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HENRY IV (1589-1610)

Hayes, a prominent historian writes about the condition of France during the seventeenth century predominance of France, "Sorry, indeed, was the plight of France which Henry IV set out to remedy. A century of civil and foreign wars had produced most unfortunate consequences for the French state and for the French people. The state was nearly bankrupt. Country districts lay largely uncultivated. Towns were burned or abandoned. Roads were rough and neglected, and bridges in ruins. Many of the discharged soldiers turned highwaymen, pillaged farmhouses, and robbed travellers. Trade was at a standstill and the artisans of the cities were out of work."

But Henry IV being a worthy ruler and efficient commander of soldiers handled the situation very intelligently and added to power and prestige of France.

A. J. Grant writes, "Henry is the most popular of all the kings of France, though he is usually known by the name of Henry of Navarre, which he bore before his succession to the throne. He is remembered as the gallant soldier who gave France peace after many years of civil and foreign wars."

Henry IV, the new king of the Bourbon dynasty was a brave soldier, an intelligent politician and gentleman. He succeeded to the throne of France after the death of Henry III. He belonged to the sect of Huguenots, hence the followers of Catholic religion did not have regard for him; therefore after his accession he had to face very many problems.

Early Difficulties of Henry IV

In 1589, Henry IV of France established his control over some parts of France and declared himself the legitimate ruler of France. However, he had to face various problems like the opposition of the Catholics and Paris, terror of Spain and economic and financial crisis.

(1) **Opposition of Catholics.** Henry IV remained the leader of the Protestants and the Huguenots for a pretty long time, but at the time of his accession there was majority of Catholics in France and they were not prepared to tolerate any ruler whose religion was anti-Roman Catholic. Hence the Catholics of France sought the help of Spain and put hurdles in his way.

(2) **Opposition of Paris.** Paris, the capital of France was the centre of the power of Roman Catholics. The Catholics of the contemporary period had a vast army of their own. Moreover, the Emperor of Spain had sent a mighty and well-equipped army for the support of the Catholics of Paris. The Duke of Parma was the commander of this army; therefore, even after having laid siege to Paris, Henry IV was feeling a lot of trouble in establishing his control over Paris.

(3) **Terror of Spain.** Philip II who was the ruler of Spain during this period, was a staunch Roman Catholic. He could not tolerate at all that the throne of France be occupied by a Protestant ruler because France was his very close neighbour. Owing to the policies of Philip II, Henry IV was afraid of an impending war between France and Spain. It disturbed him all the time.

(4) **Deplorable Economic Condition of France.** On account of the prolonged civil war, the economy of France had been crippled. Hence it was a great problem before Henry IV as to how he was to get rid of Civil War and the fear of Spanish intervention, only then he could be able to improve the economic condition of France. Constant wars were the greatest impediment in the economic development of France.

(5) **Decline of International Glory of France.** Taking the advantage of Civil War in France the Catholic feudal lords strengthened their position. They were staunch rivals of the Emperor of France.

France had lost its significance in economic and political spheres. Besides, the glory of France was waning in the international sphere for want of a powerful army.

Solution of the Problems

No doubt, Henry IV was a weak ruler but he faced all the problems very boldly and tried to find out their solutions.

Control over Paris and Conversion. Henry IV was facing great difficulties in the establishment of his control over Paris and other cities on account of the opposition of the Catholics and Spanish army. He, therefore, decided to embrace Catholic religion to quieten the opposition of the Catholics. The Protestants also advised him that he could only do good to the Protestants after conversion. The main cause of this was that Henry IV was neither a staunch Catholic nor a Protestant. He wanted to establish harmony between the two rival sects. So he joined the fold of Catholicism in 1593 and his coronation ceremony was performed in 1594 according to the Catholic traditions. After this, the Pope of Rome recognised him as the Emperor of France in 1595. Scheville writes, "For four years Henry waited for the subjects to acknowledge him as their king. When they did not do so, he took a step which it is not difficult to understand (i.e., he resumed Catholicism)."

War against Spain and Peace. Henry IV had to do two main things. First, he was to punish Spain as she was interfering in the domestic affairs of France, and secondly, to give security to the Huguenots in order to make them the contented citizens. When he felt that his position was quite secure on the French throne, he declared war against Spain in 1595. He

sent the united army of Catholics and Protestants against Spain which was his ancient foe. The war against Spain continued for three years (1595-1598). In the beginning the French armies were defeated but at last France stood victorious because at the same time Spain was involved in the war against Holland and England. At last being compelled by the circumstances, Philip II concluded a treaty of Vervins with Henry IV. Scheville writes, "Beset by three governments, Philip soon saw the necessity of giving up his far-ranging schemes and notified Henry of his willingness to treat. The result was the Peace of Vervins (1598) in which Henry received formal recognition as king of France and the relations between the two countries were re-established on the terms laid down in the Treaty of Cambrais." Thus the interference of Spain in the internal affairs of France came to an end and cordial relations were established between the two countries.

