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WYCLIFFE AND THE HUGUENOTS.

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WYCLIFFE AND THE HUGUENOTS

OR

SKETCHES OF THE RISE OF THE REFORMATION IN
ENGLAND AND OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF
PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

BY REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

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EMMANUEL

TO THE OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS
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THIS VOLUME

COMPOSED OF TWO COURSES OF LECTURES

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BY

THE AUTHOR.

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WYCLIFFE.

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PREFACE.

As no references to authorities are given in the following pages, it seems due to the reader to indicate the sources from which the information that they contain has been derived.

For the course of Lectures on the Life and Times of Wycliffe, the Biographies of the Reformer by Lewis, Vaughan, Le Bas, and Böhringer have been consulted. Among these, a special value attaches to the two Biographies of Dr. Vaughan. It is to them we are indebted for our knowledge of Wycliffe's gradual advance to that position toward the Papacy which he finally assumed ; for the first full development of his character and services as a religious Reformer ; and for the fresh interest that, during the last half century, has been taken in his life and labours ; a debt too tardily and grudgingly acknowledged by English, but which has been readily and fully acknowledged by continental writers. As might have been expected, it is to the Germans that we owe the best estimate of

Wycliffe's place in the world of philosophic thought, a topic incidentally alluded to, but not dwelt upon in the following pages.

The collateral information that I have woven into the narrative of the Wycliffe period, has been chiefly drawn from the writings of Sharon Turner, Sir James Mackintosh, Sir James Stephen, Lingard, Milman, Hallam, Fox, Neander, and Gieseler.

The rise of the Reformation in France having been traced in the familiar pages of Dr. Merle d'Aubigné, the second course of Lectures in this Volume opens a few years after the date at which his narrative closes.

The enormous folio of Crespin, "*Histoire des Martyrs persecutez et mis à mort pour la Vérité de l'Évangile, &c.* (par Simon Goulart.) Fol. Genève, 1619," will ever be the great quarry out of which all minute information as to the life and death of the Martyrs of Protestantism in France will be derived; and it is satisfactory to notice, that recent research has tended to confirm the fidelity, even in minute detail, of his voluminous records.

For that period of the History of French Protestantism which our narrative covers, the reader who desires to consult the earlier historians will have recourse to the histories of Theodore Beza, Agrippa d'Aubigné, La Place, De Thou, Garnier, Matthieu, Mézeray, Davila, Brantôme; and to the Memoirs of Castelnau, Condé,

Coligni, Tavannes, Montluc, De Nevers, and Margaret of Valois. As some of these are tedious, and many of them contradictory, it will be to the fresher, lighter, and more impartial pages of Sismondi, Capecigue, Soldan, Ranke, Mignet, and Michelet, that the general reader will naturally turn. To the four last-named writers I have been especially indebted.

Of late years, the French Protestants have themselves done much to reproduce and revivify their earlier as well as their later history. The "History of the Protestants of France," by G. de Félice, which has been translated into English, is admirably executed. A. Crottet's "Petite Chronique Protestante de France," published in 1846, was one of the first tokens of a renewed attention bestowed upon the history of French Protestantism during the sixteenth century. It was followed in 1855 by Charles Drion's "Histoire Chronologique de l'Eglise Protestante de France, jusqu'à la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes." This work consists of a series of facts, and of legislative and judicial documents, in the exact order of their succession, given in a compendious form, with their dates prominently exhibited.

In 1859 the following, among other works, issued from the Protestant press of Paris:—

"La Réformation en France pendant sa Première Période, par Henri Lutteroth."

“Les Premiers Jours du Protestantisme en France, par H. de Triqueti.”

“Les Huguenots et la Constitution de l’Eglise Réformée de France en 1559, par E. Castel.”

“Essai sur l’Avenir de la Tolérance, par Ad. Schæffer.”

“Du Protestantisme en France, par Samuel Vincent. Nouvelle Edition, avec une Introduction, de M. Prévost-Paradol.”

“Histoire de la Réformation Française,” par F. Puaux.

It was the celebration in Paris, upon the 29th May 1859, of a tricentenary commemoration of the meeting of the First Synod of the Reformed Church in France, which prompted the issue, in one year, of so many volumes upon the same subject. They are for the most part light brochures of ephemeral value and interest.

Castel’s volume is ably written, and contains a full inquiry into the etymology of the word Huguenot, quoting and canvassing the various opinions which have been entertained as to the origin and meaning of the term.

To Schæffer’s Essay there is appended a Discussion of the question, “La Saint Barthélémy fut-elle préméditée de longue main ?” This discussion is a reprint of a Review which had appeared elsewhere of a German work published in 1855, entitled “The History of Protestantism in France to the death of Charles ix., by G. G. Soldan, Professor in the University of Giessen,” and of a translation into French of that portion of this work which bore upon the question of the premeditation of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, which appeared at Paris

in the same year, from the pen of Ch. Schmidt, Professor of Theology at Strasbourg. I have to refer the reader either to Soldan's work, or to this translation of that portion of it, for the best, the fullest, and as it seems to me, most satisfactory investigation of a much disputed point. The whole evidence on either side is carefully weighed, and the conclusions are cautiously arrived at. It is in the main the view given by Soldan that I have adopted in the closing chapter of this volume, and I have to ask any who may be disposed to question its accuracy, to suspend their judgment till they have studied the pages of the German Professor. Puaux's two volumes carry the history down to the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. They are designed to form a popular history which might be widely circulated. The design is fully realized. Great pains have been taken by the author to make himself acquainted with the results of modern historical research, and he has presented the whole in a most attractive form to the reader.

The first number of the "Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français" was issued at Paris in 1853, and its continuance under the direction of its able Editor has done much to foster and to gratify the spirit of historical inquiry.

The most important bibliographical proof of a revived interest in France as to the History of its Protestantism, was the appearance, in 1846, of the first part of "La France Protestante, par MM. Eug. et Em. Haag." This

great work, whose ninth and concluding volume appeared in 1859, is a Biographical Dictionary containing the "Lives of French Protestants who have made a Name for themselves in History, from the First Days of the Reformation to the recognition of the Principle of Liberty of Worship by the National Assembly." Nothing that labour could do has remained undone to render this work complete. It is a vast repository of information, the accuracy of which can be confidently relied on. It exhibits a singular freedom from the operation of any strong religious bias. We regret to notice that in its later volumes there is a contraction in the scale of the biographies. It would be a reproach to France were it true that this has arisen from the learned and laborious authors not having met with sufficient support in their great undertaking.

No English writer that I know has attempted a complete History of Protestantism in France. Besides Browning's "Huguenots," there are, however, two volumes entitled "The Protestant Reformation in France, by the author of 'Father Darcy,' 'Emilia Wyndham,' &c.," to which too high praise can scarcely be given. The narrative which they present to the reader terminates at the death of Charles IX.

I have only to add that the two courses of Lectures which this volume contains were constructed upon different principles. As Wycliffe's Life has already been so admirably presented by Dr. Vaughan, to diversify the

interest I threw in as much collateral and illustrative information as I could collect, and indulged freely in episode, and in passing remarks and reflections. This I have carefully avoided in the second course of Lectures, setting myself in them to the pure and exclusive task of the Narrator ; the one object in view being to keep before the eye the incidents described. Whichever mode the reader may prefer, I have to ask his kind indulgence for the attempt which in both is made to popularize a portion of Ecclesiastical History.

W. H.

WYCLIFFE.

I.

PAPAL CLAIMS TO CIVIL SUPREMACY OVER ENGLAND.

ON the banks of the Tees, in Yorkshire, a few miles above Rokeby, and about as many below Bernard Castle, lies the small parish of Wycliffe. This parish either got its name from, or had given its name to, a family which had occupied its manor-house from the time of the Norman Conquest. It was in this manor-house that John Wycliffe, the first, and as a growing number now regard him, the greatest of our English reformers, was born, in the year 1324; a century and a half before the birth of Luther; three years before the accession of Edward III.

Nothing is known about his boyhood. The position of his family, and his early destination to the Church, would secure for him the best education that his country and age afforded. Schools for elementary instruction were even at that early period scattered thickly over England. A school of this kind was the ordinary appendage to the Cathedrals, and also to the larger monasteries. More than 500 religious houses had been added

to those already existing, in the interval between the Conquest and Wycliffe's birth. One of these, the Abbey of Egglestone, lay at but a short distance from Wycliffe's birthplace, and it is not unlikely that he received there the rudiments of his education. The Church of that day was the great, as yet, the almost exclusive Educator of the country. One pleasing proof may be quoted of the interest taken by it in multiplying the means of primary instruction. All teachers of youth were required to hold a license from a clergyman. Complaints arose as to the exorbitant charges demanded for the licenses. These complaints were forwarded to Rome, and at a General Council held in the Lateran in 1179, all charges of the kind were prohibited—a prohibition which was renewed at a succeeding Council held in Paris in 1212.

In 1340, when sixteen years old, Wycliffe entered Queen's College, Oxford, as a commoner. This college, opened for the first time that year, took its name from Philippa of Hainault, Queen of Edward III. For its endowments, however, it was mainly indebted to the Queen's chaplain, Sir Robert Eggesfield, who, being himself a native of Cumberland, erected it chiefly for the benefit of youth from the northern counties, a circumstance which may have had something to do with Wycliffe's being enrolled as one of its first scholars. In those days most things were moulded after scriptural models, and so, in imitation of Christ, his twelve apostles, and seventy disciples, it was provided in the constitution of this college given it by its founder, that it should have one Provost, twelve Fellows, and seventy commoners. Apostolic simplicity was not, however, preserved through-

out. The Provost and the twelve Fellows were to sit down daily to dinner, clothed in scarlet robes; while at the proper hour, and at the sound of a trumpet, the seventy poor scholars were to repair to the refectory, and kneel respectfully at the board. Perhaps young Wycliffe disliked being numbered among that seventy, or perhaps a college so recently erected failed to afford him the scholastic advantages he desired. We know, at any rate, that he stayed in Queen's College but a single year, and that, in 1341, he entered Merton College, the most celebrated foundation in Oxford.

It was the great age of the Universities. Bologna, Paris, Oxford, were at the height of their fame. Access was free to all; subscription to creed articles was not required; poverty was no disqualification; a goodly number of the scholars were fed and clothed out of the College funds; nor were the fees demanded, or the way of living, such as to put the education beyond the reach of the humbler classes. The way, too, to university distinction lay invitingly open. Any one who had properly qualified himself, by taking the necessary degrees, might assume the office of a lecturer or teacher, his success depending solely upon his merits. Master and scholar met often in those intellectual tournaments, whose lists were open to all challengers, and where the youngest aspirant might break a lance with the eldest chieftain of the schools; crowds watching the dialectic thrust and parry of the combatants, with as great eagerness as the multitude ever watched within the guarded circle, the dash of the good knight's courser, and the clash of shield and spear. Offering such facilities, excitements, rewards

to intellectual effort, and that to an age whose intellectual impulses had all the freshness and force of an awakening from a long deep slumber, the Universities during the fourteenth century were overcrowded with scholars. When Wycliffe entered Merton, 30,000 students were congregated at Oxford, some of the Halls being little better than upper schools. Wycliffe's College, Merton, was of a higher grade than most of its associates. In point of antiquity, it stood second on the list, having been founded in 1264, and though not yet a hundred years old, it could already boast of having given three primates to the Church of England, of having had its chair of theology filled by the celebrated Bradwardine, and having sent out into the schools William of Ockham, with whose fame all Europe was ringing. Its founder, De Merton, Chancellor of Henry III., with a singular prescience of the dangers to which, in Wycliffe's days, the university system would be exposed, established it as a rule of his foundation, that any of the fellows who became a monk or a friar, forfeited his fellowship. Security was in this way taken that its members should always belong to the secular or parochial clergy, among which Wycliffe intended to enrol himself. Placed so favourably—surrounded with strong stimulants to study—Wycliffe speedily distinguished himself. In a few years he became a Fellow of Merton, and devoted himself, in the first instance, almost exclusively to academic pursuits. He became thus a proficient in the knowledge both of the Canon and the Civil law ; and so great an adept in the philosophy of the schools, that one of his bitterest opponents, the contemporary historian Knyghton, has

yet said of him that "in philosophy he was second to none; in scholastic exercises incomparable; struggling to excel all others in disputation, both in subtlety and depth." Subsequently, by his treatise on the "Reality of Universal Conceptions," he won for himself a distinguished place in one of the two great philosophic schools which divided Europe. When or how it was that his attention was first directed to the Sacred Writings we do not know. They were little known and little studied then in the universities. Instruction in them formed no part of the collegiate preparation for the priesthood. The road to distinction in the Church lay through eminence in other departments, more especially in knowledge of the canon and civil law. Still there were a few devout students of the Word of God, as there had always been in the darkest ages, who sought for and found in the Holy Scriptures, light for the understanding, quickening for the conscience, comfort for the heart. That Wycliffe was early numbered with that few, appears from his fellow-collegians giving him the title of the Evangelical or Gospel Doctor.

Whatever impression the truths of Christianity had already made upon him, that impression was intensified by an event which spread a fearful gloom over England, as it had done over so many other lands. In 1345, one of the most destructive pestilences that ever wasted our globe broke out in the East. It crept along the shores of the Mediterranean; it desolated Greece; it fixed its fangs on Italy; it climbed and crossed the Alps; it rested not till it had reached and desolated the remotest countries of Europe. Boccaccio has described its horrors

as they exhibited themselves in a single city, and, such is the power and privilege of genius, has fixed on it thereby the name of the Plague of Florence. Petrarch mourned its desolations, for his Laura was among its victims. At last, after a few years' travel westward, this plague appeared in England. "And in these days," says one of our old chroniclers (Caxton), "was death without sorrow, weddings without friendship, flying without succour,—for many fled from place to place, but they were infected, and might not escape the death; so that scarcely were there left living folk for to bury them honestly that were dead." Another of our chroniclers (Hollinshed), speaking of the year 1350, relates that the deaths had been so great and vehement within the city of London, "that over and above the bodies buried in other accustomed burying-places (which for their infinite number cannot be reckoned into account), there were buried that year daily, from Candlemas till Easter, in the Charterhouse-yard of London, more than 200 bodies." From an inscription on a monument which survived for many years, it appeared that no fewer, on the whole, than 100,000 of the inhabitants of London perished; and though, when Caxton and others tell us that nine-tenths of the whole population of our own and of other lands were swept away, we cannot but think this to be exaggeration, there seems little reason to doubt that little more than a half of the population survived this terrible visitation. Till recently it was believed that it was under the awe of this event, and with the spectacle before him of its strange effects upon the Church and nation, that Wy-

cliffe issued his first publication, a small tract, which appeared in 1356, under the title of *The Last Age of the Church*. Dr. Tod of Dublin, who published and edited the treatise some years ago, speaks but doubtingly in his preface of the grounds on which this work was attributed to Wycliffe as its author. Dr. Vaughan, who in his first biography had accepted the prevailing belief, has given good reasons in his later monogram to doubt, if not to disbelieve, the authorship. We cannot, therefore, any longer make use of this volume as revealing to us the opinions and sentiments of Wycliffe; and must be content to gather from his after writings, the proof that this great national calamity sank deep into his heart, and that the slender influence for good that it had exerted upon the community and upon the Church filled his mind with painful impressions and forebodings.

In 1360, after he had been for twenty years first scholar, and then a Fellow of Merton College, Wycliffe received his first ecclesiastical preferment, being presented by the master and scholars of Balliol Hall to the living of Freylingham in the diocese of Lincoln. In the close of the same year, a still higher honour was bestowed on him by his being chosen Master or Warden of the College which had thus exercised its patronage on his behalf. He owed both these appointments to the distinguished collegiate reputation which he had now attained. What may also in part have contributed to them, was the circumstance that the Baliols by whom that college at Oxford was founded which bears still their name, were the Baliols

of Bernard Castle in the neighbourhood of Wycliffe's birthplace,—friends, it may have been, of his own family. A few years afterwards Wycliffe resigned the Wardenship of Balliol to accept that of a new college erected in 1361, by Simon Islop, Archbishop of Canterbury, and called from him Canterbury Hall. By the terms of its foundation, this Hall was to be composed of a Warden, three scholars,—who were to be monks of Christ-Church, Canterbury, and eight other scholars, who were to be secular priests. Owing to the jealousies between the seculars and the religious, this mixed constitution was not found to work well. Woodhall, a monk who had in the first instance been nominated as the Warden, got into such unseemly broils with the university authorities, that the Archbishop, exercising a right that he had reserved, resolved to remove the four monks from his college, and fill their places with secular priests. Having ejected Woodhall, he made choice of Wycliffe for new Warden. In the letter of institution Wycliffe is described “as one in whose fidelity, circumspection, and prudence his Grace very much confided, and on whom he had fixed his eyes on account of the honesty of his life, his laudable conversation, and knowledge of letters.” The good Archbishop died the following year, and was succeeded in the primacy by Langham, Bishop of Ely, who was a monk, and had previously been abbot of Westminster. Woodhall lost no time in appealing to the new primate, who not only reinstated him and his three associates, but, in direct contradiction to the intention of its founder, ejected all the seculars, and turned the college into a monastic

institution. But one alternative was left to Wycliffe. He appealed to the Pope. The case seemed clear enough. If the one archbishop had exceeded his powers in ejecting Woodhall, as certainly the other had exceeded his in remodelling the whole establishment, but Langham had the ear of the Papacy, and after a long delay the judgment of the Supreme Pontiff was, in 1370, given against Wycliffe.

While this case was still depending before the Papal court, that event occurred which first sets Wycliffe before us, as taking a conspicuous and influential part in the public affairs of the nation. More than a century before, in the days of King John, a dispute arose about the appointment of an Archbishop. It was referred to Rome. The Pope decided against the king, and instantly proceeded, without communication or consultation, to induct the Primate of his choice. The baffled and choleric king burst into a flame of passion. A Primate so appointed should never set foot on English soil. The Pope should atone to him for that insult, or the tie between his kingdom and the Papacy should be broken. The only answer that he got to his demand for redress was, that if he did not at once acknowledge the Pope's Primate, England would be laid under Interdict. The king grew furious at the threat, and in the height of his boisterous rage, he uttered fearful oaths, that if that threat was executed, he would drive the whole Roman bishops and clergy out of the land. Bold words these; but Innocent III. was not moved by them. The Interdict smote England. The churches were all closed; the bells all silent; the services of religion ceased.

Neither prayer nor chant was heard; no more the sacrifice of the mass was offered; no longer the sacred festivals of the Church were kept. All the scant mercy that was left to a land so spiritually bereft, was the furtive marriage at the Church porch, the hasty baptism of the infant, and extreme unction administered to the dying. For a whole year that Interdict, terrible beyond conception to those who believed, as all England then did, in the power of the Romish priesthood, lay upon the land. The king quailed not; his passion kept him firm. But the country groaned beneath the stroke; the nobles got estranged; there was little to bind them to the king, whose conflict with the Pope they saw to be one of passion more than principle—the ebullition of thwarted pride; the people were ripening for revolt. Feeling the ground safe beneath him, Innocent took a further step; he excommunicated the king. Papal excommunication was, then, no mere expulsion from the bosom of the Church. It shut out its victim from all the privileges of society. It debarred all intercourse, all aid, all service; marked its subject out for ignominy and abhorrence, to be shrunk from as men would shrink from the infected of the plague. We read of a king of France laid under its ban by Pope Gregory v., who, in consequence, was deserted by his courtiers, his friends, his family, by all but two attendants, who took all the meat that came from his table, and cast it as a polluted thing into the fire. Sir Walter's Abbot, in the castle of Artornish, describes faithfully to Bruce the Papal curse—

“ Unhappy, what hast thou to plead,
Why I denounce not on thy head

That awful doom, which canons tell,
 Shuts Paradise, and opens Hell?
 Anathema of power so dread,
 It blends the living with the dead;
 Bids each good angel soar away,
 And every ill one claim his prey;
 Expels thee from the Church's care,
 And deafens Heaven against thy prayer;
 Arms every hand against thy life,
 Bans all who aid thee in the strife—
 Nay, each, whose succour cold and scant
 With meanest alms relieves thy want;
 Haunts thee while living, and when dead,
 Dwells on thy yet devoted head;
 Rends honour's scutcheon from thy hearse,
 Stills o'er thy bier the holy verse,
 And spurns thy corpse from hallowed ground—
 Flung like vile carrion to the hound."

Dread as that anathema was, King John braved all its terrors for two full years, and did not yield. There must have been—craven though he turned out to be at last—a spice of the old Norman spirit in him. Innocent at last took his final step. He deposed John from the throne; released his subjects from allegiance to him; declared the throne and kingdom of England open as lawful prey to any who should wrest it from John's impious hands, and specially called on Philip Augustus, King of France, to execute the commission. The French monarch undertook the task; and the forces were already mustered for the invasion of England, when, passing at once from the height of a swaggering defiance to the depth of a most abject submission, King John signed, sealed, and publicly acknowledged a deed dictated by the Papal legate, the tenor whereof runs thus:—

“Be it known unto all men, that having in many points offended God, and our Holy Mother, the Church, as satisfaction for our sins, and duty to humble ourselves, with our own free-will, and the common consent of our barons, we bestow and yield up to God, his holy apostles, Peter and Paul, to our Lord the Pope Innocent and his successors, all our kingdom of England, and all our kingdom of Ireland, to be held as a fief of the Holy See, with the payment (annually?) of a thousand merks, and the customary Peter’s pence. And we declare this deed irrevocable; and if any of our successors shall attempt to annul our act, we declare him thereby to have forfeited his crown.”

And so, as far as act of single king could do it, the free, fair realm of England is transformed into a spiritual fief of the see of Rome, and the supremacy of the Pope over it in all matters, civil as well as sacred, is affirmed and ratified. Nor was this a unique and extraordinary stretch of Pontifical assumption and authority. It was but the carrying out of that policy inaugurated by Hildebrand in his excommunication and deposition of Henry iv. of Germany; a policy which, for 200 years and more, during the noontide of its power, as long, in fact, as it was suffered by the subject nations, the Papal court pursued. Innocent III. assumed the office of Lord Paramount of England, burdened by no sense of anything like aggression or usurpation on his part. He accepted the office as an inherent privilege of the Papacy. It sat lightly on the shoulders of one who, in one of his bulls, could say, “As the sun and the moon are placed in the firmament, the greater as the light of the day, and

the lesser as the light of the night, thus are there two powers in the Church, the pontifical, which is the greater, and the royal, which is the less." Or let us listen to the celebrated Unam Sanctam Bull of Pope Boniface VIII. (A.D. 1302), renewed and approved by Pope Leo X. in the sixteenth century, and intended specially to define the powers and prerogatives of the Roman Pontiff. "There are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. Our Lord said not of these swords, It is too much, but It is enough. Both are in the power of the Church: the one, the spiritual, to be used by the Church; the other, the material, for the Church: the former, that of priests; the latter, that of kings and soldiers, to be wielded at the command and by the sufferance of the priest. The spiritual instituted the temporal, and judges whether that power is well exercised. If the temporal power errs, it is judged by the spiritual. To deny this, is to assert with the heretical Manichæans two co-equal principles. We therefore assert, define, and pronounce that every human being is subject to the Pontiff of Rome."

The liberties and independence of England were laid by John at the feet of a foreign Pontiff. Looking, however, at the issue, one scarce can wish that the king by whom that deed was done had been a better man, or a wiser, firmer, more patriotic prince. It was the wild irregularities of his private life, the tyranny and caprice of his government, and above all, that degrading submission to the Pope, which united the Barons of England in opposition, and put that strength into their hands, by which, on the plain of Runnymede, they enforced

the signing of the Magna Charta, and laid thereby broad and deep the foundations of our country's liberties. "Whoever," says Sir James Mackintosh, "in any future age or unborn nation, may admire the felicity of the expedient which converted the power of taxation into the shield of liberty, by which discretionary and secret imprisonment was rendered impracticable, and portions of the people were trained to exercise a larger share of judicial power than was ever allotted to them in any other civilized state, in such a manner as to secure instead of endangering public tranquillity ; whoever exults at the spectacle of enlightened and independent assemblies, who, under the eye of a well-informed nation, discuss and determine the laws and policy likely to make communities great and happy ; whoever is capable of comprehending all the effects of such institutions, with all their possible improvements, upon the mind and genius of a people, is sacredly bound to speak with reverential gratitude of the authors of the Great Charter. To have produced it, to have preserved it, to have matured it, constitute the immortal claim of England on the esteem of mankind."

It was with sentiments very different from those thus eloquently expressed, that Pope Innocent III. received at Rome the first intelligence of the signing of the Great Charter. "What!" said he, in the first heat of his indignation, "have the barons of England presumed to transfer to others the patrimony of the Church? By St. Peter, we cannot leave such a crime unpunished!"—choleric words, which calmer reflection will modify or

retract. Not so. Having taken full time for reflection, he writes to these Barons of England, summons them to Rome to answer for and make reparation for their deed, and issues the bull, in which they and their act are thus spoken of: "Vassals, they have conspired against their lord; knights, against their king. Under fears which might shake the firmest man, he has entered into a treaty, not only base and ignominious, but unlawful and unjust, in flagrant violation and diminution of his rights and honour. Wherefore, as the Lord hath said by the mouth of his prophet, 'I have set thee above the kingdoms to pluck up and destroy, to build and to plant;' and by the mouth of another prophet, 'Break the leagues of ungodliness, and loose the heavy burdens,' we can no longer pass over in silence such audacious wickedness, committed in contempt of the Apostolic See, in infringement of the rights of the king, to the disgrace of the kingdom of England, to the great peril of the crusade. We, therefore, with the advice of our brethren, altogether reprove and condemn this Charter, prohibiting the king, under pain of anathema, from observing it. We declare the said Charter, with all its obligations and guarantees, null and void." Such was the welcome which at its birth British liberty received at Rome. No holy baptism for that strange child. The strongest hand in Christendom tries to strangle it in its cradle. But notwithstanding it has survived, all the more vigorous in its constitution for the exposure and rough handling of its long and chequered childhood, for England was but slowly de-

livered from that cruel thralldom to Rome in which John had bound her. His successors evaded the oath of fealty, which as vassals they should have taken at their coronation, but the accustomed payment year by year of the thousand marks, carried with it the feudal acknowledgment of vassalage. At the close of the reign of Edward the Second, the annual payment was discontinued. This was done without remonstrance or complaint.

The Pope of that period, John XXII., had his thoughts absorbed with the affairs of Italy, distracted by his rupture with the Emperor. In 1365, thirty-three years after the last payment of this tribute had been made, Edward III. received an unexpected communication from Rome. Pope Urban v. not only demanded that the payment should immediately be renewed, but that the accumulated arrears should be instantly discharged; and to let the King of England know how resolute he was that this should be done, Edward was still further informed that in default of compliance he would be summoned to appear and answer to his liege lord the Pope for his neglect. One wonders how such a monarch as Edward the Third, then in the plenitude of his power—the honours of the great victories of Crecy and Poitiers fresh around his throne—would have dealt with such a communication had it been left to himself to make reply. Urban should have known at least that it was no second John who filled the English throne. The step taken by the King tells us how the times had changed. He laid the Pope's letter before a meeting of his Parliament, and submitted to it the question as to what

answer should be given. At this important meeting Wycliffe was present, and has reported to us the speeches of some of the great Barons on the occasion.

The first speaker in the debate is a plain, blunt soldier : —“ This kingdom of England,” said he, “ was won by the sword, and by that sword has been defended. Julius Cæsar exacted a tribute by force, but force could give him no perpetual right to it. Let the Pope then gird on his sword, and come and try to exact this tribute by force, and I for one am ready to resist him.”

The second Lord (somewhat more rational), begins his speech by laying it down as a first principle that tribute such as that now claimed could be paid only to those capable of civil or secular rule. The Pope had no such qualification : his duty was to follow Christ, who refused all secular dominion. “ Let us hold him then firmly,” said the speaker, “ to his own proper spiritual duties, and oppose him when he claims civil power.”

“ It seems to me,” said the third speaker, “ that we can retort the Pope’s own reasoning upon himself. He calls himself the servant of the servants of God. He can claim then such a tribute as this, only upon the ground of some good service rendered to this land ; but as, in my judgment, he renders no such service either spiritually or temporally, but only drains our treasure to help our enemies, the tribute, I say, should be denied.”

“ The Pope,” argued the fourth speaker, “ claims lordship over all the ecclesiastical property in England ; but as there cannot be two lords-paramount over the same property, and as we cannot yield the suzerainty of our king over all the property of the kingdom, the Pope must be a

vassal to our king, and ought to render a vassal's homage. This he has never done, and we should take care lest, by admitting his present claim, we open his way to some still more flagrant violation of our laws."

A fifth Lord "wondered whether this payment was originally demanded on the condition of absolving King John, and relieving the land from the Interdict. If so, he denounced it as out and out a simoniacal transaction ; the rendering of priestly service for money payment, which they were bound at all hazard to repudiate. But if the tribute were demanded as the ordinary homage of a vassal to his lord, on the same principle the Pope might declare the throne of England vacant when he liked, and fill it as he pleased."

"If our country be the Pope's," said the sixth speaker, "why did he alienate it from Christ, for whom he claims to hold it, for so trifling an equivalent? It looks to me nothing short of a fraudulent transaction. But since Christ is head over all, and the Pope is peccable, and may, as theologians tell us, forfeit his rights if he fall into mortal sin, it seems to me better to hold our land directly and alone of Christ." A shade of irony here ; but there was nothing but sober earnestness in the last speaker's words—"I wonder," he said, "that you do not at once lay your hand upon the entire illegality of the original transaction here. King John bound himself without legal consent of the kingdom. No golden seal of royalty, nor the seals of a few lords whom the King coerced to join him, could supply the place of the national consent, or give validity to the deed. That deed therefore should be treated as a nullity."

Such is an abstract of the report which Wycliffe has transmitted to us, interesting as perhaps the earliest report of a Parliamentary debate. One half suspects that the bold Barons of the fourteenth century whose speeches have been thus preserved, were not a little indebted (as Parliamentary speakers even in our nineteenth century still are) to the skill and ability of the reporter. In much of what they said we can discern traces of those patriotic sentiments, which if Wycliffe was not the first to broach, he was the first publicly to defend, and extensively to propagate. Already well known as one of the ablest and most zealous supporters of the civil government against the usurpations of the See of Rome, he was at this time singled out by an anonymous writer, who soon after the meeting of Parliament published a defence of the rights and claims of the Papacy, and challenged him by name to answer the arguments which he adduced. Wycliffe met that challenge, and it is from the pamphlet which he issued in reply to it, that we have extracted our outline of the Parliamentary debate. Suspecting from the vehemence of his language that his antagonist desired to excite him to such an expression of his opinions as might commit and embroil him with the supreme ecclesiastical authorities, Wycliffe shields himself behind the Barons whose speeches he recites. These speeches, when we think of the period when they were uttered, are remarkable for the bold, broad, patriotic sentiments which they expressed. The best and most effective utterance, however, was the decision at which all the three estates of the realm promptly and un-animously arrived. That decision ran thus—"Inasmuch

as neither King John, nor any other king, could bring his realm and kingdom into such thralldom and subjection, but by common assent of Parliament, the which was not given ; therefore that which he did was against his oath at his coronation. If, therefore, the Pope should attempt anything against the King by process or other matters in deed, the King with all his subjects should *with all their force and power resist the same.*"

This decision of the English Parliament was forwarded to Rome. Urban quietly contemplated the forces that would be marshalled against him if he attempted to enforce his demand for the annual payment of the 1000 marks, and prudently withdrew it. It was never renewed ; not that the claim to civil supremacy on the the part of the Pope, over the crown and realm of England, was relinquished. So late as 1570, Pope Pius v. prefaced a bull, directed against Queen Elizabeth, in these words : " He that reigneth on high, to whom is given all power in heaven and earth, hath committed the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, out of which there is no salvation, to one alone on earth, namely, to Peter, prince of the Apostles, and to the Roman Pontiff, successor of Peter, to be governed with a plenitude of power. This one he hath constituted prince over all nations, and all kingdoms, that he might pluck up, destroy, dissipate, reinstate, plant, and build. He therefore deprives the queen of her pretended right to the kingdom, and of all dominion, dignity, and privileges whatsoever, and absolves all the nobles, subjects, and people of the kingdom, and whosoever else

have sworn to her, from their oath and all duty whatsoever in regard of dominion, fidelity, and obedience."

This was the last attempt, so far as England was concerned, to carry out the theory of Hildebrand, as to the absolute, unlimited civil as well as ecclesiastical dominion of the Roman Pontiff. That theory is now obsolete. No enlightened Roman Catholic would, I presume, now arrogate for the Papacy such a civil supremacy over the nations. Nor is there any leal-hearted British subject, whatever be his religious profession, who would not be prepared to guard the crown, the laws, the liberties of England at any cost, and at all hazards, against all foreign invasion and control. We may speak freely, of that illegitimate assumption by the Roman Pontiff of supreme temporal authority, and of the manner in which, while tolerated, it was exercised. But let us, at the same time, do historic justice to the Church of Rome. It is a vulgar error to attribute her first meddlings with the politics of Europe to priestly craft and the mere thirst for power. The political influence to which the earlier Pontiffs of Rome attained, was less won by art, less extorted by ambition than put spontaneously into their hands, or forced upon them by the appeals and necessities of those over whom it was wielded. They could not well have kept aloof from secular affairs, even had they been so disposed. No monarchy ever rose to power that was more the creature of the popular will, than that monarchy the scattered reins of which were grasped by the vigorous hand of Hildebrand. And we may surely believe of some of those who filled the chair of St. Peter, that

it was not so much the selfish lust of earthly dignity as the nobler ambition to do good, which prompted the secular policy which they pursued. Nor should the social and political services which in the earlier part of the middle ages were rendered to Europe by the Church of Rome be ever forgotten by us. When the old Roman civilisation perished beneath the flood of barbarism from the north, how would it have fared with southern Europe had these rude tribes, flushed with victory, impatient of control, been left to parcel it out among themselves,—with no higher power to control their fiery passions, to slake their thirst for conquest, to arbitrate between them in their fierce collisions, to teach them the great duties of justice and of humanity? It was the Church which conquered these rude conquerors, and sowed within their breasts the seeds of another and richer civilisation than that which they destroyed. What a simpler, purer form of Christianity than that which Rome presented to them, infusing its leaven gently and insensibly, might finally have done in realizing the same results, can only now be a matter of conjecture. It is impossible, however, to overlook the immediate and incalculable advantages which accrued from the Christian power, before which these untutored tribes learned so soon to bow with so profound a reverence, appearing before them embodied and concentrated in the person and authority of the Bishop of Rome. The unity of the Church undoubtedly gave her great additional strength. Her eye and her hand were everywhere, and everywhere—as the occasion called for it—could the whole measure of her power be vigorously put forth.

There was at Rome a Hall of legislature, a court of appeal, whose laws and decisions, however imperfect or corrupt they occasionally may have been, were immeasurably superior in wisdom and justice to anything these northern nations had ever known. In the person of the Supreme Pontiff, was a presence surrounded with a loftier than earthly majesty, well fitted to tame that pride which leant but on the sword. Placed towards these nations as the Church of Rome then was, could it, or ought it, to have refrained from employing that mighty power over them which was in its hands? Did it not, by its employment of that power, curb that brute force, and quell those ambitious, revengeful passions which, had they been left unchecked, had turned Europe into one broad scene of anarchy and bloody strife, keeping back, perhaps for ages, the dawning of the better day?

To look at an after age. How would it have fared with Europe when a common danger pressed, had there been no central hand with power in it politically to combine Christendom, and by keeping it combined, enable it to repel the repeated invasions of the Turk? That service also the Church of Rome rendered to Europe, nor could she have rendered it but for the place and power to which politically she had been exalted. In the Empire, she found at last her great political antagonist, and in that long strife, Italian liberty, in the form of the Italian republics, sprung up under the shade and protection of the Popes of Rome. The condition on which those Italian cities tendered their allegiance and support to the Roman Pontiff was that the privilege of self-government should be allowed to them. Rome willingly acceded to

that condition, not so much, I presume, because of any special favour borne to the republican form of government, or any special sympathy with that spirit of liberty which it embodied, as because, in herself so weak, she needed all the aid that she could get in the conflict she was waging with the Empire.

In looking back, however, to the services which, during the middle ages, the Church of Rome rendered to European civilisation, we are to remember that she stood in a quite different relation then, not only to Christendom but to Christianity, from that which she has occupied since the Reformation. Throughout that period she embraced all those elements (and there never was a period when such elements did not exist) which, fostered afterwards by the dawn of liberty and letters, issued in the separation of nearly the half of Europe from her communion. The Church of Rome *before*, and the Church of Rome *after* the Reformation are not to be confounded; nor is it historically fair in comparing Protestantism and Popery as agencies for promoting the intellectual, social, and political progress of our race, to credit the latter with all the services rendered by the Church in the mediæval ages. But if there be one fact that stands out more conspicuous than another upon the broad page of history, it is this, that to the progress of modern European liberty—to the conferring in enlarging measures of political rights and privileges upon the people—Popery has, sometimes openly, sometimes covertly, but always consistently and determinedly, been opposed. Civil and religious absolutism are natural allies, bound by reciprocal obligations to

defend one another. True to the instincts of her nature, as a great spiritual autocracy, from the first moment that Popery found herself in front of the spirit of political freedom, she felt as in the presence of her natural and mortal foe. And through all these last five hundred years during which the spirit of freedom has been wrestling with the despotisms of Europe, it has ever found its subtlest antagonists in the priestly order and the priestly power. The history of almost every country in Europe establishes this: the history of our own country conspicuously confirms it. In that great movement by which our civil rights and privileges have been acquired, every inch of ground has had to be contested, and in every great battle-field of British freedom, more or less conspicuous among the ranks of our enemies the banner of the Roman Pontiff has been seen to float. Our established freedom, and the comparative powerlessness of Popery for the last hundred years to interfere with or endanger it, have somewhat weakened our impression of the fact; but the centuries that went before have stamped that impression too deeply upon the nation's heart ever to be erased, and have taught us to link together in close and indissoluble bond, the civil and religious liberties of Great Britain.

We return now to the history of our reformer. Wycliffe came up from Oxford to be present at the meeting of Parliament at Westminster in 1366. I suspect that what brought him there was not so much the interest that he took in the Pope's claim to be recognised as the Lord Paramount of England—lively as that was—as the more personal and peculiar interest which, for many years, he

had taken in a controversy which had sprung up between the University of Oxford and the Mendicant Orders, and which had now risen to such a height, that the Parliament was required and felt compelled to interpose its authority. It was his public resistance to the encroachments of the Friars which first drew Wycliffe out from that quiet academic walk, to which the first twenty years of his life at Oxford appear to have been devoted. It was the credit which he won in his collegiate conflicts with the Friars which first fixed upon him the eyes of some of the leading political characters of the day, and taught them to regard him as a man of consummate ability and address. The war begun thus, ended only with Wycliffe's life. It was in the prosecution of it that his mind opened to those broader and deeper views of the whole sacerdotal system, his promulgation and enforcement of which raised him to the place that he now occupies in the history of the Reformation. In connexion, therefore, with his life and labours, our attention is very naturally directed to that striking event by which the thirteenth century (the century before Wycliffe's time) was distinguished—the rise and spread of the Mendicant Orders. At this period, the secular, that is, the ordinary parochial clergy, had to a great extent lost their spiritual hold of the general mind of the community, and ceased to be its religious instructors. The older Monastic Orders, at the head of which were the Benedictines and the Augustines, were not in position to meet the peculiar demands which the age was making on the Church. Let us be ever willing gratefully to acknowledge the debt that we owe to

the members of those orders—the monks of the middle ages. We have outlived the prejudice that taught us to look upon their cloister life as one only of inglorious idleness, luxurious self-indulgence, crafty pretence of piety. By help of the light now kindled for us, we can see better what really went on, both within and without those monasteries of the olden time. We cannot doubt that in the darkest ages, when all without was dark, wild, turbulent, many a gentle, peace-loving spirit found there a shelter and a congenial home; and that within those convent chapels many a truly devout spirit bent before the crucifix, full it may be of superstitious fears, but truly adoring the infinite Jehovah, and clasping the unseen Redeemer in the embrace of an ardent love. It is pleasant to think of the burly Abbot and his serfs, in the long bright summer days, busy at those out-door works by which the bare hills are to be clothed with sheltering plantations, and the swampy ground to be turned into grassy meadows and fertile fields, and the Abbey garden is to receive and shelter those foreign fruits and flowers which, under monkish hands, are fast learning to love our English soil, and to flourish under our English skies. Besides the patronage bestowed on artists—a patronage more valuable than that of kings and courts—how much did the arts themselves, especially architecture, painting, working in mosaic, carving in wood and metal, directly owe to monks? Sir Charles Eastlake tells us, in his *History of Oil Painting*, that they were the inventors of many of the best implements, as well as the discoverers of some of the finest colours of that art. Chief of all, however, was the

service rendered to literature. It was in these monasteries that the precious fruits of Greek and Roman genius were preserved. It was by monks that those old chronicles were composed, which contain almost the whole knowledge we possess of the periods that they cover. And it was in that separate secluded apartment (the *scriptorium*) where such strict silence was commanded, that the monkish scribes bent over the vellum page and completed those illuminated copies of the Bible and the Missal which form the chief treasures of our great libraries.

It is curious, however, to notice, that in conferring such signal benefits on the world without, those monastic institutions, so far from carrying out the original idea of their institution, were distinctly violating it. The theory of monasticism, as originally projected, involved a total renunciation of the world, a breaking of all domestic ties, relinquishment of property, denial to all pleasure. No time left for ease or idleness, rounds of religious offices relieved by intervals of hard labour, filled up all the hours of the day, and broke in even upon the night. The deeper the seclusion, the coarser the dress, the scantier the fare, the harder the toil, the more intense and incessant the devotion, the more sustained and the more entire the self-crucifixion,—the nearer the approach to that high ideal of spiritual perfection, which it was the great object of the monastic life to reach. By the extraordinary displays which they presented of an austere and world-despising piety—a type of piety singularly fitted to affect the half-savage and self-indulgent Gothic tribes—we have no doubt that, in their earlier

and purer days, the monasteries of Europe were largely serviceable in deepening and extending the power of religious motives upon the hearts of the general community. But the promotion thus of the religious good of others was no part of the original design of these institutions. The avowed and the exclusive object of the monastery was the cultivation of piety within ; not the spread of it without. The first, and as we may call them, the *true monks*, never attempted to benefit religiously, by any personal services among them, the community among whom they lived ; and those of them who had taken orders, were prohibited from discharging towards such any of the duties of the ordinary clergy. That peculiar form of piety which they cultivated was, indeed, by its very nature, incapable of general diffusion. If all the world had become monks, there had been no world for the monks to renounce and to despise. The dominant idea of the monastery was the attainment, by each individual member of the order, to a lofty pinnacle of spiritual perfection. Whatever, therefore, were the indirect services to the general cause of piety that the monasteries at first rendered, they were *not* rendered in obedience to the great principle and aim of these institutions. And it was when that principle and aim had very much sunk out of sight, that they became great and signal benefactors to the arts and literature and science. A century before Wycliffe's time, the monasteries of Europe presented, religiously, a very sharp and painful contrast to their primitive condition. The wealth, the luxury, the secular ambition and secular employments of abbots and monks had well-nigh wholly stripped

them of that power over the popular conscience which the real or imaginary sanctity of their predecessors had won. What hold the secular and the religious orders still had of the middle and lower classes, was the hold of a traditional belief—of a vague but still deep faith—cherished not because of, but rather in despite of the influence of clergy and of monks. Things were in this state when the mind and heart of Christendom awoke. There was a predisposition to excitement; and the mass that had been sluggish for centuries began to stir itself at last. There was a deep, uneasy feeling, that what had satisfied it hitherto, could satisfy the human spirit no longer. There was an eager, panting spirit of inquiry in all directions, and as to all subjects. Crowds of ardent youth rushed to the universities, that they might slake there their new-born thirst for knowledge. Abelard, one of the first and greatest of free-thinkers, appeared. “Not only did all Paris throng to his school; there was no country so remote, no road so difficult, but that the pupils defied the toils and perils of the way. From barbarous Anjou, from Gascony and Spain, from Normandy, Flanders, Germany, Swabia, from England, notwithstanding the terrors of the sea, scholars of all ranks and classes crowded to Paris.” The great teacher fell into disgrace. Covered with shame, he retired to the monastery of St. Denis. He opened a school there near his cell. The concourse of scholars was so great, that neither lodgings nor food could be provided for them. Another storm arose, and Abelard was driven from St. Denis. In a wild retreat, near Troyes, he built his solitary hut of the rudest materials. But his scholars

found him out, and repairing to him in crowds, peopled the desert around the hut, applying to him the words of Holy Writ, and saying, 'Behold, the world is gone after him.' We will no longer, said they, be blind leaders of the blind, nor pretend to believe what we do not clearly comprehend. From teaching like Abelard's, and its extraordinary results, no small danger threatened the established theological beliefs. A still more formidable peril arose. The Bible was translated into the Romance language; a language understood at that time over all the south of Europe, and rich already in a popular literature, for which there was a wide and growing demand. The Poor Men of Lyons scattered copies of it abroad. The Albigensian heresy took deep root in the soil, and overshadowed all the south of France. The peril to the Church was imminent; the need of some new instrumentality to cope with these new enemies was urgent, when two remarkable men arose, and gave to the Papacy the very instrument that it required.

