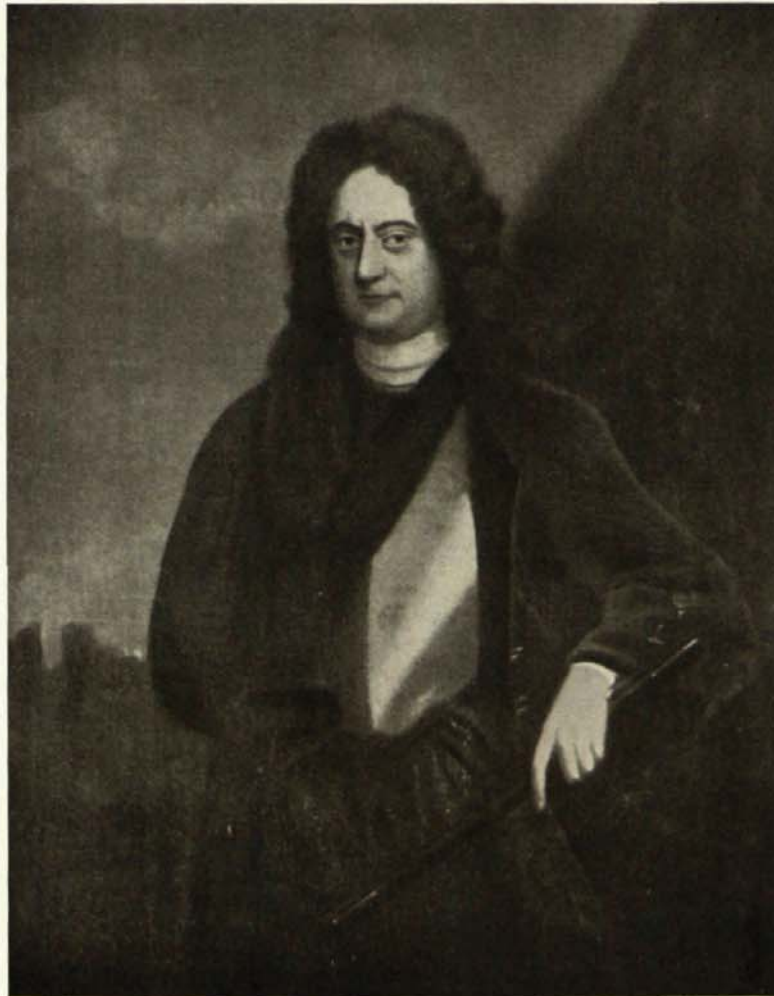




HENRI DE MASSUE, MARQUIS DE RUVIGNY, EARL OF
GALWAY. ✠ 1720.

FIRST GOVERNOR OF THE FRENCH PROTESTANT HOSPITAL.

*From an oil painting in the Court Room of the Hospital, by permission
of the Court.*

HENRI,
SECOND MARQUIS DE RUVIGNY,
EARL OF GALWAY.

AN UNKNOWN GRAVE.

BY THE REV. G. W. MINNS, LL.B., F.S.A.

*A Paper read at Stratton Park (the Earl of Northbrook's),
July 27th, 1912.*

Of the notable Huguenot refugees connected with the County of Hampshire, among whom we reckon the family of our former President, Sir William Portal, there is none more illustrious than Henri de Massue, second Marquis de Ruvigny and Earl of Galway, who was a frequent visitor to Stratton, near Micheldever, the home of his widowed cousin, Rachel, Lady Russell. At her house he died and his remains were deposited in a nameless grave at Micheldever.

The term "Huguenot," which is applied to the French Protestants of the 16th and 17th centuries, is of doubtful origin, and has been the subject of much discussion, some deriving it from Hugues, the name of one of the Reformers, others from the Genevese nickname *Eiguenot* (the German *Eidgenosse*, a confederate). A party thus designated existed at Geneva, and it is probable that the French Protestants adopted a name so applicable to themselves.

