

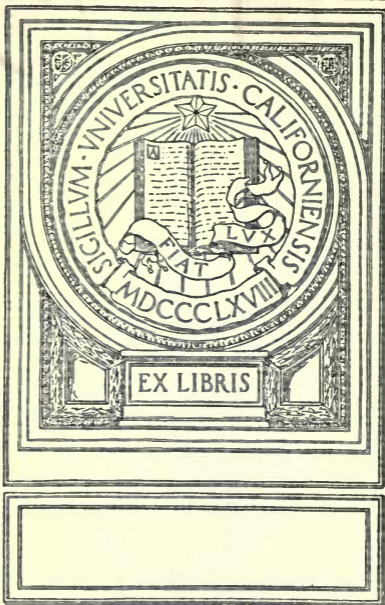


PULL COURT LIBRARY.

Div. 14 Shelf F

No. 4505

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES







THE
H I S T O R Y
O F
F R A N C E,

UNDER THE KINGS OF

THE RACE OF VALOIS,

FROM

THE ACCESSION OF CHARLES THE FIFTH,
IN 1364,

TO THE DEATH OF CHARLES THE NINTH,
IN 1574.

THE SECOND EDITION,

WITH VERY CONSIDERABLE AUGMENTATIONS.

BY

NATH^L WILLIAM WRAXALL, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR C. DILLY, IN THE POULTRY.

M.DCC.LXXXV.

THE

LIST OF

B

BY

THE

THE

THE

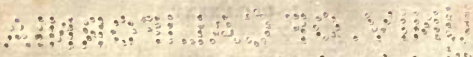
BY

IN

VOL

LONDON

PRINTED



DC
95
W92m
1785
v. 2

C O N T E N T S

O F T H E

S E C O N D V O L U M E.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

Character of Henry the second. — Changes in the state. — Diana de Poitiers — her character. — Romantic attachment of the king to her. — Disgrace of the duchess d'Estampes. — Duel of Jarnac and la Chataigneraie. — Insurrections in Guyenne. — Persecution of the Protestants. — Death of Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre — her character. — Renewal of war between Henry and the Emperor. — Catherine of Medecis left regent. — Siege of Metz. — Continuation of the war. — Abdication of the Emperor. — Power of Diana de Poitiers,

C O N T E N T S.

duchefs of Valentinois.—Expedition under the duke of Guise against Naples.—Battle of St. Quentin—Capture of Calais.—Marriage of Francis the Dauphin to Mary queen of Scotland.—Conclusion of the peace of Cateau-en-Cambresis.—Carousals of the court.—The king's death.—Enumeration of the circumstances which attended it.—Character of Henry the second.—His Mistresses.—Reflections.

Page 1

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

State of the kingdom at the death of Henry the second.—Character of the duke of Guise—of the cardinal of Lorraine—of the king of Navarre.—of the prince of Condé.—Catherine of Medecis.—Her character, person, and political conduct.—Disgrace of the duchefs of Valentinois.—Accession of Francis the second.—Power of the Guises.—The king's weak state of health.—Assassination of Minard.—Conspiracy of Amboise, and its defeat.—Executions.—Suspicious against the prince of Condé.—Convocation of Fontainbleau.—Arrival of the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé at court.—They are arrested.—Trial of the latter prince.—Francis's illness.—Condemnation of the prince of Condé.—Intrigues and cabals of Catherine of Medecis.—Death of Francis the second.—Circumstances of it.—His Character.—Funeral.—Arrival of Montmorenci.—Release of Condé.

54

C O N T E N T S.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

Reflections on the situation of affairs at the accession of Charles the ninth.—Catherine of Medecis secures to herself the regency.—Formation of the “triumvirate.”—Pernicious policy of the regent.—Assembly of the states.—Massacre of Vassy.—Duplicity of Catherine.—The young king carried to Paris by Anthony king of Navarre.—Commencement of the civil wars.—Prince of Condé is declared chief of the Hugonots.—Unsuccessful attempts to effect an accommodation.—Siege of Rouen.—Death of the king of Navarre.—Battle of Dreux.—Consequences of that action.—Siege of Orleans.—Assassination of the duke of Guise.—Account of the circumstances attending it.—His funeral, and character.—Conclusion of Peace.—Death of La Cipierre.—Character of the Marechal de Retz.—The prince of Condé's amours, and second marriage.—Charles the ninth attains to majority.—Administration of Catherine.—Interview of Bayonne.—Commencement of the second civil war.—Ineffectual enterprize of Meaux.—Battle of St. Denis.—Death of the Constable de Montmorenci.—Circumstances of that event.—Character of the young king.—Second pacification.

C O N T E N T S.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

Attempt to seize on the prince of Condé.—Third civil war.—Battle of Jarnac.—Death of Condé.—Character of the admiral Coligni, and of Jane, queen of Navarre.—Siege of Poitiers.—Battle of Moncontour.—Arrival of the king in the camp before St. John d'Angeli.—March of Coligni.—Conclusion of peace.—Duplicity of the court.—Marriage of the king to the archduchess Elizabeth.—Her character.—Festivities at court.—Policy of Catherine of Medecis.—Reflections.—Disimulation of Charles and of the queen-mother.—Arrival of Coligni at court.—Commencement of disunion between the king and Henry duke of Anjou.—Contrast of their characters.—Betrothal of Henry, prince of Navarre to Margaret of Valois.—Death of Jane, queen of Navarre.—Circumstances attending it.—Determination of Coligni to remain at Paris.—Margaret of Valois.—Her nuptials, and character.—Attempt to assassinate Coligni.—Treachery of Charles.—Resolution taken to exterminate the Hugonots.—Terrors and irresolution of the king previous to the massacre.—Death of Coligni.—Deaths of the Hugonot chiefs.—Detail of the principal circumstances attending the massacre of Paris.—Conduēt of Charles, consequent to that event.—Fourth civil war.—Siege of Rochelle.—Character of Francis duke of Alençon.

C O N T E N T S.

Alençon.—Remorse of the king.—Election of the duke of Anjou to the crown of Poland.—Carousals at court.—Charles's impatience for his brother's departure.—Mary of Cleves.—Her character and amour with the duke of Anjou.—Quarrels between the king and his mother.—Henry duke of Anjou begins his journey.—Illness of Charles.—Suspicions on that event.—Arrival of the king of Poland at Cracow.—His subsequent conduct.—New commotions in France.—Change in the king.—Conspiracy of the duke of Alençon, discovered.—Progress of Charles's indisposition.—Intrigues of the queen-mother to secure the regency.—Execution of La Mole and of Coconas.—Circumstances of the king's last illness.—Death of Charles the ninth.—Enquiry into the causes of it.—His character, issue, and funeral.—Conclusion. 173

1800
The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the country, and a description of the various parts of it. The second part contains a particular account of the different nations and tribes that inhabit it, and a description of their manners and customs. The third part is a history of the different wars and battles that have been fought in the country, and a description of the different states and governments that have been established in it. The fourth part is a history of the different religions and sects that have been introduced into the country, and a description of their doctrines and practices. The fifth part is a history of the different arts and sciences that have been cultivated in the country, and a description of the different inventions and discoveries that have been made in it. The sixth part is a history of the different languages and dialects that have been spoken in the country, and a description of the different alphabets and characters that have been used in it. The seventh part is a history of the different laws and customs that have been established in the country, and a description of the different courts and officers that have been appointed in it. The eighth part is a history of the different trade and commerce that have been carried on in the country, and a description of the different ports and harbours that have been opened in it. The ninth part is a history of the different colonies and settlements that have been made in the country, and a description of the different governments and laws that have been established in them. The tenth part is a history of the different wars and battles that have been fought in the country, and a description of the different states and governments that have been established in it.

H I S T O R Y
O F
F R A N C E,
UNDER THE KINGS OF
THE RACE OF VALOIS.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

Character of Henry the second.—Changes in the state.—Diana de Poitiers—her character.—Romantic attachment of the king to her.—Disgrace of the duchess d'Estampes.—Duel of Jarnac and la Chataigneraie.—Insurrections in Guyenne.—Persecution of the Protestants.—Death of Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre—her character.—Renewal of war between Henry and the Emperor.—Catherine of Medecis left regent.—Siege of Metz.—Continuation of the war.—Abdication of the Emperor.—Power of Diana de Poitiers,
VOL. II, B *duchess*

duchess of Valentinois.—Expedition under the duke of Guise against Naples.—Battle of St. Quentin—Capture of Calais.—Marriage of Francis the Dauphin to Mary queen of Scotland.—Conclusion of the peace of Cateau-en-Cambresis.—Carousals of the court.—The king's death.—Enumeration of the circumstances which attended it.—Character of Henry the second.—His Mistresses.—Reflections.

1547.
31st
March.

THOUGH the death of so able and experienced a prince as Francis the first, at a period of life when his character promised happiness and tranquillity to his people, was an event deeply to be lamented by those to whom the interests of the state were dear; yet as his successor had attained to years of manhood, and did not appear to be deficient in the qualities requisite for government, his loss might be deemed not irreparable.

Henry the second, who ascended the throne, was the handsomest prince of his age, and one of the most accomplished cavaliers in his dominions. He excelled in all the martial exercises where vigour and address are necessary; and bore away the prize in tournaments with distinguished grace. His heart was beneficent and humane; his temper courteous, open, and liberal; his intentions ever honourable, and directed to the public good: but he neither possessed the capacity or discernment which Francis discovered; and,

and, naturally tractable, and yielding to others, he was formed to be under the guidance of favourites. 1547.

His father's dying exhortations made no impression on his heart, nor produced any effect upon his conduct; and scarce were the late king's funeral rites performed, when Henry violated them in every point. Montmorenci, who had been during several years in disgrace, was recalled to court, and loaded with honours: the admiral d'Annebaut was dismissed, and the Cardinal de Tournon only retained a shadow of authority. In their place, Francis duke of Guise, so celebrated in the subsequent reigns, and the Marechal de St. André, were substituted. That pernicious profusion, which had characterised the commencement of the late king's reign, was carried to a more unjustifiable length; and the treasures amassed during his concluding years, were dissipated with a wanton extravagance.

April;

Diana de Poitiers, duchess de Valentinois, who may be said to have almost divided the crown with her lover, and who carried her influence, personal and political, to a height which the duchess d'Estampes never could attain under his predecessor, was the directing principle of Henry's councils, the object of his tenderest attachment, and unlimited homage. This extraordinary woman, unparalleled in the

1547. annals of history, retained her beauty undiminished even in the autumn of life, and preserved her powers of captivating, in defiance of time and natural decay. She was already forty-eight, while Henry had scarce attained his twenty-ninth year. Her father, John de Poitiers, Seigneur de St. Vallier, had been condemned to die, in 1523, as an accomplice in the revolt of the Constable, Charles of Bourbon; and though he escaped with his life, yet he was degraded from the rank of nobility, and all his estates were confiscated *. She was married, in the last year of Louis the twelfth's reign, to Louis de Brezé, Count de Maulevrier, and grand Senechal of Normandy, by whom she had two daughters then alive. It is not certain when her

* Diana de Poitiers was born on the 5th of September 1499. Mezerai, the president Henault, and many other writers have asserted, that she preserved her father's life, by the sacrifice of her chastity to Francis the first, from whose embraces she passed into those of his son; but this story is very doubtful, and most probably false. She had been married near ten years to Louis, Count de Maulevrier, at that time, and consequently had not, as those authors seem to imagine, her *virgin honour* to bestow. Besides, though her father's life was not taken away, his punishment was changed for another rather worse than death; that of being immured perpetually between four walls, in which there should be only one little window, through which his provisions might be given him. St. Vallier died of a fever, occasioned by his terror, in a very short time afterwards.

connections

connections with the Dauphin Henry first commenced; but it appears, that before he had completed his eighteenth year, her ascendancy over him was well established. All the cotemporary authors agree, that her charms were of the most captivating kind, and worthy of a monarch's love: to these personal endowments, she united a cultivated and just understanding, wit, and an animated conversation. Warmly devoted to her friends and partizans, she was likewise a dangerous and implacable enemy: of high and unsubmitting spirit, she transfused those sentiments into the royal bosom, and impelled him to actions of vigour and firmness. Fond of power, she was yet more so of flattery and submission. The nobles crowded to express their dutiful attentions to this idol; and even the Constable Montmorenci, rude, haughty, and more accustomed to insult than to flatter, bent beneath her, and condescended to ingratiate himself by the most servile adulation.

The ties which chiefly bound Henry to Diana de Poitiers, were probably first those of pleasure, and afterwards of taste and habit. In vain did the duchess d'Estampes exert every art of female rivalry and hatred, to disunite them; in vain did she publish, that Diana was married in the same year, which gave herself birth.—These efforts only increased the passion which they were designed to extinguish. The

1547. king carried it to an incredible height, and gave her every public, as well as private proof of her ascendancy over him. The furniture of his palaces, his armour, the public edifices of the kingdom, were all distinguished with her device and emblems; a “moon, bow, and arrows.” Every favour or preferment was obtained thro’ her interest; and Briffac, the most amiable and gallant nobleman of the court, who was supposed to be peculiarly acceptable to her, was created grand master of the artillery, at her particular request *. The Count de Bossu, who had been intimately connected with the late king’s mistress, and who was accused of treasonable practices with the emperor, could only shelter himself

* Charles de Coffé, Marechal de Briffac, was brought up with Francis Dauphin of France, and eldest son to Francis the first, whose premature and lamented death in 1536, deeply affected Briffac, and induced him to dedicate himself entirely to the profession of arms. He eminently distinguished his courage at the siege of Perpignan in 1541, where he was wounded, after having rescued, at the imminent hazard of his life, the artillery, which had fallen into the hands of the Spaniards. He was slender, and of a very delicate figure; but his face was so uncommonly handsome, that the ladies of the court named him always “Le beau Briffac.” In all the campaigns towards the conclusion of Francis the first’s reign, but peculiarly at the siege of Landrecy in 1543, he gained immortal reputation.—Under Henry the second he commanded the armies of France in Piedmont, where he successfully opposed the greatest

self from punishment by a resignation of his palace at Marchez to the Cardinal of Lorraine. 1547.
 The duchess d'Estampes, unsupported by the croud of flatterers who had attended on her in Francis's reign, was compelled to quit the court; but Diana, whether from motives of prudence or magnanimity, did not attempt to deprive her of the possessions which she had acquired from that monarch's generosity. Disgraced, and forsaken, she retired to one of her country houses, where she lived many years in perfect obscurity*.

Henry, on his return from a visit which he had made soon after his accession, to the fron- July.

greatest imperial generals, Ferdinand de Gonzague, and the duke of Alva.—After the death of Henry in 1559, he returned into his own country, and was made governor of Picardy: he expired of the gout, at Paris, on the 31st December 1563, being only fifty-seven years of age.—It cannot be doubted, that he was beloved by the duchess de Valentinois; and jealousy was believed to have been the motive which induced Henry the second to confer on him the command in Italy, as it necessarily compelled Brissac to quit his mistress.

* It is somewhat extraordinary, that the year of the duchess d'Estampes's death is not mentioned by any cotemporary author. All we know is, that she was alive in 1575, as she did homage at that time for one of her estates. She became a protectress of the Lutherans or Hugonots, for whom she had always entertain'd a concealed affection; and this is the only circumstance with which we are acquainted relative to her retreat.

1547. tier of Picardy, not only permitted, but was publicly present with all his court, at the celebrated duel between Guy de Chabot-Jarnac, and Francis de Vivonne-La Chataigneraie, which was fought in all the forms of chivalry, at St. Germain-en-Laye. The quarrel had originated from an accusation of La Chataigneraie respecting the duchess d'Estampes's infidelity to the late king; and was increased by a second imputation thrown on Jarnac, more dishonourable; that of his having been criminally intimate with his father's second wife. La Chataigneraie was one of the most accomplished cavaliers in France, and the most personally acceptable to the king: skilled in the practice of arms, vain of his acknowledged address, and relying on the royal favour, he despised his antagonist; while Jarnac, more cautious, and neither supported by superior force, or any hope of Henry's partial protection, endeavoured to supply these defects by artifice. A fever had diminished even his usual strength and activity; but the presumptuous negligence of La Chataigneraie decided the duel in his honour. By a thrust totally unexpected, Jarnac wounded him in the ham, and threw him to the ground, Henry instantly flung down his baton, to put an end to the engagement, and Jarnac, as the law of arms required, desisted; but his competitor, stung with disappointment, covered with shame, and incapable of surviving these accumulated mortifications,

mortifications, would not accept of a life which he deemed ignominious; and having torn off the bandages applied to his wounds, soon after expired. The king was so deeply affected with this combat, and its event, so opposite to his wishes and expectations, that he made a solemn vow, never during his reign to permit of a second, on any pretext whatsoever.

The causes of future wars, which were not extinguished by the death of Francis the first, began to display themselves between the emperor and Henry; though as yet many circumstances conduced to retard any open rupture. This latter prince made a progress through part of his dominions, accompanied with splendid entries into the principal cities; and on his return he celebrated the nuptials of Anthony duke of Vendome with Jane d'Albret, heiress of the kingdom of Navarre, at the city of Moulins*.

1547.

1548
and
1549.18th
October.

A dan-

* The young princess had been espoused several years before to the duke of Cleves; and Francis the first was present at that ceremony, which was performed with great splendor at Chatelleraud in Poitou; but the marriage was not consummated, on account of her extreme youth, she being at that time little more than twelve years old. The day was rendered remarkable by the dismissal and disgrace of the Constable Montmorenci; which was preceded by a very singular circumstance, supposed to foretel his approaching fall. The young bride, according to the manners of the age, was dressed in robes so weighty, and loaded with so many pearls and jewels, that not being able to move,

Francis

1549.

A dangerous insurrection, which broke out at this time in Guienne, rendering it necessary to send into that province some general of rank and experience, the duke of Guise and the Constable were both charged with the commission. The former, courteous, humane, and

Francis commanded the Constable to take her in his arms, and carry her to the church. Though this custom was usual at the nuptials of great persons, yet Montmorenci was deeply hurt by being selected for such an office; and regarding it as an incontestible proof of his ruin, hesitated not to declare to his friends, that his favour was at an end. The event justified his suspicion; for immediately after the banquet, the king dismissed him from his service, and he quitted the court directly. Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre, and mother to Jane d'Albret, was supposed, by her interest with her brother, to have accelerated his disgrace. The Constable had not scrupled to accuse her to Francis, of being attached to, and of protecting the Hugonots. By this imputation against his beloved sister, he offended the king, and raised up an implacable and powerful enemy in Margaret herself.

The marriage of Jane with the duke of Cleves, which had been chiefly made in compliance with the wishes of Francis the first, was afterwards dissolved from motives of policy, the duke having submitted to, and reconciled himself with the emperor. But Brantôme says, that Anthony duke of Vendôme had great scruples of delicacy relative to espousing the princess; and that he had recourse to the Senechale of Poictou, who was a lady of honour to the young queen of Navarre at the time of her first nuptials, to clear up his suspicions. She did so; and gave him the most solemn and satisfactory proofs, that Jane's first marriage had been merely a ceremony, and was never consummated.

warmly

warmly desirous to conciliate the popular favour, entered Saintonge and Angoumois, dispensing pardon, or only punishing with lenity and gentleness; but Montmorenci, inexorable, and with a severity of temper which approached to cruelty, marked his course along the river Garonne with blood; and, deaf to the supplications of the inhabitants, who had recourse to submissions and entreaties, put to death above a hundred of the principal citizens of Bourdeaux, and deprived the city of all its municipal rights and privileges. A conduct so opposite, produced among the people sentiments equally dissimilar with respect to the two commanders; and from this æra the family of Guise began to date that popularity, which in the sequel they carried to so prodigious and dangerous a length against the crown and monarchy itself.

1549.

October.

The court meanwhile was wholly engaged in carousals and festivities. A gallant and warlike prince of the character of Henry the second, who delighted in exercises of prowess and dexterity, was naturally followed in his passion for those diversions, by his nobility. Diana de Poitiers, created duchess of Valentinois, presided at these entertainments, given in her honour; and the queen, Catherine of Medecis, though young, beautiful, and of uncommon capacity, though endowed with dissimulation and manners the most temporising, yet acted only an inferior and

1549. subservient part. She had however the honour
 10th June. of being solemnly crowned at St. Denis, and of making afterwards a triumphal entry with her husband into the capital; but these were only pageantries of state, and Henry, who never admitted her to a real participation of his authority, seems to have been aware, that her character and genius were more calculated to embroil, than to assist the affairs of government.

By a transition wonderful and inexplicable, if any thing in human nature can be so esteemed, these tournaments and entertainments were immediately succeeded by exhibitions of a very different nature, which mistaken piety and the intemperate zeal of the age substituted by turns in the place of gallantry and pleasure. A number of profelytes to the doctrines of Luther and Calvin were publicly and solemnly burnt, as an example to their companions; while the king and his whole court were present at these inhuman sacrifices, which were performed with a refinement of merciless cruelty, and varied in different modes of punishment.

21st December.

Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre, died about this time, at the castle of Odos in the province of Bigorre. She had never recovered the afflicting news of her beloved brother's death. If Francis the first was the greatest monarch of his age, Margaret was indisputably the most accomplished princess. Devoted to the love

love of letters, she encouraged and patronized men of genius and learning, from whom she received the flattering epithets of, "the Tenth Muse," and "the Fourth Grace." Herself an author, she has left us incontestible proofs of her elegant genius, her wit, and graceful style, which though negligent, is full of beauty. Suspected of a partiality towards Hugonotism, she was likewise suspected of gallantry; and perhaps might have been equally sensible in turn to those grand movements of elevated minds, devotion and love. Her Tales, which are scarce inferior to those of Boccacio, seem to confirm this sentiment; and though they ever inculcate and commend the virtues of chastity and female fidelity, yet contain in certain parts an animation and warmth of colouring, that give room to suppose the writer of them was fully sensible to the delights of the passion which she censured and condemned*.

Boulogne,

* Margaret was born on the 11th of April 1492. Bonnivet, presuming on his personal accomplishments, concealed himself under her bed, and attempted to violate her honour; but she repulsed him, tore off the skin from his face with her nails, and afterwards complained to the king her brother of this daring attempt, at which he only laughed. She has related this adventure, though somewhat enigmatically, among her Tales.—Though Margaret was sometimes so devout as to compose hymns, yet she was certainly an "Esprit fort," and had even great doubts concerning
the

1550.
 March. Boulogne, after a long siege, was at length surrendered to France, from the weakness and dissensions incident to a minority; Edward the sixth, king of England, being very young, and the

the immortality of the soul. Brantome has preserved a very curious story relative to the death of one of her maids of honour, at which she was present. The queen was much attached to her, and could not be induced by any entreaties to quit her bed-side, when expiring: on the contrary, she continued to fix her eyes on the dying person with uncommon eagerness and perseverance, till she had breathed her last. The ladies of her court expressed to her majesty their astonishment and surprise at this conduct; and requested to know, what satisfaction she could derive from so close an inspection of the agonies of death? Her answer marked a most daring and inquisitive mind. She said, "that having often heard the most learned doctors and ecclesiastics assert, that on the extinction of the body, the immortal part was unloosed and set at liberty, she could not restrain her anxious curiosity to observe if any indications of such a separation were discernible: that none such she had been able in any degree to discover; and that, if she was not happily very firm in her faith and adherence to the catholic religion, she should not know what to think of this departure of the soul."

Francis the first took a pleasure in publicly declaring, that to her tenderness, care, and attentions, he was indebted for his life, during the severe illness which he suffered in his confinement at Madrid. She had the boldness and spirit to reproach the emperor and his council, in the most animated terms, for their unmanly and cruel treatment of the king her brother. It is said that Charles the fifth was so much irritated by these reprehensions, which he was conscious he merited, that he had intended to seize on her person,

the authority of his uncle the lord protector ill established. — The house of Guise, firmly united with Diana duchess of Valentinois, continued to aggrandize itself, and acquired every year some new establishment. The genius and great qualities of the duke and the cardinal of Lorraine, different from each other, but equally pre-eminent and distinguished, eclipsed all other merit: even the Constable Montmorenci, though superior to any rival in the king's favour, and possessing an unlimited influence over him, yet could not see unmoved the rapid progress which the Guises made in universal admiration; and

son, and detain her prisoner, if she had outstayed the time granted her to remain in the Spanish dominions. Margaret received intimation of this design; and, without being in the least afraid, she mounted on horseback, crossed all the provinces between Madrid and Bayonne, and arrived on the frontier of France a very few hours before the expiration of her safe conduct.

She was seized, says Brantome, with a catarrh of which she died, while she was intently gazing on a comet, supposed to predict the death of pope Paul the third: her illness lasted eight days. She seems to have had the same constitutional dread and terror of death, which characterized her mother Louisa. The ladies who attended about her bed announcing to her when in extremity, that she must prepare herself for her end, and fix her thoughts on the joys of a celestial state; "Tout cela est vrai," replied the expiring queen; "mais nous demeurons si long temps en terre avant que venir la."—She was above two years older than Francis the first; and fifty-eight years of age at the time of her decease.

1550. beheld with jealousy these new competitors for fame and glory.

1551. Italy, destined during more than half a century to be the principal scene of war, was again menaced with indications of approaching hostilities. The grandsons of the late pontiff Paul the third, against whom Julius the third, newly elected pope had taken up arms, with intent to dispossess them of the duchy of Parma, claimed the protection of Henry, who gladly afforded it to them*. He was pleased to find an occasion again to interfere in the affairs beyond the

* Alexander Farnese, who ascended the pontifical throne under the name of Paul the third, had been raised to the purple by Alexander the sixth, in 1493, and was about sixty-seven years of age at the time of his election, after the death of pope Clement the seventh. He was a prince of some ability, and taste in the arts; but his reign was sullied by the excessive fondness which he shewed for his son, Peter Louis Farnese, to whom he sacrificed the dearest interests and possessions of the holy see. To this son, whom he had by a lady to whom he was married before he embraced the ecclesiastical profession, he gave the duchy of Parma in sovereignty; but the ingratitude of his grandson Octavio Farnese, who had menaced the pope to join the Imperial general Ferdinand de Gonzague against his own grandfather, affected him so deeply, as to occasion his death. On receiving this news, he fainted, and remained in a sort of lethargy for near four hours, without betraying any sign of life; at the end of which time he was seized with a violent fever, which terminated his existence on the tenth of November, 1549, at his palace on the Quirinal Hill, in Rome, after a pontificate of fifteen years.

Alps, and of consequence to renew his attempts on the Milanese, so long and so unfortunately contended for by the French. Brissac was sent into Piedmont, and directed to assist the duke of Parma, though without any open declaration of war against the emperor. Julius, after an ineffectual attempt to induce the king to renounce his allies, made an equally unsuccessful effort upon the capital of the duke of Parma, of which his general was obliged to raise the siege.

Charles the fifth, though he had scarce passed his fiftieth year, was already oppressed with all the maladies and infirmities of a premature old age. Solyman, sultan of the Turks, his great and constant antagonist, threatened his Hungarian dominions; while the emperor himself, on the other hand, had alarmed all the princes of the empire, by the arbitrary deposition of John Frederic, elector of Saxony, by his imprisonment of the Landgrave of Hesse, and his open infringement of the Germanic rights and liberties. Even his brother Ferdinand, king of the Romans, was justly irritated by Charles's endeavours to compel him to resign the succession of the Imperial crown in favour of Philip prince of Spain, his only son.—These united considerations induced Henry no longer to dissemble his intentions, or to delay a rupture with the emperor. Brissac began the campaign in Piedmont, while Anthony duke of

1551. Vendome entered the provinces of Artois and Hainault. The king strengthened himself still further by a secret alliance with Maurice, the
- October. new duke of Saxony, head of the protestant league; whom he promised to assist with troops and money against Charles, who evidently aimed at despotism.
1552. The effects of this confederacy were soon visible, in the extraordinary and rapid march of Maurice, who had nearly taken the emperor prisoner in the city of Inspruck, while he amused him with proposals of peace. Charles, terrified, amazed, and on the brink of a shameful captivity, fled in a litter by torch-light over the mountains of the Alps, with a few attendants; and scarce imagined himself in security at Villach in Carinthia, upon the frontier of the Venetian territories. Henry, improving this favourable juncture, marched in person into Lorraine; and having first possessed himself of the person of the young duke Charles, nephew to the emperor, seized on the cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, which, being dependants of the empire, did not expect, and were unprepared for such an attack. These important acquisitions have since remained to France, without any interruption.
- March. Previous to his departure, Henry vested the regency in the queen, though he at the same time associated with her Bertrandi, who was keeper of

the seals, and implicitly devoted to the duchess de Valentinois. Catherine of Medicis, during the short time in which she was entrusted with the administration, was not guilty of any public act injurious to her own character, or to the interests of state. That complicated and intriguing genius, that perplexed and pernicious policy, those flattering but ruinous artifices, which afterwards so eminently marked her government under the reigns of her three successive children, were as yet unexerted, or unobserved. Accommodating in her manners, and mistress of all her passions, she bent beneath the duchess de Valentinois's superior power; and, so far from making any efforts to diminish or oppose it, Catherine professed for her the most strict and disinterested friendship.

Maurice's success and masterly conduct soon reduced the emperor to a necessity of complying with his offers of peace; and a treaty was signed between them, at Passau, which for ever secured the independence of the German princes, ecclesiastical and civil. Charles hastened, and gladly accepted these overtures, from the desire of being in a condition to revenge himself on the king of France. The insult and indignity which had been offered to him, as supreme head of the empire, in the height of his prosperity, by the capture of three great cities under the Imperial protection, stung him sharply; and full of resentment, he

1552. levied a prodigious army, with the resolution of immediately laying siege to the city of Metz.

18th
October.

The season was already far advanced when he began his attack; but as the place was of a large extent, and only furrounded with weak and ruinous fortifications, he would probably have rendered himself master of it, if the duke of Guise had not frustrated all his efforts. This great prince, endowed with every talent of a courtier and a warrior, had thrown himself into Metz, and withstood the emperor's assaults with unshaken intrepidity and perseverance. The severity of the winter and the frost assisted his valour, and contributed to the destruction of the Imperial forces. Charles at length raised the siege, after having lost thirty thousand soldiers before the place, and began his retreat back into Germany. His flight across the Alps, after the unfortunate campaign of Provence in 1536, was infinitely less disastrous than the present retreat; and the duke of Guise's humanity and attention towards the numbers of unhappy wretches who fell into his hands, and who were unable to accompany their commander in his flight, shone as conspicuously as his courage had done during the siege, and rendered his fame immortal.

1553.
1st Jan.

In Piedmont the war was feebly supported between Brissac and Ferdinand de Gonzague. Solyman, the firm ally of Henry the second, as he had
been

1553.

been of Francis the first, aided the king of France with his fleets, while he gained possession of the city of Sienna by intrigue; a place which, had it been preserved, would have facilitated in the greatest degree, any attempts on the Milanese, or the kingdom of Naples.

In the spring the emperor was again in the field, and anxious to repair his past defeats, he re-entered France, where Terouenne, which resisted his attacks, first felt the weight of his vengeance. He took and utterly demolished it; Francis de Montmorenci, the Constable's eldest son, who had gallantly defended it, being made prisoner in the place. Emanuel Philibert, the young duke of Savoy, had the supreme command of Charles's forces during this campaign, and began already to display that heroism and capacity for war, by which he was afterwards so eminently distinguished. He besieged Hesdin, which capitulated; but while the articles were under agitation, a grenade thrown by a priest into the town, set fire to a mine, under the ruins of which, Horace Farnese, duke of Castro, grandson to Pope Paul the third, and who had married Diana of France, the king's natural daughter, was destroyed with fifty others *.—On the other hand, the Constable,

* Diana was one of the most amiable, accomplished, and beautiful princesses who have appeared in France; her

1553. ble, to whom Henry had given the command of his whole army, performed scarce any exploits worthy of remembrance; and his illness, which followed soon after, put an end to the campaign; and permitted the troops to return into winter quarters.

21st June. The death of young Edward the sixth, king of England, interrupted the harmony between the two crowns, as Mary his sister who succeeded, in opposition equally to the wishes of her people and of Henry, soon after espoused Philip

1554. prince of Spain, the emperor's son. This union, as it increased the influence and power of the house of Austria, was little calculated to diminish the jealousy of the king of France, or to produce a peace: on the contrary, both sides prepared anew for war. The emperor, though disabled by the gout, which had contracted the sinews of one of his legs, and had deprived him of the use of one of his arms, appeared for the last time, in the field in person. Henry, who had ever studiously sought the occasion of combating his great antagonist, endeavoured to pro-

another's name was Philippa Duc, of Montcaillier in Piedmont. She was infinitely dear to Henry her father, and not less so to the three succeeding kings her brothers. When left a widow by the duke of Castro's death, she was only fourteen years old: she afterwards married Francis, duke of Montmorenci. Her name occurs frequently in the history of Henry the third's life and reign.

voke him to a general engagement. He ravaged Hainault, Brabant, and the Cambresis; demolished Mariemont, a palace of pleasure belonging to Mary queen of Hungary, who was governess of the Low Countries; and razed the magnificent castle of Bins, which she had lately constructed *. Charles marched to the relief of Renty, besieged by the French; and a considerable skirmish ensued, in which the Imperial forces were obliged to retreat, after a considerable loss of men and artillery. The place itself, notwithstanding, continued to hold out; and the king,

1554.

13th
August.

* Mary, sister to the emperor Charles the fifth, and widow of Louis the second king of Hungary, who perished in the battle of Mohatz gained by the Turks in 1521, was a princess of virtue and capacity. She was made governess of the Low Countries in 1531; and, during an administration of twenty-four years, rendered herself exceedingly beloved by the Flemings. She conducted the war in which the emperor her brother was engaged against Henry the second of France, with equal vigour and ability. In 1555, she laid down the government of the Netherlands, and retired into Spain, where she remained till the death of Charles the fifth in 1558, whom she followed to the grave within a very few days, at a time when she had intended to return into the Low Countries. The French writers have accused her of a propensity to gallantry, and have named Barbançon, a Flemish nobleman, distinguished by the beauty of his person, as her lover; but this imputation is contradicted by the whole tenor of the queen's life and character. Calumny even has ventured to go further, and to name Mary as the mother of Don John

1554. king, leaving part of his army under the command of the duke of Vendome, dismissed the remainder, and returned to Paris. After some few inconsiderable conquests, Charles the fifth closed for ever his military exploits, and put an end to all his campaigns.

April. In Italy, Sienna was lost, after a long and obstinate defence; but Brissac maintained the national honour in Piedmont, though he was ill supported at court, and opposed by the duke of Alva, who insolently threatened, that he would drive him over the mountains. This gallant commander would even have relieved Sienna, and forced the enemy to raise the siege, if the opposition of Montmorenci and the Guises, who were jealous of his glory, had not defeated his measures.

1555. Mary, queen of England, attempted to bring about an accommodation between the contending princes, and a congress was held in a splendid tent near Calais for that purpose; but it produced no beneficial consequences.

May.

of Austria, by her own brother, the emperor Charles; but as she was born in 1503, and Don John in 1547, the queen must have been forty-four at the time when it is pretended she brought this son into the world. It was however generally believed by the cotemporaries, that the mother of Don John was a princess of the highest rank; and that to cover and conceal the dishonour of her family, Barbe Blomberg, a lady of Ratibon, was asserted to have been the mother of that prince.

The death of Henry d'Albret, king of Navarre, who expired about this time at Haget-mau in Bearn, left his crown and dominions exposed to the enterprizes and attacks of the king of France, who had intended to incorporate this small kingdom with the French monarchy; but the diligence of Anthony duke of Vendome, who had married Jane, heiress to the kingdom, preserved the independance of Navarre*. The king, who was desirous of making a compensation to Anthony by the exchange of other lands, was highly offended at his conduct; and refusing to grant the government of Picardy to his brother Louis prince of Condé, he instantly conferred it on Coligny.

1555.

 25th
 May.

The emperor, chagrined and mortified at the decline of his military glory, and at the successes of Henry; broken by diseases, and perhaps partaking in some degree of his mother, the arch-duchess Joanna's † more deplorable and

* Henry d'Albret, king of Navarre, was an amiable prince, but not distinguished by any extraordinary endowments of mind. He was born in 1503, and in 1520 he recovered from Charles the fifth his kingdom of Navarre, but lost it again with equal rapidity. He married, in 1527, Margaret, duchess of Alençon, and sister to Francis the first, by whom he had only one daughter, who survived him, named Jane, mother of Henry the fourth, who, at length, united in his person the kingdoms of France and Navarre.

† The princess Joanna terminated her wretched life only
 six

1555.

and remediless disorder of mind, determined to resign all his vast possessions to his son Philip. He executed this extraordinary renunciation soon after at Bruffels, reserving only to himself the imperial dignity, which he retained a year longer.

The profusion and magnificence of the court, added to the unavoidable expence attendant on wars to be maintained against such powerful enemies, rendered it necessary to encrease the revenues, by additional taxes, oppressive to the people. The duchess de Valentinois was chiefly accused as the cause of these exactions; and so far was her influence over the king from suffering any diminution, that it appeared to be every year confirmed and extended. Henry, flexible and easily led by those whom he loved, only acted according to the suggestions or impulse of his mistress.—She built the superb palace of Anet, to which the two lovers frequently retired, and which

six months before her son the emperor's abdication: she survived her husband the archduke Philip, forty-nine years, and was above seventy at her own decease, which happened on the 12th April 1555. Her attachment to him, and his untimely death, chiefly contributed to deprive her of her intellects. She was shut up in the castle of Tordefillas, almost abandoned, and sleeping upon straw, which she sometimes wanted; her only recreation being to fight with cats, and to crawl up the tapestry with which her apartments were hung. Such was the lamentable destiny of Ferdinand and Isabella's daughter; of the mother of two emperors, and four queens!

was the chief scene of their amorous pleasures* ; 1555.
 while the nation, unable to account for an attachment so unusual between persons of such unequal ages, attributed it to forcery, and supernatural causes. It was reported that the duchess wore magical rings, which equally prevented the decay of her own beauty, and of the monarch's passion. Catherine of Medicis supported and confirmed this absurd opinion, which soothed her own vanity, by accounting for her rival's triumph †.

The

* Anet, which is situated near Dreux, in the isle of France, upon the river Eure, yet exhibits the remains of splendor and elegance. Philibert de Lorme was the architect employ'd by Henry the second in its construction, and the emblems and devices of the duchess of Valentinois are visible in every part of the edifice. Voltaire has immortalised it, in these beautiful lines of the ninth canto of his "Henriade," where Love is described as on his flight to the plain of Ivry.

" Il voit les murs d'Anet batis aux bords de l'Eure,
 " Lui-meme en ordonna la superbe structure ;
 " Par ses adroites Mains, avec art enlacés,
 " Les Chiffres de Diane y sont encore tracés ;
 " Sur sa tombe, en passant, les plaisirs et les graces
 " Repandirent les fleurs qui naissoient sur leurs traces."

† Monsieur de Thou, though so judicious and able an historian, was not superior to this weakness, characteristic of the age in which he lived ; and very gravely mentions as a fact, the magic powers of which Diana availed herself, to continue, and support her ascendancy over Henry.— Brantome knew her personally, and has given a minute description of her beauty in its most advanced period, which

1555.

March.

The death of pope Julius the third, and the election of Cardinal Caraffa to the chair of St. Peter, who assumed the name of Paul the fourth, gave another face to the affairs of Italy*.

—The new pontiff, though more than eighty years

which is too curious and extraordinary to be passed over.

“ I saw that lady,” says he, “ only six months before she died ; and at that time she was so lovely, that the most insensible person could not have looked on her without emotion. She was then on her recovery from a very severe indisposition, occasioned by a fracture of her leg, which she had broke by a fall from her horse, in riding through the streets of Orleans. Yet neither the accident, nor the intense pain which she underwent from it, had in any degree diminished her charms.”

Though Brantome does not absolutely account for this extraordinary beauty by any magic influence, yet he endeavours to explain the cause of it, by means somewhat similar.—“ Mais, on dit bien,” adds he, “ que tous les matins elle ufoit de quelques bouillons composez d’or potable, et autres drogues que je ne sçai pas.”—At the period of life when he speaks of the duchess in these terms, she was full sixty-five years old.

* John Marie del Monté, who ascended the pontifical throne by the name of Julius the third, was of a very low extraction, and had been raised to the purple by Paul the third in 1536. On the death of that Pope, Julius was elected his successor on the 8th of February 1550, after long deliberations and intrigues in the conclave.

Tho’ a prince of intrepidity, and, previous to his election to the tiara, even a prelate of austere manners, he abandoned himself when Pope, to every species of voluptuousness and immorality. The first act of his reign was to confer his own

cardinal’s

years of age, and of manners the most austere, no sooner attained to his new dignity, than pursuing a line of conduct the reverse of that which he had hitherto held, he united an unexampled pomp and luxury to projects of the most irregular ambition. Irritated by his nephews against the emperor for some pretended misbehaviour of the Imperial generals, he demanded the protection of France, offered the investiture of Naples to the king, and endeavoured to negotiate a strict alliance with him

1555.

cardinal's hat on a young man of the name of Innocent, who was a servant in his family, and had the care of an ape; from which circumstance he was called in derision the "Cardinal Simia." The sacred college having even complained to his holiness of the degradation which they suffered by the introduction of so improper a person into their body, Julius replied, "You have chosen to elect me Pope; what merit have you ever discovered in me, to raise me to so high a dignity?"—Julius the third, like almost all his predecessors in the chair of St. Peter, abandoned himself to the government of his two nephews, John Baptist, and Fabien del Monté; but the first of these having been killed before the city Mirandola, and the latter being of a more tranquil character, the Pope pursued, unrestrain'd, his passion for pleasures, and immersed himself in debaucheries, equally unbecoming his station, and unfit for his age. His palaces were a scene of intemperance, and of elegance, where magnificent entertainments, heightened by all that genius and refinement could furnish, continually succeeded each other. Julius hastened his death by these pleasures, which carried him off on the 24th March 1555, after a short pontificate of five years.

for

1555.

for their mutual advantage.—The wisest and the most disinterested part of the French council were averse to these dangerous and chimerical propositions. They foresaw only disgrace and ruin, in the renewal of the antiquated pretensions on the crown of Naples; they knew that no confidence ought to be placed in the honour or good faith of Italian politicians; and least of all, in the promises of an old man sinking under the weight of infirmities, impotent in mind, irascible, and actuated by two perfidious and violent men, his nephews. They considered the state of the kingdom, already exhausted by the long and continual wars with the emperor, and they beheld future ones in prospect against Philip his son and successor. They remembered the numerous and unfortunate attempts under Louis the twelfth, and Francis the first, to gain possession of the Neapolitan crown. These considerations so truly weighty, ought to have prevented any political union or connection with the court of Rome; but the subserviency of all the cabinet to the duke of Guise, and his brother the cardinal of Lorraine, did not permit Henry to follow this salutary advice. The cardinal, impetuous and vain, embraced the papal overtures with his accustomed enthusiasm, with the intention of placing the duke of Guise at the head of the army destined against Italy: he was immediately dispatched in person to
Rome,

Rome, to ratify and conclude the treaty; but during his absence, by the intervention of Mary queen of England, a truce was agreed upon for five years between the emperor and France. 1555.

With a view of rescinding the agreement for this suspension of hostilities, the Cardinal Caraffa was sent to Paris as ambassador on the part of his uncle the pope, with a superb train. He waited on the king at Fontainbleau, presented his majesty with a hat and sword blessed by the sovereign pontiff, and made a magnificent entry into the capital. Intriguing and artful, he moved every spring, and availed himself of every means to obtain the purpose of his embassy. Catherine of Medicis and Diana de Poitiers were both rendered subservient to his views; while flattery, presents, and sacrifices to their vanity, or ambition, were by turns employed to gain their suffrages. Henry, wavering and irresolute, after long hesitation, and in contradiction to the dictates of his own judgment, suffered himself to be borne away by the stream, and consented to the league. 1556.
February.

Francis duke of Guise, nominated to the supreme command of the army, passed the mountains, carrying with him the flower of the French nobility, whom the splendor of his character, and his reputation for courtesy, courage, and liberality, allured to follow his standard. Not one of the Italian powers could however be induced to afford him assistance; and though the pope 1557.
January.

1557.

March.

pope received him with every external mark of satisfaction, and celebrated his arrival by public festivities and honours, yet neither the pecuniary or military aids were ready, which by treaty he had promised and stipulated. The duke of Alva, Philip's general, with an army, ravaged the territories of the Church; and the French commander, after an unsuccessful attempt upon the frontier of Naples, was obliged to return to Rome for the protection of his allies.—No progress was made in the plan proposed; and every thing seemed to portend an inglorious termination to the campaign, when an event equally unexpected and disastrous to France, recalled the duke of Guise, and extricated him from so critical and dangerous a situation.

Charles the fifth, who for near half a century had spread terror throughout Europe, no longer acted upon the great political theatre; and having retired to the monastery of St. Justus in Estremadura, was already forgotten while yet alive.—Philip the second, his son, not less ambitious than Charles, assisted by his wife, Mary queen of England, and desirous on his accession to impress the European princes with the idea of his extensive power, assembled a prodigious army; but not possessing himself either the bravery or conduct necessary to command it, he entrusted that important commission to Emanuel Philibert, the young duke of Savoy. That general, after a

number of feints, attacked the town of St. Quentin in Picardy, into which Coligny had thrown himself, and which by his determin'd valour he preserved for a considerable time, though the place was otherwise ill calculated for defence. The Constable Montmorenci, his uncle, meanwhile advanced at the head of the French army, with intent to give him all the assistance possible; but it was with infinite difficulty that d'Andelot, brother to Coligny, found means to enter the town with five hundred soldiers. This service being effected, Montmorenci would have retired at noon-day, and in sight of the enemy, who were greatly superior in numbers, and particularly in cavalry. The duke of Savoy, soon perceiving the rashness of the attempt, and seizing instantly the occasion which presented itself, charged the Constable furiously before he had time to issue the necessary orders, or to draw up his forces in a proper manner to receive the attack. The French horse were routed, and thrown into confusion; but the infantry stood firm, and were almost all cut to pieces; Montmorenci himself, and the Marechal de St. André, with a number of inferior officers, being taken prisoners.— Philip, who had not contributed in any degree in his own person to this important victory, prevented the decisive effects which it might have produced, by his jealousy of the duke of Savoy. Instead of marching directly to the capital, which

1557.
3d Au-
gust.

