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An Account
OF THE
TRIAL, CONFESSION & CONDEMNATION
OF
SIX WITCHES,
AT
MAIDSTONE, IN THE COUNTY OF KENT,
AT THE ASSIZES HELD THERE JULY 1652,
BEFORE
SIR PETER WARBURTON,
One of the Justices of the Common Pleas.
TO WHICH IS ADDED
THE
TRIAL, EXAMINATION AND EXECUTION
OF
Three Witches
EXECUTED AT FAVERSHAM,
IN THE SAME COUNTY,
SEPTEMBER 1645.

London:

TWO HUNDRED COPIES REPRINTED VERBATIM FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITIONS.

MDCCCXXXVII.

P R E F A C E.

IT is somewhat extraordinary that the circumstances of the following narrative has entirely escaped the notice of all the historians and provincial writers on the County of Kent, which is the more remarkable as the celebrated Sir Robert Filmer, Knt. of East Sutton, near Maidstone, wrote a work on the occasion entitled "An Advertisement to the Jurymen of England touching Witches, together with a Difference between an English and an Hebrew Witch, quarto. Lond. 1652." in the preface of which he states, "The late Execution of Witches at the Summer Assises in Kent occasioned this brief Exercitation, which addresses it selfe to such as have not deliberately thought upon the great difficulty in discovering, *what*, or *who* a Witch is." In a volume of Tracts on Witchcraft in the possession of the printer, occurs the following manuscript remarks of a former possessor, from which it would appear, the writer intended to republish Sir R. Filmer's work, or some other treatise on Witchcraft

who also appeared to be ignorant of the rare tract here reprinted, the writer says, “ I hope it (meaning Sir Robert’s work) prevented the spreading of that weakness of reasoning which occasioned it, and made the promoters thereof ashamed of it, since I do not find nor can learn that their Tryals were ever printed or their Execution justified by any in answer thereto, nor have I been able to find any thing else relating thereto save that in the Diary of Elias Ashmole, Esquire, printed from his manuscript at Oxford by Charles Burman. Printed for Curll, duodecimo, 1717, in it he says “ August 2, 1652. I went to Maidstone Assizes to hear the Witches tryed and took Mr Tradescant with me” I was in hopes of seeing some Account of these in Dr. Harris’s elaborate Antiquities of the County of Kent, in the account he gives of the Town of Maidstone, and the Village of East Sutton where is situated the seat of the learned author of this advertisement, now that of his worthy grandson, the present Sir Edward Filmer, Bart. I was in hopes at least of receiving some Account of them from the present very worthy Minister of Maidstone, my old acquaintance and Chamber-fellow at Oxford, to whom I wrote in hopes of receiving some information relating thereto.

He wrote me the following very kind letter dated September 17, 1722.

DEAR SIR,

I am sorry it is not in my power to assist you in a design which I approve so much as

that which you are now upon I have read Dr. Hutchinson's book* and was extremely pleased with the reading of it, and I imagine you will do a good deal of real service to the world in what you are going to publish.

There is nobody here that knows or remembers the least tittle of what you desire me to inform you of; but if upon fuller enquiry I can meet with any thing worthy your knowledge you shall be sure to receive it from

Dear Sir,

Your faithful humble servant

S. WELLER.†

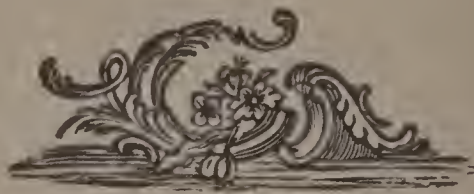
In answer to this I begged of him to continue his enquiries and for that end to pay a visit to Sir Edward Filmer, if he had the honor of being acquainted with him, in answer to which he wrote me word on October 10, following in these words "I am sorry I can't execute your directions to me relating to Sir Edward Filmer, having no manner of acquaintance with him, and as for the Executions here in 1652 I have enquired but can find no account of them," It is notoriously evident that in the late miserable times of Rebellion and Usurpation, the unhappy notions of the absurd power of Witches to hurt both man and beast had taken so great a possession of the minds of

* Historical Essay on Witchcraft.

