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THE CAMISARD UPRISING OF THE FRENCH PROTESTANTS.

By Rev. Prof. HENRY MARTYN BAIRD, D.D., LL.D.,
University of the City of New York.

The movement known as the War of the Camisards is an episode of the history of Protestantism in France which, though rarely studied in detail and perhaps but partially understood, was not devoid of significance.[1]

[1] On the Camisard uprising see Louvreleuil, "Le Fanatisme renouvellé, ou Histoire des Sacrileges, des incendies . . . que les Calvinistes revoltez ont commis dans les Sevenes" (Avignon, 1704, 3 vols.). Concluded in a fourth volume under the title "L'Obstination confondue" (Avignon, 1706). Brueys, "Histoire du Fanatisme de notre tems" (3d edition, Utrecht, 1737, 3 vols.). Cavalier, "Memoirs of the Wars of the Cevennes" (2d edition, London, 1727). Though ostensibly written by Cavalier himself, the true author is said to be Pierre Henri Galli, who gives the results of conversations with the Camisard chief, but with such frequent errors as to diminish greatly the value of the narrative. The anonymous "Histoire des Camisards" (London, 1754) is inaccurate and rarely deserving of confidence. The pastoral letters of Bishop Fléchier in the 5th volume of his "Œuvres complètes" (Paris, 1828), and his correspondence in the 10th volume are of great interest. Antoine Court, "Histoire des troubles des Cévennes ou de la guerre des Camisards, sous le règne de Louis XIV." (Villefranche, 1760, and Alais, 1819, 3 vols.). By far the most faithful and complete history of the entire war. Although Court was a child at the time of the events described, and is compelled to make use of the narratives of Louvreleuil, Brueys, etc., he had great familiarity with the region of the Cévennes, where he labored as a minister from 1715 onwards. He knew every locality where engagements took place, and held many conversations with surviving eye-witnesses. He is thus able to correct the accounts of his predecessors, and his work is in many parts an original source of information. Both his intelligence and his honesty are unimpeachable. Some of the manuscripts to which he had access have recently been published. This is the case with the valuable "Histoire de la révolte des fanatiques," by De la Baume, a judge in the presidial court of Nismes (Nismes, 1874). Prof. G. Frosterus, of the University of Helsinfors, Finland, has published the "Mémoires de Rossel d'Aigaliers" (1702–1705) in the "Bibliothèque et revue

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When it occurred, in the summer of 1702, a period of little less than seventeen years had elapsed since Louis XIV., by his edict of Fontainebleau, October, 1685, solemnly revoked the great and fundamental law enacted by his grandfather, Henry IV., for the protection of the adherents of the Reformed faith, known in history as the Edict of Nantes. During the whole of that period the Protestants had submitted, with scarcely an attempt at armed resistance, to the proscription of their tenets. They did, indeed, repudiate the maxim that the sovereign may lawfully interfere with the religious sentiments of his subjects. On this point the representatives of the Roman Catholic and the Reformed hosts stood at open variance. Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, gave expression to the views of the former in the words: "Such as will not suffer the prince to use rigor in matters of religion, because religion should be free, are in impious error. Otherwise it would be necessary to suffer among all subjects and throughout the entire state, idolatry, Mohammedanism, Judaism, and every false religion."[1] On the other hand, Jean

suisses" (Lausanne, 1866), and a part of the "Mémoires de Bonbonnoux" in his book "Les Insurgés Protestants sous Louis XIV." (Paris, 1868). The latter memoirs have since been printed entire, in a handsome but limited edition, by Pastor Vielles (Anduze, 1883). The narrative of Tobie Rocayrol of his visit to the "Camp of the Children of God," in May, 1704, is published from the hitherto inedited MS. in the *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme Français*, tome xvi. (1867), 274, etc. The same invaluable periodical has printed the brief "Mémoires de Pierre Pons" (1702–1704), in tome xxxii. (1883), 218–230; an article by L. Anguez based upon inedited letters of Abbé G. Bégault, and many other articles of importance. Haag, "La France Protestante" (2d edition, Paris, 1877–,), *sqq.* contains biographies of the Camisard chiefs. The "Mémoires du Marquis de Guiscard" (known also as the Abbé de la Bourlie) are republished in Cimber et Danjou, "Archives curieuses," seconde série, tome xi., 195–287. The "Mémoires du maréchal de Berwick," and the "Mémoires du maréchal de Villars," in Michaud et Poujoulat, "Nouvelle collection des mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France," troisième série, tomes viii., ix. Ernest Alby, "Les Camisards" (Paris, s. a.), and Eugène Bonnemère, "Histoire des Camisards" (4th ed., Paris, 1882), are popular accounts of considerable merit. The most serviceable map of the Cévennes is that subjoined to Antoine Court's history. The admirable maps of the French War Department leave nothing to be desired in respect to detail.

