

THE FROLICS OF JAMES V.

A BATTERY immediately within the present chief entrance of Stirling Castle, and called the over or upper port battery, commands in all its amplitude and gorgeousness the surpassingly brilliant panorama from Benlomond, Benvenue, Benledi, and Benvoirlich, through the Trosachs, the vales of the Forth, the Teith, and the Allan, to the plains of Lennox and the Lothians. The ground immediately overhung by the battery, and overlooking the nearest sweep of the Forth, is not precipitous, but breaks gradually down in the little rocky

range of the Gowan hills, stretching away to their termination in Hurly-Haaky near the bridge. On the brow of the nearest eminence are remains of a low rampart, extending in a line parallel to the battery,—the vestige of works constructed against the castle, in 1746, by Prince Charles Edward. Between this rampart and the castle-walls a road or narrow path comes up the acclivitous hill from the village of Raploch, and passes on to a point where formerly there was a large gateway through the exterior wall, conducting to an esplanade on which the magazines are now situated, and, across it, to a low-browed archway, called ‘the Laird of Ballangeich’s entry,’ and alleged to have once been the main entrance to the castle. This wild path, thus anciently terminating at a point of such prime importance, is called the Ballangeich road, from two words which signify ‘the windy pass;’ and, having furnished James V. with his well-known fictitious designation of the Guidman of Ballangeich, figures as to name, at least, in many curious and oft-told anecdotes of that monarch’s incognito roving through his kingdom.

Two comic songs, ‘The Gaberlunzie Man,’ and ‘We’ll gang nae mair a roving,’ are said to have been founded on the success of the Guidman of Ballangeich’s licentious adventures when travelling in the disguise of a beggar. The following anecdotes respecting him are given by Sir Walter Scott:—“Another adventure, which had nearly cost James his life, is said to have taken place at the village of Cramond, near Edinburgh, where he had rendered his addresses acceptable to a pretty girl of the lower rank. Four or five persons—whether relations or lovers of his mistress is uncertain—beset the disguised monarch as he returned from his rendezvous. Naturally gallant, and an admirable master of his weapon, the King took post on the high and narrow bridge over the Almond river, and defended himself bravely with his sword. A peasant, who was thrashing in a neighbouring barn, came out upon the noise, and, whether moved by com-

passion or by natural gallantry, took the weaker side, and laid about with his flail so effectually as to disperse the assailants, well threshed, even according to the letter. He then conducted the King into his barn, where his guest requested a bason and towel to remove the stains of the broil. This being procured with difficulty, James employed himself in learning what was the summit of his deliverer's earthly wishes, and found that they were bounded by the desire of possessing, in property, the farm of Braehead, upon which he laboured as a bondsman. The lands chanced to belong to the Crown; and James directed him to come to the palace of Holyrood and enquire for the Guidman (*i. e.* farmer) of Ballangeich, a name by which he was known in his excursions, and which, answered to Il Bondocani of Haroun Alraschid. He presented himself accordingly, and found, with due astonishment, that he had saved his monarch's life, and that he was to be gratified with a crown-charter of the lands of Braehead, under the service of presenting an ewer, bason, and towel, for the King to wash his hands, when he shall happen to pass the Bridge of Cramond. In 1822, when George IV. came to Scotland, the descendant of this John Howison of Braehead, who still possesses the estate which was given to his ancestor, appeared at a solemn festival, and offered his Majesty water from a silver ewer.

“ Another of James's frolics is thus narrated by Mr. Campbell, from the Statistical Account. ‘ Being once benighted when out a-hunting, and separated from his attendants, he happened to enter a cottage in the midst of a moor, at the foot of the Ochil hills, near Alloa, where, unknown, he was kindly received. In order to regale their unexpected guest, the gude-man (*i. e.* landlord, farmer) desired the gude-wife to fetch the hen that roosted nearest the cock, which is always the plumpest, for the stranger's supper. The King highly pleased with his night's lodgings and hospitable entertainment, told mine host, at parting, that he should be glad

to return his civility, and requested that the first time he came to Stirling he would call at the castle, and enquire for the gude-man of Ballangeich. Donaldson, the landlord, did not fail to call on the gude-man of Ballangeich, when his astonishment at finding that the King had been his guest afforded no small amusement to the merry monarch and his courtiers; and, to carry on the pleasantry, he was thenceforth designated by James with the title of King of the Moors, which name and designation have descended from father to son ever since, and they have continued in possession of the identical spot, the property of Mr. Erskine of Mar, till very lately, when this gentleman, with reluctance, turned out the descendant and representative of the King of the Moors, on account of his Majesty's invincible indolence, and great dislike to reform or innovation of any kind, although, from the spirited example of his neighbour tenants on the same estate, he is convinced similar exertion would promote his advantage."

