

# JOHN ABBOTT

HENRY IV,  
MAKERS OF  
HISTORY

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**Henry IV, Makers of History**

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*Henry IV, Makers of History:*

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# **John S. C. Abbott**

## **Henry IV, Makers of History**

### **PREFACE**

History is our Heaven-appointed instructor. It is the guide for the future. The calamities of yesterday are the protectors of to-day.

The sea of time we navigate is full of perils. But it is not an unknown sea. It has been traversed for ages, and there is not a sunken rock or a treacherous sand-bar which is not marked by the wreck of those who have preceded us.

There is no portion of history fraught with more valuable instruction than the period of those terrible religious wars which desolated the sixteenth century. There is no romance so wild as the veritable history of those times. The majestic outgoings of the Almighty, as developed in the onward progress of our race, infinitely transcend, in all the elements of profoundness, mystery, and grandeur, all that man's fancy can create.

The cartoons of Raphael are beautiful, but what are they when compared with the heaving ocean, the clouds of sunset, and the pinnacles of the Alps? The dome of St. Peter's is man's noblest architecture, but what is it when compared with the magnificent rotunda of the skies?

*John S. C. Abbott.*

*Brunswick, Maine, 1856.*

# Chapter I

## Childhood and Youth

**1475-1564**

Navarre.

Catharine de Foix.

About four hundred years ago there was a small kingdom, spreading over the cliffs and ravines of the eastern extremity of the Pyrenees, called Navarre. Its population, of about five hundred thousand, consisted of a very simple, frugal, and industrious people. Those who lived upon the shore washed by the stormy waves of the Bay of Biscay gratified their love of excitement and of adventure by braving the perils of the sea. Those who lived in the solitude of the interior, on the sunny slopes of the mountains, or by the streams which meandered through the verdant valleys, fed their flocks, and harvested their grain, and pressed rich wine from the grapes of their vineyards, in the enjoyment of the most pleasant duties of rural life. Proud of their independence, they were ever ready to grasp arms to repel foreign aggression. The throne of this kingdom was, at the time of which we speak, occupied by Catharine de Foix. She was a

widow, and all her hopes and affections were centred in her son Henry, an ardent and impetuous boy six or seven years of age, who was to receive the crown when it should fall from her brow, and transmit to posterity their ancestral honors.

Ferdinand and Isabella.

Dismemberment of Navarre.

Ferdinand of Aragon had just married Isabella of Castile, and had thus united those two populous and wealthy kingdoms; and now, in the arrogance of power, seized with the pride of annexation, he began to look with a wistful eye upon the picturesque kingdom of Navarre. Its comparative feebleness, under the reign of a bereaved woman weary of the world, invited to the enterprise. Should he grasp at the whole territory of the little realm, France might interpose her powerful remonstrance. Should he take but the half which was spread out upon the southern declivity of the Pyrenees, it would be virtually saying to the French monarch, "The rest I courteously leave for you." The armies of Spain were soon sweeping resistlessly through these sunny valleys, and one half of her empire was ruthlessly torn from the Queen of Navarre, and transferred to the dominion of imperious Castile and Aragon.

Plans for revenge.

Death of Catharine.

Catharine retired with her child to the colder and more uncongenial regions of the northern declivity of the mountains.

Her bosom glowed with mortification and rage in view of her hopeless defeat. As she sat down gloomily in the small portion which remained to her of her dismembered empire, she endeavored to foster in the heart of her son the spirit of revenge, and to inspire him with the resolution to regain those lost leagues of territory which had been wrested from the inheritance of his fathers. Henry imbibed his mother's spirit, and chafed and fretted under wrongs for which he could obtain no redress. Ferdinand and Isabella could not be annoyed even by any force which feeble Navarre could raise. Queen Catharine, however, brooded deeply over her wrongs, and laid plans for retributions of revenge, the execution of which she knew must be deferred till long after her body should have mouldered to dust in the grave. She courted the most intimate alliance with Francis I., King of France. She contemplated the merging of her own little kingdom into that powerful monarchy, that the infant Navarre, having grown into the giant France, might crush the Spanish tyrants into humiliation. Nerved by this determined spirit of revenge, and inspired by a mother's ambition, she intrigued to wed her son to the heiress of the French throne, that even in the world of spirits she might be cheered by seeing Henry heading the armies of France, the terrible avenger of her wrongs. These hopes invigorated her until the fitful dream of her joyless life was terminated, and her restless spirit sank into the repose of the grave. She lived, however, to see her plans apparently in progress toward their most successful fulfillment.



## Marriage of Henry and Margaret.

Henry, her son, was married to Margaret, the favorite sister of the King of France. Their nuptials were blessed with but one child, Jeanne d'Albret. This child, in whose destiny such ambitious hopes were centred, bloomed into most marvelous beauty, and became also as conspicuous for her mental endowments as for her personal charms. She had hardly emerged from the period of childhood when she was married to Antony of Bourbon, a near relative of the royal family of France. Immediately after her marriage she left Navarre with her husband, to take up her residence in the French metropolis.

## Lingering hopes of Henry.

One hope still lived, with undying vigor, in the bosom of Henry. It was the hope, the intense passion, with which his departed mother had inspired him, that a grandson would arise from this union, who would, with the spirit of Hannibal, avenge the family wrongs upon Spain. Twice Henry took a grandson into his arms with the feeling that the great desire of his life was about to be realized; and twice, with almost a broken heart, he saw these hopes blighted as he committed the little ones to the grave.

## Jeanne returns to Navarre.

Summers and winters had now lingered wearily away, and Henry had become an old man. Disappointment and care had worn down his frame. World-weary and joyless, he still clung to hope. The tidings that Jeanne was again to become a mother

rekindled the lustre of his fading eye. The aged king sent importunately for his daughter to return without delay to the paternal castle, that the child might be born in the kingdom of Navarre, whose wrongs it was to be his peculiar destiny to avenge. It was mid-winter. The journey was long and the roads rough. But the dutiful and energetic Jeanne promptly obeyed the wishes of her father, and hastened to his court.

Henry could hardly restrain his impatience as he waited, week after week, for the advent of the long-looked-for avenger. With the characteristic superstition of the times, he constrained his daughter to promise that, at the period of birth, during the most painful moments of her trial, she would sing a mirthful and triumphant song, that her child might possess a sanguine, joyous, and energetic spirit.

Birth of Henry IV.

The royal nurse.

Henry entertained not a doubt that the child would prove a boy, commissioned by Providence as the avenger of Navarre. The old king received the child, at the moment of its birth, into his own arms, totally regardless of a mother's rights, and exultingly enveloping it in soft folds, bore it off, as his own property, to his private apartment. He rubbed the lips of the plump little boy with garlic, and then taking a golden goblet of generous wine, the rough and royal nurse forced the beverage he loved so well down the untainted throat of his new-born heir.

"A little good old wine," said the doting grandfather, "will

make the boy vigorous, and brave."

We may remark, in passing, that it was *wine*, rich and pure: not that mixture of all abominations, whose only vintage is in cellars, sunless, damp, and fetid, where guilty men fabricate poison for a nation.

Name chosen for the young prince.

This little stranger received the ancestral name of Henry. By his subsequent exploits he filled the world with his renown. He was the first of the Bourbon line who ascended the throne of France, and he swayed the sceptre of energetic rule over that wide-spread realm with a degree of power and grandeur which none of his descendants have ever rivaled. The name of Henry IV. is one of the most illustrious in the annals of France. The story of his struggles for the attainment of the throne of Charlemagne is full of interest. His birth, to which we have just alluded, occurred at Parr, in the kingdom of Navarre, in the year 1553.

The castle of Courasse.

His grandfather immediately assumed the direction of every thing relating to the child, apparently without the slightest consciousness that either the father or the mother of Henry had any prior claims. The king possessed, among the wild and romantic fastnesses of the mountains, a strong old castle, as rugged and frowning as the eternal granite upon which its foundations were laid. Gloomy evergreens clung to the hill-sides.

A mountain stream, often swollen to an impetuous torrent by the autumnal rains and the spring thaws, swept through the little verdant lawn, which smiled amid the stern sublimities surrounding this venerable and moss-covered fortress. Around the solitary towers the eagles wheeled and screamed in harmony with the gales and storms which often swept through these wild regions. The expanse around was sparsely settled by a few hardy peasants, who, by feeding their herds, and cultivating little patches of soil among the crags, obtained a humble living, and by exercise and the pure mountain air acquired a vigor and an athletic-hardihood of frame which had given them much celebrity.

To the storm-battered castle of Courasse, thus lowering in congenial gloom among these rocks, the old king sent the infant Henry to be nurtured as a peasant-boy, that, by frugal fare and exposure to hardship, he might acquire a peasant's robust frame. He resolved that no French delicacies should enfeeble the constitution of this noble child. Bareheaded and barefooted, the young prince, as yet hardly emerging from infancy, rolled upon the grass, played with the poultry, and the dogs, and the sturdy young mountaineers, and plunged into the brook or paddled in the pools of water with which the mountain showers often filled the court-yard. His hair was bleached and his cheeks bronzed by the sun and the wind. Few would have imagined that the unattractive child, with his unshorn locks and in his studiously neglected garb, was the descendant of a long line of kings, and

was destined to eclipse them all by the grandeur of his name.

