

**A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT
OF THE
BELIEF IN WITCHCRAFT IN
SCOTLAND**

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A Historical Account of the Belief in Witchcraft in Scotland by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe

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BY

CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE, ESQ.,

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EDITORIAL NOTE.

IN the year 1819 Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe edited from manuscript the work now commonly known as Law's "Memorials." Though now a standard work, and often quoted by historical writers, it had not been printed prior to the above-named date. The title in full runs as follows:—"Memorials; or the Memorable Things that fell out Within this Island of Brittain from 1638 to 1684. By the Rev. Mr. Robert Law." In the preface to the "Memorials" Mr. Sharpe says regarding the manuscript:—"The MS. from which the 'Memorials' have been printed is not in the handwriting of the author. Transcribed with extreme inaccuracy by some blundering amanuensis, it has been corrected by Woodrow himself, and forms a part of the voluminous collection of MSS. made by that reverend minister as materials for his 'Account of the Sufferings of the Scottish Church'; and for another work which, from several papers in his library, he seems to have projected, but most unfortunately did not bring to perfection—'A History or Collection of Authentic Narratives respecting the Apparitions and Witchcraft of his Native Country.'" The author, Rev. Robert Law, was minister of Easter Kilpatrick, in the county of Dumbarton.

As the principal feature in Law's "Memorials" consists in narratives of the doings of witchcraft and other matters partaking of the marvellous, Mr. Sharpe, in editing the work, very happily

thought that an introduction tracing our legends of wizardry and spectral appearances to the earliest periods of Scottish history would be an appropriate addition to the work. This introduction amounts to nearly as much matter as that of the work to which it was prefixed, and is now regarded as probably the most important part of the volume. It is the best chronological and historical account of such matters in Scotland, and being strictly a monograph, quite independent of the "Memorialls" in every respect, it has been thought that it might very appropriately be printed by itself, and thus put within the reach of all; more especially as the original is a large quarto volume, now very scarce, and commanding a high price, debarring its possession from all but the few.

The present volume is that introduction, and is issued as sent out by Mr. Sharpe, only in some particulars the arrangement is slightly altered. In the original the page was a large quarto, permitting in several instances of extensive footnotes. These, as unsuitable for the present size of page, and as detracting from the continuity of the narrative, have, when it could be done with perfect propriety, been inserted in the body of the work. In instances where this could not be done properly, the notes have been transferred to the Appendix. Likewise in the present issue, the book is divided into chapters—a list of books on witchcraft in Scotland and an Index having been added. These additions the Editor hopes will enhance the value of the work, and render it still more interesting and attractive.

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