II.

THE MENDICANT ORDERS.

As the thirteenth century opened, alarming reports were brought to Rome as to the state of matters in the south of France. Numbers of all ranks were forsaking the ancient sanctuaries, assembling secretly for separate worship under teachers of their own, and openly declaring against the whole system of the Roman hierarchy. To quell this rising revolt against the Church a special embassy was organized. A Papal Legate, with a large cortège of ecclesiastical dignitaries, was despatched to Languedoc. It was hoped that such a stately band, with one clothed in the full authority of God's Vicar upon earth at its head, moving through their territory, would awe and subdue the heretics. The expectation was disappointed. The Albigensians were little affected by the sight, or, if moved at all, it was only to intenser dislike and opposition. Returning from their fruitless tour, dispirited and despairing, the Papal ambassadors entered Montpellier. They found there a Spanish Bishop and his attendant returning from a political mission to the north. Unbosoming themselves to their brother ecclesiastics, they sought from them sympathy and

counsel. The latter, at least, the two Spaniards were well qualified and not indisposed to give, for they too had passed through the infected region; they had come into frequent and close contact with the heretics, and had been trying upon their new opinions a power very different from that which the Papal emissaries had employed. "It is not," said the younger Spaniard, when his turn came to speak, "by the display of power and pomp, cavalcades of retainers, and richly housed palfreys, that the heretics win proselytes. It is by zealous preaching, by apostolic humility, by austerity, by seeming it is true, but yet seeming holiness. Zeal like theirs must be met by zeal; humility by humility; false sanctity by real sanctity; preaching falsehood by preaching truth." Dominic, for such was the bold speaker's name, was ready to make good his words. He remained, along with his bishop, who was a man of kindred spirit, and under Papal sanction laboured in Languedoc for three years, travelling on foot, mingling with the people, arguing, preaching, praying,—making full trial of all such spiritual armoury, till a sharper instrument, the bloody sword of Simon de Montfort, was unsheathed against the Albigenses. Dominic then went to Rome, absorbed with one great idea. What the world and the Church most wanted was a band of humble, earnest, resolute, devoted men, who, in apostolic simplicity, and with apostolic zeal, should go forth to wrestle with and slay the infant hydra. To raise up such a band, to send them forth on that great enterprise, and to equip them thoroughly for it, were the objects to which Dominic devoted himself. His steady, intense

enthusiasm, the weighty arguments he used to support his scheme, and the fascinating eloquence with which he urged them, brought many an ardent spirit within the magic circle of his influence. His application to the Pope to establish a new religious order was at last successful, and in 1216 that order was instituted, to which, because of the special instrument it was destined so largely to employ, the title was given of *Ordo Predicatorum*, the Order of Preachers. Dominic survived its institution but four years. Yet so accurately had he estimated the necessities of the age, that he lived to see sixty monasteries of his Order established in the principal cities of Europe, and to know that the voice of the multitude of his preachers was sounding over the breadth of Christendom, and heard beyond its bounds. At a general Chapter of the Order, held a year before its founder's death, it was resolved to accept, as one of its fundamental rules, the regulation about the possession of property which had been adopted by another Order which had sprung up almost contemporaneously.

Francis, from whom this other Order sprung, was the son of a hard-working, money-making, ambitious merchant of Assisi, a town in Italy. Never had father a son who turned out so unlike himself. Gay and thoughtless, gentle and dreamy, not indisposed to work yet fonder of shows and festivals, vain of dress, and lavish of expenditure, during his earlier years Francis showed himself but little different from many another rich trader's son. A quarrel arose between the inhabitants of Assisi and those of the neighbouring town of Perugia. It had to be settled by arms. Francis behaved gallantly in the

combat, but unfortunately was taken prisoner, and had to spend a year in the fortress of Perugia. Returning home, he was seized with a malignant fever, and for weeks and months lay prostrate under the disease. What his thoughts and feelings on that sick-bed were, we have no means of knowing. But the result was sufficiently striking. He rose from it, his whole being absorbed by religious ideas and emotions. He had renounced the world, and that renunciation was to be neither partial nor nominal. It was to be immediate, entire, unmistakable. At once, and as the first act of that new life to which he had consecrated himself, he embraced absolute poverty; embraced it, not as Dominic did afterward, on high principle, and for a great public end, but willingly, lovingly, as his first and only bride. He gave away everything that he possessed. Meeting a band of beggars, he put off his own better dress, and clothed himself with the filthiest garments that he could find among them. To win him from so strange a course, he was sent to sell some goods in a neighbouring city. His way lay past an old church that was falling to ruins. He entered, and prostrated himself before the crucifix. As his eyes were fixed on it, all full of tears, a voice came forth, saying, "Go, rebuild my house, which, as thou seest, is falling to ruins." He rose, departed, sold the goods, and sold the horse that carried them, and brought back the entire proceeds to rebuild the church. To secure his property against such strange inroads, his father at last resolved to denude him legally of his patrimonial rights. Francis was cited before the bishop, who, hearing the case stated, and seeing the jus-

tice of the demand, entreated him voluntarily to surrender his legal claims as his father's son. "I give up," said the youth, suiting the action to the word, and entirely disrobing himself; "I give up the very clothes I wear. Pietro Bernardini was my father. Now I have but one Father, he that is in heaven." The spectators were in tears. The bishop threw one of his own robes over Francis, and took him into his service. But he would not rest. He would do any work indeed; the more menial, the better liked; and he would take the daily food he needed, but money—wages in that form—he would not touch. He left the bishop, and wandered about the country; if he stayed anywhere longer than another, it was among the lepers in their hospital, washing and dressing their sores. Returning to Assisi, he resolved to execute the mission he had received in the old chapel. At first, when he appeared in his native town—so wild and haggard-looking, with garments dirty and torn—regarded as a lunatic, he was the sport and mockery of the very children on the streets. But he met all with such gentle patience; he was so loving, too; whatever severity he practised upon himself, there was so little in him of severity towards others; and, above all, he was so sincerely and extraordinarily devout, that contempt changed rapidly into admiration. The lunatic was transformed into the saint. Taking up his station near the old church that was to be repaired, he offered a prayer for every single stone that might be brought to him; and he carried the stones so brought with his own hands to the builders. A church-restoring mania seized upon the citizens of Assisi. Not one, but three

dilapidated churches rose from their ruins. Once while attending mass in one of these, our Saviour's words, in sending out the twelve on their short missionary excursion, were read by the officiating priest. The service over, Francis lingered in the building, and asked the priest to repeat and to explain to him the words (perhaps they had been read in Latin), which he imperfectly understood. They fell upon his ear, as addressed by Christ directly and individually to him: "Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staves." That, exclaimed Francis, is what with every fibre of my heart I wish, and I embrace. On the spot the shoes were cast off from his feet, the staff was flung away out of his hand, his leathern girdle was exchanged for a hempen cord. Reduced now to the lowest pitch of poverty—at least of raiment, he went forth, in ecstatic mood, to preach like an apostle to all around, the great lessons of penitence, humility, and love.

One or two followers had already attached themselves to his person. They increased till they reached the apostolic number of twelve. The idea dawned upon the mind of this impassioned enthusiast—this devotee of poverty—to gather a society of kindred spirits round him, linked to one another by their consent to relinquish wholly and for ever all earthly possessions, and consecrate themselves entirely to the service of God. For a time St. Francis himself hesitated, as to whether he should devote himself to the life of a recluse, as almost all who had trod the path he was now pursuing had done before him. He was a

simple, uneducated man, he thought, who had received a greater gift of praying than of preaching. But, then, by praying, one benefits himself; by preaching, he does good to others, and, besides, there was the great example of the Son of God himself; this turned the scale, and fixed his resolution to go forth and work among his fellow-men. That decision told upon the destinies of millions. With one or two disciples along with him, Francis at last appeared at Rome, to offer his own and his followers' services to the Pope, and solicit the privilege of founding another religious Order. Innocent III. was walking alone, plunged in thought, along one of the broad terraces of the Lateran, when Francis ventured to accost him. The Pope raised his eyes, fixed them on the singular figure that stood before him, listened for a few moments to the scheme that this mendicant had to suggest, and then waved him imperiously and impatiently from his presence. The disappointed enthusiast made a quick retreat, giving up all as lost. But Innocent had taken in the idea. He revolved it in his mind during the night. His penetrating glance discovered the many peculiar and most needed services which a set of men like the wandering beggar, if only devoted heart and soul to their work, might render to the Faith and to the Papacy. Francis was sent for the following day, and was received by the Pope sitting in council with all his cardinals. Transparent simplicity, singular unearthly devoteism were conspicuous in every look and gesture of the strange being before them. He stated his object and his plan. Some of the cardinals suggested that to attribute such merit to poverty would be casting some-

thing like reproach upon themselves and the Church at large. Innocent himself vigorously overruled the objection. The proposal of Francis was accepted, and the sanction for his new Order given.

Invested with the Papal prestige, he returned to Assisi. He was now the idol of the multitude: crowds followed him wherever he went: his proselytes multiplied at the most rapid pace. He was already at the head of a large, well-organized, devoted band. Imitating the burning zeal and indefatigable energy of their master, they went abroad over Italy, prosecuting their work. The spectacle of their humility, their self-denial, their devotion made everywhere the liveliest impression, and their impassioned eloquence stirred the hearts of multitudes. Italy became too narrow for them. Francis divided the world among them, and despatching chosen and trusty emissaries to France and Spain, set off himself to the East to convert the Sultan, and after many a singular adventure found his way into his presence. He spake to him as one inspired. The Sultan, we may conjecture, looked on him compassionately, tendering him the homage the Saracens gave to the insane. Francis proposed that a great fire should be kindled, that he and the priests of Islam should enter it, and the truth of the two faiths be determined by the issue. The proposal was courteously declined. He then offered to enter the fire alone, provided only the Sultan would attribute it to his personal unworthiness should the flames consume him, and would, with all his followers, embrace Christianity should he come out unscathed. Neither was that offer accepted. Francis failed in the

immediate object of his mission, but he returned to the West, and to his labours, with a new halo of glory round him. His presence, his instructions, his example gave a fresh impulse to the great movement he had commenced. There is much in the advices he gave his followers, we cannot but admire. He taught them to despise the mere outside show of holiness. A man is just so much and no more, he often said to them, as he is in the sight of God. No one should value himself for that which the sinner can do as well. He can fast, he can pray, he can work, he can chastise his body, but there is one thing he cannot do, he cannot be faithful to his Lord. This alone then is our true glory, that we serve Him faithfully and ascribe all that He bestows on us to Him. "There is but one mark," he wrote to the vicar of his Order, "by which I can know whether thou art a servant of God, namely, if thou compassionately bringest back wandering brethren to God, and never ceasest to love those who grievously err." He admonished all who had taken on them the new vows to be meek, patient, loving, not condemning or despising those who lived in better style or went better dressed. He warned them against too severe self-mortification. Once, when himself engaged in an exercise of this kind, he heard a voice at midnight saying to him, "There is not a sinner in the world whom God will not forgive if he turn to Him. But he who destroys himself with severe exercises of penance will never find mercy." He regarded it as a monition from heaven, and stopped the self-inflicted torture. One of his friars had fasted to such excess that he could not sleep. Francis carried food to him with his own hands, and seeing

that he hesitated, to win compliance ate part of it himself. Next morning he assembled the whole brotherhood of that convent, and told them what he had done ; but added, " Take, my brethren, not the eating, but the love for your example."

His love, so gentle and tender as it was, was not confined to the rational creation. All creatures, animate and inanimate, he looked upon as instinct with that divine principle by which he himself existed ; and in the enthusiasm of his love, he took them all home to his heart,—feeling, speaking, acting towards them as his dearest domestic relatives. Wandering in the free air over the beautiful Apennines, he would be heard chanting with loud voice hymns of praise, composed as they were sung ; blessing God Almighty for the sun his brother, for his mother the earth, and his sister the moon ; for the winds that blew in his face, and the flowers that sprung up at his feet, and the pure, precious water that ran by his side, and the bright stars that shone above his head. He was suffering once from an affection which made an operation necessary. His surgeon approached to cauterize him. " Fire, my brother," said Francis, " be gentle to me." When death was drawing near, he closed his eyes, saying, " Welcome, sister death." If there be any truth in the familiar lines—

“ He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast.
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all,”

of St. Francis beyond others might it be said, that he prayed without ceasing—for birds and beasts, the lamb, the lark, the nightingale—he loved them all with a very brother's love. Passing through the Venetian Lagune, a vast number of birds broke out into singing around him. "Our sisters, the birds," said Francis to his companions, "are praising their Creator. Let us sing with them," and forthwith he began the sacred service. Once when he was preaching, his voice was for the moment drowned by the chirping of some swallows. He paused, looked kindly at the birds, and said, "My sisters, you have talked enough. It is time that I should have my turn. Be silent now and listen to the Word of God." They instantly obeyed. One evening, sitting with his disciple Leo, a nightingale sung so sweetly that Francis was overpowered with delight and joy. "Sing, Leo, with the bird," said Francis, "and praise the Lord." His friend excused himself. Francis himself took up the strain. When he began, the nightingale stopped; when he stopped, the nightingale began; and they sang alternately through the quiet hours of night, till Francis failed for want of voice. Acknowledging himself vanquished in the generous strife, he called the bird to him. It came. He gave it the remainder of his bread. It waited till he had blessed it, and then it flew away. Trivial stories these, but they tell no trivial tale; they open up a strange region in no ordinary human heart.

The last years of St. Francis' life were spent in the wild retreats of Monte Alverno, on the slopes of the Apennines. All becomes now one tangled mass of fact and fiction; grandly told, however, by his

earlier biographers, some of them his contemporaries and friends, and all for centuries implicitly believed in by almost the entire population of Europe. Visions of all kinds were given; holy angels, the Virgin Mother, our Lord, by turns revealed themselves to the adoring saint. Miracles of all kinds were wrought—devils were cast out, the sick were healed, the dead were raised. In number, as in nature, these miracles were paralleled to those of Christ himself. It was a favourite theme of the followers of St. Francis to dwell upon that parallel, which they drew out so that the saint seemed to be the Saviour in a new avatar or incarnation. To crown and perfect the profane similitude, St. Francis must appear with the five stigmata or wounds of the crucifixion visible upon his body. About two years before his death, as he was engaged in prayer, a seraph with six wings, floating down through the open skies, stood above him. Within the shadow of these wings appeared our Lord as he hung upon the cross. The Crucified looked down upon the saint, and the saint fixed a look of rapturous awe and love upon the Crucified. The vision vanished; but instantly on the hands and feet of St. Francis nail-wounds appeared, and in his side a wound that often sent forth blood. In great humility St. Francis tried to hide them, but they could not be hidden. Many an infallible Pope testified to their reality, and to complete the parallel a doubting Thomas was discovered, whose incredulity was in like manner cured.

It is difficult to know what to make of such a character and such a history as this. Let all, however, that is

legendary be set aside ; let all the miraculous investiture which the superstition of the age wove around the man of its half-worship be stripped off ; let large allowance be made for the effects of that fever of his youth, generating a kind of semi-insanity out of which the patient never through life emerged,—still in that fancy, playful as childhood, in that love which embraced all nature as well as all his fellow-men, in that zeal in which there mingled nothing of the saturnine or the malign, in that mystic devotion which spiritualized everything, and turned life into a trance as if he had lived all through half-way between the world of sense and spirit,—and, above all, in that deep impassioned love to the Redeemer, we own an attraction which draws us powerfully, admirably, lovingly to St. Francis.

Such were the founders of the two great Orders of Dominican and Franciscan friars. How unlike to one another ! Dominic, the scholar, the schoolman, the man of business and affairs, of clear, cool, far-seeing judgment, in action prompt and decisive, unwavering and stern—fit founder of the Inquisition : Francis, the child of nature, with little or no scholastic education ; a dreamy, mystic enthusiast, with no settled plan of action, going, saying, doing as the inward impulse prompted ; gentle as the lamb he loved ; often very sad, with a great gift of tears, yet joyous often too, lifted into the most ecstatic moods, and vocal of praise as the birds he sang with. The two men met once at Rome, when both had organized their societies. Both had got the Papal sanction. They found that their object was the same. The instrument they mainly meant to use was the same, and unlike as

in other respects they were, they had two great attributes of character which, since their ends and instruments were the same, drew them to one another—an intense, unclouded, unfaltering faith in the whole doctrine of the Church, and an inflexible, indomitable will. Dominic proposed that the two societies should coalesce; but Francis, with an instinctive sense, perhaps, of the collision that might ensue, thought it better that they should remain separate.

Each of these societies accepted generally the ancient rule of the Augustinian monks, and bound themselves to poverty, chastity, labour, and obedience. Upon the vow of poverty, however, they put a new and much more stringent interpretation, the Dominicans accepting here the pattern first set them by the Franciscans. According to the strict letter of his vow, no monk of any of the ancient Orders could have any personal estate. What was denied, however, to the individual, was not prohibited to the community. The monk remained nominally poor, but his monastery grew rich; so rich often that its abbot ranked with nobles of the land, and its brotherhood became exposed to those seductive influences which wealth entails on all, but specially on those not born to its possession. To avoid an evil which had so deeply tainted the ancient religious Orders, it was laid down as a fundamental law of the Dominicans and Franciscans, that neither individually nor collectively should any property, in any form or to any extent, be held by any of their members. They were to live only upon the alms that the charity of the faithful might supply, taking from this characteristic one of their distinctive names, the Mendicant Orders.

But a still more important distinction marked them off from all their monkish predecessors. Those old monks lived by themselves and for themselves; or, if for others, for them indirectly, and not as the great leading object of their organization into a religious community. They stood separated from the people, a kind of spiritual aristocracy in the land. But it was not to gather themselves up into small select communities, and to keep themselves aloof from their fellow-men that the Dominican and Franciscan Orders were founded. Though they had their convents—for they required houses to lodge and to feed them—these convents were not meant originally as places of fixed residence, but of temporary repose. Though they had their chapels, they were not for the exclusive service of the brotherhood, but for the worship of the people. Their life was to be one, not of fixture or seclusion, but of busy itinerancy among the people:—of the people, with the people, for the people; their principle and their practice. Hence it was that they assumed the title, not of Fathers but of Brothers—*fratres, frati*, Friars.

In that itinerant missionary life to which more especially the Friars were devoted, they stood distinguished not only from the other religious Orders, but from the secular or parochial clergy, by the extensive use they made of preaching to the mass of the people in their own tongue. This practice had gone very much out of use. The Church of those days taught chiefly if not exclusively by her ritual. Imposing as that ritual was, and instructive too, to those who could follow it intelligently, it was a weak instrument for anything but impressing a blind

submissive awe upon those who did not understand a word of the language in which it was performed. Besides, according to the idea of the times, to preach was the privilege of the bishop ; to be exercised only by himself, or by those whom he specially licensed. It is given as an instance of great zeal on the part of an English archbishop of those days, that he tried to induce each of his clergy to preach four times in the year ; supplying them with the materials for their sermons, to make the duty easier. Dominic was early taught, by what he saw among the Albigensians, that if the Church was to recover her ground, and retain a living hold of the community, it must be by the living voice of a ministry speaking intelligently and affectionately home to the consciences and hearts of men. Preaching thus in the vulgar tongue,—preaching often, week-day and Sabbath-day,—preaching everywhere, out of doors and in doors,—this was the implement which the mendicants plied with such assiduity and with such extraordinary success.

There was still another agency common to the two Orders in which lay a great part of their strength. Between the clergy, whether secular or religious, and the laity there lay a great gulf, not in those days in any way to be overpassed. That gulf was bridged over by the establishment of a class, called Tertiaries, or Brethren of Penitence, closely connected with the religious Orders. Those admitted to this class—who might be of any age, or sex, or profession—were not required to forsake their secular engagements, or to take the vows. But they were required, at entrance, to pay all their debts, restore all unjust gains, settle all their

quarrels, and make their wills, so as to disentangle them as far as possible from all worldly affairs. They were to abstain thereafter from all luxurious living ; to be plain and frugal in dress, in house, in food, in furniture. Carefully avoiding all public shows, all dances, feasts, and theatres, their attendance at church, their observance of all penances, fasts, vigils, and holy days was to be strict and unremitting. They were to take no unnecessary oaths, and never to bear arms except in the cause of the Church, or in defence of their native land. In all things they were to reverence and obey the superiors of their Order, and to devote themselves to the advancement of its interests. To distinguish them at once as semi-religious, and to mark the particular Order to which they were attached, they were to wear an outward badge.

The Dominican and Franciscan Friars had each their peculiar habit. That of the Franciscans was a plain tunic, with long loose sleeves, a scanty cape, and a hood hanging over the shoulders, to be drawn over the head in cold inclement weather. The colour of this dress, though changed afterwards to a dark brown, was originally, and for a long time, grey : hence the name by which they became best known, that of the Grey Friars. The chief peculiarity, however, of the Franciscan's apparel lay in the twisted hempen cord he wore round his waist. This part of the dress the Tertiary had to wear. A black cloak worn over a white scapular and white woollen tunic, marked the Dominicans, giving to them the name of the Black Friars. To the Tertiaries of this Order the black cloak only was prescribed.

Ecclesiastical history supplies no parallel to the rapidity with which the Mendicant Orders spread over Europe, and to the marvellous impression which, during the first twenty or thirty years of their existence, they produced. Fortunate in their founders; offering to eyes unaccustomed to such a sight the affecting spectacle of humility and self-denying benevolence; entering into familiar converse with the humblest of the people; devoted to their religious duties, with a host of votaries ready to sound their praises and help on their work, with a population sunk as yet in ignorance, yet craving excitement, is it wonderful that these itinerant preachers should have kindled around them such a flame of religious enthusiasm? But if there be no parallel to their rapid rise in numbers and influence, neither is there any to the rapidity of the decline and corruption of these new Orders. The rule as to the possession of property, fundamental as it was regarded both by Dominic and Francis, was flagrantly violated within a few years after their death. The popular idolatry with which the friars were regarded, expressed itself in that fashion which the Church herself had been at such pains to form and foster. Donations and bequests from all quarters, and to an extraordinary amount, were poured into their treasuries. They could not, in face of their own stringent rule, hold and use these gifts, either as private or corporate property—properly so called; but they did not refuse to hold and administer them as stewards, appropriating them to pious uses, according to the will and intention of the donors. They could not become proprietors of land, nor did they wish it; it would have broken down the distinction which

they wished to preserve between them and the older monastic institutions, and turned their profession of living only upon the alms of the faithful into a mockery ; but there was no restriction upon the erection of houses for the brethren's residence, or churches for the worship of God. In one way or other they managed to take possession of and to employ all the gold that came into their coffers ; and these coffers were so abundantly supplied that in every country, convents, cloisters, churches of the Mendicants arose, which in the costliness of their materials, the beauty of their architecture, the richness of their decorations, vied with the noblest cathedrals and abbeyes of the Benedictines and Augustines. St. Francis himself wished that none but the plainest edifices should be erected for the worship of his Order, and that the utmost simplicity of devotion should be observed. He would even have laid it down as a fixed rule that all the Franciscan churches should be built of wood, had a friend not suggested to him—perhaps gently to turn him from his purpose—that in some places wood would be dearer than stone. But immediately on his decease there was erected over his remains one of the most gorgeous churches of Italy.

In one sense we can scarce regret the great wealth of which the Mendicants became possessed. It enabled them to rival the older monks as patrons of art, especially of architecture and painting. Their founders, and early heroes and heroines, afforded the finest materials for the pencil ; and the pencils of the first artists were employed upon them. Raphael painted his "Madonna di Foligno" for a Franciscan church at Rome. The frescoes of Giotto

adorn the Franciscan Santa Croce at Florence. The Franciscan church of St. Antony, at Padua, is adorned with the bronzes of Donatello and Andrea Riccio, and with the pictures and frescoes of all the great painters of Upper Italy. Titian rests in a Franciscan church at Venice. The Franciscans were the first to patronize Murillo when he returned from Madrid to Seville, poor and unbefriended; and when afterwards he was at the height of his fame, he repaid the kindness by painting for a Franciscan community of that city twenty of his finest pictures. Almost equally interesting are the trophies of art which the Dominican edifices present, in one or other of which—"The Virgin and Child," by Cimabue; the celebrated "Madonna," by Guido da Siena; the statue of Christ, by Michael Angelo; the "Last Supper," of Leonardo da Vinci, and a host of others, are to be met with. Angelico da Fiesoli and Fra Bartolomeo were themselves Dominican friars, and wrought at their art in the convent of St. Mark at Florence, neither for money nor for fame, but from the pure inspiration of piety and genius.

Another fatal influence besides that of wealth to which the Mendicants became exposed was that of the immense spiritual and ecclesiastical power which came into their hands. The Roman Pontiffs quickly recognised in them their most efficient auxiliaries, and hastened to heap upon them privileges of all kinds. They were exempted from episcopal jurisdiction, from any check or control by the parochial clergy. Permission to discharge all sacerdotal functions, to hear confessions, to administer absolution, to offer the sacrifice of the mass, when and

where and on what terms they pleased, was given to them. With such large powers came a still larger ambition. They aspired not only to guide and rule the popular conscience, over which they had almost unlimited control, but also to rule the universities. Among other privileges, that of instructing youth had been bestowed on them by the Pope, and they sought to exercise it in the highest fields of scholastic instruction. It was not unnatural that this attempt should have been made. By the power of their earlier attractions they had drawn into their number many earnest and energetic men, eminent for genius or for scholarship ; such, for instance, as our own Roger Bacon, who yielding to a first impulse became a Friar. Such men tired ere long of the vagrant life of the friar, and turned to the universities as their congenial sphere and home. At Oxford, at Cambridge, at Paris, convents of the Dominican and Franciscan friars were erected close by the older colleges, and not unfrequently their teachers were the most eminent in the departments which they had chosen. The university authorities got alarmed ; they dreaded the influence of men so entirely devoted to a religious object. They feared that the interests of learning might suffer in the hands of those who would subordinate them so entirely to ecclesiastical designs. The first collision occurred at Paris. Finding, that out of twelve chairs of theology, the religious Orders had got possession of ten, leaving only two to the secular clergy, the university authorities issued a decree, suppressing a chair held by the Dominicans. The Dominicans disobeyed the edict. The University passed a sentence of expulsion against the

whole body of Dominican professors. They kept their places, and appealed to the Pope. William of St. Amour stood forth as the champion of the University, in a quarrel upon which the eyes of all Europe were now turned. No less a champion than Thomas Aquinas stood forth on the side of the Friars. St. Amour published a book, entitled, the "Perils of the Last Days," in which the whole principles and proceedings of the mendicants were lashed with an unsparing hand. True to the policy of supporting those who had proved the best buttress of the Papal supremacy—who did for it, before the Reformation, what the Jesuits have done since—the Pope condemned St. Amour's book. It was publicly burned, and its author exiled from Paris. The Dominicans triumphed, but it was a triumph which cost their Order dear. The book burned at Rome was all the more eagerly read at Paris, where William of St. Amour became the popular hero of the day.

The strife that ran so high at Paris about the close of the thirteenth century, was, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, transferred to Oxford. Here the chief grounds of complaint against the Friars were, that they had obtruded into the office of lecturers in theology those who had not received a complete university education; and that, taking advantage of the extreme youth of many of the scholars, they had seduced them into their ranks, and got them to take their vows, at an age when they were incompetent to decide on so grave a matter. Parents who did not wish their children to become begging friars, had become

alarmed ; large numbers had, in consequence, been withdrawn, and the attendance at the University sensibly diminished. To meet these evils, two University statutes were enacted : 1. That no one should be created Doctor, or lecturer in divinity, who had not previously been a Regent in Arts ; and, 2. That no one should be received by the Friars into their Orders till he attained the age of eighteen years. Against both of these statutes the Friars loudly protested, nor was their protest confined to words. By their interest at the Court of Rome, they obtained dispensations, exempting them from obedience to these statutes. This irritated all the more the Chancellor, Proctors, and Regents of the University. Open and unseemly collisions took place. The Parliament was at last appealed to ; and in that same meeting of the House at which Pope Urban's claim for his 1000 marks was so satisfactorily disposed of, it was enacted, " That as well the Chancellor and scholars as the Friars should in all school exercises use each other in friendly wise, without any rancour as before ; that none of their Orders should receive any scholar under the age of eighteen years ; that the Friars should take no advantage, nor procure any bull or other process from Rome against the University, or proceed therein ; and that the King have power to redress all controversies between them from henceforth, the offender to be punished at the pleasure of the King and of his council."

Wycliffe had been mixed up with this dispute from the beginning of his connexion with the University. Bound to his own order as a secular priest, and doubly bound to the University on account of the benefits he

had received, and the honours which had been bestowed on him, one cannot wonder at the side he took. At the death of Fitz Ralph, Archbishop of Armagh, who, while Chancellor of Oxford, had headed the resistance to the Friars, Wycliffe became the acknowledged leader of that opposition. He appears to have learned one lesson from the experience of his predecessor. Fitz Ralph had gone to Avignon, the seat at that time of the Papacy, and had worn out the last years of his life in the vain hope of getting a Papal verdict against the Friars. Wycliffe looked for relief not to a foreign Pontiff, but to the Crown and Parliament of England, of whose full right to adjudicate in all such cases, he was the open and strenuous advocate. To expose to the public eye of England what he regarded as the false principles, the proud but hollow pretensions, the iniquitous and corrupting practices of the Mendicants, became for a season the chief object of his life. His controversy with them soon ceased to be that narrow collegiate one in which it had originated. In all his numerous writings against the Friars, that original collegiate strife is scarcely mentioned; nor is much made of their encroachments upon the privileges of the parochial clergy. His charges against them assumed a broader and graver cast. If the half only of what he tells us of them be true, they must have sadly degenerated. Nor need we be surprised at this. If only forty years after their institution, Matthew Paris could exclaim, "It is terrible; it is an awful presage, that in 300 years, nay, in 400 years and more, the old monastic Orders have not so entirely degenerated as these fraternities," what might not have been expected

from the hundred years that elapsed between that time and the period at which Wycliffe wrote. In one respect, that degeneracy was patent to every eye, in the style and character of the discourses which their itinerant preachers addressed to the common people. The discourses of St. Dominic and St. Francis, and their first associates, whatever errors they may have contained, were earnest and affectionate appeals to the conscience, the imagination, the hopes and the fears of their hearers, as to their spiritual and eternal interests. Very different were the popular discourses of the Friars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Among the helps of preachers in those days were block books, forerunners of the press, skeleton sermons, illustrated with woodcuts to warm the imagination and assist the memory of the preacher. In 1418, a Dominican friar of Basle published a book of this kind for his brethren's aid. It consists of a collection of legends about the saints, and other stories, among which the Friar's Tale of Chaucer, and the original of one of the stories of Boccaccio find a place. Wycliffe describes the Friars' sermons of his day as made up of "fables, chronicles of the world, and stories from the siege of Troy." Let me give you a specimen or two of the legends which were in this way imposed on the ignorance and credulity of the multitude. Next to St. Francis, in his own Order, stands St. Anthony of Padua, a native of Lisbon, who, touched by the story of five friars who had suffered martyrdom in Morocco, took the habit of the Franciscans, and devoted himself to a missionary life. He was preaching in Padua, so runs the legend, when a strange incident occurred in his native city. A young lady there,

of noble birth, was beloved by one, her equal in rank. The attachment was returned, but unfortunately a deadly feud divided their families. Her two brothers discovered their sister's secret, waylaid and murdered the lover, and buried his body in a neighbouring garden, which happened to belong to the aged father of Anthony. The body was found. The old man was charged with the murder, and was convicted. The sentence of death was passed, and he was about to be led out to execution, when, borne through the air from Padua by an angel, Anthony himself appeared, ordered the dead body to be produced, and obliged it to tell the whole tale of the murder. There was another miracle of this saint, which, as it appeared more frequently than any other pictorially exhibited in the Franciscan churches, was no doubt the burden also of many a discourse. A certain heretic called Bovadilla entertained doubts of the Real Presence in the sacrifice of the mass. Nothing but a miracle, he declared, would satisfy him of the truth of such a dogma. St. Anthony, in carrying about the Host in procession, encountered the mule of Bovadilla. At the command of the saint, the mule fell down in a moment on its knees. Bovadilla stood amazed. First he tried to rouse the animal, and then he tempted it aside by holding out to it a sieve full of oats. But no. The mule, rebuking its master's want of faith, remained kneeling till the host had passed.

Another tale, current in Wycliffe's time, bore upon the same subject. In 1306 a woman of Paris pledged her best gown with a Jew. When Easter-day drew near, she naturally enough wished to be as fine as

her neighbours. As she had not money enough to redeem the dress, she earnestly entreated the Jew to lend it to her till the Monday, promising to pay double interest for the loan. He would do it only upon one condition: that, keeping it unswallowed in her mouth, she brought to him the Host, the wafer, which she should receive from the priest. She refused at first to do so horrible a thing. But the Jew was inexorable, and her vanity prevailed. She got the gown and brought the wafer. Eagerly seizing it, the Jew exclaimed, Art thou the God of the Christians? Art thou He whom their mad credulity believes to have been born of the Virgin? If thou art He whom my fathers crucified, I will make trial of thy divinity; and so saying, he flung the wafer into a vessel of boiling water. Immediately a beautiful boy appeared. The Jew, instead of being converted, seized a fork, and tried to force him beneath the water, but however well his strokes were aimed, they fell always upon the water, and the beautiful child appeared at the other side untouched. The Jew ran round and round the vessel renewing the attempt. His children heard the noise; ran in to see; and then, frightened at what they saw, ran out into the street to tell the wonder. The people eagerly came in and watched the conflict. The rumour ran through the city. The Bishop of Paris and his clergy hastened to the scene, released the host out of the hands of the Jew, carried it in procession to the Church of St. John de Gravia, where, says the undoubting relater, it is kept even to this day.

Had the only or the chief fault to be found with the

Friars been this, that they told such tales to give spice to their discourses and sustain their popularity, it is not likely that Wycliffe would have troubled himself with exposing it. What roused his intensest indignation, was not their pandering to the popular credulity, but their debauching of the popular conscience. From an early date the Friars had the privilege bestowed on them of granting absolution on what terms they pleased—a power, in such hands as theirs, very liable to abuse. One Bishop is heard complaining that in his diocese there were 2000 persons who had been guilty of open sin, of whom not fourteen had confessed to, and received absolution from the parish priests, who yet claimed all the privileges of the Church, on the ground of having been absolved by the Friars. Other engines of influence, besides that of the Confessional, were possessed or had been manufactured by them. In the eyes of all the faithful of those days, a mysterious efficacy was attached to the merits and prayers of the saints. But among all the saints of the calendar, there were none greater in the popular apprehension than St. Francis and St. Dominic, and the other holy men of the Mendicant Orders. To convey the full benefit of all the merits and prayers of such to the people, the Friars drew up on pieces of vellum, enclosed in sarsenet, what they termed Letters of Fraternity, which conveyed to the purchaser and possessor an interest in the accumulated merit of the whole brotherhood of the Order. Relics too were then regarded with a superstitious awe, and believed to be possessed of miraculous powers. They were kept in one or other of those great shrines to which, in yearly pil-

grimages, vast numbers of the population resorted. With some gain to themselves, the Friars could save the people much trouble and much cost, for instead of their having to go to the relics, the relics could be brought to them. Relics accordingly formed a common part of the wandering Friar's travelling gear. But above all, he had in hand the Plenary Indulgences of the Pope. As successor of St. Peter in the Primacy, the Pope claimed to be the sole custodier and sole dispenser of that infinite stock of merit, made up of the works of supererogation of all the saints, with the merits of the Redeemer Himself super-added. While an ordinary priest could grant absolution for the particular sin or sins confessed, it was the Pope alone who, out of that vast magazine of merit, could dispense the plenary absolution which covered all transgressions, shielding from the punishment due to them both here and hereafter. The Pope could transfer to whom he pleased the privilege of distributing the Indulgences thus granted in his name, and he chose to bestow it on his faithful friends and allies, the Friars.

With so many means of acquiring and exercising it, what a vast command must the Friars have had over the consciences of the common people! Imagine a strolling company of them arriving in some rural hamlet. They have travelled on foot; they are humbly dressed; they enter the houses of the poorest. They don't go to the neighbouring monastery to sleep; whatever house will open to them they make *it* their home. They don't need to go to the Vicar to ask the use of the parish church. They carry their portable altar, and all that is needful for the services of the Church along with them. That altar

is reared on the village green. The whole inhabitants turn out; an exciting discourse, level to all capacities, is delivered. The sacrifice of the mass is offered; the priestly services of the Friars are tendered. Who would not rather confess to, and get absolution from these strangers, here to-day and away to-morrow, than expose his sins to the eye of one living constantly by his side? The wonderful wallet is produced. There are relics in it of power to insure good crops next harvest, or fruitful herds, or whatever else is wished. The Letters of Fraternity, the Indulgences of the Pope, are displayed. All is offered at a much lower rate than the precious wares of the Church are ordinarily dispensed. What an amazing power must men, armed with such instruments, have had over such a community!

For what ends, and with what effect was that power actually employed? Let us call up three cotemporaries, quick observers and faithful reporters each, to answer that question. First let Wycliffe himself be heard. His condemnation of the Friars is conveyed to us in tones of unmitigated sternness:—

“There cometh no pardon,” says he, “but of God, for spiritual good beginneth and endeth in charity, and this may not be bought or sold, as chattering priests in these days say, for whosoever is rich in charity, is best heard of God, be he shepherd, or be he layman, in the Church, or in the field.”

“The worst abuse of these friars consists in their pretended confessions, by means of which they affect, with numberless artifices of blasphemy, to purify those whom they confess, and make them clear from all pollution in the eyes of God, setting aside the commandments and satisfaction of our Lord.

“Will a man shrink from acts of licentiousness and fraud if he believes that soon after, by the aid of a little money bestowed on friars, an entire absolution from the crime he hath committed will be obtained?” “There is no greater heresy than for a man to believe that he is absolved from his sins if he give money, or if a priest lay his hand on the head, and say that he absolveth thee; for thou must be sorrowful in thy heart, and make amends to God, else God absolveth thee not.” “Many think, if they give a penny to a pardoner, they shall be forgiven the breaking of all the commandments of God, and therefore they take no heed how they keep them. But I say this for certain, though thou have priests and friars to sing for thee, and though thou, each day, hear many masses, and found churches and colleges, and go on pilgrimages all thy life, and give all thy goods to pardoners, this will not bring thy soul to heaven. While, if the commandments of God are revered to the end, though neither penny nor halfpenny be possessed, there will be everlasting pardon, and the bliss of heaven.” “May God of his endless mercy destroy the pride, covetousness, hypocrisy, and heresy of this feigned pardoning, and make men busy to keep his commandments, and to set fully their trust in Jesus Christ.”

“The friars have fallen into a radical heresy, for they pretend expressly, in the Letters of Fraternity, that the individuals to whom they grant them shall be made partakers of merits from themselves after death. How blind is their folly in making assertions on a subject on which they know so little.”

“I confess that the Indulgences of the Pope, if they are what they are said to be, are a manifest blasphemy. The friars give a colour to this blasphemy, by saying, that Christ is omnipotent, and that the Pope is his plenary vicar, and so possesses, in every thing, the same power as Christ in his

humanity. Against this rude blasphemy, I have elsewhere inveighed. Neither the Pope nor the Lord Jesus Christ can grant dispensations or give indulgences to any man, except as the Deity has eternally determined by his just counsel."

Our second testimony, relative to the Friars during the latter half of the fourteenth century, is gathered from a remarkable poem—the Vision of Piers Plowman, which appeared about the year 1362, and is generally believed to have been written by Robert Langland, a monk of Malvern.

The poem is the most perfect specimen in English of the only species of versification which was in use among the Anglo-Saxons, and which appears to have descended from a remote era. Rhyme was unknown in Anglo-Saxon literature, having been introduced by the Normans in the twelfth and thirteen centuries. Instead of rhyme, the Anglo-Saxons used a regular method of alliteration, the sounds which by their correspondence created the rhythm, being at the beginning and not at the end of the words. The lines are short, and not limited to a definite number of syllables. They run in couplets, which are so constructed, that two of the principal words in the first line, and the first in the second on which any marked emphasis falls, commence with the same letter. The poem, for example, of Piers Plowman opens thus—

“ As on a May morning,
On Malvern hills,
I was very forewandered
And went me to rest,
Under a broad bank
By a burn's side ;

And as I lay and leaned,
 And looked on the waters,
 I slumbered into a sleeping ;
 It swayed me so murye."

Falling asleep thus on Malvern hills, the poet has a series of visions, which are in fact a series of allegories, of which the poem is composed. In one of them, Lady Mede, the spirit of worldliness, is betrothed to Falsehood. Theology forbids the banns. The case is carried to the king for judgment. Lady Mede, though no very flattering picture is drawn of her previous character and life, soon finds favour at the court, and especially with the Friars ; one of whom volunteers, for a consideration, to assoil her of all her sins. The offer is accepted, and the absolution given. The friar confessor tells her that they have a window in their church, which if she would but finish, they would grave her name therein and make her sure of heaven. The terms were at once complied with ; but how far they were made good, we are not informed.

In another vision, the Plowman himself, the hero of the poem, offers to be guide to the multitude who are setting out in search of Truth. Truth hearing of this, sends the Plowman a message advising him to remain quietly at home, and to continue steadily at his daily work, as the best thing he can do both for himself and others ; and meanwhile sending him a pardon or plenary absolution, which was to embrace all who acted in like manner, and carried on their work of life, whatever it was, honestly and in purity of heart. A priest asks to see this pardon. It was contained in the two sentences :

"They that do good shall go into eternal life ;
 They that do evil, into eternal fire."

