

**IRISH  
WITCHCRAFT AND  
DEMONOLOGY**

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Irish witchcraft and demonology by John D. Seymour

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**JOHN D. SEYMOUR**

**IRISH  
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# IRISH WITCHCRAFT AND DEMONOLOGY

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# IRISH WITCHCRAFT AND DEMONOLOGY

## CHAPTER I

### SOME REMARKS ON WITCHCRAFT IN IRELAND

It is said, though we cannot vouch for the accuracy of the statement, that in a certain book on the natural history of Ireland there occurs a remarkable and oft-quoted chapter on Snakes—the said chapter consisting of the words, “There are no snakes in Ireland.” In the opinion of most people at the present day a book on Witchcraft in Ireland would be of equal length and similarly worded, except for the inclusion of the Kyteler case in the town of Kilkenny in the first half of the fourteenth century. For, with the exception of that classic incident, modern writers seem to hold that the witch-cult

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never found a home in Ireland as it did elsewhere. For example, the article on "Witchcraft" in the latest edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* mentions England and Scotland, then passes on to the Continent, and altogether ignores this country; and this is, in general, the attitude adopted by writers on the subject. In view of this it seems very strange that no one has attempted to show why the Green Isle was so especially favoured above the rest of the civilised world, or how it was that it alone escaped the contracting of a disease that not for years but for centuries had infected Europe to the core. As it happens they may spare themselves the labour of seeking for an explanation of Ireland's exemption, for we hope to show that the belief in witchcraft reached the country, and took a fairly firm hold there, though by no means to the extent that it did in Scotland and England. The subject has never been treated of fully before, though isolated notices may be found here and there; this book, however imperfect it may be, can fairly claim to be the first attempt to collect the scattered stories and records of witchcraft in Ireland