

The zeal of the Spaniards for religion, extends to the ministers of it. A priest is an object of veneration; to punish whom civil justice has no power, let him have committed ever so great a crime. A striking instance of this was seen a few years ago in Andalusia. A monk, of the order of barefooted Carmelites, had conceived a violent passion for a young girl to whom he was confessor. He had undoubtedly attempted in vain to explain to her his wishes; because, learning from herself that she was going to be married, and jealous lest another should possess her whom he idolized, he became frantic; and one day, after the young woman had made her confession to him, received the sacrament from his hands, and heard him say mass, he lay in wait for her at the church door, and, notwithstanding the cries of the mother, and the astonishment of all present, with three strokes of a poinard laid her dead at his feet. He was taken into custody, but the King being informed he was a priest, and certainly wishing to give him time to repent, condemned him to live at Porto Rico as a perfidiary, or galley-slave.

In order to form a proper idea of the manners or laws of any country, an observer should collect and compare facts, and examine the different judgments pronounced in similar cases. A canon of the cathedral of Seville, affected in his dress, and particularly curious in his shoes, could not find a workman to his liking. An unfortunate shoemaker, to whom he applied, after quitting many others, having brought him a pair of shoes not made to his taste, the canon became furious, and seizing one of the tools of the shoemaker, gave him with it so many blows upon the head as laid him dead upon the floor. The unhappy man left a widow, four daughters, and a son, fourteen years of age; the eldest of the indigent family. They made their complaints to the chapter; the canon was prosecuted, and condemned not to appear in the choir for a year. The young shoemaker having attained to man's estate, was scarcely able to get a livelihood, and overwhelmed with wretchedness, sat down on the day of a procession at the door of a cathedral of Seville, in the moment the procession passed by. Amongst the other canons he perceived the murderer of his father. At the sight of this man, filial affection, rage and despair, got so far the better of his reason, that he fell furiously upon the priest and stabbed him to the heart. The young man was seized, convicted of the crime, and immediately condemned to be quartered alive. Peter, whom we call the Cruel, and whom the

Spaniards, with more reason, call the Lover of justice, was then at Seville. The affair came to his knowledge; and, after learning the particulars, he determined to be himself the judge of the young shoemaker. When he proceeded to give judgment, he first annulled the sentence just pronounced by the clergy; and, after asking the young man of what profession he was, 'I forbid you,' said he, 'to make shoes for a year to come.'

The Spaniards never carry light into an apartment without saying, *Blessed be the holy sacrament of the altar.* The bystanders answer, *For ever.* Their salutation is, *God keep you.* Their farewell at separating, *Go with God, with the Virgin.* When they enter a house, the first words are, *Deo Gratias, Ave Maria.* The company answer, *Sim pecado concebida,* conceived without sin. This subject of so many disputes is made a form of compliment in Spain. Never were God, the virgin, and the saints so much spoken of as in that kingdom.

Easter week is the source of a thousand sacrileges, which are the consequence of billets of confession. The priests of Spain have a maxim equally false and cruel; they say that men should, by every possible means, be accustomed to do their duty, and that persuasion comes sooner or later. A few days before the holy week the vicar of each parish, accompanied by the register, makes a visit to his flock, and carefully takes down their names; fifteen days afterwards he repeats his visit, and all his parishioners are obliged to produce to him, not only a billet of confession, but another of communion. How many abuses result from this monstrous custom! The holy days are scarcely begun before a sacrilegious traffic is made of that for which religion teaches us the highest veneration. Prostitutes are seen to communicate in every parish church, and sell to their impenitent lovers the billets they have received. Priests, unworthy of the name, pay with the same money the favours of these wretches. Many persons, to spare the expences of a billet, become sacrilegious; and if any one, led astray by his passions, has preserved piety and decency enough to forbear having recourse to these horrid means, and on the day the curate makes his visit has not a billet of communion to present, he becomes the object of ecclesiastical censure; his name is shamefully posted up in the most public places; and if, in the time given, he does not fulfil the precept, he receives corporal punishment. Thus the man, perhaps the most religious amongst his brethren, is the most defamed; and