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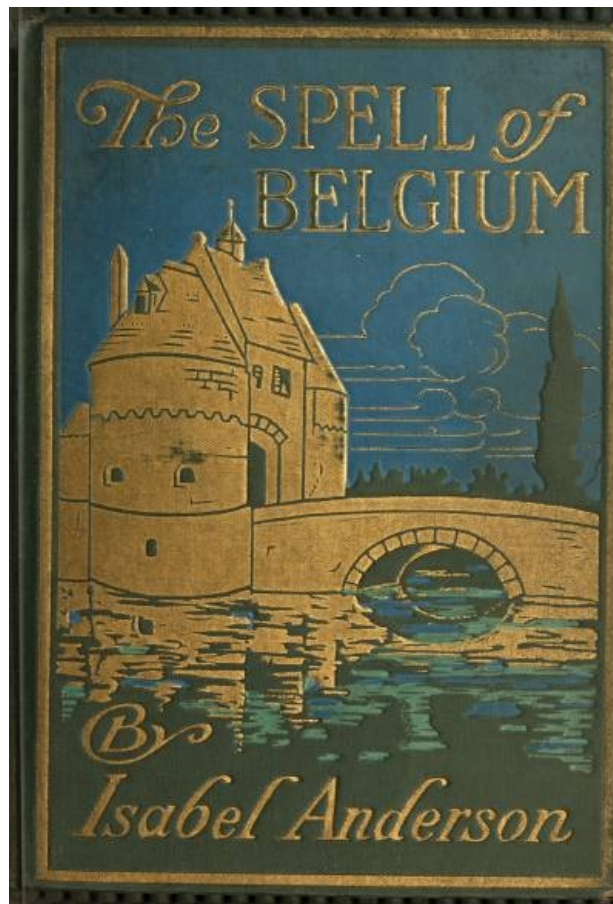
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**THE SPELL OF BELGIUM**

By  
**Isabel Anderson**

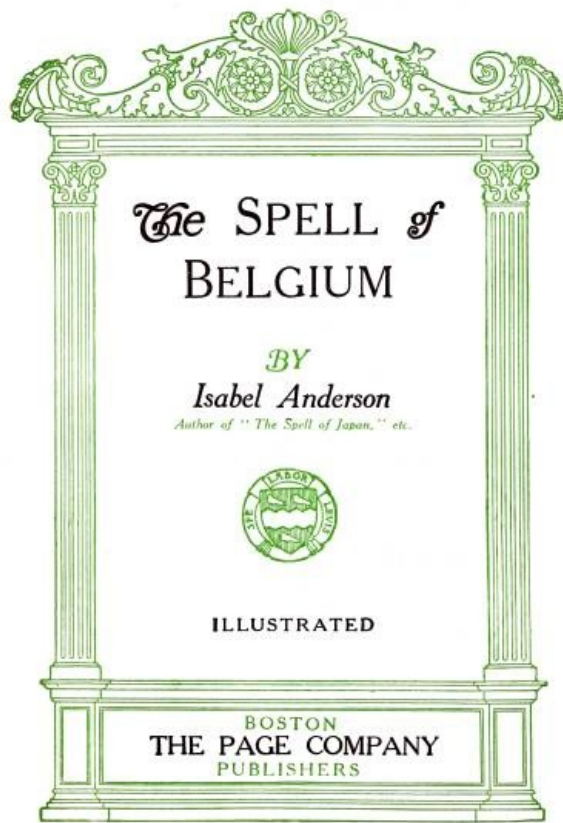
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**THE SPELL OF BELGIUM**



*Grande Place and Belfry, Furnes*  
(See page [249](#))

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***The SPELL of***  
**BELGIUM**

**BY**  
***Isabel Anderson***  
*Author of "The Spell of Japan," etc.*

**ILLUSTRATED**

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**DEDICATED  
WITH AFFECTION TO  
MY GODCHILD  
CHARLES PELHAM GREENOUGH  
MAY HE BE AS BRAVE AS  
THE BELGIANS**

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## FOREWORD

[vii]

Belgium has contributed generously to the world in the past. Much has been destroyed in this ruthless war, but much remains, for Belgium had much to give. How splendid are her unique guild-halls with their fretted towers, her massive mediæval gates and quaint old houses bordering the winding canals!

Through centuries, in one way or another, she has continued to hold the world's admiration. In olden times, when the clever weavers wrought historic scenes in their Flemish tapestries, they surely wove into the hearts of our forefathers the Spell of Belgium. In Belgium, the home of the violin, we have listened to the magic strains of the great masters and been charmed by the musical verses of Maeterlinck. There, too, we have gazed upon her inimitable Rubens and van Eycks. But today we stand spellbound before the Belgians themselves, the heroes of this war.

The legends of Antwerp were written out by the eminent Flemish historian, Sleeckx, over fifty years ago, and were found in the library at Antwerp. This version has been translated directly from the Flemish, and is [viii] believed to be unknown to the world, outside of Antwerp literary circles.

I wish to thank Her Excellency, Madame Havenith, wife of the Belgian Minister in the United States, for information, letters and photographs, and Mrs. Abbot L. Dow, whose father, General Sanford, was one of the most popular American Ministers ever in Belgium, as well as Miss Helen North, who lived for many years in that beautiful country. I wish, also, to thank the *National Magazine* for the use of a portion of the chapter on Motoring in Flanders. My thanks are due to Miss Gilman and Miss Crosby, too, for their kind assistance.

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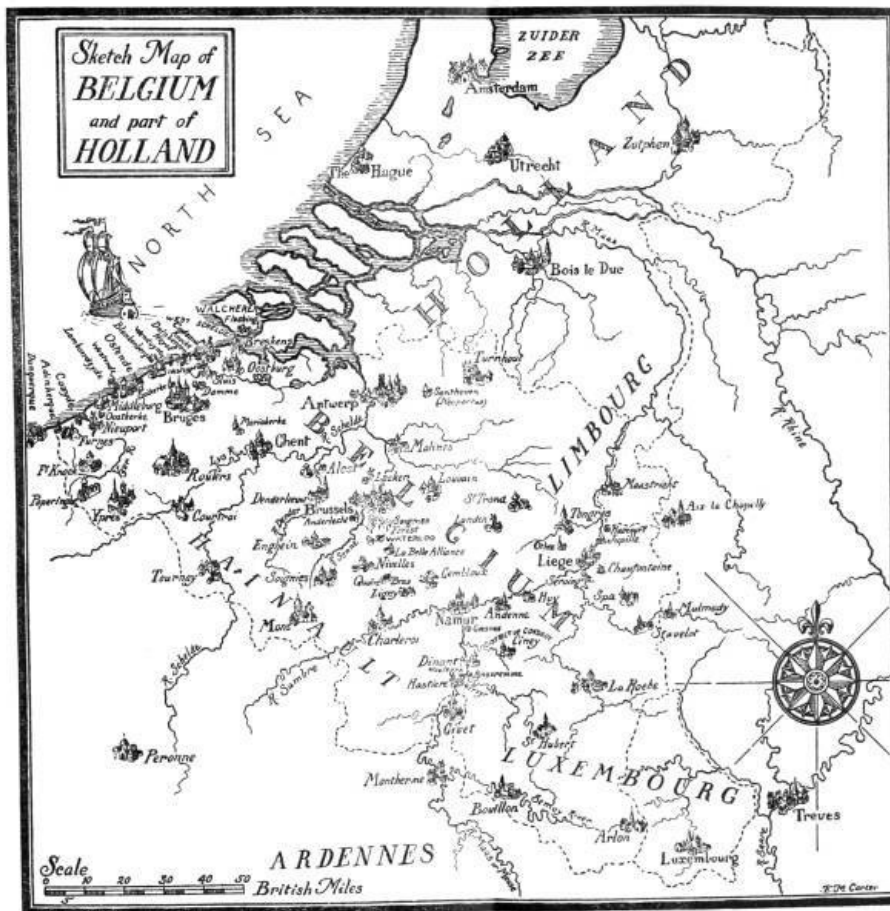
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*Sketch Map of BELGIUM and part of HOLLAND*

## THE SPELL OF BELGIUM



## CHAPTER I THE NEW POST



HE winter which I spent in Belgium proved a unique niche in my experience, for it showed me the daily life and characteristics of a people of an old civilization as I could never have known them from casual meetings in the course of ordinary travel.

My husband first heard of his nomination as Minister to Belgium over the telephone. We were at Beverly, which was the summer capital that year, when he was told that his name was on the list sent from Washington. Although he had been talked of for the position, still in a way his appointment came as a surprise, and a very pleasant one, too, for we had been assured that "Little Paris" was an attractive post, and that Belgium was especially interesting to diplomats on account of its being the cockpit of Europe. After receiving this first notification, L. called at the "Summer White House" in Beverly, and later went to Washington for instructions. It was not long before we were on our way to the new post. [2]

Through a cousin of my husband's who had married a Belgian, the Comte de Buisseret, we were able to secure a very nice house in Brussels, the Palais d'Assche. As it was being done over by the owners, I remained in Paris during the autumn, waiting until the work should be finished. My husband, of course, went directly to Brussels, and through his letters I was able to gain some idea of what our life there was to be. He lived for the time being in the Legation which had been rented by the former Minister. Through another cousin, who had been American Minister there a few years before, he secured much valuable information regarding his new mission. I say new, because he had been in the Service for twelve years before this—at first, as Second Secretary of Legation and afterward of Embassy in London; then as First Secretary of Embassy and Chargé d'Affaires in Rome.

The royal family had not returned to town, so he was compelled to wait for an opportunity to present his credentials. Finally, however, he received a notification that the King of the Belgians would grant him a special audience at eleven o'clock on the eighteenth of November. [3]



THE ROYAL PALACE, BRUSSELS.

The ceremonial proved to be most interesting, everything perfectly done and very impressive. Two state carriages of gala, accompanied by outriders, came to the Legation a few minutes before eleven, bringing Colonel Derouette, commanding officer of the Grenadiers, who was met at the door by the Secretary of Legation, Mr. Grant-Smith. L. was escorted to the great state coach, "which swung on its springs like a channel-crossing steamer."

The steps were folded up, the door closed, the footmen jumped up behind, and the little procession of prancing horses in gorgeous harness, with two outriders on high-steppers, proceeded. Following this carriage—which, by the way, was elaborately decorated and gilded, and had lamps at all four corners—came the second state carriage with the Secretary and the Military Attaché.

Passing through the broad, clean streets of the city, they soon entered the wide square before the palace. This building, which is almost entirely new within the last few years, stood behind parterres of sunken gardens, beyond a broad *place*, with the old park opposite, through which there was a vista with the House of Parliament at the other end. [4]

The guard of carabineers was turned out as the procession passed, and their bugles sounded the salute. The state carriages continued on through the fast-gathering crowd, crossed the sunken garden, and entered the porte-cochère of the palace, where a group of officials stood at attention. L. was escorted up to the entrance

and into the great gallery, where were the major-domo and a line of footmen in royal red livery.

At the foot of the grand staircase stood two officers in full uniform, one wearing the delightfully old-fashioned, short green embroidered jacket and the cherry-coloured trousers of the smart Guides Regiment. When they had been presented, they turned and led the way up the great staircase. At the top another aide of the King, Baron de Moor, a strikingly handsome man who looked stunning in his uniform and decorations, met them. Then in continued procession they passed through great rooms, which were simple yet splendidly palatial in style, with fine paintings and frescos, but with little furniture.

Finally L. came to a room where the King's Master of Ceremonies, Comte Jean de Mérode, came forward, and was presented. He disappeared through a door, saying that he would go and take the King's orders, and returned immediately with the word that His Majesty was ready. [5]

"The doors were opened *à double battant* by servants standing at each side," L. wrote in his letter describing the audience; "I was rather taken by surprise, for the room into which I was being ushered was a vast apartment, and not like the small state rooms in which on previous occasions I had been introduced for reception by royalty. The officials took their positions at a distance, in a semi-circle, so that any conversation could have been entirely confidential. I advanced, making my three bows.

"The King is a tall, fine, clean-looking man. He was dressed in simple military uniform, wearing but one star."

L. expressed his appreciation for the granting of the audience and the opportunity it gave of presenting his letters of credence, as well as his predecessor's letters of recall, and of conveying a message of greeting from the President of the United States with assurances of the sympathetic interest of the American people in Belgium's progress. When the King had received the letters and handed them to a gentleman-in-waiting, he conversed with my husband in a very low tone, speaking of his visit of fifteen years ago in America, and of his admiration for the American people and for their great advances in matters of science and hygiene, especially of the successful sanitary work which we had accomplished in Panama. [6]

They talked of the house which we had taken, and the King said that he had lived in it for nine years, and that all of his children had been born there. He expressed his admiration for President Taft, and said that he very frequently read his speeches and wished to send a message in return in acknowledgment of the President's greetings.

When the King indicated that the audience was over, the party bowed itself backward out of the room, and the procession re-formed in the next salon. L. had been notified that immediately after his audience with the King he would be received by Her Majesty the Queen. So the procession passed in similar order through a series of salons and corridors, the different gentlemen leaving him at the points where they had met him on his entry, their places being taken by others of the Queen's *entourage*. So they came to a smaller but still handsome suite of apartments, where the Queen's Master of Ceremonies met them. He also disappeared through a door to take Her Majesty's orders, and returned to say that my husband was to be received at once. As the room was not so large as that in which the King had received him, the approach to the Queen was easier. [7]

"The Queen is petite and charming," he wrote me; "from what those who escorted me said, she is looking very much stronger than she has since a recent serious illness. They all seem to be delighted at her recovery. She is exceedingly sweet and gracious, and speaks with a little manner of shyness. She was very simply dressed in what I should call a rose chiffon with a little scarf of black and white chiffon over her shoulders. (I hear she is very fond of pretty clothes.) She asked about the President, and I told her of his health and activities, and of his trip through the states. Her Majesty also spoke of the Palais d'Assche and of their life in it, asked after you, Isabel, and spoke of my cousin, Caroline de Buisseret. I tried as best I could to answer her gentle inquiries."

During the afternoon L. and his secretary made visits on the court officials and the chief members of the Government, leaving cards on the Queen's ladies-in-waiting and grand-mistresses and on the members of the Cabinet, as well as on the Governor of Brabant, and on Burgomaster Max. He was received by the Papal Nuncio, the *Doyen* of the Diplomatic Corps, with much ceremony, and found him to be a typical, good-looking priest. [8]

Burgomaster Max has had an interesting career since we met him in Brussels. Before his day there were two famous burgomasters who had served their city with special distinction. The first was Chevalier de Locquenghieu who, in 1477, had the Willebroeck Canal built, through which the Prince of Orange made his entry into town. The second was Baron de Perch, who was chosen seven times to serve as burgomaster when the glory of Brussels was at its height, early in the seventeenth century. By their side today stands a third—Monsieur Adolphe Max.

When the German army was approaching the city it was he who discussed the situation with the American Minister, Mr. Brand Whitlock, and with the Spanish Minister, Marquis Villaloba, as the King and his Cabinet had already removed to Antwerp. They all agreed that, with the troops available, the city could only hold out for a short time against the Germans, that many lives would be sacrificed, and art treasures and historic buildings destroyed. Brussels must surrender. [9]





**BURGOMASTER MAX.**

Soon after entering the city the German general sent for Max. When he came into the room the general pulled out a revolver and thumped it down on the table. Looking him straight in the eye, the burgomaster pulled out a pen and thumped that down on the table beside the general's weapon. The challenge of the pen and the gun—which, I wonder, will prove stronger in the end?

Under the Germans the life of the city continued peacefully, although somewhat changed. The new rulers issued paper money for war currency. The citizens were expected to pay their tradesmen with it, and were assured that it was "just as good as gold." But when Burgomaster Max offered it to the German general as payment of the huge indemnity required of Brussels it was refused, and gold demanded instead. Max later had trouble with the authorities, and as he had made several speeches to the populace he was sent to a prison in Germany. The last I heard of him he was still there.

Not long after my husband's presentation at Court came the King's name-day, an occasion for fêtes and gala. <sup>[10]</sup> The streets were gay with marching soldiers and people in their best clothes. There was a Te Deum at the church of St. Gudule, and of course the Diplomatic Corps went in full dress uniform to do honour to the King. Their carriages joined in the procession, while the cavalry deployed about and escorted the state officials. At the church doors officers received the arrivals, and as each Minister passed inside the portal the orders rang out in the quiet church. There was a clank of arms as a guard of honour, standing on each side of the transept aisle, came to "present arms," and a ruffle of drums.

When the Queen came—the King did not attend—she was met by the Papal Nuncio and prelates and escorted by priests, while the band played a solemn march with slow beat of drums. So she passed up into the chancel, bowing to the altar and to the diplomats and the Ministers of State. Then she passed beneath the baldachino with the King's mother, the Comtesse de Flandre, and the little Crown Prince, the Duc de Brabant, who was all in white. About them knelt the gentlemen- and ladies-in-waiting.

The priests intoned before the altar, and the music took up the beautiful and impressive service, part of which <sup>[11]</sup> dates back eight hundred years. High at one end a choir and orchestra were in a gallery, and joined the great organ in filling the vaults with lovely harmonies as the mass proceeded, while the scent of incense rose through the soft haze of the interior to the famous stained-glass windows above.

The Queen sat beneath her canopy at the side of the high altar with her little court surrounding her, the diplomats in their full regalia were in a group at one side, the Ministers of State in their uniforms in a group at the other, with the judges of the court in their scarlet robes which made bright splashes of colour. The military music resounded in slow marches and re-echoed through the spaces where candles only dimly lighted the shadows.

When they came out of church they noticed above them, floating in the sky, a great dirigible balloon, manœuvring majestically over the city, silent and impressive. How little did they think that similar balloons would so soon be dropping bombs upon their peaceful country!

That evening the Minister of Foreign Affairs gave a gala dinner in honour of the King's fête-day, and all the Chiefs of Mission and some of the court dignitaries attended. Madame Davignon, wife of the Minister, a handsome and distinguished woman, received with His Excellency. The gathering was impressive, and the diplomatic uniforms were rich with gold lace and decorations. Madame Davignon presided at this dinner of men only, the Minister sitting opposite her at the U-shaped table. Some plenipotentiaries were accredited to Paris as well as to Brussels, and came on for special functions. Although these were mostly South Americans, they were very fine in their regalia, as were also the Turks in their fezzes and the Persians in their astrakhan hats. After dinner there was a real "*recivimento*," when distinguished people came in to pay their respects to the Minister of Foreign Affairs without invitation, as used to be the custom in Rome. <sup>[12]</sup>

A few days after that L. made up a little party and ran out to Termeire, the de Buisseret château. The motor

trip took about an hour and a half, the car running smoothly and swiftly between villages and jiggling over the famous Belgian blocks that pave the towns. The country was like France, with the ditches on either side of the road and the rows of trees, and like Holland, too, with its canals. About the château there was an extensive park with game, where they hunted in the autumn, and *étangs* and bridges and fine old trees. [1] [13]

After luncheon they visited the lovely château of the Duc d'Ursel, where they met the Duchess, who has been in Paris since the war began, having established there the Franco-American Œuvre des Soldats Belges. They also met the charming, old-world Duchess Dowager. From there they ran along the banks of the Scheldt to the Pavillon, a most interesting little building, both in architecture and decoration.

It may be that there were more châteaux in the south, in the Walloon provinces, but Flanders was by no means lacking in fine old houses. Melis, the Edmond de Beughems' place, was quite enchanting. A long avenue of deep trees brought one to a stone gateway with the family arms sculptured above it, and fortified walled buildings stretching away on either side. Crossing a garden and a moat, one came to the entrance of the quaintest little old château imaginable.

On one side its gray walls dipped straight down into the moat, while on the other were green lawns and bright-coloured gardens, with splendid overhanging trees and a still lagoon with white floating swans. Beyond the deep, protecting waters were the forests of the park, with long alleys leading the eye to far-away vistas. [14]

From the bridge above the moat one passed beneath the old portcullis and the bastion with its loopholes into a little lop-sided courtyard. Here the walls were all pinkish and yellow, the old brickwork breaking through the ochre plaster placed on it in a different generation and overgrown with ivies and climbing roses. Indoors the rooms were low and tiny and filled with old-fashioned furniture.

Melis was not a great and battlemented fortress, but a small and homelike place, so miniature that it seemed as if one might put it in a pocket. No doubt it really was, as the family admitted, very cold and damp and uncomfortable, but on a warm sunny day it appeared quite one's ideal of what a château in Flanders ought to be.

While I was still staying quietly in Paris, I found much pleasure in reading about the historic old city which I was so soon to see.

Its legends attracted me especially. There was one, for instance, about Guy, the poor man of Anderlecht. His parents were serfs, and he began his career as a labourer in the fields of a nobleman who lived near the castle of Brussels. It happened one day that Guy's fellow-workmen complained to their master, who provided them all with their midday meals, that Guy always took part of his share of the food home to his parents and consequently was late in beginning the afternoon work. The master was very indignant and went to the fields himself the next day to see if it were true, and to thrash the young man soundly if he did not return on time. Sure enough, when the moment came to begin work again, Guy failed to appear. But—in his place at the plow stood an angel! [15]

It was said that the devil never tried but once to tempt Guy. That was when a rich Brussels merchant entered into partnership with him, promising to make his fortune. On his first journey down the river Senne after this his boat ran upon a sand-bank. When Guy seized a pole to push off, his fingers became fastened to it and he could not release them till he had made a solemn vow that he would give up forever the search for wealth. Even during his lifetime he was regarded as a saint, and pilgrims fell on their knees before him. When he lay dying it was said that a heavenly light filled the room. The oldest church in Brussels, where he used to pray as a child, was afterwards dedicated to him, its name being changed from St. Peter to St. Peter and St. Guy. [16]

It is Michael the Archangel, however, and not Guy, who is the patron saint of Brussels. A statue representing him with his foot upon a dragon was placed on the spire of the Hôtel de Ville by Philip the Good about 1450, and has stood there resplendent ever since. He survived even the religious wars of the sixteenth century, although the mob did not look upon him with a very indulgent eye.

The castle of Brussels, mentioned in connection with the legend of Guy of Anderlecht, was doubtless that built by Duke Charles of Lorraine, the grandson of Charlemagne, in 981. It stood on an island in the river, next to the church of St. Géry, and is supposed to have been the first dwelling in this region. The city's name, "Bruk Sel," means the "manor in the marsh." One of Duke Charles's daughters married Count Lambert of Lorraine, who built a wall about the little town to keep out robber knights. Seven noble families, of whom the de Lignes show quarterings today, built houses of stone near the seven gates, which were guarded by their retainers. For that reason seven is considered Brussels' lucky number. [17]

During the next two centuries many knights left Brussels for the crusades. Few people know that it was a little Belgian page, named Blondel, who sang "A Mon Roi" outside Richard Cœur de Lion's window when he was taken prisoner at this time. Under the weak hand of Count Godfrey the Bearded, in the twelfth century, the citizens of the town seized the opportunity to establish for themselves a position midway between the serfs and the nobles. In the following century they won still more privileges—or rather, bought them—of their duke, John the First, who needed money to carry on his wars. When he was killed in battle his successor found the townspeople were becoming too powerful for his liking, and did what he could to keep them in hand.

This city on the Senne first sprang into importance about the year 1200, when the great highroad was built from Bruges to Cologne, making Brussels a station on the busy trade route. The town gradually spread on to the surrounding hills. When the population was about fifty thousand, in the fourteenth century, the weaving industry was started. The counts of Louvain made their homes there, and the dukes of Burgundy, who united Flanders and Brabant, frequently held their courts there in the century following. During the reign of these powerful dukes the city became so prosperous that it was outranked only by Ghent and Bruges. [18]

Andreas Vesalius, a native of Brussels, born in 1515, deserves mention, as his name stands out in the scientific history of the world. He is called the "Founder of Human Anatomy," because of his discoveries. After studying at Louvain he became court physician to Charles V, and a distinguished professor and author. It is told how once when "Vesalius was dissecting, with the consent of his kinsmen, the body of a Spanish grandee, it was observed that the heart still gave some feeble palpitations when divided by the knife. The immediate effect of this outrage to human feelings was the denunciation of the anatomist to the Inquisition. Vesalius escaped the severe treatment of that tribunal only by the influence of the King, and by promising to perform a pilgrimage to the Holy Land." On this voyage he was shipwrecked in the Ionian Sea, and was buried on the island of Zante.

From the beginning of its history Brussels has been the center of much fierce fighting. Men—and women, too—have led their armies to its attack or defense, and many thousands have died about its walls. In 1695, Marshal Villeroy of France bombarded it, reducing the lower town to ashes. Less than forty years later Marshal Saxe repeated the performance. For all that it has continued to grow and prosper. Under the Hapsburgs it was made the capital of the Low Countries, and in 1830 it was recognized as the capital of the new nation of Belgium. <sup>[19]</sup>

The last remains of its walls were removed by the late King, Leopold II, in his effort to make the city more sanitary. Besides this, he did much to modernize and beautify it as well. It became a model little capital, made up of many *communes*, forming in all a city about the size of Boston. The more I read about it, and the more I learned of the life there, the more eager I became to see it all for myself, and it was with joy that I finally received word that we could move into our new home.

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## CHAPTER II

### DIPLOMATIC LIFE

[20]



**HE** American Legation in Brussels was in the Quartier Leopold, on one of the many hills on which the city was built. It was owned by the Comte d'Assche, not by our Government, but it had been used as the American Legation when Mr. Bellamy Storer was Minister, and after we left it was also the Legation under Mr. Marburg. Mr. Brand Whitlock, the present Minister, however, took another house near by, I understand.

The Palais d'Assche was one of the handsomest legations in Brussels, having a park in front and a pretty garden behind. We moved into the Legation immediately after my arrival in Brussels, although the workmen were still in the house. I describe the Palais d'Assche because it is so different from our American homes.

Just within the passage leading to the courtyard, which was entered through an arch that could be closed with doors, and down a few steps, were the rooms of the concierge and his wife. To the left of the passage were the offices and the grand staircase, to the right the private entrance and my husband's suite. At the head of the stairs leading to the second floor, and on the garden side, was the library, which was made homelike with our books, pictures and rugs. As this room had a huge fireplace and a big window, giving us all the light possible, it was really cheerful, and we spent most of our time in it; in fact, we always dined here when we had no guests. I remember especially these evenings alone when we put out the lights and enjoyed the moon shining through the great window, and listened to the church bell that echoed through the wide chimney. <sup>[21]</sup>



**AMERICAN LEGATION, BRUSSELS.**

My bedroom and boudoir were also on this floor, and opened into one of the great salons. The bedroom, which had been the present Queen's sleeping room, was very large, and was hung in rose-coloured brocade. It contained a few superb pieces of carved furniture with brass trimmings and inlaid crowns. I had the comfort of an open fire in the boudoir; indeed, I needed its cheeriness, for the sky was always gray, and we were forced to turn on the lights even early in the morning.

On the garden side of the house was a long gallery, into which the dining room broke in the center. The reception rooms were square with high ceilings and mostly finished in white and gold. The house had been partly done over by a French architect, and the interior decorations were very handsome. At one end of the palace, passing up over the legation offices, was the grand staircase, which was opened only on special occasions. The heating was very imperfect, according to American ideas, for although there was a furnace, the ceilings were so high that the heat made little impression. <sup>[22]</sup>

At the foot of the garden, behind the house, were the stables and the garage. From the porte-cochère the drive passed round both sides down to the stables, and in the center was a lawn with a screen of shrubbery. There were some handsome large trees, and several smaller ones that were trained upon trellises by the side walls, so that it promised to be a pleasant, shady place in the summer time.

By dint of much hurry and rush the house was gotten in order for Christmas Day. The workmen were in their last entrenchments on the great stairs on the 23d, and then fortunately disappeared forever. Our few belongings were quickly put in place. The tapestries and pictures were hung in the salons, and at last the Christmas tree was lighted.



**LIBRARY, AMERICAN LEGATION, BRUSSELS.**

In Belgium, very little is made of Christmas. Presents are given on St. Nicholas' Day, but their real celebration is at New Year's. We did our best, however, to make it seem like a New England Christmas. As a part of our diplomatic duties, we gave a reception for the Americans in Brussels. About seventy-five came, <sup>[23]</sup>

including every sort of person. L. and I received in the library, where the tree lighted up prettily, the music in the ballroom was good, and our guests danced and ate, and I think enjoyed themselves.

We had our share of servant troubles at the Legation. At one time we were on the point of sending away our chef, but he wrote L. a little note saying that he felt he must leave us and permit a more "valiant one" to undertake our large household. As we had already telegraphed to England for another, this was not so unfortunate as it might seem.

At another time our concierge, whom we thought a model of good behaviour, "ran amuck," and we had a series of scenes. He began to talk incoherently in the kitchen, and to complain because the automobiles went in and out so often, declaring that the chauffeurs were in league against him. Then he appeared with his coat off and rushed about the house with a loaded revolver in each hand, challenging the men servants to fight. [24] Later, as he would not come when summoned, my husband took him by the coat collar and put him out of the house. After he had been away three days and the pistols had been safely hidden, we decided, for various reasons, to give him another chance, and, curiously enough, his conduct was perfect all winter.

My first important duty was to call on the ladies in the diplomatic circle, and I went in company with Comtesse Clary, the wife of the Austrian Minister, who was the *Doyenne* of the Diplomatic Corps. I was indebted to the Comtesse de Buisseret for many little points of etiquette that Europeans and diplomats are extremely careful about, but which Americans often do not consider, such as sitting on the left of your carriage and putting your guest on the right. It is also polite of the hostess to ask a distinguished guest to sit on the sofa when calling, and the manœuvring for the proper seat is sometimes as complicated as the Japanese tea ceremony. A stranger, after speaking to the hostess, must ask almost at once to be introduced to the other guests. If they are Belgian ladies, the newcomer is supposed to leave cards within forty-eight hours, [25] and the task of finding the correct names and addresses is a great nuisance, for there are endless members of certain well-known families.



**MARIE JOSÉ, THE LITTLE PRINCESS.**

The King and Queen were very popular, even in those days, and both were young and good looking. They have three fine children, the two boys bearing the splendid historic titles of the Duc de Brabant and the Comte de Flandre. The youngest of the three is the fascinating little Princess Marie José, who is idolized by the people. His Majesty is the nephew of the former King Leopold, and the Queen is the daughter of His Royal Highness, Charles Theodore, a Bavarian Grand Duke. King Albert, before he succeeded to the throne, had traveled in America, and he always had very pleasant things to say of his visit here. His town residence was the Winter Palace, now a hospital, which was not very far from the Legation; the Summer Palace at Laeken, occupied of late by German officers, is about half an hour's distance from Brussels by motor.

My private audience with the Queen was granted within a week after my arrival in Brussels. I was told to wear a high-necked gown with a short train, a hat and no veil—veils are not worn before royalty. Her Majesty [26] received me standing, then asked me to sit on the sofa with her. I found her very pretty and sweet. I courtesied and waited for her to speak—as is customary—and then we talked upon different subjects for

about twenty minutes, until she closed the interview.

Of the various functions at Court, the balls were the most brilliant. The women wore gowns with rather long trains, quantities of old lace, and superb jewels, and with the gorgeous Hungarian uniforms, the endless orders, and the varied coats of the Chinese, the scene was dazzling. According to the rank of one's husband, or according to the length of time he had been in Brussels as Minister, the wives took their places in the "circle" which was formed in the "Salon Bleu," a room for "Serene Highnesses" and diplomats. The King and Queen made a tour of the apartment, speaking to the ladies on one side, the men on the other, as they do at most court functions. As each person courtesied to Their Majesties, it was a pretty sight to see the courtesies follow them down the line like a slow-moving wave.

After this, all the members of the Diplomatic Corps who had any of their compatriots to present, formed another circle in an adjoining room, where again the King and Queen passed down the line, and each one of us made our presentations. Then the royal party and the diplomats passed in procession through the dense throng, crossing the ballroom, a great white and gold hall, to seats on a little raised dais to the right of the throne chairs, where the diplomats watched the dancing, while to the left the Ministers of State gathered with their wives. During the evening there were repeated processions headed by the King and Queen, in which the Diplomatic Corps joined, first to a winter garden, where tea and simple things were served, then to a supper room all marble and glass, where the table was magnificent with the famous old gold service. After our return to the ballroom there was more dancing. Finally the King and Queen withdrew, and then the guests were at liberty to go home. <sup>[27]</sup>

The royal dinner given for us at the Winter Palace was delightful. In Belgium every Envoy used to receive the honour of a dinner, at which the King took in the Minister's wife on his arm, and the Minister escorted the Queen. Their Majesties sat together in the center of the table, the Minister on the right of the Queen, the Minister's wife on the left of the King. At each Court I believe the custom is a little different. In Italy they give a retiring Ambassador a dinner; in Germany the diplomats are all asked together at one dinner; in Russia the Czar does not eat in the same room with the foreign diplomats and the Ministers, I am told; and in Japan they give a luncheon, where you are placed at the same table with Their Majesties, but members of the Diplomatic Corps do not sit next to the Emperor or Empress, who have on either side of them some member of the royal family. <sup>[28]</sup>

One of the pleasantest occasions of the winter was our reception and dinner with the Comtesse de Flandre, the mother of the King. We passed up the great staircase with the red carpets, lined with footmen in red coats and knee breeches and wearing their many medals, just as at the King's palace. At the door the Grand Maître and the lady-in-waiting received the guests in a small room of white and gold, with portraits of the royal family on the walls. The doors were opened and the Countess entered, and spoke to each person. She was elderly and dressed in black, and had a very pleasant, attractive face. The guests, who numbered about forty, included the Spanish, French, English and American representatives. At table, the Grand Maître sat opposite Her Royal Highness, the diplomats had the high seats, and the others down the table were Belgians of different degrees of distinction. We returned to the reception room at the close of the dinner, and the Countess asked us all to be seated, and sat first with one group and then with another. <sup>[29]</sup>



COMTESSE DE FLANDRE.

Her death occurred, very suddenly, the following autumn, just before our departure for Japan. For court



mourning I was obliged to buy a crêpe bonnet, such as was worn for a long period by all the diplomats' wives and many of the Belgian ladies.

But for the Duke of Fife they wore black for only four days. Mourning for the Duke of Luxembourg was for twenty-one days, the first ten days in black, after that in black and white. Teas and dinners, however, went on just the same.

The funeral of the Countess was most imposing. I watched the procession from a house on the route, but L. went to St. Gudule with the rest of the Diplomatic Corps. Lines of soldiers guarded the streets as the procession, headed by the Garde Civique, passed along in the pouring rain. Following the Garde were troops of cavalry on fine horses, a military band, and a number of ecclesiastics and church dignitaries. The catafalque was borne on a great black and gold car, drawn by eight black horses decorated with plumes, and laden with magnificent wreaths of flowers. The King walked solemnly behind the funeral car, the Crown Prince of Germany on his right, and the Crown Prince of Roumania on his left, with several other lesser royalties following in their train. After these came the special Ambassadors, the Cabinet, Senators and others, in great carriages draped in black, with coachmen and standing footmen in mourning liveries. (The only touch of colour was the brilliant red robes of the Justices as they entered the church.) When the service was over, the whole funeral train was conveyed in carriages to the chapel at Laeken, near the Summer Palace. [30]

The Comtesse de Flandre had been very popular and was greatly missed. She was a kindly and much beloved old lady, and was certainly very active in society, going about everywhere, giving dinners and opening bazars. She showed especial favour to artists and musicians, and was herself a talented musician and etcher of landscapes.

