CHAPTER IV.

General view of the first ten years of Elizabeth.—Movement of Rome against Protestantism.—The persecutions in the Netherlands and in France.—Intrigues against Elizabeth.—Insurrection of the north.—Pius V. issues a bull of excommunication against Elizabeth.—Parliament of 1571.—Statutes against papists.—Puritanical party in the House of Commons.—Motion for reform of abuses in the Church. Trial and execution of the duke of Norfolk.—Troubles of Scotland.—The Huguenots of France propitiated by the marriage of the prince of Navarre.—Coligny shot.—The massacre of Saint Bartholomew resolved upon.—Its perpetration.—Effect of the news upon the court and people of England.—New danger of the queen of Scots.

THE contemporaries of Elizabeth regarded the first ten years of her reign as "her halcyon days." The transition from the fiery Catholicism of Mary Tudor to the temperate Protestantism of her sister Elizabeth had been accomplished without bloodshed or convulsion. In the parliament of 1559, the nation was quietly led back to its ecclesiastical condition in the time of Edward VI.; and conformity was not rendered difficult or impossible by any needless stringency towards those who adhered to the old religion. In the parliament of 1563 measures of a stronger character were adopted against papists. Symptoms began to manifest themselves of a more active opposition to the civil and religious settlement under Elizabeth, induced by the arguments of catholic teachers who were spread about the country. Some persons, lay and ecclesiastical, were deterred from conformity, and others left the realm. But still there was no outbreak produced either by supineness or persecution. The parliament of 1566 passed no new law that, in any matter of importance, touched the subject of religion. Differences of opinion as to ceremonial observances had arisen amongst the English protestants themselves; and those who were called Puritans were fast becoming an organised power. But at the time when Mary Stuart had crossed the Solway, and the great question of policy had been raised as to her detention, the state of Protestanism in Europe, upon the maintenance of which in England the government of Elizabeth was to stand or fall, was one of great insecurity and alarm. The halcyon days were fast passing away. The people of this country had been prospering in the labours of peace. They

had been extending their commerce to distant lands where the benefits of inter-communication had been little appreciated by earlier adventurers. Their sailors had gone forth to make maritime discoveries. Frobisher was seeking a new passage to India; and Hawkins had found a fresh source of wealth in the hateful African slave-trade. Gresham was building an Exchange in London, where the merchants of all nations might meet to buy and sell. The great principles of commerce were so far understood that merchandise was allowed to be exported and imported in foreign ships, upon the payment of alien imposts; and the English and Flemish merchants united their contributions for marine insurance. The people were lightly taxed, for the government was an economical one. Whatever were the religious differences of the community, its various members united peaceably in the duties of their several callings. They felt that they were under a firm government; and in the security of such a government, despotic enough but not corrupt or lavish, the wealth and intelligence of England were steadily progressing.

In 1568, when Elizabeth and her ministers were displaying towards Mary Stuart a policy which it is easy to call unjust and cruel, treacherous and ungenerous, the heretical queen of England and her protestant subjects were the objects of the bitterest hatred of those who thought the time was come to extirpate heresy by fire and sword. A Dominican monk of the severest life—a zealot who had distinguished himself as an inquisitor—became pope in 1566, under the title of Pius V. A more furious bigot never sat on the papal throne; and his bigotry was the more terrible from the circumstance that it was conscientious. When he sent a force to the aid of the French catholics, he told their leader "to take no Huguenot prisoner, but instantly to kill every one that fell into his hands." * When the savage duke of Alva was butchering without remorse in the Netherlands, the holy father sent him a consecrated hat and sword, in admiration of his Christian proceedings. Pius V. avowed his desire to devote the treasures of the church, even to its chalices and crucifixes, to carry a religious war into England; and to head such an expedition himself. The influence of this frantic persecutor over kings who made their religious intolerance an instrument of their cruel tyranny, such as Philip II., was enormous. This Pope of the Inquisition, as he has been called, arose, with his sole idea of extirpating heresy by force, at a time when the two great

* Ranke, vol. i. p. 383.