† The Rev. Samuel Weller was Curate of Maidstone from 1712 to 1753.

the credulous and weak teachers of those times, that it was thought no less than doing God service to promote the prosecution and execution of silly ignorant old women under the name of Witches.”

Both Lewis and Jacob in their Histories of Faversham were ignorant of the transactions recorded in annexed tract, as was also the indefatigable Bishop Hutchinson



A

Prodigious & Tragicall

HISTORY

OF THE

Arraignment, Tryall, Confession, and
Condemnation of six Witches at *Maidstone*,
in *Kent*, at the Assizes there held in *July*, Fry-
day 30, this present year, 1652.

Before the Right Honourable, *Peter Warburton*,
one of the Justices of the Common Pleas.

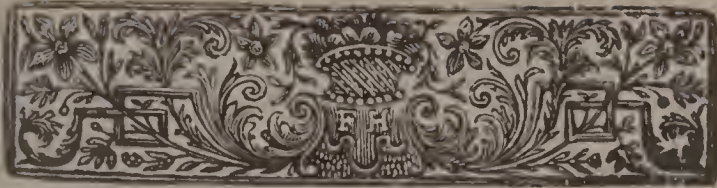
Collected from the Observations of E. G. Gent, a
learned person, present at their Conviction
and Condemnation) and digested by H. F. Gent.

*To which is added a true relation of one Mrs.
Atkins, a Mercers Wife in Warwick, who was
strangely carried away from her House in July
last, and hath not been heard of since.*



LONDON

Printed for *Richard Harper*, in Smithfeild, 1652.



Kent, the first Christian, last conquered, and one of the most flourishing and fruitful Provinces of England, is the Scene, and the beautifull town of Maidstone, the Stage, whereon this Tragicall Story was publickly acted, at Maidstone Assizes last past.



Mongst many others that then made their entrance, and were presented as suspected of Witchcraft before the Reverend and Honourable Judge *Warburton*, who then sate Judge over crimminall offenders: the most notorious were, *Anne Ashby*, alias *Cobler*, *Anne Martyn*, *Mary Browne*, *Mildred Wright*, and *Anne Wilson*, all of *Cranbrooke*, a market Town in *Kent*, and *Mary Read*, of

Lenham in the same County; all which were convicted of the execrable and Diabolicall crime of Witchcraft, and for the same received sentence of death, on Friday the 30. day of *July* last; of whose actions and confessions I shall give you a few particulars, but those you will confesse, very rare and remarkable.

Anne Ashby alias *Cobler*, who was the chief Actresse and who had the greatest part in this Tragedy, and *Anne Martyn*, confessed at the time of their triall, that the Divell had known them carnally, and that they had no hurt by it.

The said *Ashby* alias *Cobler*, in view of this Observation, fell into an extasie before the Bench, and swell'd into a monstrous and vast bigness, screeching and crying out very dolefully; and being recovered, and demanded if the Divell at that time had possessed her, she replied she knew not that, but she said that the Spirit *Rug* came out of her mouth like a Mouse.

And further concerning this Spirit *Rug*, it is reported, that the said *Ashby* alias *Cobler* being under Examination before a Justice of Peace, before whom she was carried by certain Souldiers of Colonell *Humfrey's* Regiment; at

the same time of her examination, a certain Groom that was in presence said come *Rug* into my mouth, which Groom, as it is reported, died within a fortnight after, near unto the City of London.

The said Anne Ashby further confessed, that the Divell had given them a piece of flesh, which whensoever they should touch, they should thereby affect their desires.

That this flesh lay hid amongst grasse, in a certain place which she named, where upon search it was found accordingly.

This flesh was of a sinnewy substance, and scorched, and was seen and felt by this Observer, and reserved for publique view, at the sign of the Swan in *Maidstone*.

The said *Anne Ashby*, *Anne Martyn*, and one other of their Associates, after they were cast, and upon the pronounciation of Judgement against them, pleaded that they were with child pregnant, but confessed it was not by any man, but by the Divell.

