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ARTICLE I.

THE PROTESTANT CHURCH OF FRANCE AND
THE PASTORS OF THE DESERT.

*Histoire Des Églises Réformées de Pons, Gemozac et Mortagne
En Saintonge, Précédée d'une notice étendue sur L'établiss-
ment de la Réforme dans cette Province, L'Aunis, et L'An-
goumois.* Par A. CROTTET, de Genève, Pasteur à Pons.
A Bordeaux : 1841 ; pp. 263, 8vo.

*Histoire des Églises Du Désert chez les Protestants de France
depuis la Fin du Règne de Louis XIV., jusqu'à la Révolu-
tion Française.* Par CHARLES COQUEREL.

“ Plus á me frapper on s'amuse,
“ Tant plus de marteaux on y use.”

THEODORE DE BEZA.

Two vols. Paris : 1841 ; pp. 564, 616, 8vo.

*Histoire des Pasteurs du Désert depuis la Revocation de L'édit
de Nantes jusqu'à la Revolution Française, 1685–1789.* Par
NAP. PEYRAT.

“ Ils tenaient devant le trône, en présence de l'Agneau, vetus
de longues robes blanches ayant à la main des palmes.—D'ou
sont-ils venus ?—De la grande tribulation.—Ils ont lavé leur
robe dans le sang de l'Agneau ; voilà pourquoi ils sont devant
le trône de Dieu, et le servent dans son temple.”

Apocalypse, Chap. vii.

Two vols. Paris : 1842 ; pp. 516, 552, 8vo.

Bulletins de L'Histoire de Protestantisme Francais, Documents Historiques inédits et originaux, XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Francais. Paris: 1853. &c.

The works whose titles we have placed at the head of this article, disclose that spirit of research which has prompted the Protestant Churches of France in recovering, before they utterly perish, the memorials which yet exist of their heroic and suffering ancestors. Each of the authors claims to have written after a most careful scrutiny of original documents, sought for with avidity, and, in many cases, drawn forth from the concealment in which they have laid for generations. Many, alas, have perished in the flames, to which the rage of persecutors committed every thing, whether trivial or important, traced by the pen of the hated Huguenot. In a former volume of this Review we have given some brief and general account of the sufferings of the Protestants of France, which exiled so many from their native shores, and drove them to seek a refuge in the friendly countries of Europe and in the American wilderness. We are attracted towards the same subject again, not by a desire to repeat the items of their romantic history, which filled with astonishment and sorrow the whole Protestant world, but because these volumes before us furnish us with some new historic facts respecting men who found a home and have left their names among us, and whose worth ought not to be forgotten.

In reference to the first of these volumes, its author, M. Crottet, now resident at Yverdon, in Switzerland, informs us that, being called to exercise the functions of his pastoral office in that ancient country, from which persecution had driven his fathers, he spent the leisure moments of a laborious ministry in the attempt to collect those documents which could throw light upon the history of the Churches that had given him their confidence. In a country in

which the reigning fanaticism carefully strove to destroy every thing relating to an abhorred worship, it was a baffling pursuit, but the reiterated entreaties of parents and distant friends, and the desire of leaving in the hands of his flock authentic testimonies of the zeal, piety and sufferings of his ancestors, urged him on. He gathered around him the old books which attacked or defended their faith, ran over the libraries of his parishioners, and ransacked old chests and secretaries, in the hope of finding some of those writings which their fathers sought to conceal from the eyes of their enemies. He listened to the recitals of the venerable witnesses of the last persecutions, whom he met with, here and there, among the faithful of his own Churches, receiving them with circumspection, and only when they coincided with other reliable authorities. This little work of Crottet we have perused with intense interest, in part because it speaks to us of familiar names. The work of Coquerel is dedicated "to the memory of the French *Pastors of the Desert*, who, in the midst of proscriptions and martyrdoms, sustained by the hand of God, have defended religious liberty and restored evangelical worship to the eighteenth century in the Reformed Churches of our [his] country." It, too, is compiled, in great part, from documents and manuscripts never published. Its publication fulfils a design the author formed many years before, but which he would not have dreamt of undertaking but for the sacred deposit entrusted to him by Madame Rabaut-Pomier—widow of the second son of the illustrious Pastor of the Desert, Paul Rabaut, and sister-in-law of Rabaut Saint-Étienne—of all the manuscripts and letters of her family. The historic and personal papers of Paul Rabaut, and, above all, his vast and precious correspondence with "the Pastors of the Desert," are very abundant, especially from 1750 to 1775. They consist of the acts of the Provincial and National Synods; petitions addressed to the

King, to Ministers, to Intendants; of rough draughts of letters to different administrative and ecclesiastical authorities; of apologetic memoirs in behalf of the Churches of the desert; of lists of those condemned for the faith; of note-books or journals of his private proceedings, or the perils of his ministry; of recitals, more or less extended, of the most notable religious events of Languedoc. His correspondence is composed of all the letters which his colleagues of the desert daily addressed him. In reading them, we see that during these long years Paul Rabaut was the centre and soul of the transactions of the Churches of the desert, not only for the South of France, but for the rest of the country.

The History of M. Nap. Peyrat is dedicated to the *Cevenols*, or inhabitants of the Cevennes, the Protestants of the South of France, children *des Églises sous la Croix*, of the "Churches under the Cross." This part of France was the focus of resistance, the storm-rocked cradle of "the Pastors of the desert;" in their own language, the sacred land of Israel. Peyrat's History is written in a popular, rhetoric strain, is lively and descriptive, presents many noble philosophic views, but is apparently less built on documentary evidence than the preceding. Yet he says that, from his childhood, almost, he had formed the resolution of collecting the half-corroded remains of those times, and those poetic effusions existing in flying leaves, or in the memory, not less fugitive, of the aged. He consecrated his youth to this irksome yet filial labor. He visited the libraries of Paris and Languedoc; he revolved the pages of the communal archives; he collated the popular traditions; he visited, in person, the theatre of the events, the cradle of the prophets, the fields of battle, and, charged with these documents and souvenirs, he has arranged them into this general chronicle of the desert, as a pious and dutiful son collects the scattered bones of his ancestors into a propitia-

tory monument, which he erects to them in the midst of the solitude.*

The *Bulletins* are the annual publications of the Protestant Historical Society of France, of which Guizot is honorary, and Charles Read acting President, the object of which is to collect, preserve and publish, in an authentic form, all documents bearing upon the history of the French Protestant Church.

Out of these materials, were it our purpose to do so, we might compile a complete account of the Protestant Churches of France in their season of intense suffering.

The sixteenth century was an intellectual spring-time, when antiquity regerminated, and from its withered roots bloomed forth the three divine flowers of faith, science and art, whose perfumes intoxicated the world. Protestantism was but the religious element of this universal regeneration. It was the Gospel renascent, coming forth into light from the darkness of the past.

"The Roman Theocracy," says Peyrat, "that gigantic institution of the middle ages, tottered. Every theocracy tends irresistibly to realize, in the social order, the doctrines of the Indian cosmogony, which puts the earth on the back of an elephant, emblem of the sacerdotal power, and this elephant upon a tortoise, symbol of its immobility. But even this immobility excites, by its resistance, the tumultuous outbursts of the human race in its eternal progress. Kings, peoples, the Church, even, rose against the Papacy, and the Papacy offered to the respect of the world neither the genius which establishes nor the virtues which preserve. Bereft of her moral power, she forgot her nature and origin, and to maintain her existence she had recourse to royalty, her mortal enemy. She cried out to Caesar, 'Protect me against the intellect of man!' He answered, 'Consecrate your swords.'

