

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

THE SECOND PART

TREATING ON THE METHODS BY WHICH THE WORKS OF
WITCHCRAFT ARE WROUGHT AND DIRECTED, AND HOW THEY MAY
BE SUCCESSFULLY ANNULLED AND DISSOLVED

Resolved in but two Questions, yet these are divided into many Chapters.

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Of those against whom the Power of Witches availeth not at all.

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Of the several Methods by which Devils through Witches Entice and Allure the Innocent to the Increase of that Horrid Craft and Company.

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[Question II](#)

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THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

THE SECOND PART, TREATING OF THE METHODS BY WHICH WITCHCRAFT IS INFLICTED, AND HOW IT MAY BE AUSPICIOUSLY REMOVED.

RESOLVED IN TWO ONLY QUESTIONS, BUT DIVIDED INTO MANY CHAPTERS.

PART II. QUESTION I.

Of those against whom the Power of Witches availeth not at all.

The second main part of this work deals with the method of procedure adopted by witches for the performance of their witchcraft; and these are distinguished under eighteen heads, proceeding from two chief difficulties. The first of these two, dealt with in the beginning, concerns protective remedies, by which a man is rendered immune from witchcraft: the second, dealt with at the end, concerns curative remedies, by which those who are bewitched can be cured. For, as Aristotle says (*Physics*, IV), prevention and cure are related to one another, and are, accidentally, matters of causation. In this way the whole foundation of this horrible heresy may be made clear.

In the above two divisions, the following points will be principally emphasized. First, the initiation of witches, and their profession of sacrilege. Second, the progress of their method of working, and of their horrible observances. Third, the preventive protections against their witchcrafts. And because we are now dealing with matters relating to morals and behaviour, and there is no need for a variety of arguments and disquisitions, since those matters which now follow under their headings are sufficiently discussed in the foregoing Questions; therefore we pray God that the reader will not look for proofs in every case, since it is enough to adduce examples that have been personally seen or heard, or are accepted at the word of credible witnesses.

In the first of the points mentioned, two matters will be chiefly examined: first, the various methods of enticement adopted by the devil himself; second, the various ways in which witches profess their heresy. And in the second of the main points, six matters will be examined in order, relating to the procedure of witchcraft, and its cure. First, the practices of witches with regard to themselves and their own bodies. Second, their practices with regard to other men. Third, those relating to beasts. Fourth, the mischief they do to the fruits of the earth. Fifth, those kinds of witchcraft which are practised by men only and not by women. Sixth, the question of removing witchcraft, and how those who are bewitched may be cured. The First Question, therefore, is divided into eighteen heads, since in so many ways are their observances varied and multiplied.

It is asked whether a man can be so blessed by the good Angels that he cannot be bewitched by witches in any of the ways that follow. And it seems that he cannot, for it has already been proved that even the blameless and innocent and the just are often afflicted by devils, as was Job; and many innocent children, as well as countless other just men, are seen to be bewitched, although not to the same extent as sinners; for they are not afflicted in the perdition of their souls,

but only in their worldly goods and their bodies. But the contrary is indicated by the confessions of witches, namely, that they cannot injure everybody, but only those whom they learn, through the information of devils, to be destitute of Divine help.

Answer. There are three classes of men blessed by God, whom that detestable race cannot injure with their witchcraft. And the first are those who administer public justice against them, or prosecute them in any public official capacity. The second are those who, according to the traditional and holy rites of the Church, make lawful use of the power and virtue which the Church by her exorcisms furnishes in the aspersion of Holy Water, the taking of consecrated salt, the carrying of blessed candles on the Day of the Purification of Our Lady, of palm leaves upon Palm Sunday, and men who thus fortify themselves are acting so that the powers of devils are diminished; and of these we shall speak later. The third class are those who, in various and infinite ways, are blessed by the Holy Angels.

The reason for this in the first class will be given and proved by various examples. For since, as S. Paul says, all power is from God, and a sword for the avenging of the wicked and the retribution of the good, it is no wonder that devils are kept at bay when justice is being done to avenge that horrible crime.

To the same effect the Doctors note that there are five ways in which the devil's power is hindered, either wholly or in part. First, by a limit fixed by God to his power, as is seen in *Job* i and ii. Another example is the case of the man we read of in the *Formicarius* of Nider, who had confessed to a judge that he had invoked the devil in order that he might kill an enemy of his, or do him bodily harm, or strike him dead with lightning. And he said: "When I had invoked the devil that I might commit such a deed with his help, he answered me that he was unable to do any of those things, because the man had good faith and diligently defended himself with the sign of the cross; and that therefore he could not harm him in his body, but the most he could do was to destroy an eleventh part of the fruit of his lands."

Secondly, it is hindered by the application of some exterior force, as in the case of Balaam's ass, *Numbers* xxii. Thirdly, by some externally performed miracle of power. And there are some who are blessed with an unique privilege, as will be shown later in the case of the third class of men who cannot be bewitched. Fourthly, by the good providence of God, Who disposes each thing severally, and causes a good Angel to stand in the devil's way, as when Asmodeus killed the seven husbands of the virgin Sara, but did not kill Tobias.

Fifthly, it is sometimes due to the caution of the devil himself, for at times he does not wish to do hurt, in order that worse may follow from it. As, for example, when he could molest the excommunicated but does not do so, as in the case of the excommunicated Corinthian (I. *Corinthians* v), in order that he may weaken the faith of the Church in the power of such banishment. Therefore we may similarly say that, even if the administrators of public justice were not protected by Divine power, yet the devils often of their own accord withdraw their support and guardianship from witches, either because they fear their conversion, or because they desire and hasten their damnation.

This fact is proved also by actual experience. For the aforesaid Doctor affirms that witches have borne witness that it is a fact of their own experience that, merely because they have been taken by officials of public justice, they have immediately lost all their power of witchcraft. For example, a judge named Peter, whom we have mentioned before, wished his officials to arrest a certain witch called [Stadlin](#); but their hands were seized with so great a trembling, and such a nauseous stench came into their nostrils, that they gave up hope of daring to touch the witch. And

the judge commanded them, saying: “You may safely arrest the wretch, for when he is touched by the hand of public justice, he will lose all the power of his iniquity.” And so the event proved; for he was taken and burned for many witchcrafts perpetrated by him, which are mentioned here and there in this work in their appropriate places.

And many more such experiences have happened to us Inquisitors in the exercise of our inquisitorial office, which would turn the mind of the reader to wonder if it were expedient to relate them. But since self-praise is sordid and mean, it is better to pass them over in silence than to incur the stigma of boastfulness and conceit. But we must except those which have become so well known that they cannot be concealed.

Not long ago in the town of Ratisbon the magistrates had condemned a witch to be burned, and were asked why it was that we Inquisitors were not afflicted like other men with witchcraft. They answered that witches had often tried to injure them, but could not. And, being asked the reason for this, they answered that they did not know, unless it was because the devils had warned them against doing so. For, they said, it would be impossible to tell how many times they have pestered us by day and by night, now in the form of apes, not of dogs or goats, disturbing us with their cries and insults; fetching us from our beds at their blasphemous prayers, so that we have stood outside the window of their prison, which was so high that no one could reach it without the longest of ladders; and then they have seemed to stick the pins with which their head-cloth was fastened violently into their heads. But praise be to Almighty God, Who in His pity, and for no merit of our own, has preserved us as unworthy public servants of the justice of the Faith.

The reason in the case of the second class of men is self-evident. For the exorcisms of the Church are for this very purpose, and are entirely efficacious remedies for preserving oneself from the injuries of witches.

But if it is asked in what manner a man ought to use such protections, we must speak first of those that are used without the uttering of sacred words, and then of the actual sacred invocations. For in the first place it is lawful in any decent habitation of men or beasts to sprinkle Holy Water for the safety and securing of men and beasts, with the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity and a Paternoster. For it is said in the Office of Exorcism, that wherever it is sprinkled, all uncleanness is purified, all harm is repelled, and no pestilent spirit can abide there, etc. For the Lord saves both man and beast, according to the Prophet, each in his degree.

Secondly, just as the first must necessarily be sprinkled, so in the case of a Blessed Candle, although it is more appropriate to light it, the wax of it may with advantage be sprinkled about dwelling-houses. And thirdly, it is expedient to place or to burn consecrated herbs in those rooms where they can best be consumed in some convenient place.

Now it happened in the city of Spire, in the same year that this book was begun, that a certain devout woman held conversation with a suspected witch, and, after the manner of women, they used abusive words to each other. But in the night she wished to put her little suckling child in its cradle, and remembered her encounter that day with the suspected witch. So, fearing some danger to the child, she placed consecrated herbs under it, sprinkled it with Holy Water, put a little Blessed Salt to its lips, signed it with the Sign of the Cross, and diligently secured the cradle. About the middle of the night she heard the child crying, and, as women do, wished to embrace the child, and lift the cradle on to her bed. She lifted the candle, indeed, but could not embrace the child, because he was not there. The poor woman, in terror, and bitterly weeping for the loss of her child, lit a light, and found the child in a corner under a chair, crying but unhurt.

In this it may be seen what virtue there is in the exorcisms of the Church against the snares of the devil. It is manifest that Almighty God, in His mercy and wisdom which extend from end to

end, watches over the deeds of those wicked men; and that he gently directs the witchcraft of devils, so that when they try to diminish and weaken the Faith, they on the contrary strengthen it and make it more firmly rooted in the hearts of many. For the faithful may derive much profit from these evils; when, by reason of devils' works, the faith is made strong, God's mercy is seen, and His power manifested, and men are led into His keeping and to the reverence of Christ's Passion, and are enlightened by the ceremonies of the Church.

There lived in a town of Wiesenthal a certain Mayor who was bewitched with the most terrible pains and bodily contortions; and he discovered, not by means of other witches, but from his own experience, how that witchcraft had been practised on him. For he said he was in the habit of fortifying himself every Sunday with Blessed Salt and Holy Water, but that he had neglected to do so on one occasion owing to the celebration of somebody's marriage; and on that same day he was bewitched.

In Ratisbon a man was being tempted by the devil in the form of a woman to copulate, and became greatly disturbed when the devil would not desist. But it came into the poor man's mind that he ought to defend himself by taking Blessed Salt, as he had heard in a sermon. So, he took some Blessed Salt on entering the bath-room; and the woman looked fiercely at him, and, cursing whatever devil had taught him to do this, suddenly disappeared. For the devil can, with God's permission, present himself either in the form of a witch, or by possessing the body of an actual witch.

There were also three companions walking along a road, and two of them were struck by lightning. The third was terrified, when he heard voices speaking in the air, "Let us strike him too." But another voice answered, "We cannot, for to-day he has heard the words 'The Word was made Flesh.'" And he understood that he had been saved because he had that day heard Mass, and, at the end of the Mass, the Gospel of S. John: In the beginning was the Word, etc.

Also sacred words bound to the body are marvellously protective, if seven conditions for their use are observed. But these will be mentioned in the last Question of this Second Part, where we speak of curative, as here we speak of preventive measures. And those sacred words help not only to protect, but also to cure those who are bewitched.

But the surest protection for places, men, or animals are the words of the triumphal title of our Saviour, if they be written in four places in the form of a cross: IESUS † NAZARENUS † REX † IUDAEORUM †. There may also be added the name of MARY and of the Evangelists, or the words of S. John: The Word was made Flesh.

But the third class of men which cannot be hurt by witches is the most remarkable; for they are protected by a special Angelic guardianship, both within and without. Within, by the inpouring of grace; without, by the virtue of the stars, that is, by the protection of the Powers which move the stars. And this class is divided into two sections of the Elect: for some are protected against all sorts of witchcrafts, so that they can be hurt in no way; and others are particularly rendered chaste by the good Angels with regard to the generative functions, just as evil spirits by their witchcrafts inflame the lusts of certain wicked men towards one woman, while they make them cold towards another.

And their interior and exterior protection, by grace and by the influence of the stars, is explained as follows. For though it is God Himself Who pours grace into our souls, and no other creature has so great power as to do this (as it is said: The Lord will give grace and glory); yet, when God wished to bestow some especial grace, He does so in a dispositive way through the agency of a good Angel, as S. Thomas teaches us in a certain place in the *Third Book of Sentences*.

[Question I Continued](#)

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“Stadlin.” Stadelein, who is described as “grandis maleficus,” “a most notorious warlock,” lived at Boltingen, a town in the duchy and diocese of Lausanne. John Nider sat as assessor as his trial. See the “Formicarius,” c. III.

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PART II. *QUESTION I. CONTINUED*

And this is the doctrine put forward by Dionysius in the fourth chapter *de Diuinis Nominibus*: This is the fixed and unalterable law of Divinity, that the High proceeds to the Low through a Medium; so that whenever of good emanates to us from the fountain of all goodness, comes through the ministry of the good Angels. And this is proved both by examples and by argument. For although only the Divine power was the cause of the Conception of the Word of God in the Most Blessed Virgin, through whom God was made man; yet the mind of the Virgin was by the ministry of an Angel much stimulated by the Salutation, and by the strengthening and information of her understanding, and was thus predisposed to goodness. This truth can also be reasoned as follows: It is the opinion of the above-mentioned Doctor that there are three properties of man, the will, the understanding, and the inner and outer powers belonging to the bodily members and organs. The first God alone can influence: For the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. A good Angel can influence the understanding towards a clearer knowledge of the true and the good, so that in the second of his properties both God and a good Angel can enlighten a man. Similarly in the third, a good Angel can endow a man with good qualities, and a bad Angel can, with God's permission, afflict him with evil temptations. However, it is in the power of the human will either to accept such evil influences or to reject them; and this a man can always do by invoking the grace of God.

As to the exterior protection which comes from God through the Movers of the stars, the tradition is widespread, and conforms equally with the Sacred Writings and with natural philosophy. For all the heavenly bodies are moved by angelic powers which are called by Christ the Movers of the stars, and by the Church the Powers of the heavens; and consequently all the corporeal substances of this world are governed by the celestial influences, as witness Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I. Therefore we can say that the providence of God overlooks each one of His elect, but He subjects some of them to the ills of this life for their correction, while He so protects others that they can in no way be injured. And this gift they receive either from the good Angels deputed by God for their protection, or from the influence of the heavenly bodies or the Powers which move them.

It is further to be noted that some are protected against all witchcrafts, and some against only a part of them. For some are particularly purified by the good Angels in their genital functions, so that witches can in no way bewitch them in respect of those functions. But it is in one sense superfluous to write of these, although in another sense it is needful for this reason: for those who are bewitched in their generative functions are so deprived of the guardianship of Angels that they are either in mortal sin always, or practise those impurities with too lustful a zest. In this connexion it has been shown in the First Part of this work that God permits greater powers of witchcraft against that function, not so much because of its nastiness, as because it was this act that caused the corruption of our first parents and, by its contagion, brought the inheritance of original

sin upon the whole human race.

But let us give a few examples of how a good Angel sometimes blesses just and holy men, especially in the matter of the genital instincts. For the following was the experience of the Abbot S. Serenus, as it is told by [Cassian](#) in his *Collations of the Fathers*, in the first conference of the Abbot Serenus. This man, he says, laboured to achieve an inward chastity of heart and soul, by prayers both by night and day, by fasting and by vigils, till he at last perceived that, by Divine grace, he had extinguished all the surgings of carnal concupiscence. Finally, stirred by an even greater zeal for chastity, he used all the above holy practices to pray the Almighty and All-Good God to grant him that, by God's gift, the chastity which he felt in his heart should be visibly conferred upon his body. Then an Angel of the Lord came to him in a vision in the night, and seemed to open his belly and take from his entrails a burning tumour of flesh, and then to replace all his intestines as they had been; and said: Lo! the provocation of your flesh is cut out, and know that this day you have obtained perpetual purity of your body, according to the prayer which you prayed, so that you will never again be pricked with that natural desire which is aroused even in babes and sucklings.

Similarly S. Gregory, in the first book of his *Dialogues*, tells of the Blessed Abbot Equitius. This man, he says, was in his youth greatly troubled by the provocation of the flesh; but the very distress of his temptation made him all the more zealous in his application to prayer. And when he continuously prayed Almighty God for a remedy against this affliction, an Angel appeared to him one night and seemed to make him an eunuch, and it seemed to him in his vision that all feeling was taken away from his genital organs; and from that time he was such a stranger to temptation as if he had no sex in his body. Behold what benefit there was in that purification; for he was so filled with virtue that, with the help of Almighty God, just as he was before pre-eminent among, so he afterwards became pre-eminent over women.

Again, in the *Lives of the Fathers* collected by that very holy man [S. Heraclides](#), in the book which he calls *Paradise*, he tells of a certain holy Father, a monk named Helias. This man was moved by pity to collect thirty women in a monastery, and began to rule over them. But after two years, when he was thirty years old, he fled from the temptation of the flesh into a hermitage, and fasting there for two days, prayed to God, saying: "O Lord God, either slay me, or deliver me from this temptation." And in the evening a dream came to him, and he saw three Angels approach him; and they asked him why he had fled from that monastery of virgins. But when he did not dare to answer, for shame, the Angels said: If you are set free from temptation, will you return to your cure of those women? And he answered that he would willingly. They then extracted an oath to that effect from him, and made him an eunuch. For one seemed to hold his hands, another his feet, and the third to cut out his testicles with a knife; though this was not really so, but only seemed to be. And when they asked if he felt himself remedied, he answered that he was entirely delivered. So, on the fifth day, he returned to the sorrowing women, and ruled over them for the forty years that he continued to live, and never again felt a spark of that first temptation.

No less a benefit do we read to have been conferred upon the [Blessed Thomas](#), a Doctor of our Order, whom his brothers imprisoned for entering that Order; and, wishing to tempt him, they sent in to him a seductive and sumptuously adorned harlot. But when the Doctor had looked at her, he ran to the material fire, and snatching up a lighted torch, drove the engine of the fire of lust out of his person; and, prostrating himself in a prayer for the gift of chastity, went to sleep. Two Angels then appeared to him, saying: Behold, at the bidding of God we gird you with a girdle of chastity, which cannot be loosed by any other such temptation; neither can it be acquired by the

merits of human virtue, but is given as a gift by God alone. And he felt himself girded, and was aware of the touch of the girdle, and cried out and awaked. And thereafter he felt himself endowed with so great a gift of chastity, that from that time he abhorred all the delights of the flesh, so that he could not even speak to a woman except under compulsion, but was strong in his perfect chastity. This we take from the *Formicarius* of Nider.

With the exception, therefore, of these three classes of men, no one is secure from witches. For all others are liable to be bewitched, or to be tempted and incited by some witchery, in the eighteen ways that are now to be considered. For we must first describe these methods in their order, that we may afterwards discuss more clearly the remedies by which those who are bewitched can be relieved. And that the eighteen methods may be more clearly shown, they are set forth under as many chapters as follows. First, we show the various methods of initiation of witches, and how they entice innocent girls to swell the numbers of their perfidious company. Second, how witches profess their sacrilege, and the oath of allegiance to the devil which they take. Third, how they are transported from place to place, either bodily or in the spirit. Fourth, how they subject themselves to Incubi, who are devils. Fifth, their general method of practising witchcraft through the Sacraments of the Church, and in particular how, with the permission of God, they can afflict all creatures except the Celestial Bodies. Sixth, their method of obstructing the generative function. Seventh, how they can take off the virile member by some art of illusion. Eighth, how they change men into the shapes of beasts. Ninth, how devils can enter the mind without hurting it, when they work some glamour or illusion. Tenth, how devils, through the operation of witches, sometimes substantially inhabit men. Eleventh, how they cause every sort of infirmity, and this in general. Twelfth, of certain infirmities in particular. Thirteenth, how witch midwives cause the greatest damage, either killing children or sacrilegiously offering them to devils. Fourteenth, how they cause various plagues to afflict animals. Fifteenth, how they raise hailstorms and tempests, and thunder and lightning, to fall upon men and animals. Sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth, the three ways in which men only, and not women, are addicted to witchcraft. After these will follow the question of the methods by which these sorts of witchcraft may be removed.

But let no one think that, because we have enumerated the various methods by which various forms of witchcraft are inflicted, he will arrive at a complete knowledge of these practices; for such knowledge would be of little use, and might even be harmful. Not even the forbidden books of Necromancy contain such knowledge; for witchcraft is not taught in books, nor is it practised by the learned, but by the altogether uneducated; having only one foundation, without the acknowledgement or practice of which it is impossible for anyone to work witchcraft as a witch.

Moreover, the methods are enumerated here at the beginning, that their deeds may not seem incredible, as they have often been though hitherto, to the great damage of the Faith, and the increase of witches themselves. But if anyone maintains that, since (as has been proved above) some men are protected by the influence of the stars so that they can be hurt by no witchcraft, it should also be attributed to the stars when anyone is bewitched, as if it were a matter of predestination whether a man can be immune from or subject to witchcraft, such a man does not rightly understand the meaning of the Doctors; and this in various respects.

And first, because there are three human qualities which may be said to be ruled by three celestial causes, namely, the act of volition, the act of understanding, and bodily acts. And the first, as has been said, is governed directly and only by God; the second by an Angel; and the third is governed, but not compelled, by a celestial body.

Secondly, it is clear from what has been said that choice and volition are governed directly by

God, as S. Paul says: It is God Who causeth us to will and to perform, according to His good pleasure: and the understanding of the human intellect is ordered by God through the mediation of the Angels. Accordingly also all things corporeal, whether they be interior as are the powers and knowledge acquired through the inner bodily functions, or exterior as are sickness and health, are dispensed by the celestial bodies, through the mediation of Angels. And when Dionysius, in the fourth chapter *de Diuinis Nominibus*, says that the celestial bodies are the cause of that which happens in this world, this is to be understood as to natural health and sickness. But the sicknesses we are considering are supernatural, since they are inflicted by the power of the devil, with God's permission. Therefore we cannot say that it is due to the influence of the stars that a man is bewitched; although it can truly be said that it is due to the influence of the stars that some men cannot be bewitched.

But if it is objected that these two opposite effects must spring from the same cause, and that the pendulum must swing both ways, it is answered that, when a man is preserved by the influence of the stars from these supernatural ills, this is not due directly to the influence of the stars, but to an angelic power, which can strengthen that influence so that the enemy with his malice cannot prevail against it; and that angelic power can be passed on through the virtue of the stars. For a man may be at the point of death, having reached the natural term of life, and God in His power, which in such matters always works indirectly, may alter this by sending some power of preservation instead of the natural defect in the man and in his dominating influence. Accordingly we may say of a man who is subject to witchcraft, that he can in just the same way be preserved from witchcraft, or that this preservation comes of an Angel deputed to guard him; and this is the chief of all means of protection.

And when it is said in *Jeremias* xxii: Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: this is to be understood with regard to the choices of the will, in which one man prospers and another does not; and this also can be ascribed to the influence of the stars. For example: one man may be influenced by his stars to make a useful choice, such as to enter some religious Order. And when his understanding is enlightened to consider such a step, and by Divine operation his will is inclined to put it into execution, such a man is said to prosper well. Or similarly when a man is inclined to some trade, or anything that is useful. On the other hand, he will be called unfortunate when his choice is inclined by the higher Powers to unprofitable things.

S. Thomas, in his third book of the *Summa* against the Gentiles, and in several places, speaks of these and many other opinions, when he discusses in what lies the difference that one man should be well born and another unfortunately born, that a man should be lucky or unlucky, or well or badly governed and guarded. For according to the disposition of his stars a man is said to be well or badly born, and so fortunate or unfortunate; and according as he is enlightened by an Angel, and follows such enlightenment, he is said to be well or badly guarded. And according as he is directed by God towards good, and follows it, he is said to be well governed. But these choices have no place here, since we are not concerned with them but with the preservation from witchcraft; and we have said enough for the present on this subject. We proceed to the rites practised by witches, and first to a consideration of how they lure the innocent into becoming partakers of their perfidies.

Question I, Chapter I

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“Cassian.” John Cassian, monk and ascetic writer of Southern Gaul, and the first to introduce the rules of Eastern monasticism into the West, was born probably in Provence about 360; and died near Marseilles about 435. The two principal works of Cassian are the “Institutes; De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium uitiorum remediis libri XII”; and the “Collations” or “Conferences,” “Collationes XXIV.” The author has himself remarked upon the relation between the two works: “These books (‘the Institutes’) . . . are mainly taken up with what belongs to the outer man and the customs of the coenobis; the others (the ‘Conferences’) deal rather with the training of the inner man and the perfection of the heart.” The best edition of the works of Cassian is that by Petschenig, Vienna, 1885-88.

Although never formally canonized, from very early days Cassian was regarded as a saint. At Marseilles his feast (with an octave) is celebrated 23 July, and his name is found in the Greek Calendar.

“S. Heraclides.” Episcopus Tamasi in Cypro, cuius Festum agitur die xvii Septembris. See “Analecta Bollandiana,” XXVI, 238-9; and Fr. Nau, “Revue de l’Orient chrétien,” XII (197), 125-38.

“Blessed Thomas.” At the instance of his mother Theodora, Countess of Teano, S. Thomas, who had received the Dominican habit some time between 1240 and August 1243, was whilst on his way to Rome from Naples captured near Aquapendente by his two brothers, Landolfo and Rinaldo, officers in the army of the Emperor Frederick. They confined him for nearly two years in the fortress of San Giovanni at Rocca Secca. He revealed this vision of Holy Angels who endows him with the white girdle of chastity to his faithful friend, Reginald of Piperno. One of the particular devotions of the Dominican Order consists in wearing, as a devout memorial of this event, a white girdle for which a special form of blessing is prescribed: “Benedictio Cinguli S. Thomae Aquinatis Ad Seruandam Castitatem.”

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II. *QUESTION I. CHAPTER I*

Of the several Methods by which Devils through Witches Entice and Allure the Innocent to the Increase of that Horrid Craft and Company.

There are three methods above all by which devils, through the agency of witches, subvert the innocent, and by which that perfidy is continually being increased. And the first is through weariness, through inflicting grievous losses in their temporal possessions. For, as S. Gregory says: The devil often tempts us to give way from very weariness. And it is to be understood that it is within the power of a man to resist such temptation; but that God permits it as a warning to us not to give way to sloth. And in this sense is *Judges ii* to be understood, where it says that God did not destroy those nations, that through them He might prove the people of Israel; and it speaks of the neighbouring nations of the Canaanites, Jebusites, and others. And in our time the Hussites and other Heretics are permitted, so that they cannot be destroyed. Devils, therefore, by means of witches, so afflict their innocent neighbours with temporal losses, that they are to beg the suffrages of witches, and at length to submit themselves to their counsels; as many experiences have taught us.

We know a stranger in the diocese of Augsborg, who before he was forty-four years old lost all his horses in succession through witchcraft. His wife, being afflicted with weariness by reason of this, consulted with witches, and after following their counsels, unwholesome as they were, all the horses which he bought after that (for he was a carrier) were preserved from witchcraft.

And how many women have complained to us in our capacity of Inquisitors, that when their cows have been injured by being deprived of their milk, or in any other way, they have consulted with suspected witches, and even been given remedies by them, on condition that they would promise something to some spirit; and when they asked what they would have to promise, the witches answered that it was only a small thing, that they should agree to execute the instructions of that master with regard to certain observances during the Holy Offices of the Church, or to observe some silent reservations in their confessions to priests.

Here it is to be noted that, as has already been hinted, this iniquity has small and scant beginnings, as that of the time of the elevation of the Body of Christ they spit on the ground, or shut their eyes, or mutter some vain words. We know a woman who yet lives, protected by the secular law, who, when the priest at the celebration of the Mass blesses the people, saying, *Dominus vobiscum*, always adds to herself these words in the vulgar tongue “Kehr mir die Zung im Arss umb.” Or they even say some such thing at confession after they have received absolution, or do not confess everything, especially mortal sins, and so by slow degrees are led to a total abnegation of the Faith, and to the abominable profession of sacrilege.

This, or something like it, is the method which witches use towards honest matrons who are little given to carnal vices but concerned for worldly profit. But towards young girls, more given to bodily lusts and pleasures, they observe a different method, working through their carnal desires

and the pleasures of the flesh.

Here it is to be noted that the devil is more eager and keen to tempt the good than the wicked, although in actual practice he tempts the wicked more than the good, because more aptitude for being tempted is found in the wicked than in the good. Therefore the devil tries all the harder to seduce all the more saintly virgins and girls; and there is reason in this, besides many examples of it.

For since he already possesses the wicked, but not the good, he tries the harder to seduce into his power the good whom he does not, than the wicked whom he does, possess. Similarly any earthly prince takes up arms against those who do not acknowledge his rule rather than those who do not oppose him.

And here is an example. Two witches were burned in Ratisbon, as we shall tell later where we treat of their methods of raising tempests. And one of them, who was a bath-woman, had confessed among other things the following: that she had suffered much injury from the devil for this reason. There was a certain devout virgin, the daughter of a very rich man whom there is no need to name, since the girl is now dead in the disposition of Divine mercy, and we would not that his thought should be perverted by evil; and the witch was ordered to seduce her by inviting her to her house on some Feast Day, in order that the devil himself, in the form of a young man, might speak with her. And although she had tried very often to accomplish this, yet whenever she had spoken to the young girl, she had protected herself with the sign of the Holy Cross. And no one can doubt that she did this at the instigation of a holy Angel, to repel the works of the devil.

Another virgin living in the diocese of Strasburg confessed to one of us that she was alone on a certain Sunday in her father's house, when an old woman of that town came to visit here and, among other scurrilous words, made the following proposition; that, if she liked, she would take her to a place where there were some young men unknown to all the townsmen. And when, said the virgin, I consented, and followed her to her house, the old woman said, "See, we go upstairs to an upper room where the young men are; but take care not to make the sign of the Cross." I gave her my promise not to do so, and as she was going up before me and I was going up the stairs, I secretly crossed myself. At the top of the stairs, when we were both standing outside the room, the hag turned angrily upon me with a horrible countenance, and looking at me said, "Curse you! Why did you cross yourself? Go away from here. Depart in the name of the devil." And so I returned unharmed to my home.

It can be seen from this how craftily that old enemy labours in the seduction of souls. For it was in this way that the bath-woman whom we have mentioned, and who was burned, confessed that she had been seduced by some old women. A different method, however, was used in the case of her companion witch, who had met the devil in human form on the road while she herself was going to visit her lover for the purpose of fornication. And when the Incubus devil had seen her, and has asked her whether she recognized him, and she had said that she did not, he had answered "I am the devil; and if you wish, I will always be ready at your pleasure, and will not fail you in any necessity." And when she had consented, she continued for eighteen years, up to the end of her life, to practise diabolical filthiness with him, together with a total abnegation of the Faith as a necessary condition.

There is also a third method of temptation through the way of sadness and poverty. For when girls have been corrupted, and have been scorned by their lovers after they have immodestly copulated with them in the hope and promise of marriage with them, and have found themselves disappointed in all their hopes and everywhere despised, they turn to the help and protection of devils; either for the sake of vengeance by bewitching those lovers or the wives they have married,

or for the sake of giving themselves up to every sort of lechery. Alas! experience tells us that there is no number to such girls, and consequently the witches that spring from this class are innumerable. Let us give a few out of many examples.

There is a place in the diocese of Brixen where a young man deposed the following facts concerning the bewitchment of his wife.

“In the time of my youth I loved a girl who importuned me to marry her; but I refused her and married another girl from another country. But wishing for friendship's sake to please her, I invited her to the wedding. She came, and while the other honest women were wishing us luck and offering gifts, she raised her hand and, in the hearing of the other women who were standing round, said, You will have few days of health after to-day. My bride was frightened, since she did not know her (for, as I have said, I had married her from another country), and asked the bystanders who she was who had threatened her in that way; and they said that she was a loose and vagrom woman. None the less, it happened just as she had said. For after a few days my wife was so bewitched that she lost the use of all her limbs, and even now, after ten years, the effects of witchcraft can be seen on her body.”

If we were to collect all the similar instances which have occurred in one town of that diocese, it would take a whole book; but they are written and preserved at the house of the Bishop of Brixen, who still lives to testify to their truth, astounding and unheard-of though they are.

But we must not pass over in silence one unheard-of and astonishing instance. A certain high-born Count in the ward of Westerich, in the diocese of Strasburg, married a noble girl of equal birth; but after he had celebrated the wedding, he was for three years unable to know her carnally, on account, as the event proved, of a certain charm which prevented him. In great anxiety, and not knowing what to do, he called loudly on the Saints of God. It happened that he went to the State of Metz to negotiate some business; and while he was talking about the streets and squares of the city, attended by his servants and domiciles, he met a certain woman who had formerly been his mistress. Seeing her, and not at all thinking of the spell that was on him, he spontaneously addressed her kindly for the sake of their old friendship, asking her how she did, and whether she was well. And she, seeing the Count's gentleness, in her turn asked very particularly after his health and affairs; and when he answered that he was well, and that everything prospered with him, she was astonished and was silent for a time. The Count, seeing her thus astonished, again spoke kindly to her, inviting her to converse with him. So she inquired after his wife, and received a similar reply, that she was in all respects well. Then she asked if he had any children; and the Count said he had three sons, one born in each year. At that she was more astonished, and was again silent for a while. And the Count asked her, Why, my dear, do you make such careful inquiries? I am sure that you congratulate me on my happiness. Then she answered, Certainly I congratulate you; but curse that old woman who said she would bewitch your body so that you could not have connexion with your wife! And in proof of this, there is a pot in the well in the middle of your yard containing certain objects evilly bewitched, and this was placed there in order that, as long as its contents were preserved intact, for so long you would be unable to cohabit. But see! it is all in vain, and I am glad, etc. On his return home the Count did not delay to have the well drained; and, finding the pot, burned its contents and all, whereupon he immediately recovered the virility which he had lost. Wherefore the Countess again invited all the nobility to a fresh wedding celebration, saying that she was now the Lady of that castle and estate, after having for so long remained a virgin. For the sake of the Count's reputation it is not expedient to name that castle and estate; but we have related this story in order that the truth of the matter may be known, to bring so great a crime into open detestation.

From this it is clear that witches use various methods to increase their numbers. For the above-mentioned woman, because she had been supplanted by the Count's wife, case that spell upon the Count with the help of another witches; and this is how one witchcraft brings innumerable others in its train.

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[Question I, Chapter II](#)

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THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER II

Of the Way whereby a Formal Pact with Evil is made.

The method by which they profess their sacrilege through an open pact of fidelity to devils varies according to the several practices to which different witches are addicted. And to understand this it first must be noted that there are, as was shown in the First Part of this treatise, three kinds of witches; namely, those who injure but cannot cure; those who cure but, through some strange pact with the devil, cannot injure; and those who both injure and cure. And among those who injure, one class in particular stands out, which can perform every sort of witchcraft and spell, comprehending all that all the others individually can do. Wherefore, if we describe the method of profession in their case, it will suffice also for all the other kinds. And this class is made up of those who, against every instinct of human or animal nature, are in the habit of eating and devouring the children of their own species.

And this is the most powerful class of witches, who practise innumerable other harms also. For they raise hailstorms and hurtful tempests and lightnings; cause sterility in men and animals; offer to devils, or otherwise kill, the children whom they do not devour. But these are only the children who have not been re-born by baptism at the font, for they cannot devour those who have been baptized, nor any without God's permission. They can also, before the eyes of their parents, and when no one is in sight, throw into the water children walking by the water side; they make horses go mad under their riders; they can transport themselves from place to place through the air, either in body or in imagination; they can affect Judges and Magistrates so that they cannot hurt them; they can cause themselves and other to keep silence under torture; they can bring about a great trembling in the hands and horror in the minds of those who would arrest them; they can show to others occult things and certain future events, by the information of devils, though this may sometimes have a natural cause (see the question: *Whether devils can foretell the future*, in the *Second Book of Sentences*); they can see absent things as if they were present; they can turn the minds of men to inordinate love or hatred; they can at times strike whom they will with lightning, and even kill some men and animals; they can make of no effect the generative desires, and even the power of copulation, cause abortion, kill infants in the mother's womb by a mere exterior touch; they can at time bewitch men and animals with a mere look, without touching them, and cause death; they dedicate their own children to devils; and in short, as has been said, they can cause all the plagues which other witches can only cause in part, that is, when the Justice of God permits such things to be. All these things this most powerful of all classes of witches can do, but they cannot undo them.

But it is common to all of them to practise carnal copulation with devils; therefore, if we show the method used by this chief class in their profession of their sacrilege, anyone may easily understand the method of the other classes.

There were such witches lately, thirty years ago, in the district of Savoy, towards the State of

Berne, as Nider tells in his *Formicarius*. And there are now some in the country of Lombardy, in the domains of the Duke of Austria, where the Inquisitor of Como, as we told in the former Part, caused forty-one witches to be burned in one year; and he was fifty-five years old, and still continues to labour in the Inquisition.

Now the method of profession is twofold. One is a solemn ceremony, like a solemn vow. The other is private, and can be made to the devil at any hour alone. The first method is when witches meet together in the conclave on a set day, and the devil appears to them in the assumed body of a man, and urges them to keep faith with him, promising them worldly prosperity and length of life; and they recommend a novice to his acceptance. And the devil asks whether she will abjure the Faith, and forsake the holy Christian religion and the worship of the Anomalous Woman (for so they call the Most Blessed Virgin MARY), and never venerate the Sacraments; and if he finds the novice or disciple willing, then the devil stretches out his hand, and so does the novice, and she swears with upraised hand to keep that covenant. And when this is done, the devil at once adds that this is not enough; and when the disciple asks what more must be done, the devil demands the following oath of homage to himself: that she give herself to him, body and soul, for ever, and do her utmost to bring others of both sexes into his power. He adds, finally, that she is to make certain unguents from the bones and limbs of children, especially those who have been baptized; by all which means she will be able to fulfil all her wishes with his help.

We Inquisitors had credible experience of this method in the town of Breisach in the diocese of Basel, receiving full information from a young girl witch who had been converted, whose aunt also had been burned in the diocese of Strasburg. And she added that she had become a witch by the method in which her aunt had first tried to seduce her.

For one day her aunt ordered her to go upstairs with her, and at her command to go into a room where she found fifteen young men clothed in green garments after the manner of German knights. And her aunt said to her: Choose whom you wish from these young men, and he will take you for his wife. And when she said she did not wish or any of them, she was sorely beaten and at last consented, and was initiated according to the aforesaid ceremony. She said also that she was often transported by night with her aunt over vast distances, even from Strasburg to Cologne.

This is she who occasioned our inquiry in the First Part into the question whether witches are truly and bodily transported by devils from place to place: and this was on account of the words of the Canon (6, q. 5, *Episcopi*), which seem to imply that they are only so carried in imagination; whereas they are at times actually and bodily transported.

For when she was asked whether it was only in imagination and phantastically that they so rode, through an illusion of devils, she answered that they did so in both ways; according to the truth which we shall declare later of the manner in which they are transferred from place to place. She said also that the greatest injuries were inflicted by midwives, because they were under an obligation to kill or offer to devils as many children as possible; and that she had been severely beaten by her aunt because she had opened a secret pot and found the heads of a great many children. And much more she told us, having first, as was proper, taken an oath to speak the truth.

And he account of the method of professing the devil's faith undoubtedly agrees with what has been written by that most eminent Doctor, John Nider, who even in our times has written very illuminatingly; and it may be especially remarked that he tells of the following which he had from an Inquisitor of the diocese of Edua, who held many inquisitions on witches in that diocese, and caused many to be burned.

For he says that this Inquisitor told him that in the Duchy of Lausanne certain witches had cooked and eaten their own children, and that the following was the method in which they became

initiated into such practices. The witches met together and, by their art, summoned a devil in the form of a man, to whom the novice was compelled to swear to deny the Christian religion, never to adore the Eucharist, and to tread the Cross underfoot whenever she could do so secretly.

Here is another example from the same source. There was lately a general report, brought to the notice of Peter the Judge in Boltingen, that thirteen infants had been devoured in the State of Berne; and the public justice exacted full vengeance on the murderers. And when Peter asked one of the captive witches in what manner they ate children, she replied: "This is the manner of it. We set our snares chiefly for unbaptized children, and even for those that have been baptized, especially when they have not been protected by the sign of the Cross and prayers" (Reader, notice that, at the devil's command, they take the unbaptized chiefly, in order that they may not be baptized), "and with our spells we kill them in their cradles or even when they are sleeping by their parents' side, in such a way that they afterwards are thought to have been overlain or to have died some other natural death. Then we secretly take them from their graves, and cook them in a cauldron, until the whole flesh comes away from the bones to make a soup which may easily be drunk. Of the more solid matter we make an unguent which is of virtue to help us in our arts and pleasures and our transportations; and with the liquid we fill a flask or skin, whoever drinks from which, with the addition of a few other ceremonies, immediately acquires much knowledge and becomes a leader in our sect."

Here is another very clear and distinct example. A young man and his wife, both witches, were imprisoned in Berne; and the man, shut up by himself apart from her in a separate tower, said: "If I could obtain pardon for my sins, I would willingly declare all that I know about witchcraft; for I see that I ought to die." And when he was told by the learned clerks who were there that he could obtain complete pardon if he truly repented, he joyfully resigned himself to death, and laid bare the method by which he had first been infected with his heresy. "The following," he said, "is the manner in which I was seduced. It is first necessary that, on a Sunday before the consecration of Holy Water, the novice should enter the church with the masters, and there in their presence deny Christ, his Faith, baptism, and the whole Church. And then he must pay homage to the Little Master, for so and not otherwise do they call the devil." Here it is to be noted that this method agrees with those that have been recounted; for it is immaterial whether the devil is himself present or not, when homage is offered to him. For this he does in his cunning, perceiving the temperament of the novice, who might be frightened by his actual presence into retracting his vows, whereas he would be more easily persuaded to consent by those who are known to him. And therefore they call him the Little Master when he is absent, that through seeming disparagement of his Master the novice may feel less fear. "And then he drinks from the skin, which has been mentioned, and immediately feels within himself a knowledge of all our arts and an understanding of our rites and ceremonies. And in this manner was I seduced. But I believe my wife to be so obstinate that she would rather go straight to the fire than confess the smallest part of the truth; but, alas! we are both guilty." And as the young man said, so it happened in every respect. For the young man confessed and was seen to die in the greatest contrition; but the wife, though convicted by witnesses, would not confess any of the truth, either under torture or in death itself; but when the fire had been prepared by the gaoler, cursed him in the most terrible words, and so was burned. And from these examples their method of initiation in solemn conclave is made clear.

The other private method is variously performed. For sometimes when men or women have been involved in some bodily or temporal affliction, the devil comes to them speaking to them in person, and at times speaking to them through the mouth of someone else; and he promises that, if

they will agree to his counsels, he will do for them whatever they wish. But he starts from small things, as was said in the first chapter, and leads gradually to the bigger things. We could mention many examples which have come to our knowledge in the Inquisition, but, since this matter presents no difficulty, it can briefly be included with the previous matter.

A Few Points are to be Noticed in the Explanation of their Oath of Homage.

Now there are certain points to be noted concerning the homage which the devil exacts, as, namely, for what reason and in what different ways he does this. It is obvious that his principal motive is to offer the greater offence to the Divine Majesty by usurping to himself a creature dedicated to God, and thus more certainly to ensure his disciple's future damnation, which is his chief object. Nevertheless, it is often found by us that he has received such homage for a fixed term of years at the time of the profession of perfidy; and sometimes he exacts the profession only, postponing the homage to a later day.

And let us declare that the profession consists in a total or partial abnegation of the Faith: total, as has been said before, when the Faith is entirely abjured; partial, when the original pact makes it incumbent on the witch to observe certain ceremonies in opposition to the decrees of the Church, such as fasting on Sundays, eating meat on Fridays, concealing certain crimes at confession, or some such profane thing. But let us declare that homage consists in the surrender of body and soul.

