

A True
RELATION
Of the
ARAIGNMENT
Of Thirty
WITCHES

At Chelmsford in Essex, before Judge Coniers, fourteene
whereof were hanged on Friday last, July 25 1645,
there being at this time a hundred more
in severall prisons in Suffolke
and Essex.
Setting forth the Confessions of the
principal of them.

Also shewing how the Divell had carnall copulation with Rebecca West, a young maid, daughter to Anne West. And how they bewitched Men, Women, Children, and Cattell to death: with many other strange things, the like was never heard of before.

The names of those that were executed:

Mrs Wayt, a Ministers wife, Jane Browne, Jane Brigs, Mother Forman, Mother Miller, Anne West, Rachel Flower, Mother Clarke, Mother Benefield, Mary Greene, Frances Jones, Mother Goodwin, Mary Foster, Mary Rhodes.

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The Confession of REBECCA WEST, daughter to Anne West of Colchester in ESSEX.

The said Rebecca confessed at the Barre, that about Shrovetide last her mother bad her make haste of her worke, for she must gee along with her before Sunne downe: and as they were going over the fields, her mother gave her a great charge never to speake of what shee should heare or see, and she faithfully promised to keep counsel. When she came to the house of meeting there were five Witches more; the two chiefs were Mother Benefield and Mother Goodwin: this Mother Goodwin pulled out a Booke, and after their manner they prayed out of it, and presently their severall Impes appeared in severall shapes: six whereof appeared in the shapes of Kitnens about a weeke old in Mother Benefield's lap, and after she had kissed them, she said unto Rebecca that those were all her children which she had by as handsome a man as any was in England. Then they commanded their Spirits come to kill such a mans Horse, some a cow, some a Childe, &c. Then Mother Benefield called to mother West, and asked if she were sure that her daughter Rebecca would keepe counsel, or else she might seeke all their blood. She answered, Rebecca had promised. They all then replied, if shee ever did speake of it that shee should suffer more tortures and paines on earth, then the paines of hell. Presently mother Benefield said, for more certainty let her take cur Covenant and Oath as we have already done. Then they taught her what to say, the summe whereof was to deny God and her Saviour

Jesus Christ, to renounce all promises of his blessings, and the merits of his bitter death and passion, to beleve as they did, and to serve and obey as they did. And the said Rebecca confessed that so soone as she had done thus, the Diuel in the shape of a little blacke dog leaped into hes lap, & kissed her three times, but she felt them very cold. Shortly after, when she was going to bed, the Diuel appeared unto her againe in the shape of a hand some young man, saying that he came to marry her. The manner was thus: he took her by the hand, and leading her about the roome, said, I take thee Rebecca to be my wife, and doe promise to be thy loving husband till death, defending, thee from all harmes; then he told her what shee must say, whereupon she took him by the hand and said, I Rebecca take thee to be my husband, and doe promise to be an obedient wife till death, faithfully to performe and observe all thy commands; the first whereof was that she should deny and renounce as aforesaid. And being asked by the Judge whether she ever had carnall copulation with the Diuel, she confessed that she had. And being asked divers questions by a Gentleman (Hopkins – ed) that did speake severall times with her before and afterward (giving her godly and comfortable instructions) she affirmed that so soone as one of the said Witches was in prison, she was very desirous to confesse all she knew, which accordingly she did, whereupon the rest were apprehended and sent unto the Gaole. She further affirmed, that when she was going to the Grand Inquest with one mother Miller (indicted for a Witch) she told mother Miller that shee would confesse nothing, if they pulled her to pieces with pincers: and being asked the reason by the Gentleman, she said she sound her selfe in such extremity of torture and amazement, that she would not endure it againe for the world: and when she looked upon the ground shee saw her selfe encompassed in flames of fire: and presently the Grand Inquest called for her, where they admit but one at a time, and so soone as she was thus separated from this mother Miller, the tortures and the flames beganne to cease: whereupon she then confessed all shee ever knew, and said that so soone as her confession was fully ended, she found her conscience so satisfied and disburdened of all her tortures, that she thought her selfe the happiest creature in the world: withall affirming that the Diuel can take any shape, and speake plaine English.

