

ration of Spain depends on the diminution of the vast number of convents.

These are the steps taken in Spain towards the purifying of religion.

On the other hand (for I have promised to tell all) the Spaniards still entertain a respect for the most obscure ecclesiastics; which must appear contemptible in the eyes of the most sincere Christian in any other country.

In almost every house in Spain you meet either priests or monks; and they are regarded as a shield against the anger of God and even of men. When I passed through Valencia in 1799, at the time when our nation was an object of animosity, some French ladies of my acquaintance owed their preservation entirely to the intercession of some priests who came to their assistance.

When they are met in the streets, the people form a line, and give them the wall: and every body, of whatever rank, on approaching them, respectfully kisses either their hands or the sleeve of their venerable robe; and this act of Christian humility is received with sufficient arrogance. I shall range the following particulars not amongst the acts of superstition, but amongst the testimonies of devotion, which will be thought singular by others than *free-thinkers*.

In Spain, if a gentleman in his carriage meets a priest on foot, carrying the host, he gets out and offers him his place. This he does not fail to

accept: and the gentleman, let the weather be as it will, however he may be dressed, whether for court or for a ball, or his business ever so pressing, walks slowly by the side of the coach, accompanying the priest to the house of the sick person. There he waits till the functions of the priest are finished; and then escorts him again, still *on foot*, to the church from whence he came. Not till then does he resume his station. Sometimes the priest, of himself, when he sees a carriage stop at a door, takes it without ceremony; and when the owner appears he is shown the direction in which it went, and he may either wait its return or follow it, as he pleases. The pious orthodox are pleased with these trifling inconveniences; and even those who, for some cause or other, are not of their opinion, wisely keep from murmuring.

When the holy sacrament is carried any where, a little bell announces its approach. Immediately all business, all entertainment, all pleasure, is suspended; and every one continues on his knees till it is past. Even Protestants, who look upon this homage as a species of idolatry, have much ado to dispense with it. So far there is nothing more than what is conformable to the faith and doctrine of the catholic religion; but when the ludicrous appears, it is, as I have seen more than once at Madrid, when the Host passes a play house. As soon as the little bell is heard, the play is instantly stopped. Spectators and

actors, whatever their parts, Moors, Jews, and even Devils*, all without exception turn towards the door that leads to the street, and, kneeling, remain in that position as long as the bell can be heard; and it requires not a little self-command to check an inclination for laughter.

Another custom which must appear singular to an observer, even if he is himself a catholic, is to see on certain days notice fixed on the churches to this effect: *Oy se saca animas*: "Today souls are released from purgatory." On the eve and the day of All-Souls, this delivery is universally announced with the most doleful pomp. The churches are hung with black. The tombs are opened. A coffin, covered with black, and surrounded with wax lights, is placed in the nave of the church; and in one corner, figures in wood representing the souls of the deceased are half way plunged into the flames. To succeed in drawing from purgatory those for whom they interest themselves, they pray a long time with great fervour; and passing afterward rapidly from these charitable funeral employments to every worldly recrea-

* I do not exaggerate: One day during the performance of the play called *The devil turned preacher*, a very whimsical piece, where the devil is introduced into a convent in the dress of a monk, the Sacrament passed just at the time the pretended monk was on the stage, and he was obliged to kneel as well as the others; which of course stopped the performance for some minutes.

tion, the day is finished by a jovial banquet, the principal dish of which is called *trépassés*, a kind of cake made of flour, butter, and aniseed.

In almost every catholic country these customs prevail, and tend to cast a ridicule upon devotion : but in none, except perhaps in Italy, are they so frequent and universal as in Spain.

Without being charged with impiety, or even philosophy, (which with certain people are synonymous,) I believe a man may avow that the custom observed at the door of the church of St. Anthony, on the day of his festival, of driving horses and mules in great solemnity to partake of a small quantity of oats, which a priest has sanctified by his benediction, and which is to preserve these beasts from sickness all the year, is not sound religion.

