

LETTER XIX.

The treatment of the Jews on this peninsula, though it forms a less prominent feature than the expulsion of the Moriscoes, may perhaps be productive of more lasting effects. The history may be given in a few lines.

Soon after the capture of Granada, Ferdinand commanded all Jews who would not be baptized, to depart from his dominions within four months on pain of death. Some went to Italy, some to Barbary and Turkey; but the main body thus expelled from Spain were literally *taken in* in Portugal. They obtained permission of John the Second, for a large sum of money, to remain in that country during some months till they could be provided with ships to carry them away. The King took their money, and admitted them into his dominions, allowed no ship to carry them out, and as soon as the term was expired,

he seized their effects, and sold them to his subjects for slaves.

Emanuel, who succeeded, set the Jews at liberty, but commanded them on pain of perpetual servitude, either to be baptized within a certain time, or to quit Portugal, adding that ships should be provided for their emigration at the three principal ports. The Jews accordingly repaired to these ports, and there met with a proclamation forbidding them upon pain of death to embark any where but at Lisbon: they went to Lisbon: the King then ordered that all their children under fourteen years of age should be taken from them and forcibly baptized. Many of the wretched parents to prevent this threw their children into the river or the wells, and precipitated themselves after them. The tyranny of Emanuel did not stop here; after having liberated them from a slavery which he himself acknowledged to be unjust, with a strange inconsistency he suffered no ships to receive them, and offered the alternative of slavery again or baptism. The poor victims of

bigotry preferred Christianity to servitude, and three hundred thousand persons were thus baptized.

A squib of some humour on this occasion is preserved in the *Silva Curiosa*, and said to have been found among the archives of Toledo.

Letter from the Jews of Spain to those of Constantinople.

Honoured Israelites, health and greeting! Know that the King of Spain by force obliges us to turn Christians, and deprives us of our effects, and destroys our synagogues, and works us many other vexations, so that we are altogether confused and uncertain how to act. We therefore intreat you by the law of Moses to give us some assistance, and send us, with all speed, the result of your deliberations to regulate our conduct.

CHAMORRA, Chief of the Jews in Spain.



The Answer.

Beloved Brethren in Moses,

We have received the letter, in which you have acquainted us with the troubles and misfortunes that oppress you ; and we sympathize with you in your sufferings. This is the opinion of the Chiefs and Rabbis.

You say that the King of Spain by force obliges you to turn Christians. Do so, therefore, because you can do nothing else. You say that he deprives you of your effects ; make your sons tradesmen that so by little and little you may deprive them of theirs. You say that he takes away the lives of many of your brethren ; make your sons physicians and apothecaries that they may take away theirs also. As they have destroyed your synagogues, make your sons divines and priests that you may destroy theirs ; and as they work you many other vexations, make your sons notaries, and lawyers, and counsellors ; if you follow the advice that we give, you shall well

revenge yourselves, and by this submission you will gain wealth and possessions, and we shall see that from being abject and despised you will become respected.

Ussus, Chief of the Jews in Constantinople.

The aversion of the Jews to a religion which they were thus compelled to profess, naturally became more implacable. The law of Moses was still in secret transmitted from father to son, and the vigilance of the Inquisition and the martyrdom of so many of their brethren rendering them more circumspect, must at the same time have rendered them more bigotted. Till within the last fifty years, the burning* of a Jew formed the highest delight of the Portuguese: they thronged to behold this triumph

* I have in my possession a sermon preached at an Auto-da-fe in Lisbon 1705, by the Archbishop of Cranganor. It is a curious mixture of criticism argument and abuse. Thus it commences. " Disgraceful relics of Judaism ! unhappy fragments of the synagogue ! last spoil of Judæa ! Scandal of the Catholics, and the detestable ridicule even of the Jews themselves, I speak with you o ill-advised race !

of the Faith, and the very women shouted with transport as they saw the agonizing Martyr writhe at the stake. Neither sex nor age could

I declaim against you o ill-advised people!" he proceeds by contrasting the past and present state of the Jews, and this part furnishes a curious instance of the *argumentum ad hominem*. "Formerly you were respected by the water and more respected by the fire, to-day the fire has you for its food, and your ashes thrown into the sea will find their tomb in the waters!"

