

SECTION IV.

EARLY COMMERCE AND NAVIGATION.

IN the course of these observations upon the condition of the country during this remote period of our history, its commercial wealth, and the state of its early manufactures, are subjects of high national interest, upon which it will be necessary to offer some remarks ; and both points are so intimately connected with the navigation of the country, that it will be impossible to advert to the one without attending to the other. The high prosperity of the kingdom under the reign of Alexander the Third has already been noticed ; and there is even reason to believe that, at an infinitely more remote period, the Scots had established a commercial intercourse with the Continent, and, in the end of the sixth century, imported fine linen from foreign parts.¹ Under the reign of Macbeth, a monarch whom the patient research of our antiquaries has rescued from the region of fable, and the immortal libels of Shakspeare, the kingdom was wealthy ; and, from the discovery of large quantities of money, coined by Canute, the almost contemporary king of England, we may infer the existence of some foreign commerce. It is certain that, in a pilgrimage to Rome, this king exhibit-

¹ Macpherson's Notes on Winton, vol. ii. p. 479.

ed a liberality, in distributing money to the poor, which was considered remarkable even in that rich resort of opulent pilgrims.¹ The rich dresses which were imported by Malcolm the Third; the Asiatic luxuries of Alexander the First; and the grant by Edgar, to the church of Durham, of the duties on ships which entered the ports of a certain district in his dominions; all denote the existence of a trade with foreign countries.

Under the subsequent prosperous and able reign of David the First, the evidence of the cartularies, and the minute and interesting details of his friend and faithful biographer, Ethelred, enable us to form some idea of the commercial wealth of the nation. Scotland was, at this period, visited by many foreign ships; and the merchants of distant countries traded and exchanged their commodities with the opulent burghers and merchants. It was the praise of this monarch, to use the language of Fordun, "that he enriched the ports of his kingdom with foreign merchandise, and to the wealth of his own land added the riches and the luxuries of foreign nations; that he changed its coarse stuffs for precious vestments, and covered its ancient nakedness with purple and fine linen."² In his reign the ports of Perth, Stirling, and Aberdeen were the resort of foreign merchant ships, which paid certain duties to government before they were permitted to trade; and out of the sums thus

¹ A. D. ML. "Rex Scotiæ Machetad Rome argentum seminando pauperibus distribuit." Marianus Scotus. Macpherson's Notes on Winton, vol. ii. pp. 469, 479.

² Fordun a Goodal, vol. i. p. 305.

collected, the king, who greatly favoured the church, gave frequent grants to the monasteries and religious houses.¹

One great cause of the wealth and prosperity of Scotland during those early times, was the settlement of multitudes of Flemish merchants in the country, who brought with them the knowledge of trade and manufactures, and the habits of application and industry which have so long characterised this remarkable people. These wealthy citizens had been welcomed into England by the wisdom of Henry the First, and had settled upon the district contiguous to the Marches, from which they gradually spread into the sister country during the reign of Alexander the First. In 1155, Henry the Second, with angry and shallow policy, banished all foreigners from his dominions;² and the Flemings, of whom there were then great numbers in England, eagerly flocked into the neighbouring country, which offered them a near and safe asylum. Here, without losing their own particular tendency to make money by trade, and to establish commercial settlements, they accommodated themselves to the warlike habits of the people, and willingly served in the king's army;³ whilst, at the same time, their wealth and industry as traders, fishers, manufacturers, and able and intelligent craftsmen, made them excellent instruments, in the hands of David the First, for humanizing and ameliorating

¹ Dalrymple's Collections, p. 386.

² Brompton, pp. 1043, 52. ³ Gulielmus Neubrigensis, p. 232.

the character of his people, and introducing amongst them habits of regular civil occupation. We can trace the settlement of these industrious citizens, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in almost every part of Scotland; in Berwick, the great mart of our foreign commerce; in the various towns along the east coast; in St Andrews, Perth, Dumbarton, Ayr, Peebles, Lanark, Edinburgh; and in the districts of Renfrewshire, Clydesdale, and Annandale. There is ample evidence of their industrious progress in Fife, in Angus, in Aberdeenshire, and as far north as Inverness and Urquhart. It would even appear, from a record of the reign of David the Second, that the Flemings had procured from the Scottish monarchs a right to the protection and exercise of their own laws.¹ It has been ingeniously conjectured, that the story of Malcolm the Fourth having dispossessed the ancient inhabitants of Moray, and of his planting a new colony in their stead, may have originated in the settlement of the Flemings in that remote and rebellious district.² The early domestic manufactures of our country, the woollen fabrics which are mentioned by the statutes of David,² and the dyed and shorn cloths which appear in the charter of William the Lion to the burgh of Inverness,³ must have been greatly improved by the superior dexterity and knowledge of the Flemings; and the constant commercial inter-

¹ Robertson's Index, p. 61.

² Chalmers's Caledonia, vol. i. p. 628.

³ See the charter of William the Lion to the royal burgh of Perth, in Cant's Muse's Threnodie, vol. ii. p. 6.

course which they kept up with their own little states, could not fail to be beneficial in importing the knowledge and the improvements of the Continental nations into the remoter country where they had settled.¹

The insular situation of Scotland, and the boisterous seas and high rocky coasts which defend it, must have early accustomed its inhabitants to direct their attention to the arts of ship-building and navigation. Other causes increased this. The early intercourse and colonization of the Western Islands, and of the mainland districts of Caithness and Sutherland by the Norwegians, the constant piratic expeditions and naval battles which took place between this powerful people, and the independent sea kings who broke off from their dominion, could not fail to nurse up a race of hardy sailors, and intelligent mercantile adventurers; and these, on becoming subjects and vassals of the Scottish kings, brought with them a stock of courage, skill, and enterprise, which was of the highest value to the nation. It is singular, too, that in these remote islands, when under the dominion of the Norwegians, there is reason to believe that the arts and manufactures had been carried to a high pitch of excellence. The Hebridean chiefs, in the exercise of piracy, the principal source of their wealth, and then esteemed an honourable profession, had made descents upon most of the maritime countries of the west of Europe, had become acquainted with the

¹ Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 403.

navigation of their seas, and carried off, to their island homes, the silks, the armour, the golden vases, the jewelled ornaments, and the embroidered carpets and tapestry which they plundered from the castles, churches, and palaces of the west.¹ Their skill in navigation, and the formidable fleets which they could launch against their enemies, are attested in many passages of their own historians. Alan Lord of Galloway, one of those independent princes who often disdained to acknowledge the sovereignty of Scotland, fitted out a fleet of a hundred and fifty ships, and drove Olave the Black King of Man from his dominions.² At an era anterior to this, Reginald Somerlid, who was then the king of Man, was so opulent as to purchase the whole of Caithness from William the Lion, an exception being specially made of the yearly revenue due to the sovereign.³ Ewen of Argyle, one of these island chiefs, agreed, at a very early period, probably towards the conclusion of the reign of Alexander the Second, to pay to the Scottish monarch an annual tribute of three hundred and twenty merks.⁴

Instructed by the vicinity of such enterprising navigators, and aware of the high importance of a naval force, our early sovereigns made every effort to attain it. Alexander the Second, who died on the expedition

¹ Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. pp. 278, 279.

² *Torfæi Orcades*, lib. ii. This happened in 1231.

³ *Chronicon Manniæ*, apud Johnston, *Antiquitates Celto-Normannicæ*, p. 52. This happened in 1196.

⁴ Ayloff's *Calendar of Ancient Charters*, p. 336.

which he had undertaken against Angus of Argyle, had collected a naval force, which, by the author of the Chronicle of Man, is denominated a great fleet; and there is reason to believe that, during his reign, as well as under that of his predecessor William, the navy of the country became an object of royal attention and encouragement.¹ In the year 1249, Hugh de Chastillon, Earl of St Paul, one of the richest and most powerful of the French barons, consented to accompany Lewis the Ninth to the Crusade; and it is certain that the ship which was to have borne him and his vassals to the Holy Land was built, by his orders, at Inverness. We are entitled to infer from this remarkable fact, that the ship carpenters of Scotland had acquired a reputation at this period which had made them celebrated even in foreign countries; and it furnishes another proof of those vast forests of oak and fir which at this period covered the greater part of the north of Scotland.²

In naval and commercial enterprise, as in all the other arts and employments which contributed to increase the comforts and the luxuries of life, the clergy appear to have led the way. They were the greatest shipowners in the country; and the Cartularies contain frequent exemptions from the duties generally levied on the merchantmen who imported foreign manufactures, which are granted to the ships of the bishops, abbots, and priors, who embarked the wealth

¹ Chronicon Manniæ, p. 36.

