confederacy with the earls of Crawford, Moray, and Rofs, and appeared on all occaſions with ſuch a train of followers as bade defiance to royal power itſelf. This inſolence was deteſted by the wiſer part of the nation; and one Maclellan, who is called the *Tutor of Bomby,* and was nephew to Sir Patrick Gray, captain of the king’s guard, refused to give any attendance upon the earl, or to concur in his meatures, but remained at home as a quiet ſubject. This inoffenſive behaviour was by the carl conſidered as treaſon againſt himſelf; and violently ſeizing upon Maclellan's houſe and perſon, he ſent him cloſe priſoner to the caſtle of Douglas. As Maclellan was a gentleman of great worth and reputa­tion, his uncle Gray applied earneſtly to James in his favour; and ſuch was that prince’s regard for Maclel­lan, that he wrote and ſigned a letter for his releaſe, addreſſed to the earl of Douglas. Upon Gray’s deli­vering this letter to Douglas at his caſtle, the latter ſeemed to receive it with the higheſt reſpect, and to treat Gray with the greateſt hoſpitality, by inviting him to dinner; but, in the mean time, he gave private orders that Maclellan’s head ſhould be ſtruck off, and his body expoſed upon the green before the caſtle co­vered with a linen cloth. After dinner, the earl told Gray, that he was ready to obey the king’s commands; and conducting him to the green, he ſhowed him the lifeless trunk, which he ſaid Gray might diſpoſe of as he pleaſed. Upon this, Gray mounted his horſe, and truſted to his ſwiftneſs for his own ſafety; for he was purſued by the earl's attendants to the gates of Edin­burgh.

The conſpiracy againſt James’s government was now no longer a ſecret. The Lords Balveny and Hamilton, with ſuch a number of other barons and gentlemen, had acceded to it, that it was thought to be more powerful than all the force the king could bring into the field. Even Crichton adviſed James to diſſemble. The confederates entered into a ſolemn bond and oath never to deſert one another during life; and, to make uſe of Drummond’s words, “That injuries done to any one of them ſhould be done to them all, and be a common quarrel; neither ſhould they deſiſt, to their belt abilities, to revenge them: that they ſhould concur indifferently againſt whatſoever perſons within or without the realm, and ſpend their lives, lands, goods, and fortunes, in de­fence of their debates and differences whatſoever.” All who did nor enter into this aſſociation were treated as enemies to the public; their lands were deſtroyed, their effects plundered, and they themſelves impriſoned or murdered. Drummond lays, that Douglas was then able to bring 40,000 men into the field; and that his intention was to have placed the crown of Scotland up­on his own head. How far he might have been influ­enced by a ſcene of the ſame nature that was then paſſing between the houſes of York and Lancaſter in Eng­land, we ſhall not pretend to determine; though it does not appear that his intention was to wear the crown himſelf, but to render it deſpicable upon his ſovereign’s head. It is rather evident, from his beha­viour, that he did not affect royalty; for wſhen James invited him to a conference in the caſtle of Stirling, he offered to comply provided he had a ſafe conduct. This condition plainly implied, that he had no reliance upon the late act of parliament, which declared the proclamation, of the king's peace to be a ſufficient ſecurity for life and fortune to all his ſubjects; and there is no denying that the ſafe conduct was expedited in the form and manner required.

This being obtained, the earl began his march to­wards Stirling with his uſual great retinue; and ar­rived there on Shrove-Tueſday. He was received by the king as if he had been the beſt of his friends, as well as the greateſt of his ſubjects, and admitted to ſup with his majeſty in the caſtle, while his attendants were diſperſed in the town, little ſuſpecting the cataſtrophe that followed. The entertainment being over, the king told the earl with an air oſ frankneſs, “That as he was now of age, he was reſolved to be the father of all his people, and to take the government into his own hands; that his lordſhip, therefore, had no reaſon to be under any apprehenſions from his old enemies Callendar and Crichton; that there was no occaſion to form any confederacies, as the law was ready to protect him; and that he was welcome to the principal direction of af­fairs under the crown, and to the firſt place in the royal confidence; nay, that all former offences done by himſelf and his friends ſhould be pardoned and forgot.”

This ſpeech was the very reverſe of what the earl of Douglas aimed at. It rendered him, indeed, the firſt ſubject of the kingdom; but ſtill he was controulable by the civil law. In ſhort, upon the king’s perempto­rily putting the queſtion to him, he not only refuſed to diſſolve the confederacy, but upbraided the king for his government. This produced a paſſionate rejoinder on the part of James; but the earl repreſented that he was under a ſafe conduct, and that the nature of his confe­deracy was ſuch, that it could not be broken but by the common conſent of all concerned. The king inſiſted upon his ſetting the example; and the earl con­tinuing more and more obſtinate, James ſtabbed him with his dagger; and armed men ruſhing into the room, finiſhed the ſlaughter.

After the death of the earl oſ Douglas, the confede. racy came to nothing. The inſurgents excuſed them­ſelves as being too weak for ſuch an enterpriſe; and were contented with trailing the ſafe conduct at a horſe’s tail, and proclaiming, by trumpets and horns, the king a perjured traitor. They proceeded no far­ther; and each departed to his own habitation, after agreeing to aſſemble with freſh forces about the begin­ning of April. James loſt no time in improving this ſhort reſpite; and found the nation in general much better diſpoſed in his favour than he had reaſon to ex­pect. The intolerable oppreſſions of the great barons made his ſubjects eſteem the civil, far preferable to the feudal, ſubjection: and even the Douglaſſes were divi­ded among themſelves; for the earl of Angus and Sir John Douglas of Dalkeith were among the moſt for­ward of the rovaliſts. James at the ſame time wrote letters to the earl of Huntley, and to all the noblemen of his kingdom who were not parties in the confedera­cy, beſides the eccleſiaſtics, who remained firmly at­tached to his prerogative. Before the effect of thoſe letters could be known, the inſurgents had returned to Stirling (where James ſtill wiſely kept himſelf upon the defective); repeated their inſolences, and the oppro­brious treatment of his ſafe conduct; and at laſt they plundered the town, and laid it in aſhes. Being ſtill unable to take the caſtle, partly through their own diviſions, and partly through the diverſity of the opera-