

# BRITISH REMAINS;

OR,

A COLLECTION

OF

# ANTIQUITIES

Relating to the BRITONS,

*&c.*

[Price Three Shillings.]

# BRITISH REMAINS;

OR,

A COLLECTION

OF

## ANTIQUITIES

Relating to the BRITONS:

COMPREHENDING,

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| I. A Concise History of the LORDS MARCHERS; their Origin, Power, and Conquests in Wales. | concerning Jeffrey of Monmouth's History.  |
| II. The Arms of the Ancient Nobility and Gentry of North-Wales.                          | IV. An Account of the Discovery of America, by the Welsh, more than 300 Years before the Voyage of Columbus. |
| III. A Letter of Dr. Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph's,                                       | V. A Celebrated Poem of Taliesin, translated into Sapphic Verse.   |

The Whole selected from Original MSS. and other authentic Records.

TO WHICH ARE ALSO ADDED,

MEMOIRS OF EDWARD LLWYD,

ANTIQUARY,

Transcribed from a Manuscript in the Museum, Oxford.

By the Rev. N. OWEN, Jun. A. M.

SPARSA COEGI.

L O N D O N,

Printed for J. BEW, in Pater-Noster-Row. 1777.

## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE history of the primary state of all people is commonly dark and obscure, but, I believe, few indeed, or none, more so, within a period the transactions of which might well have been transmitted to posterity in genuine perfectness, than the history of the Welsh nation, from the Conqueror William's time to the commencement of the thirteenth century. The printed accounts of this interesting interval are both few and unsatisfactory. Tho' neither poets nor bards were wanting to celebrate the heroes, the actions, and the achievements of the day; yet

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are these records now ungratefully neglected, or more shamefully abused : the precious remains of what our ancestors thought no preservation too great, no communicativeness too ready, suffered to moulder into dust, and to perish in obscurity.

The ancient manuscripts, in this kingdom, which relate even to the more infant state of the Britons, whether as originals or copies, are doubtless of number and variety abundantly sufficient : and, I am satisfied, were they better known, and had the historian an easier access to them, than at this time can be gotten, the part of our history most censured as deficient would  
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require no great elucidation nor enlargement. But, unluckily for our information, these, with others of some inferior note to *Cambrian*, have fallen, long since, into the hands of persons over-tenacious of the property, neither willing to lend the original, nor disposed to communicate the contents,

The library most copious in British MSS. which Wales, or any other country, can now boast of, is scarcely ever accessible to the antiquary or historian: but if, by some extraordinary means, admission be obtained, a favour rarely granted, permission to copy or to collate is never given on any consideration whatever: and that intelligence,

telligence, which by dint of memory is surreptitiously conveyed away, cannot be long tenable, and is ever communicable but with diffidence and distrust. Whatever objection the owner may entertain, I can, in reason, conceive none, of withholding these records from the inspection of the learned: if it be pleasure to an individual to possess in inutility what his country with profitableness might enjoy, it is then of that kind with which I never wish to be gladdened. I can safely aver, that, were I less sollicitous of rescuing from oblivion and obscurity the remains of antiquities here offered to the public, than I am of profit, or praise, from them, they should never through my means  
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have made their appearance in print. They contain in them several curious, singular, and perhaps interesting accounts of the Britons and their history, and display a narration of facts, at this time little known, read, or understood. They were selected, in the first intention, for private amusement and information: but finding in them such articles of intelligence, as might tend, in some measure, to illustrate the obscured period of our history, produced in me the first thought of their publication. To enumerate the several particulars comprehended in them, or to advance in encomiums upon the merit of which the world is to judge, would have the semblance, I presume, of vanity

nity and ostentation. Therefore I have only to add, in a few words, that, whatever errors may occur to the reader, he would not attribute them to the publisher's neglect, or inattention, but to the real source from whence taken; which he hath not, to his knowledge, deviated from in a single instance. The chief defects throughout are either nominal or local: for the modern orthography of the Welsh language varies but very immaterially from the ancient mode of spelling it, and the most considerable deviation from its originality consists merely in writing the names of men, and places; an error too prevalent, and too little regarded, in these and former days. This fault then will  
evidently



