

JOHN ASHTON

THE DEVIL IN
BRITAIN AND
AMERICA

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'Nam ut vere loquamur, superstitio fusa per gentes oppressit omnium fere animos, atque hominum imbecillitatem occupavit.'
Cicero —De Divin., Lib. ii. 72.

PREFACE

To my thinking, all modern English books on the Devil and his works are unsatisfactory. They all run in the same groove, give the same cases of witchcraft, and, moreover, not one of them is illustrated. I have endeavoured to remedy this by localizing my facts, and by reproducing all the engravings I could find suitable to my purpose.

I have also tried to give a succinct account of demonology and witchcraft in England and America, by adducing authorities not usually given, and by a painstaking research into old cases, carefully taking everything from original sources, and bringing to light very many cases never before republished.

For the benefit of students, I have given – as an Appendix – a list of the books consulted in the preparation of this work, which, however, the student must remember is not an exhaustive bibliography on the subject, but only applies to this book, whose *raison d'être* is its localization.

The frontispiece is supposed to be the only specimen of Satanic caligraphy in existence, and is taken from the 'Introductio in Chaldaicam Linguam,' etc., by Albonesi (Pavia, 1532). The author says that by the conjuration of Ludovico Spoletano the Devil was called up, and adjured to write a legible and clear answer to a question asked him. Some invisible power took the pen, which seemed suspended in the air, and rapidly wrote what is facsimiled. The writing was given to Albonesi (who, however, confesses that no one can decipher it), and his chief printer reproduced it very accurately. I am told by experts that in some of the characters may be found a trace of Amharic, a language spoken in its purity in the province of Amhara (Ethiopia), and which, according to a legend, was the primeval language spoken in Eden.

JOHN ASHTON.

CHAPTER I

Universal Belief in the Personality of the Devil, as portrayed by the British Artist – Arguments in Favour of his Personality – Ballad – ‘Terrible and Seasonable Warning to Young Men.’

The belief in a good and evil influence has existed from the earliest ages, in every nation having a religion. The Egyptians had their *Typho*, the Assyrians their *Ti-a-mat* (the Serpent), the Hebrews their *Beelzebub*, or *Prince of Flies*,¹ and the Scandinavians their *Loki*. And many religions teach that the evil influence has a stronger hold upon mankind than the good influence – so great, indeed, as to nullify it in a large degree. Christianity especially teaches this: ‘Enter ye by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it.’ This doctrine of the great power of the Devil, or evil influence over man, is preached from every pulpit, under every form of Christianity, throughout the world; and although at the present time it is only confined to the greater *moral* power of the Devil over man, at an earlier period it was an article of belief that he was able to exercise a greater *physical* power.

This was coincident with a belief in his personality; and it is only in modern times that that personality takes an alluring form. In the olden days the Devil was always depicted as ugly and repulsive as the artist could represent him, and yet he could have learned a great deal from the modern Chinese and Japanese. The ‘great God Pan,’ although he was dead, was resuscitated in order to furnish a type for ‘the Prince of Darkness’; and, accordingly, he was portrayed with horns, tail and cloven feet, making him an animal, according to a *mot* attributed to Cuvier, ‘graminivorous, and decidedly ruminant’; while, to complete his classical *ensemble*, he was invested with the forked sceptre of Pluto, only supplemented with another tine.

The British artist thus depicted him, but occasionally he drew him as a ‘fearful wild fowl’ of a totally different type – yet always as hideous as his imagination could conceive, or his pencil execute.

That the Devil could show himself to man, in a tangible form, was, for many centuries, an article of firm belief, but, when it came to be argued out logically, it was difficult of proof. The only evidence that could be adduced which could carry conviction was from the Bible, which, of course, was taken as the *ipsissima verba* of God, and, on that, the old writers based all their proof. One of the most lucid of them, Gyfford or Gifford, writing in the sixteenth century, evidently feels this difficulty. Trying to prove that ‘Diuels can appeare in a bodily shape, and use speeche and conference with men,’ he says:²

‘Our Saviour Christ saith that a spirite hath neither flesh nor bones. A spirite hath a substance, but yet such as is invisible, whereupon it must needes be graunted, that Diuels in their owne nature have no bodily shape, nor visible forme; moreover, it is against the truth, and against pietie to believe that Diuels can create, or make bodies, or change one body into another, for those things are proper to God. It followeth, therefore, that whensoever they appeare in a visible forme, it is no more but an apparition and counterfeite shewe of a bodie, unless a body be at any time lent them.’

And further on he thus speaks of the incarnation of Satan, as recorded in the Bible.

‘The Deuill did speake unto *Eua* out of the Serpent. A thing manifest to proue that Deuils can speake, unlesse we imagine that age hath made him forgetfull and tongue tyde. Some holde that there

¹ The old writers and the old maps probably meant mosquitoes when they said ‘Here be Divells.’

² ‘A Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Deuilles by Witches and Sorcerers,’ etc. By G. Gyfford. Lond., 1587.

was no visible Serpent before *Eua*, but an invisible thing described after that manner, that we might be capable thereof. . . . But to let those goe, this is the chiefe and principall, for the matter which I have undertaken, to shewe euen by the very storye that there was not onely the Deuill, but, also, a very corporall beaste. If this question bee demaunded did *Eua* knowe there was anye Deuill, or any wicked reprobate Angels. What man of knowledge will say that she did? She did not as yet knowe good and euill. She knewe not the authour of euill. When the Lorde sayde unto hir, What is this which thou hast done? she answereth by and by, The serpent deceiued me. Shee saw there was one which had deceiued hir, shee nameth him a serpent; whence had she that name for the deuill whome shee had not imagined to bee? It is plaine that she speaketh of a thing which had, before this, receiued his name.

‘It is yet more euident by that she sayth, yonder serpent, or that serpent, for she noteth him out as pointing to a thing visible: for she useth the demonstratiue particle *He* in the Hebrew language, which seuereth him from other. Anie man of a sound mind may easilie see that *Eua* nameth and pointeth at a visible beast, which was nombred among the beastes of the fieldes.’

The Devil seems, with the exception of his entering into persons, not to have used his power of appearing corporeally until people became too holy for him to put up with, and many are the records in the Lives of the Saints of his appearance to these detestably good people – St. Anthony, to wit. Of course he always came off baffled and beaten, and, in the case of St. Dunstan, suffered acute bodily pain, his nose being pinched by the goldsmith-saint’s red-hot tongs. Yet even that did not deter him from again becoming visible, until, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of our era, he became absolutely familiar on this earth.

But, according to all the records that we possess, his mission no longer was to seduce the saints from their allegiance, and, having become more democratic, he mixed familiarly with the people, under different guises. Of course, his object was to secure the reversion of their souls at their decease, his bait usually being the promise of wealth in this life, or the gratification of some passion.

He found many victims, but yet he met with failures – two of which are recorded here.

A NEW BALLAD

A poore Essex man
that was in great distresse,
Most bitterly made his complaint,
in grieve and heavinesse:
Through scarcity and want,
he was oppressed sore,
He could not find his children bread,
he was so extreme poore.

His silly Wife, God wot,
being lately brought to bed,
With her poore Infants at her brest
had neither drinke nor bread.
A wofull lying in
was this, the Lord doth know,
God keep all honest vertuous wives
from feeling of such woe.

My Husband deare, she said,
for want of food I die,

Some succour doe for me provide,
to ease my misery.
The man with many a teare,
most pittiously replyde,
We have no means to buy us bread;
with that, the Children cry'd.

They came about him round,
upon his coat they hung:
And pittiously they made their mone,
their little hands they wrung.
Be still, my boyes, said he,
And I'll goe to the Wood,
And bring some Acornes for to rost,
and you shall have some food.

Forth went the Wofull Man,
a Cord he tooke with him,
Wherewith to bind the broken wood,
that he should homewards bring:
And by the way as he went,
met Farmers two or three,
Desiring them for Christ his sake,
to helpe his misery.

Oh lend to me (he said)
one loafe of Barley-bread,
One pint of milke for my poore wife,
in Child-bed almost dead:
Thinke on my extreme need,
to lend me have no doubt,
I have no money for to pay,
but I will worke it out.

But they in churlish sort,
did one by one reply,
We have already lent you more
than we can well come by.
This answer strooke his heart
as cold as any stone;
Unto the Wood from thence he went,
with many a grievous groane.

Where at the length (behold)
a tall man did him meet
And cole-black were his garments all
from head unto his feet.
Thou wretched man, said he,
why dost thou weep so sore?

What is the cause thou mak'st this mone,
tell me, and sigh no more.

Alas, good Sir (he said)
the lacke of some reliefe,
For my poore wife and children small,
'tis cause of all my grieve.
They lie all like to starve,
for want of bread (saith he);
Good Sir, vouchsafe therefore to give
one peny unto me.

Hereby this wretched man
committed wondrous evill,
He beg'd an almes, and did not know
he ask't it of the Devill.
But straight the hellish Fiend,
to him reply'd againe,
An odious sinner art thou then
that dost such want sustaine.

Alack (the poore man said)
this thing for truth I know,
That *Job* was just, yet never Man
endured greater woe.
The godly oft doe want,
and need doth pinch them sore,
Yet God will not forsake them quite,
but doth their states restore.

If thou so faithfull bee,
why goest thou begging then?
Thou shalt be fed as *Daniel* was
within the Lyon's den.
If thus thou doe abide,
the Ravens shall bring thee food,
As they unto *Elias* did
that wandred in the Wood.

Mocke not a wofull man,
good Sir, the poore man said,
Redouble not my sorrows so,
that are upon me laid.
But, rather, doe extend
unto my need, and give
One peny for to buy some bread,
my Children poore may live.

With that he opened straight

the fairest purse in sight
That ever mortal eye beheld,
fild up with crownes full bright.
Unto the wofull man
the same he wholly gave,
Who very earnestly did pray
that Christ his life might save.

Well, (quoth the damn'd Spirit)
goe, ease thy Children's sorrow,
And, if thou wantest anything,
come, meet me here to-morrow.
Then home the poore man went,
with cheerfull heart and mind,
And comforted his woful wife
with words that were most kind.

Take Comfort, Wife, he said,
I have a purse of Gold,
Now given by a Gentleman,
most faire for to behold.
And thinking for to pull
his purse from bosome out,
He found nothing but Oken leaves,
bound in a filthy Clout.

Which, when he did behold,
with sorrowe pale and wan,
In desperate sort to seeke the purse,
unto the Wood he ran,
Supposing in his mind,
that he had lost it there;
He could not tell then what to think,
he was 'twixt hope and feare.

He had no sooner come
into the shady Grove,
The Devil met with him againe,
as he in fancy strove.
What seek'st thou here? he said,
the purse (quoth he) you gave,
Thus Fortune she hath crossed me,
and then the Devill said

Where didst thou put the Purse?
tell me, and do not lye,
Within my bosome, said the man,
where no man did come nigh.
Looke there againe, (quoth he)

then said the Man, I shall,
And found his bosome full of Toads,
as thicke as they could crawle.

The poore man at this sight,
to speak had not the power,
See (q'd the Devill) vengeance doth
pursue thee every hour.
Goe, cursed wretch, (quoth he)
and rid away thy life,
But murther first thy children young,
and miserable Wife.

The poore man, raging mad,
ran home incontinent,
Intending for to kill them all,
but God did him prevent.
For why, the chieftest man
that in the Parish dwelt,
With meat and money thither came,
which liberally he dealt.

Who, seeing the poore man
come home in such a rage,
Was faine to bind him in his bed,
his fury to asswage.
Where long he lay full sicke,
still crying for his Gold,
But, being well, this whole discourse
he to his neighbours told.

From all temptations,
Lord, keep both Great and Small,
And let no man, O heavenly God,
for want of succour fall.
But put their speciall trust
in God for evermore,
Who will, no doubt, from misery
each faithfull man restore.

'Being a very particular and True Relation of one *Abraham Joiner*, a young man about 17 or 18 Years of Age, living in *Shakesby's Walks* in *Shadwell*, being a Ballast Man by Profession, who, on *Saturday Night* last, pick'd up a leud Woman, and spent what money he had about him in Treating her, saying afterwards, if she wou'd have any more he must go to the Devil for it, and, slipping out of her Company, he went to the *Cock and Lyon* in *King Street*, the Devil appear'd to him, and gave him a Pistole, telling him *he shou'd never want for Money*, appointing to meet him the next Night, at the *World's End* at *Stepney*; Also how his Brother persuaded him to throw the Money away, which he did; but was suddenly taken in a very strange manner, so that they were fain to send for the Reverend Mr. Constable and other Ministers to pray with him; he appearing now to be very Penitent; with an

Account of the Prayers and Expressions he makes use of under his Affliction, and the Prayers that were made for him, to free him from this violent Temptation.

‘The Truth of which is sufficiently attested in the Neighbourhood, he lying now at his Mother’s house,’ etc.

Stepney seems to have been a favourite haunt of the Devil, for there is a tract published at Edinburgh, 1721, entitled ‘A timely Warning to Rash and Disobedient Children. Being a strange and wonderful Relation of a young Gentleman in the Parish of *Stepheny*, in the Suburbs of *London*, that sold himself to the Devil for 12 Years, to have the Power of being revenged on his Father and Mother, and how, his Time being expired, he lay in a sad and deplorable Condition, to the Amazement of all Spectators.’

CHAPTER II

‘Strange and True News from Westmoreland’ – ‘The Politic Wife’ – ‘How the Devill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold’ – ‘The Devil’s Oak’ – Raising the Devil – Arguments in Favour of Devils – The Numbers of Devils

In the foregoing examples we have seen the Devil in human form, and properly apparelled, but occasionally he showed himself in his supposed proper shape – when, of course, his intentions were at once perceived; and on one occasion we find him called upon by an Angel, to execute justice on a bad man. It is in

STRANGE AND TRUE NEWS FROM WESTMORELAND

Attend good Christian people all,
Mark what I say, both old and young,
Unto the general Judgment day,
I think it is not very long.

A Wonder strange I shall relate,
I think the like was never shown,
In *Westmoreland* at *Tredenton*,
Of such a thing was never known.