"What, in effect, do we see in the sixteenth century? Despotism every where triumphant; every where public freedom overborne for the advantage of absolute royalty; the Germanic Empire become hereditary; the Emperor dreaming of universal monarchy; Europe in silence before Charles the Fifth; the world ready to bow down be-

* Peyrat, p. ii.

neath a theocracy, to two heads, the Pope and the Emperor; the Empire and the Papacy, ceasing their ancient struggle, uniting the sceptre and the cross, were embracing; fatal embrace, from which the earth had seen a monster proceed, like that which hell in terror beheld born in its lowest abyss from the marriage of Satan and of Sin—the monster, Death! Yes, that death which had devoured the world, reanimated by Christ to no end. Rise, for it is time; rise, then, ye storms that regenerate the [universal] world! And from the midst of their thunders and their whirlwinds, O God, the Saviour, make Thy prophet come forth!

“Luther appeared. He rose with the impetuosity of the Germanic genius, and of that popular principle of which he was the tumultuous organ. All the vanquished heresies of the Middle Ages had remitted to him their vengeance and their triumph. And as the venerable image of those ancestors reappeared on the face of an infant who would consummate their work and their glory, all these sects seemed to revive in him. The warlike audacity of the Taborite of Bohemia, the rustic simplicity of the Vaudois of the Alps, the poetic mysticism of the Albigeois of Languedoc, commingled in his thoughtful Germanic mould, revived in this puissant heresiarch, their universal heir. At his thundering voice all Europe started. All the North, in a burst of unanimous enthusiasm, raised itself up. Its peoples believed that they saw a prophet of ancient days. His eye was an eye of fire, intrepid, lofty. His word, it was the clarion, it was thunder, it was God himself thundering by *his* mouth. By turns imperious, impetuous, ingenuous, and even jovial, terrible as a giant and candid as a child, he regarded himself as nothing but a frail instrument in the Divine hand, which employed it as a tempestuous element in His immortal work. He went forward, he went on, and, playing the lute, smiling at some infant in the cradle, or drinking carelessly his beer with Melancthon, he renovated the world.

“By this colossal tribune of the faith, Christian Europe, unsettled in its foundations, was split in two: Protestant and democratic at the North, Catholic and monarchical at the South. This a unit, resting on the sacerdotal authority; that manifold, and founded upon individual liberty. Catholicism, like the Roman Empire, seated at the capitol, in its majestic unity and its magnificent hierarchies, governing its peoples, blindly submitting to the Pontifical cross. Protestantism, like a camp of ancient Germany, an immense sheep-fold, where swarmed all the thoughtful tribes of the North, different in dialects, habits, governments; warlike, adventurous, restless, and united by the single sentiment of evangelic liberty around the shepherd’s crook of Christ. Such is the secession made by Luther, and its full immediate effect was to render impossible henceforth the two-headed theocracy of the Pope and the Emperor, which menaced Europe. Far from pretending again to an universal monarchy, the successors of Charlemagne and of Gregory the Seventh, dragged on in an insensible but irresistible

decadence, could use the sceptre and the crosier but as old men use the staff of dry reed which conducts them to the sepulchre.”*

It is in these eloquent words that Mons. Peyrat spreads out before his reader the state of Europe and the great work accomplished by Luther. He regards it as providential that this stupendous mission was reserved for a Saxon. Between the North and the South, the Teutonic and the Latin race, which God made use of, each in its turn, to civilize Europe, there was a constant antagonism. The Latin or Etruscan mind was essentially material, organizing and immovable. Its tendency was to unity. As Pagan, it founded the Roman Empire; as Christian, the Romish theocracy. The Teutonic or Scandinavian genius is, on the contrary, mystical, disorganizing, vagrant. Its craving is independence. After four or five ages of conflict, the Teutonic genius triumphed over the Empire in the person of Alaric, over the Church in the person of Luther, and substituted by the barbaric hero natural equality for political castes, and by the Protestant tribune, evangelical equality for sacerdotal hierarchies. Luther wrought out, in opposition to the Church of Rome, a revolution analogous to that which St. Paul accomplished against the Jewish Synagogue. Religion passed from the Pontiff to the people, from the temple to the domestic hearth, from authority to liberty, from sterile ritualism to fruitful morality. Protestantism was a revival of the primitive Church, and returned, in respect to doctrine, to the Augustinian theology, and in organization, to democratic election. And the fugitive Platonists of the East preceded the reformers of the West, as Plato preceded Christ. The most brilliant luminary of Greece announced, a second time, the star of Judah, as the aurora does the sun.†

The unpretending, but not less interesting, pages of Crottet, bring before us the reformer Calvin, born at

* Peyrat, p. 2-5.

† Ibid., p. 6.

Noyon, July 10, 1509. He was destined for the Church, and, opportunely for himself, obtained a benefice in early life. By the urgency of his father, who saw in the legal profession a sure passport to fortune and honors, he turned away from former pursuits and repaired to Orleans, where Pierre de l'Etoile taught the civil law. This he did the more readily, as his kinsman and friend, Pierre Robert, better known by the name *Olivétan*, had inspired him with the love of piety and a distaste for the superstitions of the Romish Church. Even here much of his time was devoted to theological pursuits. He was distinguished then, at twenty-three years of age, by remarkable talents, and began to announce the fundamental truths of the Gospel in those families into whose bosom his talents and zeal had introduced him. He then removed to Bourges, to profit by the lessons of Alciati, a celebrated doctor of the law whom Francis I. had drawn to France. Afterwards he fixed his abode at Paris, where, suspected of heresy, he was obliged to flee, and, changing his name to Happeville, he withdrew, in 1534, to the city of Angoulême. He was hospitably received by Louis Du Tillet, the Curate of Claix, who was also canon of the Cathedral of Angoulême, to whom he taught the Greek language, as some reward for his kindness. Here he commenced his celebrated Institutes, spending often whole nights upon it, and too intent upon his task by day to take his regular food. He here drew around him the men of letters, some of whom he led to embrace his ideas of reform. These he frequently assembled together to consult for the interests of truth, and read to them passages of his great work, and availed himself of their counsel and advice. He afterwards fixed himself at Poitiers, pursuing still his studies, and bringing many of those whom his genius and worth drew towards him to a knowledge of the truth. There were, in that neighborhood, excavations called the Grottoes of St. Benoît and of Crotelles. One of these is still called the Grotto of

Calvin. Into this he was in the habit of withdrawing, that he might continue, in safety, his severe labors. To this, also, he conducted those who appeared inclined to piety, and to be earnest inquirers after truth. There he gave them prayers and books which he had written, and there he often bowed the knee with them in earnest supplications.

At Angoulême he had continued to observe the exterior forms of Catholicism. He had even been called to pronounce Latin orations before the assembled clergy in the Church of St. Peter's. At the instigation of Du Tillet, he composed forms of sermons and Christian remonstrances, or exhortations, which he caused to be recited by many Curates of the neighboring localities. It was in the Grotto of Crotelles, at Poitiers, that he first broke the last links which bound him to the Church of Rome. While his friends were around him, listening to his discourse, one of them, Charles le Sage, Doctor Regent of Poitiers, took up the Word, and urged, in favor of the Mass, that it must be true, since it was celebrated in all places where the name of Christ was invoked. "This is my Mass," said Calvin, pointing to the Bible open before him, then—throwing his cap on the table and raising his eyes to Heaven—he cried with the accents of deep conviction, "Lord, if at the day of judgment Thou dost chide me that I have not been at the Mass, and that I have forsaken it, I can say, with reason, Lord, Thou hast not commanded it; behold Thy law! behold the Scripture, which is the rule Thou hast given me, in which I have been able to find no other sacrifice than that which was immolated at the altar of the Cross." The efforts of the reformer did not abide without success. Antoine de la Duguire, Doctor Regent of the University, Philippe Véron, Procurer, Albert Babinot, Doctor of Law, John Vernou, and Rénier, Lieutenant-General of the Seneschal's Court, renounced entirely the errors of Rome, formed themselves into a Church, and celebrated their first

communion in the Grotto of Crotelles. It was agreed that three among them should fill the office of Evangelists, Vernou at Poitiers, Albert Babinot at Thoulouse, Philippe Véron, who changed his name to Ramasseur, and was charged with itinerating through Saintonge, Aunis and Angoumois. A collection made at this little assembly provided for the first expenses of this pious enterprise.

