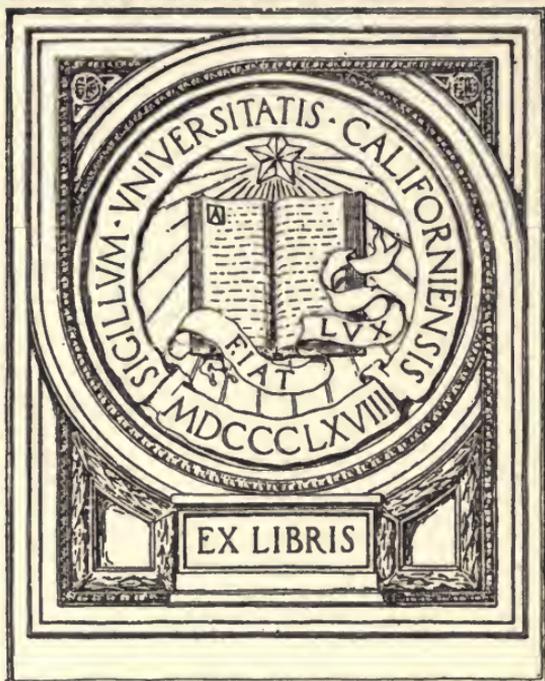


ROMANCE
OF
OLD BELGIUM

· ELIZABETH W. CHAMPNEY ·



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



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The Descent from the Cross, by Rubens, Antwerp
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ROMANCE OF OLD BELGIUM

FROM CÆSAR TO KAISER

BY

ELIZABETH W. CHAMPNEY

AND

FRÈRE CHAMPNEY

WITH 90 ILLUSTRATIONS

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

1915

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

1915

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BY

ELIZABETH W. CHAMPNEY

Second Impression

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
AND OF THE WORLD
FROM 1776 TO 1915

Published by The Knickerbocker Press, New York

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

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PREFACE

WHILE the Belgium of today is overwhelmed by a "volcanic uprush of hell," the heart-sick beholder turns gladly to contemplation of its glorious past.

No land has ever been so harried with sword and flame by the invader, or has sprung more phoenix-like from its ashes. Thus will she surely rise again, though neither campaigns of Cæsar nor Spanish Fury have dealt such devastation as the present war.

"With a pity for buildings, which he did not exercise toward human beings," Philip II. of Spain commanded his troops to respect churches and monasteries. But apart from religious considerations, there is good reason for the protection of architecture, since a masterpiece belongs not to a nation alone but to all the world and should live forever.

There is a peculiar pathos in the destruction of the Belgian churches, since the sensuous faith that created them is dead, and their marvels of sculpture, painting, and glass may never again spring into beauty.

The mediæval guild-halls, castles, abbeys, and *hotels de villes*, with their treasures of lace, embroidery,

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carvings, armour, and tapestries, should have been preserved as historical monuments. In the burning of these structures one sees, as though illuminated by their flames, the vanished men and women who builded, fought, reigned, loved, and suffered therein;—apparitions that have flitted, since the habitations which they haunted are ruined.

A half-score of episodes is too narrow a canvas on which to depict the history of a nation. It may, however, serve to suggest the temper of its people during supreme moments of liberty and oppression.

We will pause on the stepping-stones of centuries to note, only, significant events and characters. Beginning with the legend of Cæsar's Nervian wife, from whom Julius Sabinus boasted descent, we shall pass to the year 500, to recount the romance of Clotilde and her barbarian lover. The *Quatre Fils Aymon* will then lead us to the Empire of Charlemagne, a mountain top, where the old world sets in darkness and the new rises in the dawn of civilization.

With the opening of the twelfth century, at the Castle of Bouillon, in leafy Ardennes, we shall meet with Godfrey, the noblest knight of all Christendom; and Froissart, with less reserve than he manifests in his chronicles, shall relate his own heart-history, the romance of Philippa, and the guileful patriotism of Van Artevelde.

Arras of the fifteenth century will unroll a portrait

of fervent Jacqueline, and from the sixteenth shall step heroic figures, Orange and Egmont, crafty Granvelle and cruel Alva.

In the studio of Rubens we shall see sumptuous women,

“Whose forms upon his canvases still blush,
With fire of unimagined colours tender.”

Here too we shall meet van Dyck's aristocrats and listen to the mirth of Teniers's roysterers.

In the eighteenth century, we may disentangle a thread of intrigue from a web of Mechlin lace. At Waterloo, in 1815, we shall witness the fatal charge of the Cuirassiers and the death-blow to tyranny.

Finally, in our own day, we shall tread the trail of the “Devastating Hun,” and look upon the results of his “appalling world crime.”

In the Palais de la Nation, at Brussels, the portraits of Clovis, Charlemagne, Godfrey, and their great compeers, look down resentfully upon the Invader.

Great warriors! Sheathe your swords! Belgium endures for the last time the Iron Cross of War. “A federation of the world shall establish a universal republic, which will make the Game of Kings forever impossible.”

THE IRON CROSS

Belgium! Thou little land of sorrows sore,
Rent with what ravishment of sword and flame,
Since Cæsar yoked thy tribes in Roman name
And Clovis first the cross upraised of yore;
While Charlemagne the banner bravely bore,
Ere Godfrey waved it o'er Jerusalem,
And Froissart penned thy deeds for deathless fame,
Till Alva once anew thy heart-strings tore!

Whose Egmont gave his all thy might to save,
And Rubens' brush begot a golden age,
Le Grand Monarque thy southern kingdom reft,
Till what, of latent life, Napoleon left
At Waterloo, with war-besotted rage,
Thy garden, now a Kaiser makes a grave!

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Romance of Old Belgium

PART I

LOOT

IN a ruined Belgian abbey (the name has been deleted), three soldiers of the Allies were aimlessly exploring the debris-encumbered chambers.

“Comme je vous ai dit,” insisted the French sergeant, flicking the dust from his uniform, “il n’y a rien, absolument rien.”

“What did you expect to find,” inquired the Londoner, “in a beggarly old monastery, crown jewels of the Kingdom?”

The Belgian looked about him hungrily. “They say that the old monks were great eaters and good drinkers too. If we could but find our way to the cellars, for example.”

Unable to do this, as the crypt of the monastery was an impenetrable labyrinth of fallen beams, they continued their stroll above. Here a row of cells opened upon the cloister, where a shattered pear-tree thrust

its feeble branches through heaps of brick and mortar, with the despairing gesture of a man buried alive.

"What a beastly hole for a man to live in!" said the Englishman.

"N'est-ce pas, mon ami! A tomb, a kennel, fit only for a dead soul or a live dog!"

"What of the world could one know imprisoned in this cell?"

"Rien, absolument rien."

"Look you, the man's pallet stood here," continued the Englishman, "his crucifix above the pallet and here——"

"Here, Messieurs," the Belgian was scanning the wall closely, "here are stains, spatters rather."

"What, blood?" asked the Frenchman with awakening interest.

"Nothing so ordinary. Ink Messieurs, for here was once a narrow lectern close to the door where he had light from the cloister garden."

"How furiously he must have written to have so spotted the wall," exclaimed the Englishman. "What was he composing, think you?"

"Nothing of the least consequence," reiterated the Frenchman. "You see that I was right. We find nothing here,—*absolument rien.*"

As he spoke the air was rent with a heavy detonation. The three soldiers ran back into the cloister as, with a



“ In a Ruined Belgian Abbey ”

From a copyright photograph by the Topical News Agency



“ They left the papers there to scud about, the sport of every breeze ”

From a copyright photograph by the Topical News Agency

deafening crash, the wall toppled inward burying the cell under a mass of shattered masonry.

"My word!" drawled the Londoner adjusting his glasses, "that was a bit nasty."

"À la guerre comme à la guerre," said the Frenchman, "'tis all very well to expose one's self when on duty, but for one's amusement, *ma foi!* the game is not worth the candle. For my part I know not why we chose this *sacré* abbey for our promenade."

But the Belgian had leapt into the cell, where, through a cloud of dust, he discovered a closet concealed for centuries now burst open by the explosion to rifling hands. In this recess was an iron-bound box of solid oak which he bore to the light.

"It is mine," he gasped. "I alone saw it. You both said there was nothing here, nothing."

"Share alike, *mon ami,*" cried the Frenchman, "if there is anything worth sharing."

"Take it to headquarters. Are we thieves?" commanded the Englishman.

But the hasp of the casket had yielded under the blows of a stone and the Belgian strewed its contents upon the ground. To the disgust of all, the loot proved to be only worthless papers. Manuscripts yellow with age, tied in packets or bundled indiscriminately together and thrust into the niche after the writer's death. All were written in a language which none of the three could quite understand.

"It is French," declared the Englishman.

"No, Flemish," contradicted the Frenchman; while the Belgian insisted that it was English.

The Londoner studied it more carefully. "English, yes, as a Belgian might write it, a queer lingo such as our ancestors used before they learned to spell, and which no fellow nowadays can make out. No loss to the world, I fancy."

They left the papers to scud about, the sport of every breeze. Sometime later the ruins were burned over, but a heavy rain extinguished the fire. One day a soldier with more of appreciation of their value gathered the waifs together and sent them to England. So a portion of this disregarded loot came at last into the hands of the present writers.

Legends and romances they proved to be of the early history of Belgium, from half-mythical ages before the Christian era, down through the centuries, to mediæval days of troubadour and tourney. Scattered among the tales were verses, rondeaus, villanelles, serenades, ballads of wild adventure, legends of saints, and letters, written by fair hands to the monkish scribe, breathing a perfume more fragrant than that of the cloister.

Strange how these newly found tales revived traditions which we had heard from the lips of peasants! How they restored faded colours of old tapestries, and galvanized into life dead portraits, whose originals—"Nous aimons un peu sans les avoir connues,"—illu-

mining with new light dark passages, alike of crumbling castles and of histories more remarkable for veracity than charm.

Who was the Belgian chronicler writing thus in English diction of the fourteenth century? Scarcely Geoffrey Chaucer, though he may have paused here on his way to or from Italy; was it indeed John Froissart, who, after a life spent in the courts of England and of Europe, retired in his declining years to this abbey. Or was it only some humbler imitator?

Puzzle ye my puzzle, kind gentles, the magpie gatherer of these pilfered legends has filled in the lacunæ with little art but with much sympathy.

And ye who deme not sooth this monk his tales,
Nor yet allow them well invenciouned,
Think how with Godde not our desert avails
But that we righthly have intenciouned.
Then from each tale winnowe the chaffe withal,
Keeping the graine, the which the wind lets fall.
And so the goode Lorde us sinners shrive
That in his holynesse we al may live.

CHAPTER I

THE SHE-WOLF'S LITTER: A LEGEND OF THE NERVII

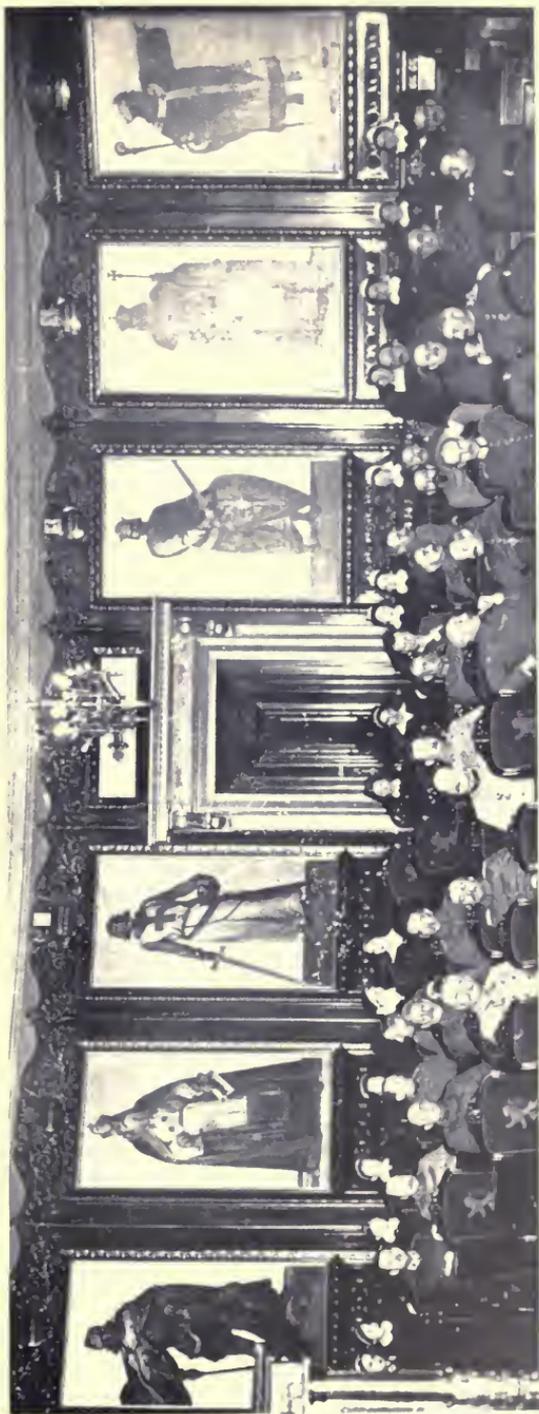
I

"VENI"

A Wolf ther was wombed 'neath a southern skye,
Wher seven grete hilles loom golden in the sunne,
With dome and towre and columned temple highe
And endlesse aqueducte in unisonne.
Lorde of a cruelle broode of war-like menne,
Than whom non lived more feresome or more colde,
Craftye and wise in arte of human ken,
Whelpes of the wolf, inexorable, bolde
To spoil and ravin al the circling wolde.

A Lamb ther was, the fable olde doth saye,
Long syne, who, drinking at a woodlande rill,
Troubled the waters, crystal, cool and stille,
Thus sayd the Wolf, what time he fared thet waye:
"For that ye dare my wateres, Lambkin, roile,
Thee shal I now incontinently slaye!"

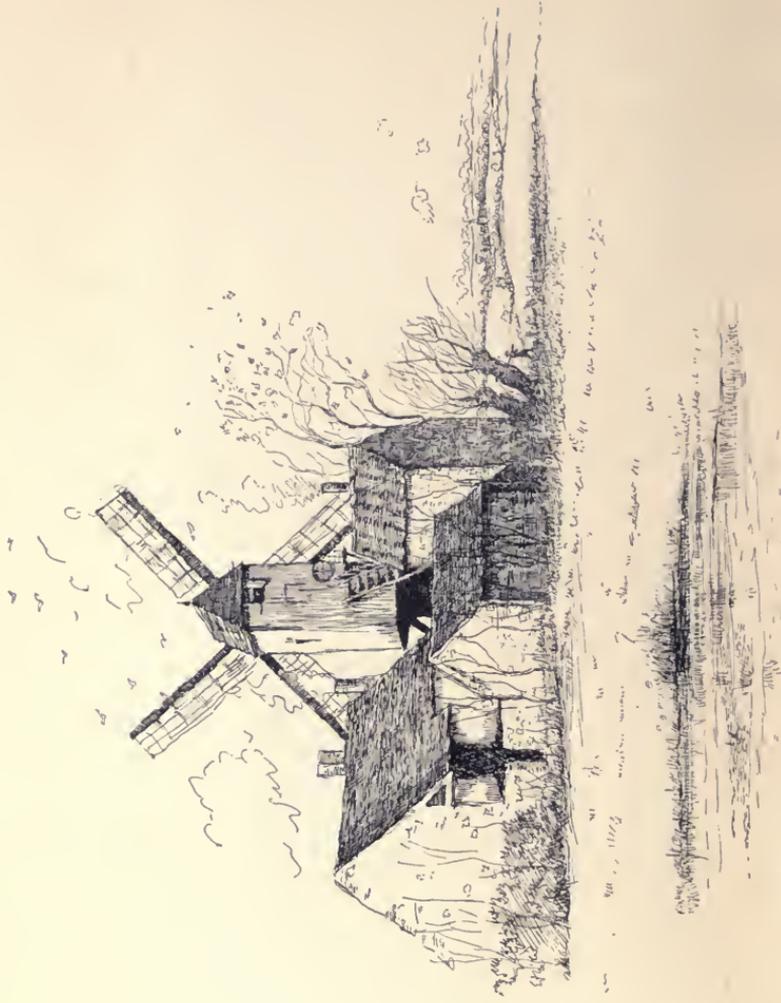
The Wolf was Cæsar, Gaul the tender preye,
Whose herte he rente with fanges athirst for gore,
Insatiate to torture and to flaye,
Still creepinge up thurgh treacherye to poure,
Til loote and carnage he could gorge no more;



In the Palais de la Nation, Clovis, Charlemagne, Godfrey, and their great compeers, with drawn swords, look down like angry ghosts upon the invader

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“Where Cæsar overcame the Nervii ”



“Now lazy windmills ply their filmy fans ”

From a drawing by Albert Charles

Whan on the Ides, upon the capitol,
E'en Rome repudiated Cæsar's sway
And Wolfings slew the Wolf that preyed on Gaul!

MAUGIS, the Druid magician, of whose birth tradition spake not and who was destined by Mananan to outlive the universe, stood by the sand-dunes peering expectantly to sea.

Tall, clothed in white, his arms bare save for a golden armlet, his elf-locks, chaplet-bound, mingling with a beard which swept like a foaming torrent to his belt, his eyes gleaming like live coals—had he possessed no supernatural prestige he would still have commanded respect.

There had been a terrific tempest; a towering tidal wave had lapped far inland, sucking back, in its greedy ebb, flocks, men, hamlets; and the shore was littered for miles with jetsam.

The survivors, too terrified to collect the wreckage, huddled about the Druid while he mumbled a rune of enchantment.

“Beltane and his demons have not been propitiated;” he shrilled, “they hunger for human sacrifice. Ye must yield them one or they will devour all.”

“Where, O Maugis,” demanded the tribesmen, “shall we offer sacrifice?”

“Upon the great dolmen in the Druid Wood, at sunrise, on the morn of the summer solstice, must the victim be immolated; that the hunger of the gods be

appeased, lest the Voyaging Rocks bring the devils of doom."

Tracing a circle in the sand with his wand, Maugis chanted a wild war-song: "Thy tables we will lay, Beltane. The victims will be slain. Druids, whet your rusted knives to cleave the tender flesh. Red blood shall assuage thy thirst. The heart of our fair princess shall smoulder on thine altar!"

"Never," cried the chief, Bodnognatus, "shalt thou sacrifice my daughter. Thou thyself shalt die in her stead!" Brandishing his flint axe above the implacable Maugis he was diverted by a despairing wail from the tribesmen.

"Behold the Rocks of Doom!"

Silhouetted against the waning moon, phantom forms loomed through the dusk, swayed, toppled, sank, and rose again—then sailed slowly by, like a fleet of ghostly galleons.

"Alas!" moaned Maugis, "no sacrifice can now avail. War, more deadly than hath e'er ravaged Gaul, will surely come. War, war!"

This prophecy was speedily fulfilled. Cæsar fell upon tribe after tribe in relentless massacre.

"Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgæ," he said, and, in order, to "pacify" these people, looting, slaying, and enslaving, he laid waste the land.

Rumours of his invincible march through Allemania foreran his legions; how that, in a day, he had flung a

magic bridge across the Rhine, whereon he crossed with all his centuries; and how, in one conflict he had put to the sword a half million of Germans.¹

And now the Roman, whose very name was terror, was at their defenceless gates. What hope to make a stand when Ariovistus had fled? The Sylvanectes, having sought shelter in their trackless forests, the Wolf King as they named him, flaired them out and, severing their hands, sent them mutilated through Belgica "to inspire the denizens with fear." The peaceful Remi laid down their arms and were sold as slaves.

The Nervii, of all the Belgæ most indomitable, would neither flee nor surrender, but laboured desperately to prepare the Romans fitting welcome.

The appearance of the Voyaging Rocks at the time of their council had decided them to submit to the demand of Maugis. Their chieftain was struck down while defending his daughter and the girl dragged to the sacrificial table.

But the great Wolf King was near at hand. That June night as the moon was dipping behind the purple hills, heading a scouting party, he rode far into the Nervian forest.

Coming upon a clearing he sedulously examined the spot. A great circle of greensward recently trampled by many feet and in the centre a huge dolmen, with

¹ This victory was gained by such treachery that Cato declared Cæsar ought to be delivered into the hands of the barbarians.

menhirs standing sentinel-like around it. He advanced within this ring of monoliths and examined the dolmen, a flat stone resting upon several low uprights, forming a table. Brushwood was piled about it and the table itself was garlanded with vervain. The forest opened toward the east, and he could see twinkling lights approaching in long lines. The conclusion was evident: the spot was a temple and a procession was winding hitherward for some religious ceremonial.

Instantly he ordered the soldiers to withdraw to cover and, secreting himself in the coppice, awaited the coming of the worshippers.

As they came a weird chant rose and swelled into a battle march timed to the beating of muffled drums, and it increased in intensity to a blast of shawms and oxhorn trumpets.

Like the muttering of distant thunder hoarsely they chanted the

Druide Hymn

Haste ye Druides to the clearing,
Wher the crescente sickle golde
Of the moone through cloudlets peering,
Floods with radiance all the wolde.

In the mystic shades suspiciouse,
By the dolmen dim and white,
Let us waite the houre auspicious
When the Dawne displayes her lyghte.

Then with utterance of thunder
Let our battle cryes resounde;
Till Rome's bonds we wreste asunder!
Let the tocsin bravely sounde!

Through the londe like comets flashynge
Grant victorouse we goe!
Gaul's grete shields of warre are clashynge,
Save our hearthes from tyrant foe.

As the company fled into the sacred place and, quenching all of their torches but one, squatted upon the ground in ever widening circles, the march changed into a wailing, funereal prayer:

Mananan, Godde of our natioune,
Irmisul and bolde Beltane
See thy people's desolaucion,
Send thy succoure not in vaine!

Gradually the sky lightened to dawn, and Cæsar could discern, through the greening dusk, nude, spectral figures, approaching the dolmen, led by an aged Druid, who supported himself upon a tall staff, while in his right hand he held the flickering torch. He took his place at the head of the altar, while the uncouth, naked savages dragged forward a shrieking girl, whom they bound upon the sacrificial stone.

Inured as Cæsar was to scenes of horror, he felt a cold sweat suffuse his person; and was about to give the signal for the onslaught of his men, when the barbarians

resumed their sitting posture, while the Druid stood gazing toward the east.

The moon had set, the chant died into an awed hush, not a leaf stirred or bird twittered. Only the low moaning of the victim shivered through the air, until as the sky flushed to sunrise, the chant swelled again:

Shall the preying Roman eagle
Our old altars e'er defame?
Shall our Druid forests regal
Fall before the axe and flame?

Nay! the sun hath passed the portal
And the victim waits the pyre.
Ply the torche, thou priest immortelle,
Rome shall know our vengeance dire!

The fiery rim of the sun appeared above the horizon, and its first white ray touched one of the giant menhirs, casting its shadow upon the foot of the altar. As the sun rose higher, its light flooded the space between the eastern menhirs and the sacrificial stone. Gradually it spread along its surface, from the feet of the recumbent victim upward until it reached her throat.

Then, as the worshippers shrieked the last stanza of their terrible invocation, the Druid plunged his torch again and again into the brushwood and flames shot up on every side of the altar!

The demonic creatures sprang to their feet and danced about the pyre with hideous yells; when, with a battle-cry which resounded through the leafy aisles, the Roman

squadron charged into the circle, slashing right and left. Plucking the burning faggots from the sacrificial stone, they flung them among the panic-stricken savages and drove them helter-skelter into the forest; while Cæsar, cutting the cords which bound her, released the maiden, who disappeared in the confusion.

As Cæsar thrust at the Druid, his sword, to his astonishment, passed through unresisting air.

"Fool," cried the wizard, "I am Maugis whom none can slay: but thou blind treader-down of innocent peoples, thou, that desecrateth the temples of their religion, and layeth waste their lands, their homes and the sepulchres of the ancient dead—thou shalt die, wolf that thou art, by the fangs of thine own brood, littered in the lair of death!"

Cæsar listened with mingled curiosity and amusement, but before these feelings could give place to anger Maugis had changed to a smouldering tree-trunk, and his long beard dissolved into a welter of wavering smoke.

II

"VIDI"

A mayde ther dwelt in Northland fer contree,
And her was wondrous swete and passing fayre,
A chieftayne's daughter she, of Nervii,
A peplet wild as wolves within a laire,

Fiercest of al the lustye tenantrye
 That habit watere, earth or reaulmes of air,
 But meke as any yereling doe might be,
 Though Lupa she yclept, and debonaire,
 Lone, elfish wilding of the marshy wode,
 Frail, gentil lambkin of a wolfish broode.

Whilom it passed that Lupa sought the streme,
 Wher, most sequestered in the pleachèd shade,
 To cool her from the sunne's unflinching beme,
 Amongst green osieres in a tranquile glade;
 Whenne sudden, thurgh the foreste's stillye hush,
 A thud of hammering hoofes and clank of maile!
 And, flocked with foam and dust, with myghtie rush,
 A Roman gallops up the foreste traile,
 Then pauses at the streamlet's mossye brinke
 To give his steede the watere clere to drinke.

Within the reedes shy Lupa strives to hide
 In vayne her beautie white beneath the tide.
 The knyghte hath seen and, seeing, straight doth ride
 In hot pursuite; but Lupa swift doth glide
 Down thurgh the rushes to an elfin grot,
 Wher, save wee sprites, ther peer intruderer not.

"Vidi," said Cæsar to himself. "'Tis a wraith, some naiad of the pool or oread of the forest. Was not Hylas snared by such in Sicily while Jason waited to hoist sail with the Argonauts?"

This was moreover the Druid wood in which he had interrupted the revolting sacrifice of a young girl; and though this religion seemed naught to him, still—"might there not be somewhat of truth therein," he queried,

"since I have seen that their hollow trees imprison beings like to the dryads?"

The water-sprite, whom he deemed that he had seen, might be mere glamouraye, or a lamia such as suck men's blood, but none the less he felt himself bewitched. Whenever he rode in this part of the forest he heard, at some point of his course, the trilling of a strange bird. Following the song, he often discerned a rustling in the bushes; and when he sought warily, or with loud halloo, he found neither wild creature nor trace of human being. Yet always, as he abandoned the search, there fluttered to his feet a thrush transfixed by an arrow, pointed with rock crystal and winged with scarlet feathers. These arrows he would thrust through his mantle, resuming his course, riding, as was his wont when pondering matters of great moment, with his hands locked behind his head, his steed at full gallop, well knowing that it would find the way to camp.

So certain was he that the mysterious being had no malevolent intent, that one day he sought the stream where she had disappeared, and fancied that he saw beneath its ripples the flash of a white arm. He was an expert swimmer, having once crossed a river swimming with one hand, holding high above the water some manuscripts which he wished to preserve. He did not hesitate now, but divesting himself of his armour, he dived beneath the surface. Here he made an important discovery.

A sub-aqueous passage led upward to a cavern above the surface of the water, lighted from above and glistening with stalactites. It was quite deserted, but there was evidence of its past occupancy, for bits of crystal had been broken off and chipped into arrowheads, which were stored in a crevice. He hesitated an instant, then tore from the breast of his tunic the brooch which fastened it, two Roman eagles with inter-hooked beaks, placed it in the crevice, and so stole from the grotto.

Again he sought the spot and, happy, or unhappy chance, found sleeping on the floor of the cave, her head pillowed upon her arm, the naiad of the stream; a lovely young girl, of fifteen, he judged, perfect in her childlike beauty, and nude save for the interlocked eagles suspended by a thong about her neck, rising and falling with her soft breathing.

She opened her deep violet eyes as he bent over her and a smile of glad surprise illumined her face, as she stroked his own softly. "Wolf King," she said in the Gallic-Roman patois, "thou didst save me from the knife of Maugis, thou wilt not betray my hiding-place."

"Nay," he protested, "and I will terribly punish those impious ones who would have ta'en thy life. Who art thou and how art thou called?"

"I have no longer people or name. Wilt thou not give me thine, O Wolf King?"

"So be it, henceforth art thou my Alba Lupa. But dwell there other nymphs within these rivers, such

as green-tressed Malis and Nychea of the caressing hands?"

"Yea, lord, water maidens have we; but who be those of whom thou speakest?"

"Listen," he said, "to an old tale by one of our poets, *The Fate of Hylas*:

"Where the lush sward is strewn with celandine,
Iris and maiden hair and no birds sing,
Fair Hylas found a cool and crystal spring,
Within whose depths the sleepless nymphs unseen,
Eunica fair and Malis apple-green
And frail Nychea, vine to twine and cling,
Were dancing in a blithe and festive ring.
And each was beauteous as a fairy queen.

"He stoops to fill his urn, the vision spies,
A heavenly glamour every sense entralls,
Then down he sinks, as from the summer skies
A flaming star in silent beauty falls.
While, 'Hylas! Hylas!' his sad comrade cries,
And 'Hylas! Hylas,' empty echo calls."¹

As Cæsar returned, he found not his armour upon the bank nor his horse waiting beside it; though when he whistled, the faithful creature came, trembling with fright, its shoulder grazed by an arrow that all but came too near.

Even this untoward incident deterred not Cæsar from his purpose. Posting guards at a little distance he again sought the cave, but the water-wraith had dis-

¹ Translated from Theocritus.

appeared. Was she offended that he had invaded her sanctuary, or had she been discovered and borne away by her savage people?

Never, though he visited the cave again and again did he find her there. No more birds fell at his feet, no sight or message of any kind was vouchsafed him, maiden or sprite, she had vanished utterly.

III

"VICI"

The Nervii, a tribe of warlike mode,
 Of al the Gauls most boisterous and brute,
 Uncouth of mien, weird offspring of the wode,
 Lurking alon unpacified though mute,
 Byded within walled hedges wide and heighe
 The grete Wolf's coming; whil in hamlets nigh
 He hibernated neth a milder skye,
 Builded him bridges o'er swift-rushynge tides,
 Leveyed his legionnes, cohorts, centuries
 Of horse and fote and burdened bestes, besides
 Huge enginerie of siege and vaste supplies.

With Springe's bryghte, burgeoned bloome like blight he
 came

And put these trembling flockes to utter flyghte,
 Harried them thurgh the stremes with sword and flame,
 Consumed the foreste dense and limitlesse,
 Whither they swermed for refuge in the nyghte.

Mercye! they crave; but, stern and pitylesse,
 The Wolf stille thirstes for more of blode and pain,

Thousands he sleys! Til sated with distresse
And glut of carnage, those who yet remaine,
Mere handfull of that nationne numberlesse,
He "spares—to bow beneath the yoke of Rome,"
And die as slaves, fer from their foreste home.

But when the prowlinge Wolf espied that nyghte,
Within the prison-penne, wher huddled close
Like lambes within a folde in sore affryghte,
The tremblinge loot his lustful legionnes chose,
A mayden wan and frayle with want of fode,
He halted horse and to her hied straightway,
For lo! 'twas Lupa, elfing of the wode.
With herte transformed to pity he did saye:
"Mayden, if less than spirite thou canst be,
Grievéd wer I, if in thy hapless plyghte
I sped me not to aid and solas thee.
My bride thou'lt be upon this verye nighte.
Centurioun, this slave I now sette free!"

Then Lupa answered: "Wolf-Kinge, strong and brave,
Thee wil I followe or to joye or peyn,
Thy lande shal be my lande in sunne or rain,
Thy gods shal be my gods unto the grave!"

And Lupa, lambkin of the Nervian vale,
Leaped laughing in her ruthless captor's arms
There to forget al fear and wilde alarums;
But, an ye herkneth to my coming tale,
I wil ye tel how, lamb-like while ye love,
A woman spurned, a verye wolf may prove.

MORALE

The morale this: Lambkin be not too bolde;
But byde with mother-ewe, secure at home.

Better to be a shepe, alive in folde,
Than mutton inne the maw of hungrye Rome
Or other nightlyc prowler of the wolde.

Fighting behind hedges wattled with intertwisted boughs, moated by streams and marshes which sucked the armour-laden Romans down to death, only inch by inch had the Nervii retreated.

Bestial howls filled the night, flaming eyes and fiendish faces peered from the forest on every hand. Now the savages were in the front, then in the rear; the Romans suddenly found themselves encompassed by a horde of barbarians, hacking, leaping, tumbling over bodies of foe and friend. The women, putting into practice the lessons of extermination which they had learned from the Romans, gleaned the battle-field by braining the wounded with their stone axes.

Routing his cavalry the Nervii surrounded the seventh and twelfth legions, slaying the centurions.

Cæsar leapt from his horse exclaiming, "I fight on foot with my men. The battle won, my steed may serve me in the chase!" Seizing a standard, he rallied his disheartened soldiery till they descended on the Nervii, driving them like chaff before the wind.

Traversing the morasses upon their prostrate foes the Romans pursued the frightened fugitives with fire and sword, until from a tribe of three score thousand warriors five hundred alone survived.

At last the Belgæ were broken. Only the Morini

remained far beyond the Scheldt, skulking from one inaccessible region to another.

It was "that summer evening," when in gladness of heart he donned a new mantle,

"What day he overcame the Nervii,"¹

that Cæsar noted among the women in the prison pen a frail familiar face.

"My General," exclaimed his lieutenant, Quintus Cicero, "what meaneth this symbol?" Tearing her garment from her throat, he disclosed the linked Roman eagles.

"Cicero," said Cæsar, "this is no common maiden. From this moment she is free." Then turning to Lupa, he asked, "Where wouldst thou go? Shall I take thee to thy grotto?"

"Take me to thine heart!" she cried and with a ripple of laughter leapt into his arms.¹

"A Nervian hath conquered the conqueror of her people," he said, folding his mantle tenderly about her.

To him the act signified simply protection; to her, as to many primitive people, this enfolding was the solemn marriage rite, and from that hour Lupa regarded herself as his wife. "What to me," she asked herself, "are

¹ See funeral oration of Marc Antony. Shakespeare, *Julius Cæsar*, act iii., scene ii.

father, mother, home, or country compared with my great Wolf King?"

After the victory over the Nervii there was a brief respite in fighting, while Cæsar sat him down by the Portus Itius (Boulogne) to prepare for the invasion of Britain.

The native hunters brought them game. Lupa strung a lithe bow with a cord twisted from her hair, and frequently returned from short excursions with a bag of birds. Often she placed before her lord fresh gathered berries, *petites fraises des bois*, heaped in vine leaves, and one day she surprised Cæsar with a pot of cream cheese garnished with cresses from the brook.

"Where didst thou find these curds?" he asked.

"'Tis my secret," she laughed, and then showed him tethered behind the tent a new-born kid which she had found in the wood.

The dam had followed, as Lupa carried it to the camp, and, made gentle by kind treatment, yielded milk for their table; while the kid became a frolicsome pet, oftentimes bringing a smile to Cæsar's face as it gambolled with its child-mistress.

Lupa was hardly more to him,—a charming playmate, affectionate, even intelligent, but hardly a creature with a soul. She quickly acquired facility in speaking a mongrel Latin, and her mistakes in construction and odd intonation were alike fascinating. Her Celtic enthusiasm gave to every-day occurrences an appetizing

flavour, her humour enlivened grey days, and her keen curiosity drew from him the story of his past successes. In this she was more clever than she knew, for what better entertainment can a man enjoy than that of recounting his own exploits, and seeing them magnified to heroic proportions in the eyes of an adoring woman?

Her hunger for information was insatiable. He must needs tell her again and again the story of Rome, describe for her its palaces and temples, the poetic imagery of its superstitions, so different from her simple Nature worship, and its grandiose ceremonies and picturesque pageants.

"One day thou wilt take me to see these wonders?" she had asked.

"Of a surety, *Lupella mea*," he replied, evading her eyes. "But first," he vaunted, "I shall pacify these barbarous Britons; and thou must await my return."

As he was speaking, he was abruptly interrupted by a wail from the frightened girl. "Woe! Woe! The Wandering Rocks!" she cried, wringing her hands in dismay. "They bring thy certain doom."

"'Tis but a hollow ship," he laughed, "in which my soldiers sail."

Meanwhile a galley oared up the river, neared the shore, dropped anchor, and from its decks several centuries of armed legionaries swarmed into the water, wading waist-deep to land.

"'Tis a winged whale," insisted Lupa, "whose belly

vomiteth forth men! Ah! go not to Britain; 'tis but an Isle of Gramaraye, that hath no existence, of which only liars have told and only dreamers have seen!"

He hardly heard her and Lupa noted the change in her lord. He was restless and moody. Tripping merrily by his side, scanning his cold visage, Lupa said within her heart:

"Much passeth in his mind which concerneth not me." Clenching her small hands she asked herself, "Doth he dream of that Egyptian, Cleopatra the dark-eyed?" Drawing her bow with sudden impulse she wounded a nightingale. Then great tears welled to her eyes as she stroked its blood-bedabbled breast. Its trilling in the long summer nights had been such delight.

Returning to the camp she sought her goat. The men had made its little one their mascot and had taught it new tricks. But Cæsar had found goat's flesh particularly palatable and Lupa discovered the kid spitted over the camp-fire.

"Thou hast caused my pet to be slaughtered!" she accused him.

"What wouldst thou?" he answered. "A man cannot live on curds and cresses; I crave red flesh."

"Blood crieth for blood," she exclaimed; "not flesh of goats will sate thee, but only flesh of men. But when their rotting carcasses taint the air, ware thee, Cæsar, for the wolves will come."

He laughed and strode to the beach to inspect his

ships. A withered crone who had been gazing at them through her shading palm drew near to Lupa. "Yea," she said, her head nodding with a palsy. "I had a lover once, a Viking, Skiold the Thirsty, who sailed in a dragon-ship, nor came again."

"Little wit hadst thou, Mother," said Lupa, "or thou wouldst have sailed with him. Then would he have clothed thee with the lure of the sea."

She did not answer, but sang to herself in a cracked voice a song of the fickleness of man. Lupa shivered as she heard the lonely woman shrilling her weird

RUNE OF THE SEA.

For manne wil mounte the grene-hilled deepe
And mayde maye bide alon and weepe,
Til the Daye of Dome, whenne the Earth is deade
And sere and bare is the Oceann bedde.

Onlye a womanne to lave his feete,
To tend the hearthe and the fyre of peat,
With warme whyte armes, in the bridal-bedde,
To enfolde and to pillowe her lorde hys head!

Onlye a woman, to beare him childe,
To toil and to moil, in the home-croft wilde,
Til her earthe-born bodye is bente and bowed
And a corse, she is wrapped in her windinge shroude.

But a woman, how fayre so e'er she be,
A man wil forsake for the sounding sea.
He wil wearye and chafe neath the yoke of love,
As he longes on the winges of the wind to rove.

Whenne the thund'rouse bergs burste the ice-bound fiord
 And the floes flashe fire, lik a two-edged sworde,
 He wil skulk to the beach in the deade of nyghte
 To launch his galley, drawn up for flighte,
 And forsak his londe and his loueing bride
 To plough the foam of the wine-dark tide.

For man wil mounte the grene-hilled deepe
 And mayde maye bide alon and weepe,
 Til the Daye of Dome, whenne the Earth is deade
 And sere and bare is the Oceann bedde.

IV

O see you, after rain, the trace
 Of mound and ditch and wall?
 O that was a Legion's camping place,
 When Cæsar sailed from Gaul.
 For England is not common Earth,
 Water or wood or air,
 But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,
 Where you and I will fare.

—*Rudyard Kipling.*

Though terrified by the sea, Lupa resolved to share the adventure with her lord, and, disguised as a boy-slave, secreted herself in the hold of his galley. When they sighted the white cliffs of Britain, to the astonishment of Cæsar, she issued from hiding.

Trembling with fear lest her lord would be angered, she extended to him a silver drinking cup. "Thou didst forget thy cup," she said, "and if there be goats in Britain, I come to make thy cheeses."

"By Bacchus!" he exclaimed, "be there goats or none, thou shalt bear my cup and press my curds. Retain thy boyish vestments; let none suspect thou art a woman. Bide thou with the ships while I make war against Cassivellaunus."

"May I not go with thee, lord, as thy slave?" implored Lupa.

"Nay; there will be grievous battles. When that I have sacked the king's dun¹ on Tamesis tide, I purpose to circumnavigate the isle, for I fain would have knowledge of its harbours and citadels. Then shalt thou sail with me. But wander not upon the downs without the camp-wall, lest these war-painted Britons rapt thee from me."

"But, lord, how canst thou safely sail around this isle? Thou knowest not the rocks and shoals of its fearsome seas."

"Ere this it hath been done. A Viking, one Skiold the Thirsty, in his high-prowed ship, circled its endless shore. They tell he had a mighty beaker fashioned from the tooth of some colossal beast, a unicorn of the sea, mayhap, and on its ivory rim he carved each harbour, inlet, frith, and fiord with graven lines for rivers till he came again to the selfsame notch whence he at first began. Oh! had I but that beaker! Safely should I sail and grave great Latin names upon its marge. Ay, what a trophy to display at Rome!"

¹ Dun—town or fort. London, the town of Lud.

"Where is the beaker, lord?"

"None knoweth, for the viking died, wrecked upon rocks, where now no rocks are seen, meeting his secret doom in mystery."

"Seek not the beaker, lord; for here I see the Wandering Rocks and Maugis's sorcery."

"How should I seek sunken galleys? 'Tis a vain desire; nathless it doth consume me."

Day and night Lupa dreamed of the beaker. She questioned the natives, who, in order to spy on the growing fortifications, sold fruit to the soldiery. One morn she met an aged fisher hawking shell-fish. "Verily, he had heard tell of a beaker. 'Twas in the possession of the Druidesses of the Vanishing Isle²; who guarded it jealously from profane eyes."

"The Vanishing Isle!" Lupa echoed wonderingly, "and where may that be?"

"Not far hence, but ill to come by," he quavered. "Ye passed it as ye came, though peradventure saw it not. When danger threatens the island vanisheth. If the Druid religion is supplanted it will ne'er return."

"Take me thither," besought Lupa.

"Nay, will I not, thou a man, and perchance a foe. Thou shalt ne'er descry it, yet 'tis alway there—beyond that rag of fog."

² Cæsar landed at Deal, near Dover. Local tradition still tells of the Vanished Isle in the Goodwin Sands. The data for this second expedition to Britain and for the great uprising of the Belgians under Ambiorix is taken from Cæsar's *Commentaries*, book v.

Straining her eyes, Lupa fancied she could discern a smudge of purple, murkier than the mist. There were boats about, but none was she able to beg.

THE ISLE OF PHANTASY

Unknowne of foolish man's unseeing eyes,
A jewelle fayre set in a golden ringe,
Where joyaunce, like a girdle, eer doth cling
About its cinctured strand of Paradise,
A fort'resse, wrought of cunninge glamouraye,
No fief nor seigneurye of Duke or Kinge,
Trancéd in slumbere depe, with folden winge,
Afloat upon the sea, an islande lies.

And whenne, with vervaine crowned and sickels keene,
The Druide daughters file, in garmentes grene,
Filling the feresome nighte with wailes forlorne,
To heape with faggots highe the sacred pyre,
The islande fades in flames of opalle fire
As Skiold blowes a blaste from his grete horn!

Early one morning she plunged into the sunrise-flushed sea, swimming swiftly in the direction which the fisher had indicated. She had not covered half a league when a smother of fog closed over her, but she swam steadily on. At noon she saw a low embankment. She was wearying fast but the sight revived her strength. The tide was running strongly toward the island and, relaxing all effort, she allowed herself to float and drift, till, after a little, her feet struck against a barrier. This was not a rock, but a stockade of great logs rising but a little above the surface of the sea.

Swimming slowly along this wall she strove to find steps to the summit; but found no landing place, while the logs had been stripped of their bark and were slimy with kelp. Nowhere was she able to obtain hold for hand or foot. At length her groping hand encountered a bronze hinge. Here was a water-gate. It opened outward and the in-rushing tide closed it firmly. Waiting patiently for the ebb, she crept upon the gate and slumbered like a wearied child. The tide reached the flood, and ebbing seaward, the great gates swung open. Lupa awakened; summoning her last strength she waded painfully a little space, then fell unconscious upon the shore.

There were shouts of alarm, cries of women, and a scurrying hither and thither. Presently Lupa felt herself lifted by gentle hands. She raised her eyes and saw a Druidess bending over her.

"Maiden," spake the priestess, "know you not that 'tis forbidden for any, save our sacred sisters, to set foot upon this isle?"

"I am a Druidess" murmured Lupa, "though not of thy land. Behold the signs: the severed lock, and, on my knees and breast, the scars of sacrificial fire."

"Thou hast passed through fire to Irminsul," cried the Druidess, "and still livest?"

"Yea, Maugis sacrificed me to the gods," Lupa answered, "but my soul hath returned to earth!"

"Thou shalt be a holy priestess to cull the sacred

mistletoe and guard the war horn of Skiold, in which, stopping the mouthpiece, he quenched his thirst."

Lupa smiled assent. The Priestess brought food and raiment. Robing her in a garment of green hemp, they led her to an aged oak, within whose lichened hollow the High Priestess disappeared.

Kneeling before the tree the Druid virgins intoned a chant and presently, illuming the shrine with a wan bluish light, appeared, as though rising from the earth, the great horn or beaker of Skiold!

The voice of the Priestess bade Lupa draw near and salute it. Reverently the novice kissed its brim, whispering, "Chalice of the gods! vouchsafe that I shall bear thee to my sovereign lord!" As she gazed upon it in awe the beaker disappeared.

Days passed during which Lupa was initiated and instructed in the sacred rites. The hollow oak she was told was not the accustomed shrine of the beaker. When a novice begged admission into the order the horn showed itself miraculously, if she were worthy; at other times it reposed in a mysterious subterranean cavern which no one might penetrate except on certain great ceremonial occasions.

Before the entrance to this temple a perpetual fire was kept burning, and terrible tales were told of the fate of certain curious votaries who, during their vigil, had dared explore the sacred cavern.

Days passed, and, detained within the Vanishing

Isle, Lupa found no opportunity to escape. She knew that Cæsar purposed to return to Belgium before the stormy season. Soon the autumnal tempests would toss the spray across the dyke and clutch at the water-gate with white foam-fingers. She could wait no longer. Assigned one night to the duty of keeping alive the sacred fire, she clad herself once more in boy's clothing, seized a brand, and descended the staircase leading to the temple-cavern.

A growth of kelp had furrowed the steps into slimy ridges upon which she continually missed footing. Steadying herself with a hand upon the wall she found it hung with seaweed, shells, and stalactites from floor to ceiling. A cold blast laden with a dank, unwholesome odour, a smell as of death, surged through the passage. She reasoned that the cavern must have an outlet to the sea.

On a sudden, it seemed to her that another torch flashed up beneath her very feet. She shrank back with a cry as she saw before her a swirling maelstrom of unfathomable depth.

The tide was ebbing fast, reverberating through the vaulted chamber like the booming of distant thunder. Gradually a chain of rocks showed themselves above the surface of the seething water. Stepping cautiously from stone to stone Lupa gained a slippery ledge, upon the yonder side.

The walls widened suddenly, expanding into a lofty

dome, under the centre of which stood an altar. Above, suspended by a golden chain, gleaming bright in the tenebrous gloom, swung the great war horn of Skiold!

Laying down her torch and climbing upon the altar, Lupa severed the chain and concealed the beaker beneath her clothing. With a joyous bound she sprang to the ground, overturning the torch; which, falling into a little pool, left her in utter darkness.

Groping tremblingly she found the wall and felt along its surface seeking the opening.

Suddenly the sound of distant footfalls growing ever nearer fell upon her ear. The sound approached, retreated, died away; but as she stirred she heard the footsteps again, muffled, stealthy, and very near. She was not alone in that pitchy darkness!

Listening intently she caught heavy breathing and muttered curses. Another prowler, seeking the beaker, had lost his way in the cavern! She crouched breathless until his groping hand touched her shoulder, then slipped from his grasp and ran wildly from her unseen pursuer, circling the chamber in frantic search for the archway.

Slipping on the wet pavement she fell. He was almost upon her, when she whipped the horn to her lips and blew a blast that re-echoed thunderously through the cavern.

Instantly the intruder took to flight, more dangerous in his terror than before, for it was impossible to foretell

and evade his blind lunges. At last the trampling died away. The man had found the opening and was fleeing down the passage.

A dull roaring caught the ear of Lupa. The tide was returning! Then a splash, a cry. The man had plunged into the gulf. His loud splashing told her that he was swimming rapidly. A bluish light showed far at the left. This must be the outlet to the sea which she had surmised whence the man had come. The moon had risen, and the increasing light showed her the stepping-stones, a little way beneath the surface of the water. She waded boldly forth, missed footing, but wading and swimming achieved the stairway and escaping from the cave plunged into new dangers.

These did not at once manifest themselves. The peace of Heaven brooded over the enchanted isle—the virgin priestesses slept unconscious of danger. The air of the sweet summer night after the foetid death-damp of that place of horror seemed the quintessence of myriad flowers. The firmament drooped heavy with stars.

Lupa climbed to the summit of the sea-wall and gazed toward Britain. The moon had built a causeway of light across the untroubled waters. She felt herself so spirit-light that she almost fancied she could walk upon it. The cup which her lord had longed for was pressed against her heart. She sensed him near, so near.

As she looked vague forms shadowed in the distance. A Roman galley oared past, its lantern shining at the poop, its sails set to catch every puff of wind and propelled by the soldiers "sitting orderly and smiting the grey sea with their oars."

Then followed another galley and another. The fleet was returning to Belgium. She shrieked and waved her arms, but the lookout took no heed. Suddenly, across the moon's silvern reflection, a great galley, bearing the eagle of Cæsar, almost grazed the rock on which she stood.

Leaping through the tossed spray with an agonized cry, Lupa plunged into the swirling waters.

The oarsmen ceased their strokes, as though by command. Cæsar strode to the rail and looked down the foaming wake.

She lifted the beaker, but her cry was drowned in the turmoil of the waves. Cæsar turned, and the galley impelled by renewed impetus sped on its way.

With the consciousness of abandonment Lupa ceased her desperate swimming. What mattered death or aught else if her Wolf King had ceased to love her? Better to drown than to live. The current bore her unresisting, whither she did not know or care.

Presently the rhythmic stroke of oars came across the water.

Lupa raised her head, as, riding the billows like a swan, gliding through the glimmering moonlight, a

great argosy with dragon figurehead and red swelling sail rounded the promontory. On it rode, over the heaving swell, dipping in the trough of the cavernous hollows, listing to larboard under the breath of a sudden squall. She could see the bronzed backs of the rowers, as like swords from the scabbard, flashed their glittering oar-blades. Their shields hung above ranged in line. A viking ship!

It was with one of these Berserks that she had played her game of hide-and-seek in the dark cavern. Not so easily should he take from her the beaker which they both had sought. She swam toward shore with all her strength. The water-gate was closed. She paddled swiftly along the wall seeking vainly some fissure in which to hide; but the island, on this side, was buttressed by stranded Wandering Rocks.

On a sudden, from its lair in the cliff, horse-headed like the prow of the dragon-ship, with long, white-maned neck, black mouth, and eyes of green flame, a *Thing* struck at her!

Lupa swerved with a shriek—clammy and viscous it grazed her side, its fanged mouth breathing putrefaction.

With frenzied strokes she swam backward into the path of the oncoming galley.

The *Thing* followed fast upon her, flapping its broad paws and spouting like a whale. Raising its

hideous head, luminous as phosphorus, high in air, it flung its many-folded tail in wide circles about her, tightening them ever in close-constricting coils.

Simultaneously a thunderous shout, "*Sö Orm! Sö Orm!* The Sea-Serpent," rang from the Berserks, as they oared furiously toward her.

So absorbed was the monster in his prey that he heeded not the approaching galley. Rallying all her strength Lupa strove to thrust away the coils. They pinioned her arms to her sides and were crushing out her breath.

The carven image of the monster loomed high above, and spat javelins into the body of its living twin.

Without relaxing grip, the wounded hydra plunged in agony to the depths of the sea! Lupa heard vaguely a far-away cry. Then merciful oblivion blotted out all consciousness.

She awoke to find herself lying upon the deck of the dragon-ship. A winged-helmeted viking bent over her, a Hercules in bulk, with saffron, forked beard and closely curling hair. His brawny arms and chest were pelted like a bear and he had the voice of a walrus, but his sea-blue eyes were wide with kindly wonder.

"Hammer o' Thor!" he bellowed, "thou art alive! Mightily did I fight to save thee. Well for me that I am blubbered like a seal, and thus rose to the surface, for thou wast drunken with sea-mead and wouldst ne'er have floated."

He spoke in the Saxon tongue from which that of the Nervii was derived.

"I thank thee, lord," Lupa replied, and then she saw that he held the beaker, which had fallen from its hiding-place.

"'Tis the horn of my father," he said, "that I sailed the world to seek. Yet, when within that cave of horror I heard the blast, I deemed 'twas sounded by his spirit. I feared my father living, and would fain not meet him dead. Lad, how camest thou by the horn?"

"Son of Skiold," answered Lupa, "I stole it for thee!"

He started. "Thou knowest my name?"

"I have heard of thy renown, good my lord. Bear me, I pray thee, to Belgica, even to mine own people."

"'Tis on my homeward track," he said, "and now that the cursed Romans have sailed southward we turn the dragon's prow to Helgoland, though on the way I must moor for food and water in that same gloomy land of which thou speakest."

With a stout heart Skioldson sped to the north with his treasure-trove, a strong hand tightening on the tiller and eyes keen as a sea-gull's piercing the lowering brume. Lupa sat beside searching for some familiar landmark, nor quitting her lookout day or night.

Skioldson was kind to her, too kind indeed. A fear numbed her heart that he suspected she was a woman.

On the second night they sighted low-lying land.

"Look, thou of the Quenchless Thirst!" cried Lupa. "Tis the great mouth of the Scaldis. I bless thee for thus bearing me safely upon my way."

The viking eyed her strangely. "Thy way must be mine, maiden," he said. "Skiold was called as thou saidest. He thirsted not for wine but for blood. My thirst is for beauty and thou shalt quench it."

A crimson flood surged to her face, then ebbing left it white. "I brought the beaker, lord, and thou didst promise to set me free, else will I vanish."

"Who art thou," he asked, "a Druid priestess?"

"Yea," she replied, "one who can work thy doom."

"Nay, I will love thee not against thy will," he answered, "but ever thou shalt sail until I win thee."

Far up the Scaldis they penetrated into the land of the Nervii. Lupa saw her people skulking in woods but they fled as the dragon-ship approached. There were wild cattle browsing in the meads and Skioldson gave order for a hunt. The sails clanged upon the deck, with cables of hide the Berserks moored the dragon ship, and seizing their bows and javelins scattered in pursuit of the game; but ever the viking kept Lupa at his side and she found no opportunity to escape.

The warriors returned to the river-bank laden with game. They had slain a great urox, two elks, deer, many birds, and a creel of speared fish. They stowed

the greater part in the hold; then digging a pit, lined it with stones and kindled a goodly fire therein. Dressing the carcase of the urox, they placed within it that of a deer, and filled its hollow with hares, pheasants, partridges, salmon, and eels; laying the mighty mass when the fuel was consumed upon the red-hot stones, they covered all with water-weeds.

When the meats were roasted they set forth their repast upon the green sward, brought from the ship a score of loaves of black bread, and, to wash all down, a vat of Drontheim ale, strong and foaming from long keeping.

The Berserks were gathering about the trenchers and unsheathing their knives, when, cantering in line over the plain, appeared a century of Roman legionaries.

The heart of Lupa bounded and sank as she cried to herself, "Cæsar!" For she recognized that the youthful leader riding in advance was not her Wolf King, but his lieutenant Quintus Cicero. Cæsar had put him in command of the troops whom he had left to winter with the Nervii; and Cicero was now returning from Portus Itius, whither he had gone to meet his general.

Hailing the Romans with friendly greeting, Skioldson invited them to share the feast. Cicero, who had no desire to provoke a quarrel, accepted the hospitality of the viking.

Bestowing their arms at an equal distance from one

“With spear and javelin-thrust they rushed upon the stag”



“The Chase,” by Rubens
Gemaldegalerie, Berlin
Photographische Gesellschaft, Berlin



Quentin Matsys, the blacksmith artist, who linked the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

another and throwing themselves upon the ground, both parties partook of the smoking meats in the utmost good fellowship.

Cicero and some of his soldiers had acquired a smattering of the Saxon language; they told each other tales, exchanged jokes, and, when they had put from them the desire for food, broached the mead anew.

Stopping the mouthpiece with his thumb, Skioldson pledged Cicero in the great war horn of his father. Borne by Lupa, the loving-cup went round. With cries of "Wassail!" "Skoal!" and "Evoe" Bacchus! they drank toasts to Thor, Odin, and the Roman gods.

Baldrics and tongues alike were loosed. Hearts grew light in proportion as bellies were weighted.

Lupa sickened with fear as the mirth waxed furious. When she filled the beaker for Skioldson his hand stole about her waist and he devoured her with leering eyes which seemed to strip her of all clothing. Her hand lay for a moment cold as ice in his hot grasp, then, evading his embrace, she glided like a ghost through the group of gluttonous revellers. Wan-faced and with lack-lustre eyes, she dragged herself listlessly about, serving mechanically and smiling pitifully when addressed.

Others at the feast were grave and silent. Under guard of Cicero was a band of British hostages received from Cassivellaunus. Amongst them was an aged bard with a harp slung across his shoulder.

Spying him Skioldson shouted for song. "Scald!" he cried, "strike thy Druid lyre! To Love or War it matters not. Sing to fair Freya or thundering Thor! Sing and loudly!"

The old man eyed Cicero questioningly.

"Yes," replied the latter, "but lend me thy harp and I will give thee theme and example. Of old my father taught me the lays of Homer in praise of Odysseus. Sing thou the praise of Cæsar."

Mead had made Cicero vainglorious and had taken from him pity, or he would not thus have insulted his captive. Tuning the harp, the young Roman sang, for song was in his mouth as eloquence in that of his great kinsman:

Singe, O Bard, of the Chief, who wanderinge fer to the
 North-lande,
 Fer from the echoing halles and the bryght-glowinge
 hearthe-stones of home,
 Fared with his legiouns to Gaule, throughe wildering
 wonders unnumbered,
 Bearing to uttermost landes the wolf and the eagles of
 Rome;
 Til that he came, onne a daye, to the mist-shrouded isle
 of the Britons,
 Lair of a lion-like race of feresome and horrible men,
 Daubing ther bodyes and heades with woad blue, and
 vermillion,
 Warriours wilde of the wold and numberlesse eek as the
 leaves;
 Ruled by an over-lorde grim, the despot Cassivellaunus.

Who, by the might of his arm, a usurper, ascended the throne,
Wresting the reins of the state from the innocent Manduberatius,
Gyring his chariot tyres o'ere the corpses of comrades and foes!

Smiting his harp-strings till they clanged as though struck with a sword, the ancient bard then shrilled forth:

A SAGA OF BRITAIN

Whilom across the wyde sea, at nonetide glemed in the offinge
Floatinge whyte in the sunne, lik the plumage of gulles in a gale,
Fluttered a fleete from the Southe, onne tirelesse, terrible pinions,
Galleys and triremes, a hoste, an armada of myriade saile.
Cesare, the Wolf-Kinge, had com! with his packe of hungeringe wolflings
Panting and hot for the fray—relentlessly thirsting for gore.
What myghte ther people availe, at grips with this “dread of the Vikings”?

As wel myghte a lambkin prevaile o'er the fanges of her pitillesse foe
“Cæsar!” whystled the wind, in the chalk-whyte crannies of Dover,
“Cæsar!” echoed the sea, o'ere the limitlesse sand-dunes of Deal.
“Cæsar!” murmured the trees, from the loch-landes down to the moorlands,

“Cæsar, the eagle of War!” hissed the serpente coiled in his
covere,

“Cæsar, the dreade Sea-Wolfe, with his raveninge packe is
here!”

Backe to the highlande heaths, from the beach, ran the
frighted Britons,

Backe to the lowlande bogges fled the Celts and the
terrified Picts;

Felling the trees lik haile, with the blows of ther bronze
battle-axes,

Pointing them sharp as dartes, for the walle of ther grete
stockade.

Here they waited, alerte in the gloome of ther fortified
foreste,

Archers and speremen untolde and fur-cladde charioteer,
Lurking, in cowering hate, at a ford of the tawnye Tamisis
Trohantes, the traitor, to slewe, inne the marshes of
Ludesdunne near.

Massed in multiple rankes came the Romane centuries
endlesse,

Crepinge and crawlinge slowe, lik a tortoise of geaunt size,
Surging ther glittering crestes as a billow sweeps o'er the
beach-sand,

Heaving the phalanx of steel on the speres of ther Briton
foes.

Manfullye them we withstode with slinge-stone, arrowe, and
javelyn,

Hardilye thrustinge our swerdes and stubbornlye beating
them backe,

Swiftlye our chariots charged 'gainst the speres of ther on-
rushing cohorts,

Striving to batter a breache in the walle of ther iron attacke.

Vaine was the hope that we helde to vanquish the spoiler
of Empires,
Vaine wer oure Druidic gods, in the houre of oure desperate
stresse,
Salwarte as bullockes they came and trampled our
hearthe stones defencelesse
Wreaking upon Britain's necke the hate of the conquerour's
heel!

Her heart singing a pæan of triumph, Lupa murmured
to the broken-spirited bard, "Drink and console thy-
self that none but the Unconquerable could vanquish
thy nation."

Skioldson was ill-pleased. "Hammer of Thor!" he
fumed. "Scald, I demanded a saga. Thou hast
keeened me a dirge. Myself will sing thee a rune that
befits the hour." Taking the harp the Viking sang:

A RUNE OF THE SEA

Inne the loathye lande of Iselande
Wher the verye summers freeze,
I furrowed the snowe wyth reindeere;
But my soule was sicke at ease,
Til I quit that lande for a nameless strande
And, a Vikinge, ploughed the seas.

Chorus of Berserks

Skoal, Drink-hael, Skoal!
We wil weather rocke and shoale,
A pull on the horne, and a pull on the oare,
The Vikinge's the Sea Kinge for evermore!

Old Belgium

Ever I sailed to the Southlande,
 Through the riftes of Norwaye's rime,
 From the Northlande snowe of the longe ago
 To the blande Iberianne clime.

Chorus

Skoal, Drink-hael Skoal! etc.

From the jade-whyte bergs of Iselande
 Wher the tuskéd walruss roare
 To the tropic moone and the wylde typhoon
 And the sleepey palm-clad shore.

Chorus

Skoal, Drink-hael, Skoal! etc.

Sende me a gale and a frothinge sea
 In my grete sea-dragonne, stil,
 Wher the storm-racks drive and the dolphins dive
 I would skoal, til I drinke my fill!

Chorus of Berserks

Skoal, Drink-hael, Skoal!
 We wil weather rocke and shoale,
 A pull on the horne and a pull on the oare,
 The Vikinges the Sea-Kinge for evermore!

Loud acclaim followed the song of Skioldson.

"Sing we now of love and wine" cried Cicero; and he launched into an exuberant dythyramb: "Drink every man to his wife or paramour."

The welkin rang with "Evoe, Venus" and cries of "Skoal!"

"Hearken, my guest," cried the Viking, "neither wife nor leman have I yet; but, by the Thunderer, this shall be my wedding-night! Toast ye all my bride!"

With a scythe-like sweep of his mighty arm he zoned Lupa about the waist and hoisted her to his shoulder.

"A youth!" laughed Cicero; "what jest is this?"

Up went the brawny hand of the viking and tearing open the girl's doublet he displayed, between two mounds of snow, the golden Roman eagles.

Cicero stared for a space, with hung jaw; then recognized the brooch and its wearer.

Lupa, from her high pedestal, held out beseeching arms. The Roman started to his feet, then, as her finger touched lip, held himself in rein. "Viking!" he cried, "grant thy bride bring me the beaker that I may drink her health."

Carrying it to him Lupa whispered, "Save me, for honour of Cæsar!"

Shouting the battle-cry of his legion, Cicero dashed the mead in the face of Skiold and sprang to arms.

Instantly his men rallied about their commander, the scene of revelry transformed to one of battle.

Quick work and bloody. Grasping with both hands his ell-long iron sword, Skioldson charged upon Cicero like a boar of the forest. Steel clanged against steel and flesh gripped flesh. It was as though these two were the vortex of a whirlpool of seething death.

Their men fought around them with the fury of fiends. Like the lightnings of Thor flashed the two-edged sword of the viking; but Roman discipline told over the brute strength of the giant.

With an adroit feint, Cicero whipped his blade under the guard and into the heart of Skioldson. The Berserks fled, fighting their way backward bearing the body of their chieftain to his dragon ship.

"Enough!" cried Cicero to the hot pursuing soldiers. "Legionaries, to horse! Better use have we for our swords than to slaughter drunken swine!"

Blowing a blast of triumph through the mead-washed hollow of the great horn, Lupa ran to the Roman. Swinging her up before him Cicero scanned the faces of the men in search of the British bard. "Hath the hostage fled?" he questioned.

"Whither thou mayest not follow," Lupa replied. "Fighting for thee, lord, he found escape in death!"

That night, black against a pale green sky, the skin-clad savages of Ambiorix swarmed upon the unsuspecting Roman camp. Suddenly awakened by their yells and assault, Cicero found himself beset and surrounded by an innumerable horde.

With the utmost skill and intrepidity he gave orders for strengthening the fortifications.

At intervals along the walls, manned with catapults,

an hundred towers were built from which the slingers and bowmen poured a deadly rain.

At sundown the Romans made a sortie, but were driven back with tremendous losses, leaving the trenches piled with their dead. Ever new hosts came on. The Nervians crucified, or burned before their eyes, all captured outside the walls. Slingers sent red-hot balls of clay and flaming javelins upon the thatched roofs.

As Cæsar himself said: "Though aware that their possessions were burning, not alone did no one quit the ramparts, but scarcely did any look behind him at the conflagration."

Cicero despatched messenger after messenger to Cæsar beseeching succour. These the Belgæ intercepted and put to death and torture. "If he come not to our aid," said Cicero, "we are lost, but how can I hope to send a messenger?"

"I will go," Lupa volunteered. "My Nervian friends will let me pass. I know the forest paths and waterways. Give me the letter."

He strove to dissuade her, but their need was great. Lupa seized the letter and was off.

Three days after, wild-eyed and haggard, a Nervian boy, whom Cæsar did not remember ever to have seen, presented him with the desperate appeal of his lieutenant.

"Canst thou find thy way back with my answer?"

"Yea, lord," Lupa replied in a voice scarce above a whisper.

"Then run, rest not till thou hast placed this promise of succour in the hand of Cicero."

She started to go, but tottered at the threshold.

"Stay," called the general, "hast thou had food this day?"

"Nay, lord, nor for three days; but 'tis not for food I hunger," she murmured, and dropped as though shot to the heart. When consciousness returned Lupa met the anxious eyes of her Wolf King. His approving smile of recognition revived her more than the wine and food.

"Thou hast done well, child," he said, "rest thee here; another shall bear my letter in thy stead."

"Nay, lord, none can find the way so quickly or pass so surely. I go, to wait thy coming."

Back through the hostile armies she threaded her way till she reached the camp of Cicero. Fastening the letter to an arrow she shot it over the fortifications, where it fell near the officers' quarters.

Some days later the smoke of Cæsar's camp-fires was seen. The forces of Ambiorix, withdrawing to the forest, were pursued with frightful slaughter and for a time the great uprising of the Belgians was quelled.

On the next day their deliverer was welcomed with delirious joy by the beleaguered legions. Cicero praised

the unfaltering courage of Lupa, telling his commander how she had filched the beaker of the vikings and committed it to his care while making her hazardous journey.

“Bear it to me upon the instant,” Cæsar commanded.

Lupa entered, knelt at her lord's feet, and extended to him the horn of Skiold.

Cæsar circled the rim joyously with his eyes, exclaiming, “Rome, thou canst not now gainsay my word! Here for all time is the earnest that Cæsar first encircled Britain.” Then addressing Lupa, he asked, “Why didst thou not bear me this talisman ere I left the Northern Isle?”

“Good my lord,” with an accent of tender reproach, “indeed I would fain have given it thee, when thy galley rounded the Isle that Vanisheth, but thou wouldst not receive it.”

His heart smote him vaguely, for he had seen her, and wearied by her persistent following had not paused, striving to convince himself that she was a water wraith. So she had come into his life, so it was fitting she should disappear.

But she had proved herself useful and might still be so. “Thou art a good child,” he said, patting her head, “and I will requite thee.”

Her eyes glistened. Her Wolf King was not ill pleased that she had returned to him. Then she sighed as she thought how much more rejoiced he was to

possess the beaker! Would his old love never awaken? Would he always receive her devotion as tribute, giving naught in return?

Throughout that bitter winter campaign Lupa was a far greater factor in his success than Cæsar realized. Undaunted by defeat, confident of victory when even his wonted assurance quailed; amusing, inspiring, resourceful, she diverted the relentless Roman by unceasing gaiety, encouraged him by indomitable faith, and reinforced him by clear-sighted counsels.

Nature seemed to fight for the Belgians: the snow, the cruel wind, even the wild beasts, for a pestilence of wolves descended upon the Roman army. After each battle they gorged themselves upon the corpses, and when these failed the famished beasts made mighty havoc among the soldiery.

Despite all Ambiorix was vanquished and at last Cæsar was weary of fighting, weary of privations, sick even of Lupa, with her hound's eyes hungering for a caress. Was this the life for a man who would be Emperor?

A messenger rode from Rome with alarming tidings: Marcellus was fomenting a cabal in the Senate. 'Twas high time that he should appear in person and thwart the intrigues of these conspirators.

Riding alone in the forest he planned his stroke of the Rubicon. Commanding the army he could command Rome. In Belgium and Gaul he had recruited

native legions which through long campaigns were hardened into experienced warriors. These should serve his ambition to overawe Italy.

Shouts of delight rang through the camps as the soldiers received orders for the homeward march. In celebration of the welcome tidings the centurions held high revel on the eve of their departure. It was an orgy in which joy was unrestrained, and to show good-fellowship Cæsar drank more deeply of the Rhenish wine than was seemly, and reeling to his tent ere dawn sank down upon the couch in a drunken stupor.

Lupa waited him with wide-eyed fear, for through the night she had been roused from slumber by the howling of wolves. She heard the pattering of their soft feet and, leaping from her couch, looked into the night. The sentinel had profited by Cæsar's absence to take leave. The fire had burned to ashes; she must rekindle it to scare away the marauders.

Rubbing two sticks together she ignited a heap of dry leaves, when, with a sudden bound, a starved wolf sprang past her through the darkness into the tent.

"'Ware thee, Cæsar!" shrieked Lupa, but the wolf remained within. All was silence. Cæsar had not wakened. No help was nigh.

Creeping softly to the tent she peered within. The light of the fire showed her Cæsar, breathing heavily, and the wolf crouching to spring.

