



## MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

By a Protestant Theologian in The Sacred Heart Review.

### VII.

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's, like all the other French massacres in that century, of Catholics by Protestants and of Protestants by Catholics, was undoubtedly religious in its motive in the sense that the two religious parties hated each other intensely, and that the temper of the age and the nation was so fierce, that every slight provocation on either side easily turned into bloodshed. As Guizot remarks, the separation of the intellectual sphere from the political, which has become a commonplace of our day, was then only the dream of a few. In our day it has gone so far that we are now instructed, by teachers of high repute in Christian universities, that the state is not a moral personality at all, that the various social classes owe each other nothing, and that moral considerations urged in public policy are a mere hollow hypocrisy. This is an endeavor to establish epicurean atheism as the religion of the state.

Matters have not gone so far as this in France. Yet atheism is practically established in all public affairs. From the president down to the postman, no civil functionary is expected to mention God, much less to worship Him in the form principally used in the nation. This shows that the separation of religious belief from political action is simply impossible in fact. The two things, it is true, are not so inextricably intertwined as they were three hundred years ago. Religious and political action are not so immediately confused as they were once. Temporal and eternal interests are not treated as incapable of any distinction. This is a cause of thankfulness. Yet we see in France a smouldering persecution of Catholicism by atheism, assisted to some extent by Protestants and Jews, and should the peasantry actuate their political power, we might possibly have a smouldering persecution of atheism by Catholicism. Mr. Bodley remarks that there is strong reason to believe that if the Catholics came into power, they would show themselves decidedly more equitable to the unbelievers than the unbelievers have been towards them, but that if they were intolerant, the intolerance of men who have an object of faith and a high ideal of excellence is more endurable than the intolerance which simply aims to bring in the reign of the world, the flesh and the devil. The great Protestant Edmond de Pressensé strongly urges this truth.

We see, then, that France is far from having outlived the age of persecution. There is no certainty that she will outlive it, that she will ever attain to a stable equilibrium of opposing principles. There is strong reason to fear that she may perish in the attempt. After all, no way has yet been found to reconcile God and Mammon. The Frenchmen of the sixteenth century were fiercer than now, but

at all events they were more high-minded. Neither of the two contending parties was fighting to enthrone mere negation. Nor can we be too proud of greater mildness. I have seen it estimated, and the estimate appeared credible, that in our day there has been in France, especially at Paris, including those shipped off to die in Cayenne, a butchery of 25,000 Communards, despatched on any evidence or none. In what would that differ from a massacre of 22,000 Huguenots, butchered on any evidence or none? It is not so sure that posterity may not yet abhor the year 1871 as much as we abhor the year 1572. Yet how indifferently has Christendom taken this latter massacre!

It is certain, however, that the immediate motive of St. Bartholomew's was not religious. Catherine de Medici probably never had a religious motive in her life. Her original purpose, and attempt, was simply to murder Coligni, because he was taking her place in the mind of the young King. It is true, his influence, if effective, would have turned Charles from an alliance with aggressive Catholicism to an alliance with aggressive Protestantism, and this was by no means to his mother's mind, being, as she was, mother-in-law of Philip the Second, a native of Italy and a niece of two Popes. Yet the only inviolable policy in her mind was the policy of keeping herself at the head, and this the Admiral was crossing. Therefore she resolved to get him out of the way. But for this she would probably not have thought of it.

The Guises were sincere and fervent Catholics, and the head of the Catholic interest. Yet they were a bold and frank race. But for their inextinguishable resentment over the great Duke Francis' death, they would probably only have thought of meeting the Admiral's influence by counter-influence, or, as before, by avowed warfare. However, being on whatever evidence, fully convinced (and there are Protestant writers who agree with them, though Guizot does not), that Coligni had plotted the murder of the elder Guise, they burned to act as the avengers of blood. Finding that Catherine's personal interest and their personal vengeance concurred, they formed the double plot, and carried it out, having no design except against Coligni himself. Of this the King knew nothing. The Guises, Catherine, and her odious son Anjou (soon to be Henry III.) were the sole conspirators.

As we know, the attempt failed. The Admiral was grievously wounded, but seemed likely to recover. The Huguenot leaders were not dismayed, but exasperated. They began to use ominous speech. They had no thought of assailing the royal house, not even the detestable Anjou, but they began to breathe vengeance against the Guises, and not improbably meant to drive the queen-mother into banishment, as befell another Medicean queen-mother half a century later, on much less occasion.

"It is the fruit of evil deed, That it must still engender evil."

Since the conspirators had failed to murder Coligni alone, they must now, they thought, murder Coligni and his chief colleagues. There was as yet no

plan of a massacre properly so-called, but of an enlarged number of assassinations. The conspirators were sliding down the inevitable slope towards a general butchery, but they had not yet reached the bottom.

The final impulse was given by the least guilty of the whole company, by Charles the Ninth himself. The conspirators could not venture to despatch so many leading men without his sanction. This his mother and brother undertook to secure. The feelings and the conscience of the unhappy youth (he was not yet 23) revolted against the deed, which, moreover, would sweep away the great Admiral whom he was already beginning to view as a father, and who, he hoped, would soon initiate him into high emprise of glorious war. But the diabolical resoluteness of his mother, and of his brother, left the wretched boy, weak in body and will, no refuge. At last he burst out: "Well, if it must be so, let it be so. Only do not stop with the chiefs. Kill them all, that there may be none left to reproach me." His mother and brother did not care how many of the common people perished besides, and thus the single abortive murder of a few days before had now expanded into the terrible massacre which Catherine herself, an hour earlier, had hardly meditated. The mind of the Guises, however, was still fixed on the Admiral, and it is said that in their province not a single Huguenot suffered death. I am not able to verify this statement, but it seems wholly consonant to the character of the House of Lorraine.