And we can assign four reasons why the devil requires the practice of such things. For we showed in the First Part of this treatise, when we examined whether devils could turn the minds of men to love or hatred, that they cannot enter the inner thoughts of the heart, since this belongs to God alone. But the devil can arrive at a knowledge of men's thoughts by conjecture, as will be shown later. Therefore, if that cunning enemy sees that a novice will be hard to persuade, he approaches her gently, exacting only small things that he may gradually lead her to greater things.

Secondly, it must be believed that there is some diversity among those who deny the Faith, since some do so with their lips but not in their heart, and some both with their lips and in their heart. Therefore the devil, wishing to know whether their profession comes from the heart as well as from the lips, sets them a certain period, so that he may understand their minds from their works and behaviour.

Thirdly, if after the lapse of a set time he find that she is less willing to perform certain practices, and is bound to him only by word but not in her heart, he presumes that the Divine Mercy has given her the guardianship of a good Angel, which he knows to be of great power. Then he casts her off, and tries to expose her to temporal afflictions, so that he gain some profit from her despair.

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THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER II CONTINUED

The truth of this is clear. For if it is asked why some witches will not confess the truth under even the greatest tortures, while other readily confess their crimes when they are questioned (and some of them, after they have confessed, try to kill themselves by hanging), the reason is as follows. It may truly be said that, when it is not due to a Divine impulse conveyed through a holy Angel that a witch is made to confess the truth and abandon the spell of silence, then it is due to the devil whether she preserves silence or confesses her crimes. The former is the case with those whom he knows to have denied the Faith both with their lips and in their hearts, and also to have given him their homage; for he is sure of their constancy. But in the latter case he withdraws his protection, since he knows that they are of no profit to him.

We have often learned from the confessions of those whom we have caused to be burned, that they have not been willing agents of witchcraft. And they have not said this in the hope of escaping damnation, for its truth is witnessed by the blows and stripes which they have received from devils when they have been unwilling to perform their orders, and we have often seen their swollen and livid faces. Similarly, after they have confessed their crimes under torture they always try to hang themselves; and this we know for a fact; for after the confession of their crimes, guards are deputed to watch them all the time, and even then, when the guards have been negligent, they have been found hanged with their shoe-laces or garments. For, as we have said, the devil causes this, lest they should obtain pardon through contrition or sacramental confession; and those whose hearts he cannot seduce from finding grace with God, he tries to lead into despair through worldly loss and a horrible death. However, through the great grace of God, as it is pious to believe, they can obtain forgiveness by true contrition and pure confession, when they have not been willing participators in those foul and filthy practices.

This is exemplified by certain events which took place hardly three years ago in the dioceses of Strasburg and Constance, and in the towns of Hagenau and Ratisbon. For in the first town one hanged herself with a trifling and flimsy garment. Another, named Walpurgis, was notorious for her power of preserving silence, and used to teach other women how to achieve a like quality of silence by cooking their first-born sons in an oven. Many such examples are to our hand, as they are also in the case of others burned in the second town, some of which will be related.

And there is a forth reason why the devil exacts a varying degree of homage, making it relatively small in some cases because he is more skilful than Astronomers in knowing the length of human life, and so can easily fix a term which he knows will be preceded by death, or can, in the manner already told, forestall natural death with some accident.

All this, in short, can be shown by the actions and behaviour of witches. But first we can deduce the astuteness of the devil in such things. For according to S. Augustine in the [*de Natura Daemonis*](#) seven reasons are assigned why devils can conjecture probable future events, though they cannot know them certainly. The first is that they have a natural subtlety in their

understanding, by which they arrive at their knowledge without the process of reasoning which is necessary for us. Secondly, by their long experience and by revelation of supernal spirits, they know more than we do. For S. Isidore says that the Doctors have often affirmed that devils derive their marvellous cunning from three sources, their natural subtlety, their long experience, and the revelation of supernal spirits. The third reason is their rapidity of motion, by which they can with miraculous speed anticipate in the West things which are happening in the East. Fourthly, just as they are able, with God's permission, to cause disease and famines, so also they can predict them. Fifthly, they can more cunningly read the signs of death than a physician can by looking at the urine or feeling the pulse. For just as a physician sees signs in a sick man which a layman would not notice, so the devil sees what no man can naturally see. Sixthly, they can by signs which proceed from a man's mind conjecture more astutely than the wisest men what is or will be in that man's mind. For they know what impulses, and therefore what actions, will probably follow. Seventhly, they understand better than men the acts and writings of the Prophets, and, since on these much of the future depends, they can foretell from them much that will happen. Therefore it is not wonderful that they can know the natural term of a man's life; though it is different in the case of the accidental term when a witch is burned; for this the devil ultimately causes when, as has been said, he finds a witch reluctant, and fears for her conversion; whereas he protects even up to their natural death others whom he knows to be his willing agents.

Let us give examples of both these cases, which are known to us. There was in the diocese of Basel, in a town called Oberweiler situated on the Rhine, an honest parish priest, who fondly held the opinion, or rather error, that there was no witchcraft in the world, but that it only existed in the imagination of men who attributed such things to witches. And God wished so to purge him of this error that he might even be made aware of the practice of devils in setting a term to the lives of witches. For as he was hastening to cross a bridge, on some business that he had to do, he met a certain old woman in his hurry, and would not give way to her, but pressed on so that he thrust the old woman into the mud. She indignantly broke into a flood of abuse, and said to him, "Father, you will not cross with impunity." And though he took small notice of those words, in the night, when he wished to get out of his bed, he felt himself bewitched below the waist, so that he always had to be supported by the arms of other men when he wished to go to the church; and so he remained for three years, under the care of his own mother. After that time the old woman fell sick, the hag whom he had always suspected as being the cause of his witchcraft, owing to the abusive words with which she had threatened him; and it happened that she sent to him to hear her confession. And though the priest angrily said, "Let her confess to the devil her master," yet, at the instance of his mother, he went to the house supported by two servants, and sat at the head of the bed where the witch lay. And the two servants listened outside the window, so eager were they to know whether she would confess that she had bewitched the priest. Now it happened that, though she made no mention in her confession of having been the cause of his malady, after the confession was finished, she said, "Father, do you know who bewitched you?" And when he gently answered that he did not, she added, "You suspect me, and with reason; for know that I brought it upon you for this reason," explaining as we have already told. And when he begged to be liberated, she said, "Lo! the set time has come, and I must die; but I will so cause it that in a few days, after my death, you will be healed." And so it happened. For she died at the time fixed by the devil, and within thirty days the priest found himself completely healed in one night. The name of that priest is Father Hässlin, and he lives yet in the diocese of Strasburg.

Similarly in the diocese of Basel, in the village called Buchel, near the town of Gewyll, this happened. A certain woman was taken, and finally burned, who for six years had had an Incubus

devil, even when she was lying in bed by the side of her husband. And this she did three times a week, on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and on some of the other more [holy nights](#). But the homage she had given to the devil was of such a sort that she was bound to dedicate herself body and soul to him for ever, after seven years. But God provided mercifully: for she was taken in the sixth year and condemned to the fire, and having truly and completely confessed, is believed to have obtained pardon from God. For she went most willingly to her death, saying that she would gladly suffer an even more terrible death, if only she could be set free from and escape the power of the devil.

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[Question I, Chapter III](#)

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“De Natura Daemonis.” “De Diuinatione Daemonum,” written 406-11. Migne, “Patres Latini,” XL, pp. 581-92.

“Holy Nights.” Saturday, however, was always particularly avoided as being the day sacred to the Immaculate Mother of God. See my “History of Witchcraft,” c. IV, pp. 115-16.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER III

How they are Transported from Place to Place.

And now we must consider their ceremonies and in what manner they proceed in their operations, first in respect of their actions towards themselves and in their own persons. And among their chief operations are being bodily transported from place to place, and to practise carnal connexion with Incubus devils, which we shall treat of separately, beginning with their bodily vectification. But here it must be noted that this transvection offers a difficulty, which has often been mentioned, arising from one single authority, where it is said: It cannot be admitted as true that certain wicked women, perverted by Satan and seduced by the illusions and phantasms of devils, do actually, as they believe and profess, ride in the night-time on certain beasts with Diana, a goddess of the Pagans, or with Herodias and an innumerable multitude of women, and in the untimely silence of night pass over immense tracts of land, and have to obey her in all things as their Mistress, etc. Wherefore the priest of God ought to preach to the people that this is altogether false, and that such phantasms are sent not by God, but by an evil Spirit to confuse the minds of the faithful. For Satan himself transforms himself into various shapes and forms; and by deluding in dreams the mind which he holds captive, leads it through devious ways, etc.

And there are those who, taking their example from S. Germain and a certain other man who kept watch over his daughter to determine this matter, sometimes preach that this is an altogether impossible thing; and that it is indiscreet to ascribe to witches and their operations such levitations, as well as the injuries which happen to men, animals, and the fruits of the earth; since just as they are the victims of phantasy in their transvections, so also are they deluded in the matter of the harm they wreak on living creatures.

But this opinion was refuted as heretical in the First Question; for it leaves out of account the Divine permission with regard to the devil's power, which extends to even greater things than this: and it is contrary to the meaning of Sacred Scripture, and has caused intolerable damage to Holy Church, since now for many years, thanks to this pestiferous doctrine, witches have remained unpunished, because the secular courts have lost their power to punish them. Therefore the diligent reader will consider what was there set down for the stamping out of that opinion, and will for the present note how they are transported, and in what ways this is possible, of which some examples will be adduced.

It is shown in various ways that they can be bodily transported; and first, from the operations of other Magicians. For if they could not be transported, it would either be because God does not permit it, or because the devil cannot do this since it is contrary to nature. It cannot be for the first reason, for both greater and less things can be done by the permission of God; and greater things are often done both to children and men, even to just men confirmed in grace.

For when it is asked whether substitutions of children can be affected by the work of devils, and whether the devil can carry a man from place to place even against his will; to the first

question the answer is, Yes. For William of Paris says in the last part of his *De Uniuerso*: Substitutions of children are, with God's permission, possible, so that the devil can affect a change of the child or even a transformation. For such children are always miserable and crying; and although four or five mothers could hardly support enough milk for them, they never grow fat, yet are heavy beyond the ordinary. But this should neither be affirmed nor denied to women, on account of the great fear which it may cause them, but they should be instructed to ask the opinion of learned men. For God permits this on account of the sins of the parents, in that sometimes men curse their pregnant wives, saying, May you be carrying a devil! or some such thing. In the same way impatient women often say something of the sort. And many examples have been given by other men, some of them pious men.

For Vincent of Beauvais (*Spec. Hist.*, XXVI, 43) related a story told by [S. Peter Damian](#) of a five-year-old son of a nobleman, who was for the time living in a monastery; and one night he was carried out of the monastery into a locked mill, where he was found in the morning. And when he was questioned, he said that he had been carried by some men to a great feast and bidden to eat; and afterwards he was put into the mill through the roof.

And what of those Magicians whom we generally call Necromancers, who are often carried through the air by devils for long distances? And sometimes they even persuade others to go with them on a horse, which is not really a horse but a devil in that form, and, as they say, thus warn their companions not to make the sign of the Cross.

And though we are two who write this book, one of us has very often seen and known such men. For there is a man who was once a scholar, and is now believed to be a priest in the diocese of Freising, who used to say that at one time he had been bodily carried through the air by a devil, and taken to the most remote parts.

There lives another priest in Oberdorf, a town near Landshut, who was at that time a friend of that one of us, who saw with his own eyes such a transportation, and tells how the man was borne on high with arms stretched out, shouting but not whimpering. And the cause, as he tells it, was as follows. A number of scholars had met together to drink beer, and they all agreed that the one who fetched the beer should not have to pay anything. And so one of them was going to fetch the beer, and on opening the door saw a thick cloud before the grunsel, and returning in terror told his companions why he would not go for the drink. Then that one of them who was carried away said angrily: "Even if the devil were there, I shall fetch the drink." And, going out, he was carried through the air in the sight of all the others.

And indeed it must be confessed that such things can happen not only to those who are awake, but also to men who are asleep; namely, they can be bodily transported through the air while they are fast asleep.

This is clear in the case of certain men who walk in their sleep on the roofs of houses and over the highest buildings, and no one can oppose their progress either on high or below. And if they are called by their own names by the other bystanders, they immediately fall crashing to the ground.

Many think, and not without reason, that this is devils' work. For devils are of many different kinds, and some, who fell from the lower choir of Angels, are tortured as if for smaller sins with lighter punishments as well as the punishment of damnation which they must suffer eternally. And these cannot hurt anybody, at least not seriously, but for the most part carry out only practical jokes. And others are Incubi or Succubi, who punish men in the night, defiling them in the sin of lechery. It is not wonderful if they are given also to horse-play such as this.

The truth can be deduced from the words of Cassian, *Collationes* I, where he says that there is no doubt that there are as many different unclean spirits as there are different desires in men. For it is manifest that some of them, which the common people call Fauns, and we call Trolls, which abound in Norway, are such buffoons and jokers that they haunt certain places and roads and, without being able to do any hurt to those who pass by, are content with mocking and deluding them, and try to weary them rather than hurt them. And some of them only visit men with harmless nightmares. But others are so furious and truculent that they are not content to afflict with an atrocious dilation the bodies of those whom they inflate, but even come rushing from on high and hasten to strike them with the most savage blows. Our author means that they do not only possess men, but torture them horribly, as did those which are described in *S. Matthew* viii.

From this we can conclude, first that it must not be said that witches cannot be locally transported because God does not permit it. For if He permits it in the case of the just and innocent, and of other Magicians, how should He not in the case of those who are totally dedicated to the devil? And we say with all reverence: Did not the devil take up Our Saviour, and carry Him up to a high place, as the Gospel testifies?

Neither can the second argument of our opponents be conceded, that the devil cannot do this thing. For it has already been shown that he has so great natural power, exceeding all corporeal power, that there is no earthly power that can be compared with him; as it is said: "There is no power on earth that can be compared with him," etc. Indeed the natural power or virtue which is in Lucifer is so great that there is none greater among the good Angels in Heaven. For just as he excelled all the Angels in his nature, and not his nature, but only his grace, was diminished by his Fall, so that nature still remains in him, although it is darkened and bound. Wherefore the gloss on that "There is no power on earth" says: Although he excels all things, yet he is subject to the merits of the Saints.

Two objections which someone may bring forward are not valid. First, that man's soul could resist him, and that the text seems to speak of one devil in particular, since it speaks in the singular, namely Lucifer. And because it was he who tempted Christ in the wilderness, and seduced the first man, he is now bound in chains. And the other Angels are not so powerful, since he excels them all. Therefore the other spirits cannot transport wicked men through the air from place to place.

These arguments have no force. For, to consider the Angels first, even the least Angel is incomparably superior to all human power, as can be proved in many ways. First, a spiritual is stronger than a corporeal power, and so is the power of an Angel, or even of the soul, greater than that of the body. Secondly, as to the soul; every bodily shape owes its individuality to matter, and, in the case of human beings, to the fact that a soul informs it; but immaterial forms are absolute intelligences, and therefore have an absolute and more universal power. For this reason, the soul when joined to the body cannot in this way suddenly transfer its body locally or raise it up in the air; although it could easily do so, with God's permission, if it were separate from its body. Much more, then, is this possible to an entirely immaterial spirit, such as a good or bad Angel. For a good Angel transported [Habacuc](#) in a moment from Judaea to Chaldaea. And for this reason it is concluded that those who by night are carried in their sleep over high buildings are not carried by their own souls, nor by the influence of the stars, but by some mightier power, as was shown above.

Thirdly, it is the nature of the body to be moved, as to place, directly by a spiritual nature; and, as Aristotle says, *Physics*, VIII, local motion is the first of bodily motions; and he proves this

by saying that local motion is not intrinsically in the power of any body as such, but is due to some exterior force.

Wherefore it is concluded, not so much from the holy Doctors as from the Philosophers, that the highest bodies, that is, the stars, are moved by spiritual essences, and by separate Intelligences which are good both by nature and in intention. For we see that the soul is the prime and chief cause of local motion in the body.

It must be said, therefore, that neither in its physical capacity nor in that of its soul can the human body resist being suddenly transported from place to place, with God's permission, by a spiritual essence good both in intention and by nature, when the good, who are confirmed in grace, are transported; or by an essence good by nature, but not good in intention, when the wicked are transported. Any who wish may refer to S. Thomas in three articles in Part I, question 90, and again in his question concerning Sin, and also in the *Second Book of Sentences*, dist. 7, on the power of devils over bodily effects.

Now the following is their method of being transported. They take the [unguent](#) which, as we have said, they make at the devil's instruction from the limbs of children, particularly of those whom they have killed before baptism, and anoint with it a chair or a broomstick; whereupon they are immediately carried up into the air, either by day or by night, and either visibly or, if they wish, invisibly; for the devil can conceal a body by the interposition of some other substance, as was shown in the First Part of the treatise where we spoke of the glammers and illusions caused by the devil. And although the devil for the most part performs this by means of this unguent, to the end that children should be deprived of the grace of baptism and of salvation, yet he often seems to affect the same transvection without its use. For at times he transports the witches on animals, which are not true animals but devils in that form; and sometimes even without any exterior help they are visibly carried solely by the operation of the devil's power.

Here is an instance of a visible transportation in the day-time. In the town of Waldshut on the Rhine, in the diocese of Constance, there was a certain witch who was so detested by the townsfolk that she was not invited to the celebration of a wedding which, however, nearly all the other townsfolk were present. Being indignant because of this, and wishing to be revenged, she summoned a devil and, telling him the cause of her vexation, asked him to raise a hailstorm and drive all the wedding guests from their dancing; and the devil agreed, and raising her up, carried her through the air to a hill near the town, in the sight of some shepherds. And since, as she afterwards confessed, she had no water to pour into the trench (for this, as we shall show, is the method they use to raise hailstorms), she made a small trench and filled it with her urine instead of water, and stirred it with her finger, after their custom, with the devil standing by. Then the devil suddenly raised that liquid up and sent a violent storm of hailstones which fell only on the dancers and townsfolk. And when they had dispersed and were discussing among themselves the cause of that storm, the witch shortly afterwards entered the town; and this greatly aroused their suspicions. But when the shepherds had told what they had seen, their suspicions became almost a certainty. So she was arrested, and confessed that she had done this thing because she had not been invited to the wedding: and for this, and for many other witchcrafts which she had perpetrated, she was burned.

Question I, Chapter III Continued

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“S. Peter Damian.” Doctor of the Church, Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, born at Ravenna 1007; died at Faenza, 21 February, 1072. His works, which have been more than once collected, may be conveniently found in Migne, “Patres Latini,” CXLIV-CXLV.

“Habacuc.” “Daniel” xiv, 32-38:

32. Now there was in Judea a prophet called Habacuc, and he had boiled pottage, and had broken bread in a bowl: and was going into the field, to carry it to the reapers.

33. And the angel of the Lord said to Habacuc: Carry the dinne which thou hast into Babylon to Daniel, who is the lions' den.

34. And Habacuc said: Lord, I never saw Babylon, nor do I know the den.

35. And the angel of the Lord took him by the top of his head, and carried him by the hair on his head, and set him in Babylon over the den in the force of his spirit.

36. And Habacuc cried, saying: O Daniel, thou servant of God, take the dinner that God hath sent thee.

37. And Daniel said: Thous hast remembered me, O God, and thou hast not forsaken them that love thee.

38. And Daniel arose and ate. And the angel of the Lord presently set Habacuc again in his own place.

Henry Boguet “Discours des Sorciers,” Lyons, 1590, XVI, 4, points out that this flying ointment is of itself useless. The actual formulae for its confection have been preserved and the employment thereof is to be considered, say most demonologists, as a piece of vain and empty ceremony of Satan, yet more to delude his votaries.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER III CONTINUED

And since the public report of this sort of transvection is continually being spread even among the common people, it is unnecessary to add further proof of it here. But we hope that this will suffice to refute those who either deny altogether that there are such transvections, or try to maintain that they are only imaginary or phantastical. And, indeed, it would be a matter of small importance if such men were left in their error, were it not that this error tends to the damage of the Faith. For notice that, not content with that error, they do not fear to maintain and publish others also, to the increase of witches and the detriment of the Faith. For they assert that all the witchcraft which is truly and actually ascribed to witches as instruments of the devil is only so ascribed in imagination and illusion, as if they were really harmless, just as their transvection is only phantastic. And for this reason many witches remain unpunished, to the great dispraise of the Creator, and to their own most heavy increase.

The arguments on which they base their fallacy cannot be conceded. For first they advance the chapter of the Canon (*Episcopi*, 26, q. 5), where it is said that witches are only transported in imagination; but who is so foolish as to conclude from this that they cannot also be bodily transported? Similarly at the end of that chapter it is set down that whoever believes that a man can be changed for the better or the worse, or can be transformed into another shape, is to be thought worse than an infidel or a pagan; but who could conclude from this that men cannot be transformed into beasts by a glamour, or that they cannot be changed from health to sickness and from better to worse? They who so scratch at the surface of the words of the Canon hold an opinion which is contrary to that of all the holy Doctors, and, indeed, against the teaching of the Holy Scripture.

For the contrary opinion is abundantly proved by what has been written in various places in the First Part of this treatise; and it is necessary to study the inner meaning of the words of the Canon. And this was examined in the First Question of the First Part of the treatise, in refuting the second of three errors which are there condemned, and where it is said that four things are to be preached to the people. For they are transported both bodily and phantastically, as is proved by their own confessions, not only of those who have been burned, but also of others who have returned to penitence and the Faith.

Among such there was the woman in the town of Breisach whom we asked whether they could be transported only in imagination, or actually in the body; and she answered that it was possible in both ways. For if they do not wish to be bodily transferred, but want to know all that is being done in a meeting of their companions, then they observe the following procedure. In the name of all the devils they lie down to sleep on their left side, and then a sort of bluish vapour comes from their mouth, through which they can clearly see what is happening. But if they wish to be bodily transported, they must observe the method which has been told.

Besides, even if that Canon be understood in its bare meaning without any explanation, who

is so dense as to maintain on that account that all their witchcraft and injuries are phantastic and imaginary, when the contrary is evident to the senses of everybody? Especially since there are many species of superstition, namely, fourteen; among which the species of witches holds the highest degree in spells and injuries, and the species of Pythoness, to which they can be reduced, which is only able to be transported in imagination, holds the lowest degree.

And we do not concede that their error can be substantiated by the Legends of [S. Germain](#) and certain others. For it was possible for the devils to lie down themselves by the side of the sleeping husbands, during the time when a watch was being kept on the wives, just as if they were sleeping with their husbands. And we do not say that this was done for any reverence felt for the Saint; but the case is put that the opposite of what is set down in the Legend may not be believed to be impossible.

In the same way all other objections can be answered: that it is found that some witches are transported only in imagination, but that it is also found in the writings of the Doctors that many have been bodily transported. Whoever wishes may refer to Thomas of Brabant in his book about *Bees*, and he will find many wonderful things concerning both the imaginary and the bodily transvection of men.

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[Question I, Chapter IV](#)

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“S. Germain.” Bishop of Auxerre, born circa 380; died at Ravenna, 31 July, 448. His body was brought back to Auxerre, and later there arose the celebrated Benedictine Abbey known as St. Germain’s.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER IV

Here follows the Way whereby Witches copulate with those Devils known as Incubi.

As to the method in which witches copulate with Incubus devils, six points are to be noted. First, as to the devil and the body which he assumes, of what element it is formed. Second, as to the act, whether it is always accompanied with the injection of semen received from some other man. Third, as to the time and place, whether one time is more favourable than another for this practice. Fourth, whether the act is visible to the women, and whether only those who were begotten in this way are so visited by devils. Fifth, whether it applies only to those who were offered to the devil at birth by midwives. Sixth, whether the actual venereal pleasure is greater or less in this act. And we will speak first of the matter and quality of the body which the devil assumes.

It must be said that he assumes an aerial body, and that it is in some respects terrestrial, in so far as it has an earthly property through condensation; and this is explained as follows. The air cannot of itself take definite shape, except the shape of some other body in which it is included. And in that case it is not bound by its own limits, but by those of something else; and one part of the air continues into the next part. Therefore he cannot simply assume an aerial body as such.

Know, moreover, that the air is in every way a most changeable and fluid matter: and a sign of this is the fact that when any have tried to cut or pierce with a sword the body assumed by a devil, they have not been able to; for the divided parts of the air at once join together again. From this it follows that air is in itself a very competent matter, but because it cannot take shape unless some other terrestrial matter is joined with it, therefore it is necessary that the air which forms the devil's assumed body should be in some way inspissated, and approach the property of the earth, while still retaining its true property as air. And devils and disembodied spirits can effect this condensation by means of gross vapours raised from the earth, and by collecting them together into shapes in which they abide, not as defilers of them, but only as their motive power which give to that body the formal appearance of life, in very much the same way as the soul informs the body to which it is joined. They are, moreover, in these assumed and shaped bodies like a sailor in a ship which the wind moves.

So when it is asked of what sort is the body assumed by the devil, it is to be said that with regard to its material, it is one thing to speak of the beginning of its assumption, and another thing to speak of its end. For in the beginning it is just air; but in the end it is inspissated air, partaking of some of the properties of the earth. And all this the devils, with God's permission, can do of their own nature; for the spiritual nature is superior to the bodily. Therefore the bodily nature must obey the devils in respect of local motion, though not in respect of the assumption of natural shapes, either accidental or substantial, except in the case of some small creatures (and then only with the help of some other agent, as has been hinted before). But as to local motion, no shape is beyond their power; thus they can move them as they wish, in such circumstances as they will.

From this there may arise an incidental question as to what should be thought when a good or bad Angel performs some of the functions of life by means of true natural bodies, and not in aerial bodies; as in the case of Balaam's ass, through which the Angel spoke, and when the devils take possession of bodies. It is to be said that those bodies are not called assumed, but occupied. See S. Thomas, II. 8, Whether Angels assume bodies. But let us keep strictly to our argument.

In what way is it to be understood that devils talk with witches, see them, hear them, eat with them, and copulate with them? And this is the second part of this first difficulty.

For the first, it is to be said that three things are required for true conversation: namely, lungs to draw in the air; and this is not only for the sake of producing sound, but also to cool the heart; and even mutes have this necessary quality.

Secondly, it is necessary that some percussion be made of a body in the air, as a greater or less sound is made when one beats wood in the air, or rings a bell. For when a substance that is susceptible to sound is struck by a sound-producing instrument, it gives out a sound according to its size, which is received in the air and multiplied to the ears of the hearer, to whom, if he is far off, it seems to come through space.

Thirdly, a voice is required; and it may be said that what is called Sound in inanimate bodies is called Voice in living bodies. And here the tongue strikes the respirations of air against an instrument or living natural organ provided by God. And this is not a bell, which is called a sound, whereas this is a voice. And this third requisite may clearly be exemplified by the second; and I have set this down that preachers may have a method of teaching the people.

And fourthly, it is necessary that he who forms the voice should mean to express by means of that voice some concept of the mind to someone else, and that he should himself understand what he is saying; and so manage his voice by successively striking his teeth with his tongue in his mouth, by opening and shutting his lips, and by sending the air struck in his mouth into the outer air, that in this way the sound is reproduced in order in the ears of the hearer, who then understands his meaning.

To return to the point. Devils have no lungs or tongue, though they can show the latter, as well as teeth and lips, artificially made according to the condition of their body; therefore they cannot truly and properly speak. But since they have understanding, and when they wish to express their meaning, then, by some disturbance of the air included in their assumed body, not of air breathed in and out as in the case of men, they produce, not voices, but sounds which have some likeness to voices, and send them articulately through the outside air to the ears of the hearer. And that the likeness of a voice can be made without respiration of air is clear from the case of other animals which do not breathe, but are said to make a sound, as do also certain other instruments, as Aristotle says in the *de Anima*. For certain fishes, when they are caught, suddenly utter a cry outside the water, and die.

All this is applicable to what follows, so far as the point where we treat of the generative function, but not as regards good Angels. If anyone wishes to inquire further into the matter of devils speaking in possessed bodies, he may refer to S. Thomas in the *Second Book of Sentences*, dist. 8, art. 5. For in that case they use the bodily organs of the possessed body; since they occupy those bodies in respect of the limits of their corporeal quantity, but not in respect of the limits of their essence, either of the body or of the soul. Observe a distinction between substance and quantity, or accident. But this is impertinent.

For now we must say in what manner they see and hear. Now sight is of two kinds, spiritual and corporeal, and the former infinitely excels the latter; for it can penetrate, and is not hindered by distance, owing to the faculty of light of which it makes use. Therefore it must be said that in

no way does an Angel, either good or bad, see with the eyes of its assumed body, nor does it use any bodily property as it does in speaking, when it uses the air and the vibration of the air to produce sound which becomes reproduced in the ears of the hearer. Wherefore their eyes are painted eyes. And they freely appear to men in these likenesses that they may manifest to them their natural properties and converse with them spiritually by these means.

For with this purpose the holy Angels have often appeared to the Fathers at the command of God and with His permission. And the bad angels manifest themselves to wicked men in order that men, recognizing their qualities, may associate themselves with them, here in sin, and elsewhere in punishment.

S. Dionysius, at the end of his *Celestial Hierarchy*, says: In all parts of the human body the Angel teaches us to consider their properties: concluding that since corporeal vision is an operation of the living body through a bodily organ, which devils lack, therefore in their assumed bodies, just as they have the likeness of limbs, so that have the likeness of their functions.

And we can speak in the same way of their hearing, which is far finer than that of the body; for it can know the concept of the mind and the conversation of the soul more subtly than can a man by hearing the mental concept through the medium of spoken words. See S. Thomas, the *Second Book of Sentences*, dist. 8. For if the secret wishes of a man are read in his face, and physicians can tell the thoughts of the heart from the heart-beats and the state of the pulse, all the more can such things be known by devils.

And we may say as to eating, that in the complete act of eating there are four processes. Mastication in the mouth, swallowing into the stomach, digestion in the stomach, and fourthly, metabolism of the necessary nutriment and ejection of what is superfluous. All Angels can perform the first two processes of eating in their assumed bodies, but not the third and fourth; but instead of digesting and ejecting they have another power by which the food is suddenly dissolved in the surrounding matter. In Christ the process of eating was in all respects complete, since He had the nutritive and metabolistic powers; not, be it said, for the purpose of converting food into His own body, for those powers were, like His body, glorified; so that the food was suddenly dissolved in His body, as when one throws water on to fire.

*How in Modern Time Witches perform the Carnal Act with Incubus Devils,
and how they are Multiplied by this Means.*

But no difficulty arises out of what has been said, with regard to our principal subject, which is the carnal act which Incubi in an assumed body perform with witches: unless perhaps anyone doubts whether modern witches practise such abominable coitus; and whether witches had their origin in this abomination.

In answering these two doubts we shall say, as to the former of them, something of the activities of the witches who lived in olden times, about 1400 years before the Incarnation of Our Lord. It is, for example, unknown whether they were addicted to these filthy practises as modern witches have been since that time; for so far as we know history tells us nothing on this subject. But no one who reads the histories can doubt that there have always been witches, and that by their evil works much harm has been done to men, animals, and the fruits of the earth, and that Incubus and Succubus devils have always existed; for the traditions of the Canons and the holy Doctors have left and handed down to posterity many things concerning them through many hundreds of years. Yet there is this difference, that in times long past the Incubus devils used to infest women against their wills, as is often shown by Nider in his *Formicarius*, and by Thomas of Brabant in his

book on the *Universal Good*, or on *Bees*.

But the theory that modern witches are tainted with this sort of diabolic filthiness is not substantiated only in our opinion, since the expert testimony of the witches themselves has made all these things credible; and that they do not now, as in times past, subject themselves unwillingly, but willingly embrace this most foul and miserable servitude. For how many women have been left to be punished by secular law in various dioceses, especially in Constance and the town of Ratisbon, who have been for many years addicted to these abominations, some from their twentieth and some from their twelfth or thirteenth year, and always with a total or partial abnegation of the Faith? All the inhabitants of those places are witnesses of it. For without reckoning those who secretly repented, and those who returned to the Faith, no less than forty-eight have been burned in five years. And there was no question of credulity in accepting their stories because they turned to free repentance; for they all agreed in this, namely, that there were bound to indulge in these lewd practices in order that the ranks of their perfidy might be increased. But we shall treat of these individually in the Second Part of this work, where their particular deeds are described; omitting those which came under the notice of our colleague the Inquisitor of Como in the County of Burbia, who in the space of one year, which was the year of grace 1485, caused forty-one witches to be burned; who all publicly affirmed, as it is said, that they had practised these abominations with devils. Therefore this matter is fully substantiated by eye-witnesses, by hearsay, and the testimony of credible witnesses.

As for the second doubt, whether witches had their origin from these abominations, we may say with S. Augustine that it is true that all the superstitious arts had their origin in a pestilent association of men with devils. For he says so in his work *On the Christian Doctrine*: All this sort of practices, whether of trifling or of noxious superstition, arose from some pestilent association of men with devils, as though some pact of infidel and guileful friendship had been formed, and they are all utterly to be repudiated. Notice here that it is manifest that, as there are various kinds of superstition or magic arts, and various societies of those who practise them; and as among the fourteen kinds of that art the species of witches is the worst, since they have not a tacit but an overt and expressed pact with the devil, and more than this, have to acknowledge a form of devil-worship through abjuring the Faith; therefore it follows that witches hold the worst kind of association with devils, with especial reference to the behaviour of women, who always delight in vain things.

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[Question I, Chapter IV continued . . .](#)

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THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER IV CONTINUED

Notice also S. Thomas, the *Second Book of Sentences* (dist. 4, art. 4), in the solution of an argument, where he asks whether those begotten in this way by devils are more powerful than other men. He answers that this is the truth, basing his belief not only on the text of Scripture in *Genesis* vi: And the same became the mighty men which were of old; but also on the following reason. Devils know how to ascertain the virtue in semen: first, by the temperament of him from whom the semen is obtained; secondly, by knowing what woman is most fitted for the reception of that semen; thirdly, by knowing what constellation is favourable to that corporeal effect; and we may add, fourthly, from their own words we learn that those whom they beget have the best sort of disposition for devil's work. When all these causes so concur, it is concluded that men born in this way are powerful and big in body.

Therefore, in return to the question whether witches had their origin in these abominations, we shall say that they originated from some pestilent mutual association with devils, as is clear from our first knowledge of them. But no one can affirm with certainty that they did not increase and multiply by means of these foul practices, although devils commit this deed for the sake not of pleasure but of corruption. And this appears to be the order of the process. A Succubus devil draws the semen from a wicked man; and if he is that man's own particular devil, and does not wish to make himself an Incubus to a witch, he passes that semen on to the devil deputed to a woman or witch; and this last, under some constellation that favours his purpose that the man or woman so born should be strong in the practice of witchcraft, becomes the Incubus to the witch.

And it is no objection that those of whom the text speaks were not witches but only giants and famous and powerful men; for, as was said before, witchcraft was not perpetuated in the time of the law of Nature, because of the recent memory of the Creation of the world, which left no room for Idolatry. But when the wickedness of man began to increase, the devil found more opportunity to disseminate this kind of perfidy. Nevertheless, it is not to be understood that those who were said to be famous men were necessarily so called by reason of their good virtues.

Whether the Relations of an Incubus Devil with a Witch are always accompanied by the Injection of Semen.

To this question it is answered that the devil has a thousand ways and means of inflicting injury, and from the time of his first Fall has tried to destroy the unity of the Church, and in every way to subvert the human race. Therefore no infallible rule can be stated as to this matter, but there is this probable distinction: that a witch is either old and sterile, or she is not. And if she is, then he naturally associates with the witch without the injection of semen, since it would be of no use, and the devil avoids superfluity in his operations as far as he can. But if she is not sterile, he approaches her in the way of carnal delectation which is procured for the witch. And should be disposed to pregnancy, then if he can conveniently possess the semen extracted from some man, he

does not delay to approach her with it for the sake of infecting her progeny.

But it is asked whether he is able to collect the semen emitted in some nocturnal pollution in sleep, just as he collects that which is spent in the carnal act, the answer is that it is probably that he cannot, though others hold a contrary opinion. For it must be noted that, as has been said, the devils pay attention to the generative virtue of the semen, and such virtue is more abundant and better preserved in semen obtained by the carnal act, being wasted in the semen that is due to nocturnal pollutions in sleep, which arises only from the superfluity of the humours and is not emitted with so great generative virtue. Therefore it is believed that he does not make use of such semen for the generation of progeny, unless perhaps he knows that the necessary virtue is present in that semen.

But this also cannot altogether be denied, that even in the case of a married witch who has been impregnated by her husband, the devil can, by the commixture of another semen, infect that which has been conceived.

Whether the Incubus operates more at one Time than another: and similarly of the Place.

To the question whether the devil observes times and places it is to be said that, apart from his observation of certain times and constellations when his purpose is to effect the pollution of the progeny, he also observes certain times when his object is not pollution, but the causing of venereal pleasure on the part of the witch; and these are the most sacred times of the whole year, such as Christmas, Easter, Pentacost, and other Feast days.

And the devils do this for three reasons. First, that in this way witches may become imbued not only with the vice of perfidy through apostasy from the Faith, but also with that of Sacrilege, and that the greater offence may be done to the Creator, and the heavier damnation rest upon the souls of the witches.

The second reason is that when God is so heavily offended, He allows them greater power of injuring even innocent men by punishing them either in their affairs or their bodies. For when it is said: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," etc., this refers only to eternal punishment, for very often the innocent are punished with temporal afflictions on account of the sins of others. Wherefore in another place God says: ["I am a mighty and jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers unto the third and fourth generation."](#) Such punishment was exemplified in the children of the men of Sodom, who were destroyed for their fathers' sins.

The third reason is that they have greater opportunity to observe many people, especially young girls, who on Feast Days are more intent on idleness and curiosity, and are therefore more easily seduced by old witches. And the following happened in the native country of one of us Inquisitors (for there are two of us collaborating in this work).

A certain young girl, a devout virgin, was solicited one Feast Day by an old woman to go with her upstairs to a room where there were some very beautiful young men. And when she consented, and as they were going upstairs with the old woman leading the way, she warned the girl not to make the sign of the Cross. And though she agreed to this, yet she secretly crossed herself. Consequently it happened that, when they had gone up, the virgin saw no one, because the devils who were there were unable to show themselves in assumed bodies to that virgin. And the old woman cursed her, saying: Depart in the name of all the devils; why did you cross yourself? This I had from the frank relation of that good and honest maiden.

A fourth reason can be added, namely, that they can in this way more easily seduce men, by causing them to think that if God permits such things to be done at the most holy times, it cannot

be such a heavy sin as if He did not permit them at such times.

With regard to the question whether the favour one place more than another, it is to be said that it is proved by the words and actions of witches that they are quite unable to commit these abominations in sacred places. And in this can be seen the efficacy of the Guardian Angels, that such places are revered. And further, witches assert that they never have any peace except at the time of Divine Service when they are present in the church; and therefore they are the first to enter and the last to leave the church. Nevertheless, they are bound to observe certain other abominable ceremonies at the command of the devils, such as to spit on the ground at the Elevation of the Host, or to utter, either verbally or otherwise, the filthiest thoughts, as: I wish you were in such or such a place. This matter is touched upon in the Second Part.

Whether Incubi and Succubi Commit this Act Visibly on the part of the Witch, or on the part of Bystanders.

As to whether they commit these abominations together visibly or invisibly, it is to be said that, in all the cases of which we have had knowledge, the devil has always operated in a form visible to the witch; for there is no need for him to approach her invisibly, because of the pact of federation with him that has been expressed. But with regard to any bystanders, the witches themselves have often been seen lying on their backs in the fields or the woods, naked up to the very navel, and it has been apparent from the disposition of those limbs and members which pertain to the venereal act and orgasm, as also from the agitation of their legs and thighs, that, all invisibly to the bystanders, they have been copulating with Incubus devils; yet sometimes, howbeit this is rare, at the end of the act a very black vapour, of about the stature of a man, rises up into the air from the witch. And the reason is that that Schemer knows that he can in this way seduce or pervert the minds of girls or other men who are standing by. But of these matters, and how they have been performed in many places, in the town of Ratisbon, and on the estate of the nobles of Rappolstein, and in certain other countries, we will treat in the Second Part.

It is certain also that the following has happened. Husbands have actually seen Incubus devils swiving their wives, although they have thought that they were not devils but men. And when they have taken up a weapon and tried to run them through, the devil has suddenly disappeared, making himself invisible. And then their wives have thrown their arms around them, although they have sometimes been hurt, and railed at their husbands, mocking them, and asking them if they had eyes, or whether they were possessed of devils.

That Incubus Devils do not Infest only those Women who have been Begotten by their Filthy Deeds or those who have been Offered to them by Midwives, but All Indifferently with Greater or Less Venereal Delectation.

In conclusion, finally, it can be said that these Incubus devils will not only infest those women who have been generated by means of such abominations, or those who have been offered to them by midwives, but that they try with all their might, by means of witches who are bawds or hot whores, to seduce all the devout and chaste maidens in that whole district or town. For this is well known by the constant experience of Magistrates; and in the town of Ratisbon, when certain witches were burned, these wretches affirmed, before their final sentence, that they had been commanded by their Masters to use ever endeavour to effect the subversion of pious maids and widows.

If it be asked: Whether the venereal delectation is greater or less with the Incubus devils in assumed bodies than it is in like circumstances with men in a true physical body, we may say this: It seems that, although the pleasure should naturally be greater when like disports with like, yet that cunning Enemy can so bring together the active and passive elements, not indeed naturally, but in such qualities of warmth and temperament, that he seems to excite no less degree of concupiscence. But this matter will be discussed more fully later with reference to the qualities of the feminine sex.

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[Question I, Chapter V](#)

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“Generation.” “Exodus” xx, 5: xxxiv, 7.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER V

Witches commonly perform their Spells through the Sacraments of the Church. And how they Impair the Powers of Generation, and how they may Cause other Ills to happen to God's Creatures of all kinds. But herein we except the Question of the Influence of the Stars.

But now there are several things to be noted concerning their methods of bringing injury upon other creatures of both sexes, and upon the fruits of the earth: first with regard to men, then with regard to beasts, and thirdly with regard to the fruits of the earth. And as to men, first, how they can cast an obstructive spell on the procreant forces, and even on the venereal act, so that a woman cannot conceive, or a man cannot perform the act. Secondly, how that act is obstructed sometimes with regard to one woman but not another. Thirdly, how they take away the virile member as though it were altogether torn away from the body. Fourthly, if it is possible to distinguish whether any of the above injuries have been caused by a devil on his own account, or if it has been through the agency of a witch. Fifthly, how witches change men and women into beasts by some prestige or glamour. Sixthly, how witch midwives in various ways kill that which has been conceived in the mother's womb; and when they do not do this, offer the children to devils. And lest these things should seem incredible, they have been proved in the First Part of this work by questions and answers to arguments; to which, if necessary, the doubtful reader may turn back for the purpose of investigating the truth.

For the present our object is only to adduce actual facts and examples which have been found by us, or have been written by others in detestation of so great a crime, to substantiate those former arguments in case they should be difficult for anyone to understand; and, by those things that are related in this Second Part, to bring back to the Faith and away from their error those who think there are no witches, and that no witchcraft can be done in the world.

And with regard to the first class of injuries with which they afflict the human race, it is to be noted that, apart from the methods by which they injure other creatures, they have six ways of injuring humanity. And one is, to induce an evil love in a man for a woman, or in a woman for a man. The second is to plant hatred or jealousy in anyone. The third is to bewitch them so that a man cannot perform the genital act with a woman, or conversely a woman with a man; or by various means to procure an abortion, as has been said before. The fourth is to cause some disease in any of the human organs. The fifth, to take away life. The sixth, to deprive them of reason.

In this connexion it should be said that, saving the influence of the stars, the devils can by their natural power in every way cause real defects and infirmities, and this by their natural spiritual power, which is superior to any bodily power. For no one infirmity is quite like another, and this is equally true of natural defects in which there is no physical infirmity. Therefore they proceed by different methods to cause each different infirmity or defect. And of those we shall give instances in the body of this work as the necessity arises.