With a cry Lupa leapt upon the beast and thrust

the sword hilt-deep into its corded throat. The wolf writhed beneath her, bit and lacerated her arm. Then slowly its fangs relaxed and it tumbled a hairy heap.

She bound her arm, and dragged the dead wolf without the door. The trumpets sounded dawn; Cæsar sat up and looked about him dazedly. His eyes falling upon the wolf he sprang instantly to his feet.

"The sentry hath slain it? He shall be requited," he exclaimed. Then catching Lupa's significant smile he noted the bloody sword and her bandaged arm. "Thou didst this?" he asked in astonishment. "Hast thou then no fear?"

"Not for myself, lord."

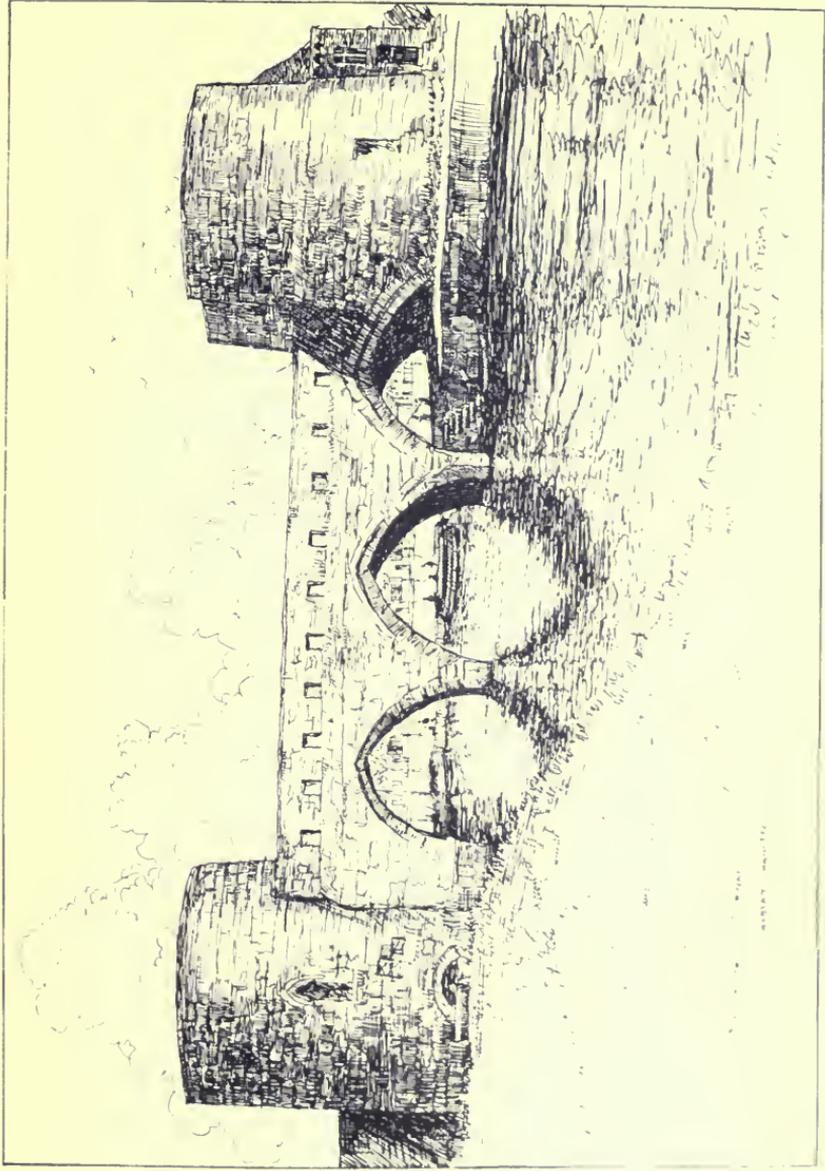
"For me then?" he asked. "Didst fear I could not defend myself?"

"Yea, lord, I feared for thee and also for another. I feared, should I slay not the wolf, for the babe I shall one day bear thee; which leaped then beneath my heart."

The occasion of this revelation was ill-chosen. It made little impression upon his dulled brain; many important and perplexing problems demanded his attention. He was in no mood to consider another and he dismissed it as mere woman's phantasy. So engrossed was he in his plans, that he had little thought of Lupa.

She went about her work, and on the day of departure silently took her wonted seat among the impedimenta.

“ Towers of Turnacum ”



“ Pont de Trous,” Tournai
Drawing by George S. Abbott, 1848



“ Unafrighted the boys confronted the bear ”

Musée de Saint-Germain. *L'Âge de la Pierre polie*, par F. Cormon. ND Phot.

Seeing her in the baggage train Cæsar sent a centurion commanding her to descend.

Running to him and throwing herself at his feet she cried, "Dost thou desert me, lord?"

"Yea, all is ended between us twain! Return to thy people, as I too return to mine," he said, rudely casting her from him.

"Nay, good my lord, desert me not in the hour of my need, for no longer have I people. Let me be thy humblest slave," she besought weeping bitterly.

"Begone!" he thundered as she crept to him, clinging to his feet, "I love thee not." With a thrust of his sinewy arm he felled her to earth. Seeing that she moved not he left her for dead, mounted his horse, and set forth on the long southward march to Rome.

Lupa still lived, however, and, tracking the remnant of her people, she sought Bodnognatus who had taken refuge among the Morini, a race so savage that they scarce resembled human beings. Here the old chieftain busied himself with making weapons of polished flint for the warriors.

In his rude hovel Lupa gave birth to twin sons, whom she named Julius Romulus and Julius Remus. Like the wolflings of Rome they sucked savagery from the breast of their mother, who nourished their ferocious hatred of the Romans into a relentless thirst for revenge.

It fortunèd, when they were some three years of age,

that Ambiorix came to the Morini seeking their aid; and besought Bodnognatus to provide his men with formidable stone axes in barter for the carcass of a great Ardennian bear.

Lupa, seated by her father's side, was grinding chips of flint, her little sons playing with the flying fragments.

Spell-bound by her wild beauty, Ambiorix glanced at the children and asked, "Whose are these?"

"Wolfings, who have no father," answered Bodnognatus bitterly.

"Then," cried the chieftain, "suffer me, O Lupa, to father them."

"I thank thee, lord," she replied, "but it may not be. These are the children of Cæsar!"

Unaffrighted by the great bear, though misdoubting the creature was alive, the boys grasped their grandfather's axes and attacked the tremendous beast. Romulus smote it grievously upon the snout and laughed gleefully as the blood gushed forth; and Remus, leaping upon the carcass, hacked the shaggy neck until he all but clove the head from the body.

Ambiorix laughingly upbore a child on either arm exclaiming, "One day ye too shall slay your monsters!"

"Yea," replied Lupa, "my sons shall be my avengers."

Despite her bitter hatred Lupa cherished her wrongs secretly until a day came, after the death of her father, when she could openly undertake her vengeance.

Southward, past Cortoriacum, through the desolated

country of the Nervii, to the blackened walls of Turnacum she journeyed with her twin sons.¹

Crossing the Scaldis at a ford where Cæsar had fought his bloodiest battle they descried numberless bones of their countrymen, and an immense mound, the ashes of cremated Roman soldiers.

Groping in the dust with eager fingers Lupa found two corroded swords, which she sharpened carefully on stones and gave to her sons.

Crossing the high lands, following the sinuous Isara till they came upon Augustomagnus in the country of the Sylvanectes, they avoided towns and villages of the Romanized Gauls, skulking in the forest by day and taking to the road by night for fear of the garrisons. But their apprehensions were groundless, for the Gauls were reaping the fruits of their surrender and all was peace.

At Lutetia Parisiorum, the island fortress of the Parisii (the Cité of Paris), so safely locked in the arms of the swift Sequana, they rested a few days. The Romans had not yet built the thermæ and amphitheatre whose ruins are still preserved in the heart of the French capital, and Irmunsul was worshipped where Notre Dame now lifts her towers.

On through central Gaul the good Roman roads, to "the Province" (Provence), where cities, such as

¹Cortoriacum, the modern Courtrai; Turnacum, Tournai; Scaldis the Scheldt; Isara, the Oise.

Nemausus and Arleate gleaming with temples, baths, and basilicas, were passed so frequently that they ceased to fear them, and only wondered whether Rome could be more glorious. But, though she plodded persistently on, the strength of Lupa began to fail, and they rested long at Massilia by the sapphire Tyrrhenian sea. Here the youths learned provincial Latin and donned Roman garb. To all inquiries they answered that they sought Cæsar.

Thus came they in early spring to the Saxa Rubra on the outskirts of Rome. At sight of its templed hills Lupa revived for a brief moment, but her strength soon fled. Consumed by burning fever and wasted with exhaustion, she sank upon the broad highway.

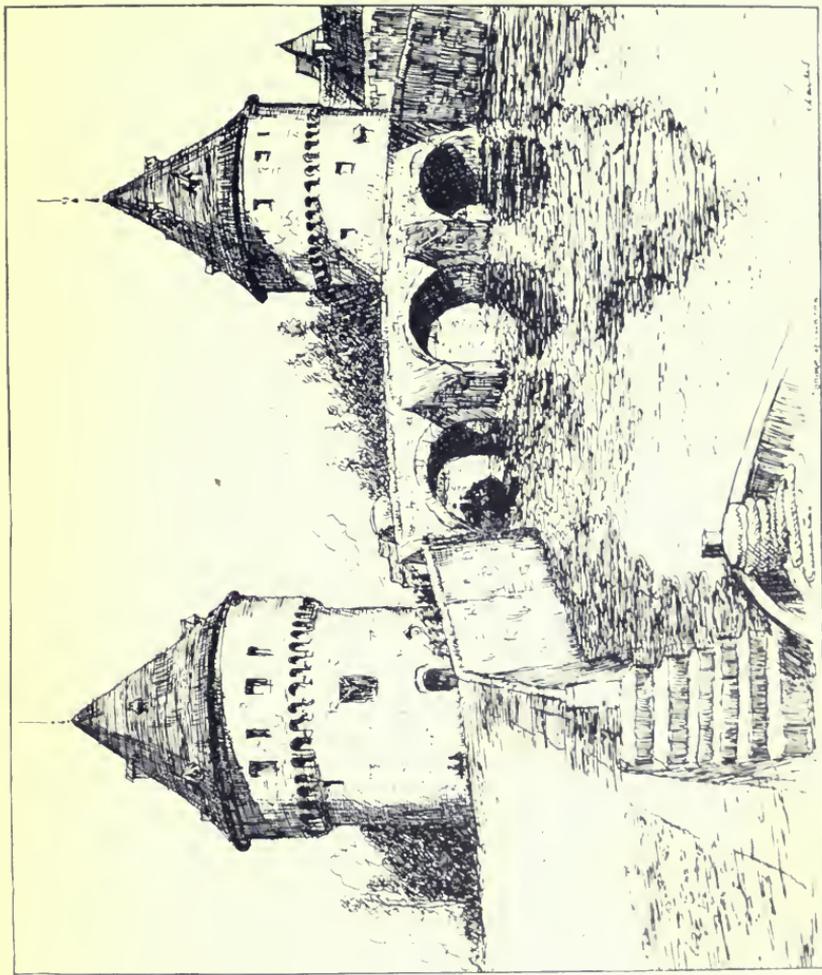
Tenderly her sons bore her to a deserted hovel and laid her upon a bed of cypress boughs. Broken with grief, they saw that the end was approaching.

In her delirium she chanted a little song:

The wolf that hath slaked its thirst will flee.
His shadow flits o'er the moonlit snow.
Never the blood-drained lamb shall see
His lambent eyes in the darkness glow.

She imagined herself back in the halcyon days of her first meeting with Cæsar, when he had deemed her a water nymph, and piteously she entreated her lover to come to her and disport in the cool waters.

Why did he not answer to her call? Her fingers



The Bridge of Courtrai
From a Drawing by Albert Chanle

Clovis



“ Long flaxen braids fell from beneath his helmet ”

Musée de Saint-Germain. Statue by Frémiet. Permission of Neurdein

strung an invisible bow. Did he not see? The thrush lay at his feet, transfixed by her crystal pointed arrow.

She fell into a troubled slumber. When she awoke they deemed her conscious. Loosening the eagle-brooch at her breast, she placed it in the hand of Romulus. "Take it to Cæsar," she commanded; "when he sees the token he will come."

The youth's eyes were wet. "If he come, all shall be forgotten," he said, and hastened away.

A goat-herd paused near the hovel, his flock bleating and tinkling their bells. Lupa moaned in her fever; "My goat has returned. Wolf King, thou shalt have curds, and milk to slake thy thirst."

Remus brought her a bowl of milk, holding it lovingly to her parched lips. She sipped a little and he set the bowl down beside her. Following him into the hut, a kid lapped the milk.

Lupa heard the sound and laughed. "My kid has returned!" The little creature nestled within her arms licking her cheek. She slept peacefully till Romulus entered.

The youth eyed his mother anxiously, then, addressing his brother: "I sought Cæsar at his villa and gave him the brooch. 'Tis mine," he said; "how camest thou by it?" "'Tis a token from Lupa," I answered. "She would fain see thee ere she dies." "Lupa?" he questioned. "Ne'er knew I such a name. Boy, thou didst

filch my brooch! Get thee gone, ere I give thee to torture.' Thus spake the Wolf King."

"The Wolf King" echoed Lupa; "meseems that once I knew that name. Would that I might forget. 'Tis by forgetting, those forgotten live." She lapsed into unconsciousness while her sons silently waited.

After a space, she opened her eyes in delirious wonderment. "My Wolf King, thou art come at last! Thou couldst not come ere this, but thou wast true. Engird me with thy great protecting arms. Caress my fragile face, wasted with waiting, loving thee always through long, lonely nights, waiting the coming of the winged whales. My Wolf King!"

She gasped for breath while the boys tremblingly ministered to her.

Then she smiled, though her eyes were closed. "I feel thy tears upon my face and know I die. Thy mantle is about me. 'Twill fold me close in the cold grave. Cæsar, my Wolf King, thou didst come!"

Up rose he, Iulius the conquerour,
 By wisdom, manhode, and by greet labour,
 Till he unto the Capitolie wente
 Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,
 And in the Capitole anon him hente
 This false Brutus, and his othere foon,
 And stikede him with bodekinnes anon
 With many a wound, and thus they lete him lye;
 But never gronte he at no stroke but oon,
 Or elles at two, but if his storie lye.

CHAUCER, *The Monke's Tale*.

Rome was in a tumult. Slaves, plebeians, warriors, patricians all—a turbulent mob swarmed to the senate-house with the muttering of a mighty earthquake.

“We seek Cæsar,” said the youths, to a passer-by.

“Then follow me,” he replied, without slackening his pace.

Women, dragging children, wailed and tore their hair as they joined in the mad race.

“Why this riot and commotion?” asked the sons of Lupa.

“Know ye not, strangers,” the other answered, “that Cæsar hath been assassinated?”

Flinging his arms in the air with a gesture of despair, Remus exclaimed: “Alas! we have come too late!”

“Nay,” replied his brother, “we may still bear our message to the heart of Cæsar.”

Within the colonnade of the senate-house, where all might view, guarded by a century of his Gallic legionaries, stood the garlanded catafalque. As the youths paused upon the steps Mark Antony drew gently back from his serene face the very mantle which Cæsar had thrown protectingly about their mother.

There is a majesty in death, and the sons of Lupa bowed their heads as they looked upon the face of their father. His placid countenance, pallid as though chiselled from ivory, unscathed by the daggers of his murderers, showed more of dignity than in life.

In mingled awe and wonder, they gazed for a moment,

then, silently stealing away, were lost in the throng, never more to be seen in the city of their father.

That night the guards, aroused by the howling of a wolf, ran hither and thither, but saw neither beast nor man.

At dawn, preparing the body for the pyre, they found, driven to the heart, two rusted swords.

CHAPTER II

THE LILY AND THE BEE: A MEROVINGIAN ROMANCE

Rondel

All in a garden of peace garnered gloome,
Elusive, calme, sequestered from alle care
Blossomed, unseene and lone, a lilie fayre,
Filling the live-long daye with rare perfume.

Sounding a rousing lay with rumbly boom
On boisterous wing a bee descended ther:
Alle in a garden of peace-garnered gloome,
Elusive, calme, sequestered from alle care.

Lapping the swete abundance of her bloome,
Upon this looting rogue to hys despaire,
She shut the petalled portalles of her laire
And prisonned him within a livyng tombe
Alle in a garden of peace-garnered gloome
Elusive, calme, sequestered from alle care.

I

HOW THE LILY PRISONED THE BEE

“PRATE not to me of thy religion,” said Clovis, King
of the Belgæ to Archbishop Remi.¹ “I bring

¹ Remi, missionary to the Gauls, sainted in after time for converting the Franks to Christianity.

thee the fragments of thine altar vase which my unruly chieftain shattered, in punishment whereof and in proof of my love for thee I brained the scoundrel with my battle-axe."

"That, sire, doth suffice as proof of thy good-will," replied the archbishop; "but still cherish I the hope that one day I may win thee to the true faith."

"Nay, Remi, never shall a Merovingian renounce his religion for that of a stranger. Are we not content with our Druids, our war-god Beltane and his invincible might? We ask naught of the Romans, least of all their religion."

The old man regarded the younger with wistfulness which bespoke an affection more than paternal. "We give thee without thy asking our love and our gratitude. Is not the armour which thou wearest the same which thy grandfather Mérovée donned when he fought side by side with the Romans against the Huns?"

Clovis flushed, for he was clad from head to foot in Roman armour. His long flaxen braids fell from beneath a helmet surmounted by a golden lark with outstretched wings, the symbol of the Alauna¹ which an ancestor had commanded; an inlaid cuirass protected his stalwart torso, his greaves and sword were of Italian workmanship; from his shoulders swept in sumptuous folds a sable mantle; alone a

¹ The Alauna was a Gallic legion founded by Cæsar, so named from the swiftness of its flight.

heavy gold armlet and his battle-axe bespoke the Frank.

Say we further that mind and body were a like blend of savagery and generous impulses, of natural courtesy and barbaric rudeness, of activity of mind and body, and a haughty disinclination to budge at the command of another. His blue eyes were childlike and winsome, his smile so engaging you felt him an angel of gentleness, but lips could snarl and eyes grow dark upon occasion with a fury uncontrollable and often quickly repented.

Add that he was fully determined to possess the best the world contained; that his ignorance was unbounded, that his self-esteem equalled his ignorance, that his good fortune excelled his presumption, and we have a fair picture of Clovis at the glorious age of nineteen.

He had felt in Remi the attraction of an opposite nature; the priest's allusion to the exploits of Mérovée flattered his pride and he replied impulsively: "Even so would I fight for thee. Friendship and alliance I promise; in proof thereof have I come to seek of thee a wife!"

"Wouldst marry, sire, and with what manner of maiden?"

"Beautiful she must be, the most excellent of all Christian princesses, as befits the bride of Clovis."

"*Gratias Domini!* Verily thou art not so unreconciled to my creed as thou wouldst have me think."

"She shall set up her images beside mine own, and we will each worship our separate gods after our own fashion."

"Nay," mused Remi, "can two walk the path of life save they be of the same faith?"

"Tell me," continued Clovis, "who is the most virtuous and desirable lady in all Christendom?"

A youthful scribe at a lectern near by, dropping his quill, drew a quick sibilant breath.

Clovis threw him an angry look. "Why snorest thou thus, dolt? Hath over-much stooping given thee the croup?"

"Thy pardon, gentle monarch," murmured the trembling youth, "I marvelled that thou didst utter the very words that Alaric, King of the Visigoths, spake to me of late."

"A mighty chieftain," said Clovis, "whom I shall surely slay when we come to grips as to which of us be ruler of Gaul. But what spakest thou? Hath Alaric set forth upon the wife hunt?"

The scribe smiled knowingly. "It needs him not to hunt, sire. The Emperor Theoderic hath hounded him sore in chase of a son-in-law."

"My scribe Aurelian can certify thee, sire, of all that thou wouldst know," said Remi. "In good repute is he in the courts of princes."

"Marry then," asked Clovis, "is the daughter of Theoderic such a paragon of the virtues?"

“That is she; noble beyond the comfort of a husband who would have dominion in his own house, o’ergood to be a merry companion, shrewishwise, within the limits of a woman’s capacity, but scarce comely or o’er youthful. Alaric is therefore in two minds betwixt the heiress to the Roman Empire and beauteous Clotilde of Burgundy.”

“Not thus would I waver ’twixt birth and beauty, for Queen can I create my wife, whereas the gods alone can make her fair. Tell me, Remi,” he asked, returning to the archbishop, “of these two apples which shall I pluck, the sweet or the sour?”

His grace was manifestly taken aback by this audacity. It was on his lip to reply, “Which e’er thou wilt,” but reflecting a moment he rejoined more tactfully: “Princess Clotilde is of thine own race; speaking a common tongue, ye should enjoy much together both in the wont of courts and the learning of the schools since she hath been nobly nurtured.”

“I could stomach even her wisdom, were she sufficient seemly,” laughed Clovis.

“She is indeed ‘*lilium inter spinas*,’” replied Remi, “of all living women most misfortunate.”

“Resolve me this riddle,” thundered the bewildered monarch.

Whereupon Remi, engrossing with elaborate detail after the manner of the chroniclers of his period, recounted how her father, King Chilperic of Burgundy,

had been murdered by his unnatural brother Gondebaud; how the latter had also slain her two brothers, and thrown their mother, a stone about her neck, into the Rhone. Gondebaud had not dared to make way with the Princess Clotilde, for all Burgundy was most loyally affected to her; nor would this further crime have assured his accession. The Grand Council winked at the murder of the tyrant Chilperic, but would ne'er have brooked usurpation of the throne by so despicable a creature as Gondebaud.

Pretending that he ruled but in her name, until such time as she should wed with some great prince, he cloistered Clotilde in a convent at Geneva and assumed the reins of government.

"Enough of this idle tale-telling," ejaculated Clovis. "Let us, without ado to the core of the nut. Since she is held at auction, Remi, get thee instantly to Chalon, outbid all others, and fetch me back the baggage!"

"But this Gondebaud, gentle monarch, is not the man to wed his niece to a powerful sovereign like thyself who might wrest from him the kingdom!"

"I count not Gondebaud of more worth than filthy vermin," replied Clovis.

"But there is one," observed Remi, "who might be taken into account—the Princess Clotilde!"

"She must needs be overjoyed," confidently affirmed the other, "for in rank and prowess there is none mine equal in all Christendom. Send thou Aurelian to the

Princess, and bid him tell her she shall be Empress not of Belgica alone but of all Gaul."

"'Tis a proud boast, sire," answered Remi, "which I doubt not thou wilt fulfil; but her religion may——"

"What boots a paltry thing like religion to pit itself against my will?"

The good archbishop threw up his hands in despair as Clovis departed.

"Were it seemly, Reverend Father in God," asked Aurelian, "to abet this braggart in despoiling so fair a flower?"

Remi smiled benignly. "Once in the cloister garden I saw a lily open her heart to a bee; but ere he sipped the nectar from her chalice—closing her petals about him she made captive her would-be captor!"

II

ALL IN A GARDEN

To Geneva wended Aurelian in the guise of a pilgrim questing Rome.

With him Clovis sent a young Frankish chieftain to judge the beauty of Clotilde before presenting the offer of his sovereign, for in this youth's opinion Clovis placed implicit confidence, since it had ever coincided with his own.

At the gate of the convent where Clotilde was sequestered was a hospice, designed for such travelling

gentry, and here Aurelian and his companion took up their lodging. It was but a mean shelter; its sole furnishing two pallets, a table, some wooden trenchers, a loaf of stale bread, and a jug of water. Having stabled their horses back of the hut the Frank brought in their packs and looked about him contemptuously.

"A pretty hostelry," he cried, "in which to entertain ambassadors from King Clovis!"

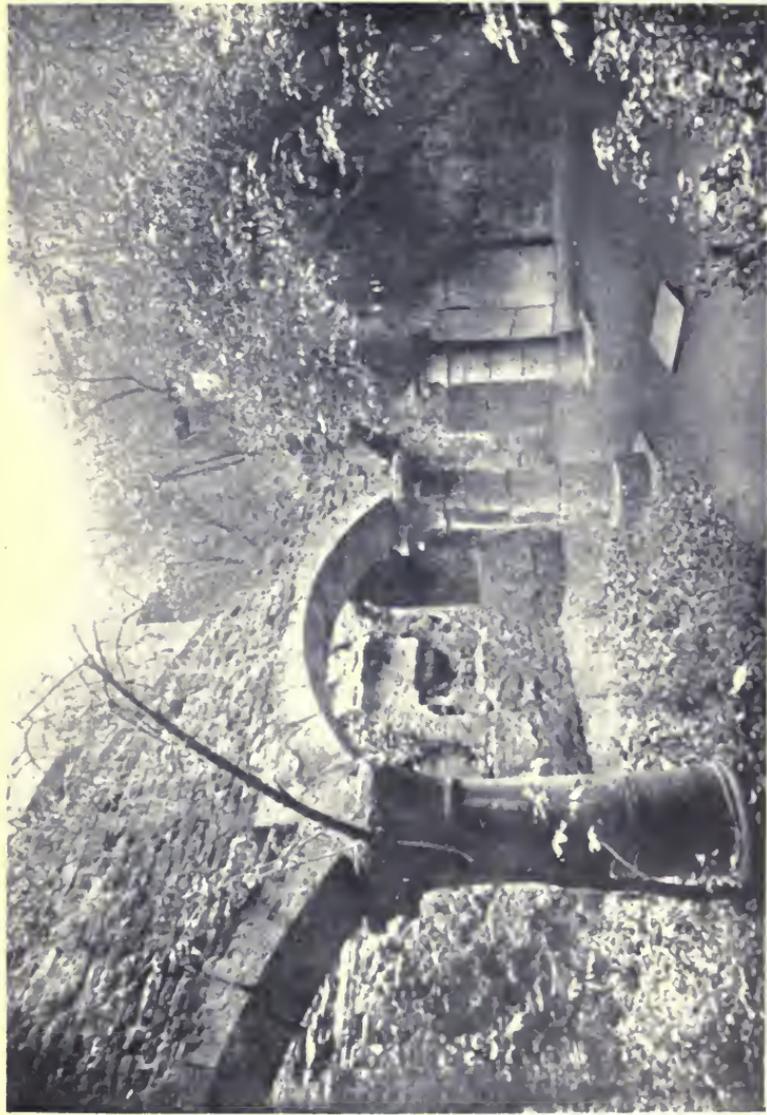
"None would suspect us here," replied Aurelian. "Moreover 'tis the only spot where we may have speech with Princess Clotilde, for eve and morn she cometh hither to wash the feet of pilgrims."

As he spoke chimed forth the angelus, as a troop of aged paupers hobbled painfully to a chapel at the convent gate and knelt before a shrine of the Virgin. Aurelian entered, but his companion stood with folded arms outside the door regarding the mendicants with contempt.

Presently the gates were opened and headed by the Abbess a procession of white-robed nuns filed into the chapel. With fringed lashes drooping o'er her wan cheeks and rose-bud mouth down-drawn like that of a grieved child, last of all came the Princess bearing a ewer of water.

The high-keyed voices of the nuns died in a hush of prayer. The throng of beggars issued forth and, receiving alms from the Abbess, clattered away. The nuns, chanting a recessional, were swallowed in the

“ In a cloister I saw a lily open her heart to a bee ”



“ All in a garden of peace-garnered gloom ”

From *Album de l'Empire de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Oberer.
Reproduced by permission of G. Van Oot A. Company.

“ An ancient fortified gate ”



Twin Towers of the “ Rabot,” Ghent

From *Album Historique de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Obreen
Reproduced by permission of G. Van Oest & Company

gloomy convent and Princess Clotilde alone remained at the chapel door.

Beseeching the pilgrim's boon with bowed head, Aurelian knelt before her and loosed his sandals. As Clotilde, pouring water from her ewer upon his dusty feet, dried them gently with a linen cloth Aurelian pressed a letter into her hand.

The Princess turned away and walked slowly toward the convent. Observing the strange youth she asked: "Art thou too a pilgrim?"

"In a sort," he replied, and she knelt before him, striving to remove his sandals.

Rudely he raised her to her feet. "Never shalt thou perform for me such vile and degrading service." Then, as she winced under his grasp—crying, "Brute that I am! Have I hurt thy fair hands?" he covered them with kisses.

"In the name of Christ no service is unworthy," she answered meekly, shrinking from him a little, but lingering as she asked: "How art thou called and what thy quest, Sir Pilgrim?"

"I am called—since I have seen thee, fair lady,—Fortunatus. Of my quest, if my name belie me not, thou shalt know more anon."

But as in wonderment she met his eyes the sourfaced Abbess peered from behind the gate.

"Of a surety, lady," Aurelian interjected, "if thou wilt grant audience where none else may hear."

Clotilde approached the Abbess remarking: "The pilgrims complain, Reverend-Mother, that our hospitality gives them naught wherewith to appease their hunger."

"Sister Perfecta shall provide them with bread," said the Abbess. "Go thou, Clotilde, to the garden and gather lilies for the festival."

Fortunatus, who had overheard this command, turned to his companion. "I climb yon hill," he said, "to spy where lies this garden."

"Softly then, beware," entreated Aurelian, "or thou wilt mar all." His words fell on unheeding ears, for Fortunatus was off for the hill without further ado.

Beneath him the convent with its dependencies lay spread like a great map. Close to the main building and, alas! overlooked by its windows, huddled the garden, where a mauve-robed novice was busily culling flowers. A brook divided a plantation of vegetables from an orchard which climbed the hill to the wall, beyond and above which Fortunatus stood.

As he hesitated, he noted that his mauve-robed lady had quitted the flower-garden and was walking toward the brook, to seek the fleur-de-lys which fringed its bank. Climbing a tree, he let himself down into the orchard; and, throwing himself on all fours, crept silently toward the brook. Not so warily, however, but Clotilde spied him as he neared her.

"How darest thou profane these sacred precincts?" she stammered. But at that instant, a swarm of bees,

attracted by the flowers, did the youth a good turn by frightening the Princess toward him. Beating the saucy marauders away he said gallantly: "Where blow sweet lilies ever come the bumblebees!"

"A flower for thy flattery," said Clotilde as she gave him a lily, "but fly fast away, O Bee!"

"But first tell me, I pray thee, hast thou read the letter?"

"That have I, and thou wilt find the answer when thou returnest, if so be thy teeth are strong. Bear it to King Clovis without delay, nor risk thy safety by seeking me again."

"But by all the gods I shall see thee. What hast thou writ? Wilt thou be the bride of Clovis?"

"Let him demand me from the nation, and the nobles will accept this alliance. Well hast thou accomplished thy mission. When I become bride of Clovis he shall reward thee. Doth not that suffice?"

"Nay, that it doth not," he cried, leaping the brook and clasping her in his arms. "I have risked death to offer thee a crown; do thou reward me, O my Queen! They say I am like to Clovis; bestow upon me, in his stead, thy troth-plight kiss!"

With this the rogue took that for which he asked. For a moment Clotilde lay swooning in his arms. Then, eluding him, with eyes flashing indignation, cried: "Darest thou thus insult the betrothed of Clovis!"

He fell at her feet and kissed the selvage of her robe. "Forgiveness, gracious lady. By great Bel-tane I swear that henceforth none but Clovis shall even touch thy hand."

With a light bound he cleared the orchard wall, singing as he went, "Lily Maid, when thou art his bride, not Clovis but Clotilde shall reward me!"

III

THE CHALICE

Lik moone-bemes in the garden's leafye lace,
 Dartling ther silverne rays through darkling gloom
 Thy smile; and straightway alle the roome
 Floods with the gladde effulgence of thy grace.
 I clasped thee in mine armes a littel space,
 And sipped the chaliced nectar of thy bloome,
 Resistlesse, cold and lifelesse as a tomb,
 Til alle my soule was drunk with love's embrace.

The memory of thine innocence of guile
 Lik vague rememboured musick hovers nigh,
 Forever fraughte with potency of paine.
 Come thou, bright chalice of my soul, againe
 Out-poure the joyance of thy wondrous smile,
 Rapture of raptures, thou my Deity!

Thus (so our monkish chronicler would strain our credulity) wrote Fortunatus on his return from Geneva, and Clovis, unconscious of any *lèse-majesté*, included the presuming youth in the embassy which in due time

set forth from Turnacum¹ to demand the hand of the Princess from the Grand Council of Burgundy then in session at Chalon-sur-Saône.

Whereat the Grand Council, having but lately despatched an envoy to Alaric offering Clotilde as pledge of a proposed alliance, found itself in a ticklish quandary. All preferred the Visigoth, but some maintained, since he could not be depended upon with certitude, it were wise to secure the friendship of the Franks.

Gondebaud, who had no wish that his niece should wed with either, since her marriage would put an end to his regency, craftily counselled that they use Clotilde as bait to lure Clovis to Chalon while awaiting word from Alaric.

“But if Clovis come, and Alaric in the meantime consent?” asked the Council.

Gondebaud smiled. “We will stipulate that he come in peaceful guise, slenderly attended. A wild country lieth between us and Belgium much beset with bandits. With the alliance of the Visigoth we need not stand in awe of reprisal from the Franks, for the chance death of their King.”

¹ Turnacum (Tournai) at this time capital of Belgium. Here was discovered the tomb of Chilperic, father of Clovis, containing a magnificent robe studded with three-hundred golden bees, the symbol of the Merovingian dynasty. Clovis on his conversion changed this device to the fleur-de-lys, which remained the symbol of France until the time of Napoleon, who during his reign reinstated the more ancient bees.

The Council accordingly promised the ambassadors of Clovis, should their sovereign come to Chalon, they would agree upon the terms of a treaty whereby Clotilde should become his Queen.

Scenting a snare, Fortunatus replied that the proposal did not accord with their instructions, since Clovis had delegated him to sign all agreements and wed the Princess by proxy.

At this word Gondebaud eyed the young man sharply. "Yet must thou needs obtain her consent," he said, clutching his chin with his clawlike hands.

Fortunatus smiled. "Of a surety," he replied confidently; "wend we forthwith to Geneva on that quest."

Temporizing adroitly, while secretly plotting to frustrate this design, Gondebaud ostensibly yielded. Aurelian was overjoyed, but Fortunatus, distrusting this easy victory, would have preferred an open opposition to a feigned acquiescence.

The Council stipulated only that Clotilde should be brought to Chalon, since here alone was it seemly that the marriage should be celebrated.

It being thus agreed, escorted by a troop of Burgundian lancers, and bearing rich gifts from Clovis in wagons drawn by lowing, milk-white oxen, caparisoned with scarlet tassels and tinkling bells, the envoys set leisurely forth in search of the Princess.

Fortunatus, however, was not pleased with the hang-dog bearing of their captain, whose demeanour

seemed to conceal something of evil. This premonition was speedily justified, for that night, while the Franks were sleeping at a mountain hostelry, the Burgundians decamped without bidding farewell.

In no wise discountenanced, the envoys continued their unruffled course, until, of a sudden, in a narrow, precipitous pass, they were set upon by a band of masked brigands.

Barricading the road with their cars the Franks let loose a shower of bolts from their crossbows. But Fortunatus, perceiving himself hopelessly outnumbered, with instant resourcefulness, unyoked the steers and goaded them forward against the onrushing bandits.

Furious from the spear-thrusts, the formidable creatures charged through their ranks, snorting, bellowing, and transfixing the horses with their long horns. Trampling the fallen beneath their hoofs, they shouldered over the precipice steeds and men in panic-stricken flight.

The envoys fell upon the remaining brigands and gave them such unexpected welcome that the rascals betook themselves to the forest, leaving a score of their comrades maimed or dead upon the field.

Fortunatus, after his wont, now set about giving succour to the wounded foes. Washing the blood from the face of a dying man disclosed the captain of the Burgundian lancers. Astonished by this discovery he cleansed the others of the soot with which their

features were besmirched and recognized them as members of the troop.

This attack confirmed his suspicions of the treachery of Gondebaud; nor was Fortunatus surprised on arriving in Geneva that the abbess, who had doubtless received her orders, refused him access to Clotilde.

Leading the train of wagons to an outlying wood, in order that the Burgundians might think he had departed, Fortunatus, returning at nightfall, sought the orchard where he last held converse with Clotilde. The purlieus of the convent were patrolled, but choosing a moment when they were changing guard he surmounted the wall.

Scarcely had he let himself down when he was ware of someone stealing toward him through the shadows. It was Clotilde who stood like a white lily in the moonlight. "How knewest thou that I was here?" questioned Fortunatus.

"I dreamed that thou hadst come," she said as he sprang toward her, "but can I trust thee?"

"This ring hath Remi blessed." Then placing it upon her finger he said: "Now art thou bride of Clovis! Henceforth will I guard thee for him with my life!"

"By our Lady of Sorrows I swear to be true," she murmured; then looking up suddenly cried: "Ware thee! If thou lovest me, flee."

Fortunatus wheeled instantly about, but none too soon, for a black thing leapt at him from the dark.

A glittering blade flashed in the moonlight slicing a wing from the golden lark upon his helmet, and on the hateful face so close to his own he recognized the hideous sneer of Gondebaud.

Little light was there in that dim place for proper sword-play, nor did Gondebaud confine himself to rules, but at it they went hack and parry, thrust and guard, attacking, evading, pressing, retiring, bounding forward again raining blows from every quarter.

The glaive of Fortunatus was the heavier but shorter. He had confined himself to defence until, by a nasty feint, Gondebaud slipped his long rapier snake-like beneath his guard and bit his shoulder. Then the Frank changed his weapon to his left hand and assumed the offensive. The agility of youth served him well. He sprang around the older forcing him to spin till his brain reeled dizzily, finally bringing his broadsword down with such force that the parrying blade snapped and flew from his hand.

Placing his foot upon the part nearer the hilt, Fortunatus laughed aloud. Then, as Gondebaud turned to flee, seized and flung him to the earth. "Shall I slay him," he asked of Clotilde, "or slit his lying tongue with his own sword?"

"Nay," she replied, "but prison him in yonder tomb, where lieth an abbess whose spirit waileth by night."

Thither he dragged the struggling Gondebaud and

gagged him with the veil of Clotilde. Pinioning his arms stoutly and bestowing upon him a farewell kick he bolted the door by driving the broken sword through its hasps.

"And now," he cried, pointing to the convent alive with startled lights, "let us bestir ourselves to flight." Gaining the top of the wall and grasping her wrists he swung Clotilde to the farther side. "Come, dearest lady," he besought, "my men are at hand."

Disposing her, snugly lapped by soft furs, within a car, goading the sleepy oxen to a shambling trot and mounting steed beside, Fortunatus held straight to the north.

At noon of the following day they paused for a little rest. Discerning trace of wistfulness upon the features of Clotilde he asked, "Dost thou regret?"

"For that I go to Clovis in such beggar guise; having naught but this poor garment."

"Here is bedizenment fit for a queen," Fortunatus replied, displaying a robe of azure Orient silk, adorned with a myriad golden bees.

As Clotilde admired the magnificent vesture with open-eyed wonder, he resumed: "Even as a bee is my master; he too loveth sweetness, and hath hived rich store for his queen."

Night and day they pursued their plodding pace, Fortunatus riding near, speaking of all save that which lay nearest his heart.

Clotilde recounted how that her uncle had brought her an offer of marriage from the King of the Visigoths.

"I marvel then that thou didst jilt so worshipful a prince," he commented.

"But I have ne'er set eyes upon this Alaric!"

"Hast thou then acquaintance with Clovis?"

"Yea, in some wise," she answered, "for thou didst say that he was like to thee."

"Not Clovis but me thou lovest," he exclaimed, his eyes aglow with longing.

She shrank from him, sobbing, shielding her face with her hands.

"Thou wouldst wed with a king, alone," he said bitterly.

"Nay, I love Clovis not, for he is a Druid."

"Even so am I," said Fortunatus moodily; "is it for this that thou dost hate me?"

"Marry I hate thee not. Tell me I pray of this religion."

"Indeed," he replied, "there is small matter to tell, save that we worship Beltane, a mighty god of war. We wot that perchance there be other gods, as Mars, and thy Christ. Him will we propitiate with bloody sacrifice and burnt offering."

Clotilde shuddered. "How little thou knowest Christ," and patiently she expounded the passion of the Saviour.

Fortunatus listened with savage indignation: "Those

damned Romans crucified thy God!" he cried. "Had I been there with my Franks, merrily would I have scattered their brains. Why prayest thou to a dead god? My Druid divinities live for ever. The Romans could not vanquish my fathers, yet they killed thy Christ. I pray alone to living gods who have power to aid."

"But Christ, all powerful, is risen to eternal life!"

"Rede me a rune," he besought her, "that I may be triumphant in battle. If thy god doth give me victory I will forswear my Druid faith."

Then Clotilde repeated the pater noster, which by dint of tedious effort he learned; shouting it in his sonorous bass, like some viking drinking-song.

Down the course of the tawny, turbulent Rhone they journeyed, crossing, after two days and nights, into the valley of the somnolent Saône and so northward, till, at their nearest point to Chalon, they learned that a party of Burgundians were scouring the country in search of them.

"We are lost," cried Clotilde. "Gondebaud is again at large!"

"Nay, we will trick him yet," cried Fortunatus, grasping the driver's goad and lashing the steers furiously.

"Belabour not the brutes," besought Clotilde. "They cannot mend their pace. Rather mount me on a steed; let us speed forward while the oxen shamble in the ruck."

"It groweth chill," replied Fortunatus. "Sleep warm this night within the cart. At dawn thou shalt take horse."

Through the black night they lumbered, urging the oxen till they broke into a run. Descending into a gorge to cross a ford, affrighted by the rushing torrent Clotilde uttered a shrill scream. The oxen balking in mid-stream refused to budge; backing, plunging, kicking beneath a rain of blows they overturned the car.

Leaping into the stream Fortunatus bent his shoulder to the wheel and exerting all his strength righted the wagon; but Clotilde, extricated from the tangle, was caught in the swirling current and borne suddenly down the stream. Swimming desperately after her through the rock-strewn rapids he shouted her name in an agony of despair; but there was no reply!

A few short strokes and he reached her. Claspings his powerful arms about her inert form he bore Clotilde to the bank.

"Suffer me to die," she gasped. "It is God's will."

"But it is my will that thou live!" cried Fortunatus, fervently chafing her hands. "Live, beloved, for one who loves thee beyond life!"

"Alas!" she murmured, "for that I love thee would I die, since no longer can I endure the thought of another!"

"Ne'er shall I bear thee to the arms of another," he

cried straining her to his heart. "Since thou lovest me, neither Clovis nor Death shall part us!"

Running along the bank, tortured with apprehension lest their loved companions had been lost in the stream, sped Aurelian and his following.

"She is safe!" called Fortunatus. "Saddle the steeds for we ride on to Rheims."

Tearing her dripping cloak from the shoulders of Clotilde, he flung it upon a rock in mid-stream. "Follow by the Marne. If ye are overtaken by the Burgundians, lead them to this rock, show the cloak, and swear the Princess was drowned."

"That shall I roundly," replied Aurelian. "I go to the carts to fetch dry garments and will return forthwith."

"Why go we still to Rheims?" asked Clotilde anxiously.

"That the archbishop may wed thee to me, even as he would have wedded thee with Clovis"; nor did she gainsay her lover.

On they hastened by unfrequented ways through vale and forest, baiting at lonely garths and scattered hamlets. At one of these they exchanged the spent steed of Clotilde for a farm-horse, less swift but fresh and strong.

That night they saw the camp-fires of the Burgundians and took no rest. At morn they struck into a ravine so overhung by trees that it was a secret way; but here, descending the rocky bed of the dried torrent,

the horse of Fortunatus stumbled and fell with a broken neck.

Mounting the horse of Clotilde he placed her behind him, his heart beating fast beneath her girdling arms. Emerging from the sheltering forest, they traversed a desolate moor, at the marge of which a mountain, bleak and sinister, merged its outline in leaden clouds. Crescent and wan the westering moon waned on the dim horizon. Above stars were glittering faintly, but, save for their tenuous gleam, all was dread and darkness upon that wild interminable plain.

Easing the pace of his tired horse, bending his course straight to the belt of Orion, Fortunatus cheered Clotilde with fond solicitude.

"Fear no longer, we are now in the land of the Franks, safe from all foes," and, pointing to a light like a jewel dropped from the baldric of Orion, he said: "Soon shalt thou rest, Lily Damsel; peace and shelter are close at hand."

Out of the drear night into a shepherd's hut, where leaped a joyous fire, he led the wearied Princess.

In the borderland between dreaming and waking Clotilde was suddenly surprised by a strange cry; then all was silence but for the laboured breathing of Fortunatus, lying in the open doorway. The fire had sunk to embers, without the sky was green in the light of dawn.

Suddenly across the doorway there flitted a shadowy form! Was it wolf or man? Again the cry. The

thing rose and peered into the hut, leering with ghoulish eyes, then stealthily slunk away!

Clotilde sprang from her couch and ran to the door. Fortunatus leapt to his feet. Looking across the moor they discerned menacing shapes skulking toward them in the dusk from every direction. Seizing a flaming brand from the hearth Fortunatus plunged into the night, Clotilde close upon his heels. "Art thou mad," she cried, "thus to make thyself a mark?"

"Anon they shall see more clearly," he answered, tossing the firebrand upon the thatched roof, which burst into instant flame. In the glare of the burning hut they recognized the mysterious shapes as a vanguard of Burgundians.

Laughing in delight, Fortunatus shouted: "Lo, Gondebaud, I, whom you seek, am here!"

Riding forward at this challenge, his antagonist retorted: "Thee have I found at last, with thy shameless paramour."

Fortunatus clenched his battle-axe. "Cur, thou liest, she is the bride of Clovis!"

"Ah! ha!" sneered Gondebaud, "the bait hath trapped the fox? Seize him, guards! Clovis, thou art my prisoner!"

The Burgundians rushed pell-mell upon him, but he cast them off as though they were weasels. Singly, by twos, and by fours they came, grappling his knees as he hewed them down. But ever his relentless battle-

axe swung flail-like o'er the human grain, thrashing its bloody chaff upon the field.

Above the groans of the dying he clamoured this blasphemous prayer:

“*Pater noster qui es in cælis*’; descend I pray and aid me now! ‘*Sanctificetur nomen tuum.*’ Prove thyself a living god and I will worship thee. ‘*Adveniat regnum tuum.*’ Let my soldiers see this signal-fire and speed to my rescue. ‘*Fiat voluntas tua.*’ Take that, caitiff, who didst think to get me from behind. ‘*Panem nostram quotidianum da nobis hodie.*’ Two at a single stroke! By Beltane ’twas not so ill! I perceive, O wife beloved, thy god is not dead. ‘*Et dimitte debita nostra.*’ Cling not to mine knees lest I trample out thy life! ‘*sicut et nos dimittiamus debitoribus nostris.*’ Lay on Gondebaud, thou dastard! A score of thy cutthroats have I sent Hell-ward, now shall I deal with thee!”

Even as he spake a thud of galloping hoofs broke upon his ear.

“‘*Et ne nos induces in tentationem,*’” he continued; while Gondebaud commanded: “Yield, dog, my Burgundians are upon thee!”

“Fool,” sneered Clovis, “these be my Franks. Thou art trapped! They come, my Belgian bees! Have at these fleeing rascals, and give no quarter! ‘*Sed libera nos de malo.*’ Burn me the villages. Set all Burgundy in a blaze! ‘*Et gloria tibi in sæcula sæcu-*

lorum! Clotilde, thy god hath vanquished! ‘*Amen, amen.*’”

Gondebaud realized that the game was up, for the Franks, drawn by the blazing beacon, had surrounded his routed Burgundians with a ring of steel. “I yield me,” he muttered, breaking his sword upon his knee. “What fate hast thou in store?”

“Thy fate is in the hands of the Frankish Queen,” replied Clovis as Clotilde advanced exultingly.

“Hast thou my marriage contract?” she asked of Clovis.

“Behold,” he replied, drawing a parchment from his tunic.

“Affix thereto thy device,” she commanded. “Write with thy finger dipped in blood!”

“But there be no terms inscribed herein,” protested Gondebaud.

“Time enough for them when we reach Rheims,” Clotilde replied. “Go then and thank Our Lady of Mercy that thou art spared thy recreant life!”

“Lily of my Heart,” murmured Clovis. “Bespeed we now to the archbishop and after to Turnacum! There shalt thou bloom in a garden of garnered peace, till what time my swarming bees shall make Lutetia the hive of Belgium!”

CHAPTER III

THE SONS OF AYMON AND A DAUGHTER OF CHARLEMAGNE

I

“IMP, devilkin, child of Satan!” shrieked the old woman. “A she-devil bore thee, and thy mother before thee.”

“Ha! ha!” taunted the boy as he capered mockingly just out of reach of her staff. “She who is my own grandmother, to say that a deviless mothered my mother! Ha! ha! who is a fiend now, *petite grand-mère?*”

“Bring back my goat,” wailed the old woman changing her tone from vituperation to entreaty. “Dost thou not see that the gentleman painter would put her in his picture, and thou hast frightened her away to the topmost crag of the cliff where I cannot follow? Bring back my goat, sweet little Yniol, and thou shalt have one of the ginger-cakes in my pocket, one of the delicious little ginger-cakes that I bought at the fair on the fête of St. Reynault a year ago. I have still

two left, and they are not over-hard for thy young teeth."

With that the crone drew, from some recess in the depths of her tatters, a strange object of the colour of an antique oak carving and the consistency of concrete. Some grotesque from an ancient abbey, it seemed, for the cake had been cut out to represent a horse-headed creature, somewhat resembling a dachshund, bearing upon its abnormally elongated back four riders,—
"*plaqué dos à ventre.*"

"They are the *quatre fils d'Aymon*," replied the crone in answer to my question.

"And their horse Bayard," added Yniol, snatching the cake. "Regard, Monsieur, and Madame, this is the horse with the dried currant for an eye, which I bite off first, for fear it drop out. It is the eye which tells you that this end is the head and not the tail."

"For five sous," continued the old woman, "my good little grandson will show Monsieur the print of Bayard's hoof on the mountain yonder, which he made when he leaped across the river when the castle was besieged. But the cliff is too steep for Madame, and Monsieur should take the precaution to give me the five sous first."

"No, I will not show the gentleman the hoof-print, but I will show him the sons. First Reynault with the tulip in his hand; the colour is red sugar which I lick off. The second son is Guichard, he without a nose,

the third is Adelard, and the fourth—O Grandmother! Richard hath no head, fumble in thy pocket till thou find it or give me straightway another cake.”

“Why should I give thee another when thou hast already eaten the better part of this? Ah! rogue, it is thou who hast but now broken off the head of Richard. Thou hast it in the palm of thy hand, cheat! Away, bring back my goat or I beat thee with my staff.”

“Catch me first!” piped the boy. “Another cake, Grandma, or I fetch not down the goat.”

In a trice the young scamp was on the summit of the citadel-crowned crag which backs the town of Dinant. It was in vain that his grandam gesticulated in no ambiguous fashion; he replied with derisive and obscene gestures, capering wildly and fingering an imaginary flageolet, whose mouth-piece was adjusted to his nose. Then, having caught the goat, he seated himself upon a stone and calmly awaited our terms of capitulation.

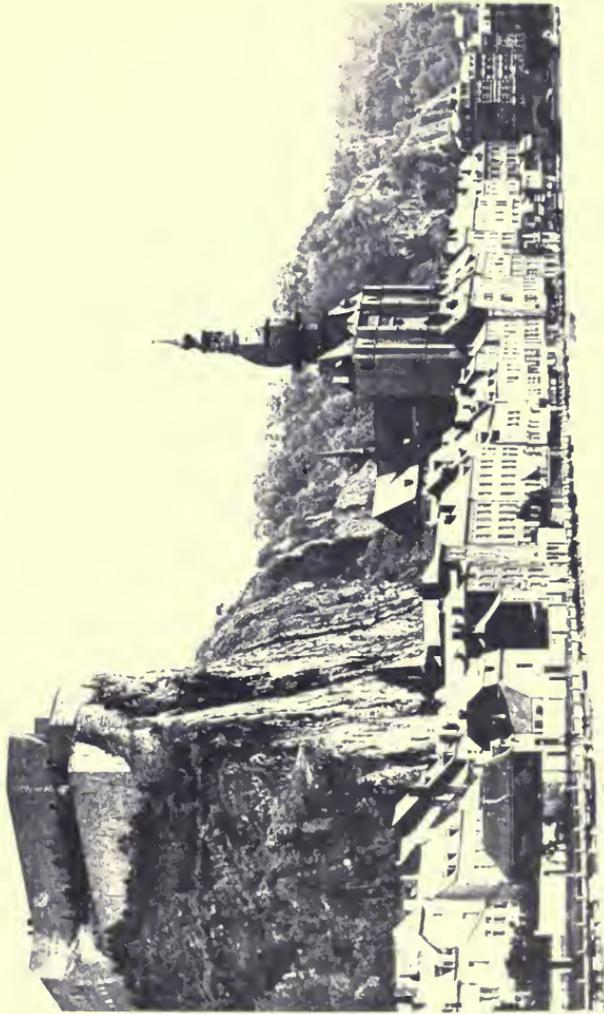
“I will paint you without the goat,” the artist said to Margot. “I have no doubt you will pose much more quietly, and perhaps you will be so good as to tell me what you meant by saying that a hoof-print of Bayard, the enchanted horse of the four sons of Aymon, is to be found on the cliff.”

“But certainly,” Margot replied, “everyone knows that it was there they lived, in a great castle which was besieged by Charlemagne. All four would have been

burned to charcoal but for their horse Bayard, which the Druid Maugis gave them. *Ma foi*, it was a handy beast for a large family, for it had the knack of lengthening its back, like an accordion, to carry double, or quadruple as the case might require. I doubt not, if Aymon had had sixteen sons instead of four, Bayard's back would have stretched without cracking until all were comfortably seated. Think of the economy also in the matter of feeding, for in the stable he pulled himself together again, until his stomach was but of a one-horse capacity. He won in all the races, by simply stretching his neck till his nose touched the finish, while his tail had not left the starting line. Then, as for leaping,—regard me there the great cleft which Charlemagne cut in the cliff with his sword, and how Dinant lies spread between the foot of the cliff and the river. It was on t'other side of the stream that Charlemagne's army was encamped, for angry the Emperor was that Reynault should have dared to make love to his daughter Erembour; but over cleft and town and river and the Emperor's army beside, Bayard leaped with the four sons of Aymon on his back, as easily as an ordinary horse would jump a hurdle."

"I have read somewhere," I objected, "that it was at Montauban that Charlemagne besieged the four sons of Aymon and that Reynault wedded Clarice, daughter of the King of Aquitaine."

"Ah! if one gives credence to the lies written in books



“The donjon of Dinant overfrowning the slumbering town and its placid river”

From a copyright photograph by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.



“ Tilting at the quintain, their favourite diversion ”

From *Album Historique de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Obreen.
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one can never get at the truth. It is not to be wondered at that other peoples should claim our heroes, but it is here in Belgium that Aymon reigned until Charlemagne dethroned him; and it was here in his castle of Dinant that his four sons were born. And the proof of it is," Margot continued triumphantly, "that there, on our church below the citadel, is the tower of the tulip-bud."

"And what may the tulip-bud, or your church tower have to do with the legend?" I asked somewhat mystified.

"An unopened tulip was the flower of Erembour, the daughter of Charlemagne whom Reynault loved. He wore it always upon his helmet; and, when he died and was buried in Dinant, it shot up from his grave and blossomed in our beautiful tower. It may well be that the sons of Aymon had a castle in Montauban, or where you will. They had other castles here in the Ardennes, at Amblève and at Aigremont near Liège, which fell to them when their uncle was murdered. The *haute noblesse* often find it convenient to have many strong-holds, as the fox has many dens; but when there is a Madame Fox and a litter of pretty cubs in each—Oh! la! la! that is not so convenient. Never shall I believe that Reynault had other wife or other love than Erembour.

"A monk he became when she died, building churches everywhere in Belgium, but always with a tulip-tower. So famous was he that the Germans sent for him to

build the Cathedral of Cologne; but the supplanted architect was so angry that he incited the populace who drowned him in the Rhine. Saint Reynault he was canonized, with the architect's T square and a tulip as his symbols, as is written in the story which I bought at the kermess with the gingerbread. It ends with a ballad, a very old ballad, which I will sing if Monsieur and Madame please."

And the mère Margot sang in her high, quavering voice, in French so archaic that it was difficult to follow, the ballad of

BELLE EREMBOUR

Bele Erembors à la fenestre au jor,
 Sor ses genolz tient paile de colon,
 Voit Frans de France qui repairent de cor
 E voit Reynaut devant el premier front
 En haut parole, si a dit sa raison:
 "E! Reynaut amis!"

"Amis Reynaut j'ai veu cel jor"
 Se passi soiz selon mon père tor,
 Dolans fussiez se ne parlasse à vos."
 "Jel mes faistes, fille d'emperor,
 Autrui amastes, si obliastes nos."
 "E! Reynaut amis!"

Li cuens Reynauz est montez en la tor,
 Si s'est asis en un lit point à flors,
 De joste lui se siet bele Erembors;
 Lors recomencent lor premières amors
 "E! Reynaut amis!"

Old Margot sang also the song of Blanche fleur, and later brought to me the pamphlet from which she had learned the legend, a *Chanson de geste*, written in the thirteenth century by Huon de Villeneuve, printed at Antwerp in 1619, and sold today at the fairs of Belgium. But not until we supplemented these traditions by the treasure-trove of the monkish scribe, looted from an unknown abbey, were we able to recognize in the conflicting legends a coherent narrative.

Very proud are the Belgians of their great Emperor Charlemagne, a pride which they share grudgingly with Germany and France, asserting that Aix, his capital and best-loved residence was at that time truly a Belgian city; but less disputed and even more intense is their pride in these legendary heroes. ¹

II

A care-free life led the four sons of Aymon aloof from the world in the donjon of Dinant overfrowning the slumbering town and its placid river. Spearing wild boar in the fastnesses of the Ardennes, flying falcon

¹ M. Paulin Paris has established the fact that the legend of the Quatre Fils d'Aymon had its birth in Belgium and is founded upon "veritable history which the fancy of poets has rendered somewhat difficult to discern." The French version of the adventures of the sons is closely interwoven with those of Roland, for which see *Romance of the Feudal Châteaux*, Chapter II.

for hare and heron, and tilting at the quintain¹ were their favourite diversions.

Once a year only did they journey beyond the boundaries of the domain of Dinant, northward down the valley, to Liége for a joyous fortnight with their uncle the Duke of Aigremont at the famed provincial fair.

Thither flocked the entire country-side to buy and barter horses and the imperial court to wager princely stakes upon the courses.

It was the wont of the Emperor Charlemagne to honour these festivities by his presence and disport himself merrily with his vassals, vavasours, and boon companions. Foremost among these was the archbishop of the suzerain see of Liége, Turpin, the Privy Councillor of the Emperor, who, though a man of the cloth, loved not a little the lusts of the flesh and well knew how to make his well-nigh royal palace the scene of lavish hospitality. Here he entertained the Emperor and a goodly following; for Charlemagne, passing fond of ladies, never journeyed without his daughters, and brought to Liége the dainty cavalcade.

Fairest of all was the Princess Erembour, sturdy and regal as her Thuringian mother, and holding in leash a love of adventure by a will as indomitable as that of her Carlovingian father.

¹ The quintain, a manikin which gyrated upon a pivot and if struck unskilfully banged the awkward jousting upon the back with a bag of sand.

Seated by his side at the race-course she presented the trophy to Reynault, whose fleet steed, Bayard, had out-distanced all competitors; and, while the concourse rang with plaudits for the mettlesome charger, her attention was fixed upon the winsome rider whose eyes met hers in undisguised admiration.

It fortuned, one evening, that Reynault passed her turret and, leaning from the casement, Erembour threw him a crimson tulip, which she took from her bosom. Reynault caught the blossom ere it reached the ground and, looking up, met the eyes of Erembour. Pressing the flower fervently to his lips he halted horse and said:

“Princess, is this kind token then for me?”

“A greeting from one who would be thy friend,” replied Erembour smiling, then swiftly withdrew from the casement.

Reynault dismounted and climbed the stair.

This off-repeated game of toss and catch led to an adventure which set the court a-gossip and still lives in the *Faietz scandaleuses* of the Carlovingian princesses. Were the flower yellow it signified to Reynault: “I love you, yet be discreet, we are watched.” But if the flower were red the message which it bore was: “Come!”

Boar-eyed, with snout-like nose and thick lips snarling from tusk-like teeth, Ganelon, the most treacherous of Charlemagne’s nobles, jealously espied this tossing of tulips and whetted his dagger.

One frosty night when livid cloud-drifts veiled the moon, Reynault, the red flower in his doublet and Erembour's kiss warm upon his lips, descended the spiral stair-case of her turret. At the first turning he fell headlong—struck in the dark by the dagger of Ganelon.

Erembour heard the thud of his fall, the slinking footsteps of the assassin, and sprang to Reynault's side.

"Fear not, beloved, my wound is not mortal," so he told her as he strove to rise. "My steed stands without. God! if I could but reach him!"

Erembour clasped her arms about her lover and staunched his wound with her scarf, but at the foot of the stairway he sank upon her breast. "Thou couldst not pass to the gateway wert thou unwounded," she cried, "for see, snow has fallen; the castle-court is one white page on which thy footprints would write the story of thy visit to my tower."

"Nay, nay, what doest thou?" he protested, as lifting her lover like a helpless child, Erembour bore him resolutely across the court.

"Resist not," she laughed, "for I am passing strong. I could bear thee in spite of thy struggling, but lighten my task, link thine arms about my neck. There, that is better. Here is thy charger. Art thou yet able to ride?"

"Of a surety, dear heart," insisted Reynault, "and



“Reynault and his mettlesome charger, Bayard”

(Kemper)

Photographische Gesellschaft, Berlin

“ Built about a spacious cloister surrounded by an ogival arcade ”



The Arch-Bishopal Palace, Liège

From a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.

on the morrow I shall return to crave thee of thy father as my bride."

"Nay, tarry at thy uncle's castle till thou art healed of thy hurt. Fear not for me. My tracks upon the snow too tiny are for a man's foot. They will tell that it was I alone who crossed the castle-court."

All might have gone well had not the scene been witnessed by one on whom Erembour had not reckoned. The Emperor had eyed this little episode from an oriel overlooking the court, and stung to the quick he assailed the culprit with angry denunciation as she re-entered her chamber. Here flint met flint. Conscious of her integrity, Erembour faced her father with the truth:

"Naught of evil hath been done. Sooth 'tis we love but in all honour, and my betrothed cometh to thee this very day to demand me in wedlock!"

"Who is this man of honour who hath so cheapened thee?" sneered the Emperor.

Erembour went crimson, but not with guilt, then flashed: "His name thou shalt not learn until thou swearest that he shall suffer no scathe at thy hands."

The Emperor pondered. Her unflinching gaze told him that she spoke truth; but Charlemagne was loath to admit defeat. "Let him come," he muttered within his beard. "No deadlier doom could a culprit suffer than life with a shrew like thee."

Erembour, believing her cause won, laughing, flung her arms about his neck.

Meanwhile, faint with loss of blood, Reynault spurred through the frosty night to his uncle's castle.

The brawling Meuse beneath, above wind wailing in leafless trees, tattered clouds scudding across the moon—all seemed to swirl onward with him in ceaseless flight. Anon gaunt arms from a gnarled yew stretched clutching fingers as he hurtled past. Menacing screams of hidden phantoms shrilled about him, and relentlessly ever his distorted shadow pursued him like a malevolent wraith. But dinning always in his ear, with the pelt of galloping hoof-beats, the rushing stream murmured the plaintive lament of Erembour: "Why must the fast-fading stars so soon, love, flee in the dawning?" Then consciousness forsook him and he lurched forward on the neck of his tireless courser. Rocking him gently as a babe in cradle the loyal Bayard bore his helpless master in safety at last to Aigremont.

On the morrow Ganelon, not Reynault, came to the Emperor and demanded the hand of his daughter. Charlemagne regarded him with cold aversion.

"I say not," he thundered, "that thou art the man I would have chosen for a son, but fate hath put beyond me the power of choice."

Ganelon's eyes glittered with delight as he realized that Erembour was his for the asking. "The sinner

shall atone with his life," he stammered as he lipped the Emperor's hand.

Charlemagne, misinterpreting his words, replied: "Even so, at the altar alone canst thou make reparation and vindicate my daughter's good name."

"Most gracious sire," he fawningly protested, "my life shall be a daily rote of devotion to my august benefactor. I can even now furnish thee with an earnest of my zeal. Through sore travail and parlous ventures have I unearthed a foul conspiracy. The Saxons plot thine assassination, an uprising of the nation and the subversion of thy dynasty."

"Body of God!" roared the Emperor. "Whence this idle tale?"

"Indeed I speak sooth, gentle sovereign. Their leader is Buves, Duke of Aigremont; the cut-throat to whom thy murder is assigned his nephew Reynault, eldest of the sons of Aymon!"

"What, the seemly stripling whose steed carried off the chalice at the courses of Liége? Nay, it cannot be. Yet, by our Lady! now that I bethink me, 'twas none other I saw lurking by the postern gate yestreen—and the night before, though he slunk into the shadow of the chapel buttresses. His horse was found pasturing on the archbishop's tulip-bed. It hath a scurvy look. Harkee, Ganelon. Go thou to Aigremont, apprehend these villains, and fetch them to me!"

But the treacherous Ganelon far exceeded his orders.

Demanding entrance in the Emperor's name, the gates of the castle were thrown open and, followed by his pikemen, who swarmed swiftly after him, he surprised the Duke and Reynault dining in the hall. Armed only with their swords, the women behind them, they fought their way to a turret. The assassins however burst in the door with their pikes. As they rushed in Reynault caught a burly pikeman about the waist and wrestled with him to a window, holding him in so tight a grip that both fell to the marsh which on that side moated the castle.

Well for Reynault the moat was shallow and that the pain which he suffered was but from a twisted shoulder, while the body of his dead antagonist masked him from view. So he lay in a swoon for hours, at last drifting back to consciousness under a soft touch nosing his cheek, and a clover-scented breath coming in short puffs at his ear. Bayard had found his master, and kicking aside the encumbering pikeman, now whispered to Reynault in low entreating whinnys.

Reynault looked upward to the battlements of the castle. There dangled horribly the naked and mutilated bodies of his uncle, his aged aunt, and his sweet cousin Rothilde!

He staggered forward and would have rushed into the castle, but Bayard's teeth were in his doublet. Again he cast an agonized glance at those distorted faces—

dead past all doubt, for dawn was paling the stars. They had swung thus throughout the night!

He mounted Bayard and rode sorrowfully up the valley of the Meuse to rejoin his brothers at Dinant. Though distracted with grief and indignation at the sad tidings, they were of one mind: the murder of their kindred could not have been committed by the authority of Charlemagne.

“Let us haste,” they cried, “to the Emperor, and demand redress!”

With heavy but determined hearts the four sons of Aymon set out for Aix, whither the court had returned. As they neared the imperial city Guichard drew Reynault apart from the others.

“Brother mine,” he said, “my heart is swelling with such joy that I needs must give it vent. Thou knowest how a year ago, at Angers, I met Blanchefleur, niece of the Emperor, and sister of Roland, who warreth now 'gainst heathenesse.”

“Yea, Brother, well know I how thou hast longed to fare with Roland on that quest.”

“Nay 'twas but a subterfuge that I might win his sister. No longer need I go on pilgrimage to find her, for, Reynault, she is here.”

“What, in the Forest of Ardennes!”

“Nay at Aix. She is with the court. I saw her at Liége. Didst thou not mark her at the races, as she sat by the side of her cousin the Princess Erembour?”

"That colourless maid!" Reynault exclaimed, "whose veins methinks run milk and not red blood."

"Yea, Blanche fleur, the lily white, the lily pure. O Brother! God's saint she is, and I a sinner went every day to vespers that I might gaze upon her. Christ forgive me, I thought not on Him nor said my Aves to his Mother, but to another blessed Virgin, the hem of whose mantle I kissed as it fluttered past me. And, Brother, incredible as it is, she knows of my devotion and is not angered; for, not by chance a blossom of white hawthorn fell upon the pavement when last I kissed her robe. Ah! sweet saint, what am I to deserve such felicity?"

Reynault regarded his brother with pitying amusement, forgetting for the nonce his own similar plight.

"Thou art a very proper man," he said, "well deserving such a lady, be she all thou deemest. When we have dispatched our weightier business, we will demand her for thee of the Emperor."

To gain access to Charlemagne was not, however, the simple matter which Reynault had thought. This could never be effected at a moment's notice, Anselm, Count of the Palace explained to them, and the present time was peculiarly unfavorable. A festival celebrating the return of Pepin, the Emperor's second son, King of Italy, from a victorious campaign against the Huns was now in progress. Charlemagne was more

than usually occupied in giving audience to guests of exalted rank. The utmost that could be done was to register with Anselm a deposition of their grievance and to await, with what patience they could, a summons to appear before the Emperor.

The spirits of youth are buoyant, and the young men determined not to be disheartened by this rebuff, for each had his own reason for not chafing at the unexpected delay. Reynault and Guichard hoped to rejoin their sweethearts; Adelar had sniffed the odour of garlic rising from pigeon-pasties, for which the inn of the Green Dragon was justly famed; and Richard was eager to enjoy the divertissements of the brilliant fête.

The narrow streets of Aix swarmed with a motley crowd of knights, squires, monks, burghers, strollers, tatterdemalions, and vagabonds, agog with curiosity and excitement. From all the environs thousands of peasants had trooped to town bringing fruits and vegetables in exchange for pleasures of the city. They thronged the market-place, where raftered houses, gay with garlands and banderoles, rose in tiers jostling each his neighbour in seeming effort to peer over his shoulders at the joyous carnival. Troops of maskers danced and capered below, minstrels and troubadours with lute and viol discoursed amorous music on balconies above, while mountebanks harangued laughing groups of Burgundians mellow with the

grape and roystering Germans maudlin from the stein.

As the four brothers loitered past, one of the buffoons declared that he would show the crowd of gaping bystanders the devil;—and, taking up a large purse, he displayed it to all absolutely empty!

“Now, good people,” he inquired, “is it not *the devil* indeed to open your purse and find naught therein?”

On they passed, threading their devious way through bands of mummers, tumblers, merry-Andrews, wrestlers, jongleurs, fortune-tellers, magicians, and pedlars with raucous cries hawking incongruous wares, every manner of trumpery from relics of the Holy Land to kickshaws swimming in boiling fat.

A troupe of miracle-players had set their scene on the very steps of the great basilica. Here they elicited roars of laughter from a delighted throng by representing Archbishop Turpin in a burlesque encounter with the devil, wherein the august prelate, after sustaining sundry familiarities from the foul fiend, finally retaliated by seizing his nose with red-hot pincers and consigning him howling, to the lower regions.