### Education of Henry.

As years glided along he advanced to energetic boyhood, the constant companion, and, in all his sports and modes of life, the equal of the peasant-boys by whom he was surrounded. He hardly wore a better dress than they; he was nourished with the same coarse fare. With them he climbed the mountains, and leaped the streams, and swung upon the trees. He struggled with his youthful competitors in all their athletic games, running, wrestling, pitching the quoit, and tossing the bar. This active out-door exercise gave a relish to the coarse food of the peasants, consisting of brown bread, beef, cheese, and garlic. His grandfather had decided that this regimen was essential for the education of a prince who was to humble the proud monarchy of Spain, and regain the territory which had been so unjustly wrested from his ancestors.

### Death of the King of Navarre.

Jeanne d'Albret ascends the throne.

When Henry was about six years of age, his grandfather, by gradual decay, sank sorrowingly into his grave. Consequently, his mother, Jeanne d'Albret, ascended the throne of Navarre. Her husband, Antony of Bourbon, was a rough, fearless old soldier, with nothing to distinguish him from the multitude who do but live, fight, and die. Jeanne and her husband were in Paris at the time of the death of her father. They immediately

hastened to Bearn, the capital of Navarre, to take possession of the dominions which had thus descended to them. The little Henry was then brought from his wild mountain home to reside with his mother in the royal palace. Though Navarre was but a feeble kingdom, the grandeur of its court was said to have been unsurpassed, at that time, by that of any other in Europe. The intellectual education of Henry had been almost entirely neglected; but the hardihood of his body had given such vigor and energy to his mind, that he was now prepared to distance in intellectual pursuits, with perfect ease, those whose infantile brains had been overtaken with study.

#### Residence in Bearn.

Henry remained in Bearn with his parents two years, and in that time ingrafted many courtly graces upon the free and fetterless carriage he had acquired among the mountains. His mind expanded with remarkable rapidity, and he became one of the most beautiful and engaging of children.

#### Marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots.

About this time Mary, Queen of Scots, was to be married to the Dauphin Francis, son of the King of France. Their nuptials were to be celebrated with great magnificence. The King and Queen of Navarre returned to the court of France to attend the marriage. They took with them their son. His beauty and vivacity excited much admiration in the French metropolis. One day the young prince, then but six or seven years of age, came running

into the room where his father and Henry II. of France were conversing, and, by his artlessness and grace, strongly attracted the attention of the French monarch. The king fondly took the playful child in his arms, and said affectionately,

"Will you be my son?"

"No, sire, no! that is my father," replied the ardent boy, pointing to the King of Navarre.

"Well, then, will you be my son-in-law?" demanded Henry.

"Oh yes, most willingly," the prince replied.

Betrothal of Henry.

Henry II. had a daughter Marguerite, a year or two younger than the Prince of Navarre, and it was immediately resolved between the two parents that the young princes should be considered as betrothed.

Henry's tutor.

Soon after this the King and Queen of Navarre, with their son, returned to the mountainous domain which Jeanne so ardently loved. The queen devoted herself assiduously to the education of the young prince, providing for him the ablest teachers whom that age could afford. A gentleman of very distinguished attainments, named La Gaucherie, undertook the general superintendence of his studies. The young prince was at this time an exceedingly energetic, active, ambitious boy, very inquisitive respecting all matters of information, and passionately fond of study.

Remark of Dr. Johnson.

Dr. Johnson, with his rough and impetuous severity, has said, "It is impossible to get Latin into a boy unless you flog it into him."

Henry's motto.

The experience of La Gaucherie, however, did not confirm this sentiment. Henry always went with alacrity to his Latin and his Greek. His judicious teacher did not disgust his mind with long and laborious rules, but introduced him at once to words and phrases, while gradually he developed the grammatical structure of the language. The vigorous mind of Henry, grasping eagerly at intellectual culture, made rapid progress, and he was soon able to read and write both Latin and Greek with fluency, and ever retained the power of quoting, with great facility and appositeness, from the classical writers of Athens and of Rome. Even in these early days he seized upon the Greek phrase "*ἡ νικᾶν ἢ ἀποθαιεῖν*," *to conquer or to die*, and adopted it for his motto.

La Gaucherie's method of instruction.

La Gaucherie was warmly attached to the principles of the Protestant faith. He made a companion of his noble pupil, and taught him by conversation in pleasant walks and rides as well as by books. It was his practice to have him commit to memory any fine passage in prose or verse which inculcated generous and lofty ideas. The mind of Henry thus became filled with



beautiful images and noble sentiments from the classic writers of France. These gems of literature exerted a powerful influence in moulding his character, and he was fond of quoting them as the guide of his life. Such passages as the following were frequently on the lips of the young prince:

"Over their subjects princes bear the rule,  
But God, more mighty, governs kings themselves."

Death of Henry II.  
Catharine de Medicis regent.

Soon after the return of the King and Queen of Navarre to their own kingdom, Henry II. of France died, leaving the crown to his son Charles, a feeble boy both in body and in mind. As Charles was but ten or twelve years of age, his mother, Catharine de Medicis, was appointed regent during his minority. Catharine was a woman of great strength of mind, but of the utmost depravity of heart. There was no crime ambition could instigate her to commit from which, in the slightest degree, she would recoil. Perhaps the history of the world retains not another instance in which a mother could so far forget the yearnings of nature as to endeavor, studiously and perseveringly, to deprave the morals, and by vice to enfeeble the constitution of her son, that she might retain the power which belonged to him. This proud and dissolute woman looked with great solicitude upon the enterprising and energetic spirits of the young Prince of Navarre.

There were many providential indications that ere long Henry would be a prominent candidate for the throne of France.

### Influence of Plutarch.

Plutarch's *Lives of Ancient Heroes* has perhaps been more influential than any other uninspired book in invigorating genius and in enkindling a passion for great achievements. Napoleon was a careful student and a great admirer of Plutarch. His spirit was entranced with the grandeur of the Greek and Roman heroes, and they were ever to him as companions and bosom friends. During the whole of his stormy career, their examples animated him, and his addresses and proclamations were often invigorated by happy quotations from classic story. Henry, with similar exaltation of genius, read and re-read the pages of Plutarch with the most absorbing delight. Catharine, with an eagle eye, watched these indications of a lofty mind. Her solicitude was roused lest the young Prince of Navarre should, with his commanding genius, supplant her degenerate house.

### Religious agitation.

#### The Huguenots.

At the close of the sixteenth century, the period of which we write, all Europe was agitated by the great controversy between the Catholics and the Protestants. The writings of Luther, Calvin, and other reformers had aroused the attention of the whole Christian world. In England and Scotland the ancient faith had been overthrown, and the doctrines of the Reformation were,

in those kingdoms, established. In France, where the writings of Calvin had been extensively circulated, the Protestants had also become quite numerous, embracing generally the most intelligent portion of the populace. The Protestants were in France called Huguenots, but for what reason is not now known. They were sustained by many noble families, and had for their leaders the Prince of Condé, Admiral Coligni, and the house of Navarre. There were arrayed against them the power of the crown, many of the most powerful nobles, and conspicuously the almost regal house of Guise.

The present controversy.

It is perhaps difficult for a Protestant to write upon this subject with perfect impartiality, however earnestly he may desire to do so. The lapse of two hundred years has not terminated the great conflict. The surging strife has swept across the ocean, and even now, with more or less of vehemence, rages in all the states of this new world. Though the weapons of blood are laid aside, the mighty controversy is still undecided.

The advocates of the old faith were determined to maintain their creed, and to force all to its adoption, at whatever price. They deemed heresy the greatest of all crimes, and thought – and doubtless many conscientiously thought – that it should be exterminated even by the pains of torture and death. The French Parliament adopted for its motto, "*One religion, one law, one king.*" They declared that two religions could no more be endured in a kingdom than two governments.

## The Sorbonne.

At Paris there was a celebrated theological school called the Sorbonne. It included in its faculty the most distinguished doctors of the Catholic Church. The decisions and the decrees of the Sorbonne were esteemed highly authoritative. The views of the Sorbonne were almost invariably asked in reference to any measures affecting the Church.

## Purging the empire.

In 1525 the court presented the following question to the Sorbonne: "*How can we suppress and extirpate the damnable doctrine of Luther from this very Christian kingdom, and purge it from it entirely?*"

The prompt reply was, "*The heresy has already been endured too long. It must be pursued with the extremest rigor, or it will overthrow the throne.*"

Two years after this, Pope Clement VII. sent a communication to the Parliament of Paris, stating,

"It is necessary, in this great and astounding disorder, which arises from the rage of Satan, and from the fury and impiety of his instruments, that every body exert himself to guard the common safety, seeing that this madness would not only embroil and destroy religion, but also all principality, nobility, laws, orders, and ranks."

## The burning chamber.

The Protestants were pursued by the most unrelenting

persecution. The Parliament established a court called the *burning chamber*, because all who were convicted of heresy were burned. The estates of those who, to save their lives, fled from the kingdom, were sold, and their children, who were left behind, were pursued with merciless cruelty.