But first, lest the reader's mind should be kept in any doubt as to why they have no power to

alter the influence of the stars, we shall say that there is a threefold reason. First, the stars are above them even in the region of punishment, which is the region of the lower mists; and this by reason of the duty which is assigned to them. See the First Part, Question II, where we dealt with Incubus and Succubus devils.

The second reason is that the stars are governed by the good Angels. See many places concerning the Powers which move the stars, and especially S. Thomas, part I, quest. 90. And in this matter the Philosophers agree with the Theologians.

Thirdly, it is on account of the general order and common good of the Universe. which would suffer general detriment if evil spirits were allowed to cause any alteration in the influence of the stars. Wherefore those changes which were miraculously caused in the Old or New Testament were done by God through the good Angels; as, for example, when the sun stood still for Joshua, or when it went backward for Hezekiah, or when it was supernaturally darkened at the Passion of Christ. But in all other matters, with God's permission, they can work their spells, either the devils themselves, or devils through the agency of witches; and, in fact, it is evident that they do so.

Secondly, it is to be noted that in all their methods of working injury they nearly always instruct witches to make their instruments of witchcraft by means of the Sacraments or sacramental things of the Church, or some holy thing consecrated to God: as when they sometimes place a waxen image under the Altar-cloth, or draw a thread through the Holy Chrism, or use some other consecrated thing in such a way. And there are three reasons for this.

For a similar reason they are wont to practise their witchcraft at the more sacred time of the year, especially at the Advent of Our Lord, and at Christmas. First, that by such means they may make men guilty of not only perfidy, but also sacrilege, by contaminating whatever is divine in them; and that so they may the more deeply offend God their Creator, damn their own souls, and cause many more to rush into sin.

Secondly, that God, being so heavily offended by men, may grant the devil greater power of tormenting them. For so says S. Gregory, that in His anger He sometimes grants the wicked their prayers and petitions, which He mercifully denies to others. And the third reason is that, by the seeming appearance of good, he may more easily deceive certain simple men, who think that they have performed some pious act and obtained the grace from God, whereas they have only sinned the more heavily.

A fourth reason also can be added touching the more sacred seasons and the New Year. For, according to S. Augustine, there are other mortal sins besides adultery by which the observance of the Festivals may be infringed. Superstition, moreover, and witchcraft arising from the most servile operations of the devil are contrary to the reverence that is due to God. Therefore, as has been said, he causes a man to fall more deeply, and the Creator is the more offended.

And of the New Year we may say, according to S. Isidore, *Etym.* VIII. 2, that Janus, from whom the month of January is named, which also begins on the Day of Circumcision, was an idol with two faces, as if one were the end of the old year and the other the beginning of the new, and, as it were, the protector and auspicious author of the coming year. And in honour of him, or rather of the devil in the form of that idol, the Pagans made much boisterous revelry, and were very merry among themselves, holding various dances and feasts. And concerning these Blessed Augustine makes mention in many places, and gives a very ample description of them in his Twenty-sixth Book.

And now bad Christians imitate these corruptions, turning them to lasciviousness when the run about at the time of [Carnival](#) with masks and jests and other superstitions. Similarly witches

use these revelries of the devil for their own advantage, and work their spells about the time of the New Year in respect of the Divine Offices and Worship; as on S. Andrew's Day and at Christmas.

And now, as to how they work their witchcraft, first by means of the Sacraments, and then by means of sacramental objects, we will refer to a few known facts, discovered by us in the Inquisition.

In a town which it is better not to name, for the sake of charity and expediency, when a certain witch received the Body of Our Lord, she suddenly lowered her head, as is the detestable habit of women, placed her garment near her mouth, and taking the Body of the Lord out of her mouth, wrapped it in a handkerchief; and afterwards, at the suggestion of the devil, placed it in a pot in which there was a toad, and hid it in the ground near her house by the storehouse, together with several other things, by means of which she had to work her [witchcraft](#). But with the help of God's mercy this great crime was detected and brought to light. For on the following day a workman was going on his business near that house, and heard a sound like a child crying; and when he had come near to the stone under which the pot had been hidden, he heard it much more clearly, and thinking that some child have been buried there by the woman, went to the Mayor or chief magistrate, and told him what had been done, as he thought, by the infanticide. And the Mayor quickly send his servants and found it to be as he had said. But they were unwilling to exhume the child, thinking it wiser to place a watch and wait to see if any woman came near the place; for they did not know that it was the Lord's Body that was hidden there. And so it happened that the same witch came to the place, and secretly hid to pot under her garment before their eyes. And when she was taken and questioned, she discovered her crime, saying that the Lord's Body had been hidden in the pot with a toad, so that by means of their dust she might be able to cause injuries at her will to men and other creatures.

It is also to be noted that when witches communicate they observe this custom, that, when they can do so without being noticed, they receive the Lord's Body under their tongue instead of on the top. And as far as can be seen, the reason is that they never wish to receive any remedy that might counteract their abjuration of the Faith, either by Confession or by receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist; and secondly, because in this way it is easier for them to take the Lord's Body out of their mouths so that they can apply it, as has been said, to their own uses, to the greater offence of the Creator.

For this reason all rectors of the Church and those who communicate the people are enjoined to take the utmost care when they communicate women that the mouth shall be well open and the tongue thrust well out, and their garments be kept quite clear. And the more care is taken in this respect, the more witches become known by this means.

Numberless other superstitions they practise by means of sacramental objects. Sometimes they place a waxen image or some aromatic substance under the [altar cloth](#), as we said before, and then hide it under the threshold of a house, so that the person for whom it is placed there may be bewitched on crossing over it. Countless instances could be brought forward, but these minor sorts of spells are proved by the greater.

Question I, Chapter VI

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“Carnival.” These Pagan practices are sternly reprobated in the “Liber Poenitentialis” of S. Theodore, seventh Archbishop of Canterbury. In Book XXXVII is written: “If anyone at the Kalends of January goeth about as a stag or a bull-calf, that is, making himself into a wild animal, and dressing in the skins of a herd animal, and putting on the heads of beast; those who in such wise transform themselves into the appearance of a wild animal, let them do penance for three years, because this is devilish.” See my “Geography of Witchcraft,” Chap. II, pp. 65-73. The Council of Auxerre in 578 (or 585) forbade anyone “to masquerade as a bull-calf or a stag on the first of January or to distribute devilish charms.”

“Witchcraft.” It is not unusual for Satanists to go to Holy Communion in various churches of a town, and instead of consuming the Host they spit God's Body from their mouths into a handkerchief or cloth and take it away to abuse in their horrid worship. In the notorious case of the Lancashire witches, at the first trial, 1612, James Device confessed “that upon Sheare Thursday was two yeares, his Grand-Mother Elizabeth Souternes alias Demdike, did bid him this Examinee goe to the Church to receive the Communion (they next day after being Good Friday), and then not to eate the Bread the Minister gave him, but to bring it and deliver it to such a thing as should meet him in his way homewards; Notwithstanding her perswasions thie Examinee did eate the Bread: and so in his comming homeward some fortie roodes off the said Church, there met him a thing in the shape of a Hare, who spoke unto this Examinee, and asked him whether he had brought the Bread.”

The toad constantly appears as a familiar. In 1579 at Windsor “one Mother Dutton dwellyng in Cleworthe Parishe keepeth a Spirite or Feende in the likenesses of a Toade, and fedeth the same Feende lying in a border of greene Hearbes, within her garden, with blood whiche she causeth to issue from her owne flancke.” Ursley Kemp, a S. Osyth witch (1582), had a familiar, Pygine, “black like a Toad.” Ales Hunt of the same coven nourished two familiars, “the which she kept in a little lowe earthen pot.” Margerie Sammon, another S. Osyth's witch, “hath also two spirites like Toades, the one called ‘Tom,’ and the other ‘Robbyn.’” When Ursley Kemp peeped through Mother Hunt's window she “espied a spirite to looke out of a porcharde from under a clothe, the nose thereof being brown like unto a Ferret.”

“Altar-Cloth.” These practices still survive.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER VI

How Witches Impede and Prevent the Power of Procreation.

Concerning the method by which they obstruct the procreant function both in men and animals, and in both sexes, the reader may consult that which has been written already on the question, Whether devils can through witches turn the minds of men to love or hatred. There, after the solutions of the arguments, a specific declaration is made relating to the method by which, with God's permission, they can obstruct the procreant function.

But it must be noted that such obstruction is caused both intrinsically and extrinsically. Intrinsically they cause it in two ways. First, when they directly prevent the erection of the member which is accommodated to fructification. And this need not seem impossible, when it is considered that they are able to vitiate the natural use of any member. Secondly, when they prevent the flow of the vital essences to the members in which resides the motive force, closing up the seminal ducts so that it does not reach the generative vessels, or so that it cannot be ejaculated, or is fruitlessly spilled.

Extrinsically they cause it at times by means of images, or by the eating of herbs; sometimes by other external means, such as cocks' testicles. But it must not be thought that it is by the virtue of these things that a man is made impotent, but by the occult power of devils' illusions witches by this means procure such impotence, namely, that they cause man to be unable to copulate, or a woman to conceive.

And the reason for this is that God allows them more power over this act, by which the first sin was disseminated, than over other human actions. Similarly they have more power over serpents, which are the most subject to the influence of incantations, than over other animals. Wherefore it has often been found by us and other Inquisitors that they have caused this obstruction by means of serpents or some such things.

For a certain wizard who had been arrested confessed that for many years he had by witchcraft brought sterility upon all the men and animals which inhabited a certain house. Moreover, Nider tells of a wizard named [Stadlin](#) who was taken in the diocese of Lausanne, and confessed that in a certain house where a man and his wife were loving, he had by his witchcraft successively killed in the woman's womb seven children, so that for many years the woman always miscarried. And that, in the same way, he had caused that all the pregnant cattle and animals of the house were during those years unable to give birth to any live issue. And when he was questioned as to how he had done this, and what manner of charge should be preferred against him, he discovered his crime, saying: I put a serpent under the threshold of the outer door of the house; and if this is removed, fecundity will be restored to the inhabitants. And it was as he said; for though the serpent was not found, having been reduced to dust, the whole piece of ground was removed, and in the same year fecundity was restored to the wife and to all the animals.

Another instance occurred hardly four years ago in Reichshofen. There was a most notorious

witch, who could at all times and by a mere touch bewitch women and cause an abortion. Now the wife of a certain nobleman in that place had become pregnant and had engaged a midwife to take care of her, and had been warned by the midwife not to go out of the castle, and above all to be careful not to hold any speech or conversation with that witch. After some weeks, unmindful of that warning, she went out of the castle to visit some women who were met together on some festive occasion; and when she had sat down for a little, the witch came, and, as if for the purpose of saluting her, placed both her hands on her stomach; and suddenly she felt the child moving in pain. Frightened by this, she returned home and told the midwife what had happened. Then the midwife exclaimed: "Alas! you have already lost your child." And so it proved when her time came; for she gave birth, not to an entire abortion, but little by little to separate fragments of its head and feet and hands. And the great affliction was permitted by God to punish her husband, whose duty it was to bring witches to justice and avenge their injuries to the Creator.

And there was in the town of Mersburg in the diocese of Constance a certain young man who was bewitched in such a way that he could never perform the carnal act with any woman except one. And many have heard him tell that he had often wished to refuse that woman, and take flight to other lands; but that hitherto he had been compelled to rise up in the night and to come very quickly back, sometimes over land, and sometimes through the air as if he were flying.

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[Question I, Chapter VII](#)

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“Stadlin.” “Formicarius,” c. III.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER VII

How, as it were, they Deprive Man of his Virile Member.

We have already shown that they can take away the male organ, not indeed by actually despoiling the human body of it, in the manner which we have already declared. And of this we shall instance a few examples.

In the town of Ratisbon a certain young man who had an intrigue with a girl, wishing to leave her, lost his member; that is to say, some glamour was cast over it so that he could see or touch nothing but his smooth body. In his worry over this he went to a tavern to drink wine; and after he had sat there for a while he got into conversation with another woman who was there, and told her the cause of his sadness, explaining everything, and demonstrating in his body that it was so. The woman was astute, and asked whether he suspected anyone; and when he named such a one, unfolding the whole matter, she said: "If persuasion is not enough, you must use some violence, to induce her to restore to you your health." So in the evening the young man watched the way by which the witch was in the habit of going, and finding her, prayed her to restore to him the health of his body. And when she maintained that she was innocent and knew nothing about it, he fell upon her, and winding a towel tightly about her neck, choked her, saying: "Unless you give me back my health, you shall die at my hands." Then she, being unable to cry out, and growing black, said: "Let me go, and I will heal you." The young man then relaxed the pressure of the towel, and the witch touched him with her hand between the thighs, saying: "Now you have what you desire." And the young man, as he afterwards said, plainly felt, before he had verified it by looking or touching, that his member had been restored to him by the mere touch of the witch.

A similar experience is narrated by a certain venerable Father from the Dominican House of Spires, well known in the Order for the honest of his life and for his learning. "One day," he says, "while I was hearing confessions, a young man came to me and, in the course of his confession, woefully said that he had lost his member. Being astonished at this, and not being willing to give it easy credence, since the opinion of the wise it is a mark of light-heartedness to believe too easily, I obtained proof of it when I saw nothing on the young man's removing his clothes and showing the place. Then, using the wisest counsel I could, I asked whether he suspected anyone of having so bewitched him. And the young man said that he did suspect someone, but that she was absent and living in Worms. Then I said: 'I advise you to go to her as soon as possible and try your utmost to soften her with gentle words and promises'; and he did so. For he came back after a few days and thanked me, saying that he was whole and had recovered everything. And I believed his words, but again proved them by the evidence of my eyes."

But there are some points to be noted for the clearer understanding of what has already been written concerning this matter. First, it must in no way be believed that such members are really torn right away from the body, but that they are hidden by the devil through some prestidigitory art so that they can be neither seen nor felt. And this is proved by the authorities and by argument;

although it has been treated of before, where Alexander of Hales says that a Prestige, properly understood, is an illusion of the devil, which is not caused by any material change, but exists only in the perceptions of him who is deluded, either in his interior or exterior senses.

With reference to these words it is to be noted that, in the case we are considering, two of the exterior senses, namely, those of sight and touch, are deluded, and not the interior senses, namely, common-sense, fancy, imagination, thought, and memory. (But S. Thomas says they are only four, as has been told before, reckoning fancy and imagination as one; and with some reason, for there is little difference between imagining and fancying. See S. Thomas, I, 79.) And these senses, and not only the exterior senses, are affected when it is not a case of hiding something, but the causing something to appear to a man either when he is aware or asleep.

As when a man who is awake sees things otherwise than as they are; such as seeing someone devour a horse with its rider, or thinking he sees a man transformed into a beast, or thinking that he is himself a beast and must associate with beasts. For then the exterior senses are deluded and are employed by the interior senses. For by the power of devils, with God's permission, mental images long retained in the treasury of such images, which is the memory, are drawn out, not from the intellectual understanding in which such images are stored, but from the memory, which is the repository of mental images, and is situated at the back of the head, and are presented to the imaginative faculty. And so strongly are they impressed on that faculty that a man has an inevitable impulse to imagine a horse or a beast, when the devil draws from the memory an image of a horse or a beast; and so he is compelled to think that he sees with his external eyes such a beast when there is actually no such beast to see; but it seems to be so by reason of the impulsive force of the devil working by means of those images.

And it need not seem wonderful that devils can do this, when even a natural defect is able to effect the same result, as is shown in the case of frantic and melancholy men, and in maniacs and some drunkards, who are unable to discern truly. For frantic men think they see marvellous things, such as beasts and other horrors, when in actual fact they see nothing. See above, in the question, Whether witches can turn the minds of men to love and hatred; where many things are noted.

And, finally, the reason is self-evident. For since the devil has power over inferior things, except only the soul, therefore he is able to effect certain changes in those things, when God allows, so that things appear to be otherwise than they are. And this he does, as I have said, either by confusing and deluding the organ of sight so that a clear thing appears cloudy; just as after weeping, owing to the collected humours, the light appears to differ from what it was before. Or by operating on the imaginative faculty by a transmutation of mental images, as has been said. Or by some agitation of various humours, so that matters which are earthy and dry seem to be fire or water: as some people make everyone in the house strip themselves naked under the impression that they are swimming in water.

It may be asked further with reference to the above method of devils, whether this sort of illusions can happen indifferently to the good and to the wicked: just as other bodily infirmities can, as will be shown later, be brought by witches even upon those who are in a state of grace. To this question, following the words of Cassian in his *Second Collation* of the Abbot Sirenus, we must answer that they cannot. And from this it follows that all who are deluded in this way are presumed to be in deadly sin. For he says, as is clear from the words of S. Antony: The devil can in no way enter the mind or body of any man, nor has the power to penetrate into the thoughts of anybody, unless such a person has first become destitute of all holy thoughts, and is quite bereft and denuded of spiritual contemplation.

This agrees with Boethius where he says in the [*Consolation of Philosophy*](#): We had given you such arms that, if you had not thrown them away, you would have been preserved from infirmity.

Also Cassian tells in the same place of two Pagan witches, each in his own way malicious, who by their witchcraft sent a succession of devils into the cell of S. Antony for the purpose of driving him from there by their temptations; being infected with hatred for the holy man because a great number of people visited him every day. And though these devils assailed him with the keenest of spurs to his thoughts, yet he drove them away by crossing himself on the forehead and breast, and by prostrating himself in earnest prayer.

Therefore we may say that all who are so deluded by devils, not reckoning any other bodily infirmities, are lacking in the gift of divine grace. And so it is said in *Tobias* vi: The devil has power against those who are subject to their lusts.

This is also substantiated by what we told in the First Part in the question, Whether witches can change men into the shapes of beasts. For we told of a girl who was turned into a filly, as she herself and, except S. Macharius, all who looked at her were persuaded. But the devil could not deceive the senses of the holy man; and when she was brought to him to be healed, he saw true woman and not a horse, while on the other hand everyone else exclaimed that she seemed to be a horse. And the Saint, by his prayers, freed her and the others from that illusion, saying that this had happened to her because she had not attended sufficiently to holy things, nor used as she should Holy Confession and the Eucharist. And for this reason, because in her honesty she would not consent to the shameful proposal of a young man, who had caused a Jew who was a witch to bewitch the girl so that, by the power of the devil, he turned her into a filly.

We may summarize our conclusions as follows: - Devils can, for their profit and probation, injure the good in their fortunes, that is, in such exterior things as riches, fame, and bodily health. This is clear from the case of the Blessed Job, who was afflicted by the devil in such matters. But such injuries are not of their own causing, so that they cannot be led or driven into any sin, although they can be tempted both inwardly and outwardly in the flesh. But the devils cannot afflict the good with this sort of illusions, either actively or passively.

Not actively, but deluding their senses as they do those of others who are not in a state of grace. And not passively, by taking away their male organs by some glamour. For in these two respects they could never injure Job, especially in regard to the venereal act; for he was of such continence that he was able to say: I have vowed a vow with my eyes that I shall never think about a virgin, and still less about another man's wife. Nevertheless the devil knows that he has great power over sinners (see *S. Luke* xi: When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace).

But it may be asked, as to illusions in respect of the male organ, whether, granted that the devil cannot impose this illusion on those in a state of grace in a passive way, he cannot still do so in an active sense: the argument being that the man in a state of grace is deluded because he ought to see the member in its right place, when he who thinks it has been taken away from him, as well as other bystanders, does not see it in its place; but if this is conceded, it seems to be contrary to what has been said. It can be said that there is not so much force in the active as in the passive loss; meaning by active loss, not his who bears the loss, but his who sees the loss from without, as is self-evident. Therefore, although a man in a state of grace can see the loss of another, and to that extent the devil can delude his senses; yet he cannot passively suffer such loss in his own body, as, for example, to be deprived of his member, since he is not subject to lust. In the same way the converse is true, as the Angel said to Tobias: Those who are given to lust, the devil has power over

them.

And what, then, is to be thought of those witches who in this way sometimes collect male organs in great numbers, as many as twenty or thirty members together, and put them in a bird's nest, or shut them up in a box, where they move themselves like living members, and eat oats and corn, as has been seen by many and is a matter of common report? It is to be said that it is all done by devil's work and illusion, for the senses of those who see them are deluded in the way we have said. For a certain man tells that, when he had lost his member, he approached a known witch to ask her to restore it to him. She told the afflicted man to climb a certain tree, and that he might take which he liked out of the nest in which there were several members. And when he tried to take a big one, the witch said: You must not take that one; adding, because it belongs to a parish priest.

All these things are caused by devils through an illusion or glamour, in the manner we have said, by confusing the organ of vision by transmuting the mental images in the imaginative faculty. And it must not be said that these members which are shown are devils in assumed members, just as they sometimes appear to witches and men in assumed aerial bodies, and converse with them. And the reason is that they effect this thing by an easier method, namely, by drawing out an inner mental image from the repository of the memory, and impressing it on the imagination.

And if anyone wishes to say that they could go to work in a similar way, when they are said to converse with witches and other men in assumed bodies; that is, that they could cause such apparitions by changing the mental images in the imaginative faculty, so that when men thought the devils were present in assumed bodies, they were really nothing but an illusions caused by such a change of the mental images in the inner perceptions.

It is to be said that, if the devil had no other purpose than merely to show himself in human form, then there would be no need for him to appear in an assumed body, since he could effect his purpose well enough by the aforesaid illusion. But this is not so; for he has another purpose, namely, to speak and eat with them, and to commit other abominations. Therefore it is necessary that he should himself be present, placing himself actually in sight in an assumed body. For, as S. Thomas says, Where the Angel's power is, there he operates.

And it may be asked, if the devil by himself and without any witch takes away anyone's virile member, whether there is any difference between one sort of deprivation and the other. In addition to what has been said in the First Part of this work on the question, Whether witches can take away a member, he does actually take it away, and it is actually restored when it has to be restored. Secondly, as it is not taken away without injury, so it is not without pain. Thirdly, that he never does this unless compelled by a good Angel, for by so doing he cuts off a great source of profit to him; for he knows that he can work more witchcraft on that act than on other human acts. For God permits him to do more injury to that than to other human acts, as has been said. But none of the above points apply when he works through the agency of a witch, with God's permission.

And if it is asked whether the devil is more apt to injure men and creatures by himself than through a witch, it can be said that there is no comparison between the two cases. For he is infinitely more apt to do harm through the agency of witches. First, because he thus gives greater offence to God, by usurping to himself a creature dedicated to Him. Secondly, because when God is the more offended, He allows him the more power of injuring men. And thirdly, for his own gains, which he places in the perdition of souls.

Question I, Chapter VIII

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“Beothius.” “De Consolatione Philosophiae,” Liber I, Prosa ii. “Atqui talia contuleramus arma, quae nisi prius abiecisses, invicta te firmitate tuerentur.”

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER VIII

Of the Manner whereby they Change Men into the Shapes of Beasts.

But that witches, by the power of devils, change men into the shapes of beasts (for this is their chief manner of transmutation), although it has been sufficiently proved in the First Part of the work, Question 10, Whether witches can do such things: nevertheless, since that question with its arguments and solutions may be rather obscure to some; especially since no actual examples are adduced to prove them, and even the method by which they so transform themselves is not explained; therefore we add the present exposition by the resolution of several doubts.

And first, that Canon (26, Q. 5, Episcopi) is not to be understood in this matter in the way in which even many learned men (but would that their learning were good!) are deceived; who do not fear to affirm publicly in their sermons that such prestidigitatory transmutations are in no way possible even by the power of devils. And we have often said that this doctrine is greatly to the detriment of the Faith, and strengthens the witches, who rejoice very much in such sermons.

But such preachers, as has been noted, touch only the outer surface, and fail to reach the inner meaning of the words of the Canon. For when it says: Whoever believes that any creature can be made, or can be changed for the better or the worse, or be transformed into any other shape or likeness except by the Creator Himself Who made all, is without doubt an infidel. . . .

The reader must here remark two chief things. First, concerning the words “be made”; and secondly, concerning the words “be transformed into another likeness.” And as to the first, it is answered that “be made” can be understood in two ways: namely, as meaning “be created,” or as in the sense of the natural production of anything. Now in the first sense it belongs only to God, as is well known, Who in His infinite might can make something out of nothing.

But in the second sense there is a distinction to be drawn between creatures; for some are perfect creatures, like a man, and an ass, etc. And other are imperfect, such as serpents, frogs, mice, etc., for they can also be generated from putrefaction. Now the Canon obviously speaks only of the former sort, not of the second; for in the case of the second it can be proved from what Blessed Albert says in his book *On Animals*, where he asks: whether devils can make true animals; and still with this difference, that they cannot do so in an instant, as God does, but by some motion, however sudden, as is shown in the case of the Magicians in *Exodus* vii. The reader may, if he likes, refer to some of the remarks in the question we have quoted in the First Part of the work, and in the solution of the first argument.

Secondly, it is said that they cannot transmute any creature. You may say that transmutation is of two sorts, substantial and accidental; and this accidental is again of two kinds, consisting either in the natural form belonging to the thing which is seen, or in a form which does not belong to the thing which is seen, but exists only in the organs and perceptions of him who sees. The Canon speaks of the former, and especially of formal and actual transmutation, in which one substance is transmuted into another; and this sort only God can effect, Who is the Creator of such

actual substances. And it speaks also of the second, although the devil can effect that, in so far as, with God's permission, he causes certain diseases and induces some appearance on the accidental body. As when a face appears to be leprous, or some such thing.

But properly speaking it is not such matters that are in question, but apparitions and glammers, by which things seem to be transmuted into other likenesses; and we say that the words of the Canon cannot exclude such transmutations; for their existence is proved by authority, by reason, and by experience; namely, by certain experiences related by S. Augustine in Book XVIII, chapter 17, of the *De Ciuitate Die*, and by the arguments in explanation of them. For among other prestidigitatory transformations, he mentions that the very famous Sorceress, Circe, changed the companions of Ulysses into beasts; and that certain innkeepers' wives had turned their guests into beasts of burden. He mentions also that the companions of Diomedes were changed into birds, and for a long time flew about the temple of Diomedes; and that Praestantius tells it for a fact that his father said that he had been a packhorse, and had carried corn with other animals.

Now when the companions of Ulysses were changed into beasts, it was only in appearance, or deception of the eyes; for the animal shapes were drawn out of the repository or memory of images, and impressed on the imaginative faculty. And so imaginary vision was caused, and through the strong impression on the other senses and organs, the beholder thought that he saw animals, in the manner of which we have already treated. But how these things can be done by the devil's power without injury will be shown later.

But when the guests were changed into beasts of burden by the innkeepers' wives; and when the father of Praestantius thought he was a packhorse and carried corn; it is to be noted that in these cases there were three deceptions.

First, that those men were caused by a glamour to seem to be changed into beasts of burden, and this change was caused in the way we have said. Second, that devils invisibly bore those burdens up when they were too heavy to be carried. Third, that those who seemed to others to be changed in shape seemed also to themselves to be changed into beasts; as it happened to Nabuchodonosor, who lived for seven years eating straw like [an ox](#).

And as to the comrades of Diomedes being changed into birds and flying round his temple, it is to be said that this Diomedes was one of the Greeks who went to the siege of Troy; and when he wished to return home, he was drowned with his comrades in the sea; and then, at the suggestion of some idol, a temple was built to him that he might be numbered among the gods; and for a long time, to keep that error alive, devils in the shape of birds flew about in place of his companions. Therefore that superstition was one of the glammers we have spoken of; for it was not caused by the impression of mental images on the imaginative faculty, but by their flying in the sight of men in the assumed bodies of birds.

But if it is asked whether the devils could have deluded the onlookers by the above-mentioned method of working upon the mental images, and not by assuming aerial bodies like flying birds, the answer is that they could have done so.

For it was the opinion of some (as S. Thomas tells in the *Second Book of Sentences*, dist. 8, art. 2) that no Angel, good or bad, ever assumed a body; but that all that we read in the Scriptures about their appearances was caused by a glamour, or by the imaginary vision.

And here the learned Saint notes a difference between a glamour and imaginary vision. For in a glamour there may be an exterior object which is seen, but it seems other than it is. But imaginary vision does not necessarily require an exterior object, but can be caused without that and only by those inner mental images impressed on the imagination.

So, following their opinion, the comrades of Diomedes were not represented by devils in the assumed bodies and likeness of birds, but only by a fantastic and imaginary vision caused by working upon those mental images, etc.

But the learned Saint condemns this as an erroneous and not a simple opinion (though, it is piously believed, it is not actually heretical), although such appearances of good and bad Angels may at times have been imaginary, with no assumed body. But, as he says, the saints are agreed that the Angels also appeared to the actual sight, and such appearance was in an assumed body. And the scriptural text reads more as if it speaks of bodily appearance than imaginary or prestidigitatory ones. Therefore we can say for the present concerning any visions like that of the comrades of Diomedes: that although those comrades could by the devil's work have appeared in the imaginary vision of the beholders in the manner we have said, yet it is rather presumed that they were caused to be seen by devils in assumed aerial bodies like flying birds; or else that other natural birds were caused by devils to represent them.

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[Question I, Chapter IX](#)

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“An Ox.” “Daniel” iv, 30: “The same hour the word was fulfilled upon Nabuchodonosor, and he was driven away from among men, and did eat grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven: till his hairs grew like the feathers of eagles and his nailes like birds' claws.”

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER IX

How Devils may enter the Human Body and the Head without doing any Hurt, when they cause such Metamorphosis by Means of Prestidigitation.

Concerning the method of causing these illusory transmutations it may further be asked: whether the devils are then inside the bodies and heads of those who are deceived, and whether the latter are to be considered as possessed by devils; how it can happen without injury to the inner perceptions and faculties that a mental image is transferred from one inner faculty to another; and whether or not such work ought to be considered miraculous.

First we must again refer to a distinction between such illusory glammers; for sometimes the outer perceptions only are affected, and sometimes the inner perceptions are deluded and so affect the outer perceptions.

In the former case the glamour can be caused without the devils' entering into the outer perceptions, and merely by an exterior illusion; as when the interposition of some other body, or in some other way; or when he himself assumes a body and imposes himself on the vision.

But in the latter case it is necessary that he must first occupy the head and the faculties. And this is proved by authority and by reason.

And it is not a valid objection to say that two created spirits cannot be in one and the same place, and that the soul pervades the whole of the body. For on this question there is the authority of S. John Damascene, when he says: Where the Angel is, there he operates. And S. Thomas, in the *Second Book of Sentences*, dist. 7, art. 5, says: All Angels, good and bad, by their natural power, which is superior to all bodily power, are able to transmute our bodies.

And this is clearly true, not only by reason of the superior nobility of their nature, but because the whole mechanism of the world and all corporeal creatures are administered by Angels; as S. Gregory says in the 4th Dialogue: In this visible world nothing can be disposed except by an invisible creature. Therefore all corporeal matters are governed by the Angels, who are also called, not only by the Holy Doctors but also by all the Philosophers, the Powers which move the stars. It is clear also from the fact that all human bodies are moved by their souls, just as all other matter is moved by the stars and the Powers which move them. Any who wish may refer to S. Thomas in the First Part, Quest. 90, art. 1.

From this it is concluded that, since devils operates there where they are, therefore when they confuse the fancy and the inner perceptions they are existing in them.

Again, although to enter the soul is possible only to God Who created it, yet devils can, with God's permission, enter our bodies; and they can then make impressions on the inner faculties corresponding to the bodily organs. And by those impressions the organs are affected in proportion as the inner perceptions are affected in the way which has been shown: that the devil can draw out some image retained in a faculty corresponding to one of the senses; as he draws from the memory, which is in the back part of the head, an image of a horse, and locally moves that

phantasm to the middle part of the head, where are the cells of imaginative power; and finally to the sense of reason, which is in the front of the head. And he causes such a sudden change and confusion, that such objects are necessarily thought to be actual things seen with the eyes. This can be clearly exemplified by the natural defect in frantic men and other maniacs.

But if it is asked how he can do this without causing pain in the head, the answer is easy. For in the first place he does not cause any actual physical change in the organs, but only moves the mental images. And secondly, he does not effect these changes by injecting any active quality which would necessarily cause pain, since the devil is himself without any corporeal quality, and can therefore operate without the use of any such quality. Thirdly, as has been said, he effects these transmutations only by a local movement from one organ to another, and not by other movements through which painful transformations are sometimes caused.

And as for the objection that two spirits cannot separately exist in the same place, and that, since the soul exists in the head, how can a devil be there also? It is to be said that the soul is thought to reside in the centre of the heart, in which it communicates with all the members by an outpouring of life. An example can be taken from a spider, which feels in the middle of its web when any part of the web is touched.

However, S. Augustine says in his book [*On the Spirit and Soul*](#), that it is all in all, and all in every part of the body. Granting that the soul is in the head, still the devil can work there; for his work is different from the work of the soul. The work of the soul is in the body, to inform it and fill it with life; so that it exists not merely locally, but in the whole matter. But the devil works in such a part and such a place of the body, effecting his changes in respect of the mental images. Therefore, since there is no confusion between their respective operations, they can both exist together in the same part of the body.

There is also the question whether such men are to be considered obsessed or frenzied, that is, possessed of devils. But this is considered separately; namely, whether it is possible through the work of witches for a man to be obsessed with a devil, that is, that the devil should actually and bodily possess him. And this question is specially discussed in the following chapter, since it has this special difficulty, namely, whether this can be caused through the operations of witches.

But as to the question whether the temporal works of witches and devils are to be considered as miracles or of a miraculous nature; it is to be said that they are so, in so far as they are beyond the order of created nature as known to us, and are done by creatures unknown to us. But they are not properly speaking miracles as are those which are outside the whole of created nature; as are the miracles of God and the Saints. (See what was written in the First Part of this work, in the Fifth Question, in the refutation of the third error.)

But there are those who object that this sort of work must not be considered miracles, but simply works of the devil; since the purpose of miracles is the strengthening of the Faith, and they must not be conceded to the adversary of the Faith. And also because the signs of Antichrist are called lying signs by the [Apostle](#).

First it is to be said that to work miracles is the gift of freely given grace. And they can be done by bad men and bad spirits, up to the limits of the power which is in them.

Wherefore the miracles wrought by the good can be distinguished from those wrought by the wicked in at least three ways. First, the signs which are given by the good are done by Divine power in such matters as are beyond the capacity of their own natural power, such as raising the dead, and things of that sort, which the devils are not able to accomplish in truth, but only by an illusion: so Simon Magus moved the head of a dead man; but such manifestations cannot last long.

Secondly, they can be distinguished by their utility; for the miracles of the good are of a useful nature, as the healing of sickness, and such things. But the miracles done by witches are concerned with harmful and idle things; as when they fly in the air, or benumb the limbs of men, or such things. And S. Peter assigns this difference in the *Itinerarium* of Clement.

The third difference relates to the Faith. For the miracles of the good are ordained for the edification of the Faith and of good living; whereas the miracles of the wicked are manifestly detrimental to the Faith and to righteousness.

They are distinguished also by the way in which they are done. For the good do miracles in a pious and reverent invocation of the Divine Name. But witches and wicked men work them by certain ravings and invocations of devils.

And there is no difficulty in the fact that the Apostle called the works of the devil and Antichrist *lying wonders*; for the marvels so done by Divine permission are true in some respects and false in others. They are true in so far as they are within the limits of the devil's power. But they are false when he appears to do things which are beyond his power, such as raising the dead, or making the blind to see. For when he appears to do the former, he either enters into the dead body or else removes it, and himself takes its place in an assumed aerial body; and in the latter case he takes away the sight by a glamour, and then suddenly restores it by taking away the disability he has caused, not by bringing light to the inner perceptions, as is told in the legend of Bartholomew. Indeed all the marvellous works of Antichrist and of witches can be said to be lying signs, insasmuch as their only purpose is to deceive. See S. Thomas, dist. 8, *de Uirtute Daemonum*.

We may also quote here the distinction which is drawn in the Compendium of Theological Truth between a wonder and a miracle. For in a miracle four conditions are required: that it should be done by God; that it should be beyond the existing order of nature; thirdly, that it should be manifest; and fourthly, that it should be for the corroboration of the Faith. But since the works of witches fail to fulfil at least the first and last conditions, therefore they may be called wonderful works, but nor miracles.

It can also be argued in this way. Although witches' works can in a sense be said to be miraculous, yet some miracles are supernatural, some unnatural, and some preternatural. And they are supernatural when they can be compared with nothing in nature, or in natural power, as when a virgin gives birth. They are unnatural when they are against the normal course of nature but do not overstep the limits of nature, such as causing the blind to see. And they are preternatural when they are done in a manner parallel to that of nature, as when rods are changed into serpents; for this can be done naturally also, through long putrefaction on account of seminal reasons; and thus the works of magicians may be said to be marvellous.

It is expedient to recount an actual example, and then to explain it step by step. There is a town in the diocese of Strasburg, the name of which it is charitable and honourable to withhold, in which a workman was one day chopping some wood to burn in his house. A large cat suddenly appeared and began to attack him, and when he was driving it off, another even larger one came and attacked him with the first more fiercely. And when he again tried to drive them away, behold, three of them together attacked him, jumping up at his face, and biting and scratching his legs. In great fright and, as he said, more panic-stricken than he had ever been, he crossed himself and, leaving his work, fell upon the cats, which were swarming over the wood and again leaping at his face and throat, and with difficulty drove them away by beating one on the head, another on the legs, and another on the back. After the space of an hour, while he was again engaged upon his

task, two servants of the town magistrates came and took him as a malefactor and led him into the presence of the bailiff or judge. And the judge, looking at him from a distance, and refusing to hear him, ordered him to be thrown into the deepest dungeon of a certain tower or prison, where those who were under sentence of death were placed. The man cried out, and for three days bitterly complained to the prison guards that he should suffer in that way, when he was conscious of no crime; but the more the guards tried to procure him a hearing, the more furious the judge became, expressing in the strongest terms his indignation that so great a malefactor had not yet acknowledged his crime, but dared to proclaim his innocence when the evidence of the facts proved his horrible crime. But although these could not prevail upon him, yet the judge was induced by the advice of the other magistrates to grant the man a hearing. So when he was brought out of prison into the presence of the judge, and the judge refused to look at him, the poor man threw himself before the knees of the other magistrates, pleading that he might know the reason for his misfortune; and the judge broke into these words: You most wicked of men, how can you not acknowledge your crime? At such a time on such a day you beat three respected matrons of this town, so that they lie in their beds unable to rise or to move. The poor man cast his mind back to the events of that day and that hour, and said: Never in all my life have I struck or beaten a woman, and I can prove by credible witnesses that at that time on that day I was busy chopping wood; and an hour afterwards your servants found me still engaged on that task. Then the judge again exclaimed in a fury: See how he tries to conceal his crime! The women are bewailing their blows, they exhibit the marks, and publicly testify that he struck them. Then the poor man considered more closely on that even, and said: I remember that I struck some creatures at that time, but they were not women. The magistrates in astonishment asked him to relate what sort of creatures he had struck; and he told, to their great amazement, all that had happened, as we have related it. So, understanding that it was the work of the devil, they released the poor man and let him go away unharmed, telling him not to speak of this matter to anyone. But it could not be hidden from those devout persons present who were zealous for the Faith.

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[Question I, Chapter IX Continued](#)

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“On the Spirit.” The treatise “De Natura et Origine Animae” was written towards the end of the year 419.

“Apostle.” S. Paul, “II. Thessalonians” ii, 8, 9.

“Itinerarium.” Pseudo-Clementines.

“Lying Wonders.” “II Thessalonians” ii, 8-9: “That wicked one . . . whose coming is according to the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and lying wonders.”

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER IX CONTINUED

Now concerning this it may be asked, whether the devils appeared thus in assumed shapes without the presence of the witches, or whether the witches were actually present, converted by some glamour into the shapes of those beasts. And in answering this it should be said that, although it was equally possible for the devils to act in either way, it is rather presumed that it was done in the second manner. For when the devils attacked the workman in the shapes of cats, they could suddenly, by local motion through the air, transfer the women to their houses with the blows which they received as cats from the workman; and no on doubts that this was because of a mutual pact formerly made between them. For in the same way they can cause injury or wound in a person whom they wish to bewitch, by means of puncturing a painted or molten image which represents the person whom they wish to injure. Many examples of this could be adduced.

And it cannot be validly objected that perhaps those women who were so injured were innocent, because according to previously quoted examples it is shown that injuries may happen even to the innocent, when someone is unknowingly hurt by a witch by means of an artificial image. The example is not apposite; for it is one thing to be hurt by a devil through a witch, and another thing to be hurt by the devil himself without any witch. For the devil receives blows in the form of an animal, and transfers them to one who is bound to him by a pact, when it is with such an one's consent that he acts in this manner in such a shape. Therefore he can in this way hurt only the guilty who are bound to him by a pact, and never the innocent. But when devils seek to do injury by means of witches, then, with the permission of God for the avenging of so great a crime, they often afflict even the innocent.

Nevertheless, devils at times, with God's permission, in their own persons hurt even the innocent; and formerly they injured the Blessed Job, although they were not personally present, nor did the devils make use of any such illusory apparition as in the example we have quoted, when they used the phantasm of a cat, an animal which is, in the Scriptures, an appropriate symbol of the perfidious, just as a dog is the symbol of preachers; for cats are always setting snares for each other. And the Order of Preaching Friars was represented in its first Founder by a dog barking against heresy.

Therefore it is presumed that those three witches attacked the workman in the second manner, either because the first manner did not please them so much, or because the second suited more with their curiosity.

And this was the order which they observed. First, they were urged to do this at the instance of the devils, and not the devils at the instance of the witches. For so we have often found in their confessions, that at the instance of devils who constantly spur them on to commit evil, they have to do more than they would. And it is likely that the witches would not, on their own account, have thought of attacking the poor man.

And there is no doubt that the reason why the devils urged them to do this is that they knew

well that, when a manifest crime remains unpunished, God is the more offended, the Catholic Faith is brought into disrepute, and the number of witches is the more increased. Secondly, having gained their consent, the devils transported their bodies with that ease which belongs to a spiritual power over a bodily power. Thirdly, having in the way which has been told been turned into the forms of beasts by some glamour, they had to attack the workman; and the devils did not defend them from the blows, although they could have done so just as easily as they had transported them; but they permitted them to be beaten, and the one who beat them to be known, in the knowledge that those crimes would, for the reasons we have mentioned, remain unpunished by faint-hearted men who had no zeal for the Faith.

We read also of a certain holy man, who once found the devil preaching in the form of a devout priest preaching in a church, and knowing in his spirit that it was the devil, observed his words, whether he was teaching the people well or ill. And finding him irreproachable and inveighing against sin, he went up to him at the end of the sermon and asked him the reason for this. And the devil answered: I preach the truth, knowing that, because they are hearers of the word only, and not doers, God is the more offended and my gain is increased.

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[Question I, Chapter X](#)

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THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER X

Of the Method by which Devils through the Operations of Witches sometimes actually possess men.

It has been shown in the previous chapter how devils can enter the heads and other parts of the body of men, and can move the inner mental images from place to place. But someone may doubt whether they are able at the instance of witches to obsess men entirely; or fell some uncertainty about their various methods of causing such obsession without the instance of witches. And to clear up these doubts we must undertake three explanations. First, as to the various methods of possession. Secondly, how at the instance of witches and with God's permission devils at time possess men in all those ways. Thirdly, we must substantiate our arguments with facts and examples.

With references to the first, we must make an exception of that general method by which the devil inhabits a man in any mortal sin. S. Thomas, in Book 3, quest. 3, speaks of this method where he considers the doubt whether the devil always substantially possesses a man when he commits mortal sin; and the reason for the doubt is that the indwelling Holy Ghost always forms a man with grace, according to I. *Corinthians*, iii: Ye are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwelleth in you. And, since guilt is opposed to grace, it would seem that there were opposing forces in the same place.