One *Gabriel Harding* liv’d of late,
As may to all men just appear,
Whose yearly Rent, by just account,
Came to five hundred pound a year.

This man he had a Virtuous Wife,
In Godly ways her mind did give:
Yet he, as rude a wicked wretch,
As in this sinful Land did live.

Much news of him I will relate,
The like no Mortal man did hear;
’Tis very new, and also true,
Therefore, good Christians, all give ear.

One time this man he came home drunk,
As he us’d, which made his wife to weep,
Who straightway took him by the hand,
Saying, Dear Husband, lye down and sleepe.

She lovingly took him by the arms,
Thinking in safety him to guide,

A blow he struck her on the breast,
The woman straight sank down and dy'd.

The Children with Mournful Cries
They ran into the open Street,
They wept, they wail'd, they wrung their hands,
To all good Christians they did meet.

The people then, they all ran forth,
Saying, Children, why make you such moan?
O, make you haste unto our house,
Our dear mother is dead and gone.

Our Father hath our Mother kill'd,
The Children they cryed then.
The people then they all made haste
And laid their hands upon the man.

He presently denied the same,
Said from Guilty Murder I am free,
If I did that wicked deed, he said,
Some example I wish to be seen by me.

Thus he forswore the wicked deed,
Of his dear Wife's untimely end.
Quoth the people, Let's conclude with speed,
That for the Coroner we may send.

Mark what I say, the door's fast shut,
The People the Children did deplore,
But straight they heard a Man to speak,
And one stood knocking at the door.

One in the house to the door made haste,
Hearing a Man to Knock and Call,
The door was opened presently,
And in he came amongst them all.

By your leave, good people, then he said,
May a stranger with you have some talk?
A dead woman I am come to see;
Into the room, I pray, Sir, walk.

His eyes like to the Stars did shine,
He was clothed in a bright grass green,
His cheeks were of a crimson red,
For such a man was seldome seen.

Unto the people then he spoke,

Mark well these words which I shall say,
For no Coroner shall you send,
I'm Judge and Jury here this day.

Bring hither the Man that did the deed,
And firmly hath denied the same.
They brought him into the room with speed,
To answer to this deed with shame.

Now come, O wretched Man, quoth he,
With shame before thy neighbours all,
Thy body thou hast brought to Misery,
Thy soul into a deeper thrall.

Thy Chiefest delight was drunkenness,
And lewd women, O, cursed sin,
Blasphemous Oaths and Curses Vile
A long time thou hast wallowed in.

The Neighbours thou wouldst set at strife,
And alwaies griping of the poor,
Besides, thou hast murdered thy wife,
A fearful death thou dy'st therefore.

Fear nothing, good people, then he said,
A sight will presently appear,
Let all your trust be in the Lord,
No harm shall be while I am here.

Then in the Room the Devil appear'd,
Like a brave Gentleman did stand,
Satan (quoth he that was the Judge)
Do no more than thou hast command.

The Devil then he straight laid hold
On him that had murdered his wife,
His neck in Sunder then he broke,
And thus did end his wretched life.

The Devil then he vanished
Quite from the People in the Hall,
Which made the people much afraid,
Yet no one had no hurt at all.

Then straight a pleasant Melody
Of Musick straight was heard to sound,
It ravisht the hearts of those stood by,
So sweet the Musick did abound.

Now, (quoth this gallant Man in green)
With you I can no longer stay,
My love I leave, my leave I take,
The time is come, I must away.

Be sure to love each other well,
Keep in your breast what I do say.
It is the way to go to Heaven,
When you shall rise at Judgment day.

The people to their homes did go,
Which had this mighty wonder seen,
And said, it was an Angel sure
That thus was clothed all in green.

And thus the News from *Westmoreland*
I have related to you o'er,
I think it is as strange a thing,
As ever man did hear before.

In the old days the Devil was used as a butt at which people shot their little arrows of wit. In the miracle plays, when introduced, he filled the part of the pantaloone in our pantomimes, and was accompanied by a 'Vice,' who played practical jokes with him, slapping him with his wooden sword, jumping on his back, etc.; and in the carvings of our abbeys and cathedrals, especially in the Miserere seats in the choir, he was frequently depicted in comic situations, as also in the illuminations of manuscripts. He was often written about as being sadly deficient in brains, and many are the instances recorded of him being outwitted by a shrewd human being, as we may see by the following ballad.

THE POLITIC WIFE; or, The Devil outwitted by a Woman

Of all the plagues upon the earth,
That e'er poor man befall,
It's hunger and a scolding wife,
These are the worst of all:
There was a poor man in our country
Of a poor and low degree,
And with both these plagues he was troubled,
And the worst of luck had he.

He had seven children by one wife,
And the times were poor and hard,
And his poor toil was grown so bad,
He scarce could get him bread:
Being discontented in his mind,
One day his house he left,
And wandered down by a forest side,

Of his senses quite bereft.

As he was wandering up and down,
Betwixt hope and despair,
The Devil started out of a bush,
And appeared unto him there:
O what is the matter, the Devil he said,
You look so discontent?
Sure you want some money to buy some bread,
Or to pay your landlord's rent.

Indeed, kind sir, you read me right,
And the grounds of my disease,
Then what is your name, said the poor man,
Pray, tell me, if you please?
My name is Dumkin the Devil, quoth he,
And the truth to you I do tell,
Altho' you see me wandering here,
Yet my dwelling it is in hell.

Then what will you give me, said the Devil,
To ease you of your want,
And you shall have corn and cattle enough,
And never partake of scant?
I have nothing to give you, said the poor man,
Nor nothing here in hand,
But all the service that I can do,
Shall be at your command.

Then, upon the condition of seven long years,
A bargain with you I will frame,
You shall bring me a beast unto this place,
That I cannot tell his name:
But, if I tell its name full right,
Then mark what to you I tell,
Then you must go along with me
Directly unto Hell.

This poor man went home joyfully,
And thrifty he grew therefore,
For he had corn and cattle enough,
And every thing good store.
His neighbours who did live around,
Did wonder at him much,
And thought he had robb'd or stole,
He was grown so wondrous rich.

Then for the space of seven long years
He lived in good cheer,
But when the time of his indenture grew near,
He began to fear:

O what is the matter, said his wife,
You look so discontent?
Sure you have got some maid with child,
And now you begin to repent.

Indeed, kind wife, you judge me wrong,
To censure so hard of me,
Was it for getting a maid with child,
That would be no felony:
But I have made a league with the Devil,
For seven long years, no more,
That I should have corn and cattle enough,
And everything good store.

Then for the space of seven long years
A bargain I did frame,
I should bring him a beast unto that place,
He could not tell its name:
But if he tell his name full right,
Then mark what to you I tell,
Then I must go along with him,
Directly unto Hell.

Go, get you gone, you silly old man,
Your cattle go tend and feed,
For a woman's wit is far better than a man's,
If us'd in time of need:
Go fetch me down all the birdlime you have,
And set it down on the floor,
And when I have pulled my cloathes all off,
You shall anoint me all o'er.

Now when he had anointed her
From the head unto the heel,
Zounds! said the man, methinks you look
Just like the very De'el.
Go, fetch me down all the feathers thou hast,
And lay them down by me,
And I will roll myself therein,
'Till never a place go free.

Come, tie a string about my neck,
And lead me to this place,
And I will save you from the Devil,
If I have but so much grace.
The Devil, he stood roaring out,
And looked both fierce and bold;
Thou hast brought me a beast unto this place,
And the bargain thou dost hold.

Come, shew me the face of this beast, said the Devil,
Come, shew it me in a short space;
Then he shewed him his wife's buttocks,
And swore it was her face:
She has monstrous cheeks, the Devil he said,
As she now stands at length,
You'd take her for some monstrous beast
Taken by Man's main strength.

How many more of these beasts, said the Devil,
How many more of this kind?
I have seven more such, said the poor man,
But have left them all behind.
If you have seven more such, said the Devil,
The truth unto you I tell,
You have beasts enough to cheat me
And all the Devils in Hell.

Here, take thy bond and indenture both,
I'll have nothing to do with thee:
So the man and his wife went joyfully home
And lived full merrily.
O, God send us good merry long lives,
Without any sorrow or woe,
Now here's a health to all such wives
Who can cheat the Devil so.

There is

'A Pleasant new Ballad you here may behold
How the Devill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold.'

The story of this ballad is, that the Devil, being much amused with this scolding wife, went to fetch her. Taking the form of a horse, he called upon her husband, and told him to set her on his back. This was easily accomplished by telling her to *lead* the horse to the stable, which she refused to do.

'Goe leade, sir Knave, quoth she,
and wherefore not, Goe ride?
She took the Devill by the reines,
and up she goes astride.'

And once on the Devil, she *rode* him; she kicked him, beat him, slit his ears, and kept him galloping all through Hell, until he could go no longer, when he concluded to take her home again to her husband.

'Here, take her (quoth the Devill)
to keep her here be bold,
For Hell would not be troubled

with such an earthly scold.
When I come home, I may
to all my fellowes tell,
I lost my labour and my bloud,
to bring a scold to Hell.'

In another ballad, called 'The Devil's Oak,' he is made out to be a very poor thing; the last verse says:

'That shall be try'd, the Devil then he cry'd,
then up the Devil he did start,
Then the Tinker threw his staff about,
and he made the Devil to smart:
There against a gate, he did break his pate,
and both his horns he broke;
And ever since that time, I will make up my rhyme,
it was called "The Devil's Oak."

But popular belief credited to certain men the power of being able to produce the Devil in a visible form, and these were called necromancers, sorcerers, magicians, etc. Of them Roger Bacon was said to have been one, and Johann Faust, whom Goethe has immortalized, and whose idealism is such a favourite on the lyric stage. But Johann Faust was not at all the Faust of Goethe. He was the son of poor parents, and born at Knittlingen, in Würtemberg, at the end of the fifteenth century. He was educated at the University of Cracow, thanks to a legacy left him by an uncle, and he seems to have been nothing better than a common cheat, called by Melancthon 'an abominable beast, a sewer of many devils,' and by Conrad Muth, who was a friend both of Melancthon and Luther, 'a braggart and a fool who affects magic.' However, he was very popular in England, and not only did Marlowe write a play about him, but there are many so-called lives of him in English, especially among the chap-books – in which he is fully credited with the power of producing the Devil in a tangible form by means of his magic art.

But the spirits supposed to be raised by these magicians were not always maleficent; they were more demons than devils. It will therefore be as well if we quote a competent and learned authority on the subject of devils.

Says Gyfford: 'The Devils being the principall agents, and chiefe practisers in witchcrafts and sorceryes, it is much to the purpose to descrybe them and set them forth whereby wee shall bee the better instructed to see what he is able to do, in what maner, and to what ende and purpose. At the beginning (as God's word doth teach us) they were created holy Angels, full of power and glory. They sinned, they were cast down from heauen, they were utterly depriued of glory, and preserued for iudgement. This therefore, and this change of theirs, did not destroy nor take away their former faculties; but utterly corrupt, peruert, and depraued the same: the essence of spirits remayned, and not onely, but also power and understanding, such as is in the Angels: ye heavenly Angels are very mighty and strong, far above all earthly creatures in the whole world. The infernall Angels are, for their strength called principalityes and powers: those blessed ones applye all their might to set up and aduance the glory of God, to defend and succour his children: the deuils bend all their force against God, agaynst his glory, his truth and his people. And this is done with such fierceness, rage and cruelty, that the holy ghost paynteth them out under the figure of a great red or fiery dragon, and roaring lyon, in very deed anything comparable to them. He hath such power and authority indeede, that hee is called the God of the world. His Kingdome is bound and inclosed within certayne limits, for he is ye

prince but of darknes; but yet within his sayd dominion (which is in ignorance of God) he exerciseth a mighty tyranny, our Saviour compareth him to a strong man armed which kepeth his castle.

‘And what shall we saie for the wisdom and understanding of Angels, which was giuen them in their creation, was it not far aboue that which men can reach unto? When they became diuels (euen those reprobate angels) their understanding was not taken awaie, but turned into malicious craft and subtiltie. He neuer doth any thing but of an euill purpose, and yet he can set such a colour, that the Apostle saith he doth change himselfe into the likenesse of an angell of light. For the same cause he is called the old serpent, he was subtile at the beginning, but he is now growne much more subtile by long experience, and continuall practise, he hath searched out and knoweth all the waies that may be to deceiue. So that, if God should not chaine him up, as it is set forth, *Revel. 20*, his power and subtiltie ioined together would overcome and seduce the whole world.

‘There be great multitudes of infernall spirits, as the holy scriptures doe euerie where shew, but yet they doe so ioine together in one, that they be called the diuell in the singular number. They doe all ioine together (as our Saviour teacheth) to uphold one kingdome. For though they cannot loue one another indeede, yet the hatred they beare against God, is as a band that doth tye them together. The holie angels are ministring spirits, sent foorth for their sakes which shall inherit the promise. They haue no bodilie shape of themselues, but to set foorth their speedinesse, the scripture applieth itselfe unto our rude capacitie, and painteth them out with wings.

‘When they are to rescue and succour the seruants of God, they can straight waie from the high heauens, which are thousands of thousands of miles distant from the earth, bee present with them. Such quicknesse is also in the diuels; for their nature being spirituall, and not loden with any heauie matter as our bodies are, doth afford unto them such a nimblenes as we cannot conceiue. By this, they flie through the world over sea and land, and espie out al aduantages and occasions to doe euill.’³

Indeed, ‘there be great multitudes of infernall spirits,’ if we can believe so eminent an authority upon the subject as Reginald Scott, who gives ‘An inuentarie of the names, shapes, powers, gouernement, and effects of diuels and spirits, of their seuerall seignories and degrees: a strange discourse woorth the reading.

‘Their first and principall King (which is of the power of the east) is called *Baëll*; who, when he is conjured up, appeareth with three heads; the first, like a tode; the second, like a man; the third, like a cat. He speaketh with a hoarse voice, he maketh a man go invisible, he hath under his obedience and rule sixtie and six legions of diuels.’⁴

All the other diabolical chiefs are described at the same length, but I only give their names, and the number of legions they command.

³ Chap. iv.