Another ceremony that we saw at St. Gudule's occurred after the death of the little daughter of one of the Ministers of State, when L. and I attended the Angels' Mass, which was celebrated in this old church. There was a great crowd in black, and the music in the immense vault with its solemn, stained-glass windows was most impressive. As the mass proceeded, all the men in the audience crowded up towards the altar, and lighted candles were handed them in turn as they formed in procession and passed before the catafalque, the Catholics kissing the patten, and others bowing to it, and then passing in review before the bereaved family, who sat to one side. This, I believe, was for the purpose of showing the mourners who had attended the ceremony, but, as some one complained, women were not allowed any credit for being present. The custom of holding the candles near the face, no doubt, was a relic of the days when the churches were so dark that it was only in this manner that people could be recognized. I believe it was also a common practice of old to drop an oblation in the plate as one passed. [31]

To return to more cheerful subjects, we had the honour of dining with the Duchesse d'Ursel one evening. The d'Ursels, the de Lignes, and the de Mérodes (Comtesse de Mérode, we hear, was arrested during the war, as she was the bearer of important papers) are some of the great names in Belgium, counting, as they do, one thousand years of "*lignage*." Several members of the d'Ursel family lived in the same house. The Duchess Dowager received at the end of one wing, and the younger Duchess in her salon at the end of another, while the Comtesse Wolfgang d'Ursel was at home in still a third. So one made a series of visits without going out of the main door—quite a hospitable way of entertaining one's friends. The old Palais d'Ursel remained alone in that part of the city which was being rebuilt with great government structures—for King Leopold promised the old Duke that his historic residence should be allowed to stand, even if the other buildings around it had to be torn down. It is long and low-lying, and mediæval in appearance. The dimly lighted rooms, with their old tapestries and quaint pieces of antique furniture, were of another age, dignified and quiet. Here we met such old-world looking people—the men with Roman noses and waxed mustachios and elegant manners. The Duchess' second son was Comte Wolfgang d'Ursel, a name that suggests the Middle Ages and a great heroic figure, although in reality he was a small man. I regret to add that he has been killed in the war. [32]



PALAIS D'URSEL.

Our dinner with Prince Charles de Ligne was also enjoyable. No family of the Belgian nobility has a prouder [33]

record than this. To name only a part of their titles, they were barons before the year 1100; they have been marshals and grand seneschals of Hainault since 1350; counts of the Empire and hereditary constables of Flanders since the sixteenth century; and were made princes of the Spanish Netherlands in the seventeenth; while "the glorious order of the Golden Fleece," says Poplimont, in his "Heraldry," "has been from its creation an appendage absolute, so to speak, of the house of Ligne."

Although the palace was so stately, and the doorkeeper wore a decoration on his livery, and the footmen were in maroon and shorts, with showy little gold shoulder-knots, the dinner was simple and well done, and so like one at home that it was really delightful. We passed up the fine staircase, with the balcony opening above and the plants as in a winter garden, and through salons in which chairs were arranged in the formal way that they affect abroad. The Prince and the Princess received us cordially, and, after dinner, we went into a small *fumoir* in which were hung tapestries that had been in the family for four centuries. [34]

We were taken one day by the Princesse de Ligne to visit the palace of the d'Arenbergs in Brussels, which was the finest in the city next to the King's. The great staircase was the most beautiful that I have ever seen—in its proportions and in the splendour of its marbles. The rooms were palatial, and there were so many wonderful tapestries and famous pictures! We saw the suite with a private entrance for royalties, where the Kaiser's son Adelbert had been a guest a few days before. Notwithstanding all this glory the bathrooms had tubs for which the water had to be heated by gas in a stove. The old wing of the palace, which had belonged to Count Egmont in the sixteenth century, was burned some time ago, and many of his possessions were destroyed, notably the desk at which he wrote. The Duchesse d'Arenberg is the daughter of the Princesse de Ligne. The Duke is a German, and I have been told that before the war he removed all their superb collection to Germany. It is reported that extraordinary things went on beneath that roof previous to the invasion.

Among the old nobility of Belgium is a member called Comte Vilain XIII. There is a curious tradition in regard to the origin of this title. When Louis XIV was in Belgium, during his Flemish campaign, it was discovered one evening that there were but thirteen to sit down at his table. The King was too superstitious to allow this, so sent out an aide to find some one to make the fourteenth. Of course only noblemen sat at the King's table, but as the aide was unable to find any one of suitable rank he brought in a wayfarer, or villain. The King at once ennobled him, calling him Comte Vilain XIII, and the title is still written in this way. [35]



**M. CARTON DE WIART, MINISTER OF JUSTICE.**

Of the many "official" dinners that we attended one was with the Minister of the Interior, M. Berryer, who is a brilliant man. We also dined with Minister of State Beernaert, one of the wonderful old men of Europe, eighty-three years old when we were there, but quite alert and still an able statesman.

Another dinner was given for us by M. Carton de Wiart, the Minister of Justice, and a writer of much ability. He was a member of the commission that came over here from Belgium in the autumn of 1914. This dinner was rather different from others that we had attended, for it was made up of the deputies. It was quite interesting to meet this entirely different class of men, whom I found to be very intelligent. Among the guests [36] was a nice old man, whom all the deputies of the Right called "Uncle." There were also dinners, of course, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other officials, as well as the diplomats, all of which I remember with pleasure.

The reception to the foreign ministers at a quarter-past ten New Year's morning was postponed on account of the King's indisposition. So L. went off to write in the King's and the Queen's books, which had to be protected by the crimson-liveried servants against the throng of people who were struggling to reach them.

Among other functions the balls at the "Concert Noble" were very enjoyable; the music was good, and the vast assembly room was handsome and not crowded. The lofty suite of salons made an effective setting for the dancing. One night when we were there, the entrance was lined with men in gold and black, and the King and Queen came in, followed by gentlemen-in-waiting. They took their seats upon a raised daïs, after walking

through the rooms, and watched the dancing for a time. When supper was ready everybody stood about, and the King and Queen talked with different people.

The life of the American Minister in Brussels, even in time of peace, was by no means all a round of social gaities. While nothing of the greatest or most pressing importance came up in our relations with Belgium, yet there were questions of commerce and questions of policy to be kept constantly in mind, and reports to be made from time to time to the home Government, not to speak of countless interruptions from Americans who, for one reason or another, were in need of the kind offices of their representative. For instance, according to Belgian law, vagabonds without money, but who might be absolutely innocent of crime, could be sent to the workhouse for two years, and sometimes American sailors landing at Antwerp would be left there without a cent. Our kind-hearted Consul General used his influence to have them set free; but then what was to be done with them? [37]

Among our countrymen who came to the Legation, however, were many welcome visitors and not a few whom we had met in far distant parts of the world. There was Governor Pack, of the mountain province in the Philippines. The last time L. had seen him, he was ruling supreme among the head-hunting Igorrotes at Bontoc. With a small handful of brave and resourceful men as lieutenants, he had in a few years brought those extraordinary aborigines into such willing subjection that their loyalty to the American was really devotion. He had been visiting the families of that company of wonderful Belgian priests who were doing so much good in his far-away mountain home—sons of rich parents, who had taken up the work in a spirit of pure self-sacrifice. [38]

It is a curious thing that the men of affairs in Belgium—often some of the Ministers of State and the captains of industry—who were broad, up-to-date men, forceful and interesting, one seldom met socially. Even some of the King's *entourage* could not join the Cercle du Parc, the most exclusive club in Brussels.

I had a reception day every Tuesday, beginning in January, besides which there were various times at which we received diplomats and titled Belgians by themselves. One of the most interesting figures was the Papal Nuncio, who came in his robes, with magenta cape and cap and gloves, wearing his ring outside. The concierge and a chauffeur waved his motor under the porte-cochère; two servants opened the doors *à double battant*; and L. met him and escorted him upstairs, where we had tea and cakes.

On Washington's birthday we had another reception for Americans. The chancery was closed, the Stars and Stripes waved in all their glory over the door, and flowers were arranged around the bust of Washington in its niche high between the windows on the main landing of the staircase. We received about one hundred and forty guests—men, women, and children of all ages—in the room at the head of the stairs, where some of the tapestries were hung. It was a most democratic assembly—young schoolgirls, teachers, most of the regular "colony," American women who had married Belgians—and they seemed to enjoy the dancing, to American airs. On the table in the dining-room was a splendid cake of many stories, all flag-bedecked—every one of the flags was proudly carried off before the afternoon was over. [39]

For a change from the official routine and the formal entertainments, we often started out on a rainy evening and walked the glistening boulevards down into the town, so gay with its brilliantly lighted shops and restaurants. Having been duly advised by our Secretary of Legation of a respectable place to which diplomats "might" go, we sought it out and had happy little dinners together, forgetting our troubles for the time.

Perhaps the most delightful day I spent in Brussels was at Laeken. The Summer Palace stood on a hill overlooking the city, and was built of gray stone in Renaissance style. The greenhouses, which were erected by old King Leopold, were supposed to be the largest in the world. One could walk for miles through covered glass walks, with climbing geraniums and fuchsias hanging from the roof and heliotrope filling the air with its perfume. [40]

The place was at its best for the royal garden party in May. As the invitations said two o'clock, we had luncheon early and set out at half after one. Soon we were careering up the fine avenue du Parc Royal, zigzagging from one side to the other as different officials gave us conflicting directions. Farther on, the road skirted the splendid park of Laeken, and we could look out over wide sweeps of lawn with great masses of trees and artificial waters winding in and out. Fine vistas led the eye up to the palace, which stood in a more formal setting of garden and terraces.

At the great gate in front of the palace, grenadiers in bearskin shakos stood guard, with uniformed officials and red-coated servants in gold lace and plumed hats. The palace was still unfinished, but looked very impressive. About it were great clumps of rhododendrons and magnificent lilacs.

The carriages stopped at the orangery, which had a long façade of stone columns and glass. Alighting, we passed into a perfect wonderland. To each side of us stretched a wing of a palace of crystal, with three rows of enormous orange trees arcing promenades. [41]

Beyond this we passed into the great palm house, a vast dome with palms so huge that they seemed to lose themselves in the height of the rotunda. The people strolling beneath them looked quite like pygmies in contrast.

All the parterre was laid out with bright-coloured flowers. In a paved space in the center was held the royal circle. When the King and Queen arrived, the people arranged themselves along the sides—the Diplomatic Corps, the ministry, and prominent Belgians—and a band played gaily while Their Majesties came down the line. The scene was really fairylike.

The circle lasted a long time, and we were beginning to weary of standing, when the royal party finally set out to make a tour of the greenhouses. The rest of us followed, glad of a chance to see the wonders of which we had heard so much—and wonders they were indeed, for who ever saw before a lovely chapel built entirely

of glass?

First we passed through a wide, two-aisled gallery with a forest of palms above and a rich display of pink and rose-coloured azaleas below. Then down steps into long, narrow passageways that were a bower as far as the eye could reach, gorgeous with climbing geraniums and lovely cinerarias. These galleries led one hither and thither, now in one direction, now in another, till both eye and mind were dazed with pleasure. We passed through tunnels of blooming flowers, and there was no end to the astonishing glory of colour and beauty. [42]

Here and there were little grottoes with mirrors, and fountains plashing; then more alleys, and another great house all aflame with azaleas. Steps led to the door of a pavilion. Here it was that King Leopold II had died.

Our progress was not rapid, as the King and Queen stopped frequently to speak to different people. But we finally made the tour and returned to the great rotunda, where I felt as if I were standing in an unreal world, inside a giant soap-bubble of many colours.

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## CHAPTER III

### BRUSSELS BEFORE THE WAR

[43]



**T**HE social life of Brussels we found very interesting. That of the Court was simple but elegant, while that of the aristocracy was old-world and conservative to a degree. Indeed, it was much like that of the Faubourg in Paris. Outside of royalty and serene highnesses, every one "in society" was either a count or a baron. It certainly seemed strange to an American that not one was without a title.

Another custom which struck one as odd was that of using titles in letters—they would often sign themselves "Countess So-and-So," or "Princess X." If a woman belonged to a fine family she would put "*née*" with her maiden name on her card.

An amusing travesty on titles occurred when our footman received letters addressed to the "Chief Cleaner of the Silver." I saw two cards which were even funnier than this, though. One bore the man's name and the title, "The Secretary of the Secretary of the Minister of"—such a department. The other was a card of a Doctor A—, who had inscribed beneath his name, "Doctor for the Countess of B—'s stomach." [44]

Hospitality generally took the form of afternoon teas. I have often been to as many as three or four in a day. They were always very ceremonial affairs, with all the servants turned out in style to receive me alone or perhaps two or three other guests.

During Lent people often received in the evening. Tea and cake and orangeade were served, while the guests sat and gossiped. At this season, we discovered, all the dinners had to have either fish or meat—not both—as it was a Roman Catholic country. Sundays, which are not Lenten days, gave them an opportunity for varying the festivities.

Dinners were given occasionally, and were always very formal and very long—really banquets—made up of a succession of rich dishes with a small glass of red or white wine with every course. The placing of guests at table was an extremely important matter, for every one must be seated strictly according to rank. One does not wonder that there were so few dinners, considering the difficulty of finding a group of congenial people who could dine together without dissatisfaction. Each was likely to think that he should have been given a higher place, and to go home feeling insulted instead of happy. [45]

The favourite subjects among the women were children and the rainy weather; aside from gossip there was talk of little else. The men had no objection to sitting in silence, and were inclined to consider women who talked as chatterboxes. But for all that, they were very charming and high-bred and delightful to meet.

I should judge the Belgian sense of humour was not like ours. Many of them had a Latin wit, but as a race they were rather serious and conventional. They seemed to consider it bad form to have what we call a good time; all their entertainments were formal and dignified.

There was much in their character that was delightfully mediæval. People in the highest position socially would say with perfect simplicity things that sounded very strange to our ears. A man of high rank and intelligence explained to me one day that the reason why the Belgians slept with their windows closed was that the early morning air was bad for the eyes! He was quite serious about it and seemed to think the excuse sufficient.

I believe some of them still imagined that our country had not reached even the first stages of civilization. A little gentlewoman whom I had engaged through a friend to act as secretary courtesied very prettily on being presented, but wasn't at all sure whether we were South Americans or not, and inquired rather anxiously whether I had ever before been away from my native land. She thought that I should always be accompanied when out walking. [46]

I once asked an American lady who had married a Belgian what her adopted countrymen thought of

Americans. She laughed and told me what happened when her husband took her home to his château as a bride, many years before. All the peasants and tradespeople of the village had turned out to greet them, and while they were evidently pleased, something in her appearance seemed to surprise them. Finally her husband asked some one if there was anything the matter. Very politely the man explained that since they had heard that their new countess came from America, they had all expected her to be black. The Count paused a moment, glancing at his wife, who was not only very beautiful but very blonde, and then answered gravely, "Oh, but you must not forget—it is winter now. My wife, she only turns black in summer!" [47]

Before the war broke down the barriers between them, the Belgians and Dutch were much inclined to make fun of each other. The former said their neighbours were heavy, stupid and stiff. The Dutch retorted that the Belgians were so weak they could simply eat them up if they wished.

Quite the most important social event of the Brussels year was the Fancy Fair, which was given for the benefit of some charity. It came off in February and lasted four days. I had been asked to help on the flower table, where we sold not only flowers, real and artificial, but flower stands, vases, and perfumes. The shelves and tables were covered with mauve paper and velvet, and the effect was quite pretty. The fair was much like ours at home, and most of the men were afraid to attend. Some of the diplomats discreetly sent donations with their cards. The Queen was expected, but was ill at the last moment and the Comtesse de Flandre took her place, spending ten dollars at each table.

During the winter months Belgium sees little of the sun. All through April, too, they tell you, as a matter of course, "It is to rain." The weather is undoubtedly bad. In most countries the people stand up for their climate to some extent, but there they have to acknowledge that it is wretched. May can be delightful, as I discovered, with floods of sunshine everywhere. But even then there were cold, dreary days, and later in the month the chestnut trees turned brown and the flowers began to fade, so the spring is short enough at best. [48]

I found the streets of Brussels always amusing, whether the sun was in or out. There were sturdy dogs pulling carts laden with shining brass and copper milk-cans, the occasional trumpet-call and tramp of soldiers, and the women selling baskets of flowers, as they do in Rome. The church bells rang at all hours, for the clocks did not any two of them agree, and were forever contradicting each other with their musical chimes.

As I have said before, Brussels was a model city, beautiful and well kept. In the center of the town was the superb Grande Place, second to none in Europe, with the Hôtel de Ville, which was second only to that in Louvain, the galleried and much-gilded Maison du Roi, and the many guild-houses of the archers and skippers and printers and merchants. I am told that this historic square has been mined by the Germans, so that all its treasures of mediæval architecture can be blown up at a moment's notice. [49]



*A Flemish Kermesse*

The Grande Place was at its best when there was a *kermesse*. Then the windows of the guild-halls and the long galleries of the Hôtel de Ville—the glory of Brussels—were lined with people looking down into the square. Flags streamed from the buildings, and there was good music, and groups of happy burghers were drinking their beer at little tables. After dark there was continuous illumination of the lovely spire of the Hôtel de Ville, with varying coloured lights that showed its tracery and design in beautiful, mysterious relief—an entrancing sight.

Not far from the corner of the Hôtel stood the famous little fountain figure of the Mannikin, the "First Citizen of Brussels." He was dressed for the *kermesse* in his best Sun-day-go-to-meeting suit, as was proper for the occasion—a plum-coloured velvet with ruffles and embroidery, a three-cornered hat with feathers and cockade, buckled shoes, and white stockings and gloves.

The Grande Place was the civic center of Brussels. The Government buildings were grouped about a park half a mile away, with the royal palace at one end and the Palais de la Nation, the House of Parliament, at the other. Close by, on either side, were grouped the various departments and the fine houses provided for the Ministers by the Government. <sup>[50]</sup>

The Palais de la Nation was only moderately impressive. The senate chamber was decorated with frescos, while the "deputies" was bare and plain. Like our two houses in Washington, the upper was rather dignified, while the lower was in apparent disorder all the time. While Parliament was in session *huissiers* with their chains of office about their necks were on guard throughout the building.

One of the points in Brussels most familiar to me was the Gare du Nord, near the long public greenhouse and park, where the narrow shopping street began, in the lower part of the town. This led to the Bourse, the Place de la Monnaie, and the Grand Théâtre. Then there was the upper Boulevard with its tram that climbed the hill from the Gare du Nord, and a foot and bridle path which led through the Quartier Leopold—and on for miles to the Gare du Midi, changing its name with every block.

There were three good motor roads leading out of town: one from this boulevard to the avenue Louise continued on through the Bois; another extended from the Quartier Leopold to the Musée Congo, while a third led in the opposite direction, through the lower town and on to Laeken, where the Summer Palace of the King was located. <sup>[51]</sup>

A favourite stroll of mine from the Legation was through the park near by, between the palace and the government houses, past the palace of the Comtesse de Flandre and the Museum, to the American Club for a cup of afternoon tea. I sometimes stopped and took a look at the interesting paintings in the Museum—a jumble of religious pictures, butchers' shops, and fat women. The street known as the Montagne de la Cour, in this part of the town, was widened a few years ago by the old King, and no doubt is more healthy, but its picturesqueness was much marred by the tearing down of some quaint old houses which had stood there for generations.

Before the war Brussels was one of the first musical cities of Europe. This was not a new honour for it, however, for as far back as the fifteenth century the Low Countries led the world in the art of music. They furnished choirmasters for the churches of the continent, and singers for the royal courts. Besides all this, they founded schools of music and supplied the instruction as well. One of their most famous composers, Grétry, who lived in the eighteenth century, wrote many operas which were very popular in Paris. Much of his life was spent in the French capital, but when he died his heart was taken to his native Liège for burial. One of his songs is supposed to have inspired the Marseillaise by its vigorous expression of loyalty to the French king. <sup>[52]</sup>

Few people, I believe, know that Beethoven's father was a Belgian. Since the tragedy of Belgium, the great composer has been taken out of the German Hall of Fame. His ancestral town was Louvain.

"Beethoven? From Louvain his fathers spring,  
Hence came the exile's dolor in his mien.  
Rebukes prophetic in his numbers ring;  
And when wild clangors smite his sealed ears,  
And loud alarums rung by hands unseen,  
It is the tocsin of his town he hears."

Because of their long inheritance of good musical taste, the public of modern Brussels had the reputation of being the most difficult to please of any. Even London and Paris audiences seemed less critical, and a triumph in Brussels was a triumph indeed. The audience was usually made up of thoroughly educated musicians who went to concerts seriously. Both Calvé and Melba made their débuts there.





EUGENE YSAYE.

But much of Brussels' musical renown was due to the presence there of the two great masters of the violin—<sup>[53]</sup> Thompson and Ysaye. The former is less known in this country than Ysaye, who has had great success here and is a popular favourite in England as well. But he himself considers Thompson his superior, and certainly the latter is acknowledged to be the greatest living master of technique.

Both men came from Liège, in the Walloon country, and both have been head of the violin department in the Conservatoire in Brussels. When Ysaye resigned a few years ago, Thompson took his place. (The Conservatoire, by the way, was subsidized by the Government and was entirely for the service of the people. The aristocracy did not send their children there, employing members of the faculty to come to their homes instead.) Unlike so many great men, Ysaye was honoured in his own country, and appreciated and adored by his own people. He was especially adored by his pupils, who considered him a sort of god.

When Thompson played in Boston he was not appreciated. He admits that he has stage fright, and when appearing before a large audience becomes frozen and fails to play at his best. He is a master of<sup>[54]</sup> counterpoint, and an authority on ancient music. Although a fine teacher, he sometimes becomes sarcastic, and his pupils do not worship him as Ysaye's do. His son served in the Belgian army and at last accounts was convalescing from a wound, in an English hospital.

We attended a wonderful performance of "Götterdämmerung," which began at half-past five and lasted all the evening. An American woman, Madame Walker, sang remarkably well. The opera was very good, and Friday night was the fashionable time to attend, when it was generally crowded.

One morning we went to the "Concours de Violons" at the Conservatoire. The playing was of a high order and the enthusiasm of the crowded audience tremendous. The judges sat in one of the stage boxes and the competitions began at nine, all the pupils playing the same piece in succession. Each competitor came out and stood on the stage alone, save for her accompanist and her teacher, and played for some fifteen minutes, facing the jury and the critical crowd.

Quite the nicest looking of all the contestants was a little American girl of sixteen, Miss Hildegard Nash,<sup>[55]</sup> who seemed very self-possessed. Her method was so perfect that, while she had to compete with men, as well as with other clever little half-grown girls like herself, she gained a "*premier prix avec grand distinction.*" We felt quite proud of her.

Besides the music, there were *conférences*—talks by various people on various subjects. One went to them either by invitation, or by purchasing tickets; some were given for charity, others for mutual benefit.

Before the war broke out there were about two hundred of our compatriots in the American colony in Brussels. Most of the older ones had brought their children there because the schools were good and quite inexpensive, and both rents and servants' wages were low. Many of the younger people were there for the purpose of studying music.

The life of an American girl studying in any Continental city is always beset with difficulties. This was no less true in Brussels, the "Little Paris" of the Low Countries, than elsewhere. So that winter I started an American Students' Club. It occupied so much of my time that it is worth a passing mention here. We had some difficulty in finding suitable rooms; my husband was much amused because I found some excellent ones over what he insisted was a bar, though it was really a restaurant. However, we didn't take them, but a lower suite in a respectable *pension* with a small writing room, reading room, tea and music rooms, bath, bedroom and kitchen. [56]

The club had its opening the first of February, and during Lent it was crowded. Different ladies poured tea, and the students sang or recited. The little Boston girl who had won the prize at the Conservatoire played for us delightfully, as did also Miss Zoellner and others. Including the students and their friends we sometimes had a hundred present. In the spring it was suggested that we should give the most prominent member of the club an introduction, so it was voted that Miss Donnan should have the first concert given for her. She had quite a lovely high voice, and the affair was very successful.

Later on the character of the club was somewhat altered. The membership grew and the treasury swelled, but it became more of an American woman's club, with dances and bridge whist. The last I heard it was being restored more to its original character. I hope it has been of service to Americans during the war.

Even before this war there was much kindly feeling in Belgium toward Americans, although during our war with Spain they sympathized with the Spaniards. (During the Boer War they were anti-English.) There was an eclipse of the sun in April, and at the moment of greatest darkness Baron von der Elst of the Foreign Office came to express to L. the sympathy of the Government in the face of the catastrophe to the *Titanic*—a catastrophe that we, like the rest of the world, had been slow to believe possible. The Baron said that the King was much concerned, and that they intended to express their sympathy in Parliament that afternoon. Indeed, both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies passed resolutions of condolence, and later the King sent his Grand Marshal, Comte de Mérode, to further express his sympathy and distress. [57]

When spring came, and sunnier weather, I had many delightful rides on horseback. A favourite one, which I took several times with the Duc and Duchesse d'Ursel, was out in the Forêt de Soignes, which was quite wonderful with its damp young green. It covered some ten thousand acres, and had alleys of great trees with beautiful vistas.

About twelve hundred years ago, they tell you, a gay and worldly young prince lived in a castle near the edge of this forest, where he was fond of hunting. He was so devoted to the sport, in fact, that he quite neglected the fast days, and hunted on Fridays as freely as on Mondays. This impiety could not be permitted, of course. One day a white stag bearing between its antlers a cross, appeared to the prince in a forest glade. The vision so impressed the young man that he forsook his sport and turned religious. In time he became Bishop of Liège, converted Brabant from paganism to Christianity, and was canonized by the Church he had served so faithfully. The people still believe that the blessing of St. Hubert rests upon the Forêt de Soignes. [58]

A favourite sport with all classes, but also a social function, was horse-racing. There was a lovely miniature racecourse at Boitsfort, just beyond the Parc de la Cambre. We walked down among the flower beds and under the shading trees to where the horses were being paraded and the betting was going on. The dresses of the women, of whom all sorts and conditions were crowded together, were quite remarkable.

The races frequently took place on Sunday afternoon. There was one at Groenendal, out on the avenue Louise, through the Parc de la Cambre—the latter very beautiful with its wide sweeps and vistas, all crowded with the holiday-making people. We ran by the artificial waters dotted with little boats, out through the alley of the Forêt de Soignes, where the deep, pleasant woods were all sun and shadow, and filled with promenaders. From there we went on past Groenendal Château, along a road that reminded one of Rock Creek Park in Washington, turning at length into the Grande Route, which leads to Waterloo. This was a great avenue of trees, lined with the burnish of copper beeches. At last we reached the hippodrome, the racecourse of Groenendal, and were just in time to see the great steeple-chase of the year. The course was unexpectedly pretty, small and with cozy stands. The international steeplechase, ridden by French and Belgian officers in uniform, was very exciting and well run, and the whole scene beautiful against the green background of the forest. [59]

Afterward we walked in the Bois de la Cambre, across the wide lawns with the people sitting about in groups, and into the shade of the great trees, dipping down into the valleys where hundreds of children were playing and tumbling about, and up again across the plateau. Here in the groves of beech trees were restaurants with many little tables and crowds of people listening to the music. Later we motored back to the avenue Louise, which was the bourgeois promenade of a Sunday afternoon, and down its long length to the boulevards and home. [60]

One week-day afternoon in early May we went to the horse show, which was the last important spring event. It was held in the great glass building back of the Palais du Cinquantenaire, the floor being laid out in a lovely parterre with banks of flowers and palms and blossoming chestnuts. In this setting the jumps and obstacles were arranged. There was a water jump in the center, and a great, terrible, grassy mound on to which the horses had to jump and from which they had to stride over a fence back on to the flat again. It was heart-breaking to watch the tumbles there—twenty-six took place; the horses seemed to fear it more than the men, and showed their nervousness. When we went again we were relieved to see that it had been removed.

As the show was a great social event, all the women were in their best, and the men wore black coats and silk hats. The officers of the Guides Regiment were very showy in their bright uniforms, and there were many French officers there, too, in the pale blue and red of the Chasseurs. The royal loge had a canopy and a garden of azaleas. It all made a very lovely scene. [61]

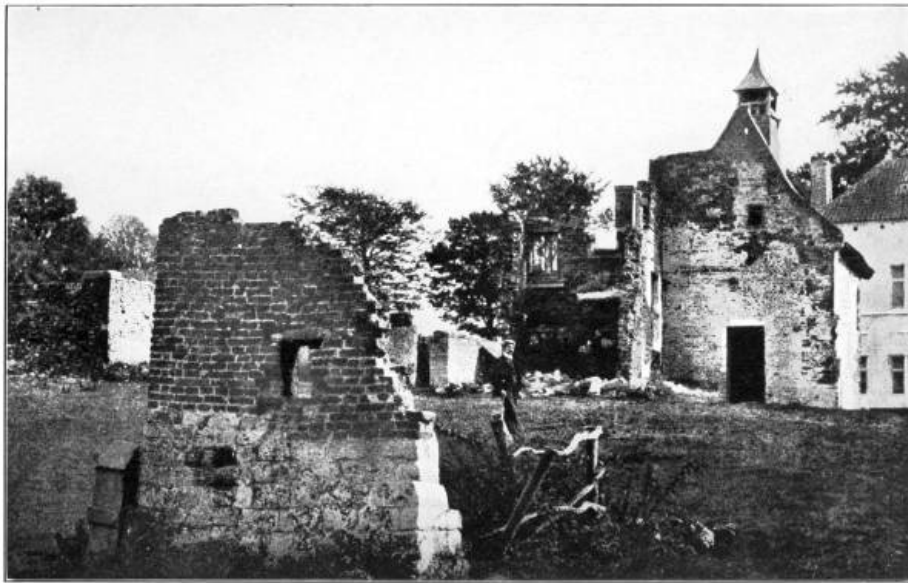
The King and Queen came in full state to the Cinquantenaire for the exhibition of the cadets of the school of

riding at Ypres. There was a tremendous crowd in the huge building, and the horsemanship was good, though no better than one could see at Fort Myer at home. There were various feats of jumping, of fencing on horseback, and some musical rides. One officer jumped his horse over three other horses, while others took a "burning" hedge.

The entry of the royal cortége was quite fine, for the gate at the end was opened and a squadron of the Guides came with fanfare of trumpets and took up their position opposite the royal loge. Then followed the five carriages, with red-coated outriders on prancing horses leading the way, each one attended by four red-coated postilions wearing gold tassels on their caps. There was much waving of handkerchiefs, and some cheering, when they came in, but when they left there was more of a demonstration, for the ladies in the audience had been provided with flowers, and as the royal carriage drove around the arena Their Majesties received a shower of blossoms.

This horse show turned out tragically, however. The great event of another day was the international military <sup>[62]</sup> race, run by many French and Belgian officers. They were started somewhere out in the country, and after a ten-mile run entered the arena, heralded by the blare of trumpets, followed each other over a series of jumps and passed out of a second gate for another ten miles across country, returning finally for more jumps. At some bars just opposite our loge young Lieutenant Terlinden, a son-in-law of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, fell, with his horse on top of him, and never regained consciousness. His wife was there, and his mother, and the world of Brussels, looking on. He was a splendid rider, but had a poor horse.

We often ran out to Waterloo in the open motor, shooting down the avenue Louise, through the Bois de la Cambre and the Forêt de Soignes, and finally out on the wide paved highway to St. Jean and Waterloo. From there it was a short ride through the straggling village to the rolling country which made the battlefield, its center marked by the conical hill surmounted by its lion. It is reported that the Germans have melted this lion for ammunition. Going by this roundabout way, and taking our time, the run was made in about an hour, but <sup>[63]</sup> it was a day's journey before motors came into use.



**HOUGOMONT.**

We passed the rather poor monuments along the roadside, and La Haye Sainte, with its broken farmyard walls and buildings, its muddy, dirty stable with its dung heaps, and on to the low, insignificant farmhouse of La Belle Alliance. On the way back we used to visit the battered walls and farm buildings of Hougomont, with its yard full of scratching chickens and scattering pigeons, and its bit of a chapel. Everywhere were mud and litter, a few broken bricks showing where the well had been. The only dignified thing about Hougomont was a bronze tablet placed on its ruined wall by the English Guards.

I was very much struck by the small area of the battlefield—all the positions were so near, and in plain sight of each other—quite different from the long battle line of to-day. It is hard to realize that a struggle of such tremendous importance was fought in such a limited space.

It seemed a pity that this most famous of the scenes of great events should not have been turned into a government park and preserved. When we were there the land was being sold off into lots, and every year the aspect of the battlefield was changing. But for all that we went again and again, for the fields were sweet <sup>[64]</sup> with spring and flowers in the warm sunshine, and it was so quiet and peaceful. That is how we shall remember it, as we saw it a century after the battle.

## CHAPTER IV

### IN DAYS OF KNIGHT AND VILLAIN



ANY centuries ago, there was fierce fighting in the glorious Meuse valley, where history seems to have a fancy for repeating itself. Then, as today, Dinant was a center of events, and it is good to know that the Belgians are strong and full of courage, as in the days when Cæsar called them "the bravest of all the Gauls."

When the victorious Roman legions reached this outpost of Gaul, they found themselves opposed by men of two different races—the fishermen of the coast and the hunters of the hills and valleys further inland. In the first shock of battle, it was only the personal bravery of Cæsar that saved the legionaries from defeat, and eight years of campaigning were required before the Roman general could report the province subdued. The warlike tribes of the south were well-nigh destroyed. Those, on the other hand, who lived on the sand dunes or in hovels raised on piles above the tides, were more fortunate. Cæsar himself with five legions finally reduced these men of the swamps to merely nominal submission. [65]

Transalpine Gaul was, by its conqueror, formed into a single province, of which the land of the Belgae was the northern part, but under Augustus it was divided into three provinces, the most distant one named Belgica. The people of southern Belgica, being nearer to the Roman civilization of Gaul, lost their primitive customs, their energy and courage. The people of the north, less under the influence of the conquerors, kept their love of independence, their frugal, industrious habits, added trade with England to their fisheries as a means of livelihood, and developed a strong stock, to which the future growth of the country was due.

Three hundred years after Cæsar's conquest, the Salian Franks, a confederacy of German tribes, invaded the country and settled between the Rhine and the Waal. They were resisted by most of the Gauls but welcomed by the Menapians of the Belgic coast.

There was, however, no real bond of union between the peaceful, hard-working people of the lowlands and the warlike Franks. The shore dwellers north of the Rhine formed with the tribes on the coasts of the German Ocean the Saxon League, which after a time renewed the warfare between Frank and Saxon, a warfare destined to endure till the twentieth century and to be waged then as fiercely as in the fourth. Driven by the Saxons from the coast districts, the Franks gradually made themselves masters of southern Belgica and northern Gaul, and the Romanized people of that section were submerged. Finally, toward the end of the fifth century, Clovis, King of the Franks, succeeded in extending his rule over the greater part of Gaul. [67]

At this early date the limits were already sharply marked out of the two great divisions of Belgium that have persisted until today—Flanders and the Walloon country. Flanders received continual additions from the German tribes who, worsted in the struggle with Rome, fled across the Rhine, and became the land of the Flémings (the "e" at first pronounced long), or fugitives. Retaining their Teutonic traits, these kept steadily at their difficult task of winning comfort and civilization from the hard conditions in which they were placed. Even today they cling tenaciously to their Flemish tongue, which is a variety of Low German, differing but little from Dutch.

The Franks of southern Belgica, on the other hand, like their neighbours in Gaul, became to all intents and purposes, transformed into French, and adopted for their language not a corrupt French, as we understand that term, but a dialect of the *langue d'oïl*, the old Romance tongue which was the speech of Gaul in that age. [68]

The successors of Clovis had many a struggle with the people of the Low Countries, but gradually the Frankish, or Merovingian, kings yielded to the Roman luxury that surrounded them and became a race of "do-nothings." Then arose those mayors of the palace, of whom Pepin of Heristall, the Belgian, was the father of Charles Martel, the "Hammer" whose vigorous blows crushed the Saracens and drove them from French soil.

The year 800 found Charlemagne, mightiest of the Franks, in possession of the Western Empire. The steady progress of the Netherlands was seen in the rise of the towns of Bruges, Ghent, Courtrai and Antwerp, not alone as trading centers but as seats of manufacture. The system of dikes for the protection of the lowlands from the sea had at that time been established by the united efforts of all the people of the region, who had thereby learned in some measure the value of coöperation.

