

is more unaccountable, this Vice not only renders us cruel to others, but even to ourselves: We hasten our End to cram our Coffers, and for the Pleasure of heaping up useless Sums, we deny ourselves needful Suttenance. This is not, however, the only Punishment of the Covetous, I don't say of the wicked Covetous, (for I lay it down as a Maxim, *that the Avaricious can never be just* :) the Hand of Providence follows them, and they seldom fail of Punishment in this World; their insatiable Thirst commonly decoys them on to Ruin. *Marcus Crassus*, tho' the richest Man in *Rome*, could not be satisfy'd: His Desire of more Gold engag'd him to make War on the *Parthians*, in which he fell, with 30,000 *Romans*. When his Body was found, these People pour'd melted Gold into his Mouth, that he might, as they said, have his Fill of what he sought, (when dead) though the Treasures of the Earth could not satisfy him living.

In the Time of *Marcus Aurelius*, a Country Peasant came to *Rome* to complain of the Avarice and Injustice of the *Romans*. I will, as it makes for the present Subject, give an Abstract of the Speech he pronounced in the Senate: And as it may divert the Reader, a Description also of his Person and Figure. Two Reasons contributed not only to his gaining an Audience, but the Preference of being heard the first of those who had Complaints to make; one was his hideous Figure; the other, the Rule of the Senate to hear the poor Complainant before the richer. As to his Dress and Person, take them in the very Words of the Emperor. 'This Peasant had a little Face, thick Lips, hollow Eyes, a swarthy Skin, and frizzled Hair; his Beard was long and thick, his Eye-brows hung over his Eyes, and his Breast was hairy as a Bear; he was bare-headed, wore Swine skin Shoes, was covered with Skins for Cloathing, which were girt with a Rush girdle, and carried a Club in his Hand.' He began his Oration thus: 'O Conscript Fathers! O fortunate Nation! I *Mileno*, a Peasant living on the Banks of the River *Danube*, salute you, noble Senators; and I pray the Gods may so inform my Tongue, that what I shall utter, may be of Use to my Country, and an Help to you in the Governing the Commonwealth with Justice. Our offended Gods having forsaken us, Fate has given our Country a Prey to you *Romans*; for had we appear'd

the Deities, you could never have triumph'd over *Germany*. The Honour you have gain'd by your many Victories, is undeniably great, and no less will be your Punishment in a future State, for the Cruelties you have committed; for the Captives Cries for Justice are not scattered in the Air; they pierce the Heavens, and reach the Throne of *Jove*. My Forefathers inhabited the Banks of the *Danube*, and as Occasion required, either withdrew up the Country, or returned to the River; but your insatiable Thirst after the Goods of others, and boundless Ambition of extending your Dominion, are such, that neither the Sea can satisfy your Avarice, nor any Distance procure us the Possession of our Lands: But we have this Comfort, the Gods are just; for did not the Oppress'd depend on their taking his Cause in Hand, Life would not be worth his Care. This I say, because I rely on Providence, and hope, as you have wrongfully, and without Cause, cast us out of our Homes, so will you, by some other Nation, be driven, not out of *Rome* only, but even out of *Italy*; for with us *Germans*, we lay it down as a Maxim, *that he who violently possesses himself of the Goods of another, ought in Justice to be deprived of what is legally his own*. Whatever Impression the Meanness of my Appearance may make, know, I have Reason to distinguish between just Possession and a tyrannous Usurpation: And from the Equity and Power of the Gods, I am satisfy'd, they can and will spoil the unjust Invader, in an Instant, of all he has been gathering for a long Series of Years, and restore to the Injur'd the Losses he has sustained in as long a Tract of Time. If the Wicked flourish, do not imagine, tho' the Gods suffer, that they approve the Crimes: Vengeance, tho' slow, is sure, and a Time of Reck'ning will come. O *Romans!* to me nothing is more astonishing, than to hear, that Men who have unjustly possessed themselves of what they cannot lawfully claim, have any Peace, can take any Rest; since they must be sensible they affront the Justice of the Gods, and have made them their Enemies. And it is not less wonderful to see Virtue banished, and Vice so triumphant: That the Reins are so loos'd to your Passions, and that your Avarice makes you esteem even the Miseries of others Riches, and your own immense Sums Poverty itself. I make