

**THE HIGHLANDERS OF SCOTLAND, THEIR
ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND ANTIQUITIES; WITH A
SKETCH OF THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS,
AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE CLANS INTO
WHICH THEY WERE DIVIDED, AND OF THE
STATE OF SOCIETY WHICH EXISTED AMONG
THEM; IN TWO VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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The Highlanders of Scotland, Their Origin, History, and Antiquities; With a Sketch of Their Manners and Customs, and an Account of the Clans into Which They Were Divided, and of the State of Society Which Existed among Them; In Two Volumes, Vol. I by William F. Skene

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WILLIAM F. SKENE

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BY WILLIAM F. SKENE, F.S.A. SCOT.

IN TWO VOLUMES,

VOL. I.

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TO
THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF LONDON,

This Work,

WHICH IS PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS

(WITH THEIR PERMISSION)

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY THEIR

OBEDIENT, HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

"*HEUREUX le peuple dont l'histoire ennuie,*" say the French, and if this be a just criterion of national prosperity, it must be confessed that the Highlanders of Scotland have no mean claim to be considered as one of the happiest people in Europe. Just as this remark may be with regard to Highland history, it would not be easy to assign a reason for it, still less to account for the general neglect which the history of that people has experienced, in an age when the early annals of almost every nation have been examined, and their true origin and history determined, with a talent and success to which no other period can show a parallel.

The cause of this somewhat remarkable fact may, perhaps, be traced to the influence of that extraordinary prejudice against the Celtic race in general, and against the Scottish and Irish branches of that race in particular, which certainly biased the better judgment of our best historians, who appear to have regarded the Highlands with somewhat of the spirit of those who said of old, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth." But it is mainly to be attributed

to the neglect, by the indiscreet supporters of Highland fables, of that strictly critical accuracy, in point of evidence and of reasoning, so indispensable to the value of historical research ; the want of which infallibly leads to the loose style of argument and vague assumption so remarkably characteristic of that class of writers, and tends unfortunately to draw down upon the subject itself no small share of that ridicule to which the authors were more justly liable. The prevailing error which appears to me to have misled almost all who have as yet written upon the subject, has been the gratuitous assumption, not only by those whose writings are directed against the claims of the Highlanders, but also by their numerous defenders, that the present Highlanders are the descendants of the ancient Scotti, who, in company with the Picti, so often ravaged the Roman provinces in Britain. Nor have either party deemed it necessary to bring either argument or authority in support of their assumption. The Scots, as will be shewn in the sequel, were unquestionably a colony issuing from Ireland in the sixth century ; and thus, while the one party triumphantly asserts the Irish origin of the Highlanders, their defenders have hitherto directed their efforts to the fruitless attempt of proving that the Scots were the original inhabitants of the country.

The attention of the Author was directed to this subject by an advertisement of the Highland Society of London, making offer of a premium for the best

History of the Highland Clans; his Essay proved the successful one, and the Highland Society deemed his Work worthy of the attention of the public, and requested that it might be published. Since that period the Author has been enabled to make many important additions to the original Essay, and has considerably altered its plan and arrangement. In collecting the materials of the present Work, the Author has to acknowledge the very liberal assistance which he has received from many of his literary friends in Scotland; and he feels that it would be improper to allow this opportunity to escape without acknowledging the very great obligations which he has been laid under by Donald Gregory, Esq., Secretary to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, for the valuable and important communications which he has at all times so liberally made to the Author; and also by Mr. T. G. Repp, for the able assistance which he has rendered to the Author in the earlier part of his enquiry.

In presenting this Work to the public it will be necessary to say a few words regarding the system of history developed in it. A glance at the Table of Contents will shew that that system is entirely new; that it is diametrically opposed to all the generally received opinions on the subject, and that it is in itself of a nature so startling, as to require a very rigid and attentive examination before it can be received. The Author had, from a very early period, been convinced that the present system was erro-

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