

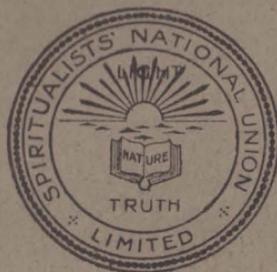
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Psychic Science and Barbaric Legislation

BY

ELLIS T. POWELL, LL.B., D.Sc.

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PSYCHIC SCIENCE AND BARBARIC LEGISLATION

A SURVEY OF THE STATUTES AND
THE LEADING LEGAL DECISIONS
IN REGARD TO PSYCHIC
PHENOMENA AND THEIR
INVESTIGATION

BY

ELLIS T. POWELL, LL.B., D.Sc.

Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and of the Institute
of Journalists :

Author of *The Evolution of the Money Market*, *The Practical
Affairs of Life*, etc.

“ Something divine and supernatural comes to me, which the prosecutor also mentioned in a spirit of mockery in his indictment. I have had this ever since I was a child, a *kind of voice coming to me*; I never was any man’s teacher; but if anyone, young or old, is anxious to hear me talking and carrying out my mission, I never grudged anyone that; nor do I talk only if I receive a fee, and decline to talk if I do not receive one; but I submit myself to rich and poor alike to be questioned, and also to anyone who wishes to answer and hear whatever I say. And if anyone of them turns out good or the reverse, I could not fairly be held accountable.” *Apology of Socrates to his Judges*, 399 B.C. Socrates was condemned to die by drinking hemlock. In England, in 1917, he would be placed in the dock of the police court as a rogue and vagabond.

1917.

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There never has been in any country a new proclamation of any great truth or principle but it has been derided as puerile, subversive, contrary to religion, ridiculous, blasphemous, and absurd. Galileo, Copernicus, Galvani, Luther, Buddha, Mahomet, Wesley, Socrates, Harvey, Newton, Columbus, Franklin, Young, Watt, and Stephenson, and many more of whom the world was unworthy, were all variously called visionaries, or blasphemers, or dreamers, or deluded, or subverters of established order, or enemies of God: and at the head of the list should stand the greatest of all names, that of ONE who was condemned to a felon's death by a fanatical priesthood, because he had affronted the orthodoxy of the day by placing himself in opposition to its conception of God, to its interpretation of the Scriptures, and to its forms and observances. V. C. Desertis, *Psychic Philosophy*, p. 41.

And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught.

But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin, Acts V., 38.

Science is now a social institution, as much as religion. But if science seems pretty safe, it is always possible that in countries where the scientific spirit is held in honour, nevertheless, serious restrictions may be laid on speculations touching social, political, and religious questions. . . . It would be silly to suppose that attempts may not be made in the future to put back the clock. . . . Meanwhile, nothing should be left undone to impress upon the young that *freedom of thought is an axiom of human progress*.—Professor J. B. Bury, *History of Freedom of Thought*, p. 240.

FOREWORD.

Nothing in this pamphlet is to be interpreted as involving a scintilla of sympathy with the charlatans and humbugs who exploit human credulity by pretended psychic phenomena, especially of the type of fortune telling. To rob men and women of their money by false pretences must always be a despicable exploit: but when the exploit is performed under the alleged aegis of spiritual influences, and frequently accompanied by the callous infliction of great mental anguish upon the victims, it descends from the despicable to the damnable, and no penalty could possibly be too severe for the intellectual depravity which manifests itself in such fashion.

This pamphlet is directed, however, not at the well-deserved punishment of vile impostors, but at the indiscriminate evocation of barbaric laws, the legacy of antique legislative cruelty and ignorance, against the "youngest of the sciences"—psychic investigation. A science sanctified by the labours of Frederic Myers, and dignified by the endorsement of Wallace, Lodge, and Barrett, is legislatively placed upon the same level as drunkenness, obscenity, and breach of the peace. As long as such Acts remain on the Statute Book, the most exalted scientific devotion, and the most delicate of individual psychic endowments, are at the mercy of the most ignorant of policemen, or the most prejudiced of magistrates. This, in a regenerated England, is intolerable, nay outrageous, to the last degree.—E.T.P.

PSYCHIC SCIENCE AND BARBARIC LEGISLATION.

IN order to understand how a particular phenomenon was regarded by those who were familiar with it, we must go to contemporary accounts of it and endeavour to place ourselves in the contemporary surroundings. We cannot fully understand from a nineteenth century version how a certain incident presented itself to fourteenth century eyes. Now, there is no more accurate source of information of this kind than the preambles of early Acts of Parliament. They set forth, generally very fully, and always with legal precision, not to say with prolixity, some account of the abuse, or the trouble, or the circumstances, with which the proposed legislation is to deal. From this source, therefore, as well as from the actual text of the statutes themselves, we may well attempt the study of the attitude of Parliament and the law towards the occult sciences. We will commence at the remotest date at which the statute book begins to afford us any information. Here and there we will illustrate the statutes from contemporaneous legal circumstances, such as will simultaneously elucidate the subject and amaze the reader. Looking at the whole topic in that way, we shall see it as it presented itself to generation after generation of the House of Commons, which, apart altogether from its particular partisan complexion at a given moment, may always be said to reflect with substantial accuracy the average sentiments of the country. The investigation will be instructive, startling. Here and there it will be nauseating and horrifying.

LEGISLATION AGAINST "GIPSIES."

At the commencement of our inquiry we shall find that there are two distinct lines of statutory enactment, dealing, so to speak, with two classes of phenomena, or alleged phenomena. The first is a series of statutes directed at vagrancy, and against a specified class of vagrants—to wit, Egyptians, or, as

we now call them, gipsies. This series begins with 22 Henry VIII., cap. 10 and 11,* and is continued through 1 and 2 Philip and Mary, cap. 4; 5 Elizabeth, cap. 15 and 20; and 17 George II., cap. 5. s. 2, to 5 George IV., cap. 83, s. 4. This Act, which repeals the earlier statutes, but retains the penal character of the various acts at which they were aimed, is still in force. This type of offence and the enactments dealing with it are only to a minor extent within our range in the present survey. Still, as the alleged offences partake somewhat of the occult, we may briefly sketch the substance of the various statutes. The first Act is 22 Hy. VIII., c. 10 and 11 (1530-1), which is "An Acte conc'nyng Egypsyans." It sets forth that these persons used "greate subtyll and crafty meanes to deceyve the people, beryng them in hande, that they by Palmestre coulde telle menne and women's fortunes, and so many tymes by crafte and subtyltie have deceyved the people of theyr money, and also hath comytted many and haynous felonyes and robberies." They are to leave the country within sixteen days of the proclamation of the statute among them. The next Act (1 and 2 Ph. and M. c. 4) is a re-enactment, due to the defiance of the Act by many of the Egyptians returning to England. After January 31st, 1554, any person conveying "Egiptians" into England is to forfeit £40. Any new arrivals who remain one month are to be felons: those at present here, remaining twenty days, are to forfeit all their goods, and unless they leave within forty days are to be felons.