religious principles were coming into open conflict. The period for accommodation had passed away. In 1568 Alva was appointed by Philip, Captain-general of the Netherlands. His mission was to destroy the heretics, root and branch; and he accomplished his work with a success that left his master and his master's holy counsellor nothing to desire. While Alva was in Valenciennes, Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp, hanging, beheading, racking, burning, and confiscating, the secretary of Philip said to the papal nuncio, "are you now satisfied with the proceedings of the king?" The smiling nuncio answered, "quite satisfied." The tribunal which condemned the victims whom their officers had ferreted out, was called the "Council of Blood." From the great commercial cities of the Netherlands there were hosts of fugitives, although the most terrible penalties were denounced against those who attempted to fly. Many came for refuge to England. The same asylum was sought by Huguenots of France, when the hopes of their party were destroyed on the field of Moncontour. They said,—

> "Our hearths we abandon, our lands we resign,
> But, Father, we kneel to no altar but thine." *

Amongst these refugees were not only a great number who professed Calvinistic opinions, but others who carried their principle of liberty of conscience into the avowal of doctrines which even liberal protestants considered dangerous. Those who were opposed to infant baptism were held, with great injustice, to belong to the old sect of anabaptists, whose social opinions were deemed adverse to all regular government. Whilst the general body of exiles, by the recital of their injuries, diffused a popular hatred of papal persecution, some strengthened that dislike to many of the ceremonial observances of the English church, which gradually established a large class who, in their hatred of popery, would tolerate no forms that appeared derived from the ancient worship. A few became obnoxious to that intolerance which, in the earlier days of the Reformation, hunted out those who, deservedly or not, were suspected of holding to the opinions which John of Leyden rendered infamous. But the puritan doctrines, or the more heterodox, as yet gave slight trouble to the government of Elizabeth, compared with the civil and religious dangers apprehended in the present crisis of Catholic hostility to every form of Protestantism. The furious pope had his agents in England denouncing the queen as a

* Macaulay, "Songs of the Huguenots."

heretic. Philip was maturing plots by advances of money to his spies in London. Alva was devising plans for an invasion of the island that had cast off the successor of St. Peter. Around Mary Stuart were concentred all the intrigues that sought to place the orthodox and legitimate descendant of Henry VII. upon the throne of the heretical and illegitimate daughter of Anne Boleyn. The insurrection of the north, of 1569, was no immature combination of a few discontented papist nobles, but a result of the general movement against the reformers that was agitating Europe. Those who regard this crisis through the thick veil of their sentimentalities about the unfortunate Scottish queen, with the usual trashy belief in Elizabeth's jealousy of her superior charms, will do well to abstain from the study of what they call history, and surrender themselves with an undivided trust to the professed writers of poetry and romance. History has to deal with serious truths, and not with morbid sympathies and blind nationalities. It was the glory of the first ten years of Elizabeth's reign that "no English blood had been shed on the scaffold or in the field for a public quarrel, whether civil or religious." * If, during the next twenty years, we have, amidst a constant advance of national prosperity, to trace the course of conspiracies and insurrections, we must look at England as the arena where the two great principles that were dividing Europe were fought out. The victory remained with the sagacious statesmen who best understood the character of the nation—statesmen led by a ruler unsurpassed in the highest attributes of a sovereign; one who in every danger was equal to the emergency; who felt the grandeur of her position as the head of the Reformation; whose force of character made that Protestantism secure which was once more than doubtful; who, in the hour of her greatest trial, when the catholic world gathered together all its strength to crush the heretic islanders, threw herself boldly upon the affections of her people, one and all, and the danger was overpast; the sovereign to whom we chiefly owe that, after the lapse of three hundred years, the faith which she built up is so safe that it allows the widest toleration to take the place of the exclusive conformity of her time. This is the queen that history should paint. The foibles of the woman belong to a lower province of literature.