² Math. Paris, p. 668. Ed. Wats.

of their religious houses in these profitable speculations. At this period the staple exports of Scotland seem to have been wool, skins, hides, and salted fish, in which there is evidence of a flourishing and constant trade.¹ For live stock also, embracing cattle, horses, and the indigenous sheep of the country, there seems to have been a frequent foreign demand ; but the woollen and linen manufactures were too coarse to compete with the finer stuffs of England, Flanders, and Italy, and were probably exclusively employed for the clothing of the lower classes. Still, there is ample proof that, limited as was this list of exports, the wealth of the country, even in those districts which were considered especially wild and savage, was very considerable. Under William the Lion, Gilbert, the lord of Galloway, was able, from the resources of his own exchequer, to offer to pay to Henry the Second a yearly tribute of two thousand merks of silver, five hundred cows, and five hundred swine.² From the account which has already been given of the wealth of the royal revenue under our early kings, and of the large sums of money expended on various public occasions by David, William, Alexander, and Malcolm the Fourth, we must infer a correspondent increase of wealth in the different classes of the kingdom, especially in the mercantile and trading part of the community ; and it is not improbable that many of these

¹ Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. iii. p. 95. Rymer, *Coll. MS.* vol. ii. p. 287, in M'Pherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 436.

² This was in 1174. Benedictus Abbas, *De vita Henrici II.* p. 93.

sums were partly contributed by an aid which was levied from the different orders of the state, although, if we except a very few instances, all records of such grants have been lost. On one memorable occasion, where William the Lion had engaged to pay to John of England fifteen thousand merks, we have seen that the burghs contributed six thousand, a sum equal to more than sixty thousand pounds of our present money;¹ and the large sums collected, or rather extorted, by the Papal legates during the reign of Alexander the Second, evince very considerable wealth at this period.² A poor country would not have attracted such frequent visits from those insatiable emissaries of the Pope; and his Holiness not only continued his extortion under the reign of Alexander the Third,³ but appears to have been highly incensed when the ambition of Edward the First interfered with his cupidity. The mercantile wealth, and the general prosperity of the kingdom during the reign of Alexander the Third, have been already noticed; and the arrival of the Lombard merchants with a proposal of establishing settlements in Scotland, is an event which itself speaks a high degree of progress in mercantile wealth and opulence. The repeated shipwrecks of merchantmen, and the loss of valuable cargoes, which are described as being far more frequent in this reign than before, were evidently occasioned by the increased spirit of commercial ad-

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. i. p. 529.

² Math. Paris, a Wats. pp. 631, 422, 481, 509.

³ Fœdera, vol. i. pp. 552, 553, 582, 608, 609. Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 122.

venture. Voyages had become more distant, the various countries which were visited more numerous, the risks of loss by piracy, tempest, or arrestment in foreign ports, more frequent; and it is a remarkable circumstance that the king, in consequence of this, became alarmed, and published an edict, by which he forbade the exportation of any merchandise from his dominions; "which measure," observes the ancient historian, "was not carried into execution without difficulty"; and a year had not expired, when the vessels of different nations, laden with merchandise, came into our ports, anxious to exchange their commodities for the productions of our country; upon which it was enacted that burgesses alone should be permitted to engage in traffic with these new comers." It is evident from all this, that the Scottish exports were in great demand in foreign markets; and the short-sighted policy of Alexander in suddenly stopping the trade which was thus carried on, created a strong sensation even in foreign countries, and occasioned an immediate resort of foreign vessels into the Scottish ports. Upon this occasion the Lombards, in their proposals to erect factories in Scotland, evidently intended to step into the lucrative trade which the Scottish merchants, in consequence of the new edict of the king, were no longer permitted to carry on.¹

One of the most interesting subjects connected

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 130. The places where the Lombards proposed to make their settlements, were on the hill above Queensferry, or on one of the islands near Cramond.

with the trade and early commerce of the kingdom is the rise of the towns and royal burghs, and the peculiar circumstances which induced our kings to bestow so many privileges upon these early mercantile communities. It is evident that the Celtic inhabitants of the country were averse to settle or congregate in towns; and that, as long as Scotland continued under a purely Celtic government, the habits of the people opposed themselves to any thing like regular industry or improvement.¹ Even so late as the present day, the pacific pursuits of agriculture, the labours of the loom, or the higher branches of trade and commercial adventure, are uncongenial to the character of this unsettled, though brave and intrepid, race; and the pages of contemporary and authentic historians bear ample testimony to the bitter and inveterate spirit with which they resisted the course of civilisation, and the enlightened changes introduced by our early kings. So much, indeed, is this the case, that the progress of improvement is directly commensurate with the gradual pressing back of the Celtic population into the remoter northern districts, by the more industrious race of the Saxons and the Anglo-Normans.

In this enquiry, a description has already been given of the royal and baronial castles of Scotland in those remote periods, and of the clusters of hamlets which arose under their walls, inhabited by the retainers of the prince or the noble upon whose bounty they lived, and whose power protected them from

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. i. p. 44.

molestation. To these small villæ, and to the security which they enjoyed from the vicinity of the castle, is to be traced the first appearance of towns in Scotland, as in the other countries of Europe. Nor were the rich religious houses less influential than the royal and baronial castles; for their proprietors, themselves the most opulent and enterprising class in the community, encouraged the industry of their numerous vassals, and delighted to see the houses and settlements of wealthy and industrious artisans arising under the walls of their monastery.¹ The motives for the care and protection extended to such infant villages and communities are easily discoverable, if we recollect the description already given of the condition of a great portion of the lower orders of the people, out of which class the manufacturers and traders arose. They were slaves; and their children, their wealth, and the profits of their industry, exclusively belonged to their lords: so that a settlement of wealthy manufacturers, or a community of successful and enterprising artisans, under the walls of a royal castle, or rich abbey, or within the territory of a feudal noble, was just so much money added to the revenue of the king, the baron, or the abbot.² As wealth increased with security and industry, the inhabitants of these communities began gradually to purchase their liberty from their lords,³ and to form themselves into insulated associa-

¹ Houard, *Traité sur les Coutumes Anglo-Normandes*, vol. ii. pp. 361, 362. Ducange, *Gloss. voce Communia*.

² *Ibid.* pp. 389, 408. *Cartulary of Kelso*, pp. 209, 221.

³ In the Appendix to Lye's *Saxon and Gothic Dictionary*, No. V.

tions ; which, from their opulence, were able to bribe the sovereign to grant them peculiar privileges.¹ Into these bodies, freedom, and the feeling of property, soon infused an additional spirit of enterprise, and transformed their members from petty artisans into opulent merchants, whose transactions embraced, as we have seen, a respectable commercial intercourse with foreign countries.

It was soon discovered by the monarchs of Scotland, that these opulent communities of merchants formed so many different points, from which civilisation and improvement gradually extended through the country ; and the consequence of this discovery was, their transformation, by the favour of the sovereign, into chartered corporations of merchants, endowed with particular privileges, and living under the especial protection and superintendence of the king.²

In this manner, at a very early period, royal burghs arose in Scotland. The various steps of this progress were, in all probability, nearly the same as those which are pretty clearly seen in the diplomatic collections and ancient muniments of different

published by Mr Manning, we find a very early instance of this, entitled, "*Testificatio Manumissionis Aelwigi Rufi.*" It is as follows : "*Hic notificatur in hoc Christi libro. quod Aelfwig Rufus Redemit seipsum de Aelfigo abbate, et toto conventu, cum una libra. Cujus est in testimonium totus conventus in Bathonia. Christus eum ocæcet, qui hoc scriptum perverterit.*" Aelfsigus was abbot between 1075 and 1087.

¹ Madox, *History of the Exchequer*, pp. 231, 275, 278, folio ed.

² Houard's *Anciennes Loix des François*, vol. i. p. 235.

European kingdoms; the hamlet growing into the village; the village into the petty town; and this last into the privileged and opulent borough: and it is evident that our kings soon found, that the rise of these mercantile communities, which looked up to the crown for protection, and repaid it by their wealth and their loyalty, formed a useful check upon the arrogance and independence of the greater nobles.¹ It is probably on this account, that the rise of the burghs was viewed with great jealousy in France; and that their introduction into that kingdom is described, by a contemporary author, "as an execrable invention, by which slaves were encouraged to become free, and to forget their allegiance to their master!"²

At a very early period in our history, the superior intelligence, and the habits of industry of the English people, induced our kings to encourage the tradesmen and the merchants of this nation to settle in these infant towns and communities. This policy seems to have been carried so far, that, in 1173, under William the Lion, the towns and boroughs of Scotland are spoken of, by an English historian, as almost exclusively peopled by his countrymen;³ and so late as the time of Edward the First, when this king, previous to his decision of the question of the succession, made a progress through Scotland, and compelled the inhabitants to take the oath of homage, the proportion

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. i. p. 305.

² Ducange, Glossar. voce Communia.

