on every measure of the regent and the queen ; to represent the regent as avaricious and tyrannical, to accuse him of a design to seize the crown, and to insinuate that the king’s life was not safe in his custody. All of these tales are to be found in his correspondence with his master, Henry the Eighth, and there can be little doubt that the greater por­tion of them were false, and the whole grossly exaggerated. So at least we must judge from the conduct of the Scot- tish Parliament, which treated a message, soon afterwards sent by Henry the Eighth, and founded upon these idle accusations, with a calm and resolute denial. This monarch, acting up­on the impulse of the moment, and thwarted by the politic measures of the Regent, had dispatched a herald, who con­veyed a severe reprimand to the queen, and, at the same time, insisted that the Scottish nobles should instantly dis­miss Albany. Their reply to this haughty communication was spirited and dignified. They derided the fears express­ed for the life of the young king, declaring that Albany was a faithful servant of the country, and had been invited by themselves to assume the regency. “ Here it is our plea­sure,” said they, “that he shall remain, nor shall he be per­mitted or enjoined to depart at the request of your grace, or any other sovereign prince. And as to the threat of hostilities, (thus they concluded their answer), if, because we assert our own rights, we should happen to be invaded, what may we do but trust that God will espouse our just quarrel, and demean ourselves, as our ancestors have done before us, who, in ancient times, were constrained to fight for the conser­vation of this realm, and that with good success and honour?”

This answer was followed, on the part of Henry, by an immediate declaration of war. The earl of Shrewsbury, at the head of the force of the northern counties, invaded Scot­land on the side of the Merse and Teviotdale ; an English fleet ravaged and laid waste the coasts of the Frith of Forth ; and Albany the Regent retaliated by breaking into England at the head of a large army. He was driven to this solely by a desire to vindicate the national honour; for he seems to have been conscious of the disadvantages which attended a war with England, and he knew that the majority of the nobles were animated by the same feelings. Under these circumstances he wisely determined to follow Bruce’s prin­ciples as to war with this country, to avoid any protracted invasion, not to hazard a general battle, and while he showed a determination to maintain the independence of the country, and to resist any foreign dictation, to evince at the same time his readiness to conclude an honourable peace.

The same disposition being evinced by lord Dacre, the minister to whom Henry entrusted the management of Scottish affairs, a truce was concluded ; but Albany, on dis­banding his army and resuming his civil duties, found him­self surrounded with difficulties. Nothing indeed could be more complicated or irksome, than the various contending interests which he had to understand and reconcile. His engagements with France prompted him to continue the war with England ; his better judgment admonished him to remain at peace. Amid the universal corruption and selfish­ness which infected the body of the nobles, many of whom were in the pay of England, he looked in vain for any one to whom he could give confidence, or entrust with the execu­tion of his designs, while the queen-mother, with whom he had hitherto acted, betrayed him, and corresponded with Dacre.

The impossibility of overcoming these intricate evils with­out a more powerful military force than he could at present bring into the field, induced the Regent once more to pass into France, for the purpose of holding a conference with Francis the First, on the best method of reducing the English faction. A council of regency was appointed, con­sisting of Huntly, Arran, Argyll, and Gonzolles, a French knight, in whom Albany placed great confidence ; and after an absence of some months, during which the war again broke out with great fury, he revisited Scotland, bringing

with him a fleet of eighty-seven small vessels, in which he had embarked a fine body of six thousand foreign troops.

With this strong reinforcement he hoped to gain a pre­ponderating influence over the nobility, and to decide the contest with England ; but he was miserably disappointed. The presence of foreign troops, always unacceptable to a people jealous of their rights, was particularly so to the Scots, who were poor, and had to support the foreigners at a great expense. This rendered the war unpopular with the great body of the nation ; the queen-dowager was devoted to Eng­land; and the nobles, although prepared to assemble an army for the defence of the borders, were opposed to any invasion of England upon a great scale, or to a war of continued ag­gression. As many of these barons, however, were at that moment receiving pensions from France, the payment of which any too decided demonstration might have interrupt­ed, they artfully concealed their repugnance. An army of forty thousand men mustered on the Bcrough-moor beside Edinburgh, and Albany, taking the command in person, advanced to the borders ; but on arriving at Melrose the mask was dropped, the leaders showed symptoms of insubor­dination, the soldiers catching the infection, murmured against the foreign mercenaries, and discontent gathering strength, at last broke out in an open refusal to advance. No entreaties or threats of the Regent could overcome this resolution ; and after a short season, news arrived that the earl of Surrey, having assembled an army, was advancing against them. The intelligence of his speedy approach strengthened the Scottish nobles in their determination not to risk a battle. So completely had the majority of them been corrupted by the money and intrigues of Dacre and the queen-dowager, that Albany did not venture to place them in the front, but formed his advance of the French auxiliaries and his artillery, the single portion of this army which had acted with spirit. To have attempted to fight Surrey with these alone, would have been the extremity of rashness, to have awaited the advance of the English earl with an army which refused to proceed against the enemy, might have rendered defeat inevitable. In these critical circumstances, Albany, who has been unjustly attacked by some ill-informed writers, adopted the only alternative which was safe or honourable. He disbanded the Scottish portion of his army, and he himself retreated with his French auxili­aries and his artillery to Eccles, from which, after a short season, he returned to the capital, and here he assembled the parliament.

Its proceedings, as might have been anticipated, were distracted and impeded by mutual accusations and com­plaints. The Regent could not conceal his animosity to those leaders who had so recently deserted him almost in the presence of the enemy. The nobles recriminated ; they blamed him for squandering the public treasure, and not­withstanding the inclement season of the year, insisted on his dismissing the foreign troops, whose residence had be­come burdensome. All this was calculated to disgust and mortify the governor; and he requested permission to retire once more to France, for the purpose of holding a conference with Francis the First,and inducing him to grant him further assistance against the designs of England. His request was complied with, on the condition that if he did not return to Scotland within a limited period, the league with France, and his own regency, should be considered as at an end. In the mean season, the custody of the king’s person was en­trusted to the lords Cassillis, Fleming, Borthwick, and Erskine, while the chief management of affairs was com­mitted to a council., composed of the chancellor, the bishop of Aberdeen, and the earls of Huntly and Argyll. Having made these arrangements, the duke of Albany quitted the kingdom, convinced, in all probability, of the impossibility of reconciling the various factions and interests by which it was torn in pieces. Although he gave hopes that his absence