Religious Policy of Henry IV and the Edict of Nantes. First of all, Henry IV paid his attention towards religion. He wanted to establish harmony among all the religions. His conversion to Catholicism satisfied most of the Catholics and this very reason annoyed a great number of his old Protestant friends. Most of his close and intimate friends who helped and supported him through thick and thin and always remained ready to sacrifice their lives for his safety and welfare were now not ready to co-operate and support him at any cost. Henry IV, therefore, issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598 in order to give some concessions to the Protestants. According to the provisions of the Edict of Nantes some such concessions were granted to the followers of Protestant religion in France as were never enjoyed by them in any part of Europe. Scheville writes, "In the matter of religious rights, the Edict of Nantes authorized Protestant worship in two places in each bailiwick (administrative division) as well as with certain restrictions, in the castles of Huguenot noblemen."

Significance of the Edict of Nantes

The Edict of Nantes was not only significant in the history of France but also in the history of Europe because in the age of religious intolerance, for the first time the Protestants or Huguenots could get rights, freedom and concessions on such a large scale in France. The Protestants got the right to worship in about 200 places and 3500 fortresses. Besides, the Huguenots living within 21 kilometres of Paris and in nearby places were given the right of worship, equal to the Catholics in schools, colleges and universities. They were also permitted to fortify about hundred forts. Thetcher writes about it that this declaration pacified the one civil war but it became the cause of the outbreak of another civil war. However, this declaration added to the popularity of Henry IV and people began to call him 'Good king Henry'. Commenting on the Edict of Nantes, Hayes mentions that 'the Edict of Nantes made Huguenots, Protestants and Roman Catholics equal before the law.' Scheville also mentions in this connection, "Not only were the Huguenots permitted to hold political assemblies in which they might legislate for themselves like an independent power but, as a guarantee of the execution of the treaty, they were put in possession of a certain number of fortified

towns, of which La Rochelle was the most important. By these concessions the Huguenots were constituted as an armed minority within and yet outside the state."

In that age of fanaticism and narrow thinking through the Edict of Nantes Henry IV gave all those rights to the people of France which they might have never dreamt of. It was a declaration worth following by the other countries of Europe and it proved to be a boon for the people of France. It led France to national unity, and because of it remarkable social, economic and political progress could be possible in France. This declaration ended civil war in France and led the country towards a constructive era.

Criticism of the Edict of Nantes

1. First of all though the Edict of Nantes was very significant for Henry IV because it established peace in France, yet the Roman Catholics could not digest it and they condemned it altogether.
2. Some of the Protestants were also not satisfied with this declaration and they considered it a half-hearted and insufficient declaration because only the Calvinists and Huguenots were recognized by it and other Protestants were not mentioned in it.
3. Several Huguenot nobles misused it. They fortified their fortresses and later on indulged in war against the Catholics.
4. It strengthened the powers of decentralization. Huguenot nobles enhanced their power and established their unions for their own good.
5. The misuse of freedom by the Huguenots proved a dangerous hurdle in the establishment of a powerful monarchy.
6. Actually, the Edict of Nantes had created an independent state in the French nation. Later, Richelieu had to face this problem and by suppressing the Huguenots severely, developed supreme and powerful monarchy in France. However, Scheville remarks, "Nonetheless, the tension between Catholics and Protestants continued unabated, reminding us that in that age intolerance was an emotion as spontaneous as the love of kin or the fear of fire."

Constructive Activities of Henry IV

Henry IV was a man of action. After the declaration of the Edict of Nantes he devoted himself with zeal and enthusiasm to the task of utilizing the peace to heal up the wounds of his country by making the following reforms:

Organization of Administration and Reforms. France had to suffer a lot due to prolonged civil war and the country was almost destroyed and devastated by massacre and plunder. A. J. Grant has written about it, "We hear of large districts that had gone out of cultivation, of wolves invading villages and even towns, the habits of the people had retrograded towards barbarism. More difficult even than the defeat of the Spaniards was the redemption of the country from its misery and its re-establishment as one of the most advanced and prosperous of European states."

Appointment of Sully and his Reforms. Henry IV in order to reorganise his administration appointed the Duke of Sully to the post of President of the Financial department in 1606. He was the chief supporter of Henry IV. However, though both had the same objectives, they were poles apart in nature. Both intended to raise France to the heights of progress and development so that her ancient glory be established again. Scheville writes, "By putting friend of his Huguenot days, the Duke of Sully, in charge of the treasury, he had the satisfaction of seeing how by the vigilance of this enlightened servant the royal debt was gradually reduced and the annual deficit converted into a surplus available for further debt reduction."

