

A BELIEF IN WITCHCRAFT

Not much over two centuries ago witchcraft was thoroughly believed in not alone by the superstitious, but by the most enlightened. It was almost a fanatical belief and seemed to be especially common among those who were most sincerely religious.

There are a number of striking instances of references to witches from the very earliest times. The antiquity of this belief is shown by the book of Deuteronomy in the Bible, where it says: "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or is an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a conjurer with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer." The penalty for these things was to be put to death.

Witches are worked prominently into the first part of Shakespeare's great tragedy of Macbeth. And way back in the early history of the church there are many chronicles showing that witches were put to death for the protection of the people against them. One of the most amazing things connected with the persecutions of so-called witches, consists of their own confessions under the torture. It seems a miracle in itself that any persons who were in their senses should accuse themselves of things so contrary to nature and reason.

In Russia in Olden Times,

when any one was suspected of witchcraft, a number of people gathered by the old tower, Bokees Seecha. To this place the unfortunate suspect was brought and stripped naked, hands and feet fastened, and a rope tied round the waist to prevent him or her from drowning, and then the person was put into a deep place in the side of the river. If he went to the bottom at once, he was quickly drawn forth, for that proved his innocence; but if he floated on the top, he was then taken and branded with a red-hot iron in the shape of a cross to warn people that the person with such a mark was a wicked witch.

In France the notorious Witch Sabbath of Arras was instituted in 1459, and the celebration of the unholy rites continued in the southern provinces of France until the seventeenth century. In the reign of Charles IX. the great sorcerer, Rinaldo des Trois Etoiles, was executed, and he undauntedly said before the king that in France he had 300,000 confederates, "all of whom you cannot commit to the flames as you do me!"

Russian folklore endows some witches with wonderful power. Not long ago one of them stored away so much rain in her cottage that not much rain fell all summer, at least the superstitions attributed the drought to the witch. One day she went out, and gave strict orders to the servant girl in charge not to meddle with the pitcher which stood in the corner. But no sooner had she got out of sight than the maid lifted the cover of the pitcher and looked in. Nothing was to be seen, but a voice said from the inside:

"Now, There Will Be Rain."

The girl, frightened out of her wits, ran to the door and the rain was coming down just as if it was rushing out of a tub. The witch came running home and covered up the pitcher, and the rain ceased. If the pitcher had stood uncovered all the village would have been drowned.

It was the belief among those who adhere to the idea that witches existed that if people are bewitched and wish to find out who bewitched them they steal a black hen, take its heart out and stick it full of pins. Then they roast the heart at the midnight hour. The double of the witch will come and nearly pull down the door in her efforts to get in and to save the heart from roasting. If this double does not come, but a neighbor should happen to pass by, bad luck will attend the neighbor.

Witches are greatly feared in Corea and hated as well, but they are employed in long runs of ill luck, sickness or other circumstances which nothing else will change to exercise the malignant demon that is the author of it. The witch is usually dressed in a fantastic garb of brilliant colors, and has a most frightful expression of countenance.

A German superstition is that if anyone can catch a little of the dust which the minister throws into the grave, and it is scattered at the portal of the church, a witch cannot cross it.

In Russia the witches' holiday is the eve of the first of September. On that evening all of the witches come out of their hiding places and roam about. To prevent their doing any harm to persons, cattle or crops, the people stick a piece of wax on their heads and on the heads of the cattle. They also shoot off guns on that evening to

Frighten the Witches Away.

It is said that in a bull issued by Pope Innocent in 1484 he charged inquisitors and others to discover and destroy all such as were guilty of witchcraft. The edict of 1484 was subsequently enforced by a bull of Alexander VI. in 1494, of Leo X. in 1521 and of Adrian VI. in 1522, each adding strength to its predecessor, and the whole to increase the agitation of the public mind on the subject.

The results were dreadful. A panic fear of witchcraft took possession of society. Everyone was at the mercy of his neighbor. If anyone felt an unaccountable illness or a peculiar pain in any part of the body, or suffered any misfortune in his family or affairs, or if a storm arose and committed any damage by sea or land, the cause of it was witchcraft. To be accused was to be doomed, for it rarely happened that proof was wanting or that condemnation was not followed by execution.

A few extracts from the work of Dr. Hutchinson will show the extent of these proceedings:

"A.D. 1448—Cumanas, an inquisitor, burned 41 poor women for witches in the country of Buriis, Italy, in one year. About the same time Alciat, a famous lawyer, in his Parergu says: 'One inquisitor burned 100 in Piedmont, and proceeded daily to burn more, till the people rose against the inquisitor and chased him out of the country.'"

