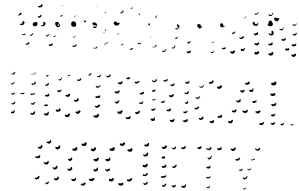


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HUGUENOT SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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HISTORY OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.*

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FOUR years ago the Huguenot Society of America commemorated the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. To-day I propose to present to you a brief history of the Edict of Nantes, its original provisions, its temporary defeat and ultimate triumph.

LITERATURE.

The literature of the Edict of Nantes and its Revocation (which are usually treated together) is very extensive. I mention the following works, most of which I have consulted for this essay:—DUMONT: *Corps diplomatique universel du droit des gens* (Amsterdam, 1726), V. A. 545 *sqq.* ELIE BENOÎT: *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes* (Delft, 1693-'95, 5 vols.). DE THOU (THUANUS): *Historiarum libri cxxxviii. ab anno 1546 ad annum 1607*, Book cxxii. (London ed., 1733). MARTIN: *Histoire de France*, tome x., 421-425; xiii., 599-615; xiv., 37-46 (fourth ed., Paris, 1878). L. ANGUEZ: *Histoire des Assemblées Politiques des Réformés en France, 1573-1622* (Paris, 1859), p. 82 *sqq.*, 188 *sqq.* G. VON POLENZ: *Geschichte des französischen Calvinismus*, vol. III. (Gotha, 1864), pp. 644-866. RANKE: *Französische Geschichte*, II., 39-59; III., 454-484 (third ed., Stuttgart, 1877). L. AGUESSE: *Histoire de l'établissement du protestantisme en France* (Paris, 1886), tome IV., 585 *sqq.* (The text of the Edict is given in an appendix, IV., 601-620). BORDIER et CHARTON: *Histoire de France*, II., 109 *sqq.*, 274 *sqq.* (Paris, 1878). *Bulletin historique et littéraire de la société de l'histoire du protestantisme français*, 34^e année, Nos. 9 et 10 (Paris, 1885). LÉON PILATTE: *Edits, Déclarations et Arrêts concernant la religion*

* Read before the Huguenot Society of America, March 21st, 1889.

prétendue réformée, 1662-1751 (Paris, 1885; the Edict of Nantes is given first, pp. i.-lxxxii.). HENRY M. BAIRD: *The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre* (New York, 1886), II., 414 sqq.; and his oration at the Huguenot Society's "Commemoration of the Bi-Centenary of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes," New York, 1886, p. 24 sqq. THEOD. SCHOTT: *Die Aufhebung des Ediktes von Nantes* (Halle, 1885). Also a number of biographical articles in the important biographical work *La France protestante par MM. Eugène et Émile Haag*, Paris, 1877, sqq., 10 vols. (second ed. by H. Bordier).

HENRY IV. AND THE EDICT OF NANTES.

The ever-memorable Edict of Nantes, the ancient capital of Brittany, was issued and signed by Henry IV., April 13th, 1598, and ratified by the Parliament of Paris, February 25th, 1599. It bears the title: "*Edit du Roy sur la Pacification des Troubles de ce Royaume.*" It brought the stormy period of the French Reformation to a close.

Henry of Navarre, the descendant of Hugo Capet, the political and military leader of the Huguenots, as the Calvinists were called, and protector of their religion, ascended by hereditary right the throne of France as Henry IV., August 2nd, 1589, abjured from policy the Protestant religion, and professed the faith of the great majority of Frenchmen at St. Denis, July 25th, 1593, but secured five years later, according to repeated promise, a legal status to his former associates in arms and religion. Before that time they were a proscribed party, and depended altogether on the fortunes of war. They achieved temporary concessions by their victories, but lost them again at the renewal of hostilities, and would probably have been overpowered in the end by the vast majority of Roman Catholics, who had the active sympathy of all papal countries.

The number of Calvinistic congregations at the time of the accession of Henry IV. was over 750, with a membership of perhaps one million, or one-twentieth part of the whole population. According to a statement not sufficiently authenti-

cated, there were then 274,000 Protestant families, or 1,250,000 souls, in France.*

They were then a strong political as well as religious party, and occupied many fortified places.

The Edict of Nantes was prepared by a commission which included such men as Gaspard de Schomberg and the distinguished historian and jurist Jacques Auguste de Thou. It is a long and complicated document, containing: (1) ninety-two public articles; (2) fifty-six "secret" articles; (3) a "brevet" or patent of the king; (4) a second set of twenty-three "secret" articles, which were added on the last day of April, 1598.

The first of these four papers is the most important, and expressly declares the Edict to be "perpetual and irrevocable."† The Edict proclaims no general principle, but makes important concessions. It is a statesmanlike recognition of the rights of a highly respectable and influential minority, as far as existing circumstances seemed to demand and to permit. It is based upon previous pacification Edicts of 1563, 1570, 1577, enlarged them, and gave them permanency.

The chief provisions of the Edict are as follows:

The Huguenots were guaranteed full personal liberty in any part of France, without molestation on account of their religious opinions, and made eligible to all secular offices of trust, honor or emolument. For their special protection special tribunals, called "Chambers of the Edict," were instituted in the Parliaments. They are allowed free access to the schools, colleges and hospitals; they may establish their own schools and universities, and publish religious books in the places where their worship is allowed; portions of the public cemeteries or special cemeteries are assigned to them for the peaceful burial of their dead; they are authorized to hold consistories, colloquies, provincial and national synods.

In the "brevet" or patent, the King pledges the annual sum of 45,000 crowns from the public treasury, for the support

* See the note in Martin, X., 575. He reduces the number of congregations to 500, but it is usually stated at 760 or more.

† "Edict perpétuel et irrévocable," at the close of the introduction.

of their clergy and the expenses of the synods. The possession of their fortified cities was guaranteed to them for a term of eight years, and an annual sum of 180,000 crowns was set apart for the maintenance of the garrisons.*

But here the principle of justice and equality ceased. The public worship of the Huguenots was restricted to certain cities and places where it had been recently (in 1596 and 1597) maintained. It was forbidden in Paris and the surrounding district of five leagues, in the residences of the court and other large cities, where worship could only be held in private houses and within closed doors. Consequently the Huguenots had often to walk or ride from ten to thirty miles to hear a Protestant sermon (*prêche*). Moreover, their creed is disparaged in the Edict by the designation of the *pretended* Reformed religion.† The Roman Catholic religion remained in every respect the only religion of the State, and the Protestants were required to pay the tithe to the clergy, to respect the fasts and feasts, and to conform to the marriage laws of the Roman Church.

The Edict, therefore, falls far short of religious liberty and equality. It recognizes fully the liberty of private conscience, but restricts the liberty of public worship. It is "a compromise between natural justice and social necessity."‡ But it goes as far as practicable, and marks a great advance beyond the public opinion of that age. It deserves to be ranked "among the grandest monuments of European civilization."§ It is the first attempt to recognize two forms of worship under the common patronage of the civil government, though with a decided preference for the religion of the majority. It anticipated the present system in France, which was introduced by the first Napoleon.

The Edict created the greatest agitation and opposition in France. The Huguenots feared another massacre of St. Bar-

* The pecuniary promises, however, were only partially fulfilled.

