HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

Sect. I.—*Homan Period.*

It will not be expected that in such *a* sketch of the history of Scotland as is alone suited to this work, we should enter into the great controversy concerning the origin of the Scottish people, a subject upon which much needless acrimony, and many unprofitable volumes, have been thrown away.@@1 It will be more suitable to mark the progress of the great events in our national history, and to pass over its minor features ; to fix the attention upon results rather than to per­plex it with details ; to establish a series of points by which an intelligent reader may guide his memory and direct his studies ; and occasionally to note those authors from whose pages he may fill up the picture.

It is well known, that our first authentic knowledge of Britain comes from Julius Cæsar. Fifty-five years before the Christian era, this extraordinary man invaded the island from Gaul ; but his operations were attended with little suc­cess, his stay was brief, and it is certain that he knew nothing of Scotland. It was not till nearly a century and a half after Caesar’s descent, and during the reign of the emperor Ves­pasian, that Julius Agricola, at the head of a Roman army, penetrated into the northern parts of Britain. The details of his various campaigns, the resistance which he encoun­tered, and the vestiges of his progress which yet remain, have furnished matter of laborious investigation to our antiquaries. Among their conflicting accounts, it seems certain that he first pushed his conquests as far as the Friths of Forth and Clyde ; that in succeeding campaigns he penetrated north­wards ; and that in his last great expedition, during which his army was accompanied by a numerous fleet, which sailed along the coast, he was opposed by a barbarian chief named Galgacus. A sanguinary battle was fought between this leader and Agricola, the exact site of which has been keenly disputed. There seems to be little doubt, however, that previously to its occurrence the Roman general hail passed the Frith of Tay, and that although victorious over the fierce and undisciplined multitudes which opposed him, he ex­perienced a check which compelled him to desist from any further aggression. Two great events marked the last years of the government of Agricola. He explored the northern coasts of Scotland by his fleet ; and to him the Ro­man world, in all probability, owed its first certain know­ledge that Britain was an island. He endeavoured, in the second place, to secure his conquests from future attack by a chain of forts connecting the Friths of Forth and Clyde. Having completed these defences, he was recalled by the jealousy of Domitian, and left Britain in the year 85.

From this time till the reign of Hadrian, a period of thirty- six years, we hear little of the Romans, either in southern or northern Britain. Early in the second century, (a.D. 121), this emperor in person made an expedition into Scotland ;

and about twenty years later, Lollius Urbicus, the Roman governor under the emperor Antoninus, distinguished him­self by the courage and ability which he displayed against the turbident and warlike tribes which inhabited the north­ern parts of the island. Two facts, however, are admitted by the Roman writers, which demonstrate how uncertain was the tenure by which these masters of the world held their northern possessions in Britain. The emperor Hadrian, apparently distrusting the sufficiency of the line of forts al­ready formed by Agricola, constructed a wall or fortified ram­part from the Tyne to the Solway. It has been supposed by some antiquaries, that the emperor entirely abandoned to the barbarians the wide country between this new defence and the more ancient *Vallum* which united the Friths of Forth and Clyde ; but the discovery of a succession of coins along the line of this last rampart, belonging to the intermediate emperors, appears to indicate the contrary.@@2 From the adop­tion of this measure it is however evident, that the courage and successes of the barbarians had given much annoyance to the Romans ; and this is corroborated by the second fact to which we allude, namely, that between the period of Hadrian’s death and the succession of Antoninus Pius, (a. **D.** 138), the wall between the Forth and Clyde had been so completely destroyed, that Lollius Urbicus entirely reconstructed it. This fact is proved by inscriptions, which the reader may consult in Horsley’s *Britannia Homana.@@3* During the remaining years of his government, this able officer devoted himself to opening up the country by roads ; to the construc­tion of various camps and fortalices, of which the site has been traced with much industry and success by the latest writer on the subject ; and to the introduction of those use­ful arts which were best calculated to raise and humanize the character of the northern barbarians. His administration in Britain appears to have terminated with the death of his master, Antoninus Pius, a.D. 161.

From this period till the beginning of the third century, all is dark in Britain. But in the year 207, the emperor Se­verus received intelligence that the Caledonians had invaded the Roman provinces ; and with a vigour and alacrity which, considering the distance of the seat of war, and the barren prize to be contested, is not easily explained, he hastened in person to reduce the insurgent Caledonians. This expe­dition, making every allowance for the exaggeration with which the exploits of an emperor were usually recorded, must have been an extraordinary one. In the comparatively civilized country which extended between the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, he could meet with little opposition ; but when he left this last line of defence, and conducted his army into the wild regions beyond the Frith of Forth, ultimately pene­trating into Moray, we must suppose him to have encounter­ed very formidable obstacles. The savage and uncleare d state of the country, the extent of the forests, the unhealthy and

@@@\* The reader is referred to Innes’s Critical Essay on the ancient Inhabitants of Scotland, as the best work yet written on this subject. Its arrangement is defective ; but its good sense, and the authenticity of the documents upon which its deductions are founded, are highly praiseworthy. Pinkerton’s Dissertation on the Scythians or Goths, Dr. Jamieson's Dissertation on the Origin of the Scottish Lan­guage, and the first volume of the laborious work of Chalmers, entitled Caledonia, may be consulted with the greatest advantage. In their pages, the critical student who may desire to pursue the subject, will find ample references to all the noted works upon this question.

@@@- Chalmers’s Caledonia, p. 116.

@@@» Horsley’s Britannia, Rom. I. i. c. 10; Innes’s Critical Essay, vol. i. p. 12. The remains of the wall are popularly called Grim’s Dyke. Grym in Welsh and Cornish, signifies strung, and is used perhaps metaphorically, as Chalmers conjectures, for a “ strength or a ram­part." Caledonia, vol. i. p. 129.

**\* We may here refer the critical reader to Chalmers's dissertation on the actions of Lollius Urbicus, contained in the first volume of his Caledonia.**