DUMAS ALEXANDRE

MASSACRES OF THE SOUTH (1551-1815)

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Содержание

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CHAPTER I

It is possible that our reader, whose recollections may perhaps go back as far as the Restoration, will be surprised at the size of the frame required for the picture we are about to bring before him, embracing as it does two centuries and a half; but as everything, has its precedent, every river its source, every volcano its central fire, so it is that the spot of earth on which we are going to fix our eyes has been the scene of action and reaction, revenge and retaliation, till the religious annals of the South resemble an account-book kept by double entry, in which fanaticism enters the profits of death, one side being written with the blood of Catholics, the other with that of Protestants.

In the great political and religious convulsions of the South, the earthquake-like throes of which were felt even in the capital, Nimes has always taken the central place; Nimes will therefore be the pivot round which our story will revolve, and though we

may sometimes leave it for a moment, we shall always return thither without fail.

Nimes was reunited to France by Louis VIII, the government being taken from its vicomte, Bernard Athon VI, and given to consuls in the year 1207. During the episcopate of Michel Briconnet the relics of St. Bauzile were discovered, and hardly were the rejoicings over this event at an end when the new doctrines began to spread over France. It was in the South that the persecutions began, and in 1551 several persons were publicly burnt as heretics by order of the Seneschal's Court at Nimes, amongst whom was Maurice Secenat, a missionary from the Cevennes, who was taken in the very act of preaching. Thenceforth Nimes rejoiced in two martyrs and two patron saints, one revered by the Catholics, and one by the Protestants; St. Bauzile, after reigning as sole protector for twenty-four years, being forced to share the honours of his guardianship with his new rival.

Maurice Secenat was followed as preacher by Pierre de Lavau; these two names being still remembered among the crowd of obscure and forgotten martyrs. He also was put to death on the Place de la Salamandre, all the difference being that the former was burnt and the latter hanged.

Pierre de Lavau was attended in his last moments by Dominique Deyron, Doctor of Theology; but instead of, as is usual, the dying man being converted by the priest, it was the priest who was converted by de Lavau, and the teaching which it

was desired should be suppressed burst forth again. Decrees were issued against Dominique Deyron; he was pursued and tracked down, and only escaped the gibbet by fleeing to the mountains.

The mountains are the refuge of all rising or decaying sects; God has given to the powerful on earth city, plain, and sea, but the mountains are the heritage of the oppressed.

Persecution and proselytism kept pace with each other, but the blood that was shed produced the usual effect: it rendered the soil on which it fell fruitful, and after two or three years of struggle, during which two or three hundred Huguenots had been burnt or hanged, Nimes awoke one morning with a Protestant majority. In 1556 the consuls received a sharp reprimand on account of the leaning of the city towards the doctrines of the Reformation; but in 1557, one short year after this admonition, Henri II was forced to confer the office of president of the Presidial Court on William de Calviere, a Protestant. At last a decision of the senior judge having declared that it was the duty of the consuls to sanction the execution of heretics by their presence, the magistrates of the city protested against this decision, and the power of the Crown was insufficient to carry it out.

Henri II dying, Catherine de Medicis and the Guises took possession of the throne in the name of Francois II. There is a moment when nations can always draw a long breath, it is while their kings are awaiting burial; and Nimes took advantage of this moment on the death of Henri II, and on September 29th, 1559, Guillaume Moget founded the first Protestant community.

Guillaume Moget came from Geneva. He was the spiritual son of Calvin, and came to Nimes with the firm purpose of converting all the remaining Catholics or of being hanged. As he was eloquent, spirited, and wily, too wise to be violent, ever ready to give and take in the matter of concessions, luck was on his side, and Guillaume Moget escaped hanging.

The moment a rising sect ceases to be downtrodden it becomes a queen, and heresy, already mistress of three-fourths of the city, began to hold up its head with boldness in the streets. A householder called Guillaume Raymond opened his house to the Calvinist missionary, and allowed him to preach in it regularly to all who came, and the wavering were thus confirmed in the new faith. Soon the house became too narrow to contain the crowds which flocked thither to imbibe the poison of the revolutionary doctrine, and impatient glances fell on the churches.

Meanwhile the Vicomte de Joyeuse, who had just been appointed governor of Languedoc in the place of M. de Villars, grew uneasy at the rapid progress made by the Protestants, who so far from trying to conceal it boasted of it; so he summoned the consuls before him, admonished them sharply in the king's name, and threatened to quarter a garrison in the town which would soon put an end to these disorders. The consuls promised to stop the evil without the aid of outside help, and to carry out their promise doubled the patrol and appointed a captain of the town whose sole duty was to keep order in the streets. Now this

captain whose office had been created solely for the repression of heresy, happened to be Captain Bouillargues, the most inveterate Huguenot who ever existed.

The result of this discriminating choice was that Guillaume Moget began to preach, and once when a great crowd had gathered in a garden to hear him hold forth, heavy rain came on, and it became necessary for the people either to disperse or to seek shelter under a roof. As the preacher had just reached the most interesting part of his sermon, the congregation did not hesitate an instant to take the latter alternative. The Church of St. Etienne du Capitole was quite near: someone present suggested that this building, if not the most suitable, as at least the most spacious for such a gathering.

The idea was received with acclamation: the rain grew heavier, the crowd invaded the church, drove out the priests, trampled the Holy Sacrament under foot, and broke the sacred images. This being accomplished, Guillaume Moget entered the pulpit, and resumed his sermon with such eloquence that his hearers' excitement redoubled, and not satisfied with what had already been done, rushed off to seize on the Franciscan monastery, where they forthwith installed Moget and the two women, who, according to Menard the historian of Languedoc, never left him day or night; all which proceedings were regarded by Captain Bouillargues with magnificent calm.

The consuls being once more summoned before M. de Villars, who had again become governor, would gladly have denied the

existence of disorder; but finding this impossible, they threw themselves on his mercy. He being unable to repose confidence in them any longer, sent a garrison to the citadel of Nimes, which the municipality was obliged to support, appointed a governor of the city with four district captains under him, and formed a body of military police which quite superseded the municipal constabulary. Moget was expelled from Nimes, and Captain Bouillargues deprived of office.

Francis II dying in his turn, the usual effect was produced, – that is, the persecution became less fierce, – and Moget therefore returned to Nimes. This was a victory, and every victory being a step forward, the triumphant preacher organised a Consistory, and the deputies of Nimes demanded from the States-General of Orleans possession of the churches. No notice was taken of this demand; but the Protestants were at no loss how to proceed. On the 21st December 1561 the churches of Ste. Eugenie, St. Augustin, and the Cordeliers were taken by assault, and cleared of their images in a hand's turn; and this time Captain Bouillargues was not satisfied with looking on, but directed the operations.

The cathedral was still safe, and in it were entrenched the remnant of the Catholic clergy; but it was apparent that at the earliest opportunity it too would be turned into a meeting-house; and this opportunity was not long in coming.

One Sunday, when Bishop Bernard d'Elbene had celebrated mass, just as the regular preacher was about to begin his sermon,

some children who were playing in the close began to hoot the 'beguinier' [a name of contempt for friars]. Some of the faithful being disturbed in their meditations, came out of the church and chastised the little Huguenots, whose parents considered themselves in consequence to have been insulted in the persons of their children. A great commotion ensued, crowds began to form, and cries of "To the church! to the church!" were heard. Captain Bouillargues happened to be in the neighbourhood, and being very methodical set about organising the insurrection; then putting himself at its head, he charged the cathedral, carrying everything before him, in spite of the barricades which had been hastily erected by the Papists. The assault was over in a few moments; the priests and their flock fled by one door, while the Reformers entered by another. The building was in the twinkling of an eye adapted to the new form of worship: the great crucifix from above the altar was dragged about the streets at the end of a rope and scourged at every cross-roads. In the evening a large fire was lighted in the place before the cathedral, and the archives of the ecclesiastical and religious houses, the sacred images, the relics of the saints, the decorations of the altar, the sacerdotal vestments, even the Host itself, were thrown on it without any remonstrance from the consuls; the very wind which blew upon Nimes breathed heresy.

For the moment Nimes was in full revolt, and the spirit of organisation spread: Moget assumed the titles of pastor and minister of the Christian Church. Captain Bouillargues melted

down the sacred vessels of the Catholic churches, and paid in this manner the volunteers of Nimes and the German mercenaries; the stones of the demolished religious houses were used in the construction of fortifications, and before anyone thought of attacking it the city was ready for a siege. It was at this moment that Guillaume Calviere, who was at the head of the Presidial Court, Moget being president of the Consistory, and Captain Bouillargues commander-in-chief of the armed forces, suddenly resolved to create a new authority, which, while sharing the powers hitherto vested solely in the consuls, should be, even more than they, devoted to Calvin: thus the office of les Messieurs came into being. This was neither more nor less than a committee of public safety, and having been formed in the stress of revolution it acted in a revolutionary spirit, absorbing the powers of the consuls, and restricting the authority of the Consistory to things spiritual. In the meantime the Edict of Amboise, was promulgated, and it was announced that the king, Charles IX, accompanied by Catherine de Medicis, was going to visit his loyal provinces in the South.

Determined as was Captain Bouillargues, for once he had to give way, so strong was the party against him; therefore, despite the murmurs of the fanatics, the city of Nimes resolved, not only to open its gates to its sovereign, but to give him such a reception as would efface the bad impression which Charles might have received from the history of recent events. The royal procession was met at the Pont du Gare, where young girls attired

as nymphs emerged from a grotto bearing a collation, which they presented to their Majesties, who graciously and heartily partook of it. The repast at an end, the illustrious travellers resumed their progress; but the imagination of the Nimes authorities was not to be restrained within such narrow bounds: at the entrance to the city the king found the Porte de la Couronne transformed into a mountain-side, covered with vines and olive trees, under which a shepherd was tending his flock. As the king approached the mountain parted as if yielding to the magic of his power, the most beautiful maidens and the most noble came out to meet their sovereign, presenting him the keys of the city wreathed with flowers, and singing to the accompaniment of the shepherd's pipe. Passing through the mountain, Charles saw chained to a palm tree in the depths of a grotto a monster crocodile from whose jaws issued flames: this was a representation of the old coat of arms granted to the city by Octavius Caesar Augustus after the battle of Actium, and which Francis I had restored to it in exchange for a model in silver of the amphitheatre presented to him by the city. Lastly, the king found in the Place de la Salamandre numerous bonfires, so that without waiting to ask if these fires were made from the remains of the faggots used at the martyrdom of Maurice Secenat, he went to bed very much pleased with the reception accorded him by his good city of Nimes, and sure that all the unfavourable reports he had heard were calumnies.

Nevertheless, in order that such rumours, however slight

their foundation, should not again be heard, the king appointed Damville governor of Languedoc, installing him himself in the chief city of his government; he then removed every consul from his post without exception, and appointed in their place Guy-Rochette, doctor and lawyer; Jean Beaudan, burgess; Francois Aubert, mason; and Cristol Ligier, farm labourer – all Catholics. He then left for Paris, where a short time after he concluded a treaty with the Calvinists, which the people with its gift of prophecy called "The halting peace of unsure seat," and which in the end led to the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Gracious as had been the measures taken by the king to secure the peace of his good city of Nimes, they had nevertheless been reactionary; consequently the Catholics, feeling the authorities were now on their side, returned in crowds: the householders reclaimed their houses, the priests their churches; while, rendered ravenous by the bitter bread of exile, both the clergy and the laity pillaged the treasury. Their return was not, however; stained by bloodshed, although the Calvinists were reviled in the open street. A few stabs from a dagger or shots from an arquebus might, however, have been better; such wounds heal while mocking words rankle in the memory.

On the morrow of Michaelmas Day – that is, on the 31st September 1567 – a number of conspirators might have been seen issuing from a house and spreading themselves through the streets, crying "To arms! Down with the Papists!" Captain Bouillargues was taking his revenge.