³ Gulielm. Newbrig. lib. ii. c. 34.

of English names in the Scottish boroughs is very great.¹

The earliest boroughs which appear in Scotland cannot be traced to a remoter period than the reign of our first Alexander, under which monarch we find Edinburgh, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Stirling; to these Inverkeithen, Perth and Aberdeen, Rutherglen and Inverness, were added in the course of years; and the policy of David the First, of William the Lion, and of the monarchs who succeeded him, had increased the number of these opulent mercantile communities, till, in the reign of David the Second, we find them extending to seventeen. These royal burghs, and the lands which were annexed to them, were the exclusive property of the king, sometimes held in his own hands, and possessed in demesne, but more generally let out to farm. In this respect, the condition of the towns and burghs of England in the time of the Conqueror, as shown in Domesday Book, was nearly similar to the state in which we find them in Scotland, from the reign of Alexander the First, to the accession of Robert the Second.² For the houses and factories possessed by the merchants, a certain rent was due to the exchequer; and previous to their appearance as a third Estate in the great national council, the king appears to have had a right of calling upon his boroughs to contribute aids or grants of money out of their coffers on any occasion of emergency.³ The

¹ Prynn's *Edward the First*, pp. 653, 663, inclusive.

² Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 297.

³ Fordun a Goodal, vol. i. p. 529.

Cartularies are full not only of grants from successive kings to new settlers, of lands in their various boroughs, with the right of building on them, and of *tofts* or small portions of pasture and arable ground, but of annuities payable out of the royal farms, and pensions from the census of their burgesses, which testify the exclusive property of the sovereign in these infant mercantile communities.¹ At a very early period these communities enjoyed a right of determining, in a separate court of their own, all questions or disputes which might arise amongst their mercantile subjects; and in addition to this privilege, a right of appeal lay from the decision of the individual court of the borough, to a higher tribunal, which was denominated the Court of the Four Boroughs, and which owes its institution to the wisdom of David the First. The boroughs which composed it, were the four oldest in the kingdom, Berwick, Roxburgh, Stirling, and Edinburgh; and it was the duty of the Chamberlain of Scotland to hold a court or *ayr*² once every year, at Haddington, to which the four boroughs sent four commissioners, for the purpose of hearing and deciding upon the appeals brought before them.

It seems to be certain, that under David the First,

¹ Cartul. of Kelso, p. 1. Cartul. of Inchcolm, p. 19. Cartul. of Scone, pp. 41, 57. The Cartularies abound with examples of this.

² Houard's *Anciennes Loix des François*, vol. i. p. 237. It is evident, from the description given by this learned writer, of the rights of the burghs under the Normans, that the Court of the Four Burghs was of Norman origin.

a code of mercantile law was gradually formed, which owed its origin to the decisions of this court, assisted probably by the practical wisdom of the most enlightened merchants and traders. It was known by the name of the *Assisa Burgorum*, and, in an interpolated and imperfect state, has reached our own times. In the famous state paper of Edward the First, known by the title of an "*Ordinatio super stabilitate terræ Scotiæ*," and published in 1305, the laws which King David had enacted, are commanded to be read by the English guardian or lieutenant, in presence of the good people of the land; and in a charter which is granted by William the Lion to the burgh of Glasgow in 1176, that monarch refers to the assizes of his burghs, as an established code of law.¹ It is the judicious observation of Chalmers, that as Malcolm the Fourth is known not to have been a legislator, these assizes must be ascribed to David, and this is confirmed by the ancient and respectable authority of Fordun.² The policy of the sovereign in the erection of these privileged communities, was gradually imitated by the religious houses, and more rarely by the greater barons, who granted exclusive privileges to the towns or villages upon their territories, and turned their

¹ Gibson's *Hist. of Glasgow*, p. 301. Ayloff's *Calendar of Ancient Charters*, p. 335. M'Pherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 440. The *Lex Mercatoria* of Scotland is referred to by Edward the First, as an established and well-known code in the *Rotuli Scotiæ*, p. 3. 10th Aug. 1291.

² Fordun a Goodal, vol. i. p. 301. *Cartul. of Glasgow*, p. 73. *Caledonia*, pp. 726, 732.

wealth into channels of mercantile adventure, employing the burghers to trade for them, and furnishing them with capital. In this way Selkirk was indebted for its first passage from a village into a borough to the abbot of Kelso ; St Andrews, Glasgow, and Brechin, to the bishops of these sees ; Newburgh to the abbot of Lindores. The town of Renfrew was expressly granted by David the First to Walter the son of Alan ; Lauder was early the property of the ancient family of the Morvilles ; and Lochmaben, in consequence of a grant by David the First, belonged to the ancestors of Bruce. The rents of the houses and of the lands of these boroughs ; the customs levied upon the ships which traded to such as were situated on the sea coast, or on navigable rivers ; and in all probability certain proportions of the profits of the various tradesmen and guild brethren who inhabited them, belonged to the spiritual or temporal lord upon whose lands they were erected, and whose favour and protection they enjoyed. If in the various revolutions and changes of the times, his lands happened to escheat to the crown, the whole wealth which belonged to them, the granges, castles, manors, villages, and boroughs, became the property of the sovereign ; and in this way, in the course of years, many baronial or ecclesiastical boroughs were changed into royal ones. Although, however, the rise of these trading communities was in the first instance eminently beneficial to Scotland, and, it cannot be doubted, contributed to give an impulse to the industry of the people ; yet as soon as this commercial and ma-

nufacturing spirit was once roused into activity, the monopolizing principle upon which the borough system was founded, by giving a check to competition, must have fatally retarded the improvement of the country. In the mean time, however, under the severity of the feudal system, boroughs were in their first introduction cities of freedom; their inhabitants were no longer in the degrading condition of slaves, who could be transferred like cattle or common property from one master to another; and we know, from the statutes of the burghs, that the same law prevailed in our own country as in England and France, by which a vassal or slave, if he escaped from his feudal superior, and was so fortunate as to purchase a house within a burgh, and live therein for a year and a day, without being claimed by his master, became a freeman for ever.¹

It was probably in consequence of this law, that a remarkable increase took place in the trade and manufactures of Scotland. During the long period of foreign war, of civil faction, and domestic feuds, which fill up the history of the country from the death of Alexander the Third to the settlement of the kingdom under Bruce, and after this, from the death of Bruce to the accession of Robert the Second, the constant changes and convulsions in the state of private property, threw great multitudes of the lower classes

¹ M·Pherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 307. *Leges Ed. et Will.* cc. 61, 66. in *Selden's Eadmer*, pp. 191, 193. *Laws of the Burghs*, c. 17. Houard, in his *Anciennes Loix des François*, vol. i. p. 238, says this privilege belonged only to royal burghs under the Normans.

of serfs and bondsmen loose upon society. These fugitives would naturally seek refuge in the cities and burghs belonging to the king; and bring with them an additional stock of enterprise and industry to the mercantile corporations, whose protection they enjoyed; in the course of years many of them must have risen to the state of freemen; and, in consequence of this extraordinary increase in the number of free merchants and enterprising traders, the wealth of the kingdom, during the latter part of the reign of David the Second, became proportionally great. It unfortunately happened, that the enormous drain of specie, occasioned by the payment of the king's ransom, and the personal expenses of the monarch, with the large sums of money levied for the maintenance of ambassadors and commissioners, with their expensive suites of knights, and other attendants, soon swallowed up the profits of trade, and reduced the kingdom to the very brink of bankruptcy.

At a remote period, under Malcolm the Fourth, the great mart of foreign commerce was Berwick. A contemporary English historian distinguishes it as a noble town, and as it possessed many ships, and enjoyed more foreign commerce than any other port in Scotland,¹ it shared the fate of all other opulent towns on the coast, in being exposed to the descents of the piratic fleets of the north. Erlind, a Norwegian and Earl of Orkney, in 1156, carried off a ship belonging to a citizen of Berwick, whose name was Cnut the Opulent; and we learn from Torfaeus, who

¹ Gulielm. Neubrig. b. v. c. 23. Torfæi Orcades, b. i. c. 32. pp. 131, 132.

has preserved the story, that the merchant, incensed at the loss of his property, instantly hired and manned fourteen vessels, for which he paid one hundred merks of silver, and with these gave immediate chase to the pirates. Under succeeding sovereigns it increased in trade and opulence; till we find it, in the reign of Alexander the Third, enjoying a prosperity which threw every other Scottish port into the shade, and caused the contemporary author of the Chronicle of Lanercost to distinguish it by the name of a Second Alexandria.¹ It enjoyed a lucrative export of wool, wool-fells, and hides, to Flanders; it was by the agency of the merchants of Berwick that the produce of Roxburgh, Jedburgh, and the adjacent country, in these same commodities, was shipped for foreign countries, or sold to the Flemish Company established in that city; its export of salmon was very great; and the single fact, that its customs, under Alexander the Third, amounted to the sum of L.2197, 8s. Sterling, while the whole customs of England, in 1287, produced only L.8411, 19s. 11½d. amply demonstrates its extraordinary wealth.²

At this period, the constitution of the towns and burghs in Scotland appears to have been nearly the same as in the sister country. Berwick was governed by a mayor, whose annual allowance for his charges of office was ten pounds, a sum equivalent to more than four hundred pounds of our present money.³ Under

¹ History, vol. i. p. 111.