10th Au-
gust.

1557.

was already in the utmost consternation, and ready to have been deserted at his approach, he compelled his general to continue the siege of St. Quentin, which Coligny yet defended some days, and in which he was at length taken prisoner*.

Henry

* The duke of Savoy, by a very able and masterly manœuvre, after having appeared to menace the town of Guise by a forced march invested St. Quentin, into which Coligny immediately threw himself, with about seven hundred soldiers. Montmorenci, who had taken the command of the French army, advanced up to the suburbs of St. Quentin, and attacked the Spanish forces who formed the siege with so much vigour, that the whole camp was thrown into disorder, the duke of Savoy's tent was overturned by the artillery, and he himself had scarcely time to put on his cuirass, and to retire to the quarters of Count Egmont. A little rivulet, and some marshes, which intersected the ground, unfortunately prevented Montmorenci from profiting in its fullest extent of the confusion in the enemy's camp; and it was with difficulty that d'Andelot found means to enter the city, with a small number of followers. The Constable then endeavoured to retreat; but Count Egmont, at the head of two thousand cavalry, taking him on one flank, while the duke of Brunswic, Count Horn and Ernest of Mansfeldt attacked him on the other, his troops began to give way. The rout commenced among the sutlers and followers of the army, and spread from thence to the soldiery, the action having lasted four hours before the French were totally defeated. Only two pieces of cannon were saved, all the others falling into the hands of the enemy, who lost only about eighty men, while two thousand five hundred of Montmorenci's troops remained dead upon the

1557.

Henry meanwhile, in this great emergency, neglected no measures requisite for the safety of his dominions. Levies of Swiss and Germans were

the field. John of Bourbon, brother to the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé, who had several times rallied the troops, and renewed the engagement, was unfortunately shot with a ball from a harquebussé, while he was still displaying the most undaunted courage, and endeavouring to retrieve the fortune of the day : he was carried into the Spanish camp, and expired in a very few moments. The Constable himself was wounded in the hip, and taken prisoner, as was the marechal de St. André, the duke de Longueville, and many others of the first nobility. Louis, prince of Condé, and the duke of Nevers, retreated to La Fere in Picardy. Philip the second was not personally present in this action, so glorious to the duke of Savoy : he contented himself with offering up vows to St. Laurence for his general's success, without having the courage to expose himself to danger ; nor did he join his victorious troops till sixteen days after, on the 27th of August, when he arrived in the camp before St. Quentin, with ten thousand English, and as many Flemish soldiers.—Coligny merited immortal honour for his obstinate defence of St. Quentin against this numerous army ; and the assault being made at noon-day, he was abandoned by his troops, only a page and four followers remaining with him, when he was taken prisoner.—D'Andelot, his brother, still continued to defend himself against the Spaniards, till, covered with wounds, and overwhelmed with numbers, he was obliged to surrender. On the following night, he found means to escape.—Had Philip pushed forward instantly towards Paris, after the victory at St. Quentin, the monarchy of France had probably been shaken to it's foundation ; but his jealousy of the duke of Savoy rescued Henry the second and his kingdom from this imminent and alarming danger.

1557. made with all possible expedition; Paris was fortified towards the side of Picardy; the duke of Guise was recalled to the defence of France; and even the most pressing solicitations were made to Sultan Solyman for assistance against the Spanish monarch. These vigorous efforts were attended with a proportionable success. Animated by their prince's firmness and intrepidity, and recovering from the first impressions of terror, the Parisians gave the most distinguished proofs of their loyalty and liberality.

1558. The duke of Guise's arrival, the lustre of his name, and the reliance upon his great abilities, completed the general tranquillity. — Philip, during the remainder of the campaign, made no conquests or acquisitions proportionate to the importance of the battle which he had gained: the capture of the three towns of Ham, Catelet, and Noyon were comparatively slight advantages, and were not attended with any decisive consequences.

On the contrary, the duke of Guise, though impeded by the rigour of winter, and the severity of the season, lost not a moment in endeavouring to raise the drooping genius of his country. After having been declared lieutenant-general within and without the kingdom, he undertook the siege of Calais, which was deemed almost impregnable; and made himself master in eight days of that city, so long held by the English, though it had

8th
January.

cost Edward the third above a year's blockade. 1558:

This signal success was followed by the capture of Thionville, in the duchy of Luxembourg; but the Marechal de Termes, although an able and experienced commander, was completely routed near Gravelines by the young Count Egmont; and he himself fell into the hands of the enemy*.

June.

So

* The Marechal de Termes, having taken Dunkirk, laid siege to Gravelines; but being subject to the gout, and at that time attacked by a violent fit of the disorder, he left the command of his forces to Estouteville, who relaxing the discipline, permitted the soldiers to quit the camp in great numbers, and to occupy themselves with plundering the peasants. Count Egmont, governor of Flanders, profiting of this error, hastily assembled the garrisons of Aire, St. Omer, and Bethune; to which being added a reinforcement which he received from the duke of Savoy, they formed a body of twelve thousand infantry, and three thousand cavalry, with which he instantly marched to attack the French. Termes no sooner received the news of the enemy's approach, than he mounted on horseback notwithstanding his indisposition, and prepared to receive the attack. He took a strong position, his right flank being covered by the sea, his left by the carts of his baggage, and his front protected by eight pieces of artillery. Count Egmont, on the other side, was totally destitute of any cannon, and only following the dictates of his courage, he led on his troops, exclaiming, "We are conquerors. Let those who love glory and their country, follow me!"—He was, however, repulsed at the first onset, his ranks were thinned by the French artillery, and his own horse killed under him.—The advantage was nearly equal on both sides, and the victory more than doubtful on the part of the Count, when ten English vessels, whom

1558.

So astonishing and so favourable a reverse of fortune served to heighten, and add new splendor to the reputation of the defender of Metz and conqueror of Calais. As he only, amid the calamities of the state, seemed able to command the events of war, and uniformly to attach victory to his party, upon him alone the public confidence rested, as the guardian and protector of France. By a combination of events, all contributing to the elevation of the house of Guise, their power was still farther confirmed and

the noise of the firing had brought to the coast, decided the fortune of the battle. Having brought their cannon to play on the right wing of the French army, which lay exposed to the fire from the ships, the cavalry, unable to withstand this unexpected and severe attack, fled in confusion, and were followed by the infantry. The defeat was entire, fifteen hundred of the French remaining on the field of battle, and a much greater number being massacred by the peasants, in revenge for the calamities which they had experienced from the depredations of the soldiery. Termes, with several other generals, was made prisoner. It may not be improper to remark, that Count Egmont, who had been so instrumental in the defeat of the French at St. Quentin, and to whom alone the glory of the victory at Gravelines was due, terminated his life on a scaffold at Brussels, only ten years afterwards, in 1568, by order of the tyrant Philip the second. His execution is one of the many atrocious deeds of blood which the duke of Alva committed in the Netherlands, and which stain the annals of Philip's sanguinary reign.—The emancipation of seven provinces from the yoke of Spain, in some degree revenged and expiated the death of this gallant commander.

extended

1558.

extended by an alliance with the heir to the crown, which took place about this time.— Francis the Dauphin, being enamoured of their niece, the young queen of Scotland, who had been sent, after the death of her father James the fifth, to the court of Henry for an asylum, obtained the king's consent to his marriage. Mary, so renowned for her beauty, her talents, and her misfortunes, was at this time in her sixteenth year; and her charms, though not yet fully expanded, are yet described by all the French historians as so touching and irresistible, that a young prince, however destitute of sensibility, could not fail to pay them homage.—The nuptials were solemnised with unusual splendor at the church of “Notre Dame;” and consummated the same day, at the “Palais,” amidst the greatest festivities, which were succeeded by a triumphal entry into the capital, where the Dauphin appeared on horseback, and the young bride in a magnificent litter. They assumed the titles of king and queen of England and Scotland, after the death of Mary, queen of England, which happened the same year. The court of France was engaged in all the entertainments and diversions usual at such a time; and the duke of Guise, together with the Cardinal of Lorraine, found themselves at the zenith of their glory and authority.

24th
April.

Two great armies, commanded by their respective sovereigns in person, threatened each

1558. other on the approach of summer: Henry and Philip seemed to be on the eve of a decisive engagement, but mutual fear restrained them from coming to a general action; and towards the autumn, by the intervention of the papal nuncio and of the duchess of Lorraine, a negotiation was opened for the conclusion of peace at the abbey of Cercamp, near Hesdin, in Picardy. The treaty was facilitated and accelerated by the Constable Montmorenci, and the Marechal de St. André, who, weary of their imprisonment, and jealous of being supplanted in the royal favour by the Guises during their absence from court, made use of the duke of Savoy to incline Philip to listen to terms of pacification. The Constable had previously requested and obtained permission to go to Henry in person at Amiens, with the design of effecting a general peace; and he was received with testimonies of the warmest affection by his master on that occasion, who (according to the manners of the age, which knew none of the delicacies of the present century) carried his condescension and attachment so far, as even to make him sleep in his own bed. It was determined to put an end to the war, at whatever price, or by whatever means; and the death of Mary, queen of England, which took place during the course of the negotiation, removed the principal obstacle to peace, as Philip, after her decease, no longer maintained with the same ardour

ardour the interests of her successor Elizabeth, 1558.
 or insisted, as he had previously done, on the ab-
 solute restitution of Calais. After several con- 1559.
 ferences at Cercamp, the preliminaries were fi- January.
 nally adjusted, and signed at Cateau in Cam-
 bresis.—All the conquests made during the late
 or present reign, in Piedmont, Tuscany and
 Corsica, were ceded to Spain, to procure the
 restitution of Ham, Catelet, and Noyon, three
 inconsiderable towns in Picardy; but, in recom-
 pence, Calais, Metz, Toul, and Verdun re-
 mained to France.—The princess Margaret,
 sister to the king, was affianced to the duke of
 Savoy*; and Elizabeth, his eldest daughter,
 transferred

* Margaret, daughter of Francis the first, was born in 1523. Her person was beautiful, and she possessed many of the most engaging and amiable qualities of the king her father, as well as all the elegance of mind by which he was peculiarly characterised. After his death, she continued that protection and liberality to men of genius which had acquired Francis so high a reputation over all Europe. Her marriage with Emanuel Philibert, duke of Savoy, was consummated in the last moments of the life and reign of her brother, Henry the second, the princess being then thirty-six years of age. She was infinitely beloved, and revered by her subjects, who called her the mother of her people. On the return of her nephew, Henry the third, from Poland into France, in 1574, she received him at Turin, and is said to have given him some excellent counsels for his conduct, of which Henry availed himself little. The anxiety and earnestness which she felt to entertain the king and his train during their stay in her capital, added to the exertions which she made

1559.

transferred from Don Carlos, Philip's only son, for whom she was first designed, and given to Philip himself, recently become a widower by the death of the queen of England*.

These

made to render his residence in Turin agreeable, threw her into a pleurisy, of which she died on the 14th of September, 1574, during the absence of the duke her husband, who had attended the king of France to Lyons, on his entering his own dominions. She was infinitely regretted by her subjects, and her memory was immortalized by the poets, to whom she had extended her patronage and generosity.

* Elizabeth of France, daughter of Henry the second and Catherine of Medici, was born at Fontainebleau, in April, 1545, and had been originally intended for Edward the sixth of England; a marriage which was prevented by the premature death of that prince. She was then destined for Don Carlos, son of Philip the second, and heir to the Spanish monarchy; but the decease of Mary queen of England, during the negotiations which preceded the treaty of Cambresis, leaving Philip free, he demanded the young princess in marriage for himself, and the nuptials were solemnized by proxy at the church of "Notre Dame," only a few days before the catastrophe of Henry the second's death. She was named "Elizabeth de la Paix," because she formed the cement of the great pacification between France and Spain.—Almost all the cotemporary historians agree in asserting, that Don Carlos never forgave his father for having thus deprived him of his intended bride; and they either insinuate or declare, that the young queen was tenderly attached to the prince during her whole life, though they expressly deny her having ever been capable, or guilty of any criminal weakness. In 1565, Elizabeth was brought by the duke of Alva to Bayonne, where an interview took place between the queen of Spain and her brother, Charles the ninth, who was accompanied by Catherine

1559.

These terms, humiliating and disgraceful to France, were principally attributed to the Constable, who from self-interested motives, and the desire of obtaining his freedom, was believed to have advised the king to accept of such inadequate conditions. The Guises openly arraigned the treaty, as unbecoming the national honour, and depriving the kingdom in a moment of the conquests of near thirty years; but Henry, not-

rine of Medicis.—The history and lamentable fate of Don Carlos is too well known, to need recital: that unhappy prince expired, though whether by a natural or a violent death is more matter of conjecture and suspicion than of certainty, on the 24th of July, 1568. It is commonly believed that Philip the second caused him to be privately executed, or poisoned; and it was imagined that jealousy of his son's attachment to the queen, hasten'd, if it did not produce this unnatural order. It is certain that Elizabeth was much affected by the misfortunes and death of Don Carlos, whom she only surviv'd about ten weeks: she died in child-bed at Madrid, on the 3d of October, 1568, not without strong suspicions of poison, and infinitely regretted by all her subjects. Brantome says, "On parle fort sinistrément de sa mort." De Thou, and the Abbé de St. Real, likewise insinuate that her death was accelerated by unnatural means; and the unrelenting, gloomy character of Philip too much strengthens the suspicion. Elizabeth was beautiful in her person, and amiable in her manners to the highest degree. By her husband she left two daughters, of whom the eldest was the celebrated *infanta Clara-Eugenia*, married to the archduke Albert, and who was governess of the Low Countries for a number of years: she was the favourite and beloved child of Philip the second. The second daughter, Catherine, was married to Charles Emanuel, duke of Savoy.

withstanding

1559. withstanding every remonstrance, adhered immoveably to his resolution.

During the reign of Francis the first, and more peculiarly so since his decease, the reformed religion had made a most alarming and universal progress. All ranks of people had imbibed the new doctrines; and persecution unhappily hastened and promoted their influence. D'Andelot, nephew to the Constable, and brother to Coligny, was justly suspected, and even accused of being a profelyte to these opinions. Henry, desirous to be satisfied of the truth or falshood of the imputation, questioned him personally on his sentiments respecting the Mass; and d'Andelot, with an imprudent zeal, made him so bold and undisguised a reply, that the king being exceedingly irritated, was about to have put him to death with his own hand.—It required all his uncle's interest, to procure his pardon and restitution to his post of general of the French infantry*. The severest penalties were denounced against

* The king ordered the cardinal de Chatillon, brother of d'Andelot, (and who afterwards openly renounced himself the Catholic religion, though he retain'd his ecclesiastical dignity and the purple) to bring d'Andelot into his presence, that he might question him in person relative to his religious opinions. The culprit having presented himself at the king's dinner, while the court was at Monceaux, Henry interrogated him on the subject of the Eucharist; and d'Andelot not

against the professors of Lutheranism, or Calvinism; and several members of the parliament of Paris having presumed to declare against the rigour of the punishments to which by law the Protestants were made liable, and which were put into execution against them, the king himself went in person, and ordered five of the most refractory members, at the head of whom was Anne du Bourg, to be arrested and carried to the Bastile immediately, who had avowed that sentiment in his presence. Orders were issued for their immediate and rigorous prosecution.

1559.

10th
June.

With the return of peace, every species of luxury and dissipation revived. Henry's court, the most refined and polished in Europe, was rendered unusually splendid by the different entertainments exhibited on occasion of the mar-

not only avowing his belief in the doctrines of Calvin, but peremptorily refusing to retract his opinion, Henry was inflamed to such a degree of resentment, that taking up a plate with intent to dash it against the ground, he wounded the Dauphin, who sat by him at table. He instantly ordered the sieur de la Bourdasiere to take d'Andelot into arrest, and to conduct him to Meaux, from whence, after some time, he was transferred to the castle of Melun. Blaise de Montluc, to whom his office was tender'd, refused to accept it, from apprehension of the indignation of the family of Montmorenci, to whom d'Andelot was very nearly allied by blood. The Constable's intercession, joined to d'Andelot's submission, procured him, however, a restoration to his military rank and charge.

riage

1559. riage of the princess Elizabeth to Philip the second, which was celebrated by proxy at Paris. Tournaments and caroufals added a martial magnificence to the other amusements of a gentler nature. The young duke of Savoy, Emanuel Philibert, arriving about the same time at Paris, accompanied by the duke of Brunswic, the prince of Orange, and a hundred gentlemen, was received with every demonstration of respect and attention by Henry, who met and embraced him at the foot of the great stair-case of the Louvre. This incident redoubled the festivals, which were interrupted only three days after by the tragical catastrophe of the king's death.

The lists extended from the palace of the Tournelles to the Bastile, across the street St. Antoine, and Henry himself had broken several lances with different lords of the court, in all which he had shewn unusual vigour and address. On that day, which was the third of the tournaments, he wore the colours of his mistress the duchess of Valentinois, in token of his love, and in compliance with the laws of chivalry, of which gallantry always formed so distinguishing a feature. Those colours were black and white, in allusion to her state of widowhood.—Towards the close of the evening, and before the conclusion of the tournament, Henry had a great inclination to try his prowess against the Count de Montgomeri, captain in his life guards. He was son to that

30th
June.

Seigneur de Lorges, who had formerly wounded Francis the first so dangerously on the head at Romorentin in Berri, and was distinguished for his superior address in these combats above any nobleman of the kingdom *. Catherine of Medicis,

* Gabriel de Lorges, Count de Montgomeri, was captain of the Scotch guards to Henry the second. He was brave and active in the highest degree, and had been sent by Francis the first, in 1545, into Scotland, to command the troops which were then dispatched to the assistance of the queen regent, Mary of Guise. The death of Henry the second cannot certainly be imputed as a crime to Montgomeri, he having urgently entreated of the king, tho' in vain, to excuse him from giving the fatal proof of his dexterity which took place: it has even been pretended, tho' probably without reason, that Henry, before he breathed his last, expressly enjoined that Montgomeri should not be prosecuted or molested for having been innocently and unintentionally the author of his death. The best French authors agree in asserting, that the king, though he continued to breathe for eleven days after the accident, never recover'd either his speech or intellects. It is plain that Montgomeri conceived himself to be in danger; for he immediately retired into England, and having embraced the doctrines of the reformation, returned into France at the commencement of the civil wars, under Charles the ninth. Brantome describes him, as addicted to gaming and pleasures in the most immoderate degree, but equally intrepid and active whenever occasion called. His own words are vastly characteristic and amusing, from their plainness and simplicity: "C'etoit," says Brantome, "le plus nonchalant en sa charge, et aussi peu soucieux qu'il etoit possible; car il aimoit fort ses aises, et le jeu: mais, lorsque
" il

1559. dicis, as if by a secret presage of the event, befought the king not to re-enter the lists, but he resisted her solicitations; adding, that he would break one more lance in her honour. Montgomeri himself accepted the challenge with extreme reluctance, and endeavoured by every argument and entreaty to prevail on his sovereign to excuse him; but without effect. Henry commanded him to obey, and even fought with his vizor raised. The shock was rude on both sides; but the count's lance breaking against the king's helmet, he attacked Henry with the stump, which remained in his hand. It entered under the eyebrow of his right eye, and the blow was so violent, as to throw him to the ground, and to deprive him instantly both of his speech and understanding, which he never more recovered, though he survived the accident near eleven days.—The queen ordered him to be carried immediately to the palace of the Tournelles;

“ il avoit une fois le cul sur la selle, c'etoit le plus vaillant
 “ et soigneux capitaine qu'on eut feu voir; au reste, si
 “ brave et vaillant, qu'il assailloit tout, foible ou fort, qui
 “ se presentat devant lui.” His defence of Rouen, in 1562, against the royal army, and his escape, after having exhausted all the resources of the most desperate bravery, in a boat, with which he broke thro' the chains stretched across the river Seine at Caudebec, raised his reputation to the highest point. His death, and the circumstances of it, will be mentioned hereafter.

every assistance was procured for him, and the divine mercy implored by processions and public prayers; but the wound was beyond a cure, and he at length expired, having only passed his fortieth year, about four months*.

1559.

10th July.

* Authors are not agreed whether the king fought with his vizor raised, or whether it flew open with the blow received from Montgomeri's lance.—Luc Gauric, a famous astrologer of the time, is pretended by de Thou to have foretold the manner and circumstances of the king's death; but unfortunately, Gauric's prediction is found in Gassendi, and expressly asserts, that "if Henry could surmount the dangers with which he was menaced in his sixty-third and sixty-fourth year, he would survive, and enjoy great happiness till the age of sixty-nine years and ten months."—Mezerai, likewise, relates that Charles duke of Lorraine, son-in-law to Henry the second, was accustomed publicly and solemnly to declare, that, "while he was at Paris during the festivities and tournaments which preceded the king's death, on the night before that melancholy event, a lady who was lodged in his own palace near the Bastille, saw in a dream the king thrown to the ground by a blow from a lance in his eye; a splinter of which struck the Dauphin by rebound in the ear, and extended him breathless near the dead body of his father."—These dreams and predictions carry with them either so much folly or so much falsity, as to become matters of contempt and ridicule in an enlightened age.—As soon as Philip the second received intelligence of the king's accident and desperate situation, he dispatched André Vesal, his own surgeon, from Brussels to Paris, to attend, and exert his skill for the recovery of the expiring monarch: but all his efforts were fruitless; an incurable abscess having formed itself in the king's brain, of which he died on the tenth of July, 1559.

1559.

9th July.

Consternation and affright, mingled with intrigue and artifice, divided the court; and the contending factions, headed by chiefs of the greatest capacity, whom the late king's vigour had kept in subjection, now declared their various pretensions without disguise.—The duke of Savoy, finding the king's recovery desperate, solicited so pressing the completion of his marriage with the princess Margaret, that it was celebrated at "Notre-Dame," without any pomp, and in the greatest privacy.—The duchess de Valentinois received an order from the queen to retire to her own house, and not to presume to enter the chamber of the dying king, which command she obeyed.—This mandate was followed by a second from Catherine, enjoining her to deliver up the jewels of the crown, and other rich effects then in her possession. She asked if Henry was dead; the messenger replied, that he yet breathed, but could not possibly remain long alive. "Know," said Diana, with undaunted intrepidity, "that so long as he shall retain the least appearance of life, I neither fear my enemies, however powerful, nor will shew any deference to their menaces or commands. Carry this answer to the queen."

If Henry was not a great, he was an amiable and accomplished prince. Generous to his domestics, bounteous to his followers, he was beloved by his courtiers and attendants. His conversation

converſation was entertaining, and lively; his manner of expreſſion flowing, and graceful. An affectionate father, a polite and decent huſband, a warm and animated friend, he was, in all the walks of private life, peculiarly an object of reſpect and attachment. Neither deſtitute of capacity or firmneſs, though governed by his miſtreſs, and ſubſervient to his favourites, he could exert himſelf on important occaſions, and enforce obedience. Fond of polite literature, as from hereditary right, he encouraged it in his court, where it made a rapid progreſs. In the prime of life, and with ſuch qualities, his death muſt at any time have been conſidered as a loſs to his kingdom; but in the critical juncture when he expired, it was a calamity of the moſt fatal nature, immediately followed by maſſacres, crimes, and civil diſcord. He only could repreſs the enthuſiaſtic ſpirit and intemperate zeal of the followers of the reformed religion; or reſtrain the intriguing genius of Catherine of Medicis, and ſet bounds to the wild ambition of the princes of the houſe of Lorrain. His untimely end, and the ſucceeding circumſtances which took place under the reigns of his three ſons, opened the avenues to every ſource of public evil and diſtreſs.

By the queen he left four ſons and three daughters, all of whom will be frequently mentioned hereafter. He never had any children by the duchefs de Valentinois; but, beſides

1559. Diana, married to the Duke of Castro, of whom I have already spoken, he left a natural son by a Scotch lady, named Henry d'Angoulesme, who was grand prior of France, governor of Provence, and admiral of the Levant seas*.

We are now about to enter on a melancholy period of the French history. Wars of religion, more

* The name of this mistress of Henry the second is said to have been Fleming: she was in the service of Mary queen of Scotland, whom she had accompanied from her own country into France; yet others of the cotemporary writers call her "Mademoiselle de Lewiston," and pretend that she was related to Mary by blood. They add, that motives of policy and court intrigue originally produced the connection between this lady and the king. The Guises, jealous of the ascendant which Diana de Poitiers had obtained and preserved over him, determined to detach him from her, as they found she no longer treated them with her accustomed confidence, and that Montmorenci had supplanted them in her affections. To this end, they artfully praised "Mademoiselle de Lewiston," and extolled her greatly to Henry, who soon after saw, and became enamoured of her. She did not scruple to gratify his passion; but their intimacy was concealed, even after she had brought him a son, with the extreme care, to prevent its being known to the dukes de Valentinois.—Henry d'Angoulesme, her son, was a generous, brave, and accomplished prince, though unhappily led, by the prejudices and madness of the times, to be particularly active in the dreadful night of St. Bartholomew.—His death was tragical and singular; it happened at Aix in Provence, on the second of June, 1588. Philip Altoviti, baron de Castellane, was his mortal enemy: Henry having entered his house, and having reproached the baron with

more sanguinary, cruel, and ruinous than even those of Henry the fifth and Edward the third, rise in succession under the three last princes of the race of Valois. The bright days of Francis and Henry, the noble and animating contests for glory with Charles the fifth and Philip the second, are succeeded by intestine confusion, by rebellion and revolt. The kingdom, over-run by foreign auxiliaries, torn by her own subjects, and bleeding at every vein, becomes a field of contention and desolation. Catherine of Medicis, like its evil genius, mingles and embroils all ranks and parties. The spirit of civil discord and religious frenzy seems almost to extinguish every sentiment of humanity, patriotism, and virtue—till at length a stranger prince, descended from the blood of their ancient kings, appears; and, as if sent from Heaven to heal the wounds of his expiring country, restores peace, and diffuses universal serenity.

1559.

with many acts of malignant hatred towards him, at length proceeded to such lengths of violence as to pass his sword through Castelane's body. Altoviti expiring, had yet sufficient force to snatch a poniard from the head of the bed on which he fell, with which he stabbed Henry in the belly. The prince did not apprehend his wound to be mortal; but the friar who confessed him, informing him of his danger, he replied, without emotion, "Il ne faut plus penser à vivre?" "Eh bien, pensons donc à mourir!"—He died twenty-four hours afterwards.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

State of the kingdom at the death of Henry the second.—Character of the duke of Guise—of the cardinal of Lorraine—of the king of Navarre—of the prince of Condé.—Catherine of Medicis.—Her character, person, and political conduct.—Disgrace of the duchess of Valentinois.—Accession of Francis the second.—Power of the Guises.—The king's ill health.—Assassination of Minard.—Conspiracy of Amboise, and its defeat.—Executions.—The prince of Condé suspected.—Convocation of Fontainbleau.—Arrival of the king of Navarre and prince of Condé at court.—They are arrested.—Trial of the latter prince.—Francis's illness.—Condemnation of the prince of Condé.—Intrigues and cabals of Catherine of Medicis.—Death of Francis the second.—Circumstances.—Character.—Funeral.—Arrival of Montmorenci.—Release of Condé.

1559.

PREVIOUS to entering upon this short, but unhappy reign, which first gave birth to the wars of religion in France, it is requisite to take a view of the great personages who will appear upon the scene, and behold the elements of

of future calamities yet latent and concealed, or only faintly unfolding the fatal principles of destruction with which they were impregnated. The unforeseen and sad catastrophe of Henry the second's death called out these principles into action, which might otherwise have remained in tranquillity. That superior and coercive power being removed, that had hitherto over-ruled the many jarring and discordant spirits with which the court was filled, a tumultuous administration succeeded, precarious in its basis, uncertain in its duration, and only supported by an extraordinary exertion of severity, circumspection, and authority.

1559.

Amidst the confusion consequent upon the July. decease of the late king, the Guises had gained possession of the person of Francis the second, the young sovereign. Their alliance by blood to the queen, Mary of Scotland, afforded them a plausible pretext to justify their conduct; and the great endowments of the two brothers, Francis duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, seemed to render them intitled to the first employments of the state.

The duke possessed in an eminent degree all those dazzling qualities which are formed to procure an unlimited ascendancy over mankind. Liberal even to munificence, courteous to condescension in his manners and address, he captivated the people; while his renown in arms

1559. procured him the adherence of the soldiery, and the attachment of the bravest captains, who deemed themselves certain of success under his command. Naturally moderate, and averse to cruelty, he yet zealously maintained the ancient religion, and opposed every innovation. Intrepid in the article of danger, either personal or political, he surveyed it without trouble or dismay, and applied to it the most instant and efficacious remedies; but conscious of his own capacity for government, favoured by the peculiar circumstances of the times, and hurried away by his ambition, he set no limits to his thirst of power*.

Talents of an opposite nature, but, perhaps, not less calculated to seduce and impose upon the
the

* Francis, duke of Guise, was, unquestionably, one of the most elevated and extraordinary characters, which appeared in the sixteenth century. He was born at the castle of Bar in Lorraine, on the seventeenth of February, 1519. In 1545 he was wounded by a lance near the eye at the siege of Boulogne, which, from the scar that it left, procured him the surname of "Balafre." His defence of Metz in 1553, against Charles the fifth, and still more, his clemency and humanity towards the Imperial soldiers who fell into his hands on the emperor's retreat from before the place, acquired him an immortal reputation. Victory appeared to accompany him wherever he moved; and the recovery of Calais from the English endeared him deservedly to all France. It is to be lamented that the death of Henry the second, the relation in which he stood to the successor by
the

the human mind, characterised his brother the Cardinal. Endowed with eloquence, and animated with an unbounded zeal in the cause of the catholic religion, he was venerated by the clergy as the guardian of the ecclesiastical immunities and privileges. Inferior to the duke in clemency and manly courage, he yet was more enterprizing, presumptuous, and vain; but as he was elated even to arrogance by success, so he sunk into pusillanimity when oppressed by adverse fortune. Violent and vindictive, he could neither restrain nor dissemble his feelings; yet dissolute, and fond of pleasure, he gave offence by the libertinism of his conduct. Greedy of power, rapacious of wealth, and sacrificing every consideration of private tenderness or affection to the dictates of a stern and an unrelenting policy, he knew no motives, and pursued no objects, except those which tended to the elevation of himself and his family.

Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, and first prince of the blood, was ill calculated to oppose these aspiring and turbulent spirits. Of

the marriage of Mary of Scotland, his niece, to that prince, and the feeble character of Francis the second himself, opened to the duke of Guise a career for his ambition, too alluring to be resisted by a man who felt his capacity. Yet even prejudice must confess that he possessed qualities worthy of government; and such as, if the circumstances of the times had permitted, might have been as beneficial to his country as they were glorious to himself.

1559.

a temper gentle, humane, and flexible, nature seemed to have designed him for times of harmony and tranquillity. Equal to the duke of Guise only in personal bravery, he was far beneath him in every other point of competition. Politically timid and irresolute, he was destitute of that firmness so indispensable in great emergencies; and fluctuating in a continual uncertainty between the two religions, he neither could be deemed a Catholic or a Hugonot; yet voluptuous and fond of women, he was easily induced to break the ties of policy, from the weakness of private attachment.

Far different was his brother Louis, prince of Condé. His person, which was little and ungraceful, inclosed a soul the most heroic: amorous from complexion, and of an address the most persuasive, he was beloved by women, and received from them the most unbounded and flattering proofs of their affection. Of high and determined courage, he was formed to shine in camps as much as in courts. Though indigent in his fortunes, which were extremely circumscribed, he yet possess'd the liberality becoming his high birth and situation. Professing with zeal the doctrines of Calvin, but little inclined to the rigorous manners of the Reformation, he made religion the pretext for his engaging in those wars, which ambition and his hatred to the Guises really produced. Not inferior to
the

the celebrated Charles of Bourbon in the arts of retaining a licentious soldiery in subjection, nature had intended him for war, and vested him with all the endowments necessary for the attainment of military glory. With qualities such as these, he formed no unequal antagonist to the duke of Guise; whom he ever considered as his mortal enemy, and boldly opposed on all occasions*.

The Constable Montmorenci, far advanced in years, long accustomed to occupy the first post of state, and too haughty to condescend to fill an inferior one, did not at once declare for

* Louis of Bourbon, prince of Condé, was the seventh son of Charles, duke of Vendome, and was born on the 7th of May, 1530. He early distinguished himself in the field under the reign of Henry the second, and made his first campaign with that monarch, when he laid siege to Boulogne: in 1552, he threw himself into Metz, and contributed to the glory which the duke of Guise acquired by his repulse of the emperor from before that city. At the fatal battle of St. Quentin, where Montmorenci was taken prisoner, and the French army was totally defeated, the prince of Condé, then only twenty-seven years of age, distinguished his courage during the action, and rallied the flying troops at La Fere, in Picardy.

He imbibed the religious opinions of the reformers before the death of Henry the second; and the tumultuous times which followed under Francis the second and Charles the ninth, rendered the prince of Condé too illustrious, and eventually involved him in rebellion, which was terminated only by a premature and tragical end. He will be much mentioned in the present and succeeding reign.

either

1559. either faction; but the pressing instances of Henry d'Amville his second son, and his aversion to the reformed religion, induced him at length, reluctantly, to join the princes of the house of Lorraine.

The Marechal de St. André, one of the most accomplished noblemen of the court, brave, polite, and elegant, but immoderately addicted to pleasures, and of a ruined fortune, ranged himself under the same banner, and devoted himself implicitly to the duke of Guise's service*.

* Jacques d'Albon, commonly known in history by the name of the Marechal de St. André, was one of the most distinguished favourites of Henry the second, who loaded him with dignities and preferments: his bravery, his magnificence of disposition, and the insinuation of his manners and address, rendered him peculiarly calculated to succeed in courts. As early as the battle of Cerizoles under Francis the first, in 1544, he had acquired a high reputation for intrepidity; and he had been present in every action of danger during the war which took place between Charles the fifth and Henry the second. He received the garter from the young king of England Edward the sixth, to whom he had been sent with the order of St. Michael. At St. Quentin he was made prisoner, together with the Constable Montmorenci.—Under the reign of Francis the second, and in the first years of Charles the ninth, he acted a distinguished part in the unhappy scenes which desolated and laid waste the kingdom. Voltaire seems to have conceived more meanly of his talents than perhaps they merited: he calls St. André the “Lepidus of the Triumvirate,” which was formed under Charles the ninth, between the duke of Guise, Montmorenci, and that nobleman.

On the contrary, Coligni, and d'Andelot his brother, both of them avowed profelytes to Calvinism, embraced the party of the princes of the blood, and adhered to it invariably.

1559.

Catherine of Medicis, whom we have so long seen obscured by the superior influence of the two successive mistresses to Francis and Henry, now first came forward, and rose into importance. Her rank, as mother to the young king, made her friendship eagerly sought after by every party; while her talents and capacity rendered her equal to, and capable of the most arduous offices of government. A character too complicated, and containing movements too numerous and intricate for a common description: it is scarce possible accurately to delineate the various and contradictory features of her mind.

Endowed by nature with a thousand great and shining qualities, she only wanted virtue to direct them to honourable and salutary purposes. Fond of pleasure, of letters, of magnificence, these were yet only inferior affections; ambition predominated, and swallowed up all other passions in her bosom. Born with a force of mind, and a calmness which might have done honour to the boldest man, she seemed to look down as from an eminence on human occurrences; while never alarmed even in circumstances the most unexpected and distressful, she
knew

1559.

knew either how to oppose them, or, if necessary, how to bend and accommodate herself to them. Mistress of consummate dissimulation, her manners, where she wished to succeed in any attempt, were ingratiating beyond the common powers of female seduction. Sprung from the blood of Cosmo de Medicis, and emulous of the fame which Francis the first had acquired by his protection of learning, she cultivated poetry and all the gentler arts amid the horrors of civil war; and extended her generosity to men of genius, even in the most exhausted state of the finances.—Expensive even to prodigality in the entertainments and diversions which she exhibited, and covering her designs under the mask of dissipation, she planned a massacre amid the festivity of a banquet, and caressed with the most winning blandishments the victim which she had previously destined to destruction. Cruel from policy, not from temper, avaricious from necessity, profuse from taste, she united in herself qualities the most discordant and contradictory*.

Her

* Catherine of Medicis, so celebrated in the annals of France and of all Europe, was the daughter of Lorenzo de Medicis, duke of Urbino, and of Magdelaine de la Tour d'Auvergne: she was born at Florence, on the 13th of April 1519; and during her childhood was exposed to the utmost hazards from the animosity of the Florentines to the house of Medicis, who had been expelled from that city

1559.

Her person was noble, and corresponded with her dignity; the beauty of her countenance being blended with majesty. She knew how to improve her natural charms by all the magic of dress, and carried her magnificence on this article to a prodigious length;

city by the opposite faction. Not content with depriving the young princess of all the possessions of her family, they confined her at nine years of age in a monastery; and during the famous siege of Florence in 1530, Baptista Cei, one of the most violent opponents of the Medicis, carried his detestation and barbarity to such a length, as to propose to place Catherine upon the walls of the city between two battlements, where she would have been exposed to the whole fire of the Imperial artillery. Bernard Castiglione even advised in the council a more brutal and horrible vengeance, that of submitting her to the prostitution and lust of the soldiery; but these cruel propositions were received with horror, and immediately rejected. Philibert, prince of Orange, who commanded at that time the army of Charles the fifth before Florence, aspired to Catherine's hand; and, although the match was displeasing to Pope Clement the seventh her uncle, who had already entertained higher views for his niece, the prince of Orange must have succeeded in his demand of the princess, if the death of that illustrious commander, which took place previous to the surrender of the city, had not liberated the Pontiff, and left Catherine at liberty to give her hand to another.— John Stuart, duke of Albany, who had married Anne de la Tour, sister to the duchess of Urbino, negotiated the alliance between the young princess and Henry duke of Orleans, which was consummated at Marseilles with so much magnificence, in October, 1533.

nor

1559. nor were her attractions fugitive and frail, but accompanied her even into age, and hardly quitted her in the most advanced period of life*.

These are only faint and imperfect outlines of a character, which cannot be known by description, but by an attentive consideration of the history of her life, and of the part which

* Her complexion was unusually fine, her eyes large, full of vivacity and fire. She had, when young, a faultless shape; but grew afterwards large and corpulent. Her head was disproportionately big; nor could she walk any considerable distance, without being subject to a dizziness and swimming. The extream symmetry and admirable shape of her legs, made her take a particular pleasure in wearing silk stockings drawn very tight, the use of which were first introduced in her time; and the desire of shewing them more conspicuously, induced her to change the mode of riding on horseback, which was by resting the feet on a small board, to that of placing one leg upon the pommel of the saddle.—Catherine piqued herself on the address with which she rode; and tho' by her boldness in hunting she once broke her leg, and at another time received so severe a blow on the head, as to be obliged to undergo the trepan, she continued this exercise to her sixtieth year. Her hands and arms excelled those of any lady of the court, both as to form and whiteness.—All habits became her, from the exquisite taste with which she adjusted every ornament to her figure; and her wardrobe was equally varied and splendid. Her neck and breast were of the most matchless and dazzling whiteness; Brantome speaks of them with enthusiastic praise and pleasure.

she took in the interesting events of the three 1559.
succeeding reigns.

While Henry, mortally wounded, lay expiring, Catherine, though in appearance agitated with the deepest sorrow, yet foreseeing the natural consequence of her son's accession, and reflecting on her present situation, was wholly intent on the consideration of what measures it would be proper for her to embrace in so critical an emergency. Though she dreaded the capacity, the ambition, and the influence of the Guises, yet the Constable Montmorenci was more personally and immediately obnoxious to her. He had lately united himself closely with the dukes de Valentinois; and had likewise started suspicions the most injurious to her honour and nuptial fidelity, by asserting, that of all the children which she had brought the late king her husband, not one resembled him*.

On

* Davila, with his usual accuracy, assigns several reasons for Catherine's dislike to the Constable: he had originally endeavoured to induce Henry the second to repudiate her for sterility; and when that cause had ceased by her having children, Montmorenci threw indirect, if not open, reflections on her fidelity to her husband, by declaring, that "of all his children, only Diana, his natural daughter, resembled Henry." Besides these personal and wounding insults, the Constable had uniformly persecuted all the Florentines, who from connexions of blood, or of country, had followed Catherine into France, or who had

1559. On the contrary, the princes of Lorraine courted her friendship, and promised her the sacrifice of the late king's mistress, as the cement of their common union. This tempting condition, so grateful to a woman's vengeance, determined the conduct of the queen. Diana, abandoned by the croud of parasites and courtiers who had surrounded her in Henry's reign, underwent in her turn the humiliation of the ducs d'Estampes, and retired immediately from a situation where her presence was grown hateful, and her power become extinct. She passed the remainder of her days at the palace of Anet; and Catherine, satisfied with a political victory, and repressing, from regard to her husband's memory any personal pursuit, permitted her to retain all the splendid presents which she had received from the bounty of her lover, without diminution*.

The

endeavoured to gain promotion in her court. All these mortifications, says Davila, the queen bore in silence during her husband's life, being a most skilful and profound dissembler; but, when released from that subjection, her remembrance and resentment of Montmorenci's treatment, induced her to lend a ready assent to the suggestions and requests of the princes of Lorraine.

* It cannot be denied that the queen acted with the highest magnanimity and clemency on this occasion, as she might have taken a bloody and exemplary revenge on her rival. The Marechal de Tavannes offered to cut off the

The young king, Francis the second, who ascended the throne, was only sixteen years and six months old; and a weakness both of body and mind, approaching to debility, incapacitated him even more than his youth, for the conduct of state affairs. Governed absolutely by his mother, and by the two princes of Lorraine, uncles to the queen consort Mary of Scotland, he had neither judgment to direct himself, or ability to withstand their advice and suggestions.—When therefore the deputies of the parliament waited on him to express their duty and allegiance to his person, he informed them that he had thought proper to invest the duke of Guise and Cardinal of Lorraine with the supreme

1559.

the duchess's nose; but Catherine would not permit it to be done: even the Guises, though intimately connected with her by marriage, and though principally indebted to her for their elevation and favour, yet were so base as to become her open enemies on Henry the second's death.—The Cardinal of Lorraine would have been her bitterest persecutor, if his brother, the duke of Aumale, who had married Diana's daughter, had not restrained and reminded him, "That it would render himself infamous, to become the executioner of his own mother-in-law."—The Constable would not desert her, from respect to the memory of his benefactor Henry the second, though solicited to that purpose.—Diana expressed her gratitude to the queen, by a present of the superb palace of Chaumont-sur-Loire, situated in the midst of those lands assigned to Catherine for dowry; and received from her in return the castle of Chenonceaux, in Touraine.

1559. administration of affairs, assigning to the former the military department, and the finances to the latter *.

The Constable, who early saw this inevitable triumph of his enemies, had announced it to the
king

* The instant that the late king Henry the second had breathed his last, the Guises without delay carried the young sovereign, Francis, to the Louvre; and Catherine of Medicis, quitting her husband's body, (contrary to the ancient invariable custom of the queens dowager of France, which did not allow them to leave their chamber during forty days, or even to see the sun or moon till the royal obsequies were performed,) followed them immediately.—By this means the duke and Cardinal gained the exclusive possession of the new king's person, and effectually prevented Montmorenci from having any access to him; because, by his office of Constable, he was under a necessity of remaining with the corpse of the deceased sovereign, and superintending his funeral, the ceremony of which lasted three-and-thirty days. When, therefore, after these solemnities were performed, Montmorenci came to express his duty to the young king, Francis, instructed by his uncles the Guises, received the Constable with every demonstration of respect and affection; but, under pretence of sparing his age, permitted him to retire to Chantilli, as a retreat becoming his time of life and infirmities. The Constable yielded to a necessity which he was not able to resist, and quitted the court.—Anthony, king of Navarre had retired from thence, previous to the death of Henry the second; in disgust that by the late treaty of peace, signed with Spain at Cateau en Cambresis, no attention had been paid to his interests, nor any endeavours used to compel Philip the second to restore to him the kingdom of Navarre.—On the very day
when

1559.

king of Navarre, beseeching him to repair immediately to court, and claim the authority to which his rank entitled him as first prince of the blood; but Anthony, incapable of any bold and decisive resolution, and distrustful of Montmorenci's attachment to him, advanced by short journies, and stopt at Vendome. This ill-judged and tardy conduct gave the Guises time to confirm their acquisition, and to strengthen their power. Montmorenci was ordered to retire to his own palace in the country: the Cardinal de Tournon was recalled, and admitted to an ostensible association in the government: Bertrandi, to whom Diana de Poitiers had caused the seals to be entrusted, was dismissed; and Francis Olivier, a man of probity and honour, was created chancellor.

Meanwhile Anthony, by the instigation of his brother the prince of Condé, at length arrived at court. His reception was cold even to indignity: the lodging assigned him was unworthy his quality, and he would not have had any, if the Marechal de St. André had

when Henry the second received his wound from Montgomery's lance, the Constable, apprehensive that it would prove mortal, and conscious of the necessity of Anthony's personal appearance, dispatched a courier to press his instant departure and arrival at court; but the king of Navarre, who imputed to Montmorenci the dereliction of his rights, sacrificed by the late peace, refused to follow the advice given him, or to profit of it with due celerity.

1559. not lent him that which he himself occupied. When he was presented to the new king, Francis made the same declaration to him which he had already done to his parliament. Anthony's friends still exhorted him to continue firm, and wait the opportunity of regaining his interest and credit; but the Guises acting on his fears by indirect menaces of the king of Spain's resentment, if he presumed to controvert the queen mother's or her son's choice of ministers; and Catherine, on the other hand, alluring him with a promise of procuring for him the restitution of his ancient kingdom of Navarre, he submitted. After the ceremony of the coronation of Francis the second, he was sent to conduct the young queen of Spain, Elizabeth, to her husband, Philip the second*.

21st Sept.

