



THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

By a Protestant Theologian in The Sacred Heart Review.

I.

I will consider as thoroughly as possible the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, in all its aspects. I say St. Bartholomew's Eve, because the tocsin seems to have been sounded from the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois just before midnight of Aug. 23.

The common way of controversy is this. When a great crime has been committed in the past by our side, we always plead in mitigation the spirit of the age. When it has been committed by the other side, we insist on treating it as if it were a crime of to-day. For instance, Lansing, who is a good illustration on account of his infinite lightness, which makes him a mere straw on the current, always treats every act of Roman Catholics in the past which is contrary to the accepted ethical standards of our time precisely as if those who committed it were in no way different from robbers and assassins of to-day. When, some years ago, in the Morning Star, I called his attention to the unreasonableness of this, instead of accepting the correction like an honest and candid man, he turned upon me and charged me with defending the massacre of St. Bartholomew! I was terribly angry, I acknowledge, but when you strive with fools you must expect that they will behave like fools.

Dismissing this poor waif of rotten driftwood, let us turn to men of sense and right reason, such as the great Frenchman and Protestant Guizot, whose ardent sympathy with the Reformation shines through every page of his History of France, but who never forgets to treat the Catholics as having been as truly Christians as the Huguenots. I refer especially to the voluminous history written for his grandchildren, giving his latest judgment of these matters. Guizot declares, emphatically, that wherever the French Protestants had resentments to gratify or dangers to obviate, they were to the full as merciless as the Catholics. The facts from beginning to end bear him out.

Our common Protestant notion of the Reformation is, that it was a sudden revival of Christian righteousness and spiritual experience against mere worldliness and wickedness. We view it as having been like the Gospel itself at its origin, and if we are a little indulgent to Catholicism, we are willing to own it as having been, on a much higher scale, not altogether unlike the rise of Franciscanism. Pietism in Germany and Methodism in England were undoubtedly true revivals, and we conceive the Reformation as having been like these, but far more illustrious. This view has been still more thoroughly settled among us by Merle d'Aubigné's slouching and untrustworthy, but picturesque and pleasing, religious romance, commonly known as a history. Doctor Merle was a thoroughly good Christian, but being utterly uncritical, he makes all his characters as good as himself. Not only is the darker side of

Luther completely hidden from us, but Philip of Hesse, tyrant, drunkard, adulterer, as he was, comes out into view as a saintly Josiah.

The real character of the Reformation, as a whole, is very well expressed by an eminent Presbyterian friend of mine, as having been "a political revolution rather than a religious revival." Not only is this the true view, but it is decidedly for our interest, as Protestants, to accept it. Taking this position, we are much less embarrassed by Luther's indecencies, and the Landgrave's and the Elector John Frederic's immoralities, and Henry the Eighth's brutalities, and Elizabeth's dubious behavior, than if we insisted on treating them as so many apostles. I think such a way of regarding Elizabeth must have greatly tickled her sense of humor, which I surmise to have been keen.

The original Reformation in France was much more nearly a true revival than almost anywhere else, unless it were in Scotland. The first Reformers there seem fairly to have been driven into revolt. They only wished, without breaking unity, to protest against theological petrification and episcopal immorality. At the very time when Rome and Catholic Louvain were founding colleges for the study of Greek and Hebrew, the fossilized Sorbonne was denouncing these studies as heretical! Not only did Lefevre always keep within the Church, and observe even her non-obligatory devotions; but Louis de Berquin, the eminent Christian, noble and scholar, who was strangled and burnt under Francis the First, not only was no Lutheran, but was steadily hostile to Luther's writings. Indeed, had the reforming Fathers of Trent come then into the hands of the Sorbonne, I doubt whether they would have escaped alive. It is not so strange, then, that a good share of the serious Christians of France, despairing of doing anything under the Sorbonne, which condemned Rome and hated Luther almost equally, and really cared for nothing but its own emoluments and power, should have seceded outright from the unreformed French Catholicism and set up a discipline of their own, which, if stern and hard, was at least pure.