[1] "Ceux qui ne veulent pas souffrir que le prince use de rigueur en matière de religion, parce que la religion doit être libre, sont dans une erreur impie. Au-

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Claude enunciated the Protestant view in the closing paragraphs of his immortal complaint against the cruel oppression to which his fellow believers were subjected, wherein he uttered a formal protest that might well have penetrated even the dull ears of tyrants, "against that impious and detestable practice, now pursued in France, of making religion to depend upon the will of a mortal and corruptible King, and of treating perseverance in the faith as rebellion and a state crime, which is to make of a man a God, and to authorize atheism or idolatry." [1]

In spite of this opposition of sentiment, however, quiet submission was with the French Protestants the almost invariable rule, armed resistance was unknown. In strange contrast with the course adopted by their ancestors in the sixteenth century, and even in the early part of the seventeenth century, the Huguenots in the reign of Louis XIV., while confident of the righteousness of their cause, and assured of the sympathy of no inconsiderable part of the inhabitants of neighboring countries, abstained from an appeal to the arbitrament of the sword. Multitudes—several hundred thousands,—it is true, in defiance of the king's prohibition and braving the perils to which their daring exposed them, made their way to foreign lands where they might enjoy liberty of conscience. But the majority, unable to escape from the land of oppression, remained at home, many of them too timid to undertake the journey to unknown regions, or doubtful of their success in eluding the watchfulness of the guards upon the frontiers; nearly all of

trement, il faudroit souffrir dans tous les sujets et dans tout l'État, l'idolatrie, le mahometanisme, le judaïsme, toute fausse religion : le blasphème, l'athéisme même, et les plus grands crimes seroient impunis."—Bossuet, "Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture Sainte," liv. vii., art. ii., xe proposition : "On peut employer la rigueur contre les observateurs des fausses religions ; mais la douceur est préférable."

[1] "Nous protestons sur tout contre cette impie et détestable pratique qu'on tient à présent en France de faire dépendre la religion de la volonté d'un roy mortel et corruptible, et de traiter la perséverance en la foy de rebellion et crime d'état, ce qui est faire d'un homme un Dieu, et autoriser l'athéisme ou l'idolatrie."—Claude, "Les Plaintes des Protestans cruellement opprimez dans le royaume de France," p. 191.

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them cherishing the confident hope that the king's delusion would be short-lived, and that the edict under which they and their ancestors had lived for three generations would, before long, be restored to them with the greater part, if not the whole, of its beneficent provisions.

Meanwhile, all the Protestant ministers having been expelled from France by the same law that prohibited the expatriation of any of the laity, the people of the Reformed faith found themselves destitute of the spiritual food they craved. True, the new legislation affected to regard that faith as dead, and designated all the former adherents of Protestantism, without distinction, as the "New Converts," "*Nouveaux Convcrtis.*" And, in point of fact, the great majority had so far yielded to the terrible pressure of the violent measures brought to bear upon them—prominent among these being the infamous quartering of insolent soldiers upon defenceless Protestant homes,—that they had consented to sign a promise to be "reunited" to the Roman Catholic Church, or had gone at least once to mass. But they were still Protestants at heart. They did not even pretend to conceal from their persecutors the fact that they only yielded to overwhelming force.

Under these circumstances, feeling more than ever the need of religious comfort, now that remorse arose for a weak betrayal of conscientious convictions, the proscribed Protestants, especially in the south of France, began to meet clandestinely for divine worship in such retired places as seemed most likely to escape the notice of their vigilant enemies. There was, however, a dearth of ordained ministers. A few, but only a few, after having been expelled from the kingdom, came back by stealth, taking their lives in their hands. Of these scarcely any were able to remain long in France. More than one was tracked and captured before he had fairly gotten at work, and was remorselessly consigned to the gallows or the wheel. Such worship as the Protestants had was essentially in the hands of laymen, private members of the former churches, distinguished, not for their learning, but rather by superior fervor of spirit and greater zeal in exhortation and prayer.

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It was not strange that in so exceptional a situation, a phase of religious life and feeling equally exceptional should manifest itself. I refer to that appearance of prophetic inspiration which attracted to the province of Vivarais and to the Cévennes Mountains the attention of all Europe. In a time of great persecution the parts of the Holy Scriptures which foretell coming disasters, which rehearse the tribulations through which the chosen people of God must pass and their ultimate triumph through the signal overthrow of their oppressors, are wont to be favorite subjects of study and contemplation. Thus it was that the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, and the Apocalypse in the New Testament, gave color to the thoughts and anticipations of the devout men and women among the Huguenots of the South who looked for the speedy redemption of their people. What formed the burden of their hopes and desires, they felt themselves impelled of God to utter for the incitement and guidance of their brethren. That many sincerely believed themselves inspired by the Holy Ghost in these deliverances, we can scarcely doubt. As little, however, can we doubt that in the progress of popular excitement, proverbially rapid and contagious in its spread, other causes, and those not always of the purest, played an important part. It was not easy at the time, even for judicious and well-informed persons, to take a calm and dispassionate view of the nature of the phenomena; and certainly, at this distance of time and place, we should find it a fruitless task to attempt to draw the line at which sincere conviction ended and more or less conscious deception began.

