

Author: R. Giles (?-?)

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[2]

THE GUDE OLD TIMES IN WELCOMBE
WITCHCRAFT-HINTURDUCKSHEN

ZUR,—Like ivery hother plase in days of owld, thare wis, as mite be thort, thayse vokes kald witches, or, as som wud zay, thay thit had got the heevil hie, an a hunderd, or ayven feefty yurs ago, inny wan mite as well hev zed thit the wurld wis rownd as tu hev zed thare wis no sitch vokes as witches; in fact in old times no boddy dowted it, an I doant vury well zee how a boddy cude arter yurin ov the duins ov mun, as I've yurd it towld yurs ago, but ware the vokes thay kald be thayse names cude and did du the things thit was zed they did, tissen vur me tu zay, nor I shant try vur vend owt hot issen rite vur no boddy tu naw. Thare yused tu be thayse vokes abowt yur thit wis thort tu hev powir tu du gude or hurt, jist as yu dud playse or ofend mun, an I beeleave som aw min didden mind bein kald by sitch names, vur thay wud du vury well if the vokes thort thay cude du a gude or bad turn vor min, an thay wud go about tu farm howses an git bits of mayt an bottels ov milk, an other things thit cudden be got be ivery wan.

The moast wandurful thing is thit a witch kin turn hursel into a hare. I didden think twis tru avaur I wis told ov an thit yused tu be prowlin abowt, an thay cude niver shet her avaur thay put som peeses ov zilver in the gun an fired, an wan ov min went into the old witches howse ware hur wus bliddin vrom a fresh wound, zo in the kase hot cude I say moar? Zeein is beleevin as the zayin is.

Som yurs ago a witch named Vown,
Lived in a howse neer Welcombe Town,
An, as 'tis ushul way hur rase,
Hur plide hur trade arown the plase.
Hur awlways vether'd well hur nest,
An ait an drink'd the verry best,
As ware no coaxin wud prevayl,
Hurd make it suteable tu stayl.
'Tis strange thit wen hur went arown,
Yude niver yer a singel sownd,
Vor kow, and peg, an duck, an fowl,
Wud stan an glaze, like a stewd owl.
No cock cude craw, no hen cude cluck,
Thare'd be no quack ov drake nor duck,
In fact hur'd always charm the lot
Till hot hur wanted hur'd a got.
Hur'd take a sampel vrom aich brude
Ov pultry, in the nayburhude,
An tho thare childern went in rags,
Hur'd fatten pon pore laburers heggs,
An drink the milk hot vrom the kow,
Or stayl yong roasters vrom the zow.
Tu sitch hextent hur kar'd hur rigs,
No wan cude keep fowls, ducks, nor pigs,
An wuss thin awul the rest hurd fleese
The heggs vrom hunder brudey geese.

Then varmer Jones put in som prime
Ducks heggs, thay'd hatch in quicker time,
But like layze kows be bastard kavs,
Thay wudden take tu things be havs,
Zo way a kackel hup thay zot,
An varmer Jones no goslins got.
An as 'tis zed the Divel mite,
Tho black, appeer thit he wis wite.
Sum times hur vownd it wudden du,
In wimmin's shape, tu keep in vue,
Zo in thet kase hur tuke the kare,
Tu turn herzel into a hare,
Cus if hur was put tu the push,
Hur'd heed away behind a bush;
But if hur got well pon hur veet,
No grehound cude way hur compeet.
The nayburs tride be varyus mayns,
(An got well laffed at vor thare payns,)
Tu stap hur game, but thick or thin,
No shot wud penetrate hur skin;
An, awlmoast worreed intu fits,
Thay cut a zixpense intu bits,
And yused the zilver stid of shot.
Wen next thay shet, the hare thay got,
Glad the old varmint tu hev vownd,
Thay left hur lyin pon the grownd,
An hasten'd hoame, well played tu naw,
Thay finished pussy's game below.
Nex day a chap wis passing by,
Wen awl tu wanse he chanced vur spy
The hare hupon the grownd. Ses he,
Yers, shorely, haf a krown vor me,

In town, at layst, zo I've a yerd,
Thayll purchase fish, or vlesh or burd,
An karren kuntry dogs despise,
Thay'll by in London vor minse pies.
Tony in time arrived in town,
No zooner kom, but byer vownd.
The dayler chuckled way delite,
The carkase was zo plump an tite.
Perhaps I hardly need tell yu,
The hare wis zune hexposed tu vue,
An very zune a byer vownd,
Becaws 'twis sleek an plump an rownd.
Lord Noodle had the Thursday arter,
Axed down the Passon and his darter,
Vur 'twas his wont vrom time tu time,
Tu git a naybur in tu dine,
An in dew time, way hodd grimase,
The hare wis pon the tabel plased.
Noodle ses, Passon, hot vur yu?
Yers boyl, an bake, an roast, an stew.
The Passon vued the joynts way kare,
An ses, I'll take a littel hare;
Zo Noodle carved the hinder kwarter,
Betwayn the Passon and his darter.
Wen hoffer'd moar, he shaked his hed,
But not a singel word he zed.
Then Dinah spauk and zed twis tuff,
And that wan helpin was enough;
An Lady Noddle zed hurd sware,
The mayt wis neythur fox nor hare.
The weytor zed the smill was sitch,
I nawd at wanse it was a witch.

