

X.

THE SCOTCH MERCHANT OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

Custom forms us all. Our thoughts, our morals, our most fixed beliefs, are consequences of our place of birth. — HILL.

It is according to the fixed economy of human affairs that individuals should lead, and that masses should follow; for the adorable Being who wills that the lower order of minds should exist by myriads, and produces the higher so rarely, has willed, also, by inevitable consequence, that the many should be guided by the few. On the other hand, it is not less in accordance with the dictates of His immutable justice, that the interests of the few should be subordinate to the more extended interests of the many. The leading minds are to be regarded rather as formed for the masses, than the masses for them. True it is, that, while the one principle acts with all the undeviating certainty of a natural law, the other operates partially and interruptedly, with all the doubtful efficiency of a moral one; and hence those long catalogues of crimes committed against the species by their natural leaders which so fill the pages of history. We see man as the creature of des-