⁴ ‘The Discouerie of Witchcraft, etc., by Reginald Scot, Esqre,’ 1584, p. 377.

Agares	31
Marbas or Barbas	36
Amon or Aamon	40
Barbatos	30
Buer	50
Gusoin	40
Botis or Otis	60
Bathin or Mathinn	30
Purson or Curson	22
Eligor or Abigor	60
Leraie or Oray	30
Valefür or Malefür	10
Morax or Forajj	36
Ipos or Ayporos	36
Naberius or Cerberus	19
Glasia Labolas or Caacrnolaas	36
Zepar	26
Bileth	85
Siri or Bitru	60
Paimon	20
Belial	none
Bune	30
Forneus	29
Ronoue	19
Berith	26
Astaroth	40
Foras or Forcas	29
Furfur	26
Marchosias	30
Malphas	40
Vepar or Separ	29
Sabnacke or Salmac	50
Sidonay or Asmoday	72
Gaap or Tap	36
Shax or Scox	30
Procell	48
Furcas	20
Murmur	30
Caim	30
Raum or Raim	30
Halphas	26
Focalor	3
Vine	none
Bifrons	26
Gamgin	30
Zagan	33
Orias	30
Valac	30
Gomory	26
Decarabia or Carabia	30
Amduscias	29
Andras	30
Andrealphus	30
Ose	none
Aym or Haborim	26
Orobas	20
Vapula	36
Cimeries	20
Amy	36
Flauros	20
Balam	40
Allocer	36
Vuall	37
Saleos	none
Haagenti	33

‘Note that a legion is 6666, and now by multiplication count how manie legions doo arise out of euerie particular,’

Or a grand total of 14,198,580 devils, not including their commanders.

How many of these fall to the share of England? I know not, but they were very active in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially in the seventeenth. They seem to us, nowadays, to have frittered away their energies in attending on witches, in entering into divers persons and tormenting them, and in making senseless uproars and playing practical jokes. Let us take about half a dozen of these latter. Say, for argument sake, that they are not very abstruse or intellectual reading; at all events, they are as good as the modern stories of spiritual manifestations, and are as trustworthy.

CHAPTER III

‘The Just Devil of Woodstock’ – Metrical Version – Presumed Genuine History of ‘The Just Devil of Woodstock.’

THE JUST DEVIL OF WOODSTOCK.⁵

‘The 16 day of *October* in the year of our Lord 1649, The Commissioners for surveying and valuing his Majesties Mannor House, Parks, Woods, Deer, Demesnes, and all things thereunto belonging, by Name Captain *Crook*, Capt. *Hart*, Capt. *Cockaine*, Capt. *Carelesse*, and Capt. *Roe* their Messenger, with Mr. *Brown* their Secretary, and two or three servants, went from *Woodstock* town (where they had lain some nights before) and took up their lodgings in his Majesties House, after this manner: The Bedchamber and withdrawing room, they both lodged in, and made their Kitchen; the Presence Chamber their room for dispatch of business with all commers: of the Councel Hall, their Brewhouse, as of the Dining room, their Woodhouse, where they laid in the clefts, of that antient standard in the High-Park, for many ages beyond memory, known by the Name of the Kings Oak, which they had chosen out, and caused to be dug up by the Roots.

‘*Octob. 17.* About the middle of the night, these new guests were first awaked, by a knocking at the Presence Chamber door, which they also conceived did open, and something to enter, which came through the room, and also walkt through the withdrawing room into the Bed chamber, and there walkt about that room with a heavy step during half an hour; then crept under the bed where Captain *Hart*, and Capt. *Carelesse* lay, where it did seeme (as it were) to bite and gnaw the Mat and Bed-coards, as if it would tear and rend the feather beds, which having done a while, then would they heave a while, and rest; then heave them up again in the bed more high than it did before, sometime on the one side, sometime on the other, as if it had tried which Captain was heaviest; thus having heaved for some half an hour, from thence it walkt out, and went under the servants’ bed, and did the like to them; thence it walkt into a withdrawing room, and there did the same to all who lodged there: Thus having welcomed them for more than two hours space, it walked out as it came in, and shut the outer door again, but with a clap of some mightie force; these guests were in a sweat all this while, but out of it falling into a sleep again, it became morning first before they spoke their minds, then would they have it to be a Dog, yet they described it more to the likenesse of a great Bear, so fell to examining under the Beds, where finding only the Mats scratcht, but the Bed-coards whole, and the quarters of Beef which lay on the floor untoucht, they entertained other thoughts.

‘*Octob. 18.* They were all awaked, as the night before, and now conceived that they heard all the great clefts of the Kings Oak brought into the Presence Chamber, and there thumpt down, and, after, roul about the room; they could hear their chairs and stools tost from one side of the room unto the other; and then (as it were) altogether jostled; thus having done an hour together, it walkt into the withdrawing room, where lodged the two Captains, the Secretary, and two servants; here stopt the thing a while, as if it did take breath, but raised a hideous tone, then walkt into the Bed-chamber, where lay those as before, and under the Bed it went, where it did heave, and heave again, that now they in bed were put to catch hold upon Bed-posts, and sometimes one of the other, to prevent their being tumbled out upon the ground; then coming out as from under the bed, and taking hold upon

⁵ ‘The Just Devil of Woodstock; or, a True Narrative of the Several Apparitions, the Frights and Punishments, inflicted upon the Rumpish Commissioners Sent thither, to Survey the Mannors and Houses belonging to His Majestie.’ London; printed in the year 1660.

the bed-posts, it would shake the whole bed, almost as if a cradle rocked; Thus, having done here for half an hour, it went into the withdrawing room, where first it came and stood at the bed's feet, and heaving up the bed's feet, flopt down again a while, until at last it heaved the feet so high, that those in bed thought to have been set upon their heads, and having thus for two hours entertained them, went out as in the night before, but with a great noise.

'*Octob. 19.* This night they awaked, not until the midst of the night, they perceived the room to shake, with something that walkt about the bed-chamber, which, having done so for a while, it walkt into a withdrawing room, where it took up a Brasse warming-pan, and returning with it into the bed-chamber, therein made so loud a noise, in these Captains' own words, it was as loud and scurvie as a ring of five untuned Bells rang backward, but the Captains, not to seem afraid, next day made mirth of what had past, and jested at the Devil in the pan.

'*Octob. 20.* These Captains and their Company, still lodging as before, were wakened in this night with some things flying about the rooms, and out of one room into the other, as thrown with some great force: Captain *Hart* being in a slumber, was taken by the shoulder and shaken until he did sit up in his bed, thinking that it had been by one of his fellows, when suddenly he was taken on the Pate with a Trencher, that it made him shrink down into the bed-clothes, and all of them, in both rooms, kept their heads, at least, within their sheets, so fiercely did three dozen of Trenchers, fly about the rooms; yet Captain *Hart* ventured again to peep out to see what was the matter, and what it was that threw, but then the Trenchers came so fast and neer about his ears, that he was fain to couch again: In the morning they found all their Trenchers, Pots and Spits, upon and about the rooms; this night there was also in several parts of the room, and outer rooms, such noises of beating at doors, and on the Walls, as if that several Smiths had been at work; and yet our Captains shrunk not from their work, but went on in that, and lodged as they had done before.

'*Octob. 21.* About midnight, they heard great knocking at every door, after a while, the doors flew open, and into the withdrawing room entred something, as of a very mighty proportion, the figure of it they knew not how to describe; this walkt a while about the room, shaking the floor at every step, then came it close to the bed side, where lay Captains *Crook* and *Carelesse*; and, after a little pause, as it were, The bed-curtains, both at sides and feet, were drawn up and down, slowly, then faster again for a quarter of an hour, then from end to end as fast as imagination could fancie the running of the rings, then shook it the beds, as if the joints thereof had crackt; then walkt the thing into the bed-chamber, and so plaid with those beds there: Then took up eight Pewter-dishes, and bouled them about the room, and over the servants in the truckle beds; then sometimes were the dishes taken up, and throwne crosse the high beds, and against the walls, and so much battered; but there were more dishes wherein was meat in the same room, that were not at all removed: During this, in the Presence Chamber there was stranger noise of weightie things thrown down, and as they supposed, the clefts of the King's Oak did roul about the room, yet at the wonted hour went away, and left them to take rest, such as they could.

'*October 22.* Hath mist of being set down, the Officers imployed in their work farther off, came not that day to *Woodstock*.

'*October 23.* Those that lodged in the withdrawing room, in the midst of the night were awakened with the cracking of fire, as if it had been with thorns and sparks of fire burning, whereupon they supposed that the bed chamber had taken fire, and, listening to it farther, they heard their fellows in bed sadly groan, which gave them to suppose they might be suffocated, wherefore they call'd upon their servants to make all possible hast to help them; when the two servants were come in, they found all asleep, and so brought back word, but that there were no bedclothes upon them, wherefore they were sent back to cover them, and to stir up and mend the fire; when the servants had covered them, and were come to the chimney, in the corners they found their wearing apparel, boots and stockings, but they had no sooner toucht the Embers, when the firebrands flew about their ears so fast, that away ran they into the other room, for the shelter of their cover-lids, then after them walkt something that

stamp about the room, as if it had been exceeding angry, and likewise threw about the Trenchers, Platters, and all such things in the room; after two hours went out, yet stamp again over their heads.

‘*October 24.* They lodged all abroad.

‘*October 25.* This afternoon came unto them Mr. *Richard Crook*, the Lawyer, brother to Captain Crook, and now Deputy-Steward of the Mannor, unto Captain *Parsons*, and Major *Butler*, who had put out Mr. Hyans his Majesties Officer: To entertain this new guest the Commissioners caused a very great fire to be made, of neere the chimney full of wood, of the King’s Oak, and he was lodged in the withdrawing room with his brother, and his servant in the same room: about the midst of the night a wonderful knocking was heard, and into the room something did rush, which, coming to the chimney side, dasht out the fire, as with the stamp of some prodigious foot, then threw down such weighty stuffe, what ere it was (they took it to be the residue of the clefts and roots of the King’s Oak) close by the bed side, that the house and bed shook with it. Captain *Cockain* and his fellow arose and took their swords to go unto the *Crooks*, the noise ceased at their rising, so that they came to the door, and called; the two brothers, though fully awaked, and heard them call, were so amazed, that they made no answer, untill Captain *Cockaine* had recovered the boldness to call very loud, and came unto their bed-side; then, faintly first, after some more assurance, they came to understand one another, and comforted the lawyer: Whilst this was thus, no noise was heard, which made them think the time was past of that nights troubles, so that, after some little conference, they applied themselves to take some rest. When Captain *Cockaine* was come to his own bed, which he had left open, he found it closely covered, which he much wondered at, but turning the clothes down, and opening it to get in, he found the lower sheet strewed over with trenchers, their whole three dozens of trenchers were orderly disposed between his sheets, which he and his fellow endeavouring to cast out, such noise arose about the room, that they were glad to get into bed with some of the trenchers; the noise lasted a full half hour after this. This entertainment so ill did like the Lawyer, and being not so well studied in the point, as to resolve this the Devil’s Law-case, that he, next day, resolved to begone, but, not having dispatht all that he came for, profit and perswasions prevailed with him to stay the other hearing, so that he lodged as he did the night before.

‘*Octob. 26.* This night each room was better furnished with fire and candle than before; yet about twelve at night came something in, that dasht all out, then did walk about the room, making a noise, not to be set forth by the comparison with any other thing, sometimes came it to the bed-sides, and drew the Curtains to and fro, then twerle them, then walk about again, and return to the bed-posts, shake them with all the bed, so that they in bed were put to hold one upon the other; then walk about the room again, and come to the servants bed, and gnaw the wainscot head – and shake altogether in that room; at the time of this being in doing, they in the bed-chamber heard such strange dropping down from the roof of the room, that they supposed ’twas like the fall of money by the sound. Captain *Cockaine* not frightened with so small a noise (and lying near the chimney) stept out, and made shift to light a candle, by the light of which he perceived the room strewed over with broken glass, green, and some as it were pieces of broken bottles. He had not long been considering what it was, when suddainly his candle was hit out, and glass flew about the room, that he made haste to the protection of the Coverlets, the noise of thundering rose more hideous than at any time before; yet, at a certain time, all vanisht into calmness. The morning after, was the glass about the room, which the maid, that was to make clean the rooms, swept up into a corner, and many came to see it. But Mr. *Richard Crooke* would stay no longer, yet as he stopt, going through *Woodstock Town*, he was there heard to say, that he would not lodge amongst them another night, for a Fee of £500.

‘*Octob. 27.* The Commissioners had not yet done their work, wherefore they must stay, and, being all men of the sword, they must not seem afraid to encounter with anything, though it be the Devill, therefore, with pistols charged, and drawn swords laied by their bed sides, they applied themselves to take some rest, when something, in the midst of night, so opened and shut the window casements, with such claps, that it awakened all that slept; some of them peeping out to look what

was the matter with the windows, stones flew about the rooms as if hurled with many hands; some hit the walls, and some the bed's head close above the pillows; the dints of which were then, and yet (it is conceived) are to be seen, thus sometime throwing stones; and sometime making thundering noise; for two hours space it ceased, and all was quiet till the morn. After their rising, and the maid come in to make the fire, they looked about the rooms; they found fourscore stones brought in that night, and, going to lay them together, in the corner, where the glass (before mentioned) had been swept up, they found that every piece of glass had been carried away that night: many people came next day to see the stones, and all observed that they were not of such kind of stones as are naturall in the countrey thereabout; with these were noises like claps of thunder, or report of Cannon planted against the rooms; heard by all that lodged in the outer courts, to their astonishment; and at *Woodstock Town*, taken to be thunder.