An then the hare, with his perfume,
Wis quickly karred vrom the rume;
An mid a storm ov coff an sneeze,
They finished hup way cress an cheese.
Nex mornin Noodle hasten'd down,
An hossback hurried hoff tu town.
The dayler just arrived down stairs
Ses, "Yers me lord, he wants moor hares;"
But Noodle vrum his hoss luked down,
An thindere owt, way sitch a frown,
"Thet whackin hare I had ov yu,
Wis niver fit vur boyl nor stu,
An Lady Noodle zeth hurd sware,
'The meyt wis neythur fox nor hare;'
An hot seemth stranger then the rest,
Hess vowd som zilver in the brest."
The dayler ses, "My word yu'll take,
Thit I will dew hinqury make,
An if our rules I have transgressed,
To make amends I'll du my best;
But be it clearly hunderstude,
I'm bownd by laws of britherhude."
His lordship zed I'll kal again,
Wen yu the matter must hexplain;
Well, Munday mornin he wis kom,
An chanced to vind the hare man hom,
His cheeks wis moast zo red as blid,
He sim'd in a moast hawful stid,
An way a thinderin voyse kald owt,
Jan More! wich make Jan luke abowt;
He niver zed a singel word
But this, "How du'ee du my Lord;"

Ses he the lady's bad in baid,
And tis a ma sy, hur bain't ded;
An Dinah Hamlyn was so sick,
Hess thort her cudden live a wick;
An morn tu nite ov yesterday,
The passon cudden praych nor pray.
Friday, my Lady simmin worse,
I zen tu Hexter vor a nurse,
Hur luketh jist like a heap ov straw,
An fit vur nort but puff an blaw.
Fust thing hur dude when hur got in,
Wis tu zit down an stuff hur skin;
Hur ses if I may make zo bowld,
I'd like a drap, 'tis verry cowld;
Tis verry littel drink I take,
An hot I du is vor helth's sake.
Rum hot at bed time, an I mite
Jist take a drap wanse in the night,
I hardly need hexplayn tu yu
Thit sitch things be tu nurses dew.
Well, I thort this wis well begun,
Some zay wen tis tis haf a dun;
An then her zed, jist let me zee,
I want tu mayds tu wayt on me?
Ses I you want yer duty shirk,
Ses she I niver du no work,
Wen I'm way vokes ov quality,
I git som wan tu tend tu me,
Zo vur yer lordship's honner's sake
I'll merely the direckshuns take;
Consult the Doctor, keep the kays
Ov wine siller, if you playse;

Hur ladyship will want some wine,
An may be brandy pon a time;
This Jan, wis jist the tale hur towld,
An I muss zay, I thort her bold.
Now can yu tell what I'm tu du?
Yu zee I'm in a purty stew,
My lot can't very well be worse;
The sarvints boath engaged way nurse,
An nort but tew old wimmin in
Onny jist fit tu scrub an cleen.
This littel game, iss, I'll be bownd
Wan't cost me less than fifty pownd;
In futur yu muss take moar kare,
An not zell witch agin vur hare.
Tis dangerous tu helth an life,
I neerly lot a luv'in wife;
An I deklare if hurd a dide
Yu shude a bin vur murder tride.
The missus komin vrom behind,
Spauk hup, ses hur, I'll tell my mind,
Yu needen be zo mortal pairt,
An I'm determined I want baret.
Yu naw, tu yurs ago, yu naw,
An wen the grownd wis wite way snow,
Tho wen the pore wis kept vor days,
Pon nothin helse but supe an pays.
Wen tu the Mill no corn wis zend,
An if yu had thay cuden grend;
How after aitin ov the supe,
Mিনny wis tuke way cramp and crupe,
An lots dide hoff, moast hawful quick,
Nor lived a day, much less a wick.

