

of white light (the series of "rainbow colours") shows dark bands in certain places when one looks through the spectroscope at a transparent mineral.

The goniometer measures the refractive power of a mineral. A stick half immersed in water appears bent, as everyone knows, and this is due to the refraction of light on passing out of the water; if the stick were immersed in a more highly refractive liquid it would appear more bent. Different transparent solids also have their different angles of refraction, and these can be accurately measured by the use of the goniometer.

The dichroscope is used to observe what changes occur in light passing through gems. The colours which make up white light are those seen in the spectrum or the rainbow. If some rays are absorbed by a gem, the light passing out of it has lost certain elements and therefore is no longer white but coloured.

### Witchcraft and the Evil Eye.

THE burning of a witch at Clonmel during the past week seems to link us closely to primitive man, and reminds us after all that superstition is a living quantity which it will take generations of School Boards to eliminate from the village mind. We are accustomed to horrors of witchcraft emanating from Russia and Poland, but this latest development has brought it unpleasantly home.

In Danish Greenland epilepsy is always regarded as showing that the sufferer is possessed of the devil, and a case recently came to light of a young woman subject to epileptic fits who was condemned by the ignorant and superstitious populace to be burned alive, in the hope that the community might thus rid itself of the presence of the living devil.

The horror was accomplished, and in due time a report of the atrocity reached Danish headquarters. The officials determined to mark their condemnation of the murder by some punishment adequate to the nature of the crime. It is the custom to keep the birthday of the King of Denmark as an annual holiday throughout the Danish possessions, and in all the provinces of Danish Greenland a plentiful supply of cake and wine is served to the natives wherewith to eat and be merry and drink "a health unto His Majesty."

The severest punishment that occurred to the official mind was to withhold the annual dole of good things on the next royal birthday following the tragedy, and so the sinning community spent their feast cakeless, wineless, and veritably in sackcloth and ashes. And thus the moral was pointed to the denizens of Greenland that he who takes his brother's life shall not be deemed worthy of plum-cake and spirituous liquors.

Not so very long ago a cure for epilepsy was supposed to be ensured if the child so afflicted could be provided with a necklace made out of sixpences stolen from a church offertory, while to-day in most country places the great and popular remedy for toothache is to tie a piece of horseradish round the wrist.

In that very fascinating book, Elworthy's "Evil Eye," the writer throws some interesting side-lights on the wide prevalence of a belief in witchcraft, especially in the kind which has to do with "overlook-

ing." He says that in Somerset if the pig is taken ill and dies "he was overlooked." A murrain affects a farmer's cattle; he goes off secretly to the "white witch"—that is, a person who has the power of finding out the bad witch who is at work—to ascertain "who has overlooked his things," and to learn the best antidote, "cause they there farriers can't do no good."

A child is ill and pining away: the mother loses all heart—she is sure the child is overlooked and "is safe to die." Often she gives up not only hope but all effort to save the child. The consequent neglect, of course, hastens the expected result, and then it is "Oh! I know'd very well he would'n never get no better." "Tid'n no good vor to strive vor to go agin it."

Elworthy also cites an interesting case of superstition and belief in the power of the "evil eye." The daughter of some farm labourer had some obscure malady. She became a patient at the Somerset County Hospital, but only grew worse. In this instance the mother does not at first seem to have believed in occult influence, but went about and spread a report that "they'd a-starved her maid into thick there hospital"! She was removed, and of course grew worse. On speaking to a lodger in the house about the starvation theory, he said, "Oh! I knows 'twadden that." "What do you think it was?" "Oh, I knows." After many times declaring "I knows," he at last said, "Her was overlooked, her was, and I knows very well who don'd it." After much persuasion he mentioned the name of a poor ignorant old woman, who certainly did not bear the best of characters. The whole family devoutly believed that the girl's death, which happened very soon, was brought about by this old woman. The writer goes on to say: "No doubt a century or two ago she would have been burnt as a witch." But in the light of the Clonmel incident, we do not have to travel back a century for the burning of a witch to be a hideous fact.



### Our Foreign Letter.

#### GERMAN NURSERIES.

"Go to the 'Babies' Palace,'" said my friend. "By all means go to the 'Babies' Palace' before you leave Germany. If you are interested in Nursing, there you will find that form of the art that is most productive of national prosperity, that is, *preventative* Nursing."

This statement had the result of sending me to Linden, where I presently found myself in the Blumenauer Strasse—street of the meadow of flowers. Never was thoroughfare more inappropriately named! The close-packed, smoke-stained artisans' houses on either hand were prosaic in proportion to the poetry of their name. No flower was in sight anywhere, and the people I met there were toil-worn and shabby step-children of fate, such as we meet in every factory centre.

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