

Essays on Subjects Connected with the Litterature, Popular Superstitions and History of England in the Middle Ages

ESSAYS ON SUBJECTS
CONNECTED WITH THE
LITTERATURE, POPULAR
SUPERSTITIONS AND HISTORY OF
ENGLAND IN THE MIDDLE AGES

THOMAS WRIGHT



This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1846. Excerpt: ... ESSAY XX. ON THE SCOTTISH POET DUNBAR. OETRY in England declined rapidly after the time of Chaucer; but the muse seems to have taken refuge in Scotland, where during a period of more than a century appeared several writers of great merit, among whom were even kings and princes. The medieval literature of Scotland was a bare imitation of that of England, which travelled gradually to the North, and in earlier times was merely transferred to the corrupt dialect of that part of the island. One of the earliest of the Scottish poets whose writings were characterized by originality of genius, was king James I, who was a prisoner in England from 1405 to 1425, and whose style appears to have been founded on that of Chaucer. Dunbar followed in the same school, after whom came Kennedy, Gawin Douglas, Sir David Lindsay, king James V, Maitland, Scott, and a number of others of less merit, and many whose productions were not worthy to be remembered. Old Time, the purifier and cleanser-out of all things, has long swept from the garner of Fame much of the chaff of former harvests. But constant sweeping has too often carried away with the chaff part of the grain also, causing thereby irreparable diminution of those stores which should belong to our heritage. Of the losses which we have thus sustained, no one is more to be lamented than the works of the Scottish poet, William Dunbar: and we owe many thanks to David Laing, for the collection he has given us of what remains of a poet, whose tales may be safely put in the same class with those of Chaucer and Prior, whose odes and songs are not unworthy to stand beside those of Horace, and whose

burlesque is as glorious as that of Aristophanes himself. Dunbar was a first-rate poet; but the circumstance of his having written i...

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