'*Octob. 28.* This night, both strange and differing noise from the former, first wakened Captain *Hart* who lodged in the bed-chamber, who hearing *Roe* and *Brown* to groan, called out to *Cockaine* and *Crooke* to come and help them, for *Hart* could not now stir himself. *Cockaine* would faine have answered, but he could not, or look about, something he thought, stopt both his breath and held down his eye lids. Amazed thus, he struggled and kickt about, till he had awaked Captain *Crook*, who, half asleep, grew very angry at his kicks, and multiplied words till it grew to an appointment in the field: but this fully recovered *Cockaine* to remember that Captain *Hart* had called for help, wherefore to them he ran in the other room, whom he found sadly groaning: where scraping in the chimney he found a candle and fire to light it; but had not gone two steps, when something blew the candle out, and threw him in the chair by the bed side, when presently cried out Captain *Careless*, with a most pittiful voice, Come hither, O come hither, brother *Cockaine*, the thing's gone off me. *Cockaine* scarce yet himself, helpt to set him up in his bed, and, after, Captain *Hart*; and having scarce done that to them, and also to the other two, they heard Captain *Crook* crying out, as if something had been killing him; *Cockaine* snacht up the sword that lay by their bed, and ran into the room to save *Crook*, but was in much more likelihood to kill him, for at his coming the thing that pressed *Crook*, went off him, at which *Crook* started out of his bed, when *Cockaine* thought a spirit made at him, at which *Crook* cried out Lord help, Lord save me; *Cockaine* let fall his hand, and *Crook* embracing *Cockaine* desired his reconcilment: giving him many thanks for his deliverance, then rose they all and came together, discoursed sometimes godly, and sometimes praied, for all this while was there such stamping over the roof of the house, as if 1,000 horse had there been trotting. This night, all the stones brought in the night before, and laid up in the withdrawing room, were all carried away again by that which brought them in, which at the wonted time, left off, and, as it were, went out, and so away.

'*Octob. 29.* Their businesse having now received so much forwardnesse, as to be neer dispatcht, they encouraged one the other, and resolved to try further, therefore they provided more lights and fires, and further, for their assistance, prevailed with their Ordinary Keeper to lodge amongst them, and bring his Mastive Bitch, and it was so this night with them, that they had no disturbance at all.

'*Octob. 30.* So well had they past the night before, that this night they went to bed confident and carelesse, untill, about 12 of the clock, something knockt at the door as with a smith's great hammer, but with such force as if it had cleft the door; then entred something like a Bear, but seem'd to swell more big and walkt about the room, and out of one room into the other; treading so heavily, as the floore had not been strong enough to bear it; when it came to the bed chamber, it dasht against the beds heads some kind of glasse vessell, that broke in sundry pieces; and, sometimes, it would take up those pieces, and hurle them about the room, and into the other room; and when it did not hurle the glasse at their heads, it did strike upon the tables as if many smiths, with their greatest hammers, had been laying on as upon an anvill: sometimes it thumpt against the walls, as if it would beat a hole through; then upon their heads such stamping, as if the roof of the house were beating down upon their heads, and, having done thus during the space (as was conjectured) of two hours, it ceased and vanished, but with a more fierce shutting of the doors than at any time before. In the morning they

found the pieces of glass about the room, and observed that it was much differing from that glasse, brought in three nights before, this being of a much thicker substance, which severall persons which came in carried away some pieces of. The Commissioners were in debate of lodging there no more, but all their businesse was not done, and some of them were so conceited as to believe, and to attribute the rest they enjoyed the night before this last unto the Mastive bitch; wherefore they resolved to get more company, and the Mastive bitch, and try another night.

‘*Octob. 31.* This night, the fires and lights prepared, the Ordinary Keeper and his bitch, with another man persuaded by him, they all took their beds, and fell asleep. But, about 12 at night, such rapping was on all sides of them, that it wakened all of them. As the doors did seem to open, the Mastive bitch fell fearfully a yelling, and presently ran fiercely into the bed to them in the truckle bed. As the thing came by the table, it struck so fierce a blow on that, as that it made the frame to crack; then took the warming pan from off the table and stroke it against the walls with so much force as that it was beat flat together, lid and bottom; now were they hit as they lay covered over head and ears within the bedclothes; Captain *Carelesse* was taken a sound blow on the head with the shoulder blade-bone of a dead Horse (before, they had been but thrown at when they peept up, and mist,) Brown had a shrewd blow on the leg with the back bone, and another on the head; and everyone of them felt severall blows of bones and stones through the bed clothes, for now these things were thrown as from an angry hand that meant further mischief; the stones flew in at the window as if shot out of a Gun, nor was the bursts lesse (as from without) than of a Cannon, and all the windows broken down. Now, as the hurling of the things did cease, and the thing walkt up and down, Captains *Cockaine* and *Hart* cried out, *In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, What are you? what would you have? what have we done that you disturb us thus?* No voice replied (as the Captains said, yet some of their servants have said otherwise) and the noise ceast. Hereupon Captains *Hart* and *Cockaine* rose, who lay in the Bed-chamber, renewed the fire and lights, and one great candle in a candlestick they placed in the door, that might be seen by them in both the rooms; no sooner were they got to bed, but the noise arose on all sides more loud and hideous than at any time before, in so much (as to use the Captain’s own words) it returned and brought seven Devils worse than itself; and, presently, they saw the candle and candlestick in the passage of the door, dasht up to the roof of the room, by a kick of the hinder parts of a Horse, and after, with the Hoof trod out the snuffe, and so dasht out the Fire in the Chimnies. As this was done, there fell, as from the sieling, upon them in the Truckle beds, such quantities of water, as if it had been poured out of Buckets, which stunk worse than any earthly stink could make. And, as this was in doing, something crept under the High Beds, tost them up to the roof of the House, with the Commissioners in them, until the Testers of the Beds were beaten down upon them, and the Bedsted-frames broke under them. And here, some pause being made, they all, as if with one consent, started up, and ran down the stairs until they came into the Counsel-Hall, where two sate up a Brewing, but were now fallen asleep; those they scared much with wakening of them, having been much perplext before with the strange noise, which commonly was taken by them abroad for thunder, sometimes for rumbling wind; here the Captains and their company got fire and candle, and everyone carrying something of either, they returned into the Presence-Chamber, where some applied themselves to make the fire, whilst others fell to Prayers, and, having got some clothes about them, they spent the residue of the night in singing Psalms and Prayers; during which, no noise was in that room, but most hideously round about, as at some distance.

‘It should have been told before, how that when Captain *Hare* first rose this night (who lay in the Bed-Chamber next the fire) he found their Book of valuations crosse the embers smoaking, which he snacht up, and cast upon the Table there, which, the night before, was left upon the Table in the presence, amongst their other papers. This Book was, in the morning, found a handful burnt, and had burnt the Table where it lay; *Brown* the Clerk said, he would not for a 100 and a 100l. that it had been burnt a handful further.

‘This night it happened that there were six Cony-stealers, who were come with their Nets and Ferrets to the Cony-burrows by *Rosamond’s* Well, but with the noise this night from the Mannor-house, they were so terrified, that, like men distracted, away they ran, and left their Haies all ready pitched, ready up, and the Ferrets in the Cony-burrows.

‘Now the Commissioners, more sensible of their danger, considered more seriously of their safety, and agreed to go and confer with Mr. *Hoffman*, the Minister of *Wotton* (a man not of the meanest note for life or learning, by some esteemed more high) to desire his advice, together with his company and prayers. Mr. *Hoffman* held it too high a point to resolve on suddenly and by himself, wherefore, desired time to consider upon it, which, being agreed unto, he forthwith rode to Mr. *Jenkinson* and Mr. *Wheat*, the two next Justices of Peace, to try what Warrant they could give him for it. They both (as ’tis said from themselves) encouraged him to be assisting to the Commissioners, according to his calling.

By which it is to be noted that a Presbyterian Minister dares not encounter an Independent Devil

‘But certain it is, that when they came to fetch him to go with them, Mr. *Hoffman* answered, That he would not lodge there one night, for £500, and being askt to pray with them, he held up his hands, and said, That he would not meddle upon any terms.

‘Mr. *Hoffman* refusing to undertake the quarrel, the Commissioners held it not safe to lodge where they had been thus entertained, any longer, but caused all things to be removed into the Chambers over the Gatehouse, where they staid but one night, and what rest they enjoyed there, we have but an uncertain relation of, for they went away early the next morning; but if it may be held fit to set down what hath been delivered by the report of others, they were also the same night much affrighted with dreadful apparitions; but, observing that these passages spread much in discourse, to be also in particulars taken notice of, and that the nature of it made not for their cause, they agreed to the concealing of the things for the future; yet this is well known and certain, that the Gate-keeper’s wife was in so strange an agony in her bed, and in her bed-chamber such noise (whilst her husband was above with the Commissioners) that two maids in the next room to her durst not venture to assist her, but, affrighted, ran out to call company, and their Master, and found the woman (at their coming in) gasping for breath: and the next day said that she saw and suffered that, which, for all the world, she would not be hired to again.

From *Woodstock* the Commissioners removed unto *Euelme*, and some of them returned to *Woodstock*, the Sunday sennight after (the Book of *Valuations* wanting something that was, for haste, left imperfect), but lodged not in any of those rooms where they had lain before, and yet were not unvisited (as they confess themselves) by the Devil, whom they called their nightly guest. Captain *Crooke* came not untill *Tuesday* night, and how he sped that night, the gate-keeper’s wife can tell, if she dareth; but, what she hath whispered to her gossips, shall not be made a part of this our Narrative, nor any more particulars which have fallen from the Commissioners themselves, and their servants to other persons; they are all, or most of them alive, and may add to it when they please, and, surely, have not a better way to be revenged of him who troubled them, than according to the Proverb, tell truth and shame the Devil.

There remains this observation to be added, that on a Wednesday morning, all these Officers went away; And that, since then, diverse persons of severall qualities, have lodged often and sometimes long in the same rooms both in the presence, withdrawing room and bed Chamber belonging unto his Sacred Majesty, yet none have had the least disturbance, or heard the smallest noise, for which the cause was not as ordinary, as apparent; except the Commissioners and their company, who came in order to the alienating and pulling down the house, which is well nigh performed.’

As to the authenticity of the above, we are told in the Preface: ‘And now, as to the Penman of this Narrative, know that he was a Divine, and, at the time of those things acted, which are here related, the Minister and Schoolmaster of *Woodstock*, a person learned and discreet, nor byassed with factious humours, his name *Widows*, who, each day, put in writing what he heard from their mouthes, (and such things as they told to have befallen them the night before), therein keeping to their own words.’

There was also a metrical account⁶ of these strange doings, printed in the year in which they occurred; but although it exactly tallies with the prose as above, it is not written in so refined a strain.

The *British Magazine* for April, 1747 (vol. ii., p. 156) professes to give ‘The genuine history of the good devil of *Woodstock*, famous in the world in the year 1649, and never accounted for, or at all understood to this time.’ It is by an anonymous writer, who says he found it in some original papers which had lately fallen into his hands, ‘under the name of authentick memoirs of the memorable *Joseph Collins* of Oxford, commonly known by the name of *funny Joe*,’ and it puts forth that this said Joe, under the name of Giles Sharp, entered the service of the Commissioners as a servant, and with the help of two friends, an unknown trap-door in the ceiling of the bedchamber, and some fulminating mercury, played the part of the Devil; but as the document is not known to be in existence, and is only mentioned in the pages of a magazine a hundred years afterwards, the reader may attach whatever credit he pleases to it. At all events, it proves that something very extraordinary, according to popular rumour, did take place at Woodstock during the Commissioners’ occupation.

⁶ ‘The Woodstock Scuffle; or Most Dreadfull Apparitions that were lately seene in the Mannor-House of Woodstock, neere Oxford, to the great Terror and Wonderful Amazement of all there, that did Behold them.’ 1649.

CHAPTER IV

‘The Dæmon of Tedworth.’

‘THE DÆMON OF TEDWORTH.’⁷

‘Master *John Mompesson*, of *Tedworth* in *Wiltshire*, being about the middle of *March*, in the year 1661, at a neighbouring Town, called *Ludgarshal*, heard a *Drum* beat there, and being concerned as a *Commission Officer* in the *Militia*, he enquired of the *Bayliffe* of the Town, at whose House he then was, what it meant. The *Bayliffe* told him that they had for some dayes been troubled by that *Idle Drummer*, who demanded money of the *Constable*, by virtue of a pretended pass, which he thought was counterfeit. Upon this Information Master *Mompesson* sent for the fellow, and ask’d him by what *Authority* he went up and down the Countrey in that manner, demanding money, and keeping a clutter with his *Drum*? The *Drummer* answered he had good *Authority*, and produced his pass, with a warrant under the hands of Sir *William Cawly* and Colonel *Ayliffe* of *Gretenham*. These papers discover’d the knavery, for M. *Mompesson* knowing those Gentlemen’s hands, found that his pass and warrant were *forgeries*; and upon the discovery, commanded the *vagrant* to put off his *Drum*, and charged the *Constable* to carry him to the next *Justice of Peace*, to punish him according to the desert of his *Insolence* and *Roguery*. The fellow then confest the *cheat*, and begg’d earnestly for his *Drum*. But M. *Mompesson* told him that if he understood from Colonel *Ayliffe*, whose *Drummer* he pretended to be, that he had been an honest man, he should have it again; but in the interim he would secure it. So he left the *Drum* with the *Bayliffe*, and the *Drummer* in the *Constable*’s hands; who, it seems, after, upon intreaty, let him go.

‘About the midst of *April* following, when M. *M.* was preparing for a Journey to *London*, the *Bayliffe* sent the *Drum* to his house; and, being returned, his wife told him that they had been much affrighted in the night by *Thieves*, during his absence; and that the House had like to have been broken up. He had not been at home above three nights, when the same noise returned that had disturbed his Family when he was abroad. It was a very great *knocking* at his Doors, and the out side of his House. M. *M.* arose, and with a brace of Pistols in his hands, went up and down searching for the cause of the Disturbance. He open’d the door, where the great knocking was, and presently the noise was at another. He opened that also, and went forth, rounding his House, but could discover nothing; only he still heard a strange noise and hollow sound; but could not perceive what was the occasion of it. When he was returned to his Bed, the noise was a *Thumping* and *Drumming* on the top of his House, which continued a good space, and then by degrees went off into the Air.

