

CHAP. V.

M A R Y.

1542 - 1546.

 CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

<i>Kings of England.</i> Henry VIII.		<i>Kings of France.</i> Francis I.		<i>Germany.</i> Charles V.		<i>Spain.</i> Charles V.		<i>Popes.</i> Paul III.
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THE total rout of the Scottish army at the Solway Moss, and the death of James the Fifth within a fortnight after that event, produced the most important changes in the policy of both kingdoms. To Henry the Eighth, and that powerful faction of the Douglasses, which, even in banishment, had continued to exert, by its secret friends, a remarkable influence in Scottish affairs, the death of the king was a subject of fervent congratulation. The English monarch immediately embraced, with the enthusiasm belonging to his character, the design of marrying his son, the Prince of Wales, to the infant Mary, hoping by this means to unite the two kingdoms, which had so long been the enemies of each other, into one powerful monarchy in the persons of their descendants. The Earl of Angus, and the Douglasses, after a banishment of fifteen

years, joyfully contemplated the prospect of a return to their native country; they had become subjects of the English monarch, had largely shared his bounty and protection; and Henry, determined to put their gratitude to the test by claiming their assistance in forwarding his great scheme of procuring the Princess Mary for his son, and incorporating the kingdom of Scotland into the English monarchy; but, in the prosecution of this design, the king employed other agents. On their first arrival in London the Scottish prisoners, who were taken at the Solway Moss, found themselves treated with great severity; they were paraded through the streets of the metropolis, conducted to the Tower, and watched with much jealousy; but, as soon as the intelligence arrived of the death of their master the king, an immediate and favorable change in their condition took place. Their high rank and influence in Scotland convinced Henry, that they might be useful, and even necessary agents to him in the accomplishment of his designs; the rigor of their confinement was accordingly relaxed; and they now experienced not only kindness, but were entertained with hopes of a speedy return to their country, on condition that they forwarded the designs of the English king. Sir George Douglas, the brother of Angus, who had shared his long banishment, and was much in the confidence of Henry, appears to have been entrusted with the principal share in negotiating the marriage. His talents for the management of political affairs were superior to

those of his brother, the Earl, over whose mind he possessed great influence; and if we may believe the expressions which he employed in his correspondence with Henry, he appears to have forgotten his allegiance to his natural prince in the humility of his homage, and the warmth of his devotion to the English monarch.¹

The project of a marriage between young Edward and the Scottish queen was in itself so plausible, and, if concluded upon an equitable basis, and with a just attention to the mutual rights and independence of each country, it appeared so likely to be attended with the happiest results, that it required little argument to recommend it to the Scottish prisoners, even had they not seen in it the only road by which they were to escape from their captivity; but whilst all can understand their readiness to promote a matrimonial alliance, and a perpetual union between the two kingdoms, had Henry confined his views to such a general design, the conduct pursued by that monarch, and the conditions which he offered were such as no man of independent and patriotic feelings, could without ignominy have embraced. He insisted, that they should acknowledge him as lord superior of the kingdom of Scotland, that the prisoners should exert their influence to procure for him the government

¹ Original letter of Sir G. Douglas, in State Paper Office, dated January 10, 1542, to Lord Lisle, the English warden:—"yff it pleases God that I continewe withe lyff and helthe, I shall do my soverand lord and maister gud servyce be the helpe of God; and yff I dey, I shall depart his trewe servand."

of the kingdom, and the immediate resignation of all its fortresses into his hands ; that they should use their utmost efforts to have the infant queen delivered into his power, to be kept in England ;¹ and, in the event of such demands being refused by the parliament of Scotland, he stipulated that their whole feudal strength was to be employed in co-operating with his army, and completing the conquest of the country. Nor did the English monarch content himself with the bare promise of his prisoners to fulfil his wishes. The affair was transacted with much rigor and solemnity. A bond or obligation was drawn up, which engrossed these stipulations. To this they were required to subscribe their names, and confirm it by their oath ; they were to leave their eldest sons, or nearest relatives, in their place as pledges for their fidelity. Should they fail in accomplishing the wishes of the king, they were to return to their prisons in England, on his so requiring it ; or if he judged it more profitable for the accomplishment of his design, to remain in Scotland, and assist him in the war.² The bond, in short, contained terms which virtually annihilated the existence of Scotland as a separate kingdom ; and sad as is the fate of the captive, I am not prepared to admit that the Scottish prisoners were placed in a very trying situation. They were called upon to choose whether they were to preserve unsullied their individual honor, and maintain their national independence, by remaining in prison, and

¹ Sadler's State Papers, vol. i. pp. 69, 74, 75, 81.

² Ibid. p. 97.

