Satan's

Invisible World

DISCOVERED.

Detailing the particulars of Strange Pranks Played by the Devil, together with a Particular account of Several Apparition's, witches, and Invisible Spirits.

to which is added

The Marvellous History of

MAJOR WEIR AND HIS SISTER.

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MAJOR WEIR AND HIS SISTER.

THIS man, Thomas Weir, was born at Clydesdale, near to Lanark, who had been a lieutenant in Ireland long since. What way he came to get some public command in the city of Edinburgh, in the years 1649 and 50, I know not; but it seems he has always been called Major Weir since that time. Many things might be narrated of him, which for brevity's sake, I cannot meddle with, since I intend only to speak of his sorceries, and other things relating thereunto. It seems he had, before he was burnt, some charge over the waiters at the ports of the city, being, as it were, a check to them. Coming one day, as his custom was, he found some of them in a cellar, taking a cup of ale, neglecting their charge. After a gentle reproof, one of them replied, That some of their number being upon duty, the rest had retired to drink with with their old friend Mr. Burn. At which he started back,

and casting an eye upon him, repeated the word Burn four or five times: and going home, he never came abroad afterwards, till a few weeks after he had discovered his impieties. It was observed by some, that going to Liberton sometimes, he shunned to step over that water brook, which is ordinarily called Liberton-burn, but went about to shun it. Some have conjectured that he had advice to beware of a burn, or some other thing which this equivocal word might signify, as burn in a fire. If so, he has foreseen his day approaching. A year before he discovered himself, he took a sore sickness; during which time he spake to all who visited him like an angel, and came frequently abroad again.——This man taking some dreadful tortures of conscience, and the terrors of the Almighty being upon his spirit, confessed to several neighbours in his own house, and that most willingly, particular sins which he was guilty of, which bred amazement to all persons, they coming from a man of so high repute for religion and piety. He ended with this remarkable expression, "Before God, (says he) I have not told you the hundred part of what I can say more, and am guilty of." These very same abominations he confessed before the judges likewise. But after this, he would never till his dying hour confess any more, which might have been for the glorifying of God, and the edification of others, but

remained stupid, having no confidence to look any man in the face, or to open his eyes. When two of the magistrates came to to his house in the night-time to carry him to prison, they asked, If he had any money to secure? He answered none. His sister said there was. Whereupon, to the value of five dollars, in percels here and there, were found in several clouts. His sister advised the two magistrates to secure his staff especially; for she also went to prison. After he was secured in the tolbooth, the bailies returned, and went to a tavern near to Weir's house in the West-bow, a street so called there. The money was put into a bag, and the clouts thrown into the fire, by the master of the house and his wife; which, after an unusual manner made a circling and dancing in the fire. There was another clout found with some hard thing it, which they threw into the fire likewise; it being a certain root, which circled and sparkled like gun-powder, and passing from the tunnel of the chimney, it gave a crack like a little cannon, to the amazement of all that were present.---The money aforesaid was taken by one of the bailies to his own house, and laid by in his closet. After family-prayer was ended, he retired into the same closet, (where I have been) during which time his wife, who is yet living, and the rest of the family, were affrighted with a terrible noise within the study, like the falling of a

house about three times together. His wife gave a fearful cry, "My dear are you alive?" The bailie came out unafraid, having, he said, heard nothing; whether he concealed this upon the account his wife was with child, or otherwise, it cannot be well known. The money was presently sent away to another bailie's house, at a great distance from Weir's; where there was some disturbance, but in broken expressions.