In the autumn of 1569 there were symptoms of disquiet in the northern counties. Cecil, in a letter of the 13th of October, to the earls of Shrewsbury and Huntingdon, says, in a postscript, "My

* Mackintosh.

lords,—It may be that you have [heard] or shall hear of a fond rumour stirred up the 6th of this month, in the North Riding and the Bishopric, of a rising should be; but it was a vain smoke, but without any spark of any account,"* When the wary minister wrote this he probably knew perfectly well that the smoke was not without fire. The general disaffection of the northern catholics was well known. Sadler wrote from the border counties, "There are not in all this country ten gentlemen that do favour and allow of her majesty's proceedings in the cause of religion."† Dr. Norton, who had been a prebendary of York in the time of Queen Mary, had come from Rome with the title of apostolical penitentiary. He had incited the catholic priests and the northern gentlemen by statements that the pope was about to issue a bull of deposition against Elizabeth. He was a relative of the families of Norton and Markenfield, whom Mary Stuart numbered amongst her friends. The earls of Westmorland and Northumberland were in secret communication with her. The adroitness by which Mary contrived to elude the vigilance of those who had her custody is one of the most remarkable points of her character. She was always borne up by the belief that she had the right to the throne filled by Elizabeth, and that the people of England would support her in that right if she had her liberty. The arrest of Norfolk precipitated the insurrection. The schemes for foreign aid were devised, but not perfected. Alva was to have sent an auxiliary force to land at Hartlepool. These schemes and preparations could not be concealed from the vigilance of Elizabeth's ministers. On the 10th of November the earls of Westmorland and Northumberland were summoned to repair to court. Apprehensive of arrest Northumberland marched with his vassals to join Westmorland at the castle of Brancepeth. There was no longer any disguise. A proclamation was issued, addressed to all professing the catholic faith, to restore the ancient worship; and the earls marched on to Durham with a banner representing the bleeding Saviour—"the banner of the five wounds." It was borne by a brave old man, whose fate, and the fate of his eight sons, have been preserved from the oblivion of dry annals by the legends which a true poet has invested with almost historical reality.‡ The Nortons of Rylstone may claim our tears; but we have little pity for the weak earls, who, when Sussex appeared against them with a strong force, fled

* Lodge, vol. ii. p. 26. † Quoted in Lingard, vol. viii. p. 54

‡ Wordsworth, "White Doe of Rylstone."

to Scotland, leaving their followers to the terrible vengeance that followed a suppressed revolt. Northumberland, after a confinement of several years at Lochleven, was given up to the English government and executed. Westmorland died an exile in Flanders. There was a subsequent revolt under lord Dacres of the North, which was put down after a battle, in which the catholics fought with desperation. The English Bible and Common Prayer had been burnt by the insurgents of 1569 in the cathedral of Durham. Their avowed intention was to march to Tutbury, and release Mary. Had they succeeded, the nation would have been plunged into a terrible civil war. The Catholics of the thinly-inhabited border counties were numerous as well as desperate; but the Protestants of the more densely peopled parts of England, and especially of the great towns, were far too united to have the old worship forced back upon them, the contest involving a new struggle for the crown. Their horror of the past days of martyrdoms—their dread of a foreign domination, with a Council of Blood and an Inquisition—made the ascendant party furious and the government revengeful. The triumph of 1569 was disgraced by fearful executions. It might have been disgraced by a more terrible act of vengeance. There is a letter written by Leicester to Walsingham in 1586, in which he urges the execution of the queen of Scots, and says, "Remember how, upon a less cause, how effectually all the Council of England once dealt with her majesty for justice to be done upon that person; for, being suspected and informed to be consenting with Northumberland and Westmorland in the rebellion, you know the great seal of England was sent then, and thought just and meet, upon the sudden, for her execution."* Had the powers of the great seal thus been exercised—and the expressions of Leicester do not imply that any trial was contemplated—the reign of Elizabeth would have been stained with a greater crime than the eventual execution of Mary, after seventeen years more of hopeless plots and ever-present suspicions. But, whatever justification there may have been for the intrigues to recover liberty and power made by this victim of an insurmountable state necessity, there can be no doubt that her life was a constant source of alarm to the English nation; and that at every hostile movement against Protestantism her death was loudly called for. If the unhappy Mary had warm friends amongst the Catholic party in both divisions of the island; if there were many who regarded her as

