them, not like many of the nobles, from interest, but from conviction ; and upon their minds the popular eloquence of Knox, his fiery zeal, his denunciations of superstition, his sarcastic attacks upon the ignorance and the vices of his opponents, produced a powerful impression. Till this period they had been wont to regard France as their ancient ally, and England as their ancient enemy. But France was now held forth to them, in the discourses of their favourite preacher, as their bitterest foe, because the enemy of their soul’s health ; while England was the land of gospel light, and its queen the princess to whom, as the bulwark of the truth, they ought to look with affection and admiration.

Such were the feelings of the Scottish nobles, and the great body of the people, with reference to the momentous struggle between the reformation and the Roman Catholic faith, which was now about to convulse the country. Had the queen-dowager continued to act with the same judg­ment and caution which had distinguished the commence­ment of her government, it is possible that the struggle might have been for a time averted ; but at this moment the powerful princes of the house of Guise deemed it expedient to join the league which had been concluded between the pope, the king of Spain, and the emperor, for the destruc­tion of the protestants, and the re-establishment of the ca­tholic faith in Europe. They immediately communicated with their sister, the regent, in Scotland ; and such was unfortunately their influence over her mind, that after a feeble resistance she joined the papal coalition.

This fatal step was followed, as might have been expect­ed, by an immediate collision between the two parties. In a convention of the clergy which was held at Edinburgh, in March 1559, the lords of the Congregation, in addition to the demands which they had already presented, insisted that bishops should not henceforward be elected without the consent of the gentlemen of the diocese, nor parish priests except by the votes of the parishioners. These proposals were met by the queen with a determined refusal. A pro­clamation was issued, commanding all persons to resort daily to mass and confession. It was declared that no lan­guage but the Latin could be used in public prayers, with­out violating the most sacred decrees of the church ; and the protestant ministers who had acted in defiance of these injunctions, were summoned to appear at Stirling, and there answer to the accusations which should be brought against them.

They accordingly did appear ; but it was with Knox at their head, and surrounded by crowds of their devoted fol­lowers, who were led by the principal barons of Angus and Mearns. On reaching Perth, however, it was judged expedient to attempt a measure of conciliation; and Erskine of Dun, a gentleman of ancient family, and grave experi­ence, leaving his brethren, proceeded to the court at Stir­ling, where he was admitted to an interview with the re­gent. He assured her that their single demand was to be allowed to worship God according to their conscience, and to secure liberty for their preachers. She replied, that if he would prevail on the Congregation to disperse, their preachers should be unmolested, the summons discharged, and their grievances redressed.

To this Erskine consented. He communicated the agreement to his brethren ; the people were disbanded ; and when the reformers looked for toleration and redress, the queen-dowager, with a perfidy which was as base as it was unwise, reiterated the summons, and on their failure to ap­pear, denounced the ministers as rebels. Such conduct inflam­ed the resentment of the Congregation to the utmost degree; and Knox having seized the moment to deliver a stern and impassioned sermonagainstidolatry,the people were wrought up to a state of high excitement. Observing a priest about to celebrate mass, after the preacher had retired, they burst in upon the altar, tore down its ornaments, shivered

the shrines and relics, and speedily demolished every monu­ment which seemed to savour of idolatry. From that mo­ment the fate of the Roman Catholic church in Scotland was decided. Having once broken through restraint, and found their own strength, the multitude rushed to the reli­gious houses of the Black and Grey friars, and inflicted on them an equally summary vengeance. They then attack­ed the charter-house or Carthusian monastery, which expe­rienced a similar fate ; and the infection of tumult and destruction spreading throughout the country, many excesses of the same kind were committed in the provincial towns. That Knox or his disciples directly advised such spoliation cannot be proved ; that the principles which he laid down, and his stern denunciations of his opponents as idolaters, led to these excesses, is certain.

The effects of such scenes on the queen-dowager, were to rouse her to instant activity, and to array the two parties in determined opposition to each other ; for although some of the protestant leaders, disclaiming all intentions of re­bellion, disapproved of the late violence, and still acted with the regent, their neutrality was so short-lived that it scarcely demands attention. It had the effect, however, of producing a momentary spirit of conciliation. The protest­ants presented an address to the queen, to the nobility, and to the Roman Catholic clergy. In the first they professed their loyalty, deprecated her injustice, and demanded li­berty of conscience, and the right of hearing their own preachers. In the second they vindicated their conduct to their brethren of the Roman Catholic nobility from the charge of heresy and sedition, while they upbraided those who first espoused and now deserted their cause. The third epistle to the Roman Catholic clergy, whom they broadly stigmatized as the generation of antichrist, was a denunciation of war, composed in that spirit of coarse and abusive railing which unfortunately marks the style of the early reformers. Such accusations were little calculated to produce pacific feelings ; but the queen-regent, who had assembled her army, finding it inferior in strength to the Congregation, proposed an armistice, which on certain con­ditions was accepted. The Congregation having bound themselves to each other in a new covenant, disbanded their forces, and for the second time, as they allege, were overreached by the treachery of the dowager, who, against a solemn stipulation, occupied Perth with a body of French soldiers, expelled the magistrates who favoured the reform­ation, and garrisoned the town with troops in the pay of France, though in reality Scots.

This unwise and unjustifiable duplicity had the worst effects. The lord James, afterwards the regent Murray, a young man of great talents and ambition, who had hither­to adhered to the regent, though professing reformed opi­nions, deserted her. Argyll, a powerful and influential nobleman, followed his example ; and, faithful to their re­newed covenant, the army of the Congregation assembled in strength at St Andrews. Knox in the mean time, whose voice, Sadler, the English ambassador, compares in his let­ters to the sound of a thousand trumpets, set out on a preach­ing tour through the country. Directing his powerful and po­pular eloquence against the evils of superstition, and the mi­sery of the thraldom which, by means of foreign mercenaries, the house of Guise were attempting to fix upon their coun­try, he so powerfully excited the people, that they deter­mined to take the reformation into their own hands, and levelled with the ground the monasteries of the Franciscan and Dominican orders. It was in vain that the regent ex­erted herself to check these popular outrages. The phrensy gained strength; the nobles and leaders of the Congregation felt proportionally encouraged, and advancing with their forces upon Perth, they opened a cannonade, and in a short time made themselves masters of the town. Stimu­lated to a high pitch of excitement by such success, the