If, however, any of the "Egiptians" shall within a specified time "leave that noughty idle and ungodly lyef and company and be placed in the service of some honest and able inhabitante or inhabitantes within this Realme"—then, while they "continue in such lawfull woorck and occupac'on" they are to be "discharged of all Paines and Forfeitures contained in

*Acts of Parliament are distinguished as "chapters" of the regnal years of the monarch in whose reign they were passed. Thus 22 Henry VIII., cap 10 and 11, s. 4. would be section 4 of the tenth and eleventh acts passed in the 22nd year of the reign of Henry VIII.

this Acte." The Act 5 Eliz. cap. 15 is directed "agaynst fonde* and phantasticall Propheysys," especially with regard to the death of the monarch: while cap. 20 is "An Act for the Punishment of Vagabondes Callyng themselves Egyprians." Finally we get Section 4 of the Act 5 Geo. IV., c. 83 (still in force), which sets forth a number of offences, mainly of a disreputable type, such as vagrancy, the exhibition of obscene pictures, the collection of alms by the exposure of wounds and personal deformities, and so forth. The first offence characterised in the section is that committed by "every person pretending or professing to tell fortunes, or using any subtle craft, means, or device by palmistry or otherwise, to deceive and impose on any of his Majesty's subjects." By a natural transition the next offence specified is that of "wandering abroad and lodging in . . . the open Air, or under a Tent, or in any Cart or Waggon."

THE "SPIRIT" STATUTES.

Thus far of one line of legislation, directed against gipsies and fortune-tellers. The other series is much more germane to our subject. It is concerned with actual spirit intercourse. The first Act is 33 Henry VIII., c. 8, which was passed in 1541, and repealed first by 1 Edw. VI., c. 12, and then by the Statute Law Revision Act of 1863, within the memories of some of us, at all events.

Almost contemporaneously with the passing of the Act the law of England murdered Sir Thomas More, one of the best and bravest of our English worthies, and the saintly John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. They were convicted, in 1535, of high treason, by means of the perjuries and forgeries of a rascal named Rich, then the Solicitor-General. Lord Macaulay has described the state trials of those days as "murder

*This is our word "fond," which we use in the sense of "loving," "tender," or "indulgent." In Tudor times it meant simply "silly" or "foolish." Thus in the twenty-second article of the Church of England the doctrine of Purgatory is mentioned as "a fond thing, vainly invented"—that is to say, a foolish thing.

preceded by mummery." Such a trial ended in sentence of death upon two of the noblest of Englishmen, both innocent, and both known to be innocent by the judges who sentenced them. It was, said Lord Campbell, "The blackest crime that has ever been perpetrated in England under the form of law," and the record of English criminal law is itself among the blackest in the world.

Within a few years of the passage of this first anti-psyhic statute we entered upon that period of religious persecution which is perhaps the darkest stain upon our national annals. It was a persecution of the weak and the poor for beliefs that were entertained with perfect impunity by the rich and powerful. Let Froude tell its story in one terrible paragraph. Although, says he, the persecutors

"could have laid their hands on earl and baron, knight and gentleman, whose heresy was notorious, although in the Queen's own guard there were many who never listened to a mass, they dared not strike where there was danger that they would be struck in return. They went out into the highways and hedges; they gathered up the lame, the halt, and the blind; they took the weaver from his loom, the carpenter from his workshop, the husbandman from his plough; they laid hands on maidens and boys who had never heard of any other religion than that which they were called on to abjure; old men tottering into the grave, and children whose lips could but just lisp the articles of their creed; and of these they made their burnt-offerings; with these they crowded their prisons, and when filth and famine killed them, they flung them out to rot. How long England would have endured the repetition of the horrid spectacles is hard to say. The persecution lasted three years, and in that time something less than 300 persons were burnt at the stake. 'By imprisonment,' said Lord Burghley, 'by torment, by famine, by fire, almost the number of 400, were, in their various ways lamentably destroyed.'"^{*}

TUDOR VIEWS OF SPIRIT INTERCOURSE.

Into such an atmosphere was the first anti-psyhic statute born. The statute is itself such a remarkable review of public belief and sentiment with regard to spirit intercourse in the sixteenth century, not long

^{*}Froude, History of England, Vol. VI., p. 101.

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*Froude, History of England, Vol. VI., p. 101.

before the birth of Shakespeare, that I propose to print it practically in full:—

Whereas divers and sundry persons unlawfully have devised and practised invocacions and conjuracions of Sprites p'tending by suche meanes to understande and get knowlege for their owne lucre in what place treasure of golde and Silver shulde or mought be founde or had in the earthe or other secrete places, and also have used and occupied witchcraftes, inchauntments, and sorceries to the distruccon of their neighboures persones and goodes, And for execucion of their saide falce devyses and practises have made or caused to be made dyvers Images and pictures of men women children Angelles or develles beastes or fowles and also have made Crownes Septures Swordes rynges glasses and other things, and gyving faithe and credit to suche fantastickall practises have dygged up and pulled downe an infinite nombre of Crosses w'in this Realme, and taken upon them to declare and tell where things lost or stollen shuld be become; whiche things cannot be used and excersised but to the great Offence of Godes lawe, hurt and damage of the Kinges Subjectes, and losse of the Sowles of such Offenders, to the greate dishonor of God, Infamy and disquetnes of the Realme:

For Reformation wherof be it enacted by the Kyng oure Sovereigne Lorde wi' thassent of the Lordes spirituall and temporall and the Comons in this p'sent Parliament assembled and by auctoritie of the same, that yf any persone or persones, after the first daye of Maye next comyng, use devise practise or exercise, or cause to be used devysed practised or exercised, any Invocacions or conjuracions of Sprites wichcraftes enchauntementes or sorcerie to the 'ntent to get or fynde money or treasure, or to waste, consume or destroy any persone in his bodie, membres or goodes, or to p'voke any persone to unlawfull love, or for any other unlawfull intente or purpose, or by occasion or color of suche things or any of them, or for despite of Cryste, or for lucre of money, dygge up or pull downe any Crosse or Crosses, or by such Invocacions or conjuracions of Sprites wichcraftes enchauntementes or sorcerie or any of them take upon them to tell or declare where goodes stollen or lost shall become. That they all and ev'y suche Offence and Offences, frome the saide first daye of Maye next comyng, shalbe demyde accepted and adjudged Felonye; And that all and ev'y persone and persones offending as is abovesaide their Councillors Abettors and Procurors and ev'y of them from the saide first daye of Maye shalbe demyde accepted and adjudged a Felon and Felones: And th'offender and Offenders contrairie to this Acte, being thereof lawfullie convicte before suche as shall have power and auctoritie to here and determyne felonyes, shall have and suffre suche paynes of deathe losse and forfaytures

of their landes tenements goodes and Catalles as in cases of felonie by the course of the Common lawes of this Realme, And shall also lose p'ivilege of Clergie and Sayntuarie.

This Act was repealed in the first year of Edward VI. (1547), and for the next fifteen years the terrible "crimes" at which it had been aimed were untouched by any repressive statute. Then came 5 Eliz. c. 16, passed almost simultaneously with the birth of Shakespeare, and a quarter of a century before the coming of the Spanish Armada. This most remarkable statute enacts:—

Whereas at this present there ys no ordinarye ne condigne Punishment provided agaynst the Practisers of the Wicked Offences of Conjuracions and Invocacions of Evil Spirites and of Sorceries Enchauntementes Charmes and Witchcraftes, the wch. Offences by force of a statute made in the xxxiiij. yere of the Reigne of the late King Henry the Eyghthe were made to bee Felonye, and so continued until the sayd Statute was repealed by Thacte and Statute of Repeal made in the first yere of the Reigne of the late King Edwarde the vjth; sythens the Repeale wherof many fantastical and devillishe p'sons have devised and practised Invocacions and conjuracions of evill and wicked Spirites, and have used and practised Wytchcraftes Enchauntementes, Charms and Sorceries, to the Destruction of the P'sons and Goodes of their Neigheours and other Subjects of this Realme, and for other lewde Intentes and Purposes contrarye to the Lawes of Almighty God, to the Perill of their owne Soules and to the great Infamy and Disquietnes of this Realm: For REFORMACION wherof bee it enacted by the Queenes Ma'tie w'th thassent of the Lordes Sp'uall and Temporall and the Comons in this present P'liament assembled, and by thauthoritee of the same, That yf any p'son or p'sons after the first daye of June nexte coming, use practise or exercise any Invocacions or Conjuracions of evill and wicked Spirites, to or for any Intent or Purpose; or els if any p'son or p'sons after the said first daye of June shall use practise or exercise any Witchcraftes Enchantment Charm or Sorcerie whereby any p'son shall happen to bee killed or destroyed, that then aswell every such Offendor or Offendors in Invocacions or Conjuracions as ys aforesayd their Concellors and Aidours, as also every suche offendor or offendors in Witchcraftes, Enchauntements Charme or Sorcerie whereby the Deathe of anny p'son dothe ensue, their Aidours and Concellors, being of either of the said Offences lafully convicted and attainted, shall suffer paynes of Deathe as a Felon or Felons, and shall lose the

Priviledg and Benefite of Sanctuarie and Clergie: Saving to the Wief of such parson her Title of Dower and also to the Heyre and Successour of suche p'son his or theyr Tytles of Inheritance, Succession and other Rightes as though no suche Attayndour of the Auncestour or Predecessour had been hadd or made.

The Act then goes on to provide that for the first offence the penalty shall be imprisonment for one year, with six hours in the public pillory every three months during such year; for the second offence the penalty is to be "Deathe as a Felon." The penalty is the same whether the object of the witchcraft, enchantment, or sorcery is the wasting or consuming of a person and his goods, or the discovery of concealed treasure.

" FEEDING " AND " REWARDING " SPIRITS.

This Act (5 Eliz., c. 16) was repealed by 1 Jac. (James) I., c. 12, the most remarkable of all the Statutes, which provides (*italics mine*) that:—

For the better restraining of the offences of conjurations, enchantments and witchcraftes, and more severe punishinge the same, be it further enacted. . . . That if any p'son or persons, after the Feaste of Saint Michael the Archangel next cominge, shall use practise or exercise any Invocation or Conjuratioun of any evill and wicked Spirit, or shall consult covenant with *entertain employ feede or reward any evill and wicked Spirit* to or for any intente or purpose; or take up any dead man woman or child out of his her or their grave, or any other place where the dead bodie resteth, or the skin bone or any other parte of any dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of Witchcraft Sorcerie Charme or Inchantment; or shall practise or exercise any Witchcraft, Inchantment Charme or Sorcerie wherebie any p'son shal be killed destroyed wasted consumed pined or lamed in his or her bodie, or any part thereof: that then everie such Offendor or Offendors, their Ayders Abettors and counsellors, being of any of the saide offences dulie and lawfullie convicted and attainted, shall suffer pains of deathe as a Felon or Felons, and shall loose the priviledge and benefit of Cleargie and Sanctuarie.

The Act then proceeds to re-enact, substantially, the provisions of the earlier statute with reference to the utilisation of Witchcraft, Inchantment, Charm, or Sorcerie for the purpose of discovering lost property, provoking unlawful love, or injuring per-

sons or cattle. The punishment is to be a year's imprisonment, with six hours in the pillory, in some market town, once every quarter during such year; and for the second offence, death as a felon.

These are very remarkable provisions. It will be noticed that this statute goes far beyond the former enactment of Elizabeth, especially in its references to persons who "consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed, or reward any evil and wicked spirit." The greatest lawyer of the age (who was also one of its foulest ruffians, as we shall see in a moment) had no doubt whatever about the literal meaning of the language. Coke (3 Inst., c. 6, page 44) gives us a series of definitions of the classes of persons who dealt with the occult. They enable us to see such people as they appeared to the eyes of an Elizabethan Attorney-General:—

A *conjurer* is he that by the holy and powerfull name of Almighty God invokes and conjures the Devill to consult with him, or to do some act.

A *witch* is a person that hath conference with the Devill, to consult with him, or to do some act.

