



A Brief History of the Sixteenth Century

James J. Walsh

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Originally published in “Encyclopedia Americana” (1920 edition), this Kindle edition, equivalent in length to a physical book of approximately 16 pages, describes the art, architecture, literature, religion, music, scientific advancements, explorations, politics, and wars of the 1500s, and profiles such historic figures as Shakespeare, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Martin Luther, Henry VIII, Mary Queen of Scots, and Copernicus.

Sample passage:

The best-known event of the century, because of the endless disputes as to its significance, is the massacre of Saint Bartholomew’s Day in Paris, August 24, 1572. A great many Huguenots were murdered under the direction of the government, with sad disgrace to France. Catherine de’Medici, the widow of Henry II, and the mother of the three kings who succeeded each other rapidly at this time, Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III, is undoubtedly responsible for it. Since Ranke’s declaration on the subject, most historians have agreed that there was no deliberate premeditation of the massacre. Catherine was angered at Admiral Coligny and in a spirit of revenge resolved to do away with him. Assassination by governmental order was still not repudiated in most countries. Coligny’s assassination was attempted August 22, but failed. In her alarm over the failure, Catherine worked upon the fears of her son, Charles IX, that the Huguenots might in revenge bring about counter attacks and had him order a massacre in which Coligny would surely be included. Only the leaders of the Huguenots were to have been put out of the way, but in the mob spirit that ensued a great many others were killed. Many rich people became victims, their houses being pillaged regardless of their religious opinions.

About the author:

James J. Walsh (1865–1942) was an American physician and author. Other works include “The Popes and Science,” “The Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries,” and “The Century of Columbus.”

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