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as soon as he was seated on the throne. A war in which all *Europe* was engaged, and engaged in point of interest ; for the ambitious designs of *Lewis XIV.* were now so evident, that even the powers, least inclined to action, found themselves obliged to provide for their own safety, by entering into a confederacy for the more effectually opposing the encroachments of that aspiring prince. The *French* king, on the other hand, instead of discovering any dread of this formidable alliance, began first ; by falling upon the empire, and declaring war against *Spain*, at the same time that he provided for his ally, king *James*, whom he sent over into *Ireland*, with a considerable force, escorted by a fleet of twenty-two sail of men of war ^b.

It was upon this occasion, that the ill management in the two last reigns, in respect to the correspondence held between our princes and the *French* king, manifestly appeared, by the prodigious growth of his naval power. Under the administration of the great cardinal *Richelieu*, *France* was so weak in this respect, that this high-spirited minister was forced, in very pressing terms, to solicit assistance from the *Swedes* ^c ; and, even in this reign, the protector *Cromwell*, had shewn the utmost contempt for the *French* power at sea. To speak the truth, it was our wars with the *Dutch*, in the reign of king *Charles II.* that, as the *French* themselves confess, gave them first an opportunity of learning, at the expence of the maritime powers, what it was to make a figure on an element with which before they were

^b Histoire militaire du regne de Louis le Grand, par M. le marquis de Quincy ; histoire de France, par P. Daniel. ^c As to this fact, we find it in the cardinal's letters, vol. ii. p. 144.