

country, or of Europe generally, and considered it in every rank of society. I speak not of the Spaniard, who has not yet rid himself from the palsy of the Inquisition, who can go from the prostration of the confessional to scenes of the wildest crime ; — I speak not of the Italian, that compound of profaneness and credulity, of sin and devotion, who can bow before an image, and with the same hand cross himself, by which a minute before he plunged his stiletto in his fellow creature's heart ; — I speak not of the simple peasantry, who Sunday after Sunday walk stately to church or chapel, and know little more than that they went there and came back again ; — I speak not of the fashionable wealthy, who, on this point are commonly as ignorant as the boor, and choose religion as they choose every thing else, as it happens to be the mode ; I pass these by, because it may be said that pleasure and gaiety leave them no time for study ; — but I will refer to multitudes who are esteemed devout and serious Christians, whose minds passively receive the mould of their teachers, and to whom religion never presents itself as a system of various thought and of independent examination. Now, this ignorant apathy has bad effects, which are not merely negative ; and I will allude in a few words to one or two of them. It gives stability to every error and corruption, and holds to them with an obstinacy against which wisdom has no power ; it is the very soil in which priestcraft grows darkest and foulest ; and the hierarchy in any age or country has never risen to its full stature of lordliness, until the people have lain lowest in torpid submission. And in addition to this, there is no uncharitableness so inveterate, there is no bigotry so intolerant, as that which this species of character matures ;