

And having dealt thus freely with myself, I hope no one will be offended, if, with Submission to *Ovid*, I venture to call this the *Pinchbeck Age*.

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AFTER this great Victory he returned to *Rome*, where he followed *Sylla's* Example, and made himself *Perpetual Dictator*; that which nothing could be more incompatible with the Constitution of the *Romans*, who never chose a Dictator, but upon some sudden Emergency; and always obliged him to abdicate his Office, as soon as the Situation of Affairs no longer required a Commander invested with such absolute Power. *Brutus* and *Cassius*, at the Head of a Conspiracy, made a bold Struggle for the Recovery of their Country's Freedom, by stabbing *Cæsar* in the Senate-House. But their ill-timed Zeal was thrown away upon a degenerate Race of Vassals, who were unwilling, and therefore unworthy to be free. Slavery to such Spirits was absolutely necessary; and this Attempt was made by the mistaken *Brutus* in an improper Age, and among *Romans*, who in nothing but the Name resembled those, who lived 465 Yers before; when very different Success attended the like heroic Patriotism of the former *Brutus*, his Ancestor, in the Abrogation of Regal Power. The Senate indeed after *Cæsar's* Death abolished the Custom of making a Dictator; but *Rome* never after recovered her Liberty.

For *Mark Anthony* being look'd on as an Enemy by the Senate for his turbulent, factious and insolent Behaviour, tho' *Cicero* could not persuade them to judge him a Rebel in Form, *Octavius*, *Cæsar's* Heir and Son by Adoption, was sent as Proprætor with the two Consuls, *Pansa* and *Hirtius*, at the Head of a powerful Army, to reduce him to Obedience. *Anthony* was at length put to Flight; but one of the Consuls being slain in the Battle, and the other dying soon after, the Command of the Army remained in the Hands of *Octavius Cæsar*, who was made Consul when he was but 20 Years old; though the ordinary Custom required the Age of the Candidates for that Office to be 42 Years. Through the Mediation of *Lepidus*, *Octavius* was reconciled to *Anthony*; and these three compos'd a Triumvirate

fatal to the Liberty of *Rome*, and the Lives of her principal Citizens. For each Triumvir made a Point of sacrificing his nearest Relations in Complaisance to his Collegues. *Cicero* was in the Number of the Proscribed, and was murdered in the 64th Year of his Age: His Head and right Hand were cut off and stuck up to public View on the *Rostrum*, by *Anthony's* Orders, as a Revenge for those poignant Speeches made against him by the incomparable Orator. *Octavius* and *Anthony* marched their Forces into *Macedonia* against *Brutus* and *Cassius*, to revenge the Death of *Cæsar*; a Place of the same Name, but not the same Place, where *Pompey* had been ruin'd (as *Florus* erroneously asserts) was the Scene of Action. And tho' neither *Anthony* nor *Octavius* was in the Battle themselves, yet their Parties remained Masters of the Field. For the Wing where *Cassius* commanded being put into Disorder, he commanded one of his Officers to kill him, through a mistaken Opinion that *Brutus* likewise was worsted. His Death so dispirited the whole Army, that the Advantage *Brutus* had gained was in a few Days overthrown; and their Forces were routed, and *Brutus*, imitating the Example of *Cassius*, died by the Hands of one of his Attendants.

After this, *Sextus Pompeius*, one of *Pompey's* Sons, who had escaped from the Battle at *Munda*, had several Engagements, with various Success, both by Sea and Land, with *Octavius* and his Party; but was at last vanquished in a Sea fight, and obliged to fly with two or three Ships into *Asia*, and was afterwards murdered at *Miletum*. *Anthony*, who had obtained the Province of *Asia*, received a total Overthrow from the *Parthians*. From thence he fled into *Egypt*; and having divorced *Octavius Cæsar's* Sister, his former Wife, married *Cleopatra*, as if he designed to reign as King of *Egypt*. But *Octavius* resenting the Alliance, overcame *Anthony* in a Sea-fight at *Actium*; whence he fled back to *Egypt*, where he and *Cleopatra* died by their own Hands; and *Egypt* became a Province to the *Romans*.

*Octavius* now remained sole Lord of *Rome* and her Dominions, which he governed under the Title of Prince. For he had before so crushed *Lepidus* and his Faction in *Sicily*, that he obliged him to resign his Share of the Government, and be contented with Leave to live. He greatly enlarg'd the *Roman* Dominions,