Christianity, introduced in the reign of Clovis, had gained much power. It is impossible to overestimate the work of monks and nuns, whose religious houses were at once schools, hospitals, book marts and universities. Tournai and Liège were the seats of bishops, who were even more powerful than the counts who played such a great part in the history of the period. [69]

The count was at first only an officer of the king, not an hereditary noble, and received as his salary the revenue of the lands which he held during his term of office. The tenants on these estates were completely in his power. If he could muster a sufficient force of armed men he might even defy the king, and thus retain his office for a longer time.

About the middle of the ninth century, Baldwin, a Fleming of great power, who had defended the coast against the Normans, carried off Judith, daughter of the French king, Charles the Bald. Much against his will, Charles was obliged to give his consent to the marriage, and settled upon Baldwin all the land between the Scheldt and the Somme. Baldwin, named *Bras-de-fer* (of the Iron Arm), was thus the first Count of Flanders. Some authorities consider this the oldest hereditary title of nobility in Europe. It is borne today by the second son of the King. [70]

Other powerful vassals of this period were the counts of Louvain and Namur. Still mightier was the Bishop of

Liège, who felt himself so strong that he even made an attempt—unsuccessful, however—to seize the domain of the Count of Louvain.

Under Baldwin II, son of *Bras-de-fer*, who married the daughter of Alfred the Great of England, the cities of Bruges, Ghent, Courtrai and Ypres were fortified, and thus insured the opportunity of becoming the great mediæval centers of freedom and progress.

After cloth weaving was begun, the first markets were opened at Ghent, Courtrai and Bruges. The word *kermesse*, the Belgian name for fair or fête, is linked in an interesting way with these markets of the Middle Ages. They were called *kerk* (church) *messe* (market), because held around the church or cathedral, and only the inconvenient letter *k* needed to be dropped out to give the word *kermesse*.

At first sight, the history of the Netherlands from about the tenth century down to the nineteenth appears a confused and confusing story of wars and uprisings, of conspiracies and persecutions—count against bishop, city against city, nobles and even, in one instance, a king, against the Emperor. But if we look more closely, we discern, three great forces at work through all the turmoil. These were feudalism, the Crusades, and the rise of the towns, or *communes*. A fourth influence, the power of the Church, was closely associated with these, sometimes as a direct impelling force, sometimes as a guiding or restraining hand, and again battling for its own temporal power with little more regard for the well-being of the masses than was manifested by the lay barons themselves. [71]



COMTE DE FLANDRE, SECOND SON OF KING ALBERT.

After the break-up of the Roman Empire, when there were no strong central governments in Europe, when practically the only law was the will of the strongest, it was inevitable that a vast number of petty chieftains should gather about them as many followers as possible, both in order to protect themselves and to plunder others. The ablest of these, by waging a continual warfare, either killed off many of their rivals and took possession of their lands, or reduced them to submission and made them tenants of their own. These tenants held their land only on condition of furnishing a certain number of men for their lord's wars and paying certain taxes, later called "aids," for his support. When this state of society became finally organized as the feudal system, the king or emperor was the overlord, the counts swore allegiance to him, the petty nobles and knights were tenants in their turn. By the twelfth century, the counts and bishops were little kings in their own domains. They had gradually acquired all the rights of the crown. They coined money, established markets, acquired the rights of fishing, hunting, brewing and milling, and collected the tolls. They were vassals of the king in little more than name. [72]

Below this landed aristocracy were the two classes of villains and serfs, who led a miserable existence, possessing scarcely one of what we consider the inalienable rights of man. Both villains and serfs were slaves, bound to the soil, but the servitude of the latter was hopeless and irremediable. Serfs must always be serfs. But the villains had the privilege of earning their freedom.

When Peter the Hermit, a Walloon of the province of Liège, made his impassioned appeals to Christendom to rescue the Holy Sepulcher from the Saracen, it was Godfrey of Bouillon, another Walloon, who laid aside his titles and sold his possessions that he might equip an army for the conquest of the Holy Land. Godfrey was made "Advocate" of Jerusalem, and was the first Western ruler of the sacred city. His brother Baldwin [73] became King of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, and his descendants were kings of Jerusalem. Next to Godfrey, both as knight and leader, stood Count Robert of Flanders.

It is told of Philip of Alsace, Count of Flanders, that he challenged and defeated a mighty Saracen in single combat. The device on his shield, which Philip bore away as a trophy, was a black lion on a field of gold. This became the emblem of Flanders.

But Philip of Alsace was noted not alone for his prowess in battle; he was an enlightened ruler for his age. He resigned the privileges of "mainmorte" and "half-have." By "mainmorte," if a man died without leaving direct

heirs, his property went to the count. By "half-have," half of all the property left by any of his vassals went to the count.

In the year 1200, Baldwin, Count of Hainault and Flanders, led the fifth crusade. Turning aside from the road to Jerusalem, he captured Constantinople, and was crowned Emperor in St. Sophia. During the fifty years that Baldwin and his descendants reigned in Constantinople, ships from Flanders brought the luxuries of the Orient to Western Europe. Many cargoes of silks and spices, of linen, damask and carpets, and other Eastern products, were landed on the wharves of Ghent and Bruges, which became the greatest centers of European commerce. [74]

The influence of the Crusades upon social progress in Belgium was not less marked than upon commerce. Shrewd townsmen who furnished their lord with means to equip his followers exacted in return a pledge of additional freedom. While the powerful nobles were in the Holy Land, moreover, their tenants were relieved from their demands, and made progress in all the arts of life.

When, after the death of Charlemagne, the river Scheldt was made the boundary of France, to the west of that river lay West Francia, which became France; to the east stretched Lotharingia, shortened to Lorraine, the land of Lothaire, a narrow strip separating France and Germany. As the various counts who possessed the Netherlands grew stronger the Duchy of Lorraine grew weaker. Flanders especially, under the rule of counts descended from Baldwin the Iron-Armed, made great progress—lowlands were protected by dikes, forests were cleared away, and towns were built. It was easily the most powerful part of Belgium. The Normans, who for a century had been the terror of the Netherlands, now visited Flemish towns to dispose of the booty they had won upon the sea, and Bruges became the chief seat of this trade. [75]

The townspeople of this period fared rather better than those in the rural districts. Many of the towns had originated as a cluster of peasants' huts, grouped around a monastery for protection. The inhabitants were tenants of the abbot, who in time became one of the powerful lords of the land. But the necessary organization of town life gave the citizens the habit, to some extent, of working together. Consequently, when a body of townsmen presented their plea for more privileges, they were able to obtain better terms than could be gained by single peasants pleading separately.

So great was the prosperity of the towns that, by the year 1066, Flanders was able to assist William the Conqueror, who had married Matilda, daughter of Baldwin V, Count of Flanders, and Flemish knights fought side by side with the Normans at Hastings. On the famous Bayeux tapestry—which, however, is not real tapestry—wrought by Matilda, is pictured the story of the Conquest of England.

Woolen cloths, the work of Flemish weavers, were already famous throughout Europe, and were carried by the sailors of the Netherlands to western and southern ports, with the jewelry, corn and salt, also produced in Flanders. [76]

But the sturdy people of these thriving towns were very jealous of the fundamental rights which had come down to them from their German ancestors. A painting by the Belgian artist, Hennebicq, depicts a landmark in the history of the Netherlands—Baldwin VI, Count of Flanders, granting a charter of rights to the citizens of Grammont, whose representatives stand before him with drawn swords. Baldwin, a kingly, dignified figure, stands on a low platform, his left hand resting on his sheathed sword, while the townsmen before him swear allegiance in return for the guarantee of their liberties. The story is this: Count Baldwin bought the land belonging to one Baron Gerard, and laid it out as a town, to which the name Grammont was given, meaning Gerard's Mont, or hill. To the men of this town the Count gave, in 1068, the first charter of liberties ever granted in Europe. Not until 1215 was England's Magna Charta wrung from King John.

By the charter were granted "(1) individual liberty; (2) the right to hold, buy, sell, inherit, or devise property; (3) the privilege of being judged by a tribunal of 'échevins' (councillors) elected in accordance with local statutes, of giving evidence and of being exempt from the judicial ordeals that still obtained throughout Belgium." The townsmen were also allowed the ownership of the neighbouring forest and the use of the meadows to pasture their cattle. A single reading of this summary, while it shows how very elementary were these provisions, yet makes it plain that this was the germ of those later charters guaranteeing the fundamental rights of man. [77]

In the words of an eminent writer, the Belgian *commune* of this period was essentially "a confederacy of the inhabitants of a town, living within the gates, who bound themselves by an oath to lend advice and a helping hand and to be true to one another, mutually and individually." The most striking prerogatives of this free association, says the same author, were "(1) a municipal counting-house; (2) a common house, or town hall; (3) a seal; (4) a belfry (*belfort* in Flemish), a lofty tower which contained the town bell, and which ordinarily served as a prison or a repository for the archives; and (5) an arsenal."

Besides these communal rights, there were individual, property and judicial rights guaranteed by the charters of the towns, as was mentioned in connection with the charter of Grammont. Serfs became freemen. The vexatious *droit de halle* was done away with, by which all kinds of goods must be sold in a given place and were subject to heavy duties. From this came, it is said, those immense *halles*, most of which were built before the towns received their charters. Henceforward, justice was to be administered by councillors drawn from the wealthy burghers and "juries" representing the trade guilds, and fines and penalties were no longer arbitrary impositions but were fixed by law. [78]

It was this same Baldwin VI who granted the charter of Grammont of whom the old chroniclers wrote: "He might be seen riding across Flanders with a falcon or hawk on his wrist; he ordered his bailiffs to carry a white staff, long and straight, in sign of justice and clemency; no one was allowed to go out armed; the labourer could sleep without fear with his doors open, and he could leave his plow in the fields without apprehension of being robbed."



When the King of France, the nominal overlord of the greater part of Flanders, interfered in their government in 1071, the citizens quickly sprang to arms. Their count had died, and the King of France chose to the vacant place his widow, Richilde, also Countess of Hainault and Namur in her own right. The nobility and the people of the higher grounds submitted to this French intervention, but the townsmen of the lowlands rallied to the banner of Robert the Frisian, brother of their late count, and inflicting upon those professional soldiers a crushing defeat, they wrested from the Countess Richilde not only Flanders but also Namur and Hainault. This battle has come down to us as the victory of Cassel, in which "street men" showed that they could defend their freedom. [79]

The Flemish burghers of the twelfth century have the honour of initiating a mighty forward step in civilization. In every country of Europe, up to that time, when one man had wronged another the injured party took justice into his own hands and punished his enemy himself. The Church had, by the Truce of God, prohibited these blood feuds on Friday, Saturday and Sunday of every week, and also on certain holy days, but Philip of Alsace was the first ruler who did away with this relic of barbarism and ordered that henceforth every man should bring his quarrel for trial to the juries chosen by the townsmen. The glory of demanding this reform belongs, however, to the Flemish burghers. [80]

By 1260, the cities of Flanders had become so strong that they dared to resist their count, and passed from his rule to that of the French king, whose aid they had sought. Forty years later, they rose against this new master. The townsmen of Bruges slaughtered the French garrison, and the following year won the "battle of the spurs" at Courtrai, after which seven hundred golden spurs were picked up on the field. Early that morning, twenty thousand artisans of Bruges, in their working dress and armed with boar-spears or plowshares set in long clubs, received on their knees the blessing of the Church, raised a bit of Flemish soil to their lips, kissed it, and vowed to die for their country, then gave battle to sixty thousand of the steel-clad knights and men-at-arms of France.

A few years later, Brabant compelled its duke to grant it an assembly which should transact all legal and judicial business, and should consist of fourteen deputies, four chosen from the nobles and the other ten from the people. The towns soon began to join their forces. Brabant and Flanders formed a sort of union. But the burghers owed allegiance not to a country but only to a small bit of a country, each to his own town. Their confederacy was bound together by self-interest alone. Ghent was jealous of Bruges, and failed to lend assistance when the Brugeois rebelled against their count. For lack of this support the latter were crushed. [81]

We speak of the cities of the Netherlands, but in the thirteenth century they bore little resemblance to the cities of today. They were walled towns, to be sure, but the walls were generally ramparts of earth with an outside covering of thick planking. Within the walls the better class of people lived in low wooden dwellings roofed with thatch, the churches and the houses of the noblemen and the chief citizens were often built of stone, but the poor, we may imagine, found shelter in rude mud huts. The "streets" were usually mere crooked cart tracks, the dumping ground for the rubbish of the community, in which boards and straw were thrown down in an effort to bridge the numerous holes and pools of muddy water. In Bruges and Ghent, as we learn from the ancient records, the principal streets were paved with stone from the quarries near the Meuse. The squares were, perhaps, not unlike the "common" of a New England village, open grassy places in which were pumps—the common source of water supply for the inhabitants—and drinking troughs for the domestic animals that were allowed to roam through the streets. There was the ever present danger of fire in cities so rudely built, and the fires often became great conflagrations in which whole cities were consumed. What with the bad roads, the blackness of the unlighted streets, and the presence in these towns of many ignorant, riotous workmen and seamen from foreign ports, we can understand that the citizen who sallied forth without escort for an evening stroll, having only his lantern for protection, might well be risking his life in a dangerous adventure. [82]

Edward III of England now laid claim to the crown of France. Jacob van Artevelde, the Brewer of Ghent, rallied the Flemings against the tyranny of their count, who was supported by France, and threw off his yoke. Among the petty jealousies and rivalries of that mediæval time, the Great Brewer—so called only because he was registered in the brewers' guild—stands out as the lone statesman of his land. (Van Artevelde at first belonged to the aristocratic clothmakers' guild, and perhaps changed to that of the brewers in order to ally himself more closely with the democracy of the city.) His outlook was broader than the narrow circle of municipal interests. He endeavoured to unite the cities into one commonwealth, and formed an alliance with Edward. In his first public utterance he said, "It is necessary for us to be friends with England, for without her we cannot live." He added, "I do not mean that we should go to war with France. Our course is to remain neutral." [83]

The combined English and Flemish fleets gained the great naval victory of Sluys over the French. The Great Brewer was made ruward, or conservator of the peace, of Flanders, and used his almost kingly power to strengthen the alliance with England and to favour the trade with that country. But he was too great a man for his time, and the traders of his native city were easily stirred by a trumped-up charge that he was plotting to deliver Flanders to the Black Prince. He met his death in 1345, at the hands of a mob, before his own doorway.

The confederacy of Flemish towns still held together for a while. They assisted Edward in the siege and capture of Calais, and when he left them to their own resources, they compelled their young Count, Louis de Maele, to recognize their right to govern themselves, and still maintained their independence of France. The wiles of Louis and the fierce hatred between Gantois and Brugeois once more plunged the countship into a state of anarchy, and Ghent, in danger of starvation, turned in despair to Philip van Artevelde, son of the Great Brewer. He led his fellow-townsmen against the Count's forces, and took the town of Bruges. But Charles VI of France came with a large army to punish the rebels of Ghent, and in the battle of Roosbeke, in 1382, completely crushed them. Philip van Artevelde was among the slain. Two years later, by the death of Louis de Maele, Flanders passed to Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, who had married Louis' daughter. [84]

In the period between the two Arteveldes, the Joyous Entry became the bulwark of the liberties of Brabant and afterward of the whole country. Duke John III of Brabant summoned to Louvain, in 1354, representatives of all the cities of Brabant and Limburg, and, announcing the marriage of his daughter Johanna and Wenzel of Luxembourg, asked that they might be confirmed as rulers of the duchy after his death. The delegates were shrewd traders. They granted his request only in consideration of a corresponding grant on his part of a liberal charter to Brabant. The Joyous Entry became the title of the charter because it was not proclaimed until Johanna and Wenzel made their entrance into Brussels with great pomp and ceremony and took a solemn oath to carry out its provisions. Down to Leopold II every succeeding ruler was obliged to swear conformity to this famous document. [85]

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## CHAPTER V

### BATTLING FOR A KINGDOM

[86]



Of more interest than Philip the Bold or John the Fearless is the beautiful Jacqueline of Bavaria, who was married to John's nephew, John of Brabant. According to tradition, Jacqueline, heiress to the counties of Holland and Hainault, was the most charming and gifted woman of her day. John, Duke of Brabant, was in no respect her equal. He subjected her to endless indignities and persecutions, and she at last fled from Brussels to the court of Henry V of England, where she found protection.

The assassination of John the Fearless by followers of the dauphin of France gave Burgundy and Flanders to his son Philip the Good. It was Philip's ambition to consolidate all the Belgic provinces under the rule of Burgundy, and thus to create a strong border state between France and Germany, and he was not too scrupulous as to the means he used in attaining his end. He wrested from the unfortunate Jacqueline first her county of Hainault, then the provinces of Holland and Zeeland in the northern Netherlands. He also succeeded to the duchy of Brabant, and gained by purchase the duchy of Luxembourg. Having induced the Emperor to renounce his rights as overlord, Philip was now the head of an independent state nearly as large as the modern countries of Holland and Belgium. [87]

It was Philip the Good who summoned the Grand Council to administer the laws for all his Belgic territory. He often called together the States-General, composed of the nobles. From this was developed in time a parliament, in which sat representatives of the nobles, the gentry and the communes, these last being called the Third Estate. But with this progress toward consolidation, there was always one powerful disintegrating force at work—the lack of any bond of union between the towns. The jealousies of these little rival states kept them involved in continual petty warfare, and even restrained them from offering assistance to one another in the face of a common danger. A story drawn from the old chroniclers will furnish a picture of the times.

In 1436, Philip led a large force of Flemings against the English stronghold of Calais, which made a stubborn defense, and the besiegers lost many men in the encounters outside the walls. As the Dutch fleet, which had been relied upon to assist Philip by blockading the port, had not appeared, the English were abundantly supplied with provisions, while their enemies were almost at the end of their resources. The garrison was in the habit of pasturing its cattle outside the ramparts under a strong guard, in defiance of the Flemings. One morning a large troop of Ghenters threw themselves upon a particularly fine herd, and had already seized a part of it, when they found themselves caught in an English ambush and driven with the animals into the city itself. Their rivals, the Brugeois, encamped near by, took their time about offering assistance and were too late to be of any service. The Duke's following never interfered in these skirmishes, for which his permission was never asked. [88]

We catch a glimpse of the splendour of these Burgundian days in the contemporary description of the Assembly of Arras, which met, the year previous to Philip's attempt on Calais, to conclude a peace between France and England. Here were ambassadors from England—among them Henry, Cardinal of Winchester, and Richard, Earl of Warwick—envoys from Charles VII of France, from the Emperor, from the kings of Spain, Portugal, Sicily, Navarre, Denmark and Poland, besides the legate from the Pope and the chief vassals and friends of Philip himself. Among the brilliant retinues that accompanied and guarded these lords, that of the Bishop of Liège was singled out for mention. This prelate, one of the most powerful Belgic nobles, was surrounded by two hundred gentlemen dressed in dazzling white costumes and mounted on white horses. The Duke of Burgundy had a bodyguard composed of one hundred gentlemen and two hundred archers, who never left his side. [89]

This assembly was one of the largest in the fifteenth century. Fifty thousand visitors were entertained and ten thousand horses were taken care of for some weeks in the city. On the arrival of the French Embassy Philip went to meet them, accompanied by the Duchess Isabella, who rode in a magnificent litter, followed by several *grandes dames* richly dressed and mounted on beautiful gray palfreys. Before the sessions of this august council began, a brilliant tournament was celebrated, in which a Spaniard, Jean de Marle, was the victor. Then the lords repaired to the monastery of Saint-Vaast for their sessions.

It may be added that this assembly was unable to make peace between France and England, the English [90]

refusing to withdraw the claim of Henry VI to the crown of France, and the French declining to accept any other terms.

While the great cities of Flanders furnished by far the larger part of the Duke's soldiery—it is said that Ghent, Bruges and Ypres could together have armed 100,000 men, had it been necessary, without arresting the course of their industries—they were often a most uncertain support, as the history of the same siege illustrates. After weary weeks of waiting, the Dutch fleet at last appeared, but was soon dispersed by English ships. At this juncture the Ghenters declared they were going home. In vain the Duke threatened and then entreated. Neither tears nor menaces could move them. "The trumpets sounded, the troops, with waving banners, marched away." Scarcely had the Ghenters disappeared when the other Flemings followed their example, and the helpless Duke was forced to bring up the rear with his nobles.

The Order of the Golden Fleece was established at Bruges by Philip the Good at the time of his marriage to Princess Isabella of Portugal. The Golden Fleece suggested the importance of Bruges as the center of the trade in wool, while the story of Jason embodied the principles of chivalry. The first motto of the order was changed later to that of the house of Burgundy—"Je l'ai emprins," (I have undertaken it). The organization was to consist of twenty-four knights besides the prince at its head, who were privileged to be tried only by the members of the order, thus being protected against despotic sovereigns as well as against the laws of their country. Philip II of Spain was the first to violate this privilege, in the execution of Counts Egmont and Hoorn. In the eighteenth century, the order of the Golden Fleece was divided into two branches, those of Austria and Spain. [91]

Philip the Good, although a vassal of both France and the Empire, was from the central position of his provinces and the number of rich trading cities that they contained, more powerful than either the French king or the Emperor. His son and successor, Charles the Rash, called "the proudest, most daring and most unmanageable prince that ever made the sword the type and the guarantee of greatness," seems to have coveted a domain that should include the whole of ancient Lotharingia, or the region watered by the Rhine, the Rhone and the Po, and even to have dreamed of invading Italy. He spent his reign in a series of unsuccessful campaigns, in the last of which he lost his life, and left to his daughter Mary the heritage of a large state, composed of many principalities—little states surrounded by enemies and with no bond of union among themselves. [92]

Louis XI of France at once seized the Duchy of Burgundy, which was ever afterwards a part of the French dominion. The County of Burgundy with the Netherlands remained under Mary's rule. The towns were not slow in reasserting their rights and recovering the privileges that had been wrested from them by the Burgundian princes. Mary married Maximilian of Austria, son of the Emperor Frederick III, and at her death, a few years later, left two children, Philip the Fair and Margaret of Austria.

Philip espoused Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Castile and Aragon, and became the father of Charles V. Then began that unfortunate connection with Spain which brought such misery to the Low Countries. Charles, who not only ruled the Netherlands and Austria, but was elected Emperor and King of Spain, governed his provinces of the Low Countries with despotic sway. At one time the Ghenters incurred his wrath by rising against the payment of a war tax and even carrying on secret negotiations with Francis I, Charles's great rival. Francis basely betrayed them to Charles, who took possession of the city with a large army. Their leaders were beheaded, many citizens were exiled, and the guild chiefs and members of the council were brought before the Emperor with halters about their necks and forced to sue for pardon. Henceforth no magistrate of Ghent was allowed to appear in public without wearing the halter. This sign of submission became the badge of the town, but in later years it was made of silk and worn as a decoration. The city lost its privileges and its great bell, Roland. At this time, too, the enormous citadel, called the Spaniards' Castle, was erected at Ghent by Charles's orders. The garrison of this stronghold was often, during the Spanish occupation of the country, of service in suppressing insurrections in Flanders. [93]

The Low Countries had never been more prosperous than at the accession of Philip II. With the vast increase in commerce had come great wealth and unexampled luxury. Antwerp, which held the place formerly belonging to Bruges, was the richest city in Northern Europe. It was said as much business was done on the exchange of Antwerp in one month as on that of Venice in two years. Under the Burgundians music, architecture, painting, lace-making and tapestry were all brought to great perfection, and the University of Louvain was founded. One important advance in government under Charles V must be noted. A code of laws was formed from the customs that had grown up under the charters of the towns and the proclamations of the rulers. [94]

Philip II, who had been brought up in Spain, was a narrow-minded despot and bigoted Catholic, entirely without natural ties binding him to the Low Countries. He resided in the Netherlands only four years, at the end of that time making Margaret of Parma, his half-sister, resident governant. The Ancienne Cour in Brussels was the seat of her Court. Philip, resenting the independence of the Belgians and determined to reduce them to abject submission, cunningly contrived a scheme of government for the provinces during his absence which left the balance of power in the hands of courtiers devoted to his service. The convocation of the States-General was forbidden, and a violent persecution of heretics was commenced. An element of terror was added to the situation by the Spanish garrisons, who ravaged the coast provinces to obtain plunder in lieu of their long delayed pay. [95]



ANCIENT BOURSE, ANTWERP.

In order to safeguard the rights of the people and make peace between them and the King, a confederation was formed of the most powerful nobles, led by the three greatest leaders in the Low Countries, William the Silent, Prince of Orange, and Counts Egmont and Hoorn. The confederates entered Brussels, where de Brederode, one of their leaders, gave a great banquet in their honour, at which three hundred guests were present. After long carousing, some one told how her advisers had handed Margaret their petition with the remark, "You have nothing to fear from such a band of beggars (*tas de Gueux*)."<sup>[96]</sup> As the leaders were then trying to decide upon a name for their confederacy, they at once adopted that of *Gueux*, and the toast, "Long Live the Gueux," was drunk with riotous hilarity. Henceforth those who upheld the rights of the people and resisted the Inquisition were known as Gueux.

Madame Vandervelde made a telling use of this rallying cry in one of her appeals in this country for the Belgian refugees. "Again," she said, "the Belgian people are beggars, but they are glorious beggars!"

This was the beginning of the forty years' struggle for freedom that ended in the division of the United Netherlands. Philip, bent upon subjugating the people, replaced the Regent, Margaret of Parma, by the infamous Duke of Alva. Backed by an army of Spanish veterans, the new governor levied ruinous taxes, laid waste cities and provinces, and carried out all the horrors of the Inquisition. Counts Egmont and Hoorn were beheaded in front of the Maison du Roi in the Grande Place of Brussels, and other leaders met the same fate. It was Alva's own boast that during his rule in the Netherlands he sent eighteen thousand people to death by execution.

Such barbarities as those committed at the capture of Haarlem roused the people to desperation. The siege of this place lasted for seven months, and when it was taken by the Spaniards the Governor and the other magistrates were beheaded, and twelve hundred of the garrison were either slaughtered or drowned in the lake. Before Alva's rule was ended, the northern provinces, chiefly Protestant, had rebelled against the Spanish crown. When no other resource remained, the intrepid burghers cut the dikes, as they have done in Belgium today, and so forced the enemy to retire.

Philip at last recalled the sanguinary Duke, and commissioned Requesens to complete his task. But the conciliatory measures of the new governor came too late, and the war went on.<sup>[97]</sup>

After the death of Requesens and before the arrival of his successor, Don John of Austria, the mutinous Spanish troops seized the citadels of Ghent, Antwerp, and Maestricht, and gave the towns over to pillage and destruction. In November, 1576, they were joined by other mutineers from Alost, and for three days the "Spanish Fury" raged in Antwerp. Even in the Low Countries such carnage and vandalism had never been known. When it ended the city was in ruins, and seven thousand of its citizens had been slain.

A few days later, the delegates from the different provinces, assembled at Ghent, under the leadership of Orange, issued the famous declaration known as "The Pacification of Ghent." This document proclaimed universal amnesty, the union of the provinces to expel all foreigners, the suspension of the edicts against heresy, liberty of worship, and the annulment of all confiscations and judgments of the ten years of warfare. The people seemed now to have taken a great stride toward freedom.

The death of Don John in the following year gave the command of the Spanish forces to Alexander Farnese,<sup>[98]</sup> Prince of Parma, one of the greatest generals of the age.

The Walloons having practically gone over to the side of Spain, on account of their devotion to the Catholic religion, William of Orange saw that it was only the northern provinces upon which he could really depend, and formed the "Union of Utrecht." By this act the states now constituting the kingdom of Holland were

bound together as a united and independent whole, each state to enjoy complete freedom of worship. They were soon joined by the towns of Antwerp, Ypres, Ghent and Bruges.

After William the Silent was assassinated, in July, 1584, at the instigation of Philip, the United Provinces, though bereft of their leader, still held out against the power of Spain, but the cities that at first cast in their lot with them, were one by one reduced by siege, the last to surrender being Antwerp. In all the conquered territory the Protestant religion was absolutely proscribed, more than half the population went into voluntary exile in England and Holland rather than renounce their faith, and the country was left desolate.

A Belgian writer has described the condition of the land thus: "In vain might vestiges of the ancient prosperity of Belgium be sought. The Belgian ports were blockaded by the cruisers of Holland and Zealand. Persecution and exile had emptied the workshops. England gathered in the industry of our ruined cities. Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Middelburg inherited the commerce of Antwerp and Bruges." At the end of Spanish rule in Belgium, it is said that, "with a foreign garrison established on its soil, and the principal part of the revenue assigned for its maintenance, there would have been nothing surprising had the Belgian race finally disappeared from the roll of nations."<sup>[99]</sup>

At last Philip gave the command in the Low Countries to the Archduke Albert, son of Emperor Maximilian II, who was to marry the Infanta Isabella, and reign jointly with her over Burgundy and the Netherlands. Under their rule the country, from this time called Belgium, began to recover from the long wars. The sovereigns ruled with wise protection of commerce and manufactures, and strove to build up the country. They were patrons of art, and by their influence Rubens was induced to make his home in Flanders.

Until the peace of Utrecht, in 1713, Spain continued to hold Belgium, on whose devoted soil many a battle<sup>[100]</sup> was fought. Sometimes Dutch and Spaniards were the combatants, again Belgians fought off the French. Through the whole second half of the seventeenth century Belgium was the battlefield on which Europe strove against the ambition of Louis XIV, and again it was laid waste.

In the course of these wars the French, in 1695, bombarded Brussels with red-hot bullets. Sixteen churches and four thousand houses were burnt down, and the buildings on the Grande Place suffered greatly.

Once more Belgium changed hands, and this time it passed under the sway of Austria. Prince Eugene, the great soldier, was made Governor-General of the Austrian Netherlands, but was too busy with his campaigns to reside in the country. His deputy was an able man, under whom business conditions improved and commerce increased, but he ruled with the iron hand of an Alva. The citizens of Brussels demanded of him the Joyous Entry, and when he refused to observe the charter, riots broke out in Brussels, which were put down and punished with all the rigours of Spanish rule.

Under the Archduchess Marie Elizabeth, the Emperor's sister, who was Regent in Belgium for fifteen years, the commerce of the country increased to such an extent that the jealousy of England and Holland was<sup>[101]</sup> aroused.

The death of the Emperor was followed by the war of the Austrian Succession, in which Belgium was again invaded and overrun by France, and one city after another was taken by the victorious Marshal Saxe. This great general was the next governor, and he proceeded to levy upon the people of Brussels the most extortionate taxes. The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle soon put an end to his rule, however, and restored Belgium to Austria.

It is a relief to read in the pages of European history that for the next thirty-six years Belgium was peaceful and prosperous under another Austrian ruler, Prince Charles of Lorraine. He was devoted to the interests of the country, and became so popular that the twenty-fifth anniversary of his government was celebrated by a succession of brilliant fêtes in the different provinces.

The death of Prince Charles was almost immediately followed by that of Maria Theresa and the accession of Joseph II to her throne. Full of the new ideas in regard to human rights with which the eighteenth century was seething, and truly desirous of improving the condition of his subjects, he set to work to reform ecclesiastical conditions not only, but also the whole system of civil and judicial administration. Conscious<sup>[102]</sup> of the highest aims, Joseph stubbornly persevered in his efforts at reform, with the result that his reign was marked by increasing strife in Belgium, culminating in a revolution. In 1790 the rebels severed their connection with Austria and formed a confederacy called the United Belgian States.

After a short and troubled existence of eleven months, the new republic was invaded by an Austrian army, and submitted to Joseph's successor, Leopold II, who agreed to restore the ancient forms of government. But in 1749 the French Revolutionists, having declared war against Austria, proceeded to invade Belgium. Though these new conquerors came in the name of liberty, they also brought devastation and tyranny in their wake. The French, however, held the country until 1814. Napoleon's sway was despotic, but he carried out the reforms that Joseph II in vain tried to introduce, and made the organization of the government practically what it is today. Perfect freedom of worship was established, and the control of education was given to the State. Foreign commerce was destroyed, but great advances were made in agriculture and manufacture.

As we all know, Napoleon returned from his banishment to Elba in March, 1815, and the Congress of Vienna<sup>[103]</sup> upon receiving the astounding news, declared that "neither peace nor truce was possible" with "the common enemy to the peace of the world." The death grapple of the campaign that he at once planned was to come upon Belgian soil.

"At half-past three on the morning of June 15, 1815, Napoleon's outposts crossed the frontier. On the evening of the 15th, Wellington attended the famous ball in Brussels, the best remembered social function, perhaps, in history, at the Duchess of Richmond's house." This house has been pulled down, but the guides still point out the spot. While the dancing was going on, despatches were brought to the Duke, and he asked to see the

map. On looking at it he exclaimed, "Napoleon has humbugged me. He has gained twenty-four hours' march on me. I must fight him here." He put his nail on the map. The scratch that was left was "the first scar of Waterloo."

"Amongst the dead on the field at Quatre Bras, were officers who still wore the pumps and silk stockings of the ball room."

Ligny and Quatre Bras were fought on the 16th, and Wellington's masterly retreat to Waterloo occupied the following day. Then came that memorable June 18th, the story of which thrills us even today. French daring was matched with British tenacity. Wellington was perfect master of the situation, and—he knew Blücher would come. But Napoleon had lost his grip. This was a day of hard fighting and terrible losses.

"A little after seven o'clock Napoleon prepared to fling his last card on the iron table of the battlefield; he would send forward his bearskins, the Old Guard, the final bid for victory." This, too, was in vain. "The Guard gives way," was the cry that rose everywhere. The first column was retreating on La Belle Alliance, the second was being driven across the road to Brussels. From the woods near Hougomont, down the slopes below La Haye Sainte, the French fled in wild confusion. "At the same moment Napoleon saw his whole line of battle fall to pieces."

"Napoleon in his flight crossed the battlefield of Quatre Bras. It was still strewn with the unburied slain, nearly four thousand corpses stripped quite naked by plunderers; and with what feelings Napoleon in the darkness of the night rode through those acres of the slain may be guessed. He drew rein for a moment in that field of the dead, and one who stood near him records how 'his face was pale as wax and the tears ran down his cheeks'—and thus across the useless battlefields of that terrible campaign Napoleon fled on his way to Paris—and beyond it to St. Helena."<sup>[2]</sup>

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## CHAPTER VI BELGIAN KINGS

[106]

**A**

**TRYING** period of fifteen years followed the battle of Waterloo. The Congress of Vienna made Holland and Belgium one kingdom under the name of the United Netherlands. But this ill-advised union failed. The Dutch King, William I, was tyrannical and tactless, and ruled entirely in the interests of Holland. Although the population of Belgium was 1,500,000 more than that of the northern states of the Netherlands, four-fifths of the army officers and by far the larger part of the government officials were Dutch. Belgians were forced to pay the public debt of Holland, and the poorer classes, under the weight of intolerable taxes, faced starvation. They had fought too long for freedom to endure subjugation. Only a little encouragement was needed to spur them on to action.



THÉÂTRE DE LA MONNAIE, BRUSSELS.

The throng that was assembled in the Brussels Théâtre de la Monnaie on the evening of the 25th of August, 1830, listened for a time quietly enough to Auber's new opera of "Musette de Portici." But when the Italian<sup>[107]</sup>

tenor in a stirring solo made an appeal to his countrymen to rise against foreign tyranny, the excitement of the audience could not be controlled. Springing to their feet, they caught up the words of the refrain and sang them over and over again. They rushed from the opera house into the street, still singing,

*"A mon pays je dois la vie,  
Il me devra la liberté!"*

The revolution begun in this dramatic fashion continued until Belgium took its place as a nation among the European powers. The new Constitution made it one of the freest countries in the world, with representative government, freedom of the press, trial by jury, freedom of education, and complete religious tolerance. The family of Orange-Nassau was forever excluded from the throne, and Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was chosen king.