A. J. Grant also writes about the efficiency of Sully, "Sully was a man of great honesty, great force of character and patient attention to detail. He managed to bring some order into the inscrutable tangle of the finances. He did utmost to encourage agriculture, the building of roads and canals and the suggestion of new methods. The silkworm was introduced by him into France and the silk industry became an important one."

Sully attained a lot of popularity due to his following reforms :

1. Sully removed all the corruption rampant in revenue department by his extraordinary ability, efficiency and sternness and increased the collection of revenue. Before him the collection of the revenue was a difficult task as the country was involved in civil war and foreign wars.

2. He dismissed all the inefficient and corrupt officers from various departments and appointed honest, efficient and industrious persons in their places. It purified the administration and helped in its smooth running.

3. He established peace, order and justice in the administration.

4. In order to enhance the business of corn, he removed all the taxes from corn and for the development of agriculture he dug canals and made the barren land cultivable.

5. He made necessary reductions in the expenditure of the government. He spent money on essential commodities. His policy of reduction proved beneficial. As a result thereof the royal coffers began to fill and the burden of foreign debts lessened.

6. He appointed some high officers to look after and to inspect the work of Provincial Governors.

7. He started the system of providing assistance to the merchants and the traders for the development of trade and industries. Arrangements were also made for the training of the workers.

8. He made new roads and bridges and renovated the old ones. Means of transportation and communication were also improved which helped the rise of trade.

9. He concluded commercial treaties with different countries so that foreign trade might prosper.

10. He ordered the confiscation of the property of those who had collected huge amounts of wealth through unfair means.

11. He removed all the restrictions so far imposed on export of the corn. As a result, people began to sell their surplus corn in the European markets and money poured into France, but he restricted the export of gold and silver.

12. He organised a powerful navy and made some commercial ships which not only helped in the establishment of colonies in foreign lands but also added to the development of sea trade.

A prominent historian A. J. Grant writes about these reforms of Sully, "The combined efforts of Henry IV and Sully did much to replenish the exhausted treasury, to reduce the national debt and to revive the prosperity of France."

Evaluating the reforms of Henry IV and Sully, Wakeman has written that in short, Henry IV was a shrewd politician but the Duke of Sully was an administrator. France needed the services of both. On the one hand, Henry IV sought out a final solution of the religious problem of France and led the country on the path of political progress and development; on the other hand, Sully developed the economic resources of the empire by his honesty and vigilance. Because of their reforms both of them would be remembered forever as the founders of the national glory of France.'

Establishment of Powerful Bourbon Monarchy

In France Louis XI and Francis I established powerful monarchy but the foreign wars and prolonged civil war weakened the monarchy in due course of time. The feudal lords of France did not wish that the monarchy should be strengthened because of their selfish motives. They often went on creating anarchy in France. They themselves remained involved in the civil wars and put incessant troubles in the way of monarchy; therefore, it was essential for the establishment of a powerful monarchy that the feudal lords should be crushed and peace and order be established in France. The people of France were not only fed up but also extremely distressed on account of foreign wars and wished from the core of their hearts that the prevailing chaos and confusion be replaced by peace and order. With this aim in view, they were prepared to support and co-operate with their king.

Henry faced all these problems with patience, enthusiasm and diplomacy. First of all he tempted some of the great nobles by giving them high and lucrative posts and gained their favour. However, a powerful noble raised the standard of revolt with the help of Savoy (Italy) and some other states. Henry IV crushed this revolt ruthlessly and assassinated the noble. He also punished some of the wicked nobles of southern France and forced them to be obedient. Some Huguenots were endeavouring to hatch a conspiracy and planning for a revolt. As soon as Henry IV came to know of this conspiracy, he made an invasion against the Huguenots and nipped the conspiracy in the bud. Thus he succeeded in establishing a powerful monarchy in France by forcing the rebellious nobles to accept his supremacy. He did not summon the Estates General as there was majority of feudal lords in it and also kept his control over the Supreme

Court. Thus he established a powerful and autocratic monarchy in France by dint of his courage and diplomacy.

Foreign Policy of Henry IV

The international power and prestige of France was marred on account of civil war which continued for a pretty long time. Just after his accession, Henry IV decided to recover the lost prestige of France. At this time Austria and Spain were holding a significant place in the politics of Europe and the rulers of Hapsburg dynasty were reigning over these two countries. Henry IV tried his best to demolish the power of these two powerful countries because they were the only hurdles in the way of progress of France. In order to fulfil his wishes he established friendly relations with various small and big countries of Europe and set them free from the influence of Austria and Spain.

