

Spanish Etiquette

THE etiquette or rules to be observed in royal palaces is necessary, writes Baron Bielfield, for keeping order at court. In Spain it was carried to such lengths as to make martyrs of their kings. Here is an instance, at which, in spite of the fatal consequences it produced, one cannot refrain from smiling.

Philip the Third was gravely seated by the fireside: the fire-maker of the court had kindled so great a quantity of wood, that the monarch was nearly suffocated with heat, and his *grandeur* would not suffer him to rise from the chair; the domestics could not *presume* to enter the apartment, because it was against the *etiquette*. At length the Marquis de Potat appeared, and the king ordered him to damp the fires; but *he* excused himself; alleging that he was forbidden by the *etiquette* to perform such a function, for which the Duke D'Usseda ought to be called upon, as it was his business. The duke was gone out; the *fire* burnt fiercer; and the *king* endured it, rather than derogate from his *dignity*. But his blood was heated to such a degree, that an erysipelas of the head appeared the next day, which, succeeded by a violent fever, carried him off in 1621, in the twenty-fourth year of his age.

The palace was once on fire; a soldier, who knew the king's sister was in her apartment, and must inevitably have been consumed in a few moments by the flames, at the risk of his life rushed in, and brought her highness safe out in his arms: but the Spanish *etiquette* was here wofully broken into! The loyal soldier was brought to trial, and as it was impossible to deny that he had entered her apartment, the judges condemned him to die! The Spanish Princess however condescended, in consideration of the circumstance, to *pardon* the soldier, and very benevolently saved his life.

When Isabella, mother of Philip II., was ready to be delivered of him, she commanded that all the lights should be extinguished: that if the violence of her pain should occasion her face to change colour, no one might perceive it. And when the midwife said, "Madam, cry out, that will give you ease," she answered in *good Spanish*, "How dare you give me such advice? I would rather die than cry out."

"Spain gives us *pride*—which Spain to all the earth
May largely give, nor fear herself a dearth!"

CHURCHILL.

Philip the Third was a weak bigot, who suffered himself to be governed by his ministers. A patriot wished to open his eyes, but he could not pierce through the crowds of his flatterers; besides that the voice of patriotism heard in a corrupted court would have become a crime never pardoned. He found, however, an ingenious manner of conveying to him his censure. He caused to be laid on his table, one day, a letter sealed, which bore this address—"To the King of Spain, Philip the Third, at present in the service of the Duke of Lerma."

In a similar manner, Don Carlos, son to Philip the Second, made a book with empty pages, to contain the voyages of his father, which bore this title—"The Great and Admirable Voyages of the King Mr. Philip." All these voyages consisted of going to the Escorial from Madrid, and returning to Madrid from the Escorial. Jests of this kind, at length, cost him his life.