

**ABERDEEN THREE
HUNDRED
YEARS AGO**

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Aberdeen three hundred years ago by John Bulloch

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JOHN BULLOCH

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HUNDRED
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Three Hundred
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BY
JOHN BULLOCH

ABERDEEN
D. WYLLIE & SON
1884

Bn 9861.15.20



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ABERDEEN :

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TO
SURGEON-MAJOR GEORGE KING, LL.D.

I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK,
AS A SLIGHT PROOF OF MY
ADMIRATION OF HIS RARE GIFTS,
AND IN TOKEN
OF OUR
INHERITED FRIENDSHIP.

"Long before Edinburgh had acquired the precedency of a capital, or even the first place among the four burghs of Southern Scotland; while Glasgow was yet an insignificant dependant on its Bishop, Aberdeen had taken its place as a great and independent Royal Burgh."—*Cosmo Innes.*



Aberdeen Three Hundred Years Ago.



WE do not envy the man who can daily tread the streets of his native town, bristling as it does with memorials of antiquity, and yet never allows his imagination to traverse the lapsed centuries, nor cares to interrogate them as to the state of things long ago, as to what sort of men his forefathers were, or how they were conditioned. The mind so incurious to the past, with its traditions, its history, its interests, may be intensely active in present relations; but in such indifference it must miss much by which a true realization of the present is reached. We are even a little sceptical as to the justness of its vision of the future. To virtually ignore one's indebtedness to one's ancestry is to be largely oblivious of one's obligations to posterity. This callousness is the more to be wondered at in the case of a town like our own, where

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materials for such investigation are abundant. No town in Scotland has such a perfect set of burgh records as Aberdeen, stretching with almost unbroken continuity from the year 1398—a period of nearly 500 years. There is evidently, however, a growing interest in what has hitherto been relegated to the dry-as-dust antiquary—one of the many hopeful tokens of a horizon widening with the dawn of a new educational regime.

Towns, like individuals, have great diversities in their history. Cities have risen, flourished, and decayed, leaving ruins sometimes scarce sufficient to mark their sites, and sometimes so abundant as to strike the beholder with astonishment. Others, with beginnings as early, have weathered the revolutions of time, and the change of dynasties, and still survive in our own day, with a vitality truly wonderful. Few things are so remarkable in the life of towns as their rate of growth. Some proceed at a slow but sure pace, which for the future can be calculated on the basis of their past; others spring into life, increasing with mushroom-like rapidity that defies all predictions. Three hundred years ago, the sites of many cities, that now teem with busy crowds of men, were the primeval forest and the dismal swamp. Nay,

the almost inaccessible spot where, less than fifty years ago, the lonely trapper built his rude hut, is to-day the abode of tens of thousands, a centre of civilization, easy of access, and a marvel of progress, although, to a great extent, devoid of historic interest.

Few sights are sadder than towns to which has come a period of decay. Their grass-grown streets and half-tenanted houses speak of commercial disaster, superseded industries, former opulence, present poverty. The few remaining inhabitants move about in a listless manner, reflecting in their actions the commercial coma that has overtaken the place. There the antiquary and the uncommercial traveller may find something to interest them, "glad to miss the lumbering of the wheels." But the modern bagman hastens to the railway station, if there be one, with all the speed he may, lest he too be smitten with the evil genius of the place. Towns, however, have their ups and downs. From some access of fresh enterprise, or turn of the wheel of fickle fortune, the decaying city may make a new departure, and even change places with her more successful rivals. Aberdeen has a happy combination of that interest and instructiveness which belong both to great antiquity and to