The activities of Henry IV also influenced otherwise the power and prestige of Spain and Austria. The people of Netherlands raised a banner of revolt against the Emperor of Spain. France endeavoured to mitigate the power of Spain by providing help to the rebels of Netherlands. He secretly helped Turkey for launching an invasion against the rulers of Spain and Austria. In order to enhance his foreign influence he married the princess of Tuscany, named Marie de Medici in 1600 and established cordial relations with Savoy in 1601. He also concluded a treaty with Venice in 1607 and thus besides Milan he established his control over most of northern Italy. He almost ended the influence of the Hapsburg dynasty here. Later on, Richelieu followed this policy very wisely and tactfully. Scherville commenting on the wise foreign policy of Henry IV writes, "When he had thus fortified France with a ring of political outposts, he considered the time to be ripe once more to summon the House of Hapsburg to the field."

Assassination of Henry IV

Henry IV was not blessed with a son and successor for quite a long time and the issue of succession went on becoming intricate day by day. Hence he married a princess of Tuscany and a son was born to her, who later on succeeded to the throne of France by the name of Louis XIII.

During the reign of Henry IV the place of the ruler of a small state in Germany fell vacant and conflict broke out between the Catholics and the Protestants on the question of succession. Henry IV intervened in this issue and favoured the Protestants. It annoyed the Roman Catholics and Ravlock, a staunch Catholic, assassinated Henry IV on 14 May 1610. It harmed the national interest of France. Austria and Spain were benefitted by this incident. His minor son, Louis XIII succeeded to the throne of France under the regency of his mother Marie de Medici. She concentrated all the powers in her hands and France continued to be afflicted by various crises for fifteen years, hence the matter of establishing supremacy of France in Europe remained in abeyance.

An Estimate of Henry IV

Henry IV was a man of liberal attitude. He was born and brought up in a staunch Catholic atmosphere and it was expected of him that

considering the social traditions of France, he would prove to be a staunch Catholic. But the reality was altogether different and he continued to be a liberal ruler throughout his reign. He carried out remarkable reforms in the political, social, economic and religious spheres and the people of France felt obliged to him because of his reforms. In fact he was a liberal ruler and an ideal reformer. He sponsored various reforms for the good of the people.

When he succeeded to the throne, chaos and confusion prevailed in France due to prolonged civil war. Moreover, the royal treasury was almost empty. Under such circumstances it was very difficult to free France of all problems by making it organized, powerful and prosperous but Henry IV searched out ways of doing so. He maintained harmony between the Protestants and Catholics and found out constructive solution, such as, the Edict of Nantes which was a living example of his ability and farsightedness.

Besides this, he made the wicked nobles obedient and established a powerful monarchy which was the need of the time as the people of France were very much distressed by the prolonged civil war.

Henry IV also paid attention to the economic reforms. It was really the fortune of France that he could enlist the services of such a capable Minister as Sully who introduced significant reforms in the economic structure of France. The selection of Sully to the post of Finance Minister also signified his ability and capability in making selections of intelligent and diligent officers.

Henry IV was a great patriot and a high-class diplomat. When he ascended the throne, there was supremacy of the Hapsburg dynasty of Austria and Spain in the entire Europe but Henry IV did not get alarmed at the adverse circumstances and established his influence in Italy by marrying the princess of Italy, Marie de Medici of Tuscany. When he was assassinated there was all-round progress and development in France and the country had secured an honourable place in the political arena of Europe. A J. Grant has also written about it, "The age of national glory was ushered in France due to Home and Foreign policy of Henry IV."

Hayes also writes, "The credit of the beginning of the prosperous age of Louis XIV goes to Henry IV. Had there been no reign of Henry IV in France, there would have been no prosperous age of Louis XIV in France."

Besides the above virtues, he had certain demerits in his character. He was a man of obstinate nature and prepared to do anything for his own selfish objectives. Even after he had embraced the Roman Catholic religion his attachment and devotion towards Protestantism had not lessened. Actually, it was not his weakness but his religious toleration and large-heartedness. He was very much attached to women. Had he not been assassinated too early, he would have made France a very important country in Europe. He effected certain revolutionary changes in the foreign policy of France and gave birth to a glorious age in France. His demerits paled into insignificance before his merits and he came to be known as a popular and important ruler of France.

Henry IV breathed his last on 14th May 1610 and his son Louis XIII succeeded him. At the time of his coronation he was a minor, hence his mother Marie de Medici became his regent and handled the affairs of the empire on her own accord. Hayes also writes, "The assassination of Henry IV by a religious maniac in 1610 threatened for a time to nullify the effects of his labors, for supreme power passed to his widow, Marie de Medici, an ambitious but incompetent woman, who dismissed Sully and undertook to act as regent for her nine-year-old son, Louis XIII. The Queen regent was surrounded by worthless favourites and was hated by the Huguenots, who feared her rigid Catholicism, and by the great nobles, Catholic and Huguenot alike, who were determined to maintain their privileges and power."

