

CHAP. III.

JAMES THE FIFTH.

1524 - 1528.

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> Clement VII.
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FOR the last two years, the Earl of Angus, who had formerly shown himself so cordial a friend of England, had remained an exile in France, whence Henry the Eighth, desirous of employing him in his designs for embroiling the Government of Albany, had secretly called him into his dominions. It was now esteemed the moment when his presence in Scotland might once more reinstate the English faction, which had been long gaining strength, in undisputed power; and the Earl, whose foreign residence had increased his experience and talent, but not improved his patriotic feelings, at once lent himself to the projects of Henry. During his banishment, he had corresponded with that monarch; although an exile, he had made himself master of the political divisions and intrigues

by which the kingdom was distracted; and having agreed upon his plan of operations, he accelerated his preparations for his return to his native country. Before, however, this project could be put into execution, the departure of the regent had given rise to a revolution, which, for a season, totally changed the aspect of public affairs. In this, the chief actors were Margaret, the queen dowager, and the Earl of Arran; whilst its sudden and startling success seems to prove, that the project had been gradually matured, and only waited for the departure of Albany to bring it into effect. The young king had now entered his thirteenth year, and already gave promise of that vigor of character, which afterwards distinguished him. His mother, no longer controlled by the presence of a superior, determined to place him upon the throne; a scheme, which, by the assistance of England, she trusted, might be easily accomplished; whilst Henry was ready to lend himself to the design, from the persuasion that the royal power, though ostensibly in the king, would be truly in the hands of a council overruled by England. Surrey, therefore, remained in the north, to overawe any opposition, by the terror of an immediate invasion; and Margaret, having gained to her interest the peers to whom the person of the sovereign had been entrusted, suddenly left the Palace of Stirling, and accompanied by her son and a small retinue, proceeded to Edinburgh, which she entered, amid the acclama-

tions of the populace, who beheld their youthful sovereign with tears of affection and surprise. The procession, which, besides the queen mother and her train, consisted of the Earls of Arran, Lennox, Crawford, and others of the nobility, moved on to the Palace of Holyrood, where a council was held, the king declared of age, and proclamations instantly issued in his name. He then formally assumed the government; the peers tendered their oaths of allegiance; and many, as well of the spiritual as temporal estate, entered into a solemn agreement, by which they abjured the engagements which had been made to Albany, declared his regency at an end, and promised faithfully to maintain the supreme authority of their sovereign against all who might dare to question it.¹

Against this extraordinary act, of which the real object on the part of Henry could not be concealed, and over which the capricious character of the queen, alternately swayed by the most violent resentments or partialities, threw much suspicion, the only dissentient voices were those of the bishops of St. Andrew's and Aberdeen. They contended that to confer the supreme power upon a boy of twelve years old was ridiculous; that to remove him from the governors to whom his education had been entrusted, and plunge him at once in his tender years into the flatteries and

¹ Pinkerton, vol. ii. p. 238. Lesly, p. 129. Caligula, B. VI. 373.

vices of a court, must be certain ruin; and they reminded the nobles of their promises so lately pledged to the Duke of Albany, to whom the regency at this moment unquestionably belonged. For this bold and honest conduct they were by the queen's party immediately committed to prison; nor could the offer from Wolsey of a cardinal's hat induce Beaton to renounce his promises to Albany, or become the tool of England.¹ The news of the success of this revolution, which in its rapidity had anticipated the wishes of Henry, was received with the utmost satisfaction in England.² A guard of two hundred men-at-arms was immediately sent by that monarch at the queen's request, for the security of the person of the young king, whilst, as a token of his complete approval of her conduct, and an earnest of future favors, Margaret received a present of two hundred marks, and Arran a hundred pounds. In return she earnestly remonstrated against Henry's permitting the re-

¹ Pinkerton, vol. ii .p. 241. Caligula, B. VI. 353, August 19th, 1524. B. III. 96.

² State Papers, p. 150. The letter written to Henry in the name of the young king, informing him of his assumption of the government, was sent by Patrick Sinclair, whom Wolsey denominates a right trusty servant of James; and at the same time describes as a spy of Dr. Magnus, and a constant friend of England. Such was the character of this revolution. George Shaw, another personal servant of James, was a spy of Norfolk.—Norfolk to Wolsey, 19th September, 1524. Caligula, B. VI. 361.