The most curious passage occurs at the close of the sermon. "If you are resolved to die in your present state, I here cite you for the Day of Judgment, when we shall both appear in the presence of the true God, you risen again a Jew and a Heretic, being the state in which you die, and I, according to my hope in the divine mercy, risen again a Catholic, as I trust by divine goodness to die in the law of Jesus Christ, the only one in which salvation can be had. We shall both rise again before the Supreme Judge, and then you shall see that God may upbraid me with the greatness of my sins, but he will not have to upbraid me with being false in my belief. The little observance I have paid to it may be urged against me, but its truth, that cannot, if God be not unjust, which he is not. And you! he will not only have to judge you for your crimes, but he will have to condemn you for the observance of the law in which you die. I will place you in the presence of God without any other crime than that of keeping the law of Moses, and I will place a Christian in the same presence, without any other sin than the observance of the Law of

save this persecuted race, and Antonio Joseph da Silva, the best of their dramatic writers, was burnt alive because he was a Jew.

Christ. If God should condemn the Christian on account of his Law and save the Jew on the same account, he cannot be a just God, he cannot answer the reasons with which the Catholic would argue against his justice. For in this case the Catholic would argue with God thus, O Just Judge, I believed in Christ, because he had all the signs which you revealed by the prophets your Son should have. I did that which you commanded me, and therefore you now condemn me. How then can you condemn me for obedience? Certainly this reasoning could not be answered, and it is clearly impossible that God could condemn the Catholic for being a Christian. Let us now place the Jew whom God condemns for observing the Law of Moses, attempting to argue with God for condemning him because he is a Jew. He will say; Lord! I believed in the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; I observed the Law which thou gavest to Moses, why then dost thou condemn me? God can reply. Thou liest, because Abraham, Isaac and Jacob believed and hoped a future Messiah, who should be my Son and should have all the signs by which I promised that he should be known. This my Son has been in the world and in him were all the signs seen that were revealed in the Scriptures;—these therefore being accomplished I am just in condemning thee, and thou hast been a rebel in being a Jew. Thus wretchedly, my brother, will you experience it in that day."

In the same volume I have a Spanish answer to this sermon,

This infernal tyranny of the Priesthood, though it produces outward conformity, can extend no farther. The Jews still preserve their faith,

said in the title page to be the posthumous work of the Author *de las Noticias Reconditas de la Inquisicion*. I know not his name, but he was evidently a man of learning and moderation, sincere in his belief. I translate his answer to that part of the Archbishop's discourse above translated, because it has probably suggested a singular passage to the Author of the *Systeme de la Nature*.

“The Archbishop speaks with confidence as though he were Secretary to the Divine Majesty, and all that passed in heaven were notorious. I have not the audacity to limit the reasons with which God could confute the Catholic, for his Divine Majesty can alledge other incomparably more efficacious than what my weakness can attain to. I only say therefore, that, not in the presence of his Divine Majesty, but in that of any human judge what I have alledged is sufficient to confute the presumption of the Archbishop; and if the Jew were to speak before his God as the Preacher says—in this manner would I do it.

O God! my Lord! prostrate before thy divine presence I come humbly to give an account of the Religion I professed in the other life, and wherefore I professed it.

