*the Black Prince,* invaded France, defeated king John at Poictiers, and took him priſoner @@\*; which unfortunate event produced the moſt violent diſturbances in that kingdom. The dauphin, now about 19 years of age, naturally aſſumed the royal power during his father’s captivity : but poſſeſſed neither experience nor autho­rity ſufficient to remedy the prevailing evils. In order to obtain ſupplies, he aſſembled the ſtates of the king­dom : but that aſſembly, inſtead of ſupporting his ad­miniſtration, laid hold of the preſent opportunity to de­mand limitations of the prince’s power, the puniſhment of paſt malverſations, and the liberty of the king of Na­varre. Marcel, provoſt of the merchants of Paris, and firſt magiſtrate of that city, put himſelf at the head of the unruly populace, and puſhed them to commit the moſt criminal outrages againſt the royal authority. They detained the dauphin in a kind of captivity, murdered in his preſence Robert de Clermont and John de Con­flans, mareſchals of France ; threatened all the other miniſters with the like fate ; and when Charles, who had been obliged to temporize and diſſemble, made his eſcape from their hands, they levied war againſt him, and openly rebelled. The other cities of the kingdom, in imitation of the capital, ſhook off the dauphin’s au­thority, took the government into their own hands, and ſpread the contagion into every province.

Amidſt theſe diſorders, the king of Navarre made his eſcape from priſon, and preſented a dangerous leader to the furious malecontents. He revived his pretenſions to the crown of France : but in all his operations he acted more like a leader of banditti than one who aſpi­red to be the head of a regular government, and who was engaged by his ſtation to endeavour the reeſtabliſhment of order in the community. All the French, therefore, who wished to reſtore peace to their country, turned their eyes towards the dauphin ; who, though not remarkable for his military talents, daily gained by his prudence and vigilance the aſcendant over his ene­mies. Marcel, the ſeditious provoſt of Paris, was ſlain in attempting to deliver that city to the king of Na­varre. The capital immediately returned to its duty : the moſt conſiderable bodies of the mutinous peaſants were diſperſed or put to the ſword ; ſome bands of mi­litary robbers underwent the ſame fate ; and France began once more to aſſume the appearance of civil go­vernment.

John was ſucceeded in the throne of France by his ſon Charles V. a prince educated in the ſchool of adverſity, and well qualified, by his prudence and experience, to repair the loſſes which the kingdom had ſuſtained from the errors of his predeceſſors. Contrary to the practice of all the great princes of thoſe times, who held nothing in eſtimation but military courage, he ſeems to have laid it down as a maxim, never to appear at the head of his armies ; and he was the firſt Euro­pean monarch that ſhowed the advantage of policy and foresight over a raſh and precipitate valour.

Before Charles could think of counterbalancing ſo great a power as England, it was neceſſary for him to remedy the many diſorders to which his own kingdom was expoſed. He accordingly turned his arms againſt the king oſ Navarre, the great diſturber of France du­ring that age ; and he defeated that prince, and redu­ced him to terms, by the valour and conduct of Ber­trand du Gueſclin, one of the moſt accompliſhed cap­

tains of thoſe times, whom Charles had the diſcernment to chooſe as the inſtrument of his victories. He alſo ſettled the affairs of Brittany, by acknowledging the title of Mountfort, and receiving homage for his do­minions. But much was yet to be done. On the concluſion of the peace of Bretigni, the many military adven­turers who had followed the fortunes of Edward, being diſperſed into the ſeveral provinces, and poſſeſſed of ſtrongholds, refuſed to lay down their arms, or relinquiſh a courſe oſ life to which they were now accuſ­tomed, and by which alone they could earn a ſubſiſt­ence. They aſſociated themſelves with the banditti, who were already inured to the habits of rapine and violence ; and, under the name of *companies* and *compa­nions,* became a terror to all the peaceable inhabitants. Some Engliſh and Gaſcon gentlemen of character were not aſhamed to take the command of theſe ruffians, whoſe number amounted to near 40,000, and who bore the appearance of regular armies rather than bands of robbers. As Charles was not able by power to redreſs ſo enormous a grievance, he was led by neceſſity, as well as by the turn of his character, to correct it by policy; to diſcover ſome method of diſcharging into foreign countries this dangerous and inteſtine evil ; and an occasion now offered.

Alphonſo XI. king oſ Caſtile, who took the city of Algezira from the Moors, after a famous ſiege of two years, during which artillery are ſaid firſt to have been uſed by the beſieged, had been ſucceeded by his ſon Peter I. ſurnamed *the Cruel;* a prince equally persidi­ous, debauched, and bloody. He began his reign with the murder of his father’s miſtreſs Leonora de Guſman: his nobles fell every day the victims of his ſeverity : he put to death his couſin and one of his natural brothers, from groundleſs jealouſy ; and he cauſed his queen Blanche de Bourbon, of the blood of France, to be thrown into priſon, and afterwards poiſoned, that he might enjoy in quiet the embraces oſ Mary de Radella, with whom he was violently enamoured.

Henry count of Traſtamara, the king’s natural bro­ther, alarmed at the fate of his family, and dreading his own, took arms againſt the tyrant ; but having failed in the attempt, he fled to France, where he found the minds of men much inflamed againſt Peter, on account of the murder of the French princeſs. He aſked permiſſion of Charles to enliſt the *companies* in his ſervice, and to lead them into Caſtile againſt his brother. The French king, charmed with the project, employed du Gueſclin in negociating with the leaders of theſe ban­ditti. The treaty was ſoon concluded ; and du Gueſ­clin having completed his levies, led the army firſt to Avignon, where the Pope then reſided, and demanded, ſword in hand, abſolution for his ruffian ſoldiers, who had been excommunicated, and the ſum of 200,000 livres for their ſubſiſtence. The firſt was readily promiſed him ; but ſome difficulty being made with regard to the ſecond, du Gueſclin replied, “ My fellows, I believe, may make a ſhift to do without your abſolu­tion, but the money is abſolutely neceſſary.” His Holineſs then extorted from the inhabitants of the city and its neighbourhood the ſum of 100,000 livres, and of­fered it to du Gueſclin: “ It is not my purpoſe (cried that generous warrior ) to oppreſs the innocent people.” The pope and his cardinals can ſpare me double the ſum from their own pockets. I therefore insist, that

@@@[m]\* See France n⁰ 44.