Preserving all due respect for the catholic religion, one cannot but be surprised at the strange inconsistency of those who profess it, at the little conformity there is in their lives and actions with their religious ceremonies. This contradiction is extremely general in Spain, and few classes of people are exempt from it. I shall not speak of the coachmen, who when they mount their box cross themselves, and mutter a few prayers, which are instantly followed by those energetic phrases with which they animate the ardour of their horses. But I will mention their masters, who, for their part, repeat an anthem almost always to

the Virgin, even when they are going to pay very profane visits. Shall I add what I have heard from some wags, whose veracity however I will by no means answer for,—that if they meet a rival in a cowl, on the staircase, they ask of him absolution beforehand for the same kind of sin which he himself, to his great regret, is going to commit.

The monkish habit is so respected that a preservative virtue is attributed to it, even beyond this life, whatever irregularities may have been committed under it. Nothing is more common than to see the dead buried in a friar's dress, and conducted in this manner with their face uncovered, which is almost the general custom in Spain. The Franciscan habit is the object of a marked predilection in the devotion of the deceased. The convents of this order have a special warehouse appropriated to this posthumous wardrobe. There is such a sale of these habits, that a stranger, who was only a few months at Madrid, without being informed of this singular custom, and seeing nothing but Franciscans interred, expressed to me his surprise at the prodigious number of them in that city, and asked me seriously, if their community, whatever their number, were not entirely carried off by this violent epidemic.

In the same manner that the monkish habit accompanies some to the grave, it rises with others from the cradle. It is not uncommon to see gamboling in the streets, little monks of the age

of four or five years. Sometimes the parents, whose whimsical vow they thus expiate, take the liberty of exercising their paternal severity on this holy robe: but that is perhaps the only outrage the habit receives in Spain; and these innocent creatures are the only monks who submit to the austerities of penance.

Besides this a certificate of confession is required from every faithful catholic, native as well as stranger, which must prove that he has observed the precepts of the church during Lent*; a very idle measure, because it is so very easy to procure them without accomplishing the formalities they require; because they are sold in the market like all other articles; because the *filles de joie* (who have numerous correspondents) have always to sell again to the bearer, those they have obtained *gratis*, it is easily guessed how.

One of the most familiar gestures of the Spaniards is the sign of the cross. It is even their

* The anonymous author of *A new journey through Spain*, published in 1805, denies that such a custom exists. M. Fischer, who wrote on Spain in 1802, asserts that it is still in full practice. To make these two authors, who appear to have seen with their own eyes, agree, it should be taken for granted that the obligation of exhibiting the certificates of confession exists still, but that for some years past it is less severely insisted on, because wisdom has profited from the lessons of experience.

manner of expressing their surprise whenever they hear any thing extraordinary, pronouncing at the same time the name of *Jesus*. At each flash of lightning they repeat this sign; and even cross their mouth with their thumb when they gape: every step they take, it may be said, is marked with a grimace of devotion.

When you enter a house, unless you wish to be considered as impious, or, what is still worse, a heretic, you must begin with these words, *Ave Maria purissima*; to which you will certainly receive this answer, *in peccado concebida*. There is still fixed every year at the church doors, the *index*, or the list of those books, especially foreign, of which the Holy Office has thought proper to interdict the reading on pain of excommunication. But many of them certainly have not sufficient merit to deserve this proscription. What respect can we have for the thunder of the church, when it is hurled only by caprice or ignorance? Can the impious, or, if you please, the philosophers, wish for any other means to render it contemptible?

Finally, that tribunal, secretly appreciated by a good number of wise men in the country, the Inquisition, is still honourably received by a great part of the nation. It has still its tremendous forms, its *familiers*, even in the most exalted classes, and sometimes its victims, &c. &c. &c.

Let us be just, at the hazard of wounding the pride of those who are too ticklish, and desire nothing but praise without restriction, and declare without calumny that Spain is still the birth-place of mummery, and the land of fanaticism and superstition.

CHAPTER XI.

Continuation of the portrait of the Spaniards. Their courage. Remains of barbarism. Patience. Sobriety. Portrait of the Women. Dissoluteness of their manners, and its causes.

