

the heart, and the bane of virtue. Her amazing beauty, her rare prudence, her wit, and her extraordinary virtue could not fail to excite the admiration of the whole court. But it was her only desire and ambition to render herself agreeable to the King of kings. She seemed to relish no earthly pleasure, finding all delight in the incomparable charms of divine love, which flowed into her pure soul chiefly by the means of assiduous prayer and meditation, in which holy exercises she often spent whole days. She took great pleasure in relieving and serving the poor, and in comforting all that were in distress, considering Christ in his necessitous members. Her consent being obtained, she was married, and crowned queen of Scotland in 1070, being twenty-four years of age. The marriage was solemnized at the king's royal castle of Dumferline, built in the midst of a beautiful plain, surrounded with woods, rocks, and rivers, by its situation almost inaccessible to men or beasts, says Fordun, and strongly fortified by art. The Scottish historian adds, that she brought a great fortune to the king in the immense treasures she had carried off from England, together with many precious relics. Among these was the Black Cross, held in the highest veneration in Scotland in succeeding ages. Malcolm was rough and unpolished, but neither haughty nor capricious; and had no evil inclinations. Margaret, by the most tender complaisance, and the most condescending and engaging carriage, always full of respect, gained so great an ascendant over him, as to seem entirely mistress of his heart; which influence she only exerted to make religion and justice reign, to render her subjects happy, her husband one of the most virtuous kings that adorned the Scottish throne. She softened his temper, cultivated his mind, polished his manner, and inspired him with the most perfect maxims and sentiments of all Christian virtues. And so much was the king charmed with her wisdom and piety, that he not only left to her the whole management of his domestic affairs, but followed her prudent advice in the government of the state. In the midst of the most weighty concerns and cares of a kingdom, Margaret always kept her heart disengaged from the love of the world, and recollected in God. The continual attention of her soul to him in all her actions, assiduous prayer, and the constant practice of self-denial, were the means by which chiefly she attained to this perfection. At the same time her prudence and care in all things, her ap-