During the time of his imprisonment, he was never willing to be spoken to; and when the ministers of the city offered to pray for him, he would cry out in fury, "Torment me no more, for I am tormented already." One minister asking him, If he would pray for him? was answered, Not at all. The other replied, in a kind of holy anger, "Sir, I will pray for you in spite of your teeth and the devil your master to," who did pray, making him at least to hear him; but the other starting wildly, was senseless as a brute. Another minister asked him if he thought there was a God; said the man, I know not. The other replied smartly, "O man, the argument that moveth me to think there is a God, is thyself; for what else moveth thee to inform the world of thy wicked life?" But Weir answered, Let me alone. When he peremptorily forbade one of his own parish ministers to pray, one

demanded, if he would have any of the presbyterian persuasion to pray, he answered, "Sir, you are all alike to me." Then said the minister to him, "I will pray for you." "Do it not," said the other, "upon your peril;" looking up to the beams of the house. But prayer was offered up so much the more heartily, because the company about expected some vision. It is observeable, that in things common he was pertinent enough; but when any thing about Almighty God, and his soul's condition, came about, he would shrug, and rub his coat and breast, saying to them, "Torment me not before the time." When he was at the stake to be burnt, the city ministers called to a churchman there looking on, being one of that persuasion whereof Weir was formerly deemed to be, to speak to him; but no sooner had he opened his mouth, than he made a sign with head to be silent. When the rope was about his neck to prepare him for the fire, he was bid say, Lord be merciful to me; but he answered, "Let me alone, I will not; I have lived as a beast, and I must die as a beast." The fire being kindled, both he and his staff, a little after, fell into the flames. Whatever incantation was in his staff, is not for me to discuss. He could not officiate in any holy duty, without his rod in his hand, and leaning upon it, which made those who heard him pray, admire his fluency in prayer. Its

falling into the fire with him, (let others search out the disparity) minds me of this passage. In Zetland a few years ago, a judge having condemned an old woman and her daughter, called Helen Stewart, for witchcraft, sent them to be burned. The maid was so stupid, that she was thought to be possessed. When she had hung some little time on the gibbet, a black pitchy-like ball foamed out of her mouth; and after the fire was kindled, it grew to the bigness of a walnut, and then flew up like squibs into the air, which the judge, yet living, attests. It was taken to be a visable sign, that the devil was gone out of her. I shall not make application of this as to Mr. Weir's staff.------I know from good hands, that if this man repented of any thing in prison, it was for causing a poor maid to be scourged, who affirmed, she had seen him commit bestiality going to Newmills to a solemn meting. This poor woman lived about two years after his death, and heard of his fatal end. His incest with his own sister, was first when she was a young maid. The place where this abomination was committed, was cursed; for, contrary to nature, it remained always bare without grass. A reverend minister told me, (I mention this as from myself, not from the author of the letter) that Major Weir confessed so much to him, and told him, that the place lies off the road-way between Kirkcaldy and

Kinghorn, upon a little hill-side; which he had the curiosity to go and see, and found it so. This was done the matter of fifty years ago. Many other things he confessed, which Christian ears should not be defiled with.---Before I come to his sister, take this notable remark from two persons yet alive, dwelling at the foot of the West-Bow, at the head whereof dwelt Major Weir. This gentlewoman, a substantial merchant's wife, was very desirious to hear him pray, much being spoken of his utterance; and for that end spoke to some of her neighbours, that when he came to his own house, she might be sent for. This was done, but he could never be persuaded to open his mouth before her; no, not to bless a cup of ale; he either remained mute, or up with his staff and away. It troubled her then; but I suppose both her husband and she smiles at it now.

Some few days before he discovered himself, this gentlewoman coming from the Castle-hill; where her husband's niece was lying-in of a child, about midnight, perceived, about the Bow-head, three woman in windows, shouting, laughing, and clapping their hands. The gentlewoman went forward, till, just at Major Weir's door, there arose, as from the street, a woman about the length of two ordinary females, and stepped forward. The gentlewoman, not as yet excessively feared, bid her maid

