

HISTORY
OF
SCOTLAND.

BY PATRICK FRASER TYTLER, Esq.

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

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PREFACE.

THE period which embraces the reigns of James the Second and James the Third, has been justly considered one of the most obscure portions of Scottish history. Even in Pinkerton, the latest, and certainly not the least acute of our historians, the narrative, from the want of access to authentic and then undiscovered materials, is often meagre, abrupt, and contradictory. Sensible of this, Mr Thomson, Depute-Clerk Register for Scotland, began, many years ago, to collect all the original muniments, and fragments of contemporary history which related to the reign of James the Second, with the laudable design of giving them to the public. This intention he afterwards abandoned, but not before he had printed the valuable Chronicle quoted so frequent-

ly in the following volume, under the title of the Auchinleck Chronicle. To this circumstance, and to the liberal communication of several other manuscript papers which he had collected, the following volume owes not a few of its facts and illustrations. I have yet another obligation to acknowledge. The Bannatyne Club, an institution which has already done much for Scottish history and antiquities, determined, some time ago, to print, from the most ancient manuscripts, a new edition of Lindsay of Pitscottie's Chronicle of Scotland. As this author, however, although one of the most amusing of our early writers, did not enjoy a high character for authenticity, it was resolved to correct and illustrate his text by notes and chronological tables, drawn up from original sources. This task was committed to the Reverend Mr Macgregor Stirling, a gentleman, whose talents for abstruse and accurate research had already been exercised on similar subjects. He enjoyed also the advantage of Mr Thomson's superintendence, and the result has been a voluminous and

valuable collection of notes and extracts from original documents, drawn up by Mr Stirling in chronological order, and compiled principally from manuscript sources. To these, which are still in manuscript, I have had unlimited access during the composition of this part of the history. They have facilitated my labour, and often alleviated the irksomeness of minute research; whilst from their materials I have frequently been enabled to derive a gleam of light, or to supply a link in the narrative, which, but for such assistance, must have remained as obscure and as defective as before.

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