Historically, however, the influence of the prophets of the Cévennes was an important factor in the Protestant problem of the end of the 17th and the commencement of the 18th centuries. Respecting the physical phenomena with which the pretended revelation from heaven was accompanied, I shall not speak at length. The trances into which the prophets, often mere boys or girls, fell; the contortions of their bodies, their apparent insensibility to pain, their unconsciousness of what was occurring about

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them, the marvellous visions which they maintained that they saw, the strange and unintelligible words they heard and repeated; the effect which their orders or their gestures exercised over entire audiences, when at a word men, women, and children, it might be numbering twenty-five hundred in all, fell backward on the ground;[1]—these and other wonders of like kind may be read in the friendly pages of Misson, in the Théatre Sacré des Cévennes, or accompanied by words of doubt or derision in the more polished writings of Bishop Fléchier.

The renown of these strange sights reached even to foreign countries. According to the Earl of Shaftesbury, so famous had they become in England, that, as he wrote, in the year 1707, the Cévenol prophets were the subject of a choice Droll or Puppet-show at Bartholomew Fair. "There doubtless," he remarks, "their strange voices and involuntary agitations are admirably well acted, by the emotion of wires, and inspiration of pipes."[2] And fifteen or sixteen years later, we find at Philadelphia a printer who was or pretended that he was one of the Cévenol prophets, in the person of Keimer, the first employer of Benjamin Franklin, who tells us, in his Autobiography, that Keimer "had been one of the French prophets, and could act their enthusiastic agitations."[3]

Various methods were adopted to put an end to the prophets with their prophecies, which were for the most part denunciatory of Rome as Antichrist and foreshadowed the approaching fall of the papacy. But this form of enthusiasm had struck a deep root and it was hard to eradicate it. Imprisonment, in convent or jail, was the most common punishment, especially in the case of women. Not infrequently to

[1] Rècit fidèle de ce pui s'est passé dans les assemblées de fanatiques du Vivarais, avec l'histoire de leurs prophètes et prophétesses, au commencement de l'année 1689. À M. le duc de Montausier, "Œuvres complètes de Fléchier," ix., 464.

[2] Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, in his "Letter concerning Enthusiasm to my Lord Summers," "Characteristics," i., 26–28.

[3] "Works of Benjamin Franklin," edited by John Bigelow, i., 66, where it is noted that "M. Laboulaye presumes Keimer was one of the Camisards or Protestants of the Cévennes so persecuted by Louis XIV."

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imprisonment was added corporal chastisement, and the prophets, male and female, were flogged until they might be regarded as fully cured of their delusion. To Marshal Villars, however, the palm must be given in the matter of cruel severity. We have it upon his own testimony that he deliberately ordered the execution of a poor woman for no other offence than this. She had been arrested in company with a score of others, and while undergoing an examination, she had, as he expresses it, the audacity to tremble and prophesy in his excellency's presence for the space of a whole hour! This act of temerity could, it seems, be expiated by no punishment short of the gallows.[1]

The prevalence of the prophetic enthusiasm had an appreciable influence in bringing on the Camisard uprising. The impassioned exhortations of the seers, who, looking into the future, gave out that they there beheld the approaching triumph of the good cause over all its adversaries, were well calculated to nerve the courage of strong and hopeful men to desperate adventures. In fact, the words of Esprit Séguier were powerful in determining the Camisards in their deliberations prior to their first attack upon the house of the Abbé du Chayla. But no utterances of prophets, however fervid and impassioned, would have sufficed to occasion an uprising of the inhabitants of the Cévennes Mountains, had it not been for the virulent persecution to which the latter found themselves exposed at the hands of the provincial authorities directly instigated thereto by the clergy of the established church.

For it must be noticed that a large part of the population of the Cévennes was still Protestant, and made no conceal-

[1] "Mémoires du maréchal de Villars" (Collection Michaud et Poujoulat), 141. The entire passage, contained in a letter to the secretary of state, Chamillard, Sept. 25, 1704, is interesting: "J'ai vu dans ce genre des choses que je n'aurois jamais crues si elles ne s'etoient passées sous mes yeux: une ville entière, dont toutes les femmes et les filles, sans exception, paroissoient possédées du diable. Elles trembloient et prophétisoient publiquement dans les rues. J'en fis arrêter vingt des plus méchantes, dont une eut la hardiesse de trembler et prophétiser pendant une heure devant moi. Je la fis pendre pour l'exemple, et renfermer les autres dans des hospitaux." This was a murder in cold blood.

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ment of the fact, even though the king's ministers affected to call them "New Catholics," or "New Converts." The region over which the Camisard war extended with more or less violence comprised six episcopal dioceses, which, in 1698, had an aggregate population of about two thirds of a million of souls, Of these souls, though Protestantism had been dead in the eye of the law for thirteen years, fully one fourth were still Protestant. But the distribution of this quarter was unequal in different parts of the region. For if in the diocese of the bishop of Mende the Reformed constituted only one eighth of the population, and in that of the bishop of Viviers, but one seventh, they could boast of being in a clear majority in the diocese of Alais, and were almost as numerous as the Roman Catholics in the diocese of Nismes. Taking these two last dioceses together (Alais and Nismes)—and these were pre-eminently the scene of the subsequent struggle,—there were 81,430 Protestants as opposed to only 71,110 Roman Catholics.[1] Moreover, if their numerical preponderance was so decided, the Protestants had notoriously the superiority in general intelligence, thrift, and industry.

