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Text type: Prose and verse

Date of composition: 1885

Editions: 1885

Source text:

Giles, R. 1885. "The Gude Old Times in Welcombe: Lucy Passmore, the Wite Witch". *North Devon Journal*, December 23: 6.

e-text

Access and transcription: March 2021

Number of words: 2,493

Dialect represented: Devonshire

Produced by María F. García-Bermejo Giner

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[6]

THE GUDE OLD TIMES IN WELCOMBE
LUCY PASSMORE THE WITE WITCH.

Zur,—In fulfilment ov my promise I must now tell yer reyderys somthin aboutw Lucy Passmore, the Wite Witch, hew lived down tu West Mill, in this parrish, neerly the lonelyst plase pon aith. Rie down betwayn two hills, an klose by the stream that divideth Welcombe vrum Morwenstow, and about 2 minnets walk strite in vrum Marsland Mowth, the landin plase vor licker in the smugglin days. Accessible onny by 2 donkey paths, it is visited by but vu peepel, except in the zummer seyson, wen be chance some visiteris mite be hinklined vor make a hexcurshen down tu the baych. Yer in happy solitude lives my frend Howard the Millard. Yer awlso lived avaur him other members of his family, hew hev passed away vrum this world. Wan brother of his was killed in the mill, an another died there. My friend the present millard works vrum Munday mornin to zaturday nite, wey no partner tu share his joys, nor help him in his troubles an sorrows. I spose he is like the farmer that wanse towld me he had a kind of joy that when he got hoam ov a nite he had no wan to kwarrel way en. Although livin in this lonely cottage, it must not be supposed that he is uninformed as to the duins ov the

owter world. He is a man possess'd ov a middlin heddication, an, I venter tu zay, raydth moar than zom ov the fine dress'd yong men thet walk abowt the strays ov yer town way ther hare parted in the middel, and a segar an walkin stick an awl thet soart ov thing; iss, an some way hie glasses, thit be blayged vor take mun off wen they wanty for zee innythig vitty. West Mill howse is bilded down a bit lawer than the level ov the grownd, vor two raysons I take it, wan to git the watter vor rin in auver the whayl, an the tether vor save it vrom the wind thet draggeth up the narrow defile way sitch forse thet wan kan zomtimes hardly stan pon his veet. Thares trowt in the stream, and somtimes zammon git hup in it, as tis a'most level in vrom the zay, but as yu may naw noboddy wud katch mun. This mill is celebrated vor bein the wan ware the watter hold'th owt longer in dray saysons thin inny other abowt yer. This is the plase ware lives in semi-monark style my friend Howard, an way him his grandson an a boy who work the two mills, an way the ayd of a pony an a vu donkeys supply the nayburhude way the warewith tu make the bred tu sustayn life. It awlways gieth me playshur tu kall in an hev a chat way en, and if inny ov yer rayders shude be passin thet way, thay wudden vend it a waste ov time tu spen a haf hower thare. Tis klose be the path that towerists take on thare way betwayn Klawvelly an Bude. But I'm tellin abowt the millard an the mill insted ov abowt Lucy. Howiver, this is the plase ware hur lived, a wisht old lonely wan som mite think, but the plase suted hur in hur line ov bisens as wite witch an forten teller, an if hur had a bin livin thare abowt thirty yur ago, hur mite a bin abel tu tell hew twas thet broke in an staul zom munny wan Zinday, wen thay was away tu church. Thay went tu a wite witch abowt thet, and thay zed he shaw'd the pikter ov som wan, but thay niver got thare munny back, an vor safety in futer thay had som iorn bars put owtzide the winder. (The man thet lost the munny is not the man thet lives thare now.) Tu Lucy ivery boddy thet was in inny trubble wud resort; in fact, hur was the oracle vow awl misterys. Wither ov witchin or love squabbels or innythig lost, the vokes wud traipse away vrom miles an miles arown, tu kunsult hur; an hur wud rayd the planets for mun. Zinday was hur cheef day, vor then sarvint maydens an sitch like wud be thare vor naw abowt thare sweetarts, an if wan shude hev a hoffer vrom tew hur wud set it rite wich shude be the wan. Laydys ov quality, of wich thare was a gude minny abowt Morwenstow in these days, wud go tu hur, and the fust thing thay did was tu put a peese ov zilver pon the palm ov hur hand. Hur cude du nort avaur thet was dude, then hur wud

git mun tu tell thare tale, an hur wud larn awl hur cude (I awlmoast think I cude be a wite witch, zur.)

