"specie? What signifies where it comes from? "This combined produce of our mines and our "industry will not be the less useful to Spain "in the hands of her great moneyed men, who "in their turn will embellish our towns and our "villas, who will furnish funds for public esta- "blishments, where the state in critical moments "may be accommodated with loans, and receive "assistance on terms less burdensome than in "former times. We have no objection to allow "that a time may come when our prosperity, ar- "rived at its acme, may occasion our downfall: "this will be when our workmen are become so "industrious and perfect that foreign productions "will become entirely useless. If at the same "time that the produce of our mines tends conti- "nually to increase our specie, all outlets are "stopped up, this situation, which may be con- "sidered as chimerical, would produce an inevitable "inconvenience. The excessively high price of "labour in Spain would call for the productions "of foreign manufactories, in spite of every pro- "hibition. The specie would go out by the chan- "nels which these would open; the home ma- "nufactures would languish for want of a sale; "the useless hands would henceforth disappear "when they could be no longer employed, and "Spain would again be reduced to a want of popu- "lation, to inertia, and to poverty. But we are "still very far from such circumstances as would

" realise this sad foreboding; and whilst a more " imminent danger condemns our manufacturers " and our miners to inaction, we think we may " continue to draw from this double source the " means of our future prosperity."

Whatever may be thought of this reasoning, it serves for the basis of the system which Spain has adopted for many years. She is persuaded that from an unremitted activity in her manufactures, accompanied by an abundant production of her mines, her greatest splendour must result.

Experience hitherto seems to confirm the soundness of this plan; But is it well adapted to the situation, the morals, and the political interest of Spain? Are there no other means of improving at the same time the mother country and the colonies? Several propositions have been made at different times that had this object in view. I shall not speak of that for which neither Spain, nor any other European power is, as yet, sufficiently enlightened. I will not say that, following the dictates of sound philosophy, the court of Madrid should declare her colonies independent, and profit from the enthusiasm which this act of generosity could not fail to excite, in establishing with them bonds of friendship and commerce much more solid than those stipulated in treaties dictated by craft or sordid interest. No; such a grievous sacrifice was not recommended in any of the plans proposed to her at different times.

About eighteen years ago a project was presented to the court of Madrid, which would entirely have changed the face of the commercial world in favour of Spain. It was, not precisely to cut through the isthmus of Panama, which had been hinted at more than once before, but to open a communication between the gulf of Mexico and the South Sea, and thus to resolve at once the great problem on the surest means of facilitating the commercial intercourse of Europe with the most industrious and fertile parts of Asia.

Besides the old project, which was to join the two seas by the river Chagre, that is navigable as far as Cruces, five leagues from Panama, there was a second, which was to effect this junction by the rivers Chamaluzon and St. Michael in the gulf of Honduras. Both the one and the other had been considered, in the reign of Philip II. as almost impracticable. That proposed about the end of the reign of Charles III seemed to have foreseen every objection, and comprised in itself every advantage. It consisted in making use of *Rio San Juan*, which has its source in lake Nicaragua, and empties itself into the gulf of Mexico: this lake is separated from the South Sea by an isthmus of only twelve thousand toises. Its shores abound with productions of all sorts, and with timber proper for building. Like other flowing rivers, its waters either rise above the two seas,

or are on a level with them. There was therefore no inundation, no violent irruption to fear.

The adoption of this plan would not only have made lake Nicaragua the centre of the most brilliant commerce in the universe, but also that of the land and naval forces of Spain for the West Indies, and the staple of all the rich productions of both Americas.

This fine perspective did not dazzle the Spanish government. The authors of the project were Frenchmen, and Spain began to be tired of seeing foreigners, particularly Frenchmen, undertaking all the grand enterprises. In this she was less struck with the advantages than the inconveniences. She had stationed during several years some prying importunates exactly in the centre of her American possessions, and one of the most rich and populous tracts. What opportunities would not these troublesome guests have to implant along all this coast, and from thence even to the extent of the Red Sea, as far as the Streights of Magellan, the seeds of an insurrection which she had already too much encouraged, in espousing the cause of the free North Americans! How easy to stock with contraband goods all those rich colonists, who, being refined, were consequently eager after the productions of Europe! Besides, if the execution of this project must really effectuate the splendour and power of Spain in the New World, Could she flatter herself that the other powers of Europe

