

A CAGLIOSTRO OF THE SECOND CENTURY.

IN the Acts of the Apostles we meet with a class of persons whose features have in our own times become again familiar to us—quacks and conjurers professing to be in communication with the spiritual world, and regarded with curiosity and interest by serious men high in rank and authority. Sergius Paulus was craving for any light which could be given to him, and in default of better teaching had listened to Elymas the Sorcerer. Simon Magus, if we may credit Catholic tradition, was in favour at the Imperial Court of Rome, where he matched his power against St. Peter's, and was defeated only because God was stronger than the devil. The 'curious arts' of these people were regarded both by Christian and heathen as a real mastery of a supernatural secret; and in the hunger for information about the great mystery with which the whole