As the Catholics were attacked unawares, they did not make even a show of resistance: a number of Protestants – those who possessed the best arms – rushed to the house of Guy-Rochette, the first consul, and seized the keys of the city. Guy Rochette, startled by the cries of the crowds, had looked out of the window, and seeing a furious mob approaching his house, and feeling that their rage was directed against himself, had taken refuge with his brother Gregoire. There, recovering his courage and presence of mind, he recalled the important responsibilities attached to his office, and resolving to fulfil them whatever might happen, hastened to consult with the other magistrates, but as they all gave him very excellent reasons for not meddling, he soon felt there was no dependence to be placed on such cowards and traitors. He next repaired to the episcopal palace, where he found the bishop surrounded by the principal Catholics of the town, all on their knees offering up earnest prayers to Heaven, and awaiting martyrdom. Guy-Rochette joined them, and the prayers were continued.

A few instants later fresh noises were heard in the street, and the gates of the palace court groaned under blows of axe and crowbar. Hearing these alarming sounds, the bishop, forgetting that it was his duty to set a brave example, fled through a breach in the wall of the next house; but Guy-Rochette and his companions valiantly resolved not to run away, but to await their fate with patience. The gates soon yielded, and the courtyard and palace were filled with Protestants: at their head appeared

Captain Bouillargues, sword in hand. Guy-Rochette and those with him were seized and secured in a room under the charge of four guards, and the palace was looted. Meantime another band of insurgents had attacked the house of the vicar-general, John Pebereau, whose body pierced by seven stabs of a dagger was thrown out of a window, the same fate as was meted out to Admiral Coligny eight years later at the hands of the Catholics. In the house a sum of 800 crowns was found and taken. The two bands then uniting, rushed to the cathedral, which they sacked for the second time.

Thus the entire day passed in murder and pillage: when night came the large number of prisoners so imprudently taken began to be felt as an encumbrance by the insurgent chiefs, who therefore resolved to take advantage of the darkness to get rid of them without causing too much excitement in the city. They were therefore gathered together from the various houses in which they had been confined, and were brought to a large hall in the Hotel de Ville, capable of containing from four to five hundred persons, and which was soon full. An irregular tribunal arrogating to itself powers of life and death was formed, and a clerk was appointed to register its decrees. A list of all the prisoners was given him, a cross placed before a name indicating that its bearer was condemned to death, and, list in hand, he went from group to group calling out the names distinguished by the fatal sign. Those thus sorted out were then conducted to a spot which had been chosen beforehand as the place of execution.

This was the palace courtyard in the middle of which yawned a well twenty-four feet in circumference and fifty deep. The fanatics thus found a grave ready-digged as it were to their hand, and to save time, made use of it.

The unfortunate Catholics, led thither in groups, were either stabbed with daggers or mutilated with axes, and the bodies thrown down the well. Guy-Rochette was one of the first to be dragged up. For himself he asked neither mercy nor favour, but he begged that the life of his young brother might be spared, whose only crime was the bond of blood which united them; but the assassins, paying no heed to his prayers, struck down both man and boy and flung them into the well. The corpse of the vicar-general, who had been killed the day before, was in its turn dragged thither by a rope and added to the others. All night the massacre went on, the crimsoned water rising in the well as corpse after corpse was thrown in, till, at break of day, it overflowed, one hundred and twenty bodies being then hidden in its depths.

Next day, October 1st, the scenes of tumult were renewed: from early dawn Captain Bouillargues ran from street to street crying, "Courage, comrades! Montpellier, Pezenas, Aramon, Beaucaire, Saint-Andeol, and Villeneuve are taken, and are on our side. Cardinal de Lorraine is dead, and the king is in our power." This aroused the failing energies of the assassins. They joined the captain, and demanded that the houses round the palace should be searched, as it was almost certain that the

bishop, who had, as may be remembered, escaped the day before, had taken refuge in one of them. This being agreed to, a house-to-house visitation was begun: when the house of M. de Sauvignargues was reached, he confessed that the bishop was in his cellar, and proposed to treat with Captain Bouillargues for a ransom. This proposition being considered reasonable, was accepted, and after a short discussion the sum of 120 crowns was agreed on. The bishop laid down every penny he had about him, his servants were despoiled, and the sum made up by the Sieur de Sauvignargues, who having the bishop in his house kept him caged. The prelate, however, made no objection, although under other circumstances he would have regarded this restraint as the height of impertinence; but as it was he felt safer in M. de Sauvignargues' cellar than in the palace.

But the secret of the worthy prelate's hiding place was but badly kept by those with whom he had treated; for in a few moments a second crowd appeared, hoping to obtain a second ransom. Unfortunately, the Sieur de Sauvignargues, the bishop, and the bishop's servants had stripped themselves of all their ready money to make up the first, so the master of the house, fearing for his own safety, having barricaded the doors, got out into a lane and escaped, leaving the bishop to his fate. The Huguenots climbed in at the windows, crying, "No quarter! Down with the Papists!" The bishop's servants were cut down, the bishop himself dragged out of the cellar and thrown into the street. There his rings and crozier were snatched from him; he

was stripped of his clothes and arrayed in a grotesque and ragged garment which chanced to be at hand; his mitre was replaced by a peasant's cap; and in this condition he was dragged back to the palace and placed on the brink of the well to be thrown in. One of the assassins drew attention to the fact that it was already full. "Pooh!" replied another, "they won't mind a little crowding for a bishop." Meantime the prelate, seeing he need expect no mercy from man, threw himself on his knees and commended his soul to God. Suddenly, however, one of those who had shown himself most ferocious during the massacre, Jean Coussinal by name, was touched as if by miracle with a feeling of compassion at the sight of so much resignation, and threw himself between the bishop and those about to strike, and declaring that whoever touched the prelate must first overcome himself, took him under his protection, his comrades retreating in astonishment. Jean Coussinal raising the bishop, carried him in his arms into a neighbouring house, and drawing his sword, took his stand on the threshold.

The assassins, however, soon recovered from their surprise, and reflecting that when all was said and done they were fifty to one, considered it would be shameful to let themselves be intimidated by a single opponent, so they advanced again on Coussinal, who with a back-handed stroke cut off the head of the first-comer. The cries upon this redoubled, and two or three shots were fired at the obstinate defender of the poor bishop, but they all missed aim. At that moment Captain Bouillargues passed

by, and seeing one man attacked by fifty, inquired into the cause. He was told of Coussinal's odd determination to save the bishop. "He is quite right," said the captain; "the bishop has paid ransom, and no one has any right to touch him." Saying this, he walked up to Coussinal, gave him his hand, and the two entered the house, returning in a few moments with the bishop between them. In this order they crossed the town, followed by the murmuring crowd, who were, however, afraid to do more than murmur; at the gate the bishop was provided with an escort and let go, his defenders remaining there till he was out of sight.

The massacres went on during the whole of the second day, though towards evening the search for victims relaxed somewhat; but still many isolated acts of murder took place during the night. On the morrow, being tired of killing, the people began to destroy, and this phase lasted a long time, it being less fatiguing to throw stones about than corpses. All the convents, all the monasteries, all the houses of the priests and canons were attacked in turn; nothing was spared except the cathedral, before which axes and crowbars seemed to lose their power, and the church of Ste. Eugenie, which was turned into a powder-magazine. The day of the great butchery was called "La Michelade," because it took place the day after Michaelmas, and as all this happened in the year 1567 the Massacre of St. Bartholomew must be regarded as a plagiarism.

At last, however, with the help of M. Damville; the Catholics again got the upper hand, and it was the turn of the Protestants

to fly. They took refuge in the Cevennes. From the beginning of the troubles the Cevennes had been the asylum of those who suffered for the Protestant faith; and still the plains are Papist, and the mountains Protestant. When the Catholic party is in the ascendant at Nimes, the plain seeks the mountain; when the Protestants come into power, the mountain comes down into the plain.

However, vanquished and fugitive though they were, the Calvinists did not lose courage: in exile one day, they felt sure their luck would turn the next; and while the Catholics were burning or hanging them in effigy for contumacy, they were before a notary, dividing the property of their executioners.

But it was not enough for them to buy or sell this property amongst each other, they wanted to enter into possession; they thought of nothing else, and in 1569 – that is, in the eighteenth month of their exile – they attained their wish in the following manner:

One day the exiles perceived a carpenter belonging to a little village called Cauvisson approaching their place of refuge. He desired to speak to M. Nicolas de Calviere, seigneur de St. Cosme, and brother of the president, who was known to be a very enterprising man. To him the carpenter, whose name was Maduron, made the following proposition:

In the moat of Nimes, close to the Gate of the Carmelites, there was a grating through which the waters from the fountain found vent. Maduron offered to file through the bars of this

grating in such a manner that some fine night it could be lifted out so as to allow a band of armed Protestants to gain access to the city. Nicolas de Calviere approving of this plan, desired that it should be carried out at once; but the carpenter pointed out that it would be necessary to wait for stormy weather, when the waters swollen by the rain would by their noise drown the sound of the file. This precaution was doubly necessary as the box of the sentry was almost exactly above the grating. M. de Calviere tried to make Maduron give way; but the latter, who was risking more than anyone else, was firm. So whether they liked it or not, de Calviere and the rest had to await his good pleasure.

Some days later rainy weather set in, and as usual the fountain became fuller; Maduron seeing that the favourable moment had arrived, glided at night into the moat and applied his file, a friend of his who was hidden on the ramparts above pulling a cord attached to Maduron's arm every time the sentinel, in pacing his narrow round, approached the spot. Before break of day the work was well begun. Maduron then obliterated all traces of his file by daubing the bars with mud and wax, and withdrew. For three consecutive nights he returned to his task, taking the same precautions, and before the fourth was at an end he found that by means of a slight effort the grating could be removed. That was all that was needed, so he gave notice to Messire Nicolas de Calviere that the moment had arrived.

Everything was favourable to the undertaking: as there was no moon, the next night was chosen to carry out the plan, and as

soon as it was dark Messire Nicolas de Calviere set out with his men, who, slipping down into the moat without noise, crossed, the water being up to their belts, climbed up the other side, and crept along at the foot of the wall till they reached the grating without being perceived. There Maduron was waiting, and as soon as he caught sight of them he gave a slight blow to the loose bars; which fell, and the whole party entered the drain, led by de Calviere, and soon found themselves at the farther end – that is to say, in the Place de la Fontaine. They immediately formed into companies twenty strong, four of which hastened to the principal gates, while the others patrolled the streets shouting, "The city taken! Down with the Papists! A new world!" Hearing this, the Protestants in the city recognised their co-religionists, and the Catholics their opponents: but whereas the former had been warned and were on the alert, the latter were taken by surprise; consequently they offered no resistance, which, however, did not prevent bloodshed. M. de St. Andre, the governor of the town, who during his short period of office had drawn the bitter hatred of the Protestants on him, was shot dead in his bed, and his body being flung out of the window, was torn in pieces by the populace. The work of murder went on all night, and on the morrow the victors in their turn began an organised persecution, which fell more heavily on the Catholics than that to which they had subjected the Protestants; for, as we have explained above, the former could only find shelter in the plain, while the latter used the Cevennes as a stronghold.

It was about this time that the peace, which was called, as we have said, "the insecurely seated," was concluded. Two years later this name was justified by the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

When this event took place, the South, strange as it may seem, looked on: in Nimes both Catholics and Protestants, stained with the other's blood, faced each other, hand on hilt, but without drawing weapon. It was as if they were curious to see how the Parisians would get through. The massacre had one result, however, the union of the principal cities of the South and West: Montpellier, Uzes, Montauban, and La Rochelle, with Nimes at their head, formed a civil and military league to last, as is declared in the Act of Federation, until God should raise up a sovereign to be the defender of the Protestant faith. In the year 1775 the Protestants of the South began to turn their eyes towards Henri IV as the coming defender.

At that date Nimes, setting an example to the other cities of the League, deepened her moats, blew up her suburbs, and added to the height of her ramparts. Night and day the work of perfecting the means of defence went on; the guard at every gate was doubled, and knowing how often a city had been taken by surprise, not a hole through which a Papist could creep was left in the fortifications. In dread of what the future might bring, Nimes even committed sacrilege against the past, and partly demolished the Temple of Diana and mutilated the amphitheatre – of which one gigantic stone was sufficient to form a section of

the wall. During one truce the crops were sown, during another they were garnered in, and so things went on while the reign of the Mignons lasted. At length the prince raised up by God, whom the Huguenots had waited for so long, appeared; Henri IV ascended the, throne.