* "Leycester Correspondence," edited by Mr. Bruce, p. 81.

innocent of the crimes laid to her charge, and were touched by a real pity for her misfortunes; the great body of the English people, who lived in security under the sagacious government of the queen, and looked with admiration upon her extraordinary abilities and strength of character, would have most gladly heard of the removal, even by some violence to which long years of despotism had familiarised them, of one whom they justly regarded as a public enemy. The nation was in a more earnest mood than when it had quietly passed from the Protestantism of Edward to the Catholicism of Mary, and back again to the Protestantism of Elizabeth. The number of enthusiasts on either side was rapidly increasing. Puritan and Jesuit were coming into closer warfare. There was a great battle of principle still to be waged by the Reformers; for their victory could scarcely be held as thoroughly achieved. Opposed to them were men as zealous and more united. The power of the state was with the Protestant cause; the ancient habit of implicit obedience to the head of the universal church gave a coherence to every movement of the Romanists. When Pius V., on the 25th of February, 1570, signed the threatened bull of excommunication against Elizabeth, which anathematised her and her adherents as heretics; absolved all her subjects from their oath of allegiance; and enjoined them, under pain of excommunication, not to obey her commands; it was not likely that the principles at issue would approach nearer to accommodation. We are told by the catholic historian, "the time was gone by when the thunders of the Vatican could shake the thrones of princes."* When Alva sent copies of the bull to England, and Felton, an enthusiastic catholic, fixed it on the gates of the bishop of London's residence, they could scarcely have meant its publicity as harmless sport. Felton was executed; but he died, avowing himself a martyr, and gave the queen the title of "the pretender." There was at this time a conspiracy detected in Norfolk. With a less vigilant government the thunder might not only have alarmed, but the lightning might have struck. The danger was not so much to be apprehended from the catholics in a united body, as from the jesuits and refugee priests who were constantly passing from the continent to England to dissuade the wavering from conformity, and to stimulate the hostile to acts of rebellion. An English college for these zealous missionaries had been established at Douay, about a year before the issue of the bull of excommunication. The natural issue

* Lingard, vol. viii. p. 67.

of these attempts to shake the government and the established religion was the enactment of more stringent laws against Roman Catholics,—laws, which in the happier spirit of our own age we may justly decry as harsh and unjust, but which we can scarcely venture to consider as simply tyrannical.

The parliament met on the 2nd of April, 1571, after a suspension of legislation for more than four years. The speech of the lord-keeper, sir Nicholas Bacon, sets forth, with considerable eloquence, the past blessings of the queen's reign,—the setting at liberty God's Word, and deliverance from Roman tyranny; the inestimable benefit of peace; and the clemency and mercy of the government. "I pray you," he says, "hath it been seen or read, that any prince of this realm during ten whole years' reign, and more, hath had his hands so clean from blood?" That this peace had been disturbed and this clemency interrupted, he then imputes to "the raging Romanist rebels." This is the prelude to the first Statute of the session, which makes it treason to set forth that the queen ought not to possess the crown but some other persons; or to affirm that she is a heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel or usurper. The second clause of this Statute is evidently directed against Mary Stuart, enacting that all persons of any degree, nation, or estate, who during the queen's life should claim title to the crown should be disabled from inheriting the same; and that any claimant to the right of succession, contrary to any proclamation on the matter that might be issued by the queen, should be declared guilty of high treason. The queen's advisers were desirous to carry the principle of exclusion further; and to make a law that the queen of Scots was unable and unworthy to succeed. A committee of the Commons presented an address to Elizabeth, asking her to proceed criminally against Mary. Divines and statesmen concurred in urging violent measures against the prisoner. With archbishop Parker she was "one desperate person." With Walsingham she was "that dangerous woman." Each called for "justice." It is the fashion to represent Elizabeth as always thirsting for her rival's blood; yet it is perfectly clear that she resisted Council and Parliament when they called for extreme proceedings against "the pretended Scottish queen." Parker asked for justice upon the desperate person that "the papists' daily expectation" might be "vanquished." The difficulties of the crisis were held to be met by the enactment of strong laws against the papists themselves. The statute of the 5th of Elizabeth against

