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**THE HAUNTED HOUSE AT
CARNIE MOUNT
(1729)**

TRANSCRIPTION BY
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A N A L E C T A :

OR

MATERIALS

FOR A

HISTORY OF REMARKABLE PROVIDENCES;

MOSTLY RELATING TO

SCOTCH MINISTERS AND CHRISTIANS.

BY

THE REV. ROBERT WODROW,

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(pp. 87-90)

Mr William Brown tells me the following accompt¹ he had, when last {in}² Perth, from Mr. James Mercer, Minister at^{†i} as what was [88] generally belived as to Dr Rule, Principal at Edinburgh; and the thing was so notour, that it could not miss to be observed. The Doctor happened to be going to the North, to some Church meeting, and road with a servant. Came to knouen Carnie Mount³, that lyes in the high and nearest road, and belongs to the parish of Laurencekirk. Before the Doctor gote to the foot of the Mount, it was turning dark, and the night drauing on him. Ther is a change-house at the foot of the Carnie Mount wher he expected lodging. When he came there, the landlord told him ther was not a bitt of room for him in the house; that the Shirrefe of the shire, and a good number of the gentlmen about, wer to lodge with him, and he expected neither he nor any of the family could have a bed that night. The Doctor told him hou unwilling he was to venture throu the Mount so late, and asked the landlord if he kneu of no remedy for him; that he would be glad of any place where he could be free of the open air, and his horses have meet. The landlord said he could find room for his horses, and they should be weel enough. For himself, he kneu no place for him, unless he pleased to lye in yonder large house about a quarter or half a mile distance, and he should take care to send over bed-cloaths, and a fire, and candles; only he told him it had not been inhabited for thirty years, and it was said to be haunted with an apparition. The Doctor said, if no better might be, he would rather chuse that than to stay in the open air. His servant, houeuer, would not go.

¹ The many peculiarities of spelling make it impractical to indicate each one of them by '[sic]'. Suffice to say that the text has been scrupulously transcribed.

² These brackets are used to differentiate corrections already present in the 1843 edition of Wodrow's *Analecta* from my own insertions, presented in square brackets ([...]) – *Ed.*

³ Carnie Mount, nowadays better known as Càrn Mòr Dearg, is in Aberdeenshire, about two Km away from Wodrow's parish in Eastwood (Renfrewshire), where he was collecting the testimonies for his *Analecta*.

The landlord was as good as his word: sent over his servants with bed-cloaths, fire, and candles; and the Doctor went over. The house was a good house, and the rooms good. After his room was ordered, and every thing well, he was left alone in it. He walked some time in the room, and committed himself to God's protection, and went to bed. There was two candles he left on the table, and these he put out. There was a large, bright fire remaining. He had not been long in bed till the room door is opened, and an apparition, in shape of a country tradesman, came in, and opened the curtains without speaking a word. Mr Rule was resolved to do nothing till it should speak or attack him, but lay still with full composure, committing himself to the Divine protection and conduct. The apparition went to the table, lighted the two candles, [89] brought them to the bedside, and made some steps toward the door, looking still to the bed, as if he would have had Mr Rule rising and following. Mr Rule still lay still till he should see his way further cleared. Then the apparition, who the whole time spoke none, took an effectual way to raise the Doctor, He carried back the candles to the table, and went to the fire, and, with the tongs, took down the kindled coals, and laid them on the deal chamber floor. The Doctor, then, thought it time to rise, and put on his cloaths, in the time of which the spectre laid up the coals again in the chimney; and, going to the table, lifted the candles and went to the door, opened it, still looking to the Principal as he would have him following the candles; which he now, thinking there was somewhat extraordinary in the case, after looking to God for direction, inclined to do. The apparition went down some steps with the candles, and carried them in to a long trance, at the end of which there was a stair which carried down to a lower room. This the specter went down, and stooped and set down the lights on the lowest step of the stair, and straight disappeared. Mr Rule, after a little, waiting to see if any further should cast up, lifted the candles, went up, the way he came, to his room, and went to his bed again, where he was no more disturbed.

Revolving in his thoughts what had passed, the Doctor began to think there was murder in the case. In the morning the landlord came over to see how his guest was, and how he had rested. The Principal told him he was very well, and asked him if the

Shirriff⁴ was still with him. The other answered he was. The principal desired him to give his service to him, and to tell him who he was, a Minister and Principal at Edinburgh, and tell him he would willingly see him in the house wher he was; but if that wer uneasy, he would come to him, because he had somewhat of weight to communicat. The Shirrif came over, and Mr Rule told him what had hapned, just as above, and that he was much of the mind ther was murder in the case. The Shirrif said it might be so, but it was certainly long since, for it was upwards of twenty, near thirty years since that hous was⁵ inhabited. The other begged the Shirriff [90] to cause lift the stone and open the earth where the candles wer left by the spectre; and he yielded. When the ground was opened, the plain remains of a human body wer found, and bones, to the conviction of all. Dr Rule next intreated the Shirrife that he would send orders to the country people, especially such above thirty or forty, to come to the place, and he would give them a sermon, and see {if} any hint could be had of the murder. The Shirriff was not for this, and insisted that the murder was certainly so old that nobody nou could probably give any accompt of it. The Doctor insisted ther was no hazard of their meeting for a sermon; and we⁶ did not knou what Providence might discover. The Shirriff condescended, and that day warning was sent for some miles about. The people conveened, the Doctor preached upon some subject suitable to the occasion, and told what had hapned, and earnestly dealt with the consciences of his hearers, if they kneu any thing of that murder to acknowledge it, nou that God, in his Providence, had brought it to light. In the time of his sermon, an old man, near eighty years, was awakned, and fell a weeping, and, before all the company, acknouledged that, at the building of that house, he was the murderer. He and one of his fellou masons fell into a debate and came to high words, on a summer morning, when the rest of the workmen wer not come up to their work; and he killed the man with one stroak of a hammer, and buried him under the first step of the stair; and the matter

⁴ Wodrow is not consistent on the spelling of this word, and we find several variations through the text (“shirriff”, “shirrif”, “shirrife”). In the third edition of his *Dictionary of the English Language* (1768) Dr. Johnson spells it as “sheriff”, and defines it as “an officer to whom is entrusted in each county the execution of the laws”. – *Ed.*

⁵ Had been [note in the original].

⁶ Here the narration seems to slip from indirect speech to a direct quote, as suggested by the change from third to first person pronouns, although there is no punctuation to mark the change. – *Ed.*

was never known. My informer knows no more of what followed, whether the murderer was punished; and, as is probable, dyed penitent.

†Aberdalgie