### Persecution of the Protestants.

The Protestants, with boldness which religious faith alone could inspire, braved all these perils. They resolutely declared that the Bible taught their faith, and their faith only, and that no earthly power could compel them to swerve from the truth. Notwithstanding the perils of exile, torture, and death, they persisted in preaching what they considered the pure Gospel of Christ. In 1533 Calvin was driven from Paris. When one said to him, "Mass must be true, since it is celebrated in all Christendom;" he replied, pointing to the Bible,

"There is my mass." Then raising his eyes to heaven, he solemnly said, "O Lord, if in the day of judgment thou chargest me with not having been at mass, I will say to thee with truth, 'Lord, thou hast not commanded it. Behold thy law. In it I have not found any other sacrifice than that which was immolated on the altar of the cross.'"

Calvin and his writings.

Calvin's physical debility.

Continued labors.

In 1535 Calvin's celebrated "Institutes of the Christian

Religion" were published, the great reformer then residing in the city of Basle. This great work became the banner of the Protestants of France. It was read with avidity in the cottage of the peasant, in the work-shop of the artisan, and in the chateau of the noble. In reference to this extraordinary man, of whom it has been said,

"On Calvin some think Heaven's own mantle fell,  
While others deem him instrument of hell,"

Theodore Beza writes, "I do not believe that his equal can be found. Besides preaching every day from week to week, very often, and as much as he was able, he preached twice every Sunday. He lectured on theology three times a week. He delivered addresses to the Consistory, and also instructed at length every Friday before the Bible Conference, which we call the congregation. He continued this course so constantly that he never failed a single time except in extreme illness. Moreover, who could recount his other common or extraordinary labors? I know of no man of our age who has had more to hear, to answer, to write, nor things of greater importance. The number and quality of his writings alone is enough to astonish any man who sees them, and still more those who read them. And what renders his labors still more astonishing is, that he had a body so feeble by nature, so debilitated by night labors and too great abstemiousness, and, what is more, subject to so many maladies,

that no man who saw him could understand how he had lived so long. And yet, for all that, he never ceased to labor night and day in the work of the Lord. We entreated him to have more regard for himself; but his ordinary reply was that he was doing nothing, and that we should allow God to find him always watching, and working as he could to his latest breath."

Calvin died in 1564, eleven years after the birth of Henry of Navarre, at the age of fifty-five. For several years he was so abstemious that he had eaten but one meal a day.<sup>1</sup>

### Inhabitants of France.

At this time the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of France were Catholics – it has generally been estimated a hundred to one; but the doctrines of the reformers gained ground until, toward the close of the century, about the time of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Protestants composed about

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<sup>1</sup> In reference to the execution of Servetus for heresy, an event which, in the estimation of many, has seriously tarnished the reputation of Calvin, the celebrated French historian M. Mignet, in a very able dissertation, establishes the following points: 1. Servetus was not an ordinary heretic; he was a bold pantheist, and outraged the dogma of all Christian communions by saying that God, in three persons, was a Cerberus, a monster with three heads. 2. He had already been condemned to death by the Catholic doctors at Vienne in Dauphiny. 3. The affair was judged, not by Calvin, but by the magistrates of Geneva; and if it is objected that his advice must have influenced their decision, it is necessary to recollect that the councils of the other reformed cantons of Switzerland approved the sentence with a unanimous voice. 4. It was of the utmost importance for the Reformation to separate distinctly its cause from that of such an unbeliever as Servetus. The Catholic Church, which in our day accuses Calvin of having participated in his condemnation, much more would have accused him, in the sixteenth century, with having solicited his acquittal.

one sixth of the population.

The storm of persecution which fell upon them was so terrible that they were compelled to protect themselves by force of arms. Gradually they gained the ascendancy in several cities, which they fortified, and where they protected refugees from the persecution which had driven them from the cities where the Catholics predominated. Such was the deplorable condition of France at the time of which we write.

Antony of Bourbon.

In the little kingdom of Navarre, which was but about one third as large as the State of Massachusetts, and which, since its dismemberment, contained less than three hundred thousand inhabitants, nearly every individual was a Protestant. Antony of Bourbon, who had married the queen, was a Frenchman. With him, as with many others in that day, religion was merely a badge of party politics. Antony spent much of his time in the voluptuous court of France, and as he was, of course, solicitous for popularity there, he espoused the Catholic side of the controversy.

Jeanne d'Albret.

Jeanne d'Albret was energetically a Protestant. Apparently, her faith was founded in deep religious conviction. When Catharine of Medici advised her to follow her husband into the Catholic Church, she replied with firmness,  
"Madam, sooner than ever go to mass, if I had my kingdom



and my son both in my hands, I would hurl them to the bottom of the sea before they should change my purpose."

The separation.

Jeanne had been married to Antony merely as a matter of state policy. There was nothing in his character to win a noble woman's love. With no social or religious sympathies, they lived together for a time in a state of respectful indifference; but the court of Navarre was too quiet and religious to satisfy the taste of the voluptuous Parisian. He consequently spent most of his time enjoying the gayeties of the metropolis of France. A separation, mutually and amicably agreed upon, was the result.

Different life.

Antony conveyed with him to Paris his son Henry, and there took up his residence. Amidst the changes and the fluctuations of the ever-agitated metropolis, he eagerly watched for opportunities to advance his own fame and fortune. As Jeanne took leave of her beloved child, she embraced him tenderly, and with tears entreated him never to abandon the faith in which he had been educated.

Jeanne d'Albret, with her little daughter, remained in the less splendid but more moral and refined metropolis of her paternal domain. A mother's solicitude and prayers, however, followed her son. Antony consented to retain as a tutor for Henry the wise and learned La Gaucherie, who was himself strongly attached to the reformed religion.

## Rage of the Pope.

The inflexibility of Jeanne d'Albret, and the refuge she ever cheerfully afforded to the persecuted Protestants, quite enraged the Pope. As a measure of intimidation, he at one time summoned her as a heretic to appear before the Inquisition within six months, under penalty of losing her crown and her possessions. Jeanne, unawed by the threat, appealed to the monarchs of Europe for protection. None were disposed in that age to encourage such arrogant claims, and Pope Pius VI. was compelled to moderate his haughty tone. A plot, however, was then formed to seize her and her children, and hand them over to the "tender mercies" of the Spanish Inquisition. But this plot also failed.

## Growth of Protestantism.

In Paris itself there were many bold Protestant nobles who, with arms at their side, and stout retainers around them, kept personal persecution at bay. They were generally men of commanding character, of intelligence and integrity. The new religion, throughout the country, was manifestly growing fast in strength, and at times, even in the saloons of the palace, the rival parties were pretty nearly balanced. Although, throughout the kingdom of France, the Catholics were vastly more numerous than the Protestants, yet as England and much of Germany had warmly espoused the cause of the reformers, it was perhaps difficult to decide which party, on the whole, in Europe, was

the strongest. Nobles and princes of the highest rank were, in all parts of Europe, ranged under either banner. In the two factions thus contending for dominion, there were, of course, some who were not much influenced by conscientious considerations, but who were merely struggling for political power.

Catharine's blandishments.

When Henry first arrived in Paris, Catharine kept a constant watch over his words and his actions. She spared no possible efforts to bring him under her entire control. Efforts were made to lead his teacher to check his enthusiasm for lofty exploits, and to surrender him to the claims of frivolous amusement. This detestable queen presented before the impassioned young man all the blandishments of female beauty, that she might betray him to licentious indulgence. In some of these infamous arts she was but too successful.

Undecided action.

Seizure of the queen.

Catharine, in her ambitious projects, was often undecided as to which cause she should espouse and which party she should call to her aid. At one time she would favor the Protestants, and again the Catholics. At about this time she suddenly turned to the Protestants, and courted them so decidedly as greatly to alarm and exasperate the Catholics. Some of the Catholic nobles formed a conspiracy, and seized Catharine and her son at the palace of Fontainebleau, and held them both as captives. The

proud queen was almost frantic with indignation at the insult.

### Civil war.

The Protestants, conscious that the conspiracy was aimed against them, rallied for the defense of the queen. The Catholics all over the kingdom sprang to arms. A bloody civil war ensued. Nearly all Europe was drawn into the conflict. Germany and England came with eager armies to the aid of the Protestants. Catharine hated the proud and haughty Elizabeth, England's domineering queen, and was very jealous of her fame and power. She resolved that she would not be indebted to her ambitious rival for aid. She therefore, most strangely, threw herself into the arms of the *Catholics*, and ardently espoused their cause. The Protestants soon found her, with all the energy of her powerful mind, heading their foes. France was deluged in blood.

### Death of Antony of Bourbon.

A large number of Protestants threw themselves into Rouen. Antony of Bourbon headed an army of the Catholics to besiege the city. A ball struck him, and he fell senseless to the ground. His attendants placed him, covered with blood, in a carriage, to convey him to a hospital. While in the carriage and jostling over the rough ground, and as the thunders of the cannonade were pealing in his ears, the spirit of the blood-stained soldier ascended to the tribunal of the God of Peace. Henry was now left fatherless, and subject entirely to the control of his mother, whom he most tenderly loved, and whose views, as one of the

most prominent leaders of the Protestant party, he was strongly inclined to espouse.

