had been treacherously slain in a charge of horse (1569). The head of the Huguenot party was now Anthony's young son, King Henry of Navarre, but the intellectual leadership fell, for the present, upon Gaspard de Coligny.

Admiral Coligny.

The new leader deserves a word in passing, for he was one of the few high-born "malcontents," who entered the Protestant ranks for other reasons than political rancor, and who, while fighting with conviction for the religion he preferred, never forgot, in the wild broils of partisanship, that he was a Frenchman and owed a duty to his country. He belonged to the great family of Châtillon, was allied through his mother with the family of Montmorency, and without going to sea held, anomalously enough, the honorary post of Admiral of France. Take him for all in all, he was the most honorable and attractive character of his time.

Effort at peace after St. Germain, 1570.

Meanwhile, a moderate party had been formed in France, which tried to make the Peace of St. Germain the beginning of a definite settlement. It was only too clear that the bloodshed, which was draining the country of its strength, ruined both parties and brought profit to none except the enemies of France. The more temperate of both sides, Coligny prominent among them, began to see the folly of the struggle, and King Charles himself, who was now of age and had replaced the Regent Catherine, inclined to this view. And yet such were the mutual suspicions and animosities that the effort to remove all cause of quarrel precipitated the most horrible of all the incidents of the war, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Marriage of Henry and Margaret.

After the Peace of St. Germain, Coligny had come up to Paris and had rapidly acquired great influence with the king. The young monarch seemed to be agreed to put an end for all time to internal dissension, enforce strictly the terms of the new peace with its provision of a limited right of worship for the Protestants, and turn the strength of the united

country against the hereditary enemy, Spain. For this purpose he arranged, as a preliminary step, a marriage between his sister Margaret and young Henry of Navarre. Joyfully responding to the invitation of King Charles, the Huguenots poured in swarms into Paris to attend the wedding of their chief, which was celebrated on August 18, 1572.

Attempted assassination of Coligny.

The wedding seemed to inaugurate an era of Protestant triumphs. Coligny's star, shedding the promise of toleration, was steadily rising; that of the Guises and their ultra-Catholic supporters, standing for religious dissension, was as steadily setting. Catherine de' Medici, originally hardly more attached to the Guises than to the Bourbons and Huguenots, because primarily solicitous only about herself and her children, had lately lost her influence with the king. She knew well whither it had gone, and fixed the hatred of a passionate nature upon Coligny. Burning to regain her power, she now put herself in communication with the Guises. On August 22d, as Coligny was leaving the palace of the king, a ball, meant for his breast, struck him in the arm. Charles, who hurried in alarm to the bedside of his councillor, was filled with indignation. "Yours the wound, mine the sorrow," he said, and swore to search out the assassin and his accomplices.

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

The terror of discovery and punishment which now racked Catherine and the Guises drove them to devise some means by which they might deflect the king's vengeance. On the spur of the moment, as it were, they planned the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. This famous massacre is, therefore, not to be considered, as was once the custom, the carefully laid plot of the Catholic heads of Europe, but rather as the bloodthirsty improvisation of a desperate band. Catherine de' Medici and the Guises were its authors, and the fervidly Catholic population of Paris was the instrument

of their spite. How the king's consent was got when all was ready would be difficult to understand, if we did not know that he was weak and cowardly, and not entirely sound of mind. In a session of the council, Catherine plied him with the bugbear of a Huguenot plot, until in an access of insane rage he cried out that they should all be butchered. In the early morning hours of St. Bartholomew's day (August 24th) the tocsin was sounded from all the churches of Paris. At the signal the Catholic citizens slipped noiselessly from their houses, entered the residences which had been previously designated by a chalk mark as the homes of the Huguenots, and slaughtered the inmates in their beds. Coligny was one of the first victims of the ensuing fury, Henry of Guise himself presiding at the butchery of his Huguenot rival. That night the streets flowed with blood, and for many days after the provinces, incited by the example of the capital, indulged in similar outrages. The grim saying went the rounds that the high espousals of Navarre must be given a tinge of crimson. The bridegroom himself was in danger of assassination, but managed to save his life by temporarily renouncing his faith. The victims of this fearful exhibition of fanaticism amounted to 2,000 in Paris, and 6,000 to 8,000 in the rest of France. We can better understand the spirit of the time when we hear that the Catholic world, the Pope and Philip of Spain at its head, made no effort to conceal its delight at this easy method of getting rid of its religious adversaries.