An then hur wud tell auver zomthing tu hurzel, wich hur was in the habit ov duin at awl times; an wan time zomboddy axed hur why hur did it, and hur sed "vur tu gude raysons: wan because I like vur ter tu a sensibel boddy, an the tether becawse I like tu hear a sensibel person talk." Zomtimes it wud happen that one yong humman wud hev moar than wan lover, an they wud go an konsult hur abowt it, an if they was abel tu pay hur purty well hur wud tak min down—

In the say at hower ov midnite

Shiverin steevin in the starlite,

Prayin the familyer sperrits

To disclose thare lovers' merits,

An by token or by voyse

To direct min in thare choyse.

Standin pon the lonely strand,

Way a lukin-glass in hand,

Tu reflect the lunar rays,

An the gods ov fortune playse.

Then hur got min to repayt the vollowin lines, but hot verty thare is in min I can't zay, as I doant profess vor understan:

"A mayden pure yer I stand,

"Naythur on say or eet on land;

"Angels watch me on aythur hand.

"If If you be landsmen com down the Strand,

"If you be sailors kom hup the sand;

"If you be angels com vrom the ski,

"Luke in my glass an pass me by;

"Luke in my glass an go vrum the shoar,

"Layve me but luv me vor ivermoar."

As I zed, Ludy wud tell tu hurzel an let min yer a word now an agen, an pertend hur was workin the charm, an hot thay didden hunderstan thay thort must be something clever, but law massy! I doant think much ov zitch things mezal. I raymimber a plase ware I yused vor go arter fizzick, an the man thet was duin hup the trade in hottels wud be raydin owth the names in a furrin tong, an the old wimmin wud zometimes zay, "He's a cliver man," but I thort he did it tu shaw hoff tu hess thet didden naw much abowt it, an I lissened an yerd en zay "Mag. sulp, hackaw mentha pip." Zo I axed a chap wan day hot that was, an he sez "Hepsom salts an peppermint watter." Zo I thort thare wassen much in it vor awl it sounded grand, an I dersay thare wassen much moar in Lucy's misteryes tales. I cant tell awl hur yused tu du, but hur profess'd tu dispel charms, cure thay thet was witched and punish the witches, rayd fortens, an hur did a roarin trade, but I cant stay tu tell wan haff. Will, hur old man, kept a bote owt hunder kliff, an picked hup a vu shillins by takin vokes hoff tu Gull Rock, an tu Lindy Island, an other plases ware thay wanted tu git away tu heedy-peep, an he did a gude stroke of bisens in reckin, but ware thare was inny smugglin in them days or no I cant zay. I muss givee the account of a hintervue betwayn hur an Passon Willot, who was berry'd in Welcombe a gude minny yers ago. Lucy haden bin tu church vor som time, an beside he had yerd that wan ov his family had bin tu hur tu git hur fortin a rayd, zo he went down tu gie hur a bit ov his mind, as he termed it, an hur axed en inzide, an he zot pon Will's stule wan zide ov the chimbley, an Lucy zot the tether. Passon: I'm kom down tu hinqur how tis I doant zee yu tu church lately, an 'tis but sildom I zee Will thare ether. Lucy: Drabbert yer hed. Wy, I'm tryin tu git a lit munny the same as yerzel. P. Yes, I hear, Lucy, yu kar awn a honlawful bisens, an hoax the peepel in varyus ways, an pertend tu tell min hot will happen in the futer, an if I hear inny moar ov it I shall take staps tu git yu trowned, beecause it hofTEN happens that thayse yong peepel, encouraged by yu, take hot issen ther awn tu give tu yu. Wen he had finished he made a heffort tu rise, but he was clibbed tu the stule, an thare hur tuke keer tu keep en avaur hur had had hur zay, as follows:—Her glinted acrass tu en way sitch a heevil luke, that made en wish hissel away, an zed, Passon, yume kom tu taych me hot yu nor none ov yer set practiss, that is tu be onest. Thare's old Giles, your clerk, mixeth zan way his shugger an watter way the trykel, an zilleth things tu the vokes avaur prare, an wen yu rayd owt, Remember that

thou keep 'oly the Sabbath Day, he zeth, Lord, hinkline owr harts tu keep this law. There's Farmer Aishon's missus kullerth hur butter tu pass hoff the grayse that hur mixeth way it, an

Will Bagghole will hup on a pinch,
Stretch owt a yard ov clath a hinch.