† "*La religion prétendue réformée*"; and the Huguenots are styled, "*Les prétendus réformés*."

‡ Augustin Thierry.

§ H. M. Baird, *The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre*, II., 420.

tholomew's Day. Processions were held and sermons preached against it. Rome, true to her instincts, denounced it in unmeasured terms. When Pope Clement VIII. was informed of its ratification, he declared to Cardinal d'Ossat, the French ambassador (as he reported to the King), that the "Edict is the most accursed that can be imagined, whereby liberty of conscience is granted to everybody, which is the worst thing in the world. In addition to this, the worship of that damnable sect is permitted throughout the kingdom; and the heretics are introduced into the courts of Parliament, and admitted to all charges, honors and dignities, so as henceforth to oppose everything that might turn to the advantage of the Catholic religion, and so as to promote and further heresy. Moreover, I see the King has made this Edict at a time when he is at peace both within and without his realm; so that it cannot be said that he has been compelled to make it." This unmeasured denunciation is quite in keeping with the glorification of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day by Pope Gregory XIII., who responded to it by a *Te Deum* in the churches of Rome, and commemorated it by a medal representing "the slaughter of the Huguenots" by an angel of wrath.

Henry regarded the threats of the Pope as empty clouds, from which no lightning nor thunder was to be feared. He adroitly maintained a friendly political neutrality towards the two religious parties of his kingdom, till he fell by the knife of an assassin, May 14th, 1610, in the midst of his brilliant career and plans for a military campaign against Germany, and a possible reconstruction of the map of Europe. The crime of François Ravailac has often been traced to Jesuitical inspiration in revenge for the Edict of Nantes, but the Bishop of Paris, Cardinal Gondy, solemnly attested the innocence of the Catholic Church and the order of the Jesuits. The assassin refused, even under frightful tortures, to disclose any name, but assigned as his motive that the king would not bring the Huguenots back to the Catholic Church, and that he intended to make war against the Pope, that is, against God.* He was

* "Que dieu estoit le pape, et le pape estoit dieu." Ranke, *Frans. Geschichte*, II., 130.

a wild, half-crazy fanatic, who associated with the most bigoted monks and priests, and embodied the Romish indignation against the Edict of Nantes, as the assassin of President Lincoln embodied the spirit of the pro-slavery rebellion. Ravail-lac was torn to pieces by four horses. Pope Paul V. saw in the tragic fate of Henry IV. a divine chastisement.*

Henry IV. is the most French and the most popular of all French kings, and combined the virtues and vices of his nation. The saying, "Paris is worth a mass," though not authentic, expresses the selfish motive of his submission to Rome, but he soothed his conscience by a patriotic motive of duty to the State, and by the substantial service he did to the Hugue-nots in just return for their services to him and to France. He had serious moments in which he feared that, by abjuring his faith, he had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, as he confessed to a Protestant friend and counselor, Agrippa d'Aubigné, in a dangerous illness; and he told once to the Landgrave of Hesse that he intended before his death to declare once more his preference for the Reformed faith. † He was the pacificator of France, a just and far-sighted statesman, and died a martyr of religious liberty. ‡

The Edict of Nantes was repeatedly confirmed—by Marie de Médicis, May 22nd, 1610; by Louis XIII., October 1st, 1614, and in March, 1626; by Anne d'Autriche, the widow of Louis XIII., July 8th, 1643; and by Louis XIV., May 21st, 1652—but never fully carried out, and often violated. At every national Synod complaints were made of non-payment of the promised aid.

* "*Deus gentium fecit hoc, quia datus erat in reprobum sensum.*" Ranke, II., 132.

† Ranke, II., 100, and Rommel's *Correspondance de Henry IV.*, p. 79, as quoted by Ranke. I have some doubts on this subject; for the last word of Henry to Agrippa d'Aubigné was: "*Je tiens ma vie temporelle et spirituelle entre les mains du pape, que je reconnais pour le véritable vicair de Dieu.*"—*La France Protestante*, I., 485.

‡ Martin, X., 571: *Les penseurs ne cesseront jamais d'honorer en lui le précurseur d'une Europe nouvelle, l'esprit juste et profond, . . . le champion enfin et le martyr de la plus sainte des libertés, de la liberté de conscience.*"

HALF A CENTURY OF REPOSE AND PROSPERITY.

Nevertheless the Reformed Church of France flourished for half a century after the Edict, and commended herself to Christendom by a high order of intelligence, virtue and piety. Her members were among the most intelligent, industrious, conscientious and useful citizens. Her academies and theological seminaries at Montauban, Saumur, Nîmes and Sedan took a high rank in sacred and secular scholarship, and attracted foreigners, even princes of the house of Brandenburg. Her divines, controversialists and preachers, such as Daillé, Blondel, Basnage, Cappel, Amyraut, La Place, Du Moulin, Jurieu, made valuable contributions to the literature of France, and indirectly to the revival of the Roman Church, which would scarcely have produced a Bossuet, a Fénelon and a Pascal without the influence of the Reformation. John Calvin laid the foundation for classical French prose. The pulpit of Charenton on the Seine, a few miles above Paris, had a succession of eloquent preachers, as Daillé, Drelincourt, Allis, Mestrezat, Claude. While the Roman Church was agitated by the Jansenist controversy, the Calvinists of the schools of Montauban, Saumur and Sedan discussed the subtle questions of inspiration, predestination and imputation, and ably conducted the argument against the Romanists. They maintained strict discipline in their churches, and held provincial and national synods; for the last time in Loudun (Anjou), in 1659, under the moderatorship of Daillé, when an order from Louis XIV. prohibited such synods in future, on the frivolous pretext that they were too expensive and too troublesome.

Nor were the Huguenots at all behind their Catholic neighbors in secular pursuits, but rather excelled them. They developed the agriculture, commerce and manufactures of the country. They furnished eminent men to all the learned professions, to the army and to the navy. The true founder of the French Academy and its first secretary was a firm Protestant, Valentin Conrart, whom Richelieu kept in office till his death.* It is asserted that the finest victories of French arms

* *La France Protestante*, IV., 575 sq.

under Louis XIII. and XIV. were due to captains of the Huguenot faith, as the Count de Gassion, Marshal Guebriant, Marshal Rantzau, the Duke de la Force, the Duke de Rohan, Marshal du Chatillon, Admiral Du Quesne, Schomberg, Marshal Turenne (whose mother was a daughter of Prince William of Orange); though some of them, like Turenne in his old age, made their submission to the Catholic Church, together with most of the nobility during the reign of Louis XIV.*

Cardinal Richelieu, the great prime minister of Louis XIII., destroyed the power of the Huguenots as a political party by the capture of their main fortress of La Rochelle (1628), which from the year 1568 had been virtually an independent republic; but he pardoned them on the single condition of laying down their arms and swearing fidelity to their king, and expressly guaranteed to them the free exercise of their religion by the treaty of Alais in 1629.

PERSECUTION OF THE HUGUENOTS UNDER LOUIS XIV.

