

was boundless in his indulgence to his children. From her first accession to the throne her path had not been strewn with roses, though she is reported to have made a smart repartee to her sister, who pitied her for the fatigue she suffered on the day of her coronation, when the queen replied:

"A crown, sister, is not so heavy as it appears."

The frenzied state of mind of the English people regarding religion, proved Mary and William's sheet-anchor. But for the fanaticism and intolerance which then reigned supreme, the partisans of the sailor-king were so numerous and influential that Mary never could have gained her unrighteous ends. Even as it was throughout the whole of her short reign, her mind was always in a state of agitation on account of the numerous risings all over the country in favor of the hapless king she had dethroned.

There can be little doubt in the minds of those who look impartially on the events which took place at the epoch of which we write, that the unfortunate Stuart race were in advance of the times in which they lived. After all, blame him as you may, James the Second asked but for that toleration of the down-trodden Catholics of these kingdoms which has been granted them in more tolerant and enlightened times.

The greatest offence, too, was taken at his admitting Catholics into the army, for it was a breach of the Test Act by which, besides taking the oaths, they were obliged under the penalty of forfeiting five hundred pounds, to receive the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England within six months of their admission into any employment, civil or military.

For this, his most just and equitable attempt to relieve his Catholic subjects, as also for the Declaration of Liberty of Conscience, which he commanded the bishops to read in the churches, he has been most severely blamed; but the latter had been published a whole year before, so that it was no new thing. There was time enough to consider the matter, and, since many of them had complied with his wish, he most unfortunately grew obstinate, and thought himself justified in punishing with imprisonment zealous and worthy men like Sancroft, Kenn, and others who did not.

And even with regard to this Declaration, what was it that was so outrageous in the attempt of the king? Neither more nor less, we reply, than the heinous crime of trying to place the long-suffering, persecuted, trodden-down Catholic Church on a par with the Church of England. As we write these lines we have but one feeling, and that is of profound astonishment that men so good and upright and conscientious as these bishops undoubtedly were (their conduct lately with regard to James, who had thrust them into the Tower, alone proves this) should have allowed their minds to be so swayed by the intolerance of the times as to have denied the liberty of conscience to their Catholic brethren which they so prized themselves.

The uncompromising Sancroft was a sore thorn in Mary's side. When she sent for his blessing he sent back word to her "to ask her father's blessing first, without which his would be useless." He refused to crown her and her husband, as also to allow them to be prayed for as sovereigns, and with some four or five others, forsook his living rather than violate his conscience.

Alas, for Queen Mary, the crown, despite all her ambition and love of power, must have been a weary weight oftentimes, during the short six years God permitted her to wear it.

On the day of her coronation she received it laden with her father's malediction, and to retain it she and her sister Anne spread the vilest reports as to the spurious birth of the Prince of Wales, and then made religion, or rather the fanaticism of the times, the stepping-stone for their usurpation. She celebrated as a glorious victory the disastrous battle of the Boyne, and had the standards and other spoils taken from her father borne in triumphant procession, and then hung up in St. James' Chapel.

The irritation such actions as these produced amongst the adherents of her father may be better imagined than described.

Florence was now behind the scenes, and would have liked marvellously well to be enabled to transmit to the Court at St. Germain faithful accounts as to how matters went on in the royal household, but no earthly being was near in whom she could confide, and her uncle was too aged, and, in fact, becoming too much of an invalid, to trust with any dangerous correspondence.

Jealousies, too, long brooding between the queen and her sister, had at length burst out into a flame. It is somewhat amusing to note, in looking over the records of the past, how these two royal ladies conducted themselves after they had played into each other's hands, as far as their father was concerned.

Behind the scenes; yes, it is quite true, the truth cannot be concealed from dependents, whether our state be cast in the palace or the cottage, in public or private life. I know not how it should be so, but that extraneous oftentimes meet, but perhaps the difference in the disposition of her *protégée* to her own, made Mary, in time, rather begin to like her than otherwise, as much as she could like any one beyond her husband. She must have known, too, that there was an aching void in the girl's heart caused by herself and of her own making, and so endeavored to make some small atonement for the tyrannical restraint she put upon her, by a meagre show of sympathy and kindness.

Any way, Florence was more frequently with her than any of her other maids of honor, and, consequently, she was privy to many a sorrow that the outer world recked little of.

Submissive wife! how well your Dutch lord rewarded you is no new matter.

THE FRENCH CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES.—The 'Univers' has opened a permanent subscription in aid of the Catholic Universities, heading the list with a sum of 2,000fr. The Bishops have decided that these institutions should not be called Catholic Universities, but simply Free Universities.

EUROPEAN COMBINATIONS.

