steps taken by this unfortunate princess may have been, her friends alleged that victory in the conferences at York and Westminster was on her side. Yet was she detained a captive by the very princess who had virtually declared her guiltless. All this might however have been anticipated ; and no one who knew any thing of the unscrupulous policy of Elizabeth could have dreamed, that having once possession of the queen, she would ever permit her to return to her dominions. In her detention, she possessed the means of rendering Murray subservient to her wishes, of checking the Roman Catholic party, confirming the ascendancy of the protestants, and destroying the French interest and intrigues in Scotland. These were advantages with which no considerations of the individual guilt or innocence of her royal captive were likely to interfere.

The subsequent career of Murray was bold and brief. He found himself called to a contest with a party, headed by the duke of Norfolk in England, and by Maitland and Grange in Scotland, whose object was, the restoration of the Scottish queen, and her marriage to Norfolk. The project had been encouraged by the Regent, whether at first sincerely or for selfish and ambitious purposes, is not clear ; but in the end he betrayed the plot to Elizabeth, and was the main instru­ment in bringing this unfortunate nobleman to the scaffold.

The principles upon which his government was conducted were entirely protestant and English ; and Elizabeth, who knew well and valued so able an assistant, cordially co-oper­ated with him to overwhelm the queen’s friends, and to ex­tinguish all hopes of the Roman Catholic party in either country. But the task was more difficult than had been anticipated. She succeeded indeed in extinguishing the great rebellion, led by the earls of Westmoreland and Northum­berland; but Murray found it impossible to prevent the in­trigues of such men as Maitland, Grange, and their asso­ciates, who had known him long, and having assisted to raise him to the supreme power, were indignant to find them­selves treated with severity or neglect. It was in the midst of this struggle between the regent and his former associates in ambition and guilt, that he was assassinated in the streets of Linlithgow, by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, who was incited to this act of revenge by a private injury, of which Murray was only the remote cause.

His death found Scotland divided between two parties. On the one side were the Protestants who adhered to the young king, and regarded Elizabeth as their protector ; on the other the queen’s friends, who, being animated with the ut­most rancour against their opponents, prepared instantly to appeal to the sword. Previously to this, however, they as­sembled a parliament at Edinburgh, and fulminated denun­ciations of treason against their enemies ; while the pro­testants in their turn having chosen the earl of Lennox regent, convoked the estates at Stirling, and soon afterwards having made themselves masters of Dunbarton by a suc­cessful night attack, they took prisoner the archbishop of St. Andrews, who had shut himself up in the fortress, and exe­cuted him on the instant, without even the semblance of a trial. This outrage led to retaliation, and a civil war, re­markable for its ferocity, began to spread havoc through the country. On Mary’s side were the duke of Chastelherault, the earls of Argyll, Athole, Huntly, Crawford, Rothes, and Cassilis, the lords Seton, Boyd, Gray, Livingston, Fleming, with the lairds of Buccleugh, Fernihirst, and many others ; to whom we must add the able and crafty secretary Mait­land, and the experienced soldier Kirkaldy of Grange. Of the king’s party the nobles were neither so numerous nor so powerful. Lennox, Morton, Mar, and Glencairn, lords Lindsay, Glammis, Semple, Methven, Ochiltree, Cathcart, Ruthven, and some others, espoused this side ; but if inferior in numbers, they were confident in the assistance of Eng­land, and in the support of the church, the commons, and the boroughs.

Such was the general comparative strength of each fac­tion. Into the details of the contest we cannot enter; and in­deed it had lasted but for a short time, when Lennox was slain in a skirmish at Stirling, and the earl of Mar, one of the most upright-minded and honourable noblemen in Scotland, was chosen to supply the vacant regency. To promote a reconciliation between the two factions, and to restore peace, order, and security of property, to a country distracted by intestine war, was the single purpose to which the new governor devoted himself; but he was thwarted by the ambition of Morton, and many of the higher nobles. These had so long been accustomed to derive individual advantage from public misery, that they laboured as ear­nestly to increase the contentions of the two parties, as Mar to remove them ; and the governor, at last worn out by the struggle, and hopeless of effecting a reconciliation, sank into the grave.

He was succeeded in the regency by the earl of Mor­ton, a man who has been justly described as possessing all the faults, some of the talents, but none of the good qualities of the regent Murray, of whom he was an old and tried ally. Sordid and selfish, implicitly devoted to the service of Elizabeth, whose countenance and support he felt necessary to enable him to retain his power, a venal judge, a cruel unrelenting soldier, a hypocrite in religion, and a profligate in private life, it is difficult to find a single virtue to relieve the dark monotony of his vices. Yet Morton had some of the great qualities which distinguished the house of Douglas. He was brave, decisive, politic; and he possessed that rapid power of discerning the instant to act with success, and that deep insight into human character which is commonly acquired by men of talent, bred up in scenes of civil commotion.

On his accession to the supreme power, the regent found the friends of the imprisoned queen still able to make head against him. The duke of Norfolk, who had been pardoned by Elizabeth, resumed his project of marrying Mary, and engaged in a correspondence with her. The duke of Chas­telherault, and the earl of Huntly, lord Claud Hamilton, the lairds of Buccleugh and Fernihirst, with the indefatig­able Maitland, and Grange, who was reputed the best soldier in Scotland, still supported her cause. Morton, however, strong in his own resources, and supported by Elizabeth, continued the war with success, and at last triumphed over opposition. Norfolk was brought to the scaffold, and the earl of Northumberland, treacherously delivered up by the Scot­tish regent, shared a similar fate. At last the castle of Edinburgh was invested by Sir William Drury, who joined the Scottish army with a formidable battering train. In this fortress, the single remaining hope of the queen of Scots, Kirkaldy of Grange commanded ; and he held it bravely till the walls were destroyed, his guns silenced, and his provi­sions exhausted. Under these circumstances he surrendered, with his companion Maitland. To this step, Drury had in­duced him by a promise of favourable terms; but the English queen disregarded the stipulation, and handed over the pri­soners to Morton. Kirkaldy and his brother were imme­diately executed, and Maitland only escaped the same scaf­fold by taking poison.

Morton now deemed himself so strong as to be independ­ent of all parties, and his avarice and spoliations knew no bounds. He oppressed the church, of whom he had for­merly affected to be the steadiest patron; and treated the young king and the nobles with so much haughtiness and severity, that he soon became an object of universal dread and hatred. James was now twelve years old, and it was not difficult for a faction of the nobles, who detested the regent, to persuade the young monarch that he ought no longer to be treated as a child. Acting by their advice, he accordingly summoned a parliament. It was numerously attended ; and Morton, to the astonishment of all, the mo­ment he learned the king’s wishes, declared his willingness