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FIGHTING FIRE.

BY DR. FELIX L. OSWALD.

GEORGE CANNING, in one of his editorial contributions to the *Anti-Jacobin*, admits that he owed his most valuable political lesson to the inventor of the safety-valve. "The effectiveness of that simple contrivance," he says, "taught me the wisdom of affording a timely outlet to a surplus of energies that defy restraint."

With similar advantage the politicians of the German Empire might study the fire-tactics of our North American forest-states. Experience, it seems, has proved the fact that at certain times of the year forest-conflagrations can be fought only with fire itself. The task of guarding every camping-ground and railway-track of an extensive woodland-region would be practically impossible, and still more hopeless is the attempt to extinguish storm-winged conflagrations by means of fire-engines or the felling of burning trees. But the simple plan of surrounding each settlement with a ring of burnt-out ground proved both reliable and inexpensive. "Prevention if possible," Commissioner McNealy of Minnesota sums up his report, "but conflagrations that have once gained a certain amount of headway can be stopped only with counter-fires."

Mischievous doctrines ought to be fought on a similar plan. Their total suppression by Government surveillance of a whole national literature is expensive, though not wholly impossible. Our own century has witnessed a stupendous, and for the time being, actually successful, attempt of that sort. For nearly fifteen years the censors of the First Empire controlled the literary activity of a great nation as individuals would control the candles and hearth-fires of their private household, but that system answered its purpose only while its manager in chief could maintain the belief in his omnipotence by a series of military miracles.

Under his successors press-gag laws proved a miserable failure, though the zealots of conservatism tried to stamp out the very sparks of the scattered fires, and interdicted Dr. Tissot's *Avis au Peuple*, as well as Voltaire's *Pucelle* and Holbach's *Esprit*. "*Il n'y a ni pucelle ni esprit dans cette ville la*," reported the literary inquisitors of a little country town, and an extra-pre-

cautionary bailiff ordered the demolition of a grove of poplar-trees (*peupliers*)—"parce qu'il y a quelque chose de peuple," but the smouldering embers rekindled the flames which ultimately devoured the stronghold of the fire-fighters.

Still, the enterprise of reactionary France was perhaps less desperately hopeless than that of the North-German conservatives at this period of social progress, though, if fires under full headway could be stopped by assiduous tree-felling, the efforts of the Prussian loyalists would not be wholly in vain. The criminal statistics of the German Empire show that the prosecutions for offences against "State, morals, and religion," have steadily increased during the last seven years, till the convictions have now reached the enormous aggregate of seventy-six thousand five hundred and fourteen—against an average of sixty-two thousand in the three preceding years. A large percentage of these indictments comes under the head of *Press-vergehen*—abuses of the press; yet it is but fair to add that among the factors of the present "epidemic of prosecutions" the personal sensitiveness of the German Emperor has been greatly overrated. Non-political critics of the Kaiser's eccentricities have been allowed a considerable latitude of speech, like Maximilian Harden in his daring banter of imperial poetry and art-attempts. Bismarck idolators, with a penchant for odious comparisons, were wisely ignored. It seems, in fact, that the War Lord of protestant Germany values his prestige as a means, rather than as an end, and exercises his privilege of connivance, in order to reserve the ammunition of the legal arsenals for the suppression of what he considers a movement threatening to subvert the foundations, not only of his dynastic stronghold, but of nearly all extant social arrangements whatever.

The construction of the press-laws, *lesæ majestatis*, and high-treason statutes has been strained for that purpose. Indictments for disrespect to the person of the sovereign and members of his family have in many instances been terminated by the *nolle pros.* of an imperial pencil decree, while the trials of socialists have been pushed to the bitterest possible end. "Not only," says a prominent leader of the obnoxious party, "has the Prussian Themis forgotten the purpose of

her balance in her eagerness to use her sword on our heads, but her reigning representative, the judicial arbiter in chief, has descended from his throne to bespatter us with mud, and done his utmost to make a mob fly at our throats," ("uns den Pöbel auf den Hals zu hetzen")—in allusion to the Kaiser's speech expressing a pious wish that "the people would rise in their wrath to rid the earth of these ruinous wretches."

Have those speeches not often seemed to echo Diocletian's philippics against the "enemies of the human race," the followers of the Olympus-subverting Nazarene; whose doctrine was fanned by the storms of persecutions, till the champions of paganism clamored for an edict of irrevocable exile, and its prophets began to dread the issue of a struggle against an irresistible foe? "Woe be our children!" cried the son of the pythoness Sospitra, when the spirit of his mother had answered his invocation in the temple of Serapis, "I see a cloud approaching, a great darkness is going to befall the human race."