With the long reign of Louis XIV. (1643-1715), the most brilliant and most despotic of French kings, and yet the slave of women, began without cause and provocation a series of systematic and cold-blooded vexations and persecutions of the Huguenots, which forms one of the most disgraceful chapters in the history of France.†

He was educated in the Roman Church and early formed the conviction that the unity of the State and the nation required unity of religion. He could not bear the idea that any of his subjects should differ from him, and deem their religion better than his. He wanted to be absolute monarch over his subjects, with his will as the supreme law. He was the embodiment of state-craft. His motto was "*L'état c'est moi.*"

* See the details in the second chapter of Weiss, *History of the French Prot. Refugees*, Vol. I., 49 *sqq.*, and sketches of all these distinguished Huguenots in *La France Protestante*.

† Martin (XIV., 54) says that history records greater effusions of blood, "*mais aucun spectacle ne blesse au même point le sens moral et l'humanité, que cette persécution exercée à froid et d'après des idées abstraites, sans l'excuse de la lutte et du danger, sans la fièvre ardente des batailles et des révolutions.*"

He wished to crown his military conquests by the extermination of heresy, and was encouraged in it by his advisers. He hoped thereby to conciliate the Pope, whom he made his enemy by the Gallican liberties, and to atone for his many adulterous amours. These political and religious motives drew him step by step into a course of actions which made his otherwise glorious and prosperous reign most inglorious and ruinous in its ultimate consequences. He aspired to become "Louis the Great," but he only reached the distinction of "the Great Monarch" with his flatterers and admirers, and even that title is marred by his bigotry, cruelty and licentiousness.

When a youth of eighteen, he declared (July 18th, 1656) that he had "always considered the Edict of Nantes as a singular work of the perfect prudence of Henry the Great, our grandfather." But he acted on the opposite view after the year 1661. He withdrew one privilege after another from the Huguenots. The legal tribunals supported him by giving the least favorable interpretation to the legislative provisions for their protection, and the most favorable interpretation to the laws for the dominant Church. Whatever was not expressly granted to the Huguenots in the Edict of Nantes was denied them. Conversion to Protestantism was prohibited under heavy penalties, while conversion to Romanism was facilitated in every way by promises and threats. The Protestants were gradually removed from the offices of state and professions of emolument; even women were denied the humble avocations of midwives, milliners and laundresses. Their "temples" were destroyed or confiscated when they stood inconveniently near the parish church, when the sound of psalm-singing disturbed the solemn mass, or when no clear title of the land could be produced. Thus Béarn, the mother province of French Protestantism, lost fifteen out of twenty churches at a stroke of the pen; the remaining five were destroyed in May, 1685, and the Protestant preachers expelled from the province that the Jesuits might begin their work of conversion without hindrance. The Chambers of the Edict were abolished. The colleges of Sedan, Montpellier, Saumur and Montauban were closed, and the buildings given over to the Jesuits. Huguenot school-

masters were forbidden to teach anything but reading, writing and arithmetic. All preaching and writing against Catholicism were strictly interdicted. Infants must be baptized within twenty-four hours by priests, if no Protestant preacher was within reach, as was often the case. A child of seven years was permitted to profess the Roman religion against the will of the parents, and could not afterwards return to Protestantism. Emigration was forbidden, and the half of the goods of the emigrants was promised to the informers.

These iniquitous measures were crowned by the infamous dragonades. Companies of coarse troopers were billeted in times of peace upon the families of the Huguenots, in order to force their wholesale conversion or ruin by every kind of violence short of rape and deliberate murder. This was done in all the districts except that of Paris, where the King wished to appear humane and enlightened. The dragoons turned the parlors into stables, broke the furniture, compelled the proprietors to furnish them with every delicacy of the market, insulted women with ribald jests and songs, disturbed the night's rest and made life unendurable.

Let us hear the reports of the best-informed French historians.

"The soldiers," reports Benoît, a contemporary historian,* "offered indignities to the women which modesty does not suffer me to describe. The officers were no better than the soldiers. They spat in the women's faces; they made them lie down in their presence upon burning coals; they forced them to put their heads in ovens, the vapor of which was hot enough to suffocate them. Their chief study was to discover torments which should be painful without being mortal."

"In many villages," says Professor Charles Weiss,† "the priests followed the dragoons through the streets, crying: 'Courage, gentlemen; it is the intention of the king that these dogs of Huguenots should be pillaged and sacked.' The soldiers entered the houses, sword in hand, sometimes

* *Hist. of the Ed. of Nantes*, Book XII., Vol. V., p. 833 sq.

† *Hist. of the French Prot. Refugees*, I., 93 sq.

crying 'Kill! kill!' to frighten the women and children. So long as the inhabitants could satisfy their rapacity, they suffered no worse than pillage. But when their money was expended, the price of their furniture consumed, and the ornaments and garments of their wives disposed of, the dragoons either seized them by the hair to drag them to church; or, if they suffered them to remain in their houses, they made use of threats, outrages and even tortures to compel them to be converted. They burnt, at slow fires, the feet and hands of some; they broke the ribs, legs or arms of others with blows of sticks. Many had their lips burned with hot irons. Others were cast into damp dungeons, with threats of leaving them there to rot. The soldiers said that everything was permitted to them, except murder and rape."

The same writer gives several cases of the barbarous cruelty of these persecutions. An old gentleman of Nîmes, named M. de Lacassaque, after having been robbed of his sleep for many days, at last professed submission to the Roman Church. "Behold, now you may take your rest," said the Bishop Séquier. "Alas, my lord," replied the unfortunate man, "I no longer expect rest, but in heaven, and God grant that what I have done this day may not close its gate upon me." His wife, disguised as a servant-maid, was wandering through the woods, where many of the women were overtaken with the pains of childbirth. A pastor at Bordeaux, a brother of Bayle, was thrown by the order of Louvois into a dungeon, called "The Hell," and kept there for five months till death delivered him from his torments. The victims in these horrible dungeons "could not remain standing, sitting or lying at length. They were let down into them with ropes, and were drawn up again every day to have inflicted upon them scourgings, either with a stick or the strappado. Many, after a few weeks' imprisonment, issued from the dungeons of Grenoble without hair or teeth."

These cruelties had their effect upon weak human nature. The sufferers sought refuge in flight or insincere submission. "The dragoons," wrote Madame de Sévigné, "have been very good missionaries; the preachers who will be sent presently

will render the work perfect." The governors of the provinces sent to the King exaggerated reports monthly and weekly of thousands of so-called new converts (*nouveaux convertis*), 60,000 in the district of Bordeaux, 20,000 in and around Montauban, 30,000 in Dauphiné, etc., without informing him of the means employed, or letting the complaints of the persecuted reach his ears, and made him believe that Protestantism was annihilated in France.

In this belief he was strengthened and encouraged to take the final step of revocation by his courtiers and advisers, especially by Louvois, his minister of war; Père la Chaise, his confessor; and Madame de Maintenon, his last mistress, the most influential woman in France, who had herself been a Calvinist (being the granddaughter of Agrippa d'Aubigné, a friend of Henry IV., and leader of the Huguenots by sword and pen), but was all the more zealous for her new faith, and acquired complete control over the head and heart of her royal lover, who secretly married her in 1684.

REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.

In the year 1685 the King revoked the "irrevocable" Edict of his grandfather by a formal decree, signed by his hand at Fontainebleau on the 18th* and registered on the 22nd of October, eighty-seven years after the Edict of Nantes and seventy-five years after the death of Henry IV. It was one of the darkest days in the history of France and the history of liberty.

In the Edict of Revocation, Louis XIV., after declaring that the greatest part of his Protestant subjects had embraced the Catholic religion and made the Edict of Nantes useless, prohibits the worship of Protestants, orders the immediate destruction of their temples, the closing of their schools, the banishment of their ministers within a fortnight on pain of death, and the Roman Catholic baptism of every new-born babe; while laymen are forbidden to leave the country, the

* Or 17th. The Edict gives only the month.

men under peril of being condemned for life to the galleys, the women to perpetual imprisonment.

A series of proclamations followed from time to time to enforce this measure of injustice and cruelty.

The Edict extended also to the French colonies in America. The King informed the Governor de Denonville of Canada, in May, 1686, of the brilliant success of the Revocation in France, and instructed him to quarter his troops in the houses of any remaining Huguenots, or to imprison them, but to be careful to accompany this rigorous treatment with the necessary provisions for their religious instruction, to be procured from the bishop. The Governor informed him that there was not a heretic in Canada.* For the Huguenots were excluded from emigrating to New France in 1633, and the settlement given into the hands of Jesuit missionaries, whose heroic labors among the Indians in the Northwest deserve all credit. The conflict of England and France for the possession of North America ended with the defeat of France. But the French Canadians are as a mass to this day as ignorant and bigoted as their ancestors in the age of Louis XIV., which is stereotyped and petrified, as it were, in the province of Quebec.

On the very day when the Edict of Revocation was registered (October 22nd), the destruction of the eight hundred Protestant houses of worship began with the demolition of the large temple of Charenton, and the erection of a cross with the royal arms on the ruins.† Of the temple of Nîmes a solitary stone was accidentally left, which bore the inscription: "Here is the house of God, here is the gate of heaven."

France had at that time about a million and a half of Protestants among twenty millions of inhabitants. ‡

* Ch. W. Baird, *Hist. of the Hug. Emigration to America*, I., 126.

† See a picture of the temple in Bordier and Charton, *Histoire de France*, II., 194, and its destruction, p. 282, and a description in the *Bulletin historique et littéraire* of the "Society of the History of French Protestantism" for Sept. and Oct., 1885, p. 388 *sqq.*

‡ This is the estimate of Martin, XIV., 54, after deducting the loss sustained by conversions and emigration in the preceding twenty years, which Jurieu estimates at more than 200,000. Contemporary estimates vary between 800,000 and 2,000,000.

APPROVAL OF THE REVOCATION BY THE ROMAN CLERGY
AND THE POPE.

Le Tellier, who prepared and countersigned the Revocation, died a few days after (October 31st), with the song of Simeon, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Lord, in peace." The Gallican Church, through its most eminent bishops and pulpit orators, with a few noble exceptions, as that of Fénelon, congratulated the infatuated King on this inglorious and disastrous deed. The great Bossuet, with all his zeal for the Gallican liberties which he formulated in 1682, hated and combatted Protestantism as a deadly heresy, and took the lead in blind laudations of Louis. He called him a new Constantine, a new Theodosius, a new Marcian, a new Charlemagne, who established the faith, who exterminated the heretics. "Through your exertions," he addressed the King, "heresy exists no longer. God alone could perform this miracle. King of heaven, preserve the king of the earth, is the prayer of the churches, is the prayer of the bishops."* Fléchier expressed the same enthusiastic joy over the destruction of heresy. Abbé Tallemant after the razing of the Protestant church at Charenton, exclaimed before the French Academy: "Happy ruins! which are the finest trophy France has ever seen. . . . There is nothing but the fable of the vanquished hydra, which can aid us to express in some degree our feelings of admiration at this astonishing victory." Massillon, in his funeral oration on Louis XIV., eulogized chiefly his great "victory over heresy," which fell at his first blow and was forced "either to conceal itself in the darkness from which it emerged, or to cross the sea and to carry with it its false gods, its wrath and its bitterness into foreign lands."† The clergy echoed these laudations. Municipal corporations, courts of justice, academies and universities rivaled in expressions of admiration for the King; medals were struck, which represent him crowned by Religion for having brought back to

* Cardinal Hergenröther (*Kirchengesch.*, III., 433) calls Bossuet the "church father of liberal Catholic theology, which would kiss the Pope's toe, but bind his hands and make the Church a tool of the State."

† Weiss, I., 123.

the Church two millions of Calvinists; statues were erected to "the destructor of heresy."

Pope Innocent XI., forgetting for a moment his quarrel with Louis XIV., on account of the assertion of the Gallican liberties, which deny the infallibility and temporal power of the Pope, praised him, in answer to official information, for an action fully worthy of "the most Christian king" (Nov. 16th, 1685), and celebrated the Revocation with a *Te Deum* (March, 1686), as his predecessor had celebrated the massacre of St. Bartholomew.*

THE VERDICT OF HISTORY.

The verdict of history differs widely from Louis XIV., Bossuet and the Pope. Catholic France was by no means unanimous in the approval of the Revocation, even at that time. The Duke de Saint-Simon, a courtier of Louis XIV., a great writer and a good Catholic (a zealous Jansenist and friend of Fénelon), was only ten years of age when the Edict of Revocation was issued, but lived long enough to see its

* The brief is printed in Latin and French in *Edits, Déclarations et Arrêts concernant la religion prétendue réformée* (Paris, 1885), p. 605 sq. The Pope begins: "Carissime in Christo fili noster," etc. "Cum præ cæteris illustribus documentis quæ ingenitam Majestatis tuæ pietatem abunde declarant, maxime excellat eximius ille regeque christianissimo dignus plane zelus, quo strenue incensus faventes istius regni hæreticis constitutiones penitus abrogasti, fideique orthodoxæ propagationi sapientissimis editis decretis egregie consuluisti, sicut nobis exposuit dilectus filius, nobilis vir dux d'Estrées," etc. The Pope predicts: "Recensébit profecto suis in fastis catholica ecclesia tam grande tuæ erga ipsam devotionis opus, nomenque tuum non interituris præconiis prosequetur."

Dr. Döllinger (*Kirche und Kirchen*, 1861, p. xxxiii.) and Cardinal Hergenröther (*Kirchengeschichte*, III., 597, 3d ed., 1886) assert that Pope Innocent disapproved the persecution. But he merely disapproved, in a roundabout way, the novel and uncatholic method of converting heretics by dragoons or "armed apostles," and tried to restrain James II. from his suicidal folly. I am glad, however, that such a Catholic scholar and dignitary as Hergenröther condemns the "terrible severity" of Louis XIV., though he prudently (must we not say, unfairly?) ignores the approval of Bossuet and the other lights of the French pulpit, as well as the *Te Deum* sung in Rome. His words are: "Sowohl französische Bischöfe, wie Fénelon, als Papst Innocenz XI. missbilligten die furchtbare Härte; letzterer liess durch den Nuntius d'Adda in London den König Jacob II. zu Vorstellungen dagegen aufmuntern."

consequences, and described them in the darkest, yet most truthful colors. The voice of Protestant Europe condemned it, and answered by offers of hospitality to the victims of persecution. Among modern historians there is scarcely a difference of opinion on the subject.