Henry III.

War, with all its dreary incidents, straightway flamed up again. In 1574 Charles IX. died from natural causes, though the Huguenots were pleased to ascribe his death to remorse for his share in the great crime of St. Bartholomew. His brother, Henry III., succeeded him on the throne. A new element of interest was introduced into the struggle only when the death of Henry's youngest brother, the duke of

Alençon, and his own failure to have heirs, involved, with the religious dispute, the question of the succession.

The question of the succession.

By the law of the realm the crown would have to pass upon Henry's death to the nearest male relative, who was Henry of Navarre, head of the collateral branch of Bourbon. But Henry was a Huguenot, the enemy of the faith of the vast majority of his future subjects. When his succession became probable, Henry of Guise and his followers formed the Holy League, which pledged itself to maintain the interest of the Roman Church at all hazards and never permit a heretic to sit on the throne of France. While the Catholics were forming a partisan organization regardless of their obligation to their country, the Huguenots showed a spirit no less narrow and sectarian. They planned to form themselves into a federal republic, practically independent of the kingdom of France. It was plain that party was becoming more and more, country less and less, and that the outcome of the wasteful civil strife would be the ruin and disruption of France. In consequence of these developments the king found himself in evil straits. As head of the state he was pledged to the interests of the country and was inclined to pursue a policy of reconciliation and peace. But the League and the Huguenots would have no peace except on their own terms, and the king, trying to hold his course between Scylla and Charybdis, was deserted by all except the handful of men who refused to share in the madness of partisan fury. In the new turn of the civil struggle three parties, each championed by a leader of the name of Henry, disputed the control of France.

League and Huguenots.

War of the Three Henries.

The new war, called the War of the Three Henries (1585–89), steeped the country in such confusion that men soon indulged in every form of lawlessness without punishment. King Henry, an effeminate dandy with a fondness for lapdogs and ear-rings, had gone to all lengths in order to main-

tain his authority, and had practically resigned the real power into the hands of the head of the League; but at last, in December, 1588, he indignantly resolved to put an end to his humiliation. He invited Henry of Guise to his cabinet, and there had him treacherously despatched by his guard. Cowardice and rancor could go no further, and the League turned in horror from the murderer, Paris and Catholic France declaring for his deposition. In his despair the king fled to Henry of Navarre, and was advancing with his Huguenot subjects upon his capital, when a fanatical Dominican monk forced admission to his presence and killed him with a knife (August, 1589). With him the House of Valois came to an end. The question was now simply between Henry of Navarre, the rightful claimant to the crown, and the League, which would have none of him.

Murder of Henry of Guise, 1588.

Murder of Henry III., 1589.

The new Henry, Henry IV., first king of the House of Bourbon, was a brave soldier, an intelligent ruler, and a courtly gentleman. He had his faults, springing from a gay, mercurial temperament, but intensely human as they were, they actually contributed to his popularity. He was confronted on his accession by the disconcerting fact that his followers were only a small part of France. The attachment of the Catholic majority he knew could only be won slowly, and force, he suspected from the first, would be of no avail. Therefore, he undertook patiently to assure the Catholics of the loyalty of his intentions and win their recognition. If the League could only have found a plausible rival for the throne, Henry might have been annihilated; but his claim was incontrovertible, and that was his strength. For the present no one thought of disarming. Henry won a number of engagements, notably the battle of Ivry (1590), but the League, still managed by the Guise faction in the person of Henry of Guise's younger brother, and supported by Philip of Spain, could not be scattered.

Accession of Henry IV.

For four years Henry waited for his subjects to come over to his side; then he took a decisive step and went over to theirs. The misery of his countrymen, racked by the endless civil struggle, wrenched his heart; also he was in constant alarm lest the League or Philip II., or both in agreement, should impose on France an elected sovereign in his stead. In July, 1593, he solemnly abjured his faith, and was readmitted into the communion of the Roman Catholic Church. The effect was almost magical. He was recognized throughout France, the League fell apart, the king of Spain was deserted by his French partisans, and the war ceased. In February, 1594, he could proceed with his coronation at Chartres, and when a month later he approached Paris the gates were thrown open and he was received like a hero and a saviour by those same Parisians who in the period of his apostacy from the Church had spewed him out of their mouths.