Regency of Marie de Medici

Marie de Medici was an Italian Princess. She was a staunch Catholic and her relations with her husband Henry IV were uncordial, as he was a liberal ruler. She wanted to unite the Hapsburg and the Bourbon dynasties into one powerful unit but none was her supporter in France as the people of France considered Spain to be their staunch enemy. The queen mother did not care for the feelings of the people of her country and she married her son Louis XIII with Anne of Austria, the daughter of Philip III, who was the Emperor of Spain. Besides this, she married her daughter princess Elizabeth with the prince of Spain who ascended the throne of Spain as Philip IV after the death of his father Philip III. A meeting of old Legislature and Estates General was summoned to consider this issue but no decision could be arrived at due to difference of opinion between the members of the Estates General. As the people of France were completely against Spain and considered her to be their enemy, they did not relish the activities of Marie de Medici and discontentment and confusion prevailed in France.

Activities of Marie de Medici

The following activities of Marie de Medici added fuel to the fire among the people of France and they felt greatly offended at the queen mother.

Marie de Medici was unhappy with the finance minister, the Duke of Sully. Actually, she was suspicious of the increasing power of the minister, hence she found out a pretext and removed him from the post.

The queen mother Marie de Medici belonged to a small state of Italy (Tuscany), so she began to appoint persons of Italian origin on significant posts which made the people annoyed. She always provided good posts to a man of Tuscany and gradually made him the Marshall of the French army.

By now the feudals who were under control due to the stern policy of Henry IV, were instigated by Concini and the stepbrother of the Emperor was elected leader of the nobles and began to raise the banners of revolt one after the other. Hence Louis XIII took over the reins of the Empire himself in 1617 and appointed Cardinal Richelieu to the post of Prime Minister in 1624. Louis XIII also dismissed all the corrupt and undesirable persons from different posts who were appointed by Marie de Medici during her regency. Scheville has thus described the character and personality of Marie de Medici, "The new ruler of France was a large, coarse-featured woman without distinction of either character or intelligence and therefore wholly incapable of consistently asserting her authority. In consequence, in spite of her formal supremacy, the crown became the football of favourites and interested groups." Hayes also writes, "It was Richelieu and his capacity, that came to the aid of France as a God-sent remedy for the national calamity."

Cardinal Richelieu and His Achievements

Scheville throwing light on the significance of Cardinal Richelieu mentions, "If France was saved from this confusion, it was due, and solely due, to one man, Armand Jean Du Plessis, known to fame as Cardinal Richelieu."

Early Career of Cardinal Richelieu. Louis XIII was not an efficient ruler. He was interested in hunting instead of administration of the Empire. Fortunately, Louis XIII got the services of Cardinal Richelieu, who compensated for all the shortcomings of his master. Hence it is rightly said by a prominent scholar, "From 1624 to 1642 it was Richelieu who remained the most conspicuous and notable figure in the history of Europe."

Cardinal Richelieu was born in a wealthy family of Paris in A. D. 1585. As a child he was destined for the Church as he had great leaning towards religion. He was, therefore, made Bishop of Lucan after completing his education by reason of his noble birth and favour of the king. In 1614, he was elected the representative of the priests in the Estates General and participated in the meetings of the Estates General. The queen mother Marie de Medici was very much influenced by his oratory, conduct, personality and extraordinary ability and she appointed him a member of the Royal Council in the French Court. After this he was promoted to be the Cardinal of the Roman Church. Gradually, he tried to become a favourite of the Emperor Louis XIII and attained some success in his aim. Seeing his extraordinary qualities of head and heart

he was appointed Prime Minister of France in A. D. 1624. Scheville writes, "Thus, it happened that when he became the king's chief minister, he united in his person a sum of dignities that raised him above attack so long as he enjoyed his sovereign's support."

He worked on this prize post till 1642. During this period he continued to be a significant personality of France as well as Europe. Robert Lodge writes about him, "He got victory against all. If he was not the best, was amongst the greatest diplomats of Europe, who had taken birth in France." Scheville writes about him, "While Richelieu lived, he retained in spite of innumerable intrigues and conspiracies the power in his hands and was the real ruler of France."

Richelieu had two aims before him as Prime Minister of France. First, he wanted to establish a powerful and absolute monarchy and endeavoured to concentrate all the powers in the hands of the Emperor so that the power and prestige of the Emperor would be enhanced. He also desired to suppress the rebellious nobles and Protestant Huguenots and outside France he endeavoured to crush the Austro-Spanish power, so that France might come out to be a powerful country in Europe. Scheville also mentions, "In the first place, he would accept the Edict of Nantes so far as its main provisions.....His second aim was to clip still further the wings of the turbulent nobility, and the third, to overthrow for the greater glory of France the power of the Hapsburgs."

