
A P P E N D I X

T O T H E

Chap. 3. Book II. Part I.

Of Witchcraft.

THE Being of Witches, and even the Possibility of Witchcraft, being called in Question by many, who do not seem to lay any great Stress upon Things which to our Forefathers appeared most convincing; and upon this Account perhaps Mr. *Sergeant Hawkins* having, in his *Pleas of the Crown*, contented himself with a bare Recital of the standing Laws against Witchcraft, without offering any Observations upon them, or so much as the least Mention of Precedents or Cases formerly adjudged: I think it not amiss, here to give the Reasons, why I have departed from the Pattern of that learned and judicious Gentleman, and treated this extraordinary and mysterious Crime in a different Manner.

Nothing seems plainer to me, than that there may be, and have been Witches, and that perhaps such are now actually existing; which I intend, God willing, to clear in a larger Work

A a 3

cont

 372 *A P P E N D I X.*

concerning the Criminal Law : Tho at the same Time I cannot account for the Way and Manner of performing their hellish Operations ; nor take upon me to determine what Things, apparently effected by them, were Realities ; and what only diabolical Juggling, or Sensations excited in us, by the Power of an evil Spirit working upon our Organs, and causing such Ideas, as are commonly produced by the Presence of certain external Objects. Such nice Inquiries I do not pretend to wade into ; and perhaps the Nature of Spirits, their several Powers and Operations, are very much out of the Reach of the most thinking Philosopher. However I chused, in the Chapter of my Book concerning Witchcraft, to make an Abstract of Things relating to that Matter, taken from the Precedents and Decisions of our supreme Court of Justiciary, the Trials of Witches in other Countries, and the Observations of Writers upon that Subject ; to serve to the Reader for a Piece of Entertainment about the former Practice : Tho it should not happen in every Respect to be observed as a Rule in this learned and inquisitive Age, when probably Things will come to be more accurately sifted, than some are ready to imagine was done by our Predecessors, as if they, following the Humour of the Time in which they lived, had been too credulous in this important Affair.

Some Things by me recited about the Marks and Characteristicks of a Witch, or of a Person's being

A P P E N D I X. 373

being bewitched, how Witches enter into Compact with the Devil, his having carnal Copulation with them, white Witches, and the Imps of Witches, (to which Regard has been had in foreign Trials, and in our Practice) may indeed appear very strange, but whether these be true or false, I do not say: Only this one Thing is sure, that such Matters of Fact have been laid in Indictments, and given in Evidence; which is all my Business with them; and if any Man, upon reading what I have said of Witchcraft, be of Opinion, that I am no Witch myself, I shall be satisfied.

F I N I S.*I N D E X.*