Analogous prophecies are whetting the sword of the Prussian Themis. For it would be a mistake to suppose that Kaiser Wilhelm is fighting the battle of conservatism singlehanded; a powerful party endorses his policy at all risks, and thousands of patriots, alarmed by the smoke-cloud of the approaching conflagration, are urging still stronger measures of repression.

Their loyalty and their fears are equally sincere. They dread the impending change as the greatest calamity that has ever menaced the human race; they predict that the victory of socialism, in some of its most rampant forms, will inaugurate a more odious tyranny than the world has ever known, an all-comprehensive despotism that will crush out individuality and suppress progress and the very motives of progress, as they have never been suppressed before. They point out the fact that the secular autocracy of the worst Roman emperors was compatible with the toleration of some twenty different religions; that the spiritual arrogance of the Roman pontiffs was often secularly tolerant by its very indifference to the worldly concerns of its converts, while "Christian Socialism" threatens a minute and oppressive control of our moral, mental, and material affairs, and will have its clutches upon every man's purse-strings, as well as upon the latch-strings of his private workshop. They apprehend a union of Church and State that will dislodge personal liberty from its latest mountain-refuge, and make the friends of self-dependence look back upon the present era of government paternalism as upon a lost paradise of freedom. They presage a final extinction of the half-revived ideals of Grecian beauty-worship, a sacrifice of science and art on the altar of a proscriptive workhouse communism, and predict

that the church militant of that dismal Zion will, in the meantime, shrink from no menace to secure its triumph, and will welcome even national calamities that may happen to involve the ruin of its opponents.¹

They point out the necessity of crushing the social schism before it has outgrown control, and emphasise the expediency of waiving the observance of a few civil right maxims in the life and death struggle against a foe who threatens to abrogate all personal rights whatever.

The chief objection against the attempted methods of suppression is, indeed, their complete futility. The conflagration has already spread beyond the control of government fire-engines. A rising gale fans the fire, and the falling of burning trees helps only to spread the contagious sparks. The party of the German Socialists, in almost all its branches, is gaining in prestige and resources; the schisms that threatened to disrupt its union were healed by persecution; the rival party-leaders combine against the common foe, and in spite of double-shotted press-laws their attacks upon the strongholds of that foe are becoming yearly more formidable, experience has taught them the art of advancing their trenches without approaching the dead-line of the penal code.

The Spanish and Italian conservatives have shared that experience. "When Crispi dissolved all the Socialist organisations, October 22, 1894," writes an American delegate from Milan, "he imagined he had given our party the death-blow. As if an idea could be swept out of the world by a mere decree! Barely two months after this decree, Socialist labor-organisations were re-formed under new names all over Italy, whereby the party gained greatly in compactness. All the present organisations are connected with one another and have become aggressive, whereas the former ones were disconnected and partly mere sociable concerns. Here, in Milan, three of the eight societies formed in 1895 have subdivided themselves by reason of their large membership, and we have now twelve

¹ A tendency of that sort manifests itself even now. "Inscrutable are the ways of Providence," says the organ of the New York Socialists; "who would have thought of Abyssinia as the quarter from which a blast of wrath would strike the criminal Court of Italy, or who would have foreseen in King Menelik the scourge with which Crispi was to be chastised for his insane persecutions of the Socialists, and hurled headlong from power, disgraced among the hootings of his whole country?" (*The People*, March 15, 1896).

And the same paper describes a meeting of the Milwaukee Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, in a hall decorated with a "large transparency, hearing the legend: 'Hurrah für die New Yorker Wirren.'"

In Germany several Socialistic unions went so far as to denounce their members for participating in the celebration of the Prussian victory anniversaries, and strongly hint that they would welcome the collapse of the reigning dynasty in the cataclysm of a general European war.

Curious analogies might be gleaned from the chronicle of the early Christian Church. "It consisted of men," says Lecky, "who regarded the [Roman] Empire as a manifestation of Antichrist, and who looked forward with passionate longing to its destruction. It substituted a new enthusiasm for that patriotism which was the very life-blood of the national existence and aspired to a type of character wholly inconsistent with that proud martial ardor by which the triumphs of Rome had been won, and by which alone her impending ruin could be averted." (*History of European Morals*, p. 413.)

organisations in this city alone, with a membership of nearly two thousand.”