Although a Protestant, Leopold proved an excellent king of a Catholic country, by his wisdom and prudence tiding the nation over several political crises and firmly establishing the kingdom. While still prince, he had married Princess Charlotte, heir to the crown of Great Britain. If she had lived, he would have become Prince Consort of England, but both the Princess and her only child died the following year. After assuming the crown of Belgium, Leopold formed an alliance with France by marrying Emilie Louise, daughter of Louis Philippe.

Leopold's eldest child, a boy, died in babyhood. The daughter, Charlotte, became the wife of the unfortunate Maximilian, whom Napoleon III sent to establish a monarchy in Mexico during our Civil War. She accompanied him to Mexico, was crowned Empress at his side, and when the Mexicans rose against them, returned to Europe to seek aid. Maximilian was shot in her absence. At the news of his death she lost her reason, but she always remembers the fatal date, and shuts herself up in her château near Brussels and refuses to see any one on that day. She never forgets that she has been an Empress. In the first days of her madness she thought she was being poisoned, but this fear was finally overcome and she was persuaded to eat by one of her favourite ladies-in-waiting.

The third son of Leopold I was Philip, Comte de Flandre, father of King Albert. Philip died in 1905. It was the second son, Leopold II, who, in 1865, began a reign of nearly forty-five years. When only eighteen, he married the Archduchess Marie Henriette of Austria, a woman of many prejudices and peculiarities, who cared for little but horses and dogs. She did not approve of tennis; she objected to Wagner. She was an invalid for many years, and it is charitable to suppose that the King's lack of home life was accountable for some of the scandals associated with his name.



**LEOPOLD I.**

Leopold's only son died before he was ten years old, but there were three daughters—Louise, who married Duke Philip of Saxe-Coburg; Stephanie, who married Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria; and Clémentine, the wife of Prince Victor Napoleon. The marriage of Louise was most unfortunate, and she left her husband, who was said to be unkind to her. She has married several times since, and has contracted large debts. Stephanie's marriage was also unhappy, and ended in the mysterious death of her husband, who either took his own life or was murdered in his shooting lodge near Vienna. They had one son, who died in boyhood. His death, as well as that of King Albert's elder brother, occurred in January, and it is for that reason that the Belgian royal family say that January always brings them ill luck. Stephanie is now the wife of an Austrian<sup>[110]</sup>



Count, and I have heard that during this war she has become a nurse on the Austrian side. Clémentine and her husband were living in Brussels at last accounts, and they have two sons. The King prevented this marriage for some years, as he felt it might make complications with Republican France. While we were in Belgium, they very kindly received us.

A charming French lady-in-waiting took us directly into the salon, where we saw a fine collection of Napoleonic relics. The Princess soon entered. We found her regal, with dark eyes and blonde hair. She struck us as a clever woman, with a good deal of power and dash. After a little while the Prince entered. He was good looking, of medium size, with dark hair and moustache and handsome eyes. We had a very pleasant half hour.

With all the pageantry of Burgundian days, in a splendid procession of church dignitaries, troops, and officials of the Government, and surrounded by royalties, Leopold began his reign with a Joyous Entry into Brussels, and was duly presented with the keys of the city. The capital was his immediate care. His first speech from the throne was upon the subject of beautifying the city and improving its sanitary condition. It is said, "He<sup>[111]</sup> found Brussels a city of brick and left it a city of marble," that "he found a weak kingdom and left a strong one."

Belgium had now a sovereign who was strong, both physically and mentally. He entered the Senate while still Duc de Brabant, and was soon recognized as a thinker and orator. But before all else, he was an able man of business. He had the foresight and breadth of view of a statesman, with the financial ability and power to handle men that belong to a captain of industry. He was interested in the construction of roads and tramway lines, in the extension of the canal system, and in measures for restoring Antwerp and Bruges, and other Belgian towns to their ancient position as queens of commerce.

In every way the King sought to develop the resources of his realm, and the marvelous prosperity of the country before the present war broke out is proof that he succeeded. In addressing the delegates of industry and commerce, early in his reign, he said, "We have been the first on the Continent to construct railways; let us understand how to prolong them by lines of navigation." It was not many years before Belgian steamship lines were formed. Under his rule the army was strengthened, and if he had been allowed to carry out his<sup>[112]</sup> plans, the country would have had at least the nucleus of a navy. He had new forts built and the army increased. It was decided that the army was deficient in numbers and in quality. The latter defect was owing to a system of recruiting which allowed any man called to the barracks by the ballot, who did not wish to serve, to find a substitute, who for a small sum of money, would take his place. The law doing away with substitutes in the army was one of the last signed by King Leopold before his death.

An early riser and indefatigable worker, Leopold often summoned his attendants at five o'clock in the morning and remained at his desk until evening. All day long, a procession of orderlies on bicycles, in swift succession, bore his orders from the study at Laeken, where he worked, to his secretary's office in Brussels.

Although in the previous reign the two political parties, Clericals and Liberals, had fought some hard battles, the Liberals continued in power more or less for twenty years. The return of the Catholic party was effected in 1884, and although their rule has been bitterly contested by the Opposition, they have held the reins of government for thirty years.



LEOPOLD II.

LEOPOLD II.

While still Duc de Brabant, Leopold traveled in Morocco and Tunis, and Algeria and Egypt, as well as in<sup>[113]</sup> China. On his return he presented to the statesmen of Belgium a Grecian stone, on which he had inscribed, "Il faut à la Belgique des Colonies." Ten years later, his dream of colonization began to be realized.

At the Geographical Congress held in Brussels in September, 1876, which was attended by representatives from all the great Powers, the question of the suppression of the slave trade in Africa was discussed. Leopold wanted to open Africa to civilization, and records and letters of the time show that he was apparently quite sincere in wishing to suppress a traffic of unspeakable cruelty, carried on by Arabs and Portuguese adventurers of the worst type.

The King's speech before the Congress contained the following words:

"The Slave Trade, which still exists over a large part of the African continent, is a plague spot that every friend of civilization would wish to see disappear. If we succeed in establishing stations along the routes followed by the slave merchants this odious traffic will be wiped out. The stations, while serving as points for travelers, will powerfully contribute toward the evangelization of the blacks and toward the introduction to<sup>[114]</sup> them of commerce and modern industry."

The most important result of the Conference was the formation of the International Association for the Suppression of the Slave Trade and the Opening of Central Africa. Leopold was made president, and it was due to his energy and wisdom that Belgium persevered in this undertaking. In answer to his appeal for money and men, men of good standing applied, and money poured in from his people—a little came from other countries—and his private fortune was freely spent in opening up the Dark Continent.

When Stanley returned to Europe in 1878, Leopold's agents met him at Marseilles and secured his services to conduct the work of the International Association on the Congo. In five years six expeditions were sent out, and many lives were lost. Stanley planted forty stations, and established a line of steamers on the river to connect with the caravan route from the coast. Stations were granted by chiefs in exchange for guns, coats and other articles that pleased their fancy.

America was first to recognize the new State. At the Congress of Berlin, in 1884, it was recognized by the great Powers, was declared open to the commerce of all nations, and the slave trade was prohibited. Ten<sup>[115]</sup> years later, the extinction of the African slave trade was accomplished. Baron Dhanis, with a large force of Belgian troops, conquered the Arab traders, and completely broke up their iniquitous traffic.

By the decree of 1885 all "vacant" land in the Congo was declared the property of the State, but in reality it became the property of Leopold. Land was considered vacant when not actually occupied by buildings or cultivated for foodstuffs. Not until 1892, however, was this theory made the actual rule of administration. Before that time, in the words of the distinguished Belgian Socialist leader, M. Vandervelde (whose wife has lately been lecturing in America in the cause of Belgian Relief), "The rights of the natives were recognized, not only over the land they cultivated, and over the land upon which they had built their habitations, but also over the forests which form the markets of their villages; the forests where, from time immemorial, they and their ancestors hunted the elephant and the antelope, collected palm oil and kernels, and gathered rubber either for the purposes of sale or for home use. During that period the Congo State acted as sovereign and not as merchant."

To secure rubber now became, however, the single aim of the man who ruled the Congo. Three<sup>[116]</sup> commissioners were appointed to enforce the "system"; a governor-general was selected and district commissioners were chosen. Under these governors of districts were native captains, or "*capitas*." The agents in charge of these *capitas* were paid according to the amount of rubber collected, so most of them were unscrupulous as to the means used in obtaining it. The *capitas* were also paid in proportion to the quantity of rubber they were able to squeeze from the natives, and they were so brutal that often whole villages rose up and killed them.

From travelers, from missionaries, and finally from the British consul in the Congo came reports of the cruelties practised on the natives. In July, 1903, a memorable debate took place in the Belgian Chamber, in which M. Vandervelde and M. Lorand fiercely denounced the policy of Leopold in the Congo.

M. Vandervelde began by saying he had never denied the greatness of the effort accomplished by some of his compatriots in Africa. He went on to say that the object of the discussion was solely to learn if the Congo State had fulfilled its international obligations; that Belgium had put fifteen million francs into the Congo<sup>[117]</sup> railway, had lent thirty-five million francs to the State; it had given money and men. Among other things, he emphasized that the commercial question was closely and inseparably linked to the question of the treatment of the natives.

"The Congo State," said M. Lorand, "has not only become the greatest vendor of ivory and rubber in the world, but has been enabled with its surplus revenues to conduct enterprises in China and elsewhere, to purchase property in Belgium, and concessions at Hankow."

Though there was no immediate result from the agitation in the Belgian House, the efforts of English reformers made it necessary to take some action in regard to the complaints. Leopold accordingly appointed a Commission of Inquiry, composed of a Belgian, an Italian and a Swiss, all able men. They went out to the Congo, where they examined a multitude of witnesses, and at the end of a year their conclusions were published. In this report they practically reiterated—though in diplomatic language—all the charges of the reformers.

Finally, in 1908, this vast African dependency was annexed to Belgium, which secured complete parliamentary control over the whole region. The next year, Prince, now King, Albert and the Colonial<sup>[118]</sup>

Minister, M. Renkin, visited the Congo State, entering it from opposite sides, and reform work was soon inaugurated. Forced labour was suppressed, payments to the natives were made in money, and several zones were opened up to free trade. The African colony pays its own expenses to-day, but it contributes little money to Belgium. King Albert refused to receive an annuity from its revenues, and that money has been used as a pension fund for those who have served well in the Congo.

In the early days many Belgians went to the Congo to escape debt; today, they pass examinations, and, if fitted for the positions, are given good salaries. As the climate is very trying for whites, and the deadly sleeping sickness still exists, carried by the tsetse fly, the number of Belgians there, from latest accounts, is only one thousand six hundred. This includes over three hundred priests. No men from the larger countries of Europe are wanted in the service of the State, but there are some fifty Swedes, Americans, Swiss and Italians among the officials. The justices of the courts are of mixed nationality, but the most important civil and military positions are kept for Belgians.

Boma, the capital of the Congo State, is now a flourishing town, with several hundred European houses, a<sup>[119]</sup> Governor's palace, the Palace of Justice, and other government buildings, both Protestant and Catholic churches, a Red Cross hospital, and a telegraphic service to the interior.



**KING ALBERT.**

A large part of Leopold's revenue from the Congo was expended in beautifying Brussels and doing over both the royal palaces. The Congo Museum, with its fine park and drives, the Colonial School, and the Cinquantenaire Museum, erected to commemorate fifty years of Belgian nationality, with its splendid Arch of Triumph, were all built by this means.

Leopold's long reign came to an end in 1909. His nephew, Prince Baudouin, who should have succeeded him, died suddenly, so, as women do not inherit, the crown descended to Baudouin's brother Albert. As I have said, Albert's father was Philip, Comte de Flandre, the younger brother of Leopold, and his mother was Marie-Louise-Alexandrine-Caroline, of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen.

King Albert was born in his father's palace in Brussels, on April 8, 1875. He has the best of French and German blood, that of the Orleans and the Saxe-Coburgs. It is said he resembles his grandfather, Leopold I. His sister Josephine is the wife of Prince Charles of Hohenzollern, a cousin of the Kaiser, and his other sister<sup>[120]</sup> Henriette, married the Duc de Vendôme. Prince Charles, who was fair, with a pointed beard, was bright and amusing when we met him; his wife, although very handsome, was a little deaf. The Duchesse de Vendôme was distinguished looking, tall and blonde, like her brother, and the Duke, although rather short, was most attractive.

Albert's boyhood was spent quietly in study and outdoor life on his father's estate at Ciergnon. He went through the usual preparation for military service under the supervision of General Jungblüth, then Chief of Staff of the Belgian army. From the moment he became heir to the throne, he set to work to prepare himself for the high position. He studied political economy with M. Waxweiler, a distinguished member of the Liberal

party, who was at the head of the Sociological Institute. That he might not be one-sided in his opinions, he became the pupil of two Catholic priests, one a Jesuit of notable courage and fairness, the other a Dominican friar. And, finally, it was from Baron Lambremont, one of the greatest of Belgian diplomats, that he learned the difficult art of dealing with governments.

Even before the present war, the King's mechanical tastes led him to take a deep interest in the problems of engineering construction, of shipbuilding and of aviation. While traveling in this country in 1898, he is said to have studied American railways under the tutelage of Mr. James J. Hill, and ten years later, to have gone to Great Britain incognito in order that he might become familiar with conditions in the shipyards there. Finally, he is known as a skilful and daring chauffeur.

In view of this fact, the well known journalist, Major Seaman, shortly returned from Belgium, told me the story was true that King Albert (accompanied only by his chauffeur) when motoring one day from one part of the lines to another, noticed that they were taking the road toward the German trenches. He directed the man to change his course, but soon found they were still going in the wrong direction. After a second order had proved unavailing, the King shot the chauffeur and himself drove the car to his destination, thus defeating an attempt to betray him into the hands of the Teutons. The money given to the traitor by the Germans was found on his body.

The Brussels Exposition was held the year after Albert became King. With his usual conscientiousness, the King not only attended innumerable congresses that were held in Brussels that year, but personally entertained the delegates at the royal palace; and, with all this, he is said to have found time to visit, with the Queen, every exhibit in every section of the Exposition.

Even before the present war, he was known as "The People's King," and during this war he has shown himself a man and leader, this hero King, whose name will be honoured through the centuries. Queen Elizabeth, too, has their hearts' devotion. "Queen Elizabeth is over there with King Albert in the midst of the fighting troops. From town to town, from camp to camp, from trench to trench she goes. She inspires the living, she consoles the dying; she smiles upon them, she binds up their wounds. There she is, so gentle, so pitying, in that Flemish land, that sad Country wrapped in heavy mist, a gray winding sheet softly falling over so many rigid shrouds. Queen errant, but more a Queen than ever has been the consort of the most puissant King, she symbolizes her Country, that Country which is so gashed and wounded, but which will not die. Far from proud cities and sumptuous palaces, she goes to the soldiers fallen beneath the leaden rain, and as she passes near them the eyes of the dying are lifted up to her for a last look, a last tear."<sup>[3]</sup>



QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The Crown Prince, although only thirteen years old, is in the Belgian army. The Queen entered a meek protest against her husband's taking their son to the front, but he answered, "I have him with me to teach him how serious a thing it is to be a King."

In an interview with Mr. Hall—a journalist whom I met at the Belgian Legation in Washington,—one of the

most striking things King Albert said was this:

“This war was unavoidable. It had been postponed several times within the last few years, and if it had not been for England’s efforts it would have come at the time of the last Balkan crisis. Germany had been piling on armament for years, had been building up a war machine so perfect and so powerful that at a given time it was bound to start itself. When you have built a monster ship, you cannot continue piling on weight all the time, or the day will come when the vessel will slip off the ways of her own accord. This thing has happened in more than one shipyard.

“When the crisis came I had hopes that the protection of international treaties would be sufficient to protect Belgium, but in any case there was no question as to what the Belgian people would do. The violation of our territory united every faction, and although we were taken by surprise we did our best and offered what resistance we could.”<sup>[124]</sup>

Mr. Hall writes: “After the defense of Liège King Albert took the field with his army and fought back all the way to Antwerp. He led both the sorties from Antwerp in person, and fought with the rear guard that covered the retreat of his army to the Yser.”

The Germans drove the Belgian army from one position to another until only a strip of Belgium was left. “The King continued to fight in the bogs and marshes of western Flanders, still undaunted, still defiant, still calm and serene.”

An Englishman asked a Belgian soldier if King Albert was beloved. The answer was, “No, Monsieur, he is not beloved.... Before the war he was beloved—today he is adored.”

Emile Verhaeren wrote in King Albert’s book: “At this moment you are the one King in the world whose subjects, without exception, unite in loving and admiring him with all the strength of their soul. This unique fate is yours, sire. No leader of men on earth has had it in the same degree as you.”<sup>[125]</sup>

“In spite of the immensity of the sorrow surrounding you, I think you have a right to rejoice, the more so as your consort, Her Majesty the Queen, shares this rare privilege with you.

“Sire, your name will be great throughout the ages to come. You are in such perfect sympathy with your people that you will always be their symbol. Their courage, their tenacity, their stifled grief, their pride, their future greatness, their immortality all live with you. Our hearts are yours in their very depths. Being yourself, you are all of us. And this you will remain.”

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## CHAPTER VII

### POLITICS AND PLURAL VOTING

[126]



**B**ELGIAN politics had a peculiar fascination for me from the first. It began perhaps with my amazement at their system of plural voting, which was different from anything of which I had ever heard. But the more I learned of the various issues and parties, the stronger the spell became. The little country was working very hard trying to solve its many problems, and was so fearless and original in some of the methods it used that you could not help but admire its pluck and spirit.

To any casual traveler it must have seemed that the country was divided against itself. It had two languages, one based on French, the other a Low German dialect, and the people themselves were of two different races. The Walloons have Latin blood, while the Flemings are of Teutonic ancestry. In spite of all this, they lived together in peace for many years, and during the past year have stood shoulder to shoulder against their common enemy.

Another extraordinary thing about political conditions there was, that while ninety-nine per cent. of the people were Roman Catholics, Socialism flourished. That these two bitterly opposed organizations should both grow strong in the same soil was even more surprising—on the surface—than the bi-lingual and bi-racial patriotism of the country.<sup>[127]</sup>

“Thanks to Belgium’s very advanced capitalistic development,” said M. Vandervelde in this connection, “it constitutes a curious laboratory of social experiment.”

The Clerical party had been in power twenty-eight years when we were there, and the diplomats rarely came in contact with the members of any other faction. I do remember seeing a big Socialist parade, held on the first of May; it was made up, apparently, of quiet and orderly men. On the other hand, the country seemed to swarm with priests. In addition to those who lived there, many thousands had come in a few years before when they left France.

There were practically only two political parties: the Clerical, which was the conservative or Church party, and the Liberal, which was closely allied with the Socialists and Democrats. The members of these last three factions formed indeed a coalition, or “bloc,” which frequently contrived to check the work of the opposition.<sup>[128]</sup>

despite the fact that they had but eighty representatives to the Clericals' eighty-six. This coalition had been gaining steadily for the past twelve years.

The national assembly was composed of a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies, both of which were, in the main, elective. The former had 102 members who served eight years without pay, except a railroad pass. The lower house had 166 members who served four years and received, not only a railroad pass, but \$800 a year besides.

Belgium was divided into nine provinces, whose governors were appointed by the King, just as the governors of our territories are appointed by the President. These provinces were subdivided into 342 cantons, much like our counties, and these again into over two thousand communes. Every two years the country voted in sections for half of each house. A majority of the five Flemish provinces went Clerical, while the four Walloon districts went Liberal.

Every man old enough to do so was compelled by law to go to the polls and cast his vote or votes when election day arrived. If for any reason he was absolutely unable to go, he must send a written explanation of his absence.

Belgium's novel method of voting was adopted some twenty-odd years ago, as a compromise between the existing property qualification and the equal suffrage which the Socialists were demanding. Like most compromises, it was not wholly satisfactory to any one. Up to the time when the war turned the attention of the people to more important matters than politics it was the cause of a great deal of controversy. But as conditions stood in 1893, the system of plural voting was a masterpiece of diplomacy, for each of the three parties—Clerical, Liberal and Socialist—had its own ideas as to the sort of persons who should be granted the ballot, and of course no two agreed as to the necessary qualifications.

The Clericals wished to have the franchise granted on the basis of occupation and property; the Liberals thought it should be bestowed on all who were sufficiently educated to use the power intelligently; the Socialists, however, insisted upon universal suffrage for men and women alike, without preference or favour.

The Clericals got their wish outright—property and professional rights were recognized generously. The Liberals also got what they wanted—a vote for every man with a college education. The Socialists got half of their demands, which was all that they could reasonably have expected at a time when votes for women were not being widely advertised.

But of the three parties, only the first has shown any measure of satisfaction with the arrangement, for plural voting plays into the hands of the Church. Indeed, the only hope of the Clerical party was said to lie in its maintenance, while the great hope of the Liberal wing lay in its overthrow.

Briefly, the system of plural voting is this: Every male citizen of Belgium who had reached the age of twenty-five years was qualified to cast—and by law must cast—one vote. Every man of thirty-five who had children and paid at least \$1 a year income tax, might cast two votes, while those without children could get this second vote if they had real estate amounting to \$400, or \$20 a year income from state securities. Any man who had filled a public position, who had a profession, or who held a college diploma, was entitled to a third vote, or to two in addition to his first manhood suffrage. This third vote could also be obtained by a property qualification. No one might have more than three votes in all.

This was the way it would work out in an individual case: A workman at twenty-five receives one vote. He marries, becomes the head of a family, and at thirty-five receives a second vote. Then, if he buys a house—even if it is mortgaged—he gets a third. It can easily be seen how such a system might encourage thrift and industry, and even responsible citizenship.

Indeed, on the face of it, this system of plural voting seems nearly ideal. A writer in the *Contemporary Review* seriously advocated its adoption in England. It has the advantage of putting the weight of power on the educated classes, while still giving to every man some share in the government. Our own "one man, one vote" appears rather crude and arbitrary by contrast with this carefully graded electorate.

For all that, it did not work out very well in practice. The educated upper classes were not always disinterested, and they were nearly always conservative. Poor men are naturally adventurous when they see a chance for gain, but when comfortable they are more and more inclined to hang back, reluctant to risk their present comfort for any hazardous improvement. The story of a young captain of militia who got separated from his company in a strike riot and cried—"Where are my men? I am their leader—I must follow them!" illustrates this point. There was a lively agitation for electoral reform while we were there.

At the root of much of the political strife was the question of schools. Should the Church share with the State in the education of the children, or should the public schools be purely secular?

The coalition of liberal parties demanded for every child up to fourteen years of age a compulsory education, which must be followed by two years of training along some technical line. They insisted, moreover, that every commune should be bound to provide adequate schools, from which both religion and politics must be barred. Although they never achieved this, the steady gain of the coalition in recent years has been attributed to their stand in educational matters.

The Belgian Constitution provides for two kinds of schools, State and "free." The latter, corresponding to private schools in our country, were not under Government control, and were, indeed, generally under the management of the clergy. Prior to 1878 the Church had also, step by step, gained a certain amount of influence in the State schools, but in that year the Liberals came into power and suppressed clerical inspection. As a result of this, six years later, the Liberals went down to defeat and did not regain their power. From that time on, the curriculum of the State schools included religious instruction, although it was not compulsory.

It seems strange now to remember that only a very short time ago one of the burning issues in Belgium was militarism. Then they were facing much the same question which is before us today in this country: Should they have a large standing army, with all the burden of service and taxation that it entailed, or should they try the system in use in Switzerland? There every man is equipped, and drilled for a short time each year, but there is only a very small regular army. The Belgians compromised by blocking up all the entrances to their country by means of strong fortifications, with the idea that no invader would gain enough by crossing their territory to make it worth the trouble. If they had had the army too, the story might have had a somewhat different ending.

The year that we were there, there was much fear as to the result of the elections. The talk was such as to make you feel that the end of the world was at hand if the Clericals failed to win, and that if they did win, there would surely be a revolution. Our own papers had greatly exaggerated accounts of the trouble in Brussels following the elections, with stories of sieges and revolutions and all kinds of violence. But although the riots themselves amounted to little, they were of such significance as a part of the general social and political unrest throughout the world that I insert an account of them here.<sup>[134]</sup>

The general elections were held in Belgium on Sunday, the second of June, 1913, and resulted in the maintenance in power of the clerical conservative Government. The dissolution had been brought about by the gradually diminishing majority of the Clericals in Parliament till they had kept themselves in office by an excess in the Chamber of Deputies of only six votes.

It was expected that the elections would be very close, owing to the alliance which had been formed for this campaign between the two opposition parties of Liberals and Socialists. It was the surprise of the election that the returns for the new Parliament showed a substantial gain for the party in power. It seemed that the Clericals had come back from the country with a majority of sixteen in the Chamber, while in the Senate their supremacy was also maintained.

An explanation of these gains was afterwards found in the defection of many Liberals at the last moment because they feared the alliance with the Socialists and preferred, after all, as the lesser of the two evils, the Clerical ministry, such as Belgium had prospered under for nearly thirty years. Liberal officers of the army could not bear alliance with the anti-monarchical party, moreover, and the high finance and commerce—the Liberal bourgeoisie—feared radical changes.<sup>[135]</sup>

The defeated parties raised the cry of corruption, and of the advantage which the plural vote gave the government forces, since it was the educated and official classes and the rural population which benefited by the allowance of a second or third vote. Afterwards a more active campaign than ever was waged in favour of the "one man, one vote" suffrage by those out of power. Throughout the rural communities the Clericals developed a well-organized machine in the "Boerenbonden," or agricultural syndicates, which might have been subventions of the Government but were generally in the hands of the priests.

A more immediate result of the conclusive character of the elections was that many of the demonstrations that were feared in case of a close vote lapsed through lack of heart and of excuse for agitation. The Government had expressed a determination to maintain the peace, and troops were held in readiness in their barracks; civil guards were also ordered under arms during certain hours of the day when trouble was especially likely, and were bivouacked in the parks and the courts of public buildings, as evidence to the people of serious preparations for the repression of disorder.<sup>[136]</sup>

There were small riots in Brussels, resulting in a few wounds and arrests, but these seem to have been more or less formal, and the work of the rougher element. In some of the other cities, especially in the industrial parts of Belgium, and in the Borinage, or colliery district, there were disorders and strikes more or less serious. In Liège there was a riot with several deaths resulting.

But everywhere the result of the election was accepted more quietly than had been feared. The leaders of the defeated parties showed selfcontrol and attempted to restrain their following, so that the rioting and strikes were more the result of the excitement of the masses, who were taking advantage of the excuse which politics always gives for breaking out into disorder, than of agitation with any immediate political effect in view.

The Premier of the continued Government was Baron de Broqueville, an astute and moderate man. But there were able and fanatic elements in the Clerical party which it was feared might try to force legislation, especially in the matter of education. This would prove such an aggravation to the more liberal thinkers in the country as to lead to further disorders.<sup>[137]</sup>





**BARON DE BROQUEVILLE.**

But when the war broke, all differences of opinion were forgotten, and every man, Clerical or Socialist, gave himself without reserve to the common cause of his country's need. Baron de Broqueville and M. Vandervelde worked side by side in the Cabinet. The Government was moved from Brussels to Antwerp, as the invaders drew near, and on again from Antwerp to Ostend and later to Havre. But in the narrow strip of Belgian soil which still remains, the King and his Ministers daily share the same dangers and hardships, and toil for the same end. For the time at least, party differences have been forgotten in a cause immeasurably greater.

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## CHAPTER VIII BELGIUM'S WORKSHOPS

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**BELGIUM** was slightly larger than the State of Massachusetts, yet she ranked eighth among the nations in wealth, and sixth in commerce. Antwerp was one of the five great ports of the world, with more dock-room than New York.

Several favouring conditions enabled her to compete so successfully with her big neighbours. Rivers and canals gave her inland cities easy access to the sea. Much of the raw material for her foundries and factories was to be found within her own boundaries, while fuel for her engines was furnished cheaply by her own mines. Most important, perhaps, labour was abundant, low of cost, and highly skilled. In her people really lay Belgium's greatest strength, for they are hardy and thrifty, and peculiarly skilled as mechanics.

They used to say that while France furnished mankind with their luxuries, Belgium supplied them with their necessities. But this is not wholly true, for the smaller country is celebrated for its exquisite lace and superb tapestries, while the gardens of Ghent raised orchids, azaleas and camellias for the flower-markets of France, Germany, England and even America.

These were the exports of Belgium, in the order of their importance: coal, iron, steel and zinc; firearms; glass; cement; ceramics; cotton, wool and flax; furniture and lace.

The centers of the metal, coal and glass industries were in the Walloon districts, especially in Charleroi and Liège, while the textile centers were, for the most part, in Flanders.

The story of how coal was first discovered in Belgium has been told a thousand times, but rarely, I think, in America. It seems that in a village not far from Liège there lived—some seven hundred years ago—a poor blacksmith named Houllou. One day he found himself quite out of money. He could not work to earn more, because he had no wood to heat his forge. While he sat bewailing his fate a mysterious stranger appeared and asked the cause of his woe. When he had heard the mournful story, "Take a large sack," said he, "and go to the Mountain of the People. There you must dig down three feet into the earth. You will find a black, rocky substance, which you must put into the sack and bring home. Break it up, and burn it in your forge." This is the reason why, in Belgium, coal still bears the name of *huile*, in memory of the blacksmith of Liège. Some think the stranger was an Englishman, since coal was already in use in London. But tradition has insisted that

*ange* and not *Anglais*, is the proper word, and that Houllou entertained an angel.

Near Mons are the great mounds of slag which were begun in the earliest times and look today not unlike the pyramids of Egypt. Whatever the origin of the mining industry in Belgium, there is nothing idyllic about the conditions there in modern times. The coal region of the Borinage is known as Le Pays Noir, and it certainly deserves the name.

The miners are called *Borains*, or coal-borers. "They live both on the earth and in the earth, delving amid the black deposits of vast primeval forests." Owing to their former long hours, which have been somewhat shortened in late years, the present generation is dwarfish, the men often under five feet and the women still less. Most of them cannot read or write, and they have little pleasure save what comes from beer. (More beer was sold per head in Belgium than even in Germany.) Of the hundred and twenty-five thousand miners in the country, three-quarters belonged to Hainault.<sup>[141]</sup>

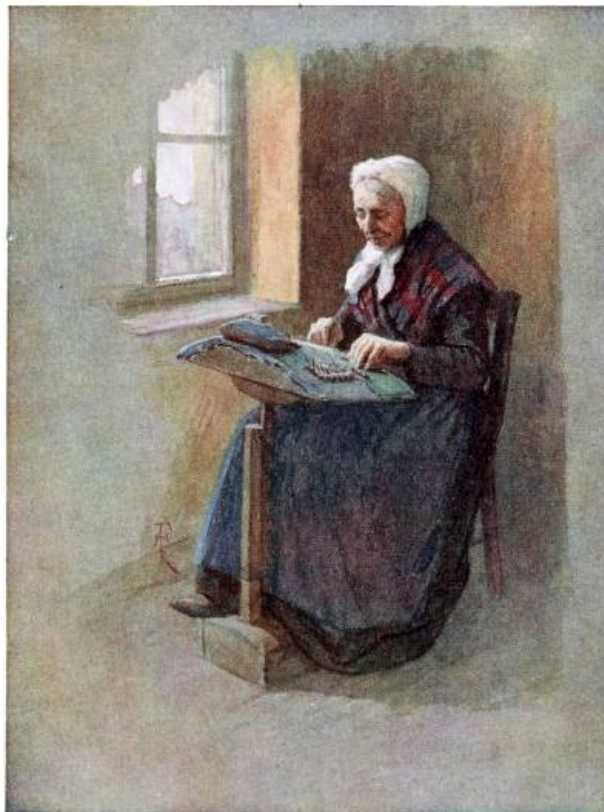
There are in all over a hundred coal mines in Belgium, the area of those that were worked amounting to over ninety thousand acres, and of those not worked to forty thousand more. A new coal field has been discovered in the north but has not been exploited as yet. Although the home consumption was steadily increasing, and averaged nearly three tons per capita, large amounts were exported to France and Holland. It was sold at a closer margin than in any other of the mining countries.

Mining was commenced on the out-crops eight or nine hundred years ago, but it was only when steam-engines were invented that the miners were able to reach the deeper parts of the coal measures, and the yield was greatly increased.

Firearms have been manufactured in Liège since midway in the fourteenth century. The first portable arms were the cannon and handgun, both adjusted to very heavy, straight butt-ends and very difficult to handle. They were loaded with stones, lead or iron balls. The musket and arquebus came later, and had matchlocks, an idea suggested by the trigger of the crossbow.

The first exporters of Liège arms were naildealers, who possessed from immemorial times commercial relations with the most distant countries. After the invention of the flint-lock in the seventeenth century the gun trade made rapid progress. The number of workmen became enormous. The superiority of Liège arms was recognized all over the world, and the gunworkmen received offers of high salaries to induce them to go to France, England, Germany and Austria. Several of them were engaged to work at the Royal Manufactory of Arms at Potsdam. Much of the best work was done at the worker's own house, and in order to prevent any decline in the individual skill of the men to whom Liège owed so much of its fame, the union of manufacturers of arms created a professional school of gunnery, where they could be specially trained. In this way they hoped to avoid the danger that the facility which machinery gives the workman would cause him to lose interest in his hand-work at home, which requires such varied knowledge and ability.

Cotton spinning was one of the most important textile industries. Over a million spindles were employed, most of them in the two provinces of Hainault and Brabant, and in the city of Ghent. Most of the cotton came from America and Egypt.



*An Old Lacemaker*

Verviers, in Liège, was the center of the wool-spinning industry. Here again the superior skill of the artisans<sup>[143]</sup> established the reputation of the Belgian article. Most of the wool came from Australia and the Cape.

For its flax spindles, however, Belgium raised its own material. The flax of Courtrai was considered the best in all Europe. More than half the finished thread was exported to England. The abundance of this material doubtless led to the early development of lace-making, for which the women of the country became so famous.

Flanders claims to be the birthplace of pillow-lace—*dentelles aux fuseaux*—and disputes with Italy the invention of lace generally. In earlier times drawn or cut work was often confused with lace, as was embroidery of one sort or another, and for this reason it is difficult to trace the art definitely back to its beginning. Ornamental needlework was done in Old Testament days, for Isaiah mentions those who “work in fine flax and weave networks.” But real lace-making—the interweaving of fine threads of flax, cotton, silk, of silver, gold or hair, to form a network—did not appear till the time of the Renaissance, when all the arts of Europe awoke to life. In a chapel at St. Peter’s, in Louvain, was an altar-piece painted in 1495 by Quentin<sup>[144]</sup> Matsys, which showed a girl making lace on a pillow like those still in use to this day.

The manufacture of lace began in Brussels about the year 1400. The city excelled from the first in the quality of the work done there. This was due to the fineness of the thread of Brabant, which the women spun inch by inch with such painstaking care that it defied competition. A pound of flax was sometimes transmuted into lace worth several thousand dollars.

The lace industry was the only one in Flanders which survived the upheavals of the sixteenth century. Its prosperity alone tided the distracted people over their difficulties and saved them from the ruin which threatened. The women plodded on at their slow task, hour after hour, thread after thread, for a pitiful few cents a day, and never knew that they had saved their country. “They are generally almost blind before thirty years of age,” wrote an early chronicler.

The women of Belgium have always been specially adept with the needle, and it may be that the rainy weather so prevalent there had something to do with the development of this indoor industry. Certainly lace-making is—or was, until very recently—practised in all the provinces except Liège, and in some districts it<sup>[145]</sup> could be said that every woman, young or old, handled the bobbins or the needle. It was, indeed, the national industry.