would have peaceably suffered it to be brought to a conclusion? And in the last result, would she not find that she had laboured more for these dangerous rivals than for herself? She could not keep to herself exclusively the benefit of this communication. She had no more the bulls of Alexander VI to oppose to the temptations of navigators, or the avarice of merchants. The passage must therefore have been open to all powers; but this would be to admit them to traverse at all times the centre of her possessions, and to furnish them with an opportunity of not only touching at, but of remaining there under various pretences. What advantages could compensate the inconvenience of harbouring such spies! The nations which Nature has condemned to it, such as the Turks in the Straits of the Dardanelles, in the Bosphorus of Thrace, are obliged to resign themselves to it; but it would be the height of folly for a nation to create for itself this source of quarrels and of dangers.

These no doubt were the reasons which prevented the court of Madrid from favouring the project I have just represented. It will certainly be executed one day or other; but by a neighbouring people, by a new race, who in the first effervescence of liberty and commercial enterprise, will find means to cut through the isthmuses which oppose a few hillocks to their navigation, as they have already forced the mouth of a great river to

open a route to the ocean. It is you, perhaps, enterprising and industrious inhabitants of Kentucky, who will be the first to drink tea, to dress your wives with the fine stuffs you have fetched from India, without making the tour of America, or doubling the Cape of Good Hope. But the Spaniards, who are already spoiled for great enterprises, whose caution is timidity, and whose distrust and suspicion border on dotage, will hardly embrace so bold an idea,—especially with a council for the Indies who are the religious and obstinate defenders of old maxims, and during the despotic influence of a suspicious and jealous minister. It is a great deal for Spain to have shaken off the yoke of several other prejudices which kept her and her colonies in a state of destructive languor; to have established manufactories; to have begun to make roads and canals; to have given a kind of freedom to her trade with the Spanish Indies, and almost complete freedom to two of her colonies: in a word, in the course of about thirty years to have produced a considerable increase in the industry, the riches, and the activity of her inhabitants. This alone is sufficient to refute by facts a part of the serious charges which the rest of Europe bring against the Spaniards, the justness of which will be the object of the following chapter.

CHAPTER X.

Character of the people in general. Some traits peculiar to the Spaniards. Pride. Gravity. Sloth. Idleness. Superstition.

IT is difficult to delineate national character. Almost always such pictures are portraits, which, under a brilliant pencil, may possess every merit but that of likeness. From such descriptions it is impossible to form a right idea of any modern people. Since Europe has been civilized from one end to the other, it would be easier to class its inhabitants by professions than by nations. Thus, all Frenchmen, all Englishmen, and all Spaniards would not resemble one another; but almost all those amongst these three people who have had nearly the same education, or have led the same kind of life, would. All their lawyers, for instance, would resemble one another by their attachment to forms and a taste for chicane; all their literati, by their pedantry; all their traders, by their avidity; all their sailors, by their coarseness; and all their courtiers, by their complaisance. That all the individuals of a nation should have the same natural and moral physiognomy, it would be requisite that they lived under the influence of the same climate,

followed the same occupations, and professed the same religion. It would be necessary, if they belonged to a polished nation, that they should live under a very stable form of government, and that the part which they bore in it gave to their ideas, to their sentiments, and even to the exterior of their body, an uniform and settled manner. It is the concurrence of all these points of union that can alone justify the application of the portrait of a single individual, taken at a venture, to a whole nation. A difference in any of these respects is sufficient to vary their physical and moral features *ad infinitum*. It would therefore be easy to give the character of the ancient Scythians, of a pastoral people, of the savages of Canada, and of all barbarians who have a simple religion, few laws, and few communications with other nations.