Similar reports come from Spain, Belgium, and Austria, and *Flug-Schriften* (flying pamphlets), like the whirling leaves of a burning forest, have found their way over into Portugal and across the borders of the Russian Empire.

Conservatives of all classes, and not a few liberal reformers, are viewing these omens of the impending fire-storm with growing alarm, and one of their exponents has illustrated the effectiveness of the McNealy plan by a striking example. Herr Richter, the leader of the North German Liberals, deprecates the blind wrath of the loyalist zealots, but fully indorses their apprehensions, and in his augury of the Socialistic future surpasses even Herbert Spencer in exposing the absurdity of the proposed panacea of social distress, and traces the tendencies of the impending despotism to consequences more odious than the sansculotte or inquisitorial reign of terror.

The effect of those prophecies rivalled that of Paine's political pamphlets. For the first half year larger and larger editions followed each other at semi-monthly intervals, and eighty-five thousand copies have by this time been sold in Berlin alone. It is found in the reading-rooms of aristocratic club-houses and in the circulating libraries of Silesian weaver-towns; news-agents sell it in the waiting-saloons of metropolitan railway-stations, and literary notion pedlars have carried it to remote hamlets of the Saxony metal mountains. Herr Richter has become a favorite author in circles where political topics have never been discussed before, and, like McNealy's counter-fires, his arguments have burnt out the ground of whole districts so thoroughly that subsequent conflagrations will die out for lack of fuel.

Richter is not a pet of the court-party; but the eighty or ninety *Geheimrätbe* of the Prussian capital should prove their wisdom of counsel by persuading the government to get his book illustrated by the best modern artists, and distribute a few million free copies with all the supplementary inducements of our prize-story publications. They should get it dramatised and publish a commentary edition.

“What in the world shall I do with fanatics of that sort?” asked the Empress Catherine after her futile attempts to silence the Novgorod mystics; “they will not listen to reason, and martyrdom would only popularise their insanities.”

“*Procurez une bonne troupe des comedians,*” said Dennis Diderot. The German rationalists should also reprint the *reductio ad absurdum* of the monster maniac Stoecker, in Zubeil's debating-hall, where the project of his Christian treadmill Utopia was ridiculed by one of his former associates, as a proof that the leaven of

Richter's logic is beginning to work in the Eucharist paste of his adversaries. As a commentary, they might add a translation of Herbert Spencer's political pamphlets, which to Richter's bear the relation which Juvenal's analysis of social decadence bore to Cato's presage of its results.

But, of course, nothing of the sort will be done till all other methods of resistance have been exhausted by a government itself too deeply tinged with the great political superstition,—the “idea that the operation of nature's eternal laws can be reversed by acts of parliament.”

The European champions of that delusion, in fact, dread the Socialists as rivals, rather than as perilous will-o'-the-wisp hunters, and the struggle in the woods will continue till the wild-fires of the mad chase have set the continent aflame, and after a havoc, perhaps exceeding that of the *autos-da-fe*, exhausted themselves by their own consequences.

And if the spark-whirls of that conflagration should be carried to our own shores, the counter-fires of a free press will prove a better safeguard than the waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNOLOGY ON THE STUDY OF THE VEDA.¹

BY PROF. H. OLDENBERG.

MORE decisive than the reformation accomplished within philology itself, the course of which we traced in the last article, was the influence on Vedic research of a new class of inquiries, which were far removed from the domain of comparative philology and of Sanskrit, and which tended to overthrow altogether the belief that the Veda was the representative type of every primitive religion and mythology. We refer to the researches of the comparative ethnologists who were now making a highly comprehensive and systematic study of the elusive forms which the religious sentiment, the cult, the myth-creating phantasy of modern peoples assumed in the lower and the lowest stages of civilisation.

And here a discovery of the utmost import was made, the honors of which belong first of all to English investigators such as Tylor and Lang, and along with them to an excellent German scholar, Wilhelm Mannhardt. It was found that, very much like their weapons and utensils, so too the religion of the lowest orders of man, the whole world over, was everywhere one and the same in its essential elements. By some intrinsic necessity, there is always imposed upon this low state of evolution just this particular type of ideas and customs, which is the normal one, and as such may be looked for with absolute certainty.