An *inchanter, incantator*, is he or she qui carminibus aut cantiunculis Daemonem adjurat—he or she who adjures the Devil by rhymes or versicles.

After reciting the case of Saul, he goes on to say "therefore it had been a great defect in government if so great an abomination had passed with impunity"—and this, he adds, is the reason why the late statutes were passed. He proceeds to take the more prominent classes of offence and add some explanation of their nature. He says, reciting the words of the statute:—

"1. If any person or persons shall use, practise, or exercise any invocation or conjuration of any evill and wicked spirit.

"Here," says Coke, "The Devill by the holy and powerfull names of Almighty God is invoked, as hath been said, and this invocation or conjuration of a wicked spirit is felony, without any other act or thing, save only the apparition of the spirit.

"2. Or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evill or wicked spirit, to or for any intent or purpose.

"By this branch," remarks Coke, "if any consult,

etc. (howsoever the wicked spirit appeareth and cometh) these actions (here mentioned) with or to that wicked spirit, to or for any intent or purpose, are felony without any other act or thing."

THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT.

Thus far Coke's exposition. As he was Attorney-General, and a typical lawyer of his age, we will turn aside for a moment to look at Coke himself, so as to obtain some idea of the depraved legal atmosphere in which the anti-psychic statutes were originally engendered. Coke, as Attorney-General, acted in defiance of justice, pity, remorse or even decency. Provided the Crown required the conviction of an innocent man, Coke was prepared to get it, no matter how foul the means he used. He prosecuted at the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh, one of the noblest Englishmen that ever lived, for high treason against James I., a cowardly, drivelling fool with the manners of a hog and the morals of a goat. During the proceedings Coke, who well knew Raleigh to be innocent, worked himself into such a paroxysm of rage that for a time he could not speak. When at length he resumed, Raleigh interposed a few words, whereupon the following dialogue (taken verbatim from the *State Trials*, vol. II., p. 26) ensued:—

Coke: Thou art the most vile and execrable traitor that ever lived.

Raleigh: You speak indiscreetly, barbarously, and uncivilly.

Coke: I want words sufficient to express thy viperous treasons.

Raleigh: I think you want words indeed, for you have spoken one thing half a dozen times.

Coke: Thou art an odious fellow, thy name is hateful to all the realm of England for thy pride. . . . I will now make it appear to the world that there never lived a viler viper upon the face of the earth than thou.

The trial ended, as it was bound to end in those dark days, in the conviction and sentence of the gallant prisoner. As in the case of modern psychic, the controlling power was the demon of Law, not the goddess of Justice. The sentence (on page 31 of the

volume of *State Trials* already quoted) was in these words:—

“ You shall be led from hence to the place whence you came, there to remain until the day of execution : and from thence you shall be drawn upon a hurdle through the open streets to the place of execution, there to be hanged [for a few moments] and cut down alive, and your body shall be opened, your heart and bowels plucked out, and your [here the details are too obscene to be printed] and thrown into the fire before your eyes ; then your head to be stricken off from your body, and your body shall be divided into four quarters, to be disposed of at the King’s pleasure.

At the pleasure, that is to say, of one of the most despicable reprobates who ever sat upon the English throne ! Verily the opponents of psychic research can hardly congratulate themselves upon the legal conditions amid which the prohibitive legislation first began to sprout !

SPIRIT INTERCOURSE ACCEPTED AS A FACT.

We have now taken a passing glance at the man who was simultaneously the leading lawyer and the biggest blackguard of the age. Let us now consider for a moment the language of the statutes themselves. However sordid, bigoted and tyrannous their origin, it seems to me abundantly clear that these statutes were not regarded by their authors as being directed against a type of imaginary offences. At a later date, as we shall see, the Legislature changed its attitude, and frankly abandoned all prosecutions for witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment or conjuration. It proceeded to enact penalties against persons *pretending* to exercise psychic powers. But the Elizabethan and Jacobean statutes are not drafted in that sense or spirit at all. They treat the offences as *real intercourse with spirits*. They even go so far as to forbid the entertaining, employing, feeding, or rewarding of any evil and wicked spirits. I cannot bring myself to believe that language so precise as this would have been used if the prohibited acts were considered to be purely imaginary. Our Elizabethan forefathers were undoubtedly under the shadow of mediævalism—a retreating shadow if you like, but a shadow nevertheless. Shakespeare’s allusions to spirits are redolent of the antique, vague

idea that there were persons who could summon them from their obscure and gloomy abodes:—

“ I can call spirits from the vasty deep.”

I. Hen. IV. iii. 2.

“ Now ye familiar spirits that are cull'd
Out of the powerful regions under earth.”

I. Hen. VI. v. 3.

“ For, upon my life

This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.”

Hamlet i. 2.

These passages express the ordinary beliefs with regard to spirits. There must have been something much more definite and real to inspire the specific language of the statutes. In fact, there certainly was an unquestioning and literal belief in the reality of spirit intercourse. It was based, no doubt, upon actual experience, which was much more easy to obtain in that leisured and slow-pacing age than it is in our twentieth century of whirl and “rush.” Let me take two proofs out of a multitude which could be adduced. The King himself, James VI. of Scotland (our James I.), published in 1597 a work on Daemonology. James actually classifies spirits. According to this eminent authority, some spirits are of high class, and “not to be spoken of idly or foolishly.” Others are of inferior grade, and the lowest of all comprise “the damned souls of departed conjurers.” Apparently you can speak of these as disrespectfully as you please. James says they had the power to bring fire from heaven, to conjure corn from one field to another, and to raise the wind. But an even more vivid illustration is to be found in a contemporary indictment for making a written agreement with a spirit. Let me anticipate incredulity by saying that this is not a joke or a fake, but an actual text from the Middlesex County Records. Here it is:—

20th April, 19 Charles I. True Bill that at St. Giles's without Cripplegate co. Midd., on the said day, Thomas Browne, late of the said parish, yeoman, by a certain writing dated on the said day of the said year, wickedly, diabolically and feloniously made an agreement with an evil and impious spirit, that he the same Thomas Browne would within ten days after the death of him Thomas

Browne give his soul to the said evil and impious spirit, in consideration that the said evil and impious spirit yearly, at the feasts of Pentecost and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, should pay or cause to be paid to the said Thomas Browne the sum of one thousand pounds of current English money on each of the said feasts for and during the term of the natural life of the same Thomas Browne: And in consideration that the said evil and impious spirit should defend the same Thomas from all perils of body and goods for and during the full term of forty-one years, and that the same Thomas should have and marry a woman who should be pleasing to the same Thomas, and that the same Thomas should have and enjoy all health, riches and worldly pleasure for and during the natural life of the same Thomas: And for the performance thereof the same Thomas then and there impiously and blasphemously as an impious apostate promised and vowed to renounce the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ against the Catholic Christian faith, and to the grave scandal of the Christian religion, and of all pious Christians, and to the great displeasure of God Almighty . . . and against the peace of the said Lord, now King, his crown and dignity, and also against the power of the statute for a case of this kind published and provided.