I have spoken of the persecution to which this Protestant majority had for years been subjected, as exercised at the direct instigation of the clergy of the established church. In saying this I do not merely refer to the well-known fact, that the clergy had been in their periodical convocations, for the past one hundred years and over, the authors of every proposal which, when adopted by the court, proved one of the series of successive steps in the abrogation of the Protestant liberties.[2] Nor do I mean to emphasize the influence which clerical writers and orators had put forth

[1] The "Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Languedoc," by M. de Basville, Intendant of the province, *apud* Court, "Histoire des troubles des Cévennes," i., 126–131, give the exact figures of the census of 1698. The total for the six dioceses is 663,701 souls, of which 166,777 are set down as of the Reformed faith.

[2] On this point see Auguste François Lièvre, "Du rôle que le clergé catholique de France à joué dans la révocation de l'édit de Nantes." Strasbourg, 1853.

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tending to a general policy of persecution by the skilful use of their famous misinterpretation of our Lord's parable of the Great Supper; according to which the order given by the master of the house to his servant, "Compel them to come in," was held to be an injunction to use what the exegetes were pleased to call a "gentle" or "salutary" violence to induce the Huguenots to enter the Roman Catholic Church. In the spirit of this system of hermeneutics, Bishop Fléchier of Nismes set forth his view of the religious situation. "St. Paul," he says, "declares in his Epistle to the Galatians, that every one that is circumcised is bound to keep the whole law. The New Converts have, by baptism and abjuration, become subjects and children of the Roman Catholic Church, and are consequently bound to observe its laws. Therefore, according to the apostle's teaching, they may and should be constrained to do so. It is useless to say, that they have changed their mind; a rebellious subject or a disobedient child cannot relieve himself of his obligations. . . . Our intention is to make real Catholics; if they deceive us and their religion is an empty pretence, it is not for us to act as judges: that office belongs to God. The king has deemed it his duty to compass, by all sorts of methods, the salvation of his subjects. . . . It is not less proper that, after their abjuration, they should be compelled to fulfil the promise they have made to God." [1]

But, as I have said, in mentioning the conduct of the clergy of the established church as the prime cause of the Camisard revolt, I refer neither to their agency in procuring the recall of the Edict of Nantes, nor to the intolerant counsel which they continued to give to the secular authorities; but, rather, to the irritating and insufferable meddlesomeness of the parochial priests and the inferior clergy. Not even now that the Edict of Nantes was revoked and that the great majority of the Protestants had succumbed, would they leave these unfortunates alone. Had the curates

[1] Lettre en forme de Mémoire à Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Paris concernant les nouveaux convertis (1698), "Œuvres complètes de Fléchier," v., 269-275.

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been content to act as pastors of their own flocks, the Huguenots, though recognizing in them few of the lineaments of true spiritual shepherds, would have borne them no special dislike, and would, at all events, have taken good care to leave them undisturbed in the discharge of their ecclesiastical functions. But, unfortunately, to be a priest was in this case to be a spy, ever on the watch to detect and bring to grief those who failed to perform the duties of sincere children of the established church. Having forced such Protestants as had not succeeded in flight from the kingdom to profess Roman Catholicism, the ecclesiastics now sought to force them to be constant in the profession. Their hand was in every act of oppression, even, though from motives of prudence and from a decorous regard for the claim of the Church to be the author of peace, they often preferred to leave the execution of their schemes to the secular arm. Their contemporaries knew it; but even had the fact escaped their notice, the government archives, with their multitude of priestly denunciations, now for the first time brought to the light of day, would amply establish it. To be irreverent at mass, or to abstain from going thither at all, much more to attempt to deter others, was quite enough to occasion a secret missive, suggesting to the Intendant or his deputy, that such a one might advantageously make trial of prison walls. Here, for example, is a sentence or two from a note of this kind, written by Abbé Poncet de la Rivière to the Intendant of Languedoc, from the town of Uzès, May 25, 1701: "Monseigneur, I have within a few days learned the bad language in which master Trinquelaigue, senior, indulges, a man whose name is not unknown to you. Not satisfied with being a bad Catholic, he turns into ridicule those who do their duty. He prowls about in several communities, in which he does us much harm. He is a man that will die as he has lived; nevertheless, I believe that some citadel would do him good."[1]

It is not my purpose in this paper to give a detailed

[1] Text of the letter in G. Frosterus, "Les Insurgés protestants sous Louis XIV." (Paris, 1868), p. 43.

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account of the military struggle. A history so replete in incidents of the most stirring character could not be compressed within the short time that is at our disposal.

The war may be said to have begun on the 24th of July, 1702, when the Abbé du Chayla, a noted persecutor, was killed in his house, at Pont de Montvert, by a band of forty or fifty of the "Nouveaux Convertis," whom he had driven to desperation by his cruelty to their fellow believers. If we regard its termination to be the submission of Jean Cavalier, the most picturesque and, in some regards, the most able of the leaders, in the month of May, 1704, the war lasted a little less than two years. But, although the French government had succeeded, rather by craft than by force, in getting rid of the most formidable of its opponents, the danger of a widespread conflagration involving all the south-eastern part of the kingdom was by no means averted; and it was not until five or six years later—that is, until 1709 or 1710—that, the last Camisard chiefs having been successively surprised and slain in encounters with the royal troops, or, as was more frequently the case, betrayed by false friends and executed on the gallows or the wheel, comparative peace was finally restored.