After Calvin was established at Geneva, these three evangelists reported themselves to him for advice and counsel. Many young persons resorted to him there to pursue the study of theology, many ecclesiastics and monks, renouncing their vows and the Church of Rome, resorted to Saintonge, and found refuge in the isles of Ré and Oleron. One of the three evangelists perished in the fires of martyrdom, and many other noble ministers of Christ and private Christians met with the same fate.

It does not suit our purpose to trace the progress of the Reformation, which was carried on in France through years of persecution and sanguinary wars. At length the dynasty of the House of Valois was extinguished, and Henry IV., by the arms of the Protestants, was seated on the throne. They had taken him into their favor in his childhood among the shepherds of Béarne, and had conducted him from victory to victory, to the very steps of the throne. He was obliged to choose between the faith of Rome and that of the Reformation. He decided for the former, perhaps from conviction, more probably from motives of State. He could not do otherwise than guarantee to the veteran warriors to whom he was indebted for his throne their former rights. But it was not till four years after he entered Paris that their almost imperious demands wrested from him the religious and political charter known as the Edict of Nantes. Gaspard de Schomberg, Councillor of State, the historian de Thou, the President Jeannin, Dominic De Vic, Governor of Calais, labored upon it during a year with the illustrious Protestant, de Calignon, and Henry

himself discussed the ninety-two articles with the Calvinistic deputies convoked at Nantes. It proclaimed entire freedom in religion, but proceeded to limit its exercise, on the part of Protestants, by many and burdensome restrictions. It was declared irrevocable in its nature, it was in fact transitory, insufficient for the Protestants, incomplete in its provisions, and productive of only a momentary peace. At the death of the Monarch by the hands of the assassin, the Edict which protected the liberties of the Huguenots more and more lost its power. The Protestant chiefs again resumed their arms, but after terrible conflicts, in which the genius of Cardinal Richelieu was triumphant, they lost, one after another, their fortified towns, Rochelle, Montauban, Montpellier, and Nismes. When Louis XIV. espoused Maria Therese of Spain, the extirpation of heresy was one of the clauses of the contract. A commencement was made by Cardinal Mazarine, who named a commission, taken equally from the two forms of faith, to traverse the kingdom, verify the legal title of the churches, schools and cemeteries, under the perfidious pretext of maintaining the integrity of the Edict of Nantes. This commission shut up the Protestants within the bounds the Edict had enjoined, allowing no more than that Edict had expressly mentioned. All Churches and schools which the growing numbers of Protestants demanded were forthwith suppressed. This was but the beginning of sorrows; severer forms of persecution followed, and ended in those terrible dragonnades which we have spoken of in a preceding number. The ingenuity of the tormentors seems to have been assisted by the powers of darkness. The great point to be gained was to force them to abjure their faith. Among the most intolerable forms of suffering was the privation of sleep. Sometimes the tormentors would sell to their victim the privilege of enjoying it at ten, twenty, or thirty crowns an hour. But no sooner did the purchased slumber commence, than they aroused their miserable victim with the sound of

drums. An old man of Nismes, M. de Lacassagne, tormented thus a long time by fifty dragoons, abjured in the presence of the Bishop. "Soon," says the prelate, "you will find repose." "Alas, my lord," replied the worn-out old man, "I expect repose only in heaven, and God grant its gates, should I reach them, may not be shut against me." Young mothers were bound to the posts of the conjugal bed, and reduced to the alternative of abjuring or seeing their infants perish with hunger. Some succumbed under their maternal love, and professed conversion, for the privilege of suckling their famishing babes, hoping that the infinite mercy of God would pardon the act, and pity the weakness of a mother's love.

At length the Edict which protected the Protestants of France was annulled, amidst the shouts of the Church of Rome. "Take," cried Bossuet, in his funeral oration over the Chancellor of France, at whose demand Louis XIV. cancelled the Edict, "Take your consecrated pens, ye who compose the annals of the Church! Ye swift instruments of a ready writer and a diligent hand, hasten to enrol Louis with Constantine and Theodosius. Let us send our thanksgiving to heaven, and say to this new Constantine, this new Theodosius, this new Marcien, this new Charlemagne, that which the six hundred and thirty fathers said in days of yore, in the Council of Chalcedon, 'You have confirmed the faith! You have exterminated the heretics! It is the work worthy of your reign! It is its distinguishing characteristic! Through you heresy is at an end! God alone could have effected this miracle! King of heaven protect and keep the king of the earth! It is the prayer of the Church, the prayer of its prelates.'" Medals were struck commemorating "the extinction of heresy," and at the *Hôtel de Ville* of Paris a statue of bronze was consecrated "to Louis, the Great, ever conqueror, defender of the majesty of the Church and of kings." The bas-reliefs of the plinth displayed a horrible vampire, enveloping with its large

wings the works of John Huss and of Calvin; intended, in all probability, to represent the demon bearing away the books of the Reformers.* Thenceforward there was no home for the Huguenots in France. Their pastors were exiled. Five hundred Ministers, with their staves and Bibles in hand, passed the frontiers for other lands, and were followed by five hundred thousand of their people. Protestant nations vied with each other in offering them an asylum. Amsterdam alone constructed for its new guests a thousand houses, and gave them a revenue of eighty thousand florins. William of Orange, as the King of Great Britain, created an annual revenue of twenty-five thousand pounds sterling for her soldiers, and fifteen thousand pounds for her merchants. Our own soil afforded them a hospitable asylum, and the new colony of Carolina owes not a little to these persecuted children of the Church.

Of the clergy of the Huguenot Churches of France, who migrated to these shores, we find in the authors whose works are at the head of this article, the names of at least two, especially worthy of mention. One of these is Elias Prioleau, Pastor of Pons, a small town of about four thousand inhabitants, agreeably situated on a small river called la Seugne, in Saintonge. His father, Samuel Prioleau, son of Elisha Prioleau,† *sieur de La Vienerie*, had been Pastor at Jonzac in 1637, and at Niort in 1642, and succeeded Jean Constans, a Minister of singular ability and virtue, with whom he had been associated, as colleague, for some years, and who died in 1650. The

* "In 1793," says Peyrat, "this impious bronze, melted down and transformed into canon, regenerated like France, expiated the scandal of this apotheosis while thundering against her enemies."

† So Crottet. Some American authorities make him the son of Antoine, or Antoni Prioli, who was elected Doge of Venice, in 1618 and died in 1623, and suppose that the orthography of the name was adapted to the French idiom by the son on his becoming a citizen of France.

first years of the pastorate of Samuel Prioleau were passed in tranquillity, but the state of things was changed when the clergy and the Jesuits, who had become all-powerful at the Court of Louis XIV., entered upon their schemes for abrogating the muniments which the Edict of Henry IV. had thrown around the Reformed. One after another, with considerable intervals between, its provisions were infringed, ever under the appearance of carrying the Edict into execution, till the Protestants were deprived of all means of protecting or exercising their ecclesiastical rights. These designs were zealously seconded by d'Albret, who held the seignory in this city. Under these circumstances Elias Merlat, Pastor at Saintes, made overtures for the assembling of a Synod at Pons, to concert means for removing the obstacles interposed to the exercise of the Reformed worship. It met on the 25th of June, 1667, and Prioleau filled the office of Moderator.

Meanwhile, their enemies attempted to deprive this worship, and the Pastors, of all symbols of outward dignity. The title of Pastors was denied them, and they were called simply Ministers of the pretended or self-styled reformed religion, (R. P. R.) They were prohibited from wearing their clerical robes, or to appear in long habits, outside of the houses of worship. The use of bells was forbidden except in garrisoned towns. They were forbidden to sing psalms in public, or at the execution of criminals, or on days of public rejoicing. Funerals could only take place at the break of day or in the early night, and this without any address or exhortation from the Pastor. The National and Provincial Synods were required to forbid Pastors from preaching, except in the places of their residence, cutting off thus from small congregations annexed to others the exercise of public worship.