² M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce, Rymer, vol. ii. pp. 605, 613. Ibid. vol. i. p. 446.

³ Rotuli Scotiæ, 8 Ed. III. m. 16.

this superior officer were four provosts, or *p̄ræpositi*. At the same period Perth, Stirling, Roxburgh, and Jedburgh, were each governed by an alderman, who appears to have been the chief magistrate. Glasgow by three provosts; Haddington by one officer under the same name; whilst the inferior burghs of Peebles and Montrose, of Linlithgow, Inverkeithing, and Elgin, were placed under the superintendence of one or more magistrates called bailies. These magistrates all appear as early as the year 1296;¹ and, it seems probable, were introduced into Scotland by David the First, whose wise and enlightened partiality to English institutions has already been noticed in this history.

The comparative state of the trade and exports of the remaining burghs of the kingdom, at this early period, cannot be easily ascertained. Perth, which had become very opulent and flourishing in the time of William the Lion, by whom it was erected into a royal burgh, increased in its wealth and consequence under Malcolm the Fourth, who made Scone, the neighbouring monastery, the principal seat of his kingdom. The resort of the court, and the increased demand for the articles of domestic manufacture and foreign commerce, gave a stimulus to the enterprise and industry of the infant burgh; and a contemporary poet, whose works have been preserved by Cam-

¹ Prynne's Edward I. pp. 653, 654. Rymer's Collection of MSS. vol. iii. No. 116; quoted by M'Pherson in Annals of Commerce, vol. i. p. 446.

den, characterises Perth as one of the principal pillars of the opulence of the kingdom.¹

These few and scattered but authentic facts, regarding our early commerce and manufactures, make it evident, that in such great branches of national wealth there is a discernible improvement, from the remote era of Malcolm the Third, to the period of the competition for the crown. Indeed, immediately before the commencement of the war of liberty, the commercial transactions of the country were of consequence enough to induce the merchants of St Omers, and partners of the Florentine houses of Pullici and Lambini to have correspondents in Scotland; and, about the same period, we find that Richard le Furbur, a trader of the inland town of Roxburgh, had sent factors or supercargoes to manage his business in foreign countries, and in various parts of Britain. The list of her exports, at this time, embraced the same articles as those already described: wool, skins, hides, and wool-fells; great quantities of fish, salted and cured;² horses, sheep, and cattle;³ and, more rarely, pearls, falcons, and greyhounds. It is singular to find so precious an article as pearls amongst the subjects of Scottish trade, yet the fact rests on good authority. The Scottish pearls in the possession of Alexander the First were celebrated in distant countries for their extreme size and beauty; and, as early

¹ Necham apud Gough's Camden's Brit. vol. iii. p. 393.

² Rotuli Scotiæ, vol. i. pp. 40, 911, 929, 941, 944.

³ Ibid. p. 881.

as the twelfth century, there is evidence of a foreign demand for this species of luxury.¹ As the commercial intercourse with the East encreased, the rich Oriental pearl, from its superior brilliancy, and more perfect form, excluded the Scottish pearls from the jewel market; and by a statute of the Parisian goldsmiths, in the year 1355², we find it enacted, that no worker in gold or silver shall set any Scottish pearls with Oriental ones, except in large ornaments or jewels for churches.²

The leporarii, or greyhounds of our country, were also famous in France; for, in 1396, the Duke de Berri sent his valet and three attendants into Scotland on a commission to purchase dogs of this kind, as appears by the passport preserved in Rymer;³ and, at an earlier^v period, under the reign of David the Second, Godfrey de Roos, an English baron, procured from Edward the Third a safe-conduct for his shield-bearer and two attendants, who were travelling from Scotland with dogs and falcons, and who purposed to return into the same country, under the express condition that they did not abuse their privilege, by

¹ Nicolai Epist. in Anglia Sacra, vol. ii. 236. “Præterea rogo et valde obsecro ut margaritas candidas quantum poteris mihi adquiras. Uniones etiam quascunque grossissimas acquirere potes. Saltem quatuor mihi adquiri per te magnopere postulo; si aliter non vales saltem a rege, qui in hac re omnium hominum ditissimus est, pro munere expete.” M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. i. pp. 318, 555.

² Du Cange, Gloss. voce Perlæ.

³ Rymer's Fœdera, vol vii. p. 831.

carrying out of England either bows, arrows, arms, or gold or silver, in the form of bulk, plate, or money.¹

Of the imports of Scotland at the same period, it is difficult to give any thing like an accurate or satisfactory account. Fine linen and silks; broad-cloth, and a rich article called sayes, manufactured in Ireland from wool, and esteemed so beautiful, as to be worn by the ladies of Florence;² rich carpets, and tapestry; wine, oil of olives, and occasionally, corn and barley;³ spices and confections of all kinds; drugs and electuaries; arms, armour, and cutlery; were the chief commodities: and it has already been observed, that many articles of Asiatic luxury and magnificence had reached our country, by means of a constant communication with the Flemish and Italian merchants. In 1333, we know, from an authentic instrument, preserved in the *Fœdera*, that the Scottish merchants were in the custom of importing, from the county of Suffolk, vases of gold and silver into Scotland; besides silver in bars and in money;⁴ a proof that the silver mine which David the First worked, at a very early period, in Cumberland, and the gold of Fife, to which the same monarch alludes in the *Cartulary of Dunfermline*, had neither of them turned to much account.⁵

¹ *Rotuli Scotiæ*, vol. i. p. 891.

² *M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 562.

³ *Rotuli Scotiæ*, vol. i. pp. 890, 891.

⁴ *Rymer's Fœdera*, vol. iv. p. 575.

⁵ *Joann. Hagulstad*. p. 280. *Cart. of Dunferm.* folio 7; quoted in *Dalyel's Tract on Monastic Antiquities*, p. 30.

Under the reign of Bruce, and during the long war with England, every possible effort was made by Edward the First and his successor, to crush and extinguish the foreign trade of Scotland, but the success does not appear to have been in any degree proportionate to their exertions. All English or Irish merchants were prohibited, under the severest penalties, from engaging in any transactions with that country; and repeated requests were addressed to the rich republics of the low countries, to the courts of Flanders, and the Dukes of Brabant, to induce them to break off all traffic with the Scots;¹ but the exertions of contraband traders and privateer vessels eluded the strictness of the prohibitions against English and Irish trade,² and the Flemings and Brabanters steadily refused to shut their ports against any nation which could pay for their commodities. In 1315, a fleet of thirteen ships or galleys belonging to the Scots, and other "malefactors" who adhered to them, was at anchor in the port of Sluys in Flanders, waiting to be laden with arms, victuals, and other goods, which they intended to export from that country into Scotland, when Edward the Second, as the public order relative to the circumstance informs us, adopted vigorous but apparently unsuccessful measures for intercepting them.³ To Bruce, whose life was

¹ *Rotuli Scotiæ*, vol. i. p. 136. 1st April, 1314. *Ibid.* 140. Rymer, vol. iv. p. 715.

² *Rotuli Scotiæ*, vol. i. pp. 491, 525.

³ This instrument is one of the deeds added by the editors of the new edition of the *Fœdera Angliæ*, vol. ii. part I. p. 265. The original is in the Tower.

spent in almost uninterrupted war, the great articles of demand were such as he could use for his soldiers and knights ; arms of all kinds, helmets, cuirasses, chamfreyns, and horse armour, swords and daggers, bows of English yew, spear shafts, and lances, formed the staple cargoes of the Flemish merchantmen which traded to his dominions ; but in other respects, the export trade of the country, which had been principally carried on through England and Ireland, although not extinguished, experienced a material depression. Yet although this branch of national wealth was rendered less productive, other sources were opened peculiar to war. The immense plunder which was taken at Bannockburn, the large sums of money paid by the English nobles and barons for their ransom ; the subsequent plunder in the repeated invasions of England, and the frequent and heavy sums which were subscribed by the Border counties, to induce the Scottish leaders to spare their towns and villages, greatly enriched the kingdom, and provided a mass of capital which is distinctly perceptible in the increased commercial speculation of the subsequent reign, and in the remarkable and successful efforts made by the nation in fitting out a navy. Previous to the accession of David the Second, we have already seen that little traces of a regular naval force exist in Scotland ; and although the fleets of William the Lion, and that of his successor Alexander the Second, are commemorated in the Chronicle of Man, it seems probable that these naval armaments were furnished by the island vassals, who owned the superiority

of the Scottish crown, and who held their lands by the tenure of furnishing a certain number of galleys for the use of the king.¹ The maritime exploits of these kings were temporary and insulated, and the same observation applies to the naval expeditions of their successors. It appears, indeed, from a passage in the chamberlain rolls of Alexander the Third, that, in 1263, this monarch was in possession of several vessels, which, under the direction of the Earl of Menteth, were built in the port of Ayr, and that two hundred oars were manufactured for their use;² but it is evident, from Alexander declining any naval contest with the King of Norway, that his fleet could neither have been numerous nor powerful. Robert Bruce's reign being principally occupied with a land war, his efforts for distressing his enemy by sea, were mostly confined to the commissioning piratic ships from the Flemings and Genoese, which cruised upon the English coasts, and in the double capacity of traders and ships of war, landed their cargoes in Scotland and attacked the English merchantmen and victuallers. Yet there is evidence in that very interesting portion of the chamberlain accounts which relate to the expenditure of Bruce at his palace of Cardross the year before his death, that he and his old companion in arms, the great Randolph, were anxiously directing their attention to the subject of shipping and navigation. But the navy assumes a

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 101. Robertson's Index, p. 100.

