

TWELFTH PERIOD.

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THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNAL ORDER BY
ROYALTY, AND THE SECOND STRUGGLE OF FRANCE
AGAINST THE HOUSE OF AUSTRIA (1598-1659).

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CHAPTER XLVII.

REORGANIZATION OF FRANCE BY HENRY IV.

(1598-1610 A. D.)

State of France. — In 1598 Henry IV. had driven out the foreigners, reconciled Catholics and Protestants, and established peace in the interior and on the frontiers. It was now necessary to heal all the wounds that France had received. A contemporary estimated that since 1580 eight hundred thousand persons had perished by war and massacre; that nine cities had been levelled with the ground, two hundred and fifty villages burned, and one hundred and twenty-eight thousand houses destroyed. And since that period, which preceded the formation of the League, how numerous were the ruins of another sort! Workmen without work, commerce interrupted, agriculture desolated, robbery everywhere; and from the midst of all this desolation Henry IV. must endeavor to resuscitate France. The nobility had proposed one way out of the difficulty; they offered him all the money necessary for the government and for the maintenance of the army, on condition of a virtual restoration of feudalism. This was far from according with Henry's designs.

Sully. — Henry had already fixed upon the man who should aid him in this work, more difficult than that of battle-fields: a man of strong good sense, a brave heart, and

above all a well-balanced mind, the Protestant Maximilian of Béthune, afterwards Duke of Sully. He was born in the castle of Rosny, near Mantes, in 1560. At the time of the massacre of St. Bartholomew he was studying in Paris, but escaped by presence of mind. He attached himself to the king of Navarre, followed him through all his adventures and battles, showing himself as brave as the bravest. He was not a knight after the fashion of the paladins of romance; for while he attended thoroughly to his master's business, he had an eye to his own affairs, married a wealthy heiress, and did not scorn the emoluments of war. But in his devotion to the prince and the State, this prudent manager cut down his forests of Rosny, and gave the money thus procured to Henry in his need; and the zealous Protestant counselled the king to end the war by avowing himself a Catholic.

In 1596 Henry appointed him a member of the financial council, and after the peace of Vervins he held the position of superintendent of finances and grand overseer of the roads of France (1598), then that of grand master of the artillery (1601). He preserved his honesty and his rectitude of character as well as his religion, and was the friend as well as the minister of the king.

Financial Reforms. — The disorder of the finances was extreme. The public debt was estimated at 345,000,000. France paid annually more than 170,000,000 in taxes. The net revenue scarcely amounted to 30,000,000, of which 19,000,000 had to be deducted to meet the engagements of the State. Almost all the royal domain was mortgaged. From one end to the other of the financial administration there was theft. Sully undertook to have reports made on every point, to have accurate accounts kept, to establish a balance between receipts and expenditures, to take inventories of all the resources of the country, province by province, and of all branches of service, and to fix the annual budget of expenses. The proceeds of the principal taxes were thus almost doubled without any additional expense to the country. A court of justice prosecuted dishonest agents, and the tax-collectors were forced to keep strict accounts. The governors had been in the habit of levying arbitrary taxes in their provinces; the lords, upon their vassals. He put an end to the profits thus derived by these pilferers, and the taxes imposed by the king were consequently more produc-

tive. He revised all claims against the state, annulled many, and reduced the interest from $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. He took an account of all the leases on which the public taxes were farmed, and raised the price of them. A number of useless offices, fraudulent annuities, and illegal exemptions were suppressed, and others diminished in magnitude. Many persons who had taken upon themselves the title of noble were restored to the class of taxables. Hereditary tenure of office, officially constituted in 1504, by the annual payment of the *paulette*, was a less honorable device, but that also helped the treasury. The great strictness in matter of receipts was balanced by a wise economy in matters of expenditure. Consequently at the end of the reign of Henry IV. his government had paid 147,000,000 of debts, bought back 80,000,000 of domains, cut off 8,000,000 of annuities, reduced the taxation from 30,000,000 to 26,000,000, of which the treasury realized 20,000,000, spent 40,000,000 in fortifications or on public works, made provision for the service for the current year, and amassed a reserve of 20,000,000 livres.

Agriculture. — Henry IV. took an equal interest in the three sources of public wealth, — agriculture, commerce, and industry; Sully was more exclusively in favor of agriculture. He went twice through all the provinces (1596 and 1598), so as to study for himself the needs of the country, and in 1600 remitted to the people their arrears of the *tailles*, amounting to 20,000,000, and reduced the land-tax 1,800,000 livres. Finally, in 1601, he permitted the exportation of grain — a bold measure for this period, but a very wise one, which would enrich the country instead of impoverishing it. He also favored the draining of marshes.

A Protestant gentleman of Languedoc, Olivier de Serres, deserves to be called the father of French agriculture, on account of the rules he laid down in his *Théâtre de l'Agriculture* and his *Ménage des Champs*, and which he put into practice himself on his model farm. When Henry IV. received his book he ordered a certain number of pages to be read to him every day after his dinner. Many others read it and followed the advice which it gave. Thus farming made rapid progress, and until the wars of Louis XIV. French agriculturists took the lead in Europe. There was not a single year of scarcity from 1598 to 1626.