The new ministers, conscious of the precarious foundation on which their authority rested, and

* The prince of Condé, Coligni, and many others of the Calvinist lords having met Anthony at Vendome, a council was held, to deliberate on the steps requisite to be taken for sharing at least the power of the state with the house of Guise. The prince of Condé and d'Andelot were for the most vigorous and violent measures; but the king of Navarre and the admiral Coligni advised a slow and gentle mode of conduct. This latter opinion prevailed: Anthony was received by the young king in a manner which afforded no hopes of displacing the Guises, or even of participating with them in the government: Francis's answers were cold, ungracious, and harsh; nor did he ever admit

and dreading lest some attempt should be made upon it, published an edict, forbidding any one to carry fire-arms, or even to wear any dress favourable to the concealment of such weapons. This order, calculated for their personal safety, and strongly expressive of their fears, was followed by a second, which was dictated by their interest. The king declared, that he would permit no person to hold two posts at the same time. Coligni, who to the high charge of admiral, joined the government of Picardy, resigned cheerfully the latter, in the expectation that it would be conferred on the prince of Condé; but the Marechal de Brissac was recalled from his command in Piedmont, and invested with that employment. The Constable reluctantly, and after many delays, laid down his office of grand master of the household, bestowed on him by his late sovereign, and was succeeded in it by the duke of Guise.

admit the king of Navarre into his presence, except when the duke of Guise and the Cardinal were with him.—Thus repulsed, Anthony endeavoured to work upon the queen mother; but Catherine, versed in Italian wiles, duped the king of Navarre; and, partly by terror, partly by flattery, induced him to desist from any further remonstrances. He was then dispatched on the empty ceremony of conveying the young queen of Spain to Roncevaux in Navarre, at which place the duke of Alva came at the head of an embassy to receive the princess, and conduct her to Philip the second.

1559.

Animated by an intemperate and sanguinary zeal, the ministers persuaded their weak sovereign that he only adhered to his father's maxims and conduct, in commencing a persecution against the Hugonots. Courts of ecclesiastical judicature, invested with inquisitorial powers, were erected, which took cognizance of heresy; and they were denominated the "Chambres ardentes," from the severity of the punishments which they inflicted. The strictest search was made to discover offenders; crimes of the most improbable and flagitious nature were imputed to them in their nightly assemblies; and a death of ignominy and cruelty was decreed for their adherence to Calvinism. The rigour of the prosecutions was not confined to the capital, but was imitated in the provinces; and this unhappy body of men being forced into resistance, and actuated by despair, began to attempt to defend themselves against their oppressors.

The great number of troops which had been disbanded at the late peace, and the many military adventurers whom the cession of the duchy of Luxembourg and the restitution of Piedmont had left unemployed, afforded the Calvinists the means of raising forces in case of necessity, and was another cause that contributed to the commotions which soon followed. The court, which then resided at Fontainebleau, was crowded with
soldiers

foldiers of fortune, who importunately demanded some recompence for their services. The Cardinal of Lorraine, to whom they principally addressed their petitions, being unable to satisfy them, and apprehensive of some conspiracy among this multitude, published an edict, by which all persons, who had any favour to ask of the king, were commanded instantly to withdraw themselves, on pain of being hung up on a gibbet, which was expressly erected for that purpose in the forest of Fontainebleau. A proceeding so inhuman and despotic, irritated extremely all those against whom it was directed, and alienated from the duke and Cardinal many brave officers, who were before devotedly attached to the house of Guise.

Francis's health in the mean time, enfeebled by distempers, gave alarming symptoms of decay. A quartan ague, with which he had been indisposed during several months, made him totally unfit for any application to business of state; and when this disorder left him, his face was covered with pustules, which evinced the diseased state of his blood. He was therefore carried to Blois, in hopes of receiving benefit from the change of air, and from the methods usually practised to abate the acrimony of scorbutic habits. A report even prevailed, and was generally believed in the neighbourhood of Blois, that the blood of infants was procured, to
make

1559.

November.

1559. make him a bath. The same story had been asserted of Louis the eleventh during his last illness, though probably without foundation. From the remedies administered, of whatever kind, the young king however derived some temporary benefit and relief.

Dec. Meanwhile the severities against the professors of the Reformed religion were redoubled at Paris. Anne du Bourg, one of the five members of the parliament, whom Henry the second had committed to the Bastile a few weeks before his death, was brought to his trial, and adhering pertinaciously to his opinions, was 20th Dec. capitally condemned. His execution was hastened by the assassination of the president Minard, one of his judges; to whom he had particularly objected, and who had been zealously active in the seizure and conviction of the Calvinists *. The authors of this crime were never discovered; but Robert Stuart, a native of

* Anne du Bourg was a man of distinguished talents and erudition. The unexpected death of the late king Henry the second had protracted his trial; and as the Elector Palatine, and many other protestant princes of the empire interposed in his behalf, it is probable that his life might have been granted to the requests of such powerful intercessors, if the assassination of Minard had not irritated the commissioners who presided on his trial. This magistrate, returning from the "Palais" to his own house on the 12th of December, about six in the evening, was attacked and

of Scotland, and who was afterwards in the battle of St. Denis where he mortally wounded the Constable Montmorenci, was suspected and seized on that account. He claimed the young queen's protection, to whom he declared himself related by blood; and when Mary disowned his alliance, and would extend no mark of her favour towards him, Stuart found resources in his own firmness and intrepidity: he underwent the most excruciating pains of the torture without making any confession, and was therefore absolved and dismissed.

1559.

Driven to despair by the ill-judged tyranny of their persecutors, and opposing the undaunted spirit of religious conviction to the superior power of their enemies, the Calvinists began secretly to unite for their common preservation. Neither Louis prince of Condé, nor Coligni, though notoriously profelytes to the new opinions, had however as yet declared themselves their chieftains. A gentleman of the province

1560.
February.

and murdered by three ruffians: Du Bourg was suspected, from some obscure and indirect menaces which he had thrown out against Minard, to have been privy to this attempt; and the supposition tended to accelerate the sentence pronounced, by which he was condemned to be strangled, and his body consumed to ashes. Du Bourg suffered this punishment in the "place du Greve," at Paris, to which he was drawn in a sledge, and put to death at thirty-eight years of age.

of

1560. of Perigord, named John de Bary la Renaudie, was notwithstanding commissioned by the principal persons among them, to collect a number of people under proper leaders, who by different roads should meet at Blois; and, having presented a petition to the king, should seize on the persons of the duke of Guise and Cardinal of Lorraine, as enemies to the kingdom and public tranquillity. The secret was divulged, and information of the conspiracy sent to court from many quarters*. The Guises, warned of the coming storm, took every measure necessary to avert it: Francis was removed from

* Davila and De Thou agree in all the principal and leading features of this memorable conspiracy. La Renaudie was a gentleman of an antient family, brave even to intrepidity, and of a ruined fortune, having been not only cast in a law-suit, but condemned to a severe fine and banishment, for having produced fictitious titles. He retired to Geneva and Lausanne, where he imbibed the doctrines of the Reformation, and became known to a number of French, who had fled into Switzerland to avoid persecution. By these he was regarded as their deliverer; and returning into France, he traversed many provinces of the kingdom under a feigned name. Nantes was appointed for the general rendezvous; and the 1st of February 1560 was named by La Renaudie for the time of assembling, as the parliament of Bretagne would be then sitting. Every precaution was there taken to secure the success of this desperate enterprize; the respective destination of the principal conspirators was settled, and the 15th of March appointed for their general union at Blois, where the court then resided.

from Blois to the castle of Amboise, as a place more capable of defence; and immediately issued letters, commanding the prince of Condé's and the admiral's attendance, who obeyed. The duke of Guise's title of lieutenant-general of

1560.

It would seem that the princes of Guise received various tho' obscure intimation, that some insurrection was to be dreaded. Davila says, it came from Germany; and De Thou confirms this opinion. The first authentic detail of the conspiracy was, however, brought to court by Avenelles, a protestant lawyer, at whose house in Paris La Renaudie lodged, and to whom he had divulged this dangerous secret.—Avenelles, from what motive is uncertain, instantly gave information of the plot to Milet, the duke of Guise's secretary, and was by him carried to Blois, from whence the king had already removed to Amboise; but the Cardinal of Lorraine not having instantly followed the court, Avenelles revealed to him every circumstance of the conspiracy. It is not only probable, but almost certain, that had the enterprize been successful, it was intended to seize, and possibly to put the Guises to death, as enemies to the kingdom; and to declare the prince of Condé regent or administrator, granting at the same time a compleat toleration of the Reformed religion. These facts must be admitted; but it is at least as indisputable, that the attempt was never extended to the person of the king, or of any of the royal family, as calumny pretended, with intent to render the Hugonots odious. Davila avows this truth, though he mentions the conspiracy with detestation: De Thou even goes further, and assures us, that the chiefs concerned in the enterprize only meant to liberate the kingdom from the tyranny of the house of Guise; and that they even bound themselves by oath to defend the king and royal family with their lives and fortunes, against every attempt contrary to the laws.

the

1560. the kingdom, was confirmed; bodies of soldiery were stationed on all the surrounding roads; and a company of musqueteers, mounted on horseback, was raised to guard the person of the king.

15th
March.

Notwithstanding these judicious and necessary precautions, the conspirators, marching in small bands, and only during the night, appeared unexpectedly at the gates of Amboise. The Cardinal of Lorraine, terrified at the approach of danger, betrayed the timidity which was natural to him; but his brother the duke instantly prepared to meet it with becoming courage. His cool discernment appeared conspicuously in this hour of trial; and he instantly assembled the guards, the nobility, and the inhabitants. Suspecting the prince of Condé, the duke committed to him the post of one of the gates to defend; but took care to associate with him the grand-prior, one of his own brothers, who watched all the prince's movements, and prevented him from lending the most indirect assistance to the enemy.

The Calvinists were all dispersed, taken, or cut in pieces. La Renaudie, with a few desperate associates, was met in the forest of Chateau-Renaud by the Baron de Pardaillan, at the head of two hundred cavalry. He defended himself, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, with a bravery heightened by despair; but

FRANCIS THE SECOND.

79
1560.

but his followers being almost all slain, and no chance remaining either of victory or retreat, he spurred his horse up to Pardaillan, and thrusting a poniard through his vizor, laid him dead upon the ground. He himself fell soon after by a ball from a harquebuste; and his body being brought to Amboise, was hung during some hours on a gallows erected upon the bridge across the Loire.—All the inferior conspirators were treated with the same ignominy; their bodies were dragged at the tails of the horses, and afterwards placed on iron hooks round the walls of the castle, booted, and dressed as they fell in the field*.

Some clemency might yet have been extended towards the chiefs. Olivier, the Chancellor, advised lenient and conciliating measures; even the Guises were in suspense whether to pardon or to punish; when a new, but unsuccessful attempt to surprize the town, (which was made by

* La Renaudie, though he found that the court had quitted Blois, and retired for protection to the castle of Amboise, which, from situation as well as from art might resist an attack, yet determined to proceed. Lignieres, one of the principal leaders in the conspiracy, having however betrayed his associates, and given the most exact information of the time and roads by which the different bands were to arrive, the Marechal de St. André and the duke of Nemours were sent out to intercept, and cut them in pieces. The baron de Castelnau, at the head of a considerable body of his followers, being invested in the castle
of

1560. by La Mothe and Coqueville, two of the principal conspirators, who were not dismayed by the ill success of their friends,) gave a loose to the utmost severity. All who were taken in arms, even though on their return home, were put to death; and a number not less than twelve hundred expired under the hands of the executioner. The streets of Amboise ran with blood; the Loire was covered with floating carcases; and all the open places were crowded with gibbets, on which hung these unhappy wretches, who infected the air with a pestilential smell.

The principal leaders were the last who were led out to death. The queen-mother, with her three young sons, and all the principal ladies of the court, beheld this horrid spectacle from the windows of the castle, as a diversion. Two of them, under the agony of the torture, accused the

of Noisai by the duke of Nemours, surrendered on promise of life for himself and his associates; but this capitulation was disregarded and violated. La Renaudie, who had received information of the danger in which Castelnau stood, endeavoured to arrive in time for his relief; but was met by Pardaillan in the woods near Amboise. After a brave, though ineffectual resistance, the Calvinists were routed; and La Renaudie, after having killed Pardaillan, was shot through the thigh by that officer's page, and died fighting desperately to the last. His troops were almost all put to death upon the spot. La Renaudie's body was hung upon a gibbet, with a label affixed to it, containing the words "Chef des Rebelles;" and his quarters were afterwards exposed on stakes in the environs of Amboise.

prince

prince of Condé as their accomplice; but the Baron de Castelnau, being confronted with them, denied it strongly, and in the moment before his head was severed from his body, continued to assert the prince's innocence*.

Some suspicions still remaining against him, notwithstanding this deposition in his favour, he demanded permission to clear himself in full council before the king; and Catherine, ever endeavouring to hold the balance between the contending factions, as the line of conduct most beneficial to her own interests, granted his request.

The

* La Bigne, who was secretary to La Renaudie, being put to the question, only asserted that it was commonly believed the prince of Condé would have put himself at the head of the conspirators, if the enterprize had been accompanied with success. This accusation, if such it could be properly termed, was confirmed by Rannay and Mazere, two of the leaders, previous to their execution; but the Baron de Castelnau peremptorily contradicted their deposition.—This nobleman was of the most amiable and honourable character, infinitely beloved by the whole court, and of a family which had done distinguished services to the state. The strongest entreaties were used to save his life: Coligny, d'Andelot, and even the duke d'Aumale, though brother to the duke of Guise, yet interceded for his pardon.—The queen-mother inclined to clemency, and wished to spare him; but Francis, instigated by the two princes of Lorraine, was inexorable. Castelnau submitted to the sentence of death with perfect composure; but when the crime for which he suffered was stated to be that of high treason, he burst into the most indignant complaints:—

1560. The prince, with that intrepidity which distinguished all his actions, vindicated his honour from the imputations cast upon it; and, after having given the lye to whoever should dare to maintain or assert the charge against him, he offered to engage with his accuser in single combat, as the most convincing proof of his adversary's falsehood. The Cardinal of Lorraine, who clearly saw at whom this defiance was levelled, made a sign to the young monarch to rise without reply; but his brother the duke, concealing his indignation under the mask of friendship, praised with warmth the prince's conduct, and offered himself to be his second, against whatever antagonist. Yet in private, it was his

“ If,” said he to his judges, “ it be declared treason to have taken up arms against strangers who have violated the laws, and usurped the sovereign authority, let them be proclaimed kings!” Villemongey, one of the principal conspirators, being conducted to the scaffold, which was already covered with the bodies of his friends who had suffered, imbrued his hand in their blood, and holding it up to Heaven, “ Behold!” exclaimed he, “ righteous Judge, the innocent blood of those who have fought thy cause! thou wilt not leave their death unrevenged.” The royal family, and all the ladies of the court were present at these affecting and inhuman spectacles. Only the duchess of Guise, Anne d'Esté (who was daughter of Reneë of France, the youngest child of Louis the XIIth) retired to her apartment to lament these executions, which she had vainly deprecated. The duchess, as well as her mother, were suspected of an adherence to the doctrines of the Reformation.

advice

advice to arrest the prince; but the queen-mother, who foresaw the annihilation of her own power by such an act, opposed and prevented its execution. 1560.

The Chancellor Olivier died at this time, of 30th Mar. grief and horror excited by the cruel and sanguinary scenes to which he had been a witness*.

* Olivier rose under the protection of Margaret queen of Navarre, and sister of Francis the first, to whom he had been Chancellor; and he was raised to the same high dignity by Francis the first himself in 1545. While he held this office, his integrity, firmness, and love of his country, rendered him beloved by all France. Henry the second deprived him of the seals on his accession to the throne, which were entrusted to Bertrandi, a man devoted to the duchess de Valentinois. Soon after the time when Olivier was recalled, and reinvested with his office under Francis the second, the emperor Ferdinand the first sent the bishop of Trent into France, to demand the restitution of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, which Henry the second had retained by the peace of Cateau, and which had been dismembered from the empire. Ferdinand chose the opportunity of a weak and tumultuous reign, such as that of Francis, in which to claim these fiefs; and he had besides commissioned the bishop his ambassador to bribe such of the lords of the council as might be inimical to his demand. The chancellor, aware of Ferdinand's intentions, and vigilant to counteract them, opened the debate, and declared that it was incumbent to take off the head of that person who should dare to propose so pernicious and traitorous a measure, as the surrender of the cities and districts reclaimed by the emperor. This bold and honest declaration intimidated and overawed those who might otherwise have been for such a step, and preserved these valuable acquisitions to the crown of France.

1560. He was succeeded by Michael de l'Hopital, an able minister, and devoted to the queen-mother. His advice, though always temperate and judicious, yet confirmed her in that system of temporizing and intricate policy, and in those arts of division and disunion, which mark her character. She trembled lest the Guises should obtain a complete victory over the princes of the blood, and therefore secretly supported Condé and the Hugonots. An assembly of the nobility was summoned with this view at Fontainbleau, whither the young king was carried; and to which came the Constable Montmorenci, Colig-
 20th Aug. ni, and a numerous train of followers. It was held in Catherine's own cabinet, Francis himself being present. The admiral advancing, threw himself on his knees before his sovereign, and presented him a petition unsigned, in which a toleration was demanded for the professors of the reformed religion; adding, that though no names were affixed to it, yet whenever his majesty should be pleased to signify his pleasure, it would be instantly subscribed by an hundred and fifty thousand persons. The Cardinal of Lorraine opposed the indulgence requested by Coligai, with that impetuous and commanding eloquence by which he was distinguished; and expressions of so much asperity passed between the princes of Lorraine and the admiral, as to oblige Francis to impose silence on the two parties. No decisive resolution was taken; but

the states were ordered to assemble in the month of December ensuing, and a national council was proposed, in hopes of finally adjusting these religious differences. 1560.

Neither the king of Navarre nor prince of Condé were present at this conference, they having previously retired into Guyenne, where they were engaged in concerting measures to dispossess the Guises of their power and offices. Septem.

The person whom Anthony employed as his confidant and messenger, named La Sague, having imprudently communicated the commission with which he was charged, to one of his friends named Bonval, this man betrayed the trust reposed in him, and gave information of La Sague's errand. He was immediately seized at Estampes, by order of the queen-mother, on his return into Gascony, together with a number of letters which he carried. The terror of the torture induced him to confess the method of discovering their contents; and those of Francis de Vendome, Vidame of Chartres, a personal enemy of the duke of Guise, were regarded as peculiarly criminal. He was one of the most brave and gallant lords of the court, and had even been so particularly acceptable to, and favoured by Catherine, as to give rise to suspicions very injurious to her honour*. As he was how-
ever

* The protestant writers, who detested Catherine of Medicis, have not failed to accuse her of gallantries, among

1560. ever now become equally an object of her hatred, she caused him to be carried to the Bastile; and he was transferred some time after to the palace of the Tournelles, where he died either of chagrin, or of the consequences of his debaucheries.

Bouchard, Chancellor to the king of Navarre being likewise seized, and actuated by the same timidity as La Sague, accused the prince of Condé of having endeavour'd to seduce his brother to engage in treasonable practices. Notwithstanding this act of undisguised hostility on the part of the court, Anthony and Louis, after long irresolution and many delays, finally embraced the dangerous resolution of attending the states which were convoked at Orleans. Francis himself, quitting Fontainbleau on account of the danger to which his person was exposed in so defenceless a place, removed to the

her other faults and crimes. Jurieu particularly names the duke of Nemours, the Vidame of Chartres, and the Marquis de Méscoet, as her lovers; and declares her to have been criminally intimate with all these noblemen. Impartial justice must, however, acquit her from such imputations. Ambition, not love, was her predominant passion; and her conduct towards Mademoiselle de Limeuil, when seduced by the prince of Condé, of which I shall have occasion to speak particularly hereafter, was very opposite to any such libertinism.—Mezerai, and Le Laboureur, only blame her love of pleasures, without any reflections on her honour, which are certainly to be distrusted as false aspersions.

palace

1560.

palace of St. Germain. His health was even in so precarious and declining a state, as to induce the Guises to order public prayers for its restoration; but as it was necessary for him to open the deliberations of the states in person, the young king proceeded towards Orleans, escorted by a thousand horse, and accompanied by the queen-mother, and Charles duke of Orleans, his brother. He entered that city in a fort of military pomp, to which the nation had been little accustomed, and which had more the appearance of a conqueror triumphing over rebels, than of a king scarcely yet attained to manhood, and who could neither have forfeited or alienated the affections of his people.

18th Oct.

Meanwhile the princes of Bourbon set out to attend the assembly of the states: their friends advised them to appear well armed, and well accompanied; but the mandate which the Guises issued in the king's name, forbidding them to bring any other followers than those of their own household, together with the confidence which they reposed in their own high rank, and relation to the royal blood, made them despise and neglect these salutary precautions*. Various
informa-

* Davila, the great directing historian of these times, beautifully lays open the artifices which the Guises used to draw the two brothers into the snare. Louis, says he, conscious that his co-operation in the late conspiracies and

1560. informations and intimations of a very alarming nature met them on their way towards Orleans. They were assured that Francis and his mother, hurried on by the impetuous counsels of the duke of Guise and the Cardinal, had been either induced or compelled to adopt the most sanguinary measures; but the two princes, notwith-

commotions might be ascertained from the papers and persons lately seized, peremptorily refused to trust himself in the power of his enemies: but Anthony, either more innocent, or more credulous, and deeming it impossible that an Italian woman and two strangers would venture to arrest and capitally punish the first princes of the blood, inclined to attend the states. While they fluctuated in this state of uncertainty, the Count de Crussol and the Marechal de St. André were dispatched by the young king, to induce them by the strongest assurances of amity not to delay their journey; but Condé still remained firm in his first determination. This report being made by the Count de Crussol on his return to court, the Marechal de Termes was sent into Gascony, and ordered to levy a body of troops, which might invest them in Bearn, where they were unprepared for their defence. At the same time, the queen-mother, ever effecting her schemes by dissimulation, prevailed on Charles, Cardinal of Bourbon, brother to Anthony and Louis, to add his entreaties to her own, and assured him of the good intentions of Francis. The Cardinal, credulous and relying on Catherine's assurances, instantly left Orleans, and proceeded to Bearn, where he implored the two princes his brothers no longer to refuse their obedience to the repeated orders of their sovereign. These united efforts were at length successful: the princes reluctantly left Pau, and with a slender train proceeded towards Orleans.

standing these advices, continued their journey *. On their arrival at Orleans, they entered the royal presence and saluted the king, who gave them a cold and ungracious reception. The instant of their departure, two captains of the guard took them into custody. Anthony was only carefully watched; but the prince of Condé was committed close prisoner to a house erected purposely in a public

1560.
30th Oct.

* The king of Navarre confiding in his innocence, and trusting likewise to his high rank, refused seven hundred gentlemen of Poictou the permission to accompany him to Orleans, and forbad above fifteen hundred others, who had prepared to attend and escort his person. Marillac, archbishop of Vienne, conscious of the danger into which the two princes of Bourbon were precipitating themselves, gave them the most authentic information of the intentions of their enemies; but they disregarded all admonition.

As they advanced towards Orleans, their retreat was cut off by troops, who occupied the provinces behind them through which they must have returned into Bearn; and no sooner had the court received certain advice of their being on the territory of France, than, as if that act had served as a signal for taking off the mask, Grollot, Bailiff of Orleans, who was suspected of holding a correspondence with Anthony, was committed to custody.

At Poitiers, Montpezat, the governor shut the gates of that city against the princes; but, on their instantly suspending their journey, and complaining of this insult by a messenger whom they dispatched to court, the Marechal de Termes was sent to excuse it in the king's name, and they were received in triumph into Poitiers. Termes having executed this commission, followed them at some distance with a body of cavalry, to observe their motions, till their final entry into Orleans.

square,

1560. square, and which was defended by some pieces of cannon *.

The

* The Marechal de Brissac first proposed in council to arrest the prince of Condé; and Francis signed the order, which was reluctantly countersigned by de l'Hopital, the Chancellor.

“ I saw the two brothers Anthony and Louis,” says Brantome, “ when they arrived : the king of Navarre entered the court of the palace on horseback ; the prince, on foot. Never did I see a man exhibit a more bold and fearless mien than did the latter ; but on his return, when arrested, he appeared covered with astonishment. Anthony, who had thought to disconcert and terrify his enemies by his threats and appearance at court, was not less confounded and amazed.”

Davila has related with equal accuracy and minuteness all the principal circumstances which preceded and attended the arrest of the two princes : they are too authentic and interesting to be omitted.—“ When they entered the city of Orleans,” says he, “ they found all the streets lined with soldiers, thro’ whom they passed to the king’s lodging ; but, the gate being shut, and only the wicket left open, the two princes were compelled to dismount and enter on foot. Scarce any of the persons whom they met, saluted them ; and on being conducted into the royal presence, they found the young king seated between the duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, surrounded by the captains of the guard. Francis received them with coldness, and then conducted them himself to the apartment of the queen-mother, the Guises not following : Catherine, with her accustomed dissimulation, and to preserve the appearance of impartiality, treated the princes with every demonstration of affection, mixed with sadness, and even shed tears on the occasion ; but Francis, with looks of resentment, and in terms of reproach,

The admiral Coligni was in Orleans at this time; but d'Andelot his brother, more cir-

1560.

“ reproach, arraigned the prince of Condé, accused him
 “ of attempting to seize on the principal cities of his do-
 “ minions, and even of having plotted against his life,
 “ and that of his brothers. Condé, not in the least dis-
 “ mayed, boldly denied the accusation, and said that he
 “ would make his own innocence and the calumny of his
 “ enemies apparent to the whole world. ‘ To ascertain
 “ the truth,’ answered Francis, ‘ it is necessary to pro-
 “ ceed by the usual modes of justice:’ and instantly quit-
 “ ting the room, gave orders to the captains of the guard
 “ to arrest the prince of Condé.

“ Catherine, affecting on this memorable occasion the
 “ utmost sympathy and concern, endeavoured to soothe the
 “ two princes, though she had previously consented to the
 “ act of seizing on Condé; who suffered himself to be led
 “ away, only venting his reproaches on himself for hav-
 “ ing been so deluded by the good faith and credulity of
 “ the Cardinal his brother, as to venture himself in the
 “ power of his enemies. Anthony remained with the queen-
 “ mother, who threw the whole odium of the prince’s arrest
 “ on the duke of Guise, and endeavoured to remove all
 “ participation in it from herself. After a long conversa-
 “ tion, the king of Navarre was conducted to an apartment
 “ prepared for him in a house adjoining to the palace in
 “ which Francis resided; and where, tho’ he was permitted
 “ the liberty of conversation, he was in every other respect
 “ a prisoner.”

Philip de Maillé Brezé, and Chavigni, captains of the
 body guard arrested the prince of Condé; he was then
 led to a tower of brick, erected for the purpose, and on
 which were mounted some pieces of cannon. Iron bars
 were fixed to the windows; and the door was closed up,
 only an opening being left in it by which to convey to him
 provisions and necessaries,

cumspect,

1560. cumspect, and foreseeing the danger, had retired into Bretagne.—Magdalen de Roye, mother to the princess of Condé, was arrested at her own house of Anici in Picardy, by Tannegui de Carrouge, who sent her prisoner to the castle of St. Germain; and Grollot, bailiff of Orleans, had been already taken into custody.

The Chancellor, and five judges, who were appointed to interrogate the prince, waited on him in prison for that purpose. In no degree dismayed by the violence exercised against him, he refused to plead before such a tribunal; and demanded a public trial by the whole parliament, peers, and king, to which he was entitled by his high dignity. This spirited and intrepid behaviour did not however disconcert his enemies, or delay the proceedings against him, which were continued without interruption. He stood on the brink of destruction; while the Guises, already anticipating the fall of this powerful rival, and intoxicated with their own success, observed scarce any deference towards the queen-mother whom they secretly suspected, and whom they intended to divest of all influence or authority.—Catherine saw the error which she had committed, in uniting herself with the princes of Lorraine against Anthony and Louis; but it was too late to retract, and the
evil

evil was beyond a cure *. The condemnation and execution of Grolot were universally regarded as preparatory to that of the prince of Condé; when an unexpected and great event, big with the most important consequences, averted the blow, and snatched him from the impending destruction.

The king, to avoid being present at Grolot's execution, had gone out to the chace. On his return from that diversion he was at- 17th Nov.

* The duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine publicly boasted, says Davila, that "at two blows only they would cut off the heads of heresy and rebellion." Permission was refused the prince of Condé to see either his wife or brothers; but he was allowed to write to them. Anthony would, in all probability, have been involved in the fate of his brother, as the princes of Guise must naturally have dreaded the revenge due to the execution of Condé. The 25th of November was regarded as the day fixed on for that melancholy spectacle, and his death seemed equally imminent and inevitable. Davila draws a masterly and striking picture of the queen-mother's conduct during the time of the prince of Condé's trial and imprisonment. She anxiously desired to appear innocent of the crime, to which she had notwithstanding previously consented: she wore a face of sorrow and distress: she continually sent for the admiral Coligni and his brother the Cardinal de Chatillon, on pretence of finding some expedient to extricate the king of Navarre, and the prince of Condé: she even sent the duchess of Montpensier to Anthony, with kind and condoling messages. "So exquisitely," adds Davila, "did she dissemble, that even those who knew her best, yet hesitated in pronouncing whether she was sincere or not in her affectation of concern."

1560. tacked with a heaviness in his head, which at the end of some days was followed by a suppuration, and an imposthume in his ear*. The symptoms did not at first appear mortal, or alarming; but the Guises apprehensive of the event, and dreading lest their prey should escape, pushed on the trial of the prince with an unprecedented and indecent haste. The customary forms, observed in capital cases were omitted, and he was at last condemned to lose his head.

The Chancellor, ever averse to the violent measures pursued, and seeing that Francis's complaints assumed every hour a more dangerous appearance, artfully delayed affixing his signature to the order for the prince's execution. Yet among all the nobles and great personages with which the court was crowded, (so despotic was the influence of the princes of Lorraine, and so servile the devotion paid them) only the Count de Sancerre had the courage to refuse ab-

* Davila says that "Francis being under his barber's hands, was suddenly seized with an apoplectic or fainting fit, and that his attendants immediately laid him on the couch without signs of life. His senses returned after some time; but it was evident from the nature of the attack, and the effects which it left, that he could not long survive." De Thou calls it an abscess which the king had in his head, and which beginning to suppurate thro' his ear, was attended with the most fatal symptoms. Mezerai speaks of it in similar terms; but adds, that during the first five or six days it was not regarded as mortal, or even dangerous.

olutely to sign it, though three repeated orders of the king were brought him for that purpose. 1560. Whether Francis himself had affixed to it his sign manual or not, is a secret of state never divulged, and on which historians differ.

In the mean time the physicians, from the nature of the symptoms which they observed in the young king, and a gangrene which had begun to manifest itself, declared him near his end. The Guises, conscious of the critical situation in which their daring conduct had involved them, and believing that their own personal safety was inseparably connected with a steady adherence to the principles which they had hitherto pursued, remained firm in their determination to put the prince of Condé to death. Placing their confidence only in the prosecution of this measure, they even endeavoured to induce Catherine to join them in arresting the king of Navarre, and conducting him to a similar fate; but she, too wise to be rendered subservient to their ambitious purposes, and emancipated by the prospect of Francis's death from the tyranny which they had exercised over her, refused to consent to, or to permit of so sanguinary a proceeding*. She saw herself exactly
in

* Monsieur de Thou expressly asserts that previous to the young king's attack on the 17th of November, the Guises, apprehensive that if Anthony was left alive, he
would

1560: in that situation to which she had long aspired.
 The approaching minority left the regency open

would revenge the prince of Condé's death, took the decisive resolution of causing him to be assassinated. Their consciousness of being the objects of the public hatred for their despotism and tyranny, confirmed them in this desperate and criminal purpose, which was absolutely debated, and finally settled in a secret council. The misguided king, who was to be made the instrument of so foul and base an assassination, committed in the person of the first prince of the royal blood, consented to it; and it was agreed on, that he should command the attendance of Anthony in his own cabinet, the Guises being present, where, feigning to have discovered new proofs of his treasonable practices, he should reproach the king of Navarre in the severest manner. As they naturally imagined that this latter prince would reply in terms of warmth and generous indignation, they meant to take advantage of that circumstance, and to dispatch him in the confusion, under pretence of his having threatened Francis's life. Anthony received information of this barbarous project from some of the adherents of the Guises themselves: he was at first undecided what conduct to hold; but reflecting that he was absolutely in the power of the Guises, who could effect their purpose in any way which they chose, he boldly resolved to prepare himself for the worst, and to dispute his life with his own sword, if attacked. In this perilous and awful moment, he called to him Reinsy, one of his gentlemen; "If they kill me," said he, "carry my shirt all bloody, to my wife and son! They will read in my blood what they ought to do to revenge it."

Anthony then entered the apartment where the young king Francis the second was seated, and approaching him, kissed his hand with profound submission. Softened

1560.

open to her ambition, while both parties paid her the most assiduous court, as to the common arbiters of their lives and fortunes. In the anticipation of her son's death, she took with the most cool perspicuity and masterly address, the necessary precautions for securing to herself the first place in the government under Charles, the immediate heir to the crown, and who was only ten years and five months old. Anthony promised in writing to cede to her the regency, which belonged to

by this behaviour, and affected by the presence of Anthony, the king changed his resolution, and omitted to give the sign previously settled, at which the surrounding attendants were to fall upon the king of Navarre. It is pretended, adds De Thou, that the duke of Guise, finding his project abortive, exclaim'd with a voice full of indignation, " Oh ! le timide et lache enfant ! "

This story, which powerfully arrests the imagination, conveys an astonishing idea of the daring and criminal lengths to which the princes of Guise carried their projects of vengeance and aggrandizement. We cannot wonder at the irresolution of a prince of seventeen years of age, refusing to stain the majesty of the throne with so atrocious a deed of blood; but we are lost in astonishment at the unprecedented boldness of the persons who could dare to propose to their sovereign so flagitious and unmanly an assassination. Though Davila does not relate this anecdote, yet he expressly asserts that both before the king's attack of illness, and at the time when his death was regarded as imminent and certain, the Guises implored the queen-mother to put the king of Navarre to death before Francis's eyes were closed.

1560. him of right, as first prince of the blood; and the Guises swore to serve her in every manner, for and against whomever she commanded*.

Amid these intrigues and cabals, Francis the second breathed his last, on the eighteenth day

* De Thou and Davila perfectly coincide in their account of Catherine's conduct during the last hours of her son Francis's life. The Guises urged her to put both the princes Anthony and Louis to death, as the only certain means of securing the regency to herself, and providing for the tranquillity of the new reign. The duchess of Montpensier opposed this sanguinary advice, and represented to the queen-mother, that by following it she would confirm the power of the princes of Lorraine, and become their slave, instead of their arbitress. Catherine hesitated long between these different lines of conduct, endeavouring to gain time, giving out that there were yet great hopes of the young king's recovery, and intending eventually to conform to circumstances. De l'Hopital, the chancellor, confirmed her in this system of procrastination; and at last, when the symptoms of Francis's disorder appeared to indicate his imminent and inevitable dissolution, he strongly advised the queen to spare both the princes of Bourbon, and even to enter into a private negotiation with the king of Navarre. In pursuance of this salutary counsel, Catherine dispatched the prince-Dauphin of Auvergne, son to the duchess of Montpensier, to bring the king of Navarre privately in the night, to her own chamber: they there conferred together; and after the queen had again disclaimed all participation in the trial and intended execution of the prince of Condé, she assured Anthony of her desire to join with him to repress the exorbitant power of the house of Guise. This interview and compact took place only a few hours before the death of Francis the second.

from his seizure, and aged only seventeen years ten months and a half, of which he had reigned about a year and five months *.

1560.

5th Dec.

We know not with certainty what qualities he possessed, or might have discovered, if he had attained to manhood; but his capacity appears to have been very mean and weak, and his bodily infirmities encreased these mental defects. Some French historians have absurdly given him the epithet of "The king without vice." Voltaire has drawn

* The critical nature of Francis's death, so opportune for the preservation of the prince of Condé, and so fortunate to Catherine of Medicis whom the Guises had deprived of all influence, gave rise to reports of poison. "Le Laboureur," and several other writers, have accused Ambrose Paré the king's surgeon, and a Scotch valet de chambre who was a Hugonot, with having poisoned Francis's night-cap exactly at the place which answered to, and covered the imposthume in his ear; but De Thou, infinitely more worthy of credit, denies and disproves this assertion. That historian expressly attributes his death to the weakness of his constitution, and to hereditary maladies derived from his mother.

Davila seems to incline likewise to the belief that he died a natural death, yet mentions the opinion generally received of his having been poisoned. "The young king," says he, "had always been troubled with pains and defluxions in his head, from his infancy. An imposthume formed itself over his right ear; and that bursting, so great a quantity of matter fell into his throat, that it stopped up the passage, and prevented him either from speaking, or receiving any sort of

1560. drawn his portrait more spiritedly and more justly, in his *Henriade*.

“ Foible enfant, qui de Guise adorait les caprices,
 “ Et dont on ignorait les vertus et les vices.”

His continence has been made the subject of encomium; but to the feeble state of his health and early youth, this virtue may be chiefly attributed; besides that his attachment to his consort Mary was extreme, and both her beauty and accomplishments such, as to challenge the warmest homage of the heart.

Francis's funeral was indecently neglected, ambition and intrigue occupying the whole court. Catherine, who had been ostentatiously magnificent in the obsequies of her husband, was equally remiss in those of her son; while the Guises, on whom he had heaped so many fa-

“ nourishment.—Most people,” continues Davila, “ believed at the time, that his barber had conveyed poison into his ear; and it was even reported, that the physicians had discovered evident signs of the fact. The sudden nature of Francis's seizure, and the extraordinary crisis in which he expired, would have given universal credit to the accusation, even among men of the best understandings, if the disorder which terminated his life had not been known to have grown up with him from his cradle.”

After the testimonies of these two last historians, we cannot hesitate to believe the king's death natural, and almost inevitable, from his hereditary weakness and complaints.

vours, and to whom he had confided such unlimited power, by a conduct which marked them with the basest ingratitude, did not shew him this last and slender token of respect. They excused themselves, under the frivolous pretext of remaining to console the young queen, their niece; but in reality with intent, by their presence and authority, to controul and over-awe their enemies.

Among so many lords and bishops who were assembled at Orleans, only Sansac and La Brosse, who had been Francis's governors, and Guillard bishop of Senlis, who was blind, followed his corpse to St. Denis. Upon the cloth which covered his coffin, a billet was found, containing this severe and pointed sarcasm, "Tanne-guy du Chatel, où es tu?" It alluded to the funeral rites of Charles the seventh: Du Chatel had been that monarch's favourite and chamberlain, but was afterwards banished from court. On Charles's death he instantly returned, and as a mark of his gratitude and affection to a master whom he had loved, was said to have buried him at his own private expence, with a royal magnificence.

Francis the second left no issue, legitimate or illegitimate, and the crown descended to Charles his brother.—Mary, queen of France and Scotland, makes no figure in her husband's reign. Subservient to, and awed by the daring

1560. genius of her uncles, the princes of Lorraine, she performed only an inferior part. They made use of her charms and influence over the young king, to bend him to their wishes and measures. In a court of such gallantry, where her beauty was adored, she could not however escape some malignant and false reflections on her character; but they do not deserve to be mentioned, and much less to be refuted.

The Constable Montmorenci, who had been repeatedly ordered to appear at Orleans, but whose distrust and caution rendered him slow, hastened his march on the news of the king's death*. He arrived on the third day after that event, accompanied by six hundred horse; and making use of the authority which his high charge conferr'd, he drove the guards from the gates of the city; threatening to hang

* Davila, usually so exact, and on whose authority we may rely with an almost implicit faith, expressly asserts, "That the prince of Condé was condemned to be beheaded before the royal palace, previous to Francis the second's seizure; and that the execution of the sentence was only delayed, in hopes to draw Montmorenci and his sons into the net, and to involve the king of Navarre in the same common destruction." So that the Constable's delays were chiefly instrumental to Condé's preservation. It is impossible not to be amazed at the bold and nearly successful plan of the duke of Guise and cardinal of Lorraine, thus at one blow to cut off by a solemn and public trial, two princes of the blood, and the first officer of the crown.

them

them up, if they kept the king invested in full peace, and in the centre of his kingdom *.

1560.

Meanwhile the prince of Condé escaped amidst these unexpected changes, Francis's death having unloosed his fetters. With a magnanimity and courage becoming himself, he notwithstanding refused to quit his prison, till he knew who had been his prosecutors and accusers; but no person dared to avow himself as such. The Guises declared that every step had been taken by the late king's express and particular command; but they did not produce the royal order, in consequence of which measures

fo

* Davila says, that Montmorenci suspected the intentions of the Guises to such a degree, that no invitations or artifices could allure him to venture himself in their power. He returned from Paris to Chantilli, under pretence of the gout; and when he began his journey a second time, he purposely delayed his progress, on the plea of his advanced age and infirmities.

His sons pressing him to hasten to court, and assuring him that the Guises and the queen-mother would equally dread offending him; he replied, that "those in whose power the government then was vested, would act as they pleased; that the states could not be assembled without some cause; and that a little time would unfold all these dark and mysterious proceedings."

Nothing could have been more artful and masterly, than the address which the queen-mother exerted, in flattering and gaining the Constable, whom she termed the arbitrator and moderator of all things. Loyalty to his sovereigns, and

1560.

so violent had been pursued. Thirteen days afterwards the prince quitted Orleans, accompanied as a mark of honour, by those very soldiers who had served as his guard, and retired first to Ham in Picardy, and thence to La Fere, both which places belonged to his brother Anthony, king of Navarre.

unshaken allegiance to the throne, were the leading features of Montmorenci's character, on which Catherine relied.—When he arrived at the palace, where the young king (Charles the ninth) resided, at Orleans, he did homage to his new sovereign with tears in his eyes, and exhorted him not to be disturbed at the present commotions, since he himself, and all good Frenchmen, were ready to lay down their lives for the preservation of the crown and kingdom. Catherine then entered into a long conversation with him; and by those blandishments of which she was so compleat a mistress, worked upon his feelings of public spirit and regard to the interests of the state, till the Constable, won to her purposes, consented to be the common mediator between the princes of Bourbon and the Guises. Catherine secured by this means the regency for herself, and attached Montmorenci to her son, independent of either of the two great factions.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

Reflections on the situation of affairs at the accession of Charles the ninth.—Catherine of Medicis secures to herself the regency.—Formation of the “Triumvirate.”—Pernicious policy of the regent.—Assembly of the states.—Massacre of Vassy.—Duplicity of Catherine.—The young king carried to Paris by Anthony king of Navarre.—Commencement of the civil wars.—Prince of Condé declared chief of the Hugonots.—Vain attempts to produce an accommodation.—Siege of Rouen.—Death of the king of Navarre.—Battle of Dreux.—Consequences of that action.—Siege of Orleans.—Assassination of the duke of Guise.—Account of the circumstances attending it.—His funeral, and Character.—Conclusion of Peace.—Death of La Cipierre.—Character of the marechal de Retz.—The prince of Condé’s amours, and second marriage.—Charles the ninth attains to majority.—Administration of Catherine.—Interview of Bayonne.—Commencement of the second civil war.—Ineffectual enterprise of Meaux.—Battle of St. Denis.—Death of the Constable Montmorenci.—Circumstances of

*that event. — Character of the young king. —
Second pacification.*

1560. **T**HE circumstances in which Charles the
 Dec. ninth succeeded to the crown, were such
 as seemed to indicate the future tempests which
 shook his throne; nor do the annals of any
 nation present us with a reign producing events
 of a more calamitous nature. Religion, a sa-
 cred name, but prostituted to the purposes of
 interest or policy, served as an ostensible pre-
 text to cover the ambition, and the other real
 causes, which conspired to involve the unhappy
 kingdom in all the horrors of civil war.—An
 historian of sensibility cannot even relate these
 disastrous circumstances, without feeling the
 utmost commiseration and distress. That inve-
 terate animosity, that sanguinary spirit, which
 ever characterises theological disputes, actuated
 and inflamed the whole community. All the
 provinces became in turn the theatre of war
 and rapine; while the dreadful night of St.
 Bartholomew, stained with blood, and veiled
 in darkness, completes the mournful picture.
 An event which stands unparalleled in the his-
 tory of mankind, and which must impress with
 horror, in ages the most remote!

The young king Charles the ninth, who
 ascended the throne in this critical and perilous
 juncture, was as yet of an age too tender to
 interfere

interfere personally in the administration of affairs, and could not, during many years, extend any effectual or permanent redress to the accumulated evils of the state. Catherine of Medecis, only anxious to lengthen the term of her son's minority, and of her own regency; ever intent on projects for the enlargement and the continuance of that authority with which she was invested, sowed division and discord among the principal nobility. Opposing, with Italian refinement, one party to another, negligent of the public tranquillity, and solely attentive to her own private interests, she sacrificed every consideration to her thirst of power. Even the feelings of a parent could set no bounds to this tyrannic passion; and Charles, tho' her own son, yet from the moment that he conceived the desire of reigning without her aid, was regarded by her as the most inveterate enemy. As yet however she had not this event to dread, Francis the second's premature end having placed her in the first post of government. The states, assembled at Orleans, were opened with a speech from the chancellor de l'Hopital, in which he exhorted them to toleration, unanimity, and an oblivion of past dissentions. Counsels the most wise and salutary, but unhappily impracticable amid the furious zeal of contending parties!

1560.

13 Dec.

- Some attempts were made while the states were sitting, to deprive the queen-mother of the

1560. the regency, which she had assumed by a sort of political violence; but the weakness of Anthony king of Navarre, and her own address, soon extinguished all appearance of opposition. She then dissolved the assembly, whose deliberations she feared might tend to diminish the prerogatives of the crown; and convoked them to meet anew at Poissy in the month of May ensuing.

1561.
February. The court having retired to Fontainebleau, Louis prince of Condé repaired thither with a slender train. Desirous of justifying himself from the imputations cast upon him in the late reign, he demanded permission to prove his innocence before the king, which was granted; the Chancellor pronounced him guiltless of the crimes laid to his charge, and he was re-admitted to his seat in council.

Unaffected by the elevation of their enemies, and the unexpected reverse of fortune which had befallen them, the princes of Lorraine still maintained their ground. Equally supporting, and supported by the ancient religion, they yet preserved a prodigious influence, and spread terror among their opponents. In vain did the king of Navarre, though invested with the title of lieutenant-general, and though aided by the Constable and the Colignis, attempt to humble, and compel the duke of Guise to relinquish a part of his authority, as grand master of the household: Anthony was himself re-

duced, after an ineffectual struggle, to renounce his pretensions. 1561.

