

Sensible that authority improperly used, may become the most dreadful instrument of oppression, the law has not only declared wilful malversation in office to be a crime, but to those who have suffered by the proceedings of Magistrates, whether through inattention or ignorance (for ignorance is never blameless in a Magistrate), it has given an action of oppression and damages, for reparation of the injury the private party has suffered.

In this light did I consider the harsh sentence of the Magistrates of Aberdeen against me, p. 112. Had they acted, according to the established forms of all courts of Justice, their proceedings would, at least, have had some colour of regularity; though their sentence would not have been less iniquitous. Why was not I complained of, by a party having interest in the cause? Why was not the complaint served upon me, and I appointed to give in answers? Why were not the legal *inducia*, or days, allowed me to prepare for my defence? All these forms were neglected or despised. The Magistrates themselves instigated the complaint; they proceeded to judge upon it without service; without allowing *inducia*; and without answers. It is evident, therefore, they acted not as Magistrates, but as private oppressors.

Banished from the capital of the county wherein I was born, and stripped of my all, I now bethought myself where or how to apply for redress. In this view I pursued my journey to Edinburgh; but, ignorant of the law, and unacquainted with any of its members, equally destitute of money and friends, and labouring under the reflections which the calumnious advertisement published by the Magistrates threw on my character, I was utterly at a loss to whom, or in what manner, I should apply to for direction. From this dilemma, however, I was soon relieved by the assistance of kind providence, who

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