But once seated, Henri found himself in the same difficulty as had confronted Octavius fifteen centuries earlier, and which confronted Louis Philippe three centuries later – that is to say, having been raised to sovereign power by a party which was not in the majority, he soon found himself obliged to separate from this party and to abjure his religious beliefs, as others have abjured or will yet abjure their political beliefs; consequently, just as Octavius had his Antony, and Louis Philippe was to have his Lafayette, Henri IV was to have his Biron. When monarchs are in this position they can no longer have a will of their own or personal likes and dislikes; they submit to the force of circumstances, and feel compelled to rely on the masses; no sooner are they freed from the ban under which they laboured than they are obliged to bring others under it.

However, before having recourse to extreme measures, Henri IV with soldierly frankness gathered round him all those who had been his comrades of old in war and in religion; he spread out before them a map of France, and showed them that hardly a tenth of the immense number of its inhabitants were Protestants, and that even that tenth was shut up in the mountains; some in Dauphine, which had been won for them by their three principal

leaders, Baron des Adrets, Captain Montbrun, and Lesdiguieres; others in the Cevennes, which had become Protestant through their great preachers, Maurice Secenat and Guillaume Moget; and the rest in the mountains of Navarre, whence he himself had come. He recalled to them further that whenever they ventured out of their mountains they had been beaten in every battle, at Jarnac, at Moncontour, and at Dreux. He concluded by explaining how impossible it was for him, such being the case, to entrust the guidance of the State to their party; but he offered them instead three things, viz., his purse to supply their present needs, the Edict of Nantes to assure their future safety, and fortresses to defend themselves should this edict one day be revoked, for with profound insight the grandfather divined the grandson: Henri IV feared Louis XIV.

The Protestants took what they were offered, but of course like all who accept benefits they went away filled with discontent because they had not been given more.

Although the Protestants ever afterwards looked on Henri IV as a renegade, his reign nevertheless was their golden age, and while it lasted Nines was quiet; for, strange to say, the Protestants took no revenge for St. Bartholomew, contenting themselves with debarring the Catholics from the open exercise of their religion, but leaving them free to use all its rites and ceremonies in private. They even permitted the procession of the Host through the streets in case of illness, provided it took place at night. Of course death would not always wait for darkness, and the Host

was sometimes carried to the dying during the day, not without danger to the priest, who, however, never let himself be deterred thereby from the performance of his duty; indeed, it is of the essence of religious devotion to be inflexible; and few soldiers, however brave, have equalled the martyrs in courage.

During this time, taking advantage of the truce to hostilities and the impartial protection meted out to all without distinction by the Constable Damville, the Carmelites and Capuchins, the Jesuits and monks of all orders and colours, began by degrees to return to Nines; without any display, it is true, rather in a surreptitious manner, preferring darkness to daylight; but however this may be, in the course of three or four years they had all regained foothold in the town; only now they were in the position in which the Protestants had been formerly, they were without churches, as their enemies were in possession of all the places of worship. It also happened that a Jesuit high in authority, named Pere Coston, preached with such success that the Protestants, not wishing to be beaten, but desirous of giving word for word, summoned to their aid the Rev. Jeremie Ferrier, of Alais, who at the moment was regarded as the most eloquent preacher they had. Needless to say, Alais was situated in the mountains, that inexhaustible source of Huguenot eloquence. At once the controversial spirit was aroused; it did not as yet amount to war, but still less could it be called peace: people were no longer assassinated, but they were anathematised; the body was safe, but the soul was consigned to damnation: the days as they

passed were used by both sides to keep their hand in, in readiness for the moment when the massacres should again begin.

CHAPTER II

The death of Henri IV led to new conflicts, in which although at first success was on the side of the Protestants it by degrees went over to the Catholics; for with the accession of Louis XIII Richelieu had taken possession of the throne: beside the king sat the cardinal; under the purple mantle gleamed the red robe. It was at this crisis that Henri de Rohan rose to eminence in the South. He was one of the most illustrious representatives of that great race which, allied as it was to the royal houses of Scotland, France, Savoy, and Lorraine; had taken as their device, "Be king I cannot, prince I will not, Rohan I am."

Henri de Rohan was at this time about forty years of age, in the prime of life. In his youth, in order to perfect his education, he had visited England, Scotland, and Italy. In England Elizabeth had called him her knight; in Scotland James VI had asked him to stand godfather to his son, afterwards Charles I; in Italy he had been so deep in the confidence of the leaders of men, and so thoroughly initiated into the politics of the principal cities, that it was commonly said that, after Machiavel, he was the greatest authority in these matters. He had returned to France in the lifetime of Henry IV, and had married the daughter of Sully, and after Henri's death had commanded the Swiss and the Grison regiments – at the siege of Juliers. This was the man whom the king was so imprudent as to offend by refusing him

the reversion of the office of governor of Poitou, which was then held by Sully, his father-in-law. In order to revenge himself for the neglect he met with at court, as he states in his Memoires with military ingenuousness, he espoused the cause of Conde with all his heart, being also drawn in this direction by his liking for Conde's brother and his consequent desire to help those of Conde's religion.

From this day on street disturbances and angry disputes assumed another aspect: they took in a larger area and were not so readily appeased. It was no longer an isolated band of insurgents which roused a city, but rather a conflagration which spread over the whole South, and a general uprising which was almost a civil war.

This state of things lasted for seven or eight years, and during this time Rohan, abandoned by Chatillon and La Force, who received as the reward of their defection the field marshal's baton, pressed by Conde, his old friend, and by Montmorency, his consistent rival, performed prodigies of courage and miracles of strategy. At last, without soldiers, without ammunition, without money, he still appeared to Richelieu to be so redoubtable that all the conditions of surrender he demanded were granted. The maintenance of the Edict of Nantes was guaranteed, all the places of worship were to be restored to the Reformers, and a general amnesty granted to himself and his partisans. Furthermore, he obtained what was an unheard-of thing until then, an indemnity of 300,000 livres for his expenses

during the rebellion; of which sum he allotted 240,000 livres to his co-religionists – that is to say, more than three-quarters of the entire amount – and kept, for the purpose of restoring his various chateaux and setting his domestic establishment, which had been destroyed during the war, again on foot, only 60,000 livres. This treaty was signed on July 27th, 1629.

The Duc de Richelieu, to whom no sacrifice was too great in order to attain his ends, had at last reached the goal, but the peace cost him nearly 40,000,000 livres; on the other hand, Saintonge, Poitou, and Languedoc had submitted, and the chiefs of the houses of La Tremouille, Conde, Bouillon, Rohan, and Soubise had came to terms with him; organised armed opposition had disappeared, and the lofty manner of viewing matters natural to the cardinal duke prevented him from noticing private enmity. He therefore left Nimes free to manage her local affairs as she pleased, and very soon the old order, or rather disorder, reigned once more within her walls. At last Richelieu died, and Louis XIII soon followed him, and the long minority of his successor, with its embarrassments, left to Catholics and Protestants in the South more complete liberty than ever to carry on the great duel which down to our own days has never ceased.

But from this period, each flux and reflux bears more and more the peculiar character of the party which for the moment is triumphant; when the Protestants get the upper hand, their vengeance is marked by brutality and rage; when the Catholics are victorious, the retaliation is full of hypocrisy and greed.

The Protestants pull down churches and monasteries, expel the monks, burn the crucifixes, take the body of some criminal from the gallows, nail it on a cross, pierce its side, put a crown of thorns round its temples and set it up in the market-place – an effigy of Jesus on Calvary. The Catholics levy contributions, take back what they had been deprived of, exact indemnities, and although ruined by each reverse, are richer than ever after each victory. The Protestants act in the light of day, melting down the church bells to make cannon to the sound of the drum, violate agreements, warm themselves with wood taken from the houses of the cathedral clergy, affix their theses to the cathedral doors, beat the priests who carry the Holy Sacrament to the dying, and, to crown all other insults, turn churches into slaughter-houses and sewers.

The Catholics, on the contrary, march at night, and, slipping in at the gates which have been left ajar for them, make their bishop president of the Council, put Jesuits at the head of the college, buy converts with money from the treasury, and as they always have influence at court, begin by excluding the Calvinists from favour, hoping soon to deprive them of justice.

At last, on the 31st of December, 1657, a final struggle took place, in which the Protestants were overcome, and were only saved from destruction because from the other side of the Channel, Cromwell exerted himself in their favour, writing with his own hand at the end of a despatch relative to the affairs of Austria, "I Learn that there have been popular disturbances in a

town of Languedoc called Nimes, and I beg that order may be restored with as much mildness as possible, and without shedding of blood." As, fortunately for the Protestants, Mazarin had need of Cromwell at that moment, torture was forbidden, and nothing allowed but annoyances of all kinds. These henceforward were not only innumerable, but went on without a pause: the Catholics, faithful to their system of constant encroachment, kept up an incessant persecution, in which they were soon encouraged by the numerous ordinances issued by Louis XIV. The grandson of Henri IV could not so far forget all ordinary respect as to destroy at once the Edict of Nantes, but he tore off clause after clause.

In 1630 – that is, a year after the peace with Rohan had been signed in the preceding reign – Chalons-sur-Saone had resolved that no Protestant should be allowed to take any part in the manufactures of the town.

In 1643, six months after the accession of Louis XIV, the laundresses of Paris made a rule that the wives and daughters of Protestants were unworthy to be admitted to the freedom of their respectable guild.

In 1654, just one year after he had attained his majority, Louis XIV consented to the imposition of a tax on the town of Nimes of 4000 francs towards the support of the Catholic and the Protestant hospitals; and instead of allowing each party to contribute to the support of its own hospital, the money was raised in one sum, so that, of the money paid by the Protestants, who were twice as numerous as the Catholics, two-sixths went to

their enemies. On August 9th of the same year a decree of the Council ordered that all the artisan consuls should be Catholics; on the 16th September another decree forbade Protestants to send deputations to the king; lastly, on the 20th of December, a further decree declared that all hospitals should be administered by Catholic consuls alone.

In 1662 Protestants were commanded to bury their dead either at dawn or after dusk, and a special clause of the decree fixed the number of persons who might attend a funeral at ten only.

In 1663 the Council of State issued decrees prohibiting the practice of their religion by the Reformers in one hundred and forty-two communes in the dioceses of Nimes, Uzes, and Mendes; and ordering the demolition of their meetinghouses.

In 1664 this regulation was extended to the meeting-houses of Alencon and Montauban, as Well as their small place of worship in Nimes. On the 17th July of the same year the Parliament of Rouen forbade the master-mercers to engage any more Protestant workmen or apprentices when the number already employed had reached the proportion of one Protestant, to fifteen Catholics; on the 24th of the same month the Council of State declared all certificates of mastership held by a Protestant invalid from whatever source derived; and in October reduced to two the number of Protestants who might be employed at the mint.

In 1665 the regulation imposed on the mercers was extended to the goldsmiths.

In 1666 a royal declaration, revising the decrees of Parliament, was published, and Article 31 provided that the offices of clerk to the consulates, or secretary to a guild of watchmakers, or porter in a municipal building, could only be held by Catholics; while in Article 33 it was ordained that when a procession carrying the Host passed a place of worship belonging to the so-called Reformers, the worshippers should stop their psalm-singing till the procession had gone by; and lastly, in Article 34 it was enacted that the houses and other buildings belonging to those who were of the Reformed religion might, at the pleasure of the town authorities, be draped with cloth or otherwise decorated on any religious Catholic festival.

In 1669 the Chambers appointed by the Edict of Nantes in the Parliaments of Rouen and Paris were suppressed, as well as the articled clerkships connected therewith, and the clerkships in the Record Office; and in August of the same year, when the emigration of Protestants was just beginning, an edict was issued, of which the following is a clause:

"Whereas many of our subjects have gone to foreign countries, where they continue to follow their various trades and occupations, even working as shipwrights, or taking service as sailors, till at length they feel at home and determine never to return to France, marrying abroad and acquiring property of every description: We hereby forbid any member of the so-called Reformed Church to leave this kingdom without our permission, and we command those who have already left France to return

forthwith within her boundaries."