² Excerpta ex Rotulo Comptorum Temp. Alex. III. p. 10.

very different and far more formidable appearance under the reign of David Bruce. The Scottish ships of war, along with numerous squadrons of foreign privateers, in the pay of the Scots, swept the seas round England, plundered their merchant vessels, and made repeated and successful descents upon the coast, burning and destroying the seaport towns, and creating extreme alarm in the country.

In 1334, a fleet of Scottish ships of war threatened a descent on the coast of Suffolk; in the subsequent year, twenty-six galleys and other ships were hovering and watching their opportunity for attack off the coasts of Chester and Durham; and not long after this, notwithstanding the utmost exertions by the English government to fit out a fleet which should put an end to the naval aggressions of the Scots, and precautions taken to spread the alarm in case of any hostile descents, by lighting beacons upon the cliffs above the sea; the towns of Portsmouth, Fodynton, Portseye, and Easten, were burnt and plundered, and the country threatened with invasion by an immense fleet of foreign ships and galleys, whose approach is described by Edward the Second in an order addressed to the sheriffs of England, and evidently written under extreme anxiety and apprehension.¹ Yet the probability is, that none of these vessels were the property of the king, but merchant ships of Scottish and foreign traders fitted up for the expedition as

¹ *Rotuli Scotiæ*, vol. i. pp. 299, 317. vol. i. *Ibid.* pp. 320, 363, 440. *Rymer's Fœdera*, new edit. vol. ii. part ii. pp. 1055, 1067.

ships of war, and commissioned, like the mercenary troops of Hainault or Switzerland, to assist whatever country chose to pay them the highest price for their services. At this period, the same mode of fitting out a fleet of ships of war was adopted in both countries. There appears to have been no regular permanent naval force of any consequence maintained in either.¹ In England, as the emergency of the moment required, the monarch was in the habit of directing his writs to the wardens of the Cinque Ports, and to the magistrates of the different seaports, empowering them to press into the service, and instantly arm and victual any number of vessels he deemed necessary, and to commission such merchantmen as were fond of the adventure, to fit out their traders as *naves guerrinæ*, or ships of war,² with the right of attacking the enemies of the king, under the condition of giving up half the profits in the event of a successful capture.³ We may form some idea of the size and strength of these vessels from an order issued by Edward the Third during his Scottish war, to the mayor of Bristol, in which this magistrate is commanded to arrest three of the largest ships then in the port of that city. These are described to be two

¹ M'Pherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 378.

² *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 430.

³ "Galfridas Pypere Magister Navis que vocatur le Heyte habet licentiam gravandi inimicos Regis ita quod de medietate lucri Regi respondeat." Teste R. apud Burdegalliam xiii. Feb. 28. Henry III. m. 16. Rotuli Pat. MS. note apud M'Pherson's *Annals*, vol. i. p. 394.

of a hundred tons, and one of sixty tons burden, on board of which a hundred and thirty-two men are instantly to be put for the king's service, which force is mentioned in the order, as being double the ordinary complement of mariners and soldiers.¹ Many of the privateers, however, which were at this time employed by the Scots against England, appear to have been vessels of larger dimensions, and more formidable equipment than those of England, probably from their being foreign built, and furnished by the Flemings, the Genoese, or the Venetians, for the purposes both of trade and piracy. In 1335, a very large foreign ship, laden with arms, provisions, and warlike stores, arrived in the port of Dumbarton, and for the purpose of intercepting her, Edward not only ordered two of the largest merchantmen of Bristol to be manned and provisioned as ships of war, but commanded Roger de Hegham, his admiral of the Western fleet, to fit out two other vessels, with a double complement of men, to be employed apparently on the same service.²

In 1357, three Scottish ships of war, manned with three hundred picked soldiers, infested the East coast, and grievously annoyed the English commerce. This large complement of soldiers must have been exclusive of the sailors employed to navigate the ships, and proves them to have been very powerful, when compared with the ordinary vessels of the time.³ In the same

¹ Rotuli Scotiæ, vol. i. p. 231. 24th April, 1333.

² Ibid. vol. i. p. 340.

³ Knighton, Col. 2617.

year, we have seen that the Scottish privateers captured a vessel called the Beaumondscogge, which was the property of that powerful baron, Henry de Beaumont, who, along with Baliol and the rest of the disinherited nobles, succeeded in driving David the Second from the throne; and soon after the united fleets of the Scots and their allies increased in numbers and audacity to such a degree, that the English coasts were kept in a state of continual terror. The merchantmen did not dare to sail except in great squadrons, and with a convoy of ships of war; and even when riding at anchor within the harbours, were cut out and carried off by the superior naval skill and courage of the Scottish seamen, and their allies.¹ In a remarkable order, addressed by Edward the Third to his admirals and naval captains, this monarch complains in bitter terms of their base and pusillanimous conduct, in permitting the united fleets of the Scots, French, and Flemings, to capture and destroy the ships of England in the very sight of his own navy, which kept aloof during the action, and did not dare to give battle.²

Such appears to have been the great superiority of the Scottish navy over that of England in the beginning of the reign of David the Second. Meanwhile, the long and inveterate war between the two countries, which arose out of the aggressions of Edward the First, entirely extinguished the regular Scottish

¹ *Rotuli Scotiæ*, pp. 451, 456, 467, 477.

² *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 513. *Ibid.* 498.

commerce with that country. From the year 1291 to 1348 there appear only three safe-conducts for English merchants, permitting them to trade with Scotland; and those repeated proclamations which were made against any commercial intercourse, seem to have been so rigorously executed, that in this long interval, embracing more than half a century, we do not find a single passport for a Scottish merchant, allowing him to visit England for the purposes of trade.

In 1348 the Scots were included in the truce of Calais; for the first time since the long war the commerce of England was thrown open to their skill and enterprise; and, in a very few years, the mercantile intercourse between the two countries increased to an astonishing and unexampled degree. At the request of the Queen of Scotland, important privileges were granted to the Scottish merchants; the Scottish nobles possessed companies of merchants, who speculated on their account, and under their protection;¹ and we have seen that, instead of the rigid and determined exclusion from all trade with their dominions, which, for so long a time, formed part of the policy of the three Edwards to their Scottish enemies,² a system of the utmost liberality and indulgence was pursued, under which the commerce of both countries was carried on with a wonderful degree of energy and enterprise.

¹ Rotuli Scotiæ, vol. i. pp. 758, 823. *Salvus conductus pro mercatoribus Williemi de Douglas.*

² Rotuli Scotiæ, vol. i. p. 140.

The immense sums of money which were drawn from the country for the ransom of the king ; the expenses incurred by the residence and ransom of the noble prisoners taken in the battle of Durham ; and the reiterated and heavy payments which were made during the various and protracted negotiations with England ; exhibit, in a very striking manner, the encreasing opulence of the country ; and it cannot be doubted, that one great source of this wealth is to be traced to the improved state of the national commerce, and to the increasing wealth of the traders and manufacturers. I shall conclude this sketch of the early commerce and navigation of Scotland, by a few remarks upon the money of those times, and upon the wages of labour, and the prices of the necessaries of life.

