

**GASPARD DE
COLIGNY (MARQUIS
DE CHATILLON)**

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Gaspard de Coligny (marquis de Chatillon) by Walter Besant

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WALTER BESANT

**GASPARD DE
COLIGNY (MARQUIS
DE CHATILLON)**



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(MARQUIS DE CHATILLON)

ADMIRAL OF FRANCE; COLONEL OF FRENCH INFANTRY; GOVERNOR OF
PICARDY, ILE DE FRANCE, PARIS, AND HAVRE

BY
WALTER BESANT, M.A.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"



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P R E F A C E.

THE murder of Admiral Coligny, on the day of Bartholomew, 1572, proved the death-blow to the French Reformation. Other things, of course, contributed to this failure. I advanced the opinion four years ago, in a paper published in the *British Quarterly*, that one great cause was the fact that the scholars and divines of France did not take part in the movement. On the contrary, they held themselves aloof or condemned it. While in England the great scholars and eminent divines all came over to the new Faith, in France we see them either openly hostile or else indifferent, coldly waiting to see the event of the struggle.

There is, in the history of every religious persecution, a dreadful monotony of enthusiasm, patience, and perseverance. All can endure who believe; but the blood of English martyrs bore fruit in English freedom, while that of their French brethren would seem to have been spilt in vain. The little volume which follows tries to show how one man, a man of indomitable patience, steadfastness, and clearness of brain, brought together the Protestantism which lay scattered loosely over the whole country, and which, had it not been for him, would have been stamped out in detail, as it was in Spain and Italy; how he fought a losing fight, but never gave way; and how, when

the cause seemed actually won, he was struck down by an act of treachery the like of which there is none in history, nor will be, let us hope, while the world lasts.

I believe I am right in stating that no life of Coligny has yet been published in England. My materials have been gathered from various sources, most of which are well known to all readers in that period—such as the memoirs of La Noue, Tavannes, and others; Haag's *La France Protestante*; the works of Sismondi, De Thou, Prince Caraman Chimay, Tessier, Brantôme, and many others. I trust that this record of the great Admiral may help forward the cause for which, as it seems, we shall never cease to struggle, however often it is won—that of religious and political liberty.

I have endeavoured in this little volume to present faithfully the record of a life whose greatness is such that words of mine are unequal to the task of adequately portraying it. Surely, one feels who has dwelt long upon this portrait, there is no one, in all the long list of French worthies, like unto the Admiral, worthy to stand beside him. Other great men adorned that age of struggle and upheaval: he overshadows them all. It is in the earnest hope that his history may serve at once as an encouragement and an example that I send it forth.

W. B.

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