And there he proves that to possess a man can be understood in two ways: either with regard to the soul, or with regard to the body. And in the first way it is not possible for the devil to possess the soul, since God alone can enter that; therefore the devil is not in this way the cause of sin, which the Holy Spirit permits the soul itself to commit; so there is no similitude between the two.

But as to the body, we may say that the devil can possess a man in two ways, just as there are two classes of men: those who are in sin, and those who are in grace. In the first way, we may say that, since a man is by any mortal sin brought into the devil's service, in so far as the devil provides the outer suggestion of sin either to the senses or to the imagination, to that extent he is said to inhabit the character of a man when he is moved by every stirring temptation, like a ship in the sea without a rudder.

The devil can also essentially possess a man as is clear in the case of frantic men. But this rather belongs to the question of punishment than that of sin, as will be shown; and bodily punishments are not always the consequence of sin, but are inflicted now upon sinners and now upon the innocent. Therefore both those who are and those who are not in a state of grace can, in the depth of the incomprehensible judgement of God, be essentially possessed by devils. And though this method of possession is not quite pertinent to our inquire, we have set it down lest it should seem impossible to anyone that, with God's permission, men should at times be substantially inhabited by devils at the instance of witches.

We may say, therefore, that just as there are five ways in which devils by themselves, without

witches, can injure and possess men, so they can also do so in those ways at the instance of witches; since then God is the more offended, and greater power of molesting men is allowed to the devil through witches. And the methods are briefly the following, excepting the fact that they sometimes plague a man through his external possessions: sometimes they injure men only in their own bodies; sometimes in their and in their faculties; sometimes they only tempt them inwardly and outwardly; others they at times deprive of the use of their reason; others they change into the appearance of irrational beasts. We shall speak of these methods singly.

But first we shall rehearse five reasons why God allows men to be possessed, for the sake of preserving a due order in our matter. For sometimes a man is possessed for his own advantage; sometimes for a slight sin of another; and sometimes for his own venial sin; sometimes for another's heavy sin. For all these reasons let no one doubt that God allows such things to be done by devils at the instance of witches; and it is better to prove each of them by the Scriptures, rather than by recent examples, since new things are always strengthened by old examples.

For an example of the first is clearly shown in the *Dialogue* of [Severus](#), a very dear disciple of S. Martin, where he tells that a certain Father of very holy life was so gifted by grace with the power of expelling devils, that they were put to flight not only by his words, but even by his letters or his hair-shirt. And since the Father became very famous in the world, and felt himself tempted with vainglory, although he manfully resisted that vice, yet, that he might be the more humiliated, he prayed with his whole heart to God that he might be for five months possessed by a devil; and this was done. For he was at once possessed and had to be put in chains, and everything had to be applied to him which is customary in the case of demoniacs. But at the end of the fifth month he was immediately delivered both from all vainglory and from the devil. But we do not read, nor is it for the present maintained, that for this reason a man can be possessed by a devil through the witchcraft of another man; although, as we have said, the judgements of God are incomprehensible.

For the second reason, when someone is possessed because of the light sin of another, S. Gregory gives an example. The Blessed Abbot Eleutherius, a most devout man, was spending the night near a convent of virgins, who unknown to him ordered to be put by his cell a young boy who used to be tormented all night by the devil. But on that same night the boy was delivered from the devil by the presence of the Father. When the Abbot learned of this, and the boy now being placed in the holy man's monastery, after many days he began to exult rather immoderately over the boy's liberation, and said to his brother monks: The devil was playing his pranks with those Sisters, but he had not presumed to approach this boy since he came to the servants of God. And behold! the devil at once began to torment the boy. And by the tears and fasting of the holy man and his brethren he was with difficulty delivered, but on the same day. And indeed that an innocent person should be possessed for the slight fault of another is not surprising when men are possessed by devils for their own light fault, or for another's heavy sin, or for their own heavy sin, and some also at the instance of witches.

Cassia, in his *First Collation* of the Abbot Serenus, gives an example of how one Moses was possessed for his own venial sin. This Moses, he says, was a hermit of upright and pious life; but because on one occasion he engaged in a dispute with the Abbot Macharius, and went a little too far in the expression of a certain opinion, he was immediately delivered up to a terrible devil, who caused him to void his natural excrements through his mouth. And that this scourge was inflicted by God for the sake of purgation, lest any stain of his momentary fault should remain in him, is clear from his miraculous cure. For by continual prayers and submission to the Abbot Macharius,

the vile spirit was quickly driven away and departed from him.

A similar case is that related by S. Gregory in his *First Dialogue* of the nun who ate a lettuce without having first made the sign of the Cross, and was set free by the Blessed Father [Equitius](#).

In the same *Dialogue* St. Gregory tells an example of the fourth case, where someone is possessed because of the heavy sin of another. The Blessed Bishop Fortunatus had driven the devil from a possessed man, and the devil began to walk about the streets of the city in the guise of a pilgrim, crying out: Oh, the holy man Bishop Fortunatus! See, he has cast me, a pilgrim, out of my lodging, and I can find no rest anywhere. Then a certain man sitting with his wife and son invited the pilgrim to lodge with him, and asking why he had been turned out, was delighted with the derogatory story of the holy man which the pilgrim had invented. And thereupon the devil entered his son, and cast him upon the fire, and killed him. And then for the first time did the unhappy father understand whom he had received as a guest.

And fifthly, we read many examples of men being possessed for their own heavy sin, both in the Holy Scripture and in the passions of the Saints. For in I. *Kings* xv, Saul was possessed for disobedience to God. And, as we have said, we have mentioned all these so that it need not seem to anyone impossible that men should also be possessed because of the crimes of, and at the instance of, witches. And we shall be able to understand the various methods of such possession by quoting actual examples.

In the time of Pope [Pius II](#) the following was the experience of one of us two Inquisitors before he entered upon his office in the Inquisition. A certain Bohemian from the town of Dachov brought his only son, a secular priest, to Rome to be delivered, because he was possessed. It happened that I, one of us Inquisitors, went into a refectory, and that priest and his father came and sat down at the same table with me. We saluted each other, and talked together, as is customary; and the father kept sighing and praying Almighty God that his journey might prove to have been successful. I felt great pity for him, and began to ask what was the reason of his journey and of his sorrow. Then he, in the hearing of his son who was sitting next to me at the table, answered: "Alas! I have a son possessed by a devil, and with great trouble and expense I have brought him here to be delivered." And when I asked where the son was, he showed me him sitting by my side. I was a little frightened, and looked at him closely; and because he took his food with such modesty, and answered piously to all questions, I began to doubt that he was not possessed, but that some infirmity had happened to him. Then the son himself told what had happened, showing how and for how long he had been possessed, and saying: "A certain witch brought this evil upon me. For I was rebuking her on some matter concerned with the discipline of the Church, upbraiding her rather strongly since she was of an obstinate disposition, when she said that after a few days that would happen to me which has happened. And the devil which possesses me has told me that a charm was placed by the witch under a certain tree, and that until it was removed I could not be delivered; but he would not tell me which was the tree." But I would not in the least have believed his words if he had not at once informed me of the facts of the case. For when I asked him about the length of the intervals during which he had the use of his reason more than is usual in the case of persons possessed, he answered: "I am only deprived of the use of my reason when I wish to contemplate holy things or to visit sacred places. For the devil specifically told me in his own words uttered through my mouth that, because he had up to that time been much offended by my sermons to the people, we would in no way allow me to preach." For according to his father, he was a preacher full of grace, and loved by all. But I, the Inquisitor, wishing for proofs, had him taken for a fortnight and more to various holy places, and especially to the Church of [S. Praxedes](#)

the Virgin, where there is part of the marble pillar to which Our Saviour was bound when He was scourged, and to the place where S. Peter the Apostle was crucified; and in all these places he uttered horrible cries while he was being exorcised, now saying that he wished to come forth, and after a little maintaining the contrary. And as we have said before, in all his behaviour he remained a sober priest without any eccentricity, except during the process of any exorcisms; and when these were finished, and the stole was taken from his neck, he showed no sign of madness or any immoderate action. But when he passed any church, and genuflected in honour of the Glorious Virgin, the devil made him thrust his tongue far out of his mouth; and when he was asked whether he could not restrain himself from doing this, he answered: "I cannot help myself at all, for so he uses all my limbs and organs, my neck, my tongue, and my lungs, whenever he pleases, causing me to speak or to cry out; and I hear the words as if they were spoken by myself, but I am altogether unable to restrain them; and when I try to engage in prayer he attacks me more violently, thrusting out my tongue." And there was in the Church of S. Peter a column brought from Solomon's Temple, by virtue of which many who are obsessed with devils are liberated, because Christ had stood near it when He preached in the Temple; but even here he could not be delivered, owing to the hidden purpose of God which reserved another method for his liberation. For though he remained shut in by the column for a whole day and night, yet on the following day, after various exorcisms had been performed upon him, with a great concourse of people standing round, he was asked by which part of the column Christ had stood; and he bit the column with his teeth, and, crying out, showed the place, saying: "Here He stood! Here He stood!" And at last he said, "I will not go forth." And when he was asked why, he answered in the Italian tongue (although the poor priest did not understand that language), They all practise such and such things, naming the worst vice of lustfulness. And afterwards the priest asked me, saying, "Father, what did those Italian words mean which came from my mouth?" And when I told him, he answered, "I heard the words, but I could not understand them." Eventually it proved that this demoniac was of that sort of which the Saviour spoke in the Gospel, saying: This sort goeth not out save by prayer and fasting. For a venerable Bishop, who had been driven from his see by the Turks, piously took compassion on him, and by fasting on bread and water for forty days, and by prayers and exorcisms, at last through the grace of God delivered him and sent him back to his home rejoicing.

[Question I, Chapter X Continued](#)

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“Severus.” Sulpicius Severus, who has been styled the Christian Sallust, was born in Aquitaine about 360; and died circa 420-25. He became a personal friend and enthusiastic disciple of S. Martin, and lived near Eauze, at Toulouse and Luz in Southern France. His “Life of S. Martin” was very popular during the Middle Ages, as also were his “Two Dialogues,” formerly divided into three. His works are to be found in Migne, “Patres Latini,” XX, 95-248.

“Equitius.” In 487 Equitius was Bishop of Matelica, a diocese now joined to Fabriano. Only one other Bishop (Florentius) of the ancient see is known.

“Pius II.” Enea Silvio de’ Piccolomini was born at Corsignano, near Siena, 18 October, 1405; and elected to the Chair of S. Peter, 19 August, 1459. He died at Ancona, 14 August, 1464.

“S. Praxedes.” Praxedes and Pudentiana were the daughters of the Senator Pudens, a pupil of S. Peter. There was an old title-church of Rome, “titulus Pudentis,” called also the “ecclesia Pudentiana.” The two female figures in the mosaic of the apse of S. Pudenziana, via Urbana, are Pudentiana and Praxedes. In the fourth century a new church, “titulus Praxedis,” was built near Santa Maria Maggiore, and when Paschal I in 822 rebuilt the church in its present form (the basilica and title-church S. Prassede all’ Esquilino) he translated to it the bodies of S. Praxedes, S. Pudentiana, and of many other martyrs. Under the High Altar are the chief Relics of the Saints. In the Chapel of S. Zeno, which dates from the ninth century, is the Holy Pillar of the Scourging brought in 1223 from Jerusalem by Cardinal Giovanni Colonna. Another portion of the Holy Pillar is preserved in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, where it is publically venerated each year on Easter Eve. S. Prassede is one of the richest churches in Rome in Relics. It contains the Bodies of S. Zoe, S. Feldian, S. Candid, S. Basil, S. Celestine I, S. Nicomedius; important Relics of S. Matthew, S. Luke, S. Bartholomew, S. Philip, S. Andrew, S. Peter, S. Paul, and S. John Baptist; some of the garments of Our Lady; a piece of the seamless robe of Our Lord; thee Thorns from the Crown of Thorns; and four fragments of wood from the True Cross.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER X CONTINUED

Now it would be a miracle if anyone in this life could thoroughly explain in what and in how many ways the devil possesses or injures men: yet we can say that, leaving out of account his method of injuring men in their temporal fortunes, there are five ways. For some are affected only in their own bodies; some both in their bodies and in their inner perceptions; some only in their inner perceptions; some are so punished as to be at times only deprived of their reason; and others are turned into the semblance of irrational beasts. Now the priest we have just mentioned was possessed in the fourth manner. For he was not touched in his worldly fortunes or in his own body, as it happened to the Blessed Job, over whom the Scripture clearly tells us that God gave the devil power, saying to Satan: Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. And this refers to exterior things. But afterwards He gave him power over his body, saying: Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

And it can also be said that Job was tormented in the third manner, that is, in the inner perceptions of his soul as well as his body; for it is said in *Job* xii: If it is said to the Lord, My bed will console me, and I will take comfort to myself on my couch, then Thou wilt terrify me with dreams, and shake me with the horror of visions: though these dreams were caused by the devil, according to [Nicolas of Lyra](#) and S. Thomas: Thou wilt terrify me with dreams, which appear to me in sleep, and with visions which come to me waking by a distortion of my inner perceptions. For the phantasms which occur to the thoughts in the day-time can become the terror of sleepers, and such were visited upon Job through the infirmity of his body. Therefore he was so shut off from all comfort that he saw no remedy or way of escaping from his misery except in death, and said that he was shaken with horror. And no one doubts that witches can injure men in these ways through devils, as will be shown in what follows, how they bring injuries upon the fortunes of men and upon the bodies of men and animals by means of hailstorms.

And there is a third way of injuring the body and the inner perceptions, without taking away the reason, which is shown when witches, as has been said, so inflame the minds of men with unlawful lust that they are compelled to travel long distances in the night to go to their mistresses, being too fast bound in the net of carnal desire.

We may mention an example which is said to have happened in Hesse, in the diocese of Marburg. A certain priest was possessed, and during an exorcism the devil was asked for how long he had inhabited that priest. He answered, For seven years. And when the exorcist objected, But you have tormented him for hardly three years; where were you for the rest of the time? He answered, I was hiding in his body. And when he asked in what part of the body, he answered, Generally in his head. And when he was again asked where he was when the priest was celebrating the Sacrament, he said, I hid myself under his tongue. And the other said: Wretch! How were you so bold as not to flee from the presence of your Creator? Then the devil said: Anyone may hide under a bridge while a holy man is crossing, as long as he does not pause in his walk. But with the

help of Divine grace the priest was delivered, whether he told the truth or not; for both he and his father are liars.

The fourth method applies to the case of the priest who was liberated in Rome, under the proposition that the devil can enter the body, but not the soul, which only God can enter. But when I say that the devil can enter the body, I do not mean that he can occupy the essential limits of the body.

I will explain this further; and in doing so it will be shown how devils sometimes substantially occupy a man, and at times deprive him of his reason. For we may say that the limits of the body can be considered in two ways: they may be physical or essential limits. Whenever any Angel, good or bad, works within the physical limits of the body, he enters the body in such a way as to influence its physical capacities. And in this way the good Angels cause imaginary visions in the good. But they are never said to enter into the essence of the body, since they cannot do so, either as part of it or as a quality of it. Not as a part, for the angelic and the human essence are entirely different from each other; and not as a quality, as if giving it its character, for it has its character by creation from God. Wherefore He alone is able to influence its inner essence, and to preserve it when He is pleased in His mercy to preserve it.

So we conclude that, speaking of all other perfections in the good or defects in the wicked, when these are caused by a spirit operating in the head and its attributes, such a spirit enters into the head within the physical limits of the physical capacities of the body.

But if the spirit is working upon the soul, then again it works from the outside, but in various ways. And they are said to work on the soul when they represent phantasms or shapes to the intellect, and not only to the common understanding and the outer perceptions. And when bad Angels so operate, there follow temptations and evil thoughts and affections, caused by an indirect influence upon the intellect. But good Angels cause phantasms of revelation which enlighten the understanding. And there is this difference between them; that good Angels can even directly impress enlightening fancies upon the intellect; but bad Angels are said not to enlighten but rather to darken by means of their phantasms, and they cannot influence the intellect directly, but only indirectly, in so far as the intellect is bound to take such phantasms into consideration.

But even a good Angel is not said to enter into the soul, although he enlightens it: similarly a superior Angel is not said to enter into an inferior, although he enlightens it; but he works only from the outside, and co-operates in the way we have said. Therefore far less can a bad Angel enter the soul.

And so the devil occupied the body of the priest in three ways. First, as he could enter his body within its physical limits, so he occupied his head by substantially inhabiting it. Secondly, he could extrinsically work upon his reason. And he could have so tormented him without any intermission or respite; but we may say that the priest had this gift from God, that he should not be tormented by the devil without intermission. Thirdly, that although he was deprived of the power of the sane use of words, yet he was always conscious of his words, though not of their meaning. And this differs from the other methods of obsession, for we generally read that those who are possessed are afflicted by devils without intermission; as is clear in the case of the lunatic in the Gospel, whose father said to Jesus: Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic, and sore vexed (*S. Matthew xvii*); and of the woman whom Satan had crippled for eighteen years, who was bowed together and could in no wise lift herself up (*S. Luke xiii*). And in these ways devils can without doubt at the instance of witches and with God's permission inflict torments.

Question I, Chapter XI

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“Nicolas of Lyra.” “Doctor planus et utilis,” the famous exegete, was born at Lyra in Normandy, 1270; and died at Paris, 1340. He is the author of numerous theological works, by far the most famous of which is his monumental “Postillae perpetuae in uniuersam S. Scripturam,” which was so popular that it gained the distinction of being the first biblical commentary to be printed.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER XI

*Of the Method by which they can Inflict Every Sort of Infirmity,
generally Ills of the Graver Kind.*

But there is no bodily infirmity, not even leprosy or epilepsy, which cannot be caused by witches, with God's permission. And this is proved by the fact that no sort of infirmity is excepted by the Doctors. For a careful consideration of what has already been written concerning the power of devils and the wickedness of witches will show that this statement offers no difficulty. Nider also deals with this subject both in his [Book of Precepts](#) and in his *Formicarius*, where he asks: Whether witches can actually injure men by their witchcraft. And the question makes no exception of any infirmity, however incurable. And he there answers that they can do so, and proceeds to ask in what way and by what means.

And as to the first, he answers, as has been shown in the First Question of the First Part of this treatise. And it is proved also by S. Isidore where he describes the operations of witches (*Etym.* 8, cap. 9), and says that they are called witches on account of the magnitude of their crimes; for they disturb the elements by raising up storms with the help of devils, they confuse the minds of men in the ways already mentioned, by either entirely obstructing or gravely impeding the use of their reason. He adds also that without the use of any poison, but by the mere virulence of their incantations, they can deprive men of their lives.

It is proved also by S. Thomas in the *Second Book of Sentences*, dist. 7 and 8, and in Book IV, dist. 34, and in general all the Theologians write that witches can with the help of the devil bring harm upon men and their affairs in all the ways in which the devil alone can injure or deceive, namely, in their affairs, their reputation, their body, their reason, and their life; which means that those injuries which are caused by the devil without any witch, can also be caused by a witch; and even more readily so, on account of the greater offence which is given to the Divine Majesty, as has been shown above.

In *Job* i and ii is found a clear case of the injury in temporal affairs. The injury to reputation is shown in the history of the Blessed Jerome, that the devil transformed himself into the appearance of S. Silvanus, Bishop of Nazareth, a friend of S. Jerome. And this devil approached a noble woman by night in her bed and began first to provoke and entice her with lewd words, and then invited her to perform the sinful act. And when she called out, the devil in the form of the saintly Bishop hid under the woman's bed, and being sought for and found there, he in lickerish language declared lyingly that he was the Bishop Silvanus. On the morrow therefore, when the devil had disappeared, the holy man was scandalously defamed; but his good name was cleared when the devil confessed at the tomb of S. Jerome that he had done this in an assumed body.

The injury to the body is shown in the case of the Blessed Job, who was stricken by the devil with terrible sores, which are explained as a form of leprosy. And [Sigisbert](#) and Vincent of

Beauvais (*Spec. Hist.* XXV, 37) both tell that in the time of the Emperor [Louis II](#), in the diocese of Mainz, a certain devil began to throw stones and to beat at the houses as if with a hammer. And then by public statements, and secret insinuations, he spread discord and troubled the minds of many. Then he excited the anger of all against one man, whose lodging, where he was resting, he set on fire, and said that they were all suffering for his sins. So at last that man had to find his lodging in the fields. And when the priests were saying a litany on this account, the devil stoned many of the people with stones till he hurt them to bleeding; and sometimes he would desist, and sometimes rage; and this continued for three years, until all the houses there were burned down.

Example of the injury to the use of the reason, and of the tormenting of the inner perceptions, are seen in those possessed and frenzied men of whom the Gospels tell. And as for death, and that they deprive some of their lives, it is proved in *Tobias* vi, in the case of the seven husbands of the virgin Sara, who were killed because of their lecherous lust and unbridled desire for the virgin Sara, of whom they were not worthy to be the husbands. Therefore it is concluded that both by themselves, and all the more with the help of witches, devils can injure men in every way without exception.

But if it is asked whether injuries of this sort are to be ascribed rather to devils than to witches, it is answered that, when the devils cause injuries by their own direct action, then they are principally to be ascribed to them. But when they work through the agency of witches for the disparagement and offending of God and the perdition of souls, knowing that by this means God is made more angry and allows them greater power of doing evil; and because they do indeed perpetuate countless witchcrafts which the devil would not be allowed to bring upon men if he wished to injure men alone by himself, but are permitted, in the just and hidden purpose of God, through the agency of witches, on account of their perfidy and abjuration of the Catholic Faith; therefore such injuries are justly ascribed to witches secondarily, however much the devil may be the principal actor.

Therefore when a woman dips a twig in water and sprinkles the water in the air to make it rain, although she does not herself cause the rain, and could not be blamed on that account, yet, because she has entered into a pact with the devil by which she can do this as a witch, although it is the devil who causes the rain, she herself nevertheless deservedly bears the blame, because she is an infidel and does the devil's work, surrendering herself to his service.

So also when a witch makes a waxen image or some such thing in order to bewitch somebody; or when an image of someone appears by pouring molten lead into water, and some injury is done upon the image, such as piercing it or hurting it in any other way, when it is the bewitched man who is in imagination being hurt; although the injury is actually done to the image by some witch or some other man, and the devil in the same manner invisibly injures the bewitched man, yet it is deservedly ascribed to the witch. For, without her, God would never allow the devil to inflict the injury, nor would the devil on his own account try to injure the man.

But because it has been said that in the matter of their good name the devils can injure men on their own account and without the co-operation of witches, there may arise a doubt whether the devils cannot also defame honest women so that they are reputed to be witches, when they appear in their likeness to bewitch someone; from which it would happen that such a woman would be defamed without cause.

In answering this we must premise a few remarks. First, it has been said that the devil can do nothing without the Divine permission, as is shown in the First Part of this work in the last Question. It has also been shown that God does not allow so great power of evil against the just

and those who live in grace, as against sinners; and as the devils have more power against sinners (see the text: [When a strong man armed](#), etc.) so they are permitted by God to afflict them more than the just. Finally, although they can, with God's permission, injure the just in their affairs, their reputation, and their bodily health, yet, because they know that this power is granted them chiefly for the increase of the merits of the just, they are the less eager to injure them.

Therefore it can be said that in this difficulty there are several points to be considered. First, the Divine permission. Secondly, the man who is thought to be righteous, for they who are so reputed are not always actually in a state of grace. Thirdly, the crime of which an innocent man would be suspected; for that crime in its very origin exceeds all the crimes of the world. Therefore it is to be said that it is granted that, with God's permission, an innocent person, whether or not he is in a state of grace, may be injured in his affairs to this particular crime and the gravity of the accusation (for we have often quoted S. Isidore's saying that they are called witches from the magnitude of their crimes), it can be said that for an innocent person to be defamed by the devil in a way that has been suggested does not seem at all possible, for many reasons.

In the first place, it is one thing to be defamed in respect of vices which are committed without any expressed or tacit contract with the devil, such as theft, robbery, or fornication; but quite another matter to be defamed in respect of vices which it is impossible to accuse a man of having perpetrated unless he has entered upon an expressed contract with the devil; and such are the works of witches, which cannot be laid at their door unless it is by the power of devils that they bewitch men, animals and the fruits of the earth. Therefore, although the devil can blacken men's reputations in respect of other vices, yet it does not seem possible for him to do so in respect of this vice which cannot be perpetrated without his co-operation.

Besides, it has never hitherto been known to have happened that an innocent person has been defamed by the devil to such an extent that he was condemned to death for this particular crime. Furthermore, when a person is only under suspicion, he suffers no punishment except that which the Canon prescribes for his purgation, as will be shown in the Third Part of this work in the second method of sentencing witches.

And it is set down there that, if such a man fails in his purgation, he is to be considered guilty, but that he should be solemnly adjured before the punishment due to his sin is proceeded with and enforced. But here we are dealing with actual events; and it has never yet been known that an innocent person has been punished on suspicion of witchcraft, and there is no doubt that God will never permit such a thing to happen.

Besides, He does not suffer the innocent who are under Angelic protection to be suspected of smaller crimes, such as robbery and such things; then all the more will He preserve those who are under that protection from suspicion of the crime of witchcraft.

And it is no valid objection to quote the legend of S. Germanus, when devils assumed the bodies of other women and sat down at table and slept with the husbands, deluding the latter into the belief that those women were in their own bodies eating and drinking with them, as we have mentioned before. For the women in this case are not to be held guiltless. For in the Canon (*Episcopi* 26. q. 2) such women are condemned for thinking that they are really and actually transported, when they are so only in imagination; although, as we have shown above, they are at times bodily transported by devils.

But our present proposition is that they can, with God's permission, cause all other infirmities, with no exception; and it is to be concluded from what we have said that this is so. For no exception is made by the Doctors, and there is no reason why there should be any, since, as we

have often said, the natural power of devils is superior to all corporeal power. And we have found in our experience that this is true. For although greater difficulty may be felt in believing that witches are able to cause leprosy or epilepsy, since these diseases arise from some long-standing physical predisposition or defect, none the less it has sometimes been found that even these have been caused by witchcraft. For in the diocese of Basel, in the district of Alsace and Lorraine, a certain honest labourer spoke roughly to a certain quarrelsome woman, and she angrily threatened him that she would soon avenge herself on him. He took little notice of her; but on the same night he felt a pustule grow upon his neck, and he rubbed it a little, and found his whole face and neck puffed up and swollen, and a horrible form of leprosy appeared all over his body. He immediately went to his friends for advice, and told them of the woman's threat, and said that he would stake his life on the suspicion that this had been done to him by the magic art of that same witch. In short, the woman was taken, questioned, and confessed her crimes. But when the judge asked her particularly about the reason for it, and how she had done it, she answered: "When that man used abusive words to me, I was angry and went home; and my familiar began to ask the reason for my ill humour. I told him, and begged him to avenge me on the man. And he asked what I wanted him to do to him; and I answered that I wished he would always have a swollen face. And the devil went away and afflicted the man even beyond my asking; for I had not hoped that he would infect him with such sore leprosy." And so the woman was burned.

And in the diocese of Constance, between Breisach and Freiburg, there is a leprous woman (unless she has paid the debt of all flesh within these two years) who used to tell to many people how the same thing had happened to her by reason of a similar quarrel which took place between her and another woman. For one night when she went out of the house to do something in front of the door, a warm wind came from the house of the other woman, which was opposite, and suddenly struck her face; and from that time she had been afflicted with the leprosy which she now suffered.

And lastly, in the same diocese, in the territory of the Black Forest, a witch was being lifted by a gaoler on to the pile of wood prepared for her burning, and she said: "I will pay you"; and blew into his face. And he was at once afflicted with a horrible leprosy all over his body, and did not survive many days. For the sake of brevity, the fearful crimes of this witch, and many more instances could be recounted, are omitted. For we have often found that certain people have been visited with epilepsy or the falling sickness by means of eggs which have been buried with dead bodies, especially the dead bodies of witches, together with other ceremonies of which we cannot speak, particularly when these eggs have been given to a person either in food or drink.

[Question I, Chapter XII](#)

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“Book of Precepts.” “Praeceptorum diuinae legis Liber,” of which there were seventeen editions before 1500. I have used that of Douai, 1612.

“Sigisbert.” Sigebert of Bembloux, the celebrated Benedictine historian, was born at Gembloux (pr. Namur) about 1035, and died at the same place, 5 November, 1112. He was a prolific author, and his most famous work, “Chronicon siue Chronographia,” is the basis of many other histories. It has frequently been reprinted. The works of Sigebert may be conveniently found in Migne, “Patres Latini,” CLX. There is a study by Hirsh, “De uita et scriptis Sigeberti Monachi Gemblacensis,” Berlin, 1841.

“Louis II.” Son of Lothaire I, was born about 822. He became associated with his father in the Empire in 849, and succeeded to the Imperial Crown in 855. He died in 875.

“Strong Man.” “S. Luke” xi, 21.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER XII

Of the Way how in Particular they Afflict Men with Other Like Infirmities.

But who can reckon the number of infirmities which they have inflicted upon men, such as blindness, the sharpest pains, and contortions of the body? Yet we shall set down a few examples which we have seen with our eyes, or have been related to one of us Inquisitors.

When an inquisition was being held on some witches in the town of Innsbruck, the following case, among others, was brought to light. A certain honest woman who had been legally married to one of the household of the Archduke formally deposed the following. In the time of her maidenhood she had been in the service of one of the citizens, whose wife became afflicted with grievous pains in the head; and a woman came who said she could cure her, and so began certain incantations and rites which she said would assuage the pains. And I carefully watched (said this woman) what she did, and saw that, against the nature of water poured into a vase, she caused water to rise in its vessel, together with other ceremonies which there is no need to mention. And considering that the pains in my mistress' head were not assuaged by these means, I addressed the witch in some indignation with these words: "I do not know what you are doing, but whatever it is, it is witchcraft, and you are doing it for your own profit." Then the witch at once replied: "You will know in three days whether I am a witch or not." And so it proved; for on the third day when I sat down and took up a spindle, I suddenly felt a terrible pain in my body. First it was inside me, so that it seemed that there was no part of my body in which I did not feel horrible shooting pains; then it seemed to me just as if burning coals were being continually heaped upon my head; thirdly, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet there was no place large enough for a pinprick that was not covered with a rash of white pustules; and so I remained in these pains, crying out and wishing only for death, until the fourth day. At last my mistress' husband told me to go to a certain tavern; and with great difficulty I went, whilst he walked before, until we were in front of the tavern. "See!" he said to me; "there is a loaf of white bread over the tavern door." "I see," said I. Then he said: "Take it down, if you possibly can, for it may do you good." And I, holding on to the door with one hand as much as I could, got hold of the loaf with the other. "Open it" (said my master) "and look carefully at what is inside." Then, when I had broken open the loaf, I found many things inside it, especially some white grains very like the pustules on my body; and I saw also some seeds and herbs such as I could not eat or even look at, with the bones of serpents and other animals. In my astonishment I asked my master what was to be done; and he told me to throw it all into the fire. I did so; and behold! suddenly, not in an hour or even a few minutes, but at the moment when that matter was thrown into the fire, I regained all my former health.

And much more was deposed against the wife of the citizen in whose service this woman had been, by reason of which she was not lightly but very strongly suspected, and especially because she had used great familiarity with known witches. It is presumed that, having knowledge of the spell of witchcraft hidden in the loaf, she had told it to her husband; and then, in the way

described, the maid-servant recovered her health.

To bring so great a crime into detestation, it is well that we should tell how another person, also a woman, was bewitched in the same town. An honest married woman deposed the following an oath.

Behind my house (she said) I have a greenhouse, and my neighbour's garden borders on it. One day I noticed that a passage had been made from my neighbour's garden to my greenhouse, not without some damage being cause; and as I was standing in the door of my greenhouse reckoning to myself and bemoaning both the passage and the damage, my neighbour suddenly came up and asked if I suspected her. But I was frightened because of her bad reputation, and only answered, "The footprints on the grass are proof of the damage." Then she was indignant because I had not, as she hoped, accused her with the actionable words, and went away murmuring; and though I could hear her words, I could not understand them. After a few days I became very ill with pains in the stomach, and the sharpest twinges shooting from my left side to my right, and conversely, as if two swords or knives were thrust through my breast; whence day and night I disturbed all the neighbours with my cries. And when they came from all sides to console me, it happened that a certain clay-worker, who was engaged in an adulterous intrigue with the witch, my neighbour, coming to visit me, took pity on my illness, and after a few words of comfort went away. But the next day he returned in a hurry, and, after consoling me, added: "I am going to test whether your illness is due to witchcraft, and if I find that it is, I shall restore your health." So he took some molten lead and, while I was lying in bed, poured it into a bowl of water which he placed on my body. And when the lead solidified into a certain image and various shapes, he said: "See! your illness has been caused by witchcraft; and one of the instruments of that witchcraft is hidden under the threshold of your house door. Let us go, then, and remove it, and you will feel better." So my husband and he went to remove the charm; and the clay-worker, taking up the threshold, told my husband to put his hand into the hold which then appeared, and take out whatever he found; and he did so. And first he brought out a waxen image about a palm long, perforated all over, and pierced through the sides with two needles, just in the same way that I felt the stabbing pains from side to side; and then little bags containing all sorts of things, such as grains and seeds and bones. And when all these things were burned, I became better, but not entirely well. For although the shootings and twinges stopped, and I quite regained my appetite for food, yet even now I am by no means fully restored to health. — And when we asked her why it was that she had not been completely restored, she answered: There are some other instruments of witchcraft hidden away which I cannot find. And when I asked the man how he knew where the first instruments were hidden, he answered: "I knew this through the love which prompts a friend to tell things to a friend; for your neighbour revealed this to me when she was coaxing me to commit adultery with her." This is the story of the sick woman.

But if I were to tell all the instances that were found in that one town I should need to make a book of them. For countless men and women who were blind, or lame, or withered, or plagued with various infirmities, severally took their oath that they had strong suspicions that their illnesses, both in general and in particular, were caused by witches, and that they were bound to endure those ills either for a period or right up to their deaths. And all that they said and testified was true, either as regards a specified illness or as regards a specified illness or as regards the death of others. For that country abounds in henchmen and knights who have leisure for vice, and seduce women, and then wish to cast them off when they desire to marry an honest woman. But they can rarely do this without incurring the vengeance of some witchcraft upon themselves or their wives. For when those women see themselves despised, they persist in tormenting not so

much the husband as the wife, in the fond hope that, if the wife should die, the husband would return to his former mistress.

For when a cook of the Archduke had married an honest girl from a foreign country, a witch, who had been his mistress, met them in the public road and, in the hearing of other honest people, foretold the bewitching and death of the girl, stretching out her hand and saying: "Not for long will you rejoice in your husband." And at once, on the following day, she took to her bed, and after a few days paid the debt of all flesh, exclaiming just as she expired: Lo! thus I die, because that woman, with God's permission, has killed me by her witchcraft; yet verily I go to another and better marriage with God.

In the same way, according to the evidence of public report, a certain soldier was slain by witchcraft, and many others whom I omit to mention.

But among them there was a well-known gentleman, whom his mistress wished to come to her on one occasion to pass the night; but he sent his servant to tell her that he could not visit her that night because he was busy. She promptly flew into a rage, and said to the servant: Go and tell your master that he will not trouble me for long. On the very next day he was taken ill, and he was buried within a week.

And there are witches who can bewitch their judges by a mere look or glance from their eyes, and publicly boast that they cannot be punished; and when malefactors have been imprisoned for their crimes, and exposed to the severest torture to make them tell the truth, these witches can endow them with such an obstinacy of preserving silence that they are unable to lay bare their crimes.

And there are some who, in order to accomplish their evil charms and spells, beat and stab the Crucifix, and utter the filthiest words against the Purity of the Most Glorious Virgin MARY, casting the foulest aspersions on the Nativity of Our Saviour from Her inviolate womb. It is not expedient to repeat those vile words, nor yet to describe their detestable crimes, as the narrative would give too great offence to the ears of the pious; but they are all kept and preserved in writing, detailing the manner in which a certain baptized Jewess had instructed other young girls. And one of them, named Walpurgis, being in the same year at the point of death, and being urged by those who stood round her to confess her sins, exclaimed: I have given myself body and soul to the devil; there is no hope of forgiveness for me; and so died.

These particulars have not been written to the shame, but rather to the praise and glory of the most illustrious Archduke. For he was truly a Catholic Prince, and laboured very zealously with the Church at Brixen to exterminate witches. But they are written rather in hate and loathing of so great a crime, and that men may not cease to avenge their wrongs, and the insults and offences these wretches offer to the Creator and our Holy Faith, to say nothing of the temporal losses which they cause. For this is their greatest and gravest crime, namely, that they abjure the Faith.

[Question I, Chapter XIII](#)

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THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER XIII

How Witch Midwives commit most Horrid Crimes when they either Kill Children or Offer them to Devils in most Accursed Wise.

We must not omit to mention the injuries done to children by witch midwives, first by killing them, and secondly by blasphemously offering them to devils. In the diocese of Strasburg and in the town of Zabern there is an honest woman very devoted to the Blessed Virgin MARY, who tells the following experience of hers to all the guests that come to the tavern which she keeps, known by the sign of the Black Eagle.

I was, she says, pregnant by my lawful husband, now dead, and as my time approached, a certain midwife importuned me to engage her to assist at the birth of my child. But I knew her bad reputation, and although I had decided to engage another woman, pretended with conciliatory words to agree to her request. But when the pains came upon me, and I had brought in another midwife, the first one was very angry, and hardly a week later came into my room one night with two other women, and approached the bed where I was lying. And when I tried to call my husband, who was sleeping in another room, all the use was taken away from my limbs and tongue, so that except for seeing and hearing I could not move a muscle. And the witch, standing between the other two, said: "See! this vile woman, who would not take me for her midwife, shall not win through unpunished." The other two standing by her pleaded for me, saying: "She has never harmed any of us." But the witch added: "Because she has offended me I am going to put something into her entrails; but, to please you, she shall not feel any pain for half a year, but after that time she shall be tortured enough." So she came up and touched my belly with her hands; and it seemed to me that she took out my entrails, and put in something which, however, I could not see. And when they had gone away, and I had recovered my power of speech, I called my husband as soon as possible, and told him what had happened. But he put it down to pregnancy, and said: "You pregnant women are always suffering from fancies and delusions." And when he would by no means believe me, I replied: "I have been given six months' grace, and if, after that time, no torment comes to me, I shall believe you."

She related this to her son, a cleric who was then Archdeacon of the district, and who came to visit her on the same day. And what happened? When exactly six months had passed, such a terrible pain came into her belly that she could not help disturbing everybody with her cries day and night. And because, as has been said, she was most devout to the Virgin, the Queen of Mercy, she fasted with bread and water every Saturday, so that she believed that she was delivered by Her intercession. For one day, when she wanted to perform an action of nature, all those unclean things fell from her body; and she called her husband and son, and said: "Are those fancies? Did I not say that after a half a year the truth would be known? Or who ever saw me ear thorns, bones, and even bits of wood?" For there

were brambles as long as a palm, as well as a quantity of other things.

Moreover (as was said in the First Part of the work), it was shown by the confession of the servant, who was brought to judgement at Breisach, that the greatest injuries to the Faith as regards the heresy of witches are done by midwives; and this is made clearer than daylight itself by the confessions of some who were afterwards burned.

For in the diocese of Basel at the town of Dann, a witch who was burned confessed that she had killed more than forty children, by sticking a needle through the crowns of their heads into their brains, as they came out from the womb.

Finally, another woman in the diocese of Strasburg confessed that she had killed more children than she could count. And she was caught in this way. She had been called from one town to another to act as midwife to a certain woman, and, having performed her office, was going back home. But as she went out of the town gate, the arm of a newly born child fell out of the cloak she had wrapped around her, in whose folds the arm had been concealed. This was seen by those who were sitting in the gateway, and when she had gone on, they picked up from the ground what they took to be a piece of meat; but when they looked more closely and saw that it was not a piece of meat, but recognized it by its fingers as a child's arm, they reported it to the magistrates, and it was found that a child had died before baptism, lacking an arm. So the witch was taken and questioned, and confessed the crime, and that she had, as has been said, killed more children than she could count.

Now the reason for such practices is as follows: It is to be presumed that witches are compelled to do such things at the command of evil spirits, and sometimes against their own wills. For the devil knows that, because of the [pain of loss](#), or original sin, such children are debarred from entering the Kingdom of Heaven. And by this means the Last Judgement is delayed, when the devils will be condemned to eternal torture; since the number of the elect is more slowly completed, on the fulfilment of which the world will be consumed. And also, as has already been shown, witches are taught by the devil to confect from the limbs of such children an unguent which is very useful for their spells.

But in order to bring so great a sin into utter detestation, we must not pass over in silence the following horrible crime. For when they do not kill the child, they blasphemously offer it to the devil in this manner. As soon as the child is born, the midwife, if the mother herself is not a witch, carries it out of the room on the pretext of warming it, raises it up, and offers it to the Prince of Devils, that is Lucifer, and to all the devils. And this is done by the kitchen fire.

A certain man relates that he noticed that his wife, when her time came to give birth, against the usual custom of women in childbirth, did not allow any woman to approach the bed except her own daughter, who acted as midwife. Wishing to know the reason for this, he hid himself in the house and saw the whole order of the sacrilege and dedication to the devil, as it has been described. He saw also, as it seemed to him, that without any human support, but by the power of the devil, the child was climbing up the chain by which the cooking-pots were suspended. In great consternation both at the terrible words of the invocation of the devils, and at the other iniquitous ceremonies, he strongly insisted that the child should be baptized immediately. While it was being carried to the next village, where there was a church, and when they had to cross a bridge over a certain river, he drew his sword and ran at his daughter, who was carrying the child, saying in the hearing of two others who were with them: "You shall not carry the child over the bridge; for either it must

cross the bridge by itself, or you shall be drowned in the river.” The daughter was terrified and, together with the other women in company, asked him if he were in his right mind (for he had hidden what had happened from all the others except the two men who were with him). Then he answered: “You vile drab, by your magic arts you made the child climb the chain in the kitchen; now make it cross the bridge with no one carrying it, or I shall drown you in the river.” And so, being compelled, she put the child down on the bridge, and invoked the devil by her art; and suddenly the child was seen on the other side of the bridge. And when the child had been baptized, and he had returned home, since he now had witnesses to convict his daughter of witchcraft (for he could not prove the former crime of the oblation to the devil, inasmuch as he had been the only witness of the sacrilegious ritual), he accused both daughter and mother before the judge after their period of purgation; and they were both burned, and the crime of midwives of making that sacrilegious offering was discovered.

But here the doubt arises: to what end or purpose is the sacrilegious offering of children, and how does it benefit the devils? To this it can be said that the devils do this for three reasons, which serve three most wicked purposes. The first reason arises from their pride, which always increases; as it is said: “They that hate Thee have lifted up the [head](#).” For they try as far as possible to conform with divine rites and ceremonies. Secondly, they can more easily deceive men under the mask of an outwardly seeming pious action. For in the same way they entice young virgins and boys into their power; for though they might solicit such by means of evil and corrupt men, yet they rather deceive them by magic mirrors and reflections seen in witches' finger-nails, and lure them on in the belief that they love chastity, whereas they hate it. For the devil hates above all the Blessed Virgin, because she [bruised his head](#). Just so in this oblation of children they deceive the minds of witches into the vice of infidelity under the appearance of a virtuous act. And the third reason is, that the perfidy of witches may grow, to the devils' own gain, when they have witches dedicated to them from their very cradles.

And this sacrilege affects the child in three ways. In the first place, visible offerings to God are made of visible things, such as wine of bread or the fruits of the earth, as a sign of honour and subjection to Him, as it is said in *Ecclesiasticus* xxv: Thou shalt not appear empty before the Lord. And such offerings cannot and must not afterwards be put to profane uses. Therefore the holy Father, S. John Damascene, says: The oblations which are offered in church belong only to the priests, but not that they should divert them to their own uses, but that they should faithfully distribute them, partly in the observance of divine worship, and partly for the use of the poor. From this it follows that a child who has been offered to the devil in sign of subjection and homage to him cannot possibly be dedicated by Catholics to a holy life, in worthy and fruitful service to God for the benefit of himself and others.

