

consecrated more than once to employ these means when he was Bishop of Rieti and Ferma.

Every one knows how the Holy Inquisition has surpassed every other tribunal by its extreme rigourity in torturing human nature. Must I bring examples from the Inquisition of Spain? That of Rome has had her own to answer for as well. Through the mercy of Heaven, the former has come to an end; but that of Rome is in full vigour.

I do not propose to myself to speak of the Inquisition of one part, but that of the laws of this institution being in no respect changed, neither can the institution itself be said to have undergone any alteration. The present race of priests who are now in power, are too much afraid of the popular indignation to let loose all their inquisitorial fury, which might even occasion a revolt if they were not to restrain it; the whole world, moreover, would cry out against them, a crusade would be raised against the Inquisition, and for a little temporary gratification, much power would be endangered. This is the true reason why the severity of its penalties is in some degree relaxed at the present time, but they still remain unaltered in its code.

Governing the method of conducting a process, I read in the *Libro Negro* as follows:—"With respect to the examination, and the duty of the examiners—either the prisoner confesses, and he is proved guilty from his own confession; or he does not confess, and he is proved guilty from the evidence of witnesses. If a prisoner confesses the whole of what he is accused, he is unquestionably guilty of the whole; but if he confesses only a part, he ought still to be regarded as guilty of the whole, since he has confessed proves him to be capable of guilt as to the other points of accusation. And here the precept is to be kept in view, 'no one is obliged to confess himself guilty of what he has not done.' Nevertheless, the Judge should do all in his power to induce the culprit to confess, since confession leads to the glory of God. And as the precept due to the glory of God requires that no one particular should be omitted, not even a mere attempt; so the Judge is bound to put in force, not only the ordinary means which the Inquisition allows, but whatever may enter into his thoughts, as fitting to lead to a confession. Holy torture has ever been found the most salutary and efficient means of leading to spiritual repentance. Therefore the choice of the most fitting mode of torture is left to the Judge of the Inquisition, who determines according to the age, the sex, and the constitution of the party. He will be prudent in its use, always being mindful at the same time to procure what is required from it—the confession of the delinquent. But notwithstanding all the means employed, the unfortunate which still occurs, and who he is to be considered as a servant of the Devil; and efficient means of his cooperation from the servant of God, nor the pity or indulgence of holy mother Church; he is a son of perdition. Let him perish, then, among the damned, and let his place be no longer found among the living."

With regard to these denunciations, the Inquisition declares that in matters of offences against religion, it is the positive and bounden duty of every one to become an inquisitor. Children may be thought to do their parents wrong as a subject of the Devil; and servants of the law; is, according to the decrees of several Popes, that whoever becomes acquainted with any offence committed against religion, whether from his own knowledge, or from hearsay, is bound, within fifteen days, to bring forward his accusation before an inquisitor, or the vicar of the Holy Office; or, where there are not present, before a Bishop. "The crime, whatever it may be, not only attaches to the principal and the accomplices, but also to every one who knows it and does not reveal it. So that if you, for example, dear reader, should unfortunately belong to the Church of the Inquisition, you would be obliged to accuse not only me, who address you, but all those who, together with myself, listen to me; and whoever knows that you have listened to my discourses, although he himself may never have heard me, is under the obligation to denounce you to the Inquisition. The parents and the children, the husband and the wife, the occupation, which excludes the party subject to it from the benefit of all the sacraments, and shuts him out from the kingdom of heaven. Moreover, besides excommunication, he is liable to be imprisoned in the Inquisition, and to suffer such other punishment as may be deemed necessary. Even the very Cardinals, and the Inquisitors themselves, are not exempt from this obligation; the Pope himself has followed the example. My letters to Gregory XVI. were immediately forwarded to the Inquisition, by his own hand. I have reason to believe that Pius IX. did the same when I wrote to him. All this we may overlook; but that a wife should be obliged to accuse her own husband, or a mother her children, is too dreadful to think of.

#### A CASE IN POINT.

I will here relate a fact which it always pains me to call to mind; and which until the present occasion I have never before spoken about. During my residence in Rome, I was invited to the house of a young professor and teacher in the Church of *di Gradi*; I was one day applied to by a lady of prepossessing appearance, whom I saw first for the first time. She requested, with much eagerness, to see me in the society; and as I entered the apartment where she was waiting for me, she begged the sacrifice to leave us alone, and suddenly closing the door, presented a moving spectacle to my eyes. Drawing off her bonnet and letting loose her hair, she lay on the ground in tears, the lady in my presence before me, and gave vent to her grief in abundance of sighs and tears. On my endeavoring to encourage her, and to persuade her to rise and unfold her mind to me, she at length, in a voice broken by sobs, thus addressed me:—

"No father, I will never rise from this posture unless you first promise to pardon my very heavy transgression. (Although much younger than herself, she addressed me as her father.)"

