eaſtern, and in a latter period alſo the more ſouthern, diviſion of North Britain, were at firſt more powerful than the Caledonians of the weſt. It is therefore pro­bable, that the Picts, from a principle of malevolence and pride, were ready to traduce and ridicule their weaker neighbours of Argyle. Theſe two nations ſpoke the ſame language, the Gaelic. In that language *Scot,* or *Scode,* ſignifies a corner or ſmall diviſion of a coun­try. Accordingly, a corner of north Britain is the very name which Giraldus Cambrenſis gives the little kingdom of Argyle, which the ſix ſons of Muredus king of Ulſter were ſaid, according to his information, to have erected in Scotland. *Scot* in Gaelic is much the ſame with *little* or *contemptible* in Engliſh; and *Scot­ian,* literally ſpeaking, ſigniſies a *ſmall flock;* metapho­rically, it ſtands for a ſmall body of men. (Dr *Macpherson's Diſſert.)*

Others obſerve, that in the ſame language the word *Scuit* ſigniſies a *wanderer,* and ſuppoſe that this may have been the origin oſ the name of *Scot;* a conjecture which they think is countenanced by a paſſage in Am­mianus Marcellinus (1. xxvii.), who characterizes the men by the epithet of *roaming;* “per diverſa vagantes.” (Mr *Macpherſon. and Mr Whitaker).*

All that we can ſay is, that for ſome one of the reaſons couched under the above diſparaging epithets, their malicious or ſneering neighbours, the Picts or the Britons, may have given the appellation of *Scots* to the anceſtors of the Scottiſh nation.

At what time the inhabitants of the weſt of Scot­land came to be diſtinguiſhed by this name is uncertain. Porphyrius the philoſopher is the firſt who mentions them, about the year of the Chriſtian era 267; and towards the middle of the 4th century we find them mentioned with other Britiſh nations by Am. Marcellinus, in the paſſage above referred to.

The origin of the Scots has been warmly diſputed by many antiquaries of note; particularly by Mr Macpherſon and Mr Whitaker. The firſt contends, that they are of Caledonian, the latter, that they are of Iriſh extraction. Each ſupports his poſition with ſuch arguments and authorities, that an impartial inquirer is almoſt at a loſs which of their opinions he ought to eſpouſe. What appears moſt probable is, that they are both partly in the right and partly in the wrong —The Scots ſeem to have been originally deſcended from Britons of the ſouth, or from Caledonians, who being preſſed forward by new colonies from Gaul, till they came to the weſtern ſhore of Britain, paſſed over from thence into Ireland, probably about 100 years before the Chriſtian era. About the year of Chriſt 320, they returned again into Britain; or at leaſt a large colony of them, under the conduct of Fergus, and ſettled on the weſtern coaſts of Caledonia, from whence they had formerly migrated. As early as the year 340, we find them aſſociated with the Picts in their ex­peditions to the Roman province; and for 90 or 100 years after, their ravages are frequently mentioned by the Roman and Britiſh writers (*Whitaker's hiſt. of the Britons,* 284).

The territory of the ancient Scots, before the annex­ation of Pictavia, comprehended all that ſide of Cale­donia which lies along the north and weſtern ocean, from the frith of Clyde to the Orkneys. Towards the eaſt, their dominions were divided from the Pictiſh

territories by thoſe high mountains which run from Dumbarton to the frith of Tain. —In proceſs of time, the Scots, under the reign of Kenneth the ſon of Al­pin, became ſo powerful as to ſubdue entirely their neighbours the Picts, and gave their own denomination to all Caledonia, Pictavia, and Valentia; all which are ſtill comprehended under the general name of *Scotland.*

Like thoſe of all other nations, the hiſtorians of Scot­land aſſitme too great an antiquity for their country­men; however, they are much leſs extravagant in this reſpect than many others. By them the reign of Fer­gus, the firſt Scots monarch, is placed in 330 B. C. He was the ſon of Ferchard an Iriſh prince; and is ſaid to have been called into Scotland by the Caledo­nians, to aſſiſt them againſt the ſouthern Britons, with whom they were then at war. Having landed on one of the Aebudae or weſtern iſles, he had a conference with the Caledonians, whoſe language and manners he found to be the ſame with thoſe of his countrymen. Having then landed in Scotland, and taken the field at the head of his new allies, he engaged the Britons un­der their king Coilus. Victory declared in favour of the Scots; Coilus was defeated and killed; and from him the province of Kyle firſt received its name. Af­ter this Fergus was declared king of the Scots, with the ſolemnity of an oath. But he did not long enjoy his new dignity: for having been recalled to Ireland to quiet ſome commotions there, he was drowned, by **a** ſudden tempeſt, on his return, at a place in Ireland called from him *Knock-Fergus,* or *Carrick-Fergus; i.e.* Fergus’s Rock.

Fergus was ſucceeded by his brother Feritharis, to the prejudice of his two ſons Ferlegus and Mainus, This, we are told by the ancient Scottiſh writers, was done in conformity to a law, by which it was ordained, that whilſt the children of their kings were infants, one of their relations who was reckoned the moſt fit for the government ſhould be railed to the throne, but that after his death the ſovereignty ſhould return to the ſons of the former king. This was the caſe at preſent; however, Ferlegus, impatient for the crown, made a formal demand of it from his uncle. The diſpute being referred to an aſſembly of the ſtates, Feritharis was confirmed on the throne; and Ferlegus would have been condemned for ſedition, had not his uncle interpoſed. However, he was impriſoned; but having made his eſcape, he fled firſt to the Picts, and then to the Britons, in order to excite them againſt Feritharis. With both he failed in accompliſhing his purpoſe: but, in the mean time, his uncle being ſtabbed in his bed, the ſuſpicion fell upon Ferlegus, who was thereupon ſet aſide from the ſucceſſion, and died in obſcurity, the throne being conferred upon his brother Mainus.

The reigns of Mainus, Dornadil, and Nothat, afford nothing remarkable, excepting that Dornadil, who was a great hunter, inſtituted the laws of hunting in this country. Nothat was killed in a battle with Reuther his nephew; upon which the latter was immediately inveſted with the ſovereignty. A bloody war enſued, in which both parties were reduced to the laſt extre­mity, and glad at length to conclude a peace. The fate of Reuther is not known; but it is generally ſuppoſed that he ended his life in the year 187 B. C.

The reigns of Reutha, Thereus, Jalina, and Finnan,