The Revocation was a moral crime, a political blunder and a national disaster. It deprived France of many thousands of her best citizens, ruined her manufactures and commerce, subjected her for a long time to the pillage of the dragoons, brought untold misery upon individuals, families and communities, armed parents against children and children against parents, covered the land with hypocrisy, perjury and sacrilege, roused the indignation of the Protestant world, filled the refugees with hatred of their native country, and was the remote cause of the French Revolution.*

We may go even further, and say that the recent humiliation of France in the war of 1870 was the result of the policy of Louis XIV. with his Protestant subjects, and of his unjust wars against Holland and Germany, the savage devastation of the Palatinate and the robbery of Strasburg. When the German historian Ranke met the French historian and statesman Thiers at Vienna, after the downfall of the second empire at Sedan, he is reported to have told him that the Germans were making war, not upon Napoleon, nor the empire, nor the republic, still less upon the French people, but upon Louis

* This is substantially the judgment of the Duke de Saint-Simon, in his *Mémoires*, ch. 313, quoted in French by Bordier (II., 282 sq.), and in English by Ch. W. Baird, *Hist. of the Hug. Emigration to America*, I., 259. Comp. also the spirited summary in Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, the judgments of Martin, Bordier, Weiss and other historians. Dr. Döllinger, in an essay on Louis XIV. (*Akademische Vorträge*, 1888, Vol. I., 311), makes the striking remark, that that man would have been the greatest benefactor of the king and of France, who with the authority of a Hebrew prophet would have warned him in 1685 to this effect: Do not revoke the Edict of Nantes! You will forge a chain of oppressions; you will make more hypocrites than believers, and desecrate the sacred rites of the Church; you will drive hundreds of thousands of the most conscientious citizens out of the land; you will inflame bloody civil wars; you will alienate the hearts of foreign nations; you will raise a generation of infidels who will overthrow your throne and persecute and destroy your Church, which now offers you the weapons and instruments against the sons of your people.

Quatorze ; whereupon Thiers wondered at the long memory of the Germans.

THE GREAT EXODUS.*

The Revocation forced the Protestant ministers to leave the country, and the laymen to remain at home. Now the emigration which had begun in the early stages of the persecution assumed the proportion of a vast exodus, which may be compared to the exodus of Israel from the oppression of Pharaoh, and forms one of the most glorious, as the Revocation forms one of the most inglorious, chapters in the history of the French people. The Huguenot emigration for the sake of religion throws all similar emigrations into the shade. No church can boast of a larger army of confessors and martyrs of conscience than the Calvinistic Churches of France and of Holland.

The Huguenots as a rule were superior to the mass of the Roman Catholic population outside of Paris in intelligence, industry and virtue, and the emigrants were the élite of the Huguenots, including such distinguished names as Claude, Jurieu, Bayle, Basnage, Lenfant, Beausobre, Abbadie, Saurin, Ancillon, Tronchin, Constant, Candolle, Denis Papin, de Blois, not to count the much larger number of their equally distinguished descendants in other countries.

Their high moral character is shown by the very fact of their emigration. They left their property and native land in

* On the Huguenot emigration and settlements in foreign lands, see the following works besides those already quoted:—CHARLES WEISS (Professor of History in the Lycée Bonaparte): *Histoire des réfugiés protestants de France*, Paris, 1853, 2 vols. (English translation by W. H. Herbert, N. Y., 1854). SAM. SMILES: *The Huguenots, their Settlements, Churches, and Industries in England and Ireland*, London, 1867 (Am. ed. with appendix by G. P. Disosway, N. Y., 1867). R. LANE POOLE: *History of the Huguenots of the Dispersion at the Recall of the Edict of Nantes*, London, 1880. DAVID C. A. AGNEW (of the Free Church of Scotland): *Protestant Exiles from France, chiefly in the Reign of Louis XIV.*; or *The Huguenot Refugees and their Descendants in Great Britain and Ireland*, London and Edinburgh, 1866; second ed., 1871, in 3 vols.; third ed., 1886, in 2 large vols. C. W. BAIRD: *History of the Huguenot Emigration to America*, New York, 1882, 2 vols. *The Collections of the HUGUENOT SOCIETY OF AMERICA*, New York, 1886 sqq.

obedience to their conscience and at the risk of their lives. They showed their heroism in flight under the greatest hardships, in constant dread of the heartless pursuers. They made their way to a place of safety, singly or with women and children, in all sorts of disguise,—as pilgrims, as couriers, as sportsmen with their guns upon the shoulder, as peasants driving cattle,—on untrodden roads, travelling by night and passing the day in forests or caverns, hid under bales of goods and heaps of coal or in empty casks on English and Dutch merchant vessels. “Persons brought up in every luxury, pregnant women, old men, invalids and children rivaled each other in constancy, hoping to escape their persecutors.”

Those who were caught in the flight had to endure the extreme hardships of the galleys at Marseilles and Toulon, chained two and two, plying the long and heavy oars, exposed to the heat of the day and the chill of the night, without being able to change their position beyond the length of their chain.

Men made of such stuff and capable of such sacrifices are worthy of a place of honor and glory among the heroes of faith and “the noble army of martyrs.”

The total number of French refugees cannot be exactly ascertained, and is variously stated at 300,000 up to a million. Counting all the Huguenots who emigrated before and after the Revocation, for the sake of religion, half a million is probably not too high an estimate.*

* Vauban counted 100,000 from 1684 to 1691; Jurieu more than 200,000 in 1687; Benoît 200,000 in 1695; Basnage, an illustrious refugee, speaks vaguely of from 300,000 to 400,000; others swell the number still more; while Martin (XIV., 59) and Bordier (II., 283) reduce it to 250,000, but only from the Revocation to the beginning of the following century. Professor Charles Weiss (Vol. I., p. 3 of the English translation) estimates the number of refugees during the last fifteen years of the seventeenth century at from 250,000 to 300,000, and gives several details of the diminution of the population in various cities and provinces according to the official reports of 1698, but these reports are incomplete, and cover only a few years. The population of La Rochelle decreased more than one-third. Of 1,938 Protestant families in the district of Paris, 1,202 emigrated, and only 731 remained behind. In the district of Meaux, 1,000 families out of 1,500 made their escape. In Burgundy about one-third of the Protestants expatriated themselves. Normandy, which had formerly at least 200,000 Protestant families, suffered most. In Picardy, as in

THE HUGUENOTS IN FOREIGN LANDS.

The loss of France was a gain to foreign lands. The curse of the Revocation was turned into a blessing. Providence overrules the counsels of bad men, and brings good out of evil.

The Huguenot refugees excited the active sympathy of all Protestant countries, and found new homes in Switzerland, England, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and in the colonies of North America. They enriched the lands of their adoption by their intelligence, industry, virtue and the charms of refined manners. Their names and those of their descendants are on honorable record in the theological, literary, political and military history of those countries.