WE have seen the influence of the character and education of the modern Spaniards on their religion. Let us now observe how it acts upon their courage.

The causes which formerly kept it in a state of activity have disappeared. It is a long time since there were any Moors in their neighbourhood, who were the constant food of their courage; the motives of their hatred, their jealousy, and their fanaticism increased its ardour. If it does not appear in the same degree of fermentation as it was then, if it appears to sleep, it may rouse; and indeed it does awake at the least signal. The fits of fury which were called *holy*, are become infinitely more rare. The time when it was fired by the mere name of Infidel; the age of the *Pizarros* and the *Almagros* is gone by with the Spaniards. Religious intolerance, if not entirely corrected among them, has borne for some time

at least more the stamp of ridicule than the appearance of atrocity ; and in their wars with the Mussulmen they fight the enemies of their country rather than the enemies of their religion.

They begin even to feel that religion may suffer a government to treat as useful neighbours those that were formerly looked upon as irreconcilable enemies. In Spain, as else where, reason, the progress of mind, and philosophy well understood, though slow, have sensibly softened their manners. The remains of ancient barbarism disappear one after another.

Formerly assassinations were more common in Spain than at present. Every man of any consequence had assassins in his pay. They were let out to hire in the kingdom of Valencia, in the same manner as it is pretended that we not long ago hired witnesses in some of our provinces. This disgraceful custom was chiefly owing to the kind of arms that were worn. It was a three-edged poniard, which, hidden under the cloak, was drawn on the first moment of an affront ; its stab was more dangerous than that of the sword, which cannot be used privately, and the management of which requires some dexterity, and is even more dangerous than the common poniard called *rejon*. The use of these weapons of perfidy is not yet quite abolished, and justifies one of the accusations with which the character of the Spaniards continues to be blackened.

It is very difficult to correct the morals or even the manners of a people by violent and sudden means. The minister Squilaci made, it is said, forty years ago, under the eyes of Charles III, the difficult experiment. The long cloaks and the flapped hats (*sombreros chambergos*), a costume in which it was difficult to recognise your best friend, favoured all sorts of disorders, particularly those which endangered the safety of the citizen. To proscribe them, he had recourse to coercive laws, and even to acts. His satellites were stationed in the cross-ways, and, being provided with scissars, curtailed the cloaks of all those who exceeded the prescribed length. He, being a stranger, and the minister of a sovereign who had passed a great part of his life out of Spain, expected to find the Castellians as manageable as Peter the Great had found the Russians. But what happened? The people resisted his proceedings. The king began to be afraid; and the minister was put to death. The costume, so rudely attacked, out-lived him some time:—but more slow and lenient measures (the example of the court and those belonging to it, and the activity of a vigilant police,) have greatly diminished these inconveniences. The flapped hats, which encouraged both insult and crimes, by ensuring their impunity, have entirely disappeared in the capital; and the cloak, a dress very convenient for those who know how to use it, no longer encourages laziness.

With respect to the use of the fatal poniard, it exists still in some parts of Spain, but only amongst the inferior classes of the people. There are still some bullies who make use of it to frighten the timorous; and some violent men, to whom it is a ready instrument of vengeance. The ecclesiastics have employed the arguments of charity and peace to make their congregations discard them. The last archbishop of Granada, in particular, was very successful by means of his preaching. But these measures have not been so efficacious every where. The kingdom of Valencia, the country most favoured by Heaven, where it should seem that beauty of climate and the goodness of nature would excite none but the softer passions, is sullied by frequent murders. One of the prerogatives of the crown is, that the king can every year pardon one criminal condemned to death, if there is the least thing in his favour. But it has been remarked that, in the list presented to the king by the assembly of Valencia, for the last seven years, there has not been a single criminal, condemned, whose case was at all pardonable; so much premeditated atrocity was observed in their crimes.

The poniard and the assassin are still pretty common in Andalusia: and it is there verified how powerful the influence of the climate is when not counter-balanced by moral remedies. During the summer a certain easterly wind (called *le*

vent de médine) occasions a kind of phrensy, which renders these excesses much more frequent than at any other time of the year.