This type of belief and cult, which is only faintly

¹ Authorised translation from the *Deutsche Rundschau* by O. W. Meyer.

idealistic, and is dominated by thoroughly harsh and practical views, we shall describe at some length farther on. At this point we have simply to remark upon the evident conclusion to be drawn from these observations, that the ancestors of those peoples, also, which we meet with in historic times as the possessors of a most opulent civilisation, must, in some, however remote, prehistoric age, have gone through just such a savage period of religious and ritualistic development.

This fact established, there was at once opened to scholars who did not deem it beneath them to learn something from American Indians, negroes, and Australians, a source of highly important data drawn directly from the mouths of living witnesses, by which it was possible to reveal prehistoric epochs antedating even the Homeric or Vedic religions, and preparatory to them. Reasoning from the ideas of modern savages to the ideas obtaining in the prehistoric savage state of subsequently civilised peoples, may have seemed a hazardous undertaking, but there was a sure corrective for the procedure. It is well-known that in all transitions of lower civilisations to higher, many elements of the old condition persist and hold over in the new, and that the spirit of the new can neither destroy nor assimilate them. They persist as *survivals* of the past in the midst of altered surroundings, and are absolutely unintelligible to people who know only the tendency and ways of the new period; they can be explained only from the point of view of the time in which they originated—a time when they were active principles, and one whose tracks they preserve, as it were, in a fossil condition.

Now if our view is correct, such survivals must be found at every step in a mythology and a cult like the Veda—and, we might likewise say, in those of Homer. They must be the particular lurking-places of whatever appears to be irrational, odd, self-contradictory, and difficult of exposition. But again, whatever in those poems seems incomprehensible to the man of to-day must become intelligible as soon as the art is acquired of looking at it from the standpoint of the modern savage and with the help of his peculiar logic, both of which are often totally distinct from ours.

As a matter of fact, the moment a search was made through the ancient Indian and the related European civilisations for such remains of prehistoric and anticipatory culture, the conviction forced itself irresistibly on scholars that the correct method had at last been discovered. Problems quickly resolved themselves, which theretofore dared scarcely be approached. The most striking agreements were disclosed between the various types of myth and cult scattered at this very day over the earth among our savages and barbarians, and the type of myth and cult which had lain imbedded in the Veda as a mass of unintelligible facts, wholly ir-

reconcilable with any interpretation derived from the modern intellectual character of the Vedic world.

The chain of proof was thus rendered continuous and conclusive. Science had succeeded (or at least was steadily advancing toward success)—not by means of bare grammatical speculations or the study of Sanskrit roots, but by inquiries which rested at every point upon a basis of living fact—in showing that there was a certain elementary state at the beginning of all civilisations and in disclosing the gray, early dawn anticipatory of the broad daylight of history. This was a revelation, which—however gradually and modestly it asserted itself—is perhaps of even farther-reaching importance in the exploration of antiquity than those brilliant exploits of the philologist's finished art which has opened the way to the remote recesses of Egyptian and Babylonian civilisation.

As a result of this discovery, a place was given to the religion and mythology of the Veda widely different from that which the enthusiasm of its earlier students had sought to assign to them. The assumption that the Veda revealed the secret of the elementary formative processes of creed and cult, was thus shown to be as far wide of the mark, as it would have been to have considered the grammar of the Sanskrit, the complexity of which points to an infinitely long preparatory history, as the elemental grammar of human speech. The fact is, it is not true, as the supposition had been up to that time, that the myth-building phantasy of man is revealed in its natural processes in the Veda, as plainly as a clock housed in glass reveals all its wheels and works. The Vedic divinities, the Vedic sacrifices, are not primitive and transparent products of the original creative force of religion, but for the most part turn out, on close scrutinisation, to be ancient, obscure, and complex creations.

We shall next attempt a description of the age preceding the Vedic religion, and also of that religion itself, as both appear from the point of view here sketched.¹

THE SECOND STAGE OF FREE THOUGHT: ENTERPRISE.

BY GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

"Better wild ideas than no ideas at all."
—Professor Nichol at Horsham.

THE emancipation of the understanding from intimidation and restraint soon incited thinkers of enterprise to put their new powers to use. Theology being especially a forbidden subject and the greatest repressive force, inquiry into its pretensions first attracted critical attention.

In every century forlorn hopes of truth had set out to storm one or other of the ramparts of theology. Forces had been marshalled by great leaders and bat-

¹ I have given this subject a more detailed treatment in my book *The Religion of the Veda*. (1894.)

tle often given in the open field and unforeseen victories are recorded, in the annals of the wars of infantine rationalism, against the full-grown powers of superstition and darkness. In every age valiant thinkers, scholars, philosophers, and critics, even priests in defiance of power, ecclesiastical and civil, have, at their own peril, explored the regions of forbidden truth.

