

civilization, which commenced under the Israelitish leader, may both have produced forms of mental disease, and have created a necessity for rigor in the treatment of them, which have since disappeared. But there is something to be said both for the prevalence in the eighteenth century, and the flickering survival to the end of the nineteenth, of belief in witchcraft. For long after the Mosaic dispensation was over, scientific men, legislatures, and judges vied with each other in their efforts to keep it alive. Look at the facts stated in Calmeil's "*Dé la Folie*," and in Michelet's "*La Sorcière*" of the Middle Ages; we see also Pope Innocent VIII. issuing bulls for "the discovery and burning of witches;" look at the wholesale massacres (disposing of at Geneva 500 wretches in three months) of witches on all parts of the Continent in the fifteenth century; and who can wonder that a creed with so much confidence in itself caused the perpetration of these acts of persecution and hideous cruelty for the purpose of emphasizing its supremacy? It held its own amongst the upper classes in England till the beginning of the present century, and can any human being say that there is no longer some excuse for its survival among an ignorant peasantry in the example of their betters? Though it may be a duty to punish for the excesses, does it lie in the mouth of a generation which has believed in planchette, in spiritualism, and in the "prophetic religions," in spite of the *Bridgewater Agapemone Case*, and the still worse fraud of the itinerant seer who induced—with results which may be imagined—seven credulous young women to accept the view that they had been assigned to him by heaven for his spiritual comfort, to upbraid the Irish peasantry for their faith in witchcraft? In all seriousness, however, it is satisfactory to find that the Clonmel outbreak has been sternly dealt with. Sir Matthew Hale said that "he made no doubt there were such creatures as witches" in 1665; Sir William Blackstone, in 1765, wrote "that to deny the possibility—nay, the actual existence—of witchcraft and sorcery is flatly to contradict the revered Word of God in various passages of the Old and New Testaments," and, in 1597, James the Sixth of Scotland, in his treatise on "*Demonology*," proceeded as follows: "Witches are not generally melancholic; but some are rich and worldly wise, some are fat and corpulent, and most part are given over to the pleasures of the flesh; and, further, experience daily proves how loath they are to confess, without torture,