The conversion of Henry

Henry's conversion fiercely excited contemporary opinion. By uncompromising Huguenots, by many Protestants the world over, the act was denounced as nothing less than treason. But by modern historians, whose judgment is far less affected by allegiance to a particular dogma, the conversion is regarded more leniently. In so far as we are inclined to admit that attachment to one's country is as lofty, if not a loftier consideration than attachment to one's Church, we have praise rather than blame for the patriot king. But even our altered standards of conduct do not excuse Henry for taking his change of sides so lightly. He disposed of his conversion with a smile and an epigram. Paris is well worth a Mass, he said to the circle of his courtiers. The sentiment confirms the earlier statement that we have in him a gay, sensuous cavalier, constitutionally incapable of being very serious about the great matter of religion, which occupied all the profounder spirits of the age. But his con-

Justified or not?

stitutional unfitness for religious passion redounded, as in the case of Elizabeth of England, to the advantage of his country. He could practise a genuine tolerance, and could undertake, on the basis of it, to carry through a solution of the religious conflict.

The Edict of Nantes, 1598.

The document in which Henry tried to arrange for the peaceful living side by side of Huguenots and Catholics is known, from the town in which the king affixed his signature, as the Edict of Nantes. It bears the date of April 13, 1598, and falls naturally into the three sections of religious rights, civil rights, and political rights. Under the head of religious rights we note that Protestant worship was authorized in two places in each bailiwick of France, as well as in the castles of noblemen. As a concession to the fanaticism of the day, the reformed service was expressly forbidden at Paris and at the royal court. In the matter of civil rights, a Huguenot was recognized as a full-fledged Frenchman, who was protected by the law wherever he went, and was eligible to any office. So far the settlement of Nantes was conceived in the modern spirit, and was far ahead of any solution found in any other country. But by the section dealing with political rights, the Protestants were granted an exceptional position, in entire disagreement with present-day conceptions, and destined to prove incompatible with the interests and even the existence of the state. They could hold assemblies in which they legislated for themselves, and they were put in military possession of a certain number of fortified towns, of which La Rochelle was the chief. As long as Henry lived, there was peace between Protestants and Catholics, but the tolerant spirit of Henry was appreciated by but a handful of men, and the mass of Protestants and Catholics continued to regard each other with venomous hatred. Once again we may see how in that age of religious passion intolerance was not so much the work of the governments

The political privileges.

as of the people themselves, a thing inborn as the love of kin or the fear of fire. Therefore, the strong hand of Henry had no sooner been withdrawn than the religious conflict threatened to revive.

Peace with Spain, 1598.

In the same year in which Henry disposed of the Protestant issue, he signed a treaty of peace with Philip II. Spain had made common cause with the League, and was recognized by Henry as a dangerous enemy to his House and nation, but the time was not yet ripe for decisive action. The Peace of Vervins (1598) drew the boundary between France and Spain as determined in the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis of 1559.

Peace labors of Henry and Sully.

France being now at peace within and without, Henry set about the task of healing the wounds of his stricken country. The finances were put in charge of a friend of his Huguenot days, the duke of Sully, whose vigilance and honesty soon wiped out a large part of the state debt and converted the annual deficit into an annual surplus. Henry himself did all in his power to encourage agriculture, then as now the chief source of French prosperity. He built good roads, he favored new industries, especially the manufacture of silk, and he made a modest beginning toward acquiring for France a foothold in America by furthering French enterprise in the basin of the St. Lawrence.

Henry resolves to attack the House of Hapsburg.

