

The official person showed him that the laws against witchcraft were abrogated, and had little difficulty to bring him to regard the matter in its true light of an accident.

It is strange, but true, that the accused herself was not to be reconciled to the sheriff's doctrine so easily. He reminded her, that if she used her tongue with so much license, she must expose herself to suspicions, and that should coincidences happen to irritate her neighbours, she might suffer harm at a time when there was no one to protect her. He therefore requested her to be more cautious in her language for her own sake, professing, at the same time, his belief that her words and intentions were perfectly harmless, and that he had no apprehension of being hurt by her, let her wish her worst to him. She was rather more angry than pleased at the well-meaning sheriff's scepticism. "I would be laith to wish ony ill either to you or yours, sir," she said; "for I kenna how it is, but something aye comes after my words when I am ill-guided, and speak ower fast." In short, she was obstinate in claiming an influence over the destiny of others by words and wishes, which might have in other times conveyed her to the stake; for which her expressions, their consequences, and her disposition to insist upon their efficacy, would certainly of old have made her a fit victim. At present, the story is scarcely worth mentioning, but as it contains materials resembling those out of which many tragic incidents have arisen.

So low, in short, is now the belief in witchcraft, that, perhaps, it is only received by those