

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.

I HAVE commenced the HISTORY OF SCOTLAND at the accession of Alexander the Third, because it is at this period that our national annals become particularly interesting to the general reader. During the reign of this monarch, England first began to entertain serious thoughts of the reduction of her sister country. The dark cloud of misfortune which gathered over Scotland immediately after the death of Alexander, suggested to Edward the First his schemes of ambition and conquest; and perhaps, in the history of Liberty, there is no more memorable war than that which commenced under Wallace in 1297, and termina-

ted in the final establishment of Scottish independence by Robert Bruce, in 1328.

In the composition of the present volume, which embraces this period, I have anxiously endeavoured to examine the most authentic sources of information, and to convey a true picture of the times without prepossession or partiality. To have done so, partakes more of the nature of a grave duty than of a merit; and even after this has been accomplished, there will remain ample room for many imperfections. If, in the execution of my plan, I have been obliged to differ on some points of importance from authors of established celebrity, I have fully stated the grounds of my opinion in the Notes and Illustrations, which are printed at the end of the volume; and I trust that I shall not be blamed for the freedom of my remarks, until the historical authorities upon which they are founded have been examined and compared.