"A.D. 1524—About this time a thousand were burned in one year, in the diocese of Como, and a hundred per annum for several years together."

From other authorities it is learned that the devastation was as great in Spain, France and northern Germany as it was in the Italian states. About the year 1515 500 Witches Were Burned in Geneva in three months, and in France many thousands.

The prosecution of witches was no less severe in England and Scotland, where it began about the middle of the sixteenth century. Barlington, in his observations on the statue of Henry VI. does not hesitate to estimate the number of those put to death in England on the charge of witchcraft at 30,000.

It was supposed that witch-elm sewed up in the gatherings of a woman's petticoat was a sure protection against evil spirits, and that to bewitch the bewitched you must spit into the shoe of the right foot. The Irish believed that a branch of rowan-berry, that does not bear, is the luckiest to keep off witches and evil influences.

To ward off the wicked influence of a witch place a charm in a red cloth and hang it about your neck, and never take it off to show it to anybody else or the charm will not work. This is the general belief in Bohemia. A bag of nuts and apples used to be placed on the grave of a supposed witch in order to prevent her from roaming at night among the farm-houses in search of her favorite dainties.

Of all superstitions, witchcraft seems to have had itself most firmly established. The man who thoroughly disbelieved in the evils of thirteen or the good luck of the horseshoe would draw the line when it came to witches, for he felt no doubt of their existence.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDY

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, JULY 6.

Lesson I. The Child Moses Saved From Death. Exod. 1. 8-14, 22 to 2. 10. Golden Text, Matt. 18. 5.

The Book of Exodus begins with a list of the sons of Jacob, followed by a statement regarding the rapid increase of the children of Israel, which in turn gives rise to alarm on the part of a new Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph." The building of the store-cities, Pithom and Raameses, upon which the new king has set his heart, furnishes the opportunity for the exacting slave service required of the Hebrews in the hope of breaking their spirit and reducing their numbers. This method of proving futile, other means are adopted, culminating in the royal decree for the wholesale destruction of male children among the Hebrews.

Verse 22. Pharaoh charged all his people—His taskmasters and overseers, those having general and more immediate supervision over the Hebrew colony.

Every son . . . cast into the river—According to Josephus, the Israelites, during their severe persecution in Egypt, "dug canals and banked rivers, fortified cities and built pyramids." The same author explains that the severe persecution was due to the prediction of a soothsayer that an Israelite child should be born who would bring disaster on Egypt and free Israel.

1. A man of the house of Levi—Amram by name (compare Exod. 6, 18, 20). The family of Levi had now become a tribe.

A daughter of Levi—Jochebed, a

near kinswoman of her husband, Amram.

2. A son—Not a firstborn child, since both a daughter, Miriam, mentioned in Exod. 15, 20, 21, and a son, Aaron, according to Exod. 7, 7, older by three years than Moses, had already come to the home.

Hid him three months—Hers was a supreme effort to save the infant son from death, Pharaoh's strict charge to his servants concerning Hebrew infants being, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive" (Exod. 1. 22).

An ark—The Egyptian word thus translated means, literally, chest or casket.

Bulrushes—A word also of Egyptian origin, designating the well-known papyrus reed, cultivated so extensively in the delta of the Nile in ancient times. The papyrus is no longer found in Egypt, but still grows in Abyssinia, Nubia, and various parts of Sicily. By the ancients it was put to many uses, its roots, stalks, pith, fiber, and juice all being valuable. From its stalks light skiffs suitable for navigating the shallows of the Nile were constructed.

Stone—A word of uncertain meaning in the original, though generally thought to mean a kind of bitumen or mineral pitch.

The flags by the river's brink—The word translated "flags" comes from the Egyptian tuft, a kind of flowering water plant, differing from the papyrus. The phrase translated "the river's brink" means, literally, the lip of the river—an Egyptian idiom.

4. His sister—Miriam, now about thirteen years old. The first mention of Miriam by name is in connection with the account of Israel's successful escape through the Red Sea, after which she led a chorus of women with timbrels and dancing in honor of the escape of the Israelites from their pursuers. Later in the desert journey of the people

ned everything carefully beforehand, selected the place and time of exposing the babe, from a knowledge of the habits and character of the princess.

8. Called the child's mother—It is hard to believe that the princess did not suspect the real situation and the relation of both the obliging Hebrew maiden and the nurse she proposed to call to the little child. But having determined to save the infant's life, she asks no questions.

9. I will give thee thy wages—The princess assists by her action in allaying all suspicion.

10. The child grew—Jochebed had saved her son's life by a transfer of her mother's right to him to the daughter of Pharaoh, to whom she delivers him as soon as her services as a nurse to the infant can be dispensed with. Stephen (Acts 7. 22), that "Moses was instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians" is in harmony with the privileges and educational advantages which he would naturally enjoy as the adopted child of the princess.

