could obtain it. But, if Mary cannot be acquitted of the degree of complicity implied in accepting the conse­quences of the murder, many of the leading nobles were involved in equal guilt. On 19th April a bond asserting Bothwell’s innocence and urging Mary to marry him had been signed at Ainslie’s tavern, not only by Bothwell’s few friends, but by “a great part of the lords.” Most of those who signed had in the parliament just concluded re­ceived grants of land or remission of forfeiture, and it is urged by Mary’s defenders that they were bribed to acqui­esce in Bothwell’s designs. When the bond was after­wards put in evidence against them their plea was that they had been forced to sign it by Bothwell. It is con­tended on Mary’s behalf that with so many of the nobles committed to approval of the marriage she had no one on whom to rely. There is something in this argument; but it does not meet the point—Why did she rely on Bothwell? That a scheme was arranged before Darnley’s murder to entrap her into this marriage, in order to pave the way for her deposition, and that the casket letters were fabri­cated to clench her guilt, has been suggested ; but the facts necessary to prove so deep a train of conspiracy are wanting. The two Scotsmen who almost alone main­tained the character of honest men, Kirkaldy of Grange and Sir James Melville, who were so far from being un­friendly to Mary that they ultimately espoused her cause, believed that she was a willing victim and threw herself into Bothwell’s arms. The narrative in her own despatch to the bishop of Dunblane does not allege that she was forced, but only that “he partlie extorted and partlie obtained our promise to take him as our husband.”

The leading nobles were not disposed to accept a new master in Bothwell, whose vices, unlike those of Darnley, were coupled with a strong instead of a weak character. They kept jealous possession of the young prince, placed in the custody of Mar in Stirling ; and, when a muster was called to enforce order on the border, secretly collected their forces to act against instead of for the queen and her husband. Within a month of her marriage she was met at Carberry Hill, near Musselburgh (15th June 1567), by a force of the confederate lords, headed by Morton and Glencairn, Ruthven and Lindsay. Mary, after a fruitless attempt at mediation by Du Croc, the French ambassador, and an offer equally vain by Bothwell to decide the issue by single combat, surrendered to Kirkaldy. Both­well rode off to Dunbar with a few followers, and Mary was conducted to Morton’s camp. Once in their hands, the lords treated her as a prisoner, and confined her at Lochleven Castle, where she was forced to abdicate, sur­rendering the crown in favour of her son and committing the regency during the minority to Moray. The young king was crowned at Stirling on 29th July. The prudent Moray, who had kept out of the way in France while these events were transacted in Scotland, now returned and was installed as regent (22d August). Mary remained prisoner in Loch Leven for nearly a year. After her escape on 2d May 1568 the duke of Chastelherault and other Catholic nobles rallied round her standard ; but on 13th May Moray and the Protestant lords met her forces at Langside near Glasgow, and the issue of that battle forced her to fly to England, where she placed herself (19th May) in the hands of Lord Lowther, governor of Carlisle, recalling Elizabeth’s promises of protection. Mary, however, found that she was really a prisoner. Like Baliol, she disappears personally from the field of Scottish history ; but her life in exile, unlike his, was spent in busy plots to recover her lost throne. It became clear as time went on that she placed her whole reliance on the Catholic minority and foreign aid ; even in prison she was a menace to Elizabeth and ready to plot against her as an enemy. The Pro­

testant party increased in Scotland until it became a majority almost representative of the whole nation ; even her own son when he came to hold the sceptre, little in­clined as he was to accept Presbyterian principles, regarded her as a revolutionary element fortunately removed. Her knowledge of Babington’s plot for the invasion of England is proved, though her assent to the death of Elizabeth is still an open question. By her will, confirmed by her last letters, she bequeathed the crown of Scotland and her claim to that of England to Philip II. The letters contain this modification only, that her son was to have an opportunity of embracing the Catholic faith under the guardianship of Philip to save his own throne. There was no such reservation as regards that of England. The Armada, from whose overthrow date the fall of Spain and the rise of Britain as the chief European power, was due to the direct instigation of Mary Stuart.

Meantime, in Scotland, four regencies rapidly succeeded each other during the minority of James. The deaths by violence of two regents, Moray and Lennox, the suspicion of foul play in the death of the third, Mar, and the end scarcely less violent because preceded by a trial of the fourth, Morton, mark a revolutionary period and the im­possibility of the attempted solution by placing the govern­ment in the hands of the most powerful noble. Heredi­tary royalty, not the rule of the aristocracy, was still dominant in Scottish politics and a regency was an experiment already disparaged in the preceding reigns. Moray, said Sir J. Melville, “ was and is called the good regent,” mingling with this praise only the slight qualifi­cation that in his later years he was apt to be led byflatterers, but testifying to his willingness to listen to Melville’s own counsels. This epithet bestowed by the Protestants, whose champion he was, still adheres to him ; but only partisans can justify its use. He displayed great promptness in baffling the schemes of Mary and her party, suppressed with vigour the border thieves, and ruled with a firm hand, resisting the temptation to place the crown on his own head. His name is absent from many plots of the time. He observed the forms of personal piety,— possibly shared the zeal of the Reformers, while he moder­ated their bigotry. But the reverse side of his character is proved by his conduct. He reaped the fruits of the conspiracies which led to Rizzio’s and Darnley’s murders. He amassed too great a fortune from the estates of the church to be deemed a pure reformer of its abuses. He pursued his sister with a calculated animosity which would not have spared her life had this been necessary to his end or been favoured by Elizabeth. The mode of production of the casket letters and the false charges added by Buchanan, “the pen” of Moray, deprive Moray of any reasonable claim to have been an honest accuser, zealous only to detect guilt and to benefit his country. The reluctance to charge Mary with complicity in the murder of Darnley was feigned, and his object was gained when he was allowed to table the accusation without being forced to prove it. Mary remained a captive under suspicion of the gravest guilt, while Moray returned to Scotland to rule in her stead, supported by nobles who had taken part in the steps which ended in Bothwell’s deed. Moray left London on 12th January 1569. During the year between his return and his death several events occurred for which he has been censured, but which were necessary for his secur­ity,—the betrayal of the duke of Norfolk and of the secret plot for the liberation of Mary to Elizabeth, the imprison­ment in Loch Leven of the earl of Northumberland, who after the failure of his rising in the north of England had taken refuge in Scotland, and the charge brought against Maitland of Lethington of complicity in Darnley’s murder. Lethington was committed to custody, but rescued by