The author now interposes, and speaking in his own person and in very emphatic mood, declares that at the dreadful doom, where the dead should arise, it would profit a man nothing though he had the wealth of the world to buy Popes' Bulls, and a poke full of pardons and Letters of Fraternity from all the Orders, and indulgences double-fold, if he had been a breaker of the Ten Commandments ; but if he had been a keeper of them, then, says the poet,

" I set your patentes and your pardons
At one pie's hele :"

a magpie's heel—not a large price to set upon such wares.

In the closing allegory of the poem, the Plowman appears as the representative of Christ. Grace descends through him to lay the foundation of the Church. Anti-christ, identified with the Pope and the Cardinals, comes forward to assault her, and foremost in the attack appear the Friars. One of these, who calls himself Sir Penetrans Domos, is offering his services as physician to Conscience, who had been wounded, when the poem abruptly closes.

So spake the parochial clergyman and lecturer on divinity at Oxford, and so spake the monk of Malvern, of the Friars of the fourteenth century. Is it ecclesiastical jealousy that speaks in them ? Let Chaucer, their contemporary, the scholar, the courtier, the soldier, the man of the world, the first of our English poets, tell us. One of his earliest literary labours was a translation of the "Romaunt of the Rose," a poem full of praises of William of St. Amour, and sarcastic reproaches

of the Mendicants. One of Chaucer's own smaller pieces, "The House of Fame," better known, perhaps, through Pope's paraphrase entitled the "Temple of Fame," has an episode descriptive of the abode of Rumour. Here are crowds of people, each whispering into his neighbour's ear, or bawling out for the benefit of all around, some new piece of intelligence generally untrue; and here, too, not certainly in the best society, appear the Friars:—

"And eke alone by themselves,
A many thousand times twelve,
Saw I of these pardoners;
With boxes crammed as full of lies
As ever vessel was with lees."

It is, however, in the Pardoner and the Limitour (both Friars) of the "Canterbury Tales," that the full-length portrait of the Mendicant appears. The Pardoner, drawn with Vandyke minuteness and effect, has by no means an engaging exterior. Hair yellow as wax, smooth as flax, long and lank, hanging by shreds upon his shoulders; his eyes glaring like a hare's;—

"His wallet lay before him in his lap,
Brimful of pardons from Rome all hot."

For relics, he has our Lady's veil; a swatch of the sail of Peter's fishing-boat;

"A cross of laton full of stones,
And in a glass he had pig's bones,"

warranted all to work wonderful miracles. His sermon he describes himself. First a flourish of all his great authorities:—

"I ring it out as round as goeth a bell,
 For I ken all by rote that I tell.
 Then tell I them ensamples many a one,
 Of old stories longe time agone.
 I preach so as ye have heard before,
 And tell a hundred false japes more.
 Is all my preaching for to make them free
 To give their pence, and namely unto me."

Chaucer perhaps was drawing here literally from life. "I find," says our witty church historian, Fuller, "this Chaucer fined in the Temple two shillings for striking a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street, and it seems his hands ever after itched to be revenged and have his penny-worth out of them; so tickling religious with his tales, and yet so pinching them with his truths, that Friars in reading his books know not how to dispose their faces betwixt crying and laughing."

The Limitour of the "Canterbury Tales" is a much more inviting personage than the Pardoner. He sang a good song, played a good tune, told a good story; was a mighty favourite with all the rich farmers of his district, and with their wives:—

"His tippet was aye stuffed full of knives
 And pinnes, for to give fair wives....
 Somewhat lisped he for his wantonnesse,
 To make his English sweet upon his tongue;
 And in his harping, when that he had sung,
 His eyen twinkled in his head aright,
 As do the starres in a frosty night."

Chaucer's Limitour, its darker shades omitted, is none other than the jolly Friar Tuck of *Ivanhoe*.

"The friar has walked out, and where'er he has gone,
 The land and its fatness is marked for his own;
 He can roam where he lists, he can stop when he tires,
 For every man's home is the barefooted friar's.

- “ He’s expected at noon ; and no wight till he comes
May profane the great chair, and the porridge of plums :
For the best of the fare, and the seat by the fire,
Is the undenied right of the barefooted friar.
- “ He’s expected at night, and the pastry’s made hot ;
They broach the brown ale, and they fill the black pot ;
And the goodwife would wish her goodman in the mire,
Ere he lacked a soft pillow, the barefooted friar.
- “ Long flourish the sandal, the cord, and the cope,
The dread of the devil, and trust of the Pope :
For to gather life’s roses unscathed by the briar,
Is granted alone to the barefooted friar.”

III.

STATUTES OF MORTMAIN, PROVISORS AND PRÆMUNIRE
—CHARGES AGAINST WYCLIFFE—HIS OBJECTIONS TO
ECCLESIASTICAL ENDOWMENTS.

WYCLIFFE never wearied in denouncing the enormous wealth of the Church as one chief source of the idleness, ambition, and corruption of the clergy. That wealth was in his days almost incredible. In 1337, the gross incomes of the Ecclesiastics of England amounted to 730,000 marks, *i.e.*, upwards of ten millions sterling per annum; twelve times the amount of the whole civil revenue of the kingdom. This income included the tithes, as well as the rents of all the manors and estates of the parochial clergy and the religious orders. All the great landed properties of the country were then held as military fiefs under the crown. It appears from a public return, that the whole number of such fiefs was 53,000, and of these, 28,000 were held by ecclesiastics, bringing out the striking fact, that the clergy were in possession at that time of more than half of the landed property of the kingdom. In addition to its fixed revenue, there was constantly flowing into the treasury of the Church, the ordinary oblations at the offertory, and those presented at the shrines of saints. There were besides the fees for one or other of those manifold religious services, which were connected with almost every great

incident of life ; there were the gifts of the dying, and the costly masses for the dead. A box which stood under the great cross of the Cathedral of St. Paul's, yielded about £9000 per annum. One year, the offerings at the single shrine of St. Thomas à Becket amounted to the almost incredible sum of £14,310. To die in those days without leaving anything for pious purposes was regarded as a robbery of the Church, which she punished by taking the administration of the affairs of those who died intestate into her own hands. There were celebrated in the course of a year, within St. Paul's Cathedral, 111 funeral services, or anniversary services for the dead, the payments for which realized upwards of £40,000. In a will made in the reign of Richard III. Lord Hastings bequeathed property to the value of about £10,000 to the conventual establishments, on condition, that as soon as notice of his death was given, "a thousand priests shall say a thousand Placebos and Diriges, with a thousand masses for my soul, if reasonably possible." And on condition also, that a perpetual yearly service shall be sustained "for the souls of me and my wife, myn ancestors, and all Christian souls," to be performed "solemnly with Note, Placebo and Dirige, and on the morrow, mass of requiem with Note." Dr. Milman is inclined to believe that, taken all together, the revenue springing from such sources as those now indicated, must have been as large as that derived from the permanent endowments.

The most conspicuous item in this large account is the extent of land held by the priesthood. This had gone on increasing, and there seemed no limit to the

absorbing process. At each step of advance, the Crown and country suffered a serious loss. Ecclesiastical superiors were bound, indeed, to furnish in times of war their quota of armed vassals equally with others, but there was much greater difficulty in securing the regular services of their retainers than of those of the ordinary aristocracy—the military chiefs. Ecclesiastical corporations, besides, which never died, had no wards to be kept, no children to be married. The payments to the Crown upon alienation, succession, wardships, marriages, were consequently lost. The clergy, too, claimed exemption from the ordinary taxation of the country. The more land that they acquired, that burden fell all the more heavily upon the remaining proprietors. This the Kings and Barons were not slow to perceive. In the Great Charter a check was put upon the further acquisition of territory by the religious houses; and by the Statute of Mortmain, passed in the reign of Edward the First, all conveyance of land, whether by gift, bequest, or otherwise, to any ecclesiastic, as such, or to any ecclesiastical corporation, was strictly prohibited. That Statute was long and artfully evaded; but a final stop was put to the territorial aggressions of the Church, by its re-enactment in still more stringent terms in the reign of Richard II. As to the claim for immunity from taxation put forth on behalf of all the property of the Church, Edward the First had too great need of money to carry on his wars, and too strong a hand to take all that he could get, to allow that claim to stand in his way, though it rested on the prescription of centuries, forming one in fact of those privileges of the clerical order for upholding which

Becket sacrificed his life, and won his place in the saintly calendar. On the whole, the clergy offered but a feeble opposition to their property being placed on the same footing with that of all other members of the State in the bearing of the national burdens.

The strife, however, became a deadly one when it ceased to be a home quarrel between the Crown and its vassals, and turned into a foreign one between the Crown and the Papal See ; and that a quarrel not only as to the Crown's right to regulate the disposition of ecclesiastical property, but to appoint to ecclesiastical offices. From the time of the Conquest till the passing of the Great Charter, the nomination of Archbishops, Bishops, and the greater Abbots, lay with the Crown. The Charter conveyed the liberty of election to the clergy. On the death of a bishop, the cathedral chapter applied to the Crown for a *congé d'élire*, a formal application which was never refused. The name of the person elected by a majority of votes was submitted to the Metropolitan, and by him to the Pope. The Papal approval having been obtained, the new bishop was consecrated and presented to the King to be invested by him with the temporalities of the see. The only difference as to Abbots was, that in their case, the superior of their Order took the place of the archbishop in communicating with the Papal See. The right of presentation to the inferior benefices and to the abbacies of the smaller monasteries belonged to private patrons, lay or clerical. The right of the Popes to arbitrate in the case of disputed elections to the greater offices of the Church was admitted, and ultimately a reference was sup-

posed to lie to them as to every clerical investiture. A natural opportunity was thus given them to interfere, which step by step they took increased advantage of, till the nomination to the metropolitan sees, and afterwards to the ordinary bishoprics, passed to a large extent into their hands. As to the inferior offices, the Popes were in the first instance satisfied with addressing letters to the bishops or other private patrons with whom the nomination lay, requesting them to confer the vacant benefice upon some nominee of their own. The Papal letters passed gradually from requests into commands, and got thence the name of Mandates.

During the reign of Henry III. (1216-1272), when the Papal power in England was at its height, all the richest benefices were conferred in this way upon Italian priests. It was stated by the English envoys at the Council of Lyons, in 1245, that these foreign ecclesiastics, in most instances non-resident, drew from England from sixty to seventy thousand marks a year, a sum exceeding the entire revenue of the Crown. After ten years' trial of Henry's pliability and of England's endurance, Pope Honorius III. made at last the demand that two prebends in every cathedral and in every conventual church should be assigned in perpetuity to the See of Rome. The King would have complied, but the Barons resisted, and at their instance the King transmitted to the Pope this very judicious and safe reply—"When the rest of Christendom," wrote Henry, "shall have consented to this measure, we will consult with our prelates whether it be right to follow the example." There was one prelate of that reign, one of the first

scholars and most eminent men of his age, who if consulted would have been at no loss as to the advice which he would have given. When appointed to the see of Lincoln, Bishop Grosstete had distinguished himself by resolutely refusing to induct incapable or unworthy incumbents, by whomsoever presented. He received at last a mandate from the Pope himself, requiring him to confer a canonry of Lincoln on the Pope's own nephew, a mere boy:—"I am bound," said the bishop in reply, "by filial reverence to obey all commands of the Apostolic See; but those are not apostolic commands which are not consonant with the doctrine of the Apostles, and of the master of the Apostles, Jesus Christ. After the sin of Lucifer there is none more contrary to the gospel than that which ruins souls by giving them a faithless ministry. Those who introduce such into the Church are little better than Antichrists, and their culpability is in proportion to their dignity. Although the chief of the angels, therefore, should order me to commit this offence I would refuse. Obedience here forbids me to obey." "Who is this dotard," said the Pope, when the letter of refusal was read to him, "who presumes to judge our acts? By St. Peter and St. Paul, if we were not restrained by our generosity, we would make him a fable, an astonishment, an example and warning to the world. Is not the King of England our vassal, rather our slave? Would he not at a sign from us throw this bishop into prison, and reduce him to the lowest disgrace?" The cardinals wisely soothed the anger of their lord, reminding him of the European reputation which the Bishop of Lincoln had acquired for learning and piety, and Grosstete was suffered to escape.

Innocent IV. had too good grounds for speaking of Henry III. as his vassal. His successors carried still farther their interference with the English ecclesiastical appointments. Of one of them, Gregory IX., we are informed that in the course of a few years he drained England of no less a sum than 950,000 marks—£15,000,000 sterling—partly in the revenues of benefices conferred on his nominees, and partly by direct taxation of the clergy. Exercising their assumed prerogative within varying limits, according to the disposition and power of the reigning pontiff and the reigning prince, the Popes continued during the reigns of Edward the First and Edward the Second to reserve to themselves certain coveted benefices, and as it might be inconvenient to wait till the vacancy had actually occurred, they issued the appointments beforehand by what were termed *provisors*. These provisors became the source of a continued and increasing national irritation, as well they might, considering what they were in themselves and the manner in which they were often made. “When any bishoprick,” says Fuller, “abbot’s place, dignity, or good living, was like to be void, the Pope by a profitable prolepsis to himself, predisposed such places to such successors as he pleased. By this device he defeated the legal election of convents and rightful presentation of all patrons. He took up churches before they fell, yea, before they stumbled; I mean while as yet there was no suspicion of sickness in incumbents, younger and healthier than his Holiness. Yea, sometimes no act of provision was entered *in scriptis* in the court, only the Pope was pleased to say by word of mouth (and who dare confute

him) he had done it. So that incumbents to livings, who otherwise had a rightful title from their patrons, were, to purchase their peace, glad to buy the Pope's provisors. Yea, his Holiness sold them beforehand, so that not he who gave the *first*, but he who gave the most money carried away the preferment."

Edward III. was not a prince to submit to what appeared to be such a national degradation. Some years before his conflict with Urban about the payment of the annual tribute of 1000 marks, the Parliament had complained to him, in the strongest terms, of the grievance and oppression which the Church and Kingdom of England were enduring by these Provisors of the Papal See, and had moved the King to rule, that whoever brought into the country any Papal Bull containing such an appointment to an English benefice, should be arrested and imprisoned. The King forwarded this complaint and proposal to the Pope. The only answer was the nomination by the Pope of two of his Cardinals to the two benefices that should next be vacant in England, and that should be of the value of 2000 marks. Edward's spirit was now fairly roused. The procurators of the two cardinals, sent to prosecute their nominations, were at once ordered to quit the kingdom. The Pope refused to rescind the appointment. The Parliament came in to help the King, and proposed that all foreigners holding benefices by provisors should be expelled the kingdom, and after a given date should be outlawed. The Pope was equally resolute; instead of bending before the threatened storm, he filled up a new vacancy that had occurred in the Abbey of St. Augustine, in Canterbury,

without regard to the election made there by the monks. The King prohibited the monks (who were the legal electors), under the heaviest penalties, from giving effect to the Papal appointment.

At last, two statutes of the realm were framed to meet the emergency: the first, enacted in 1358, called the Statute of Provisors, declared the collation to any dignity or benefice in a manner opposed to the King, the chapters, or the legal patrons, to be null and void. The second, enacted the year afterwards, and called the Statute of Præmunire, forbade the introduction of any Bull or mandate of the Pope prejudicial to the rights of the King and Commonwealth of England; and further, declared that whosoever should transfer any cause belonging to the King's jurisdiction to a foreign tribunal, or should appeal from the latter to the former, should be liable to imprisonment and confiscation of goods. The Statutes were too stringent to be at once and rigorously carried into execution. The Popes who followed Clement VI. took advantage of this, and continued to act as he had done. Edward's vigour was now declining, and he was less disposed to mingle personally in the fray. But his Parliament would not let the matter drop. In 1373, they addressed a new remonstrance to the King, setting forth, that instead of being checked, the grievance of these Papal Provisors was more intolerable than ever. The King nominated a Commission to present this remonstrance to the Pope. It was courteously received, but no redress was given. Next year, the Parliament caused an exact estimate to be made of the number and value of English benefices

held by aliens. The picture of abuse that it presented was so broad and dark, that it was resolved to send a second Commission to the Papal Court. The name of John Wycliffe stands second in the list of the Commissioners appointed for this purpose. The Pope declined receiving them at Avignon, and, in company with his brother Commissioners, Wycliffe went to Bruges to meet the Papal Legate. Negotiations were protracted for two years with no definite or satisfactory result. Gregory XI. revoked the reservations of his immediate predecessor, Urban V., and confirmed the royal nominations. Edward, on his side, remitted the penalties contracted under the Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire. But neither did the Pope relinquish his right to nominate, nor were the Statutes modified or repealed. It was a hollow truce kept but for a year.

In 1376, the Parliament finding that diplomacy had done nothing, drew out a long Bill of Indictment against the usurpations of the Papacy. In this important public document, it is affirmed that the taxes paid to the Pope for ecclesiastical dignities, amounted to five times as much as those levied by the King out of the whole realm; that many unlearned and unworthy men were for money presented to benefices of the value of 1000 marks, while the poor and learned hardly obtained one of twenty, whereby learning suffered; that lay patrons perceiving the covetousness and simony of the Pope, had learned to sell their benefices to beasts, none otherwise than Christ was sold to the Jews; that there was no prince in Christendom that had the fourth part of the treasure which the Pope sinfully drew from England; that the

Pope's collectors kept a house in London, with clerks and officers, like one of the King's high courts; that one cardinal remaining at the Papal court was Dean of York, another of Salisbury, another of Lincoln, another Archdeacon of Canterbury, another Archdeacon of Durham, &c. &c. These are a few of the seven-and-twenty counts of that Bill of Indictment which the Parliament on this occasion drew up. As a remedy for these evils, prohibitory statutes, with heavier penalties than before, were enacted. They were evaded or openly defied. In 1390, the King's council addressed the reigning Pontiff, entreating him to adjust the difficulty. Pope Boniface IX. replied by appointing an Italian cardinal to a prebend's stall at Wells, to which a presentation had been already issued by the King. The claim of the King's nominee was admitted by the English Bishops. For supporting in such a way the Crown against the Papacy, these Bishops were excommunicated. The House of Commons promptly interposed. Speaking of the Papal excommunications in a petition addressed by them to the King, they declared that "the things so attempted were clearly against the King's crown and regality, used and approved of in the times of all his progenitors, and therefore they and all the liege Commons of the realm would stand with their said lord the King and his said crown, in the case aforesaid, *to live and die.*" Their own position taken up so firmly, the Commons requested the King to try how the Lords temporal and spiritual would stand. The lay Lords had no hesitation; they would uphold the Crown against the Mitre. The Bishops gave a like reply. They would pass no judgment, indeed, on

the legality or illegality of the Pope's excommunications, ecclesiastically considered; but inasmuch as they violated the prerogatives of the monarchy, as loyal subjects they would support the King. The Three Estates having unanimously and in such emphatic terms declared their readiness to resist the Pope, the Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire were re-enacted in still more stringent terms and with still weightier penalties; to be no longer as dead letters in the Statute Book, but to be rigidly enforced. In no instance was a foreign presentation suffered to take effect. The Popes for a time, but in a somewhat languid way, kept up the struggle, but they at last gave way, and the victory was complete.

The latter half of the fourteenth century is distinguished in our annals for the two great victories of Crecy and Poitiers—victories flattering to national pride, but, save in the high prestige they lent to British arms, barren of national benefits. They failed in their immediate object, and no fruit of them remains. But there were two other victories gained in the same period, less known, less gloried in, the fruits of which abide. The first of these was won when England refused to pay the 1000 marks to Urban, and take on the badge of vassalage, and the fruit of that victory was the secure and perpetual establishment of the civil supremacy of the Crown and Parliament, the vindication and protection of our national independence. The second of these victories was won when the claim of the Popes to appoint as they pleased to English benefices was conclusively set aside, and the fruit of that victory was the secure and permanent establishment, so far as its patronage was concerned, of the liberties of the Church of England.

In both of these politico-ecclesiastical conflicts, Wycliffe took a prominent part and rendered important services. His appointment on the royal commission despatched to Bruges is of itself a conspicuous proof of the high place which he had won for himself in the esteem and confidence of the country. He owed that place neither to position, nor to rank, nor to connexion, but solely to his talent and his worth, and to the powerful aid that he had given to the Crown and Parliament in their collision with the Papal See. On his return from his diplomatic mission, Wycliffe was presented to the prebend of Aust, in the diocese of Worcester, and subsequently to the Rectory of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire; no high preferments, certainly, yet, as emanating from the Crown, sufficiently expressive of the royal approval of his conduct as Commissioner. A year or two before he had taken his degree of Doctor, and had commenced lecturing on theology, and now in his pulpit at Lutterworth and in his lecture-room at Oxford, he began to speak so freely about the Papacy; his opinions were so novel and so bold, uttered with such earnestness, enforced with such énergy, illustrated with such eloquence, spreading with such rapidity; their author, too, had become so great a friend and favourite with many of the most influential men in the country, especially with the great Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt, that the hierarchy of England were thrown into the greatest excitement and alarm. Something prompt and vigorous behoved to be done to stay this rising tide which was now directing itself not simply against the Pope, but against the priesthood generally. The time

seemed favourable to strike an effective blow both at the Duke and his clerical *protégé*. Edward the Black Prince, the Duke's elder brother, had just been carried to the grave, amid the tears of the nation. Richard, his son, next heir to the crown, was but a feeble youth. The King's health had failed, and the power had passed into the vigorous hands of Lancaster. That passionate attachment which the people cherished towards the Black Prince turned into a jealousy of the Duke, to whom the ambitious design was attributed of thrusting himself in between young Richard and the crown. Courtenay, Bishop of London, one of the Duke's chief antagonists, in a convocation of clergy which met early in 1377, rose and moved that Wycliffe should be summoned before them, to be examined as to his teaching. He was cited to appear. The 19th February was named as the day, and Our Lady's Chapel in St. Paul's as the place for his appearance. Of all this the Duke had been informed. Early on the morning of the appointed day the great dignitaries of the church, accompanied by some of the chief nobility, took their seats within the chapel. Somehow or other it got noised abroad that there was to be a collision between the Bishop and the Duke, and a London mob, unfriendly at the time to Lancaster, were there, in a somewhat ruffled mood, to witness it. Wycliffe appeared at the extremity of the crowd. He would have had great difficulty in getting through it, but Lord Percy, the Earl-Marshal of England, went before to clear the way, and the great Duke himself walked by the Reformer's side. Forcing their way, they got at

last within the chapel. Courtenay rose in high displeasure. "My Lord Percy," said he, "had I known what masteries you would have kept within this church, I would have stopped you from coming in here." "He shall keep such masteries," said John of Gaunt, answering for Lord Percy, "though you say nay." "Wycliffe," said the Earl-Marshal, "be seated; you have many things to answer, and you will need the rest." "He must and he shall stand," replied the Bishop; "it is unreasonable that one cited before his ordinary should sit during his answer." "Lord Percy's motion is but reasonable," rejoined the Duke; and as for you, my Lord Bishop, who are grown so proud and arrogant, I will bring down the pride not of you alone but of all the prelaty in England." It turned now into a rude squabble between the Duke and the Bishop. Words between them ran higher and higher. At last the Duke was heard to say that, rather than take such words from him, he would pluck the Bishop by the hair out of the church. The threat was circulated among the crowd without. They got into the wildest excitement. They, on their part, rather than see their Bishop so abused, were ready to lose their lives in his defence. The uproar became such that it was vain to think of carrying on any legal process. "And so," says one narrator of this strange scene, "that council being broken up (for that day) with scolding and brawling, was dissolved before nine o'clock."

We are left in the dark as to whether any specific charges were brought at this time against Wycliffe. Had he been furnished with any list of such sent along

with the citation, they would, in all likelihood, have been preserved. It is most likely, for the thing was done in haste, that the Bishop expected to have the legal grounds of accusation supplied in Wycliffe's answers and acknowledgments. If so, this interference of the Duke and the Earl-Marshal disappointed them. That disappointment, however, made the Bishops all the more determined to gain their end. To do so, they would call in a power which no Duke of Lancaster dare resist; they would have that power exercised in such a way that no opportunity should be given to any one to baulk or defeat it. Letters were immediately despatched to Pope Gregory XI., in which the most alarming representations were given of the magnitude of the danger. Extracts from Wycliffe's lectures and sermons, containing nineteen different heresies, which he was accused of propagating, were enclosed, and the Pope was entreated to interfere. He instantly and most vigorously responded to the appeal. In June 1377, five separate Bulls were drawn up at Avignon, and despatched to England; three to the Bishops; one to the King; and one to the University of Oxford. The Bishops were commanded to have Wycliffe, without any notice, brought to trial, immediately apprehended, and cast into prison. Whatever confession he made, or whatever the evidence they collected in proof of his having taught the heresies attributed to him, they were to send, by a faithful messenger, in a document sealed with their own seals, and disclosed to no one but the Pope, and they were to await his further orders. In the event of their failing to arrest him, they were to summon him to appear personally before the

Pope within three months. The King, in the Bull addressed to him, was besought, for the reverence he bore to God, to the faith, and to the Apostolic See, to protect and aid the Bishops in their endeavours to extirpate these heresies. The University, in its turn, was called upon to root out the tares that had been springing up among the wheat; to suffer no one to teach within its precincts propositions so detestable and damnable, tending to subvert the state of the whole Church, and even of the civil government; and to deliver up Wycliffe, if he were at Oxford, into the custody of the Bishops. The Pope certainly did his very best. He left no Bull unwritten, no means untried. The net was drawn around the victim so that it seemed impossible that he should escape. At this crisis, however, events occurred, both in England and in France, which altered the whole complexion of affairs, and saved Wycliffe from the fate of Huss.

Edward III. died before the Bull addressed to him reached England, and his grandson, Richard II., had ascended the throne. Before any measures could be taken against Wycliffe, the first Parliament of the new reign assembled. It gave speedy proof that whatever its temper towards the Duke of Lancaster might be, the resolution to withstand the aggressions of the Papacy remained as firm as ever. All through the reign of Edward III., the Popes, removed from Rome by the French monarchy, had been residing at Avignon. Those Popes of Avignon, French by birth, and raised to the pontifical chair by the influence of the French kings, had naturally enough thrown their weight into the scale against England in her wars with France.

These wars had pressed heavily on the resources of the country, and doubtless it gave a sharper edge to the public feeling in our country against the exactions of the Papacy, that the gold drained from England passed into the treasury of a hostile power. At Edward's death, it was believed that large funds were in the hands of the Pope's officers in England, ready to be conveyed to France. The Parliament had an itching hand to clutch this gold. That it might have some warrant for a deed that looked a little thievish in its character, it resolved to submit the point to some high authority ; and in the name of the King, the following question was submitted to Wycliffe for his judgment: " Whether the kingdom of England might not lawfully, in case of necessity, detain and keep back the treasure of the kingdom for its defence, that it be not carried away to foreign and strange nations, the Pope himself demanding and requiring the same, under pain of censure ?" Wycliffe's answer was a plain and explicit affirmative. Every national body, he said, had a power given it by its Creator, which it was authorized to use for its own self-preservation, and why should not the kingdom of England possess and exercise such a power ? The Pope could put in a claim to any part of the treasure of the kingdom only as to alms, which the kingdom was bound to extend to the Church—a claim which the pre-supposed necessitous condition of the kingdom itself set aside. And as to his enforcing his demands by exercising, in the way of carrying out his spiritual censures, any secular control, all such secular lordship and dominion was plainly forbidden to the

Apostles, and consequently to the Pope. If he would be such a Lord, he lost his Apostleship ; if he would be an Apostle, the Lordship must be given up. Such an answer, at such a time, to such a question, could only have inflamed the more the enmity of the prelates, and intensified their desire to get rid of so bold and so dangerous an adversary. He stood so high in public repute, however, that they needed to proceed with caution. After some delay, the Bull to the University was sent off from London to Oxford. It met with a strange reception there. It was at first debated whether it should be received or not. Through respect to the Pope it was at last received, but the University refused to execute it. As yet it would do nothing against Wycliffe.

Left to their own resources, and uncertain how far the civil power would bear them out, the Prelates refrained from any attempt to arrest or incarcerate. They satisfied themselves with summoning Wycliffe to appear at a synodical meeting, to be held in the archiepiscopal palace at Lambeth, in April 1378. He was furnished, at the same time, with a list of the erroneous doctrines imputed to him. With an answer to these prepared, Wycliffe presented himself at the palace at Lambeth on the appointed day. There was as great a concourse of people, as there had been at St. Paul's ; but either they were a different class of people, or, which is more likely, they had learned better to estimate Wycliffe's character and position. So it was, at least, that instead of now opposing his passage, they forced themselves in formidable numbers along with him into the chapel ; and their stormy looks and words and gestures, at once told the

Prelates that it would be at their peril that they touched or injured him. Wycliffe had barely time to lodge his answers, and the Prelates had but time hurriedly to inhibit him from all teaching of the obnoxious doctrines from the chair or the pulpit, when Sir Lewis Clifford entered the chapel, and in the name of the Dowager Princess of Wales, the widow of the Black Prince, commanded all farther procedure to be sisted. The Prelates yielded to the terror of the mob and the command of the Princess. "As a reed shaken of the wind," so does the contemporary Catholic historian Walsingham describe the scene, "their speech became soft as oil, and with such fear were they struck, that they seemed to be as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs." There was no Earl-Marshal nor stout John of Gaunt to stand on this occasion by Wycliffe's side; yet he passed as safely out of the chapel at Lambeth as he had done out of that of St. Paul's.

We have before us the nineteen articles of accusation presented to this Synod of Lambeth. Embracing, as they must have done, the heaviest charges which could be brought, they fix the farthest point to which, in his public teaching, Wycliffe, as a Reformer, had at that time advanced. Looking at them in this light, we find that they are restricted to his repudiation of the civil and political dominion claimed by the Pope; to his assertion of the right and duty of the State to exercise entire control over ecclesiastical property, to the extent even of withholding or permanently withdrawing her endowments from the Church; to his condemnation of the use

by the Church of her spiritual arms for temporal purposes, such as enforcing the payment of her revenues ; to his denial of any power in the Church absolutely and unconditionally to bind and to loose, to pardon or to condemn ; to his affirmation that the censures of the Church had power and effect only so far as they were inflicted upon what was truly sinful and censurable in the sight of God, and were not otherwise to be regarded ; and to his bold averment that ecclesiastics, nay even the Pope himself, might warrantably be impeached and corrected by their subjects, both clergy and laity,—“For since,” said Wycliffe in one of his answers, “the Pope is our peccable brother, or liable to sin as well as we, he is subject to the law of brotherly reproof ; and when it is plain that the whole College of Cardinals are remiss in correcting him, for the necessary welfare of the Church, it is evident that the rest of the body of the Church, which may chiefly be made up of laity, may medicinally reprove and implead him, and reduce him to a better life.”

Wycliffe’s ideas as to the Church property, the tenure by which it was held, and the manner in which it should be disposed of, exhibiting the most violent reaction from the theory and practice of the hierarchy, exposed him not only to the virulent persecution of the priesthood in his own day, but have created an enduring prejudice against him, under which many down even to our own day continue to labour. All the fixed property belonging to her, along with the tithes, the Church of Rome claimed as her own, by divine indefeasible right. Any alienation of it, any re-distribution of it by secular authori-

ties, she resented and condemned as worse than robbery—as sacrilege. “Prelates and priests,” says Wycliffe, “cry aloud and write that the King hath no jurisdiction nor power over the persons and goods of Holy Church. And when the King and the secular Lords, perceiving that their ancestors’ alms are wasted in pomp and pride, gluttony and other vanities, wish to take again the superfluity of temporal goods, and to help the land and themselves and their tenants, these worldly clerks bawl loudly that they ought to be cursed for intromitting with the goods of Holy Church, as if secular Lords and the Commons were no part of Holy Church.” “And by their new law of decretals, they have ordained that our clergy shall pay no subsidy nor tax, for keeping of our King and realm, without leave and assent of the worldly Priest of Rome. And yet many times this proud worldly Priest is an enemy of our land, and secretly maintained our enemies in war against us with our own gold. And thus they make an alien Priest, and he the proudest of all priests, to be chief lord of the whole of the goods which clerks possess in the realm, and that is the greatest part thereof.” In opposition to the Papal claims, Wycliffe contended for the subjection of all property, ecclesiastical equally with other, to the ordinary civil control; that it should all be put upon the same level as to the bearing of all public burdens, which, as we have already seen, Edward the First took good care that it should. Wycliffe denied that the Church had the same kind of right of property in her estates that ordinary proprietors had in theirs. He would not admit that the broad acres of the Bishop belonged to him and to his

successors in the same way, or with the same legal effect and issue, that the broad acres of the adjoining barony belonged to the Baron and his heirs. The one was private, the other, in his eyes, was national property. With the way in which the Baron chose to spend his rents the King and Parliament of England had nothing to do ; but not so with the way in which the Bishop or the Abbot spent the rental of their lands. Nor would Wycliffe acknowledge any divine right on the part of the Church to the tithes. The argument drawn from the Jewish economy he cut short by saying that on the same ground on which it was said that all priests should have tithes paid them, all Christians should be circumcised. The whole of the temporalities of the Church, of whatever kind, and however held, he regarded but as a perpetual alms, bestowed by the bounty of the nation, and put into the hands of the priesthood, to be used for pious purposes ; the King and Parliament, representing the original donors, retaining the entire right to judge as to the manner in which the funds so destined were applied, nay, having it still in their power to reclaim or re-destine these funds, in part or in whole, in the event of its appearing either that there was a superfluity of them, or that this peculiar application of them was, on the whole, attended with more evil than good. This was far enough to go ; but our Reformer went farther. The overgrown wealth of the clergy he looked upon as the chief source of the corruption of the Church ; and the chief source of that wealth, the bestowal by kings and nobles, of fixed or permanent property upon the Church. All such endowment he regarded

as wrong in principle and hurtful in result. The clergy, he thought, should be supported, and supported alone, by the voluntary offerings of the people; should live upon alms as Christ and his apostles did—alms not extorted as the Mendicant Friars extorted theirs, by forward and incessant beggary, but alms put willingly and generously into their hands by those among whom, and for whom, they laboured. For his model, not only as to the character, but as to the outward condition, of the clergy, Wycliffe went back to primitive, apostolic times; imagining that as the Church then was—not inwardly alone and spiritually, but in every respect, outwardly as well as inwardly, as to all its external regulations, its orders, its offices, the way in which its ministers were so supported—so it was meant to be, and by Divine authority ordained to be in all countries, in all ages, and under all circumstances. Finding no endowments in apostolic times, and looking to their results as presented before his eyes in that over-pampered Church of which he was a member, Wycliffe lamented the day in which the Church had accepted in that form the aid of the civil power. Heartily would he have re-echoed Dante's sentiment—perhaps he had read the lines; they were written before his day—

“ Ah! Constantine, to how much ill gave birth,
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower,
Which the first wealthy father gained from thee.”

“ That Silvester,” says Wycliffe, “ or whoever it was that first accepted the perpetual imperial endowment, was by no means free from blame; his sin as an indivi-

dual might be light, but he gave occasion to sin in a far greater degree, for before the time of that endowment, when apostolic men were more humble, men were regarded as deserving in proportion as they were found useful. But now, by reason of endowment, they incapacitate themselves for being useful, and become negligent of the counsel and command of Christ." With passionate ardour, and in the midst of the fiercest clerical opposition, did Wycliffe plead with the King and Parliament of England to remove these encumbering buttresses from the Church of England, and leave her to be maintained by the free-will offerings of the community. "Think ye, Lords and mighty men who support priests, how fearful it is to maintain worldly priests in their lusts, who neither know good nor will learn it, nor will live as holy men in their Order! For ye may lightly amend them, by only telling them that ye will not support them but as they do their duty, live well, and preach the gospel. Then, indeed, they would certainly do this. And think ye, great men, were not this a thousandfold better than to conquer the world? Hereby there should be none cost to you nor travail, but honour to God and endless good to yourselves, to priests, and to all Christendom; for this, by reducing the clergy to meekness and useful poverty and ghostly travail, as lived Christ and his apostles, sin should be destroyed, and holiness of life brought in, and secular laws strengthened, and the poor Commons aided, and good government, both spiritual and temporal, come again; and what is best of all, as Christ's word would run to and fro freely everywhere, many men would wing their way to heaven.

God for His endless mercy and charity bring this holy end. Amen."

But Wycliffe was not content with mere passionate appeals. He was pre-eminently practical ; a man of action as well as utterance. He not only so strongly urged the object ; he indicated the way in which, without wrong or injury done to any one, it could be carried out. " That there is a facility for performing this duty may be thus shown : It is well known, that the King of England, by virtue of his regalia, on the death of a Bishop or Abbot, or any one possessing large endowments, takes possession of these endowments as the sovereign, and that a new election is not entered upon without the royal assent, nor will the temporalities in such a case pass from their last occupant to his successor, without that assent. Let the King, therefore, refuse to continue what has been the great delinquency of his predecessors, and in a short time the whole kingdom will be freed from the mischiefs which have flowed from this source. Who, I ask, would dare to seize on these temporalities without license obtained from the King ? Nor need the King or his kingdom, to do themselves justice in this matter, smite with the sword, kill any man, or exercise their authority presumptuously. But as nature abhors sudden changes, and as this great transgression made progress by little and little, so if it were made to decrease by successive steps, as the deaths of the occupants succeed each other, with a small amount of prudence, the result would be anything but hurtful either to King or people."

There was, however, another obstacle in the way ;

there were the spiritual anathemas that were so sure to be denounced upon the heads of those who attempted to carry out any such measures. These Wycliffe exhorted all to take no heed to, reminding them "that though all the clerks on earth should curse them, because of their labour, with a clean conscience to bring clerks to this holy life,—as this would be according to God's law, God and all angels and all saints will bless them for their righteousness. The curses of these men harm no one; neither their interdicts, nor any censure which Satan may feign. Almighty God, stir our clerks, our Lords, our Commons, to maintain the rightful ordinance of Jesus Christ made for clerks, and to dread the curse of God and not the curse of Antichrist; and to desire the honour of God and bliss of heaven, more than their own honour and worldly joy." It is curious and very interesting to find sentiments and proposals such as these, which would even now be regarded as extreme, broached in England more than 500 years ago, by a man of such note and influence as Wycliffe undoubtedly then was. But it is still more remarkable to notice the spread and prevalence of these opinions at so early a period of our history. Wycliffe did not live to see any actual attempt made to carry his ideas into practice; but these ideas must have widely pervaded and taken strong hold of the public mind, for twenty-four years after his death a petition was presented by the House of Commons to the King, praying that all the Church property of the country should be taken possession of by the Crown; that a priesthood of 15,000, without distinction of rank, and with an annual stipend assigned to them should be retained and sup-

ported ; and that the remainder should be appropriated to the creation and maintenance of new nobles, knights, squires, and burghers, and the building and support of alms-houses.

Such, then, were Wycliffe's theories as to Church property, and their results. The heresies, as they were regarded, which he had broached in connexion with this subject, formed no small part of the charges brought against him before the Papal Delegates who sat in convocation within the Palace of Lambeth. It will be noticed that however extreme or revolutionary the opinions charged against him were, they did not trench upon any of the great spiritual dogmas of the Church. Many a sincere enough believer in the entire doctrine of the Papacy, so far went along with Wycliffe. Had he been cut off then, at this period of his life, he would still have ranked high among those of whom there were many, in every century before the Reformation, who mourned over the pride and luxury and corruption of the Church, who condemned her aggressions upon the State, who, reducing her wealth, would have had her confine herself exclusively to her own spiritual province, and even within that province limited the range of her spiritual powers ; but while he should have taken his place beside Arnold of Brescia and Savonarola of Florence, he would not have been entitled to rank with Luther and Calvin, Zuingle and Knox.

His life was in great jeopardy about this time. Returning to Oxford from that scene of excitement at Lambeth, he was seized with an illness which threatened to be fatal. His old enemies, the Friars, heard

the rumour that he was lying upon what seemed to be his death-bed. One day the door of his chamber opened, and a strange procession entered. First came four Doctors or Regents of the Orders, and behind, and supporting them, four Aldermen of the wards, and a deputation from the Mendicants. They approached the bed, and after kindly but solemn salutation, they reminded Wycliffe of the many and great injuries which, in diverse ways, he had inflicted upon the Friars, and as now he might be on the point of death, and could not but desire to die as a penitent, they called upon him to express his sorrow for and to revoke all that he had said and written in their condemnation. Wycliffe lay silent till the speaker had done with this address. He beckoned to his servant to raise him upon his pillows, and gathering all his strength, with a firm loud voice, he said, "I shall not die but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the Friars." The astonished deputation recoiled from the bedside, and instantly retired confused and discomfited. Wycliffe did live, but it was for other and greater ends than any correction of the Mendicants.

A great event had recently occurred, which, telling upon the state of Europe, affected also his own individual fate. At the very time that the noisy conclave of Papal delegates, which met to condemn Wycliffe, was broken up at Lambeth, another and still noisier conclave was assembling at Rome. Gregory XI. had removed during the preceding year from Avignon to Rome, and so had terminated what has been called the seventy years' Babylonish captivity of the Papacy. He

found, however, his new residence in Rome so disagreeable, that he was already meditating a return to Avignon when he died. On the 7th April 1378, the cardinals met to elect a successor. The hall in which they met was invaded by a fierce rabble. A Roman Pope—a Roman Pope—we will have none but a Roman Pope! was shouted into the ears of the affrighted Cardinals. The majority of them were French, and it was feared by the populace of Rome, that they would choose one of their own countrymen to be Pope, and transfer, once more, the seat of the Holy See to Avignon. Two ecclesiastics announced themselves as delegates of the people. They told the Cardinals that the rage and determination of the citizens was such, that should their wishes be thwarted, they threatened to hew them and every Frenchman in Rome to pieces, and that the threat was quite likely to be carried out. The mass for the descent of the Holy Ghost had not yet been celebrated. There could be no election that day; the people must wait at least till to-morrow, and on that plea, and hoping that by to-morrow the clamour would have subsided, the Cardinals dismissed the delegates. Next day, however, saw no such subsidence. The clamour had only become louder and fiercer. The French Cardinals would not yield. At last, the name of the Archbishop of Bari happened to be introduced. He was not a Roman, but neither was he a Frenchman. He was an Italian, and that might help to soothe and reconcile the mob. He was voted by acclamation into the Chair of St. Peter. The waves of the tumult went down, and ten days afterwards Urban VI. was

crowned in the Church of St. John Lateran. All the Cardinals assisted at the coronation, and in other ways acknowledged his authority. But they speedily repented of their choice. Their new master had been a monk ; rigid in his fasts ; a wearer of sackcloth. They had been accustomed at Avignon to a very different kind of life. In one of his first public addresses, the new Pope broke out into a furious tirade against their luxurious mode of living, and threatened to enforce upon the whole conclave the strict rule of his own Order—the having but one dish at table. At the same time he announced his determination to abolish simony. Every Cardinal who accepted money in order to secure his vote or interest in any matter, he would excommunicate. Nor were these great dignitaries, these cardinal princes, treated with more ceremony in his private audiences. One of them he called a fool ; another, the Cardinal of Amiens, he charged with robbing the treasury of the Church. The high-born Frenchman could not brook this, and somewhat forgetting for a moment the courtesy of his nation, he said, “ As Archbishop of Bari, you lie.” The French Cardinals, in a body, retired in disgust to Anagni. Thence, on the 9th of August, they addressed encyclical letters, signed by thirteen cardinals, to all the faithful, declaring that Urban’s election had been carried by force and fear of death, and as compulsory was null and void. Denouncing him as an apostate, as an accursed Antichrist, they called upon him to descend at once from a throne to which he had no title. Urban was as imprudent as he was imperious. With the four Italian Cardinals still left to him, and the strong plea

to urge that all the others had, in the most solemn manner, and after all popular compulsion had been removed, acknowledged him as Pope, he might easily have braved the fulmination of Anagni. But he drove even the Italian Cardinals from his side. Without consulting them, he suddenly created twenty-six new Cardinals. Forsaking the unwelcome companionship thus thrust upon them, the four old Cardinals left Rome, and joined their brethren who were now at Fondi. Their accession precipitated the final step. On the 20th September, in presence of all the Cardinals except one, by whom Urban had been elected (the Italians not voting indeed, but yet not objecting), Robert of Geneva was chosen to be Pope, under the name of Clement VII. There were now two rival Popes, and so arose that great schism that for nearly half a century divided and distracted Europe; Germany, Hungary, Poland, Denmark, England, Portugal, siding with Urban; France, Spain, Scotland, and Naples, with Clement. This event had a direct and most important bearing upon Wycliffe's position. The death of Gregory had annulled the commission under which Courtenay and his associates had assembled at Lambeth. If Wycliffe were again to be singled out, and proceedings against him renewed under Papal authority, a new brief or Bull from the new Pope would be required. But Urban had some other employment for the thunders of the Vatican than that of launching them at the head of the Rector of Lutterworth. He had Kings and Cardinals to excommunicate, and an anti-Pope to denounce and to dethrone. He had got politically involved besides with France and Naples, and

could ill afford to take any step which might weaken the support England was tendering him; nor till the Commons of England were somewhat better disposed towards the hierarchy, would it have been safe for him to order, as his predecessor had done, the seizure and imprisonment of one who stood so high in the public regard. Wycliffe was left for a season unmolested. He employed the leisure thus enjoyed in translating the Bible into English.

