Buchan ; he next visited Caithness, crossed the Pentland frith to the Orkneys, doubled Cape Wrath, steered for the Lewis, crossed over to Skye, circumnavigated Mull, swept along the shores of Argyle, and passing Kintyre, inspected Arran and Bute, whence he sailed up the Clyde to Dun­barton, where he concluded his labours.

The effects of this royal progress were salutary and deci­sive. The force with which James was accompanied se­cured a prompt submission to his commands, and inspired these remote districts with a wholesome dread of the royal name. Some of the fiercer and more independent chiefs, who affected a show of resistance, were seized and confined in irons on board the fleet; others, more gently treated, were yet compelled to accompany the monarch as hostages for the pacific behaviour of their followers; and all were con­vinced that any attempt to brave the power of the crown, must for the present be vain and ruinous.

This exhibition of increasing energy in the king only exposed him the more to the jealousy of those nobles whose power had been nourished by long intervals of license, and who now clearly perceived, that unless they were prepared to resign their rights, a struggle between them and their sovereign could hardly be averted. A proof of this was shown on James’s return to court from his northern voyage, when a conspiracy against his life was detected, the third which had occurred within no very long period. Like the rest it is involved in obscurity ; but the proof was considered as sufficient, and its author, Sir James Hamilton, commonly called the bastard of Arran, was tried, convicted and exe­cuted. It is said that the king was thrown into a state of great despondency and gloom by the discovery of this plot; that it opened his eyes to the manifold dangers which sur­rounded a prince at variance with his nobles; and that he began to feel that he was engaged in a contest in which they might prove too strong for him.

Whatever credit we may attach to these reports, the conduct of James gave decided proofs that he was deter­mined to continue the struggle; and in a Parliament which soon afterwards assembled in the capital, he strengthened his own hands by annexing to the crown the whole of the He­brides, by which we are to understand the isles north and south of the two Kintyres. But this was not all. To these new acquisitions were added the Orkney and Zetland isles, many extensive lordships, Jedburgh forest, and the demesnes of Angus, Glammis, Liddaldale, and Evandale.

In the want of contemporary evidence, it is difficult to decide upon the strict justice of this sweeping measure. It is possible that, by rigidly investigating the history of former rebellions, and present treasons, James may have persuad­ed himself that he was entitled to the forfeiture of all these large estates and principalities; but in such circumstances it had been the practice of former monarchs to parcel out the forfeited lands among his nobles who had preserved their loyalty; and in the measure now adopted, of annexing the whole to the crown, the aristocracy saw little else than their own intended ruin. It was in vain that the measure was followed by the publication of a general act of amnesty for all former treasons. The earl of Angus, Sir George Dou­glas, and the whole of their adherents were excepted ; and men observed that while the king’s generosity was vague and capricious, his aversion to those who had once injured him, was stern and immutable.

It is not easy to discover James’s exact opinions regard­ing the progress of the reformed doctrines, which now began to create great alarm in the Roman Catholic clergy. On the one hand he seems to have become convinced of the neces­sity for a reform in the church, and to have looked with a severe eye upon the idleness, corruption, and ignorance of a large portion of the clergy. He encouraged Sir David Lindsay, whose satire upon the three estates contained a bitter attack upon the prelates; and being himself much in­

volved in debt, there is reason to believe he regarded the overgrown possessions and extraordinary wealth of the clergy with certain longings to appropriate some portion of it towards the exigencies of the state. Yet, in the Parlia­ment to which we have just alluded, it was made a capital offence to argue against the supreme authority, or the spi­ritual infallibility of the pope; the discussion of religious questions in private meetings was interdicted ; a law was passed against the demolition of the shrines and images of saints ; and it was evidently the opinion of the king that the reformation should be made by the church itself, within itself, and under the sanction of its head the pope.

Such seems to have been the feelings and the policy of the sovereign. Those of another influential body in the state, the clergy, are easily detected. To counteract the intrigues of Henry the Eighth, and to check any incipient feelings of favour towards the reformation, the great reliance of cardi­nal Beaton and the Roman Catholic party was in the pro­spect of a war with England. To accomplish this, they had unfortunately ample materials to work upon. Henry the Eighth was violent and dictatorial ; James proud, and jeal­ous of his independence. The English king had espoused the interests of the banished house of Douglas, and fomented discontent among the rest of the Scottish nobles. James was animated by an unrelenting animosity to the earl of An­gus, the head of the house of Douglas, and to all who bore the name. Henry, instigated by the utmost hostility to the Roman sec, eagerly desired that his royal nephew should imitate his example, suppress the religious houses, and pro­claim his independence ; but the instructions to his ambas­sador, Sadler, upon this subject, contained expressions so personally insolent to James, that if obeyed, his mission must have occasioned disgust rather than conciliation. The English king requested a personal interview at York; and James, after a promise to meet him, broke the appoint­ment with Henry, who had proceeded to that city in expec­tation of his arrival.

At this crisis, the Scottish king evidently dreaded being prematurely hurried into war. He was in debt, he suspect­ed the fidelity of his nobles, he was well aware that a feudal monarch at variance with his barons, the sinews of his strength, was likely to be dishonoured and defeated. He had lately lost his only children, Arthur and Jamcs, and he be­lieved that Beaton’s anxiety for war was dictated by selfish motives, and influenced by his intrigues with Rome. Un­der these circumstances, public policy and personal feeling alike made him dread any immediate hostilities with Eng­land, and he endeavoured by an embassy to avert the rup­ture; but Henry, from the moment of his disappointment at York, would listen to no message of conciliation. War was resolved on, the cast and middle marches were put into a state of defence, Berwick inspected, musters raised in the north, and soon afterwards Sir James Bowes, with the force of the east marches, marched across the border. The ba­nished Angus, his brother Sir George Douglas, and a large body of the retainers of the Douglases, had joined him ; but they were encountered, and completely defeated by Huntly and Home.

This, however, was merely a preliminary outbreak; and as such border outrages had frequently occurred without drawing after them more serious consequences, James made a last effort to avert the storm, by sending commis­sioners first to York, and afterwards to meet the duke of Norfolk, who, at the head of an army of forty thousand men, had crossed the Tweed, and already given many of the granges and villages to the flames. It was in vain, how­ever, to attempt negotiation ; and aware that the crisis had arrived, the Scottish king commanded Huntly and Home, upon whose fidelity he had most reliance, to watch the pro­gress of Norfolk, while he himself assembled the main force of his kingdom on the Borough-moor near Edinburgh.