

AN ACCOUNT OF THE WONDERFUL ESCAPE OF MR. BOWER, ONE OF THE INQUISITORS AT MACERATA, INTO ENGLAND, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE INQUISITION IN ITALY.

Mr. Archibald Bower, (author of the history of the Lives of the Popes) was born in Scotland, and at five years of age was sent over by his parents, (who were Roman Catholics) to an uncle in Italy, where he was educated, and became so great a proficient in learning, that he was appointed professor of rhetoric and logic in the College of Macerata. At this place there is an office of the inquisition, called the Holy Tribunal, which consists of an Inquisitor General, (who is president thereof) and twelve counsellors who are chosen by him indifferently from the ecclesiastics or the laity. Each of these has a salary of about 200*l.* sterling per annum, and an apartment in the house of the Inquisition, which is a grand building, and the residence of the Inquisitor General who provides a table for them. Much honour and many great privileges, besides certainty of good preferment, are attached to the situation. One privilege is, that if they commit ever such enormous or flagitious crimes against the law, even murder, they cannot be apprehended, without leave from the Inquisitor General; which gives them opportunity to escape.

The counsellors cannot be absent a single night without leave from the Inquisitor. Offences against the faith or practices of the church alone come under the cognizance of this court; and these are generally very trifling—such as saying or doing any thing disrespectful, with regard to their saints, images, relics, or the like.

When a person is accused, the Inquisitor General summons the council, which always meets in the night, and if any member should happen to be

absent, his place is supplied by a notary, for all trials must be in full court. The president then notifies the crimes, without naming the informer or the criminal.

Any of the council may object to the information; and if the number of objectors amount to four, the Inquisitor is obliged to disclose the evidence, or more properly, the informer: after which, if the objections are still persisted in, the cause must be carried to the high court at Rome: otherwise their opinions are taken whether or not the offence be such as the Holy Tribunal ought to notice. If it is determined to proceed against the criminal, the Inquisitor General orders any one of the council, whom he pleases, to apprehend him at the dead hour of the night. A proper guard is assigned for that purpose, who with dark lanterns and arms, attend him to the poor wretch's abode; where, with the utmost silence and secrecy; for nobody dare to make any noise or resistance on pain of excommunication, he is seized and conveyed into one of the dismal dungeons under the Inquisition house. There the poor creature is confined seven or eight days, without the least glimpse of light, uninformed of the crime of which he is accused, and without other sustenance than a little bread and water once a day. The key of the dungeon is given to the counsellor who makes the arrest, and is delivered up by him the next morning to the Inquisitor General.

The term of seven days being expired, the court is summoned for the trial, when a notary attends to write down what the criminal says, and a surgeon to feel his pulse, and to tell them how much he can bear. The machines or engines for torture being fixed, the accused is brought in; and without being told either his offence or his accuser, and denied the liberty of expostulating, he is exhorted to confess what crimes he has been guilty