Effects of the war.

The sanguinary conflict still raged with unabated violence throughout the whole kingdom, arming brother against brother, friend against friend. Churches were sacked and destroyed; vast extents of country were almost depopulated; cities were surrendered to pillage, and atrocities innumerable perpetrated, from which it would seem that even fiends would revolt. France was filled with smouldering ruins; and the wailing cry of widows and of orphans, thus made by the wrath of man, ascended from every plain and every hill-side to the ear of that God who has said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Liberty of worship.

Indignation and animosity.

At last both parties were weary of the horrid strife. The Catholics were struggling to extirpate what they deemed ruinous heresy from the kingdom. The Protestants were repelling the assault, and contending, not for general liberty of conscience, but that their doctrines *were true*, and *therefore* should be sustained. Terms of accommodation were proposed, and the Catholics made the great concession, as they regarded it, of allowing the Protestants to conduct public worship *outside of the walls of towns*. The Protestants accepted these terms, and sheathed the sword; but many of the more fanatic Catholics were greatly

enraged at this toleration. The Guises, the most arrogant family of nobles the world has ever known, retired from Paris in indignation, declaring that they would not witness such a triumph of heresy. The decree which granted this poor boon was the famous edict of January, 1562, issued from St. Germain. But such a peace as this could only be a truce caused by exhaustion. Deep-seated animosity still rankled in the bosom of both parties; and, notwithstanding all the woes which desolating wars had engendered, the spirit of religious intolerance was eager again to grasp the weapons of deadly strife.

Religious toleration.

Belief of the Romanists.

Establishment of freedom of conscience.

During the sixteenth century the doctrine of religious toleration was recognized by no one. That great truth had not then even dawned upon the world. The noble toleration so earnestly advocated by Bayle and Locke a century later, was almost a new revelation to the human mind; but in the sixteenth century it would have been regarded as impious, and rebellion against God to have affirmed that *error* was not to be pursued and punished. The reformers did not advocate the view that a man had a right to believe what he pleased, and to disseminate that belief. They only declared that they were bound, at all hazards, to believe the *truth*; that the views which they cherished were *true*, and that *therefore* they should be protected in them. They appealed to the Bible, and challenged their adversaries to meet them there. Our fathers must

not be condemned for not being in advance of the age in which they lived. That toleration which allows a man to adopt, without any civil disabilities, any mode of worship that does not disturb the peace of society, exists, as we believe, only in the United States. Even in England Dissenters are excluded from many privileges. Throughout the whole of Catholic Europe no religious toleration is recognized. The Emperor Napoleon, during his reign, established the most perfect freedom of conscience in every government his influence could control. His downfall re-established through Europe the dominion of intolerance.

The Reformation, in contending for the right of private judgment in contradiction to the claims of councils, maintained a principle which necessarily involved the freedom of conscience. This was not then perceived; but time developed the truth. The Reformation became, in reality, the mother of all religious liberty.

# Chapter II

## Civil War

**1565-1568**

Henry but little acquainted with his parents.  
Indecision of Henry.

While France was thus deluged with the blood of a civil war, young Henry was busily pursuing his studies in college. He could have had but little affection for his father, for the stern soldier had passed most of his days in the tented field, and his son had hardly known him. From his mother he had long been separated; but he cherished her memory with affectionate regard, and his predilections strongly inclined him toward the faith which he knew that she had so warmly espoused. It was, however, in its political aspects that Henry mainly contemplated the question. He regarded the two sects merely as two political parties struggling for power. For some time he did not venture to commit himself openly, but, availing himself of the privilege of his youth, carefully studied the principles and the prospects of the contending factions, patiently waiting for the time to come in which he should introduce his strong arm into the conflict. Each



party, aware that his parents had espoused opposite sides, and regarding him as an invaluable accession to either cause, adopted all possible allurements to win his favor.

### Hypocrisy of Catharine.

Catharine, as unprincipled as she was ambitious, invited him to her court, lavished upon him, with queenly profusion, caresses and flattery, and enticed him with all those blandishments which might most effectually enthrall the impassioned spirit of youth. Voluptuousness, gilded with its most dazzling and deceitful enchantments, was studiously presented to his eye. The queen was all love and complaisance. She received him to her cabinet council. She affected to regard him as her chief confidant. She had already formed the design of perfidiously throwing the Protestants off their guard by professions of friendship, and then, by indiscriminate massacre, of obliterating from the kingdom every vestige of the reformed faith. The great mass of the people being Catholics, she thought that, by a simultaneous uprising all over the kingdom, the Protestants might be so generally destroyed that not enough would be left to cause her any serious embarrassments.

She desires to save Henry.

A significant reply.

For many reasons Catharine wished to save Henry from the doom impending over his friends, if she could, by any means, win him to her side. She held many interviews with the highest

ecclesiastics upon the subject of the contemplated massacre. At one time, when she was urging the expediency of sparing some few Protestant nobles who had been her personal friends, Henry overheard the significant reply from the Duke of Alva, "The head of a salmon is worth a hundred frogs." The young prince meditated deeply upon the import of those words. Surmising their significance, and alarmed for the safety of his mother, he dispatched a trusty messenger to communicate to her his suspicions.

Indications of future greatness.

His mind was now thoroughly aroused to vigilance, to careful and hourly scrutiny of the plots and counterplots which were ever forming around him. While others of his age were absorbed in the pleasures of licentiousness and gaming, to which that corrupt court was abandoned, Henry, though he had not escaped unspotted from the contamination which surrounded him, displayed, by the dignity of his demeanor and the elevation of his character, those extraordinary qualities which so remarkably distinguished him in future life, and which indicated, even then, that he was born to command. One of the grandees of the Spanish court, the Duke of Medina, after meeting him incidentally but for a few moments, remarked,

The prophecy.

"It appears to me that this young prince is either an emperor, or is destined soon to become one."

Henry was very punctilious in regard to etiquette, and would allow no one to treat him without due respect, or to deprive him of the position to which he was entitled by his rank.

#### Visit of Catharine.

Jeanne d'Albret, the Queen of Navarre, was now considered the most illustrious leader of the Protestant party. Catharine, the better to disguise her infamous designs, went with Henry, in great splendor, to make a friendly visit to his mother in the little Protestant court of Bearn. Catharine insidiously lavished upon Jeanne d'Albret the warmest congratulations and the most winning smiles, and omitted no courtly blandishments which could disarm the suspicions and win the confidence of the Protestant queen. The situation of Jeanne in her feeble dominion was extremely embarrassing. The Pope, in consequence of her alleged heresy, had issued against her the bull of excommunication, declaring her incapable of reigning, forbidding all good Catholics, by the peril of their own salvation, from obeying any of her commands. As her own subjects were almost all Protestants, she was in no danger of any insurrection on their part; but this decree, in that age of superstition and of profligacy, invited each neighboring power to seize upon her territory. The only safety of the queen consisted in the mutual jealousies of the rival kingdoms of France and Spain, neither of them being willing that the other should receive such an accession to its political importance.

Endeavors of Catharine to influence the young prince.

The Queen of Navarre was not at all shaken in her faith, or influenced to change her measure, by the visit of the French court to her capital. She regarded, however, with much solicitude, the ascendancy which, it appeared to her, Catharine was obtaining over the mind of her son. Catharine caressed and flattered the young Prince of Navarre in every possible way. All her blandishments were exerted to obtain a commanding influence over his mind. She endeavored unceasingly to lure him to indulgence in all forbidden pleasure, and especially to crowd upon his youthful and ardent passions all the temptations which yielding female beauty could present. After the visit of a few weeks, during which the little court of Navarre had witnessed an importation of profligacy unknown before, the Queen of France, with Henry and with her voluptuous train, returned again to Paris.

The return visit.

Jeanne d'Albret had seen enough of the blandishments of vice to excite her deepest maternal solicitude in view of the peril of her son. She earnestly urged his return to Navarre; but Catharine continually threw such chains of influence around him that he could not escape. At last Jeanne resolved, under the pretense of returning the visit of Catharine, to go herself to the court of France and try to recover Henry. With a small but illustrious retinue, embellished with great elegance of manners and purity

of life, she arrived in Paris. The Queen of France received her with every possible mark of respect and affection, and lavished upon her entertainments, and fêtes, and gorgeous spectacles until the Queen of Navarre was almost bewildered.

Obstacles to the departure.

Whenever Jeanne proposed to return to her kingdom there was some very special celebration appointed, from which Jeanne could not, without extreme rudeness, break away. Thus again and again was Jeanne frustrated in her endeavors to leave Paris, until she found, to her surprise and chagrin, that both she and her son were prisoners, detained in captivity by bonds of the most provoking politeness. Catharine managed so adroitly that Jeanne could not enter any complaints, for the shackles which were thrown around her were those of ostensibly the most excessive kindness and the most unbounded love. It was of no avail to provoke a quarrel, for the Queen of Navarre was powerless in the heart of France.

