

## Original Documents.

### WITCHCRAFT IN THE SOMERS ISLANDS.

By Major-General J. H. LEFROY, C.B., F.R.S., Governor of the Bermudas.

COLONIZED as the Somers Islands were within ten years from the date of the repeal of the Act of Elizabeth "agaynst conjurac'ons, enchantments, and witchcraftes" (5 Eliz., cap. xvi.), a repeal which had for motive only to re-enact its provisions in a yet more stringent form (1 Jac. I., cap. xii.), it would be no matter of surprise if the first settlers reached the enchanted Isles, the *yslas de demonios* of the early Spanish navigators, with minds prepared to hear there "airy tongues that syllable men's names," and to find the spirits

"That have their haunts in dale or piney mountain,  
Or forest by slow stream, or pebbly brook,  
Or chasms, and watery depths."

still haunting the tangled cedar groves and the pellucid basins of the rocky shore. But of these poetic forms of superstition we find no traces. Prospero and Miranda, Ariel and Caliban, have vanished away and not bequeathed one legend, one fancy, or one local name, to cavern, or fountain, to grove or deep. And it is singular that even the vulgar superstition of the age slumbered for a generation or more, when it was aroused by the same contagious delusion which about that time possessed men's minds with a species of insanity in so many quarters, and led to horrors which are little known in these days, simply because their details are too shocking for repetition. Just as that monster of cruelty, cunning, and superstition, Hopkins the witchfinder, led away all his contemporaries, and exercised over English men and English women a Satanic tyranny which, contemplated as a phase of human aberration, is one of the most amazing in history; just as to the misplaced piety of Cotton Mather is mainly attributable the barbarities of the Puritan Fathers, so in the little community of the Bermudas, one weak and superstitious man in high authority seems to have the entire responsibility for a series of persecutions which vie with any of those of Old or New England in absurdity and cruelty. They are later in date than the former, but earlier than the latter, and began and ended with the government of Captain Josias Forster, a Puritan, who signalised his appointment to that post, among other things, by taking upon him to perform the marriage ceremony.<sup>1</sup> I propose in this memoir to give such extracts from the original records as will present a fair picture of the conduct of trials for witchcraft in a colony of that period, softening or omitting

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Parish Register of Pembroke Tribe, 1652.

only a few details which are too revolting for publication, and supplying by conjecture only a few unimportant *lacunæ* in the MS. It usually happens that words wanting, or at least their purport, can be confidently made good from the context; but there are parts of the MS. where considerable portions have been devoured by insects, or ruined by damp and decay. These are passed over. I have found no record of an actual trial or even presentment for witchcraft in Bermuda of earlier date than 1650, although the possibility of the offence had long been admitted. In the Instructions for Churchwardens and Sidesmen, dated 1623, we find (Art. 11):—"Item. All sorcerers, inchanters, charmers, figure casters, or fortune tellers, coniurers, or whoeu<sup>r</sup> hath or seemeth to have any familiar consultation with the Divell," are to be presented at the General Assize. This enumeration does not differ much from that of the statute of Elizabeth. "Whereas at this present, there ys no ordinarye ne condigne Punishment provided agaynst the Practisers of the wicked offences of conjuracons, and invocacons of evill spirites and of sorceries, enchantments, charmes, and witchcraftes, the w<sup>ch</sup> offences, by force of a statute made in the xxxij yere of the Reigne of the late King Henry the Eyghthe, were made to be Felonye, and so continued until the sayd statute was repealed by Thacte and statute of Repeale made in the first yere of the Reigne of the late King Edwarde the vj: sythens the Repeale whereof many fantastickall and divilische persons have devised and practised invocac'ons and conjurac'ons of evill and wicked spirits, and have used and practised wythcraftes, enchantmentes, charms, and sorceries, to the Distruc'ion of the Persons and Goodes of their neighbours and other subjectes of the Realme, and for other lewde Intentens and Purposes, contrarie to the lawes of Almighty God, to the Perill of theyr owne soules, and to the great Infamy and Disquietnes of this Realme. For Reforma'con whereof be it enacted, &c."

The first entry among the Somers Islands Records is in 1650:—

1. "The Jury for our Sou'agne Lord the Kinge doe present Anne, the wife of Richard Bowen, uppon suspicon of witchcraft, and for want of further evidence at present doe pray she may be continued until the next assizes."

The Court ordered that she should be continued in sureties for good behaviour, and appeare at the next assizes (when she was acquitted).

The next entry is of a much more serious character, though it still presents a little of the hesitation of beginners; as in the case just given, the Court wanted more evidence, so in this "the Governor and counsell was very carefull in finding out the trewth:" but we shall find in succeeding trials that insufficiency of evidence was the last thing to strike the minds of the Judges, and that no charge was too trivial or too monstrous to be readily received as the truth.

