

nation. It does not present a gloomy picture of the turbulence of heroes, or the devastation of conquerors: but a record of the people, limiting the prerogative of their kings; combating the despotism of their governors; and establishing a form of legislation, which, notwithstanding its imperfections, is to this day revered as the sacred constitution of the country.

CHAP. V....*A Review of the Manks History, from the Accession of the House of Stanley to the Revestment of the Royalty of the Isle in the British Crown.*

BEFORE I proceed to enumerate the princes of the Stanley line, it may not be improper to observe, that their personal history, except in a few instances, is unconnected with the public transactions of the island. Being subjects of England, they generally resided in that country; and so long as their lieutenants remitted the revenues of the kingdom, they supinely acquiesced in their administration. For more than three centuries this family enjoyed the regal government of Man; yet in so long a period few of them possessed the ambition or generosity to visit their subjects: and when they conferred this honour, either their interests in the island were threatened, or their personal safety in England endangered.

Sir John Stanley, on whom the munificence of Henry the Fourth had conferred the royalty of this island, died in 1414; and was succeeded by his son,

SIR JOHN STANLEY,

a man of politic and penetrating genius. During the reign of his predecessor, the island paid him homage as heir-apparent; and after his father's decease, the anarchy of the state, and the discontents of his new subjects, again forced him to visit his kingdom. Previous to this period, the laws of the island resided in the breasts of their Deemsters. Under the pretext of witnessing the promulgation of these, but with the real design of asserting his prerogative, and intimidating the vulgar by a display of majesty, he convened, in 1417, the whole body of the people at the Tynwald.* As king of Man he was invested with the insignia of royalty. The diadem flamed on his brow; and the regal mantle flowed in all its splendour. On the summit of the mount was placed a chair of state, canopied with crimson velvet, and richly embroidered with gold. In this chair he was enthroned; his face fronting the east, and a sword in his hand pointed towards Heaven. His Deemsters sate before him; and on the highest circle his barons and beneficed men: on the middle circle were seated the twenty-four Keys, then stiled "the worthiest men in the land;" and on the lowest circle the knights, esquires, and yet men; while the commons stood without the circuit of the hill, with three clerks in their surplices. The hill was guarded† by the coroners and moars, armed with their swords and axes; and a proclamation was issued, by the coroner of Glanfaba, denouncing those, who should in the time of Tynwald murmur in the king's presence. Accordingly, the people waited with an awful silence the future fate of their nation, in the promulgation of those laws which had for so many ages been industriously concealed from them. The venerable Deemsters then rising, with an audible voice, alternately published to this assembly several laws; which, though more an assertion of the king's prerogative, than a declaration of the rights of his subjects, were received by the people with reiterated acclamations.

Having thus, as he fondly imagined, established his prerogative on a permanent basis, he returned to England: and the people, no longer dazzled or intimidated by the

* See Chap. XI. of the Tour.

† Tynwald is derived from the Danish words Ting, a Court of Justice; and Wald, fenced.