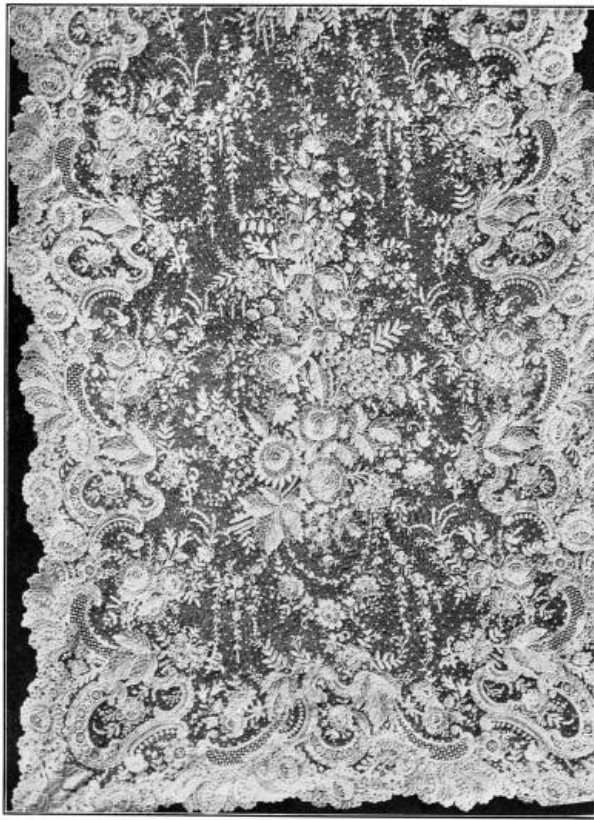
As a rule, the women worked to order and by contract, and were paid by the piece. The lace, when finished, was handed over to the local middleman, who, in turn, sold it to the contractors in the cities. The children learned the art from their mother or—more often—from the nuns in the various convent schools. They would enter these schools when six or eight years old, and often remained there till their marriage. The nuns did much to keep up the ancient traditions of the art, and even in their convents in the Far East today they make a point of teaching the native children to copy European laces.

There are two kinds of lace, point and pillow. The former is made with a needle, and its characteristic feature is the “set-off” of the flowers. The needle laces, of Belgium are divided into Brussels point, Brussels appliqué, Venice, rose and Burano points.

Several classes of workers are needed for each piece—those who make the openwork ornaments and the flowers, and those who apply them on to the background, a very delicate task. Brussels point is the finest example of this form of lace, and indeed of any lace made in Belgium at the present time. The designs are<sup>[146]</sup> very elaborate, with the flowers often in relief. Modern Brussels point is, however, too frequently an imitation, with flowers sewn on to a machine-made net that is often rather coarse, while the application is done by unskilled fingers.

Of pillow lace there are many kinds, and their chief characteristic is the outline of the design. The lace is made on a cushion or pillow which stands on a frame, with little spools or bobbins for the threads, and pins for fixing the lace on the pattern.

The best kinds of pillow lace are duchess, Mechlin, and Valenciennes. “Valenciennes the eternal,” they called it, because by working fourteen hours a day for a year you made less than half a yard. Marie Therèse had a dress of it which took a year to make and cost fourteen thousand dollars. Considering that the workers received barely a cent an hour, one gets some idea of the magnitude of the task. The Béguinage in Ghent was the headquarters for the manufacture of this lace, but only a few old nuns remain there now who know the secrets of its making. Machine-made imitations flood the market, and the former process is too costly to make<sup>[147]</sup> it worth any one’s while to master it.



**BRUSSELS POINT LACE.**

Mechlin is the Flemish name for the town of Malines, and both words are used in connection with the lace which originated there. Mechlin is the airiest and most exquisite of laces, but its very delicacy made it too costly, and since it could be so easily and cheaply imitated, it is no longer made by hand. It was constructed in one piece, with no application, a flat thread forming the flower and giving it almost the appearance of embroidery. Napoleon, who admired it greatly, cried out when he saw the delicate spire of Antwerp Cathedral that it was like "*la dentelle de Malines.*"

In spite of the fact that the art of making lace had fallen upon hard days, the lacemakers' ball was still an important event of the season when we were in Brussels. It came in carnival week, and was the occasion on which the Société de la Grande Harmonie received the King and Queen. It interested me to see how Their Majesties were welcomed by such a representative body of middle-class citizens—there was the most genuine enthusiasm I have ever seen shown towards royalty.

The Diplomatic Corps had been invited to attend, and we were taken to a platform at the end of a great room, where the royal chairs were placed, and chairs in rows for the Corps and the Court and the Ministers of State. Beyond the columns which divided the hall into three parts were arranged the seats for the members of the society. The center of the floor remained clear, and here the tableaux and pageants representing the various stages in the history of lace were performed. In their pageant the lacemakers all wore examples of their craft.

One of the prettiest incidents occurred when the groups of costumed personages separated and there passed along the length of the ballroom floor two little children, a boy and a girl, dressed as a page and a miniature lady-in-waiting. They advanced slowly, and presented to the King and Queen books which told of the evening's entertainment. The Queen rose and apparently questioned the president of the society about the little girl who stood so shyly before her. Then, taking the book, she stooped down and kissed her. It was very prettily and naturally done, and caused a round of appreciative applause and cries of "Long live the Queen!"

Another attractive feature was that of the tiny children who represented the Flemish lacemakers, each one wearing the costume of the trade. They passed in procession before the Queen and each, with a little courtesy, laid a bouquet of flowers at her feet.

I was surprised to find that Brussels was the market for lace from all over the world, and that foreign laces of every description were copied there by the skilful *dentellières*. This was still true, in spite of the marked decline which the industry had shown of late, especially since the introduction of machinery.

Where a generation ago one hundred and fifty thousand women were employed, in 1910 there were barely twenty thousand. Their product had lost in quality, too, as well as in quantity. The old nuns who did the wonderful, intricate stitches, were dying off and there were none to take their places. The pattern-makers, also, were contenting themselves with easier designs. Belgium was "speeding up," with the rest of the world, and the painstaking arts had to suffer. Modern laces are carelessly made, in comparison with those of former days, and from inferior designs.

The wages paid those who still work at the craft seem low indeed, especially when the long years of apprenticeship are considered. Verhaegen, in statistics collected in 1910, cites a girl of thirteen who was

working ten hours a day, making in fifty-five hours a meter of Cluny lace for which she received about fifty<sup>[150]</sup> cents. Children of fourteen were working seventy-two hours a week for something less than a cent an hour, and grown women earned little more. The workers were not organized, and the middlemen seem to have prospered accordingly.

But the pay was low in all branches of industry, even those which were well organized. An English writer noted that the rate of wages per hour for men in Belgium was only about half that prevailing in Britain, while the cost of living was nearly the same. The average earnings of the breadwinner of the family were about \$165 a year. These facts certainly account for the development of coöperation.

This movement, which had a great vogue throughout the country, started in Ghent in 1873. Bread was scarce, and famine prices prevailed. A group of poor weavers conceived the idea of baking for themselves and their friends at cost. Their capital consisted of the vast sum of seventeen dollars and eighteen cents. Their bakery was in a cellar, and their utensils were antiquated. They could not afford a dog to deliver their wares, which were taken from door to door in a basket. But this was only the beginning. The "free bakers," as they called<sup>[151]</sup> themselves, came to have for their headquarters one of the finest buildings in Ghent.

A few years later Edouard Anseele, realizing the power of the new movement, decided that it should be identified with Socialism for their mutual benefit. To that end was organized the Vooruit, which has branches all over Belgium, and in other countries as well.

Instead of returning the profits made on bread sold at market prices to the purchasers, as had been originally done, a percentage was retained for the support of the organization in its various departments. There was a mutual benefit fund, for instance: bread was sent to members out of work; a doctor went to those who were ill; a trained nurse was at hand to look after the first baby and to instruct the mother in its care.

When the Church set up rival bakeries, the Vooruit went farther. It established its first "*maison du peuple*," which has since been duplicated in many places. Every need of the people was supposed to find here its satisfaction. There was a café, with tables in the park, and lights and music. There were lectures, dances, debates, concerts, movies. There was a theater where the actors and the plays were chosen by the vote of the audience, which, by the way, strongly favoured their own Maeterlinck. Besides a library and a day nursery,<sup>[152]</sup> there was a big department store, and in the same building were the headquarters for all the allied and friendly organizations—trade unions, coöperative and socialistic societies, and so on.

One of the most interesting activities of the Vooruit was the traveling club for children, bands of whom went from town to town, picking up recruits as they went, seeing their own land first, then—this was before the war—crossing the border into France or Germany, where the local Vooruits made them welcome. A common practice was for children of the French and Flemish parts of the country to be exchanged for long visits, so that they might have a chance to learn each other's language.

When the organization, which had always before refused to sell alcoholic drinks, found itself bitterly opposed by the liquor interests, especially in the mining districts, it built breweries of its own. In this way it was able to give the working men pure beer at a very low cost.

The Maison du Peuple in Brussels was established in 1881, with a capital of about one hundred dollars. It began, like the one in Ghent, as a bakery, and owned a dog and a small cart to make deliveries. At last accounts the society had over ninety dogs. It is amusing to read that these had their own kitchens, where<sup>[153]</sup> their cooking was done, and their bathrooms, where they were kept clean.

And when one is speaking of the workers of Belgium, the dogs should not be forgotten, for the larger breeds were very useful members of the industrial system. Laundresses, bakers and vendors used them in distributing their wares, and they were of great service on the farm. But perhaps the commonest sight was that of a dog hitched to a cart filled with shining brass and copper milk cans. They were all carefully inspected to see that their harness fitted properly, and that they were provided with a drinking bowl and with a mat to lie down on when they were tired.

The Government made a point, indeed, of seeing that conditions were as comfortable as possible for the animals. The poor cannot afford to keep a dog simply for a pet; there are no scraps from the table to feed him, because no thrifty housewife leaves any scraps; he must do his share and earn his keep like the others.

At a time when France laid a heavy tax on imported laces, dogs made excellent smugglers. They were kept for a time on the French side of the line, petted and well fed; then they were sent over into Belgium, where they were allowed to become thoroughly homesick. Skins of larger dogs were lined with contraband lace and tied<sup>[154]</sup> on to them, and they were headed for home and set free. Of course they naturally sought their own firesides, and the lace went with them. When the ruse was discovered, over forty thousand of them were captured and put to death.

Since the war began, dogs have been of great service in dragging the mitrailleuses, the light machine-guns, as well as in helping their masters carry their household goods to a place of safety. The police dogs were wonderfully trained, and have been used by the Red Cross to find the wounded in remote places and to carry first aid.

The same high standards of efficiency by which Belgian workmen made a national reputation for their various manufactures showed also in the cultivation of the ground. The whole western part of the country was one vast market-garden, but it was no happy chance of soil and climate that made it so. Generations of unbroken toil on the part of a patient, skilful peasantry, equipped with the most primitive tools but with a positive genius for their work, were necessary. So recently as the first half of the nineteenth century there was a wild stretch of land west of the Scheldt known as the Pays de Waes, which was uncultivated and desolate. Today it<sup>[155]</sup> is wonderfully fertile, its little truck farms supporting five hundred people to the mile.



"SINCE THE WAR BEGAN, DOGS HAVE BEEN OF GREAT SERVICE IN DRAGGING THE MITRAILLEUSES."

Flanders as a whole, indeed, had poor soil, often "an almost hopeless blowing sand." The method of reclamation usually began with the planting of oats, rye or broom. This was used three years for forage and then plowed in, after which the land became capable of producing clover. The rotation of crops was worked out with great care, according to the special needs of the soil. The Belgian wheat crop averaged thirty-seven bushels to the acre in 1913, while in the same year "up-to-the-minute" America raised only fifteen bushels.

The soil is particularly suited to hemp and flax, the latter furnishing not only oil but fiber, of which the British markets bought ten million dollars' worth annually. Poppies were grown for oil. Tobacco yielded two tons to the acre, and white carrots eight hundred bushels.

The Flemish farmer did most of his work by hand, with no other implement than a spade, which has been called the national tool. The population was so large that human labour was cheaper than animal. In sixteen days a man could dig up an acre of land as well as a horse could plow it. A farmer was able to support<sup>[156]</sup> himself, his wife and three children, keep a cow and fatten a hog, on two and a half acres. With another acre he had a surplus product to carry to market. A man with a capable wife and children could do all the work on six acres and have time left for outside interests. If he was fortunate enough to have horses they were the pride of his heart and he kept them always finely groomed and in the pink of condition.

The women of the country married early, raised large families, and worked hard. They were good managers, especially in the Walloon districts where they often carried on some industry besides their housekeeping. For centuries their chief employment was making lace. The Government established schools of housekeeping, where the girls learned domestic economy in every branch; they were sent to market, for instance, with six cents to buy the materials for a meal, which they afterwards cooked and served.

The Government indeed did everything it could to improve conditions in the country districts and to encourage farming. It established schools of agriculture, with dairy classes for the girls, and aided in starting coöperative societies. Its policies were far-seeing and marked by a really paternal interest, as well they might<sup>[157]</sup> have been, for to her sturdy peasants—and to the peasants' sturdy wives—were due the foundations of Belgian prosperity.

## CHAPTER IX TAPESTRIES

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As we were intensely interested in tapestries we often went to the Museum to study and admire the most famous set in Brussels, an early Renaissance series of four pieces, called Notre Dame du Sablon.

These hangings illustrate an old fourteenth-century story, which I condense from Hunter's delightful work on "Tapestries." Beatrix Stoelkens, a poor woman of Antwerp, was told by the Virgin in a dream to get from the church of Notre Dame a little image of the Madonna.

In obedience to the vision she obtained the statuette and took it to a painter, who decorated it in gold and colours. After Beatrix had returned it to the church, the Virgin clothed it with such grace that it

inspired devotion in all who saw it. Then Our Lady appeared a second time to Beatrix, and directed her to carry the statue to Brussels. When she attempted to get it, the warden of the church interfered, but he found himself unable to move, and Beatrix bore away the little Madonna in triumph. She embarked for Brussels in an empty boat, which stemmed the current as if piloted by unseen hands. On arriving at her destination, she was received by the Duke of Brabant and the magistrates of the city, and the precious little statue was carried in procession to the church of Notre Dame du Sablon.<sup>[159]</sup>

This set bears the date 1518, when Brussels was no longer under a Burgundian Duke, but Charles V was ruler of the Netherlands. The designer of the set followed the Gothic custom of representing the story under the forms of his own day, so, instead of the Duke of Brabant, Philip the Fair, father of Charles V, is pictured receiving the Madonna from the hands of Beatrix at the wharf, Charles V and his brother Ferdinand are bearing it in a litter to the church, and Margaret of Austria, aunt of Charles, kneels in prayer before the niche where the sacred image has been placed.

When in New York it always gives us pleasure to go to the Metropolitan Museum to see the finest Belgian set in the United States, the Burgundian Sacraments, woven in the early fifteenth century. This splendid example of Gothic workmanship was made in the days when Philip the Good had brought the power of Burgundy to its zenith. When the great Duke wanted to have magnificent hangings for the chamber of his son (who was afterward Charles the Bold), he ordered a set of tapestries from the weavers of Bruges. All that remains of this splendid work of art is now in the New York Museum—five pieces, which form half of the original set. The complete series consisted of two rows of scenes, the upper seven representing the Origin of the Seven Sacraments, the lower, the Seven Sacraments as Celebrated in the Fifteenth Century. This set shows wonderful weaving, “with long hatchings that interpret marvelously the elaborately figured costumes and damask ground.”<sup>[160]</sup>

There are other exquisite tapestries in America, too, for the Committee of Safety in 1793 imported some American wheat into France, and when the time came to pay it proffered *assignats*. Naturally enough, the Americans objected, but there was no money. “Then they offered, and the United States was obliged to accept in payment, some Beauvais tapestries and some copies of the *Moniteur*.”

Tapestries required muscular strength, for the material was heavy, and so men were given this work in town workshops. The ladies did the needle, bobbin and pillow work in the castles and convents. True tapestry is always woven on a loom, and is a combination of artistic design with skill in weaving.<sup>[161]</sup>

This tapestry industry was introduced into Western Europe in the Middle Ages by the Moors, but we can trace the art of making woven pictures to much earlier times. The ancient Romans had them. Ovid describes the contest in weaving between Arachne and Pallas, in which the maiden wrought more beautifully than the goddess. Pallas in anger struck the maid, who hanged herself in her rage because she dared not return the blow. The goddess, relenting, changed Arachne into a spider, and she continues her weaving to this day.

But a much earlier poet has described the making of tapestry. We read in the *Odyssey* that, when the return of Ulysses to his native land was long delayed, his faithful wife Penelope postponed a decision among the suitors who importuned her by promising to make a choice when she had finished weaving the funeral robe for Laertes, her husband’s father. The robe was never completed, for each night she took out the work of the day before.

It is a very interesting fact that a Grecian vase has come down to us on which is a painting of Penelope and her son Telemachus. Penelope is seated at what the experts say is certainly a tapestry loom, though somewhat different from those used at a later day.<sup>[162]</sup>

We have no large pieces done by the Greeks and the Romans, but many small bands for use as trimmings of robes. Some of these were woven by the Greeks as early as the fourth century B.C., others were made in Egypt under Roman rule some centuries later, and are called Coptic. From these one can trace the series through the silken Byzantine, Saracenic and Moorish dress tapestries to the Gothic fabrics of the fourteenth century.

The Flemish and Burgundian looms were those of Arras, Brussels, Tournai, Bruges, Enghien, Oudenarde, Middlebourg, Lille, Antwerp, and Delft in Holland. The value of the tapestry industry to Flanders may be judged from the fact that Arras, a city of no importance whatever, from which not a single great artist had come, led all Europe for about two centuries in tapestry weaving.

Although some fine pieces were woven in the fourteenth century, as far as known, only two sets of Arras tapestries of this period are left. One set is at the cathedral of Angers in rather bad condition, for they were not appreciated at one time, and were used in a greenhouse and cut up as rugs. Fortunately, they have been restored and returned to the cathedral. The other set of early Arras hangings is to be found at the cathedral of Tournai, in Belgium. A piece of this set bore an inscription—which has fortunately been preserved for us—stating, “These cloths were made and completed in Arras by Pierrot Féré in the year one thousand four hundred two, in December, gracious month. Will all the saints kindly pray to God for the soul of Toussaint Prier?” Toussaint Prier, a canon of the cathedral in 1402, was the donor of the tapestries.<sup>[163]</sup>

When Louis XI of France captured Arras, in 1477, and dispersed the weavers, Tournai, Brussels, Oudenarde and Enghien took up the work. The oldest Brussels tapestries known belong to the latter part of the fifteenth century. Two of these sets were painted by Roger van der Weyden and celebrated the Justice of Trajan and the Communion of Herkenbald. Some have tried to prove that other important tapestries were designed by the great primitives, but Max Rooses assures us the resemblance to their work comes from the fact that their characteristics, “careful execution, extreme delicacy of workmanship, and brilliancy of colour,” pervaded every branch of art at that period.

Brussels and Oudenarde held the lead throughout the sixteenth century. The Bruxellois wove vast historical<sup>[164]</sup>



compositions to decorate the palaces of kings; the weavers of Oudenarde produced landscapes, “verdures” and scenes from peasant life for the homes of burghers.

Tapestries are at their best as line drawings; when more complicated effects are sought “confusion and uncertainty follow.” The finest ever woven were produced during the last half of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries, when Gothic tapestries gradually ceased to be made and Renaissance pieces began to take their place. During that hundred years, when the weavers were most skilful and were still satisfied with line drawings, many of the finest tapestries combined the characteristics of both styles.

In the sixteenth century, the weavers had such marvelous skill, however, that they actually reproduced the shadow effects of Italian designs. Even such great artists as Raphael and Michael Angelo drew cartoons, and stories of ten, twenty or even thirty scenes were woven, all showing the distinctive characters of Renaissance art. They combined breadth of composition and lively action with the introduction of nude figures and elaborate landscape and architectural settings. But in trying to copy painting too closely, they departed from the best traditions of tapestry technique, and deterioration was sure to follow in time.

After the desolating wars of the sixteenth century, when arts and industries revived under the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, Brussels weavers set up their looms again, and “Rubens brought new life into tapestry manufacture. He supplied the Brussels workshops with four great series—the History of Decius Mus, destined for some Genoese merchants; the Triumphs and Types of the Eucharist, ordered by the Infanta Isabella for the convent of the Clares at Madrid; the History of the Emperor Constantine, executed for Louis XIII; and the History of Achilles, for Charles I.... The Triumphs and Types of the Eucharist are the most powerful allegories ever created to glorify the mysteries of the Catholic religion.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Jacob Jordaens also designed tapestry cartoons, but the most popular artist among the weavers at the end of the seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries was David Teniers. He did not himself make designs, but the manufacturers, especially at Oudenarde, borrowed his subjects, which were drawn largely from peasant and village life.

One reason why we have so few of the really antique tapestries is that in 1797 the market for them was so dead—owing to the increasing use of wall-papers and canvases painted in oils—that the French decided it would be better to burn them for the gold and silver they contained. Accordingly, “One hundred and ninety were burned. During the French Revolution, a number of tapestries that bore feudal emblems were also burned at the foot of the Tree of Liberty.” At this time, when they were not in fashion, many rare old hangings were cut up by the inartistic or the ignorant and used as rugs and curtains.

But in recent years, we are told, the Brothers Braquenié have set up a workshop at Malines, where they have produced a fine series for the Hôtel de Ville in Brussels, called “Les Serments et les Métiers de Bruxelles.” The cartoons for this set were made by Willem Geefs, the painter.

As to the material, there is a great difference. Gothic tapestries are composed of woolen weft on linen, or woolen on hemp warp, and are often enriched with gold and silver thread. These are not used today, as they are considered too expensive. Since the sixteenth century, Brussels, Gobelins, and Mortlake have used a great deal of silk. In the fifteenth century fifteen or twenty colours were employed, in the Renaissance period, twenty or thirty.

“Both high warp and low warp antedated the shuttle. In other words, they use bobbins that travel only part way across instead of shuttles that travel all the way across.” The high warp loom was also in use before the treadle. “In the low warp loom the odd threads of the warp are attached to a treadle worked with the left foot, the even threads of the warp to a treadle worked with the right foot, thus making possible the manipulation of the warp with the feet and leaving both hands free to pass the bobbins. In the high warp loom, that has no treadle, the warps are manipulated with the left hand while the right hand passes the bobbins back and forth. The term high warp means that the warp is strung vertically, low warp horizontally.”

Both are woven with the wrong side toward the weaver. “The wrong side in all real tapestries is just the same as the right side except for reversal of direction and for the loose threads.... In the high warp loom, the outline of the design is traced on the warp threads with India ink from tracing paper, and the coloured cartoon hangs behind the weaver, where he consults it constantly. In the low warp loom, the coloured cartoon is usually beneath the warp, and often rolls up with the tapestry as it is completed.”<sup>[5]</sup> In the eighteenth century, the low warp loom was considered better than the *haute lisse*, or high warp.

Great care has to be taken in dyeing the threads of the weft, which are much finer than those of the warp. Vegetable dyes, such as cochineal, madder, indigo, etc., must be used, for permanent colours can never be obtained with aniline dyes. The old Spanish dyes were considered the best. In this country, one sometimes gets the fine colours in an old Mexican serape or a prized Navajo blanket. The wool that is used to mend old tapestries in the American museums is coloured with dyes made by Miss Charlotte Pendleton in her workshop near Washington, which I have visited.

The Arras tapestries have a better and more attractive texture than any others. “Arras tapestries are line drawings formed by the combination of horizontal ribs with vertical weft threads and hatchings. There are no diagonal or irregular or floating threads, as in embroideries and brocades. Nor do any of the warp threads show, as in twills and damasks. The surface consists entirely of fine weft threads that completely interlace the coarser warp threads in plain weave (over and under alternately), and also completely cover them, so that only the ribs mark their position—one rib for each warp thread. Every Arras tapestry is a rep fabric, the number of ribs eight to twenty-four to the inch.” The finely woven textures are not always considered the best. “The most marvelous tapestries of the fifteenth century were comparatively coarse (from eight to twelve ribs), and of the sixteenth were moderately coarse (from ten to sixteen).”

Many of the early Gothic tapestries had inscriptions woven at the bottom or the top, but had no borders. It

was not until toward the end of the fifteenth century that they began to develop these. They first had narrow verdure edgings, until Raphael introduced compartment borders in the set of the Gates of the Apostles, the most famous tapestries of the world. The most noted cartoons in existence are the designs for this set, in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington. Renaissance borders were much wider than the Gothic, and were filled with greens and flowers. At the end of the seventeenth century the borders took the form of imitation picture frames.<sup>[170]</sup>

Gothic verdures are in reality coloured drawings in flat outline of trees and flowers with birds and animals. Renaissance verdures have more heavily shaded leaves and look more true to nature.

The majority of Gothic tapestries are anonymous as regards both maker and designer. With the Renaissance began the custom in Brussels and other Flemish cities of weaving the mark of the city into the bottom selvage, and the monogram of the weaver into the side selvage on the right. This custom was established by a city ordinance of Brussels in 1528. An edict of Charles V made it uniform, in 1544, for the whole of the Netherlands. After another century, weavers began to sign their full names or their initials in Roman letters, and monograms were discarded.

When the weavers of Arras took refuge in other countries, after the capture of that town by Louis XI, they went by thousands to England and France. In this way the French looms at Gobelins, Beauvais, and Aubusson were started, and those at Mortlake, in England.

As early as the fourteenth century, there was at least one eminent master weaver in Paris, Nicolas Bataille, in whose factory part of the remarkable Apocalypse set of the cathedral of Angers was woven. But even in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, French tapestries were far from equaling those of Flanders. In 1667, Colbert "established in the buildings of the Gobelins the furniture factory of the Crown under the direction of Charles Lebrun."

The great establishment of "Les Gobelins," by the way, has an interesting history. Jean and Philibert Gobelin built a dyehouse in the fifteenth century by the little stream of the Bièvre, in the Faubourg, whose waters had peculiar qualities that gave special excellence to their dyes. The family found dyeing so profitable that they were able to become bankers, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century they sold the establishment, which, however, still kept their name. Here Comans and Planche, tapestry weavers from Flanders, opened a factory in 1601. The edict of Henri Quatre by which they were incorporated gave them important privileges, but also obliged them to train apprentices and to establish the craft in the provinces.

During the Spanish occupation of the Netherlands, many tapestries were taken to Spain, where the finest in existence today are to be found. They may be seen in the churches and draping the balconies over the streets of a fête day. King Alfonso owns seven miles of gold and silver thread hangings. But these are only the remnant of what Spanish royalty formerly possessed. Charles V, Philip II, and many others of the ruling house were indefatigable collectors. The famous Conquest of Tunis, in twelve pieces, was woven by Willem de Pannemaker, the most noted of the master-weavers, for Charles V. The cartoons for this set are in the Imperial Museum in Vienna and the tapestries in the royal palace in Madrid. "Many pieces that formerly belonged to the kings of Spain have been destroyed by fire; others have been worn out by long and frequent use. For these tapestries did not remain in a fixed place: they were hung in halls and apartments on festive occasions; they were taken down and rolled up when they had done service; they were used on journeys to furnish the lodgings en route; they were packed with the campaign-baggage to garnish the tents; they decorated the jousting lists and the streets and squares when the sovereigns made their entries."

Tapestries can also be found in Russia in palaces and museums, for Peter the Great sent for weavers from Flanders. England, too, was dependent upon the Flemings, for the noted weaver, Philip de Maecht, came from the atelier of Comans and Planche to become head of the works at Mortlake.<sup>[173]</sup>



DIANA TAPESTRY.

In 1376, the Court of Savoy ordered many tapestries from the great manufacturer, Nicolas Bataille, but later factories were opened in Italy. About 1455, Renard de Marncourt, another Flemish weaver, made in Rome for Pope Nicholas V the marvelous set of the Creation of the World. There were also tapestry works at Ferrara with prominent Flemings at their head. Nicholas and Jean Karcher were employed there by Duke Hercules II. Jean Roost, of Brussels, was head of a factory at Florence, in which work was continued for over two hundred years. Cardinal Francisco Barberini, after his visit to France in 1633, when he became interested in the works of Comans and Planche, started another factory in Rome. Nicholas Poussin and Pietro de Cortona supplied designs, the art director was Jean François Romanelli, and the manager Jacopo della Riviera.

Among our own tapestries, the Diana set of eight pieces came from the Barberini collection. The cartoons of these were done by du Breuil. This series possesses remarkable decorative qualities and is of great historical importance. The panels were woven in Brussels at the close of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century, in the ateliers of Jacques Geubles and Jean Raes, who were among the most famous weavers of their time. The mark of Brussels and Brabant is woven in the bottom galon of every one of the pieces, and the monograms of the authors, that of Raes in the upper part and that of Geubles in the lower part, although it is most unusual to find all the panels signed by the artists collaborating in their production. The original linings of these tapestries bore the stamped monogram of Cardinal Francisco Barberini and also that of Cardinal Antonio Barberini. In MSS. XLVIII of Vol. 141, preserved in the Barberini library, these tapestries are mentioned as having been "presented by the most Christian King Louis XIII of France to Cardinal Barberini, Legate to France, 1625."

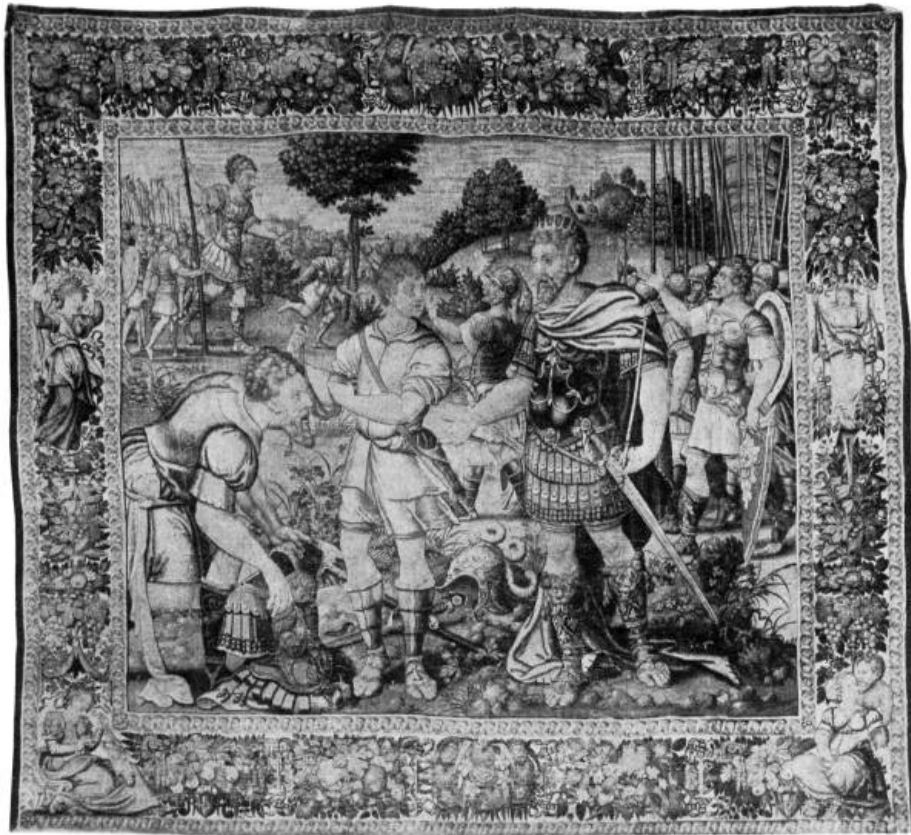
Cardinal Francisco Barberini, when he visited the Court of France in 1625, went as Legate of his uncle, Pope Urban VIII, to settle upon terms of peace for Europe. These hangings then became part of the collection owned by the princely Barberini of Rome, which in time came to be renowned and was regarded as one of the most splendid in the world.

The subjects seem to be allegorical representations of the Loves of Henry of France and Diana of Poitiers, as has been agreed by some of the most important authorities who have studied them, for the faces in the tapestries show a distinct resemblance to portraits of the King and his favourite. Engravings of the heads of Henry and Diana, as can be seen in the Gazette des Beaux Arts, exhibit striking likenesses to those on the woven fabric. In the Gazette there is an illustration which shows the château of Anet, with gardens such as are represented in the tapestries, with a fountain, and Diana standing with the crescent in her hair, her bow in her hand and a quiver at her back, wearing a costume similar in style and character. Montaignon writes of the château of Anet, that the altars were destroyed and the statues torn from their bases and carried off in pieces, as is suggested in one panel which represents a rushing river sweeping away columns and statues from their foundations. Mythology teaches that the legendary Diana punished mothers who deserted their children, and succoured their offspring, as is again suggested in this same panel of Diana of Poitiers, who did more, history relates, to bring up the children of the King than did the Queen. The beautiful Madame d'Estampes and her coterie did everything in their power to destroy Diana; pasquinades and libelous brochures were levied against her. The dragon in one panel represents jealousy, spite and vindictiveness in its flaming eyes, scaly hide and protruding tongue. Also, in allegorical manner, nothing could better express the triumph which the King accorded Diana when he "broke her enemies and humiliated them," than the picture of the King slaying the dragon. The set is full of interesting detail—there are dogs and hares, nymphs

and satyrs. All the details combine to tell the story, and in one piece the monarch wears a crown, which emphasizes the royalty of the lover.

Seven of the tapestries were originally acquired from the Princess Barberini, although inventories suggested that there were eight in the full series; strangely enough, several years later, the missing one was discovered by another collector in Amsterdam, but this had had its border cut off, as would naturally be the case in a stolen tapestry. We were able to get it, so that now the set is once more complete after hundreds of years.

The David and Goliath series is also in our possession, and is a representative set. These tapestries illustrate prominent events in the story of David and Goliath, and were made in Flanders in the second half of the sixteenth century. They are in excellent condition, without repair, and possess borders of delicious character.



**DAVID AND GOLIATH TAPESTRY.**

This set was presented by Cardinal d'Este, Papal Legate at the Court of Charles IX of France, to Count Flaminio Mannelli, who was then his secretary and had filled in various ways honourable offices at the Court and in the service of the Dowager Queen Catherine de Medici.

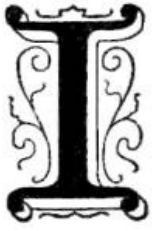
A record of the period shows that about 1587 the hangings were brought to Count Mannelli's palace, in the Marche of Italy, where they remained until 1898, when we purchased them from the Marquis Pianetti of Jesi, who had come into possession of the set. The six different panels depict literally the scenes described in the Bible. The titles are: David before Saul, the Challenge of Goliath of Gath, the Battle between Goliath and David, the Beheading of Goliath, the Triumph of David, and the Madness of Saul.

When we were in Belgium, the home of tapestry, I was surprised to find comparatively few pieces there. Many more, as I have said, are seen in Italy and Spain, some in France and England, and a few in America, where we are beginning to appreciate them.

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## **CHAPTER X**

### **PRIMITIVES AND LATER PAINTERS**



**I**N the Low Countries, perhaps more than in any other part of Europe, has the many-sided life of the people revealed itself through the various forms of artistic expression. Religion, industry, struggles for independence, the power of the guilds, the splendour of the dukes of Burgundy, the landscape, the homes, the people themselves, all are found in Belgian art. They were pictured in the delicate tracery of cloistered illuminators, carved in wood or stone in the old churches, enshrined within the wooden panels of ancient triptychs, and woven into the storied tapestries of hall and castle. They figured in the canvases of the Renaissance masters, and after the "Dark Ages" of the Spanish oppression, were revived in a new race of modern painters, who depicted the life of the young nation. The true greatness, the real charm of Belgium has lain in her art.

Obviously, the two great periods of Belgian art were the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, but it by no means follows that no other periods are worthy of our consideration; indeed, we cannot understand the school of the van Eycks without studying the three centuries preceding the fifteenth. Before the days of Hubert van Eyck there were at Bruges masters of whom he learned, and whose style can hardly be distinguished from his own. A hundred years earlier than the van Eycks was the great age of architecture, when cathedrals and mighty cloth-halls rose on Flemish plains, and sculpture, stained glass and wrought iron were all called for to decorate the wonderful structures. Still earlier, many a patient monk in his cell traced with loving care those illuminations that made the beauty of missal and breviary. The van Eycks and Memling were the lineal descendants of these artists.