But let the natural face of Spain be changed; let canals and roads be made through those of her cantons which are at present inaccessible; let more easy communications render the inspection of the agents of government more quick and more certain; let the progress of agriculture, of industry and trade give occupation to mischievous idleness;—in short, let the plan of the present government continue to be executed, and the influence of climate will give way in this respect, as well as in others, to these powerful causes.

The revolutions which have happened in their manners within the last sixty years, justify this prognostication. It was only during the last century that two customs, which reason and humanity had a long time proscribed, began to become less common: I mean the *rondalla* and the *pedreades*.

The *rondalla* is a species of defiance shown to one another by two troops of itinerant musicians. Without any other motive than to prove their courage, they present one another with fire-arms and swords; each side begins with firing, and they then have recourse to their swords. Will it be believed that this custom still exists in Navarre and in Arragon; and that a similar defiance took place in the month of August 1792, between two parishes near the town of Saragossa?

The custom of the *pedreades* has only lately disappeared. This was also a kind of combat between two troops armed with slings, who attacked and overwhelmed one another with stones.

Such manners seem equally to accuse those that keep them alive and the government that tolerates them. There are, however, some reasonable people who lament similar institutions, but who pretend that, if they bear the marks of a little barbarism, they also put their courage to the proof and nourish it. The lovers of paradox even go so far as to regret the reformation which the work of Cervantes has produced in the Spanish manners, by throwing an indelible ridicule on those silly, but brave and generous, adventurers, who face every danger, and who offer gratuitously their assistance to the weak, the unfortunate, and the fair. In vain was it objected to them, that the institution of knight-errantry is at least useless in a country where charity and the police watch over the safety of these three classes of society. They reply; "Yes, if you are without trouble-
" some neighbours, or if you are secluded from
" the world, you may, in polishing and refining
" the manners, give yourself up with safety to all
" the emotions of humanity, to the tranquil enjoy-
" ment of the arts and of pleasures; but if you
" are destined to brave the fury of the elements
" and of death in battle, Is not an education
" which early familiarises you with danger and

“ with sufferings, an inestimable treasure? Would
“ a nation long remain free from the yoke of
“ despotism, and independent of her neighbours,
“ if its members were to renounce every military
“ exercise for the scenery of the opera; or ex-
“ change feats of pugilism for the dance? He
“ would perhaps see her population and her opu-
“ lence extend infinitely into the bosom of the arts
“ of peace. She might levy and maintain as
“ innumerable and brilliant armies as Xerxes and
“ Darius. But would she have her Leonidas and
“ her Miltiades?”

However this may be, we can further give as a proof of the modern reformation upon the morals of the Spaniards, the rarity of duelling. Formerly, the nicest point of honour carried to excess occasioned amongst them very frequent duels, of which their plays and their romances bear testimony. At present, their courage, though not so soon inflamed, may still serve in time of war for the defence of their country, without interrupting its tranquillity in time of peace;—and during the space of nearly ten years residence in Spain, I have not heard of one fatal duel having taken place; and very rarely indeed of any rencontres.

On the other hand, the Spaniards have preserved even to this day many of their ancient virtues; and particularly patience and sobriety. The one makes them hardy in their enterprises and indefatigable in their occupations; the other

shields them from the excesses so very common among the other nations of Europe. Without wishing to detract from the first of these virtues, I would say that they are indebted for it to their natural constitution and to the quality of their food. Their robust and nervous bodies, dried and hardened by a hot climate, can better support the privation and superabundance of food. The flesh of animals, at least in the middle provinces of Spain, contains more nourishment than elsewhere. Their vegetables, being less spongy than in other countries, where water contributes more to their growth than the sun, also contain more nourishment. The foreigners who settle in Madrid very soon perceive this; and if they were fully to satisfy the appetite which they bring with them, they would soon be convinced, (by a very painful disease, called *entripado*, a kind of colic which the physicians of this country alone can cure,) that they have changed both food and climate.

