

the Huguenot leaders. It was rumored in Court circles that the administration of the Government would soon pass into more vigorous hands, and that Coligny would rule supreme as President of the Council and Captain-General of all the forces of the kingdom. "What do you learn in your long conversations with the Admiral Coligny?" said Catherine one day to the King. "I learn," he hastily replied, "that I have no greater enemy than my mother."* These words sealed the doom of Coligny.

Most of the leading Huguenots had hastened to Paris to be present at the marriage festivities of the Prince of Navarre, and they availed themselves of this opportunity to complete their political organisation, and to make an imposing display of their numbers and strength in the French capital. The public festivities had not as yet concluded when Coligny, passing through the streets, received two gunshot wounds at the hands of an assassin, on the evening of August 22. The wounds, though dangerous, were not judged mortal. The public voice instinctively traced the attempt to the Queen Mother, and authentic history has fully justified that verdict.† In arranging the details of the attempted assassination, Catherine had for her only assistants her son, the Duke of Anjou, and the Duchess of Nemours, whose first husband had been murdered by the Huguenots.

Had Coligny been slain on August 22, it is probable that no further massacre would have taken place, and Catherine, without opposition, would have at once resumed her place at the helm of the State. Now, however, that Coligny still lived, and that their party was strengthened by the universal sympathy which the attempted assassination had awakened, the Huguenots vowed immediate vengeance against the assassins. They brandished their swords marching past the Hotel des Guise,‡ menacing words were even uttered against the King, and it became their common boast that the broken arm of Coligny would cost their enemies 40,000 heads.§ Above all, angry words were freely used in regard to Catherine. This artful woman, having failed in this attempt to rid herself of her defiant rival, saw that not a moment was to be lost to save herself from utter ruin. On the morning of the 23rd she hastened to the King, and unfolded to him the details of a conspiracy** which the Huguenots had planned against the State, as well as against himself and the members of the Royal Family: one course alone was open to him to anticipate the traitorous designs of the conspirators, and to turn on themselves the ruin they meditated against France. "The Huguenots won over the King (thus writes the acute historian Ranke), and appeared to supplant Queen Catherine's influence over him. This personal danger put an end to all delay. With that resistless and magical power which she possessed over her children, she reawakened all the slumbering fanaticism of her son. It cost her but one word to rouse the populace to arms, and that word she spoke. Every individual Huguenot of note was delivered over to the vengeance of his personal enemy."††

* White, page 374.

† A number of contemporary authorities will be found in two valuable articles of the *Revue des Questions Historiques*, published by Victor Palmé, Paris, 1866, livr. 1., page 11, and livr. 2, page 322: also in White, page 400, seqq.

‡ Lavalée, *Histoire des Français*, i., page 594; Dargaud, *Histoire de la liberté religieuse*, iii., page 255.

§ Dispatch of the Ambassador, Giovanni Michieli, in *La Diplomatic Veneizienne*, page 548.

** Froude thus describes the discourse of Catherine to the King: "She told him that at the moment that she was speaking the Huguenots were arming. Sixteen thousand of them intended to assemble in the morning, seize the palace, destroy herself, the Duke of Anjou, and the Catholic noblemen, and carry off Charles. The conspiracy, she said, extended through France. The chiefs of the congregations were waiting for a signal from Coligny to rise in every province and town."—*History of England*, x., 401.

†† Ranke, *Histoire de la Papauté pendant le 16me siècle*, iii., 83.

(To be continued.)

THE STORY OF IRELAND

(By A. M. SULLIVAN.)

(Continued.)

CHAPTER XXIX.—HOW THE CIVIL WARS IN ENGLAND LEFT THE ANGLO-IRISH COLONY TO RUIN. HOW THE IRISH DID NOT GRASP THE OPPORTUNITY OF EASY LIBERATION.

Within the hundred years next succeeding the events we have just traced—the period embraced between 1420 and 1520—England was convulsed by the great civil war of the White and Red Roses, the houses of York and Lancaster, Irish history during the same period being chiefly a record of the contest for mastery between the two principal families of the Pale—the Butlers and the Geraldines. During this protracted civil struggle, which bathed England in blood, the colony in Ireland had, of course, to be left very much to its own resources; and, as a natural consequence, its dimensions gradually contracted, or rather it ceased to have any defined boundary at all, and the merest exertion on the part of the Irish must have sufficed to sweep it away completely. Here was, in fine, the opportunity of opportunities for the native population, had they but been in a position to avail of it, or had they been capable of profiting by any opportunity, to accomplish with scarcely an effort the complete deliverance of their country. England was powerless for aggression, torn, distracted, wasted, paralysed, by a protracted civil war. The Lords of the Pale were equally disunited and comparatively helpless. One-hundredth part of the exertion put forth so bravely, yet so vainly, by the native princes in the time of Donald O'Neil and Robert Bruce would have more than sufficed them now to sweep from the land every vestige of foreign rule. The chain hung so loosely that they had but to arise and shake it from their limbs. They literally needed but to will it, and they were free!

Yet not an effort, not a movement, not a motion, during all this time—while this supreme opportunity was passing away for ever—was made by the native Irish to grasp the prize thus almost thrust into their hand—the prize of national freedom! They had boldly and bravely striven for it *before*, when no such opportunity invited them: they were subsequently to strive for it yet again with valor and daring as great, when every advantage would be arrayed against them. But now, at the moment when they had but to reach out their hand and grasp the object of all their endeavors, they seemed dead to all conceptions of duty or policy. The individual chiefs, north, south, east, and west, lived on in the usual way. They fought each other or the neighboring Anglo-Norman lord just as usual, or else they enjoyed as a pleasant diversification a spell of tranquility, peace, and friendship. In the relations between the Pale and the Irish ground there was, for the time, no regular Government "policy" of any kind on either hand. Each Anglo-Norman lord, and each Irish chieftain, did very much as he himself pleased; made peace or war with his neighbors, or took any side he listed in the current conflicts of the period. Some of the Irish princes do certainly appear to have turned this time of respite to a good account, if not for national interests, for other not less sacred interests. Many of them employed their lives during this century in rehabilitating religion and learning in all their pristine power and grandeur. Science and literature once more began to flourish; and the shrines of Rome and Compostello were thronged with pilgrim chiefs and princes, paying their vows of faith, from the Western Isle. Within this period lived Margaret of Offaly, the beautiful and accomplished Queen of O'Carroll, King of Ely. She and her husband were munificent patrons of literature, art, and science. On Queen Margaret's special invitation, the literati of Ireland and Scotland, to the number of nearly 3000, held a "session" for the furtherance of literary and scientific interests, at her palace, near Killeagh, in Offaly, the entire assemblage being the guests of the King and Queen during their stay.