Toward the fourteenth century, the exquisite vignettes of the illuminators displayed marvelous grace and delicacy of execution, cleverness of design, and great brilliancy of colour. To quote from a French writer, "In the hands of the miniature painters of Bruges, gold glistens, it sparkles. Their colours, if they are not more beautiful, are as beautiful as those of nature. Their flesh tints vie with the freshness of colour of young girls, just as in their arabesques and in their frames we think we see currants and strawberries ripening and breathe the perfume of flowers."

At this time, painters and illuminators were in some sense rivals. They were enrolled in separate guilds at Bruges. "The Guild of St. Luke included painters, saddlers, glass-makers and mirror-makers; that of St. John illuminators, calligraphers, binders and image-painters." Painters were allowed to use oil-colours, but illuminators were limited to water-colours. It became the aim of the former to transfer to their canvases and their wooden panels the same vividness of colouring that the latter produced upon vellum. Doubtless many artists were at work at this problem, which was finally solved by Hubert van Eyck.

Another important factor in forming the Flemish school was the influence of the guilds. In the fourteenth century, the painter was a craftsman and as rigidly bound by the laws of his guild as any carpenter or mason. He was apprenticed to a master for perhaps five years, during which he was taught the secrets of the craft. He learned to choose the wood for his panel and make it ready for use. He mixed the fine plaster with which to cover the wood, and the durability of his picture depended on the care he used in this and the evenness of the coating. For every implement with which he worked, every colour that entered into his picture, he must depend upon himself. He must prepare his own oils and varnishes. If he wished to make a drawing, he often was obliged to work with the silver-point, and to prepare his paper himself; if he drew in chalk or charcoal, he had to make his own selection of materials.

After the apprenticeship came the years of wandering, when the young painter could work for any master he pleased, could travel as far afield as he chose, and in this way gain experience and a store of valuable impressions. When he returned to his home, he was admitted to the painters' guild, provided he could satisfy its officers that he was competent; if so, he could take his position as a master of the craft. Even then he was not free from the supervision of the fraternity. His master's oath bound him to honesty and to do his work "as in the sight of God." Its officers inspected his materials and his output, and if either was found to be below the standard he was punished. Every contract must be fulfilled to the letter, and the guild officers were the arbiters in case of any dispute. Finally, all his implements were marked with the sign of the guild.

Pictures of the cities of Flanders in the fifteenth century bear witness to their artistic splendour. Says an English writer of Bruges at that time, "The squares were adorned with fountains; its bridges with statues in bronze; the public buildings and many of the private houses with statuary and carved work, the beauty of which was heightened and brought out by gilding and polychrome; the windows were rich with storied glass, and the walls of the interiors adorned with paintings in distemper, or hung with gorgeous tapestry." It was in surroundings such as these and under the stimulus of competition with his brother craftsmen that Hubert van Eyck made his great discovery of a manner of using oil in painting large pieces that would make it possible to equal the brilliant colours of the illuminators. The Flemings kept the secret of the new process so well that it was not disclosed to Italian artists until toward the end of the fifteenth century.

But this discovery in technique is not his only claim to renown. His achievements as a painter were even greater than his skill as a craftsman. A high authority says that the beauty of the Virgin in the Adoration of the Lamb "places it in the rank of the Madonnas of Leonardo da Vinci and of Raphael." This genius of the Middle Ages and his younger brother have left Belgium in the famous triptych a lofty composition in which the marvelous technique that has wrought the colours together till the surface is like enamel is combined with beauty of landscape and skill in portraiture. In the inscription placed upon it we read: "Hubert van Eyck, than whom none greater has appeared, began the work, which Jan his brother, in art the second, brought to completion."



Almost nothing is known of the life of Hubert van Eyck. He was born at Maaseyck about the year 1366, and lived at Bruges with his brother and their sister Margaret, who was also a painter. He was made a member of the painters' guild of Ghent in 1421, the year in which he left the service of the powerful lord afterward known as Philip the Good. Three years later, Jodocus Vydts, burgomaster of Ghent, and his wife Isabella gave him an order for an altar-piece to be placed in their mortuary chapel in the cathedral. His work was cut short by his death in 1426. It is impossible to tell how much was done by his hand and how much by his brother Jan, but there seems good reason to believe that Hubert painted the central panels in the upper row, and that<sup>[184]</sup> Jan was the artist of the Adoration panel below these. Through some strange lack of appreciation in the custodians of this masterpiece, Brussels and Berlin were able to purchase the wings, so that those we saw at Ghent were only copies.

Hubert van Eyck's body was laid in the chapel of the Vydts' in the cathedral of St. Bavon, near his masterpiece, but we are told that his severed right arm was placed in a reliquary in the cathedral itself. No doubt it was considered a sacred relic! His epitaph was carved on a shield, supported by a marble skeleton. The following free translation of this quaint old Flemish verse was made by William B. Scott:<sup>[6]</sup>

“Whoe'er thou art who walkest overhead,  
Behold thyself in stone: for I yestreen,  
Was seemly and alert like thee: now dead,  
Nailed up and earthed, and for the last time green;  
The first spring greenness and the last decay  
Are hidden here forever from the day.  
I, Hubert van Eyck, whom all Bruges' folks hailed  
Worthy of lauds, am now with worms engrailed.  
My soul, with many pangs by God constrained,  
Fled in September, when the corn is wained,  
Just fourteen hundred years and twenty-six  
Since Lord Christ did invent the crucifix.  
Lovers of Art, pray for me that I gain  
God's grace, nor find I've painted, lived, in vain.”



**"L'HOMME À L'ŒUILLET."—VAN EYCK.**

Jan van Eyck was courtier as well as artist. As a young man, he was employed by John of Bavaria, Bishop of Liège, and after the death of his brother we hear of him as gentleman of the chamber to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, by whom he was sent on various missions. One of his journeys was made to Portugal, where he painted the portrait of Princess Isabella, who afterward became the second wife of the Duke, and in whose honour the Order of the Golden Fleece was founded. His famous picture called "L'homme à l'œuillet," was the portrait of Jean de Roubaix, who accompanied him to Portugal and arranged the marriage of the Princess with the great Duke. Jan seems to have possessed the modesty of true greatness, for on more than one of his pictures is found the motto, "Als Ikh Kan," As I can. During the latter part of his life he lived at Bruges, where he died in 1440.

In the midst of his court duties, Jan found time to go on with the great altar-piece, which he completed in 1432. A few years later, he produced what is perhaps his finest religious painting next to the Adoration, the Madonna of the Canon van der Paele. This picture represents the Virgin and Child enthroned in a stately basilica, probably the cathedral of St. Donatian at Bruges. In the foreground, on the right stands St. George,<sup>[186]</sup> on the left St. Donatian. On the Virgin's left, upon his knees, is George van der Paele, Canon of St. Donatian, the donor of the painting.

This Virgin and St. Donatian by Jan van Eyck would make one think, says Fromentin, "that the art of painting had said its last word, and that from the first hour. And yet, without changing either theme or method, Memling was going to say something more."

A tradition cherished by the Flemings has it that Hans Memling, in the year 1477, dragged himself, sick and needy, to the gates of St. John's Hospital in Bruges, where he was tenderly nursed back to health, and that, in gratitude, he painted for the hospital the pictures that have ever since been its pride. This may or may not be true, but a detail in the Marriage of St. Catherine seems designed to confirm the legend. It represents a man dropping exhausted in the street, who is then revived by some cooling drink, and afterward borne to the hospital. We can not but feel that the artist is giving us here an incident from his personal history.

The little we know of Memling's life may be told in very few words. In 1450, he painted the portrait of<sup>[187]</sup> Isabella, Duchess of Burgundy, whose likeness Jan van Eyck had journeyed to Portugal to make twenty-two years before. After the death of Philip the Good, no doubt he was court painter to Charles the Rash and in the year of the latter's defeat and death at Nancy took refuge in Bruges. Here he married and came into possession of some property through his wife, he painted his greatest works, and died in 1495.

In the quaint chapter-room of the old hospital, itself dating from the thirteenth century, Memling's compositions found an appropriate setting. Here was the great triptych of the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine, an altar-piece for the high altar of the church connected with the hospital; two smaller triptychs, one of the Three Kings, the other a Pietà; the portrait of Mary Moreel, and a diptych ordered by Martin van Nieuwenhoven, on which is Memling's finest piece of portraiture, the likeness of the donor. "The man himself is no very superb specimen of humanity; he has a bright and pleasant though rather foolish face; but such as he is Memling has caught the idea of him, and placed him visibly and knowably on the panel.... Its colouring is unusual and most beautiful. The textures of the garments are superb, and not only are the little landscapes<sup>[188]</sup> seen through the open windows full of the charm that Memling always threw into his backgrounds, but the charm extends to the interior of the room, with its stained glass windows, paneled walls, looking-glass and other pieces of furniture."<sup>[7]</sup>

But the most interesting work by the great Fleming that the hospital contains is the world-famed reliquary of St. Ursula. This chest, in shape like a tiny Gothic chapel, only three feet long and two feet ten inches high, bears on its sides in six arched panels the legend of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins. The saint and her maidens are seen landing at Cologne, arriving at Basle, and received in Rome by the Sovereign Pontiff himself, who joins them for the return voyage down the Rhine. They are awaited at Cologne by the cruel Huns, who shoot them down without mercy, and, last of all, the saintly princess suffers martyrdom.

This story is told in panels only one foot in width. The little pictures are crowded with figures dressed in the sumptuous costumes of the Court of Burgundy. Genuine landscapes are introduced in the backgrounds—the city of Cologne and the scenery along the Rhine are pictured from sketches which the artist made himself.<sup>[189]</sup> These tiny paintings have the brilliant colouring of the van Eycks and the finish of detail of the old illuminators. They show the tenderness, the fancy, the patient industry of the master. "Gentle, cordial, affectionate, humble, painstaking as Memling must have been, his best works are those of the St. Ursula series type, where his fancy could play about bright and fairy-like creatures, where no storm nor the memory of a storm need ever come, where no clouds darkened the sky, and not even the brilliant tones of sunset gave forecast of a coming night."<sup>[8]</sup>





ST. LUKE PAINTING THE MADONNA.—VAN DER WEYDEN.

Another of the early Flemish masters was Roger van der Weyden. His *St. Luke Painting the Madonna*, in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, is considered one of the masterpieces of that gallery.

As an artist, Roger van der Weyden was the equal of neither the van Eycks nor Memling, but he was greater as a master. His art combined the religious symbolism of the Middle Ages with the new naturalism of Jan van Eyck, and its effect was wide-spread. The Germans made his paintings their standard, the Italians acknowledged his greatness, and the artists of the Low Countries all formed their style under his teaching or strove to imitate his work.<sup>[190]</sup>

I have never seen a keener and juster analysis of the art of the Flemish primitives than that given by Conway, in his "Early Flemish Artists," from which I quote: "Jan van Eyck was a man of fact, his work is an attempt to state the uttermost truth about things.... In his pictures, light and shade, texture, colour and outline have about equal stress laid upon them. In this respect he was one of the most complete of artists." Roger van der Weyden "laid chief stress upon outlines, striving to make them graceful so far as in him lay.... Memling was formed of milder stuff.... He was a painter of fairy tales, not of facts.... To lose oneself in a picture of his is to take a pleasant and healthy rest."

The same critic adds this beautiful characterization of early Flemish art in general: "The paintings of Flanders were not, and were not intended to be, popular. Flemish artists did not, like the Italians, paint for the folk, but for the delight of a small clique of cultured and solid individuals. They painted as their employers worked, with energy, honesty and endurance; they cared not for beauty of the more palpable and less enduring kind, but they cared infinitely for Truth; for her they laboured in humility, satisfied with the joy of their own obedience, and then, when they slept and knew not of it, she came and clothed the children of their industry with her own unfading garments of loveliness and life."<sup>[191]</sup>

Between the glorious past of the van Eycks and Memling and the brilliant future of Rubens and Jordaens, stands Quentin Matsys, the founder of the Antwerp school, who died in 1530. He was the great master of the Gothic-Renaissance transition, showing the influence of the Renaissance, while still clinging to Gothic types. His paintings include religious subjects and incidents drawn from daily life. His "women of a goddess-like delicacy with almond eyes and long slim fingers," lived a mystical life among transparent, glassy columns and carpets with exotic embroideries. The men have an air of distinction. He often leans as far toward caricature, however, as he does toward sentimentality, and there are great contrasts in his work—grimacing, long-nosed, carousing old men and lovely women. "None understands as well as Matsys how to make strong splendours of colour shine through a thin veil of mist, or how to paint the tremulous surface of life so that we see the blood running in the veins."<sup>[192]</sup>

From "Master Quentin's" prime until Rubens brought back to Flanders the results of his studies in Italy was nearly one hundred years—years that covered the Spanish oppression of the Low Countries under Charles V and Philip II, years that saw Flanders desolated by the Duke of Alva. But out of the decay of Flemish art rose Peter Paul Rubens, born in 1577.

John Rubens, the father of the painter, was a lawyer in Antwerp. As he favoured the Protestants, he found it the safest course, when the Duke of Alva's reign of terror began, to take refuge with his family across the border at Cologne. Here he became the legal adviser of Anne of Saxony, wife of William the Silent, who preferred to reside comfortably at Cologne while he was off fighting the Spaniards.

The result of this association was a scandal of the most serious nature, and only the efforts of his forgiving wife and the desire of the house of Orange to hush up the affair, saved Master Rubens from the penalty of death, as prescribed by the German law of that day. His sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life, but after two years of close confinement he was permitted to live with his family in Siegen, on condition of giving himself up again whenever summoned. It was during this time that Peter Paul, "the most Flemish of all the Flemings," was born at Siegen, on German soil.<sup>[193]</sup>

After the death of John Rubens, his widow returned with her family to Antwerp, where the little Peter Paul was sent to a school on the site of the present Milk Market, until he was thirteen years old. Then, as he was a bright, handsome boy, the Countess van Lalaing received him as page into her house, where she held a miniature court. He was in the service of the Countess only one year, but the training he gained in that time gave him the courtesy and ease of manners that made him, in after years, perfectly at home in the presence of princes.

In his boyhood Rubens had shown his love of art by making it his chief amusement to copy the illustrations in his mother's large family Bible, and after leaving the Countess van Lalaing, he persuaded his mother to let him study painting. For four years he was the pupil of Adam van Noort, and afterward of Otto van Veen, also called Vaenius, after the fashion of the day. At that time van Veen was the most noted painter in Antwerp. Two years more of study, and Rubens was admitted into the Guild of St. Luke, and the following year he assisted his master in decorating the city for the Joyous Entry of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella.<sup>[194]</sup>

The young painter's next step was to seek inspiration in Italy, and in 1600 he went to Venice to study Titian and Veronese. Here he copied old masters, painted portraits, and attracted the attention of the Duke of Mantua, who became his patron. In 1603 he was sent to Spain by the Duke, and took with him many paintings as a present for Philip III. When he went home to Flanders in 1608, Albert and Isabella made him court painter in order that they might keep him in Antwerp.

Rubens was twice married. His first wife, Isabella Brant, made his home happy for seventeen years, and is commemorated in several paintings. Helena Fourment, whom he married four years after Isabella's death, was a girl of sixteen who was considered remarkably beautiful, and if we may judge by the use he made of her as a model, this opinion of her was fully shared by her husband. Besides the numerous portraits of her—in every possible position, sitting, standing or walking, handsomely dressed or nearly nude, alone or with her husband or children, in her own person or as Bathsheba, Dido or Andromeda—she appears in such large compositions as the Garden of Love and the Judgment of Paris.<sup>[195]</sup>

The paintings of Rubens have always been the special pride of Antwerp. The Elevation of the Cross and the Descent from the Cross were the treasures of the cathedral. The first was painted in 1610, soon after his return from Italy, and the second but little later. There are six known variants of the Descent from the Cross. The one in the cathedral is a wonderful composition, brilliant in its conception and marvelously drawn. The Elevation is by some critics considered finer than its companion picture. The Christ à la Paille, the "Coup de Lance," the Adoration of the Kings, and the Last Communion of St. Francis are all in the Antwerp Museum.

Fromentin, writing of Rubens in 1876, thus spoke of Malines and works of the great artist that were treasured there: "There are only two things that have outlived its past splendour, some extremely costly sanctuaries and the pictures by Rubens. These pictures are the celebrated triptych of the Magi, in St. John's, and the no less celebrated triptych of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes, which belongs to the Church of Notre Dame."

In this connection it is interesting to read how, when the Germans were shelling Malines for the second time,<sup>[196]</sup> early last September, a Red Cross worker saved the Adoration of the Magi. The church had not yet suffered from the German shells. "This large work, composed of two side panels and a center piece, being on panel, was too heavy for two men to handle. I was first compelled to break into the church, for everybody had fled from the stricken town, and after many endeavours to find help, commandeered the only police officer available, two fine gendarmes and a locksmith. These men, with the utmost good will, helped us to rig a tackle over the famous picture, and, after two or three hours' work, we were rejoiced to see our exertions crowned with success, for the three parts of the picture were down, without the slightest scratch. We commandeered from a village close by a dray and two horses, lashed the central piece of the picture between soft pads of hay and blankets, and sent it under the care of one of our men into safety at ——. The two side panels I took away myself in my own car."

The Miraculous Draught of Fishes, which had been removed from the church of Notre Dame, and was found in a corridor of a public gymnasium, lying bare against the wall and without any protection whatever, was saved in the same way. The shrine of St. Rombaut, "a very costly work of silver and gold, about three feet high and five feet long," was rescued before the destruction of the cathedral, and sent to a secret place of safety. It is a "valuable specimen of antique goldsmith's work." Many altar furnishings in gold and silver, beautiful laces, and a number of paintings, among them two more that are attributed to Rubens, were also included among the articles saved.<sup>[197]</sup>



**PORTRAIT OF A MAN AND HIS WIFE.—RUBENS.**

Rubens was a prolific artist, and his pictures are to be found in all the great galleries of Europe, besides a small number in American private houses and museums. An interesting example of these is the portrait of a man and his wife, in the collection of Mrs. Robert D. Evans of Boston, now in the Museum of Fine Arts.

Rubens had all the industry, honesty, and brilliancy of colour of the great Flemings. He had, besides, greatness of conception and breadth of composition. A distinguished English painter calls him "perhaps the greatest master in the mechanical part of the art, the best workman with his tools, that ever exercised a pencil." His paintings glow with vitality; they depict natural life in landscapes, in animals, in human beings.<sup>[198]</sup> Many of his works are on large canvases and depict gross and sensual subjects. His Madonnas are often unsatisfying; his figures of Christ seldom bear the impress of the Godhead; with one or two notable exceptions the life of the spirit is lacking in his work. One of these exceptions is the Last Communion of St. Francis, which was at last accounts in the Antwerp Museum. The dying saint in the foreground has raised himself on his knees, and is even stretching toward the officiating priest on the left. His weak body is supported by a monk on the right. His face is radiant with spiritual exaltation and an earnestness of purpose that would hold even death in check until the holy wafer has passed his lips. In this picture Rubens has pierced the veil and revealed the things that cannot be known by the senses. Fromentin says of it: "When one has made a prolonged study of this unequalled work in which Rubens is transfigured, one can no longer look at anything, neither any person, nor other paintings, not even Rubens himself; for today one must leave the Museum."

But Rubens was the head of a school of painting—the later Flemish school. His studio was thronged with young artists, who were assistants as well as students. With his keenness of observation directed to a line of<sup>[199]</sup> business, the master quickly discovered what each pupil could do best, and set him at that part of a composition. In this way Rubens was enabled to produce the immense number of pictures that bear his name—thirteen hundred have been catalogued. One student would paint nothing but landscapes, another all the animals, while the teacher put in the most important parts and added the finishing touches to the whole. There was no deceit in this method of working, for the amount of Rubens' own work a given piece contained depended upon the price his clients were willing to pay. The design was always his, but those who paid the lowest price got nothing but the design from his hand, while his wealthy patrons who could afford the maximum received pieces that were entirely his own handiwork, and between the two extremes there were all grades of collaboration.

Jacob Jordaens was one of the most famous of Rubens' pupils. It is said that "they are of the same family and the same temperament; and Rubens stands between Jordaens and van Dyck. Rubens is gold, van Dyck silver, and Jordaens blood and fire." The latter was an indefatigable painter and a rapid worker, often completing a<sup>[200]</sup> portrait at a single sitting. He covered a wide range of subjects, religious, allegorical, landscapes, portraits and animals, and he succeeded so well that "there are Jordaens attributed to Rubens and Rubens to Jordaens."

Anthony van Dyck was another pupil of the great master, and the aristocrat of the famous seventeenth century Flemings. He was only a boy among boys, quite undistinguished, until one day chancing to rub against a painting of his teacher's on which the paint was still wet, he retouched it so skilfully that it turned

out better than before. In time he became so formidable a rival, in spite of his youth, that Rubens sent him off to Italy to study. He came back in four years, greater than ever. A few years later, Rubens contrived to have him called to England as court painter. During the time that he remained in Flanders he produced several religious pictures, among them the Raising of the Cross, at Courtrai, and a Crucifixion, which, before the war, was in the Cardinal's palace at Malines. The same Red Cross worker who rescued the Rubens from destruction at Malines also brought away this composition, of which he says, that it had been cut out of its frame the day before, rolled up, and stowed away in the cellar. But van Dyck's best work was done in<sup>[201]</sup> portraiture, and in this he was "nearly the equal of Titian."



**CHARLES I AND HIS FAMILY.—VAN DYCK.**

Van Dyck so quickly became a great favourite of Charles I that he was knighted within three months after going to England. He painted the King and Queen many times. The portrait of Charles I in the Louvre was done at the height of his skill. He loved to paint kings and nobles, in velvet and silken garments trimmed with rare old lace. For ten years he was court painter in England, and so many of his portraits are still in the great houses there that a family portrait by van Dyck is said to be "tantamount in England to a patent of nobility." After the execution of Charles, he went to Flanders and to Paris seeking commissions, but his popularity had waned, and he returned to England broken in health and spirit, and died there in 1641. His body rests in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Van Dyck painted cavaliers, and he himself belonged to that type. His work is so individual that it is easily recognized. A charming adventurer, a popular courtier, he was a favourite of kings, was fêted in foreign countries. At the close of his life, he is called "a man in ruins, who until his last hour has the good fortune,<sup>[202]</sup> and this is the most extraordinary thing about him, to preserve his greatness when he paints."

The annals of the seventeenth century are filled with the names of a host of artists of more or less renown, followers of Rubens and van Dyck. But "for the Flemish school, the eighteenth century is a long entr'acte, during which the stage, so nobly occupied of old, is sad and deserted."

The modern Belgian school of art started in Antwerp after the Revolution of 1830. At first it corresponded to the romantic movement in France, of which Delaroche was one of the leaders, but with this difference, that the Belgians chose their subjects for the most part from the age-long battle for freedom waged by their country. The most distinguished of these "romantic" Belgian artists were Louis Galliat and Edouard Biefve.

The "historic" and "archaic" schools of these modern painters included Leys and his followers, whose work is interesting because they sought to reproduce the characteristics of van Eyck and Memling. The frescos in the Antwerp town hall by Leys, illustrating the charters and the privileges of that city in olden times, are called by Max Rooses, "monumental creations by a great master of the art of painting." Henri de Braekeleer had the<sup>[203]</sup> art of investing the most prosaic subjects with interest. He painted the ordinary things of daily life, a wine-shop, an old man at his printing, in a way that glorified them.

The insane artist, Wiertz, thought himself the second Rubens, and produced a number of huge canvases. The Wiertz Museum had an astonishing collection of the works of this artist—paintings on every imaginable theme, ranging from "wild nightmares of the brain" to such impressive compositions as the Contest for the Body of Patroclus, after the manner of Rubens, and the Triumph of Christ, a sublime work showing great originality and wonderful power of execution.

Much remarkably good restoration of paintings has been done by modern Belgian artists. An amusing story has come to me of an artist who was employed to touch up a large painting in an old church. When he presented his bill the committee in charge refused payment unless the details were specified. Whereupon he

presented the items as follows:

To correcting the ten commandments	\$5.12	
To embellishing Pontius Pilate and putting new ribbons on his hat	3.02	[204]
To putting new tail on rooster of St. Peter and mending his comb	2.20	
To repluming and gilding left wing of the Guardian Angel	5.18	
To washing the servant of the High Priest and putting carmine on his cheeks	5.02	
To renewing Heaven, adjusting the Stars and cleaning up the moon	7.14	
To touching up Purgatory and restoring Lost Souls	3.06	
To brightening up the flames of Hell and putting new tail on the Devil, mending his left hoof and doing several odd jobs for the damned	7.17	
To rebordering the robes of Herod and adjusting his wig	4.00	
To taking the spots off the son of Tobias	1.30	
To cleaning Balaam's Ass and putting new shoe on him	1.70	
To putting rings in Sarah's ears	1.71	
To putting new stone in David's sling and enlarging the head of Goliath and extending Saul's legs	6.13	
To decorating Noah's Ark and putting head on Shem	4.31	
To mending the shirt of the Prodigal Son and cleaning his ear	3.39	
	\$60.45	

Belgium has lost none of her interest in artistic expression. At the Academy in Antwerp, there were about two thousand art students before the war, and about sixteen thousand in all Belgium. Perhaps the most noted living painters at that time were Stevens and Wauters, and Madame Ronner, who was famous for her pictures<sup>[205]</sup> of cats. The studio of Blanc-Grin, in Brussels, was the center of present-day painters when we were there.

Belgium has never been so famous for its sculptors as for its painters. Among the moderns, Jef Lambeaux took high rank, but Constantin Meunier, of Liège, was perhaps the greatest. "He was *par excellence*," says Max Rooses, "the sculptor of the workman: first of the Hainault coal-miner, then of the worker of all trades and countries.... He finally arrived at investing his models with truly classic beauty. They became the heroes of a grand drama, now commanding the flames of tall furnaces and measuring their strength with the most terrible of the elements, now cutting the corn and tying it in sheaves, defying the almost equally murderous heat of the sun."

In a notice of the Royal Academy Exhibition in London, in May of the present year, we read, "Almost the only work universally praised in the press reviews of the opening day is by a Belgian sculptor, Egide Rombeaux. It is a statue of more than life size, entitled 'Premier Morning.'" One critic says, that outside the charmed circle where Rodin reigns supreme, no sculpture more remarkable in originality and poetry of conception has been seen of late years in a public exhibition. Belgian art has not lost its vitality. Will it not emerge from its<sup>[206]</sup> baptism of fire with the consecration of a noble purpose to express the honour, the patriotism, the self-sacrifice, that have glorified the land?

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## CHAPTER XI

### LA JEUNE BELGIQUE IN LETTERS

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**A**LTHOUGH for many, perhaps most, of my readers, Belgian literature is summed up in the one word, Maeterlinck, it is nevertheless true that the writers of this little country have been no unworthy spokesmen for so sturdy and independent a race. Even when the nation lay stupefied in the relentless grasp of Spain, among the exiles who sought refuge in Holland was at least one poet, Vondel, who is remembered with pride today.

From the earliest days of Belgian fable the name of the chronicler, Lucius de Tongres, has come down to us. Like many another monk, he wrote in his humble cell the annals of the warring tribes. We think of the Nibelungen Lied as the especial property of Germany, but "The epic of the Franks belongs to our provinces," says the Belgian writer, Potvin, "and the Siegfried of the Nibelungen is called the *hero of the Low Countries*."

Later, when troubadour and trouvère sang of love and war from Provence to Normandy, there were minstrels<sup>[208]</sup> also in the castles of Flanders and Brabant. Jean Bodel of Arras, in his "Chansons des Saxons," sang of resistance to the power of Charlemagne, and it was the trouvères of the Walloon country who first borrowed from the Britons the cycle of the *Table Ronde*. The greatest poet of the reign of Philip of Alsace, at the end of the twelfth century, was Chrestien de Troyes, a native of Brabant, whose writings were imitated in England and Germany.

The "Chambers of Rhetoric," formed in the sixteenth century to provide entertainment for the people, exerted

so great an influence in promoting a taste for art and literature among Belgians in general that our own Motley could find nothing with which to compare it except the power of the press in the nineteenth century. These chambers were really theatrical guilds, composed almost entirely of artisans, and they not only produced plays and recited original poetry but also arranged pageants and musical festivals. In 1456, the Adoration of the Lamb was reproduced as a tableau vivant by the chamber of rhetoric at Ghent. The "Seven Joys of Mary" was given at Brussels for seven years, beginning in 1444, and was the best acted mystery of that time. Jean Ruysbroeck was called the "Father of Flemish Prose," while Jean le Bel (a Walloon) started a school of writers which rivaled that of France.

The treatment these rhetoricians received from the Spanish sovereigns is sufficient proof that they were the mouthpiece of the people and voiced their aspirations for freedom in both church and state—Charles V was their persecutor, Philip II their executioner.

When the long struggle with Spain ended in the subjugation of the Spanish Netherlands and art and literature were stifled in the southern provinces of the Low Countries, Vondel, the Fleming, produced in his safe retreat in Holland plays which are worthy of notice today. About the same time the poet who is known as "le père des Flamands, le Vieux Cats," had many followers, and his works were so popular that they were called "The Household Bible."

Another exile, Jacques van Zèvecote, a native of Ghent, who also emigrated to Holland during the Spanish oppression, was a great poet. His hatred of Spain found expression in these vigorous lines:—

"The snow will cease to be cold,  
The summer deprived of the rays  
Of the sun, the clouds will be  
Immovable, the huge sand-hills on the shore  
Leveled, the fire will cease to burn,  
Before you will find good faith  
In the bosom of a Spaniard."

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Under Napoleon the chambers of rhetoric were revived. In 1809, the *concours* of Ypres celebrated a "hero of the country." In 1810, Alost called on Belgian poets to sing "The Glory of the Belgians." A young poet named Lesbroussart won the prize in a fine poem full of the old national spirit of the race. Jenneval, the author of the "Brabançonne," the national anthem, was killed in a battle between the Dutch and the Belgians outside Antwerp, in the revolution of 1830.

About 1844 Abbe David, and Willems, a free thinker, started literary societies, and later followed Henri Conscience and Ledeganck. Ledeganck was called the Flemish Byron, and another poet, van Beers of Antwerp, was often compared to Shelley. To the early years of free Belgium belonged also Charles de Coster, whom Verhaeren calls "the father of Belgian literature."

Henri Conscience, the Walter Scott of Flanders, was born in 1812, when Belgium was under the rule of France. His father was a Frenchman, his mother a Fleming. He first wrote in French, but in 1830 he said, "If ever I gain the power to write, I shall throw myself head over ears into Flemish literature." In 1830 he volunteered as a soldier in the army of Belgian patriots.

His first historical romance, "Het Wonder-Jaar," written in Flemish, is said to have been "the foundation-stone on which arose the new Flemish school of literature." His two finest historical novels, "The Lion of Flanders" and "The Peasants' War," describe the revolt of the Flemings against French despotism, for "to raise Flanders was to him a holy aim." The net profit to the author from the first of these books was six francs!

The most artistic work that Conscience ever did, however, is found in his tales of Flemish peasant life, one of which, "Rikke-Tikke-Tak," says William Sharp, "has not only been rendered into every European tongue, but has been paraphrased to such an extent that variants of it occur, in each instance as an indigenous folk-tale, in every land, from Great Britain in the west to India and even China in the east." Conscience says of himself, "I write my books to be read by the people.... I have sketched the Flemish peasant as he appeared to me ... when, hungry and sick, I enjoyed hospitality and the tenderest care among them."

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"After a European success ranking only after that of Scott, Balzac, Dumas, Hugo, and Hans Andersen, Henri Conscience is still," wrote William Sharp in 1896, thirteen years after the great Fleming's death, "a name of European repute; is still, in his own country, held in the highest honour and affection."

The Walloon country provided the historians, of whom Vanderkindère was one of the ablest. Charles Potvin, born at Mons in 1818, was a Walloon journalist and prolific writer on a variety of subjects. He held the position of professor of the history of literature at the Royal Museum of Industry in Brussels, was director of the *Revue de Belgique*, which he founded, and was curator of the Wiertz Museum in Brussels. He was poet, writer on political subjects, historian of art and literature, critic and essayist; "a power in Belgian politics and literature, a leader of democrats and free-thinkers." In his long life—he died in 1902—he produced a great number of works, among which were "La Belgique," a poem, the "History of Civilization in Belgium," the "History of Literature in Belgium," and a work on "Belgian Nationality."

Camille Lemonnier, of Liège, wrote three or four novels before 1880. He was a brilliant writer, who "touched modern society at almost every point" in his books, but will perhaps be remembered chiefly as the *doyen* of the little band of "*la jeune Belgique*."

The students at Louvain in 1880, with their rival magazines, really laid "the foundation of a literature which is in many respects the most remarkable of contemporary Europe." At the head stand Maeterlinck and

Verhaeren. Edmond Glesener, a hero of Liège, is well known for his novels.

In 1887, with the publication of the periodical, *La Parnasse de la Jeune Belgique*, began a renaissance of poetry, which became distinctly modern Belgian in character. Maurice Warlemont (Max Waller) was the generally recognized founder of this paper. Verhaeren and other noted contributors also wrote for the *Pléiade*, which was a famous Parisian periodical at that time.

Maeterlinck is the best known of these modern Belgian writers, for many of his plays have been well translated into English, and some have been produced with great success in this country. He wrote at first in Flemish, but soon changed to French. I admire his symbolic and allegorical language, so mysterious and full<sup>214]</sup> of charm. It is said of his earlier poems that "they require a key and are not literature but algebra." Maeterlinck "has the happy faculty of making people think they think."

Apropos of this mysticism of Maeterlinck's I may give the bon mot of a witty Frenchman in regard to the Jeune Ecole Belge. He said that their ambition was to write obscurely, and if the first writing seemed easy to understand, they would scratch it out, and try again. At the second attempt, if no one could understand it but the writer—that was still too simple. If the public could not understand the third, nor the writer himself, it was quite perfect.

Maurice Maeterlinck was born on August 29, 1862. As a boy, he lived at Oostacker, in Flanders, and was sent to the College of Sainte Barbe, a Jesuit school, where he studied for seven years. Among his friends in this college was Jean Grégoire le Roi, who later became a well-known poet. Even in those days Maeterlinck contributed to a literary review, and like Verhaeren, he studied for the bar. At the age of twenty-four he went to Paris, where he continued his friendship with le Roi. Maeterlinck had a thin, harsh voice, which was much against him as a lawyer, and he soon gave up that profession and turned his entire attention to literature. He<sup>215]</sup> is short, stocky, Flemish in appearance, but is a dreamer, shy, solitary, and moody.



**MAURICE MAETERLINCK.**

In 1889, his first book of poems, "Serres Chaudes," was published. After this he returned to Oostacker, and when he was not writing tended his bees, which have always interested him.

In reading his earlier poems, I find they are principally concerned with souls, hothouses, and hospitals. Some of them have a strange prophetic note, and are also good examples of his style.<sup>[9]</sup>

This is an extract from "The Soul":

"And lo, it seems I am with my mother,  
Crossing a field of battle.  
They are burying a brother-in-arms at noon,  
While the sentinels are snatching a meal."



The same strain is found in this bit from "The Hospital":

"All the lovely green rushes of the banks are in flames  
And a boat full of wounded men is tossing in the moonlight!  
All the king's daughters are out in a boat in the storm!  
And the princesses are dying in a field of hemlock!"

Here is another passage. Does it not make one wonder what its meaning can be?

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"Do you not hear me calling, white deer with no horns?  
I have been changed to a hound with one red ear;  
I have been in the path of stones and the wood of thorns,  
For somebody hid hatred, and hope, and desire, and fear  
Under my feet that they follow you night and day."