‘After this *It* would come 5 nights together, and absent itself 3. Knocking very hard at the out-sides of the House, which is most of it, of Board. This *It* did, constantly, as they were going to sleep, either early or late. After a month’s racket without, *It* came into the room where the *Drum* lay, where *It* would be 4 or 5 nights in 7, making great hollow sounds, and sensibly shaking the Beds and Windows. *It* would come within half an hour after they were in Bed, and stay almost two. The sign of *Its* approach was an *hurling* in the Air over the House; and at *Its* recess they should hear a *Drum* beat, like the breaking up of a Guard. *It* continued in this Room for the space of two months; the Gentleman himself lying there to observe *It*: and though *It* was very troublesome in the fore part of

⁷ ‘Palpable Evidence of Spirits and Witchcraft, in an Account of the Fam’d Disturbance by the Drummer, in the House of M. Mompesson, etc.’ London, 1668.

the night, yet, after two hours disturbance, *It* would desist, and leave all in quietness: At which time perhaps the Laws of the *Black Society* required *Its* presence at the general *Rendezvous* elsewhere.

‘About this time the Gentleman’s Wife was brought to Bed; the noise came a little that night she was in Travail, but then forbore for three weeks till she had recover’d strength. After this *civil cessation*, it return’d in a *ruder* manner than before, applying wholly to the younger children; whose Bedsteads *It* would beat with that violence that all present would expect, when they would fall in pieces. Those that laid their hands upon them, could feel no blows, but perceived them to shake exceedingly. *It* would for an hour together beat, what they Call Roundheads and Cuckolds – the Tattoo, and several other Points of Warre, and that as dextrously as any Drummer. After which *It* would get under the Bed, and scratch there as if *It* had Iron Tallons. *It* would lift the children up in their Beds, follow them from one room to another; and, for a while, applied to none particularly but them.

‘There was a Cock-loft in the House which had been observed hitherto to be untroubled; thither they removed their children, putting them to bed while it was fair day: and yet they were no sooner covered, but the *unwelcome Visitant* was come, and played his tricks as before.

‘On the 5th of *Novemb. 1662. It* kept a mighty noise, and one of the Gentleman’s Servants observing two Boards in the children’s room that seemed to move, he bade *It* give him one of them, and presently the Board came within a yard of him. The Fellow added, *Nay, let me have it in my hand*: upon which it was shuft quite home. The man thrust it back, and the Dæmon returned it to him, and so from one to another at least 20 times together, till the Gentleman forbade his servant such *Familiarities*. That morning *It* left a *Sulphurous smell* behind *It*, very *displeasent* and *offensive*... At night the Minister of the place, Mr. *Cragge*, and many of the Neighbours came to the House – and went to prayer at the Children’s Bed-side, where, at that time *It* was very troublesome and loud. During the time of *Prayer* *It* with-drew into the Cock-Loft, but, the Service being ended, *It* returned; and in the sight and presence of the company, the *Chairs* walked about the Room, the Children’s Shooes were thrown over their heads, and every loose thing moved about the Chamber; also a Bed staffe was thrown at the *Minister*, which hit him on the Leg, but so favourably, that a lock of Wooll could not have fallen more softly. And a circumstance more was observed, viz., that it never in the least roul’d, nor mov’d from the place where it lighted.

‘The Gentleman perceiving that *It* so much persecuted the little Children, lodg’d them out at a Neighbour’s House, and took his eldest daughter, who was about 10 years of Age, into his own Chamber, where *It* had not been in a month before. But no sooner was she in Bed, but the troublesome Guest was with her, and continued his unquiet visits for the space of three weeks, during which time *It* would beat the Drum, and exactly answer any Tune that was knock’d, or called for. The House where the Gentleman had lodged his Children, being full of Strangers, he was forced to take them home again; and, because they had never observed any disturbance in the Parlor, he laid them there, where also their old Visitant found them; but, at this time, troubled them no otherwise than by plucking them by the hair and night-cloathes.

‘*It* would sometimes lift up the Servants with their Beds, and lay them down again gently, without any more prejudice than the fright of being carried to the *Drummer’s* quarters. And at other times *It* would lie like a great weight upon their Feet.

‘Twas observed, that when the noise was loudest, and came with the most *suddain* and *surprizing violence*, yet no Dog would move. The Knocking was oft so boysterous and rude, that it hath been heard at a considerable distance in the Fields, and awakened the Neighbours in the Village, none of which live very near this house.

‘About the latter end of *Decemb. 1662. the Drummings* were less frequent, and the noise the *Fiend* made, was a *gingling*, as it had been of money, occasioned, as ’twas thought, by some discourse of an antient Gentlewoman, Mother to M. M. (who was one day saying to a Neighbour that talked of *Fairies leaving money*, that she should like *It* well, if *It* would leave them some to make amends for the trouble *It* made them) for that night there was a great *chinking* of money all the house over; but he that

rose earliest the next morning, was ne're a groat the richer. After this *It* desisted from its *runder noises*, and employed *It* self about little *apish Tricks*, and less troublesome *Caprichios*. On *Christmas Eve*, an hour before day, one of the little Boyes arising out of his Bed, was hit on a sore place in his Heel by the latch of the Door, which the *waggish Dæmons* had pluckt out and thrown at him. The Pin that fastened it was so small, that 'twas for the credit of his *Opticks* that he pick't it out without Candle-light. The night after *Christmas Day*, *It* threw all the old Gentlewoman's Cloaths about the Room, and hid her *Bible* in the Ashes. In such *impertinent ludicrous fagaries*, it was frequent. After *this* the *Spirit* was very troublesome to a Servant of M. *Mompesson's*, who was a stout fellow, and of sober conversation... His Master permitted him to give this proof of his courage, and lodg'd him in the next room to his own. There was *John engarrison'd*, and provided for the assault with a trusty Sword, and other implements of War. And, for some time, there was scarce a night past without some doubtly action and encounter, in which the success was various. One while, *John's* bag and baggage would be in the enemy's power, *Doublet* and *Breeches* surprized, and his Shooes raised in *rebellion* against him; and then *lusty John* by *Dint* of Weapon recovers all again, suppresseth the *insurrection* of his *Shooes*, and holds his own in spite of *Satan* and the *Drummer*. And for the most part, our combatant came off with honour and advantage, except when his enemy outwatch'd and surprized him, and then he's made a prisoner, bound hand and foot, and at the mercy of the *Goblin*; till he hath got the opportunity of recovering his *Diabolical Blade*, and then our Champion is in good plight again...

'About the beginning of Jan. 1662 they were wont to hear a *singing* in the *chimney*, before *It* came down. And one night, about this time, Lights were seen in the House: One of which came into M. *Mompesson's* Chamber, which seemed *blue* and *glimmering*, and caused a great stiffness in their eyes that saw it. After this light, something was heard coming up the Stairs, as if it had been some one without Shooes. The light was also 4 or 5 times seen in the Children's Chamber; and the Maids confidently affirm that the doors were at least ten times opened, and shut in their sight. They heard a noise at the same time when the Doors were opened, as if half a dozen had entred in together. After which, some were heard to walk about the room, and one rusled as if it had been in silk. The like M. *M.* himself once heard.

'During the time of the Knocking, when many were present, a Gentleman of the company said, *Satan*, If the *Drummer* sets thee a work, give three Knocks, and no more, which *It* did very distinctly, and stopt. Then the Gentleman knockt, to see if *It* would answer him as *It* was wont, but *It* remained quiet. He further tryed *It* the same way, bidding *It*, for confirmation, if *It* were the *Drummer*, to give 5 Knocks and no more that night, which *It* did accordingly, and was silent all the night after. This was done in the presence of Sir *Tho. Chamberlain* of *Oxfordshire* and several others.

'On *Saturday* morning, Jan. 10. an hour before day, the *Drum* was beaten upon the out-sides of M. *Mompesson's* Chamber, from whence *It* went to the other end of the House, where some Gentlemen, Strangers, lay, playing at their door, and without, 4 or 5. several Times, and so went off into the Air.

'The next night, a Smith of the Village lying with *John*, they heard a noise in the room, as if one had been shooing of a horse there; and somewhat came, as it were, with a pair of *Pincers*, and snipt at the Smith's Nose, most part of the Night.

'One morning M. *Mompesson* rising early to go a Journey, heard a great noise below, where the Children lay, and, running down, with a Pistol in his hand, heard this voice, *A Witch, A Witch*, as they had also heard it once before; but, upon his entrance, all was quiet. Having, one night played some little pranks at M. *Mompesson's* Bed's feet, *It* went into another Bed, in which one of his Daughter's lay, where *It* passed from side to side, and lifted her up, as *It* went under her. At that time there were three kindes of noises in the Bed. They endeavoured to thrust at *It* with a *Sword*, but *It* very carefully avoided them, still skipping under the Child, when they were ready to thrust. The night after, *It* came *panting* like a Dog out of breath; upon which one took a Bed-Staff to knock, which was taken out of her hand, and thrown away with some violence. Upon this the company came up, and, presently, the

room was filled with a *bloomy noysome* smell, and was very *hot*; though without Fire, and in midst of a very *sharp* and *severe* winter. *It* continued in the Bed, panting and scratching an hour and half, and then went into the next Chamber, where it knock'd a little, and seemed to rattle a chain. Thus it did for two or three nights together.

'After this, the old Gentlewoman's Bible was found in the Ashes open, the paper side being downwards. M. *Mompesson* took it up, and observed that it lay open at the third chapter of S. *Mark*, in which there is mention of the *unclean spirits falling down before our Saviour*; of his *giving power to the 12 to cast out Devils*, and of the *Scribes' opinion*, that he *cast them out through Beelzebub*. The next night they strewed ashes over the Chamber, to see what *impressions* *It* would leave. And in the morning, found in one place the resemblance of a great Claw, in another, of a lesser; some Letters in another, which they could make nothing of; besides many *Circles* and *Scratches* in the Ashes; all which, I suppose, were *ludicrous* devices, by which the *sportful Daemon* made *pastime* with human *Ignorance* and *Credulity*.

'About this time, my⁸ curiosity drew me to the House, to be a witness of some of those strange passages. *It* had ceased from *It's* pranks of *Drumming*, and *ruder noises*, before I came; but most of the more remarkable circumstances before related were confirmed to me there, by several of the Neighbours together, who had been present at them. At that time *It* used to haunt the Children; I heard *It* scratch very loudly and distinctly in their Bed, behind the Boulster. I thrust in my hand to the place where the noise seemed to be, upon which *It* withdrew to another part of the Bed; and, upon the taking out of my hand, *It* returned as before. I had heard of *It's* imitating noises, and therefore made the trial, by scratching certain determinate times upon the Sheet, as 5. and 7. and 10. which *It* did also, and still stopt at my number. After a while *It* went into the midst of the Bed, under the Children, and there *panted* like a Dog, very loudly. I put my hand upon the place, and felt the Bed bear up against it, as if something had thrust it up; but, by grasping, could feel nothing but the Feathers: and there was nothing under it. The motion *It* caused by this *panting* was so strong, that it shook the Rooms and Windows. *It* continued thus for more than half an hour, while I stayed, and as long after. I was certain that there could be no *fallacy* nor *deceit* in these passages, which I critically examined; and I am sure there was nothing of *fear* or *imagination* in the case; for I was no more concerned than I am at the Writing this Relation.

'But to proceed with M. *Mompesson's* own particulars.

'There came one morning a light into the Children's Chamber, and the voice, crying, *A Witch, A Witch*, for at least an hundred times together. M. *M.* seeing at a time some Wood move that was in the Chimney, when no one was near, discharged a Pistol into it; after which they found several drops of Blood on the Hearth, and in divers places of the Stairs.

There was a seeming *calm* in the House for 2 or 3 nights after the discharge of the Pistol; but then *It* came again, applying *Itself* to a little Child, newly taken from Nurse; which it so persecuted, that *It* would not let the poor Infant rest for two nights together, nor suffer a Candle in the Room, but would carry them away up the *Chimney*, or throw them under the Bed. *It* so scared this Child by leaping upon it, that for some hours, it could not be recovered out of the fright. Insomuch as they were inforced again to remove the Children out of the House. The next night, after they were gone, something about midnight came up the Stairs, and knockt at M. *Mompesson's* door; but he, lying still, *It* went up another pair of Stairs, to his Man's Chamber, to whom *It* appeared, standing at his Bed's foot. The exact shape and proportion he could not discover; but saw a great body, with two *red* and *glaring* eyes, which for some time were fixt steddily upon him, and, at length, disappeared.

'Another night, Strangers being present, *It* purr'd in the Children's Bed like a *Cat*; and at that time the Cloaths and Children were lift up from the Bed, and 6 men could not keep them down.

⁸ The writer was the Rev. Joseph Glanville, M.A., F.R.S., Chaplain in Ordinary to King Charles II., Rector of the Abbey Church, Bath, and a Prebendary of Worcester.

Upon this they removed them from thence, intending to have ript open the Bed: but they were no sooner laid in another, but this second Bed was more troubled than the former. *It* continued thus 4 hours, and so beat the Children's legs against the Bed-posts, that they were forced to arise, and sit up all night. After this *It* would empty Chamber-pots into their Beds, and strew them with Ashes; and that though they were never so carefully watch't, *It* put a long piked Iron into M. *Mompesson's* Bed, and, into his Mother's, a naked Knife upright. It would fill porringers with Ashes, throw every thing about, and keep a noise all day.

'About the beginning of April 1663. a Gentleman that lay in the house had all his money turn'd black in his Pockets. And M. *Mompesson*, one morning, coming into his Stable, found the Horse he was wont to ride, on the ground, with one of his hinder Legs in his mouth, and so fastned there, that 'twas difficult work for several men, with a Leaver, to get it out. After this there were some other remarkable things; but my *account* goes no farther: Only M. *Mompesson* told me, that afterwards the house was several nights beset with 7 or 8 in the shape of men, who, as soon as a Gun was discharged, would shuffle away together into an Arbour.

'The Drummer was tryed at the *Assize* at *Salisbury*, condemned to the *Islands*, and was, accordingly, sent away: but I know not how, made a shift to come back again. And 'tis observable, that during all the time of his restraint, and absence, the House was in quiet; but, as soon as ever he came back, the disturbance also returned. He had been a Souldier under Crumwel, and used to talk much of gallant Books he had of an odd Fellow's, who was counted a Wizard.'