The stratagem.

Its success.

At last she resolved to effect by stratagem that which she could not accomplish openly. One day a large party had gone out upon a hunting excursion. The Queen of Navarre made arrangements with her son, and a few of the most energetic and trustworthy gentlemen of her court, to separate themselves, as it were accidentally, when in the eagerness of the chase, from

the rest of the company, and to meet at an appointed place of rendezvous. The little band, thus assembled, turned the heads of their horses toward Navarre. They drove with the utmost speed day and night, furnishing themselves with fresh relays of horses, and rested not till the clatter of the iron hoofs of the steeds were heard among the mountains of Navarre. Jeanne left a very polite note upon her table in the palace of St. Cloud, thanking Queen Catharine for all her kindness, and praying her to excuse the liberty she had taken in avoiding the pain of words of adieu. Catharine was exceedingly annoyed at their escape, but, perceiving that it was not in her power to overtake the fugitives, she submitted with as good a grace as possible.

Home again.

Henry found himself thus again among his native hills. He was placed under the tuition of a gentleman who had a high appreciation of all that was poetic and beautiful. Henry, under his guidance, devoted himself with great delight to the study of polite literature, and gave free wing to an ennobled imagination as he clambered up the cliffs, and wandered over the ravines familiar to the days of his childhood. His personal appearance in 1567, when he was thirteen years of age, is thus described by a Roman Catholic gentleman who was accustomed to meet him daily in the court of Catharine.

Description of the prince.

"We have here the young Prince of Bearn. One can

not help acknowledging that he is a beautiful creature. At the age of thirteen he displays all the qualities of a person of eighteen or nineteen. He is agreeable, he is civil, he is obliging. Others might say that as yet he does not know what he is; but, for my part, I, who study him very often, can assure you that he does know perfectly well. He demeans himself toward all the world with so easy a carriage, that people crowd round wherever he is; and he acts so nobly in every thing, that one sees clearly that he is a great prince. He enters into conversation as a highly-polished man. He speaks always to the purpose, and it is remarked that he is very well informed. I shall hate the reformed religion all my life for having carried off from us so worthy a person. Without this original sin, he would be the first after the king, and we should see him, in a short time, at the head of the armies. He gains new friends every day. He insinuates himself into all hearts with inconceivable skill. He is highly honored by the men, and no less beloved by the ladies. His face is very well formed, the nose neither too large nor too small. His eyes are very soft; his skin brown, but very smooth; and his whole features animated with such uncommon vivacity, that, if he does not make progress with the fair, it will be very extraordinary."

Evil effects of dissolute society.

Henry had not escaped the natural influence of the dissolute society in the midst of which he had been educated, and manifested, on his first return to his mother, a strong passion for balls and masquerades, and all the enervating pleasures of

fashionable life. His courtly and persuasive manners were so insinuating, that, without difficulty, he borrowed any sums of money he pleased, and with these borrowed treasures he fed his passion for excitement at the gaming-table.

#### Influence of Jeanne d'Albret.

The firm principles and high intellectual elevation of his mother roused her to the immediate and vigorous endeavor to correct all these radical defects in his character and education. She kept him, as much as possible, under her own eye. She appointed teachers of the highest mental and moral attainments to instruct him. By her conversation and example she impressed upon his mind the sentiment that it was the most distinguished honor of one born to command others to be their superior in intelligence, judgment, and self-control. The Prince of Navarre, in his mother's court at Bearn, found himself surrounded by Protestant friends and influences, and he could not but feel and admit the superior dignity and purity of these his new friends.

#### Catharine's deity.

Catharine worshiped no deity but ambition. She was ready to adopt any measures and to plunge into any crimes which would give stability and lustre to her power. She had no religious opinions or even preferences. She espoused the cause of the Catholics because, on the whole, she deemed that party the more powerful; and then she sought the entire destruction of the Protestants, that none might be left to dispute her sway. Had the



Protestants been in the majority, she would, with equal zeal, have given them the aid of her strong arm, and unrelentingly would have striven to crush the whole papal power.

Principle of Jeanne d'Albret.

The cannon the missionary.

Jeanne d'Albret, on the contrary, was in *principle* a Protestant. She was a woman of reflection, of feeling, of highly-cultivated intellect, and probably of sincere piety. She had read, with deep interest, the religious controversies of the day. She had prayed for light and guidance. She had finally and cordially adopted the Protestant faith as the truth of God. Thus guided by her sense of duty, she was exceedingly anxious that her son should be a Protestant – a Protestant Christian. In most solemn prayer she dedicated him to God's service, to defend the faith of the Reformers. In the darkness of that day, the bloody and cruel sword was almost universally recognized as the great champion of truth. Both parties appeared to think that the thunders of artillery and musketry must accompany the persuasive influence of eloquence. If it were deemed important that one hand should guide the pen of controversy, to establish the truth, it was considered no less important that the other should wield the sword to extirpate heresy. Military heroism was thought as essential as scholarship for the defense of the faith.

Devastation.

A truly liberal mind will find its indignation, in view of the

atrocities of these religious wars, mitigated by comparison in view of the ignorance and the frailty of man. The Protestants often needlessly exasperated the Catholics by demolishing, in the hour of victory, their churches, their paintings, and their statues, and by pouring contempt upon all that was most hallowed in the Catholic heart. There was, however, this marked difference between the two parties: the leaders of the Protestants, as a general rule, did every thing in their power to check the fury of their less enlightened followers. The leaders of the Catholics, as a general rule, did every thing in their power to stimulate the fanaticism of the frenzied populace. In the first religious war the Protestant soldiers broke open and plundered the great church of Orleans. The Prince of Condé and Admiral Coligni hastened to repress the disorder. The prince pointed a musket at a soldier who had ascended a ladder to break an image, threatening to shoot him if he did not immediately desist.

"My lord," exclaimed the fanatic Protestant, "wait till I have thrown down this idol, and then, if it please you, I will die."

It is well for man that Omniscience presides at the day of judgment. "The Lord knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

Indecision of the prince.

Arguments pro and con.

Chances of a crown.

Europe was manifestly preparing for another dreadful religious conflict. The foreboding cloud blackened the skies.

The young Prince of Navarre had not yet taken his side. Both Catholics and Protestants left no exertions untried to win to their cause so important an auxiliary. Henry had warm friends in the court of Navarre and in the court of St. Cloud. He was bound by many ties to both Catholics and Protestants. Love of pleasure, of self-indulgence, of power, urged him to cast in his lot with the Catholics. Reverence for his mother inclined him to adopt the weaker party, who were struggling for purity of morals and of faith. To be popular with his subjects in his own kingdom of Navarre, he must be a Protestant. To be popular in France, to whose throne he was already casting a wistful eye, it was necessary for him to be a Catholic. He vacillated between these views of self-interest. His conscience and his heart were untouched. Both parties were aware of the magnitude of the weight he could place in either scale, while each deemed it quite uncertain which cause he would espouse. His father had died contending for the Catholic faith, and all knew that the throne of Catholic France was one of the prizes which the young Prince of Navarre had a fair chance of obtaining. His mother was the most illustrious leader of the Protestant forces on the Continent, and the crown of Henry's hereditary domain could not repose quietly upon any brow but that of a Protestant.

War again.

Arrival of the Queen of Navarre.

Such was the state of affairs when the clangor of arms again burst upon the ear of Europe. France was the arena of woe

upon which the Catholics and the Protestants of England and of the Continent hurled themselves against each other. Catharine, breathing vengeance, headed the Catholic armies. Jeanne, calm yet inflexible, was recognized as at the head of the Protestant leaders, and was alike the idol of the common soldiers and of their generals. The two contending armies, after various marchings and countermarchings, met at Rochelle. The whole country around, for many leagues, was illuminated at night by the camp-fires of the hostile hosts. The Protestants, inferior in numbers, with hymns and prayers calmly awaited an attack. The Catholics, divided in council, were fearful of hazarding a decisive engagement. Day after day thus passed, with occasional skirmishes, when, one sunny morning, the sound of trumpets was heard, and the gleam of the spears and banners of an approaching host was seen on the distant hills. The joyful tidings spread through the ranks of the Protestants that the Queen of Navarre, with her son and four thousand troops, had arrived. At the head of her firm and almost invincible band she rode, calm and serene, magnificently mounted, with her proud boy by her side. As the queen and her son entered the plain, an exultant shout from the whole Protestant host seemed to rend the skies. These enthusiastic plaudits, loud, long, reiterated, sent dismay to the hearts of the Catholics.

Education of the prince.

The Prince of Condé.

Jeanne presented her son to the Protestant army, and solemnly

dedicated him to the defense of the Protestant faith. At the same time she published a declaration to the world that she deplored the horrors of war; that she was not contending for the oppression of others, but to secure for herself and her friends the right to worship God according to the teachings of the Bible. The young prince was placed under the charge of the most experienced generals, to guard his person from danger and to instruct him in military science. The Prince of Condé was his teacher in that terrible accomplishment in which both master and pupil have obtained such worldwide renown.