From 1889 to 1896 Maeterlinck wrote many poems and eight plays. His first play, "La Princesse Maleine," was a masterpiece, and is said to have made an "epoch in the history of the stage." The author was named the Belgian Shakespeare. Many of his plays, however, have a fairy-like and unreal quality, so they have been termed "bloodless" or unhealthy. A short synopsis of "La Princesse Maleine" will give an idea of the plot.

The scene opens at the betrothal banquet of the young Princess Maleine. The fathers of the two young people quarrel over the arrangements. The betrothal is broken, and war is declared between their countries. In the attack on the castle, in the next act, the mother and father of the Princess are killed, and she disappears with her nurse into the forest. While escaping, she hears that her lover is to wed another. She decides then that she will try to obtain a position as her rival's attendant and learn the truth.

As she is very beautiful, she succeeds in arranging it, and is taken to her rival's castle. The young Prince<sup>[217]</sup> discovers Maleine's identity, and realizes that, after all, she is the only one he really loves. The mother of the spurned princess determines to poison Maleine, but the physician does not make the potion deadly, and as she sickens slowly, the wicked queen, tired of waiting for her death, twists a cord of hair around Maleine's neck and kills her. The scene of the last act is the cemetery near the castle where Maleine's funeral is going on. The lover stabs the Queen in revenge for the girl's murder, and then kills himself. The animals in the play all appear. The black hound is there, bats and moles gather about; swans are seen in the castle moat, and peacocks among the cypresses; owls perch on the crosses, and sheep graze near the tombstone.

Among Maeterlinck's books of essays the best known are "The Bee," "The Unknown Guest," and "Our Eternity." In one of his essays he writes that he loves the idea of silence so much that the words of the people in his plays "often seem no more than swallows flying about a deep and still lake, whose surface they ruffle seldom and but for a moment."

Maeterlinck has continued writing poems and essays as well as plays. The two dramas called "Palleas" and<sup>[218]</sup> "Melisande" were put on the stage in 1893, and were greatly praised. In 1902 appeared "Le Temple Enseveli." "Le Trésor des Humbles" was dedicated to Georgette Le Blanc, an actress, who helped him write it. Later they were married and settled in Paris. Here he lived a quiet life, writing constantly, and was seen by only a few of his friends.

"Monna Vanna" was his first play in which the action was assigned to a definite period. It was supposed to take place at the end of the fifteenth century. A few years ago, it was well given in this country, Mary Garden impersonating the heroine. Her rendering of the part was widely discussed. "Sister Beatrice" was also produced in America, and "Mary Magdalene" has been translated into English, as well as "The Bluebird." The last named was beautifully given in New York, and was superbly staged and very spectacular. It was so artistic, so original and mysterious, and unlike anything that one had ever seen before, you knew at once that it was the work of Maeterlinck. People swarmed to see it, people went to hear it read, and people took it home to read.

Maeterlinck is now over fifty years old, and is at the height of his popularity. He spends the winter at<sup>[219]</sup> Katchema, near Grasse, in the south of France, the summers at the ancient Benedictine Abbey of St. Wandrille. During the war he has been lecturing in behalf of his native country.

I quote from an address made by him in Milan: "It is not for me to recall here the facts which hurled Belgium into the abyss of glorious distress where she now struggles. She has been punished, as no nation ever was punished, for doing her duty as no nation ever did it. She has saved the world, in the full knowledge that she could not be saved.

"She saved the world by throwing herself across the path of the barbarian horde, by allowing herself to be trampled to death in order to give the champions of justice the necessary time, not to succor her—she was aware that she could not be succored in time—but to assemble troops enough to free Latin civilization from the greatest danger with which it has ever been threatened.

"The spectacle of an entire people, great and humble, rich and poor, savants and unlettered, sacrificing themselves deliberately for something which is invisible—that, I declare, has never been seen before, and I say it without fear that any one can contradict me by searching through the history of mankind. They did<sup>[220]</sup> what had never been done before, and it is to be hoped, for the good of mankind, that no nation may ever be called upon again to do it."

Among other well-known Belgian authors Eugène Demolder may be mentioned. In his historical novel, "Le Jardinier de la Pompadour," he has made the eighteenth century live again in pages "vibrant with prismatic

colours." A charming characteristic of this book is the exquisite pictures of flowers and woods. The critic Gilbert quotes a page, of which he says, "It opens the story like a whiff of perfumes, for it symbolizes the charm and the freshness of rural France in flower."

The works of Leopold Courouble are greatly enjoyed. He represents the humour of Brabançon fiction. As the old painters of Flanders gave expression to Flemish gaiety in their immortal canvases, so has Courouble concentrated in "Les Fiançailles de Joseph Kaekebroeck" the whole spirit of a race.

Le Vicomte de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul is noted as a critic and essayist, and has had five of his works crowned by the French Academy. Henri Pirenne, author of "Histoire de la Belgique," is at the head of the list of Belgian historians today. (There have been a number of patriotic books written foreshadowing this war<sup>[221]</sup> Balzac wrote "France et Belgique," and it has been said that Balzac was the inspiration of the modern writers of Belgium.)

Grégoire le Roi, Maeterlinck's friend, is described by Bithell as "the poet of retrospection"—"the hermit bowed down by silver hair, bending at eventide over the embers of the past, visited by weird guests draped with legend." It is said "the weft of his verse is torn by translation, it cannot be grasped, it is wafted through shadows."

Charles van Lerberghe wrote his play of the new school, "Les Flaireurs," in 1889, before Maeterlinck had published anything, but his work resembles the latter's somewhat in style. He was born in 1862, of a Flemish father and a Walloon mother, which resulted in a sort of dual personality. Van Lerberghe was "a man for whom modern life had no more existence than for a mediæval recluse," and he passed his happiest years in an old-world village in the Ardennes. He died in 1907, having published besides the play already mentioned, only three little books of poetry, "Entrevisions," "La Chanson d'Eve," and "Pan"—small but classic. Maeterlinck speaks of his verse as having a sort of "lyric silence, a quality of sound such as we have not<sup>[222]</sup> heard in our French poetry." The early poems of Rossetti are suggested by his work.

"If poetry is music van Lerberghe is a poet. The charm of his verses is unique," writes Bithell. Are not these stanzas on "Rain" exquisite?

"The rain, my sister dear,  
The summer rain, warm and clear,  
Gently flees, gently flies,  
Through the moist atmosphere.

"Her collar of white pearls  
Has come undone in the skies.  
Blackbirds, sing with all your might,  
Dance, magpies!  
Among the branches downward pressed,  
Dance, flowers, dance, every nest,  
All that comes from the skies is blest."

"Fernand Severin, who was lecturer in French literature at the University of Ghent, is a poet of great charm. His diction is apparently that of Racine, but in substance he is essentially modern." The following lines, from the translation by Bithell, will give an idea of the grace and beauty of his style:

"Her sweet voice was a music in mine ear;  
And in the perfume of the atmosphere  
Which, in that eve, her shadowy presence shed,  
'Sister of mystery,' trembling I said,  
'Too like an angel to be what you seem,  
Go not away too soon, beloved dream!'"

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Albert Mockel is a fine musician and an excellent critic, as well as a good poet, a combination which is very rare. He is learned, subtle and brilliant. "Chantefable un peu Naïve" and "Clartés" contain musical notations of rhythms.

I give here part of one of his poems called

#### THE CHANDELIER

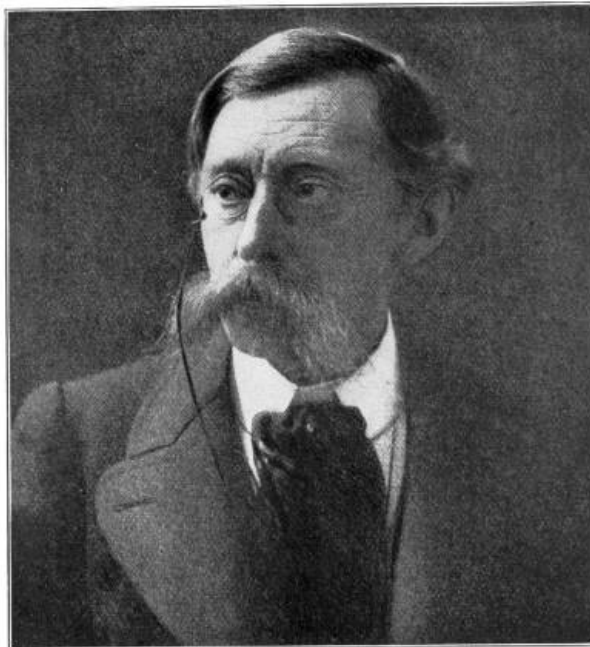
"Jewels, ribbons, naked necks,  
And the living bouquet that the corsage decks;  
Women, undulating the soft melody  
Of gestures languishing, surrendering—  
And the vain, scattered patter of swift words—  
Silken vestures floating, faces bright,  
Furtive converse, gliding glances, futile kiss  
Of eyes that flitting round alight like birds,  
And flee, and come again coquettishly;  
Laughter, and lying ... and all flying away  
To the strains that spin the frivolous swarm around."

I also give an extract from his "Song of Running Water," that is quite lovely.

"O forest! O sweet forest, thou invitest me to rest  
And linger in thy shade with moss and shavegrass dressed,  
Imprisoning me in swoon of soft caresses  
That o'er me droop thy dense and leafy tresses."

"Verhaeren is the triumph of the Belgian race, the greatest of modern poets," writes Stefan Zweig, who has<sup>[224]</sup> translated many of his works. Verhaeren is much admired by the Germans and Austrians, but is not so well known in this country, as few of his books have been translated into English. As Rubens with his brush depicted carousals and excesses, so did Verhaeren depict the wildness and madness of youth with his clever pen.

Emile Verhaeren was born in Flanders at St. Amand on the Scheldt, the twenty-first of May, 1855. His parents were considered well-to-do and owned a house and garden of their own on the edge of the town, overlooking the yellow cornfields and the wide river. It was here Emile's boyhood was spent, watching the peasants sow and reap, and the white sails of the boats slowly drifting down to the great ocean. He was blue-eyed and golden-haired in those days. The people loved him then, and they love him now. As a boy he was sent to the Jesuit College of Sainte Barbe, in Ghent, and it was hoped that he might in time join the order. There he began writing verses, and there too he met the poet, Georges Rodenbach, and Maeterlinck and Charles van Lerberghe, all of whom later became famous. Emile refused to become a priest and he did not wish to enter his uncle's workshop, so when his courses were finished at Sainte Barbe, he was sent to<sup>[225]</sup> Louvain to study law. His student days were wild in the extreme.



**EMILE VERHAEREN.**

In 1881 he went to Brussels to practice, but he was not a success as a lawyer. Here he met artists and authors, and like many poets became eccentric in his dress. "Les Flamandes" is the name of his first book. When it was published his conservative parents were scandalized and the critics were very severe, but all had to admit the primitive vitality and savage strength of his work. "Les Moines" is his second book. These sonnets describe the monks and are unlike his other poems.

As Verhaeren was unbridled in his studies as well as his follies, he had a severe nervous breakdown. While convalescing he wrote "Les Soirs, Les Débâcles, Les Flambeaux Noirs," which are extraordinary descriptions of his physical and mental sensations during his illness.

After he recovered he married and traveled in Europe and in England. Then for a time he gave lectures at the Université Libre in Brussels.

"Les Villes Tentaculaires," which describes the monster city, is called magnificent. "Les Aubes" and the "Campagnes Hallucinées" were published at the same time, and "La Foule" and "Vers la Mer" in the book<sup>[226]</sup> entitled "Les Visages de la Vie" are also fine.

Among Verhaeren's plays, "Le Cloître" is taken from his book of poems, called "Les Moines." It is peculiar in having no woman in the cast, but it was well given and proved successful. "Les Aubes" and "Hélène de Sparte" were others of his plays.

The three following poems by this author are marvelous pieces of description and thoroughly characteristic of Belgium:

A CORNER OF THE QUAY

"When the wind sulks, and the dune dries,  
The old salts with uneasy eyes  
Hour after hour peer at the skies.

"All are silent; their hands turning,  
A brown juice from their lips they wipe;  
Never a sound save, in their pipe,  
The dry tobacco burning.

"That storm the almanac announces,  
Where is it? They are puzzled.  
The sea has smoothed her flounces.  
Winter is muzzled.

"The cute ones shake their pate,  
And cross their arms, and puff,  
But mate by mate they wait,  
And think the squall is late,  
But coming sure enough.

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"With fingers slow, sedate,  
Their finished pipe they fill;  
Pursuing, every salt,  
Without a minute's halt,  
The same idea still.

"A boat sails up the bay,  
As tranquil as the day;  
Its keel a long net trails,  
Covered with glittering scales.

"Out come the men: What ho?  
When will the tempest come?  
With pipe in mouth, still dumb?  
With bare foot on sabot,  
The salts wait in a row.

"Here they lounge about,  
Where all year long the stout  
Fishers' dames  
Sell, from their wooden frames,  
Herrings and anchovies,  
And by each stall a stove is,  
To warm them with its flames.

"Here they spit together,  
Spying out the weather.  
Here they yawn and doze;  
Backs bent with many a squall,  
Rubbing it in rows,  
Grease the wall.

"And though the almanac  
Is wrong about the squall,  
The old salts lean their back  
Against the wall,  
And wait in rows together,  
Watching the sea and the weather."

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FOGS

"You melancholy fogs of winter roll  
Your pestilential sorrow o'er my soul,  
And swathe my heart with your long winding sheet,

And drench the livid leaves beneath my feet,  
 While far away upon the heaven's bounds,  
 Under the sleeping plain's wet wadding, sounds  
 A tired, lamenting angelus that dies  
 With faint, frail echoes in the empty skies,  
 So lonely, poor, and timid that a rook,  
 Hid in a hollow archstone's dripping nook,  
 Hearing it sob, awakens and replies,  
 Sickening the woeful hush with ghastly cries,  
 Then suddenly grows silent, in the dread,  
 That in the belfry tower the bell is dead."

#### THE OLD MASTERS

"In smoky inns whose loft is reached by ladders,  
 And with a grimy ceiling splashed by shocks  
 Of hanging hams, black puddings, onions, bladders,  
 Rosaries of stuffed game, capons, geese, and cocks,  
 Around a groaning table sit the gluttons  
 Before the bleeding viands stuck with forks,  
 Already loosening their waistcoat buttons,  
 With wet mouths when from flagons leap the corks—  
 Teniers, and Brackenburgh, and Brauwer, shaken  
 With listening to Jan Steen's uproarious wit,  
 Holding their bellies dithering with bacon,  
 Wiping their chins, watching the hissing spit.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Men, women, children, all stuffed full to bursting;  
 Appetites ravening, and instincts rife,  
 Furies of stomach, and of throats athirsting,  
 Debauchery, explosion of rich life,  
 In which these master gluttons, never sated,  
 Too genuine for insipidities,  
 Pitching their easels lustily, created  
 Between two drinking bouts a masterpiece."

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Even amid the ruins of their country, Belgian writers, like the Belgian people, are indomitable. Verhaeren, from his retreat in London, sends out words that are a pæan of victory, and the bugle note of "Chantons, Belges, chantons!" by another author, is a call to great deeds in the future.

## CHAPTER XII

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### MOTORING IN FLANDERS

"O little towns, obscure and quaint,  
 Writ on the map in script so faint,  
 Today in types how large, how red,  
 On battle scroll your titles spread!"



**RUSSELS** is ideally located for the motorist. From it both the Flemish and the Walloon districts could easily be reached. To be sure, the towns were paved with the famous Belgian blocks, but the roads outside the towns were in excellent condition. One of our favourite trips was to Antwerp, where we went often, either to meet people landing from steamers from America or to look up boxes shipped us from home.

A bit aside from the direct route between the two cities, but well worth going out of one's way to see, was Louvain. Baedeker speaks of it as "a dull place with 42,000 inhabitants," but we found it delightful. It was a pretty old town, with its richly fretted Hôtel de Ville, the finest in Belgium, its university and library, its impressive church in the center of the city, and the innumerable other gray old churches with their long sloping roofs. The streets were narrow, picturesque and rather dirty. They were lined with the high walls and closed windows of convent after convent, and there were huge clusters of

monastic buildings on the hills about, many of these newly built and modern. The whole town seethed with black-robed priests, brown-robed, bare-footed monks, and white-coped nuns.

In the Middle Ages Louvain had four times its present population; its once famous university had diminished in the same proportion. There was a time when no man might hold public office in the Austrian Netherlands who did not have a degree from the University of Louvain.

Of the two thousand cloth factories which made the city a hive of industry during the thirteen hundreds but little sign remained when we were there. During the fifteenth century it was the largest city west of the Alps. The walls were built at the period of greatest prosperity, and much of the land which they inclosed had been turned into gardens, showing how the population had decreased. It was said that however much outward<sup>[232]</sup> change there had been, however, in the Abbey of the White Canons the spirit of "religious mediævalism" was still to be found, untouched by modern thought.

Southey describes the town hall at Louvain as an "architectural bijou ... like a thing of ivory or filigree designed for a lady's dressing table." This building seems to have passed through the war unscathed. But the famous library of the university, which was one of the most noted in Europe, containing over a hundred thousand rare manuscripts, was completely destroyed.

Not far from Brussels, and on the direct road to Antwerp, is Vilvorde, a small town, chiefly noted as the scene of the martyrdom of Tyndale, the famous Englishman who attempted the translation of the Bible, and for this was imprisoned and later burned at the stake by the Church. His last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!" It seems as if his prayer must have been heard, because within a year—in 1537—the King ordered the publication of the Bible and its use in all the churches of the land.

Halfway between Brussels and Antwerp is Malines, perhaps better known to us by its Dutch name of Mechlin. Every house had its maker of lace; they could be seen on pleasant days sitting on low stools out of doors<sup>[233]</sup> among the flowers, singing as they worked.

The tower of the beautiful old cathedral, which was erected in 1312, was intended to be the highest in all Christendom, but was never completed. Its carillon, however, was second only to that of Bruges. The church was dedicated to St. Rombaut, who was supposed to have built it. The story was that in paying his workmen he never took from his pockets more than ten *cents* at a time, and the men, thinking he must have a large number of the coins upon his person, murdered him for the booty. To their disappointment they found he had just one coin, for the saint, each time he needed money, had worked a miracle similar to that of Jesus and the fishes! A discrepancy of some three or four hundred years between the time of the good saint's life and the building of the church is a trifle confusing. This cathedral has been destroyed.

We set out for a direct trip to Antwerp one morning at eight, and reached there after a fine run of an hour and a half through the fair green country. All along the way the towns were gaily decorated and beflagged for a holiday. The city itself was alive with traffic, while the river and the canals were crowded with moving<sup>[234]</sup> boats.

Just opposite the station was the famous Zoo. A band concert was going on, and crowds sat drinking tea or beer beneath the trees, listening to the music, which was interrupted every once in a while by the raucous cry of some wild creature in its cage. All the animals were killed before the siege of the city in October.

A service was being held in the great cathedral. There was lovely music, and a solemn light fell on Rubens' great masterpiece. The church was two hundred and fifty years in building, and is the largest in the Low Countries. Fortunately we can still use the present tense in speaking of Antwerp Cathedral, for it survived both the bombardment and the conflagration that ensued.

Antwerp came into prominence only after Bruges, Ghent and Ypres entered upon their long decline. The architectural gem of the city was the Plantyn-Moretus Museum, once the printing works of Christopher Plantyn and his son-in-law Moretus, who did such notable work in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The rooms of the old house had been restored quite in the old style, so that you felt the quiet, peaceful atmosphere of other days.



**CORNER OF THE COURTYARD, PLANTYN-MORETUS MUSEUM, ANTWERP.**

The history of Antwerp goes back some thirteen hundred years, but it was not until the seventeenth century<sup>[235]</sup> that it gained the right to be called the richest and most prosperous city in Europe. After that it, too, like so many of its sister cities, fell asleep; but these days were of brief duration, for in the middle of the nineteenth century the Belgian Government bought the right to use the Scheldt, and it awoke to new life. When the war broke out it was the greatest port on the continent, and surpassed only by London and New York in the world.

Its social life was a striking contrast to that of Brussels, for it was strongly Flemish in thought and feeling, as well as in speech, while the national capital was like a French city.

Antwerp was of great strategic importance, for the mouth of the Scheldt is opposite the mouth of the Thames. Napoleon realized this. "Antwerp might be made a pistol directed at the heart of England," he said. Indeed, before it fell into the hands of the Germans a military expert prophesied that within two months of its fall the English would be suing for peace. The city had been made the chief arsenal of Belgium, and one of the strongest fortresses in Europe. At the beginning of the attack the suburbs, which were particularly beautiful, were destroyed and covered with pits and wire entanglements by the defenders. Tens of millions of dollars<sup>[236]</sup> worth of property was laid waste, and nothing gained, for the city was bombarded from a distance and no infantry attacks were made.

One summer day we started out in the motor for Ostend. Out across the flat country, through forests and fields and villages, we passed through Termonde where, a few centuries before, they had opened the sluices and driven back the army of Louis XIV by flooding the country.

Ghent was our first stopping place. In the Cathedral of St. Bavon hung the Adoration of the Lamb, by the van Eycks—the most celebrated of Belgium's pictures. A few buildings still remained which recalled the former glory of the burghers of Ghent. Among them was the gray pile of the château of the counts of Flanders, a splendid specimen of the residences of the great lords in the magnificent Burgundian days. It was built for the purpose of overawing the headstrong citizens, and had on one side the moated river and on the other the square which saw so many tragedies of the Inquisition.

It is a picturesque city with its network of canals. Its Béguinage, a religious home for older women with little<sup>[237]</sup> means, is a small world in itself. It consists of a group of houses of different sizes, each with its own little garden in front, shut in by high brick walls. Through the community flows a stream where the women do their washing from a boat, spreading the linen to dry in an open, park-like space reserved for that use. The women who live there belong to a religious order, but are bound by no vows and are free to leave if they choose. Their special mission is to nurse the sick, whom they care for either in their own homes, or in the Béguinage. Because of its many gardens Ghent was often called the City of Flowers. Maeterlinck said of it, "It is the soul of Flanders, at once venerable and young. In its streets the past and present elbow each other." This may be due to the fact that while it is an ancient city, it had before the war experienced a return of its former prosperity, so that it was, in comparison with Bruges, for instance, quite lively and up-to-date. Its great canals gave it access to the sea and to other cities, and its various industries were thriving. The story of Ghent is the usual tumultuous chronicle of Flemish towns. The weavers who early made their city famous were an



independent lot, not easily governed against their will. When not fighting outsiders they were usually struggling for more rights and privileges for themselves. During the Middle Ages Ghent's great leader, van Artevelde, was treated as an equal by Edward III of England. The belfry was the symbol of their freedom, and it served as a watch-tower—a necessity in a country where there are no hills—and to give alarm at the approach of an enemy. On the great bell, Roland, is the inscription: "My name is Roland. When I toll there is fire. When I ring there is victory in Flanders." They tell you now how, shortly after the Germans entered Belgium, some one tried to ring the mighty bell and discovered that it was cracked.<sup>[238]</sup>

We found the old town of Bruges, which lies between Ghent and Ostend, more attractive than we had expected. Indeed it was perhaps the most interesting town in Belgium, and the most picturesque. One doesn't easily forget the squares with their handsome façades, the ancient Béguinage with its tottering old women, or the lovely Lac d'Amour, which was once a harbour, with its pretty border of flowers and flotilla of white swans. I remember the walk through the little street of the "Blind Donkey," below the gilded bridge, to the town hall and the richly-fretted law court, into the square where the exquisite Chapel of the Holy Blood was tucked away in a corner. It dates from 1150, when it was built to enshrine some drops of the "*Saint Sang*" brought, according to the old legend, from the Holy Land by a count of Flanders.<sup>[239]</sup>



LAC D'AMOUR, BRUGES.

People call Bruges the Venice of the North, on account of its many picturesque canals, but here are trees everywhere, and the houses are of a wholly different style. It is very charming, really the most fascinating town in Belgium, with its mediæval buildings and its people, who seemed to have a quaintness all their own. The old women in caps, sitting in their doorways making lace, looked as if they had just stepped out of an art gallery.

Bruges gets its name from the Dutch word for the many bridges which cross the canals in every direction. These canals connect it with Ghent and other inland cities and were once important highways of commerce. In those days Bruges had a harbour that was large enough to hold the whole French fleet, but this has long since been filled in by silt from the river.

The town was so sleepy and quiet, I found it hard to realize that it had once been one of the wealthiest, busiest cities in Europe, the commercial center of the whole continent. The famous Belfry of Bruges was originally built of wood, nearly a thousand years ago, but near the end of the thirteenth century it was replaced by the present tower. Like that of Ghent, it stood the townsfolk in good stead as a watch-tower from which they might see the approach of their warlike and envious neighbours. When Bruges was not at war with them, she was usually occupied in repelling attacks from foreign invaders.<sup>[240]</sup>

It seems strange that in spite of her battles, not only her commerce but her intellectual life flourished and grew stronger. At one time merchants from seventeen countries lived there, which must have given the city a very cosmopolitan air. Laces, tapestries and woolen cloths were bartered for the treasures of the East and South and North. Art and letters gave it its chief renown, however, for Bruges was the home of Memling, and of the van Eycks. This was during the Golden Age of the city, in the reign of Duke Philip the Good, who was himself a patron of art while his wife was keenly interested in literature. It was for her that William Caxton, living at that time in Bruges, made the translation of his first book, which he later printed. Glorious old manuscripts were still to be seen when we were there. In his book, "Some Old Flemish Towns," George Wharton Edwards describes his climb into the top of the belfry—an adventure which we did not undertake. After treading many flights of stone steps he reached at last "a leather-covered door and entered a room floored with plates of lead, and filled with iron rods, pulleys, and ropes.... Faint, clear, sweetly coming from afar, one hears the music of the bells subdued, soft, like harmony from an æolian. But this is from the lower chamber. Very different will be the impression of the sounds if one is among the bells when the hour or the quarter is struck. Here, among the hanging bells is a sort of chamber, where lives a being who seems the very double of Caliban, so hairy and wild-looking is he. He is the watchman, and is forced to pull upon a rope every seven minutes before the bells sound. I shall not forget the fright he gave me when fancying myself<sup>[241]</sup>

alone in the tower I was examining the carillon, and he thrust his huge red, hairy face between the two bells under which I groped, and stood there staring while I froze with horror, while the bells row upon row, above and about us, clashed and clanged and boomed, swinging as if they would the next minute fall upon us and crush us. Thus he stood in this turmoil of din and roar and finally when it ended he demanded—in the mousiest squeak of a voice imaginable, a small fee for beer money.” These bell-ringers have appealed to other imaginations, too. Poe might well have had in mind the Belfry in Bruges when he wrote:

“And the people—ah, the people,  
They that dwell up in the steeple  
All alone,  
And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,  
In that muffled undertone,  
Feel a glory in so rolling  
On the human heart a stone—  
They are neither man nor woman—  
They are neither brute nor human—  
They are Ghouls:  
And their king it is who tolls.”

In Ostend we found a watering place which during the last generation has more than doubled its population and become wealthy and important. This change was due to the efforts of the old King, who saw the possibilities of his sandy sea-coast if pleasure seekers could be induced to come in sufficient numbers. His dream was to build a road from one end of the shore to the other which should be one long, continuous summer resort. At tremendous cost of money and labour strong sea-walls were built to protect the shifting dunes, and sections of the road as well. Hotels and casinos and villas sprang up all along the shore, among them the villa of the old King himself.

In the time of Charlemagne Ostend was a fishing village, but only yesterday it was the Continental ideal of what a bathing place should be. The Digue, that famous walk by the sea, was thronged with an endless variety of men and women, of all nationalities and styles of raiment. Thousands sat and watched them drift by. The heavy bathing machines—a city in themselves—went lumbering into the water, all so gay in pink and green and blue paint. Absurd looking old people were wading and children played everywhere in the sand. It was indeed a passing show.

The weather was warm when we were there, and we saw the place at its best. Each night we dined inside the glassed-in terrace of the hotel, with gay people all about us and the crowds passing up and down, outside. Then we went over to the Casino, a vast amphitheater where the orchestra played and throngs sat listening till the dancing began at half after ten.

In sad contrast to these lively scenes was that a few months later, just before the Kaiser's troops entered the town. A mournful procession of refugees moving to the quay, men with stolid faces guiding little dog-carts piled high with luggage, anxious women and weary children laden with bundles—all seeking the promised safety of England.

Every year there was held at Ostend a curious ceremony which drew excursionists from all corners of the country to witness. This was the benediction of the sea, which was performed by the more intelligent Belgians with all the decorum of a religious rite. The ceremony went back apparently at least to the early sixteenth century, for it is recorded that after a certain inundation of the coast the fishermen joined with ship-owners in contributing the sum of 271 francs to the Church, which was instructed to use it for the benefit of the fish in the North Sea. This was no doubt the beginning of the procession to the shore.

Running inland from Ostend one comes before long to Roulers, where there was a training convent for missionaries. We found the town an active, commercial place, and drove over rattling streets to the outskirts and our destination, the Convent of the Missionary Sisters of St. Augustine.

The Mother Superior had invited us to visit them because six of the little sisters were about to start for the Philippines, some to go to a convent in the Bontoc country among the headhunters, where L. had followed the trail on horseback with the Governor and the Secretary of War, a short time before. We wanted to show appreciation of their undertaking, for they have always spread good reports of the United States' government of the islands.

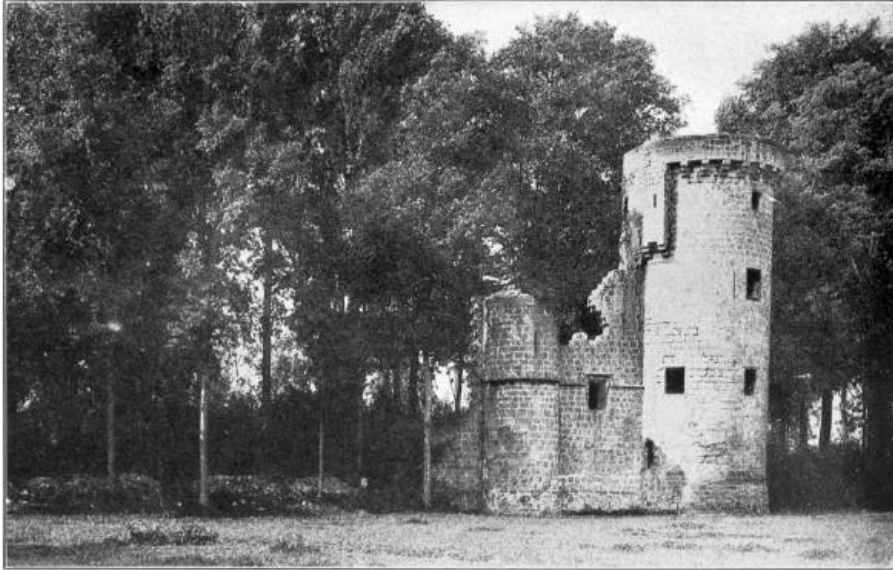
The buildings were neither large nor extensive, for the sisterhood is limited and the order comparatively new. There was an American flag—rather a queer one, for the little sisters had made it themselves—hanging with the Belgian flag above the door, and inside there were decorations of flags and paper flowers and streamers, all quite sweet and pathetic.

Mother Ursula, a nice looking woman, met us and conducted us into a room where the forty little sisters were huddled together, peering at us out of their headdresses, with the liveliest curiosity. It was natural enough that they should be curious, too, for during their two years of instruction they were never allowed to go out, and saw very few laymen. At any rate, their eyes never left us all the time we were with them. They seemed very docile and obedient, and were pretty and young, but they were rather ignorant, although they were taught a little English besides the native dialect of the savage places where they were to go, and a little music. They played and sang for us, so badly but so touchingly and anxiously—the Old Kentucky Home, in a way to make one cry, and the Star Spangled Banner—both in English.

Their days were filled with offices of the Church, with a little recreation in the small garden. When an extra holiday hour was allowed them for the time we were there, the first thing they did was to go in procession to

the garden and fall upon their knees before the crucified Christ. That was evidently their idea of a holiday hour.

The Flemish roads themselves were always interesting, even here where the country was so level. We passed an endless succession of wonderfully tilled fields in which the peasants were working with their primitive implements, and little red-roofed stone farmhouses with innumerable tow-headed children playing about them. I shall never forget how lovely were the apple trees about the farmhouses and in the orchards. They all had white blossoms, and while we missed the more varied pinks and mauves which we see at home, the effect was charming. Every now and then we would catch a glimpse of a *château* in its park, usually just beyond a lagoon and with a moat about it. We traversed the streets of the little towns, so quiet in spite of the factories<sup>[247]</sup> that sometimes girdled them, and wondered how the people lived behind the quaint *façades* of their ancient houses. We stopped at the little village of Herzèle, on the road to Courtrai, to see its ruined tower, once the property of Count Egmont, in which he sustained a siege for six months. It was quite picturesque, built of slabs of rough gray stone. Its history reminded us of the great Flemish primitives, for its first owner was Jean de Roubaix, the friend of Jan van Eyck.



**COUNT EGMONT'S TOWER, HERZÈLE.**

On another occasion we made a circuit of the now historic places in the neighbourhood of the Yser River. To be sure, they were historic enough then, but so remote from the lines of tourist travel that few realized what treasures they contained. Now, when nearly everything has been swept away, hordes of people are waiting eagerly for a chance to see even the ruins.

At that time Dixmude had a population of about a thousand, although it was built for thirty thousand. Its deserted *Grande Place* was large enough to hold every man, woman and child in the place—and if they kept quiet I doubt if you would have noticed them! In the church was one of the finest altar screens in Europe. Because of repeated bombardments Dixmude is now completely off the map—church and all. I wonder what is<sup>[248]</sup> left of the ancient windmill on its grassy hillock overlooking the town; it had been there since the Middle Ages.

Nearer the mouth of the Yser was Nieuport, the “new port” made when the harbour of Lombaertzyde across the river filled with sand during a terrific storm in the twelfth century. Part of the way the road along the embankment ran just over the sea, and the rest of the time behind the dunes. It was a quaint old town with some really fine Gothic buildings, hidden by its sheltering mounds of sand from the hotels and villas of the beach, which is called Nieuport-Bains to distinguish the resort from its moribund neighbour.

This is far from being Nieuport's first experience of war. It was destroyed in 1383, after withstanding nine sieges. A hundred years later it was successfully defended against the French, the women and even the children fighting side by side with the men. It was destroyed again in the seventeen hundreds—three times, in fact. Whether it will rise again, the world will wait to see. A brave little town among its gray-green sand dunes, with its ancient lighthouse and its empty, echoing square.

A few miles west along the coast was Furnes, whose history begins in the Dark Ages and finishes—in 1914. It<sup>[249]</sup> was quite of a piece with the other dead little towns of the Yser country, so far as one could see, but distinguished from them all by its strange celebration, the Procession of Penance.



*Sand Dunes, Newport*

This was held every year on the last Sunday in July, and was one of the last remaining Christian mysteries. The procession represented the life of Jesus. It is supposed to have been instituted by that Count of Flanders who was also King of Jerusalem, for the purpose of carrying about the streets of Furnes a splinter from the Cross, which he had brought back from the Holy Land.

For a while other mysteries were added, but it finally began to degenerate until by the seventeenth century it had become a sort of burlesque. A brotherhood was founded to restore it to its primitive form, but a new motive entered into it when two soldiers profaned some concentrated wafers and had to do penance in public. In this manner the modern penitential procession originated.

The procession formed within the church of Sainte Walburge. Outside, the horses of the Roman soldiers pranced about while Mary sat on an ass waiting for the flight to Egypt. Then slowly forth from the church<sup>[250]</sup> came the penitents, robed and cowled in brown, their faces masked, dragging after them the carts bearing the stable of Bethlehem, the Holy Sepulcher, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. Following them came many rosy-cheeked girls veiled in white.