All the Scottish coins which have yet been discovered, previous to the reign of Robert the Second, are of silver ; and this fact of itself furnishes, if not absolute proof, at least a strong presumption, that anterior to this period there was no gold coinage in Scotland.¹ Of this early silver money the most ancient specimens yet found are the pennies of Alexander the First, who succeeded to the throne in the commencement of the twelfth century ; after which

¹ In a Parliament held at Scone by David the Second, in 1369, there is mention of gold money. Robertson's Parliamentary Records, p. 117. But the gold money of England was then current in Scotland, and the enactment may refer to it. Ruddiman's excellent Introduction to Anderson's Diplomata, pp. 54, 55.

we can trace a regular coinage of silver pennies under the reigns of David the First, William the Lion, and the successive sovereigns who filled the throne, with the exception of Malcolm the Fourth, whose money, if in existence, has hitherto eluded the utmost research of the Scottish antiquary. The silver pennies of Alexander the First, now extremely rare, are of the same fineness, weight and form, as the contemporary English coins of the same denomination, and down to the time of Robert the First, the money of Scotland was of precisely the same value and standard as that of England. Towards the conclusion of the reign of William the Lion, that monarch reformed the money, which had been somewhat debased from its former standard;¹ perhaps in consequence of an attempt to supply in this way the very large sums which this monarch paid to Richard the First.² During the succeeding reign, the standard value and the device continued the same as under William; but almost immediately after the accession of Alexander the Third, the ministry of this infant sovereign borrowed from England what was deemed an improvement in the mode of stamping the reverse. The history of this alteration is curious. It appears that in 1248, the Sterling money of England had been defaced, by clipping, to such a degree, that the letters of the inscription were almost entirely cut away, and the delinquents were suspected to be the Jews, the Causini, and the Flemish wool merchants.³ At a meeting of the king's

¹ M'Pherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 356.

² *Wynton Chron.* vol. i. p. 342. *Chron. Melross*, p. 180.

³ *Mathew Paris a Wats.* p. 639.

council, which was summoned to advise what steps ought to be taken, some of the members recommended that, in imitation of the money of France, the quality of the silver in the English money ought to be debased, under the idea, that the temptation to make profit by clipping would thus effectually be removed. Fortunately this advice, which marks a very rude age, and a limited knowledge on the subject, was not adopted; but proclamation was made that all the defaced coin should be brought into the king's exchanges, and that a new coinage should be struck, out of which those who brought in the clipped money were to be paid weight for weight. On the old coins, the cross upon the reverse side had only reached half way from the centre to the edge, in consequence of which, an expert clipper might have pared away a considerable breadth, without much chance of detection; but, now the expedient was adopted, of carrying the arms of the cross, through the letters of the legend, and a border of small beads was added round the outer extremity; so that the money could not be clipped, without at least a greater chance of discovery.¹ The immediate adoption of this clumsy expedient in Scotland was probably occasioned by the same abuse of clipping having been practised in that country.²

¹ " Ut non sine evidenti, et valde notabili dispendio, aliquid inde radi possit vel abscindi." *Annales Waverlienses*, p. 207.

² *Fordun a Goodal*, vol. ii. p. 83. The same monarch, Alexander the Third, appears to have coined silver pieces of two pennies. *M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 432.

In Scotland, the first very sensible diminution of the purity of the standard money was introduced by Robert Bruce; but the exact date of the depreciation is unknown. Like the other alterations in the coinage, it was adopted in imitation of England; and proceeded upon the unjust and erroneous idea, that the wealth of the kingdom might be increased, by multiplying the number of pennies coined out of the pound of silver. In 1300, Edward the First commanded two hundred and forty-three pennies to be coined out of the standard pound, instead of two hundred and forty, which was the old rate.¹ A diminution of three pennies in the value of the pound of account was deemed, perhaps, too trifling and imperceptible a change, to be in any way detrimental; and the Scottish monarch not only followed, but went beyond the pernicious example of England; for, under the expectation that the pennies of both kingdoms would, as before, continue to pass indiscriminately, he coined two hundred and fifty-two pennies from the pound weight of silver,—an impolitic departure from the integrity of the national money, which had hitherto been strictly observed by the government of the country.²

From this time till 1354 there appears to have

¹ Topham's Observations on the Wardrobe Account of Edward the Eleventh, p. 11. "The pound weight of silver then (31. Ed. I.) consisted of twelve ounces, each containing twenty pennyweights, or of two hundred and forty pennies. These pennies were composed of mixed silver; one pound, or twelve ounces, of which contained eleven ounces and two pennyweights of fine silver, and eighteen pennyweights of copper or alloy."

² M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. i. p. 466. Folkes on English Coins, pp. 8, 142. Edition 1763.

been no change in the money of Scotland ; which, according to a proclamation of Edward the Third, was received as of the same weight and alloy as the money of England.¹ This monarch, however, finding himself grievously distressed by the debts which he had incurred in his French war, unfortunately repeated the expedient, to relieve himself, which he had already partially adopted, although as dishonest as it was injurious to the best interests of his kingdom. In order to pay his creditors with less money than he had borrowed, he commanded two hundred and sixty-six pennies to be made out of the pound of standard silver ; and afterwards, in the year 1346, he diminished the money still farther, by making two hundred and seventy pennies out of the pound,—a proceeding by which the people were greatly distressed, owing to the consequent rise in the prices of all the necessaries of life.

In 1354 the Steward, who was now Regent in Scotland, during the captivity of David, imitating this mistaken policy, issued a new coinage, which was not only far below the original standard in value, but even inferior to the money of England, depreciated as it then was. We are informed of this fact, by a proclamation which the issue of this new money of Scotland drew from Edward the Third. In a letter to the Sheriff of Northumberland, the king informs him, that the new money of Scotland, although of the same figure with the old, was not, like it, of the same weight and quality with the Sterling money of Eng-

¹ Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. v. p. 813.

land; and he accordingly commands that officer to make proclamation within his district, that the new Scottish money should be taken only for its value as bullion, and carried to the proper office, to be exchanged for current money; but that the old money of Scotland, which, as appears from what was above stated, was considerably better than that of England, should be still as current as before.”¹

Soon after the return of David the Second to his dominions, he appointed Adam Torre, a burges of Edinburgh, and James Mulekin of Florence, joint keepers of the Exchange for all Scotland, and masters of the Mint. Foreigners appear to have been the great coiners or minters of those times. At an earlier period, in 1278, the Exchange at London was under the direction of some Lucca merchants, and Gregory de Rokesley, the mayor.² In 1366, the Scottish Parliament had ordered the money of the kingdom to be coined of the quality and weight with that of England;³ but, in the subsequent year, the extreme scarcity of silver money, occasioned by the great drain of specie from the country for the king's ransom, and other heavy expenses, created an alarm, which unfortunately caused the Parliament to relapse into the ancient and erroneous notion, that the wealth of the

¹ M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. i. p. 554. Rymer's Fœdera, vol. v. 813. “*Super nova moneta Scotiæ.*”

² Madox's Hist. of Exchequer, c. 22. § 4. c. 23. § 1. *Comptum Custodis Monete*, vol. i. Accounts of the Great Chamberlains of Scotland, pp. 401, 402.

³ Robertson's Parliamentary Records, p. 104.

kingdom might be increased by diminishing the intrinsic value, and increasing the number of the pieces coined. This produced an order, by which it was declared, that the standard pound of silver should be diminished in the weight by ten pennies; so that henceforth the pound of silver should contain twenty-nine shillings and four pennies; out of which seven pennies were to be taken for the king's use.

To understand this order, it must be remembered that the only coins which had yet been struck, either in England or Scotland, were pennies, with their halves and quarters, along with a few groats and half groats; so that when the Parliament enacted that the pound of silver should contain twenty-nine shillings and four pennies, it was saying in other words that it was to be coined into three hundred and fifty-two pennies; an enormous departure from the integrity of the old standard of two hundred and forty pennies in the pound. In the same ordinance it is provided that eleven pennies are to be taken for the Master of the Mint and the payment of the workmen, and one penny for the Keeper of the Mint. If to these we add the seven pennies for the King's use, twenty-seven shillings and nine pennies would remain to the merchant for the pound of silver;¹ so that, by this change in the coinage, the king practised a very extensive and grievous fraud upon his subjects.

It is curious to attend for a moment to the consequences of this depreciation of the money of the country. They are distinctly to be traced in a statute

¹ Robertson's Parliamentary Records, p. 109.

soon after passed by Edward the Third.¹ There was, in the first place, a rise in the prices of all the necessaries of life; so that the labouring classes, being paid at the same rate as before, found that they could not procure the same subsistence. This they patiently bore for some time; but when the immense mortality occasioned by the pestilence had diminished the number of working men, and thus created a great demand for labour, the survivors naturally seized the opportunity to raise their prices; and, in consequence of this, the king, with the advice of his parliament, enacted the Statute of Labourers, "by which all men and women under sixty years of age, whether free or slaves, and having no occupation or property, were compelled to serve any master who hired them, for the same wages which were given before the year 1346, under pain of imprisonment." Artificers were, at the same time, prohibited from exacting more than the old wages; and the butchers, bakers, brewers, and other dealers in provisions, were strictly enjoined to sell their commodities at reasonable prices.

The legislators of those remote times had not yet learned that the price of food must be the standard for the price of labour; and that by depreciating the coin of the kingdom, they raised the prices of the necessaries of life, and compelled the labouring classes to adopt the very conduct of which they complained.

¹ Statute 23, Ed. III. M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. i. p. 542.