For who can say that the sins of the mothers and of others do not redound in punishment upon the children? Perhaps someone will quote that saying of the prophet: “The sons shall not bear the iniquity of the father.” But there is that other passage in *Exodus* xx: I am a jealous God, visiting the sins of the father upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Now the meaning of these two sayings is as follows. The first speaks of spiritual punishment in the judgement of Heaven or God, and not in the judgement of men. And this is the punishment of the soul, such as loss or the forfeiture of glory, or the punishment of pain, that is, of the torment of eternal fire. And with such punishments no one is punished

except for his own sin, either inherited as original sin or committed as actual sin.

The second text speaks of those who imitate the sins of their father, as [Gratian](#) has explained (I, q. 4, etc.); and there he gives other explanations as to how the judgement of God inflicts other punishments on a man, not only for his own sins which he has committed, or which he might commit (but is prevented by punishment from committing), but also for the sins of others.

And it cannot be argued that when a man is punished without cause, and without sin, which should be the cause of punishment. For according to the rule of law, no one must be punished without sin, unless there is some cause of punishment. And we can say that there is always a most just cause, though it may not be known to us: see S. Augustine, XXIV, 4. And if we cannot in the result penetrate the depth of God's judgement, yet we know that what He has said is true, and what He has done is just.

But there is this distinction to be observed in innocent children who are offered to devils not by their mothers when they are witches, but by midwives who, as we have said, secretly take from the embrace and the womb of an honest mother. Such children are not so cut off from grace that they must necessarily become prone to such crimes; but it is piously to be believed that they may rather cultivate their mothers' virtues.

The second result to the children of this sacrilege is as follows. When a man offers himself as a sacrifice to God, he recognizes God as his Beginning and his End; and this sacrifice is more worthy than all the external sacrifices which he makes, having its beginning in his creation and its end in his glorification, as it is said: A sacrifice to God is an afflicted [spirit](#), etc. In the same way, when a witch offers a child to the devils, she commends it body and soul to him as its beginning and its end in eternal damnation; wherefore not without some miracle can the child be set free from the payment of so great a debt.

And we read often in history of children whom their mothers, in some passion or mental disturbance, have unthinkingly offered to the devil from the very womb, and how it is only with the very greatest difficulty that they can, when they have grown to adult age, be delivered from that bondage which the devil has, with God's permission, usurped to himself. And of this the *Book of Examples, Most Blessed Virgin MARY*, affords many illustrations; a notable instance being that of the man whom the Supreme Pontiff was unable to deliver from the torments of the devil, but at last he was sent to a holy man living in the East, and finally with great difficulty was delivered from his bondage through the intercession of the Most Glorious Virgin Herself.

And if God so severely punishes even such a thoughtless, I will not say sacrifice, but commendation used angrily by a mother when her husband, after copulating with her, says, I hope a child will come of it; and she answers, May the child go to the devil! How much greater must be the punishment when the Divine Majesty is offended in the way we have described!

[Question I, Chapter XIII continued](#)

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“Pain of loss.” Poena damni.

“Head.” “Psalm” lxxxii, 2.

“Genesis.” Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius: ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo eius.

“Gratian.” The little that is known concerning the author of the “Concordantia discordantium canonum,” more generally called the “Decretum Gratiani,” must be gathered from the work itself. Gratian was born in Italy, perhaps at Chiusi. He became a Camaldolese monk and taught at Balogna. It is uncertain at what time he compiled the “Decretum,” but it was commonly held to have been completed in 1151. More recent authorities, however, are inclined to suggest 1140. Gratian died before 1179, some think as early as 1160. He is regarded as the true found of the science of canon law.

“Spirit.” “Psalm” l, 19.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER XIII CONTINUED

The third effect of this sacrilegious oblation is to inculcate an habitual inclination to cast spells upon men, animals, and the fruits of the earth. This is shown by S. Thomas in the 2nd Book, quest, 108, where he speaks of temporal punishment, how some are punished for the sins of others. For he says that, bodily speaking, sons are part of their fathers' possessions, and servants and animals belong to their masters; therefore when a man is punished in all his possessions, it follows that often the sons suffer for the fathers.

And this is quite a different matter from what has been said about God visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. For there it is a question of those who imitate their fathers' sins, but here we speak of those who suffer instead of their fathers, when they do not imitate their sins by committing them in fact, but only inherit the results of their sins. For in this way the son born to David in adultery died very soon; and the animals of the Amalekites were ordered to be killed. Nevertheless, there is much mystery in all this.

Taking into consideration all that we have said, we may well conclude that such children are always, up to the end of their lives, predisposed to the perpetration of witchcraft. For just as God sanctifies that which is dedicated to Him, as is proved by the deeds of the Saints, when parents offer to God the fruit which they have generated; so also the devil does not cease to infect with evil that which is offered to him. Many examples can be found in the Old and New Testaments. For so were many of the Patriarchs and Prophets, such as Isaac, Samuel, and Samson; and so were [Alexis and Nicolas](#), and many more, guided by much grace to a holy life.

Finally, we know from experience that the daughters of witches are always suspected of similar practises, as imitators of their mothers' crimes; and that indeed the whole of a witch's progeny is infected. And the reason for this and for all that has been said before is, that according to their pact with the devil, they always have to leave behind them and carefully instruct a survivor, so that they may fulfil their vow to do all they can to increase the [number of witches](#). For how else could it happen, as it has very often been found, that tender girls of eight or ten years have raised up tempests and hailstorms, unless they had been dedicated to the devil under such a pact by their mothers. For the children could not do such things of themselves by abjuring the Faith, which is how all adult witches have to begin, since they have no knowledge of any single article of the Faith. We will recount an example of such a child.

In the duchy of Swabia a certain farmer went to his fields with his little daughter, hardly eight years old, to look at his crops, and began complaining about the drought, saying: Alas! when will it rain? The girl heard him, and in the simplicity of her heart said: Father, if you want it to rain, I can soon make it come. And her father said to her: What? Do

you know how to make it rain? And the girl answered: I can make it rain, and I can make hailstorms and tempests too. And the father asked: Who taught you? And she answered: My mother did, but she told me not to tell anybody. Then the father asked: How did she teach you? And she answered: She sent me to a master who will do anything I ask at any time. But her father said: Have you ever seen him? And she said: I have sometimes seen men coming in and out to my mother; and when I asked her who they were, she told that they were our masters to whom she had given me, and that they were powerful and rich patrons. The father was terrified, and asked her if she could raise a hailstorm then. And the girl said: Yes, if I had a little water. Then he led the girl by the hand to a stream, and said: Do it, but only on our land. Then the girl put her hand in the water and stirred it in the name of her master, as her mother had taught her; and behold! the rain fell only on that land. Seeing this, the father said: Make it hail now, but only on one of our fields. And when the girl had done this, the father was convinced by the evidence, and accused his wife before the judge. And the wife was taken and convicted and burned; but the daughter was reconciled and solemnly dedicated to God, since which hour she could no more work these spells and charms.

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[Question I, Chapter XIV](#)

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“Alexis.” S. Alexis, Confessor. Feast, 17 July. The Basilica and title-church of SS. Bonifacio ed Alessio all’ Aventino, Rome, contains the bodies of S. Boniface and S. Alexis under the High Altar. S. Aglae is buried in the confessional.

S. Nicolas of Tolentino, O.S.A., circa 1246-1306. was born of gentlefolk, Compagnonus de Guarutti and Amata de Guidiani, pious and devout, living in great seclusion on very moderate means. He was the child of prayer, his mother being advanced in years and vowing her son, should she bare one, to God from the womb. His parents joyfully consented to his joining the Order of Augustinian Hermits, of which he is one of the greatest glories. S. Nicolas was distinguished by angelic meekness and celestial purity. He died 10 September, and his feast is celebrated on that day.

“Number of Witches.” Francesco Maria Guazzo, “Compendium Maleficarum,” Milan, 1608, tells us that the witches promise the devil “to strive with all their power and to use every inducement and endeavour to draw other men and women to their detestable practices and the worship of Satan.” So in the case of Janet Breadheid of Auldearne it was her husband who “enticed her into that craft.” (Pitcairn, “Criminal Trials,” Edinburgh, 1833.) At Salem, George Burroughs, a minister, was accused by a large number of women as “the person who had Seduc'd and Compell'd them into the snares of Witchcraft.” See my “History of Witchcraft,” Chap. III, pp. 83-84.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER XIV

Here followeth how Witches Injure Cattle in Various Ways.

When S. Paul said, Doth God care for [oxen](#)? he meant that, though all things are subject to Divine providence, both man and beast each in its degree, as the [Psalmist](#) says, yet the sons of men are especially in His governance and under the protection of His wings. I say, therefore, if men are injured by witches, with God's permission, both the innocent and just as well as sinners, and if parents are bewitched in their children, as being part of their possessions, who can then presume to doubt that, with God's permission, various injuries can be brought by witches upon cattle and the fruits of the earth, which are also part of men's possessions? For so was Job stricken by the devil and lost all his cattle. So also there is not even the smallest farm where women do not injure each other's cows, by drying up their milk, and very often killing them.

But first let us consider the smallest of these injuries, that of drying up the milk. If it is asked how they can do this, it can be answered that, according to Blessed Albert in his *Book on Animals*, milk is naturally menstrual in any animal; and, like another flux in women, when it is not stopped by some natural infirmity, it is due to witchcraft that it is stopped. Now the flow of milk is naturally stopped when the animal becomes pregnant; and it is stopped by an accidental infirmity when the animal eats some herb the nature of which is to dry up the milk and make the cow ill.

But they can cause this in various ways by witchcraft. For on the more holy nights according to the instructions of the devil and for the greater offence to the Divine Majesty of God, a witch will sit down in a corner of her house with a pail between her legs, stick a knife or some instrument in the wall or a post, and make as if to milk it with her hands. Then she summons her familiar who always works with her in everything, and tells him that she wishes to milk a certain cow from a certain house, which is healthy and abounding in milk. And suddenly the devil takes the milk from the udder of that cow, and brings it to where the witch is sitting, as if it were flowing from the knife.

But when this is publicly preached to the people they get no bad information by it; for however much anyone may invoke the devil, and think that by this alone he can do this thing, he deceives himself, because he is without the foundation of that perfidy, not having rendered homage to the devil or abjured the Faith. I have set this down because some have thought that several of the matter of which I have written ought not to be preached to the people, on account of the danger of giving them evil knowledge; whereas it is impossible for anyone to learn from a preacher how to perform any of the things that have been mentioned. But they have been written rather to bring so great a crime into detestation, and should be preached from the pulpit, so that judges may be more eager to punish the horrible crime of the abnegation of the Faith. Yet they should not always be preached in this way; for the

secular mind pays more attention to temporal losses, being more concerned with earthly than spiritual matters; therefore when witches can be accused of inflicting temporal loss, judges are more zealous to punish them. But who can fathom the cunning of the devil?

I know of some men in a certain city who wished to eat some May butter one May time. And as they were walking along they came to a meadow and lay down by a stream; and one of them, who had formed some open or tacit pact with the devil, said: I will get you the best May butter. And at once he took off his clothes and went into the stream, not standing up but sitting with his back against the current; and while the others looked on, he uttered certain words, and moved the water with his hands behind his back; and in a short time he brought out a great quantity of butter of the sort that the country women sell in the market in May. And the others tasted it and declared that it was the very best butter.

From this we can deduce first the following fact concerning their practices. They are either true witches, by reason of an expressed pact formed with the devil, or they know by some tacit understanding that the devil will do what they ask. In the first case there is no need for any discussion, for such are true witches. But in the second case, then they owed the devil's help to the fact that they were blasphemously offered to the devil by a midwife or by their own mothers.

But it may be objected that the devil perhaps brought the butter without any compact, expressed or tacit, and without any previous dedication to himself. It is answered that no one can ever use the devil's help in such matters without invoking him; and that by that very act of seeking help from the devil he is an apostate from the Faith. This is the decision of S. Thomas in the *Second Book of Sentences*, dist. 8, on the question, Whether it is apostasy from the Faith to use the devil's help. And although Blessed Albert the Great agrees with the other Doctors, yet he says more expressly that in such matters there is always apostasy either in word or in deed. For if invocations, conjurations, fumigations and adorations are used, then an open pact is formed with the devil, even if there has been no surrender of body and soul together with explicit abjuration of the Faith either wholly or in part. For by the mere invocation of the devil a man commits open verbal apostasy. But if there is no spoken invocation, but only a bare action from which follows something that could not be done without the devil's help, then whether a man does it beginning in the name of the devil, or with some other unknown words, or without any words but with that intention; then, says Blessed Albert, it is apostasy of deed, because that action is looked for from the devil. But since to expect or receive anything from the devil is always a disparagement of the Faith, it is also apostasy.

So it is concluded that, by whatever means that sorcerer procured the butter, it was done with either a tacit or an expressed pact with the devil; and since, if it had been with an expressed pact, he would have behaved after the usual manner of witches, it is probably that there was a tacit or secret pact, originating either from himself or from his mother or a midwife. And I say that it arose from himself, since he only went through certain motions, and expected the devil to produce the effect.

The second conclusion we can draw from this and similar practices is this. The devil cannot create new species of things; therefore when natural butter suddenly came out of the water, the devil did not do this by changing the water into milk, but by taking butter from some place where it was kept and bringing it to the man's hand. Or else he took natural milk from a natural cow and suddenly churned it into natural butter; for while the art of women takes a little time to make butter, the devil could do it in the shortest space of time and bring

it to the man.

It is in the same way that certain dealers in magic, when they find themselves in need of wine or some such necessity, merely go out in the night with a flask or vessel, and bring it back suddenly filled with wine. For then the devil takes natural wine from some vessel and fills their flasks for them.

And with regard to the manner whereby witches kill animals and cattle, it should be said that they act very much as they do in the case of men. They can bewitch them by a touch and a look, or by a look only; or by placing under the threshold of the stable door, or near the place where they go to water, some charm or periapt of witchcraft.

For in this way those witches who were burned at Ratisbon, of whom we shall say more later on, were always incited by the devil to bewitch the best horses and the fattest cattle. And when they were asked how they did so, one of them named Agnes said that they hid certain things under the threshold of the stable door. And, asked what sort of things, she said: The bones of different kinds of animals. She was further asked in whose name they did this, and answered, In the name of the devil and all the other devils. And there was another of them, named Anna, who had killed twenty-three horses in succession belonging to one of the citizens who was a carrier. This man at last, when he had bought his twenty-fourth horse and reduced to extreme poverty, stood in his stable and said to the witch, who was standing in the door of her house: "See, I have bought a horse, and I swear to God and His Holy Mother that if this horse dies I shall kill you with my own hands." At that the witch was frightened, and left the horse alone. But when she was taken and asked how she had done these things, she answered that she had done nothing but dig a little hole, after which the devil had put in it certain things unknown to her. From this it is concluded that the witch co-operates sufficiently if it is only by a touch or a look; for the devil is permitted no power of injuring creatures without some co-operation on the part of the witch, as has been shown before. And this is for the great offence to the Divine Majesty.

For shepherds have often seen animals in the fields give three or four jumps into the air, and then suddenly fall to the ground and die; and this is caused by the power of witches at the instance of the devil.

In the diocese of Strasburg, between the town of Fiessen and Mount Ferrer, a certain very rich man affirmed that more than forty oxen and cows belonging to him and others had been bewitched in the Alps within the space of one year, and that there had been no natural plague or sickness to cause it. To prove this, he said that when cattle die from some change plague or disease, they do not do so all at once, but by degrees; but that this witchcraft had suddenly taken all the strength from them, and therefore everyone judged that they had been killed by witchcraft. I have said forty head of cattle, but I believe he put the number higher than that. However, it is very true that many cattle are said to have been bewitched in some districts, especially in the Alps; and it is known that this form of witchcraft is unhappily most widespread. We shall consider some similar cases later, in the chapter where we discuss the remedies for cattle that have been bewitched.

Question I, Chapter XV

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“Oxen.” “I. Corinthians,” ix. 9.

“Psalmist.” “Psalmists” xxxv, 7, 8.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER XV

How they Raise and Stir up Hailstorms and Tempests, and Cause Lightning to Blast both Men and Beasts.

That devils and their disciples can by witchcraft cause lightnings and hailstorms and tempests, and that the devils have power from God to do this, and their disciples do so with God's permission, is proved by Holy Scripture in *Job* i and ii. For the devil received power from God, and immediately caused it to happen that the Sabeans took away from Job fifty yoke of oxen and five hundred asses, and then fire came from heaven and consumed seven thousand camels, and a great wind came and smote down this house, killing his seven sons and his three daughters, and all the young men, that is to say, the servants, except him who brought the news, were killed; and finally the devil smote the body of the holy man with the most terrible sores, and caused his wife and his three friends to vex him grievously.

S. Thomas in his commentary on Job says as follows: It must be confessed that, with God's permission, the devils can disturb the air, raise up winds, and make the fire fall from heaven. For although, in the matter of taking various shapes, corporeal nature is not at the command of any Angel, either good or bad, but only at that of God the Creator, yet in the matter of local motion corporeal nature has to obey the spiritual nature. And this truth is clearly exemplified in man himself; for at the mere command of the will, which exists subjectively in the soul, the limbs are moved to perform that which they have been willed to do. Therefore whatever can be accomplished by mere local motion, this not only good but bad spirits can by their natural power accomplish, unless God should forbid it. But winds and rain and other similar disturbances of the air can be caused by the mere movement of vapours released from the earth or the water; therefore the natural power of devils is sufficient to cause such things. So says S. Thomas.

For God in His justice using the devils as his agents of punishment inflicts the evils which come to us who live in this world. Therefore, with reference to that in the Psalms: "He called a famine on the land, and wasted all their substance of bread."; the gloss says: God allowed this evil to be caused by the bad Angels who are in charge of such matters; and by famine is meant the Angel in charge of famine.

We refer the reader also to what has been written above on the question as to whether witches must always have the devil's help to aid them in their works, and concerning the three kinds of harm which the devils at times inflict without the agency of a witch. But the devils are more eager to injure men with the help of a witch, since in this way God is the more offended, and greater power is given to them to torment and punish.

And relevant to this subject is what the Doctors have written in the *Second book of Sentences*, dist. 6, on the question whether there is a special place assigned to the bad Angels in the clouds of the air. For in devils there are three things to be considered - their

nature, their duty and their sin; and by nature they belong to the empyrean of heaven, through sin to the lower hell, but by reason of the duty assigned to them, as we have said, as ministers of punishment to the wicked and trial to the good, their place is in the clouds of the air. For they do not dwell here with us on the earth lest they should plague us too much; but in the air and around the fiery sphere they can so bring together the active and passive agents that, when God permits, they can bring down fire and lightning from heaven.

A story is told in the [*Formicarius*](#) of a certain man who had been taken, and was asked by the judge how they went about to raise up hailstorms and tempests, and whether it was easy for them to do so. He answered: We can easily cause hailstorms, but we cannot do all the harm that we wish, because of the guardianship of good Angels. And he added: We can only injure those who are deprived of God's help; but we cannot hurt those who make the sign of the Cross. And this is how we got to work: first we use certain words in the fields to implore the chief of the devils to send one of his servants to strike the man whom we name. Then, when the devil has come, we sacrifice to him a black cock at two [cross-roads](#), throwing it up into the air; and when the devil has received this, he performs our wish and stirs up the air, but not always in the places which we have named, and, according to the permission of the living God, sends down hailstorms and lightnings.

In the same work we hear of a certain leader or heresiarch of witches named [Staufer](#), who lived in Berne and the adjacent country, and used publicly to boast that, whenever he liked, he could change himself into a mouse in the sight of his rivals and slip through the hands of his deadly enemies; and that he had often escaped from the hands of his mortal foes in this manner. But when the Divine justice wished to put an end to his wickedness, some of his enemies lay in wait for him cautiously and saw him sitting in a basket near a window, and suddenly pierced him through with swords and spears, so that he miserably died for his crimes. Yet he left behind him a disciple, named Hoppo, who had also for his master that Stadlin whom we have mentioned before in the sixth chapter.

These two could, whenever they pleased, cause the third part of the manure or straw or corn to pass invisibly from a neighbour's field to their own; they could raise the most violent hailstorms and destructive winds and lightning; could cast into the water in the sight of their parents children walking by the water-side, when there was no one else in sight; could cause barrenness in men and animals; could reveal hidden things to others; could in many ways injure men in their affairs or their bodies; could at times kill whom they would by lightning; and could cause many other plagues, when and where the justice of God permitted such things to be done.

It is better to add an instance which came within our own experience. For in the diocese of Constance, twenty-eight German miles from the town of Ratisbon in the direction of Salzburg, a violent hailstorm destroyed all the fruit, crops and vineyards in a belt one mile wide, so that the vines hardly bore fruit for three years. This was brought to the notice of the Inquisition, since the people clamoured for an inquiry to be held; many beside all the townsmen being of the opinion that it was caused by witchcraft. Accordingly it was agreed after fifteen days' formal deliberation that it was a case of witchcraft for us to consider; and among a large number of suspects, we particularly examined two women, one named Agnes, a bath-woman, and the other Anna von Mindelheim. These two were taken and shut up separately in different prisons, neither of them knowing in the least what had happened to the other. On the following day the bath-woman was very gently questioned in the presence

of a notary by the chief magistrate, a justice named Gelre very zealous for the Faith, and by the other magistrates with him; and although she was undoubtedly well provided with that evil gift of silence which is the constant bane of judges, and at the first trial affirmed that she was innocent of any crime against man or woman; yet, in the Divine mercy that so great a crime should not pass unpunished, suddenly, when she had been freed from her chains, although it was in the torture chamber, she fully laid bare all the crimes which she had committed. For when she was questioned by the Notary of the Inquisition upon the accusations which had been brought against her of harm done to men and cattle, by reason of which she had been gravely suspected of being a witch, although there had been no witness to prove that she had abjured the Faith or performed coitus with an Incubus devil (for she had been most secret); nevertheless, after she had confessed to the harm which she had caused to animals and men, she acknowledged also all that she was asked concerning the abjuration of the Faith, and copulation committed with an Incubus devil; saying that for more than eighteen years she had given her body to an Incubus devil, with a complete abnegation of the Faith.

After this she was asked whether she knew anything about the hailstorm which we have mentioned, and answered that she did. And, being asked how and in what way, she answered: "I was in my house, and at midday a familiar came to me and told me to go with a little water on to the field or plain of Kuppel (for so is it named). And when I asked what he wanted to do with the water, he said that he wanted to make it rain. So I went out at the town gate, and found the devil standing under a tree." The judge asked her, under which tree; and she said, "Under that one opposite that tower," pointing it out. Asked what she did under the tree, she said, "The devil told me to dig a hole and pour the water into it." Asked whether they say down together, she said, "I sat down, but the devil stood up." Then she was, with what words and in what manner she had stirred the water; and she answered, "I stirred it with my finger, and called on the name of the devil himself and all the other devils." Again the judge asked what was done with the water, and she answered: "It disappeared, and the devil took it up into the air." Then she was asked if she had any associate, and answered: "Under another tree opposite I had a companion (naming the other capture witch, Anna von Mindelheim), but I do not know what she did." Finally, the bath-woman was asked how long it was between the taking up of the water the hailstorm; and she answered: "There was just sufficient interval of time to allow me to get back to my house."

But (and this is remarkable) when on the next day the other witch had at first been exposed to the very gentlest questions, being suspended hardly clear of the ground by her thumbs, after she had been set quite free, she disclosed the whole matter without the slightest discrepancy from what the other had told; agreeing as to the place, that it was under such a tree and the other had been under another; as to the method, namely, of stirring water poured into a hole in the name of the devil and all the devils; and as to the interval of time, that the hailstorm had come after her devil had taken the water up into the air and she had returned home. Accordingly, on the third day they were burned. And the bath-woman was contrite and confessed, and commended herself to God, saying that she would die with a willing heart if she could escape the tortures of the devil, and held in her hand a cross which she kissed. But the other witch scorned her for doing so. And this one had consorted with an Incubus devil for more than twenty years with a complete abjuration of the Faith, and had done far more harm than the former witch to men, cattle and the fruits of the earth, as is shown in the preserved record of their trial.

These instances must serve, since indeed countless examples of this sort of mischief could be recounted. But very often men and beasts and storehouses are struck by lightning by the power of devils; and the cause of this seems to be more hidden and ambiguous, since it often appears to happen by Divine permission without the co-operation of any witch. However, it has been found that witches have freely confessed that they have done such things, and there are various instances of it, which could be mentioned, in addition to what has already been said. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that, just as easily as they raise hailstorms, so can they cause lightning and storms at sea; and so no doubt at all remains on these points.

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[Question I, Chapter XVI](#)

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“Formicarius,” Chap. iii.

“Cross-Roads.” In the trial of Dame Alice Kyteler of Kilkenny, 1324, it was shown that she had sacrificed at the cross-roads live animals (Holinshed says nine red cocks) to her familiar, Robert Artisson, “qui se facit appellari Artis Filium.” In Greek tradition the ἡερῶπις, a poltergeist, haunted the cross-ways. Lemoine, VI, p. 109, tells us: “Celui qui veut devenir sorcier doit aller à un ‘quatre chemins’ avec une ‘poule noire,’ ou bien encore au ‘cimetière,’ sur une ‘tombe’ et toujours à ‘minuit.’ Il vient alors quelqu’un qui demande: ‘Qui venez-vous faire ici?’ ‘J’ai une poule à vendre,’ répond-on. Ce quelqu’un (est) le Méchant.”

“Stauffer.” Staufus. “Formicarius,” Chap. iii. The edition Frankfort, 1588, Vol. I, p. 722, reads “Scavius” and in the margin “Schasius.” (Marginal note: “De Schasio in murem se conuertente.”)

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER XVI

Of Three Ways in which Mean and Women may be Discovered to be Addicted to Witchcraft: Divided into Three Heads: and First of the Witchcraft of Archers.

For our present purpose the last class of witchcraft is that which is practised in three forms by men; and first we must consider the seven deadly and horrible crimes which are committed by wizards who are archers. For first, on the Sacred Day of the Passion of Our Lord, that is to say, on Good Friday, as it is called, during the solemnization of the Mass of the Presanctified they shoot with arrows, as at a target, at the most sacred image of the Crucifix. Oh, the cruelty and injury to the Saviour! Secondly, though there is some doubt whether they have to utter a verbal form of apostasy to the devil in addition to that apostasy of deed, yet whether it be so or not, no greater injury to the Faith can be done by a Christian. For it is certain that, if such things were done by an infidel, they would be of no efficacy; for no such easy method of gratifying their hostility to the Faith is granted to them. Therefore these wretches ought to consider the truth and power of the Catholic Faith, for the confirmation of which God justly permits such crimes.

Thirdly, such an archer has to shoot three or four arrows in this way, and as a consequence he is able to kill on any day just the same number of men. Fourthly, they have the following assurance from the devil; that though they must first actually set eyes on the man they wish to kill, and must bend their whole will on killing him, yet it matter not where the man may shut himself up, for he cannot be protected, but the arrows which have been shot will be carried and struck into him by the devil.

Fifthly, they can [shoot an arrow](#) with such precision as to shoot a penny from a person's head without hurting his head, and they can continue to do this indefinitely. Sixthly, in order to gain this power they have to offer homage of body and soul to the devil. We shall give some instances of this sort of practice.

For a certain prince of the Rhineland, named Eberhard Longbeard because he let his beard grow, had, before he was sixty years old, acquired for himself some of the Imperial territory, and was besieging a certain castle named Lendenbrunnen because of the raids which were made by the men of the castle. And he had in his company a wizard of this sort, named Puncker, who so molested the men of the castle that he killed them all in succession with his arrows, except one. And this is how he proceeded. Whenever he had looked at a man, it did not matter where that man went to or hid himself, he had only to loose an arrow and that man was mortally wounded and killed; and he was able to shoot three such arrows every day because he had shot three arrows at the image of the Saviour. It is probable that the devil favours the number three more than any other, because it represents an effective denial of the Holy Trinity. But after he had shot those three arrows, he could only shoot with the same uncertainty as other men. At last one of the men of the castle called out to him

mockingly, “Punker, will you not at least spare the ring which hangs in the gate?” And he answered from outside in the night, “No; I shall take it away on the day that the castle is captured.” And he fulfilled his promise: for when, as has been said, all were killed except one, and the castle had been taken, he took that ring and hung it in his own house at Rorbach in the diocese of Worms, where it can be seen hanging to this day. But afterwards he was one night killed with their spades by some peasants whom he had injured, and he perished in his sins.

It is told also of this man, that a very eminent person wished to have proof of his skill, and for a test placed his little son before the target with a penny on his cap, and ordered him to shoot the penny away without removing the cap. The wizard said that he would do it, but with reluctance, not being sure whether the devil was seducing him to his death. But, yielding to the persuasions of the prince, he placed one arrow in readiness in the cord which was slung over his should, fitted another to his bow, and shot the penny from the cap without hurting the boy. Seeing this, the prince asked him why he had placed the arrow in that cord; and he answered: “If I had been deceived by the devil and had killed my son, since I should have had to die I would quickly have shot you with the other arrow to avenge my death.”

And though such wickedness is permitted by God for the proving and chastisement of the faithful, nevertheless more powerful miracles are performed by the Saviour's mercy for the strengthening and glory of the Faith.

For in the diocese of Constance, near the castle of Hohenzorn and a convent of nuns, there is a newly-built church where may be seen an image of Our Saviour pierced with an arrow and bleeding. And the truth of this miracle is shown as follows. A miserable wretch who wished to be assured by the devil of having three or four arrows with which he could, in the manner we have told, kill whom he pleased, shot and pierced with an arrow (just as it is still seen) a certain Crucifix at a crossroad; and when it miraculously [began to bleed](#), the wretch was stuck motionless in his steps by Divine power. And when he was asked by a passer-by why he stood fixed there, he shook his head, and trembling in his arms and his hands, in which he held the bow, and all over his body, could answer nothing. So the other looked about him, and saw the Crucifix with the arrow and the blood, and said: “You villain, you have pierced the image of Our Lord!” And calling some others, he told them to see that he did not escape (although, as has been said, he could not move), and ran to the castle and told what had happened. And they came down and found the wretched man in the same place; and when they had questioned him, and he had confessed his crime, he was removed from that district by public justice, and suffered a miserable death in merited expiation of his deeds.

But, alas! how horrible it is to think that human perversity is not afraid to countenance such crimes. For it is said that in the halls of the great such men are maintained to glory in their crimes in open contempt of the Faith, to the heavy offence of the Divine Majesty, and in scorn of Our Redeemer; and are permitted to boast of their deeds.

Wherefore such protectors, defenders and patrons are to be judged not only heretics, but even apostates from the Faith, and are to be punished in the manner that will be told. And this is the seventh deadly sin of these wizards. For first they are by very law excommunicated; and if the patrons are clerics they are degraded and deprived of all office and benefit, nor can they be restored except by a special indulgence from the Apostolic See.

Also, if after their proscription such protectors remain obstinate in their excommunication for the period of a year, they are to be condemned as heretics.

This is in accordance with the Canon Law; for, in Book VI, it touches on the question of direct or indirect interference with the proceedings of Diocesans and Inquisitors in the cause of the Faith, and mentions the aforesaid punishment to be inflicted after a year. For it say: We forbid any interference from Potentates, temporal Lords and Rulers, and their Officials, etc. Anyone may refer to the chapter.

And further, that witches and their protectors are by very law to be excommunicated is shown in the Canon of the suppressing of the heresy of witchcraft; especially where it says: We excommunicate and anathematize all heretics, Catharists, Sectaries . . . and others, by whatever names they are known, etc. And with these it includes all their sympathizers and protectors, and others; saying later on: Also we excommunicate all followers, protectors, defenders and patrons of such heretics.

The Canon Law prescribes various penalties which are incurred within the space of a year by such heretics, whether laymen or clerics, where it says: We place under the ban of excommunication all their protectors, patrons and defenders, so that when any such has been so sentenced and has scorned to recant his heresy, within a year from that time he shall be considered an outlaw, and shall not be admitted to any office or council, nor be able to vote in the election of such officers, nor be allowed free opportunity of giving evidence; he shall not succeed to any inheritance, and no one shall be held responsible for any business transaction with him. If he be a judge, his judgement shall not stand, nor shall any case be brought to his hearing. If he be an advocate, he shall not be allowed to plead. If he be a notary, no instrument drawn up by him shall have any weight, but is to be condemned together with its condemned author; and similar penalties are decreed for the holders of other offices. But if he be a cleric, he is to be degraded from all office and benefice; for, his guilt being the greater, it is more heavily avenged. And if any such, after they have been marked down by the Church, contemptuously try to ignore their punishment, the sentence of excommunication is to be rigorously applied to them to the extreme limits of vengeance. And the clergy shall not administer the Sacraments of the Church to such heretics, nor presume to give them Christian burial, nor accept their alms and oblations, on pain of being deprived of their office, to which they can in no way be restored without a special indulgence from the Apostolic See.

There are, finally, many other penalties incurred by such heretics even when they do not persist in their obstinacy for a year, and also by their children and grandchildren: for they can be degraded by a Bishop or by an Inquisitor, declared deprived of all titles, possessions, honours and ecclesiastical benefits, in fine of all public offices whatsoever. But this is only when they are persistently and obstinately impenitent. Also their sons to the second generation may be disqualified and unable to obtain either ecclesiastical preferment or public office; but this is to be understood only of the descendants on the father's side, and not on the mother's, and only of those who are impenitent. Also all their followers, protectors, fautors and patrons shall be denied all right of petition or appeal; and this is explained as meaning that, after a verdict has been returned that they are such heretics, then can they make no appeal before their sentence, however much they may have been in any respect ill-used or treated with undue severity. Much more could be adduced in support of our standpoint, but this is sufficient.

Now for the better understanding of what has been said, some few points are to be

discussed. And first, if a prince or secular potentate employ such a wizard as we have described for the destruction of some castle in a just war, and with his help crushes the tyranny of wicked men; is his whole army to be considered as protectors and patrons of that wizard, and to be subjected to the penalties we have mentioned? The answer seems to be that the rigour of justice must be tempered on account of their numbers. For the leader, with his counsellors and advisers, must be considered to have aided and abetted such witchcraft, and they are by law implicated in the aforesaid penalties when, after being warned by their spiritual advisers, they have persisted in their bad course; and then they are to be judged protectors and patrons, and are to be punished. But the rest of the army, since they have no part in their leaders' council, but are simply prepared to risk their lives in defence of their country, although they may view with approval the feats of the wizard, nevertheless escape the sentence of excommunication; but they must in their confession acknowledge the guilt of the wizard, and in their absolution by the confessor must receive a solemn warning to hold all such practices for ever in detestation, and as far as they are able drive from their land all such wizards.

It may be asked by whom such princes are to be absolved when they come to their senses, whether by their own spiritual advisers or by the Inquisitors? We answer that, if they repent, they may be absolved either by their spiritual advisers, or by the Inquisitors. This is provided in the Canon Law concerning the proceedings to be taken, in the fear of God and as a warning to men, against heretics, their followers, protectors, patrons and fautors, as also against those who are accused or suspected of heresy. But if any of the above, forswearing his former lapse into heresy, wish to return to the unity of the Church, he may receive the benefit of absolution provided by Holy Church.

A prince, or any other, may be said to have returned to his senses when he has delivered up the wizard to be punished for his offences against the Creator; when he has banished from his dominions all who have been found guilty of witchcraft or heresy; when he is truly penitent for the past; and when, as becomes a Catholic prince, he is firmly determined in his mind not to show any favour to any other such wizard.

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[Question I, Chapter XVI continued](#)

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“Shoot an Arrow.” This old tradition was made the subject of the celebrated opera “Der Freischutz,” the libretto of which is by Kind, the music by Weber. It was originally produced at Berlin in 1821, and on 22 July, 1824, first performed in England at the Lyceum Theatre, London, as “Der Freischutz; or, The Seventh Bullet.”

“Began to Bleed.” On 29 May, 1187, a number of mercenaries and bandits were playing with dice before the door of the church at Déols. One of these fellows, who had lost a throw, cursing and swearing, took up a stone, which he flung at the figure of Our Lady with the Child over the sacred portal. The arm of the Infant JESUS was snapped in twain. “ A stream of blood poured from the arm of the broken image and made a pool on the earth below. The wretch who flung the stone was seized with madness, and dropped down dead upon the spot.” The blood was carefully collected in a phial which was deposited in an Oratory dedicated to Our Lady. Numberless cures were effected, and a Confraternity which was founded in honour of the miracle flourished until the Revolution. It was reorganized in 1830, and on 31 May there is a solemn Commemoration of the Blood-shedding of Notre Dame de Déols.

After S. Paul of the Cross (1694-1775) had preached for the last time in the church of Piagaro, a Crucifix over one of the side-altars was seen to be oozing with blood. Hundreds witnessed the miracle, and later a chapel was built to enshrine the Miraculous Cross. In 1630 at Spoleto, drops of blood flowed from the head of a figure of Our Lord Crowned with Thorns. Even in this unbelieving age the Most Holy Crucifix of Limpas, El Santo Cristo de la Agonia, sweats blood, whilst tears have been observed in the eyes, which turn from side to side, and the head sometimes moves as in all the weariness of bitter pain. Very many other instances of similar miracles might be cited.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION I. CHAPTER XVI CONTINUED

But it may be asked to whom should such a man be surrendered, in what court he should be tried, and whether he is to be judged as one openly apprehended in heresy? The first difficulty is specially dealt with at the beginning of the Third part; namely, whether it is the business of a secular or of an ecclesiastical judge to punish such men. It is manifestly stated in the Canon Law that no temporal magistrate or judge is competent to try a case of heresy without a licence from the Bishops and Inquisitors, or at least under the hand of someone who has authority from them. But when it says that the secular courts have no jurisdiction in this matter because the crime of heresy is exclusively ecclesiastical, this does not seem to apply to the case of witches; for the crimes of witches are not exclusively ecclesiastical, but are also civil on account of the temporal damage which they do. Nevertheless, as will be shown later, although the ecclesiastical judge must try and judge the case, yet it is for the secular judge to carry out the sentence and inflict punishment, as is shown in the chapters of the Canon on the abolition of heresy, and on excommunication. Wherefore, even if he does surrender the witch to the Ordinary to be judged, the secular judge has still the power of punishing him after he has been delivered back by the Bishop; and with the consent of the Bishop, the secular judge can even perform both offices, that is, he can both sentence and punish.

And it is no valid objection to say that such wizards are rather apostates than heretics; for both these are offenders against the Faith; but whereas a heretic is only in some partial or total doubt with regard to the Faith, witchcraft in its very essence implies apostasy intent from the Faith. For it is a heavier sin to corrupt the Faith, which is the life of the soul, than to falsify money, which is a prop to the life of the body. And if counterfeiters of money, and other malefactors, are immediately sentenced to death, how much more just and equitable it is that such heretics and apostates should be immediately put to death when they are convicted.

Here we have also answered the second difficulty, namely, by what court and judge such men are to be punished. But this will be more fully considered in the Third Part of this work, where we treat of the methods of sentencing the offenders, and how one taken in open heresy is to be sentenced (see the eighth and twelfth methods), and of the question whether one who becomes penitent is still to be put to death.

For if a simple heretic constantly backslides as often as he repents, he is to be put to death according to the Canon Law; and this is reasonable according to S. Thomas, as being for the general good. For if relapsed heretics are often and often received back and allowed to live and keep their temporal goods, it might prejudice the salvation of others, both because they might infect others if they fell again, and because, if they were to escape without punishment, others would have less fear in being infected with heresy. And their

very relapse argues that they are not constant in the Faith, and they are therefore justly to be put to death. And so we ought to say here that, if a mere suspicion of inconstancy is sufficient warrant for an ecclesiastical judge to hand over such a backslider to the secular court to be put to death, much more must he do so in the case of one who refuses to prove his penitence and change of heart by handing over to the secular court an apostate or any witch, but rather leaves free and unchecked one whom the secular judge wishes to put to death as a witch according to the law, on account of the temporal injuries of which he has been guilty. But if the witch is penitent, the ecclesiastical judge must first absolve him from the excommunication which he has incurred because of the heresy of witchcraft. Also when a heretic is penitent, he can be received back into the bosom of the Church for the salvation of his soul. This matter is further discussed in the First Question of the Third Part, and this is ample for the present. Only let all Rulers consider how strictly and minutely they will be called to account by that terrible Judge; for indeed there will be a severe judgement on those in authority who allow such wizards to live and work their injuries against the Creator.

The other two classes of wizards belong to the general category of those who can use incantations and sacrilegious charms so as to render certain weapons incapable of harming or wounding them; and these are divided into two kinds. For the first class resemble the archer-wizards of whom we have just spoken, in that they also mutilate the image of Christ crucified. For example, if they wish their head to be immune from any wound from a weapon or from any blow, they take off the head of the Crucifix; if they wish their neck to be invulnerable, they take off its neck; if their arm, they take off, or at least shorten, the arm, and so on. And sometimes they take away all above the waist, or below it. And in proof of this, hardly one in ten of the Crucifixes set up at cross-roads or in the fields can be found whole and intact. And some carry the limbs thus broken off about with them, and others procure their invulnerability by means of sacred or unknown words: therefore there is this difference between them. The first sort resemble the archer-wizards in their contempt of the Faith and their mutilation of the image of the Saviour, and are therefore to be considered as true apostates, and so much be judged when they do not approach them in wickedness. For they seem only to act for the protection of their own bodies, either above the waist or below it, or of the whole body. Therefore they are not to be judged as penitent heretics and not relapsed, when they have been convicted as wizards and have repented; and they are to be imposed a penance according to the eighth manner, with solemn adjuration and incarceration, as is shown in the Third Part of this work.

The second sort can magically enchant weapons so that they can walk on them with bare feet, and similar strange feats do they perform (for according to S. Isidore, *Etym.* VIII, enchanters are those who have some skill to perform wonders by means of words). And there is a distinction to be made between them; for some perform their incantations by means of sacred words, or charms written up over the sick, and these are lawful provided that seven conditions are observed, as will be shown later where we deal with the methods of curing those who are bewitched. But incantations made over weapons by certain secret words, or cases where the charms written for the sick have been taken down, are matters for the judge's attention. For when they use words of which they do not themselves know the meaning, or characters and signs which are not the sign of the Cross, such practices are altogether to be repudiated, and good men should beware of the cruel arts of these warlocks. And if they will not desist from such deeds, they must be judged as suspects although lightly, and the manner of sentencing such after the second method will be shown later. For

they are not untainted with the sin of heresy; for deeds of this kind can only be done with the help of the devil, and, as we have shown, he who uses such help is judged to be an apostate from the Faith. Yet on the plea of ignorance or of mending their ways they may be dealt with more leniently than the archer-wizards.

It is more commonly found that traders and merchants are in the habit of carrying about them such charms and runes; and since they partake of the nature of incantations, a complete riddance must be made of them, either by the father confessor in the box, or in open court by the ecclesiastical judge. For these unknown words and characters imply a tacit compact with the devil, who secretly uses such things for his own purpose, granting their wearers their wishes, that he may lure them on to worse things. Therefore in the court of law such men must be warned and sentenced after the second method. In the box, the confessor must examine the charm, and if he is unwilling to throw it away altogether, he must delete the unknown words and signs, but may keep any Gospel words or the sign of the Cross.

Now with regard to all these classes of wizards, and especially the archers, it must be noted, as has been declared above, whether they are to be judged as heretics openly taken in that sin; and we have touched on this matter even before in the First Question of the First Part. And there it is shown that S. Bernard says that there are three ways by which a man can be convicted of heresy: either by the evidence of the fact when in simply heresy he publicly preaches his errors, or by the credible evidence of witnesses, or by a man's own confession. S. Bernard also explains the meaning of some of the words of the Canon Law in this connexion, as was shown in the First Question of the First Part of this work.

