and began to liſten to the advances of the emperor’s miniſters. Meantime the ducheſs of Bourbon died ; and as the conſtable was no leſs amiable than accompliſhed, the ducheſs of Angouleme, ſtill ſuſceptible of the tender paſſions, formed the ſcheme of marrying him. But Bourbon, who might have expected every thing to which an ambitious mind can aſpire, from the doating fondneſs of a woman who governed her ſon and the kingdom, incapable of imitating Louiſa in her ſudden transition from hate to love, or of meanly counterfeit­ing apaſſion for one who had ſo long purſued him with unprovoked malice, rejected the match with diſdain, and turned the propoſal into ridicule. At once deſpiſed and inſulted by the man whom love only could have made her ceaſe to perſecute, Louiſa was filled with all the rage of disappointed woman ; ſhe reſolved to ruin, ſince ſhe could not marry, Bourbon. For this purpoſe ſhe commenced an iniquitous suit againſt him ; and by the chicanery of chancellor du Prat, the conſtable was ſtripped of his whole family-eſtate. Driven to deſpair by so many injuries, he entered into a ſecret correſpondence with the emperor and the king of England ; and he propoſed, as ſoon as Francis ſhould have croſſed the Alps, to raiſe an inſurrection among his numerous vaſſals, and introduce foreign enemies into the heart of France.

Happily Francis got intimation of this conſpiracy before he left the kingdom ; but not being sufficiently convinced of the Conſtable’s guilt, he suffered ſo dan­gerous a foe to eſcape ; and Bourbon entering into the emperor’s ſervice, employed all the force of his enterpriſing genius, and his great talents for war, to the prejudice of his prince and his native country.

In conſequence of the diſcovery of this plot, and the eſcape of the powerful conſpirator, Francis relinquiſhed his intention of leading his army in perſon into Italy. He was ignorant how far the infection had ſpread among his ſubjects, and afraid that his abſence might encourage them to make ſome deſperate attempt in fa­vour of a man ſo much beloved. He did not, however, abandon his design on the Milaneſe, but ſent forward an army of 30,000 men, under the command of admi­ral Bonnivet. Colonna, who was entruſted with the defence of that duchy, was in no condition to reſiſt ſuch a force ; and the city of Milan, on which the whole territory depends, muſt have fallen into the hands of the French, had not Bonnivet, who posseſſed none of the talents of a general, wasted his time in frivolous enterpriſes, till the inhabitants recovered from their conſternation. The imperial army was reinforced. Colonna died ; and Lannoy, viceroy of Naples, ſuc­ceeded him in the command : but the chief direction of military operations was committed to Bourbon and the marquis de Peſcara, the greateſt generals of their age. Bonnivet, deſtitute of troops to oppoſe this new army, and ſtill more of the talents which could render him a match for its leaders, after various movements and encounters, was reduced to the neceſſity of attempt­ing a retreat into France. He was followed by the im­perial generals, and routed at Biagraſſa, where the fa­mous chevalier Bayard was killed.

The emperor and his allies were leſs ſucceſsful in their attempts upon France. They were baffled in every quarter : and Francis, though ſtripped of his Italian dominions, might ſtill have enjoyed in ſafety

the glory of having defended his native kingdom againſt one half of Europe, and have bid defiance to all his enemies ; but underſtanding that the king of England, diſcouraged by his former fruitleſs enterpriſes, and diſguſted with the emperor, was making no preparations for any attempt on Picardy, his ancient ardour ſeized him for the conqueſt of Milan, and he determined, not- withſtanding the advanced ſeaſon, to march into Italy.

The French army no ſooner appeared in Piedmont, than the whole Milaneſe was thrown into conſternation. The capital opened its gates. The forces of the empe­ror and Sforza retired to Lodi : and had Francis been ſo fortunate as to purſue them, they muſt have aban­doned that poſt, and been totally diſperſed ; but his evil genius led him to beſiege Pavia, a town of conſi­derable ſtrength, well garriſoned, and defended by An­tonio de Leyva, one of the braveſt officers in the Spaniſh ſervice ; before which place he was defeated and taken priſoner on the twenty-fourth day of February 1524∙

The captivity of Francis filled all Europe with alarm. Almoſt the whole French army was cut off; Milan was immediately abandoned ; and in a few weeks not a Frenchman was left in Italy. The power of the em­peror, and ſtill more his ambition, became an object of univerſal terror; and reſolutions were everywhere taken to ſet bounds to it. Meanwhile Francis, deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of his misfortune, wrote to his mo­ther Louiſa, whom he had left regent of the kingdom, the following ſhort but expreſſive letter : .“ All, Ma­dam, is loſt but honour.” The ſame courier that car­ried this letter, carried alſo dispatches to Charles ; who received the news of the ſignal and unexpected ſucceſs which had crowned his arms with the moſt hypocritical moderation. He would not ſuffer any public rejoicings to be made on account of it ; and ſaid, he only valued it, as it would prove the occaſion of reſtoring peace to Chriſtendom. Louiſa, however, did not truſt to thoſe appearances ; if ſhe could not preſerve what was yet left, ſhe determined at leaſt that nothing ſhould be loſt through her negligence or weakneſs. Inſtead of giving herſelf up to ſuch lamentations as were natural to a wo­man ſo remarkable for maternal tenderneſs, ſhe diſco­vered all the foresight, and exerted all the activity, of a conſummate politician. She took every poſſible mea­ſure for putting the kingdom in a poſture of defence, while ſhe employed all her addreſs to appeaſe the reſentment and to gain the friendſhip of England ; and a ray of comfort from that quarter ſoon broke in upon the French affairs.

Though Henry VIII. had not entered into the war againſt France from any concerted political views, he had always retained ſome imperfect idea of that balance of power which it was neceſſary to maintain between Charles and Francis ; and the preſervation of which he boaſted to be his peculiar office. By his alliance with the emperor, he hoped to recover ſome part of thoſe territories on the continent which had belonged to his anceſtors ; and therefore willingly contributed to give him the aſcendency above his rival ; but having never dreamt of any event ſo decisive and fatal as the victory at Pavia, which ſeemed not only to have broken, but to have annihilated the power of Francis, he now became ſenſible of his own danger, as well as that of all Europe, from the loss of a proper counterpoiſe to the power of