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THE SURVIVAL OF SUPERSTITION.

A correspondent writes :— ' It is without doubt very , many years since the last ' witch-burning ' took place in England, but that the superstition regarding the spells cast by witches is still rife in many out of the way parts of the country is beyond question. Such popular beliefs die hard, and within the last 30 years there have been several instances of widespread feeling I on the subject. In 1865, at Castle Hedingham, in Essex, a poor paralysed Frenchman died through ' being 'swum' by a mob, under the belief that he had ; been exercising evil influences over his neighbours, and on September 17, 1875, an old woman named Ann Turner was killed by an insane man at Long Compton, ' in Staffordshire, who was labouring under a similar delusion. Again, in 1879, at East Dereham, Norfolk, a man was fined by the magistrate for committing an assault on a girl whose mother had 'charmed‘ him by a "walking toad," ' and as recently as April 12th, 1890. an account appeared in the Daily News of an inquest on a child at Freasingfield, Suffolk, at which the parents confidently ascribed its death to 'witchcraft’. According to their evidence, the child's step-grandmother, who died a few hours before it, had been the cause of its death, and the father declared in all seriousness that when out with his offspring in a perambulator he saw smoke issuing from the carriage. The mother also declared that on arrival home the child was hot and dry, and smelt of brimstone! These instances, all of which are within the recollection of many living at the present time, go to show that even in the latter part of the 19th century many of the old superstitions are still held in esteem among the people of our country villages, and nothing but a more complete system of education will do anything to eliminate them. The last trial in England was that of Jane Wenham, who was convicted of witchcraft at Hereford in 1712; but the sentence of death was not carried out."