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[5]

ZUR,—I derzay zom vokes wonder ware I be deyd or no, as they heven't zeed my name lately, zo let me zay that tho not deyd, I've a ben crewel bad, and didden naw ware I shude be abel vor zend tu ee inny moar or no, an shuden now if I hadden a zeed zum thin in the paper abowt wan Mister Western, hot thort his childern had a witched or auverluded en, an zo he gied away his property vrom min. I zee he went tu the wite witch, hew towld en that they had dude it. Well, now, if they did du it shure neff, they didden hoft vor git nort.

Ware thare is zitch vokes as witches or no tissen vor me to deeside, but tis well nawd that ovr granfers an grannys tew awl thort thare was, an avaur thare time thay hanged lots ov min wen twas proved against min. In the gude old times thare was witch hunters, huze bizens it was tu go abowt an vend min owt, and git min browt tu jistis, and wan was vownd guilty, if hur had got inny property, twas awul take away, an yused as the clergy mite direct. In the Catholic days witchcraft was held tu be zitch a krime, that the benefit ov klergy was deenyd min. 'Tis well nawd that wen the preests did innything rong, they wassen take avaur the jidges like hother vokes, an this hindulginse was, dree hundred an feety yurs ago, granted tu awl hew cude rayd, an they that twas granted tew

was burned in the han way a hot iron. In the time ov wan King Edward the 6th a law was passed "that Lords of Parliament and peers of the realm may have the benefit of their peerage, equivalent to that of Clergy, for the first offence (although they cannot read and without being burnt in the hand) for all offences chargyable to commoners, and also for the crimes of housebreaking, highway robbery, horse-stealing, and robbing churches." They hot had this benefit was exempt vrom punishment in the King's Corte, and was handed auver tu the Bishop, or his deputy tu be dayld way by the Canons of the Church, wen they wud ginerally, and hesheshally if they was abel tu pay, git off scot free. Now a day, if innyboddy wanteth vor pent anether up verry bad, an make others think he is a bad fella, they will hexklaym, "He wud rob a church," but in them times that I've a bin telling aw, that was a verry mild krime, but wan ov the wust sinners was a witch, wan that had a zowld herzel, sawl an boddy, tu the divel. Twas a zed that they that wished vor be witches made a bargain way Satan tu gie therzels up tu he, an he agreed tu let min hev hotiver they wanted, an let min put therzels in hotiver shape they played, so as tu be abel tu visit an torment ther hinnemys, but the most ushal shape was a cat or a hare, an twas zed no shot wud kill min. I've yerd tell of wan humman that yused tu turn herzel intu a hare, livin down neer the say, ware a sartin gentelman wud com arownd shettin, an he wud gie hur zixpense ivery time vor the old humman tu shaw ware was a hare, an twas zed hur went owt hurzel, an poynted in a sartin direckshun an then dissppeerd, an zo hur was the hare hurzel. Wen the divel had made a bargain way inny wan twas zed he wud delever tu hur a imp or little divel tu be awlways ready at hur call, an that he wud zook the witch. This imp and the divel together wud help the witches tu travel dru the air vor attend thare meetins ware the divel prezided.

Praps, Zur, you wud le me tell yer rayders how they yused tu vend owt ware innyboddy was a witch or no. Thare was varyus ways, an I'll jist tell a vu ov min. Wun was tu wee the supposed witch agin the Church Bible, if hur was a witch the Bible wud be hevyyest; anether tu git hur tu repayt the Lord's Prare, wich a witch cude niver du correctly; havin saycrit tets vor the imps tu zook, awlways raw, an if squeezed wud eeld blid. A witch cude onny shed teers vrom the left hie, an then but dree tu a time. This yused tu be thort be the judges tu be gude hevidense agin min. Zwimmin min was anether: they wud ty the rite thum tu the left gurt toe, an the left thum tu the rite toe, an yen min intu a pond; if gilty they wudden zink, vor they havin zowld therzelz tu the

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divel had renounsed the water ov baptism, the water in turn renounsed they. Zomtimes thay was tride be stickin a nale under a stule that they was gwain vor zit pon top; thay wud plase the supposed witch in the middel of a rume crasslegged, an if hur wudden zit still hur was bownd way roaps, an kept wayowt mayt or slayp vor 24 howers, vor they zed in that time the imp wud be shore tu come vor zook.

Wen a rayl witch was vownd an pruver be inny ov thayse raysonabel plans, hur was brot up vor trial, I'll gie a vu items ov the cost connected way the hexecution ov two witches in the yer 1636:—Ten lodes ov coals tu burn min, £3 6s. 8d.; a tar barrel, 14s.; towes, 6s.; tu him that brot the hexecutioner, 18s.; tu the hexecutioner vor his payns, £8 14s. Tens ov thousands ov thayse pore crayturs hev a bin put tu deth in this land, an if they did zitch things as twas zed they did hew can zay they didden deezarve it.

Nex week I shall try vor gie the akownt of dree Bideford women that was hanged vor witchcraft in 1682.

Yours truly,

R. GILES

Welcombe, June 4th, 1886.

