

old age without a companion and gain their living in as easy a manner as possible, being not very particular in choosing the means. Outwardly they seem to be utterly devoted to their religious duties, and are always seen to murmur prayers and count their beads, by which behavior even religious people are often deceived so as to support them. On closer observation, however, their real occupation proves to be roaming about in the houses and intruding themselves in a skilful and unobserved way in order to spy out people's whereabouts. They try to make themselves agreeable to the female members of the household by tale-bearing or making commissions of different kinds, particularly those which the women cannot make themselves or which the landlord of the house must not know about. Thus they gain influence over those whom they have served, and assure themselves of their gratitude. They promote love-intrigues, make marriages, and so on; if desired, they will also go to some celebrated fortune-teller, in order to secure a talisman.

These talismans or amulets generally consist of a scrap of paper, on which there are written sayings, names, letters, figures, or signs with common ink, or often with a yellow liquid made of saffron, musk, or amber; sometimes even serpent's blood is used for this purpose. If the talisman is to be worn on the body, the paper is folded in the form of a triangle or a quadrant, then wrapped in a piece of cotton which has been made water-proof, and at