

***GOTHIC BOURNES***

**A REMARKABLE STORY  
OF  
DISCOVERED WITCHCRAFT  
AT LAUDER, ANNO 1649.**

**(1775)**

TRANSCRIPTION BY

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THE  
**HISTORY**  
OF  
WITCHES, GHOSTS,  
AND  
HIGHLAND SEERS:  
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Many wonderful well-attested RELATIONS  
OF  
**SUPERNATURAL APPEARANCES,**  
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DESIGNED

For the Conviction of the UNBELIEVER, and  
the Amusement of the CURIOUS.

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*Somnia, terrors Magicos, miracula, Sagas  
Nocturnos Lemures, portentaque, Theffala rides?*

Say can you laugh indignant at the schemes  
Of magick terrors, visionary dreams,  
Portentous wonders, witching imps of Hell,  
The nightly goblin and enchanting spell?

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**BERWICK:**

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(pages 37-44)

*Remarkable Story of Discovered Witchcraft at  
Lauder, Anno 1649. And of the Wiles which  
the Devil used in deceiving poor Creatures.*

[37]

IN<sup>1</sup> the beginning of the year 1649, a common report passing up and down in all men and women's mouths, of an eminent warlock, whose name was Robert Grieve, Alias Hob Grieve, trafficking in these parts of the country, and deceiving many simple people. He was at last discovered, apprehended, and imprisoned at the town of Lauder, and after long shiftings and denial, wherein he had learned of his hellish master to be most subtle, by [38] the great goodness of God, he was at length brought to a serious acknowledgment of his guilt, and confession of his being the devil's officer in that country, for warning all Satan's vassals to come to the meetings where, and whensoever the devil required, for the space of eighteen years and more. He acknowledged also, that his wife (who, twenty years, or thereabout, before was burnt at Lauder) was the occasion of his coming into that snare; for they being poor, and having little or nothing to live upon, he began to grudge under that condition, and to complain of his lot; which his wife perceiving, desired him not to be troubled, but shewed him, that if he would follow her counsel, she should acquaint him with a gentleman who would teach him a way how to become rich. To which motion he hearkened, and at her desire went down to a haugh on Gallawater, near to the Stow, where she was to meet the gentleman; and when they had come to that place, and tarried a considerable space, seeing nobody, he began to weary, and tell her, that he would be gone; but she pressed him to stay, and assured him, that the gentleman would not fail her. At last there came a great mastiff bigger than any butcher's dog, and very black, running upon him, which put him into such a confusion, and astonishment of spirit, as that he knew not where he was; but his wife laboured to

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<sup>1</sup> Setting the first word, first few words, first phrase or sentence, or the complete first line of *each chapter* in small caps, sometimes preceded by an initial or drop cap, is **done by the typesetter** in the course of the interior design of the book. It is *never* a part of the author's manuscript (<https://writing.stackexchange.com/questions/9252/capitalized-opening-lines>).

comfort him under that consternation, assuring him, that the gentleman would come presently and perform what he had promised him.