Hereupon the doors of the cathedral flew open and the real archbishop, in full canonicals, emerged, showering anathemas upon players and audience. The latter, in frantic effort to escape, fell mumchance into the outstretched trunk of a gorgeously caparisoned elephant,

which the ambassador of Haroun Al Raschid was leading to the Emperor.

Indignant at the hurtling which he received from the vulgar throng, the elephant, from a fountain which the Emperor had commanded should for this hour run wine, filled his trunk and drenched with the crimson flood all within reach, including his grace the archbishop.

While Adelard and Richard were enjoying the wonders of the city and the toothsome dainties of the inn, Reynault and Guichard busied themselves in searching for their sweethearts. The former haunted the environs of the imperial palace, spying all its towers in fruitless search. After a day he dispatched a missive to Erembour, by a page of the palace, and was rewarded by a glimpse of her face at a casement. Though she appeared but for a brief moment he knew that she was ware of his presence, for there fell at his feet the love token, a yellow tulip!

He strove again to send a letter, but by ill-fortune her brother, Prince Louis, intercepted the messenger, wrenched the billet from his hand, and tore it into shreds.

The page brought Reynault a plea from Erembour: "An you love me Reynault dear, tempt not fate but wait the token of the red tulip."

Guichard questing his lady was more fortunate. Rightly surmising that Blanchefleur would at some time be found at her devotions, early and late he had

been most assiduous in attendance at the imperial basilica. It soon chanced that he espied her during the celebration of early mass, and, kneeling by her side, he gently touched her hand. Blanchefleur trembled like a startled fawn, then timidly returned the pressure; but the omnipresent Empress Hildegarde was but a pace behind her and she passed from the church giving Guichard no salutation.

He continued to attend matins and it fortuneed one morning that he discerned Blanchefleur alone, while her duenna was enumerating her manifold sins behind the curtains of the confessional. Straightway they proceeded to exchange confidences, their faces bowed devoutly over their missals.

"Sweet Guichard," Blanchefleur entreated, "bid thy brother, on his life, show himself no longer nigh the palace. Ganelon hath persuaded the Emperor that Reynault seeketh to assassinate him. If he come again it will mean his death, for Ganelon hath so duped my uncle that he purposeth soon to bestow upon him the hand of my cousin Erembour."

Guichard carried these parlous tidings to his brother, but none the less on the following day Reynault and Guichard presented themselves in the ante-room of the Emperor's audience-chamber to demand a hearing. Here Anselm informed them that Charlemagne had approved the execution of the Duke of Aigremont and had conferred his estates upon Ganelon.

It chanced as Reynault quitted the palace in a fever that he neglected, for the first time, to glance upward while passing Erembour's casement; and the yellow tulip was caught in its fall by a knight approaching from the contrary direction. The presumption of this stranger was not to pass unheeded, and Reynault angrily called upon him to surrender the flower.

He retorted: "If thou wouldst dispute with me the right to wear this token, it were more seemly this to do privily instead of brawling beneath the window of her who threw it me."

Reynault could not but acknowledge the reasonableness of this demand. "Thy name, caitiff," he cried, "anon thou shalt hear from me!"

"The Knight of the Tulip," sneered the stranger, waving the flower triumphantly as he spurred away.

"Thou hast 'scaped encounter with the best sword in Lorraine," said a bystander. "Knowest thou not the invincible champion whom the Emperor hath chosen to joust with his sons against all comers?"

"Nay, his name, I know him not," reiterated Reynault.

"Until yesterday all knew him as Count Ganelon, but henceforth we must yield him the title Duke of Aigremont!"

"That will I never," exclaimed Reynault, smarting under the lash of the double injury.

While he stood pondering how best to come at his

revenge, with a fanfare of trumpets a herald mounted the steps of the palace and proclaimed the invitation to take part in the tournament.

“Oyez, oyez!” he cried, “be it known to all princes, seigneurs, barons, knights, and squires of his illustrious and all puissant majesty, Charles the Great. Whether they be of the march of Lorraine, of the march of Flanders, of the march of Allemania, of the march of Burgundy, of the Isle de France, of the march of Aquitaine, of Lombardy and so following. And to all chevaliers of Christian lands, if they be not foemen to the Emperor our sire, to whom God grant long life, that at twelve of the clock noon, in the meadow by the lake of Aix-la-Chapelle, will be a very great pardon of arms and a very noble tournament, fought after all the ancient customs, at which tourney the chiefs are: the very illustrious Princes Charles, Pepin, and Louis, sons of our imperial sovereign Charlemagne, and Duke Ganelon of Lorraine appellants, who hereby challenge all comers to take part in the said tourney for the glory of knighthood and the fame of their ladies.”

Hereupon Reynault plucked Guichard by the sleeve. “Brother,” said he, “time is to avenge our uncle’s death on this craven Ganelon. Since hath he dealt me injury under cover of fine advantage, but at our third meeting by the grace of God and the Saints he shall repay the debt.”

"Certes," replied Guichard, "our uncle's blood crieth for vengeance, and since this unjust Emperor is deaf to our appeal refer we it to Heaven. Perchance in this gentle pardon of arms we shall, through the persons of the proud princes, deal some small discomfiture on Charlemagne as punishment for his slackness."

While Reynault, tortured by suspicion as well as by rage, could scarcely await the tourney, Guichard, who had no personal injury to avenge, would gladly have avoided the combat had such a course consisted with his conception of honour. He had held converse with Blanchefleur at vespers, when she passed him 'twixt the leaves of her missal the key to the bower of Erembour. That night he mounted to the tryst, leaving Richard to guard the stairway.

Blanchefleur, a wreath of bride-roses on her hair, met him with a face as white when Guichard declared his intent to enter the tournament. "Sweet Christ, have pity!" she cried. "Something seems to tell me, Guichard, this night we part for aye!"

Guichard's heart was also oppressed by a premonition of evil. "If I live I will surely come to claim thee," he promised, but as they embraced in farewell his eyes were sad as the Grail Knight's, parting from his beloved Blanchefleur, fearing that it was to be forever.

Now it fortun'd that on this very night Reynault, who knew not of Guichard's tryst within, waited beneath

the tower the accustomed token from Erembour. A taper illumined the casement and, outlined against its radiance, he caught the profile of a woman's face. Then it vanished and suddenly a man's shadow (that of his brother though he knew him not) fell on the flag-stones at his feet. Reynault strained his eyes to discover whom it might be, but to his deluded vision, the man's shadow merged in the image of Erembour—the two meeting in passionate embrace!

Reynault staggered into an archway opposite, the demon of jealousy taking possession of his soul.

III

THE JOUST

Anon, the sounding clarionnes boldly blare
 A blaste that echoes through the cryptes of time,
 Penon and gonfalon flaunt wide unfurled;
 Whil, armèd cap-à-pie, in argent maile,
 On chargers eek with steele caparisoned,
 The champions pace forth in proud arraye.
 Then o'er the teeming listes a billowe sweeps,
 Of waiving scarves, as suddene al the knyghtes
 Sette lance in rest, spur furious to the charge,
 Let loose from lustye lungs a roare of warre
 And, meeting in the midst, hurl down to death!

Along the broad highway they rode in brave defile, a gay cavalcade brilliant with gleaming steel and motley of velvets, silks, and cloth of gold. Ladies mounted on white palfreys, chevaliers on richly capari-



“ Sad as the Grail-Knight, when he parted from Blanchefleur ”

(Abbey)

Reproduced by permission of Curtis & Cameron, Copley Print Co.

“ Anon the sounding clariounes boldly blare ”



“ Then sudden all the knyghtes set lance in rest ”

From *Album Historique de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Obreen
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soned chargers curvetting proudly under the curb, ambled in endless processional across the wide champaign to a sapphire lake, on the banks of which were pitched the lists and pavilions of the champions.

Above a lofty stockade like a great rainbow loomed the amphitheatre, its crescent tiers glittering in the noonday sun with the varicoloured apparel of the multitude. On the sides stretched the tribunes of the King and Ladies, gay with gonfalons and garlands.

Enthroned upon a tapestried dais, under an emblazoned panoply, robed in purple samite sat the Emperor. At his side, suspended by a ruby studded baldric, hung his battle-sword "Monjoie!" A mantle of miniver fell in sumptuous folds to the steps of the throne, on either side of which were seated Duke Ogier of Denmark and Archbishop Turpin. Ranged about Charlemagne in golden semicircle gleamed the twelve illustrious Paladins of the Empire, behind whom Ibn El Arabi and his turbaned Saracens made an ebony and ivory background which set in bold relief the gold and purple of the imperial suite.

All the flower of chivalry was clustered in one vast garden, gorgeous with banners and blazonry. Not Lorraine alone, but the entire sovereignty of the Roman Empire was represented; for his son Pepin had brought from Lombardy a goodly following of condottieri, whose boldest lances lusted to tempt fortune in the tournament. From Champagne, the valiant Duc

Thibault de Coucy and a score of bronzed chevaliers had ridden all the way to Aix in the hope of wresting, from the Carolingian princes, the coveted trophy; while a band of flaxen-haired Allemanians had crossed the Rhine equally confident of victory.

Holding in her hands the wreath of golden laurel with which to crown the victor, Erembour, "Sovereign of Love and Beauty," shone resplendent in the centre of the Ladies' Tribune. Beside her towered the Empress Hildegarde, rotund and awesome, in stiff brocade and jewel-broidered stomacher. Surrounding them a bevy of court-beauties formed a shining diadem in which the fair Blanche fleur, lily-pale and breathless with excitement, was the central pearl.

"Largesse, largesse, gallant knights!" cry the heralds, while a shower of golden coins rains upon them from the spendthrift throng. "Love of Ladies—Death of Champions! Splintering of Lances! Ride forth, brave knights, bright eyes await your deeds! Largesse, largesse!"¹

The appellants, or challenging party, ranged themselves, a glitter of polished steel and waving plumes, in front of their pavilions; while behind each knight stationed himself a mounted standard-bearer. The barriers were thrown open and the defendants, four Italian champions, mounted on heavily armoured

¹ The traditional cry of the heralds, see Walter Scott, to whom we are indebted for material relating to the tournament.

chargers, rode into the arena to the clash of cymbals and blare of brasses. After making the circuit of the amphitheatre under the gaze of the mighty concourse, they approached the pavilions of the appellants and touched, with the butts of their lances, the shields of their chosen adversaries.

A murmur of disapproval from the throng indicated its disappointment at the choice of "courteous arms."¹

The Italian knights then withdrew to the end of the lists and ranged themselves in line; the Carlovingian princes and their leader Duke Ganelon in the meantime placing themselves opposite their antagonists.

Eagerly awaiting the signal, mounted axmen prepare to cut the cords, which separate, by a wide lane, the opposing parties. A grand fanfare of trumpets—the cords fall—and the tournament begins!

Standing in their stirrups, with lances in rest, the eight champions charge furiously upon one another.

When the cloud of dust had subsided, the antagonists of Charles, Pepin, and Louis, were seen writhing on the ground. Of the Italian knights, Count Hercule of Pavia alone remained in the saddle, having shivered spears to no effect with his opponent Duke Ganelon. Amid a tumult of applause, the victorious princes retired to their pavilions; while the vanquished knights of Lombardy limped from the lists.

¹ "Courteous arms" were lances to the points of which disks of wood were attached and blunted swords too wide to enter the visor.

"Methinks, my frail flower," said Queen Hildegarde, "I discern in thee an unwonted pallour. Thy spirit is o'er ruthless to endure these rough jousts. If thou wilt, thou may'st withdraw ere the blood-tide runs full flood."

To this Blanchefleur dissented, pretending that she was well at ease and eager to witness the exploits of the princes.

"Bide without fear, sweet coz," whispered Erembour, "of a surety the prize will fall to *our* champions, for 'tis their wont to win whatsoe'er they set heart upon."

Clad in steel armour, damascened with gold and silver, the French chevaliers, undaunted by the defeat of their predecessors, next took the field. For a time the tide of fortune wavered between the opposing parties, but the sons of Charlemagne at length carried off the honours of the hour, neither failing thrust nor losing seat in the encounter. Unhelmeted and unhorsed, the Gallic champions fled incontinently from the field, forfeiting by their defeat caparisons, steeds, and armour.

"By my hilt!" cried Charlemagne, his eyes aglow with pride, "my sons acquit themselves right manfully!"

"Not without reason," replied Archbishop Turpin, "for in their youthful veins flows the red blood of their sire."

"Gramercy for thy courtesy," said the Emperor,

“ ’tis music to mine ear. But if I mistake me not, they have now to deal with sterner stuff, for hither comes the blood of Queen Hildegarde who hath ever proved my conqueror.”

As he spoke four Allemanian knights, led by Duke Gerold of Bavaria, brother of the Empress, rode proudly into the arena. At a flourish of clarions, they spurred against the challengers, meeting in the midst with a clash which brought the huge throng to its feet as one man. Of the German champions, half were unhorsed at the first onset, and the remainder vanquished in the ensuing conflict, in which Prince Charles overthrew his opponent, and Duke Gerold was felled by a mighty thrust from the lance of Ganelon.

The unfailing fortune of the appellants appeared to chill the ardour of the defendants; no other champions dared oppose the victorious princes, and unceasing plaudits of the throng bespoke its delight in the triumph of its countrymen.

“It waxeth late, our champions come not!” whispered Blanchefleur to Erembour, “and perchance ’tis better so, since they must either vanquish thy brothers or suffer hurt at their hands.”

“Dastards they are not,” replied the Princess. “Of a surety they will come. Time is my braggart brothers were taught there are doughtier men in the world. As for Duke Ganelon he hath a cruel lance and a tricky sword. Heaven grant he meet his doom!”

Blanchefleur went white. "O holy Virgin," she prayed within her heart, "suffer Guichard not to come into this field of death."

"Prithee, daughter," demanded the Empress, "what saidst thou? For methinks I heard but ill."

"I said," replied the adroit Erembour, "that there are no doughtier men in the world than my brothers and Duke Ganelon."

The Emperor now called Count Anselm, Marshal of the Day. "Since it hath pleased God to bring our sons unscathed to victory were it not seemly now to adjudge the prize?"

"In verity, sire," answered Anselm. "The triumph of the Princes and Duke Ganelon cannot be gainsaid!"

Charlemagne rose and was about to address the expectant multitude when a defiant blast of a trumpet broke the silence, heralding the arrival of new champions! Eyes were strained and necks craned in the effort to learn who these might be. The barriers were suddenly thrown open and four knights, clad in armour without device, mounted on black chargers, rode slowly into the lists.

Alone in the vast assemblage, springing to her feet as she recognized the sons of Aymon, Blanchefleur uttered a cry of delight!

"Who may these intruders be," exclaimed the Emperor, "that affront us thus disguised?"

"I' faith, I know not," replied Ogier the Dane,

“ unless they be Britons or other barbarians untaught in the lore of blazonry.”

Meanwhile the unknown champions, with closed visors, had filed in processional around the arena, saluting the Emperor and ladies by lowering lances. Their gallant bearing won the immediate approval of the multitude who hailed them with shouts of acclaim and waving of scarfs.

The black knights then approached their antagonists and struck, with the points of their lances, the shields of the Princes and Duke Ganelon, thus signifying that the challenge was *à l'outrance*, or to mortal combat.

Amazed by this unexpected audacity, Ganelon angrily addressed his opponents: “Are ye shrived fools, that ye thus court certain death?”

“Recreant,” retorted Reynault, “methinks 'tis thou shouldst seek absolution, for this day shall I avenge my uncle's murder!”

Backing their chargers to the end of the lists, the four unknown champions, motionless as statues, awaited the signal for the onset.

A blast of clarions, and the eight knights simultaneously crashed together, splintering lances with a shock which threw their chargers back upon their haunches; then, adroitly recovering, galloped back to the extremity of the lists to take new spears from their servitors.

A clamour of applause from the sea of onlookers,

gradually subsided into a breathless silence, as the bugles blared to renew the combat.

The eight champions again flashed at one another, shivering spear on shield with the crash of a thunder bolt, and Princes Pepin and Louis, reeling in the saddle, whirled heavily to the ground. Instantly the sable knights sprang from their steeds and with naked glaives stood ready to strike. But the prostrate princes rose not and were borne senseless to their pavilions.

Charlemagne buried his face in his hands, but remained silent.

"I go, sire," said Duke Ogier," to learn what injuries thy sons have suffered."

"Heaven grant they be not mortal," exclaimed the Emperor, while the Archbishop, crossing himself, gravely murmured: "The issues of life are in the hands of God."

After an interval of a few moments Charlemagne motioned to the heralds to sound the onset. Four knights, only, appeared in the encounter, in which Reynault crossed lance with Ganelon and Guichard opposed Prince Charles. At the first shock of the galloping chargers Charles went down before the well-directed spear of his Belgian adversary; but Ganelon, by a swift manœuvre of his courser, evaded the thrust of Reynault, wheeling adroitly and withdrawing in safety to the rear.

As the two remaining contestants entered the lists a hush fell upon the multitude. For a moment they eyed one another—Ganelon stolid and sinister, Reynault, alive with eagerness and determination. Suddenly the marshal let fall his gauntlet and both knights charged in full career! But the steed of Ganelon, swerving in midcourse, deflected his master's lance, causing it to glance harmlessly over his opponent's shoulder. Of this vantage the black knight disdained to avail himself, returning to his station amid the plaudits of the throng and giving his rival the opportunity of another combat.

"Sire," said Ogier the Dane, returning joyously, "I bring good tidings! The princes rally under the ministrations of thy leech and bid fair ere long to recover."

Charlemagne, heartened by the news, replied: "'Tis well, good friend, but if I mistake me not, in this unknown knight, Duke Ganelon hath met his peer."

"By my sword," cried Ogier, "he is indeed a man of great heartiness and I tremble lest our champion is too spent with the contest to endure the thrusts of this stranger."

The King's champion, however, in the second course attacked his opponent with so true an aim that he shattered his helmet, which rolled its sable plumes upon the ground. Stunned and wounded, the blood

gushing from his forehead, Reynault withstood the shock as though welded to his steed; and, spurring back to his comrades amid a tumult of applause, appeared forthwith in a new head-piece.

"St. George aid thee! O Reynault dear!" Exclaimed Erembour, "that thou may'st drive this Satan Ganelon to deepest Hell!"

"Do I hear thee aright, daughter?" inquired the Empress.

"I prayed," stammered Erembour, "may Saint George aid Duke Ganelon to wreak doom upon this stranger!"

"Amen," responded the befooled Hildegarde, as the clarions blared for the final combat.

Armed cap-à-pie in shining mail, sitting their horses like brazen statues, the two warriors rode into the arena. In a thunderous onset, the avenging Reynault bore down so lustily upon his antagonist that he pierced his hauberk at the first encounter, and toppling from the saddle, the indomitable Ganelon crashed lifeless to earth!

As the body of the defeated champion was being carried from the lists Charlemagne rose and proclaimed the Black Knight victor of the day; while the latter sat, heedless of the throng, who greeted his triumph with a tempest of applause and a glittering rain of coins and flowers.

Advancing to the Tribune of the Ladies and dis-

mounting from his horse, Reynault knelt at the feet of Erembour, Sovereign of Love and Beauty, who, as she crowned him with the golden laurel, intertwined therewith a crimson tulip and whispered in his ear, "O Reynault dear!—"

But the surprises of this eventful day were not yet at an end. Leading them across the field strewn with debris of the conflict, Marshal Anselm escorted the unknown champions to the presence of the Emperor.

"Unhelm, valiant Knights," commanded Charlemagne, "that I may now proclaim the names of those who have gained the honours of the day, for I would fain requite, according to their deserts, such gallant feats of arms."

Instead of removing their casques, as bidden, the four brothers merely threw back their visors, confronting the Emperor with bitter and insolent faces.

"We are the sons of Aymon," retorted Reynault, "till now thy loyal subjects. But when our beloved uncle fell, foully murdered by the assassin Ganelon, we came to Aix to demand redress. Since thou would'st neither grant us aid nor audience, we have thus avenged his murder and now renounce our fealty to thee and defy thy vaunted power!"

Having flung this defiance in the teeth of the astonished Emperor, they wheeled their horses suddenly about and, before he could recover from his stupefaction and chagrin, galloped furiously from the lists.

CHAPTER IV

A BOAR OF THE ARDENNES

(WHEREIN ARE SET FORTH FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE
SONS OF AYMON)

BELLE EREMBOUR

When, with the cold, days shorten fast,
To Aigremont came the knights of France,
And Reynault riding in advance;
The tower of Erembour he passed
Nor deigned her way to throw a glance.
"O, Reynault dear!"

Within her turret on her knees
Weaving the brilliant broideries,
Fair Erembour the Knights of France
Perceived, and Reynault in advance,
In grieved surprise she sudden cries
"O, Reynault dear!"

"O, Reynault dear, a time was when
If that you passed my casement then
Full sad were you, if from the tower
I leaned not forth to cast a flower."

"Still am I sad, still true to thee,
But faithless thou hast been to me."

"O, Reynault dear!"

“ Anon ye dogges drive on—onlye again to fal in mangled gore ”



The Boar Hunt, by Franz Snyder
The Uffizi Gallery, Florence

“Dear Reynault, by my faith I swear,
And by the hundred virgins fair
Who Mary serve, so debonair,
Save you alone no man I love,
Come, take my kiss in proof thereof.

“O, Reynault dear!”

Then Reynault climbs the turret tall,
With shoulders broad and baldric small
His flaxen curls like wavelets fall.
A knight more fair no land doth know,
For love of him her tears do flow.

“O, Reynault dear!”

When Reynault came within the door,
Upon a couch sat Erembour,
Weaving the brilliant broideries;
Then as they met each other's eyes,
Up-leapt the ardent love of yore
More sweet, more fragrant than before.

“O, Reynault dear!”

He spake: “My words belied my heart,
Think naught of what my tongue did say.
Think of our love, ere we did part,
And of a man who loves for aye!”

“O, Reynault dear!”¹

UP the valley of the Meuse to their mighty fortress of Dinant sped the four sons of Aymon, fortifying themselves in hot haste for a siege which well they recked would follow. Scarcely had they hoisted the draw-bridge and thrust forth the hoardings, when the entire

¹ From an unknown author of the twelfth century.

country-side bristled with armed men who beset the castle so vigilantly that not a mouse could escape.

Serfs seeking shelter in the stronghold brought tidings of a fearsome horde ravaging the province under the leadership of the unconquerable Ganelon, whom Reynault deemed left dead upon the field of Aix.

Relentlessly he pressed the siege: mangonel and trebuchet, battering-ram and every manner of siege-engine were brought to bear upon the doomed fortress. Driven from the outer defences by overwhelming odds, fighting valiantly for every foot of vantage, the little band of defenders at last took refuge in the keep, where they held the besiegers at bay.

The assailants, protected from the rain of boiling pitch under a roof of rawhides, brought up a battering-ram, and with thunderous blows breached the huge wall. Piling faggots about the base of the donjon, where his helpless victims were prisoned like rats in a trap, Ganelon fired the mass with a blazing torch. Flames roared up the spiral stairway as though it were a chimney, smoke burst from windows and billowed from roof. The air was rent with a roar of falling timbers, till at last the undermined keep toppled in with a crash that reverberated from mountain to mountain across the serrated ranges of the Ardennes.

Not a sign was disclosed of the four brothers; it was rumoured that they were consumed in the conflagration. The legend recounted by Mère Margot is but a trifling

exaggeration of fact. A moment before the tower fell the sons of Aymon with a few companions retreated to a barbican below the cliff, and, swimming the river, fled in safety to Dordogne, the domain of their father.

'Twere a fruitless quest to relate the legendary adventures from flight to home-coming, in which they bravely but vainly attempted to rescue Roland, brother of Blanchefleur, at Roncesvalles, and how that on occasion they saved the life of Charlemagne by holding a defile until a messenger warned him of the approaching enemy. Though most diligently sought they vanished mysteriously.

Great honour they gained and might have succeeded their father in governance of Dordogne had not the loved memory of Erembour and Blanchefleur drawn them like a lodestone to the Ardennes. It was mid-winter when the four brothers arrived at the blackened ruins of Dinant. Pausing only to say a prayer at the little church under the cliff they continued onward, through wild mountain gorges to their hunting-lodge of Amblève, a lone tower upon a rocky eminence.

Here they found Maugis, the Druid, hanging the hall with mistletoe, for by his magic art he had forecast their approach. Adelard was greeted with a savoury matelotte of venison, and the spent steeds were given provender. Bayard, recognizing his former master, mingled mane and beard in a drift of snow as he

nestled his nose lovingly against the enchanter's withered cheek.

Returning to the tower Reynault's sharp eye was arrested by marks of hoofs.

"Yea," said Maugis, "they are tracks of boars which, now that snow covers the acorns, come nigh habitations. To go abroad unarmed is fraught with peril. Only yesternight they devoured a child!"

"By St. Hubert!" shouted Adelard, "the morrow we will to the hunt and spear such swine-flesh as was ne'er spitted before."

"Range, an ye will, to the east," counselled Maugis, "but approach not Aigremont, for there Ganelon and the Emperor hold high revel in honour of the Duke's espousals with the Princess Erembour."

"Fear not that I break in upon their mirth," said Reynault bitterly.

But the heart of Guichard leaped within him. Waiting only until his brothers slept he saddled Bayard and set forth in quest of the fair Blanchefleur.

The morn the other brothers rose betimes eager with excitement for the chase, a scowl seaming the brow of Reynault as he learned of his brother's secret departure.

"Rashling, thus to peril his life for a faithless wench, who I misdoubt is but tempting bait to lure him into a trap whence he may not escape."

"Ay," assented the enchanter, "but the stars tell

that ere nightfall ye will all be prisoned beyond hope of ransom."

"Shall we bide in hiding," asked Richard, "until the ill-omened hour hath passed?"

"Nay, what is written will be," Maugis replied. "Both Love and Death have keen arrows and certain aim. It availeth naught to remain in cover when these huntsmen roam the wild."

Reynault shrugged. "The old witling is in his dotage," he said as he spurred away.

All day long he hunted with a sore heart torn by memories of an hour when he too would have defied Death for Love.

Ganelon, Duke of Aigremont, stood in the great hall of the castle. If any haunting memory lurked in his mind of another night when he had burst into this room with his pikemen and foully murdered the rightful duke it was dulled by his intoxication in this supreme moment.

All of his schemes had fruited, his dreams come true. Charlemagne had come with his court to spend the Christmas tide with him, in celebration of his betrothal with the Princess Erembour, a festival on whose heels the marriage ceremony would shortly tread.

Enviied and feared by Paladin and Prince, fawned upon by Archbishop Turpin, accepted at last by

Erembour, the most utterly trusted of all the Emperor's favourites—what more could he desire? And yet Ganelon coveted far more. The hand of Erembour lay pulseless within his own. She shuddered as his hot mouth drank her own. Well he knew that only because hope was dead had she yielded to her father's compulsion. Something in her frozen face awed him, though he did not divine that she had resolved to die upon the steps of the altar ere the priest should pronounce her his.

Nor was his voracious ambition sated by the dignity of Seneschal. Secretly he was engaged in fomenting with malcontent Saxons the very plot of which he had accused the uncle of the sons of Aymon.

The guests for whom the drawbridge had been thrown down with such acclaim had scarcely retired to rest when Ganelon descended to the crypt to hold assignation with a messenger from the conspirators.

It was on this night while, still illumined from its narrowest meutrière to the windows of the great banqueting-hall, the castle outshone the stars, that Guichard approached Aigremont. Though past midnight the château hummed like a hive with scurrying servitors, song of minstrels, and laughter of guests.

Stabling Bayard in an abandoned hut below, circling the walls, avoiding the great sally-port, he sought the postern. As he proceeded he saw that fresh foot-

prints led to the door which stood ajar. He listened, peeped, all was silent and dark as the grave. Groping his way past the grim torture-chamber and up a few steps he entered the Hall of Justice. To his alarm a torch in a sconce at the extreme end threw its flaring light upon Ganelon seated at the tribunal. Before him stood a slouching churl, not a criminal for he bore himself with a certain presumption not in accord with the meanness of his appearance.

The low vaulted ceiling was supported by a forest of massive columns; and gliding stealthily from one to another, with hand upon the hilt of his dagger, Guichard drew near the speakers.

"I bring letters," said the stranger, "from the Saxon leaders for Buves, Duke of Aigremont. Art thou indeed he?"

"I am the Duke of Aigremont," replied Ganelon evasively. "Give me the letters." After perusing them attentively Ganelon locked the papers within a heavy oaken cabinet containing musty archives and records of the seignory, then writing rapidly he affixed to his missive the great seal of Aigremont.

"Listen, Saxon," he said at length. "Ere you convey this missive to your masters, get you to the Druid Wood east of the Meuse. There at sunset shalt thou find the dead body of Charlemagne, whose head thou mayest carry to those who sent thee, as earnest of my good faith and ability to aid them. The Emperor's

death shall be followed by that of the Princes and Paladins; and thereafter will I join the Saxon nobles as herein set forth. Begone; be faithful and thou shalt be rewarded."

Ganelon turned and extinguishing the torch mounted a stairway to the upper part of the castle. The messenger, lighted by the moon, which shone through a grated window, hastened toward the passage. But Guichard, realizing the importance of the documents which he carried, was at the door before him. Pausing at the head of the short staircase he tripped the man, who fell at the door of the torture-chamber.

It was but the work of an instant to transfer the letter to the breast of his own doublet, to fling the unconscious Saxon into the dungeon, and to draw bolt upon him; but Guichard's next manœuvre was not so successful. Re-mounting he found that Ganelon had locked the door leading from the staircase into the Hall of Justice and again descending that a sentry had fastened the postern from without. He also was a prisoner!

Throughout what remained of the night and all of the succeeding day he paced the passage and various cellars vainly striving to find some other entrance into the castle or to attract the attention of its inmates. At dawn, through windows high in the wall of the Hall of Justice, he heard the merry din of a departing hunt, but his frantic shouts were drowned by the baying of hounds and neighing and trampling of horses.

THE BOAR-HUNT

Unwitting that black Death lurked imminent in the white-robed forest, Charlemagne rode merrily forth to the meet.

Every casement and balcony of the castle was a-flutter with scarfs as fair faces smiled farewell and fortune to the gallant huntsmen, a blithe cavalcade with favours streaming from their javelins, who caracolled adown the sinuous road amid packs of hounds straining at the leash, mingling their frantic baying with the echoing blare of the hunting-horns. Ganelon alone rode away taciturn and sinister, neither receiving nor uttering farewells.

All the morn the huntsmen proceeded in company, through glades and gorges up the valley of the Meuse; but though the beaters searched with all diligence they caught no sight of the quarry. Young boar they glimpsed rooting in the vales and a herd of "sounders"; but of these Charlemagne would have none.

The afternoon they encountered a wood-cutter who asserted that he had seen a great boar in the Druid Wood. Thither they hastened and, coming upon a slough, where swine had lately wallowed, paused for consultation. From this spot tracks led in two directions. The cavalcade then divided, a great majority taking to the open.

The Emperor, however, struck into a forest, Ganelon

holding back for him the over-hanging branches, but letting them fly in the face of Turpin, who, in high dudgeon, relinquished the hunt.

Nose to earth, lustily giving tongue, coursing in full career, doubling back in spirals on the track of the quarry, now seen, now lost to view, the hounds pressed forward in hot pursuit. Hard upon their heels sped Charlemagne, his blood afire with the lust of the chase. He rang a merry tra-la-lira-la on his horn as the prickers unharboured a giant boar.

"Halt! Sire, for the love of Heaven!" shouted Ganelon, and the Emperor angrily drew rein.

"In the name of all the saints in Hell!" he roared, "stint me not of my prey!"

"I needs must," replied Ganelon, leaping from his horse. Then, under pretence of tightening, he treacherously cut the Emperor's saddle-girth.

"The strap was loosened, sire. Anon thou hadst been unhorsed!"

"What boots such trifling?" growled Charlemagne. "Haste, lest we lose the sport!"

Emerging from the forest they galloped to a mead, where, backed against a writhen oak, beset by a circlet of clamouring hounds, with foaming tusk and blood-shot eye, bristling with rage, dogged and defiant stood at bay a tremendous boar!

Spurring forward Charlemagne struck the quarry with his javelin, wounding it grievously. The infuriated

beast, throwing off the onrushing hounds, tusking some through the vitals, tossing others in air to fall a mangled mass, summoned one supreme effort and with lowered tusks charged!

Rending the *jambière* of Charlemagne from ankle to thigh, lacerating the flank of his steed, the boar rushed on in blind fury, while the horse, unruly with fright, suddenly reared, bursting the saddle-girth and throwing the rider heavily to earth.

“À mon secours, Ganelon, à moi!” shouted Charlemagne, then all swam before him.

It seemed, to his delirious vision, that the boar had whelmed upon him, its weight crushing his chest. He felt its hot breath on his face and its cloven hoofs upon his body. Why were not its terrible tusks plunged into his throat? In vain he struggled to free himself. Its gleaming tusks merged into a murderous knife. He felt the chill blade against his throat! Slowly the boar's snout was transformed into the malevolent sneer of Ganelon. Then its eyes bulged horribly. A flash as of lightning fell and his face was drenched in a torrent of blood!

Actions succeeding the fall of Charlemagne cumulated so swiftly that he was only conscious of a vague vision, in which the boar was confused with Ganelon.

The latter had contrived this trap in order that the boar might accomplish the Emperor's murder, and deliberately failed the imperiled Charlemagne in his

extremity. He would surely have met his death had not Reynault, hunting near, hearing the horn, rushed instantly to his assistance. Arriving in the nick of time he hurled his javelin with so sure an aim that the charging boar fell dead at the feet of the Emperor.

Seeing his design thus balked, Ganelon leaped across the carcass and poised his great hunting knife over the head of the unconscious Charlemagne. But as he was about to strike his arms were pinned in a grip of iron.

It was Reynault who, leaping from hiding, seized his wrists as the death-blow was descending and, wresting the knife from his weakened grasp, flung it into the thicket. At grips like two great tigers, tearing at one another's throats, knee to knee, chest to chest they struggled, stumbling, writhing, clutching in lust of blood and death. Suddenly Ganelon, by a merciless blow of his knotted fist, felled his antagonist to earth. There they grappled, wallowing in the blood of the boar and over the prostrate Emperor, each alternately uppermost, all but overcoming the other, till both were spent with exhaustion.

At last Reynault in one desperate effort hoisted his opponent over his shoulder and hurled him lifeless to the earth!

The attempted crime and its frustration had not been unwitnessed. Turpin, arriving on the moment, with the squires, had watched it with the gravest con-

cern; while Adelard and Richard rushed in as the assassin writhed in his death-agony.

Dragging the body aside, the squires flung it into a ditch, while Reynault and his brothers, with tender solicitude, raised the Emperor to a sitting posture.

"Was the boar despatched?" asked Charlemagne, still dazed from his fall.

"The beast was slain, sire," replied Turpin, "by the hand of this stranger. We came in time to behold but not to share in that exploit."

The Emperor's eye wandered over the faces of the brothers. "And Ganelon?" he asked.

"His grace hath spoken, sire," replied Reynault. "'Twas I who slew that beast!"

Charlemagne nodded assent. "Then it was not a dream," he said. "His knife was at my throat?"

"In verity, sire," said Turpin. "He would have slain thee but for this unknown friend."

"Nay, not unknown to me," exclaimed the Emperor. "I owe thee my life, and have long sought thee, Friend Reynault. Come with thy brave brothers to Aigremont, where we will keep the Christmas feast in company, forgetting all past feuds and hatreds.

"Stay ye," he commanded the squires, "bury the body. We would not that the corse of a malefactor lie like carrion to be mangled by kites and wolves; and see thou, Turpin, that masses be said that his soul find peace."

Convinced of their sovereign's kindly intent, the sons of Aymon gladly accompanied him to the castle, enlivening the way by relating tales of their thrilling adventures.

As they mounted the eminence on which towered the castle, Charlemagne pointed to a turret from which the ladies were gazing and said drily: "'Tis not the season, Friend Reynault, for tulips."

Though sense that Erembour regarded him tingled in every fibre of his being, Reynault would not look up. His brain burned with resentment and jealousy. Was she not the bride of Ganelon now reigning in the castle which by lawful right should have been his own? But all else was as naught compared with his unconquerable love, which even the conviction of her unfaith could not vanquish.

Not so distraught were Adelard and Richard. They marked the cordial bearing of the imperial suite, how in the swimming pool, where the hunters refreshed themselves, and in the hall the courtiers vied with each other in attentions and knew that their own troubles were at an end.

One apprehension only disquieted Richard. "Brother," he whispered to Adelard, "I fear me that Guichard hath met with some mishap."

"A fig for thy fears," replied Adelard. "He is doubtless disporting himself in his lady's bower. I discern the mouth-watering savour of roast boar.

The cook is basting him with drippings seasoned with sage and marjoram. St. Lawrence of the gridiron grant that Charlemagne detain us not until the brawn be over-crisped."

Following his nose the young gastronome betook himself to the kitchens, where he found an aged cellarer quavering in the buttery nigh out of his senses with fear.

"Is it thou indeed, my lord," cried the servitor, "or see I but a spirit?"

"Myself 'tis, Blaise, who would fain see the spirits of mine uncle's wine cellar, tombed in their cobwebbed coffins."

Blaise trembling protested. "Only now the butler demanded wine, but not for all the vintages of Champagne would I enter that cave of hell."

"Give me the stoup, thou chicken-livered poltroon, my throat is parched with thirst."

"Nay, sweet Master Adelard, stay, I beseech thee. Murderous and most ungodsome howlings have rent mine ears. Yea, and trampling up and down the torture-chamber. Not by night alone but all this day."

"Open in the name of Our Lady. Let me forth," cried a voice from the depths.

Adelard wrenched the keys from Blaise and, springing through the low doorway, fell into the arms of Guichard!

Wan with fasting, distraught with apprehension,

"Tell me, Brother," he cried, "doth the Emperor still live?"

"Yea, by succour of St. George and Reynault, he hath scaped the knife of Ganelon."

Enthroned in the audience chamber, surrounded by the Princes and Paladins, Charlemagne was pondering the purport of his foiled assassination! Making his way brusquely through the ring of councillors Guichard knelt at the feet of the Emperor. "Sire," he cried, presenting the letter, "I bring thee proof of infamy most foul."

"My Lieges," exclaimed Charlemagne, "here is evidence which convicts Ganelon of having plotted not my murder alone but the usurpation of mine empire!"

"'Tis his script, sire," asserted Anselm scrutinizing the missive.

"Letters from the Saxons lie locked in the cabinet of archives," said Guichard. "The messenger who brought them have I fettered in the torture-chamber."

"Look to him, Anselm," the Emperor commanded, "but torture not the wretch. 'Tis the eve of the Nativity, let all enmity be blotted from our memory.

"For the adroitness with which thou hast unearthed this plot, I now confer upon thee, Guichard, all the dignities enjoyed by glorious Roland. Thee, Reynault, do I create Seneschal of our Empire! Adeldard

and Richard, thy names shall adorn the roster of our peerage."

The sons of Aymon knelt before Charlemagne. "Rise valiant knights and leal," he commanded, "'tis I should humble myself this day, for that mind-poisoned by Ganelon, I misthought your uncle a traitor, and condoned his murder. For unknowing complicity in that loathly crime and for connivance in the siege of Dinant (which shall be rebuilt at our costs), Your Sovereign craveth pardon, and will do what penance Holy Church may ordain.

"Nay, no need of thanks. Turn we to merrier themes. The ladies come, without whom all emprise were purposeless and vain."

Thereupon the hall was murmurous with a twittering of many thrushes, as the Empress and her ladies-in-waiting fluttered in, a flock of brilliant plumage and melodious noise. Greeting them with incidents of the chase before their mutual entry into the banquet-room, the Emperor followed by his family, the twelve Paladins, Archbishop Turpin, and the sons of Aymon marched into the great hall.

"Qui estis in convivio
Servite cum cantico,
Reddens Laudes Domini!"

chanted Turpin by way of grace; and Charlemagne turning to Reynault commanded: "Take the citole

from yon minstrel and while we carouse raise thou a skald of how ye slew the boar."

Thus summoned, his rich bass resounding through the vaulted chamber, sang Reynault.

YE BALLAD OF YE BOARE

Through craggie fastnesses of foreste glade
With blasts tempestuose of hollowe horne,
Ye huntsmene gallope by in cavalcade,
Ryding like wilde Valkyries downe ye morne.

Fierclye ye bayinge houndes ye scent pursue
With nose to earthe and swiftlye flyinge feete,
As, suddene seene, then suddene loste to vieue
Ye quarrye doubles backe in spirals fleete.

With foamyng tuske and evil flamyng eyen,
Rendyng ye welkyn wyde with raucus roare,
But scornynge from ye vengeful dogges to flyen
Brystlyng with strength and wrath behold ye boare!

Then spede a shower of shaftes from bow-strings tichte
And from an hundrede lungs is loosed a roare,
As spent and brethles from hys tortuous flyghte
Tremblyng but fereles stands at bay ye boare!

Anon ye dogges drive on with laboured breth
Onlye againe to fal in mangled gore,
Tusked thro the entrails fighting unto deth.
Tossed, torne, and trampled by the frenzied boare.

Then leap I from my stede, with lifted targe
And poise my trustie javelin stoute and keene,
The whil the baited brute on one last charge
Stakes al his fate with dull and dogged mien.

As bounds a torrent in the Sprynge first floode
So flies my shafte of stele straight to the core,
And reeling prone amydst a pool of blode
Stryken to deth, sinks down ye tuskèd boare!
Whil thro ye wodelande wyde afar and nere
Flutter fraile wings and flee affryghted deere.

Pleased by Reynault's modesty in making naught of the rescue of his sovereign, Charlemagne joined in the applause, but an instant later as with hawk eyes he swept the board. "Why, by all the devils in Paradise," he thundered, "is the seat of the Princess Erembour empty?"

Ere he could be answered he struck his forehead with the cry: "God forgive me, I have been so besotted with mine own affairs that I clean forgot that Erembour weepeth her lover."

To her feet sprang Blanchefleur. "Dearest Uncle, how you have misjudged my cousin! She weepeth not yon traitor. His death for her is deliverance."

"What mean you?" asked the astonished Charlemagne. For answer Blanchefleur laid in his hand the stiletto which Erembour was wont to wear within her hair.

"Uncle mine, while my cousin deemed me sleeping, I heard her beseech the Virgin to strengthen her hand to speed this dagger to her heart if one she loved came not to rescue her from that hated marriage."

At that word Reynault stood suddenly erect. "Jest

not, lady!" he cried. "Surely the Duchess of Aigremont was not wedded against her will."

"Wedded hath she not been," roared Charlemagne. "Nor Duchess of Aigremont e'er shall be unless to wed with her is thine intent, since seignory and castle on thee, Reynault, Duke of Aigremont, I now bestow. Waste not the homage of thy lips upon my withered hands, for see, one cometh with tulips for thy gathering."

Between the parted tapestries, a hand on either fold, stood Erembour all white save that on her breast glowed the crimson love-tokens. She swayed a little as Reynault sprang toward her, then crushed them in long embrace upon her lover's heart.

Then arose a tumult without the hall as with blowing of horns, with antics and buffoonery, with shouting and with laughter an immense yule-log wound with mistletoe and holly was rolled to the hearth, and having been duly drenched with brandy of high proof, was set aflame to cries of "Wassail, Drink-hail Le tisson de Noël!"

Scarcely had this hubbub ceased when the minstrel sounded a loud fanfare and the steward cried:

Draw your knives! though naught can harm us.
Caput Apri deferamus!

In an enormous salver wreathed with garlands of rosemary and ivy, borne upon the shoulders of four serving-men with the utmost state and solemnity, came the great boar's head, acorns in snout; while with

one accord the whole assemblage rose to their feet
and carolled lustily this jocund roundelay:

WHILE THE YULE-LOG BURNS

Menne are fools who love not wyne,
Women, songe, they're al divyne!
Fil with meade the foamyng stein

Wassail ho!

Rather then than prate and pine
Let us prayse this tryad feyn

In a merrye rondelaye,
Whil the yule-log crackles gaye,
With a hey nonny, nonny,
Hey nonny O!

Welcome dauncyng, geste, and folye,
Christmas bids us al be jolye.
Deck the halle with gleamyng hollye, mystletoe.
Everie Dick shal have hys Dollie
Her to eas his melancolye.

Buss your sweethearts whil ye maye,
Whil the yule-log crackles gaye,
With a hey nonny, nonny,
Hey nonny O!

Bring the heade of the tuskèd swine,
Carve the capon fatte and feyn,
Tomorrow dye, tonichte we dine!

Wassail ho!

Fil with meade the foamyng stein,
Draine the beakers redde with wyne,

Feaste and laugh al care awaye
Whil the yule-log crackles gaye,
With a hey nonny, nonny,
Hey nonny O!

Remaineth only to relate the espousals of Blanche-
fleur and Guichard, and, as this cheerful consummation
hath been celebrated in one of the most ancient of
French ballads, append we it herewith:

BLANCHEFLEUR

Of all the sons of Aymon old
The comeliest, blithest, and most bold
Young Guichard was, of stature tall
Though but a score of years in all
Was yet of life his total sum
When Love into his heart had come.

He worshipped with a passion pure
The fair Blanche fleur, a maid demure,
And wooed her oft, all undismayed
That Charlemagne his suit forbade;
Though ne'er in earth, or heaven above,
Were there two hearts so tuned to love.

The lovers moved to pity all
Who viewed them in the castle hall.
Pallid with grief, her fragile face
Seemed a white flower of ghostly grace.
And her frail form in ermine white
A miracle of heavenly light!

Great Charles then summoned to his throne
And Guichard first did question,
Who answered thus! "By all the powers
I solemn swear, I sought thy towers
Without the knowing of Blanche fleur,
Thus I, not she, did witless err,
And therefore, since she sinned not, I,
Sole sinner, thou shouldst doom to die."

Out-cried Blanchefleur: "Dear Uncle mine,
For me alone did Guichard pine,
For love of me, a poor white flower,
He clomb the stairway of thy tower,
Then doom him not to death for me
But bid me die and set him free!"

To this the King: "Now, by the Lord,
Ye both shall I put to the sword!"
Swift springs Blanchefleur the blade beneath,
But Guichard plucks her back from death.
"A man am I, and 't were my shame,
If thou should'st die, a helpless dame!"

Then first to die each one did strive,
Whilst all the throng cried: "Let them live!"
"Since," quoth the King, "each fool doth crave
A death which would the other save,
Forever both I now condemn
To life-long death! Monk, marry them!"¹

¹ Adapted from Marie de France and Dean Carrington.

CHAPTER V

A TALE OF TALES: THE HERMIT'S CRUSADE

I

YE FEASTE

(Transcribed from Walter Scott)

They sounde ye pipe, they strik ye stringe,
They daunce, they revelle, and they singe
Til ye rude turretes shak and ringe.
Pages with readye blade wer ther,
Ye myghtie meale to carve and share:
O'er caponne, heron-shaw, and crane,
And princelye peacocke's gilded traine,
O'er ptarmigan and venisonne
Ye Hermite spak his benison.
Ther clanging bowles olde warriors quaffed,
Loudlye they spoke and loudlye laughed;
Whispered yonge knyghtes in tone more milde
To ladyes fayre, and ladyes smiled.
Ye hooded hawke, highe perched on beme,
Ye clamour joined with whistling screme,
And flapped her winges, and shook her bells,
In concerte with ye stagge-hounde's yells.
Ronde go ye flaskes of ruddye wyn
From Champagne, Burgundie, and Rhein;
Her task ye busye sewers ply
And alle is mirthe and revelry.

“ Today the castle's claws are clipped and its beak broken ”



Donjon of the Castle of Godfrey of Bouillon

From *Album Historique de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Obreen
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L IKE an ebon falcon hanging above a brood of white, cowering doves the great keep of Château Bouillon swooped over the huddled hamlet. Today it droops with clipped wing, sheathed claw, and broken beak, supine and powerless, a gaunt skeleton of the ancient war-hawk. In the ninth month of the year of our Lord one thousand one hundred and one, Bouillon was a very eagle of a fortalice, terrible alike to tear its foes or protect its vassals and vavasours.

From tower-topped crag, from bourg and village had the Crusaders ridden forth, their lands mortgaged to furnish arms and followers. Never so willingly had the villeins deserted field or the burghers quitted mart. A thousand horse and two thousand foot had espoused the cause, under the good Duke Godefroy de Bouillon, who, with his brothers Baldwin and Eustace, was the foremost to bear his banner 'gainst the Saracen.

How the welkin had rung with "God wills it! God wills it!" as they marched to join the Dukes of Vermandois, Blois, and Normandy; until the stream was swelled to a torrent by Raymond, Bohemond, and Tancred.

At the period we now chronicle the Crusade was ended. A truce, not of good will but of utter exhaustion, had descended upon all Christendom; since what time her knights trooped with such alacrity at call of Peter the Hermit to deliverance of the sainted Sepulchre. During the last decade there had been no mustering of the tempestuous hordes of Bouillon either for defence

or foray and all was peace in the vast forest of the Ardennes.

Women toiled in fields, blew bellows in the smithy, butchered beeves in the shambles, and garrisoned the château of the Lady Yolande. Before his demise her sire had acquired the seigneurie of Sir Godefroy; and well he recked that, though his worshipful daughter might readily administer the domain in time of peace, much disorder would ensue when the bands of wolfish marauders returned empty-handed to their impoverished fiefs. Foreseeing the perils of a *dame seule* unprotected by a powerful mate, he had striven in his will to assure her a fitting defender. To all neighbouring seigneurs he had conveyed rescripts of his testament, soliciting their presence at Bouillon upon his daughter's coming of age.

The fortress was astir from moat to turret. In the bailey, grooms were stabling the horses of belated arrivals. From the great hall arose the laughter of guests mingled with clatter of servitors. Presently the clamour ceased and a savory odour ascended, incense-like, proclaiming that the feast was spread.

The knights lusted to set knife to the steaming viands; but still the Lady Yolande gazed from the battlements upon the autumn sunset.

Forest after forest, a motley of bright russets and vivid red, trailed tattered tapestries in the rosy glow. Amethystine ranges climbed one another in endless

vista to jagged peaks, whose snow-crowned summits were cut sharp against the lucent sky. Wistfully her eyes scanned the lonely road, as one no longer expectant, but unreconciled to disappointment. Despite her lowering brows the young chatelaine was beauteous beyond desire. The toss of her proud head, like that of an Arab colt, denoted wilfulness and temper; but her eyes were a tender bluish jade. Stern or lovesome, by turns, vividly intense in each varying mood, the soul of Yolande was a quivering flame in a chalice of snow.

"Hast given me all the names?" she questioned of a doting dowager at her side.

"All! What wouldst thou more, my daughter? Here are a score of gallant knights, lords of wide domain, and the great Duke Robert of Normandy. Are these not fit for any maid to choose among?"

"One would suffice, were he the man of my heart," replied Yolande; "but of all these will I none."

"Thou ungrateful child, there remaineth naught but the cloister. Thus readeth thy father's testament: 'If at her majority my daughter, Yolande, hath not chosen a husband:—then shall all mine estates, of which I die seized and possessed; real and personal, castles, domains, farms, forests, quarries, goods and chattels, lands and heredit, with all interests and appurtenances of whatsoever nature, quality, and description, pass, by execution of such conveyances as are proper, to the feofdom of the archbishopric of Liège:

save and excepting a moitie of the usufruct of my arable lands with such funds and commodities herein-after disposed by Codicil A, to be vested in whatsoever nunnery wherein my aforesaid daughter Yolande shall elect to make profession.' ”

“A sore condition,” cried Yolande, “which runs more trippingly from thy tongue than from my desires, seeing it liketh me not a cloistered life.”

“Thy father purposed for thy safety; for ere he died was Jerusalem delivered and the Crusaders were coming back to seek new spoil.”

“All have not yet returned,” mused Yolande, with a quiver of the lip.

“Ay, ruth it is,” responded her mother, “that many of the best lie deep beneath the dust of Palestine. We know not if the three brothers reared in this castle still live. We only know they have not come, so make no vain account of them.”

The shrewd old woman had rightly divined, for the thoughts of Yolande were busy with the brothers of Bouillon. With Godefroy the chivalrous, of whom it was said, “In war he was his father, in religion his mother”; with burly Baldwin, sitting his sable stallion as though they were a statue, feared by all and loved by none; with slender Eustace, a scholar from Neumontier but rife of mischief as a monkey.

Since girlhood Yolande had known them all. Godefroy she revered, Baldwin she had dreaded, and Eustace

she had loved. She felt herself a usurper in their hereditary home, and preserved the belongings of each exactly as he had left them. Old tomes of Godefroy's cluttered the shelves of his sanctum. Ofttimes she fingered them with childlike wonder, striving to read his thoughts between the long Latin lines, as a devoted hound follows his master through a tangled forest. The boar-spear and hunting-horn of Baldwin hung disregarded in the great hall; but she had taken the theorbo of Eustace to her own bower, there to strum the albas, serenas, and rondeaus which he was wont to sing. "Ah me," she sighed, "shall e'er I hear his blithe voice ring again?"

Even as she questioned she descried two strange travellers winding up the long white road.

The first, mounted upon a grey mule, she recognized from his habit as a pilgrim returning from the Holy Land; but the second intrigued her curiosity.

He could scarcely be a knight, for neither glint of armour nor flutter of pennon flashed in the sunset, while the steed which he bestrode was no caparisoned destrier, but a lean Rozinante whose very ribs could be numbered. Sorry as the nag seemed it neighed joyously as it sniffed the good provender in the stables of Bouillon. Its rider, scarce more bravely accoutred, was clad in russet fustian topped by a cap with a scarlet feather; and a long-necked viol, slung across his shoulder, proclaimed him but a vagrant troubadour.

Even so, monk and minstrel were most welcome guests of the Lady Yolande; their lays and tales would assuredly prove diverting and perchance one or the other might bring tidings of Eustace.

Yolande descended hastily to the hall to discover that her unpretentious pilgrim was the illustrious Peter the Hermit, en route to his abbey of Neumoutiers, from the famed Crusade which he had led to so glorious an end. He was uproariously greeted by the entire assemblage, the chatelaine graciously assigning him the place of honour, while she seated Duke Robert of Normandy at her left, the remainder according to their rank, with the troubadour at the lower end of the board.

Conspicuous among them was the mighty bulk of Samson de la Marcke, cousin of Yolande, whose estates touched her own. He regarded Duke Robert with sudden jealousy and cast about in his dull brain for some innuendo which might discredit him. His opportunity came when the latter, with easy familiarity, claimed kinship.

“Yea,” quoth Samson, “thy father wedded our cousin Matilda, daughter of Baldwin of Flanders. A gentle manner of wooing had he forsooth, since, when she disdained his suit, he rolled the lady in the mire!”

“And yet, despite that mishandling, she wedded him,” said Robert drily.

“Right were they both,” Yolande asserted, “for William, rightly yept the Conqueror, chastised her for naughty words spoken against his mother. My cousin also justified him and herself when she declared, ‘None other will I have for husband, for a man who so well defends his mother will know how to protect his wife.’”

“We brook no wooing after the manner of Normandy here,” grumbled Samson, certain that he saw in this defence of the father an overweening preference for the son. This were not strange, for Robert o’ertopped them both in rank and person.

The other suitors were cadet brothers of Crusaders, too young to have shared the glory of the holy war, or pusillanimous elders like Samson o’erheedful of their wealth and their safety. Voicing their feeling the latter protested loudly that he saw no reason why any man should fight save for plunder, in which the Crusaders had come off but poorly.

“Nay,” protested Peter, “should then the sainted sepulchre have been left the scoff of Infidels? Knowest thou not, ere this Crusade, when Fulk Nerra of Anjou went on pilgrimage, the Saracens would in no wise suffer him to enter that most sacred place until he had insulted the tomb wherein the Lord lay? Thereupon in sight of the Paynims he bit off a piece of the rock; and what they construed an insult he reconciled to his conscience as an act of adoration,

since lips which had received the body of our Lord in the holy communion need not hesitate to kiss his tomb."

"Better were it," grumbled the stay-at-home Samson, "if Fulk had kept his lips from those of wenches, then would his conscience not have driven him to pilgrimage."

"Fie, cousin Samson!" exclaimed the dowager. "Bridle thy too mettlesome tongue, since noble dames grace our hospitality."

The warning was timely for among these ladies was the prudish Abbess of the Convent of Seven Dolours, who had come trusting to purvey to her nunnery a portion of the dowry of Yolande, even though she might not persuade the fair chatelaine to renounce an earthly bridegroom for heavenly espousals.

The repast having been sped with discourse both grave and gay, the guests gathered about the great hooded fireplace, whose lambent flames set monstrous shadows dancing 'mongst the trophies of venery which decked the wall. Drowsy, hooded falcons, *en perche*, shook their silver bells as though dreaming of the morrow's flight. Gaunt, shaggy boar-hounds, yawning, stretched themselves upon wolf-skins before the hearth. A babble of laughing badinage rippled over the company, dying into a hush as the fair chatelaine heralded a feast of song and minstrelsy.

To the accompaniment of vibrant viol and amorous lute thus sang Yolande:

PROLOGUE

Then telle a tale or sing a songe tonight
Of maiden faire and parfite gentil knyghte,
Of bold bataille in parlous fer contree,
Of marvel, heathenesse and vilanye,
Of necromancer, ghoule and evil spryte,
Legende of saint and playnt of haples wyghte;
So shal we have, in spoken pictures, sighte
Of highe Romance and ancient chivalrye.
Then telle a tale!
Whil we, before the fire-log burning bryghte,
Forget the colde and darkness and the flyghte
Of laggard Time, in dremes of faierie,
The dayes dull cares in songe and swete delight.
Then telle a tale!

Yolande addressed her refrain to the troubadour, who, regarding her meaningly, asked: "Fair lady, since I come but late from the Crusade my mind runneth most thereon. Is there mayhap a knight of whose emprise thou wouldst hear?"

The demoiselle averted her face that its quickened rose might not be remarked; but while her riotous heart sang within her, "Eustace, tell me of Eustace," her lips murmured demurely: "There is but one of whom I fain would hear, the worshipful Sire Godefroy; and meet it were we should laud his valour in this his dwelling. Therefore stint thee not, good minstrel, but sing."

"Methinks," he replied, "I might relate somewhat

not known of every idle ballad-singer. Wouldst learn imprimis why Sire Godefroy for land unknown forsook his own?"

"Ay, ay!" answered all the assemblage, "the more if it concerneth love, for none hath linked his name with womankind."

Whereupon the minstrel, touching his viol with plaintive chords, sang:

THE QUESTE

Crusader, who for lande unknowne
 Forsak'st thine owne,
 Wherfor, sadde herte,
 On pilgrimage and holie strife
 Forswearinge life,
 Dost thou departe?

What griefe now shrouddes this blythesome worlde
 With gloom enfurled,
 Thy joye a woe,
 Love deade within thy herte so soone?
 Sooner renowne
 To deathe shall go!

Crusader who for lande unknowne
 Forsak'st thine owne,
 Wherfor sadde herte
 Goest thou hence? "Entombed for aye
 My love to laye
 Do I departe!"¹

¹ Transcribed from Alfred de Musset.

The troubadour fretted his lute-strings, then regarding his hostess earnestly, asked: "By your lief, fair lady, shall I recount the reason of his going?"

Yolande caught her breath in pain, then assenting, bowed her head. "Listen gentles all," she said, "to *The Tale of the Troubadour.*" Sang the minstrel:

Listeth, goode knyghtes and ladyes belles,
 And hearkeneth unto me,
 A tale anon I will ye telle
 Of tourneyment and chivalrye
 And sore bataille beyonde the see
 Where did Sire Godefroy dwelle.

The lord he was of grete contree,
 In Flaunders and Ardennes wilde,
 Forestes, where beastes of venerye
 Harde by hys fortalice didde hide.
 Both bucke and boare he baited sore
 With hondès fulle a triple score
 And eke of stedes to ride.
 In soothe, he was a gentil knight,
 Of that Sheik, Soldan, Marmaluke,
 Pope, Emperour and comrade Duke,
 Bear witness to his might.

And so befel, upon a day,
 Dim in the bosky glade,
 Sire Godefroy, on a palfrey grey
 Espied a gentil mayde,
 Flying her falchon for the prey,
 In robe of silke arrayed.
 The demoiselle, yclepte Yolande,
 A chatelaine was she

Of acres broad of fertile londe
 Ajoint his seigneurie,
 Beloved by all her valiant band
 Of vassals, serfs and free.

Sire Godefroy fell in love-longinge
 When first he glimpsed her face,
 Within his heart, a voice didde singe
 Full of such sweete solace;
 Beseemed he saw no mortal thinge,
 So elf-like was her grace.

His goode stede he priketh sore
 Fast through the foreste greene,
 Until his flanke with foam and gore
 All red and white was seene.
 While Godefroy by his Saviour swore,
 "This mayde shall be my queene."

"Fair lady," quoth Sire Godefroy low,
 "So have I hope in Heaven,
 Thy beautie moves my beinge so
 That I for thee would dyen.
 'Virginia est confusio,'—
 The meaninge of this Latyn line,
 Thou art my joy and alle my woe."

But in the middle of this stanza the troubadour was suddenly interrupted by Samson de la Marcke:

"Enough of ryme and Romayn speche. It likes me not, Sir Troubadour, to go on longen pilgrimages nor e'en to list on longen psalmodies."

"Good minstrel," said Yolande, "right seemly is thy song; I pray thee stint it not but sing."

"Gladly would I do so," quoth the troubadour, setting down his viol, "but since our friend will none of the ripple of ryme, him will I humour, though in my dogerel is no vilanye, and tell the remainder in prose."

(The minstrel resumeth his Tale.)

"Well spake Sire Godefroy, that this mayde, who seemed so simple swete, was doomed to be his joy and eke his woe! She gave him of her love and in token thereof, a jacinth, such as one might wear, a signet in a ring; but so sacred did Godefroy it esteem that he caused the stone to be set in the centre of the crosse which hilted his sworde, and so he rode away to do grete deedes for her sake. But all the whiles she had in falsest guile plighted secret troth with another."

At this the Demoiselle Yolande went white with anger, but ere she could muster her speech the hand of Samson fell heavily upon the table, making the glasses ring like a carillon of bells.

"Lying ballad monger!" he bellowed, "if thou camest here to dishonour my kinswoman, by the body of God I will souse thee in the moat and scour the courtyard with thy filthy hide!"

But the wrath in Yolande ebbed as quickly as it had risen, and encountering the steadfast gaze of the minstrel her eyes fell.

"Patience, sweet cousin," she pled with quivering lips, "here is some strange misjudgment, for he telleth all awry. Since it concerneth my sacred faith, therefore

will I tell the tale aright, even most holy Father as though I made confession unto thee."

Recounteth then Yolande

THE CHATELAINE'S TALE

"The maiden, seeing Godefroy in such piteous plight, made answer full sadly: 'Sir Knight, since Christe's tomb suffereth dishonour, shame 'twere if love of mortal maid should make thee sheathe thy sword. I come from hearing the blessed Hermit preach. A crusade gathereth he of all who will Jerusalem deliver. Behold this rosary; its beads are jacinths, wrought in the Holy City. Upon it I pray for the triumph of the Christian hostes and for souls of those who fall in the sacred cause.'

"Quoth Sire Godefroy 'Since I go upon this quest, may it not be as thy pledged knight, and thou wilt wait and wed me, if so be I return?'

"'That were indeed great honour,' replied the mayde, 'but it may not be.'

"'Why, then, Heart of my Soul,' he demanded, 'lovest thou another?'

"'With that the mayde let fall her eyes: "'Twas mine own secret, but sin no other word will let thee from thy purpose, know thou hast rightly divined.'

"Then trembled Sire Godefroy, as though suddenly wounded, and silence fell upon the twain. But ere

long he spake again: 'Fair mayde, if for love's sake I may not wear thy favour on my helm, grant me, out of thy great pity, one bead from thy rosary, that its empty place may mind thee to murmur a prayer for me.'

"'Take thou the bead,' she said, 'and this my kiss.' And thus they parted."

There was quiet for a space, then drew the Lady Yolande the rosary from her bosom.

"Here hath the rosary made its shrine," she said, "save when I pray. Here shall it rest until a greater love shall draw it from its sanctuary. One kiss and one bead gave I Sire Godefroy, but he to whom I give the rosary shall have all."

"Lady," cried the troubadour, "I repent me that I did thee wrong; but knowing how Sire Godefroy for thy sake cherished the bead, I misdeemed ye plighted."

"Of light avail is thy misdeeming," replied Yolande; "but tell me in what manner thou didst come by thy fable."

"Lady, his squire was I. With me he deigned to share his inmost memories."

"Thy master, squire, confided all to thee?"

"In his waking hours he breathed no word of thee, for that 'he was a parfite gentil knight,' but in his slumber thy name was oft upon his lips."

"What spake he when sleep unlocked his lips?"

"In honour this may I not reveal. Eustace alone might claim that right since that he loved thee but believed thee faithless."

"Too patient art thou, sweet cousin," cried de la Marcke. "Out with him! Who is this cur who doth so disparage thee with prating of rights? What of love had Eustace to flaunt before these honourable suitors?"

"Who is he indeed?" Robert of Normandy asked of his jester, "and where have I seen this jaunty cock-comb? Is it Eustace himself think you?"

The demoiselle's voice cut like a sword. "No right had Eustace based on word or deed; since, though my girlish fancy fluttered to him who played upon all women's hearts, yet he guarded well that there should be no exchange of troth. I also in my innocence guarded mine honour, unsullied and unforsworn. Such affection as I gave him he hath long forfeited and I have long forgotten. An he loved me still he would not have deemed me false."

"Thou speakest sooth," said de la Marcke. "An he love thee he would be here upon this day of days. Is not his name, Sir Notary, among those to whom bidding was sent?"

"Yea," replied the man of law, "but of where he bideth I had no knowledge."

The jester whispered to his master, "Probe him," and the Duke said: "Nor hath any man seen Eustace,

since he deserted the Crusade for the arms of the sorceress Armide."

"A proper one art thou, Robert, to slander that brave knight, thou who forsookest the siege of Antioch," said the troubadour.

The Duke's hand was on his sword. "Now by the Holy Sepulchre," he cried, "if thou wert of mine own rank thou shouldst cross swords with me."

"Softly, shed not blood!" cried Yolande, stepping adroitly between. "Nay Robert, tell thy tale of the fickle Eustace, which thou, Sir Troubadour, mayst answer if thou canst."

"My fool shall tell it," muttered Robert, "for 'twas the common gossip of the camp. As for me, I mingle not with minstrels or their romances."

Flourishing his bauble with a "Grammercy, Ladye fair, and you my noble lords," the jester pranced into the circle, and began:

THE JESTER'S TALE

I

A mayde ther was inne Palestyne
Yclept Armyde, the legendes telle,
Who regnèd o'ere Damascus Quene,
As faire as Heven, as false as Helle.

Pereles in alle deceipts was she,
Of teres and laughter hadde she ken,
The subtil wiles of wytcherie,
And guile of love that conquers menne.

Old Belgium

Whilom the wyde champaign she soughte
 Wher Godefroy hadde hys campe 'y pight;
 Then pondered sore eche doughty knyghte
 What mote her ben and whence 'y broughte.

For non hadde eyed so faire a face,
 Beseemed a goddes from the sea,
 Al made of love and elfyn grace,
 Rose, as among hem passéd she:

Unto the duke's imperiale tente,
 A boone to begge on bended knee,
 In rustlynge silkkes her steppes her bente
 And softly him addressèd she:

"O myghtie Prince, in me you see,
 Of lande and kyngdoume dispossesst,
 A hapless mayde in miserie,
 Unjustlie used and sore opprest.

"The bas usurper of my thron
 Hath domed me thus to wander lon.
 Do thou, al powerful, righteous Lorde,
 Wreke vengeance on hym with thy swerd!"

Spak Godefroy: "Gentil mayde, we com
 To free for Christe hys sacred tombe,
 And pitye 'twere if for a dame
 Thys queste forsooke I to my shame."

Then from her eyen feignèd teres
 Rained lik grete perles adown her dresse,
 And pity softened al the peers,
 But Godefroy bided pitylesse.

Quoth Eustace, movèd by her looke,
 "Let not so brave a chevisaunce
 By us unworthie be forsooke,
 But holp the mayde with swerd and lance!"

And al the reste acclaimed his worde,
 Eke swore her champioun to be.
 With that she smiled againe to see
 How she enslaved ech trustynge lorde.

And to ech lordling she didde saye:
 "Withouten thee lyfe were dismaye."
 Whil Godefroy smiled to see befooled
 Hys armèd menne, unarmed Armyda ruled.

"The love of Armyde, sorceresse,
 Shal 'vail ye noughte but utter woe.
 Beware her eyen, her brest of snowe.
 Her rounded armes are wantonnesse!"

But tho' he spak with wisest arte
 They listenne with unhearing hart,
 And folie deme his counselles sounde,
 Which fal lik graine onne barrene grounde.

II

To that grete loathly lake of fyre
 'Neath which Gomorrah whelmèd lyes
 They com, wher on an islet dire
 Ther doth a charmèd castel rise.

The Stygian water girdes the grounde
 About a garden faery fair,
 Wher blossomed flowers the whole yeare rounde
 Mak perfumed summer everywhere.

Old Belgium

Thither Armyde the warriors broughte
 And welcomed to her bosky grot.
 And ther she sate hem down befor
 A banket furnyshed forth with arte,

On massy plat and *vaisselle d'or*,
 Daintyes from Earth's most utter parte,
 Served by an hundred maydens faire
 Whil myriad birdes made musick rare.

Sated with meat and drynke enow
 Entrancèd sate eche knyghte the whiles
 With rhythmic dance and laughter low
 Armyde the fleeting houre beguiles

The wytych nowe poureth in the wyne,
 Like Circe sorceresse of yore,
 A potion from a phial feyn
 Steeped with the poyson Hellebore.

Of which but one small subtil draught,
 Sipped from the cuppe or sudden quaffed,
 Hath power to turne al mortal menne
 To fawning bestes or birds obscene.

The heedless knyghtes the philtre taste
 And straightwaye then eche Prins and Kinge
 Doffs human shape for forme of beaste,
 Foul fishe and swyn al wallowing.

Then suddenlye to craven menne
 Her victyms turns she bakke again.
 "See, dastards, how the soules of al
 Mankind I holde in endlesse thrall.

“Forsak your queste and faith of woe,
Here byde with me in lov for aye,
Or captyves chained to Egypte go!”
Then al but Eustace answered, “Nay!”

He false to them his faith forswore.
They unawares by Egypt's king
And hundrede horse surprisèd were
Fettered to Nile's far banks to bring.

But Godefroy then upon the plaine
O'ertook and quickly rescued them
At last to com, by devious traine,
To saufety at Jerusalem.

And as they rode in joyance thenne
From that dread castel in the sea,
Ne'er to be seene by eyes of menne,
In smok it vanished utterlye!