CHAPTER V

‘The Dæmon of Burton’ – ‘Strange and Wonderful News from Yowel, in Surrey’ – The Story of Mrs. Jermin – A Case at Welton – ‘The Relation of James Sherring.’

The next case (in chronological order) that I have met with is very similar to that of Mompesson, and, like that, shows the trivialities to which this species of Devil could descend, apparently, with no object.

‘THE DÆMON OF BURTON.’⁹

‘There is a Farm in *Burton*, a *Village* in the Parish of *Weobley*, in this County,¹⁰ which Mr. *William Bridges*, a Linnen-Draper in *London*, has in Mortgage from one *Thomas Tompkins*, a decay’d Yeoman man. This Farm was, about Michaelmas, 1669. taken by Lease by Mrs. *Elizabeth Bridges*, to commence from *February* then next; Soon after this Tenant was entered on the Farm, and lodg’d in the House, some *Familiar* began to act apish Pranks, by knocking boldly at the door in the dusk of the Evening, and the like, early in the Morning, but no body to be seen.

‘After this, the Stools and Forms, though left in their proper places, were, every night set round the fire, which the Tenant perceiving, she set them next night under the Table, and next morning they were found set orderly about the fire as before, and a continual noise of Cats heard all night, but never seen.

‘Afterwards, the Tenant having in a Room a heap of Malt, and another of Vetches, the two parcels were found next morning exactly mingled together, and put into a new heap.

‘Another time she had baked a Batch of Bread, and laid the Loaves over night on a Table; next morning the Loaves were all gone, and, after search made, they were found in another Room, hid in Tubs, and covered with linnen Cloathes, and all this while the Tenant had the keys of the doors in her pocket, and found the doors in the morning fast lock’d as she left them over night: so, also, her Cheeses and meat were often carried out of one Room into another, whilst the doors were fast lock’d, and sometimes convey’d into the Orchard.

‘Then the Tenant having set Cabbidg-Plants in her Garden, in the night the Plants were pull’d up, and laid in several formes, as Crosses, Flower-de-Luces, and the like. She caus’d them to be set again, and the Ground finely raked about, to the end they might see if any footsteps might be discovered in the morning, when the Plants were found pull’d up as before, and no track or footstep to be found or perceived; the Plants were set a third time, and then they continued unmoved.

‘She had in her Cheese-chamber many Cheeses upon Shelves, and a Bag of Hops in the same Room. One night, the Cheeses were all laid on the floor in several formes, and the Hops all strewed about the Room, and the Chamber door found fast lock’d in the morning.

‘Another night in the Buttery there were several dishes of cold Meat left upon a hanging Shelf; in the morning, the Table Cloath was found orderly laid on the Floor, and the Dishes set on it, and most of the Meat eaten, onely a manners bit left in every Dish; yet there were silver Spoons, which lay by the Dishes, and none of them diminished.

⁹ ‘The Dæmon of Burton; or, A True Relation of Strange Witchcrafts, or Incantations, lately practised at Burton, in the Parish of Weobley, in Herefordshire. Certified in a Letter from a Person of Credit in Hereford.’ London, 1671.

¹⁰ Herefordshire.

‘At another time she had left half a roasted Pig, which was design’d for breakfast next day, when the Pig was call’d for, there was not one bit of either Skin or Flesh left, but the Bones of the Pig, lay orderly in the Dish, and not one of them unjoynted or misplac’d.

‘Whilst these, and many other such pleasant tricks were play’d in the Rooms that were lock’d to make a discovery of any deceipt, if possible, the entrance of the doors were all strew’d with sifted ashes, and no footstep or track of anything was found in the morning, when such pranks were play’d in the Room.

‘One night the Tenant having bought a quart of Vinegar in a Bottel, she set it in her Dairy-house, where there were six Cows Milk. In the Morning she found her Bottle empty, and her milk all turned, and made into a perfect Posset, with the Vinegar.

‘And the Cheeses were sometimes convey’d by night out of the Cheese Chamber, and put into the Trines of Milk in the Dairy-house.

‘The Tenant had, likewise, divers of her Cattel that dyed in a strange manner, among others, a Sow that leap’d and danc’d in several unusual postures, and, at last fell down dead.

‘The *Hagg*, having thus for above a moneth together, almost every night acted the part of *Hocus pocus Minor*, lay quiet for some moneths, and then began to act the *Major*, and do greater mischiefs; and to this purpose, One night, as the Tenant and her Maid were going to bed, and passing by the Hall, which was dressed with green boughs tyed on the Posts, after the Country fashion, they were all of a flame, and no fire had been made in that Room of a fortnight before, nor any Candle that night; but the fire was soon quenched by throwing water on it, yet an outcry being made, the neighbours came in, and watched the House all night.

‘Not long after, a Loft of Hay, dry, and well Inned, was set on fire in the daytime, and was, most of it, burnt, with the house it lay in; and no way could be found how it should come to pass, but by the same black hand.

‘And, after some time, a Mow of pulse and pease was likewise fired in the daytime, and all the grayn either burnt or spoiled, and in the middle of the bottom of the Mow were found dead burnt Coales, which in all the Spectators Judgements, could not be conveyed thither but by Witchcraft.

‘After these dreadful fires, which did endanger the whole Village had they not been at length quench’d by a numerous Company of the Neighbours, who came in to the Tenant’s Assistance, the poor Tenant dirst stay no longer in the House, but quitted it, with all her losses, when one *John Jones* a valiant Welchman of the neighbourhood, would needs give a signal proof of his Brittish Valour, and to that purpose undertook to lye in the House, and to incounter the *Hagg*, to which end he carried with him a large Basket hilted Sword, a Mastive Dog, and a Lanthorn and Candle to burn by him; he had not long lain on the Bed, with his Dog, and Sword ready drawn by him, but he heard a great Knocking at the Door, and many Cats, as he conceived, came into his Chamber, broke the Windows, and made a hideous noise, at which the Mastive howl’d and quak’d, and crept close to his Master; the Candle went out, and the Welchman fell into a cold sweat, left his Sword unused, and with much adoe found the door, and ran half a Mile without ever looking behind him; protesting, next day, he would not lye another night in the House, for a hundred pounds.’

The next in point of time is the following:

‘STRANGE AND WONDERFUL NEWS FROM YOWEL¹¹ IN SURREY.’¹²

‘On *Thursday*, the 5th of *October*, one Mr. *Tuers*, a Gentleman, living at *Yowell* in the County of *Surry*, together with his wife, went forth upon occasion, leaving their Servant Maid, *Elizabeth*

¹¹ Ewell.

¹² ‘Strange and Wonderful News from Yowel in Surry, giving a True and Just Account of One Elizabeth Burgiss, who was most strangely Bewitched,’ etc. London, 1681.

Burgiss, at home, to officiate in their absence, as she found occasion. In the meantime, or interim, one *Joan Butts*, a person that hath been for a long time suspected to be a *Witch*, came to the house of the aforesaid Mr. *Tuers*, and, framing some discourse to the Maid before named, she, at last, askt her for a pair of old Gloves; the Maid knowing her to be a person of ill repute, and being willing to be rid of her company, gave her a very short and sharp answer, telling her that she had no Gloves for her, or, if shee had, she could not spare time to look them out; whereupon this *Joan Butts* went away, but in a little time returned, asking the aforesaid Maid for a Pin to pin her Neckcloth, which she furnished her with, and so this *Joan Butts* departed, leaving the Maid without any dread or fear of any harm.

‘But, about fourteen days after, there happened strange and miraculous wonders, amazing and frightening all the Spectators; for stones flew about the Yard at such a strange rate, as if it had rained down showers of them, and many of them were as big as a man’s fist, and afterwards flew as thick about the House as before they did about the Yard, notwithstanding the doors were close shut, yet for all (that) they flew so thick about, they hit nobody but the Maid, to the great astonishment of her Master, Mistris and others; but more to be admired, the next day this maid was suddenly attacked with intolerable pain in her back, and such unsufferable pricking of Pins, that she was not able to endure, or without lamentable complaining. The groans and skreeches she sometimes parted with, would have moved a stony heart to pity her distress, and Mr. *Tuers*, her Master, commiserating her condition, asked if he should put his hand down her back, and feel what might be the cause of her pain or Torment, which she willingly agreed to, and, to the amazement of all persons present, pulled out a great piece of Clay as full of Pins as it could well be, and throwing them into the fire, she was for that present at great ease. But, after that, a second Torment did seize this Maid, which caused her to complain more grievously and lamentably than before; whereupon one Mr. *Waters* put his hand down her back, and pulled out a piece of Clay as thick of Thorns, as the other of Pins, so, throwing them into the fire, she was again at ease for that time.

‘The next day, as she was going a Milking, she saw, in *Nonsuch Park*, this wretched old Caitiff sitting amongst the Thorns and Bushes, bedaggl’d up to the Knees in Dew, and looking like one that had lately had converse with some Infernal Fiend; and, wondring to see her there so early, in that pickle (being, as it were, doubtful of her wickedness); and supposing her to be the cause of her (before mentioned) pain and misery, returned home to her Master’s house, telling him how she saw this *Joan Butts* in the place before named, adding in what strange garb and posture she sat in; which added to the suspicion of the (before doubtful) Master.

‘But the same night the Maid going into the chamber where she lay, to fetch a Trunk which was intended to be sent to *London*, all on a sudden cryed out, Master, Master, here is the old Woman: the master running hastily to see whether it were so or no, could see no old woman, but the Andirons thrown after the maid, and all her own Linnen thrown about at such a rate, as it is hard to believe, but that it will, upon occasion, be attested by unquestionable Evidence; and likewise a Wooden Bar which belonged to the street door, was strangely removed and conveyed up stairs, and came tumbling down after the maid, in the sight of her master.

‘About three days after, they were surprized with new wonders, for there was to be seen such sights as they never saw before, viz., the Bellows flew about the house, and Candlesticks and other things thrown after the Girl as she passed to and fro in her master’s house; and, going to her Mother’s house, which was at *Astead*, about three miles distant from *Yowel*, such numberless numbers of stones were thrown at her, that she found it hazardous to Travel, but had she returned, it might have been the same; and so she continued till she came to her mother’s house, where, on Sunday the 9th of *October*, they were possest with admiration, as well as those of her Master’s Family, for her Grandfather’s Britches were strangely found to be on the top of the house, as near as can be imagined, over his Bed; and, besides, such great quantities of Nuts and Acorns flew about, that the Spectators never beheld the like before. The pewter danced about the house in a strange manner, and hits a Gentleman such a blow on the back, that I suppose he will have but little stomach hereafter, to go to see the Devil dance.

‘But the same day happened another Wonder, no less strange than what is before recited, for there was a Fiddle close laid up in a Chest, which was strangely, and unknown to any of the house, hung up in the room, and, after, was removed to the top of the Bed-Tester, and, the third time, carried quite away, and hath no more been seen since.

‘But, on Thursday, the 18th of this present *October*, there being a Fair kept at *Yowel*, the mother of this afflicted maid came thither, and, meeting with this old suspected *Witch* (whom she had great reason to imagine so to be,) fell foul upon her, and so evilly Treated her, that she fetcht out some of her Hellish Blood, but the effects and event thereof, I must get time to acquaint you with.’

The Rev. Joseph Glanvill was a great collector of these stories, and after his death many were published, as being found among his papers. One is a story of a Mr. Jermin, minister of Bigner in Sussex, who had noises in his house like guns going off whilst it seemed that people ran swiftly down stairs, into his chamber, and there seemed to wrestle, whilst one day, when a physician was dining with him ‘there came a Man on Horseback into the Yard, in Mourning. His Servant went to know what was his Business, and found him sitting very Melancholy, nor could he get any Answer from him. The Master of the House and the Physician went to see who it was; upon which, the Man clapt spurs to his Horse, and rode into the House, up Stairs into a long Gallery, whither the Physician followed him, and saw him vanish in a Fire at the upper end of the Gallery. But though none of the Family received hurt at any time, yet Mr. *Jermin* fell into a Fever with the Disturbance he experienced, that endangered his Life.’

Then we have the story of an extremely uncomfortable house ‘at Welton, within a mile of Daventry,’ where the younger daughter, ten years of age, took to vomiting three gallons of water in less than three days, and afterwards stones and coals, in number about five hundred. ‘Some weighed a quarter of a Pound, and were so big, as they had enough to do to get them out of her mouth... This Vomiting lasted about a Fortnight, and hath Witnesses good store.’ Things got rather lively in the house, and were thrown about; the Bible, being laid upon a bed, was hid in another bed; the things from the parlour were turned out into the hall; their milk was spilt, their beer mixed with sand, and their salt with bran. The man of the house, one Moses Cowley, seems to have had an especially bad time of it. ‘A knife rose up in the Window, and flew at him, hitting him with the Haft;’ and, to make the place more uncomfortable, ‘Every day abundance of Stones were thrown about the House, which broke the windows, and hit the people.’ Probably the Devil was disappointed, inasmuch as ‘they were the less troubled because, all this while no hurt was done to their Persons,’ and after a while the persecution ceased, with the exception of ‘great Knockings, and cruel Noise.’

Then there is ‘The Relation of *James Sherring*, taken concerning the matter at old *Gast’s* House of *Little Burton*.

‘The first Night I was there with *Hugh Mellmore* and *Edward Smith*, they heard, as it were, the Washing in Water over their Heads. Then, taking a Candle, and going up Stairs, there was a wet Cloth thrown at them, but it fell on the Stairs. They going up farther, there was another thrown as before. And, when they were come up into the Chamber, there stood a Bowl of Water, some of it sprinkled over, and the Water looked white, as if there had been Soap used in it. The Bowl, just before, was in the Kitchin, and could not be carried up but through the Room where they were. The next thing that they heard, the same Night, was a terrible noise, as if it had been a clap of Thunder, and, shortly after, they heard great scratching about the Bed stead, and, after that, great Knocking with a Hammer against the Beds-head, so that the two Maids that were in the Bed cryed out for Help. Then they ran up the stairs, and there lay the Hammer on the bed, and on the Beds-head there were near a Thousand Prints of the Hammer, which the violent Strokes had made. The maids said they were scratcht and pinchd with a Hand that was put into the Bed, which had exceeding long Nails. They said the Hammer was lockt up fast in the Cup board when they went to Bed.