The following anecdote is extracted from the genealogical work of Buchanan of Auchmar, upon Scottish surnames:—
"This John Buchanan of Auchmar and Arnpryor was afterwards termed King of Kippen, upon the following account. King James V., a very social debonair prince, residing at Stirling, in Buchanan of Arnpryor's time, carriers were very frequently passing along the common road, being near Arnpryor's house, with necessaries for the use of the King's family, and he having some extraordinary occasion, ordered one of these carriers to leave his load at his house, and he would pay him for it; which the carrier refused to do, telling him he was the King's carrier, and his load for his Majesty's use; to which Arnpryor seemed to have small regard, compelling the carrier, in the end, to leave his load; telling him if King James was King of Scotland, he was King of Kippen, so that it was reasonable he should share with his neighbour King in some of these loads, so frequently carried that road. The carrier representing this usage, and telling the

story, as Arnpryor spoke it, to some of the King's servants, it came at length to his Majesty's ears, who, shortly thereafter, with a few attendants, came to visit his neighbour King, who was in the meantime at dinner. King James having sent a servant to demand access, was denied the same by a tall fellow with a battle-axe, who stood porter at the gate, telling there could be no access till dinner was over. This answer not satisfying the King, he sent to demand access a second time; upon which he was desired by the porter to desist, otherwise he would find cause to repent his rudeness. His Majesty finding this method would not do, desired the porter to tell his master that the good-man of Bal-langeich desired to speak with the King of Kippen. The porter telling Arnpryor so much, he, in all humble manner, came and received the King, and having entertained him with much sumptuousness and jollity, became so agreeable to King James, that he allowed him to take so much of any provision he found carrying that road as he had occasion for; and, seeing he made the first visit, desired Arnpryor in a few days to return him a second at Stirling, which he performed, and continued in very much favour with the King, always thereafter being termed King of Kippen while he lived." The last King of Kippen, we may add, was hanged in 1746, at Carlisle, for fighting in the rebel army of Prince Charles Edward.

James's matrimonial campaign, though necessarily a very serious affair for both himself and the nation, was conducted with sufficient eccentricity to give it some of the characters of a frolic; and, even when related in the most solemn style of historiography, bears such strong marks of the outre monarch's peculiar spirit as unavoidably to provoke a smile. The following lachrymose account of the active or successful part of it, after James had declined matrimonial offers from the courts of England, Austria, and Denmark, is given in his Life in the *Miscellanea Scotica*:—"King James resolved

at last to match with some of the Royal family of France, from whence he could expect the surest assistance when his affairs wanted it. For this end he sent his ambassadors to France, viz. James, Earl of Murray, his bastard brother, William Stuart, Bishop of Aberdeen, John Erskine, and Robert Reists, to negotiate a marriage betwixt him and the Lady Magdalen of France. The French King received them courteously, but was greatly at a loss what to do in that matter, seeing the design of the marriage was to tie the two kingdoms together by a more close alliance. He was afraid that both their enemies would make use of that match as a handle to disunite them; because King James could not promise himself any children by his daughter, who was a sickly lady, so in the end would rather prove the occasion of indifference betwixt them. Francis therefore proposed to the ambassadors a match betwixt their master and the Lady Mary of Bourbon, the daughter of Charles, Duke of Vendosme. The ambassadors refused to treat about it without instructions from King James; so desired time to acquaint him with the proposal, and to know his pleasure. This account of affairs made the King very melancholy. Sometimes he doubted lest some selfish views in the Earl of Murray, and the Bishop of Aberdeen, might incline them to embarrass that match; at another time, the confidence he had in John Erskine and Robert Reists made him easy, because he was sure they would not betray the trust reposed in them, but would use all possible application towards the accomplishing the desired match. Notwithstanding, to prevent delays, and considering that the great reason why the matches of most princes are so unhappy, is, because they never see their queens before marriage, he determined to go over to France, and to court in person. But the great heats at that time obliged him to defer his voyage till they were a little abated. But, after a while, being uneasy with impatience because his ambassadors were not like to conclude the