Unhappily, remarks Guizot, the new organization did not regard itself as provisional and incomplete, but as perfect and definitive. It also was thoroughly persuaded that it had the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Catholicism allows for large tracts of truth yet to be apprehended and brought out. Its central fixity, therefore, is consistent with a great pliability and elasticity, with large theological progress. Calvinism, on the other hand—and this much more than Lutheranism—crystallized itself from the very beginning into a hard and unprogressive definiteness. It caught the fixedness of Rome, but not her plasticity. Calvin's system seemed to regard itself as being a theological Minerva, springing from the mind of the Godhead mature and completely equipped. Any thought, therefore, that a Catholic conscience also was to be treated with respect and reverent forbearance was wholly alien to French Protestantism. It was not so fixed but that it had a

certain measure of indulgence for Lutheranism, but for Catholicism, none. It lived only in the hope of seeing it utterly extirpated from France. Even after many years of fruitless endeavor should have shown the folly of this hope. Anthony of Bourbon, heir to the throne, reverting on his deathbed to his original Protestantism, declared that if God raised him up, he would suffer "only the gospel," that is, only Calvinism, to be preached throughout the kingdom.

For a good while the Calvinists of France were few and unorganized. They were not competent to war, but only to martyrdom, which they endured with firmness and dignity. Yet their utter want of regard for the Catholic conscience led them, almost from the beginning, into acts of contumelious violence against the images of the saints, of the Virgin, of Jesus Himself. It was not only an illiterate wool-carder, a Leclerc, who committed such outrages. The learned William Farel, the first great propagator of Calvinism in French Switzerland—Calvinism even before Calvin—counted it, as I remember, a special mission and honor to penetrate into the churches during the Mass, or to break up a party accompanying the Viaticum, and snatching the Host from the hands of the priest, to trample it under foot. How could the most cold-blooded race of the world have been expected to endure such outrages against the very heart of their religion? Above all, how could the intensity of the French nature endure such things? It is a wonder that, so long as the Calvinists were counted only by hundreds in France, there were any of them left alive.

As they became more numerous, I have the impression that they learned to restrain themselves from direct attacks upon the Mass, but their attacks upon the churches and images became more frequent. They roamed the country, burning monasteries, murdering the monks, plundering the treasures of the churches, breaking their sculptured ornaments and the effigies of saints and kings, shattering tombs, and throwing the bones of bishops and abbots and monarchs about the churchyards. This last outrage also again and again occurred in Protestant Germany, in the hope of finding gold and gems buried with the dead. At last, after having thoroughly plundered the splendid cathedral of Orleans, a band of Calvinists, headed by the great reformer Theodore Beza, as I learn from The Churchman, forced their way in and blew up three great pillars, bringing down the whole western front.

Not to speak of the fierce sixteenth century, what would come to pass in England in the twentieth century if the Catholics were prowling around the Protestant churches and cathedrals watching to lay them waste in this fashion?

CHARLES C. STARBUCK.

12 Meacham street, North Cambridge, Mass.

Hon. Senator Bernier is here for the Easter vacation.

Horses and cattle have colic and cramps. Pain-Killer will cure them every time. Half a bottle in hot water repeated a few times. Avoid substitutes. There is but one Pain-Killer, Perry Davis'. 25c and 50c.

CELESTIAL PAGEANTS.

Written for THE REVIEW by an English Banker.

Those of us whose experience extends not more than about 30 years back, have not been favored with the sight of any unusual celestial phenomena. But the 20 preceding years, from 1850 to 1870, presented several noteworthy spectacles, of such marvellous interest that the remembrance of each one of them must be indelibly impressed on the memory of all who had the good fortune to witness them.

The first of these, the wonderful annular eclipse of the sun, was a most startling exhibition; a delicate ring of bright light, a copper-coloured disc, hanging suspended high in space, the brilliance of the shining circle being enhanced by the semi-darkness which prevailed. This was a spectacle of extreme interest.