‘The second Night that *James Sherring*, and *Tho. Hillary* were there, *James Sherring* sat down in the Chimney to fill a pipe of Tobacco, he made use of the Fire-tongs to take up a Coal to light his

Pipe, and by and by the Tongs were drawn up the Stairs, and after they were up in the Chamber, they were play'd withal (as many times Men do) and then thrown down upon the Bed. Although the Tongs were so near him, he never perceived the going of them away. The same Night one of the Maids left her Shoes by the Fire, and they were carried up into the Chamber, and the old Man's brought down, and set in their places. The same Night there was a Knife carried up into the Chamber, and it did scratch and scrape the Bed's head all the Night; but, when they went up into the Chamber, the Knife was thrown into the Loft. As they were going up the Stairs, there were things thrown at them, which were, just before in the low Room, and when they went down the Stairs, the old Mans Breeches were thrown down after them. These were the most remarkable things done that Night, only there was continual knocking and pinching the Maids, which was usually done every Night.'

There is a great deal more of this case, which reads like the senseless phenomena of a spiritual séance, but we will pass on to

CHAPTER VI

A Demon in Gilbert Campbell's Family – Case of Sir William York – Case of Ian Smagge – Disturbances at Stockwell

‘A REMARKABLE STORY TOUCHING THE STIRS MADE BY A DÆMON IN THE FAMILY OF ONE GILBERT CAMPBELL, BY PROFESSION A WEAVER, IN THE OLD PARISH OF GLENLUCE, IN GALLOWAY, IN SCOTLAND

‘It happened in October 1654, that after one *Alexander Agnew*, a bold and sturdy Beggar, who, afterwards, was hang'd at *Dumfries*, for Blasphemy, had threatened hurt to *Gilbert Campbel's* family, because he had not gotten such an Alms as he required; the said *Gilbert* was oftentimes hindred in the exercise of his Calling, all his working Instruments being, some of them broken, some of them cut, and yet could not know by what means this hurt was done. Which piece of trouble did continue till about the middle of *November*; at which time the Devil came with new and extraordinary Assaults, by throwing of Stones in at Doors and Windows, and down through the Chimney head, which were of great quantity, and thrown with great force, yet by God's good Providence, there was not one Person of the family hurt, or suffer'd damage thereby. This piece of new and sore Trouble did necessitate Mr. *Campbel* to reveal that to the Minister of the Parish, and to some other Neighbours and Friends, which, hitherto, he had endured secretly. Yet notwithstanding this, his Trouble was enlarged; for, not long after, he found oftentimes his Warp and Threads cut as with a pair of Sizzars, and the Reed broken; and not only this, but their Apparel cut after the same manner, even while they were wearing them, their Coats, Bonnets, Hose, Shoes, but could not discern how, or by what means. Only, it pleased God to preserve their Persons, that the least harm was not done. Yet in the Night-time they wanted liberty to Sleep, something coming and pulling their Bed-clothes and Linnens off them, and leaving their Bodies naked.

‘Next, their Chests and Trunks were opened, and all things in them strewed here and there: Likewise the parts of the working Instruments that had escaped, were carried away, and hid in holes and bores of the House, where hardly they could be found again: Nay, whatever piece of Cloth or Household stuff was in any part of the House, it was carried away, and so cut and abused, that the Good-man was necessitated, with all haste and speed to remove, and to transport the rest to a Neighbour's House, and he himself compell'd to quit the Exercise of his Calling, whereby only he maintained his Family. Yet he resolv'd to remain in the House for a season. During which time some Persons thereabout, not very judicious, counselled him to send his Children out of the Family, here and there, (to try whom the Trouble did most follow, assuring him that this Trouble was not against all the Family, but against some one Person or other in it) whom he too willingly obeyed. Yet for the space of 4 or 5 Days after, there were no remarkable assaults, as before.’

After the Devil had twice set this poor man's house on fire, and ‘the persons within the family suffering many losses, as the Cutting of their Coaths, the throwing of Peits, the pulling down of Turf and Feal from the Roof and Walls of the House, and the stealing of their Apparel, and the pricking of their Flesh and Skin with pins, the Presbytery set apart a day for a solemn humiliation, which seems to have had some effect upon Satan, for soon after he found a voice.

‘Upon *Monday* the 12th of *February*, the rest of the Family began to hear a Voice speak to them, but could not well know from whence it came. Yet, from Evening to Midnight, much vain

Discourse was kept up with the Devil, and many idle and impertinent Questions proposed without that due Fear of God that should have been upon their Spirits, under so rare and extraordinary a Trial. The Minister hearing of this, went to the House upon the *Tuesday*, being accompanied with some Gentlemen, who, after Prayer was ended, heard a Voice speaking out of the Ground, from under a Bed, in the proper Country Dialect, saying, *Would you know the Witches of Glenluce? I will call them,* and so related four or five Persons Names, that went under an evil report. The said *Gilbert* informed the Company that one of them was dead long ago. The Devil answered, *It is true, she is dead long ago, yet her Spirit is living with us in the World.* The Minister reply'd, saying: *The Lord rebuke thee, Satan, and put thee to silence, we are not to receive any Information from thee, whatsoever Fame any Persons go under; thou art but seeking to seduce this Family, for Satan's kingdom is not divided against itself.'*

Then the Devil and the minister had a most unseemly wrangle, both battering each other with texts of Scripture; and the holy man's visit did no good, for all their annoyances returned, until poor Campbell again appealed to the Presbytery; which body ordered that a solemn humiliation should be kept through all the bounds of the Synod. This was in February, and Campbell's persecutions gradually decreased till April, when they altogether ceased, and so continued till August.

'About which time the Devil began with new Assaults, and taking the ready Meat that was in the House, did sometimes hide it in holes by the Door-posts, and at other times did hide it under the Beds, and sometimes among the Bed cloaths, and under the Linnens, and at last did carry it quite away, till nothing was left there save Bread and Water to live by. After this he exercised his Malice and Cruelty against all the Persons of the Family, in wearying them in the Night time, with stirring and moving through the House, so that they had no rest for noise, which continued all the month of August after this manner. After which time the Devil grew yet worse, and began with terrible Roarings and terrifying Voices, so that no Person could sleep in the House in the Night-time, and sometimes did vex them with casting of Stones, striking them with Staves on their Beds, in the Night time, and upon the 11th of *September*, about Midnight, he cried out with a loud voice: *I shall burn the House:* and, about 3 or 4 nights after, he set one of the Beds on Fire, which was soon extinguished without any prejudice, except the Bed itself, and so he continued to haunt them.'

Here this thrilling narrative ends, and the minister and Presbytery seem to have given up the job of quelling the Devil. A much milder case is:

'*A true and faithful Narrative of the disturbance which was in the House of Sir William York, in the Parish of Lessingham in Lincolnshire.*'

It began in May, 1679, with the latch of the outer door being lifted very quickly, which was done for between two or three hours. In July the doors banged to, and the chairs all held a *conversazione* in the hall, after which they returned to their several rooms. In August the persecution took the form of knocking at the doors; in September the noise was of a man walking on stilts.

'Afterwards the said Noise began to be more dreadful and greater yet, and in more places, which mightily disordered Sir *William's* ancient Father; and his Lady and Children very much. Upon which they were thinking upon leaving the House. Sir *William* was willing that they should, but unwilling to leave it himself, and thereupon they all continued. At this time Sir *William* had a Plummer putting up Lead about the House, to convey the Rain which fell into a Cistern, and this knocking was often against the Lead, and often against the Iron that bore it, in imitation of the Plummers knocking in the Day-time. He likewise had Carpenters at the same time, and sometimes the Noise was like their Chopping at the Wood in the Yard, insomuch that the head Carpenter said, That if he had not known his Servants to be in the House, he would have thought they had been chopping. Sometimes it was like the Servants Chopping of Coals in the Coal Yard; sometimes knocking at the Doors of Out-houses, at the Wash-house, Brew-house, and Stable-doors; and, as they followed it from place to place, it was still immediately, and in one instant removed. These were the usual Noises that were every Night when it came, which was 3 or 4 times a Week.'

It got worse until October, when Sir William had to go to London, to Parliament, when it entirely ceased. As years went on, these manifestations appear to have been of a much milder type. The belief in witchcraft and the personal power of the Devil was much shaken in Queen Anne's reign, but *the Ghost* began to be introduced. In the following the two are well mixed, but, as we have nothing to do with such silly things as ghosts, this narrative will not take up much time.

**‘AN EXACT NARRATIVE OF MANY SURPRIZING MATTERS OF FACT
UNCONTESTABLY WROUGHT BY AN EVIL SPIRIT, OR SPIRITS,
IN THE HOUSE OF MASTER *IAN SMAGGE*, FARMER IN *CANVY*
ISLAND NEAR *LEIGH*, IN *ESSEX*, UPON THE 10TH, 13TH, 14TH, 15TH,
AND 16TH OF *SEPTEMBER* LAST, IN THE DAYTIME.’ London, 1709**

‘This now Dwelling-House of *Ian Smagge*, standing in *Canvy* Island, in the County of *Essex*, is said to have been Built, and for a great while Inhabited by a certain Person deceased; who, with his Wife, were lookt upon in their Life-time, jointly to have scrap’d together in the said House, by Fraudulent and Oppressive means, a considerable lump of Pelf. Having for a long time carried on this groveling Employ, the Wife being in a declining Condition, went to *London* to be advis’d for her Health; but Sickness increasing, and she conceiving she should die, desir’d the Man with whom she lodg’d, that happened to be the same Person that now lives in the said disturb’d House, to acquaint her Husband, She would be Buried in a Place call’d *Benfleet*, near *Canvy*-Island, where her deceased Children lay: To which he answered, ’Twas all one where the Body was dispos’d, so the Soul was Happy.

‘This discourse passed about Six a Clock in the Evening in the Summer time. Immediately on which, *Ian Smagge* affirms, He received a hard Stroke or Stroking on the Arm, from the Wrist upwards to his Shoulder; and then felt the Chair, that he sat in, to shake in an extraordinary manner. He lookt under the Chair, and about him, to see what caus’d the Motion, but discern’d nothing. His Wife and the sick Person were in the Room, but both distant from him.

‘In two or three Days the said Person died, and her Husband was sent for, and acquainted with her Mind; but he, probably to save Charges, buried her in Town. The Funeral being over, he return’d to his Habitation in *Canvy Island*, and in a few Years made his *Exit* also, which the old Inhabitants compute to be upward of 20 Years since. Presently, upon his death, unaccountable Noises were frequently heard in the House, to the great trouble of those that succeeded him in it. Such as forcibly opening and Shutting the Doors at Noon-day, no one being near them, or the least Wind or Breeze of Air stirring to do it. Nay, whilst the people have had the Doors in their Hands, they have been violently snatch’d from them, and shut to and fro, with exceeding quickness, for many times together.’

There were all sorts of noises and silly tricks, such as spirits seem to delight in – breaking windows, throwing stones, etc., and a ghost or two thrown in. The local minister did all he could to quiet matters, and ‘throughout this sore Visitation discharged his sacred Function in a ready and constant attendance, in advising Mrs. Smagge to a Fast, and Prayers in the Family’; and no doubt his remedies were effectual, for the disturbances ceased.

Cases of this kind became scarce, possibly because the Devil got weary of such puerilities, and I shall only record one more case in which he, certainly, made a house very lively:

**‘AN AUTHENTIC, CANDID, AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL
NARRATIVE, OF THE ASTONISHING TRANSACTIONS
AT STOCKWELL IN THE COUNTY OF SURRY, ON MONDAY
AND TUESDAY THE 6TH AND 7TH DAYS OF JANUARY 1772**

‘On *Monday, January* the 6th 1772, about ten o’clock in the forenoon, as Mrs. *Golding* was in her parlour, she heard the china and glasses in the back kitchen tumble down and break; her maid came to her and told her the stone plates were falling from the shelves: Mrs. *Golding* went into the kitchen, and saw them broke. Presently after, a row of plates from the next shelf fell down likewise, while she was there, and nobody near them; this astonished her much, and while she was thinking about it, other things in different places began to tumble about, some of them breaking, attended with violent noises all over the house; a clock tumbled down, and the case broke; a lanthorn that hung on the staircase was thrown down and the glass broke to pieces; an earthen pan of salted beef broke to pieces, and the beef fell about.’

A carpenter gave it as his opinion that the house was going to tumble down, so Mrs. *Golding* removed to Mrs. *Gresham*’s, her next door neighbour, and her effects were also removed as quickly as possible; but the demon followed with them.

‘Among the things that were removed to Mrs. *Gresham*’s, was a tray full of china, &c. a japan bread basket, some mahogany waiters, with some bottles of liquors, jars of pickles &c., and a pier glass, which was taken down by Mr. *Saville*, (a neighbour of Mrs. *Golding*’s): he gave it to one *Robert Hames*, who laid it on the grass-plot at Mrs. *Gresham*’s; but, before he could put it out of his hands, some parts of the frame on each side flew off. It raining at the time, Mrs. *Golding* desired it might be brought into the parlour, where it was put under a side-board, and a dressing glass along with it; it had not been there long, before the glasses and china which stood on the side board, began to tumble about and fall down, and broke both the glasses to pieces. Mr. *Saville* and others, being asked to drink a glass of wine or rum, both the bottles broke in pieces before they were uncorked.’

This made the poor lady very nervous indeed, and she could no longer stop in a house where there were such doings, so moved to that of a niece, Mrs. *Pain*, but while they were picking up some of her things to store away, ‘a jar of pickles that stood upon a table, turned upside down, then a jar of rasburry jam broke to pieces; next two mahogany waiters and a quadrille-box likewise broke to pieces.’

Mrs. *Golding* doubtless thought that her troubles were ended, for everything was quiet in her new abode till about eight o’clock in the evening, when there was ‘the Devil to pay.’

‘The first thing that happened, was, a whole row of pewter dishes, except one, fell from off a shelf to the middle of the floor, rolled about a little while, then settled, and what is almost beyond belief, as soon as they were quiet, turned upside down; they were then put on the dresser, and went through the same a second time; next fell a whole row of pewter plates from off the second shelf over the dresser to the ground, and being taken up, and put on the dresser one in another, they were thrown down again.