upholding the jurisdiction of the See of Rome had been transgressed by bringing in bulls and instruments of absolution. It was now enacted, that the putting in use or publishing any such bull, or giving absolution under the same, or obtaining such an instrument from Rome, shall be adjudged high treason; and that such as brought into the kingdom crosses, pictures, beads, or other "vain and superstitious things," claiming to be hallowed by the bishop of Rome, or under his authority, should incur the penalties of præmunire. This statute was more comprehensive in its severity than at first sight appears; for the outward conformity of Romanists had been tolerated under absolution, without which they were excluded from the communion of their own church. How far it was politic to force the pliant and wavering into the established religion against the rights of conscience, or to render them liable to extreme dangers in asserting these rights, is a question of which we cannot wholly judge. Of the injustice of such a proceeding there can be no doubt. But we cannot quite go along with the belief of one whose opinion is entitled to the utmost respect, that "the nation, as it was clearly ready to profess either religion, would, beyond all doubt, have been ready to tolerate both;" and that "Elizabeth might have united all conflicting sects under the shelter of the same impartial laws and the same paternal throne, and thus have placed the nation in the same situation, as far as the rights of conscience are concerned, in which we at last stand." * We can as readily believe that, without the experience of three centuries, Elizabeth might have bestowed upon her people the relief from the system of commercial restriction which we have at length attained. "Confidence," said Chatham, "is a plant of slow growth;" and so is toleration. Lament as we may with the great historian over "the heart-burnings, the persecutions, the conspiracies, the seditions, the revolutions, the judicial murders, the civil wars, of ten generations," we have no assurance that the rights of conscience could have been established without such fearful trials of a nation's courage and endurance. Whilst the storm of papal bigotry was raging in the Netherlands and in France,—whilst Knox was proclaiming in Scotland that one mass was more fearful to him than ten thousand armed men, and carrying the people with him,—it is difficult to imagine that England could have been smoothed into a perfect indifferentism, or that England would have been what she is if she had been so "rocked

* Macaulay, "Essays—Burleigh and his Times."

and dandled" into liberality. But there was, moreover, a strong party in England that would not have endured anything approaching to union between Protestant and Roman Catholic. The Act of the 5th of Elizabeth, which excluded Roman Catholics from the House of Commons, gave an ascendency in that house to the more earnest reformers—those who had very influential supporters in the queen's own councils, though their hostility to any ceremony or practice of the church supposed to be an approach to the old worship, was very obnoxious to the queen herself. That contest between the establishment and the Puritans which convulsed England for many a year, and of which the traces are by no means extinct, was actively beginning before the "halcyon days" were past. That spirit which would admit of no toleration for papists had, in a few years, to fight its own battle against intolerance. But the "ice-brook temper" of the sword, then in its sheath, which was to be drawn seventy years afterwards, was known to some in this parliament. A motion for a further reformation of religion was made in the House of Commons on the 6th of April, by Mr. Strickland, "a grave and ancient man, of great zeal," says the reporter, sir Simonds D'Ewes. Having set forth various abuses he moved that a convenient number of the house might have conference with the Lords spiritual. During the Easter recess, Mr. Strickland was called before the Privy Council, and commanded not to resume his seat in the house. Then rose in his place Mr. Carleton, and moved that Mr. Strickland should be sent for to the bar of the House, "forasmuch as he was not now a private man, but specially chosen to supply the room of a multitude;" and Mr. Yelverton "showed it was fit for princes to have their prerogatives, but yet the same to be straitened within reasonable limits." The ministers of Elizabeth understood the force of such words, and they whispered with the Speaker. The debate was suspended; and the next day Mr. Strickland took his seat, amidst cheers whose echoes reverberated in that Chapel of St. Stephen, when kings, long afterwards, had forgotten their import.

