



The Little Coligni.

Coligni.

See page 7.

COLIGNI.

BY

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Florence H. Crowell.

COLIGNI.

I HAVE told you of many good people who were scholars, teachers, ministers, priests and queens. I am now to write you about a good and brave soldier. This soldier was a noble Frenchman. You have been reading so many little books about

6

COLIGNI.

pious French men and women that perhaps you will think all the good people grow in France! There are a great many there, I hope, yet that is not the only land where they are to be found.

You may have heard boys telling how bold and brave they are, yet you do not know if they are truly as brave as they say until they have been *tried*. Trial brings out truth.

COLIGNI.

7

Now, the reason the brightness and goodness of so many French people shone out is that in France the Church has been much *tried*.

France, your Geography will tell you, is a Catholic country—a *Roman* Catholic country. It has been such for many hundred years. France has been ruled by priests, who set themselves against the Reformed Church, against the

pure Protestant faith. I know all the children who read these books are Protestants. You may be Baptists or Methodists or Episcopalians or Presbyterians, or, as a little boy of my acquaintance said, "*Episcoverians*," but you are Protestants; and I want you to thank God for that and hold fast to it.

I have written to you of some priests who loved God

COLIGNI.

9

and read their Bibles and came rejoicingly into the Reformed Church, but many of them did all they could to hurt and kill the Reformers. In France, through the lovely valleys and the bold high mountains, God's dear people have been driven like wild beasts, and used so badly that it would make your hearts ache even to hear of it. But this very cruelty brought out

10

COLIGNI.

the brave, true men, and showed them to the world in all their goodness and beauty. These persecutions set forth in a clear light these men and women of the early French Church, which the world has loved and honored ever since. As to that long word "persecutions," I am going to use it a good many times, so I hope you will find out what it means.

COLIGNI.

11

The Bible uses “temptation” for “persecution” sometimes, and says, “Blessed is that man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

These “crowns of life” have been given to many noble souls out of the French Church. These French Protestants were called “Waldenses” and “Hu-

guenots.” I hope you will excuse the long words. They were a brave and simple, God-loving people, and the priests treated them with the greatest cruelty, killing mothers and children, and even little babies.

The histories of these dear people have been written in books. I remember my grandfather sent me one when I was about as old as some of my smallest readers. I used to

COLIGNI.

13

like to read it, for all it made me very angry, and was so heart-breaking that when I got out my book for a good read I always got my pocket-handkerchief at the same time!

These poor French Protestant churches needed some one to defend them—some one pious, brave, rich, noble and powerful. God sent them just such a defender when he sent

into the world Gaspard de Coligni.

Gaspard was born at Châtillon, on the Loing. He was one of three brothers—brothers who always loved and helped each other and never quarreled. I wish that could be said for all little brothers.

These three brave brothers had a dear, kind mother; they lived with her in a chateau—an ancient house like a castle.

COLIGNI.

15

The family were much loved by the poor people who lived on their land.

The names of these brothers were Odet, Gaspard and Francis. In those countries the eldest son gets the house and the lands. Odet was the oldest, so he was to have these, and Gaspard must be a priest and Francis a lawyer. But Gaspard said that he must be a soldier; he should die if he

16

COLIGNI.

were made a priest. He said he never would look in a book again if he should be made a priest.

Odet loved his brother. He was of a quiet nature and loved books, so he said he would give the house and lands to Gaspard, and that Gaspard might be a soldier and Odet himself would go into the Church. Do you not think Odet loved his brother

COLIGNI.

17

when he gave up so much for him ?

The Coligni family had always been Roman Catholics, but Louisa, the mother of these three boys, had seen and heard some of the Reformed preachers, and she liked their teaching and taught it to her sons. When teachers were chosen for the young Colignis, they were men who inclined to the Reformed Church, who read

18

COLIGNI.

their Bibles and tried to serve God.

You will think I do not say much about the father of our three brothers. He was a very brave soldier, but he died of a fever when Gaspard was only a little more than five years old.

But even at this early age little Gaspard had made his father very proud by showing his love for soldiers. The boy

COLIGNI.

19

had a square board and a number of soldiers made of ivory. He would put on a cocked hat, a toy sword, and take a little drum, and then he would march his ivory soldiers up and down and play at battles and war and taking forts and towns, having play over all the acts which when he grew to be a man were sober, earnest and hard, sad work.