In Great Britain it was the courage of insurgent thinkers among the working class—whom no imprisonment could intimidate—who caused the right of free speech and free publicity to be finally conceded. Thus rulers came round to the conclusion of Caballer, that "tolerance is as necessary in ideas as in social relations."

As soon as opinion was known to be emancipated, men began to think who never thought before. The thinker no longer had to obtain a "Ticket of Leave" from the Churches before he could inquire—he was free to investigate where he would and what he would. Power is, as a rule, never imparted nor acquired in vain, and honest men felt they owed it to those who had won freedom for them, that they should extend it. Thus it came to pass that independence was an inspiration to action in men of intrepid minds. Professor Tyndall in the last words he wrote for publication said, "I choose the nobler part of Emerson when, after various disenchantments, he exclaims, 'I covet truth!'" On printing these words the *Westminster Gazette* added: "The gladness of true heroism visits the heart of him who is really competent to say this." The energies of intellectual intrepidity had doubtless been devoted to science and social progress—but as philosophers have found, down to Huxley's day, all exploration was forbidden in that direction. Murchison, Brewster, Buckland, and other pioneers of science were intimidated. Lyell held back his book, on the *Antiquity of Man*, twenty years. Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer were waiting to be heard. As Huxley has justly said: "there was no Thoroughfare into the Kingdom of Nature—By Order—Moses." Hence, to examine theology, to discover whether its authority was absolute—became a necessity. It was soon seen that there was ground for scepticism. The priests resented criticism by representing the sceptic of their pretensions, as being sceptical of everything—whereas they were only sceptics of clerical infallibility. They indeed did aver that branches of human knowledge, received as well established, were really open to question—in order to show that if men could not be confident of things of which they had experience, how could the Churches be confident of things of which no man had experience—and which contradicted experience? So far from disbelieving everything, scepticism went everywhere in search of truth and certainty. Since the Church could not be absolutely certain of

the truth of its tenets, its duty was to be tolerant. But being intolerant it became as Julian Hibbert put it—"well-understood self-defence" to assail it. The Church fought for power—the thinker fought for truth.

Free thought among the people may be likened to a good ship manned by adventurous mariners, who, cruising about in the ocean of theology came upon syrens, as other mariners had done before—dangerous to be followed by navigators bound to ports of progress. Many were thereby decoyed to their own destruction. The syrens of the Churches sang alluring songs whose refrains were:

1. The Bible—the guide of God.
2. The origin of the universe disclosed.
3. The care of providence assured.
4. Deliverance from peril by prayer.
5. Original sin effaceable by grace.
6. Perdition avoidable by faith.
7. Future life revealed.

These propositions were subjects of resonant hymns, sermons, and tracts, and were not, and are not, disowned, but still defended in discussion by orthodox and clerical advocates. Save salvation by the blood of Christ (a painful idea to entertain), the other ideas might well fascinate the uninquiring. They had enchanted many believers, but the explorers of whom we speak had acquired the questioning spirit, and had learned prudently to look at both sides of familiar subjects and soon discovered that the fair-seeming propositions which had formerly imposed on their imagination were unsound, unsightly, and unsafe. The Syracusans of old kept a school in which slaves were taught the ways of bondage: Christianity has kept such a school in which subjection of the understanding was inculcated, and the pupils, now free to investigate, resolved to see whether such things were true.

Then began the reign of refutation of theological error—by some from indignation at having been imposed upon—by others from zeal that misconception should end; by more from enthusiasm for facts; by the bolder sort from resentment at the intimidation and cruelty with which inquiry had been suppressed so long; and by not a few from the love of disputation which has for some the delight men have for chess or cricket, or other pursuit which has conflict and conquest in it.

Self-determined thought is a condition of the progress of nations. Where would science be but for open thought, nursing mother of enterprise, of discovery, of invention, of new conditions of human betterment?

A modern Hindu writer¹ tells us that: "The Hindu is sorely handicapped by customs which are prescribed by his religious books. Hedged in by minute rules and restrictions the various classes forming the Hindu

¹ Pramatha Nath Bose.

community have had but little room for expansion and progress. The result has been stagnation. Caste has prevented the Hindus from sinking, but it has also prevented them from rising."

