

MALLEUS MALEFIC

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THE FIRST PART TREAT-
ING OF THE THREE NECES-
SARY CONCOMITANTS OF
WITCHCRAFT, WHICH ARE
THE DEVIL, A WITCH, AND
THE PERMISSION OF
ALMIGHTY GOD

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PART I

QUESTION I

*Here beginneth auspiciously the first part
of this work. Question the First.*

WHETHER the belief that there are such beings as witches is so essential a part of the Catholic faith that obstinately to maintain the opposite opinion manifestly savours of heresy. And it is argued that a firm belief in witches is not a Catholic doctrine: see chapter 26, question 5, of the work of Episcopus. Whoever

believes that any creature can be changed for the better or the worse, or transformed into another kind or likeness, except by the Creator of all things, is worse than a pagan and a heretic. And so when they report such things are done by witches it is not Catholic, but plainly heretical, to maintain this opinion.

Moreover, no operation of witchcraft has a permanent effect among us. And this is the proof thereof: For if it were so, it would be effected by the operation of demons. But to maintain that the devil has power to change human bodies or to do them permanent harm does not seem in accordance with the teaching of the Church. For in this way they could destroy the whole world, and bring it to utter confusion.

Moreover, every alteration that takes place in a human body—for example, a state of health or a state of sickness—can be brought down to a question of natural causes, as Aristotle has shown in his 7th book of *Physics*. And the greatest of these is the influence of the stars. But the devils cannot interfere with the movement of the stars. This is the opinion of Dionysius in his epistle to S. Polycarp. For this alone God can do. Therefore it is evident the demons

cannot actually effect any permanent transformation in human bodies; that is to say, no real metamorphosis. And so we must refer the appearance of any such change to some dark and occult cause.

And the power of God is stronger than the power of the devil, so divine works are more true than demoniac operations. Whence inasmuch as evil is powerful in the world, then it must be the work of the devil always conflicting with the work of God. Therefore as it is unlawful to hold that the devil's evil craft can apparently exceed the work of God, so it is unlawful to believe that the noblest works of creation, that is to say, man and beast, can be harmed and spoiled by the power of the devil.

Moreover, that which is under the influence of a material object cannot have power over corporeal objects. But devils are subservient to certain influences of the stars, because magicians observe the course of certain stars in order to evoke the devils. Therefore they have not the power of effecting any change in a corporeal object, and it follows that witches have even less power than the demons possess.

For devils have no power at all save by a certain subtle art. But an art cannot permanently produce a true form. (And a certain author says: Writers on Alchemy know that there is no hope of any real transmutation.) Therefore the devils for their part, making use of the utmost of their craft, cannot bring about any permanent cure—or permanent disease. But if these states exist it is in truth owing to some other cause, which may be unknown, and has nothing to do with the operations of either devils or witches.

But according to the Decretals (33) the contrary is the case. "If by witchcraft or any magic art permitted by the secret but most just will of God, and aided by the power of the devil, etc. . . ." The reference here is to any act of witchcraft which may hinder the end of marriage, and for this impediment to take effect three things can concur, that is to say, witchcraft, the devil, and the permission of God. Moreover, the stronger can influence that which is less strong. But the power of the devil is stronger than any human power (*Job xi*). There is no power upon earth which can be compared to him, who was created so that he fears none.

Answer. Here are three heretical errors which must be met, and when they have been disproved the truth will be plain. For certain writers, pretending to base their opinion upon the words of S. Thomas (iv, 24) when he treats of impediments brought about by magic charms, have tried to maintain that there is not such a thing as magic, that it only exists in the imagination of those men who ascribe natural effects, the causes whereof are not known, to witchcraft and spells. There are others who acknowledge indeed that witches exist, but they declare that the influence of magic and the effects of charms are purely imaginary and phantasmical. A third class of writers maintain that the effects said to be wrought by magic spells are altogether illusory and fanciful, although it may be that the devil does really lend his aid to some witch.

The errors held by each one of these persons may thus be set forth and thus confuted. For in the very first place they are shown to be plainly heretical by many orthodox writers, and especially by S. Thomas, who lays down that such an opinion is altogether contrary to the authority of the saints and is founded upon absolute infidelity. Because the authority of the Holy Scriptures says that devils have power over the bodies and over the minds of men, when God allows them to exercise this power, as is plain from very many passages in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore those err who say that there is no such thing as witchcraft, but that it is purely imaginary, even although they do not believe that devils exist except in the imagination of the ignorant and vulgar, and the natural accidents which happen to a man he wrongly attributes to some supposed devil. For the imagination of some men is so vivid that they think they see actual figures and appearances which are but the reflection of their thoughts, and then these are believed to be the apparitions of evil spirits or even the spectres of witches. But this is contrary to the true faith, which teaches us that certain angels fell from heaven and are now devils, and we are bound to acknowledge that by their very nature they can do many wonderful things which we cannot do. And those who try to induce others to perform such evil wonders are called witches. And because infidelity in a person who has been baptized is technically called

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heresy, therefore such persons are plainly heretics.