IV.

FIRST TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE—WYCLIFFE'S THEOLOGY, PASTORATE, CHARACTER, AND SERVICES AS A REFORMER.

It was necessity not choice which confined the western world for so many ages to a Latin version of the Scriptures. When Christianity was first diffused over our quarter of the globe, there was no other language generally intelligible into which they could have been translated. In progress of time Latin sunk into a dead language, and even that limited amount of acquaintance with Holy Writ conveyed by the services of the Church was lost to the people, who no longer understood the language in which those services were conducted. The Scriptures became in this way the almost exclusive possession of the priesthood; whatever knowledge the people had of their contents being derived solely from their instructions. As the languages of modern Europe grew up to be fit instruments of literature, various attempts were made in different countries to render into them portions at least of Holy Writ. In the first instance these were made by the priesthood, and for the priesthood. Designed chiefly for the use of the more illiterate members of that order who knew but little of the Latin tongue, and not intended for general circulation, they

were limited to those parts of Scripture embraced in the Ritual. There is a very ancient Psalter, said to have been given by Pope Gregory to St. Augustine, the monk sent to Britain to convert the Saxons, in which an Anglo-Saxon version of the Psalms appears interlined with the Latin text. The first entire portion of Scripture, however, of which we have any certain knowledge that it was translated into the Anglo-Saxon tongue, was the Gospel of St. John. This translation, made in the eighth century, occupied the last hours, the last moments of the venerable Bede. He had begun the translation when a fatal illness seized him. With failing strength he kept unfaltering at the work. As chapter after chapter was translated, lower and lower sank the sands of life. The day that he felt was to be his last dawned upon the dying monk. The youth whom he employed as his amanuensis was early by his bedside. "Dear master," said he, as he took his place, and unrolled his manuscript, "Dear master, there is still one chapter wanting." "Take your pen," said Bede, "make ready, and write fast." Sentence by sentence was read by the youth in Latin; repeated by Bede in Anglo-Saxon, and quick as the pen could move transcribed. They were interrupted by other duties which the dying man had to discharge. These over, the willing and affectionate scribe was once more at his post. "Dear master," he said, "there is yet but a single sentence left." "Write quickly!" was the feeble response. "It is finished," said the writer. "Thou hast truly said, It is finished," answered Bede. Then, lifting up his voice and heart to God in thanksgiving, he said—"Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." It was with his last breath that the last word was spoken, and with that breath his saintly spirit passed.

In the succeeding century King Alfred sent his celebrated letter to all the Bishops and Heads of monasteries, in which he said:—"That it was needful for his kingdom that whatever knowledge was contained in the Latin language should, as fast as possible, be transferred into English; that all men should first learn English, and then afterwards those who had leisure might give themselves to the study of the Latin tongue." The Great Prince added to his many other claims upon our reverence, the deep anxiety he displayed to see the Scriptures translated into the mother-tongue of his people—an anxiety, however, which was not gratified. At the time of his death he was himself engaged in translating a portion of the Bible, but the work was not completed. There are two interlinear translations of the Gospels and of the Psalter, and there is a remarkable version, or rather paraphrase of the historical books of the Old Testament by Ælfric, all of which are of a date prior to the Norman Conquest. Between that period and the time of Wycliffe, no further progress was made. An inhabitant of England, 300 years before his time, would have found more of Scripture in the Anglo-Saxon tongue than Wycliffe found in that form of the language prevalent in his days. Many years before he appeared as an opponent of the Papacy, he had occupied some of his leisure hours in turning parts of the Bible into his native tongue. And so soon as his mind opened to a distinct and entire conviction of the anti-scriptural character of the Papal system of doctrine,

government, and worship, he was seized with a burning desire to lay open to the eyes of all his countrymen the source whence that conviction had been drawn, the foundation upon which it had been built. It was truly a great undertaking, the greatest that any man in that age could take in hand, and it was executed within three or four years from the time it was undertaken. To Wycliffe belongs the undivided honour of having been the first to translate the entire Bible into English prose, to put that translation, without note or comment, into the hands of his fellow-countrymen, and to circulate it freely and widely among them. By doing this, he let in more light upon England than if he had kindled, in a thousand of its parishes, a light like that which burned at Lutterworth. By doing this, he forged and sent abroad the instrument which, of itself, by its own native force, removed the shackles from many a spirit burdened and enslaved, and which, socially, civilly, and religiously, made England a nation of free men. By doing this, he did more for his country than Edward and the Black Prince did, when they won the bloody victories of Crecy and Poitiers.

The first English Bible was fortunate in the time and circumstances of its appearance. Had Bede lived to complete an Anglo-Saxon translation, his monkish version, transcribed with the utmost care, illuminated like the middle-age copies of the Vulgate, would have been laid up in the libraries of the greater monasteries and cathedrals, and have passed but slowly out into the hands of the general community. It was different with Wycliffe's English Bible. He had stirred the public

mind with questions connected with the Church, as it had never been stirred before. Step by step he had advanced,—many of the clergy, multitudes of the laity, approving,—till at last he boldly threw down the gage of battle, and declared an entire and undying hostility to Rome. Then it was that his friends among the clergy drew off in alarm, and his political and aristocratic supporters failed him. He had but one stay to look to, the enlightened conviction of the great body of the people. That stay he had to create; the Scriptures, read and understood by them, would create it. Old, forsaken, weakened by a stroke of paralysis, he set himself to the Herculean task. With one or two friends to help him, he toiled at the noble work within the rectory of Lutterworth; toiled patiently, hopefully, for he knew that if once that Book were in the hands of all, they might do as they liked with him, but the light so kindled they could never quench.

Once finished, the English Bible was eagerly sought for, and extensively circulated. In modern language, we should say, that when published, it met with a large sale. We are to remember, however, that we are dealing with a time when there were comparatively few readers, few indeed who could read. When printing was an unknown art, and bookselling an unknown trade, many a monk put down in writing what neither he nor any one else ever thought of copying or offering for sale. It was the attempt to diffuse which then constituted publication. The simplest way to do this, was for the author to deposit his manuscript in some Convent or College Library, easy of access, of

general resort, where it might lie open to any one to read, and if he so chose, order a copy to be transcribed. If the author had the means of doing so, he might employ copyists himself, multiply the number sent to places of public resort, or offer them for sale. There were other methods he might adopt for letting the character and contents of his volume be known. It is told of a distinguished author of these days, Giraldus Cambrensis, that he caused a pulpit to be erected at Brecon, in an open and crowded thoroughfare, from which he read some of his works aloud, that all might have an opportunity of hearing, and those who chose, might order or buy a copy. Wycliffe did not need to resort to any of these methods. The agitation of years had excited curiosity which created a spontaneous demand. There were not a few of the nobility well able to stand the cost, who were desirous to read the book. The good Queen Anne became one of its earliest and devoutest readers. In the middle rank, there were not wanting those who, without remuneration, were willing to help in the copying; and of the humbler clergy, there was a devoted band of itinerant preachers already organized by Wycliffe into a society, ready to act as colporteurs, to whom no work was more welcome than this of taking with them, in parts or in whole, the sacred volume, and reading it and circulating it among the common people. The evidence survives that, broken up thus into parts—written not with monkish care, but in a ruder way, and with inferior materials—the English Bible found its way where no other volume reached.

The impression was as deep as the diffusion was ex-

tensive. Instantly, from all ranks and quarters of the priesthood, the cry of heresy arose. The undaunted Wycliffe stood forth to vindicate what he had done ; to assert and defend it as the right and the duty of all men to read the Sacred Scriptures. He did so in no soft strains of weak apology, but boldly hurled the charge of heresy back on those who brought it. " Those heretics," he declared, " are not to be heard who imagine that temporal lords should not be allowed to possess the law of God, but that it is sufficient for them that they know what may be learnt concerning it from the lips of their priests and prelates. The faith of the Church is contained in the Scriptures ; the more these are known, then, the better ; and as secular men should assuredly understand the faith that they profess, that faith should be taught in whatever language may be best known to them."

Such pleading is familiar to our ears, but it was absolutely new in England in those days. In Anglo-Saxon times, the question of the right of the laity to possess and read the Bible in their own language had never been raised. There were no English Bibles to be read, and even if there had been, there were very few to read them. As there was no peril, the Church issued no prohibition. The first translation of the entire Bible into any modern language was the Romaunt version, written in a language understood over the whole south of Europe, and widely circulated by the Waldensians and others in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. That version was speedily condemned by the Church of Rome, and attempted to be suppressed. Wycliffe's version met with a similar

reception. In 1390, a bill condemning it and prohibiting its circulation, was brought into the House of Lords. It was rejected; the Duke of Lancaster showing, upon this occasion, that though he had deserted Wycliffe in his attack upon the doctrines of the Church, the old love of freedom and of national independence was not dead in him. "We will not," he declared, "be the dregs of all, seeing other nations have the law of God, which is the law of our faith, written in their own language." Failing in this endeavour to call in the civil power, the hierarchy had recourse to their own chosen weapons. In 1408 were issued from a great convocation of the clergy, what are known by the name (taken from the Archbishop who presided) of the Arundel Constitutions. One of these is as follows:—"We decree and ordain that from henceforward no unauthorized person shall translate any part of the Holy Scripture into English, or any other language, under any form of book or treatise.* Neither shall any such book, treatise, or version, made either in Wycliffe's time or since, be read, either in whole or in part, publicly or privately, under the penalty of the greater excommunication, till the said translation shall be approved, either by the Bishop of the diocese, or a Provincial Council, as occasion shall require." The State was induced to lend the Church its aid. It was made a civil crime to possess even a portion of Wycliffe's Bible. Men and women, against whom no other crime than such possession could be proved, were doomed to death. Still, however, under all the coercive measures used, copies of the persecuted volume were carefully preserved and stealthily circulated; handed

down from father to son as a precious family inheritance, till, at the Reformation, those days arrived, when the discovery of the art of printing, and the appearance of more perfect translations by Tyndale, Coverdale, and others, put Wycliffe's version aside.

It was not creditable to our country that a work of such great historic and linguistic interest as Wycliffe's Bible should have remained so long unprinted. That discredit has recently been removed by the appearance, from the press of the University of Oxford, of four large octavo volumes, containing two different texts of Wycliffe's Bible, issued under the joint editorship of the Rev. Mr. Forshall and Sir Frederic Madden. The editors tell us that in preparing these volumes for the press, there passed through their hands no fewer than 150 separate manuscripts, the majority of which, they had every reason to believe, must have been transcribed within forty years of the first appearance of the original translation—of itself a convincing proof, at once of the avidity with which it had been at first received, and of the careful shelter under which it had been protected and preserved. The editors, to whom the thanks of the nation are so amply due, close their preface in these words:—“The editors have spared no pains to render these volumes complete. A considerable portion of their time during twenty-two years has been spent in accomplishing their task. They will have no cause of regret, if the result of their labours shall remove some portion of the disgrace which has long been attached to the English nation, for the continued neglect of its earliest versions of Holy Scripture, and if it shall serve in any important

degree to illustrate the history and structure of the English language."

Apart from his other public services, Wycliffe is entitled to our grateful remembrance as one of the earliest and most successful cultivators of the English tongue. He lived at a most interesting epoch in the history of that language. To our country belongs the honour of giving birth, in the seventh and eighth centuries, to the Anglo-Saxon, the earliest literature in any of the vernacular languages of modern Europe. That literature itself perished under the invasion of the Danes and Normans, but the Anglo-Saxon tongue survived, and not only kept its hold, but finally drove the language of the invaders forth of English soil.

It would form the subject of a very interesting (as yet, I believe, an unprosecuted) inquiry, to examine into the conditions under which conquerors have imposed their language upon the conquered, and the conquered have imposed theirs upon their conquerors. There are large materials here. We have the conquest and occupation of Russia by the Tartars, without, I believe, the slightest infusion of the Tartar into the Russian speech. The same result appears in the Tartar conquest and government of China. Northern Africa again, in the spread of the Arabic, exhibits a different result; although, generally, one might say that the history of Mohammedanism proves that it is easier to conquer a country than to conquer a language. The Moorish invasion of Spain, though neither so extensive nor so continued, leaves stronger marks of itself in the Spanish tongue than the Tartar did on the Russian or the

Chinese. The Romans conquered Spain and Gaul, and imposed their language upon both, the Latin being the basis of the language of both countries. The same people held Britain as a province for nearly 500 years. It does not appear that the Latin mingled with the Celtic speech; but perhaps had the Roman occupation been wider and more permanent, our country might have added another to the kingdoms whose language betrayed the dominant power of the Latin speech. The Romans withdrew, and the Saxon invasion was rather an occupation than a conquest. The vigorous character of the race, its insular position, and the strong spirit of nationality which sprung up, all contributed to that first birth of a vernacular literature. The Anglo-Saxon tongue, into which there was breathed the living vigour of the Anglo-Saxon people, took full and lasting hold of England. The present population of these islands springs, perhaps, from more separate sources than that of any other country in Europe; but in our English tongue the Saxon element immeasurably preponderates.

The Normans came to England with a language well formed and strong. Everything outwardly was in its favour, and great pains were taken by William and his successors to secure its triumph over the vulgar tongue. The ecclesiastical appointments all tended to this object. Norman-French was the language of the Court, the camp, the school. Boys were made to learn their Latin through it, and not through the Saxon. It was in Norman-French that the pleadings in all the Courts of Justice were conducted. It was in Norman-French that the records of Parliament and the chief civic

corporations were kept. Yet it made no way. The language of the common people during the eleventh and twelfth centuries was undergoing a change in its inflexions, passing in part from the Anglo-Saxon into the English, but it took in scarcely a word from the Norman-French. During the thirteenth century, under its grasp of growing vigour, the Norman-French itself began to wither and decline. This was the more remarkable when we remember that the ancestors of those very Normans, within a century after their settlement in Normandy, lost their ancient Runic and adopted the French speech. In Normandy the Runic yielded to a tongue stronger than itself, but in England that stronger tongue yields to one of still greater power. It was in Wycliffe's time that the reaction of the Saxon against the Norman-French reached its height. Edward III. was not slow to perceive this, and showed both his wisdom and his patriotism by a Royal edict issued in 1362, that all public proceedings in Parliament and in all the courts of law should thenceforth be conducted in the vernacular speech. The mother tongue of England thus rose in triumph over both the clerkly Latin and the aristocratic French, and in the pages of Chaucer and Wycliffe celebrated her victory; for Wycliffe has as much reason to be honoured as the father of English prose as Chaucer of English poetry. No writer of his age made so large a use of the English language, and no writings of that age were so widely diffused among all orders of the community. The very strength of his desire to make himself understood, and to gain acceptance for his teaching, gave clearness and

terseness to his style ; and in seeking to popularize his doctrines, he did much to popularize the language in which they were embodied. It would be scarcely fair to criticise as mere pieces of composition many of his tracts and pamphlets. They were addressed to the comparatively uneducated. They were written in haste. The writer was too much engrossed with the immediate and practical object he had in view, to bestow much care upon his language. Nevertheless, these very circumstances obliged him to choose the words that would be most easily understood, and to mould them into the form that was most likely to make impression. Hence it is that they exhibit in a marked degree the two qualities in which our language has proved pre-eminent. It has neither the copiousness of the German, nor the delicate flexibility of the French, nor the softness and beauty of the Italian ; but in precision and in force it stands above all its rivals ; and in precision and force Wycliffe's writings undoubtedly excel. No single work exerted a tithe of the influence in moulding our language into its present shape and form that his Translation of the Scriptures did. Differences of opinion have been expressed as to the literary merits of his other writings, but here there is a universal agreement.

“A recent writer,” says Mr. Wilmott,¹ “has ventured to express an opinion that the English of Wycliffe is harsh and difficult as compared with that of Mandeville ; a cen-

¹ “Wycliffe,” says Mr. Sharon Turner, “is neither classical in his Latin, nor clear and vigorous in his usual eloquent. His English partakes of the imperfection of his Latin diction in all his works but the Scriptures, and there the unrivalled combination of force, simplicity, devout compactness,

sure which he still further heightens by affirming that his style, though occasionally emitting gleams of animation, is everywhere coarse and slovenly. The criticism seems to be incorrect. Even in fertility and grace the Reformer surpasses the traveller. It has always been admitted that Wycliffe's translation of the Scriptures enriched our language. It seems impossible not to feel surprised and awed by the wonderful happiness of diction with which the dignity of the original has been frequently preserved. The simple pictures of holiness and truth are enriched with a becoming shade by the massive and antique framework of his language."

Wycliffe's patient and profound study of the inspired documents had been gradually conducting him to the conclusion that the Sacred Scriptures supply the sole sufficient, infallible rule of faith and practice to the Church. That conclusion, fraught with such weighty consequences, he now openly declared and defended in his work *De Veritate Scripturæ*; and from this time it was to the Bible, and the Bible alone, that he appealed as the ultimate test and standard of truth. "God's will," such is the form in which he announced his adoption of dignity, and feeling in the original, compel his old English, as they seem to do every other language into which they are translated, to be clear, interesting, and energetic. There is something remarkable in the composition of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, that although in every language they are the easiest book to a learner, they are yet dignified, interesting, and impressive. The Pentateuch, Psalms, and Gospels unite in a singular degree simplicity and perspicuity, with force, energy, and pathos. I cannot satisfy myself what the literary peculiarities, the felicities of language are, which make them so universally comprehensible, and yet avoid insipidity, feebleness, and tedium; which display so often such genuine eloquence and majesty, and yet are neither affected nor elaborate, nor, in general, above the understanding of the commonest reader."

this cardinal position,—“is plainly revealed in the two Testaments, which may be called Christ’s law, or the faith of the Church, and Christ’s law sufficeth of itself to rule Christ’s Church, which law a Christian man well understanding, may thence gather sufficient knowledge during his pilgrimage here on earth.” That whole circle of questions concerning the canon of Scripture, the authority of Scripture, and the right of private interpretation of Scripture with which the later controversies of the Reformation have made us so familiar, received their first treatment in this country at Wycliffe’s hands. In conducting this fundamental controversy, Wycliffe had to lay all the foundations with his own unaided hand. And it is no small praise to render to his work to say that it was, even as he laid them, line for line and stone for stone, that they were relaid by the master-builders of the Reformation.

Wycliffe’s theology, drawn fresh from the Scriptures (and with him it was truly the first crush of the grape), became quite definite and distinct. The divinity of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice He had offered for human guilt, His merits and mediation, were thus spoken of: “We should believe that Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, took flesh and blood, and came unto this world. Very God and man together, he suffered death, to deliver us from death.” “His merit is able of itself to redeem all mankind.” “Faith in him is sufficient for salvation, and this sufficiency is to be understood without any other cause concurring, and therefore men ought, for their salvation, to trust wholly to Christ, not to seek to be justified by any other way

than by his death and passion, nor to be righteous by any other method than by participation of his all-perfect righteousness." "Christ is himself the mediator, the intercessor, the best, the most ready and the most benign. He is always dwelling with the Father, and ever ready to intercede for us. We ought not then to seek the mediation of saints, because he is kinder and more disposed to help us than any of them. Who would make a buffoon his mediator, when he might have the aid of a most clement and ready King? The saints indeed are not buffoons, but they are less in comparison with Christ than a buffoon is to an earthly sovereign." Wycliffe accepted as revealed the doctrine of Predestination. In the language of our modern creeds we would call him a Calvinist. It is well known, however, that the Reformers of the sixteenth century regarded his system of doctrine as incomplete and insufficient. It is quite true that it would be difficult to frame a creed from his writings like that of Augsburg, or the Thirty-nine Articles, or the Westminster Confession. It is quite true that in his sermons and treatises, doctrine in a dry abstract dogmatic form does not fill a large space, and is not constantly obtruded. It is quite true that the profounder mysteries of the Divine character, purposes, and doings, are gently and reverently touched as by a hand that felt the insufficiency of its grasp. The moral, the spiritual, the practical, the love to be cherished, the duty to be done, supply the chief themes of his purely religious writings. There are many, however, who will venture to think that the difference in these respects between Wycliffe and those who wrote as long after the Reforma-

tion as he did before it, tells not against but for him. His ideas of its Church, its sacraments, its orders, its worship, bear obvious traces of the pure fountain-head from which they were derived. With him the clergy did not constitute the Church; he ignored the distinction between them and the laity; nor was the Church confined to or commensurate with any visible society. "The Church is mother to every man who shall be saved, and containeth no other." The sacraments are simply "tokens that may be seen of things that may not be seen with the bodily eye." There were seven sacraments observed at that time by the Church, but he saw no reason why they might not have been more, there being many symbols besides those which might be used as signs of the invisible. To these seven sacraments he assigned an unequal virtue. Confirmation he regarded as unnecessary, ordination as conferring no indelible character or gift; he utterly repudiated the notion of the bread and wine of the Eucharist being transformed into the body and blood of Christ. "If Prelates inquire of me what the sacrament of the altar is in its kind, I would say, it is bread the same as it was before. As to all questions beyond this, I neither grant it, nor deny it, nor doubt it." "It appears to me," he says, "presumptuous and unwise to decide on the salvation or damnation of men simply from the circumstance of their baptism. Nor do I assert that the infants slain for Christ (at Bethlehem), who not having reached the eighth day had not been circumcised, are lost. Nor dare I determine on the other side; but I hold my peace as one dumb, and humbly confess my ignorance. But I know that whatever God

doth in the matter will be just, and a work of compassion to be praised by all the faithful." That the sacraments are the sole, or are necessary channels of grace, absolutely and vitally essential to salvation, Wycliffe did not believe, and in not believing stood separate from the almost universal conviction of his age.

Had the remodelling of the Church, as to its office-bearers, been put into his hands, he would have had but two classes of public functionaries. "One thing I confidently assert, that in the primitive Church, in the time of Paul, two orders were held sufficient, those of Priest or Presbyter, and Deacon. No less certain am I that in the time of Paul, Presbyter and Bishop were the same. There were not then the distinctions of Pope and Cardinals, Patriarchs and Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, with other offices without number or rule. As to all the disputes which have arisen about these functionaries, I shall say nothing ; it is enough for me that according to the Scriptures, the Presbyters and Deacons retain that office and standing which Christ appointed, because I am convinced that Cæsarean pride has introduced these orders."

Such is a brief abstract of Wycliffe's positive beliefs. It will have prepared you for being told that the whole doctrine of the Papacy, as to the primacy of the Pope, his headship over the Church, the divine origin and authority of the hierarchy, the power of the priesthood, auricular confession, the celibacy of the clergy, absolutions, indulgences, interdicts, excommunications, the nature and efficacy of the sacraments, the adoration of saints, the worship of images and relics, Wycliffe abso-

lutely and vehemently repudiated. There was but one exception. The idea of a kind of Purgatory or intermediate state clung with him to the last.

His convictions at length matured, he was not satisfied with seizing every common opportunity for expressing and enforcing them. He resolved openly to assail a system which he believed to be so erroneous ; and out of the whole doctrine of the Church he selected that of Transubstantiation as the subject of attack. Oxford has seldom witnessed such commotion among its Colleges and Halls as was excited when in the spring of 1381, there appeared a paper signed by Wycliffe, containing twelve conclusions directed against this doctrine, and closing with a challenge to all the members of the University to meet the writer in a public discussion. His opponents shrank from the conflict, but the chief influence in the University happened to lie in their hands, and they hastened to put it forth. Twelve doctors and regents, of whom eight were members of one or other of the religious Orders, assembled at the summons of the Chancellor. Their decision was prompt and energetic, Wycliffe was sitting in the chair of his lecture-room, with his scholars round him, when the Chancellor and his coadjutors entered. Their decree was read, which ended by declaring that if any person, of whatever degree, state, or condition, should, in future, either in the schools or out of them, publicly teach that in the sacrament of the altar the substance of material bread and wine do remain the same after consecration, or that in that venerable sacrament the body and blood of Christ are not essentially or substantially, or even bodily, but

only figuratively or typically present, so that Christ is not there, truly and verily in his own proper bodily person, such offender should be suspended, imprisoned, and excommunicated, the same penalties to be inflicted on those who hear as on those who teach such heresy. Wycliffe was scarce prepared for what was virtually his expulsion from Oxford. Recovering himself from a momentary confusion, he reminded the Chancellor that neither he nor any of his assistants had met him in the open field of controversy. He complained of the attempt to suppress discussion, and to quench the truth by bare authority; and he announced it to be his purpose to appeal to the King and Parliament.

It was many months, however, ere the opportunity of prosecuting that appeal occurred. Wycliffe retired to his quiet Rectory at Lutterworth, where the authority of the Chancellor could not touch him. Part of his time there was devoted to pastoral work, to him a most congenial sphere of labour. He had a plain rustic congregation to address, but he gave himself to their instruction with as much zeal and energy as ever he bestowed upon the most profound prelections of the class-room. "The highest service that man may attain to on earth is to preach the Word of God." This was his estimate of preaching in an age when it was but little practised by the parochial clergy, whose office in the Church was restricted to the reading of the service. In the middle ages, when the primitive practice of reading and expounding was relinquished, and the Scriptures had passed out of the hands of the people into those of the clergy, the preacher

did not connect in any way his address with the Word of God. Announcing a topic, he read or delivered an essay or oration. In the thirteenth century, when the light of better days began to break, and the Bible had been divided into chapters and verses as we now have it, a verse embracing a topic was selected. In treating the verse thus chosen, however, the preachers of the time fell into the method then in such great vogue in the schools. Speaking of this way of preaching while yet it was in its infancy, Roger Bacon says, "The greatest part of our Prelates having but little knowledge of divinity, and having been but little used to preaching in their youth, when they become bishops, and sometimes are obliged to preach, are under the necessity of begging and borrowing the sermons of certain novices who have invented a new way of preaching, by endless divisions and quibblings, in which there is neither sublimity of style nor depth of wisdom, but much childish trifling and folly unsuitable to the dignity of the pulpit. May God banish this conceited and artificial way of preaching out of his Church, for it will never do any good, nor elevate the hearts of the hearers to anything that is good and excellent." The desire of the worthy Friar has been long in witnessing its accomplishment, although, perhaps, had the great lovers and practisers of the method of heads and divisions known a little more of the time and circumstances of its birth, it might somewhat have abated the ardour of their attachment. Wycliffe was not misled by the new habit of preaching that had been introduced. Notwithstanding all efforts to destroy them, so many as 300 of the discourses delivered from the pulpit

at Lutterworth have come down to us. They are called Postils, not sermons. They are, in fact, what we now call Lectures. Generally the portion of Scripture read in the lessons of the day was selected ; its meaning unfolded in simple language, and the lessons—whether of truth or duty—contained in it enforced. Brief, plain, terse, often homely, but always earnest and vigorous are these Postils of Wycliffe ; dealing often with the errors and abuses of the hierarchy, but dealing with them not in the way of subtle controversial argument. Fit as he was for this, and fond of it, too, the great schoolman here lays aside all such weapons. He has a simple people to instruct ; to instruct so as, if possible, to make them better, holier men, and he keeps that object steadily in view. There is no play of fancy, there are no utterances of eloquence, but there are the most direct and powerful appeals to the judgment, the conscience, the heart, all telling us how arduous a work he felt it to be, and how earnestly he was bent on doing it—to strip from off the simple truths of Christianity the incrustation of centuries, and to make men know and feel that it was in a firm trust in the Divine mercy, and in a faithful discharge of duty, and not in the purchasable aid of priests, nor in the sacraments or services of any Church, that their true, their eternal salvation stood.

Such was Wycliffe in the pulpit. Tradition still speaks of the active, holy, benevolent life he led in his daily and domestic intercourse with his parishioners. “ If thou be a priest,” so had he said to others, “ live thou a holy life. Pass other men in prayer, in counseling and teaching the truth. Ever keep the command-

ments of God, and let his gospel and his praises be ever in thy mouth. Have both meat and drink and clothing, but the remainder give truly to the poor, to those who have freely wrought, but who now may not labour from feebleness or sickness, and thus thou shalt be a true priest, both to God and man." Who can doubt that Wycliffe was himself the kind of priest he here depicts? In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, there is a fuller sketch of a true priest of those days, taken, as has been generally believed, from Wycliffe, as its original:—

“ Benign was he, and wondrous diligent,
 And in adversity full patient.
 Wide was his parish, the houses far asunder,
 But he ne'er left, neither for rain nor thunder,
 In sickness, nor in mischief, for to visit
 The farthest in his parish, great or light;
 And though he holy were, and virtuous,
 He was not to sinful men despitious;
 Nor of his speech dangerous nor deign,
 But in his teaching discreet and benign.
 To draw folk to Heaven with fairness,
 By good example, this was his business.”

During the summer of 1381 a great social earthquake rent the kingdom. Six counties broke out into open insurrection. It was the intolerable pressure of the taxation, and the unnameable insults inflicted by the tax-collectors, which first drew the people into a mad-dened resistance to the law. As they mustered in thousands, and marched on London, they remembered their other wrongs. When the young king met the men of Essex at Mile-end, and found himself surrounded by 60,000 peasants, their demeanour was mild and respectful. Their four demands, embodied in their claim of

rights, were moderate—1. The total abolition of slavery for themselves and their children for ever. 2. The reduction of the rent of good land to a fixed price. 3. The full liberty of buying and selling like other men in all fairs and markets. 4. A general pardon for all past offences. The King complied with their demands; but while this negotiation was going on, the men of Kent had broken tumultuously into London, had murdered the Chancellor and other of the King's ministers, and, maddened by their first taste of blood, stood ready for all enormities. Wat Tyler of Dartford, who was at their head, rejected the charter of the men of Essex. The bravery of the young King, then only in his 15th year, and the sword-stroke of the Lord Mayor, saved the city and the kingdom. Their leader fell; the insurgents wavered and dispersed. The danger past, the King withdrew the charter he had granted; 40,000 horse were let loose upon the peasantry ere they reached their homes. Here and there they stood at bay, and were cut down. Then the myrmidons of the law were on them; the trial swift, the execution sure; 1500 bodies were seen hanging on gibbets.

It was a political, or rather a social, not a religious revolt. Two strolling preachers, Ball and Straw, were among its leaders, but their discourses were republican or communistic, not theological. Ball's standing text was, "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?" It was not against the clergy that the popular fury was mainly, or in the first instance, devoted, but against the nobles, the judges, the magistrates, all who had been the instruments of their oppression. The

Duke of Lancaster was a special object of their dislike ; the Mendicants of their favour. To say, as afterwards was said, that Wycliffe had anything to do, either personally or by means of his doctrines or disciples, with stirring up or fomenting this great tumult, is historically incorrect. That his doctrines had the slightest tendency to weaken men's sense of the ordinary rights of property, or foster the spirit of anarchy and sedition, he always and most indignantly denied. Nor does it seem in point of fact that this insurrection sought or found any part of its nourishment in the truths he taught.

One remark we cannot but make in passing. That rude mass of the labouring population of England, as it rose five hundred years ago, forces itself painfully on our sight. We see it, out of that darkness in which our historians let it lie, whilst they were describing to us movements in court and camp, suddenly upheave itself. You hear its cry for redress ; we see it strike its hideous stroke of vengeance ; and anon it is crushed down under the tramp of the iron heel to groan and curse unheard, unheeded. But that one momentary glimpse we have got into the actual condition of these many thousand poor toiling children of the soil, shall we forget that it has taught us that so many of them were slaves, bought and sold with the properties to which they were irremoveably attached ; that whenever the country suffered, as it had been suffering to the last limit of endurance under the long wars of Edward, it was upon them that the heaviest part of the suffering fell ; that they were but just awaking to know and feel what was due to them as men and citizens of a free country ; and

that it was in a moment of frenzy, and under provocations which might have driven a wise man mad, that they rushed thoughtlessly into revolt? There is no more striking proof, in the page of English history, of how slowly the rights and sufferings of the poor have been recognised and sympathized with by the upper and middle classes of society than this, that some years after this insurrection, the Commons of England petitioned the King that the old laws which protected villains from being reclaimed after a residence of a year and a day in a town, should be repealed; that for the honour, as they said, of all the freemen of the kingdom, villains might not be allowed to put their children to school in order to advance them by the Church; and that on the King's revoking the charters of manumission he had granted to the insurgents, the two Houses not only approved of the deed, but added, that they never would consent to such enfranchisement, no, not to save themselves from perishing all together in one day.

In one respect, this insurrection of 1381 told upon Wycliffe's fate. Sudbury, the Chancellor and Archbishop, had been beheaded. Courtenay, Bishop of London, the chief adversary of Wycliffe, was elevated to the Primacy. His first act, when fairly seated on his archiepiscopal throne, was to convoke a synod to condemn the heresies the Rector of Lutterworth had been teaching. The synod met, 17th May 1382, not now at Lambeth or St. Paul's, but, with sinister augury, at the monastery of Blackfriars. Eight Bishops, fourteen Doctors of Law, six Bachelors of Divinity, four Monks, and fifteen Friars, all of high degree, assembled at the

✓ Primate's summons. The crisis was great and the muster large. But they had scarce taken their seats when an earthquake shook the city. Some, in terror at the unseemly omen, were for an immediate adjournment of the Court. The Primate allayed their fears. "This earthquake," he gravely told them, "did portend a purging of the kingdom from heresies, for as there are included in the bowels of the earth noxious spirits, which are expelled in an earthquake, and so the earth is cleansed, but not without great violence, so there were many heresies shut up in the hearts of reprobate men, but by the condemnation of them the kingdom was to be cleansed, but not without irksomeness and great commotion." Mightily relieved by this new theory of earthquakes, its zeal against heresy having got a stimulative movement imparted to it, the Synod began its work. Twenty-six articles were selected out of the writings of Wycliffe. Ten were condemned as heretical, the remainder as erroneous. A circular was despatched to all the Bishops, reciting the heresies which the Council had condemned, and enjoining them to take order that none of them were taught or publicly defended within their dioceses. A copy of this letter was received by the Bishop of Lincoln. He sent it down among the clergy. Wycliffe among the rest would read it, but it did not move him by a hair's-breadth from his path.

A still more imperative document was sent to Oxford. In it Wycliffe and others known to be friends and followers, were by name suspended from all scholastic acts; the faithful were warned to shun them as they would shun a serpent putting forth most pestiferous poison; the

chancellor was instructed to inquire diligently after all who favoured these heresies, and compel them to abjure them, and to see to it that the decisions of the Great Council should be publicly read in the churches and in the lecture-rooms, as well in the vulgar as in the Latin tongue.

The Synod met soon again to prosecute its work. Hereford, Rippington, and Ashton, three of Wycliffe's friends, were called before it; their answers and explanations were adjudged to be insufficient and perverse, and they were excommunicated. At Oxford, however, a reaction in Wycliffe's favour had now taken place; the orders of the Archbishop were evaded. At the high festival of Corpus Christi, Rippington, though under the ban of the Synod, was appointed to preach the University sermon. The Primate, hearing of this, sent down a Dr. Stokes to publish the decisions of the Synod on the same day that Rippington was to preach, writing at the same time to the Chancellor, commanding him to open all the schools and lecture-rooms to Stokes. The Chancellor, indignant at what appeared to him to be an invasion of the independence of the University, laid the letter before the Heads of Colleges and Masters of Arts, declaring that, for his part, so far from giving any facility to Stokes in executing his errand, he should resist him to the uttermost, if need be by force. The day arrived. The Chancellor, supported by armed followers, repaired to the church. Rippington preached a sermon generally in favour of Wycliffe, but avoiding the perilous topic of the Eucharist. Stokes looking out and seeing the threatening aspect of affairs, wisely kept within doors, and so the day passed over quietly.

But Courtenay was not to be defeated thus. The young King was won over to the Primate's party, and the royal authority was appended to the Injunctions that had been sent down to Oxford. The University authorities could withstand no longer the heavy pressure to which they were exposed, and they gave way. Wycliffe's friends, when first summoned before the Synod, had appealed to the Duke of Lancaster for protection, but it was refused. So soon indeed as he heard of Wycliffe's challenge to the University on the subject of Transubstantiation, he had posted to Oxford, and urged him to give up that controversy, warning him that he would be no party to the agitation of such questions. But Wycliffe would go on. Deserted by their chief political supporter, his friends bent before the storm, but he remained erect and unmoved. Why it was we cannot tell, but, though he was the arch-offender, he was not called before any of the many meetings of the Synod which were held in the summer of 1382. Parliament met at Oxford in November, and a Convocation of the clergy met along with it.

At last the opportunity was given Wycliffe of carrying out the purpose he had announced on returning from Oxford. A complaint and appeal by him was laid upon the table of the Parliament. It was not limited to his own individual case. He had recently been holding up the ministry of our Lord himself as a perfect model for imitation. "The Gospel relates," he had said, "how Jesus went about in places of the country both great and small, in cities and castles, or in small towns, and this that he might teach us to become profitable to men everywhere,

and not to forbear to preach to a people because they are few, and our name may not in consequence be great." Age and infirmities hindered Wycliffe from going out himself, but, at his call, and animated by his spirit, a body of devoted men, all of whom were in priest's orders, went forth over England to realize the idea embodied in the personal ministry of Christ. The extent and the effect of their labours best appears from a royal proclamation, issued on a complaint by the clergy, the preamble of which runs thus:—"Forasmuch as it is openly known that there are diverse evil persons within the realm, going from county to county, and from town to town, in certain habits, under dissimulation of great lowliness, without the license of the ordinaries of the place, or other sufficient authority, preaching daily not only in churches and church-yards, but also in markets, fairs, and other places, where a great congregation of people is, diverse sermons," . . . "which preachers, by their subtle and ingenious words, do draw the people to hear their sermons, and do maintain them in their error by strong hand and by great routs;" "it is ordained, that the sheriffs and other magistrates shall arrest all such preachers, and also their fautors, maintainers, and abettors, and hold them in arrest and strong prison till they had purified themselves according to the law and reason of Holy Church."

Wycliffe looked upon the itinerant preachers, who were thus attacked, as his own children, whom he was bound to do his utmost to protect. In explanation and defence of their conduct he published a treatise, with the title *Why Poor Priests have no Benefices*; and now,

in his complaint and appeal lodged with the Parliament, he called the special attention of the Commons to that ordinance which had been passed without their consent, and under which the civil power had become the instrument of persecution. His first article of demand was to this effect:—"That all men may freely, without any letting or bodily pain, leave that private rule or new religion founded of sinful man, and stably hold the rule of Jesus Christ given by Him to his Apostles."

Nor was it only when he or his friends were under the lash of the law that Wycliffe spoke out for freedom. There have been many great denouncers of religious persecution when they were the persecuted, who became persecutors themselves, and who proved thereby that it was only persecution of what they deemed to be the truth that they condemned; that they had, in fact, no right or true idea after all of religious toleration. It was not so with Wycliffe. All through his writings, in his fiercest denunciations of those whom he thought furthest in error, and in his warmest appeals to the civil power to interfere, that clause, "saving their persons," which so frequently occurs, shows with what charity to the man his opposition to his errors was always tempered; and, in his great work, *The Trialogus*, we have that noble sentence, "Christ wished His law to be observed willingly, freely, that in such obedience men might find happiness. Hence He appointed *no civil punishment* to be inflicted on the transgressors of His commandments, but left the persons neglecting them to the sufferings which shall come after the day of doom." Those only who have traced the slow

and lingering footsteps by which it has been suffered to advance, can estimate the breadth of vision and the depth of love which must have dwelt in him, who, five hundred years ago, first startled the ear of Europe by proclaiming the great principle of religious toleration.

Wycliffe's appeal to the Commons in behalf of the poor priests was not in vain. They petitioned the King that the recent statute should be annulled, stating in their petition, that it was "in no wise their meaning that either themselves, or such as should succeed them, should be any further bound to the Prelates than were their ancestors in former times." The King complied with the prayer of this petition, and in form, at least, the obnoxious statute was repealed. In his own case, Wycliffe got no Parliamentary redress. He had to appear in person before the clerical Convocation sitting at the same time at Oxford, and presided over by the Primate, as Legate of the Pope, and Chief Inquisitor, as he now called himself, of heretical opinions. The Convocation, wisely for itself, sunk all other charges against him in that of his heretical teaching on the subject of Transubstantiation. Collision with the Commons was thus avoided. There would be no John of Gaunt to throw his shield over the accused. Already, upon this point, Wycliffe's closest allies in the University had wavered and given way.

Coming for the last time to Oxford, Wycliffe stood before that Convocation alone and unbefriended. He gave in two papers in answer to the charge; the one in Latin, the other in English. There was no recanting, no shifting of his ground, no explaining away of former

statements. There was still the utter and absolute denial of any material or fleshly presence of Christ in the sacramental bread ; but he had put forth all his unrivalled powers as a master of the scholastic art, and his judges were confused and confounded by the subtlety and intricacy of his reasonings. Perhaps, too, there may have been a lingering respect for his character, or some sympathy felt for his bodily infirmities, or some feeling that it was not safe to go too far with such a man. However it was, the Convocation passed no sentence, and satisfied itself by obtaining letters from the King, permanently expelling Wycliffe from Oxford.

The Pope, however, was by no means satisfied that he had been suffered in this way to escape. Urban summoned him to Rome, to answer in person before a tribunal unhampered by personal or political restraints. The summons found Wycliffe prostrated under a second attack of paralysis, unable to undertake the journey. Not content with giving so satisfactory an excuse, he took occasion in his answer to tell the Pope "that the greatness of Christ's vicars was not to be measured by worldly greatness, but by the extent to which they followed Him, who when He walked here was the most poor man of all, and had nought to rest his head on." Counselling him "to leave his worldly lordship to worldly lords, for thus did Christ ; and I take it," said he in closing, "as my belief that no man should follow the Pope, nor no saint that is now in heaven, but inasmuch as he followed Christ. If I err in this sentence, I will meekly be amended, if needs be, by death."