And accordingly in a short space the devil appeared in the shape of a black man, and fitting his [39] discourse to the man's temptation, made many promises to him, that if he would become his servant and obey him, he would teach him ways how to be rich, and how to be much made of in all the country; unto which demand of the devil he acknowledged, that he consented to, not so much for any hopes of future riches, as for fear lest he should be devoured by him, (for he suspected in the very mean time it was the devil) and then he gave him that charge to be his officer to warn all to the meetings, (as was said before) in which charge he continued for the space of eighteen years and more, until he was apprehended. He was most ingenuous in his confession, an evidence whereof was this, "That there was neither man nor woman delated him, but were all confessors when apprehended, and confronted with him, and died confessing." One instance whereof is remarkable, and worthy of observation, which is this. After he had delated many, and as many of those were apprehended as the prison could conveniently contain, and the keepers attend, he gave up another woman in the town of Lauder, whose name the magistrates resolved to conceal for a time, till the prison should be emptied of some of<sup>2</sup> those who were already apprehended, and had confessed; and accordingly secrecy was engaged unto. But the devil came that same night unto her, and told her, "That Hob Grieve had blamed her for a witch; but assured her, that if she would rise up and go and challenge him for it, and never come away till he and she were confronted, that then he would deny it." Whereupon she arose and came to the prison window, and railed upon Hob [40] Grieve, calling him warlock, and slave to the devil, and all evils which her mouth could utter; and when desired to get home by the centinels [sic], and also by the magistrates, she sat down upon the tol-booth-stair,<sup>3</sup> and said, "She should never go to her house till she and that slave of the devil were confronted." Whereupon the bailie came to the preacher, desiring him to come and speak to her, to desire her to go home, for there was none accusing her, who accordingly came, and entreated her to go home; but she obstinately refusing to go, till she should be confronted with that rascal, who had delated her an honest woman, for a witch. The bailie was constrained to her desire. Whereupon many being present as witnesses, she was conveyed up to the prison, to the room where Hob Grieve was. And as soon as she was come in sight, she fell down upon her bare knees, and began to scold the man, and accuse him of a lie, in speaking of her name. Says she, "Thou common thief, how dare thou for thy soul say, that ever before this time, thou saw me or I saw thee, or ever was in thy company either alone or with others?" All which language he heard very patiently, till he was desired by the bailie to speak. Whereupon he asked her, how she came to know, that he had delated her for a witch?

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<sup>2</sup> Written: 'of of' in the source text.

<sup>3</sup> One word illegible in the source text before 'booth stair'.

For (says he) surely none but the devil, thy old master and mine, has told thee so much. She replied, "The devil and thou perish together, for he is not my master, though he be thine. I defy the devil and all his works." Whereupon he says to her, "What needs all this din? Does thou not know, that these many years I have come to thy [41] house, and warned thee to meetings? and thou and I have gone along together?" And thereafter he condescended to her upon several places, and actions done in these places by her and others; "to all which, I am, (said he) a witness." By this she was so confounded that immediately in presence of the bailie, the preacher, the schoolmaster, and many witnesses, she cried out, "Oh now (says she) I perceive that the devil is a liar, and a murderer from the beginning<sup>4</sup>; for this night he came to me, and bid me come and abuse thee, and never come away till I was confronted with thee, and he assured me that thou would deny all, and say, thou false tongue thou lied." And having said this, she with many tears confessed, that it was all truth he had said, and prayed the minister, that he would entreat God for her poor soul, that she might be delivered out of the hands of the devil. Under this confession she continued even unto the day of her death.

Another evidence of ingenuity in him was this, that after five of six men and women whom he had delated, were also convinced, and had confessed their witchcraft, he earnestly desired, "That he and them might be taken to the church on the Lord's day, to hear the word of God;" which being granted, and they conveyed with a guard to the church, all of them sat down together before the pulpit. The preacher lectured on these words, Mark ix 21<sup>5</sup> "And oft time<sup>6</sup> it hath cast him into the fire, and into the water to destroy him, &c.<sup>7</sup> The father of the lunatic child complained to Christ, of the devil's cruelty towards his son"<sup>8</sup> And the preacher briefly noted that observation from the [42] words, "That whatever the devil did to such as he had gotten any power over, his aim and end was always to destroy the poor creature, both soul and body." This truth being seriously applied, and spoken home by the preacher to the said Hob Grieve, and the rest of the confessing witches and warlocks, they were all immediately so confounded, that all of them cried out with a dreadful and lamentable noise, "Alas! That is a most sure truth; Oh, what will become of us, poor wretches? Oh, pray for us." But Hob Grieve especially bare witness to that sad truth, by a general declaration, in the face of the congregation, that he had experience of the truth thereof. "For (said he) there is no trusting to his promises; for in Musselburgh<sup>9</sup> water when I had a heavy

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<sup>4</sup> Written 'begining' in the source text.

