



**THE SECRET
COMMONWEALTH OF
ELVES, FAUNS AND FAIRIES**

ROBERT KIRK

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BY
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- 1. The History Of The Book And Author**
- 2. The Secret Commonwealth**
- 3. "The Subterranean Inhabitants."**
- 4. Fairyland And Hades**
- 5. Fairies And Psychical Research**
- 6. Second Sight And "Telepathy"**

Preamble

Chapter 1. Of The Subterranean Inhabitants

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Chapter 8

Chapter 9

Chapter 10

Chapter 11

Chapter 12

Chapter 13

Chapter 14

Chapter 15

A Succint Accompt Of My Lord Tarbott's Relations

Conclusions

Note

Postscript

Dr. Hicke calls the first Lord Stair "John," Scott calls him "James." There can be no doubt that Dr. Hicke refers to the woful tale of the bride of Lammermoor, who died on September 12, 1669. Law, in his *Memorials*, says she "was harled through the house"--by spirits, he means. This "harling" or tossing about of a patient, probably epileptic, we have noticed in many of the old stories, as in the modern instance of "Mr. H." Now, in his Introduction to the *Bride of Lammermoor*, Scott gives all the authorities at his command: Law, Symson's *Elegie*, and Hamilton of Whitelaw's *Satire*, which avers that Satan seized the bride and "threw the bridegroom from the nuptial bed." Sir Walter was unacquainted with Dr. Hicke's hint, which actually produces the bride's own father as evidence for a story which was plainly regarded as supernatural. It is most unlucky that Dr. Hicke distrusted his memory. However, it is something to feel assured that "a memorable story" was accepted at the time by the family of the bride, and was known to Lauderdale.¹ Lauderdale himself, by the way, was a psychical researcher, and accommodated Richard Baxter with some accounts of haunted houses, published in his *World of Spirits*. One story of a haunted house, where a spectral hand appeared, he gives on the authority of "the Rev. James Sharp," afterwards the famous Archbishop. Lauderdale inspected the famed Loudun nuns, and saw only "wanton wenches singing bawdy songs in French." His letter to Mr. Baxter is dated March 12, 1659. His best haunted house is of the Epworth type.

¹ The letters to Pepys are quoted from his Correspondence, published as Vol. X. of his *Diary* (New York, 1885).