

CHAP. II.

JAMES THE FIFTH,

1513 - 1524.

CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

<i>Kings of England.</i>	<i>Kings of France.</i>	<i>Germany.</i>	<i>Spain.</i>	<i>Popes.</i>
Henry VIII.	Lewis XII. Francis I.	Maximilian I. Charles V.	Philip I. Charles V.	Leo. X. Adrian VI. Clement VII.

THE news of the discomfiture of the Scottish army at Flodden spread through the land with a rapidity of terror and sorrow proportionate to the greatness of the defeat, and the alarming condition into which it instantly brought the country. The wail of private grief, from the hall to the cottage, was loud and universal. In the capital were to be heard the shrieks of women who ran distractedly through the streets bewailing the husbands, the sons, or the brothers, who had fallen, clasping their infants to their bosoms, and anticipating in tears the coming desolation of their country. In the provinces, as the gloomy tidings rolled on, the same scenes were repeated; and had Surrey been inclined, or in a condition to pursue his victory, the consequences of the universal panic were much

to be dreaded; but the very imminency of the public danger was salutary in checking this violent outburst of sorrow in the capital. During the absence of the chief magistrates who had joined the army with the king, the merchants to whom their authority had been deputed, exhibited a fine example of firmness and presence of mind. They issued a proclamation which was well adapted to restore order and resolution. It took notice of the great rumour touching their beloved monarch and his army, which had reached the city, dwelt on its uncertainty, and abstained from the mention of death or defeat; it commanded the whole body of the townsmen to arm themselves at the sound of the common bell, for the defence of the city. It enjoined, under the penalty of banishment, that no females should be seen crying or wailing in the streets, and concluded by recommending all women of the better sort to repair to the churches, and there offer up their petitions to the God of battles, for their sovereign lord and his host, with those of their fellow citizens who served therein.¹

It was soon discovered that, for the moment at least, Surrey had suffered so severely that he did not find himself strong enough to prosecute the victory, and an interval of deliberation was thus permitted to the country. Early in October, a parliament assembled at Perth, which from the

¹ Haile's Remarks on the History of Scotland, chap. ix.

death of the flower of the nobility at Flodden, consisted chiefly of the clergy.¹ It proceeded first to the coronation of the infant king, which was performed at Scone with the usual solemnity, but amid the tears, instead of the rejoicings of the people; its attention was then directed to the condition of the country; but its deliberations were hurried, and unfortunately no satisfactory record of them remains. Contrary to the customary law, the regency was committed to the queen mother, from a feeling of affectionate respect to the late king. The castle of Stirling, with the custody of the infant monarch, was entrusted to Lord Borthwick; and it was determined, till more protracted leisure for consultation had been given, and a fuller parliament assembled, that the queen should use the counsel of Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow, with the Earls of Huntly and Angus.² It appears, however, that even at this early period, there was a party in Scotland which looked with anxiety on the measure of committing the chief situation in the government to a female, whose near connection with England rendered it possible that she might act under foreign influence; and a secret message was dispatched by their leaders to the Duke of Albany, in France—a nobleman, who, in the event of the death of the young king, was the next heir to the

¹ Dacre to the Bishop of Durham, 29th Oct. Cal. B. III. 11.

² Dacre to the King's Highness.—Harbotill, 13 Nov. Cal. B. VI. 38, d.

throne, requesting him to repair to Scotland and assume the office of regent, which of right belonged to his rank.¹

In the mean time the apprehensions of the country were quieted by the intelligence that Surrey had disbanded his host—a proceeding to which that able commander was reduced not only by the loss which he had sustained, but the impossibility of supporting an invading army without the co-operation of a fleet. It was probably on his own responsibility that Howard thus acted, for, on receiving accounts of the victory, whilst still in France, Henry appears to have been solicitous to follow up his advantage, and transmitted orders to Lord Dacre, of the north, warden of the Eastern Marches, and Lord Darcy, directing them to make three principal incursions into Scotland. These orders were partially obeyed, and in various insulated inroads much devastation was committed by the English; but the retaliation of Home, the chamberlain and warden of the Scottish Marches, was equally prompt and destructive, whilst the only consequences from such mutual hostilities, were to protract the chances of peace by the exacerbation of national animosity.

The condition of the country, meanwhile, was alarming, and when men began to recover from the first impulses of grief, and to consider calmly the most probable schemes for the preservation of order, under the shock which it had received, the pro-

¹ Lesly, Bannat. Edit. p. 97.—Pinkerton, vol. ii. p. 112.