EUROPE is always changing its combinations, but its spirit remains just the same. When Austria, France, Russia, and Sweden combined against Prussia, Frederick the Great beat them all. Since then there have been so many combinations that their mere mention would occupy several columns. The combinations under the first Napoleon were of an exceptional character; for he first conquered a country, then compelled it to combine with him in compelling others to combine in similar manner. Obviously there is no principle of combination in Europe save that of political interest; and since political interest is as changeable as the wind combinations must vary perpetually. Just at this moment there is no known combination, because the late war has made nations stand still. Every nation is thinking of itself, and does not want to fight anybody in particular; but all eyes are turned on the two excited Powers which are resting from their terrible struggle, and everybody wonders what original combination may possibly grow out of the momentary calm.

The only two Powers which seem to watch one another with jealousy, if not with dislike, are the new German Empire and Russia. France is out of the field. For many long years it will be impossible for France to think gravely of avenging the past. Let us hope that the interval which must elapse before France can resume any hostilities will give time for sound counsels of peace. Germany has just completed her new fortifications, intended as bulwarks against France, out of that money which was subscribed by France to indemnify Germany for beating her. France has to contemplate those impregnable citadels, reared on the Rhine and on the Moselle, and paid for out of her own bitter fines for the luxury of being vanquished and maimed. It is not likely that France will forget the humiliation, even without "anniversaries of Sedan." Such irritations require no trumpet.

But Germany, which is complacent in her attitude towards France, is not happy in her contemplation of Russia. The huge Muscovite Empire has before now paralysed a Power quite as great as even the new German Empire. The first Napoleon marched an army, the greatest then in Europe, into the very centre of the Empire of Russia, but his ruin was the result, because the very greatness of Russia absorbed all the antagonism thrown upon it. Russia is more powerful now than she was then; and what she is likely to become during the next fifteen years all military men speak of with awe. Even the German officers, who think themselves supreme, do not like the prospect of her growth. She may be some way off from Germany, but this only increases the difficulty of Germany in getting satisfactorily at her centre. Probably Germany would beat Russia if they were to fight at the present time; but, first, they would neither of them like to fight with such consequences on both sides at stake; and, next, there would be the question of alliances, which, in such a war, would be supreme in importance. France is nowhere in the military game; she could do little more than make herself troublesome. Austria would shrink from such a struggle, for she has eight millions of subjects in Austrian Hungary who would probably side with the German Empire; and her policy is that of development, not of risking great battles for little gains. The interest of Austria is to maintain peace; for France peace is absolutely essential; but ten or fifteen years hence, when France has repaired, and when Russia has developed all her strength, there may be one more great war for supremacy. This probability has been shown in a recent article in 'Macmillan,' contributed by Colonel Charles C. Chesney, and entitled "The Military Future of Germany."

Meanwhile it is certain that Russia is getting ready on a scale which is positively alarming; and it is equally certain that Germany has the intention of not deteriorating in military prestige. A glance at the statistics of the two armies will show this with tolerable certainty. Germany has 469 battalions of infantry, 485 squadrons of cavalry, eighteen battalions of pioneers, and eighteen battalions of service corps. Add to these the reserves, the Landstrum, the Landwehr, and the navy, and we arrive at a total of 1,700,000 men, with annual estimates of £20,000,000. Here it may be mentioned incidentally that the whole force of Austria is not more than half a million of men, while her military expenditure may be roughly estimated as one half of that of the German Empire. It is needless to say anything about France, since her new army exists mainly on paper, and will exist there for a good many years. But Russia is so desperately in earnest in the race for military supremacy that while France spends thirty per cent. of her revenue on the reorganisation of her military system, and Germany no more than twenty-six per cent., Russia is spending thirty-six per cent., and is fully prepared to spend more. Austria spends less than twenty per cent., so that she is evidently not bent on "glory." It is true that we have to remember in our estimate of German outlay that the fortifications, the re-armaments, the railways of Germany have been mainly paid for out of the French war indemnity; so that perhaps, but for these items, the German and Russian empires would be about on a par in their outlay. But what is the meaning of these two great empires vying in the magnitude of their armies? We do not believe that Germany has any fear of France, nor that she would think it necessary to be always armed to the teeth because there was vengeance on her border. Her fortifications, and a fair standing army, would suffice for her necessities on that score. She must have ulterior views, and indirect objects, in thus menacing all the Powers of Europe. It is the belief of Russian officers that Germany has the intention of fastening a quarrel on Russia, not at present, perhaps, but a few years hence, or whenever the occasion may serve. Russia would not dare to attack Germany at present, though she would doubtless do her best to defend herself; but there seems to be a spirit abroad throughout Russia which aims at reasserting that primacy which was claimed by the late Emperor Nicholas. Germany is aware of this; and whether Germany