Long files of English troops, with trumpet tones, and waving banners, and heavy artillery, were seen winding their way along the streams of France, hastening to the scene of conflict. The heavy battalions of the Pope were marshaling upon all the sunny plains of Italy, and the banners of the rushing squadrons glittered from the pinnacles of the Alps, as Europe rose in arms, desolating ten thousand homes with conflagrations, and blood, and woe. Could the pen record the smouldering ruins, the desolate hearthstones, the shrieks of mortal agony, the wailings of the widow, the cry of the orphan, which thus resulted from man's inhumanity to man, the heart would sicken at the recital. The summer passed away in marches and counter-marches, in assassinations, and skirmishes, and battles. The fields of the husbandmen were trampled under the hoofs of horses. Villages were burned to the ground, and their wretched inhabitants driven out in nakedness and starvation to meet the storms of merciless

winter. Noble ladies and refined and beautiful maidens fled shrieking from the pursuit of brutal and licentious soldiers. Still neither party gained any decisive victory. The storms of winter came, and beat heavily, with frost and drifting snow, upon the worn and weary hosts.

### Slaughter of the Protestants.

In three months ten thousand Protestants had perished. At Orleans two hundred Protestants were thrown into prison. The populace set the prison on fire, and they were all consumed.

The battle.

Courage of the Prince of Condé.

The defeat.

At length the Catholic armies, having become far more numerous than the Protestant, ventured upon a general engagement. They met upon the field of Jarnac. The battle was conducted by the Reformers with a degree of fearlessness bordering on desperation. The Prince of Condé plunged into the thickest ranks of the enemy with his unfurled banner bearing the motto, "Danger is sweet for Christ and my country." Just as he commenced his desperate charge, a kick from a wounded horse fractured his leg so severely that the fragments of the bone protruded through his boot. Pointing to the mangled and helpless limb, he said to those around him, "Remember the state in which Louis of Bourbon enters the fight for Christ and his country." Immediately sounding the charge, like a whirlwind his little band

plunged into the midst of their foes. For a moment the shock was irresistible, and the assailed fell like grass before the scythe of the mower. Soon, however, the undaunted band was entirely surrounded by their powerful adversaries. The Prince of Condé, with but about two hundred and fifty men, with indomitable determination sustained himself against the serried ranks of five thousand men closing up around him on every side. This was the last earthly conflict of the Prince of Condé. With his leg broken and his arm nearly severed from his body, his horse fell dead beneath him, and the prince, deluged with blood, was precipitated into the dust under the trampling hoofs of wounded and frantic chargers. His men still fought with desperation around their wounded chieftain. Of twenty-five nephews who accompanied him, fifteen were slain by his side. Soon all his defenders were cut down or dispersed. The wounded prince, an invaluable prize, was taken prisoner. Montesquieu, captain of the guards of the Duke of Anjou, came driving up, and as he saw the prisoner attracting much attention, besmeared with blood and dirt,

"Whom have we here?" he inquired.

"The Prince of Condé," was the exultant reply.

"Kill him! kill him!" exclaimed the captain, and he discharged a pistol at his head.

Death of the Prince of Condé.

Retreat of the Protestants.

The ball passed through his brain, and the prince fell lifeless

upon the ground. The corpse was left where it fell, and the Catholic troops pursued their foes, now flying in every direction. The Protestants retreated across a river, blew up the bridge, and protected themselves from farther assault. The next day the Duke of Anjou, the younger brother of Charles IX., and who afterward became Henry III., who was one of the leaders of the Catholic army, rode over the field of battle, to find, if possible, the body of his illustrious enemy.

"We had not rode far," says one who accompanied him, "when we perceived a great number of the dead bodies piled up in a heap, which led us to judge that this was the spot where the body of the prince was to be found: in fact, we found it there. Baron de Magnac took the corpse by the hair to lift up the face, which was turned toward the ground, and asked me if I recognized him; but, as one eye was torn out, and his face was covered with blood and dirt, I could only reply that it was certainly his height and his complexion, but farther I could not say."

Fiendish barbarity.

They washed the bloody and mangled face, and found that it was indeed the prince. His body was carried, with infamous ribaldry, on an ass to the castle of Jarnac, and thrown contemptuously upon the ground. Several illustrious prisoners were brought to the spot and butchered in cold blood, and their corpses thrown upon that of the prince, while the soldiers passed a night of drunkenness and revelry, exulting over the remains of their dead enemies.



Advice of the Pope.

Incitement to massacre.

Such was the terrible battle of Jarnac, the first conflict which Henry witnessed. The tidings of this great victory and of the death of the illustrious Condé excited transports of joy among the Catholics. Charles IX. sent to Pope Pius V. the standards taken from the Protestants. The Pope, who affirmed that Luther was a ravenous beast, and that his doctrines were the sum of all crimes, wrote to the king a letter of congratulation. He urged him to extirpate every fibre of heresy, regardless of all entreaty, and of every tie of blood and affection. To encourage him, he cited the example of Saul exterminating the Amalekites, and assured him that all tendency to clemency was a snare of the devil.

The Catholics now considered the condition of the Protestants as desperate. The pulpits resounded with imprecations and anathemas. The Catholic priests earnestly advocated the sentiment that no faith was to be kept with heretics; that to massacre them was an action essential to the safety of the state, and which would secure the approbation of God.

The protectorate.

But the Protestants, though defeated, were still unsubdued. The noble Admiral Coligni still remained to them; and after the disaster, Jeanne d'Albret presented herself before the troops, holding her son Henry, then fourteen years of age, by one hand, and Henry, son of the Prince de Condé, by the other, and

devoted them both to the cause. The young Henry of Navarre was then proclaimed *generalissimo* of the army and *protector* of the churches. He took the following oath: "I swear to defend the Protestant religion, and to persevere in the common cause, till death or till victory has secured for all the liberty which we desire."

# Chapter III

## The Marriage

**1568-1572**

Young Henry of Navarre was but about fourteen years of age when, from one of the hills in the vicinity, he looked upon the terrible battle of Jarnac. It is reported that, young as he was, he pointed out the fatal errors which were committed by the Protestants in all the arrangements which preceded the battle.

"It is folly," he said, "to think of fighting, with forces so divided, a united army making an attack at one point."

Emotions of Henry.

His military sagacity.

For the security of his person, deemed so precious to the Protestants, his friends, notwithstanding his entreaties and even tears, would not allow him to expose himself to any of the perils of the conflict. As he stood upon an eminence which overlooked the field of battle, surrounded by a few faithful guards, he gazed with intense anguish upon the sanguinary scene spread out before him. He saw his friends utterly defeated, and their squadrons trampled in the dust beneath the hoofs of the Catholic cavalry.

Enthusiasm inspired by Jeanne.

The Protestants, without loss of time, rallied anew their forces. The Queen of Navarre soon saw thousands of strong arms and brave hearts collecting again around her banner. Accompanied by her son, she rode through their ranks, and addressed them in words of feminine yet heroic eloquence, which roused their utmost enthusiasm. But few instances have been recorded in which human hearts have been more deeply moved than were these martial hosts by the brief sentences which dropped from the lips of this extraordinary woman. Henry, in the most solemn manner, pledged himself to consecrate all his energies to the defense of the Protestant religion. To each of the chiefs of the army the queen also presented a gold medal, suspended from a golden chain, with her own name and that of her son impressed upon one side, and on the other the words "Certain peace, complete victory, or honorable death." The enthusiasm of the army was raised to the highest pitch, and the heroic queen became the object almost of the adoration of her soldiers.

The failure of Catharine.

Catharine, seeing the wonderful enthusiasm with which the Protestant troops were inspired by the presence of the Queen of Navarre, visited the head-quarters of her own army, hoping that she might also enkindle similar ardor. Accompanied by a magnificent retinue of her brilliantly-accoutred generals,

she swept, like a gorgeous vision, before her troops. She lavished presents upon her officers, and in high-sounding phrase harangued the soldiers; but there was not a private in the ranks who did not know that she was a wicked and a polluted woman. She had talent, but no soul. All her efforts were unavailing to evoke one single electric spark of emotion. She had sense enough to perceive her signal failure and to feel its mortification. No one either loved or respected Catharine. Thousands hated her, yet, conscious of her power, either courting her smiles or dreading her frown, they often bowed before her in adulation.

The second defeat.

The two armies were soon facing each other upon the field of battle. It was the third of October, 1569. More than fifty thousand combatants met upon the plains of Moncontour. All generalship seemed to be ignored as the exasperated adversaries rushed upon each other in a headlong fight. The Protestants, outnumbered, were awfully defeated. Out of twenty-five thousand combatants whom they led into the field, but eight thousand could be rallied around their retreating banner after a fight of but three quarters of an hour. All their cannon, baggage, and munitions of war were lost. No mercy was granted to the vanquished.

The wounded friends.

Coligni, at the very commencement of the battle, was struck by a bullet which shattered his jaw. The gushing blood under his

helmet choked him, and they bore him upon a litter from the field. As they were carrying the wounded admiral along, they overtook another litter upon which was stretched L'Estrange, the bosom friend of the admiral, also desperately wounded. L'Estrange, forgetting himself, gazed for a moment with tearful eyes upon the noble Coligni, and then gently said, "It is sweet to trust in God." Coligni, unable to speak, could only *look* a reply. Thus the two wounded friends parted. Coligni afterward remarked that these few words were a cordial to his spirit, inspiring him with resolution and hope.

