

Author: R. Giles (?-?)

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Original Correspondence.

[To the Editor of the *North Devon Journal*.]

THE GUDE OLD TIMES IN WELCOMBE

WITCHCRAFT—CONTINUED

Deer Zur, I muss tellee I hevent had time,
To put the witch storey awl intu rime,
But thares wan thing, I spose, I need'n tell yu,
That in rime, or in prose, twud be aykwilly tru.
The old vokes wud tell ov a long Winter nite,
Sitch things as wud neerly kill childern way frite;
An I yused vor tu think hot fuels thay muss be,
Tu tell littel brats hot thay niver wud zee.
Thay wud tell ov som witch'd, an sum auverluded,
An the kavs an the pegs in sitch ways wis a tuked,
Thit wen thay went zukin thay'd bite dru the tet,

Wile thore moathers, pore things, wud du nothin but fret.

In the gude olden times you'd niver vend wan

But had yerd ov the duins of Betty or Nan,

Somtimes yu wud yer ov wan hunder a spell,

An som thit wis witched thay wud naw verry well.

An lots thay'd a yerd ov, awl kovered way lise,

Tho the things thit thay wared wis zo clayn an zo nise,

An then if thay changed mun thay verry zune vownd,

Thay wis swarmin agen vrom the hed tu the ground.

Thare wis som hew benayth a gude planet was bawrn,

Wud hold hup the witch an ther duins tu scorn,

Vor hur niver cude titch min, no hodds how hur'd try,

Nor eet git min hunder the ban ov hur hie,

But if thay'd a son or a darter hur mite

Hev a chance vur tu vetch owt hur envy an spite,

An a man, zo Im towld, hew is livin tu-day,

Wis sarved owt be a witch in this verry same way;

I cude give ee the names ov boath father an son,

Thay doant live verry var vrom Ath-er-ing-ton.

An as thicky plase is zo neer tu the town,

Praps yude gie min a kal, an thare storey take down.

Thay cude tellee ov kows, pegs an vovls, kom'd tu harm,

An thit nothin wis safe, in feeld, stabel, or barn.

The witch tride hur game pon the father but fayld,

Then, tu leasta, hur turned tu the son an prevayled,

An vor yurs he was ailin, zo sick an zo bad,

If the storey be true, wy shorely tis sad.

He was gwain tu be marryd, appynted the day,

But it cudden take plase, vor the witch had hur zay,

An hur kept en in bed, zo bad an zo sick,

Thait he didden git owt vor hup moar thin a week.

Agen they appoynted a time vor tu wed,

But this time the bride was confin'd tu her baid,
An months past away avaur thay got well,
Wich shawd cleer enuff thay wis hunder a spell,
Thay tride awl the doctors vor miles arownd,
An payd lots ov munny, but no benefit vownd,
Till thay went tu a man hew carry'd a pack,
It was like a tin box sling'd hup tu hes back.
Inzide it he carryd a lot ov wite rods,
Vor rulin the planets, an konsultin the Gods,
Sez he, "My deer man, tis playn yuve bin witch'd,
Twas ment vor yer father, but he cudden be titch'd.
The Wite witch declar'd, he cude du the man gude,
Vor his aylment was wan, that he well hunderstude,
Then he tuke his wite sticks, and poynted abowt,
An ses he, "I can zee the heevil gwain owt,"
An shoaf nuff the man's better an travellth arown,
An Vriday be Vriday he visits the town,
Wan old humman I nawd yusd tu ware a long cloke,
An twas zed hur had awlso a comikal buke,
Thit hur yused vor hur witchin, and then wen hur dide,
Hur no longer was abel hur saycrit tu hide,
Hur darter arterwards waur the long cloke,
An the nayburs thay wonder'd if hur'd awlso the buke,
But I niver hev herd, thit hur dude inny harm,
Tu kattel or pultery tu howehold or farm,
Anether old humman I naw'd yurs ago,
Wud rin abowt beggin thay dreded hur zo,
Thit no wan wud iver think tu zend hur away,
Way owt givin hur somthin be it dinner or tay;
Pore old crayter hur awlways was shakin hur hed,
Hess pore littel brats was moast dredful afrayd,
An wud shet in a bush or go auver a hedge,

Or push in together zo tite as a wedge,
Hur bunnet wis long way hur kurtin arown,
An hur cloke was so long that it rayched tu the grownd.
It yused to be zed, tho I niver nawd wy,
Thit a witch cude be nawd be the luke ov hur hie,
An agen 'tath bin towld but doant naw if tis rong,
That a witch hath got vive black spots hunder the tongue.
'Tis thort that the Divel maketh witches, and then
He tamporeth moar hoften, way wimmen than men,
An he gieth mun the power tu du hot thay will,
Zo long as ther akshuns his wishes fullfill.
It is sartinly true an well hunderstude,
That Satan will niver du inny thing gude,
Zo if way ther hate is a mixter ov love,
Wan wud think thay wis mued be the Sparet above,
Like as Paul wen he zed he hexperynsd within,
A promptin tu gude and a drain tu sin,
'Tis a verry old tale an hath hoften bin twold,
That ther boddy's and sawls tu the Divel was zowld,
But hew shall condem if mersy is sitch,
That there's pardon vor awl, they wy not vor a witch,
I've a yerd of the way thit the witches be made,
But cant zay if wimmin wud thersels zo digrade,
Arter prare in the Church thay tu sackermint stay,
An not ayt the bred but consayl it away,
In the middel ov nite, thay muss go to the Church,
An walk dree times arown and stop at the porch,
Wen a tode thay will meet way a whackin gurt hed,
Then he aupens his mowth and thay give he the bred,
Then the party lyes down in the pressanse ov deth,
Puts the tode pon ther fase, an draw in his breth,
Wen the boddy hath dude it, hur will be zo cliver,



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As tu be a strong witch, for ever an ever,
I've a yerd it a towld again and again,
That a witch awlways keepth livin todes in a stayn,
An thayse vor tu help hur in witchin hur'd yuse,
Arter thet hur wud cuke mun in puddins an stews.

To be continuy'd

R. GILES

Welcombe, October 31st, 1885.