It is for this reason that the Greeks and Romans, in the brightest periods of their several republics, concentrating almost all their affections in a zeal for their country, in liberty and glory, inhabiting a limited tract, where the influence of the climate was nearly the same throughout, might be painted almost all with the same features. For the same reasons, in speaking of nations nearer to us, as well in time as in position, the English, the Swiss, and even the Dutch, would require more uniformity in colouring than any others:—the English, from that general inquie-

tude which fixes their eyes on a government whose every proceeding, notwithstanding the imperfection of their representation in parliament, is submitted to the examination of every individual; from their insular situation, which makes them all more or less fit for the dangers of navigation and speculations in maritime commerce; from that national arrogance, which their dominion of the seas, so feebly contested, in some degree justifies:—the Swiss, from their local situation, which till within a short time made them, out of the reach of harm, spectators of the convulsions of Europe:—the Dutch, who, even before they had established a nearer uniformity between the governments of their different provinces, had *all* their respective point of union in their attachment to liberty, in the nature of their soil, and in their situation on the shores of the sea, and of their own canals;—circumstances from which a kind of identity in their occupations, in their taste, and even in their passions, must result.

But who could flatter himself with being able to trace the character of the whole German, Italian, or French nations? What a difference in the climate, the productions, the employments, the laws, and the language of one province from those of another! Who would apply to a Suabian or to a Westphalian the portrait of a Saxon or

an Austrian; to a Neapolitan that of a Venetian; to a native of Languedoc that of a Fleming?

The Spaniards are similarly circumstanced to these three nations. There are between the inhabitants of their principal provinces differences so striking, from climate, manners, disposition, language, temper, and exterior forms, that the portrait of a Gallician would more nearly resemble that of a native of Auvergne than a Catalonian, and that of an Andalusian would be more like a Gascon than a Castillian. If the Spaniards ever had characteristic features applicable to all the inhabitants of their peninsula, it was at the time when the Arabians settled amongst them, and stamped them with a particular seal; and, notwithstanding the different causes which now separate them, communicated to them a portion of their manners, the turn of their noble, grand, sometimes gigantic, in a word, ORIENTAL ideas; their taste for the arts and sciences; and every thing of which there are still traces in the provinces where they resided the longest;—it was when the high opinion which the Spaniards entertained of their nation, (and which circumstances justified,) expressed itself in their whole frame, and made them all resemble the portrait drawn of them at this day, and which represents them grave, austere and generous, breathing nothing but war

and adventures. Finally, it was when in their general assemblies, called *cortes*, they all took a more or less active part in the government, when they directed or watched over all its operations, and when they exemplified more energetically than at present that patriotism which acts so powerfully on the opinions, the affections, and the manners.

But these three causes of uniformity in the national character have almost disappeared, and, in vanishing, have left the Spaniards to the more immediate influence of the climate, the laws, and the productions of their different provinces; so that to represent them as they now are, we must subdivide them into Castillians, Catalonians, Arragonese, Navarrese, Andalusians, Biscayans, and Asturians, and draw of each of these people a separate portrait; a task difficult and unpleasant, and which could not be accomplished without accompanying almost every rule with an exception, where it would be difficult to be correct without being minute, just without appearing severe, or an apologist without being considered as a flatterer.

This revolution, however, has not been so universal, but that some features remain by which the whole Spanish nation is still to be recognised. A part of their manners has survived the events which altered them. The empire of the climate has

been modified, but not destroyed. In many respects the provinces have the same form of government. The court of an absolute monarch is still the centre of all vows and affections. All the modern Spaniards profess the same religion. Their literature is still from the same models, and in the same taste. In these several respects they have preserved the features of their forefathers. Let us attempt to sketch them.

At the period when Spain acted such a grand part, when she discovered and conquered the New World; when, not satisfied with domineering over a great part of Europe, she agitated and convulsed the other, either by intrigues or by military enterprises; at this period, the Spaniards became intoxicated with that national pride which breathed in their exterior, their gestures, their discourse, and their writings. As it then existed, it gave them an air of grandeur, which was overlooked at least by those whom it did not inspire with respect. But by a concurrence of unfortunate circumstances, this splendour is eclipsed; yet the pretensions for which it formed an excuse have survived. The Spaniard of the sixteenth century has disappeared, but his mask remains. Hence that proud and grave exterior which distinguishes them still in our days, and which has often brought to my mind these two lines of one of our poets on original sin, notwithstanding the consequences

of which the noble destination of man is still recognisable.

C'est du haut de son trône un roi précipité,
Qui garde sur son front un trait de majesté *.

