

Inquisition

INNOCENT the Third, a pope as enterprising as he was successful in his enterprises, having sent Dominic with some missionaries into Languedoc, these men so irritated the heretics they were sent to convert, that most of them were assassinated at Toulouse in the year 1200. He called in the aid of temporal arms, and published against them a crusade, granting, as was usual with the popes on similar occasions, all kinds of indulgences and pardons to those who would arm against these *Mahometans*, so he styled these unfortunate men. Once all were Turks when they were not Catholics! Raymond, Count of Toulouse, was constrained to submit. The inhabitants were passed on the edge of the sword, without distinction of age or sex. It was then he established that scourge of Europe, THE INQUISITION: for having considered that though all might be compelled to submit by arms, numbers might remain who would profess particular dogmas, he established this sanguinary tribunal solely to inspect into all families, and INQUIRE concerning all persons who they imagined were unfriendly to the interests of Rome. Dominic did so much by his persecuting inquiries, that he firmly established the inquisition at Toulouse.

Not before the year 1484 it became known in Spain. To another Dominican, John de Torquemada, the court of Rome owed this obligation. As he was the confessor of Queen Isabella, he had extorted from her a promise that if ever she ascended the throne, she would use every means to extirpate heresy and heretics. Ferdinand had conquered Granada, and had expelled from the Spanish realms multitudes of unfortunate Moors. A few remained, whom, with the Jews, he compelled to become Christians: they at least assumed the name; but it was well known that both these nations naturally respected their own faith, rather than that of the Christians. This race was afterwards distinguished as *Christianos Novos*; and in forming marriages, the blood of the Hidalgo was considered to lose its purity by mingling with such a suspicious source.

Torquemada pretended that this dissimulation would greatly hurt the interests of the holy religion. The queen listened with respectful diffidence to her confessor; and at length gained over the king to consent to the establishment of this unrelenting tribunal. Torquemada, indefatigable in his zeal for the holy seal, in the space of fourteen years that he exercised the office of chief

inquisitor, is said to have prosecuted near eighty thousand persons, of whom six thousand were condemned to the flames.

Voltaire attributes the taciturnity of the Spaniards to the universal horror such proceedings spread. "A general jealousy and suspicion took possession of all ranks of people: friendship and sociability were at an end, Brothers were afraid of brothers, fathers of their children."

The situation and the feelings of one imprisoned in the cells of the inquisition are forcibly painted by Orobio, a mild, and meek, and learned man, whose controversy with Limborch is well known. When he escaped from Spain he took refuge in Holland, was circumcised, and died a philosophical Jew. He has left this admirable description of himself in the cell of the inquisition. "Inclosed in this dungeon I could not even find space enough to turn myself about; I suffered so much that I felt my brain disordered. I frequently asked myself, am I really Don Balthazar Orobio, who used to walk about Seville at my pleasure, who so much enjoyed myself with my wife and children? I often imagined that all my life had only been a dream, and that I really had been born in this dungeon! The only amusement

I could invent was metaphysical disputations. I was at once opponent, respondent, and præses!"

In the cathedral at Saragossa is the tomb of a famous inquisitor; six pillars surround this tomb; to each is chained a Moor, as preparatory to his being burnt. On this St. Foix ingeniously observes, "If ever the Jack Ketch of any country should be rich enough to have a splendid tomb, this might serve as an excellent model."

The inquisition, as Bayle informs us, punished heretics by *fire*, to elude the maxim, *Ecclesia non novit sanguinem*; for burning a man, say they, does not *shed his blood!* Otho, the bishop at the Norman invasion, in the tapestry worked by Matilda the queen of William the Conqueror, is represented with a *mace* in his hand, for the purpose that when he *despatched* his antagonist he might not *spill blood*, but only break his bones! Religion has had her quibbles as well as Law.

