lately been dazzled by dreams of Edward the Third and Henry the Fifth, to invade France. Louis, on the other hand, negotiated with James the Fourth, and to embarrass the king of England, induced him to declare war against Henry the Eighth. It was a fatal resolution ; but the Scot­tish prince was beloved by his people, and so popular with the great body of his nobles, that his appeal to arms was answered by the muster of one of the most numerous and best equipped armies, and one of the most formidable fleets ever fitted out by the country.

The fleet amounted to twenty-three sail., of which thir­teen were large ships, the rest small armed craft. Of this armament the destination was Ireland, but its command was entrusted to the earl of Arran, an officer of no experience in naval affairs; and the result was its total dispersion and discomfiture. The land army, on the other hand, which was led by the king in person, amounted to a force little short of a hundred thousand strong, with which James in­vaded England, and after some slight successes, encamped in a strong position on the hill or rising ground of Floddon, one of the last and lowest eminences which detach them­selves from the range of the Cheviots. It was a strong position, impregnable on each flank, and in front defended by the Till, a deep and sluggish stream, which is tributary to the Tweed.

Henry the Eighth, before passing with his army into France, had entrusted the defence of his kingdom to the earl of Surrey, a brave and experienced officer, who lost no time in collecting a force with which, although it did not amount to half the number of the Scots, he did not hesi­tate to march against the king. But what he wanted in numbers, Surrey supplied by military experience and cool­ness ; while James, blind, obstinate, and attending only to the dictates of his personal courage, threw away his ad­vantages both of numbers and position. The result was one of the most calamitous defeats ever experienced before or since by Scotland. Surrey was permitted by the king to cross the Till in the face of his army. Contrary to the re­monstrances of his veteran officers, he would suffer no one to attack him ; although the moment was so favourable that, if Angus, Lindsay, and Huntly had been allowed to charge with their men, nothing less than a miracle could have saved the English earl. To the entreaties of Borth­wick, the master of his artillery, he was equally obstinate. Had the guns been brought to bear upon the enemy when crossing the bridge of the Till, they must either have been beaten back or thrown into such disorder as would have ex­posed them to immediate rout; but this too the king would not suffer. With amazing folly he renounced the use of his artillery, that arm of war which, with so great care and expense, he had strengthened or rather created, at the very moment it became serviceable, and might have saved himself and his army. What James’s motive was in this, unless the indulgence of some idle chivalrous punctilio, it is impossible to discover; but its consequences were grievous. Surrey completed his arrangements, passed the ford and the bridge, marshalled his army at leisure, and placing his en­tire line between James and his country, advanced by an easy ascent upon the rear of the Scottish army. Upon this the king set fire to the huts and temporary booths of his en­campment, and descended the hill with the object of pre­occupying an eminence on which the village of Branksome is built. His army was divided into five battles, some of which had assumed the form of squares, some of wedges, all being drawn up in a line about a bow-shot distance from each other. The enemy were divided into two battles, each of which had two wings. The English van was led by lord Thomas and lord Edmund Howard, Surrey himself com­manded the centre of the host, Sir Edward Stanley and lord Dacre the rear and the reserve. On the side of the Scots, Huntly and Hume led the advance, the king the

centre, and the earls of Lennox and Argyll the rear. The battle commenced at four in the afternoon, and after an obstinate contest, which continued till nightfall, concluded in the total defeat of the Scots. Among the slain was the king himself, who, surrounded by a circle of his nobles, had fought with desperate courage, besides thirteen earls, and fifteen lords and chiefs of clans. The loss of common soldiers was estimated at ten thousand men. Of the gentry it is impossible to say how many were slain. Scarcely a family of note could say that they had not lost one or more rela­tives, while some had to lament the death of all their sons. Whether we regard this miserable slaughter of the sove­reign with the flower of his nobility and country, or look to the long and sickening train of national calamities which it entailed upon the kingdom, it is not too much to pronounce the battle of Floddon the greatest national misfortune ever endured by Scotland.

The character of the unfortunate monarch who thus perished in the prime of life, for James had not completed his forty-second year, was marked by very contradictory qualities. Although devoted to his pleasures, wilful, and impetuous, he was energetic and indefatigable in the ad­ministration of justice, a patron of all the useful arts, and laudably zealous for the introduction of law and order into the remotest parts of his dominions. The commerce and the agriculture of the country, the means of increasing the na­tional security, the navy, the fisheries, the manufactures, were all subjects of interest to him ; and his genuine kind­ness of heart, and accessibility to the lowest classes of his subjects, rendered him deservedly beloved. Yet he plung­ed needlessly into all the miseries of war, and his thirst for individual honour, and an obstinate adherence to his own judgment, led to the sacrifice of his army and his life, and once more exposed the kingdom to the complicated evils of a minority.

The news of defeat always flies rapidly, and **the** full **ex-** tentof the national calamity soon became known in the capital, which was seized with the utmost sorrow and terror. The magistrates, with the forces of the borough, had joined the king’s army, and many of them shared his fate ; but the merchants, to whom their powers had been deputed, acted with much firmness and spirit. They armed the townsmen, published a proclamation, enjoining the women who were seen waiting in the streets to cease their lamentations, and repair to the churches, where they might pray for their lords and husbands, and took all the necessary precautions to de­fend the city in the event of any immediate attack. Soon afterwards the welcome intelligence arrived that Surrey, hav­ing suffered severely in the battle, had disbanded his host, and a breathing interval was allowed. The infant king was crowned at Scone, the castle of Stirling appointed as his residence, the government of it entrusted to lord Borth­wick, and the archbishop of Glasgow, with the earls of Huntly and Angus, selected to be the councillors of the queen-mother, till a parliament should assemble. At the same time suspicions βeem to have arisen that too much influence in the government ought not to be given to this princess, whose near connection with England might sub­ject her to foreign influence ; and a secret message w as dis­patched to France inviting the duke of Albany, the next heir to the throne, to repair to Scotland and assume the of­fice of regent.

It was necessary, in the mean time, to consider the best schemes for the restoration of tranquillity and the preserva­tion of order under the shock which a defeat so terrible had given to the country ; and the prospect which presented it­self, on taking a general view of the condition of the king­dom, was discouraging. The dignified clergy, a class of men who were undoubtedly the ablest and the best educat­ed in Scotland, from whose ranks the state had been accustomed to look for its wisest councillors, were divid­