In 1670 the king excluded physicians of the Reformed faith from the office of dean of the college of Rouen, and allowed only two Protestant doctors within its precincts. In 1671 a decree was published commanding the arms of France to be removed from all the places of worship belonging to the pretended Reformers. In 1680 a proclamation from the king closed the profession of midwife to women of the Reformed faith. In 1681 those who renounced the Protestant religion were exempted for two years from all contributions towards the support of soldiers sent to their town, and were for the same period relieved from the duty of giving them board and lodging. In the same year the college of Sedan was closed – the only college remaining in the entire kingdom at which Calvinist children could receive instruction. In 1682 the king commanded Protestant notaries; procurators, ushers, and serjeants to lay down their offices, declaring them unfit for such professions; and in September of the same year three months only were allowed them for the sale of the reversion of the said offices. In 1684 the Council of State extended the preceding regulations to those Protestants holding the title of honorary secretary to the king, and in August of the same year Protestants were declared incapable of serving on a jury of experts.

In 1685 the provost of merchants in Paris ordered all Protestant privileged merchants in that city to sell their privileges within a month. And in October of the same year the long series

of persecutions, of which we have omitted many, reached its culminating point – the: Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Henri IV, who foresaw this result, had hoped that it would have occurred in another manner, so that his co-religionists would have been able to retain their fortresses; but what was actually done was that the strong places were first taken away, and then came the Revocation; after which the Calvinists found themselves completely at the mercy of their mortal enemies.

From 1669, when Louis first threatened to aim a fatal blow at the civil rights of the Huguenots, by abolishing the equal partition of the Chambers between the two parties, several deputations had been sent to him praying him to stop the course of his persecutions; and in order not to give him any fresh excuse for attacking their party, these deputations addressed him in the most submissive manner, as the following fragment from an address will prove:

"In the name of God, sire," said the Protestants to the king, "listen to the last breath of our dying liberty, have pity on our sufferings, have pity on the great number of your poor subjects who daily water their bread with their tears: they are all filled with burning zeal and inviolable loyalty to you; their love for your august person is only equalled by their respect; history bears witness that they contributed in no small degree to place your great and magnanimous ancestor on his rightful throne, and since your miraculous birth they have never done anything worthy of blame; they might indeed use much stronger terms, but your

Majesty has spared their modesty by addressing to them on many occasions words of praise which they would never have ventured to apply to themselves; these your subjects place their sole trust in your sceptre for refuge and protection on earth, and their interest as well as their duty and conscience impels them to remain attached to the service of your Majesty with unalterable devotion."

But, as we have seen, nothing could restrain the triumvirate which held the power just then, and thanks to the suggestions of Pere Lachaise and Madame de Maintenon, Louis XIV determined to gain heaven by means of wheel and stake.

As we see, for the Protestants, thanks to these numerous decrees, persecution began at the cradle and followed them to the grave.

As a boy, a Huguenot could – enter no public school; as a youth, no career was open to him; he could become neither mercer nor concierge, neither apothecary nor physician, neither lawyer nor consul. As a man, he had no sacred house, of prayer; no registrar would inscribe his marriage or the birth of his children; hourly his liberty and his conscience were ignored. If he ventured to worship God by the singing of psalms, he had to be silent as the Host was carried past outside. When a Catholic festival occurred, he was forced not only to swallow his rage but to let his house be hung with decorations in sign of joy; if he had inherited a fortune from his fathers, having neither social standing nor civil rights, it slipped gradually out of his hands,

and went to support the schools and hospitals of his foes. Having reached the end of his life, his deathbed was made miserable; for dying in the faith of his fathers, he could not be laid to rest beside them, and like a pariah he would be carried to his grave at night, no more than ten of those near and dear to him being allowed to follow his coffin.

Lastly, if at any age whatever he should attempt to quit the cruel soil on which he had no right to be born, to live, or to die, he would be declared a rebel, his goads would be confiscated, and the lightest penalty that he had to expect, if he ever fell into the hands of his enemies, was to row for the rest of his life in the galleys of the king, chained between a murderer and a forger.

Such a state of things was intolerable: the cries of one man are lost in space, but the groans of a whole population are like a storm; and this time, as always, the tempest gathered in the mountains, and the rumblings of the thunder began to be heard.

First there were texts written by invisible hands on city walls, on the signposts and cross-roads, on the crosses in the cemeteries: these warnings, like the 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin' of Belshazzar, even pursued the persecutors into the midst of their feasts and orgies.

Now it was the threat, "Jesus came not to send peace, but a sword." Then this consolation, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Or perhaps it was this appeal for united action which was soon to become a summons to revolt, "That which we have seen and

heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us."

And before these promises, taken from the New Testament, the persecuted paused, and then went home inspired by faith in the prophets, who spake, as St. Paul says in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, "not the word of men but the word of God."

Very soon these words became incarnate, and what the prophet Joel foretold came to pass: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions… and I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire… and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered."

In 1696 reports began to circulate that men had had visions; being able to see what was going on in the most distant parts, and that the heavens themselves opened to their eyes. While in this ecstatic state they were insensible to pain when pricked with either pin or blade; and when, on recovering consciousness, they were questioned they could remember nothing.

The first of these was a woman from Vivarais, whose origin was unknown. She went about from town to town, shedding tears of blood. M. de Baville, intendant of Languedoc, had her arrested and brought to Montpellier. There she was condemned to death and burnt at the stake, her tears of blood being dried by fire.

After her came a second fanatic, for so these popular prophets

were called. He was born at Mazillon, his name was Laquoite, and he was twenty years of age. The gift of prophecy had come to him in a strange manner. This is the story told about him: – "One day, returning from Languedoc, where he had been engaged in the cultivation of silkworms, on reaching the bottom of the hill of St. Jean he found a man lying on the ground trembling in every limb. Moved by pity, he stopped and asked what ailed him. The man replied, 'Throw yourself on your knees, my son, and trouble not yourself about me, but learn how to attain salvation and save your brethren. This can only be done by the communion of the Holy Ghost, who is in me, and whom by the grace of God I can bestow on you. Approach and receive this gift in a kiss.' At these words the unknown kissed the young man on the mouth, pressed his hand and disappeared, leaving the other trembling in his turn; for the spirit of God was in him, and being inspired he spread the word abroad."

A third fanatic, a prophetess, raved about the parishes of St. Andeol de Clerguemont and St. Frazal de Vantalon, but she addressed herself principally to recent converts, to whom she preached concerning the Eucharist that in swallowing the consecrated wafer they had swallowed a poison as venomous as the head of the basilisk, that they had bent the knee to Baal, and that no penitence on their part could be great enough to save them. These doctrines inspired such profound terror that the Rev. Father Louvreloeil himself tells us that Satan by his efforts succeeded in nearly emptying the churches, and that at

the following Easter celebrations there were only half as many communicants as the preceding year.

Such a state of licence, which threatened to spread farther and farther, awoke the religious solicitude of Messire Francois Langlade de Duchayla, Prior of Laval, Inspector of Missions of Gevaudan, and Arch-priest of the Cevennes. He therefore resolved to leave his residence at Mende and to visit the parishes in which heresy had taken the strongest hold, in order to oppose it by every mean's which God and the king had put in his power.

The Abbe Duchayla was a younger son of the noble house of Langlade, and by the circumstances of his birth, in spite of his soldierly instincts, had been obliged to leave epaulet and sword to his elder brother, and himself assume cassock and stole. On leaving the seminary, he espoused the cause of the Church militant with all the ardour of his temperament. Perils to encounter; foes to fight, a religion to force on others, were necessities to this fiery character, and as everything at the moment was quiet in France, he had embarked for India with the fervent resolution of a martyr.

On reaching his destination, the young missionary had found himself surrounded by circumstances which were wonderfully in harmony with his celestial longings: some of his predecessors had been carried so far by religious zeal that the King of Siam had put several to death by torture and had forbidden any more missionaries to enter his dominions; but this, as we can easily imagine, only excited still more the abbe's missionary fervour;

evading the watchfulness of the military, and regardless of the terrible penalties imposed by the king, he crossed the frontier, and began to preach the Catholic religion to the heathen, many of whom were converted.

One day he was surprised by a party of soldiers in a little village in which he had been living for three months, and in which nearly all the inhabitants had abjured their false faith, and was brought before the governor of Bankan, where instead of denying his faith, he nobly defended Christianity and magnified the name of God. He was handed over to the executioners to be subjected to torture, and suffered at their hands with resignation everything that a human body can endure while yet retaining life, till at length his patience exhausted their rage; and seeing him become unconscious, they thought he was dead, and with mutilated hands, his breast furrowed with wounds, his limbs half warn through by heavy fetters, he was suspended by the wrists to a branch of a tree and abandoned. A pariah passing by cut him down and succoured him, and reports of his martyrdom having spread, the French ambassador demanded justice with no uncertain voice, so that the King of Siam, rejoicing that the executioners had stopped short in time, hastened to send back to M. de Chaumont, the representative of Louis XIV, a mutilated though still living man, instead of the corpse which had been demanded.

At the time when Louis XIV was meditating the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes he felt that the services of such a man

would be invaluable to him, so about 1632, Abbe Duchayla was recalled from India, and a year later was sent to Mende, with the titles of Arch-priest of the Cevennes and Inspector of Missions.

Soon the abbe, who had been so much persecuted, became a persecutor, showing himself as insensible to the sufferings of others as he had been inflexible under his own. His apprenticeship to torture stood him in such good stead that he became an inventor, and not only did he enrich the torture chamber by importing from India several scientifically constructed machines, hitherto unknown in Europe, but he also designed many others. People told with terror of reeds cut in the form of whistles which the abbe pitilessly forced under the nails of malignants; of iron pincers for tearing out their beards, eyelashes, and eyebrows; of wicks steeped in oil and wound round the fingers of a victim's hands, and then set on fire so as to form a pair of five-flamed candelabra; of a case turning on a pivot in which a man who refused to be converted was sometimes shut up, the case being then made to revolve rapidly till the victim lost consciousness; and lastly of fetters used when taking prisoners from one town to another, and brought to such perfection, that when they were on the prisoner could neither stand nor sit.

Even the most fervent panegyrists of Abbe Duchayla spoke of him with bated breath, and, when he himself looked into his own heart and recalled how often he had applied to the body the power to bind and loose which God had only given him over the

soul, he was seized with strange tremors, and falling on his knees with folded hands and bowed head he remained for hours wrapt in thought, so motionless that were it not for the drops of sweat which stood on his brow he might have been taken for a marble statue of prayer over a tomb.

Moreover, this priest by virtue of the powers with which he was invested, and feeling that he had the authority of M. de Baville, intendant of Languedoc, and M. de Broglie, commander of the troops, behind him, had done other terrible things.

He had separated children from father and mother, and had shut them up in religious houses, where they had been subjected to such severe chastisement, by way of making them do penance for the heresy of their parents, that many of them died under it.

He had forced his way into the chamber of the dying, not to bring consolation but menaces; and bending over the bed, as if to keep back the Angel of Death, he had repeated the words of the terrible decree which provided that in case of the death of a Huguenot without conversion, his memory should be persecuted, and his body, denied Christian burial, should be drawn on hurdles out of the city, and cast on a dungheap.

Lastly, when with pious love children tried to shield their parents in the death-agony from his threats, or dead from his justice, by carrying them, dead or dying, to some refuge in which they might hope to draw their last breath in peace or to obtain Christian burial, he declared that anyone who should open his door hospitably to such disobedience was a traitor to religion,

although among the heathen such pity would have been deemed worthy of an altar.

Such was the man raised up to punish, who went on his way, preceded by terror, accompanied by torture, and followed by death, through a country already exhausted by long and bloody oppression, and where at every step he trod on half repressed religious hate, which like a volcano was ever ready to burst out afresh, but always prepared for martyrdom. Nothing held him back, and years ago he had had his grave hollowed out in the church of St. Germain, choosing that church for his last long sleep because it had been built by Pope Urban IV when he was bishop of Mende.

Abbe Duchayla extended his visitation over six months, during which every day was marked by tortures and executions: several prophets were burnt at the stake; Francoise de Brez, she who had preached that the Host contained a more venomous poison than a basilisk's head, was hanged; and Laquoite, who had been confined in the citadel of Montpellier, was on the point of being broken on the wheel, when on the eve of his execution his cell was found empty. No one could ever discover how he escaped, and consequently his reputation rose higher than ever, it being currently believed that, led by the Holy Spirit as St. Peter by the angel, he had passed through the guards invisible to all, leaving his fetters behind.