There can be no doubt that the consequences of the depreciation in Scotland must have been the same as in the sister country ; and the sumptuary laws, which we find enacted towards the conclusion of the reign of David the Second, with the statutes regarding carrying the coin “ furth of the realm,” are to be traced to the same causes as those which led to the statute of labourers in England.¹

The price of labour, of the necessaries of life, and of the articles of comfort or luxury, forms at all times an interesting subject of enquiry, probably from that strong and natural desire which we feel to compare our own condition with that of our fellow-men, however remote may have been the period in which they lived. Upon such points, however, previous to the transcription and printing of the Accounts of the Great Chamberlains of Scotland, little satisfactory information could be collected ; for our most ancient historians, although they occasionally mark the prices of provisions and of labour, commonly do so in years of scarcity, when the high rate to which they had risen fixed their attention upon the subject ; and upon such data no correct enquiry could be founded.² These accounts, on the contrary, as they contain the ordinary and common prices of most articles, are on this, as on all other points which they embrace, our most authentic and valuable guides.

¹ Statuta Davidis II. Regiam Majes. pp. 45, 46. Robertson's Parliamentary Records, pp. 106, 117.

² Preface to Fleetwood's Chronicon Preciosum.

It will be recollected that the value and the denomination of money, down to the reign of Robert the First, continued the same in Scotland and in England; and that, even under Edward the Third, the depreciation of the Scottish money could not be very great, as it required a royal proclamation to put the people on their guard against it.¹

To begin with the price of grain, we find that, in 1263, a chalder of oatmeal, fourteen bolls being computed for a chalder, cost exactly one pound.² In the same year, six chalders of wheat were bought for nine pounds, three shillings.³ The prices, however, varied occasionally as we might expect. In 1264, twenty chalders of barley sold for ten pounds; although in 1288, the price had fallen so low, that we find forty chalders sold for six pounds, thirteen shillings, and four pence, being at the rate of forty pence the chalder.⁴ In 1288, twelve chalders of wheat brought twelve merks, or thirteen shillings and four pence the chalder.⁵ In 1290, a chalder of barley sold for ten shillings, and a chalder of rye for four shillings;⁶ while, in 1329, we find the prices of the same grain fluctuating from twenty to twenty-four shillings the chalder for the best barley.⁷ In 1326, four chalders of oatmeal cost a hundred and six shillings

¹ Madox's History of Exchequer, vol. i. p. 277. 4th Edition. The pound of silver by tale was twenty shillings; the merk of silver 13s. 4d. or 160 pennies.

² Chamberlain's Accounts, p. 9. Temp. Regis Alex. III. p. 66.

³ Ibid. p. 9.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 24, 66.

⁵ Ibid. p. 69.

⁶ Ibid. p. 77.

⁷ Ibid. vol. i. p. 37.

and eight pence, being at the rate of twenty pence the boll; whilst, of the same date, the same kind of grain, but probably of a superior quality, sold for two shillings the boll.¹ In 1360, a chalder of barley cost thirteen shillings and four pence, and five chalders of wheat brought eight pounds; whilst, five years after this, four chalders and eleven bolls of fine wheat could not be had under twelve pounds sixteen shillings.² About the same time, twenty-nine barrels of beer, purchased for the king's household, cost eleven pounds nine shillings, and fifty-five barrels of herring twenty-nine pounds nineteen shillings.³ As far back as 1263, we find, that the price of a cow was four shillings and five pence;⁴ and that thirty muttons were purchased for the king's table, at the rate of twenty-five shillings, averaging exactly ten pence a piece.⁵ In the following year, forty cows were sold for ten pounds, the price of each being five shillings; whilst thirty-eight swine brought fifty-seven shillings, being no more than eighteen pence each; and, in 1288, twelve swine sold as low as a shilling a head.⁶ In 1368, two oxen sold for thirteen shillings and four pence,

¹ Chamberlain's Accounts. *Compotum Constab. de Tarbat*, vol. i. p. 2.

² *Ibid.* *Compot. Cleric. libationis*, vol. i. p. 445.

³ *Ibid.* *Compot. Clerici libationis*, p. 445. In 1328, we find 1800 herring sold for twenty-eight shillings. *Ibid.* p. 28. In 1288, 100 eels brought three shillings, p. 69.

⁴ *Ibid.* *Rotuli Compot. Temp. Regis Alex. III.* p. 14. To twenty-four cows 108 shillings.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 15.

⁶ Chamberlain's Accounts, *Temp. Custod. Regni*, p. 56. *Ibid.* p. 77.

being six shillings and eight pence a head. In the concluding passage of the Excerpts from the Chamberlain's Accounts, seven score hens are sold for eleven shillings and eight pence, exactly a penny each; and a tonegall of cheese, measuring six stones, sold for three shillings.¹

The common fuel of those times, consisting of peats and wood, was to be had at a moderate rate. In 1288, two hundred and five horse-loads of fire-wood, for the royal palace at Stirling, cost only thirty-six shillings and sixpence. Eight waggon-loads of peats, including the carriage and some small expenses, cost thirteen pounds, seventeen shillings, and five pence.² Although coals were undoubtedly worked in Scotland as early as 1291, perhaps even anterior to this, yet we find them rarely mentioned previous to the reign of David the Second. Under this monarch, eighty-four chalders of coal being purchased for the use of the queen's household, cost twenty-six pounds.³ Salt appears to have been one of those necessaries of life which varied considerably in its price. In 1288, twelve chalders of salt were sold for six shillings the chalder; whilst, in 1360, ten chalders could not be purchased under thirteen pounds, six shillings, and eight pence.⁴

In comparing the wages of labour with the above

¹ Chamberlain's Accounts, Temp. Custod. Regni, pp. 77, 78. "Et sciendum est quod quilibet tonegall valet 6 petras."

² Ibid. p. 61.

³ Chalmers's Caledonia, vol i. p. 793. Chamberlain's Accounts, p. 495.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 69, 392.

prices of provisions it is evident that, even in the most remote period which these researches have embraced, the lower orders must have lived comfortably. In the Excerpts from the Chamberlain's Rolls of Alexander the Third, the Keeper of the King's Warren at Craill receives, for his meat and his wages during one year, sixteen shillings and eight pence; and as this was deemed too high, it is added, that, for the coming year, he is to have his option to take either a merk, which was thirteen shillings and four pence, or a chalder of oatmeal.¹ The gardener of the king at Forfar had, for his yearly wages, five merks, the gardener at Menmouth only one merk;² and William, the king's cook and keeper of the royal larder, was paid, for his arrears of three years wages, ten pounds.³ The king's balistarius, or keeper of the cross-bows for the castle of Ayr, received yearly two merks and a-half;⁴ whilst the warder of the same castle for his yearly wages and support, cost the exchequer eight shillings.⁵

When Alexander the Third was making preparations against the expected invasion of the King of Norway, in 1263, in order to secure the allegiance of the petty princes who held the Western Isles, he seized their children as hostages for their peaceable behaviour. These, of course, he had to support, and this explains an entry in the Chamberlain's rolls, from which we may form some idea of the rate of living.

¹ Chamberlain's Accounts, Excerpta. E. Rotul. Temp. Alex. III. p. 7. ² Ibid. p. 13. ³ Ibid. p. 1. ⁴ Ibid. p. 9. ⁵ Ibid.

For the expenses of the son of Angus, who was the son of Donald, with his nurse and a waiting woman, for twenty-six weeks, the king paid seventy-nine shillings and tenpence.¹ The expenses of another of these hostages, the son of Murchard, amounted to twenty-one shillings for twenty-four weeks; and we find, that in speaking of twenty-two hostages from Caithness and Sky, the first was allowed for his living a penny, and the second three-halfpence a day.² At the time of this expected invasion, Alexander possessed no regular navy, but a few ships of war appear to have been stationed in the port at Ayr: such, however, was the unsettled state of the country, that these vessels had to be watched, probably only during the night; and we find an entry in the same accounts of sixteen shillings and ninepence, to four men who had been employed watching the king's ships for twenty-three weeks.³ In 1326, the fortifications of the Castle of Tarbart having become insecure in some places, Robert the Mason was employed to repair and strengthen the walls. This he did by contract, and as the quantity of work which was executed does not appear, no exact inference can be drawn from the sum paid, which amounted to two hundred and eighty-two pounds, fifteen shillings.⁴ But in this work, two labourers were employed in carrying lime from Thorall to Tarbart for twenty-nine weeks and three days, and received four shillings

¹ Excerpt E. Rotul. Temp. Alex. III. pp. 9, 14.

² Ibid. p. 22.

³ Ibid. p. 9.