It is clear, therefore, that archer-wizards, and those mages who enchant other weapons, are to be considered as manifestly guilty of flagrant heresy, through some expressed pact with the devil, since it is obvious that their feats would not be possible without the devil's help.

Secondly, it is equally clear that the patrons, protectors and defenders of such men are manifestly to be judged in the same way, and subjected to the prescribed punishments. For there is not in their case, as there may be in that of several others, any doubt as to whether they are to be regarded as lightly or strongly or gravely suspected; but they are always very grave sinners against the Faith, and are always visited by God with a miserable death.

For it is told that a certain prince used to keep such wizards in his favour, and by their help unduly oppressed a certain city in matters of commerce. And when one of his retainers remonstrated with him over this, he threw away all fear of God and exclaimed, "God grant that I may die in this place if I am oppressing them unjustly." Divine vengeance quickly followed these words, and he was stricken down with sudden death. And this vengeance was not so much on account of his unjust oppression as because of his patronage of heresy.

Thirdly, it is clear that all Bishops and Rulers who do not essay their utmost to suppress crimes of this sort, with their authors and patrons, are themselves to be judged as evident abettors of the crime, and are manifestly to be punished in the prescribed manner.

Question II

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THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II.

The Methods of Destroying and Curing Witchcraft.

Introduction, wherein is Set Forth the Difficulty of this Question.

Is it lawful to remove witchcraft by means of further witchcraft, or by any other forbidden means?

It is argued that it is not; for it has already been shown that in the *Second Book of Sentences*, and the 8th Distinction, all the Doctors agree that it is unlawful to use the help of devils, since to do so involves apostasy from the Faith. And, it is argued, no witchcraft can be removed without the help of devils. For it is submitted that it must be cured either by human power, or by diabolic, or by Divine power. It cannot be by the first; for the lower power cannot counteract the higher, having no control over that which is outside its own natural capacity. Neither can it be by Divine power; for this would be a miracle, which God performs only at His own will, and not at the instance of men. For when His Mother besought Christ to perform a miracle to supply the need for wine, He answered: Woman, what have I to do with thee? And the Doctors explain this as meaning, “What association is there between you and me in the working of a [miracle](#)?” Also it appears that it is very rarely that men are delivered from a bewitchment by calling on God's help or the prayers of the Saints. Therefore it follows that they can only be delivered by the help of devils; and it is unlawful to seek such help.

Again it is pointed out that the common method in practice of taking off a bewitchment, although it is quite unlawful, is for the bewitched persons to resort to wise women, by whom they are very frequently cured, and not by priests or exorcists. So experience shows that such curses are effected by the help of devils, which it is unlawful to seek; therefore it cannot be lawful thus to cure a bewitchment, but it must patiently be borne.

It is further argued that S. Thomas and S. Bonaventura, in Book IV, dist. 34, have said that a bewitchment must be permanent because it can have no human remedy; for if there is a remedy, it is either unknown to men or unlawful. And these words are taken to mean that this infirmity is incurable and must be regarded as permanent; and they add that, even if God should provide a remedy by coercing the devil, and the devil should remove his plague from a man, and the man should be cured, that cure would not be a human one. Therefore, unless God should cure it, it is not lawful for a man to himself to try in any way to look for a cure.

In the same place these two Doctors add that it is unlawful even to seek a remedy by the superadding of another bewitchment. For they say that, granting this to be possible, and that the original spell be removed, yet the witchcraft is none the less to be considered permanent; for it is in no way lawful to invoke the devil's help through witchcraft.

Further, it is submitted that the exorcisms of the Church are not always effective in the

repression of [devils](#) in the matter of bodily afflictions, since such are cured only at the discretion of God; but they are effective always against those molestations of devils against which they are chiefly instituted, as, for example, against men who are possessed, or in the matter of exorcising children.

Again, it does not follow that, because the devil has been given power over someone on account of his sins, that power must come to an end on the cessation of the sin. For very often a man may cease from sinning, but his sins still remain. So it seems from these sayings that the two Doctors we have cited were of the opinion that it is unlawful to remove a bewitchment, but that it must be suffered, just as it is permitted by the Lord God, Who can remove it when it seems good to Him.

Against this opinion it is argued that just as God and Nature do not abound in superfluities, so also they are not deficient in necessities; and it is a necessity that there should be given to the faithful against such devils' work not only a means of protection (of which we treat in the beginning of this Second Part), but also curative remedies. For otherwise the faithful would not be sufficiently provided for by God, and the works of the devil would seem to be stronger than God's work.

Also there is the gloss on that text in *Job*. There is no power on earth, etc. The gloss says that, although the devil has power over all things human, he is nevertheless subject to the merits of the Saints, and even to the merits of saintly men in this life.

Again, S. Augustine ([De moribus Ecclesiae](#)) says: No Angel is more powerful than our mind, when we hold fast to God. For if power is a virtue in this world, then the mind that keeps close to God is more sublime than the whole world. Therefore such minds can undo the works of the devil.

Answer. Here are two weighty opinions which, it seems, are at complete variance with each other.

For there are certain Theologians and Canonists who agree that it is lawful to remove witchcraft even by superstitious and vain means. And of this opinion are [Duns Scotus](#), Henry of Segusio, and Godfrey, and all the Canonists. But it is the opinion of the other Theologians, especially the ancient ones, and of some of the modern ones, such as S. Thomas, S. Bonaventura, Blessed Albert, Peter a Palude, and many others, that in no case must evil be done that good may result, and that a man ought rather to die than consent to be cured by superstitious and vain means.

Let us now examine their opinions, with a view to bringing them as far as possible into agreement. Scotus, in his Fourth Book, dist. 34, on obstructions and impotence caused by witchcraft, says that it is foolish to maintain that it is unlawful to remove a bewitchment even by superstitious and vain means, and that to do so is in no way contrary to the Faith; for he who destroys the work of the devil is not an accessory to such works, but believes that the devil has the power and inclination to help in the infliction of an injury only so long as the outward token or sign of that injury endures. Therefore when that token is destroyed he puts an end to the injury. And he adds that it is meritorious to destroy the works of the devil. But, as he speaks of tokens, we will give an example.

There are women who discover a witch by the following token. When a cow's supply of milk has been diminished by witchcraft, they hang a pail of milk over the fire, and uttering certain superstitious words, beat the pail with a stick. And though it is the pail that the women beat, yet the devil carries all those blows to the back of the witch; and in this

way both the witch and the devil are made weary. But the devil does this in order that he may lead on the woman who beats the pail to worse practices. And so, if it were not for the risk which it entails, there would be no difficulty in accepting the opinion of this learned Doctor. Many other examples could be given.

Henry of Segusio, in his eloquent *Summa* on genital impotence caused by witchcraft, says that in such cases recourse must be had to the remedies of physicians; and although some of these remedies seem to be vain and superstitious cantrips and charms, yet everyone must be trusted in his own profession, and the Church may well tolerate the suppression of vanities by means of others vanities.

[Ubertinus](#) also, in his Fourth Book, uses these words: A bewitchment can be removed either by prayer or by the same art by which it was inflicted.

Godfrey says in his *Summa*: A bewitchment cannot always be removed by him who caused it, either because he is dead, or because he does not know how to cure it, or because the necessary charm is lost. But if he knows how to effect relief, it is lawful for him to cure it. Our author is speaking against those who said that an obstruction of the carnal act could not be caused by witchcraft, and that it could never be permanent, and therefore did not annul a marriage already contracted.

Besides, those who maintained that no spell is permanent were moved by the following reasons: they thought that every bewitchment could be removed either by another magic spell, or by the exorcisms of the Church which are ordained for the suppression of the devil's power, or by true penitence, since the devil has power only over sinners. So in the first respect they agree with the opinion of the others, namely, that a spell can be removed by superstitious means.

But S. Thomas is of the contrary opinion when he says: If a spell cannot be revoked except by some unlawful means, such as the devil's help or anything of that sort, even if it is known that it can be revoked in that way, it is nevertheless to be considered permanent; for the remedy is not lawful.

Of the same opinion are S. Bonaventura, Peter a Palude, Blessed Albert, and all the Theologians. For, touching briefly on the question of invoking the help of the devil either tacitly or expressedly, they seem to hold that such spells may only be removed by lawful exorcism or true penitence (as is set down in the Canon Law concerning sortilege), being moved, as it seems, by the considerations mentioned in the beginning of this Question.

But it is expedient to bring these various opinions of the learned Doctors as far as possible into agreement, and this can be done in one respect. For this purpose it is to be noted that the methods by which a spell of witchcraft can be removed are as follows: - either by the agency of another witch and another spell; or without the agency of a witch, but by means of magic and unlawful ceremonies. And this last method may be divided into two; namely, the use of ceremonies which are both unlawful and vain, or the use of ceremonies which are vain but not unlawful.

The first remedy is altogether unlawful, in respect both of the agent and of the remedy itself. But it may be accomplished in two ways; either with some injury to him who worked the spell, or without an injury, but with magic and unlawful ceremonies. In the latter case it can be included with the second method, namely, that by which the spell is removed not by the agency of a witch, but by magic and unlawful ceremonies; and in this case it is still to be judged unlawful, though not to the same extent as the first method.

We may summarize the position as follows. There are three conditions by which a remedy is rendered unlawful. First, when a spell is removed through the agency of another witch, and by further witchcraft, that is, by the power of some devil. Secondly, when it is not removed by a witch, but by some honest person, in such a way, however, that the spell is by some magical remedy transferred from one person to another; and this again is unlawful. Thirdly, when the spell is removed without imposing it on another person, but some open or tacit invocation of devils is used; and then again it is unlawful.

And it is with reference to these methods that the Theologians say that it is better to die than to consent to them. But there are two other methods by which, according to the Canonists, it is lawful, or not idle and vain, to remove a spell; and that such methods may be used when all the remedies of the Church, such as exorcisms and the prayers of the Saints and true penitence, have been tried and have failed. But for a clearer understanding of these remedies we will recount some examples known to our experience.

In the time of Pope Nicolas there had come to Rome on some business a certain Bishop from Germany, whom it is charitable not to name although he had now paid the debt of all nature. There he fell in love with a girl, and sent her to his diocese in charge of two servants and certain other of his possessions, including some rich jewels, which were indeed very valuable, and began to think in her heart that, if only the Bishop were to die through some witchcraft, she would be able to take possession of the rings, the pendants and carcanets. The next night the Bishop suddenly fell ill, and the physicians and his servants gravely suspected that he had been poisoned; for there was such a fire in his breast that he had to take continual draughts of cold water to assuage it. On the third day, when there seemed no hope of his life, an old woman came and begged that she might see him. So they let her in, and she promised the Bishop that she could heal him if he would agree to her proposals. When the Bishop asked what it was to which he had to agree in order to regain his health, as he so greatly desired, the old woman answered: Your illness has been caused by a spell of witchcraft, and you can only be healed by another spell, which will transfer the illness from you to the witch who caused it, so that she will die. The Bishop was astounded; and seeing that he could be healed in no other way, and not wishing to come to a rash decision, decided to ask the advice of the Pope. Now the Holy Father loved him very dearly, and when he learned that he could only be healed by the death of the witch, he agreed to permit the lesser of two evils, and signed this permission with his seal. So the old woman was again approached and told that both he and the Pope had agreed to the death of the witch, on condition that he was restored to his former health; and the old woman went away, promising him that he would be healed on the following night. And behold! when about the middle of the night he felt himself cured and free from all illness, he sent a messenger to learn what had happened to the girl; and he came back and reported that she had suddenly been taken ill in the middle of the night while sleeping by her mother's side.

It is to be understood that at the very same hour and moment the illness left the Bishop and afflicted the girl witch, through the agency of the old witch; and so the evil spirit, by ceasing to plague the Bishop, appeared to restore him to health by chance, whereas it was not he but God who permitted him to afflict him, and it was God Who properly speaking restored him; and the devil, by reason of his compact with the second witch, who envied the fortune of the girl, has to afflict the Bishop's mistress. And it must be thought that those two evil spells were not worked by one devil serving two persons, but by two devils serving two

separate witches. For the devils do not work [against themselves](#), but work as much as possible in agreement for the perdition of souls.

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[Question II Continued](#)

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“Miracle.” The sense is completely mistaken here. It should rather be, “Lady, what is it to Me and to Thee” if these people lack wine? Our Lord marvels at the supreme charity of Our Lady. The first miracle was wrought at the request of MARY. Quod Deus imperio tu prece, Virgo, potes. It may be argued that all miracles are performed at the request of Our Lady, since, as S. Bernard says, God wishes us to obtain everything through Her. Totum now uoluit habere per MARIAM.

“Devils.” If the exorcism is not effective it is owing to lack of faith.

“De Moribus.” “De Moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum” was written 388-89.

“Duns Scotus.” John Duns Scotus, Doctor Subtilis, the famous Franciscan scholastic, died 8 November, 1308. He lived and taught at Oxford, and for a time at Paris. His complete work with commentaries appeared at Paris, 1891-95, in twenty-six volumes, quarto, being a reprint of the twelve folio volumes which were issued by Luke Wadding in 1639 at Lyons.

“Ubertinus.” Ubertino of Casale, leader of the Spiritual Franciscans, who expressed extreme views regarding evangelical poverty. He was born in 1259, and died about 1330. Owing to his warm advocacy of the strictest ideas he was severely condemned by the authorities, and his history is a matter of considerable difficulty. His chief work is generally considered to be “Arbor uitae crucifixae JESU Christi.”

“Against themselves.” “S. Matthew” xii, 26: “Et si Satanas Satanam eiicit, aduersus se diuisus est: quomodo ergo regnum eius?”

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CONTINUED

Finally, the Bishop went out of compassion to visit the girl; but when he entered the room, she received him with horrible execrations, crying out: May you and she who wrought your cure be damned for ever! And the Bishop tried to soften her mind to penitence, and told her that he forgave her all her wrongs; but she turned her face away and said: I have no hope of pardon, but commend my soul to all the devils in hell; and died miserably. But the Bishop returned home with joy and thankfulness.

Here it is to be noted that a privilege granted to one does not construe a precedent for all, and the dispensation of the Pope in this case does not argue that it is lawful in all cases.

Nider in his *Formicarius* refers to the same master, for he says: The following method is sometimes employed for removing or taking vengeance for a spell of witchcraft. Someone who has been bewitched either in himself or in his possessions comes to a witch desiring to know how has injured him. Then the witch pours molten lead into water until, by the work of the devil, some image is formed by the solidified lead. On this, the witch asks his enemy to be hurt, so that he may recognize him by that hurt. And when he has chosen, the witch immediately pierces or wounds with a knife the leaden image in the same part, and shows him the place by which he can recognize the guilty person. And it is found by experience that, just in the same way as the leaden image is hurt, so is the witch hurt who cast the spell.

But of this sort of remedy I say, and of others like it, that generally they are unlawful; although human weakness, in the hope of obtaining pardon from God, is very often ensnared in such practices, being more careful for the health of the body than for that of the soul.

The second kind of cure which is wrought by witches who remove a spell again requires an expressed pact with the devil, but is not accompanied by any injury to another person. And in what light such witches should be considered, and how they are to be recognized, will be shown later in the fifteenth method of sentencing witches, for they are always found at intervals of one or two German miles, and these seem to be able to cure any who have been bewitched by another witch in their own district. Some of them claim to be able to effect such cures at all times; some that they can only cure those bewitched in the neighbouring signiory; others that they can only perform their cures with the consent of the witch who cast the original spell.

And it is known that these women have entered into an open pact with the devil, because they reveal secret matters to those who come to them to be cured. For they suddenly disclose to such a person the cause of his calamity, telling him that he has been bewitched either in his own person or in his possessions because of some quarrel he has had with a neighbour or with some other woman or man; and at times, in order to keep their criminal practices secret, they enjoin upon their clients some pilgrimage or other pious work. But to approach such women in order to be cured is all the more pernicious because they seem to bring greater contempt upon the Faith than others who effect their cures by means of a

merely tacit compact with the devil.

For they who resort to such witches are thinking more of their bodily health than of God, and besides that, God cuts short their lives to punish them for taking into their own hands the vengeance for their wrongs. For so the Divine vengeance overtook Saul, because he first cast out of the land all magicians and wizards, and afterwards consulted a witch; wherefore he was slain in battle with his sons, I. *Samuel* xxviii, and I. *Paralipomenon* x. And for the same reason the sick [Ochozias](#) had to die, IV. *Kings* i (Ahaziah; II. *Kings* i. A. V.).

Also the who consult such witches are regarded as defamed, and cannot be allowed to bring an accusation, as will be shown in the Third Part; and they are by law to be sentenced to capital punishment, as was said in the First Question of this work.

But alas! O Lord God, Who art just in all Thy judgements, who shall deliver the poor who are bewitched and cry out in their ceaseless pains? For our sins are so great, and the enemy is so strong; and where are they who can undo the works of the devil by lawful exorcisms? This one remedy appears to be left; that judges should, by various penalties, keep such wickedness as far as possible in check by punishing the witches who are the cause of it; that so they may deprive the sick of the opportunity of consulting witches. But, alas! no one understands this in his heart; but they all seek for their own gain instead of that of JESUS Christ.

For so many people used to go to be freed from spells to that witch in Reichshofen, whom we have already mentioned, that the Count of the castle set up a toll-booth, and all who were bewitched in their own persons or in their possessions had to pay a penny before they could visit her house; and he boasted that he made a substantial profit by this means.

We know from experience that there are many such witches in the diocese of Constance: not that this diocese is more infected than others, since this form of infidelity is general in all dioceses; but this diocese has been more thoroughly sifted. It was found that daily resort was being made to a man named Hengst by a very large concourse of poor folk who had been bewitched, and with our own eyes we saw such crowds in the village of Eningen, that certainly the poor never flocked to any shrine of the Blessed Virgin, or to a Holy Well or a Hermitage, in such numbers as they went to that sorcerer. For in the very coldest winter weather, when all the highways and byways were snow-bound, they came to him from two or three miles round in spite of the greatest difficulties; and some were cured, but others not. For I suppose that all spells are not equally easy to remove, on account of various obstacles, as has been said before. And these witches remove spells by means of an open invocation of devils after the manner of the second kind of remedies, which are unlawful, but not to the same extent as the first kind.

The third kind of remedy is that which is wrought by means of certain superstitious ceremonies, but without any injury to anyone, and not by an overt witch. An example of this method is as follows:

A certain market merchant in the town of Spires deposed that the following experience had happened to him. I was staying, he said, in Swabia in a well-known nobleman's castle, and one day after dinner I was strolling at my ease with two of the servants in the fields, when a woman met us. But while she was still a long way off my companions recognized her, and one of them said to me, "Cross yourself quickly," and the other one urged me in like manner. I asked them what they feared, and they answered, "The most dangerous witch

in the whole Province is coming to meet us, and she can cast a spell on men by only looking at them." But I obstinately boasted that I had never been afraid of such; and hardly had I uttered the words before I felt myself grievously hurt in the left foot, so that I could not move it from the ground or take a step without the greatest pain. Whereupon they quickly sent to the castle for a horse for me, and thus led me back. But the pains went on increasing for three days.

The people of the castle, understanding that I had been bewitched, related what had happened to a certain peasant who lived about a mile away, whom they knew to have skill in removing spells. This man quickly came and, after examining my foot, said, "I will test whether these pains are due to a natural cause; and if I find that they are due to witchcraft, I will cure you with the help of God; but if they are not, you must have recourse to natural remedies." Whereupon I made reply, "If I can be cured without any magic, and with the help of God, I will gladly agree; but I will have nothing to do with the devil, nor do I wish for his help." And the peasant promised that he would use none except lawful means, and that he would cure me by the help of God, provided that he could make certain that my pains were due to witchcraft. So I consented to his proposals. Then he took molten lead (in the manner of another witch whom we have mentioned), and held it in an iron ladle over my foot, and poured it into a bowl of water; and immediately there appeared the shapes of various things, as if thorns and hairs and bones and such things had been put into the bowl. "Now," he said, "I see that this infirmity is not natural, but certainly due to witchcraft." And when I asked him how he could tell this from the molten lead, he answered, "There are seven metals belonging to the seven planets; and since Saturn is the Lord of lead, when lead is poured out over anyone who has been bewitched, it is his property to discover the witchcraft by his power. And so it has surely proved, and you will soon be cured; yet I must visit you for as many days as you have been under this spell." And he asked me how many days had passed; and when I told him that was the third day, he came to see me on each of the next three days, and merely by examining and touching my foot and by saying over to himself certain words, he dissolved the charm and restored me to complete health.

In this case it is clear that the healer is not a witch, although his method is something superstitious. For in that he promised a cure by the help of God, and not by devils' work, and that he alleged the influence of Saturn over lead, he was irreproachable and rather to be commended. But there remains some small doubt as to the power by which the witch's spell was removed, and the figures caused in the lead. For no witchcraft can be removed by any natural power, although it may be assuaged, as will be proved later where we speak of the remedies for those who are possessed: therefore it seems that he performed this cure by means of at least some tacit pact with a devil. And we call such a pact tacit when the practitioner agrees tacitly, at any rate, to employ the devil's aid. And in this way many superstitious works are done, but with a varying degree of offence to the Creator, since there may be far more offence to Him in one operation than in another.

Yet because this peasant was certain of effecting a cure, and because he had to visit the patient for as many days as he had been ill, and although he used no natural remedies, yet cured him according to the promise made; for these reasons, although he had entered into no open pact with the devil, he is to be judged not only as a suspect, but as one plainly guilty of heresy, and must be considered as convicted and subject at least to the penalties set out below in the second method of sentencing; but his punishment must be accompanied with a solemn adjuration, unless he is protected by other laws which seem to be of a contrary

intention; and what the Ordinary should do in such a case will be shown later in the solution of the arguments.

The fourth class of remedies, concerning which the Canonists are in partial agreement with some of the Theologians, is said to be no worse than idle and vain; since it is superstitious only, and there is no pact either open or tacit with the devil as regards the intention or purpose of the practitioner. And I say that the Canonists and some Theologians are only partially agreed that this sort of remedy is to be tolerated; for their agreement or non-agreement depends upon whether or not they class this sort of remedies together with the third sort. But this sort of vain remedy is exemplified above in the case of the women who beat the pail hung over the fire in order that the witch may be beaten who has caused a cow to be drained of milk; although this may be done either in the name of the devil or without any reference to him.

We may adduce other examples of the same kind. For sometimes when a cow has been injured in this way, and they wish to discover who has bewitched it, they drive it out into the fields with a man's trousers, or some unclean thing, upon its head or back. And this they do chiefly on Feast Days and Holy Days, and possibly with some sort of invocation of the devil; and they beat the cow with a stick and drive it away. Then the cow runs straight to the house of the witch, and beats vehemently upon the door with its horns, lowing loudly all the while; and the devil causes the cow to go on doing this until it is pacified by some other witchcraft.

Actually, and according to the aforesaid Doctors, such remedies can be tolerated, but they are not meritorious, as some try to maintain. For S. Paul says that everything which we do, in word or deed, must be done in the name of Our Lord JESUS Christ. Now in this sort of remedy there may be no direct invocation of the devil, and yet the devil's name may be mentioned: and again there may be no intention to do such things by means of any open or tacit pact with the devil, yet a man may say, "I wish to do this, whether the devil has any part in it or not"; and that very temerity, by putting aside the fear of God, offends God, Who therefore grants the devil power to accomplish such cures. Therefore they who use such practices must be led into the way of penitence, and urged to leave such things and turn rather to the remedies of which we shall speak later, though we have touched upon them before, namely, the use of Holy Water and Blessed Salt and exorcisms, etc.

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[Question II Continued](#)

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“Ochozias,” who when sick “sent messengers, saying to them: Go, consult Beelzebub, the god of Hecaron, whether I shall recover of this my illness. And an angel of the Lord spoke to Elias the Thesbite, saying: Arise, and go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them: Is there not a God in Israel, that he go to consult Beelzebub, the god of Hecaron? Wherefore thus saith the Lord: From the bed on which thou art gone up thou shalt not come down, but thou shalt surely die.”

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CONTINUED

In the same light should be regarded those who use the following method. When an animal has been killed by witchcraft, and they wish to find out the witch, or to make certain whether its death was natural or due to witchcraft, they go to the place where dead animals are skinned, and drag the intestines along the ground up to their house; not into the house through the main door, but over the threshold of the back entrance into the kitchen; and then they make a fire and put the intestines over it on a hurdle. Then, according to what we have very often been told, just as the intestines get hot and burn, so are the intestines of the witch afflicted with [burning pains](#). But when they perform this experiment they take great care that the door is securely locked; because the witch is compelled by her pains to try to enter the house, and if she can take a coal from the fire, all her pains will disappear. And we have often been told that, when she is unable to enter the house, she surrounds it inside and out with the densest fog, with such horrible shrieks and commotions that at last all those in the house think the roof is verily going to fall down and crush them unless they open the door.

Certain other experiments are of the same nature. For sometimes people pick out the witches from a number of women in church by causing the witches to be unable to leave the church without their permission, even after the service is finished. And they do it in this way. On a Sunday they smear the shoes of the young men with grease, lard or pigs' fat, as is their wont when they wish to repair and renew the freshness of the leather, and thus the juvenals enter the church, whence it is impossible for any witches who are present to make their way out or depart until those who are anxious to espy them either go away themselves or give them express leave to make their way to their homes (*see [note](#)*).

It is the same with certain words, which it is not expedient to mention lest anyone should be seduced by the devil to use them. For judges and magistrates should not attach too much weight to the evidence of those who pretend to discover witches by this means, for fear lest the devil, that wily enemy, should induce them under this pretext to defame innocent women. Therefore such persons must be enjoined to seek the remedy of penitence. However, practices of this kind are on occasion to be tolerated and allowed.

In this way we have answered the arguments that no spell of witchcraft must be removed. For the first two remedies are altogether unlawful. The third remedy is tolerated by the law, but needs very careful examination on the part of the ecclesiastical judge. And what the civil law tolerates is shown in the chapter on witches, where it is said that those who have skill to prevent men's labours from being vitiated by tempests and hailstorms are worthy, not of punishment, but of reward. S. Antoninus also, in his *Summa*, points out this discrepancy between the Canon Law and civil law. Therefore it seems that the civil law concedes the legality of such practices for the preservation of crops and cattle, and that in any event certain men who use such arts are not only to be tolerated but even rewarded. Wherefore the ecclesiastical judge must take particular note whether the methods used in

counteraction of hailstorms and tempests are within the spirit of the law, or whether they are in any way superstitious; and then, if no scandal to the Faith is involved, they can be tolerated. But actually this does not belong to the third method, but to the fourth, and also to the fifth, of which we shall speak later in the following chapters, where we deal with the ecclesiastical and lawful remedies, with which are sometimes included certain superstitious practices belonging to the fourth method.

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[Question II, Chapter I](#)

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"Burning pains." The following quotation is from an article "Witchcraft, Past and Present," by Lady Peirse, that appeared in "Word-Lord," Vol. I, No. 3 (pp. 122-28), May-June, 1926. The district to which reference is made is "a south-country village in England." "A local farmer, whose cows and sheep ailed mysteriously, and showed all the usual signs of being 'overlooked' or bewitched, whilst things in general went wrong with him, consulted the witch doctor, and was told to repeat a certain charm last thing at night, to nail a sheep's heart to his front door, and on no account to open the door till morning, no matter what happened.

"This the farmer did, and when his family had repaired to bed, he commenced his lonely vigil by the kitchen fire. After a while there came a thunderous knocking on the door, and a voice crying 'Open and let me in.' The voice was very urgent, but the farmer, though he trembled exceedingly, kept firm grip of himself and never moved from his chair. Then came the knocking a second time and a deplorable voice begging to be allowed in, but the farmer remained obdurate. Lastly came a feeble knocking and moaning. The farmer, who was greatly alarmed, remained at his post till the sun was up next morning. When he opened his door a neighbour lay stretched across his threshold dead.

"The doctor, so my friend was told, believed it to be a case of heart failure. We can only imagine that the farmer and his family remained silent about the voice and the knocking at the door; perhaps no one but the farmer had heard. To the doctor, a simple though regrettable episode; to the farmer, an awesome case of retribution. To the world at large, a story that may be interpreted in many different ways; but with a lesson for all who run to read, namely, that it does not pay to practise witchcraft or the indulgence of personal spite if there happens to be a witch doctor in the neighbourhood, since it is apparently quite an easy thing, with a little occult knowledge, to do the witch to death! Throughout many centuries witches in the long run always seem to come off second best. Faith and fear in their victims seem to lend them strength, just as faith and love help righteousness."

Not very many years ago a farmer and his wife who lived in the country just outside Milan came to the conclusion that their daughter, who had long been suffering from a mysterious ailment, which the best doctors in Milan seemed unable to diagnose and cure, was bewitched by an old woman dwelling in their villagem a wretch of notoriously bad reputation, whome the girl had unwittingly offended in some small way. Accordingly they resorted to a "wise man," who lived in a small town a good many miles distant. He gave them a bundle of herbs, telling them to boil these in water and at the same times to recite a certain rune or rhyme which he taught them. He told them that if their daughter was indeed plagued by the malice of some individual, as the water boiled the witch who had cast the spell would be so tormented that she would hasten to their house and betray herself be begging them to take the cauldron from the fire. They could then refuse to do so unless she at once relived the girl from her sickness. They precisely obeyed the directions which had been given, and hardly had the water begun to bubble with the heat than there came running the hag whom they had suspected, imploring them with every symptom of intense agony to throw away the contents of the pot. This they would not do unless the charm was broken. In her despair the old woman promised to restore their daughter to health, and from that time the child rapidly began to mend until she was as stout and sturdy as any lass in the whole country-side.

The text of this passage seems corrupt and varies considerably in the later editions. The earliest edition of the “Malleus” in the British museum reads: “Nam die dnico sotularia iuueni fungia seu pinguedie proci vt moris e p restauratoe fieri pungut et sic vbi ecclesia intrat tadiu malefice exire eccias non poterut quo adusq: exploratores aut exeunt aut illis licentia sub expssione ut sup exeundi peedat.” “Die dnico” was almost immediately altered to “die dominica.” The usual reading is “die Dominica Sotularia, iuueni fungia . . .” Venice, 1576, introduces a fresh error: “die dominica Solutaria iuueni fungia. . . .” The Lyons text of 1669 has an excellent emendation, which is, no doubt, correct: “die Dominica Sotularia iuueni axungia. . . .”

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER I

The Remedies prescribed by the Holy Church against Incubus and Succubus Devils.

IN the foregoing chapters on the First Question we have treated of the methods of bewitching men, animals and the fruits of the earth, and especially of the behaviour of witches in their own persons; how they seduce young girls in order to increase their numbers; what is their method of profession and of offering homage; how they offer to devils their own children and the children of others; and how they are transported from place to place. Now I say that there is no remedy for such practises, unless witches be entirely eradicated by the judges, or at least punished as an example to all who may wish to imitate them; but we are not immediately treating of this point, which will be dealt with in the last Part of this work, where we set forth the twenty ways of proceeding against and sentencing witches.

For the present we are concerned only with the remedies against the injuries which they inflict; and first how men who are bewitched can be cured; secondly, beasts, and thirdly, how the fruits of the earth may be secured from blight or phylloxera.

With regard to the bewitchment of human beings by means of Incubus and Succubus devils, it is to be noted that this can happen in three ways. First, when women voluntarily prostitute themselves to Incubus devils. Secondly, when men have connexion with Succubus devils; yet it does not appear that men thus devilishly fornicate with the same full degree of culpability; for men, being by nature intellectually stronger than women, are more apt to abhor such practises.

There is in the town of Coblenz a poor man who is bewitched in this way. In the presence of his wife he is in the habit of acting after the manner of men with women, that is to say, of practising coition, as it were, and he continues to do this repeatedly, nor have the cries and urgent appeals of his wife any effect in making him desist. And after he has fornicated thus two or three times, he bawls out, "We are going to start all over again"; when actually there is no person visible to mortal sight lying with him. And after an incredible number of such bouts, the poor man at last sinks to the floor utterly exhausted. When he has recovered his strength a little and is asked how this happened to him, and whether he has had any women with him, he answers that he saw nothing, but his mind is in some way possessed so that he can by no means refrain from such priapism. And indeed he harbours a great suspicion that a certain woman bewitched him in this way, because he had offended her, and she had cursed him with threatening words, telling him what she would like to happen to him.

But there are no laws or ministers of justice which can proceed to the avenging of so great a crime with no other warrant than a vague charge or a grave suspicion; for it is held that no one ought to be condemned unless he has been convicted by his own confession, or

by the evidence of three trustworthy witnesses, since the mere fact of the crime coupled with even the gravest suspicions against some person is not sufficient to warrant the punishment of that person. But this matter will be dealt with later.

As for instances where young maidens are molested by Incubus devils in this way, it would take too long to mention even those that have been known to happen in our own time, for there are very many well-attested stories of such bewitchments. But the great difficulty of finding a remedy for such afflictions can be illustrated from a story told by Thomas of Brabant in his *Book on Bees*.

I saw, he writes, and heard the confession of a virgin in a religious habit, who said at first that she had never been a consenting party to fornication, but at the same time have been known in this way. This I could not believe, but narrowly charged and exhorted her, with the most solemn adjurations, to speak the truth on peril of her very soul. At last, weeping bitterly, she acknowledged that she had been corrupted rather in mind than in body; and that though she had afterwards grieved almost to death, and had daily confessed with tears, yet by no device or study or art could she be delivered from an [Incubus](#) devil, nor yet by the sign of the Cross, nor by Holy Water, which are specially ordained for the expulsion of devils, nor even by the Sacrament of the Body of Our Lord, which even the Angels fear. But at last after many years of prayer and fasting she was delivered.

It may be believed (saving a better judgement) that, after she repented and confessed her sin, the Incubus devil should be regarded rather in the light of a punishment for sin than as a sin in itself.

A devout nun, named Christina, in the Low Country of the Duchy of Brabant, told me the following concerning this same woman. On the vigil of one Pentacost the woman came to her complaining that she dared not take the Sacrament because of the importunate molestation of a devil. Christina, pitying her, said: "Go, and rest assured that you will receive the Body of Our Lord to-morrow; for I will take your punishment upon myself." So she went away joyfully, and after praying the night slept in peace, and rose up in the morning and communicated in all tranquility of the soul. But Christina, not thinking of the punishment she had taken upon herself, went to her rest in the evening, and as she lay in bed hear, as it were, a violent attack being made upon her; and, seizing whatever it was by the throat, tried to throw it off. She lay down again, but was again molested, and rose up in terror; and this happened many times, whilst all the straw of her bed was turned over and thrown about everywhere, so at length she perceived that she was being persecuted by the malice of a devil. Thereupon she left her pallet, and passed a sleepless night; and when she wished to pray, she was so tormented by the devil that she said she had never suffered so much before. In the morning, therefore, saying to the other woman, "I renounce your punishment, and I am hardly alive to renounce it," she escaped from the violence of that wicked tempter. From this it can be seen how difficult it is to cure this sort of evil, whether or not it is due to witchcraft.

However, there are still some means by which these devils may be driven away, of which Nider writes in his *Formicarius*. He says that there are five ways by which girls or men can be delivered: first, by Sacramental Confession; second, by the Sacred Sign of the Cross, or by the recital of the Angelic Salutation; third, by the use of exorcisms; fourth, by moving to another place; and fifth, by means of excommunication prudently employed by holy men. It is evident from what has been said that the first two methods did not avail the

nun; but they are not on that account to be neglected, for that which cures one person does not necessarily cure another, and conversely. And it is a recorded fact that Incubus devils have often been driven away by the Lord's Prayer, or by the sprinkling of Holy Water, and also especially by the Angelic Salutation.

For [S. Caesarius](#) tells in his *Dialogue* that, after a certain priest had hanged himself, his concubine entered a convent, where she was carnally solicited by an Incubus. She drove him away by crossing herself and using Holy Water, yet he immediately returned. But when she recited the Angelic Salutation, he vanished like an arrow shot from a bow; still he came back, although he did not dare to come near her, because of the Ave MARIA.

S. Caesarius also refers to the remedy of Sacramental Confession. For he says that the aforesaid concubine was entirely abandoned by the Incubus after she was clean confessed. He tells also of a man in Leyden who was plagued by a Succubus, and was entirely delivered after Sacramental Confession.

He adds yet another example, of an enclosed nun, a contemplative, whom an Incubus would not leave in spite of prayers and confession and other religious exercises. For he persisted in forcing his way to her bed. But when, acting on the advice of a certain religious man, she uttered the word Benedicite, the devil at once left her.

Of the fourth method, that of moving to another place, he says that a certain priest's daughter had been defiled by an Incubus and driven frantic with grief; but when she went away across the Rhine, she was left in peace by the Incubus. Her father, however, because he had sent her away, was so afflicted by the devil that he died within three days.

He also maintains a woman who was often molested by an Incubus in her own bed, and asked a devout friend of hers to come and sleep with her. She did so, and was troubled all night with the utmost uneasiness and disquiet, and then the first woman was left in peace. William of Paris notes also that Incubus seem chiefly to molest women and girls with beautiful hair; either because they devote themselves too much to the care and adornment of their hair, or because they are boastfully vain about it, or because God in His goodness permits this so that women may be afraid to entice men by the very means by which the devils wish them to entice men.

The fifth method, that of excommunication, which is perhaps the same as exorcism, is exemplified in a history of S. Bernard. In Aquitaine a woman had for six years been molested by an Incubus with incredible carnal abuse and lechery; and she heard the Incubus threaten her that she must not go near the holy man, who was coming that way, saying: "It will avail you nothing: for when he was gone away, I, who have till now been your lover, will become the cruellest of tyrants to you." None the less she went to S. Bernard, and he said to her: "Take my staff and set it in your bed, and may the devil do what he can." When she had done this, the devil did not dare to enter the woman's room, but threatened her terribly from outside, saying that he would persecute her when S. Bernard had gone away. When S. Bernard heard this from the woman, he called the people together, bidding them carry lighted candles in their hands, and, with the whole assembly which was gathered, excommunicated the devil, forbidding him evermore to approach that woman or any other. And so she was delivered from that punishment.

Here it is to be noted that the power of the Keys granted to S. Peter and his successors, which resounds on the earth, is really a power of healing granted to the Church on behalf of travellers who are subject to the jurisdiction of the Papal power; therefore it seems

wonderful that even the Powers of the air can be warded off by this virtue. But it must be remembered that persons who are molested by devils are under the jurisdiction of the Pope and his Keys; and therefore it is not surprising if such Powers are indirectly kept at bay by the virtue of the Keys, just as by the same virtue the souls in purgatory can indirectly be delivered from the pains of fire; insasmuch as this Power availeth upon the earth, ay, and to the relief of souls that are under the earth.

But it is not seemly to discuss the Power of the Keys granted to the Head of the Church as Christ's Vicar; since it is know that, for the use of the Church, Christ granted to the Church and His Vicar as much power as it is possible for God to grant to mere man.

And it is piously to be believed that, when infirmities inflicted by witches through the power of devils, together with the witches and devils themselves, are excommunicated, those who were afflicted will no longer be tormented; and that they will be delivered all the sooner by the use of other lawful exorcisms in addition.

There is a common report current in the districts of the river Etsch, as also in other places, that by the permission of God a swarm of locusts came and devoured all the vines, green leaves and crops; and that they were suddenly put to flight and dispersed by means of this kind of excommunication and cursing. Now it any wish that this should ascribed to some holy man, and not to the virtue of the Keys, let ie be so, in the name of the Lord; but of one thing we are certain, that both the power to perform miracles and the power of the Keys necessarily presuppose a condition of grace in him who performs that act of grace, since both these powers proceed from grace granted to men who are in a state of grace.

Again, it is to be noted that, if none of the aforesaid remedies are of any avail, then recourse must be had to the usual exorcisms, of which we shall treat later. And if even these are not sufficient to banish the iniquity of the devil, then that affliction must be considered to be an expiatory punishment for sin, which should be borne in all meekness, as are other ills of this sort which oppress us that they may, as it were, drive us to seek God.

But it must also be remarked that sometimes persons only think they are molested by an Incubus when they are not so actually; and this is more apt to be the case with women than with men, for they are more timid and liable to imagine extraordinary things.

In this connexion William of Paris is often quoted. He says: Many phantastical apparitions occur to person suffering fro a melancholy disease, especially to women, as is shown by their dreams and visions. And the reason for this, as physicians know, is that women's souls are by nature far more easily and lightly impressionable than men's souls. And he adds: I know that I have seen a woman who thought that a devil copulated with her from inside, and said she was physically conscious of such incredible things.

At time also women think they have been made pregnant by an Incubus, and their bellies grow to an enormous size; but when the time of parturition comes, their swelling is relieved by no more than the expulsion of a great quantity of wind. For by taking ants' eggs in drink, or the seeds of spurge or of the black pine, an incredible amount of wind and flatulence is generated in the human stomach. And it is very easy for the devil to cause these and even greater disorders in the stomach. This has been set down in order that too easy credence should not be given to women, but only to those whom experience has shown to be trustworthy, and to those who, by sleeping in their beds or near them, know for a fact that such things as we have spoken of are true.

Question II, Chapter II

*Part II, Question II, Chapter I
was transcribed by [Wicasta Lovelace](#).*

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“Incubus.” Sinistrari tells of a case which came under his own notice when a deacon, a monk of the Certosa at Pavia, was sorely vexed by an Incubus. Exorcisms seemed unavailing; the Incubus himself in the shape of Father Prior blessed the place with Holy Water. However, the demon was at last banished. See my translation, “Demoniality,” pp. 57-59, and passim.

“Caesarius.” A learned monk of the Cistercian monastery of Heisterback near Bonn, born about 1170 at Cologne, died about 1240 as Prior of Heisterbach. Abbot Henry requested Caesarius to draw up an abstract of his teaching, and this resulted in the famous “Dialogue magnus uisionum atque miraculorum, Libri XII,” which it is no exaggeration to say was probably the most popular book in Germany of its period. More than fifty MSS. are extant, and seven printed editions are known. The latest, two volumes, was edited by Strange, Cologne, 1851; an index to this followed, Cologne, 1857.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER II

Remedies prescribed for Those who are Bewitched by the Limitation of the Generative Power.

Although far more women are witches than men, as was shown in the First Part of the work, yet men are more often bewitched than women. And the reason for this lies in the fact that God allows the devil more power over the venereal act, by which the original sin is handed down, than over other human actions. In the same way He allows more witchcraft to be performed by means of serpents, which are more subject to incantations than other animals, because that was the first instrument of the devil. And the venereal act can be more readily and easily bewitched in a man than in a woman, as has been clearly shown. For there are five ways in which the devil can impede the act of generation, and they are more easily operated against men.

As far as possible we shall set out the remedies which can be applied in each separate kind of obstruction; and let him who is bewitched in this faculty take note to which class of obstruction he belongs. For there are five classes, according to Peter a Palude in his Fourth Book, dist. 34, of the trial of this sort of bewitchment.

For the devil, being a spirit, has by his very nature power, with God's permission, over a bodily creature, especially to promote or to prevent local motion. So by this power they can prevent the bodies of men and women from approaching each other; and this either directly or indirectly. Directly, when they remove one to a distance from another, and do not allow him to approach the other. Indirectly, when they cause some obstruction, or when they interpose themselves in an assumed body. So it happened that a young Pagan who had married an idol, but none the less contracted a marriage with a girl; but because of this he was unable to copulate with her, as has been shown above.

Secondly, the devil can inflame a man towards one woman and render him impotent towards another; and this he can secretly cause by the application of certain herbs or other matters of which he well knows the virtue for this purpose.

Thirdly, he can disturb the apperception of a man or a woman, so that he makes one appear hideous to the other; for, as has been shown, he can influence the imagination.