Samuel Prioleau had permitted to escape him in the pulpit some words which showed his indignation at these procedures. These were gathered up and commented on

with no friendly spirit. Agustin Mayac, the Superior of the Convent of Franciscans, accused the worthy Pastor of speaking evil of the Vicar of Christ, and he was sent to prison. His Church on the next Sabbath assembled in great numbers, and resolved to carry their complaints to the King, through the mediation of the Marquis de Ruvigny, Deputy-General of the Church, near the King. For this purpose they appointed eight men of the congregation, of the highest respectability, all deacons in the Church, to take charge of this affair. These measures were not crowned with success. After an imprisonment of more than a year, Prioleau was condemned, in reparation of his pretended blasphemy, to pay a fine of six hundred pounds, five hundred of which went to the Franciscans for the construction of their Convent, on condition that they should pray on St. Paul's day and St. Peter's for the exaltation of the Holy Church and the Holy Father, the Pope, and should invoke the Lord for the extirpation of heresy.

The Reformed of Pons were harassed perpetually with new vexations. In August, 1678, they were forbidden to have any longer a rector to instruct their youth. The unhappy parents used all proper means of remonstrating against this decree. But it was carried into execution. The schools were destroyed, two of the mistresses of the schools, and others who resisted, were thrown into prison. The most adroit methods were resorted to to gain the pupils of both sexes to the Catholic faith. Maria d'Albret, now Countess of Marsan, founded a Convent, to whose income Louis XIV. also contributed, for the education in the Catholic faith of young girls of the Reformed religion. The conversion of children of seven years of age, by whatever means effected, was declared valid, and it was decreed that the *bastards* of Protestants, for so they called their *children*, of whatever age, belonged to the communion of Rome. The Reformed were inhibited from the holding of civil office, or pursuing any of the learned professions.

The Church of Pons was at length called upon to produce to the Council of State documentary authority for the exercise of their worship, or in default of this, to have their worship interdicted, as had been the case with a multitude of Churches in the realm. Every thing presaged evil. The church of Saintes had been attacked in broad day by a fanatic mob, its doors, windows and seats broken up, and the tiles of the roof removed. The Church of Beaumont, in the neighborhood, was annihilated, and the flocks of Bois and Clan were deprived of their shepherd. The Church of Pons obtained an order from the Provincial Synod for the union of these with their own body, and elected Elders resident in those quarters, who signed the Confession of Faith and the Discipline of the Church, in December, 1682. Two months after, this Church lost its worthy and venerable Pastor, Samuel Prioleau, who died February 17, 1683, having exercised the ministerial functions in the town of Pons for thirty-two years.

Elias Prioleau, whose history is more interesting to us, was called to occupy his father's place by the Colloquy (Presbytery) met at Bazieux on the 4th of May, 1683. With a true devotedness he entered upon the perilous work confided to him. Many of his colleagues, of the neighboring Churches, had been torn from their flocks, under various pretences. Mesnard and Orillard, Ministers of Saintes, were at La Reole, in the prisons of the Parliament of Guienne. In spite of these discouraging prospects, he did not fear to place himself at the head of a Church environed with so many rocks and dangers. He prudently strove with the Elders of the Consistory (Session) to conform to the Royal orders. Proper measures were taken to send the titles of the Church to Paris, and to deposite them with the Marquis of Châteauneuf, that they might be remitted to the Council of State. They caused, meanwhile, to be read in Church, during many consecutive Sabbaths, the act of the last Synod, which excluded from

the Supper those whom fear or worldly interests had induced to abjure the evangelical worship. They distributed *tokens* * to the communicants, which they must present on approaching the Table. Fathers offering children for baptism, and god-fathers and god-mothers, were required to present themselves to the Elders near the pulpit, before the ceremony, and establish, by certificate or otherwise, their membership in the Reformed Church. On days of communion, seven or eight hundred persons partook of the sacrament, alms and collections were abundant, and Church dues were promptly paid, and discipline strictly administered.

But difficulties thickened around this devoted Church and Minister. All the Churches of that neighborhood had been already annihilated. That of Saint Fort had been interdicted, and its fragments were united to the Church of Pons by the provincial Synod held at St. Just, November, 1683. Elders were appointed, as in the other cases, to exercise the functions of their office in that quarter. On the 10th of February, 1684, Du Vigier, Councillor of the Parliament of Bordeaux, charged to take cognizance of the infractions of the edicts and declarations of the King in the department of Saintonge, repaired to Pons, and ordered all the papers which the Consistory might possess to be delivered to him. He associated with himself two monks of the Recollets (of St. Francis), as denunciators, witnesses, parties, registrars or assessors. One, La Roussie, set himself to making extracts from all the sermons of Prioleau that he could hear of or procure, and put them into the hands of the deputy commissary, after he had spitefully distorted them. The other was Augustin Mayac, who, joining his efforts to those of his *confrere*, Du Vigier, was enabled, after an examination

* These were pieces of block tin, of the size of a *sous*, which usually bore on the obverse the comforting words—Luke xii., 22—“Fear not, little flock.”

of eight hours, to collect sixteen heads of accusation against Elias Prioleau. Behold the heinous crimes with which he was charged! "1st. That he had preached at Pons before being established there as Minister. 2d. That he had baptized an infant of Mr. Marchais, privately baptized before by Saunier, the surgeon. 3d. That he had written a letter to M. St. Hilaire, to the address of Sieur Allenet à Saint-Jean, of which the original had been sent to the office of the Commissary. 4th. That the daughters of Abraham Garnier la Crápussille had come to preaching at Pons since the abjuration of their father. 5th. That children of one named Bernard Hoste had come to the Church of Pons since their father became a Roman Catholic. 6th. That children of one named Richard Blanconnier had been conducted to preaching by their mother-in-law since the abjuration of their father. 7th. That a person named Bertin had come to preaching at Pons since the abjuration of her father, and since she herself had become Catholic. 8th. That the wife of one named Boursier, bastard of Mr. Fouestier La Brande, had come to preaching at Pons." Such is the character of the whole sixteen accusations. They could not furnish sufficient ground for a sentence against Prioleau, and he was restored to his flock.

It was, however, only to witness among them the deepest afflictions. The persecution, which had consisted in confiscation and imprisonment, now was carried out in acts of violence and barbarity. The Countess of Marsan signalized herself by an ardent fanaticism. She caused to be carried off, imprisoned, beaten, and maltreated, those who declined conversion. She caused cruelties to be inflicted on persons of every age and sex, but devoted her attention particularly to the kidnapping of children from every quarter. Many men and women succumbed, after three or four weeks in prison. Many, however, resisted successfully, and regained their liberty. Even children sometimes carried their firmness further than one could

dare to hope. Jean de Brung, an orphan, twelve years of age, persisted more than a month, though the domestics of the lady made him submit to a thousand torments. They strove above all to prevent him from praying to God. At last they bethought themselves of the expedient of lowering him with cords into the privies, where they left him suspended, threatening to leave him to die if he persevered. The memphitic vapors he was constrained to breathe wore out his patience. One, named Jacques Pascalet, shut up in the tower of Pons, was thrown into a dungeon, where he could only breathe through a hole. The domestics of the Countess contrived to have the smoke of hay and wet straw penetrate there to suffocate him, and so convert him. This kind of suffering did not destroy his courage, and they conducted him to a chamber, where they made him turn around upon a table, constructed for this purpose, to produce giddiness. This exhausted his strength, and he fell to the ground in a species of *coma*. From this he was aroused by the blows of his pitiless tormentors. He could hold out no longer, but finished by abjuring.

They complained to Du Vigier. He sent them back to the Countess. They next applied to the Parliament of Guienne, and, obtaining no satisfaction, presented their case to the King, but received no response.