Justly alarmed at so powerful a combination between the princes of the blood, Montmorenci and his nephews, the regent exerted herself to dissolve a confederacy, which she feared might affix limits to her own power. The Constable was long uncertain and irresolute which party he should join. His eldest son Francis, Marechal de Montmorenci, esteemed one of the most prudent lords of the kingdom, and closely connected with the Hugonot party, endeavoured to retain his father on that side; but Henry d'Amville, his second son, and Magdalen of Savoy, Montmorenci's own wife, were attached to the opposite faction *. Catherine, regardless of the engines which she made subservient to her measures, and anxious to succeed by whatever means, recalled Diana de Poitiers again to court, and ordered her to try her powers of persuasion upon the Constable. She succeeded: he declared at length in favour of the Guises; and
a private

* Henry, second son of the Constable Montmorenci, and the favourite of his father, was early distinguished by his courage, and rose after the extinction of the house of Valois, under Henry the fourth, to the dignity of Constable of France. He was one of the most accomplished noblemen of the courts of Henry the second and Francis the second; and after the death of the last of those princes, he followed Mary, queen dowager of France and queen of Scotland, when

1561. a private union of interests was established between the duke, the Marechal de St. André, and himself, which obtained the name of “the Triumvirate *.”

15th May. The ceremony of Charles’s coronation, which these intrigues and disputes had hitherto delayed, was at length performed at Rheims, with the

when she returned into her own dominions. He was tenderly attached to her; and Mary was so sensible to his passion, that it was believed had he been at liberty, she would have married him; but d’Amville had been already married in 1558 to Antoinette de la Marck, grand-daughter of the celebrated duchess de Valentinois. His elder brother Francis dying without issue, Henry succeeded in 1579 to the possessions and titles of the house of Montmorenci. By Louisa de Budos, his second wife, he was father to Henry, last duke of Montmorenci, equally amiable and unfortunate, who was put to death at Toulouse by the cardinal de Richlieu, after the combat of Castelnaudari, in 1632.

* This was the last public act of the celebrated duchess of Valentinois; and she again retired, after this proof of her influence over Montmorenci, to the castle of Anet. She survived it about five years, and at length died, in the sixty-seventh year of her age, on the 26th of April, 1566. Her body reposes under a marble mausoleum, in the centre of the choir of the great chapel of Anet, which she had herself constructed. She was the most extraordinary instance of beauty and powers of pleasing, preserved even in the winter of life, which occurs in modern history; unless Ninon de l’Enclos may be supposed to form an exception.

—It was by no means the intention of the queen-mother, in detaching the Constable from Anthony king of Navarre and his own nephews the Ccignis, to force him to so strict a

union

the accustomed magnificence. This splendid pageantry could not however in any degree heal the wounds of the state; and Catherine's ambiguous conduct, which tended to spread universal jealousy and distrust, encreased and irritated the public disorders. Fearful that she might be oppressed by the superior power of the three great united lords, and incapable of detaching them from their new confederacy, she attempted to balance their political weight by another of equal importance. In consequence of this determination, she immediately made proposals to the king of Navarre, for establishing a more close and intimate alliance between them, which might conduce to their common support. Anthony gladly embraced these offers; but while, in compliance with her promises to him, she affected to protect and favour the reformed religion, she secretly prevailed on the Constable to complain of those very innovations. Not sufficiently powerful to annihilate and compress by force the numerous parties, union with the house of Guise and the Marechal de St. André. She had hoped to attach Montmorenci to herself and to the young king her son, independantly of either of the great factions; but she was deceived in this expectation. The union of "the Triumvirate" was studiously concealed from Catherine, who dreaded and trembled at that powerful combination.—Davila and De Thou equally agree in their account of the principal facts respecting this transaction.

1561.

1561. she substituted cunning and artifice in its stead; but her abilities, though great, and equal to almost every undertaking, yet fell short of this purpose. After having fomented the sparks of civil discord, she vainly flattered herself that she could extinguish them at pleasure, or direct their fury; they blazed to the destruction of her son, and to the ruin of his kingdom.

A feigned reconciliation took place about this time between the duke of Guise and the prince of Condé; after which they embraced in the royal presence, and made professions of the most sincere and cordial amity*. The king of Na-

* Mezerai says, that the Constable was the author of this pretended reconciliation; because, conceiving it unbecoming his own honour openly to ally himself with the duke of Guise, while the prince of Condé was that nobleman's enemy, he requested of the queen-mother to undertake the accommodation of their differences.

The young king in consequence commanded their attendance at St. Germain-en-Laye, where the court then resided, and ordered them mutually to forget their past animosities. The duke of Guise protested that he had not advised the imprisonment of the prince of Condé; who replied, that "whosoever was the person from whom that advice came, he regarded him as a villain and a traitor." The duke answered that he was equally of that opinion, and that the prince's observation no way affected him. This scene having been acted, they embraced; and the king enjoined them to observe in future a strict and cordial friendship. Catherine then invited them both to a magnificent entertainment, which she gave as a testimony of her satisfaction at this auspicious event.

varre, in the assembly of the states, was again so weak as to renounce his claim to the regency. Catharine, who intimately knew the human heart, who ever addressed herself to its passions, and conquered by flattering its propensities, had enslaved Anthony by a new allurements, peculiarly calculated to retain him in her obedience. Mademoiselle du Rouet, one of the most beautiful maids of honour in her train, served as an instrument to fascinate the easy prince; and her ascendancy over a temper yielding, voluptuous, and indolent, was only extinguished with his life.

1561.

The states meanwhile were opened with great solemnity at St. Germain; the young king, though only ten years of age, seated on his throne, with the queen-mother, and his sister the princess Margaret on his left hand, being present at the debates. As the admiral Coligni had been principally instrumental in prevailing upon the king of Navarre not to contest the regent's power, she in return avowedly patronised the Calvinistical doctrines and followers. This pretended partiality, which was the result not of conviction, but of the most profound political hypocrisy, was equally displayed by Catherine at the disputation of Poissy; a vain attempt made to reconcile the religious differences, and in which the Cardinal of Lorraine on one side, and Theodore Beza on the other, declaimed with equal

August.

Sept.

1561. violence and eloquence, in defence of their respective tenets.

Disgusted at the loss of their credit, as well as at the preference shewn to the Hugonots, and covering their dissatisfaction at Catherine's conduct under the pretext of attachment to their religion, "the Triumvirate" quitted the court. Still however, attentive to their great political interests, they exerted every artifice which might win the king of Navarre, and bring him over to their party.—The Guises first proposed to him a divorce from his wife Jane d'Albret queen of Navarre, and his marriage with their niece, the young queen dowager, Mary of Scotland. Finding that from attachment to his son Henry, prince of Bearn, he disapproved and rejected this offer, they pretended to have received promises from Philip the second of Spain, of ceding to him the island of Sardinia, in compensation for the kingdom of Navarre. Anthony, deceived by this ideal advantage, at length united himself to his natural enemies, and became the dupe of their artifices, in contradiction to his honour and real interests*.

The

* It is to Davila alone that we can have recourse, amid this chaos of opposite and continually shifting measures, for any clear or certain explication of the sources, from which sprung the different actions related.—According to that great historian, who appears to have traced beyond any other writer, the

The voluntary retreat of "the Triumvirate" 1562.
 having left the prince of Condé and Coligni un-
 disputed January.

the silent workings of the heart, Anthony's change of conduct is not to be attributed, in any degree, either to religious or to patriotic motives. Interest, ambition, and rivalry, were his sole directing principles; to which indolence, and a pacific temper, added strength. His partiality to the Calvinistical tenets had been shaken at the dispute of Poissy, from the little agreement which he found in the ministers of that persuasion on the articles of belief, and their reasons of dissension from the Romish church. He was offended with the behaviour of the admiral Coligni, who affected, and attempted to govern him in every particular; but above all, he was stung with the preference given to his brother among the Reformers. The prince of Condé's open detestation of the Guises; his personal courage, and his avowed protection of the Hugonots, had made him in reality the hero of the party. The king of Navarre's interests were likewise very different, as he was the first prince of the blood, and might entertain no very distant or chimerical hopes of the crown. All these reasons account for his confederacy with the Guises.—De Thou, though he does not analyze with equal accuracy and perspicuity the motives to Anthony's conduct, yet accounts for it upon similar principles. He adds, that Manriquez, the Spanish ambassador, instructed by his court to deceive the king of Navarre with false promises and expectations, effected his purpose by flattering or corrupting the two favourites of that prince, Lenoncourt, bishop of Auxerre, and d'Escars. They engaged to endeavour to induce him to declare himself protector of the Catholic religion in France; in return for which Philip was to put him in possession of the kingdoms of Sardinia and Tunis. Anthony was completely deceived by these flattering prospects, and entered into the closest union with "the Triumvirate."—Jane d'Albret, his wife,

1562. disputed masters of the court, Catherine issued a new edict, highly favourable to the Hugonots. She even affected to regulate her measures by their advice, and shewed them every mark of perfect confidence; but these encouraging appearances were only calculated to deceive, and were followed by the most dreadful convulsions. The queen had favoured the Calvinist party merely from her apprehensions of the tyranny of the king of Navarre and "the Triumvirate;" who, though they seemed to have quitted the court, waited only for an opportunity to resume their authority. Condé and Coligni foresaw the storm; they knew the queen's duplicity, and prepared to ward off the dangers with which they were menaced. Anticipating the hostilities which they conceived to be imminent and inevitable, they applied to the Protestant princes of the Germanic empire, and received from them assurances of support.

Meanwhile the duke of Guise, at the pressing instances of his friends, and peculiarly of Anthony king of Navarre, set out on his return to court; when a fatal accident which happened on the way, hastened the rupture between

no sooner found that he had abandoned the party and religion of the Calvinists, than she immediately withdrew from court, carrying with her Henry and Catherine her children, and retired into Bearn, where she educated them in the doctrines of the Reformation.

the two factions, and began the bloody quarrel. While he stopt at the little town of Vassy in Champagne, and was employed in hearing mass, a crowd of Calvinists, assembled in a barn, interrupted and disturbed his devotions by their hymns. A dispute arising among the duke's domestics and the Hugonots, he ran eagerly himself to prevent it; but in this attempt he received a blow upon the cheek with a stone; and his attendants seeing his face bloody, drew their swords, and killed above fifty, besides near two hundred others, who were wounded in the fray*.

1562.

1 Mar.

The prince of Condé, who had accompanied the young king and court to the palace of Monceaux

* If we may credit Davila, the duke of Guise had no intention to injure or molest the Hugonots, while occupied in an act of their religion; and the account which he gives of this unfortunate massacre, inclines us to imagine that the duke regretted, and exerted every endeavour to prevent the scene of blood which took place. He was on his way from Joinville to Paris, accompanied by his brother the Cardinal, a train of gentlemen, and an escort of two hundred lances, when the unusual noise of bells, as he passed through the village of Vassy, incited the pages and lacqueys to advance, partly from curiosity, and partly from derision, to the spot from whence the ringing proceeded. A congregation of Calvinists being there assembled, and hearing that their great enemy the duke of Guise was in the town, some of them began the dispute by throwing stones at his attendants; who instantly betook themselves to their arms, and a dangerous

1562. ceaux near Meaux, having immediately demanded justice and reparation for the massacre, Catherine,

quarrel ensued. The duke no sooner received intelligence of it, than spurring his horse into the crowd, he reprehended his followers, and entreated of the Hugonots to retire; when a blow from a stone, which struck him on the left cheek, and which caused a considerable effusion of blood, compelled him to quit the place. His attendants, irritated at the wound which their lord had received, attacked the house into which the Hugonots had retreated for security, killed above sixty of them, and severely wounded the minister, who escaped by climbing over the tiles into one of the adjoining houses. When it was over, the duke summoned the magistrate of the place into his presence, and severely reprimanded him for permitting these licentious and illegal assemblies of the people. On his attempting to justify himself, by pleading the royal edict lately issued in favour of the Calvinists, the duke laid his hand on his sword, and replied angrily, "This shall soon cut the bond of that edict, though never so strong."

De Thou's narration of the massacre of Vassy, differs in some material circumstances from that of Davila; peculiarly in that leading feature of it, which exculpates the attendants of the duke of Guise.—De Thou, on the contrary, charges them expressly with having commenced the fray, by riding up, and insulting the Hugonots, who were assembled at their devotions, with every injurious and opprobrious epithet; but he allows that the duke himself exerted every possible endeavour, though unfortunately to no purpose, to stop the fury of his followers and servants. He draws a very affecting picture of the unhappy wretches who were victims on this occasion to the merciless rage of the duke's attendants: women and children, who made the air echo with their cries, were shot at, till none remained alive to satiate their vengeance. The minister, named Leonard Morel, was wounded,

rine, distressed at this peremptory requisition, promised ample satisfaction to the prince. She issued an order to the king of Navarre, commanding him to provide for the safety of her son and of the kingdom; enjoined the duke of Guise to repair instantly to her, unattended; and commanded the Marechal de St. André to set out without delay for his government of Lyons. Not one of the three obeyed her mandate. Anthony repulsed the Hugonot deputies with threats, who were sent to lay before him their

1562.

as were two hundred others, and sixty were killed upon the spot.

De Thou seems to impute in some degree this inhuman carnage to the duchess dowager of Guise, Antoinette de Bourbon, mother of the duke and cardinal; whose residence being in the neighbourhood of Vassy, she had frequently complained to her son the duke, of the meetings of the Calvinists so near her castle, and had requested him to deliver her from such a scandal.—Very different, adds this great historian, was the conduct of the young duchess of Guise, Anne d'Esté, who had derived from her mother Renée, daughter to Louis the twelfth, a partiality towards the Calvinists. She followed the duke her husband in a litter; and hearing the cries of the unhappy people, she instantly apprehended the cause of it, and dispatched a messenger to her husband, to implore mercy for the Hugonots. The duke had already rode up to the spot, and was exerting himself to terminate the quarrel, when the wound which he received on his cheek gave an immediate loose to the violence of his attendants.—These are the principal circumstances of this unfortunate massacre, from whence we may date the origin of the civil wars.

1562.

complaints : the duke of Guise replied, that he had no leisure to come yet to court, being otherwise employed : and St. André, more insolent, informed her majesty to her face, that in the present critical situation of affairs, he could not abandon the person of his sovereign.

The duke of Guise arrived soon after at Paris, attended by twelve hundred horse. Terrified by his approach, and dreading lest he should, in conjunction with the other confederates, deprive her of the supreme management of affairs, the queen took a step the most pernicious, and productive of future calamities. She wrote to the prince of Condé, who had retired to his own house, recommending to him, in terms so touching and pathetic, herself, the kingdom, and her son, adding, that the combined nobles held her in captivity; that she gave him the most plausible and just pretence to arm his associates. He availed himself of these letters to excuse his proceedings; but being as yet too feeble to oppose enemies so numerous and powerful, he withdrew a second time to his seat of La Fertè-Aucou, near Meaux.

March.

The queen meanwhile, accompanied by the Chancellor, had carried the young king to Fontainebleau. She beheld the awful picture of a civil war in full view, which her own ambiguous and interested policy, directed only to preserve the authority of regent, had greatly conduced to accelerate ;

rate; and she would yet most willingly have averted by any means whatever, so deplorable a calamity. Her own interests made her wish to prevent the effusion of blood; and, conscious that her junction with either party must be the signal of open hostility, she still anxiously hoped to remain in a state of neutrality, and to hold the balance; but this middle line of conduct was become impracticable. The duke of Guise, with a prodigious train, calculated to inspire terror, having arrived at Fontainbleau, Catherine again summoned the prince of Condé secretly to her assistance. She vainly flattered herself that his presence would restore her to freedom, and render her the common arbitress; but the evil genius of France had decreed otherwise, and all her schemes became abortive.

The prince appeared immediately in arms, and passed the river Seine at St. Cloud, in his way to join her. Though his forces were too few to terrify the confederate lords, they instantly availed themselves of the occasion to render themselves masters of the king's person, which act of violence they pretended was necessary, to prevent his falling into the hands of the Hugonots. The king of Navarre brought the regent this melancholy intelligence, and Catherine hesitating, Anthony informed her that he was come to conduct his sovereign to Paris, where he would be in safety; adding with a sort of brutality, that

“ if

1562.

1562.

“ if she did not, chuse to accompany him, she
 “ might remain alone.” He even allowed her
 no time to deliberate upon this important and
 decisive measure. Charles himself, too young to
 oppose the violence offered him, turned towards
 his mother, as if to know her sentiments: she
 dared not utter a word; and the young king,
 bursting into tears of impotent resentment and
 indignation, suffered himself to be conducted
 weeping to Melun, and from thence to the ca-
 pital*.

No

* Davila has given the most satisfactory and interesting de-
 tail of Catherine's conduct during this whole transaction. It
 is beyond a doubt, that she yielded to a force which she was
 unable to resist; and that she exerted every artifice to induce
 the king of Navarre and “ the Triumvirate” to leave her-
 self and the young king at liberty. She even used so many
 powerful arguments to incline them to permit her to remain
 at Fontainbleau, where the court would at least have had
 the appearance of being free, that the king of Navarre and
 the Constable were on the point of yielding to her entrea-
 ties, if the duke of Guise had not dissuaded them from any
 such compliance.

De Thou says, that in a council which was held by “ the
 Triumvirs,” the Marechal de St. André proceeded to such
 lengths of violence, as to propose to throw the queen-mo-
 ther into the Seine, if she should dare to oppose or impede
 the journey to Paris. He adds, that Catherine had prepar-
 ed a boat, in which she meant to carry off her son Charles
 the ninth during the night, previous to their departure from
 Fontainbleau; but that she found it impossible to deceive
 the vigilance of Montmorenci.—“ The queen mother,” says
 Davila, “ perceiving it in vain to attempt any resistance to
 the peremptory requisition of the Catholic lords and of An-

No alternative, except open war, remained to the prince of Condé. Deceived as he apprehended, by the queen, and seeing his enemies in possession of the king's person, he deemed it too late to retract, or even to suspend his enterprise. Setting off therefore with the utmost expedition for Orleans, accompanied by two thousand cavalry, he rendered himself master of the city, after a vigorous opposition *.

1562.

2 April.

Conscious

thony, instantly resolved to yield with grace; and mounting on horseback with the king and her two younger sons, being surrounded by "the Triumvirate" and their attendants, reached Melun that night; from whence they proceeded on the following day to the Bois de Vincennes, and arrived on the third day at Paris." The young king, continues Davila, was seen by many to weep on that occasion, being conscious that he was treated as a prisoner; the regent, perplexed in mind, foreseeing a civil war, and finding all her projects overthrown, spoke not a word, but observed a gloomy silence; while the duke of Guise, regardless of the king's tears, or of the queen-mother's distress, was heard publicly to say, that "the good is always good, whether it proceed from love, or from force."—These are the most interesting circumstances of that memorable transaction.

* Louis, prince of Condé, was only at a small distance from the court, when intimation arrived of the Catholics having carried Charles the ninth to Paris. Astonished at this intelligence, the prince checked his horse, and remained a considerable time motionless, and silent. He perceived the critical situation in which he stood, while all the troubles and disasters of the future war rose before his imagination. He had not yet passed the Rubicon.—As he revolved in his mind these

1562.

Conscious that the measure which he had embraced was decisive and ir retrievable, he proceeded to form regulations for the military and civil conduct of his followers; and as in war only his future safety could be found, he neglected no precautions becoming a general, to ensure success. He was proclaimed chief of the party by unanimous consent; the pretext for their having taken up arms, was declared to be the release of the king and his mother from the captivity in which they were held by "the Triumvirate;" and he immediately dispatched mes-

these considerations, Coligni, who had been behind, overtook him, and they conferred together some minutes. At length, the prince seemed to have taken his ultimate resolution; and after a deep sigh exclaimed, "Affairs are arrived at that pass, that it is necessary for us to drink, or to be drowned!" So saying, he proceeded instantly towards Orleans, at the head of near 3000 horse; and as d'Andelot, Coligni's brother, had already attempted to render himself master of that city, in which endeavour he was vigorously opposed by Montcreau the governor, the alarm was communicated for many miles by the incessant firing, and ringing of the bells. Condé redoubled his haste, on hearing these proofs of the attack made by d'Andelot, and galloped at full speed till he reached the gates of Orleans, where he arrived at a most critical moment, as d'Andelot, overpowered by numbers, was on the point of retreating without success. The unexpected arrival of the prince at the head of such a body of cavalry, decided the fortune of the day, and rendered him master of Orleans.—It is Davila who relates these particulars of the commencement of the civil war.

sengers

sengers to the German princes, requesting their aid in the great cause of religion.

1562.

This conduct was the signal of revolt and sedition throughout the whole kingdom. The Hugonots, excited by their leader's example, having expelled in many places the Catholics, the cities of Rouen, Blois, Poitiers, Tours, and Lyons, fell into their hands; but their ungovernable zeal carried them every where to the most violent and sanguinary excesses. Animated with the frenzy commonly characteristic of new and oppressed sects, they respected no places or professions, however sacred; while the prince of Condé in vain attempted to restrain these licentious practices, as he was neither heard nor obeyed amid the fury of religious animosity.

The Chancellor de l'Hopital, who alone in this tumultuous and melancholy period, preserved a calm and equal temper, yet laboured to avert the tempest. He beheld France ready to be plunged into a civil war, heightened by every circumstance of mutual hatred, and inveterate antipathy. He felt for his bleeding country a parent's and a patriot's sensations, and he prevailed on the queen to exert her endeavours for an accommodation*. Catherine wished it

* Davila and De Thou perfectly coincide on this point, and assert, that the Chancellor exerted every possible endeavour to prevent and avert a civil war. When the king of Navarre

1562. it with equal ardour, though from motives of a far inferior nature. She saw the prince of Condé already in possession of half the kingdom; she dreaded lest the confederates should imitate the precedent, and the king be finally left between the two factions, without places, revenue, or dominions.

Stimulated by considerations so forcible to an ambitious mind, she undertook the arduous task of conciliating the rival parties. Not discouraged by ill success, and conscious of her own talents in negotiation, she made repeated and masterly attempts to detach the prince of Condé from Coligni and the Hugonots. More than once, her address and persuasions had nearly proved successful: she allured him by the most seducing proposals, promised that “the Trium-

Navarre and “the Triumvirate” had secured the person of Charles the ninth by bringing him to Paris, they summoned a council at the palace of the Louvre, where the duke of Guise proposed to declare war with the prince of Condé and the Hugonots. De l’Hopital opposed this violent measure very strongly; and the Constable having said, that the question in agitation was not of the resort of persons of the long robe, the Chancellor replied, that “if he and his
“ profession were not acquainted with the art of making
“ war, they at least perfectly well knew under what cir-
“ cumstances it could be made with equity.”—In consequence of this upright and spirited answer, the Chancellor was excluded from the further deliberations of the council of state, and the most violent resolutions were embraced in that assembly.

virate”

virate" should quit the court, and a general freedom of religious sentiment and worship be granted to his followers. An interview even took place between the prince and the queen-mother, at Toury near Orleans; and though unsuccessful in its effect, Catherine still continued her efforts to produce an accommodation *. Acting in person, and not through the medium of delegates; mistress of all the winning arts which enslave the human mind; ever attacking the heart and its favourite propensities, she at length engaged him to give his word that he would quit the kingdom, if his enemies consented to relinquish the administration. "The Triumvirs," from whom she had previously obtained a promise to that effect, instantly performed

1562.

June.

* The queen-mother, by the mediation and endeavours of the bishop of Valence, having induced the prince of Condé to agree to a conference at Toury, a small place about ten leagues from Orleans, they met on the day appointed. The king of Navarre accompanied Catherine, and each party was escorted by thirty-six horsemen; Henry d'Amville commanding the escort of the queen, and the count de la Rochefoucauld that of the prince. To prevent any quarrel, the two bands were stationed at eight hundred paces from the town, and they remained more than half an hour in their respective posts; but gradually approaching, they at length joined, and embracing with warmth, they mutually lamented the hard destiny which thus armed them against each other, and which pointed their weapons against themselves. A more affecting spectacle,

1562. performed it, and retired to Chateau-Dun. Catherine having therefore summoned the prince to the observance of his agreement, he affected to obey; and a second interview took place between them at Talsy, only six miles distant from either camp, where Condé made his feigned submissions to Charles and the queen. But Coligni, who reposed no confidence in her honour, and who beheld the Hugonots in the most extreme peril if their chieftain abandoned them, by his remonstrances and representations, broke this treaty, which was on the point of being accomplished, and led him back to his expecting partizans*.

27 June.

The

cle, or one more calculated to display the fatal spirit and effects of civil discord, history scarce ever has commemorated. Meanwhile Catherine, the king of Navarre, and the prince of Condé held a conference of two hours, during which the queen affected the greatest concern at her inability to comply with Condé's demands. Anthony, on the contrary, treated his brother with severity, and rejected all his propositions for peace with the utmost asperity. The interview terminated ineffectually, and only served to exasperate the two princes of Bourbon against each other. De Thou is very minute in his relation of all the circumstances of this interview: Davila is more succinct in his account of it, nor does he seem to have known or apprehended, that the king of Navarre was present at, and a party in the private conversation which took place between Catherine and the prince of Condé.

* Nothing can be more evident, than that neither "the Triumvirate," or the Hugonot lords sincerely meant to terminate

The war, so long suspended by the queen's negotiations, now began in all its fury: the duke of Guise and the Constable being sent for in great haste, returned to the camp, and the royal army, in which was the queen and her son Charles the ninth, after having taken Blois, Tours, and Bourges, which were abandoned to plunder, laid siege to Rouen. Montgomeri, whose fatal tournament with Henry the second has rendered him so famous in the annals

1562.July and
August.

27 Sept.

terminate their differences by an accommodation. Davila, who is very exact and diffuse in his delineation of the principles of conduct in each party, expressly asserts, that the whole plan was concerted between the prince of Condé and Coligni, previous to the visit made by the former to the queen-mother and the king, at Talsy. Nor do "the Triumvirs" appear to have been at all more sincere in their affected renunciation of power, and voluntary secession from court; for, tho' they quitted the army, and left the person of the sovereign free, yet they only removed to Chateau-Dun, five leagues from the royal camp, where they remained, with intent to watch the prince's conduct. Catherine had previously obtained a promise subscribed by Condé, in which he engaged to quit the kingdom, provided that "the Triumvirate" likewise retired from court, and laid down their authority. This engagement, into which he had imprudently entered, on a presumption that his enemies never would accede to, or fulfil their part of the conditions, had so far committed the prince of Condé, that it was impossible for him to refuse to venture his person by paying his duty to the young king, and to the queen-mother. He accordingly went, accompanied with a very slender escort, to Talsy, where, as the court had only the ordinary guards,

1562. annals of France, commanded in it, and made a most vigorous defence. Honourable terms were offered him repeatedly, which he as frequently refused. The queen, by the Chancellor's entreaties, thrice prevented the duke of Guise from storming the place; but as the besieged rejected obstinately every proposal of an accommodation, it was at length permitted *. The city

he was under no apprehension of being detained by violence. A scene of mutual duplicity then took place, the queen urging the prince to leave the kingdom, at least for a short time; and he procrastinating and postponing any final determination. While this illusory negotiation was performing, Coligni, and the other great Hugonot chiefs arrived, as pre-concerted, under pretence of paying their respects to the king; and affecting indignation at the prince's too easy concessions, hurried him away by violence, mounted him on horseback, and carried him back to their own camp.—De Thou agrees with Davila in most of these particulars, which, however, he relates in a manner less unfavourable to the prince of Condé and his party.

* Among the many great qualities which Catherine of Medécis possessed, and which are rarely found in women, was her courage: it approached to the noblest heroism. During the siege of Rouen, she went every day to the fort St. Catherine, where the most bloody attacks were made; the duke of Guise and the Constable remonstrating with her on the danger to which she exposed her person, "Why," answered she, "should I spare myself more than you? Is it that I have less interest in the event, or less courage?" "True, I have not your force of body, but I have equal resolution of mind!"—What grandeur of sentiment, had it been guided by principles of virtue! The soldiers gave her the title of "Mater Castrorum," in imitation of the Romans.

CHARLES THE NINTH.

131

was carried by assault, and the pillage lasted two days without intermission. Montgomeri, with a few desperate attendants, and a party of English whom Elizabeth had sent to his aid, escaped in a boat upon the Seine, and broke the chains which were stretched across the river at Caudebec. 1562.
26 Oct.

Anthony king of Navarre met with his death at this siege; he was wounded in the trenches, by a ball from a harquebuse, in the shoulder, on the day intended for the assault. His emulation of the duke of Guise, and his own personal courage, carried him ever into the most dangerous situations. When the city was taken, tho' much indispos'd, he caused himself to be carried by his Switzers through the breach, in a litter. The wound did not at first assume a mortal appearance; but his fondness for Mademoiselle du Rouet, one of the maids of honour to the queen-mother, and the pleasures in which he imprudently indulged himself with her, threw his blood into a violent agitation, and brought on a fever. The uneasiness of his mind inducing him to embark upon the Seine, for the village of St. Maur near Paris, he was seized with a shivering and cold sweats, which announced his approaching end. The boat in which he had embarked, stopping at Andely, he soon after breathed his last, at forty-two years of age. That irresolution which distinguished him through life, equally accom-

15 Oct.

17 Nov.

1562. 308. panied him in the article of death: he received the sacrament after the forms of the Roman Catholic communion; but his dying professions evinced his attachment to the Reformed religion. He ordered those who were around his bed, to carry his strictest injunctions to Jane queen of Navarre, on no account to trust either herself or her children at court; to be ever upon her guard; and to fortify her places*.

While

* Davila's account of Anthony's wound, and the circumstances of his decease, is somewhat different from that of most other historians.—“The king of Navarre,” says he, “had gone out to reconnoitre the breach, when he received a musket-ball in his shoulder, which breaking the bone, and tearing the nerves, he dropped down upon the spot as dead. This accident obliged the commanders to delay the assault; the soldiers and attendants bore him to his tent, and the surgeons immediately dressed his wound, in presence of the young king, his mother, and all the generals. It was their unanimous opinion that he could not live, on account of the great size of the orifice, and the depth which the ball had entered.” He makes no mention of Mademoiselle du Rouet; but says, “That the king of Navarre not being able to support the extreme and violent pain which he underwent, was resolute, notwithstanding the remonstrances and entreaties of his physicians, to go up the Seine to St. Maur, whither he was accustomed frequently to retire, on account of the purity and salubrity of the air. His brother the cardinal of Bourbon, the prince of La Roche-sur-Yonne, Louis Gonzaga, and several other persons Catholic and Hugonot, accompanied him; but he was scarcely arrived at
“Andely,

While success attended on the royal troops before Rouen, the kingdom became a scene of 1562.
defolation,

“ Andely, when his fever, which the motion of his journey had irritated, encreasing, he became delirious, and soon after expired.”—Davila mentions his varying religious belief, even in the article of death. He ever speaks of Anthony in terms of approbation, mixed with compassion; and says, that he was not calculated for the tempestuous scenes in which he was compelled to act a part. His candour, sincerity, and gentleness were ill adapted to the universal dissimulation and fury, which characterised his associates in power. Davila adds, that his death happened at a time when experience had so ripened and matured his judgment, that it would probably have produced events widely different from the ideas preconceived of him.

Brantome says, that he was of a fine stature, and much superior in personal dignity and appearance, to any other prince of the house of Bourbon: He confirms Anthony's uncertainty and fluctuation between the two religions.—De Thou describes very circumstantially every particular respecting the progress of his wound. The ball had pierced too deep into the king of Navarre's shoulder, to be found or extracted, tho' the surgeons made repeated incisions and attempts for that purpose. The flesh returned in great quantity, and closed up the orifice: he appeared, however, to be on his recovery, when on a sudden he was seized with a violent fever. New operations being performed, in order to cut away the flesh which had grown over the wound, a quantity of matter was found to have formed, the discharge of which weakened, without giving him relief. He continued, notwithstanding, adds De Thou, to flatter himself with the hope of a speedy recovery: he fed his imagination with the delusive prospect of possessing the island of Sardinia, which Philip the second had always held out as a

1562. desolation, rapine, and blood through all the provinces; the contending parties, inflamed with civil and religious rage, being equally guilty of the most barbarous excesses. A mi-

bait to delude this easy prince. Entertainments and play occupied his time; and he kept constantly by his bedside a young lady, maid of honour to the queen, whom he passionately loved, and whom Catherine had intentionally placed about him, to serve as her instrument in governing the king of Navarre.—His two physicians, Vincent Lauro, and La Meziere, were of different religious persuasions, and each endeavoured to influence the dying prince's mind and conduct. In compliance with the exhortations of the first, who was a Catholic, he received the Viaticum, and confessed himself at Rouen, in presence of the prince of La Roche-sur-Yonne. Yet the queen coming to visit him, and advising him to hear some pious book read, he listened with great attention to the book of Job, which his Calvinist physician had brought; and this man reproaching him with indifference for his tenets, Anthony assured him that if he recovered, he would publicly embrace the profession of Lutheranism, as established by the confession of Augsbourg.—De Thou says, that during the time when La Meziere was reciting to Anthony the prayers used by the protestants for dying persons, the Cardinal of Bourbon, brother to the king of Navarre, remained at the other extremity of the boat; but, when he found the king approached his last moments, he brought in a Dominican monk, disguised in a secular habit. The expiring prince seemed for some instants to listen to the discourse of the friar; then, suddenly turning to his Italian valet-de-chambre, who was at his bed's head, he charged the servant to exhort the young prince of Bearn, his son, to preserve his loyalty and fidelity unshaken to the king of France; and soon afterwards he expired.

nute recapitulation of these calamities would present a picture too humiliating to human nature, though the pen of history is compelled to hold them up to view, however reluctantly, for the instruction and detestation of future ages.

1562.

Louis prince of Condé at length took the field, with twelve thousand men. He had determined, in contradiction to the advice of Coligni and d'Andelot, to march directly to Paris, expecting that the consternation which he should strike into the inhabitants and the queen, would reduce them to terms of accommodation. In this hope he however found himself deceived: Catherine, skilled in all the subtleties of delay and of negotiation, engaged him in repeated and fruitless conferences, only calculated to give the Parisians time to recover from the panic into which they had been thrown by his sudden appearance. While she tendered him fallacious conditions of peace, she seduced his bravest captains, and prevailed on them to quit his cause. Condé, convinced how futile and dangerous were all the regent's offers, after several vain attempts upon the capital, decamped, and began his march into Normandy. "The Triumvirs" followed close upon his steps; and, having come up with him unexpectedly near Dreux, an engagement became unavoidable.

Nov.

10 Dec.

The Hugonots had in the beginning the

20 Dec.

1562. whole advantage, the impetuosity of their charge bearing down all opposition. The Constable, who commanded in chief, being wounded in the face with a pistol-ball, and his horse falling under him, was taken prisoner; a part of the cannon of the royal army was seized, and the rout appeared to be universal. But the duke of Guise, cool and unmoved, had not yet engaged: he regarded the battle with the most serene composure, and watched the moment in which it might be retrieved. Though never possessed of any military rank higher than that of a captain of gen-d'armes, his great and distinguished capacity rendered him more respected than were the first commanders of the age. Observing that the Hugonots were dispersed and already engaged in plunder, he fell upon them, and put them instantly to flight. The prince of Condé, who disdained to turn his back, and who was ever found in the front of danger, was surrounded and made prisoner by Henry d'Amville, the Constable's second son, after having been wounded in the right hand. Coligni rallying his forces, retired precipitately, under cover of the night; and so far from being vanquished, he would have returned to the combat the ensuing day, if his German auxiliaries had not refused. He retreated therefore towards Orleans, unpursued by
the

the Royalists, and carrying with him his captive, Montmorenci*.

1562.

The

* It is evident from De Thou's description, that the prince of Condé was surprized, and in a great degree compelled to hazard a general action at Dreux. That historian agrees with Davila in all the leading and important particulars of the engagement. Robert Stuart, who has been already mentioned in the reign of Francis the second, was the person who made the Constable prisoner. The duke of Guise having recovered the honour of the day, and regained the battle at a moment when the rout was universal in the royal camp, the prince of Condé was in turn borne reluctantly away by his flying troops; but his horse having been wounded in the leg, fell under him; and while he was endeavouring to remount himself, d'Amville arrived, and compelled him to surrender. Coligni made the most vigorous and repeated efforts to retrieve the day; and after the unfortunate charge of the royal troops under St. André, in which that Marechal was taken prisoner and killed, he had nearly again obtained a victory. It was reserved for the duke of Guise a second time to tear the laurels from the Hugonot leaders: he attacked the admiral in flank, who then yielding to the disparity of numbers, retreated slowly, in the best order, without quickening his ordinary march, and even carrying off two pieces of the royal cannon. The action lasted four hours, and near eight thousand men were killed on both sides, of which number the Hugonots owned to have lost only three thousand.

The most exact detail of this celebrated engagement is likewise to be found in Davila. He allows that the prince of Condé's negligence chiefly involved the Hugonots in the necessity of fighting; the Constable having taken advantage of his security and want of precaution, to pass his whole army over the river Eure by moon-light, on the

the

1562.

The field of battle, and the whole glory of the day, remained undisputed to the duke of Guise; but if his masterly conduct in the action gained him the applauses of the court and the adoration of his troops, his behaviour to the prince of Condé did him likewise immortal honour. The duke received him with the utmost politeness, lodged him in his own tent, and even divided with him his bed, no other

the preceding night. Coligni first discovered this error and its consequences, of which he sent immediate information to the prince; who might still have avoided a decisive action; but his great spirit would not permit him to retreat before the Catholics. The admiral fought with dauntless resolution, and with his own hand laid dead upon the ground Gabriel de Montmorenci, fourth son to the Constable, and the Count de Rochefort. The Switzers alone remained firm and immoveable, tho' they were surrounded and repeatedly charged by the whole Hugonot army. Davila attributes all the merit of the victory, very deservedly, to the duke of Guise. D'Andelot, one of the most intrepid chieftains in the Hugonot army, had been obliged to retire from the field, being ill of an ague, which rendered it impossible for him to continue there, or to take any part in the action.—The prince of Condé, all covered with sweat and blood, was conducted by d'Amville to the duke of Guise's tent at Blainville, where they supped together, and afterwards divided the same bed.—These are some of the most interesting facts of the battle of Dreux, as enumerated by Davila; who however represents the victory on the one side as more compleat, and the defeat on the other as more universal, than they appear to have been, as related by De Thou.

being

being procurable at the time. The prince himself afterwards declared, that during the whole night he could not close his eyes, while the duke enjoyed the soundest sleep by his side.— In this engagement fell the Marechal de St. André, one of “the Triumvirate*.”

At the beginning of the engagement, as the advantage was entirely on the prince of Condé's side, numbers of the royal army fled even to Paris, and published that all was lost. The duchess of Guise, who was usually attended by a prodigious crowd of courtiers and votaries, remained almost alone. The queen-mother, prepared for every event, careless of the fate of religion, and viewing all objects through the medium of policy and interest, received the news with

* St. André was a polite and gallant nobleman, much regretted by his party. Brantome has given us the minutest particulars of his death. The battle was already gained, says he, when intelligence arrived, that a body of four hundred Hugonot cavalry had rallied, and prepared to renew the attack. St. André was mounted on a horse, which spent with fatigue, fell in the onset, and had not strength to rise. At that moment, a gentleman on the opposite side, named Aubigné, or Bobigné, whose estate the Marechal enjoyed by confiscation, came up, and discharged a pistol-ball through his head, which instantly killed him. His body was not found till the next morning, in a ditch near the spot where he fell.

Davila only mentions very briefly that the Marechal de St. André was mortally wounded; but De Thou circumstantially relates the origin and cause of Bobigné's detestation and vengeance

1562. with extreme compofure, and is reported only to have faid, “Eh bien ! il faudra donc prier Dieu en François !”—It was to her indifferent, provided that ſhe retained poſſeſſion of power, whether Condé or Guiſe ultimately prevailed; whether the Catholic, or the Calviniftical doctrines gained the pre-eminence. When the ſucceeding day corrected the error, and brought certain intelligence of the victory obtained by the royal forces, ſhe from a conſequence of the ſame principles, was concerned and mortified; her diſcernment compelling her to foreſee that it eſtabliſhed the duke of Guiſe’s authority, and reduced her to a more compleat ſubjection. She notwithstanding endeavoured to conceal her feelings; ordered rejoicings to be made for the

geance on that nobleman. His reſentment appears to have been too juſtly founded, as St. André had repaid the deepeſt obligations conferred on him by Bobigné, with ingratitude, perfidy, and rapacity. After having availed himſelf of the pecuniary aſſiſtance of Bobigné to the greateſt degree, he had the cruelty and the baſeneſs to procure for his own uſe the confiscation of his effects; and to this injury St. André even added personal indignities and insults. Bobigné, thus doubly affronted and degraded, ſwore revenge, and waited the opportunity of ſatiating his vengeance, which he fully obtained. De Thou confeſſes that the Marechal, though adorned by nature and by fortune with their choicest preſents, and though alike calculated to ſhine in the cabinet or in the field, was become equally an object of hatred and contempt, by his profligacy, injuſtice, and inſatiable avidity, to which vices he juſtly fell a victim.

deſeat

defeat of the Hugonots; and conferred upon the duke the supreme command of the army, with which he had already been invested by his troops. 1562.

Coligni meanwhile, on whom his forces had likewise conferred the post of general, passed the Loire at Beaugency; and having left his brother d'Andelot in Orleans with two thousand men, in expectation of that city being invested by the royalists, marched into Normandy, where he might receive the queen of England's promised supplies. After having waited upon the sea coast some weeks in anxious suspense, and hourly menaced with the cries of the German auxiliaries, who loudly demanded their arrears, the expected succours arrived under the conduct of Montgomeri, who brought an ample supply of money, troops, artillery, and ammunition. The admiral's precautions for the security of Orleans were justly founded; as notwithstanding the severity of the winter, and the strength of the city, the duke of Guise was determined to commence the siege. The queen mother accompanied him, carrying with her the prince of Condé, who was shut up in the castle of Onzain, under the custody of d'Amville, who had made him prisoner. Though d'Andelot, one of the most intrepid and experienced captains of the age, animated by the important charge confided to his care, exerted every effort of courage and military skill to defend the place; yet the superior

1563.

January

1563.

rior genius and conduct of the duke had already rendered him master of the bridge across the Loire, and of the suburbs. Coligni, occupied in reducing Normandy to subjection, was not able to march to its relief, in time to have afforded it an effectual aid; nor can there be any doubt that Orleans must have surrendered in a few weeks, if the fatal accident of the duke of Guise's death had not snatched the Hugonots from the imminent and unavoidable danger.

A gentleman of Angoumois, named John Poltrot de Meré, was the author of this detestable assassination. He was of the Reformed religion, which he had pretended to renounce; and the duke had received him with his accustomed courtesy and liberality of spirit. Poltrot had long watched the favourable opportunity to give the blow. The duke of Guise being accustomed to go every day in person to visit the works, and to inspect the advances made, as he returned in the evening, without his armour, only attended by one gentleman, and mounted on horseback, the assassin, who waited for him, discharged three balls into his left shoulder. Every assistance of art was procured, but he died at the end of eight days*.

The

* Davila says, that the duke was shot by Poltrot on the 24th of February, in the evening, being the feast of St. Matthias; that the assassin was mounted on a swift jennet, and discharged three balls into his right shoulder, all which passing

The queen-regent, fearful lest she should be suspected as instrumental or privy to his death, caused

1563-

him to be carried through his body, laid him on the ground, as dead. He agrees with Brantome in many of the particulars respecting the duke's death; and adds, that he expired on the third day from that on which he received the wound.

De Thou coincides with the historians already mentioned, as to all the leading facts. He is very minute in his account of Poltrot, and mentions many curious circumstances relative to that fanatic, which tend to hold up in the strongest point of view, the atrocious spirit of the times, where devotion and the most flagitious crimes were continually found united in the same person and character. In his interrogatory before the queen-mother and the principal lords of the court, Poltrot, among many other facts which he confessed, and which evince the force of that gloomy and sanguinary enthusiasm by which he was actuated, declared, that "only a few moments before he killed the duke of Guise, he had dismounted from his horse in a neighbouring wood, and on his knees had urgently besought the Lord to turn his mind, and to change his resolution, if it arose from the suggestions of the evil spirit."—Many similar instances occur in the history of these melancholy times, when the human mind was under the dominion of the most inveterate errors, heightened and inflamed by the acrimony of religious differences. Jacques Clement, the Jacobin friar, who stabbed Henry the third in 1589, received the sacrament, and passed the day in prayer, previous to an act of regicide and assassination.

Brantome, who served under the duke of Guise, and was at the siege of Orleans, has given the most minute account of the circumstances of this assassination. On the evening when the duke was killed, says he, only Monsieur de Rostain accompanied him, and he had just passed the river in a little boat, which constantly waited for that purpose. Poltrot immediately fled on discharging his pistol; and

1563. caused herself to be interrogated in his chamber, before his own family, and a number of the nobility. Poltrot had endeavoured to secure himself by flight; but after having wandered the whole night in the woods on horseback, he found himself in the morning at the bridge of Olivet, only a league from Orleans; where exhausted with fatigue, he entered a house to repose himself, and was taken while asleep by one of the duke's secretaries.

When questioned with respect to the motives that had urged him to the commission of so foul a crime, he declared it to have arisen solely from zeal for his religion. As to his instigators, he accused several, but without uniformity; and among others the admiral. Coligni highly resented and denied the imputation, which must have stigmatized him with indelible infamy to his own adherents, and to the latest posterity. He even demanded of the queen, that the criminal's punishment should be delayed till they could be personally confronted, and the falsity of the accusation demonstrated. These justifications and solemn protestations did not, however, convince the family of Guise of Coligni's innocence. Henry,

and affecting to be a pursuer of the assassin, cried out, "Take him! take him!"—The duke perceiving himself dangerously wounded, only said, "L'on me devoit celle-la; mas je crois que ce ne sera rien." They carried him to his own quarters.

son to the expiring duke, and then in very early youth, vowed an immortal hatred, and imprecated vengeance on the admiral's head, as his father's murderer. He fatiated this unrelenting desire of révenge many years afterwards, at the fatal massacre of St. Bartholomew*.

1563.