2. 1651. "An assize and generall Goale deliverie held at St. George's from the 19th daye of Maye to the 22nd daye of the same month, 1651. Captain Josias Fforster, Governor.

"The Jury for our soveraigne Lord the Kinge<sup>2</sup> Doe present Jeane Gar-

<sup>2</sup> The people of Bermuda were not ignorant of the execution of King Charles I. two years before. The news reached them in July, 1649, and was received with the horror natural to loyal

subjects whose minds had not been prepared for such an unheard-of event, by the religious and political passions which brought it about. Their first act was to "acknowledge the high borne Charles

diner, the wife of Ralph Gardiner, of Hambleton tribe, for that y<sup>e</sup> said Jeane, on or about the 11th day of Aprill, 1651, feloniously, deliberately, and mallitiously did saye that she would crape Thomasin, a mullato woman in the same tribe, and used many other threaneinge words, tending to the hurt and injurie of the said mullato woman, and within a while after, by practice and combination with the devill, felloneously did practice on the said mullatto the diabolical craft of witchcraft, inso-much that the said mullatto was very much tormented, and struck blind and dumbe, for the space of two houres or there abouts, and at divers tymes in other places did practice the same devilish craft of witchcraft on severall persons to the hurt and damage of their bodyes and goods, contrary to the peace of our souveraigne the Kinge, his crowne and dignitie.

"To which indictment she pleaded not guiltie, but beinge the grand inquest found a trewe bill, and for her further triall did put herselfe uppon God and the country, w<sup>ch</sup> being a Jury of 12 sworne men did find her guiltie, whereuppon the sentence of death was pronounced upon her, and accordingly she was executed on Monday, the 26th day of this instant May, at St. Georges, before many spectators.

"The proceedinge against this woman was longe and teadious, by reason of many accusac<sup>o</sup>ns. The Governor and Councill was very carefull in finding out the trewth. They caused a Jury of woemen to search her and one Goody Bowen which was suspected.<sup>3</sup> They returned as followeth: Havinge made diligent search accordinge to our oathes, we cannot find any outwards or innwards mark, soe far as wee can perceave, whereby we can in conscience find them or either of them guiltie of witchcraft. Onely in the mouth of Goody Gardiner there is a blew spott which beinge prickt did not bleed and the place was insensible, but beinge prickt close by it it bled, the which we leave to the judgements of Phisitians. Mr. Hooper and the chirurgions beinge appointed to viewe that spott the day that she was to come to her triall, and it was fallen away and flatt, and beinge prickt it bled, and it was knowne to be there 18 yeares. And for further triall she was tied and thrown twice in the sea. She did swyme like a corke, and could not sinke. These signes and other strong evidences in court condemme her. Yet neverthesse she would confesse nothinge att her death. She was demanded in court if she could giue a reason why she did not sinke. She answered that she did open her mouth and breathe, but could not sinke."

The next two Bills indicate that superstition was making considerable progress, but as they were both thrown out by the Grand Jury, there is reason to suppose that it did not as yet pervade the little society of the Somers Islands to the exclusion of all common sense.

### 3. 165 $\frac{3}{4}$ . *Elizabeth Middleton*.

"The Jury for the keepers of the liberties of the Commonwealth of England, doe present Elizabeth Middleton, of Sandis Tribe, spinster,<sup>4</sup>

Prince of Wales, to be the undoubted heir-apparent to the kingdomes of Great Brittan, France, and Ireland." How the principles of the Commonwealth speedily established themselves, under civic influence from home, belongs to the history of the colony, rather than to our present

subject.

<sup>3</sup> See entry No. 1.

<sup>4</sup> She was a married woman. See her husband's trial afterwards. The term seems to mean one who spins. We have another instance of it in the case of Grace Bedwell.

for that she in the month of September last past did use many cursed speeches against a young child, age 9 months, of Anthony White's, of Sandys Tribe afore said, after which it fell into strange fitts. And by her combination with the Diuell did use that abominable Practice of witchcraft upon the body of the child, and thereby did destroy yt, contrary to the peace of the commonwealth of England, and the dignity thereof."

The Grand Inquest found this Bill '*ignoramus*' and the Prisoner acquitt by proclamation.

4. 1653.—*Henry Ward.*

"The Jury for the keepers of the liberties of the commonwealth of England do present Henery Ward, of the Somer Islands, planter, for that he in or about the month of February last past, in Anno 1653, not having the feare of God before his eyes did consult with the deuill to bewitch the turkeyes of Thomas Atkin, of the Islands aforesaid, which cast them into strong fitts, so that they at last died by that diabolical practice, contrary to the peace of the commonwealth of England and the dignity thereof."