Pore things! thay thout twis dredful sad,
Zo minny died, and lots moar bad,
My Lord it did luke verry queer,
Iss fath, it did, abowt thet deer.
Jan zeth, yu hol yer bal my deer,
It aint yore plase to hinterfeer,
Yu awlways wull hev the laest word,
Dee think I want t'offen my Lord,
Go in the howse an wash yer fase,
An clayn an tidy hup the plase,
But net a singel hinch hur stired,
An simm'd tu want anether word,
He ses, go in, ses hur, I want,
Ses he, yu shall, ses hur I shant,
He tride tu push hur dru the dore,
But still her wud hev wan word moar,
Iss fy I'll zay it did luke queer,
Abowt yu naw, 'bout that thare deer.
Jan ses my Lord, yu want forgit,
My dirty hag in thic thare fit,
It make me mad, it dith I sware,
Tu yur hur spayk, no odds huse thare,
Tis how herth bin broat hup I spose,
Owt every day in hur best close,
Hur promised better, if I'd take
Hur hoam way me for pity's sake,
Hur wareth hur finger deck'd way rings,
Tew fine vor clayn away the things,
The candel grayse hupoon the chaires,
An heeps oo filth awl hup the stares.
My lord, I've had tu wives yu see,
The fust wan was tu gude vor me,

Hur kept the plase so nayt and cleen,
An cude depend tu vend hur in.
Hur'd mend the stockins and the close,
An hang the cups awl hup in rows,
Wen hur, pore thing, wis ded an gawn,
The loss I feel'd I skase wud awn.
Well, then I had a turn abowt,
I marry'd wan moast awlways owt,
Hur zeth fresh air is gude vor helth,
An if yume bad hot yuse is welth?
I thort I'd got a splendid catch,
But now I vend hur moar'n a match,
I du beeleve as hoft I've zed,
'Tis better hev a sarvint maid
Way a print frock if clayn and nayt,
Than thayse thit shaw hoff in the strayt.
Shorely, my lord, yu must be blest,
A luvin wife, childern well drest,
Way ivery thing you wish or want,
An niver say I shall or shant.
Lord Noodle smiled an zed 'twas sad,
Thit he wis zorry an yet glad—
Zorry tu yer min disagree,
But glad that som ov low degree
Differ like hess, wy if you playse,
My lady purts, sometimes vor days,
An ses the mayds an awl arownd,
Be the wist plages thit can ve vownd,
An ses 'tis better be a wife,
In a pore cottige, ware's no strife.
Now yers the time a rinnin awn,
An this long mornin moast agaun.

I must go hoam, no longer stay,
Now Jan yer hexplanashum preay,
Jan ses, I've full hinqury made,
An 'tis the kustom ov the trade,
Zo by an zill hot komth tu han,
An never axin questions stan.
I may tell yu it hoften happins,
That hess by trade ov furrin cappens,
An twudden du, hess shude be fules,
Tu stick tew klose tu rigid rules.
An kustomers doant hoft object,
To take hots saved from vessels reck,
It may be flesh, it may be fish,
Spiced hup it maketh a splendid dish,
Well kuked an well mixed hup together,
You can't distinguish wan vrom tether.
I doant think you wis badly sarved,
Yore mayt wis vrom the karkase carved,
Vor tho I awn it mite be tuff
And in the aytin rather ruff,
I can't hadmit yuve bin tuke in.
Yuve got a splendid furry skin,
'Twill make a kuver vur yer pate,
Dru wich no shot will penetrate;
An in yer presence I deklare,
I niver zed twis *witch* or *hare*.
My lord tis fortunet yer kase,
Is sitch as seldem dith take plase;
'Tis nort but this, this honawares,
Yu dined hoff witch, hinsted ov hares;
In futer sitch mistakes avoid,
An thit yer gests maent be anoid,

Wen yu ax nayburs in tu ayt,
Distinguish wan vrom tether mayt,
Hev printed in yer bill ov fate
Wan line vor witch, an wan vor hare.
An wan for ivery well nawn dish,
Wither 'tis fowl or game or fish,
An wines ov ivery brand an soart,
Vrom logwood mixter tu old port,
Or hannimals hot Frenchmen ayt,
An wich they kal delicious mayt;
Well nawn in Welcombe by thare klaws,
As well as by thare rownded jaws,
'Tis hot ovr witches awlways yuse,
Tu sayson hup thare broths an stews.
My Lord as 'twas in days ov old,
Wen Paul the honnawn God behold,
The nobel statue plased in view,
To represent thay nawd not hew.
Tis possible there was a name
Forgotten or honnawn to fame,
An thet the God mite be well playсед,
Or thet his rath mite be appaysed,
Thay plased the statue pon the hill,
Its well-ment purpose tu fullfill.
Zo now I give yu gude hadvise,
I ax no fee nor carge nor prise,
Wen yuve hexausted awl yer store
Ov names, thare be somethin more,
Huse karater hath not bin shawd,
Or wich taint proper shude be nawd,
Tu gratify a friendly wish
Let wan be term'd the nameless dish.

The Salamanca Corpus: "The Gude Old Times in Welcombe" (22nd October 1885)

His lordship sed, I thank yu Jan,
Owr daylins are twixt man an man,
Yu hev hexpleynd yer kase full well,
Ov kuse yu by zo well as zill.
I du raymember bowt thet hind
Wich yer gude wife brot tu my mind,
I naw yu had it hoff ov me,
That I'm payd hoam I playnly zee.

Tu be kontinnyod

Yours truly,

R. GILES

Welcombe, Oct. 10th, 1885