The Parisians, then as intense Catholics as two centuries later they were intense Jacobins, and as now a great part of them are Jacobins of a yet more malignant type, were ready for the butchery. They had not forgotten the burning monasteries, the plundered and mutilated churches, the violated tombs, the three thousand monks and priests slowly tortured to death. Like every party, they had forgotten their own past atrocities. Only a few months before this their indignation had flamed up afresh when they learned that two hundred monks and priests of a captured town had been asked by Dutch Protestants to renounce their religion, and, refusing, had been put to death in lingering torments. They remembered that they had now among them, unsuspecting, or but beginning to suspect, those very Calvinists who, they believed (apparently on good evidence) had invited the German Lutherans to the sack of their city.

As the English Jesuit says, nothing can be alleged which will excuse the massacre of St. Bartholomew's. Yet the various considerations and facts which I have adduced seem to be quite sufficient to explain it.

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The Tablet, of May 5, announces that a marriage "will shortly take place" between William Louis Scott, Local Master at Ottawa of the Supreme Court of Judicature for Ontario, eldest son of the Hon. R. W. Scott, Secretary of State for Canada, and Alice May, second daughter of the Hon. William Wilfrid Sullivan, Chief Justice of Prince Edward Island.

## A GRUESOME VISITANT.

Written for THE REVIEW by an English Banker.

The recrudescence of late, both in India, and now in Europe, of that most awful of all the scourges to which the human race is, or probably ever has been, subject, the Plague, or "Black Death," is a matter which should cause great concern, and, in view of the unfortunate fact that so far medical science has proved quite unable to arrest its full progress if once it gains serious hold of a population, it must surely be the duty of governments, at whatever cost, to appoint duly qualified medical commissions to study the subject experimentally, with a view, to devise a mode of treatment which would enable the profession to cope successfully with even the most virulent onslaughts of the dreaded pestilence.

For if an outbreak be not speedily checked, the fell disease spreads like wild-fire throughout a population. For instance, the last occasion of a visitation in London, A. D. 1665, no less than 97,306 victims were carried off, or about one in five of the entire population of the Metropolis at that time; in a week alone, according to Pepys, 10,000 having succumbed. Comparing the present population of London, of more than five millions, with the half million of that time, a plague of equal virulence would carry off in a week a hundred thousand victims, or a ghastly aggregate of more than a million human beings, slaughtered by the desolating hand of the grim destroyer.

What a charnel house the Metropolis was during those melancholy weeks! On the door of nearly every house the words "Lord have mercy on us," marked in chalk, together with a cross, indicated that the pestilence was, or had been, raging therein; while lying about in the streets and on the doorsteps were people writhing in their last death-throes, soon to be collected by the death carts which were constantly traversing the streets. And as the carter passed along the thoroughfares, crying out in cadaverous tones the dismal dirge, "Bring out your dead, bring out your dead," the ghastly pile was soon completed, to be taken to the nearest plague pit, and unceremoniously shot into the common grave, as if all those human forms, all that was left of loved and revered ones, were but a cartload of road refuse. Night and day this melancholy cry continued to resound, pit after pit being filled up almost to the brim with the ghastly loads.

Providential it surely was that immediately after the subsidence of the plague the great fire of London consumed the infected area and burnt to the ground the houses in which, in many cases, the last inmate having succumbed, his home had become his sepulchre.

The most terrible visitation of the Black Death of which history has any record, appears to have been the outbreak culminating A. D. 1345, the death-roll of which, in Europe alone, was estimated at twenty-four millions; while in Asia it also raged furiously, for in one place, the great city of Bagdad, half a mil-

lion were said to have died in 90 days. In China the number of victims was estimated at five millions.

Happily for mankind the world has for more than two centuries been spared any terrible visitation of this deadly pestilence, may this immunity be continued; and may the great civilizing powers carefully watch for, and, with the aid of the most drastic measures, endeavor to stamp out any outbreak in any part of their dominions.

But though the "Black Death" is full of horror, yet the "Second Death" is far more terrible, for the one is, for those who are amongst the redeemed, only the entrance to a glorious Life, replete with ever-enhancing gratification and pleasure; while the other involves a never-ending existence of gruesome remorse, and unavailing self-condemnation.

## CANADIAN PILGRIMAGE

TO PARAY-LE-MONIAL, LOURDES AND ROME.

On the 22nd of June, the Feast of the Sacred Heart will be celebrated at Paray-le-Monial, which may be called the birth place of the devotion, by pilgrims of all the nations of the world.

The Canadian pilgrimage, which has received the warmest approbation of our apostolic delegate and the entire Canadian episcopate, leaves Montreal on June 2 by the Dominion liner Vancouver, and returns by the same on Aug. 4. From Paray the Pilgrims will go on to Lourdes and Rome.

In Rome they will have audience of the Holy Father and will fulfill the conditions for gaining the indulgence of the Jubilee.

Father J. J. Kavanagh, S. J., is chaplain to the English section of the pilgrimage.

Of course ample opportunities will be afforded to visit and enjoy the principal points of interest abundantly occurring in an itinerary which covers Liverpool, London, Paris, Marseilles, Genoa, Florence, Rome, Venice, and the St. Gothard through Switzerland.

The business matters are in the hands of Mr. L. J. Rivet, an experienced manager, who accompanies the pilgrimage and who may be applied to for information at 418 Rachel street, Montreal. The fare is \$400, which covers all travelling and living expenses during the nine weeks' absence. As the ocean tickets are good for six months, a protracted sojourn would enable one to visit Ireland and Scotland. For fear of disappointment places ought to be secured as soon as possible.

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