Henri de Massue, first Marquis de Ruvigny and de Raineval, Deputy-General of the Huguenots at the Court of Versailles, was the brother of Rachel, wife of Thomas Wriothesley, fourth Earl of Southampton. In the parish

register of Titchfield is the entry: "August, 1634, married the Right Honourable Earle of Southampton in France the 18th day of this month." The young Countess was a zealous Protestant, a lady of great personal attractions and moral excellence. The Earl of Southampton had sown his wild oats on the Turf. A letter dated March the 20th, 1634, reports: "The Earl of Southampton, they say, has lost a great deal of money lately at the horse race at Newmarket. He has licence to travel for three years, and is gone in all haste to France." His exemplary life after this catastrophe was in all probability largely due to the influence of the good Countess. We may say that if he had not married *la belle et vertueuse Huguenotte*, as Rachel de Ruvigny was called, he would not have been immortalized in history as the wise and virtuous Earl of Southampton. Of this marriage were born two daughters, the Lady Elizabeth, who married Edward Noel, Earl of Gainsborough, and the Lady Rachel, who married first, Francis, Lord Vaughan, and secondly, the ill-fated William, Lord Russell.

The first Marquis was employed in important offices of State in France, and was Ambassador from Louis XIV. at the Court of Charles II. Anticipating the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he obtained beforehand for himself and his children letters of naturalization in England. In 1680 he wrote to his niece, Rachel, Lady Russell: "I send you our letters of naturalization which will be safer in your hands than mine." Five years later the Edict was revoked (1685) and he quitted France for a modest dwelling at Greenwich. John Evelyn in his Diary, August 8th, 1686, writes: "I went to visit the Marquis de Ruvigné, now my neighbour at Greenewich, retired from the persecution in France. He was Deputy of all the Protestants in the kingdom at the Parliament of Paris, . . . a person of greate learning and experience." Lady Rachel writes, January, 15th, 1686: "My uncle and his wife are permitted to come out of France." And March 23rd: "I was at Greenwich to see my old uncle Ruvigny," then probably in his 86th year. Rachel, Lady Russell, in her celebrated Letters,

thus characterizes him : " As kind a relation, and as zealous tender a friend as ever any body had." Macaulay tells us his house at Greenwich was the resort of the most distinguished of his fellow exiles. His experience and munificent kindness made him the undoubted chief of the refugees, many of whom he enrolled in the army of William III., in which four regiments were formed of French refugees. A French Service was held in the Parish Church at Greenwich, as noticed by John Evelyn in his Diary : " 1687, April 24th. At Greenewich at the conclusion of the Church Service there was a French sermon preach'd after the use of the English Liturgy translated into French to a congregation of about 100 French refugees, of whom Monsieur Ruvigné was the chief, and had obtain'd the use of the Church after the parish Service was ended." The first Marquis lived till July, 1689, and was buried at Greenwich. The interment is thus registered :—

BURIALS IN JULY, 1689.

Marquis of Ruvignie.

On the death of his father, Henri de Ruvigny, the second Marquis (born April, 1648) who had taken up his abode in England, continued to reside at Greenwich. He had served in the French Army under Schomberg and Turenne, was sent on secret service to England in 1678, and in 1679 succeeded his father as Deputy-General of the Protestant Churches in France. By special favour of Louis XIV. he was allowed to leave France on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes without forfeiting his property or his rights as his father's heir. Upon the deaths of his brother de Caillemotte and of Marshal Schomberg, both killed at the Battle of the Boyne (July, 1690) he offered his services to King William III.

He distinguished himself at the Battle of Athlone, where St. Ruth, the General in command of the French allies of the rebel Irish, was killed, and was one of the most eminent winners of the field of Aughrim, 12th July, 1691. For this service he was created Baron Portarlington and Viscount

Galway, the county of Galway being that in which Aughrim is situated.

When Louis XIV. heard of his services to William III. he confiscated all de Ruvigny's property in France and bestowed it on Cardinal Polignac, 1711. To compensate him for this loss William conferred on him the forfeited estates of Sir Patrick Trant at Portarlinton in Queen's County, where de Ruvigny founded a flourishing Huguenot colony. The appropriation was violently attacked in the English Parliament, and in 1700 he was deprived of all his Irish estates by the "Act of Resumption." Personally he was not much affected by this loss, as William felt keenly for him and gave him a pension of £1,000 a year in addition to a military pension of £500. On being created Earl of Galway, 1697, de Ruvigny was appointed Lord Justice of Ireland, but he was more fitted for the camp than the council chamber, and his inability to speak English fluently placed him at a disadvantage, so he sought retirement in 1702. Among English counties Hampshire attracted him most, and at the age of fifty-four he became the tenant of the Manor House at Rookley,* a few miles from Stratton, in the Parish of Crawley, where he hoped to remain in quiet for the rest of his days. The house still exists.