step on, if, by the lanthorn, they could see what she was; but haste what they could, this long-legged spectre was still before them, moving her body with a vehement cahination, and unmeasurable laughter. At this rate the two strove for place, till the giantess came to a narrow lane in the Bow, commonly called the stinking-close, into which she turning, and the gentlewoman looking after her, perceived the close full of flaming torches, (she could give them no other name,) and as it had been a great multitude of people, stentoriously laughing and gaping with tehees of laughter. This sight, at so dead a time of the night, no people being in the windows belonging the close, made her and her servant haste home, declaring all what they saw to the rest of the family; but more passionately to her husband. And though sick with fear, yet she went the next morning with her maid, to view the noted places of her former night's walk, and at the close inquired who lived there? It was answered, Major Weir. The honest couple now rejoiced, that to Weir's devotion they never said, Amen. I know there are some, who strenuously assert the unreasonableness of beliving such visions and apparitions; but you have made them sufficiently evident from your relation foregoing. These, in all probability, have been a presage of his approaching death, and of the manner of it: links and torches

signifying an honourable interment, which perhaps had been promised to him. There was one minister in the city, that could never be persuaded to speak with him in prison; but no sooner was he dead, than he went to the tolbooth, and called for his sister, who had some remorse; of whom I shall now speak. He told her, that her brother was burnt, and how he died, (though he saw him not executed) as I heard from himself. She believed nothing of it; but after many attestations, he asked where his staff was? for, it seems, she knew that his strength and life lay therein. He told her, it was burnt with him. Whereupon, notwithstanding of her age, she nimbly, and in a furious rage, fell on her knees, uttering words horrible to be remembered. And in rising up, as she was desired, her raging agony closed with these words, "O Sir, I know he is with the devils; for with them he lived." She entreated that minister to assist her, and attend her to her death, which, at her violent importunity, he yielded unto, though it was not his course to wait upon condemned persons. What he said in private to himself, he says, must die with him. She avouched, that from her being sixteen years of age, to her fiftieth, her brother had the incestuous use of her, and then loathed her for her age. She was pretty old at this time; and he, when he died, was about seventy. He asked her, If ever

she was with child to him? She declared, with great confidence, he hindered that by means abominable: which she, beginning to relate, the minister stopped her. Some bystanders were desirous to hear the rest; but says he, "Gentlemen, the speculation of this iniquity is in itself to be punished."---In often and returned visits, she was interrogated, If she had any hand in her brother's devilry? She declared but in a passive way; and gave this for an instance: A fiery chariot or coach, as she called it, coming to his door, at broad day, a stranger invited him and her to go and visit a friend in Dalkeith, a small town about six miles from Edinburgh. They both entered, and went forward in their visit; at which time (says she) one came and whispered something in his ear, which affected him. They both returned after the same manner that they had gone out. And Weir, going after to make some visits, told them he had strong apprehensions, that that day the King's forces were routed at Worcester; which, within a few days, was confirmed by post. She affirmed, that none saw the coach but themselves. The devil hath wrought far greater farlies in his time than this---She knew much of the enchanted staff; for by it he was enabled to pray; to commit filthiness, not to be named; yea even to reconcile neighbours, man and wife, when at variance. She oft hid it from him; and

because without it he could do nothing, he would threaten and vow to discover her incest; fearing which, she would deliver it again. Being asked the cause of her much spinning, which she was famous for, she denied any assistance from the devil, but found she had an extraordinary faculty therein, far above ordinary spinsters; yet owned, that when she came home, after her being abroad, she found there was more yarn on her wheel than she left: and that her weaver could not make cloth thereof, the yarn breaking, or falling from the loom.------Once there came a stranger to her, while she was at her wheel, and proposed a way to her to make her rich; for they both lived almost upon alms. The way was this, "Stand up and say, all crosses and cares go out of this house." She answered, "God forbid, I say that, but let them be welcome when God sends them." After two or three visits more, she asked this stranger, where she dwelt? She replied, "In the Potterrow," a street in the suburbs of of that city; but finding neither such a house, nor such a woman, I judged, said she, it was the devil, one of my brother's acquaintances; for I know he had familiarity with the devil.