‘The next thing was two eggs that were upon one of the pewter shelves, one of them flew off, crossed the kitchen, struck a cat on the head, and then broke to pieces.

‘Next *Mary Martin*, Mrs. *Pain*’s servant, went to stir the kitchen fire, she got to the right hand side of it, being a large chimney, as is usual in farm houses, a pestle and mortar that stood nearer the left hand end of the chimney shelf, jumped about six feet on the floor. Then went candlesticks and other brasses; scarce anything remaining in its place. After this, the glasses and china were put down on the floor for fear of undergoing the same fate, they presently began to dance and tumble about, and then broke to pieces. A tea-pot that was among them, flew to Mrs. *Golding*’s maid’s foot, and struck it.

‘A glass tumbler that was put on the floor jumped about two feet, and then broke. Another that stood by it, jumped about at the same time, but did not break for some hours after, when it jumped again, and then broke. A china bowl that stood in the parlour jumped from the floor, to behind a table that stood there. This was most astonishing, as the distance from where it stood was between seven and eight feet, but was not broke. It was put back by *Richard Fowler*, to its place, where it remained some time, and then flew to pieces.

‘The next thing that followed was a mustard pot, that jumped out of a Closet, and was broke, A single cup that stood upon the table, (almost the only thing remaining) jumped up, flew across the kitchen, ringing like a bell, and then was dashed to pieces against the dresser. A candle stick, that stood on the Chimney shelf, flew cross the kitchen to the parlour door, at about fifteen feet distance. A tea-kettle, under the dresser, was thrown out about two feet, another kettle that stood at one end of the range, was thrown against the iron that is fixed to prevent children falling into the fire. A tumbler with rum and water in it, that stood upon a waiter upon a table in the parlour, jumped about ten feet, and was broke. The table then fell down, and along with it a silver tankard belonging to Mrs. *Golding*, the waiter in which had stood the tumbler and a candle stick. A case bottle then flew in pieces.’

The food took to flying about, and it must have been heartbreaking for the ladies to witness the destruction of their property, which must have been aggravated by the conduct of Mrs. *Golding*’s servant. ‘At all the times of action, she was walking backwards and forwards, either in the kitchen or parlour, or wherever some of the family happened to be. Nor could they get her to sit down five minutes together, except at one time for about half an hour towards the morning, when the family were at prayers in the parlour; then all was quiet; but in the midst of the greatest confusion, she was as much composed as at any other time, and, with uncommon coolness of temper, advised her mistress not to be alarmed or uneasy, as she said these things could not be helped. Thus she argued, as if they were common occurrences which must happen in every family.’

Nowadays, perhaps, she would have been termed a very powerful ‘medium,’ but as the property still continued in an abnormal condition, and its destruction was proceeding at a very rapid rate, it was thought better to discharge her, ‘and no disturbances have happened since.’

CHAPTER VII

Possession by, and casting out, Devils – The Church and Exorcisms – Earlier Exorcists – ‘The Strange and Grievous Vexation by the Devil of 7 Persons in Lancashire.’

The New Testament, especially the Gospels, decidedly and authoritatively teach that the Devil, or Devils, had power to enter into and possess men, and Jesus not only cast them out, but gave His disciples power to do the same; and, in order that this possession by the Devil should not be ascribed to disease, it is expressly classified apart, Matt. iv. 24: ‘And they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy, and He healed them.’ And even the Revised Version does not materially alter the text: ‘And they brought unto Him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, *possessed with aevils* (or, *demoniacs*) and epileptic and palsied; and He healed them.’

The early Christian Church fully believed in its powers of casting out devils, and holy-water, accompanied with the sign of the cross, was very efficacious in this matter. Now, in these latter days, it seems to be of no effect of itself. In Addis and Arnold’s ‘Catholic Dictionary,’ a work which has received the *imprimatur* of Cardinal Manning, we read, under the heading ‘Holy-water’: ‘Water and salt are exorcised by the priest, and so withdrawn from the power of Satan, who, since the fall, has corrupted and abused even inanimate things; prayers are said that the water and salt may promote the spiritual and temporal health of those to whom they are applied, and may drive away the Devil with his rebel angels; and, finally, the water and salt are mingled in the name of the Trinity. The water thus blessed becomes a means of grace... The reader will observe that we do not attribute to holy-water any virtue of its own. It is efficacious simply because the Church’s prayers take effect at the time it is used.’

But this was not the belief of the Roman Catholic Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as we may read in Boguet¹³: ‘But it was a frightful thing to hear the Demon cry and yell when the priest had pronounced the holy name of Jesus, and when he invoked the assistance of the holy Virgin Mary, or when he approached the Demoniac with the Cross, or when he sprinkled him with holy-water, or made him drink some. For he said sometimes *that they were burning him*, and at others, *that they had given him enough holy-water, and that if they persisted in throwing any more over him, he would not go out, and would torment Roland’s body still further.*’

But, before the Church took up this good work, it would seem that there were more or less effective agents for the purpose in existence, for Reginald Scot tells us, in ‘A Discourse upon Diuels and Spirits,’ chap. xv.: ‘But when Saule was releued with the sound of the harpe, they say that the departure of the diuell was by meanes of the signe of the Crosse imprinted in *Dauid’s* veines. Whereby we maie see how absurd the imaginations and deuises of men are, when they speake according to their own fansies, without warrant of the word of God. But methinks it is verie absurd that *Josephus* affirmeth: to wit, that the diuell should be thrust out of anie man by virtue of a root. And as vaine it is that *Ælianus* writeth of the magicall herbe *Cynospastus*, otherwise called *Aglaphotis*; which is all one with *Salomon’s* root, named *Baaros*, as hauing force to driue out anie diuell from a man possessed.’

Nowadays we put some of those possessed with devils into prison, and we endeavour to purify them by work, diet, good counsel, and the absence of temptations – a course which is sometimes,

¹³ ‘Discours des Sorciers,’ by Henry Boguet (Lyon, 1608), p. 417.

but not always, effective; but, then, the character of devils has certainly changed during the last four or five centuries.

The reading of cases of possession is somewhat dreary work, and some are evidently catch-pennies, extremely goody-goody, consisting of long-winded theological discussions between the possessed and the Devil, in which the former invariably gets the best of the argument, so that I shall not tarry long on this branch of my subject, giving only three or four cases in illustration.

**‘A TRUE NARRATION OF THE STRANGE AND GRIEVOUS
VEXATION BY THE DEVIL OF 7 PERSONS IN LANCASHIRE,
BY JOHN DARRELL, MINISTER OF THE WORD OF GOD. 1600**

‘At *Cleworth* in *Lancashire*, within the parish of *Leigh*, there dweleth one *Nicholas Starchie*, gentleman, who, having only two children, it went thus with them, in the beginning of february, 1594: first, *Anne*, his daughter, being 9 Yeares olde, was taken with a dumpish and heauie countenance, and with a certaine fearefull starting and pulling together of her body; about a weeke after, *Iohn Starchie*, his sonne, of the age of 10 yeares, as he was going to the schoole, was compelled to shout, neither was able to staie himself. After, they waxed worse and worse, falling often into extreame fits, M. *Starchie* seeking for remedy, after 9 or 10 weekes, heard of one, *Edmund Hartlay*, a coniurer, to whom he repaired, made knowne his greife, and with large profers craued his helpe. *Hartlay* comes, and, after he had used certaine popish charmes and hearbs, by degrees the children were at quiet, and so continued, seeming to be well almost a yeare and halfe, all which time *Hartlay* came often to visit them. At length, he fained as though he would have gone into another country, but wether, M. *Starchie* might not know. When he begane to goe his way, *Iohn* fell of bleeding; then, presently, he was sent for again, who affirmed that if he had bene 40 rodes off, no man could have stanchd him, and thus it fell out at other times.

‘M. *Starchie* hereupon fearing lest his children would be troubled in his absence, and he uncertaine where to find him, offered to giue him his table to tarie with them, and so he did for a certain space; but, after couenaunted with him to giue him an annuel pension of 40s. for his assistance in time of neede; which pension was assured him in writing, and began at *Michael’s* day 1598; wherewith *Hartlay* not being satisfied, desiered more, an house and ground: whereunto, because M. *Starchie* would not accord, he threatned in a fume (M. *Starchie* being absent, but in the hearing of diuers), that, if he would not fulfil his minde, he would make such a shout as never was at *Cleworth*; and so ther was indeed, not only upon the day, and at the instant of their dispossession, but also the day before: when 7 of them, both in the afternoone and in the evening, sent forth such a strange, supernaturall, and fearfull noyse, or loud whupping,¹⁴ as the like, undoubtedly, was neuer hard at *Cleworth*, nor it, I think, in *England*. This he said in September 1596, and on the 17 day of Nouember folowing, they both began to be troubled againe after so long rest.

‘On a certaine time *Hartlay* went with M. *Starchie* to his father’s house in *Whally* parishe, where he was tormented sore all night. The next day, beinge recouered, he went into a little wood, not farr from the house, where he maide a circle about a yarde and halfe wyde, deviding it into 4 partes, making a crosse at euery Diuision; and when he had finished his worke, he came to M. *Starchie*, and desiered him to go and tread out the circle, saying I may not treade it out my selfe; and further, I will meete with them that went about my death. When M. *Starchie* saw this wretched dealing of his, and his children still molested, he waxed wearie of him, howbeit he sought other helpe for his children.

‘Then he tooke his sonnes water to a phisitian in *Manchester*, who sawe no signe of sicknes; after, he went to *Doctor Dee*, the warden of *Manchester*, whose helpe he requested, but he utterly

¹⁴ Whooping.

refused, sayinge he would not meddle, and aduised him that, settinge aside all other helpe, he should call for some godlye preachers, with whom he should consult concerning a Publicke or Privat fast. He also procured *Hartlay* to come before him, whom he so sharply reproved, and straitly examined, that the children had more ease for 3 weekes space after; and this was upon the 8 of December.

‘About Newyeare’s Day, the children (being in good case, as it seemed) went to *Manchester*, invited to a kinsman’s house, whom *Hartlay* accompanied as their overseer, and in their returne homewardest, they were desirous to see *Doctor Dee*, according to their promise, and his request. But *Hartlay* withstood them, and, because they went to his house, notwithstanding his prohibition, he told them, with an angri loke, that it had bene better for them not to haue chaunged an old frend for a new, with other menacinge speaches, and so went before them in a rage, and neuer came neare them all the way home.

‘Upon the Tuseday after newyeares day Ianuarie 4. *John Starchie* was readinge, somethinge gave him such a blowe on the necke, that he was soddenlye stricken downe with an horrible scryke,¹⁵ saying that *Satan* had broken his necke and laye tormented pitifully for the space of two howres. The same day, at night, being in bed, he lept out on the sudden, with a terrible outcry, that amased all the familie. Then was he tossed and tumbled a long tyme, was very feirce like a mad-man, or a mad dogge, snacted at and bite euery one that he layde hold on, with his teethe, not spareing his mother, smiting the next, and hurling Bed-staues, Pillowes, or whatsoeuer at them, and into the fire. From this day forward he had no great ease until the day of his deliuerance.

‘His sister *Anne* likewise began againe to be troubled, and 3 other yong children in the house, of whom M. *Starchie* had the education and tuition, with there portiones committed unto him by ther parentes. The first was *Margaret Hardman*, of the age of 14 yeares, the 2. *Elizabeth* her sister of 10 yeares age, and the 3. *Ellinor Holland* of 12 yeares. The same day, at night, *Hartlay* himself, was also tormented, and the next day in like manner, where many held him, among whom one *Margaret Byrom* of *Salford*, by *Manchester* 33 yeares olde, a poore kinswoman of *Mistris Starchies*, was one; who beinge come thither to make merrie, was requested to sit downe behind *Hartlay* to hold him, and did so; but, when he was out of his fit, she endeuored to arise, was so benumb and giddi, that shee could not stand, yet, being lifted up shee stroue to goe, but being unable, fell downe, and was sencelesse, and very unruly.

‘Which, *Hartlay* seeinge, saide, I feare I haue done her harme. Then she nicknamed and taunted all that were present, though she wyste not what she saide, nor knewe or sawe *Hartlay* onely, whome she both knewe and saide she sawe, albeit her eyes were shut close, that she could see nothing: at him she rayled, and angerly smote. After her fit, *Hartlay* came to comforte her, for hee pretended to bere a louinge affection towards her: and it was thought he had kissed her. Nowe they iudged in the house that whomsoeuer he kissed, on them he breathed the diuell. He often kissed *Iohn* for loue, (as he saide) he kissed the little wenches in iest, he promised *Margaret Hardman* a thrane¹⁶ of kisses. He wrastled with one *Iohan Smyth*, a maide seruante in the house to kisse her, but he fayled of his purpose; whereupon *Elinor* in a fitt saide, if hee had kissed her, 3 men coulde not haue helde her. When he cam to comfort *Margaret*, she could not abide his companie. He demaunded of her, why? She said for that she thought he had bewitched her. He asked the reason why she thought so? Shee answered, for thou art euer in myne eyes, absent and present.

‘But let us returne to the other 5, who were first possessed, of whome we will say very little, seeing we have much to say of *Margaret Byrom*: and it is sufficient to heare at large of one of them, and were too much to discourse fully of euery of them, considering the number.

‘The 2. of February, in the night, *Iohn Starchie* had verie shorte fittes, and thick; and at the recouery of euery one, gaue 3 Knockes with his hand on the seeling, and said that he must haue 20

¹⁵ Shriek.

¹⁶ A sheaf or bundle.

such fits. The next day he left knocking, and fell to washing his hands after euery short fitt, and when so euer he washed, he would have newe water; if it were the same wherewith he washed before (for he could tell) he refused it. About the 14 of Januarie, these 5 beinge in theire fits, one of them began to barke and howle (according to theire custom); after that 2. then 3, lastly they were all in, like a ring of 5 bells for order and tune, and so continued almost a quarter of an houre. After theer howling, they fell to a tumbling, and after that became speachlesse, sencelesse, and as dead.

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