Lord! I was born of Jewish Parents, I was instructed in the Law of Moses, and professed it from education till my arrival at years of discretion, when from reading books of controversy my duty obliged me to examine the reasons on

and the true Israelite physiognomy is evident in half the people you meet. A great crowd were assembled to behold the Marquis of Pombal

one side and on the other, with all the accuracy of which my understanding was capable; and having balanced them, without admitting any prejudice of my bringing up, Lord! I found that the divine prophecies which treat of the true Messiah had never been accomplished in any man before the day of my death. I found O Lord, that in thy Divine Law thou hast assured us, that though our dispersion were from one extremity of the world to the other, thou wouldest collect us together again, and bring us to the Promised Land, and even there charge us with the observance of thy divine precepts. How then could I go over to another religion, which destroys and annihilates thy most holy word, and which opposes itself to thy divine decrees which thou hast thyself pronounced on Mount Sinai, because there are men who interpret some prophecies allegorically and apply them to a certain person whom they call thy Son! and when they see themselves *confuted by the force of thy divine, clear, and manifest word, which literally contradicts what they pretend to prove, betake themselves to the allegorical meaning! what proof is there that this is the true meaning and no other?

* Wherever this word occurs the Spanish is *convencidos*, but to *confute* and to *convince* are not synonymes in England, and the first is evidently the meaning of *convencer* as used by the Jew.

open a fountain which he had erected. "See, my Lord," said one of his flatterers, "like Moses you make water flow from the rock!" "Yes," replied the Marquis, "and here are the Jews looking at me!"

Pombal, though a great villain, was a great Minister; perhaps calculated by the one character to excel in the other. One of his laws forbids any person to call another a Jew, and

How could we forsake that divine word which we have heard from thy most holy lips, for the explications and allegories of men who do not agree among themselves, who contradict and oppose the truth received from thy faithful servant Moses, from thy most holy Prophets, and from such a series of wise and learned men, who during so many ages have written conformably to this the same revealed truth; who in all their writings confirm and exhort us to the strict observance of thy divine word! These then have I followed and believing these have I served and worshipped thee in the best form and manner which was possible in the world, have I leagued myself strictly with that religion which I believed to be the one and the only, and which I acknowledged for thy true and eternal word. I lived a Jew and I died a Jew, in which I believe that I have served thee as thou hast commanded, and here I am before thy divine mercy, that thou mayest ordain it to be with done with me, accordingly as I have served thee.

trifling as this may appear, its effects have been very beneficial.

For my own part I am unchristian enough to wish that all this nation were converted to the Jewish faith, or at least to the Jewish ceremonies, for a reason which may be found in the twenty-third chapter of Deuteronomy, at the thirteenth verse.

I have sometimes amused myself by fancying what effects might have been produced had the books of Richard Brothers been circulated in this country. Whenever revolutionary principles shall find their way here, the Jews will probably be the first to receive them.

Geddes saw a prisoner at the Auto da Fe gagged, because immediately on coming out of the gate, and looking up to the sun, which for many years he had not seen, he exclaimed with enthusiasm, "How is it possible for men who behold that glorious orb to worship any Being but him who created it!" The power of this

infernal tribunal is now however seldom exerted. You will be surprized at the mildness of the sentences in the following paper, but you will be more surprized at the charges against the prisoners: the rank of the criminals, and the manner of expressing their opinions render it a curious paper, and it is most probably the last of its kind.

LIST OF THE PENITENTS

AT THE

AUTO DA FE, *October* 15th, 1779.

1. JOZE DE SOUSA, a soldier of the regiment of artillery of Porto, quartered at Valencia on the Minho, who from reading impious prohibited books became a profest Atheist. He denied the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, and the Incarnation of our Saviour. He held that all religions were good, and that every country

ought to profess some on a political account. He looked upon our Lord Jesus Christ as an Impostor, the Virgin Mary as a Strumpet, the Apostles and Prophets as deceivers and fanatics, St. Dominic, St. Francis, and St. Theresa, as executioners, alluding to their being the inventors and Patrons of the Holy Office which he blasphemously despised. He denied the immortality of the soul, and of consequence the existence of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. In short he was the greatest libertine, and approved of every the most impious licentiousness.

He was condemned to be shut up for three years in the Convent of Rilhafoles, and deprived of the benefits of Communion and Confession.

2. JOHN MANOEL DE ABREU, of the same regiment, from reading the like books, denied the existence of a God. He was an Infidel, impious, blasphemous, and a Materialist; hence he took upon him to deny the utility of prayers and masses for the dead, and to hold as unlawful the alms and donations which the Clergy

receive for those offices. He affirmed that the law of Nature was sufficient to keep men honest, that simple fornication was not criminal, and that the Americans were not the descendants of Adam, expressly denying the authority of the sacred writings.

