and to keep alive her gratitude for their activity. The lord James Stuart, who was intitled to her reſpect and eſteem from his abilities, and his proximity to her in blood, had merited rewards and honours by his public ſervices and the vigour of his counſels. After his ſucceſsful diſcharge of her commiſſion as chief juſticiar and lord lieutenant, ſhe could not think of allowing him to deſcend from theſe offices, without beſtowing upon him a ſolid and permanent mark of her favour. She advan­ced him into the rank of her nobility, by conferring up­on him the earldom of Marre. At the ſame time ſhe contributed to augment his conſequence, by facilitating his marriage with Agnes the daughter of the earl of Mariſchal; and the ceremonial of this alliance was cele­brated with a magnificence and oſtentation ſo extrava­gant in that age, as to excite the fears of the preachers left ſome avenging judgment or calamity ſhould afflict the land. They exclaimed with virulence againſt his riotous feaſting and banquets; and the maſquerades which were exhibited upon this occaſion, attracting in a ſtill greater degree their attention, as being a ſpecies of entertainment hitherto unknown in Scotland, and which was favourable to the profaneneſs of gallantly, they pointed againſt them the keenneſt ſtrokes of their cenſure and indignation.

The abilities of the earl of Marre, the aſcendency he maintained in the councils of his ſovereign, and the diſtinctions which he had acquired, did not fail to expoſe him to uncommon envy. The moſt deſperate of his enemies, and the moſt formidable, was the earl of Huntley. In their rivalſhip for power, many cauſes of diſguſt had ariſen. The one was at the head of the Proteſtants, the other was the leader of the Papiſts. Upon the death of Francis II. Huntley and the Popiſh faction had lent a deputation to Mary, inviting her to return to Scotland, and offering to ſupport her with an army of 20,000 men. His advances were treated with attention and civility, but his offer was rejected. The invitation of the Proteſtants, preſented by the earl of Marre, was more acceptable to her. Huntley had adviſed her to detain his rival in confinement in France till the Roman Catholic religion ſhould be re-eſtabliſhed in Scotland. This advice ſhe not only diſregarded, but careſſed his enemy with particular civilities. Upon her arrival in her own country, Huntley renewed his ad­vances, offering to her to ſet up the maſs in all the northern counties. He even converted in a preſſing manner upon this ſubject with her uncles and the French courtiers who attended her. Still no real attention was paid to him. He came to her palace, and was recei­ved only with reſpect. He was lord high chancellor without influence, and a privy counſellor without truſt. The earl of Marre had the confidence of his ſovereign, and was drawing to him the authority of government.

Theſe were cruel mortifications to a man of high rank, inordinate ambition, immenſe wealth, and who com­manded numerous and warlike retainers. But he was yet to feel a ſtroke ſtill more ſeverely excruciating, and far more deſtructive of his conſequence. The opulent eſtate of Marre, which Mary had erected, into an earl­dom, and conferred upon his rival, had been lodged in his family for ſome time. He conſidered it as his pro­perty, and that it was never to be torn from his houſe. This blow was at once to inſult moſt ſenſibly his pride, and to cut moſt fatally the ſinews of his greatneſs,

After employing againſt the earl of Marre thoſe arts of detraction and calumny which are ſo common in courts, he drew up and ſubſcribed a formal memorial, in which he accuſed him of aiming at the ſovereignty of Scotland. This paper he preſented to the queen; but the arguments with which he ſupported his charge being weak and inconcluſive, ſhe was the more confirm­ed in her attachment to her miniſter. Huntley then addreſſing himſelf to the earl of Bothwel, a man diſpoſed to deſperate courſes, engaged him to attempt to involve the earl of Marre and the houſe of Hamilton in open and violent contention. Bothwel repreſented to Marre the enmity which had long ſubſiſted between him and the houſe of Hamilton. It was an obſtacle to his greatneſs; and while its deſtruction might raiſe him to the higheſt pinnacle of power, it would be moſt ac­ceptable to the queen, who, beſide the hatred which princes naturally entertain to their ſucceſſors, was animated by particular cauſes of offence againſt the duke of Chatelherauit and the earl of Arran. He concluded his exhortation with making an unlimited offer of his moſt ſtrenuous ſervices in the execution of this flagi­tious enterpriſe. The earl of Marre, however, abhor­ring the baſeneſs of the project, ſuſpicious of the ſincerity of the propoſer, or ſatisfied that his eminδnce did not require the aid of ſuch arts, rejected all his ad­vances. Bothwel, diſappointed upon one fide, turn­ed himſelf to the other. He practiſed with the houſe of Hamilton to aſſaſſinate the earl of Marre, whom they conſidered as their greateſt enemy. The buſineſs, he ſaid, might be performed with eaſe and ex­pedition. The queen was in uſe to hunt the deer in the park of Falkland; and there the earl of Marre, unſuſpecting any danger, and ſlenderly attended, might be overpowered and put to death. The perſon oſ the queen, at the ſame time, might be ſeized; and by de­taining her in cuſtody, a ſanction and ſecurity might be given to their crime. The integrity of the earl of Arran revolting againſt this conſpiracy, defeated its purpoſes. Dreading the perpetration of ſo cruel an action, and yet ſenſible of the reſolute determination of his friends, he wrote privately to the earl of Marre, informing him of his danger But the return of Marre to his letter, thanking him for his intelligence, being intercepted by the conlpirators, Arran was confined by them under a guard in Kenneil-houſe. He effected notwithſtanding his eſcape, and made a full diſcovery of the plot to the queen. Yet in a matter ſo dark he could produce no witneſſes and no written vouchers to confirm his accuſations. He therefore, according to the faſhion of the times, offered to prove his informa­tion, by engaging Bothwel in ſingle combat. And though, in his examinations before the privy council, his love to the queen, his attachment to the earl of Marre, the atrocity of the ſcheme he revealed, and, above all, his duty and concern for his father the duke of Chatelherauit, threw him into a perturbation of mind which expreſſed itſelf violently in his ſpeech, his coun­tenance, and his actions; yet his declarations, in gene­ral, were ſo conſiſtent and. firm, that it was thought adviſable to take the command of the caſtle of Dum­barton from 'the duke of Chatelherault, to confine the other conſpirators to different priſons, and to wait the farther diſcovevies which might be made by accident and time.