



MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

By a Protestant Theologian in The Sacred Heart Review.

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During the reign of Francis I. and the earlier part of the reign of Henry II., the laws concerning heresy were strictly applied against the French Calvinists, of whom from 200 to 300 were burnt alive. This persecution, it will be seen, was much less severe than that by Mary Tudor in England, for while the number of victims was about the same, the executions extended over a very much longer tract of time. Francis was mostly passive in the matter, not seeing how to impede the carrying out of the laws against heresy, although his adored sister Margaret was a friend of the new doctrine. Widely as Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists differed from each other in the definition of heresy, almost all then agreed that it ought to be punished with fire. In Spain this opinion had been opposed by some leading Catholics, but although they were not molested, they were not regarded. The Protestants, although they stigmatized the Catholics as idolaters, could not very well call them heretics, but, as we know, they repeatedly burnt Unitarians, and burnt or drowned Anabaptists. Calvin tried to mitigate the punishment of the Arian Servetus to the sword, but the magistrates refused. Cranmer, notwithstanding the entreaties of the young King Edward, would not save the Arians and Anabaptists from the stake, which can not but lessen our sympathy with him when his turn came.

Henry II., inferior to his father in every way, was an active persecutor. Under him, however, the Calvinists multiplied so uncontrollably, that they were soon reckoned at almost one-fourth of the nation. Their great strength lay among the merchants and artisans of the cities and among the nobility. The nobles, and very possibly the burgesses, were much more largely of Teutonic descent than the bulk of the people, and therefore instinctively more inclined to the great Teutonic movement, although, being Latinized, they accepted a form of Protestantism far more deeply surcharged with Latin elements than Lutheranism is. Presbyterianism seems much farther from Catholicism than Lutheranism does, but in reality it is not so far.

It seems strange, at first, that French Protestantism should have had its great strength in the south, bordering on Spain. Canon Taylor, however, has reminded us that the Teutonic blood is peculiarly strong in Languedoc (in its wider sense), which for generations was the seat of the great Visigothic kingdom. The Gallicized Goths, being still Goths, were quick to welcome the modified Christianity coming from Germany, although Toulouse, from which the elements of dissent had been so relentlessly purged out by the Albigensian crusade, remained intensely, savagely Catholic, and was a constant thorn in the side to the Protestantism of the South. The Calvinists, so strong

among the lower and higher nobility, soon availed themselves, as Ranke points out, of the chronic seditiousness of the younger branches of the blood royal against the reigning line. In England, the Lancasters, after dallying with Wycliffism, had finally carried out their designs upon the crown by a strict alliance with the Church, which in this case undoubtedly consulted the good of England by supporting them. Richard had become impossible, and Henry was the only feasible alternative. In France it was the other way. The Huguenots allied themselves with the junior princes, and fused their religious interests with the personal ambitions of the Bourbons. This necessarily threw the reigning line of Valois into an attitude of hostility to the Protestants. The Bourbons had no thought of anticipating the time of their own accession to the crown. To dethrone the hereditary king was an impossibility in French eyes. The intensest fanaticism of the League could not carry it out. What they wished, by the aid of the powerfully organized Calvinistic body, with its graduated synods, its armies, fortresses, magistrates, levies of taxes, was to rule over the kings, in the hope of the time when they should, by due succession, become kings themselves. They were cheerfully willing to reverence the crown, if only they could control the crown.

Here, we see, were all the conditions of desolating civil wars, which again and again, and yet again and again, ravaged the fair land of France nearly to the end of the century. It was almost an impossibility for the two religions to live together in that age anywhere, and with the intense and intolerant French nature it was quite an impossibility in France. The ambition of the Guises, the irresolution of the Valois, the unspeakable wickedness of Catherine, exasperated the situation, but did not create it, nor essentially alter it.