The old miracle-bubbles which the Jews blew into the air of wonder two thousand years ago, delight churches—still in their childhood. The sea of theology had been stagnant centuries ago, had not insurgent thinkers, at the peril of their lives, created commotion in it. Morals would have been poisoned on the shores of theology had not free thought purified the waters by putting the salt of reason into that sea, freshening it year by year.

WITCH PROSECUTION.

THE saddest side of the devil's history appears in the persecution of those who were supposed to be adherents of the devil; of sectarians, heretics, and witches. The most ridiculous accusations were made and believed against the Manichees, Albigenses, and other dissenters. They were said to worship the devil by most obscene ceremonies, and their intercourse with him is described most minutely as indecent and outrageous. In times of a general belief in witchcraft and the devil's power, nobody was safe against the accusation of being in the service of Satan. Thus the Stedingers, having effectually resisted the Bishop of Bremen when he tried to take their tithes from them by force of arms, were vanquished and cruelly slaughtered after having been denounced as devil-worshippers. The order of the Templars, the richest and most powerful and even the most orthodox order of Christianity, was accused of the meanest and most bestial idolatry, simply because an avaricious king of France was anxious to deprive them of their wealth and valuable possessions; and innumerable private citizens, as a rule poor people recklessly and rich people deliberately, in some way or other, fell victims of this most shameful superstition, sometimes to benefit ecclesiasticism, sometimes to serve the interests of the powerful, sometimes out of sheer ignorance, and sometimes even with the purest and sincerest intentions of doing the right thing for the best of mankind, and with a pious desire of obeying the word of the Lord, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus, xxii, 18).¹

The witch-prosecution mania was a general and a common disease of the age. On the one hand, it cannot (as is often supposed) be attributed to the influence of the Church alone, and it would, on the other hand, be a grave mistake to absolve the ecclesiastical

institutions of the fearful crimes of this superstition; for the highest authorities of both catholic and protestant Christianity not only upheld the idea of witch prosecution, but enforced it in the execution of the law in all its most terrible consequences.

It was natural that heretics were always regarded as belonging to the same category as witches and wizards, for they, too, were according to the logic of ecclesiastical reasoning "worshippers of Satan." Deuteronomy commands that prophets and dreamers of dreams, who by signs or wonders that come to pass would persuade Israelites to obey other gods, "shall be put to death" (xiii, 5-11). We read:

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

"Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth;

"Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him:

"But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

"And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

"And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you."

Relying on this passage St. Hieronymus would not hesitate to inflict capital punishment upon heretics; and Leo the Great takes the same view.¹ Under Pope Alexander III. the title "Inquisitor," in the sense of judge in matters of faith, was used for the first time at the council of Tours (in 1163). The synod of Verona (in 1184) cursed all heretics, and ordered them, in case they relapsed, to be handed over to the secular authorities for capital punishment. Pope Innocent III. (1198-1216) gave power to papal emissaries to sue the heretics, and enjoined all bishops on penalty of deposition to assist in the discovery and prosecution of unbelievers. At the suggestion of Castilian Dominic and the Bishop of Toulouse the new order of Dominicans was instituted which was destined to become the working force of the Inquisition. Pope Gregory IX. pursued the traditional policy with great vigor, establishing a regular inquisitorial office for Italy under the name of the "Holy Office," in 1224.

Gregory's policy was codified in an instrument of forty-five articles by the Council of Toulouse, in 1229, and thus the Inquisition became an established church-institution the appointment and superintendence of which formed an important prerogative of the pope. It was not until now that the pope became the abso-

¹ The same command is twice repeated in Leviticus xx, where we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people (verses 1 and 6).

"A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them." (Lev. xx, 27.)

¹ See Epist. xv, ad Turribium.

lute ruler of the Church, for now even bishops could be cited before the papal tribunal of the Inquisition. Gregory IX. appointed (in 1232) the Dominicans as papal inquisitors, who performed the terrible duties of their office so faithfully that they truly earned the title of *Domini canes* "the dogs of the Lord," which originated in a word-play on their name.

A famous fresco in the Santa Maria Novella at Florence entitled *Domini canes*, painted by Simone Memmi, represents the inquisitorial idea under the allegory of a pack of hounds chasing off the wolves from the sheep-fold.