An yu doant zay nort tu mun becaws thay go tu Church. I tell ee hot 'tis, I reckon mezel so gude as the rest aw mun, not layvin owt yerzel, fur the sarmins hot yu rayd yu by mun a penny a peece thirteen tu the dizen, an som aw min was a left ee by passon Druterch, an wen I yer the tex I naw not is comin arter. Wen Will kom'd hoam dree weeks ago kom Zinday and towld hot yu zed tu en I nawd the sarmin wassen yer awn, for he towld me how yu kayn'd owt auver the pulpit, strite tu he, an towld abowt vokes followin old wive's fabels, an the sin ov witchcraft, an wen yu had finished lukin tu he yu went raydin agen. Iss, zur, I've yurd som ov the same sarmins a rayd auver vive and twenty yur ago. Wen hur'd a finished hot hur had got tu zay hur stop'd the charm, an direkly he vownd the stule let go he started vor hoam, an wen he got thare he zed tu his missus hur wud stay away vrom church som time avaur he shude invite hur agen, an I beleeve he niver did, but left hur to continny hur bisens tu the end ov hur days, an arter hur passed away hur hath had minny himitators. Fortin tellin durin this sentery hath bin dun moastly by gipsys, hew wud git abowt an slock things owt ov sarvint maydens vur tellin min hup a lot ov stuff that wud sownd verry well, an thay yused tu zay thay nawd thay cude tell vor they nawd kases ware it had kom tru. I spose tis like halmanack makin, it kom'th true zomtimes. There was a chap down yer a vu yurs ago went to git wan ov thayse vokes tu rayd the planets vor en, an thay told en the fust humman he wud meet wud be his wive, zo he passed a yong humman, an then he loked back an hur was lukin back tew, zo his tale was like this—I ses, ses I. "Will yu be my wive," and her zed, "I've no hobjeckshuns" ses hur, an shure enuf hur was my wive arterwards. From this case the vokes thort twas proved that the fortin teller cude foretell things.

A vu yers ago a laburer thot I nawd verry well had twenty pownds left en on the deth ov his mother, an som gipsys got tu naw it an went tu the man's wive an promised if hur

wud let mun hev it thay wud dubbel it for hur, but thay dubbel'd hur hinsted ov the munny.

It muss be hadmitted tu be hexcusabel in vokes livin down in a plase like this tu be tuke in pon a time. Wen hess zee tales ov how vokes abowt in large towns beeleve in sperrit rappin an other zitch nonsense, talkin wey the ded an zo aun. I doant think thares hardly inny witches left now that practise it, but I spose if thay was baurn like it yurs ago twud be the same now, but the law is aginst mun.

The cownty bobbys be a terror tu mun. A man that is now ded wanse zed this land contaynth zo minny inhabitants, moastly fules, an it mite be supposed thare wud be a vu down yer, ware the skulemaister hathen bin long a nawd, an ware a nusepaper was sildom zeed wen thay was zixpense, an aytpanse aych, but the lite is beginnin to dawn aiven yer, an the vokes hunderstan the ivery day things ov life, tho thay may not naw much abowt zitch things ov life, tho thay may not naw much abowt zitch things as a sientiffick fronteer, or primogeniter or the law ov hintayl, that I rayd abowt in yer paper zomtimes. Us hunderstand the Eastern Question tu mayn the passon turnin his back tu the vokes in church ov a Zinday.

I muss now klose

This letter, the sixteenth, on Old Times,
Made hupp ov hodd storeys and rimes,
Hinterspers'd way awl soarts, ov tales an repoarts,
An published hat different times.

The duty I've tried tu fulfil,
Issent meerly yer pages tu vill,
Nor amusin the yuthe, but tu tell mun, in truth,
How old times were hinkompass'd way ill.

An if I've accomplish'd me task,
But wan simpel faver I ask,
'Tis thit thay hew now live, will dew 'lowance give,
Vor the hignorant times thit be past.

I hop, zur, yur rayders be plays'd,
Way hot I've a zend in past days,
An if sitch be the kase, an yu kin vind spase,
Yu shall yer a vu mare times at layst.

Let me zey in koncludin this letter,
(Way regret, thit tissen dude better)
Thit if awl things go well, som time I shall tell,
Ov pixys, hobgoblins, an reckers.

Yours truly,

Welcombe, December 19th, 1885.

R. GILES

