

THE KING'S BISHOP.*

A.D. 1317.

THERE is a pleasant anecdote inserted by Lord Hailes on the authority of Barbour and Fordun, which is worthy of notice in the present work. During the absence of King Robert Bruce in Ireland to assist his brother in the conquest of that country, the English, who made several attempts to disturb the tranquillity of Scotland, appeared in the Frith of Forth, and anchored off Inverkeithing. The Earl of Fife and the sheriff of that county collected five hundred men, and attempted to oppose their landing, which they effected either to the west of Inverkeithing Bay, or at Dunibristle. Intimidated by the numbers of the English the Scots were afraid to encounter them, and consulted their safety by flight.

It happened that William Sinclair, Bishop of Dunkeld, who had always been a determined supporter of Bruce, and whose consecration had been violently opposed by Edward, met the fugitives in their retreat. This prelate, who was the brother of Sinclair of Roslin, and who is de-

* Hailes' Annals of Scotland.

scribed as “right hardy, meikle, and stark,” had a country residence in the parish of Auchtertool in the neighbourhood. “Whither are you running?” he called out to the leaders of the fugitives: “You deserve to have your gilt spurs hacked off.” This was specially addressed to the Earl of Fife, the same nobleman who founded the Abbey of Culross. Throwing off his ecclesiastical garment, Bishop Sinclair seized a spear, and exclaimed—“Let him who loves Scotland follow me.” The Scots rallied, and, led by the brave prelate, they impetuously attacked the enemy, who had not completed their landing. The English were driven back to their ships with considerable loss. When King Robert was informed of the intrepidity of the Bishop of Dunkeld, he said—“Sinclair shall be *my* bishop, under the appellation of the *King’s Bishop*.” By this name he was long remembered by his countrymen.