Gregory IX. sent (in 1230) Konrad of Marburg to Germany and gave him unlimited power of citing before his tribunal all people suspected of witchcraft, commanding him to bring the guilty to the fagot. And this fiendish man obeyed with joy his master, whom he revered as the Vicar of Christ on earth. He encountered much opposition, for the people became rebellious and even the Archbishops of Cologne, Trèves, and Mayence attempted to resist him. But Konrad remained firm; his practices had the unequivocal sanction of his Holiness the Pope, and he did not hesitate to begin proceedings even against these three highest dignitaries of the Church in Germany. Whenever Konrad appeared the fagots were lit and many innocent people became the victims of his fanaticism. At last he was murdered in 1233. The Archbishop of Mayence writes of this fiend:

"Whoever fell into his hands had only the choice between a ready confession for the sake of saving his life, and a denial whereupon he was speedily burnt. Every false witness was accepted, but no just defence granted—not even to people of prominence. The person arraigned had to confess that he was a heretic, that he had touched a toad, that he had kissed a pale man, or some monster. Many Catholics suffered themselves to be burned innocently rather than confess such vicious crimes, of which they knew they were not guilty. The weak ones, in order to save their lives, lied about themselves and other people, especially about such prominent ones whose names were suggested to them by Konrad. Thus brothers accused their brothers, wives their husbands, servants their masters. Many gave money to the clergy for good advice as to how to protect themselves, and the greatest confusion originated." (*Alberici Monachi Chron. ad. a. 1233.*)¹

While the establishment of the Holy Office in Germany met with serious difficulties, the inquisitors were welcomed in France by the pious Louis, Philip the Fair, and Charles IV. Under the rule of the last-mentioned monarch the ill-famed Bastille was built because the prisons no longer sufficed to hold the indicted heretics.

In Spain the Inquisition prospered best. The *Directorium inquisitorum* of N. Eymerich (Rome 1587), the inquisitor-general for Castile, allows us a complete insight into the proceedings of the Holy Office, its spy-system, its modes of cross-examination and tor-

ture, and its spoils. Torquemada and Ximenes were the most determined and unrelenting successors of Eymerich.¹ The wealthiest, the most powerful, the most learned were threatened alike, and even Archbishop Carranza, the primate of the Church of Spain could not escape the prosecution of the inquisitors.

In the beginning of the fifteenth century Johannes Nieder, a Dominican monk, published a book on *Witches and Their Deceptions*.² In 1458 J. Nicolaus Jaquierius followed with another publication called the heretics' scourge or *Flagellum hereticorum fascinariorum*. All opposition to the practices of witch-prosecutors were put down. "The Prior of St. Germain, William von Edelin, who had preached against the reality of witchcraft, had to beg pardon publicly in the Episcopal Chapel at Evreux on September 12, 1453, and to confess that he himself had worshipped Satan, had renounced his faith in the cross, and preached the illusion of witchcraft on the special command of the devil for the propagation of the Satanic dominion." (Raynald ad. ann. 1451.)

Witch prosecutions received a new impulse in the year 1484 through the bull of Pope Innocent VIII. beginning with the words *Summis desiderantes affectibus*. The inquisitors of Germany, Heinrich Institoris (whose German name was Krämer) and Jacob Sprenger, complained of having met with resistance while attending to their duties, and the Pope afforded them the desired assistance for the sake of strengthening the Catholic faith³ and of preventing the horrible crimes and excesses of witchcraft.

The bull of Pope Innocent III. had reference to Germany only, but other popes, Alexander VI., Julius II., Leo X., and Hadrian IV. issued bulls written in the same spirit, instigating the zeal of the inquisitors to do their best for the purification of the faith and the suppression of witchcraft.

The heinous bull of Pope Innocent III. was the immediate occasion for the writing of the *Witches' Hammer*, *Malleus Maleficarum*, which received the sanction of the Pope, the approbation of the theological faculty of Cologne, and a patent from Emperor Maximilian. Damhonder, the great criminalist of the sixteenth century, esteemed its authority as almost equal to the law; and its baneful influence extends over a period of three centuries. The *Witches' Hammer* or *Malleus Maleficarum* is one of the most famous and

¹ F. Hoffmann, *Geschichte der Inquisition*, Bonn, 1878. Llorente, *Geschichte der spanischen Inquisition. Aus dem Spanischen*.

² Fr. Joannes Nider. Suevi ordinis. praeclat. s. theolog. profess. et hereticae pestis inquisitoris, liber insignis de maleficiis et eorum deceptionibus.