Those who emigrated to Holland and England lent effectual aid as private soldiers and officers, trained under Turenne and Condé, to William of Orange in the Revolution of 1688, and the defeat of the Jacobite rebellion in Ireland, aided by Louis XIV., in the following year. In the battle of the Boyne (July 1st, 1690) the Huguenots first crossed the river under the command of Count de Schomberg, who addressed them: "Come, friends, remember your courage and your griefs; your persecutors are before you." Such acts of retaliation, which transplanted the civil war to foreign soil, are, of course, offensive to French patriotism, and obscure the fame of bravery. But the great majority devoted themselves to the arts of peace, greatly enlarged the commerce and navigation, and introduced or improved the manufacture of silks, linen, hats, tapestry. Allix, Abbadie and Jacques Saurin (before his call to the Hague in 1705) graced the pulpits of London with their eloquence.*

The greatness of Prussia dates from that period, and was promoted by the French Reformed element. In the same month in which Louis XIV. signed the Revocation of the

Normandy, the vicinity of the sea favored the escape into Holland and England. Pastor N. Weiss (secretary and librarian of the "Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français") estimates the whole number of refugees at from 500,000 to 600,000. See his *La Sortie de France pour cause de religion de Daniel Brousson et de sa famille*, Paris, 1885, p. vi.

* Weiss, *l. c.*, I., 267 sqq.

Edict, Frederick William, the great Elector of Brandenburg (who had received a French Protestant education at the court of the princes of Orange, and married Louisa Henrietta, a daughter of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry and a descendant of Admiral Coligny), signed at Potsdam an Edict expressive of warm sympathy with the persecuted Huguenots, and offering inducements to those who might wish to settle in his dominions (October 29th, 1685). He received about 20,000 refugees, including such distinguished scholars as Lenfant, Beausobre, Vignole, Lacroze, Abbadie (who afterwards settled in England), able journalists, skilled artisans and brave officers. He made liberal provision from his private purse for their temporal and spiritual needs in Berlin and other cities. "I will sell," he said, "my silver plate before they shall suffer want." Several Huguenot churches remain to this day living monuments of that noble hospitality, which has borne rich fruit in subsequent history down to the victories of the Franco-German War of 1870.

It should be added, however, that he did not permit the free development of the presbyterian and synodical self-government which would interfere with his summepiscopate.

Huguenot colonies settled also in Halle, Magdeburg, Stendal, Halberstadt, Calb, Spandau, Königsberg, Hamburg, Frankfort-on-the-Oder, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Cassel, Hanau, Friedrichsdorf in Hesse and other places of Germany, and have in part preserved the French language in public worship to this day.*

In American history the influence of the Huguenot element is very conspicuous, and out of proportion to the extent of immigration. It may be traced in the French names of our patriots, statesmen, philanthropists and ministers of the gospel. One of the chaplains of the old Continental Congress,

* Comp. Charles Ancillon, *Histoire de l'établissement des Réfugiés dans les États de son Altesse Électorale de Brandebourg*, 1690. Weiss, *l. c.*, Book II. (p. 127 sqq.). E. Muret, *Geschichte der französischen Kolonie in Brandenburg-Preussen*, 1885. Henri Tollin, *Geschichte der französischen Colonie von Magdeburg*, Halle, 1886-'87, 2 vols. In the first volume (p. 740), Tollin gives a full general history of Huguenot emigration to Germany.

during the War of Independence, Jacob Duché, of Philadelphia ; three of the seven Presidents of that Congress, Henry Laurens, of South Carolina, John Jay, of New York, Elias Boudinot, of New Jersey ; two of the four commissioners who signed the treaty of peace at Paris in 1782, Laurens and Jay ; the first Chief-Justice of the State of New York and the second Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, John Jay, were descendants of French Protestant refugees, and gave their influence to the establishment of the new republic on the basis of political and religious freedom. John Jay was also, as joint editor with Hamilton and Madison of *The Federalist*, one of the chief advocates and expounders of the Federal Constitution.

THE CHURCH OF THE DÉSERT.*

Louis XIV. vainly believed and declared, March 8th, 1715, that God had blessed his "pious intentions" to bring back the heretics and their children to the true church. But the Protestant religion was not dead in France ; it was only buried alive and continued to breathe, and at last burst the coffin. For a century the Reformed Church of France lived as a Church of the Désert, like the burning bush which it has chosen for its device, "*Flagror, non consumor.*" More than one-half of the Huguenots could or would not flee from their native land, and yet adhered to their faith in the face of confiscation, torture and death. They met for worship in forests, on the mountains, in caverns, under cover of the night. The awful silence of nature, the flickering torches, the reading of

* On this most interesting period of the French Reformed Church, I refer to CHARLES COQUEREL : *Histoire des Églises du Désert*, Paris, 1841. O. DOUEN : *Les premiers pasteurs du désert (1685-1700)*, Paris, 1879, 2 vols. EDMOND HUGUES : *Histoire de la Restauration du Protestantisme en France au XVIIIe siècle—Antoine Court—d'après des documents inédits*, Paris, 1875, 2 vols. *Les Synodes du Désert*, Paris, 1885, 2 vols., by the same. A. P. DARDIER : *Paul Rabaut, ses lettres à Antoine Court (1739-1755)*. *Dix-sept ans de la vie d'un apôtre du désert*, Paris (n. d.). The earlier work of A. VINET : *Histoire de la Prédication parmi les Réformés de France au dix-septième siècle*, Paris, 1860 (1841), comes down to Jacques Saurin (1677-1730), but belongs more properly to the previous period.

the Prophets, the plaintive strains of the Psalms, the solemn prayers, the sudden interruptions by the cries of sentinels, created a morbid excitement of religious feelings, and gave rise to a set of enthusiasts and visionaries who took the place of regular pastors and believed themselves inspired by God. They stirred up the revolt of the Camisards in the Cévennes, but it was soon put down by the armies of Louis XIV.

During that critical period, Providence raised a man of truly apostolic zeal and wisdom, Antoine Court (March 27th, 1695–June 15th, 1760), pastor at Nîmes, who consecrated his whole life to the Protestant Church of France, and is justly called its "Restorer." He collected the scattered members, called them from wild enthusiasm to sobriety, organized them into regular churches and established a seminary of learning at Lausanne for the training of ministers.

Paul Rabaut (1718–1792) continued this work in a faithful ministry of fifty years till his death, and lived to rejoice over the Edict of Toleration in 1787, when he could exclaim with Simeon's song, "Now lettest Thou depart Thy servant, O Lord, in peace." What a contrast to Chancellor Le Tellier, who departed with the same song after signing the Edict of Revocation.

The ministers trained for the Church of the Désert by Court and Rabaut were no great scholars or divines, but, what is more important, sincere and devoted Christians, zealous evangelists and faithful pastors.

The resurrection of the Huguenot Church and its continuance for a hundred years in spite of legal prohibition and systematic persecution by the State, is a marvel without a parallel in history, except in the Church of the first three centuries. The Huguenots were not even allowed to bury their dead in consecrated ground. The last case of a dragonade was the dispersion and arrest of a religious meeting in 1767 in a cavern of Orange, which served as a temple, but the prisoners were discharged without process, since they were only found guilty of mutual prayer and edification. The last preacher of "the désert" who was condemned to death for preaching the gospel, ascended the gallows with the old Huguenot hymn,

La voici l'heureuse journée. The day of deliverance was at hand. The midnight was past, the day was breaking.