But though palsied and feeble in body, his intellectual

energy and activity continued unabated to the last. On the 29th December, whilst engaged in conducting service in the church, Wycliffe was struck down by a final stroke of paralysis. They bore him to his Rectory, where on the last day of the year 1384 he expired, in the sixtieth year of his life. His remains were interred in the chancel of the church. He departed this life full of hope as to the issue of his labours. It was his own estimate, that one-third of the clergy of England agreed with him in his views as to the Eucharist. "The number of those," says Knyghton, who speaks from personal observation, "who believed in his doctrine very much increased; and like suckers growing out of the root of a tree, were multiplied, and everywhere filled the compass of the kingdom, insomuch that a man could not meet two persons on the road, but one of them was a disciple of Wycliffe."

England bid fair to have thrown off the yoke of the Papacy one hundred years and more before Luther was born. But that bright and hopeful dawn was speedily and darkly overclouded; or rather we would compare that Wycliffe period to some stray day which summer drops on the bleak edge of winter,—a day of sunny skies and balmy breezes, bursting blossoms and singing birds; but a day that gives place to others, dark, chill, and most unsummerlike. So was it with that prologue, or brief rehearsal of the English Reformation, which was witnessed in the close of the fourteenth century. That conjunction of events which lent the edge of a national and political dislike to England's opposition to the Popes, ceased with Edward's

wars. Instead of having a French Pope to resist, England had a Pope of its own adoption to support against one upheld by France. Richard II. was personally not unfavourable to the Lollards. His consort, the good Queen Anne of Bohemia, was one of their warmest friends. But she died in 1394, and not many years afterwards her husband was deposed. The usurper, Henry IV., to a large extent owed his throne to Arundel, the Archbishop, and he repaid the obligation by throwing the whole weight of his influence into the scale of the Church.

An early incident of his reign was the promulgation of a statute bearing the ominous title, "For the Burning of Heretics." A reaction, on the one hand, set in in favour of the hierarchy; while, on the other, the Lollards, irritated at the state of matters, ran into excesses both of doctrine and practice. The Crown felt strong enough to carry the persecuting statute into force, and for the first time in England the martyrs' fires were kindled. One of the most illustrious victims who perished at the stake was Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, over whose political history there hangs a cloud which it seems impossible to penetrate, but whose personal worth and piety shone out conspicuous in his trial and execution. Among other things, they taunted him on his trial for being a friend of Wycliffe. "As for that virtuous man, I shall say of my part, both before God and man, that before I knew that despised doctrine of his, I never abstained from sin; but since I learned therein to fear my Lord God, it hath otherwise, I trust, been with me."

The Lollard cause sunk under the weight of persecution to which it was at this time exposed, and afterwards, during the Wars of the Roses—the country otherwise occupied—it found no opportunity of revival. But the light that waned in England broke out brightly in Bohemia. A close connexion between the two countries had sprung out of the marriage of Richard II. Wycliffe's writings in large numbers had been transmitted to Bohemia. A scholar of John Huss, who had come to study at Oxford, on his return to his native country put some of them into his master's hands. Though read at first with alarm and suspicion, they finally effected an entire revolution in his religious beliefs. It was the same with Jerome of Prague, who, having studied at Oxford, had drunk in a like inspiration from the same fountain-head. Huss and Jerome scattered diligently the new seed ; it sprung up with wonderful rapidity over a large breadth of the kingdom.

Bohemia seemed upon the edge of being altogether lost to the Papal See, when the great Council met at Constance in the year 1415. That Council had a double object ; to bring the great schism in the Papacy to a close, and to quench that anti-sacerdotal spirit which Wycliffe's writings had kindled widely over Europe, but especially in Bohemia. Brought before this council, Huss was required to concur in the judgment passed on Wycliffe. He replied, "I am content that my soul be where his soul is." Huss and Jerome were both condemned, and perished in the flames. Wycliffe's writings were publicly burned, anathemas were heaped upon his name, and his very bones were ordered

to be dug up and flung out of consecrated ground. The English Archbishop Arundel, in the height of his zeal, had previously asked leave of the Pope to do this, but the leave had been refused. And now when this Council ordered it to be done, it so happened that there was another Primate in England who hesitated to comply with such an order. It was not till thirteen years afterwards that the deed was done. In the year 1428 (forty-two years after their interment), Wycliffe's remains were disinterred. They burned them on the bridge that crosses the little stream which runs by Lutterworth, and flung his ashes into it. "This brook," says Fuller, "did convey his ashes to the Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean, and thus the ashes of Wycliffe were the emblems of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."

It would be difficult to name another who, in his lifetime, stood so high, and did so much as Wycliffe, of whom personally we know so little. His infancy is lost in obscurity. The character of his parents is unknown. Not an anecdote of his boyhood remains. His life at Oxford, extending over forty years, presents us with but a single illustrative incident. And those last six years at Lutterworth, from his fifty-fourth to his sixtieth—years filled up with incessant toil, during which tracts, pamphlets, treatises, in teeming multitude, issued from his wonderful intellectual laboratory—what would we not have given for it, if Purvis, the faithful curate who shared his labours, had but told us how a single day of them was spent. But the

interior of its Rectory is as dark to us as the home of any unknown villager of Lutterworth. His voluminous writings have been perused in search of some personal allusions that might have helped us to form some idea of his tastes and habits ; but not a single allusion of this kind has been discovered. We must be content, it seems, to remain in ignorance of all those lesser peculiarities which humanize to us the man they dwell in, and give him a strong hold upon our heart. As Wycliffe passes across the stage of history, it is not a man of living flesh and blood, it is a spirit that moves before us. Spirits cast no shadows before them, and he casts none. There is no colour on that cheek ; no playful fancy arches that pale brow ; no gentle domestic sympathies sit upon those lips, or look out from those eyes : we might have thought that all the man had been swallowed up in the ghostly father, did we not know—not from his books or sayings, but from his deeds—that the warmest philanthropy and the purest patriotism shared with piety the hidden empire of that noble heart.

But can we not gather some knowledge of this man from the very absence of all ordinary information ? Must he not have been a singularly self-oblivious man ; singularly absorbed by, and intent upon his work ; singularly thoughtless about who was doing it,—who has not left the slightest image or impress of himself on any thing he wrote and did ? He appears before us the least egotistical, and the most faultless of all our Reformers. For a quarter of a century he lived in the stormy atmosphere of controversy. In his invectives he was violent and unrestrained ; he lashed with unrelenting

severity the ambition, the luxury, the worldliness, the selfishness of Friars, Prelates, Priests. But he never, so far as I am aware, was involved in a personal quarrel ; he never stooped to personal abuse. No individual Friar, Priest, or Prelate is ever selected to suffer beneath his lash. And though all the vocabulary of abuse was exhausted upon him in return by his irritated adversaries, they have not named a single instance in which he spoke a word that he had to retract, or did a deed for which he had to apologize. The truth is, Wycliffe's vehemence is altogether different from that of Luther or of Knox. It had not a touch or tinge in it of arrogance or resentment ; it was the vehemence, not of passion, but of the moral sense. It was the moral nature that, set on fire, glowed with all the heat, but with none of the virulence of passion. There is not a trace of the proudful, the vindictive, or of the malign emotions in his rudest assault.

It would have been a pleasing task to have spoken of the deep personal piety of this great and good man, but the occasion is not suitable for such a theme. I have but to say a word in conclusion, as to the unique position which, as a public man, he occupies in the history of the Reformation. Princes and States, whose wealth had been wasted, whose liberties had been imperilled, had stood up before his time, to resist the ambitious encroachments of the Papacy. Good and holy men within the bosom of the Church had mourned over the corruptions and abuses that prevailed, and single doctrines, touching even vital matters of the faith, had been questioned or denied, and whole communities in

the valleys of the Alps and in the plains of Languedoc stood aloof from her communion altogether, professed a purer faith, and practised a simpler worship. But Wycliffe was the first, after that great sacerdotal system of Rome had attained its maturity and strength, who stood up in the high places of the field, and, as the friend at once of reason and of Scripture, addressing himself to the scholar and the divine as well as to the peasant, denounced that system out and out as unscriptural, unreasonable, deceiving, enslaving, degrading the human spirit, and who held up in its stead the simple doctrine of the Redeemer, and the simple institute of the Church as set forth in Holy Writ.

Had he at that early age in which he lived, seen but half the length he saw,—had he done but half of what he did,—had he attacked but one or two of the chief strengths of the enemy, and brought into action but one or two of the great engines of war,—our eye had fixed on him as the foremost pioneer of that great host led on by Luther, who, far in advance of all the rest, alone in the thickest of the enemy, had first lifted the war-cry of the Reformation, and commenced the battle. But, a century and a half before the ranks mustered under their great German leader, to see this solitary English soldier fighting that battle as he did, taking up every position that was afterwards taken up, using every instrument of war that afterwards was used, assaulting every stronghold that was afterwards assaulted—nay more, advancing in more than one direction farther than ever Luther led—alone, deserted, pressing on to the last, not a jot of heart or hope abated, his last strokes his strongest, till he fell,

but fell all confident that he left victory in store for those who followed ; what annalist of the great campaign shall describe to us the place and part in it that such a warrior filled, or who shall weave for us the crown that we would like to plant upon his pale and palsied brow !

THE HUGUENOTS ;

OR,

SKETCHES FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF
PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

THE HUGUENOTS.

I.

THE AGE OF PERSECUTION.

REIGNS OF FRANCIS I. AND HENRY II., 1515-1559.

MILMAN has remarked that throughout the world wherever the Teutonic is the groundwork of the language, Protestantism either is, or, as in Southern Germany, has been dominant; wherever Latin, Roman Catholicism has retained its ascendancy; or, taking it geographically, the Reformation gained all the northern, the Papacy kept all the southern countries of Europe. France lay in the centre between the northern and the southern, the Teutonic and the Celtic tribes; its population so mixed in origin and character that both tendencies were found in it,—that which clung to, and that which recoiled from Rome. It was natural, therefore, that France should be the country which the great religious movement of the sixteenth century divided and distracted most. It proved in fact the bloodiest battle-field of the Reformation, in which the opposing forces, when each had marshalled its full strength, were found

to be the most nearly matched, and were thrown into the fiercest collisions, victory trembling often in the balance, as scarce knowing on which side to fall. Nowhere else did the Reformation give birth to fifteen years of almost uninterrupted and most embittered civil war.

Yet it was not till the year 1559, by which time in Germany, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, all the great battles of the Reformation had been fought, and all its great victories won, that it took any tangible shape in France, or originated any political movement. The first country in Europe in which the new doctrines had been taught, France was the last country in which they were embodied in an ecclesiastical institute, the last in which they proved the occasion of social strife and political division. This may partly have arisen from the weakened condition of the state. France for the time had lost her leadership of European civilisation. In the twelfth century she had headed the Crusades; the most brilliant intellectual lights of the thirteenth century shone in her great university; her monarchs had triumphed in the fourteenth century in their contests for supremacy with the Popes; and in the fifteenth century it was she mainly that in the Councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basle, stood out successfully for the rights of the Church at large against the claims of the Roman Pontificate. But her step was not the foremost in the century of the Reformation. It was not within her bounds that the telescope was invented or the art of printing discovered; it was not her ships that first doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and made their way across the Atlantic; it was not her schools or universi-

ties that gave to art a Leonardo da Vinci, a Cardan and a Copernicus to science, an Erasmus to general literature.

There were, however, more special reasons why in the great religious movement of the time France walked at first with a slow and lingering footstep. In other countries the Reformation found from the beginning some ecclesiastical or political support to lay its hand upon, by which to help itself forward. None such was found in France. The Church was not groaning there under the same bondage that elsewhere oppressed her; she had already fought for and so far achieved her independence, that no foreign ecclesiastics were intruded into her highest offices, nor were her revenues liable to be diverted at the will of the Pope into Italian channels. Philip the Fair had two centuries before emancipated the monarchy from the hierarchical thralldom. Neither Church nor State had in France the same grounds of quarrel with Rome they had in other lands. There was less material there for the Reformers to work upon. With little to attract either King or Clergy, the Reformation had in its first aspects everything to repel. The Church saw in it a denial of her authority, a repudiation of her doctrine, a simplification of her worship, an overturn of her proud and ambitious hierarchy. The Royal power was in conflict with two enemies; the feudal independence of the nobles, which it wished to destroy; the growing municipal freedom of the great cities, which it wished to curb. To both enemies of the Crown, the Reformation, itself a child of liberty, promised to lend aid. Absolutism on the Throne looked on it with jealousy and dread. Alone

and unbefriended, it had from the beginning to confront in France bitter persecution, a persecution instigated in the first instance exclusively by the clerical body, afterwards by the Clergy and the Monarch acting in willing concert.

For nearly half a century, from 1515 to 1559, during the reigns of Francis I. and Henry II., the history of French Protestantism offers nothing to the eye of the general historian but a series of attempts to crush it by violence. We scarcely wonder, therefore, that Mignet should have said, that the religious revolution proclaimed forty years before, by Luther on the banks of the Elbe, by Zuinglius on the lake side of Zurich, was not seriously entered on in France, till about the year 1560. Nevertheless, the forty previous years are as full of interest to our eye as any equal period in the entire history of French Protestantism. They form its age of martyrdom. In no country, the Netherlands alone excepted, did Protestantism furnish so large and so noble an army of martyrs as in France. In Scotland and England, the martyrs of the distinctively Reformation period were so few, that we can stand by every stake, and grave the name of every one who perished in the flames upon our memory. In the pages of Crespin and elsewhere, you will find described at large the death scenes of many hundreds burned alive in France during these forty years.

Besides being fitly described as its age of persecution, these first years of Protestantism in France may as fitly be described as its age of purity. The Reformed had as yet no organization, civil or ecclesiastical ;

they had no Church, no creed, no fixed form of worship. They had entered into no political alliance with any party in the State. It was a quiet, hidden movement in the hearts of men, thirsting for religious truth, for peace of conscience, for purity of heart and life. They sought each other out, and met to help each other on. But it was in small bands, in closets with closed doors, in the murky lanes of the city, in the lonely hut of the wayside, in the gorge of the mountain, in the heart of the forest, that they met to study the Scriptures together, to praise and pray. They did so at the peril of their lives, and the greatness of the peril guarded the purity of the motive. Ordinarily, they had no educated ministry. Those who, as Luther and Melancthon in Germany, Knox and others in Scotland, Zuinglius in Switzerland, might have formed the nucleus of a new clerical institute, were either like Lefevre, Farel, Calvin, forced into exile, or like Chatelain, Pavannes and Wolfgang Schuch, burnt at the stake. Left for a time without such guidance, they had to provide for their religious instruction, and for the administration of ordinances among them as best they could. Bernard Palissy, who was one of them, tells us in his own quaint and simple style how they did in his own town of Saintes. "There was in this town," he says, "a certain artisan marvellously poor [it is thus he describes himself], who had so great a desire for the advancement of the gospel, that he demonstrated it, day by day, to another as poor as himself, and with as little learning—for they both knew scarcely anything. Nevertheless, the first urged upon the other, that if he would employ himself

in the making of some kind of exhortation, it would be productive of great good. The man addressed thus, one Sabbath morning assembled nine or ten persons, and read to them some passages from the Old and New Testaments, which he had put down in writing. He explained them, saying that as each one had received from God, he ought to distribute to others. They agreed that six of them should exhort, each once in the six weeks, on Sundays only. That was the beginning of the Reformed Church at Saintes ;” and that, we have to add, was the beginning of many other churches all over France, and that was the way in which they were often served. In France the Reformation began in the University. The lettered classes were the first to hail the new ideas that it taught. Many of the nobles—their wars with one another now prohibited—gave their leisure hours in their country castles to the reading of the Bible and Lutheran tracts. But it was among men like Palissy, the skilled artisans of the towns and villages of France, that the Reformation made the greatest and the purest progress. “Above all,” says a Catholic historian, “painters, watchmakers, sculptors, goldsmiths, printers, and others who, from their calling, have some mental superiority, were among the first taken in.”

To provide all who could read with the Scriptures, and religious books and tracts, the writings especially of Calvin and of Luther, a prodigious activity was employed. The printing-presses of Geneva, Lausanne, Neufchatel, teemed with such productions ; nor were there wanting the brave men who took and bore them all through France, not a few of whom paid the forfeit of their lives

for doing so. Under this simple *régime*, and amid all difficulties and disadvantages, the Reformation made such extraordinary progress, that at the death of Francis I., which took place in 1547, it had largely leavened seventeen provinces, and thirty-three of the principal towns in France,—those who had embraced it forming about a sixth of the entire population of the country.

With Francis I. the middle ages ended, and the age of the *renaissance* commenced. The idol of his country, Francis was the living image of the times in which he lived,—times that present to us a strange *mélange* of barbarism and refinement, of chivalry and cruelty, of bloody wars and luxurious fêtes. Francis was a brilliant soldier, but it was as a royal Bayard that he headed his troops in battle; sleeping all night in full armour upon a gun-carriage at Marignano, that he might renew the conflict betimes next day. He was a King to whom the country he ruled was dear; but it was the military glory of France, her place of pre-eminence and power in Europe that he mainly sought to guard, and elevate, and extend,—type and model, in this respect, of many a successor upon that Gallic throne. As fond of gaiety as glory, he gathered round him so numerous and splendid a court, that we read of 130 pages and 200 ladies, sons and daughters of the chief nobility, being in constant attendance on it. The number of horses required by it was 6000. In that Court he inaugurated the fatal reign of mistresses so mischievous afterwards to France. But there too he showed himself the munificent patron of art and letters. He failed to bring Erasmus to Paris, but Leonardo da

Vinci lived with him as a friend, and died in his monarch's arms.

Neither naturally cruel, nor religiously a bigot, for the first twenty-five years of his reign he was rather favourable than otherwise to the Reformers. Lefevre, the father of the Reformation in France, was protected by him against the assaults of the Sorbonne, and it was by a prompt and arbitrary exercise of the royal power, that the learned and high-spirited De Berquin was rescued out of the grasp of the Parliament of Paris. Francis enjoyed greatly the classic wit of Erasmus, and the coarser jests of Rabelais pointed against the Romish clergy. He was present at, and loudly applauded, a theatrical representation, in which the Pope and other high dignitaries of the Church were very roughly handled. He lent, for many a year, an open ear to the counsels of his wise and witty and gentle sister, Margaret of Valois, whose mystic piety inclined her to Lutheranism. He allowed her favourite ministers to preach for a time under protection of the Court. She published a little volume which the Sorbonne publicly condemned. The King resented it as an insult, and forced the University of Paris to disown the censure of the Sorbonne. Some monks had a play acted in their presence, in which Margaret, whilst sitting spinning and reading the Bible, was transfigured into a devil. The King inflicted on them a severe mark of displeasure. A popular orator of the Church proclaimed from one of the Parisian pulpits, that Margaret deserved to be enclosed in a sack and thrown into the Seine. Francis doomed the preacher to that punishment. It was only

the intervention of Margaret herself that saved him. So far did Francis go in manifesting a favourable disposition to the Protestants, that he wrote with his own hand to Melanchthon, earnestly soliciting him to come and settle in Paris.

The battle of Pavia, however, fought and lost in 1525, was in this as in other respects, a turning point in the King's history. He was carried a prisoner into Spain. He returned next year to France, soured as well as saddened in spirit, fresh difficulties to contend with, and a new edge set upon his ambition. He opened his ear to his mother Louisa of Savoy, to the Prelates, to the Parliament of Paris, by all of whom he was assured that the calamities of the country sprung from the growth of heresy, that the Reformers were enemies of the Crown as well as of the Church. The marriage of his son Henry with Catherine de Medicis, the niece of the reigning Pope, and his personal interview with the Pontiff at Marseilles in 1533, drew him into closer relationship with the Holy See. He at last openly declared, that in his realm there should be but one King, one law, one faith. He was heard to say of Lutheranism, that that sect, and others like it, tended more to the overthrow of governments than the good of souls. Still, however, the force of earlier feelings, the sway not yet departed of Margaret's graceful wit and devoted love, and still more, perhaps, the weighty political considerations that in his life-long struggle with Charles v. led him to cultivate the friendship of the Protestant Princes of Germany, might have held him back from taking personally any part in the perse-

cution of the Protestants, had not a rash deed of their own, touching the most sensitive part of his character, turned dislike into bitter hatred.

On the 18th of October 1534, the inhabitants of Paris, on going out into the streets in the morning, found the walls of their houses and the corners of their squares covered with placards denouncing, in the most virulent language, "the horrible, great, and unbearable abuses of the Popish mass." The eye of the King fell upon one of these placards posted on the door of his own cabinet. He felt this as a personal insult, and finding his passion seconded by the anger of the citizens, he gave instant orders to search for and punish, summarily, not only those who had taken part in affixing the offensive placards, but all who acknowledged or favoured Lutheranism. The search was made, a number of the guilty found, and the utmost pains were taken to make their punishment impressive to the public eye.

Between eight and nine o'clock on the morning of the 21st January 1535, an extraordinary procession issued from the Church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois in Paris, headed by a company of priests, bearing in coffers upon cushions of velvet the most precious relics of saints and martyrs. For the first time since the funeral-day of St. Louis, the Reliquary of La Sainte-Chapelle exposed its treasures to the public eye. There was the head of St. Louis; there was a piece of the true Cross; there was the crown of thorns; there was the spear-head that had pierced the Saviour's side. Ecclesiastics of every order, Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Monks, clad all in their richest robes, followed the relics. The Bishop

of Paris bore on high the Holy Sacrament. Then came the King, his head uncovered, and in his hand a large burning torch of virgin wax. Princes of the blood, nobles of all ranks, the high court of Parliament, the foreign ambassadors, the great officers of State, came after the King. The oldest inhabitant of Paris had never seen so imposing a *cortège*, nor such a multitude gathered to gaze on it. Not a house-top but was crowded, not a jutting projection that could support a spectator but was occupied; the windows all filled with faces, the streets all paved with heads. With slow and solemn pace the great procession moved on through the principal streets of the city. Six times it stopped, each time before a temporary altar, decked with its crucifix, its candlesticks and flowers. Beside each altar, had the common custom been obeyed, fair children dressed as angels, emblems of Heaven's love to man, should have appeared. But now beside each altar there is a pile of blazing fagots, above which there is an iron beam, turning on a pivot, and so moveable by pulleys that it can be lifted and lowered at pleasure. To each of these beams a Lutheran had been attached,—the executioner instructed to plunge him occasionally into the scorching flames, so as to prolong his sufferings, and to time these terrible dippings into the fire in such a way that the fastenings which bound the victim should be consumed, and he fall into the flames at the moment when the procession stopped and the King stood before the gibbet. Six times the King thus paused, handing each time his torch to the Cardinal of Lorraine, clasping his hands and prostrating himself in prayer as the heretic was burned.

The tidings of what Paris saw that day were borne over Europe. The Protestant Princes of Germany remonstrated with Francis. He excused himself by saying that "he had been constrained to use this rigour against certain rebels who wished to trouble the State under the pretext of religion"—the one great excuse of despots, which on this occasion called forth a memorable reply. A few months afterwards (August 1535) a volume issued from the press at Basle. Its author's name was not upon the title-page. It opened with a dedicatory epistle to Francis, and bore to be throughout an apology for the Protestants of France, to redeem their faith from the charge of fanaticism, their conduct from the charge of sedition. "This," said its author afterwards, "was what led me to publish it: first, to relieve my brethren from an unjust accusation, and then, as the same sufferings still hung over the heads of many poor faithful ones in France, that foreign nations might be touched with commiseration for their woes, and might open to them a shelter." "If the act," says Michelet, speaking of this volume, "was bold, no less so was the style. The new French language was then an unknown tongue. Yet here, twenty years after Comines, thirty years before Montaigne, already the language of Rousseau; his power, if not his charm. But the most formidable attribute of the volume is its penetrating clearness, its brilliance of steel rather than of silver; a blade which shines, but cuts. One sees that the light comes from within, from the depth of the conscience, from a spirit rigorously convinced, of which logic is the food. One feels that the author gives nothing to appearance; that

he labours to find a solid argument upon which he can live, and, if need be, die." The work so characterized by so capable, at least by so unprejudiced a judge, was Calvin's "Institutes of the Christian Religion." Its diffident and retiring author was then in his twenty-sixth year, and had been seeking, as he himself tells, some hiding-place from the world where he might pursue his studies at leisure. But that book once published, he could be hidden no more. He was hailed at once by all the Reformers of France not only as the apologist of the martyrs, but as the theologian and legislator of the Church.

The invasion of France in 1536; the temporary reconciliation of the two great European Rivals; their four days' interview at Aigues Mortes; the breaking out of the war almost immediately afterwards,—these kept the hands of Francis too full to be turned against the Lutherans. From 1536 to 1543, the persecution languished. At last the peace of Crespy set both Charles and Francis free to pursue an object upon which both had now set their hearts, and which they mutually encouraged each other to prosecute—the utter extirpation of heretics in their respective dominions. In France the first blow fell upon an innocent and secluded community.

Wellnigh three hundred years before this time a colony of the Vaudois, survivors of the terrible crusade of Innocent III., driven from Dauphiny and Piedmont, had settled in Provence. They occupied a district on the banks of the Durance, in the highlands between Nice and Avignon. They had found it bleak and sterile. The industry of successive generations had turned it

into a garden,—olives, vines, and almond-trees, clothed their hill-sides, and the breed of their mountain cattle was in demand through all the country round. Their tribute to the king, their dues to their liege lords, were paid with exemplary regularity. There was nothing to expose them to the jealousy of their rulers. But their pure and simple faith rendered them obnoxious to the Roman Catholic population by which they were surrounded. As Louis XII. was passing through Dauphiny, they were denounced to him as heretics. He ordered an inquiry to be instituted into their character and habits, and when the results were before him, he ordered the process against them to be cast into the Rhine, saying, "These people are much better Christians than myself." Tidings of the great religious movement in Germany and Switzerland reached them. Their hearts were stirred. They sent deputies to confer with Œcolampadius in Basle, with Bucer at Strasburg, with Haller at Berne. The report of these deputies led them at once to hail Luther and Zuinglius, and the Reformers in their own land, as of the same faith with themselves. Throwing themselves into the great movement of their age, they felt that their own country had the first claim upon their regard. But what could a small community of peasants in a remote region do? It was told them that a translation of the Bible into the French tongue had just been finished by one of their countrymen, Peter Olivetan, but that a pecuniary difficulty had arisen as to carrying it through the press. They resolved to undertake the cost, raised 1500 golden crowns, and had the first edition of the French Bible published at their expense at Neufchatel. Hundreds of copies passed in-

stantly into France, and contributed more, perhaps, than any single instrument to the spread of the Reformation. Identified now with the Lutherans, a terrible sentence was pronounced against them by the Parliament of Aix. It decreed, "that the villages of Merindol, Cabrières, and Les Aigues, and all other places, the retreat and receptacle of heretics, should be destroyed,—the houses razed to the ground, the forest-trees cut down, the fruit-trees torn up by the roots, the principal inhabitants executed, and the women and children banished for ever out of the land." Francis hesitated long before he consented to sanction it; but at last, in an evil hour in 1545, he gave instructions that the sentence should be executed. The Baron d'Oppède, to whom the execution of it was committed, made his preparations with the utmost secrecy. Six regiments of mercenaries, trained to murder and pillage in the Italian wars, were collected. A company of cavalry was placed under the Baron de la Garde, a captain notorious for his ferocity. These troops, despatched in bands so as to surround the district, were launched upon the unprepared and unsuspecting Vaudois, with no other instructions than to burn and pillage, and kill at random. Taken unawares, the inhabitants of the first villages they fell upon,—man, woman, and child, were massacred. The light of their burning villages gave warning to the others. In Merindol, one of the two chief towns, but a single man was found. He was a poor simpleton, and had given himself up to one of the soldiers, to whom he had promised a few crowns for his ransom. D'Oppède heard of it, paid himself the ransom, had the man tied up to a tree and shot. From Cabrières, the other chief town, the bulk of its inhabi-

tants had fled. Sixty men, and about thirty women, remained in it. It was a walled town, and for twenty-four hours held out against the soldiers. Their lives were promised to its defenders, and they gave themselves up unarmed. They were cut to pieces on the spot. The women were shut up in a barn filled with straw, which was set on fire. One soldier, touched with pity, opened for those within a way of escape. But his companions were merciless. Whoever tried to escape was thrust back by pike and halbert. They all perished in the flames. Night and day the murderous work went on. Within a week or two twenty villages had been destroyed, and four thousand of their inhabitants had been slaughtered. Those whom fire and sword had spared, wandered in the mountains and the woods. There were no fruits for them to gather, for it was yet early spring. Many perished from hunger. The miserable survivors besought D'Oppède to allow them to return to Germany. We will give up everything, they said to him, but the clothes upon our back. Their request was contemptuously denied. "I know what I have to do with you," he replied; "I will send every one of you to hell, and make such a havoc of you that your memory will be cut off for ever." Numbers fell into his hands. After the mockery of a brief trial, 250 of them were on one occasion executed together. La Garde selected 600 of the finest young men and sent them to the galleys, where the treatment given them was such that in a few weeks 200 of them had died. It was but a miserable remnant that, escaping fire, sword, famine, fatigue, the galleys, made their way into the land of the stranger. A houseless, treeless, scorched and barren wilderness was left,

where the vines, and the olives, and the almond-trees had flourished, where the homes and the families of the Vaudois had been.

The tale of that wholesale butchery was one that Francis never liked to hear. The image of it haunted his deathbed. He left instructions to his son Henry to inquire into a deed that he felt had sullied his reign, and to punish the perpetrators. Three years after his death, but not at Henry's instance, the matter was brought before the Parliament of Paris. Fifty sittings of that Court were devoted to it. D'Oppede was acquitted. One of his officials was indeed condemned, not for the part he had taken in the massacre, but because it was found that he had filched a portion of the public treasure.

Francis died in 1547. His eldest son having died some years before, his second son Henry ascended the throne. Henry had a showy exterior, was expert in all manly exercises, could run, could ride, could chase the deer, could break the lance with the most expert performer of the circus, the best trained knight of the tournament. Nor was he altogether deficient either in talent or in industry. He gave hours each day to the public business of the State. But he had none of the qualities of a great prince. In boyhood, it might be said in childhood, he had given himself up to the empire of Diana of Poitiers; and that empire, one of the most singular that even French history, prolific in such instances, presents, lasted undiminished through life. When under eighteen years of age, he married Catherine de Medicis, but his marriage did not shake his early attachment, nor did his wife apparently desire it

should. Diana became the friend and protectress of Catherine, and for more than twenty years that subtle Italian bided quietly her time, consenting uncomplainingly to occupy her most anomalous position ; the mother of the King's children, but in no sense the Queen of France.

Henry was twenty-eight years old when his father died. Diana was twenty years his senior. It was she who in 1547 ascended the throne, and for the twelve years of Henry's reign it was she who ruled ; a rule fatal to the Protestants, whom, with a touch of the Herodias spirit, she both hated and feared. One other only shared her influence with the King, the Constable de Montmorency, an early friend of Henry's, disliked by Francis and excluded by him from power, but now recalled to take his place in the Council, and to become the chief adviser of the King. Montmorency, who prided himself on being the descendant of the first Christian Baron of France, was at one with Diana in her dislike of the Protestants, and under their joint instigation, Henry launched at once upon the career of the persecutor.

His first essay in this department was painfully unfortunate. It had been resolved to grace the festivities of the Queen's coronation in 1549, by the public execution of a few Lutherans. As a kind of recreation amid the fatigues of the marriage fêtes, as Henry had never seen nor conversed with any of the sect, orders were given by him to the Provost-Marshal to have one of them brought to the Palace. Some of the courtiers who secretly desired that a favourable impression might be made upon the King, asked the Provost-Marshal to bring

up one of the best educated of his prisoners. The Cardinal of Lorraine would have it otherwise. "Bring up," he said, "that tailor you have in custody. He will do well enough as a pastime for his Majesty, and his answers do little damage to the Church." The tailor was accordingly produced. They put to him all kinds of questions, tried upon him all kinds of raillery. His answers, full of intelligence, were given with the utmost calmness and self-possession. Word came that Diana, too, desired to see him. He was taken into her chamber, into which a few privileged courtiers were admitted. The Bishop of Maçon was ordered by the King to recommence the examination. The spirit of the prisoner rose. The attacked became the attacker. The Bishop got angry; his argument degenerated into abuse. Diana, thinking she could manage it better, took the matter up. She put some contemptuous question. "Content yourself, madam," was the only reply the tailor gave her, "content yourself, madam, with having infected all France with your infamy, without touching a matter so sacred as the true religion and the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ." Diana grew pale with rage. The King ordered the man instantly away, and instructed the Provost-Marshal to hasten his execution. He would witness it with his own eyes. The stake was erected in the Rue St. Antoine. The King placed himself in the window of a house opposite. The poor Lutheran was brought out. Turning round at the stake, he perceived the King. As if insensible from that moment to all other objects, he fixed his eyes upon him. The fagots were kindled, the smoke began to rise, the flame to

burn, but through smoke and flame those eyes looked out immovably upon the King. Henry for a time was kept transfixed ; at last he yielded, and turned his back upon the sight, but for days and nights those dying eyes, gazing on him through smoke and flame, with that calm look of triumph and reproach, haunted the monarch. Never, he declared, would he see another of that sect die, and we may believe he kept his word.

On the 27th January 1551, an edict against the Lutherans was issued, known by the name of the Edict of Chateaubriand. Not only was the old law of St. Louis dooming all heretics to death, which had all along been acted on, renewed in this edict, but the secular and the ecclesiastical courts were equally empowered to judge in cases of heresy, so that though absolved by the one, the accused might be carried before the other and condemned. All intercession on behalf of the condemned was prohibited. The sentences were to be executed without delay and without appeal. To encourage informers, the third part of the goods of the condemned was to be appropriated to them. Heavy punishments were to be inflicted upon all who introduced into the realm, or were found to be possessed of any book in which the new doctrines were inculcated. The entire property of the refugees who had left France to escape the persecution was confiscated to the Crown. To send money or letters to them was forbidden ; and finally, every one even suspected of heresy, was obliged to present a certificate of orthodoxy.

Five youths from the south of France were at that time studying theology in Lausanne. Having completed

their studies they set out to return to France. Stopping a few days with Farel and Calvin, they left Geneva for Lyons in the end of April 1552. They had scarcely entered the French territory when they were accosted by a stranger, who, travelling also, as he said, to Lyons, asked permission to be their companion by the way. The simple youths, without suspicion, at once acceded to his request. On parting from them at Lyons he made them promise to come the following day to see him at his residence. He received them with open arms. They sat down to a repast he had prepared. They were scarcely, however, seated at the table when a lieutenant of police entered the room, demanded the strangers' names, searched them, bound them, and bore them off to prison. Their companion by the way had been an agent of the priests. The intelligence of their arrest excited the liveliest grief in Switzerland and France. The Bernese wrote to the King on their behalf, and got but an evasive answer. The Cantons of Basle, Berne, Zurich, and Schaffhausen then united and sent a special deputy to Paris. These and other efforts all proved fruitless. Remitted to Paris for trial before the Parliament, they were at last, after a year's imprisonment, sent back to Lyons, and condemned to be burned alive on the Place des Terraux. The day of their execution arrived. Repeating passages of Scripture, singing Marot's Psalms, chanting with loud voice together the Apostles' Creed, they reached the stakes to which they were to be fastened back to back. Martial Alba, the eldest of the five, was the last to mount the pile of wood heaped around the gibbets. He fell upon his knees, whilst the

others were a-binding to the stakes. When his turn came, "There is a favour," said he to the officer in command, "which I much wish that you would grant me." "What is it?" said the officer. "That I might be allowed to embrace my brothers before we die." The favour was granted; the last salute of Christian brotherhood was given. The fire was kindled. A cord had been run round the neck of each, by means of which the executioner had hoped to shorten their sufferings by strangulation. Unhappily, at the same time, he had dusted their bodies over with sulphur, and the quickly kindling flames burned the cord before he had time to draw it tight. They were left to the common fate; their voices rose amidst the flames; the last words audible, "Courage, my brothers, courage." When the fire had done its work their ashes were flung into the Rhone.

There are still extant some touching letters of these five youths addressed to their parents and friends, written during their imprisonment; and in the collection of Calvin's letters, published a few years ago, you will find three letters of the great Reformer addressed to them. Of itself it would form an interesting volume, a collection of all the letters from the martyrs of the Reformation to Calvin, and from Calvin to them. "Their letters to him," says Michelet, "respectful, noble, sad, still draw tears. Were they without effect upon the man of strife? Yes, say they who judge of him by his polemic volumes, his hard intolerance. We think otherwise. Those who lived with Calvin tell us that he was a stranger to no affection of the family or of friend-

ship, especially attached to the children of his word. His eye followed them through Europe. His letters to them, strong and Christian, are not the less pathetic on that account."

The whole machinery of persecution was now in full operation all over France, one spring acting with peculiar potency,—Diana, Montmorency, and other favourite courtiers finding it a profitable employment to persecute, as the confiscated estates found their way into their hands. One step only remained to be taken to put France abreast of Spain: a royal edict was drawn up establishing the Inquisition. Presented to the Parliament of Paris it encountered there an unexpected opposition. Séguier, the President of the Parliament, in communicating to Henry its refusal to register the decree, had the boldness to say to the King (I quote the words as the first indication in France of the true idea of toleration), "We take the liberty to add that since these punishments on account of religion have failed, it seems to us conformable to the rules of equity and right reason to follow here the footsteps of the early Church, which never employed fire and sword to establish or extend itself, but a pure doctrine and an exemplary life. We think, therefore, that your Majesty should exclusively apply yourself to preserve religion by the same means by which it was first established."

The King was forced unwillingly to yield. Other matters besides engrossed him. More fortunate than his father, he had seen, in the early part of his reign, the arms of France and her confederates triumph over those of the Empire; the Emperor himself on the edge of being taken

prisoner at Innspruck ; and the peace of Cambrai established. But the fortune of war had changed. The disastrous battle of St. Quentin—that fatal Flodden Field of France—in which the flower of her chivalry perished, laid her at the feet of Spain. At Paris, the greatest consternation prevailed. They fancied they heard the enemy already at their gates. Superstition took advantage of the national disaster. The priesthood inflamed the spirit of the mob.

One day, from the pulpit of St. Eustache, its occupant was calling upon his auditors to rise, sword in hand, and enter upon a new crusade against the pestilent Lutherans, whose presence it was affirmed had drawn down the judgment of Heaven upon their nation. A poor scholar, one of his hearers, broke out into a hysterical laugh. “It is a Lutheran who mocks the preacher,” some one said. It was enough. The people rose, dragged the poor scholar out, and killed him on the spot. From the church of St. Innocent a preacher sent his hearers out inflamed with fanatic passion. Two of them quarrelled in the cemetery adjoining the church. Finding himself worsted in the quarrel, the one called the other a Lutheran. The crowd heard it, and in fury rushed upon the man, and pursued him into the church where he sought shelter. Two gentlemen, who were brothers, one of them an ecclesiastic, happened to be passing at the time. One of them, penetrating the crowd within the church, interceded for the victim. “It is you we are against,” immediately cried a priest, “since you dare to oppose yourself to the death of a Lutheran.” The mob turned its fury upon the stranger. He succeeded in

escaping, but covered with wounds. His brother, who had rushed to his defence, was less fortunate. In vain did he declare his attachment to, and connexion with the Church. He was stabbed to death, and they crowded in upon the body as it fell, eager to thrust their fingers into the wounds, glorying in it that they had hands to hold up stained with the blood of a Lutheran.

Late in the evening of the 4th September 1557, a few weeks after the tidings of the battle of St. Quentin had reached Paris, three or four hundred Lutherans met to partake secretly of the Lord's Supper, in a house in the Rue St. Jacques. The buildings of the Sorbonne stood near. Some members of the college, struck at the sight of so many people from such different quarters, going into the same building at so late an hour, suspected the character of the meeting, watched till all had entered, then hurried from house to house, raised the multitude, and set afloat the most frightful tales as to what the Lutherans had met to do. The streets around soon filled with a mob excited to the highest pitch. Piles of stones were heaped together ; hasty preparations made for assault. About midnight, the service being over, those engaged in it prepared to depart. The doors were opened. It was the signal for a fiendish shout and a shower of stones. Torches brandished in the air shone on faces glowing with passion, and showed the streets blocked up with men armed with all kinds of weapons. The doors were shut, and there was a short deliberation. The bravest of the Lutherans, rather than abide the issue of an assault, determined to force a passage. Drawing their swords, they dashed out upon the crowd ; it gave way

before them ; one only of their number fell, whose mutilated body was exposed for days to the outrages of the multitude. About 200 persons, chiefly women, remained within the building. In vain they supplicated mercy. The doors had been already forced, and the work of slaughter was beginning, when the city authorities arrived. They seized all found within, and bound them in couples, to carry them to prison. It was through a perfect hail of missiles of all kinds, their clothes all torn, their bodies covered with blood and filth, that the prisoners at last reached the gaol. Seven of their number soon perished at the stake ; for more of them the same doom was ready, when foreign intervention, which Henry at the time dared not despise, stayed its execution.

The year 1559, a memorable one in the history of Protestantism in France, opened with the inglorious treaty of Cateau Cambresis, entered into between France and Spain. A secret article, appended to that treaty, concocted by the two great clerical persecutors, the Cardinals of Lorraine and Granville, bound the two monarchs to employ the whole force of their kingdom in the extermination of the heretics. The later history of the Low Countries proved the faithfulness of Philip II. to that engagement. His brother of France showed no want of alertness or vigour in following the same course. The treaty was signed on the 3d April. On the 12th of the same month letters-patent were sent to all the provinces, in which the King said—"I desire nothing more than the total extermination of this sect ; to cut its roots up so completely that new ones may never

rise again; have no pity then nor compassion, but punish them as they deserve.”

The authorities were generally but too ready to carry out the royal instructions. One instance, however, of hesitation appeared. The Parliament of Paris was divided into two sections—the Great Chamber and the Tournelle. The former called for the infliction of death without mercy upon all heretics. The latter, when four young men were convicted before it of holding some of the new opinions, sentenced them not to death but to exile. Such leniency was appalling. It showed something fatally wrong in the court that could extend it. It was whispered that the heretic leaven had infected some of its members. The names of the suspected were privately presented to the King. The Cardinal of Lorraine, who had been telling Henry that the true way for him to cover before God and man all the vices to which he might abandon himself, was to root out the adversaries of the Romish Church, now took upon him to become his monarch's counsellor. “You must lay a snare for these dangerous men; call a *Mercuriale*; invite them all to speak freely out their sentiments, and then punish them upon their own confession. The burning of half a dozen heretic members of Parliament will be a pleasant sight to the Duke of Alva and the Spanish grandees, who are now in Paris.” The King took the Cardinal's advice. A meeting of both Chambers of Parliament was held. Henry himself presided. The amplest encouragement was held out by the King to every one to speak his mind without reserve. The snare succeeded but too well. One member of the House, Anne du Bourg,

distinguished himself by the openness and boldness of his remarks. "One sees committed," said he, "every day crimes of all kinds which are left unpunished, whilst those guilty of no crime are dragged to the stake. It is no light thing to condemn to the flames those who in the midst of them invoke the name of Jesus Christ." The conference at last closed, the King rose to depart, but as he went, and by his order, the Constable advanced, laid his hand upon Du Bourg and four others who had been guilty of the same license in their speech, and committed them to the Captain of the Guard to be carried to the Bastile.

