retired from Leith to the caſtle of Edinburgh, and put herſelf under the protection of the lord Erſkine. At the period when ſhe was appointed to the regency, the lord Erſkine had received from the three eſtates the charge of this important fortreſs, with the injunction to hold it till he ſhould know their farther orders; and giving way to the ſolicitations of neither faction, he had kept it with fidelity. By admitting the queen- dowager, he yielded to ſentiments of honour and hu­manity, and did not mean to depart from his duty. A few only of her domeſtics accompanied her, with the archbiſhop of St Andrew’s, the biſhop of Dunkeld, and the earl Mariſchal.

The confederated nobles now aſſembled at Dalkeith to hold a council; and conforming to thoſe maxims of prudence and equity which, upon the eve of hoſtilities, had been formerly exerciſed by them, they invited the queen-dowager to an amicable concluſion of the preſent troubles. In a letter which they wrote to her, they called to her remembrance the frequent maniſeſtos and meſſages in which they had preſſed her to diſmiſs the French ſoldiery, who had ſo long oppreſſed the lower ranks of the people, and who threatened to re­duce the kingdom itſelf to ſervitude. The averſion, however, with which ſhe had conſtantly received their ſuit and prayers, was ſo great, that they had given way to a ſtrong neceſſity, and had intreated the aſſiſtance of the queen of England to expel theſe ſtrangers by the force of arms. But though they had obtained the powerful protection of this princeſs, they were yet ani­mated with a becoming reſpect for the mother of their ſovereign; and, abhorring to ſtain the ground with Chriſtian blood, were diſpoſed once more to ſolicit the diſmiſſion of theſe mercenaries, with their officers and captains. And that no juſt objection might remain againſt the grant of this their laſt requeſt, they aſſured her, that a ſafe paſſage by land, to the ports of Eng­land, ſhould be allowed to the French; or that, if they judged it more agreeable, the navy of queen Elizabeth ſhould tranſport them to their own country. If theſe propoſals ſhould be rejected, they appealed and proteſted to God and to mankind, that it ſhould be underſtood and believed, that no motive of malice, or ha­tred, or wickedneſs of any kind, had induced them to employ the fatal expedient of arms and battles; but that they had been compelled to this diſagreeable and diſtreſsful remedy, for the preſervation of their com­monwealth, their religion, their perſons, their eſtates, and their poſterity. They begged her to weigh the equity of their petition, to conſider the inconveniences of war, and to think of the reſt and quiet which were neceſſary to relieve the afflictions of her daughter’s kingdom; and they beſought her to embalm her own memory, by an immortal deed of wiſdom, humanity, and juſtice.

To give authority and weight to the letter of the aſſociated lords, the lord Grey directed Sir George Howard and Sir James Croft to wait upon the queen- dowager, and to ſtipulate the peaceable departure of the Engliſh troops, upon the condition that the French mercenaries were immediately diſmiſſed from her ſervice, and prohibited from reſiding in Scotland. Returning no direct anſwer to the applications made to her, ſhe deſired time to deliberate upon the reſolution which it be­came her to adopt. This equivocal behaviour correſponded with the ſpirit of intrigue which had uniformly diſtinguiſhed the queen-dowager; and it is probable, that her engagements with France did not permit her to be open and explicit.

The combined armies marched towards Leith. A body of the French, poſted upon a riſing ground call­ed *Hawk-hill,* diſputed their progreſs. During five hours the conflict was maintained with obſtinate valour. At length the Scottiſh horſemen charged the French with a fury which they were unable to refill. They fled to Leith with precipitation; and might have been cut off from it altogether, if the Engliſh cavalry had exerted themſelves. Three hundred of the French ſoldiers periſhed in this action, and a few combatants only fell on the ſide of the Congregation.

Leith was inverted. The pavilions and tents of the Engliſh and Scottiſh nobility were planted at Reſtalrig, and around it. Trenches were call; and the ord­nance from the town annoying the combined armies, a mount was raiſed, upon which eight cannons were erect­ed. A continued fire from theſe, againſt St Anthony’s tower in South Leith, being kept up and managed with ſkill, the walls of this fabric were ſhaken, and the French found it neceſſary to diſmount their artillery.— Negligent from ſecurity, and apprehenſive of no attack, the Engliſh and Scottiſh officers occupied themſelves in amuſements, and permitted a relaxation of military diſcipline. The French, informed of this ſupineneſs and levity, made a ſally from Leith, While ſome of the captains were diverting themſelves at Edinburgh, and the ſoldiery were engaged at dice and cards, they en­tered the trenches unobſerved, and, puſhing their advan­tage, put 600 men to the ſword. After this ſiaughter, the Proteſtants were more attentive to their affairs.— Mounts were built at proper diſtances, which, being fortified with ordnance, ſerved as places of retreat and defence in the event of ſudden incurſions; and thus they continued the blockade in a more effectual man­ner.

The army under the marquis D’Elbeuf, promiſed ſo often to the queen-regent, was in vain expected by her; but ſhe received, at this time, ſupplies in money and military ſtores; and Monluc biſhop of Valence, though defeated in dexterity by Elizabeth and her miniſters, had arrived in Scotland to try anew the arts of delay and negociation. Conferences were held by him with the queen-dowager, with the Engliſh commanders, and with the confederated nobles; but no contract or agreement could be concluded. His credentials neither extended to the demolition of Leith, nor to the recal of the French mercenaries: and though he obtained powers from his court to conſent to the former of theſe meaſures, they were yet burdened with conditions which were diſgraceful to the Congregation; who, in the preſent proſperous ſtate of their fortunes, were not diſ­poſed to give up any of the objects for which they had ſtruggled ſo long, and to the attainment of which they now looked forward with a ſettled hope and expectation.

Though the grave and meaſured orations of Monlue could not overpower the plain and ſtubborn ſenſe of the Congregation, yet as he affected to give them ad­monitions and warnings, and even ventured to inſult them with menaces, they appear to have conceived a high indignation againſt him. Under this impulſe, and