

Thomas B. Macaulay (1800-59)

4 *Ivry*

A Song of the Huguenots

Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all glories are!  
And glory to our Sovereign Liege, King Henry of Navarre!  
Now let there be the merry sound of music and of dance,  
Through thy corn-fields green, and sunny vines, oh pleasant land of France!  
And thou, Rochelle, our own Rochelle, proud city of the waters, 5  
Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourning daughters.  
As thou wert constant in our ills, be joyous in our joy,  
For cold, and stiff, and still are they who wrought thy walls annoy.  
Hurrah! Hurrah! a single field hath turned the chance of war,  
Hurrah! Hurrah! for Ivry, and Henry of Navarre. 10

Oh! how our hearts were beating, when, at the dawn of day,  
We saw the army of the League drawn out in long array;  
With all its priest-led citizens, and all its rebel peers,  
And Appenzel's stout infantry, and Egmont's Flemish spears.  
There rode the brood of false Lorraine, the curses of our land; 15  
And dark Mayenne was in the midst, a truncheon in his hand:  
And, as we looked on them, we thought of Seine's empurpled flood,  
And good Coligni's hoary hair all dabbled with his blood;  
And we cried unto the living God, who rules the fate of war,  
To fight for his own holy name, and Henry of Navarre. 20

The King is come to marshal us, in all his armour drest,  
And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his gallant crest.  
He looked upon his people, and a tear was in his eye;  
He looked upon the traitors, and his glance was stern and high.  
Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing, 25  
Down all our line, a deafening shout, "God save our Lord the King."  
"An if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may,  
For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray,  
Press where ye see my white plume shine, amidst the ranks of war,  
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre." 30

Hurrah! the foes are moving. Hark to the mingled din,

Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum, and roaring culverin.  
The fiery Duke is pricking fast across Saint André's plain,  
With all the hireling chivalry of Guelders and Almayne.  
Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France, 35  
Charge for the golden lilies, — upon them with the lance.  
A thousand spurs are striking deep, a thousand spears in rest,  
A thousand knights are pressing close behind the snow-white crest;  
And in they burst, and on they rushed, while, like a guiding star,  
Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet of Navarre. 40

Now, God be praised, the day is ours. Mayenne hath turned his rein.  
D'Aumale hath cried for quarter. The Flemish count is slain.  
Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before a Biscay gale;  
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and flags, and cloven mail.  
And then we thought on vengeance, and, all along our van, 45  
"Remember Saint Bartholomew," was passed from man to man.  
But out spake gentle Henry, "No Frenchman is my foe:  
Down, down, with every foreigner, but let your brethren go."  
Oh! was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,  
As our Sovereign Lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre? 50

Right well fought all the Frenchmen who fought for France to-day;  
And many a lordly banner God gave them for a prey.  
But we of the religion have borne us best in fight;  
And the good Lord of Rosny hath ta'en the cornet white.  
Our own true Maximilian the cornet white hath ta'en, 55  
The cornet white with crosses black, the flag of false Lorraine.  
Up with it high; unfurl it wide; that all the host may know  
How God hath humbled the proud house which wrought his church such woe.  
Then on the ground, while trumpets sound their loudest point of war,  
Fling the red shreds, a footcloth meet for Henry of Navarre. 60

Ho! maidens of Vienna; Ho! matrons of Lucerne;  
Weep, weep, and rend your hair for those who never shall return.  
Ho! Philip, send, for charity, thy Mexican pistoles,  
That Antwerp monks may sing a mass for thy poor spearmen's souls.  
Ho! gallant nobles of the League, look that your arms be bright; 65  
Ho! burghers of Saint Genevieve, keep watch and ward to-night.  
For our God hath crushed the tyrant, our God hath raised the slave,  
And mocked the counsel of the wise, and the valour of the brave.

Then glory to his holy name, from whom all glories are;  
And glory to our Sovereign Lord, King Henry of Navarre.

70

1824

(From *Macaulay: Prose and Poetry*. Selected by G. M. Young. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1952)