merits, and her kingdom, were high allurements to this nobleman; and as he was the greateſt ſubject of Eng­land, and perhaps of Europe, he ſeemed not to be un­worthy of them. The propoſal was very flattering to the admiration he entertained of Mary, to his ambition, and to his patriotiſm. The more he thought of it, he was the more convinced of its propriety. His acceſs to be informed of the practices of the regent, deſtroyed in him the operation of theſe ſlanders by which her ene­mies were ſo active to traduce her. In this ſtate of his mind, the lady Scroop, his ſiſter, who reſided at Bol­ton Caſtle with Mary, completely confirmed his resolu­tion. For from her he learned the orderly carriage and the amiable diſpoſitions of the queen of Scots. He was now impatient to have a fit ſeaſon to make her formally the offer of his hand.

Elizabeth in the mean time was thrown into confuſion by the refuſal of the regent to accuſe the queen of Scots. To give a poſitive anſwer to his doubts and ſcruples was not confident with her honour; and yet, without this condeſcenſion, ſhe was aſſured that the Scottiſh deputies would not exhibit their charge or cri­mination. Having deceived Mary therefore with fair promiſes, ſhe was active in gaining over the regent to her views; which having done, he conſented at laſt to prefer his accuſation againſt Mary before the commiſſioners, who now met at Weſtminſter by the command of Elizabeth. The charge was expreſſed in general and presumptive terms. It affirmed, that as James earl of Bothwel was the chief executor of the murder of king Henry, ſo the queen was his perſuader and counſel in the device; that ſhe was a maintainer and fortifier of this unnatural deed, by ſtopping the inquiſition into it and its puniſhment, and by taking in marriage the prin­cipal regicide; that they had begun to exerciſe a cruel tyranny in the commonwealth, and had formed a reſolution of deſtroying the innocent prince, and of tranſferring the crown from the true line of its kings to a bloody murderer and a godleſs tyrant; and that the eſtates of the realm, finding her unworthy to reign, had ordered her to reſign the crown, her ſon to be crowned, and the earl of Murray to be eſtabliſhed in the regen­cy. Before this accuſation was preferred, the earl of Lenox preſented himſelf before the Engliſh commiſſioners; made a lamentable declaration of his griefs, and produced to them the letters which had paſſed be­tween him and Mary concerning the murder, with a writing which contained a direct affirmation of her guilt.

The deputies of Mary were aftoniſlied at this accuſation, being a violent infringement of a proteſtation which they had formerly given in, and which had been accept­ed, namely, that the crown, eſtate, perſon, and honour of the queen of Scots, ſhould be guarded againſt every aſſault and injury; yet in all theſe particulars ſhe was touched and affected. It was underſtood that no judi­cial proceedings ſhould take place againſt her; yet ſhe was actually arraigned as a criminal, and her deputies were called upon to defend her. They diſcovered not, however, any apprehenſion of the validity of the charge; and while they fully explained the motives which actu­ated the earl of Murray and his faction in their pro­ceedings, they imputed to perſons among themſelves the guilt of the king’s murder. They affirmed, that the queen’s adverſanes were the accomplices of Bothwel; that they had ſubſcribed a bond conſpiring the death of the king; and that their guilt had been atteſted in the fight of 10,000 ſpectators by thoſe of their confederates who had already been executed. They exclaimed againſt the enormous ingratitude, and the unparalleled audacity of men, who could forget ſo completely all the obligations which they owed to their ſovereign; and who, not ſatisfied with uſurping her power, could even charge her with a murder which they themſelves had committed. They repreſented the ſtrong neceſſity which had ariſen for the fulleſt vindication of their miſtreſs; and they ſaid, that in ſo weighty an ex­tremity, they could not poſſibly ſuppoſe that ſhe would be reſtrained from appearing in her own defence. They had her inſtructions, if her honour was touched, to make this requiſition; and till it was granted, they inſiſted, that all proceedings in the conference ſhould be at am end. A refuſal of this liberty, in the ſituation to which; ſhe was driven, would be an infallible proof that no good was intended to her. It was their wiſh to deal with ſincerity and uprightneſs; and they were perſuaded, that without a proper freedom of defence, their queen would neceſſarily fall a victim to partiality and injuſtice. They therefore earneſtly preſſed the Engliſh commiſſioners, that ſhe might be permitted to preſent herſelf before Elizabeth, the nobles of England, and the ambaſſadors of foreign nations, in order to manifeſt to the world the injuries ſhe had ſuffered, and her innocence.

After having made theſe ſpirited repreſentations to the Engliſh commiſſioners, the deputies of Mary deſired to have acceſs to the queen of England. They were admitted accordingly to an audience; and in a formal addreſs or petition they detailed what had hap­pened, inſiſted that the liberty of perſonal defence ſhould be allowed to their miſtreſs, and demanded that the earl of Murray and his aſſociates ſhould be taken into cuſtody, till they ſhould anſwer to ſuch charges as ſhould be preferred againſt them. She deſired to have ſome time to turn her thoughts to matters of ſuch high im­portance; and told them, that they might ſoon expect to hear from her.

The biſhop of Rofs, and the other deputies of Mary, in the mean time, ſtruck with the perfidious manage­ment of the Conference, convinced of the jealouſies and paſſions of Elizabeth, ſenſible that her power over her commiſſioners was unlimited, and anxious for the de­liverance of their miſtreſs, made an overture for an ac­commodation to the earl of Leiceſter and Sir William- Cecil. They propoſed, that the original meaning of the conference ſhould ſtill be adhered to, notwithſtanding the accuſation which had been preſented by the earl of Murray; and that Elizabeth, diſregarding it as an effort of faction, ſhould proceed to a good agreement between Mary and her ſubjects. For this ſcheme, which is ſo expreſſive of their ſuſpicions of Elizabeth and of her commiſſioners, they had no authority from their miſtreſs. They acknowledged- accordingly, that it was made without her inſtructions; and intimated that they were moved to it by their anxiety for peace and the re-eſtabliſhment of the affairs of the Scottiſh nation. They were introduced at Hampton-court to Elizabeth; who liſtened to their motion, and was averſe front it. They then repeated the deſires of the petition they had preſented to her; but ſhe did not