<sup>5</sup> Written 'Mark ix 21' in the source text. However, it should be 'Mark ix 22': <https://biblehub.com/kjv/mark/9-22.htm>

Also, full stop missing before 'And'.

<sup>6</sup> Written 'and oft time' in the source text, where 'Mark ix 22' verse says 'ofttimes'.

<sup>7</sup> Closing inverted commas and full stop missing in the source text.

<sup>8</sup> Full stop missing after "son."

<sup>9</sup> Full stop missing in the source text. Also 'Water' instead of 'water'.

criel<sup>10</sup> upon my back, he thought to have drowned me there; and since I came into prison, he did cast me into the fire to destroy me, as is well known to the present preacher, and magistrates of the place and many others<sup>11</sup>; and concluded with an exhortation to all, to beware of the devil: "For whatever he saith or doth, his purpose is to destroy you, and that you will find to be the end of his work, as we know to our doleful experience this day." Another evidence of the devil's art in studying the destruction of the poor creatures, was manifest, in that same place, and year 1649. A certain woman in the town of Lauder was blamed (not by Hob Grieve, but by some other) and she for a long time denied. The magistrates of the place for this cause were loath to meddle with her, but adjudged to death all the rest, who had confessed; and ordained them to be burnt upon the [43] Monday after: she hearing of this, and that she alone was to remain in prison, without hopes of escape, was prompted by the devil to make up such a confession in her own bosom, as she supposed might take away her life, and thereupon sent for the minister, and made that confession of witchcraft which she herself had patched up, before witnesses, and in the close she earnestly entreated the magistrates, and ministers, "That she might be burnt with the rest upon Monday next." Her confession was, "That she had covenanted with the devil, and had become his servant about twenty years before, when she was but a young lass, and that he kissed her, and gave her a name, but since he had never owned her, and that she knew no more of the works of the devil, as she should answer to God, but what she said was true." But intelligent persons began to be jealous of the truth of that confession, and began to suspect that out of the pride of her heart, in a desperate way, she had made up that confession to destroy her life, because she still pressed to be cut off with the rest on Monday. Therefore much pains was taken on her by ministers and others on Saturday, Sunday and Monday morning, that she might resile<sup>12</sup> from that confession, which was suspected to be but a temptation of the devil, to destroy both her soul and body, yea, it was charged home upon her by the ministers, that there was just ground of jealousy<sup>13</sup> that her confession was not sincere, and she was charged before the Lord to declare the truth and not to take her blood upon her own head. Yet stiffly she adhered to what she had said, and cried always to be put away with the rest. Whereupon [44] on Monday morning, being called before the judges, and confessing before them, what she said, she was found guilty, and condemned to die with the rest that same day. Being carried forth to the place of execution, she remained silent, during the first, second and third prayers, and then perceiving that there remained no more, but to rise and go to the stake, she lift up her body, and with a loud voice, cried out, "Now all you that see me this day, know that I am now to die as a witch by my own confession, and I free all men, especially the ministers and magistrates of the guilt of my blood. I take it wholly upon myself, my blood be upon my own head. And as I

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<sup>10</sup> 'Criell', presumably a variant of 'cryal', meaning a species of heron, a large bird.

<sup>11</sup> Closing inverted commas missing in the source text.

<sup>12</sup> To retract.

must make answer to the God of heaven presently, I declare, I am as free of witchcraft as any child: but being delated by a malicious woman, and put in prison under the name of a witch, disowned by my husband and friends, and seeing no ground of hope of my coming out of prison, or ever coming in credit again, through the temptation of the devil I made up that confession, on purpose to destroy my own life, being weary of it, and chusing rather to die than live, and so died. Which lamentable story, as it did then astonish all the spectators, none of which could restrain themselves from tears, so it may be to all a demonstration of Satan's subtilty, whose design is still to destroy all, partly by tempting many to presumption, and some others to despair. These things to be of truth, are attested by an eye and ear witness, a faithful minister of the gospel, who died not long since.

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<sup>13</sup> Suspicion.