

it, by raising up from among the people that independent middle class, the creators and conservators of popular liberty, without which the population of any country can consist of only slaves and their masters. Even in the northern districts there were causes coming into operation which were eventually to annihilate the sentiment in at least its more mischievous tendencies. The state of matters in the town of Cromarty at this time, where a zealous Catholic was struggling to obtrude a minister of his own choosing on a Protestant people, furnishes no bad illustration of the nature of some of these, and of their mode of working. The absurd and mischievous law of patronage was doing in part for the Lowland districts of the north what the persecutions of the Stuarts had done for those of the south an age before, and what the large sheep-farm system, and the consequent ejection of the old occupants of the soil, has done for the Highlands an age after. And the first two were causes admirably suited to awaken a people who had derived their notions of rational liberty solely through the medium of religious belief. Their whiggism was a whiggism not of this world, but of the other; and as the privilege of preparing themselves for heaven in what they believed to be exclusively the right way was the only privilege they deemed worth while contending for, their first struggle for liberty was a struggle that their consciences might be free. The existence, too, of such men among them as Mr. Forsyth, men who had risen from their own level, had a twofold influence on the contest. They formed a sort of aristocracy of the people that served to divide the old feelings of respect which had been so long exclusively paid to the higher aristocracy; and they were enabled, through their superior intelligence,