But Eustace since, for aught we know,
Still bydes beneath that lake of woe,
Domed with Armyde for e'er to dwelle
In burninge fyres of deepest Helle!

There followed a hush like that between a flash of lightning and a peal of thunder. But the crash came quickly, for the troubadour leaped at the throat of Robert. “By the splendour of God!” he cried, “I am minded to kill thee that thou hast set on thy minion so to slander me.”

“Then art thou that damnèd Eustace!” stammered Robert, as he wrested himself from the clutch of the troubadour and drew his sword.

"But not yet in deepest hell," laughed Eustace, his hand upon his poniard. "Confess that I abided not with Armide but bore gallant lance against the infidels."

"Thou wert at Jersusalem, but hadst little part therein," maintained Robert.

"In Christ's sweet name," besought Yolande, "let there be peace between you!" and fell swooning in her mother's arms.

The Hermit raised his hand and in a voice accustomed to command exclaimed: "Lay down your weapons! Shame it were that they who battled side by side for Holy Cross should set sword upon one another!"

The Duke folded his arms and Eustace sprang to Yolande's side; but the Hermit put him sternly away. "Put not her life in peril," he said, "with your vain bickerings and desires. She can endure no more. Disperse ye all unto your rest until the morrow, and the peace of God be with you!"

II

FALCON AND ROSARY

Wide-eyed and restless lay Yolande that night, perturbed by memories, tortured by uncertainty, overwhelmed by love which beat its fragile wings in vain against an impenetrable wall of doubt.

"Doth he still love me?" she queried within her heart. "Then why hath he given no token thereof through all these silent years? Nay, he hath answered,

he believed me betrothed to his brother. In spite of this he comes! But why then in disguise? Why did he so pitilessly shame me in the eyes of my friends? Can it be that love in his heart hath frozen to hate? How dearly once I loved the glad-souled boy! But this stranger,—is this the Eustace that I knew?"

Sedulously she contrasted the two images and strove to reconcile them. Slender as the youth of long ago, for ceaseless hardship had kept him spare; his white skin beneath which the blood was wont to mantle so ruddily was now scorched by exposure to a tawny bronze; the raven locks, which had an upward sweep, as though they leapt for very exuberance of life, now drooped limply over sunken cheeks; his eyes were blue, but inscrutable; there was cruelty in the aquiline nose, more falconlike than of yore, beneath which thin lips were drawn in an ironical smile. Nay, she loved not those treacherous lips. His brother's visage was masterful but not cruel, and his smile the gentlest she had ever known. Involuntarily she drifted into dream of Godefroy. Had he too altered? she wondered. Nay, time ne'er could change his wondrous constancy.

Then, sweet and clear through the breaking dawn, there thrilled a sunrise song, an alba he had sung ere they parted. Her heart gripped with ruth for the love long gone that would ne'er return. Tears welled in her eyes as, soaring like a lark, a voice carolled to the sunrise:

AN ALBA

O Ladye mine! when first with morn's wan lighte,
 The silente wold is bathed inne radiance brighte,
 And timorouse birdlyngs flutter in the neste
 And gentlye wake from soft-enfolded reste
 To grete the Dawne etherially white—

Then wolde I thatte to my bedimmèd sighte,
 Wearye with waiting alle the endlesse nighte
 That thou shouldst come,—my lighte of morning bleste,
 O Ladye mine!

No nocturne born of dreame I thee indite,
 But minstrelsye of morn to spede the flighte
 Of laggarde nighte, til suddene, east and west
 Glows with the daye! The birdling quits her neste.
 Come, thou brighte dawne, of alle delighte,
 O Ladye mine!

So enthralled was Yolande in the song that, until stillness fell, she had not queried as to whom the singer might be. Then the wonder smote her. Could it be Godefroy?

She tiptoed to her window and glimpsed, in the white light of the autumn morn, not Godefroy but Eustace. He was silently watching her casement; but waved cap in air when he spied her.

To his wonderment—and her own not less—she shrank softly back without responding to his greeting.

Followed matins, and the break of fasting. Yolande had regained her wonted poise. She welcomed

Eustace to his home with grace and seeming cordiality. Not but that he would have preferred more show of affection, or even stammering of speech and lowered eyelids.

After the morning meal she proposed, for pastime of the day, a hunt with falcons. Level country such as befitted was not to be found within several leagues, therefore they would to horse betimes.

Eustace lifted her into the saddle. "May I be your falconer?" he asked.

"Gramercy," she answered, "I hunt with cousin Samson. Wait if thou wilt upon my Lady Mother."

Eustace drew a wry face. "I needs must speak with thee," he insisted.

"Meet me at noontide by the Roman tower," Yolande replied.

Smiling assent Eustace betook himself to the dowager humming an air too saucy for the chaste ears of that venerable dame. At length he cunningly contrived to bestow her upon Robert of Normandy and attained the rendezvous before the appointed hour.

He mounted the tower and scanned the horizon. Presently he was rewarded by sight of the Lady Yolande, who, hawk on wrist, with her hounds gambolling at her palfrey's heels, ambled leisurely across the moor, the utterly superfluous Samson riding beside her.

As she halted beneath the *meurtrière* through which

Eustace was peering he piped a shrill whistle like the cry of a magpie. It was a signal which they had been wont to use as playmates.

Yolande quickly sprang her falcon though no quarry was in sight. "Sweet cousin," she cried in simulated dismay, "mine eyess hath escaped me! Wilt thou not lure it back?"

"Right gladly," replied de la Marcke, "but it irks me sore to leave thee thus alone."

"My servitors come anon with the refecton, I run no manner of danger," she said. "I pray thee bring me my gentle eyess."

With that Cousin Samson was off on a fruitless quest, as well the minx knew, for her hawk was a peregrine of passage scarce mewed, which once free would ne'er descend till it had found prey.

Springing from her steed, Yolande repeated the magpie signal. Eustace descended the tower and stood waiting in the doorway.

They were alone. No living creature stirred o'er all the drowsy moor in the still, hot glare of noon. Yet the somnolent silence was rife with inaudible murmurs. The air was redolent with the scent of ripened fruitage. Myriad offspring of the wold harboured beneath tangled leafage, seeking shelter from the all-seeing stare of the sun. Above, a sultry canopy of incumbent azure brooded upon all—breathless and transparent—but surcharged with portent of passion.

Tranquilly Yolande approached Eustace and gave him her gloved hand to kiss.

With a flash of scorn from his steel-blue eyes, he asked: "Hast thou no better welcome?"

"An thou wilt enlighten my wilderment," she replied, seating herself in the narrow archway, her level look probing him like a lance.

"As thou wilt," he shrugged. "To thine inquisition, gentle torturer, thou seest I lie upon the rack."

His tone was too flippant, and jangled with her mood. "Jest not," she said, "I come hither not for badinage but for earnest speech."

He drew nearer. "Listen, Yolande, more earnest am I than death. Thou knowest I love thee beyond life! What matters aught save thou to me and I to thee?"

Her heart cried with delight, "If this were only true!" Then, as she caught the glitter of triumph in his gaze, she held herself in leash, "Thou art too certain of me!" she said.

"I am sure of thee for that thou wouldst have the highest seat in Lorraine. This I shall give thee; but what I purpose can only be accomplished through thine aid. I would grasp the dukedom which Godefroy let slip."

"But how wilt thou obtain consent of its vassals?"

"All that a man hath will he forfeit for his life," Eustace replied with a twitch of his treacherous lips.

"Thinkest thou that when each of thy suitors waketh in fetters he will not consent to whatsoever I may demand?"

"But that were villainy!" cried Yolande.

"It were a pretty stroke. I will lure each lord with bribes of place or fortune. If this fail, there remaineth lingering torture, and the oubliette. There be a many keys with which to ope a door."

"Some doors," said Yolande, "have but one. 'Tis a wise rogue that wotteth which key will fit the lock."

"I have the key to ope thy heart," quoth Eustace; "not love, but high ambition. Thou wouldst have a sovereign to mate, as I a Queen."

"Yea," she murmured, "the master of my heart must be a king!"

He believed his cause won, but she continued with sudden vehemence: "Such then is thy love; cold and unrelenting thou wouldst make me a mere tool for thine aggrandizement."

"Cold sayest thou?" he muttered ironically.

"Why else yestreen didst thou so shame me before all?"

"I was beside myself with jealousy. Knowest thou not that misprision is but the hither side of love? That it is a flame that devours the heart which is its torch?" He prisoned her hands, covering them with kisses. Had he but known he was nigh to victory.

Yolande could not trust herself so near and eluding

his hold, sprang into the open, when with a whir of wings a wounded dove suddenly circled downward and, veering hither and thither, took trembling sanctuary in her bosom.

"Poor, piteous pigeon!" she murmured, stroking it gently. "What has frightened thee?"

"See, a hawk!" cried Eustace, pointing to a black speck, far up in the sky, which grew until great wings dusked the sun, when sudden out of the blue vault, like a bolt from an arbalist, upon the cowering dove hurtled a huge gerfalcon!

Its talons entangled in Yolande's rosary, the hawk, unable to free itself, struck at her face with its terrible beak.

Leaping upon it with an oath, Eustace buffeted off the struggling falcon, then, tearing the helpless pigeon from its refuge, threw it relentlessly in air. The hawk swooped again and engaged; blood-bedabbled feathers flew in every direction. Again the dove fell; but, ere it reached the ground, the falcon pounced upon it and soared far away over the heath.

"O, cruel one!" cried Yolande. "How couldst thou betray that trusting dove?" Then, perceiving a trickle of blood upon his brow, she said tenderly: "Thou art wounded, Eustace, love. Let me staunch the blood with my scarf."

"Wilt thou be more kind to a senseless dove than to me?" he cried. "Let me too find sanctuary," and

before she could free herself he had buried his face in her bosom.

With a shriek she attempted to thrust him off, her eyes blazing with anger; but he knelt before her clinging to her knees. "Thou lovest me," he cried. "Thou hast confessed it. *Par dieu* thou shalt not taunt me with coldness, but pay Love's ransom ere I free thee."

"Caitiff!" she flashed, struggling desperately; then, as she felt herself at the end of her strength, implored: "In mercy wait. Slay not my love for thee!"

"I have waited o'er long, my hour has come!" he muttered, as he dragged the swooning Yolande to the tower. But in the doorway he paused, for, far across the moor figures were approaching.

Yolande felt his grasp relax and springing to her feet recognized the burly Samson, and other of her friends. "Go," she commanded, "nor e'er return. I will not expose thy villainy, so thou come not in my sight again!"

"Were it not matter for comment if I were seen fleeing from thy presence like a whipped hound?" he asked. "Thou art mine now beyond release, for no other will deign to lay his head where mine hath rested!"

She clutched at her bosom as though to tear away a burning brand, then she paled. "My rosary!" she gasped, "thou didst filch it from me!"

It flashed over him that she misdeemed he held damning evidence of her shame and he laughed de-

rively. "None will gainsay my right to thee when I show this proof of thy largesse."

"But I gave thee not my treasure," she insisted, "thou didst wrest it from me."

"Little matters if a woman's treasure be given or taken so it is lost!"

His words stabbed her to the quick but she dared, "Thou art a perjured liar and a coward!"

"There be a many keys to unlock a fortress," he sneered. Then as she turned from him in despair, her form shaken with sobs, he entreated: "Yolande, rosary of my heart, proclaim me thy choice and thou shalt ne'er repent."

She had not time to answer for her friends were hard at hand. Samson hot, and out of humour, without the eyess for which all the morning he had searched fruitlessly. Yolande returned him scant courtesy for his pains, but kept him by her. The others came by twos and threes, Duke Robert cursing similar ill-luck, for he had lost his hawk, the great gersfalcon, early in the day.

The sumpter mules arrived with the refection in which the knights found consolation. A comparison of game-bags showed that the sport had been fair. A thrall brought news of a plenitude of woodcock in the wheat fields of Sedan. They would make a detour in that direction on their return to the château.

There was idle chatter, a strumming of lutes, and

the company took horse for the afternoon hunt. Later, as the gay though wearied cavalcade wound toward Bouillon, Eustace rode last of all, striving gloomily to foresee his next throw of the dice. Well he recked that if he carried out his threat and boasted possession of the love-token he would be challenged to produce it. How then to come by the rosary?

He had searched in vain the entire afternoon; only when dusk fell had he given up the quest. He had traversed the lonely moor without encounter, but at a fork in the road 'twixt fen and woodland he was confronted by a rustic cross, which marked the spot where a maiden had been foully murdered.

In his despite a prayer surged to his lips: "Mother o' God! give me the love-token, and thou shalt ne'er again be troubled by prayer of mine!" Then the blasphemy of it stabbed him. "Nay, Our Lady would not lend aid in such a cause." According he addressed himself to the Power of Darkness: "Thou, who bringest to pass all infamy, grant me this bauble and I will yield thee eternally my soul!"

A woman crouching at the foot of the cross sprang suddenly out of the dark. "Is this thy hawk, Sire Knight?" asked the ragged drab displaying the gerfalcon.

"Ay," he laughed, "and right glad am I thou hast returned it; but how camest thou by the hawk?"

"I found him glutting himself on a pigeon and hooded

him with my stocking. Will not the bountiful knight reward me? See, there is tangled in its varvel¹ a chain of stones which should be precious."

"Ay, 'tis precious indeed!" cried Eustace, tossing her a florin; "I bought it with my soul."

At the feast that night he was gloomy and taciturn; but his silence passed unnoticed by the company, whose interest was turned to the forthcoming event, for ere midnight Lady Yolande must announce her choice.

To while away the intervening time Peter the Hermit had consented to recount to them the deliverance of Jerusalem from Paynim rule.

Thus forestalling Tasso four centuries or more Peter intoned:

YE HERMITE'S TALE

I

When that in silverne mantle, morning bryghte[]]
With rosie fingers, Dawne displayed her lighte
Opal and golde, Jerusaleme appeared,
The sainted cite where oure Lorde was reared,
Then sudden broke the congregacioun,
In thousand voicèd salutacioun.
"Jerusaleme, Jerusaleme! Oure sacrede queste is o'ere!"
Murmured the multitude in accentes lowe,
Lik wynde in leafie forestes, or the slowe
Washe of the thundrous surfe upon the shore.

¹ A silver ring on the ankle of the falcon on which the owner's name was sometimes engraved.

Nowe on the aride plaine that northwarde shines
 Duke Godefroy pitched his campe, while to the southe,
 Count Raymonde ranged his troope in bataille lines
 Consumed by burning sunne and desert drouthe
 More pitylesse than flame of Moslem mines.
 Mules, horses, menne perished of fierye thirste
 Taintynge the air with pestilence accurst.

Fir from the foreste vales of Nablus borne
 Timber for toures and batteringe-rammes horne
 The workmenne wrought with cunnynge and with crafte
 Devysèd by an artfulle architecte,
 Guilliaume le Genoys, who didde directe
 The whiles the Saracines derisive laughed.

Not rammes nor mangonel alone they mak
 But rear a forteresse both highe and wyde
 The lik was never seene, the walles to rak
 With haile of barbèd darte and missiles dire
 And to protecte its bulwarke fronte and side,
 Againste the Moslem balles of wikked fire,
 Clothèd the nakyd frame with new bulles hide.

This toure they filled with armèd menne a score
 And set upon an hundred wheles to rolle
 Fast to assaulte and eke of toures two more
 Raised they to rampartes highe with rope and pole.

II

Whil thus with brawne and enginerye immense
 Som do attack and som maintaine defense,
 Hygh inne the welkyn o'ere Godefroy's tente,
 Fluttered a gentil dove onne pinyons fraile,
 Bearynge a spedye course to Zion bente
 Straighte o'ere the campe lik shippe befor a gale.

Then lo, a falcon flew in swift pursuite
With talons longe and keene, whence none could telle,
After the trembling dove, which wounded, mute
In Godefroy's very handes defenseless fell.

Arounde her throat a missive she didde weare
Whereon was writ in scripture wondrous faire
"Greetyngs to Solyman from Egypt's King
For three more days indure, when at thy prayere
I surely com deliverance to bringe!"

The Duke sette free the dove which fled in feare
Whence she hadde com, then read the message cleare.
"See how oure ever helpyng Saviour showes,"
Quoth he, "the vrye secretes of oure foes.
No longer byde, but, ere this helpe awayle,
Wher leaste defensèd Salem loomes moste highe,
From oure grete toure and geaunt enginerye
Sounde the assaulte and quick the fortresse scale."

With bristling speres, joined in a solide mass,
Eche lifting o'ere his head his targe of bras,
And climbing onne his fellowe's shoulder, formes
A living pyramide which upward swarms,
The knyghtes the Tortoise mak, that tedious crawls
Resistlesse 'gainst the loftyc Syrian walles.

But, maugre al our warrior's hardinesse,
The Moslemmes heap upon them such a stress
Of rockes that down they reel in dire distresse.
A ladder talle with rungs an hundred highe
Agaynst the walls did Eustace then uprayse
And nimbly clomb the battlements well nighe,
Then backward battered through a mangled maze
Headlong he felle, a comet from the skye!

Meanwhil from the grete toure the archers sent
 Ther poysened dartes of death so thick a cloude
 The shynyg face of dayes whyte firmament
 Was darke as ebon nyghte in sudden shroude.

But Solyman with furye gave repleye
 With stones and fallyng trees from offe the walle
 And to the armèd toure did then applye
 With pulleys, ropes and chaines a myghtye beame,
 Who smote her woden sydes till they did falle
 Refte lyk an avalanche from glaciale streame.
 Then on them poured a raine of stinkyng fire,
 Redde as the blode from Ætna's crateres caste!
 And belch of blindyng smoke and furye dire
 Kindled to burstyng flame the tymbers vaste.

Anon the Knyghtes presse up with dauntless wil,
 But, spyte of al assaultes, the Turkes againe
 Of moltenne led and eke of boilyng oile
 Pour on ther foemenne such a ceaseles raine
 That, doomward, down they fall al starke and stil!
 For every Turke the bolde crusaders kil
 An hundred Moslems swarmyng from the soil
 Seem suddenly to spring to life, until
 Our corage, overtried, at laste doth faile.
 "Who can againste such whelming oddes prevail?"

III

"Lord Christe, thou whom the cruel Jewes did naile
 Upon the cross with malefactors twaine,
 Who walked in Galilee the tempeste maine,
 Was crucified, entombed, then rose againe,"
 Prayed Godefroy, "now thy liegman do not faile,
 But save my sinfull soul and arme mine handes,
 And make my thews lik stalwart brazen bandes

That thy grete sepulcher, by help of thee,
This daye mine host for Christendomme shall free!"

Scarce from his lippes the wordes had issued whenne
In answeere to his prayer, a vision bryghte,
Shaming in luster Noon's translucent skyes,
Unseene by al the mad contendyng menne,
Archangel Michel, clad in armour whyte,
Appeared alone to Godefroy's wildered eyes.

He spake: "To thine assistance, lo, I bringe
Succour from Heaven and strength of Heavenly King!
Thine eyes uplift the soules of al to see
The holie legions who for Christe his sake
Have foughte and died, assembled here for thee
To fighte and die againe or conqueste make!
This is the long-awaited, fated houre
To wrest Jerusaleme from Paynim power."

The vision vanisheth as sinkes a ston,
Flung in the mydst of som depe, placid ponde
Rippling in circles ever wyder ronde,
The wingèd legions flutter and are gon!

IV

Then with new corage eche to toure and walle,
Boldened by Godefroy, fightyng in the fore,
Rearing anew the laders frail and talle,
The knyghts swarme upward in a raine of gore
But downward stil to totter as bcfor!
Ageyn they batter at the rampartes highe,
Ageyn approched the engine slowe and vaste,
Lumbering onwarde, towering to the skye,
Til that, upon the walles, the bridge she caste!

Then Godefroy liftes the gonfalon on highe
And, leaping o'ere the bridge, with gleming glaive
Striks downe the Soldan, who the entry nighe,
Alon remained, the whil themselves to save
His body-guard flee from Sire Godefroy, bente
Lik an avenging god on punishmente!

On David's Toure, the Holie Cross dispreade,
Now Godefroy nailleth to the topmoste maste!
The walles are won! The gates are open vaste!
One mightye shout, to raise the verye deade,
The armyes loose, and Zion's temples smile
Whyte in the joyous sunne, as tho' they taste
The swete deliverance from durance vile,
Forever saved for Christendomme at laste!

A storm of plaudits greeted the hermit at the termination of his tale.

Yolande sat silent with flaming cheeks. "A wondrous deed for a sacred cause," she said at last. "Master, I forgive thee for the sacrifice of the lives of our men and the hearts of our women, and I do envy the humblest widow who tombeth her love in triumphant pride of him she weeps."

"Nay," protested Eustace, "were it not better to be wife of a living crusader than widow of one dead?"

"Yea," assented Robert, "for once he speaketh sooth. No sable weed for thee, but the snowy ermine of a queen. Myself and Normandy I lay at thy feet. Perchance one day I may crown thee empress of the realms of the Conqueror!"

“ Prayed Godefroy,—that thy grete sepulcher by help of thee ”



“ This daye mine host for Christendomme shall free! ”

Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Kaulbach, Wilhelm)



“ An it please you, Philippa ”

From Froissart's *Chronicles*

"That were indeed too great honour, my lord; the falcon of my heart wingeth not so nigh the sun," replied Yolande humbly.

"The sun then shall stoop to thee," exclaimed the Duke kneeling ceremoniously at her feet. "Give me, I beseech thee, sovereign lady, the rosary that zones thy heart."

With wide eyes of despair, "I have it not," she stammered, "a ravening falcon tore the token from me!"

A shudder ran over the assemblage: "Can it be she hath granted it already?" was the thought which flashed through the minds of all.

Eustace realized that the crisis of his life had come. At a word from him Yolande must yield herself or stand forever shamed. But the thought that she could never love him turned his triumph to defeat and reconciled him to renunciation.

Yolande bided her death-blow, as one with head upon the block awaits the axe of the executioner. The expectant hush was broken by the tinkle of a silver bell.

Yolande started. "'Tis the bell of my gergefalcon!" she cried.

"Yea, 'tis here," said Samson, unjessing the hawk from its perch, "and, by the miracles of the saints, it beareth, round its throat, thy lost rosary!"

"Heaven sends it me!" cried Yolande, little surmising that Eustace had thus restored the token. He had

foreborne his advantage at the moment of victory, and a peace such as he had never known, flooded his tempest-racked heart.

"Choose, my child," said the Hermit, "the nobles wait thy decision."

Thus spake Yolande:

"My friends, absolve me, through your great courtesy, if what I must needs say grieveth you. Witness that it was not by bidding of mine that ye were summoned here today."

"'Twas at call of thy father," interjected De la Marck, "and well reckoned we in coming that but one of us could carry off the prize. We are good gamesters all, none shall reproach thee for his misfortune."

"Certes," continued Yolande, "had I ere now understood mine own heart, ye should not so needlessly have been affronted. But late whiles, in pondering much, have I learned to love the noblest knight of all high chivalry."

Then all lifted voice with one acclaim, "'Tis Godefroy, and none other!" and whispering among themselves, "She knoweth not! She knoweth not."

Spake the Hermit, his voice tremulous with compassion. "Alas! that pure soul hath departed 'whither they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God.'"

Yolande stood stark-white. "It cannot be Heaven taketh one so needed in this world."

"He had finished his task. Not until then did the Almighty call him to a greater life. For twelve months after the taking of Jerusalem he laboured to bring concord out of confusion, that Christian and Moslem might live together in peace, until he had built the way wherein, unassisted, weaker feet might walk. Then laid he down the burden he manfully had borne."

Yolande sank to her seat her face buried in her hands sobbing piteously. The Abbess, enfolding the heart-broken girl in a motherly embrace, besought: "Wed thyself with Christ, my daughter. We will gather the children orphaned by war, and nurture them to an heritage of peace."

"Alas!" wept Yolande, "were I but as those happy widows, who knew, though but for a moment, the bliss of love."

"Be comforted," said the Hermit, "for Godefroy of his undying love sends thee a proof. When he ate of the poisoned fruit sent by the Emir of Cesarea, I watched at his death-bed. "Thou spakest sooth, thy gift of the jacinth was no pledge of thy love, of that Godefroy ne'er had hope, deeming that Eustace loved thee in plighted troth. Father and brother was he alike to that abandoned youth. His last words breathed only blessing.

"'Bid Eustace be true!' he said, then, 'It darkens fast. Fetch me my sword.' Reverently kissing the cross he prayed, '*Noctem quietam concede illa Do-*

mini,' and journeyed to that Jerusalem where war is not nor thought of any guile."

Yolande rose, her eyes gleaming with exaltation. "Great soul, of whom I was unworthy! Friends, grieve not at my widowhood, for I glory therein. I walk in joyous pride till that I find my King in the Heavenly City."

One by one the knights silently took leave; but that night, as she slumbered, Yolande heard the voice of Godefroy without her casement singing an even song:

SERENA

Her eyen placide wer as eve in June,
 When Vesper stilles the ocean's restless playe,
 In joyance unalloyed her seemed to saye:
 With life and nature is mine herte attune,
 Til alle my being thrills a slumbrous rune,
 Consonant sweteness, mingling, night and daye,
 In lilt of laughing love; a virelaye
 Of longe-remembered trystings 'neath the moone.

The long, long daye is done and with the nyghte,
 The stedfast starres o'er purple hillocks creepe.
 Al murmurs cease in silente, silverne calme,
 Wherein dwelles onlye dream and swete delichte
 The sighing nyghte exhales a scented balme,
 Peace, ladye, peace, serene and blissful sleep!

CHAPTER VI

“AN IT PLEASE THEE, PHILIPPA”

(A LOST CHRONICLE OF MATTERS CONCERNING WHICH
FROISSART IS DISCREETLY SILENT)

You don't know Froissart now, young folks.
This age, I think, prefers recitals
Of high-spiced crime, with slang for jokes
And startling titles.

But, in my time, when still some few
Loved “old Montaigne,” and praised Pope's *Homer*,
We thought to style him “poet” too
Were scarce misnomer.

Here is a time-stained chapter—How
The English King laid siege to Calais;
I think Gran knows it even now—
Go ask her, Alice.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

I

OF PHILIPPA'S WEDDING RING

FIVE daughters had Earl Guillaume of Hainault,
and, in point of privilege, I might reckon myself
the sixth; for when my sister wedded his elder son, and

I, Marguerite of Brabant, journeyed with her to Valenciennes, his daughters were to me as sisters. More than sisterly was the affection I cherished for Philippa, of whose history I am the loving chronicler.

Lovesome she was, with her milky skin that flushed and paled like heat-lightning, for she was quick to anger and as quick to forgive. Gold-red was her hair, which flowed like a river of flame from forehead to feet. Unhesitant of judgment, clear of foresight, boundless of courage, and of faithful though passionate heart. What wonder that I loved her, and was minded to bide away her devoted companion?

One ne'er-to-be forgotten night, in the summer of the year of grace 1326 [Marguerite begins] we awoke to find the château in commotion. Torches flashing in the court below glared through our open casement. I heard, as in a troubled dream, the clang of the portcullis; the neighing of horses, and clatter of hoofs.

Philippa shook me by the shoulder. "Marguerite!" she cried. "See, a cavalcade of lance!"

We stood, the better to spy through the narrow *meutrière* one above the other, and beheld the court crowded with men-at-arms, ranged orderly, halberds at salute. Earl Guillaume and his Countess stood beneath the vaulted archway of the Porte d'Honneur. They were robed *en gala*. The Countess in black velvet, pranked with the lace that made Valenciennes

famed; Earl Guillaume in sable-bordered pourpoint, a heavy golden chain about his shoulders.

Presently came cantering across the drawbridge Sire Jean of Hainault, the uncle of Philippa, in resplendent armour, leading by the bridle a snow-white palfrey. Upon it sat a lady, sable-robed and closely veiled; seeing our parents awaiting her she withdrew her wimple and revealed her wondrous face. Beauteous she was indeed, but worn beyond her years, and there was something cruelly bitter in her wan, drawn lips and wild, dark eyes.

So bewitched was I by the strange aspect of this lady, that I did not at first comprehend the smothered exclamation of Philippa. “Who is he, Marguerite, who is he?” Then was I ware that her eyes were bent not on the loathly lady, but upon a youth who, bravely mounted, followed after her. He was unarmed, and slender, indeed he appeared too youthful for a knight.

Having crossed the drawbridge, he spurred to the side of the lady. Sire Jean presented both to the parents of Philippa. Earl Guillaume went down on one knee murmuring greetings. The Countess, having embraced the strange lady, would have kissed the hand of the youth but that he suffered her not, saluting her instead upon the forehead. They disappeared within the castle, their men-at-arms retiring to the guard-room.

Agog with curiosity I began to dress; but Philippa

fell upon her knees before an image of the Virgin praying: "O Mother of Mercies, grant us grace serenely to face what fate thou sendest us."

"The fate she sendeth at this present," I observed, "is a castle brimming with guests, and thy burdened mother to provide them entertainment."

"I have need," Philippa answered, "to set my mind in order and to ponder what this may mean."

"Canst divine," I asked, "who these strange visitants may be?"

"Yea, it comes upon me that they are their Puissant Highnesses Isabella Queen of England and the Crown Prince Edward."

"If so it be," I exclaimed, "more need that we set our robes in order than our minds; for 'tis thy parents' part to ponder on the destiny of nations, and ours to aid, though we may not understand." With that I speedily robed myself and it was time, for the torches were waxing spectral in the grey of morn. Presently the Countess repaired to our chamber to tell us the tidings. The slender youth was indeed Edward, Prince of Wales, who with his mother found harbourage with us in their sore distress.

His father, Edward II. of England, was a man of moody and suspicious humour, who, being played upon by base favourites, had conceived an unreasoning hatred for his wife, Isabella, sister of Charles, King of

France. The dark humours of Edward so frightened his Queen that, believing her life in danger, she fled with her youthful son to France. Lovingly was she received by her royal brother, until the Pope commanded Charles to return his erring sister to her rightful lord.

The King of France, a pious and peaceful diplomat, therefore begged his sister to quit his country without acquainting him of her destination. Well he knew that she could claim but one refuge, Valenciennes, for the Countess of Hainault was her cousin-german, and her husband kind to all in adversity. Sire Jean of Hainault also was a chevalier panting for glory, burning to do doughty deeds in behalf of distressed ladies, and most ardently for those of comely face and grateful disposition.

Therefore when a messenger from Queen Isabella arrived craving hospitality for his mistress, the parents of Philippa despatched Sire Jean, who, with a squadron of fivescore horse, escorted the Queen of England to the castle. Here they rested with most courteous entertainment. Though their presence was not publicly proclaimed yet there were ever noble knights coming and going, endless colloquies, and high feasting in hall. It transpired that Sire Jean was raising an army, with the aid of many lords, to invade England under Queen Isabella and wreak judgment upon her foes. While the hot-headed youths were eager for this foray, the elders, among them Earl Guillaume, were

reluctant, misdoubting what fell disasters such venture might involve.

“By Goddes fay!” I heard him exclaim, “let our Cousin Isabella bide here forever, with her son, but as for espousing a quarrel not mine own, and crossing swords with King Edward and my liege lord Charles of France, that will I not.”

But Sire Jean was ill content. Ruth for the Queen’s sad state had kindled every spark of chivalry in his being, and her beauty had fanned it into a devouring flame.

In these intrigues and dissensions Prince Edward, youthful and inert, bore no part. He favoured his mother in feature alone, was of a sweet and tractable nature, content to defer to her opinion in all things. His days were spent with the daughters of the house; ofttimes hawking in the forest of Saint Amand, but for the most part keeping close within the castle walls. Nor did he weary of our company; winding our woofs, singing madrigals, acquiring the steps of our dances, and teaching us in turn those of his country.

Our favourite meeting-place was a little walled pleasaunce. Here, though overlooked by the casements of the castle, we felt ourselves in perfect privacy and would chatter and sing at our ease. Mayhap, had we known that every word we uttered could be overheard by anyone in the hall, we might have been less loquacious.

One day the family held a most battlesome argument regarding the invasion of England. “Heap of pigs! let there be an end to this madness,” shouted the Earl. “I maintain that it is the part of Hainault to keep one eye on the skirts of France and the other on the crown of England!”

“’Twere a skew-eyed diplomacy,” murmured Queen Isabella; “I misdoubt, cousin Guillaume, that both thine eyes would fain follow French skirts.”

“If thou, Jean,” Earl Guillaume resumed, unheeding, “wilt forth upon this mad venture, I can neither let nor hinder thee; but I shall send no spearmen beyond the bounds of Hainault, seeing that I have a mort of troubles of mine own.”

“What troubles, sweet cousin?” asked the Queen of England.

“Marry a sufficiency, but none which thou canst assuage,” the Earl replied. “Doth it not suffice that I must provide husbands and dowries for a score, more or less, of marriageable daughters?”

“A score is indeed a sufficiency in the matter of daughters,” laughed the Queen, “and I can but commend thy motherly anxiety to see these maidens well bestowed.”

Opening the casement she looked down upon the pleasure, where it fortuneed that Philippa and the Prince were culling cherries from each other’s lips. The sound of their laughter mounted like music to the oriel above.

"Sweet coz, why wilt thou not believe?" the Prince was pleading. "I love thee beyond life." With that a sudden hush fell upon the elders who listened intently. "So utterly do I love thee, Philippa," pursued the Prince, "that I will abandon thought of returning to England and bide here alway, if thou wilt wed with me."

"Thy Queen Mother," Philippa doubted, "would ne'er consent."

"Ay, that would she not," he echoed, "but notwithstanding, so thou biddest me, for the nonce, I will defy her."

Philippa laughed. "Nay she would pack thee in her wallet, and bear thee home willy nilly," she jibed. Then more seriously: "Thinkest thou, Edward, I would have thee renounce thy kingdom for my sake? Nay, thou must depart at the head of an army and win thy throne by dint of arms."

"An thou wilt accompany me, Philippa mia?" the Prince implored. "Will thy father send his spearmen to aid me?"

"My sire doth ever in all things as I desire," Philippa replied confidently.

At this Guillaume of Hainault drew a long breath, but made no protest. Philippa proceeded serenely: "Look thee, Edward, I can wind Uncle Jean also about my finger thus"—she twisted a strawberry tendril ring-wise about her thumb. "No one hath e'er denied

me aught, nor wilt thou, cousin, an thou lovest me. Go thou without me; but if thou gainest the victory——”

“Then, an it please my royal mother, I shall return and wed thee.”

“Nay,” she said, holding him at arm’s length. “Say that otherways, Cousin Edward, say—‘I will come—an it please thee, Philippa.’”

Dutifully he repeated his lesson and she yielded her lips.

“Eh, bien! Guillaume,” demanded the Queen clanging the casement. “What sayest thou, shall I have the spears?”

“In the name of Saint Judas take them!” cried the Earl, “and begone to thine accursed islet. Philippa hath reason, I can deny her naught.”

The campaign [continues Marguerite] whereby was accomplished the coronation of this prince, I shall not attempt to recount, for it hath been ably chronicled by one Jean Froissart, of whom more hereafter. Suffice it to say that on Christmas day of that same year Edward, third of that name, was crowned in the Abbey of Westminster.

Having accomplished their mission, Sire Jean and his company of lance returned to Hainault with high honour.

Thereafter came to Valenciennes a deputation led by the Bishop of Lichfield, in the name of the King of England, to demand of Earl Guillaume the hand of his

daughter. Then arose a contrariety of fate which well-nigh brought these proposals to naught. For the deputation did not specify the daughter desired. Queen Isabella having, as was afterward known, blotted, in the instructions of Edward, the name Philippa from before the words "most beauteous daughter," for she feared she would not be able to rule, as dowager, a daughter-in-law of so domineering a spirit.

So now was the good prelate of Lichfield in a sorer dilemma than was Paris, since it would seem that it was left to his judgment to decide which of the daughters of Earl Guillaume was most beauteous.

Philippa, piqued for that she alone had not been besought, was possessed of all contumaciousness to render herself unhandsome both in act and person. Malcontent were we all that she should do herself this despite; but none dared reveal the true state of her affections, her father having enjoined us to hold our tongues.

"*Par dieu!*" he roared, "if Philippa is minded not to marry, so be it; but I have full many daughters to dispose, therefore, in the name of all mercies, let me not that I rid myself of one!"

It fortunèd, through no malfeasance on her part, that the worthy Bishop leaned more especially toward Joanne. One day discovering her alone in the garden pleasaunce he implanted upon her reluctant finger

the ruby ring of betrothal, with which he had been entrusted by the King.

“I can in no wise accept this great gage,” she protested, “for well I know that King Edward loves me not, but my sister Philippa.”

“And from what I have learned of the contrariety of thy sex,” exclaimed the Bishop, “I trow upon my soul that she requiteth his affection. Take her the ring; an it please Philippa, this shall be the end of my embassy.”

Joanne, loyally devoted to her sister, had a most overweening conceit in her own judgment, and having decided what were good to be done conferred with none other. As Heaven sendeth succour through most unlikely ministers, it chanced there came to her in this extremity a certain page of the Countess, yclept Jean Froissart.

He was a pallid youth with a gleaming light in his great, grey eyes, which made many to deem that he wandered in his wits; but of this he gave no other sign save that he had contracted a spiritual passion for me. This in despite the variance in our rank and that I was a damsel older than himself, who, lacking the intellect to comprehend his superiority, flouted him with unceasing contumely.

This Froissart had a trick of spoiling good parchment with poesy; ballads, rondeaus, villanelles, canzons, and I know not what other love-longing screeds, for

the most part in praise of mine eye-brows, nose, fingernails, and other less displayed members of my person. These verses I had ever singed with the flame of ridicule, but Philippa, who had a nicer taste in letters, judged them meritorious.

The quaint conceit occurred to Joanne that, since Philippa was piqued because the King had not written her, Froissart might perform this service in his stead. To the scribe therefore she resorted and demanded this devoir, which he most joyfully performed.

Swearing him to secrecy, Joanne thrust the verses within the casket containing the ring and hastened to her sister. Philippa opened the Pandora box and out tumbled ring, missive, and a host of troubles that afterwards ensued, but of which, for the moment, she was unaware, so engrossed was she with perusal of the verses, feigned to have been writ her by Edward.

Feasting her hungry heart upon his love, thus read Philippa:

MADONNA MIA

Thou arte lovesome, my litel Philippa,
 And thy presauce a melodye swete,
 From the smile of thy wondrous red lippe, ah!
 To the tips of thy flutteringe feete,
 That flitte neath thy farthingale folden
 Like mothes through the twilyghte so fleete,
 Sudden seene, and as soone un beholden,
 Philippa, my Ladye discrete!

Fayre thou arte, as a visione Elysian,
And thy haire like a streme ever free,
Or a flame by the vagrante wind driven,
Flowes in waywardnesse down to thine knee.
As the froth of the runnel is riven
To the foame of the bountiful sea,
So my love, like a rivulet given,
I poure, my Philippa, to thee!

Not Helena of Troye was so peerlesse,
So resplendently lissome of limbes,
Nor Diana, the moone-godesse fereles,
But thy lustre their beautee bedimmes.
Fayre of face and of forme, but yet fayrer
Thy spiryte of boundles delyghte,
And thine aura more radiant and rarer
Madonna, my Ladye of lyghte!

II

THE REDINGOTE ROUGE

'Twas a red riding-robe [resumes Marguerite] of a wondrous shade! Not coral of roses, nor ruby of Burgundian wine; but such a glory as glows in a copper cauldron, when living flame leaps therein!

Seeing her reflection in the mirror Philippa cried: “Whate'er the cost, in none other robe will I ride to my coronation.”

For the purchase of the wedding palliament of Philippa, mounted upon palfreys and escorted by

servants with pack-horses bearing empty chests, we had voyaged to Gand.¹

Here we were entertained by Louis, Prince of Nevers, Count of Flanders, and brother of the French King; but not altogether as we had anticipated.

We found him in much trepidation because of an uprising amongst his turbulent Flemish subjects. Though they had sworn allegiance to the King of France it disliked these stiff-necked burghers sorely to be ruled by a foreigner, and, holding council in their guild-halls, they framed laws in the Count's despite.

Assembling in the city square the rabble were harangued by a demagogue, one Jacques van Artevelde, who incited them to refuse payment of the French imposts. Whereupon the worthy burghers soused the unhappy tax-collector in the Scheldt whence he luckily scrambled from a slimy death.

With an eye to placating the ringleaders the Count invited them to a banquet at the castle, where they might rehearse their grievances.

The seneschal had removed all cushions from the chairs, saying it irked him sore that their bright brocade should be besmattered by the burgher's greasy breeches. These witless words were conveyed to them by I know not what busybody, as spoken by the Count himself.

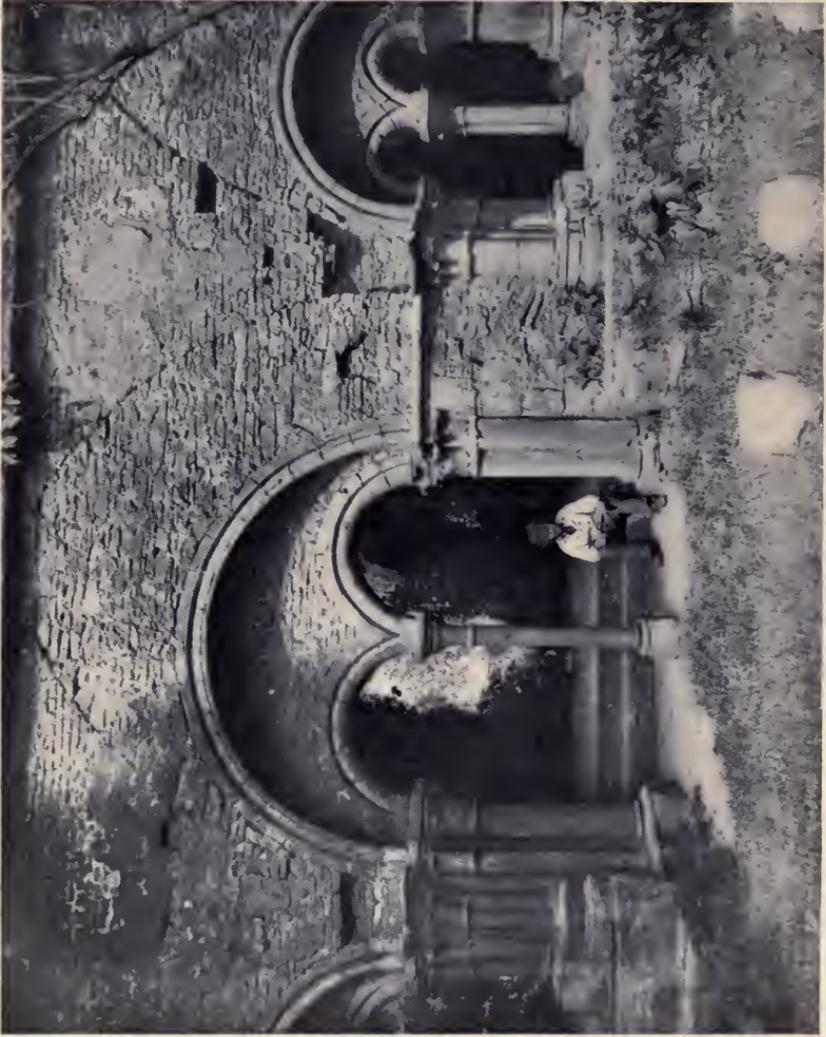
Upon their entrance, therefore, each burgher ostentatiously removed his richly furred cloak, folded, and

¹ Ghent at this time was the mart of the world for textiles.

“ The Grim Gravensteen ”



Château of the Count of Flanders



Cloister Arches, Abbey of Saint Bavon (Ghent)

From a photograph by Levy

sate him down upon it, the toast-master shouting the whiles: “This we do, Sir Count, that our breeches may not be soiled by thy greasy benches.”

Endeavouring to reply, they drowned his voice by hammering upon the table with their tankards.

Whereupon, Van Artevelde informed the Count in no ambiguous terms that he was but a figure-head upon the prow of the ship of state; and as such, it was his devoir to be borne whither the mariners willed.

This oratory was greeted with a tempest of applause and the assemblage took its departure. To the senechal's reminder that they were leaving their cloaks behind them Van Artevelde answered: “’Tis not the habit of the burghers of Ghent, when invited to a banquet, to bear away the cushions!”

That night the Count, more in anger than in fear, departed the castle by a secret way, to demand of the King of France the chastising of these contumelious rascals.

He left as our safeguard his son, young Louis de Male; and counselled us, as disorders might arise when his evasion was known, to hasten our visits to haberdashers and mercers. This we did on the morning following, gathering together a deal of frippery of various sorts, and experiencing no untoward behaviour.

But on the afternoon of the same day on revisiting certain shops where we had already bought considerably, we were ware that there were consultations between

the knaves who displayed the goods and their principals, before we were served according to our desires; and that when they were bidden deliver our purchases at the castle of the Count of Flanders, advance payment was demanded, and strict inquiry made as to the names of the purchasers.

Still all went well until Philippa spied the scarlet riding-robe of which I have spoken, wherewith was confederated a marvellous conical coiffure, above an ell in height, with a veil of fine Brussels net, enveloping it as mists swirl about a mountain peak. When Philippa spied herself topped by this stupendous structure, she caught my arm with a little gasp of delight.

"It is like a cathedral spire!" she whispered. "Think you that so crowned e'en the Queen Mother herself can look down upon me!"

The shopkeeper took himself off after receiving his gold, and through an open door I caught a glimpse of him running toward the Cloth Hall. The shopkeeper's wife delayed us unconscionably in the wrapping of the parcel, but at last it was ready and we set out for the castle. At the door we were overtaken by a body of halberdiers, who desired us, not over-civilly, to accompany them to the Cloth Hall.

Hither arrived we were taken into a great room where a number of burghers were seated about a table, and in their midst one to whom all deferred, whom I recog-

nized at once as Jacques van Artevelde. At Count Louis's banquet where he and his fellows had done such despite to the courtesy of their host, I had seen him only from a distance and had been impressed solely by his barbarous arrogance of bearing, and the insolence of his speech. His manner had been boorish, but masterful.

Swaggering to the dais where the Count sate he had snapped his fingers in his lordship's face. Louis of Flanders had turned deadly pale for well he knew that had Van Artevelde given the signal, the burghers would have torn him in pieces. But as he stood there, with his sturdy legs far apart to support his great body and his head thrown back in derision, it had pleased him to insult and banter his master rather than to do him bodily injury. I had feared and loathed him then, as the embodiment of brute strength and vulgar humour, which scrupled as little at risking his life as at throwing away his mantle for the sake of an insolent jest. I feared him still more now as I faced the shrewd keenness of the relentless eyes, which peered upon us from between his narrowed eyelids, while another burgher questioned us as to our names, our place of residence, the reason for our presence in Ghent, and other matters. To all of these questions Philippa replied truthfully, while Van Artevelde relaxed slightly his searching gaze.

The interrogatory ended he spoke as one accustomed to command. “Thy deposition tallies with our information. Tell us, demoiselle, with equal frank-

ness, for whom you have purchased habiliments of such extraordinary quantity and quality as to awaken the suspicion that they are not intended for the family of the thrifty Count William of Hainault, or to be worn in an inconsiderable burgh like that of Valenciennes. This dress for instance—" and a servitor displayed the unfortunate purchase which had drawn us into the trap. "This piece of extravagance is fit for a Queen's robe; and the cloth merchants of Ghent have sworn that none of their handiwork shall be flaunted at the Court of the King of France."

Philippa laughed merrily. "I love Philip of Valois as little as thou," she replied. "My betrothed by right shall one day reign in his stead. 'Tis sooth the robe will adorn a sovereign, since I shall wear it as Queen of England."

Van Artevelde sprang to his feet and doffed his hat. The others, following his example, saluted humbly.

A greybeard muttered, "How do we know that this is true?"

"By her face, man," cried Van Artevelde. "The robe is thine, my lady, a wedding-gift from the drapers of Ghent. If ever thou hast favours to ask of Flanders, command thy servitor Jacques van Artevelde!"

III

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM SLUYS GHENT

Dolefully lagged the days following the wedding of Philippa, alone with my parents in the château of

the Dukes of Brabant, whose foundations were laid by Cæsar on the mount o'erlooking Louvain.

Lonely and listless I waited in that moated keep, for I would have none of all the noble seigneurs who had come to woo me. One was a septuagenarian who had already three wives; another was a loutish and ill-favoured stripling; the third a dissolute and effeminate ne'er-do-well.

“What wouldst thou?” bawled my father, “must we needs summon Saint Sebastian to satisfy thine exigency? Thou art fit for naught but the convent, though no such shame hath ever befallen a lady of our house. Why wilt thou not wed with one of these? Art dying of love for another peradventure?”

With the blood tingling my cheeks, for, though he knew it not, that chance shot of my father had gone home, I cried out: “I die of stagnation, for zest of life and venture; I am more weary of this castle, where naught doth happen than was Cicero when the Nervii besieged him here, for alas! no Cæsar cometh to rescue me.”

Then my heart gave a leap for I saw, dismounting in the courtyard, Jean Froissart. And here must my secret be confessed, that, despite all my raillery and unhandsome treatment of this young man, his poesies and I know not what look of worship in his sea-grey eyes had wakened in me a love for which I hated myself and him. What, forsooth, was a poet-page, the son of an untitled painter of other's blazons, to one

in whose veins ran the blood of kingly ancestors? I taught him the lesson of humility so thoroughly that he despaired of any return, and went with Philippa to England as clerk of her chamber, caster up of her accounts, and writer of masques and madrigals. He indited me many hopeless missives during his exile, one of which, a certain "villanelle à la Margherite," I discovered but lately 'twixt the leaves of an old missal, where it hath lain, like a pressed flower, wasting its fragrance on neglected orisons through these many years.

VILLANELLE

Fayrest of floures, the daisy bryghte,
 Golde and white with a face demure;
 Fayre is the floure of my herte's delighte.

Pale as a snowfloure of Alpine heichte,
 Frail as a lillie, serene and pure;
 Fayrest of floures, the daisy bryghte.

Silver her soule as the moonlite nyghte,
 Golden her herte as the sunset sea;
 Fayre is the floure of my herte's delighte.

Chaste as the blossome that lives on lighte,
 So shal I live on thoughte of thee,
 Fayrest of floures, my daisy bryghte!

Homewarde winging onne pinions white,
 Myriad doves from the Northland flee.
 Fayre is the floure of my herte's delighte.

Tireless pinions in homing flighte
Would that thus I mighte wing to thee,
Fayrest of floures, my daisy, bryghte,
Fayrest of floures my herte's delighte!

Though absence had in no wise cured him of a devotion which required naught in return, he came not now of his own behest but to bring me tidings that Philippa was in Ghent, whither she entreated my company. The better to assist him with her judgment, which was oft clearer than his own, she had accompanied King Edward to Flanders.

Philippe of Valois was dead, and it was the desire of Edward, though not of France, that he should succeed to the throne. Knowing their disaffection for Count Louis, he hoped to secure the aid of the Flemings. While the Count as usual in such exigencies bided not to greet his unwelcome guest but fled precipitately to Paris, leaving his son, Louis de Male, to receive the English King and Queen.

In none of the negotiations with the municipality, into which Edward now entered, was the young Prince consulted. Nor was the King able to gain more than the mere neutrality of the Ghentois in a treaty whereby he granted them, without duty, the importation of their woollen stuffs into England.¹

¹ Edward's treaty contained this clause:

“We have agreed with the good folk of Flanders that they must not mix nor intermeddle in any way by assistance, in men or arms, in the wars of our lord the King and the noble Sir Philip of Valois, who holdeth himself for King of France.”

Philippa persuaded her lord to permit her to tarry in Ghent while he mustered his army in England. "Thou mayest give out," quoth she, "that I am unable to voyage and I will win over to thee this flint-hearted Van Artevelde."

The reason given by Philippa for not returning to England was an honest one. She was soon to become a mother. I bided with her in the convent of St. Bavon; while surrounded by secret treachery and open hatred, wrung with anxiety for the safety of her husband she awaited in fortitude her hour of trial.

Three staunch friends we had: Jacques van Artevelde, who had worshipped Philippa from the time she defied him in the Cloth Hall; Louis de Male, than in whom the word gentleman had never a truer showing, and Froissart, faithful as a hound.

That I did not then deem him so I must now explain, and should his eyes e'er fall upon this chronicle he will understand why I then treated him with such undeserved misprision.

One night when Philippa deemed me sleeping, I saw her take from her bosom a poem and, reading it beneath the hanging-lamp, kiss it passionately. She fell asleep holding it to her heart, but with a grasp so relaxed that a light breath of wind carried it toward the hearth. Fearing that a token she so greatly treasured might be burned, I stole from my couch to restore it to her.

The familiar script was not to be mistaken, for I had

received too many love-poems in the same hand not to recognize the delicate characters, ere the words grouped themselves in sentiment and style identical with those dedicated to me. Joanne had told none of us of the stratagem by which Froissart had won Philippa's heart for Edward, and, God pardon me my evil surmise, I thought at that moment the page had dared woo her for himself.

As I replaced the poem in Philippa's hand my own trembled so that she awoke, and I explained how I came by it.

“Read the words, dear,” she said, “and tell me am I not the most blessed of women to be honoured by such love?”

I was mute with indignation that such a thing should be. Never could I bring myself to speak to her of the poem, and pity it was that I did not, for so my false imaginings might have been dispelled.

With Froissart I was more frank, for when next he offered me verses, I flung them in his face bidding him give them to “Philippa, his Lady discrete.”

He made as though he did not understand.

“She shewed the poem to me,” I said; “thou canst not deny that thou didst write ‘Madonna Mia.’”

“Didst thou tell her thou knewest it for my pencraft?”

“Nay, much more to the purpose were it to certify the King.”

"He knoweth," Froissart replied impudently. "He praised my skill when we were alone, and wished, poor-slow-of-wit, that he could write as winsomely. Good care took he not to admit the truth to his Queen."

Still we played at cross-purposes. "He is wondrous complaisant," I said scornfully. "Since thou hast found a mistress who doth so appreciate thy poesies thou mayest spare thyself the pains of bestowing them on me."

So, to make it manifest to Froissart that I cared not one whit for him, I feigned great consideration for Louis de Male, who oft sate with us in the cloistered garden. For Louis was lonely and sad, feeling himself the sport of fate, with no opportunity to show forth the courage that burned within his soul. His eyes were dark and appealing; his hair, cut straight across his forehead and falling to his collar, gave him a boyish mien though he was trapped in knightly guise. On his surcoat the lion of Flanders ramped in rich broidery and beneath was a coat of linked mail, for he walked in daily danger of the assassin's dagger. He knew that Van Artevelde played with him as a cat with a mouse, that he was a prisoner and a hostage, and yet he cringed to no one, and to Van Artevelde was more haughty than to others.

I felt a profound sympathy for this noble youth, while Philippa treated him with tender motherliness,

“ Upon their surcoats and shields ramped the Lion of Flanders ”



The Count of Flanders, Louis de Male, and his Mother

From *Album Historique de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Obreen.
Reproduced by permission of G. Van Oest & Company.



“The Countess threw open the shutters and disclosed the Wandering Rocks.”

Sir Edward Burne-Jones

Reproduced by permission of Berlin Photograph Co.

and spake often of her wish that he might go to England and know her children.

Though our relations were outwardly the same, I was so angered with my friend that I resented even these kindly overtures. “Is it not enough,” I told my envious heart, “that she hath a true and devoted husband, but she must filch from me every friend?” Later, when I knew from Joanne that Philippa imagined Edward had writ her the poem, I understood how she had worshipped her husband in every line, and sorely I repented my reasonless jealousy. But now it stung me to win the affection of Louis de Male, an all too easy conquest.

One morn he came to me in great excitement: “I must bid thee farewell for a little space,” he said. “Secret tidings have I of great moment which I will share only with thee and the Queen. The King of France hath sent a fleet of four hundred sail, under the great corsair Barbenoir, and manned by thousands of Genoese archers; their mission to reinstate my father in Flanders. They will land at Sluys, whither I haste to lead them to Ghent. Should the Flemings resist our entry, we shall slay them without quarter.”

“Shall we be endangered?” I asked anxiously.

“Nay, I have given thy good nuns the banner of France, bidding them fling it out above the convent gate when the troops enter.

“If thou lovest us thou wilt not leave us in this

peril," I urged. A secret lay heavy on my heart, and I could not, even at the cost of disloyalty to Philippa, suffer this great-hearted youth to go to certain death. I must requite confidence with confidence. "Louis," I implored, "stir not from Ghent; for the King of England makes for Sluys with his fleet. A great battle is imminent! Bide here, to protect us if thy father wins,—that we may protect thee if Edward of England triumphs."

"Nay," he cried, "the more reason I join my father and fight under his colours. Fear not but we shall vanquish our foes!"

"But how canst thou quit the city?" I asked. "Thou wilt be halted at the gates."

"Beloved lady, I trust me to thine aid. Disguise me as a varlet of the Queen of England and I shall pass without challenge!"

I could not say him nay, but bade Jean Froissart have my palfrey saddled, and provide the livery.

Then fell from the lips of Louis such passionate words as I had ne'er before heard. He loved me with all his soul. If he died in the coming encounter I must at least know as much. If he lived he would one day ask me to become Countess of Flanders.

My heart swelled with triumph and I gave him my lips in pledge. As I stood enfolded in his arms entered Jean Froissart. The scribe turned deadly pale, but we recked no more of him than of a hound or other soulless creature.

“Go with him, Froissart,” I cried, “and serve him well, for I shall hold thee answerable for his life.”

“I shall be true to the trust,” he replied bitterly, “the only one with which thou hast ever honoured me.”

Anon I saw them ride away together, two varlets of Queen Philippa to judge from their garb, little differing in outward mien, and my heart misgave whether I, who fancied that I knew them so well, had better knowledge of their souls than any chance observer.

We were not the only ones who were ware of the coming of the two fleets. The streets echoed with the clatter of marching feet. The guilds, clad in their white hoods, trooped to the city square, bells clanged and tocsins blared; but all that night Philippa battled for her life unheeding the uproar without. With the first light of dawn she lay white and still with that smile of perfect peace which only mothers know, gazing upon her new-born son, John of Ghent.

Days later when the great bell Roland shattered the air, and the reiterated clangour roused her at last, it was as though she were emerging from great depths of sea. A wiidered trouble misted her eyes.

“It is Roland,” said the nun at her side. “There is victory in the land.”

“Who has conquered?” Philippa questioned eagerly.

“Who, but the English!” roared a voice without the

door, which Jacques van Artevelde strove to modulate. "God save thy Majesty, I go to carry to thy royal spouse tidings of thee which will glad him yet more. He will be here anon. Meanwhile let not this knave of thine, who brought news of the victory, weary thee with his chatter."

He thrust Jean Froissart into the chamber, very red and dusty, his legs trembling for weariness and eyes shining with happy tears.

"Speak, my friend," murmured the Queen, giving the kneeling clerk her hand to kiss. "Tell us of the battle of the seas."

"Sovereign lady, I saw not all, but what I could descry from the light-house tower was glorious. Like a towering forest of pine the French fleet filled the roadway, their masts furled of sails. *Par dieu!* but I babbled my prayers, as the English ships came on, undaunted though outnumbered two to one.

"On a sudden they tacked that they might put the sun behind them, while archers let fly a thousand shafts, shouting 'Saint George for Merrie England!'"

"Be silent, fool," I said. "Is this a place to vent such a blast? Thou frightest the infant, and as for the Queen's grace——"

"She hath not supped such cordial in a mort of days," said Philippa, "the babe is not frightened, I pray thee stint not thy tale."

"From dawn to noon the combat lasted. Two

hundred and thirty French vessels surrendered to King Edward, with prisoners I know not how many thousand. But this I saw, that only one swift-flying pinnace escaped, bearing the Count of Flanders. The remaining masts of all that endless forest sank to the depths of the main.”

“Let masses be chanted for the dead,” said Philippa faintly, while I seized Froissart by the arm and buffeted him from the room.

I loosed my grip after we had passed the threshold. “And Louis,” I shrilled, “what of him? Said I not thou shouldst be answerable for his life?”

“He is safe, dearest lady; with these arms I hindered him from leaping into the sea! He was clean distraught, but at last I made him understand that a better course were to trust himself to the protection of King Edward.”

“Thou didst betray him!” I cried. “Thou didst betray him to his enemy. God may forgive such treachery but ne’er shall I.”

IV

HOW FROISSART FULFILLED HIS TRUST

Much mistook I the character of Edward, for the event proved, as I shall show anon, that Louis could have done no wiser thing than to place himself in the hands of the King of England.

Edward again asked the Flemings for troops to assist him in his war with the French. Van Artevelde argued his case with much casuistry before the burghers, and finally replied in their name.

“Sire, thou hast already made such requests to us, and verily if we could acquiesce while keeping honour and faith we would do so; but we be bound (on a bond of two millions of florins, entered into with the Pope), not to go to war with the King of France, on pain of that debt, and of excommunication. But if thou wilt perform that which we are about to propose, namely: adopt the arms of France and quarter them with those of England, then *will we uphold thee for the true King of France*, and will go whithersoever thou shalt ordain.”

To this Edward answered that it misliked him to assume the name and arms of a country to which he had not as yet acquired the title. But Philippa urged him to assent and the agreement was signed and sealed.

The rumour ran that, in return for this good turn, Edward purposed making Van Artevelde Count of Flanders. But there still remained many friends of Louis de Male who declared publicly in the Guild Hall that, be who might King of France, they would have for their Count neither a man of plebeian birth nor a foreigner.

Van Artevelde, whose craft exceeded anticipation, voted for this resolution, which was passed with

acclamation, then mounting on that high wave of enthusiasm, he cried: “I present to you your native-born prince of noble Belgian lineage, grandson of Guillaume of Hainault and, by his mother’s choice, born in this good city, *John of Ghent!*”

With that, robed in the *redingote rouge*, Philippa entered bearing her babe in her arms, whom Van Artevelde lifted high above his head, while the whole assembly joined him in one tremendous shout: “God save the Count of Flanders!”

Thus was Louis deposed from his inheritance; but Divine Justice suffered not the subtle Van Artevelde to prosper in his crime. When the English had departed, perceiving how they had been tricked, the fickle Flemings fell to quarrelling among themselves, many contesting that Van Artevelde had bartered them to the English (in exchange for the shipload of wool which arrived forthwith, as a gift from Edward to the guild of weavers), and others asserting that he had rifled the public treasury.

Wrought upon to a frenzy, a volatile and passionate mob surrounded the house of Van Artevelde, calling upon him to come forth and answer to these charges. While he endeavoured so to do, from his open window, he was stabbed in the back and his body thrown upon the pavement, where it was trampled by those whom he had so lately ruled as a King.

I was at home once more in my father’s castle, and

of such contrarities is our nature made that I wept when I heard the news, for Van Artevelde's nature was also one of contrarities. He was a staunch friend to Philippa, now, alas, no longer a friend of mine, but he was also a friend of commercial prosperity, o'erweening liberty and contumaciousness against my own class, who questionless should rule the rabble whether they will or no.

Edward, bereft of Van Artevelde's support, adroitly proposed, for the pacification of all parties, that Louis de Male should wed with little Princess Isabel of England, and the Countship of Flanders be secured to their descendants, without lapsing from the old hereditary line. Louis, who was still Edward's prisoner, had no choice but to consent, and was betrothed to the little maid.

One heart-broken letter I received from him, in which he protested that the betrothal was but a ruse and that the marriage would never be consummated. No faith had I in these protestations. It is only by miracle that men marry except for interest, for (even when, were they free, their hearts would lead them elsewhere), men and women of our condition are but puppets to be pulled by the cords of intrigue.

The English army was besieging Calais; but Edward held court at a townlet farther north. On a day of the same week in which Louis de Male was to espouse the princess, he obtained permission to hunt without the

gates. He was closely guarded, but at a certain cross-roads the falconer flew his hawk at a heron and Louis's companions dashed after it.

At the same moment the Count flew his hawk, as though at other prey, and galloped across the fields to the cover of a little wood, where a friend was in waiting with a fresh horse, whereby he escaped safely to Artois.

And if any who read this chronicle would know how I came by this knowledge let me bear witness that for once the miracle has been wrought, and that Louis, though enmeshed in the toils of circumstance, yet found a way to break through and seek the woman he loved.

Our marriage, approved by the King of France, took place in my father's château of Louvain and now unites in one the two provinces of Flanders and Brabant. There was hard fighting before the victory of Roerbeke, when my gallant husband came to his own, — for the burghers had the audacity to cross swords with the Knights of France and at times the amazing fortune to vanquish them. At Bruges they pulled down from the belfry the golden dragon, which Baldwin brought from Constantinople, and set it up on the belfry of Ghent, where it now waggles with each shifting breeze, to threat us that though the wind of fortune bloweth now our way it may shift in days to come.

To my present writing the weary war between France and England still continues. In the battle of Crecy fell Louis de Nevers, whom, from that event, men now

name Louis of Crecy, to distinguish him from his son, Louis de Male the present Count of Flanders.

Life is still sweet to me; and I seem to see it stretching on in a long vista of happiness and love for our only child, my namesake, who is soon to wed with Philippe le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy, thus placing our country under his powerful protection. God grant it be for peace!

Philippa lies at rest in the Abbey of Westminster.¹ Did her heart yearn for me at the last as mine has yearned for her?

I can not say, for we have not met since that day in Ghent when I parted from her in bitterness of spirit leaving upon Jean Froissart my heart's curse.

Undeserved it was, for, as Louis has since made clear to me, he would have indubitably been slain at Sluys, or thereafter in Ghent, had he not been under the protection of Edward, through whose ruling he was established Count of Flanders.

¹ Translation of the Latin epitaph on a tablet close to her tomb in Westminster Abbey:

"Faire Philippe, Wiliam Hainault's child and younger daughter deare,
Of roseate hue and beauty bright, in tomb lies billéd here;
King Edward through his mother's will and nobles' good consent
Took her to wife, and joyfully with her his time he spent.
Her uncle John, a martial man, and eke a valiant knight
Did link this woman to this king in bonds of marriage bright.
This match and marriage thus in blood did bind the Flemings sure
To Englishmen, by which they did the Frenchmen's wreck procure.

The wife of Edward, dear
Queen Philippe, lieth here."

My husband hath also certified me that the man who planned his final escape, who waited in the wood with the fleetest steed in Edward's stables, and who, changing clothing with him, curvetted for an hour in full view of the huntsmen, so that they deemed Louis still with them, was none other than Jean Froissart!

He placed a parchment in the hands of Louis. “Thou wilt give her this from me. And tell her,” Froissart added, “when thou seest that laughing love-light in her eyes, that I was true to my trust.”

Thus, great heart, would Marguerite acknowledge thee, craving forgiveness upon her knees, for cruel words spoken in ignorance and bitterly repented.

We may never meet, for after a life of great accomplishment and fame thou hast cloistered thyself from the world within a monastery.

I am an old woman, many undeserved gifts have been mine, but none that touched my heart more deeply than this tribute from my poet-lover:

BALLADE

Of alle the floures is held most fayre the Rose,
And after her, the gentil Violette,
Fayre is the Floure of France as aught that blows,
The Peonie, bryghte belle, a gay coquette;
And Valley-Lilie payle, her eyeliddes wet
With teres of dew wept from a bleedyng herte.
But fayrest of Earth's fragrant coronet,
O Margherite, the floure of floures thou art!

For what betyde, or rain or haile or snowes,
 Sunshine or storm, in lyght or darknesse, yet
 Thou sheddest joyance, as a brooklet flowes,
 Exhaustless ever, free from roile or fret,
 In never-ceasing streme; a fontaine jet
 Of parfaite blis, purl'd from a laughing herte,
 In gladd'e abondance, runnes thy rivulet—
 O, Margherite, a spring of joie thou art!

About the garden, wher thy beautee shows
 Her peerlesse grace, ther runnes a parapette,
 Which walles me out and thee doth safe enclos,
 Howe'er I maye the battlemente beset;
 But though the goldene key I ne'er shal get
 To ope the portalles of thy cinctured herte,
 Stil ever-blooming live without regrette
 O, Margherite, my Floure of Floures thou art!

AFTER FROISSART.

AFTERWORD

I Benigne, Abbot of the Abbey of Saint — do hereby make deposition that the papers sealed herein are those of our worthy brother and friend Frère Boniface, so called by us for his worthy deeds, and because, as a page, he was named the boy of the "bonny face." The secular world knows him as the chronicler Jean Froissart.

To these manuscripts found in his scriptorium I have added one only parcel, brought me as I now set forth, to wit. *Imprimis*. On the night whereon our said Brother Boniface died, a wild night whereon the Prince of the Powers of the Air unchained the demons of the

elements; so that the wind wrenched open our chapel doors and quenched the tapers about his bier; the surges of the ocean burst their bounds and invaded the monastery, we walking ankle-deep in sea-water. On such a night came our worshipful lady, Marguerite, Countess of Flanders, praying to look upon the face of the dead.

Having said her prayers beside the bier, she besought that she might enter his scriptorium. This being but a portion of the organ-loft and not sequestered from the secular world I could not deny her. Here was a small organ at which our said brother was wont to improvise sacred chants and music of wailful sweetness, and here in a cubicle beneath the window and upon a lectern were his papers.

The light being dim our worshipful Countess threw open the shutters whereby was disclosed a sight which I cannot even now but regard as phantasmagoria and sorcery, for there in the midst of the foaming surges were travelling-rocks, coming and going where no rocks had erstwhile been seen since Maugis, for the love of Dorigen, loosened them from the Breton coast and sent them on pilgrimage. When I made mention of this the Countess answered: “Well mayst thou Maugis, so honour our friend, for he was a greater enchanter than thou.”

While I misdoubted whether this prodigy might foretoken war, the worshipful lady laid her commands

upon me that these papers should be scrupulously collected and preserved with others which she confided to me, the same to be hidden from the world until all of this generation had passed away.

The Countess having knelt once more on the wet pave by the side of our dead brother went her ways.

I, having in part perused these chronicles and having found them not of a religious nature but dealing with unedifying and oftentimes ungodly romances, am the more willing to sequester them, walled from the sight of man. The which act the abbey mason will this day perform, to the avoidance of scandal and the salvation of weak souls.

Given at the Abbey of St. —

✠ ANNO DOMINI INCARNATIONIS
MCCCCX

PART II

WEBS OF OUDENAARDE

VERDURE

Arras of wonder weft on Flemish loom!
With patient toil her craftsmen did devise
Such imagery of water, earth, and skies,
Bright birds in canopies of bowered bloom
With mingled interlace of bosky gloom
As Adam might have seen in Paradise,
Ere yet he knew the laughter of Eve's eyes
And ate the fruit of love and drank its doom.

Old tattered tapestry of Oudenaarde,
Mouldered verdure, slow golding through the years
Into the sere and saffron tint of dream;
Calm, moon-lit glades and daisy-spangled sward
Where pale Pierrots and Columbines in tears
Embark to Cytheria on Love's stream.