Many instances of the like cruelty could be here repeated. The plan adopted by Louis XIV. or his Confessor, the Jesuit, La Chaise, was followed. Missionaries were sent to Pons, with little success. These were followed by another kind of converters. Dragoons were quartered on families, to eat out their substance, and where these failed, they resorted to those manifold tortures of the body which we have recounted elsewhere. At length, October 18, 1685, the revocation of the Edict ordained also the demolition of all the Churches in the realm—the cessation of Protestant worship—required the Ministers to leave the kingdom in fifteen days; required parents to

present their children for baptism to the priests, under the penalty of a fine of five hundred pounds. The following November, the inhabitants of Pons belonging to the Reformed religion, received information of this Edict. The greater part, fearing a continuance of these cruel persecutions, permitted themselves to sign a formula of abjuration which had been prepared in advance. Those who persisted, had the pain of seeing their children conducted to the Mass, their daughters shut up in the Convents of Pons and Saintes, and their sons educated by the Jesuits. Others prepared themselves to quit a country where they could no longer serve the Lord in spirit and truth. Prioleau could not decide to abandon his flock, which was still so dear. He braved the danger, and organized secret assemblies. The 15th of April was the most dolorous day for the Protestants who had resisted all the ordeals of persecution. The house of worship was battered down. While their enemies were laboring at its demolition, Prioleau, who had assembled the people together, addressed them a most touching discourse, which they listened to flowing down with bitter tears.

Such is the account which Crottet gives of the pastor, Elias Prioleau. He adds the following words: "From this moment we are entirely ignorant what was the fate of this faithful minister. Perhaps he was the victim of his zeal and self-devotion, and finished his days upon the galleys of Rochefort, or else, seeing that his presence was a continual danger to those who furnished him an asylum, he took the resolution of withdrawing to a foreign country. However this was, while he was at Pons he did not cease to manifest the qualities and virtues of a true servant of God."

The last conjecture of M. Crottet is right. And we are able to supply the remaining particulars in the life of Elias Prioleau, the Pastor of Pons. He emigrated to South

Carolina, probably early in 1686, bringing a considerable number of his congregation with him. He was probably the founder of the French Huguenot Church in the city of Charleston. His name, and that of his wife, Jeanne Merlat, head the list of French and Swiss refugees in Carolina, who obtained naturalization in 1698.* He married, it seems, the daughter of Elias Merlat, Pastor of Saintes, before mentioned. There are said to be manuscript copies of the productions of Elias Prioleau existing among his descendants, delivered in France as early as 1677, which are characterized by great doctrinal purity, deep piety, elegance of diction, and vigor of mind. Elias Prioleau, the Huguenot Pastor, has left behind him numerous descendants in South Carolina, who cherish his memory and emulate his virtues.†

The Church of Pons was annihilated. It had neither temple nor pastor. The greater part of its members had feigned a conversion far from their hearts. It was in this melancholy situation that they received a long letter from their co-religionists of Saintonge, who had left all, that they might go to a foreign country to find that freedom to worship God denied them in France. This epistle is addressed "To our brethren who groan under the captivity of Babylon, to whom we desire peace and mercy on the part of God."

* A copy of this list is in our possession, entitled "Liste des François et Swisses Refugez au Caroline qui souhaitent d'e [tre] naturalizes Anglois." It was discovered in a parcel of old papers belonging to Henry de St. Julien, who died seventy years of age, in 1758 or 9, and was the youngest son of Peter de St. Julien, mentioned in the list. From a family Bible, still in existence, it appears that a child, whose name is given in the list, was born May, 1694, and died Sept., 1695.

† It was not till Crottet saw Weiss's "French Refugees" that he could satisfy himself as to the fate of Elias Prioleau. He immediately instituted a correspondence with America, through the intervention of some mercantile friends, by whom at length he was put in correspondence with Daniel Ravenel, Esq., of Charleston, who is a lineal descendant of Elias Prioleau, through his maternal ancestors, to whom we are indebted for a copy of the "Liste" above mentioned.

It is a letter full of affectionate advice and faithful rebuke, uttered in eloquence of language and deep sincerity. We imagine it to have been penned by Elias Prioleau, though we have no certain evidence that this is the fact. "We exhort you," say they, "to think seriously with yourselves, and to consider what you will have to answer Him who has ordered you to confess Him before men, if you desire Him to do you the honor of confessing you and acknowledging you before God and before His angels. How can you stand before the seat and tribunal of Him who has commanded you to abandon goods, possessions, houses, wives, fathers, and children, because of His name, promising to restore you a hundred fold? Can you tell Him you have resisted to blood, striving against sin? What have been your sufferings in comparison with those of our Lord Jesus Christ? What can you think when you read these words: 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake'? You can have no part in this blessedness, since you have renounced righteousness to exempt yourselves from persecution. What can you answer those holy Apostles who have preached to the world a gospel of tears, who have all died in martyrdom, and have prepared their disciples for persecution? What can you answer to our Reformers, who have spared neither vigils, nor sweat, nor blood, to draw us from idolatry and superstition? What have you to say to those happy martyrs, whose children you are, who, for the cause you have lightly abandoned, have suffered the prison, racks, fire, and the most cruel tortures? They have been buried, often for years, in dungeons full of mire, impurities, toads and serpents. Drawn thence, they have made them pass through the fire, have scorched their feet and hands, have taken them alive from the fire, that they might prolong their punishment. Still alive, when they saw their entrails coming forth from their scorched integuments, in the midst of these torments, instead of renouncing God's truth, they blessed His name

and chanted His praises. What can you say to those great workmen, who by their pious travails have raised up this glorious work of the Reformation, which you in one moment have let fall to the earth? How can you bear the reproaches of your happy ancestors, whose goods have been pillaged, who have been persecuted beyond all endurance, and who have transmitted the pure Gospel to their children? In the name of God, my very dear brethren, consider your fault in all its extent, and cry, with a holy compunction of heart, 'Now, brethren, what shall we do?' Your conscience in chains demands for you counsel, and we proceed to give it.

"First, then, be aware of the great peril in which you are. It is that of abandoning God with the heart, after having renounced him with the mouth: for it often happens that God abandons to their reprobate minds those who have had the baseness to betray their conscience.

"At first it will appear to you hard to assist at a service so opposed to yours; the sight of the images before which you see the brutish and the superstitious prostrate themselves, will give you pain; you will endure with difficulty the barbarous language in which you will hear litanies chanted to the honor of creatures, and the dishonor of their Creator; you will suffer yet more when you assist at what they call the sacrifice of the Mass, where they will make you adore the bread; but it is to be feared that, by little and little, you will accustom yourself to all this; that at first you will say, I do not believe in it, and this is enough; that in the end you will find it less bad, and come to regard idolatries as simple superstitions, which are neither good nor evil. It is infallible that this way conducts you to the contempt and hatred of the truth, and from this infallibly to hell: for it is the sin against the Spirit, which will be pardoned neither in this world nor in that to come." We forbear further extracts. This letter, conveyed secretly into all the houses of the Reformed in Pons, whom the fear of tor-

ture had induced to renounce a worship to which they were still attached in the depth of their hearts, moved their consciences. They deplored with tears the weakness which had separated them from the profession of the truth, and took the generous resolution of showing, by imposing upon themselves the greatest sacrifices, that they were the true disciples of Jesus Christ. They organized themselves into secret assemblies, and Crottet has found and given in full one of the prayers composed to be used on these occasions, which breathes a spirit of the deepest humiliation and contrition for their great sin. They now endured imprisonment with fortitude. Many, who persisted in assembling for prayer, were conducted to prison, and condemned to the galleys, as galley-slaves for life. Multitudes left their country, under divers disguises, and emigrated to the Isles of Jersey and of Guernsey, to England, Ireland, Scotland, the North of Germany, and North America. Many parents, to prevent their children from being taken from them and brought up in a false religion, sent them to foreign lands. Two gentlemen of Pons sent each four of their daughters to England, sending them on board the vessel in empty casks, to escape detection.

