

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION, 1812.*

BY the candour of an indulgent public, this work has in five years been enabled to pass through a second edition. The circumstance is not usual, at least so early, in works of a local nature; but it becomes the Author to remember in how small a degree it is to be ascribed to himself, for the subject was interesting, the materials original, and the decorations numerous and beautiful.

In correcting the former edition he has attended to every hint which could reasonably claim attention, and has expunged every remark which, however unintentionally on his part, may have hurt the feelings of any respectable person. But this complaisance could not be permitted to extend to contested truths. On such topics, he waited for reasons, he invited conviction; but he was not to be silenced by authority.

Experience had taught him that in the genealogies of old families there are many vestiges of error, and some of fraud, which time and vanity have rendered sacred; and rumour whispered in his ear that some topographers had been required to adopt pedigrees unexamined, as the price of a subscription or an engraving. It is, however, equally due to his own feelings and to the ancient families of this district to say that no proposal so humiliating was ever made to him, as in truth it never will be made to any man who is known to respect himself.

Such baseness, indeed, while it degrades an useful and amusing department of literature, though in its lowest branch, never fails to be visited upon the receiver of these fabrications with the infamy which it deserves. On the other

[* The Second Edition of the "History of Craven" was published in 1812. It was entirely reprinted, and contained fifty-five plates, fifteen being added to those in the First Edition.

The work was published in royal quarto at five guineas, and in folio at fifteen guineas. In the folio copies there are duplicate impressions of the aquatint plates coloured.]

hand, there are works which scrupulous accuracy, united with stubborn integrity, has elevated to the rank of legal evidence. Such is Dugdale's "Warwickshire"! But, independently of all consequences, truth on the most trifling subjects (and, after all, genealogies are very trifling) is sacred for its own sake. It may sometimes indeed be suppressed; but never compromised. Yet, in subjects like these, why suppress it? Of the ancestors of old families, it is no libel on human nature, or even on their posterity, to suppose that some were knaves and others were dunces; and surely to rectify the blunders of the one, and expose the impostures of the other, while it affords some exercise to the perspicacity of the inquirer, ought, at the distance of centuries, to excite no displeasure in the descendant. *Nulli gravis est percussus Achilles*. Do not the representatives of the first families in the kingdom read with endurance, or even with pleasure, a faithful exposure of the crimes and follies of much nearer progenitors in the history of their country? Nay, have not the posterity of some of the most ridiculous characters in Shakspeare been seen, at the distance of less than two centuries, convulsed with laughter at the representation of their ancestors' absurdities? For the feelings, however, of rank and ancient descent, though in some instances not connected with the exactest information, the writer has always entertained a high respect. Not so for the subjects of the next paragraph.

To low-bred insolence and threatening he has paid no other attention than to reprint certain obnoxious passages *verbatim*. What he thought of manufactories in 1805 *he said*. In 1811 he continues to think what he then did, and therefore says it again.*

But enough has been said on such a subject.

The benefactors to this edition, whether in matter or ornament, are entitled to a grateful remembrance.

Miss Currer, consistently with the general liberality of her conduct in the application of a large fortune, has contributed plates of Eshton and Kildwick Halls. The Rev. William Roundell has kindly added an aquatinta engraving of Gledstone House; the Rev. William Carr, a beautiful view of the west front of the abbey church at Bolton; and Stephen Tempest, Esq., among other favours, a view of the new front of Broughton Hall.

Mrs. Richardson has exerted her wonted activity and intelligence in

[* Vide pp. 187 and 200 of this third edition.]

collecting and communicating many particulars relating to the caves in Craven, and to St. Hellen's Crosses; while Mr. Carr, above mentioned, the unshaken friend of the author and his family, by diligent researches among the Evidences of the Cliffords at Londesborough, has brought to light by far the most numerous and valuable additions to this volume.

The last, but not least, honourable place in this catalogue belongs to the dead.

It is a melancholy, yet it ought to be an improving, reflection, that in work after work, at no great distance of time, the Author has still had to deplore the loss of some friend to whose assistance it was indebted, or for whose amusement it was intended. And now, scarcely had Mr. Beaumont, whose latest correspondence with him was on the subject of the present volume, received from him a public testimony of grateful friendship,* when he also was no more. On this occasion the writer waited till those who stood nearer, or were more obliged than himself, had time to discover that talents for panegyric are best directed to living objects. This silence, however, far better than ill-judged flattery, has left space for fact and truth. Let it now, therefore, be told, without offence, that his peculiarities were great and his prejudices strong. He had a clear understanding and a tenacious memory, which, after his return from Italy, were devoted principally to the study of English history and antiquities. Inheriting a fine estate, and having never married, he became, through the ardour of this pursuit, a hermit in a palace; for such was his house at Whitley. At his other mansion of Little Mitton, in which he took great delight, he was wont to say that he contended with the owls for possession. His apartments were not merely strewed but piled, with books and papers of his own transcribing. No man living had taken the same pains with Dodsworth's MSS., or was so well qualified to make an index to that confused but valuable collection. As a magistrate, he was skilful and upright, but very irascible, and altogether irreconcilable to every thing which he thought improper in the conduct of his brethren. He was a warm and faithful friend, and more especially a literary friend, but subject to fits of resentment, which, if he thought well of the objects of them on the whole, were easily appeased. To his indigent acquaintance the large sums which he professed to lend were eventually given. His liberality to his immediate relatives knew no bound but the extent of his means, and scarcely even that. With an income of

* In the Dedication to the "Life and Correspondence of Sir George Radcliffe."

little less than 10,000*l. per annum*, and no personal expense (for he was remarkably inattentive both to his own comforts and to external appearance), his estate was left somewhat in debt. He had all the pride of ancient descent, and with it a high sense of honour, which, together with his good understanding, would not permit him to be either duped or flattered by the ascription of alliances to which he had no claim. He knew and despised all the tricks of pedigree-mongers ; and when some herald, whom he employed to marshal the bearings of his family had officiously inserted that of the Viscounts and Barons Beaumont, he struck the quartering out with his own hand, saying to the writer of the present article, "These are honourable bearings, but they belong not to me." His eye, when an object could be brought within its short focus, was perfectly microscopical ; and he was perhaps the best reader of ancient charters in his time. For the same reason he was an excellent judge of *Forgeries*. Such were the mixed qualities, such the head and heart, of this singular man, delineated at a distance of time sufficient to allow the first feelings of surviving friendship to cool ; without partiality, therefore, but not without affection. He died Nov. 22, 1810, aged 61, and was interred in the family chapel within the church of Kirk Heaton.