fiery zeal and popular eloquence soon gained over the Con­gregation, determined them to make a formal separation from the Catholic Church ; and although the reformer was once more compelled, probably by fears for his life, to retreat to Geneva, the danger appears soon to have passed, and the leaders of the Congregation, conscious of increasing strength, entered into that memorable bond or covenant, by which they engaged to establish the word of God, to maintain the gospel of Christ, to labour to have faithful ministers, and to execute judgment upon what they termed the superstitions and abominations of the ancient faith.

This bond was little less than an open declaration of war against the established religion ; and lest it should be mis­understood, the lords of the Congregation at the same time passed a resolution, declaring, that in all parishes the com­mon prayer, by which was meant the service book of Ed­ward the Sixth, should be read in the churches by the cu­rates, if qualified to perform this service, if not, by others in the parish who were qualified. It was resolved at the same time, that doctrine, preaching, and the interpretation of Scrip­ture should be used privately, until it pleased God to move the prince to grant public preaching by faithful ministers.

The Roman Catholic clergy received such a denunciation of the national faith with alarm and indignation ; and resort- ingonce more to those weapons which had already so deep­ly injured their cause, they deemed it expedient to hold up an example which should strike terror into the new converts. Walter Mill, a priest who had embraced the reformation, was seized, tried, delivered over to the secular arm and burned at St. Andrews. The people, however, only execrat­ed the cruelty of which he was the victim, and his last words were never forgotten. “ I am now fourscore and two years old, and could not have lived long by the course of nature ; but a hundred better shall rise out of the ashes of my bones, and I trust in God I am the last who shall suffer death in Scotland for this cause.” A pathetic declaration, and hap­pily prophetical.

Against this cruel execution, the lords of the Congrega­tion, Glencairn, Argyll, Morton, Erskine of Dun, and others, presented a remonstrance to the queen-dowager. It was im­possible, they said, that her Grace could be ignorant of the controversy which had arisen between them and the popish clergy, concerning the true religion and the right worship­ping of God. They denounced the power which was claimed by these priests of dictating their creed under the penalty of fire and faggot, and declared, that although hitherto they had remained quiescent under such abuses, they now were persuaded, that they, “as part of that power which God had established in the land,” were bound to defend their perse­cuted brethren. They proceeded still more boldly to state, that a reformation of abuses was necessary, not only in re­ligion, but in the temporal government of the state ; and after claiming for themselves the free right of assembling in public or private, hearing common prayers, and having the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper administered in the vulgar tongue, they concluded by declaring that they were willing that the controversy between themselves and the Catholic priesthood should be determined by a reference to the New Testament, the writings of the fathers, and the laws of the emperor Justinian. This declaration was soon after fol­lowed by a supplication to parliament, in which they re­quested that all statutes by which churchmen were empower­ed to proceed against heretics, should be suspended until the controversies in religion were determined by a general council of the church.

This petition was received by the queen-regent with con­cealed dissatisfaction, by the great body of the Roman Ca­tholic clergy with undisguised scorn and reprobation. It suited however the regent at this moment to dissemble. She required the aid of the protestant lords to carry her favourite measures in this parliament, the obtaining the crown-

matrimonial and the title of king of Scots for the dauphin; and intreating the lords of the Congregation to withdraw their petition and articles for a season, she promised them her protection, and a favourable consideration of their de­mands. To this they agreed, but under a protestation which was publicly read in parliament. It proved by the manner in which it was worded that they knew their own strength ; and, in the event of a refusal, were prepared to enforce their demand for liberty of conscience and a thorough reforma­tion of the church.

It was at this crisis, when the lords of the Congregation had taken their stand on the ground which they never af­terwards deserted, and when the queen-regent, having ob­tained her wishes, considered herself independent of their support, that Elizabeth succeeded to the throne, and Knox, who soon after his first return had left Scotland, again arrived in his native country. Both events produced the most important effects. It was one of the great principles of Elizabeth’s policy to increase her own security by weak­ening her neighbours; to accomplish which, she invariably fomented a secret faction which opposed itself to the exist­ing government. We have already seen how lightly the feudal nobility of Scotland were accustomed to regard the power of the crown or the laws of the realm, if they interfered in any prominent manner with their personal freedom or privileges ; and the history of the country, from the rebellion in the reign of James the Third, to the moment when they so recently refused to lead their forces against England, had exhibited little else than the total destruction of any balance between the fierce unbridled license of the aristocracy, and the decreasing influence of the crown and the laws.

Of those nobles who had been ready, without any feel­ings of shame, to renounce their allegiance to their country, and to be bought over by England, many had embraced the principles of the reformation. To men so long accustom­ed to make their personal interest the measure of their duty, and to think and act as they pleased, a revolution which contended for liberty of conscience and the license of pri­vate judgment, must have warmly recommended itself ; and when they considered the history of the English reforma­tion, and the appropriation of the church lands by Henry and Edward, they could not, we may believe, be totally dead to the lesson. The church of Rome in Scotland was compa­ratively as rich as her sister had been across the border; and if the reformation was to be as complete in their own coun­try as in England, it was not difficult for these shrewd barons to persuade themselves that they might imitate, perhaps im­prove the example.

Over an aristocracy of such a character, Elizabeth and her ministers at once perceived how easy it would be to acquire an influence. Her policy at home was to avoid war, and to enforce in every department of the state the most rigid economy. Her policy abroad, as already observed, was to give her neighbours full employment within their own realm, by secretly encouraging every faction which rose against the government. From the first moment of her accession, therefore, she favoured the leaders of the Congregation, di­rected their measures, supported them with money, and re­ceived from them in rcturn a respect and deference supe­rior to that which they paid to their own sovereign.

But if the effects of the accession of Elizabeth upon the body of the Scottish nobles, were important in reference to the reformation, the consequences of Knox’s re-appearance were not less momentous upon the character of the people. Hitherto the healthy patriotic feeling, the resolution to de­fend their independence as a separate kingdom from foreign domination and attack, had existed almost exclusively in the middle and lower orders, the commercial classes, and the la­bourers of the soil. But among these, the principles of the reformation had taken a deep root. They had adopted