Industry and Commerce. — Sully thought that field labor

made men good soldiers. The worthy gentleman feared that manufacturing industry would weaken the French. He was entirely opposed to the importation of foreign industries and modes of cultivation. Henry IV. was of a different opinion. He endeavored to establish in France the raising of the silkworm. A similar purpose is evinced in the foundation of manufactories of the fine crape of Bologna, of gold thread of the kind made at Milan, of high-warp tapestries, of gilt leather, glass, crystal, mirrors, and linen of the Dutch style, etc. This was a more successful plan for keeping money in the kingdom than Sully's prohibitions of its export had been. In 1604 the king convoked an *assembly of commerce*. Among other things proposed by it was a general reformation of the guilds and trade corporations.

Maritime Affairs; Colonies. — The military marine developed by Francis I. had fallen very low. Sully had no aversion to the navy; but he did not desire colonies for France, and would willingly have left to the people of Spain, the Netherlands, and England the care of conquering and peopling distant countries. Henry IV. was more far-sighted than his minister; in order to encourage trade with North America, he sent Champlain to Canada to found Port Royal (now Annapolis) in 1604, and Quebec in 1608. Henry even planned the establishment of an East India Company which should rival those established by England and Holland. He did not live to realize this project, but he signed an advantageous commercial treaty with Turkey.

Public Works; the Canal of Briare. — Many roads were laid out by Sully. The plan of the great canals which have since been cut throughout France was then conceived. One only was finished, — that of Briare. This was the first, except in Italy, which had locks uniting two levels; its length is fifty-five kilometers, and it connects the Loire and the Seine.

The Army. — In 1595 there were only four regular regiments; Henry increased them to eleven. But the custom of hiring foreign troops continued. The cavalry continued to form much the larger part of the army, the nobility being unwilling to serve as infantry. The artillery under Sully's management assumed great importance. Since 1572 no lord had been allowed to have cannon in his castle without express permission from the king. Sully caused a

number of fortresses to be repaired, and stocked the arsenals which had been left empty by the civil war.

Arts and Letters under Henry IV. — Though not loving the arts as Francis I., Henry II., and Charles IX. had done, Henry IV. appreciated the fact that they shed lustre upon the reign of a king. He therefore accepted the heritage of the Renaissance, which had unhappily now come almost to its decay. He had much work done upon the château of Fontainebleau; at Saint-Germain he constructed the new château. He began two new pavilions at the Tuileries, and intended extending the great gallery of the Louvre so far as to join that palace. He finished also the front of the Hôtel de Ville and the Pont Neuf, commenced under Henry III. In 1604 was laid the corner-stone of the Palais Royal at Paris, in which appears the mixed structure of brick, stone, and slate, — a style revived from ancient Italian architecture.

The Renaissance abandons its capricious liberty; method, regularity, and law everywhere replace the bold and often irregular but powerful and original independence of the sixteenth century. In politics, the royal authority was advancing toward that irresistible power which was established by Richelieu and Louis XIV. In literature, also, a king arose; a tyrant of words and syllables, — Malherbe, a refined and tasteful scholar, rather than a great poet. A regulator of expressions and ideas, Malherbe produced but little besides odes and stanzas; but in most of his works he attained perfection of form, and a few of his pieces are, even in thought and feeling, perfect models. He firmly established among the French the poetic language and style which were used by Corneille, Racine, and Boileau.

The satirist, Mathurin Régnier, with his fantastic energy, revolted against Malherbe; but in vain. Discipline would have its way in letters as well as in the State. Régnier wrote satires in verse; the heir of Marot, with more malice, and a style which was often perfect, he dealt only with the ridiculous side of character, and did not go beneath the surface of things. The verse and prose writings of D'Aubigné, in spite of their real merits, are rather political efforts than literary works. The fiery Protestant continues with his pen the battle which he had so valiantly sustained with his sword. One ought also to mention, in connection with Henry IV., the *Satire Ménippée*.

Popularity of the King ; Conspiracies. — The solicitude of Henry IV. for the prosperity of France had acquired for him a well-deserved popularity. The brilliant qualities of his mind and heart concealed weaknesses which, indeed, were easily forgiven by the people; they saw in him only the king who promised the disabled soldiers an asylum, and the peasant a chicken in the pot every Sunday.

But if the people blessed him, it was not so with certain parties and certain men, who were more dissatisfied with his strong policies than with all his faults. They forgave him his mistresses and his bastards: that sort of thing had been seen in every reign. Nevertheless, the favor shown to Gabrielle d'Estrées and Henriette d'Entraigues, forgotten promises, services rendered the king of Navarre which the king of France was unable to repay, caused some to murmur; and his intense desire to be king in everything drove others into conspiracies.