Fourthly, he can suppress the vigour of that member which is necessary for procreation; just as he can deprive any organ of the power of local motion.

Fifthly, he can prevent the flow of the semen to the members in which is the motive power, by as it were closing the seminal duct so that it does not descend to the genital vessels, or does not ascend again from them, or cannot come forth, or is spent vainly.

But if a man should say: I do not know by which of these different methods I have been bewitched; all I know is that I cannot do anything with my wife: he should be answered in this way. If he is active and able with regard to other women, but not with his wife, then he

is bewitched in the second way; for he can be certified as to the first way, that he is being deluded by Succubus or Incubus devils. Moreover, if he does not find his wife repellent, and yet cannot know her, but can know other women, then again it is the second way; but if he finds her repellent and cannot copulate with her, then it is the second and the third way. If he does not find her repellent and wishes to have connexion with her, but has no power in his member, then it is the fourth way. But if he has power in his member, yet cannot emit his semen, then it is the fifth way. The method of curing these will be shown where we consider whether those who live in grace and those who do not are equally liable to be bewitched in these manners; and we answer that they are not, with the exception of the fourth manner, and even then very rarely. For such an affliction can happen to a man living in grace and righteousness; but the reader must understand that in this case we speak of the conjugal act between married people; for in any other case they are all liable to bewitchment; for every venereal act outside wedlock is a mortal sin, and is only committed by those who are not in a state of grace.

We have, indeed, the authority of the whole of Scriptural teaching that God allows the devil to afflict sinners more than the just. For although that most just man, Job, was stricken, yet he was not so particularly or directly in respect of the procreant function. And it may be said that, when a married couple are afflicted in this way, either both the parties or one of them is not living in a state of grace; and this opinion is substantiated in the Scriptures both by authority and by reason. For the Angel said to [Tobias](#): The devil receives power against those who are given over to lust: and he proved it in the slaying of the seven husbands of the virgin Sara.

Cassian, in his *Collation of the Fathers*, quotes S. Antony as saying that the devil can in no way enter our mind or body unless he has first deprived it of all holy thoughts and made it empty and bare of spiritual contemplation. These words should not be applied to an evil affliction over the whole of the body, for when Job was so afflicted he was not denuded of Divine grace; but they have particular reference to a particular infirmity inflicted upon the body for some sin. And the infirmity we are considering can only be due to the sin of incontinence. For, as we have said, God allows the devil more power over that act than over other human acts, because of its natural nastiness, and because by it the first sin was handed down to posterity. Therefore when people joined in matrimony have for some sin been deprived of Divine help, God allows them to be bewitched chiefly in their procreant functions.

But if it is asked of what sort are those sins, it can be said, according to S. Jerome, that even in a state of matrimony it is possible to commit the sin of incontinence in various ways. See the text: He who loves his wife to excess is an adulterer. And they who love in this way are more liable to be bewitched after the manner we have said.

The remedies of the Church, then, are twofold: one applicable in the public court, the other in the tribunal of the confessional. As for the first, when it has been publicly found that the impotence is due to witchcraft, then it must be distinguished whether it is temporary or permanent. If it is only temporary, it does not annul the marriage. And it is assumed to be temporary if, within the space of three years, by using every possible expedient of the Sacraments of the Church and other remedies, a cure can be caused. But if, after that time, they cannot be cured by any remedy, then it is assumed to be permanent.

Now the disability either precedes both the contract and the consummation of marriage;

and in this case it impedes the contract: or it follows the contract but precedes the consummation; and in this case it annuls the contract. For men are very often bewitched in this way because they have cast off their former mistresses, who, hoping that they were to be married and being disappointed, so bewitch the men that they cannot copulate with another woman. And in such a case, according to the opinion of many, the marriage already contracted is annulled, unless, like Our Blessed Lady and S. Joseph they are willing to live together in holy continence. This opinion is supported by the Canon where it says (23, q. I) that a marriage is confirmed by the carnal act. And a little later it says that impotence before such confirmation dissolves the ties of marriage.

Or else the disability follows the consummation of a marriage, and then it does not dissolve the bonds of matrimony. Much more to this effect is noted by the Doctors, where in various writings they treat of the obstruction due to witchcraft; but since it is not precisely relevant to the present inquiry, it is here omitted.

But some may find it difficult to understand how this function can be obstructed in respect of one woman but not of another. S. Bonaventura answers that this may be because some witch has persuaded the devil to effect this only with respect to one woman, or because God will not allow the obstruction to apply save to some particular woman. The judgement of God in this matter is a mystery, as in the case of the wife of Tobias. But how the devil procures this disability is plainly shown by what has already been said. And S. Bonaventura says that he obstructs the procreant function, not intrinsically by harming the organ, but extrinsically by impeding its use; and it is an artificial, not a natural impediment; and so he can cause it to apply to one woman and not to another. Or else he takes away all desire for one or another woman; and this he does by his own power, or else by means of some herb or stone or some occult creature. And in this he is in substantial agreement with Peter a Palude.

The ecclesiastical remedy in the tribunal of God is set forth in the Canon where it says: If with the permission of the just and secret judgement of God, through the arts of sorceresses and witches and the preparation of the devil, men are bewitched in their procreant function, they are to be urged to make clean confession to God and His priest of all their sins with a contrite heart and a humble spirit; and to make satisfaction to God with many tears and large offerings and prayers and fasting.

From these words it is clear that such afflictions are only on account of sin, and occur only to those who do not live in a state of grace. It proceeds to tell how the ministers of the Church can effect a cure by means of exorcisms and the other protections and cures provided by the Church. In this way, with the help of God, Abraham cured by his prayers [Abimelech](#) and his house.

In conclusion we may say that there are five remedies which may lawfully be applied to those who are bewitched in this way: namely, a pilgrimage to some holy and venerable shrine; true confession of their sins with contrition; the plentiful use of the sign of the Cross and devout prayer; lawful exorcism by solemn words, the nature of which will be explained later; and lastly, a remedy can be effected by prudently approaching the witch, as was shown in the case of the Count who for three years was unable to cohabit carnally with a virgin whom he had married.

Question II, Chapter III

*Part II, Question II, Chapter II
was transcribed by [Christie Rice](#).*

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“Tobias.” “Tobias” vi, 16 and 17: Then the angel Raphael said to him: Hear me, and I will show thee who they are, over whom the devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power.

”Abimelech.” “Genesis” xx.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER III

*Remedies prescribed for those who are Bewitched by being Inflamed
with Inordinate Love or Extraordinary Hatred.*

JUST as the generative faculty can be bewitched, so can inordinate love or hatred be caused in the human mind. First we shall consider the cause of this, and then, as far as possible, the remedies.

Philocaption, or inordinate love of one person for another, can be caused in three ways. Sometimes it is due merely to a lack of control over the eyes; sometimes to the temptation of devils; sometimes to the spells of necromancers and witches, with the help of devils.

The first is spoken of in *S. James* i. 14, 15: Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured. Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: but sin, when it is completed, begetteth death. And so, when Shecham saw Dinah going out to see the daughters of the land, he loved her, and ravished her, and lay with her, and his soul clave unto her (*Genesis xxxiv*). And here the gloss says that this happened to an infirm spirit because she left her own concerns to inquire into those of other people; and such a soul is seduced by bad habits, and is led to consent to unlawful practices.

The second cause arises from the temptation of devils. In this way Amnon loved his beautiful sister Tamar, and was so vexed that he fell sick for love of her (*II. Samuel xiii*). For he could not have been so totally corrupt in his mind as to fall into so great a crime of incest unless he had been grievously tempted by the devil. The book of the Holy Fathers refers to this kind of love, where it says that even in their hermitages they were exposed to every temptation, including that of carnal desires; for some of them were at times tempted with the love of women more than it is possible to believe. *S. Paul* also says, in *II. Corinthians xii*: There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me: and the gloss explains this as referring to the temptation of lust.

But it is said that when a man does not give way to temptation he does not sin, but it is an exercise for his virtue; but this is to be understood of the temptation of the devil, not of that of the flesh; for this is a venial sin even if a man does not yield to it. Many examples of this are to be read.

As for the third cause, by which inordinate love proceeds from devils' and witches' works, the possibility of this sort of witchcraft has been exhaustively considered in the Questions of the First Part as to whether devils through the agency of witches can turn the minds of men to inordinate love or hatred, and it was proved by examples which had fallen within our own experience. Indeed this is the best known and most general form of witchcraft.

But the following question may be asked: Peter has been seized with an inordinate love of this description, but he does not know whether it is due to the first or the second or the

third cause. It must be answered that it can be by the work of the devil that hatred is stirred up between married people so as to cause the crime of adultery. But when a man is so bound in the meshes of carnal lust and desire that he can be made to desist from it by no shame, words, blows or action; and when a man often puts away his beautiful wife to cleave to the most hideous of women, and when he cannot rest in the night, but is so demented that he must go by devious ways to his mistress; and when it is found that those of noblest birth, Governors, and other rich men, are the most miserably involved in this sin (for this age is dominated by women, and was foretold by [S. Hildegard](#), as Vincent of Beauvais records in the *Mirror of History*, although he said it would not endure for as long as it already has); and when the world is now full of adultery, especially among the most highly born; when all this is considered, I say, of what use is it to speak of remedies to those who desire no remedy? Nevertheless, for the satisfaction of the pious reader, we will set down briefly some of the remedies for *Philocaption* when it is not due to witchcraft.

Avicenna mentions seven remedies which may be used when a man is made physically ill by this sort of love; but they are hardly relevant to our inquiry except in so far as they may be of service to the sickness of the soul. For he says, in Book III, that the root of the sickness may be discovered by feeling the pulse and uttering the name of the object of the patient's love; and then, if the law permits, he may be cured by yielding to nature. Or certain medicines may be applied, concerning which he gives instructions. Or the sick man may be turned from his love by lawful remedies which will cause him to direct his love to a more worthy object. Or he may avoid her presence, and so distract his mind from her. Or, if he is open to correction, he may be admonished and expostulated with, to the effect that such love is the greatest misery. Or he may be directed to someone who, as far as he may with God's truth, will vilify the body and disposition of his love, and so blacken her character that she may appear to him altogether base and deformed. Or, finally, he is to be set to arduous duties which may distract his thoughts.

Indeed, just as the animal nature of man may be cured by such remedies, so may they all be of use in reforming his inner spirit. Let a man obey the law of his intellect rather than that of nature, let him turn his love to safe pleasures, let him remember how momentary is the fruition of lust and how eternal the punishment, let him seek his pleasure in that life where joys begin never to end, and let him consider that if he cleaves to this earthly love, that will be his sole reward, but he will lose the bliss of Heaven, and be condemned to eternal fire: behold! the three irrevocable losses which proceed from inordinate lust.

With regard to *Philocaption* caused by witchcraft, the remedies detailed in the preceding chapter may not inconveniently be applied here also; especially the exorcisms by sacred words which the bewitched person can himself use. Let him daily invoke the Guardian Angel deputed to him by God, let him use confession and frequent the shrines of the Saints, especially of the Blessed Virgin, and without doubt he will be delivered.

But how abject are those strong men who, discarding their natural gifts and the armour of virtue, cease to defend themselves; whereas the girls themselves in their invincible frailty use those very rejected weapons to repel this kind of witchcraft. We give one out of many examples in their praise.

There was in a country village near Lindau in the diocese of Constance a grown maid fair to see and of even more elegant behaviour, at sight of whom a certain man of loose principles, a cleric in sooth, but not a priest, was smitten with violent pangs of love. And

being unable to conceal the wound in his heart any longer, he went to the place where the girl was working, and with fair words showed that he was in the net of the devil, beginning by venturing in words only to persuade the girl to grant him her love. She, perceiving by Divine instinct his meaning, and being chaste in mind and body, bravely answered him: Master, do not come to my house with such words, for modesty itself forbids. To this he replied: Although you will not be persuaded by gentle words to love me, yet I promise you that soon you will be compelled by my deeds to love me. Now that man was a suspected enchanter and wizard. The maiden considered his words as but empty air, and until then felt in herself no spark of carnal love for him; but after a short time she began to have amorous thoughts. Perceiving this, and being inspired by God, she sought the protection of the Mother of Mercy, and devoutly implored Her to intercede with Her Son to help her. Anxious, moreover, she went on a pilgrimage to a [hermitage](#), where there was a church miraculously consecrated in that diocese to the Mother of God. There she confessed her sins, so that no evil spirit could enter her, and after her prayers to the Mother of Pity all the devil's machinations against her ceased, so that these evil crafts thenceforth never afflicted her.

None the less there are still some strong men cruelly enticed by witches to this sort of love, so that it would seem that they could never restrain themselves from their inordinate lust for them, yet these often most manfully resist the temptation of lewd and filthy enticements, and by the aforesaid defences overcome all the wiles of the devil.

A rich young man in the town of Innsbruck provides us with a notable pattern of this sort of struggle. He was so importuned by witches that it is hardly possible for pen to describe his strivings, but he always kept a brave heart, and escaped by means of the remedies we have mentioned. Therefore it may justly be concluded that these remedies are infallible against this disease, and that they who use such weapons will most surely be delivered.

And it must be understood that what we have said concerning inordinate love applies also to inordinate hatred, since the same discipline is of benefit for the two opposite extremes. But though the degree of witchcraft is equal in each, yet there is this difference in the case of hatred; the person who is hated must seek another remedy. For the man who hates his wife and puts her out of his heart will not easily, if he is an adulterer, be turned back again to his wife, even though he go on many a pilgrimage.

Now it has been learned from witches that they cause this spell of hatred by means of serpents; for the serpent was the first instrument of the devil, and by reason of its curse inherits a hatred of women; therefore they cause such spells by placing the skin or head of a serpent under the threshold of a room or house. For this reason all the nooks and corners of the house where such a woman lives are to be closely examined and reconstructed as far as possible; or else she must be lodged in the houses of others.

And when it is said the bewitched men can exorcise themselves, it is to be understood that they can wear the sacred words or benedictions of incantations round their necks, if they are unable to read or pronounce the benedictions; but it will be shown later in what way this should be done.

Question II, Chapter IV

*Part II, Question II, Chapter III
was transcribed by [Wicasta Lovelace](#).*

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“S. Hildegard.” Born at Böckelheim on the Nahe, 1098; died on the Rupertsberg near Bingen, 1179. This great Benedictine seeress and prophetess has been called the Sibyl of the Rhine. From her earliest years she was favoured with visions, and when she was aged about forty she received a Divine command to publish to the world what she had seen and heard. After much hesitation owing to her humility she obeyed, and in 1141 she commenced her profound treatise “Scivias” (“scire uias Domini”), which occupied her for ten years. It is ecstatic and prophetic throughout, and demands profoundest study. Herwegen, “Kirchl. Handlexikon” (1908), remarks that in order fully to appreciate this marvellous writer a new and critical edition of her writings must be prepared, a task entailing immense labour and research. No formal canonization of S. Hildegard has taken place, but many miracles were wrought at her intercession, and her name is in the Roman Martyrology. The feast is celebrated on 17 September in the dioceses of Speyer, Mainz, Trier and Limburg, and by the Solesmes monks on 18 September with a proper Office. The Relics of the Saint are at Eibingen, of which town she is patron. The convent of S. Hildegard there was formally constituted on 17 September, 1904.

“Hermitage.” The famous shrine of Our Lady of the Hermit, at the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln, in the Canton of Schwyz, Switzerland. S. Meinrad, who was assassinated by bandits in 861, had embraced the solitary life and established his hermitage on the slopes of Mount Etzel, when he built a small oratory for the wonder-working statue of Our Lady which had been given him by Abbess Hildegard of Zurich. Several anchorites succeeded him, and one of these, by name Eberhard, erected a monastery and church there. This fane was miraculously consecrated in 948 by Christ Himself, assisted by the Four Evangelists, S. Peter and S. Gregory the Great. Even the rationalistic Father Thurston, S.J., will be unable to impugn this holy marvel, as it was investigated and confirmed by Pope Leo VIII, and subsequently ratified by many a Pontiff, the last being Pius VI, who in 1793 confirmed the acts of all his predecessors. The miraculous statue is enthroned in a little chapel which stands within the great abbey church in much the same way as the Holy House at Loreto, encased in marbles and elaborate wood-work, the goal of ten thousand pilgrimages. The two chief days are the fourteenth of September and the thirteenth of October, the first being the anniversary of the Divine consecration of Eberhard's basilica, the second that of the translation of the Relics of S. Meinrad from Reichenau to Einsiedeln in 1039.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER IV

Remedies prescribed for those who by Prestidigitative Art have lost their Virile Members or have seemingly been Transformed into the Shapes of Beasts.

In what has already been written it has clearly enough been shown the remedies which are available for the relief of those who are deluded by a glamour, and think that they have lost their virile member, or have been metamorphosed into animals. For since such men are entirely destitute of Divine grace, according to the essential condition of those who are so bewitched, it is not possible to apply a healing salve while the weapon still remains in the wound. Therefore before all things they must be reconciled to God by a good confession. Again, as was shown in the seventh chapter of the First Question of the Second Part, such members are never actually taken away from the body, but are only hidden by a glamour from the senses of sight and touch. It is clear, too, that those who live in grace are not so easily deluded in this way, either actively or passively, in such a manner, that is, that they seem to lose their members, or that those of others should appear to them to be missing. Therefore the remedy as well as the disease is explained in that chapter, namely, that they should as far as possible come to an amicable agreement with the witch herself.

As to those who think that they have been changed into beasts, it must be known that this kind of witchcraft is more practised in Easter countries than in the West; that is to say, in the East witches more often bewitch other people in this way, but it appears that the witches so transform themselves more frequently in our part of the world; namely, when they change themselves, in full sight, into the shapes of animals, as was told in the eighth chapter. Therefore in their case the remedies to be used are those set out in the Third Part of this work, where we deal with the extermination of witches by the secular arm of the law.

But in the East the following remedy is used for such delusions. For we have learned much of this matter from the Knights of the Order of S. John of Jerusalem in Rhodes; and especially this case which happened in the city of Salamis in the kingdom of Cyprus. For that is a seaport, and once when a vessel was being laden with merchandise suitable for a ship which is sailing into foreign parts, and all her company were providing themselves with victuals, one of them, a strong young man, went to the house of a woman standing outside the city on the seashore, and asked her if she had any eggs to sell. The woman, seeing that he was a strong young man, and a merchant far away from his own country, thought that on that account the people of the city would feel less suspicion if he were to be lost, and said to him: "Wait a little, and I will get you all that you want." And when she went in and shut the door and kept him waiting, the young man outside began to call out to her to hurry, lest he should miss the ship. Then the woman brought some eggs and gave them to the young man, and told him to hurry back to the ship in case he should miss it. So he hastened back to the ship, which was anchored by the shore, and before going on board, since the full company

of his companions was not yet returned, he decided to eat the eggs there and refresh himself. And behold! an hour later he was made dumb as if he had no power of speech; and, as he afterwards said, he wondered what could have happened to him, but was unable to find out. Yet when he wished to go on board, he was driven off with sticks by those who yet remained ashore, and who all cried out: "Look what this ass is doing! Curse the beast, you are not coming on board." The young man being thus driven away, and understanding from their words that they thought he was an ass, reflected and began to suspect that he had been bewitched by the woman, especially since he could utter no word, although he understood all that was said. And when, on again trying to board the ship, he was driven off with heavier blows, he was in bitterness of heart compelled to remain and watch the ship sail away. And so, as he ran here and there, since everybody thought he was an ass, he was necessarily treated as such. At last, under compulsion, he went back to the woman's house, and to keep himself alive served her at her pleasure for three years, doing no work but to bring to the house such necessities as wood and corn, and to carry away what had to be carried away like a beast of burden: the only consolation that was left to him being that although everyone else took him for an ass, the witches themselves, severally and in company, who frequented the house, recognized him as a man, and he could talk and behave with them as a man should.

Now if it is asked how burdens were placed upon him as if he were a beast, we must say that this case is analogous to that of which S. Augustine speaks in his *De Ciuitate Dei*, Book XVIII, chapter 17, where he tells of the tavern women who changed their guests into beasts of burden; and to that of the father Praestantius, who thought he was a pack-horse and carried corn with other animals. For the delusion caused by this glamour was threefold.

First in its effect on the men who saw the young man not as a man but as an ass; and it is shown above in Chapter VIII how devils can easily cause this. Secondly, those burdens were no illusion; abut when they were beyond the strength of the young man, the devil invisible carried them. Thirdly, that when he was consorting with others, the young man himself considered in his imagination and perceptive faculties at least, which are faculties belonging to the bodily organs, that he was an ass; but not in his reason: for he as not so bound but that he knew himself to be a man, although he was magically deluded into imagining himself a beast. Nabuchodonosor provides an example of the same delusion.

After three years had passed in this way, in the fourth year it happened that the young man went one morning into the city, with the woman following a long way behind; and he passed by a church where Holy Mass was being celebrated, and heard the sacred-bell ring at the elevation of the Host (for in that kingdom the Mass is celebrated according to the Latin, and not according to the Greek rite). And he turned towards the church, and, not daring to enter for fear of being driven off with blows, knelt down outside by bending the knees of his hind legs, and lifted his forelegs, that is, his hands, joined together over his ass's head, as it was thought to be, and looked upon the elevation of the [Sacrament](#). And when some Genoese merchants saw this prodigy, they followed the ass in astonishment, discussing this marvel among themselves; and behold! the witch came and belaboured the ass with her stick. And because, as we have said, this sort of witchcraft is better known in those parts, at the instance of the merchants the ass and the witch were taken before the judge; where, being questioned and tortured, she confessed her crime and promised to restore the young man to his true shape if she might be allowed to return to her house. So she was dismissed

and went back to her house, where the young man was restored to his former shape; and being again arrested, she paid the debt which her crimes merited. And the young man returned joyfully to his own country.

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[Question II, Chapter V](#)

*Part II, Question II, Chapter IV
was transcribed by [Christie Rice](#).*

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“Sacrament.” One of the most famous of the miracles of S. Antony of Padua, wrought for the conversion of heretics, was that of a mule, belonging to one Bovidilla, a blasphemer of the Sacrament. The animal, although it had been, as agreed, kept fasting for three days, refused to turn to a sieve of oats held out by its master, but fell down upon its knees and adored the Host which the Saint was carrying in the ostensory. Some narratives of the fourteenth century say this happened at Toulouse, and some name Bruges, but the actual place Rimini. In the basilica Il Santo, at Padua, this miracle is depicted more than once. There is a bronze bas-relief by Donatello in the Chapel of the Sacrament, and a fresco by Campagnola. The same subject was painted by Van Dyck for the Recollects at Malines.

Animals have been known to distinguish Our Lord’s Body in the Host, a fact which, when one considers their sense and intelligence, is not at all surprising.

At the trial of the Satanist Louis Gaufridi it was proved that upon one occasion during their accursed rites a dog was led in to devour the consecrated Species, but he stretched out his paws in adoration before the Body of Christ and bowed down his head, nor could kicks nor blows compel him to stir. Several of the devotees broke down into tears and began loudly to bewail their sins, after which it was decreed in future that the Host should be defiled, but that no animals must be admitted. See my “Geography of Witchcraft,” pp. 410-411.

S. Optatus tells us that certain Donatists once threw the Host to some hungry dogs, who suddenly turned on the heretics and tore them to pieces.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER V

Prescribed Remedies for those who are Obsessed owing to some Spell.

We have shown in Chapter X of the preceding Question that sometimes devils, through witchcraft, substantially inhabit certain men, and why they do this: namely, that it may be for some grave crime of the man himself, and for his own ultimate benefit; or sometimes for the slight fault of another man; sometimes for a man's own venial sin; and sometimes for another man's grave sin. For any of these reasons a man may in varying degrees be possessed by a devil. Nider in his *Formicarius* states that there is no cause for wonder if devils, at the instance of witches and with God's permission, substantially take possession of men.

It is clear also from the details given in that chapter what are the remedies by which such men can be liberated; namely, by the exorcisms of the Church; and by true contrition and confession, when a man is possessed for some mortal sin. An example is the manner in which that Bohemian priest was set free. But there are three other remedies besides, which are of virtue; namely, the Holy Communion of the Eucharist, the visitation of shrines and the prayers of holy men, and by lifting the sentence of excommunication. Of these we shall speak, although they are plainly set out in the discourses of the Doctors, since all have not easy access to the necessary treatises.

Cassian, in his *Collation of the Abbots*, speaks in these words of the Eucharist: We do not remember that our elders ever forbade the administration of the Holy Communion to those possessed by evil spirits; it should even be given to them [every day](#) if possible. For it must be believed that It is of great virtue in the purgation and protection of both soul and body; and that when a man receives It, the evil spirit which afflicts his members or lurks hidden in them is driven away as if it were burned with fire. And lately we saw the Abbot Andronicus healed in this way; and the devil will rage with mad fury when he feels himself shut out by the heavenly medicine, and he will try the harder and the oftener to inflict his tortures, as he feels himself driven farther off by this spiritual remedy. So says S. John Cassian.

And again he adds: Two things must be steadfastly believed. First, that without the permission of God no one is altogether possessed by these spirits. Second, that everything which God permits to happen to us, whether it seem to be sorrow or gladness, is sent for our good as from a pitying Father and merciful Physician. For the devils are, as it were, schoolmasters of humility, so that they who descend from this world may either be purged for the eternal life or be sentenced to the pain of their punishment; and such, according to S. Paul, are in the present life delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But here there arises a doubt. For S. Paul says: Let a man examine himself, and so eat

of the Bread: then how can a man who is possessed communicate, since he has not the use of his reason? S. Thomas answers this in his Third Part, Question 80, saying that there are distinct degrees in madness. For to say that a man has not the use of his reason may mean two things. In one case he has some feeble power of reason; as a man is said to be blind when he can nevertheless see imperfectly. And since such men can to some extent join in the devotion of this Sacrament, it is not to be denied to them.

But others are said to be mad because they have been so from birth; and such may not partake of the Sacrament, since they are in no way able to engage in devout preparation for it.

Or perhaps they have not always been without the use of their reason; and then, if when they were sane they appeared to appreciate the devotion due to the Sacrament, It should be administered to them when they are at the point of death, unless it is feared that they may vomit or spew It out.

The following decision is recorded by the [Council of Carthage](#) (26, q. 6). When a sick man wishes to confess, and if on the arrival of the priest he is rendered dumb by his infirmity, or falls into a frenzy, those who have heard him speak must give their testimony. And if he is thought to be at the point of death, let him be reconciled with God by the laying on of hands and the placing of the Sacrament in his mouth. S. Thomas also says that the same procedure may be used with baptized people who are bodily tormented by unclean spirits, and with other mentally distracted persons. And he adds, in Book IV, dist. 9, that the Communion must not be denied to demoniacs unless it is certain that they are being tortured by the devil for some crime. To this Peter of Palude adds: In this case they are to be considered as persons to be excommunicated and delivered up to Satan.

From this it is clear that, even if a man be possessed by a devil for his own crimes, yet if he has lucid intervals and, while he has the use of his reason, is contrite and confesses his sins, since he is absolved in the sight of God, he must in no way be deprived of the Communion of the Divine Sacrament of the Eucharist.

How those who are possessed may be delivered by the intercessions and prayers of the Saints is found in the Legends of the Saints. For by the merits of Saints, Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins the unclean spirits are subdued by their prayers in the land where they live, just as the Saints in their earthly journey subdued them.

Likewise we read that the devout prayers of wayfarers have often obtained the deliverance of those possessed. And Cassian urges them to pray for them, saying: If we hold the opinion or rather faith of which I have written above, that everything is sent by the Lord for the good of our souls and the betterment of the universe, we shall in no way despise those who are possessed; but we shall incessantly pray for them as for our own selves, and pity them with our whole heart.

As for the last method, that of releasing the sufferer from excommunication, it must be known that this is rare, and only lawfully practised by such as have authority and are informed by revelation that the man has become possessed on account of the excommunication of the Church: such was the case of the Corinthian fornicator (I. *Corinthians* v) who was excommunicated by S. Paul and the Church, and delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit might be saved in the day of our Lord JESUS Christ; that is, as the gloss says, either for the illumination of grace by contrition or for judgement.

And he delivered to Satan false teachers who had lost the faith, such as Hymenaeus and Alexander, that they might learn not to blaspheme (I. *Timothy* i). For so great was the power and the grace of S. Paul, says the gloss, that by the mere words of his mouth he could deliver to Satan those who fell away from the faith.

S. Thomas (IV. 18) teaches concerning the three effects of excommunication as follows. If a man, he says, is deprived of the prayers of the Church, he suffers a threefold loss corresponding with the benefits which accrue to one who is in communion with the Church. For those who are excommunicated are bereft of the source from which flows an increase of grace to those who have it, and a mean to obtain grace for those who have it not; and, being deprived of grace, they lose also the power of preserving their uprightness; although it must not be thought that they are altogether shut out from God's providence, but only from that special providence which watches over the sons of the Church; and they lose also a strong source of protection against the Enemy, for greater power is granted to the devil to injure such men, both bodily and spiritually.

For in the primitive Church, when men had to be drawn into the faith by signs, just as the Holy Spirit was made manifest by a visible sign, so also a bodily affliction by the devil was the visible sign of a man who was excommunicated. And it is not unfitting that a man whose case is not quite desperate should be delivered to Satan; for he is not given to the devil as one to be damned, but to be corrected, since it is in the power of the Church, when she pleases, to deliver him again from the hands of the devil. So says S. Thomas. Therefore the lifting of the ban of excommunication, when prudently used by a discreet exorcist, is a fitting remedy for those who are possessed.

But Nider adds that the exorcist must particularly beware of making too presumptive a use of his powers, or of mingling any ribaldry or jesting with the serious work of God, or adding to it anything that smacks of superstition or witchcraft; for otherwise he will hardly escape punishment, as he shows by an example.

For Blessed Gregory, in his First Dialogue, tells of a certain woman who, against her conscience, yielded to her husband's persuasions to take part in the ceremonies at the vigil of the dedication of the Church of S. Sebastian. And because she joined in the Church's procession against her conscience, she became possessed and raged publicly. When the priest of that church saw this, he took the cloth from the altar and covered her with it; and the devil suddenly entered into the priest. And because he had presumed beyond his strength, he was constrained by his torments to reveal who he was. So says S. Gregory.

And to show that no spirit of [ribaldry](#) must be allowed to enter into the holy office of exorcism, Nider tells that he saw in a monastery at Cologne a brother who was given to speaking jestingly, but was a very famous expeller of devils. This man was casting a devil out of a man possessed in the monastery, and the devil asked him to give him some place to which he could go. This pleased the Brother, and he jokingly said, "Go to my privy." So the devil went out; and when in the night the Brother wished to go and purge his belly, the devil attacked him so savagely in the privy that he with difficulty escaped with his life.

But especial care is to be taken that those who are obsessed through witchcraft should not be induced to go to witches to be healed. For S. Gregory goes on to say of the woman we have just mentioned: Her kindred and those who loved her in the flesh took her to some witches to be healed, by whom she was taken to a river and dipped in the water with many incantation; and upon this she was violently shaken, and instead of one devil being cast out,

a legion entered into her, and she began to cry out in their several voices. Therefore her kindred confessed what they had done, and in great grief brought her to the holy Bishop [Fortunatus](#), who by daily prayers and [fasting](#) entirely restored her to health.

But since it has been said that exorcists must beware lest they make use of anything savouring of superstition or witchcraft, some exorcist may doubt whether it is lawful to use certain unconsecrated herbs and stones. In answer we say that it is so much the better if the herbs are consecrated; but that if they are not, then it is not superstitious to use a certain herb called [Demonifuge](#), or even the natural properties of stones. But he must not think that he is casting out devils by the power of these; for then he would fall into the error of believing that he could use other herbs and incantations in the same way; and this is the error of necromancers, who think that they can perform this kind of work through the natural and unknown virtues of such objects.

Therefore S. Thomas says, Book IV. dist. 7, art. the last: It must not be any corporeal powers; and therefore they are not to be influenced by invocations or any acts of sorcery, except in so far as they have entered into a pact with a witch. Of this Esaias (xxviii) speaks: We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement. And he thus explains the passage in *Job* xli: Canst thou draw out Leviathan with an hook? and the following words. For he says: If one rightly considers all that has been said before, it will seem that it belongs to the heretical presumption of necromancers when anyone tries to make an agreement with devils, or to subject them in any way to his own will.

Having, then, shown that man cannot of his own power overcome the devil, he concludes by saying: Place your hand upon him; but understand that, if you have any power, it is yet by Divine virtue that he is overcome. And he adds: Remember the battle which I wage against him; that is to say, the present being put for the future, I shall fight against him on the Cross, where Leviathan will be taken with an hook, that is, by the divinity hidden under the bait of humanity, since he will think our Saviour to be only a man. And afterwards it says: There is no power on earth to be compared with him: by which it is meant that no bodily power can equal the power of the devil, which is a purely spiritual power. So says S. Thomas.

But a man possessed by a devil can indirectly be relieved by the power of music, as was Saul by David's harp, or of a herb, or of any other bodily matter in which there lies some natural virtue. Therefore such remedies may be used, as can be argued both from authority and by reason. For S. Thomas, XXVI. 7, says that stones and herbs may be used for the relief of a man possessed by a devil. And there are the words of S. Jerome.

And as for the passage in *Tobias*, where the Angel says: Touching the heart and the liver (which you took from the fish), if a devil or an evil spirit trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed; S. Thomas says: We ought not to marvel at this, for the smoke of a certain tree when it is burned seems to have the same virtue, as if it has in it some spiritual sense, or power of spiritual prayer for the future.

Of the same opinion are Blessed Albert, in his commentary on *S. Luke* ix, and Nicolas of Lyra and [Paul of Burgos](#), on I. *Samuel* xvi. The last-named homilist comes to this conclusion: that it must be allowed that those possessed by a devil can not only be relieved, but even entirely delivered by means of material things, understanding that in the latter case they are not very fiercely molested. And he proves this by reasoning as follows: Devils

cannot alter corporeal matter just at their will, but only by bringing together complementary active and passive agents, as Nicolas says. In the same way some material object can cause in the human body a disposition which makes it susceptible to the operations of the devil. For example, according to physicians, mania very much predisposes a man to dementia, and consequently to demoniac obsession: therefore if, in such a case, the predisposing passive agent be remove, it will follow that the active affliction of the devil will be cured.

In this light we may consider the fish's liver; and the music of David, by which Saul was at first relieved and then entirely delivered of the evil spirit; for it says: And the evil spirit departed from him. But it is not consonant with the meaning of the Scripture to say that this was done by the merits or prayers of David; for the Scripture says nothing of any such matter, whereas it would have spoken notably in his praise if this had been so. This reasoning we take fro Paul of Burgos. There is also the reason which we gave in Question V of the First Part: that Saul was liberated because by the harp was prefigured the virtue of the Cross on which were stretched the Sacred Limbs of Christ's Body. And more is written there which may be considered together with the present inquiry. But we shall only conclude by saying that the use of material things in lawful exorcisms is not superstitious. And now it is expedient that we should speak about the exorcisms themselves.

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[Question II, Chapter VI](#)

Part II, Question II, Chapter V
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“Every day.” Since the Sacrament is “medicina animae”. In “En Route,” Chap. V, the Abbé Gévresin says: “Je comprends très bien le système du père Milleriot qui forçait à communier des gens qu’il appréhendait de voir retomber dans leurs péchés, après. Pour toute pénitence, il les obligeait à recommunier encore et il finissait par les épurer avec les Saintes Espèces prises à de hautes doses. C’est une doctrine tout à la fois réaliste et surélevée.” Père Milleriot, S.J., was largely concerned in the conversion (1879-80) of Paul-Maximilien-Emile Littré, who died at Paris, 2 June, 1881.

“Carthage.” The earliest Council of Carthage of which we know was held about A.D. 198, when seventy bishops, presided over by the Bishop of Carthage, Agrippinus, were present. After this date more than twenty Councils were held at Carthage, of which the most important were those under S. Cyprian, relative to the “lapsi,” Novatianism, and the re-baptism of heretics, and the synods of 412, 416 and 418 which condemned the doctrines of Pelagius.

*“Ribaldry.” A rubric of the “De exorcizandis Obsessis a Daemonio” prescribes:
“Necessarie uero interrogationes sunt, ut de tempore quo ingressi sunt, de cause, et aliis
huiusmodi. Ceteras autem daemoniis nugas, risus, et ineptias Exorcista cohibeat, aut
contemnat, et circumstantes, qui pauci esse debent, admoneat, ne haec curent, neque ipsi
interrogent obsessum: sed potius humiliter et enixe Deum pro eo precantur.”*

“Fortunatus.” Bishop of Naples, who was appointed to that see by S. Gregory the Great in 593 upon the deposition of Demetrius.

“Fasting.” “S. Matthew” xvii, 20: Hoc autem genus non eiicitur nisi per orationem et ieiunium.

*“Demonifuge.” See Sinistrari, “De Daemonialitate,” LXVIII, in my translation
“Demoniality,” pp. 52-53.*

“Paul of Burgos.” Paul de Santa Maria, a Spanish Archbishop, Lord Chancellor, and exegete, born at Burgos about 1351; died 29 August, 1435. The most wealthy and influential Jew of Burgos (Jewish name Solomon-Ha-Levi), and a scholar of the first rank in Talmudic and Rabbinical literature, a Rabbi of the Hebraic community, he was converted to Christianity by the irrefutable logic of the “Summa” of S. Thomas. He received baptism 21 July, 1390. His reputation as a Biblical writer chiefly rests upon his “Additiones” to the “Postilla” of Nicolas of Lyra, Nuremberg, 1481; Venice, 1481; and many other editions.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER VI

Prescribed Remedies; to wit, the Lawful Exorcisms of the Church, for all Sorts of Infirmities and Ills due to Witchcraft; and the Method of Exorcising those who are Bewitched.

It has already been stated that witches can afflict men with every kind of physical infirmity; therefore it can be taken as a general rule that the various verbal or practical remedies which can be applied in the case of those infirmities which we have just been discussing are equally applicable to all other infirmities, such as epilepsy or leprosy, for example. And as lawful exorcisms are reckoned among the verbal remedies and have been most often considered by us, they may be taken as a general type of such remedies; and there are three matters to be considered regarding them.

First, we must judge whether a person who has not been ordained as an exorcist, such as a layman or a secular cleric, may lawfully exorcise devils and their works. Bound up with this question are three others: namely; first, what constitutes the legality of this practice; secondly, the seven conditions which must be observed when one wishes to make private use of charms and benedictions; and thirdly, in what way the disease is to be exorcised and the devil conjured.

Secondly, we must consider what is to be done when no healing grace results from the exorcism.

Thirdly, we must consider practical and not verbal remedies; together with the solution of certain arguments.

For the first, we have the opinion of S. Thomas in Book IV, dist. 23. He says: When a man is ordained as an exorcist, or into any of the other minor Orders, he has conferred upon him the power of exorcism in his official capacity; and this power may even lawfully be used by those who belong to no Order, but such do not exercise it in their official capacity. Similarly the Mass can be said in an unconsecrated house, although the very purpose of consecrating a church is that the Mass may be said there; but this is more on account of the grace which is in the righteous than of the grace of the Sacrament.

From these words we may conclude that, although it is good that in the liberation of a bewitched person recourse should be had to an exorcist having authority to exorcise such bewitchments, yet at times other devout persons may, either with or without any exorcism, cast out this sort of diseases.

For we hear of a certain poor and very devout virgin, one of whose friends has been grievously bewitched in his foot, so that it was clear to the physicians that he could be cured by no medicines. But it happened that the virgin went to visit the sick man, and he at once begged her to apply some benediction to his foot. She consented, and did no more than silently say the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, at the same time making use of the sign of the life-giving Cross. The sick man then felt himself at once cured, and, that he

might have a remedy for the future, asked the virgin what charms she had used. But she answered: You are of little faith and do not hold to the holy and lawful practices of the Church, and you often apply forbidden charms and remedies for your infirmities; therefore you are rarely healthy in your body, because you are always sick in your soul. But if you would put your trust in prayer and in the efficacy of lawful symbols, you will often be very easily cured. For I did nothing but repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, and you are now cured.

This example gives rise to the question, whether there is not any efficacy in other benedictions and charms, and even conjurations by way of exorcism; for they seem to be condemned in this story. We answer that the virgin condemned only unlawful charms and unlawful conjurations and exorcisms.

To understand these last we must consider how they originated, and how they came to be abused. For they were in their origin entirely sacred; but just as by the means of devils and wicked men all things can be defiled, so also were these sacred words. For it is said in the last chapter of S. Mark, of the Apostles and holy men: In My Name shall they cast out devils; and they visited the sick, and prayed over them with sacred words; and in after times priests devoutly used similar rites; and therefore there are to be found to-day in ancient Churches devout prayers and holy exorcisms which men can use or undergo, when they are applied by pious men as they used to be, without any superstition; even as there are now to be found learned men and Doctors of holy Theology who visit the sick and use such words for the healing not only of demoniacs, but of other diseases as well.

But, alas! superstitious men have, on the pattern of these, found for themselves many vain and unlawful remedies which they employ these days for sick men and animals; and the clergy have become too slothful to use any more the lawful words when they visit the sick. On this account [Gulielmus Durandus](#), the commentator on S. Raymond, says that such lawful exorcisms may be used by a religious and discreet priest, or by a layman, or even by a woman of good life and proved discretion; by the offering of lawful prayers over the sick: not over fruits or animals, but over the sick. For the Gospel says: They shall place their hands upon the sick, etc. And such persons are not to be prevented from practising in this way; unless perhaps it is feared that, following their example, other indiscreet and superstitious persons should make improper use of incantations. It is these superstitious diviners whom that virgin we have mentioned condemned, when she said that they who consulted with such had weak, that is to say bad, faith.

Now for the elucidation of this matter it is asked how it is possible to know whether the words of such charms and benedictions are lawful or superstitious, and how they ought to be used; and whether the devil can be conjured and diseases exorcised.

In the first place, that is said to be lawful in the Christian religion which is not superstitious; and that is said to be superstitious which is over and above the prescribed form of religion. See *Colossians* ii: which things indeed have a show of wisdom in superstition: on which the gloss says: Superstition is undisciplined religion, that is, religion observed with defective methods in evil circumstance.

Anything, also, is superstition which human tradition without higher authority has caused to usurp the name of religion; such is the interpolation of hymns at Holy Mass, the alteration of the Preface for Requiems, the abbreviation of the Creed which it to be sung at Mass, the reliance upon an organ rather than upon the choir for the music, neglect to have a

Server on the Altar, and such practices. But to return to our point, when a work is done by virtue of the Christian religion, as when someone wishes to heal the sick by means of prayer and benediction and sacred words, which is the matter we are considering), such a person must observe seven conditions by which such benedictions are rendered lawful. And even if he uses adjurations, through the virtue of the Divine Name, and by the virtue of the works of Christ, His Birth, Passion and Precious Death, by which the devil was conquered and cast out; such benedictions and charms and exorcisms shall be called lawful, and they who practise them are exorcists or lawful enchanter. See S. Isidore, *Etym.* VIII, Enchanters are they whose art and skill lies in the use of words.

And the first of these conditions, as we learn from S. Thomas, is that there must be nothing in the words which hints at any expressed or tacit invocation of devils. If such were expressed, it would be obviously unlawful. If it were tacit, it might be considered in the light of intention, or in that of fact: in that of intention, when the operator has no care whether it is God or the devil who is helping him, so long as he attains his desired result; in that of fact, when a person has no natural aptitude for such work, but creates some artificial means. And of such not only must physicians and astronomers be the judges, but especially Theologians. For in this way do necromancers work, making images and rings and stones by artificial means; which have no natural virtue to effect the results which they very often expect: therefore the devil must be concerned in their works.

Secondly, the benedictions or charms must contain no unknown names; for according to S. John Chrysostom such are to be regarded with fear, lest they should conceal some matter of superstition.

