

HISTORY
OF
SCOTLAND.

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VOLUME VI.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Volume of the History of Scotland, now published, comprehends the period from the assassination of Cardinal Beaton in 1546, to the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots, with Henry, Lord Darnley, in 1565, an interval, brief, indeed, in point of time, but prolific in events, and most momentous in their consequences. In proof of this, it is enough to say, that it embraces the history of the Reformation in Scotland: it includes the outbreak, the progress, and the establishment of that wonderful revolution, of which, in a former volume, the Author has marked the faint approaches, but which now, with all its conflicting principles, its mingled feelings,

Besides these sources, he has occasionally derived assistance from two manuscript volumes of Selections from the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer, and the Register of the Privy Seal of Scotland.¹ Lastly, he has consulted an unpublished volume, entitled "Illustrations of the Reign of Queen Mary," consisting principally of Letters from the Talbot Correspondence, preserved in the Library of the College of Arms.²

In the examination of these materials, with a view to impart the condensed historical result to the reader, the only merit to which the Author ventures to lay claim, is an earnest desire to discover the truth; a task so difficult,

¹ These volumes were obligingly lent me by their Compiler, Mr. Pitcairn, the Author of that laborious and useful work, "The Ancient Criminal Trials."

² This valuable volume will soon be presented to the Maitland Club by Mr. Kirkman Finlay. We owe its compilation to Mr. Stevenson, Sub-Commissioner of the Public Records, whose learning and enthusiasm have done so much for the remoter periods of Scottish History.

that in looking back upon the wide field over which he has travelled, he can sincerely say, that each succeeding volume has more fully convinced him of the imperfection of its predecessor, and impressed upon his mind the necessity of increased labour if he hopes to produce any thing which is worthy to live.

This volume was nearly finished printing, when Mr. Van Raumer presented to the world his work, entitled "Contributions to Modern History," from the British Museum and the State Paper Office, embracing Illustrations of the Reign of Mary Queen of Scots, and of the character and conduct of Elizabeth. It is to be regretted that this lively and ingenious writer, should have fallen into the singular mistake of printing as new materials, what has been long familiar to the critical readers of Scottish and English history. The letters, or rather the extracts from letters, which he has given as illus-

trating the first part of the reign of Mary, from 1561 to 1565, had (with a few slight exceptions) been published from the originals by Keith, in his elaborate work, entitled, "The History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland." (Edinburgh, 1734.) This volume of Keith, was the great mine from which Robertson drew his stores, and it formed the chief basis of Hume for the Scottish portion of his history. Its letters have been repeatedly quoted by succeeding writers, and it is still of the greatest utility to every reader who is anxious to derive his knowledge from authentic sources. To repeat these letters was superfluous, to mutilate and misunderstand them, was unfortunate—but, the climax of error was to give them as new matter.¹ The Author mentions this to show that English and Scottish historians are

¹ This fact, of the previous publication of these letters by Keith, has been stated in an able article of the British and Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 7.

not so utterly neglectful of the manuscript riches of England, as has been supposed, and that the "new lights," which some of the periodical critics have hailed, as proceeding from Prussia, may indeed be new to that country, but have been burning for upwards of a century in England. Mr. V. Raumer, whose continental reputation is firmly established, will, it is hoped, receive these remarks as they are meant to be given—in the spirit of necessary, but not unfriendly criticism.

LONDON,
March 2d, 1837.

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