The reserve force.

Henry of Navarre, and his cousin, Henry of Condé, son of the prince who fell at the battle of Jarnac, from a neighboring eminence witnessed this scene of defeat and of awful carnage. The admiral, unwilling to expose to danger lives so precious to their cause, had stationed them there with a reserve of four thousand men under the command of Louis of Nassau. When Henry saw the Protestants giving way, he implored Louis that they should hasten with the reserve to the protection of their friends; but Louis, with military rigor, awaited the commands of the admiral. "We lose our advantage, then," exclaimed the prince, "and consequently the battle."

Misfortunes of Coligni.

The most awful of earthly calamities seemed now to fall like an avalanche upon Coligni, the noble Huguenot chieftain.

His beloved brother was slain. Bands of wretches had burned down his castle and laid waste his estates. The Parliament of Paris, composed of zealous Catholics, had declared him guilty of high treason, and offered fifty thousand crowns to whoever would deliver him up, dead or alive. The Pope declared to all Europe that he was a "detestable, infamous, execrable man, if, indeed, he even merited the name of man." His army was defeated, his friends cut to pieces, and he himself was grievously wounded, and was lying upon a couch in great anguish. Under these circumstances, thirteen days after receiving his wound, he thus wrote to his children:

His letter.

"We should not repose on earthly possessions. Let us place our hope beyond the earth, and acquire other treasures than those which we see with our eyes and touch with our hands. We must follow Jesus our leader, who has gone before us. Men have ravished us of what they could. If such is the will of God, we shall be happy and our condition good, since we endure this loss from no wrong you have done those who have brought it to you, but solely for the hate they have borne me because God was pleased to direct me to assist his Church. For the present, it is enough to admonish and conjure you, in the name of God, to persevere courageously in the study of virtue."

The third army.

The tide of victory changed.

The treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye.

In the course of a few weeks Coligni rose from his bed, and the Catholics were amazed to find him at the head of a third army. The indomitable Queen of Navarre, with the calm energy which ever signalized her character, had rallied the fugitives around her, and had reanimated their waning courage by her own invincible spirit. Nobles and peasants from all the mountains of Bearn, and from every province in France, thronged to the Protestant camp. Conflict after conflict ensued. The tide of victory now turned in favor of the Reformers. Henry, absolutely refusing any longer to retire from the perils of the field, engaged with the utmost coolness, judgment, and yet impetuosity in all the toils and dangers of the battle. The Protestant cause gained strength. The Catholics were disheartened. Even Catharine became convinced that the extermination of the Protestants by force was no longer possible. So once more they offered conditions of peace, which were promptly accepted. These terms, which were signed at St. Germain-en-Laye the 8th of August, 1570, were more favorable than the preceding. The Protestants were allowed liberty of worship in all the places then in their possession. They were also allowed public worship in two towns in each province of the kingdom. They were permitted to reside any where without molestation, and were declared *eligible* to any public office.

Coligni, mourning over the untold evils and miseries of war, with alacrity accepted these conditions. "Sooner than fall back into these disturbances," said he, "I would choose to die a



thousand deaths, and be dragged through the streets of Paris."

Perfidy of Catharine.

The queen, however, and her advisers were guilty of the most extreme perfidy in this truce. It was merely their object to induce the foreign troops who had come to the aid of the allies to leave the kingdom, that they might then exterminate the Protestants by a general massacre. Catharine decided to accomplish by the dagger of the assassin that which she had in vain attempted to accomplish on the field of battle. This peace was but the first act in the awful tragedy of St. Bartholomew.

Peace being thus apparently restored, the young Prince of Navarre now returned to his hereditary domains and visited its various provinces, where he was received with the most lively demonstrations of affection. Various circumstances, however, indicated to the Protestant leaders that some mysterious and treacherous plot was forming for their destruction. The Protestant gentlemen absented themselves, consequently, from the court of Charles IX. The king and his mother were mortified by these evidences that their perfidy was suspected.

The court at Rochelle.

The two courts.

Jeanne, with her son, after visiting her subjects in all parts of her own dominions, went to Rochelle, where they were joined by many of the most illustrious of their friends. Large numbers gathered around them, and the court of the Queen of Navarre

was virtually transferred to that place. Thus there were two rival courts, side by side, in the same kingdom. Catharine, with her courtiers, exhibited boundless luxury and voluptuousness at Paris. Jeanne d'Albret, at Rochelle, embellished her court with all that was noble in intellect, elegant in manners, and pure in morals. Catharine and her submissive son Charles IX. left nothing untried to lure the Protestants into a false security. Jeanne scrupulously requited the courtesies she received from Catharine, though she regarded with much suspicion the adulation and the sycophancy of her proud hostess.

#### Marriage of Elizabeth.

The young King of France, Charles IX., who was of about the same age with Henry, and who had been his companion and playmate in childhood, was now married to Elizabeth, the daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II. of Austria. Their nuptials were celebrated with all the ostentatious pomp which the luxury of the times and the opulence of the French monarchy could furnish. In these rejoicings the courts of France and Navarre participated with the semblance of the most heartfelt cordiality. Protestants and Catholics, pretending to forget that they had recently encountered each other with fiendlike fury in fields of blood, mingled gayly in these festivities, and vied with each other in the exchange of courtly greetings and polished flatteries. Catharine and Charles IX. lavished, with the utmost profusion, their commendations and attentions upon the young Prince of Navarre, and left no arts of dissimulation unessayed

which might disarm the fears and win the confidence of their victims.

The Princess Marguerite.

Effects of the connection.

The queen mother, with caressing fondness, declared that Henry must be her son. She would confer upon him Marguerite, her youngest daughter. This princess had now become a young lady, beautiful in the extreme, and highly accomplished in all those graces which can kindle the fires and feed the flames of passion; but she was also as devoid of principle as any male libertine who contaminated by his presence a court whose very atmosphere was corruption. Many persons of royal blood had most earnestly sought the hand of this princess, for an alliance with the royal family of France was an honor which the proudest sovereigns might covet. Such a connection, in its political aspects, was every thing Henry could desire. It would vastly augment the consideration and the power of the young prince, and would bring him a long step nearer to the throne of France. The Protestants were all intensely interested in this match, as it would invest one, destined soon to become their most prominent leader, with new ability to defend their rights and to advocate their cause. It is a singular illustration of the hopeless corruption of the times, that the notorious profligacy of Marguerite seems to have been considered, even by Henry himself, as no obstacle to the union.

A royal match.

A royal marriage is ordinarily but a matter of state policy. Upon the cold and icy eminence of kingly life the flowers of sympathy and affection rarely bloom. Henry, without hesitation, acquiesced in the expediency of this nuptial alliance. He regarded it as manifestly a very politic partnership, and did not concern himself in the least about the agreeable or disagreeable qualities of his contemplated spouse. He had no idea of making her his companion, much less his friend. She was to be merely his *wife*.

Repugnance of Jeanne d'Albret.

Objections overcome.

Jeanne d'Albret, however, a woman of sincere piety, and in whose bosom all noble thoughts were nurtured, cherished many misgivings. Her Protestant principles caused her to shrink from the espousals of her son with a Roman Catholic. Her religious scruples, and the spotless purity of her character, aroused the most lively emotions of repugnance in view of her son's connection with one who had not even the modesty to conceal her vices. State considerations, however, finally prevailed, and Jeanne, waiving her objections, consented to the marriage. She yielded, however, with the greatest reluctance, to the unceasing importunities of her friends. They urged that this marriage would unite the two parties in a solid peace, and thus protect the Protestants from persecution, and rescue France from unutterable woe. Even the Admiral Coligni was deceived. But the result proved, in this case as in every other, that *it is never safe to do evil that good may come*. If any fact is established under the

government of God, it is this.

The Queen of Navarre, in her extreme repugnance to this match, remarked,

"I would choose to descend to the condition of the poorest damsel in France rather than sacrifice to the grandeur of my family my own soul and that of my son."

Perjury of Charles IX.

With consummate perjury, Charles IX. declared, "I give my sister in marriage, not only to the Prince of Navarre, but, as it were, to the whole Protestant party. This will be the strongest and closest bond for the maintenance of peace between my subjects, and a sure evidence of my good-will toward the Protestants."

Displays of friendship.

Thus influenced, this noble woman consented to the union. She then went to Blois to meet Catharine and the king. They received her with exuberant displays of love. The foolish king quite overacted his part, calling her "his great aunt, his all, his best beloved." As the Queen of Navarre retired for the night, Charles said to Catharine, laughing,

"Well, mother, what do you think of it? Do I play my little part well?"

"Yes," said Catharine, encouragingly, "very well; but it is of no use unless it continues."

"Allow me to go on," said the king, "and you will see that I shall ensnare them."

Indifference of Marguerite.

Preparations for the wedding.