Worse than even the civil wars, which had at least their laws and bounds, their treaties and truces, were the alternations of massacre, and the continual recurrence of assassinations. Ranke, though a zealous Protestant, seems to put the earlier civil wars rather to the account of the Huguenots than of the Catholics. Froude, who will not be suspected of partialities for the Catholics, puts the blame of the first massacre on the Calvinists, although they were its victims, while the first notable assassination was wrought by a fanatical Protestant upon the great Duke who was the head of the Catholic interest.

However, we are not to suppose that the French Protestants were intrinsically any more inclined to massacre or assassination than the Catholics, or any less. As Guizot remarks, together with Froude, both of whom are borne out by the narrative of Ranke, massacre and assassination were in the very air of that age, but above all in France. Unless the massacres were very extended, or the murders those of very notable persons, they seem to have drawn little attention from either side.

If we take the number of the victims of Saint Bartholomew's at seventy thousand, it swells the relative bloodthirstiness of the Catholics very high. In

such a case, however, we are bound by the later estimates of sober-minded historians, 100,000, the hyperbolic estimate of Archbishop Péréfixe, of the next century, is given up on all hands. 10,000, the estimate of another Catholic, is as extravagant again in its reduction of number. Even the warm temper of Péréfixe could not easily have multiplied the real number of victims by ten, and that so long afterwards.

Professor Fisher, a man of almost excessively sober temper, of miraculous accuracy of statement, and, as a staunch Protestant, not inclined to diminish the number of Protestant martyrs, having, moreover, the advantage of all the evidence and computations of three centuries, puts the victims of the Saint Bartholomew at twenty-two thousand, five thousand in Paris, seventeen thousand in the rest of France. This may safely be taken as about the truth. Such a number might easily, in the first indefiniteness of horror, even in our times, whether it was a massacre, pestilence or earthquake, be run up to three times its true reckoning, or more. How much more in that time, when communication was so uncertain, statistics so vague, and our present armies of reporters, mutually checking each other, wholly unknown! The royal orders, in many towns, and whole provinces, were utterly contemned. Zealously Catholic Nantes, and Lisieux, Macon, Dijon, the great provinces of Provence and Dauphiné, took measures, not to murder the Huguenots, but to protect them. The numerous Calvinists of Languedoc and Guienne, I presume, were able to care for themselves, and so was Calvinistic Rochelle. Even where the royal orders were carried out, there were such intervals of time between that the first fierce central impulse of murder went on slackening with every day. Although it was an age of murder, yet there were many already who abhorred it. Various commanders of garrisons scornfully refused to suffer their troops to defile their hands with the horrid work.

The wretched king, suffering already the torments of hell, unable, as he complained to his Protestant nurse, to rid himself of the vision of the bloody faces of the dead by day or night, was now as eager to check the work as in his compelled desperation, tormented by his evil mother and his evil brother, he had been eager at first to have it begin.

Undoubtedly then we should set down the true number of the victims of this awful massacre, as Doctor Fisher does, as having been from twenty to twenty-five thousand.

Taking this as our basis, we will next consider how, in France, the two religions compare in this fearful pre-eminence of individual and collective murder.

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Twenty new members joined the St. Boniface C. M. B. A. yesterday evening.

The Japs did it. They supplied us with the menthol contained in that wonderful D. & L. Menthol Plaster, which relieves instantly backache, neuralgia, rheumatism and sciatica. Manufactured by the Davis & Lawrence Co., Lim.

AN IMPORTANT LESSON FOR CATHOLICS.

Catholic Times, (Eng.)