"Signora," replied I, "it belongs to God to pardon our transgressions. If you have in any way sinned me, so far I can forgive you; but confession I have no cause of complaint against you, with whom, indeed I have not even the pleasure of being acquainted."

"I have not been guilty of a great sin, for which no priest will grant me absolution, unless you will be so kind as to fetch me out of this."

"You must expiate yourself more fully, as yet I have no idea of what you allude to."

"It is now about a year since I last received absolution from my confessor; and the last few days he has entirely lost his presence, telling me that I am damned. I have tried others, and all tell me the same thing. One day, however, he has suddenly returned, and all I wish to be agreed and pardoned, I must apply to you, who, after the Pope, are the only one who can grant me absolution."

"Signora, there is some mistake here, explain yourself; of what description is your sin?"

"It is a sin against the Holy Office."

"Well, but I have nothing to do with the Holy Office."

"How do you not know Father Achilli, the Vicar of the Holy Office?"

"You have been informed, Signora; I am Achilli, the deputy master of the Holy Palace, not Office; you may see my name, with this title, prefixed to all works that are printed here, in lieu of that of the master himself. I assure you that neither my principal nor myself has any authority in cases that regard the Inquisition."

The good lady heuristics rose from her knees, arranged her hair, wiped the tears from her eyes, and desired leave to relate her case to me; and, having sat down, began as follows:—

"It is not quite a year since, that I was going, about the time of Easter, according to my usual custom, to confess my sin to my parish priest. He being well acquainted with myself and all my family, began to interrogate me respecting my sin, the only one I have, a young man twenty-four years of age, full of pain and sorrow, but with little respect for the priests. It happened that I happened to be in the court, notwithstanding my remonstrances, my son was in the habit of saying that the business of a priest was a complete deception, and that the head of all the impostors was the Pope himself. Would I had never told him! The curate would hear no further. 'It is your duty,' said he, 'to denounce your son to the Inquisition.' Imagine what I felt at this intimation! It was the accuser of my own son! Such is the case, observed he, there is no other way of saving him, unless you will give up the world and the flesh is done. And, indeed, from every one else I have had the same refusal. It is now twelve months since I have received absolution; and in this present year my misfortunes have befallen me. Ten days ago I tried again, and promised, in order that I might receive absolution, that I would denounce my son; but it was all in vain, until I had actually done so. I then to whom I ought to go to prefer the accusation. And I was told to the Bishop, or the vicar of the Holy Office, and they named yourself to me. Twice already have I been here, with the intention of doing what was required of me, and as often have I recollected that I was a mother, and was overwhelmed with horror at the idea. On Sunday last I came to your church, to pray to the Virgin, the mother of Christ, to aid me through this difficulty; and I remember that when I had retired the room in her honor, I turned to my prayer book, and saying: 'O Lord Jesus, thou wert also accused before the chief priests, by a traitorous disciple; but thou didst not permit thy Mother to take part in that accusation. Behold, then, I also am a mother, and although my son is a sinner, whilst thou wert just, do not, I implore thee, require that his own mother should be his accuser.' Whilst I was making this prayer the preaching began. I inquired the preacher's name, and he told me that he was the same who had been the confessor, but I was wholly occupied in looking at you, and reflecting, with my son, that I was under the obligation to accuse to you my own child. In the midst of my agitation a thought suddenly relieved me, I did not see the Inquisitor in your countenance. Young, animated, and with marks of sensibility, it seemed that you would not be too harsh with my son; I thought you would treat your first to correct him himself, to reprimand and to threaten him, without subjecting actual punishment upon him."

I shall not recapitulate my objections to the priest, so to tranquillize her mind with respect to having to denounce her son. I advised her to change her confessor, and be silent with regard to him—say how she was not in fault. And if confession, I further remarked, be a sacrament that pardons sin, it can never be made a means of unprofitably obtaining information as to the words or deeds of another.

But had I been really Vicar of the Holy Office, what was my duty in this matter? To give notice of the accusation of this mother against her own son, and to threaten her with the same punishment she had made such a great and unlearned of enmity! She naturally would have made such a great and unlearned of enmity! And I should have had to offer her consolation. And since this horrible act of treason has the presence of religion about it, I should have employed the aid of religion to persuade her that the sacrifice she made was most acceptable to God. Perhaps, to act my part better, I might have alluded to the sacrifice demanded of Abraham, and have applied the same application to her from Scripture, to calm her mind, and to silence the remorse of conscience she must have heard on account of the iniquity of bringing her child before the Inquisition.

Now let us see what is done by the Inquisitors. In what is called the Holy Office, everything is allowable that tends to their own purpose.