After his appointment to the post of Prime Minister of France, he took an oath before Louis XIII, the Emperor of France :

"I promise that I would use all of my rights and powers in destroying Huguenots, in crushing the powerful and proud feudal lords and in making the entire rivals obedient and dutiful and making the name of the Emperor of France popularly known in foreign lands."

Thatcher also writes about the aims of Richelieu, "Richelieu desired to establish the king's absolute monarchy within France and he desired at the same time to make France as a supreme power in Europe."

Richelieu continued to act according to the words of his oath for the ensuing 18 years. Various intrigues and conspiracies were hatched against him in the French Court during this period and he had to face difficulties from the queen mother, Marie de Medici too, but he continued to work with great devotion for the good of France. He was once banished from the country by the queen mother because she was against his working system. Louis XIII also did not relish him from the core of his heart but they were all small before his gigantic personality. In the long run it was proved that this grand minister performed deeds for the benefit and progress of France. Actually, the reign of Louis XIII was not his reign but the empire of the deeds of Richelieu in internal and external spheres of France. He not only strengthened the Bourbon dynasty in France but also added to the glory of France during his tenure as Prime Minister.

Home Policy of Richelieu. In order to prove his utility Richelieu directed his attention to the Home and Foreign policy of France. He knew

it very well that he would not be able to establish a solid and successful foreign policy unless and until he had strengthened France on the domestic front. So first of all he took the following steps in order to satisfy the people of France.

Religious Policy of Richelieu. It is said about Richelieu that he was a Catholic in France but acted as a Protestant abroad. He was provided religious education and became a Bishop in the beginning of his career. In due course of time he was promoted to the post of Cardinal which was his wonderful achievement. Besides being a religious person and a follower of the Roman Catholic faith, he was a competent politician and diplomat. No doubt, he was born in an age of fanaticism, but he was not fanatic and narrow-minded. After becoming the Prime Minister of France, first of all, he paid his attention to the Huguenots who were creating chaos and confusion in France but he did not suppress the Huguenots because of any religious partiality. The scholars opine that Richelieu was first a statesman and politician, and then a Roman Catholic. He wished from the core of his heart that the Huguenots should follow the commands of the Emperor in toto. He did never think about the curtailment of their religious rights but he wanted to make them obedient by all means.

The Protestants of France had formed a powerful party which was completely against the progress of the nation. Taking advantage of the declaration of the Edict of Nantes, they had fortified themselves and maintained powerful troops. Thus, in other words, they succeeded in establishing a state within the state in France. Richelieu was not against their religious freedom but he wanted to curtail their political and military right by all means because they often disobeyed the Emperor. As they had their separate judiciary, army and forts, they incessantly conspired against the Emperor and in A. D. 1625 they raised a standard of revolt against the monarchy, hence Richelieu decided to crush them mercilessly. However, Richelieu proceeded cautiously and talked with them as long as negotiations were possible, but when he felt that the Huguenots were not mending their manners, he invaded La Rochelle. The Huguenots of Rochelle faced the royal army with all their power and bravery and also got the support and co-operation of England but ultimately having realized their weakness they had to surrender in 1628. Scheville also writes, "A long siege followed, wherein the endurance of the beleaguered citizen proved no match for the skill of the tireless cardinal, who conducted the operations in person. In vain did the English fleet sent by king Charles I at the solicitation of the Huguenots, try to relieve the town. In 1628, La Rochelle, having lost 16,000 inhabitants through hunger and pestilence, surrendered at discretion."

Next year the remaining Protestant forces also gave up their opposition and Richelieu became the master of the situation. After this Richelieu showed his remarkable moderation. Had there been some other person in place of Richelieu he would have forced the defeated Huguenots to accept the religion of the majority, i.e., the Protestantism or might have put them to sword or banished them from the country but

Richelieu did not resort to any of the above means; rather he confirmed their religious and civil rights but demolished their political and military fortifications. Thus he succeeded in crushing a state within the state. Scheville also mentions, "Conforming to the Huguenots the civil and religious rights granted by the Edict of Nantes, he mercilessly cancelled their rights to have an army and hold a number of fortified towns. They were no longer to be imperium in imperio (a state within the state) but French citizens subject to the laws of their country."

