

**THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF
NANTES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES TO
THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF FRANCE
AND ITALY: CONTAINING MEMOIRS OF
SOME OF THE SUFFERERS IN THE
PERSECUTION ATTENDING THAT EVENT**

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The revocation of the Edict of Nantes and its consequences to the Protestant Churches of France and Italy: containing memoirs of some of the sufferers in the persecution attending that event by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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INTRODUCTION.

FROM an early period of the Reformation, the Protestants of France, although embracing many of the nobility, were assailed by the most relentless persecutions. The church of Rome has ever been the enemy of light, and has never hesitated, where it possessed the power, to employ force and violence to prevent its diffusion. The Reformed Church in France was particularly exposed to the malignant persecutions of a corrupt government, instigated by the sanguinary suggestions of the Roman Pontiffs and troops of Jesuits. An exemption from these troubles, was secured by the celebrated Edict drawn up at Nantes, by which Henry IV. guaranteed to his Protestant subjects, the possession of religious liberty and the secure enjoyment of civil rights and privileges. This delivered them from all further molestation during the period of that monarch's reign.

At a subsequent period, however, the persecuting spirit of the Church of Rome, which had been temporarily held in check, again burst forth with additional violence. Stratagem having failed to induce the Protestants to put themselves under the

Papal yoke, every measure, which malice and cruelty could suggest, was resorted to for their extirpation. Lewis the XIV., prevailed on by the importunities of the Bishops and Jesuits, in disregard of all laws human and divine, revoked the *Edict of Nantes*, by which act the Protestants were deprived of the liberty of worshipping God, agreeably to the dictates of their consciences, and were exposed without shelter to the sanguinary assaults of their enemies. The Roman pontiff applauded the measure which was to bring ruin upon so many thousands. An attempt being made to force the consciences of the Protestants, they emigrated in vast numbers to other parts of Europe, in which they might enjoy the sacred privileges which had been denied them in their own country. This proved highly detrimental to the real prosperity of France, as it deprived it of many of its most useful citizens. Where flight was impossible the unhappy Protestants were subjected to the most cruel and murderous persecutions.

Living, as we do, in peace and security, so far removed from times when the fury of religious persecution desolated the land, we can scarcely imagine the distress and alarm of the Protestants, when this unrighteous decree was passed. Not only was the exercise of their religion, in public and in private, forbidden, but they were interdicted from following any trade or profession, by

which they might procure the means of living for themselves and their families, and from holding any office whatever, which might give them weight and influence in society. It was soon found that flight to a foreign land was the only earthly refuge for the sufferers. But here, again, difficulties beset them wherever they turned. By a most perverse cruelty, while they were deprived of the means of living in their own country, they were not permitted to seek an alleviation of their misery, by retiring to a foreign land. The greatest advantage the most fortunate could hope to obtain, was the mournful privilege of becoming fugitives and exiles.

Though multitudes were unable to succeed in removing themselves and their families from their native country, many overcame every obstacle. Various parts of the continent were open to them, and England and America offered them a shelter from the fury of the oppressor. Half a million of the most virtuous and industrious subjects of the king of France withdrew to other countries, which they enriched by the arts and manufactures they carried with them.

Of the miseries occasioned by the proceedings against the members of the reformed church, we can form very little idea from a cursory view of the subject. All the ministers were commanded to leave the kingdom within fifteen days after the