The

* Brantome, though devotedly attached to the house of Guise, yet does not absolutely accuse the admiral as the concealed author of the duke's death. He only drops some ambiguous intimations that Coligni knew of Poltrot's designs, without exposing himself to the infamy of a discovery, in case of the assassin being taken. He however pretends, that the duke himself suspected Coligni, and pardoned him, when expiring.—Davila says, that the admiral and Theodore Beza were universally believed to have persuaded Poltrot to commit this crime. They constantly denied the charge, and dispersed long justifications of their innocence over all Europe; but the Catholics, and the house of Guise still believed them guilty, and anxiously waited for an occasion of revenge. Davila expressly declares, that Poltrot persisted invariably in the same assertions, and confirmed, when under the torture, the accusations of the admiral and Beza, which he had first voluntarily made.—De Thou seems to leave the matter more in doubt; he says, that Poltrot, though he had twice repeated on oath, and signed the deposition by which he accused Coligni of having urged him to the commission of the crime, yet on being afterwards put to the torture, retracted this accusation, and exculpated Coligni; then again he repeated the same assertion. The admiral, De Thou allows, wrote in the most pressing terms to the queen, beseeching her to delay Poltrot's execution, denying the crime imputed to him, or any participation in it, and demanding to be personally confronted with the assassin.

1563.

The duke of Guise, perceiving that his end approached, prepared himself for it, as became a hero. That magnanimous and exalted intrepidity, that mild and equal serenity of temper, which had shone eminently in his life, was equally visible in his dying moments. He recommended to the duchess his wife the education of their children; and he exhorted Henry, his eldest son, to preserve an inviolable fidelity to the king. Mindful of his honour, and desirous to clear his conduct from the aspersions which had been cast upon it, he vindicated himself from any intention to commit the massacre of Vassy; and lamented in the most pathetic terms, that unhappy event, which had lighted up the destructive flame of civil discord. With earnest entreaties he implored the queen, as the common mother of her people, to terminate the quarrels which desolated France; and pronounced the man an enemy to his country and his sovereign, who should venture to offer her any other counsel.

I cannot quit the subject of Francis duke of Guise, without mentioning a circumstance respecting him, which marks the truest magnanimity and patriotism.—When previous to the storm of the breach at Rouen, he harangued his soldiers and put himself at their head, he ardently recommended to them three things; to respect the chastity and honour of the women; to spare the lives of every Catholic without distinction; and to shew no mercy or quarter to the English auxiliaries, their ancient and inveterate enemies.

The

CHARLES THE NINTH.

147

The funeral honours paid to him after death, were scarce less than royal, and are equalled by nothing in the French annals, except those which Turenne received above a century afterwards. His body was carried in melancholy pomp to the Chartreux at Paris, and from thence to the church of "Notre-Dame," where he lay in state; immense crowds of weeping citizens following the procession. He was at last deposited with his ancestors at Joinville, in Lorrain.

1563.

18th Mar.

Poltrout was adjudged by the parliament to suffer the same punishment inflicted on traitors or regicides, and was torn in pieces by horses. At his execution, it is said that he still accused the admiral, as privy to the commission of the crime: and though the whole tenour of Coligni's life and conduct seems to refute this imputation, though a candid and impartial mind must refuse to admit so insufficient a testimony, yet we too well know what degrading and unnatural violations of honour and justice, the spirit of religious zeal, inflamed and heightened by personal animosities, can induce mankind to commit.

Francis duke of Guise appears to have been one of the greatest characters of the age in which he flourished, whether regarded as a warrior or a statesman. His errors, and even his faults and vices, were more the result of situation than of sentiment; and his towering ambition, tho' not justified, is yet palliated and diminished by

1563. the sublime qualities which he possessed from nature, and by the peculiar circumstances which gave them scope and exertion. His death must certainly be considered as a misfortune to France; since he alone set some limits to the restless and intriguing genius of Catherine, henceforth liberated from all constraint, and without a rival in authority.

The queen shewed her deference to the duke of Guise's dying advice, by the immediate overtures which she made for a pacification. It was
 19th Mar. soon concluded by the mediation of the Constable and prince of Condé, on terms not unfavourable to the Hugonots; though the admiral, on his arrival from Normandy, reproached the prince in very severe expressions for his hasty compliance with the propositions, at a juncture when their great adversary's death gave them reason to expect the most flattering reverse of fortune.

Orleans was evacuated by the Calvinist troops; and the Seigneur de la Cipierre, one of the most accomplished, virtuous, and amiable lords in the kingdom, was appointed governor of the city. He was already in possession of a post perhaps the most important which could be entrusted to any subject; that of preceptor to the young king. No man was more calculated to execute its high duties: he endeavoured to instil the most elevated and glorious sentiments into his
 royal

royal pupil; and he would probably have inspired Charles, who possessed lively parts and a quick perception, with the love of virtue, and the feelings of a great monarch; but his death, untimely, and before these noble seeds could sink deep into Charles's bosom, deprived his country of so inestimable a treasure. All the miseries of this unhappy reign, are probably in a great measure to be imputed to that inauspicious event.

1563.

Albert de Gondi, Marechal de Retz, a Florentine, and a devoted creature of Catherine, was placed by her in the charge which La Cypierre had occupied. Destitute of principle, dissolute in his manners, cruel from temper, dissembling, and master of every little art of sordid policy, he corrupted and perverted the many shining qualities with which nature had liberally endowed the king. The unfortunate prince was ruined while yet in early childhood, and all the high expectations to which he had justly given birth, were defeated and rendered abortive.

During the tranquillity which succeeded to the late troubles of the state, Catherine, with her usual duplicity endeavoured to sow distrust and jealousy between the prince of Condé and Coligni. To the former she made the same fallacious proposals, which she had used with so much success to Anthony his brother; but Louis

1563.

was not to be deceived by her insidious offers, and she attempted in vain to dissolve the intimate connection which continued to subsist between him and the admiral.

The prince of Condé, gallant and amorous, was more assailable on the side of love, than on that of policy. No nobleman of the court had received such flattering proofs of female attachment, or was more generally acceptable to women. Margaret de Lustrac, widow of the Marechal de St. André, long disputed the possession of his heart with Isabella de la Tour de Turenne, known in history under the name of "La Belle de Limeüil." Each of these contending rivals gave him the most romantic testimonies of their love: the first presented him with her estate and castle of St. Valeri, magnificently furnished; the latter carried her passion yet farther, and sacrificed to him her chastity and honour. She was even brought to bed in the queen's wardrobe; and Catherine, to whom she was distantly allied by blood, and to whom she immediately belonged as a maid of honour, ordered her to be instantly conducted to a convent*.

The

* Almost all the French writers have been very minute and circumstantial in the relation of this singular anecdote, and Even Davila did not deem it unworthy a recital.—"It was Catherine's favourite system of policy," says he, "at the conclusion of the first civil war, to engage the prince of Condé

" in

The admiral, who was conscious that these irregularities in the chief of his party reflected a disgrace on all its adherents; and who dreaded lest some one of the prince's amours might prove too strong for the weaker ties of ambition or religion, remonstrated with him so forcibly on the pernicious consequences of his continual engagements and gallantries, that he prevailed on him to put an end to them by a
second

“ in all those effeminate pleasures which might insensibly
 “ enervate his mind, and imperceptibly diminish the natural
 “ activity of his disposition. She peculiarly endeavoured, by
 “ the donation of honours and ample possessions, to give him
 “ a distaste for the fatigues of a camp. To accomplish this
 “ end, she prompted and encouraged the Marechale de St.
 “ André, who inherited from her father and her husband
 “ prodigious riches, to attempt the conquest of the prince's
 “ heart; but though he accepted her splendid present, he de-
 “ spised her person, and remained proof against all her
 “ attacks.”—To Mademoiselle de Limeüil he was more
 deeply attached; and Davila makes no scruple to declare
 that Catherine was not ignorant, though she affected to be
 so, that he had obtained from her the last favours.—De
 Thou coincides with the historian already mentioned, in all
 the principal circumstances of this story. “ The queen-
 “ mother,” says he, “ having first vainly attempted to se-
 “ duce the prince of Condé by the same fallacious prospects
 “ of ambition, which had succeeded with his brother the
 “ king of Navarre, and peculiarly by the pretended promise
 “ of the island of Sardinia, attacked him thro' another chan-
 “ nel, with more success. Having remarked that the prince
 “ betrayed a partiality towards Mademoiselle de Limeüil,

1563. second marriage with Frances, sister to the duke of Longueville.

28 July. Meanwhile the Catholics and Hugonots forgetting their inveterate animosities, and animated by the love of their common country, joined to retake Havre-de-Grace from the English, to whom it had been ceded during the war. The place soon capitulated, and its surrender was followed by a final accommodation between the two crowns, which took place a few months afterwards.

“ one of her maids of honour, Catherine herself induced
 “ and engaged her to omit no means of augmenting his
 “ passion. The princess of Condé, his wife, was so deeply
 “ affected by his infidelity, that it produced her death.
 “ Mademoiselle de Limeüil then flattering herself that the
 “ prince would marry her, granted him the last favour; but
 “ becoming with child, the queen expelled her from court,
 “ and she was abandoned by her lover.—The Marechale de
 “ St. André conceived the same chimerical project, and
 “ was equally deceived in her expectations.”—It is said
 that the prince’s wife, Eleanor de Roye, died a martyr to her
 jealousy and chagrin at her husband’s amours. Mademoiselle
 de Limeüil was married afterwards to Geoffry de Caufac,
 Seigneur de Fremon.

The prince of Condé’s gallantries and libertinism gave occasion at the time to the following Vaudeville, or satirical sonnet;

“ Ce petit homme tant joly,
 “ Toujours cause, et toujours rit,
 “ Et toujours baise sa mignonne :
 “ Dieu garde de mal le petit homme !”

Catherine,

Catherine, who had always amused the prince of Condé with promises of admitting him to a participation in the government, and who knew not how longer to exclude him, determined on a singular expedient. The Chancellor de l'Hopital, who had withdrawn from court during the league of the triumvirate, but who had been recalled by the regent, was the author and adviser of the measure. The young king, Charles the ninth, entered at this time into the fourteenth year of his age. By the famous edict of Charles the fifth, made in 1363, it was necessary that he should have completed the year, before he attained to majority; but as the queen, by the declaration of his being no longer a minor, knew that she should retain unmolested the supreme power in her son's name, she procured an act to be registered in 15 Sept. the parliament of Rouen, which declared the king's minority to be expired *. That of Paris refused to receive or confirm this edict; but

Charles,

* No measure of the administration of Catherine of Medicis was more able, or more artful, than that of anticipating her son's majority, by which, under the appearance of resigning, she in effect continued and augmented her authority. Charles addressed the parliament of Rouen from his throne, on that occasion, surrounded by all the princes of the blood, and environed with the insignia of royalty. His speech was full of fire, and in a tone of command, which was highly consentaneous to his character. When he had

1563.

Charles, instructed by his mother, reprimanded them in terms so peremptory and severe for their audacious temerity, that after a considerable delay, it passed that assembly.

1564.

Magnificent in all her plans, the queen caused the palace of the Tournelles, in which her husband Henry the second had expired, to be entirely demolished; and began to erect in its place, the more splendid one of the Tuilleries. She employed in its construction the most celebrated architects of the age, and rewarded them as became a sovereign, with the noblest liberality. All the branches of polite literature felt her patronage; and Italy, her native country, was ransacked to enrich and adorn the kingdom over which she reigned. She piqued herself on the unbounded reverence which she paid to the memory of Francis the first, in whose court she had passed her early years, and whose character

had finished his harangue, the queen-mother rose, and declared that she then with infinite joy restored to her son the administration of his kingdom. As she prepared to take the oath of allegiance and fidelity, Charles descended from his throne, uncovered himself, and went to meet her: Catherine embraced him on her knees, and the king declared that he should defer more than ever to her advice and counsels. Being again seated on his throne, the princes of the blood, and principal lords of the court, were permitted to kiss his hand, and to do him homage. The edict which declared the king's majority was then read publicly by the proper officer, and instantly afterwards solemnly registered.

she wished or affected to imitate. Elegant and luxurious in her taste, refined and delicate in all her projects far beyond the genius of the century in which she flourished, Catherine of Medecis forms one of the most extraordinary characters which is to be found in the history of mankind.

1564.

The continual complaints which were made by each party, of the infringement of the peace, strongly proved the uncertainty of its duration; and the family of Guise loudly demanded justice against Coligni, as the supposed author of the late duke's assassination. A contest between Francis de Montmorenci, the Constable's eldest son, who was governor of Paris, and the cardinal of Lorraine, had nearly lighted up again the fatal brand of civil commotion throughout the kingdom.

The queen therefore from a variety of motives, resolved to carry her son on a progress through his dominions. It was supposed that a principal inducement to this journey, was to form an estimate of the Hugonot forces and real strength, by an inspection of them in person; to which was added the desire of shewing the young sovereign to his subjects, and awakening their loyalty and fidelity by his presence, and their knowledge of his character. Catherine, however, who always concealed her political designs under the mask of pleasure, endeavoured

1564. endeavoured to attribute to vanity and affection what originated in deeper motives. All her magnificence of disposition was betrayed in the preparations for Charles's journey: a train of courtiers and ladies attended his person; and Henry duke of Anjou, the eldest of the king's two brothers, as well as Margaret his sister, afterwards queen of Navarre, accompanied their mother. After having visited Sens, and Troyes in Champagne, at which latter city Charles concluded a solemn treaty with Elizabeth queen of England, from whom he at the same time received the order of the Garter, he continued his progress to the city of Bar. The duke of Lorraine, and his wife the duchess Claude, who was sister to the king, met him at that place, and entertained him with the utmost magnificence. Passing through Burgundy to Lyons, he was compelled to quit that city on account of the plague, and to remove to the town of Roussillon in Dauphiné, where he was visited by Emanuel Philibert, duke of Savoy. At Marseilles he made a public entry, and returning by Avignon, he passed the Rhone into Languedoc. The court, after visiting the principal cities of that province, and making some stay in Toulouse and Bourdeaux, arrived at Bayonne in the summer of the following year, where took place the celebrated interview between Charles and the queen of Spain, Elizabeth, his
- April.
- 1565.
- June.
- sister.

sister. The princess was conducted by a splendid train, at the head of which was the duke of Alva, and the Count de Benevento. The duke of Anjou, with a number of the young nobility passed the frontiers, and met his sister at Arnani in the Spanish Navarre. Catherine of Medecis, from impatience to embrace her favourite and beloved daughter, crossed the river Bidassoa which separates the two kingdoms; and on the opposite side Elizabeth was met by the king himself, who gave her his hand to conduct her out of the vessel. 10 June;

The young queen was received with prodigious pomp at Bayonne, and the interview lasted above three weeks. Every beautiful and brilliant entertainment, every gallant and elegant diversion, which Catherine's fertile genius and uncommon capacity could invent or procure, was exhibited to testify her joy on this occasion, and to inspire the Spaniards with the highest ideas of the magnificence of her court. Pleasure seemed to engross all present, and to have banished from this scene of festivity the sterner passions; but it was the queen's peculiar characteristic, to cover her schemes of ambition or vengeance under the mask of dissipation. A gallery, constructed to join the house in which she resided, with that of her daughter the queen of Spain, served to facilitate the secret conferences which it is said she held with the duke of

of

1565.

of Alva, on the subject of reducing and extirpating the Hugonots *. Some uncertain and ambiguous informations of this powerful confederacy for their destruction, were circulated abroad, the suspicion of which was confirmed by Catherine's character and subsequent conduct. Distrust necessarily succeeded, nor could any caresses of the king or court dispel their apprehensions. At the termination of the interview of Bayonne, the queen-mother conducted her son to Nérac, a little city of Gascony, in which Jane queen of Navarre had fixed her residence and established her court, on account of its distance from the Spanish frontiers, where even her person was not safe from the perfidy and enterprizes of Philip

* De Thou gives credit to the suspicion of measures having been concerted at Bayonne for the extermination of the Protestants; though he seems to rest the proof of such an intention chiefly on the assertion of the Calvinist writers themselves. Jean Baptiste Adriani, who was the continuator of Guicciardini's history, confirms the accusation, and adds, that the conferences between Catherine and the duke of Alva were held at the desire of the Pope; that it was determined to renew the Sicilian Vespers, and not to spare even the persons of the highest quality or distinction. It is even pretended that the city of Moulins, where an assembly of the principal nobility was convoked to meet in January 1566, was destin'd to be the scene of this tragedy.—Davila expressly avows Catherine's intention of cutting off the heads of Heresy, and destroying the Hugonots. He only says, that the duke of Alva was of opinion to employ the most violent

lent

CHARLES THE NINTH.

159

Philip the second, who had attempted to seize on and deliver her over to the Inquisition as a heretic.

1565.

After a short stay in Nerac, the court continued its progress through Angoulesme and Tours, to Blois, where Charles passed the winter; and early in the ensuing year repaired to Moulins. An assembly of the nobility was held in that city, where a constrained reconciliation, destitute of mutual forgiveness, took place between the admiral and the family of Guise; which was followed by another, not more sincere, be-

Nov.

1566.
January.

lent and sanguinary measures; while the queen-mother, consulting the genius of the French nation, reluctant to imbrue her hands in the blood of the first nobility and princes of the royal family, dreading a renewal of the civil commotions, and fearful of the dismemberment of the kingdom by the introduction of English and German auxiliaries, leaned to more gentle and temporizing councils.— Nothing can be better established than the secret consultations for the destruction of the Hugonots, during the interview of Bayonne, tho' it is difficult to say how accurately the precise and minute features of that plan were traced. Francis de la Noue, a protestant writer, asserts, that the prince of Condé and Coligni received exact information of the intention to massacre themselves, and their adherents, at the assembly of Moulins. It is certain that they conceived a general and well-founded suspicion of the hostile and treacherous designs of the court, from the time of the interview at Bayonne; and that it laid the foundation of the renewal of the civil war in little more than two years afterwards.

1566. tween the cardinal of Lorraine and the Marechal de Montmorenci.

New sources of war disclosed themselves every day. The edicts of toleration and protection, repeatedly issued in favour of the Reformed religion, were violated in all the provinces with impunity; while the government indirectly encouraged these proceedings, and afforded no redress to the grievances of the Calvinists. They carried the complaints of their oppressions to the admiral and the prince of Condé; but it was long before either of those chiefs could be induced to resume the sword. The latter yet hoped to be appointed lieutenant-general of the kingdom, as his brother the king of Navarre had been; and both of them peculiarly dreaded impressing their young sovereign, who was now advancing fast to manhood, with sentiments unfavourable and hostile to themselves and their party. 1567. They twice dismissed the delegates sent by their adherents, after having advised and enjoined them rather to submit to any indignities or persecutions, than to have recourse to so dreadful a remedy as rebellion, and a renewal of the calamities of which they had already been witnesses: but the intimation which they soon afterwards received, that it was determined to seize on them both, to detain the prince in perpetual imprisonment, and to put Coligni to death, obliged them to think of taking more decisive

decisive and vigorous measures. In a great assembly of the Hugonot nobility and leaders, which was held at the castle of St. Valeri, it was agreed to suspend all acts of hostility or violence till they had received more certain intelligence of the intentions of the court; but in a subsequent council summoned at Chatillon, d'Andelot, who was ever of opinion to embrace the most daring and decided measures, strongly urged an immediate and open renewal of the war. His remonstrances prevailed; and it was resolved to attempt to gain possession of the young king, which could only be effected by cutting in pieces the Swiss guards, who attended on and protected his person*.

1567.

May.

This

* Brantome, who was certainly well informed in the court intrigues, declares the war to have been principally caused by the prince of Condé's disappointed ambition. He had flattered himself with the lieutenancy of the kingdom; but Catherine, unable longer to delude him with promises, tutored her favourite son Henry, and inspired him with the desire of filling that high office. At a supper in the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prez, the young prince most severely and haughtily reprimanded Condé for his audacity in presuming to aspire to a post, which he had resolved to possess himself. Brantome says that he was present, and heard the conversation. Condé perceived from what hand the blow came; he saw all his expectations blasted; he beheld himself duped by the queen, and sought for revenge by unsheathing the sword. The writer of Louis duke of

1567.

Sept.

This enterprize was not difficult, as Charles, with the queen his mother, resided securely at the palace of Monceaux, where he held a grand chapter of the order of St. Michael. The Switzers, dispersed in the surrounding villages, might have been separately surprized, and easily put to the sword; but Catherine having received intelligence of the enemy's approach, and suspecting their intentions, retired hastily with her son into the city of Meaux. She then dispatched the Marechal de Montpensier's life asserts the same fact, and Davila confirms its authenticity.

This last historian, with his usual impartiality and discernment, has laid open, with great exactness, the many latent principles which produced the second civil war. He accuses the partizans of both religions with being principally accessory to it, by their reciprocal injuries and animosities. He attributes it to the young king's high and unconcealed resentment of the presumption and encroaching spirit of the Hugonots; to the prince of Condé's ambitious and restless temper; to the fears of the Calvinists on account of the supposed schemes for their destruction planned at Bayonné; to the march of the duke of Alva, at the head of a numerous army, along the frontiers, for the purpose of subjecting the revolted subjects of Philip the second in the Low Countries; to the continual infractions of the peace by the Catholics, and the wanton outrages committed by them on the Hugonots; to Coligny and d'Andelot's haughty and unsubmitting spirit; to Catherine's hypocrisy and dangerous dissimulation; and lastly to the Cardinal of Lorraine's violent counsels.—All these conjoined causes, operating on minds already inflamed with mutual animosity, and incapable of being restrained, again involved the kingdom in new commotions.

Montmorenci

Montmorenci with some unmeaning propofals, only calculated to gain time, while the Switzers 1567. affembled for the king's defence.

A council was held, on the meafures requifite to be purfued in this critical juncture. The Conftable, cautious and provident of hisroyal mafter's fafety, wifhed if poffible not to expofe him to the hazard of an uncertain combat. The Chancellor, touched by the great and falutary confiderations of the public tranquillity, and confcious that the young king would be irritated to the higheft degree by fo audacious an attempt, which muft infallibly produce a fecond civil war more cruel and inveterate than the firft, joined Montmorenci in advifing the king to remain at Meaux. Unhappily for France, the cardinal of Lorraine oppofed thefe lenient counfels, and prevailed. At the break of day therefore, Charles quitted the city, furrounded by the Switzers, in the centre of whom he was placed; but before they had advanced two leagues, the prince of Condé appeared in fight with near five hundred horfe. The Conftable, dreading the fhock of fo determined a body commanded by fuch leaders, and rendered diftruffful by age, after having fufained the repeated fhocks of the Hugonot cavalry, fent the king forward with only two hundred horfe by a private road, and he arrived fafely at Paris the fame evening. Condé, who was ig-

30 Sept.

1567. repeatedly, but in vain: they sustained the attacks unmoved, and after having harrassed them a considerable way, he at length retired*.

Ineffectual

* Davila's account of the enterprize of Meaux is very circumstantial, and somewhat different from that of Mezerai, and most of the other French historians.—He attributes the advice of marching to Paris, not to the cardinal of Lorraine, but to the duke of Nemours. He adds that the Constable's opinion would notwithstanding have prevailed, if Fifer, general of the Switzers, had not requested to be admitted to the young king's presence, and assured his majesty, that his troops would open him a passage through the enemy with the point of their pikes, if he would entrust his person to their protection. This offer was accepted, and the march began at day-break. Charles, the queen-mother, the foreign ambassadors, and all the ladies of the court were received into the center of the Swiss battalion. The Count de la Rochefoucault, and Andelot, having joined the prince of Condé and the admiral, they made a furious attack on the rear, but were received on the Swiss pikes with great intrepidity. The king gallantly spurred on his horse to the foremost ranks, followed by all the noblemen who attended him; and when he arrived safe in the capital, the Parisians shed tears of joy for his preservation. The whole merit of this action and escape was due to the bravery of the Switzers.

De Thou is by no means so minute as Davila in his narration of the particulars attending the enterprize of Meaux. He says, “ that the queen-mother assembled the council in the
“ duke de Nemours' chamber, who was confined to his bed
“ by the gout; and that contrary to the advice of the Con-
“ stable and the Chancellor, it was there determined to en-
“ deavour to reach Paris. In consequence of this resolution,
“ Charles, accompanied by about nine hundred gentlemen,
“ quitted Meaux at midnight, and proceeded towards the
“ capital,

Ineffectual conferences succeeded; but both parties, inflamed with animosity, were incapable of listening to any terms of peace; and the Hugonots, though few in number, having attempted to block up and distress the capital, Montmorenci, however reluctant, yet compelled by the murmurs of the Parisians, marched out to give them battle. The prodigious inequality of numbers insured him the victory; but the glory of the day remained to Condé and Coligni, who with a handful of troops, could venture to engage a royal army so much superior*.

1567.
October.

The

“capital, escorted by the Switzers.”—Mezerai and De Thou equally accuse the Cardinal of Lorraine, as the promoter of the war, by his violent and injudicious counsels.

* The action, says Davila, began about noon, and the superiority of the Hugonots in cavalry chiefly contributed to their success in the commencement of the battle. Though the royal army was so much superior to that of the enemy in numbers and in artillery, yet only the horse were engaged on both sides, the infantry of the Constable not being able to keep pace with the squadrons of cavalry, and being almost totally thrown out of the engagement. The prince of Condé was opposed to the Constable's division, which he entirely routed; but his horse was killed under him, and he with great difficulty recovered another. Coligni commanded the van on that day; and being mounted on a fiery Turkish horse, was once so much engaged among the enemy, that he was borne away in their flight, and narrowly escaped being taken prisoner. D'Andelot, who had been stationed on the other side the Seine, at Passy, could not join his friends in time to be present at the battle, on account of the bridges

1567.

10th Nov.

The engagement was fought in the plains of St. Denis, and was rendered famous by the Constable's death, who exerted during the action all the courage and activity of a young soldier. Wounded in five places, he yet continued to defend himself with undaunted intrepidity, till Robert Stuart discharged a ball into his reins which proved mortal. Even then, he had vigour enough left to drive the pommel of his sword into Stuart's mouth, with which he beat out several of his teeth. His son Henry d'Amville rescued, and disengaged him from the enemy. Fainting with loss of blood, he sunk down upon the ground; but the first use that he made of his speech when recovered, was to demand if there yet

across the river having been all demolished. The Hugonots took the advantage of a very dark and rainy evening to cover their retreat; and the Catholics, though victorious, yet did not pursue them, on account of the loss of their general.

In all the principal circumstances attending the battle of St. Denis, De Thou and Mezerai concur with Davila.—The Constable only meant originally to drive the prince of Condé from his posts round Paris, by which he distressed and straitened the capital; but stung with the complaints and outcries of the Parisians, who even dared to insinuate suspicions injurious to his fidelity and loyalty, Montmorenci at length marched out, assuring the discontented citizens, that “he would on that day evince his steady adherence to the crown, and return either dead or victorious.”—The royal army consisted of sixteen thousand infantry, and three thousand cavalry, besides fourteen pieces of cannon; whereas that

yet remained sufficient day to pursue the Hugonots. It was long before he would even permit himself to be carried off the field, on which he obstinately resolved to expire. "Tell the king and queen," said he, "that I die with the highest pleasure in the discharge of the great duties which I owe them; and that I have at length found that honourable end, which I have sought under their predecessors in so many battles!"—Yielding at last to the importunate sollicitations of his sons and surrounding friends, he suffered himself to be carried to Paris, where Charles and his mother visited him, and wept his approaching end. A Franciscan

that of the Calvinists only amounted to twelve hundred foot, and fifteen hundred horse. Yet, encouraged by the season of the year when the days were so short as not to allow the Catholics, even if victorious, to pursue their triumph, the prince of Condé determined to give battle to the Constable. The Switzers did not maintain their reputation for courage in this engagement, but gave way when charged by the prince and the admiral. A report having been spread that Coligni was taken prisoner, Catherine of Medecis caused very strict search to be made after him in Paris, among those whom she suspected to be capable of concealing his person.—D'Andelot, having repaired the pontoons upon the Seine, passed that river at St. Ouen the same evening, and joined his friends. All the honour of the action must be confessed to have remained with the Calvinists, who, notwithstanding the prodigious disparity of numbers, had maintained so unequal a contest. About seven hundred persons fell on both sides, principally from among the cavalry.—It is De Thou who enumerates these particulars.

1567. friar tormenting him with admonitions and exhortations in his last moments, Montmorenci besought him to cease those needless remonstrances: "Dost thou imagine," said the Constable, turning himself towards the monk with a serene countenance, "that I have lived to near four-score years, without having yet learned to die a single quarter of an hour *?"

In

* "The Constable," says Davila, "though overpowered by the fury of Condé's and Coligni's attack, yet continued to fight desperately. He had already received four slight wounds in the face, and one very large one on the head, with a battle-axe. While he was attempting to rally his disordered troops, Robert Stuart rode up to him, with a pistol levelled at his head." "Dost thou not know me?" said Montmorenci, "I am the Constable of France." "Yes," answered Stuart, "I know thee well, and therefore I present thee this."—So saying, he discharged a pistol ball into the Constable's shoulder, who fell; but while falling, he dashed the hilt of his sword, which he had held fast in his hand, though the blade was broke, into his enemy's mouth. So violent was the blow, that it beat out three of Stuart's teeth, fractured his jaw-bone, and laid him instantly senseless on the ground. All his followers abandoned Montmorenci; and the Hugonots were carrying off his body, when the duke of Aumale and d'Amville having routed the van commanded by Coligni, came up and rescued the Constable. They then carried him, senseless and dying to Paris, where he expired on the ensuing day, with undaunted composure and magnanimity."

Davila speaks with perfect impartiality of his character.—"Montmorenci was," says he, "a man of great capacity,
" mature

In him expired the last remaining obstacle to Catherine's authority, and she saw herself delivered from every rival who could henceforth oppose or impede her designs. She possessed an ascendancy the most unlimited over her son's mind, and governed in effect, though not invested with the title of regent. Notwithstanding that the Constable had been always uniformly unsuccessful in war, and was accounted the most unfortunate general

1567.

 11 Nov.

“ mature wisdom, and long experience. Those who judged
 “ of him dispassionately, allowed that he was a valiant
 “ soldier and a dutiful servant; but a bad friend, and ever
 “ entirely governed by his own interest.” The Constable was in his seventy-fifth year, when he was killed: his funeral rites were conducted with unusual pomp and solemnity. De Thou coincides with Davila in every important circumstance relative to the death of Montmorenci.

Robert Stuart was afterwards taken prisoner at the battle of Jarnac, and being brought before Henry duke of Anjou, the Marquis de Villars besought the prince's permission to put him to death, as an offering to the manes of Montmorenci. Henry long refused to consent to so base a murder; but at length, overcome with the importunity of the Marquis, he turned his head aside, and said, “ Well then—be
 “ it so.” Stuart, with animated entreaty, represented to him how ignominious and dastardly an action he was about to authorise, and endeavoured to awaken his compassion and sense of honour; but all was ineffectual: he was led a little on one side, disarmed, and put to death, in the very hearing of the duke. Even Brantome, corrupt as he was, speaks with honest indignation and abhorrence of this infamous act, exactly similar to that of Montesquiou and the prince of Condé.

1567. of his age; though his bigotry, his severity, and imperious manners rendered him little an object of love, or even of veneration; yet we cannot help lamenting the veteran commander, who had fought under Gaston de Foix at Ravenna, and who had been successively the friend and favourite of two monarchs, Francis and Henry. He alone could have inspired the young king with the desire of reigning himself, without his mother's pernicious counsels; and his death left her genius full scope to exert all its destructive influence.

The post of Constable was not filled up after the death of Montmorenci, nor would the king confer so high a dignity even on his own brother Henry, though strongly urged to that purpose by Catherine of Medecis. Several lords of the court requesting it for themselves, Charles, jealous of his authority, and deeming this charge too great and near the throne, refused to confer it on any subject. "I want no person," said he, "to carry my sword: I am well able to carry it myself." Yielding however with reluctance to the entreaties and expostulations of the queen-mother, in favour of her beloved son Henry duke of Anjou, the king constituted him Lieutenant General of the kingdom, tho' he was then scarcely sixteen years of age. Charles's character, as he approached to manhood, began gradually to unveil and disclose itself. He possessed almost all the qualities requisite

requisite to constitute a great monarch, had they not been corrupted and depraved by the most flagitious examples and instructions. Diffimulation, cruelty, and ferocity were either familiarised to him by constant habit, or even inculcated into him as virtues. Catherine, only anxious to reign, endeavoured to prevent her son from feeling his own powers, and of consequence emancipating himself from the state of tutelage, in which he had hitherto been detain'd.

Meanwhile the Hugonot army, far from being vanquished, and reinforced by d'Andelot, who had joined the prince of Condé, advanced towards Paris, and even attacked the suburbs of that capital. They were at length repulsed, though not without considerable slaughter on both sides; and then retiring in defiance of the royal forces, they effected their junction with Casimir son to the elector Palatine, who led to their assistance a body of German auxiliaries. The city of Rochelle declared in their favour, and La Noue, one of their generals, made himself master of Orleans; but the prince of Condé was repulsed before Sens, by Henry the young duke of Guise. His combined troops however formed a numerous army, and in hopes of being again able to invest or distress the capital, he laid siege to the city of Chartres. The success of the enterprize was doubtful; but while he remained before the place, new propositions of peace

1567.

11th Nov.

1568.

11th Jan.

February.

peace

1568. peace were tendered by Catherine. They terminated in the treaty of Chartres, concluded on 2d March. terms nearly similar to the preceding pacification; but the Hugonots, who were dissatisfied with it, as fraudulent and dangerous, gave it the denomination of "La Paix boiteuse et mal-affize," from the two principal negotiators of it on the part of the king; one of whom, the Marechal de Biron, was lame, and the other, Henry de Mesme, was lord of the land of "Mal-affize." It produced however, a temporary suspension of hostilities, though it could neither procure a solid peace or diminish that mutual distrust and aversion which the opposite parties nourished against each other. We now proceed to the yet more bloody scenes of this calamitous reign.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

Attempt to seize the prince of Condé.—Third civil war.—Battle of Jarnac.—Death of Condé.—Characters of the admiral Coligni, and of Jane, queen of Navarre.—Siege of Poitiers.—Battle of Moncontour.—Arrival of the king in the camp before St. John d'Angeli.—March of Coligni.—Conclusion of peace.—Treachery of the court.—Marriage of the king to the archduchess Elizabeth.—Her character.—Festivities at court.—Policy of Catherine of Medecis.—Reflections.—Dissimulation of Charles and the queen-mother.—Arrival of Coligni at the court.—Commencement of disunion between the king and Henry duke of Anjou.—Contrast of their characters.—Affiance of Henry, prince of Navarre to Margaret of Valois.—Death of Jane, queen of Navarre.—Circumstances attending it.—Determination of Coligni to remain at Paris.—Margaret of Valois.—Her nuptials, and character.—Attempt to assassinate Coligni.—Dissimulation of Charles.—Resolution taken to exterminate the Hugonots.—Terrors and irresolution of the king previous to the massacre.—Death of Coligni.—Deaths of the Hugonot chiefs.

KINGS OF FRANCE.

chiefs.—Detail of the principal circumstances attending the massacre of Paris.—Conduēt of Charles.—Fourth civil war.—Siege of La Rochelle.—Character of the duke of Alençon.—Remorse of the king.—Election of the duke of Anjou to the crown of Poland.—Carousals at court.—Charles's impatience for his brother's departure.—Mary of Cleves.—Her character, and amour with the duke of Anjou.—Quarrels between the king and his mother.—Henry, duke of Anjou begins his journey.—Illness of Charles.—Suspicious on that event.—Arrival of the king of Poland at Cracow.—He abandons himself to grief.—New commotions in France.—Change in the king's conduēt.—Conspiracy of the duke of Alençon, discovered.—Progress of Charles's indisposition.—Intrigues of the queen mother to secure the regency.—Execution of La Mole and Coconas.—Circumstances of the king's last illness.—Death of Charles the ninth.—Enquiry into the causes of it.—His character, issue, and funeral.—Conclusion.

1568.

SUCH was the sanguinary zeal which animated the partizans of either religion in these unhappy times; and such was the perfidious system of policy pursued by Catherine of Medecis, that no permanent accommodation could take place throughout the kingdom. Scarce any of the conditions stipulated by the late treaty of Chartres were observed; while mutual rage armed the hands of Catholics and Hugonots

CHARLES THE NINTH.

Hugonots against each other. Alternate insults and acts of violence were committed in many of the provinces, which strongly evinced how little either party could be restrained by edicts of toleration; the professors of the reformed religion were attacked, or massacred with impunity; and the treacherous intentions of the court itself soon appeared too visibly to be mistaken.

The prince of Condé not daring to trust himself in the power of his enemies, had withdrawn to the castle of Noyers in Burgundy, which belonged to him in right of his second wife Frances de Longueville, and whither Coligni likewise repaired. While they remained in this retirement, a soldier was one day surprized in the act of measuring the fossé and walls, as if with an intent to ascertain whether they might be successfully attacked; and on being questioned, this man confessed that he was sent by the court, who meant to seize on the prince and all his family. The queen, who had hoped to take the great leaders of the Calvinists unprepared, no sooner found that her designs were discovered, than she ordered the royal troops to enter Burgundy. Condé and the admiral, who saw the project concerted for their destruction, were sensible of the extreme peril in which they stood, and that no safety was to be found except in immediate flight. It was not easy to evade the many detached bodies of soldiers, already posted

175
1568.

July.

1568. to intercept their passage ; but necessity dictated
 the attempt as the sole means of preservation,
 23d Aug. and they therefore left Noyers, only escorted by
 a hundred and fifty cavalry, in the centre of
 which were placed their wives and children.
 Fortune favoured their enterprize ; an unusual
 drought enabled them to ford the Loire ; and
 after having traversed a number of hostile pro-
 vinces, thro' continual and imminent dangers,
 19th Sept. they arrived safely at Rochelle*.

The conduct of the court breathed undi-
 guised hostility and revenge ; nor were any heal-

* Mezerai, Davila, and De Thou, all relate the circum-
 stances of Condé's and Coligni's flight from Noyers, in nearly
 similar terms. It was a spectacle worthy of compassion, to
 see a prince of the blood compelled to abandon his residence,
 and to fly from the destruction which impended, incumbered
 with a numerous family, and scarcely accompanied by any
 escort which could protect him against his enemies. Three
 of his children were still in the cradle : the princess of Condé
 herself, and the two families of Coligni and d'Anselot, as
 yet in very early youth, or in their nurses' arms, followed the
 march, and augmented the difficulties of their flight. Scarce-
 ly had they passed the Loire at Sancerre, when the count de
 Tavannes, at the head of a body of forces, appeared on the
 opposite bank ; but a sudden inundation prevented him from
 crossing the river, and as by miracle, saved the prince.
 Continuing his route through the provinces of the Limousin
 and Poictou, he arrived at length at Rochelle, where Jane
 d'Albret queen of Navarre joined him soon afterwards with
 her two children, Henry and Catherine. That princess
 was followed by all the principal Hugonot nobility and
 commanders.

ing measures embraced amidst the fury which seemed to possess and actuate the government. The Chancellor de l'Hopital, too mild and virtuous for the manners of a corrupt administration, and suspected of a partiality to the Hugonots, was deprived of the seals, disgraced, and confined to his house at Vignan near Estampes: his office was soon afterwards conferred on John de Morvilliers, Bishop of Orleans. Henry duke of Anjou, only sixteen years of age, was placed by his mother at the head of the royal army, though the Marechal de Tavannes superintended and principally directed its operations. The young prince having joined his forces, a general engagement was expected, but the advanced season of the year prevented it, and obliged both commanders to retire into winter quarters. 1568.

In the ensuing spring they again took the field, and after many unsuccessful attempts, the duke of Anjou at length compelled the Hugonots to a decisive action. The scene of war lay in the province of Angoumois, on the banks of the river Charente; and the fatal day of Jarnac, in which the royal army was victorious, put an end to the prince of Condé's life *. Novemb.

In

* The victory of Jarnac must be entirely attributed to the prodigious disparity of numbers, as the Hugonot infantry were almost all absent from the field of action, and only the cavalry disputed the day, with a courage and constancy which approached to frenzy. The duke of Anjou having

1569. In that memorable battle, he behaved with almost unexampled heroism and courage. His arm

passed his army in the night unobserved, across the river Charente, Coligni was first attacked. The prince of Condé, who lay at some distance, galloped immediately to his assistance, made a masterly disposition, and sustained long, with far inferior strength, the whole fury of the Catholic army.

D'Andelot, who had been left with only a hundred and twenty horse to delay the enemy, and give time to Condé to range his soldiery, performed this dangerous commission with his accustomed intrepidity and success; filling the place in which he had taken his stand, with confusion and carnage. At the beginning of the attack he rode up to the duke de Monfalez, who headed the first squadrons of the Catholic horse; and lifting up with his bridle hand the vizor of his helmet, discharged, with the other, a pistol into his face, and laid him dead on the ground.—Overborne by numbers, d'Andelot at length gave way, and retired to the main body.

Here the engagement was renewed with incredible obstinacy, the admiral and his brother in the left wing, maintaining the combat for near an hour, against the young duke of Guise. But the royal army being continually supplied with fresh troops, Coligni's own standard beat to the ground, and the van completely routed, they deemed it unavailing to continue the fight, and provided for their safety by retreat. In the right wing, the Counts of Montgomeri and La Rochefoucault disputed with equal courage the glory of the day; but were at last compelled to quit the field with precipitation.

Only the prince of Condé remained, incapable of turning his back, tho' encompassed by superior numbers. He was in the centre, and had encountered, in the beginning of the action,

arm was in a scarf at the time when it began ; 1569.
 and as he marched up at the head of his troops, his brother-in-law the Count de la Rochefoucault's horse reared, and broke his leg. Unmoved by so painful an accident, and disdain-
 ing to betray any emotions unbecoming his high station in that important moment, he coolly turned to those around him ; " Learn," said he, " that unruly horses do more injury than ser-
 vice, in an army!"—An instant after, previous to the charge, addressing his followers, " French nobility," said he, " know that the
 prince of Condé, with an arm in a scarf, and

action, the duke of Anjou's own squadron. Repeatedly broken and charged through by the royal forces, he yet rallied his men, and returned to the engagement. Even when almost deserted after the retreat of his adherents, and totally surrounded by the opposite army, he fought with invincible courage. His horse being killed under him, and himself wounded in many places, he yet continued to defend and ward off the blows aimed at him, with one knee upon the ground, till Montesquiou put an end to his life.

The duke of Anjou behaved with the utmost bravery in this action, and shewed a dauntless spirit above his years. His horse was killed under him, and he once narrowly escaped himself, fighting valiantly at the head of his squadrons. After the prince of Condé's death, no farther resistance was made ; it became a flight, and evening which drew on, in some measure befriended the conquered Hugonots.—All these particulars are drawn from Davila ; and many others are omitted, less interesting. De Thou coincides with the above-mentioned historian, in all the principal circumstances respecting this engagement.

1569. " a leg broke, fears not to give battle, since you
attend him !"

The fortune of the day was unfavourable to the Hugonots ; and the prince of Condé, thrown from his horse, was surrounded and taken prisoner. Overcome with fatigue and wounded, they seated him at the foot of a tree ; when Montesquiou, captain of the duke of Anjou's Swiss guards galloped up to the spot. Having demanded who he was, and being informed, " Tuez, tuez, mordieu !" said he ; and drawing out a pistol, discharged a ball into the prince's head, which instantly killed him. The cool and merciless barbarity of this assassination, committed upon a man wounded and defenceless, after the heat of the action was past, excited universal abhorrence ; and the enormity of the crime was rendered more conspicuous, from the high rank of the person put to death. The duke of Anjou neither avowed nor punished it ; but he permitted the prince's body to be laid upon an ass, and carried to the castle of Jarnac, where he went himself to lodge*.

Thus

* Though Davila does not speak of the prince of Condé's death, as of an assassination, yet as such it must be regarded, and the French historians are unanimous on this point. Davila, however relates the circumstance of his being carried across a *pack-horse* to the castle of Jarnac, to the joy and savage diversion of the whole army, who jested at this melancholy and affecting spectacle ; tho' he adds, that the duke of Anjou would not suffer any indignity to be offered to his body,

Thus fell the first Louis prince of Condé, by the hand of an assassin, rather than of a warrior.

1569.

The

in consideration of the prince's alliance to the blood royal. He owns all the sublime and shining qualities of Condé, and only laments that they were obscured by rebellion.

De Thou, after relating the desperate bravery with which the prince continued to dispute the field, even after the retreat of the admiral, and notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, says, that " Condé being at length left almost alone, and his horse falling upon him, in that situation, he recognized two officers of the royal army, named Tison d'Argence, and St. Jean. Having raised the vizor of his helmet that he might render himself known, he surrendered to them, under their promise to save his life; but Montesquiou riding up while the prince was speaking to them, instantly discharged a ball into him from behind, of which he expired."

De Thou celebrates with the warmest panegyrics, his valour, liberality, eloquence, talents, and numerous virtues, in which he was equalled by few of the princes his contemporaries, and excelled by none. He reprobates the indignities offered to Condé's remains, dishonouring only to those by whom such insults were permitted. He insinuates plainly, that Montesquiou acted by secret orders, and that he did not commit so base an assassination without knowing that it would meet with approbation. He even mentions a singular circumstance highly tending to corroborate this suspicion: " The duke of Anjou," says de Thou, " after the engagement, communicated to those persons who were in his confidence, his determination to cause a chapel to be erected over the spot on which the prince of Condé was killed. This idea had been suggested to him by some ecclesiastics; but he relinquished it on the advice of Car-

1569. The unhappy circumstances of the times had in some degree necessitated him, though allied by blood to the crown, to unsheath his sword against his sovereign; and the great talents for military enterprize and command which he possessed, rendered him the hero of his own, and the terror of the opposite party. There is too much reason to believe, that Henry duke of Anjou authorized and commanded the captain of

“ would confirm the opinion already entertained in both
 “ armies, that Montesquiou had assassinated the prince by
 “ his express directions.”

“ We found him,” says the writer of the duke of Montpensier’s life, “ lying across an ass; and the Baron de Magnac asked me if I should know him again? but as he had one eye beat out of his head, and was otherwise much disfigured, I knew not what to answer. The corpse was brought in before all the princes and lords, who ordered the face to be washed, and recognized him perfectly. They then put him into a sheet, and he was carried before a man on horseback to the castle of Jarnac, where Monseigneur, the king’s brother, went to lodge.”