The Grand Jury of Middlesex found a true Bill, but the case was too much for the Petty Jury, who found Thomas "not guilty." Possibly the preoccupation of men's minds with the Civil War prevented the "packing" of the Petty Jury, which otherwise might have placed Thomas Browne in grave jeopardy. For the century was one of judicial squalor, on a scale and of a type almost unimaginable in an era when really infamous appointments to the Bench are few and far between. In the seventeenth century they were almost a matter of course. The notorious scoundrel Scroggs became Chief Justice in 1678. He was succeeded in 1683 by Jeffreys, the very incarnation of devilish injustice. After him came Sir Robert Wright. This rascal began life in "gaming, drinking, and every kind of debauchery." He got £500 on the mortgage of an estate by swearing a false affidavit that it was clear of all incumbrance. When the money was spent and the fraud detected he was in the greatest danger of being indicted for swindling and perjury. He was, however, a clever mimic. In that capacity he made sport for Chief Justice Jeffreys in the latter's drunken

orgies. One day Jeffreys said to him: "As you seem to be unfit for the Bar, or any other honest calling, I see nothing for it but that you should become a Judge yourself." Wright replied that the Lord Keeper, who made the Judges, knew of his unfortunate mortgage transaction. "Never despair, my boy," said Jeffreys, "leave all that to me." In due course the King (James II. of infamous memory) transformed his "trusty and well-beloved Robert Wright" into a Judge. He accompanied Jeffreys on his "bloody assize" in the West, helped to perpetuate the judicial atrocities, and pocketed his share of the bribes which the Judges received. A year or two afterwards, it became desirable to find a Judge "who, by no possibility, could go against the Government, or hesitate about doing anything required of him, however base or however bloody"—and Wright was selected as Chief Justice for that purpose. He committed a judicial murder on the first day that he sat on the bench as Chief Justice.*

THE BEGINNING OF BETTER THINGS.

This was the environment in which anti-psyche legislation was administered in the days preceding the establishment of the Bank of England in 1694. But the reaction had already begun, though it was as yet powerless to affect the Legislature. Even Jeffreys himself seems to have had doubts about the reality of witchcraft. Lecky believes, indeed, that the belief in witchcraft had almost disappeared in England among the educated classes after the Revolution of 1688, though the execution—or rather the murder—of these wretched creatures was still familiar. Three witches were hung at Exeter in 1682. In New England, in 1692, thirteen women and six men were hanged *in one year in one village* for witchcraft. One octogenarian was pressed to death under a board loaded with heavy stones. It took him two days to die, in agonizing torture. One of the murdered women left a four-year-old child, who was imprisoned as a witch!

*Lord Campbell, *Lives of Chief Justices*, Vol. II., p. 95 and onwards. From this authoritative source all the particulars of Wright are derived.

The old ideas were not easily dissipated. They died hard, as all such superstitions do. Addison—one of the most generous, liberal and enlightened intellects of that generation—evinces a curious hesitation in his references to them. “I believe in general,” he says, “that there is and has been such a thing as witchcraft, but at the same time can give no credit to any particular instance of it.” The main credit for assisting the spread of saner sentiment belongs to Holt, who became Lord Chief Justice in 1689, and brought an atmosphere of honesty and trenchancy into the foetid surroundings of that office. “Eleven poor creatures,” says his biographer, Lord Campbell, “were successively tried before him for witchcraft and the prosecutions were supported by the accustomed evidence of long fasting, vomiting pins and tenpenny nails, secret teats sucked by imps, devils’ marks” and so forth: “but by Holt’s good sense and tact in every instance the imposture was detected to the satisfaction of the jury, and there was an acquittal.” Finally the Chief Justice directed that a prosecutor, who alleged himself bewitched, should be indicted as an impostor and a cheat. The accuser said the witch had made him fast for a fortnight, and vomit pins meanwhile:—

“Doctor,” said Holt to the medical witness, “do you think it possible for a man to fast a fortnight?”

Dr. Hamilton: “I think not, my lord.”

Lord Chief Justice: “Can all the devils in hell help a man to fast so long?”

Doctor: “No, my lord, I think not.”

Upon this evidence the jury found the accuser guilty. Holt sentenced him to two hours in the pillory at Southwark, the Royal Exchange, and Temple Bar, on three successive days, then to be whipped at the House of Correction, and finally to do six months’ hard labour.

A LEGISLATIVE RIGHT-ABOUT-FACE.

This change in public sentiment led to fresh legislation. The Act of James I., with its amazing allusions to the “feeding” and “employing” of spirits,

was in its turn repealed by 9 Geo. II., c. 5, which came into force on the 24th of June, 1736. The new Act provided that henceforth no prosecution, suit, or proceeding should be commenced or carried on against any person for witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment or conjuration, or for charging another person with any such offence. As I read the Act (and as judicial opinion has interpreted its words), it is an inferential declaration by the Legislature that *there are no such things as witchcraft, enchantment, sorceries, charms, and conjurations*. It was thought desirable to make this legislative opinion clear, which of course it could not be as long as there remained on the Statute Book enactments expressly and specifically directed against acts of this kind. To hold that there was no such thing as witchcraft, while at the same time perpetuating a law directed against it, was too illogical a policy even for the British Parliament, which in its time has done some very illogical things. The new Act, therefore, repeals the penalties enacted against what were now regarded as impossible offences, but goes on to enact punishments for those who *pretended* to exercise the discredited arts. "For the more effectual preventing and punishing of any *pretences* to such arts or powers," the old penalty of a year's imprisonment, with four standings in the pillory, is provided for any person who *pretends* to "exercise or use any kind of witchcraft, sorcery, inchantment, or conjuration," or who "undertakes to tell fortunes, or *pretends*, from his or her skill or knowledge in any occult or crafty science, to discover " lost goods.