As regards those who hold the other two errors, those, that is to say, who do not deny that there are demons and that demons possess a natural power, but who differ among themselves concerning the possible effects of magic and the possible operations of witches: the one school holding that a witch can truly bring about certain effects, yet these effects are not real but phantastical, the other school allowing that some real harm does befall the person or persons injured, but that when a witch imagines this damage is the effect of her arts she is grossly deceived. This error seems to be based upon two passages from the Canons where certain women are condemned who falsely imagine that during the night they ride abroad with Diana or Herodias.* This may be read in the Canon. Yet because such things often happen by illusion

* "Diana or Herodias." This decree, which was often attributed to a General Council of Ancyra, but which is now held to be of a later date, was in any case authoritative, since it passed into the "De ecclesiasticis disciplinis" ascribed to Regino of Prum (906), and thence to the canonists S. Ivo of Chartres and Johannes Gratian. Section 364 of the Benedictine Abbot's work relates that "certain abandoned women turning aside to follow Satan, being seduced by the illusions and phantasms of demons, believe and openly profess that in the dead of night they ride upon certain beasts with the pagan goddess Diana and a countless horde of women, and that in these silent hours they fly over vast tracks of country and obey her as their mistress, while on other nights they are sullen to pay her homage." John of Salisbury, who died in 1180, in his "Policraticus," I, xvii, speaks of the popular belief in a witch-queen named Herodias, who called together the sorcerers to meeting at night. In a MS., "De Sortilegis," the following passage occurs: "We next inquire concerning certain wicked crones who believe and profess that in the night-time they ride abroad with Diana, the heathen goddess, or else with Herodias, and an innumerable host of women, upon certain beasts, and that in a silent covey at the dead of night they pass over immense distances, obeying her commands as their mistress, and that they are summoned by her on appointed nights, and they declare that they have the power to change human beings for better or for worse, ay, even to turn them into some other semblance or shape. Concerning such women I answer according to the decrees of the Council of Alexandria, that the minds of the faithful are disordered by such fantasies owing to the inspiration of no good spirit but of the devil."

and merely in the imagination, those who suppose that all the effects of witchcraft are mere illusion and imagination are very greatly deceived. Secondly, with regard to a man who believes or maintains that a creature can be made, or changed for better or for worse, or transformed into some other kind or likeness by anyone save by God, the Creator of all things, alone, is an infidel and worse than a heathen. Wherefore on account of these words "changed for the worse" they say that such an effect if wrought by witchcraft cannot be real but must be purely phantastical.

But inasmuch as these errors savour of heresy and contradict the obvious meaning of the Canon, we will first prove our points by the divine law, as also by ecclesiastical and civil law, and first in general.

To commence, the expressions of the Canon must be treated of in detail (although the sense of the Canon will be even more clearly elucidated in the following question). For the divine law in many places commands that witches are not only to be avoided, but also they are to be put to death, and it would not impose the extreme penalty of this kind if witches did not really and truly make a compact with devils in order to bring about real and true hurts and harms. For the penalty of death is not inflicted except for some grave and notorious crime, but it is otherwise with death of the soul, which can be brought about by the power of a phantastical illusion or even by the stress of temptation. This is the opinion of S. Thomas when he discusses whether it be evil to make use of the help of devils (ii. 7). For in the 18th chapter of Deuteronomy it is commanded that all wizards and charmers are to be destroyed. Also the 19th chapter of Leviticus says: The soul which goeth to wizards and soothsayers to commit fornication with them, I will set my face against that soul, and destroy it out of the midst of my people. And again, 20: A man, or woman, in whom there is a pythonical or divining spirit dying, let them die: they shall stone them. Those persons are said to be pythons in whom the devil works extraordinary things.

Moreover, this must be borne in mind, that on account of this sin Ochozias fell sick and died, IV. Kings 1. Also Saul, 1 Paralipomenon, 10. We have,

moreover, the weighty opinions of the Fathers who have written upon the scriptures and who have treated at length of the power of demons and of magic arts. The writings of many doctors upon Book 2 of the *Sentences* may be consulted, and it will be found that they all agree, that there are wizards and sorcerers who by the power of the devil can produce real and extraordinary effects, and these effects are not imaginary, and God permits this to be. I will not mention those very many other places where S. Thomas in great detail discusses operations of this kind. As, for example, in his *Summa contra Gentiles*, Book 3, c. 1 and 2, in part one, question 114, argument 4. And in the *Second of the Second*, questions 92 and 94. We may further consult the Commentators and the Exegetes who have written upon the wise men and the magicians of Pharaoh, *Exodus* vii. We may also consult what S. Augustine says in *The City of God*,* Book 18, c. 17. See further his second book *On Christian Doctrine*.† Very many other doctors advance the same opinion, and it would be the height of folly for any man to contradict all these, and he could not be held to be clear of the guilt of heresy. For any man who gravely errs in an exposition of Holy Scripture is rightly considered to be a heretic. And whosoever thinks otherwise concerning these matters which touch the faith that the Holy Roman Church holds is a heretic. There is the Faith.