With respect to intoxicating liquors;—The sobriety of the Spaniards is also owing in a great measure to Nature, which, always making use of means proportioned to the end required, has given them a constitution analogous to the strength of their wine, which their land produces; whilst foreigners do not with impunity gratify their taste to excess. I have known repeated and striking examples of it. I have seen seven or eight domestics which our ambassador count Montinc-

rin had brought with him, who drank the wine of La Mancha as freely as they would the light wines of France, miserably perish in less than six years. They were almost constantly in a state of intoxication, and their decay was visible to the most inattentive observer. The Spaniards, who follow the same custom, do not experience the same inconvenience. It is extremely rare to see one overcome with wine*; and if you meet a drunken soldier in the street, you may lay ten to one that he is a foreigner, and twenty to one that he is a Swiss.

Let us remark on this occasion, that sobriety is a quality belonging to the inhabitants of southern countries, and intemperance to those of the northern ones. Let us also remark, that those liquors which they drink to excess are not the productions of their own country:—as if Nature, who has given them sufficient food and drink, and furnished them with organs adapted to the means of procuring it, was determined to punish those who bring such articles from another country,

* I still maintain this assertion; whatever a German writer, who has travelled in Spain more recently than I, and who pretends to have met with many drunkards, may say. A Spaniard, speaking to me lately on this subject, said; This accusation comes from a German, who wishes to exaggerate this failing among the Spaniards, in order to excuse his own countrymen. I do not adopt this recrimination, but I persist in my statement.

that were intended for the use of that particular people. This is perhaps sometimes prevented by certain circumstances, but an attentive observer will easily find examples to convince him of its truth.

The Spaniards will pardon me for ascribing to their climate the virtue of sobriety (which is so un-animously granted to them). Is it not comparing them to other nations, and even to every individual of the human species, who owe their qualities, equally to their education, their station, their habits, to example, and to a thousand other causes which do not depend upon themselves? And is it not also a great merit that they have profited by these benign influences?

The Spaniards may at least boast of having triumphed over that influence which carried them to a certain excess, and which might have served for their excuse. I have particularly in view, a depraved taste, repugnant to nature, injurious to the fair sex, and too common among the inhabitants of southern countries. This base passion is entirely unknown in Spain. Jealousy, another outrage against that sex which is the object of our homage, seems also to depend on the influence of a climate which communicates its ardour both to the senses and the imagination. This odious passion, once so offensive in its suspicions, so injurious and cruel in its precautions, and implacable in its resentment, is now much

weakened among the modern Spaniards. If in Spain the lovers are tormented with suspicion, and sometimes too severe in their vengeance, there is no country in Europe that can boast of so few jealous husbands. The women, who were formerly deprived of all intercourse, who could hardly be seen through the grates of their windows, (which certainly owe their name to the vile sentiment of him who invented them)—these women now enjoy perfect liberty. Their veils (*mantillas*), the only remains of their ancient slavery, now serve no other purpose than to defend them against the sun, and to render them more attractive. A tissue at first invented by jealousy now belies its intention. Coquetry has made it one of its most seducing articles of dress; and, in favouring half-concealment, has indirectly encouraged the stolen glances of love. Those lovers, who breathed the tale of their disconsolate sufferings under the balcony of their invisible mistresses, and had no other witness or interpreter than their guitar, are now only to be found in plays and romances. Conquests are become less cruel and less dilatory; the husbands are become more tractable, the women more accessible.

Woman!—Who is there that does not feel a lively interest in this word? Who is not disposed to pardon their caprices; to submit to their raillery, and to indulge them in their foibles? Do not all of you, particularly ye foreigners, who have

sighed at the feet of a Spanish lady—When thinking of your chain, do you not approve of all these sentiments? Shall I endeavour to draw a feeble sketch of the object of your adoration, in order to retrace your pleasures? Or, if you have been separated from them by absence, by time, or by inconstancy, which sometimes renders them still dearer in your estimation;—shall I endeavour to mix a little sweetness with the bitterness of your regrets?