The Bill was ignored, and the Prisoner cleared by proclamation; which, however, did not prevent his being presented again (*postea*).

The depositions of the trial next in order are recorded at great length, but the MS. has suffered much in this part from the effects of damp, and by the ravages of insects. Enough remains to show that the principal witness was a half-witted man, subject to fits, and that imaginary witch marks on his person were the damning evidence against the unfortunate victim, as indeed they were in almost every case.

"At a Court held the 3rd of May, 1653, at George's Towne,<sup>5</sup> in the Somer Islands, for the triall of John Midleton, of Sandis Tribe, were delivered in these attestations against him, as followeth:—

"The examynation of John Midleton, taken before Captain Josias Fforster, Gou'nor of the saide Islands. By Anton Jenour, Secretary. April y<sup>e</sup> 13th, 1653.

"John Midleton being accused for bewitching of a Skotsman called John Makaraton, who then dwelt with Governor Captain Josias Fforster, answered that he was no witch, nor had he any knowledge that way, nor had he done harm to the said Skot but good, for he had healed his legg, which was hurt at the catching up of calves that were lose. It being further demanded of Midleton whether he and the Skot did not fall out about gathering hogsmeat in his grounds he answered yes, and he went to strike him; and he turned to him agayne, so they parted that time.

"JEAMES BLAKE being examined upon his oath sayeth that upon friday the — day of April, 1653, w<sup>ch</sup> was the day that John Mokarraton was brought to prison, he sitting downe upon the ground by the prison door, fell down backward, and he being brought into prison came agayne to his senses, and talked very discreetly and soberly, and being offered victuals he did eate it and gave God thanks, and after this he did relate unto him all the [story] of the difference betweene Midleton and himself, and how he came hurt on his legg, and how he fetcht hogsmeat, and how his present grief and distraction came upon him by degrees:

<sup>5</sup> St. George's Town became "George's Town" under the Commonwealth.

which was as followeth. Att first he grew solintary by the space of a fortnight, and in the middle of thes solintary fitts as he was in bed he saw a thing in the shape of a man black in culler, two sev'all nights, w<sup>ch</sup> sate upon him very hevely and asked him if he would loue hym, and he answered noe, I will loue God. And on Satterday about noon he fell a roaring and cried out to God : and after this he would not acknowledge any thing that day. But at night in a fitt this deponent saith that he herd the Skott say I am terrified enough for Midleton's hogsmeat, and in that night he saith that he heard Mokaraton as he was by himsele name the name of Middleton very often : and on the sabbath day in the morning he being in his fitt said that Midleton came to strike him : and he went to strike him agen : and so continued in his fitts until afternoone, that the people were ready to go to church. And then he herd him say that he was not there as a thefe or a rogue, but because y<sup>e</sup> Lord's hand was upon him, and said that when Mr. Stow badd the people depart and goe forth, as they went he saw Midleton betwixt 2 hogsheads, and he thought to goe and lay hands on him, and then he saw him rush out amongst y<sup>e</sup> people. . . .

"ALISTER SMITH being examined the same tyme affirmeth on oath that this attestation above deliuered by Jeames Blake is the truth. And the said Alister further attesteth, that he being in prison he herd John Mokaraton say (poynting to the gallows) that he should never be well untill he saw Midleton hanged upon the gallowes, and after this in the night did here Morkaraton say (looking up), Ah, ah, Midleton, art thou there to choake me !

"(Signed) JAMES BLAKE, ALISTER SMITH.<sup>6</sup>

"MR. JOHN STOW, marshall, affirmeth y<sup>t</sup> these attestations hath declared all these things before attested ; or the substance of them to himself. And further saith that he tooke especial notice that after John Makaraton had confessed anything about his present distraction or about Midleton, he was worse tormented than before, a negro boy called Symon being in present, in another roome where this Makaraton was prisoner, he saw through a great hole in the wall a thing of a blacke culler come from towards the place where he laye, and ran so swiftly that he could not well tell the shape of it, which thing went out of the privy hole. Att that instant he heard the man give a thump and make a noise which before he thinks was fast asleep.

"Upon these and many clear grounds of suspection of John Midleton being guilty of witchcraft Captain Josias Fforster, Gov<sup>r</sup>no<sup>r</sup>, [directed] the severall men w<sup>ch</sup> follow to search Midleton [names]."

