

WHEN we see a people, of all others in Europe the least restless and changeable, quite on a sudden one religion to embrace another, there must infallibly have been some particular cause to make so violent an impression on all minds. That which brought about so sudden a revolution in the opinions of the people of Switzerland, was as follows.

The two orders of Franciscans and Dominicans had been at open enmity with each other, ever since the thirteenth century. The latter had lost a great part of their credit with the people, on account of their not paying so much honour to the Virgin Mary, as their antagonists the Cordeliers or Franciscans, and that they denied her, with St. Thomas the monk, of having been borne without sin. The Franciscans, on the other hand, gained ground daily, by preaching upon all occasions the doctrine of immaculate conception, maintained by St. Baraventure. The mutual hatred and animosity between these two orders was so great, that, in the year 1503, a Franciscan being one day preaching at Frankfort, on the subject of the blessed Virgin, and seeing a Dominican enter the church, he cried out in the midst of his sermon, that he blessed God he was not of that order, which depreciated the mother of God herself, and who poisoned kings and emperors with the consecrated elements. The Dominican, whose name was Vigan, replied with a loud voice, that he was a liar and an heretic. Upon this the Franciscan quits his pulpit, gathers the people together, and drives his enemy out of the church, after beating him in such a manner with a crucifix, that he is left dead at the door. The next year, 1504, the Dominicans held a chapter of the order at Wimpfen, in which it is resolved to take vengeance of the Franciscans, and to destroy their credit, and even their doctrine, by bringing the Virgin Mary herself into the field against them. Berne was fixed upon to be the theatre of this scene. They began by spreading reports for three years together, of the mother of God having appeared several times to different persons, reproaching the Franciscans with their doctrine of immaculate conception, which she said was horrible blasphemy, and tended to rob her son of the glory of having cleansed her from original sin, and the power of hell. The Franciscans, on their parts, were not behindhand in opposing other apparitions. But at length, in the year 1507, the Dominicans having brought over a young lay brother, called Yetser, made him their instrument to work upon the minds of the people. It was an established opinion in the convents of all orders, that if a novice quitted the habit, and did not make his profession, his soul remained in purgatory till the last judgment, unless it was released by prayers, or alms given to the convent.

The prior of the convent, who was a Dominican, entered Yetser's cell in the night, in a habit painted with devils, a great chain about his middle, leading four dogs, and casting flames out of his mouth, by means of a little round box filled with the pickings of flax, and set on fire. This horrible figure told the half-scared Yetser, that he was a monk, who in former times had quitted his habit, for which his soul was thrown into purgatory, but that it might be delivered from thence, if Yetser would consent to suffer himself to be flogged by the monks before the great altar. Yetser complied without-hesitating, and delivered the monk's soul from purgatory, who appeared

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Moses

The
Joshua
Gideon

Full

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M. W.

D. D.

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