



PREFACE.

“Of old, those met rewards who could excel,
And those were praised who but endeavoured well.”

WE have often been amused with reading long prefaces to little books, wherein the writers have studiously anticipated objections and apologized for defects by the ostensible plea that their productions were never intended for publication. We shall, however, be silent on most of the objections which might be urged against many of our statements, and leave them for the critical reader to ponder over, hoping that his criticisms may be the means of eliciting some useful facts; and we have no apology to offer for appearing before the public, except a desire to extend and preserve the little we know of our native place and neighbourhood, by adding this humble contribution to our local literature.

The following pages contain the matured results of much diligent inquiry and research, continued for

a series of years by the late Mr. William Keighley of Keighley. He laid every accessible source under tribute, and spared no labour to secure accuracy. Although the field of investigation is extensive, the materials which it affords are unusually scanty. Beyond a few incidental notices of Keighley in Domesday Survey, and documents chiefly relating to pedigrees, we have scarcely any historical data before the reign of Queen Elizabeth; even the parish register goes no farther back than the year 1562. One of the oldest and most interesting documents connected with the place is a manuscript narrative of events relating to the Quakers, from the year 1654 to 1760, and of which we have availed ourselves. We have recently been informed that Jennings's MSS. in the British Museum contain some notices of Keighley, but of what kind we are not aware.

As we have had to cull our information from a great variety of imperfect sources, it cannot be expected to be free from errors. Every person acquainted with subjects of this nature knows how difficult it is to obtain perfect accuracy. The correction of a single date or fact sometimes involves an incredible amount of labour. We have experienced this in attempting to reconcile the discrepancies in the pedigree of the family of Keighley, and clear up the uncertainty of the date of Gilbert Keighley's tombstone: our utmost

endeavours have been unavailing, even with the assistance of our friend, Mr. Jonathan Hindle, whose intimate acquaintance with such subjects is well known. We have, in a few instances, supplied the want of certainty by probability, grounded upon reasons which are not always fully stated, as we did not wish to swell the book by what we deemed to be unnecessary details.

We would direct the reader's special attention to the invaluable meteorological observations under the head "Braithwaite;" we believe there are none collected in Yorkshire equal to them in length of time.

In drawing up the sketch of the life of our late worthy pastor, the Rev. Theodore Dury, the editor begs to tender his thanks to those friends who have supplied him with information; and he hopes that his own admiration of Mr. Dury's character has not caused him to speak too highly of his merits in the estimation of those persons who only knew him in a general way, as he is quite sure that those who knew him intimately will deem the memoir to be far below the deserts of the subject.

We had thought of adding some particulars respecting the natural history of the locality, but upon investigation we found neither animals, vegetables, nor minerals peculiar to the place; the subject is, therefore, only noticed incidentally.

Our remarks on those subjects which are ever fluctuating, such as trade, population, &c., are to be referred to their condition as they existed in the summer of 1857.

In order to preserve a clear and easy style throughout, we have taken the liberty of altering a few words in some of the quotations.

If any merit attaches to the historical portion of this unpretending volume, it may be offered as balm to perpetuate the memory of the late Mr. Keighley,—all literary defects must be ascribed to the editor,

ROBERT HOLMES.

Sunk Island, near Hull,
June, 1858.

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