That the outbreak was unpremeditated, the apparently fortuitous result of intolerable oppression, seems to be certain. It is equally beyond dispute that the very means employed to crush it, only tended to give it a wider scope and insure temporary success. When men saw that the judges took little pains to discriminate between the guilty and the innocent, those whose sympathies lay with the insurgents preferred the risks of the field to the perils encompassing them in their own homes. Thus it was that more than once a small band grew in the course of a few days to formidable proportions, because of the severity of the measures to which royal magistrates and generals resorted. Terror served rather as a spur than as a curb.

During the first months of the insurrection the exploits of the malcontents were confined to deeds of destruction accomplished by companies of venturesome men, who

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almost everywhere eluded the pursuit of the enemy by their superior knowledge of the intricacies of the mountain woods and paths. The track of these companies could easily be made out; for it was marked by the destruction of vicarages and rectories, by the smoke of burned churches, too often by the corpses of slain priests. The perpetrators of these acts of violence soon won for themselves some special designations, to distinguish them from the more passive Protestants who remained in their homes, taking no open part in the struggle. They called themselves simply "*the Children of God*," and their headquarters for the time being, "*the Camp of the Lord.*" But their enemies at first nicknamed them "*Houssards*," "Hussars," because of their daring and the fear their advent inspired; or "*Barbets*," because they were supposed to have some connection with the Waldenses, to whom the epithet had formerly been applied. About the close of 1702, however, or the first months of 1703, a new word was coined for the fresh emergency, and the armed Protestants received the appellation under which they have passed into history—the *Camisards.* Passing by all the strange and fanciful derivations of the word which seem to have no claim upon our notice, unless it be their evident absurdity, we have no difficulty in connecting it with those nocturnal expeditions which were styled *Camisades;* because the warriors who took advantage of the darkness of the night to ride out and explore or force the enemy's entrenchments, sometimes threw over their armor a shirt that might enable them to recognize each other. Others will have it, that though the name was derived from the same article of apparel—the *camisa* or shirt, it was applied to the Cévenol bands for another reason, namely, that when the malcontents, weather-beaten and begrimed, from time to time made their appearance in some peaceful village in search of food or ammunition, they did not hesitate to make a substitution, which they considered a fair exchange, and no robbery, taking off what clean white linen they needed, and leaving their own soiled garments in lieu thereof.

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The number of the leaders who from first to last headed the Camisards is as difficult to fix with precision as the number of the separate bands. Only two need be particularly mentioned—Roland and Cavalier—both men of the people, both young, and with little or no experience when they entered upon their work, both possessed of great nerve and address, and giving evidence of no little native military ability, and of a breadth of comprehension that would have stood them in good stead had they been called upon to command on more extended fields. As between the two, Jean Cavalier—the *pitot*, or shepherd's assistant, the baker's apprentice, who at the age of barely twenty-one years of age[1] found himself in command of men, many of them much older than he—was undoubtedly the more brilliant and striking figure, as his personal history also more strikingly exhibits the singular vicissitudes of fortune. To defeat more than once considerable bodies of trained soldiers under the command of officers of high rank, to treat as an equal with a marshal of France and secure terms from proud Louis XIV. himself, to gain the post of colonel in the French army, then to pass into foreign service, and finally to die under the flag of Great Britain, a major-general of his Majesty's troops and governor of the island of Jersey—these were some of the features in the career of the quondam *pitot* born at Ribaute. Yet, after all, not Cavalier, but Roland is the true hero of the Camisard war—Roland, the staunch asserter of Protestant rights, whose steady vision could not be dazzled by the glitter of the tempting offers of personal aggrandizement which Marshal Villars held forth; who under no circumstances would listen to suggestions of a peace based on other terms than those for which he had taken up arms—the virtual restoration of the Edict of Nantes and complete religious liberty—Roland who therefore preferred a speedy death on his native hills to the long life and worldly honors that might have been secured by a less uncompromising devotion to principle.

[1] Jean Cavalier was born November 28, 1681. See the baptismal record in Haag, "La France protestante" (2me ed.), iii., 926.

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These men, and men like them, of humble parentage, and possessed of no advantages of birth or station, obtained on the whole decided advantages over all the generals sent against them. Not that they were uniformly fortunate. Accustomed as they were to surprise the royal troops, falling upon them when least expecting an attack, they were themselves more than once the victims of similar movements on the part of the forces sent against them. Yet the general results of such actions were wonderfully in their favor. Had it been otherwise, the government, with the enormous preponderance of numbers, would speedily have crushed them. As it was, their final overthrow was not accomplished without the employment of one hundred thousand troops, certainly far more than ten times the total number ever brought into the field by the Camisards. No clearer evidence of the government's perplexity is needed than is afforded by the changes made in its generals. Not less than three officers of the highest grade in the service, marshals of France, were successively appointed to put down a revolt which it might have been expected a simple colonel could suffice to quell—M. de Broglie being succeeded by the Marshal de Montrevel, the Marshal de Montrevel by the Marshal de Villars, and the Marshal de Villars by the Marshal de Berwick.