STROLLING aimlessly down the rue Rossignol back of the beautiful Hôtel de Ville of Oudenaarde, on a misty summer evening, my attention was arrested by an archway in which loomed a figure armed cap-à-pie in shining plate from visored helm to gilded spurs.

It was as though some knight of the Middle Ages

stood in the sally-port of his castle challenging my right of entry. But the arcade he guarded led only to a dingy curio-shop, through whose cluttered bric-à-brac I threaded my mazelike way twixt tarnished brasses, gilded crucifixes, faded brocades, broken-nosed cherubs, tattered missals, and stringless viols to a dusky chamber, where a septuagenarian, squinting through great goggles, was stringing with trembling fingers a rosary of beads.

Behind him, sere and yellow, hung a magnificent series of four tapestries, representing the procession of Notre Dame du Sablon. Against the arras roseate in the gleam of a square of glass from some forgotten rose-window a carven cabinet completed the background of a picture, which recalled an interior of the old Flemish school.

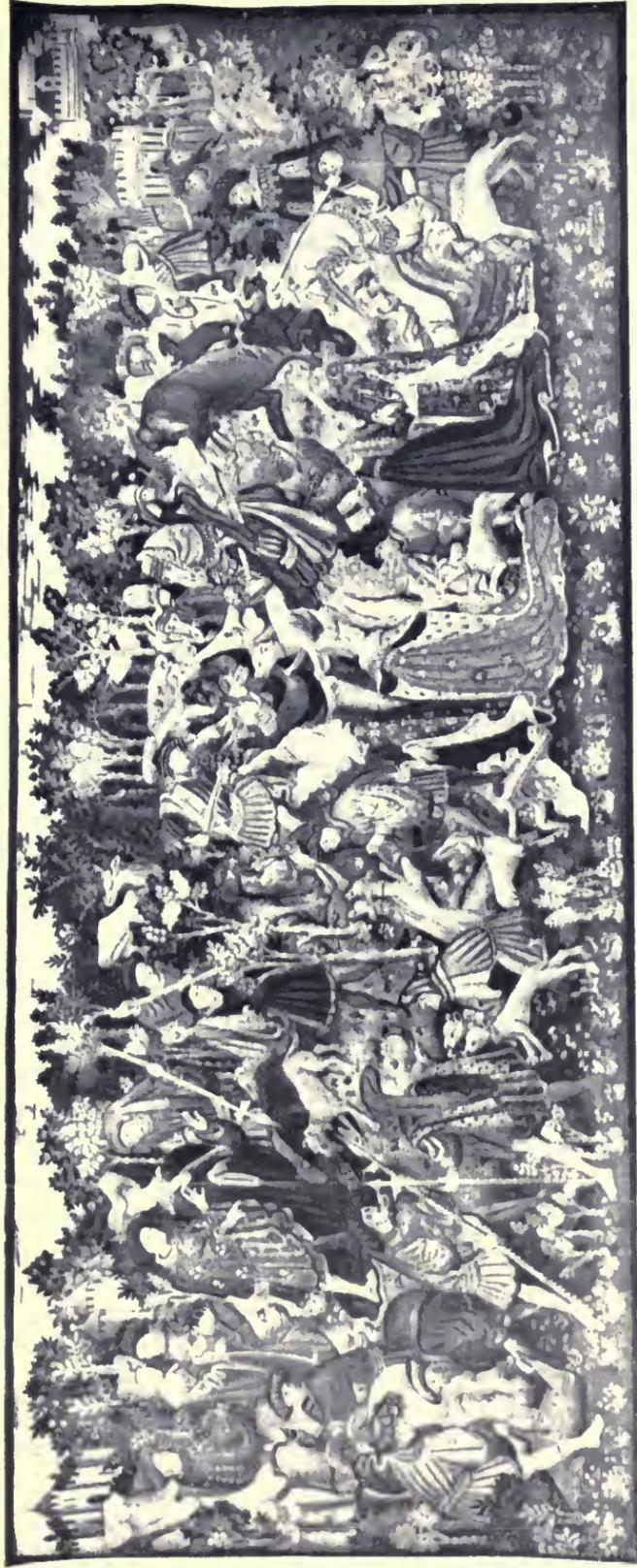
So engrossed in his task was the custodian that he scarcely noted my entry; but summoning French in lieu of Flemish I at length roused him from his reverie.

"Qu'est-ce-que Madame désire?" he mumbled quaveringly. "Nous avons des jolies reliquaires, les dentelles de Malines et de Valenciennes, des tapisseries, de la bijouterie et des objets d'art."

"What is the price of that tapestry?" I asked timidly.

"Ça ce n'est pas à vendre," croaked the curio dealer. "It is the property of the government and comes to us from the Musée du Cinquanteaire for reparation. It

“Mouldered verdure, slow gilding through the years”

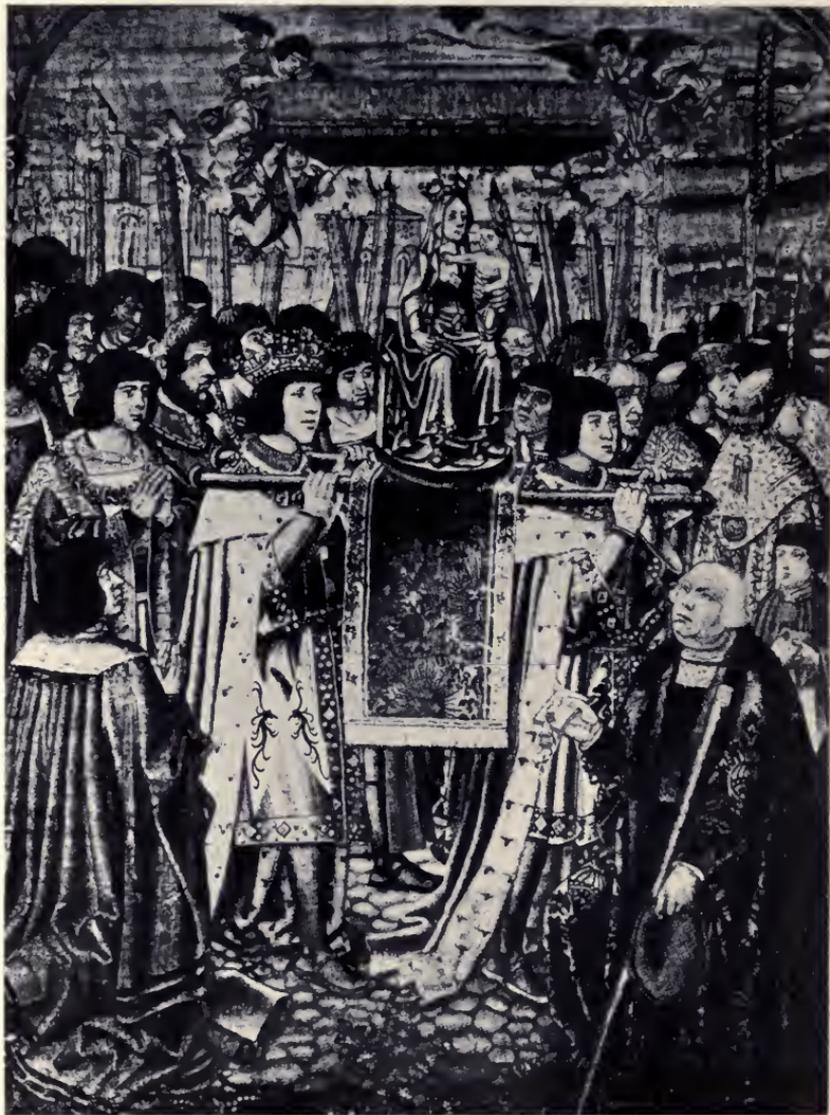


“Arras of wonder weft on Flemish loom”

Hunting Tapestry, XIVth Century

From *A History of Tapestry*, by W. G. Thompson. G. P. Putnam's Sons; Hodder & Stoughton, London.

"The Emperor and his brother Ferdinand bear the litter of the Virgin"



Tapestry—The Legend of Notre Dame de Sablon—Central Panel

From *La Musée Cinquantenaire*, Brussels

was made early in the sixteenth century for a chapel built by the Imperial Postmaster. See, the *donateur* kneels in the corner with a stamped letter in his hand. He was a canny courtier and complimented the family of the Emperor by putting them all in the tapestry. Charles himself and his brother Ferdinand bear the litter of the Virgin; and here is Margaret of Austria and the Emperor's sisters. What stories these tapestries could tell, eh!

"We have many priceless examples sent us to repair, in such a state as Madame cannot imagine. *Regardez moi ça!*" and he pointed to a heap of tatters upon the floor. "It is not alone the moths; those little beasts are not nearly so bad as men. That mass of rags, that will not hold itself together, hung in the château of Hougomont, a poor château, a little bit of arras, but antic, as you English say, *vrai* antic, and it should possess interest for you, for it is shot full of holes which the French would rather have put in the breasts of your soldiers. And those stains, English blood, O veritably English blood!"

Feeling that the tatters were indeed too antic, I turned to a superb specimen of the verdures of Oudenaarde, so called because the subjects chosen were landscapes, hunting scenes in parks, or garden-parties on balustraded terraces.

This particular one appeared to depict an *embarquement pour Cythère*, for two maskers were stealing

in the moonlight to a little boat moored at the foot of a flight of marble steps. A troop of loves were tugging at the boat with garlands of roses, and nymphs, playing upon viols and harps, were leading the way to the fabled country. The amorous allegory was framed with masses of blue-green foliage among which impossible macaws and parakeets preened their plumage, while peacocks promenaded stately upon the terrace.

"Ça ce n'est pas à vendre," reiterated the curio dealer. "It is reserved for the government by the Superintendent of Beaux Arts. It came from a castle near Mons. This cabinet also, and that roll of tapestry, which would have been a miracle were it but completed. Regard me, Madame!"

He unrolled a strip scarce two feet in width, but something over twelve in length, displaying a portion of a web most "proudly purposed forth," as the representation of a tournament. The lower half only had been completed, and depicted two mounted knights, spurring furiously together with lances in rest. The weaver had ceased his labours before reaching their casques, so that they presented a grotesque, decapitated appearance. The caparisons of their steeds were blazoned with the arms of the contestants; and, as these devices were repeated upon bannerets held by esquires at either side, I fancied they would not be difficult to identify. An irresistible longing to acquire this mutilated tapestry took possession of me.

“Ça doit avoir une histoire, n'est-ce pas,” cackled the curio dealer, divining my intent.

“But since the story is not known,” I objected, “could not the superintendent of Beaux Arts explain why it was left unfinished?”

“No, madame, and because it is but a fragment he took no interest in it. Only a true connoisseur like Madame could appreciate it.”

“And this cabinet,” I said flippantly, “is doubtless also *réservé pour le gouvernement*.”

“No, Madame, I sacrifice you that for a thousand francs. A veritable *occasion*. Of the sixteenth century and belonging formerly to Margaret of Parma.”

“If it is really what you claim, it might be worth that to your Superintendent, but not to me.” I pretended to examine an embossed silver casket, while calculating what I could afford, lest the greedy shopkeeper should guess my interest.

“Madame cannot have observed the workmanship,” coaxed the crafty old fox. “The inlay is of a delicacy to put out your eyes, the arabesques delicious as a drawing by the great Raphael.” As he spoke he turned a filigreed key; the heavy doors swung back disclosing tiers of drawers inlaid with tortoise-shell.

“Madame sees compartments for a collection of miniatures, of jewels, of whatever curios Madame affects. There are doubtless secret drawers.”

Here my cupidity got the better of my reason and

I was about to exclaim: "Very well, if that is your lowest figure"; but a lurking eagerness in the old man's eyes changed my response to, "That price is out of the question."

"It is a pity," he sighed. "Madame sees a complete secretary," and he drew out a shelf which converted the cabinet into a writing-desk equipped with all conveniences.

"Madame writes?" he asked, "novelettes perhaps, *pour les jeunes filles?*"

I nodded haughtily. "Ah! in that case, *c'est bien autre chose*. Madame has my commiseration. Would eight hundred francs seem excessive?"

"It would," I replied testily.

"Eight hundred francs! A mere nothing for the inspiration which Madame will experience as her fingers retrace histories that have been confided here to other beautiful eyes. Madame is psychic, I perceive; let her place between her fingers this quill pen. Does not Madame feel a thrill? There are possibly letters hidden here, very probably documents of value. Madame is at liberty to make the research."

He ambled away into an adjoining room, and tugging at a refractory drawer, I opened it a fraction of an inch, then it stuck fast. But there were papers within, tied in a packet, and across the margin nearest the orifice was traced in faded red ink: "*Histoires véritables et scandaleuses de certaines personnages illustres*"



“ Margaret of Parma, the gracious Regente ”

From Romance of the Roman Villas, by E. Champney. G. P. Putnam's Sons

“ Philip the Bad, miscalled the Good ”



“ Spider-legged and hawk-beaked ”

From *Album Historique de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Obreen
Reproduced by permission of G. Van Oest & Company

—*publication interdite!*” After that was any price exorbitant?

Thrusting back the drawer as the curio dealer returned, “I will give you five hundred francs,” I ventured, taking out my cheque-book.

“O Madame, Madame,” moaned the curio dealer, then, more cheerfully, “Madame will pay for the boxing, *bien entendu*, and the delivery to the express company?”

“Certainly,” I conceded, “and the unfinished tapestry,” I asked, with ill-concealed eagerness, “*combien ça?*”

“Ah! that,” replied the old man, neglecting, in his delight at having made a sale, the opportunity for further profit, “*ce n'est pas grande chose*; but it will protect well the cabinet *en voyage*, and economize the purchase of burlap. *Allez donc*, would Madame consider twenty francs?”

Madame considered—but, in her self-gratulation for having once in her life outwitted a predatory dealer, she inadvertently made out her cheque for the sum, which he had at first demanded, failing to discover her error until too late.

Her purchases are at her side at this writing: the tapestry scoffed at by custom's officials as not worth declaration, the cabinet and its hoarded histories sneered at by connoisseurs as rank forgeries, but each suggesting to the deluded owner:

“Vanished days of ancient splendour, and before her
dreaming eye
Wave these mingled shapes and figures like a faded
tapestry.”

Her treasure of romance she shares with you, dear
reader, confident that

When panels creak, when moving in their frames
The portraits seem of ancient knights and dames.
You also like by night, with no one near,
To read old tales of marvel and of fear?
Dragged from a Gothic cabinet
Long years forgotten, on whose margins set
Flowers, figures, objects of each gorgeous hue,
As in a painted window you may view.

I cannot leave them lyrics, ballads, fain
All I devour, the clock strikes twelve in vain.

Meanwhile my candle gutters o'er and makes
Long winding sheets; till thro the lattice breaks
The rosy tint of dawn, and the glad sun
Begins through heaven his glorious course to run.

Théophile Gautier, translated by Henry Carrington, U. S.

CHAPTER VII

AN ABANDONED TAPESTRY

(AN ERRANT PRINCESS) ¹

Sometime I'll say I am Duke Humphrey's wife,
And he a prince and ruler of the land:
Yet so he ruled and such a prince he was,
As he stood by whilst I, his forlorn duchess,
Was made a wonder and a pointing stock
To every rascal follower.

SHAKESPEARE, *Henry VI.*, part ii., act ii., scene 4.

I

A PAGEANT OF FORTUNE

WHEREAS many have taken upon themselves to write lying chronicles of my worshipful lady, slanderously accusing innocent persons to her overlord, Duke Philip of Burgundy, as having aided her in her revolt against him, I have determined to set down a true account thereof. More especially is it meet and fitting so to do, since I alone was instigator of her

¹ The author is indebted for much of the material relating to the adventurous career of Jacqueline to the admirable and more veracious history, *A Medieval Princess*, by Miss Ruth Putnam.

flights and rescues, the guileless cause whereby she was meshed in the net of manifold misfortune; and also to my joy, the means of restoring her at last to the one faithful heart whose love was more precious to her than all beside. And so to my story.

It was upon her wedding-day, in the spring of the year of grace 1418 that I, John Robessart, Sire d'Escaillon, first took service as captain of her body-guard with my sovereign lady, Jacqueline, Countess of Holland, Zealand, and Hainault. She was scarce sixteen, but a virgin-widow; for the Dauphin of France, to whom she had been contracted in her fifth year had, a year ago, yielded his innocent soul to God. Thus the little girl who might, had her boy-husband lived, have become Queen of France, was left unprotected, with a heritage which was to make her the prey of unscrupulous and powerful men.

Foremost amongst these was the puissant Philip, Duke of Burgundy. It was the ambition of this man to unite all Holland and Belgium under his own rule. Of Flanders he was already lord. His nephew and ward was Duke of Brabant. The first step in acquiring the estates of the Countess Jacqueline was to wed her to this nephew and thus assume the right of her guardianship.

My lady had never seen her proposed bridegroom, but her mother approved the match, and, to her great future misery, she became his wife.

He was by nature a fool and still further disordered in his intellectuals by drink. His mistress the Demoiselle Laurette had queened it in the old palace of the dukes of Brabant at Louvain and she continued to do so after the advent of the young Duchess. The Duke laughed at the insults to which she was submitted and flouted her in the presence of his courtiers.

My high-spirited lady soon reached the term of her patience and, calling me to her one morn, gave orders for our departure to her city of Mons.

"And when," I made bold to ask, "dost thou purpose to return?"

"Never, Robessart," she flashed. "I can endure this life no longer."

"But Monseigneur of Brabant may compel thy submission. Were it not better to stop his mouth ere we go?"

"Wouldst thou do him murder?" she gasped.

"With good relish," I assented, "but there may be a means less parlous for thee. I am ill versed in such villainy; thou shouldst seek a doctor."

"Heart of God!" she cried. "Is it then poison?"

"Nay, my lady, I spoke only of Judge Van Borselen, a learned Doctor of Law. He passeth the palace each morning on his way to the University. They say there is not in all Europe a lawyer of greater acumen or eloquence."

My lady had already marked him, a fine figure of

a man, not stoop-shouldered and emaciated, as one who spent his days poring over musty tomes, but erect and soldier-like, his hooded robe fluttering bravely with his magisterial stride, every motion speaking adequacy, resourcefulness, and power.

"Bid him counsel me," she said. "Nay, as the Duke's people spy upon me here, I will meet him in the library."

Whilst I paced the great hall, that no intruding scholar might play the eavesdropper, in a book-walled alcove, looked down upon alone of busts of Greek philosophers, my lady poured out her grief to the learned judge.

"Canst thou dissolve this unholy union?" she demanded.

He was grave, but sympathy showed in his benevolent eyes.

"Justice is upon thy side," he said, "but marriage fetters are ill to break. That a man is brute and villain is not sufficient legal quittance to a wife's bondage."

She wrung her hands. "If the oppressed may not find justice in law, where then?"

"I said not that a cause must necessarily be lost because it is righteous," he replied. "With subtlety I have known even the innocent vindicated. Gladly would I undertake for thee were there not reasons why I cannot. Nathless I will seek thee out an advocate even better than I."

"None other will I," she cried. "Why canst thou not do me this favour?"

He smiled sadly. "Thy most formidable foe in this matter is not thy husband but his over-lord, Duke Philip of Burgundy, who holds thy estates in fee through his nephew, and will not, save under strong compulsion, suffer thee to free thyself.

"Nevertheless he might be so compelled, and a battle with a man of his wits would give me such fierce joy as would repay all the toil I have given to the law. Hadst thou asked me a week ago I would have given myself heart and soul to thy service."

"And why not now?" she demanded.

"Because," he said moodily, "one may not run with the hare and course also with the hounds. Yestreen I signed an agreement with the Duke of Burgundy, whereby I am become his legal adviser and counsel, swearing to conduct for him to the best of my ability all his actions at law. He will undoubtedly call upon me to arrange his nephew's defence against your proposed suit."

"I comprehend," the Countess replied, "I can scarce hope to retain as my lawyer one already subsidized by the Duke of Burgundy; but thy fee cannot be too exorbitant for my present necessity."

Van Borselen flushed. "The consciousness that I have made thee happy will be the richest reward life can give me," he said; "I will resign all offices that conflict. My services are thine."

She paid no heed to aught but his acceptance. "My friend, my one true friend," she cried. "Ask what thou wilt it shall not be denied!"

He caught her hand, his eyes ablaze. "Dost thou mean what thou sayest?" She drew back startled. "Nay," he said, mastering himself, "when all is done and thou art free—then will we talk of guerdon."

Even then my lady did not understand. The difference between their station was too great for her to deem it possible that he should be so mad as to love her. Devotion she counted on as her right, mere loyalty that could expect no reward.

I, being a man, know a man's nature better. But it would do no harm, I thought, to let this madness grow. Love is a great sharpener of the wits and oft performs miracles. He would serve my lady the better for his love. As for any good that he would gain thereby—that was not my affair.

Thereafter they met often, the brief of divorce was framed, copies nailed to church doors and sent to the Dukes of Brabant and Burgundy. More important still Van Borselen made a secret journey to the Pope, laying the entire matter before his Holiness and receiving great encouragement.

Meanwhile the Countess had departed Brabant and taken up her residence with her mother at Quesnoy, in the county of Hainault.

Hither Duke Philip sent word that he would come

to reconcile the differences betwixt his ward and his unloving wife. This was what my lady least desired and, seeing that she was not safe in her own domains, she determined to place herself under the protection of one more powerful than Burgundy, even the King of England.

And thus it came about that upon a certain March morning I had orders to wait on my lady with my company of sixty horse, in a wood near her manor of Bouchain to escort her to Calais and thence to England.

In what manner it began I know not, but certain it is that she had maintained a secret correspondence with the King's brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.

Of this I had ample evidence when, on our arrival at Dover, we found the Duke patrolling the cliffs with a company of horse, and leading by the bridle a white palfrey royally caparisoned in scarlet and gold.

When my lady saw the glint from his armour she clapped her hands and let fly her veil, which signal was answered by the Duke with sundry passes in air with his rapier.

What is ordained to be will be, but woe is me that ever I brought my lady to that false-hearted man. False he was even then, enamoured of the witch, Eleanor Cobham, and only seeking the Countess Jacqueline out of covetousness of her estates of Hainault and Holland.

Van Borselen had written of the Pope's private

approval, my Lady construed herself divorced, and without waiting for public confirmation of the act from his Holiness, wedded the Duke of Gloucester with all ceremony and good faith.

Soon thereafter Henry V. of England died, leaving a son but nine months of age, for whom the government was to be administered by his uncle, and my lady's husband was now Lord Protector of England.

For two years he found no time to visit, with his wife, her countship of Hainault. This stoppage in England irked me much, for I had left at the château of Quesnoy my sweetheart, Ermengarde, daughter of the Master of the Kennels, a sweet, mouth-watering plum. (I refer to the maid and not to her sire, who was but a crab-thorn tree to have grown such fruitage.) It was a "joyful entry" for me when my lady and the Duke of Gloucester came to Mons to receive the allegiance of her people. Her château of Quesnoy was newly furbished up, the old tapestries mended, and the great one of the Tournament commanded.

The occasion that prompted the choosing of such a subject must now be set forth.

It would seem that if any one was to take exception to my lady's marriage it should have been her former husband, the unworthy Duke of Brabant; but he dared not open his mouth now that the Duke of Gloucester was in the country with a large following of English bowmen.

But Philip, Duke of Burgundy, was furious that a female vassal should have dared alienate, to a foreign prince, the estates which he had marked for his own, and very shortly after our return to Mons there arrived a messenger from his lordship. This was the Duke's herald, a knight in full armour, wearing a surcoat of white brocade embroidered with the arms of the Duke of Burgundy. He presented his letter to the seneschal who in turn gave it to the Duke of Gloucester.

"This letter," said the latter, "seemeth over-lengthy; we will therefore give it perusal on a later occasion."

"Pardon, my lord," replied the herald, "the sense of this epistle may be told in few words."

"Thou art permitted so to expound it," replied Gloucester.

"Then," said the messenger, "be notified, all who hear: that my master, the most puissant Lord and Prince Philip, by the grace of God, Duke of Burgundy and Lotharingia, of Limbourg, Luxembourg, and Gueldres, Earl of Flanders and of Artois, and Marquis of the Holy Empire, doth give thee, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, Lord Protector of England, to know that in espousing, without his lief and knowledge, the Lady Jacqueline, Countess of Holland, Zealand, Friesland and Hainault, wife of Jean Duke of Brabant his nephew and vassal, and in maintaining and fortifying her in her contumacy contrary to the laws of God and man as acknowledged by all Christendom, she

being not lawfully divorced from her husband, thou hast exceeded thy powers, and that such marriage cannot stand. And moreover since thou hast fallen upon Hainault with an armed force, essaying to rob the said Duke of Brabant, not only of his wife but of his heritage by the stirring up of war, therefore, to avoid the spilling of Christian blood, my master doth challenge thee to put an end to this quarrel in single combat, and to decide the matter each on the body of the other, before what judges thou wilt.

“I pause for thy reply.”

Humphrey's sallow cheek flushed but he held himself in check. “Since thine errand,” he said, “is to insult my honoured wife, and through her to strike at me, say to thy master that Jacqueline of Hainault and Holland renounces all fealty to his dignity and that I, as her true knight and husband, declare him to be an injurious slanderer.

“As for the Brabanter, if thy master continues to assert that he hath better right than I to my wife or to her estates, then am I ready to stake my body against his on the day of my patron St. George; and, as my dear brother of Bedford is near at hand, I am content to submit the issue of the combat to him as arbitrator of the duel. And in evidence of this challenge there lies my gage.”

Tearing off his gauntlet with this declaration, the Duke of Gloucester flung it at the feet of the herald.

Then turning contemptuously on his heel he gave his arm to the Countess Jacqueline, saying more quietly: "We have wasted too much time with this fellow. My lords and ladies, our supper cooleth. Let us to the banquet hall."

These were stout words, for Humphrey of Gloucester had but a short temper, and was moreover studious of theatrical effect. But, though my lady, delirious with joy, called him her "dear champion," methought his smile was but a sickly one and he ate with little appetite.

It chanced that the mended tapestries of which I have spoken were but newly arrived from Oudenaarde, and my lady posted me off on the morrow to pay for them and to order the fabrication of another, and that in all haste. It should figure forth the joust to be fought between Philip of Burgundy and the Duke of Gloucester, for the Duchess had no doubt but that her lord would come off victor. Little thought had we that the duel would never take place; nor Philip neither, for he accepted the challenge incontinent, and set the artificers of Hesdin to fashion for him a magnificent suit of armour.

But the Duke of Gloucester so manœuvred matters that he was called to London on affairs of government, Philip consenting to a postponement of the tourney to a more convenient season. The estates of Hainault insisted their countess should remain in Mons, and it was with a heavy heart that she saw her lord depart.

What irked her most was that one of her English ladies-in-waiting, Mistress Eleanor Cobham by name, returned with him.

It was plain to us all even then that she had snared the affections of the Duke and that she had no love for my lady, though she gave her in parting a fair silver pomander with her device on the lid. My lady could not abide it, and flung it in pique to her half-sister Beatrix when her false friend had departed.

Gloomy as were the forebodings of the Countess Jacqueline she could not then have foreseen that this was her final parting from her husband, or that Philip would dare to send a troop of five hundred horse and bear her a prisoner from her city of Mons to the castle of the Counts of Flanders at Ghent.

So sudden was the coup that her people had no opportunity to resist, and though I gathered my company together and waylaid the convoy at the windmill of Arth, it was a vain attempt, for what were sixty light horsemen against five hundred Burgundian lanzknechts?

The attack was made at night else the Burgundians would have seen how overwhelmingly they outnumbered us and would have annihilated us to a man. As it was we drew off, leaving half of our company on the field, and many of those who fled were wounded. The lanzknechts meanwhile bore away to captivity my beloved lady and my still more beloved Ermengarde,

who had been promoted to be her favourite maid, and whom I had had hopes of making Mistress John Robesart on Michaelmas following.

II

A DISPOSSESSED COUNTESS: JACQUELINE LA DÉsirÉE

I

In merye Mons, a cite of Hainault,
Whilom ther dwelt a ladye passing fayre,
Beloued by alle folk both heighe and lowe.
Noble she was, discret and debonaire,
Gentil withal and swete of contenance.
Her seemed a nursling of the wylde plesaunce,
Whenne through the wolde she rode her palfrey roan,
Seekynge disport and blythe distracioun,
With her whyte houndés, Countess Jacqueline.
Wel loued she too the joyance of the toun.
Wherfor I seye she is my sovraine quene!

II

Penelope, Thaïs, and Greek Helaine,
Calpurnia, Faustine, the Romaune fayre,
Clotilde and Hildegard, blythe chastelaine,
Matilde and Eleanore, alle jewelles rare,
Agnes Sorel and Joanne of sunny Fraunce,
Grete sovraines alle and quenes of heighe romaunce.
But non of these wolde I mak mencioune,
Worthye with thee to weare the thornyc crowne.
That thou dost meeklye beare, my Jacqueline.
Though Gloucester's duchesse thou, he is a clown
Wherfor I seye thou art my sovraine quene!

III

"Dame Jacque la Désirée," tis written so,
 Duke Philip dubbed thee, whenne he sprede his snare,
 Ladye the much desired, by friende or foe.
 But who thy hate doth knowe hadde best bewarre!
 For, in despyte thy lovesome apparaunce,
 Thou hast a herte that harboureth mischaunce,
 To wreke onne him such castagacioun
 And meed of woe as he hath never knowne.
 Better to parley wyth Dame Jacqueline
 Thanne seeke herre undesyred confusioun.
 Wherfor I seye she is my sovraine quene!

IV

Van Eyck, the painter, whom alle menne do knowe,
 Did limn a tableau, bryghte and wondrous fayre,
 Wherein are pictured, inne a shyning row,
 The hevenlye hostes and eke the earthlye there
 Kneeling, amydst a flowery plesaunce,
 Befor a litel lamb, in obeisaunce;
 So at thy shrine, in adoracioun,
 Thus wolde I kneel fore thee, thy champioun,
 Ever in ravissement, Sainte Jacqueline,
 My soule shal worship thee and thee alone
 Wherfor I seye thou art my sovraine quene!

V

Thine eyen placide are, yet bryghtlye glow,
 Thy mouth, a pettaled rose and golde thy haire,
 Thy voice, a winde of musick soft and lowe,
 Lighte as the loitering breeze in pine trees bare.
 With swete allurements blent, thy coutenance
 Bespeketh parfait blis and heighe romaunce.

O priestesse sanct, grant now thy champioun,
In his sore neede, thine absolucioun
And raise thy holye handes, Sainte Jacqueline,
On my bowed heade inne benedictioun;
Wherfor I seye thou art my sovraine queene!

ENVOY

Princesse, thou art, in fayre or foul sesoun,
Ever a floure, I but a lichened ston,
Thenne yield thy livyng bloome, fayre Jacqueline,
To my graye life, ere its conclusioun.
Wherfor I seye thou art my sovraine queene!

Thus sang Van Borselen his chant royal in praise of my lady. Judge ye who read whether he had reason for his singing.

That which I have heretofore chronicled is but history, known, in some fashion, to all; but the matters I am about to relate—namely the escape of my lady from implication in her uncle's murder, and the manner of her evasion from her imprisonment in the Gravensteen¹ of Ghent—have been, until now, secrets locked in the hearts of but two or three chosen confidants.

And, firstly, of the murder.

There was one powerful noble, who was my lady's natural protector, to whom it would seem that she might have appealed in her troubles. This was her father's brother, John, Bishop of Liège and Duke of Bavaria. But her very reverend uncle was known

¹ Castle of the Counts of Flanders. Flemish, Gravensteen.

in Liége as "John the Pitiless, a tiger rather than a man." Though lord of vast states he had coveted those of his niece and had disputed vainly her succession to her father's, holding that Holland and Hainault were male fiefs of which he was the true heir.

Latterly he had been the parasite and tool of the Duke of Burgundy, who knew how to flatter those whom he intended to despoil.

But the Countess Jacqueline was thought to be the Bishop's heiress and when it fell out that his reverence was poisoned by one Jan Van Vliet, the husband of my lady's half-sister Beatrix (though the murderer had his own reasons for hating the reverend father in Christ), there lacked not those who thought the deed instigated by my lady, that she might possess an estate the more and an enemy the less. The murderer (who was tried at The Hague before Lord Frank Van Borselen, whose destiny was so strangely interwoven with that of the Countess) made full confession of his crime and was duly executed therefor. He made no mention of my lady in his examination, and when it was discovered that the murdered man had named Philip of Burgundy as his heir, the Countess profiting naught by her uncle's death, suspicion as to her complicity therein died.

The Judge was supposed to be a creature of the Duke of Burgundy, and it was believed that had it been possible to implicate the Countess Jacqueline he would

have done so, as nothing would better have pleased his patron.

This I could not believe, for though van Borselen had received no thanks from my lady for the pains he had taken for her sake, which had indeed only served to throw her into Gloucester's arms, and though deeply wounded in heart and pride he had later accepted office under Philip, I knew that no disappointment or pique could change an honourable man into a villain.

Of this I had astonishing proof at the time of the trial, when with subtlety greater than the Duke's he shielded my lady from a shameful death, foiling the many satanic attempts made to entrap her. Point after point I noted, for I had attended the trial in disguise in order that I might know the machinations which were being hatched against my mistress.

Van Vliet had confessed that a poisoned pomade had been sent him from England, enclosed in a small silver casket, that he had possessed himself of the Bishop's missal and had pasted certain of the pages together with the pomade, first taking the precaution to cover his hand with a glove, which he had burned. The casket he had thrown into a tomb in the crypt of the Cathedral of Liége.

I saw at once that if this casket could be found it might be a clue to van Vliet's accomplices, and I set forth that night for Liége. Stabling horse at the inn I hastened to the cathedral. The entrance to the crypt

was closed by an iron grille, but thrusting my shoulder against it, the rusted hinges gave way. Within, a half-light showed me but three tombs covered by heavy marble slabs. How could van Vliet have made shift to remove one of these? His story was a lie, and he had hidden the casket elsewhere. Then, as I peered at the tombs in my perplexity, I noticed a crack running down the side of one, and at the corner a small fragment of marble had been removed and replaced. Prying it aside I discovered the end of a silver chain and drawing it from the tomb there fell into my hand the silver pomander, which I had seen my lady give her sister.

While I stared at her device, the two red and two black lions enamelled in fair colours upon the lid,¹ and thought with horror of the damning testimony which this instrument of Satan might have given against her, I was startled by the creak of the grille and a quick step behind me.

Thrusting the pomander into my bosom, I turned to face the man I most dreaded, Judge Frank van Borselen.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "we both would secure the silver casket of which the murderer testified yestreen. Thou hast forestalled me, but 'twill avail thee naught to draw thy sword. My men wait above. If the casket, of which thou hast possession, would seem to

¹ "Quarterly: 1 and 2 or, a lion rampant sable, 2 and 3 or, a lion rampant gules."

implicate an accessory in this horrible crime, I have no desire to bring it into court. The man has sworn on his hope of Christ's pardon that he had no confederate. 'Tis enough that he should suffer. One possibly innocent should not be wrongfully accused.

"Keep thy find. I came but to place it out of reach of those who might use it as an engine of mischief."

Finding no words I bowed low.

"Wait here," he commanded, "until I have departed. If the casket is demanded by the prosecution, I shall truthfully bear witness that, searching the crypt, I found naught."

All this matter of murder and trial, with my adventure in the crypt, had chanced before Countess Jacqueline was taken in custody to Ghent, by order of the Duke of Burgundy. Not until her imprisonment did I suspect that the plan to implicate my lady was his scurvy work.

Van Borselen had foiled the pomander plot; but now was I at wits' end to provide means of communication with my Ermengarde. She was incarcerated with my lady in the Gravensteen, and neither were permitted to set foot outside the gloomy state apartments, where they were served by soldiers in guise of lackeys. They were allowed to receive no visitors, and their letters were intercepted and sent to the Duke. The heavily-barred windows of their gaol frowned down upon turbid waters of a loathly moat which cinctured the

castle on every side. Within tattered tapestries were greening with mould to the mottled tones of ripe goat's-milk cheese, and everywhere was the odour of decay.

I strove to make friends of the guard, bringing my lute like another Blondel and strumming excellent good songs of my own composing, but my gift of minstrelsy got me no farther than the portcullis. Scurvily incorruptible I found them and so unappreciative of the lure of the tavern that none of them would accept my offer to stand sentry in his stead while he refreshed himself with a stoup of ale. Disgustingly intelligent and disobliging these minions, for they had a flair for all my tricks, and though I attempted to send Ermengarde a message concealed in the lining of a coif, the rogues failed to convey it, though they kept my bribe.

In prowling about the wall I discovered a postern door through which, morn and eve, a comely, scholar-like man came and went. Upon our second meeting I made bold to ask if he were of the castle-guard. This he denied, letting me to know that he was an illustrious painter, one Messire Jan van Eyck, commissioned with an *Adoration of the Lamb* which his brother had begun for the Cathedral of St. Bavon. As the canvas was of ungainly dimensions he had been accorded permission to use the Gravensteen council-chamber as his studio.

"Thy name, sir, is not unknown to me," I said,



“Barred windows of her gaol frowned upon turbid waters”

From a photograph by Photochrom Co.



“ A secret staircase led to vaulted subterranean chambers ”

From *Album Historique de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Obreen
Reproduced by permission of G. Van Oest & Company

“and I would fain enjoy sight of this lambkin of thy colourful brush.”

He eyed me quizzically. “I have need of models,” he said. “Hast thou leisure to posture for me? I will pay two copper clinquars the day for thy pains.”

“And what may this posturing be?” I interrogated.

“Naught,” replied van Eyck, “but to sit stock-still and suffer me to limn thy visage.”

“Such labour liketh me well,” I grinned, and the painter resumed boastfully:

“I dream a wondrous vision of Paradise, a glorious assemblage of archangels, blessed saints, holy martyrs, virgins, popes, and emperors.”

I was flattered to have found such favour in his eyes that he thought my lineaments worthy of these worshipful personages, but my vanity was to have a rude tumble. “In what guise wilt thou depict me, as St. George or Charlemagne, since I possess not the requisite garb?”

“Have no fear as to that,” he said reassuringly. “’Tis not in Paradise I would bestow thee but in another picture. I will strip thee to the buff and figure thee as one of the damned in Hell, tormented by devils with red-hot pincers.”

“That likes me not, fair sir,” I made answer, “surely thou dost but jest.”

“I’ faith not,” he returned. “The pincers are but cold iron painted red, and the devils shall torture full

gently." Then giving me his key he bade me mount to the council-chamber after the midday meal.

I agreed to these humiliating conditions in order to gain entrance to the Gravensteen and returned to my hostelry. Here I fell in with two Dutchmen, pretended pottery pedlars, leading pack-horses laden with crates, piled with the ware of Delft. I noted the horses were too good for such service; and scrutinizing the merchants recognized one as the Seigneur of Gorcum, a staunch friend of the Countess.

We speedily put our heads together and came to an understanding. He brought tidings that Humphrey of Gloucester had despatched a contingent of three thousand archers to defend my lady against Duke Philip of Burgundy.

Gorcum had provided for every stage of the journey to Holland, save only the first. For the trivial achievement of conveying the Countess without the city walls he trusted wholly to me.

As we were plotting together, cudgelling our brains under the sense of necessity for speedy action, there clattered through the sleepy, noontide streets a squadron of Burgundian lance.

Sending his command to their barracks, the captain swaggered into the tavern and called loudly for *déjeuner*.

My comrades slipped away unperceived, but I engaged the stranger in conversation. I offered to regale

him with the wine of his country, which the landlord had long in cellar. After the second bottle I learned to my dismay that he had escorted the Duke of Burgundy to Ghent, and that it was the purpose of his master to take the Countess Jacqueline with him on his return to Dijon.

To my inquiry as to the extent of his purposed stay in the city, he replied that his instructions were to count upon but a day's breathing space.

Once on their way there would be no possibility of rescue, for the remnant of my little band had scattered to their homes. I must act quickly. Having once gained access to the castle, by means of Messire van Eyck's key, my intention was to utterly disregard my appointment with him and to find my way by some means to the apartment of the Countess. What was my displeasure, therefore, on mounting the postern stairway to find myself immediately within his studio.

He was so occupied with painting that he noted not my ill humour. "Thou art tardy, damned One," he cried. "Get thee behind yonder arras and disrobe thyself for torture."

I obeyed and was presently postured by the artist. There were no attendant devils nor pincers, and, albeit it irked me to constantly maintain one position, the task was not difficult. It was beginning to grow wearisome, however, when there came a lively knocking at

the postern below stairs, and the painter, grumbling at the interruption, sullenly descended.

At once I set about to explore a doorway which appeared to lead into the interior of the castle, when, to my confusion, it was suddenly opened from the other side and I found myself face to face with my beloved Ermengarde.

The recognition was not at first mutual, for she was not wont to see me in the lack of apparel in which I now presented myself. Shrieking with fright she fled precipitately down the long corridor, while I, catching up the first rag (which chanced to be a dalmatic that the model who posed as the Pope had been wearing), charged frantically after her.

"Ermengarde, dearest lady," I cried, "stop, for the love of Heaven, 'tis I, thy Robessart."

With that she glanced over her shoulder, and, seeing me more decently accoutred, desisted in her flight. I tugged at the dalmatic, to hide my legs, but it played me false as to my chest. Moreover it was slit on both sides, so that Ermengarde forgot her fear in mirth at my discomfiture.

"Cease thy unseemly laughter," I cried, shaking her in my wrath, "if thou hast any wit in thy foolish poll."

Having reduced her to reason I told her why I appeared in such strange garb, and how I would be at the postern that night to conduct my lady and herself

beyond the gates where they would mount pack-horses and so to freedom.

"Gladly will we fly with thee," she made answer, "if thou wilt provide thyself with Christian clothing."

"Have no fear," I replied, "but canst thou gain entrance into the council-chamber?"

"Certes," Ermengarde rejoined confidently. "My lady is sitting for her portrait to Messire van Eyck. The guards have orders to admit her when e'er she wills. Nay, nay, thou shalt not kiss me until thou art garbed in more seemly fashion. Into thy hell of paint-pots, thou damned soul."

Hearing steps at the turn of the corridor I was forced for very shame to obey her. As I slunk to the sheltering arras, Jan van Eyck threw me a quick, questioning look, but he was so occupied with two guests who accompanied him that he spake not.

Scrutinizing them through a rent in the arras I was astonished beyond measure to recognize one as the worshipful Judge Francis van Borselen, and the other thin-shanked and richly dressed, with straight lips, hawk-like nose, and piercing eyes, masked by slanting lids, as the puissant Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Bad, falsely yclept the Good.

Drawing aside the curtain which hid it, van Eyck disclosed his great picture, the *Adoration of the Lamb*.

Duke Philip stood as one spell-bound, declaring the painting a miracle of art. To me it seemed but a

motley multitude, on their knees before a woolly bit of mutton, but van Borselen, of a more spiritual nature, comprehended its mystical significance and overwhelmed the artist with praise.

"Sir van Eyck," spake the Duke, "I came to commission thee to paint for me a portrait."

The artist bowed, murmuring appreciatively.

"Hark thee," continued Philip, "perchance this may not pleasure thee so well. Thou must depart Flanders on the instant, and voyage, with my embassy to the King of Portugal. His daughter, the Infanta Isabella, hath been proffered me in marriage. Her rank is royal, but I mistrust she may be sour-visaged. My late spouse, the Lady Bonne of Artois, was a comely damsel, but Michele, though a princess of France was most ill-favoured. I desire that my future duchess shall be beauteous. I therefore pray thee, van Eyck, to submit me her likeness ere I contract myself."

"My lord," replied the painter, "the beauty of thy betrothed shall suffer no derogation at my brush."

"I fear rather the contrary," retorted the Duke, "and would regard the portrait thou hast limned of the Countess Jacqueline, that I may judge whether thy pencil be flattering as van Borselen's tongue."

As van Eyck produced the portrait the Duke burst into uncontrolled laughter. "So this is thy peerless beauty!" he sneered.

"Nay, my lord," protested van Borselen, "I do

assert that van Eyck hath maligned the noble lady most vilely."

"We shall see forthwith," chuckled the Duke. "Prithee go to her, Messire Painter, and say that Philipee of Burgundy craveth audience with his fair cousin. And, if I find that thy brush doth flatter in lady's favour, no commission shalt thou have to Portugal from me."

There was silence in the studio for a moment, but I had reason in not venturing forth. Presently the Duke resumed. "Friend Borselen, now that we are alone, there is a question I fain would ask of thee. How is that thou didst not find in the tomb of St. Hubert a lady's pomander bearing the device of Hainault?"

"*Sang de Dieu!*" exclaimed the other. "Van Vliet particularized it not so, deposing only that he hid therein a silver casket. Even thus far I deem he lied, for the tomb was empty of aught save the relics of the saint."

"Then, my friend, some agent of the Countess purloined the evidence of her complicity."

"How knowest thou, my lord, there was such evidence?"

The Duke laughed. "In this fashion. The wife of van Vliet begged his life at my hands. 'If thou canst prove,' I promised her, 'that another incited thy husband to this murder then shall he go free.' Thereat

the woman declared that the poison had been secreted in a pomander given to the Countess Jacqueline by one who would have compassed her death therewith, and that this coffret bore her sister's device. What better evidence that she had devised this murder? The pomander thou shouldst have found."

"I have sworn there was naught in the tomb. Most like she planned to place it there to save her husband," mused van Borselen."

"Say rather that so I inconsiderately planned," continued the Duke. "The death of the Lady Jacqueline would have spared me much inconvenience. But, since she is innocent of that crime, I rejoice that her removal was not compassed thus prematurely. Advisedly I use the word, for it is not my wont to cast away an orange till I have sucked dry its sweetness. Now mark thee, van Borselen, and thou shalt know why I have asked thee to share this interview. I have persuaded the Pope to declare that the Countess Jacqueline was never by Holy Church divorced from Brabant; therefore her marriage with Gloucester is null and void. His Holiness hath envoyed me this notification, and since she could scarcely regard with favour the bearer of such tidings, it is my desire that thou shouldst present the missive in my stead."

"Gramercy for thy courtesy," replied van Borselen with irony.

"Nay, pull not such a wry countenance," laughed

Philip. "I will protect thee from her spleen. Moreover, as a man-of-law, thou art of less account in her eyes than the parchment on which thy pen-craft is engrossed."

Van Borselen nodded assent, but nathless protested. "Since the Duke of Brabant hath departed this earth the Countess hath no further need of divorce, for she is now widowed by act of God."

"Who, I trust, will endow her with a more fitting mate," ejaculated Philip.

"Whom hast thou in mind?" questioned the Justice.

"*Par dieu!* my very self! With this intent have I voyaged hither. Her estates of Holland, Zealand, and Hainault like me well, and will suffice the baggage as dowry."

"But the Infanta Isabella?" questioned van Borselen.

"My friend, 'tis a long mile to Portugal, and much may transpire during the journey of my embassy. Likewise it booteth naught whether the Infanta Isabella be my third duchess or my fourth. Jacqueline hath much lived in little space, mayhap she draweth near to her end."

My flesh crept with horror at the cold-bloodedness of this villain. I could scarce prevent myself from rushing upon him, but at that moment van Eyck entered.

"What reply doth the Countess send to my request for audience?" asked the Duke.

"One scarce courteous, my lord," replied van Eyck. "'The Duchess of Gloucester,' so she insisted I should particularize her, will not receive the Duke of Burgundy."

"*Can* not, man, thou repeatest thy lesson ill."

"Verbatim, my lord, though with less of emphasis. She will, however, gladly grant an interview to the worshipful Judge van Borselen."

"Forward, friend," cried Philip gaily. "Storm the redoubt for me; I commit the siege to thy generalship."

The Duke then departed, but I tarried still in durance, expectant that van Borselen would wait upon my lady in her apartment; but, as he was about to leave the studio, the Countess Jacqueline entered.

"My friend," she exclaimed, "bringest thou tidings from the Pope? Hath he publicly approved my divorce? Tell me, have I my release at last?"

His voice was very grave. "One higher than the Pope hath freed thee; Brabant no longer liveth."

She was silent for a space. "I can not feign sorrow," she said, "for now my marriage with Gloucester is clear before all the world."

"Nay," replied the Judge, "thou art released from him also," and patiently he explained the papal decision.

"'Tis infamy," she raved. "Dare he, or any man, say I am not Duke Humphrey's wife?"

“My lady, as I read here, the Duke hath accepted annulment of his vows. I received this morn a dispatch from England announcing his marriage to Dame Eleanor Cobham!”

“It is false!” she cried, then tottered like to faint. He soothed and comforted, but was still far from understanding her.

“Gloucester is unworthy of thee,” he urged. “Another, who hath long worshipped thee, asketh only to devote his life to thy service.”

“I know whom thou wouldst signify. The Duke of Burgundy hath ever so beset me. How canst thou counsel such unspeakable disgrace?”

“God forbid! Thou art a saint too holy for the love of sinful man.”

“Nay,” she protested, “I am only a woman who loves her husband, and will defend her estates for him 'gainst all the dukes and popes in Christendom. Therefore I implore thee aid my faithful equerry, John Robessart, to deliver me from this prison.”

“This night I will come,” he promised, “and guard thee to Holland and to safety.”

Hastening to the inn I instructed the Delft-ware pedlars that they should await us in a forest beyond the city walls and, as the evening sun was slanting its long beams across the grey Gravensteen, I betook myself again to the postern gate. Applying my key with confidence to the lock, I was astonished to find the door

bolted on the inside. I tapped softly, hoping that Ermengarde would draw the bolt.

Presently, creaking on its ponderous hinges, the gate swung open within the black entry, and I fell into the arms of a burly sentinel whose unshorn chaps grated against my amorous lips.

"What wouldst thou here?" he demanded, shaking me as a terrier might a rat.

"I bring Jan van Eyck a message," I protested, "from the Duke of Burgundy."

"Thou mayest mount," the watch grumbled; "I have no warrant to hinder the incoming of who-so-will. But thou goest not out until dawn. Not a mouse may quit the castle this night."

Hastily bolting into the studio I found the Countess and Ermengarde disguised in boys' attire ready for departure. Van Borselen also had returned armed with a sword. "I have left a letter disowning my allegiance to the Duke of Burgundy," he explained, "and am ready to accompany and defend the Countess."

"More like to remain in custody with her," I retorted, "for I know not how we shall make shift to leave the castle," and I reported the strict orders newly given to the guards.

Jan van Eyck sprang to his feet and touching a spring threw open a concealed door disclosing a secret staircase. "See," he exclaimed, "this leadeth to a passage beneath the moat, debouching, as I have

found by exploration, in a chapel beyond the city wall. It served the Counts of Flanders long syne, when they desired to sally with little ceremony from the custody of their too-loving subjects. Take thou the command of this sortie, Friend Equerry."

"I will then lead with the lanthorn," I cried; "do thou, Judge van Borselen, support my lady. Ermengarde, follow with thy satchel, and do thou, Messier Painter, bring up the rear, our defence in case we are pursued."

"We will not be followed," spake up Ermengarde, "for I have had the guard heat my lady's bath-room and have left a light burning. They will not intrude but will respect her deshabelle."

"It seemeth men have more courtesy than some women," I said sourly, and the baggage tittered.

"Why this levity?" asked her mistress.

"John Robessart was saying," quoth the hussy brazenly, "that yon Bishop's gear were a rare disguise, an Messier van Eyck would but lend it."

"Prate no longer, but away," I cried, and with that we began to thread the long passage.

Loathly it was, with a graveyard stench, and dank with drippings from the leaky walls, slippery and dark too, save for the flickering light of my lanthorn, which flung wavering shadows behind us, frightening the rats helter-skelter as we penetrated more deeply. Their scuttling and the echoes of our own footsteps on the

slimy stones were gruesome indeed; but when we had traversed half the interminable passage a veritable danger beset us.

Torches gleamed in the darkness; from the other extremity of the noisome gallery, marching toward us, came the night-watch, who, seeing our light and mistaking us for comrades, hailed us lustily, demanding drink.

We retreated to a shallow cave in which tools were kept, and into this we thrust the women and waited. The flare of their torches showed us six lusty fellows armed with halberds marching toward us two by two.

In a moment they were upon us. I felled one to the earth, then rushed with drawn sword upon his companion and pinked his arm lightly—but he was no coward, and changing his pike to his left hand whirled it like a quarter staff above his head. There was no room in that narrow space for the others to advance while we fought like fiends. Van Borselen flashed the cresset in the eyes of my opponent, which gave me the advantage and he went down.

The two following next, charging with lowered pikes, drave at me. I fell sprawling, with a glancing thrust on the side and a thwack of my pate on the pave. Van Borselen bestrode me. I heard for a moment the steady clack, clack of his sword on the two halberds and wondered dully that a *gens de robe* could fence so well; then all was blackness and silence.

They told me afterward that he ran one through, but lost his footing on the slimy pavement, tripping up the other, whom he held down with an iron grip and deprived of his weapon.

Leaping over the entangled heap, the remaining two tore through the tunnel, but van Eyck, snatching a mattock from the tool-closet, crushed the head of one, and the sixth alone escaped, speeding to give alarm at the castle.

"How goes it with thee, my brave Robessart?" asked my lady.

"Most vilely drunk," I stuttered; "'tis debatable whether I have the right use of my senses."

"Thou hast greater exigency for the use of thy legs," replied van Eyck, "for that bawling poltroon will bring a pack of soldier dogs to retrieve us."

Staggering down the gallery we blundered on, Ermengarde supporting me, like the stout-hearted, stout-bodied girl she was, and presently we reached a short stairway, then a gate opening into the crypt of the chapel. Alas! it was locked!

Beyond, steps led upward and a dim light filtered down. Rats swarmed by us squeezing through the bars. These vermin were not frightened by our passage, but ran past and over us, mad to gain the outer air. My lady shrieked as they brushed her feet, and we fought them off. They came by hundreds. It did not seem possible that the sewers of the city could contain so many.

At last the hegira ceased, and we sate us down to rest and consider, when my lady cried out that she heard the gurgle of lapping water. Van Eyck swung the lantern downward, and saw what had frightened the rats. They of the castle had discovered our flight and had let in the water. We were trapped and would be drowned.

We clattered upon the gate and not long thereafter a band of halberdiers appeared. They had been sent from the castle to apprehend us; and though they saved us from the watery death, yet would we have been scarce advantaged, but for van Borselen. He loosing from his person a heavy belt bought them off, swearing them to report that they found us not.

Discovering in the neighbourhood our pottery merchants, van Eyck bade us farewell, and we brought my lady safely to her strong fortress of Gorcum.

Here Judge van Borselen left us, to serve her in financing her army. The Duke of Burgundy had created him tax-collector for her estates of Holland and Zealand, and he continued to exercise the duties of that office, with the difference that he henceforth rendered his accounts directly to the Countess Jacqueline.

No need for me to chronicle how gallantly she battled for her rights. Her campaign of two years, with the little, lukewarm aid from England granted by Parlia-

ment, in shame for Gloucester's indifference, is known to all.

She took the field in person, the peasants rallying to her cause. Fortresses she took and those opening their gates to her she defended. In skirmishes and battles, sieges and sallies, the taking of banners by her own hand, and in bushments and escalades she did a man's work with a man's endurance, and it was no defeat at arms that at last broke her great spirit.

Courageously she bore the capture of her towns, the surrender of her army, and the Duke of Burgundy's final victory. Not a whit would she have cared for the Pope's decision against the legality of her marriage if the Duke of Gloucester had but responded to her many passionate appeals by coming or sending for her. But when she could no longer doubt that he had accepted the freedom granted by the Holy Father and had publicly wedded with his mistress Eleanor Cobham—then, and then only, did my lady acknowledge herself conquered and desolate.

So indifferent was she to her own future place in Fortune's pageant¹ that when the time came for a treaty with the Duke of Burgundy she agreed to all his demands, acknowledging him as regent of her countships and consenting if she married without his approval that her subjects should owe obedience only to the Duke.

¹ Shakespeare makes Eleanor Cobham boast: "Being a woman I will not be slack to play my part in Fortune's pageant."

She had indeed no thought of marriage, regarding herself as broken-hearted and longing to enter a convent when she signed this treaty. The Duke, however, well knew that unless she retained this empty semblance of authority (resigning its exercise as a weak feminine person to him as her *ruward* and heir), he could do nothing with her loyal-hearted folk of Hainault.

Adroitly he managed to withdraw her from her city of Mons, by making her "Lady Forester of Holland," with privileges of hunting where she would.

When he neglected to pay her stipulated income, so that she was sore harassed, he overreached himself, for it was then that she acceded to the oft-repeated request of van Borselen to make use of his castle of Martinsdijk.

I misdoubted that a mere commoner could possess a château more sumptuously appointed than that of my lady at Quesnoy. But the one particular of tapestries may stand for an ensample of how vastly his treasuries outvied hers. My lady's chamber was garnished with hangings of peacock-winged angels, after designs by Jan van Eyck; his own with grotesqueries of many strange beasties; the two an allegory, he explained, symbolizing the disparity in their souls.

Yet, for all this seeming humility, he caused every wall and furnishment to be ornamented with the letter D, intertwined with garlands.

When, much intrigued, she demanded the answer

to this riddle, he said the device stood for "Devotion," "Dijn williger, dienaar" ("I am thy serf and willingly will serve"), which motto he had assumed since having the happiness to know her.

This gave my lady food for reflection, the more that on the same day he placed in my hands a casket containing deeds for lands, bondments for money loaned, and gold-pieces in such number as we conceived not treasured save in the strong-box of an emperor.

It was indeed his entire fortune, to the last clinquar. "Tell thy mistress," he said, "to take herefrom whate'er she needs, for all my possessions are hers, and to aid her is my highest joy."

What more to chronicle, save that such long patience and devotion past belief could not fail of its reward, and that they were wedded at my lady's hunting-château of The Hague.

I was sent to Quesnoy to fetch a few chests of her belongings. There I found an unopened package from the tapestry weavers of Oudenaarde. It contained the abandoned tapestry of the tournament, commanded when it was thought that the Dukes of Burgundy and Gloucester would splinter lances in the lists.

With good gusto I kicked the pictured persons of these vile caitiffs into a closet of worthless lumber, there to be consumed by moths and rats, or cut into door-mats to be drabbled with the grime of stranger feet. Some of

my lady's white dogs wandering at large in the park came at my whistle and ran by my stirrup all the long way to The Hague.

Philip of Burgundy was not like to overlook such high-handed defiance. Lurking under the very shadow of her castle walls, his bravos abducted the bridegroom and carried him to the citadel of Rupelmonde in Flanders.

Secret as had been his arrest we were ware of it an hour later. I flung on my war-harness, and my lady rang the alarm, summoning her meagre troop to the pursuit.

Speedily down the Scheldt we rowed, flat-boats and wagons following us with cannon, bombards, and siege enginery.

At Rupelmonde, under a white flag, the Duke of Burgundy sallied forth to parley. This was mere irony on the part of Philip, for he could have annihilated our little force had he chosen so to do. He sought instead, by playing upon the anxiety of the Countess, to secure her abdication.

In her sore distress she agreed to the renunciation of every vestige of authority, rank, and property in exchange for her husband's life. Stripped of everything they retired to Martinsdijk, a poor gentleman and his dowerless, untitled wife. Yet methinks they were never before so happy. I mind me of a poem which van Borselen wrote my lady at this time:

SESTINA

The love of Youth is lik the floure of daye
That burgeons in the herte, surpassing bryghte,
Blooming too soone, it wasteth to decaye,
Poore passion-floure, enduring for a nyghte,
Then trampled under fote and cast awaye
Ere it hath knowne the noone of love's delyte.

Fulnes of love and life's parfait delyte
But comes with tyme and flyghte of ardent daye,
Inne tranquile houres of cool star-studded nyghte,
Whenne folded floures exhale a faynt decaye,
And whyspered nothings 'neath the ful moone bryghte
Breathe more of love thanne frensies flung awaye.

As fayrest blossoms, soonest flung awaye,
Youth's fervente flame of love and fond delyte
Flares for a litel, lik the flush of daye,
Then, flickering, dies in ashen-embered nyghte,
A floure out-bloomed, that festers in decaye,
A soul-consuming flame of passion bryghte!

Not thus the love of manhood, gleaming bryghte,
Grows ever bryghter stille, nor flings awaye
The folded floure of Youth's unknown delyte
But turns with faery touch to radiant daye
The gloomy shadows of the darksome nyghte,
And knoweth naught of wasting or decaye.

The floure of Youth is born but to decaye
Its noondaye bloome, erstwhile so wondrous bryghte,
The blood-red passion floure of Youth's brief daye,
The battle-cry of brute desire's delyte,
Satiety doth swiftly burn awaye—
Leaving the ashes only of the nyghte.

But who so loves the freshness of the nyghte,
Whose fragraunce wasteth not, nor knows decaye,
And fret of Noone intolerably bryghte,
The end of strife, alle sorrow cast awaye
He knoweth fulnes of life's blest delyte
The floure supreme of Love's enduring daye.

ENVOI

Princesse, my daye thou art and eke my nyghte,
Floure ever bryghte that knoweth not decaye,
Ne'er flung awaye, blythe bloom of love's delyte.

So perfect were the two short years that followed that it would seem Heaven could not grant mortals such delight upon earth, and my lady was called above when she would much liefer have bided below with the one being who truly loved her.

The exposure of many campaigns had been more than her fragile frame could survive, and on a Sabbath dawn, as we knelt in tears about her, my lady passed to peace.

All that night she was wandering in her mind. At one moment she deemed herself besieging a castle, another begging the life of her husband, anon galloping with her stag-hounds through the forests; but never a thought or word of recreant Gloucester. At last she imagined herself in the studio of Jan van Eyck.

"Behold that great multitude," she cried, "the heavenly hosts and sainted martyrs, emperors, popes, and warriors in adoration before the Lamb!"

Van Borselen sought the holy script and read:
“These are they who came out of great tribulation.”

“Out of great tribulation,” she echoed, “into, into what?”

He read on, though his voice broke for weeping:
“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. For the Lamb shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.” He pressed her fingers to his lips murmuring. “And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away.”

CHAPTER VIII

A RAT I' THE ARRAS

(THE STORY OF EGMONT)

I

THROUGH the thick tapestry Sabine had felt it move. Scarcely a tremor, but she sensed its loathsome form upon her neck, as she leaned against the arras. She knew it instantly for a rat from an offensive, musky odour, and, from its stealthy vanishing, judged it more frightened than herself, though her terror of the tribe amounted to hysteria. She could neither shriek nor faint here in church and create a disturbance, but she changed her seat and bravely mastered her nausea.

The tapestry was one of a set adorning a side chapel. She had always loved to regard them, for they depicted the procession of the miraculous image of Notre Dame du Sablon. The comely youths, Charles V. and his brother Ferdinand, were bearing our lady upon a brancard, accompanied by ecclesiastics and singing choristers.

“The Emperor, Margaret of Austria, and her five homely nieces kneeling before the Virgin”



Tapestry -The Legend of Notre Dame de Sablon Side Panels

From *Le Musée Cinquantenaire*, Brussels



Margaret of Austria
From a contemporary print

There was a pretty legend, which Sabine firmly believed, that the image had voyaged of itself to the Church of Notre Dame du Sablon, and was most gracious in its responses to all petitions.

In another panel Margaret of Austria, aunt of the Emperor, was represented, kneeling before the Virgin, with her five homely nieces, who were doubtless beseeching for husbands.

Sabine had a kindly feeling toward the entire family for they had all attended her wedding (at a period much later than that depicted in the tapestry). The Emperor Charles was not so handsome as when a boy bearing the sacred image; but he had been fond of her husband, as indeed who could fail to be, her glorious Lamoral, Count of Egmont and Prince of Gave?

While she was thinking of him he entered the church and made his way through the crowd toward her. The populace of Brussels adored him for his great victories of St. Quentin and Gravelines. The heart of Sabine swelled with pride as she saw the sea of admiring faces turn toward him.

How aristocratic his bearing and yet how debonair. His hair prematurely streaked with grey only added to the distinction of his appearance, which owed nothing to his princely attire.

There was no vacant seat but the one beside the tapestry. Sabine's lips framed the words. "Beware,

a rat!" He was too far to hear, but saw her fright, and smiled reassuringly.

Then as he sank upon his knees she fell to comparing her husband—tall, with features of feminine delicacy, soft brown eyes and slight moustache shading lips modelled like those of Antinous—with the portrait of the youthful Emperor upon the tapestry; and, flattered as the latter was, knew that Egmont was far more kingly.

She remembered the Emperor, on his last appearance in Brussels, at the great ceremony of his abdication. Decrepit at fifty-five, he had leaned for support on the shoulder of the Prince of Orange. His frail boyish face had grown coarse and repulsive, the Hapsburg jaw protruding heavily, the lower lip pendulous and flabby, only the brow and eye retaining their expression of majesty.

Then it seemed to her that the tapestry swayed slightly. An instant later a letter slipped from its folds and her husband's hand closed upon it; the tapestry swayed again and all was as before.

Vaguely troubled, Sabine sought her husband after the service, but found difficulty in approaching him for his friends besieged him on all sides. Murmurs of admiration had disturbed the reverent silence when he entered, but as he descended the church steps a storm of huzzas rent the air.

His great slouched hat in hand, bowing acknowledg-

“ Philip knelt in obeisance before his imperial father ”



Abdication of Charles V., by Le Gollait
From a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.



“ In a cabaret of Seville ” (Vinea)

Copyright, 1896, by Photographische Gesellschaft, Berlin

ments in every quarter, as though all this homage were intended for himself, the mercurial Baron Brederode flattered his general with protestations of devotion. "Willingly," he exclaimed, "would I deny God to become thy dog, 'Mustache,' and follow at thy heels!"

Catching sight of his father's friend, ducking between the legs of the crowd, Joconde, the merry five-year-old son of Egmont ran to the side of Brederode. Gradually the two edged their way to Sabine and walked across the square to the home of Egmont.

While waiting for the Count to disengage himself from his admirers, Brederode went into the garden with Joconde.

"Everyone loves Little Father," the child exclaimed proudly. "Is it not so, Baron Breddy?"

"Everyone," the Baron replied with emphasis, "except the Duke of Alva; and he does not signify."

"Why doesn't the Duke of Alva love Little Father?" asked Joconde.

"Because your father did what Alva said was impossible. He won the battle of Gravelines. 'Impossible for you,' said the King, 'but not for a greater man.' The Duke will never forgive your father for that."

"Show me how Little Father won the battle," begged the boy.

"*Petit polisson*," replied the Baron; "I have told you twenty times already, but now we will enact it veraciously. I will be your father; the purple fleur-

de-lys yonder, the Gascons. The white lilies will do duty as the English ships. The tulips behind me are Lazarus Schwendi's black hussars. Thou shalt play my part, and with Mustache as cavalry, sneak around by the downs, under cover of the rose-bushes and turn De Therme's left. Now, when I shout your father's battle cry, 'Follow me, all who love the Fatherland!' have at them helter-skelter, and drive the frog-eaters into the sea. Here we go. Yell 'Huzza for Egmont!' Pikemen, musketeers, lancers, sword to sword, breast to breast, horse to horse! The foe is ours!"

Carried away by his enthusiasm Brederode sprang into the iris-bed lopping off blossoms right and left with his sword; while Joconde echoing his cry charged with Mustache through the hedge of roses. In their furious *mêlée* they overturned the bee-hive. The vengeful bees issued in an unanticipated *sortie*, and, attacking the valiant army, front and rear, routed it ignominiously.

Alarmed by Gautier, the butler, who declared that Monsieur the Baron was drunk again and murdering their little child, Egmont ran to the garden to rescue Joconde from the swarming bees.

Brederode, beside himself with pain could give no explanation, but rushed cursing hither and thither.

"Take the boy within," exclaimed Egmont, "and try to understand why he made this raid upon the honey. I can make nothing of his talk."

It was incoherent indeed, for Joconde, between his howls, protested: "He was thee, and I was he! But the bees would not play fair. The French did not really make sortie from Gravelines. They did not vanquish thee, Little Father, but the bees would not surrender. They did not play fair!"

Sabine balsamed the stings of the gallant combatants and Brederode assuaged the grief of Joconde by singing a song with which his troop were wont to hearten their spirits for the charge.

BOOTS AND SADDLES

Hot with the wine cup red,
Drunken and ruddy!
Rolling gait, reeling head,
Rapiers bloody.

Ghostly the cresset flares
Best to be wary,
Hark, 'tis the bugle blares!
Heedless we tarry.

Spreads the cold, ashen dawn,
Mount, gallants merry.
O, ere the game be gone!
On to the quarry.

One more last stirrup-cup,
Fair or foul weather,
Fill, brim the tankard up,
Drink we together.

Old Belgium

Sharp are our swords and dirks,
Brave blades, each dagger.
Though death in ambush lurks
Gaily we'll swagger.

Then through the daggered dark,
Through mire and bracken,
Strike poniards to the mark.
Halt not nor slacken.

Leave we our wine and mirth
Fear we no evil.
Mount, but draw tight the girth,
Ride like the devil!

After dinner, when Sabine had retired with the children, Egmont and his friend sat late together.

"You are not drinking as usual tonight, Brederode," said his host, passing the decanter.

"I' faith no," replied the other. "I have weighty matters to discuss with you which demand a clear head. There is trouble brewing, that you alone can avert. The Inquisition is burning too many good citizens. There is revolt everywhere."

Egmont frowned. "I do not wonder," he said. "It is the work of that cursed Granvelle. He sets the Inquisition on every rich man for the sake of his fortune."

"Rebellion is ripening," replied Brederode. "I have it from good authority that when two heretic ministers were taken for execution to the public square

at Valenciennes they were rescued by the rabble, who tore lighted faggots from the pyre and belaboured the executioners."

Egmont's eyes kindled. "Whether this new religion be madness or no it cannot be stamped out by the Inquisition. The Cardinal is not a Fleming; he does not know our temper. The Council shall write the King urging him to moderate the edict."

Brederode shook his head. "The Cardinal is not only a member of your Council, he boasts that he is the Council."

Egmont broke out angrily. "'Sdeath! Brederode, are you turned Cardinalist? I shall chastise this popinjay one day if the saints do not mend my temper."

Brederode tapped his sword. "That is exactly what is on my mind," he said.

Egmont calmed at once. "What in the devil's name do you insinuate?"

"Only this, sixty thousand armed men attend the Protestant field preachings. All they need is a leader, a van Artevelde, but they would scorn to follow a brewer; they demand the most illustrious warrior of our age. If you will command them they will seize Brussels before Philip can send his army."

"Hush, that were treason," whispered Egmont. "Ne'er will I take arms against the King. But for the Cardinal—war, not a bloody but a merry one. We will

ridicule him in pasquinades. His life shall be such a burden that he will gladly resign his office."

"So be it. Come to Count Cullemburg's house tonight. There will be a foregathering of madcap fellows to wassail the moon down and the sun up. We will form a league which shall harry the Cardinal to an early grave."