The duke of Norfolk had been released from his imprisonment in the Tower on the 4th of August, 1570. On the 7th of September, 1571, he was again arrested. During the thirteen months of his comparative freedom he was in a sort of honourable custody, and was not called to Council or to Parliament. Before his release from the Tower he had sent a declaration to the queen, in which he had solemnly engaged "never to deal in that cause of marriage of

the queen of Scots, nor in any other cause belonging to her, but as your majesty shall command me." In April, 1571, a correspondence was detected, which showed that some treasonable project was in course of formation. Further correspondence was intercepted in August, and various persons were arrested. Amongst these was the bishop of Ross, who, after pleading in vain that his privilege as an ambassador from the queen of Scots ought to shield him from answering questions, made a full declaration, which was corroborated by the confessions of the other prisoners. The duke was tried on a charge of high treason by his peers, on the 16th of January, 1572. All the previous transactions connected with the plan of marriage with the queen of Scots were entered into; and it was urged that his continued desire for that alliance had a view to Mary's claim to the present possession of the crown of England. This was very slight matter upon which to found the accusation of an overt act of treason. The more serious charge was, that through the agency of Rudolphi, an Italian, who had been sent by Mary to the pope, the king of Spain, and the duke of Alva, he had received assurances of the support of these personages to a plan for uniting Mary with the duke, for seizing the person of Elizabeth, and for landing a foreign army in England. Mr. Jardine, in his excellent report of this great trial, expresses his opinion, from a critical examination of the voluminous documents connected with the Rudolphi conspiracy, that, "though the duke was probably a tool in the hands of persons more artful than himself, he probably participated in the scheme." The trial itself was conducted with such fairness as is compatible with evidence mainly resting upon the confessions of absent persons, some of which were extorted by the rack, or by its terror. Norfolk was unanimously condemned; but his execution was deferred till the 2nd of June. Again and again, Elizabeth revoked the warrant which consigned him to the block. The duke was the chief of the English nobles. He was of royal lineage. He was the son of the illustrious Surrey who had perished under the jealousy of her father. There were many causes for Elizabeth hesitating when, for the first time, she was called to shed the blood of an English peer, besides the dissimulation which some are ready to impute to her. There is a real struggle of mind to be traced in her letter to Burleigh, received by him at two o'clock of the morning of the 11th of April, when, in her obscure style, she writes, "My lord, methinks that I am more beholding to the hinder part of my head than well dare trust the

forwards side of the same, and therefore sent to the lieutenant and the S. [sheriff?], as you know best, the order to defer the execution till they hear further. . . The causes that move me to this are not now to be expressed, lest an irrevocable deed be in mean while committed." *

The spectacle of a great nobleman perishing upon the scaffold was not amongst the experiences of the rising generation of England. The catastrophe of Norfolk made a popular impression in proportion to the rarity of such an exhibition. The very aspect of the place of punishment was suggestive of political remembrances. "Upon Tower-hill," says Holinshed, "a scaffold had been builded many years ago, serving for execution; which being old was both rotten and ruinous. For queen Elizabeth having with mercy governed her commonwealth, there was no punishment there inflicted upon any for the space of fourteen years; wherefore a new scaffold must needs be made." The penalty which the duke had incurred by meddling with the affair of the queen of Scots could not deter others from the same dangerous course. Two Derbyshire gentlemen were tried and executed in May, upon a charge of having corresponded with Mary for the purpose of delivering her from the custody of the earl of Shrewsbury. The affairs of Scotland had become more and more distracted since the period of the detention of the queen. The regent Murray had been assassinated, from motives of private revenge, at Linlithgow, in January, 1570. Lennox, the father of Darnley, had succeeded him. He, also, was assassinated in September, 1571. The country was enduring some of the worst miseries of a civil war between the two factions of catholic and presbyterian, contending, one in the name of Mary, and the other in the name of her son. On the 30th of July, 1572, there was a truce between these fierce opponents; and it is possible that some negotiations might have successfully proceeded between those who made the restoration of Mary a condition of pacification, and the reformers, who might have thought it possible to secure their ascendency, even under "the wicked woman" whom Knox continued to denounce, had not an event occurred which produced a rage against the Romanists, both in England and Scotland, compared with which all previous indignation was moderate.