When, after years of reconstructive labor, Henry saw himself at the head of a flourishing commonwealth, he again turned with vigor to foreign affairs. The House of Hapsburg, reigning through its two branches in Spain and Austria, seemed to him, now as ever, the great enemy of France. Throughout the period of peace he had cultivated the friendship of the smaller powers of Europe—the Italian states, the Swiss, Holland—until he exercised a kind of protectorship over them. Thus backed, he thought he might summon the House of Hapsburg once more to the field. A

Murdered, 1610.

local quarrel in Germany was just about to furnish him with the necessary pretext for beginning the war, when on May 14, 1610, he was laid low by the dagger of a fanatic named Ravaillac.

The regency of Maria de' Medici.

At Henry's death his son Louis XIII. (1610–43) was but nine years old. Accordingly, a regency was proclaimed under Louis's mother, Maria de' Medici, whom Henry IV. had married upon the grant of a divorce from his first wife, Margaret of Valois. Maria, an Italian of the same House as the former regent, Catherine de' Medici, was a large and coarse woman ("*une grosse banquière*" was her husband's ungallant description of her), without personal or political merit. The sovereign power was, therefore, soon in a bad way. Italian favorites exercised control, and the turbulent nobility, which had been repressed by the firm hand of Henry IV., began again to aspire to political importance. Among these nobles the Huguenot aristocracy, who had been permitted by the Edict of Nantes to keep up an army and several fortified places, assumed an especially threatening tone, and judging from the confusion which followed Maria's assumption of power, it seemed more than likely that France was drifting into another era of civil war.

Richelieu saves the state.

If France was saved from this calamity, it was due, and solely due, to one man, Armand Jean du Plessis, known to fame as Cardinal Richelieu. When he entered the royal council, to become before long, by the natural ascendancy of his intellect, the leading minister (1624), the queen-regent had already been succeeded by the king; but under the king, who had much more of his mother than of his father in him, and was dull and slothful, the affairs of the realm had not been in the least improved. Richelieu, therefore, found himself confronted by a heavy task. But his unique position proved a help to him in fulfilling it. As a boy he had been destined for the Church, and at a ludicrously early

age he had, by reason of his noble birth and the favor of the king, been made bishop of Luçon. Later he was honored by the Pope with the cardinal's hat. His ecclesiastical dignities, added to his position in the state, raised his authority to a height where it could not be assailed while the king supported him. And this the king did to the fullest extent. That is the dullard Louis XIII.'s greatest merit in the eyes of history. While Richelieu lived, he retained, in spite of intrigues and conspiracies, the power in his hands and was the real king of France.

His programme.

Richelieu was one of those rare statesmen who can form and carry through with an iron will a policy suited to the needs of the country. His programme, which seems to have been inspired by that of Henry IV., falls into three sections. In the first place, he inherited Henry's tolerance, a circumstance the more remarkable as he was a leading dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church. He would grant the Huguenots the civil and religious rights laid down in the Edict of Nantes, but their political rights, which made them almost independent of the state, he would ruthlessly destroy. His second aim was to clip the wings of the nobility once for all, and his third, to overthrow for the glory of France the power of the House of Hapsburg.

The Hugueno problem.

He first attacked the pressing problem of the Huguenots. Since Henry's death they had become restless and hung on the horizon like a thunder-cloud, ready to burst at any moment. Richelieu proceeded cautiously, treated with them as long as negotiation was feasible, and suddenly, when the opportunity came, invested their chief town, La Rochelle. A long siege followed, wherein the endurance of the beleaguered citizens proved no match for the skill of the tireless cardinal, who conducted the operations in person. The English fleet, sent by Charles I., tried to relieve the town, but in vain. In 1628 the Rochellese, having lost 16,000 inhabitants through

hunger and pestilence, surrendered at discretion. The next year the remnant of the Protestant forces in the south was likewise disarmed and Richelieu was master of the situation. But now his admirable moderation came to light. The ordinary ruler of the time would have compelled the beaten minority to conform to the religion of the majority or else be burned or banished. Not so Richelieu, true forerunner of the brotherhood of all Christian men. He confirmed to the Huguenots the civil and religious rights granted by the Edict of Nantes, and for the rest incorporated them into the state on the basis of equality with all other Frenchmen by cancelling their special political privileges.

The turbulent nobility.