The people were, at length, deprived of all their Ministers and all the means of education. It was not wonderful if, under these circumstances, and under the irritation of terrible persecutions, there should spring up, in the absence of a clergy who had always inculcated submission to the Government, the spirit of resistance. This, especially, manifested itself in the most southern portion of France. De Baviile, who was the Supreme Administrator of the Province, became known—in the language of the populace—as “the King of Languedoc,” and he was the terror and horror of that unhappy people. Exasperated with their obstinacy, he would ferret out their places of secret convocation, surround them with his troops, charge upon them sabre in hand, or fire into their

crowded assemblies with a discharge of musketry. The most notable of the prisoners were hung on the nearest trees, and others sent to the galleys, where they were chained to their oar-benches in perpetual bondage. At the commencement of the eighteenth century there had been two thousand of these convicts, and among them men of gentle blood and Ministers of Christ, who were more severely treated than highway robbers.

Du Chayla, Inspector of Missions, tore away the beard and eyelids of his victims with pincers, placed live coals in their hands and pressed their fingers together with violence, or covered them with cotton saturated with oil, which he set on fire, and kept burning till the flesh was consumed to the bone. He arrested, on one occasion, a troop of fugitives, and put them in irons, among whom were two young women, of the first families. At ten in the morning of the 24th of July, 1702, forty or fifty men, chanting psalms of praise, knocked at his gate, having come as avengers of blood. They first penetrated to the dungeons of the strong-hold he occupied as his parsonage, and released the prisoners, whom they found swollen through their whole bodies, their bones half broken and unable to sustain them. The abbe Du Chayla attempted to repulse the assailants with a discharge of musketry. One of them was slain. The others set fire to the house, seized the priest, led before him his victims, showed him their contused and mangled members and bodies, and, after this terrible act of accusation, put him to death. Fifty-two wounds were found on his dead body. Thus began the war of the Camisards.

It was different, wholly, from the struggles which had preceded it. In those the gentlemen of France were engaged—under experienced leaders—on tented fields and in regular battles. This was a war of peasants, ignorant of the art of war, without arms—except such as they wrested from their enemies—and obliged to sell their lives

dearly behind the rocks and thickets of their mountains. In the Vivarais, in the high and lower Cevennes, amid their naked peaks—their bristling crests—their horrid precipices—"the image of a world tumbling to ruins and perishing with old age"—they found their strong-holds. The caverns of the mountains served them for granaries, magazines, stables, hospitals, powder-mills, arsenals, and armories. Their government was a military theocracy. For purposes of military discipline, there were captains of tens, of fifties and hundreds. Their chiefs were prophets, acting, as they believed, under a Divine inspiration. Their God was Jehovah; their temple, Mount Zion; their camp, the camp of the Eternal; their people, the children of God. The Church of Rome was Babylon, its priests the priests of Baal; their tyrant, Pharaoh. Religion was their solace; desert and solitary places, sanctified by their tears, and often by their blood, were their temples of worship. All acts of theft and cruelty were punished with the utmost severity. On the field of battle the orders of their leaders were regarded as inspired by God. Their captain, Cavalier, sword in hand, was every where present on the field of death, encouraging, animating his brethren, giving forth the most surprising orders, which were executed with unquestioning confidence, and crowned with surprising success. They believed themselves to hear the Word of God, and went into conflict as if clad with iron. Boys of twelve or fourteen years of age fought like veterans, striking as they could to the right and left. Those who had neither sabre nor musket, did execution with clubs and slings, and the hail of bullets which whistled around their ears, and pierced their hats and sleeves, was not regarded. Their number was never more than ten thousand, but they had a good understanding with many who did not join their ranks, who, by preconcerted signals, warned them of the approach of their enemies, and gave them time for concealment in their impenetrable fast-

nesses. This was continued from 1702 to 1704, but, at length, their leaders accepted conditions of peace, and their struggles were brought to an end.

There now arose a new order of Pastors, who took the place of those whom cruel death or foreign exile had removed from them, the "pasteurs sous la Croix," or "pasteurs du désert;" "pastors beneath the Cross," or "pastors of the desert." *The desert* was a vague term which the Protestants of this period used to conceal the true places from which they wrote, or to designate, in general, their persecuted Church. An attempt was now made, by a man of intrepid courage, wonderful vigor of mind and body, consummate prudence and tact, incorruptible integrity, and surprising knowledge of human nature, united with an agreeable amenity of manners, to reorganize the Huguenot Church. Antony Court deserves the name of Restorer of Protestantism in France. At the age of seventeen years he began to preach to the Churches of the desert. He was endowed by nature with remarkable gifts of eloquence, and, without the advantages of early education, he acquired, during a life of constant study and toil, rare erudition on the many topics to which his attention was directed. Even at this early age he conceived the plan of reorganizing the Churches. To four points did he direct his efforts—to repress the disorders of those who pretended to be inspired; to collect regular religious assemblies; to restore the government of Consistories, Colloquies and Synods; to raise up young Ministers, who should undertake the work of preaching the Gospel amid scaffolds and gibbets, in the spirit of martyrs. In all these things he was wonderfully successful. He traveled through the country, gathering the adherents of the truth together in desolate and hidden places. At first he was able to collect but six, ten or twelve persons, in some gap in the rocks, in some remote barn or open meadow; but at last he had the pleasure of meeting, some-

times, ten thousand souls for the worship of God. Their assemblies were held at night, under the shadow of rocks, or in caves and dens of the earth. A system of secret intelligence prevailed. Letters were addressed to third persons of approved fidelity, and the names of those for whom they were destined concealed in anagrams hard to decipher. Notices of meetings were sent by chosen messengers from place to place, and whispered from one to another. Experienced guides conducted the Ministers, at night, by adventurous and secret routes, concealed often under ingenious disguises, to the place of convocation. Sentinels placed upon the heights, at different distances, watched the approach of troops, upon whom Protestants in the towns and cities continually kept their eye, that they might convey to their brethren information of their movements. The ministers changed their abode each night, and no sufferings to which their adherents were exposed could prevail for their betrayal.

For the education of Ministers for the scattered flock, he established an institution at Lausanne, in Switzerland, which became one of unspeakable importance to the persecuted Church. To sustain it he raised subscriptions in Switzerland, England, Holland, and Germany. He searched out young men who were willing to take upon themselves, to use his own language, the vocation of martyrdom. From the plough, the shops of artisans and merchants, and from any source whence he could draw devoted and talented youth, he gathered them, sent them to Lausanne, and provided for their support till they were prepared for their work, and were initiated into their arduous, dangerous vocation as "Pastors of the desert." It was this Academy at Lausanne which saved the Protestants of France. It continued in existence for three-quarters of a century, and was closed by Napoleon in 1809, who transferred its theological faculty to Montauban. In 1740 this Seminary sent into Saintonge several of its young *Proposans*,

or *Candidates*, who reorganized, secretly, several Churches, and were followed, in 1744, by regular Ministers of the Gospel. In 1745 they received from the same institution three others, Du Bessé, Gounon, called also Pradon, and Jean Louis Gibert. These last three Pastors had no permanent abode. Always on horseback, they itinerated through the cities, towns and villages. After the fatigues of the day they would claim the hospitality of Protestant families known by their zeal, and it was always accorded to them with the liveliest alacrity.

The Protestants of Pons, who had survived the persecutions, were animated with new courage by the presence of these faithful servants of God. At the suggestion of Louis Gibert, who did not cease to visit and electrify them by his warm exhortations, they constituted themselves secretly into a Church. But already the attention of their infuriated enemies had been attracted to this religious revival, and they hastened to take measures for arresting its progress. The three zealous Pastors, and above all Gibert, who seemed the most formidable, were denounced to the magistrates. A price was set upon the head of this eminent Pastor, and the Bishop of Saintes neglected no means by which he might fall into his hands.

