occasion many of the moſt illuſtrious personages in the kingdom were arreſted: the duke of Albany, his two sons, and the earl of Lennox the duke’s father-in-law, were put to death; though their crimes are not ſpecified by hiſtorians. Buchanan mentions a tradition, that James barbarouſly ſent to the counteſs of Lennox the heads of her father, huſband, and ſons; for the fol­lowing more barbarous reaſon, that in the bitterneſs of her grief ſhe might drop ſome expreſſions tending to involve others in the ſame cataſtrophe. The coun­teſs, however, calmly ſaid, “That, if the charges againſt the criminals were proved, they deſerved their fate.”

James now proceeded with great ſpirit to reform the abuſes which had pervaded every department of the ſtate, protected and encouraged learning and learned men, and even kept a diary in which he wrote down the names of all the learned men whom he thought deſerving of his encouragement. James himſelf wrote ſome poetry; and in muſic was ſuch an excellent compoſer, that he is with good reaſon looked upon as the father of Scots muſic, which has been ſo much admired for its ele­gant ſimplicity. He introduced organs into his chapels, and a much better ſtyle of architecture into all build­ings whether civil or religious. Neither did he con­fine his cares to the fine arts, but encouraged and pro­tected thoſe of all kinds which were uſeful to ſociety; and, in ſhort, he did more towards the civilization of his people than had been done by any of his predeceſſors.

In the mean time the truce continued with England. James, however, ſeemed not to have any inclination to enter into a perpetual alliance with that kingdom. On the contrary, in 1428, he entered into a treaty with France; by which it was agreed, that a marriage ſhould be concluded between the dauphin of France, afterwards Louis XI. and the young princeſs of Scotland; and ſo great was the neceſſity of king Charles for troops at that time, that he demanded only 6000 forces as a por­tion for the princeſs.

The reſt of the reign of James was ſpent in reform­ing abuſes, curbing the authority of the great barons, and recovering the royal eſtates out of the hands of uſurpers. In this, however, he uſed ſo much ſeverity, that he was at laſt murdered, in the year 1437. The perpetrators of this murder were the earl of Athol; Robert Grahame, who was connected with the earl, and who was diſcontented on account of his loſing the eſtate of Strathern, which had been re-annexed to the crown; and Robert, grandchild and heir to the earl of Athol, and one of the king’s domeſtics. The king had diſmiſſed his army, without even reſerving to him­ſelf a body-guard, and was at ſupper in a Dominican convent in the neighbourhood of Perth. Grahame had for ſome time been at the head of a gang of outlaws, and is ſaid to have brought a party of them to Perth in the dead of the night, where he poſted them near the convent. Walter Straton, one of the king’s cup­bearers, went to bring ſome wine to the king while at ſupper; but perceiving armed men ſtanding in the paſſage, he gave the alarm, and was immediately killed. Catharine Douglas, one of the queen’s maids of honour, ran to bolt the outer door; but the bar was taken away by Robert Stuart, in order to facilitate the entrance of the murderers. The lady thruſt her arm into the ſtaple; but it was inſtantly broken, and the conſpirators ruſhed in upon the king. Patric Dunbar, brother to the earl of March, was killed in attempting to defend his ſovereign, and the queen received two wounds in attempting to interpoſe herſelf betwixt her huſband and the daggers of the aſſaſſins. James defended himſelf as long as he could; but at laſt expired under the re­peated ſtrokes of his murderers, after having received 28 wounds.

After the murder of James I. the crown devolved upon his ſon James II. at that time only ſeven years of age. A parliament was immediately called by the queen-mother, at which the moſt cruel puniſhments were decreed to the murderers of the late king. The crime, no doubt, deſerved an exemplary puniſhment; but the barbarities inflicted on ſome of thoſe wretches are ſhocking to relate. Within leſs than ſix weeks af­ter the death of the king, all the conſpirators were brought to Edinburgh, arraigned, condemned, and ex­ecuted. The meaner ſort were hanged; but on the earl of Athol and Robert Graham the moſt cruel tor­ments were inflicted, ſuch as pinching with hot irons, diſlocation of the joints, &c. The earl of Athol, had, beſides, a crown of red-hot iron put on his head; and was afterwards cut up alive, his heart taken out, and thrown into a fire. In ſhort, ſo dreadful were theſe puniſhments, that AEneas Sylvius, the pope’s nuncio, who beheld them, ſaid, that he was at a loſs to determine whether the crime committed by the regi­cides, or the puniſhment inflicted upon them, was the greater.

As the late king had preſcribed no form of a regency in caſe of his death, the ſettlement of the government became a matter of great difficulty as well as impor­tance. Archibald earl of Douglas, who had been created Duke of Touraine in France, was by far the greateſt ſubject in the kingdom; but as he had not been a favourite in the preceding reign, and the people were now diſguſted with regencies, he was not formally appointed to the adminiſtration, though by his high rank he in fact enjoyed the ſupreme power as long as he lived; which, however, was but a ſhort time. He died the ſame year (1438); and Sir Alexander Livingſtone of Callendar was appointed to ſucceed him as governor of the kingdom, that is, to have the executive power, while William Crichton, as chancellor, had the direc­tion of the civil courts. This was a moſt unfortunate partition of power for the public. The governor and chancellor quarrelled; the latter took poſſeſſion of the king’s perſon and the caſtle of Edinburgh, to neither of which he had any right; but the former had on his ſide the queen-mother, a woman of intrigue and ſpirit. Her ſon was ſhut up in the caſtle of Edinburgh; and in a ſhort time there was no appearance either of law or government in Scotland. The governor’s edicts were counteracted by thoſe of the chancellor under the king’s name, and thoſe who obeyed the chancellor were puniſhed by the governor; while the young earl of Douglas, with his numerous followers and dependents, was a declared enemy of both parties, whom he equally ſought to deſtroy.

The queen-mother demanded acceſs to her ſon, which Crichton could find no pretext for denying her; and ſhe was accordingly admitted with a ſmall train into the caſtle of Edinburgh. She played her part ſo well,