ſelves, they engaged the king to ſubſcribe a bond, af­firming that the project of aſſaſſmating Rizzio was al­together of his own deviſing; acknowledging that he had ſolicited them to take a part in it, from the apprehenſions that reſiſtance might be made to him; and agreeing, upon the word and honour of a prince, to protect and ſecure them againſt every hazard and injury to which they might be expoſed from the atchievement of his enter priſe. Having procured this ſecurity, and having allured the earl of Lenox the king’s father to approve their meaſures, they adjuſted the method of the projected murder; and diſpatched a meſſenger to the Engliſh frontier, advertiſing the earl of Murray and the rebels of their intentions, and inviting them to return to the court.

Upon the 9th day of March, about 7 o’clock in the evening, armed men, to the number of 500, ſurrounded the palace of Holyroodhouſe. The earl of Morton and the Lord Lindſay entered the court of the palace, with 160 perſons. The queen was in her chamber at ſupper, having in her preſence her natural filter the counteſs of Argyle, her natural brother Robert com­mendator of Holyroodhouſe, Beton of Creicſh matter of the houſehold, Arthur Erſkine, and David Rizzio. The king entering the apartment, ſeated himſelf by her fide. He was followed by the Lord Ruthven, who be­ing waſted with ſickneſs, and caſed in armour, exhibi­ted an appearance that was hideous and terrible. Four ruffians attended him. In a hollow voice he com­manded Rizzio to leave a place which did not become him. The queen, in aſtoniſhment and conſternation, applied to the king to unfold to her this myſterious en­terprise. He affected ignorance. She ordered Ruth­ven from her preſence, under the pain of treaſon; de­claring to him at the ſame time, that if Rizzio had committed any crime, ſhe would produce him before the parliament, and puniſh him according to the laws. Ruthven drawing his dagger, advanced towards Rizzio. The queen roſe to make an exertion of her authority. The unfortunate ſtrangcr laid hold of her garments, crying out for juſtice and mercy. Other conſpirators ruſhing into the chamber, overturned the table, and increaſed the diſmay and confuſion. Loaded piſtols were preſented to the boſom of the queen. The king held her in his arms. George Douglas, Hatching the dag­ger of his ſovereign, plunged it into the body of Riz­zio. The wounded and ſcreaming victim was dragged into the antichamber; and ſo eager were the aſſaſſins to complete their work, that he was torn and mangled with 56 wounds.

While the queen was preſſing the king to gratify her inquiries into the meaning of a deed ſo execrable, Ruthven returned into their preſence. She gave a full vent to indignation and reproach. Ruthven, with an intolerable coldneſs and deliberation, informed her, that Rizzio had been put to death by the counſel of her huſband, whom he had diſhonoured; and that by the perſuaſion of this minion ſhe had refuſed the crown-matri­monial to the king, had engaged to re-eſtabliſh the an­cient religion, had reſolved to puniſh the earl of Murray and his friends, and had entruſted her confidence to Bothwel and Huntley, who were traitors. The king, taking the part of Ruthven, remonſtrated againſt her proceedings, and complained that from the time of her familiarity with Rizzio, ſhe had neither regarded, nor entertained, nor truſted him. His ſuſpicions and in­gratitude ſhocked and tortured her. His connection with the conſpirators gave her an ominous anxiety. Apprehenſions of outrages ſtill more atrocious invaded her. In theſe agitated and miſerable moments ſhe did not loſe herſelf in the helpleſſneſs of ſorrow. The loftineſs of her ſpirit communicated relief to her; and wiping away her tears, ſhe exclaimed, that it was not now a ſeaſon for lamentation, but for revenge.

The earls of Huntley, Bothwel, and Athol, the lords Fleming and Levingſton, and Sir James Balfour, who were obnoxious to the conſpirators, and at this time in the palace, found all reſiſtance to be vain. Some of them eluding the vigilance of Morton, made their eſcape; and others were allowed to retire. The provoſt and magiſtrates of Edinburgh getting intelli­gence of the tumult, ordered the alarm bell to be rung. The citizens, apprehenſive and anxious, approached in crowds to inquire into the welfare of their ſovereign; but ſhe was not permitted to addreſs herſelf to them. The conſpirators told her, that if ſhe preſumed to make any harangue, they would “cut her in pieces, and caſt her over the walls.” The king called to the people that ſhe was well, and commanded them to diſperſe. The queen was ſhut up in her chamber, uncertain of her fate, and without the conſolation or attendance of her women.

In the morning a proclamation was iſſued by the king, without the knowledge of his queen, prohibiting the meeting of the parliament, and ordering the mem­bers to retire from the city. The rebellious lords now

intitled, “Le Livre de la Morte de la Reyne d’Ecoſſe,” and printed in the year 1587, he is ſaid to be “diſgracie de corps.” Cauſſin, ap. Jebb, p. 37. This work, too, while it records the unkindneſs of nature to his perſon, has obſerved, that he was in his old age when he made a figure in the court of Mary. “Elle traittoit or­dinairement avec David Rſecio ſon ſecretaire, homme aagé et prudent, qui poſſedoit ſon oreille.” Ibid. And other authors give their teſtimonies to the ſame purpoſe.

It is probable that the panegyriſts of Mary exaggerate ſomewhat the imperfections as well as the good quali­ties of Rizzio. But there ſeems in general to be no reaſon to doubt his fidelity and talents, any more than his uglineſs and ſenility. He had therefore a better title to be her ſecretary than her lover. It is an abſurdity to think that a queen ſo young and beautiful would yield herſelf to deformity and old age. A common proſtitute muſt be brought to endure this misfortune. The capacity of the man was a recommendation to him; and as he owed every thing to her bounty, and was a ſtranger, ſhe had the greateſt reaſon to rely upon his faithfulneſs. The perſidiouſneſs and duplicity of her courtiers drew cloſer the tie of their connection; and as Rizzio was ſtudious to make himſelf agreeable, and was ſkilful in games of hazard, he was always ready to be a party with her **in** thoſe innocent amuſements which fill up the liſtleſs intervals of life. Keith. Append, p. 124.