A diversity of troops were employed. The burgess militia proved unsatisfactory. The very name *Camisard* inspired as much fear in them as, according to the account of Herodotus, the name of the Medes did in Greece at the beginning of the Persian wars. There was this difference in the two cases, however, that, whereas the stout-hearted Athenians speedily put aside all such terrors as soon as they had once met the barbarians on the plain of Marathon, the Roman Catholic militia only felt their fears intensified as time went on. And if perchance they heard, as the Camisards approached, the notes, only too well known, of the 68th Psalm, the Protestant battle hymn, they fled, to use the expressive words of a Roman Catholic officer, "as if all the devils had been at their heels." [1]

[1] "Un officier françois, qui avoit servi contre les Camisards, me disoit un jour, en me parlant de cette guerre: 'Quand ces diables-là se mettoient à

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Marines were brought in from ships of war at Toulon, and troops called "miquelets" from the province of Roussillon, on the Spanish frontier, accustomed to scale the rugged sides of the Pyrenees. Beside these, bands of volunteers, scarcely distinguishable from brigands, were encouraged to associate themselves for purposes of plunder, who, under the name of "*Cadets de la Croix*," or "*Camisards blancs*," so called to distinguish them from the Camisards proper, or "*Camisards noirs*," exercised a cruel warfare, often making little distinction between friend and foe. It is a Roman Catholic historian who in narrating the misery of the villagers of the Cévennes, pillaged alternately by Camisards and Cadets de la Croix, ludicrously likens the region to the unfortunate husband of the fable from whose head the elder wife plucked out every black hair, while the younger pulled out every gray one, and who in the end became totally bald.[1]

The direct measures adopted by the government were, however, little less inhuman than the acts of these marauders. Not to speak of the unjust trial and execution of single individuals, against whom nothing had been proven, whole communities were fined enormous sums of money because a band of Camisards had obtained food or shelter within their bounds, or had held a religious meeting in some remote corner of their territory. This was made the rule by a decree of the royal council, fastening upon the entire commune the responsibility for whatever occurred within its bounds. In many cases whole bodies of men, women, and children were taken from their homes and transported to a distance, on the mere suspicion of sympathy with the Camisards. By a single order of Marshal Villars, some thousands of persons, not themselves accused of any crime, were thrown into the prisons of Nismes, Alais, Montpellier, and other cities, merely because they were the fathers or mothers or wives of the rebels who were in arms.[2] But the most barbarous of all

chanter leur B. de chanson, *Que Dieu se montre*, nous ne pouvions plus être les maîtres de nos gens: ils fuyoient comme si tous les diables avoient été à leurs trousses.'"—"Histoire des Camisards" (London, 1754), i., 244, 245.

[1] Brueys, ii., 263.

[2] Order of June 17, 1704, in Court, iii., 17, 18.

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was the plan devised by the Intendant Basville, and distinctly approved by the ministers of Louis XIV., according to which that portion of the higher Cévennes which was peopled by the most determined Camisards, and from which it had been found impossible to dislodge them, was deliberately devoted to destruction. The project was carried out to the letter. For weeks, in the autumn of the year 1703, several bodies of troops, starting from various points, were busy with axe and crowbar and torch, and with other instruments of destruction, in executing their pitiless commission. The wretched inhabitants had but three days allowed them to remove from their homes to the villages or towns which were designated to them, but where they could not claim the shelter of a roof, and possibly had not a friend. Four hundred and sixty-six hamlets, comprised in thirty-one parishes, were blotted out of existence, and at the very lowest computation 19,500 human beings were turned upon the tender mercies of the world. Basville's original plan had probably contemplated the massacre of these Protestants, after the fashion of the slaughter of the doomed Vaudois of Mérindol and Cabrières in Provence, in the last part of the reign of Francis I. At least there is a significant passage in the "instructions" given to the troops, where it is said, "The king would not hearken to any suggestion of bloodshed"—"*Le Roy n'ayant pas voulu entendre parler d'effusion de sang*,"—apparently referring to a definite proposal to exterminate the Cévenol Huguenots.[1] If so, we may have to thank Louis XIV.'s tender-heartedness that the butchery which Louvois authorized in the Palatinate was not imitated in Languedoc.

It is not strange that the Camisards instantly retaliated, and that almost at the very moment their mountain hamlets were smoking, bands of men, bent only on revenge, were devoting the flourishing farms and villages of the Roman Catholics to the flames, even to the very gates of Nismes. Bishop Fléchier could see the fires from the windows of his episcopal palace.

[1] Louvreleuil, ii., 98 ; Court, ii., 39.