Women in every country have some peculiar attractions which characterize them. In England, you are charmed by the elegance of their shape and the modesty of their behaviour; in Germany, by their rosy lips and the sweetness of their smiles; in France, by that amiable vivacity which animates all their features. The sensation which you experience at the approach of a handsome Spanish lady has something so bewitching that it baffles description. Her coquetry is more open and less restrained than that of other women. She cares little about pleasing the world in general. She esteems its approbation much more than she courts it; and is perfectly contented with one, if it be the object of her choice. If she neglects nothing which is likely to carry her point, at least she disdains affectation, and owes very little to the assistance of her toilet. The complexion of a Spanish woman never borrows any assistance from art. Art never furnishes her with a colour which

Nature has denied to her by placing her under the influence of a burning sun. But with how many charms is she not endowed, as a compensation for her paleness ! Where can you find such fine shapes as theirs ; such graceful movements, such delicacy of features, and such lightness of carriage ? Grave, and sometimes at first sight even a little melancholy, when she casts upon you her large black eyes full of expression, and when she accompanies them with a tender smile, insensibility itself must fall at her feet. But if the coldness of her behaviour does not hinder you from paying your addresses to her, she is as decided and mortifying in her disdain as she is seducing when she permits you to hope. In this last case she does not suffer you to be long in suspense, but perseverance must be followed by happiness ; and this line from a well known poem,

Nourri par l'espérance, il meurt par les plaisirs.

cannot be applied to a Spanish lady.

Perseverance is, without doubt, pleasure with a Spanish woman ; but is at the same time a rigorous and slavish duty. Love, even when crowned with success, requires that you belong to her alone. The man who has enlisted under her banners, must sacrifice to her all his affections, all his desires, and all his time. He is condemned, not to languor, but to idleness. Those happy mortals whom the Spanish women deign to subdue, and

are named *cortejos*, are less disinterested, but are not less assiduous, than the Italian *cicisbeos*. They must be ready to prove their devotion every hour of the day; to accompany their beloved to the promenade, to the theatre, and even to the confessional. More than one tempest disturbs the serenity of such an union; the slightest incident produces alarm; and a transient wavering is punished like infidelity. It may be said, that in Spain jealousy has fled from Hymen to take refuge in the bosom of Love; and that it belongs more particularly to that sex which seems made rather to inspire than to experience it.

To be brief. The bonds of a handsome Spanish woman are less pleasant to support than difficult to avoid. Their caprices, the natural offspring of a lively imagination, are sometimes obstinate and unruly. But it is not easy to reconcile with these transient humours the constancy of most of the Spanish women in their attachments. The infatuation which they occasion and which they experience, so different from all extreme situations that do not last long, is often prolonged much beyond the ordinary time; and I have seen in this land of ardent passions more than one lover die of old age. May not this apparent contradiction be accounted for from their religious scruples, ill understood as they almost always are? The conscience of a Spanish woman, though complaisant enough to permit one only choice at which her

duty murmurs, would it not be frightened with a succession of infidelities? Does she find for the first an excuse in her frailty, and in the irresistible vow of her heart, that draws her to the only object which Nature designed for her? Or does she find in succeeding attachments the sin appear again in all its ugliness? This is another ænigma to explain in the Spanish women. They reconcile their inconsistency in morals with the minute observance of religious duties. In many countries these excesses succeed one another alternately. In Spain they are inseparable, as well among the men as the women. In this association of the most incoherent things, their object seems to be not to prevent scandal or to change their conduct, but to make a kind of compensation for their faults.

I have known many men in Spain who frequented the churches with an assiduity which even true Christians might regard as a rigorous obligation; who kept strictly the laws of the church concerning fasts; who rendered to their priests the most humble homage;—and who, notwithstanding, led dissolute lives.

I have known many women, abandoned to an attachment which their duty disproves, surrounded with relics and scapularies, bind themselves by the most insignificant vows, and fulfill them with scrupulosity.