When Gaspard was five years old he went one day with his father to review some troops of soldiers. One tall soldier pleased the little fellow very much. Gaspard saw that the man was brave and knew what he was about. Some fine swords were lying near by, and Gaspard took up one, and walking up to the man with a grand air, said,

“Take this sword, sir. I

COLIGNI.

21

shall reward every one who does his duty."

His father was so pleased at this speech that he ran and caught the child in his arms and kissed him, crying out,

"You will make a great man, my Gaspard!"

There were some cannon near, and some one said,

"If this little boy is brave he will fire a cannon!"

The great gun was loaded

and the long match given to Gaspard. He took it, saying, "I am brave!"

But he was only five years old, and had never seen one of these great guns near at hand. He drew back a little. The soldiers began to laugh. Gaspard's cheeks grew red. He cried out,

"Ho! you men! do you think I am afraid?" and at once he fired the cannon.

COLIGNI.

23

His father could not talk enough of his brave little son. He praised him to all his friends.

It is sad to think of this brave, kind father going from his dear home, his wife and his little sons, and being sick and dying far away. The last word of the father was about his boys. He said their uncle and their mother must take good care of them.

The mother and the uncle tried to do their duty, and, as I told you, they thought Gaspard should be a priest and have a great deal of money and power. But Gaspard, who was now growing up, did not like this idea; he wept and said he must be a soldier. Here the kind brother Odet came to help, and said he did not care—he would be a priest instead of Gaspard.

COLIGNI.

25

As for Francis, he was a good-natured little lad, and he did not care what they did with him so that he had his brothers and all that he wanted to eat.

The brothers had a happy home and a kind, wise teacher. We are told that they were “obedient, brave, truthful and temperate.”

When Odet had become a priest his uncle thought he

deserved a reward, and so, as he had a great deal of money and power, he got the pope to make Odet a cardinal.

A cardinal is a very high priest—one who has great wealth and much influence. Priests are very proud of getting to be cardinals, and while there are very many priests, there are few cardinals. When the pope makes a priest a cardinal he sends him a red hat.

A red hat, therefore, was sent to Odet.

Odet was a good man. We read of him, "Even his enemies must admire him, his face was so frank, his heart so open, his way so gentle, his tongue so pure, and he was never rude to any one. He was wise, sober and generous."

The love of these three brothers was remarked by all. One of their friends said,

“They are a fine example to brothers of all ages, and for our age, when brothers often show more hate than love.”

When Gaspard was eighteen years old his mother sent him to Paris to go to college. His brother Francis went with him. In college Gaspard was called the model of diligence and morality. He was neither idle nor vicious. Gaspard got into one quarrel while at col-

COLIGNI.

29

lege. He tried to defend one of the teachers with whom some rude lads were fighting. In the fight Coligni had like to have been killed, but before long we find him begging the college teachers not to expel the men who had injured him.

When Gaspard was very young his uncle took him to court to see the king. Gaspard's mother was at court too. She was a friend to

30

COLIGNI.

Queen Margaret of Navarre, and had the care of Jeanne, Margaret's little girl.

Gaspard became a great friend to King Francis. When the king went to ride or to hunt he rode near him, and for his bravery he was given many rewards.

One person at the court became the great foe of Coligni. She was Catharine, afterward queen for many years. She



The Bambino.

Coligni.

See page 52.

was a bad woman, but when Coligni first went to court she was young and had no power. She had enemies, and they were cruel to her, and Coligni took her part and tried to be kind to her. When she came into power she forgot all this, and hated him, and at last killed him.

When Gaspard went to war he was very brave. He was in battles and wars nearly all

COLIGNI.

33

his life, and became one of the greatest generals. The first time he was wounded a musket-ball passed through his hat and cut his head.

Guise — you remember a Guise was son-in-law to Renee—stood by, and said, “Oh, Coligni, are you wounded?”

“I think I am,” replied Gaspard, very coolly.

“Oh dear! oh dear! how terrible this is!” cried Guise,

who had never been in battle before.

Then, in the midst of the battle, Coligni found time to say great words. He said, "We ought ever to be ready to die. We are always in danger. We should be prepared to meet death. That, friend Guise, is the great business of life!"

The king now began to persecute the Reformed Church,

COLIGNI.

35

which they called Lutherans, Waldenses or Huguenots, and had many killed.