One *Dock* of *Gresham* alias *Cresham*, Doctor to *Anne Ashby*, is committed to close imprison-

ment, and not permitted to speak with any person, without the presence of his Keeper.

A Pin being thrust to the head into one of their arms, the party did not feele it, neither did it draw bloud from her, which was *Mary Browne*, *Anne Wilson*, or *Mildred Wright*.

Mary Read of *Lenham* had a visible Teat under her tongue, and did shew it to many, and it was likewise seen by this Observator.

It is likewise to be noted, that the aforesaid *Anne Ashby*, alias *Cobler*, during the time of her extasie, when she swell'd in that prodigious manner before mentioned, uttered many speeches which did greatly amaze and astonish the Auditory, proceeding from her in that manner, of which there was no small number of Witnesses, in so great and generall a confluence of people, some of which the Observator remembreth, but forbears at present to set down the particulars.

So upon the proceedings aforesaid, and the evidences brought in against them, the said *Anne Ashby*, alias *Cobler*, *Anne Martyn*, *Mary Browne*, *Anne Wilson*, and *Mildred Wright* of *Cranbrook*, and *Mary Read*, of *Lenham*, being

legally convicted, were according to the Laws of this Nation, adjudged to be hanged, at the common place of Execution.

Some there were that wished rather they might be burnt to Ashes; alledging, that it was a received opinion amongst many, that the body of a witch being burnt, her bloud is prevented thereby from becomming hereditary to her Progeny in the same evill, which by hanging is not; but whether this opinion be erroneous or not, I am not to dispute.

Besides these former six condemned Witches, there were at the same time others of *Greanes* Arraigned, who although sentence of death did not then passe against them, yet one whose name was *Creed*, was by three severall Indictments found guilty by the Grand Jury, consisting of persons of good integrity, and estates. And in the aforesaid black List, were mustred one *Reynolds*, and one *Wilson*, with both their Wives.

It is supposed that nine children, besides a man and a woman, were bewitched; 500 pounds worth of Cattel lost, and much Corn at Sea wrack'd, by Witchcraft.

They confessed they had bewitched a child, that had been languishing a long time; this child died about the time of their trials, whose pourtraicture in wax was found, where they had laid it, under the Threshold of a doore.

To this discourse the bodies of three Children lately found at *Chatham*, may have some reference, which however it will not be much amisse to insert here; although it be doubtfull, whether their deaths be to be attributed to Sorcery or any other violent means; two of these bodies appeared but in part, the rest being consumed; the third was the entire body of a Male-child, having a Navell five inches long.

And here you may observe the hellish and infernall estate of those wretched deluded people, calld Witches, whom their Grand-master the Devill, at one time or other leaves in the lurch; as here you may perceive in the Story of these miserable Wretches, who deservedly received the Sentence of Condemnation, as aforesayd; for it is written, *Thou shalt not suffer a Witch to live.*



A true Relation of one Mrs. *Atkins*, a Mercers Wife in *Warwick*, who was strangely carried away from her house in *July* last, and hath not been heard of since.

IN *Warwick Town* one Mrs. Katherine *Atkins*, a Mercers Wife, standing at her door on *Saturday* night, the 24. *July* 1652. A certain unknown Woman came to her and sayd *Mistris*, pray give me two-pence, she answered, two-pences are not so plentiful, and that she would give her no Mony. Pray *Mistris*, sayd she, then give me that Pin, so she took the Pin off her sleeve and gave her, for which she was very thankful, and was going away, *Mistris Atkins* seeing her so thankful for a Pin, called her again, and told her if she would stay, she would fetch some Victuals for her, or give her some thread, or something out of the shop. She answered, she would have nothing else, and bid a pox of her Victuals, and swore (by God) saying, You shall be an hundred miles off within this week, when you

shall want two-pence as much as I, and so she went grumbling away.

Hereupon the sayd Mistris Atkins was much troubled in mind, and did advise with some Friends what were best to be done in such a case, but receiving no resolution from any one what to do, she attended the Event what might befall within such a time, and upon the 29. of July, she exprest to a Kinsman Mr. Nicholas Bikar, that she was much troubled about the foresayd businesse, but hoped the time was so near expired, that it would come to nothing.

