

PART I

CHIEFLY BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS

A separation of the biographical and historical from the more theoretical in our account of Kames's life and work cannot, of course, be complete, because his thinking, his writings, his world of ideas, were also very much a part of his life.¹ But an attempt to separate the two should at least enable us to portray Kames the man, his interests and activities, and the leading events of his life in their relation to his historical background, with less interruption than would otherwise be possible, while at the same time enabling us later to present his thought, and any contributions he may have made to the world of ideas, in clearer perspective and in a more connected and systematic fashion.

The ten chapters of Part I follow only in part a time order. Yet we cannot but note, on examination of the materials available, how many of the man's interests and activities deemed worthy of recording, as topically treated in Chapters IV to VIII, do fall heavily into the late middle and later periods of his life, that is his years on the bench, as covered in Chapter III – age fifty-six to nearly eighty-seven – rather than into the earlier periods. Kames did remain active, both with his pen and in his judgeship and in public affairs, up to the very end.

In the final chapter in this section we attempt to give a more rounded picture of Kames the man, his personality and his traits of character – some favorable, some less favorable – than was possible in the piece-meal treatment in earlier chapters of his various interests and activities.

¹ For the principal sources on Kames's life, and for general historical background references, see Bibliography, *infra*, pp. 342f.