And then followed, in 1858, Donati's comet. In July and August of that year the comet was plainly visible to the naked eye, daily approaching nearer and nearer, and growing larger and larger. In the following month the comet continued to increase in size and in brilliance at a rate which was almost terrifying, for it was apparently approaching so near to the earth that people began to conjecture what would happen if the fiery visitor—which was known to be travelling at the rate of perhaps 30 miles a second, or more—were to strike our earth. Some thought the globe would be shattered into fragments; others that the moon would be lost to us for ever, carried away in the mad rush of the gigantic visitor; while others thought it possible that the earth itself might be forced out of her orbit, and shot into space somewhere into the perpetual cold and darkness reigning on the confines of the solar system. Those, however, who feared that contingency could solace themselves with the reflection that before they reached those regions of eternal cold the furious fires raging in the comet would have effectually calcined everything upon the earth's crust.

And truly the errant orb now presented a magnificent and imposing spectacle. Its dazzling nucleus, as large as a small satellite, outshone the brilliant sun Arcturus, sparkling vividly close to the gigantic intruder, which appeared like a fiery globe which had been shot forth and impelled through space by some terrific outburst of explosive energy either in our own sun, or in some other giant luminary. From this incandescent globe streamed out, to the extent of several millions of miles, the vast burning "tail," vividly bright near the nucleus, but gradually becoming more and more attenuated, the whole stretching upwards far towards the Zenith, and apparently hanging threateningly over, as some thought, a doomed earth.

Soon after this, in 1859, the great display of Aurora Borealis took place. The entire northern heavens were encircled with a gigantic pillared arch, the structure appearing as if formed of solid columns of shining polished metal of many brilliant hues, depending from the skies like a gorgeous canopy. Now, the great arch, with a kind of trem-

ing shudder, somewhat paled away for a few seconds, again with a sudden quiver to regain the brilliancy of its fires, which continued to kindle into greater and greater intensity until now it is glowing as if the pillars were formed of emeralds and sapphires, rubies and opals, chrysolite and amethyst, while ever and anon throughout the glittering dome, vibrating coruscations of scintillating fires radiate in alternating spasms of energy.

And then the stately pageant gradually fades away, and the stars, which had been shut out from view by that apparently solid and massive canopy, once more shine forth.

And in 1866 finally succeeds the extraordinary display of meteors, when it appeared as if every star in the heavens were falling to the earth, and as if the entire starry vault were being broken up, and the stellar universe condemned to destruction.

But a time will come when those of us who have not fatuously refused to accept the light and easy service of the Redeemer of the world, will be able on angel-wing to visit any part of the great Universe, and to see for themselves the burning wonders of the great laboratories of nature. But those who neglect, equally with those who refuse, will be shut out!

FROM THE WESTERN WATCHMAN.

(St. Louis.)

It used to be asked 25 years ago, will the Pope leave Rome? Now it is asked, will the King of Italy be permitted to stay?

The venerable Father Smulders, of the Redemptorists, breathed his last at the home of his order in this city on Monday last. He was nearly 60 years in the community, and during his long career of usefulness was known for his great zeal and self-denial.

Why do many of our young Catholic men, and not a few of our young Catholic women, stay away from the sacraments? Is it because they do not believe in their religion? Is it because they have ceased to be Catholics? Not a bit of it. They will not tell you the reason, and they have no need to tell it to each other.

On Monday last we received the April number of the North American, with Mirart's article on "Roman Congregations and Modern Thought," and on the same day the daily papers contained a notice of his death. Reading the article we had to think of old Noah when his sons mocked him; reading his death notice we felt like stepping backwards and covering his shame. Poor Mirart! Cardinal Mazzella preceded him a short week.

In a competition for prizes offered lately by the Chicago Tribune, for the best ten essays on George Washington, the first prize was won by a pupil of the Holy Angels Catholic school of that city.

Immense increase in the sale of the D. & L. Menthol Plaster evidences the fact that it is useful for all rheumatic pains, lumbago and lame back, pain in the side, etc. Davis & Lawrence Co., Ltd., manufacturers.