That to deny the existence of witches is contrary to the obvious sense of the Canon is shown by ecclesiastical law. For we have the opinions of the commentators on the Canon which commences: If anyone by magic arts or witchcraft . . . And again, there are those writers who speak of men impotent and bewitched, and therefore by this impediment brought about by witchcraft they are unable to copulate, and so the contract of marriage is rendered void and matrimony in their cases has become impossible. For they say, and S. Thomas agrees with them,

* "The City of God." S. Augustine's great work "De Civitate Dei" was written 413-26.

† "On Christian Doctrine." The "De Doctrina Christiana" was originally written in 397, but S. Augustine revised his work with addition in 427, leaving a monument of hermeneutics.

that if witchcraft takes effect in the event of a marriage before there has been carnal copulation, then if it is lasting it annuls and destroys the contract of marriage, and it is quite plain that such a condition cannot in any way be said to be illusory and the effect of imagination.

Upon this point see what Blessed Henry of Segusio ‡ has so fully written in his *Summa*: also Godfrey of Fontaines § and S. Raymond of Peñafort, || who have discussed this question in detail very clearly, not asking whether such a physical condition could be thought imaginary and unreal, but taking it to be an actual and proven fact, and then they lay down whether it

‡ "Blessed Henry." Blessed Henry of Segusio, usually called Hostiensis, the famous Italian canonist of the thirteenth century, was born at Susa, and died at Lyons, 25 October, 1271. After a most distinguished career, on 4 December, 1261, he became Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, whence his name Hostiensis. His "Summa super titulis Decretalium" (Strasbourg, 1512; Cologne, 1612; Venice, 1605), which was also known as "Summa aurea," or "Summa archiepiscopi," since it was written whilst he was Archbishop of Embrun, won for its author the title "Monarcha iuris, lumen lucidissimum Decretorum." One portion of this work, the "Summa, siue Tractatus de poenitentia et remissionibus," was very popular, and is continually referred to as of high authority. The book was written between 1250 and 1261.

§ "Godfrey." Godfrey of Fontaines, Doctor Uenerandus, scholastic philosopher and theologian, was born near Liège within the first half of the thirteenth century; he became a canon of his native diocese, and also of Paris and Cologne. In 1300 he was elected to the See of Tournai, which he declined. During the last quarter of the century he taught theology with great distinction at the University of Paris. His vast work, "XIV Quodlibeta," which in manuscript was extensively studied in the mediaeval schools, has recently been published for the first time with an ample commentary.

|| "S. Raymond." One of the most distinguished names of the Dominican Order. Born in 1175, he professed Canon law at Barcelona and Bologna. At the request of his superiors he published his "Summa Casuum," of which several editions appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His reputation as a jurist was so great that in 1230 he was called to Rome by Gregory IX, who directed him to rearrange and codify the ecclesiastical canons. Having completed the work, he refused all honours, and returned to Spain. He died at Barcelona, 6 January, 1275. His feast is celebrated on 23 January.

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is to be treated as a lasting or temporary infirmity if it continued for more than the space of three years, and they do not doubt that it may be brought about by the power of witchcraft, although it is true that this condition may be intermittent. But what is a fact beyond dispute is that such impotency can be brought about through the power of the devil by means of a contract made with him, or even by the devil himself without the assistance of any witch, although this most rarely happens in the Church, since marriage is a most excellent sacrament. But amongst Pagans this actually does happen, and this is because evil spirits act as if they had a certain legitimate dominion over them, as Peter of Palude* in his fourth book relates, when he tells of the young man who had pledged himself in wedlock to a certain idol, and who nevertheless contracted marriage with a young maiden, but he was unable to have any connexion with her because the devil always intervened, actually appearing in bodily form. But nevertheless in the Church the devil prefers to operate through the medium of witches and to bring about such effects for his own gain, that is to say, for the loss of souls. And in what manner he is able to do this, and by what means, will be discussed a little later, where we shall treat of the seven ways of doing harm to men by similar operations. And of the other questions which Theologians and Canonists have raised with reference to these points, one is very important, since they discuss how such impotence can be cured and whether it is permissible to cure it by some counter-charm, and what is to be done if the witch who cast the spell is dead, a circumstance of which Godfrey of Fontaines treats in his *Summa*. And these questions will be amply elucidated in the Third Part of this work.