A few senators were thus secured to grace the festivities the Court was holding in honour of the two marriages—that of Philip of Spain with Henry's daughter Elizabeth, and that of the young Dauphin of France with our own Mary of Scotland. Among these festivities was the Tournament, in which the King delighted to exhibit his own skill in arms. The lists were erected in the Rue St. Jacques. Henry had encountered one and another of his nobles, who gracefully yielded to him the palm of victory. To make a last display of his prowess, he insisted on Montgomery, the stout Scottish knight, breaking a lance with him. Montgomery sought to be excused, but the King insisted. They met; grasped by a strong hand, the knight's well-laid and well-aimed lance struck the visor of the King, and was broken by the shock. A splinter of it pierced the eye-hole of the visor, and penetrated the brain. A shrill cry of pain was heard, the king sunk down upon his saddle, and a few days afterwards expired (10th July 1559).

On the 25th May 1559, two months before Henry's death, at the very time when the Court was full of the bitterest hate, when the severest laws were in most vigorous operation, when death was the doom for all who secretly assembled for religious worship, when the stake and the gibbet were busy at their terrible work, the first Synod of the Reformed Church met in Paris. For years past Calvin had been urging it upon his followers in France that they should embody their societies in a definite and uniform organization. Here and there individual churches had done what they could, but there was still wanting the bond of a common creed and a common code of laws and discipline. This was what they now met to frame. Deputies from eleven churches assembled. In front of all the perils to which they were exposed, they sat four days successively in a house in the Faubourg St. Germain-des-Prés. The fruit of their sittings was a Confession of Faith, and an order of worship, discipline, and government. Both came originally from the pen of Calvin.

The Presbyterian order as we have it among ourselves—their Consistory, our Kirk-session; their Colloquy, our Presbytery; their National Synod, our General Assembly—was without any division of opinion adopted. The election of all the members of the Consistory was, in the first instance, to be by the common voice of the people; but afterwards all vacancies were to be filled by the suffrages of its own members. “The minister selected,” so runs the canon of this old code, “shall preach publicly on three several Sabbaths in the audience of the whole congregation.” After this, “The

people's silence shall be taken for a full consent. But if any contention should arise, and the aforementioned elect be pleasing to the Consistory, but not unto the people, or to the major part of them, his reception shall be deferred, and the whole shall be remitted unto the Colloquy or Provincial Synod. And though the said elect should be then and there justified, yet shall he not be given as pastor unto that people against their will."

The Confession of Faith is, with one remarkable exception, similar to that which a century afterwards was adopted by the Westminster Divines. The exception consists in the presence of the following clause in the article on the power of the Civil Magistrate: God "hath delivered the sword into the magistrates' hands that so sins committed against both the tables of God's law, not only against the second, but against the first also, may be suppressed."

This clause contains the fatal dogma that six years before had sent Servetus to the stake. It being once laid down that both tables of God's law should unitedly form part of the civil and criminal code, and that it was equally obligatory on the magistrate to punish breaches of both, an inexorable logic doomed Servetus to be burned. Let us not misunderstand, however, the Genevese Reformer, nor set up that single burning pile of Servetus against the thousands of Spain and France and Holland, as if it proved that the first Reformers were as great persecutors as the churchmen of Rome. From the time of the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, it was the creed and practice of the Roman Catholic Church that all secular powers should be constrained to

enforce the sentence of the Church against heretics, and lend their aid to exterminate them. So far from turning the State into a tool of the Church, to be employed in such a way and for such a purpose, Calvin's was the hand that first attempted the arduous task of separating wholly the two domains, the civil and the ecclesiastical—each authority left supreme in its own sphere. The Church's sole instrument, he tells us in his Institutes, is the Word. Her last punishment is excommunication, which she is to use only in extreme necessity. "But excommunication requires not force; it contents itself with the simple power of the Word." How different the excommunication of Calvin and of Pope Innocent III.

The only heretic, besides, that Calvin would have the civil magistrate punish with death was a violator, in the highest degree, of a code that in his judgment should have formed part of the common law in every land. In his eyes, Servetus was a blasphemer, an atheist, as great an offender against the first table of God's law as a murderer would be against the second. Still farther, to bring any such culprit under sentence of the law, it was necessary that there should be overt act, some *corpus delicti*, for the law to deal with. It was the publication and propagation of a man's beliefs, not the entertaining them, that brought him within reach of the penalty. The heretic, on the other hand, that Rome devoted to the stake was an offender against the Church, a deviator to any extent from her doctrine, a denier of her authority. Whoever she suspected, she forced, when she had power, to tell his creed, and upon his bare confession condemned him to the flames. At her instance

men were burned alive in France, nothing else being proved against them than their having been found reading the Bible in the French tongue, or offering that Bible for sale, or refusing to kneel before an image of the Virgin. The Popes did not hesitate to urge upon the French authorities the wholesale extirpation—man, woman, and child—of heretic populations. You have nothing parallel to this in the principles or practice of any of the States or Churches of the Reformation.

Calvin was as dominant in Geneva as the Pope was in Paris. The Mass being regarded as an open act of idolatry, the Syndics of Geneva would no more have allowed the Bishop of Paris to celebrate it in their city, than the Parliament of Paris would have allowed Calvin to celebrate the Supper after his fashion in theirs. But the Bishop of Paris, nay, Servetus himself, had they but kept their religious notions to themselves, might have lived in all quiet in Geneva; whilst Calvin, so soon as he became a convert to the reformed doctrines, before even he had said or done anything against Roman Catholicism, had to fly for his life from France, and would not have been safe for a day in its metropolis.

. Still, however, though his intolerance was narrower in its limits, and somewhat mitigated in its degree,—Calvin was intolerant. A few months after the burning of Servetus, a little volume issued from the press of Basle. Temperately, yet strongly and eloquently it protested against the deed that had been done, advocating the principle that the civil magistrate had no right to interfere in questions of heresy, much less to punish heretics with death. It was believed by Calvin and Beza

to come from the pen of Castalio, who had been one of Calvin's colleagues, and contained large quotations from the writings of several other well-known Reformers, showing that they were of the same mind. How were Castalio and his volume treated? Beza, Calvin's chosen coadjutor, published instantly, in answer to the modest little volume, that breathed nothing but the spirit of charity and toleration, a fierce philippic, denouncing its liberal sentiments as untenable, unscriptural, latitudinarian, and dangerous at once to Church and commonwealth. Castalio, driven from Geneva, had fled to Basle. Calvin and Beza pursued him with their calumnies. He was one of the first Greek scholars of his age; known as the translator of the Scriptures into both the French and Latin tongues; but such were the prejudices that his enemies raised against him, that no chair for a time was opened to him, no literary employment given. He had a wife and family, and was forced at last to work as a common labourer in the fields; to gather the floating sticks that the Rhine carried down in its overflowings, selling them, as we are told, at four *sous* for seven arms-full. Toiling at that low but honourable work, and meeting no other treatment at the hands of Calvin and Beza than having the report raised against him that he had stolen the sticks he sold, Castalio did not meet, indeed, the fate of Servetus, but he met one that covers with shame the men who inflicted it.

Jean Bonneau, the Calvinistic minister of Beaugency in France, had read the tractate of Castalio, and the reply of Beza. He sided with the former, and published his opinions, repudiating the persecuting principle of

Beza, and maintaining with great ardour that it was not lawful for the magistrate to punish those whom he deemed heretics with death. He was cited to appear before his Presbytery, and ordered, under pain of ecclesiastical censure, to retract the opinions in favour of toleration that he had expressed. In an evil hour he yielded, but he lived to see that it would have been better for him to have gone and gathered sticks with Castalio.

The history of the idea and practice of religious toleration remains yet to be written. It is quite true that, on the whole, the Reformers of the sixteenth century received the idea of it but in part. Truth comes to us but in fragments, and we should be satisfied with the small portion that each century supplies. Those first Reformers took a great stride away from Rome, but it was one that took them but half way on to the true conception of toleration. The right of individual free belief that they so nobly vindicated for themselves, they refused too often to grant to others. We thank them for the vindication, and wonder not at the refusal. It would have been almost an intellectual miracle had they, out of the midst of the Papal doctrine of persecution, stepped into the broad day-light of our modern ideas as to what the rights of conscience are. There was one of them, however, who appears to have taken that step. In the treatise of Castalio above alluded to, there occur the following noble words of Luther, "Since faith then is for every man an affair of conscience, the temporal power should not meddle with the things of faith. It should leave each man free to believe what he can and

what he pleases, and use no constraint in such matters, seeing that faith is of the domain of liberty, and allows not violence. Faith is the work of God in our spirit, how then can it come from external pressure? Constraint is powerless to make believers."

Two hundred and fifty years after these words were spoken by Luther, an address was presented by the pastors of the Reformed Church of France to the First Napoleon, on the occasion of his coronation as Emperor. Napoleon replied in these memorable words: "I rejoice to see the pastors of the Reformed Church of France here assembled. I embrace eagerly this opportunity to declare how satisfied I have always been with all that I have heard of the fidelity and good conduct of the pastors and members of the different Protestant communions. I wish it thoroughly to be understood that my purpose and firm resolve are to maintain liberty of worship. The empire of law terminates where the empire of conscience begins. Neither law nor princes can do anything against that liberty. These are my principles, and those of the nation; and if any of my race that may succeed me should forget the oath that I have taken, and, deceived by the inspiration of a false conscience, should violate it, I devote him to public reproach, and authorize you to call him another Nero."

How exact an echo here to the words of Luther; but what struggles, what convulsions, what seas of blood had France to pass through ere Napoleon could proclaim it to be his principle and hers—that the empire of law ends where the empire of conscience begins.

II.

THE CONSPIRACY OF AMBOISE.

REIGN OF FRANCIS II., 1559-1560.

IT was during the reign of Henry II. that the seeds were sown of all those dissensions by which France was torn asunder for so many years after his death. The Court had become corrupt. "Almost every vice," says Mézeray, "which tends to the ruin of great States reigned in this Court: luxury, immodesty, libertinism, blasphemy, and that impious curiosity which seeks the secrets of futurity in the detestable illusions of magic." The Crown had fallen into contempt. The Princes of the blood and the higher nobility, all power being withdrawn from them to be bestowed upon a few reigning favourites, were alienated. The highest offices of State were shamelessly bought and sold. The fountains of justice, the courts of law, had become tainted with the prevailing venality. The wars with the House of Austria, the lavish expenditure of the Court upon idle shows, the want of any fixed sources of royal income, the expedients that were adopted to meet existing difficulties, had drained the public treasury, plunged the monarchy in debt, and created an inextricable financial confusion. In the midst of all this Henry was cut off. Francis, his eldest son, a

youth not sixteen years old, succeeded. The Government of France lay open to the hands that were the first to grasp and that had the power to hold it. Let us cast a glance around upon the leading men who now step upon the stage.

Forty-six years before this time, Claude, second son of René, Duke of Lorraine, entered France. He came to take possession of extensive estates in that country, left him at his father's death, and to establish there a separate branch of his family, as the houses of Mantua and Savoy did in the persons of the Dukes of Nevers and Nemours. Among the captains whom Francis I. gathered round him in his wars, Claude speedily distinguished himself, attaining the rank of a General at an age when many of the bravest scions of the nobility were only passing through military apprenticeship as knights. At the head of a small band of followers he once penetrated the English camp, and left five or six hundred dead behind him as the trophies of his success. During the captivity of Francis in Spain, he surprised 10,000 German *Reiters* in their march to Neufchâteau, and cut them to pieces. He turned his sword next upon 15,000 German communists who had penetrated France, and disposed of them in such a way that not more than a thousand were left to carry home the news of their enterprise. He hastened then to the relief of the terrified inhabitants of Paris, who saw an English army within a few leagues of their ramparts, threw himself into the city, and by saving it forged the first link of that chain that attached the Parisians to his family. When twelve years old, he had seen his mother, Philippa

of Gueldres, lay aside riches and honours, part from her seven young children, and not in disappointment or chagrin, but on the impulse of an intense pietism, retire into a cloister. From her he inherited that fanatical attachment to the ancient faith which in his warlike heart turned into a desire to bathe his hands in the blood of heretics. For good or for evil, he linked his fortunes with those of the Papacy, and in doing so marked out for his sons the path they followed. Francis at last gave him a place in the French Peerage, by creating him first Duke of Guise. His fortunate marriage with Antoinette de Bourbon, sister of Charles, first Duke of Vendôme, associated him with the ancient nobility, who nevertheless always looked on him as an intruder within their domain. Despite their jealousy, by his talents and address he won for his family the highest positions in Church and State. His daughter Mary, married to James v. of Scotland, became the mother of Mary Stuart. Six sons grew up around him, sharers of his fanaticism, his ambition, his talents, and his success. Two of them became Dukes, two rose to be Cardinals, one is known in history as the Marquis d'Elbœuf, and another as the Grand Prior. It was the two eldest, Francis who succeeded his father as second Duke of Guise,—and Charles the Cardinal of Lorraine, who played so conspicuous a part in the religious wars of France. Before he died, Francis I. had warned his son Henry against these two young men, whose ambition, he feared, might become dangerous to the monarchy. Henry did not heed the warning. Under his patronage the young Duke of Guise rose to share the command of the French

armies with the Constable Montmorency. His gallant and successful defence of Metz against all the forces that Charles v. could muster; his victories at Rentz, and above all his capture of Calais—his wresting out of the hands of the English that last relic of their victories in France—covered him with glory, and made him the idol of the people. Skilful, courageous, successful as a soldier, he had little capacity as a politician. What he wanted his brother amply possessed, and under the Cardinal's guidance, Francis put himself at the head of the ultra-Catholic party. Sincere in his religious belief, but grossly ignorant, he was ready at command to march in any direction, to draw the sword and strike any blow, if only once assured that the double object was to be gained thereby—the Church's interests served, and his own family exalted. There was nothing, however, mean or double in his nature. Choleric, at times brutal in his rage, he had withal that generous nature which knows to pity a fallen enemy and forgive the deepest wrong.

His brother Charles, the Cardinal, was fashioned after a different mould. Invited by the King, at the age of three-and-twenty, to take part in the management of public affairs, he ingratiated himself with Diana of Poitiers, and rose rapidly at Court. He had every qualification for a courtier—an imposing exterior, a graceful address, a fertile and playful wit, a copious and persuasive eloquence. The Italians, the Spaniards, the Germans, the English, the Dutch, all noticed with admiration the fluency and the accuracy with which their different languages were spoken by him. The successes and high alliances of his family; the mar-

riage of his sister to the King of Scotland, and then of his niece with the heir-apparent to the French throne, fed that ambition which developed all the vices of his character. He gave himself to the pursuit of power. In that pursuit he displayed the quickest foresight, extraordinary subtlety ; the talents, however, rather of the diplomatist than of the statesman ; but he displayed at the same time selfishness, meanness, cowardice, cruelty. Insolent and overbearing when things went well, he sunk under adversity into the sycophant and flatterer. "Come tell us," said one of the ladies of honour to whom he had been speaking in a very humble and gracious manner,— "Come, tell us, what great misfortune has befallen you that you are speaking to us in that way?" His cowardice was so notorious, that to cover it he made it the subject of his own pleasantry. He was the chief persecutor of the Huguenots, but he had not the excuse of the fanatic in becoming so. His faith was as versatile as his intellect ; now he could preach the highest doctrines of the Papacy, and again so that the Lutherans could find nothing to condemn.

Opposed to the Guises stood the Princes of the House of Bourbon. This house, which ascended the French throne in the person of Henry iv., and gave afterwards so many kings to France and Spain and Naples, took its origin from Robert, sixth son of St. Louis (Louis ix.), who married Beatrice the heiress of Bourbon ; Bourbon being originally a simple barony, which in 1327 was erected into a duchy in favour of Louis, Robert's eldest son. In the succession to the French throne, this family stood next to the reigning family of the Valois. Jeal-

ousies between the two houses had arisen. In the reign of Francis I., the Constable of Bourbon openly revolted. His failure and disgrace excluded, for a time, all members of his family from the higher offices of the State. Under the reign of Francis' successor, they had hoped to be restored to their natural position in the monarchy, but the Court influences were against them. They remained excluded from the government. The Guises had taken a chief part in that exclusion, and had usurped the places that should have been theirs. The Bourbons counted them as their enemies. Subject themselves to a political persecution, they sympathized with those of their fellow-countrymen who were exposed to a religious one, a sympathy not lessened by the circumstance that the Guises headed the persecution.

Antony of Bourbon was now the head of the family. By his marriage with Jeanne d'Albret, daughter of Margaret, the favourite sister of Francis I., he had become King of Navarre. Shortly before the death of Henry, Antony had abjured the Roman Catholic religion, and openly professed himself a Protestant. The cause of Protestantism, however, lost more than it gained by the accession of a man so weak and vain and vacillating, yet so ambitious, who, pleased for the time by being hailed as the head of a party, had none of the energy or resolution needful for that post. The crown he wore did not sit firmly upon his head, and it was a crown with but little of a kingdom; half of the old territory of Navarre having been annexed to Spain. Knowing all Antony's weaknesses, and determined to detach him from Protestantism, Philip II. held out the threat, that

if he persevered in heading the Huguenots, the half that he still possessed should likewise be annexed. And now, he promised that if he deserted the Huguenots, and united with the Guises for their extermination, he would give back the appropriated half, or, better still, would give him a new kingdom,—that of Sardinia, of whose extent and wealth fabulous accounts were given. Antony yielded, returned into the bosom of the Church, but there was no enlargement of his kingdom.

The attachment to the reformed doctrine of his younger brother, Louis Prince of Condé, was more sincere and steadfast. There was little in that doctrine to attract such a laughter-loving, pleasure-loving, gay, and gallant youth as Condé was. But he was chivalrously honourable ; there was depth as well as liveliness in his character, and wayward and wild as his conduct often was, his religious convictions appear to have been genuine and strong. He could never, at least, be induced to renounce them. Bribes of all kinds were held out to tempt him to do so ; bribes that, to one so poor, must have been very tempting, but he spurned them indignantly away.

Another family, inferior in rank to the Bourbons, lent to the cause of Protestantism a purer and more efficient aid. The Marquis de Chatillon was the head of a family that for nearly 500 years had been mixed up with all the great political movements of their country. He died in 1522 in the service of Francis I., leaving his widow, a sister of the Constable Montmorency, with three sons, Odet, Gaspard, and Francis. When the eldest of the boys was but sixteen years old, a Cardinal's hat was placed by the Pope at the disposal of the Con-

stable, to be given to one of his nephews. It should naturally have fallen either to Gaspard or to Francis. Both, however, young as they were, showed an invincible repugnance to accept of it. Their elder brother, who was of a gentler nature, was induced to do so. To the Cardinalship, the rich Bishopric of Beauvais was forty years afterwards annexed. Finding himself so well provided for, Odet generously ceded all his patrimonial rights to his younger brothers. Gaspard became thus the head of the family of Chatillon, taking the title of Count of Coligni, from a village in Franche-Comté, an ancient possession of his house.

Coligni was early introduced at Court, under the auspices of his uncle the Constable. That gay court life had little or no charm for this thoughtful, studious, retiring, and somewhat austere youth. He formed there but a single friendship, that with the young Duke of Guise, but it did not last long. The Duke one day asked Coligni's opinion as to the projected marriage of one of his brothers, with a daughter of the Duchess of Valentinois (Diana of Poitiers). "I would prefer," said Coligni, "an honoured name to all the riches a woman could bring into my family." In his twenty-fourth year Coligni entered upon his military career. Distinguishing himself in Flanders, he served as a volunteer in the army of Italy, and displayed such bravery on the bloody field of Cerisoles, that he was knighted on the field. Returning to Paris in 1547, he married a daughter of the illustrious house of Laval. The accession of Henry II. to the throne brought with it fresh addition to his honours. He was appointed Colonel-General of the French in-

fantry. In that office he matured and introduced those military ordinances, of which Brantome says, "that they were the best and most politic that have ever been made in France, and, I believe, have preserved the lives of a million of persons, for, till then, there was nothing but pillage, brigandage, murders, and quarrels, so that the companies resembled hordes of wild Arabs rather than noble soldiers."

In 1551, Coligni was nominated Governor of Paris and of the Isle de France, and in the following year, created Admiral of France, a military as well as a naval office, next in rank to that of the Constable. Soon afterwards he was invested with the military government of Picardy, and admitted a member of the Privy Council. In 1556, he negotiated a peace with Spain on terms honourable to France. It was but two months after the signature of this treaty, when the intrigues of the Pope and the Guises induced Henry to attack Spain, without even the formality of a declaration of war being issued. Coligni was ordered to commence hostilities. He remonstrated in the most forcible terms against so flagrant a breach of faith, but his remonstrances were overruled. The loss of the battle of St. Quentin was the penalty France paid for her treachery on this occasion. In that disastrous campaign the one redeeming incident was the heroic defence of St. Quentin by Coligni and his younger brother. The town was taken at last by assault, and the Admiral had to yield himself a prisoner of war. He was confined first in the fort of L'Ecluse, and afterwards in the citadel of Ghent. He occupied his leisure hours in reading

the Bible, and the writings of the Reformers. His generous spirit had been already deeply moved by the heroism of the Protestant martyrs. He now discovered the source of that heroism in the simple but sublime truths they had received out of the Holy Scriptures. So deep was the impression made upon his mind, that when in 1559 he was released from his captivity, he did not return to Court. He threw up the government of Picardy and of the Isle de France, and retired to his country seat of Chatillon. His two brothers joined him there. Days and months were given by the three to earnest reading of the Scriptures, and consultations as to the future. The mind of the youngest brother Francis, better known by his second name D'Andelot, had already been made up. Three years before he had been confined in the citadel of Milan, had taken the same means to relieve his solitude as his elder brother had done, and with the same result, only his more ardent temperament had carried him somewhat farther; for upon his release, which took place the year before the battle of St. Quentin, he announced himself a convert to Protestantism, and in his own county of Brittany openly encouraged it. The Cardinal found himself at first much in the same state of mind with the Admiral. The result of their conferences was, that all three resolved openly to cast in their lot with their persecuted fellow-countrymen. D'Andelot was the first to be exposed to danger.

One evening in the spring of 1557, some students were sauntering along the Pré-aux-Clercs, the fashionable promenade on the banks of the Seine. They sang to-

gether, as they walked, the French Psalms of Clement Marot in the harmony of four parts, set by Goudimel. Such kind of singing was new to the ears of the Parisians. They had many listeners, and many assistants too ; for, evening after evening as the singing was resumed, the band of singers swelled in numbers, good proof how many voices had been trained in secret to this kind of psalmody. The King of Navarre, who happened to be in Paris at the time, in the fresh impulse of his new-born and short-lived Lutheranism, put himself at its head. Lords and gentlemen, French and foreign (among the latter we notice some Lords of the Congregation from Scotland), joined the ranks and took part in the music. It became for the time the great evening incident of the Parisian day. The clergy took instant and grave alarm. Henry was not at Paris, but they forwarded in haste a representation to him at Amiens, denouncing these reunions as seditious assemblies. A royal order for their suppression immediately appeared.

Among those reported to the King as having taken part in these musical promenades was D'Andelot. In itself it was but a slight offence ; but it had been told the King besides, that Protestant books had been found in D'Andelot's luggage, and that Protestant ministers had been openly protected by him in Brittany. He was summoned into the royal presence. The King asked his opinion of the mass. "I look upon it," said the frank and fearless soldier, "as a detestable profanation." The King reminded him of the honours he had heaped upon him, and reproached him with ingratitude. "Sire," said D'Andelot, "the obligation I feel for the honours you

have conferred upon me is such that I have not spared either body or goods in your service ; but do not think it strange if, after having rendered that service to your Majesty, I study the wellbeing of my soul. I entreat you that you leave my conscience free, and take my body and goods which are altogether yours." "But I did not give you that order," said the King, pointing to the collar that he wore, "that you might act as you have done. In accepting it you swore to follow my religion." "Sire," replied D'Andelot, "I did not then know what it was to be a Christian. I should not have accepted it on such conditions had God then touched my heart as he has touched it since." The King could restrain his rage no longer. Seizing the first thing he could grasp,—some say a knife, and some a plate,—he flung it at D'Andelot, missing him, and hitting his own son the Dauphin instead. Ordered out of the royal presence, D'Andelot made his obeisance and withdrew ; but at the door of the palace he was arrested and carried prisoner to the citadel of Melun.

The imprisonment of so distinguished a nobleman produced a profound sensation. The Cardinal of Lorraine would have liked to have seen the law at once carried out in all its rigour. The Pope expressed his astonishment afterwards that this was not done ; but D'Andelot had many friends at Court who busied themselves incessantly in trying to persuade him to make some concession. Calvin heard of this and wrote to warn him against yielding to such solicitations. All that D'Andelot was asked to do was to allow the mass to be celebrated in his presence ; he was neither asked to take part him-

self in the service, nor to retract his formerly expressed opinion of it. He did so, and purchased thereby his liberty; but so strict were the ideas of religious duty entertained among the Calvinists, that his concession was generally lamented as a dishonourable fall, and Calvin wrote to reproach him with it as such. D'Andelot lived to prove that these injurious suspicions of him were unfounded.

The Protestants hailed with hope the advent of Francis II. to the throne. He was not yet sixteen years old; too young, too feeble, to take the government into his own hands. The Queen-Mother, Catherine de Medicis, though she had not yet declared herself for either, had shown herself ready to take any side. With one exception, that of the Cardinal de Bourbon, the Princes of the blood—into whose hands, had all ordinary precedents been followed, the power should have fallen—had espoused that cause. Visions of a happier future, of the fires of persecution quenched, of liberty of worship established, of the truth triumphing all over France, were floating before their eyes. A few days sufficed to dispel all these visions, and to bring down a deeper darkness than ever upon the future. When Henry received his death-wound, and it became evident that a change of government was at hand, the Constable had despatched a courier to the King of Navarre, urging his immediate presence at Paris. Instead of acting at once upon the counsel given him, the irresolute Antony loitered by the way, and finally stopped altogether at Vendôme. When Henry died, the Constable's hands were for the time tied up, it being part of his official duty to conduct the

funeral obsequies of the monarch, and the custom of the times forbidding that for thirty-five days he should meddle with public affairs. The Constable thus set aside, and the Bourbons and the Chatillons being at a distance, the Guises were masters of the position, and lost not a day in occupying it. Their influence over the new boy-king, through their niece Mary Stuart, was unbounded. Catherine they propitiated by the sacrifice of the Duchess of Valentinois. As by the law of France the King attained his majority at the age of thirteen, they were able to act under royal sanction. The late King's seal was demanded and obtained from the Constable; the Cardinal was placed at the head of the Finance, the Duke at the head of the War Department. When the Deputies of the Parliament of Paris presented themselves to congratulate the young Prince upon his accession, they were informed by him that, with the approbation of the Queen-mother, he had committed the entire charge of the government to his two uncles. Released from his funeral duties, the Constable appeared at Court; he was informed that the King had no further need of his services, and he retired. Condé was appointed ambassador to the Low Countries, an office unsuited to his position, which he rightly interpreted as only another way of banishing him from the Court.

Action so prompt and decisive, such an instant and entire exclusion from the government of all the natural and hereditary counsellors of the Crown, excited the keenest indignation and discontent. Condé, Coligni, D'Andelot, the Prince of Porcian, the Count of Rochefoucault, the Vidâm of Chartres, and others, hastened

to Vendôme, where Navarre was still resting on his way to Paris. The bolder spirits, such as Condé and D'Andelot, were for instant recourse to arms; the wiser, as Coligni, resisted the proposal. It was at last resolved that the King of Navarre should at once proceed to Paris, and claim and insist upon his rights. But all vigour went out of him by the way. Instead of resenting the studied affronts put upon him, on reaching the metropolis he meekly submitted. The Guises knew well with whom they had to deal. A letter from Philip of Spain was put into his hands, threatening an invasion of Navarre; and so terrified was Antony that he accepted the inglorious office of conducting the Princess Elizabeth to Spain, in the hope that in a personal interview with Philip—an interview that was never granted him—he might move that monarch from his purpose.

Meanwhile, the Guises, intoxicated with success, advanced in their career. Montmorency was stripped of the office of Grand Master (originally that of the Mayor of the Palace), which was assumed by the Duke. The government of Picardy, which the Admiral had resigned, in the expectation that it would be given to Condé, was bestowed on a creature of the Lorraines. The Cardinal, with nothing in the public treasury, found himself besieged by old servants of the Crown, demanding the payment of arrears of salary. The Duke received the importunate suitors in the most gracious manner, and gave them all good words, while the Cardinal had gibbets erected in the neighbourhood of St. Germain, and caused it to be proclaimed three times by sound of trumpet, that all who came there to demand

money should quit the place within twenty-four hours, on pain of being hanged forthwith,—one of the numerous instances in which the two brothers played with admirable effect into each other's hands.

But there were those for whom something worse than threatenings were prepared. King Henry died on 10th July 1559. On the 14th of the same month, an injunction was laid upon the Parliament of Paris to proceed instantly to the trial of Anne du Bourg, the Member of Parliament who had been arrested by the late king's order. The position, the youth, the eloquence, the piety of Du Bourg, fixed upon this trial a larger measure of public attention than on that of any other martyr of the Reformation. He asked to be tried by his peers; just and constitutional as it was, that plea by royal mandate was overruled. He drew up such a confession of his faith, as could not fail to send him to the stake. Few more touching scenes have ever been recorded than that of his last appearance before the Court when the sentence of death was passed upon him. He melted his stern judges to tears, and then turned those tears into fresh arguments against the course of persecution that was being followed in France. A rash attempt was made to rescue him from prison. An old iron cage that had been used in the days of Louis XI. was sought out. Du Bourg was enclosed in it, clothed and fed in the meanest way. The 23d of December, the day before Christmas eve, was fixed for his execution. His deportment at the stake was so calm, so modest, yet so triumphant, and so sublime, that a Roman Catholic historian declared, that "his execution did more harm than a hundred ministers by all their preaching could have done."

Edict after edict was published, denouncing death on all who attended any private meeting for religious purposes ; declaring that all who had knowledge of such assemblies, and failed to reveal them, should have the same penalty inflicted on them, offering large rewards to all who should inform against heretics, and ordering all houses in which it could be proved that secret assemblies had been held, to be razed to the ground. New courts were established, fitly called *Chambres Ardentes*, since they burned without mercy every one who was convicted of heresy. Popular fanaticism lent its aid to the execution of the law. In Paris, Bordeaux, Lyons, Grenoble, Dijon, and other cities where the Calvinists abounded, private houses were broken into upon the slightest suspicion, and whole families hurried to prison ; espionage, pillage, confiscation, executions, multiplied day by day.

Men began at last to speak freely of taking up arms. A case was drawn up, and submitted to the most celebrated jurists and theologians of France, Switzerland, and Germany. They were asked, "Whether with a safe conscience, provided no violence was offered to the King and the lawful magistrates, men might take up arms for the safety and liberty of the country, seize Francis of Guise, and the Cardinal his brother, and compel them to resign their usurped authority." True to the principle of almost unlimited submission to the civil power, which he had always taught, Calvin gave his judgment against the employment of force. The majority, however, decided in favour of the proceeding, provided it had the sanction of one of the Princes of the blood, and of the States of the kingdom, or the greater

and sounder part of them. The Prince of Condé was consulted. He was not prepared, in the first instance, to appear as the leader of the movement ; but should a successful commencement be made, he was ready then to acknowledge and to head it.

The perilous task was undertaken by Renaudie, a gentleman of Perigord. In executing it, he displayed an ability, activity, and devotedness worthy of a better fate. He crossed to England to see what hope of support he might count upon from the Government of Elizabeth, but got little encouragement. He traversed a large part of France, and conversed personally with the chief of the disaffected. He appointed a rendezvous to take place on the 1st February 1560 at Nantes. The Parliament of Brittany was to hold its sittings there. Some marriages among the nobility were at the same time to be celebrated. There would be a large concourse of people gathered, and Renaudie rightly calculated that he and his friends might assemble without exciting notice or suspicion. The day arrived. The engagements were all kept. By different routes, a goodly band, none indeed of the chief nobility, but one or two of the lesser barons, and many gentlemen of character and good position, entered Nantes. Renaudie visited each of them separately in their hotels. In the evening they all met. Renaudie depicted in glowing terms the insolent tyranny of the Guises ; the miserable condition into which the State had fallen ; the danger to the King himself, if not rescued out of their hands. " Why, then," said he, " should we delay any longer ? Let us deliver our King from peril, our country from its chains. Let all who agree with me

stand up." They rose as it had been a single man. Not an objection was taken, nor shadow of hesitation seen. It was resolved that they should all return forthwith to their different provinces, to meet again, accompanied with a small but sufficient force, in the neighbourhood of Blois, where the Court then was, on the 10th of the next month. A few of them unarmed were then to seek an audience of the King, to demand liberty of worship for the Protestants, and the dismissal of the Guises from power. On their demand being rejected, as they calculated it would, their armed followers were to seize upon the Guises, arrest them for trial, and call upon the Prince of Condé, who was not to be far off, to take the further guidance of affairs. The plan was admirably laid ; the secret kept with astonishing fidelity, but the treachery of one man proved fatal.

Retiring from Nantes to Paris, Renaudie took up his quarters in the house of a Protestant advocate named Avenelles. Surprised at the number of persons coming at strange hours to see his guest, Avenelles expressed suspicion. To secure his silence, Renaudie took him into his confidence, and disclosed the project. Avenelles revealed the whole to the agent of the Cardinal of Lorraine in Paris. A courier with the intelligence set off at once to Blois. The frightened Cardinal was for instant seizures, imprisonments, and executions. The Duke took a different course. He removed the Court from Blois, where it was unprotected, higher up the Loire, to Amboise, whose strong castle, built upon a lofty rock, was of itself a bulwark of defence. He got himself appointed Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, an office conferring

almost unlimited authority. He sent off letters to Condé, the Admiral, and D'Andelot, desiring their immediate attendance upon the King. If they came, it would keep them from rendering any help to the conspirators ; if they came not, their absenting themselves would be presumptive evidence of their complicity in the plot. They all, however, without delay, presented themselves at Amboise. The Admiral, who had no concern whatever with Renaudie's movements, strongly counselled that the best way to meet and counteract them was by the exercise of toleration towards the Protestants, a counsel that for the time was partially followed.

Renaudie was informed of the treachery of Avenelles. It did not change his purpose ; but he had to alter his plan. The day of the meditated assault was shifted from the 10th to the 16th March, and fresh instructions were issued to his followers, their places of meeting on the morning of the 16th fixed, and the secret word of recognition given. Renaudie still fancied he should succeed, as the Duke had but a small body of troops at Amboise. One of his own number again betrayed him. All his preconcerted arrangements were communicated to the Duke. Met at every point by skilful dispositions of the royal forces, the attack utterly failed. Renaudie himself fell in one of the first encounters of the morning. His body was suspended for a day upon a gibbet on the bridge, then cut into four quarters, which were exposed in the most public places of the town ; the head nailed to a plank, as keepers nail the birds of prey they shoot.

The Baron de Castelnau, one of Renaudie's associates, advancing at the head of his Gascons, found himself suddenly in front of a superior force. The Duke de Nemours, who led it, and who knew the Baron, warned him of the utter hopelessness of the enterprise, and entreated him to surrender. Castelnau did so, though not till he had got a written engagement (signed by Nemours on the spot) that his life, and that of his followers, should be spared. But few escaped. The great body of the insurgents fell into the hands of the victors.

And now commenced a series of butcheries that lasted for a whole month. During these four weeks, and within the small enclosure of that town of Amboise, 1200 men were beheaded, hanged, or drowned. The market-place was crowded with gibbets. Gallows enough could not be raised, and so they took them, and hung them up from the walls and battlements of the Castle. The Loire would soon have been choked up, and so they took the dead bodies, and sent them floating down the river in small rafts, whose ghastly freightage announced to the inhabitants of Tours and Nantes what was going on at Amboise. The Court had its daily festival of blood. At a set hour each day, the ladies of the Court dressed in their gayest attire—our own Mary Stuart there among the rest—placed themselves at the windows of the Château, before which, for their special behoof, a number of executions took place. The Cardinal was there, amusing them with his pleasantries, directing their attention to those minor incidents of the bloody drama that might otherwise have escaped their notice, turning occasionally to the young King, as the

most intrepid heroism was displayed by his victims in meeting death, to say, "See, Sire, their shameless effrontery! The very fear of death can't quench their arrogance. What would they have done with you if they had had you in their hands?" The Duke had his own private entertainments of the same kind. A gentleman from the Duke of Longueville arrived to inquire after the Duke's health. He received him at table. "Tell your master," said he, "that I am well, and report to him (pointing his finger to the window) with what kind of viands I am regaling myself." As he spoke, a tall and handsome man, chosen for the occasion, was hung up upon the bars of the window.

One pities the poor sickly Francis, doomed to be the spectator of such scenes. It is a relief to notice that some bitter misgivings did at times come over him. "What have I done," said he once, bursting into tears, "what have I done to my people that they hate me so? I would like to hear their complaints and their reasons." Then, turning to the Lorraines, "I don't know how it is, but I hear that it is against you that they are so angry. I wish you would leave me for a while, that I might see whether it is of me or you that they complain." "If we left you," was the reply, "the Bourbons would quickly find the means of exterminating our house." The weak youth had nothing for it but to bury his misgivings in his heart.

Among the ladies of the Court one only shrank from the frightful daily spectacle. It was not, as we could have wished it to be, the young King's beautiful bride. The Baron de Castelnau, with fifteen gentlemen who

had surrendered along with him, were brought up for trial. Faith had been plighted to them, but it was ruled that with rebels as with heretics no faith should be kept. The Chancellor, Francis Olivier, whom Castelnau knew well, presided at the trial. Questioned as to his religious opinions, the Baron answered so well, that the Chancellor was tempted to ask him at what school of theology he had studied? "Have you forgotten," said the accused, "how, on my return from imprisonment in Flanders, you asked me once how I had spent my time, and when I told you it was in study of the Holy Scriptures, you praised my labours, advised me to attend the assemblies of the Reformed, and expressed your wish that all the nobility of France had chosen, like me, the better part?" Olivier hung his head in silence. The Cardinal took up the theological debate to be in turn confounded. Castelnau asked the Duke to notice how his brother had broken down. "I know nothing of arguments," said the Duke, "but I know very well how to cut off heads." "Would to God," replied the Baron, "that you did understand argument like your brother. I am certain you would not pervert your conscience. As to your threat about cutting off heads, it is unworthy of a Prince like you." Castelnau and his friends were subjected to torture, but no sufferings could extort from them any other declaration than that it was against the Guises alone, and not against the King, that they had taken up arms. They were condemned to death as guilty of high treason. "Treason!" said Castelnau, on hearing the sentence, "I ought then to have said that the Guises were kings of France. If it be treason to take up arms against those

violators of our laws and liberties, let them be declared kings at once." The scaffold on which he and his companions were beheaded, was erected in front of the Castle. The Court ladies as usual, with the Chancellor and the Guises, were looking on. Castelnau, after praying aloud to God, and appealing to Him to attest his innocence, gave his head to the executioner. It came to the turn of Villemorgue, one of the fifteen. Stepping forward, he dipped his hands in the blood of his companions, and raising them to Heaven, exclaimed, "Lord, it is the blood of thy children, unjustly slain. Thou wilt avenge it." A cry came from the place where the ladies of the Court were sitting. The Duchess of Guise, who uttered it, sprung from her seat, and rushed into the chamber of the Queen-mother. Catherine asked her why it was that she was in such deep distress. "Have I not seen," said the Duchess, "the blood of the innocent flowing? I fear, I fear, that cry for vengeance will fall heavy upon our house."

The Chancellor Olivier had been seen to weep at the execution. The last words of Castelnau kept ringing in his ears. He sought his chamber; he flung himself upon his bed. That room he never left; from that bed he never rose. Devoured by a terrible remorse that induced a consuming fever, he filled his chamber with the bitter cries of a self-accusing spirit. The Cardinal heard of his distress, and came to visit him. "Ha! Cardinal," said Olivier when he saw him enter, "you have damned yourself and all of us." "It is the Evil One who troubles you," said the Cardinal; "force yourself to stay firm in the faith." "Well spoken, well answered," said Olivier

with a sardonic laugh ; then turned his back upon him, and would not speak another word. The Cardinal retired. Two days afterwards Olivier died.

It is from this conspiracy of Amboise that we date the giving of a new name to the Reformers of France. Up to this time, during the reign of Francis I. and Henry II., they had been called Sacramentaires, or those of "the religion" or heretics of Meaux, or more generally Lutherans. The impropriety of the last name was now generally felt. Both in doctrine and discipline the French Churches followed the guidance, not of Luther but of Calvin. A new term now arose of local origin, at first a *soubriquet* of reproach invented and applied by their enemies. In the superstitious belief of the times, each chief town had its own goblin of the night ; its foul spirit doomed to make its purgatory there, its haunt by day in some dark subterranean dwelling, but sallying forth under cover of the darkness, to scour the streets and terrify the poor wayfarers it chanced to meet. At Tours it was Le Roi Huguet. From this King, of whose historic character we know nothing, one of the gates of that city derived its name. Near this gate was an underground apartment in which the Reformers of the city held their nightly meetings. The time, the place, the object of their meetings connected themselves in the popular belief with the goblin King Hugo, and his terrible nightly forthcomings. They called the Reformers Huguenots. The term was taken up by others ; it spread rapidly over France ; time stripped it soon of its primitive and sinister signification. It was accepted at last by the Protestants themselves, who ever since for nearly 300 years

have been everywhere familiarly spoken of as the Huguenots of France.*

But not only was a new name now given to the Reformation, a new character was given to it. Up to this period it had been a purely religious movement. Now it became a political as well as a religious one. There was as much, certainly, of political as of religious discontent at the bottom of Renaudie's enterprise. Its double aim was to overthrow the power of the Guises, and to protect the Huguenots from persecution. The victims of that enterprise died as heroically as any martyr at the stake died ; but those bloody hands of Villemorgue, that dying cry for vengeance, tell us that the purer age of religious martyrdom is over ; that the strife of human passion and political faction has begun, with what gain and loss to the cause of Protestantism it remains for us to notice.

Condé's complicity in Renaudie's unfortunate attempt was more than suspected by the Court. Perhaps the Cardinal had in his hands sufficient proof of it. We know, at least, he urged that Condé should be arrested, and brought instantly to trial. The Prince cut the matter short by demanding an audience of the King ; proclaiming in the royal presence that whoever charged him with being a conspirator against the King lied in his throat, and challenging him to single combat. The Duke of Guise stepped forward, not to take up the gauntlet, but to offer himself as the Prince's second. A few days afterwards, the Court, driven from Amboise by the stench of the putrefying bodies, removed to Tours, and Condé took

* See Preface.

advantage of the opportunity to effect his escape. He found the country everywhere in a ferment; the ranks of the Huguenots recruited by multitudes whom the cruelties of Amboise had excited against the Guises.

