

1792. *Memoirs of the Earl of Marr.* 3

In the year 1570, after Buchanan's public situations were at an end, and the young king became of an age to receive the seeds of useful learning, Lord Marr; being then twelve years old, began to imbibe the instructions of that admirable preceptor, together with his cousins Alexander, Thomas, and George Erskines, the sons of Sir Alexander the king's governor, and some other relations of the house of Marr; the whole illustrious group forming as it were a little academy; the most favourable education for a young monarch that can be imagined, and which must have made James a great sovereign, if his understanding had been equal to his advantages. Of these companions and fellow scholars of the king, Alexander was

warn them of their danger; but as they were going to put their project in execution, one of the old rats asked which of them would be the first to seize the cat. This witty question created a profound silence, when Angus exclaimed, "I'll bell the cat!" After dinner this day, the young king romping and trifling with the master of Erskine, the Earl of Marr's eldest son, Buchanan ordered the king to be silent and not to interrupt Erskine in his reading; to which command James paying no attention, Buchanan said, that if he did not hold his peace he would whip his breech. "Will you so?" said the king, "I would fain see who will bell the cat." Up starts Buchanan, and throwing away his book, performs his promise to the king, with a sound drubbing. The old Countess being in her apartment, which was immediately adjoining, runs up to the poor kingling, takes him up into her arms, and asks him what is the matter? Which being told by the bawling sovereign, she fiercely asks Buchanan how he durst lay his hand on the Lord's anointed? To which Buchanan very gravely replied, "madam, I have whipt the king for disobedience and rudeness in the usual way, you may heal it with a kiss if you please."

Upon another occasion, the master of Erskine having a tame sparrow, the king resolved to take it from him; Erskine resisted, and the