

short time before, on account of a similar crime, the Emperor of Austria had on one day ordered two thousand Jews to be enclosed in a prison in order to be burnt alive.

Until the latest times all these marvellous accounts, found in the chronicles, of the appearance of blood on bread, and especially on the consecrated wafer, instances of which might be multiplied indefinitely, were regarded as pure deception; nor can it be denied that, in numerous instances, fanaticism, avarice and envy contributed in no small degree to the invention of an unmeaning fable, which had not the slightest foundation in fact. Yet there still remain some examples in which the presence of blood in bread was supposed to have been actually proved, and for these no natural explanation could be given until at Padua, in 1819, at Berlin, in 1848, and afterwards in many other places, accurate observations were made, which prove that, in reality, on certain kinds of food, especially on bread, a color bearing a striking resemblance to that of blood is frequently observed.

In August, 1819, there were found, on a plate of bread, at the house of a wealthy farmer near Padua, red spots resembling drops of blood. The bread, which was supposed to be spoiled, was thrown away; but on the following day the specks appeared on new bread. The priest was sent for to bless the place, but the colors grew daily more pronounced. Fasts, prayers, sacraments were in vain. Presently blood appeared on all kinds of food. Thousands flocked to the famous place, and were almost unanimously of the opinion that the circumstance was a punishment from God for the withholding of corn at the time of the last famine. However, an unprejudiced inquirer (Sette) showed that the colors consisted by no means of blood corpuscles, but were the product of vegetable organisms, and were closely related to the well-known, but sometimes strangely colored moulds, which appear on old and decomposing vegetable foods. By producing the same color in the house of the priest, he overcame the opinion that it could only occur in the house of one who had been guilty of an offence, and when it appeared later in the houses of a hundred different persons, the