

HISTORY
OF
SCOTLAND.

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VOLUME V.

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P R E F A C E.

IN the present volume, the History of Scotland is brought down from the year 1497, where the fourth volume concluded, to the year 1546, a period embracing the greater part of the reign of James the Fourth, the regency of Albany, the whole of the reign of James the Fifth, and a portion of the minority of Mary. In various parts of this volume, but more particularly in the view given of the regency of the Duke of Albany, the author has differed essentially from Pinkerton, one of the latest and most acute of our historians, and to whose previous researches, in the unpublished treasures of the British Museum, he has been much indebted. The reasons for this difference are fully stated in the text ;

and it is certainly curious, that while Pinkerton has frequently opened new ground, he should have failed to perceive the contradiction which was given by the tenor of his narrative to those loose assertions of Buchanan and other historians, which he has not hesitated to repeat.

It is, however, in the latter portion of this volume, which embodies the regency of the Earl of Arran, and the first rise of the Reformation, that the author trusts the historical student will be most interested. It is written almost exclusively from original letters and public muniments preserved in His Majesty's State Paper Office. These rich materials have lain unexamined by any of our general historians for a period of nearly three centuries; and it is not too much to say, that they throw a clear and useful light on a period of our annals hitherto very dark and contradictory. To demonstrate their value, it is only neces-

sary to point out the elucidations which they afford of the conduct and motives of some individuals of the Scottish aristocracy who were in the interest of England ; the manner in which they illustrate the violent and often unprincipled policy of Henry the Eighth, and the extraordinary and revolting views which they open into the conspiracy for the assassination of Cardinal Beaton. On these, and on many other subjects, the materials preserved in the State Paper Office contribute information, which is new in the history of the country ; and if, in the course of this volume, the author has spoken with severity of the conduct of various members of the Scottish nobility, who have been eulogized by other historians, it is to be remembered, that the proceedings upon which he animadverts are proved under their own hand, and that the motives held up to reprobation are taken from their own lips.

The exposure of such transactions is a grave, though not a grateful duty—and, undoubtedly, the prevailing feeling ought to be, satisfaction at the complete, though tardy, discovery of the truth. In the volume of Scottish correspondence during the reign of Henry the Eighth, which is soon to be published by Government, those original letters and public papers, from which extracts have been given in this part of the work, will appear in their entire state; and the author begs to express his obligation to Lord Melbourne, for the liberality which allowed him the use of these most valuable documents previous to their publication; and to Mr. Hobhouse, for the courtesy with which the order was carried into effect. But most of all are his thanks due to his friend, Mr. Lemon, Deputy-keeper of the State Paper Office,—a gentleman to whose exertions the country mainly owes that admirable arrange-

ment which now distinguishes this great repository of our national muniments ; and from whose intimate acquaintance with ancient manuscripts and records he has repeatedly derived assistance.

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