

that Scotland had hitherto known sufficiently, but it was possible for it to be aggravated by the sceptre falling to a *female* minor, which it did at the early death of James V., who left it to his daughter Mary, a babe just born. This unfortunate queen assumed the reins of government in Scotland in the midst of a religious civil war. When she returned to Scotland she was the widow of Francis II., king of France; she married, in 1565, her cousin Henry Stuart,¹ lord Darnley.

Edinburgh-castle was the birth-place of their son, James VI. He was born June 19, 1566. During the short period in which his mother retained her regal authority after his birth, he was baptized, according to the Catholic rites, in Stirling cathedral, by the name of Charles James, December 17, 1566. His sponsors were Charles IX. of France, and queen Elizabeth of England; and the latter sent, as her gift to her godson, a golden font. Soon after the birth of an heir, the husband of the queen of Scots was murdered, and she was driven into captivity in England. A faction of the most turbulent of the Scottish nobility took possession of her infant and proclaimed him king, when a long minority commenced, the whole of which time was spent in civil strife of factions struggling who should reign in the child's name. Such had been the proceedings in Scotland, with some accidental variations, for six previous minorities, only the troubles and disasters of the minorities of queen Mary and of her son James VI. were aggravated by the furious struggles of three religions, the Roman-catholics, the Reformers, and the Calvinists. James III. had, in the preceding century, built and strongly fortified the beautiful castle of Stirling for the residence of his eldest son, or of any future heir of Scotland. In this castle queen Mary's infant was left, under the care of the earl of Marr, hereditary guardian of the heir of Scotland. His state-governess was Annabella countess of Marr. His cradle and chair, of carved oak, are still in the possession of the Erskine family, and are in perfect preservation.

¹ Eldest son to lady Margaret Douglas and Matthew Stuart, earl of Lenox. See biography of Mary I., queen of England, vol. iii., where lord Darnley and his mother are mentioned.