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Cavalier, duped by Marshal Villars, submitted to the royal terms in May, 1704. He was to be colonel of a new regiment in the service of Louis XIV., to be recruited from the Camisards who had followed him so faithfully. He expected fully one thousand men to accompany him to the German border; of his troop of six hundred foot and horse only one hundred and fifty men actually went with him. His old associates for the most part denounced him as a traitor to the cause, and refused to have any thing to do with him.

It is interesting to note that during the discussion of the terms upon which the leaders of the Camisards would accept of peace, the provincial authorities placed the small town of Calvisson in their hands. Instantly it was seen how much of truth there was in the assertion that Protestantism in France was dead. Scarcely had the Camisards taken possession of the place and posted their guards, when, after an hour or two given to much needed rest, they betook themselves to the site of their ancient "temple" or church, there to celebrate divine worship. At the news that the services of their faith were again held in their vicinity, the Protestants of the entire region—miscalled New Converts and New Catholics—flocked to Calvisson. At a single service, four or five thousand persons came together. They prayed, they listened again without hindrance to the preaching of God's word, they joined in singing the prohibited psalms of Marot and Beza. Almost as soon as one service was over, another began. A contemporary writer will have it, that during the few days of the Camisard possession, Protestant services were held for twenty hours out of every twenty-four. Forty thousand persons from first to last joined in the beloved worship of which they had been long deprived. It was a bitter experience for the bigots who looked on and could not prevent.

Three months after Cavalier's surrender, Roland was surprised and killed (August 1704). His death was a disastrous blow to the Camisards, more disastrous even than Cavalier's defection. Within a little more than a month many of the

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leaders, losing heart, came in and surrendered themselves to the authorities—Castanet, Catinat, Joany, La Rose, Valette, Marion, and others, with more than five hundred men, to whom a safeguard was given to go out of France (Sept.–Oct., 1704). The next spring Ravanel, Jonquet, and Vilas were captured and put to death (April, 1705). A month later came the execution of Boëton. Yet still the war was not at an end. A few intrepid leaders of no less intrepid men, continued to maintain themselves in the Cévennes, and to perform exploits of valor worthy of the best days of Greece and Rome. The conflict of Justet, for example, a prodigy of physical strength, alone and unarmed against two grenadiers whom, giant-like, he held one in either hand, and slew by smiting them together, does not suffer by comparison with the deeds of prowess recorded of any of the band of Leonidas at Thermopylæ.[1]

And so, about the year 1710, closed the final scene in this dramatic episode of the history of French Protestantism. A few months before, on the 29th of April, a victim had been immolated on the altar of religious intolerance, whose last hours present an incident of pathetic interest, not devoid of prophetic significance. An old Camisard, who had also officiated as a preacher, Salomon Sabatier by name, was detected lurking at Alais, thanks to the extraordinary vigilance of the provincial authorities. He was taken to Montpellier, there promptly adjudged guilty of death, and ordered to be broken alive upon the wheel. Only four days elapsed between his apprehension and the execution of the barbarous sentence. In that brief interval, and, indeed, before he was transferred from the prison of Alais, the officer into whose hands he had fallen was importuned by some ladies of the place to gratify their curiosity by bringing out the Camisard from his dungeon to preach before them. Too gallant to refuse a favor so easily granted, M. de la Lande ordered the jailer to produce his prisoner, and on Sabatier's arrival intimated to him the desire that had been expressed. The Cévenol preacher could not be ignorant of the unworthy motive that

[1] Brueys, iii., 553, 554. Court, iii., 252, 253.

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had led to the invitation, or of the want of sympathy in his expectant auditors with the only truths he felt at liberty to announce to them. None the less did he cheerfully comply with the general's demand. For his text he chose the first verse of the fifty-ninth chapter of Isaiah: "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." Taking advantage of the rare opportunity now enjoyed by the Protestant churches of France for a brief moment of setting forth their deplorable condition as the objects of an unjust persecution, he passed on to the consideration of the joy felt by their triumphant enemies. Over against this stood their own unshaken confidence of ultimate deliverance. Cast down to the earth as they were, these innocent victims of unparalleled oppression, speaking, as by their mouth-piece through a man about to be put to death by the most cruel form of execution known to a bloody code of law, proclaimed without hesitation the certainty of a hope founded upon the promises of God, upon His pity, upon His goodness, upon His power. His arm was not shortened: it would yet be outstretched for their deliverance. His ear was not heavy: it was even now listening to every sigh, and groan, and cry of His children suffering such injury and outrage.

Again, as so often in the history of the Christian Church, it was the prisoner for righteousness' sake that assumed the place of conqueror, and triumphant Iniquity was forced to crouch at his feet, vanquished in the moral strife. As for the Camisard preacher's audience, those who had come to sport with the misfortunes of a helpless captive, were touched, were moved to tears, possibly began to doubt the justice of a cause which was compelled to resort to violence for its maintenance. Perceiving this, M. de la Lande, annoyed at the issue of his friends' curiosity, and vexed with himself that he had acceded to their request, abruptly ordered Sabatier to be silent, and sent him back to confinement.[1]

Cui bono? Had the struggle been all in vain? Must the thousands of lives lost on the Cévennes, in the lowlands,

[1] Antoine Court, "Histoire des troubles des Cévennes," iii., 272, 273.