³ "... ut fides catholica nostris potissime temporibus ubique augeatur et floreat, ac omnis heretica pravitas de fideibus fidelium procul pellatur. ... Sane nuper ad nostrum non sine ingenti molestia pervenit auditum quod ... complures utriusque sexus personae ... cum demonibus incubis et succubis abuti, ac suis incantationibus ... mulierum partus, animatum foetus, terrae fruges ... periri, suffocari et extingui facere. ..." — See Soldan, *Hexenprozesse*, p. 222. Roskoff, *l. l.*, pp. 226-292.

¹ Roskoff, *Geschichte des Teufels*, Vol. II., pp. 215-216.

infamous works ever written. Its name indicates that it intends to crush witchcraft. No author is mentioned, but Sprenger's spirit is recognised in both, its preface (the *Apologia*) and the various chapters of the book. It contains the most confounded nonsense, often self-contradictory, and is throughout irrational and superstitious. To us who live in an age of calmer thought and more exact investigation, it is difficult to understand how its expositions could ever be believed.

Volumes might be filled with accounts of the many thousand various instances of witch prosecutions. But every single case is so soul-harassing that we prefer to pass them by in silence. Therefore we select from the great number of prosecutions for witchcraft one instance only, which, however, is neither typical nor extraordinary in its horrors.

We read in König's popular exposition of human superstitions,¹ p. 240:

"There was a farmer by the name of Veit, living in a village of Southern Bohemia. He was famous for his wit and unusual humor. At the same time he was physically strong, and whenever there was a quarrel at the inn he came off victor. The rumor spread that he was inviolable, as sometimes hunters are supposed to be bullet-proof, and Veit never denied it. By and by he was regarded as a wizard, and as his cattle prospered best, and his fields yielded the richest crops, he was soon supposed to be in league with the Evil One. Now it happened that the village was troubled with mice, and Veit was suspected of having caused the plague. When questioned about it, he granted in a moment of humor that he had sent the mice but would soon drive them away again, and he promised to prove at the next church-fair that he could actually make mice. When the day appointed came, the inn was overcrowded, and the farmer Veit appeared with a big bag under his arm, into which he requested the company to throw twenty pebbles. They did so, without noticing that the bag was double. And while one part was empty the other contained twenty mice. When the pebbles were put in the bag, Veit murmured a magic formula and let the mice loose in the presence of his frightened audience.

"This performance, however, had unexpected and tragic results. The people were convinced that it was the work of hell, and Veit escaped with difficulty from the inn. Veit was arrested on the next night and delivered to the criminal court. A mole on his body was thought to be a stigma of the Devil, and all the witnesses agreed that he was a genuine wizard. His case was thoroughly investigated and even the University of Prague was consulted; the verdict signed by the Rector Magnificus with his own hand was against him, and Veit, who professed his innocence, had to endure all the tortures of the inquisition. At last he was burned alive, and the ashes of his body were thrown into the wind. We read in the Acts of the law-suit that Veit mounted the stake 'without showing repentance or doing penance.' And when chains were put on his neck, around his body, and around his feet, he cried with a loud voice, 'My God, I die innocently.' Judges, professors, physicians, and theologians agreed unanimously in the conviction of this innocent man."

We abstain from quoting other instances. There are plenty of them, and one is always more terrible and infamous than the others. The accusations are

¹ *Ausgeburten des Menschenwahns*, ein Volksbuch, Rudolstadt.

almost always very circumstantial and definite, mostly of brutal indecency and ridiculously impossible.

* * *

One of the most comical with prosecutions took place in 1474 against a diabolical rooster who had been so presumptuous as to lay an egg. The poor creature was solemnly tried, whereupon he was condemned to die at the stake and publicly burned by order of the authorities of the good city of Basel.

We abstain from entering further into the details of the prosecution of witches, which gradually developed into a systematic business involving great emoluments to judges, torturers, hangmen, inquisitors, denouncers, witnesses, and all persons connected with the process. It is a doleful work to go over the mere statistics of the *autos-da-fé*, and every single story of a trial for witchcraft cannot but rouse our deepest indignation; and even now the belief in witchcraft is not yet extinct among the so-called civilised races of mankind.

NOTES.

Dr. Oswald's article "Fighting Fire" reminds us of a passage in the *Vattaka Jalaka* (translated by T. W. Rhys Davids in *Buddhist Birth Stories*, p. 303). When the disciples of the Buddha were surrounded by a jungle fire they called out: "Let us make a counterfire, so that the conflagration shall not spread beyond the space burned out by that." When the fire reached the spot where the Buddha stood it went out like a torch thrust down into water.

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