His poverty minds me of a wizzard accused and executed in Zetland, before named for witchcraft, several years ago, called Luggy to a nick-name; who, being a fisher, had a trick, at any time when

hungry at sea, to cast out his line, and would, out of Neptune's lowest kitchen, bring cleverly up fish well boiled and roasted; and his comrades, by a natural courage, would make a merry meal thereof, not questioning who was cook. He had another piece of art, at any time of the year, or in great storms, to go up to a hill near his own house, whereupon there was a deep pit, out of which, with his lines, he drew up codlings or keiling for his provision, which never man could but himself. This history is true, being yet to be seen in the criminal books of that country---She was asked anent her parents? She was persuaded her mother was a witch; "for the secretest thing that either I myself, or any of the family could do, when once a mark appeared on her brow, she could tell it them, though done at a great distance. Being demanded what sort of a mark it was? She answered, "I have some such like mark myself, when I please, on my forehead? Whereupon she offered to uncover her head for visible satisfaction; the minister refusing to behold it, and forbiding any discovery, was earnestly requested by some spectators, to allow the freedom. He yielded: She put back her head dress, and seeming to frown, there was seen an exact horse shoe shaped for nails in her wrinkles, terrible enough, I assure you, to the stoutest beholder. In the morning before her execution, she

told the minister, she resolved to die with all the shame she could, to expiate, under mercy, her shameful life; this he understood to be an ingenuous confession of her sins in opposition to her brother's despair and desperate silence, to which he did encourage her. At her parting with him, she gave him hearty thanks for his pains; and shaking his hands, offering to kiss them, she repeated the same words which he bade her perform. Ascending up the ladder, she spoke somewhat confusedly of her sins, of her brother and his enchanting staff; and with a ghastly countenance, beholding a multitude of spectators, all wondering, and some weeping, she spake aloud, "There are many here this day, wondering and greeting for me, but alas! few mourn for a broken——-;" at which words, many seemed angry: some called to her to mind higher concerns; and I have heard it said, that the preacher declared, he had much ado to keep a composed countenance. The executioner falling about his duty, she prepares to die stark-naked; then, and not before, were her words relating to shame understood: the hangman struggled with her to keep on her clothes, and she struggled with him to have them off. At last he was forced to throw her over openfaced, which afterwards he covered with a cloth.------So much from the gentleman that gave me this information; to which I shall add, that this is not pub-

lived with a design to reflect upon men of this or that persuasion, far be it. The devil can counterfeit what religion he pleases, and ordinarily a good one. True religion can never suffer any prejudice from a hypocrite's wearing a cloak of it, more than the good angels can suffer a stain by Satan's transforming himself into an angel of light. The devil hath his lackies and pages with Christ's livery upon them. Was not Judas, who was but one of the twelve, a vile hypocrite? It is a wonder, where there are a thousand professing Christ in a congregation, that a hundred of them are not as bad. His glistering cloak of religion dazzled all men's eyes; this was needful. Foul faults must have a cloak to cover them. The apostle Jude speaks of some that go after Sarko's heteras, which may be understood, not only of that sin mentioned, Rom, i. 27. but one of another sort of flesh, not to be named. Here was a demonstration, proving evidently that there is a God, viz. by the terrors of his conscience. It is evident also, there is a devil that hurries men on into sin. He had this expression to two ministers that came to see him in prison; there was no temptation which the devil could propose to him, but he was capable to accept of it. It is evident also, there is either an explicit compact between some men and the devil; horrible sins covered with religion bring utter despair at last. Desperation

in hell in "fieri." Some men as well as devils are tormented before the time. Let us not count the less of religion, that it is made a cloak for covering sin; let us beware that such a man's fall prove not a neck-break to us; let us idolize no man for his profession, or that he is of this or that persuasion, or of such a party: let no man rest in a bare profession of religion. Men in compact with the devil, may be assisted both to preach and pray. The devil's servants are well rewarded at the last. Profession and practice must go together; a clinking profesion, with an unbridled tongue, is a vain religion. "Pure religon, and undefiled before God and the Father, is, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction; and for a man to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Major Weir was burnt between Edinburgh and Leith, at a place called the Gallowlee, on Thursday the 14th of April 1676.