marriage with that despatch he wished for, notwithstanding the inconveniences of the season, he resolved to sail for France; and having given orders that a fleet should be ready, he went aboard at Leith, together with the great ministers of his court, without owning whither he was bound. Many thought he designed to go into England to visit his uncle, and now repented, that the former year he refused an interview with that King. They were scarcely got out of the haven, when a storm began to arise, and the wind turned contrary: upon this the pilot asked the King which way they should steer their course? He answered, 'Whither you please except to England.' This convinced them all that the King designed for France, which was impracticable at that time, because of the contrary winds; which, when the King understood, he chose rather to sail round the coasts of his kingdom, and try if they could have better passage by St. George's Channel, than to put in again at Leith. Neither did that succeed, for still the storm increased, which made those who attended him bethink that it was safest to return home, and not expose their King's and their own life to visible danger; and that it was fool-hardiness to struggle with the unrelenting winds and waves; that there was no need for such haste; and that they might lie in some harbour till the storm was over, without any prejudice to the King's affairs. So whilst the King was asleep, they tacked about and sailed for the coasts of Scotland. When the King awakened, he was in a great rage, and never pardoned those who advised the sailing back to Scotland. When the bad weather was over the nobility who were with the King, in complaisance to his Majesty, desired him to think of sailing with the first fair wind, which he did; and setting sail from Scotland on the first day of September, —, he landed at Dieppe ten days after, and went incognito to Vendosme, to see the Lady Mary of Vendosme,—where he was satisfied that she was an excellent and well accomplished princess, and that

fame had not been too favourable to her. But seeing he had had the choice of three princesses, all daughters of kings, he thought he could not in honour marry one of a lower degree. So he left Vendosme, and had still the disposing of his own heart, notwithstanding the charms of that fair lady, and went straight for Paris to meet with the French King, whose coming was a surprisal to the court. The King, who knew nothing of it till about two hours before he saw him, immediately went to meet him and welcome him to Paris, being accompanied with all the nobility then at court, and received him with all the grandeur and honour that King James could desire. He had not been long at Paris before the Lady Magdalen owned that she loved him. He desired the King her father to agree to the match, and said, 'He hoped that the change of air, and more years, would confirm her in perfect health, and doubted not but he should have children by her.' The French King consented to the match, and told him, there was nothing that he could deny the King of Scotland. So the marriage was solemnized with all the pomp and ceremony imaginable; and King James and his Queen set out for Scotland, having with them a great number of French ships. When they arrived in Scotland, they were received with the universal joy of their subjects; but as in human life our gladness is still allayed with sorrow, so this joy was short lived, and was interrupted by the great grief occasioned by the death of the young queen, who lived only six months after her landing in Scotland; for the sea air, and the fatigue of the voyage, had occasioned her sickness. There was such an universal and real grief over all the kingdom, upon the news of her death, that to testify the sense the court, and other persons of note, had of the great loss, they went into mourning, which was the first time that ever that custom was used in Scotland. After the funeral ceremonies were over, King James was more desirous than ever of children, and was unwilling to live any time a widower. He cast his eyes upon the Lady Mary

of Lorrain, sister to Francis, Duke of Guise, a famed general, and the widow of the Duke of Longueville; for the charming virtues of that lady had made a mighty impression upon his heart during his stay in France."

A poetical frolic, the well-known, old humorous ballad, called 'The Wife of Auchtermuchty,' has been very generally ascribed to James V.; and though certainly not written by him, yet on account of popular opinion regarding it as an index or expression of his taste and genius, two or three stanzas of it may here be quoted:—

" In Auchtermuchty dwelt a man,
 An husband, as I heard it tauld,
 Quha weil could tipple out a can,
 And nowther luvit hungir nor cauld;
 Till anes it fell upon a day,
 He zokit his plewch upon the plain;
 But schort the storm wald let him stay,
 Sair blew the day with wind and rain.

He lowsd the plewch at the land's end,
 And draife his owsen hame at ene;
 Quhen he came in he blinkit ben,
 And saw his wyfe baith dry and clene,
 Set beikand by a fyre full bauld,
 Suppand fat sowp, as I heard say:
 The man being weary, wet and cauld,
 Betwein thir twa it was nae play.

Quod he, ' Quhair is my horses corn?
 My owsen has nae hay nor strae;
 Dame, ye maun to the plewch the morn,
 I sall be hussy gif I may.

This seid-time it proves cauld and bad,
 And ze sit warm, nae troubles se;
 The morn ze sall gae with the lad,
 And syne zeil ken what drinkers drie.'

‘Gudeman,’ quod scho, ‘content am I,
 To tak the plewch my day about,
 Sae ye rule weil the kaves and ky,
 And all the house baith in and out.
 And now sen ze haif made the law,
 Then gyde all richt and do not break ;
 They sicker raid that neir did faw,
 Therefore let naething be neglect.’”

The bargain proved, as might be anticipated, a most unfortunate one for the gudeman, whose successive disasters in ‘hussyskep’ brought him ‘meikle schame,’ fairly sickened him of his new employments before night-fall, and forced him upon the sound reflection and wise resolution with which the ballad closes :—

“Quod he, ‘When I forsuke my plewch,
 I trow I but forsuke my skill !
 Then I will to my plewch again,
 For I and this house will nevir do weil.’”