"That I will. The popinjay has embroidered a cardinal's hat on the liveries of his servants. He has called our young Belgian bloods dunces. Very well, we will take the fool's cap as our device. Let him beware the jester's gibe!"

II

SON ÉMINENCE ROUGE

Anthony Perenot, Cardinal Granvelle, was in residence at La Fontaine, his charming villa in the environs of Brussels. Through the open casements of his study the warm summer wind brought the fragrance of roses and hyacinths. It was too glorious a day for writing, and, thrusting from him a voluminous pile of papers, he summoned his secretary.

"François," he said, "dispatch these memorials to Madrid, and acquaint Donna Felicidad that I will await her in the garden."

As the Cardinal descended the terrace a silvery voice laughed: "I am here, Uncle; I was waiting outside

the window for you to finish those stupid letters. Of what use is a secretary if he does not attend to your correspondence?"

The Cardinal smiled indulgently. "The reason, Felicidad, that my writing consumes so much time is because I dictate to both correspondents. First, letters from Margaret of Parma to Philip, enclosing therewith drafts of answers which he will return. It is just as well, you see, for one head to manage these complicated affairs."

"But how silly, to waste time instructing those puppets and in making them believe that they accomplish all of their own volition."

"'Tis an amusing game. With no one have I e'er been so frank before. I recognize that there is something other than thistle-down within your pretty head. Did you hear the letter I was dictating François to write Count Egmont?"

"Every word! I am your little white rat, Uncle; I can slip about so silently that no one guesses me near. I gave Madame of Parma quite a start last night, when she was scolding Prince William of Orange. Why does she dislike him. Is it because she is afraid of him?"

"Tut, tut, have you not learned that we do not scold people whom we fear? The Regente is too stupid to be afraid of the Silent One. She thinks him tractable because he does not fly into a pas-

sion like Egmont; in reality he is ten times more dangerous."

"Is Egmont dangerous?"

"That Friend of Smoke is dangerous only to himself. To us he may be very useful. You knew him once. How intimately?"

"'Twas long ago, when he was returning from the war in Barbary. He was but nineteen."

"And you fourteen. Fruits ripen early in Seville."

"Yes, Uncle, my Cousin Carmen and I were carrying a basket of grapes through the inn courtyard. A group of officers were playing mandolins and drinking at a table. Seeing us, they demanded a song. I trilled a merry *canzone*. Wouldst hear it now, Uncle?"

And Felicidad sang:

THE RAT

Like the cliquetis of a castanet
 In a patio of Seville,
 Or the pick, pick, pick, in a cabaret,
 Of the mandolin's tinkling trill.

So I patter softly through the wet
 Of the loathly kennel rill
 And I scratch, scratch, scratch, on the parapet,
 Or the stone of the window-sill.

I jig, like a dancing marionette
 And a Jumping Jack or Jill;
 While I shriek, shriek, shriek, like a paroquet
 With squeaks of laughter shrill.

I nibble beneath the cabinet,
In the hours of midnight chill,
And I gnaw, gnaw, gnaw, as my teeth I whet,
And I saw, with my claws, and drill.

In the holy fount of the anchoret,
I disport, till I've drunk my fill,
And I tear, tear, tear, through the closest net,
Till I wreak my vengeful will.

So then dub me any epithet,
Howsoe'er unclean or ill,
I will rap, tap, tap, like a drum-cadet,
For a rat you can never kill.

“Then Egmont cried: ‘If thou art a rat then am I a cat!’ and springing over tables and benches gave me chase. I crimsoned his face well with my grapes and ran away. How his comrades laughed, declaring that it was the first time Egmont had been wounded. Thereafter I never saw him. I misdoubt if he would recognize me.”

“He remembers you, child, without doubt. ’Twas a good beginning. Hearken, Felicidad, Egmont is the most noble seigneur in Belgium, the richest, dearest to the popular heart and to that of the King. He is impressionable, easily flattered, a character made for us to mould.”

“I do not understand.”

“Then you are not so quick as I supposed. I am weary of the Regente. Time was when she was

docile. I could guide her exactly as I wished, but she is developing the Hapsburg obstinacy. She shows dangerous symptoms of independent thought and action. The Inquisition, my child, is a great blessing. Everyone in the Netherlands fears for his life. All that a man hath will he give for that, and we are judiciously using the wine-press. But the Regente has learned the lesson which I have taught her almost too well. She has attempted a little injudicious squeezing of her own; has taken bribes to guarantee certain wealthy personages from *me*. Most puerile. I fear I shall be compelled to have her recalled."

"Have the King's sister deposed!"

"Quite so, but in the meantime I must bestir me, for a substitute. These turbulent Belgians would go mad with joy to have an over-stadtholder chosen from among their own greatest nobles."

"But could you persuade Egmont to uphold the Inquisition?"

The Cardinal half closed his eyes. "I might not be able to persuade him," he replied, "but Egmont has an affectionate nature, his wife might accomplish what I could not."

"His wife! Sabine of Bavaria! Uncle, she hates you!"

The Cardinal laughed and continued to study his niece, who was nervously stripping the roses from a delicate bush.

“Sabine, Countess of Egmont, has a remarkable constitution,” he said, “as strong as that rose-tree’s, and yet”—he stooped and regarded the plant with sudden interest. “What a pity,” he said, “I verily believe some little creature has gnawed the stem. Can it possibly have been a rat?”

III

DOUBT

A soul-mist, through whose rifts familiar stars
Beholding we misname.

—JEAN INGELOW.

Egmont fingered the tiny, musk-scented missive within the breast of his doublet. Its penetrating odour permeated his clothing and wakened vague, haunting memories of glorious Sevillian nights.

The clack of the castanet to flying feet, the flash of gaily embroidered mantillas, and languorous Andalusian eyes swam before him in that seductive perfume.

His hand had closed over the billet thrust before him as he knelt, for it might be of moment; there were other conspiracies hatching than those of love. When quite alone he tore open the letter and read:

“SEÑOR LAMORAL, COUNT EGMONT:

“The Little White Rat has nibbled her way to Brussels. Wouldst thou know why? Then fail not to attend the Regente’s ball. There thou shalt find

one who would make amends for so saucily staining thy fine lace collar."

Egmont had read with increasing bewilderment but now burst into a laugh. "Ten years ago! She will find me changed." He sprang to his mirror and turned up his mustachios, à la Henri of Navarre. Then he thought of his wife and stepping to the fireplace deliberately burned the billet. As he did so Sabine entered.

"Our Pierrot and Columbine costumes for the masquerade have arrived," she said. "Would you like to inspect them?"

The burning letter diffused a heavy scent; Sabine sniffed and looked about. Egmont drew her toward him. "Dear, would it disappoint you very much not to attend this ball?"

"No indeed," she replied "but will not the Regente be offended?"

He shrugged. "A fig for the Regente," then, framing her face in his hands, continued: "My little wife has seemed wan and listless of late. These court functions are very wearisome. What say you to a vacation at the château?"

"You will come too, Lamoral?"

"But certainly. It is time I looked over the alterations the architect is making and the beck must be swarming with trout. Let us set forth at once, dearest."

As he spoke Gautier entered bearing a letter. Egmont tore it open and read: "I shall come to Brussels for the ball and will slip away with you for a private conference. Concoct some pretext to keep your wife away. The matter is of vital moment." There was no signature but he recognized the script, that of the Prince of Orange.

"Peste!" he exclaimed: "I shall be unable to accompany you, but will follow soon."

"I will await you," Sabine protested.

"Nay, dearest, it happens well, this is an important meeting. We must not be disturbed. Be off all of you and amuse yourselves well. Flinging the letter beside the one still smouldering he hastily left the room.

Sabine approached the fire-place; as the billet curled and flickered she read: "Concoct some pretext to keep your wife away," and on the incinerated paper beneath it, "The Little White Rat."

The heart of Sabine was very heavy. Never before had she doubted her husband's love. As yet her doubt was the vaguest shadow, for who could be more tenderly solicitous. Had he not noted her pallor and insisted that she leave the city with the children for their chateau of Gaesbeek,¹ though, immersed as he was in important affairs, he could not accompany her?

¹ Ten miles south-west of Brussels near Lennich St. Martin.

Therefore, because he desired it, though she would liefer have remained at his side, and because country-life was better for the children and especially for active Joconde they were at Gaesbeek.

The beck was full of trout, an endless source of amusement for them all—from Father Xavier the tutor, who had been accorded a vacation from his duties at Notre Dame du Sablon, to blond-headed Joconde, that “naughty Cupidon,” the special trial of the good priest.

Sabine sat apart under the great willow and watched their sport idly. After a time Joconde left the others and stealing behind her, clasped his hands over her eyes. She laughed at his “Guess who,” and drawing down the plump white hands covered them with kisses.

“I did not frighten you this time, Little Mother, not so much as that day in the church, when you jumped right out of your chair!”

“Frightened me in the church?” she echoed.

“Yes, Little Mother, you thought I was a rat!”

She started now in earnest. “Was that you, Joconde, who stole your hand through the tapestry?”

“And stroked your neck, Little Mother; but I did not mean to scare you, at least not so badly.”

“What were you doing, you bad boy, behind the arras?”

“I was waiting there for father; the lacy lady wanted me to give him the letter right away, and so nobody would see.”

"The lacy lady, Joconde?"

"Yes, Little Mother, a lady in a pretty lace dress, with a lace shawl over her head,—that smelled—like medicine."

"You mean of perfumery."

"No, not 'fumery," and the child screwed his small nose, "like—like your fur cloak, nice and not nice."

"Civet," mused Sabine. "I smelled it that day when you gave the letter."

"Yes, the letter smelled so too. I washed my hands afterward. It tickled my nose, I liked it and I did not like it."

Sabine kissed the blond head, then suddenly held him at arm's length. "Joconde," she exclaimed with wide eyes, "I sense that perfume again!"

"Yes, Little Mother. See, another letter!" and he took it from his doublet. "The lacy lady drove by the great gate of the château today. She saw me on the lawn, beckoned me to her, and bade me give it to Little Father, and a book to Father Xavier."

"But your father is not here."

"I did not have time to tell her, she talked so fast and then drove away."

"What did she say, Joconde?"

"Give it to no one else. It is very important."

"Then I must drive to the city and take it to him." But as Sabine hesitated the silken cord which fastened the letter unknotted. Surely she did no wrong in

ascertaining the urgency of the occasion, and she read:

“DEAR FRIEND:

“The Regente is seriously vexed with you for declining her invitation. She wishes to consult with you on a vital matter. Fail not to come.

“FELICIDAD.”

There was still time. Egmont must be notified; and Sabine hastened to the city. The palace windows were ablaze with lights as she passed, her own house dark.

“Monseigneur has hastily decided to attend the ball, and has just departed,” Gautier explained.

“I also have changed my mind,” said Sabine. “My costume is in my dressing-room. Bid the coachman wait.”

As Sabine entered, the Pierrot and Columbine gavotte was progressing. She slipped into an unobtrusive seat to watch its evolutions. It was easy to recognize Egmont, for he carried himself with a graceful insouciance which was unmistakable. Her admiring gaze wandered to his partner—piquant, full of dash and abandon; her imperious stamp, and fingers snapped at intervals had all the bravado of a fandango. Sabine watched her fascinated, until a faint, repugnant perfume assaulted her senses and drowned every other sensation in an overwhelming flood of jealousy.

The dance ended Egmont and his Columbine wan-

dered to the garden. "It was good of you, Felicidad," he said "to avert the anger of the Regente from Sabine by impersonating her this evening."

Felicidad laughed. "Can you not forget Sabine for an instant while I tell you why I sought this interview? Egmont, I love you."

"Hush!" he said earnestly. "This is folly. We must never meet again. My friendship cannot aid you; it is dangerous for us both."

She caught his hand, and pleaded. "Hear me, Egmont. You stand at the parting of the ways. Without my help you go to death. I read my uncle's letters and will report all to you. Better, I can imitate the Cardinal's hand and interline in his despatches advice which the king will follow blindly. Philip has under consideration the recall of the Regente. I will counsel your appointment in her stead. Now, Egmont, will you not love me?"

"No, Felicidad," he replied coldly, "I love Sabine so utterly that there is no cranny in my heart for another. Nor will I, for any bribe, feign affection to purchase the services of a spy."

"Take my hate since you scorn my love," she said, and struck him full in the face.

Disdaining to play the eavesdropper, Sabine had wandered aimlessly through the salons until the return of Egmont, when avoiding the unmasking she stole away indignant and heart-sore to her home.

Gautier stared with protruding eyeballs. "Am I then drunk without drinking, that I thus see double?" he exclaimed. "Having just admitted you, and seeing no one go out, I am at a loss, madame, to explain your reappearance."

"Search the house!" cried Sabine, "some thief hath entered."

They tiptoed cautiously about, discovering no one, and while Sabine was searching the upper chambers Egmont entered accompanied by his friends, William of Orange and Count Horn. They passed immediately to the library, and while Gautier strove to speak his master closed the door.

Sabine was in a quandary. Should she intrude upon this secret meeting to warn her husband of an imaginary danger? Instead she would keep watch that no spy or assassin lurked in the hall. Dismissing Gautier, she ensconced herself behind a statue which occupied a niche near the library door.

A murmur of earnest debate came to her, but not for some moments could she distinguish words. Suddenly Egmont's voice rang clear:

"Loyalty is my watchword; loyalty to wife, religion, country, and king. God helping me I shall be faithful to each and all."

"My friend," replied Orange, "you will find loyalty to king unconfomable with loyalty to country, as I have found vassalage to the Catholic faith inconsistent

with the duty I owe my Protestant wife. If the Inquisition had Sabine in its net would you still uphold it?"

"My wife is a faithful daughter of the Church," protested Egmont, "and has nothing to fear."

"How many good Catholics have we seen burned, for the pretended crime of singing in Flemish psalms which we sing in Latin; when the real occasion of their death was that their possessions were coveted by the Cardinal. Egmont, it is fortunate that the Regente wishes to send you as her envoy to Spain at this time. You will inform Philip that the whole machinery of edicts, informers, inquisitors, and scaffolds must once and forever be abolished. Of your success in this dubious undertaking, I have little hope; but, if anyone can influence his Majesty, you are the man. Above all, convince Philip that the Cardinal is fomenting disorder and must be recalled."

As Orange ceased speaking, Felicidad ran down the staircase past Sabine, who attempted vainly to detain her, into the street.

Hearing the scuffle Egmont came from the library and seizing Sabine shook her violently. "Spy," he hissed; then, as he recognized her beseeching face, "*Mon Dieu!* Is it you, Sabine? Whom then can I trust?"

"Hear me, Lamoral," she pleaded. But, placing his hand over her mouth, Egmont led her to a small

room at the extremity of the hall. "Not a word," he commanded. "My friends must not comprehend that you were listening to our secrets. You shall have no opportunity to divulge them now."

Locking the door he returned to the library. "Mustache was chasing a rat," he said.

"A rat that opened the door and laughed as it went out," observed Orange significantly.

"I saw someone examining the papers on the desk yonder," added Horn pointing to the gallery.

Egmont ran thither; the papers lay littered in confusion. On the margin of one he found written, "Inform me on what ship Egmont sails."

Orange stooped and lifting from the floor a heavily scented handkerchief placed it on the desk.

"Fool!" muttered Egmont; then, as his friends regarded him questioningly: "It appears that my secretary betrays me. I will leave word that I have gone to Gaesbeek for a fortnight with my family; but instead will immediately set forth to Spain."

"In the meantime Granvelle will be informed that your chief business there is to effect his recall," remarked Count Horn.

"And I shall secure it before word from him can reach the King," replied Egmont confidently. "Farewell, my friends, an hour hence I shall be on my way!"

They had scarcely taken their leave before Egmont hastened to the little room in which he had imprisoned

Sabine. A sudden draft extinguished the taper as he entered. "Sabine!" he cried, "where are you?"

She leapt laughing and sobbing to his arms. He folded her close. "For an instant, when I saw that open window, I thought you were gone, that I had sinned past forgiveness. You can not know, Beloved, the dangerous path I tread, with traitors on every hand. But that I should have thought you one is monstrous."

"I well know, Lamoral, that in your heart you could not doubt me. 'Love beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.'"

"Sabine!" he cried in terror, "you have been reading the Bible?"

"Yes, Lamoral, Father Xavier gave me the book, a French translation from the Cardinal's library. His hat was on the book-plate."

"Is Father Xavier intimate with Granvelle?"

"No, he was much surprised when the Spanish lady brought it."

"Felicidad again!" exclaimed Egmont. "You must burn the book, as you would a poisoned garment. Our enemies would infect us with heresy!"

IV

THE RAT'S REVENGE

Egmont was not over-sanguine in his boast to his friends. Upon his arrival at Madrid, the King received

him with signal courtesy, showing him the Escorial, built in honour of the victory of St. Quentin, flattering him with festivals and loading him with gifts. Philip, moreover, gave his assurance that the abuses of the Inquisition would speedily be abated; he was surprised beyond measure to learn that Granvelle was using the Holy Office as a means to extort money, and dispatched a letter to the Cardinal demanding his immediate resignation.

Grateful and radiant Egmont bade his sovereign farewell. As he drove to the ship which was to carry him to Belgium, he passed the coach of the Duke of Alva. Framed in its window Egmont caught a fleeting glimpse of a face whose eyes challenged his own with an expression of triumphant hatred.

He had reckoned without Felicidad.

She brought Philip a letter from the Cardinal, which he had not dared entrust to the post, in which he informed the King that Egmont was conspiring to make Maximilian of Bohemia Governor of Belgium. It was a false charge, but one calculated to discredit Egmont in the eyes of the suspicious Philip. He had recalled Granvelle because he permitted Protestants to purchase their lives, for Philip coveted not the wealth of the heretics alone, but relentlessly sought their extermination. To this end he sent the relentless Alva to supplant the perfidious Granvelle; an uprising which presently took place, giving him a pretext for this action.

“ Interior of Antwerp Cathedral ”



“ The richest and greatest of Northern Europe ”

By Pieter Neefs
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Brederode had established his league of the Gueux (The Beggars, thus dubbed in derision by the royalists). This motley company waited upon Margaret of Parma and extorted her consent to the suspension of the Edicts; which consent she well knew Philip would nullify.

In mad delight the mob marched triumphantly through Brussels singing a rollicking ballad.

LES GUEUX

Chevaliers Brabantian, gentlemen adventurers,
 Soldiers of misfortune, what gallant blades are we!
 Weary of the platitudes of moralists and censors,
 Amorous and shameless as cadets of Gascony.
 Unfroked monks and 'prentice-lads absconding from
 indenturers,
 Calvinist and Romanist, Lutheran and Jew,
 Men of every rank and station,
 Men of every creed and nation,
 Men of doubtful reputation,
 Highwayman and vagabond and sons of nobles too.

Children of the underlands, gentleman adventurers
 Bristling of mustache and swaggering of gait,
 Welded in a band together
 Decked our hats with cock'rel's feather.
 Brederode, our leader, hath a soul for any fate.
 Gutter-rats and beggar brats, a swarm of reckless venturers
 Iconoclast and Huguenot, a wild and motley train.
 Through the land with quick ignition
 Spreading flame of hot sedition,
 Death to Philip's Inquisition,
 Torture to the torturer, the tyrant King of Spain!

This demonstration was quickly followed by a disorganized eruption of the unruly element in Antwerp, who made religious reform an excuse for rioting. Before the door of the great cathedral, displaying her scanty stock of wax tapers and votive offerings, ragged and wizened by years of exposure, sat a doddering old crone. A group of the Gueux, shouting "Long live the Beggars!" approached the ancient dame, bantering her with ribald jests and scoffing at her sacred commodities. Enraged by their gibes, the aged huckstress retorted with all manner of imprecations. Grasping a besom from the hand of a street-cleaner she laid about her in all directions. But the "Beggars" rushed upon her in a drove, overpowered her, and destroyed her store of consecrated wares.

That evening a mob assembled at an early hour in front of the cathedral. After an ineffectual attempt to rescue the most precious possessions, the wardens and treasurers fled precipitately, leaving the richest and greatest cathedral of Northern Europe to its fate.

In they poured, a howling, shrieking band, bent on destruction and sacrilege. They rushed upon the image of the Virgin, tore off its bejewelled vestments, and plunged their daggers into its body, which they broke into a thousand fragments. Armed with bludgeons, axes, and sledge hammers and with ropes and pulleys, they hurled statues from niches, pictures from the walls, and shattered the incomparable windows of painted

glass. Mad with lust of destruction, they flew upon the statue of Christ, which adorned the altar. This they wrenched from its place and destroyed, leaving the statues of the two thieves still on high in blasphemous irony. Forcing open the chests of treasure the rabble donned the ecclesiastical vestments, and pouring the sacramental wine into the golden chalices drank "Long life to the Beggars!"

Philip's rage, at hearing of the work of the iconoclasts, burst all bounds. Margaret of Parma had written her brother that she felt herself incapable of resisting a rebellion. The King at once decided to replace her by Alva and to buttress his unlimited power by the support of the Spanish army.

News of his immediate coming preceded him and Orange at once resigned his offices and prepared to leave the country, endeavouring with every argument in his power to induce Egmont to accompany him.

"My love for you," he said, "has taken root too deeply in my heart to permit me to seek my own safety without one last warning. I know absolutely that Alva is in possession of our death warrants."

Egmont was deaf to his entreaties. "I have taken my stand," he reiterated. "I will not desert my people. My conscience is clean. The King knows my devotion to him. I have no fear."

Egmont had other warnings. Father Xavier came to him in great trouble. "The seal of confession is on

my lips," he said, "but I must break it, or be partner in the crime of murder. A wretch, would that I might say a penitent, has confessed to me that she bore to Philip a lying charge of treason concerning you for which you are soon to be indicted. When I refused her absolution unless she expiated her crime by confession to you she threatened to inform the Holy Office that I was a heretic reading openly the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue.

"When I protested that the book was sent me by the Cardinal, she declared that if I produced it she would testify the book-plate was forged. On her oath that she would never prefer that charge, I gave her the outward sign of absolution enjoining her to repentance."

"She shall never know that you have told me," said Egmont, "for I shall remain at my post."

The blow fell suddenly. The details of the treacherous arrest and mock trial of Counts Egmont and Horn are too well known for recapitulation here. Egmont appealed confidently to the King, nor through the nine months of his imprisonment did he lose faith in his murderer. Sabine used every means in her power, even throwing herself on her knees before the ruthless Alva. Egmont's friends vainly attempted his rescue. It was the hour of the Powers of Darkness.

On the night preceding Egmont's execution, a little procession consisting of Father Xavier with the cross,

“ Father Xavier learns from Felicidad the plot to behead Egmont ”



A Startling Confession

By Vibert

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



“ Relentless Alva ”

From *Album Historique de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Obreen
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an acolyte tinkling his tiny bell, and the Bishop of Ypres bearing the sacrament entered the Broodhuis. As the bodeful chiming caught his ear Egmont sank upon his knees murmuring the prayer for a passing soul.

Bolts were harshly drawn; the Bishop, priest, and little acolyte entered. Egmont sprang forward. "Joconde!" he cried.

Tears welled in the Bishop's eyes. "It is a last grace, Monseigneur, that thou mayest bid thy son farewell."

Kneeling beside his child Egmont clasped him passionately to his heart.

"Little Father, Little Father!" besought the boy, "Don't go away. We want you so, Mamma Sabine and I. Come to Gaesbeek, Little Father."

"Not now, darling, perhaps by and by"; and Egmont's eyes questioned the Bishop, while his lips articulated the words, "Is there then no hope?"

The prelate shook his head despairingly.

"Joconde," exclaimed Egmont, after a moment's silence, "you and mamma shall come to me. I must go far away."

"Farther than Spain, Little Father?"

"Much farther, but I shall build for you a beautiful château."

"Prettier than Gaesbeek?"

"More beautiful. Father Xavier will tell you all about it. You must be a good boy, Joconde, and take care of mamma."

"Yes, Little Father."

"And tell her for me—remember this very carefully—'Love endureth all things.' Repeat it after me, darling.

"Love 'dureth," lisped Joconde.

"That sufficeth. Tell mamma to endure, for your sake."

The child nodded wearily. "I so sleepy," he murmured.

"Bear him to his mother, Xavier," said Egmont.

"Nay let him slumber on the pallet," entreated the good priest. "I would fain wait to receive thy final commands."

Joconde slept peacefully while the Bishop listened to Egmont's confession, gave him absolution, and administered the sacrament. Departing for the ministration of the same rites to Count Horn, the Bishop said to the gaoler, "Permit this priest and the child to remain a half-hour longer."

He had scarcely crossed the threshold when Father Xavier whispered: "Monseigneur, I wear two cassocks. Take one, robe thyself therein, and escape."

"And abandon you?"

"Nay, I will go forth when they change guard. Follow the rue Tête d'Or to the church of Notre Dame de Bon Secours. There you will find a cavalier in waiting with the swiftest horse in Brussels, to take you across the border to the Prince of Orange."

“This is one of the wild schemes of Brederode?”

“No, Monseigneur, the wretched woman of whose confession I told thee hath indeed repented of her appalling crime. She craveth thy forgiveness, and offereth thee this means of deliverance.”

“Felicidad!” murmured Egmont. “I will not accept safety at her hands, or leave my wife and children in the hands of my foes. To whatever fate the King sends me I am resigned.”

“Put not thy trust in princes, but this woman thou mayest now trust. Thou wilt recognize her in the guise of the cavalier. She longeth to make reparation.”

“Tell her she hath my forgiveness, but I can not flee.”

At that instant the gaoler appeared. “Time is up!” he shouted. “The priest and child must go.” Egmont embraced Joconde passionately. “What were you to say to mamma?” he questioned.

“Love ’dureth,” murmured the child sleepily. “Little Father said—Love ’dureth.”

A murky, saffron haze shrouded the great square of Brussels in ominous gloom. Through the drifting mist the lace-like *flèche* of the mediæval Hôtel-de-Ville lifted its intricate tracery of spire and pinnacle. Opposite loomed the Oriental façade of the ancient Broodhuis, grotesque and sinister in the haze. Huddled about those structures clustered the guild-houses whose

quaint gables crowded one another in an effort to secure the foremost place at the spectacle.

Around a scaffold, in the centre of the square, three thousand Spanish troopers were drawn up in battle array. On the scaffold which was covered with black fustian had been placed two black velvet cushions, two iron spikes, and a table on which was a small silver crucifix.

Beneath, red rod in hand, motionless as a statue, sat on horseback the provost marshal. Behind the Spanish soldiery a vast assemblage of the populace filled the square; and scores of nobles and burghers looked down from the ornate casements and picturesque balconies of the surrounding houses.

The great clock struck an hour before noon and a squadron of Spanish foot led Egmont forth from the prison. Walking with steady step, followed by the guard, the Bishop at his side, he approached the scaffold. He was reading the Sixty-first Psalm.

“Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.”

A hush fell upon all the multitude as they listened to this last prayer.

“Thou wilt prolong the King’s life,” he read, “and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God forever; O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.”

A low wail ran over the populace as he ascended the scaffold.

"Down with the traitor!" cried one, but his words were drowned in a storm of imprecations.

"Silence, dog," said another. "He goes to pay the forfeit. Let him be at peace!"

Egmont crossed the scaffold and, approaching the marshal, demanded if his sentence were irrevocable.

The officer shrugged and muttered affirmatively.

Egmont's face furrowed for a moment but, commanding himself, he threw aside his black, gold-embroidered mantle, exposing his tabard of red damask.

He then withdrew the order of the Golden Fleece from his shoulder, and knelt by the side of the Bishop, murmuring the Lord's Prayer; after which, kissing the crucifix he received the blessing of the prelate. Drawing a cap over his eyes he cried: "Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit," as the headsman with a single stroke let fall his fatal axe.

Tears blinded the eyes of even the Spanish soldiers, as they witnessed the doom of the flower of Flemish chivalry.¹

¹ The authors acknowledge their indebtedness as all, "who come after the King," must necessarily do to *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* by John Lothrop Motley.

Even as a sketch this story would be incomplete without reproducing literally that masterpiece of Christian forgiveness—Egmont's farewell letter to his King.

"SIRE:

"I have learned this evening the sentence which your Majesty has been pleased to pronounce upon me. Although I have never had a thought,

and believe myself never to have done a deed, which could tend to the prejudice of your Majesty's person or service, or to the detriment of our true, ancient, and Catholic religion, nevertheless I take patience to bear that which it has pleased the good God to send. If during these troubles in the Netherlands, I have done or permitted aught which had a different appearance, it has been with the true and good intent to serve God and your Majesty. Therefore, I pray your Majesty to forgive me, and to have compassion on my poor wife, my children, and my servants; having regard to my past services. In which hope I now commend myself to the mercy of God.

"FROM BRUSSELS.

"Ready to die, this 5th June, 1568. Your Majesty's very humble and loyal vassal and servant,

"LAMORAL D'EGMONT."

CHAPTER IX

THE LOST TAPESTRY

TWO ADVENTURES OF DETECTIVE VIDOCQ¹

I

THE CARDINAL'S ALB

IT was in the summer of 1670 that I, a cadet of the old family of Vidocq, was pleasantly surprised by receiving a letter from the great Minister Colbert, requesting me to confer with him, so the summons read, "on a matter in which I take much interest and which, should you bring it to a satisfactory conclusion, may prove of profit to yourself."

I hastened to Versailles at the time appointed, was admitted at once, but, to my surprise found a lady seated familiarly at the Minister's writing-table. They were looking over a portfolio of drawings, as it seemed to me plans of geometrical fortresses such as Vauban was then building on our new northern frontier, star-shaped bastions, with re-entrant angles, scarp, and counter-scarp.

¹ Possibly an ancestor of François Eugène Vidocq, the Prince of Detectives a century later.

"So," I thought, "this lady is a spy, who is furnishing Colbert with maps of Belgian citadels." This was a service for which I had no stomach, and when my patron greeted me with: "Ah! Vidocq, I have need of your assistance in several matters of delicacy,"—I blurted forth an assurance that I was ready to serve him in any enterprise not dishonourable.

His face darkened. "That was scarcely a politic remark," he said, "but we will let it pass." Then, turning to the lady, he continued: "This, Madame Guilbert, is the young man of whom I was speaking. He has lived in Flanders and speaks Flemish fluently. He is the very one for our purpose."

Madame Guilbert smiled. "The service is very easy," she said. "It is only to collect secretly such designs as these which will be very useful to France."

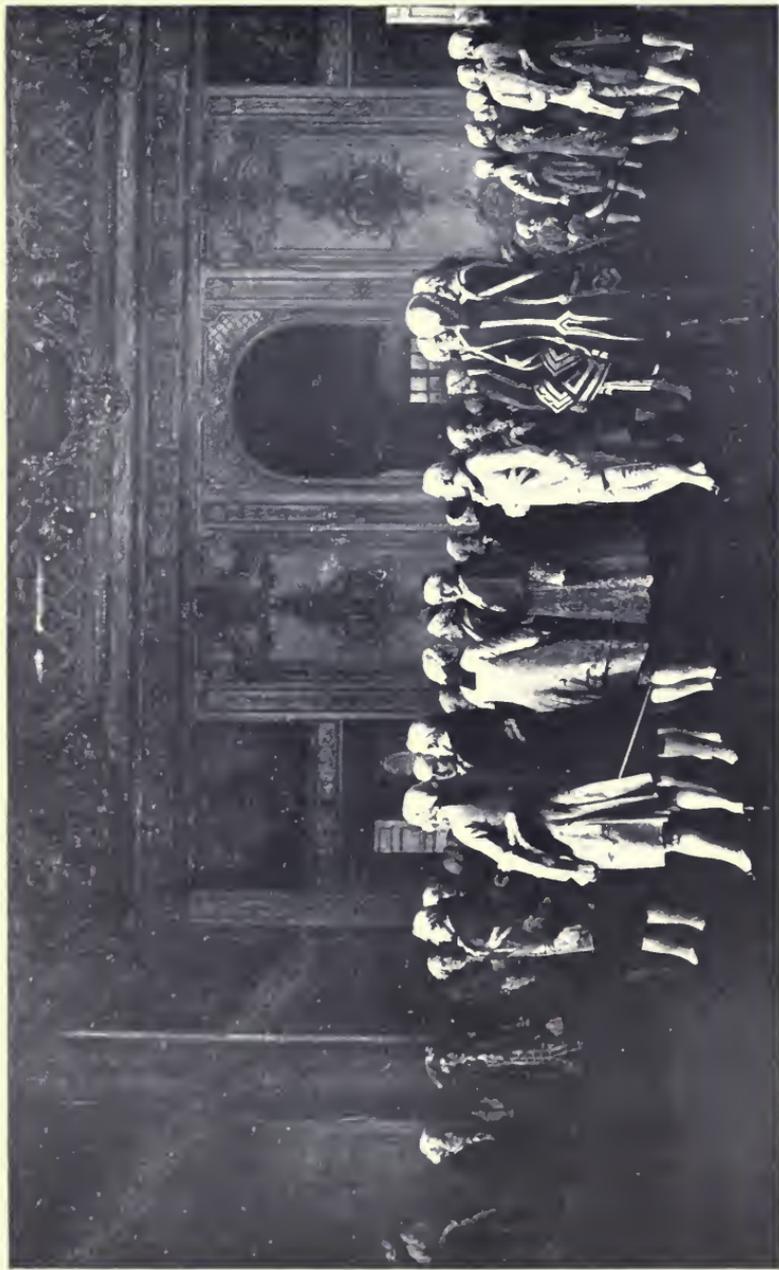
"Am I right in supposing the mission one of danger?" I asked.

"Not of danger, though possibly of some inconvenience—should your purpose be divined," replied Madame Guilbert.

"So," I retorted, "it is only inconvenient to be hanged as a spy, as I certainly should be if caught with plans like those upon my person."

Colbert burst into a loud laugh. "These are not plans of forts but designs for the making of lace," he said. "Madame Guilbert is the head of the Royal Manufactory which his Majesty has just founded in

“At Versailles I beheld his Eminence”.



Vestured in the Alb of Mechlin lace”

By B. E. Fichel

Reproduced by permission of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Entry of Louis XIV. into Dunkirk

From *A History of Tapestry*, by W. G. Thompson. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York; Hodder & Stoughton, London

the Château of l'Ouray at Alençon, which the King desires so heartily to encourage that he has forbidden the importation of Mechlin and other Flemish laces. Nevertheless, so great is the admiration for the laces of Flanders that in spite of the penalty of confiscation and imprisonment they are constantly smuggled over the border. I have decreed that all smuggled laces shall be submitted to Madame, and those she wishes to use as patterns sent to Ouray. It is my desire that you act as my agent, in discovering a wonderful alb ordered by a French prince of the Church some five years since, which should about this time be completed, though no whisper has been heard of its whereabouts. Madame has, however, reason to believe that an attempt will be made to get it across the border from the vicinity of Courtrai."

The problem pleased me. Madame Guilbert advised my assuming the guise of a pedlar, but I was left entirely to my own devices in carrying out my campaign. Madame then took her leave and I was about to follow her example but Colbert detained me by a gesture.

"This is not all," he said. "Belgium has led us too long in all the arts, painting, goldsmithery, and especially in the weaving of tapestries. Le Grand Monarque has determined that France shall no longer suffer this reproach. He took Arras, but the tapestry weavers removed their industry to Oudenaarde. We have

established the manufactory of the Gobelins, but find it difficult to tempt Flemish workmen to come to us. Especially is there a dearth of designs from the brush of masters in art such as Rubens.

“I am told that in the latter years of his life he made cartoons for tapestries which were never executed. One in especial—a Verdure, called *The Garden of Love*, I hope you can discover and purchase. The central figure is Marie de Medicis whom he painted so admirably when he was in France.”

“And this cartoon is——”

“Is lost, but you will find it.”

“Inevitably. And is this all Monseigneur?”

“Not quite. The name of Marie de Medicis reminds me that she visited Rubens and is said to have left very valuable jewels with him as security for moneys which he loaned her. At any rate this much is certain, when she decamped in disgrace from France she carried with her crown jewels to which she had no right, a parure of sapphires and diamonds. If you should happen to run across that——”

I smiled ironically. “And if I find neither the Cardinal’s Alb, nor the Lost Tapestry, nor yet the Queen’s jewels I shall doubtless enjoy some very pretty adventures.”

“My young gentleman,” Colbert replied, “I have not engaged your services for the purpose of regaling you with adventures. You will return with the design

for the tapestry, with the alb, and the jewels, or not at all."

I bowed profoundly. "I shall return, Monseigneur, and with all three," I replied confidently.

Carrying my pedlar's pack I set out for the Belgian frontier on the highway from Lille to Courtrai, for it was in this vicinity that the lace smuggling was usually effected. I observed the farmhouses keenly as I proceeded. Each and all had an innocent aspect, standing free from cover of orchard or wood while the country was flat and open. Hardly a place for underhand business, for any traveller was conspicuous for miles. The glare of the noonday sun had become very oppressive and I sat down to rest in a strip of shade beneath a hedge surrounding a red windmill. My long tramp had made me drowsy and I was falling asleep when a furious barking on the other side of the hedge awakened me. Peering through a gap I saw a peasant tapping at a window of the little house, at the side of the mill, and presently a woman came out, looked about in a furtive way, and gave the man money. It was not the act of charity, for ten *louis d'or* dropped one by one into his hand. Then she disappeared and returned leading a black poodle, shaven *en lion*, by a strong leash.

The dog resisted frantically, but the man dragged it howling dismally, in the direction of the little customs station. I followed, wondering at the transaction; the man had brought the woman nothing, and was taking

away a valuable dog, for which he had not paid, on the contrary it was the woman who had given him money. The customs' official was chatting with him as I approached. "You have bought another dog," he remarked. "Yes, I sell him in Courtrai," replied the man. "It is a French poodle and does not wish to come. I am having the trouble of the Evil One to make him change his country."

"It was so with the one you bought last," replied the officer. "He was as like this as two peas, and as fat. One sees well that they are pampered pieces of uselessness, not trained like your Belgian dogs to take the milk cans to market."

Stepping within the octroi I endeavoured to extract some information from the officer. He was confident there had been no smuggling recently.

"How about the man who has just passed by?" I asked.

"An honest, simple peasant. We had another officer here who suspected him absurdly and he was twice examined, stripped to the skin and his clothing searched. Nothing! The good man was much grieved at the indignity. We saw nothing of him for a long time."

I trudged on my way, the sun had set when I reached the first cottage beyond the frontier. I was hungry and it occurred to me that I might obtain supper within.

A pretty, rosy-cheeked girl answered my summons.

“But certainly Monsieur can have an omelette and there is soup upon the fire.”

While she placed it upon the table the man whom I had noticed entered and the girl explained my presence. I had intended after a short rest to proceed, but, as the girl bent over me to serve the omelette one of the lappets of her cap lay for an instant upon my sleeve and I noted that it was of fine Mechlin lace. This was not such an extraordinary circumstance, for I knew that many of the peasants in the neighbourhood had inherited caps that had been heirlooms for many generations, still if I could talk with her alone I might find some helpful clue. A glance at her attractive face further strengthened my half-formed resolution, and feigning a galled foot I asked if I could remain over night.

The girl did not reply but regarded her father with a doubtful expression, while I displayed a silver guilder in as engaging a manner as possible.

“Lodge him in the front loft,” he said to her in Flemish, which he had not as yet ascertained that I understood. “He will hear nothing.”

The girl gave me a quick apprehensive glance; I had greeted her in Flemish on entering and, though I strove to make my face a blank, she was convinced that I had understood. To cover the somewhat awkward silence which followed I opened my pack and displayed the few wares which I had brought.

The man looked at them scornfully. "Monsieur will never get back his money from that outfit. Possibly he is carrying on at the same time some other and more lucrative business."

"None other," I replied, "though I would like to fill my pack with Flemish wares to sell in France upon my return."

"Wares, what wares?" the girl asked quickly.

"Lace, for instance," I replied carelessly; "I would not mind purchasing the cap you wear, if it is not an heirloom."

"I made it myself," she replied, "the sisters taught me when I was in the convent in Courtrai."

"It is not for sale," the man interrupted surlily, "besides, it would be seized at the *douane*."

"And nevertheless," I replied, "Mechlin lace in some mysterious way finds its way to us. If I should succeed in securing some, would you, Mademoiselle, on my return make me a pie in which to conceal it?"

"My faith no," shouted the man, "we are honest people; we have nothing to do with smugglers. We keep early hours, Monsieur, I have taken a long tramp and am weary. Babette will show you to your room, and so, good night."

Frustrating with a rousing slap my attempt to bestow upon her a farewell kiss, Babette hurried away, and vowing to have better luck upon the morrow I soon found consolation in sleep.

I was awakened possibly an hour later by the arrival of a guest. A ray of light betrayed a knot-hole in the floor and applying my eye to it I saw a white-haired man seated at the table before a pile of gold, which he was bestowing in a canvas bag. "Strange," thought I, "that he should display such an amount of money before these people."

After a time, as though in justification of my apprehension, I heard our host say: "If you think the French pedlar is asleep, I will kill him."

My flesh crept with horror and I silently prepared to sell my life dearly. Minutes dragged themselves by, but no one entered my room and there was no sound except the howling of dogs. Suddenly a sharp cry of agony, inarticulate, almost bestial, ending in gurgling sobs rang through the night. They had murdered that too-trusting old man!

Then I heard my host's voice in the garden: "Babette, come hold the candle while I bury the body. Bring, too, a pail of water to wash away the blood, or that cursed pedlar will suspect."

I waited an hour or more, then, with pedlar's pack in one hand and my shoes in the other, I cautiously descended the ladder. The dawn threw a square of white upon the floor from the curtainless window. The ladder creaked frightfully, and suddenly my ears were assailed by another sound which took from me the power of motion, it was only a regular peaceful snoring,

someone was asleep upon the couch in the chimney corner—the old man whom I had seen the night before and believed had been murdered.

I could not credit my eyes and tiptoed nearer to make sure. As I bent over him he suddenly awaked, and, taking me for a thief cried out in terror. A door opened and Babette appeared, and in a sudden revulsion of feeling I laughed outright. “He was going to shoot me,” quavered the old man. “See, he is still holding his blunderbusses.”

“They are shoes,” I shrieked between my fits of laughing and then, sobering, I dropped them and catching Babette’s arm exclaimed: “Did I then dream that you held a candle while your father dug a grave?”

“But yes, Monsieur, I held the candle indeed and my father dug the grave, but it was for our dog that has been making trouble for us in the killing of our neighbours’ fowls. If Monsieur will regard the granary outside he will perceive Wolf’s skin, but freshly flayed, nailed to the door.”

It was indeed as she had said. I did not return to my loft but shared the old man’s coffee. He regarded me distrustfully, however; it was plain that he was not entirely reassured as to my good intentions and he hurried briskly away as soon as he had eaten his light breakfast.

Babette took up her lace-cushion and began to sing a song which she had learned at the convent.

Bruges

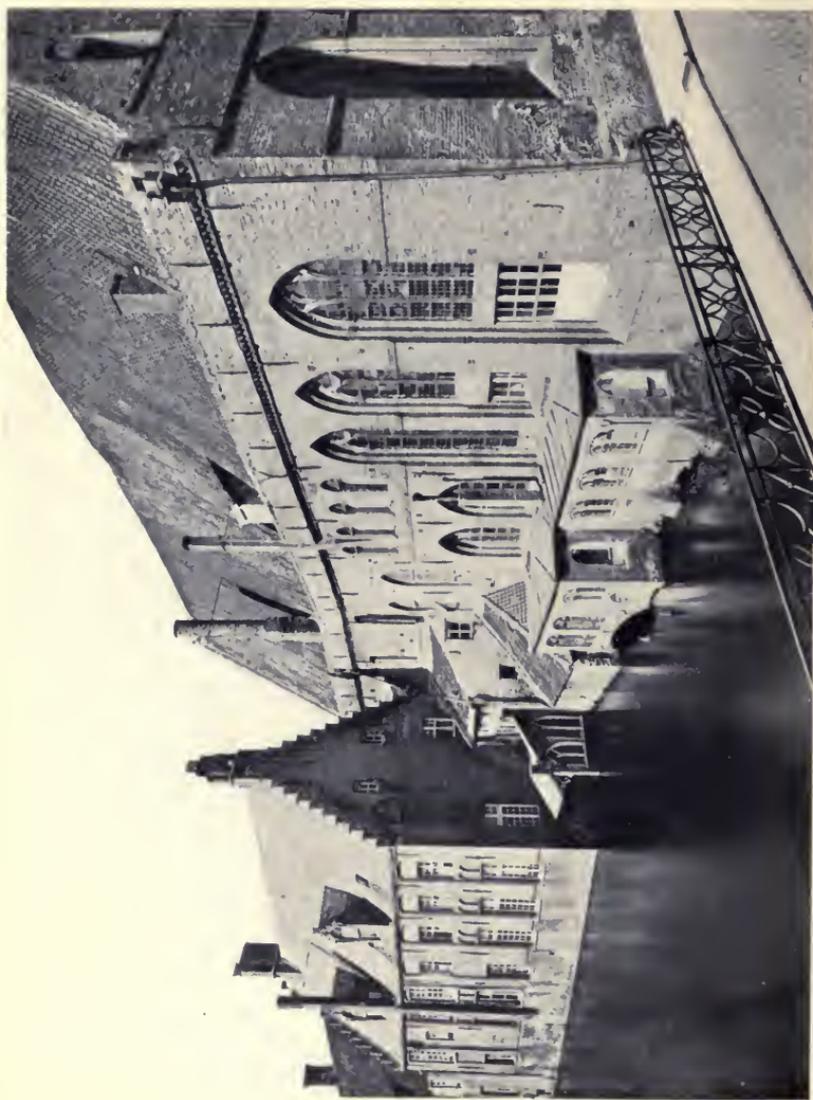
“ The belfry no longer displays its golden dragon ”



“ But the river still ripples through its arched bridges ”

From a drawing by Albert Chanler

“ A retreat from the world, where Memling limned St. Ursulas ”



Hospital of St. Jean, Bruges

From a photograph by Neurdein

CHANSON DE DENTELLE

Our nimble fingers speed the bobbins fleet,
Threading, in endless coils, the flaxen strands,
To faery frost-stars, with our busy hands;
And, while we twine, we sing an anthem sweet,
Speeding the blithesome hours on wingèd feet.

Frail gossamers and filmy butterflies
With silver dream-flowers weft, our needle plies,
The whiles we sing to Christ an anthem sweet,
Speeding the blithesome hours on wingèd feet.

Wreathing, within the convent cloister shade,
A coronal of flowers that never fade;
And while we twine, we sing an anthem sweet
To Vierge Marie and Anne, the saint discreet,
To thee we pray, our patroness benign,
Bless thou the craft we lay before thy shrine!

“You will be quitting us today I suppose,” she said as she concluded her song.

“I shall drop in upon my return, and since I am interested in lace will you not tell me where I may find some fine examples?”

“The finest in all Belgium is at the Convent of the Sisters of St. Jean in Bruges,” she replied. “They have been labouring for years on a magnificent piece, a copy of the famous Bloody Alb made for Cardinal Granville.”

“The Bloody Alb”—I repeated. I do not understand.”

“When the Cardinal left Belgium it was so hurriedly that he did not take with him the beautiful alb which he had commanded; but he sent word to the sisters that his niece would bring it. But on the day that Count Egmont was executed the guards could not prevent his friends from dipping their handkerchiefs in the precious blood. The Cardinal’s niece who loved Egmont was among these. It seems she blamed Granville for his death, for she stained the alb with her bloody handkerchief; and marked the box in which it was enclosed, ‘His blood is upon your skirts!’

“The nuns kept the design and have executed it again. If Monsieur would like to inspect it he has only to go to Bruges.”

So to Bruges like a trusting fool I journeyed, only to find that the Sisters of St. Jean had never made lace but devoted themselves to the nursing of the sick. Furious was I to find myself so befooled by a maid so demure, and I swore to have my revenge upon her, which later I effected, as those who have patience to follow my adventures to the end will ascertain.

Sister Opportune had seen the alb, which was being constructed at the Convent of the Visitation at Mechlin whence she had recently returned. I had lost nothing by my detour as a full fortnight would be needed to complete the work. Moreover she had learned that it was to be sent into France by a trusty messenger by way of Courtrai and Lille. This was news indeed. Babette

“ With folded hands and feet upon her favourite dog she lay ”



Tomb of Mary of Burgundy, Bruges

From a photograph by Girardon

“ A fifteenth-century Madonna ”



Hugo van der Goers painting the portrait of Mary of Burgundy

By Koller
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

was doubtless the intermediary. I would return in time to secure the alb.

Meantime, Sister Opportune suggested that I should inspect the glory of her hospital, the marvellous *châsse* of St. Ursula which Mary of Burgundy had donated to her order.

On the way to the hospital I had paused at the cathedral and had looked with something like compassion upon the effigy of Mary of Burgundy. The sweet-faced girl lies upon her pompous sarcophagus, her thin hands placed straitly palm to palm in the attitude of prayer, a plaintive smile on her narrow lips. Remembering her tumultuous reign which changed the merry baby face of Hugo van der Goers' portrait to these pinched and pitiful features, I hoped that Sister Opportune might have some tale to tell of the patroness of her convent.

In the chapter room, on a rotary pedestal, stood this famous reliquary, a tiny chapel of fretted goldsmith work decorated by Memling with episodes in the life of the saint.

"Who was the model for this exquisite face?" I asked, and Sister Opportune, serenely garrulous, told me the story: How Memling, a Burgundian soldier, had been wounded at the battle of Nancy and thereafter was "never good for anything but just to paint." The good sisters had nursed him back to life and in gratitude for their care he had painted this history

of their favourite saint, and her eleven thousand virgins.

"It was in this cloister," said Sister Opportune, that he set up his easel, and Sister Simplicité, a lovely novice, impersonated the sainted Ursule."

"And Memling doubtless made love to her while he painted," I interjected.

"Surely, Monsieur, surely," Sister Opportune replied, folding her pudgy hands over her protuberant stomach, and smiling with the provoking reticence of a confirmed *raconteuse* who is not to be balked of the pleasure of unfolding a romance in her own way.

"The artist declared his love, *toute naturellement*; but Sœur Simplicité explained why this might not be. She had loved a noble prince, and her sire had approved their union; but he had fallen out with the father of her betrothed over the marriage settlements and the lovers had been rudely torn apart.

"A prince,' cried Memling, 'who was he?'

"The Emperor Maximilian,' she replied.

"Memling kissed the hem of her robe. 'And thou art Mary of Burgundy, forgive me that I dared.'

"I am Sœur Simplicité,' she replied meekly, 'who will shortly take the final vows. Never, until he returned to me my betrothal ring, I swore to my father, would I hold communication with Maximilian. But, alas! Friend, I love him still.'

"Then Memling cried in ecstasy, 'Thanks be to



The Benediction of St. Ursula and her Virgins Militant.

By Memling

Voyage of the Eleven Thousand Virgins



St. Ursula disembarks at Cologne

By Memling

God, I can make thee happy. I was with thy father at the battle of Nancy when he fell with seven deadly wounds. From his finger he drew a ring. "Take this to her with my blessing," he said, and died. Tell me is it thine?'

"He took from his neck a slender chain and laid within her hand the ring. She kissed it sobbing.

"Thus was it, Monsieur, that we lost the Sœur Simplicité. And Memling? Mary of Burgundy made him her court-painter. It was well, for the poor creature could do nothing but paint—nothing else whatever."

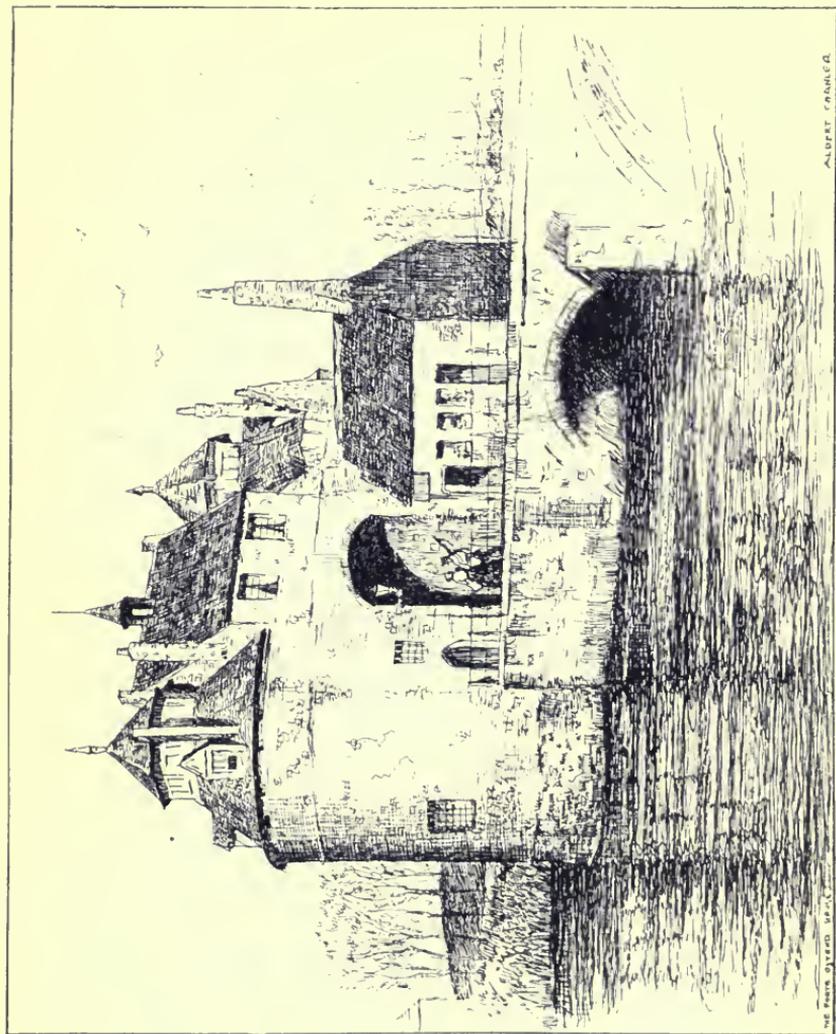
I am aware that this is a long digression, but have, patience, we shall get back to that minx Babette, have no fear. At Courtrai, only a few miles from her home, I came upon my first real adventure. The Broeltorens (or bridge towers) guard each end of a massive old bridge which spans the Lys. The Speytorre on the south bank marks the confines of the city in that direction, and discerning just opposite it a cabaret displaying the inviting announcement *Hier Verkoopt Men Drank*, I bethought myself that there was no inn of any description on the road beyond and entering refreshed myself in a seemly manner. As I crossed the threshold the old man passed out whom I had seen at Babette's cottage, but at the moment I gave the circumstance no consideration. At the conclusion of my meal mine host informed me that, my horse having a loose shoe,

he had taken the liberty to send it to a farrier. In the meantime would Monsieur amuse himself by visiting the tower?

I mounted the narrow staircase in the thickness of the walls, looked out of the slits by which the archers commanded the Lys, and, tempted by an ill-timed curiosity, descended to the dungeons below the level of the river. A draft blew out the candle which the woman who showed the place carried, and, bidding me not to stir until she returned, for the staircase had no rail and was slippery with ooze, she hurried away for a lantern. Disregarding her warning of a trap-door opening into a knife-garnished oubliette, I toiled up the staircase only to find the door at the landing locked. I was trapped!

Then the truth flashed upon me. The old man was bearing the alb to Babette and had secured me here until it should be safely passed over the border. I passed a most uncomfortable night, nor in the morning did my shouts or hammering bring rescue. The dungeons were at different levels; the upper one lighted by a sort of water-gate giving upon the river. Pressing upon it with all my might the rusted bolts gave way and it fell with a great splash into the water.

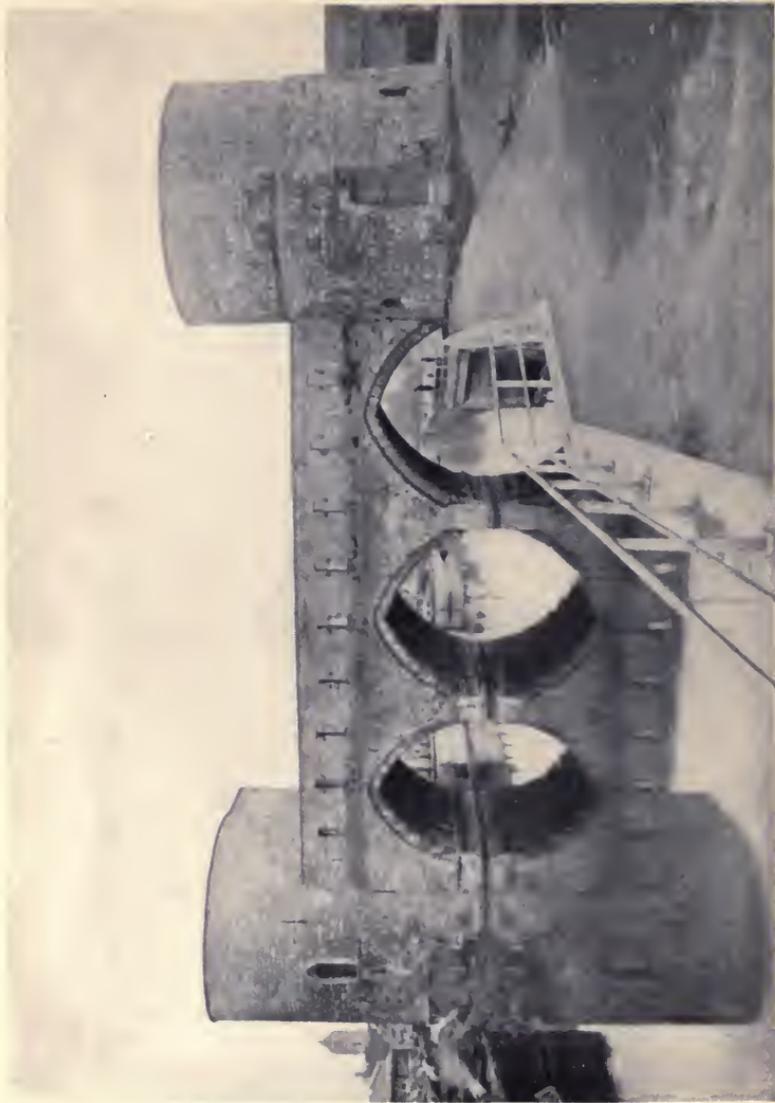
A barge was being towed along the stream at a little distance. With one wild effort I sprang far out and landed on my knees beside the startled steersman. The terrified fellow imagined me a desperado fleeing from



ALBERT FRANCKE

The Ostend Gate, Bruges
From a drawing by Albert Chanler

- "From its apertures, Baldwin Main de Fer poured molten lead upon assailants"



The "Broeltorens" or "Pont des Trous," Tournai

From *Album Historique de la Belgique*, by H. Van der Linden and H. Obreen
Reproduced by permission of G. Van Oest & Company

justice, and I had no need to show my pistols to prevail upon him to give me passage.

As I hastened across the fields to the home of Babette I noticed my own horse fastened at her door. It was then that Prudence tapped me on the shoulder, and I stole to the shuttered window and peeped through a small heart-shaped orifice. There stood Babette and opposite her the little old man. "He, he," he laughed, "he may stay forever in the dungeons for all me, for I have no desire to meet him."

"But I am longing to meet you!" I cried springing into the room. I could have throttled the villain had not Babette flung her arms about me and given him time to make off.

"Poor dear," she cried, "how hungry you must be," and she hastily piled the table with dainties from her well-stocked larder which I lost no time in devouring. "And now, my girl," I cried, pulling her down upon my knee, "I will thank you to deliver to me the Cardinal's alb!"

"Ah! you saw Pieter give it to me when you spied through the shutter. I will forgive you, since we are all smugglers together, if you will carry it to the pock-marked chambermaid at the inn of the Pomme d'Or at Lille. She is in Archbishop Rohan's employ and will give you a large sum of money, no less than two thousand francs." She left the room and returned with something round knotted in a blue checked kerchief. "Look within," she cried gleefully. "It is a *tête de mort*."

"A skull!" I repeated aghast.

"One of our round cheeses which they call death's heads. Tell me, would anyone suspect that lace of fabulous value was secreted within its rind?"

"Never," I replied. "I will do this service for you, Babette, if you will give me a kiss now and your promise that I shall have more when I come again."

"With all my heart," she laughed, and bussed me on the mouth and then to my disgust her father entered. I bade them a hasty farewell, Babette calling after me: "Monsieur will not forget—the pock-marked chambermaid, not the pretty one, at the Pomme d'Or."

At the custom-house on the frontier I found the force doubled, the chief scrutinizing the meadow with a field-glass. "We have discovered the smuggler's depot on this side," he said, "an agent is waiting the arrival of an important *envoi*."

"The pock-marked chambermaid at the Pomme d'Or at Lille?" I asked, carefully depositing the cheese beneath my hat.

"Not at all—the pink windmill yonder."

I remembered how Babette's father had obtained the black poodle at the mill. "Is the agent a miller?" I asked.

"A miller who breeds dogs. When great ladies drive out to look at them they carry back more than puppies. A woman and child with a lantern are leaving the mill now. Look sharp, Jean, is anything moving on the meadow?"

“Yes sir, a small animal, a dog, I fancy, running with all its might in their direction.”

“A clipped black poodle?” I asked.

“No sir, a yellow, shaggy mongrel.”

“Ah! is that their game?” exclaimed the inspector taking down a rifle. “It is making for that row of willows but I will shoot it before it reaches cover; and do you, sir, follow that lantern, I think we are going to make a discovery.”

The woman and child had gained the shelter of the row of willows. They were on the farther side, but I could see the light twinkling at intervals between their trunks, while hidden by the dusk I was walking now close beside them and feared that they might hear my footsteps, but they were running and too excited to heed anything except the approaching dog.

Suddenly a shot rang out. The woman gave a low whistle. There was no response. “They have killed our dear Leo,” she said. “Come, let us go back before they see us.”

But the boy began to cry, “Leo, my beautiful Leo! He is coming Mother, he is coming!”

Parting the branches I saw a mongrel, with a heavy tawny pelt like that of Babette’s dead “Wolf,” trailing its wounded body toward them. The boy ran to it crying, “Leo, my beautiful Leo.”

Then suddenly he cried: “He does not lick my face any more, and he is all bloody.”

“He is dead, my child,” replied the woman, “help me to carry him to the mill.” But at that instant the inspector and Jean crashed through the trees. The woman and child dropped their burden and fled. For the dog was indeed their black poodle, Leo, though strangely disguised. Petted and pampered by them, starved by Babette’s father, what wonder that when released they could count on his rushing straight to his old home and friends. The Cardinal’s alb had been strapped to his body and over it had been fitted a coat made of Wolf’s skin, fastened at the neck by a collar and securely sewn together. The black head had been dusted with flour and a casual glance would have detected nothing extraordinary. The replica of Cardinal Granville’s alb had gained another point of likeness to the original, for the blood of the faithful Leo had blotted its filmy frostwork with vermilion stains.

So engrossed was I in our remarkable seizure that I quite forgot the humble casket which Babette had entrusted to me with the assurance that it was the depository of the contraband lace. Examination proved that it was neither more nor less than what it appeared, a spherical cheese, which had never been excavated and cleverly joined as she had represented. The conclusion was obvious: I had been duped to distract my attention from the transport of the alb, and, had not a happy chance thrown it in my way I would not have been able to fulfill the first of my three promises to Colbert.

How I prospered in my quest for the Lost Tapestry and the Queen's Jewels and how I wrought abundant revenge on the minx Babette is matter for another story. Needless to add that there was no pock-marked chambermaid at the Pomme d'Or nor indeed any inn of that name at Lille.

II

THE SPURIOUS VAN DYCK

“NON, Monsieur Vidocq,” said the Director of the Tapestry Manufactory, at Oudenaarde, “I know nothing of such a tapestry as you describe. You are thinking possibly of an oil painting entitled *The Garden of Love* which the King of Spain purchased, a group of cavaliers and ladies near a *pavillon de plaisance* in a park. Helena Fourment, the wife of Rubens, robed in black velvet, figures in the foreground, with the notorious Gretchen Le Moine, one of his favourite models.

“Apropos, I have in my possession a very curious portrait, which proves that lady to have been van Dyck's legal wife.”

“Impossible!” I exclaimed. “She followed him to London, it is true, but he gave her *cong * on his marriage with Mary Ruthven, the ward of Charles I.”

“We are all familiar with that story,” assented the director, “but the question remains whether Gretchen Le Moine was a clever adventuress or a sadly

wronged woman. Would Monsieur like to inspect the portrait?"

The hope I had entertained that it might not be a genuine van Dyck vanished as I studied the painting, for, with the exception of the face, it possessed all the master's characteristics: his peculiar charm, "which gives one the feeling of being in very good society," the aristocratic and tranquil pose, flowing drapery, sumptuous but restrained colour, and the slender, sensitive fingers. But the face was a disappointment. It was not his winsome childwife, Mary Ruthven, whose pitiful eyes look forth with such appeal from the well-known portrait in the Pinakothek; instead, an insolent face devoid of distinction, which might have been painted by Rubens, so glowing were the carnations.

I turned indignantly to the Director. "What proof have you that this woman was the wife of van Dyck?"

"*Voilà*, Monsieur," he replied, turning the painting about. On the back of the canvas was traced in the painter's well-known hand: "To my master and friend, Peter Paul Rubens, a portrait of my dear wife, from Anthony van Dyck. 1639."

"The painting has been tampered with," I exclaimed. "Gretchen Le Moine discovered this inscription; determined to prove herself his widow, to claim his fortune, and to wreak revenge upon her rival she painted over the face of Mary Ruthven with her own!"

"What amateur could have painted those features?"



Portrait of Van Dyck, by himself

Photographische Gesellschaft, Berlin



“Soirée musicale” with his family at Dry Toren. Teniers

Gemäldegalerie, Berlin
Photographische Gesellschaft, Berlin

he asked scornfully. "Only Rubens had such a technique and he would not have stooped to villainy of that order."

Silenced but unconvinced I recalled how van Dyck's marriage had been planned by Charles I. who loved his ward Mary Ruthven as his own daughter and van Dyck as a son; how her father, suspected of treason, his property confiscated, languished in the Tower but the King had taken the penniless girl into his own household. Charles had established van Dyck in a forest studio near his castle of Windsor. In this sylvan solitude the two lovers met without fear of intrusion and their attachment ripened to betrothal.

One midsummer morning as van Dyck deposited a letter for his fiancée in the hollow of an old willow he was startled by a mocking laugh. Turning he encountered the flaming eyes of his model, who, unsummoned, had followed him from London.

"Ah! we make assignations with some pretty court-lady," she exclaimed spitefully. "I thought as much when you wrote me that you were about to go abroad and would no longer require my services as housekeeper or model. It is then to be a wedding journey! Doubtless some wealthy heiress has bought you."

"No, Margaret, the lady is as poor as yourself. I shall support my wife with the work of this hand."

"And if you should suddenly lose its use?"

"That would indeed be a calamity, for my art is my

sole means of livelihood. I do not fear paralysis until my declining years but will strive to put by something for the evil day."

"Anthony," she exclaimed, "unless you renounce this marriage you shall never again touch brush to canvas."

He regarded her gravely. "You have no reason to hate me, Margaret. You came to me in distress. I gave you a home and have always treated you with generosity and respect."

"A fig for your respect! Am I a servant to be cast off at a moment's notice with a year's salary as quittance?"

His voice lost its calm. "You have been my model and housekeeper, Margaret, nothing more. When a man, I thought my friend, boasted openly that you were his mistress and he had no need to support you, since I saved him that expense, it seemed to me that I had done so long enough."

"Who told you?" she cried; then realizing that she had betrayed herself: "Desert me if you will, but think not you shall escape punishment."

Van Dyck was never to see her again, but her vengeance, missing its aim, fell upon one dearer to him than his own life.

The following day Mary Ruthven sought the willow to see if perchance it held a letter from her lover. As she inserted her hand in the hollow her wrist was suddenly gripped by the teeth of a steel trap.

Roused by her cries van Dyck ran anxiously from the studio. Tenderly he released the fragile hand which, but for her protecting bracelet, would have been severed by the bloody fangs.

"O my love! my love!" he cried in anguish greater than her own, "that you should have suffered, in my stead, this unspeakable atrocity!" Staunching the wound as best he could, he ran with her to the castle. From shock and loss of blood her life hung long in the balance, but she bore in happiness the lifelong scar, glorying that her unwitting hand had been the means of preserving for the world the genius of its greatest master.

Two years of happiness followed in which:

"The sulphurous fires of passion and woe,
Lay deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burned-out craters healed with snow."

Into his scant forty-two years van Dyck had compressed the activities of a lifetime. He was weary of everything, worn with regret and disillusion. Never could his tireless hand find rest, nor his fervid mind peace. These lines, written in a moment of secret despair, Mary discovered one day beneath his pillow:

Come, tranquil Death, with thy benignant might,
Give to mine eyes the solace of thy night.
Enfold me in thy passionless embrace,
Breathe thy cool breath upon my fevered face,
Like fragrant wind, in boughs with blooms bedight.

Old Belgium

Westward, the weary swallows wing in flight,
The red sun molten on the mountain bright,
All stillness is and peace through utter space.
Come, tranquil Death!

Farewell, life's little hour of vain delight,
Triumph and fame, fierce lust of bloody fight,
The wine-red passions of my life's disgrace,
From my shrived soul, all sorrows now efface.
Grant thou thy peace, compassionately blest;
Come, tranquil Death!

As I recalled this story to the Director he sympathized in my indignation that the gentle and trusting Mary must yield her title of honourable wife to such a tigress as Gretchen Le Moine. None the less he scornfully rejected my theory that the portrait vouched for by van Dyck was spurious or had been tampered with in any way.

Certain that my solution was correct, I set forth to the château of Rubens, hoping there to discover the missing clue. Riding into Perck during the *déjeuner* hour I halted at the famous hostelry of the Croix Rouge.

Here, in the shady square, good old David Teniers had painted many a rollicking kermess. Here also in the smoky kitchen of the inn he had grouped his boisterous revellers; smoking, eating, drinking, and kissing one another in a joyous riot of abandoned mirth. Seating myself at its oaken table I called for a flagon of mine host's best Flemish and a hare, which he had doubtless poached from the forest of Steen.

As I lighted my porcelain pipe and stretched myself at ease before the blazing kitchen fire, the sunbeams glinting on glazed earthenware, burning in polished copper cauldrons, and lingering within great glass bottles like a dissolved and imprisoned flame, I felt myself transported to the day when the great master exalted this humble interior by the wizardry of his brush.

The landlord beguiled me with traditions of the country. "Monsieur must visit Dry Toren [Three Towers], the manoir of Teniers, near at hand, and Steen, the *château tout à fait magnifique* of Rubens."