The establishment of this despotic order was resisted in France; but it may perhaps surprise the reader that a recorder of London in a speech urged the necessity of setting up an inquisition in England! It was on the trial of Penn the Quaker, in 1670, who was acquitted by the jury, which seems highly to have provoked the said

recorder. "*Magna Charta*," writes the prefacer to the trial, "with the recorder of London, is nothing more than *Magna F——!*" It appears that the jury, after being kept two days and two nights to change their verdict, were in the end both fined and imprisoned. Sir John Howell, the recorder, said, "Till now I never understood the reason of the polioy and prudence of the Spaniards in suffering the inquisition among them; and certainly it will not be well with us, till something *like unto the Spanish inquisition be in England*." Thus it will ever be, while both parties, struggling for the pre-eminence, rush to the sharp extremity of things, and annihilate the trembling balance of the constitution. But the adopted motto of Lord Erskine must ever be that of every Briton, "*Trial by jury*."

So late as the year 1761, Gabriel Malagrida, an old man of seventy, was burnt by these evangelical executioners. His trial was printed at Amsterdam, in 1762, from the Lisbon copy. And for what was this unhappy Jesuit condemned? Not, as some have imagined, for his having been concerned in a conspiracy against the king of Portugal. No other charge is laid to him in this trial but that of having indulged certain heretical notions, which any other tribunal but that of the inquisition would have looked upon as the delirious fancies

of a fanatical old man. Will posterity believe that in the eighteenth century an aged visionary was led to the stake for having said, amongst other extravagancies, that "The holy Virgin having commanded him to write the life of Anti-Christ, told him that he, Malagrida, was a second John, but more clear than John the Evangelist; that there were to be three Anti-Christes, and that the last should be born at Milan, of a monk and a nun, in the rear 1920; and that he would marry Proserpine, one of the infernal furies."

For such ravings as these the unhappy old man was burnt in recent times. Granger assures us that in his remembrance a *horse* that had been taught to tell the spots upon cards, the hour of the day, &c. by significant tokens, was, together with his owner, put into the inquisition for *both* of them dealing with the devil! A man of letters declared that, having fallen into their hands, nothing perplexed him so much as the ignorance of the inquisitor and his council; and it seemed very doubtful whether they had read even the Scriptures.

One of the most interesting anecdotes relating to the terrible inquisition, exemplifying how the use of the diabolical engines of torture forces men to confess crimes they have not been guilty of, was related to me by a Portuguese gentleman.

A nobleman in Lisbon having heard that his physician and friend was imprisoned by the inquisition, under the stale pretext of Judaism, addressed a letter to one of them to request his freedom, assuring the inquisitor that his friend was as orthodox a Christian as himself. The physician, notwithstanding this high recommendation, was put to the torture; and, as was usually the case, at the height of his sufferings, confessed everything they wished. This enraged the nobleman, and feigning a dangerous illness, he begged the inquisitor would come to give him his last spiritual aid.

As soon as the Dominican arrived, the lord, who had prepared his confidential servants, commanded the inquisitor in their presence to acknowledge himself a Jew, to write his confession, and to sign it. On the refusal of the inquisitor the nobleman ordered his people to put on the inquisitor's head a red-hot helmet, which to his astonishment, in drawing aside a screen, he beheld glowing in a small furnace. At the sight of this new instrument of torture, "Luke's iron crown," the monk wrote and subscribed the abhorred confession. The nobleman then observed, "See now the enormity of your manner of proceeding with unhappy men! My poor physician, like you, has confessed Judaism; but with

this difference, only torments have forced that from him, which fear alone has drawn from you!"

The inquisition has not failed of receiving its due praises. Macedo, a Portuguese Jesuit, has discovered the "Origin of the *Inquisition*" in the terrestrial Paradise, and presumes to allege, that God was the first who began the functions of an *inquisitor* over Cain and the workmen of Babel! Macedo, however, is not so dreaming a personage as he appears; for he obtained a professor's chair at Padua for the arguments he delivered at Venice against the pope, which were published by the title of "The Literary Roarings of the Lion at St. Mark;" besides he is the author of 109 different works; but it is curious to observe how far our interest is apt to prevail over our conscience,—Macedo praised the Inquisition up to heaven, while he sank the pope to nothing!

Among the great revolutions of this age, and since the last edition of these volumes, the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal is abolished—but its history enters into that of the human mind; and the history of the inquisition by Limborch, translated by Chandler, with a very curious "Introduction," loses none of its value with the philosophical mind. This monstrous tribunal of human opinions aimed at the sovereignty of the intellectual

world, without intellect. It may again be restored, to keep Spain stationary at the middle ages!