HOME

Ways of Preparing Cherries.

Cherries are the first of the fruits of the summer—the first, that is, of the fruits of the summer trees. Plums, pears and peaches are still served only in the feasts of dreamland when cherries are ripe. Hence they are generally greeted with an enthusiasm not bestowed on any of the later fruits.

Cherries served fresh and cold on their own stems for breakfast are so delicious that no other way of serving them at that meal could be better. But pitted and sprinkled



A LOVELY LITTLE SPANISH PRINCESS

Latest photograph of Princess Beatrice, daughter of King Alfonso of Spain. She looks like her dad.

Miriam instigated an open rebellion against Moses, which was followed also by Aaron. For this rebellion against God's chosen leader she was smitten with leprosy, from which she was healed only at the earnest intercession of Moses. The death and burial of Miriam at Kadesh is referred to in Num. 20. 1 (compare also Exod. 15, 20, 21; Num. 12, 1-15).

5. The daughter of Pharaoh—Possibly a daughter of Seti I, and if so, then a sister of Rameses the Great.

Came down to bathe at the river—A not uncommon custom for women even of high rank, special places being reserved for their bathing along the river bank. The Nile River, moreover, was regarded by the Egyptians as a sacred stream, and its waters as health-giving.

Her maidens—Only women of high rank would serve as maids to the princess. Pictorial representations on Egyptian monuments are extant showing aristocratic Egyptian ladies attended by handmaidens.

Her handmaid—Referring to her special personal attendant.

6. And she opened it—The princess. Had compassion on him—Prompted to pity by her womanly instincts, even though she doubtless knew the babe to be one of the Hebrew children.

7. Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women?—An offer made, doubtless, according to the implicit instruction of Miriam's mother, who had apparently plan-

BECAUSE OF LITTLE FAITH

Great Tasks are Left Undone, Great Ideals Unfulfilled, Great Emancipations Unachieved

Because of your little faith.—Matthew, xvii., 20.

Why could we not do this thing, said the disciples of the Nazarene, as they beheld the doing of one of His mighty works, at which they themselves had ignominiously failed? "Because of your little faith," replied Jesus, "for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, * * * nothing shall be impossible unto you."

The lesson of this episode is perfectly plain—that it is faith which is the condition of all achievement in the world, and lack of faith which is the explanation of all failure. We find it impossible to do the work of the Master to-day for the same reason that the disciples found it impossible in their day, namely, "because of (our) faith." We have no faith that the Golden Rule can be made to work in the world of business, and therefore we yield ourselves supinely to the law of tooth and nail. We have no faith that there can ever be peace on the earth and good will among men, and therefore we pile up our enormous armaments on land and sea to the embitterment of nations and the impoverishment of the workers. We have no faith that "God hath made of one blood all races of men," and therefore we prate of

Superior and Inferior Peoples and nurse with the beasts the venom of prejudice against our kind. We have no faith that there will ever be a time when we shall not have the poor with us, and therefore we rest content with a civilization which enriches the favored few at the expense of the wretched many. We have no faith that men can be trusted with the boon of liberty, and therefore we build our tyrannies and excuse our slaveries. We have no faith in human nature, and therefore reconcile ourselves to the fate that things can never be much better than they are at present. We

have no faith in justice, righteousness and love, and therefore practice injustice, unrighteousness, selfishness and hate. We have no faith in God, and therefore postpone the time when His kingdom shall come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We have no faith, and therefore are the great tasks left undone, the great ideals unfulfilled, the great emancipations unachieved!

How would all this be instantly transformed, however, if we had a faith which was commensurate in some measure with our knowledge and our reason! "A great task," says a contemporary writer, "demands a great faith." And the same token, a great faith assures the achievement of a great task. "The force of will, of courage, of self-sacrifice liberated by living faith, is so incalculable, so invincible, that nothing is impossible when that power enters the field." Give us faith and

The Golden Rule could be established to-morrow in all human relationships, war abolished, race prejudices obliterated, poverty extinguished, injustice hated everywhere removed, righteousness and good will everywhere brought in. Give us faith and we could have the millennium to-morrow morning. Give us faith and the coming of God's kingdom would not need to be postponed a single hour. Faith in ourselves—in our power to do and dare; faith in our fellow-men—in their capacity for sympathy, sacrifice and brotherly love; faith in God—in His steadfast "watch above his own"—here is the great need of humanity!

Just this, and nothing less, was it that Jesus had in mind when He said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove!"—Rev. John Haynes Holmes.

