

of a line in breadth, and of which, in each cubic line of seawater, there must have existed upwards of a hundred million individuals (*Protococcus atlanticus*).

Not only on the sea, but also on land, especially on walls and rocks, microscopic red-colored plants grow, the most common of which are known as bloody Pamella (*Pamella cruenta*). These have the peculiarity of drying up in hot weather to an almost imperceptible black crisp, which the inexperienced observer readily overlooks. In moist air, on the contrary, and in rain, they quickly swell out into a red jelly, which presents an appearance not unlike to that of thick blood. The common crowd, surprised by the extraordinary character of this appearance, at once concludes that it is blood rained from heaven, or that the earth has sweated blood.

One of the most remarkable appearances of which the old chronicles make mention, and, at the same time, one which has had the greatest influence upon the history of mankind, has only of late years found its natural explanation; I refer to the so-called *wonder of blood on food*. Already, at the time of Alexander the Great, according to the accounts of historians, this phenomenon was very widely observed, and was supposed by all to be followed by the most important and fatal consequences. For instance, when this great commander was besieging the city of Tyrus, a panic spread in his army because blood, as it was supposed, was found in the bread. The interpretation of the priest, however, quieted the soldiers. In case the blood had appeared on the outside of the bread it had then been ominous of misfortune to the besiegers, but since it was found within, it prophesied the destruction of the city. About the same time one hundred and seventy women were executed at Rome, because blood had been observed in the bread during a pestilence. They were pronounced guilty, because, as it was said, they had poisoned the bread and thereby caused the epidemic.

But, in the Middle Ages, a special importance was first uniformly attached to these phenomena, when the Roman Catholic