The modern Spaniard presents in his countenance the impression of his ancient character. Whether in speaking or in writing, his expressions have such exaggerated turns as border on rodomontade. He has a high idea of his nation, which he expresses without caution, and often without address. He does not show his vanity by those pleasingly exaggerated turns which provoke laughter more than they offend, and which characterize the inhabitants of one of our provinces. When he praises himself, it is gravely, and with all the pompousness of his language.

I am, however, much inclined to believe that the genius of his language may also account for this inflation of style. Not only has it adopted many words and expressions of the Arabians, but is as it were impregnated with the Oriental spirit, which this people has naturalised in Spain. This spirit is found in all their productions of imagination, in their religious compositions, in their plays, and in their romances. It is perhaps one of the principal causes of the slow progress

* A king hurled from the height of his throne, who still retains on his brow a trait of majesty.

of sound philosophy; because, carrying every thing beyond the truth, heaping images around the most simple ideas, caressing every thing that tends to the wonderful, it surrounds with illusion the sanctuary of truth, and renders it as it were inaccessible.

But this pride, which would be noble if more moderate; this gravity, which always deceives and sometimes repulses; are compensated by very estimable qualities; or rather, they are the source of them. Individual as well as national pride elevates the soul, and guards it against meanness; and such is the effect of Spanish pride. There are in Spain, as elsewhere, vices and crimes; but they wear in general this prominent feature of the Spanish character. It is to be perceived even in a dungeon, and under the tatters of misery. It even balances to a certain point the genius of a language essentially diffuse, where the ear seems to be pleased with a collection of sonorous words, and where an abundance of words is taken for an abundance of ideas. Pride is commonly very precise; she disdains to go into detail, and loves expressions ænigmatical from their conciseness, which leave something to think on, and sometimes to guess at. Hence it happens that these same Spaniards, who, when their imagination is ever so little heated, display all the richness of their language, are perfectly laconic when their mind is calm. I could quote a hundred examples, but

will only state two. I have business to transact with a Spaniard of an obscure class; I find him at home gravely caressing an infant. I ask him, "Are you the father of this child?" to which a Frenchman would have gaily answered, *Yes, Sir, or at least I ought to think so*; and would thus have said more than I wanted to know. The Castillian, without being deranged, without receiving my question with a smile, would coolly answer, *It was born in my house*; and then talk of something else.

Another example of laconicism:—A French traveller, on entering Castille, meets a shepherd with a flock of sheep. Curious to know all the circumstances which produce the valuable qualities in the wool, he tires the shepherd with questions; asks him whether his flock belongs to the province; what food he gives them; whether he is on a journey; whence he comes, and where he is going; at what time he begins his journey, and at what period he returns home, &c. The shepherd, after a cool hearing, answers; *Aqui nacen*; *aqui pacen*; *aqui mueren**, and continues his way.

This Spanish gravity, which is become proverbial, is, however, far from what is generally conceived. It is true, you seldom find amongst the

* Here they were born; here they feed; and here they will die.

Spaniards what we call affability. They will never go to meet you, but wait for you. This forbidding exterior, however, often envelops a good and kind heart, which you will find when you least expect it. Strangers to the empty grimaces of French politeness, the Spaniards are sparing of gesticulations. The smile of good-will is seldom the mask of duplicity, and their heart commonly expands with their countenance. How often has it happened to me to be for a long while repulsed by their exterior of a Spaniard; when, conquering my repugnance, I have found him complaisant and good, not with grimace but in reality; and obliging, not merely in profession, but in performance! The urbanity acquired by a refined education is perhaps wanting in a Spaniard, and which too often serves as a cloak for falsehood and disdain. But he supplies this defect by a blunt frankness, and that good nature which announces and inspires confidence. Their great men have no dignity, if we call *dignity* that feature which is always circumspect and distant, for fear of encouraging familiarity; and cares very little whether it is beloved, provided it be respected. They do not, in an ungracious manner, point out the distinction of ranks, nor do they disdain to form connexions with those classes of people whom they consider as their inferiors. We no more see amongst them such personages as the duke of Alva, don Louis de Haro, don Peñaranda, whose cha-

racters, so well known throughout Europe, have contributed no doubt to spread the idea that is still maintained of the imperious pride of the high Spanish nobility. At least the nation is not what she has been; and if some individuals still wear the stamp of it, it is in them not so much a mark of pride, as of coldness, timidity, and embarrassment.

