

HISTORY

OF

SCOTLAND.

CHAP. I.

JAMES THE FOURTH,

(Continued.)

1497 - 1513.

CONTEMPORARY SOVEREIGNS.

<i>England.</i>	<i>France.</i>	<i>Spain.</i>	<i>Portugal.</i>	<i>Germany.</i>	<i>Popes.</i>
Henry VII. Henry VIII.	Lewis XII.	Ferdinand and Isabella.	John II. Emanuel.	Maximilian.	Alexr. VI. (Borgia) Pius III. Julius II. Leo. X.

THE departure of the impostor Perkin Warbeck, from Scotland, was not long after followed by a truce between England and that country. It was evidently the interest both of Henry the Seventh, and of James, to be at peace. The English monarch was unpopular; and every attack by a foreign power endangered the stability of his government, encouraging domestic discontent, and strengthening the hands of his enemies: on the side of the Scottish king there were not similar causes of alarm, for he was strong in the affections of his subjects, and beloved by his nobility; but grave and weighty cares engrossed his attention, and these were of a nature which could be best pur-

sued in a time of peace. The state of the revenue, the commerce and domestic manufactures of his kingdom, and the deficiency of his marine, had now begun to occupy an important place in the thoughts of the still youthful sovereign: the disorganised condition of the more northern portions of his dominions, demanded also the exertion of his utmost vigilance; so that he listened not unwillingly to Henry's proposals of peace, and to the overture for a matrimonial alliance, which was brought forward by the principal Commissioner of England, Fox, bishop of Durham. The pacific disposition of James appears to have been strengthened by the judicious counsels of Pedro D'Ayala, the Spanish envoy at the court of Henry the Seventh: this able foreigner had received orders from his sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, to visit Scotland as the ambassador from their Catholic majesties; and on his arrival in that country, he soon acquired so strong an influence over this prince, that he did not hesitate to nominate him his chief commissioner for the conducting his negociations with England. A seven years' truce was accordingly concluded at Ayton, on the 31st of September, 1497¹, and in a meeting which took place soon after, between William de Warham, Henry's commissioner, and D'Ayala, who appeared on the part of James; it was agreed that this cessation of hostilities should continue during the lives of the two monarchs, and

¹ Rymer, vol. xii. pp. 673, 678 inclusive.

for a year after the death of the survivor. Having accomplished this object, the Spanish minister and his suite left the Scottish court, to the regret of the king, who testified by rich presents the regard he entertained for them.¹

This negociation with England being concluded, James had leisure to turn his attention to his affairs at home; and although in the depth of winter, with the hardihood which marked his character, he took a progress northward as far as Inverness. It was his object personally to inspect the state of these remote portions of his dominions, that he might be able to legislate for them with greater success than had attended the efforts of his predecessors. The stern and somewhat ungenerous policy which he adopted was, to separate and weaken the clans by arraying them in opposition to each other, to attach to his service by rewards and preferment some of their ablest leaders—to maintain a correspondence with the remotest districts—and gradually to accustom their fierce inhabitants to habits of pacific industry, and a respect for the restraints of the laws. It has been objected to him that his proceedings towards the Highland chiefs were occasionally marked by an unbending rigor, and too slight a regard for justice; but his policy may be vindicated on the ground of necessity, and even of self-defence.

¹ MS. Accounts of the High Treasurer of Scotland under the 31st of October, 1497.

These severe measures, however, were seldom adopted but in cases of rebellion. To the great body of his nobility, James was uniformly indulgent; the lamentable fate of his father convinced him of the folly of attempting to rule without them: he was persuaded that a feudal monarch at war with his nobles, was deprived of the greatest sources of his strength and dignity; and to enable him to direct their efforts to such objects as he had at heart, he endeavoured to gain their affections. Nor was it difficult to effect this: the course of conduct which his own disposition prompted him to pursue, was the best calculated to render him a favorite with the aristocracy. Under the former reign they seldom saw their prince, but lived in gloomy independence at a distance from court, resorting thither only on occasions of state or counsel; and when the parliament was ended, or the emergency had passed away, they returned to their castles full of complaints against a system which made them strangers to their sovereign, and ciphers in the government. Under James all this was changed. Affable in his manners, fond of magnificence, and devoted to pleasure, the king delighted to see himself surrounded by a splendid nobility: he bestowed upon his highest barons those offices in his household which ensured a familiar attendance upon his person: his court was a perpetual scene of revelry and amusement in which the nobles vied with each other in extravagance, and

