

HISTORY
OF
SCOTLAND.

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F.R.S.E. AND F.A.S.

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P R E F A C E .

IT may not be improper to state, that the greater part of this Second Volume is founded upon documents which have not been examined by any writer of Scottish History. Of these, some have been published considerably subsequent to the date of the composition of any other history. Other most valuable records have been consulted, which, although transcribed and partly printed, are not yet communicated to the public. To the first class belongs the great national work printed, in the years 1814 and 1819, at the expense of Government, by command of his late Majesty, entitled "Rotuli Scotiæ," the publication of which was originally suggested by the present learned Deputy-Clerk-Register, Mr Thompson, and committed to the superintend-

ence of Mr David Macpherson, the able Editor of Winton's Chronicle. It consists of two very large folio volumes, embracing a collection of historical records, relative to the political transactions between England and Scotland, from the nineteenth year of the reign of Edward the First to the eighth of Henry the Eighth. These records consist of rolls, which are preserved in the Tower and the Chapter-House at Westminster; and, although the series is not quite complete, and, owing to their being exclusively written in Latin or in Norman French, the work is uninviting to the general reader, it is not too much to say, that, considered as materials for authentic history, the "Rotuli Scotiæ" is one of the most valuable presents which could have been made to the country. To the second class of documents, those printed but not published, belongs the folio volume which has been quoted in this work, under the title of "Robertson's Parliamentary Records," also printed by direction of Government in 1804, but cancelled

and withdrawn, owing to some defects in the arrangement; and the voluminous and valuable work, the "Accounts of the Great Chamberlains of Scotland," of which a more full notice is given in the Appendix.

From the materials furnished by these records, as well as from other sources, to which it is unnecessary here to allude, I have endeavoured to give clearness and consistency to a portion of history hitherto in many places obscure—the reign of David the Second, which immediately preceded the accession of the House of Stewart to the throne. It was during this period that Edward the Third attempted to make himself master of Scotland, both by force of arms and by political intrigue; and that the country, although four times invaded by this able and victorious prince in person, deserted by a part of its nobility, and betrayed by its king, contrived successfully to maintain its liberty. I have been accused of injustice in delineating the character of Edward the First, and of being actuated by a national bias;

and, although anxious to weigh with scrupulous impartiality the characters of the principal actors in the scenes which I have described, it is possible I may have been unable wholly to divest myself of individual feelings. Yet, in writing the history of a brave people, resolutely struggling for their independence under circumstances of peculiar discouragement, it is difficult to be a friend of freedom and not to sympathize with their sufferings,—not to feel indignation at unjust aggression, and satisfaction when the attempt is met with disappointment and defeat. And surely, if the circumstance, that it was an English Monarch who was misled, by the spirit of ambition and conquest, into a glaring disregard of the most sacred rights and sanctions, had induced the historian to dilute his censure, or to assume a tone of palliation and apology, there would have been room for a severer, because a more merited, impeachment, in which every man who has tasted the sweetness of freedom, or felt the insolence of conquest, would have

risen in witness against him. I am far from being blind to the great qualities of Edward the First; but it is with this king in his transactions with Scotland that a historian of Scotland has to do, and not with his character as an English King.

In the "Enquiry into the State of Ancient Scotland," it was my object to communicate authentic information upon the general appearance of the country; its ancient feudal constitution; the manners and amusements, the superstitions and character, of its people; its progress in agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; and its advancement in the arts which add comfort or ornament to life. I have attempted to direct the spirit of antiquarian research, which is too often applied in the investigation of questions of inferior moment, to the elucidation of subjects of general interest and importance: But the task has not been one of easy execution; and I have only to hope, that all who are acquainted with the difficulty of procuring information where the

period is so remote, and the materials are to be derived from such various and scattered sources, will, on this ground, make allowance for the errors into which I may have fallen, and the imperfections which accompany such an investigation.

MELVILLE STREET,
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