Francis, routed by the rising conſequence of his rival, reſolved to exert himſelf with freſh vigour, in order to wreſt ſrom him his late conqueſts in Lombardy. Lautrec received a ſupply of money, and a reinforcement of 10,000 Swiſs. With this reinforcement he was enabled once more to act offenſively, and even to advance within a few miles of the city of Milan ; wſhen money again failing him, and the Swiſs growing mutinous, he was obliged to attack the imperialiſts in their camp at Bicocca, where he was repulſed with great ſlaughter, ha­ving loſt his braveſt officers and beſt troops. Such of the Swiſs as ſurvived ſet out immediately for their own country; and Lautrec, deſpairing of being able to keep the field, retired into France. Genoa, which ſtill re­mained ſubject to Francis, and made it eaſy to execute any scheme for the recovery of Milan, was ſoon after taken by Colonna : the authority of the emperor and his faction was everywhere eſtabliſhed in Italy. The citadel of Cremona was the ſole fortreſs which remained in the hands of the French.

The affliction of Francis for ſuch a ſucceſſion of misfortunes was augmented by the unexpected arrival of an Engliſh herald, who in the name of his ſovereign de­clared war againſt France. The courage of this excel­lent prince, however, did not forſake him ; though his treaſury was exhauſted by expensive pleasures, no leſs than by hoſtile enterpriſes, he aſſembled a conſiderable army, and put his kingdom in a poſture of defence for refilling this new enemy, without abandoning any of the ſchemes which he was forming againſt the empe­ror. He was ſurpriſed, but not alarmed, at ſuch a de­nunciation.

Meanwhile Charles, willing to draw as much advan­tage as poſſible from ſo powerful an ally, paid a ſecond viſit to the court of England in his way to Spain, where his preſence was become neceſſary. His ſucceſs exceeded his moſt ſanguine expectations. He not only gained the entire friendſhip of Henry, who publicly ra­tified the treaty of Bruges ; but diſarmed the reſent­ment of Wolſey, by alluring him of the papacy on Adrian’s death ; an event ſeemingly not diſtant, by rea­ſon of his age and infirmities. In conſequence of theſe negociations an Engliſh army invaded France, under the command of the earl of Surrey ; who, at the end of the campaign, was obliged to retire, with his forces greatly reduced, without being able to make himſelf maſter of one place within the French frontier. Charles was more fortunate in Spain : he ſoon quelled the tu­mults which had there ariſen in his abſence.

While the Chriſtian princes were thus waſting each other’s ſtrength, Solyman the Magnificent entered Hungary, and made himſelf maſter of Belgrade, reckoned the chief barrier of that kingdom againſt the Turkiſh power. Encouraged by this ſucceſs, he turned his victorious arms againſt the iſland of Rhodes, at that time the seat of the knights of St John of Jeruſalem ; and though every prince in that age acknowledged Rhodes to be the great bulwark of Chriſtendom in the eaſt, ſo violent was their animoſity againſt each other, that they ſuffered Solyman without diſturbance to carry on his operations againſt that city and iſland. Liſle Adam, the grandmaſter, made a gallant defence ; but, after incredible efforts of courage, patience, and military conduct, during a ſiege of six months, he was obliged to ſurrender the place, having obtained an honourable ca­

pitulation from the sultan, who admired and reſpected his heroic qualities (ſee Rhodes and Malta). Charles and Francis were equally aſhamed of having occaſioned ſuch a loſs to Chriſtendom by their conteſts ; and the emperor, by way of reparation, granted to the knights of St John the ſmall iſland of Malta, where they fixed their reſidence, and continued long to retain their an­cient ſpirit, though much diminiſhed in power and ſplendour.

Adrian VI. though the creature of the emperor, and devoted to his intereſt, endeavoured to aſſume the impartiality which became the common father of Chriſtendom, and laboured to reconcile the contending princes, that they might unite in a league againſt Solyman, whoſe conqueſt of Rhodes rendered him more formi­dable than ever to Europe. The Italian ſtates were no leſs deſirous of peace than the pope : and ſo much regard was paid by the hoſtile powers to the exhortations of his holineſs, and to a bull which he iſsued, requiring all Chriſtian princes to conſent to a truce for three years, that the imperial, the French, and the Engliſh ambaſſadors at Rome, were empowered to treat of that matter ; but while they wasted their time in ſruitleſs negociations, their maſters were continuing their pre­parations for war ; and other negociations ſoon took place. The confederacy againſt France became more formidable than ever.

The Venetians, who had hitherto adhered to the French intereſt, formed engagements with the emperor for ſecuring Francis Sforza in the poſſeſſion of the duchy of Milan ; and the pope, from a perſuaſion that the ambition of the French monarch was the only obſtacle to peace, acceded to the ſame alliance. The Florentines, the dukes of Ferrara and Mantua, and all the Italian powers, followed this example. Francis was left without a ſingle ally, to refill the efforts of a mul­titude of enemies, whoſe armies everywhere threatened, and whoſe territories encompaſſed his dominions. The emperor in perſon menaced France with an invaſion on the ſide of Guienne ; the forces of England, and the Netherlands hovered over Picardy, and a numerous bo­dy of Germans was preparing to ravage Burgundy.

The dread of ſo many and ſuch powerful adversaries, it was thought, would have obliged Francis to keep wholly on the deſenſive, or at leaſt have prevented him from entertaining any thoughts of marching into Italy. But before his enemies were able to ſtiike a blow, Francis had aſſembled a great army, with which he ho­ped to diſconcert all the emperor’s ſchemes, by march­ing it in perſon into Italy : and this bold measure, the more formidable becauſe unexpected, could ſcarcely have failed of the desired effect, had it been immediately car­ried into execution. But the diſcovery of a domeſtic conſpiracy, which threatened the destruction of his kingdom, obliged Francis to ſtop ſhort at Lyons.

Charles duke of Bourbon, lord high conſtable of France, was a prince of the moſt ſhining merit : his great talents equally fitted him tor the council or the field, while his eminent services to the crown intitled him to its firſt favour. But unhappily Louiſa ducheſs of Angouleme, the king’s mother, had contracted a violent averſion againſt the houſe of Bourbon, and had taught her ſon, over whom ſhe had acquired an abſolute aſoendant, to view all the conſtable’s actions with a jea­lous eye. After repeated affronts he retired from court,