The demand for the calling of the States-General of the kingdom became so loud and so general, that the Guises yielded so far as to summon an assembly, consisting of Princes of the blood, the Ministers of the Crown, the chief Clergy and Nobility. This Assembly, called from the character of its constituency the Assembly of Notables, met at Fontainebleau on 21st August 1560. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé did not attend. The old Constable, however, appeared with his two sons, and his three Huguenot nephews, attended by eight hundred gentlemen. Coligni presented a petition from the Huguenot inhabitants of Normandy. The petitioners professed entire allegiance to the Crown; offered to pay double tribute, to prove how falsely they were accused of a seditious spirit; and humbly entreated that they might be allowed temples of their own in which they might assemble. It was remarked by some one that the petition was unsigned. "Prudence," Coligni said, "had dictated the omission, but he was instructed to say that in a few days, 50,000 signatures could be obtained." "And I," said the Duke of Guise, "can as easily get a million of good Catholics to lead against them, and break their heads." In the debate which followed, two Roman Catholic Bishops, Montluc, Bishop of Valence, and Marillac, Archbishop of Vienne, distinguished themselves by the moderate and charitable sentiments they expressed. The Cardinal, seeing that the drift of the

debate was running against his party, spoke in a conciliatory strain. "With regard to the States-General, he was decidedly of opinion that they should be called. A National Council to reform the Church he saw little need of, nevertheless he would not object to it. As to those seditious Huguenots, who cloaked their malice against the Crown under the guise of religion, he was for the severest punishment being inflicted on *them*; but as to those poor fanatics who, without arms, and for fear of being damned, went to their preachings and their psalm-singsings, and other things of that sort, since punishment had as yet done nothing, he was of opinion that the King should no longer pursue them in that way; but as to allowing them places of worship of their own to practise their idolatry in, the King could not do it without being damned eternally."

One searches in vain through all the speeches on either side made on this occasion, of which large records have been preserved, for any expression in favour of religious liberty properly so called. It was not upon the ground that their faith and worship should be tolerated, though differing from that of the majority of their countrymen, that the Huguenots preferred their request, but alone upon the ground that theirs was the only true faith, theirs the only true worship. Nor was it with the idea that two different faiths and worships were to be allowed to dwell together, that those good and kindly Bishops pleaded for a National Council being held, but solely in the hope that the two might be brought together into one. One king, one law, one faith, was still the maxim universally accepted.

The Assembly of Notables broke up, after appointing a meeting of the States-General to be held at Meaux on the 10th December, and a National Council to be held at Paris on the 20th January 1561.

Convinced by the results of this Assembly that a war *à l'outrance* was approaching, the Guises resolved to be beforehand with their enemies, and to cut them off at a stroke. The Cardinal was the contriver of the scheme, which he facetiously called his "rat-trap." A Confession of Faith that no Huguenot could sign, was to be presented by the King to the States-General, and adopted as a fundamental law of the Kingdom. This formula was to be presented afterwards to every individual in the kingdom arrived at years of discretion; whoever refused to sign it was to be executed next day without mercy shown. As a preliminary step, the Bourbon Princes, of whose treasonable practices sufficient evidence had now been got, were to be tried and executed.

A project so large and so perilous, demanded that adequate preparations should be made for its execution. Nothing in this way was left undone. The place of meeting of the States-General was changed from Meaux to the fortified town of Orleans, formidable forces were concentrated around the Court; camps were formed, and bodies of troops distributed over the provinces, and the King of Spain and the Duke of Savoy engaged to hold themselves in readiness to co-operate with the Lorraines when the time for action came. The Bourbons were now summoned to Court. Leaving Pau, the two brothers took their way to Orleans. All along their route they were met by those who entreated them to return, or at

least allow themselves to be escorted by a sufficient force. At Limoges, they found between 700 and 800 gentlemen awaiting them, who engaged, that if they would but openly head the Huguenots, 16,000 well-armed men could be at once collected to open the campaign. Condé was ready for it, but Antony thought the enterprise too rash. They then asked the King of Navarre to leave his brother with them in command, but Condé would not secure his own safety at his brother's risk. Blinded by a fatal infatuation, they pursued their ill-fated journey.

As they approached Orleans, a vague terror came over them. No one came out to meet them. They found the city crowded with military. Between two files of soldiers, drawn up as if to guard them as prisoners by the way, they reached the house in which the king was lodged. Its main entrance they found closed; they had to pass in by the wicket. As soon as they were in his presence, the King proceeded to accuse Condé of treasonable designs upon his person and crown. The dauntless Prince flung back the charge upon his accusers. "In that case," said the King, "we shall proceed according to the ordinary forms of justice." Rising to depart, he ordered the captain of the guard to arrest the Prince, and convey him instantly to prison. The iron-grated windows of the house to which he was conducted, the formidable guard placed over it, the triple row of cannon that faced each street by which it was approached, the order that none of his friends should be allowed to communicate with him, not even in the jailer's presence, all foretold to Condé his approaching doom. But nothing

could daunt his spirit. They sent a priest to celebrate mass in his room. He dismissed him contemptuously. It was hinted to him that he should make some concession to the Guises. "My only way of settling with them," was the reply, "shall be at the point of the lance." His trial, irregularly conducted, was hurried through, and he was condemned to die, the 10th December being named as the day of his execution.

Poor Antony had entered Orleans, idly talking of bearding these lions, the Guises, in their den. His brother's arrest shook all vain confidence out of him; he sank into despair. The meanest and most humiliating approaches were made by him to the Lorraines, which they haughtily repulsed. He, too, was to be removed, but in a different way. A plan for his assassination was concocted; it was to be managed, so that the King should be personally implicated. The young King was to send for him, provoke a quarrel, draw and strike at him with his own dagger, and then, fitter and stronger hands were to complete the deed. Navarre got notice of the plot. Sent for by the King he declined to go. The message was repeated. Navarre's blood rose, for he was brave, though weak. Accompanied by Renty, an officer who enjoyed his confidence, he proceeded to the royal residence. As he mounted the steps, he was entreated to turn back. "Mount not, sire," said a friendly voice; "you go to perish." "I go," said he, turning to Renty, "into a place where I know they have sworn my death, but never was life sold so dearly as mine shall be." With these bold words upon his lips, he passed into the royal presence. There was something

in his bearing that quelled the King. Francis' courage failed him ; no quarrel was raised, nor stroke of dagger attempted. The Duke of Guise, on seeing Navarre come out unhurt, was heard to say contemptuously, "The weak, cowardly child ; his prey has escaped him." Some other mode of securing that prey was to be tried.

The scaffold for Condé's execution had been erected ; the most expert executioners had been sent for, and were already in Orleans, when, on the morning of the 17th November, the young King was seized with a sudden illness. An abscess formed in the brain discharged itself through the ear. Symptoms of mortification exhibited themselves. The Guises were in despair. The choleric Duke vented his abuse upon the physicians who could not cure the king. The Cardinal set the whole machinery of the Church in motion. Preachers in all the churches besought their hearers to pray for the prolongation of the King's life. The streets and squares were crowded with processions of the faithful. But the fatal malady pursued its course. Ambrose Pare, the celebrated physician, declared the case to be hopeless. In their extremity, the Guises offered their support to the Queen-mother, if she would consent to the immediate execution of the Bourbons. She was of too quick intelligence not to see, that in event of the young King's death, the destruction of the House of Bourbon would leave the Lorraines masters of the Crown. She closed her ear to the proposal, and calmly awaited the event that was to put so much power into her own hands.

Meanwhile, the poor young Prince was passing through his dying agonies. At first he had some hope, and then

he made the vows that he had been taught to believe would be most acceptable to Heaven. He vowed, that if life were given him, he would extirpate every heretic out of his land. "May I die next moment," cried he, "if I spare mothers, infants, wives; any who have even the taint of the suspicion of heresy upon them." Alas! all vows and prayers were vain. The sickly youth must die. His last hour, he himself felt, had come; and we are pleased to hear from those dying lips the words,—among the last he spake, "O Lord, pardon me my faults, and impute not to me those that my ministers have committed under my authority." The light of truth breaks in through the shades of death, and gentle nature triumphs over fanatical belief!

III.

BREAKING OUT OF THE RELIGIOUS WARS—DEATH
OF THE DUKE OF GUISE.

REIGN OF CHARLES IX., 1560-1563.

THE death of Francis II. terminated for a time the domination of the Guises. Relieved so suddenly from so heavy a pressure, France sprang to her feet and for a moment fancied she was free. The States-General met at Orleans on the 13th December 1560, only eight days after the young monarch's death. They sat daily for upwards of six weeks. Two of the Estates, the Nobility and the Tiers-Etat, met some months afterwards at Pontoise to complete the work so auspiciously begun at Orleans.

One of the first matters for consideration was the settlement of the Government. Charles IX. was only ten years old at his brother's death. The Estates conceived that it lay with them to nominate the Regent. Instead of waiting, however, even to consult with them, they found at their first sitting that the Regency had been filled up, and all the great officers of State appointed. They might have been less disposed to quarrel with this arrangement had the old custom of the State been followed, by the Regency being put into the hands of the nearest Prince of the blood. But Antony of

Navarre had been set aside, and the Queen-mother installed in the place that should have been his. It had been done, however, with Navarre's own consent and concurrence. It was more difficult to satisfy that party which had attached itself to the House of Bourbon, as furnishing it with its best heads and protectors. Coligni and D'Andelot were wisely chosen to conduct the negotiations between the Huguenots and the Court, and so thoroughly did Catherine convince them of her friendliness to their cause, that, mainly by their means, the controversy upon this point was closed by the Regency of the Queen-mother being ratified. One regrets to see that the Protestant ministers assembled in synod at Poitiers mixed themselves up with this affair, by drawing up a memorial demanding the exclusion of women from the government. It was stepping beyond their province, and that in the way most fitted to prejudice Catherine against them.

The state of the public finances came next under the notice of the Deputies. Matters here were in a quite ruinous condition. Not only had the surplus which Francis I. left in the public treasury been exhausted, but a debt had been accumulating during the reigns of his two successors which amounted now to forty-three millions of livres. What was worse, the excess of the annual expenditure over the annual income had been increasing till the one was now nearly the double of the other. To meet this deficit, the Nobles proposed that a new tax should be levied, two-thirds of which should be imposed upon the property of the Church, and one-third upon that of the general community. The Third Estate

went further. It broadly laid down the position that the possessions of the Church, having no other origin than the liberality of kings and ancient barons, were in the hands of ecclesiastics only as administrators ; that the right to dispose of them lay with the State. It proposed that, reserving to the Church its right to the ecclesiastical edifices, the entire remainder of its estates should be disposed of by public auction : one-third of the produce to be invested so as to furnish incomes to the clergy, one-third devoted to the liquidation of the public debt, and one-third to the general purposes of the State. It is curious to find a measure so sweeping and revolutionary in its character proposed at so early a period in France. Still more curious to remember that more than a century and a half before this time, in 1408, the Commons of England presented a petition to the King embodying a proposal identical in principle with that mooted by the Tiers-Etat of France.¹ Alarmed at this threatened invasion of their property, the clergy of France voluntarily undertook the payment of nearly a half of the public debt, obtaining in return a secret pledge from the Queen-Regent that the Catholic religion should be exclusively maintained.

With respect to the Church and the state of religion generally, the Deputies of the two Estates demanded that all pluralities in the Church should be abolished ; that ecclesiastical benefices should be conferred only by election ; that free schools should be opened all over France, in which the children should be instructed in the truths of the Christian religion ; that a national

¹ See p. 95.

council should be held, in which all the existing controversies should be decided according to the Word of God ; that in this council the reformed ministers should be invited to take part ; that, meanwhile, churches should be allowed to the Reformed ; and that all punishments on account of religious offences should cease. The States declared their belief that perseverance, even for one year, in such persecuting measures as had been pursued, would light a flame which no power under heaven could extinguish. Such were the proposals and demands of the first meeting of the Estates that had assembled in France since the leaven of the Reformation had begun to work. In the political and religious reforms which they suggest, they carry with them convincing proof of the extent to which this leaven had at this time permeated the middle and upper classes of society.

The assembly of the clergy, in which the differences between the Reformed and the Roman Catholic faiths were to be discussed, was summoned to meet at Poissy in September. Instead of calling it a council—a term obnoxious to Rome—the milder epithet of a Colloquy was bestowed on it. Called by whatever name, a conference upon equal terms between Huguenot ministers and the clergy of the Church was a scandal to all ultra Catholics. The Pope was alarmed and exasperated when he heard of it, nor were his fears apparently without foundation. A curious letter is preserved, written to him by Catherine de Medicis, in which she defends the calling of this assembly. “The numbers,” she says, “of those who have separated from the Church of Rome are so great, the party has become so power-

ful through the multitudes of the nobility and magistracy that have adopted it, that it is formidable in all parts of the kingdom. But there are found among them neither libertines, anabaptists, nor holders of any opinions that are regarded as monstrous. All admit the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed as they have been explained in the seven Œcumenical Councils. On this account, many zealous Catholics are of opinion, that they ought not to be cut off from the communion of the Church, which might prove a first step towards the reunion of the Greek and Latin Churches. Should your Highness not approve of the suggestion, they are of opinion, so urgent is the evil, that recourse must be had to extraordinary measures, in order to recall those who have separated, and to retain those who still adhere to the Church. To accomplish the first of these objects, they believe no better method will be found than frequent conferences between the Doctors on either side, and for the second, that all scandals should be removed." As instances of the scandals to be removed, Catherine goes on to specify, the worship of images, communion only in one kind, the use of the Latin tongue in public worship, and the practice of private masses. The Pope, as he read this letter, must have felt as if France was on the eve of following the example of England. He immediately despatched the Cardinal of Ferrara to be present at the Colloquy, and Lainez, the general of the Jesuits, set out on the same errand. Catherine had written to Calvin inviting his presence. He did not come, but sent in his stead Theodore Beza, who being an accomplished gentleman as well as a divine, was

peculiarly fitted for the task assigned him. Beza was accompanied by Peter Martyr, a name familiar to us in the history of the Reformation in England.

The sittings of the Colloquy were opened on the 8th September in the refectory of one of the largest convents at Poissy. The young King, the Queen-mother, the members of the Court, all the great officers of state, six Cardinals, thirty-six Bishops and Archbishops, a whole host of inferior clergy and distinguished doctors of the Church, filled the Hall. The King opened the diet by announcing the object of the assembly. The Chancellor followed in a long address ; then, at a given signal, the doors were thrown open, and clad in their simple Geneva vestments, the twelve Calvinistic ministers, escorted by two-and-twenty deputies from the churches, were seen to enter. They approached a balustrade that had been drawn across the hall to prevent their further ingress. Beza, addressing the King, entreated him not to be offended if in a matter of such great moment he had recourse to the Father of spirits for light and guidance. He and his colleagues then fell upon their knees, and amid the breathless silence of the large assembly, Beza offered up a prayer still preserved in the liturgy of the French churches. Rising from his knees he entered upon a lengthened statement and defence of the doctrines of the Reformation. He was listened to with the utmost attention till he happened to let fall the words that he believed that in the Supper the real body and blood of Christ were as far from the bread and wine as the heavens were from the earth. A tumult of indignation was excited ; some rose to depart, others exclaimed

that he had blasphemed. The old Cardinal of Tournon entreated either that the speaker should be stopped, or that he and others should be permitted to retire. Order was at last restored. Beza resumed his address, which he closed by presenting to the King, on bended knee, the Confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches.

Beza's eloquent oration occupied the whole forenoon. The Cardinal of Lorraine undertook to reply to it. He demanded, however, some days for preparation. It was not till the 16th of the month that the sittings were resumed. The Cardinal's address came up to the highest expectation of his friends. Instead of going over the whole ground occupied by Beza, he confined himself to two points—the authority of the Church, and the real presence in the Communion. Opposing the unity of the one Holy Catholic Church to all the diversities of Protestantism, he drew a grand historic picture of that Church, surviving all the changes of the past, and destined to resist all the shocks of the future, ending by an appeal to the young monarch to attach himself more and more firmly to the ancient faith of his fathers. The assembly was electrified. The Bishops all rose from their seats, pronounced the reply unanswerable, demanded that the Reformed ministers should confess themselves conquered, and should either at once acknowledge the two articles the Cardinal had substantiated, or be driven from the presence of royalty. In the midst of the confusion Beza rose and requested to be heard immediately in reply. The Council, more reasonable than the Bishops, acknowledged the fairness of the request, but adjourned the hearing of the reply to a future diet.

Meanwhile, the Cardinal of Ferrara and Lainez had arrived. Unable at once to stop the Colloquy, they persuaded the Regent that already by far too much publicity had been given to such discussions, and that if continued it would be much better to have a small number on both sides chosen, and to conduct the discussion in a smaller apartment of the convent. This suggestion was acted on, but the discussion in the Prior's chamber had no better issue than those in the refectory.

The Cardinal now tried a ruse, upon the success of which he confidently counted. Having selected those articles of the Confession of Augsburg to which he thought it most likely that the Calvinists would object, he presented it to Beza and his colleagues, and asked if they were ready to sign them as a basis of peace and reconciliation. Beza answered that these articles would be useless as such a basis, unless it were known in the first instance whether the Bishops agreed to them, and intimated that whenever their signature was attached to them, he and his friends would be prepared to take them into consideration. The wily Cardinal for once was foiled.

As a last effort, the Queen-mother required a few theologians on both sides to draw up a formula of belief as to the Lord's Supper which both could sign. They succeeded in doing so. The formula was shown to the Cardinal of Lorraine, who approved of it. For a moment it was imagined that a common ground or form of belief, on this one point at least, had been discovered. No sooner, however, had the formula been shown to the Bishops and the doctors of the Sorbonne than it was at

once rejected. Another, drawn up according to the strictest tenets of Catholicism, was framed ; and the Regent was required to extort a signature to it from the Reformed ministers, or, in case of their refusal, to drive them from the kingdom. Catherine was convinced that the attempt to reconcile the two religions was vain, and the Colloquy of Poissy was closed.

The adherents of the old faith, constituting the vast majority of the nation, regarded with an evil eye the favour shown to the Huguenots by the Government. All trials for heresy had ceased, the prison doors had been opened to those confined on account of their religion, the banished were invited to return, and though all public assemblies for worship were still legally prohibited, the law was not rigorously carried out. Under cover of the virtual toleration thus extended to them, the Huguenots made many open, in some instances offensive exhibitions of their strength. They had not hesitated in a few cases to appropriate to their own use churches of the Catholics, cleansing them from all vestiges of idolatrous worship. Feeling the pulse of the nation beat strongly against the Government, the Guises saw that the opportunity for recovery of their power had come. By the help of that aged intriguer, the Duchess of Valentinois, they effected a reconciliation between the Constable and the Marshal St. André.

The Chancellor, L'Hôpital, under whose wise and temperate guidance Catherine had hitherto been acting, felt that it was necessary to take a decided step. He resolved that it should be one in advance ; nothing short, in fact, of the formal and legal recognition of the

Reformed faith in France. In January 1562, he called together Deputies from all the seven Parliaments of the kingdom, the Council of State, the Princes of the blood, and the chief nobility. In his opening address, L'Hôpital combated with the utmost strenuousness the advice of those who desired to see the King put himself at the head of one religious party in the State in order to crush the other. "It were a thing," he said, "unworthy not only of Christianity but of humanity. Whichever party gained, it would be a victory as sad for the conquerors as for the conquered. Deprecating all such remedies, let us seek one more analogous to the nature of the evil; an evil which being purely moral will never yield to mere physical applications. Waste not, then, your time in determining which of the two religions is the best. We are here not to establish a dogma of faith, but to regulate an affair of State. Ought the new religion to be tolerated according to the demand of the Nobles and Tiers-Etat assembled at Pontoise? Must one cease to be a good subject of the King when he ceases to worship God as the King does? Is it not possible to be a good enough subject without being a Catholic or even a Christian? Citizens of different religious persuasions, can they not live together in all good harmony as members of the same society? These, gentlemen, are the questions you are called upon to decide." New, strange words these; new even from L'Hôpital's lips. Two years before, in opening the States-General, he had spoken in quite other terms, laying it down then as a maxim that it was folly to expect that persons of different religions could ever live together in peace and amity. But those two years'

study of the state of France have opened the Chancellor's mind, and now he is the first public man in France to announce the true idea of toleration.

After twelve days' stormy debate he carried the measure—the Magna Charta of religious liberty in France—by which Protestantism was legally acknowledged and protected. This Edict, generally spoken of by historians as the Edict of January, suspended the execution of all pains and penalties on account of religion till the decision of a General Council, and granted liberty to the Huguenots to assemble for public worship, they binding themselves to teach no other doctrines than those contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments and in the Creed of the Council of Nice, and not to hold their Synods without permission from a magistrate. Moderate as it was in its concessions, this Edict was gratefully and joyfully accepted by the Huguenots. Their adversaries regarded it as so fatal a blow to the religious unity of the kingdom, so ruinous to the State, so dishonouring to God, that they resolved to disobey it, though at the cost of thereby generating a civil war.

Before plunging into the conflict, the Guises, knowing that it would be to the Protestant Princes of Germany that, in the event of hostilities breaking out, the Huguenots would apply for aid, invited Christopher, Duke of Würtemberg, whose position and character placed him among the first of these princes, to an interview at Saverne. The Duke, accompanied by his chief theologians, reached that city on the 13th February 1562, and found the Duke of Guise and his brother, the Cardinal,

awaiting his arrival. Next morning the Cardinal preached a sermon, in which neither the Lutheran Duke nor any of his divines could find anything objectionable. That evening Francis of Guise had a private interview with the Duke of Würtemberg. "I am but a man of arms," said Francis, "and know little about these matters. I have been brought up in the faith of my fathers, but if any one will convince me I am in error, I will readily acknowledge it. Those ministers at Poissy called us Catholics idolaters. What is idolatry?" "It is idolatry," said the Duke of Würtemberg, "when one adores any other God than the true one; when one seeks any other mediator than Jesus Christ; and when one puts his confidence for salvation in saints, the Virgin Mary, or his own merits." "I adore God only," said Guise; "I confide only in Jesus Christ. I know well that neither the saints nor the Virgin can aid me; that it is Christ alone and not my works must save me." Delighted at meeting one so open, so frank, already so far advanced, the Duke of Würtemberg discoursed at large to his attentive auditor. Apparently convinced by his arguments and eloquence, the Duke of Guise ended by saying, "Well, these things are quite new to me; but, if it be as you say, then I am a Lutheran, but you must speak to my brother about all this."

Next morning at seven o'clock Francis entered the apartment of Christopher. "My mind," said he, "has been so full of the subject of our conversation that I have slept none last night. I have told something of it to my brother the Cardinal, who would like much to have a conversation with Brentius in your presence."

The German Prince most readily assented. At eight o'clock the Cardinal preached a second sermon, more decidedly Lutheran than the first. A conference was held afterwards. Brentius, at the Cardinal's desire, stated the leading points of controversy between the two communions, the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic, dwelling particularly upon the mass. "No doubt," said the Cardinal, "Catholicism has gone too far in its exegesis of the Supper." They spoke then of the means of reconciling the two communions. "If the ministers at Poissy," said the Cardinal, "had accepted the Confession of Augsburg, I should have got the Prelates to range themselves on the same side." "Had Beza, then, and his friends," said the Duke of Würtemberg, "signed that Confession, would you have signed it?" "Certainly," said Charles of Lorraine, "I take God to witness that I think and believe as I now say, and that by the grace of God I shall live and die in these sentiments. I have read the Confession of Augsburg. I have read also those of Melanchthon and Brentius, and others. I entirely approve of their doctrines; I agree with them in all that relates to ecclesiastical discipline; but it is necessary that for a time I conceal these sentiments to gain those who are weaker in the faith." Brentius entreated him to labour for the advancement of the gospel and the attainment of religious concord in France. "I promise to do it," said the Cardinal; "but it is difficult to do anything with those wrong-headed Calvinists," upon whose wrong-headedness he continued to descant. The strange conference broke up, the Guises having succeeded in injecting into the minds of the Germans

an unmerited confidence in themselves, and a suspicion and dislike of the Huguenots.

Quitting Saverne, the Princes of Lorraine retired to Joinville, the residence of their mother Antoinette de Bourbon. Hearing strange rumours as to the progress of the Triumvirate, the Queen-mother despatched an order to the Duke that he should remain at Joinville. He got other instructions, however, from his friends in Paris, which he resolved rather to obey. Everything was now ripe for open resistance to the Edict of January, and his presence was required to assist in carrying the preconcerted measures into execution. By the way, an event occurred which precipitated those measures, and plunged France at once into all the horrors of a wide-spread civil and religious war.

Three leagues from Joinville, on the way to Paris, lay the little town of Vassy. During the last few months a Huguenot congregation had sprung up in it, to which a large body of its inhabitants had attached themselves. His mother had complained bitterly to the Duke of Guise of a nuisance like this showing itself under the shadow of her château, and of the fruitlessness of all her attempts to suppress it. Early on Sunday morning the 1st day of March 1562, attended by a numerous and well-armed suite, the Duke was approaching Vassy on his way through it to Paris. Hearing the sound of bells, he asked what they were ringing for. It was for the service of the Huguenots, he was told. It threw him into a towering passion. Biting his lips and twisting his beard, as his custom was when in such a state, with his usual oath he exclaimed, "We

will huguenot them presently in a different fashion ; march, gentlemen, we must see them while they meet." Entering the town he dismounted before the convent, which stood about 200 paces from the building, a large barn, in which the Huguenots were assembled.

After a short interview with some of the town authorities, he placed himself at the head of his followers and proceeded to the building, in which 1200 persons were engaged in worship. The Duke's company got wild with excitement by the way. The prayers were over, and the minister, Morel, had begun his discourse, when the hootings and shoutings of the approaching band were heard. Presently two shots were heard, fired by some of the Duke's people at the upper windows. Those within who were nearest the entrance-door rushed forward to close it. They were too late. Sword in hand the Duke's men broke in, stabbing and shooting right and left. Some stones were thrown ; one struck the Duke. The fury of the assailants then knew no bounds. Unable to get out at the door, the Huguenots tore up part of the roof of the building, and some of them tried to escape along the tops of the neighbouring houses. They were discovered and made shot-marks of, a servant of the Duke's boasting afterwards that with his own arquebuse he had brought down half-a-dozen of those pigeons. The Duke with drawn sword was himself within the building urging on the carnage. Sixty were killed upon the spot, more than two hundred severely wounded.

The minister kept his place and continued his discourse till a shot struck the pulpit. Throwing off his gown, he tried like others to escape. In doing so he fell

over a dead body, and when down got a sabre-cut across the shoulders. He rose, but he had scarcely done so when several sabre-strokes fell upon his head. Again he fell, but some one recognised him and carried him to the Duke. "Are you the minister?" said the Duke; "what makes you seduce these people?" "I am no seducer," answered Morel, "but a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." "Does the Gospel then," said the Duke, "preach sedition? You are the true cause of the death of all these people, and you shall be hanged this moment." He turned and gave an order to this effect to the Provost, but there was no one at hand to execute it.

The sackers of the chapel now brought the Bible that they had found in the deserted pulpit. Taking it into his hands the Duke went out, and calling to the Cardinal, who all the while had been lounging upon the walls of an adjoining cemetery, "There, brother," said he, "look at one of these cursed Huguenot books." The Cardinal, with the volume in his hands, cast a glance at its title-page, and said, "There's no great harm in it; it is the Bible, the Holy Scriptures." "How!" said the Duke, "the Holy Scriptures. It is fifteen hundred years since Jesus Christ suffered death and passion, and it is but a year since that book was made. Do you call that the Gospel? it's good for nothing." As he turned away in his blind passion, the Cardinal was heard quietly saying, "My brother is in the wrong." Walking up and down before the now blood-stained and desolated chapel, the Duke called for the Judge of the district, and demanded of him why he had tolerated this conventicle. The Edict

of January was pleaded by the Judge in his defence. "Detestable edict!" said the Duke, grasping his sword; "this shall cut it asunder."

Prior to the Revolution of 1789 there was a convent of Irish Capuchins at Vassy. At its suppression, Father Macnulty, known under the name of Père Casimir, left an old coffer of the convent in charge of a merchant of Vassy named Delauney. The coffer was carefully preserved, and never opened till 1835, when its contents were inspected in the presence of a Justice of Peace. Among other papers which it contained was found a manuscript account of the Massacre of Vassy. M. Horace Gourjon published this account in 1844. It is almost verbatim the same with that given in the Martyrology of Crespin, that compilation whose accuracy every late historical investigation is serving to confirm.

The massacre of Vassy, committed in open day, in flagrant violation of the law that secured to them the free exercise of their religion, filled the hearts of the Huguenots with grief and indignation. The news of it spread speedily over the country. Rude engravings, horribly accurate in their details, were scattered over France, and copied and circulated in Germany. The whole Protestant world was filled with horror at the deed. The Duke of Guise, aware that the decisive step had at last been taken, hastened on to Paris. The tidings of the affair at Vassy had preceded him. His entry into the city was a triumphal ovation. On his right hand rode the Marshal St. André, on his left the Constable; more than 1200 noblemen and gentlemen followed in his train. The mayor of the city met him

at the gate of St. Denis, and presented him with a congratulatory address. The assembled multitudes rent the skies with their acclamations, hailing him as the champion of the faith.

Catherine de Medicis had heard at Monceaux, where the Court then was, of what happened at Vassy, and of the Duke's approach to Paris. She wrote commanding him to lay down his arms, and to repair to Monceaux attended by twelve gentlemen. The order was disobeyed. The Duke preferred to receive the ovation that he knew awaited him at Paris. And now there came to Monceaux, couriers from Condé and deputies from the Reformed Churches, entreating the interference of the Government. It was a critical moment in the history of the Queen-mother. She inquired eagerly as to the strength of the Huguenots. The Deputies showed her a list of 2150 churches, and assured her that they could bring into the field an army of 50,000 men. Still undecided, unwilling to throw herself into the hands of the Triumvirate by going to Paris, but as unwilling to throw herself into the hands of the Huguenots by going to Orleans, their stronghold at this time, she retired first to Melun, and afterwards to Fontainebleau. The arrogance of the Guises seems at last to have determined her. From Fontainebleau she wrote in the most urgent terms to Condé, entreating him to come and take her and the young King under his protection.

Condé, forced to retire from Paris, was now at Meaux. Whether from distrust of the Queen-mother, or from thinking that the force he had was too feeble, he hesitated to take the step. The hesitation was fatal to the

Huguenots ; it lost them the opportunity of carrying the authority of the young King over to their side. Prompter and less scrupulous, the Triumvirs proceeded at once with a sufficient force to Fontainebleau, and informed the Queen-Regent that they came to conduct her and their young monarch to Paris. For the moment, Catherine resisted, and resented this attempt to coerce her movements. "She would not move," she said, "till moved by force." "She may remain here or quit the kingdom as she likes," was the haughty answer of the Duke of Guise ; "the thing is indifferent to us ; the King must go with us, whether she will or no." To part from her son was political death to Catherine. She gave way, and was conducted in triumph to Paris.

For months past, Coligni had been living quietly at his country seat at Chatillon. A faithful picture of his daily life there has been handed down to us. It shows a household fashioned after the strictest Puritan model : the early hours, the fixed methodical routine, the frequent prayers, the fervent psalmody, the preachings almost every day. But there was no tinge either of asceticism or fanaticism in the piety of Coligni. He was an unselfish patriot, and a far-seeing politician as well as a devoted religionist. Scarce a forenoon passed at Chatillon in which some deputy from one or other of the Reformed churches was not received, coming to him for advice, and getting evidence, in the counsel that he gave, of his gentleness and moderation as well as his sagacity. But now the quiet of that country life is broken. He hears of the massacre at Vassy. Couriers from the impetuous Condé come to the château, telling him of the occupation

of Paris by the Triumvirate, of the resolution openly avowed to trample under foot the Edict of January. Fresh messengers arrive to tell him that all Protestant France is up in arms, ready to take the field, and summoning him to join the Prince of Condé and share in the command. His wife and brothers press him to depart. He hesitates. Calvin's repugnance to the use of arms is also in a large measure his. No eye in France sees half so far as his into the miseries and crimes into which a religious war must plunge his country. Would they but let that Edict stand; would they but let the true faith live and breathe, though it were within narrow limits, and in a hampered straitened way, he would be content. Strifes of rival houses struggling for political power, what were they to him? Besides, if war were entered on, to fail, were to doom Protestantism to extinction; and was there anything like a fair promise of success? Coligni could not see his way as yet to draw the sword.

But now came tidings, day by day, of the atrocities of Vassy repeated here and there all over France; of the Catholics rising upon the Calvinists at Chalons, Sens, Auxerre, and Tours; of 3000 men, women, and children murdered. Coligni's heart was rent by the recital. One night, with sobs and tears, his wife, the truly noble Charlotte de Laval, besought him to depart. "Are you prepared," he said to her, "to receive the intelligence of defeat, to see your husband branded as a rebel, and dragged to a scaffold; your children disgraced and ruined, begging their bread at the hands of their enemies? I will give you three weeks to reflect." "The three weeks are already past," was her chivalrous reply.

“Go, in God’s name, and he will not suffer you to be vanquished.” Next day Coligni was on his way to join Condé at Meaux.

If slower than others to draw it, Coligni was for decisive measures when once the sword was drawn. His advice was to march instantly on Paris, and meet the enemy in the open field. The Huguenot troops might be inferior in number, but Coligni’s own companies were men upon whom he could fully count. He had inspired his own spirit into them. They were under the strictest discipline; no license of any kind was given. A Calvinist minister was placed over each regiment. They were drilled daily, not only in martial movements, but to know and feel that they were soldiers of the Cross, called to do battle for the true faith. Had the Admiral been at the head of the movement, with none but his Huguenot soldiers under him, there might have been seen in France, a hundred years before Cromwell’s time, a little army of Ironsides, that had proved invincible in the field. But the Barons brought other kinds of men, and other kinds of ideas into the field. The Prince, to whom the chief command belonged, shrunk from following the Admiral’s advice. The Queen-mother, whose boast was, that her tongue and pen were more powerful than the swords of the greatest captains, got him entangled in negotiations. The summer months of 1562 were wasted thus.

But while the chiefs on either side—the one assembled at Orleans, the other at Paris—hesitated, the country took the matter into its own hands. The note of open war was no sooner sounded, than in the south-western

provinces, in which the Huguenots prevailed, they rose against the Catholics ; in the north-western, in which the Catholics prevailed, they rose against the Huguenots. For weeks and months, the blindest, wildest, bloodiest, fanaticism ran riot over France. Where the Huguenots had power, the Catholic worship was abolished. The Catholic priests were driven away or killed ; the Catholic Churches were sacked, their altars overturned, their images broken, their relics scattered and defiled, their baptismal fonts turned to the vilest uses. The shrines of saints, the tombs of kings, whatever monument was venerable by age or otherwise, was marked for ruin. The ashes of Irenæus were flung into the Rhone, those of St. Martin of Tours into the Loire, the sepulchres of Louis XI. at Cleri, of Richard Cœur de Lion at Rouen, of William the Conqueror at Caen, were rifled and desecrated. The Catholics had no churches of their opponents to pillage, no images of theirs to break. Their wrath directed itself not against dead monuments, but against living men. In that region, spurred on by the priests, and encouraged by a terrible Edict of the Parliament of Paris, which doomed every Huguenot to death, and called upon the faithful everywhere to arise, and without form of law, to execute that doom, it was a frightful havoc that they wrought. We read of a stream of Huguenot blood running in one place nearly a foot deep. We would shut our eyes upon such horrors, were it not that it is so useful, by thorough inspection of them, to be taught into what fearful excesses religious wars have run.

Blaise de Montluc was commissioned by the Govern-

ment to reduce the Huguenot district of Guienne. Let us listen to Montluc himself, as in his commentaries, written many years after and in cold blood, he describes to us the beginning of his operations. "I privately," he says, "got two hangmen (whom they have since called my lacquais, because they were often at my heels), determining to execute all the cruelty I could, for I saw very well that gentle means would never reclaim those cankered and inveterate rascals. So soon as I came to St. Mezard, Monsieur de Fontenelles presented three prisoners, all bound in the churchyard, in which there was yet remaining the foot of a stone cross that they had broken. I had my two hangmen behind me, well equipped with their tackle, and especially with a very sharp axe, when, flying in great fury upon one of the three, I took him by the collar, saying, 'O thou confounded rogue, dost thou defile thy wicked tongue against the majesty of thy King and Sovereign?' To which he replied, 'Ah, Sir, have mercy upon a poor sinner!' At which, more enraged than before, I said to him, 'Thou ungracious rascal, wouldst thou have me to have mercy upon thee, who hadst no reverence nor respect for thy King?' and with that, I pushed him rudely to the ground, so that his neck fell exactly upon the piece of the cross, crying to the hangman, 'Strike villain,' which he did, and so nimbly, that my word and the blow were the one as soon as the other, which fetched off his head, and, moreover, above another half-foot of the cross. The other two I caused to be hanged upon an elm that was close by. This was the first execution I did at my arriving from my own house."

The thousands that followed were done by Montluc in the same style, so that, as he seems pleased to tell us, "one might mark the road I took by the trees on which my ensigns hung."

Montluc's terrible doings in Guienne were rivalled by a Huguenot captain, the Baron des Adrets in Dauphiny. So swift in motion, so fiery in assault, was Des Adrets, and his name at last carried with it such a spell of terror, that the best fortified cities flung open at once their gates at his approach. But few escaped who fell into his hands. The garrison of the lofty stronghold of Maugiron were all put to the sword, with the exception of a few whom he reserved for after dinner, to enjoy the savage glee of making them, one after another, leap down from the highest tower. One of them alone escaped. Three times he had taken the preparatory run, but each time had halted at the brink. Des Adrets reproached him with his cowardice in having three times failed. "Baron," said the man, turning quickly round to him, "brave as you are, I will give you ten trials to do it in." The Baron spared him for his reply. Equal in cruelty, on opposite sides, as Montluc and Des Adrets were, there was this difference between them. The one gloried afterward in the blood he shed; the other endeavoured to excuse it. The one received for his services a letter of thanks from the Pope, the acknowledgment of his own government, and the rank of Marshal in the French army; the other was openly censured by Condé and Coligni, took offence at the manner in which he was treated by the Protestants, and finally forsook their ranks.

The leaders on both sides, at Orleans and at Paris, fearing to act upon the offensive with so small a body of native troops as they had been able to muster, had, during the summer months, been seeking foreign aid,—the Huguenots at first unwillingly, the Admiral strenuously opposing it. When it was known, however, that Spanish and Swiss troops had been engaged to act against them, Coligni withdrew his opposition. On the 20th September, a treaty was signed at Hampton Court, by which the English Government agreed to furnish 140,000 crowns and 6000 men, on condition, however, that the town of Havre should be put into their hands,—a condition, the granting of which did no small injury to the Huguenot cause in France. D'Andelot was despatched to Germany, where, after overcoming many difficulties, he gathered round him some thousands of those *Reiters*, heavy cavalry, armed with pistols, whose attacks, in close, deep columns, had proved so formidable in so many fields. Instantly on their arrival, Condé took the field and marched on Paris. The wily Catherine once more entangled him in her snares, and kept him inactive till such a large body of Spaniards and Swiss had entered the city, as to cut off all hope of successfully assaulting it. Condé retired into Normandy. The army of the Triumvirs hastened after him to cut off his retreat.

On the 18th December, near the village of Dreux, on the plain that stretches between the Blaise and the Eure, two tributaries of the Seine, the two armies found themselves in front of one another, and the first great battle of those wars was fought. The Catholic army was composed of 16,000 infantry and 3000 cavalry, in all 19,000

men; the Huguenot army of 5000 infantry and 8000 cavalry, in all 13,000 men. The great numerical inferiority of the Protestants was in part made up for by the ground being so favourable for the movements of that branch, the cavalry, in which they were the strongest. Condé, with Coligni and D'Andelot under him, led the one army; the old Constable, with the Duke of Guise and the Marshal St. André under him, led the other. For two whole hours the armies stood gazing at each other in perfect stillness, many in each thinking of the friends and relations that were in the opposing ranks. But when the close-handed fight began, which lasted for full seven hours, it was carried on with extreme ferocity. At first all seemed to go in favour of the Huguenots. Condé, with his natural impetuosity, flung himself with his gallant French lances on the Swiss, who sustained the shock with a steadiness worthy the reputation gained upon so many fields. At last, however, their ranks were broken, and they were forced into retreat. The Admiral, leading 1200 German *Reiters*, was no less successful against the division of the French army, led by the Constable in person. That gallant old general, his horse shot under him, his jaw broken by a pistol-bullet, his throat choked with blood—unable any longer to let his word of command be heard—was forced to yield himself prisoner. The confusion of the Catholic army became general, apparently irretrievable. The Huguenots looked on the day as already theirs. Scattered over the field, they had already begun the work of pillage.

The eyes, however, of the two best captains in the

field were still studying the bloody fray. The Admiral felt insecure. He had noticed a dense company of the enemy, which had remained motionless on the left. While the shout of victory was ringing in his own ranks, he fixed an uneasy look upon that company, and said,—“We deceive ourselves. We shall soon see that great cloud discharge itself upon us.” He was not mistaken. The Duke of Guise, with a chosen troop of 600 men-at-arms, had stationed himself at the beginning of the action on a rising ground somewhat in the rear. He watched there the progress of the fight. The retreat of the Swiss, the confusion and flight of a large body of the Catholic army, did not seem to move him. The Constable's son, Damville, galloped up to him, and entreated him to fly to his father's rescue. “Not yet, my son ; not yet,” was the Duke's reply. All he did was to command his ranks to open. He rode out to the front, rose upon his stirrups, and looked round upon the field. At last the time for action came. Turning to his men, and putting spurs to his horse, he cried, “Come on, my friends, the day is ours.” Dashing forward, he took up by the way the yet unbroken division of St. André, and threw himself upon the surprised, exhausted Huguenots. The charge was decisive. The Protestants were utterly routed. Condé was taken prisoner. Coligni and D'Andelot, after the most determined struggles to retrieve the fortunes of the day, were forced to retire. It was a proud day for the Duke of Guise: for the victory was wholly of his gaining. The Constable was in the hands of the enemy. The Marshal St. André had fallen in the fray. The undivided command of the royal army

was in his hands, nor was there any one to dispute his general influence over the Government. He closed a day that raised him to such a pinnacle of power, by an act of chivalrous courtesy to his distinguished prisoner. The Prince of Condé was received by him into his own tent. They slept that night in the same bed, Condé relating afterwards that he never closed his eyes, but that the Duke slept as soundly as if nothing had occurred.

The Duke was too good a general not to follow up his success at Dreux. Taking a few weeks to recruit his army, he led it, flushed with victory, forward to Orleans. That city was the stronghold of the Huguenots. Their ablest ministers, the wife and eldest son of Condé, the wives and families and moveable estates of many of their nobles and gentry, their important prisoner the Constable, were all shut up within its walls. Trusting mainly to the bridge and towers which guarded it—the Tourelles which had witnessed one of the greatest exploits of the Maid of Orleans—D'Andelot, who commanded the garrison, had engaged to keep Guise before the city till the Admiral returned from Normandy to raise the siege. An accidental and unexpected success put the southern suburb, that part of the city which lay on the south side of the Loire, into the Duke's hands. The bridge and towers were captured in a night attack. The other fortifications of the city were too weak and the garrison too feeble to resist an assault. The Duke looked upon the city as already his, and proceeded to lay before his officers his plan for terminating the war. Orleans taken, he was to call out the *Arrière-ban*—all the nobi-

lity of France from eighteen to sixty years of age, with their retainers—to gather all the regular forces scattered throughout the kingdom, pursue the Admiral into Normandy, cut his troops to pieces, drive the English into the sea, and so quench the Huguenot spirit in France,—a bright and not improbable perspective.