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in the Vaunage, be regarded as a wasteful sacrifice, from which humanity, from which religion has derived no appreciable advantage? I think not.

First of all, the Camisards demonstrated beyond controversy, both to the crown and to the Roman Catholic people of France, that Protestantism, so far from being destroyed, was in fact indestructible. When Louis XIV. based his revocatory edict upon the assumption that the greater and better part of the adherents of the "so-called Reformed Religion" had been converted, we can, taking the most charitable view of the case, but suppose him to have been scarcely half convinced of the proposition which he was affirming. He was determined, however, to make it true. His advisers, especially the more intelligent men both of the clergy and of the laity, argued that, even if possibly Protestant parents could only be constrained to make a very insincere profession of Roman Catholicism, it was quite practicable to bring up the children in that profession from the start. The next generation, at any rate, would consist of trustworthy members of the established church. To secure this end, laws were enacted trampling on all the dictates of natural justice; parents were compelled by severe penalties not only to bring their children to the public services, but to send them to catechetical classes; parents suspected of endeavoring, by private instruction, to counteract the priestly instruction, were arbitrarily sent to a place of confinement; or else their children were pitilessly torn from the home and placed in some convent or monastery. By these and other measures of the same kind, pursued systematically for a long course of years, it was expected that the aim would certainly be compassed.

The outbreak of the Camisard revolt roughly dispelled the dream. Bishop Fléchier, whose diocese, as has been seen, was its theatre, begged his friends to commiserate him —he had lost, he said, the entire fruits of seventeen years of labor.[1] His surprise is almost pitiful when he tells us that

[1] "Nous voyons tout le fruit de nos travaux de dix-sept ans perdu." Letter of April 25, 1703. "Œuvres," x., 121.

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the Protestants, or, as he still persists in calling them, the New Converts, of his diocese, whom he has "instructed, served, assisted, treated with great mildness and charity since their conversion, have almost to a man been wholly perverted, and have instantly become enemies of God, of the king, of the Catholics, and especially of the priests."[1] Evidently there were just as many Protestants as there had been so-called New Converts—all animated by a strong desire to profess the doctrines of the Reformation, all imbued with a violent hatred of the prevalent system, a hatred displaying itself not merely in a wholesale abandonment of the parish churches, but in deeds of violence, often savage and most unjustifiable, directed against members of the ecclesiastical establishment. And it is to be noted, that the active participants in the warfare were chiefly young men. The Edict of Nantes had been revoked, and Protestantism proscribed, for not less than seventeen years, when the war broke out. Those who took the most prominent part in it were twenty, twenty-five, or thirty years of age; they were either infants or young children when the tolerant law of Henry IV. was recalled. Consequently their attachment to Protestantism was created at the very time when the clergy believed that, by their instructions, they were training the younger generation, the Protestant children, to become zealous Roman Catholics. Thus the uprising of the Camisards proved to their enemies the complete failure of the attempt to destroy Protestantism.

It had a corresponding effect upon the Protestants themselves. It encouraged them to believe that there were better things in store for them; that they had but to bide their time, and the monstrous fabric of persecution must crumble and fall. In the words of Holy Writ, which Sabatier so appropriately chose for his text, the Lord's hand was not shortened that it could not save. Deliverance would yet come in God's appointed way.

But the experience of the war showed that the way was not to be through force of arms, not by the prowess of the

[1] Letter of April 27, 1704, *ubi supra*, x., 147.

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Protestants themselves, nor by the interposition of foreigners or foreign states. On the one hand, the hopes based upon the promised help of sympathizers abroad came to nothing. On the other, the demoralizing effects of war discredited a recourse to the sword as the means of establishing a reign of peace and righteousness upon the earth. The excesses of the Camisards themselves, or of bands conveniently sheltering themselves under their name, were surpassed in cruelty only by the excesses of the "Cadets de la Croix," and the so-called "Camisards blancs," and disgusted many of those even whose natural sympathies were with the cause of religious toleration. Hence the collapse of a movement which, had it enlisted the undivided support of all the members of the Reformed communion, might have lasted if not indefinitely, yet for a much longer period than that which it actually covered.

At the same time, if the Camisard war did not strike a death-blow at the enthusiastic frenzy of the Cévenol prophets, it hastened the extinction of that delusion. Pretended revelations from Heaven did much to nerve the courage of the first Camisards. Persuaded that the road to victory was distinctly pointed out by seers inspired of the Holy Ghost, men willingly undertook the most hazardous enterprises. Assured that their bodies were invulnerable, they rushed into conflict with little thought of danger, doubting not that God would take care of His own children. But as the war advanced, the instances of the disappointment of hopes based upon private revelations multiplied, and while these did not altogether dispel the illusion, they did much to shake the faith of the many. Thus it was that the Camisards made the path of Antoine Court and his associates less rugged when, about five years after the execution of Sabatier, he undertook to bring order out of the reigning confusion, and inaugurated that noble work of setting up again the ecclesiastical organization and discipline of his fellow believers that has earned for him the enviable title of "Restorer of French Protestantism." The failure of the Camisard uprising was an important factor in the success of the Churches of the "Desert."

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