The Swiss in these circumstances began to look towards Louis XI. of France, who had confirmed the treaty pf friendship made with them by his father in 1452. Sigismund had applied to him early in 1469 to help him in his many troubles, and to give him aid against the Swiss, but Louis had point-blank refused. Anxious to secure their neutrality in case of his war with Charles, he made a treaty with them on the 13th of August 1470 to this effect. All the evidence goes to show that Sigismund was not a tool in the hands of Louis, and that Louis, at least at that time, had no definite intention of involving Charles and the Swiss in a war, but wished only to secure his own flank.

Sigismund in the next few years tried hard to get from Charles the promised aid against the Swiss (the money was paid punctually enough by Charles on his behalf), who put him off with various excuses. Charles on his side, in 1471-1472, tried to make an alliance with the Swiss, his efforts being supported by a party in Bern headed by Adrian von Bubenberg. Probably Charles wished to use both Sigismund and the Swiss to further his own interests, but his shifty policy had the effect of alienating both from him. Sigismund, disgusted with Charles, now inclined towards Louis, whose ally he formally became in the summer of 1473—a change which was the real cause of the emperor’s flight from Treves in November 1473, when he had come there expressly to crown Charles. The Confederates on their side were greatly moved by the oppression of their friends and allies in Alsace by Hagenbach,and tried in vain (January 1474) to obtain some redress from his master. Charles’s too astute policy had thus lost him both Sigismund and the Swiss. They now looked upon Louis, who, thoroughly aware of Charles’s ambition, and flaring that his disappointment at Treves would soon lead to open war, aimed at a master stroke—no less than the reconciliation of Sigismund and the Swiss. This on the face of it seemed impracticable, but common need and Louis’s dexterous management brought it to pass, so that on the 30th of March 1474 the Everlasting Compact was signed at Constance, by which Sigismund finally renounced all Austrian claims on the lands of the Confederates, and guaran­teed them in quiet enjoyment to them; they, on the other hand, agreed to support him if Charles did not give up the mortgaged lands when the money was paid down. The next day the Swiss joined the league of the Alsatian and Rhine cities, as also did Sigismund. Charles was called on to receive the money contributed by the Alsatian cities, and to restore his lands to Sigismund. He, however, took no steps. Within a week the oppressive bailiff Hagenbach was captured, and a month later (May 9,1474) he was put to death, Bern alone of the Confederates being represented. On the 9th of October the emperor, acting of course at the instance of Sigismund, ordered them to declare war against Charles, which took place on the 25th of October. Next day Louis formally ratified his alliance with the Con­federates, promising money and pensions, the latter to be increased if he did not send men. Throughout these negotiations and later Bern directs Swiss policy, though all the Confederates are not quite agreed. She was specially exposed to attack from Charles and Charles’s ally (since 1468) Savoy, and her best chance of extending her territory lay towards the west and south. A forward policy was thus distinctly the best for Bern, and this was the line supported by the French party under Nicholas von Diesbach, Adrian von Bubenberg opposing it, though not with any idea of handing over Bern to Charles. The Forest districts, however, were very suspicious of this movement to the west, by which Bern alone could profit, though the League as a whole might lose; then, too, Uri had in 1440 finally won the Val Leventina, and she and her neighbours favoured a southerly policy—a policy which was crowned with success after the gallant victory won at Giornico in 1478 by a handful of men from Zürich, Lucerne, Uri and Schwyz over 12,000 Milanese troops. Thus Uri first gained a permanent footing south of the Alps, not long before Bern won its first conquests from Savoy.

The war in the west was begun by Bern and her allies (Fribourg, Soleure, &c.) by marauding expeditions across the Jura, in which Héricourt (November 1474) and Blamont (August 1475) were taken, both towns being held of Charles by the “ sires ” de Neuchâtel, a cadet line of the counts of Montbéliard. It is said that in the former expedition the white cross was borne (for the first time) as the ensign of the Confederates, but not in the other. Meanwhile Yolande, the duchess of Savoy, had, through fear of her brother Louis XI. and hatred of Bern, finally joined Charles and Milan (January 1475), the immediate result of which was the capture, by the Bernese and friends (on the way back from a foray on Γontarlier in the free county of Bur­gundy or Franche-Comté), of several places in Vaud, notably Grandson and Échallens, both held of Savoy by a member of the house of Chalon, princes of Orange (April 1475), as well as of Orbe and Jougne, held by the same, but under the count of Burgundy. In the summer Bern seized on the Savoyard district of Aigle. Soon after (October-November 1475) the same energetic policy won for her the Savoyard towns of Morat, Avenches, Estavayer and Yverdon; while (September) the Upper Valais, which had conquered all Lower or Savoyard Valais, entered into alliance with Bern for the purpose of opposing Savoy by preventing the arrival of Milanese troops. Alarmed at their success, the emperor and Louis deserted (June-September) the Confederates, who thus, by the influence of Louis and Bernese ambition, saw themselves led on and then abandoned to the wrath of Charles, and very likely to lose their new conquests. They had entered on the war as “ helpers ” of the empcror, and now became principals in the war against Charles, who raised the siege of Neuss, made an alliance with Edward IV. of England, received the surrender of Lorraine, and hastened across the Jura (February 1476) to the aid of his ally Yolande. On the 21st of February Charles laid siege to the castle of Grandson, and after a week’s siege the garrison of Bernese and Fribourgers had to surrender (Oct. 28), while, by way of retaliation for the massacre of the garrison of Estavayer in 1475, of the 412 men two only were spared in order to act as executioners of their comrades. This hideous news met a large body of the Confederates gathered together in great baste to relieve the garrison, and going to their rendezvous at Neuchâtel, where both the count and town had become allies of Bern in 1406. An advance body of Bernese, Fribourgers and Schwyzers, in order to avoid the castle of Vauxmarcus (seized by Charles), on the shore of the Lake of Neuchâtel, and on the direct road from Neuchâtel to Grandson, climbed over a wooded spur to the north, and attacked (March 2) the Burgundian outposts. Charles drew back his force in order to bring down the Swiss to the more level ground where his cavalry could act, but his rear mis­interpreted the order, and when the main Swiss force appeared over the spur the Burgundian army was seized with a panic and fled in disorder. The Swiss had gained a glorious victory, and regained their conquest of Grandson, besides capturing very rich spoil in Charles’s camp, parts of which are preserved to the present day in various Swiss armouries. Such was the famous battle of Grandson. Charles at once retired to Lausanne, and set about reorganizing his army. He resolved to advance on Bern by way of Morat (or Murten), which was occupied by a Bernese garrison under Adrian von Bubenburg, and laid siege to it on the 9th of June. The Confederates had now put away all jealousy of Bern, and collected a large army. The decisive battle took place on the afternoon of the 22nd of June, after the arrival of the Zürich contingent under Hans Waldmann. English archers were in Charles’s army, while with the Swiss was René, the dispossessed duke of Lorraine. After facing each other many hours in the driving rain, a body of Swiss, by outflanking Charles’s van, stormed his palisaded camp, and the Burgundians were soon hopelessly beaten, the losses on both sides (a contrast to Grandson) being exceedingly heavy. Vaud was reoccupied by the Swiss (Savoy having overrun it on Charles’s advance); but Louis now stepped in and pro­cured the restoration of that region to Savoy, save Grand­son, Morat, Orbe and Échallens, which were to be held by the Bernese jointly with the Fribourgers, Aigle by Bern alone —Savoy at the same time renouncing all its claims over Fri­bourg. Thus French-speaking districts first became permanently