"That is the very purpose of my coming," I rejoined. "Have you ever chanced to hear of his noted model, Gretchen Le Moine?"

"Gretchen Le Moine, she who was the wife of Anthony van Dyck? Her father was the *garde-chasse* of the *château*. He lived in the old tower and purveyed the table of Steen with venison, and trapped boar and deer which Snyders painted on the canvases of Rubens."

"That is very possible," I replied, "for it is a well-known fact that he could never have executed those great hunting scenes without the assistance of his famous partner."

"Le Moine invented a trap, which he placed near the drinking places of the deer to enable his patron to paint them."

"*Attendez*," I cried; "what sort of a machine was this?"

“An insignificant little affair, Monsieur, small enough to put in a valise, but with a powerful spring and very cruel teeth.”

“So,” I reflected, “it was one of her father’s traps which Gretchen carried to England. Tell me,” I asked, “why you think the model was the wife of van Dyck.”

“Why that is known to everyone,” he replied. “Her portrait as Saint Cecilia was given to the village church, where it hung for many years before the organ. It was hinged, to swing like a door and display an inscription in the artist’s hand.”

“It is odd,” I observed, “that Rubens should not have donated to his village church one of his own paintings.”

“It was not Rubens who left it to the parish, but Madame van Dyck, who was at Steen when Rubens died. Next year she came again and was married to a nobleman, whose name I have forgotten. He sought to purchase the painting, but at that time the church would not part with it. Lately, however, in order to pay for reparations they sold it to a collector from Oudenaarde.”

Pressing a crown in the palm of my loquacious landlord and declining his persistent offers to act as guide I bade him farewell.

“Will not Monsieur return and sleep here?” he asked.

“*Malheureusement non*,” I replied; “I must reach Malines tonight.”

“Dusk deepens fast in the forest,” he objected, “and

you would surely be lost. Spectres haunt the castle, and travellers who go thither after sundown rarely return."

"Nonsense," I retorted. "My directions are very clear. I shall not lose my way. As for ghosts—" I tapped my sword-hilt, and mine host turned pale. Had he recognized me? Scarcely, but his warning roused my suspicions. On no account would I spend the night at his tavern.

The sun slanted over the moorland, gilding the way-side bracken and flaming the trembling aspens with gleams of violet and gold. I spurred my mare to a gallop through the foliage-arched *allées* of the forest. Soon its spell was upon me. A mystic murmur stirred the wood, as though it were alive with unseen sylvan presences. Fauns, satyrs, nymphs seemed to flit before me through the dusk as I plunged into the depths of its sombre intricacies.

There fell a sudden hush upon the feathered and furry denizens of the wold. Not a rabbit scuttled through the underbrush nor squirrel chattered in the branches overhead; only the cicadas strummed and wood-moths glinted in the sparse sunbeams.

I halloed lustily! My voice echoed back huskily, like the dying notes of a distant horn. A peal of eerie laughter rang through the silence. I spurred eagerly forward in pursuit. Of a sudden my horse fell back on his haunches at the brink of a deep pool. I caught,

between parted branches, a gleam of white forms which flickered for a moment, then were swallowed up in the shadowy waters.

With hair dishevelled flashing fires of gold,
Like streaming comets 'thwart the dusky night,
Elusive through the by-ways of the wold,
Seeking secluded fountains clear and cold,
There safe to hide mid reeds and lilies white,
Diana's dryads flee in pale affright,
From swift pursuing satyrs lewd and old.

Then sudden all the satyrs disappear,
From pool and rill the nymphs emboldened peer
As, mirrored in the tranquil mere below,
Resplendent gleams Diana's crescent bow.
Which seen, her daughters issue unafraid,
Again with laughter light to thrill the glade.

On the glassy surface only the moon was mirrored; swallows dipped sharp wings in its placid shadow and ever widening circles rippled and undulated till they were lost in void.

"Am I then bewitched?" I asked myself as I rode on, following a trail which led from the pool to the ruined hunting-lodge.

At the door an aged woman was crooning to a babe. A few questions assured me that the crone was a descendant of Ignace Le Moine the *garde-chasse*.

"Have you by chance any examples of Rubens's work?" I asked.

"There are papers in the loft," she mumbled, "pre-

cious drawings; but when my husband took them to the city no one would buy, because, forsooth, they were unsigned, and a little nibbled by the rats."

"Might I see them?"

"But certainly, if Monsieur proves himself sufficiently generous!"

I displayed a purse filled with gold and jingled it alluringly. She led me to the garret where from a mass of worthless lumber we unearthed a dusty roll. My heart leaped as I uncovered the lost design; though discoloured and mutilated, with one of the heads cut from the parchment, it was unmistakably the work of Rubens, and on the margin were written the names of the persons represented.

In the centre was the Queen Marie de Medicis, on her left stood the beautiful Helena Fourmont, and on the right, with arms folded in a daring attitude, sat the headless lady. I gazed spellbound upon her Juno-like arms and on her

". . . breast's superb abundance
Where a man might base his head,"

then caught the name traced beneath, "Gretchen Le Moine!" My missing clue had dropped from the skies!

I poured fifty golden guilders into the greedy hands of the delighted beldame and left her calling down upon my head blessings of all the saints.

Twilight deepened to dark. A broad avenue stretched before me, like a white river on whose surface wavered weird shadows of sentinel poplars. I came to an *étoile*; six *allées* radiated and I paused uncertain which way to proceed. Then a rift in the clouds flooded one of the vistas with moonlight and I perceived at its extremity the high-pitched roofs of an old château. Silhouetted sharply against the sinister sky loomed a battered tower, in whose upper story gleamed a dim light which was extinguished suddenly on my approach.

Tying my horse to the chain of the lowered draw-bridge, I took a taper from my wallet, lighted it and entered.

Wandering through the tenantless chambers, whose tarnished gilding and faded frescoes still displayed much of their former splendour, musing upon the "King of Painters" and his sumptuous court which had formerly filled these desolate salons with warmth of joyous life, I was suddenly arrested by a sound of hollow tapping upon the wall. I hastened from one salon to another in vain endeavour to locate the sounds which continued rhythmically, like the hammering of a mason's chisel. I had decided that they were made by rooks tapping upon the leaden roof, when suddenly the floor creaked overhead. Then a door grated on its hinges and swung to with a sharp metallic click.

I stood silent for an instant, then cautiously retraced my steps. The room was empty and the noises had



The Garden of Love. Peter Paul Rubens

(Prado, Madrid)

Reproduced by permission of Berlin Photographic Co.

“ Through an opening in the forest loomed the high-pitched roofs of an old chateau ”



The Castle of Steen (home of the artist), by Rubens

National Gallery

Photographische Gesellschaft, Berlin

ceased. Chancing to lower my eyes I saw a woman's footprints on the dusty floor. I trailed them through a labyrinth of passages to an oratory in the ancient tower, where the mysterious sounds were again audible. The light of a lantern shone from the half-open door and, crouching behind a confessional, I perceived three masked figures prying a panel from the marble altar. At the same instant I felt a gentle grip upon my arm, and turning faced a woman shrouded in a hooded cloak.

"Hush!" she whispered, "it is I, Babette," and throwing back her capuchin I recognized my little maid of the smuggler's cottage. "Fly," she implored, "before they are aware that you are spying upon them."

"Fly! not I, until I have ferreted out this little affair." But our conversation was interrupted by a sudden crash. Under the battering of their chisels the entire front of the altar gave way and fell in shattered fragments upon the pavement.

I leaned heedlessly from my hiding-place, while Babette vainly strove to hold me back. The confessional creaked beneath our movements and instantly the three blackguards were upon me.

I laid about me manfully with my rapier in every direction. Babette reinforced me by tripping one of the assassins who strove to poignard me in the back. As I ran him through the throat I recognized my host of the Croix Rouge. "Come on," I cried to the others who shrunk back in hesitation.

Rushing forward to the lunge, laughing as I leaped, drunk with blood, I sent another rascal reeling through the doorway. His comrade with a shriek of terror fled headlong down the stairs.

"Are you hurt?" Babette asked as I wiped a trickle of blood from my cheek.

"Only a scratch," I replied, "but, quick, let us search the altar." The fools had left their booty, a leaden casket.

Ripping off its lid with a vigorous wrench, to our astonishment a shower of dazzling jewels strewed the floor. It was the famous *parure* which Marie de Medicis had entrusted to Rubens as gage for moneys which he had loaned her.

"These are the crown jewels of France," I cried. "They must be rendered to the King."

"Yes," Babette replied, "you must take them."

"And thee, also, my gem of gems," I said. "But now it is high time to free ourselves." We sped along the corridor to a staircase and postern, thence to my great stallion, stout enough to carry double and chafing to be off.

As we pounded down the avenue a musket-ball whizzed by my head. The report so excited my steed that, fancying himself upon the battlefield, he charged valiantly into a band of *braconniers* at the gate. One of the number by waving his coat strove to frighten the mettlesome animal but he kicked the poor devil senseless into the ditch. Crashing through the gate he

struck into a run that would have carried off the trophy at the King's races.

Hungry and weary after the strenuous happenings of the night the appetizing odour of *café au lait* greeted our nostrils most gratefully as we rode into Malines.

In justice to myself I must explain that I was neither drunk nor moon-struck when I beheld Diana and her nymphs disporting in the sylvan pool. The daughters of the *garde-chasse* and Babette had been enjoying a bath, and, while I was chatting with the old crone, Babette had stolen back to the château.

Little remains to tell save that we were most solidly wedded at St. Rombold, while the *carillon* pealed its merriest chimes from the great belfry.

Thence we pressed eagerly forward to Oudenaarde where I found the Director of the Tapestry Establishment. I related to him my exploit in quest of the lost design, and he overwhelmed me with felicitations on the successful outcome of my venture.

I suggested that we might remove the spurious face from the disputed van Dyck by steaming the canvas. This we proceeded to do, and after a thorough Turkish bath peeled away the rubicund countenance of Gretchen Le Moine, revealing in its place the exquisite face of Mary Ruthven, van Dyck's true and only wife. Prodigy of prodigies the face of Gretchen fitted precisely into the aperture in the Rubens cartoon from which it had been cut by its crafty original!

On receiving the tapestry design and the Queen's jewels Colbert was so overjoyed that he promoted me to the post of Chief of the Detective Bureau. My salary amply satisfies Babette and has enabled me to purchase commissions in the army for my four gallant sons and to handsomely portion my five buxom daughters, who, in astuteness and charm, so markedly resemble their father.

CHAPTER X

WATERLOO

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it? No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But, hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier, than before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;

And there were sudden partings, such as press
 The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
 Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
 If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
 Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
 The mustering squadron and the clattering car,
 Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
 And the deep thunder, peal on peal afar;
 And near, the beat of the alarming drum
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
 While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
 Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe! They come!
 They come!"

.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
 Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
 The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
 The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
 Battle's magnificently stern array!
 The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
 The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,
 Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
 Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent!

BYRON, *Childe Harold*, Canto iii., stanzas 21-30.

I

THE DUCHESS OF RICHMOND'S BALL

IT would surely be the most brilliant ball of her life,
 but Nellie Walters had no desire to attend it.
 Brussels was quite the gayest city in Europe that



Salute of the Cuirassiers. Meissonier

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“The scarred historic walls of Hougomont”

From a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.

summer of 1815; far livelier than London or even Paris. The Duke of Wellington had made it his headquarters, and the town overflowed with officers of the Allies. English families of wealth and fashion flocked thither to be near their martial kinsfolk and to enjoy the ceaseless festivities. The air thrilled with dance music, played by regimental bands. Ponsonby's Dragoons played *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, while perfidiously making eyes at the girls they found before them. The Irish Inniskillings bawled the Shan Van Vocht, declaring in the very faces of the Nassovians that "the Orange must decay," unable to quite comprehend that the then prince of that name was their Ally. The streets were alive with fluttering banners, flash of gold-broidered uniforms, and the prancing of mettlesome chargers. The Park teemed with coquetting couples seeking in vain a bench in some secluded bosquet not already pre-empted by Cupid's devotees. Byron and Tom Moore were the favourite poets of the day and every man subscribed to the sentiment:

"How sweet is the thought that wherever we rove
We're sure to find someone that's charming and near,
And that when we're afar from the lips that we love
We've but to make love to the lips that are near."

"There is at this present more love-making to the square inch in Brussels, ma'am," said the Duke of Richmond to his lady, "than in any city on the continent."

Nellie Walters turned up her pretty nose and sniffed; her brother, Captain Jack, stammered, fidgeted, and glanced across the room at pretty Huguette de Goumont, who blushed and ran into the garden. Nellie Walters had accepted the invitation of the Duchess to spend a fortnight, not for the sake of these social distractions, but because she wished to be with her brother as long as possible, near enough to go to him "in case anything happened."

There was that feeling in the air,—something was bound to happen soon. No one knew just where Napoleon and his army were, but he would strike ere long. This was the reason, doubtless, for the reckless gaiety of the soldiers; they "whose business 'twas to die," wished to drain the cup of sweetness before it was dashed from their lips.

Many a fine fellow had looked longingly at Nellie Walters, had made advances only to be sternly repulsed. She passed for the cruelest little beauty who ever flaunted false lights before the eyes of a love-wrecked mariner. But, had the truth been known, Nellie was only cold because her heart was flaming with hidden fires. A year ago she had committed it unreservedly to Antoine du Mont, a youthful lieutenant of cuirassiers, whom she had met in Paris. Their betrothal must be a secret, for their families were enemies. He was *en campagne* with Marshal Ney, where, Nellie did not know. She waited patiently for the termination of

the war. Jack assured her the campaign would be a brief one, and her brother should know for he was an officer in Ponsonby's Dragoons on fire to make mince-meat of "Bony."

While awaiting this pleasing diversion he was engaged in the more serious business of making love to his sister's friend Huguette. There was a secret tie between the two girls, for Huguette was a cousin of Antoine du Mont, the only being to whom Nellie could pour out her heart.

They attended the famous ball and pointed out to one another the celebrities. "There is the Duke of Brunswick," said Nellie, "in high feather tonight,—as always a great favourite with the ladies."

"Yes," assented Huguette, "I heard him make two engagements for next Monday afternoon, one with Lady Caroline Lamb and the other with the Princess of Orange, and he can't possibly keep both."

"Men are so irresponsible," replied Nellie. "Perhaps," and her words were more prophetic than she knew, "he will fail them both."

Captain Walters, who had been edging eagerly toward them, now presented Colonel Ponsonby, who led Nellie away to the mazes of *Money Musk*, giving her brother the opportunity which he sought, a *tête-à-tête* with Huguette.

"What a dancer Ponsonby is," he remarked, "and he seems quite taken with Nell; but tonight she dances

like a marionette and with about as much expression in her features. I don't know what has come over my little sister; she used to be as merry as a squirrel."

"She needs country life. I shall carry her away very soon to our little château. Galloping through the woods will bring back the colour to her cheeks."

"That is very good of you. Where is your château? May I drop in sometime?"

"It is only a *tout petit* château, a manoir rather, very simple and old—with a great tower of a *pigeonnier*. I have some of the pigeons here in Brussels, and can send word from Hougomont and back in less time than by post."

"Hougomont? Is that the name of the estate?"

"Yes, our far-away ancestor, who built, and gave his name to the château was Hugo du Mont. We have du Mont relatives in France but the name of the Belgian branch has become corrupted to Goumont, and the manoir is called Hougomont. It is near Waterloo."

"I shall find my way there, never fear. But there is an orderly presenting a despatch to the Duke of Wellington. The music has stopped. Here comes Ponsonby. Is there any news Colonel?"

"Yes," replied the latter. "The French have crossed the Sambre. We have orders to march at dawn."

II

THE DOVES OF HOUGOMONT

Three hundred British lads, they made three thousand reel.
Their hearts were made of English oak, their swords of
Sheffield steel,
Their horses were in Yorkshire bred,
And Ponsonby them led.
So huzza for brave dragoons, with their long swords, boldly
riding,
Whack! fal de ral, etc.

Then here's a health to Wellington, to Ponsonby and Long,
And a single word of Bonaparte before I close my song.
And it's *peste! morbleu, mon Général,*
Hear the English bugle call!
Oh! You'll run from our dragoons with their long swords,
boldly riding!
Whack! fal de ral, etc.

WALTER SCOTT.

So Ponsonby's Dragoons had vaingloriously sung at many a rollicking banquet, but they were silent now as in the early dawn they rode grimly out of Brussels. There had been no sleep the night before. Some had remained at the ball dancing until the bugle call, mounting in silk stockings and dancing pumps. The little daughter of the Duchess of Richmond had buckled the Duke of Wellington's sword belt, and many a white-faced woman had choked back her tears lest they should salt the coffee, which she bravely prepared as a stirrup-cup for her husband.

What Jack Walters achieved and endured during the next two days is history written in four languages, studied in the schools, discussed and lauded by military expert and patriotic bard. We shall have the battle fought over for us anon by two of its veterans who understood it better a half century later, than when unflinching courage and the habit of unquestioning obedience carried them blindly to that maelstrom of death.

Unknown to each other they had met in the last charge of the cuirassiers, and the English dragoon had felled du Mont who mercifully knew nothing of the sublime charge and utter destruction of the Imperial Guard which turned the battle into the rout of the French.

Like the disintegration of a giant glacier splitting under the weight of its mighty mass—then toppling and crashing into the sea—the entire French army collapsed simultaneously, scattering helter-skelter in precipitate flight.

“*Sauve qui peut, tout est perdu!*” was the final order of Napoleon, wrung from him in his despair.

In vain Ney leapt upon a horse, hatless and swordless, and barred the Brussels road, striving to recall the remaining soldiers to their duty; they fled in terror—the rout only halted at the frontier.

The mad tide of the flight had rolled far away, leaving the battlefield deserted except by the dying and dead.

For hours Captain Walters had lain with a dislocated shoulder beneath the body of his dead horse. In intense agony he dragged himself free and staggered to his feet. Staring dazedly about he scanned the valley in search of Hougomont. There it loomed, a straggling mass of burning ruins and battered wall.

Fire no longer belched from the loop-holes which the British soldiers had made; bodies of men and horses lay thickly strewn in the wood, which had been swept by fierce cannonade; all was silence and desolation.

Walters pushed rapidly forward through the wood, thinned and shattered by the French artillery, and entered the orchard where hundreds of men and horses lay piled one upon another, friend and foe in a last bloody embrace. Consumed by thirst he threaded his way to the well in the courtyard and drank feverishly. Within the kitchen the floor was covered with men more desperately wounded than himself, awaiting the surgeon. On the other side of the court in an isolated position stood the *pigeonnier*, an extinguisher-roofed tower, pierced by hundreds of tiny openings.

Walters recalled what Huguette had told him of her swift carriers. Here was an opportunity of sending her a message, perhaps of being the first to announce the victory in Brussels. He entered and, climbing a ladder, inspected the boxes. Except for peeping fledglings the nests were deserted by the frightened birds.

Returning to the courtyard he stumbled upon the

prostrate body of a wounded cuirassier. His helmet had fallen off and blood trickled from an ugly gash upon his forehead. In one hand he held a folded paper, the other tightly clutched a live pigeon.

"*Camarade*," he murmured huskily, "do me the kindness to fasten this billet beneath the wing of this pigeon. The cursed blood blinds my eyes."

"First, let me bandage your wound," replied Walters, and he knotted his handkerchief about the man's forehead, drawing it taut with his teeth, as he could use but one hand. He poured some brandy down the throat of the cuirassier who revived temporarily. "Thanks my friend, but you also are wounded," he said.

"If you have sufficient strength to brace yourself and hold my arm," replied Walters, "I think we can jerk the bone into its socket."

"Then hold you the pigeon," replied the other, "and I will do my best." He summoned all his strength, the sweat stood on Walter's forehead but he uttered no sound and the arm was in place. But the effort had been too much for the cuirassier and he sank back unconscious.

Walters picked up the billet; its address, traced in blood, burned itself into his brain:

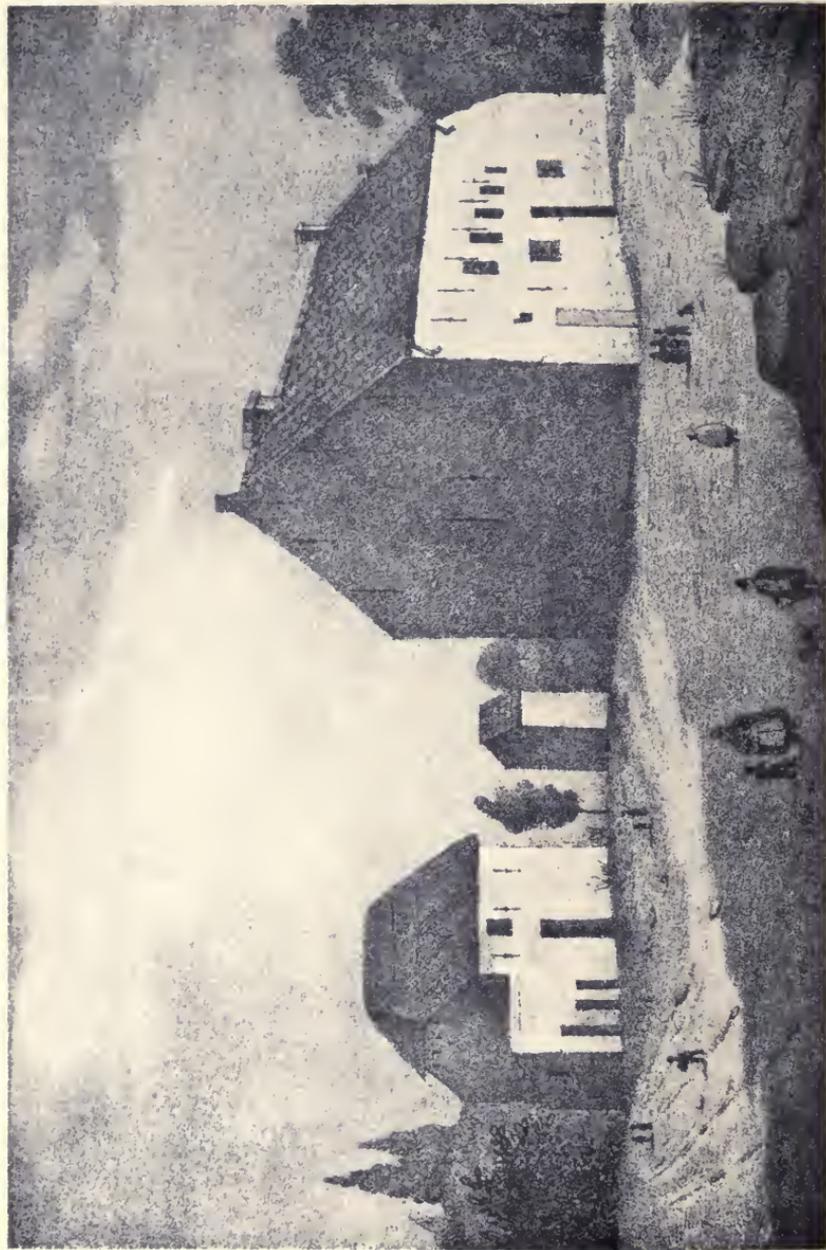
Mademoiselle Huguette de Goumont,
rue Fossé aux Loups. Brussels.

What could this mean? One thing only, that his betrothed had given to another, an enemy, the same



After Waterloo. "Sauve qui peut." A. C. Gow, R. A.

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Farm of "La Belle Alliance," Waterloo

From an old lithograph

means of communicating with her which she had confided to him. In his excitement he relaxed his hold upon the pigeon, and with a whirr of wings it soared aloft.

With sword half drawn Walters turned to the cuirassier. He lay stark and white, but smiled with the serenity of sleep. The dragoon's sabre slipped back into its scabbard with a gentle thud.

"I will take your missive to Huguette," he said, as he looked pityingly down upon the young Frenchman. He thrust it into his belt and strove to rise. A sudden darkness drifted over him. He staggered for a moment then fell, his head upon the breast of his wounded enemy.

Swift through the night the liberated pigeon winged to its dovecote in Huguette's garden at Brussels. There she discovered it the next morning and, as she searched in vain for a letter, noticed that though the bird was not injured its wings were dabbled with blood.

"Your brother is wounded," she cried, running to Eleanor, forgetting her girlhood when with Cousin Antoine she had played pigeon-post at Hougomont.

Refugees began to come in with rumours of the battle, but no one could tell with certainty which side had conquered. The Duchess of Richmond fitted up her ball-room as a temporary hospital and the two girls volunteered their aid. In the evening a farmer's cart

brought, stretched upon straw, the first harvest of that terrible reaping. Later came wounded from the field-hospital of Hougomont.

Captain Walters woke from torturing dreams to see bending over him the pitiful face of Huguette. With the first recognition the old love-light flashed for an instant in his calm grey eyes. Then his face shadowed as he placed in her hand the letter from the French cuirassier. He scanned Huguette's countenance questioningly; but instead of flushing guiltily she smiled upon him with delight.

"Oh! the merciful *Bon Dieu* who protected him!" she cried. "How happy this will make Eleanor!"

"Eleanor?" he echoed wonderingly.

"Look, dearest," and Huguette unfolded the paper, blank, except for the superscription, but containing another slip addressed: "Mademoiselle Eleanor Walters. In the care of *Ma Cousine Huguette*."

"What!" exclaimed Walters, "Nell in correspondence with the enemy?"

"You, a victor, can afford to be generous," pleaded Huguette; "besides, Jack, he is my cousin." Then, catching sight of Nellie, she ran to her with the missive.

"Antoine lies in our hospital," Nellie replied. "Come quickly. They say that he is dying."

Brain fever developed. For days du Mont fought over, in his delirium, the battle of Waterloo. When at last the tide turned to recovery his first conscious glance

fell upon the face of Eleanor transfigured by a great thankfulness. "*Et le pigeon?*" he asked

"I have your letter," replied Eleanor, "my brother brought it me. He is here, love."

Walters came to the bedside, his arm in a sling, fatigue coat thrown over his shoulder. The cuirassier regarded him intently. Suddenly his wan face purpled to hate. He strove to spring from his pallet, but strength failed him.

"*Sacré Anglais!*" he cried. "It was you who cleft my skull!"

"Think again, friend, where you last saw my face. It was at Hougomont where you put into its socket my dislocated arm."

"Antoine," exclaimed Eleanor. "You did this, not knowing that he was my brother!"

The knotted features of the cuirassier relaxed gradually into a boyish smile as he understood. "*Mon Frère,*" he murmured, clasping fervently the hand of the dragoon, "*Mon Frère, à moi!*"

III

WATERLOO, SIXTY YEARS AFTER

"*Sacré Tonnerre de Dieu!*" shouted the old cuirassier, bringing his fist down with a bang that nearly broke the glasses. "If it had not been for that hidden, sunken road we would have hacked you British all to pieces."

"Undoubtedly, my friend du Mont," said his interlocutor soothingly, a white-haired veteran of Waterloo, Major Walters, formerly a captain in Somerset's Dragoons.

"Besides," resumed the French *invalidé*, somewhat mollified, "if it had not rained all night, and our artillery had been able to manœuvre, instead of floundering axle-deep in the mire, and Marshal Grouchy had not been delayed, *alors*."

"If—if," interrupted the Englishman, at length aroused from his mood of courteous acquiescence. "If—there you are again with those eternal ifs."

"Well then, sacred name of a cabbage! you very well know that we outnumbered you and that Wellington retreated, scared as a schoolboy."

"You mean the affair of the Plateau," laughed the dragoon; "why that was only a ruse to draw you into the mouths of our artillery."

"If it was a ruse, which I doubt, not implying the least insinuation on your veracity, my very dear friend," apologized Colonel du Mont, "we were not slow to rush into the trap."

It was in the garden of the Invalides at Paris, shortly after the Franco-Prussian war, that this spirited though friendly altercation took place. The two old cavalymen, erstwhile foes, but long since brothers-in-law and the best of friends, were fighting over for the twentieth time the battle of Waterloo.

“It was like this,” exclaimed the cuirassier, tracing with his cane in the gravel a letter A.

“This left leg is the road to Nivelles, the right, that to Genappe, this cross-bar is the sunken road, *vous voyez*. The point is Mont St. Jean, where Wellington ambushed himself, the left foot, Hougomont, and the right Belle Alliance, where Napoleon was stationed. The wings of both armies extended to right and left of the legs of the letter. Wellington, the fox, had well studied the field of battle and occupied a high wooded plateau where he could conceal his artillery.

“Napoleon, on the contrary, was badly posted, in low and unfavourable ground. His plan of battle, however, was, you must confess, a veritable *chef-d'œuvre*. To effect a breach in the centre of the Allies' line, cutting them in two, driving the British back on Hal, the Prussians on Tongres, thus separating Wellington and Blücher, to carry Mont St. Jean and seize Brussels, to hurl the German into the Rhine, the British into the sea. This was Napoleon's plan.”

“You must admit that the English carried themselves well at Hougomont,” interrupted Walters.

“*Mais oui*,” replied the cuirassier, “that château was a veritable fort.”

“In the dismantled chambers of that old château,” added the dragoon, four companies of guards withstood, for seven hours, the fury of an army; and from its casements and spiral staircase poured upon you a

deadly fire. 'Twas there, my friend, I found you lying at the door of the *pigeonnier*, and you jerked my arm into place—do you remember?"

"I remember! I risked my life for a *sacré* little beast of a pigeon to send your sister a message. She was worth it, *mon ami*, a good wife was Nellie, 'twas not her fault that she was an Anglaise. Oh! but the fighting in the garden had been magnificent! It was there that six French infantrymen, concealed in the currant-bushes, resisted for a quarter of an hour two Hanoverian companies, and fifteen hundred men fell in less than an hour. *Oui, mon ami, c'était bien terrible.*"

"Do you remember the well in the courtyard?" asked Walters.

"Yes," replied the cuirassier, "that well was a sepulchre. Three hundred corpses were cast therein—if, indeed, they were all dead."

"But tell me more in detail," said the white-haired major, "your reasons for believing that Napoleon might have won."

"All that night," resumed the Colonel, "it rained, and puddles lay in the hollows like ponds. The artillery carriages were buried up to the hubs and the horses well-nigh mired. Napoleon waited vainly for the sun to dry the soil so that he could move his batteries freely. But the sun did not appear. The Emperor began action by hurling the brigade of Quiot on La Haye Sainte while Ney advanced the French right against the English left.

“Napoleon’s attack on Hougomont was in the nature of a feint. He purposed to draw Wellington thither in order to make him swerve to the left. The plan would have succeeded but for the heroic defence of the English guards and Perponcher’s valiant Belgians.”

“In the main his plan was successful,” observed Walters. “You took Papelotte and carried La Haye Sainte.”

“But, afterwards,” said the cuirassier, “the battle wavered.”

“Yes, I remember,” replied Walters, “about four o’clock the English army was in a bad way. Picton of the left was dead, a bullet through the head. La Haye Sainte was taken, but Hougomont, though burning, still held heroically. Three thousand men fell in the defence of the former, and only forty-two survived. All the officers were killed or captured. The Scots Greys were wiped out. Ponsonby’s great dragoons were hacked to pieces and our leader riddled with lance thrusts. Gordon was dead. Marsh dead and the fifth and sixth divisions annihilated. Wellington, anxious but impassive, sat on horseback before the Mill of Mont Saint Jean. Behind was the village, in front the slope. Masked behind hawthorn hedges, through which poked the noses of their cannon, our artillery was ambushed in the brushwood; while a battalion of Kempt’s brigade was hidden in a wheat field near by. Wellington, the bullets falling about him like rain, shouted to Clinton,

'Hold this spot to the last man,' and at four o'clock, dislodged by your shells and bullets, our line drew back toward Mont Saint Jean, leaving only the artillery and sharpshooters."

"'Tis the beginning of retreat!' Napoleon said, little knowing the trap you had prepared," resumed du Mont, his face lighting with excitement. "All night long Napoleon had not slept. Exploring on horseback the line of outposts, he halted from time to time to talk to the sentinels. 'That little Wellington needs a lesson,' he said to me shortly before dawn when the storm was at its worst. At five o'clock a Belgian deserter brought word that the enemy was drawn up for battle.

"'So much the better,' laughed the Emperor. Soon after, seated on a peasant's chair before a kitchen table, he unrolled a map of the battlefield. 'A pretty checker-board, *mon ami*,' he exclaimed. At eight o'clock breakfast was served, during which it was rumoured that Wellington had, two nights before, been to a ball at the Duchess of Richmond's.

"'The ball will take place today,' I remarked ironically.

"After breakfast the Emperor rested for a time then dictated to us the order of battle. At nine o'clock, the whole French army deployed and ranged itself in battle array. Napoleon smiled.

"The stubborn defence of Hougomont, the resistance

of La Haye Sainte, Ney's fatal error in massing his men before the English grape-shot, Vieux wounded, Marcognel's cavalry put to the sword, Grouchy's ominous delay—all this did not suffice to undermine Napoleon's belief in his infallibility. When Wellington gave way I saw the Emperor rise in his stirrups, turn and dispatch a message to Paris that the battle was won."

"In point of fact, however," interrupted the Major, "the supposed retreat of the Iron Duke was only a ruse. He was hiding and rallying our men. But 'the Sunken Road,' my friend, tell me of that disastrous charge."

"We were stretched out for nearly a mile, twenty-six squadrons of horse, comprising thirty-five hundred men, armed with casque and cuirass, pistol and sabre, deployed in battle line, an impenetrable wall of steel, silent but alive with eagerness. On a sudden, an aide-de-camp galloped up, placing in the hand of Marshal Ney an order:

"'Carry Mont Saint Jean.

"'NAPOLEON.'

I distinctly remember how the hoofs of his charger threw off great chunks of mud as he splashed through the quagmire. Surging and undulating like a tidal wave, we burst into simultaneous motion.

"With upraised sabres and flowing standards, through a storm of grape-shot and musketry, we galloped fearlessly up the slope toward the tableland of Mont

Saint Jean. Behind the crest of the plateau, the British infantry, drawn up in solid squares, waited silent and immovable. Shouting *Vive l'Empereur!* our cuirassiers charged up the hill at full gallop. Suddenly, as we arrived at the very crest, we saw, between us and the British, just beneath our horses feet, a yawning ravine.

“It was the Sunken Road of Ohain. Crashing, rearing plunging, unable to withstand the momentum of the onrush, we fell, horse and man, into the inexorable trench. Our second rank pushed our first forward, the third thrust forward the second, until the road was a seething mass of horses and men, over which those behind trampled and marched on. Decimated but not disheartened by the disaster of the sunken road, our remnant of cuirassiers hurled themselves upon the British squares.

“With swords in our teeth, pistols in fist, galloping like Valkyries, we assailed the impassive Englishmen, whose front rank, kneeling, plunged their bayonets into the bellies of our rearing horses. Their second rank shot us down, while behind them the cannoneers poured upon us great volleys of grape.”

“Had it not been for the sunken road,” interrupted Walters, “you might have turned the issue. As it was you annihilated seven squares out of thirteen and captured sixty pieces of ordnance and six British flags. 'Twas then Wellington bethought himself of his

cavalry. Attacking the cuirassiers from the rear he drove them against Somerset and our dragoons."

"Then," said du Mont, "in a whirlwind charge we slaughtered half of your unconquerable dragoons and their brave commander. The plateau of Mont Saint Jean was taken, lost and retaken. Ney had four horses shot beneath him. After two hours' fighting the greater part of our cuirassiers lay stretched on the plain."

It was in vain that Walters had striven to restrain the old *invalide*. His blood was up.

"I remember," he cried, "I was singing: *Allons, Enfants de la Patrie, Le jour de gloire*——"

He sang now in a high pitched voice, brandishing his cane like a sabre and straddling his chair.

"And then," he cried, "as my horse sprang over my dead comrades—thou—damned Englishman, didst bar my way. I raised my arm to strike but thy sword was stronger than mine."

His face was livid, the old cicatrice seamed it like a white gash. He struck at his friend, then reeling in his imaginary saddle, toppled and fell, crying: "*Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur—Vive*——"

1815-1914

Where crashed the cuirassiers in that dread heap
And rallied Orange his reluctant bands;
Cast from French guns, a monster lion stands,

Old Belgium

While on the plain, there graze contented sheep
And joyous peasants now the harvests reap,
At Waterloo—Peace broodeth o'er the lands
Where, fivescore years ago, War's vengeful hands
Sent countless victims down to ceaseless sleep.

The wide champaign is fair with blossoms red,
Serenely white, the moon wanes overhead,
The starry sentries pace their silent round,
Hearken! Once more the sullen thunders sound,
The heavens are rent with cannonade afar,
Hell's Huns, on Belgium, loose their hounds of War!

CHAPTER XI

BLOOD KINDRED

I

OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

IT was in the blood! Harry Walters, only son of Major Anthony du Mont Walters, of Balaklava and Sepoy Rebellion fame, grandson of Captain John Walters, who distinguished himself at Waterloo, could no more have kept out of the fighting than a duck out of water.

Rivals on the crews of Harvard and Yale we were chums now, off on a short vacation. Like a long line of my Winthrop forbears, was a surgeon, and had been taking a post-graduate course at the *École de Médecine* in Paris. Harry, who carried off honours at Sheffield, was now a mechanical engineer specializing in structural engineering. Every machine was for him a fascinating toy, his latest an Antoinette monoplane, in which we were now skimming over the beautiful Ardennes in the lazy days of August.

We were halfway across Luxembourg when the first

premonition of the approaching invasion dawned upon us. Flying over a range of screening hills we saw, as far as the eye could reach, platoons of marching men and, alternately revealed and hidden by clouds of dust, squadron upon squadron of Prussian cavalry!

"Can you beat that!" I exclaimed irrelevantly.

"I'll try, old man," Harry replied. "Here's for the nearest telegraph station to send the alarm to Liège."

We scudded back like a leaf before a tempest. Already the spires of Liège were visible, when suddenly we discerned, conspicuous on the white highway, a grey touring-car dashing eastward and exceeding the speed limit even for country roads.

We were flying low and, discerning us, its occupants, two men in civilian garb, stopped as we flew over and studied us intently through field-glasses. Then one of them levelled a rifle; there was a puff of smoke, a detonation, our engine stopped short, and the monoplane staggered in its flight.

Skilfully Harry volplaned into a ploughed field where the touring-car could not follow. We spied a hut near at hand and, dashing for it under a rain of bullets, found ourselves in an abandoned smithy. Supporting its unhinged door against sacks of coke, we entrenched ourselves behind the rude barricade. Our only weapons were Harry's revolver and my rifle. Our assailants continued to fire but their shots went wild. We waited patiently, saving our ammunition.

Attaching a handkerchief to a cane they jumped from the car and came toward us, waving a flag of truce. Halfway across the field they stopped and the leader shouted: "It's all our mistake. I'll explain. Come out; we won't hurt you."

Laying down his automatic, Harry went confidently up to the stranger. "Why did you fire on us?" he asked.

"We took you for German spies," the other replied, holding out his hand in a friendly manner.

Harry laughed. "Shake hands," he said.

Quick as a flash the fellow's hand slipped to his hip pocket. A shot rang out. Striking the revolver from his hand Harry sprang upon him.

At the same time the chauffeur rushed to the assistance of his chief. I fired, saw him clap his hand to his cheek, run back to the automobile, and drive rapidly away. Then, as I turned to Harry, his man wrenched himself free and was off across the field.

With a bound Harry was after him, gripping the scoundrel above the knees, in as pretty a diving tackle as ever I saw on a football field. Down he whirled, his head striking a stone, and collapsed limp and senseless.

Beside him fluttered a paper, a maze of apparently meaningless hieroglyphics. "Look at this!" Harry cried exultantly. "It is a German cipher code."

"Keep it," I counselled. "This may come in handy."

Dragging our prisoner to the smithy, we bound him

hand and foot with a halter. Then, lifting the door onto its hinges, we piled bags of coke against it and left him muttering obscene German oaths.

"There, I guess he won't make any more row," said Harry complacently. "Now let's see what we can do to fix our monoplane." After an hour's work we managed to repair damages, planed toward a village, and alighted in a meadow, leaving the monoplane behind some willows which bordered a beautiful stream. Here we rested, gazing across the valley to a beetling cliff on which was perched a turreted château. Crossing a foot-bridge near this point we hastened on to telegraph Liège the approach of the Germans.

As we threaded the shadowy forest, mists rose purple and cool, thrushes trilled in the coverts, and the wind strummed in the pines. We drank deep draughts of the balsam-scented air.

A moment later, rounding a turn in the road, a pair of runaway cobs, dragging a phaeton, galloped furiously toward us. As they neared, I caught sight of a woman, wide-eyed with fright, still pluckily straining at the reins.

Harry sprang to the bits, I, into the phaeton, and, grasping the reins, gradually pulled the pair down to a walk.

Soothing her high-spirited pets with caresses, the lady overwhelmed Harry with her thanks. "It is not their fault, for they are the gentlest creatures," she protested.

"Some boors rushed by us in a grey touring-car, and almost took the wheels from my phaeton. But for your assistance I might have been killed."

There was not a tremor in her resolute voice, which had a strangely deep and delicate quality. Harry regarded her fixedly; noting every feature of her distinguished face and bearing, every detail of her tailor-made costume, from the crisp white stock to her perfectly fitting driving gloves—an up-to-date militant maid, though none the less daintily feminine.

"It was nothing," he replied, "but you are a trifle pale, may I not drive you home?"

"Not home," she said, "but to the railway station. I have had two frights today and it is beginning to get on my nerves."

"It happens that we are also on our way to the station," Harry replied.

At the word "we," she became for the first time conscious of my presence. "Then may I not give you both a lift?" she asked, and, as we accepted the proffered courtesy: "Tell me, have either of you observed anything which would lead you to think that the German army is about to invade this region?"

"At the risk of alarming you again—we have"; and Harry told her of our adventure.

"Then he spoke the truth," she exclaimed; "an old acquaintance, Baron von Derbitz, called upon me to-day and threatened that I would soon appeal to him for

protection. I shall leave for Brussels tomorrow. My father always predicted that we would come to grips again with Germany; and insisted that I should be prepared to do my part. I have taken three years of training and shall be a Red Cross nurse."

"That is a fine spirit," I remarked, for Harry only looked his approval.

"It is the spirit of all French and Belgian women," she said simply.

At the ticket-office, she asked for reservations on the morning's express. The station-master was troubled. It would probably be all right tomorrow; no trains had come through today.

"You will dine with me tonight at the château," she said, and, with a cordial *au revoir*, drove rapidly away.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish," I said to Harry, as he turned upon me his enraptured face. "We have accepted an invitation from we don't know whom, to a château we don't know where!"

"Don't be flippant, Winthrop," he replied, and applied himself to his telegraphing.

The operator rattled her keys, then cried in dismay: "I can't get Liège. The wires must be down. It's odd too, for I sent a message on that line this afternoon for a German gentleman. Such a funny message, I couldn't understand it all."

"Do you happen to remember it?" asked Harry.

"Why yes, I wrote it down. What do you think of that?" Harry read:

"TO GENERAL VON ALTENBERG, STAVELOT.

"Four melons, two peaches, and a bunch of grapes. Melons contain 4000 seeds, peaches 500, grapes 1000.

"Signed VON DERBITZ."

"Is it a joke?" she asked.

"No," replied Harry, "the Germans will be here tomorrow. You had better get out."

As he spoke, an ominous rumbling to the north reverberated in our ears. "That's artillery," he said. "They are bombarding Liège! We must make a dash for Waldsteen and warn the Countess Antoinette."

"How the devil did you find out her name?" I asked.

"From the telegraph operator. Sprint, man!" he exclaimed, and was off.

As we neared the park gate, a man slunk toward us from the shadows, "For the love of God do not enter," he stammered, "the place is live with Germans."

"Is the Countess safe?" Harry asked hoarsely.

"Yes, but she is a prisoner in her own apartment. General von Altenberg has requisitioned the château as his headquarters. I am her chauffeur. She sent me to warn you."

"Can you carry back a message?"

"No, Monsieur, I am dismissed. Mademoiselle is served by orderlies. Her suite has no outer door and its windows look sheer down the precipice to the river."

"Is that side of the château guarded?"

"No, Monsieur, it is unapproachable."

"But someone in a small boat might row close to the foundations."

"And then?"

"Is there such a thing as a rope-ladder in the village?"

"Yes, Monsieur, at the Fire Department."

"Can't you get it to the Countess in some way?"

"No, but the Germans have ordered beer. I could help the brewer's man unload, and fasten the rope-ladder at the wine-cave."

"Good, and thence one can surely reach the apartment of the Countess."

The man shrugged. "From the wine-cave there is a staircase to the kitchen-cellars and to the butler's pantry. Then Monsieur turns to the left and along the corridor to the grand staircase, above which is the Countess's suite. But it is always locked, and the General's secretary, Baron von Derbitz, keeps the key."

That night we unmoored a boat and drifted down to the château. The moon glimpsed from cloud rifts and showed us the rope-ladder. But to our great discomfiture, the lowest rung swung several feet above Harry's head. I rose to my full height and raised him on my shoulders. With a lithe spring he covered the remaining interval, grasped the ladder, and went up hand over hand like a monkey.

He entered the lower cave and I waited, restraining



“ Upon a lofty cliff perched a turreted chateau”

From a copyright photograph by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

“Great peace is over Hougomont”



“Idle barges and laborious windmills”

From a copyright photograph by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

an intense desire to smoke. I was congratulating myself that the most difficult part of our undertaking was accomplished, when I heard a sudden scuffle, a maddened shriek, and a muffled thud. Someone had been done for, but whether Harry or his assailant I could not tell.

The minutes lagged like hours. Throttling his man, Harry mounted a rock-hewn stairway to the upper cave. Threading murky, tortuous chambers, he finally groped his way upward to the basement. Roistering songs of drunken revellers rang out as he tiptoed past the banqueting hall. Someone lurched against him in the dark, but he slipped on as noiselessly as a ghost; and found the apartment of the Countess.

Harry tapped softly, but there was no reply. Suddenly he heard a smothered cry: "Help! Help!"

Thrusting his shoulder against the door, he burst it open and rushed into the room. The Countess lay upon the floor. Von Derbitz knelt beside her, his hands clutching her throat. Wrestling desperately, Harry tore him away. Across the floor they rolled to the door, where Harry thrust his opponent into the corridor and turned the key.

Leading the Countess to the window, Harry sprang out upon the sill. "Come quick," he said, "they will be after us in a minute."

Placing her feet on the gnarled branches, with his arm encircling her, he clambered down the vine to the upper cavern. Two guards rushed suddenly from the shadows

with bared bayonets. Drawing his automatic, Harry fired; the foremost fell dead, the other slunk back cursing. On to the wine-cellar they dashed, but here Antoinette's nerve failed her. One downward look at the swaying rope-ladder and her brain swam giddily. "I can never make it," she cried.

Harry clasped her close. "There is no risk. I love you utterly. Will you trust to me?"

"Now, and always," she answered.

He tied her wrists together with a handkerchief, and, placing her arms around his neck, descended. When they reached the last rung, he stooped, grasped it, and, striking out with his feet, dropped to my shoulders. Then he leaped into the boat, nearly capsizing it.

As we sprang to the oars a shout rang from the balcony. It was von Derbitz, who leaped, striking the water with a splash which drenched us with spray, and came to the surface only a few feet behind us.

Harry raised an oar and as von Derbitz grasped the stern thrust him under. We raced on but he rose and swam frenziedly after us.

I jumped ashore and pulled in the boat. Running to the monoplane, Antoinette and Harry sprang in. He started the engine and, shoving with all my might, I sent them trundling along the ground.

Von Derbitz ran up as they mounted. He clutched at the aeroplane, but the propeller struck him and he fell back upon me.

We grappled. I thought myself his match, but he was drunk with rage and fought, not like a man but a fiend. I doubled his arm back and he cried out with pain. Relaxing my grip, his dagger bit my side and all was darkness.

II

HOUGOMONT

Great peace is over Hougomont,
And over La Haie Sainte is peace,
The level lands are ploughed and rich
With promise of increase;
The sleepy cattle graze along
Beneath the scarred historic walls,
And here where nations spent their blood
The flush of sunset falls.

No pride nor pity touches me,
Nor Hatred's fire and ancient stings,
Only a sense of strifes outworn,
And strange ironic things;
And stirrings of some broken strain
Of sounding hoofs and answering guns,
And faith that Europe now as then
Can breed heroic sons.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

Dawn silvered the historic battlefield, as they flew over Waterloo, displaying long ribbons of white roads, winding between wide fields, golden with grain, as yet unharvested. Children were driving to pasture contented cattle. From the church spires of the waking

hamlets the angelus chimed musically. They were flying low, and Harry discerned a cluster of irregular buildings. "Here is a farm," he said, "shall we descend for rest and *déjeuner*?"

The Countess assented. "Why this is my own *manoir*!" she exclaimed, "dear old Hougomont."

Harry tilted his planes and they glided to a meadow. As they walked along the road a dairy-woman, driving a dog-cart, approached them, singing, as she jogged, a merry tune to the rattling of her great brass milk-cans.

The panting dogs halted and their driver stared in astonished delight. "*C'est ma petite Toinette!*" she cried, springing from her cart and kissing the hands of the Countess.

"Yes, *Mère Bavarde*, it is your very tired *Toinette*. Have you some milk for her in the china porringer with the blue tulips?"

"*Mon Dieu, oui!*" she cried. "How pale you are! Come into the *manoir* and I will make you *café au lait*. *Tenez*, that is a strange kind of bird on which you came.

"*Bien oui*, I have seen them. It is an age of wonders. See, I have here a telegram from niece Lizi, she who makes them at Waldsteen. She says the *Boches* are upon us, and she is coming to me. But she is crazy, that girl." As she gossiped, *Mère Bavarde* conducted us to her kitchen and bustled about preparing breakfast, which she served beneath a trellised arbour in the garden.

"I trust you are not sacrificing the carrier-pigeons for us," Antoinette said as the good woman brought a platter of spitted birds.

"*Mais non*, the carriers are kept apart; we have many, many. Shall Mademoiselle go to her château near Ypres? We have pigeons from its dove-cote also. Mademoiselle remembers son Antoine, who is her *fermier là-bas*? The *gars* will be glad to fly a pigeon to Lizi when she comes to me."

Harry was struck by a sudden thought. "Keep your pigeons, Madame," he said, "they may be more useful than you think."

He examined the dove-cote, and looked with keen interest about the courtyard. "I have always longed to see Hougomont," he remarked, "for my grandfather fought under Wellington and my grandmother, Huguette de Goumont, was born in this very *manoir*."

Antoinette laughed in delighted surprise. "Why, she was the cousin of my grandfather! We are related, without doubt."

"I'd rather think we were friends," he replied.

"The best of friends. Though kin, we need be no less kind."

They were in the orchard where their ancestors, a century ago, had ministered to one another in sore distress. The thrill in her voice stirred Harry to the depths. Wheeling about he caught her hand. "Allies, friends, kindred—dearest, may we not be something more?"

III

THE BOMBARDMENT OF ANTWERP

Peace and darkness brooded over the city. Through broken shards of cloud a wan moon blinked down upon sleeping houses and deserted streets. Scarcely a ripple stirred the placid river which seemed almost to have ceased to flow in the sombre silence of its empty quais.

Straight and sharp, like a lofty pine-tree, looms the fretted obelisk of the great cathedral spire, raising ever to an unseeing heaven its vain beseeching hand. All lights have been extinguished. The city appears cold, uninhabited, and dead. Only the minster chimes, as they toll the lagging hour, give audible trace of human life.

Suddenly a shadow passes across the face of the moon! It darkens—widens—greatens—floating onward like a sleek, aërial whale. Noiseless and ghostly it glides in furtive flight. Nearer and nearer it looms, sweeping in a spacious circle over the house-tops of the slumbering city.

Suddenly from its gauzy envelope flutters a filmy black thread! Hissing like a rocket, downward writhes a slender puff of smoke.

Then, with a flash, whose lurid glare illumines the surrounding country, a deafening concussion bursts the ear-drums of the night! Like a mighty earthquake



Mère Bavarde and her "patient, panting doggies"

From a copyright photograph by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

Hougomont



“ In the orchard which once ran blood they retold the ancient story ”

From a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.

muttering its wrath in thunderous mumblings reverberating on and on in reiterant muffled roar.

Searchlights from every quarter suddenly slash the murk! Multitudinous and glaring, they dart like giant glow-worms through the dusky void. Machine-guns belch and sputter at the hovering bird of prey! Rifles crack and the bullets zip like flies around a carcass—but the aerial Dreadnought is out of range, and swift and scatheless sails majestically away.

Antoinette grasped Harry's arm and gazed at the air-ship in tense excitement, but unafraid. "Harry!" she cried as the bomb exploded in the square, "that was aimed at the cathedral!"

"And missed!" he exulted. "Thank God, it missed you, darling."

"It has done no harm," she laughed. "But, Harry, will they come again?"

"Not tonight; but this is only the beginning. You must leave Antwerp."

They were sitting upon her balcony, speaking little, so absorbed were they in their happiness. "Yes, I will go," she replied reluctantly. "The Queen has accepted my château of Bonneville. I will convert it at once into a military hospital. But I hate to run away before the guns. I want to stay and fight shoulder to shoulder with you."

He drew her close. "What a sanguinary creature you

are! Do you realize that you are giving me heart to fight? I never thought that I should turn aside from my life-work of construction. I have built some pretty towers in steel that would match that spire in height. But the wonder of these old cathedral towers of Rheims and Antwerp has gripped me, and instead of building skyscrapers I am going to devote myself to the defence of these masterpieces. Let me tell you what I am planning.

"I have secret information that the Germans are constructing a giant aerial battleship, which will surpass the super Zeppelins. We must be prepared to meet them and hold the supremacy of the air. I believe that the best features of the Parseval Fleurus and Astra dirigibles can be combined with the Sikorsky and Caproni aeroplanes and result in a battle-plane of tremendous power. It would have a breadth of wing of over a hundred feet. I would install three 150 horsepower Mercedes engines, and four rapid-fire machine-guns, to enable it to attack on every quarter without turning."

"Harry!" Antoinette exclaimed, "why don't you build such an air-ship for the Belgian Government?"

"I hope to do so; but the first thing is to find a manufacturing plant and complete a model."

"Yes," she exclaimed, "at Bleyden are the very builders for you. I will write the senior member of the firm to place his works at your service, and that I will

back your invention with whatever capital is required."

"I cannot permit you to do this," he exclaimed. "It is too much, dearest."

"Nothing is too much for Belgium," she murmured, lowering her eyes as Harry sealed the contract, then descending the stairway waved gaily to her from the street.

Antoinette sat wondering vaguely at her own depression. "'Only for a little while,' he said," she repeated to her foreboding heart, and strove in vain to sleep.

A day later saw the beginning of the bombardment of Antwerp.

Within the turret, stripped to the waist, the bronze-backed gunners with blood-shot eyes blind with smoke leap to the monster gun.

The captain, maimed and reeling, his head bound with bandages, still stands by to fire a final charge. Shrapnel bursts upon the glacis tearing great gashes in the silken sward. Shells explode and hurl steel splinters through the embrasures of the armoured dome. Panting and crazed by the stifling heat in the bowels of this infernal vault, waits the blackened and bloody crew.

Suddenly a titanic thunder rends the air; a lightning flash and belch of choking fumes.

The cloud slowly clears disclosing, in place of the rounded cupola, a shapeless heap of shattered concrete and splintered steel. Where once had stood a fort, now lies a mass of mangled limbs and shredded bones.

AT THE CHÂTEAU-HOSPITAL

When the storm burst upon Antwerp, Antoinette slipped away to her château of Bonneville.

Where so long ago the Nervii made their stand against Cæsar, fighting knee-deep in morasses, the heroic Belgians opened dykes and farmsteads to the sea, rather than to that relentless Teuton tide which swept upon them.

Gaunt and grey, with tall turrets silhouetted against the clear sky, like halberds of a troop of lancers, the château lifts hoary towers above terraced parterres. For seven centuries have the self-same battlements frowned down upon as many wars and sheltered successive generations of the de Bonneilles. Their interminable salons made admirable wards for the Auxiliary Hospital, into which Antoinette converted her luxurious home.

Here it was my privilege to co-operate with her, receiving, from the dressing station at Ypres, hundreds of men too desperately wounded for transportation to the main hospitals at Amiens and Paris. Never shall I forget the pity in

The faces of the Sisters as they bore the wounded in,
When each nerve cried on God that made the misused clay,
Till the pain was merciful and stunned them into silence,—
These abode their agonies and wiped the sweat away.¹

¹ Rudyard Kipling.

At my present writing the beautiful old château is still a place of stillness and peace. In each of its nineteen great chambers is installed a bed, and in each, pale and lifeless, lies a wounded soldier. In the library, amid rare bibelots garnered from the uttermost parts of the world, Spanish armour, Chinese porcelains, brazen Buddhas, Mechlin lace, ivory carvings, Delft and Arras, dim Madonnas bend sorrowful eyes down upon a young French lieutenant who lies sightless amid these curios in the embrace of *La belle Dame sans merci*.

Death lurks also in the drawing-room where Memling, Teniers, Rubens, and Van Dyck, in massive gildings, set the walls aglow with the opulent, ancient Flemish life. Here lies an English colonel, veteran of the Crimean War, white as a corpse, shot through the lungs, bleeding to death.

In the music room, whose clustered-columned vaulted loggias have echoed so often to clavichord and castanet, a Belgian general hums softly an air he cannot hear.

He was deafened by the bursting of a shell at——

V

THE BATTLE OF THE RIVERS

We saw nothing of Harry until the spring brought a lull in the fighting, for after perfecting the designs of his great battle-plane, he had joined the Royal British Flying Corps and had been constantly at the front.

Was there a particularly hazardous reconnaissance, he was sure to be detailed for the duty. We had not infrequently heard of his dashing raids over the enemy's country, though it was difficult to make him speak of them. But the evening before he left us, as we were sitting in Antoinette's boudoir before the great fireplace, where glowing pine-cones dispelled the chill of the April night, he responded more frankly to our urgent clamours for a tale of personal adventure.

"I wonder," he mused after a silence devoted to carefully lighting a cigarette, "if you happen to know why the battle of the Marne did not eventuate just as the Germans anticipated."

"I am sure you had a finger in the pie," Antoinette asserted proudly, "for we know that General French sent you to assist Joffre at that time."

Harry laughed. "Any other aviator would have turned the trick as well," he said; "I happened to have the chance, that's all. The details which included the activities of yours truly are of no importance to the world but more nearly approach an adventure than any of my other experiences.

"In the sultry heat of September we were fighting in the neighbourhood of Nancy.

"The attacks of the Germans seemed to have dwindled into feints and might be simply attempts to divert our attention from more serious operations in another quarter. In this state of uncertainty

I was detailed to ascertain what was going on at the enemy's centre.

"The balls of the German snipers whistled harmlessly about me as my biplane rose out of the afternoon haze and came round in a long curve settling to its north-westward flight.

"My scout was directed toward Vitry le François, just within the German trenches. As I flew high above the town I saw unrolled beneath me, a large section of the enemy's formation, corps after corps, deployed in an immense V, the point concentrating on Vitry.

"This appeared to be our weak spot, for the British, under Kitchener and French, were far to the west, near Amiens and St. Quentin, pressing against the right flank of Von Kluck. General Joffre, as I have explained, held the east wing, while at the centre, the army of Paris remained panic-stricken within its *enceinte*.

"The Germans will drive south from Vitry," I said to myself, 'for here our lines are unsupported by reserves.'

"I was about to return, when, in the neighbourhood of Châlons, I noticed a monoplane; and, as it neared me, recognized the black crosses of a Taube. I spiralled rapidly higher. The Taube also manœuvred for position. My biplane was swifter. From a height of 4000 feet, I swooped like a falcon upon a dove, and with my rapid-fire gun wounded the aviator.

"He glided swiftly to the ground, where some labourers

were harvesting hay. I watched him leave his machine, run a few yards, and then fall.

"A peasant-crone, brandishing a pitchfork, ran toward me. 'There he is, behind the hayrick,' she shrilled; 'shall I prod him, M'sieu?'

"Declining the assistance of the gentle creature, I rushed forward and recognized, in the unconscious aviator, our old friend von Derbitz.

"We searched him and discovered, within the lining of his coat, a code message. Translating the involved cipher, I read as follows:

(1)

"IMPERIAL HEADQUARTERS.

"TO GENERAL VON BUELOW:

"I am engaging Joffre in the environs of Nancy.

"Von Kluck has forced Kitchener and French on Amiens. Drive on Paris through the centre of the Allies' line. Do not

(2)

wait for my arrival before attacking the enemy.

"Signed

"WILHELM.'

"Here was what I wanted, the precise location where the German attack would be delivered. I must fly to General Joffre with my news. But in the meantime, von Buelow, even without this order, might be counted upon to advance; and von Kluck, now on the march,

would surely wedge his army between Paris and General Joffre, cutting our line in two.

“It was precisely the stroke Napoleon hoped to accomplish at Waterloo, when he attempted to throw Grouchy’s troops between Wellington and his German allies.

“If there were only some means of delaying the attack until our forces could be concentrated!

“Suddenly I saw a way. The Kaiser’s orders had been written on two separate pages. If the last page alone were delivered, it would read: “‘Wait for my arrival before attacking,’ and would have the effect I desired.

“Quickly I exchanged my uniform for that of the unconscious German, but paused, as I reflected that my biplane bore on its wings the tricolour circles of the Allies.

“I examined the Taube and found it uninjured. Heaping hay upon my uniform and biplane, I started in the direction of Châlons.

“It was dark when I grounded outside the city. I hurried to headquarters with my dispatch. Fortunately, the General was not in and I was spared an embarrassing interrogatory. Appetite led me to a *café*, where, round the groaning board, a group of drunken Uhlans were celebrating the recent arrival of von Kluck’s advance corps. Seating myself in a secluded corner, I absorbed a much-needed meal, and with it information from the hilarious Teutons.

“‘We have scared the Parisian rabbits into their burrow,’ they boasted, ‘not one will stick his ears outside the fortifications.’

“‘How about the British?’ someone asked.

“‘Kitchener has followed us to Soissons, but he’ll not attack. We gave him his bellyful at Mons.’

“Rejoiced to learn that our forces were so near, I determined to fly to them with my news.

“The night was cool and clear. A brief flight brought me to the hay-field. Here I abandoned the Taube for my powerful biplane. Von Derbitz had disappeared, heaven knows how, without discovering it.

“Gaining British headquarters, I sought Earl Kitchener and delivered my message. He at once assembled the entire British expeditionary force and struck southward to join Joffre, at the same time sending word to the Paris garrison urging them to effect a junction with him.

“Back to General Joffre I flew with tidings that the combined armies were marching to meet the German advance.

“I shall never forget his laugh, a braying, triumphant explosion, as I told him the welcome news. In a minute he had dispatched orders to his staff, commanding an immediate movement of the army to the north-west.

“On September 6th, between Montmirail and Vitry le François, the Allies concentrated along a front of

fifty miles. Then began the terrific 'Battle of the Marne,' which lasted an entire week. Like the converging blades of an immense pair of shears, from Paris to the eastern fortresses, stretched the V-shaped line. Between the blades, unwitting that they were riveted at the centre, marched von Kluck. Relentlessly, though slowly, the living blades closed upon him. He started north with frantic haste, and, fighting desperately, managed to secure his retreat.

"Four days later von Buelow, beaten by Joffre, retreated with the entire German army, driven back through seven days' fighting from the Marne to the Aisne.

"The tradition of Teuton invulnerability was demolished and our armies exulted with the intoxication of Victory."

VI

CONQUERORS OF THE AIR

We mount like soaring eagles
The empyrean morn.
We veer and swoop like sea-gulls
And hold the winds in scorn.

Over mankind's dominions
Our flight no hand may stay,
We speed on gyring pinions
Like vultures to our prey.

Old Belgium

On fleets and armies, tireless
We scout with watchful eyes
And flash our missives wireless
From bastions of the sky.

Darting and never resting
Through shrapnel to and fro,
Undaunted, ever questing
The secrets of the foe.

What though the engine quiver
And halt with bated breath,
While in the swirling river
We plunge to certain death!

We know the joy supernal,
The thunder-lust of war;
We climb the clouds eternal
And drop—like a falling-star!

Harry's giant battle-plane was now completed. His orders were elastic, both duration and direction of flight being left to his personal initiative.

As he was preparing to mount, Antoinette gave him a letter which had just been brought by one of the Hougomont pigeons.

Lizi, the Waldsteen operator, had obtained a place at the Brussels telegraph bureau. This letter was the duplicate of a message which had passed through her hands, it read:

“On board flagship *Cuxhaven*.

“To BARON VON DERBITZ,

“Leave Brussels on Wednesday. Cross England in Zeppelin to latitude 52° , longitude 12° and deliver accompanying message:

“Commander UNTERSEE,

“Western Division Submarine Flotilla.

“Base, Cruiser *Siegfried*.

“Send six submarines to St. George’s Channel, off Kinsale to intercept and torpedo Cunard liner *Sulitania*, due to arrive, with contraband of war for the Allies, on May 7th.

“Signed — KRIEGSHOF,

“Acting Commander in Chief, German Fleet.”

Harry was thunder-struck by the cold-bloodedness of this order.

There was no time to consult General French, for von Derbitz might already be on his fiendish errand. Without an instant’s delay Harry and his associates mounted the monster battle-plane and set forth upon their scout.

An English officer, who was brought in wounded from the trenches, gave us our next news.

“There had been no attack that morning,” he said, “and the men were smoking idly, when, dim and ominous, hovering over the line of low hills like a giant bumble-bee, a great Zeppelin lumbered lazily in the

breathless air of noon. First a mere yellow fleck on the sapphire sky, then gradually expanding till its colossal bulk covered us with its sinister shadow, as we lay crouching in the trenches. So clear and silent was the air that we could see the silvered helmet of the commanding officer cut like a jewel against the silken fabric of its long cigar-shaped gas-envelope, and could hear the cat-like purr of her whirling propellers, as she climbed clumsily over us. One sharp, simultaneous volley from our magazine rifles, and she was off, out of range, 'scot free,' except for a tattered streamer of yellow silk, a feather from the Prussian Eagle, trailing from her stern.

"Suddenly the air is filled with a whir of wings, like the rising of a covey of partridges, as an English battle-plane, flashing from behind a neighbouring copse, soars upward and gives chase! A shower of shrapnel from the German batteries greets the departure of the British air-ship and falls roaring to earth!

"Calmly the pilot holds the wheel, impervious to any sense of danger. Little by little he gains on his giant adversary, mounting steadily higher with the plan of attacking from above. When he had reached an altitude of 2000 metres, and approached within 500 metres of the fleeing dirigible, the latter opened fire on its pursuer with a volley of machine-guns.

"The battle-plane made a sudden dive, escaping without injury, then, circling gradually higher, hovered for an instant above its opponent.

“A flash of white, drops like a stone from the body of the battle-plane, and the dreaded Zeppelin bursts instantly into yellow flame and crashes clumsily to earth! At the same time, the battle-plane swerves swiftly from the flaming gases and glides down into the meadow.”

VII

FUMES OF HELL

Then on them poured a raine of stinkyng fire,
Saffron as reek from Ætna's cratere caste,
And belch of blindyng smoke and furye dire
Kindled to burstyng flame the welkyn vaste!
Anon the Francs presse up with dauntless wil,
But, spyte of al assaults, the Huns againe
Of vapours dire and fumes of flaming oile
Pour on ther foemenne such a ceaseles raine
That, doomward, down they totter starke and stil!
For every Hun the bolde crusaders kil
An hundred Paynims swarmyng from the soil
Seem suddenly to spring to life, until
Our courage, overtried, at last doth faile,
Who can againste such whelming oddes prevail?

UNKNOWN CHRONICLER.

“What is it, a conflagration?” asked Antoinette as she watched the lurid bank of yellow smoke settling above the trenches beyond the meadow.

Scanning the field eagerly with my glass, where the French held the line, I saw a multitude of figures fleeing dazedly before a murky cloud.

"The French have broken," someone shouted, and a moment later the road was crowded with a mob of panic-stricken fugitives, artillerymen, Zouaves, Turcos, and Infantry. Delirious they staggered in, with heaving chests and livid, contorted faces, from suffocation with the fumes of that poison gas.

Through a four-mile breach the Germans were pouring in thousands, into which gap the "Princess Pats," the crack Canadian regiment, immediately rushed. Overwhelmed by superior numbers, stifled by the asphyxiating fumes, "The men who came from the setting sun" fought with the fury of fiends and converted a terrible disaster into a victory.

The *Boches* swarmed upon them in hordes—only to be repulsed with terrific loss—but ever came new reserves, fresh, invincible, inexhaustible.

Running out of the teeming ward, I sprang into the motor-ambulance and speeded to the battlefield.

Orderlies were scurrying hither and thither laying upon stretchers bodies of unconscious victims.

Through the saffron fumes staggered a soldier in the last stage of exhaustion. "For God's sake, give this to General French," he gasped, struggling to tear a message from his coat.

"Trust it to me, Harry," I replied, as we lifted him into the ambulance.

"Rush to the hospital," I shouted to the chauffeur;

Antwerp Spire



“ It rises above the huddled houses, a slender obelisk of sculptured lace ”

“Vast intricacy and picturesqueness of perspective”



Antwerp Cathedral—Interior

and, while my assistant kneaded his chest I seized Harry's arms and pumped them up and down rhythmically.

He was still unconscious as we bore him in. His pulse scarcely perceptible, spontaneous breathing had ceased, and red blotches spotted the bluish pallor of his face. Antoinette ran to his side. "Dearest," she called again and again,—but Harry gave no response.

"Take him to the operating-room," I ordered, and send for Dr. Kyle.

The famous specialist joined us a moment later, businesslike, cool, and confident. "Transfusion of blood is the only hope for this case," he announced after a careful inspection.

"Find someone to give his blood," entreated Antoinette, "no matter what the cost"; then, turning to Dr. Kyle, asked: "Is it death for the donor?"

"No, my child, though it is a serious matter; for we cannot measure the amount of blood which flows from the artery of the donor to the vein of the recipient. But it is our patient's only chance for recovery."

I went through all the wards, promising five thousand francs for a volunteer. Only two men responded, one tuberculous, the other dying of blood-poison, both manifestly unfit.

Returning disheartened, I offered myself. Dr. Kyle proceeded to make a microscopic test, mingling a few drops of my blood with Harry's.

After a time he shook his head. "Utterly incom-

patible—their blood will not mingle without causing destruction of the red cells. If we could only find some relative. Consanguinity is what we need.”

Antoinette was transfigured with a strange delight, as she swiftly bared the beauty of her arm.

“We are blood-kindred,” she said triumphantly.

Dr. Kyle bent his head. “Greater love hath no man than this——”

Flashing on Harry a smile of maternal tenderness, Antoinette laid herself upon the table by his side.

Painting Harry’s left arm with iodine, I opened a vein and drew away the poisoned blood. Meantime, Dr. Kyle made an incision in an artery of Antoinette’s right wrist, and, by means of a glass tube, connected it with Harry’s arm.