The report, which is in a mutilated condition, states how the jurors stretched Midleton's body upon a chest, and "found diuers suspicious markes blew in culler, also one teate or dugg about the bigness of a catts or bigger, which was moyste, and right over against it they found another, not altogether so bigg or great. They say further that because they desired to be better satisfied amongst themselves they concluded to search each other, to see whether their might appear any such markes naturally upon any of themselues, w<sup>ch</sup> they did accordingly, but they affirm that they found none nor likelihood of any."

<sup>6</sup> Nearly all the depositions are signed. Out of 37 persons examined, 16 seem to have written their names ; 21 sign with a

mark. Among this latter number are all the female witnesses.

Then follow the evidences of Margery Tucker and John Burch as to Middleton's having confessed that he was a witch and had the private marks about him, and it appears that he was subjected to the trial of swimming. Thomas Hess and Michel Burrowes say that after Middleton came out of the water, and was taken back to prison, they being there with him asked him what he could now say for himself, seeing he had been also tried by water, and desired him to confess the truth to them, "and they do both declare that Middleton told them that he was a witch, and that he knew yt not before." They affirmed also that they did earnestly persuade Middleton to discover other witches if he knew of any in these Islands, to which he answered that the wife of — Stevenson was a witch, "as badd a one as any in the world, and said also that Goody North was one he feared, but did not positively accuse her to be a witch."

The next evidence against this unhappy man was his own wife, Elizabeth Middleton, who had herself been tried on a like charge a few months before, "who saith that in the tyme of her trouble she hath said that there is a witch amongst us. It was her husband and not herself, that she suffered for his cause, and she hath said since her husband was sent to prison That they have taken a wronge hogge by the eare, all this while that they accused her." The poor woman, however, after details which must be omitted, declares that "she hath no ground to accuse her husband to be a witch, although she hath spoken thus of him in the tyme of her distemper, and further sayth not."

"ROBERT PRIESTLY sayth that on fryday last, being the 15th of this instant, he being removing Mr. Tucker's cattell in the evening in a piece of ground near to the house of John Middleton, he saw right oppositt agt the house a black creatuer lye soe upon the ground in the shape of a catt, but farre bigger, with eyes like fier and a tayle near as long as a man's arme, and this examine being somewhitt daunted at the first sight, yet took courage and went upp close to yt, having drawne his knife with a resolution to stabb yt. As he lift up his hand and knife to strike at yt ( . . *MS. defective* . . ) he had no power to strike it. At which this examine was so amazed and affrighted that his hayer stood upright on his head. He departing from it looked backe and sawe the said creature turne his head and look wishfully after this examine, but he ran away and left it : reporting the same to the servant in his house with much feare, and further saith not.

"JOHN MIDDLETON being at the barr spake as followeth. It being demanded of him by the Governor whether he knew any other witches his answer was that he feared there was too many, and prayed God he would [shew] them. Being urged to reveale such as he knew and had spoken suspitiously of, the Governor asked him what he could say of Goody Moore. He answered he feared she was a naughty woman, and his reason was because he saw her in her window in a [great'] hatt, and further that she then scratched him by the face, which he told to others, and knowing of yt when she met him desired him not to bring her into question and trouble : Middleton being desired to tell when he had this discourse with her, he said that it was when his own wif was in trouble about suspition of witchcraft. Then it being demanded what he could say of Goody Stevenson, he said that he thought her to be naught, for



he being in Thomas Ffarmer's house, there was Goody Stevenson, and hee and she had some speach together that did not please her, and they fell out and parted, and he went [home] by the hill, and going up the hill he sawe two things in the shape of cattis and thought at first they had been his own cattis, untill he had better considered them, and then he perceaving them to differ in culler he was afrajd, and turning to look after them again, they were vanished out of his sight. Midleton further saith that being at John Ashe's house he met her there also, and when he told her that she was naught, for he had herd that she had given Goody Butler a rose, and after she had smelt on yt the woman was very much troubled and ill or sicke, and then she answered him that yt was true that such a report there was about giving her a rose, but she gave yt to her for noe hurt to her. And saith that he met her at Thomas Homer's anothere tyme, and then he told her that she was naught, for Georg had a beaste was sicke and died, and when yt was opened yt had not any blood in yt. Midleton then was asked by the Govnr if he would speake these things to Goody Stevenson's face, to which he answered he cared not, although he did, and said he would do yt. Christian Stevenson being sent for to come into the Court the said Midleton told her of all the before-mentioned passages to her face at the Barr, when she denied not but that Midleton and she had had such discourse together, but yet denied that she had used any kind of witchery, or had any knowledge of any such thing, and withall wished that God wode show his Judgment on her if she were a witch or had done any such thing.

