

HISTORICAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE

ANCIENT STATE OF SCOTLAND;

EMBRACING PRINCIPALLY THE PERIOD

FROM THE ACCESSION OF ALEXANDER THE THIRD

TO THE DEATH OF DAVID THE SECOND.

ANCIENT STATE OF SCOTLAND.

HAVING brought this work down to the great era of the accession of the house of Stewart, in the occupation of the throne by Robert the Second, I propose to pause for a short time, in order to cast our eye over the wide field through which we have travelled, and to mark, as fully as our imperfect materials will permit, the progress of the nation in some of those great subjects which form the body of its civil history. The general features and appearance of the country; its agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; the manners and amusements, the superstitions and character, of the people; the system of feudal government under which they lived; their progress in the arts, which add comfort, or security, or ornament to life; the character of their literature; are subjects upon which our curiosity is naturally active and eager for information; but it is unfortunate that the writers, who can alone be considered as authentic, have regarded such investigations as either un-

interesting, or beneath the dignity of the works in which they had engaged. Some lights, however, are to be found scattered through their works, or reflected from the public muniments and records of the times ; and it is to the guidance of these, however feeble and imperfect, that the historian can alone commit himself.

It must necessarily happen that, in an attempt of this kind, owing to the paucity of materials, and to the extreme remoteness of the period, any thing like a full account of the country is unattainable ; and that it is exceedingly difficult to throw together, under any system of lucid arrangement, the insulated facts which have been collected. I have adopted that order which appears the most natural.

SECTION I.

GENERAL APPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRY.

WE must be careful not to permit the ideas which are derived from the condition of Scotland in the present day, to influence our conclusions as to its appearance in those rude and early ages of which we have been writing. No two pictures could be more dissimilar than Scotland in the thirteenth and fourteenth, and Scotland in the nineteenth century. The mountains, indeed, and the rivers, are stern and indomitable features of nature, upon which the hand of man can introduce but feeble alterations; yet, with this exception, every thing was different. The face of the country was covered by immense forests chiefly of oak, in the midst of which, upon the precipitous banks of rivers, or on rocks which formed a natural fortification, and were deemed impregnable by the military art of that period, were placed the castles of the feudal barons. One principal source of the wealth of the proprietors of these extensive forests consisted in the noble timber which they contained, and the deer and other animals of the chase with which they abounded. When Edward I. subdued and overran the country, we find him in the constant practice of repaying the services of those who submitted to his

authority, by presents of so many stags and oaks from the forests which he found in possession of the crown. Thus, on the 18th of August, 1291, the king directed the keeper of the Forest of Selkirk to deliver thirty stags to the Archbishop of St Andrews, twenty stags and sixty oaks to the Bishop of Glasgow, ten to the High Steward, and six to Brother Brian, Preceptor of the Order of Knights Templars in Scotland.¹

To mark the names, or define the exact limits of these huge woods, is now impossible; yet, from the public records, and the incidental notices of authentic historians, a few scattered facts may be collected.

In the north, we find the forest of Spey,² extending along the banks of that majestic river; the forests of Alnete, and of Tarnaway, of Awne, Kilblene, Langmorgan, and of Elgin, Forres, Lochindorb, and Inverness.³ The extensive county of Aberdeen appears to have been covered with wood. We meet there with the forests of Kintore, of Cardenache, Drum or Drome, Stocket, Killanal, Sanquhar, Tulloch, Gasgow, Darrus, Collyn, and what is called the New Forest of Innerpeffer.⁴ In Banff was the forest of Boyne; in Kincardine and Forfar the forests

¹ Rotuli Scotiæ, vol. i. p. 3. 18th August, 1291.

² Ibid. vol. i. p. 5. Anno 1291. m. 11.

³ Ibid. p. 9. Robertson's Index to the Charters, pp. 32, 35, 42. Rolls of Parliament, ii. 469, quoted in Caledonia, vol. i. p. 792. Fordun a Hearne, p. 1027.

⁴ Robertson, pp. 23, 33, 38, 58, 71, 72, also Rotuli Scotiæ, in anno 1292, p. 10. Chamberlain's Accounts. Compot. vice Comitibus Aberdein, p. 298.

of Alyth, Drymie, and Plater;¹ in Fife, those of Cardenie and Uweth;² in Ayrshire, the forest of Senecastre;³ in the Lowlands, those of Drumselch,⁴ near Edinburgh, of Jedburgh, and Selkirk, Cottenshope, Maldesley,⁵ Ettrick, and Peebles; of Dolar, Traquhair, and Melrose.⁶

The counties of Stirling and Clackmannan contained extensive royal forests, in which, by a grant from David I. the monks of Holyrood had the right of cutting wood for building and other purposes, and of pasture for their swine.⁷ In the reign of the same king, a forest covered the district between the Leader and the Gala; and in Perthshire, occupied the lands between Scone and Cargil.⁸ Immense tracts which, in the present day, are stretched out into an interminable extent of naked and desolate moor, or occupied by endless miles of barren peat hags, were, in those early ages, covered by noble forests of oak, ash, beech, and other hard timber. Huge knotted trunks

¹ Robertson's Index, pp. 39, 55, 67, and *Rotuli Scotiæ*, p. 8.

² Robertson, p. 47. *Cartulary Dunferm.* f. 12 and 20.

³ *Cartulary of Paisley*, p. 46, in *Caledonia*, 793.

⁴ *Caledonia*, p. 793.

⁵ Chamberlain's Accounts. *Rotuli Comp. Temp. Custod. Regni*, p. 62.

⁶ *Rotuli Scotiæ*, in anno 1296. vol. i. p. 33. *Ibid.* p. 3, 278, 380. *Ibid.* p. 748. *Cartulary of Dunferm.* p. 10. *Rotuli Scotiæ*, p. 7. and Fordun, p. 1048. Robertson, p. 81. *Chron. Melrose*, ad ann. 1184, quoted in Dalziel's *Fragments*, p. 32. *Cartulary of Kelso*, p. 323. *Caledonia*, p. 798.

⁷ *Caledonia*, p. 792.

⁸ *Cart. Melross.* p. 104. *Cart of Scone*, p. 16.