Then, as now, legal conservatism lagged behind the Legislature and public opinion as a whole. Thirty years after Parliament had declared that all spirit intercourse and witchcraft were impostures one of the greatest of English lawyers, Blackstone, produced the fourth volume of his famous Commentaries. The subject of spirit intercourse necessarily came within his review of our law: but he frankly admits the diffidence with which he approaches the subject. "A sixth species of offences against God and religion,"

says he, "of which our antient books are full, is a crime of which one knows not well what account to give." He reviews ancient opinion on the subject, and quotes verbatim the statute, 1 Jac. I. c. 12, with regard to "entertaining, employing, feeding, or rewarding" any evil spirit. "These Acts," he says, "continued in force until lately"—we have seen that they had been repealed in 1736—"to the terror of all antient females in the Kingdom. Our Legislature, however, has followed the wise example of Louis XIV. and stopped this species of prosecution." With these brief observations he hurries away from a topic of which he was evidently afraid. But the best comment upon the condition of the legal surroundings is supplied by Lecky, who reviews and contrasts the legal infamies of this period:—

"To steal a sheep or a horse; to snatch a man's property out of his hands and run away with it; to steal to the amount of forty shillings in a dwelling house, or to the amount of *five shillings* 'privately' in a shop; to pick a man's pocket of any greater sum than *twelvepence*; to steal linen from a bleaching ground, and woollen cloth from a tenter ground; to cut down trees in a garden or in an orchard; to break the border of a fish pond so that the fish may escape—were all crimes *punishable with death*. On the other hand it was not a capital offence for a man to attempt the life of his father; to commit premeditated perjury, even when the result was the execution of an innocent man; to stab a man, however severely, provided the man did not die from the wound; to burn a house of which the incendiary had a lease, even though it was so situated as to endanger the lives of hundreds. It was a capital offence to steal goods to the amount of forty shillings from a vessel on a navigable river, but not from a vessel on a canal. To steal fruit ready gathered was a felony. To gather it and steal it was only a trespass. To break a pane of glass at five in the afternoon for the purpose of stealing something that lay in the window was a capital offence. To break open a house in every circumstance of violence in summer, at four o'clock in the morning was only a misdemeanour. To steal goods from a shop, if the thief happened to be seen to take them, was punishable by transportation. To steal the same goods 'privately' (that is to say, when the criminal was *not* seen) was punishable with death."^{*}

^{*}Lecky, History of the Eighteenth Century, Vol. VI., p. 246.

Such was the legal environment which engendered the Witchcraft Act, under which opponents of psychic investigation are enabled to operate their campaign of intolerance and bigotry! As for the *social* environment of the age of George II., one glance at the monarch himself, the "fountain of honour," the example of his people, will suffice us:—

"In public life he was altogether indifferent to the welfare of England, except as it affected his electorate's † or his own. Always purchasing concubines, he was always governed by his wife. In private life he was a gross lover, an unreasonable master, a coarsely unfaithful husband, an unnatural parent, and a selfish man." ‡

Under an Act which represents one of the legislative achievements of this wretch, and perpetuates the gross materialism of his age, the psychic sensitive stands in the dock to-day! It is perhaps to be regretted that the passage from Phillimore cannot be read at the commencement of each prosecution. If that were the case, the public would learn what in the opinion of the Law and the Legislature is the "ideal life," in contrast with the criminal practices of the sensitives who aid man in the investigation of his relation with the higher spheres, and his eternal destiny therein. Of course George II. was not, in any but the strict constitutional sense, the source of this legislation. But the act nevertheless represents the sycophantic attitude of a cowardly and corrupt Legislature, which, while it characterised all psychic phenomena as sheer humbug, lacked the honesty and courage to strike at the shameless profligacy of the monarch on the throne.

This statute of George II., known as the Witchcraft Act, is still in force. But as recently as 1905 a defendant in a palmistry case pleaded that he had never heard of the Act. That, of course, was no valid defence. Ignorance of the law excuses no man. Yet as the "Solicitors' Journal" said at the time (Vol. 49, p. 162), the statute was out of print at the King's

† George II. was Elector of Hanover as well as King of England.

‡ Phillimore.

printers, so that even if the defendant had suspected its existence he could not have discovered its provisions unless he had had access to one of the great law libraries. The legal journal rather aptly compared this obsolete statute to certain other forgotten enactments which are, however, still in force and of full legal effect, such as the provision that agricultural labourers may not play cards except at Christmas, and that the man who elopes with a nun, whatever her age and however complete her consent, shall be imprisoned for three years.

JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION OF STATUTES.

And now, by way of completing our survey, let us scrutinise the very scanty legal precedents on this subject, and see how these ancient Acts have been interpreted by modern judges. The first and perhaps the most famous case is *Lyon v. Home* (6 Eq. 655). There a widow, aged 75, was induced, by messages purporting to come from her deceased husband, to adopt a medium, the well-known D. D. Home, as her son, and to convey to him securities and money worth £30,000, and to settle upon him, subject to her own life interest, the reversion to another £30,000. This was in the sixties of the last century. The late Mr. Henry Matthews, Q.C., for the defendant, Home, argued that the plaintiff had failed to prove any overwhelming undue influence. Unless, said he, the belief in Spiritualism is itself such a badge of fraud as to taint every transaction resting upon it, the case is not within the authorities on the point of undue influence. Vice-Chancellor Gifford decided that the gifts could not be retained. He ordered the plaintiff, however, to pay her own and certain other costs, as the penalty, in his own words, in the course of the judgment (p. 681) for "innumerable misstatements in many important particulars—misstatements on oath so perversely untrue that they have embarrassed the Court to a great degree, and quite discredited her testimony." The learned Vice-Chancellor then went on to some *obiter dicta*—observations by the way—with regard to Spiritualism itself. As they evidence the

state of the judicial mind in that regard in the year 1868, I transcribe them. "I know nothing" said the Vice-Chancellor,

"of what is called 'Spiritualism' otherwise than from the evidence before me, nor would it be right that I should advert to it except as portrayed by the evidence. It is not for me to conjecture what may or may not be the effects of a peculiar nervous organisation, or how far that effect may be communicated to others, or how far some things may appear to some minds as supernatural realities, which to ordinary minds and senses are not real. But as regards the manifestations and communications referred to in this cause I have to observe, in the first place, that they were brought about by some means or other after, and in consequence of, the defendant's presence, how, there is no proof to show . . . in the next, that the system, as presented by the evidence, is mischievous nonsense, well calculated on the one hand to delude the vain, the weak, the foolish and the superstitious: and on the other, to assist the projects of the needy and the adventurer; and lastly, that beyond all doubt there is plain law enough and plain sense enough to forbid and prevent the retention of acquisitions such as these by any 'medium' whether with or without a strange gift."