Brantome has likewise given us many interesting circumstances of this tragical event. “ The prince,” says he, “ fought with a courage heightened by despair, on that day; but he was soon beat to the ground by superior numbers. It had been recommended to the duke of Anjou’s favourites to kill Condé at all events; and Henry himself did not disguise the joy which he felt at the execution of his orders. After the action was over, he chose to gratify his eyes with the sight of the dead body; and it was then thrown, in derision, across an old she-ass, the head and legs dangling down on either side. It even remained

of his guard to put him to death. He was not naturally cruel; but the prince had been his rival for the lieutenancy of the kingdom, and was peculiarly an object of his detestation: besides that in the person of Condé, they apprehended the whole Hugonot faction must infallibly be destroyed*.

1569.

Coligni, who with the broken remains of the

“mained during the ensuing night, in a room exactly under
 “that in which the duke himself slept; and after having
 “been exposed to the view of the whole army, it was re-
 “stored to the duke of Longueville his brother-in-law, who
 “interred him with his ancestors at Vendome. There was
 “made on him this sarcastic epitaph,

“L’an mil cinq cens soixante neuf,

“Entre Jarnac et Chateau-neuf,

“Fut porté sur une anesse,

“Cil qui vouloit oster la Messe.”

Brantome says, he intimately knew Montesquiou, and that he was a brave and gallant gentleman: at the subsequent siege of St. John d’Angeli, he was killed by a musket shot.

* Voltaire, in his beautiful poem of the *Henriade*, introduces Henry the fourth pathetically lamenting the prince’s death. It is to our Elizabeth that he relates the story; and the lines are so masterly and affecting, that I shall make no apology for their insertion. It is Henry himself who exclaims:

“O! Plaines de Jarnac! O! coup trop inhumain!

“Barbare Montesquiou, moins guerrier qu’assassin,

“Condé déjà mourant tomba sous ta furie;

“J’ai vu porter le coup; j’ai vu trancher sa vie.

“Helas! trop jeune encore, mon bras, mon foible bras

“Ne put ni prévenir ni venger son trepas.”

1569. cavalry, had retreated to St. John d'Angeli, naturally became by the death of the prince, the leader of the Calvinist forces. He was in every respect equal to, and calculated for this arduous station. More advanced in years than Condé, he joined the experience of a veteran commander, to the most intrepid courage, and the most distinguished military talents. Loyal to his prince even in the midst of rebellion; ardently zealous for the glory of his country, though a fatal necessity compelled him to appear in arms against it, Nature had designed him to promote its grandeur and prosperity. In happier times he would have been the guardian of France, enrolled among her heroes and patriots, her Condés and her Turennes. Less ambitious than the prince, he was ever ready to accept the overtures of peace; but more attached to the religious principles of Calvinism, and not seduced by love or pleasure to sacrifice and forget them, he steadily pursued these objects, for the defence of which he had first drawn his sword. Fertile in resources, vast and capacious in his projects, rising on his very defeats, and magnanimous in circumstances the most distressful, he long sustained with inferior force, the utmost efforts of his victorious enemies.

Jane d'Albret, queen of Navarre, a princess endowed with virtues and qualities of the most estimable kind, and inheriting from her mother
Margaret

Margaret of Valois a strength of mind and elegance of genius rarely found, seconded the admiral's measures for the protection and preservation of the Hugonot party. She brought her son Henry, as yet in very early youth, to Rochelle, where she harangued the troops, who formed a circle round her; and Coligni was immediately declared general of the forces, under the prince of Navarre and his cousin the young prince of Condé. 1569.

The intelligence of the victory at Jarnac, and the death of the Hugonot leader, were received at Paris with unusual demonstrations of joy. The king rose at midnight to sing Te-Deum in person, announced it to all the sovereign princes of Europe, and sent the standards gained in the action to Rome, as a present the most acceptable to the sovereign pontiff. The real advantages resulting from it to the royal party, were however very inconsiderable. Henry duke of Anjou was repulsed before Cognac; while Coligni, reinforced from every quarter, appeared again in the field, more terrible from his late ill success. The death of his brother d'Andelot, 27 May. who died of a pestilential fever at the city of Saintes, was an event deeply regretted by all his adherents, who lost in him a chieftain eminent for intrepidity and martial spirit.

Meanwhile the admiral at the head of an army, faced the duke of Anjou in the Limousin, after

1569. after having effected a junction with Count Mansfeldt, who led to his assistance a large reinforcement of German auxiliaries. In the great
 25 June. skirmish of La Roche Abeille, the Hugonots were victorious; while the Count de Montgomeri, one of their most active and enterprizing generals, reduced all the Province of Bearn to obedience, and extended his ravages even into Languedoc.

Coligni, encouraged by these prosperous events, determined once more to pass the Loire, and carry the war to the gates of Paris, as the only effectual means to procure a termination of
 it; but unfortunately he afterwards changed his
 25 July. resolution, and undertook the siege of Poitiers. Henry, the young duke of Guise, son to Francis, and not inferior to his father in genius, in courage or in ambition, had thrown himself into the place. Anxious to signalize himself, and animated with an uncommon detestation of the admiral, whom he ever regarded as his father's murderer, he made an obstinate and resolute defence. Coligni, compelled at length by the duke of Anjou's near approach, who had laid siege to Chatelleraud, and finding his forces diminished by the loss of above two thousand
 7 Sept. men, retired without success from before the city. The battle of Moncontour, which followed only a few days afterwards, seemed to
 3 Oct. menace with total destruction the Hugonot party,

party. The action lasted more than three hours; and victory declared a second time for Henry and the Catholics. Near nine thousand French and Germans of the vanquished side, were left upon the field; and scarce could Coligni, wounded in the face, and accompanied by about three hundred cavalry, who in some measure stopt the pursuit of the conquerors, secure his retreat to Parthenai*.

1569.

Any

* This was the most bloody and decisive engagement of any which was fought during the civil wars. It began two hours after sun-rise, at eight in the morning, and lasted till ten: Coligni, who knew that the Catholics were superior to his own forces in discipline still more than in numbers, would have declined a contest, the inequality of which was visible; but the clamours of his troops, and peculiarly of the German auxiliaries, who demanded their arrears, and refused to retreat before the Catholics, compelled him reluctantly to hazard the issue of a battle.

It was disputed with such incredible obstinacy and mutual antipathy, that the very sutlers, lacqueys, and pioneers of either camp took a part in the engagement, and each individual fought, as if on his personal exertion alone the fortune of the day depended. The event was long doubtful; but at length the Switzers in the royal army having cut to pieces the Germans, of whom out of four thousand, scarce two hundred remained alive, a general rout succeeded.

Henry duke of Anjou signalized his bravery, and appeared in the first ranks of danger; he narrowly escaped being killed more than once, having rushed into the thickest squadrons of the enemy (where the Marquis of Baden fell by his side) and exposed his person like a common soldier; but the

1569. Any genius, except his own, must have sunk under so disastrous a reverse of fortune; but his mind, accustomed to adversity, and unshaken in every situation, seemed to rally and collect its powers in this moment of distress. On the very evening of the day upon which the battle was

the admiral united on that day all the impetuous courage of youth, with the resources and ability of an able and experienced general. The Rhinegrave, who commanded the German troops in the royal army, encountered him in person; and firing a pistol into his face, beat out four of his teeth, and broke his jaw; but Coligni discharging his own into the Rhinegrave's vizor, laid him instantly dead upon the ground. He afterwards continued gallantly fighting, though the blood ran in such quantity from his wound, as to fill both his helmet and gorget.

At length, seeing his troops dispersed on all sides, and flying before the conquerors; his voice quite spent, and scarce capable of being heard; being himself covered with blood, and sinking under fatigue, he found it in vain longer to dispute the field. Retiring therefore with the two young princes of Navarre and of Condé, who had remained at some distance during the combat, he gained Parthenai the same evening, at six leagues distance from Moncontour, only accompanied by 300 cavalry. The counts of Mansfeldt and Nassau, with about two thousand of their men, joined him at night, having retreated in good order, and stopped the pursuit of the conquerors. The duke of Anjou commanded quarter to be given to three thousand of the French infantry, who had thrown down their arms. Near two hundred colours were taken from the Hugonots.—These particulars are principally extracted from Davila, with whom De Thou and Mezerai agree in almost all the circumstances.

fought,

fought, though almost incapable of speaking from the effects of his wound, he held a council of his chief officers; and dispatched messengers into England, Switzerland, and the German states, to announce his perilous condition and late defeat. He demanded, as in the common cause of religion, an immediate supply of troops and money, without which the consequences to his party must be the most fatal. He himself in person retired with the two princes of Navarre and Condé, into the province of Saintonge; and collecting the scattered fugitives dispersed at Moncontour, meditated new opposition to the royal forces.

Had Henry instantly pursued the enemy broken and dispirited by so many calamities, before they had sufficiently recovered from their terror to reunite and appear again in the field; he would probably have destroyed them entirely, or at least have rendered them incapable of farther resistance: but the siege of St. John d'Angeli, which he immediately undertook, prevented all the beneficial consequences otherwise to have been expected from his late victory. Charles, who had long beheld his brother's glory with jealousy, and who possessed equal or superior courage, could no longer be restrained from appearing personally in the army. Catherine of Medecis, attached to the duke of Anjou with peculiar tenderness, and anxiously endeavouring by

1569.

16 Oct.

1569. by every means to exalt this her favourite son, tried in vain to withhold the king, and to oppose his determination. On Charles's arrival in the
 26 Oct. camp before St. John d'Angeli, he seemed to be transported with the scene: he was constantly present in the trenches, exposed his person like the meanest foldier, and declared publicly that he would gladly share his crown with Henry, so he might alternately command the forces*.

2 Dec. After a siege of two months the city capitulated; but La Noue, and the count de la Rochefoucault yet sustained the party in Rochelle; while Coligni having assembled all his adherents near Saintes, began that celebrated march through

* Charles early saw with discontent, his mother's partiality to the duke of Anjou; he complained of it to her; and his temper, naturally impetuous and violent, could not bear this preference. Catherine on the other hand feared that Charles, who was endowed with great capacity for affairs, would not always be held in tutelage, and might at last dispense with her counsels, and deprive her of all power. Henry's indolence and submission secured her from those apprehensions, in case he should ever mount the throne.

An anecdote which Brantome mentions, very strongly proves the king's dissatisfaction at Henry's success, and early greatness. Soon after the battle of Moncontour, D'Orat the poet had presented him with some verses in his praise.—“It is not to me,” said Charles, “that these eulogiums are due! I have not merited any panegyrics, or performed any high exploits! To my brother they may indeed justly be addressed, who is every day employed in acquiring renown in arms.”

fo many provinces, almoft unexampl'd in modern hiftory. In defiance of the inclemency of winter, of fo many confiderable rivers which interfe&ced his courfe, of the royal generals and Catholic forces ftationed to oppofe his progrefs; he travers'd all the provinces at the foot of the Pyrenees and Languedoc, returned along the banks of the Rhone, and appeared in Burgundy in the enfuing fummer, after having carried terror through all the fouth of France*.

1570.

June.

Charles

* The march of Coligni thro' fo many provinces, deftitute of artillery, money, baggage, or ammunition; and the refources by which he maintained and fupported his broken troops under fuch diftreffful circumftances, convey the higheft ideas of his military talents. The princes of Navarre and Condé, early inured to the dangers and fatigues of a camp, accompanied him thro' the whole courfe of this perilous enterprize, and fhared every calamity of their leader and their party. The Hugonots left bloody traces of their paffage in all the provinces thro' which they paffed; peculiarly in the environs of Touloufe. Having remained during the feverity of winter near the fhore of the Mediterranean, in the vicinity of Narbonne, they travers'd Languedoc early in the fpring, re-mount'd the Rhone, and marching along the Loire, arriv'd towards the end of May in the province of Forez, at the little town of St. Etienne. Here Coligni was attacked with a malignant fever, which ftopped the army three weeks, during which time the camp was plung'd in the deepeft confternation; but recovering, after imminent danger of his life from this diftemper, he conducted his forces into Burgundy, where they re-appear'd in the middle of June.

The following fong, fays Brantome, was commonly fung
by

1570. Charles submitted with difficulty to permit the admiral thus to ravage his dominions, unpursued. He would even have followed Coligni immediately, had not the queen mother, who dreaded his assuming the command in person, prevented him by the remonstrances of the Marechal de Tavannes; who assured his majesty, that the troops were already too much exhausted and broken, to attempt any new enterprize in so advanced a season.

25 June. The re-appearance of Coligni in the heart of France, at the head of a formidable army; the combat of Arnay-le-Duc, where he had manifestly the advantage; the complicated ills under which the unhappy kingdom groaned; and the dread of future calamities yet more insupportable, at length produced a negotiation for the termination of hostilities. The duke of Anjou, whose health had extremely suffered from the fatigues of the preceding campaign, was retired under that pretext to the palace of St. Germain, and

by the Hugonot soldiers, after Louis prince of Condé's untimely death, and on the succession of the admiral to the supreme command of the forces.

“ Le prince de Condé,

“ Il a été tué ;

“ Mais Monsieur l'Admiral

“ Est encore a cheval,

“ Avec La Rochefoucaut,

“ Pour chasser tous ces papaux, papaux ! ”

Charles

Charles had conferred the supreme command of the royal forces on the Marechal de Cossé. That general, whether from incapacity or want of inclination, obtaining no advantages over Coligni, peace so long and anxiously desired, was again re-established on terms not unfavourable to the Hugonots; and public tranquillity seemed once more to spread a calm over the state, which had been shaken and convulsed by so many intestine commotions. Charles solemnly swore to observe the treaty inviolate, and to protect the Hugonots in every right which it conferred; but all these flattering appearances concealed the most perfidious designs; and Catherine, who had been convinced by experience that Coligni and the Calvinists were not to be reduced by force, had already planned the fatal massacre, which she executed two years afterwards. All the intermediate period was employed in the most consummate dissimulation; in the deceitful arts of lulling to sleep the wretches destined to destruction. Only the vast and comprehensive genius of the queen-mother could have concerted a system of vengeance so enormously flagitious, and so unprecedented in the records of mankind. Like some minister of an angry Deity, she appears to have been occupied only in effecting the ruin of her people, and to have always marked her course with carnage and desolation.

1570.

15 Aug.

1570.

Pleasure and dissipation notwithstanding seem-
ed to engage the whole court; and the mar-
riage of Margaret of Valois, sister to the king,
with Henry prince of Navarre, was already pro-
posed by Catherine, with intent to strengthen and
confirm the late union between the parties*.

The

* It is impossible not to enter with some minuteness and curiosity into the amours of Margaret of Valois, one of the most beautiful and accomplished, but dissolute princesses of modern times. It is said, so violent was her love of pleasure, that at twelve years old, she had sacrificed to it her honour. The young Entragues, and Charry, a captain in the royal guards, disputed the precedency in her affections, when she was about that age. Her warm and animated attachment to her own brother Henry duke of Anjou, gave rise to similar suspicions, which, indeed, her character, conduct, and writings all tend to confirm. Henry was handsome, amiable, and fond of women; the libertinism of the court authorized every debauchery. The duke of Guise was unquestionably beloved by Margaret with the most unbounded passion, which she herself does not disguise in her memoirs; and the duke of Anjou withdrew from her his confidence, when he found the duke of Guise master of her person and affections.

In the celebrated manifesto which Henry the fourth caused to be drawn up, and presented to the pope, as a justification of his conduct in soliciting a divorce from Margaret, he minutely enumerates her debaucheries, and successive lovers. It contains so astonishing and unparalleled an account of the queen's conduct, that I shall extract from it several particulars.

“The princess,” says the manifesto, “was only *eleven*
“years old, when she began to yield to the pleasures of love.

“Entragues

The duke of Guise, who was in love with the princess, and beloved by her in turn, attempted to raise obstacles to this marriage, in hopes of obtaining her hand himself; but Charles, offended at his conduct, and resenting his presumption, gave orders to his own natural brother Henry Count d'Angoulesme, to put him to death, as he went to the chace; nor had the duke any other means of averting the blow, except

“ Enragues and Charry were in turn favoured by her; and the former carried his proofs of attachment to such a length, as nearly to sacrifice to it his life. The prince of Martigues succeeded to their place, and was fondly beloved; but naturally vain, he could not conceal an intrigue so flattering, and divulged the secret of their amours, which became universally known. He always wore on the most dangerous occasions, an embroidered scarf, which his royal mistress had given him, together with a beautiful little dog, presented by the same hand.

“ The tears which she shed for this favourite's death, were dried by the duke of Guise; who became in turn her paramour, by the good offices of Madame de Carnavalet.”—“ On pretend,” continues Henry, “ que les ducs d'Anjou et d'Alençon troublerent cette intrigue; et qu'elle eut pour eux des complaisances, que le droit du sang n'autoriseroit pas; mais je ne puis croire que sa debauche ait été jusqu'à cet excès.”

All these lovers preceded the king of Navarre; and the manifesto continues the enumeration of her subsequent irregularities and gallantries, which almost exceed the bounds of credibility. Yet Henry, in the beginning of this extraordinary piece, which is opened with the greatest solemnity, calls on God to witness the veracity of his assertions, and the integrity of his intentions.

1570. by a speedy marriage with Catherine of Cleves, widow to the prince of Portien*.

The king being already entered into his twenty-first year, it was become advisable to marry him; and his mother, after having in vain solicited the hand of Elizabeth queen of England, fixed on the archduchess Elizabeth, daugh-

* Even Davila confirms the attachment of the duke of Guise to the princess Margaret; and says, that she long persisted peremptorily to refuse any other husband.—“One night,” adds he, “there being a ball at court, as the duke was going into the great hall of the palace, dressed with the utmost magnificence, and adorned with jewels, he met the king, who had placed himself purposely at the door. Charles, with an angry air, asked him, “Whither he was going?” The duke answered, “That he came to serve his Majesty.” “I have no occasion for your services,” replied he.—Henry saw the dangerous situation in which he had engaged himself, and determined instantly to recover his sovereign’s favour, by putting it out of his own power to be longer obnoxious.”

De Thou and Mezerai confirm, in the strongest manner, the unconcealed and reciprocal passion of Margaret and the duke of Guise, as well as the order issued by Charles the ninth to dispatch the duke, of which he received intimation from Francis de Balzac-Entragues.—Davila adds, that it was commonly believed a promise of marriage had been exchanged by the lovers; but, that the duke of Guise, either from inconstancy, ambition, or desire of satiating his revenge upon Coligni, (whom it was requisite to draw into the snare by the lure of this marriage between the Prince of Navarre and Margaret) desisted from any further prosecution of his claims on the princess, and contracted another alliance.

ter of the emperor Maximilian the second. The dukes of Anjou and Alençon, Charles's brothers, were sent to receive the new queen at Sedan; and he himself advanced to meet her at Mezieres, where the nuptials were solemnized. She was an amiable and virtuous princess, devout, humble and submissive. Her capacity, limited and slender, gave Catherine no alarm, and she was neither consulted in, nor privy to any of the sanguinary measures which were pursued during her husband's reign. Though agreeable in her person, and gentle in her manners, yet she never could attain any power over Charles's heart, and only possessed his esteem*.

1570.

26 Nov.

The

* Elizabeth of Austria, daughter of Maximilian the second, was born in June, 1554, and was only sixteen years of age at the time of her marriage with Charles the ninth. The duke of Anjou was sent at the head of a magnificent train of nobility, to receive the young queen at Sedan; to which city the king himself came incognito, to view her person, and then returned to Mezieres, where the marriage ceremony was performed with a royal splendor. She possessed all the characteristic superstition of the house of Austria, and carried her religious exercises to a length injurious to her health; but her conjugal affection, and sweetness of disposition, rendered her universally beloved. Brantome always mentions her with the warmest expressions of approbation, as one of the most virtuous and amiable queens who had ever appeared in France. He says that her person was more than merely agreeable: "Elle etoit une tres belle
" Princesse," adds he, "ayant le teint de son visage aussi
" beau & delicat que dame de sa cour, & fort agreable. Elle

1570. The beautiful Mary Touchet, his mistress, had long reigned in his affections without a rival; and the king, naturally constant, remained unalterably attached to her till the hour of his death*.

1571. Elizabeth was notwithstanding crowned soon
25 Mar.

“avoit la taille fort belle aussi, encore qu’elle l’eut
“moyenne assez.”—This description must certainly be allowed to convey an idea of a very pretty woman.

* Mary Touchet was daughter to the “Lieutenant Par-
“ticulier” of Orleans, and the time when Charles’s attachment to her commenced, is not certain; but it appears from an anecdote related of her, that she had acquired the highest influence over him before his marriage, since it is clear that she dreaded no rival. Brantome says, that Elizabeth of Austria’s portrait being shewn her, she exclaimed, after having long and attentively regarded it, “L’Allemande
“ne me fait pas peur!”—Her personal and mental attractions were equally pre-eminent; but her ascendancy over the young king her lover never extended to affairs of state, or enabled her to guide the counsels of the sovereign, as the duchesses of Valentinois and Estampes had done under Francis the first, and Henry the second. “I have seen her
“picture,” says the author of the *Anecdotes des Reines et Regentes de France*, “done in crayons, and during
“the prime of her beauty. The contour of her face was
“round, her eyes finely shaped and lively, her forehead
“small, her nose justly proportioned, her mouth little and
“crimson, the lower part of her face admirable.” Such was the celebrated Mary Touchet! She was, by her marriage with Francois de Balzac-Entragues, mother of Henriette de Balzac, mistress to Henry the fourth of France, and created by him marchioness of Verneuil.—Mary Touchet died at the advanced age of eighty-nine years, in March, 1638.

after

after at St. Denis; and the queen-mother, whose magnificence and taste eminently appeared on these occasions, displayed all her talents for pleasure in the entertainments which were exhibited at court. The fictions of antiquity, as well as the allegories of Greek and Roman fable were called in, to embellish the representations. A refinement, superior to the progress which the human mind had made in the sixteenth century, and little, if in any degree inferior to the splendid productions of art and elegance afterwards displayed under Louis the fourteenth's reign, characterised all the amusements of Catherine. Her extraordinary and universal genius comprehended every thing in its embrace, and shone equally distinguished in the cabinet or at a banquet, whether directed to the destruction or delight of mankind. She even seems to have blended and united qualities the most opposite and discordant in their own nature. Her versatility of mind enabled her to pass with the easiest transition, from the horrors of war, to all the dissipations of indolence and peace; and we are forced to lament that a capacity so exalted, only produced from the principles with which it was actuated, more general and lasting evils to her kingdom, and to the world*.

The

* In the entertainments given at court on Elizabeth's coronation, the peculiar situation of the state was enigma-

1571.

The grand scheme of deceiving the Hugonot leaders and drawing them into the fatal snare, now totally occupied the queen-mother. She had tutored the young king her son but too well, and instructed him in all the lessons of a profound and pernicious dissimulation: His very virtues and great qualities were transformed under her baneful touch, into vices and crimes. His prudence, penetration, and discretion, she converted into a subtle and perfidious policy; his natural vivacity of temper became passion and fury; his courage degenerated into stern ferocity; and his heart, steeled against the impressions of benevolence and pity, was inflamed with a savage thirst of blood and vengeance.—For Catherine, there is no justifi-

cally pourtray'd under various forms, which exhibited a political mirror, under the appearance of an amusement. Charles the ninth was represented in the character of Jupiter; Catherine, in that of Juno; the young queen, in that of Minerva. The Hugonots appeared under the names of Typhon and the Giants. Even the vengeance of St. Bartholomew, already planned, was darkly alluded to in the mottos and devices chosen, of which the following was one, addressed to the king:

“ Cadme, relinque ratem; pastoris fibula finge;

“ Fas superare dolo, quem vis non vincit aperta.”

The meaning of this remark is too evidently connected with the ensuing massacre to be mistaken; nor can we avoid being surprised that allusions so obvious should not have awakened more suspicion and distrust of the court, in the minds of the Calvinist leaders,

cation

eration or apology to be suggested; her name in distant ages will be pronounced with detestation, nor can the brilliancy of her genius, or the seduction of her captivating manners, preserve her from ignominy and abhorrence. But for Charles every heart of sensibility will form some excuse. Accustomed from his infancy to precepts and examples the most depraved, and encouraged to spill the blood of his subjects, as meritorious and acceptable to Heaven, he awoke too late from the fatal delusion, into which he had been plunged by his mother's maxims and advice. Death permitted him not to expiate his offences; and he expired in the flower of youth, an awful lesson to future times, that monarchs cannot with impunity violate the great and sacred duties of humanity!

Every artifice was used, and every appearance of perfect confidence was assumed, to convince the queen of Navarre and Coligni that the king and court were disposed to maintain the late peace inviolate. The Hugonot deputies were sent back, after a reception the most gracious, with the amplest confirmation of every article of the treaty. Count Ludovic of Nassau having quitted Rochelle in disguise, and waited on the king at Lumigny, was received by Charles with uncommon distinction, and loaded with favours. Teligni, son-in-law to the admiral, was dispatched to him with a request to lay aside all distrust,

1571.

August.

1571. distrust, and to repose himself on his sovereign's honour.

Sept. Confiding in this sacred pledge as he deemed it, and happy to give a proof of his implicit reliance on the sincerity and virtue of his prince, he came at length to Blois, where the court then resided. Charles embraced him, hung upon his neck, and kissed him: he gave Coligni the endearing epithet of his Father, and professed for him a filial deference and respect. He was re-admitted to take his seat in council, received from the royal bounty a donation of an hundred thousand livres, and all his estates were restored.

Dec. After having permitted him to visit his castle of Chatillon, the king again recalled him, redoubled his careffes, bestowed on him numberless favours, and even carried his dissimulation to such a length, that the duke of Guise, and the more zealous Catholics took the alarm; and began to fear, lest Coligni should really effect that alteration in Charles's heart, which at first they knew was only assumed, to render the destruction of the Hugonots inevitable*.

When

* Never was dissimulation and treachery carried to a greater length, or more completely covered with the mask of affection, than on the occasion of Coligni's return to court. When the admiral embraced his sovereign's knee, the king raised him up, assured him that it was the happiest moment of his reign, and smiling added, "Enfin, nous vous tenons; vous ne vous éloignerez plus de nous quand
" vous

When the admiral withdrew a second time, the king yet kept up a continual and unreserved communication with him by letters. Charles re-assured him of his determination to complete the nuptials of his sister Margaret with the prince of Navarre; professed his intentions of shaking off the fetters in which his mother and the duke of Anjou had hitherto held him; and as the last flattering bait, declared that he would send an army into the Netherlands, to assist the revolted provinces against Philip the second, at the head of which he should himself be placed. Coligni, whose bosom glowed with the love of his country's glory, and a just indignation against Spanish bigotry and oppression, could not resist so animating a motive. He even persuaded the queen of Navarre to visit the

1572.

February.

“vous le voudrez.”—All acts of grace and favour were obtained by the admiral's solicitation, nor was there any thing too difficult to be effected by his powerful interposition. The Protestant leaders were constantly near the king's person, and all partook of the royal munificence. Davila says, that a young nobleman, named Villandry, who had offended Charles the ninth at play in so heinous a degree as to be condemned to die, and whose pardon the king had refused to his mother, to the young queen his wife, and to the duke of Anjou, was nevertheless instantly forgiven at Coligni's intercession, and even restored to his former familiarity with the king. Mezerai and de Thou confirm and recapitulate the many perfidious marks of dissembled kindness, shewn by Charles and the queen-mother to Coligni during his visit to the court.

king

1572. king and his mother at Blois, where she was
 April. received with an excess of honours, and dis-
 fembled fondness. The negotiation for her
 son's marriage was resumed, and finally con-
 cluded, only the dispensation from Rome re-
 maining to delay the consummation of their
 nuptials*.

The reputation which Henry duke of Anjou had acquired by the two victories of Jarnac and Moncontour, the early glory with which he seemed to be invested, and the title to which he aspired of restorer and defender of the state,

* Similar demonstrations of affection and regard were shewn to the queen of Navarre and her son Henry, on their arrival at Blois, as had been lavished upon Coligni only a few weeks before. De Thou relates, that Charles having demanded of his mother, after his first interview with the queen of Navarre, whether he had not played his part well? Catherine replied, "You have undoubtedly begun well; but that will be of little avail, unless you continue:" to which Charles answered, swearing, as was his custom, "I will take them all in a net, and deliver them over to you."—The articles, and contract of marriage between Henry and Margaret, were signed on the 11th of April, and Charles stipulated to give a hundred thousand crowns of gold to his sister, as her dowry.—"Margaret," says Davila, "yielding at length reluctantly to her mother's sollicitations, and her brother's menaces, as well as from a regard to her own honour, which began to be very much called in question, though she did not absolutely consent to marry the Prince of Navarre, yet no longer openly declared her determination never to contract or submit to that alliance."

justly

justly gave offence to Charles. He beheld himself obscured in Hénry's superior lustre, and regarded him as his rival in fame, perhaps in empire. He saw, and resented his mother Catherine's unconcealed partiality for his brother; and these principles of aversion and discontent began already to display themselves. The queen-mother, who watched with peculiar tenderness over her darling son, and whose ambitious mind ever projected schemes of greatness for her children, turned her view towards the Polish diadem, and began her intrigues for procuring Henry's election to the throne of that distant kingdom. Though Sigismund Augustus, the reigning king was yet alive, Montluc, bishop of Valence, was sent into Poland to endeavour to gain the suffrages of the nobility, and he succeeded beyond expectation in his commission.

The duke of Anjou presented at this time the model of the most accomplished hero; nor can we be surprized, when we consider his many brilliant qualities, at Catherine's partial attachment to him. In his person he was beautiful and finely made, above any prince of the age; a majesty, tempered with sweetness, accompanied all his actions, and his courage had been distinguished in two great engagements where he had been uniformly victorious. A flowing, dignified, and commanding eloquence disposed all hearts to admire and love him; his presence

and

1572. and demeanour announced a prince, nor had the house of Valois produced any, whose person and manners were so captivating in the eyes of mankind*.

The contrast in many points of view between himself and the king, tended to diffuse over him additional lustre. Charles, endowed by nature with much greater qualifications, and better calculated for a throne; possessing vigour, capacity, discernment, activity and judgment, was yet carried away by the impetuosity of his passions, and presented little to the view, except the unamiable part of his character.—Henry, under so fair a form, and in full possession of all the military renown which in fact was due to the wisdom and conduct of Tavannes, was yet deficient in that force of mind, and in those kingly qualities with which his brother was endowed. Beneath that engaging appearance, was concealed

* Desportes, the most elegant poet of the time, describes him in these lines. It is the portrait of Adonis himself.

“ Il eut la taille belle et le visage beau ;
 “ Son teint étoit de lys, et de roses pourpretés ;
 “ Et ses yeux rigoureux dardoient mille fagettes,
 “ On le prend pour l’amour !”——

Davila conveys a high idea of the duke of Anjou; and expatiates minutely on his uncommon personal beauty, courage, eloquence, and other dazzling or sublime qualities. He says, that all mankind had their eyes fixed on him, and had conceived the greatest expectations from his future conduct. Mezerai and De Thou confirm these eulogiums.

an effeminate indolence, an enervate softness, a prodigality without bounds, and an indulgence to favourites the most pernicious to his kingdom and himself. 1572.

The duke of Anjou had not, however, yet betrayed those errors and vices, which characterised Henry the third on his subsequent accession to the throne; nor could love and gallantry be ranked even among the list of faults, in a court so dissolute as that of Catherine of Medicis. The young prince was fondly attached to Mademoiselle de Chateaufeuf, and equally beloved by her; and this connexion was only broken by the more violent passion which he afterwards conceived for the princess of Condé*.

Pius

* Renée de Rieux, commonly called Mademoiselle de Chateaufeuf, was a Beauty of the most engaging kind. She was of the antient family of Rieux in Bretagne, and had been early taken into the household, and placed near the person of Catherine of Medicis, as a maid of honour to that queen. She possessed an elegance of form and manner peculiar to herself; and long after her retreat from court, it was thought a very high compliment to a young person, to say, "Qu'elle avoit de l'air de Mademoiselle Chateaufeuf."—Desportes, the Tibullus of the sixteenth century, celebrates her charms in many of his sonnets, addressed to her under the name of the duke of Anjou. After Henry the third's return from Poland, he designed to have married her to the Count de Brienne; but that nobleman quitted France, to avoid the marriage. She became soon

1572.

April.

Pius the fifth, who at this time filled the papal chair, terrified at the intention of marrying the princess Margaret to a Hugonot, which he apprehended would be highly injurious to the interests of the Catholic religion, and uninformed of the designs concealed under this alliance, still refused and delayed the necessary dispensation. He even suggested to the young king of Portugal, the celebrated and unfortunate Sebastian, to demand Margaret's hand; and dispatched the Cardinal Alexandrin as his nuncio into France, to press the acceptance of that proposal. Charles excused himself from complying with the request, as having previously engaged his honour; but implored the legate to assure the holy Father of his filial obedience; and tenderly pressing his hands, added with warmth, "Oh! s'il m'étoit permis de m'expliquer davantage *!"

Gregory

soon after the wife of a Florentine named Antinotti, whom she killed with her own hand in 1577; but it does not appear that she was punished, or even prosecuted for this crime. Her second husband was Philip Altoviti, baron de Castelane, of whom mention has been made in a former note, and who was put to death in 1586 by Henry d'Angoulesme, natural son to Henry the second. His widow died in great obscurity some years afterwards.

* De Thou minutely relates the efforts and expostulations made by the legate, to induce Charles the ninth to retract his intentions of giving the princess Margaret his sister in marriage to the prince of Navarre; and adds, that the nuncio

Gregory the thirteenth, who succeeded Pius the fifth in the papal see, having granted the dispensation, the day was fixed for the nuptials. Jane, queen of Navarre arrived at Paris with her son and the prince of Condé; but while she was engaged in preparations for the approaching ceremony, a malignant fever with which she was attacked, put an end to her life, after five

1572.

May.

5 June.

10 June.

nuncio persisting in his remonstrances on this point, the king replied, "Je ne puis pas, Monsieur le Cardinal, m'expliquer avec vous; mais, soyez persuadé que le Pape approuvera bientôt le mariage qu'il condamne aujourd'huy." Jerome Catena, who wrote the life of Pope Pius the fifth, relates, in addition to this anecdote, that Charles having taken off a diamond ring of great value from his finger, presented it to the cardinal, at the same time saying, "Receive this pledge of the promise which I give you, not to defer the execution of my resolutions against the heretics." The legate declined the acceptance of the ring, but assured his majesty, that "his word was the most precious pledge which he could give to the sovereign Pontiff."

Davila allows that Charles made many ambiguous declarations of his design to the legate, promising affirmatively, that "all should terminate to the satisfaction of the Pope, and the benefit of the Catholic religion;" but that every effort to pacify or satisfy the nuncio, was ineffectual. He relates the story of the ring, though not exactly as De Thou has done; but he says, that the cardinal refused the king's present.—Mezerai only mentions the dark and mysterious assurances made by Charles to the cardinal, intimating his intention to satisfy the Pope, and to punish his Calvinist subjects.

1572. days illness. The multitude, ever disposed to attribute the deaths of great personages to violent causes, supposed that poison had been used for that purpose; and a perfumer, named René, who had followed the queen-mother from Florence, of which place he was a native, has been accused as the author of this crime. It is pretended that he even avowed himself as such, and boasted of it publicly. Some perfumed gloves, which Jane bought of him, were said to have been the medium through which the poison was conveyed, and Catherine of Medicis was supposed to be an accomplice in the transaction; but these suspicions, on an impartial consideration of every circumstance, are probably ill founded. The physician and surgeon who opened her body, and who were both Hugonots, found no appearances to justify such a conjecture; on the contrary, they declared her to have died of an abscess in her breast; and there is every reason to give credit to their deposition*.

Coligni,

* It must however be confessed that Davila asserts in the most express terms, that the queen of Navarre was poisoned.—“The first blow of so great a tempest,” says he, “fell upon Jane, whom the king and his mother thought fit to take off by poison; administered, *as it was reported*, in the trimming of a pair of gloves; but in a manner so imperceptible, and in so nice a proportion, that after having worn them for some time, she was seized with a violent fever, which put an end to her life in four days.—

“The

Coligni, still irresolute, dreading Catherine's
and Charles's treachery, and rendered even more
distrustful

1572.

July.

“ The Hugonots instantly took the alarm, and began to
“ suspect some unfair play ; but to free their minds from
“ these apprehensions, the king, knowing that the poison
“ had left no traces except in her brain, ordered her body
“ to be publicly opened. The vitals and intestines being
“ found and untainted, the head was left untouched, under
“ pretence of respect ; and the surgeons then declared that
“ she had died a natural death, caused by a fever.” Not-
withstanding this positive testimony of so great an historian
as Davila, it may be justly questioned whether there are
any poisons of so subtle a nature as only to affect the brain
exclusively, and to cause death without leaving any symp-
toms on the body of their mortal tendency.

De Thou seems to discredit the suspicion of the queen of
Navarre's death having been accelerated by any unnatural
means. He says that she died of a fever, at the age of
forty-three years, and some months ; that reports of poison
were spread, and René, a Milanese perfumer was accused as
the person who had administered it ; but that her body having
been opened, no marks of violence were discovered, and
that an abscess had formed itself in her left side.

Mezerai has strengthened the contrary opinion, by hav-
ing said that the two persons who opened the queen's body
did not touch her head, where it was supposed the poison
had left traces too visible. D'Aubigné seems to make no
question of her having been taken off by unnatural means.
—Voltaire, on the contrary, has taken considerable pains to
refute these assertions. “ La Chronologie Novenaire” ex-
pressly declares, that Caillard her physician and Desuœuds
her surgeon, *did* dissect her brain ; which they found in a
sound state.

1572. distrustful by their careffes, long delayed his appearance at court, and retired to his castle of Chatillon. New artifices were therefore employed for that purpose; and an open commencement of hostilities against Philip the second in the Netherlands was permitted, as the

The queen had during her whole life been subject to violent head-achs, attended with an itching; and she expressly requested, that attempts might be made to ascertain the cause of this complaint, with the intention of relieving her children, if they should be attacked with the same disorder.—Her desire was complied with; and the surgeons discovered only some little vesicles full of water, between the brain and the membrane inclosing it, which they declared to have been the cause of her malady.—Catherine of Medicis needs no supposititious crimes to blacken her character: Unhappily she committed too many, from which it is impossible to justify her.

Davila allows Jane to have been a great and accomplished princess; he celebrates her courage, capacity, chastity, and magnificence; adding, “That she would have been worthy
“ of immortal praise, if she had not presumed, without
“ sufficient learning, to explore the profoundest mysteries of
“ divinity, and had not pertinaciously adhered to the errors
“ of Calvin.”—D’Aubigné says that “she had nothing of
“ a woman about her except her sex; a manly mind, an
“ elevated capacity, a magnanimity and fortitude of soul
“ proof against all the storms of adversity.”

De Thou concurs in these eulogiums on her capacity and grandeur of mind: he says, that she ordered her body to be interred in the tomb of her father Henry d’Albret, without any funeral pomp; that she recommended to her son Henry to persevere in the doctrines of the Reformation; to love the princes of Condé and of Conti as his brothers; and above all, to maintain the strictest union between them and Coligni.

last

last confirmation of the king's design to remain true to his past engagements. Conquered by this consummate piece of treachery, the admiral yielded against his better reason, and arrived at Paris, accompanied by a prodigious number of the Hugonot nobility, and followed by the young king of Navarre. 20 July.

The nuptials of Henry prince of Condé with Mary of Cleves, sister to the duchess of Guise, were meanwhile solemnized at the castle of Blandi near Melun; and those of Henry, now become king of Navarre by his mother's death, were appointed for the ensuing month. Every testimony of the most respectful and cordial friendship was studiously conferred on the Calvinist nobles, as well as on their leader, and every endeavour was used to dissipate their fears and suspicions.

Notwithstanding these external demonstrations of amity, the inhabitants of Rochelle dispatched repeated messengers, to implore Coligni not to rely on a king violent even to fury, and on the queen-mother, a faithless Italian, who was their irreconcilable and mortal enemy. Tho' conscious of the danger, he however remained immovable; and replied with the truest greatness of mind, that he would rather suffer himself to be dragged through the streets of Paris, than renew the horrors of a fourth civil war,

August.

1572. and plunge his unhappy country into new calamities*. The Marechal de Montmorenci, either more clear-sighted or more cautious, obtained Charles's permission to retire to his castle of Chantilli, under pretence of an indisposition; and by that artifice saved both himself and all his family from the destruction intended for them by Catherine.

18 Aug. The nuptials of the king of Navarre with the princess Margaret were solemnized at the

* Davila says, that the admiral did not slight the solicitations repeatedly made to him to quit the court, from any feelings of a public nature; but that, elated with the honours shewn him, and intoxicated with his good fortune, he declared, that Charles and his council neither wished nor dared to attempt any thing against him and his adherents. It is however much more natural as well as pleasing, to think that Coligni was influenced by better motives: the other French historians attribute such to him; and we know that Davila, though one of the greatest writers of modern times, scarcely ever accounts for any action, or supposes it to have proceeded from disinterested and generous principles.

He relates an extraordinary anecdote, to prove the suspicions entertained among the Hugonots, relative to the king's sincerity. Langoiran, one of them, distrusting the appearance of affairs, determined at length to retire from Paris.—Coligni, when he came to take leave of him, asked Langoiran "Why he would not remain?" "Because," answered he, "I see that you are too much cared for; and I choose rather to save myself with fools, than perish with those who are too wise."

church

church of "Notre Dame" in Paris soon after*. The young queen was in the full bloom of her charms, and had just completed her twentieth year. In her are said to have been united all the great qualities and virtues, with all the defects and vices of the family of Valois, from whence she sprung. The beauty of her person, captivating in the highest degree, inspired passion and desire in

1572.

* Davila enumerates with great exactness every circumstance attending these inauspicious nuptials. The cardinal of Bourbon performed the marriage ceremony, in presence of the whole court, and accompanied with a royal magnificence; but Davila expressly declares, that when the Princess Margaret was asked, whether she would take the king of Navarre for her husband? She did not answer a word. The king her brother having however, with his hand compelled her to bow her head, this act was interpreted as a consent on the part of the princess; though she always continued and persisted to assert, that to be deprived of the duke of Guise to whom she had engaged her promise, and to be united to his most inveterate enemy, were things to which her mind could never be reconciled. The young king of Navarre submitted notwithstanding, with a good grace, to all the marks of alienation visible in the conduct of his bride. The entertainments given by the court on this occasion lasted three days, and were more splendid than any ever exhibited at the nuptials of a princess of France. It is scarcely conceivable or credible, that only six days elapsed between the marriage of Charles's sister to the king of Navarre, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

1572.

the coldest bosoms. Her complexion was clear and animated, her hair of the finest black, and her eyes equally full of fire and languor. Her look, voluptuous and tender, indicated a heart framed for love; while full of grace and majesty in all her movements, and possessing like her mother, the art of disposing every ornament of dress with the most exquisite taste, she announced her high birth the instant that she appeared.

Her genius and imagination were equal to those of the first Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre; and like that princess, she was celebrated by all the poets of her time, with the most flattering eulogiums. They addressed her rather as a deity than a mortal, and gave her the epithets of "Venus Urania," and "Celestis." Her munificence, her passion for glory, her protection of letters, her vanity, her unbounded attachment to the pleasures of love, were all striking features of the character of Francis the first, whom she intimately resembled, and whose memory she revered. Courteous and affable in her manners, like her father Henry the second, she was likewise of a temper yielding, flexible, and attached to favourites.

Capable of conducting the greatest affairs of government, but hurried away by her inclinations,

clinations, she only emerged by paroxysms from pleasure, and returned to it again from an incapacity of resisting its allurements. Mingling devotion with gallantry, and connecting the fervours of religion with the excesses of dissipation, she appeared, one while a penitent, stretched at the foot of the altar, and bewailing her past transgressions; at another, a refined voluptuary, devoted to all the enchantment of epicurean wantonness.

An unstudied eloquence, a graceful facility of expression characterised her in an eminent degree; but carried away by an enthusiasm which she could not restrain, her very virtues were carried to an extreme, and her vices were not concealed under any sort of decorum. Enslaved by constitution more than by passion, and criminal from habit rather than from principle; if genius, if generosity of sentiment, and superiority of talents could form the least apology for unrestrained sensuality, it would be in the person of Margaret queen of Navarre*.

The

* Margaret was born on the 14th of May, 1552. Brantome has exhausted all the powers of panegyric in his delineation of her character: Those which he bestows on her virtue might as well have been omitted; but the encomiums which he pays to her beauty and understanding she certainly merited. The assemblage of charms, accomplishments, and winning qualities which she possessed, rendered her almost irresistible. She sung and played on

1572.

The most splendid entertainments and demonstrations of joy succeeded to the marriage of the king of Navarre, and were continued during three days; but amidst this scene of festivity, the plan of the projected massacre was matured, and the circumstances of it's future execution arranged. The intention of Charles and of the Guises extended only to the exclusive destruction of the Hugonots; but it is said that Catherine, hardened to the commission of crimes, and more influenced by motives of ambition than of zeal for religion, had carried her designs to a much greater length, and meant to involve the Calvinists, the Guises, and the Montmorencis, in one common carnage. This design is imputed to her by the greatest French historians; nor is even so atrocious a project

the lute with exquisite skill; and in dancing, no lady of the court was her equal, whether in the serious, or the lively kind. Her person possessed a thousand graces, all which Brantome enumerates; but it is her bosom on which he principally dwells, with uncommon pleasure. "Car jamais," says he, "n'en fut veue une si belle, ni si blanche, si pleine, ni si charnue, qu'elle monstroît; et si descouverte, que la plupart des courtisans en mouroient: voire les dames, que j'ai veues aucunes de ses plus confidentes et privées, avec sa licence, la baiser par un grand ravissement." This passage certainly tends to convey no faint idea of the dissolute and libertine manners of the court of Catherine of Medecis.

incompatible

incompatible with, or contradictory to the genius of the queen-mother, who was capable of forming and executing schemes of vengeance the most unexampled and detestable.

1572.