Another Witch sent her maid to a neighbours house for a handfull of herbes, who meeting with her sweetheart staid an houre by the way, saying she should bee halfe hanged for staying so long: whereupon he told her that in such a place in their owne garden there grew the same herbes, so it was but going over the pale and her journey was ended; which she did, and pleased her mistris well for her long stay, by bringing those herbes. At night her mistris bade her go up to bed first, which made her mistrust something; where upon she peeked between the boards, and observed her mistris to cut the herbes in small peeces, shrewing them about the roome: the next morning her husband rising betimes found twelve or fourteene great Hogs, being all his owne, dead in the yard, and so for his Sheepe and all his other Cattell, and telling his wife how they were undone, she replied, Hath the queane served me thus? she shall suffer for it. Then he examined the maid, and both gave evidence. This was at Ipswich in Suffolke.

The evidence of Mr. Long a Minister neere Colchester in Essex.

First, that as he was riding on the way, the shape of a red Dog passed by him, at which his blood did rise: and being passed a small distance, turned his face, his eyes appearing not like the eyes of any creature, his horse presently started, and never

left kicking and flinging untill he threw him downe, but had no hurt. An old woman in the Towne called goodwife Clarke being mistrusted and examined before Sir Thomas Boes, confessed that she sent forth this spirit, with command to make the horse throw Mr. Loig and breake his necke: and being demanded by Sir Thomas Boes what was the reason the Spirit did not performe her commands, she answered because the power of God was above the power of the Divil. But the horse did pine to death for his punishment.

The evidence of the said Mr. Long.

He said that one morning as he was walking abroad, a poore woman being of his own Parish spake kindly to him, but his answer was that he had a long time a good opinion of her, although he ever accounted her sister, an ill liver, and little better then those that are accounted Witches, but now he strongly beleevved that her sister had made her as bad as herselfe; this much troubled the old woman, and she would not leave following and perswading of the said Mr. Long to bee of his former good opinion, professing her own innocence in any ill of such nature, or any compact with such evil Spirit whatsoever: but finding him not satisfied with any thing she had said, she assured him she would give him an evidence undenyable, whereupon she lifted up both her hands towards heaven, calling God to witnes, and desired that he would shew a present Iudgement upon her if she were not innocent and cleare: now Mr. Long affirmed upon his oath that these words were no sooner out of her mouth, but she was strucke to the ground upon her back before his face, where she did lye in a most lamentable condition, trembling and crying; he took her up and carried her into an Alehouse hard by, where she did lie in this extremitie two dayes, and that so soone as she came to herselfe he gave her the best comfort he could, shewing how mercifull God had beene to her in sparing her life, giving her time of repentance, the first step whereof must be her confession and contrition, whereupon she confessed that she had done much mischief, and that she had compacted with the Devill, that hee usually sucked her and appeared unto her in the shape of a Squirell. These aforesaid Witches have confessed that they did raise the great windes in March last, and caused a Hoy to be cast away, wherein were many passengers.

When these Witches came first into the Gaole at Colchester, the Gaoler lost his meat often, and mistrusting that the Witches had got it, upon a time bought a good shoulder of Mutton, and said hee would looke to the dressing of it himselfe, but when it was ready the Witches had got it, and all the while the Witches were at supper with it, the Gaoler in stead of Mutton was eating Hogs-wash.

After this the Gaoler desirous to see more of their feats, intreated some of them to shew him a little of their cunning, thinking to make himselfe meny for the losse of his meat, whereupon one of the Witches bid him goe fetch her foure pewter dishes wherein never water came; straightway went the Gaoler to a Pewterer and got 4. new dishes, and afore he brought them to the Witch he wet one of them, contrary to the Witches direction, neverthelesse as soone as the Witch had them, she put her bands and feet into the foure dishes, and upon an instant was lifted into the ayre with three dishes that were dry, the fourth falling off, and by good chance was found in a meadow about halfe a mile off, and brought backe to Prison.