The success of the efforts to secure through the Government proper provision for the religious requirements of Catholics in the Navy is gratifying. It teaches the lesson which we should never forget in dealing with public matters that when we are making a just claim—and it is to be hoped we shall never make any but a just one—we should be fearlessly determined and persistent. If, with dogged determination and persistence, we have unity amongst ourselves, then we are bound to gain our end. Of course, where a purpose can be achieved by quiet persuasion it is well to pursue that course, but there are times when public objects can be attained only by speaking out and acting boldly. In view of the large number of Catholic seamen, a committee of the Catholic Truth Society was formed to consider and protect their religious interests, and certain concessions were granted by the Government. But, as Father Goldie, S.J., stated at a recent meeting of the Catholic League of South London, the concessions were far from satisfactory. Cardinal Logue took up the question and handled it in a vigorous and decisive style. Our readers will remember the forcible words of his Pastoral, in which he declared that if no better provision were made for Catholic chaplains in the Navy, he would regard it as a duty to warn young Irish Catholics that by accepting service in the Navy they would be imperilling the welfare of their souls. This firm language aroused attention in Parliament, and at a time when the zeal for recruiting was running high some good Protestant members were furiously indignant with the Cardinal. Young Mr Chamberlain, who has evidently got some of his father's qualities, without his ability, actually threatened that if his Eminence did not retract what he had published the training ship would be withdrawn from Queenstown. The Cardinal did not withdraw the remarks contained in his Pastoral, but emphasised them by re-assertion at the meeting which he addressed in Bradford. Resolutions in support of the demands he advocated were passed at a meeting of the Catholic League of South London held under the chairmanship of Mr. Arthur O'Neill. The notice of the Irish Parliamentary party was called to the grievance. The First Lord of the Admiralty was requested to receive a deputation representative of Catholic opinion, and he consented. It was the Government, not Cardinal Logue, that receded.

The points upon which remedial action was pressed for are, as shown in the letters of the two Cardinals and in the explanations of the members of the deputation, clear and simple. The Catholics do not look for any special privileges; they merely ask that the Government should place at the disposal of Catholics in the Navy facilities for the exercise of essential religious duties. It may be said that Wesleyans and other Non-conformists do without such facilities, and that Catholics should not be more exacting. But the cases are quite different. The Non-conformists do not believe in the Sacraments and are content with

the ministrations of the Church of England chaplain or the good offices of an ordinary member of their own body. The Catholic holds that the Sacraments have an operative effect in cleansing the soul from sin when repentance is sincere. The deputation demanded that the services of Catholic priests should be secured at all the naval bases; that they should be afforded free access to Catholic seamen and marines; that three or four Catholic clergymen should be appointed at a central port to accompany any squadron going on a long cruise; that a chaplain should be attached to the training squadron; that a chaplain should be at once chosen for each hospital ship in the event of the outbreak of hostilities; and that the regulations with regard to religious practices should be carried out with something of the strictness that is observed by the officers of the land forces. His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan in his letter to Count Moore expressed the conviction that the deputation would find Mr. Goschen most willing to meet the wants of Catholics as far as he could, and the forecast was not incorrect. The assurances of the First Lord of the Admiralty are, as such, eminently satisfactory. He would, he said, see whether further steps could not be taken to make provision for ministrations to Catholics at all the naval bases; a Catholic chaplain will for the future accompany a squadron when it is proceeding on any special service; and a Catholic chaplain will be attached to all hospital ships. We trust that the measure of satisfaction which Catholics have derived from these promises will be completed by their realization.

All who have helped in the good work of bringing the Government to recognise the necessity of reform are entitled to the sincere gratitude of Catholics. For the efforts of Cardinal Logue and the Irish Parliamentary Party this sentiment will be deeply felt. It is not the first time that his Eminence and the members of that party have rendered notable service to the Catholic interests of Great Britain, as well as to those of Ireland. When the elementary education question was before the House of Commons the Nationalists, with the approval and sympathy of the Cardinal and the Catholics of Ireland, valiantly championed the claims of their co-religionists in England, disregarding the irritation thus caused to the Liberal advocates of the School Board system who were then their political allies. Their aid, it is safe to predict, will be required on many future occasions, and we feel sure it will be given ungrudgingly. It is only by continual watchfulness and insistence on the redress of grievances that the battle for Catholic rights will be won. Within the past quarter of a century the growth of a liberal spirit towards Catholics has been very marked, and the tendency in many directions has been to place Catholics on a level of perfect equality with their non-Catholic fellow-subjects. But we must not rest content until all the vestiges of intolerance that remain are for ever removed. The Protestants of this country are fully convinced that they are thoroughly just in their dealings with us. We must prove to them that their standards of right and wrong are sometimes very defective.