This then is the reason why the Canonists have so carefully drawn up a table of the various differing penalties, making a distinction between the private and open practice of witchcraft, or rather of divination, since this foul superstition has various species and

* "Peter of Palude." Peter of Palude, who died 1342, of the Order of S. Dominic, was one of the most distinguished Thomistic theologians during the first half of the fourteenth century.

degrees, so that anyone who is notoriously given to it must be refused Communion. If it be secretly practised the culprit must do penance for forty days. And if he be a cleric he is to be suspended and confined in a monastery. If he be a layman he shall be excommunicated, wherefore all such infamous persons must be punished, together with all those who resort to them, and no excuse at all is to be allowed.

The same penalty too is prescribed by the civil law. For Azo,† in his *Summa* upon Book 9 of the Codex, the rubric concerning sorcerers, 2 after the *lex Cornelia*,‡ concerning assassins and murderers, lays down: Let it be known that all those who are commonly called sorcerers, and those too who are skilled in the art of divination, incur the penalty of death. The same penalty is enforced yet again. For this is the exact sentence of these laws: It is unlawful for any man to practise divination; and if he does so his reward shall be death by the sword of the executioner. There are others too who by their magic charms endeavour to take the lives of innocent people, who turn the passions of women to lusts of every kind, and these criminals are to be thrown to the wild beasts. And the laws allow that any witness whatsoever is to be admitted as evidence against them. This the Canon treating of the defence of the Faith

† "Azo." Early in the thirteenth century Portius Azo stood at the head of the Bolognese school of law which was accomplishing the resuscitation of the classical Roman law. He was the pupil of the celebrated Johannes Bassianus, and his fame so eclipsed all his contemporaries that in 1205 Thomas of Marlborough, afterwards Abbot of Evesham, spent six months at Bologna hearing his lectures every day. Azo was saluted as "Master of all the Masters of the laws," and the highest praise that could be given another canonist was to declare him to be "second only to Azo." Savigny says that Azo was alive as late as 1230. His chief work is a "Summa" of the first nine books of the Code, to which he added a "Summa" of the Institutes. No less than thirty-one editions appeared between 1482 and 1610; of which five are earlier than 1500. Throughout the Middle Ages these treatises were in highest repute.

‡ "Lex Cornelia." De Sicariis et Veneficis. Passed circa 81 B.C. This law dealt with incendiaryism as well as open assassination and poisoning, and laid down penalties for accessories to the fact.

explicitly enjoins. And the same procedure is allowable in a charge of heresy. When such an accusation is brought, any witness may come forward to give evidence, just as he may in a case of lese-majesty. For witchcraft is high treason against God's Majesty. And so they are to be put to the torture in order to make them confess. Any person, whatever his rank or position, upon such an accusation may be put to the torture, and he who is found guilty, even if he confesses his crime, let him be racked, let him suffer all other tortures prescribed by law in order that he may be punished in proportion to his offences.

Note: In days of old such criminals suffered a double penalty and were often thrown to wild beasts to be devoured by them. Nowadays they are burnt at the stake, and probably this is because the majority of them are women.

The civil law also forbids any conspiring at or joining in such practices, for it did not allow a diviner even to enter another person's house; and often it ordered that all their possessions should be burnt, nor was anyone allowed to patronize or to consult them; very often they were deported to some distant and deserted island and all their goods sold by public auction. Moreover, those who consulted or resorted to witches were punished with exile and the confiscation of all their property. These penalties were set in operation by the common consent of all nations and rulers, and they have greatly conduced to the suppression of the practice of such forbidden arts.

It should be observed that the laws highly commend those who seek to nullify the charms of witches. And those who take great pains that the work of man shall not be harmed by the force of tempests or by hailstorms are worthy of a great reward rather than of any punishment. How such damage may lawfully be prevented will be discussed in full below. Accordingly, how can it be that the denial or frivolous contradiction of any of these propositions can be free from the mark of some notable heresy? Let every man judge for himself unless indeed his ignorance excuse him. But what sort of ignorance may excuse him we shall very shortly proceed to explain. From what has been already said we draw the following conclusion: It is a most certain and

most Catholic opinion that there are sorcerers and witches who by the help of the devil, on account of a compact which they have entered into with him, are able, since God allows this, to produce real and actual evils and harm, which does not render it unlikely that they can also bring about visionary and phantastical illusions by some extraordinary and peculiar means. The scope of the present inquiry, however, is witchcraft, and this very widely differs from these other arts, and therefore a consideration of them would be nothing to the purpose, since those who practise them may with greater accuracy be termed fortune-tellers and soothsayers rather than sorcerers.

It must particularly be noticed that these two last errors are founded upon a complete misunderstanding of the words of the Canon (I will not speak of the first error, which stands obviously self-condemned, since it is clean contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture). And so let us proceed to a right understanding of the Canon. And first we will speak against the first error, which says that the mean is mere illusion although the two extremes are realities.