The affassination of the admiral was determined on, as a prelude to the general massacre, and a man named Mourevel, rendered infamous by the murder of the Seigneur de Mouy one of the Calvinist leaders, was selected for that purpose. He posted himself therefore in a little chamber of the cloister of St. Germain de l'Auxerrois, belonging to one of the canons who had been preceptor to the duke of Guise, and near which Coligni usually passed, in his return from the palace of the Louvre to his own house. As the admiral walked slowly on, employed in the perusal of some papers which he held in his hand, Mourevel, from a window which looked into the street, levelled a harquebuste at him loaded with two balls; one of which broke the fore-finger of his right-hand, and the other lodged in his left arm, near the elbow. The affassin fled instantly at another door of the cloister, and mounted a horse provided for him by the duke of Guise, on which he escaped. Coligni, without betraying the least emotion, and turning calmly towards the place from whence came the shot, "Le coup," said he, "vient de là;" pointing with

22 Aug.

1572. with his finger to the window. His attendants immediately conveyed him home, where his wounds were dressed.*

The

* Davila in his account of this infamous transaction, positively attributes it to Henry duke of Guise, who deemed himself justified in attempting to take away the admiral's life by the same means, which he conceived this latter had formerly used to assassinate Francis his father, at the siege of Orleans. Davila likewise expressly declares that "the duke of Guise had received the king's commission to take away Coligni's life, as a blow preparatory to the general destruction of the Calvinists."

"Mourelvel," says Davila, "having shut himself up in a little lower room of a house near the Louvre, belonging to the duke of Guise's family, and having covered the window, which had iron bars, with an old tattered cloak, waited with great secrecy and patience, for a convenient opportunity. On the third day he executed his commission, as the admiral was walking slowly along, followed by his servants. One of the balls took off the fore finger of Coligni's right hand; and the second tore the flesh from his left elbow, and broke the bone. The doors of the house were immediately burst open, and all the apartments searched in vain; they found only a little boy, Mourelvel having already escaped by the gate St. Antoine."

De Thou likewise declares that the duke of Guise acted with the king's consent and privity, in the attempt to cause the admiral to be assassinated by Mourelvel. His relation of this whole transaction coincides with that given by Davila in all the leading circumstances. "Coligni, after coming from the council on Friday the 22d of August, says De Thou, accompanied the king who went to play
at

The king who was playing at tennis in the court of the Louvre, when this news was brought him, feigning the most furious indignation, threw down his racket on the ground, and instantly left the place. With loud imprecations he denounced vengeance on the miscreant who had attempted the admiral's life, and named judges immediately for the purpose of bringing

1572.

at tennis with the duke of Guise and Teligni. Having regarded the game as a spectator for some time, the admiral quitted the place, and returned home on foot, walking slowly, and occupied in the perusal of a memorial which he had just received. As he passed before the house of Pierre de Villemur, who had been preceptor to the duke of Guise, Mourevel from a window shot him with two balls, of which one broke the fore finger of his right hand, and the other wounded him severely near the left elbow, Guerchy, and Sorbieres des Pruneaux being on each side of him. Totally unmoved by the accident, Coligni instantly pointed to the place from whence came the shot, and dispatched two of his adherents, Clermont de Piles and Francois de Monins, to inform Charles the ninth of this extraordinary act of perfidy and violence. He then caused his arm to be bound up, and continued his return home on foot, supported by his servants. Only a laquais, a maid servant, and a harquebuste were found on breaking open the doors of the house, Mourevel having already made his escape."

Mezerai differs little, if at all, from the two before-mentioned historians; but he seems to impute more extended and flagitious schemes of destruction to the queen-mother, than to Charles, or to the family of Guise.

him

1572. him to trial and punishment.* Coligni having signified his wish to communicate some important matters to his Majesty in private, Charles went in person to visit him on the afternoon of the

* At the news of Coligni's accident, says De Thou, Charles the ninth, who was playing at tennis, threw his racket on the ground with all the marks of agitation and distress, exclaiming, "N'aurai-je jamais de repos? Quoi! toujours de nouveaux troubles!" He instantly quitted the place with looks of indignation, and the duke of Guise retired likewise by another door. When the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé came to visit Coligni, he said to them, "Is this, then, that reconciliation of which the king was guarantee?"—Meanwhile it became indispensable to amputate the finger which had been broken by the ball, as a mortification had begun to manifest itself in the part. Ambrose Paré the king's surgeon performed the operation without delay; but, unfortunately, owing to the want of proper instruments, he was necessitated to make use of a pair of bad scissars, and could not take off the wounded finger in less than three several attempts. Coligni, notwithstanding, never betrayed any emotion, nor let the slightest complaint escape him, either during the amputation, or when the wound in his left arm was dressed.

Davila mentions the circumstance of the king's having loudly protested that he would revenge so daring an assassination committed at the very gate of his own palace; but, he confesses, that all this resentment and indignation was merely feigned. The precaution which Charles afterwards used, of commanding all the gates of the capital except two to be shut, under pretence of stopping Mourevel's flight, Davila owns, was done only to prevent the escape of the Hugonots.

same day, accompanied by the queen-mother, his brother Henry duke of Anjou, and several of the nobility. About the admiral's bed were ranged the king of Navarre, the prince of Condé, and all the Hugonot chiefs or adherents. Charles carried his dissimulation on this occasion, to the greatest pitch of hypocrisy; and after a general discourse, entertained Coligni near an hour in private conversation. He affected to approve, and promised to comply with his advice, of attacking the Spaniards in the Low-Countries; he exhausted every conciliatory art to efface the unfavourable impressions made upon his mind; and proceeded so far at this interview, that Catherine herself took the alarm, and demanded of her son with earnestness, what advice the admiral had given him; to which the king replied, swearing as was his custom, that Coligni had counselled him to reign alone, and to be no longer governed by others*.

All

* When Charles the ninth entered the admiral's apartment, he said, with all the appearances of concern and sympathy, " Mon Pere, la blessure est pour vous, et la douleur pour moi; mais vous serez vengé d'une maniere si terrible, qu'on s'en souviendra eternellement."—This is De Thou's account; who, however adds, that it is uncertain whether the king and Coligni had any private conversation, or whether Catherine of Medecis, who feared the effect which the suggestions of the admiral might produce upon her son's mind, did not prevent their conversing together

1572.

All this pretended concern could not however diminish the alarm of the Hugonot party, or dissipate their apprehensions. The king of Navarre and the prince of Condé waited on Charles, to request his permission to leave Paris, in which they deemed themselves no longer safe; and could scarcely be restrained by any entreaties from executing their intention, tho' Charles and his mother, with solemn and repeated

gether apart. When Coligni pressed the king to declare war with Philip the second, and to aid the revolted Flemings in the Netherlands, Charles artfully broke off the discourse, by affecting an apprehension lest the admiral's health should suffer from any animated remonstrances, in his present state of body. At his departure, he expressed a desire to see the balls with which the admiral had been wounded, and which were of copper.—The Count de Retz, under pretence of more effectually protecting Coligni against any possible insurrection, or effects of popular violence, proposed to transport him to the palace of the Louvre: Charles approved of this expedient, which would have put the admiral more perfectly and compleatly in his power; but the surgeons declared that it would be dangerous, and probably fatal, to attempt his removal.

Davila says, that the king, accompanied by his mother and the duke of Anjou, after a hasty dinner, went immediately to visit the admiral, who urgently requested his Majesty's permission to retire from Paris, a city hostile and ill-affected to him, and desired leave to cause himself to be transported to his own castle of Chatillon. Charles upbraided and remonstrated with him on his want of confidence, and doubts of his royal protection; opposed such a journey as dangerous

1572.

peated denunciations of exemplary vengeance on the affassin, besought them not to quit the capital. The Calvinist nobles called for instant punishment on Mourevel; and Clermont de Piles, one of them, entered the palace of the Louvre at the head of four hundred gentlemen, threatening to revenge the affassination of Coligni.

This last violent step accelerated the massacre, the queen-mother having persuaded her son that he would be himself the victim of his own irresolution, and that his only security lay in preventing the Calvinists, by decisive and speedy measures. Many consultations were held among the Hugonot leaders, respecting the conduct necessary to be pursued in circumstances so critical and hazardous. John de Ferrieres, Vidame of Chartres strongly urged a retreat, and asserted that it was practicable before the people were armed; but Coligni's

dangerous to his health, and reiterated his assurances of regard and affection. The physicians concurring in opinion that any attempt to move him might be fatal, Coligni, making a virtue of necessity, and seeing how impossible it was to effect his retreat, acquiesced in and submitted to the king's request, recommended himself to his majesty's protection, and demanded justice for the late atrocious attempt upon his life.— Charles and Catherine gave him every assurance of amity, and having peculiarly recommended the care of his personal safety to the duke of Anjou as governor of Paris, returned to the palace of the Louvre.

1572. extreme reluctance to rekindle a civil war, made him determine rather to die than to leave the capital; and his son-in-law Teligni strengthened, with all his influence, this sentiment.

Compelled however by the many symptoms which he observed of the approaching and imminent danger, the Vidame renewed his solicitations, and insisted on them with more warmth, as the admiral seemed able to support the fatigue of a removal. A gentleman who had been present at this council, and who betrayed his party, carried immediate intimation of their debates and intentions to the palace of the Tuilleries, where Charles had assembled his secret council in his mother's apartment*.

The

* Davila relates the repeated attempts made by the Vidame of Chartres, to induce Coligni to retire to Châtillon, and to quit a city in which his life was not secure for a moment; and he says, that the Vidame's expostulations and arguments *had* prevailed on the Hugonot chiefs to follow his advice. Teligni maintained that he could procure the king's permission for this purpose; while the other leaders offered, in case it was refused, to carry off the admiral by open force. Davila allows that there was treachery in the Hugonot councils, though he does not name the traitors; and adds that the court having received intelligence by the accustomed channel, of their determination to leave Paris, and to renew the civil war, instantly came to a decisive resolution to anticipate such a retreat, and to commence the massacre.

De

The apprehension of Coligni's escape, which must have involved them in new and deeper embarrassment, strengthened by the opinion of the Marechal de Tavannes his mortal and inveterate enemy, who loudly advised a total extermination of the Hugonots, at length prevailed on the king, and obtained his reluctant consent. It is said, that he long hesitated on the dreadful measure, and shuddered at its consequences: but being overcome by the reiterated and pressing remonstrances of those about him, he exclaimed with his usual imprecations, " Eh

De Thou, who agrees with Davila in his account of the reiterated efforts made by the Vidame of Chartres to prevail on the admiral to remove from Paris, yet maintains that he never could carry his point, as the king of Navarre, the prince of Condé, and Teligni persisted to oppose an act, which must be an outrage to the king, who had given them so many marks of affection and regard. He names Bayancourt de Bouchavannes as the person who was suspected to have betrayed the Hugonots, and revealed all their intentions to Charles and Catherine of Medecis. —Mezerai coincides with De Thou; and imputes to the repugnance of Coligni, and to the unsuspecting good faith of Teligni, the rejection of the Vidame of Chartres's advice. He adds, that a gentleman who had been present at the deliberations held in the admiral's apartment, carried information of every thing which had been there transacted to the palace of the Tuilleries, where Charles had assembled his secret cabinet; and that upon this gentleman's deposition it was finally resolved to commence the massacre.

1572. “ bien! puisque il le faut, je ne veux pas qu’il
 “ en reste un seul qui me le puisse reprocher!”

The completion of the design was appointed for the same night; the duke of Guise was constituted chief, as being animated with a peculiar detestation to the admiral, whom he considered as his father’s murderer; and the signal was to be made by the striking of the great bell of the palace, on which they should instantly begin the massacre.

As the awful moment approached, Charles’s terrors and irresolution encreased. Some principles of remaining honour, some sentiments of humanity, commiseration and virtue, which all Catherine’s pernicious maxims and exhortations had not been able totally to destroy, yet maintained a conflict in his bosom. His mind, torn by the agitations of contending passions, affected and disordered his body. Cold sweats bedewed his forehead, and his whole frame trembled, as if under the attack of an ague. He paused upon the threshold of the enterprise, while the slaughter of his innocent people rose before his imagination in all its horror. Catherine exerted every endeavour to support his wavering resolution, and to stifle his nobler feelings. With infinite difficulty she forced from him a precise command to commence the massacre; and having obtained it, still dread-
 ing

ing a relapse in her son, she hastened the signal more than an hour, and gave it by the bell of the church of St. Germain de l'Auxerrois*.

1572.

When

* "At midnight," says d'Aubigné, "and at the moment when the massacre was to begin, Catherine, who feared some change in the king, entered his apartment, where were assembled the dukes of Guise and Nevers, Birague keeper of the seals, Tavannes, and the Marechal de Retz, whom Henry duke of Anjou had conducted thither. The king was in great emotion and uncertainty; but the queen-mother, among other arguments which she used to encourage him, said, 'Vaut il pas mieux dechirer ces membres pourris, que le sein de l'Eglise, Epouse de notre seigneur?' She finished by a passage taken from the sermons of the bishop of Bitonto, 'Che pieta lor ser crudele; che crudelta lor ser pietosa.'"

The duke of Guise, as De Thou assures us, was not present at the council in which the immediate commission of the massacre was determined, but received his orders and instructions from the king himself, on the evening of that fatal night, to assemble the guards, and to make all the necessary preparations. In consequence of the royal command, the duke disposed every circumstance, and enjoined that the Catholics should wear about their left arm a white scarf, and a cross of the same colour in their hats. Candles, or lights were likewise recommended to be placed in all the windows, to facilitate the projected destruction of the Hugonots, and to enable the Catholics more easily to recognize each other in such a scene of horror and confusion.

De Thou describes the irresolution and fluctuations of mind in the king, previous to the commencement of the

1572.

24 Au-
gust.

When Charles heard the dreadful knell, he was seized with new remorse, which was increased by the report of some pistols in the street; and overcome with affright, he sent instantly to command the leaders not to put the design in execution till further orders: but it was too late. The work of death was already begun; and the messengers brought back word that the people become furious, could no longer be restrained or withheld from exer-

bloody tragedy. Catherine, adds he, seeing her son turn pale, and a cold sweat appear on his forehead, reproached him with the want of courage—"Quoi!" said she, "vous n'osez vous defaire de gens, qui ont si peu menagé votre autorité, & votre personne?" Charles catching fire at this contemptuous reflection, and piqued at his mother's insinuation of his want of courage, gave orders instantly to begin the massacre; but Catherine, fearful that as his resentment abated, he might retract the declaration, anticipated the signal which was to have been made only an hour before day-break, and caused it to be given immediately.

Mezerai coincides in almost every particular with De Thou; and describes in very affecting colours the agitations and distress of the young king, before his mother with difficulty forced from him a precise order for the commencement of the massacre.

Davila is totally silent on all this part of the history of the night of St. Bartholomew, though minute in his narration of many other circumstances attending that unprecedented act of blood.

cising

cising their vengeance on the Hugonots*. It is not my intention to unveil or describe all the horrors of that fatal night, which are unhappily perpetuated by their atrocity to times the most remote. The picture is best concealed in darkness, and is almost too flagitious and affecting for the pen of history to commemorate. Yet some particulars of it may naturally be expected, and peculiarly those which accompanied Coligni's end, so long the support of the Hugonot religion and party.

* After the first signal given by Catherine of Medecis, says De Thou, a tumult having immediately begun, the Hugonots, who were lodged in the vicinity of the Louvre, and who were awakened by the noise in the streets, anxiously enquired what was the occasion of the lights in all the windows, as well as the reason of the people being armed. They were answered, that it was on account of a diversion which was to be exhibited for the queens; and curiosity prompting them to advance towards the Louvre, they were immediately cut to pieces by the guards, who were drawn up before the palace. Catherine of Medecis, anxious to prevent the possibility of her son's retreat, and dreading a change in his resolutions, upon the information which she received of some blood being spilt, went instantly to Charles's apartment; who, terrified at the news of the massacre being begun, had just sent orders to suspend it's further prosecution. The queen-mother having assured him, that "it was too late to revoke his intention, and that "neither the people nor the soldiery could be any longer "restrained," Charles, driven forward, took his decisive resolution, and caused the signal to be made by the bell of St. Germain de l'Auxerrois.

1572.

The admiral had been long retired to rest, when the noise of the assassins compelled him to rise; and apprehending immediately their intentions, he prepared as became himself, for death. A German gentleman named Besme, followed by a number of others, burst open the door, and entering his chamber, advanced towards the admiral, holding a long rapier in his hand. Coligni looking at him with an undismayed countenance, and incapable of resistance from the late wounds which he had received, only said, "Young man, respect these grey hairs, nor stain them with blood!" Besme hesitated a moment, then plunged the weapon into his bosom; and the others immediately threw out his body into the court, where it was impatiently expected by the duke of Guise. He contemplated it in silence, without offering it any injury; but Henry d'Angoulesme, Grand Prior of France, who was with the duke, having wiped the face with a handkerchief, and recognized the admiral's features which were covered with blood, gave the corpse a kick; adding, with a barbarous joy to those about him—"Courage! my friends! we have begun well: let us finish in the same manner*."

Teligni,

* Davila has related minutely, though with some little variation, this affecting and tragical story. "At the hour appointed,"

Teligni, a youth of the most beautiful person, and the most engaging manners, who had married

1572.

“ appointed,” says he, “ the duke of Guise, his uncle the duke of Aumale, and Henry d’Angoulesme the king’s natural brother, attended by about three hundred followers, repaired to the admiral’s house. They were there joined by a company of Catholic soldiers, commanded by Cossens, whom the duke of Anjou had stationed for that purpose, under arms, and with their matches lighted. The gate of the court, which was only guarded by a few of the king of Navarre’s halberdiers, they instantly forced; putting to death both them, and all the servants whom they met, without mercy. The nobles waited below, while La Besme, a native of Lorraine, and an immediate dependant of the duke of Guise, went up to Coligni’s apartment. He was accompanied by Achille Petrucci, a Siennese gentleman retained by the duke, by colonel Sarlebous, and the other soldiers.

“ The admiral hearing a disturbance, got up; and kneeling down, supported himself against the bed, when one of his servants, named Cornafon, burst into the room. Coligni asked him, ‘ What occasion’d the noise?’ To which Cornafon hastily replied, ‘ My lord, God calls us to him;’ and instantly ran out at another door. The assassins entered a moment afterwards, and advanced towards him: Coligni addressing himself to La Besme, who had drawn his sword, said, ‘ Young man, you ought to reverence these grey hairs; but do what you think proper: my life can only be shortened a very little.’ He had scarce spoke these words, when La Besme plunged the sword into his breast, and the others dispatched him with their daggers. They then threw his body down into the court, from whence it was dragged into a stable.”

1572.

married Coligni's daughter, was massacred on that night at the same time, having attempted
to

De Thou's account differs in no material point whatever from that of Davila, though he mentions some circumstances omitted by the last historian. "Cossens," says De Thou, "having united himself to the duke of Guise and his followers on their arrival at the admiral's house, ordered Labonne, who kept the keys, to open the door in the king's name. He obeyed without the slightest suspicion of treachery, and was instantly stabbed. The persons who were with him, astonished and terrified at this unexpected assassination, fled; and gaining the staircase, endeavoured to stop the further entrance of the ruffians, by barricading the passage with chairs and tables. Meanwhile Coligni, hearing a noise, imagined it was caused by some tumult; but persisting to repose himself on the honour and good faith of the king, he still conceived his person secure under the guard which had been assigned for his protection; 'till hearing a harquebuste fired in the court, he got out of bed. While he was preparing himself for every event, the door of the staircase was burst open, and the assassins mounted to his apartment. Cossens, d'Attins, Corberon, Cardillac, Sarlabouz, Petrucci, and a German named Besme, who had been a servant in the duke of Guise's house, entered his chamber, all armed with cuirasses. They forced the door, and Besme advancing first, with a sword in his hand, said to the admiral, 'Est-ce toi qui es Coligni?' 'C'est moi meme,' answered he, with a serene air; and shewing Besme his grey hairs, 'Jeune homme,' added he, 'tu devrois respecter mon age; mais acheve. Tu ne peux abregier ma vie que de fort peu de jours.' Besme made no reply,

to save himself on the roof of the house, where he was discovered, and stabbed by the assassins. 1572.

“ ply, but plunged his sword into the admiral’s body, and drawing it out, cut him several times across the face. “ It is reported,” continues De Thou, “ that Coligni exclaimed, on receiving the wound from Besme, ‘ Au moins si je perissois par la main d’un homme de cœur ; & non par celle d’un miserable valet !’

“ The duke of Guise, who during this unmanly assassination, had remained in the court below with the nobility who attended him, demanded if the business was finished ; and being answered in the affirmative, ‘ Monsieur d’Angoulesme,’ said he, ‘ ne le croira point, s’il ne voit le traître a ses pieds.’ The body of the admiral was immediately thrown down from a window ; and the Count d’Angoulesme having with a piece of linen wiped off the blood from the face, and recognized the features, disgraced himself so far as to kick the corpse, and to treat it with other indignities.”

Brantome, in his “ Life of Coligni,” relates, with scarce any material variation, all the principal circumstances enumerated by De Thou and Davila. He says, that “ Sarlabous, governor of Havre, boasted to have put the admiral to death ; but that beyond a doubt Besme gave the mortal blow ; as a reward for which act of blood, the duke of Guise, whose page he had been, married him to the natural daughter of the cardinal of Lorraine. Besme, vain of the exploit which he had performed, and in expectation of receiving from Philip the second a reward proportionate to the magnitude and importance of it, went into Spain two years afterwards, and was treated by Philip with great civility. That monarch conferred many favours on him ; but return-
“ ing

1572. fins. But the fate of the Count de la Rochefoucault was attended with circumstances which excite peculiar pity and indignation. He had passed the whole evening with the king at play; and Charles, touched with pity for a nobleman so amiable, whom he even personally loved, would willingly have rescued him from the general destruction. With that intention he ordered la Rochefoucault to remain all night in his privy chamber; but the Count, who apprehended that the king only meant to divert himself at his expence by some puerile trick, refused, and retired to his own apartment in the Louvre. "I see," said Charles, "it is the will of God that he should perish!" When the officer who was sent to destroy him knocked at the door, he opened it himself, apprehending it to have been the king; and seeing several persons enter masqued, he advanced gaily to meet them,

"ing into France, God, the just avenger of crimes," says Brantome, "either blinded him, or his malignant destiny conducted him into the hands of the Hugonots; who made him prisoner as he passed through Guienne, between Barbesieux and Chateauneuf. Besime was carried immediately to the castle of Bouteville, where the Sieur de Bertauville commanded, who detained him a considerable time, and at length, on pretence of his having attempted to effect his escape, caused him to be killed as a victim to the manes of Coligni."

but

but was instantly dispatched with their dag- 1572.
gers*.

The Count de Guerchy, who lodged in the same house with Coligni, wrapping his cloak about his arm, died sword-in-hand; and killed several of his murderers before he fell himself. Soubise, covered with wounds, after a long and gallant defence, was at last put to death under the queen-mother's windows; and the ladies

* Even Brantome severely arraigns and condemns the conduct of Charles the ninth, in permitting the Count de la Rochefoucault to be put to death at the massacre of St. Bartholomew. He relates the circumstances attending it, with more minuteness than De Thou: "When Chicot the king's buffoon, and his brother the captain Raymond," says Brantome, "came in the morning to break open the door of Rochefoucault's apartment, he immediately rose and dressed himself, imagining it to be Charles himself, who came to play some youthful frolic. The assassins continuing to attempt to force the door, he cried out, (still conceiving that he addressed his discourse to the king) 'Ce sont des jeux du feu roy, votre pere; vous ne m'y attraperez pas; car je suis tout chauffé et vestu.' In this fatal and unsuspecting security, he ordered the door to be opened, and was instantly murdered. Charles, in excuse for having permitted a nobleman on whom he had recently bestowed so many marks of personal affection, to be basely assassinated, said, that he had two or three times in vain requested Rochefoucault to remain in his own chamber during that fatal night; — an apology which serves only to heighten the atrocity of the action!

of

1572. of the court, from a savage and unnatural curiosity, went to view his naked corpse, disfigured and bloody. The bodies of the slaughtered Hugonots were collected and thrown in heaps before the palace of the Louvre, to satiate at once the curiosity and the vengeance of Catherine of Medecis, who fed her eyes with this inhuman spectacle. The Marechal de Tavannes, one of the most violent in the execution of the massacre, ran through the streets, crying, "Let blood! Let blood! Bleeding is equally wholesome in the month of August, as in the month of May!" Even the king himself, forgetful of the sacred duties which he owed to his people and to humanity, was personally aiding on that night, in the slaughter of his miserable subjects. It is said that he fired on them with a long harquebuste from the windows of his palace, and endeavoured to kill the fugitives who attempted to escape from the "Fauxbourg St. Germain."

The admiral's body was treated with indignities which dishonour human nature, and underwent all the fury of an enraged and barbarous populace. An Italian first severed his head from the trunk, and carried it to Catherine of Medecis; after which the people cut off the hands, leaving the disfigured remains upon a dunghill. In the afternoon they took the body up
2 again,

again, dragged it three days in the dirt, then on the banks of the Seine, and lastly, carried it to the village of Montfauçon, where it was hung upon a gibbet by the feet with an iron chain, and a fire lighted under it, by which it was scorched, without being consumed. In this dreadful situation, the king went with several of his courtiers to survey it; and as the corpse smelt very disagreeably, some of them turning away their heads, "The body of a dead enemy," said Charles, "smells always well!"—The remains of Coligni, after so many indignities, were at length taken down privately in a very dark night, by order of the Marechal de Montmorenci, and interred with the utmost privacy in the chapel of the castle of Chantilli.

Many accidents conduced, notwithstanding the rigorous orders for an universal slaughter, to rescue numbers of the Hugonots; and the king himself excepted two from the common destruction. The first of these was his surgeon, the celebrated Ambrose Paré, whose superior and uncommon professional skill proved the preservation of his life, Charles having commanded him to remain in his own apartment during that dreadful night. The other person was his nurse, to whom he was warmly attached, and to whom he never refused any request. The duke of Guise himself preserved more than
a hun-

1572.

a hundred, with intent to attach them to his service, whom he concealed during the violence of the massacre, in his own palace.

The Montmorencis, all which family had been inrolled in the fatal list, and devoted by Catherine of Medecis to death, were secured by the absence of the Marechal, their eldest brother, who it was feared might severely revenge the slaughter of his relations. The tears and entreaties of Mademoiselle de Chateauneuf, prevailed on her lover the duke of Anjou to spare the Marechal de Cossé, who was allied to her by blood. Biron, grand master of the artillery, and afterwards so renown'd in the wars of Henry the fourth, having pointed several culverines over the gate of the arsenal, stopped in some measure the fury of the Catholics, and afforded an asylum to many of his friends and adherents.

The Count de Montgomeri, and the Vidame of Chartres, with near a hundred gentlemen, who were lodged to the south of the river Seine, in the "Fauxbourg St. Germain," escaped on horseback, half naked; but being pursued by the duke of Guise, and overtaken at break of day, many of them were cut off, only the two chiefs and about ten of their followers arriving safe on the coast of Normandy, from whence they passed over into England.

1572.

England. Henry king of Navarre, and the prince of Condé, were exempted from the general carnage, though not without violent debates in the council. Charles ordered them both to be conducted into his presence, and commanded them, with menaces and imprecations, to abjure their religion, on pain of instant death. The king of Navarre obeyed; but the prince of Condé obstinately refusing to renounce his principles, Charles, at length, frantic with indignation, said to him in three words, “Mort, Messe, ou Bastile!” This threat was effectual, and the young prince, terrified into submission, complied with the necessity of his situation*.

During

* Davila declares, that the duke of Guise strenuously endeavoured to have the two princes of Bourbon included in the massacre; but Charles and the queen-mother thinking it an action so abominable and detestable, to imbrue their hands in the blood of their own relations, that no reasons of state could in any degree justify or authorize it, peremptorily refused their consent. He adds, that the king was peculiarly inclined to this conduct, from personal affection, and regard to the many virtues of Henry king of Navarre.

De Thou says, that the council was unanimous in their opinion that the king of Navarre, so recently allied to Charles by a marriage with his own sister, could not be put to death in the very arms of his bride, and in the palace of his brother-in-law, without reflecting indelible

1572.

During a whole week the massacre did not cease, though its extreme fury lasted only for the
two

infamy on the perpetrators of such a deed, to the latest posterity. But he adds, that there was more difficulty respecting the prince of Condé, to whom the court bore an hereditary hatred. The entreaties of the duke of Nevers, who had married the princess of Condé's sister, superadded to his own relationship to the blood royal, prevailed however over his enemies, and determined Charles to except him from the general destruction.

Davila and De Thou perfectly coincide in their account of the menaces made use of by Charles the ninth, to compel the two princes of Bourbon to renounce and abjure their religious opinions. The latter of these historians asserts, that about a fortnight after the massacre, on the 9th of September, the king, irritated by the inflexibility of the prince of Condé, called for arms to be brought to him, and determined at the head of his guards to exterminate the surviving Hugonots, of whom the prince himself should be the first victim. The advice and efforts of the young queen his wife, who besought him not to proceed to an act of such vengeance without asking the opinion of his council, induced Charles to dismiss his guards, and to desist from the prosecution of this barbarous purpose. But, on the following day, having sent for the prince, he said to him, with a tone of voice and manner the most indignant, "Messe, mort, ou prison perpetuelle!" "A Dieu ne plaise," answered Condé, "que je choisisse la premiere! Pour les deux autres autres, c'est a votre majesté a decider. Je prie la providence de vouloir la guider dans la resolution qu'elle prendra." This humble and submissive reply in some degree disarmed the violence of Charles, and induced him to determine on
a milder

two first days; and every enormity which zeal, revenge, and cruelty are capable of influencing mankind to commit, stain the dreadful registers of this unhappy period. More than five thousand persons of all ranks perished by various kinds of death; the Seine was loaded with floating carcases; and Charles saw with satisfaction from the windows of the Louvre, this unnatural and abominable spectacle. A butcher, who entered the palace during the heat of the massacre, is said to have boasted to his sovereign, baring his bloody arm, that he had dispatched himself a hundred and fifty Hugonots*.

1572.

Catherine

a milder treatment. The prince of Condé, yielding soon afterwards to motives of terror more than of conviction, abjured the principles of the reformation, and received absolution in the Pope's name, from his uncle the cardinal of Bourbon, as did his two brothers, the prince of Conti, and the Count de Soissons.

* The account which Margaret queen of Navarre has given us in her Memoirs of the night of St. Bartholomew, is not only of the most incontestible authenticity, but too interesting in its own nature to be omitted. On the evening preceding the massacre, Margaret was at the queen her mother's "Coucher," who ordered her to retire.—"As I made my courtesy," says she, "my sister of Lorraine" (Claude, princess of France, married to the duke of Lorraine) "took hold of my arm, and stopping me, burst into tears; 'My God,' said she, 'sister, do not go!' which frightened me extremely. The queen my mother per-

1572.

Catherine of Medecis, who scattered destruction in so many shapes, was not affected with

“ceived it, and calling my sister to her, reprehended her
 “very severely, and forbid her to say any thing to me. I
 “saw plainly that they differed, but could not hear their
 “words; and the queen commanded me a second time
 “rudely to go to bed. My sister, melting into tears, bid
 “me good night, without daring to say any thing else;
 “and I went out, all trembling and terrified, without
 “being able to imagine what I had to fear.” The king
 of Navarre was already in bed, and Margaret found him
 surrounded by thirty or forty of the Hugonot Lords, who
 remained the whole night in conversation upon the subject
 of the admiral’s late wound. At break of day Henry rose,
 intending to play at tennis, and fully determined as soon
 as Charles the ninth was awake, to demand justice on the
 assassins of Coligni. Margaret then yielding to fatigue, or-
 dered the door of her apartment to be shut, and soon fell
 asleep; but scarcely had an hour elapsed, when a person
 came to the door, and knocking violently at it with his
 hands and feet, cried out, “Navarre! Navarre!” The
 nurse, who lay in her apartment, rose immediately to open
 it, apprehending it to be Henry her husband. A gentle-
 man, named Tersan, covered with wounds, and pursued by
 four archers, instantly burst in, threw himself on her bed,
 and clasping her in his arms, besought her to save his
 life. He had received two wounds; one in the neck
 from a sword, and the other in his arm from a halberd.
 The archers, notwithstanding, pursued the object of their
 fury even into the princess’s chamber, and attempted to
 tear him from the asylum to which he had fled for re-
 fuge; but as Tersan held the young queen closely em-
 braced, it was impossible to separate them, till their cries
 brought

1572.

with the least remorse or pity at the view of such complicated and extensive misery. She is said to have gazed with a savage satisfaction on Coligni's head which was brought her, and which was sent to Rome, as a present the most acceptable to the sovereign Pontiff. Some weeks after the massacre had ceased, she carried her son to see the execution of Brique-

28 Oct.

maut, an old Hugonot gentleman of seventy-two years, and of Cavagnes, master of requests, who had escaped in the general slaughter brought to the spot Nançay, captain of the guards. Margaret says, that in spite of all the horror of the spectacle, Nançay could not help laughing at the situation of Terfan; and then commanding the archers to leave the room, he granted Terfan's life to the princess's entreaties, who caused him to lie in her own cabinet, and ordered his wounds to be dressed, till his cure was complete.

The young queen, frightened into agonies at this horrid sight, put on a night-gown, and ran to her sister the duchess of Lorraine's chamber, where she arrived, more dead than alive. As she entered the antichamber, a gentleman named Bourse was stabbed with a halberd, at two steps from her. Overcome with this second barbarity, she fainted into the arms of Nançay, and she declares that she was sprinkled all over with the blood of these miserable victims. Nançay informed her of the king of Navarre's safety, who was at that time in Charles's closet. She went thither; and throwing herself at her brother's and the queen-mother's feet, implored, and at length procured with difficulty the pardon of Miossans and Armagnac, two Hugonots in her husband's service.

1572. ter, but being afterwards discovered, were condemned to suffer capital punishment. By a refinement in barbarity which impresses with horror, the king was desirous of enjoying the sight of their last agonies. As it was night before they were conducted to the gibbet, he commanded torches to be held up to the faces of the criminals, and studiously remarked the effects which the approach of death produced upon their features.

The admiral's effigy was likewise drawn upon a sledge to the same place, and hung upon a gallows; nor had they forgot to put a toothpick into the mouth of the figure, as Coligni when alive usually appeared with one. Gaspard de la Chatre, Count de Nançay, had been previously dispatched by the court to the castle of Chatillon, to seize on the admiral's wife and children, as well as on those of d'Andelot; but the news of the massacre having reached them, Coligni's widow and his eldest son, together with his daughter who had been married to Teligni, and the Count de Laval son to d'Andelot, escaped, and arrived safe at Geneva. Not thinking themselves even in that asylum secure from the vengeance of Catherine de Medecis, they removed into the territories of the Canton of Berne, where they remained concealed. The younger children were all
conducted

conducted to Paris; and notwithstanding their youth and innocence, fell victims to the barbarous policy of the court of France. The dreadful example of Paris was too faithfully followed through all the provinces, into which similar orders had been dispatched. Some few great and exalted spirits only, whose names the latest posterity will revere, refused to comply with the mandate, though signed by the king's hand, and preserved the Hugonots from outrage in their respective governments*.

1572.

Charles's

* In the cities of Lyons, Orleans, Rouen, Bourges, Angers, and Thoulouse, the royal orders for massacring the protestants were most implicitly obeyed. In Provence, Claude de Savoye, Count de Tende absolutely refused to pay any obedience to so detestable a command; "for which," says Davila, "he was secretly dispatched soon after at Avignon; and, as it was commonly believed, by a commission from the king."—St. Herem, governor of Auvergne, and De Gordes, who commanded in the province of Dauphiné, declined any compliance with the orders sent to them for the extermination of the Calvinists. The bishop of Lizieux protected them from injury in his diocese, as did the Marechal de Matignon in the city of Alençon; but above all, the glorious answer of the Viscount d'Ortez to Charles the ninth, is never to be forgotten. It was to this effect; "Sire, I have read the letter, enjoining a massacre of the Hugonots, to the inhabitants of Bayonne. Your majesty has many faithfully devoted subjects in this city, but not one executioner." Mezerai estimates the number

1572.

Sept.

Charles's perplexed and contradictory conduct subsequent to the massacre, plainly evinced his own consciousness of the infamy of that transaction. He first accused Henry duke of Guise as the sole author of it, in his circular letters; and afterwards avowed himself as such. The court, fatiated with the sacrifice of so many Hugonots, did not believe it possible that they could rise again in arms, without leaders or any means of support; but in this confidence they were deceived. Though dismayed and oppressed by superior numbers, the zeal for their religion, which this cruel persecution had heightened and confirmed, rendered them invincible. They stood on their defence in several provinces, erected anew the standard of revolt, and resisted with success the efforts of their victorious enemies.

1573.

February.

Rochelle, the grand asylum of Calvinism, having shut its gates upon the royal forces, and prepared to defend itself in case of a siege, the duke of Anjou was sent at the head of a numerous army to invest it, and carried with him almost all the young nobility. The

of Hugonots put to death in the various provinces, at twenty-five thousand; De Thou supposes them to have amounted to thirty thousand; and Davila even carries the computation to more than forty thousand persons, of all ages and conditions.

duke

duke of Alençon his youngest brother, together with the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé, were in the royal camp, and Catherine had even projected the dissolution of her daughter Margaret's late marriage; but the princess herself opposed this intention, and refused to consent to its execution*.

There

* Margaret, in her Memoirs, has given the most minute relation of her mother's measures for procuring a divorce. Catherine demanded of her daughter, whether Henry had consummated the nuptials on the bridal night; and asked her, "Si son mari étoit homme? parceque si cela n'étoit pas, ce seroit un moyen de la demarier." The answer which Margaret pretends that she made to this question, is curious; and peculiarly so, if we consider the dissolute character and manners of the princess herself. She assured Catherine, with all the appearance of simplicity and innocence, that "she besought her majesty to believe that she did not understand what was asked her; but that she would remain with the husband whom they had given her; Me doutant bien," adds she, "que la separation n'avoit pour but, que la perte de mon mari."—It is hard, and almost ungenerous, to assign any other motive for this conduct in the queen of Navarre, than that of humanity, as she never loved Henry during the whole course of her life; unless we suppose that reluctance to lay down the title of Queen, might have influenced her in the refusal of such a proposition.

That the marriage was consummated, is a point beyond all doubt, since Henry the fourth himself avowed it, tho' the confession was injurious to his interests. Many years after, when his divorce was solicited in the court of Rome, he

1573.

March.

There are few examples in modern history of a siege carried on with greater vigour, or sustained with more determined obstinacy, than that of Rochelle. In vain did the duke of Anjou blockade it on every side; his reiterated and bloody attacks, in which vast numbers of his soldiers fell, neither terrified the inhabitants, nor disposed them to capitulate; while, on the other hand, the intrigues, dissentions, and opposite factions, with which the royal camp was filled, heightened the obstacles to his success.

Francis duke of Alençon, the youngest son of Henry the second, began to display his character, and to form a new party in the distracted state. In his person, he was little, ungraceful, and deformed. Turbulent and restless, he always beheld with envy and discontent his brother Henry's superior glory; and anxious to raise his own reputation by whatever means, he united himself with the Hugonots and the king of Navarre, to revenge the death of Coligni. Irresolute, capricious, and incapable of firm-

he was informed that he had only to imitate the example set him by Louis the twelfth, of denying the consummation of his nuptials. "No," said Henry, "it is an assertion which I cannot make; nor is it credible that a man of my constitution, and a woman of the princess's complexion, could possibly fail to have completed the nuptial rites."

ness

ness on great occasions, he ever deserted his friends in distress; void of faith and honour, no reliance could be reposed on his promises or engagements. His rank as prince of the blood, and his personal courage, which was undisputed, counterbalanced however all these defects of nature and of character; nor was he altogether destitute of generous and better feelings, which sometimes broke out at intervals*.

His

* Francis, duke of Alençon, the fifth and youngest son of Henry the second, was born on the 18th of March, 1554, and at his baptism received the name of Hercules, which his mother Catherine of Medecis afterwards changed, from a superstitious expectation of prolonging his life by that alteration. She never loved him, and frequently called him "Mon fils égaré." Having received in his childhood some impressions favourable to the reformed religion, from the persons who had the charge of his education, he had connected himself very closely with Coligni previous to the massacre, of which he was totally innocent and uninformed. As the duke of Alençon appeared deeply affected by his death, which he bewailed with tears, the queen-mother, desirous of erasing these sentiments from her son's mind, caused a part of the admiral's journal, which had been brought her, to be read to him, in which he had strongly advised Charles the ninth not to give his brothers too much authority, or to assign them a large establishment. "See," said she, "what counsel your good friend gives the king!" "I know not," replied the duke, "whether he loved me much; but I am convinced that none except a man most faithful to his ma-
 " jesty,

1573.

His practices and connection with the king of Navarre were soon divulged, and spread a great alarm at court. Charles sent him a strict prohibition from quitting the camp on any pretence; and ordered the duke of Anjou to hasten by every means the reduction of Rochelle, on account of the urgent necessity which he had of the troops for the protection of his own person,

Already

“jeſty, and moſt zealous for the ſtate, would be the author of ſuch advice.”

Davila attributes this affected attachment of the duke of Alençon to the memory of Coligni, entirely to the envy and jealousy which he felt at his brother Henry's power and great exploits. That historian has always depicted the duke of Alençon under the moſt unfavourable colours, as deficient in any talents or qualities worthy of eſteem, and as incapable of ſuffering a compariſon with the duke of Anjou. —“*La propria capacita, e l'habilita di lui,*” ſays Davila, “*era ſtimato molto inferiore, e d'ingegno, & di valore, al duca d'Angio.*” In another place, ſpeaking of that prince, he thus delineates his character: “*Francesco, duca d'Alanſone, terzo fratello del ré, il quale non ſolo era giovane d'anni, & per difetto dell' eta privo d'esperienza; ma per natura, ancora dotato di poca capacita d'ingegno, e d'animo coſi volubile, e coſi gonſio, che ſi vedeva molto piu inclinato a conſigli torbidi e precipitoſi, che a maniera di vita prudente, e moderata.*”—De Thou has drawn his portrait in a much more flattering manner, though he admits his defects and weakneſſes. “*Vif, eloquent, courageux, affable, et magnifique; mais ambitieux, inquiet, et changeant.*”—Mezerai, on the
other

Already the miserable king began to awake, though slowly, from the delirium into which he had been plunged by his mother's fatal advice. The horror of the night of St. Bartholomew remained indelibly impressed on his imagination; his usual gaiety and complacency appeared no longer in his countenance; and in its place a fixed and melancholy gloom sat upon his features. He beheld the ignominy and detestation with which his unparalleled barbarity and perfidy had marked him to the latest posterity; nor could he dissemble his resentment of Catherine's pernicious counsels, which had induced him thus to violate the fa-

1573.

other hand, speaks in terms of disapprobation and contempt, of his qualities both of body and of mind.—“Prince ambitieux et inquiet,” says he, “meprisé pour sa petite taille, et sa mauvaise mine; capable d’embrasser toutes sortes d’entreprises sans raison, et de les abandonner aussi legerement.”

Tho' most of the French historians describe his person as mean, and almost deformed, yet De Thou contradicts that assertion. “Il etoit petit, mais bien fait. Sa phisionomie etoit agreable, quoiqu’il eut le teint fort brun, et le visage gaté par la petite verole.” These are De Thou's words.—Montfaucon, in his “Monumens de la Monarchie Françoisé,” has preserved two portraits of Francis duke of Alençon; one of which is only a bust; the other a whole length, in complete armour. In neither of these, does he appear to be either deformed in his figure, or deficient in beauty of features, and personal elegance.

cred

1573. cred laws of honour and humanity. The queen-mother having one day reproved him for his furious passion with some of his servants, and told him, that he would do better to exert that anger against the rebels who caused the deaths of so many of his faithful and loyal subjects before Rochelle; he replied, "Madame, qui en est cause que vous? Par la mort.... vous êtes cause de tout!"

June.

While these symptoms of animosity between Charles and his mother began to display themselves, and while Henry exhausted his army in ineffectual attempts against Rochelle, the news arrived of this latter prince's election to the crown of Poland. It was an event by no means desired on the part of Catherine and her favourite son. The duke of Anjou, who ever considered himself as immediate heir to the crown of France while his brother had no male issue by the queen, and who had from his infancy been accustomed to the dissipations of the most magnificent court in Europe, regarded with a sort of horror the idea of going to reign over a barbarous people, so far removed from his native country. He had even, in conjunction with his mother, endeavoured by every secret means, to counteract the success of the negotiation which was to place him on the Polish throne; but Montluc bishop of Valence, who had

1573.

had been sent into Poland to gain the suffrages of the Diet, regarding his sovereign's orders and his own honour, more than Catherine's or Henry's wishes, acted with so much vigour and address at the election, that the duke of Anjou was chosen king. This intelligence formed an honourable pretext for withdrawing his troops, wearied and broken with so unsuccessful a siege. Deputies were appointed on either side; and a general pacification was at length concluded, not only for the city of Rochelle, but for the whole kingdom, on terms less favourable to the Hugonots, than any of the three preceding treaties. 25 June.

The duke of Anjou having terminated this negociation, embarked on board the royal gallies, together with his brother the duke of Alençon, the king of Navarre, and the prince of Condé. Landing at Nantes, he remounted the Loire to Clery, at which place having performed a vow which he had made, he proceeded to Orleans, where he was received with every mark of solemnity and magnificence. The Polish ambassadors, twelve in number, made their entry into the capital soon after, where Henry had previously arrived. 19 Aug.

The decree which elected him to the throne, inclosed in a silver box, and sealed with a hundred and ten seals of Prelates, Palatines,

1573.

and Castellans, was publicly read; Charles, seated on a scaffold in his royal robes, and accompanied by all the grandees of the court, being present at this ceremony. When Te Deum had been sung, the king rose, and embraced his brother the new sovereign; Henry then kissed the duke of Alençon, and king of Navarre; after which all the noblemen of the court paid him the customary respects and congratulations. Catherine of Medecis displayed all her magnificence and taste on this occasion, in the splendid diversions and entertainments with which she honoured her son's accession to the throne of Poland*.

Sept.

Charles, who had taken the firm resolution of reigning by himself, and of adopting measures more salutary and beneficent to his people,

* Brantome has given us a minute description of Catherine's banquets and amusements on the arrival of the Polish ambassadors. Sixteen ladies of the court, representing the sixteen provinces of France, dressed with the most perfect propriety in habits emblematical of their characters, formed a dance, which was performed in the palace of the Thuilleries. As far as we are able to judge, scarce any of the superb carousals of Louis the fourteenth were superior in elegance, in brilliancy, or in effect, to those of Catherine of Medecis, which were exhibited nearly a century earlier.