evidently appear in the subsequent collection, from the differences of the times it originally was written in, and for which I am no way answerable. Indeed, were I desirous to alter what my poor judgment may prompt, I do not think myself at liberty herein to do it, but in passive province of a transcriber purely to deliver the plain simple narrative in the language of the original, neither to add, nor to diminish. I must confess that a critical knowledge of the Welsh tongue is far beyond my sphere of comprehension, and I believe is the excellency of few; for I knew but \*one person, during my residence in Oxford, that made it his study to attain it: from whose skill and learning in

in British antiquities his country may one day or other be benefited.

What reception this work may meet with, I am not anxious to know: that having done mine endeavours to rescue from obscurity the perishable remains of our ancestry, I shall rest satisfied in the attempt, be it successful or not. If favourably received, a future period may add to it others, equally scarce, curious, and valuable.

N. B. I need not apprize the reader that the History of the Lords Marchers is taken from no particular MS. The materials for it were selected out of divers, and thus digested, by the Editor, into the following summary.

THE

A CONCISE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
LORDS MARCHERS;  
THEIR  
ORIGIN, POWER,  
AND  
CONQUESTS IN *WALES*.

A CONCISE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
LORDS MARCHERS;  
&c.

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WHEN the Saxons had invaded Britain, and driven the ancient inhabitants from their fertile lands and territories, to seek for shelter in foreign kingdoms, a remnant took refuge in Wales; a country of itself naturally strong and secure, being bounded on one side by the Irish Sea, and separated from England on the other by mountains scarcely accessible. In this safe retreat did they live, and keep the possessions, in the full

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exercife of their customs and manners, nearly 800 years. They were governed by Princes of their own blood royal until the death of Lleweline, sometime by one Prince, sometime by a number. The British language is, at this day, spoken by their descendants, the Welshmen; if it be not entire, it is the least corrupted, by changes and innovations, of any neighbouring tongue whatever: and, I think, there is now no danger of its ending in the same fate with the Cornish; a considerable time must certainly elapse before it is obliterated or wholly forgotten, if ever.

Egbert, who reduced the Saxon Hierarchy into one Monarchy, and first called it by the name England, could never get any obedience or subjection paid to him by the Princes who ruled over Wales; for the people would acknowledge no Supreme, under God, but the lawful issues of Cadwallader, the last King of the

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the Britons : whereupon did they continue in enmity with each other the whole of the Saxon government. And in the end, when it pleased God to send the Normans, under the conduct of William their Duke, to make a conquest of England, and to dispossess the Saxon issue of the Crown and its hereditaments, the Welshmen seemed unconcerned which side obtained the victory, for they accounted it as a war existing between two strange nations ; they would neither defend nor give assistance.

A while prior to the Norman conquest, the government of all Wales, which was once divided in petty principalities and jurisdictions, was happily united, and centered lastly in Roderic the Great. This Prince, not consulting the public weal or prosperity of his country, portioned his dominion into three shares, or territories, among his three sons. To his eldest son Anarwd he gave North-

## 6 A CONCISE HISTORY OF

Wales, containing fifteen cantreds; to Cadel, the second son, all South-Wales; and to Mervin, the youngest, fifteen cantreds in Powis-land. This division weakened the State exceedingly, caused them to be at variance with each other at home, and from abroad to suffer rapine and molestation: nevertheless, neither these Princes nor their successors would ever submit to the English Kings. Hence arose cruel wars and dissensions between the two nations, which continued, with but little remission, to the time of Edward I. who compleatly conquered the Principality, and acceded it to his dominion.

The frequent skirmishes and battles fought between the Welsh and their enemies, on the other side of the Severn, were productive of great slaughters and losses to both parties; and the Kings of England oftentimes levied great armies, and some in person, invaded their coasts,  
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