Daily Appeal.

A STRANGE DELUSION.

One of the most interesting but deplorable stories of witchcraft that has ever been recorded, occurred in Dalecarlia, a province of Sweden, in the year 1670.

The Dalecarlians, simple and ignorant, but of exemplary integrity and honesty, who dwelt amidst impassable mountains and precious mines of copper and iron, were distinguished for superstitions among the countries of the north, where all were superstitious. In the year 1670, and one or two preceding years, there was a great alarm of witches in this town of 70 tbs. There were always two or three witches existing in some of the obscure quarters of this place. But now they increased in number, and so bold their forms with the utmost audacity. Their mode on the present occasion was to make a journey through the air to Blocksla, an imaginary scene of retirement which none but the witches and their fellows had ever seen. Here they met with feasts and various entertainments, which it seems had particular charms for the persons who partook of them. The devil feasted them with various compounds and confections, and, having eaten to their hearts' content, they danced, and then fought. The devil made them throw off spite, from which they were thrown; and laughed at them. He then caused them to build a house to protect them against the day of judgment, and presently overturned the walls of the house and buried them again.

But this was not all. The devil was not content with ordering the witches to go and celebrate this infernal wedding. He further insisted that they should bring the children of Mora along with them. At first, he was satisfied if each brought one; but now he demanded that each child should bring an ox or wether for sacrifice. How the witches managed with the minds of the children we are at a loss to guess. These poor, harmless innocents, steeped to the very lips in ignorance and superstition, were by some means kept in continual alarm by the witches, and said as their prompters said. It does not appear that the children ever left their beds, at the time they reported they had been to Blocksula. These parents watched them with fearful anxiety. At a certain time of the night the children were seized with a strange shuddering; their limbs were agitated, and their skins covered with a profuse perspiration. When they came to themselves they related that they had been to Blocksula, and the strange things they had seen, similar to what had already been described by the women. *Three hundred* children, of various ages, are said to have been seized with this epidemic.

The whole town of Mahra became subject to the infection; and even overcome with the deepest affliction. They consulted together, and drew up a petition to the Royal Council, in which, after stating that they could not discover some remedy, and that the government would interpose its authority to put an end to a calamity to which otherwise they could find no limit. The Council of Sweden were at that time Charles XI, father of Charles XII, and was only fourteen years of age. They addressed to their wisdom depicted their consternation in the Mora, and furnished them with powers to examine witnesses, and to take whatever proceedings they might judge necessary to put an end to so great a calamity.

They entered on the business of their commission on the 13th of August, the ceremony having been begun with two sermons in the great church of Mohra, in which we may be sure the damnable sin of witchcraft was fully dilated on, and concluding with a prayer to Almighty God that in his mercy he would speedily bring to an end the tremendous misfortune, with which for their sins he had seen fit to afflict the poor people of Mohra. The court, they opened their commission. Seventy witches were brought before them. They were all first steadfast in their denial, alleging that the charges were maliciously brought against them, solely from malice and ill-will. But the judges were earnest in pressing them, step at length first one, and then another, burst into tears and confessed. Twenty-five were prevailed on thus to disburthen their consciences; but nearly the whole, as well those who owned the justice of their sentence, as those who pretended their innocence to the last, were sentenced. Fifteen children confessed their guilt, and were also executed. Twenty-six other children, (who, we may infer, did not confess,) between the ages of six and sixteen, were condemned to run the gauntlet, and to be whipped on their backs at the church door every Sunday for a year together. Twenty-one others were whipped on their hands for three Sundays. This extinguished the delusion.

THE POSITION OF GERMANY IN THE WAR.

From the London Times.]

As far as we can judge, the position which this war shall become general rests at present principally with the Prince Regent of Prussia and his advisers. To the Court of Berlin has been confided, at its own request, the initiative in all measures for enforcing the safety and honor of Germany. The decision of the Regent will probably be respected, and, in spite of the agitation which prevails throughout the country, no rash act will involve the Confederation in war with France. We say that this will probably be the ultimate result, but certainly at present the war spirit has risen to such a hight that no one can tell into what dangers the enthusiasm of the Bavarian and Hanoverian Courts, and of the people everywhere, may plunge the country, in spite of all the caution of Berlin.