I believe that hypocrites, the true *Tartuffes*, are rare in Spain; but this fantastic association of im

morality with superstitious practices is more common in Spain than elsewhere. Must we attribute this to the want of civilisation, or to the criminal complaisance of the directors of conscience, who are lavish of the indulgences which they themselves stand in need of? Or does the climate, which must also serve as an excuse for some vices, command too imperiously certain weaknesses of conscience, scrupulous enough in other respects, to be frightened from them?

Endeavouring to explain the dissoluteness of morals, is to own their existence. Yes, in this respect depravity knows no bounds. It infects all classes of society, and even those whom one would expect at least to have the appearance of shame, the impetuosity of desires leads even to effrontery; and it is not rare to receive advances from that sex destined by Nature not to provoke but to await them. Too often you have little reason to be satisfied with this good fortune. How often does one revolt at those easily obtained pleasures, and even those granted with some trouble! How many victims does not incontinence produce! She punishes not only the guilty, but too often the innocent suffer from the dreadful consequences. That horrible gift which the New World has given to the Old, is become in Spain the patrimony of whole families, and the degeneration of a great number of illustrious races is strikingly visible.

This plague, which seems to have become very common here, is of most dangerous consequence to those who have been born in another climate; and though a thousand charms and attractions incite, a prudent foreigner will hesitate before he bends his neck to this dreadful yoke.

This depravity is, however, not so general as the libertine would insinuate. There are, indeed, in Madrid many exemplary families, faithful spouses, and women that might be quoted as models of reserve and decorum. The younger females, though less reserved in their behaviour, grant much less than their exterior promises, and it is very seldom that they anticipate marriage. If opportunities of buying those shameful and easy pleasures are frequent for those who seek after them, prostitution is by no means so public and barefaced as in other countries. The police, which proscribes this scandalous intercourse with severity, obliges it to hide itself, and it is even often followed to its secret recesses. And, what is very singular in a country where dissolut manners are so common, and where there are so many rich loungers, you will in vain look for one of those courtezans that in other countries parade about with the wages of their shame. Amongst the great personages, although they enjoy the utmost gratification that opulence can procure them, there is still a kind of decency presiding over their

irregularities; and secrecy accompanies the most disgraceful amours.

The austerity of all the kings of the new dynasty can alone account for this modern singularity. At their court it was necessary to conceal those weaknesses which were not excused by their example; to be suspected would have been great imprudence, and to make them public the height of temerity. Charles III was on this head even almost tyrannical. I have seen one of the most eminent grandees of his court impeach before this prince his own son, who had suffered himself to be seduced by a pretty actress; and obtained from him that the lover should be shut up in a castle, and the mistress in a house of correction: but all the young lords at the court of Spain have not such rigorous fathers; nor do all the actresses atone in the same manner for the passions they inspire.

I must still add, for the honour of the fair sex in Spain, that the women banish from their society all those familiarities which are esteemed innocent in countries where the senses are less apt to be inflamed; and this distrust of themselves is at least a homage which their weaknesses offer up at the altar of modesty:—for instance, they will not suffer in public the most innocent salute, and those liberties which some of our comedians exhibit without any scruple to the eyes of the spec-

tators are rigorously banished from the Spanish stage*.

But provided you do not approach them too near, they suffer and sometimes even provoke those enticements which decency startles at. Double entendres, paintings by the most indelicate pencil, even obscenities, and every loose expression, they easily pardon. I have heard them hold such discourse as few men, though not very scrupulous, would make use of at their most dissolute banquets, and have heard them sing some

* I observed in one of the theatres of the metropolis, some years ago, a singular instance, which, though trivial in itself, I can hardly confine to a note, but which displays an instance of excessive delicacy, joined to morals that are often vulgar and sometimes disgusting. There is not a traveller who, in crossing Spain, particularly Castille, has not observed groups of the lower class of people, who, sitting in the sun, awaken from their laziness in order to clear themselves of their vermin. Among lovers of this class it is a piece of gallantry which both enjoy. Taking this for granted, our little opera of the *Tonnelier* having been translated into Spanish, the scrupulous translator would not venture to hazard the stolen kiss which brings about the denouement. But what does he substitute in its stead? In the interesting scene where the master cooper is busy in the inside of the tub, the journeyman enters slyly, and sits down between the legs of the ingenious Fanchette; who with her delicate fingers clears his head of the vermin. It is in this situation of expressive familiarity, whilst the two lovers are giving one another this unequivocal pledge of their love, that they are surprised by the old man.

of the most indecent songs imaginable; I have been more than once shocked at the abominable stories of some *women of the town*. I have heard them relate without blushing, and without any reserve, the most secret details of their amorous scenes; and they were astonished that their auditors should discover any embarrassment.

