

CHAP. II.

JAMES THE THIRD.

 CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.
Kings of England.

Henry VI.
Edward IV.
Edward V.
Richard III.
Henry VII.

Kings of France.

Charles VII.
Lewis XI.

Popes.

Pius II.
Sixtus IV.
Innocent VIII.

SCOTLAND, once more exposed to the danger and the woe pronounced upon the nation whose king is a child, was yet entitled to expect a pacific commencement of the minority, from the wisdom and experience of the queen-mother, the apparent union amongst the nobility, and the sage counsels of the chief ministers of the late king, who, from attachment to the father, were likely to unite for the support of the son. Immediately after the surrender of the fortress of Roxburgh, which was dismantled, and the demolition of Wark castle, which had been stormed by another division of the army, the further prosecution of the war was intermitted, and the nobility conducted their monarch, then only eight years old, to the monastery of Kelso, where he was

crowned with the accustomed pomp and solemnity, a hundred knights being made, to commemorate the simultaneous entrance of the prince into the state of chivalry, and his assumption of his royal and hereditary dignity.¹ The court then removed to Edinburgh, where the remains of the late king were committed to the sepulchre in the venerable abbey of Holyrood.²

We have already seen, that at this moment the neighbouring nation of England was torn and distracted by the wars of York and Lancaster, and the captivity of Henry the VI., the ally of Scotland, with the escape of his queen, and her son, the prince, into that country, are events belonging to the last reign. Immediately after the royal funeral, intelligence was brought, that this fugitive princess, whose flight had lain through Wales, was arrived at Dumfries, where she had been received with honour, and had taken up her residence in the monastery of Lincluden. To this place, the queen-mother of Scotland, with the king and the royal suite, proceeded, and a conference took place relative to the public affairs of both kingdoms, of which, unfortunately, we have no particular account, except that it lasted for twelve days. A marriage was talked of between the English prince and the sister of the King of Scotland, but the energetic consort of the feeble Henry required more prompt and warlike support than was to be

¹ Auchinleck Chronicle, p. 58.

² Extracta ex Chronicis Scotiæ, fol. 289. "Medium circiter choram."

derived from a distant matrimonial alliance, and, encouraged by the promise of a cordial co-operation upon the part of Scotland, she returned with haste to York, and there, in a council of her friends, formed the resolution of attacking London, and attempting the rescue of her captive husband. The complete triumph of this princess at Wakefield, where she totally routed the army of the Duke of York, once more, though for a brief period, confirmed the ascendancy of the House of Lancaster; and Scotland, in the re-establishment of her ally upon the throne, anticipated a breathing time of peace and tranquillity.¹

But the elements of civil commotion existed in the habits of the people, and the constitution of the country. In the north, the fertile region of all confusion and rapine, Allan of Lorn of the Wood, a sister's son of Donald Balloch, had seized his elder brother, Ker of Lorn, and confined him in a dungeon in the island of Kerweray. Allan's object was to starve his victim to death, and succeed to the estate; but the Earl of Argyle, who was nearly related to the unfortunate baron, determined to rescue him; and arriving suddenly with a fleet of warlike galleys, entirely defeated this fierce chief, burnt his fleet, slew the greater part of his men, and restored the elder brother to his rightful inheritance. This, although apparently an act of justice, had the usual effect of rousing the whole body of the Island lords, and dividing them into various parties, animated with a

¹ Auchinleck Chronicle, p. 58. Carte, Hist. of England, vol. ii. p. 757.

mortal hostility against each other, and these issued from their ocean-retreats to plunder the islands, to make descents upon the continent, and to destroy and murder the unhappy persons who refused to join their banner, or engage in such atrocities.¹

○ In the meantime, it was thought expedient that writs should be issued, in the royal name, for the meeting of the parliament, which assembled at Edinburgh on the 24th of February, 1460. It was fully attended, not only by the whole body of the prelates, to whose wisdom and experience the people anxiously looked for protection, and by the great southern barons, but by the Earl of Ross, the Lord of the Isles, and a multitude of haughty and independent Highland chiefs, whose hands were scarce dry from the blood which they had lately shed in their domestic broils, and who came, not so much from feelings of affection to the crown, as with the desire of profiting by the changes and the insecurity which they knew to be the invariable attendants upon a minority. Unfortunately no records remain of the transactions of this first parliament of James the Third. It is certain, however, that the debates and divisions of the aristocracy were carried on with a virulence which augured ill for the kingdom, and rendered abortive, in a great measure, the deliberations of the friends of order and good government. These, however, so far succeeded as to procure the appointment of sessions for the distribution of justice, to

¹ Auchinleck Chronicle, pp. 58, 59.

