

THE DOOM OF SPAIN.

BY J. M. WHEELER.

"Who can positively say why the Spanish nation, so dominant at one time, has been distanced in the race? The awakening of the nations of Europe from the dark ages is a still more perplexing problem. At that early period, as Mr. Galton has remarked, almost all the men of a gentle nature, those given to meditation or culture of the mind, had no refuge except in the bosom of a Church which demanded celibacy; and this could hardly fail to have had a deteriorating influence on each successive generation. During this same period the Holy Inquisition selected with extreme care the finest and boldest men in order to burn or imprison them. In Spain alone some of the best men—those who doubted and questioned, and without doubting there can be no progress—were eliminated during three centuries at the rate of a thousand a year."—CHARLES DARWIN, "Descent of Man," part 1, chap. 5.

In his careful style, Darwin states the two-fold way in which the Christian religion, as exhibited in its greatest Church, has inflicted incalculable evil upon humanity. It first drained some of the most refined and cultured, in an age of barbarism, and thus prevented them from recruiting their race with a progeny of finer quality. Then it eliminated all who showed strong tendency to vary from the orthodox standard. The actual data of the martyrdom and imprisonment of heretics in Spain, between 1471 and 1771, are 32,000 burnt, 17,000 burnt in effigy (they mostly died in prison or escaped from Spain), and 291,000 condemned to various terms of imprisonment. Mr. Francis Galton, who gives the figures, says, in his work on "Hereditary Genius:" "It is impossible that any nation could stand a policy like this, without paying a heavy penalty in the deterioration of its breed, as has notably been the result in the formation of the superstitious, unintelligent Spanish race of the present day."

Four hundred years ago Spain stood at the pinnacle of nations. Its Moslem-founded universities had been the first and the finest in Europe. It had discovered a New World. Its dominions extended from Mexico to Malacca, and it had great soldiers who were also men of mind, like Bernal Diaz, Lope de Vega, Hurtado de Mendoza, Calderon, and Cervantes. But even then its priest-led rulers pursued the short-sighted policy of lopping off the heads of its tallest citizens. It drove out not only the alien Moors, but the native Moriscoes, who maintained a fine strain of Oriental art and culture in Granada. Its Inquisition relentlessly persecuted the Jews, who had aided its commerce, medicine and learning. Under Torquemada, the confessor to Isabella, in one year two hundred and eighty were burned in the city of Seville alone; seventy-nine were condemned to perpetual imprisonment; seventeen thousand suff