The following recital is given by Crottet, taken word for word from a register of baptisms and marriages of the Parish of St. Martin, in which it was inserted, without foreseeing that it would ever come forth from the sacristy, to show the infamous ambushade prepared by the chief of the diocese to take the unhappy Minister by surprise :

“Towards the month of May, 1754, there came to establish himself at Pons, with his wife, a man named Syntier, who appeared to be a person of some consideration. M. Syntier seemed at first a zealous Protestant; he would have no communication with the Catholics, not even for the articles of merchandize for which he had need. The Protestants of Pons gave him their confidence. His wife was brought to bed the beginning of November, and not having brought her infant to the Church, the undersigned, Curate, went with Mr.

Parossier, his vicar, to M. Syntier. He was not to be found. The lady, who was beginning to get about, presented herself, and said her infant was baptized by these gentlemen. The Curate made his affidavit at the Clerk's office, and in consequence of this, the procureur fiscal sent to tell M. Syntier to carry his child to the Church. The next day M. Syntier presented a letter to the Curate from M. the Bishop. It was dated November 18, 1754, and couched in the following terms: '*I have important reasons, Monsieur, to desire that you should not press M. Syntier, your parishioner, to take his child to Church to receive baptism; I pray you, then, to take no further measures in relation to it for three weeks. If the infant is in danger, I have confidential persons who are on the watch, and who will take care to anticipate the time, so as to avoid all accidents. I have the honor, &c.*' Upon this the Curate remained quiet. M. Syntier caused his child to be baptized by a minister. He prayed the minister to dine with him the next day. But the Protestants began to suspect M. Syntier. They saw him make frequent journeys to Saintes. The minister refused to dine with him. In the night M. Syntier had sent to advertise the cavaliers of the marshalsea of St. Genis, by a kind of soldier whom he called his brother-in-law, and who had lived with him about two months. The cavaliers arrived at early dawn at the inn of Petit St. Jean, near the Cross of St. Vivien. A moment after, the minister passed on horseback, accompanied by two persons. The cavaliers mounted promptly and pursued the minister. They overtook him at the cross-road which conducted to Chardon. Those who accompanied the minister put themselves on the defensive, fired upon them, and they, in return, killed one, who was a gentleman of Sainte-Foy. They took another, but at the commencement of the combat the minister escaped upon a gallop, and they were unable to apprehend him. The horsemen charged upon his horse, and garroted another, who was a deacon. They passed by Coudenne and the fair-ground, to conduct him to Saintes. M. Syntier and his brother-in-law went on to identify them. The cavaliers made the semblance of removing to a distance from them, but the Protestants were not deceived. They regarded M. Syntier as a spy. Suddenly M. Syntier and his brother-in-law withdrew, and appeared no more at Pons. Some days after, Madame Syntier also went, escorted by the cavaliers of the marshalsea. It is said that they retired to Rochelle, and there had their child baptized.

"The better to put the Protestants on the wrong scent, some days before this scene, the cavaliers came to M. Syntier's, and seemed to be making diligent search for the child, to take him to Church, but did not find it. The time of the visit was doubtless known. They had sent the infant away, and the cavaliers could not find it.

(Signed)

"FORGET,

"Curate of Sainte Martin de Pons."

M. Crottet had learned from other sources that the night before Jean Louis Gibert's arrival at Pons he slept at the house of an Elder of the Church of Gemozac, by the name of Bugeaud. The gentleman who accompanied him was the Count de Grâce, who was actively employed in establishing the Churches. On leaving Pons, this last had forced Louis Gibert, whose useful ministry he appreciated, to change horses with him. They did not seek to resist the horsemen sent in their pursuit. They refused simply to stop when commanded to do so, and it was then that the balls of the horsemen struck the unfortunate gentleman who rode the horse which had been described to them as the horse of the Minister. This odious attempt discouraged neither the Pastor nor the flock. At the commencement of 1755, Louis Gibert reappeared at Pons, and assembled the scattered members of this ancient Church at the wood of Merlet, in the parish of Tanzac. This reunion was fatal to some who assisted at it, who were seized and conducted to the prison of Rochelle. M. Thomas de Riollet, one of them, who filled the office of Elder, composed during his imprisonment a short address to encourage his brethren at Pons, from which Crottet gives extracts.*

There is another scene, equally if not more striking, which shows the courage and conduct of this noble Pastor of the desert, who ended his days and whose descendants still live in South Carolina.

“The depth of the woods, out-of-the-way places, caverns of the rocks, or the shores of the ocean, served them as temples. It was in these last retreats that they assembled of choice, for there the cruel persecutors could with difficulty hear their songs and prayers, which were drowned by the solemn voice of the winds and waves. Often, by the feeble light of the torch, did they there listen in pious

* Crottet, page 168.

meditation to the reading of the Word of God, which had become their only treasure, or to the touching recitals of the sufferings, firmness, and courageous death of their distant brethren. In spite of the danger, it was sufficient only to announce the presence of a Pastor in a particular place, to see the scattered members of the neighboring Churches run thither. One of the last and most remarkable of these reunions of the desert took place under the ministry of Louis Gibert. One or two days before the appointed time, many of the Reformed arrived from the most distant parts of Saintonge. A generous hospitality was accorded them in the dwellings of the Protestants living near, and of Catholics who had never approved the severity with which they had been treated. But it was not till the next day, and the day of the Assembly, that the mass of the faithful arrived. The richer were borne on little vehicles, or mounted on horses. The others had accomplished long journeys on foot. Gibert, the intrepid Gibert, on whose head a price was always set, was not tardy in reaching his numerous flock. He escaped the pursuit of his enemies, a few days later, only by hiding under the straw, at the house of an Elder of La Salle, named Guillot. To avoid all surprise, it was agreed that they should hold the service, as usual, at night, in the heart of the forest of Velleret, in a place where there was a wide space, called still by the inhabitants, the Combe de la Bataille, in memory, doubtless, of some ancient battle with the English. All was arranged for the celebration of worship. They carried thither the different pieces which composed the pulpit of the desert. This was placed between two oaks. The communion table was arranged in the enclosure of the Consistory, or the place reserved for the Elders. Seven flambeaus, placed at intervals, shed a feeble light over seven or eight thousand persons grouped together in pious meditation. A moment after these preparations, the Pastor, escorted by certain of the faithful, armed for his

defence, ascended the pulpit clad in his ecclesiastical habit. Their arms were then laid aside. At the invitation of Louis Gibert the assembly sang the 84th Psalm, whose words were so appropriate to their present circumstances. But the solemn chant, which reëchoed with such clearness during the silence of the night, gave the alarm to certain enemies of the Gospel, who, suspecting some assembly, were prowling about to discover the place the Protestants had chosen. They hastened towards the Combe de la Bataille, having at their head Bernard, Governor (Tutor) of Prince Camille, of Pons. Gibert did not allow himself to be disconcerted by their presence. He ordered, from the pulpit, that they should seize their persons, disarm them, and place them in the Consistory, that they might convince themselves that their assemblies had no other object than the worship of God. The services then continued without interruption. A considerable number of children, brought from places the most distant, were baptized. Young people of both sexes, who had been instructed by the Elders in the truths of the Gospel, were received into the membership of the persecuted Church, and many marriages were blessed (celebrated). Gibert, in a discourse full of faith and life, touched the hearts of his numerous auditors, and it was while shedding tears of gratitude they took part in the sacrament of the Supper, which some of them had been deprived of for a long time. The meeting continued nearly five hours. Those who had assisted at it then resumed their journey homewards, blessing the Lord for the holy joys he had vouchsafed. But all had not the good fortune to reach their homes in safety. Some had to submit on the way to many persecutions of the enemies of the Gospel, chiefly on the part of the Lord of Semussac and Monsieur Labbé, Captain of the Coast Dragoons. This last, a gentleman of Talmont, slew with his own hand a married lady of La Jaille. The widow Larente, who accompanied her, would have shared the same fate if the

sword of this fanatic had not broken against her corset. This circumstance saved her life." *

After these events, we find this indefatigable Minister still active. He encouraged the Protestants of Pons to secure to themselves a house of worship. They accomplished this by purchasing two houses adjoining each other, removing the separating wall and arranging the interior for religious service. He stimulated the faithful of Saint-Seurin and de Mortagne to construct also a place of worship. This they did, but it was demolished by their persecutors in 1768. He also established a school at Biziterie for Protestant children. Still later we find him engaged in constructing a church at Gemozac. These churches were often barns, at other times dwelling-houses, converted to purposes of religion.† But the Intendant of Rochelle, de Baillon, Councillor of State, ordered all such to be demolished. Martin Pasdejue, of Arvert, for disposing of his granges, or barns, at Avallon, for this purpose, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment in a Convent.‡ Soon there followed a judgment against the Pastor who had occupied the post of danger. A sentence was passed§

* Crottet.