At court, Louisa, the mother of the three Coligni brothers, left the Catholic Church and turned Protestant. She was taken ill, and would not see a priest, but had her Bible read and died very happy. She said she knew her sons would become Protestants, and so they did after a while.

Gaspar Coligni became a Protestant, he married a Protestant, and from that time he gave help and protection to the persecuted and despised Church of the Reformers. He stood before them like a wall. Any injury toward them must touch him first; and people often dared not attack a church which was dear to Coligni, the most famous man in France.

COLIGNI.

37

As a general, Coligni showed how one can be a Christian soldier and follow religion in a camp. He allowed no fighting and no swearing in his camp.

Coligni was made Admiral of France: that is a very high title.

You must not think the life of Coligni was all gladness. He had troubles like all other men. He suffered many hard-

ships in the army, was often severely wounded in battle, and was taken prisoner. He was unkindly used often by those whom he believed to be his friends; and the king, without any cause, would be cold to him and find fault with him.

One thought kept the mind of Coligni in peace—like a rock that is firm and still in the midst of the storm. This

COLIGNI.

39

thought was that he lived for a higher world than this; that Jesus would one day reward him for all his trials here, and though the King of France might be unkind, Jesus was ever true.

Francis de Coligni, the dear brother of Gaspard, became a brave and open Protestant. For this he was put in prison and cruelly used.

“Pretend to turn to Rome

40

COLIGNI.

again," advised some of his friends.

"I can never pretend what is not true," said Francis. "I will die if need be for the sake of a pure faith."

At his own home, Coligni, the rich and great, lived a plain and simple life, taking care of his family, helping the poor, and beginning and ending the day with family prayers. He and his wife were

COLIGNI.

41

very happy. But while safe and happy himself, Coligni did not forget the dear Church which was so persecuted.

I must tell you of three several attempts he made to help the Reformers. He saw that they were injured and abused so much in France that they could not live there, and he asked the king to allow money to be raised to take as many as could go to America, which

was then a new and wild country, and to let them live there in quiet and serve God in their own way. The king agreed to this, and he sent out a large number of French Protestants, with their property; and they came over to our land and settled on the coast of Carolina, at a place they called Fort Charles. They did not stay very long: they had bad health; they were

COLIGNI.

43

homesick; they did not get on well; they pined for the hills and the valleys and the lovely land of France, and before many years they went back, and this ended Coligni's first attempt to find his Church another home.

As the sufferings of the Reformed people became still greater, Coligni determined to send out another colony to America. He had heard that

44

COLIGNI.

Florida was warm and sunny like France, and he thought his friends would be happy there; so he got ships and money and sent out all the Protestants who would go. He sent pastors with them and books, and told them they could set up their Church, build a town, serve God as they thought was right, and by and by become a great people.

COLIGNI.

45

This colony went to the mouth of the St. John's river, in Florida. If you will get your maps, you can see where it is, and some day perhaps you may go there to visit.

The Spaniards then said they owned Florida, and they were Roman Catholics. The cruel priests of France wrote to them to fight against these poor lonely Frenchmen, who were so far away from their

native home. The Spaniards were strong, and went and fought with the French. At last they said if the Protestants would give up their arms — that is, their swords and guns — they would go away and let them alone. They promised this in the most solemn manner, and the poor colonists believed them and laid aside all their weapons. Then the false Spaniards rush-

COLIGNI.

47

ed upon them and brutally killed nearly every one.

Does it not seem strange and terrible to think that in this great, broad land of ours men were thus cruelly killed, and not only men, but women and children, just because they loved God and would not bow down to graven images?

Well, dear children, how can we tell what may happen? Such days may come

48

COLIGNI.

again. I hope not. If they do, may all the boys and girls who are reading these little books about the Reformers be honest and brave and true to their faith. You can never learn too well this verse, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

As the colonies sent out by Coligni had met such sad fate in that part of the country

COLIGNI.

49

which is now the United States, he made up his mind to send a church to the region now called Brazil, in South America. So much interest was felt in this colony, and so much was done toward buying ships and goods, that in two years ten thousand Frenchmen, nearly all of them Protestants, went to Brazil and began what is now the grand city of Rio Janeiro. High

were the hopes of God's people that these ten thousand would make Brazil a Protestant country, but again the priests came and brought soldiers and broke this colony up. Many of the people were killed, and many more escaped to France.