Thirdly, there must be nothing in the words that is untrue; for if there is, the effect of them cannot be from God, Who is not a witness to a lie. But some old women in their incantations use some such jingling doggerel as the following:

Blessed MARY went a-walking
Over Jordan river.
Stephen met her, and fell a-talking, etc.

Fourthly, there must be no vanities, or written characters beyond the sign of the Cross. Therefore the charms which soldiers are wont to carry are condemned.

Fifthly, no faith must be placed in the method of writing or reading or binding the charm about a person, or in any such vanity, which has nothing to do with the reverence of God, without which a charm is altogether superstitious.

Sixthly, in the citing and uttering of Divine words and of Holy Scripture attention must only be paid to the sacred words themselves and their meaning, and to the reverence of God; whether the effect be looked for from the Divine virtue, or from the relics of Saints, which are a secondary power, since their virtue springs originally from God.

Seventhly, the looked-for effect must be left to the Divine Will; for He knows whether it is best for a man to be healed or to be plagued, or to die. This condition was set down by S. Thomas.

So we may conclude that if none of these conditions be broken, the incantation will be lawful. And S. Thomas writes in this connexion on the last chapter of *S. Mark*: And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall take up serpents. From this it is clear that, provided the above conditions are observed, it is lawful

by means of sacred words to keep serpents away.

S. Thomas says further: The words of God are not less holy than the Relics of the Saints. As S. Augustine says: The word of God is not less than the Body of Christ. But all are agreed that it is lawful to carry reverently about the person the Relics of the Saints: therefore let us by all means invoke the name of God by duly using the Lord's Prayer and the Angelic Salutation, by His Birth and Passion, by His Five Wounds, and by the Seven Words which He spoke on the Cross, by the Triumphant Inscription, by the three nails, and by the other weapons of Christ's army against the devil and his works. By all these means it is lawful to work, and our trust may be placed in them, leaving the issue to God's will.

And what has been said about the keeping off of serpents applies also to other animals, provided that the attention is fixed only on the sacred words and the Divine virtue. But great care is to be used in incantations of this nature. For S. Thomas says: Such diviners often use unlawful observances, and obtain magic effects by means of devils, especially in the case of serpents; for the serpent was the devil's first instrument by which he deceived mankind.

For in the town of Salzburg there was a certain mage who one day, in open view of all, wanted to charm all the snakes into a particular pit, and kill them all within an area of a mile. So he gathered all the snakes together, and was himself standing over the pit, when last of all there came a huge and horrible serpent which would not go into the pit. This serpent kept making signs to the man to let it go away and crawl where it would; but he would not cease from his incantation, but insisted that, as all the other snakes had entered the pit and there died, so also must this horrible serpent. But it stood on the opposite side to the warlock, and suddenly leapt over the pit and fell upon the man, wrapping itself round his belly, and dragged him with itself into the pit, where they both died. From this it may be seen that only for a useful purpose, such as driving them away from men's houses, are such incantations to be practised, and they are to be done by the Divine virtue, and in the fear of God, and with reverence.

In the second place we have to consider how exorcisms or charms of this kind ought to be used, and whether they should be worn round the neck or sewn into the clothing. It may seem that such practices are unlawful; for S. Augustine says, in the *Second Book on the Christian Doctrine*: There are a thousand magic devices and amulets and charms which are all superstitious, and the School of Medicine utterly condemns them all, whether they are incantations, or certain marks which are called characters, or engraved charms to be hung round the neck.

Also S. John Chrysostom, commenting on *S. Matthew*, says: Some persons wear round their neck some written portion of the Gospel; but is not the Gospel every day read in the church and heard by all? How then shall a man be helped by wearing the Gospel round his neck, when he has reaped no benefit from hearing it with his ears? For in what does the virtue of the Gospel consist; in the characters of its letters, or in the meaning of its words? If in the characters, you do well to hang it round your neck; but if in the meaning, surely it is of more benefit when planted in the heart than when worn round the neck.

[Question II, Chapter VI Continued](#)

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“Durandus.” William Duranti, canonist and one of the most important mediaeval liturgical writers, born about 1237 at Puimisson, Provence; died at Rome 1 November, 1296. His career was most noble and distinguished. A long epitaph upon his monument in Santa Maria sopra Minerva tells the story of his life and gives a list of his works. The most important of these is the “Rationale diuinorum officiorum,” the first edition of which by Fust and Schoeffer as issued at Mainz in 1459. It has been frequently reprinted, the last complete edition being Naples, 1839. The “Speculum Iudiciale” and the “Commentarius in canones Concilii Lugdunensis II” are valuable treatises upon the canons and canonical processes.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER VI CONTINUED

But, on the other hand, the Doctors answer as follows, especially S. Thomas where he asks whether it is unlawful to hang sacred words round the neck. Their opinion is that, in all charms and writings so worn, there are two things to be avoided.

First, in whatever is written there must be nothing that savours of an invocation of devils; for then it is manifestly superstitious and unlawful, and must be judged as an apostasy from the faith, as has often been said before.

Similarly, in accordance with the above seven conditions, it must not contain any unknown names. But if these two snares be avoided, it is lawful both to place such charms on the lips of the sick, and for the sick to carry them with them. But the Doctors condemn their use in one respect, that is, when a man pays greater attention to and has more reliance upon the mere signs of the written letters than upon their meaning.

It may be said that a layman who does not understand the words cannot pay any attention to their meaning. But it is enough if such a man fixes his thoughts on the Divine virtue, and leaves it to the Divine will to do what seems good to His mercy.

In the third place we have to consider whether the devil is to be conjured and the disease exorcised at the same time, or whether a different order should be observed, or whether one of these operations can take place without the other. Here there are several points to be considered. First, whether the devil is always present when the sick man is afflicted. Second, what sort of things are capable of being exorcised or remedied. Third, the method of exorcising.

For the first point, it would seem, following that pronouncement of S. John Damascene that where the devil operates there he is, that the devil is always present in the sick man when he afflicts him. Also in the history of S. Bartholomew it seems that a man is only delivered from the devil when he is cured of his sickness.

But this can be answered as follows. When it is said that the devil is present in a sick man, this can be understood in two ways: either that he is personally present, or that he is present in the effect which he has caused. In the first sense he is present when he first causes the sickness; in the second sense he is said to be present not personally but in the effect. In this way, when the Doctors ask whether the devil substantially inhabits a man who commits mortal sin, they say that he is not personally present, but only in effect; just as a master is said to dwell in his servants in respect of his mastership. But the case is quite otherwise with men who are possessed by a devil.

For the second point, as to what sort of things can be exorcised, the opinion of S. Thomas, Book IV, dist. 6, should be noted, where he says that on account of man's sin the devil receives power over a man and over everything which a man uses, to hurt him with them; and since there can be no compromise of Christ with Belial, therefore whenever

anything is to be sanctified for Divine worship, it is first exorcised that it may be consecrated to God freed from the power of the devil, by which it might be turned to the hurt of men. This is shown in the blessing of water, the consecration of a church, and in all matters of this sort. Therefore, since the first act of reconciliation by which a man is consecrated to God is in baptism, it is necessary that man should be exorcised before he is baptized; indeed in this it is more imperative than in any other circumstance. For in man himself lies the cause by reason of which the devil receives his power in other matters which are brought about by man, namely, sin, either original or actual. This then is the significance of the words that are used in exorcism, as when it is said, "Depart, O Satan, from him"; and likewise of the things that are then done.

To return, then, to the actual point. When it is asked whether the disease is to be exorcised and the devil abjured, and which of these should be done first; it is answered that not the disease, but the sick and bewitched man himself is exorcised: just as in the case of a child, it is not the infection of the *fomes* which is exorcised, but the child itself. Also, just as the child is first exorcised, and then the devil is abjured to depart; so also is the bewitched person first exorcised, and afterwards the devil and his works are bidden to depart. Again, just as salt and water are exorcised, so are all things which can be used by the sick man, so that it is expedient to exorcise and bless chiefly his food and drink. In the case of baptism the following ceremony of exorcism is observed: the exsufflation towards the West and the renunciation of the devil; secondly, the raising of the hands with a solemn confession of the faith of the Christian religion; thirdly, prayer, benediction, and the laying on of hands; fourthly, the stripping and anointing with Holy Oil; and after baptism, the communion and the putting on of the chrisom, he is to remain bound naked to a Holy Candle of the length of Christ's body or of the Cross. And then may be said the following:

I exorcise thee, Peter, or thee, Barbara, being weak but reborn in Holy Baptism, by the living God, by the true God, by God Who redeemed thee with His Precious Blood, that thou mayest be exorcised, that all the illusions and wickedness of the devil's deceits may depart and flee from thee together with every unclean spirit, adjured by Him Who will come to judge both the quick and the dead, and who will purge the earth with fire. Amen.

Let us pray.

O God of mercy and pity, Who according to Thy tender lovingkindness chastenest those whom Thou dost cherish, and dost gently compel those whom Thou receivest to turn their hearts, we invoke Thee, O Lord, that Thou wilt vouchsafe to bestow Thy grace upon Thy servant who suffereth from a weakness in the limbs of his body, that whatever is corrupt by earthly frailty, whatever is made violate by the deceit of the devil, may find redemption in the unity of the body of the Church. Have mercy, O Lord, on his groaning, have mercy upon his tears; and as he putteth his trust only in Thy mercy, receive him in the sacrament of Thy reconciliation, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Therefore, accursed devil, hear thy doom, and give honour to the true and living God, give honour to the Lord Jesus Christ, that thou depart with thy works from this servant whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath redeemed with His Precious Blood.

Then let him exorcise him a second and yet a third time, with the prayers as above.

Let us pray.

God, Who dost ever mercifully govern all things that Thou hast made, incline Thine ear

to our prayers, and look in mercy upon Thy servant labouring under the sickness of the body; visit him, and grant him Thy salvation and the healing virtue of Thy heavenly grace, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Therefore, accursed devil, etc.

The prayer for the third exorcism.

O God, the only protection of human frailty, show forth the mighty power of Thy strong aid upon our sick brother (or sister), that being holpen by Thy mercy he (she) may be worthy to enter Thy Holy Church in safety, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And let the exorcist continually sprinkle him with Holy Water. And note that this method is recommended, not because it must be rigidly observed, or that other exorcisms are not of greater efficacy, but that there should be some regular system of exorcism and adjuration. For in the old histories and books of the Church there are sometimes found more devout and powerful exorcisms; but since before all things the reverence of God is necessary, let each proceed in this matter as he finds it best.

In conclusion, and for the sake of clearness, we may recommend this form of exorcism for a person who is bewitched. Let him first make a good confession (according to the often-quoted Canon: If by sortilege, etc.). Then let a diligent search be made in all corners and in the beds and mattresses and under the threshold of the door, in case some instrument of witchcraft may be found. The bodies of animals bewitched to death are at once to be burned. And it is expedient that all bed-clothes and garments should be renewed, and even that he should change his house and dwelling. But in case nothing is found, then he who is to be exorcised should if possible go into the church in the morning, especially on the Holier Days, such as the Feast of Our Lady, or on some Vigil; and the better if the priest also has confessed and is in a state of grace, for then the stronger will he be. And let him who is to be exorcised hold in his hand a Holy Candle as well as he can, either sitting or kneeling; and let those who are present offer up devout prayers for his deliverance. And let him begin the Litany at "Our help is in the Name of the Lord," and let one be appointed to make the responses: let him sprinkle him with Holy Water, and place a stole round his neck, and recite the Psalm "Haste thee, O God, to deliver me"; and let him continue the Litany for the Sick, saying at the Invocation of the Saints, "Pray for him and be favourable; deliver him, O Lord," continuing thus to the end. But where the prayers are to be said, then in the place of the prayers let him begin the exorcism, and continue in the way we have declared, or in any other better way, as seems good to him. And this sort of exorcism may be continued at least three times a week, that so through many intercessions the grace of health may be obtained.

Finally, he must receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist; although some think that this should be done before the exorcism. And at his confession the confessor must inquire whether he is under any bond of excommunication, and if he is, whether he has rashly omitted to obtain absolution from his Judge; for then, although he may at his discretion absolve him, yet when he has regained his health, he must seek absolution also from the Judge who excommunicated him.

It should further be noted that, when the exorcist is not ordained to the Order of Exorcist, then he may proceed with prayers; and if he can read the Scriptures, let him read the beginnings of the four Gospels of the Evangelists, and the Gospel beginning, "There was an Angel sent"; and the Passion of our Lord; all of which have great power to expel the

works of the devil. Also let the Gospel of S. John, "In the beginning was the Word," be written and hung round the sick man's neck, and so let the grace of healing be looked for from God.

But if anyone asks what is the difference between the aspersion of Holy Water and exorcism, since both are ordained against the plagues of the devil, the answer is supplied by S. Thomas, who says: The devil attacks us from without and from within. Therefore Holy Water is ordained against his attacks from without; but exorcism against those from within. For this reason those for whom exorcism is necessary are called *Energoumenoi*, from *En*, meaning In, and *Ergon*, meaning Work, since they labour within themselves. But in exorcising a bewitched person both methods are to be used, because he is tormented both within and without.

Our second main consideration is what is to be done when no healing grace results from exorcisms. Now this may happen for six reasons; and there is a seventh about which we suspend any definite judgement. For when a person is not healed, it is due either to want of faith in the bystanders or in those who present the sick man, or to the sins of them who suffer from the bewitchment, or to a neglect of the due and fitting remedies, or to some flaw in the faith of the exorcist, or to the lack of a greater trust in the powers of another exorcist, or to the need of purgation and for the increased merit of the bewitched person.

Concerning the first four of these the Gospel teaches us in the incident of the only son of his father, who was a lunatic, and of the disciples of Christ being there present (*S. Matthew* xvii. And *S. Mark* ix.). For in the first place He said that the multitude were without faith; whereupon the father prayed Him, saying: Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief. And JESUS said to the multitude: O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you?

Secondly, with regard to him who endured the devil, JESUS rebuked him, that is, the son; for, as Saint Jerome says, he had been tormented by the devil because of his sins.

Thirdly, this illustrates the neglect of the rightful remedies, because good and perfect men were not at first present. For S. John Chrysostom says: The pillars of faith, namely, Peter and James and John, were not present, for they were at the Transfiguration of Christ: neither were there prayer and fasting, without which Christ said that this sort of devil goeth not out. Therefore Origen, writing on this passage, says: If at any time a man be not cured after prayer, let us not wonder or ask questions or speak, as if the unclean spirit were listening to us; but let us cast out our evil spirits by prayer and fasting. And the gloss says: This sort of devil, that is, the variability of carnal desires induced by that spirit, is not conquered except by strengthening the soul with prayer, and subduing the flesh with fasting.

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THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER VI CONTINUED

Fourthly, the flaw in the faith of the exorcist is exemplified in the disciples of Christ who were present. For when they afterwards asked Him privately the cause of their failure, He answered: Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, [Remove hence](#), etc. And S. Hilary says: The Apostles believed indeed, but they were not yet perfect in faith: for while the Lord was away in the mountain with the other three, and they remained with the multitude, their faith became lukewarm.

The fifth reason is illustrated in the Lives of the Fathers, where we read that certain possessed persons could not be delivered by S. Antony, but were delivered by his disciple, Paul.

The sixth reason has already been made clear; for not always when a man is freed from sin is he also freed from punishment, but sometimes the penalty remains as a punishment and atonement for the previous sin.

There is yet another remedy by which many have been said to be delivered, namely, the re-baptizing of those who are bewitched; but this is a matter on which, as we have said, we can make no definite pronouncement. Nevertheless it is most true that when a person has not been duly exorcised before baptism, the devil, with God's permission, has always more power against such a person. And it is clearly shown without any doubt in what has just been written, that much negligence is committed by improperly instructed priests (in which case it pertains to the fourth of the above-noted impediments, namely, a flaw in the exorcist), or else by old women who do not observe the proper method of baptism at the necessary time.

However, God forbid that I should maintain that the Sacraments cannot be administered by wicked men, or that when baptism is performed by a wicked man it is not valid, provided that he observes the proper forms and words. Similarly in the exorcism let him proceed with due care, not timidly and not rashly. And let no one meddle with such sacred offices by any accidental or habitual omission of any necessary forms or words; for there are four matters to be observed in the right performance of exorcism, namely, the matter, the form, the intention and the order, as we have set them out above; and when one of these is lacking it cannot be complete.

And it is not valid to object that in the primitive Church persons were baptized without exorcism, and that even now a person is truly baptized without any exorcism; for in that case S. Gregory would have instituted exorcism in vain, and the Church would be in error in its [ceremonies](#). Therefore I have not dared altogether to condemn the re-baptism under certain conditions of bewitched persons, that they may recover that which was at first omitted.

It is said, also, of those who walk in their sleep during the night over high buildings

without any harm, that it is the work of evil spirits who thus lead them; and many affirm that when such people are re-baptized they are much benefited. And it is wonderful that, when they are called by their own names, they suddenly fall back to earth, as if that name had not been given to them in proper form at their baptism.

Let the reader pay attention to those six impediments mentioned above, although they refer to *Energoumenoi*, or men possessed, rather than to men bewitched; for though equal virtue is required in both cases, yet it may be said that it is more difficult to cure a bewitched person than one possessed. Therefore those impediments apply even more pertinently to the case of those who are bewitched; as is proved by the following reasoning.

It was shown in Chapter X of the First Question of the Second Part that some men are at times possessed for no sin of their own, but for the venial sin of another man, and for various other causes. But in witchcraft, when adults are bewitched, it generally happens to them that the devil grievously possesses them from within for the destruction of their souls. Therefore the labour required in the case of the bewitched is twofold, whereas it is only single in the case of the possessed. Of this most grievous possession John Cassian speaks in his *Collation* of the Abbot Serenus: They are truly to be judged unhappy and miserable who, although they pollute themselves with every crime and wickedness, yet show no outward sign of being filled with the devil, nor does there seem to be any temptation commensurate with their deeds, nor any punishment sufficient to restrain them. For they do not deserve even the healing medicine of purgatory, who in their hardness of heart and impenitence are beyond the reach of any earthly correction, and lay up to themselves anger and vengeance in that day of wrath and revelation of the Just Judgement, when their worm shall not die.

And a little earlier, comparing the possession of the body with the binding of the soul in sin, he says: Far more grievous and violent is the torment of those who show no sign of being bodily possessed by devils, but are most terribly possessed in their souls, being fast bound by their sins and vices. For according to the Apostle, a man becomes the slave of him by whom he is conquered. And in this respect their case is the most desperate, since they are the servants of devils, and can neither resist nor tolerate that domination. It is clear then that, not they who are possessed by the devil from without, but they who are bewitched in their bodies and possessed from within to the perdition of their souls, are, by reason of many impediments, the more difficult to heal.

Our third main consideration is that of curative charms, and it is to be noted that these are of two sorts. They are either quite lawful and free from suspicion, or they are to be suspected and are not altogether lawful. We have dealt with the first sort in Chapter V, towards the end, where we disposed of a doubt as to the legality of using herbs and stones to drive away a bewitchment.

Now we must treat the second sort which are under suspicion of not being altogether lawful; and we must draw attention to what was said in the Introduction to the Second Question of the Second Part of this work as to the four remedies, of which three are judged to be unlawful, and the fourth not altogether so, but vain, being that of which the Canonists say that it is lawful to oppose vanity to vanity. But we Inquisitors are of the same opinion as the Holy Doctors, that when, owing to the six or seven impediments which we have detailed, the remedies of sacred words and lawful exorcism are not sufficient, then those who are so bewitched are to be exhorted to bear with patient spirit the devils of this present life for the purgation of their crimes, and not to seek further in any way for superstitious and vain remedies. Therefore, if anyone is not content with the aforesaid lawful exorcisms, and

wishes to have recourse to remedies which are, at least, vain, of which we have spoken before, let him know that he does not do this with our consent or permission. But the reason why we have so carefully explained and detailed such remedies is that we might bring into some sort of agreement the opinions of such Doctors as Duns Scotus and Henry of Segusio on the one hand, and those of the other Theologians on the other hand. Yet we are in agreement with S. Augustine in his *Sermon against Fortune-tellers and Diviners*, which is called the *Sermon on [Auguries](#)*, where he says: Brethren, you know that I have often entreated you that you should not follow the customs of Pagans and sorcerers, but this has had little effect on some of you. Yet, if I do not speak out to you, I shall be answerable for you in the Day of Judgement, and both you and I must suffer eternal damnation. Therefore I absolve myself before God, that again and again I admonish and adjure you, that none of you seek out diviners or fortune-tellers, and that you consult with them for no cause or infirmity; for whosoever commits this sin, the sacrament of baptism is immediately lost in him, and he at once becomes a sacrilegious and a Pagan, and unless he repents will perish in eternity.

And afterwards he adds: Let no one observe days for going out and coming back; for God hath made all things well, and He Who ordained one day ordained also another. But as often as you have to do anything or to go out, cross yourselves in the name of Christ, and saying faithfully the Creed or the Lord's Prayer you may go about your business secure in the help of God.

But certain superstitious sons of our times, not content with the above securities and accumulating error upon error, and going beyond the meaning or intention of Scotus and the Canonists, try to justify themselves with the following arguments. That natural objects have certain hidden virtues the cause of which cannot be explained by men; as a lodestone attracts iron, and many other such things which are enumerated by S. Augustine in the *City of God*, xxi. Therefore, they say, to seek the recovery of one's health by the virtue of such things, when exorcisms and natural medicines have failed, will not be unlawful, although it may seem to be vain. This would be the case if a man tried to procure his own or another's health by means of images, not necromantic but astrological, or by rings and such devices. They argue also that, just as natural matter is subject to the influence of the stars, so also are artificial objects such as images, which receive some hidden virtue from the stars by which they can cause certain effects: therefore it is not unlawful to make use of such things.

Besides, the devils can in very many ways change bodies, as S. Augustine says, *de Trinitate*, 3, and as is evident in the case of those who are bewitched: therefore it is lawful to use the virtues of such bodies for the removing of witchcraft.

But actually all the Holy Doctors are of an entirely contrary opinion to this, as has been shown here and there in the course of this work.

Therefore we can answer their first argument in this way: that if natural objects are used in a simple way to produce certain effects for which they are thought to have some natural virtue, this is not unlawful. But if there are joined to this certain characters and unknown signs and vain observations, which manifestly cannot have any natural efficacy, then it is superstitious and unlawful. Wherefore S. Thomas, II, q. 96, art. 2, speaking of this matter, says that when any object is used for the purpose of causing some bodily effect, such as curing the sick, notice must be taken whether such objects appear to have any natural quality which could cause such an effect; and if so, then it is not unlawful, since it is lawful

to apply natural causes to their effects. But if it does not appear that they can naturally cause such effects, it follows that they are not applied as causes of those effects, but as signs or symbols; and so they pertain to some pact symbolically formed with devils. Also S. Augustine says, in the *City of God*, xxi: The devils ensnare us by means of creatures formed not by themselves, but by God, and with various delights consonant with their own versatility; not as animals with food, but as spirits with signs, by various kinds of stones and herbs and trees, animals and charms and ceremonies.

Secondly, S. Thomas, says: The natural virtues of natural objects follow their material forms which they obtain from the influence of the stars, and from the same influence they derive certain active virtues. But the forms of artificial objects proceed from the conception of the craftsman; and since, as Aristotle says in his *Physics*, I, they are nothing but an artificial composition, they can have no natural virtue to cause any effect. It follows then that the virtue received from the influence of the stars can only reside in natural and not in artificial objects. Therefore, as S. Augustine says in the *City of God*, x, Porphyry was in error when he thought that from herbs and stones and animals, and from certain sounds and voices and figures, and from certain configurations in the revolutions of the stars and their motions, men fabricated on earth certain Powers corresponding to the various effects of the stars; as if the effects of magicians proceeded from the virtue of the stars. But, as S. Augustine adds, all such matters belong to the devils, the deceivers of souls which are subject to them. So also are those images which are called astronomical the work of devils, the sign of which is that they have inscribed upon them certain characters which can have no natural power to effect anything; for a figure or sign is no cause of natural action. But there is this difference between the images of astronomers and those of necromancers; that in the case of the latter there is an open invocation, and therefore an open and expressed pact with devils; whereas the signs and characters on astronomical images imply only a tacit pact.

Thirdly, there is no power given to men over devils, whereby a man may lawfully use them for his own purposes; but there is war declared between man and the devils, therefore by no means may he use the help of devils, by either a tacit or an expressed pact with them. So says S. Thomas.

To return to the point: he says, "By no means"; therefore not even by the means of any vain things in which the devil may in any way be involved. But if they are merely vain, and man in his frailty has recourse to them for the recovery of his health, let him repent for the past and take care for the future, and let him pray that his sins may be forgiven and that he be no more led into temptation; as S. Augustine says at the end of his Rule.

[Question II, Chapter VII](#)

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“Remove hence.” The miracle of the removal of a mountain was actually performed by S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Bishop of Neocaesarea (d. circa 270-275), as the Venerable Bede tells us in his Commentary upon “S. Mark” xi: “Hoc quoque fieri potuisset, ut mons ablatus de terra mitteretur in mare, si necessitas id fieri poscisset. Quomodo legimus factum precibus beati patris Gregorii Neocaesareae Ponti Antistitis, uiri mentis et virtutibus eximii, ut mons in terra tantum loco cederet, quantum incolae ciuitatis opus habebant. Cum enim uolens aedificare ecclesiam in loco apto, uident eum angustiores esse quam res exigebat, eo quod ex una parte rupe maris, ex alia monte proximo coarctaretur; uenit nocte ad locum, et genibus flexis admonuit Dominum promissionis suae, ut montem longius iuxta fidem petentis ageret. Et mane facto reuersus inuenit montem tantum spatii reliquisse structoribus ecclesiae, quantum opus habuerant.”

“Ceremonies.” Actually baptismal exorcism is earlier than S. Gregory. From the very first catechumens were exorcised as a preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism. In this connexion exorcism is a symbolical anticipation of one of the chief effects of the Sacrament of Regeneration, and since it was used in the case of children who had no personal sins, S. Augustine, writing against the Pelagians, appeals to it as clearly implying the doctrine of original sin. S. Cyril of Jerusalem in his “Catecheses,” A.D. 347, gives a detailed description of baptismal exorcism, by which it appears that anointing with exorcised oil formed a part of this function in the East. The earliest Western witness which explicitly treats unction as part of the baptismal exorcism is that of the Arabic Canons of Hippolytus.

“Auguries.” The “De Auguriis,” which is often ascribed to another writer, may be found in the Migne S. Augustine, Ap. V, 2268.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER VII

Remedies prescribed against Hailstorms, and for Animals that are Bewitched.

With regard to the remedies for betwitched animals, and charms against tempests, we must first note some unlawful remedies which are practised by certain people. For these are done by means of superstitious words or actions; as when men cure the worms in the fingers or limbs by means of certain words or [charms](#), the method of deciding the legality of which has been explained in the preceding chapter. There are others who do not sprinkle Holy Water over bewitched cattle, but pour it into their mouths.

Beside the proofs we have already given that the remedy of words is unlawful, William of Paris, whom we have often quoted, gives the following reason. If there were any virtue in words as words, then it would be due to one of three things: either their material, which is air; or their form, which is sound; or their meaning; or else to all three together. Now it cannot be due to air, which has no power to kill unless it be poisonous; neither can it be due to sound, the power of which is broken by a more solid object; neither can it be due to the meaning, for in that case the words Devil or Death or Hell would always be harmful, and the words Health and Goodness always be beneficial. Also it cannot be due to all these three together; for when the parts of a whole are invalid, the whole itself is also invalid.

And it cannot validly be objected that God gave virtue to words just as He did to herbs and stones. For whatever virtue there is in certain sacramental words and benedictions and lawful incantations belongs to them, not as words, but by Divine institution and ordinance according to God's promise. It is, as it were, a promise from God that whoever does such and such a thing will receive such and such a grace. And so the words of the sacraments are effective because of their meaning; although some hold that they have an intrinsic virtue; but these two opinions are not mutually inconsistent. But the case of other words and incantations is clear from what has already been said; for the mere composing or uttering or writing of words, as such, can have no effect; but the invocation of the Divine Name, and public prayer, which is a sacred protestation committing the effect to the Divine Will, are beneficial.

We have treated above of remedies performed by actions which seem to be unlawful. The following is a common practice in parts of Swabia. On the first of May before sunrise the women of the village go out and gather from the woods leaves and branches from willow trees, and weave them into a wreath which they hang over the stable door, affirming that all the cattle will then remain unhurt and safe from witchcraft for a whole year. And in the opinion of those who hold that vanity may be opposed by vanity, this remedy would not be unlawful; and neither would be the driving away of diseases by unknown cantrips and incantations. But without meaning and offence, we say that a woman or anyone else may go out on the first or any other day of the month, without considering the rising or the setting of

the sun, and collect herbs or leaves and branches, saying the Lord's Prayer or the Creed, and hang them over the stable door in good faith, trusting to the will of God for their protective efficacy; yet even so the practice is not above reproach, as was shown in the preceding chapter in the words of S. Jerome; for even if he is not invoked, the devil has some part in the efficacy of herbs and stones.

It is the same with those who make the sign of the Cross with leaves and consecrated flowers on Palm Sunday, and set it up among their vines or crops; asserting that, although the crops all round should be destroyed by hail, yet they will remain unharmed in their own fields. Such matters should be decided upon according to the distinction of which we have already treated.

Similarly there are women who, for the preservation of milk and that cows should not be deprived of their milk by witchcraft, give freely to the poor in God's name the whole of a Sunday's yield of milk; and say that, by this sort of alms, the cows yield even more milk and are preserved from witchcraft. This need not be regarded as superstitious, provided that it is done out of pity for the poor, and that they implore the Divine mercy for the protection of their cattle, leaving the effect to the good pleasure of Divine providence.

Again, Nider in the First chapter of his *Præceptorium* says that it is lawful to bless cattle, in the same way as sick men, by means of written charms and sacred words, even if they have the appearance of incantations, as long as the seven conditions we have mentioned are observed. For he says that devout persons and virgins have been known to sign a cow with the sign of the Cross, together with the Lord's Prayer and the Angelic Salutation, upon which the devil's work has been driven off, if it is due to witchcraft.

And in his *Formicarius* he tells that witches confess that their witchcraft is obstructed by the reverent observation of the ceremonies of the Church; as by the aspersion of Holy Water, or the consumption of consecrated salt, by the lawful use of candles on the Day of Purification and of blessed palms, and such things. For this reason the Church uses these in her exorcisms, that they may lessen the power of the devil.

Also, because when witches wish to deprive a cow of milk they are in the habit of begging a little of the milk or butter which comes from that cow, so that they may afterwards by their art bewitch the cow; therefore women should take care, when they are asked by persons suspected of this crime, not to give away the least thing to them.

Again, there are women who, when they have been turning a church for a long while to no purpose, and if they suspect that this is due to some witch, procure if possible a little butter from the house of that witch. Then they make that butter into three pieces and throw them into the churn, invoking the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and so all witchcraft is put to flight. Here again it is a case of opposing vanity to vanity, for the simple reason that the butter must be borrowed from the suspected witch. But if it were done without this; if with the invocation of the Holy Trinity and the Lord's Prayer the woman were to commit the effect of the Divine Will, she would remain beyond reproach. Nevertheless it is not a commendable practice to throw in the three pieces of butter; for it would be better to banish the witchcraft by means of sprinkling Holy Water or putting in some exorcised salt, always with the prayers we have mentioned.

Again, since often the whole of a person's cattle are destroyed by witchcraft, those who have suffered in this way ought to take care to remove the soil under the threshold of the stable or stall, and where the cattle go to water, and replace it with fresh soil sprinkled with Holy Water. For witches have often confessed that they have placed some instrument of

witchcraft at the instance of devils, they have only had to make a hole in which the devil has placed the instrument of witchcraft; and that this was a visible object, such as a stone or a piece of wood or a mouse or some serpent. For it is agreed that the devil can perform such things by himself without the need of any partner; but usually, for the perdition of her soul, he compels a witch to co-operate with him.

In addition to the setting up of the sign of the Cross which we have mentioned, the following procedure is practised against hailstorms and tempests. Three of the hailstones are thrown into the fire with an invocation of the Most Holy Trinity, and the Lord's Prayer and the Angelic Salutation are repeated twice or three times, together with the Gospel of S. John, *In the beginning was the Word*. And the sign of the Cross is made in every direction towards each quarter of the world. Finally, *The Word was made Flesh* is repeated three times, and three times, "By the words of this Gospel may this tempest be dispersed." And suddenly, if the tempest is due to witchcraft, it will cease. This is most true and need not be regarded with any suspicion. For if the hailstones were thrown into the fire without the invocation of the Divine Name, then it would be considered superstitious.

But it may be asked whether the tempest could not be stilled without the use of those hailstones. We answer that it is the other sacred words that are chiefly effective; but by throwing in the hailstones a man means to torment the devil, and tries to destroy his works by the invocation of the Holy Trinity. And he throws them into the fire rather than into water, because the more quickly they are dissolved the sooner is the devil's work destroyed. But he must commit to the Divine Will the effect which is hoped for.

Relevant to this is the reply given by a witch to a Judge who asked her if there were any means of stilling a tempest raised by witchcraft. She answered: Yes, by this means. I adjure you, hailstorms and winds, by the five wounds of Christ, and by the three nails which pierced His hands and feet, and by the four Holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, that you be dissolved and fall as rain.

Many also confess, some freely and some under stress of torture, that there are five things by which they are much hindered, sometimes entirely, sometimes in part, sometimes so that they cannot harm his friends. And these are, that a man should have a pure faith and keep the commandments of God; that he should protect himself with the sign of the Cross and with prayer; that he should reverence the rites and ceremonies of the Church; that he should be diligent in the performance of public justice; and that he should meditate aloud or in his heart on the Passion of Christ. And of these things Nider also speaks. And for this reason it is a general practice of the Church to ring bells as a protection against storms, both that the devils may flee from them as being consecrated to God and refrain from their wickedness, and also that the people may be roused up to invoke God against tempests with the Sacrament of the Altar and sacred words, following the very ancient custom of the Church in France and Germany.

But since this method of carrying out the Sacrament to still a storm seems to many a little superstitious, because they do not understand the rules by which it is possible to distinguish between that which is superstitious and that which is not; therefore it must be considered that five rules are given by which anyone may know whether an action is superstitious, that is, outside the observances of the Christian religion, or whether it is in accordance with the due and proper worship and honour of God, proceeding from the true virtue of religion both in the thoughts of the heart and in the actions of the body. For these are explained in the gloss on *Colossians* ii, where S. Paul says: Which things have a show of

wisdom in superstition; and the gloss says: Superstition is religion observed without due discipline; as was said before.

The first of these is, that in all our works the glory of God ought to be our chief aim; as it is said: Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever else ye do, do all in the [glory of God](#). Therefore in every work relating to the Christian religion let care be taken that it is to the glory of God, and that in it man should give the glory chiefly to God, so that by that very work the mind of man may be put in subjection to God. And although, according to this rule, the ceremonies and legal procedures of the Old Testament are not now observed, since they are to be understood figuratively, whereas the truth is made known in the New Testament, yet the carrying out of the Sacrament or of Relics to still a storm does not seem to militate against this rule.

The second rule is that care should be taken that the work is a discipline to restrain concupiscence, or a bodily abstinence, but in the way that is owed to virtue, that is, according to the rites of the Church and moral doctrine. For S. Paul says, *Romans* xii: Let your service be reasonable. And because of this rule, they are foolish who make a vow not to comb their hair on the Sabbath, or who fast on Sunday, saying, The better the day the better the deed, and such like. But again it does not seem that it is superstitious to carry out the Sacrament, etc.

The third rule is to be sure that what is done is in accordance with the statutes of the Catholic Church, or with the witness of Holy Scripture, or according at least to the rites of some particular Church, or in accordance with universal use, which S. Augustine says may be taken as a law. Accordingly when the Bishops of the English were in doubt because the Mass was celebrated in different manners in different Churches, S. Gregory wrote to them that they might use whatever methods they found most pleasing to God, whether they followed the rites of the Roman or of the Gallican or of any other Church. For the fact that different Churches have different methods in Divine worship does not militate against the truth, and therefore such customs are to be preserved, and it is unlawful to neglect them. And so, as we said in the beginning, it is a very ancient custom in the Churches of France and some parts of Germany, after the consecration of the Eucharist to carry It out into the open; and this cannot be unlawful, provided that It is not carried exposed to the air, but enclosed and contained in a Pyx.

The fourth rule is to take care that what is done bears some natural relation to the effect which is expected; for if it does not, it is judged to be superstitious. On this account unknown characters and suspected names, and the images or charts of necromancers and astronomer, are altogether to be condemned as suspect. But we cannot say that on this account it is superstitious to carry out Holy Relics or the Eucharist as a protection against the plagues of the devil; for it is rather a most religious and salutary practice, since in that Sacrament lies all our help against the Adversary.

The fifth rule is to be careful that what is done should give no occasion for scandal or stumbling; for in that case, although it be not superstitious, yet because of the scandal it should be forgone or postponed, or done secretly without scandal. Therefore if this carrying of the Sacrament can be done without scandal, or even secretly, then it should not be neglected. For by this rule many secular priests neglect the use of benedictions by means of devout words either uttered over the sick or bound round their necks. I say that nothing should be done, at least publicly, if it can give any occasion of stumbling to other simple

folk.

Let this be enough on the subject of the remedies against hailstorms, either by words or lawful actions.

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[Question II, Chapter VIII](#)

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“Charms.” Cf. Shirley's comedy “The Sisters,” licensed April 1642, where Antonio says to one of the supposed astrologers, III, I:

*“You are one of the knaves that stroll the country,
And live by picking worms out of fools' fingers.”*

“Glory of God.” “I. Corinthians” x, 31.

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

PART II, QUESTION II. CHAPTER VIII

*Certain Remedies prescribed against those Dark and Horrid Harms
with which Devils may Afflict Men.*

Yet again we reserve our judgement in discussing the remedies against certain injuries to the fruits of the earth, which are caused by canker-worms, or by huge flights of locusts and other insects which cover vast areas of land, and seem to hide the surface of the ground, eating up everything to the very roots in the vineyards and devouring fields of ripe crops. In the same light too we consider the remedies against the stealing of children by the work of devils.

But with regard to the former kind of injury we may quote S. Thomas, the *Second of the Second*, Question 90, where he asks whether it is lawful to adjure an irrational creature. He answers that it is; but only in the way of compulsion, by which it is sent back to the devil, who uses irrational creatures to harm us. And such is the method of adjuration in the exorcisms of the Church by which the power of the devil is kept away from irrational creatures. But if the adjuration is addressed to the irrational creature itself, which understands nothing, then it would be nugatory and vain. From this it can be understood that they can be driven off by lawful exorcisms and adjurations, the help of the Divine mercy being granted; but first the people should be bidden to fast and to go in procession and practice other devotions. For this sort of evil is sent on account of adulteries and the multiplication of crimes; wherefore men must be urged to confess their sins.

In some provinces even solemn excommunications are pronounced; but then they obtain power of adjuration over devils.

Another terrible thing which God permits to happen to men is when their own children are taken away from women, and strange children are put in their place by devils. And these children, which are commonly called changelings, or in the German tongue *Wechselkinder*, are of three kinds. For some are always ailing and crying, and yet the milk of four women is not enough to satisfy them. Some are generated by the operation of Incubus devils, of whom, however, they are not the sons, but of that man from whom the devil has received the semen as a Succubus, or whose semen he has collected from some nocturnal pollution in sleep. For these children are sometimes, by Divine permission, substituted for the real children.

And there is a third kind, when the devils at times appear in the form of young children and attach themselves to the nurses. But all three kinds have this in common, that though they are very heavy, they are always ailing and do not grow, and cannot receive enough milk to satisfy them, and are often reported to have vanished away.

And it can be said that the Divine pity permits such things for two reasons. First, when the parents dote upon their children too much, and this a punishment for their own good.

Secondly, it is to be presumed that the women to whom such things happen are very superstitious, and are in many other ways seduced by devils. But God is truly jealous in the right sense of the word, which means a strong love for a man's own wife, which not only does not allow another man to approach her, but like a jealous husband will not suffer the hint or suspicion of adultery. In the same way is God jealous of the soul which He bought with His Precious Blood and espoused in the Faith; and cannot suffer it to be touched by, to converse with, or in any way to approach or have dealings with the devil, the enemy and adversary of salvation. And if a jealous husband cannot suffer even a hint of adultery, how much more will he be disturbed when adultery is actually committed! Therefore it is no wonder if their own children are taken away and adulterous children substituted.

And indeed that it may be more strongly impressed how God is jealous of the soul, and will not suffer anything which might cause a suspicion, it is shown in the Old Law where, that He might drive His people farther from idolatry, He not only forbade idolatry, but also many other things which might give occasion to idolatry, and seemed to have no use in themselves, although in some marvellous way they retain some use in a mystical sense. For He not only says in *Exodus* xxii: Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live on this earth; but He adds this: She shall not dwell in thy land, lest perchance she cause thee to sin. Similarly common bawds and bulkers are put to death, and not allowed to company with men.

Note the jealousy of God, Who says as follows in *Deuteronomy* xxii: If thou find a bird's nest, and the dam sitting upon the eggs or upon the young ones, thou shalt not take the dam with the young, but thou shalt let the dam fly away; because the Gentiles used these to procure sterility. The jealous God would not suffer in His people this sign of adultery. In like manner in our days when old women find a penny, they think it a sign of great fortune; and conversely, when they dream of money it is an unlucky sign. Also God taught that all vessels should be covered, and that when a vessel had no cover it should be considered unclean.

There was an erroneous belief that when devils came in the night (or the [Good People](#) as old women call them, though they are witches, or devils in their forms) they must eat up everything, that afterwards they may bring greater abundance of stores. Some people give colour to the story, and call them Screech Owls; but this is against the opinion of the Doctors, who say that there are no rational creatures except men and Angels; therefore they can only be devils.

Again, in *Leviticus* xix: Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard; because they did this idolatrously in veneration of idols.

Again in *Deuteronomy* xxii: God says that men shall not put on the garments of women, or conversely; because they did this in honour of the goddess Venus, and others in honour of Mars or Priapus.

And for the same reason He commanded the altars of idols to be destroyed; and Hezekias destroyed the Brazen Serpent when the people wanted to sacrifice to it, saying: It is brass. For the same reason He forbade the observance of visions and auguries, and commanded that the man or woman in whom there was a familiar spirit should be put to death. Such are now called soothsayers. All these things, because they give rise to suspicion of spiritual adultery, therefore, as has been said, from the jealousy which God has for the souls He has espoused, as a husband espouses a wife, they were all forbidden by Him.

And so we preachers also ought to bear in mind that no sacrifice is more acceptable to

God than a jealousy of souls, as S. Jerome says in his commentaries upon Ezekiel.

Therefore in the Third Part of this work we shall treat the extermination of witches, which is the ultimate remedy. For this is the last recourse of the Church, to which she is bound by Divine commandment. For it has been said: Ye shall not suffer witches to live upon the earth. And with this will be included the remedies against archer-wizards; since this kind can only be exterminated by secular law.

A remedy. When certain persons for the sake of temporal gain have devoted themselves entirely to the devil, it has often been found that, though they may be freed from the devil's power by true confession, yet they have been long and grievously tormented, especially in the night. And God allows this for their punishment. But a sign that they have been delivered is that, after confession, all the money in their purses or coffer vanishes. Many examples of this could be adduced, but for the sake of brevity they are passed over and omitted.

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[Part III](#)

*Part II, Question II, Chapter VIII
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“Good People.” So in Ireland the fairies are called “good people,” and traditionally seem to be of a benevolent and capricious and even mischievous disposition. In some parts of Highland Scotland fairies are called “daoine sithe” or “men of peace,” and it is believed that every year the devil carries off a tenth part of them.

It will be readily remembered that to the Greeks the Fairies were αἱ Εὐμενίδες, the gracious goddesses.