The turbulent nobles intrenched in the provinces, where they exercised most of the functions of the local governments, gave the cardinal much food for thought. With his clear eye he saw that they were an anomaly in a state aspiring to be modern. They carried on a veritable private warfare by their duelling habits, and defied the authorities from behind their fortified castles. So Richelieu threw himself upon duels and castles, declaring by edict that the time for them was past, and executing a few of the most persistent duellists as an example to their class. He also directly undermined their authority by settling in the provinces agents called *intendants*, who took supreme charge of justice, police, and finances. These intendants were commoners, who executed orders received from Paris, and marked

Centralization of administration.

the creation of a new and highly centralized administration, in place of the ancient feudal one with the power in the hands of the local magnates. By virtue of this systematic abasement of the nobility to the profit of the royal executive, it is frequently maintained that Richelieu created the absolute monarchy. This is not strictly true, for we have seen that the French kings had been becoming more and more powerful ever since the fifteenth century; but it is

beyond contradiction that Richelieu eminently improved the king's position by his successful war upon the nobles.

Richelieu, the States-General, and the Parliaments.

Here we are tempted to ask what became, in the presence of this exaltation of the royal prerogative, of those institutions which still exercised some check on the king's will—the States-General and the Parliaments? Richelieu regarded their pretensions with suspicion. The States-General, composed of the three classes, clergy, nobles, and commoners, had been summoned by the regent in 1614, quarrelled, as usual, among themselves, and accomplished nothing. Richelieu did not summon them again. They fell into oblivion and were not thought of until the absolute monarchy, one hundred and seventy-five years later, acknowledged its bankruptcy, and was reminded of this means of appealing to the people for aid. The Parliaments —there were ten of them in Richelieu's day—fared somewhat better. They continued to act as supreme courts of justice, but their interference with political affairs the high-handed cardinal would not suffer.

Richelieu and the Thirty Years' War.

With the Huguenots at peace and the selfish nobility held in check, Richelieu could take up with vigor his foreign plans, looking to the humiliation of the House of Hapsburg. It was a most convenient circumstance that Germany was convulsed at this time with the Thirty Years' War. (See next chapter.) With the instinct of a statesman Richelieu felt that if he helped the German Protestants against the Catholics, represented by the emperor and Spain, he would sooner or later acquire some permanent advantages for France. His gradual interference, developing from occasional subsidies of money to the recruitment of large armies, finally secured to his king the balance of power in the German war, and made France practical dictator of Europe when the Peace of Westphalia (1648) ended the struggle. Richelieu did not live to see this result (he died 1642), but the ad-

vantage which France secured on that occasion may be written down to his statesmanlike conduct of the government.

Bloom of French culture.

Many criticisms can be urged against Richelieu's rule; for instance, his handling of the finances was mere muddling, and his exaltation of the monarch at the expense of every other institution in the state led in the eighteenth century to dire disasters. But the sum of his achievement is none the less immense, when we reflect that he welded France into a solid union and made her supreme in Europe. The new splendor could not fail to stir the imagination, and favor the bloom of art and literature. The cardinal himself established the famous Academy of France as a kind of sovereign body in the field of letters (1635), and lived to see the birth of the French drama in the work of Corneille ("The Cid," 1636). This is an important circumstance, for France was destined in the days after Richelieu to exercise an even wider empire through her culture than through her arms.

CHAPTER X

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR AND THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA

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Religious and political bearing of the Peace of Augsburg, 1555.

THE Peace of Augsburg of the year 1555 was undoubtedly a victory for the German Protestants. But it was also, since it took the affairs of religion out of the hands of the emperor and put them in the hands of the local powers, a victory of the princes. Henceforth the decline of the emperor was more certain than ever, while at the same time it became plain that the future of the German people depended on the ability of the princes to shape their territories into modern states.

Unsolved religious problems.

But if the Peace of Augsburg represents a victory of Protestantism over Catholicism, and of the princes over the emperor, it was far from being a final settlement of the troubles of Germany. The peace left important matters in suspense. To mention only two: (1) It recognized Lutheranism without extending any rights whatever to Calvinism; and (2) the article called the Ecclesiastical Reservation, as interpreted by the Catholics, prohibited any further seizures of Church property. None the less, the Lutherans, who put their own reading upon the Ecclesiastical Reservation, continued to take monastic property and to appropriate abbacies and