Here it must be noticed that there are fourteen distinct species which come under the genus superstition, but these for the sake of brevity it is hardly necessary to detail, since they have been most clearly set out by S. Isidore* in his *Etymologiae*, Book 8, and by S. Thomas in his *Second of the Second*, question 92. Moreover, there will be explicit mention of these rather lower when we discuss the gravity of this heresy, and this will be in the last question of our First Part.

The category in which women of this sort are to be ranked is called the category of Pythons, persons in or by whom the devil either speaks or per-

* "St. Isidore." The "*Etymologiae*," or "*Origines*" as it is sometimes called, must be regarded as the most important and best known of the works of S. Isidore of Seville, born circa 560; died 4 April, 636. It has been described as "a vast storehouse in which is gathered, systematized, and condensed, all the learning possessed by that time." Throughout the greater part of the Middle Ages it was the text-book most in use in educational institutions. Arevalo, who is regarded as the most authoritative editor of S. Isidore (7 vols., Rome, 1797-1803), tells us that it was printed no less than ten times between 1470 and 1529.

necessarily must be very imperfect creatures, and probably in some way deformed. And it is plain that the sense of the Canon agrees with what S. Augustine tells us concerning the magicians at the court of Pharaoh, who turned their rods into serpents, as the holy doctor writes upon the 7th chapter of *Exodus*, ver. 11, —and Pharaoh called the wise men and the magicians. . . . We may also refer to the commentaries of Strabo, who says that devils hurry up and down over the whole earth, when by their incantations witches are employing them at various operations, and these devils are able to collect various germs or seeds, and from these germs or seeds they are able to cause various species to grow. We may also refer to Blessed Albertus Magnus,* *De animalibus*. And also S. Thomas, Part I, question 114, article 4. For the sake of conciseness we will not quote them at length here, but this remains proven, that it is possible for certain creatures to be created in this way.

With reference to the second point, that a creature may be changed for better or for worse, it is always to be understood that this can only be done by the permission and indeed by the power of God, and that this is only done in order to correct or to punish, but that God very often allows devils to act as His ministers and His servants, but throughout all it is God alone who can

* "Blessed Albertus." *Albert the Great, the Dominican doctor, scientist, philosopher, and theologian. Born circa 1206; died at Cologne, 15 November, 1280. He is called "the Great" and "Doctor Universalis" on account of his extraordinary genius and encyclopaedic knowledge, for he surpassed all his contemporaries in every branch of learning cultivated in his day. He is certainly one of the glories of the Order of Preachers. Ulrich Endelbert speaks of him as: "Vir in omni scientia adeo diuinus, ut nostri temporis stupor et miraculum congrue uocari possit" ("De summo bono," III, iv). Perhaps at the present day his extraordinary genius is not sufficiently recognized, for he was certainly one of the most learned men of all time. The latest edition of his complete works, Paris (Louis Vives), 1890-99, in thirty-eight quarto volumes, was published under the direction of the Abbé Auguste Borgnet, of the diocese of Reims. "De animalibus" will be found in Vols. XI-XII. The feast of Albertus Magnus is celebrated on 15 November. He was beatified by Gregory XV in 1622, so in this translation I call him "Blessed" by anticipation.*

afflict and it is He alone who can heal, for "I kill and I make alive" (*Deuteronomy* xxxii, 39). And so evil angels may and do perform the will of God. To this also S. Augustine bears witness when he says: There are in truth magic spells and evil charms, which not only often afflict men with diseases but even kill them outright. We must also endeavour clearly to understand what actually happens when nowadays by the power of the devil wizards and witches are changed into wolves and other savage beasts. The Canon, however, speaks of some bodily and lasting change, and does not discuss those extraordinary things which may be done by glamour of which S. Augustine speaks in the 18th book and the 17th chapter of *Of the City of God*, when he reports many strange tales of that famous witch Circe, and of the companions of Diomedes and of the father of Praestantius. This will be discussed in detail in the Second Part.

Whether it be a Heresy to Maintain that Witches Exist.

The second part of our inquiry is this, whether obstinately to maintain that witches exist is heretical. The question arises whether people who hold that witches do not exist are to be regarded as notorious heretics, or whether they are to be regarded as gravely suspect of holding heretical opinions. *It seems* that the first opinion is the correct one. For this is undoubtedly in accordance with the opinion of the learned Bernard. And yet those persons who openly and obstinately persevere in heresy must be proved to be heretics by unshaken evidence, and such demonstration is generally one of three kinds; either a man has openly preached and proclaimed heretical doctrines; or he is proved to be a heretic by the evidence of trustworthy witnesses; or he is proved to be a heretic by his own free confession. And yet there are some who rashly opposing themselves to all authority publicly proclaim that witches do not exist, or at any rate that they can in no way afflict and hurt mankind. Wherefore, strictly speaking those who are convicted of such evil doctrine may according to the commentary of Bernard be excommunicated, since they are openly and un-

