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John F. McCaffrey

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PREFACE

In this book I have tried to show how Scotland became a different kind of society in the nineteenth century, developing many of the features which still influence the lives of its inhabitants today. As it became industrialised and urbanised like its larger neighbour England, to whom it had been joined in a legislative union in 1707, it became a more integral part of the United Kingdom. Despite the rapidity of these changes, however, and the resulting tendencies to uniformity, Scotland retained a distinctive identity while, at the same time, reinforcing its British links in its cultural and institutional adaptations to these modern pressures. Its history is, therefore, more than a regional variation of the social and economic trends which were affecting Britain and Europe at this time. Much of its commercial expansion was fostered by an outlook, already well established by 1800, which was ready to adjust and experiment. Much of that outlook was itself due to the desire for commercial progress, which again can be traced back to before 1700. Which was the prime mover in this process will probably never be satisfactorily decided by historians. What is clear is that change depended on much more than economic forces, although these are an important part of the story. It also depended on pre-existing beliefs and institutions which embodied values and practices suited to a highly localised country lacking any tradition of strong central government. As political participation widened, what is striking in nineteenth-century Scotland is how the arguments about the way it should adapt to change were expressed in an almost total commitment to the Liberal party. Partly this was due to its desire to become an ever closer part of those progressive forces which were expanding British power, but partly, too, it was because it saw its role in Britain expressed in its response to that particular timing and blend of economic and social changes which had affected it. In writing this book I have drawn on the enormous body of work on Scotland which has appeared over the past 30 years and I have tried to

acknowledge this wherever possible. My other debts are to the many students whose questions have constantly challenged my views on the history of Scotland. More specifically, I thank Professor Archie Duncan for his encouragement over the years. I owe a great deal especially to my former colleague, John Gilfillan, for much insight and discussion, the value of which can never be truly measured. I am grateful to Dr Irene Maver for having commented on the typescript. The map is reproduced from Professor Bruce Lenman's *An Economic History of Modern Scotland*, by kind permission of the author. Most of all, I have to thank my wife Caroline, not least for her preference for plain English, and to her I dedicate this book.