The Earl of Galway was not, however, allowed the repose he desired, but was summoned to foreign wars in Portugal and Spain (1704-1710). In the course of these wars he lost his right arm at Badajos in 1704; at Almanza in 1707 a sabre wound deprived him of his right eye. His horse was shot under him at the Battle of Caya in 1709, and he himself narrowly escaped capture. Latterly he became partially deaf. When age and infirmities pressed upon him he retired to Rookley in 1716 and died September 2nd, 1720, aged 72, during a visit to his cousin Rachel, Lady Russell, and was interred according to his wish "in the church belonging to the parish wherein I shall happen to depart this life." There

*An interesting chapter on Rookley will be found in *Crawley: Glimpes into the Past of a Hampshire Parish*, by F. W. Pledge, M.A., published at the request of Mr. O. E. Philippi, of Crawley Court, MCMVII.

is the following entry in the East Stratton register of burials at Micheldever :—

HENRY, EARL OF GALWAY.

Died Sept. 3rd,

Was buried Sept. 6th, 1720.

JOHN IMBER,

Curate of Stratton.

An admirable portrait of the Earl of Galway adorns the Court Room of the French Protestant Hospital, "La Providence," South Hackney, of which institution he was a benefactor and the first Governor. He was interested in the affairs of the French Church at Southampton, where in the last recorded baptism, 1717, the sponsors (represented by proxies) were, the Marquis de Ruvigny and La très honorable Dame Rachel Wriothsley, Veuve du très honorable Seigneur Guillaume Russell.

His will, contained in the Court of Probate, piously begins :—

"In the name of God Amen, I, Henri de Massue, Earl and Viscount of Gallway, and Baron of Portarlinton in the Kingdom of Ireland, being weak in body but of sound and disposing mind, judgment and memory, do make this my last Will and Testament in writing in manner following : First, I bequeath my soul to God's mercy through Jesus Christ, and my body to the earth, to be privately interred by my executors, hereinafter named, in the church belonging to the Parish wherein I shall happen to depart this life. And for such Worldly Estate as it hath pleased God to entrust me with, I do hereby dispose of the same in the manner following" :—

He gives and bequeaths to Rachel, Lady Russell, all his estate both real and personal. To every household servant, "mourning," "one year's wages more than shall be due to them at the end of the quarter wherein I shall die." To several servants special bequests are made. Among legacies to personal friends in England, Madame Lucrece Chavernay

of Southampton, £40 per annum ; Anthony Cong of Southampton, Clerk, £13 per annum ; Monsieur Peter de Cosne, of Southampton, £500, and to his children, Charles de Cosne £1000, Henrietta £1,500, Ruvigny de Cosne £2,000. To the French Hospital in London, "of which I am Governor," £1,000. To the poor of East Stratton in the county of Southampton, £10. To the poor of Crawley, £10. To the poor of King Somborne, £10.

The Will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury at London on December 7th, 1720, and dated August 30th, 1720. Among the witnesses were the Rev. John Imber, aged 27, Curate of Stratton.

Rachel, Lady Russell's *Letters* contain frequent reference to her cousin : "When I scribble to Lord Gallway I consider very little what I put down, as I am secure, by God's grace, never to forfeit your love and esteem." On February 13th she writes : "To-morrow your health will not be omitted Daughter Devon (Rachel, married to the Duke of Devonshire) and Mr. Charlton being to dine here . . . God for the good you do to mankind grant you some easy years, to do good upon earth before you change for an happy eternity. So does desire and pray, Lord Gallway's truly affectionate cousin, R. Russell."

Lord Galway was unmarried and his property passed by will, as we have seen, to Rachel, Lady Russell, who died 1723 in her eighty-seventh year.

The British title Earl of Galway became extinct, but the Marquisate passed to a nephew, from whom the present Marquis de Ruvigny claims descent. Lord Galway at the close of his life was described as "an aged General, maimed and covered with honourable wounds, by birth a foreigner, by sentiment and inclination an honest Englishman, a gentleman of rare and eminent qualities that equally render him proper for the Cabinet or the field." We would hope that this testimony will some day be recorded on a substantial memorial in the church of Micheldever to a noble soul whose body is there deposited in an unknown grave.