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mistakably to be convicted of false doctrine. The reader may consult the works of Bernard, where he will find that this sentence is just, right, and true. Yet perhaps this may seem to be altogether too severe a judgement mainly because of the penalties which follow upon excommunication: for the Canon prescribes that a cleric is to be degraded and that a layman is to be handed over to the power of the secular courts, who are admonished to punish him as his offence deserves. Moreover, we must take into consideration the very great numbers of persons who, owing to their ignorance, will surely be found guilty of this error. And since the error is very common the rigor of strict justice may be tempered with mercy. And it is indeed our intention to try to make excuses for those who are guilty of this heresy rather than to accuse them of being infected with the malice of heresy. It is preferable then that if a man should be even gravely suspected of holding this false opinion he should not be immediately condemned for the grave crime of heresy. (See the gloss of Bernard* upon the word *Condemned*.) One may in truth proceed against such a man as against a person who is gravely suspect, but he is not to be condemned in his absence and without a hearing. And yet the suspicion may be very grave, and we cannot refrain from suspecting these people, for their frivolous assertions do certainly seem to affect the purity of the faith. For there are three kinds of suspicion—a light suspicion, a serious suspicion, and a grave suspicion. These are treated of in the chapter on Accusations and in the chapter on Contumacy, Book 6, *On Heretics*. And these things come under the cognizance of the archidiaconal court. Reference may also be made to the commentaries of

* "Bernard." Junior, or Modernus, a canonist who lived in the middle of the thirteenth century, called "Compostellanus" from the fact that he possessed an ecclesiastical benefice in Compostella. He was also known as Brignadius from his birthplace in Galicia, Spain. Bernard was chaplain to Innocent IV, who reigned 1243-54, and was himself a noted canonist. Bernard's Commentaries on Canon law are very copious and very celebrated. He is termed Modernus to distinguish him from Bernard Antiquus, a canonist of the early thirteenth century, a native of Compostella, who became Professor of Canon law in the University of Bologna.

Giovanni d'Andrea,† and in particular to his glosses upon the phrases *Accused; Gravely suspect;* and his note upon a presumption of heresy. It is certain too that some who lay down the law on this subject do not realize that they are holding false doctrines and errors, for there are many who have no knowledge of the Canon law, and there are some who, owing to the fact that they are badly informed and insufficiently read, waver in their opinions and cannot make up their minds, and since an idea merely kept to oneself is not heresy unless it be afterwards put forward, obstinately and openly maintained, it should certainly be said that persons such as we have just mentioned are not to be openly condemned for the crime of heresy. But let no man think he may escape by pleading ignorance. For those who have gone astray through ignorance of this kind may be found to have sinned very gravely. For although there are many degrees of ignorance, nevertheless those who have the cure of souls cannot plead invincible ignorance, nor that particular ignorance, as the philosophers call it, which by the writers on Canon law and by the Theologians is called Ignorance of the Fact. But what is to be blamed in these persons is Universal ignorance, that is to say, an ignorance of the divine law, which, as Pope Nicholas‡ has laid down, they must and should know. For he says: The dispensation of these divine teachings is entrusted to our charge: and woe be unto us if we do not sow the good seed, woe be unto us if we do not teach our flocks. And so those who have the charge of souls are bound to have a sound knowledge of the Sacred Scrip-

† "Giovanni d'Andrea." This distinguished canonist was born at Mugello, near Florence, about 1275; died 1348. He was educated at the University of Bologna, where he afterwards became Professor of Canon law. He had previously taught at Padua and Pisa, and his career as a lecturer extended for nearly half a century. His works are "Glossarium in VI decretalium librum," Venice and Lyons, 1472; "Glossarium in Clementinas"; "Novella, siue Commentarius in decretales epistolas Gregorii IX," Venice, 1581; "Mercuriales, siue commentarius in regulas sexti"; "Liber de laudibus S. Hieronymi"; "Additamenta ad speculum Durand" (1347).

‡ "Pope Nicholas." Nicholas V, 1397-1455, the great patron of learning.

tures. It is true that according to Raymond of Sabunde* and S. Thomas, those who have the cure of souls are certainly not bound to be men of any extraordinary learning, but they certainly should have a competent knowledge, that is to say, knowledge sufficient to carry out the duties of their state.