The young Princess Marguerite, heartless, proud, and petulant, received the cold addresses of Henry with still more chilling indifference. She refused to make even the slightest concessions to his religious views, and, though she made no objection to the decidedly politic partnership, she very ostentatiously displayed her utter disregard for Henry and his friends. The haughty and dissolute beauty was piqued by the reluctance which Jeanne had manifested to an alliance which Marguerite thought should have been regarded as the very highest of all earthly honors. Preparations were, however, made for the marriage ceremony, which was to be performed in the French capital with unexampled splendor. The most distinguished gentlemen of the Protestant party, nobles, statesmen, warriors, from all parts of the realm, were invited to the metropolis, to add lustre to the festivities by their presence. Many, however, of the wisest counselors of the Queen of Navarre, deeply impressed with the conviction of the utter perfidy of Catharine, and apprehending some deep-laid plot, remonstrated against the acceptance of the invitations, presaging that, "if the wedding were celebrated in Paris, the liveries would be very crimson."

Death of Jeanne.

Jeanne, solicited by the most pressing letters from Catharine

and her son Charles IX., and urged by her courtiers, who were eager to share the renowned pleasures of the French metropolis, proceeded to Paris. She had hardly entered the sumptuous lodgings provided for her in the court of Catharine, when she was seized with a violent fever, which raged in her veins nine days, and then she died. In death she manifested the same faith and fortitude which had embellished her life. Not a murmur or a groan escaped her lips in the most violent paroxysms of pain. She had no desire to live except from maternal solicitude for her children, Henry and Catharine.

"But God," said she, "will be their father and protector, as he has been mine in my greatest afflictions. I confide them to his providence."

Demonstrations of grief.

Different reports.

She died in June, 1572, in the forty-fourth year of her age. Catharine exhibited the most ostentatious and extravagant demonstrations of grief. Charles gave utterance to loud and poignant lamentations, and ordered a surgeon to examine the body, that the cause of her death might be ascertained. Notwithstanding these efforts to allay suspicion, the report spread like wildfire through all the departments of France, and all the Protestant countries of Europe, that the queen had been perfidiously poisoned by Catharine. The Protestant writers of the time assert that she fell a victim to poison communicated by a pair of perfumed gloves. The Catholics as confidently affirm that

she died of a natural disease. The truth can now never be known till the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed at the judgment day.

The King of Navarre.

Indifference.

Henry, with his retinue, was slowly traveling toward Paris, unconscious of his mother's sickness, when the unexpected tidings arrived of her death. It is difficult to imagine what must have been the precise nature of the emotions of an ambitious young man in such an event, who ardently loved both his mother and the crown which she wore, as by the loss of the one he gained the other. The cloud of his grief was embellished with the gilded edgings of joy. The Prince of Bearn now assumed the title and the style of the King of Navarre, and honored the memory of his noble mother with every manifestation of regret and veneration. This melancholy event caused the postponement of the marriage ceremony for a short time, as it was not deemed decorous that epithalamiums should be shouted and requiems chanted from the same lips in the same hour. The knell tolling the burial of the dead would not blend harmoniously with the joyous peals of the marriage bell. Henry was not at all annoyed by this delay, for no impatient ardor urged him to his nuptials. Marguerite, annoyed by the opposition which Henry's mother had expressed in regard to the alliance, and vexed by the utter indifference which her betrothed manifested toward her person, indulged in all the wayward humors of a worse than spoiled child. She studiously displayed her utter disregard for Henry, which



manifestations, with the most provoking indifference, he did not seem even to notice.

Coligni lured to Paris.

He is remonstrated with.

During this short interval the Protestant nobles continued to flock to Paris, that they might honor with their presence the marriage of the young chief. The Admiral Coligni was, by very special exertions on the part of Catharine and Charles, lured to the metropolis. He had received anonymous letters warning him of his danger. Many of his more prudent friends openly remonstrated against his placing himself in the power of the perfidious queen. Coligni, however, was strongly attached to Henry, and, in defiance of all these warnings, he resolved to attend his nuptials. "I confide," said he, "in the sacred word of his majesty."

Upon his arrival in the metropolis, Catharine and Charles lavished upon him the most unbounded manifestations of regard. The king, embracing the admiral, exclaimed, "This is the happiest day of my life." Very soon one of the admiral's friends called upon him to take leave, saying that he was immediately about to retire into the country. When asked by the admiral the cause of his unexpected departure, he replied, "I go because they caress you too much, and I would rather save myself with fools than perish with sages."

The nuptial day.

The scene.

At length the nuptial day arrived. It was the seventeenth of August, 1572. Paris had laid aside its mourning weeds, and a gay and brilliant carnival succeeded its dismal days of gloom. Protestants and Catholics, of highest name and note, from every part of Europe, who had met in the dreadful encounters of a hundred fields of blood, now mingled in apparent fraternity with the glittering throng, all interchanging smiles and congratulations. The unimpassioned bridegroom led his scornful bride to the church of Notre Dame. Before the massive portals of this renowned edifice, and under the shadow of its venerable towers, a magnificent platform had been reared, canopied with the most gorgeous tapestry. Hundreds of thousands thronged the surrounding amphitheatre, swarming at the windows, crowding the balconies, and clustered upon the house-tops, to witness the imposing ceremony. The gentle breeze breathing over the multitude was laden with the perfume of flowers. Banners, and pennants, and ribbons of every varied hue waved in the air, or hung in gay festoons from window to window, and from roof to roof. Upon that conspicuous platform, in the presence of all the highest nobility of France, and of the most illustrious representatives of every court of Europe, Henry received the hand of the haughty princess, and the nuptial oath was administered.

Small favors gratefully received.

Marguerite, however, even in that hour, and in the presence of all those spectators, gave a ludicrous exhibition of her girlish petulance and ungoverned willfulness. When, in the progress of the ceremony, she was asked if she willingly received Henry of Bourbon for her husband, she pouted, coquettishly tossed her proud head, and was silent. The question was repeated. The spirit of Marguerite was now roused, and all the powers of Europe could not tame the shrew. She fixed her eyes defiantly upon the officiating bishop, and refusing, by look, or word, or gesture, to express the slightest assent, remained as immovable as a statue. Embarrassment and delay ensued. Her royal brother, Charles IX., fully aware of his sister's indomitable resolution, coolly walked up to the termagant at bay, and placing one hand upon her chest and the other upon the back of her head, compelled an involuntary nod. The bishop smiled and bowed, and acting upon the principle that small favors were gratefully received, proceeded with the ceremony. Such were the vows with which Henry and Marguerite were united. Such is too often *love in the palace*.

Mass.

National festivities.

The Roman Catholic wife, unaccompanied by her Protestant husband, who waited at the door with his retinue, now entered the church of Notre Dame to participate in the solemnities of the mass. The young King of Navarre then submissively received his bride and conducted her to a very magnificent dinner. Catharine

and Charles IX., at this entertainment, were very specially attentive to the Protestant nobles. The weak and despicable king leaned affectionately upon the arm of the Admiral Coligni, and for a long time conversed with him with every appearance of friendship and esteem. Balls, illuminations, and pageants ensued in the evening. For many days these unnatural and chilling nuptials were celebrated with all the splendor of national festivities. Among these entertainments there was a tournament, singularly characteristic of the times, and which certainly sheds peculiar lustre either upon the humility or upon the good-nature of the Protestants.

#### The tournament.

A large area was prepared for the display of one of those barbaric passes of arms in which the rude chivalry of that day delighted. The inclosure was surrounded by all the polished intellect, rank, and beauty of France. Charles IX., with his two brothers and several of the Catholic nobility, then appeared upon one side of the arena on noble war-horses gorgeously caparisoned, and threw down the gauntlet of defiance to Henry of Navarre and his Protestant retinue, who, similarly mounted and accoutred, awaited the challenge upon the opposite side.

#### Strange representations.

The portion of the inclosure in which the Catholics appeared was decorated to represent heaven. Birds of Paradise displayed their gorgeous plumage, and the air was vocal with the melody

of trilling songsters. Beauty displayed its charms arrayed in celestial robes, and ambrosial odors lulled the senses in luxurious indulgence. All the resources of wealth and art were lavished to create a vision of the home of the blessed.

The Protestants, in the opposite extreme of the arena, were seen emerging from the desolation, the gloom, and the sulphurous canopy of hell. The two parties, from their antagonistic realms, rushed to the encounter, the fiends of darkness battling with the angels of light. Gradually the Catholics, in accordance with previous arrangements, drove back the Protestants toward their grim abodes, when suddenly numerous demons appeared rushing from the dungeons of the infernal regions, who, with cloven hoofs, and satanic weapons, and chains forged in penal fires, seized upon the Protestants and dragged them to the blackness of darkness from whence they had emerged. Plaudits loud and long greeted this discomfiture of the Protestants by the infernal powers.

Regal courtesy.

But suddenly the scene is changed. A winged Cupid appears, the representative of the pious and amiable bride Marguerite. The demons fly in dismay before the irresistible boy. Fearlessly this emissary of love penetrates the realms of despair. The Protestants, by this agency, are liberated from their thralldom, and conducted in triumph to the Elysium of the Catholics. A more curious display of regal courtesy history has not recorded. And this was in Paris!

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