rendered himſelf obnoxious to the beſt part of the no­bility, he was, in 1577, compelled to reſign his office into the hands of James VI.; but as his majeſty was then only twelve years of age, a general council of twelve peers was appointed to aſſiſt him in the adminiſtration. Next year, however, the earl of Morton having found means to gain the favour of the young king, procured the diſſolution of this council; and thus being left the ſole adviſer of the king, he hoped once more to be raiſed to his former greatneſs. This could not be done, however, without keeping the king in a kind of captivity, ſo that nobody could have acceſs to him but himſelf. The king, ſenſible of his ſituation, ſent a diſpatch to the earls of Argyle and Athole, intreating them to relieve him. An army for this purpoſe was ſoon raiſed; and Morton’s partiſans were in danger of being defeated, had not the oppoſite party dreaded the vengeance of Elizabeth, who was reſolved to ſupport the earl of Morton. In conſequence of this a negocia­tion was entered into, by which it was agreed, that the earl of Argyle, with ſome others, ſhould be admitted into the king’s council; and that four noblemen ſhould be choſen by each party to conſider of ſome proper method of preſerving tranquillity in the nation.

This pacification did not greatly diminiſh the power of Morton. He ſoon got rid of one of his principal antagoniſts, the earl of Athole, by poiſoning him at an entertainment; after which he again gave a looſe rein to his reſentments againſt the houſe of Hamilton, whom he perſecuted in the moſt cruel manner. By theſe means, however, he drew upon himſelf a general hatred; and he was ſupplanted in the king’s favour by the lord d’Aubigney, who came from France in the year 1579, and was created earl of Lenox. The next year Mor­ton was ſuſpected of an intention to deliver up the king to Elizabeth, and a guard was appointed to prevent any attempts of this kind. The queen of England endeavoured to ſupport her zealous partiſan; but with­out effect. He was tried, condemned, and executed, as being concerned in the murder of Darnley. At the place of execution, it is ſaid that he confeſſed his guilt; but of this the evidence is not quite ſatisfactory. It is however certain that he acknowledged himſelf privy to the plot formed againſt the life of the king; and when one of the clergymen attending him before his execu­tion obſerved, that by his own confeſſion he merited death in foreknowing and concealing the murder, he re­plied "Ay but, Sir, had I been as innocent as St Stephen, or as guilty as Judas, I muſt have come to the ſcaffold. Pray, what ought I to have done in this matter? You knew not the king’s weakneſs, Sir. If I had informed him of the plot againſt his life, he would have revealed it even to his enemies and thoſe concern­ed in the deſign; and I would, it may be, have loſt my own life, for endeavouring to preſerve his to no pur­poſe.”

The elevation of king James, and the total overthrow of Morton, produced no beneficial conſequences to the unfortunate Mary. In the year 1581, ſhe addreſſed a letter to Caſtelnau the French ambaſſador, in which ſhe complained that her body was ſo weak, and her limbs ſo feeble, that ſhe was unable to walk. Caſtel­nau therefore intreated Elizabeth to mitigate a little the rigours of Mary’s confinement; which being refu­sed, the latter had thoughts oſ reſigning her claims to the crown both of England and Scotland into the hands of her ſon, and even of adviſing him to uſe every effort in his power to eſtabliſh his claim to the Engliſh crown as preferable to that of Elizabeth. But being apprehenſive of danger from this violent method, ſhe again contented herſelf with ſending to the court of England ineffectual memorials and remonſtrances. Eli­zabeth, inſtead of taking compaſſion on her miſerable ſituation, aſſiduouſly encouraged every kind of diſorder in the kingdom, on purpoſe to have the queen more and more in her power. Thus the Scottiſh malconents finding themſelves always ſupported, a conſpiracy was at laſt entered into, the deſign of which was to hold James in captivity, and to overthrow the authority of Arran and Lenox, who were now the principal perſons in the kingdom. The chief actors in this conſpiracy were the earls of Gowrie, Marre, and Glencairn, the lords Lindſay and Boyd, with the maſters of Glammis and Oliphant. By reaſon of the youth and imbecillity of the king, they eaſily accompliſhed their purpoſe; and having got him in their power, they promiſed him his liberty, provided he would command Lenox to depart the kingdom. This was accordingly done; but the king found himſelf as much a priſoner as before. The more effectually to detain him in cuſtody, the rebels conſtrained him to iſſue a proclamation, wherein he declared himſelf to be at perfect liberty. Lenox was preparing to advance to the king’s relief with a conſiderable body of forces, when he was diſconcerted by the king’s peremptory command to leave Scotland; upon which he retired to Dumbarton, in order to wait for a more favourable opportunity. The earl of Arran, being more forward, was committed to cloſe cuſtody for ſome time, but afterwards confined only in his houſe of Kinneil. The rebels took upon them the title of “lords for the reformation of the ſtate.”

The clergy, who had all this time been exceedingly averſe to Epiſcopacy, now gave open countenance to the lords of the reformation. On the 13th of Octo­ber 1582, they made a ſolemn act, by which the *raid oſ Ruthven,* as the capture of the king was called, was deemed a ſervice moſt acceptable to all who feared God, reſpected the true religion, and were anxious for the preſervation of the king and ſtate; and every miniſter was commanded to declaim from his pulpit upon the expediency of this meaſure, and to exhort the people to concur with the lords in proſecuting the full deli­verance of the church, and the perfect reformation of the commonwealth. Not ſatisfied with this approba­tion of the clergy, the conſpirators got their proceed­ings approved by the ſtates of Scotland, as “a good, a thankful, and a neceſſary ſervice to the king.” At the ſame time it was enacted, that no ſuit civil or criminal of any kind ſhould ever be inſtituted againſt the perſons concerned in it. Soon after this, Lenox took his leave of Scotland, and ſailed for France, where he died.

The unfortunate Mary was driven to deſpair when ſhe heard that her ſon was taken priſoner by rebels who had been inſtigated by Elizabeth. In this diſtreſs, ſhe addreſſed a moſt ſpirited letter to Elizabeth, in which ſhe at once aſſerted her own innocence, and ſet forth the conduct of Elizabeth herſelf in ſuch language as muſt have put the moſt impudent of her adverſaries to