But the sayd Thursday night betwixt the houres of 8. and 9. She going into the Shop, and returning thence in the Entry adjoyning to the sayd Shop, she was immediately gone, by what means and whither we do not know, nor can we hear of upon enquiry made to this present.

The desire of her Husband and Friends is of all the Inhabitants of this Nation, That if they hear of any such party in such a lost condition as is before expressed: That there may be speedy notice given thereof to her Husband in Warwick, and that all convenient provisions both of Horse and mony may be made for the conveying of her to the place aforesayd,

and such as shall take pains, or be at expences herein shall be sufficiently recompenced for the same, with many thanks.

It's likewise desired that Ministers in London, and elsewhere, where the notice of these presents shall come, would be pleased to present her sad condition to God in their severall Congregations. The truth hereof we testifie, whose names are subscribed.

	}	Richard Vennour.
John Halleford		Hen. Butler, <i>Ministers</i> , of Warwick.
		Joseph Fisher, <i>Minister</i> .



THE
EXAMINATION
CONFESSION, TRIALL,
AND EXECUTION
Of Joane Williford, Joan Cariden
And Jane Hott :

Who were executed at *Feversham*, in *Kent*, for
being Witches, on Monday the 29 of
September, 1645.

Being a true Copy of their evill
lives and wicked deeds, taken by the Major
of *Feversham* and Jurors for the
Said Inquest.

With the Examination and Confession of
Elizabeth Harris, not yet executed.

All attested under the head of
ROBERT GREENSTREET, *Major of Feversham*.

London,
Printed for *J. G.* October 2, 1645.



The confession of *Ioan Walliford*,
Septemb. 25, 1645. made before the
Major and other Jurates.

Shee confessed :

That the divell about seven yeeres agoe did appeare to her in the shape of a little dog, and bid her to forsake God and leane to him : who replied, that she was loath to forsake him.

Shee confessed also that shee had a desire to be revenged upon *Thomas Letherland* and *Mary Woodruse* now his wife. She further said that the divell promised her, that she should not lacke, and that she had money sometimes brought her she knew not whence, sometime one shilling, sometimes eightpence, never more at once ; shee called her Divell by the name of *Bunne*. Shee further saith, that her retainer *Bunne* carried *Thomas Gardler* out of a window, who fell into a backside. She further saith, that neere twenty yeeres since, she promised her soule

to the Divell. She further saith, that she gave some of her blood to the Divell, who wrote the covenant betwixt them. She further saith that the Divell promised to be her servant about twenty yeeres, and that the time is now almost expired. She further saith that *Iane Hot, Elizabeth Harris, Ioan Argoll*, were her fellowes.

She further saith that her Divell told her that *Elizabeth Harris*, about six or seven yeeres since curst the Boat of one *John Woodcott*, and so it came to passe.

She further saith, that the Divell promised her that shee should not sinke being thrown into the water. She further said Goodwife *Argoll* cursed Mr. *Major*, and also *Iohn Mannington*, and said that he should not thrive, and so it came to passe. She likewise saith, that the Divell sucked twice since she came into the prison, he came to her in the forme of a muce.

She being brought to the Barre, was asked *Guilty* or *not Guilty*, she answered, *guilty*.

When she came to the place of execution Mr. Major asked her if she thought that she deserved death? to whom she answered, that she had; and that she desired all good people to take warning by her, and not to suffer themselves to

be deceived by the Divell, neither for lucre of money, malice, or any thing else, as she had done: but to sticke fast to God, for if she had not first forsaken God, God would not have forsaken her.

*The Examination of Joan Cariden, widdow,
taken Septemb. 25. 1645.*

THIS Examinant saith, that about three quarters of a yeere agoe, as she was in the bed about twelve or one of the clocke in the night there lay a rugged soft thing upon her bosome which was very soft, and she thrust it off with her hand; and she saith that when she had thrust it away she thought God forsooke her, for she could never pray so well since as she could before; and further saith, that shee verily thinkes it was alive.