This incomprehensible escape redoubled the severity of the Arch-priest, till at last the prophets, feeling that their only chance

of safety lay in getting rid of him, began to preach against him as Antichrist, and advocate his death. The abbe was warned of this, but nothing could abate his zeal. In France as in India, martyrdom was his longed-for goal, and with head erect and unfaltering step he "pressed toward the mark."

At last, on the evening of the 24th of July, two hundred conspirators met in a wood on the top of a hill which overlooked the bridge of Montvert, near which was the Arch-priest's residence. Their leader was a man named Laporte, a native of Alais, who had become a master-blacksmith in the pass of Deze. He was accompanied by an inspired man, a former wool-carder, born at Magistavols, Esprit Seguier by name. This man was, after Laquoite, the most highly regarded of the twenty or thirty prophets who were at that moment going up and down the Cevennes in every direction. The whole party was armed with scythes, halberts, and swords; a few had even pistols and guns.

On the stroke of ten, the hour fixed for their departure, they all knelt down and with uncovered heads began praying as fervently as if they were about to perform some act most pleasing to God, and their prayers ended, they marched down the hill to the town, singing psalms, and shouting between the verses to the townspeople to keep within their homes, and not to look out of door or window on pain of death.

The abbe was in his oratory when he heard the mingled singing and shouting, and at the same moment a servant entered in great alarm, despite the strict regulation of the Arch-priest that he was

never to be interrupted at his prayers. This man announced that a body of fanatics was coming down the hill, but the abbe felt convinced that it was only an unorganised crowd which was going to try and carry off six prisoners, at that moment in the 'ceps.' [A terrible kind of stocks – a beam split in two, no notches being made for the legs: the victim's legs were placed between the two pieces of wood, which were then, by means of a vice at each end, brought gradually together. Translators Note.]

These prisoners were three young men and three girls in men's clothes, who had been seized just as they were about to emigrate. As the abbe was always protected by a guard of soldiers, he sent for the officer in command and ordered him to march against, the fanatics and disperse them. But the officer was spared the trouble of obeying, for the fanatics were already at hand. On reaching the gate of the courtyard he heard them outside, and perceived that they were making ready to burst it in. Judging of their numbers by the sound of their voices, he considered that far from attacking them, he would have enough to do in preparing for defence, consequently he bolted and barred the gate on the inside, and hastily erected a barricade under an arch leading to the apartments of the abbe. Just as these preparations were complete, Esprit Seguier caught sight of a heavy beam of wood lying in a ditch; this was raised by a dozen men and used as a battering-ram to force in the gate, which soon showed a breach. Thus encouraged, the workers, cheered by the chants of their comrades, soon got the gate off the hinges, and thus the outside

court was taken. The crowd then loudly demanded the release of the prisoners, using dire threats.

The commanding officer sent to ask the abbe what he was to do; the abbe replied that he was to fire on the conspirators. This imprudent order was carried out; one of the fanatics was killed on the spot, and two wounded men mingled their groans with the songs and threats of their comrades.

The barricade was next attacked, some using axes, others darting their swords and halberts through the crevices and killing those behind; as for those who had firearms, they climbed on the shoulders of the others, and having fired at those below, saved themselves by tumbling down again. At the head of the besiegers were Laporte and Esprit Seguier, one of whom had a father to avenge and the other a son, both of whom had been done to death by the abbe. They were not the only ones of the party who were fired by the desire of vengeance; twelve or fifteen others were in the same position.

The abbe in his room listened to the noise of the struggle, and finding matters growing serious, he gathered his household round him, and making them kneel down, he told them to make their confession, that he might, by giving them absolution, prepare them for appearing before God. The sacred words had just been pronounced when the rioters drew near, having carried the barricade, and driven the soldiers to take refuge in a hall on the ground floor just under the Arch-priest's room.

But suddenly, the assault was stayed, some of the men going

to surround the house, others setting out on a search for the prisoners. These were easily found, for judging by what they could hear that their brethren had come to their rescue, they shouted as loudly as they could.

The unfortunate creatures had already passed a whole week with their legs caught and pressed by the cleft beams which formed these inexpressibly painful stocks. When the unfortunate victims were released, the fanatics screamed with rage at the sight of their swollen bodies and half-broken bones. None of the unhappy people were able to stand. The attack on the soldiers was renewed, and these being driven out of the lower hall, filled the staircase leading to the abbe's apartments, and offered such determined resistance that their assailants were twice forced to fall back. Laporte, seeing two of his men killed and five or six wounded, called out loudly, "Children of God, lay down your arms: this way of going to work is too slow; let us burn the abbey and all in it. To work! to work!" The advice was good, and they all hastened to follow it: benches, chairs, and furniture of all sorts were heaped up in the hall, a palliasse thrown on the top, and the pile fired. In a moment the whole building was ablaze, and the Arch-priest, yielding to the entreaties of his servants, fastened his sheets to the window-bars, and by their help dropped into the garden. The drop was so great that he broke one of his thigh bones, but dragging himself along on his hands and one knee, he, with one of his servants, reached a recess in the wall, while another servant was endeavouring to escape through the flames,

thus falling into the hands of the fanatics, who carried him before their captain. Then cries of "The prophet! the prophet!" were heard on all sides. Esprit Seguier, feeling that something fresh had taken place, came forward, still holding in his hand the blazing torch with which he had set fire to the pile.

"Brother," asked Laporte, pointing to the prisoner, "is this man to die?"

Esprit Seguier fell on his knees and covered his face with his mantle, like Samuel, and sought the Lord in prayer, asking to know His will.

In a short time he rose and said, "This man is not to die; for inasmuch as he has showed mercy to our brethren we must show mercy to him."

Whether this fact had been miraculously revealed to Seguier, or whether he had gained his information from other sources, the newly released prisoners confirmed its truth, calling out that the man had indeed treated them with humanity. Just then a roar as of a wild beast was heard: one of the fanatics, whose brother had been put to death by the abbe, had just caught sight of him, the whole neighbourhood being lit up by the fire; he was kneeling in an angle of the wall, to which he had dragged himself.

"Down with the son of Belial!" shouted the crowd, rushing towards the priest, who remained kneeling and motionless like a marble statue. His valet took advantage of the confusion to escape, and got off easily; for the sight of him on whom the general hate was concentrated made the Huguenots forget

everything else:

Esprit Seguier was the first to reach the priest, and spreading his hands over him, he commanded the others to hold back. “God desireth not the death of a sinner,’” said he, “‘but rather that he turn from his wickedness and live.’”

“No, no!” shouted a score of voices, refusing obedience for the first time, perhaps, to an order from the prophet; “let him die without mercy, as he struck without pity. Death to the son of Belial, death!”

“Silence!” exclaimed the prophet in a terrible voice, “and listen to the word of God from my mouth. If this man will join us and take upon him the duties of a pastor, let us grant him his life, that he may henceforward devote it to the spread of the true faith.”

“Rather a thousand deaths than apostasy!” answered the priest.

“Die, then!” cried Laporte, stabbing him; “take that for having burnt my father in Nimes.”

And he passed on the dagger to Esprit Seguier.

Duchayla made neither sound nor gesture: it would have seemed as if the dagger had been turned by the priest’s gown as by a coat of mail were it not that a thin stream of blood appeared. Raising his eyes to heaven, he repeated the words of the penitential psalm: “Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice!”

Then Esprit Seguier raised his arm and struck in his turn,

saying, “Take that for my son, whom you broke on the wheel at Montpellier.”

And he passed on the dagger.

But this blow also was not mortal, only another stream of blood appeared, and the abbe said in a failing voice, “Deliver me, O my Saviour, out of my well-merited sufferings, and I will acknowledge their justice; far I have been a man of blood.”

The next who seized the dagger came near and gave his blow, saying, “Take that for my brother, whom you let die in the ‘ceps.’”

This time the dagger pierced the heart, and the abbe had only time to ejaculate, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy!” before he fell back dead.

But his death did not satisfy the vengeance of those who had not been able to strike him living; one by one they drew near and stabbed, each invoking the shade of some dear murdered one and pronouncing the same words of malediction.

In all, the body of the abbe received fifty-two dagger thrusts, of which twenty-four would have been mortal.

Thus perished, at the age of fifty-five, Messire Francois de Langlade Duchayla, prior of Laval, inspector of missions in Gevaudan, and Arch-priest of the Cevennes and Mende.

Their vengeance thus accomplished, the murderers felt that there was no more safety for them in either city or plain, and fled to the mountains; but in passing near the residence of M. de Laveze, a Catholic nobleman of the parish of Molezon, one of the fugitives recollected that he had heard that a great number

of firearms was kept in the house. This seemed a lucky chance, for firearms were what the Huguenots needed most of all. They therefore sent two envoys to M. de Laveze to ask him to give them at, least a share of his weapons; but he, as a good Catholic, replied that it was quite true that he had indeed a store of arms, but that they were destined to the triumph and not to the desecration of religion, and that he would only give them up with his life. With these words, he dismissed the envoys, barring his doors behind them.

But while this parley was going on the conspirators had approached the chateau, and thus received the valiant answer to their demands sooner than M. de Laveze had counted on. Resolving not to leave him time to take defensive measures, they dashed at the house, and by standing on each other's shoulders reached the room in which M. de Laveze and his entire family had taken refuge. In an instant the door was forced, and the fanatics, still reeking with the life-blood of Abbe Duchayla, began again their work of death. No one was spared; neither the master of the house, nor his brother, nor his uncle, nor his sister, who knelt to the assassins in vain; even his old mother, who was eighty years of age, having from her bed first witnessed the murder of all her family, was at last stabbed to the heart, though the butchers might have reflected that it was hardly worth while thus to anticipate the arrival of Death, who according to the laws of nature must have been already at hand.

The massacre finished, the fanatics spread over the castle,

supplying themselves with arms and under-linen, being badly in need of the latter; for when they left their homes they had expected soon to return, and had taken nothing with them. They also carried off the copper kitchen utensils, intending to turn them into bullets. Finally, they seized on a sum of 5000 francs, the marriage-portion of M. de Laveze's sister, who was just about to be married, and thus laid the foundation of a war fund.

The news of these two bloody events soon reached not only Nimes but all the countryside, and roused the authorities to action. M. le Comte de Broglie crossed the Upper Cevennes, and marched down to the bridge of Montvert, followed by several companies of fusiliers. From another direction M. le Comte de Peyre brought thirty-two cavalry and three hundred and fifty infantry, having enlisted them at Marvejols, La Canourgue, Chiac, and Serverette. M. de St. Paul, Abbe Duchayla's brother, and the Marquis Duchayla, his nephew, brought eighty horsemen from the family estates. The Count of Morangiez rode in from St. Auban and Malzieu with two companies of cavalry, and the town of Mende by order of its bishop despatched its nobles at the head of three companies of fifty men each.

But the mountains had swallowed up the fanatics, and nothing was ever known of their fate, except that from time to time a peasant would relate that in crossing the Cevennes he had heard at dawn or dusk, on mountain peak or from valley depths, the sound going up to heaven of songs of praise. It was the fanatic assassins worshipping God.

Or occasionally at night, on the tops of the lofty mountains, fires shone forth which appeared to signal one to another, but on looking the next night in the same direction all was dark.

So M. de Broglie, concluding that nothing could be done against enemies who were invisible, disbanded the troops which had come to his aid, and went back to Montpellier, leaving a company of fusiliers at Collet, another at Ayres, one at the bridge of Montvert, one at Barre, and one at Pompidon, and appointing Captain Poul as their chief.

This choice of such a man as chief showed that M. de Broglie was a good judge of human nature, and was also perfectly acquainted with the situation, for Captain Poul was the very man to take a leading part in the coming struggle. "He was," says Pere Louvreloeil, priest of the Christian doctrine and cure of Saint-Germain de Calberte, "an officer of merit and reputation, born in Ville-Dubert, near Carcassonne, who had when young served in Hungary and Germany, and distinguished himself in Piedmont in several excursions against the Barbets, [A name applied first to the Alpine smugglers who lived in the valleys, later to the insurgent peasants in the Cevennes. – Translator's Note.] notably in one of the later ones, when, entering the tent of their chief, Barbanaga, he cut off his head. His tall and agile figure, his warlike air, his love of hard work, his hoarse voice, his fiery and austere character, his carelessness in regard to dress, his mature age, his tried courage, his taciturn habit, the length and weight of his sword, all combined to render him formidable. Therefore

no one could have been chosen more suitable for putting down the rebels, for forcing their entrenchments, and for putting them to flight."