Margaret queen of Navarre was the animating soul of these gallant diversions. Her beauty, gaiety, and above
all

plé, received with extreme satisfaction the news of his brother's election to a foreign and distant diadem. He had long perceived the error which his mother's counsels had induced him to commit, of entrusting to Henry so extensive an authority; and he now saw himself on the point of being released from a rival, who became every year more obnoxious. He hastened his brother's departure with a visible anxiety and impatience; but the king of Poland protracted it under a thousand pretences. Not only Catherine's tender and maternal fondness for him; not only the charms of a luxurious court, the possession of a degree of power scarce less than that of the king himself, or the expectation of the crown of France, contributed to detain him: A passion still more violent and tyrannical rendered him deaf to the voice of glory, or the suggestions of reason. He was tenderly attached to the princess of Condé; and his heart naturally soft, and susceptible of the impressions of love, tried in vain to extricate itself from the effect of her charms.

all that air which characterised her, and which breathed and inspired desire, rendered her the most fascinating princess in the world. Lascio one of the noblemen in the Polish embassy, when he was presented to her, was so overcome with the lustre of her attractions, that he broke out into the most passionate exclamations of rapture and astonishment at the sight of so beautiful a woman.

1573.

Mary of Cleves, married to Henry prince of Condé, and who was at this time only seventeen years of age, possessed attractions of person the most winning and irresistible. Her mind, improved and elegant, corresponded with her external charms; and her heart, formed to taste the delights of a mutual passion, had not been able to resist so accomplished a lover, as the hero of Jarnac and of Moncontour. A sense of honour, and a regard to the nuptial vow which she had so recently made, long supported her sliding virtue; but Henry, master of all the wiles which such a design inspires and dictates, employed the most effectual methods to obtain the gratification of his wishes. His sister the queen of Navarre lent her assistance in obtaining for him the possession of his beloved mistress: Even the duke of Guise, forgetting his natural haughtiness, and united to the king of Poland by the closest friendship, did not hesitate to aid him with all his eloquence. His uncle the cardinal of Lorraine, was the first to persuade him to undertake this humiliating office, and to procure his own sister-in-law for Henry. Overcome by so importunate a suit, the princess yielded at length; the first decisive interview between herself and the king of Poland took place at the palace of the Louvre; and she was there delivered up

to him as a victim by Margaret of Valois and the duke of Guise*.

1573.

Amidst the transporting enjoyments to which the two lovers at first abandoned themselves, they were equally insensible to the suggestions of ambition and of glory. A distant crown, which could only be purchased by a removal from the object of his tenderness, did not in any degree rouse the enamoured king, or appear to him worthy of the sacrifice which he must make to it, of his beloved mistress. But a necessity more cruel soon compelled him to hasten his departure. Charles grew hourly

* Neither Davila nor De Thou have descended to the narration of this interesting story; but Mezerai expressly assigns the attachment of the king of Poland to the princess of Condé as the most insurmountable obstacle to his departure from France. He confirms likewise the part which the duke of Guise acted; and adds, that the duke offered Henry fifty thousand men to protect him from the resentment of Charles the ninth, if he persisted to refuse to quit Paris, and to take possession of his new dominions.—Desportes, the celebrated poet, who accompanied the king of Poland to Cracow, has given an account of this amour, and has minutely described the interview of the two lovers, in a poem called "Cleophon." Henry is there named Eurilas; the princess of Condé, Olympia, and Margaret of Valois, Fleur de Lys. Buffi d'Amboise, the queen of Navarre's lover, is supposed to be depicted under the character of Nireus; as are the duke of Guise and his mistress Madame de Sauve, under the names of Floridant and Camilla.

1573. more and more impatient at his delays, and at length informed the queen-mother with his usual vehemence, that he would not permit of the king of Poland's longer stay, and that one or the other of them must instantly quit the kingdom.

Henry began his preparations, and ordered all his equipage and attendants to be ready, but still delayed his final departure. The duke of Guise, his intimate friend, flattered him with the hopes of Charles's death, and even offered, if he was determined to stay in France, to protect him against the king's resentment with fifty thousand forces. Three days having elapsed in this state of uncertainty, Charles, irritated at length almost to fury, and persuaded that Catherine chiefly prevented the king of Poland's journey, perhaps from some treasonable and dangerous intentions in his favour, no longer observed any measures with his mother. He ordered the door of his apartment to be shut against her, and began to meditate some more effectual designs against herself and her favourite son.

These open marks of displeasure terrified Catherine, and she implored the king of Poland to delay no longer, if he regarded his own personal safety. Henry consented though with extreme reluctance, and began his journey.

28 Sept. The

The whole court accompanied him, and Charles himself, more from motives of prudence, than of affection, was among the number. He could not however conduct his brother to the frontier, as he had intended; a slow fever, attended with a violent giddiness in the head, and pains about his heart and stomach, having obliged him to stop at the town of Vitry in Champagne*.

The

* De Thou, in his account of the illness of Charles the ninth, and the symptoms attending it, not only attributes it to poison, but he expressly names Charles de Gondi de la Tour, great master of the wardrobe, as the person who, in concert with his two brothers, the Marechal de Retz, and the bishop of Paris, was suspected of having executed this detestable project. The family of Gondi, originally Tuscan, and who had followed the queen-mother from Florence into France, had been elevated by Charles, at Catherine's suggestion, to the highest dignities and employments. The Marechal de Retz had succeeded La Cipierre in the important charge of Governor to the young Monarch, and had enjoyed the greatest degree of his personal favour and affection. But the king, naturally discerning, had begun to manifest some concern at the profusion of honours which he had heaped on this family, and to repent of his own work. To this diminution of his public regard and protection, was added another more wounding, though more private affront on the part of Charles. He had been deeply sensible to the beauty and attractions of Helena Bon, wife to the Count de la Tour, and had removed her husband from court, to facilitate his interviews with the lady. The Count, who suspected their attachment, returned unexpectedly, and was too well satisfied

1573.

October.

The queen-mother, the duke of Alençon, with the king and queen of Navarre, and a great train of the nobility continued their rout with

by the evidence of his own senses, that all his apprehensions were founded in truth. Charles, instead of endeavouring to mollify and soften the resentment of the Count, menaced him with the severest effects of his indignation, if he presumed to treat his wife with rigour. The story became public; and it was said, that the duke of Guise, discontented with Charles the ninth, had instigated and inflamed the Count de la Tour to vengeance. The queen-mother herself had not been spared on this occasion, and popular report had asserted that she was not unacquainted with, or adverse to the projects for the king's destruction. Her assurances to the king of Poland at his departure that "he would not be long absent," increased these suspicions, and induced her enemies to pretend that she was privy to the attempts against Charles's life. This is De Thou's account of that prince's disorder, and its cause; the scene of which he lays at the town of Villers Coteretz, between Paris and Vitry in Champagne, to which last place, though severely indisposed, he continued his journey, and where he was absolutely compelled to stop, by more violent attacks of a similar nature.

Davila makes no mention whatever of Charles's illness during the journey of his brother Henry towards the frontiers; but Mezerai speaks of it in very ambiguous and enigmatical terms. "A few days," says he, "after the menaces which Charles had used towards his mother, he had been seized with a slow, malignant fever, accompanied with a vertigo, and pains about his heart at every moment." He insinuates that unnatural means were suspected, but leaves the point dark and undetermined.

Henry

1573.

Henry to Blamont in Lorraine, where the separation took place between him and Catherine. She held him long in her arms, unable to bid him the last adieu, while sighs and tears interrupted her voice. Among the expressions of comfort which she used, to diminish the excess of his grief on this exile from his country; "Allez, mon fils;" said she, "vous n'y de-
"meurerez pas long tems!" The ambiguity of this prediction, Charles's illness accompanied with extraordinary symptoms, the known and recent quarrel which had preceded it, and the queen-mother's partiality to the king of Poland; all these circumstances gave rise to reports and suspicions, though probably ill-founded and unjust, that Charles's seizure was the effect of poison.

The king's disorders were more reasonably attributed to natural causes, and all the French historians agree that ever since the massacre of Paris, he had betrayed marks of great agitation and distress. He had besides much impaired his constitution by too violent and laborious exercises; and it was said that his lungs were affected by his constantly blowing the horn when he went to the chace. He used to play at tennis during five or six hours without intermission, which extremely agitated and heated his blood: He became incapable of sleeping except for a

1573.

very short time, at intervals; and even then his slumbers were restless and disordered. These causes probably conducted him, though slowly, to his grave, and might fully account for, and justify Catherine's assurances to the king of Poland, that his absence from France would not be of long duration*.

1574.

Henry meanwhile, accompanied with several of the first nobility, and a train of five hundred gentlemen, crossed the whole Germanic empire, and arrived at Miezych, the first

* Brantome says, that Charles the ninth never recovered his tranquillity of mind, nor even the exterior appearance of repose, after the massacre of St. Bartholomew. I "saw him," says Brantome, "on my return from the siege of Rochelle, and found him entirely changed."—"On ne lui voyoit," adds he, "plus au visage cette douceur qu'on avoit accoutumé de lui voir."—Mezerai enumerates the violent exercises to which the king had accustomed himself; "de courir a la chasse, de piquer de grands chevaux, de jouer a la paume cinque ou six heures durant, de forger et battre le fer a tour de bras." All these imprudent excesses had naturally thrown his blood into a state of fermentation, highly injurious to his health; and joined to the uneasy reflexions which continually haunted him, contributed to prevent his recovery.—De Thou equally admits the effect of the massacre on the king's mind, and says, that "after the day of St. Bartholomew he slept little, and his slumbers were interrupted by dreadful dreams; at which times he was accustomed to send for musicians, who by airs and symphonies procured him some repose and sleep."

city

CHARLES THE NINTH.

265

city of his Polish dominions, in the depth of winter. All the princes through whose territories he passed, endeavoured to outvie each other in the honours which they paid to so illustrious a stranger, and he was received at Cracow with every demonstration of joy and public festivity *. His beautiful and majestic person,

1574.

25th Jan.

* The king of Poland, after quitting Blamont, passed through the bishopricks of Spire and Worms, to Heidelberg, the capital of the dominions of the Elector Palatine. That prince, walking with his royal guest in a gallery of the palace, which was ornamented with the portraits of illustrious persons, undrew a curtain from before a picture of Coligni, and pointing to it, said to Henry, "Of all the French nobility whom I have seen, that is the man whom I have found most zealous for the glory of his country; and I am not afraid to assert, that the king of France has sustained a loss in him, which he never can repair." The king of Poland felt the severity of the censure, and made no reply.—Continuing his route through Mentz, he stopped during the festival of Christmas at the abbey of Fulda, and on leaving it was received by the Landgrave of Hesse with extraordinary honours. Having passed the river Elbe at Torgau, the Elector of Saxony, who was himself indisposed by sickness, dispatched his son-in-law to conduct the young monarch through the Saxon dominions, at the head of two thousand cavalry; and on his passing the frontiers, he found an escort of fifteen hundred horse waiting for him, sent by the emperor Maximilian the second. The prince of Prussia attended him to Francfort on the Oder; and Henry arrived in the territories of Poland upon the

1574. person, his condescending and courteous manners, and his unbounded liberality to all ranks of people, rendered him in the beginning the idol of his new subjects; but these external endowments, calculated to charm at first view, soon lost their effect, and he became splenetic, melancholy, and reserved.

Disgusted with the barbarous customs and character of the Poles, he was no longer easy of access, or affable towards them, as he had been on his arrival. He remained whole days shut up in his apartment, abandoned to chagrin, and under the greatest uneasiness at not receiving the letters which he expected from France. He passed his whole time in perusing the billets of the princess of Condé, which he kissed and bathed with his tears; she was ever present to his imagination, and maintained her empire over his affections. He wrote letters to her

the 25th of January, 1574, where the bishop of Cujavia harangued him in the name of the Polish senate and the nobility. The king proceeded immediately to Cracow, the capital of his new dominions, where the Count de Retz had previously assisted as his representative, at the obsequies of the late sovereign, Sigismund Augustus. The senate and nobles advanced to meet him half a league from Cracow, into which city he was received with all the testimonies of public festivity. The anecdote respecting the Elector Palatine and the portrait of Coligni, is confirmed by Mezerai and by Brantome in the strongest manner, as well as by De Thou.

of the fondest attachment entirely in his own blood, and filled with protestations of inviolable fidelity; while Desportes the poet, who attended him to Cracow, continually fed his passion by sonnets in praise of his beloved mistress. His dejection of spirits was still more encreased by the proposition which the Polish senate made him of marrying Anne Jagellon, sister to the deceased monarch Sigismund Augustus, a princess of a disagreeable person, and already advanced in years.

1574.

It was natural to suppose, that the departure of the king of Poland would have tended to diffuse a tranquillity over the court and kingdom of France; but Charles's reign seem'd destined to every species of civil commotion. The duke of Alençon, ever forming schemes of ambition which he afterwards abandoned from fickleness and irresolution, rekindled the flame of expiring sedition. The genius of Calvinism, springing from its own ashes, re-appeared in every quarter of France; and undismayed by the late dreadful massacre of its votaries, animated them to new efforts against the government. January,

The king's strength began to fail just as he entered the prime of life, and appeared to promise happier times. His capacity, naturally clear and discerning, enabled him at length to see the train of errors and crimes,

1574.

into which his youth had been betrayed; and all his actions indicated the resolution which he had taken, to govern by other principles than those which had actuated his past conduct. He applied himself in person to the affairs of state, and expressed the most anxious desire to relieve his people from the many calamities which they had experienced since his accession to the crown. In opposition to the advice of several of his ministers, he discharged them from a third part of the taxes, and would only retain three companies of the regiment of guards about his person; the rest were disbanded.

Though he detested Calvinism and the Hugonots, he had yet determined to disgrace and banish for ever from his presence and councils, the advisers of massacre and bloodshed. He intended to restore to his parliaments the administration of justice; to repress the dangerous power of the two houses of Guise and Montmorenci; to renounce his prosecution of the chase and other dissipations, and to dedicate his whole attention to the more important and glorious labours of a great monarch. But it was in vain that he formed these salutary plans; enfeebled by the progress of his disorders, and unable to resist their violence, he rapidly approached the end of his days before he had yet expiated his past offences.

Meanwhile

1574.

Meanwhile the Hugonots, whose courage was revived by the duke of Anjou's removal, and the king's languid state of health, which rendered him unfit for any exertion of vigour, rose again in arms. La Noue and Montgomeri, in whom survived the genius of Condé and Coligni, re-assembled their dismayed and scattered party. The duke of Alençon, to whom Charles, at the solicitation and advice of his mother Catherine, had refused the post of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, was privy to their enterprize; Henry king of Navarre, and the prince of Condé, had promised to declare openly in their favour; and many noblemen of the court were secretly disposed to join the insurgents. The duke of Alençon even engaged to quit the court, and to put himself at their head; but de Chaumont, who, with a body of cavalry had approached the palace of St. Germain to facilitate his escape, as had been preconcerted, having mistaken the day, and arrived near a week before the time, the duke, naturally fickle, and incapable of a bold and decisive resolution, had not the courage to perform his agreement.

March.

La Mole, his principal favourite, conscious that the design could not long remain concealed, went immediately and revealed the whole conspiracy to the queen-mother. The court was instantly filled with confusion; and Catherine affecting a degree of terror which she

1574.

she did not really feel, with an intent to render the conspirators greater objects of public hatred, fled to Paris at midnight in the utmost disorder, and was followed by most of the ladies and courtiers. Charles himself did not remove before the ensuing day, when he went to lodge at the castle of the "Bois de Vincennes," where his brother Francis and the king of Navarre were likewise conducted, not as close prisoners, but accompanied by a guard who carefully watched their motions. On their subsequent examination in presence of the king and queen-mother, the duke of Alençon behaved with the meanest pusillanimity, trembling, and as a criminal; but Henry answered the interrogatories put to him with intrepidity, rather as an injured than as a guilty person, and refused to make any confession injurious to his friends and followers*.

Charles's

* De Thou has given several very curious and interesting particulars of the defence of Henry king of Navarre, when interrogated before Charles and Catherine, which may serve to throw some light upon the conclusion of this disastrous reign, and to evince that there were at least intentions of hastening Charles's death by unnatural means. Henry asserted positively, that he could adduce proofs of designs having been meditated against his own life; and that though he might have despised the danger which menaced himself, he could not be insensible to that which threatened the king. He declared that after the departure

ture

Charles's disorders, which had given him some respite during the winter, revived with double violence on the approach of spring. The late practices of his brother the duke of Alençon, and of the king of Navarre, added to the renewal of the civil war with the Hugonots, affected him deeply, and irritated the other diseases which preyed on his enfeebled constitution. "At least," said he, "they might have waited for my death. It is too

1574.

April.

ture of the king of Poland, a secret council was held for the purpose of deliberating on the methods of dispatching Charles the ninth; and added that the Catholics wished his death, in the hope and expectation that his brother Henry ascending the throne of France, would finish the extermination of the Protestants. He then complained of the ill usage which he had himself sustained from Catherine of Medecis; and particularly of her having excluded him from the council, and prevented his access to the person of the king. "I have frequently," added he, "spoken to the king of Poland respecting the bad designs of some turbulent spirits in the court; but I am well persuaded that my frankness displeased him, since at his departure from Blamont, he did not deign to mention me to the queen-mother, though he recommended to her all those who were present, and even many persons who were absent at that time." Five days afterwards the king of Navarre repeated the same assertions in the queen-mother's presence, in that of the Cardinal of Bourbon, and of other commissaries appointed to enquire into the conspiracy; he even spoke with more force and warmth than on his first examination.

" much

1574. "much to distress me now, that I am debilitated by illness *!"

Catherine, ever attentive to her own interests, and foreseeing that the king's end could not be very distant, with her usual sagacity began to concert measures for securing to herself the future regency. Her son's declining health, and incapacity of personal application to affairs of state, having in a degree restored to her the authority of which he had previously begun to deprive her, she exerted it to render herself mistress of those persons, who might otherwise oppose her taking possession of the supreme power, in case of Charles's death.

11 April. La Mole, and the Count de Coconas, an Italian nobleman, both favourites of the duke of Alençon, were arrested. The former de-

* It was not possible, says Brantome, to ascertain of what nature was the king's disorder; so various and uncommon were the symptoms. These are his own words which follow: "Car il lui survint une fièvre catartique, qui tantôt étoit quarte, tantôt continue: et pensoit Monsieur Masille, son premier médecin, qu'il se porteroit de bien en mieux, ainsi que la fièvre diminueroit." He adds, that the duke of Alençon and king of Navarre's collusion with the rebels aggravated all the symptoms of his complaint; and that from that time his majesty grew much worse.— "Dont on en soupçonna," adds he, "quelque poison, enchantment, et enforcellement."

nied

nied every thing imputed to his charge, and persisted invariably in that assertion; but the Count, flattered with the hopes of life and of a large reward, being examined in the royal presence, confessed all he knew, and even accused the Marechals de Montmorenci and de Coffé, as accomplices in the conspiracy. This deposition, though probably extorted only by the expectation of escaping an ignominious punishment, furnished Catherine with the pretext which she wanted for arresting the two Marechals, who might, she feared, in case of Charles's death, form an impediment to the succession of the king of Poland.

A circumstance which very strongly marks the superstition of that age, in which the effects of charms and forcery were objects of general belief, served to hasten the execution of La Mole and Coconas. A little image composed of wax, was found in the house of the former, the heart of which was pierced through with a needle in many places; and it was pretended that this waxen figure represented the king, whom La Mole had devoted to death by the force of enchantments. He denied the charge, and asserted that he had procured it from Cosmo Ruggieri, a Florentine who had followed the queen-mother into France, and who professed the art of magic. Ruggieri being interrogated, confirmed

1574. La Mole's assurances; and added, that the intention of the charm was to gain the affections of a lady, to whom that gentleman had been fondly attached *.

Notwith-

* All the French historians relate this story, and it is mentioned in nearly similar terms by De Thou, by Mezerai, and by Davila. This last writer speaks of La Mole and of the Count de Coconas in terms of equal detestation and contempt. "Bonifacio, Signore della Mola," says he, "huomo di poca levatura, ma ripieno di pensieri misurati e vasti; et Annibale Conte di Coconas, Bandito Piemontese." With respect to the figure of wax, found in the possession of La Mole, it was a characteristic of the age, which was infected to the greatest degree with a belief in magic; a species of madness which did not terminate 'till towards the close of the reign of Louis the fourteenth. A priest, named Des Eschèles, who was executed about this time in the "Place de Greve" at Paris, for having had a communication with evil spirits, accused near twelve hundred persons of the same crime. Catherine of Medecis was peculiarly credulous on that point, and always carried about her person cabalistical characters, written on the skin of an infant born dead. Several talismans and amulets were found in her cabinet after her death, and she consulted an astrologer on the fortunes of all her children. Favon, in his history of Navarre, relates a curious anecdote upon this subject. "The queen," says he, "having early applied to a magician to know the destiny of her sons, he made her see in a magic mirror the number of years that each would reign, by the number of turns which they made. Francis the second, Charles the ninth, and Henry the third, passed successively in review before her: she even saw Henry duke

" of

Notwithstanding this defence, La Mole was executed some days after, with the Count de Coconas, in the "Place de Greve" at Paris. Their bodies being quartered, were placed on wheels, and their heads fixed on two poles. La Mole was peculiarly acceptable to, and beloved by the queen of Navarre, as his accomplice was equally by the duchess of Nevers; and it is confidently asserted by many of the cotemporary historians, that these two princesses caused the heads of their lovers to be taken down, on the night after their execution, and interred them with their own hands in the chapel of St. Martin, near Paris*.

The

"of Guise, who disappeared on a sudden; and Henry the fourth, who made twenty-four turns. This prediction and apparition encreased her original aversion to the king of Navarre."—Cosmo Ruggieri, of whom mention has been made, was sent to the gallies; but Catherine soon after liberated him from that state of servitude and punishment, to make use of the secrets which she supposed him to possess, and he died in high repute at Paris, under Louis the thirteenth's reign, in 1615.

* Mezerai mentions this extraordinary fact, and Henry the fourth, in his memorial relative to the dissolution of his marriage, presented to the Pope, expressly asserts and confirms it, as well as the intrigue by which it was preceded. "The Duchess of Nevers," says he, "being attached to the Count de Coconas, persuaded her friend the queen of Navarre to commence an amour with La Mole, their common confident," "pour lui épargner le chagrin de garder les manteaux, pendant
T 2 " qu'ils

1574.

The two accused noblemen, Montmorenci and Cossé, either from a reliance on their own innocence, or from a confidence in their rank and authority, came immediately to court, to justify themselves from the supposed treason attributed to them; but they were committed by Catherine to the Bastile, and the Parisians furnished with alacrity eight hundred men to prevent their escape. Orders were likewise issued for the arrest of Henry prince of Condé, who, as governor of Picardy, resided at Amiens; but he had the good fortune to make his escape, and quitting that city in disguise, arrived safe at Strasbourg, where he solemnly abjured the Catholic religion, and made a public profession of Calvinism.

25 May.

In Normandy, the Hugonots being pressed by the Marechal de Matignon, were almost every where reduced to lay down their arms; and the Count de Montgomeri, so long inured to war, and one of their greatest commanders, was obliged to surrender himself to Matignon, who invested him in the town of Domfront. The stipulation of his life was one of the conditions; but the queen-mother, who had determined to sacri-

“ qu'ils étoient ensemble.”—“ The connection was of
 “ short duration. The two lovers left their heads upon a
 “ scaffold; and their mistresses, having caused them to
 “ be taken down, put them in a coach, and buried
 “ them in St. Martin's chapel, below Montmartre.”

fice

fice this victim to the memory of her husband, caused him to be executed after the death of Charles the ninth, in defiance of the convention.

1574.

The king began to sink apace under the weight of his disorders, which increased every day; and though he long endeavoured to resist their attacks, yet his strength diminishing continually, at length compelled him to take to his bed, at the palace in the "Bois de Vincennes."

8th May.

Catherine improving the opportunity afforded by the decay of her son's strength of mind, used every exertion to induce him to invest her with the regency. As long as Charles retained in any degree his usual faculties, he persisted invariably to deny her this proof of his confidence; and could only be persuaded to grant her letters to the governors of the different provinces, which enjoined them, that "during his illness, and in case that it should please God to take him, they should obey his mother till the return of the king of Poland."

One of the most awful and affecting pictures which can be held up to human survey, is that of Charles the ninth, cut off in the flower of his age by a disorder very unusual, if not unprecedented, and accompanied with many circumstances strongly calculated to excite horror and compassion. During the two last weeks of his life, nature seemed to make ex-

1574.

traordinary efforts for his relief. He trembled, and all his limbs were contracted by sudden fits; while his acute pains did not suffer him to enjoy any repose, or to remain scarce a moment in one posture. He was even bathed in his own blood, which oozed out of the pores of his skin, and at all the passages of his body, in great quantity. His constitution, naturally sound and robust, supported him however for some time, against the progress of this cruel and unsurmountable disease.

27 May.

Only three days before he died, the queen-mother having informed his majesty, that the Count de Montgomeri was taken prisoner by the Marechal de Matignon, he received the news without any mark of joy, or change of countenance. "Quoi! mon fils," said she, "ne vous rejouissez vous point de la prise de celui qui a tué votre pere?"—"I am no longer interested," answered the expiring prince, "about that, or any other affair." Catherine regarded this indifference as the infallible prognostic of his speedy and approaching dissolution.

On the morning of the day when Charles the ninth breathed his last, she availed herself of the condition in which he then lay, to reiterate to him her entreaties to nominate her to the regency. He complied with her request, though

rather by compulsion and through weakness, than from choice ; and she immediately dispatched other letters into the different parts of the kingdom, announcing the king's pleasure. Yet only a few hours before he expired, Charles openly gave marks of his alienation from his mother. Henry king of Navarre coming near his bed, Charles embraced him many times ; and after other demonstrations of confidence and attachment, said to him, “ Je me fie en vous de ma femme, et de ma fille ; Je vous les recommande, et Dieu vous gardera ! Mais ne vous fiez pas à—” Catherine, fearing he was about to name herself, interrupted him with—“ Monsieur, ne dites pas cela.”—“ Je le dois dire,” answered the dying monarch, “ car c'est la verité.”

When he found his end approaching, he prepared himself for it with perfect composure and dignity of mind. He ordered the duke of Alençon and the king of Navarre to be brought into his presence ; Birague the chancellor, Monsieur de Sauve secretary of state, and the Cardinal of Bourbon, with several others of the nobility, being likewise admitted. He addressed himself to them with the earnestness of a person about to quit the world, and declared his brother Henry king of Poland, successor to the crown of France, the Salic law excluding

1574.

his own child, a daughter, from the throne. He implored the duke of Alençon not to molest, or attempt to impede his elder brother's entry into the kingdom; and obliged all present to take the oath of allegiance to the absent sovereign, and of obedience to Catherine, 'till his arrival.

30 May.

He commanded the Viscount d'Auchy, captain of the guards, to look well to his charge, and to preserve unshaken his loyalty to the king of Poland. He requested Poquenot, lieutenant of the Swiss guards, to make his dying recommendations to his allies the thirteen Cantons; and he particularly charged the Count de la Tour, master of his wardrobe, to carry his tender and constant remembrances to his mistress, the beautiful Mary Touchet, whom he had long loved. These acts performed, he fell into an extreme weakness, and yielded his last breath about three o'clock in the afternoon; wanting only twenty-one days to have accomplished his twenty-fourth year*.

The

* Brantome, who was in the court at the time of Charles's death, is very minute in his relation of all the circumstances which attended the last illness of that prince. These are his own words:—" Il mourut le propre jour de
 " la Pentecoste, l'an 1574, trois heures après midi, sur le
 " point que les médecins et chirurgiens, et tous ceux de
 " la cour le pensoient se mieux porter: car le jour avant
 " il

The reports of poison were again renewed with some appearances of reason, and Catherine of Medecis was even accused of having hastened her son's death; but from this detestable and unnatural crime, she must be acquitted on an impartial examination*.

Charles

“ il se portoit bien ; et nous croyions qu'il s'en alloit
 “ guery ; mais nous donnames de garde que sur le matin
 “ il commença à sentir la mort, laquelle il fit très belle
 “ et digne d'un grand Roi.”

* It may be curious, however, to enter a little into this disquisition, almost all the writers of that period having made mention of the suspicion, though they in general exculpate the queen-mother, and pronounce her guiltless. So abominable an action, if true, would probably have been authenticated, and handed down to us by incontestible evidence and authority. Davila never once hints at poison; but expressly attributes Charles's death to “ an illness occasioned by too violent exercise in running, hunting, wrestling, and riding the great horse; to all which recreations he was immoderately attach'd.”—In another place he says, “ The king's life was now hastening fast to its period; he had begun to spit blood some months before, and being exhausted with a slow, continued, internal fever, he had entirely lost his strength.”—Davila recounts the particulars of his calling into his chamber the princes and great officers of state previous to his death; and adds, that “ Charles having dismissed all present with weighty and affecting admonitions, still continued to hold his mother's hand fast in his own, and in that posture ended the course of his troublesome reign.”—The very act in which he expired, seems to indicate filial piety and affection. Even Henry Etienne, a
 violent

1574.

Charles left by his queen only one daughter, named Mary-Elizabeth, who survived him about

violent declaimer against Catherine of Medecis, and who accuses her of many murders, makes no mention of, nor imputes to her that of Charles the ninth.

Monfieur De Thou hesitates, and leaves the point undecided; yet he rather seems to insinuate poison as the cause of the king's death, and charges indirectly the queen his mother. "Charles," says he, "embraced Catherine of Medecis tenderly before his decease, and thanked her for the obligations which he owed her; having thus continued his dissimulation to the last moments of his life; for it is certain that his affection for, and confidence in the queen-mother were considerably diminished. It is even pretended, that he had it in contemplation to send her into Poland to her beloved son Henry." De Thou asserts likewise, that the Count de Coconas, previous to his execution, had warned the king of attempts which were meditated against his life from more than one quarter; and La Popeliniere confirms this fact. Henry king of Navarre, in repeated declarations, accused Catherine either by name, or by implication, of practising against the life of Charles the ninth, with intent to place the crown on the head of the king of Poland. De Thou likewise relates, that on opening the body of Charles, very suspicious appearances were discovered, and that poison was commonly believed to have been the cause; "*cujus rei, suspicio ut purgaretur, mortui corpus a chirurgiis et medecis apertum est; in quo livores, ex causa incognita reperti, conceptam opinionem auxerunt, potius quam minuerunt.*" These are the words of that great historian.

Brantome on the other hand, denies this assertion, and positively

bout four years. His widow, Elizabeth of Austria, retired soon after into the dominions 1574.

positively declares, that no marks of violence or poison were discoverable on the king's body.—“ Le jour ensuivant
 “ son corps fut ouvert en presence du magiftrat, et n'y
 “ ayant été trouvé au dedans aucune meurtriffeure ny
 “ tache, cela osta publiquement l'opinion que l'on avoit de
 “ la poison.” He adds that Monsieur de Strozzi and himself demanded of Ambrose Paré, the king's surgeon, to what cause he imputed that monarch's death? who replied,
 “ that he had destroyed his lungs and vitals by constantly
 “ and immoderately blowing the horn.” A moment afterwards, however, he talks of poison.—“ Si est ce qu'on ne
 “ scauroit oster aucuns d'opinion qu'il ne fut empoisonné,
 “ des que son frere partit pour Pologne, et disoit on que
 “ c'étoit de la poudre de corne d'un lievre marin, qui fait
 “ languir long tems la personne, et puis après peu à peu
 “ s'en va, et s'eteint comme une chandelle. Ceux qu'on
 “ en a soupçonné auteurs, n'ont pas fait meilleure fin.” These are Brantome's own expressions.—Mezerai, though he mentions the suspicions of poison, yet never formally accuses the queen-mother by name.

The Marechal de Bassompierre says, that having one day told Louis the thirteenth, that Charles the ninth had burst a vein in his lungs by blowing the horn, which caused his death; the king replied, that he would not have died so soon, if he had not drawn on himself his mother Catherine's resentment, and afterwards been so imprudent as to trust himself near her, at the Marechal de Retz's persuasion.—Catherine of Medecis was so conscious of her son's death being imputed to her by the people, that she thought it necessary to inform the governors of the provinces of all the circumstances of his disorder, with intent to vindicate herself from the suspicions universally received against her, and too generally credited

1574.

of her father the emperor Maximilian, and died in retreat, at Vienna*. By his mistress Mary Touchet, he had one son, Charles, Grand Prior of France, Duke of Angoulesme, and Count de Ponthieu; well known in history by his treasonable connections with the duke of Biron, under the reign of Henry the fourth.

There is perhaps no character upon which we should decide with so much candour and

* Elizabeth of Austria, queen dowager of France, after having made a visit to the castle of Amboise to bid adieu to her infant daughter, left Paris on her return into the Imperial dominions, upon the 5th of December, 1575. Rodolphus the second, her brother, who had then succeeded to the emperor Maximilian the second, received her; and under his protection she remained till her death in January, 1592. She was generous, beneficent, and humane in the highest degree, though tinged with all the devotion characteristic of the age, and of the house of Austria. Margaret queen of Navarre, her sister-in-law, found in her more than a sister's affection; Elizabeth having during the imprisonment and distress of that princess, when confined in the castle of Usson in Auvergne, divided with her the dowry assigned her as a queen of France. She always preserved an attachment to the memory of Charles the ninth, and refused to yield to the importunities of Philip the second king of Spain, who requested her hand in marriage. When Henry the third passed through Vienna, on his return from Poland into France, Maximilian the second proposed to him an alliance with his daughter, the young queen dowager; but the offer was declined by Henry. Elizabeth founded the convent of St. Claire at Vienna, in which she resided, and where she ended her life.

caution,

caution, as on that of Charles the ninth. Educated in a corrupt and vicious court, under the pernicious counsels of Catherine of Medecis, all the sentiments of virtue and grandeur of mind, with which nature had liberally endow'd him, were extinguished, or perverted into destructive and furious passions. In the powers of genius, discernment and capacity, he was hardly, if in any respect inferior to Francis the first, his grandfather. He possessed a comprehensive and retentive memory, an energy of expression the most happy, and uncommon personal and intellectual activity. Master of keen penetration, he knew the human heart, and piqued himself on his skill in discovering its feelings through the closest disguise.

No prince of the house of Valois excelled him in intrepidity and courage: His munificence was truly royal, because it was unlimited and impartial; not confined to favourites and parasites, like that of his brother Henry the third. With an intent to prevent him from application to affairs of state, those who were about his person endeavoured to seduce him into debauches of wine and women; but to the latter he was little addicted; and having once perceived that wine had so far disturbed his reason, as to induce him to commit some acts of violence, he never could be persuaded to engage a second time in such excesses, and
carefully

1574. carefully abstained from them during the remainder of his life. “ Princeps præclara indole, et magnis virtutibus,” says De Thou, “ nisi quatenus eas prava educatione et matris indulgentia corrupit.”

In the midst of all the civil dissensions with which the sad annals of his reign abound, he yet cultivated assiduously the politer studies of a liberal mind; he even took a peculiar pleasure in the company of learned and ingenious men, in a select company of whom he often amused himself, and held a sort of academy. He possessed an easy vein of poetry, and some of his compositions in verse yet remain, which do honour to his genius. With talents so comprehensive and various, he would doubtless under other instructors, and in happier times, have been ranked amongst the greatest monarchs whom France has seen reign. His vices and crimes were evidently the result of his misguided youth, and of passions naturally impetuous. Even for the massacre of Paris, a mind tinctured with compassion for human error and weakness, will make some apology; since to his mother alone, and to his pernicious counsellors, that deed of sanguinary and abominable revenge may justly be attributed*.

In

* Brantome, who freely and fully enumerates Charles's defects, and who speaks in terms of detestation of the massacre

In his person he was tall, and well shaped, though he stooped in his walk, and his head usually leaned a little on one side. His complexion was pale, his hair of a deep black, his nose aquiline, and the air of his countenance keen and penetrating. His neck was long and slender, his chest raised, and all his limbs justly proportioned, except that his legs were rather too large. He excelled in every martial exercise, and rode the horse with distinguished grace and address: of the diversion of hunting he was immoderately fond, and pursued it to the injury of his health and constitution. The Marechal de Retz, and those persons to whom the charge of his education was committed, had so accustomed him to the habit of swearing, that he used oaths and imprecations in his common discourse †.

1574.

Cut

· sacre of Paris, yet exculpates him on account of his youth, his unprincipled preceptors, and the general corruption of the whole court. I much admire the passage, which breathes a generosity and candour of sentiment. “ J’ai veu plusieurs s’etonner,” says Brantome, “ que veu la corruption de son regne, et depuis la perte qu’il fit de Monsieur de Sipierre, qui le nourissoit si bien, comme il fut si magnanime, si genereux, valeureux, et liberal, comme il a eté. Car il a autant etendu sa liberalité que fit jamais roi, à toutes sortes de gens.”

† Brantome, who resided in the court of Charles the ninth, and who personally knew all the first nobility of his
time,

1574.

Cut off by an immature and miserable death, just as he began to emerge from the abyss of

time, paints the Marechal de Retz in the most frightful colours, and accuses him of having corrupted the noble nature of his royal pupil, by every pernicious precept and example. "Albert de Gondi," says he, "Marechal de Retz, etoit un Florentin, fin, caut, corrompu, menteur, et grand dissimulateur." Then continuing his account of the family of Gondi; "to speak of him in two words," adds Brantome, "his grand-father was a miller, only two leagues from Florence; his father was a bankrupt at Lyons; and his mother, grande Revendresse de Putaines, on account of which talent Henry the second conceived a friendship for her, and made her governess of his children, particularly of Charles the ninth. The Marechal de Retz himself was for a long time a commissary of provisions in the royal army, 'till Charles advanced him; and he in return taught the king to swear and to dissemble." Brantome proceeds to draw a comparison, or rather a contrast, between him and the Seigneur de la Cipierre, who had been Charles's preceding governor, and who possessed all the endowments of mind and character, requisite for the due discharge of so important a trust. After his death, the Marechal de Retz perverted all the great qualities of the young king, and accustomed him to deceit and to imprecations; "si bien que le roi," adds Brantome, "apprit de lui ce vice; car de son naturel, il ne l'etoit nullement en sa jeunesse, etant fort ouvert, prompt, actif, vigilant, et eveillé."

This description of Brantome is confirmed by almost all the best historians, who impute many of the calamities of this reign, and many of the vices of Charles's character, to the pernicious precepts of the Marechal de Retz.

guilt

guilt and infamy, into which a deference to his mother's fatal advice had plunged him; and scarce known in history, except as the author of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, posterity have regarded his reign with detestation rather than pity, and condemned him too severely for errors and crimes which can scarcely be deemed his own. Commiseration for a prince, whose youth and inexperience rendered him but too easily the victim of a pernicious system of politics; the satisfaction which we feel in attempting to rescue from ignominy, a character not originally or naturally debased; and the impartiality which every writer should cultivate and encourage;—these sentiments alone have induced me to regard Charles the ninth in a far more favourable light, than that in which he has generally been represented by all the English historians.

The same indecent neglect which had been exhibited at the funeral of Francis the second, attended that of Charles; and, some disputes relative to precedence having arisen among the nobility who followed in the procession, his body was quitted by them between Paris and St. Denis, and conducted, without any pomp or royal state, to the tomb of his ancestors*.

* Brantome was himself, as a gentleman of the bed-chamber, one of the very few who accompanied his royal

1574.

master's body, and saw it deposited at St. Denis.—“ Le
 “ corps du Roi fut quitté,” says he, “ estant à l'église
 “ de St. Lazare, de tout le grand convoy, tant des prin-
 “ ces, seigneurs, cour de parlement, et ceux de l'église
 “ et de la ville; et ne fut suivy et accompagné que du
 “ pauvre Monsieur de Arozze, de Funcel, et moi, et de
 “ deux autres gentilhommes de la chambre, qui ne vou-
 “ lusmes jamais abandonner notre maître, tant qu'il seroit
 “ sur terre. Il y avoit aussi quelques archers de la garde,
 “ chose, qui faisoit grand pitié à voir!”—A singular
 fatality seems to have accompanied this unhappy prince;
 and the continual dissensions which marked his reign,
 pursued him even after death.—Elizabeth, queen of Eng-
 land, though of a different religion from Charles the ninth,
 yet celebrated his funeral with extraordinary solemnity and
 magnificence, in the church of St. Paul, at London.

F I N I S,

B O O K S

Printed for, and Sold by,

C. D I L L Y.

1. **A** Tour through the Western, Southern, and Interior Provinces of France; written by Mr. Wraxall, and now first published separate. Price 2s. 6d. in boards.

2. Liberal Education; or, a Practical Treatise on the Methods of acquiring useful and polite Learning, 2 vols. 6s. By Mr. Knox.

3. Essays Moral and Literary, by the same Author, 2 vols. 7s.

4. Bath Society Papers on Agriculture, Planting, &c. 2 vols. 8vo. 12s.

5. Cavallo on General Electricity, 8vo. 7s.

6. ——— on Medical Electricity, 8vo. 3s. 6d.

7. ——— on Air, with an Introduction to Chemistry, 4to. 1l. 8s.

8. Carver's Travels through North America, large 8vo. 9s.

9. Chesterfield's Miscellaneous Works, 2 vols. 4to. 2l. 8s.

10. The same, 4 vols. 8vo. 1l. 4s.

11. Chapone's Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, 2 vols. 6s.—Another edition, in 1 vol. 3s.

12. ———'s Miscellanies, in Prose and Verse, 3s.

13. Justamond's Private Life of Lewis XV. 4 vols. 8vo. 1l. 4s.

14. Falconer on Climate, &c. 4to. 1l. 1l.

15. Ives's Voyage from England to India, in the Year 1754, 4to. 1l. 5s.

16. Parker's

BOOKS printed for C. DILLY.

16. Parker's Evidence of our Transactions in the East Indies, 4to. 10s. 6d. in boards.

17. Cronstedt's System of Mineralogy, translated from the Swedish Original; enlarged and improved, according to the latest Discoveries made since the Death of the Author, 2 vols. 12s.

18. Clark's concise History of Knighthood, 2 vols. 12s.

19. Hanbury's complete Body of Planting and Gardening, 2 vols. fol. 4l. 4s.

20. History of the Revolution of Ali Bey against the Ottoman Porte, with a Map of Lower Egypt, the second edition, 8vo. 6s.

21. Letters from Italy to a Friend residing in France, written by Lady Miller, of Bath-Easton Villa, 2 vols. 8vo. 12s.

22. Playfair's (Dr.) System of Chronology, elegantly printed on a new Great Primer Type, and a fine Royal Paper, in one large volume, fol. 2l. 12s. 6d.

23. Townsend's Free Thoughts on Despotic and Free Governments, 4s.

24. Cooke's Voyage to Russia, 2 vols. 12s.

25. Johnson's Dictionary, 2 vols. fol. 4l. 10s.

26. ————— Abridged.—In 2 vols. 8vo. 10s.

27. Kitchin's Traveller's Guide thro' England and Wales, 3s. 6d.

28. Jacob's Law Dictionary, fol. 2l. 2s.

29. Fothergill's (Dr.) Works, with the Life of the Author, by Dr. Lettsom, 3 vols. 8vo. 1l. 1s.

30. Gerard's Sermons, 2 vols. 8vo. 12s.

31. Hederici Lexicon, new edition, corrected and enlarged, 4to. 1l. 1s.

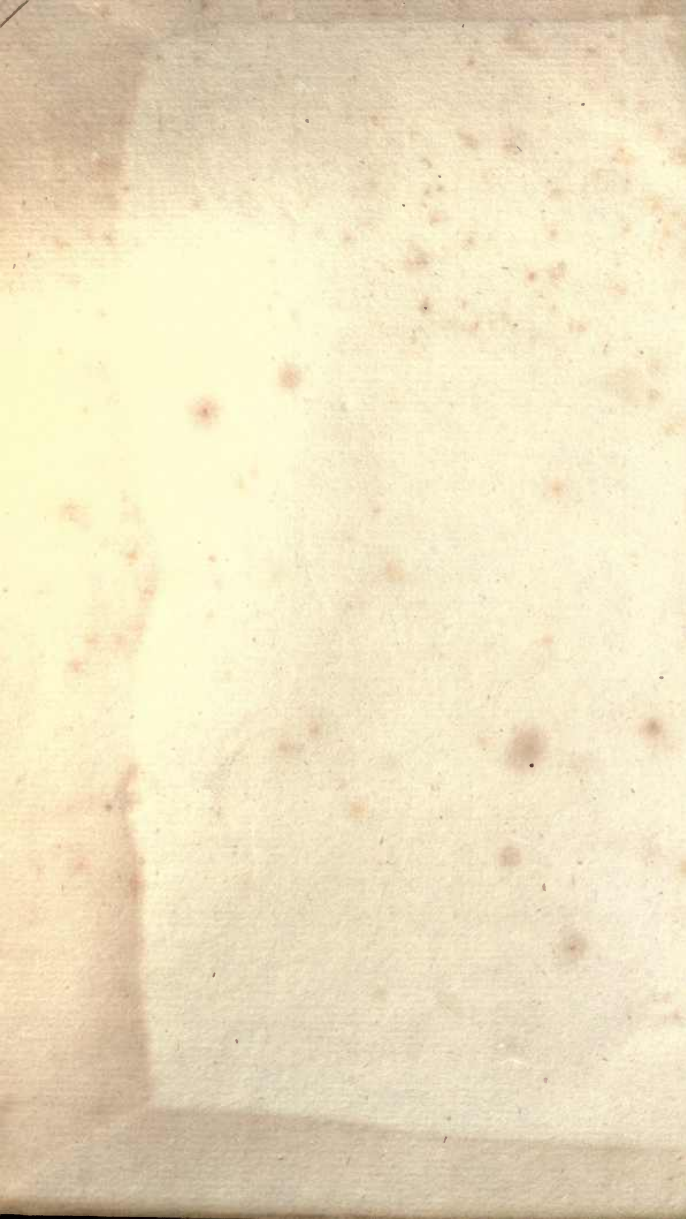
32. Parry's (of Cirencester) Sermons on Practical Subjects, 8vo. 6s.

33. Tillotson's Sermons, 12 vols. 8vo. 3l.

34. Walker's (Robert of Edinb.) Sermons, 3 vols. 8vo. 18s.







DC Wraxall -
95 The history of
W92m France
1785
v.2



3 1158 00984 1452

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 007 434 4

DC
95
W92m
1785
v.2

UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