For half an hour her heart ceaselessly throbbed, pulsing pure blood into his polluted veins.

Presently Harry stirred, an awakening flush lighted his face. He breathed deeply and gazed about with eager questioning eyes. Antoinette went suddenly white. Dr. Kyle instantly arrested the transfusion, and, by dextrous stitching, we hastily closed their wounds.

“What does this mean?” questioned Harry confusedly.

“It means,” I answered, “that your life is saved.”

Antoinette gasped, straining for breath, then relapsed into immobility.

Harry winced as if struck with a whip. “Lift me up!”



“ The famous Belfry of Bruges still towers above the sleepy town ”

From a photograph by Levy

“ Oriental minaret, and Gothic tracery ”



St. Sang, Bruges

From a photograph by Neurdein

he cried imperiously. We raised him to a seated posture. Claspng Antoinette in his quivering arms, Harry sobbed like a child.

Not long after I had the happiness of acting as groomsman at the wedding of our friends, where, in the presence of the King and Queen of Belgium, Lord Kitchener decorated the bridegroom with the coveted Victoria Cross.

BELGIAN BELLS

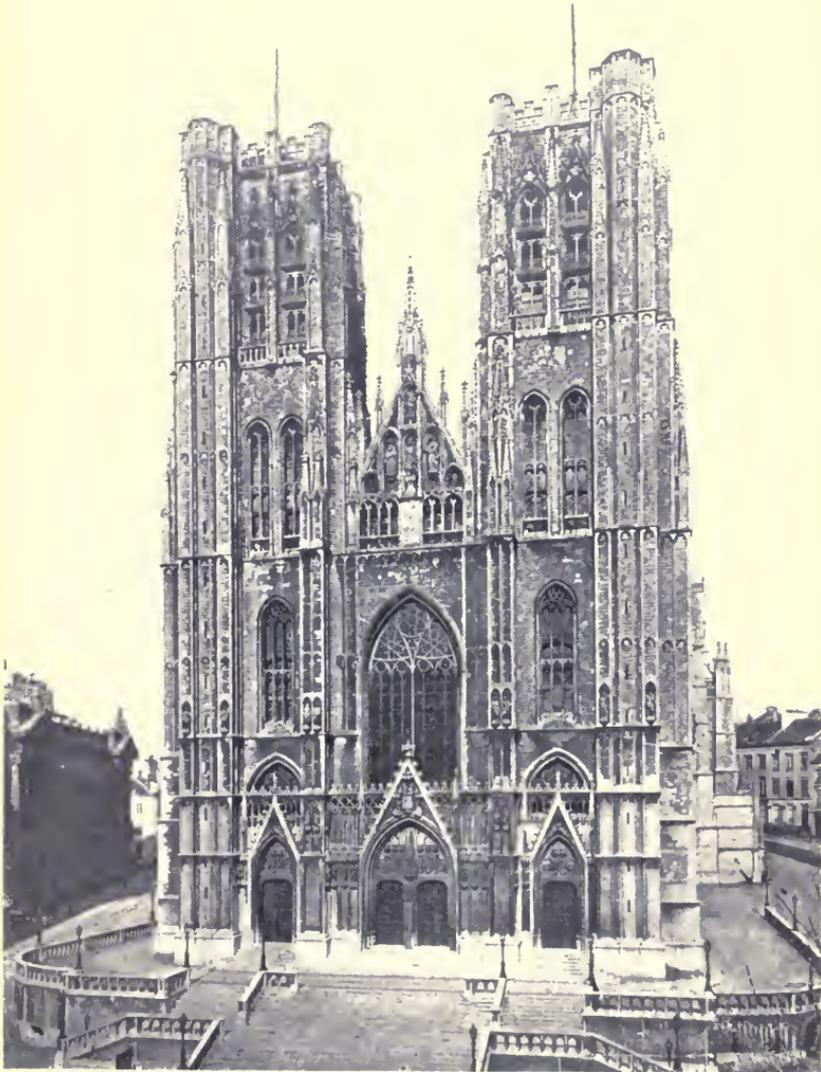
In a brave old Flemish city,
Ringed with water all around,
Where the girls are all so pretty
Quaintly coifed and gaily gowned;
And to market-place and cloister
Windy wharf and bustling mart
Shrewish fish-wives bring the oyster,
Eel, and flounder in a cart,
Dragged by patient, panting doggies
Big as wolves and tame as mares,
While with deep and raucous voices
These sea-sirens shout their wares,
And the lanes are rife with laughter,
As the brazen kettles gleam
From the tiles above the rafter
To the stones beneath the stream.
But above the city's clamour
Fast enfolded by its wings
Gleams the great cathedral's glamour
Through the dusk and din of things.
And at sunset when the quiet
Slants its shadow on the square
Ring the chimes a joyous riot
Through the silent winter air.
From the minster in the golden
Mist of melody and fire
Flames the buttressed belfry olden
And its lace-encrusted spire.

“Flames the buttressed belfry olden and its lace-encrusted spire”

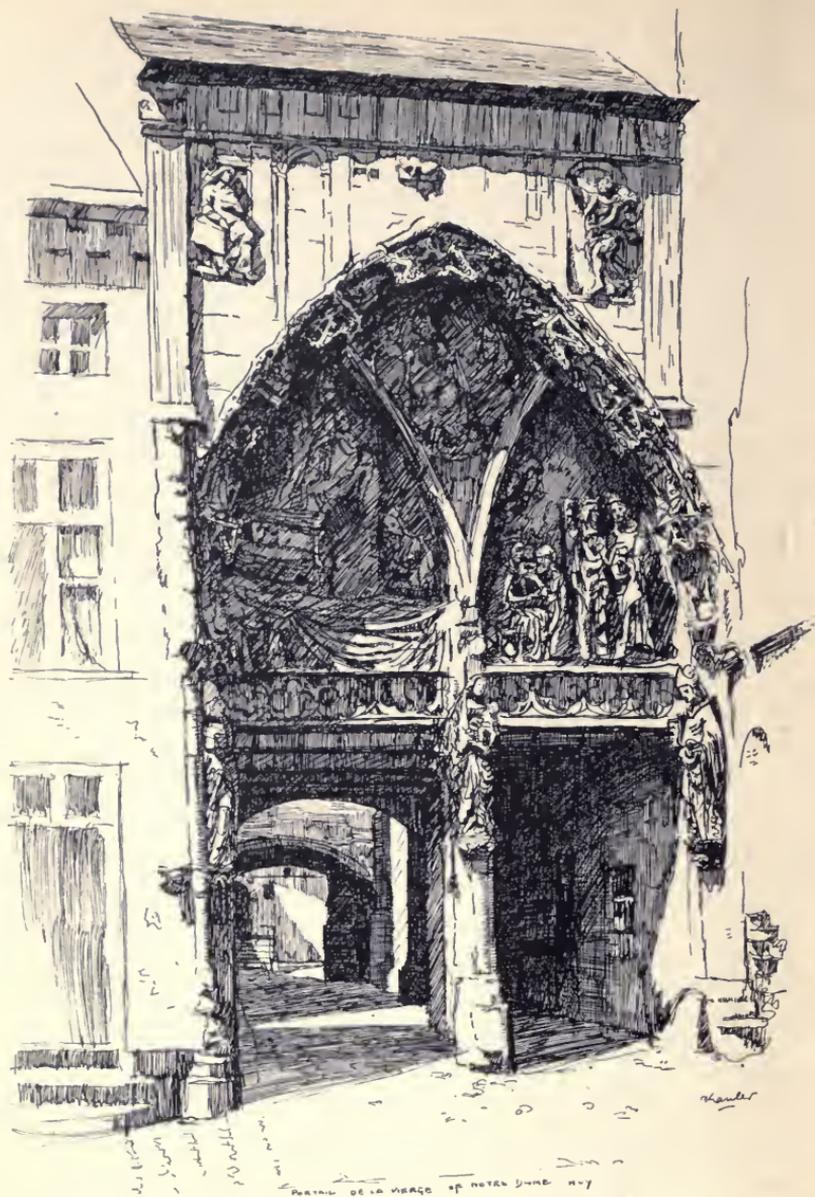


Antwerp Cathedral and Rubens Monument

From a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.



Cathedral of Ste. Gudule, Brussels



Portail de la Vierge, Notre Dame de Huy

From a drawing by Albert Chanler

Bell-tower battered, bruised, and saddened,
With what need of joy and pain
Will our yearning hearts be gladdened
By thy jubilant refrain?
Shall the ripple of thy singing
Rouse the welkin with its ringing,
Clanging victory again?
Then with murmur gently swelling
Came the answer ever welling,
In a calm triumphant strain
Came an echo ever knelling
As from chimes within my brain—
“Peace on Earth” all hate dispelling
Carillon of Christmas cheer,
Ring to all the news foretelling—
“War shall cease! Goodwill to all!”
Then outside my humble dwelling
Comes a strident brazen call,
“Wuxtry, Wuxtry!” hear the yell,
“Two more churches shot to hell!”

CHAPTER XII

NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF BELGIAN ARCHITECTURE¹

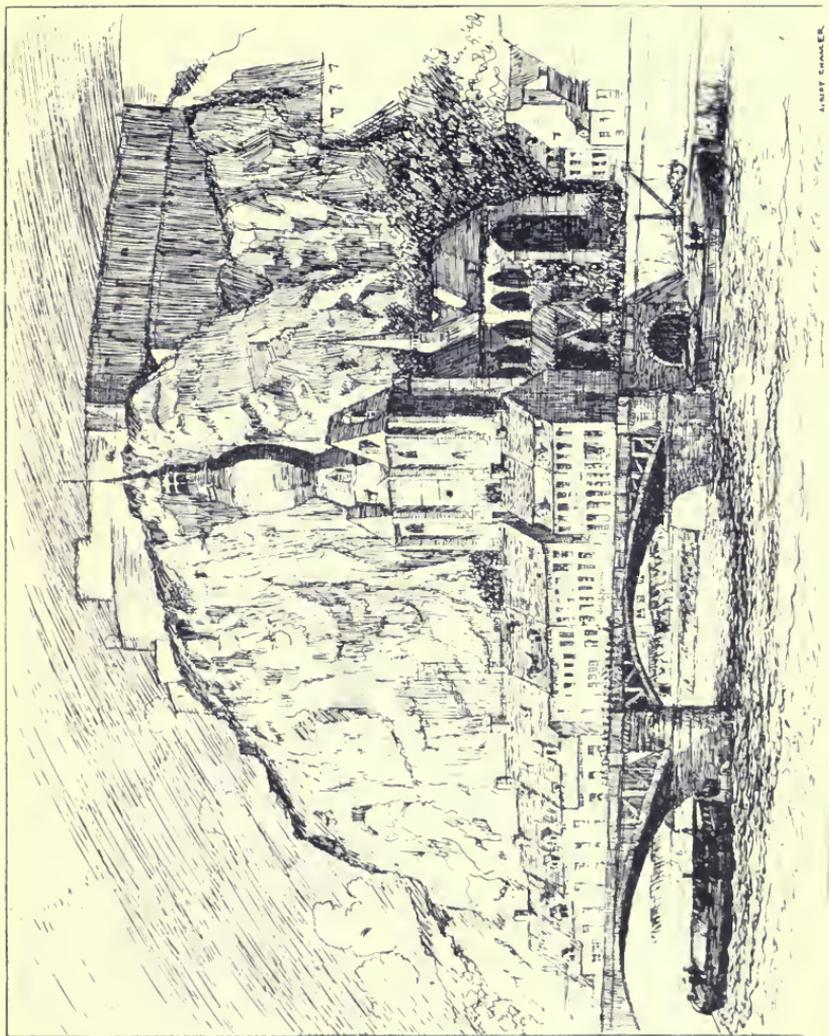
PART I—MEDLEVAL PERIOD

THE architecture of the Middle Ages breathes the spirit of Memling, retreat from the din of the world to an abode where passions are stilled, strife ceases in prayer and love, where physical and moral ugliness are nonexistent, and where spiritual thoughts bloom, like lilies, in the purity of naïve innocence.

It is precisely in examples of this period that Belgium, a country so harried by alien invasions that it has been described as the cockpit of Europe, is richest. Richer far than France—possibly than all of the countries of Northern Europe combined.

This was inevitable, for from the tenth to the sixteenth century, while the other countries of Europe

¹Indebtedness is acknowledged to the following authorities: Dr. Martin Shaw Briggs, *Baroque Architecture*; Eugene Fromentin, *Les Maîtres d'Autrefois*; Dr. James Fergusson, *History of Architecture*; Louvain Number, *Architectural Review*, London; G. A. T. Middleton, *Architectural Record*; H. Obreen and H. Van der Linden, *Album Historique de la Belgique*, Brussels; Professor Conrado Ricci, *Baroque Architecture*; Max Rooses, Curator of the *Plantin-Moretus Museum*, Antwerp; "Times'" *History of the War*, London.



Dinant

From a drawing by Albert Chanler

“ Bleeding and torn, ravished with sword and flame ”



Louvain

From a copyright photograph by the Topical News Agency

were engaged in war, Belgium was enjoying a supremacy in commercial prosperity due to her tireless industry; and had developed a more luxurious civilization than her neighbours, which found its expression in the arts of life. Its architecture was the ornate Gothic of Northern France—for a large part of its population, the Walloons, were largely French and, moreover, the northern provinces of France were at this time a part of Belgium. Of the cathedrals of northern Europe, that of Antwerp exceeds in size and gorgeousness all others; few can rival those of Mechlin, Mons, Bruges, and Ghent, while there is hardly a village which does not possess a church worthy of study.

A review of the Gothic architecture may therefore well be taken up as the traveller sees it, city by city. One cannot go wrong in search of such shrines no matter how we shape our pilgrimage.

ANTWERP. The first impression which the trans-Atlantic tourist gains as he sails slowly up the Scheldt is that of the spire of Antwerp Cathedral. It rises like a vision from the square, whose huddled houses seem to shrink from it as in reverent awe, a multitude of pinnacled buttresses, soaring ever higher in a slender obelisk of sculptured lace.

“Antwerp Cathedral,” says Fergusson, “is one of the most remarkable churches in Europe,” being 390 feet long by 170 in width inside the nave and covering more than 70,000 square feet. That of Cologne is

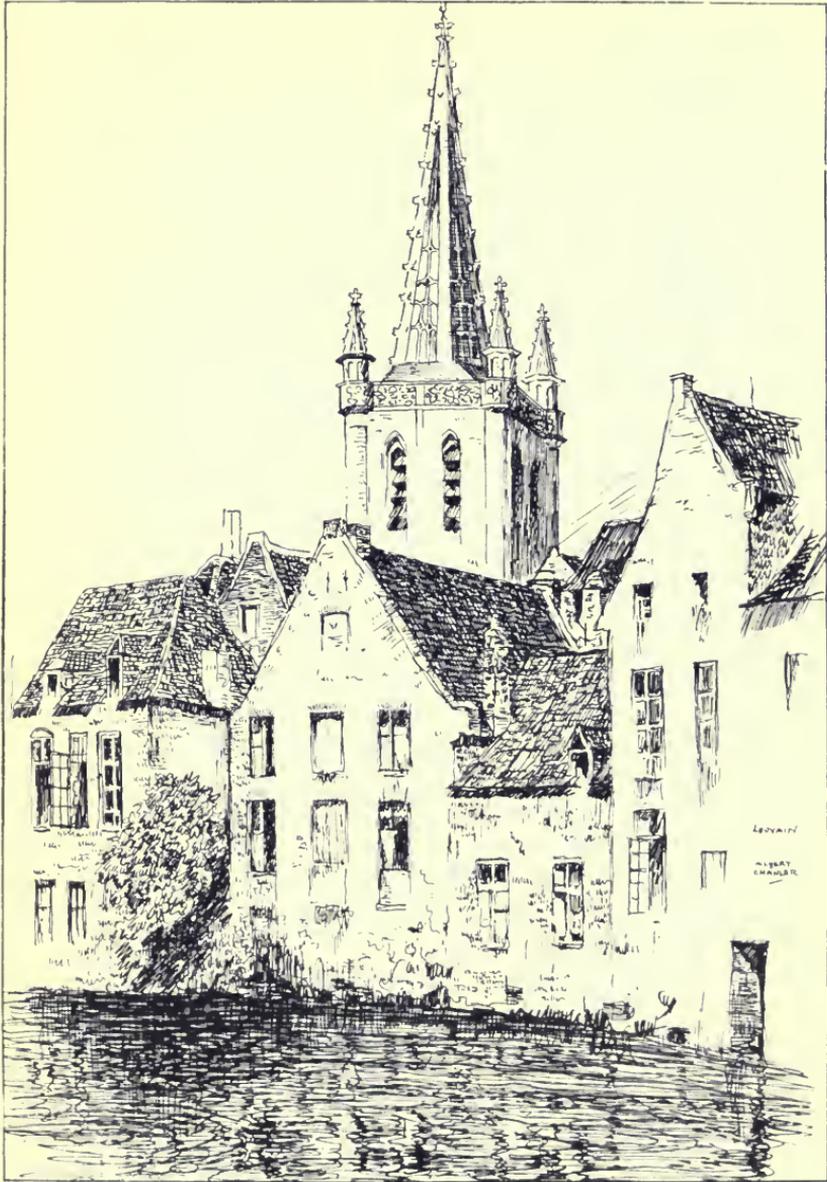
66,600. It is divided into a nave and six aisles, which give a vast intricacy and picturesqueness to the perspective.

"Its magnificent portal with its one finished tower 406 feet in height was commenced in 1422 but only finished in 1518. It is more in accordance with the taste of the sixteenth century than with the original design, and is still so gorgeous a specimen of art, and towers so nobly over the buildings of the city, that one must have very little feeling for the poetry of art who can stop to criticize it too closely."

Its base is "perfect in proportion and good in detail; the caprice begins only when near the top, where it constructively can do no harm. It is not perfect, but taking it altogether is perhaps the most beautiful thing of its kind in Europe. It is a great question if the second spire, which only reached one third of its intended height, were it completed as originally designed, would add to, or detract from, the beauty of the composition."

Among the most interesting of municipal buildings is the Bourse or Stock Exchange erected in 1531 by Dominigue de Waghemakere and reconstructed in 1868 by Schadde. The latter architect retained its most striking features, the loggias, whose columns exhibit the capricious richness of the flamboyant style.

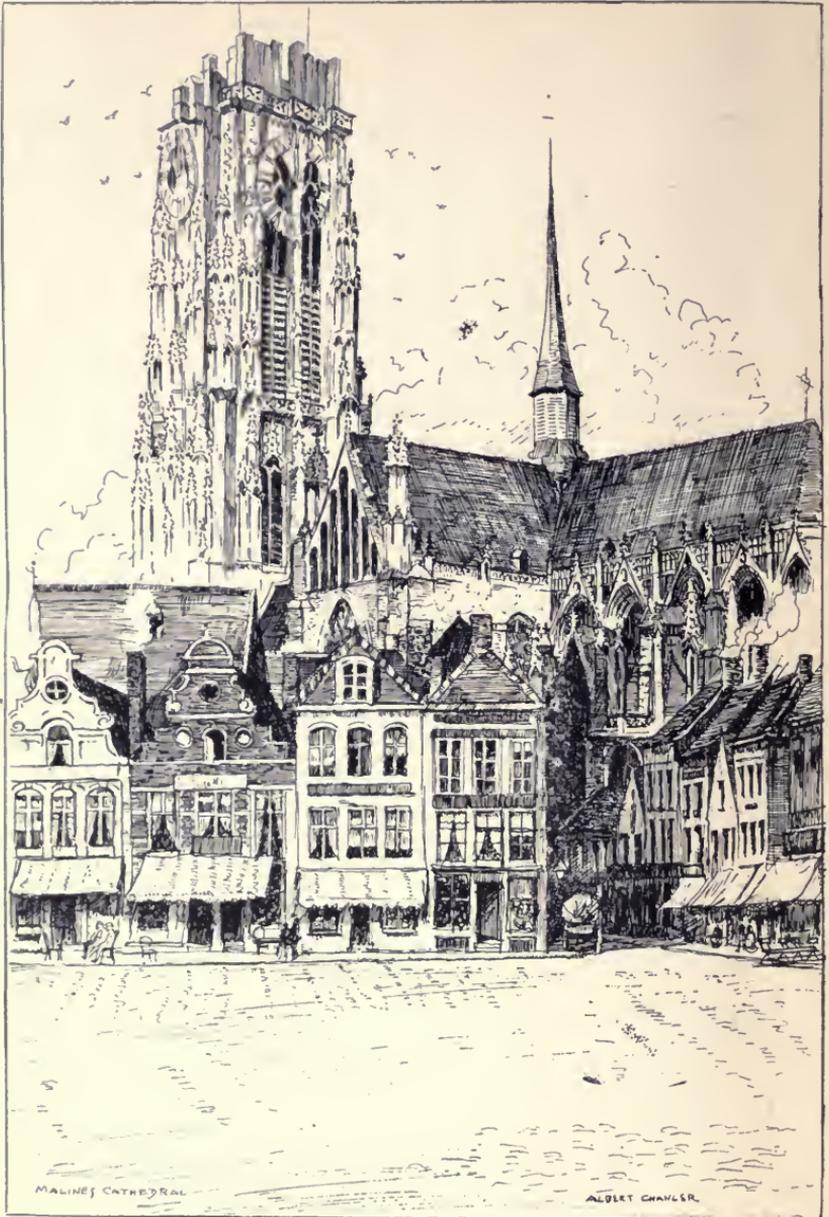
BRUGES. Happily Bruges yielded to the Germans and escaped bombardment. Its famous belfry still towers above the quiet square.



The lace-like spire of St. Gertrude (Louvain)

From a drawing by Albert Chanler

“The colossal buttressed tower of St. Rombault”



Malines Cathedral

From a drawing by Albert Chanler

Its imposing octagonal capital, once crowned by a pyramidal spire flanked by four turrets, since destroyed by fire, was begun in 1284.

“The Hôtel-de-Ville, begun in 1377, whose forty niches were filled with statues of the Counts of Flanders, with its lofty lancet windows, has more the air of a church than a municipal building but is nevertheless a distinguished work of art.”

BRUSSELS. The Cathedral of Sainte Gudule was begun in 1220 and completed in the fifteenth century.

The five beautiful stained-glass windows in the Chapel of the Sacrament were presented by the Emperor Charles V., his brother Ferdinand of Austria, and his three brothers-in-law: Francis I., of France, John III., of Portugal, and Louis of Hungary.

LIÉGE. St. Jacques, at Liége (1522–1558), is a very interesting example of transitional architecture, in that it still retains the low octagonal tower and screen of the old Romanesque church—mingled with magnificent flamboyant features. The east end is a blend of French and German methods. Its chapels, which encircle the polygonal choir, lacking the ambulatory, do not constitute a true chevet while they differentiate it from the German apse. Altogether the structure whimsically and charmingly expresses the characteristics of both countries, on whose frontier it is situated.

The Bishop's Palace, one of the largest and most beautiful residential structures of mediæval Europe,

is built about a spacious cloister surrounded by an ogival arcade, ornamented with elegant restraint.

Liège contains several churches of the Romanesque style of which that of Sainte Croix, with its stately octagonal tower and lofty apse, is the most noteworthy.

Among the earliest examples of greater Gothic work "is the Cathedral of Liège begun in 1280, exhibiting the style in great purity. It has no western entrance, but like St. Croix, St. Jacques, and all the principal churches of this city, is entered by side porches."

TEUTON VANDALISM. It is not our purpose to retrace the whole length of the Trail of Death left by the twentieth-century iconoclasts—from Visé, Wavre, Termonde, Dinant, Malines, Louvain, Ypres, to Rheims, where their architectural vandalism reaches its culmination. Suffice it to mention merely the more notable structures which have suffered wanton destruction or irreparable damage in the principal towns and cities.

AERSCHOT. At Aerschot, a town of 8000 inhabitants, the Germans sacked, pillaged, and burned, held drunken orgies in the house of the village doctor, and stabled their horses in its exquisite church, under a rich rood-loft and amidst its fifteenth-century choir-stalls.

VISÉ. The quaint town of Visé, the seat of customs, was burned with the exception of a religious establishment which the Germans spared.

“Dignified, though dilapidated.”



The Market Place, Malines
From a drawing by Albert Chanler



Museum Square, Ypres, before the bombardment
From a copyright photograph by the Topical News Agency

MARSAGE. Marsage was entirely destroyed.

LIERRE. At Lierre, the religious houses of the Black Sisters and the Jesuits were shattered to pieces, but the beautiful Gothic church of St. Gommarius appears to have been preserved.

WAVRE. Wavre, to which the Prussians retreated after the battle of Ligny, they totally demolished.

SAVENTHEM. Saventhem, the parish church of which contains a famous canvas by Van Dyck, *St. Martin Dividing his Cloak*, was put to flames.

Louvain

Bleeding and torn, ravished with sword and flame,
By that blasphemous prince, who with the name
Of God upon his lips betrayed the State
He falsely swore to hold inviolate,
Made mad by pride and reckless of the rod,
Shaking his mailed fist at God.
But not in vain her martyrdom, Louvain,
Like the brave maid of France shall rise again;
Above her clotted hair a crown shall shine,
From her dark ashes rise a hallowed shrine
Where pilgrims from far lands shall heal their pain,
Shrived by the sacred sorrow of Louvain.

OLIVER HERFORD.

(With permission of the author.)

LOUVAIN. On Wednesday, August 26, 1914, the Germans bombarded Louvain and set fire to the town, the greater part of which was a prey to the flames, including

the Church of St. Pierre, the University, the Municipal Theatre, and modern buildings.

Perhaps no church in Europe conveyed such an impression of picturesque ruggedness as the Church of St. Pierre at Louvain, a worthy rival of Notre Dame of Antwerp and St. Rombault at Malines; for though perhaps a century more modern, it was built at one time on a uniform and consistent plan. "The façade," says Fergusson, "which would have rendered it the noblest building of the three, has never been completed. It was designed on the true German principle of a great western screen, surmounted by three spires, the central one 535 feet in height, the other two 430 feet each."

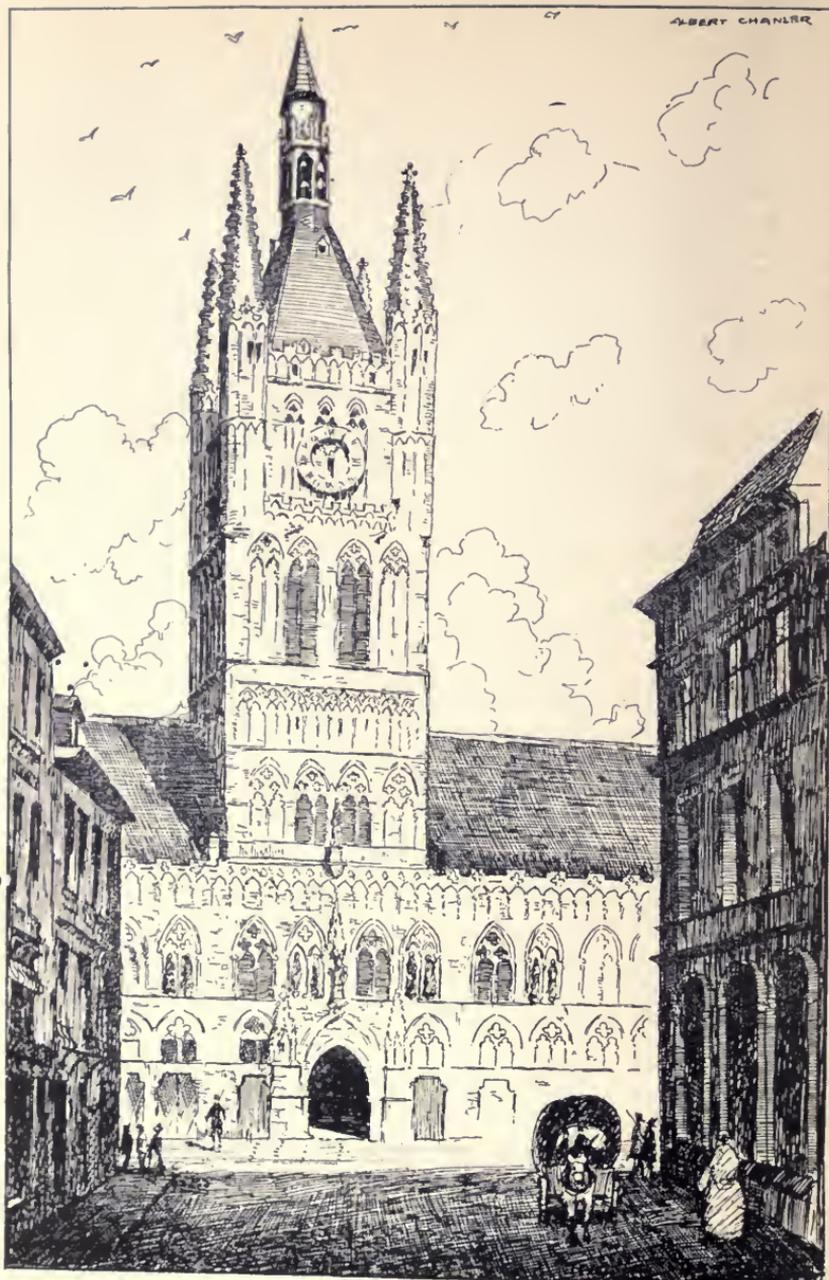
Opposite the south transept of St. Pierre, on the other side of the little "Grande Place," stands the Hôtel-de-Ville, commenced in 1448 and constructed fifteen years later, the work of the architect Mathieu Layens. Its façade is remarkable for the unimaginable richness of its sculpture and its slender balconied minarets.

The famous University boasted its four thousand scholars and its forty-three colleges about the year 1600. In a narrow street west of the Hôtel-de-Ville was housed the great University Library, whose burning has been likened to that of Alexandria. Its massive sixteenth-century façade like the Florentine palaces was designed to resist attack and possessed originally no windows on the ground floor—only a



Museum Square, Ypres, after the bombardment

From a copyright photograph by the Topical News Agency



The Cloth-Hall Tower, Ypres
From a drawing by Albert Chanler

great Gothic door. This doorway led to a Romanesque hallway from which a grand staircase communicated with the library above, an imposing gallery with carved baroque bookcases and eighteenth-century ceiling.

The lower part of the town with its charming Church of St. Gertrude, whose open spire is a perfect jewel, has fortunately suffered but little from the bombardment, and its delightful transitional choir-stalls have escaped injury.

MALINES. What lover of Belgium does not remember with De Morgan the carillon of St. Rombault sounding through the hours and quarters of the night:

“Voici le sabre, le sabre, le sabre,
Voici le sabre, le sabre, de mon père;

at the rate of one sabre for the first quarter, two for the half-hour, and the whole regiment for the three-quarters.”

Its colossal buttressed tower “flinging itself mightily into the sky” gives a shock of delight at every glimpse, and yet it was only carried to half its intended height of 550 feet. The church is one of the finest that have made use of round pillars instead of the clustered columns of its period.

Malines was an undefended town, a treasury of other works of art and yet it was several times bombarded.

TERMONDE. Termonde, a quaint town of about 16,000, contained several buildings of exceptional in-

terest. It was completely demolished by the Teuton hordes, not by bombardment but by deliberate destruction. In each house a separate bomb was exploded which set fire to its interior. The Church of St. Giles had its vaults blown in. The Hôtel-de-Ville, one of the most picturesque of the smaller town-halls of Belgium, is in ruins and its bells litter the ground.

TOURNAI. The Cathedral of Notre Dame, four hundred feet long, contains Romanesque portions which date back to the eleventh century. Its choir and principal portal are Gothic of the thirteenth and fourteenth respectively. The most ancient part is Romanesque and is separated into three naves. Lighter and more fantastic are the transepts where the architect allowed his fancy full play without, however, marring its harmonious solemnity. Grouped about "the crossing" are five lofty towers, in which pointed and round-arched windows exist side by side.

YPRES. Of all Belgium cities, says Middleton,^{*} Ypres, has suffered most at the hands of the Germans in the recent war. No important group of Gothic buildings in Europe, except perhaps the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, could compare with that of the Grande Place of Ypres, the largest square in Belgium.

The Hôtel-de-Ville has been entirely destroyed. The Great Cloth Hall (described elsewhere), "unsurpassed

^{*} *Architectural Record*.



The unscathed statue of Van den Peereboom, beside the shattered church of St. Martin, Ypres

From a copyright photograph by the Topical News Agency

“ Its stately campanile flaunts the golden dragon ”



The Belfry, Ghent
From a photograph by Levy

by any secular building of the Gothic era," is gutted and demolished, and the Church of St. Martin, one of the purest examples of the thirteenth-century Gothic in Flanders, battered beyond recognition. Its exquisite choir-stalls, the work of the carver Taillebert (1598), have happily escaped injury and together with the Bishop's throne and florid late Renaissance confessional-boxes have remained intact. The Neuwercke or Hôtel-de-Ville (1620) was designed in 1575 by John Sporeman, an architect of Ghent, in the style of the Spanish Renaissance. It was by no means the equal of its earlier neighbours though a picturesque and spirited piece of work. Ypres was besieged by the British in 1383 and its environs were destroyed. Thereafter the cloth trade declined and it speedily lost its former commercial supremacy. The sixteenth century brought the Spanish invasion, the town was three times sacked and reduced to a community of 5000 souls. When Philip II. launched his "Victorious Armada," in full confidence that he would soon land in England, he sent Mary's wedding chest to Flanders, where it still remains in the Museum of Ypres.

CIVIL ARCHITECTURE

"Whatever opinion we may form as to her ecclesiastical edifices," says Fergusson, "the real architectural pre-eminence of Belgium consists in her civil and municipal buildings, which surpass those of any other country."

BELFRIES. "One of the earliest architectural expressions of their newly-acquired independence was the erection of a belfry. The right of possessing a bell was one of the first privileges granted in all old charters, not only as a symbol of power, but as the means of calling the community together, either with arms in their hands to defend their walls, to repress internal tumults, for the election of magistrates, or for deliberation on the affairs of the Commonwealth.

"Whether on the banks of the Scheldt or the Po, the first care of every enfranchised community was to erect a 'Tower of pride' proportionate to their greatness. The tower, moreover, was generally the record-office of the city, the place where the charters and more important deeds were preserved secure from fire; and in a place sufficiently fortified to protect them in the event of civic disturbances.

"All these uses have passed away, and most of the belfries have either fallen into neglect or been removed or appropriated to other purposes. Of those remaining, the oldest seems to be that of Tournai, a noble tower, though greatly altered and its effect marred by modern additions. The belfry of Ghent was begun in 1183, but the masonry shaft was not finished until 1337. At this date a wooden spire crowned it with a total height of 240 feet. In 1855 this was removed and the tower completed according to the original design.

"The belfry of Brussels was one of the finest in the

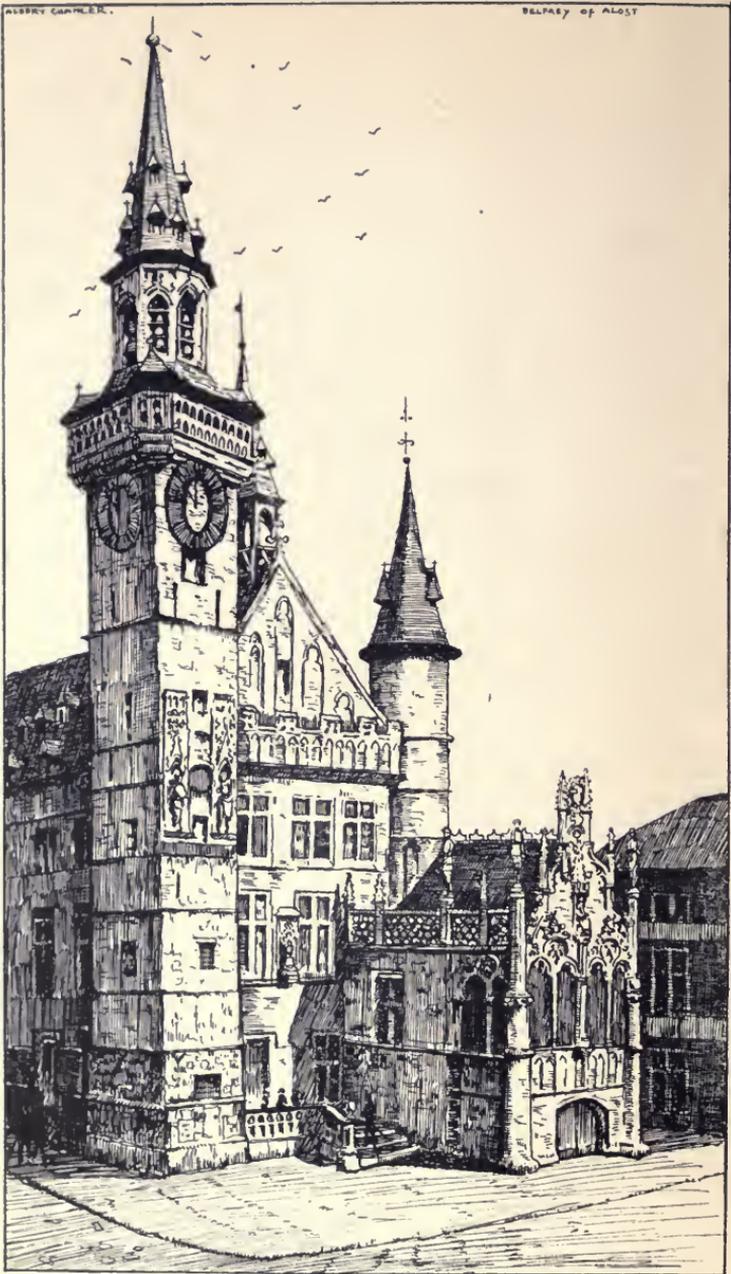
“With clustered, corbelled turrets”



The Belfry of Lierre

From a drawing by Albert Chanler

“Irresistibly picturesque”



The Belfry of Alost

From a drawing by Albert Chanler

country, but after various misfortunes it fell in 1714, and is only known now by a model still preserved in the city."

At Ypres and Bruges the belfries form part of the great halls of the city.

Those at Lierre, Nieuport, Alost, Furnes, and the minor cities, have been damaged by alterations and are more interesting to the archæologist than to the architect.

MUNICIPAL HALLS. "The great municipal halls, which are found in all the principal cities of Belgium are of three classes: (1) Town-halls—the municipal senate-houses and courts of justice; (2) Trade-halls or market houses, the principal of which were Cloth-halls, cloth having been the great staple manufacture of Belgium during the Middle Ages; (3) the Guild halls, the places of assembly of the various trades-unions.

"The town-hall at Bruges is perhaps the oldest building erected especially for that purpose in Belgium, the foundation stone having been laid in 1377. It is a small building, being only 88 feet in front by 65 in depth, and of a singularly pure and elegant design. Its small size causes it to suffer in comparison with the great cloth-hall and other trade halls of the city. Massed with the belfry in their centre these occupy one end of the great Place and constitute a most imposing composition.

“The belfry is the most picturesque tower in the country. Its original height was 356 feet, which was diminished by about 60 feet by the removal of the spire in 1741, though it still towers above all the buildings of the city, and in that flat country is seen far and wide.”

The Belfry of Bruges

In the market-place of Bruges stands the belfry old and brown;
Thrice consumed and thrice rebuilt, still it watches o'er the town.

As the summer morn was breaking, on that lofty tower I stood,
And the world threw off the darkness, like the weeds of widowhood.

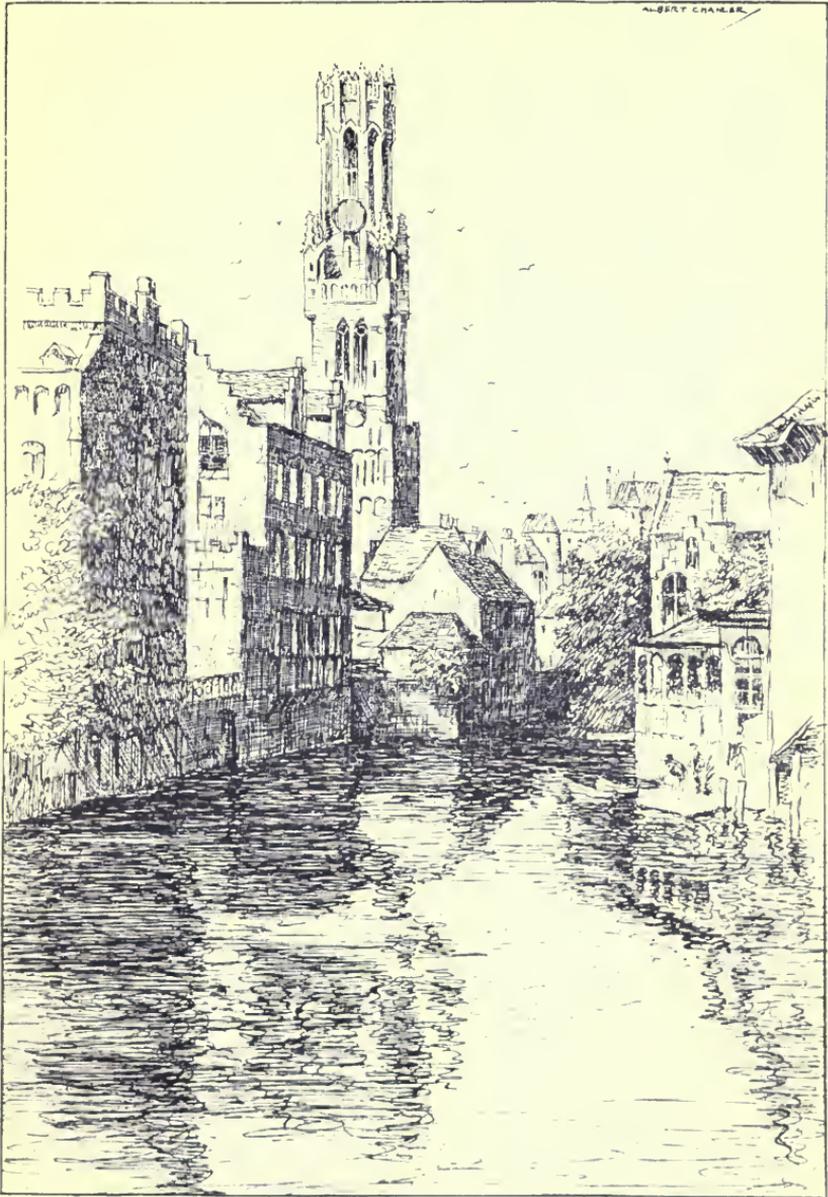
Then most musical and solemn, bringing back the olden times
With their strange, unearthly changes rang the melancholy chimes.

Like the psalms from some old cloister, when the nuns sing in the choir;
And the great bell tolled among them, like the chanting of a friar.

Visions of the days departed, shadowy phantoms filled my brain;
They who live in history only seemed to walk the earth again;

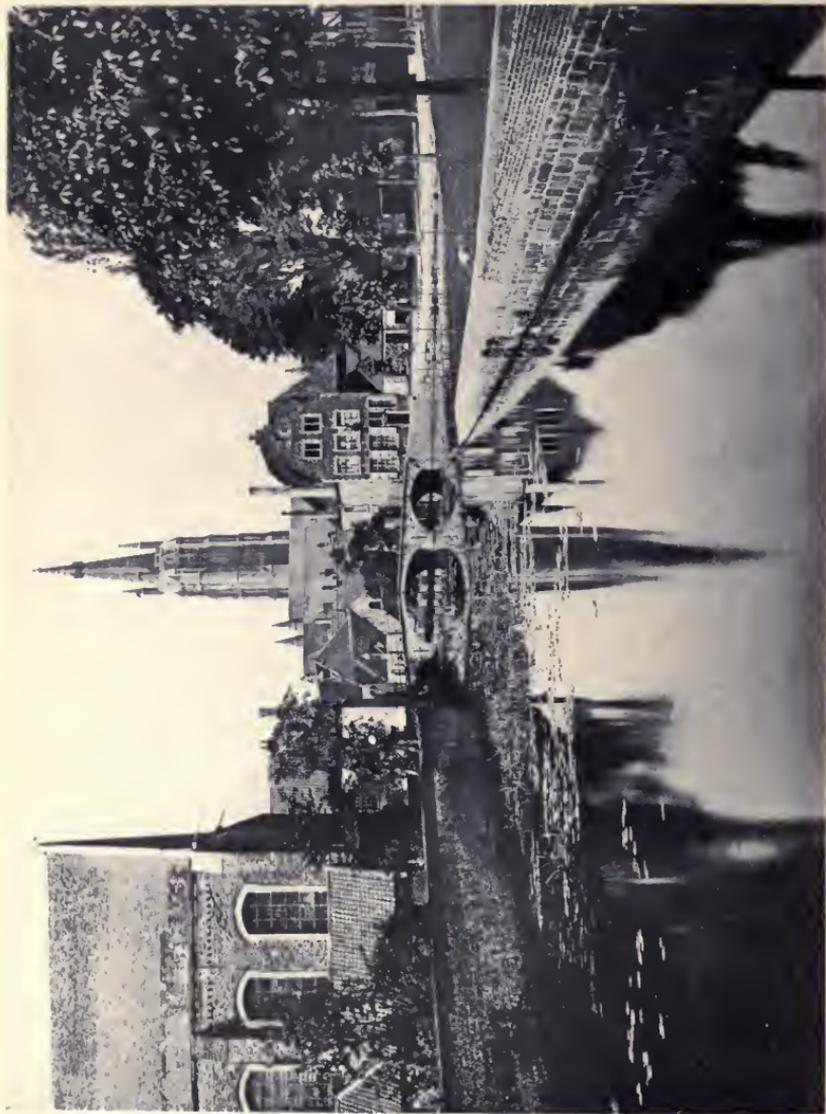
I beheld proud Maximilian, kneeling humbly on the ground,
I beheld the gentle Mary, hunting with her hawk and hound;

The Belfry of Bruges



“ Thrice consumed and thrice rebuiled, still it watches o'er the town ”

From a drawing by Albert Chanler



“ And the world threw off the darkness like the weeds of widowhood ”
Bruges

From a photograph by Neurdein

Examples of Belgian Architecture 421

I beheld the Flemish weavers, with Namur and Juliers
bold,
Marching homeward from the bloody battle of the Spurs
of Gold;

Saw the fight at Minnewater, saw the White Hoods moving
west,
Saw great Artevelde victorious scale the Golden Dragon's
nest.

And again the whiskered Spaniard all the land with terror
smote;
And again the wild alarum sounded from the tocsin's
throat;

Till the bell of Ghent responded o'er lagoon and dike of sand,
"I am Roland! I am Roland! There is victory in the
land!"

Hours had passed away like minutes; and, before I was
aware,
Lo! The shadow of the belfry crossed the sun-illuminated
square.

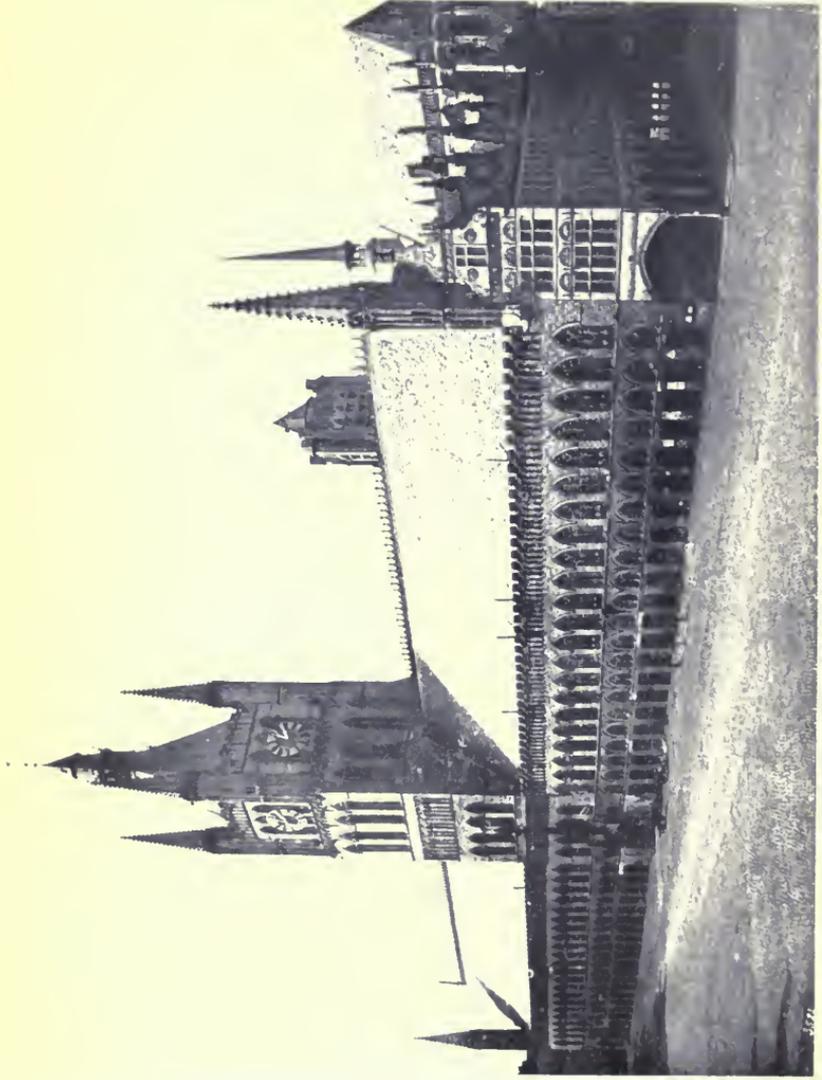
LONGFELLOW.

YPRES. Of the trade halls the Cloth-hall at Ypres is the most magnificent as well as the earliest. Its foundation stone was laid in 1200 by Baldwin of Constantinople, but it was not completed until a century later. The façade is 440 feet in length, "perfectly straight and unbroken from end to end. The windows of each story, all of one design, are repeated not only along the whole front, but at each end. Its

centre is emphasized by the lofty belfry which rises to a height of 230 feet, and by a bold and beautiful angle pinnacle. The whole is of the pure architecture of the thirteenth century, and is one of the most majestic edifices of its class to be seen anywhere. It is extremely pleasing from its simplicity and the perfect adaptation of its exterior to its internal arrangements. These consist of one vast hall on the ground floor, supported by several ranges of columns, with galleries and great halls above for the use of the trade to which it was appropriated.

BRUSSELS. "The finest of the town-halls of Belgium is that of Brussels commenced in 1401, and finished in 1455. In dimensions it is inferior to the Cloth-hall at Ypres, being only 264 feet in length by about 50 in depth, and its details are less pure; but the spire that surmounts its centre, rising to the height of 374 feet, is unrivalled by any spire in Belgium, and is entitled to take rank among the noblest examples in Europe. Notwithstanding the age in which it was built it displays no extravagance, either in design or detail; but the mode in which the octagon is placed on the square, and the outline broken and varied by the bold pinnacles that group around it, produce a most pleasing variety without interfering with the main structural lines of the building."

LOUVAIN. "Next in importance to Brussels is the well-known and beautiful town-hall at Louvain (1448-



“ The great Cloth-Hall (Ypres) unsurpassed by any secular building of the Gothic era now gutted and demolished ”

From a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.

"Finest of the Town Halls of Belgium"



The Hôtel de Ville and Market Place, Brussels
From a copyright photograph by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

1463), certainly the most elaborately decorated piece of Gothic architecture in existence. In design it follows very closely the hall at Bruges but lacks the tower, which gives such dignity to those at Brussels and Ypres."

GHENT. "Towards the end of the same century (1481) the inhabitants of Ghent determined on the erection of a town-hall, which, had it ever been finished, would have surpassed all the others in size and magnificence. After a century of interrupted labour the design was abandoned before it was more than two-thirds completed, and now that age has softened its extravagances it is a pleasing and beautiful building. Nothing, however, can exceed the extent of tormented and unmeaning ornament that is spread over every part of it, showing great richness certainly, but frequently degenerating into doubtful taste."

OUDENAARDE. The Hôtel-de-Ville, commenced in 1527, completed in three years under the direction of Henri Van Pede, architect of Brussels, is one of the most ornate examples of the florid Flemish Gothic style. Its charming façade, with arcaded loggia and clock-tower terminated by a Renaissance crown, was reproduced at the Paris Exposition of 1900 as the Belgian National Pavilion, a building evidently meant as a copy of that at Louvain, but combining with it a belfry, in imitation of that at Brussels.

"The result is certainly rich and pleasing in general

effect; but the details incidental to its age (1525) have marred the execution and given to the whole a clumsiness and a flimsiness that greatly detract from its beauty. Even the effect of the belfry is spoiled by the temptation to exhibit a masonic trick, and make it appear as if standing on the two slight pillars of the porch. It is clever, but apparent stability is as necessary to true architectural beauty as real stability is to the dignity of the art."

MONS. Among the smaller halls that of Mons is perhaps the most elegant and is very similar to that of St. Quentin, which, though now in France, was a Flemish city at the time of its erection.

"In the days of her magnificence Mechlin attempted the erection of a splendid hall, which was intended to rival those of any of the neighbouring towns. Civic troubles, however, put a stop to the work before it was carried so far as to enable us now even to determine what the original design may have been."

Among minor edifices of the same class may be mentioned the Boucheries or meat-markets of Diet, Ypres, Antwerp, the boatmen's lodge at Ghent, and the burgesses' lodge at Bruges.

PALACES. "Of palaces, properly so called, little remains in Belgium worthy of notice, unless it be the palace of the Bishop of Liège (1508), which, so far as size and richness of decoration are concerned, deserves the reputation it has attained. Of the same age and

“Age has softened its extravagances”



Hôtel de Ville, Ghent

From a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.

The Hôtel de Ville of Oudenarde



“ One of the most ornate examples of Flemish Gothic ”

From a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.

style was the Exchange at Antwerp (1515). Its simpler and more monumental character seems to have preserved it from the individual caprices which are apparent in the palace."

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

"Of a charming simplicity and sober restraint is the house of Curtice on the banks of the Meuse near Liège, with its fine cornice, decorative brick-work, and well-proportioned windows."

The palace of Cardinal Granvelle at Brussels, now a part of the University, is redolent with Italian influences and is built about a courtyard reminiscent of Genoa.

"Many of the private dwellings in the Flemish cities are picturesque and elegant—though hardly rising to the grade of specimens of fine art; but when grouped together in the narrow winding streets, or along the banks of the canals, the result is so varied and charming that we are inclined to ascribe to them more intrinsic beauty than they really possess as individual designs. Most of them are of brick, and the brick being used undisguisedly and the buildings depending wholly on such forms as could be given to that material, they never offend our taste by shams; and the honest endeavour of the citizens to ornament their dwellings externally, meets here with the success that must always follow such an attempt."

PART II—RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE.¹

In the course of the sixteenth century Italian influences began to make themselves felt in the architecture of Belgium. The later Gothic monuments possessed no longer the purity of style of their predecessors. They were none the less original and beautiful, but their former restraint had given place to a lavish and fantastic profusion of ornament. The architects abandoned the Gothic style as being too barbarous and plunged themselves with enthusiasm into the current of the Renaissance.

In the middle of the sixteenth century Pierre Coecke of Antwerp published a translation of Serlio's work on *Architecture* which initiated his compatriots into the principles of Vitruvius. At the same period Hans Bloem published a book, *The Five Orders of Architecture*, and Vredemand de Vries followed with seven volumes of excellent examples of the revived classic. Thereafter the pointed arches and vertical lines of the mediæval Gothic made way for Roman columns and formal horizontal cornices.

Among the most important examples of this period is the Hôtel-de-Ville of Antwerp (1561 to 1563), designed by Corneille Floris, a vast structure in which superimposed pilasters crowned by a loggia flank

¹ *Histoire de l'Art de Flandre*, by Max Rooses, Conservateur of the Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp.

“ Forty stuated niches and lofty lancet windows ”



Hôtel de Ville, Bruges

From a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.

Residence and Printing-House of a Wealthy Burgher.



Court of the Museum Plantin, Antwerp
From a photograph by Photochrom Co.

a projecting central motive, lifting its columned arcade in a monumental stepped gable high above the roof.

A more charming though much smaller building of about the same date is the Justice de Paix at Bruges, where the richest Renaissance detail overlays a sub-structure of Gothic proportions.

Among the Guild Halls and Corporations, most noteworthy in elegance of proportion and sobriety of design, are the houses of the Drapers and Tanners at Antwerp (1541), the house of the Fishmongers (le Saumon) at Malines (1530), which latter, in spite of unhappy restoration, still remains perhaps the most graceful structure of the early Renaissance.

JESUIT CHURCHES OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Professor Conrado Ricci tells us in a recent book that the aim of the Baroque architect was to instil a feeling of wonder into the mind of the beholder.¹

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, under the reign of Albert and Isabella, innumerable churches were erected in all the cities of the country. Jacques Francquart of Brussels planned the Church of the Jesuits of that city (1617) and the Béguinage at Malines; Wenceslas Coberger, the churches of the Augustines and Carmelites at Brussels; Pierre Huyssens built

¹ Ricci, *Baroque Architecture in Spain and Italy*.

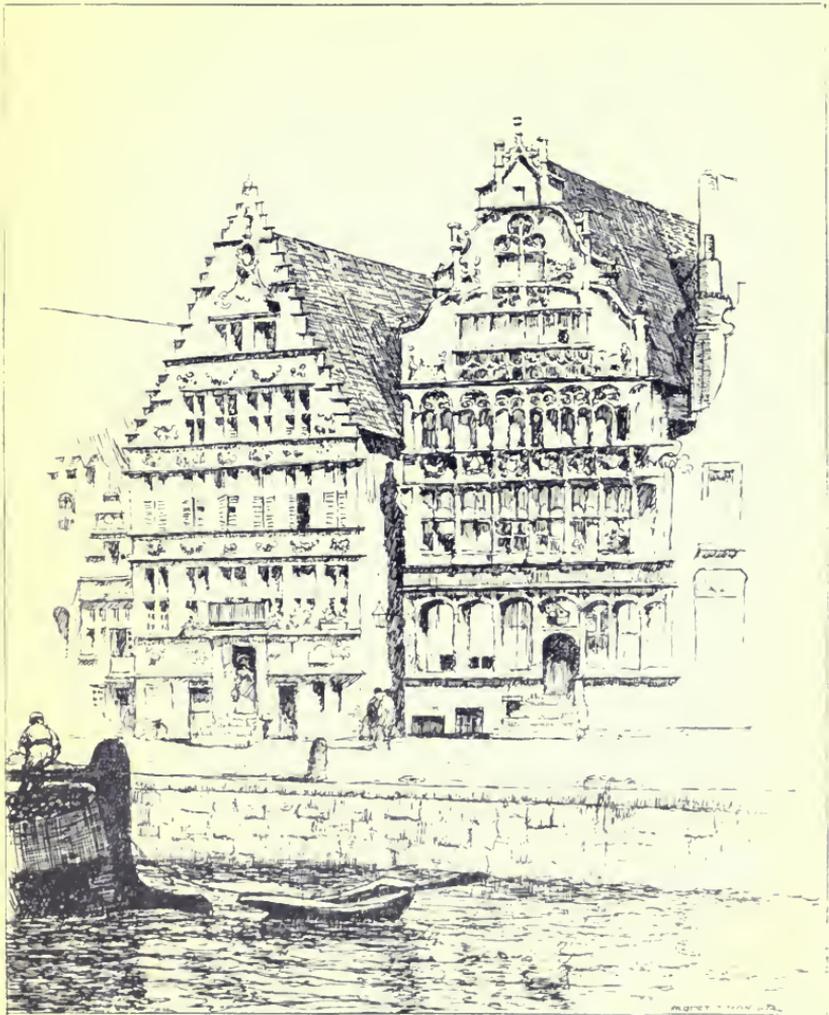
the churches of the Jesuits at Antwerp, Bruges, and Namur, as well as the abbey of St. Peter at Ghent (1621), and Guillaume Hersius in 1650 to 1670 constructed the Church of St. Michael at Louvain.

All these Jesuitical designs exhibit the same characteristics—a vast screen of superimposed orders, framing heavily ornamented doors and windows crowned by monstrous consoles and overpowering pediment.

The delicate refinement of the early Renaissance and its capricious charm gave place to massive forms over-ornamented, pompous, ponderous, and dull.

The most remarkable of the Jesuit churches is that of Antwerp (1614 to 1621) whose opulently decorated façade and robust tower entitle it to rank as the best example of the Second Renaissance. The primitive structure was resplendent with marbles, gilding, and no less than twenty mural paintings by Rubens. In 1718, a conflagration destroyed the greater portion of the interior, only sparing the choir and lateral chapels, which still display their sumptuous adornments. The architecture of this period has often been erroneously termed "the Jesuit Style" though it was that of all churches of the seventeenth century. It has also been called "le Style Rubens" under the misconception that the illustrious painter designed the Jesuit Church of Antwerp.

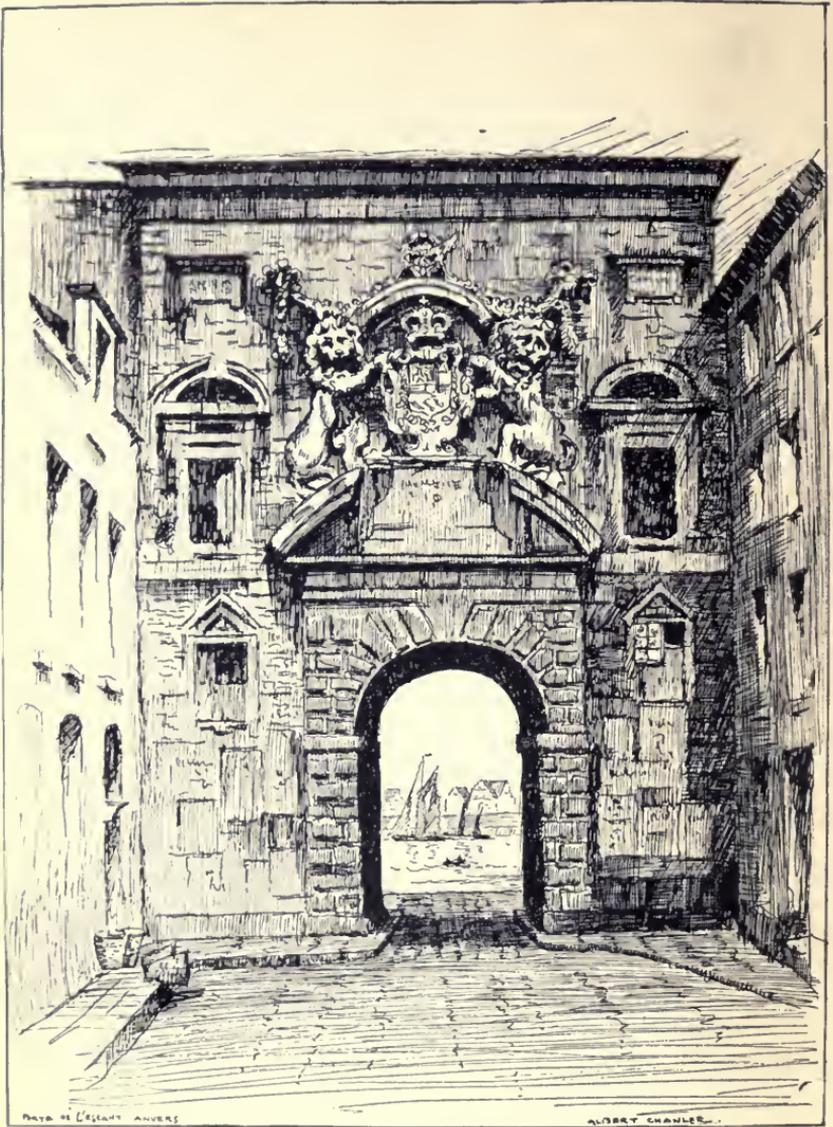
In point of fact Rubens never drew plans for any work of architecture except his own house, in which he



Guilds of the Boatmen (Ghent)

From a drawing by Albert Chanler

“Refinement gave place to the massive, the ponderous and dull”



Porte de L'Escaut, Antwerp
From a drawing by Albert Chanler

reconciled the sunny splendour of the Genoese palaces with the rigours of a northern climate.

GUILD-HALLS. Many of the famous guild-houses are designed in this luxurious late Renaissance of which perhaps, the most noteworthy is the house of "The Tanners" (1644) purchased in 1755 by The Carpenters, in the "Grande Place" at Antwerp.

In 1695 when Brussels was bombarded by the French army, a considerable number of its guild houses were destroyed. The Hôtel-de-Ville and La Maison du Roi (Broodhuis), a little jewel of late Gothic art, alone escaped. The municipal government ordered the immediate reconstruction of "The Guilds," which took place 1696 to 1699.

This transformed the "Grande Place" of Brussels into a forum which for picturesqueness and fantasy is unsurpassed by any square in Northern Europe. Of this Baroque architecture one of the most striking examples is that of the Guild of the Boatmen (*bateliers*) in which the pediment that terminates its graceful façade represents the stern of a ship.

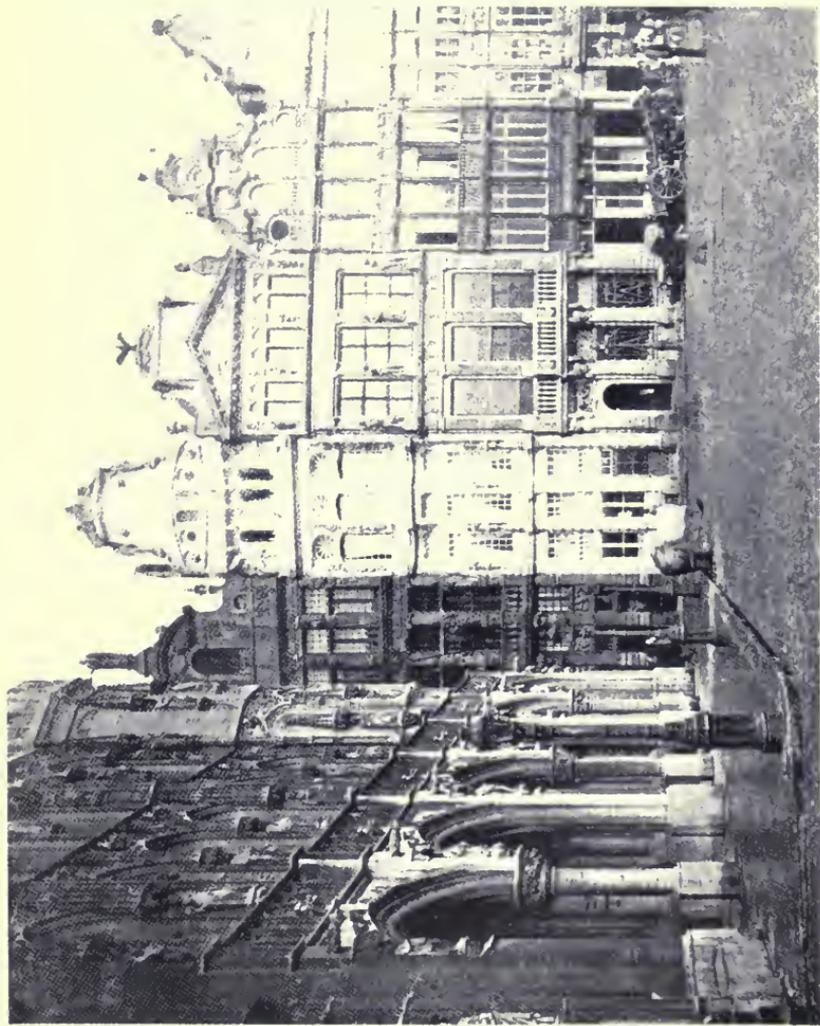
RHEIMS. Though Rheims is no longer a Belgian city, any enumeration of that country's losses in noble buildings seems incomplete without mention of the Cathedral, raised on what was once her soil, where her first great Apostle, St. Remi, baptized her first Christian King.

Arnold Bennett, in writing its requiem, closes with the prophecy of its resurrection:

"But the Cathedral stands. Its parvis is grass grown; the hotels on the parvis are heavily battered, and if they are not destroyed, it is because the Cathedral sheltered them, but the Cathedral stands, high above the level of disaster, a unique target and a target successfully defiant. The outer roof is quite gone. Much masonry is smashed; some of the calcined statues have exactly the appearance of tortured human flesh, but in its essence, the building remains apparently unconquerable. The towers are particularly serene and impressive. The deterioration is, of course, tremendously severe. Scores of statues, each of which was a masterpiece, are spoiled. Great quantities of carvings are defaced, quite half the glass is irremediably broken. The whole of the interior non-structural decoration is destroyed. But the massiveness of the Cathedral has withstood German shrapnel. The place will never be the same. Nevertheless Rheims Cathedral triumphantly exists."¹

Mr. Thomas Hardy, who began his career as an ecclesiastical architect, in speaking of the restoration of the Cathedral of Rheims says: "What is gone of thirteenth century craftsmanship, is gone forever. The mediæval artist has no fellow of the present day and until another race of craftsmen come with another age of faith, his work cannot truly be replaced. Heine long ago foretold that the Huns should again traverse

¹ *Saturday Evening Post*, September 18, 1915.



“For picturesqueness and fantasy unsurpassed by any square in Europe”

From a copyright photograph by the late Sir Benjamin Stone, reproduced by courtesy of the Studio



" Christ Is Fallen "

Reproduced by permission of *The Daily Mirror*, London

the land and hammer to bits the Gothic cathedrals, and the fearful truth of that prophecy is now borne down upon us as we contemplate the glory that was Rheims."

From the high altar of its shattered cathedral and the rustic crucifix of many a "four-went-way," the sculptured Christ hath fallen. To sorrowing devotees this must typify the triumph of the Powers of Darkness, for we can only see "as in a glass darkly" the beginning of the end.

"RESURGO."

Christ is fallen! Christ is fallen!
From the high cathedral choir,
And the crucifix lies shattered,
Trampled in the bloody mire.
Shattered too, the lancet windows with their glowing eyes
of glass.
Shattered too, the carven choir-stalls and the organ's
sounding brass.
Shattered too, the airy narthex and its "rose" of frosted
lace.
Christ is fallen! Christ is fallen!
From his lone and lofty place.

Christ is fallen! Christ is fallen!
From the chimeless belfry down,
And the ripple of its laughter
Ne'er will thrill the brave old town,
Ringing over roof and rafter,
Tocsin, dirge, and carillon.
Christ is fallen! Christ is fallen!
From the chimeless belfry down.

Christ is fallen! Christ is fallen!
From the altar where we pray;
But the minster still gleams golden
With the sun's last molten ray,
And each carven angel olden,
In the shadow of the portal,
Seems to spring to life and say:
"Christ is fallen, Christ immortal,
But from sepulchre triumphant will arise on Easter Day!"

THE END

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