

the country, and evincing the most vivid detestation and aversion of the priests, whom they designated with words the most foul and vituperative. They believed themselves damned and invaded by infernal spirits, and they would not suffer (a peculiarity strangely uniform in all,) to be called by their own names, evincing the highest rage if any one dared so to address them. Yet they still conserved sufficient discernment to comprehend what was said to them, and to reply more or less pertinently, though crookedly correlative to the questions. They always knew the persons who approached them, and exhibited a sort of *clairvoyance*, which consisted in predicting those about to enter the house, in divining their intentions, and what was passing in their minds; all which may be fully explained and understood, as the product of an exaltation of their intellect and their sensory organs, in affinity to that which is obtained by magnetism, but which in a credulous and ignorant population produces the conviction of the operation of some supernatural agency, due to the presence, in those affected, of wicked spirits. They craved, and relished in the most lively manner, the drinking of brandy, which, given in moderate doses, procured a momentary alleviation of the nervous spasm. After the fit passed of, nothing was discoverable in them which would lead any one who did not know the fact, to suspect that anything was the matter with them, and they even attended, as if quite rational, to their ordinary domestic work, and to outside occupations; but while they were suffering they knew nothing, and they afterwards had no recollection of what occurred in their fits. As has been said, the malady was developed in the past spring, and it was aggravated in those previously affected. The priests of the place were prompt to second the prejudices and superstitions of the poor and ignorant villagers, pressing in with the rites of their ministry for the exorcising of those affected, and driving out the diabolical spirits. They employed for this requirement, at the residence of each, in due form, and with ritual vestments, the consecrated formulas of the liturgy, offering prayers on the missal, sprinklings of holy water, and not omitting the application of sacred images and relics on the breast.

"But that which operated yet worse to excite beyond measure the fantasies, was the assembling of all one day in the church, to hear the mass, and

witness the appropriate ceremonies of the exorcismal rite, whilst they were in their normal state, from which indiscretion a complete scandal ensued; for now even the calm became excited, several fell down in paroxysms, breaking out, in the very church, into their wonted bawlings and indecent words, and their vituperations against the priests.

"That which, however, sustains and favors this malady, besides extending it to others, is the continual contact of the sane with the diseased. The former run foolishly to witness every fresh accession. They flock in suffocating crowds to the houses of the affected, and confidential interviews with the male visitors are frequent. It is very pleasing, however, to record that unless in their words, the patients lose not their modesty. There was not evinced, nor did there take place, the least impropriety with the young men. They indeed uttered obscene words, but as the impressions and not the expressions of erotism. I learned from the two priests, by their own admission, how much they had contributed to the evil, and I strongly urged them to desist from every further attempt at exorcism, and to adopt every possible means to suppress excitement in relation to this superstition."

The foregoing is but a meagre extract from the lengthy and able report of Dr. Franzolini, the officer deputed by the Government to enquire into this serious invasion of mental aberration. Notwithstanding Dr. F.'s injunctions, it appears from the sequel that the priests did not carry out his recommendations. The superstitious fanaticism finally culminated in a terrific outburst, which would certainly have eventuated in the sacrifice of the lives of parties regarded as the agents of Satan, had not the central authorities interfered, and sent a military force to restore order, by the removal of the affected women, 19 in number, to the insane hospital of Udine. It would appear that religious revivals are not peculiar to Protestant churches, but that, even in the end of the nineteenth century, the Catholic church is able to get up some, with very high steam power. It is worthy of note, as an instructive illustration of clerical self-complacency, that throughout the course of the epidemic the priests believed and taught that the vituperations uttered against them, were not the language of the patients, but of the devils which had taken possession of them,—a doctrine quite comprehensible to their flocks, who were convinced