Perhaps we ought to add that whatever may have been the merits of this particular case, the genuineness of Home's mediumship is attested by scientific evidence far too powerful to be refuted or disregarded. The next of the leading cases is *Monck v. Hilton* (2 Ex. D. 268). This was an appeal in 1876 against a conviction under 5 Geo. IV. c 83 for using certain subtle craft, means and devices, by palmistry or otherwise, to deceive and impose on Hepplestone, Bedford, Lodge (not the present Sir Oliver Lodge), and others. The justices had sentenced Monck to three months' hard labour as a rogue and vagabond. It appeared that at certain séances at Hepplestone's house raps were heard on the table, a tambourine moved without visible physical cause, and a hand appeared. A blank slate, placed under the table, was shortly found to have written upon it, "in very crabbed, singular writing, the words, 'Oh, for a Lodge in some vast wilderness.'" After the manifestations Lodge asked to be allowed to search Monck, but was refused permission. When Monck's boxes

were subsequently examined, a good deal of apparatus was found, such as would have been necessary for the production of the various manifestations. Monck, in appealing, contended that manifestations such as he produced, whether by conjuring or otherwise, were not within the provisions of the Act of George IV., which were only intended to apply to gipsies and other wandering and homeless vagabonds. The appeal was dismissed and the conviction upheld. "We have," said Baron Pollock, "a craft, means, and device which is beyond that of physical dexterity" [and therefore is not conjuring] "and a professed dealing with some spiritual agency which is enacted, not for the mere purpose of individual experiment or so-called scientific pursuit, but to deceive and impose on others." The learned Baron draws a distinction between "individual experiments and so-called scientific pursuit" on the one hand, and mere deception on the other. This is very important, and seems to indicate, at all events, that the Baron was alive to the possibility of genuine scientific experiments in the investigation of the phenomena. This is the more significant because, in the course of the same case, he declared the acts to be offences in themselves, no matter what their purpose.

THE FACTOR OF SHEER FRAUD.

In *Regina v. Giles* (Leigh and Cave's Reports 502) the main element was fraud, almost comical in its character, rather than the occult. A man named Fisher deserted his wife. The wife was crying over it in the street when Giles, the defendant, offered to bring him back in consideration of receiving a shilling and Mrs. Fisher's underskirt. She said she had power to bring the errant husband back "over hedges and ditches," claiming to be a "Cunning Woman" and that certain stuff in her possession enabled her to perform such achievements. The woman was convicted on a charge of obtaining money by false pretences. On appeal it was contended that the mere pretence of "power" to bring the wandering husband back over

hedges and ditches was not necessarily false, since "power" might mean either moral, physical, or supernatural force. If it meant the last, how could you prove that the pretence was false? How could the possession of such a power be negatived? The conviction was, however, affirmed.

Penny v. Hanson (16 Cox. Crim. Cas. 173) was a case, in 1887, of a circular issued claiming the power of casting nativities in return for money. It was argued on behalf of the appellant against a conviction that no proof had been given of his own absence of belief in astrology. The argument apparently was that if he honestly believed in it he could not be convicted as a rogue and a vagabond. It was held, however, by Mr. Justice Denman that proof that the issuer of the circular does not believe in his own power to foretell the future is not necessary to the substantiation of the charge. The mere issue of the circular is ground for an inference of the intent to deceive. Finally, as recently as 1904 (in *Rex v. Stephenson*, 682, P. 524) an indictment against palmistry was framed upon 9 Geo. II. c. 5. Counsel for the defence sought to call evidence that palmistry was a recognised science, but the deputy-chairman of the North London Sessions ruled that "the question whether there is a such thing as palmistry or not is not the question at all here." He consequently declined to accept the evidence of expert palmists. There have been many later and similar decisions, in lower tribunals, with reference to spirit manifestations and other species of occult phenomena.

What is the substantial result of these decisions? Well, in a note to Article 337 of his Digest of the Criminal Law the late Mr. Justice Stephen asked "Would it be a good defence to an indictment [under the Witchcraft Act] to prove that the defendant not only 'pretended' but *actually* practised witchcraft?" The eminent jurist did not attempt to answer his question. But the judicial decisions give the reply. The genuineness of the phenomena is no defence. By these Acts, said Baron Pollock (in *Monck v. Hilton*, 1877,

2 Ex. Div., at p. 280), "dealing with the supernatural is itself made an offence, apart from any deceiving or imposing on others." The expression is not happy, since we do not know what is "supernatural." Cable, telephone, and wireless would all have been declared "supernatural" two centuries ago. The only person who could tell us, with certainty, what was supernatural and what was not would be a man possessing a knowledge of every law of nature, without exception. No such man exists, or is ever likely to exist. Therefore, according to Baron Pollock, the law forbids any dealing with something which it cannot define. "You are not to deal with *x*," says the law. "But what is *x*?" replies the investigator. "I haven't the vaguest idea what it is," retorts the law, "but anyhow, you are not to deal with it."

A FITTIFUL RECORD OF IGNORANCE.

The story of anti-psychic legislation is a shocking recital of ignorant floundering. Our ancestors began in Tudor times with the firm belief that psychic manifestations were real. They accordingly legislated to prohibit the procuring of such phenomena by entertaining, feeding, or employing spirits. In one form or another, these enactments held their own until the reign of George II., well on in the 18th century, the age of the religious revival under Wesley and Whitfield. Our ancestors then altered their views. They decided that occult phenomena were all fraudulent. They therefore repealed all legislation prohibiting such manifestations or the procurement thereof. In this they were unquestionably logical. If there were no such things as spirit manifestations, it was obviously foolish for Parliament to retain on the Statute Book an enactment which prohibited them. Consequently the prohibition went. But its place was taken by an Act forbidding all *pretences* to the exercise of psychic powers in any form. These prohibitions were modified but specially re-enacted by 5 George IV., c. 83, better known as the Vagrant Act.