"Then Midleton said,<sup>s</sup> *I thought that a man could not do the thinges that I was accused of and wished that god would show his judgment upon me as you do. But since I came to prison I prayed to the Lord to discover yt to me, and now he hath found me out, and made me know that I was a witch, which I knew not before, and said I blesse God for yt. Goody Stevenson replied that she for her part was wrongfully accused, for she knew not what did belong to any such thing. John Midleton said unto her, I know that you are a witch as well as I, and said perceaving that you are a witch I have told of thee.*

"After the Court was *suspended* and the Governor remayeing in y<sup>e</sup> sessions house, Mrs. Stow and others were appoynted to search Goody Stevenson, and they haveing some conference with John Midleton he tould them, that if at any tyme they intended to discover witches by signes or markes they must not delaye yt, but goe about it suddenly. And as for their teates or markes which the ympes do suck: after their sucking these teates wilbe *pale* and hard, soe that if you offer to enter them with an instrument you shall hardly enter them, but if you do *stick in* them y<sup>r</sup> instrument crie Twang! and as for them that do not suck after their desier, their teates or markes will be redd *because* of moystuer in them, and they being pickt they will seem to bleed, but it is not blood, but redd waterish blood, and not blood, although it may appear so to you.

"At a Court held the 3rd and 4th of Maye, 1653, at George's Towne in the Som<sup>re</sup> Islands for the trial of John Midleton now present:

"Captain Josias Fforster, Governor.

Captain Roger Wood, Councillor and Com<sup>r</sup> of Pagat's Fort.

Captain Richard Jennings, Councillor and Com<sup>r</sup> of Kinge's Castle.

<sup>s</sup> The words in *italics* are conjectural, the paper being eaten away by insects.

Captain William Seymer, Councillor and Com<sup>r</sup> of Southampton Fort.  
 Mr. Stephen Paynter, Councillor of Southampton Tribe.  
 Mr. William Wilkinson, Councillor of Sandis Tribe.  
 Mr. Richard Norwood,<sup>9</sup> Councillor of Devon Tribe.  
 Mr. John Miller, Councillor of Hamilton Tribe.  
 Mr. John Waynewright, Councillor of Warwicke Tribe.  
 Mr. John Wentworth, Councillor of Pagett Tribe."

[Then follow the names of the Grand Inquest, sixteen in number.]

"The Jury for the Keeper of the Commonwealth of England doth present John Midleton, of Sandy's Tribe, in the Somer Islands, Planter, for that he not having the feare of God before his eyes, hath feloniously, wickedly, and abhominably consulted and consented to and with the devill to become a witch, as doth appear by several signs and markes upon his body, and that diabolical sin of witchcraft hath put in practice now lately upon the body or person of John Morkaraton, a Skotsman of about the age of 50 years, and him hath vexed, tormented, and disquieted, contrary to the peace of the Commonwealth of England and the dignity thereof.

"This Bill being put to the consideration of the Grand Inquest was found *Billa vera*, and for his further Trial he put himself upon God and the country, whereof a Jury of 12 men sworne did find him guiltie, and sentence of death was pronounced upon him, and he was executed at George's towne at the comon place of execution the 9th of May, 1653.

"A note of such sins as I, John Midleton, have committed from my youth, soe farre as I can call them to mynd or remember. W<sup>ch</sup> were read and confessed by him at the place of execution before his death.

1. Disobedience to my parents.
  2. Purloyneing from them and others money and goods.
  3. Running awaie from school.
  4. Ffor purloyneing of cloth wurth 20s. and denieng yt and wishing that God would judge me at the tyme of need if I had yt.
  5. After my coming of age for drunkenes, swearing and cursing for many yeares.
  6. For adultery with English and negroes.
  7. For contempt of godliness and God: though I went to church, w<sup>ch</sup> was for fashion sake.
  8. For neglect of the sacraments.
  9. For consenting to the stealing of turkeyes.
  10. For making debate betweene neighbours.
  11. For lying.
  12. For making awaie my wive's estate, and making her case worse than it was when she was in trouble for witchcraft, and for her goods I put away and denyed them, until she found them with other folkes.
  13. I did curse John the Skot for cutting my pastuer.
  14. *Crimen haud inter Christianos nominandum.*<sup>1</sup>
- Signed with the mark X of John Midleton.

<sup>9</sup> R. Norwood was a mathematician of considerable eminence. He made two surveys of Bermuda, and communicated some papers to the "Philosophical Transactions" relating to the colony.

<sup>1</sup> One William Worth was executed the previous year (1652) for a similar

offence, the executioner being Black Moll, a negro woman who was reprieved from a sentence of death for robbery at the same assizes, by the Governor, "the country being at that tyme in want of an executioner."