Hardly had he taken up a position in the market town of Labarre, which was to be his headquarters, than he was informed that a gathering of fanatics had been seen on the little plain of Fondmorte, which formed a pass between two valleys. He ordered out his Spanish steed, which he was accustomed to ride in the Turkish manner – that is, with very short stirrups, so that he could throw himself forward to the horse's ears, or backward to the tail, according as he wished to give or avoid a mortal blow. Taking with him eighteen men of his own company and twenty-five from the town, he at once set off for the place indicated, not considering any larger number necessary to put to rout a band of peasants, however numerous.

The information turned out to be correct: a hundred Reformers led by Esprit Seguier had encamped in the plain of Fondmorte, and about eleven o'clock in the morning one of their sentinels in the defile gave the alarm by firing off his gun and running back to the camp, shouting, "To arms!" But Captain Poul, with his usual impetuosity, did not give the insurgents time to form, but threw himself upon them to the beat of the drum, not in the least deterred by their first volley. As he had expected, the band consisted of undisciplined peasants, who once scattered were unable to rally. They were therefore completely routed. Poul killed several with his own hand, among whom were two

whose heads he cut off as cleverly as the most experienced executioner could have done, thanks to the marvellous temper of his Damascus blade. At this sight all who had till then stood their ground took to flight, Poul at their heels, slashing with his sword unceasingly, till they disappeared among the mountains. He then returned to the field of battle, picked up the two heads, and fastening them to his saddlebow, rejoined his soldiers with his bloody trophies, – that is to say, he joined the largest group of soldiers he could find; for the fight had turned into a number of single combats, every soldier fighting for himself. Here he found three prisoners who were about to be shot; but Poul ordered that they should not be touched: not that he thought for an instant of sparing their lives, but that he wished to reserve them for a public execution. These three men were Nouvel, a parishioner of Vialon, Moise Bonnet of Pierre-Male, and Esprit Seguier the prophet.

Captain Poul returned to Barre carrying with him his two heads and his three prisoners, and immediately reported to M. Just de Baville, intendant of Languedoc, the important capture he had made. The prisoners were quickly tried. Pierre Nouvel was condemned to be burnt alive at the bridge of Montvert, Molise Bonnet to be broken on the wheel at Deveze, and Esprit Seguier to be hanged at Andre-de-Lancise. Thus those who were amateurs in executions had a sufficient choice.

However, Moise Bonnet saved himself by becoming Catholic, but Pierre Nouvel and Esprit Seguier died as martyrs, making

profession of the new faith and praising God.

Two days after the sentence on Esprit Seguier had been carried out, the body disappeared from the gallows. A nephew of Laporte named Roland had audaciously carried it off, leaving behind a writing nailed to the gibbet. This was a challenge from Laporte to Poul, and was dated from the "Camp of the Eternal God, in the desert of Cevennes," Laporte signing himself "Colonel of the children of God who seek liberty of conscience." Poul was about to accept the challenge when he learned that the insurrection was spreading on every side. A young man of Vieljeu, twenty-six years of age, named Solomon Couderc, had succeeded Esprit Seguier in the office of prophet, and two young lieutenants had joined Laporte. One of these was his nephew Roland, a man of about thirty, pock-marked, fair, thin, cold, and reserved; he was not tall, but very strong, and of inflexible courage. The other, Henri Castanet of Massevaques, was a keeper from the mountain of Laygoal, whose skill as a marksman was so well known that it was said he never missed a shot. Each of these lieutenants had fifty men under him.

Prophets and prophetesses too increased apace, so that hardly a day passed without reports being heard of fresh ones who were rousing whole villages by their ravings.

In the meantime a great meeting of the Protestants of Languedoc had been held in the fields of Vauvert, at which it had been resolved to join forces with the rebels of the Cevennes, and to send a messenger thither to make this resolution known.

Laporte had just returned from La Vaunage, where he had been making recruits, when this good news arrived; he at once sent his nephew Roland to the new allies with power to pledge his word in return for theirs, and to describe to them, in order to attract them, the country which he had chosen as the theatre of the coming war, and which, thanks to its hamlets, its woods, its defiles, its valleys, its precipices, and its caves, was capable of affording cover to as many bands of insurgents as might be employed, would be a good rallying-ground after repulse, and contained suitable positions for ambuscades. Roland was so successful in his mission that these new "soldiers of the Lord," as they called themselves, on learning that he had once been a dragoon, offered him the post of leader, which he accepted, and returned to his uncle at the head of an army.

Being thus reinforced, the Reformers divided themselves into three bands, in order to spread abroad their beliefs through the entire district. One went towards Soustele and the neighbourhood of Alais, another towards St. Privat and the bridge of Montvert, while the third followed the mountain slope down to St. Roman le Pompidou, and Barre.

The first was commanded by Castanet, the second by Roland, and the third by Laporte.

Each party ravaged the country as it passed, returning deathblow for deathblow and conflagration for conflagration, so that hearing one after another of these outrages Captain Poul demanded reinforcements from M. de Broglie and M. de Baville,

which were promptly despatched.

As soon as Captain Poul found himself at the head of a sufficient number of troops, he determined to attack the rebels. He had received intelligence that the band led by Laporte was just about to pass through the valley of Croix, below Barre, near Temelague. In consequence of this information, he lay in ambush at a favourable spot on the route. As soon as the Reformers who were without suspicion, were well within the narrow pass in which Poul awaited them, he issued forth at the head of his soldiers, and charged the rebels with such courage and impetuosity that they, taken by surprise, made no attempt at resistance, but, thoroughly demoralised, spread over the mountain-side, putting a greater and greater distance at, every instant between themselves and the enemy, despite the efforts of Laporte to make them stand their ground. At last, seeing himself deserted, Laporte began to think of his own safety. But it was already too late, for he was surrounded by dragoons, and the only way of retreat open to him lay over a large rock. This he successfully scaled, but before trying to get down the other side he raised his hands in supplication to Heaven; at that instant a volley was fired, two bullets struck him, and he fell head foremost down the precipice.

When the dragoons reached the foot of the rock, they found him dead. As they knew he was the chief of the rebels, his body was searched: sixty Louis was found in his pockets, and a sacred chalice which he was in the habit of using as an ordinary

drinking-cup. Poul cut off his head and the heads of twelve other Reformers found dead on the field of battle, and enclosing them in a wicker basket, sent them to M. Just de Baville.

The Reformers soon recovered from this defeat and death, joined all their forces into one body, and placed Roland at their head in the place of Laporte. Roland chose a young man called Couderc de Mazel-Rozade, who had assumed the name of Lafleur, as his lieutenant, and the rebel forces were not only quickly reorganised, but made complete by the addition of a hundred men raised by the new lieutenant, and soon gave a sign that they were again on the war-path by burning down the churches of Bousquet, Cassagnas, and Prunet.

Then first it was that the consuls of Mende began to realise that it was no longer an insurrection they had on hand but a war, and Mende being the capital of Gevaudan and liable to be attacked at any moment, they set themselves to bring into repair their counterscarps, ravelins, bastions, gates, portcullises, moats, walls, turrets, ramparts, parapets, watchtowers, and the gear of their cannon, and having laid in a stock of firearms, powder and ball, they formed eight companies each fifty strong, composed of townsmen, and a further band of one hundred and fifty peasants drawn from the neighbouring country. Lastly, the States of the province sent an envoy to the king, praying him graciously to take measures to check the plague of heresy which was spreading from day to day. The king at once sent M. Julien in answer to the petition. Thus it was no longer simple governors of towns

nor even chiefs of provinces who were engaged in the struggle; royalty itself had come to the rescue.

M de Julien, born a Protestant, was a, member of the nobility of Orange, and in his youth had served against France and borne arms in England and Ireland when William of Orange succeeded James II as King of England, Julien was one of his pages, and received as a reward for his fidelity in the famous campaign of 1688 the command of a regiment which was sent to the aid of the Duke of Savoy, who had begged both England and Holland to help him. He bore himself so gallantly that it was in great part due to him that the French were forced to raise the siege of Cony.

Whether it was that he expected too much from this success, or that the Duke of Savoy did not recognise his services at their worth, he withdrew to Geneva, where Louis XIV hearing of his discontent, caused overtures to be made to him with a view to drawing him into the French service. He was offered the same rank in the French army as he had held in the English, with a pension of 3000 livres.

M de Julien accepted, and feeling that his religious belief would be in the way of his advancement, when he changed his master he changed his Church. He was given the command of the valley of Barcelonnette, whence he made many excursions against the Barbets; then he was transferred to the command of the Avennes, of the principality of Orange, in order to guard the passes, so that the French Protestants could not pass over the frontier for the purpose of worshipping with their Dutch

Protestant brethren; and after having tried this for a year, he went to Versailles to report himself to the king. While he was there, it chanced that the envoy from Gevaudan arrived, and the king being satisfied with de Julien's conduct since he had entered his service, made him major-general, chevalier of the military order of St. Louis; and commander-in-chief in the Vivarais and the Cevennes.

M de Julien from the first felt that the situation was very grave, and saw that his predecessors had felt such great contempt for the heretics that they had not realised the danger of the revolt. He immediately proceeded to inspect in person the different points where M. de Broglie had placed detachments of the Tournon and Marsily regiments. It is true that he arrived by the light of thirty burning village churches.

M de Broglie, M. de Baville, M. de Julien, and Captain Poul met together to consult as to the best means of putting an end to these disorders. It was agreed that the royal troops should be divided into two bodies, one under the command of M. de Julien to advance on Alais, where it was reported large meetings of the rebels were taking place, and the other under M. de Brogue, to march about in the neighbourhood of Nimes.

Consequently, the two chiefs separated. M. le Comte de Broglie at the head of sixty-two dragoons and some companies of foot, and having under him Captain Poul and M. de Dourville, set out from Cavayrac on the 12th of January at 2 a. m., and having searched without finding anything the vineyards of Nimes and La

Garrigue de Milhau, took the road to the bridge of Lunel. There he was informed that those he was in search of had been seen at the chateau of Caudiac the day before; he therefore at once set out for the forest which lies around it, not doubting to find the fanatics entrenched there; but, contrary to his expectations, it was vacant. He then pushed on to Vauvert, from Vauvert to Beauvoisin, from Beauvoisin to Generac, where he learned that a troop of rebels had passed the night there, and in the morning had left for Aubore. Resolved to give them no rest, M. de Broglie set out at once for this village.

When half-way there, a member of his staff thought he could distinguish a crowd of men near a house about half a league distant; M. de Broglie instantly ordered Sieur de Gibertin, Captain Paul's lieutenant, who was riding close by, at the head of his company, to take eight dragoons and make a reconnaissance, in order to ascertain who these men were, while the rest of the troops would make a halt.

This little band, led by its officer, crossed a clearing in the wood, and advanced towards the farmhouse, which was called the Mas de Gafarel, and which now seemed deserted. But when they were within half a gun-shot of the wall the charge was sounded behind it, and a band of rebels rushed towards them, while from a neighbouring house a second troop emerged, and looking round, he perceived a third lying on their faces in a small wood. These latter suddenly stood up and approached him, singing psalms. As it was impossible for M. de Gibertin to hold his ground against so

large a force, he ordered two shots to be fired as a warning to de Brogue to advance to meet him, and fell back on his comrades. Indeed, the rebels had only pursued him till they had reached a favourable position, on which they took their stand.

M de Brogue having surveyed the whole position with the aid of a telescope, held a council of war, and it was decided that an attack should be made forthwith. They therefore advanced on the rebels in line: Captain Poul on the right, M. de Dourville on the left, and Count Broglie in the centre.

As they got near they could see that the rebels had chosen their ground with an amount of strategical sagacity they had never till then displayed. This skill in making their dispositions was evidently due to their having found a new leader whom no one knew, not even Captain Poul, although they could see him at the head of his men, carbine in hand.