These traits only, which I would not have the injustice to place to the account of all the Spanish fair sex, are not, however, sufficient to prove the depravity of morals in Spain. The women who suffer others and who themselves hold these free discourses, are neither for that more seductive nor more easy to seduce. It has been besides observed, that a nation not yet perfectly civilized, may very well, without being corrupted, have in their language a species of naïveté which renders their expressions less chaste; and I am tempted to believe that these manners, which shock decency so much in other people, would disappear with a more refined civilization, and by more care in education. But what can be expected when the young people are left entirely to the management of servants, even in families of distinction? Can they for any time preserve in their thoughts and in their discourse that virgin purity, the principal charm of their sex, when, from the tenderest age, they familiarise themselves with the most vulgar expressions; and when they see the most indecent

wit applauded at the theatre ; particularly when love, which occupies their mothers' whole time, scarcely leaves a minute to watch them ; when, finally, ignorance and idleness leave to plays and romances the care of forming their heart and improving their mind ? Ye who are to become mothers of families, how ill do you understand, or rather how ill do others understand, your interest ! Some taste for employment, some care bestowed on the development of those dispositions Heaven hath showered in plenty upon you, would make you the most happy as well as the most bewitching creatures. You are neglected ; you are left to yourselves and those who corrupt you. Listlessness and its concomitants surround you. You will, to your misfortune and our despair, disappoint the intention of Nature,

The character and manners of a people would be imperfectly known if they were only seen in their serious occupations and under the empire of passion. They show themselves better in their festivals, their games, and their taste. We shall endeavour to delineate the Spaniards under these different heads,

CHAPTER XII.

Manners and customs of the Spaniards. Their dances. Their games. Their pleasures. Their meals. Their taste.

NOTHING forms a stronger contrast to the gravity of the Spaniards than their favourite dance the *fandango*, a truly national dance, full of expression, at which foreigners that are a little scrupulous are at first shocked, but soon become enchanted with it.

As soon as the *fandango* is struck up by the musicians at a ball, all faces begin to be animated, and the spectators, if even their age condemns them to a state of immobility, have great difficulty to keep from falling in. A very ingenious apologue has been formed, to give an idea of its irresistible fascination.

It is related that the court of Rome, scandalized that a country so renowned for the purity of its faith had not long ago proscribed such a profane dance, resolved to pronounce the solemn condemnation of it. A consistory was formed; the cause of the *fandango* was tried according to all the rules of law. Sentence was going to be pronounced, when one of the judges very judiciously



observed, that a criminal ought not to be condemned without being seen and heard. The observation was approved; and a Spanish couple was introduced, who to the sound of instruments displayed all the graces of the *fandango*. The severity of the judges was not proof against this trial; the austerity in their faces soon began to disappear; they got up, their knees and arms recovered their juvenile suppleness; the hall of the consistory is transformed into a dancing-room, and the *fandango* is acquitted.

After such a triumph, it may well be imagined that any claim advanced by decency will be laughed at. The reign of *fandango* is now established. He changes his character, however, according to the place where he is introduced. The audience sometimes ask for him on the stage, and he closes almost every private ball. At these times he confines himself to a slight expression of his meaning; but under other circumstances, where a small number of spectators in good humour are inclined to dispense with scruples, his meaning is pronounced in such a manner, that voluptuousness seizes the very soul; his sting penetrates the heart of the most modest youth, and reanimates the blunted senses of old age. The *fandango* is danced only by two people, who never touch one another, not even with their hands; but to see them provoke one another, by turns retreating to a distance, and advancing closely again; to see