The Huguenots of France were a body isolated from their countrymen, who viewed them with dislike,—sometimes conciliated and sometimes persecuted by the Court, as their support was sought or re-

* Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 263.

jected by the mere ambitious factions that alternately prevailed. In 1570, a treaty was concluded between them and the young king Charles IX.; who professed great anxiety for reconciliation with this portion of his subjects. The great Huguenot leader, Coligny, Admiral of France, was earnestly pressed to repair to the king's court; to which, after some manifestations of distrust, he went in the autumn of 1571. The sister of Charles was pressed in marriage upon the prince of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV.; and that marriage was celebrated with great magnificence on the 18th of August, 1572. England had made a treaty with France, which had for one of its objects to wrest the Netherlands from Spain; and the advisers of Elizabeth had recommended a marriage with the duke of Alençon, the younger son of Catherine de Medici, who had given intimation of his disposition to favour the Protestants. Like many other recommendations of her Council and her Parliament, the queen of England treated this proposal with civility, but with a secret determination, from whatever cause it proceeded, not to marry at all. Under these circumstances the apprehension that there was a deep confederacy for the annihilation of Protestantism began to be lessened. The Huguenots were drawn in large numbers to Paris by the festivities of the marriage of the French princess with Henry of Navarre, their acknowledged head. On the 22d of August, Coligny was shot from the window of a house occupied by a dependant of the duke of Guise. His wounds were not dangerous. The king, with his mother, Catherine, visited the wounded man. The queen-mother could ill disguise her alarm when the admiral began to speak earnestly with the king, whilst the house was filled with Coligny's armed retainers. She had concerted the assassination with the duke of Anjou and the duchess of Nemours, whose first husband had been slain by a Huguenot. A cautious historian says, speaking of Catherine de Medici, "The Huguenots won over the king, and appeared to supplant her influence over him. This personal danger put an end to all delay. With that resistless and magical power which she possessed over her children, she re-awakened all the slumbering fanaticism of her son. It cost her but one word to rouse the populace to arms, and that word she spoke. Every individual Huguenot of note was delivered over to the vengeance of his personal enemy."* This is, perhaps, a better solution of a disputed question than the theory that Charles IX., a very young man, weak and impulsive, vacillating and ferocious, was such a master of

* Ranke, "History of the Popes," vol. ii. p. 69.

dissimulation, that for several years he could have deceived the English ambassador, Walsingham, into a belief that he was favourable to the Protestants whilst meditating their destruction. On the other hand, the jealousy of Catherine is a more rational explanation of her conduct, than the belief that the Massacre of St. Bartholomew had been part of a plan for the extirpation of Protestantism, settled between that fearful woman and the duke of Alva, in their conferences at Bayonne, in 1564. These questions have formed the subject of much historical controversy. The terrible events that followed the attempt to assassinate Coligny admit of no dispute. On the 23rd of August, according to the account given by Charles himself to his sister Margaret, after the noontide dinner of the court he was told of a treasonable conspiracy of the Huguenots against himself and his family. It would be necessary, his relations said, to anticipate the designs of the conspirators by their previous destruction. He gave his consent, and expressed his hope that not a single Huguenot would be left alive to reproach him with the deed. Night had descended upon Paris. There was no alarm, as bands of assassins silently congregated in the streets. A signal was to be given when the work of slaughter was to commence. The king, his mother, and Anjou sate amidst darkness and stillness in a balcony of the Louvre. The noise of a pistol is heard, and Charles trembles in the agony of guilty expectation. At length the clocks of Paris strike two. Then the bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois tolled forth the signal. The duke of Guise bursts into the defenceless courts where Coligny slept, and three hundred men slaughter him and his followers. His body is cast out of the window, and the cry of 'Death to the Huguenots,' amidst the sound of the tocsin, wakes up the fanatical citizens, and one universal butchery of the protestants is being accomplished. For three days the slaughter goes on and the fury extends to Orleans, Lyons, Troyes, Rouen, Toulouse, Bourdeaux, and other towns. We may choose what estimate we please of the number of the victims, from the highest estimate of a hundred thousand, to the extenuating calculation of Dr. Lingard that there might be about sixteen hundred. Whatever was the number, the massacre was considered as a glorious triumph for the catholics. The pope, now Gregory XIII., celebrated the event by a solemn procession; and the pious Venetians expressed their satisfaction at this mark of God's favour. Charles, in his despatches to foreign courts, bewailed the massacre, and imputed it to the populace of Paris. To his parliament he avowed