† In the year 1756, the troops which passed by Pons and Gemozac took possession of their houses of religious assembly. On this occasion Gibert addressed a letter to his different Churches, dated May the 3d, 1756, which is given by Crottet, in which he counsels them, out of the love they bear their King, to submit to this oppression, and to meet in their private dwellings for the worship of God; and, for this purpose, to subdivide their congregations as much as convenience may demand. He exhorts them not to spread hangings and tapestries on the ninth of the following month, in honor of the God of the Church or Rome. "Your God is in the Heavens," says the Psalmist, "where he doeth according to His will, and is jealous of His own glory." The Reformed of Gemozac, says Crottet, conformed to the invitation of Louis Gibert, and though there were two companies of dragoons in Gemozac, they spread nothing in front of their houses. Each householder was fined six livres, afterwards reduced one-half, which was placed in the hands of the Church Wardens, to repair the roof of the Catholic Church.—*Crottet*, 221.

‡ Coquerel, II., 228. Also, *Lett. du Past. Etienne Gibert*, in Coquerel, p. 363.

§ July 14, 1756.

by the same Intendant against the Minister, Gibert, "duly held and convicted of having performed the functions of Minister for many years in the province of Saintonge; with having convoked and held assemblies of religionists; with having preached; celebrated the Supper, baptisms and marriages." He was condemned to the gibbet after submitting to this singular procedure. He must be conducted to the principal gate of the Church of Saint Bartholomew, "and there, with head uncovered, on his knees, say and declare, in a loud and intelligible voice, that he had wickedly, and as ill-advised, performed the aforesaid functions of the ministry, to the prejudice of the ordinances of his Majesty." The nephew of the Minister, Stephen Gibert, must assist at the execution of his uncle, and then be conducted to the gallies. The Protestants, Gentelot de Sainte-Foy, and Belrieu de la Grâce, convicted of having accompanied the Minister Gibert, nightly, and of having menaced, with their pistols, the cavaliers who would seize them, were condemned to prison, and Andrew Bonfils was banished. Happily, the persons accused had fled. De Belrieu had died. "His memory must abide suppressed." The Intendant did not fail to take possession of their goods, not being able to seize their persons. This accounts for the note of Paul Rabaut in his journal: "The Pastor, Gibert, is exposing himself greatly in Saintonge." The courageous and zealous Minister survived a long time this barbarous sentence.*

Despairing, however, of finding liberty of worship in his own land, he conceived the project, which could hardly be universally carried into execution, of an extensive expatriation of his fellow-worshippers to foreign countries. His plan was to make this known at Versailles, to show that the way was open, and to hold it up in terror to the Government if the persecutions should recommence.

* Coquerel, II., pp. 228, 229.

Gibert, in the year 1763, left France for England, and negotiated with the English Government for the transportation of colonists to Carolina. His memorial was read in Council July 6, 1763, praying for a tract of thirty square miles on the eastern bank of the Savannah, between Purisburg and Fort Moore. This memorial was for substance granted. By correspondence with his friends in various provinces in France, two hundred and twelve persons, having hastily converted their effects into money, commenced their travels in small numbers from Languedoc, Hainault, and Montrevel, and from the River Loire, pursuing their way in secret, and often by night. On the 2d of August they reach their vessel, and after a stormy passage arrive in England, and collect at their rendezvous at Plymouth. On January 25th, 1764, they set sail from Plymouth, and are twice driven back. On the 22d of February they set sail once more, and on the 14th of April land at Charleston, and are accommodated in barracks furnished by the town. They took the oath of allegiance on the 18th of April, three days after their arrival, at which time their bounty lands, varying from three hundred to one hundred acres each, were assigned them. His Majesty, George III., had taken them under his particular protection, supported them from his privy purse, and ordered that they should be provided for on their arrival. They were to be settled on a township of the best unoccupied land, and absolved from quit-rents for ten years. They sent up a party to explore the country and select a site for a town, who soon returned to make their report. In July, two parties of the settlers set out from Charleston, and reached the place of their destination, in Abbeville District (which was named from Abbeville in France). Another party reached the spot in November. A township was surveyed for them by Patrick Calhoun, including twenty-six thousand acres on both sides of Little River, with a town of eight hundred acres, which they called New Bor-

deaux, after Bordeaux in France, from which some of them came. A palisade fort * was also erected, overlooking the town, as a protection from the Indians, and vineyard lots of four acres each were laid out in the vicinity.

The settlement was commenced under Rev. Mr. Boutiton, one of their pastors, Mr. Gibert having remained some months in Charleston and its vicinity. This Mr. Boutiton was the brother-in-law of Jean Louis Gibert, and officiated, at least occasionally, in clerical services. Mr. Gibert appears, however, to have been regarded as their spiritual leader. They had a regular organized Church, kept a baptismal registry, and faithfully maintained religious worship. Their beloved and noble leader, Jean Louis Gibert, the well-known and distinguished "Pastor of the desert," died in August, 1773, aged fifty-one. His life, though not long, was an eventful one, characterized with great energy and devoted zeal. To have braved the bitter persecutions of malignant enemies for so many years—to have sustained the faith of the afflicted children of "the Church beneath the Cross" in his own native land—to have escaped the snares laid for him there—to have transplanted a colony of those persecuted saints in the American wilderness, where their descendants still reside, and to have watched over this colony during the first years of its existence—was accomplishing far more than falls ordinarily to the most chosen servants of God. The choice library which he brought with him shows his cultivated tastes. It was distributed, after his death, among his descendants, and though his manuscripts, and many valuable volumes, have perished, enough yet remain as memorials of a man to be had in long remembrance. He left a widow and three small children, a son and two daughters. The son died unmarried. His youngest daughter, Louise, who was about six years old at her father's death, married William Peti-

* Fort Bonne.

gru, and was the mother of Capt. Thomas Petigru, of the United States Navy, recently deceased, and of Hon. James L. Petigru, of Charleston, whose family are the only lineal descendants of the Rev. J. L. Gibert. The other daughter married Mr. Thomas Finley, and died leaving an infant son, John Louis. He grew up a young man of great promise, but died while a student of the South Carolina College, and his remains were recently removed by the students of that College to the Elmwood Cemetery, near Columbia, out of respect to an honorable family, and to that distinguished "Pastor of the Desert," of "the Church under the Cross," JEAN LOUIS GIBERT. His nephew, [according to Coquerel, but "his brother," according to Moragne,*] Etienne Gibert, who was also educated at Lausanne, migrated to England, and was Minister of the Chapel Royal. A volume of his sermons, and a book of criticisms on the writings of Voltaire, were there published. Another nephew, Pierre Gibert, was taken to England by Etienne Gibert, and there partially educated. He was brought to this country by his uncle, and became an Elder of the Church at Hopewell, and subsequently of the Church at Willington, and was for several years a member of the Legislature of South Carolina. Another, Simon Gibert, we have met with in history, as Pastor of Bas Languedoc, in France. Peter Gibert was a patriot of the revolution, and is still represented by numerous descendants, among whom are three Ministers of the Gospel in the Presbyterian Church.

* We are indebted for the American history of this family to the excellent address of W. C. Moragne, Esq., delivered at New Bordeaux, Nov. 11, 1854, being the ninetieth anniversary of the arrival of the French Protestants at that place.