He was condemned to three years confinement at Rilhafoles; and on being asked whether he did not think the fire of Purgatory more intense than that of Hell, he said he believed that it must be, on account of its boiling the cauldrons of such a number of Ecclesiastics and Friars; however he imagined they would not experience any of its heat after they were dead, because they consumed so great a share of it while they were living.

3. MANOEL DE ESPIRITO SANTO LIMPO, native of Olivença, and serjeant in the same regiment. An impious Atheist and a Blasphemer of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom he gave the appellation not of God, but of a Good Philosopher. He affirmed that Religion was a

mere chimera, a political invention to keep men in obedience and subordination to those who govern. That if our Saviour had been really God, he would never have left the stupendous firmament of the Heavens to come upon earth for the love of such a vile creature as man. He despised the sacraments and ordinances of the Church, eat meat on fast days, did not hear mass on holy days, and denied the free will of man.

He was condemned to three years imprisonment at Rilhafoles.

4. HENRIQUE LEITAO DE SOUZA, native of Penamacor, and a Cadet, from reading the same heretical and prohibited books became an Atheist, and of consequence denied the sacred writings, the mysteries of the most Holy Trinity, and the Incarnation. He was an impious blasphemer of Jesus and the Virgin Mary, the Apostles and Prophets: he held the sufficiency of the Law of Nature, and that simple fornication was lawful.



Condemned to Rilhafoles for three years.

5. JOZE BARRETO, native of Valença, a Cadet, from the same cause, the reading of prohibited books, became an impious and incredulous Atheist and Blasphemer, calling Ladies of his acquaintance Nossa Senhora da Carma, and Santa Benta, and by other names which the Church holds as the most venerable.

Condemned to three years confinement at Rilhafoles.

6. JOZE LEANDRO MILLANI, native of Lisbon, and Lieutenant of the same regiment, from reading impious prohibited books was an Atheist, Materialist, a despiser of the Sacraments and Ordinances of the Church, and a strenuous defender of simple fornication, and of the indifference or equal goodness of all religions.

Condemned to Rilhafoles for three years, and deprived of the benefits of Communion and Confession.

7. ALEXO VACHE, a Frenchman, native of Hieres in Provence, and Surgeon of the same regiment, an Atheist Materialist, and a defender of suicide, which whilst in prison he likewise endeavoured to put in practice, but did not succeed in the attempt; he held simple fornication to be no sin.

Condemned to the Convent of French Capuchins for three years, and banished for three years more to Viseo.

8. MIGUEL WINCESLAW LATE, native of Brussels, and Major in the same regiment, who at the age of eighteen enlisted himself in Hungary, in the troops and service of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, where he served a considerable time and contracted some doubts in religion from being acquainted with persons of different persuasions, and from reading prohibited books, by which he was led to neglect hearing mass, for which he was fined three months pay. Going with his regiment into Sclavonia, he there followed the Greek Church,

and on his return he entered into the Society of Free Masons, notwithstanding that Society was condemned as heretical by Benedict XIII. He afterwards held that all religions were indifferent, denied Purgatory, which he looked upon as invented for the interest of the Church, profest religion solely from formality and political motives, and defended the sufficiency of the Law of Nature. He preferred the Confession which the Lutherans make before God, to the Auricular Confession practised by the Catholic Church, and disapproved of the custom of giving absolution to the soldiers before they went to battle. Three years confinement at Rilhafoles, and three years banishment to Lamego.

9. JOZE ANASTASIO DA CUNHA, Lieutenant of the same regiment, and Professor of Geometry in the University of Coimbra. Reading prohibited books, and an intimacy with people of various persuasions, made him first of all embrace a liberty of conscience, and afterwards an apostate, a favourer of toleration, indifferent to religion, a Libertine, and an Atheist. He held