However, these scientific preparations did not stop M. de Brogue: he gave the order to charge, and adding example to precept, urged his horse to a gallop. The rebels in the first rank knelt on one knee, so that the rank behind could take aim, and the distance between the two bodies of troops disappeared rapidly, thanks to the impetuosity of the dragoons; but suddenly, when within thirty paces of the enemy, the royals found themselves on the edge of a deep ravine which separated them from the enemy like a moat. Some were able to check their horses in time, but others, despite desperate efforts, pressed upon by those behind, were pushed into the ravine, and rolled helplessly to the bottom.

At the same moment the order to fire was given in a sonorous voice, there was a rattle of musketry, and several dragoons near M. de Broglie fell.

"Forward!" cried Captain Poul, "forward!" and putting his horse at a part of the ravine where the sides were less steep, he was soon struggling up the opposite side, followed by a few dragoons.

"Death to the son of Belial!" cried the same voice which had given the order to fire. At that moment a single shot rang out, Captain Poul threw up his hands, letting his sabre go, and fell from his horse, which instead of running away, touched his master with its smoking nostrils, then lifting its head, neighed long and low. The dragoons retreated.

"So perish all the persecutors of Israel!" cried the leader, brandishing his carbine. He then dashed down into the ravine, picked up Captain Poul's sabre and jumped upon his horse. The animal, faithful to its old master, showed some signs of resistance, but soon felt by the pressure of its rider's knees that it had to do with one whom it could not readily unseat. Nevertheless, it reared and bounded, but the horseman kept his seat, and as if recognising that it had met its match, the noble animal tossed its head, neighed once more, and gave in. While this was going on, a party of Camisards [Name given to the insurgent Calvinists after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. – Translator's Note.] and one of the dragoons had got down into the ravine, which had in consequence been turned

into a battlefield; while those who remained above on either side took advantage of their position to fire down at their enemies. M. de Dourville, in command of the dragoons, fought among the others like a simple soldier, and received a serious wound in the head; his men beginning to lose ground, M. de Brogue tried to rally them, but without avail, and while he was thus occupied his own troop ran away; so seeing there was no prospect of winning the battle, he and a few valiant men who had remained near him dashed forward to extricate M. Dourville, who, taking advantage of the opening thus made, retreated, his wound bleeding profusely. On the other hand, the Camisards perceiving at some distance bodies of infantry coming up to reinforce the royals, instead of pursuing their foes, contented themselves with keeping up a thick and well-directed musketry-fire from the position in which they had won such a quick and easy victory.

As soon as the royal forces were out of reach of their weapons, the rebel chief knelt down and chanted the song the Israelites sang when, having crossed the Red Sea in safety, they saw the army of Pharaoh swallowed up in the waters, so that although no longer within reach of bullets the defeated troops were still pursued by songs of victory. Their thanksgivings ended, the Calvinists withdrew into the forest, led by their new chief, who had at his first assay shown the great extent of his knowledge, coolness, and courage.

This new chief, whose superiors were soon to become his

lieutenants, was the famous Jean Cavalier.

Jean Cavalier was then a young man of twenty-three, of less than medium height, but of great strength. His face was oval, with regular features, his eyes sparkling and beautiful; he had long chestnut hair falling on his shoulders, and an expression of remarkable sweetness. He was born in 1680 at Ribaute, a village in the diocese of Alais, where his father had rented a small farm, which he gave up when his son was about fifteen, coming to live at the farm of St. Andeol, near Mende.

Young Cavalier, who was only a peasant and the son of a peasant, began life as a shepherd at the Sieur de Lacombe's, a citizen of Vezenobre, but as the lonely life dissatisfied a young man who was eager for pleasure, Jean gave it up, and apprenticed himself to a baker of Anduze.

There he developed a great love for everything connected with the military; he spent all his free time watching the soldiers at their drill, and soon became intimate with some of them, amongst others with a fencing-master who gave him lessons, and a dragoon who taught him to ride.

On a certain Sunday, as he was taking a walk with his sweetheart on his arm, the young girl was insulted by a dragoon of the Marquis de Florae's regiment. Jean boxed the dragoon's ears, who drew his sword. Cavalier seized a sword from one of the bystanders, but the combatants were prevented from fighting by Jean's friends. Hearing of the quarrel, an officer hurried up: it was the Marquis de Florae himself, captain of the regiment

which bore his name; but when he arrived on the scene he found, not the arrogant peasant who had dared to attack a soldier of the king, but only the young girl, who had fainted, the townspeople having persuaded her lover to decamp.

The young girl was so beautiful that she was commonly called la belle Isabeau, and the Marquis de Florac, instead of pursuing Jean Cavalier, occupied himself in reviving Isabeau.

As it was, however, a serious affair, and as the entire regiment had sworn Cavalier's death, his friends advised him to leave the country for a time. La belle Isabeau, trembling for the safety of her lover, joined her entreaties to those of his friends, and Jean Cavalier yielded. The young girl promised him inviolable fidelity, and he, relying on this promise, went to Geneva.

There he made the acquaintance of a Protestant gentleman called Du Serre, who having glass-works at the Mas Arritas, quite near the farm of St. Andeol, had undertaken several times, at the request of Jean's father, Jerome, to convey money to Jean; for Du Serre went very often to Geneva, professedly on business affairs, but really in the interests of the Reformed faith. Between the outlaw and the apostle union was natural. Du Serre found in Cavalier a young man of robust nature, active imagination, and irreproachable courage; he confided to him his hopes of converting all Languedoc and Vivarais. Cavalier felt himself drawn back there by many ties, especially by patriotism and love. He crossed the frontier once more, disguised as a servant, in the suite of a Protestant gentleman; he arrived one night at Anduze,

and immediately directed his steps to the house of Isabeau.

He was just about to knock, although it was one o'clock in the morning, when the door was opened from within, and a handsome young man came out, who took tender leave of a woman on the threshold. The handsome young man was the Marquis de Florac; the woman was Isabeau. The promised wife of the peasant had become the mistress of the noble.

Our hero was not the man to suffer such an outrage quietly. He walked straight up to the marquis and stood right in his way. The marquis tried to push him aside with his elbow, but Jean Cavalier, letting fall the cloak in which he was wrapped, drew his sword. The marquis was brave, and did not stop to inquire if he who attacked him was his equal or not. Sword answered sword, the blades crossed, and at the end of a few instants the marquis fell, Jean's sword piercing his chest.

Cavalier felt sure that he was dead, for he lay at his feet motionless. He knew he had no time to lose, for he had no mercy to hope for. He replaced his bloody sword in the scabbard, and made for the open country; from the open country he hurried into the mountains, and at break of day he was in safety.

The fugitive remained the whole day in an isolated farmhouse whose inmates offered him hospitality. As he very soon felt that he was in the house of a co-religionist, he confided to his host the circumstances in which he found himself, and asked where he could meet with an organised band in which he could enrol himself in order to fight for the propagation of the Reformed

religion. The farmer mentioned Generac as being a place in which he would probably find a hundred or so of the brethren gathered together. Cavalier set out the same evening for this village, and arrived in the middle of the Camisards at the very moment when they had just caught sight of M. de Broglie and his troops in the distance. The Calvinists happening to have no leader, Cavalier with governing faculty which some men possess by nature, placed himself at their head and took those measures for the reception of the royal forces of which we have seen the result, so that after the victory to which his head and arm had contributed so much he was confirmed in the title which he had arrogated to himself, by acclamation.

Such was the famous Jean Cavalier when the Royalists first learned of his existence, through the repulse of their bravest troops and the death of their most intrepid captain.

The news of this victory soon spread through the Cevennes, and fresh conflagrations lit up the mountains in sign of joy. The beacons were formed of the chateau de la Bastide, the residence of the Marquis de Chambonnas, the church of Samson, and the village of Grouppieres, where of eighty houses only seven were left standing.

Thereupon M. de Julien wrote to the king, explaining the serious turn things had taken, and telling him that it was no longer a few fanatics wandering through the mountains and flying at the sight of a dragoon whom they had to put down, but organised companies well led and officered, which if united would form

an army twelve to fifteen hundred strong. The king replied by sending M. le Comte de Montrevel to Nimes. He was the son of the Marechal de Montrevel, chevalier of the Order of the Holy Spirit, major-general, lieutenant of the king in Bresse and Charolais, and captain of a hundred men-at-arms.

In their struggle against shepherds, keepers, and peasants, M. de Brogue, M. de Julien, and M. de Baville were thus joined together with the head of the house of Beaune, which had already at this epoch produced two cardinals, three archbishops, two bishops, a viceroy of Naples, several marshals of France, and many governors of Savoy, Dauphine, and Bresse.

He was followed by twenty pieces of ordnance, five thousand bullets, four thousand muskets, and fifty thousand pounds of powder, all of which was carried down the river Rhone, while six hundred of the skilful mountain marksmen called 'miquelets' from Roussillon came down into Languedoc.

M de Montrevel was the bearer of terrible orders. Louis XIV was determined, no matter what it cost, to root out heresy, and set about this work as if his eternal salvation depended on it. As soon as M. de Baville had read these orders, he published the following proclamation:

"The king having been informed that certain people without religion bearing arms have been guilty of violence, burning down churches and killing priests, His Majesty hereby commands all his subjects to hunt these people down, and that those who are taken with arms in their hands or found amongst their bands,

be punished with death without any trial whatever, that their houses be razed to the ground and their goods confiscated, and that all buildings in which assemblies of these people have been held, be demolished. The king further forbids fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and other relations of the fanatics, or of other rebels, to give them refuge, food, stores, ammunition, or other assistance of any kind, under any pretext whatever, either directly or indirectly, on pain of being reputed accessory to the rebellion, and he commands the Sieur de Baville and whatever officers he may choose to prosecute such and pronounce sentence of death on them. Furthermore, His Majesty commands that all the inhabitants of Languedoc who may be absent at the date of the issue of this proclamation, return home within a week, unless their absence be caused by legitimate business, in which case they shall declare the same to the commandant, the Sieur de Montrevel, or to the intendant, the Sieur de Baville, and also to the mayors and consuls of the places where they may be, receiving from the latter certificates that there is a sufficient reason for their delay, which certificates they shall forward to the above-mentioned commandant or intendant. And His Majesty furthermore commands the said commandant and intendant to admit no foreigner or inhabitant of any other province into Languedoc for commercial purposes or for any other reason whatsoever, unless provided with certificates from the commandants or intendants of the provinces whence they come, or from the judges of the royal courts in the places

whence they come, or from the nearest place containing such courts. Foreigners must be provided with passports from the ambassadors or ministers of the king accredited to the countries to which they belong, or from the commandants or intendants of the provinces, or from the judges of the royal courts of the places in which they may be at the date of this proclamation. Furthermore, it is His Majesty's will that those who are found in the, aforesaid province of Languedoc without such certificates be regarded as fanatics and rebels, and that they be prosecuted as such, and punished with death, and that they be brought for this purpose before the aforesaid Sieur de Baville or the officers whom he may choose.

"(Signed) "(Countersigned) "LOUIS PHILIPPEAU

"Given at Versailles the 25th day, of the month of February 1703."

M de Montrevel obeyed this proclamation to the letter. For instance, one day – the 1st of April 1703 – as he was seated at dinner it was reported to him that about one hundred and fifty Reformers were assembled in a mill at Carmes, outside Nimes, singing psalms. Although he was told at the same time that the gathering was composed entirely of old people and children, he was none the less furious, and rising from the table, gave orders that the call to horse should be sounded. Putting himself at the head of his dragoons, he advanced on the mill, and before the Huguenots knew that they were about to be attacked they were surrounded on every side. It was no combat which ensued,

for the Huguenots were incapable of resistance, it was simply a massacre; a certain number of the dragoons entered the mill sword in hand, stabbing all whom they could reach, whilst the rest of the force stationed outside before the windows received those who jumped out on the points of their swords. But soon this butchery tired the butchers, and to get over the business more quickly, the marshal, who was anxious to return to his dinner, gave orders that the mill should be set on fire. This being done, the dragoons, the marshal still at their head, no longer exerted themselves so violently, but were satisfied with pushing back into the flames the few unfortunates who, scorched and burnt, rushed out, begging only for a less cruel death.

Only one victim escaped. A beautiful young girl of sixteen was saved by the marshal's valet: both were taken and condemned to death; the young girl was hanged, and the valet was on the point of being executed when some Sisters of Mercy from the town threw themselves at the marshal's feet end begged for his life: after long supplication, he granted their prayer, but he banished the valet not only from his service, but from Nimes.