Cherry fritters can be served with meat as a separate course or as dessert. To make them, prepare a batter of a cupful of flour, a teaspoonful of baking powder mixed with a tablespoonful of melted butter, a well-beaten egg and enough water to make a thin batter. Stew ripe, pitted cherries until they are just tender—but do not cook them to pieces—and sweeten them. Drain them and add them to the batter. Drop it in spoonfuls into deep fat and fry brown. The juice drained from the cherries can be substituted for water to moisten the fritter batter.

Sherbet and Salad.

Sour cherries are needed for cherry sherbet. Stone a quart of them. In the mean time boil together a quart of water and a pound of granulated sugar for 15 minutes. Add the cherries to the hot syrup just as it is taken from the stove and stand aside until it is perfectly cold. Strain through a fine wire sieve and freeze. When you take out the dasher stir in a meringue made of the white of one egg sweetened with a tablespoonful of granulated sugar. Pack in ice for an hour or two.

Cherry salad that is surprising as well as appetizing is made of pitted cherries filled with chopped nuts in the cavity made by the removal of the pit, served on crisp white lettuce leaves and dressed with French dressing. This is one of the prettiest salads imaginable, if the cherries are bright red and the lettuce white and yellow, as perfect lettuce hearts are.

Cherry bread pudding is a dessert which can be eaten by children and which is enjoyed likewise by grown-ups. To make it, spread a layer of bread crumbs in the bottom of a buttered baking dish and cover with a layer of stoned cherries, sugar, bits of butter and a sprinkle of lemon juice. Add a layer of crumbs, another layer of cherries, and so on until the dish is full. Finish with a layer of crumbs. Bake the pudding until the cherries are tender. If they are juicy the pudding will need no moistening while baking, but if they are not juicy pour a few tablespoonfuls of water over it when it is put in the oven and add water to keep it from drying out as it bakes. Serve the pudding with a sauce made of cherries boiled in sugar and water for 10 minutes and then pressed through a sieve.

Cherries can be used for short-cake. Make a rich biscuit short-cake, bake it in two thin, crisp layers, butter each and cover over the bottom with crushed and pitted cherries that have been generously sprinkled with sugar. Cover the top with whole, pitted cherries, sprinkle with sugar and serve with a sauce like that for the bread pudding.

A Few Suggestions.

To remove a fishbone from the throat, cut a lemon in half and suck the juice slowly. This will dissolve the fishbone, and give instant relief.

Put a damp cloth or damp napkin over sandwiches or bread if it is necessary to wait before serving.

The hair may be kept from coming out after an illness by frequent application to the scalp of sage tea.

An easy and quick way to clean pie-dishes and plates burnt in the oven is to wash them first, and then rub them with a small piece of emery paper.

When boiling old potatoes add a little milk to the water in which they are boiled. This prevents them turning dark in the cooking, and improves the flavor.

After washing blankets, hang them on a line until quite dry, then beat them gently with a carpet beater. This makes them soft and fluffy.

An excellent plan before putting one's hands in soda-water is to rub them well with a piece of mutton fat. This counteracts the bad effects of soda.

To clean white shoes, scrape some pipe clay finely and mix it to the consistency of cream with cold water. Brush all dust off the shoes, and rub the mixture well into them. Leave till thoroughly dry.

There is a proper way to mix blacking. Cut the cake of blacking into small pieces, put into a saucer, and pour enough sweet milk to make it rather into a thick cream. Mixed in this way helps to prevent the blacking from cracking.

When making jam add a piece of butter the size of an egg, fifteen minutes before removing the fruit from the fire. This will make it look clear and prevent it from sticking to the sides of the jars.

To take bruises out of furniture wet the part with warm water. Double a piece of brown paper six times thick. Soak it and lay it on the place. Apply on that a hot flat-iron until the moisture is evaporated. If the bruise has not gone repeat the process until the dent or bruise is raised level with the surface.

In making meat pies to be eaten cold, see that the top is ventilated by one or, better still, two holes. Without this precaution ptomaine poison is liable to develop, even when the meat used in the pie appears to be perfectly fresh.

When boiling rice boil it fast for twenty minutes, then remove from the fire, and pour cold water immediately over it. Drain through a sieve, and place in the oven to dry before serving.

A few drops of castor oil will be found most beneficial to drooping ferns. Drop the castor oil on the roots and soak the fern in a pail of water all night. In a week a marked improvement will be noticeable.

When cream is only slightly sour it may be made delicious to serve with puddings, etc., in the following way: Put it into a basin with the juice of a lemon and a tablespoonful of sugar and whip until quite stiff. This treatment makes it excellent and increases the quantity at the same time.