**returned** from England, and arrived at Edinburgh within 24 hours after the aſſaſſination of Rizzio. The queen, knowing of how much conſequence it was for her to gain the earl of Murray, invited him to wait upon her. Notwithſtanding the extreme provocation which ſhe had met with, Mary ſo far commanded her paſſions, that ſhe gave him a favourable reception. After informing him of the rudeneſs and ſeverity of the treatment ſhe had met with, the queen obſerved, that if he had remained in friendſhip with her at home, he would have protected her againſt ſuch exceſſes of hardſhip and inſult. Murray, with an hypocritical compaſſion, ſhed abundance of tears; while the queen ſeemed to entertain no doubt of his ſincerity, but gave him room to hope for a full pardon of all his offences. In the mean time, however, the conſpirators held fre­quent conſultations together, in which it was debated, whether they ſhould hold the queen in perpetual capti­vity, or put her to death; or whether they ſhould content themſelves with committing her to cloſe cuſtody in Stirling caſtle till they ſhould obtain a parliamentary ſanction to their proceedings, eſtabliſh the Proteſtant religion by the total overthrow of the mats, and inveſt the king with the crown-matrimonial and the govern ment of the kingdom.

Mary now began to perceive the full extent of her wretchedneſs; and therefore, as her laſt reſource, ap­plied to the king, whom ſhe treated with all thoſe blandiſhments uſually employed by the fair ſex when they want to gain the aſcendency over the other. The king, who, with all his faults, had a natural facility of temper, was eaſily gained over. The conſpirators were alarmed at his coldneſs, and endeavoured to fill his mind with fears concerning the duplicity of his wife; but, finding they could not gain their point, they at laſt began to treat of an accommodation. The king brought them a meſſage, importing, that Mary was diſpoſed to bury in oblivion all memory of their tranſgreſſions; and he offered to conduct them into her preſence. The earls of Murray and Morton, with the lord Ruthven, attend­ed him into her preſence; and, falling on their knees before the queen, made their apologies and ſubmiſſions. She commanded them to riſe; and having deſired them to recollect her abhorrence of cruelty and rapaciouſneſs, ſhe aſſured them with a gracious air, that inſtead of deſigning to forfeit their lives, and poſſeſs herſelf of their eſtates, ſhe was inclined to receive them into favour, and to give a full pardon, not only to the nobles who had come from England, but to thoſe who had aſſaſſinated David Rizzio. They were accordingly ordered to pre­pare the bonds for their ſecurity and forgiveneſs, which the queen promiſed to take the earlieſt opportunity of ſubſcribing; but in the mean time the king obſerved, that the conſpirators ought to remove the guards which they had placed around the queen, that all ſuſpicion of reſtraint might be taken away. This meaſure could not with any propriety be oppoſed, and the guards were therefore diſmiſſed; upon which the queen, that very night, left her palace at midnight, and took the road to Dunbar, accompanied by the king and a few attendants.

The news of the queen’s eſcape threw the conſpira­tors into the utmoſt conſternation; as ſhe immediately iſſued proclamations for her ſubjects to attend her in **arms, and was powerfully ſupported. They ſent there­**

fore the lord Semple, requeſting, with the utmoſt hu­mility, her ſubſcription to their deeds of pardon and ſecurity; but to this meſſage ſhe returned an unfavour­able anſwer, and advanced towards Edinburgh with an army of 8000 men. The conſpirators now fled with the utmoſt precipitation. Even John Knox retired to Kyle till the ſtorm ſhould blow over. On the queen’s arrival at Edinburgh, a privy council was inſtantly call­ed, in which the conſpirators were charged to appear as guilty of murder and treaſon; their places of ſtrength were ordered to be rendered up to the officers of the crown; and their eſtates and poſſeſſions were made li­able to confiſcation and forfeiture.

But while the queen was thus eager to puniſh the conſpirators, ſhe was ſenſible that ſo many of the nobi­lity, by uniting in a common cauſe, might raiſe **a** powerful party in oppoſition to her; for which reaſon ſhe endeavoured to detach the earl of Murray from the reſt, by making him offers of pardon. Sir James Melvil accordingly pledged himſelf to produce his pardon and that of his adherents, it he would ſeparate from Morton and the conſpirators. He accordingly became cold and diſtant to them, and exclaimed againſt the murder as a moſt execrable action; but notwithſtanding his affected anger, when the conſpirators fled to Eng­land, he furniſhed them with letters of recommendation to the earl of Bedford. After the flight of the conſpi­rators, the king thought it neceſſary for him to deny his having any ſhare in the action. He therefore em­braced an opportunity of declaring to the privy council his total ignorance of the conſpiracy againſt Rizzio; and not ſatisfied with this, he, by public proclamations at the market-place of his capital, and over the whole kingdom, proteſted to the people at large that he had never bellowed upon it, in any degree, the ſanction of his command, conſent, alliſtance, or approbation.

In the mean time the queen granted a full and am­ple pardon to the earls ot Murray, Argyle, Glencairn, and Rothes, and their adherents; but towards the con­ſpirators ſhe remained inexorable. This lenity, to Mur­ray eſpecially, proved a ſource of the greateſt inquietude to the queen; for this nobleman, blind to every motive of action diſtinct from his own ambition, began to con­trive new plots, which, though dilappointed for a time, ſoon operated to the deſtruction of the queen, and almoſt to the ruin of the nation.

In 1566, the queen was delivered oſ a prince, who received the name of *James.* This happy event, how­ever, did not extinguiſh the quarrel betwixt her and the king. His deſire to intrude himſelf into her autho­rity, and to fix a ſtain upon her honour, his ſhare in the murder of Rizzio, and his extreme meanneſs in publicly denying it afterwards, could not fail to impreſs her with the ſtrongeſt ſentiments of deteſtation and con­tempt. Unable, however, totally to diveſt herſelf of regard for him, her behaviour, though cold and diſtant, was yet decent and reſpectful. Caſtelnau, at this time ambaſſador extraordinary from France, conceived that a reconciliation might be effected, and employed himſelf ſome time in this friendly office. Nor were his endea­vours altogether ineffectual. The king and queen ſpent two nights together; and proceeded, in company with each other, to Meggatland in Tweeddale in order to en­joy the diveriion of the chace, attended by the earls of Huntley, Bothwel, Murray, and other nobles. From