The grandees, nevertheless, and those who without being so consider themselves of as illustrious a cast, still possess a high idea of their birth, and occasionally show it, particularly to those who aspire to be their equals. The pride of *thouing*, (tutoiement,) of which we have spoken above, is every day a proof of it; but this pride is not to be discovered towards those inferiors who solicit and enjoy their favours; near and around the throne it is entirely extinguished. There their dignity is sometimes brought to life again. Despotism, clad in the mantle of goodness, as it has constantly been in this century, seems to load them with its weight, and almost crush them. Placed under his eye, they find there nothing but slavery and vexation, yet have not the spirit to seek elsewhere the means of dissipating them, and of acquiring independence. We may with more propriety say of them now than formerly, "They "might be petty sovereigns on their estates, if "they would; but they prefer being servants at "court." Exceptions are rare, and consequently

observed. There are some, however, who prove that they feel, if not the dignity of their existence, at least that of their race. I have myself known some to banish themselves from court, and prefer the appearance of disgrace to the shame of a mean condescension; and others who have occasionally indulged themselves in spirited repartees. One of them, who was very often with the present monarch when he was prince of Asturias, is of remarkably low stature. The prince often joked with him on it. One day, being tired of constantly hearing himself called *little*, he replied with a noble coolness, which was received without anger, *Señor, en mi casa me llaman grande*; "Signor, at home I am called great."

The ladies of these grandees seem to have preserved that haughty look which is attributed to the first nobility of Spain. It is scarcely possible to be more cold, more grave, or to appear more listless than the greater part of these ladies; I could except five or six, but I will not sow dissension amongst that portion of the fair sex which is destined to embellish the court.

This apparent gravity, however, very often conceals, amongst all classes of people, a gaiety which requires only to be provoked in order to show itself. I will not adduce as a proof the Spanish stage, where buffoonery is so well received; because it has often been remarked, that the theatres of sprightly nations are more serious than those of

grave nations; as if the mind were better pleased with those emotions that abstract it from its habitual state.

But to judge whether the Spaniards are lively, go into their private circles when they are quite at home; be present at their meals, even before the vapours from the viands and the wine have put their brains in a fermentation; make one at their *conversaziones*, full of pleasant sallies of wit, bons mots, &c., all the legitimate or illegitimate offspring of gaiety, and you will find them as free and entertaining as our countrymen. It may be replied, perhaps, that this gaiety is too noisy, that it is vulgar. But away with that delicacy which would condemn us to ennui. Besides, whether approved or not by people of fashion, this gaiety continues, in spite of any prejudice to the contrary.

It is much the same with respect to other faults imputed to the Spaniards. If I have not absolutely acquitted them of idleness, I have said, and I repeat it, that it is occasioned by transient circumstances, and will disappear with them. Indeed, when we observe the activity so general on the coast of Catalonia, in the kingdom of Valencia, in the mountains of Biscay, every where, in short, where industry is encouraged, and where the productions have a sure and easy sale, especially where this industry has a facility of conveyance and an object to aim at;—when, on the other

hand, we observe the hard and tiresome life of the muleteers, those carriers who traverse the steepest roads;—when we view their husbandmen, who in the plains of La Mancha and Andalusia are employed in agriculture, which the nature of the soil, the distance of their habitations, and the heat of the most burning climate in Europe, make excessively laborious;—if we consider the shoal of Galicians and Asturians, who, like our Auvergnats and our Limousins, go to a distance to seek fatigue and the scanty means of subsistence; if we see at last that the idleness with which the Spaniards are so much reproached, is confined to the two Castilles, that is to say, to that part of Spain the least provided with roads and canals, and the most distant from the sea,—are we not justified in the conclusion, that this vice is neither indelibly fixed, nor an universal trait in the Spanish character?

There is another fault which has a great affinity to idleness, and which at least discovers itself by the same symptoms, I mean sluggishness: and it is more difficult to clear the Spaniards from this. The light, it must be confessed, penetrates them very slowly. In politics, in war, in the other operations of government, even in common life, when others act they are still deliberating. Distrustful and circumspect, they do as much harm by slowness as others do by precipitation; which is the more extraordinary, as their lively imagination should seem rather to be irritated by delay.