On this statutory foundation there has been built up a small structure of judicial decision, the effect of which is that psychic phenomena are prohibited by law, whether genuine or not—in fact, that all psychic phenomena are fraudulent pretences. I want to put the case as strongly and yet as reverently as I can. Therefore, let me say this: If Jesus Christ, once more incarnate, were to revisit the earth and were to re-enact that marvellous evocation of psychic power which we know as the Transfiguration, he could be successfully prosecuted under the Witchcraft and the Vagrant Acts. The plea that he was the Son of God, and overwhelming proof that the phenomena were genuine, would not save him from being fined or sent to prison as a rogue and vagabond. That is to say, in a country which professes adherence to a religion founded in psychic phenomena, such manifestations are declared by the legislature to be utterly fraudulent. If the Divine Defendant, in our hypothetical case, were to offer demonstration of His psychic powers, the magistrate would reply with a sarcasm, to the probable accompaniment of “laughter in court.” Such is the absurd, I had almost said ludicrous, effect of the retention on the Statute Book of enactments which are hopelessly and utterly out of consistence with modern scientific achievement.

Happily there is no doubt that the investigation of psychic phenomena is growing in all directions. When the investigators include men like Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir W. F. Barrett, Sir William Crookes, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and when one of the investigating societies has numbered Mr. Arthur Balfour among its Presidents, it is difficult to imagine anything more stupid and offensive than the legislative affirmation that these gentlemen are all engaged in the study of bogus manifestations. It is as if Parliament were to enact that any person must go to prison if he alleged that there were satellites round the planet Jupiter. Suppose a man on being charged with this offence were to say to the magistrate, “Come into my yard, your worship, and look through the telescope and you

will see them." The magistrate would reply, " My dear sir, the Legislature says there are none; consequently I must send you to prison." The defendant retorts that the satellites are known to astronomical science, and their movements recorded in every authoritative astronomical Treatise. " I am totally ignorant of astronomy, and have never read even the most elementary book on the subject " is the magistrate's answer. This kind of thing has actually occurred in the course of police-court proceedings against psychics, in the course of which the magistrate has admitted that he was *totally ignorant of the most elementary principles of the science upon which he was sitting in judgment*. So we find Christianity a " part of the law of England," commanding us (I. Epistle John, IV. i.) to " prove the spirits, whether they are of God "; while Parliament replies that *there are no manifesting spirits*, and that persons professing to be so sensitive to spirit influence as to aid us in obeying the divine injunction are rogues and vagabonds! Parliament and police magistrates brand Socrates as a lunatic, St. Paul as a crazy impostor, and the Holy Maid of France as a deluded fanatic. Sincere investigators of the proofs of immortality may well be nauseated by a perverseness worthy of Calvin when he burnt Servetus for affirming that Christ was the Son of the Eternal God, but refusing at the same time to admit that He was also the Eternal Son of God.

RESPONSIBLE SUPERVISION WANTED.

At the same time there is the consideration that in dealing with this question we must have some responsible body or bodies created for exercising control over persons who purport to be instruments of psychic power. You cannot leave the field open to impostors, who would immediately rush in. If the obsolete and barbaric statutes are repealed, it will be necessary to appoint some sensible, responsible and skilled body, composed of individuals of tried probity, who should have power to license sensitives who have proved

to its satisfaction their possession of psychic powers. You have analogies in the cases of barristers, solicitors and medical men. No one is allowed to practise in these professions until he has been licensed to do so by a body entrusted by the Legislature with the duty of testing his capacities. We do not indiscriminately prosecute every professor of medicine or surgery without regard to his possession, or non-possession, of the skill he claims. We test his intellectual and practical qualifications by means of ordeals specially arranged for the purpose: and, if he "passes," we permit him to practise. Exactly in the same way you could create a central body, on which the London Spiritualist Alliance, the Spiritualists' National Union, and other bodies would be represented. It should be made an offence for a person to practise as a medium without a licence from this central body. When we had done that, I think we should have made a very great stride.

It is no use our blinding ourselves to the fact that although psychic science is advancing there does exist a large body of antagonistic opinion, represented by persons who may be described as of the bigoted type, who desire to keep their eyes closed. They are opposed to all psychic manifestations, howsoever genuine. We know that these reactionaries carry their prejudices with them, at their death, to the planes of discarnate existence, and even there oppose the manifestations of intelligences among whom they themselves are numbered. They endeavour, for example, to break up investigating circles, or to lead the sensitive into palpable fraud and trickery, so as discredit the movement altogether. Such people, while they are in mortal garb, would not be reconciled to psychic investigation even if it were demonstrably inspired and guided by an Archangel, or the third Person of the Trinity. They are certain, after the war, to make a desperate effort to overthrow the movement—an effort which may do great harm, for we have to recognise the subtle fact that the best mediums may be induced

quite innocently, and simply by the force of suggestion, to produce fraudulent phenomena. In at least 50 per cent. of the instances of fraudulent manifestations, the fraud is in the sitter or sitters, rather than in the medium. Hence the urgent and peremptory necessity, not only for the repeal of the barbaric relics of fanatical prejudices in bygone centuries, but also for the regulation of the public exercise of psychic faculties. The forces working through a genuine sensitive are a well-spring of consolation and beneficence: but they may be simulated where they do not exist, and fouled by malign intervention, both incarnate and discarnate, where they do. Therefore let us have searching scrutiny, with the certification and protection of genuine gift. We have gone past the days when infatuated narrow-mindedness, equipped with weapons from the armoury of the mediæval inquisitor and persecutor, can be allowed to block the path which leads through earnest struggle up to God—

“ For what contend the wise?—for nothing less
 Than that the Soul, freed from the bonds of Sense,
 And to her God *restored by evidence*
Of things not seen, drawn forth from their recess,
 Rest *there*, and not in forms, her holiness.”

“ For they are dead which sought the young child's life”*—
 Thus one by one the enemies of the race
 Who closed with Progress in a deadly strife
 Shall come, at last, unto the grave's low place.

“ And Time shall point us to the ashes grey
 Where Persecution's fires have long grown cold,
 And lead us where brave Science holds her sway,
 While tyrants fester in the weed-grown mould.”

*Matthew II., 20.

APPEAL TO THE READER

Having perused this pamphlet, are *you* of opinion that these obsolete laws need drastic amendment?

The mere *repeal* of the Acts would but open the way to the charlatans and harpies alluded to on page four. Against these the public must be protected.

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