6. "Here ffolloweth several attestations taken agaynst Christian Stevenson and Alice More upon suspition of witchcraft, 9th May, 1653.

"CHRISTIAN STEVENSON having been accused in open Court by John Midleton to be a witch : and she being now examined she denieth it, and saith that she is noe witch : yt being then demanded of her how she came by the duggs and markes of a witch that were found on the inside of her cheekes, she answered, that all those markes came by reason of an imposthume on the one side, and the other came by a ragged tooth on the other side, and this was about 5 yeares since : and saith that Goody Todd badd her lay the curd of a lemon possett unto the said imposthume (and Mrs. Denicombe was then present), which curd brake it : and it hath bin ever since, and the other by the ragged tooth aforesaid, which was filed by Thomas Denicombe, and further saith not.

"THOMAS DENICOMBE being then examyned, saith that if he did file any such tooth of Goody Stevenson it was more than he remembered.

"The wife of Thomas Denicombe being then examyned also sayth that she doth remember that Goody Stevenson askt her husband to file a tooth, but whether he did file it or noe she knoweth not, and further saith not. Thomas Murrill saith that Goody Stevenson came unto his house to buy somewhat, and she brought with her a crosslett wrought with gould and wold have him purchase it : but he refused it, and would not meddle with her. Then she would buy some paper for a dollar that she had, he refused that alsoe, at which she went awaye, very much discontented as it seemed to him, and before even the same day his child fell extreameley sicke, and it continued so with sore and unnatural paynes until it died, and further saith not."

Then follow attestations of Dorothy Budd and Goody Burch as to the child's sufferings and death, but the MS. is here much damaged.

"Anne the wife of Daniell Butler saith that Goody Stevenson and herself having had dealings together formerly, at length they fell out about twopence : yet afterwards they grew friends agayne. And one after-noone she said Goody Stevenson came unto her and gave her a rose, and this deponent saith that she kept the rose in her bosom all the night following. And in the night as she was in bedd she felt a hand in her bosom (in her best judgement), which hand did by force pluck her upright in her bedd : do what she could to the contrary. And then she heard a voyce say unto her, *Doe not strike ; I'le do thee no harm*, and the next morning herselfe and children sought for the rose in her bedd, and up and down the house, but could not see nor fynd so much as one leafe of yt. Then the next morning Goody Stevenson came to her house, and then this deponent askt her if she had fetched away the rose that she had given her : to which Goody Stevenson replyd that she came not that way since until now, and after all this, this deponent affirmeth that she was tormented every night for the space of a yeare and a halfe after, until at length a thing having the shape of a woman came in the night and took her by the throat, and this deponent saith that then she got her by the throat also with one hand and with the other hand got her by the head, and she perceived her to have short haire upon her head, and then she puld of her bed clothes and laid them under her thinking to keep them safe enough, but could never after that fynd them. And then this declarant saith that she still held her by the throat with one hand, and with the other got her thumb in her mouth and bitt it so

long that her mouth was all clammy with the blood, and in the morning she found three drops of blood upon her neck. And this deponent saith that the thing that harmed her appeared unto her sometyes in the likeness of a [*word gone*] and at other tymes in the shape of a child. Also when she had that combatt and found the dropps of blood aforesaid this deponent saith that Goody Stevenson came unto her and had a cloat bound about her thumbe, and when she asked her whether she did bite her by the thumbe or not, last night; for she had bitten somebody by the thumbe last night . . . but after these passages betweene this deponent and Goody Stevenson she had spoken of her biting by the thumbe to divers people, upon which Goody Stevenson would needs be searched by woomen, and after that searchmente saith that they had several cattell died, and had severall hoggs that were in good plight yet would not eat, though they had come by them, and were forst to kill them, or else they had died, and saith that they had a sow that had young piggs sucking, which turned sicke, and would turn round and dyed soudaynely.

"Furthermore this declarant saith that she had a child born into the world very likely to live and doe well, and it pyned away by the space of 3 quarters of a yeaere, and then died; and further saith not.

"Elizabeth, the wife of Henry Fford, and Nicholas Ellis, taken the same time, who saith that her mother Mrs. Pitt had three shoates<sup>2</sup> loose that would turne round and soe two of them died. At length the third turned round alsoe and was dying, w<sup>ch</sup> they perceiving went and told Mrs. Pitt, who coming to see yt badd them steeke yt and scald yt, but when they could not get the hayer off with skalding, they laye the shoat upon two trevetts and said it may be Goody Stevenson will come by, and before they could get the hayre of one side Goody Stevenson came thither and asked them if Mrs. Pitt had her spider's tooth<sup>3</sup> home yet, or noe, to w<sup>ch</sup> was answered, you know yt is come home well enough, for yourself left word w<sup>th</sup> Mrs. Jones to bring yt home: but Elizabeth saith that she doth not perfectly remember whether it were herselfe that answered Goody Stevenson or some other that stood by; and further they say not. Nicholas Ellis confirms this attestation to be truth alsoe.