But it is with nations as with individuals: there is hardly a quality which is not modified by a contrary one; and in this struggle the triumph is always on that side where the mind is impelled with the greatest force by circumstances of the moment. So the Spaniard, naturally cold and reflecting when nothing extraordinary moves him, is inflamed to enthusiasm when pride, resentment, or some one of the passions which compose his character, is awakened by outrage or contradiction. This is the reason why the nation, apparently the most grave, the coolest, and the slowest, in Europe, becomes one of the most violent when circumstances have drawn it from its habitual calmness to put it under the empire of imagination. The most formidable animals are not the most lively. Observe the lion: his countenance as well as his gait is grave; his movements have always an object in view; his voice is never wasted in useless roaring. As long as you respect his inaction, he loves peace and silence; but provoke him, he shakes his mane, his eyes sparkle with fire, he roars, and you recognise in him the king of animals.

I shall not say from this, that the Spaniard is the king of Europe, though he formerly had pretensions to that title. I only say that this people prove, more perhaps than any other nation in the world, that qualities in appearance the most opposite may be found united in one character;

such as vigour and sluggishness, cool gravity and extreme irascibility. He carries this mixture into two of the principal affections of the mind, devotion and courage. Under the most calm exterior, one leads him to fanaticism, and the other to fury; for I will not palliate his excesses, often ridiculous and sometimes atrocious, in what he calls his attachment to religion; nor detract from the claim his courage has to admiration. He deserves to be viewed in these respects with attention.

Yes, I confess it, the Spanish nation, with some almost modern exceptions, is addicted to devotional credulity, to religious mummery, and is justly accused of superstition. It may even be pronounced, in the strictest acceptation of the term, that this illegitimate sister of Religion has been to the present day, almost without interruption, either on the throne or very near it. She was constantly at the side of the feeble and valetudinary Charles II. She accompanied Philip V, a good and virtuous prince, but without energy; he was truly pious, but carried his piety to excess. She attached herself to Ferdinant VI, with a taste for pomp and gaiety, more consistent with these three monarchs and their successors than the greatest part of their subjects. She defended them from dissolute morals; and accounts for the rare phænomenon of a succession of monarchs without a mistress.

As to Charles III, simple in his manners, exemplarily regular in his private life, scrupulously honest even as a monarch, he paid till his death, in his actions as well as his conversation, a tribute to superstition.

It was more particularly required of the founder of the order which bears the name of St. Januarius, and which has for its motto, *In sanguine fœdus*, to believe in the liquefaction of the blood of that blessed Neapolitan. Nor did he ever miss an opportunity of manifesting the blind faith he had plighted to this wonder. I have heard him relate that whilst he reigned at Naples, the miracle was interrupted all at once. In vain was the sacred phial shaken; the blood remained congealed. The cause was a longwhile sought after, and at last found. It must be remembered that this phial is deposited in the shrine itself of the saint, but separated from it by a partition. There is a tradition at Naples, that in order to effect the liquefaction, there must not be the least communication between the body of St. Januarius and his miraculous blood. The tomb was examined with care, and a crack was discovered in the partition, which being immediately repaired, the blood recovered its property. Let any one explain this miracle as he pleases, but to doubt of it is impossible. For, as the good Fontaine has said, *Jamais un roi ne ment*; and Charles III deserved this praise more than any other.

This prince amused himself with relating another event perhaps still more extraordinary. We may call to our recollection the danger he was in in 1744, when an Austrian army under Prince Lobkowitz went to Naples to dethrone Don Carlos, (which was himself,) and the good luck he had of escaping from the battle of Veletri. The success of this affair depended, said the prince, on a battery opportunely raised at the entrance of a street where the Austrians must have entered to search for him. The battery played on them in such a manner that they were obliged to take another road; and the victory escaped them as well as their prey. When the battle was over, the skilful, faithful servant who had planted this preserving battery was sought after through the whole army; even a reward was offered, but nobody appeared. Upon this Don Carlos and those about him had no doubt that it had been placed there by the hand of God himself, and Charles III carried this belief with him to the grave.