We cannot help thinking what it would have been if this colony had not been broken up. Now the people

COLIGNI.

51

of Brazil are mostly poor and ignorant. They are like heathen; they pray to saints and to images, and have a wooden image all dressed in gold cloth and jewels which they call a *bambino*—that is, baby, “the baby of the altar of heaven.” To this they pray and give money and trust to it, poor bit of wood as it is, to save their souls. Perhaps you would like to see a picture of

52

COLIGNI.

the “bambino.” You will find one on page 31.

The dress of this “baby” has so many jewels on it that it is worth a million of dollars.

Now, if Coligni’s colony had not been destroyed, all the children who pray to this bambino might have been happy little Protestants like you.

We have good missionaries in Brazil now, teaching these

COLIGNI.

53

poor people. Very likely some of the missionary money which you give in Sunday-school—I hope you do not forget to take it—goes to help the missionaries in Brazil.

While Coligni was trying to take care of the Protestants and was fighting for France, and was looked up to by all the world as a brave soldier and a good man, he had seen several French kings reign

and die ; and for years the wicked Catherine, to whom he had been kind when she was young and helpless, had been queen and the most powerful person in France, and hated Coligni with all her bad heart.

But Coligni had seen other than kings die. That dear brother Francis, whom he called his "right hand," who was a loving brother, a brave sol-

COLIGNI.

55

dier and a true Protestant, died at Saintes very suddenly. It is thought that he was poisoned by the priests. Coligni wrote to his children, "The loss of my dear brother breaks my heart, but God's will be done. May I die no less piously and gladly than I saw him do! Let his virtues shine in you. Study that you may be wise, and when you play be careful and do nothing that

will offend God and lead you from him.”

Odets Coligni, the eldest of the three brothers, also became a Protestant. You know he had been a Catholic priest and a cardinal. He gave up riches and honor and power to be a true servant of God. The cardinal was then persecuted as his brothers were. A great man of those days said, “These good Colignis will be hunted

COLIGNI.

57

to death. The priests are like hounds, pursuing them.”

Odet fled to England, where Queen Elizabeth received him kindly and where he lived some time, helping the Reformers and taking care of them. At last the priests bribed a young manservant to poison Odet. The man gave him an apple to eat in which apple he had put poison. Poor Odet fell dead just before he

was going to bid Queen Elizabeth "Good-bye" and go over to France to help the Church against the priests.

Poor Gaspard Coligni's heart was "broken" again, for, as said his friends, "these three brothers seemed to have but one soul, so well they loved!"

You remember I told you that Louisa, the mother of these brothers, had died praying and believing that God

would bring her sons to the true faith in Jesus Christ. You see she was not disappointed, for now already two of them had died for that faith; and, as my story is now closing, you will learn how Gaspard, who was highest and best of all, and for this cause the most hated, was made a martyr of the Reformed Church. They won the crowns of life laid up in heaven.

Gaspar Coligni and many more died on a fatal day, which will never be forgotten—the day of St. Bartholomew.

On that day—St. Bartholomew, Sunday—nearly all the chief men of the Reformed Church were in Paris, where the king had called them, pretending it was to make friends with them and have them at a wedding. Coligni was there with the rest.

COLIGNI.

61

The real motive of the king was to have the Protestants together, unarmed, and then in the night have his soldiers fall upon them and kill them. He was urged to do this by Queen Catherine, his wicked mother, and the priests.

Three or four days before this a bad man had shot at Coligni in the street and wounded him so that he was ill in his bed. His friends

and his servants were about him at his hotel. When the murders began all over the city, soldiers were put about Coligni's house so that none could get away. Gaspard and his friends went to prayer, and prayed all through the night that God would fit them for death. Toward morning there was a wild attack on the hotel.

“Sir,” said a pious friend

COLIGNI.

63

to Coligni, "it is thus that God is calling us to himself."

A man named Behm rushed up to Coligni's bed, followed by the king's troops, crying,

"Are you the admiral?"

"I am," replied Coligni; "but do you not respect gray hairs? But what matters it? —I go to God!"

Behm began to curse and swear, and drove a dagger into the heart of Gaspard Co-

ligni, the bravest and greatest man in France!

Queen Catherine had Coligni's body dragged through the mud, and his head cut off and sent in a box to the pope. But what mattered this ill-treatment of his dead body? Gaspard's soul was with God; and at the last day God will raise that body up to live with him in glory.