to carry them into effect, and instantly resigned his regency.

This ready and implicit submission was rewarded by the passing of an act of indemnity, which included a general pardon for any alleged transgressions, and ratified his whole conduct as regent. It is in his anxiety to procure this, that we are to find the secret of his sudden relinquishment of the supreme power ; and scarcely was it procured when this ex­traordinary man, by means of a successful intrigue with a portion of the family of Mar, found means again to become master of the king’s person, and re-emerged into as great power and ascendancy as before. His usurpation, however, was this time more short lived. Atholl, Argyll, and some of the most powerful nobles, assembled their forces, and de­clared their resolution to liberate the sovereign from his ig­nominious captivity. Instead of a battle, however, the op­posite factions came to a compromise, by which the veteran tyrant was shorn of a large part of his power, and the young king recovered something of his independence.

James began now to show that strong propensity to favouritism which marked his future career ; and the effects of this weakness were seen in the sudden rise into power of Esmé Stewart, duke of Lennox, and captain Stewart, second son of lord Ochiltree, and afterwards the notorious earl of Arran. Of these, the first was a high-born nobleman, of graceful address, amiable feelings, and common-place un­derstanding ; but the second, of birth and connections much inferior to Lennox, was ambitious, intriguing, daring, and un­principled, and soon managed to gain an influence over both the young king, and the duke his favourite. With these ad­vantages, an overwhelming opposition was soon raised against Morton ; and as his exactions and cruelty had made him uni­versally odious, it was in vain that his steady friend, the Eng­lish queen, interposed to save him. Her interference indeed rather accelerated his fate, and the news that she meditated an invasion, roused the spirit of the young king and of his people to instant opposition. When Elizabeth, however, received intelligence that a Scottish army was assembled, she prudently withdrew from the contest ; and Morton abandoned to his fate, was arraigned as an accomplice in the king’s murder, at the instance of captain Stewart, who had recently been created earl of Arran. Of his guilt there can be little doubt, and he himself, after the jury brought in their verdict, and he had received sentence of death, ac­knowledged that he was privy to the intended murder. But his trial was conducted, even in those days of prostituted justice, with a reckless disregard of every form of law ; and all were aware that the jury, of whom many were his bitter enemies, would, under any circumstances, have found him guilty. He died as he had lived, boldly, expressing a calm contempt of death, and exhibiting all the outward marks of repentance.

The death of Morton was followed by the nominal acces­sion of the young king to the supreme power, but by the actual transmission of that power into the hands of his fa­vourites, Lennox and Arran. This last nobleman, owing to the weak and flexible character of Lennox, soon came to rule all, and his rapacity, profligacy, and open defiance of pub­lic opinion, completely disgusted the nation. The result was a conspiracy for his ruin, headed by the earl of Gowrie. This nobleman and his associates having contrived to make them­selves masters of the king’s person, at the castle of Ruthven, and having removed Lennox and Arran from all authority in the state, directed the government as they judged best for their own interests. But the character of the king, al­though full of many strange contradictions, began now to exhibit a greater degree of talent and energy than his op­ponents were aware of ; and although compelled to dissemble, and showing no symptoms of discontent with this change of masters, James was really disgusted with the durance in which he was held by Gowrie and his faction. With an ability which proved the more successful, because his

adversaries were unprepared for it, he contrived to or­ganize a party, and free himself from his servitude ; but it happened unfortunately that at this crisis the earl of Arran regained his liberty, and returning to court, soon resumed his baneful influence over the fond and facile monarch. It was by his advice that the king, who had first been inclined to use his victory over the faction of Gowrie with modera­tion, exchanged this wise resolution for vindictive measures; and although Elizabeth strongly remonstrated against it, he brought Gowrie to the scaffold, and drove his associates into banishment.

Arran was now supremely powerful ; but the venality, tyranny, and abuses of his government, soon became in­tolerable, and worked their own cure by producing a counter-revolution, in which the despotic favourite, after having first courted, and then quarelied with the Scottish church, in vain attempted to recover his influence by means of the English queen, and was at last chased from court by the associated lords, who made themselves masters of the king’s person. A government, upon a model which admit­ted the principal nobility to a share in the councils of the state, was now established ; and Arran, deserted by all parties, sank into insignificance.

It was impossible that Mary, who had been detained a captive by Elizabeth, contrary to every principle of honour and justice, should not have exerted herself to regain her freedom ; and the Roman Catholic party in England were not only interested in her success, but regarded her as their best security against Elizabeth and the Protestant faith. This led to a succession of intrigues, which were discovered by the penetration and activity of Elizabeth’s ministers, the discovery only serving to increase the rigour of her confinement. At last the Scottish queen having been arraigned (unjustly as afterwards appeared) of an accession to the conspiracy of Babington, the object of which was the assassination of Elizabeth, and the restoration of the ancient religion, she was brought to trial before a commission, whose jurisdiction she at first peremptorily declined as an inde­pendent and sovereign princess. It was unfortunate for Mary that she did not continue in this resolution ; but in the idea that a refusal might be construed into an admission of guilt, at last condescended to plead. The consequence was, what might have been expected from the nature of the evid­ence, the constitution of the court, and the supreme authori­ty of Elizabeth. Mary was found guilty of having compassed divers matters tending to the death of the queen ; and after many affected delays, and an atrocious attempt to induce her keeper, Paulet, to dispatch her secretly, Elizabeth sign­ed the warrant for her execution, which was carried into ef­fect on the 7th of February 1587. The meekness with which she received the intimation of her sentence, and the admirble and saintly fortitude with which she suffered, formed a striking contrast to the despair and agony which not long afterwards darkened the death-bed of the English queen.

It might have been expected that if any thing could have roused the king of Scots, it would have been the cruelty and injustice to which his mother had fallen a sacrifice ; and for a moment there was an ebullition of indignant feeling. But Elizabeth sent him an artful apology. The blame of the execution was laid upon Davison, her secretary, an in­nocent and upright man, who simply obeyed heir orders ; and with that unscrupulous falsehood which this princess seldom hesitated to employ when necessary to carry through her designs, the unfortunate statesman was sacrificed, that his royal mistress might escape. But the English queen had still a firmer hold over the young king of Scots. He regard­ed the succession to her throne as his undoubt∣ed right, and dreaded to irritate her personal feelings, or alienate her Protestant subjects, by appearing to place himself at the head of the Roman Catholic party, who burned to avenge the death of their royal mistress. In vain, therefore, they