⁴ Comptum Const. de Tarbart, vol. i. p. 3.

a week for their wages,¹ being sixpence and a fraction for each day. Days' wages, however, sometimes fell still lower; five barrowmen, or carriers, for three weeks' work received each only three shillings and fourpence; and apparently in the same repairs of Tarbart Castle, seven labourers or barrowmen were engaged for thirty-two weeks at the rate of fourteen-pence a-week each.² Higher craftsmen, of course, received higher wages. John the Carpenter was engaged for thirty-two weeks at threepence a day, with his meat, which was each month a boll of oatmeal, and one codra of cheese, the boll being reckoned at two shillings, and the codra of cheese at sevenpence.³ Nigel the Smith had twelve pounds, and Nicolas the Mason six pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence, for his yearly wages.⁴ The cooks who exercised their mystery at the nuptial feast given on the marriage of David the Second at Berwick, received, on that occasion, twenty-five pounds, six shillings, and eightpence, for their labours there.⁵ To the minstrels who attended the ceremony, and we must remember that the rejoicings continued probably for many days, there was given sixty-six pounds, fifteen shillings and fourpence.⁶ John, the apothecary of King Robert Bruce, received for his salary eighteen pounds, and for his robe, a perquisite which

¹ Comp. Constab. de Tarbart, p. 3.

² Ibid. p. 4.

³ Ibid. p. 5. In pp. 77, 78, we find a tonegall of cheese, which is there stated to be equal to six stones, sold for three shillings.

⁴ Ibid. p. 5. ⁵ Chamberlain's Accounts, p. 96. ⁶ Ibid. p. 96.

we find given to many of the king's servants and officers, the sum of twenty-six shillings and eightpence.¹ It is somewhat singular, that many years after this, in 1364, Thomas Hall, the physician of David the Second, received only ten merks for his salary.² In 1358, however, Hector the doctor received at once from the king a fee of five pounds, six shillings, and eightpence, so that it is difficult to ascertain exactly the rate of the fees or the salaries of these learned leeches. The druggist, indeed, appears to have been a favourite; for, in addition to his salary and his robe, we find him presented by the king in the course of the same year with a gift of fourteen pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence. The prices of clothes, according to the coarseness or the costliness of the materials, varied exceedingly. A robe for the keeper of the gate of the king's chapel, cost only twenty shillings; a robe for Patrick de Monte-alto, which was, in all probability, lined with rich furs, cost four pounds;³ a robe for the clerk of the rolls, twenty-six shillings⁴ on one occasion, and thirty shillings on another;⁵ whilst John Bysit, a poor monk of Haddington, and one of King Robert's pensioners, was allowed, in 1329, twenty shillings annually for his clothing;⁶ and later than this, in 1364, a poor scholar, who is denominated a relation of the king, received from David the Second four pounds annually, to provide himself in food and clothing.⁷ In 1263,

¹ Chamberlain's Accounts, p. 99.

² Ibid. p. 539.

³ Ibid. pp. 101, 400.

⁴ Ibid. p. 479.

⁵ Ibid. p. 526.

⁶ Ibid. p. 101.

⁷ Ibid. p. 413.

Alexander the Third granted fifty shillings to nine prebendaries to provide themselves with vestments.¹

Wine appears to have been consumed in large quantities at the royal table. In 1263, under Alexander the Third, who is celebrated in a fragment of an old song for "wine and wax, gamyn and glee," a hundred and seventy-eight hogsheads or dolii of wine were bought for four hundred and thirty-nine pounds, sixteen shillings, and eightpence. In 1264, sixty-seven hogsheads and one pipe cost the royal exchequer three hundred and seventy-three pounds, sixteen shillings, and eightpence; whilst in 1329, forty-two hogsheads, purchased from John de Hayel, a merchant at Sluys, in Flanders, cost a hundred and sixty-eight pounds.² A pipe of Rhenish wine, bought for David the Second, at the time he held his court at Dundee, cost five pounds; but a pipe of the same wine, of finer flavour, which David had sent to the Countess of Strathern, cost seven pounds, six shillings, and eightpence, in 1361.³ In 1364, the same noble lady received a hogshead of wine by the king's orders, for which the chamberlain paid six pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence.⁴ These wines were, without doubt, the same as those imported into England from Spain, Gascony, and Rochelle, and of which we find the prices fixed by a statute of Richard the Second.⁵ Other wines, of far inferior price, were

¹ Excerpta E. Rotul. Compot. Temp. Alex. III. p. 13.

² Ibid. p. 17. Chamberlain's Accounts, p. 97.

³ Ibid. p. 377.

⁴ Ibid. p. 412. See also p. 414.

⁵ M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. i. p. 592.

probably mixtures compounded in the country, and not of pure foreign growth. Thus, in 1263, we find the dolius or hogshead of red wine, *vinum rubrum*, sold for thirty-six shillings, and eightpence; and, at the same time, the hogshead of white wine brought two pounds.¹ In other articles of luxury for the table, the great expense seems to have been in spices, confections, and sweetmeats, in which great quantities of mace, cinnamon, flower of gilliflower, crocus, and ginger, appear to have been used, upon the prices of which it would be tedious and useless to enlarge.

Some idea of the prices of gold and silver plate may be formed from an item in the Chamberlain's Accounts of the year 1364, in which it appears that Adam Torre, burgess of Edinburgh, furnished for the king's table thirteen silver dishes, and six silver saltcellars, for which he was paid seventeen pounds, twelve shillings.²

With regard to the rent and the value of land at this period, the subject to be investigated in a satisfactory manner, would lead us into far too wide a field; but any reader who is anxious to pursue so interesting an enquiry, will find, in the Cartularies of the different religious houses, and in the valuable information communicated by the books of the Chamberlain's Accounts, a mass of facts, from the comparison of which he might draw very authentic deductions. The great difficulty, however, in an investigation of

¹ Excerpta E. Rotul. Compot. Temp. Alex. III. p. 44.

² Chamberlain's Accounts, p. 411.

this nature, would arise from the want of any work upon the exact proportion which the ancient divisions of land, known in the Cartularies by the epithets of *carucatae*, *bovatae*, *perticatae*, *rodæ*, *virgatae*, bear to the measures of land in the present day, a desideratum which must be felt by any one attempting such an enquiry, in every step of his progress. For example, in an ancient roll, containing the rents of the Monastery of Kelso, preserved in the Cartulary of that religious house, and drawn up prior to 1320, we find, that the monks of this opulent establishment possessed the grange or farm of Reveden in Roxburghshire, in which they themselves cultivated five carucates of land. The remainder of the property appears to have been divided into eight husbandlands, *terræ husbandorum*, for which each of these husbandmen paid an annual-rent of eighteen shillings. Upon the same grange they had nineteen cottages; for eighteen of which they received an annual-rent of twelve pennies, and six days' work at harvest and sheep-shearing. The ninth cottage rented at eighteen pence, and nine days' harvest work. Upon the same property they had two breweries, yielding a rent of two merks; and one mill, which brought them nine merks yearly.¹ The difficulty here is, to ascertain the size of these husbandlands, in which enquiry, at present, I know not of any certain guide. The bovate or oxgang of land, according to Spel-

¹ Cartulary of Kelso, MS. Rotulus Reddituum Monasterii de Kalchow.

man and Ducange, contained eighteen acres; a carucate contained eight bovates; and eight carucates made up a knight's fee; but that the same measures obtained in Scotland cannot be confidently asserted. And we know that they varied even in England; and that a deed, quoted in Dugdale's *Monasticon*, makes the bovaté contain only ten acres; whilst Skene, upon no certain authority, limits it to thirteen.

In the same monastic roll we find, that Hugo Cay had a small farm, which consisted of one bovaté, for which he paid to the monks a rent of ten shillings; and for a cottage, with six acres attached to it, and a malt-house, the tenant gave six shillings a-year. At a remote period, under Alexander the Second, the monks of Melrose purchased, from Richard Barnard, a meadow at Farningdun, consisting of eight acres, for thirty-five merks. In 1281, we have already seen, that the portion of Margaret, Princess of Scotland, who was married to Eric, King of Norway, was fourteen thousand merks. At the same time it was stipulated, that, for one-half of the portion, the King of Scotland might, at his option, assign to the King of Norway, during the continuance of the marriage, rents of lands amounting to a tenth part of the money, or to seven hundred merks yearly; whilst it was settled, that the princess was to have a jointure of one thousand, four hundred merks; and in both the public instruments drawn up upon this occasion, an annuity upon the life of Margaret, then in her twenty-first year, was valued at ten years' purchase.¹ In

¹ History, vol. i. pp. 55, 56.

1350, a perpetual annuity of eight merks Sterling, or five pounds, six shillings, and eight pence, secured on land, was bought for one hundred and twenty merks, being exactly fifteen years' purchase. To any of my readers who may be solicitous to pursue these enquiries farther,—to investigate the comparative value of food and labour in the sister countries, and their relation to the prices in the present day, I would recommend the Table of the Prices of Corn, and other necessary articles, subjoined to M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce,—a work which is a storehouse of the most authentic and interesting information upon the early history, not only of European commerce, but of European manners.

¹ Hailes' Annals, vol. ii. p. 275. M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce, Appendix, vol. iv. No. III. Chronological Table of the Prices of Corn, and other necessary articles.