The faith he had in the immaculate conception has been consecrated by the establishment of another order, to which he gave the name. He has left his successor his virtues, as a legacy, without forgetting that first of theological virtues, which seems to be a necessary duty of the monarch emphatically called *Catholic*.

It may be concluded that such pious monarchs must be surrounded with servants, and must have

many subjects, who are animated by the same zeal for religion and for every thing belonging to it, whether far or near; and we must do that justice to the greater part of the grandees, the ministers, and the generals, to say, that in this respect they follow their august examples. There are few grandees who have not some relics amongst the jewels of their family, and who do not sing an anthem to the Virgin every morning.

I have heard the minister Galvez (who certainly could not be accused of having a weak head) relate that he was witness to the following fact. Being at Seville, he had the *happiness* of viewing there the body of St. Ferdinand. The air of serenity which still reigned in every feature inspired a devotion which it was impossible to resist. An Englishman who was amongst the spectators, and had before used the most impious language respecting all the practices of the Romish religion, was so moved by the venerable aspect of this blessed saint, that he burst into tears in the church, and became on the instant a most devout catholic. The same minister at another time related, that whilst at Mexico he had seen the first bishop of Guadalaxara, who had died in the odour of sanctity. His body escaped corruption; and being again habited in his pontificals, he seemed to enjoy a peaceful slumber. His beatification was then thought of: "and certainly," said he, "the bishop had

strong claims to it. His life had been a tissue of miracles. Judge of one. Before he was elevated to the bishopric he was counsellor of the audience of Guadalaxara. A criminal suit was brought before this tribunal; the accused was found guilty, and all voices, including the future bishop, had pronounced the sentence of death. But when it was presented to the judges, the holy man obstinately refused to sign it. They urge his compliance, and demand the reason of this inconsistency. He explained at last, and answered, that bishops could not sign a sentence of death.—'But you are no bishop.'—'I feel that I am one.' The court thought him deranged;—but were undeceived, when some months after they learned that on the very day of his refusal the pope had nominated him to the bishopric of Guadalaxara."

If any more general proofs of the propensity of the Spaniards to superstitious belief be wanted, let it be recollected that in 1780 the Spanish navy received a violent check in the latitude of Cadiz. One of her squadrons was fallen in with by Rodney; and notwithstanding the courage of her admiral, Langara, was put to flight. Four of their ships fell into the hands of the English. Their names were the *Phœnix*, the *Diligent*, the *Princess*, and the *St. Dominique*. All those that escaped were called after saints. This did not pass unobserved; and as, by a singular chance, the *St. Do-*

minique blew up at the instant of boarding, it was believed that her patron rather chose she should perish than fall into the hands of heretics.

I am far, however, from supposing that it was the officers of this squadron who made the remark. They are not all like admiral Barcelo, who having begun his career as master of a barque, and risen to the highest station (carrying with him the simplicity of his origin), said that there was no merit in his courage, because he was invulnerable: at the same time, showing his scapulary, he very seriously declared, that he had more than once seen balls coming directly to him, but that at the approach of this talisman they had turned aside. There are no doubt, in every class of people amongst the Spaniards, many who are superstitious to the most ridiculous degree. But where is the nation, ancient or modern, on whom the same reproach may not be made? The Greeks, the Romans, their philosophers, their historians, Plutarch, Livy, Tacitus, even Socrates, have they not all paid this tribute to human weakness? The head of Pascal, one of the soundest we ever had, was it exempted from it? Did not Racine believe and relate some of the miracles wrought at Port Royal? It is true, to this day the Spaniards are in this respect more credulous than every other people in Europe. There are, however, and I know several, who have derived from education, their own reflections, and travel, very sound ideas of re-

ligion; some even express themselves on the articles of faith which the church does not imperiously command, with a freedom that may be called philosophical*. I have seen even ecclesiastics not far from sharing in such bold opinions.