"The attestation of Prudence Seares, wife of Guy Seares, of Pembroke Tribe, taken the same tyme, who sayth that she was entreated by Mrs. Burrowes to demand 12*d.* of Goody Stevenson for a payer of spectacles, or in leu thereof to get her 2 fowles, if she had not money, and at length they fell to words about yt, and this deponent saith that Goody Stevenson called her plundermouth, and said that she could teare her flesh from her bones, and many fleyeckes to the like purpose, and that very night the deponent saith that her tongue was puld out of her head, and hanged out like a beastes tungue, and was rough like a beastes tungue, so that she could not eat nor goe to church by the space of [many days?]. She saith that this discourse was at Mrs. Edwicke's house in Pembroke, and she affirmeth further that yt was 3 tymes that she had differences with Goody Stevenson, and all these tymes her tongue was drawne out and rufe like a beastes tongue.

<sup>2</sup> Shoat—shote, a young pig. A provincialism still in use in Bermuda and in New England. Thus Hosea Bigelow—

"It means that we'er to set down licked,

That we'er *poor shotes* an' glad to own it."

"Ballads," No. vii.

<sup>3</sup> These words are pretty plain. I cannot guess the meaning.—J. H. L.

"The attestation of the Widow Hopkins, late wyfe to Henery Hopkins, of Pembroke Tribe, taken the same tyme. Who saith that the said Goody Stevenson *lent her some* butter, and she came for yt and demanded yt: the declarant told her that she had not enough to repay her, but prayed her to stay till she had churned and could provide yt for her. And this declarant saith that she went on churning and continued soe doing all the day untill night, and she saith that Goody Stevenson came to the house severall tymes whilst she was churning, and askt her if she had done. *But?* this declarant replied and said her butter would not come: and coming at last to aske this deponent told her yt would never come now, *for* her husband that throwne yt unto the piggs, and then she went her *way*, and when she was *gone* goodeman Hopkins said to *her*, Wife, pray god this woman be not a witch. And *within* a while after she said Goody Stevenson came to the house and said to this deponent and to her husband that neither she nor her husband had bewitched her butter.

"This deponent saith further that she being present at the search of Goody Stevenson by woomen at Mr. Barkley's house, she was taken with divers paynes and tortures in her body so that she lost her child that she *was great* withall in a strang and onnaturall manner. And further saith not.

"The attestation of Thomas Wiverley taken the same tyme, as follows, who saith that about two yeares ago Goody Stevenson offered him a rose w<sup>ch</sup> he refused to take at her hand, w<sup>ch</sup> she perceiuing said to him I am noe witch, and saith that after this he was haunted as he laye in his bedd, and saith that he is fully persuaded that he saw Goody Stevenson in one of those fitts twice: being demanded what manner of fitt he had, sayth that as soone as he was turned upon his side he was presently turned upon his back with voyolence, and is then in great tortuer, and saith that he hath been thus haunted this halfe yeare, and doth verily believe that thus being haunted in this manner is the cause of a great weaknes that is upon him, and saith further that the side of his wife that lyeth next to him in the night is very blacke, although it is not soe when they lye down together.

"The attestation of Marye Hopkins taken the 17th day of Maye, 1653, by Antho. Jenour, secretary, who saith that about 4 or 5 yeares since, she had bin at Goodman Sanders, his house, and as she was going home she overtook Goody Stevenson, and coming behind her Goody Stevenson would have her goe before her, w<sup>ch</sup> she refused to doe because she was her elder, and told her it was not meet for her to goe before her, w<sup>th</sup> that she came to her, and pusht her forwards, and then she askt her if 'Treesdall were at home that daye. She answered noe. Goody Stevenson sayd to her that she would come or send for him betweene this and night, and at night going into her master his buttery to carry in some planteing roots, and being there she felt herself bitten by the arme.

"The attestation of Sarah Dunscombe saith that this declaration delivered by Mary Hopkins is the truth according as the said Mary Hopkins told yt them at the tyme being, and saith further that she had at that tyme in her ffather Jones his house herd her cry out and say, *Oh lord, oh lord.* Goody Stevenson was pinching her, or biting her. She saith further that her mother herd the words the same tyme spoken by the same Mary Hopkins, and this deponent affirmeth that she puld up

her sleive to look what she ailed, and that she sawe her arme as though she had bin pinched or bitten, and further sayth not.

