



FAIRS, PAST AND PRESENT.



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FAIRS,
PAST AND PRESENT:

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CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF
COMMERCE.

BY

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P R E F A C E.



IT seems a little remarkable that an institution at once so popular and so universal as fairs should not heretofore have found an historian. The fact may perhaps be accounted for in the circumstance that fairs, as now regarded, are associated with notions of frivolity. Many of the circumstances connected with their origin are certainly not generally known. They were the product of a blending of Religion with Commerce, suited to the genius of former ages, but finding little sympathy now. They have been associated with the development of commerce in the nations of Europe—perhaps in the nations of the world.

The materials for such a history are reasonably abundant upon diligent search. They do not lie upon the surface. Prolonged investigation revealed so much, that for the purpose of this work some selection became necessary. I had to consider whether it would be more instructive to present the incomplete outline of a number of fairs ranging throughout the world, or to select some of the prin-