The very same evening at supper word was brought to the marshal that another gathering had been discovered in a garden near the still smoking mill. The indefatigable marshal again rose from table, and taking with him his faithful dragoons, surrounded the garden, and caught and shot on the spot all those who were assembled in it. The next day it turned out that he had made a mistake: those whom he had shot were Catholics who had

gathered together to rejoice over the execution of the Calvinists. It is true that they had assured the marshal that they were Catholics, but he had refused to listen to them. Let us, however, hasten to assure the reader that this mistake caused no further annoyance to the marshal, except that he received a paternal remonstrance from the Bishop of Nimes, begging him in future not to confound the sheep with the wolves.

In requital of these bloody deeds, Cavalier took the chateau of Serras, occupied the town of Sauve, formed a company of horse, and advancing to Nimes, took forcible possession of sufficient ammunition for his purposes. Lastly, he did something which in the eyes of the courtiers seemed the most incredible thing of all, he actually wrote a long letter to Louis XIV himself. This letter was dated from the "Desert, Cevennes," and signed "Cavalier, commander of the troops sent by God"; its purpose was to prove by numerous passages from Holy Writ that Cavalier and his comrades had been led to revolt solely from a sense of duty, feeling that liberty of conscience was their right; and it dilated on the subject of the persecutions under which Protestants had suffered, and asserted that it was the infamous measures put in force against them which had driven them to take up arms, which they were ready to lay down if His Majesty would grant them that liberty in matters of religion which they sought and if he would liberate all who were in prison for their faith. If this were accorded, he assured the king His Majesty would have no more faithful subjects than themselves, and would henceforth be ready

to shed their last drop of blood in his service, and wound up by saying that if their just demands were refused they would obey God rather than the king, and would defend their religion to their last breath.

Roland, who, whether in mockery or pride, began now to call himself "Comte Roland," did not lag behind his young brother either as warrior or correspondent. He had entered the town of Ganges, where a wonderful reception awaited him; but not feeling sure that he would be equally well received at St. Germain and St. Andre, he had written the following letters: —

"Gentlemen and officers of the king's forces, and citizens of St. Germain, make ready to receive seven hundred troops who have vowed to set Babylon on fire; the seminary and the houses of MM. de Fabregue, de Sarrasin, de Moles, de La Rouviere, de Musse, and de Solier, will be burnt to the ground. God, by His Holy Spirit, has inspired my brother Cavalier and me with the purpose of entering your town in a few days; however strongly you fortify yourselves, the children of God will bear away the victory. If ye doubt this, come in your numbers, ye soldiers of St. Etienne, Barre, and Florac, to the field of Domergue; we shall be there to meet you. Come, ye hypocrites, if your hearts fail not.
"COMTE ROLAND."

The second letter was no less violent. It was as follows: —

"We, Comte Roland, general of the Protestant troops of France assembled in the Cevennes in Languedoc, enjoin on the inhabitants of the town of St. Andre of Valborgne to give proper

notice to all priests and missionaries within it, that we forbid them to say mass or to preach in the afore-mentioned town, and that if they will avoid being burnt alive with their adherents in their churches and houses, they are to withdraw to some other place within three days. "COMTE ROLAND."

Unfortunately for the cause of the king, though the rebels met with some resistance in the villages of the plain, such as St. Germain and St. Andre, it was otherwise with those situated in the mountains; in those, when beaten, the Protestants found cover, when victorious rest; so that M. de Montrevel becoming aware that while these villages existed heresy would never be extirpated, issued the following ordinance: —

"We, governor for His most Christian Majesty in the provinces of Languedoc and Vivarais, do hereby make known that it has pleased the king to command us to reduce all the places and parishes hereinafter named to such a condition that they can afford no assistance to the rebel troops; no inhabitants will therefore be allowed to remain in them. His Majesty, however, desiring to provide for the subsistence of the afore-mentioned inhabitants, orders them to conform to the following regulations. He enjoins on the afore-mentioned inhabitants of the hereinafter-mentioned parishes to repair instantly to the places hereinafter appointed, with their furniture, cattle, and in general all their movable effects, declaring that in case of disobedience their effects will be confiscated and taken away by the troops employed to demolish their houses. And it is hereby forbidden to

any other commune to receive such rebels, under pain of having their houses also razed to the ground and their goods confiscated, and furthermore being regarded and treated as rebels to the commands of His Majesty."

To this proclamation were appended the following instructions: —

"I. The officers who may be appointed to perform the above task shall first of all make themselves acquainted with the position of the parishes and villages which are to be destroyed and depopulated, in order to an effective disposition of the troops, who are to guard the militia engaged in the work of destruction.

"II. The attention of the officers is called to the following: – When two or more villages or hamlets are so near together that they may be protected at the same time by the same troops, then in order to save time the work is to be carried on simultaneously in such villages or hamlets.

"III. When inhabitants are found still remaining in any of the proscribed places, they are to be brought together, and a list made of them, as well as an inventory taken of their stock and corn.

"IV. Those inhabitants who are of the most consequence among them shall be selected to guide the others to the places assigned.

"V. With regard to the live stock, the persons who may be found in charge of it shall drive it to the appointed place, save and except mules and asses, which shall be employed in the transport

of corn to whatever places it may be needed in. Nevertheless, asses may be given to the very old, and to women with child who may be unable to walk.

"VI. A regular distribution of the militia is to be made, so that each house to be destroyed may have a sufficient number, for the task; the foundations of such houses may be undermined or any other method employed which may be most convenient; and if the house can be destroyed by no other means, it is to be set on fire.

"VII. No damage is to be done to the houses of former Catholics until further notice, and to ensure the carrying out of this order a guard is to be placed in them, and an inventory of their contents taken and sent to Marechal de Montrevel.

"VIII. The order forbidding the inhabitants to return to their houses is to be read to the inhabitants of each village; but if any do return they shall not be harmed, but simply driven away with threats; for the king does not desire that blood be shed; and the said order shall be affixed to a wall or tree in each village.

"IX. Where no inhabitants are found, the said order shall simply be affixed as above-mentioned in each place.

"(Signed) "MARECHAL DE MONTREVEL"

Under these instructions the list of the villages to be destroyed was given. It was as follows:

18 in the parish of Frugeres,
5 " " Fressinet-de-Lozere,
4 " " Grizac,

15 " " Castagnols,
11 " " Vialas,
6 " " Saint-Julien,
8 " " Saint-Maurice de Vantalon
14 " " Frezal de Vantalon,
7 " " Saint-Hilaire de Laret,
6 " " Saint-Andeol de Clergues,
28 " " Saint-Privat de Vallongues,
10 " " Saint-Andre de Lancise,
19 " " Saint-Germain de Calberte,
26 " " Saint-Etienne de Valfrancesque,
9 " " parishes of Prunet and Montvaillant,
16 " " parish of Florac.
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A second list was promised, and was shortly afterwards published: it included the parishes of Frugeres, Pompidon, Saint-Martin, Lansuscle, Saint-Laurent, Treves, Vebron, Ronnes, Barre, Montluzon, Bousquet, La Barthes, Balme, Saint-Julien d'Aspaon Cassagnas, Sainte-Croix de Valfrancesque, Cabriac, Moissac, Saint-Roman, Saint Martin de Robaux, La Melouse, le Collet de Deze, Saint-Michel de Deze, and the villages of Salieges, Rampon, Ruas, Chavrieres, Tourgueselle, Ginestous, Fressinet, Fourques, Malbos, Jousanel, Campis, Campredon, Lous-Aubrez, La Croix de Fer, Le Cap de Coste, Marquayres, Le Cazairal, and Le Poujal.

In all, 466 market towns, hamlets, and villages, with 19,500

inhabitants, were included.

All these preparations made Marechal de Montrevel set out for Aix, September 26th, 1703, in order that the work might be carried out under his personal supervision. He was accompanied by MM. de Vergetot and de Marsilly, colonels of infantry, two battalions of the Royal-Comtois, two of the Soissonnais infantry, the Languedoc regiment of dragoons, and two hundred dragoons from the Fimarcon regiment. M. de Julien, on his side, set out for the Pont-de-Montvert at the same time with two battalions from Hainault, accompanied by the Marquis of Canillac, colonel of infantry, who brought two battalions of his own regiment, which was stationed in Rouergue, with him, and Comte de Payre, who brought fifty-five companies of militia from Gevaudan, and followed by a number of mules loaded with crowbars, axes, and other iron instruments necessary for pulling down houses.

The approach of all these troops following close on the terrible proclamations we have given above, produced exactly the contrary effect to that intended. The inhabitants of the proscribed districts were convinced that the order to gather together in certain places was given that they might be conveniently massacred together, so that all those capable of bearing arms went deeper into the mountains, and joined the forces of Cavalier and Roland, thus reinforcing them to the number of fifteen hundred men. Also hardly had M. de Julien set his hand to the work than he received information from M. de Montrevel, who had heard the news through a letter from

Flechier, that while the royal troops were busy in the mountains the Camisards had come down into the plain, swarmed over La Camargue, and had been seen in the neighbourhood of Saint-Gilles. At the same time word was sent him that two ships had been seen in the offing, from Cette, and that it was more than probable that they contained troops, that England and Holland were sending to help the Camisards.

M de Montrevel; leaving the further conduct of the expedition to MM. de Julien and de Canillac, hastened to Cette with eight hundred men and ten guns. The ships were still in sight, and were really, as had been surmised, two vessels which had been detached from the combined fleets of England and Holland by Admiral Schowel, and were the bearers of money, arms, and ammunition to the Huguenots. They continued to cruise about and signal, but as the rebels were forced by the presence of M. de Montrevel to keep away from the coast, and could therefore make no answer, they put off at length into the open, and rejoined the fleet. As M. de Montrevel feared that their retreat might be a feint, he ordered all the fishermen's huts from Aigues-Morte to Saint-Gilles to be destroyed, lest they should afford shelter to the Camisards. At the same time he carried off the inhabitants of the district of Guillan and shut them up in the chateau of Sommerez, after having demolished their villages. Lastly, he ordered all those who lived in homesteads, farms, or hamlets, to quit them and go to some large town, taking with them all the provisions they were possessed of; and he forbade any workman

who went outside the town to work to take more than one day's provisions with him.

These measures had the desired effect, but they were terrible in their results; they deprived the Camisards of shelter indeed, but they ruined the province. M. de Baville, despite his well-known severity tried remonstrances, but they were taken in bad part by M. de Montrevel, who told the intendant to mind his own business, which was confined to civil matters, and to leave military matters in his, M. de Montrevel's, hands; whereupon the commandant joined M. de Julien, who was carrying on the work of destruction with indefatigable vigour.

In spite of all the enthusiasm with which M. de Julien went to work to accomplish his mission, and being a new convert, it was, of course, very great. Material hindrances hampered him at every step. Almost all the doomed houses were built on vaulted foundations, and were therefore difficult to lay low; the distance of one house from another, too, their almost inaccessible position, either on the peak of a high mountain or in the bottom of a rocky valley, or buried in the depths of the forest which hid then like a veil, made the difficulty still greater; whole days were often lost by the workmen and militia in searching for the dwellings they came to destroy.

The immense size of the parishes also caused delay: that of Saint-Germain de Calberte, for instance, was nine leagues in circumference, and contained a hundred and eleven hamlets, inhabited by two hundred and seventy-five families, of which

only nine were Catholic; that of Saint-Etienne de Valfrancesque was of still greater extent, and its population was a third larger, so that obstacles to the work multiplied in a remarkable manner. For the first few days the soldiers and workmen found food in and around the villages, but this was soon at an end, and as they could hardly expect the peasants to keep up the supply, and the provisions they had brought with them being also exhausted, they were soon reduced to biscuit and water; and they were not even able to make it into a warm mess by heating the water, as they had no vessels; moreover, when their hard day's work was at an end, they had but a handful of straw on which to lie. These privations, added to their hard and laborious life, brought on an endemic fever, which incapacitated for work many soldiers and labourers, numbers of whom had to be dismissed. Very soon the unfortunate men, who were almost as much to be pitied as those whom they were persecuting, waited no longer to be sent away, but deserted in numbers.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.