The number of Calvinists in 1760 according to their calculation was 593,307, of whom 337,307 were entered by the pastors in their registers.* This number was considerably smaller than that before 1685, but very great under the circumstances, for every Protestant was true to his faith at the risk of exile or death. They had no aspiration to become a political party, as their ancestors had been before Richelieu; they were peaceful and patriotic, and never neglected to pray for the King and the government. The Parliament of Rouen which was not favorable to them, called them erring Christians, but loyal subjects of the King and valuable citizens of the State.

France rejected the Reformation and reaped the Revolution. The tyranny of Romanism provoked infidelity. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was followed by the temporary destruction of the Church in France.

The eighteenth century is the century of infidelity, which had its head-quarters in Paris. Voltaire (1694-1778) was its chief apostle, who ruled as an absolute monarch in the realm of literature. He was a master-architect of ruin, but unable to build up. He was essentially a mocker, though not without noble impulses for justice, liberty and humanity. Frederick the Great admired his genius but despised his character, and ascribed to him all the agility and malice of a monkey. Voltaire knew the Christian religion only in a distorted form, which it had assumed under Louis XIV. and Louis XV. in connection with worldliness and political despotism, and he never took the trouble to study seriously its true character in the Bible and in history. He hated the Roman Church of his day as the mother of superstition and the enemy of all freedom and progress. He employed his inexhaustible resources of sarcasm, irony and ridicule for her destruction. He gave expression to his malignant hatred in the terrible phrase, "Crush the wretch,"

**Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du Protest. Français*, 1886, p. 472. The present number is not much larger. It must be confessed that Protestantism has not made as much progress since 1787 as might have been expected from its vitality and intellectual and moral strength.

which frequently occurs in his works, and especially in his private letters. By the infamous wretch he meant no more or less than the Roman Church as a hierarchical institution, the intolerant, persecuting, Jesuitical Church of the Inquisition and the Revocation.*

But while we deplore his infidelity, we must give him credit for his triumphant advocacy of religious toleration, by which he revolutionized public opinion in France. This is his noblest deed. He went to great trouble and expense to rescue the memory of Jean Calas and to cause the reversion of his unjust condemnation, and thereby he dealt a death blow to the system of religious persecution.

THE TRIAL OF JEAN CALAS.

Jean Calas was a worthy Protestant merchant of Toulouse, and father of four sons and two daughters. One of his sons hung himself in a fit of melancholy, October 13th, 1761. A rumor arose that the unfortunate youth intended to profess the Roman religion the next day, and that the father had strangled him to prevent his conversion. The clergy stirred up the fanatical passions of the populace. Calas was arrested, accused

* "*Écrasez l'infâme.*" The word *infâme*, *infamous*, is also used as a noun in the sense of a convicted criminal, an infamous man or woman. Voltaire uses it as a feminine. It is often asserted, but denied by the best authorities, that he meant Christianity or even Christ. The writer of the Art. "Voltaire" in Pierre Larousse's *Grand Dict. universel du XIX. Siècle*, Tome XV., 1181, says that Voltaire by that phrase certainly intended no more than to designate "*la superstition, le fanatisme et l'intolérance, restes impurs du moyen âge, qui non seulement n'ont rien de religieux, mais sont même subversifs de toute idée religieuse.*" The same writer states that Voltaire was no atheist, but simply a deist, and that he returned in his later writings more and more from skepticism to deism. When Franklin asked him to bless his grandson, he laid his hands on him with the words, "*Dieu et la liberté.*" G. Saintsbury, in the *Encycl. Britannica*, Vol. XXIV., 292 (9th ed.), takes a similar view: "*L'infâme* is not God; it is not Christ; it is not Christianity; it is not even Catholicism. Its briefest equivalent may be given as 'persecuting and privileged orthodoxy' in general, and, more particularly, it is the particular system which Voltaire saw around him, of which he had felt the effects in his own exiles and the confiscations of his books, and of which he saw the still worse effects in the hideous sufferings of Calas and La Barre." Compare also the discussion of the phrase by Strauss, *Voltaire*, p. 188 sq., and Zeller, *Friedrich der Grosse als Philosoph*, p. 144 sqq.

by false witnesses, condemned by the Parliament of Toulouse, and broken alive on the wheel, March 10th, 1762. He protested his innocence to the last breath, bore his sufferings without a murmur and prayed God not to punish his judges, who were no doubt deceived by false witnesses. His little property was confiscated, and his children were imprisoned in a convent; but two sons escaped to Geneva. The revision of the process proved the complete innocence of Calas. The verdict of the highest legal tribunal of Paris unanimously reversed the verdict of the Parliament of Toulouse (March 9th, 1765); the property was restored to the family; and the King made the widow (who died an octogenarian in 1792) a present of thirty thousand francs; but the guilty parties were not punished.*

The case of Calas interested all France—yea, all Europe; it elicited no less than 145 publications, and was also brought upon the stage. The verdict of Toulouse was the last act of Huguenot persecution; the verdict of Paris was the death of the Edict of Revocation.

VOLTAIRE'S THEORY OF TOLERATION.

Voltaire did not defend Calas as a Protestant, but as an injured citizen. He cared no more for Protestantism as a religion than for Catholicism, but he did care for the natural rights of man and for justice. He exposed the case in his *Tract on Toleration* which appeared first in 1763, in several editions and languages, and had a most extensive circulation and a powerful effect.† When he held his last triumphant entry in Paris, he was hailed as “the Defender of Calas and Sirven.”

He advocated toleration as a right of justice, a duty of humanity, a condition of the prosperity of the State and as the only basis of peace between the State and religion and the different religions. Toleration promotes population. It alone

* Comp. Athan. Coquerel, Jr., *Jean Calas et sa famille*, Paris, 1858; 2d ed., 1869 (with all the documents, 527 pp.); Herzog, *Die Familie Calas und Voltaire*, 1868; Kohler, *Die Familie Calas*, Hamburg, 1871; *La France Protest.*, Vol. III., 471 sqq., 2d ed. (1881). The work of Coquerel is exhaustive.

† “*Traité sur la Tolérance à l'occasion de la mort de Jean Calas.*” Voltaire frequently speaks of toleration in his letters to D'Alembert.

makes society endurable. The Christian religion, he thought, ought to be the most tolerant, because Christians have been the most tolerant among men.

Yet Voltaire, Rousseau and the other French freethinkers of the eighteenth century maintained the right of the civil ruler over the religion of his country. Voltaire recognized (as he wrote to Catherine II.) only the temporal power, which may forbid any dogma contrary to the public good. Dissenters from the established religion should always be obliged to apply to the magistrate to hold their assemblies. Rousseau taught that all believers in an exclusive religion (that is, all Roman Catholics) should be banished, because such a belief was incompatible with the safety and tranquillity of society.