Suppression of the Nobility. The nobility of France was enjoying various privileges since many centuries, and they were working on high and lucrative posts in the empire. The provincial Governors were also appointed from amongst the nobles. They had their own army and fortresses. They did not pay any heed to the orders of the Emperor of France, and followed the orders of only that emperor whom they considered powerful enough but neglected the weaker one. Some of the turbulent nobles had formed their own governments. Therefore Cardinal Richelieu decided to take a stern view of their impertinence which was not relished by the nobles. They conspired against the life of the Prime Minister five times with the help of the queen mother, Marie de Medici, so Richelieu made up his mind to crush them ruthlessly. In 1626 Richelieu issued a special ordinance and ordered the nobles to demolish their fortifications. He also completely banned duels and personal conflicts, and punished those who disobeyed the commands of the Emperor and violated the ordinance. Count Bulbil of Montgomery family was awarded death punishment for taking part in a duel. Scheville writes, "They (nobles) carried on a veritable private warfare by their duelling habits and defied the authorities from behind their fortified castles. Hence Richelieu waged war upon duels and castles, declaring by Edict that castles used against the crown would be destroyed and duellists punished with death."

Thus, owing to the stern stance of Cardinal Richelieu the fortified castles and public duels which were rampant among the nobility became things of the past because Richelieu frowned on them. Thus Richelieu not only succeeded in suppressing the turbulent nobles but also got success in the establishment of an absolute and powerful Bourbon monarchy in France.

Centralization of Administration. Richelieu was anxious for establishing a powerful and absolute monarchy in France so that he could set the people free from the atrocities of the turbulent nobility. It was also essential for him in order to maintain law and order and to enhance the national glory of France, that a centralized administration be established in France. By this time the provincial governors were appointed from amongst the nobles who either did not care or paid the least attention to the orders of the Emperor or his Prime Minister. These nobles were very powerful, hence it was not possible to remove them from their posts lest they should raise a standard of revolt against the Emperor. So he decided to put some restrictions on their rights. Richelieu appointed royal agents called Intendants to look after the work of police, justice and finance in

the provinces and the districts, and deprived the provincial governors of their privileges of looking after these responsibilities.

The appointments of the Intendants were made by Richelieu himself. Scheville writes, "He selected the Intendants exclusively from the commoners (the third estate) on the ground that commoners might be expected faithfully to carry out the orders of the government and to keep aloof from the intrigues of the local nobles." The Intendants were required to send all the informations to the Prime Minister, hence it became easy for the Prime Minister to keep an eye over the activities of these provincial governors. It strengthened the hands of the Central Government.

Feeble Estates General. Thus, after increasing the power of the absolute monarchy, Richelieu decided to remove the other impediments which checked the progress and development of absolute monarchy in France. He did not summon the meetings of the Estates General and made it almost a dead institution. The other obstacle in the way of absolute monarchy was the Supreme Court. There was a provision that so long the orders of the kings were not registered by the Supreme Court, they could not be implemented. The Supreme Court also had a right to refuse the registration of any order, so Richelieu forced the Supreme Court (the Parliament of Paris) not to refuse the registration of any order of the Emperor. Actually, Richelieu wanted to crush all those powers which came in the way of the absolute monarchy and succeeded in his objective; hence he came to be known as the founder of the absolute monarchy in France. Hayes writes, "Richelieu has rightly been called the creator of absolute monarchy of France."

To sum up, we may say that "Richelieu exalted the royal prerogative until the power of the crown seemed to depend on itself alone and the king appeared as an irresponsible agent ruling by divine right."

Foreign Policy of Cardinal Richelieu. Richelieu who was Catholic in France and Protestant abroad wanted to establish the absolute monarchy of Louis XIII in France so that the power and prestige of France might be enhanced. Defining his foreign policy Hayes has pointed out, "Richelieu was the faithful servant of Bourbon family and true patriot of France. Being a patriot of France he wanted to crush the supremacy of the Hapsburgs of Spain in Europe so that supremacy of France be established in its place and Bourbons might win laurels."

His foreign policy was motivated by two main considerations. First, he intended to enhance the international prestige of France and secondly, he endeavoured to establish the supremacy of France in place of the Hapsburgs of Spain. At that time France was surrounded from three sides by the boundaries of Spain. The frontiers of France were unsafe from the east and the north. Spain had its control over Sardinia and Rosolin. These were French states. The frontiers of France were also not safe from Savoy (Italy). Therefore, Richelieu thought that the expansion of the frontiers of France was very essential in order to safeguard the territory of France. Hence, he began to expand his frontiers towards the hills, Rhine river and

Netherlands (Belgium). In 1622 the Spanish Emperor occupied Baltic province with the support and co-operation of the German Emperor. Richelieu commanded his army to make the Spanish ruler flee from there and he succeeded in his object. In 1626 Spain had to conclude a treaty with France which is known as the Treaty of Monzon. According to the terms of this treaty the right of Gwizo Union was accepted on the Baltic province.

