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In the late 17th century, Gaspar Bouttats created a line engraving—depicted in this image—of the Assassination of Henry IV (Henri IV) of France by François Ravallac. The image is online via Wikimedia Commons; click on it for a fuller view.

After the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, French Protestants no longer focused solely on religious issues. They filled their literature with radical ideas, asserting the people - not the king - were the ultimate source of political authority. Such thinking would ultimately put Huguenots on a collision course with strong-minded monarchs and their ministers (like Richelieu) who believed in the divine right of kings.

In the meantime, however, a former Huguenot who promised "*une poule an pot*" (a chicken in every pot) was on the throne. And while Henri IV was joyously welcomed by Catholics in Paris, his Edict of Nantes would eventually allow Huguenots the right to practice their religion. The city of La Rochelle (all too soon the scene of renewed tensions between Catholics and Protestants) was, for the time being, a Huguenot stronghold.

Less joyous was the king's marriage to Marguerite de Valois (his first wife). At 45 years old, she agreed to dissolve her marriage with Henri IV. (It was unhappy and childless, although the King had other loves and two children by Catherine Enragues.)

Henri's second wife, Marie de Medici, became queen in Marguerite's place and soon gave birth to the Dauphin Louis. When the boy was nine years old, his father was fatally stabbed by a Catholic fanatic, Jean Francois Ravallac.

With his mother as Queen Regent and Duke Armand-Jean du Plessis (also known as Cardinal Richelieu) as Chief Minister, young Louis XIII was ultimately known as "The Just." But life for the Huguenots took a dramatic turn for the worse after the death of Henri IV. Richelieu thought the state was above everything, and religion was an instrument to promote the policies of the state.

If a Cardinal of the Catholic Church believed such a thing about his own religion, what chance did the Huguenots have?

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Henri IV - Portrait

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Henry IV - Welcomed by Catholics in Paris

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Edict of Nantes

Image online, courtesy the South China Normal University website.

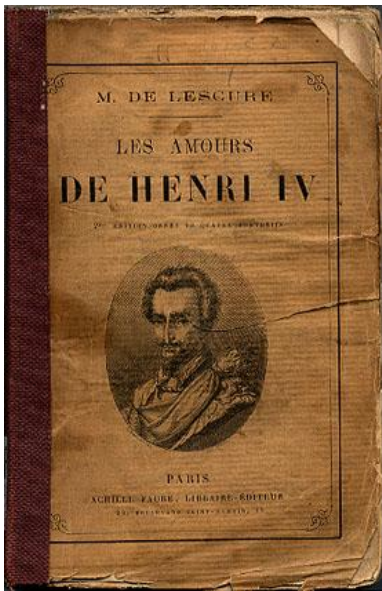
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Marguerite de Valois

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Les Amours De Henri IV - by M. De Leschure

Image online, courtesy the [Municipal Library of Lyon, France](#).

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Marie de Medici

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Marie de Medici - Becomes Queen

Image online, courtesy Sweet Briar College website.

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Henri IV - Fatally Stabbed

Image online, courtesy the University of Minnesota website.

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Cardinal Richelieu

Image online, courtesy the [National Gallery](#) website.

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