that he was ſtill capable of ſucceeding to the crown of England, he conſented to make up matters, and to addreſs the murderer of bis mother by the title of loving and affectionate ſiſter.

The reign of James, till his acceſſion to the crown of England by Elizabeth’s death in 1603, affords little matter of moment. His ſcandalous conceſſions to Eli­zabeth, and his conſtant applications to her for money, filled up the meaſure of Scottiſh meanneſs. Ever ſince the expulſion of Mary, the country had in fact been re­duced to the condition of an Engliſh province. The ſovereign had been tried by the queen of England, and executed for treaſon; a crime, in the very nature of the thing impoſſible, had not Scotland been in ſubjection to England; and to complete all, the contemptible ſucceſſor of Mary thought himſelf well off that he was not a traitor too, to his ſovereign the queen of England we muſt ſuppoſe, for the caſe will admit of no other ſuppoſition.

During the reign of James, the religious diſturbances which began at the reformation, and that violent ſtruggle of the clergy for power which never ceaſed till the revolution in 1688, went on with great violence. Con­tinual clamours were raiſed againſt Popery, at the fame time that the very fundamental principles of Popery were held, nay urged in the moſt inſolent man­ner, as the effects of immediate inſpiration. Theſe were the total independence of the clergy on every earthly power, at the ſame time that all earthly powers were to be ſubject to them. Their fantaſtic decrees were ſuppoſed to be binding in heaven; and they took care that they ſhould be binding on earth, for whoever had offended ſo far as to fall under a ſentence of excom­munication was declared an outlaw.

It is eaſy to fee that this circumſtance muſt have con­tributed to diſturb the public tranquillity in a great de­gree. But beſides this, the weakneſs of James’s govern­ment was ſuch, that, under the name of peace, the whole kingdom was involved in the miſeries of civil war; the feudal animoſities revived, and daughter and murder prevailed all over the country. James, fitted only for pedantry, diſputed, argued, modelled, and re-modelled, the conſtitution to no purpoſe. The clergy continued their inſolence, and the laity their violences upon one another; at the **ſame** time that the king, by his unhap­

py credulity in the operation of demons and witches, declared a moſt inhuman and bloody war againſt the poor old women, many of whom were burnt for the imaginary crime of converſing with the devil.

In autumn 1600 happencd a remarkable conſpiracy againſt the liberty, if not the life, of the king. The at­tainder and execution of the earl of Gowrie for the part he acted in the raid of Ruthven and for ſubſequent practices of treaſon have been already mentioned. His ſon, however, had been reſtored to his paternal dignity and eſtates, and had in conſequence profeſſed gratitude and attachnrent to the king. But the Preſhyterian clergy continued to expreſs their approbation of the raid of Ruthven, and to declare on every occaſion that in their opinion the earl of Gowrie had ſuffered by an unjuſt ſentence. One of the moſt eminent and popular of that order of men was preceptor to the younger Gowrie and his brothers, who, from their frequent conversations with him, muſt have been deeply impreſſed with the belief that their father was murdered. The paſſion of revenge took poſſeſſion of their breaſts; and having in­vited the king from Falkland to the earl of Gowrie’s houſe at Perth, under the pretence of ſhowing him a ſecret treaſure of foreign gold, which he might lawfully appropriate to his own uſe, an attempt was made to keep him a cloſe priſoner, with threats of putting him to inſtant death if he ſhould make any attempt to regain his liberty.

The reality of this conſpiracy has been queſtioned by many writers, for no other reaſon, as it would appear, but becauſe they could not aſſign a rational motive for Gowrie’s engaging in ſo hazardous an enterpriſe; and ſome have even inſinuated that the conſpiracy was en­tered into by the king againſt Gowrie in order to get poffeſſion of his large eſtates. It has been ſhown how­ever by Arnot, in his Criminal Trials, with a force of evidence which leaves no room for doubt, that the con­ſpiracy was the earl’s, who ſeems to have intended that the king ſhould be cut off by the hand of an affaſſin; and the ſame acute and diſcriminating writer has made it appear highly probable, that he entertained hopes, in the then diſtracted ſtate of the nation not ill founded, of being able to mount the throne of his murdered ſovereign@@(z). From this imminent danger James was reſcued by his attendents the duke of Eenox, the earl of

@@@( z ) The family of Ruthven had long been looked upon as the head of that party which was attached to England and the reformation; and the accompliſhments of the latter Gowrie qualified him to be the leader of an enterpriſing faction. The importance he derived from ariſtocratic influence over his extenſive domains, and from the attachment of a powerful party in church and ſtate, was embelliſhed with the luſtre of a regal deſcent. Thus ambition, as well as revenge, might ſtimulate him to his daring enterpriſe. Indeed, if his attempt was to be directed againſt the life of the king, it could no longer be ſafe for him to remain in the condition of a ſub­ject: and the indecent and malicious imputation of baſtardy, with which the fanatics reproached king James, might afford a plauſible pretext for ſecluding the royal offspring. The family of Hamilton, next heir to the crown, had long loſt its popularity, and the earl of Arran, its head, had loſt his judgment; and, though there undoubtedfuly were ſeveral families interpoſed between Gowrie and the crown in the ſtrict line of fucceſſion, none of them probably poſſeſſed power and popularity to ſupport their right. But if Gowrie and his brother were really endowed with thoſe perſonal accompliſhments which have been ſo highly extolled, and which made their countrymen conceive the moſt *ſanguine hopes oſ their early virtues*; it is abſurd to ſuppoſe lord Gowrie to have flattered himſelf, that in a country where *the church was in danger,* where the trumpet of ſedition was found­**ed** by the miniſters, who fortified the *chief block-house of the Lord’s Jerusalem,* his piety, popularity, and bravery, ſhould ſupply the defect in title, and make him be called, while there were nearer heirs to the crown; as has ſince happened in the ſame country, on a ſimilar occaſion.