The Duke of Mantua who was a duke of a very small territory died in 1627. His successor was the Duke of Nabour who was a Frenchman. The army of Spain established its rule over Mantua, by putting the Duke of Nabour behind the prison, Richelieu could not tolerate it. He at once ordered his army to establish control over the town of Mantua and he also asked his army to make the Duke of Nabour free. The French army achieved tremendous success in this mission.

Richelieu being a successful diplomat provided assistance to the German rulers against the Emperor of Austria in Germany because at that time the ruler of Austria who was a representative of Hapsburg dynasty also ruled over Germany. In Italy Richelieu also helped some small states and freed them from the clutches of Spain and Austria. Thus by crushing the Austro-Spanish alliance he paved the way for the beginning of the splendid era of Louis XIV.

The Thirty Years' War was in full swing when Richelieu was the Prime Minister of France. In the beginning in spite of being a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, Richelieu helped the Protestant states like Denmark, Sweden, Holland etc. against the Emperor due to political reasons. When he realized that it was a useless effort, he plunged directly into the Thirty Years' War. By taking part in this war Richelieu wanted to capture Alsace-Lorraine for France so that the frontiers of France could be safe from the western side. Besides, Richelieu took part in this battle just to crush the supremacy of Spain and to enhance the international prestige of France.

Richelieu died in 1642 and he could not see the decline of Spain and Austria during his life time but it was the result of his policies that just seven years after his death, with the treaty of Westphalia his aim was fulfilled because this treaty ended the influence of Spain in Europe forever. The treaty of Pyrenees further weakened Spain and led France towards the path of progress and development. Thus the aim of Richelieu's life was attained, no doubt but not in his life time. Scheville writes, "Although Richelieu did not live to witness the outcome of the Thirty Years' War, yet he lived long enough to behold the turning of the tide and the passing of military prestige from Spain to France."

Estimate of Richelieu

In 1642, Richelieu, the famous Prime Minister and nation-builder of France died. He was a patient and capable politician. He had a very strong will power. Just about one year and a half later, his dear Emperor Louis XIII also died. Cardinal Richelieu was a powerful man who often used animal force in order to get things done but he was a great devotee of France and his emperor. He compelled the people of France that they

should continue to be faithful to their nation and emperor. He would always be remembered in the history of France as a founder of a powerful nation. He made the rule of Louis XIII popular and strengthened the absolute monarchy in France. Like a shrewd politician he removed all the obstacles which he considered as impediments in the way of progress and development of France, through means, fair or foul. He suppressed the Huguenots, nobles and the opponents of the Emperor and succeeded in establishing a powerful government in France. Fisher evaluates the grand personality of Richelieu thus, "He mitigated the spirit of intrigues and conspiracies by way of terror and tortures. He made the king absolute by strengthening the central government. He also enhanced the power of France in the external sphere and supported the Protestants in spite of his being a Catholic."

He failed to implement all those laws and reforms which might have proved beneficial for France as he remained busy in prolonged wars in the foreign lands and confronted by the internal problems. His foreign policy proved to be very successful. He took part in the Thirty Years' War in the interest of his country and crushed the supremacy of the Hapsburg dynasty in Europe. He led a way for the establishment of absolute monarchy during the reign of Louis XIV. D. Ogg has written about him that he helped take the Bourbon dynasty to its climax of glory by crushing the supremacy of the Hapsburg dynasty.

He always opposed the powerful persons and never punished the innocent. He rendered praiseworthy services in the field of literature. He established an Academy which made some significant changes in the style and thinking of the people of France, but he gave birth to two enemies: Absolutism and Press whose mutual conflicts killed the spirit of the Modern Europe.

No doubt, Richelieu rendered yeoman service to France but he did not make any planning for the good of the people which might have made them happy and prosperous. His royal agents also known as Intendants oppressed the public to a great extent. He deprived the nobility of their political rights but he did not make any attempt to reduce the burden of the taxes on the people of France.

Following in the footsteps of Richelieu Cardinal Mazarin enhanced the power and prestige of France during the reign of Louis XIV. Hence in the contemporary history of Europe Richelieu had the highest place and his name would always be remembered as the maker of the Modern France. By the time he left for his heavenly abode, France had become a very significant nation and people were greatly impressed by the power, diplomacy and competence of the late Prime Minister.

To sum up, we may say, had there been no Richelieu, perhaps there would have been no Louis XIV nor a person like Colbert could have got an opportunity for making reforms.

A. J. Grant also writes, "It is enough to emphasise that the absolute monarchy of France was more the work of Richelieu than of any other single statesman. The great age of French history deserves to be called rather the Age of Richelieu than the Age of Louis XIV."