

tiny conforming unresistingly to the one law; as a free agent, accountable for all his actions, yielding an imperfect and occasional obedience to the other. And yet his duty and his true interest, were he but wise enough to be convinced of it, are in every case the same. The following chapters, as they contain the history of a mind of the higher order, that, in doing good to others, conferred solid benefits on itself, may serve simply to illustrate this important truth. They may serve, too, to show the numerous class whose better feelings are suffered to evaporate in idle longings for some merely conceivable field of exertion, that wide spheres of usefulness may be furnished by situations comparatively unpromising. They may afford, besides, occasional glimpses of the beliefs, manners, and opinions of an age by no means remote from our own, but in many respects essentially different from it in spirit and character.

The Lowlanders of the north of Scotland were beginning, about the year 1700, gradually to recover the effects of that state of miserable depression into which they had been plunged for the greater part of the previous century. There was a slow awakening of the commercial spirit among the more enterprising class of minds, whose destiny it is to move in the van of society as the guides and pioneers of the rest. The unfortunate expedition of Darien had dissipated well-nigh the entire capital of the country only a few years before, and ruined almost all the greater merchants of the large towns. But the energies of the people, now that they were no longer borne down by the wretched despotism of the Stuarts, were not to be repressed by a single blow. Almost every seaport and larger town had its beginnings of trade. Younger sons of good family, who would have gone, only half a century before, to serve as