And yet, and this may be some small consolation to them, the theoretical severity of the law is often balanced by the actual practice, and they may know that this ignorance of the Canon law, although sometimes it may be culpable and worthy of blame, is considered from two points of view. For sometimes persons do not know, they do not wish to know, and they have no intention of knowing. For such persons there is no excuse, but they are altogether to be condemned. And of these the Psalmist speaks: He would not understand in order that he might do good. But secondly, there are those who are ignorant, yet not from any desire not to know. And this diminishes the gravity of the sin, because there is no actual consent of the will. And such a case is this, when anyone ought to know something, but cannot realize that he ought to know it, as S. Paul says in his 1st Epistle to Timothy (i, 13): But I obtained the mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And this is technically said to be an ignorance, which indirectly at least is the fault of the person, inasmuch as on account of many other occupations he neglects to inform himself of matters which he ought to know, and he does not use any endeavour to make himself acquainted with them, and this ignorance does not entirely excuse him, but it excuses him to a certain degree. So S. Ambrose,† writing upon that passage

* "Raymond of Sabunde." Born at Barcelona, Spain, towards the end of the fourteenth century; died 1432. From 1430 to his death he taught theology, philosophy, and medicine at the University of Toulouse. Of his many works only one remains, "Theologia Naturalis." It was first written in Spanish, and translated into Latin at various times: Deventer, 1487; Strasburg, 1496; Paris, 1509; Venice, 1581, etc. Montaigne, who translated the book into French, Paris, 1569, bears witness to the extraordinary popularity it enjoyed in his own day.

† "S. Ambrose." "On désigne depuis le XVI^e siècle sous le nom d'Ambrosiaster (= pseudo-Ambroise) l'auteur anonyme d'un commentaire sur les Epîtres de saint Paul (à l'ex-

in the *Romans* (ii, 4): Knowest thou not, that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance? says, If thou dost not know through thine own fault then thy sin is very great and grievous. More especially then in these days, when souls are beset with so many dangers, we must take measures to dispel all ignorance, and we must always have before our eyes that severe judgement which will be passed upon us if we do not use, everyone according to his proper ability, the one talent which has been given. In this way our ignorance will be neither thick nor stupid, for metaphorically we speak of men as thick and stupid who do not see what lies directly in their very way.

And in the *Flores regularum moralium* the Roman Chancellor commenting upon the second rule says: A culpable ignorance of the Divine law does not of necessity affect the ignorant person. The reason is this: the Holy Spirit is able directly to instruct a man in all that knowledge essential to salvation, if these things are too difficult for him to grasp unaided by his own natural intellect.

The answer to the first objection then is a clear and correct understanding of the Canon. To the second objection Peter of Tarentaise (Blessed Innocent V†) replies: No doubt the devil, owing to his malice which he harbours against the human race, would destroy mankind if he were allowed by God to do so. The fact that God allows him sometimes to do harm and that sometimes God hinders and prevents him, manifestly brings the devil into more open contempt and loathing, since in all

clusion de l'Épître aux Hébreux), qui au moyen-âge, peut-être même dès l'époque de Cassiodore, fut imputé inexactement à saint Ambroise. Cette paraphrase est tout à fait remarquable; c'est l'une des plus intéressantes que l'antiquité chrétienne nous ait léguées." Labriolle, "Histoire de la Littérature Latine Chrétienne," c. III.

† "Innocent V." Petrus a Tarentasia, born in Tarentaise, towards 1225, elected at Arezzo, 21 January, 1276; died at Rome, 22 June, 1276. At the age of sixteen he joined the Dominican Order, and he won great distinction as a Professor at the University of Paris, whence he is known as Doctor Famosissimus. He is the author of several works dealing with philosophy, theology, and Canon law, some of which are still unpublished. The principal of these is the "Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard." I have used the edition, Toulouse 1652.

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things, to the manifestation of His glory, God is using the devil, unwilling though he be, as a servant and slave. With regard to the third objection, that the infliction of sickness or some other harm is always the result of human effort, whereby the witch submits her will to evil, and so actually as any other evil-doer, by the volition of her will can afflict some person or bring about some damage or perform some villainous act. If it be asked whether the movement of material objects from place to place by the devil may be paralleled by the movement of the spheres, the answer is No. Because material objects are not thus moved by any natural inherent power of their own, but they are only moved by a certain obedience to the power of the devil, who by the virtue of his own nature has a certain dominion over bodies and material things; he has this certain power, I affirm, yet he is not able to add to created material objects any form or shape, be it substantial or accidental, without some admixture of or compounding with another created natural object. But since, by the will of God, he is able actually to move material objects from place to place, then by the conjunction of various objects he can produce disease or some circumstance such as he will. Wherefore the spells and effects of witchcraft are not governed by the movement of the spheres, nor is the devil himself thus governed, inasmuch as he may often make use of these conditions to do him service.

The answer to the fourth objection. The work of God can be destroyed by the work of the devil in accordance with what we are now saying with reference to the power and effects of witchcraft. But since this can only be by the permission of God, it does not at all follow that the devil is stronger than God. Again, he cannot use so much violence as he wishes to harm the works of God, because if he were unrestricted he would utterly destroy all the works of God.