The most celebrated of the conspiracies was that of Marshal Biron, in which foreigners also had a hand. The Duke of Savoy and the king of Spain endeavored to incite the French nobles to revolt. The proud Biron, who had been created marshal, duke, a peer of France, and governor of Burgundy, considered these rewards still insufficient for his services, and so allowed himself to be seduced into treason. Once before, in 1601, Henry had pardoned him, and he would have pardoned him a second time if Biron would have agreed to the conditions that he demanded. Irritated by his obstinacy, and wishing to make him an example to the nobility, he allowed his sentence to be executed: Biron was beheaded (1602).

Plan for the Reorganization of Europe. — Spain had reason to be alarmed, for the power of the house of Austria was the continual subject of Henry's meditations. Sully suggested to him a plan for the reorganization of Europe, which was doubtless talked of, but the realization of which Henry was too clear-sighted to expect. The king, says Sully, desired to drive the house of Austria from the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany; to make of Hungary, with the addition of the Austrian provinces, a powerful kingdom; to give Lombardy to Savoy, Sicily to Venice; to form of the peninsula of Italy one great state having the Pope for its chief; to make Genoa and Florence, with the small neighboring lordships, into a republic. Europe, then, with

six hereditary kingdoms, — France, Spain, England, Sweden, Denmark, and Lombardy; with five elective governments, — Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, the Empire, and the Papacy; with four republics, — Venice, Genoa and Florence, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, — would have formed one great republic, having a supreme council of deputies from all the states, whose duty should be to prevent encroachments and collisions. Henry would have asked nothing for France, excepting French-speaking districts, Savoy, Lorraine, Belgium, and Franche-Comté.

His designs upon the last two were capable of present execution. In order to accomplish them he counted on the alliance of England, on the Protestants of the Netherlands, and on those of Germany, the Evangelical Union. The Duke of Cleves and Jülich had just died. Protestants and Catholics were already disputing for that rich possession; this afforded an opportunity to interfere and to begin a war which the increasing hatred of the two religious parties in the Empire was making inevitable. The most extensive preparations were made; forty thousand men advanced towards the frontiers of Champagne.

Assassination of Henry IV. (1610). — The alliance of Henry with the Protestants and the Turks alarmed the extreme Catholics. In vain he endeavored to preserve the friendship of the Pope, of whom he had obtained a divorce from Margaret of Valois, in order to marry, in 1600, the Pope's own niece, Mary de' Medici. In vain he had, in 1603, allowed the Jesuits to return to France, and granted their order the right to teach. In spite of all this, he was, in the eyes of many, the enemy of religion, and of this François Ravallac, a fanatic, was fully persuaded.

Henry was anxious and sad; reports of plots reached him constantly; already nineteen attempts to assassinate him had been frustrated; he had cause to fear a twentieth. Before setting out for the war he yielded to the entreaties of his wife, who was anxious to be crowned. Ideas of impending assassination never left him. On the 14th of May, being urged to go to ride in order to shake off these gloomy feelings, he took an open carriage. He took with him the dukes of Épernon and Montbazou, and five other lords, with no escort; only a few gentlemen on horseback and a few footmen followed him. He drove towards the Arsenal, where he intended to visit Sully, who was ill. A blockade

of vehicles on the way stopped the coach. Ravallac, who had followed him on foot from the Louvre, jumped up upon a post and struck the king. "I am wounded," he cried, and threw up his arms. This movement exposed his left side, and the assassin dealt a second blow which pierced his heart. The king fell back without uttering a cry: he was dead. Ravallac made no attempt to fly, and it was with difficulty that the people were prevented from tearing him in pieces. Two weeks after he was put to death with horrible tortures.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LOUIS XIII.

(1610-1643 A.D.)

Regency of Mary de' Medici. — Sully was expecting the king at the Arsenal, when a gentleman of his household came rushing in and said, "The king is fatally wounded." "My God!" exclaimed Sully, "have pity on him, on us, and on the State. If he dies, France will fall into strange hands!"

Louis XIII. was not nine years old; custom assigned the regency to the mothers of kings. Mary de' Medici, who was a foreigner and felt that she was not beloved by the French people, thought it necessary that a sort of legal sanction should be given to her authority. She addressed herself to the Parliament of Paris, as if these magistrates were representatives of the country. Ordered by Épernon to declare her regent, the magistrates obeyed; later they remembered how a queen had recognized their right to dispose of royal authority.

At first nothing appeared changed in the political system of France. Mary de' Medici retained the ministers of the preceding reign, including Sully. The projects of Henry IV. were apparently carried out under his administration: a royal declaration confirmed the edict of Nantes, and an army of ten thousand men went to take possession of Jülich for the Protestant princes, the allies of France.

Abandonment of the Policy of Henry IV.; Concini. — But it happened, as it generally does when queens are kings, that affairs were subordinated to persons, which is a course of things directly opposed to true statesmanship. The government became feeble and capricious. With a minor king, an incapable regent, a divided court, and turbulent princes, the action of France in foreign affairs was of course neutralized for a long time. Finding it necessary to make peace, Mary de' Medici turned towards the Spaniards; she opened negotiations for the double marriage of her son with the