himself the author, and claimed the glory of having given peace to his kingdom. He sent an ambassador to England, to explain away the causes of this termination of his proposed tender mercies to the Protestants. The queen was at Woodstock; and when the envoy was admitted to a public audience, he had to pass between two lines of lords and ladies in deep mourning. Not a word was uttered as he advanced towards the queen, who also wore the deepest black. It was the chamber of death which he seemed to have entered. Motionless and silent was every courtier as he made his salutations. Elizabeth heard with perfect calmness the lying excuses which he was entrusted to utter. Charles wrote letters to her, which she first refused to answer; but afterwards replied to with courteous words. But her measured civility produced an impression in France that Elizabeth was about to arm. There was a general terror in England that the example of St. Bartholomew's day would spread. The bishop of London writes to lord Burleigh, on the 5th of September, "These evil times trouble all good men's heads, and make their hearts ache, fearing that this barbarous treachery will not cease in France, but will reach over unto us. . . . Hasten her majesty homeward; her safe return to London will comfort many hearts oppressed with fear." The bishop, Edwin Sandys, then advises, amongst other precautions, "Forthwith to cut off the Scottish queen's head." Walsingham writes from France that "certain unsound members must be cut off," for "violent diseases will have violent remedies." Elizabeth would not comply with these suggestions, pressed on her, as they were, by the terrors of her subjects and the counsels of her ministers. But there appears little doubt that she was cognisant of a plot between some of these ministers and the earl of Mar, the regent of Scotland, to deliver Mary up, that she might be put to death by her own people. It is not so clear, as Mr. Tytler believes, that she was to be secretly made away with. The death of Mar put an end to these dark intrigues; and Burleigh was left to make his moan that "if her majesty will continue her delays, for providing for her own surety by just means given to her by God, she and we shall vainly call upon God when the calamity shall fall upon us." Those means "for her own surety" were not employed by the queen for fourteen years; and, however indefensible they may have been when called into exercise, it is an abuse of historical evidence to represent that her perpetual anxiety was to get rid of her hated rival. There might be deep policy in Elizabeth's delays;

but her jealousies and fears must have been under some subjection to a higher feeling, when she was hounded on by those in whom she had the surest trust; by the petitions of the Commons and the clamour of the populace; to do a deed for which all the bells of London would have rung, but which she shrank from, to remain in perpetual apprehension of losing crown and life. Unless we can believe, against all proof, that such danger was imaginary, we must be content to think that each of these queens was the victim of a sad necessity; and that some of the wretchedness which Mary had to endure in her lonely prisons was not unfelt by Elizabeth in her gorgeous court. But it awakens, indeed, a painful contrast to imagine the one queen wearing out her life in some inaccessible castle; working tapestry with her maidens in gloomy rooms; walking in the narrow garden, or gazing from the guarded turret; waiting eagerly for news which never comes; sending secret letters which are intercepted; watched by a stately earl and his haughty countess; and then to read of the other making joyful progresses, and smiling upon loving subjects; borne on the willing shoulders of handsome courtiers, amidst "throngs of knight" and "store of ladies;" feasting at Kenilworth with Leicester, or opening the Royal Exchange with Gresham; speaking Greek with the Greek professor at Oxford, or correcting the exercises of the scholars at Eton. It is indeed a sad contrast. But in our pity for the one queen we must not forego our respect for the other,—for the queen who, despotic as she was, always relied upon the people—who, as Mr. Macaulay has most justly said, "did not treat the nation as an adverse party:" the queen under whose auspices Drake circumnavigated the world, and Raleigh founded Virginia; the queen whose name will be ever associated with the splendid literature of her age, for that sprang out of the emancipation of the national mind which she was the great instrument of accomplishing.