The article in the Augsburg Gazette, will seem extravagant to Englishmen, but it is only an expression of the disappointed rage of the German press. That Louis Napoleon meditates a renewal of his uncle's policy, that the campaign in Italy is to be succeeded by a campaign on the Rhine, and that Germany, now unprecedentedly united and enthusiastic, ought to seize things to a crisis at once, and anticipate the threatened incursion, is the constant argument of the press of all and throughout the fatherland; and the Augsburg Gazette only repeats what may be heard in every public place. Without take, indeed, this article as expressive point fairly what the average German thinks about his own country and France and the state of Europe; and the composition shows the strength and the weakness of the people to whom it is addressed.

"The duty of Germany," proclaims the writer "is to go to war with France at once. With an army of half a million of men, the Confederation might march upon Paris, and make its vainglorious inhabitants to the day when they excited the enmity of a Teutonic people. We advance upon Paris to repeat Napoleon, to deliver the world from a nightmare which has too long already oppressed its chest, to destroy a system which is a plague to morality, religion, and civilization." Such services to humanity must, of course, have their reward. This "can be no other than Alsace and Lorraine. The broad wedge West of the line of Luxemburg by Metz and Nancy to Basle—that French wedge, which strikes so deep into the German territory, which so long has offended every eye in Germany on the map of Europe—must have down the French flag."

Such is the programme of German conquest for the year 1859. It may be raving, but still at the present moment people are raving in exactly the same language through every cloud of tobacco smoke from Hamburg to Vienna. The only thing for us to consider is whether such moderate German statesmen stand by, and how far the spirit of which they give evidence may be considered as a danger or safeguard to Europe.

With respect to the former question, we must admit that the minor German States are likely to give much trouble to Prussia, and that if the French Emperor does not find himself in a position to make use of them, or solely through the exertions of the Court of Berlin, it is rather difficult to penetrate the Teutonic mind sufficiently to ascertain whether, in the depth of its inner consciousness, it believes that the Germans can beat the French or not. To judge from the frantic appeals to Providence, and Liberty, and Justice, and England and Sweden, and Norway, and every power, abstract and material, one would think the Germans in a desperate condition.

If Napoleon III were publishing decrees from Dresden and Berlin, the German papers could not shriek more wildly than during the last three months, and it is scarcely to be doubt that the people and the army are influenced by something very like martial ardor. The desire to fight arises not so much from glorious ardor as from confidence. They believe that France wants to make war upon them sooner or later, and they think themselves strong enough and united enough to give her a lesson of cause.

They have been galled by the lead France has taken in European affairs and by the chronic hostility of the French Ministry, who seldom allow a German to be ten minutes in their company without an allusion to the left bank of the Rhine. The alliance between France and Russia has aroused them still further, though they fully count on the unwillingness of the Czar to carry things to extremities with the dynasties and people of Germany proper. The consequence is that many of them really do wish to go to war with France, and the southern States have ventured on acts which might justify France in demanding explanations. The Bavarian Government is entertaining transporting Austrian troops through its territory from Bohemia to the seat of war, while both this State and Saxony, and Wurtemberg are supplying the Austrians with every material of warfare which they can furnish. As for the Bavarian Court, there can be no doubt that it would be delighted to find Prince Napoleon make an opportunity for a breach of neutrality, and commit some special which would draw the wole Confederation into the quarrel. Napoleon, however, will no doubt be on his guard, and will ignore such, as he can, the provocations of the more excited courts.

In the conduct of these we need not say we have no sympathy. While we consider it a guaranty of European freedom that the Germans should be united, strong and determined to allow no aggression on the part of their neighbors, yet a war with France, for the mere purpose of supporting the Austrians in Italy, would meet with the just reprobation of the whole world. The first duty of Germany is to herself, and the resources which now permit large armies to be brought into the field should be husbanded to defend the fatherland in the complications which the next few years may witness. The existence of the Austrian dominion in Italy is not a matter of importance to the Confederation; many believe, and we think, that, on the contrary, it is stronger should the cognate provinces of Venice and Milan be rendered free.

The danger against which Europe has to guard is the desire of Austria, the lawlessness and aggressive designs of two great despotic powers. Security against these can best be obtained by the course England has adopted—general and prolonged preparation for war, and a resolute determination to observe the strictest neutrality. If Germany, convinced of Austrian designs, will continue steadily with being ready for a contest, even, the military ambition of France may be sufficiently checked by such a permanent attitude of defence. If, on the contrary, in a transport approaching, it rushes into the fray, to help those who ought to need no help from her, the world will not be sparing of its sneers and reproaches.

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