

SCIENCE AND WITCHCRAFT



—Bettmann Archive.

BELIEF in witchcraft is extremely ancient and is found everywhere. It is easy to jump to the conclusion that people who disagree with us are bad people. Witches are men or women who have sold their souls to the Devil. It is easy to punish heretics and dissenters by assuming that they too are in league with the Devil and the orthodox mutter, "Those troublemakers are witches and should be treated as such; they deserve neither good faith nor mercy."

It is thus natural that fear of witchcraft became more virulent at the end of the fifteenth century, when the Church felt itself jeopardized by increasing criticism and disaffection. A large amount of combustible material had already been gathered when Innocent VIII (Pope 1484-92) put the torch to it with his bull of December 5, 1484, *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, and especially when two Dominicans, complying with Innocent's wishes, produced soon afterward the *Malleus maleficarum*, the "witchhammer."

The *Malleus* was a code of procedure for the guidance of inquisitors; it explained in great detail how to detect, expose, convict, and punish witches. From one point of view it might be considered a textbook of sexual psychopathology, but nobody was yet able to see it in that light. The fear of witches was the main cause of their persecution, and the persecutions increased the fears. There appeared and spread everywhere a mass psychosis the like of which was not experienced again until our own enlightened day. The procedure followed in many witch trials was scrupulously recorded. When torture was used we are given the details. The inquisitors were not bad people; at least, they fancied themselves to be far better

than the average; were they not working unceasingly for the greater glory of God?

The good bishop of Treves, Peter Binsfeld, ordered the death of some 6,500 people. Nicolas Remy, inquisitor of Lorraine, caused nearly 900 witches and sorcerers to be burned to death within fifteen years (1575-90). He was a very conscientious man, and toward the end of his life he had a guilty feeling because he had spared a few children. Is it right to spare baby vipers?

There is no need to describe the very complex and pedantically elaborate procedure; it must suffice to indicate the guiding principles. When the inquisitors entered a new district they issued a proclamation calling on all people to give intelligence against suspected witches; if any persons withheld such intelligence they were liable to be excommunicated and to suffer temporal penalties. To inform was a sacred duty. The names of the informers were not divulged. Suspected persons, including those who might have been denounced by private enemies, were kept in ignorance of the charges against them and of the evidence upon which these charges were based; they were presumed to be guilty and it was up to them to prove that they were not. The judges used every means, mental and physical, to force them to confess and to name their accomplices. Promises of remission or leniency were made to them in order to encourage their confessions, but it was understood (by the judges) that there was no moral obligation to keep faith with sorcerers or heretics, except perhaps for a short while (just as long as confidence was expedient). Each knavery used against them was justified by the holy purpose. The

more torture was practiced the more necessary it became. . . .

Many witches confessed their horrible crimes and described their association with the Devil; their descriptions of the latter tally so often and in so many standardized features that one might take them as an objective proof of his reality. Each recorded confession was a new proof of the reality of witchcraft.

The witchcraft delusion could not be cured by theologians, who tended, on the contrary, to aggravate it. The poor women (the majority of witches were female) who were burned at the stake were neurotics whom we would send to hospitals or asylums. Most of the trouble was not a matter of sin and heresy to be scrutinized by theologians, but a matter of psychopathology to be dealt with by doctors of medicine. The first physician to make the attempt (in 1563) is one of the least known heroes of the Renaissance but one of the greatest, the Dutchman Jan Wier.

This illustrious man explained many of the aberrations of "witches" in medical terms, though not, of course, as clearly as would be done today. During the climax of the witchcraft obsession, that required a very high and clear vision and unusual courage.

Such a situation may reappear under different forms. It is always the same kind of mass psychosis, but its appearance varies because the mentally sick (the prosecutors and their victims) center their delusions upon the outstanding cause of fear or anxiety of their environment. During the Renaissance the main cause of trouble was witchcraft (or was it heresy?); often it was pestilence or war; today it is Communism.

The Renaissance was an age of superstition, but so is our own, under the surface; science has made gigantic progress in certain fields, but in politics, national and international, we are still fooling ourselves.

The history of science is not simply the history of discoveries and new ideas that are closer to reality; it is also the history of the defence of these ideas against recurrent errors, illusions, and lies. We must replace darkness with light; that is the main function of science.

Art reveals beauty; it is the joy of life. Religion means love; it is the music of life. Science means truth and reason; it is the conscience of mankind. We need all of them—art and religion as well as science. Science is absolutely necessary but it is never sufficient.