A Wonderful discovery of Murder by an Apparition.

About the year of the Lord 1632, near unto Chester in the street, there lived one Walker, a yeoman of good estate, and a widower, who had a young woman called Anna Walker to his kinswoman, that kept his house, who was by the neighbours suspected to be with child; and was, towards

the dark of the evening, one night sent away with Mark Sharp, who was a collier, or one that digged coals under ground, and who had been born in Blackburn-hundred in Lancashire, and so she was not heard of for a long time, and no noise or little was made about her. In the winter time, one James Graham, being a miller, and living two miles from the place where Walker lived, was one night alone very late in the mill grinding corn; and about twelve or one o'clock at night he came down the stairs, from having been putting corn in the hopper, the mill-doors being shut there stood a woman upon the midst of the floor, with her hair about her head, hanging down and all bloody, with five large wounds on her head. He being much affrighted and amazed, began to bless himself; and at last asked her who she was, and what she wanted? To whom she answered, "I am the spirit of such a woman, who lived with Walker; and being got with child by him, he promised to send me to a private place, where I should be well look'd to, until I was brought to bed, and well recovered, and then I should come home again, and keep his house. And accordingly," said the apparition, "I was one night late, sent away with one Mark Sharp, who upon a muir (naming a plain the miller knew) slew me with a pike, such coals withal, and gave me these five

wounds, and after threw my body into a coal pit hard by, and hid the pick under a bank; and his shoes and stockings being bloody, he endeavoured to wash them, but seeing the blood would not wash out, he hid them there." And the apparition further told the miller, "That he must be the man to reveal it, or else that she must still appear and haunt him." The miller returned home, very sad and heavy, and spoke not one word of what he had seen, but shunned as much as he could to stay in the mill after night without company, thinking thereby to escape the seeing again that frightful apparition. But notwithstanding, one night when it began to be dark, the apparition met him again, and seemed very fierce and cruel; and threatened him, that if he did not reveal the murder, she would continually pursue and haunt him: Yet for all this, he concealed it, until some few nights before Christmas; when being, soon after sunset, walking in his garden, she appeared again, and then so threantened him, and affrighted him, that he faithfully promised to reveal by the next morning.

In the morning he went to a magistrate, and made the whole matter known, with all the circumstances: And diligent search being made, the body was found in a coal pit, with five wounds in the head, and the pick, and shoes and stockings yet

bloody, in every circumstance as the apparition had related to the miller. Whereupon Walker and and Sharp were both apprehended, but would confess nothing. At the assise following, viz. at Durham, they were arraigned, found guilty, condemned, and executed; but would never confess the fact. There are many persons yet alive that can remember this strange murder; and the discovery of it; for it was, and sometimes yet is, as much discoursed of in the North of England as any thing that almost hath ever been heard of, and the relation was printed, though now not to be gotten.

Strange pranks played by the Devil at Woodstock in England.

The commissioners, October 13, 1649, with their servants, being come to the manor-house, they took up their lodging in the king's own rooms, the bed-chamber, and withdrawing-room: the former whereof they also made their kitchen; the council-hall their brew-house; the chamber of presence, their place of sitting to dispatch business; and a wood-house of the dining-room, where they laid the wood of that ancient standard in the High Park, known of all by the name of the King's Oak, which (that nothing might remain that had the mane of King affixed to it) they digged up by the roots. October 14th and 15th, they had little disturb-

ance; but on the 16th there came. as they thought, somewhat into the bed-chamber where two of the commissioners and their servants lay, in the shape of a dog, which going under their beds, did, as it were, gnaw their bed cords; but on the morrow finding them whole, and a quarter of beef, which lay on the ground untouched. they began to entertain other thoughts.