The answer to the fifth objection may be clearly stated thus: The planets and stars have no power to coerce and compel devils to perform any actions against their will, although seemingly demons are readier to appear when summoned by magicians under the

influence of certain stars. It appears that they do this for two reasons. First, Because they know that the power of that planet will aid the effect which the magicians desire. Secondly, They do this in order to deceive men, thus making them suppose that the stars have some divine power or actual divinity, and we know that in days of old this veneration of the stars led to the vilest idolatry.

With reference to the last objection, which is founded upon the argument that gold is made by alchemists, we may put forward the opinion of S. Thomas when he discusses the power of the devil and how he works: Although certain forms having a substance may be brought about by art and the power of a natural agent, as, for example, the form of fire is brought about by art employed on wood: nevertheless, this cannot be done universally, because art cannot always either find or yet mix together the proper agents in the proper proportions, and yet it can produce something similar. And thus alchemists make something similar to gold, that is to say, in so far as the external accidents are concerned, but nevertheless they do not make true gold, because the substance of gold is not formed by the heat of fire which alchemists employ, but by the heat of the sun, acting and reacting upon a certain spot where mineral power is concentrated and amassed, and therefore such gold is of the same likeness as, but is not of the same species as, natural gold. And the same argument applies to all their other operations.

This then is our proposition: devils by their art do bring about evil effects through witchcraft, yet it is true that without the assistance of some agent they cannot make any form, either substantial or accidental, and we do not maintain that they can inflict damage without the assistance of some agent, but with such an agent diseases, and any other human passions or ailments, can be brought about, and these are real and true. How these agents or how the employment of such means can be rendered effective in co-operation with devils will be made clear in the following chapters.

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a thing were permissible, the devil, moving only in local vapour of the spirit, can grievously afflict men supernaturally. But herbs and harmonies cannot of their own natural virtue cause in man a disposition by which the devil is prevented from creating the aforesaid commotion. Nevertheless it sometimes happens that the devil is permitted to inflict only so small a vexation on a man that, through some strong contrary disposition, it may be totally removed; and then some herbs or harmonies can so dispose a man's body to the contrary that the vexation is totally removed. For example, the devil may at times vex a man with the affliction of sadness; but so weakly that herbs or harmonies which are capable of causing a swelling and uplifting of the spirits, which are contrary emotions to sadness, can totally remove that sadness.

Moreover, S. Augustine, in his Second Book *On the Christian Doctrine*, condemns amulets and certain other things of which he there writes much, attributing their virtue to magic art, since they can have no natural virtue of their own. And this is clear from what he says. To this sort belong all amulets and charms which are condemned by the School of Physicians, which condemns very clearly their use, in that they have no efficacy of their own natural virtue.

And as for that concerning 1 *Kings* xvi: that Saul, who was vexed by a devil, was alleviated when David played his harp before him, and that the devil departed, etc. It must be known that it is quite true that by the playing of the harp, and the natural virtue of that harmony, the affliction of Saul was to some extent relieved, inasmuch as that music did somewhat calm his senses through hearing; through which calming he was made less prone to that vexation. But the reason why the evil spirit departed when David played the harp was because of the might of the Cross, which is clearly enough shown by the gloss, where it says: David was learned in music, skilful in the different notes and harmonic modulations. He shows the essential unity by playing each day in various modes. David repressed the evil spirit by the harp, not because there was so much virtue in the harp, but it was made in the sign of a cross, being a

cross of wood with the strings stretched across. And even at that time it fled from this.

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QUESTION VI

Concerning Witches who copulate with Devils.

Why it is that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil Superstitions.

THERE is also, concerning witches who copulate with devils, much difficulty in considering the methods by which such abominations are consummated. On the part of the devil: first, of what element the body is made that he assumes; secondly, whether the act is always accompanied by the injection of semen received from another; thirdly, as to time and place, whether he commits this act more frequently at one time than at another; fourthly, whether the act is invisible to any who may be standing by. And on the part of the women, it has to be inquired whether only they who were themselves conceived in this filthy manner are often visited by devils; or secondly, whether it is those who were offered to devils by midwives at the time of their birth; and thirdly, whether the actual venereal delectation of such is of a weaker sort. But we cannot here reply to all these questions, both because we are only engaged in a general study, and because in the second part of this work they are all singly explained by their operations, as will appear in the fourth chapter, where mention is made of each separate method. Therefore let us now chiefly consider women; and first, why this kind of perfidy is found more in so fragile a sex than in men. And our inquiry will first be general, as to the general conditions of women; secondly, particular, as to which sort of women are found to be given to superstition and witchcraft; and thirdly, specifically with regard to midwives, who surpass all others in wickedness.

Why Superstition is chiefly found in Women.

As for the first question, why a greater number of witches is found in the fragile feminine sex than among men; it is indeed a fact that it were idle to contradict, since it is accredited by