

ording to merit [n]. I do not say this to disparage the blood of the Witikinds [o], the Charlemagnes, and the Ottomans: for I have more reasons than one to set a due value upon illustrious birth; but still I shall always pay a greater regard to personal merit.

I must not forget to take notice here, that Machiavel has fallen into an error, in supposing that the favour of the Soldiery alone was sufficient to secure the possession of the Empire in the time of Severus. The History of the Emperors shews us the contrary: the more they indulged the ungovernable Pretorians, the more they felt their weight: it was equally dangerous to caress or restrain them. But the power of the Soldiery is not much to be dreaded at present: because armies are now separated in little corps, which are a check upon each other, as their Princes nominate to all Commissions, and the authority of Laws is more firmly established. The Turkish Emperors, indeed, are not yet free from the terror of the bowstring: but it is because they have not availed themselves of this piece of policy. The Turks are all slaves to the Grand Signior; and he is a slave to the Janizaries. But in Christendom, Princes must treat all orders of their Subjects with the same favour and indulgence, and not make those distinctions amongst them, which are apt to create envy and jealousies that often prove fatal to their interests.—The conduct of Severus, therefore, which Machiavel proposes for the imitation of those that advance themselves to Empire, from a private condition, is as bad a pattern as that of Marcus Aurelius is a good one. But how can any one for shame propose the models of Severus, Cæsar Borgia, and Marcus Aurelius at the same time? Is not this coupling the most respectable wisdom and virtue, with the most hideous crimes? I cannot help adding by way of conclusion to this Chapter, that Cæsar Borgia, with all his cruelty and artifice, came to a miserable end: and that on the contrary, Marcus Aurelius, that royal Philosopher, who was always good and virtuous, lived in happiness and tranquillity all the days of his life, without experiencing any reverse of fortune.

[n] Asia may be said to abound with such examples as well as Europe. For the Turks make no account of high blood: most of their Vissers, and other great Officers, have been Slaves brought out of Europe.

[o] Witikind was a Saxon Prince, who kept the Saxons a long time in rebellion against Charlemagne, though he at last reduced them to terms: but Witikind soon after appeared in arms again, at the head of a body of Danes. Charlemagne hearing of this, and being tired of spilling blood after so many rebellions as he had punished, sent one of his Courtiers, whose name was Amalauvinus, to exhort him to return to his duty, and to offer him very advantageous conditions: upon which, Witikind submitted, and came to wait upon the Emperor at Agny in Champagne, who received him kindly, gave him the Duchy of Angrie, and engaged him to be instructed in the Christian Religion, of which he made profession in the year 843. He was killed four years after by Gerald Duke of Suabia, leaving but one Son called Wipert or Robert, the chimerical head of so many great genealogies. *Crantz. Metropol. cap. xviii. Witikind Chron. Sax.*