But in the classes where education is neglected, (and these are very numerous) where little communication with their betters, and few means of enlightening themselves, are to be had, superstition and fanaticism are still carried to a degree seldom found in Flanders or Bavaria; because reli-

* In the midst of this Spanish nation, who have the reputed character of being so much inclined to superstition, some take the liberty of publishing reflections not uncalculated to shake the faith a little, or to prove to those who hear or read them without being offended, that theirs is not very strong. In the reign of Philip V, a king most fervently attached to religion, an officer of his own regiment of guards, Don Gerardo Lobo, published a collection of poetry, in which is the following stanza, relative to a battle between the Moors and the Spaniards:

VINICRON LOS SARACENOS
Y NOS MATARON A PALOS;
PUES DIOS ESTA POR LOS MALOS,
QUANDO SON MAS QUE LOS BUENOS.

The Saracens came and thrashed us soundly. For God declares himself for the wicked when they are more numerous than the good.

Well,—Readers the most devout only smiled, and the author was not even *admonished*.

The Spaniards, in their convivial circles, indulge themselves with little scruple and with impunity in many pleasantries and

gion, always assimilating with the character of the people, must have very warm and ardent votaries in a nation remarkable for the vivacity of its imagination and the violence of its passions.

This mixture of strength and imbecility produces still in our days the most cruelly fantastical effects. There is a church in Madrid, where, during the Holy Week, the most fervent of the faithful meet in a dark vault. Long whips are given them on their entrance. They strip themselves naked to the waist, and, on a signal given, flagellate themselves with such violence that the blood runs in streams. Silence during this barbarous ceremony is interrupted only by the sighs of repentance, and the groans of pain. Thus most of them employ a transient cessation from a life of licentiousness.— Unhappy wretches! they have no other witnesses to this voluntary martyrdom than God and their conscience, and the next day

sprightly stories, which would frighten the severely orthodox. I will quote one of these tales because it is short, and will give an idea to what a degree of gaiety these people, who are considered so very grave and religious, may be carried. A Spaniard was rowing singly in a boat, in view of his comrades, when it upset. The man tried to swim, but could do it but badly; he was near sinking, but by catching hold of some rushes he happily saved himself. "Ah!" cried his comrades, "thank God, you are saved!" "Thank God!" said he, gaily, "Pray say 'Thanks to the rushes!' for, as to God, his intention was plain enough."

belie one and the other. They have the courage to chastise themselves, but not to amend; and there is nothing but clear loss in this cruel act of superstition.

It may easily be imagined that the metropolis has not this privilege exclusively. In some provinces, the day begins with such scenes of scandalous piety. A very creditable gentleman assured me that he was witness a few years ago, in a town of Estramadura, of the following scene. He was acquainted there with a lady of sweet manners, of an amiable and lively character, and blest with all the agreeable qualities of her age and sex. He went to visit her once on a Good Friday: her countenance and deportment displayed an air of cheerfulness, and she was dressed in a beautiful white robe. He asks her the reason of this extraordinary appearance on a day of mourning and penitence. "You will soon know it," said she. At this moment the flagellants were to pass her house. She waited for them with every mark of impatience. At last they appear. She approaches the window, which was on the ground floor, and next the street. The flagellants stop before her, and lash themselves. In an instant she is besprinkled with drops of blood from their bodies, and appears delighted at seeing her garments wetted with this horrid dew. The ænigma of her white robe was now explained to the spectator. I will suppose, if you please, that gallantry played a part in this pious

work of penitence, and that the lover of the young lady was amongst the actors. But does not the scene appear the more atrociously absurd on that account?

These are some samples of Spanish devotion. It is not carried all over the kingdom to such mad excess. The enlightened Spaniards, who increase every day, sigh to see it still deeply rooted. In the latter days of the pious Charles III, attempts were made with success to produce some salutary reforms.

Even at Madrid a great number of their processions, called *rosarios*, are suppressed: these almost at every hour in the day used to cross the city in every direction, on their way from one church to another, chanting the most unintelligible psalmody;—ceremonies not only without use in the eye of sound religion, but having no other effect than to fatigue the passers-by, to draw the workmen from their shops, and mothers of families from their domestic employment.

Defiance is bid to the court of Rome whenever she would encroach on the rights of the temporal authority.

The estates of the clergy are no longer considered as inviolable.

The disorderly conduct of the lower clergy and of the monks is blamed without scruple; and strict measures are taken to restrain them.

It is moreover extensively felt, that the regene-