

the penitent. It was converting a sacrament into a register of accusations and sacrilege; for by the antient canons, and particularly by the Lateran council, under Innocent III. every confessor who reveals confession, of whatsoever nature it may be, shall be interdicted and imprisoned for life.

THUS we see four different Popes, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ordering the revelation of a sin of impurity, and forbidding it in cases of parricide. A woman confesses, or supposes in her confession to a Carmelite, that a Cordelier attempted to seduce her; the Carmelite must impeach the Cordelier. A fanatical assassin, believing that he shall serve God by killing his prince, consults his confessor on this case of conscience; the confessor is guilty of sacrilege if he save the life of his sovereign.

THIS horrible absurdity is one of the unhappy consequences of the continual opposition, which hath subsisted for so many ages, between the Ecclesiastical and
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