—GEORGE SARTON,
in "Six Wings: Men of Science
in the Renaissance" (Indiana
University Press, \$6.75).

KINGSLEY DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 1206

Reg. U.S. Patent Office
By Doris Nash Wortman

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Ghostly black spaniel that haunted Peel Castle, preventing profane talk ("Lay of the Last Minstrel"; 2 wds.).	65 164 184 26 91 61 136 96 37
B. Describing standard feature of modern MSS.	190 183 105 138 175 30 14 89 90 75 147
C. Large drinking vessel (Biblical origin).	121 2 80 177 95
D. Let the tiller come back a little (after being put hard over).	81 22 156 35 16
E. Impinging.	134 150 66 128 99 193 109 165 83
F. What the "beauteous idiot" used in Congreve's "Lesbia," to heal the speaker's wound.	18 24 72 84 107 167 53 149
G. Midday for Tennyson's "Godiva" (followed by Word I).	152 46 17 52 101 129 21 85 69
H. Folly, stupidity.	47 1 200 38 15 54 74 196 11 185
I. See Word G.	48 29 174 203
J. Condition of severe strain.	86 192 82 102 57 135 163 104 20
K. Where "shadows longer grow" (2 wds.; "Somehow, Singing").	42 6 144 197 58 106 133 204
L. Contemporary Irish novelist, esp. of Revolution of 1916.	114 199 157 77 87 51 140 39 98

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
M. High U.S. Labor union official, recently deposed for cause (2 wds.).	172 103 56 119 182 94 148 8
N. Sir Toby's adjective for the rapier of Viola's opponent ("Twelfth Night").	27 60 40 139 45 4 162 122 19
O. Mexican site of Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl where Aztecs made human sacrifices.	7 143 201 55 112 180 73
P. Handbills, advertising pieces, distributed free to catch casual readers.	123 176 97 71 62 120 186 88 161 23
Q. Perfidy.	131 173 115 117 32 92 68 44 179 137
R. Serpentarius.	158 194 189 10 202 63 191 170 141
S. City at entrance to Hampton Roads (2 wds.).	110 31 159 113 146 125 145 171 33 76 153
T. Practically worthless (comp.).	49 43 198 168 70 188
U. North-flowing river in New York, forming part of Barge Canal System.	132 36 78 12 111 64
V. Affectionate native nickname, meaning "teller of tales," for famous man.	28 67 130 100 142 151 160 59
W. Where Holland lies embosomed (Goldsmith's "The Traveller"; 3 wds.).	187 25 116 50 195 155 41 166 124
X. Name of Bickerstaffe's "Hypocrite" ("Reader's Encyc.").	93 79 3 9 126 178 118
Y. Classifying more than sixty-three million U.S. citizens in March, 1957.	181 13 127 5 169 34 154 108

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd WORDS, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. Alongside each definition, there is a row of dashes—one for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, write it on the dashes, and also write each letter in the correspondingly-numbered square of the puzzle diagram. . . . When the squares are all filled in, you will find that you have completed a quotation from some published work. If read up and down, the letters in the diagram have no meaning. . . . Black squares indicate ends of words; if there is no black square at the right side of the diagram, the word carries over to the next line. . . . When all the WORDS are filled in, their initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Of great help to the solver are this acrostic feature and the relative shapes of words in the diagram as they develop. Authority for spellings and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition.

	1	H	2	C	3	X		4	N	5	Y	6	K	7	O	8	M	9	X	10	R	11	H	12	U		13	Y	14	B								
15	H	16	D					17	G	18	F	19	N					20	J	21	G	22	D	23	P	24	F	25	W	-	26	A	27	N	28	V	29	I
30	B	31	S	32	Q													37	A	38	H	39	L	40	N	41	W	42	K					43	T	44	Q	
45	N	46	G	47	H	48	I											53	F	54	H	55	O	56	M	57	J	58	K					59	V			
60	N	61	A	62	P													67	V	68	Q	69	G	70	T	71	P	72	F					73	O		74	H
75	B	76	S																																			
90	B	91	A	92	Q																																	
104	J	105	B	106	K	107	F	108	Y	109	E	110	S	111	U																							
119	M			120	P																																	
		134	E	135	J	136	A																															
148	M	149	F																																			
163	J	164	A	165	E	166	W	167	F																													
178	X	179	Q	180	O	181	Y																															
192	J			193	E	194	R	195	W	196	H	197	K																									

Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 8 of this issue.

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