October 17. Something, to their thinking, removed all the wood of the King's Oak, out of the dining-room to the presence-chamber, and hurled the chairs and stools up and down that room: From whence it came into the two chambers where the commissioners and their servants lay, and hoisted up the feet of their beds so much higher than their heads, that they thought they should have been turned over and over, and then let them fall down with such force, that their bodies rebounded from the bed a good distance, and then shook the bedsteads so violently, that themselves confest their bodies were sore with it.

October 18. Something came into the bed-chamber, and walked up and down, and fetching the warming-pan out of the withdrawing-room, made so much noise, that they thought five bells could not have made more. And Octobter 19th, Trenchers were thrown up and down the dining-room, and at them who lodged there; one of them

being wakened, put forth his head to see what was the matter, but had trenchers thrown at it.

October 20th. The curtains of the bed in the withdrawing-room were drawn to and fro, and the bed-stead, much shaken, and eight great pewter dishes, and three dozen of trenchers, thrown about the bed-chamber again. This night they also thought a whole armful of the wood of the King's Oak were thrown down in their chambers, but of that in the morning they found nothing had been moved.

October 21st. The keeper of their ordinary, and his bitch lay in one of the rooms with them, which night they were not disturbed at all. But Oct. 22d, Though the bitch kennelled there again, to whom they ascribed their former night's rest, both they and the bitch were in a pitiful taking.the bitch opening but once, and that with a whining fearful yelp.

October 23. They had all their clothes pluck'd off them in the withdrawing room, and the bricks fell out of the chimney into the room.

On the 24th, They thought in the dining-room, that all the wood of the King's Oak had been brought thither, and thrown down by their bed-side; which being heard by those of the withdrawing-room, one of them rose to see what was done, fearing indeed that his fellow commissioners had

been killed, but found no such matter. Whereupon returning to his bed again, he found two or three dozen of trenchers thrown into it, and handsomely covered with the bed clothes.

October 25. The curtains of the bed in the withdrawing-room were drawn to and fro, and the bed-stead shaken as before; and in the bed-chamber, glass flew about so thick (and yet not one lozen of the chamber windows broken) that they thought it had rained money, whereupon they lighted candles; but, to their grief, they found nothing but glass.

October 29. Something going to the window opened and shut it; then going into the bed chamber, it threw great stones, for half an hour's time, some whereof lighted on the high-bed, others on the truckle-bed, to the number in all of above fourscore. This night there was also a very great noise, as if forty pieces of ordnance had been shot off together. At two several knocks, it astonished all the neighbouring dwellers, which is thought might have been heard a great way off. During these noises, which were heard in both rooms together, both commissioners and their servants were struck with so great horror, that they cried out one to another for help: whereon one of them recovering himself out of a strange agony he had been in, snatched a sword, and had like to have killed one of his brethren coming out of his bed in his shirt, whom he took for

the spirit that did the mischief. However, at length they got all together, yet the noise continued so great and terrible, and shook the walls so much, that they thought the whole manor would have fallen on their heads. One of them lighted a candle, and set it between the two chambers in the door-way, on which another fixing his eyes, saw the similitude of a hoof striking the candle and candlestick into the middle of the bed-chamber, and afterwards making three scrapes on the snuff to put it out. Upon this, the same person was so bold as to draw his sword, but he had scarce got it out, when there was another invisible hand had hold of it too, and tugged with him for it; and, prevailing, struck him so violently, that he was stunned with the blow.

Then began violent noises again, insomuch that they called to one another, got together, and went into the presence-chamber, where they said prayers, notwithstanding all which, the thundering noise still continued in other rooms. After this, November 3d, they removed their lodging over the gate; and next day, Being Sunday, went to Ewelm, where, how they escaped, the authors of the relation knew not. But returning on Monday, the devil (for that was the name they gave their nightly guest) left them not unvisited, nor on the Tuesday following, which was the last day they stayed.

FINIS.