The first step, at least, seemed sure. The 19th February was fixed on as the day for the assault at Orleans. The Duke wrote to the Queen-mother that the city must inevitably be taken, and that he hoped she would not blame him if he slew every living thing within the walls, razed it to the ground, and sowed its foundations with salt. On the 18th, he visited the trenches, and saw that all was ready for next day's bloody work. In the dusk of the evening, he was returning to the château in which he slept. He had just passed two walnut trees which stood where two roads met, when the click of a trigger was heard immediately behind his back; a shot was fired; three balls entered his right shoulder and passed out through his breast. At first he bent to his horse's neck, then raising himself, he said, "They owed me this, but it will be nothing." He tried to grasp his sword, but his arm hung useless by his side; another impression came over him, he felt that the wound was mortal. They bore him to his chamber. All that the surgical skill of those days could do was done, but without effect. The skill of the regular practitioner failing, there was presented to the Duke's notice some early discoverer of the water-cure—one reputed to have done wonders in the cure of wounds, by use of linens and of water. The Duke refused to be treated in that way.

“He would have,” he said, “no other remedies than those proceeding from the Divine goodness; he would rather die than give himself to enchantments forbidden of God.”

His end approaching, he met his fate, that came upon him at the very time when all that ambition sought for seemed within his grasp, with the utmost fortitude and resignation. In the most urgent terms he asked that his death should not be avenged. Most tenderly he warned his son against ambition, bidding him beware how for worldly distinction he stained his soul with violence or crime. Some of his own excesses he admitted, but tried partially to excuse. The Massacre of Vassy he frequently alluded to, solemnly declaring that on his part it was unpremeditated. He advised the Queen-Regent, who had hastened to Orleans to see him, to make peace as speedily as possible. Long speeches and prayers have been preserved, not likely to have been spoken as they are given. But there is reason to believe that the last hours of the Duke of Guise were those of an affectionate, devout, and generous spirit; nor do we remember another to whom the familiar words of Shakspeare might more fitly be applied—

“Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it.”

IV.

MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

REIGN OF CHARLES IX., 1563-1572.

THE Duke of Guise died on the 24th February 1563, six days after he received his wound. So prompt was the Queen-Regent in carrying out the advice which he had given her, that on the 12th of the following month the basis of a peace was fixed upon in a conference between the Prince of Condé and the Constable. Before formally concluding it, Condé consulted his co-religionists. He had no difficulty with the Huguenot officers and gentlemen, who were willing that some sacrifice should be made for peace. It was otherwise with the ministers. The question whether it would be right or lawful to lay down arms on any terms less favourable than those of the Edict of January, was submitted to an assembly of seventy-two ministers assembled at Orleans. They declared energetically that peace purchased on less favourable terms would be treason against God, and they insisted that it should form one of the terms of the settlement that all atheists, libertines, anabaptists, and disciples of Servetus, should be burned alive.

Turning a deaf ear to such advisers, without waiting even to consult with Coligni, Condé signed a pacification

on the 18th March, known under the title of the Edict of Amboise. By this edict the exercise of the Reformed religion was prohibited in Paris, somewhat limited in the provinces, but it secured individual liberty. "Every one," said the Treaty, "shall be permitted to live at liberty in his own house, without search or molestation, and without being forced or constrained for conscience' sake."

The peace established thus lasted for four years. Not that the Huguenots enjoyed during these years anything like security or repose. The repeated abridgment even of those narrow liberties conferred by the Edict of Amboise, and the frequent outbreaks of popular hatred in which numbers of them perished, kept them in perpetual alarm. Still more alarming was the meeting at Bayonne in the summer of 1565. The Pope had long sought to bring about a personal interview between Catherine de Medicis and Philip of Spain, with a view to concert measures for the suppression of Protestantism. Taking advantage of a royal progress that Catherine was then making with her son the King through France, it was arranged that the two Courts should meet in the border town of Bayonne. Philip himself did not come, but sent as his representatives his Queen and the Duke of Alva. Amid the Court festivities which took place, it was known that there had been many secret meetings between Alva, Catherine, and Charles. The darkest suspicions as to their objects and results spread over France. It was generally believed—falsely, as from Alva's letters it now appears—that a simultaneous extermination of all heretics in the French and Spanish dominions had been agreed upon.

To anticipate this stroke, Coligni proposed that the person of the King should be seized upon. The Court, but slenderly guarded, was then at Monceaux. The project had almost succeeded. Some time, however, was lost. The Court got warning and fled to Meaux. Six thousand Swiss arrived, and by a rapid march carried the King to Paris. After such a failure, nothing was left to the Huguenots but the chances of a second civil war. Condé entered boldly on the campaign. Though he had with him but 1500 horse and 1200 infantry, he marched to Paris, and offered battle to the royal troops beneath its walls. The Constable, who had 18,000 men at his command, accepted the challenge, and on the 10th of November 1567, the Battle of St. Denis was fought. The Huguenots displayed unexampled bravery. "Ah!" said the Ambassador of the Sultan, who was looking on, "had my master but 6000 men like these, all Asia would be at his feet." Neither party could well claim the victory, as both retired from the field. The royal army had to mourn the loss that day of its aged and gallant commander the Constable. Condé renewed next day the challenge, which was not accepted.

The winter months were spent by the Huguenots in effecting a junction with some German auxiliaries, and in the spring they appeared in such force upon the field that, on the 23d March 1568, the Peace of Longjumeau was ratified, which re-established, free from all modifications and restrictions, the Edict of Amboise. It was evident from the first that this treaty was not intended to be kept; that it had been entered into by the Government solely to gain time, and to scatter the ranks of the

Huguenots. Coligni sought Condé at his château of Noyers in Burgundy. He had scarcely arrived when secret intelligence was given them of a plot upon their lives. They had barely time to fly, making many a singular escape by the way, and reaching Rochelle, which from this time became the head-quarters of the Huguenots, on the 15th September 1568.

On the 23d of the same month, a royal Edict was proclaimed, revoking all the liberties granted to the Huguenots, and prohibiting, under pain of death, the profession or practice of any other than the Roman Catholic religion throughout the realm. All reserve was thrown aside, and the third civil war commenced. The same barbarous scenes by which the first war had been characterized were re-enacted. On the bloody field of Jarnac, Condé lost his life, treacherously murdered after he had yielded himself prisoner of war. On the no less fatal field of Moncontour the Huguenots suffered a second and still more disastrous defeat. Still they persevered, wonderfully recruiting their strength, reappearing on the field, gaining their first advantage at Arnay-le-Duc, and finally extorting from the Court the Edict of Pacification, published at St. Germain-en-Laye on the 15th August 1570, by which more favourable terms than the Huguenots had yet obtained, were granted them.

We now enter upon one of the darkest chapters in French history; darkened by the terrible tragedy with which it closed; darkened also by the exceeding difficulty of tracing accurately the motives and objects of some of the chief actors in the drama. It has long and generally been believed, at least in Protestant countries, that the

peace of 1570, the favourable treatment given afterwards to the Huguenots, the treaties made or proposed with foreign powers, and the marriage of young Henry of Navarre with the daughter of the Queen-Regent, were but so many snares laid by the cunning hand of a most consummate hypocrisy, by which the Huguenots were conducted to Paris, to have their long premeditated doom inflicted on them in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The writings of Wachler, Sugenheim, Ranke, Michelet, and especially the analysis of the evidence by Soldan,¹ force upon us a modification of our old beliefs. Instead of entering, however, into a controversial discussion, let me endeavour to present you with a narrative of the events, as seen in the light which the latest research has thrown upon them.

The Peace of St. Germain, so favourable to the Protestants, we know now to have been concluded in spite of the strongest opposition both of the Pope and of the King of Spain. Pope Pius v. was a chief instigator and promoter of the third religious war in France. He had furnished both troops and funds for its prosecution. The spirit in which he desired to see it conducted appears from the instructions issued to his soldiers, that no quarter should be given to the enemy. After the battle of Jarnac, he wrote thus to the French King:—
“ If your Majesty continue to pursue openly and ardently the enemies of the Catholic religion, even to their extermination, be assured the Divine succour will not be wanting. It is only by the entire destruction of the heretics that you can restore its ancient worship to your

¹ See Preface.

noble realm." Hearing that negotiations for peace were opened, his Holiness wrote to Charles, warning him against all advisers of a peace as deceivers of his Majesty; as men who, under the false pretext of the general good, forgot at once their faith and their loyalty. When, notwithstanding his remonstrances, the peace was concluded, he complained of it as pernicious, infamous, abominable; reproaching Charles in such strong terms, that he was obliged at last to say that he was King in France, and would do there what he thought best.

Ever since the inglorious treaty of Cateau-Cambresis, Philip of Spain had insisted, without ceasing, that the course which he was taking in the Low Countries should be followed also by France. He had fomented every rising against the Huguenots; had opposed every concession made to them; had lent his aid in the last war expressly on the condition that no treaty should be made with them; did his utmost to prevent the peace; and, when he could do no more, Alva expressed his monarch's sentiments when he declared that it was a peace most dangerous to Christianity. How then was a peace, so offensive to Spain and the Holy See, brought about? Chiefly through the influence of a party inaugurated by L'Hôpital, which rose at this time into power, by obtaining a dominant influence over the mind of the young King.

At the head of this party were Montmorency, the eldest son of the old Constable, his brother Damville, and the Marshals Cosse and Biron, all zealous Roman Catholics, but men tired of civil war, impatient of Spanish bondage, who wished to see their country resume that position of power and independence which it had

held in the days of Francis I. "Montmorency," says Walsingham, the English ambassador at Paris, writing on the 29th August 1570, "who has had the chief part in bringing about the peace, insinuates himself more and more into power." A few days afterwards, Walsingham writes again—"Montmorency is at present all-powerful at the Court; the Government of Paris has been put into his hands." The young King, who had opened his ear to these wise advisers, came to regard himself as the author of the peace; took pride in calling it *his* treaty, *his* peace; watched strictly over its execution; and punished severely those who violated its provisions. He repeatedly declared that he had been mistaken in the Huguenots; that he now counted them good and loyal subjects; and he gave orders that the nomination to all public offices should be made without distinction as to religion. There was every external indication that he had adopted the moderate policy of L'Hôpital and Montmorency.

It was from the same party that brought about the peace, that the proposal emanated, of the marriage of Henry of Navarre with the King's sister, Margaret of Valois. The marriage, like the peace, met with open and violent opposition from the Pope, who in the first instance sent his relative the Cardinal Alessandrino to dissuade Charles from entertaining the proposal; and when that intervention failed, he refused the dispensation necessary for the completion of the marriage. It was as strenuously opposed by Philip, by the Guises, the Duke of Anjou, and the whole Spanish party in France, who looked upon it as a step towards the amicable ad-

justment of the religious strife which had rent the kingdom. There were difficulties with the Huguenots themselves. Jeanne D'Albret, Henry's mother, shrunk from the idea of such an alliance for her son : Coligni and the Huguenot chiefs were equally indisposed to it. They could not indeed be insensible to the great benefit to their cause that would arise from Henry's becoming the brother-in-law of the reigning monarch ; but they were naturally mistrustful of all propositions emanating from the Court. Montmorency, however, wrote to Coligni, informing him of the origin of the proposal ; Biron and Cosse visited him and the Queen of Navarre at Rochelle. Long conferences were held, such explanations made, and such assurances given, that at last all obstacles in that quarter were removed.

Another marriage was projected by the same parties at the same time—that of the Duke of Anjou with Queen Elizabeth of England. Anjou was enjoying at this time a borrowed but brilliant reputation in consequence of his victories during the late war. It was a tempting offer, that of sharing with Elizabeth the throne of England. At first, however, Anjou refused to entertain it. He shared with the young Duke of Guise the chieftainship of the Spanish or ultra-Catholic party, to which such alliance was peculiarly offensive. The leaders, however, of the *tiers parti* convinced Catherine that it would strengthen the position and enlarge the power of her family, and she got the Duke at last to give his consent. On the part of Elizabeth the overtures for the marriage were at first favourably entertained ; but the affair was at last broken off by Elizabeth refusing, even by a secret

article in the marriage-contract, to grant the free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion to her proposed husband and his domestics.

What mainly indicated, however, the entrance upon a new line of policy was the manner in which the proposal of a breach with Spain, by supporting the Netherlanders in their noble struggle, was entertained by the Court of France. Montmorency and his friends saw in such a course the salvation of their country from intestine discord, and its advance upon a new career of conquest and glory. Many they knew of their best affected Roman Catholic fellow-subjects felt bitterly the degradation of that subjection to Spanish influence under which France had so long been groaning. A war with Spain then would be popular. It offered besides to French ambition the easy acquisition of provinces that lay contiguous to its own territory. The fact of their inhabitants being Calvinists could create no difficulty, as Charles had only to extend to them the same toleration which he had already given to his own subjects of the same faith. The Netherlanders themselves had their eyes quite open to the advantage of coming under French rather than Spanish rule, and in despair of achieving unaided their independence, made tempting offers to Charles to espouse their cause.

The project was opened to Coligni, with a view to secure the co-operation of the Huguenots. He embraced it with the entire devotion of his heart. To assist in its execution became the ruling passion of his being. To William of Orange—the soldier, the patriot, the Christian—kindredship of spirit linked him. They were in fact the two first and greatest men of their age. To

Coligni nothing could be more attractive than to fight side by side with William and his gallant brother Louis, and to assist them to throw off the yoke of Spain and its terrible Inquisition. The more he thought of it, the more persuaded was the Admiral that it was the best course for France upon purely national grounds to take. When he heard therefore that the King welcomed the proposal, wished to consult with him, and thought of putting him at the head of the enterprise, Coligni hesitated no longer, but repaired to Court. The King gave him the most gracious reception, and restored him to all his honours.

Charles was a weak, impulsive, passionate, capricious youth, surrounded from boyhood by those who had pandered to his worst appetites, to which he had given unbounded indulgence; but he was not insensible to generous emotions, nor incapable of perceiving and estimating true worth. He saw through and he despised the men who were his mother's favourite advisers and friends. This simple, earnest, grave, truthful, unflattering man—the Admiral—gained day by day a growing ascendancy over him. Already well-disposed to the measure, he delighted to hear the brave old soldier and statesman descant upon the prosperity of France, her domestic wounds all healed, and taking a first place once more among the great military powers of Europe.

For a time all went favourably. An envoy was sent from France to cement a union with the Protestant Princes of Germany. Though marriage projects failed, there still might be effected a close political alliance between France and England, directed against their com-

mon enemy of Spain. So eagerly and successfully was this matter pressed, that a treaty offensive and defensive between these two powers was signed at Blois on the 29th April 1572. Montmorency, who had been its chief promoter, passed over to London to have it ratified, and had the most distinguished reception given him at the British Court. All seemed pointing to a speedy open rupture between France and Spain.

A counter-movement, however, had commenced. The Spanish party, at the head of which were Guise, Tavannes, Nevers, De Retz, Birague, wrought now upon the fears and now upon the pride of the Queen-mother. The life of this singular woman—Catherine de Medicis—whose character it is so difficult to decipher, had been one of extraordinary vicissitude. Of a nervously diseased constitution from her birth, she had been a prey from infancy to terrors of all kinds. Raised to share the throne of France, she had for twenty years to endure the infidelity of her husband, the dominion of a rival, and the perpetual threatening of divorce. The death of her husband, Henry, only brought with it to her a change of masters. During the brief reign of Francis II., the Guises, through their young niece, Mary Stuart, had exercised a sway scarce less despotic than that of Diana of Poitiers. With her son Charles's advent to the throne, she had risen to a larger, a dominant share in the management of public affairs. Fond of, and a perfect mistress of intrigue, she was keen of insight into all the motives by which men are moved; and passionless herself (if we except that one passion, the love of power), cunning and mean in her methods of playing upon the

passions of others. Superstitious, as the towers she built for her astrologers still tell, she had no strong faith in the truths of Christianity. Bound by hereditary attachment to the Papacy, she could yet sportingly say, when told by the first messenger from the field of Jarnac that the Protestants had gained the battle, "Well, then, we shall have to say our prayers in French." Contemplating, as she at the moment did, the ascendancy of the Protestant faith, seeking supremely the secure possession of the throne, and the aggrandizement in it of her family, she cared for little else than the self-indulgence of a gay and cultivated but unrestrained frivolity.

Disposed at first to follow the moderate course marked out by the counsels of her wise and tolerant Chancellor, De L'Hôpital, by degrees she had got estranged from the Huguenots. Heartily disliking from the first their strict morality, she had given up the hope, perhaps relinquished the desire of ruling by their help. The results of the first two religious wars had taught that they were not easily to be subdued by open force; but they had convinced her, at the same time, that the scheme was vain of bringing the two religions to dwell together in harmony. Regulating her movements by no fixed principles, nor by any broad political ideas, she had gone in for the moment with the measures that Montmorency and Coligni had proposed, their accomplishment offering such strong temptations to personal and family ambition.

But it was with a quick and jealous eye she watched the estrangement of Charles, for whom she had little of a mother's affection, from his brother Henry, the Duke

of Anjou, the only one of all her family that it was thought she loved. Still quicker, and still more jealous was the eye with which she watched the growing influence of the Admiral over the passionate but generous spirit of the King. Coligni, on his part, was not slow to perceive what soon openly revealed itself, that Catherine would be on the side of Spain, against the aiding of the Netherlands; and that if Charles was to be kept firm in his purpose, it could only be by emancipating him from that maternal thralldom in which he had hitherto been held. All depended upon which of the two should gain the supremacy over Charles. The simplicity, the earnestness, the noble candour, the unselfish patriotism of the Admiral for a time prevailed. Charles dared to assert and express his independence of his mother. One day that Catherine entered his closet, after a long conference he had had with the Admiral, in a piqued and taunting tone she asked him what it was that he was learning in all those endless conversations? "I have learned, madam," said the King, "that I have no greater enemy than my mother."

Her part now chosen, Catherine resolved to break a spell that she foresaw would be used against herself. The King had gone to his hunting-seat at Montpipeau, where she knew he would be alone. Thither she followed him. Shutting herself up with him in a cabinet, she burst into a flood of tears. "You hide yourself," she said, "from me, your mother, to take counsel with my enemies. You forsake the arms that have preserved you, to take refuge in those of an assassin. You would plunge your kingdom into a war with Spain, that would

make you and all of us a prey to the Huguenots. Rather than that I should witness such a catastrophe, give me my dismissal, send me back to the place of my birth."

All that Charles had been secretly planning with Coligni, every step that had been taken to bring on the war, she showed him that she knew, representing all as a device of the Huguenots, by which they hoped to climb to power. Every instrument that a strong-minded, strong-willed mother can exercise over a weak child that had long been subject to her, Catherine wields. Astonished, affrighted, overcome, Charles yields, confesses error, pitifully asks pardon, and promises obedience.

Released, however, from the pressure of these threats and tears, once more under the sway of Coligni's calm but resolute counsel, he returns once more to the anti-Spanish policy. More decisive steps than ever are now taken. A large body of French troops under Genlis march to the help of William of Orange, carrying with them an autograph letter from Charles, that fell afterwards into Alva's hands, betraying the King's complicity in the movement. Accurate information of all that had been going on had been forwarded to Alva, who, falling unawares upon Genlis in his march, cut to pieces the 3000 men that he commanded. Catherine gets more impatient, Charles more irritable than ever. Violent altercations take place in the Council of State. Coligni is for an immediate and open rupture with Spain. "He is no true Frenchman who opposes it:" these are his bold words. The King holds fast by Coligni. Catherine and Anjou notice with alarm that he is becoming more and more suspicious of them.

One day the Duke of Anjou entered unexpectedly the cabinet of the King, who had just had an interview with the Admiral. "Without speaking a word to me," said Henry, afterwards describing the scene, "the King began in the most furious manner to stride back and forward across the apartment, casting at me savage looks, and put his hand so often in such a threatening way upon his dagger that I thought every moment he was about to collar and to stab me. Perceiving myself in such danger I lost no time in retreating as hastily as I could, while his back was turned to me, to the door by which I had entered, and with a much curter salute than I had given on entrance disappeared, counting myself happy at having effected my escape." Henry went instantly to his mother with the news. Something prompt and decisive must be done. They agreed at last (we have Anjou's own word for it) that the Admiral must be assassinated.

All the difficulties about young Henry of Navarre's marriage had by this time been got over, and the 18th August 1572 fixed as the day of the nuptials. Henry came to Paris escorted by the flower of the Huguenot nobility and gentry. There were not wanting many among their number whose hearts misgave them as they entered the capital, and thought how entirely they were in the hands of their enemies. Their reception by all parties went far to remove their misgivings, especially their reception by the King. The regard and confidence so openly manifested by him towards the Admiral relieved their fears; his personal kindness to many of their number confirmed the confidence. With Roche-

foucault and Teligni, young men about his own age, the latter a son-in-law of Coligni, he was so frank, so familiar, so confiding, as to dispel the shadow of suspicion. None of those who had the best opportunities of knowing intimately his sentiments, up to this time, doubted his friendliness to the Huguenots. Still there were those who would not be persuaded, who carried their alarms to the Admiral, and entreated him to leave Paris. Firmly always, sometimes indignantly, he repelled their suggestions and alarms. Was he, on the very eve of seeing a great scheme executed that would unite all true Frenchmen, heal all internal strifes, and give back to his country her old place and renown among the nations, to do what would not only defeat that scheme but plunge France once more into a religious war? He would rather die than do it, rather die than distrust a monarch who had given him every assurance of protection and support.

On the morning of Friday the 22d August, four days after the marriage, Coligni was sent for to the Louvre. Returning on foot to his hotel, some one put a paper into his hand which he opened and was reading, walking slowly as he passed the cloister of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, when a shot was fired. Coligni owed his life to a sudden movement that he made. But he had not wholly escaped the shot of the assassin. Two balls took effect; the one shattering two fingers of the right hand, the other lodging in the left arm. Pointing to the house from which the shot had come, Coligni fell into the arms of one of his attendants, asking another to go and tell the King. Several of his suite now rushed to

the house that had been indicated, forced an entrance, sought eagerly for the perpetrator of the deed, but he was gone.

The King was playing at tennis with the Duke of Guise and Teligni. When told of what had happened, he flung his racket upon the ground, exclaiming, "What! am I never to have peace?" and retired to the Louvre. Grief and fury in his looks, he paced his chamber to and fro. His mother and the Duke of Anjou ventured into his presence and tried to soothe him; he turned on them disdainful looks, but would not say a word.

Henry of Navarre and the young Prince of Condé came straight from the bedside of the Admiral. Full of sorrow and indignation, they told the King that neither they nor their friends could deem themselves any longer safe in Paris, and solicited permission to depart. The King burst out now into a tempest of rage against the attempt on Coligni's life, swearing with the most terrible oaths that he would have justice done to the uttermost on all concerned in it. Relieved of their own fears, the two Princes returned to tell their friends what the King's feelings and purposes were.

The wounded man was now lying upon his bed. It was found necessary to amputate the two fingers, and to make deep incisions in the arm to extract the ball; the operations were painful, the result uncertain. But the composure of the sufferer was unruffled. Many were weeping around him.

"My friends," said he, "why do you weep? I am, indeed, sorely wounded, but it is the will of God, and I

thank Him that he favours me by permitting me to suffer for His name."

"I wonder," said Marshal Damville, who came to visit him, "whence this can have come."

"I suspect no one," said Coligni, "but the Duke of Guise, but I do not feel sure even as to him. But by the grace of God, I do not fear my enemies; the worst they can do to me is to bring me a little sooner to my eternal rest. I grieve, however, to be deprived of the opportunity of showing my King how greatly I desire to serve him. I wish his Majesty might be pleased to listen to me for a few moments. There are things which it concerns him to know, and which, perhaps, no one but myself will tell him."

The desire was communicated to Charles, who hastened to gratify it. Catherine and the Duke of Anjou, alarmed about the interview, accompanied the King. On coming to the bedside, the King manifested the strongest and tenderest emotion.

"Ah, my father," he said, "the wound is yours, but the anguish, the injury is mine; but by God's death, I will take such vengeance as shall never be effaced from the memory of man!"

"May God never be my help," said the wounded patriot, "if I desire vengeance. Justice, I feel certain, I shall obtain."

Coligni asked to be permitted to speak to the King alone. Charles motioned Catherine and Anjou away. The Admiral, believing himself to be dying, then unburdened his mind. The conversation was deepening in its earnestness. In her impatience the Queen-mother

at last interfered, and under the plea that it would be cruel to Coligni to tax his strength any longer, forced Charles from his side.

On their way back to the Louvre, Catherine asked her son what the Admiral had been saying to him? He would not tell. Again and again, with increasing importunity, she urged him to let her know. Provoked at last, Charles turned to her, and said, "If you will have it, then, he told me that the power and management of affairs was too much in your hands, and that this superintendence and authority of yours was certain one day to be deeply injurious to myself and to my country. That is what, as one of the best and most faithful servants of the Crown, he wished to guard me against before he died; and *Eh, bien! mon dieu!* what he said was true."

The King's conduct was in keeping with his words. He gave instant orders that the gates of the city should be closed, and every corner of it searched for the assassin. It soon appeared that the house from which the shot was fired belonged to one of the household of the Duke of Guise; that the piece which, so soon as it had been discharged, had been flung upon the floor, belonged to one of the Duke's body-guard; that the horse in attendance behind the house, on which the assassin had escaped, came from the Duke's stud. No sooner, in fact, had Catherine and Anjou resolved upon the deed, than they took into their counsels the widow and son of the late Duke of Guise, who, believing the Admiral to be implicated in his death, cherished the bitterest hatred towards Coligni.

The suspicion that directed itself against the young Duke of Guise was well founded. He had taken a chief part in the management of the affair. But as no evidence had been got to implicate him, he was bold enough to go into the royal presence, complain haughtily of the injustice that was done him, and request permission to retire from Court. His reception by Charles was gloomily ominous. He was told he might go when and where he liked ; but if proved to be guilty, Charles would know well enough where to find him. But if the royal vengeance fell on him, what were Catherine and Anjou to do? They could not disown and forsake one who had acted but as their instrument. Even if they tried it, Guise and his mother could easily establish their connexion with the crime. Out of the meshes of those difficulties, in which this failure of the attempt on the Admiral's life had involved her, what way was there for Catherine to escape ?—the one that for years she had been keeping as an *arrière-pensée* in her mind ; the one that, thirteen years before, Henry II. had whispered into the ear of William of Orange in the woods of Vincennes ; the one that Alva had boldly proposed to her in those midnight interviews at Bayonne ; the one that her son-in-law, Philip of Spain, had never ceased to urge upon her adoption ; the one that Pope after Pope had recommended, that from so many pulpits had been proclaimed to the populace as the only fit cure for the plague of heresy in France—the cutting off, not of Coligni alone, but of all the Huguenots at a stroke. Here now, in Paris, as if brought together for the very purpose, were the head and flower of that party, a head and flower

that a vigorous hand might lop off by a single blow. It could be done, indeed, only under royal warrant, and how, in his present mood and temper, could Charles be brought to give the order ?

Catherine knew her son too well—his weakness, his fitfulness, his suspiciousness, his proneness to sudden turns and frightful gusts of passion,—to despair. Next day, Saturday the 23d, by her direction, Albert de Gondi, better known under his title of Cardinal de Retz, who had been Charles's tutor, and who of all his courtiers was supposed to have most influence over him, asked a private audience of the King. The astonished monarch was now told that it was his own mother and brother who had instigated the attempt on the Admiral's life ; that they had recourse to this as their only and last resource to save him from the pernicious influence that Coligni had got over him ; that it was most unfortunate the attempt had failed, for that now the Huguenots had guessed the truth, were burning with indignation, and regarding the King as party in the plot, had resolved that very night to take up arms. Something instant and decisive must be done.

Amazed and distracted by this intelligence, Charles consented to hold a secret council. It met far on in the evening in a summer-house in the gardens of the Tuileries. There were but six persons present besides the King—Catherine, Anjou, Tavannes, De Retz, Birague, and Nevers. The effective part of that fatal consultation was managed by Catherine herself. She told her son that the Huguenots had resolved upon an immediate *émeute*. Charles seemed somewhat doubtful. She put

the doubt away by telling him that the Admiral had already sent off envoys to raise 10,000 *Reiters* in Germany, and as many foot soldiers in Switzerland; that many officers had that forenoon left Paris to take their different commands in the provinces; that the rising was to begin next day by an attempt on the lives of himself and the other members of the royal family.

“What then,” she asked Charles, “are you to do? where are your troops? where is your treasure? how is this revolt to be met and to be subdued?”

The poor, stupid, distracted King was silent. Catherine pressed her advantage.

“Look,” she said, “at the other side; the Catholics, aware of their danger, and tired out with waiting in vain for support from the throne, are determined to take the matter into their own hands and appoint a general of their own. Paris is already in arms.”

“I have forbidden it,” cried the King.

“It is done notwithstanding,” said his mother; “and now between these two parties what are you to do?”

The King asked her what.

“First,” she said, “let the Admiral, the source of the whole evil, be killed.”

Charles hesitated. Then, by every argument that could move his fears, his jealousies, his thirst for vengeance, she pictured the wrongs done to the throne by Coligni and his friends. Tavannes, Birague, Nevers, were all asked their opinion, and all supported the Queen-mother, insisting that not Coligni only but the whole body of the Huguenots should be cut off. Charles had nothing in reply to offer but plaintive cries.

“But my honour,” he exclaimed, “and my friends the Admiral, Rochefoucault, Teligni!”

“You won’t do it, then?” said his mother, rising in indignation. “Then give to me and your brother here, permission to retire, and take our own steps to save ourselves and the monarchy.”

Charles trembled at the thought of being left alone.

“You are afraid, then, of the Huguenots?” she said, ironically.

This taunting him with cowardice was the last touch of that cruel and cunning hand. Charles sprung up with a shout of rage, and with a fearful oath exclaimed,—

“Then since you think it right the Admiral should be killed, let every Huguenot in France perish with him, that there be not one left of them to reproach me with the act. Let it be done,” he said, and the meeting hastily broke up. It was already past eleven o’clock when the royal sanction was got. It was settled that the massacre should begin at day-break.

Marcel, the provost of the city, was summoned to the Louvre. “Should the King,” he was asked, “under urgent circumstances require the assistance of the Parisian populace, upon what number of them could he count?” “Give him a month,” he said, “and he could have 100,000 men.” “But now, this very day, how many?” He thought he could collect 20,000, or perhaps more. He was told to close the city gates, and summon the citizens to arms in all their quarters. They had already been mustering and equipping themselves, for emissaries had been among them all forenoon stimulating their passions against the Huguenots.

To the young Duke of Guise was assigned the task of organizing and beginning the massacre. He called together the captains of the French and Swiss guards. "Gentlemen," he said, "the hour is come when, under sanction of the King, we may at length avenge ourselves upon the accursed race, the enemies of God. The game is in the snare, you must not suffer it to escape." He then posted the troops on each side of the Louvre, with command to suffer no servant of the House of Bourbon to pass.

At midnight, the city authorities assembled in the Place de Grève. The Duke addressed them thus: "It is the King's good pleasure that we should take up arms to kill Coligni, and extirpate all the other Huguenots and rebels. The same is to be done in all the provinces. When the clock of the Palais de Justice sounds its bell at daybreak, let each good Catholic bind a stripe of white linen round his left arm, and put a white cross on his cap, and begin the work."

They had not to wait so long. It wanted yet an hour and a half of daybreak when the Queen-mother, impatient of the delay, or fearing some change in the purpose of the King, gave orders that the bell of the church of St. Germain de l'Auxerrois should be sounded as the signal to commence. Then she and Charles and Anjou passed into a small apartment above the gate of the Louvre, and opening the window looked out to see the tragedy begin. All was still and dark: a pistol-shot was fired; the solitary report struck terror into their hearts. Seized with a spasm of remorse, they sent a gentleman to the Duke of Guise, bidding him proceed no further. It was too late.

No sooner had the signal been given than Guise galloped to the dwelling of the Admiral. Cosseins, the Captain of the King's Guard, knocked at the outer gate and demanded entrance. Suspecting nothing, the servant in charge opened, and fell under the stroke of Cosseins' dagger. His followers rushed in and filled the inner court of the hôtel. The noise had awakened the Admiral, who lay up stairs with one or two faithful attendants in his room. Fearing some popular outbreak, but relying on the King's Guard stationed there for the purpose of protecting him, Coligni rose, put on his dressing-gown, and asked Merlin, his favourite minister, to engage in prayer. A servant rushed into the room.

"My Lord," he said, "it is God who calls you. The hall is carried, and we have no means of resistance left."

"I have been long prepared to die," said the Admiral ; "but save yourselves, all of you, if you can."

Behme, a German, and other retainers of the Guises, now broke into the apartment.

"Are you the Admiral?" said Behme.

"Yes," was Coligni's calm reply ; "but, young man, you should have some respect to my grey hairs and my infirmities."

With a savage oath, the German plunged his boarspear into his breast. Rapid sword-strokes from others followed. Covered with wounds, Coligni sank mangled among their feet.

"Behme, have you done it?" shouted the Bastard of Angoulême, from the court below.

"It is done, my Lord," was the reply.

“But Guise will not believe it unless he see him with his own eyes. Throw him out of the window.”

The brutal command was instantly obeyed. The body was flung down upon the pavement. The two Lords alighted and bent over it; the face was besmeared with blood and disfigured; they took their handkerchiefs, and wiped the blood away. “It’s he,” they said, as each kicked the corpse. Then in haste they mounted, and dashed out through the gate, shouting in triumph as they galloped forth, “Courage, soldiers, courage! we have made a good beginning,—now for the others.”

At this moment, responding to the first signal sound, the bells of all the churches rung out their summons to that shameless slaughter. In a few hours, within a short space round the Louvre, 500 noblemen and gentlemen were sabred or shot. Rochefoucault had parted from the King but an hour or two before, the last to leave the palace. He was awakened by men entering his chamber in masks. Fancying it some frolic of the Prince, he rose to meet them, and fell pierced by their rapiers at the door. The young Teligni was seen creeping along a house-top; but he was such a favourite that more than one, who as they pointed their pieces recognised him, held back their fingers from the trigger. At last the fatal shot was fired, and he fell dead upon the street.

Margaret, the young Queen of Navarre, gives us a glimpse into the interior of the palace. “I saw every one in agitation,” she says, “but no one told me anything till the evening, when being with the Queen my mother, sitting near my sister of Lorraine, who I saw was very

sorrowful, the Queen noticed me, and told me to retire. As I made my courtesy, my sister seized me by the arm, and stopping me began to weep, saying, 'My sister, do not go.' This frightened me excessively, which the Queen perceived, and calling very angrily to my sister forbade her to tell me anything. My sister said it was shocking to send me to be sacrificed in that way. The Queen answered, Be it as it might, I must go, lest they should suspect something. They continued to dispute, but I could not hear their words. At length the Queen told me very roughly to go to bed, and my sister bursting into tears bade me good-night. I went away shivering and trembling, unable to imagine what was to be feared. At the point of day the King rose and quitted the room. I begged my nurse to shut the door, and fell asleep.

"I had slept but an hour when I was startled by the cries of some one striking with hands and knees against the door, and calling loudly 'Navarre! Navarre!' My nurse rose and opened it, when a gentleman called Tejan rushed in, having a sword-wound in his elbow, and one from a halberd in his arm, pursued by four of the Guard. He threw himself upon the bed, from which I sprang, and he after me, catching me in his bloody arms, both of us screaming with terror. At last, by God's help, Monsieur de Nançay came in, who finding me in that situation could not help laughing. He scolded the archers for their indiscretion, and having ordered them out of the room, granted me the life of the poor gentleman, whom I hid in my cabinet till he was cured.

"While I was changing my dress, which was covered

with blood, M. de Nançay told me what was going on, assuring me that the King, my husband, was in the King's own apartment, and was safe. Throwing a cloak over me, he led me to the chamber of my sister of Lorraine, where I arrived more dead than alive. As I entered the ante-chamber, the doors of which were all open, a gentleman named Bourse, flying from the archers who were pursuing him, received a blow from a halberd and fell dead at my feet. I swooned in the arms of M. de Nançay, who thought the same blow had struck both at once, and was carried into my sister's room."

But the archers' work in the chambers and passages of the Palace, daring and desperate as it was, was a restrained and orderly execution, as compared with that perpetrated throughout the city by sixty thousand men—princes, nobles, soldiers, citizens—with all kinds of murderous weapons in their hands, under no command, throwing off all restraint, all pity, every vestige of human feeling, turned for the time into incarnate demons; Guise, Tavannes, Nevers, and others, hounding them on with shoutings of "Down with the Huguenots! Kill, kill! blood-letting is as good in August as in May! Kill, kill! it's the command of the King!" and king never had command more thoroughly obeyed. Two thousand unsuspecting, helpless, half-naked men were slaughtered that morning, their bodies flung out at windows, dragged through the mire, pitched into the river, amid whistlings and howlings, and yells of delight, and oaths of a horrible blasphemy.

At mid-day of that Sabbath, the King thought good

to hold his hand, and sent an order to the authorities of the city to check the massacre. And his mother and he employed the leisure of that Sabbath evening in writing despatches to foreign Powers, attributing the massacre wholly to the Guises, going so far even as to say that they had had enough to do to protect themselves in the Louvre.

But Charles had raised a demon he could not lay. Next forenoon, in the Cemetery of the Innocents, a miracle was announced ; a hawthorn had flowered in the night—emblem of the Church flourishing once again. The fanatic city mob got more excited than ever. The bells all rang out again. The massacre began with greater barbarity than ever, and went on more or less throughout the week. The business now was to search out every Huguenot that was left, to let not even the youngest child escape. Infants packed in baskets, amid jeering laughter were flung over the bridge into the Seine. Little boys not ten years old were seen dragging with cords in triumph along the streets, a Huguenot infant torn from its slaughtered mother's breast.

Upon the streets, there lay together, weltering in their blood, a father and his two sons, apparently all dead. Many as they passed stopped for a moment to gaze upon the group. "It's all the better so, they said ; it is nothing to kill the wolves, if you do not kill their little ones along with them." The bodies lay all still. At last there came a solitary man who, as he stopped and looked, gently raised his hands to heaven, and said in pitiful indignation, "God will avenge that deed." And then the youngest of the children raised its little head from

out its bath of blood, and said, "*I am not dead.* Take me to the arsenal, and M. de Biron will pay you well." The child that had the singular self-possession to feign itself dead so long, and was thus preserved, was Caumont de la Force, the head of a distinguished family, who lived to do good service afterwards to the Huguenot cause in France.

As little respect was paid to character as to age. Pierre de la Place, a distinguished jurist and historian, had a message sent to him that he was wanted at the Louvre. Suspecting the object, he fled out of his own house, tried the houses of three friends, was repulsed from each, returned to his own dwelling, gathered his family round him and engaged in prayer. The message came a second time, with an urgency that he could not resist. He bade adieu to his household, but had not gone far upon his way when he fell under the daggers of the assassins.

Peter Ramus—still a name of renown in the world of scholarship and philosophy, the highest name, in fact, that France had then to boast of—retired into his library in the fifth storey of the house, and was kneeling there in prayer when they broke in upon his retirement. They stopped a moment. They heard him say, "O my God, have mercy on me, and pardon those who know not what they do!" A sword was passed through his body, a shot fired at his head. He still breathed. His murderers seized him and flung him out of the window. Still he breathed, but no one would give him the *coup de grace*. They tied cords, instead, about his feet, and dragged him through the streets. At last,

by the river's side, they cut the head off, and flung the trunk into the stream.

Coligni's body was exposed to still more barbarous treatment. His head—like the Baptist's—was carried to Catherine, and sent off by her as a trophy to the Cardinal of Lorraine at Rome. The decapitated body, subjected to indescribable indignities, after having been dragged to and fro through the streets, was hung up by the feet, half burnt, upon a gibbet at Montfauçon. Two days afterwards, the King and Catherine, and the Court ladies, made a holiday excursion to the spot, shamelessly to gaze on and to jeer at the marred and mutilated remains of the greatest man that France had in that age produced.

With marvellous speed the news of the Parisian massacre spread over France, and so ripe and ready for it was the Catholic population, that each city, as it got the tidings, had its own St. Bartholomew. They heard of it at Meaux on the Sunday evening; that night the streets of Meaux were drenched in blood. They heard of it at Orleans on Tuesday the 20th; for a week onward from that date, Catholic Orleans gave itself up to the pillage and murder of its Huguenot inhabitants, 1200 perishing. They heard of it at Lyons on Thursday the 28th, and scenes of horror, outrivalling those of Paris, were day by day enacted, the Rhone literally so red with blood, that the inhabitants of Arles, and other towns below Lyons, for days abstained from drinking its waters. The massacre of St. Bartholomew, premeditated as to the general design, but not preconcerted as to the time and mode of its execution, was not the

sudden gusty act of a single night. It was the prolonged and wide-spread massacre of six weeks and more, all over France, in the course of which 50,000 Huguenots were cut off.

The King at first, as we have seen, would have thrown the odium upon the Guises. A day's reflection satisfied him, or rather convinced Catherine and her advisers, that it must be openly avowed. On Tuesday the 26th, Charles, accompanied by his Court, appeared before the Parliament of Paris, acknowledged that the order had been given by himself, vindicated it by asserting that Coligni and his friends had embarked in treasonable designs, and had meditated an assault upon the throne. The obsequious Parliament heard and applauded, appointing an annual festival in Paris to commemorate the day.

Philip of Spain got speedy information of the event. "The news," says the French Envoy at Madrid, "arrived here on the 7th September. The King, on receiving the intelligence, showed, contrary to his natural custom, so much gaiety, that he seemed more delighted than with all the good fortune or happy incidents which had ever before occurred to him. I went to see him next morning, and as soon as I came into his presence, he began to laugh, and with demonstrations of extreme contentment to praise your Majesty, as deserving your title of Most Christian, telling me there was no king worthy to be your Majesty's companion, either for valour or prudence. I thanked him; and I said that I thanked God for enabling your Majesty to prove to his master that his apprentice had learned his trade."

At Rome, the joy was greater than at Madrid. Gregory XIII., who had just ascended the pontifical throne, went at the head of his Cardinals, and all the ambassadors of the Catholic Princes, in solemn procession to different churches of the city, to have masses and *Te Deums* chanted over the deed. As if news of a great victory had been received, the cannon of St. Angelo sent their booming sounds of triumph across the Tiber. Vasari was instructed to execute a large picture, representing the massacre, to be added to the embellishments of the Vatican, beneath which were the words, "*Pontifex Coligni necem probat.*" A medal was struck: on one side the crest of the reigning Pope, on the other, that of a destroying angel smiting the Huguenots. Marc Antony Muret, preaching before the Pope, exclaimed: "Oh, memorable night, worthy of a distinction all its own among our festivals! I love to think that the stars that night shone with a more silvery brilliance, that the Seine rolled its waters more impetuously, as if in haste to fling into the sea the corpses of the impure it carried. O day full of joy and gladness, when you, thrice holy Father, received the tidings, and went to render solemn thanks to God! What happier commencement for your pontificate could you have desired?"

Very different was the reception given to the news in England. Elizabeth was at Woodstock with her Court. She had heard all from her own ministers before Lamotte Fénelon, the French ambassador, came down from London personally to announce it. It was a dull and rainy day. The ambassador was ushered into a room hung

with black. The Queen and Court were all in mourning. Every eye was bent upon the ground. "Sir," said Elizabeth to him in reply to his communication, "Heaven weeps for the miseries of France. Your King must be a very cruel master to have so many traitors among his subjects. It seems that men were wishing to put that commandment out of the Decalogue, Thou shalt not kill." A touch of Elizabethan stiff formality, and Elizabethan masculine boldness in that reception, but such a touch of nature, too, as has made all the world akin: for, that sentiment of the English Court is it not now the sentiment of true broad humanity, which in every land weeps over and abhors that massacre of St. Bartholomew as one of the foulest crimes that ever stained our globe?

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