Through the influence of Voltaire, Rousseau and the Encyclopædists the doctrine of toleration, in conjunction with indifference and infidelity, pervaded French society and reduced the intolerant legislation of Louis XIV. to a dead letter. The leaders of public opinion were nominally Catholics (except Rousseau, who was a native of the city of Calvin), and even Voltaire confessed his sins to a priest before his death to insure decent burial.

Contemporary events greatly promoted the cause of religious liberty. The Toleration Edict of Joseph II. in 1781 found an echo in France and in all Europe. But a still greater effect must be ascribed to the triumph of American independence, which was achieved with the diplomatic and military aid of France, and to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, which made religious liberty the law of the United States. It is well known with what honor Benjamin Franklin was treated in Paris. General Lafayette, on his return from America, acted as a mediator and friend of both countries, and freely advocated the principle of civil and religious liberty. He travelled under the pretext of business to Nîmes and other places of the south where Protestants were numerous, made the acquaintance of Pastor Rabaut (1785), and exerted his influence upon the King, who esteemed him very highly as the restorer of the military glory of France.

TOLERATION RESTORED.*

At last toleration was restored in France, and Protestantism once more was recognized by law. Louis XV., although himself a sincere Catholic, prepared the way for this act of justice. He signed an Edict of Toleration, November 17th, 1787, which granted to his Protestant subjects, in thirty-seven Articles, civil rights as regards birth, marriage and burial. He declared: "After the example of our predecessors, we shall always favor, with all our power, the means of instruction and persuasion, which may tend to bind our subjects in the common profession of the ancient faith of our kingdom; and we shall proscribe, with the utmost severity, all those violent means which are as contrary to the principles of reason and humanity as to the true spirit of Christianity. But while we wait till Divine Providence shall bless our efforts, and bring about this happy revolution, our justice and the interest of our kingdom permit us no longer to exclude from civil rights those of our subjects and of strangers, domiciled in our empire, who do not profess the Roman Catholic religion. A sufficiently long experience has demonstrated that rigorous proceedings are insufficient to convert them. We must, therefore, no longer permit our laws to punish them for the misfortune of their birth, by depriving them of rights which nature must incessantly demand in their behalf."

The toleration granted was very limited indeed, and fell short even of the Edict of Nantes and the Toleration Edict of Joseph II.; it carefully avoided the very name "Protestant" and "Reformed," and excluded them expressly from the chairs of teachers and judges, and from the right of holding property as corporations, but it was the entering wedge for further progress. The clergy held a convention in July, 1788, and protested against this little morsel of freedom which had been given to heretics without consulting the bishops and the Pope, but the Revolution swept over all reactionary tendencies.

* Theodor Schott, *Das Toleranzedict Ludwigs XVI.*, in H. von Sybel's "Historische Zeitschrift," vol. xxv. (München & Leipzig, 1889), pp. 385-425.

The Constituent Convention of 1789 went a step beyond the Edict of the King, and overthrew the barriers which still kept the Protestants from public offices. It declared (August 21st) all citizens to be equal in the eyes of the law, and equally admissible to all public dignities according to their abilities, and passed a decree (August 23rd) that "No person ought to be troubled on account of his opinions, even though they be religious, provided that their manifestation do not disturb the public order as instituted by law." By a singular nemesis of history, Saint-Étienne Rabaut, the oldest of the three sons of Paul Rabaut, was elected President of the National Assembly, and could write to his aged father March 15th, 1790: "The National Assembly lies at your feet." He boldly demanded not toleration simply, but liberty and justice to Protestants. He contributed much to the triumph of this principle, but as a moderate monarchist he fell a victim to the Reign of Terror, and was executed December 5th, 1793.

A law of December 15th, 1790, gave the descendants of French refugees, on returning to France and making it their home, all the rights of citizenship, and promised them restoration of such confiscated property as was not sold *bona fide* but still under sequestration. The Republican Constitution of June 24th, 1793, Article VII., says in language similar to that of the First Amendment of the American Constitution: "The right of communicating thoughts and opinions, either through the press or in any other manner; the right of assembling peacefully; *the free exercise of religion*, cannot be prohibited."

It is true that the toleration of the infidel school of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists ended in the greatest intolerance,—even the extermination of the Christian religion under the Reign of Terror. Voltaire's *Écrasez l'infâme* was literally carried into effect, even beyond his intention; and the worship of reason was substituted for the worship of God by the National Assembly in November, 1793. Thus the French Revolution took fearful revenge on the Revocation, and the Gallican Church was almost annihilated in France. The Pope himself was made prisoner by French troops, and his dominion changed into a republic (1798).

THE NAPOLEONIC SYSTEM.

But this Reign of Terror was short-lived, and committed suicide. It brought France to the brink of ruin, from which it could be saved only by military despotism. The first Napoleon, the rider and tamer of the wild beast of Revolution, saw that society could not be reconstructed and maintained without religion. He therefore restored the Roman Catholic Church, and concluded a concordat with the Pope (1802). He also restored the legal existence of the Protestant (Calvinistic and Lutheran) Churches.

The Napoleonic system has, with unessential modifications and enlargements, remained in force through all the changes of government to this day. Even the Bourbons dared not set it aside, though they favored the Roman Church as far as possible. It is a system of limited liberty of religion under government supervision and with government support. It is an expansion of the Edict of Nantes with considerable improvements. It still recognizes the Roman Catholic Church as the religion of the great majority of Frenchmen, and gives her the strongest support; but it restores also the legal and ecclesiastical status of the Huguenot or Calvinistic Reformed Church, and removes the restrictions of the Edict of Nantes, by authorizing its public worship everywhere, in Paris as well as in the country. It recognizes and supports, in addition to those two Churches, the Lutheran Confession, and, since 1841, also the Jewish Synagogue; in Algiers, even the Mohammedan worship. Finally, it tolerates other religious societies and congregations, which support themselves (as the *Église libre*, founded in 1849, foreign churches of Episcopalians, Wesleyans, Baptists, the McAll missions, etc.). So far liberty is unrestrained in France, and nobody is persecuted simply for his religious opinions.

But by supporting the recognized religions from the public treasury, the civil government, whether imperial or monarchical or republican, keeps them under its control, and obstructs their free movement. Even the present republic does not allow the Reformed Church to exercise the right of

synodical self-government. It did so once, but once only, in 1872, under the Presidency of Thiers, and through the influence of Guizot. The synods held since that time are *unofficial*, and have no legislative authority. In this respect the present system is behind the Edict of Nantes, which authorized provincial and general synods. The anti-clerical infidel radicalism is opposed to the freedom and self-government of the Church, and endangers free institutions, which can only be maintained on the strong moral foundation of respect for law and reverence for religion.

As long as Church and State remain united in France, the majority of French Protestants avail themselves of the government patronage, hoping thereby to maintain a stronger social position and to exert a greater influence upon the people. But it is not impossible that the French government may abolish the Concordat, and put all Christian Churches on a footing of legal equality. Then they will be thrown on the duty of self-support and enjoy the full right of self-government. There can be no doubt that the Church of the Huguenots, which has stood the test of the severest persecution, will be abundantly able to take care of itself. Christianity needs and should ask nothing but freedom.