"The examination and attestation of Henery Bishop, taken the same day. Who saith that about 4 yeares agoe he being at Mr. Attwoode's house in Hamilton tribe and ther was Goody Stevenson, and Mrs. Attwood askt that deponent if he had any hookes and lynes to sell to Goody Stevenson, he answered no, then Goody Stevenson replied and said that old lynes would doe her turn for her, some to catch her some small fish withal, and this declarant went home and *found* some *old lynes* and sold them to her, and that night after she was gone he saith that he dreamed that he saw a spiritt follow him, and he running to shun it fell into a cave, and called out to William fford as he was shuning yt to help him, and when William fford came he asked him how he came there, and he thought he called out that Stephen Stevenson had bewitched him, and as soon as he came near he desiered him to have a care and take heed how he came, notwithstanding he fell into the cave also, and he thought he made somethinge to come downe to him and offered to lift him up. And then he awoke so that he was emediately very sensible desiring God to blesse him, for what a strang dreame have I bin in : and now he knew himself to be perfectly awake, and desired to sleep, and goeing to turn himselfe in his bedd was not able to stirr, and so contynued for the space of a month, not able to turn himselfe without great paynes, w<sup>ch</sup> grieue caused him to cry out grievously, and further saith not.

"The attestation of Thomas Seewarde taken by the grand Inquest, taken the 17 day of Maye, 1653, who saith that about 7 or 8 yeares agoe, he had a daughter above a yeare old and well and in health, and of a soddaynely yt fell sickly and pyned away, her side hunched up, and her eyes grew out of her head, and a great bunch grew upon her head, and yt fell into strong fitts, insomuch as yt falling into such strong fitts, he carried it unto Mr. Seymer, who could not tell what to say to yt, by reason of the strangnes of the fitts, w<sup>ch</sup> caused Mr. Seymer to thinke it was bewitched, and told his deponent that she had a grand-child that met with Goody Stevenson and came home and fell into such strong fitts and was strangly taken. And she asked he who she met withall and she said with Goody Stevenson. And then this deponent told Mrs. Seymer that Goody Stevenson was very busy with his child and would ever and anon be giving it green plantains and such things.<sup>4</sup> And this Mrs. Seymer badd this deponent that he should not suffer to give her any thing, and this deponent saith that he forbadd her to give the child any more thinges, and she would answer this deponent, *What ! do you thinke I am a witch !* and ye child lying sicke. She would be with yt and doe what he could, and when the child was quiett she would disappear. When we thought not of her she would be with the child, and the child would still cry, *Knock my gammer on the head ! knock my gammer on the head !* And oftentimes since the child died, she would say, *You thinke hardly of me because of your child*, this deponent would say, *I thinke not hardly of you*. And she would answer, *Oh but you do ! oh but you do !* And further this deponent saith that Goodman Stevenson gave him a cocke turkey for the pastuer of a peece of ground for his goat, and the deponent saith that Goody Stevenson was not willing to give it, and a certayne tyme after she came to this deponent's house and asked him where

<sup>4</sup> An act of affection much like giving a sick child green gooseberries.

was the turkey you had of my husbände, but he would not tell her and she went awaye, and that night he had grievous paynes, and his side in the morning was as blacke as a shoe, and also after this deponent came hither out of England this Goody Stevenson came to him to buy a combe, and he said he had none to sell, and she went away mumbling ; and presently after a young shoat began to cry out alwayes and droop and afterwards died, and this deponent cut off the tayle and eares and threw them in the fire, saying yt may be Goody Stevenson will come by, and soe she did. And further saith not.

“ The names of the women that were empannelled to search the body of Christian Stevenson, supposed to be a witch :—

Mrs. Leea, forewoman.

Dame Coursby.

Mrs. Elizabeth Rener.

Widdow Robinson.

Mrs. Elizabeth Jenour.

Dame Port.

Mrs. Stow.

Who made report as followeth :—

“ That upon the search of the body of Goody Stevenson they found in her mouth two small teates or dugs, the one on the one side of her mouth, and the other on the other side of her mouth, which they prickt with a needle, but there came forth noe bloud at all from them, and when they prickt they asked her if she felt when they prickt them, and she confessed that she felt them not. And they say further that because they would not mistake they did all severally search her mouth and prickt these teates: but they affirm that there came not forth any bloud when they did soe, and say also that they found a blew spott or like wart [in a certain place], very suspitious and against nature, out of which came waterish bloud when they prickt yt.

*(To be continued.)*