*The second Examination of the said Joan
Cariden, alias Argoll, taken the same day
before the Major,*

THIS Examinant saith, that in the same yeere that this Major was formerly Major the Divell came to her in the shape of a blacke rugged Dog, in the night time, and crept into the bed to her, and

spake to her in mumbling language ; The next night it came to her againe, and required this examinant to deny God and leane to him, and that then he would revenge her of any one she owed ill will to, and thereupon this examinant promised him her soule upon those conditions ; And that about that time the Divell sucked this examinant and hath divers times since sucked her, and that it was no paine to her.

September 27. 1645.

Confest upon the examination of *Ioan Carri-*
den before Master Major, that Goodwife *Hott*
told her within these two daies that there was a
great meeting at Goodwife *Panterys* house, and
that Goodwife *Dodson* was there, and that Good-
wife *Gardner* should have been there, but did
not come, and the Divell sat at the upper end of
the Table.

*The Examination of Jane Hott widdow, taken
before the Major and Jurates, the 25 of Sep-
tember, 1645.*

THIS Examinant confesseth that a thing like
a hedg-hog had usually visited her, and came to
her a great while agoe, about twenty years agoe,

and that if it sucked her it was in her sleep, and the pain thereof awaked her, and it came to her once or twice in the moneth and sucked her, and when it lay upon her breast she stricke it off with her hand, and that it was as soft as a Cat.

At her first comming into the Goale she spake very much to the other that were apprehended before her, to confesse if they were guilty ; and stood to it very perversely that she was cleare of any such thing, and that if they put her into the Water to try her, she should certainly sinke. But when she was put into the Water and it was apparent that she did flote upon the water, being taken forth, a Gentleman to whom before she had so confidently spake, and with whom she offered to lay twenty shillings to one that she could not swim, asked her how it was possible that she could be so impudent as not to confesse herselfe, when she had so much perswaded the other to confesse : to whom she answered, That the Divell went with her all the way, and told her that she should sinke ; but when she was in the Water he sate upon a Crosse-beame, and laughed at her.

These three were executed on Munday last.

The Examination of Elizabeth Harris, the 26 of September, 1645. before Master Major.

THIS examinant saith, that about 19 yeeres agoe, the Divell did appeare to her in the forme of a Muse: she further saith, that she had a desire to be revenged; and the divell told her she should be revenged; she called the Divell her Impe. She further saith, Goodman *Chilman*, of Nuenham said that she stole a Pigge, then she desired that God would revenge her of him, and the man pined away and dyed, and she saw it apparent that her Impe was the cause of that mans death; she further saith, that the Divell bid her to forsake Christ and leane to him, whereupon she saith that she scratched herselfe with her nailes and fetched blood from her breast, and she wiped it with her finger and gave it to her Impe who wrote the covenant with it: she further saith that a fortnight after the Divell sucked her, but she felt no paine. Being demanded how many Witches were in Town? She answered that were a heavy sentence. She further saith that Goodwife *Dodson*, *Ioan Argoe*, *William Argos* wife, Goodwife *Cox* have very bad tongues. She further saith that her Impe did sucke every three or foure nights; she further saith that her sonne being drowned in Goodman *Woodcots* High she wished that God might be her revenger, which was her watchword to the Divell, and this High was cast away, and she

conceives that her wish was the cause of its being cast away : she further saith, than *Ioan Williford* told her that her Impe said on Wednesday last, that though the Boate, (she not knowing what Boat,) went chearfully out, it should not come so chearfully home ; She saith further, that Goodwife *Pantery* did many times make meetings with Goodwife Williford and with Goodwife *Hott* ; she further saith, that Goodwife *Gardner* hath a very ill tongue.

All these are true coppies of examination, one whereof is not yet executed, and were taken before me,

Robert Greenstreet, Major

Finis.



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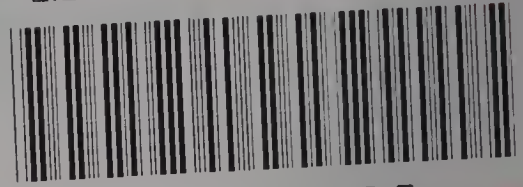
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