

against him, and they filled the land full of castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at these castles, and when the castles were finished they filled them with devils and evil men. Then they took those whom they suspected to have any goods, by night and by day, seizing both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable, for never were martyrs tormented as these were. They hung some by their feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; some by the thumbs, or by the head, and they hung burning things on their feet. They put a knotted string about their heads and twisted it until it went into the brain. They put them into dungeons, wherein were adders and snakes and toads, and thus wore them out. Some they put into a crucet house, that is into a chest that was short and narrow and not deep, and they put sharp stones in it, and crushed the men therein so that they broke all their limbs. There were hateful and grim things, called Sachentege, in many of the castles, and which two or three men had enough to do to carry. The Sachentege was made thus: it was fastened to a beam, having a sharp iron to go round a man's throat and neck, so that he might no ways sit, nor lie, nor sleep, but that he must bear all the iron.

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"Then was corn dear, and flesh and cheese and butter, for there was none in the land—wretched men starved with hunger, some lived on alms who had been erewhile rich; some fled the country—never was there more misery, and never acted heathens worse than these. At length they spared neither church nor churchyard, but they took all that was valuable therein, and then burned the church and all together. Neither did they spare the lands of bishops nor of priests; but they robbed the monks and the clergy, and every man plundered his neighbor as much as he could. If two or three men came riding to a town, all the township fled before them, and thought that they were robbers. The bishops and clergy were ever cursing them, but this to them was nothing, for they were all accursed and foresworn and reprobate. The earth bare no corn, you might as well have tilled the sea, for the land was all ruined by such deeds, and it was openly said that Christ and his angels slept."

As a graphic picture of wretchedness and of hopeless woe, as a deep wail of a nation's misery, of suffering and trouble, this passage is scarcely to be surpassed.