As the long lines of the procession unfolded themselves before the spectator there was a general impression of a variegated river of gold, purple and blue. First came chariots representing Old Testament scenes, followed by the scourges—War, Pestilence and Famine, a prophetic trio. Then appeared St. John, the Hermits and the Shepherds, and the Stable, which was preceded by an angel and bore Mary and Joseph seated inside.

When, after various scenes from the story of the Passion, Jesus passed by, dragging the cross, with the soldiers and executioners following behind, a tense silence fell upon the crowd of onlookers. Not a sound was heard, save here and there the low muttering of the men, women and children kneeling on the pavement, praying over their rosaries. At every window along the route were lighted candles. It was no uncommon sight to see some poor old woman, carried away by her religious fervour, throw coins in front of the cross. This was indeed one of the characteristic incidents of the Furnes festival. <sup>[251]</sup>

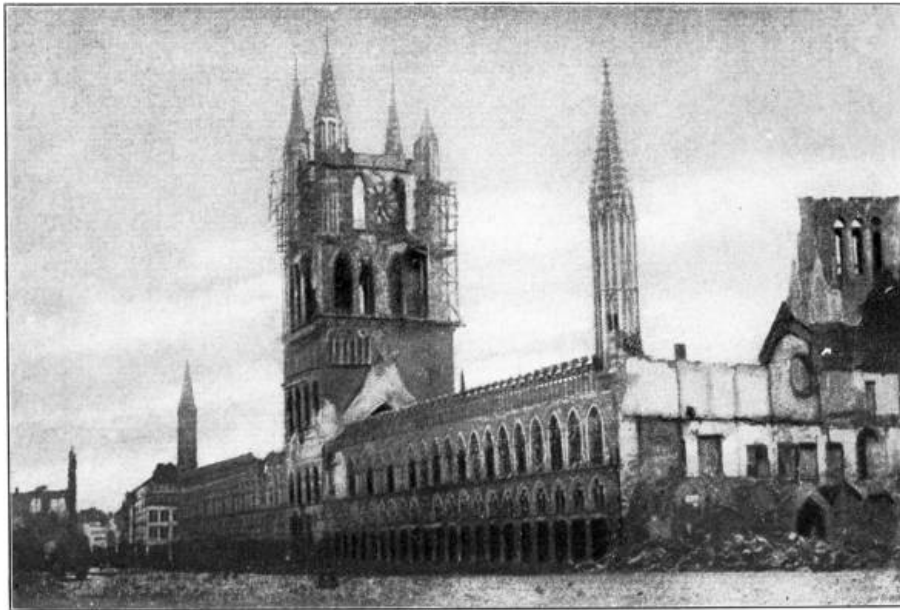
Following this came the penitents, marching in close ranks, torches in hand and weighed down by the heavy crosses that they dragged along. The men's faces were hidden by their masks and hoods, the women's by their veils. All were barefooted.

Every position in the procession was sought for as eagerly as if it had been a public office. Some of the principal parts were hereditary in certain families. They say that the festival as given the last time was unchanged from its original form, centuries ago, thanks to the care of "La Sodalité," the brotherhood having it in charge.

Ypres we saved for the last. Poor Ypres! Remains of its ancient ramparts still were to be seen, and moats with lilies floating on their dark waters, and the vast Grande Place, with the glorious Cloth Hall occupying one side of the huge square, rivaled only by that of Brussels. Through the crooked streets of the town, with their sagging, gabled houses whose upper stories often projected over the tiny sidewalks, one caught now and then a glimpse of a quiet courtyard beyond a vaulted gateway.

In the quotation which follows, Pierre Loti refers to the "little children" in Ypres. Until recently their presence<sup>[252]</sup> there in what eventually became a deserted city was not explained, nor indeed specially noticed. But it has been discovered that when the last train left the interior of Belgium, supposedly for France, just in front of the advancing Germans, frantic mothers pushed their children into the already crowded cars, hoping that some one would care for them at their destination. This proved to be Ypres, where for months the motherless little ones wandered about the deserted streets, living in cellars and abandoned houses, the older ones caring for the younger, all living on what they could pick up in the streets. At last accounts they were being brought together by the French Government and cared for in a convent until the war is over, when every effort will be made to find their parents.

Pierre Loti has written of Ypres as he saw it not long ago, and it gives us a vivid glimpse of the city in war times. "The squares around these tall ruins are filled with soldiers who stand still, or who move slowly about in silent little groups a trifle solemnly, as though awaiting something of which every one knows, but about which no one speaks. There are also poorly dressed women with haggard faces, and little children; but the lowly civil population is completely swallowed up in the mass of rough uniforms, almost all soiled and earthy, having evidently witnessed many a long battle. The graceful khaki yellow uniform of the English and the slender black regimentals of the Belgians mingle with the sky blue military cloaks of our French soldiers, who make up the majority. All this taken together results in an almost neutral shade, and two or three red cloaks of Arab chieftains form a sharp and unexpected contrast to this universal monotony of a gloomy winter evening. The thousands of soldiers glance instinctively at these ruins, as they take their melancholy evening strolls, but usually they remain at a distance, leaving both hall and church in their majestic isolation.... And now the night is almost here, the true night which will put an end to every trace of life. The crowd of soldiers retires gradually into the streets, already dark, but which surely will not be lighted. Far away a bugle is calling them to their evening meal, in the houses or the barracks where they sleep insecurely.... Now the silhouettes of the cathedral and the great belfry are all that are pictured against the sky—like the gesture of a shattered arm now turned into stone. As the night gradually closes in on you under the weight of its clouds, you recall with increasing vividness the mournful surroundings in the midst of which Ypres is now lost, the vast, tenantless plain, now almost black, the mutilated roads, over which none would know how to flee, the fields flooded with water or blanketed with snow, the lines of trenches, where, alas! our soldiers are cold and suffering."



CLOTH HALL, YPRES, AFTER BOMBARDMENT.

## CHAPTER XIII LEGENDS OF ANTWERP

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### I

#### ANTIGON; OR, THE GIANT OF ANTWERP



It was a fine night in the year 54 B.C., the sky clear, the air calm, when a boat—a sort of raft of basket work covered with ox hides—was slowly following the ebb of the Scheldt. A voice was heard from the boat, a woman's voice, soft and gentle.

"Yes, Atuix, for thee have I passed the threshold of my father's dwelling. I have quitted the deep forests of Gaul, my native country; for thee have I left all, because of my love for thee, Atuix, and thy beautiful harp which sleeps silently by thy side."

Another voice was heard: "Oh, Frega, since the day that thine eyes looked into mine, my harp has forgotten its sounds and my soul no longer knows any of the songs whispered by Ogmius, whom I worshiped in the forests—the god of the bards, he who is always surrounded by men bound by their ears to chains of gold and amber which issue from his mouth."

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The boat continued to descend with the tide. Suddenly the waves were troubled and foaming as if some water monster was rising to their surface. A breathing, a stifled murmuring, was heard, like unto the autumn wind rushing through the branches of an old, decayed forest; the bubbling of the waters came nearer, and the breathing grew stronger. Then by the pale rays of the moon's light, rising above the silvery clouds, Atuix and Frega beheld with terror, approaching them and swelling the waves in his rapid course, a colossal Giant.

The waters of the river reached up to his broad chest, and formed around him a white and sparkling belt of foam. From his formidable face flowed a thick beard, and his head was covered with hair like that of a horse, rough and black. He looked like those isolated peaks which are sometimes seen on the borders of the ocean, with their frowning crests from which the long, trailing grass hangs dripping in the waves. The boat suddenly stopped, and cracked under the hand of the giant. A terrible roaring burst from his hollow chest, and these words were uttered in a voice of thunder:—

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"Ah! ah! my passengers of the night!—you think that the eyes of Antigon are closed to allow you to pass in the dark! Where are my three oxen to satisfy my hunger this evening?"

Frega clung trembling to Atuix who silently drew forth his long blade.

The giant continued, "If you wish to speak to me, then swell out your feeble voices, my dwarfs."

"Mercy upon us, if thou art the god of this river," replied Atuix, "and if thou art not a god, then let a poor bard of Ogmios pass unmolested."

"O terrible giant, let us pass in the name of the great Hesus of Teutates, and of all the gods."

"Oh, thou dost jest, I think," said the giant in a ferocious tone. "I laugh at Hesus, seest thou? and at all thy gods!—and if thou hast seen them, is their stature no higher than yours, fine race of weaklings, of whom I could trample a whole army under my feet? Ah! thy gods, I should long ere this have taken them from their heaven for my evening's amusement on the lonely shore, or to make a repast of, if they were anything more than vain smoke!"

"Who, then, art thou," said Atuix, "thou who laughest at the gods?"

"Who am I?—Where is Antigon? Ah! thou wouldst dissemble with Antigon!—Yes, thou forgettest the tribute of<sup>[258]</sup> oxen thou owest me for passing on my river—thou didst think, favoured by the darkness, to deceive me, and now thou wouldst use thy childish tricks! Ah! Ah!" And the giant covered Atuix with his powerful hand before he could move a limb.

Frega, who had remained motionless with terror, threw herself on her knees in the boat. "Mercy, mercy upon Atuix," she exclaimed. "Oh! mercy! what harm can our passing this river do to thee, we feeble and without any evil intention, he loving me and I loving him? Mercy! Ah, heavens! is there, then, no pity in thy soul?"

The giant interrupted with a terrible sneer: "Oh! my soul, sayst thou! My soul! Where hast thou learnt that I have a soul? Who has ever seen a soul? Oh, I tell thee truly that there are neither souls nor gods, neither mind, nor anything but the body, and hunger!"

As he ended the giant pressed the hand of Atuix between his two iron fingers, the hand fell into the boat with the glaive it grasped. A terrible cry was heard accompanied by a ferocious laugh. The giant picked up the bloody hand and threw it into the river. Then, just as he was about to seize Frega, who had dropped<sup>[259]</sup> senseless, Atuix freed from the frightful claws which pressed him, with the hand which was left him, picked up the fallen sword and plunged it to the hilt in the giant's arm. A howl of pain was repeated by the surrounding echoes.

The moon was just rising brilliant and pure from her bed of clouds, and her rays played on the waves, which were scarcely ruffled by the light breeze. The boat no longer detained floated adrift. A violent shock aroused Frega! She rose painfully on her knees and saw at some distance from her a horrible sight. The furious giant was crushing the body of Atuix between his hands. Frega dragged herself to the edge of the boat, her eyes fixed, her face ashy pale, she with difficulty stretched out her neck, tried to advance farther, as if under some invisible attraction; an instant she gazed, leaned forward, her eyes tearless, not a sigh from her bosom; then she loosened her hold and rolled over into the river.

A year after this night Cæsar had put an end to Gaulish liberty. The strength, the courage and the heroic resistance of this great people whose ancestors had in one of their daring wanderings over Europe encamped on the ruins of Rome, was now crushed under the fortune and genius of the conqueror. By the glare of vast<sup>[260]</sup> conflagrations, Belgium, the perpetual focus of revolt against oppression, was traversed by three Roman armies, and bridges thrown over the Scheldt opened the passage to the country of the Menapians. One day a detached company of the legion of the vanguard followed the banks of the river, guided, it is said, by a mysterious being. Twice the sun had sunk to rest without their returning. German horsemen sent on their track towards the middle of the night were stopped at the sight of a strange spectacle. Raging flames agitated by the wind were devouring the foundations of a tower which had protected a castle of colossal proportions. The ground was lit by the glare of the fire and strewn with the dead bodies of the Roman soldiers. In the midst of them, on a mound of the dead, was stretched motionless, covered with wounds, pierced all over by darts, the enormous body of a giant. From one of his huge arms, from which the hand was severed, ran on the ground a rivulet of black blood. Over his head bent a warrior. After some moments of suspense the eyes of the giant opened. The warrior instantly raised himself, parting his long, flowing hair from off his pale and beautiful face. Then his eyes suddenly flashed with extraordinary brightness—he<sup>[261]</sup> approached near to the monster's ear, shouting out these words:—

"Antigon! Antigon! I must call loudly, is it not true?—so that thine ear may catch the sound? Well, now listen to me, Antigon! Oh! thou art not quite dead, thou canst yet understand and remember! A year has elapsed



since—truly, truly, thy wounds are ghastly and bleeding and sweet to look upon!—Yes, it was on a summer night, two lovers floated together on the river. Oh! thy den was not as bright as this night—Two lovers thou knowest!—two lovers who only spoke of love, their hearts filled with gentle thoughts. Look, look, how well one sees one's shadow here in thy blood.—One of the two lovers was a bard. Oh! oh! thy dying eyes flash! Thou didst kill him, and the other—But where are thy terrible hands, Antigon? The other, that feeble woman—Thou hearest me? She lives to avenge him!”

A shudder ran through the giant's body, a frightful rattle burst from his chest; his teeth chattered like the clashing of swords, his eyes rolled once more in their bloody orbits, and then closed forever. He was dead. Frega knelt on the ground and prayed. Upon that spot rose Antwerp. Now Antwerp is the Antwerpen of the ancient Flemish language, which still preserves its original strength and richness in its Saxon garb—<sup>[262]</sup> Antwerpen, in which word the chroniclers find Hand and Werpen, to throw, in remembrance of the giant Antigon and the hands which he threw into the Scheldt.

## II

### YVON BRUGGERMANS: A LEGEND OF THE ANTWERP CATHEDRAL

When you approach the old Flemish city, built upon the banks of the Scheldt, in one of the finest situations of Europe, the first object which attracts the attention of the traveler is the great spire of the Cathedral. This “Heaven-directed” spire is one of the loftiest and finest in the world. It is a masterpiece of pyramidal construction, delighting the vision not more by its vast height than by its exquisite proportions. It is surmounted by a cross of a size corresponding with the edifice itself. The Antwerpians are justly proud of their antique cathedral, which occupies the first rank among the monuments of Europe; if time and space permitted I would give you a sketch of its beauties, but many others before me have described its elegant marble statuary, chapels, confessionals, altars, choirs, and above all the chef-d'œuvre of the immortal<sup>[263]</sup> Rubens. Before the grand entrance, which so plainly shows the imprint of time, observe this blue marble stone, inlaid with several small pieces of brass, scattered promiscuously and seeming to form a mysterious design, which irresistibly excites one's curiosity. This monument marks the historical and fatal spot where the event occurred which I am about to relate.



SPIRE OF THE CATHEDRAL, ANTWERP.

The 22d of October, 1520, was a day of fêtes and rejoicing in all the cities of Flanders, for on that day a Fleming, Charles V, was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle. The rich and powerful city of Antwerp, whose merchants were opulent as princes, displayed all its luxury and splendour to honour its new Cæsar. The day commenced with prayers in all the churches and finished with national games of every description upon the public squares, and processions of artisans preceded by the banners of their several professions. The streets resounded with songs and repeated cries of “Vive l'Empereur Charles!” and as the night approached the night became more dense and noisy, for before the Hôtel de Ville immense casks were placed, which poured forth floods of wine and beer that helped to increase the enthusiasm of the citizens of the good city of<sup>[264]</sup> Antwerp. But above all sounded the glorious peals of the silver chimes from the old cathedral, as if it wished



to add its voice in a hymn of praise to the young Emperor whose reign commenced under such auspicious circumstances.

There were nevertheless in the city many sad hearts, as upon all such occasions there are many who cannot participate. At the window of one of the largest but poorest lodging houses of the Kamerstraet, known by the sign of a large Red Lion, stood a young man whose desponding and sorrowful air contrasted strongly with the joyful bands that passed under his window. It was evident that he took no part in the general rejoicing. The room in which he was, although showing that scrupulous Flemish neatness, presented an appearance of extreme poverty. A miserable pine bedstead, curtains of blue linen, four old chairs, and an old oak table comprised the furniture of the room. The whitewashed walls were devoid of ornament, except the image of the Virgin, before which burned a small wax candle. Upon the bed reclined a woman whose pale, wan face, deep-sunk eyes, livid lips, and forehead covered with premature wrinkles (she being still young) wore the marks of serious physical and mental suffering. The silence which reigned in the room was broken by the [265] invalid.

"Yvon, my son," said she, "come to me; but what do I see, tears?"

"Alas, Mother, how can I keep them back? I cannot help you; the fever has so weakened me that I am unable to work. Hardly can I lift a hammer. I could not bear the heat of the forge. I am as weak as a child."

"My poor child, the fever has paralyzed your strength as well as mine, but the will of God be done."

"Amen," responded the son. "It is hard nevertheless to struggle against sickness and poverty. If tomorrow we do not satisfy the demands of the landlord we shall be turned into the street. If I were the only one to suffer!"

"My son, I have seen your father and your three brothers die with this merciless fever, and with them perished all my happiness. But in the midst of my suffering I have always said, God has given them to us and taken them from us. Blessed be his name. And in this submission to his will I have found my only consolation."

The young man sighed but made no reply. At this moment a tumultuous noise of steps arose from the street. It was a procession. The corporations of tanners and joiners were passing. [266]

"Now come the painters with the image of St. Luc, and now, oh! I see the blacksmiths and lockmakers carrying the banner of St. Eloi."

Poor Yvon looked sorrowfully upon his former companions, happy in their strength and health, when suddenly he drew back from the window and rapidly closed it as if he would shut out a fatal vision.

"What is it?" exclaimed his mother, alarmed at his sudden pallor.

"Marie has just passed with her father and Master Verachter, the rich jeweler of Ziereckstraet."

The poor mother tenderly caressed him, without speaking. She seemed to fear to encourage by the least word this sorrow she knew to be without hope.

Yvon sat a long time at the bedside, his face hidden in his hands. He recalled his early days, joyous and without care, his affectionate father and brothers, the winning voice of his mother, who instructed them in their early duties, and the young Marie, the constant companion of his youthful plays, whom one day he hoped to call his wife. He had nearly served his apprenticeship at the forge with his father when this fatal [267] epidemic broke out, to which his father and brothers fell victims, and he himself and his mother barely survived. But the blacksmiths of the city refused to accord him the right to continue his father's business, as he had not fully worked out the required time. That very morning he had heard a neighbour, who came to visit his mother, say that the hand of Marie, which had been the secret of all his efforts and thoughts, had been promised by her father to the rich jeweler of Ziereckstraet. He had not believed it, but the sight he saw from the window confirmed all his fears, and he remained in deep reverie for a long time.

He was startled from it by the sounds of a violent tempest which had suddenly broken upon the city. The merciless blast from the North Sea swept over it, spreading destruction in its course. Everywhere was heard the falling of tiles, the crashing of glass from the broken windows, the uprooting of trees, and the distant noise from the river, whose swollen waters were overflowing its banks. Yvon approached the window; darkness reigned everywhere, the rain fell in torrents, and had extinguished all the torches and lights of the streets.

During all this long October night the storm raged with unabated fury; towards morning it subsided, and [268] when day broke it had passed, leaving all the country inundated. As the disasters of the city were insignificant compared with those of the country the inhabitants consoled themselves with the reflection that others had been more unfortunate than they. It is often thus that we console ourselves. Those who passed in the vicinity of the cathedral saw with regret that the great cross which surmounted the spire had been struck by the lightning, and was so bent that at any instant it might fall. This cross had cost so much work and care to place it so high! The news spread rapidly, and soon the Grande Place before the cathedral was crowded.

In those times, when the love of art reigned supreme, each Flemish city possessed its monument. Ghent boasted its gigantic belfry, surmounted by its Byzantine dragon brought from the crusades; Louvain, its Gothic Hôtel de Ville; Bruges, its old parks and public buildings; while Antwerp glorified itself justly in its cathedral, of which no one dared to contest the superiority as a work of art and architecture. All the citizens viewed this sight with consternation, and asked each other anxiously who would be the individual bold enough to attempt such a perilous enterprise. The sound of a trumpet was heard and two heralds on [269] horseback appeared on the Place. Silence being established, one of them read with a slow and loud voice the following proclamation:—



CATHEDRAL, ANTWERP.

"To the good citizens of Antwerp!—We, the Burgomaster and Aldermen of the city, make known that we have resolved to give five hundred golden crowns to the person who will reëstablish the iron cross in its ancient position on the cathedral tower. *Five hundred golden crowns!* Citizens! Whoever desires to obtain this munificent reward will present himself immediately before the Council now assembled at the Hôtel de Ville."

There was a moment of silence. Each one waited to see who would accept, but no one advanced. The heralds were about to retire, to read elsewhere their proclamation, when the crowd suddenly opened and gave passage to a young man, who precipitated himself resolutely towards the Hôtel de Ville. Every eye was turned towards him with curiosity. He was of extreme beauty, although emaciated, but from his eyes shone forth manly resolution and courage. The crowd anxiously waited the result. A few minutes only had passed when the heralds reappeared to read a second proclamation:—

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"To the good citizens of Antwerp!—We, the Burgomaster and Aldermen, make known that Yvon Bruggermans, blacksmith and free citizen, has engaged before us this 23d day of October, 1520, to reëstablish our iron cross in its position upon the tower of the cathedral tomorrow with the aid of God. Consequently, we order all who may be present to refrain from distracting the attention of the said Yvon Bruggermans, by cries, charms, or malicious interventions, but on the contrary to give him all the assistance which he may need for the accomplishment of his work in the name of God and the Holy Virgin."

When the time arrived, Yvon, clothed in his holiday suit, approached his mother's bed and with an animation which she had not seen in him for several months, embraced her and asked her blessing.

"Where are you going, my son? You are dressed in your holiday suit, and the fêtes are over."

"I go to look for work, dear Mother," answered he, trying to hide his agitation. "I feel my strength return, and I can no longer bear the misery of our situation. Take courage, Mother, I feel the certainty that a better future is before us."

"My child, take care to do nothing beyond thy strength. Think that all the riches of the world will be nothing to me if I lose thee."

"And you, my Mother, are you not for me the entire world? I would give my life willingly to insure your happiness. But time passes; bless me, dear Mother."

"May the benediction of God be on thee and on thy designs, now and forever. Amen," said his mother gravely with her eyes raised to heaven, and with her right hand upon the head of her kneeling son.

After a last embrace, he left with a firm and resolute step. The most trying proof was past, and he felt his courage and hope revive. He soon arrived at the Grande Place, where an immense crowd was assembled. All eyes were turned upon him with an expression of pity and regret, and voices murmured in his ear words of encouragement, sympathy and hope. But Yvon, avoiding as much as possible every species of emotion, advanced without answering, traversed the crowd, and entered the cathedral. He approached the altar, which was decorated as if for a fête, and kneeling, recited with fervour this prayer:

"Lord of Heaven, I risk my life not to gain a miserable sum of money, but to save my mother; preserve me, then, for the love of her, or if it must be that I die, permit me to accomplish the work I have undertaken. Father all-powerful, I place my soul in thy hands."

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He then rose and proceeded with a firm step towards the door of the spiral steps which lead to the summit of the tower. As he ascended he saw through the loopholes the crowd increasing, until all the neighbouring roofs, windows and balconies were filled; everywhere a sea of heads. He arrived at last at the end of the

steps. After having thrown a glance of admiration over the country, he turned his gaze toward the city. At his feet he distinguished the sign of the Red Lion. He thought of his mother, then turned toward the dwelling of Marie. The remembrance of her animated his courage, for on his success depended the only chance he had of obtaining her hand, and he prepared himself to finish the most perilous part of his undertaking. Before him rose this long, perpendicular spire, the summit of which he must reach without any other means of ascent than the crevices between the stones. He attached to a strong rope the brazier and tools which he had brought to work with, fastened this firmly around his waist, and after crossing himself devoutly commenced his perilous ascent.

The crowd watched him as he slowly mounted. Deep emotion filled every breast. Not a sound was heard until<sup>[273]</sup> he arrived at the summit and stood immobile at the foot of the cross. Then burst forth a universal cry of admiration. He lighted his brazier and actively commenced his work, attaching firmly to the cross one end of the rope, of which the other encircled his body. The multitude saw the great cross rise slowly and by degrees under the repeated blows of the hammer, and with every stroke his strength appeared to increase.

Fifteen minutes had hardly passed when cries of enthusiasm saluted the cross completely restored. His first thought was an aspiration of gratitude to heaven, the second was for his mother. Then he thought with an emotion of indescribable joy of Marie, who would be his, for her father certainly could not refuse, when he should have the five hundred golden crowns obtained in such an heroic manner. His happiness was at its height, and fearing that his emotion might prove fatal, he crossed himself and prepared to descend, but before doing so he threw a last glance over the crowd. He saw them separate to give passage to a wedding cortège, which advanced towards the cathedral. Attracted in spite of himself, he regarded attentively all the<sup>[274]</sup> members. He noticed a young girl dressed in white as a bride leaning on the arm of an old man. He supported himself at the foot of the cross and leaned as far as possible to assure himself of the reality of his fears—his eyes distended, his face livid, and his whole body trembling with emotion. They glanced upwards to see the young workman who had raised the cross—Yvon gave a cry of agony, for this bride was Marie, and at her side the old jeweler Verachter of Ziereckstraet! The shock was too violent for his spirit exhausted by so many struggles. He fainted—his hands dropped the support which held him, he remained an instant immovable—then fell. But the rope which was around him remained fixed to the foot of the cross, and he was for some minutes suspended in space. The crowd who had seen his fall with terror believed him saved, but the rope had touched the lighted brazier, and soon the body of the unfortunate Yvon fell a disfigured and bleeding mass in the midst of this brilliant wedding cortege, at the feet of the bride.

The next day a deputation of magistrates of the city went to carry to his mother the five hundred golden crowns, the price of the blood of her son. But the chamber was empty. A coffin was placed in the middle of the room. Death had spared the poor mother this great affliction. Yvon was buried on the spot where he fell,<sup>[275]</sup> and the blue stone, with the brass encrusted in the marble, alone indicates the place where lies the body of the young blacksmith.

### III FRÜGGER THE MISER

#### I

One evening in the year 1552, the bells of the numerous hurches and chapels of the pious city of Antwerp were heard calling the faithful to divine service, to pray for the repose of the souls of their deceased relatives and friends. The heavens were obscured by black and angry clouds; the wind blew in strong gusts, accompanied by a drizzling rain. A profound silence reigned in the obscure streets. As the greater part of the population were in the churches, one could easily have traversed half the city without meeting a living soul, except, perhaps, some tardy worshiper, hastening to regain lost time and to arrive at the Salut, before the *Tantum Ergo*.

Notwithstanding the importance of the religious solemnities which were being performed in all the houses of<sup>[276]</sup> God, and the detestable weather which drove every one from the streets, a man stood motionless before a house in the rue des Tailleurs de Pierres, enveloped in a dark cloak. He remained motionless, feeling neither the wind nor the rain, his eyes fixed on the windows, trying vainly to distinguish the least ray of light. He was young, with effeminate features, and his upper lip was shaded by a light moustache; although he endeavoured to conquer the emotions which agitated him, it was not difficult to discover by the contraction of his brows, that bitter thoughts filled him with despair. The house before which he stood was that of a rich banker named Frügger. After having stood there some time, he lost hope of seeing in this dwelling the wished-for object, and with that, the courage to remain longer exposed to the inclemency of the storm, so he walked slowly away in the direction of the Scheldt. While he was in the neighbourhood of the mansion of Frügger he stopped from time to time and regarded it still with the same ardent anxiety which for more than an hour had characterized his contemplation. When at last the distance and the obscurity prevented him from seeing it, the expression of his countenance became still more sorrowful.

Letting his head droop upon his chest, he sighed, "Katharina, thou lovest me no more! Thou hast forgotten<sup>[277]</sup> me! Thou hast abandoned me! It is foolish for me to doubt it! Oh! now it is finished! I wish no longer to live! Existence becomes a burden to me."

At the moment he pronounced these words, expressed with such profound despair, he arrived at the Canal St. Jean, not far from the river. At that time, there stood at this place a water mill. Suddenly the noise of the water pouring over the wheel attracted his attention, and drew him from his somber reverie. He raised his head, his eyes sparkled, the expression of his features became nearly radiant, his steps were firmer, and with a species of cruel joy he directed himself towards the canal. It could not be doubted that the unfortunate young man wished to put an end to his sufferings, which he believed would terminate only with his life. He was already on the banks of the Scheldt. One step farther and he would have disappeared in the waves, when

suddenly the bells of the city recommenced their funeral knell.

These lugubrious sounds had a singular effect upon his spirit. He recoiled with fright, his thoughts suddenly changed. He was astonished to think he had contemplated committing a crime to put an end to his troubles.<sup>[278]</sup> He turned away and was soon far from the place where he had so nearly put into execution his fatal project. A quarter of an hour after, he was near the church of St. André, calmer, but still despairing.

“Ungrateful,” he said to himself, “to commit a crime that would have brought affliction upon the last days, and covered with shame the white hairs of the worthy old man, your father, who loves you so tenderly, and has only yourself in the world. God knows if he would have survived your suicide, if sorrow would not have brought him to the grave. And why? For a woman that you have loved, that you still love more than words can express! How do you know she merits your love? And has she ever loved you? Foolish to doubt! She still loves you—Oh, no! she has lost all interest in you and treats you as if there never existed the least sympathetic sentiment between you.”

Saying this, he turned, stopped, and appeared to consider anew whether he should return to the canal. It was the last attempt of the spirit of evil upon his heart enfeebled by suffering. Happily his good angel watched over him and gave him strength to resist.

After a moment of hesitation he continued his route, murmuring, “But no, that cannot be; she cannot have<sup>[279]</sup> forgotten me, she must love me yet—Katharina, this angel with looks so pure, voice so sweet, expression so celestial, thoughts so candid, she could never deceive me. For her I would give my life. She cannot abandon me thus; but why does she not let me hear from her? She must realize that her silence and this uncertainty make me suffer torments.”

Thus reasoning, by turns filled with hope and despair, he gradually approached the principal entrance of the church. Divine service had long since commenced. The majestic tones of the organ rang through the vaulted roof, floating over the heads of the kneeling faithful. He entered more through curiosity and to distract his grief, than through piety, or to pray for the souls of the dead, as he felt that in his distracted state of mind it would be impossible for him to elevate his thoughts above the earth, and to invoke God with any other intention than that of seeing his well beloved.

The church of St. André at this period was a remarkable edifice, built in the Gothic style, and of an imposing appearance. Its origin was as follows: In 1519 the Augustinian monks possessed on this spot a magnificent cloister from which the street takes its name. Several of these friars, being suspected of heresy, and of<sup>[280]</sup> following the example of their colleague, the famous monk of Württemberg, were expelled from the city. The cloister was demolished and sold, with the exception of the church that the order was building, which was finished with the authorization of Pope Adrian VI, under the invocation of St. André. The spectacle which the interior of the church presented at this moment was not calculated to inspire our hero with less sorrowful thoughts or more consoling reflections. Everything there spoke of death, eternity and purgatory. The nave was draped with black; upon all sides, upon the pillars, on the altar, on the candelabra, were funeral emblems, death’s heads and cross bones, and skeletons, speaking of punishments and expiations of the other life. He felt ill at ease in the midst of all these lugubrious decorations. This colossal edifice, partially lighted by innumerable wax candles, this compact crowd kneeling on the marble and buried in prayer, these gigantic columns hidden under the funeral drapings, and, more than all, the mournful strains of the organ and the solemn character of the chants, saddened him and filled him with an indefinable and mysterious fear.

All this only served to recall more vividly his own situation, and he felt he could no longer endure it. As he<sup>[281]</sup> advanced towards another door of the church he noticed in the shade of a pillar a female who, while appearing to pray with fervour, watched all his movements and endeavoured to attract his attention. Before her two persons were kneeling, one a young girl with an angelic countenance, whose elegant figure was not entirely hidden by the ample folds of her black silk cloak. He recognized her whose silence had made him suffer so cruelly. The other, an old man whose features were strongly marked with sternness and severity, was the father of Katharina. The female who had at first attracted his attention was the servant, whose eloquent gestures had caused to disappear, as if by enchantment, the sorrow and discouragement of the desolate lover, who thought no more of leaving the church. Drawing his cloak around him, so as to conceal as much as possible his features, he placed himself behind the persons upon whom all his thoughts were concentrated, and decided to wait until the close of the services, hoping he should succeed in learning something of the inexplicable conduct of the daughter of the banker. The service was finished, the last modulations of the organ had died away, when the old man and his daughter prepared to leave the church. <sup>[282]</sup>

The young man followed as near as possible, without being noticed. Near the door he felt some one press his arm and at the same instant put in his hand a letter, which he took without pronouncing a word. He continued to follow the three persons instinctively. It was only after seeing them enter their dwelling and close the door that he thought of returning home.

## II

To those acquainted, however slightly, with the history of Antwerp it will be superfluous to recall the immense prosperity of the city at the time of our little drama. To give an idea of its ancient wealth and magnificence, it will suffice to say that five hundred vessels ascended and descended the Scheldt daily. The river near the city was literally covered with ships at anchor, waiting their turn to discharge; they often extended as far as the village of Hoboken, three miles from the city, which gave rise to the Flemish saying “Op de Hobooksche hei liggeren” (To remain in the fields of Hoboken). This saying is used to designate persons who are obliged to wait a long time for the accomplishment of their desires. Nearly every nation had its representatives in the fine and celebrated city of Antwerp, and one of the writers of the time said that the<sup>[283]</sup> Antwerpians could study the customs, language and costumes of all the nations of the globe without leaving their city. We will not attempt to explain the causes of this gigantic prosperity, which caused Antwerp to be

the rival of Genoa and Venice. Its admirable situation, which still contributes to its prosperity, was one of the principal reasons. The fairs, like those of Leipsic and Frankfort, were endowed with many valuable privileges; one of these guaranteed to its visitors a species of inviolability. They could not be molested for debt during the continuance of the fair and while making their return trip to their homes. It is not astonishing that with the freedom and facility which foreign merchants enjoyed they preferred Antwerp to other cities, and that it attained such a degree of splendour.

Among the foreign bankers the most noted was a German named Wolfgang Frügger. He was descended from the famous Früggers of Augsburg, who had representatives in France, Spain, Italy and Antwerp. They were the richest bankers of Europe, the Rothschilds of the epoch. He had inherited from his father a sum of six million crowns, a fabulous amount at that time. His house had the reputation of containing more treasures<sup>[284]</sup> than the palace of a king. He was called by every one "Frügger the Rich." He lived in a very simple, miserly manner.

Frügger had been for a long time connected with another German banker, immensely rich, named Hochstetter, whose mode of living differed essentially from that of the father of Katharina. He lived in a princely manner in a palace which he had built in the street that still bears his name. It appears that notwithstanding the difference in their manner of living, they agreed marvelously, and visited each other frequently. Their names were inseparable upon the Bourse, as all believed that there existed between the two houses a secret partnership, and why should they not have believed so? For when the name of one alone was cited in a transaction it was soon known that the other participated in it. When the loan of £152,000 sterling was made to Henry VIII, King of England, ostensibly by Frügger alone, it was soon known that it was an operation of the two houses. Later, when Hochstetter concluded his loan of 3,000,000 crowns of gold, to the King of Portugal, Frügger, which was a mystery for no one, took part for at least one-half.

Thus it had been for many years, when suddenly without any apparent cause the union of the rich Germans<sup>[285]</sup> was interrupted in the most complete manner. They ceased to visit and became as strangers. Although no one knew the reason of this sudden change they did not doubt that Frügger was the cause, as it was known that Hochstetter had been to visit him and had not been received. This happened a few days only before the ceremonies at the church for the repose of the dead. Frügger had not for several days appeared at the Bourse, which had filled all the merchants with astonishment.

### III

The same evening of the ceremonies two persons conversed together in one of the salons of the superb mansion of Hochstetter. One of them was a man of about sixty years of age, of a venerable aspect, whose features expressed mildness and benevolence. This was Hochstetter. Not far from him was seated in a heavy oaken chair the young man whom we have followed from the river to the church; he appeared a prey to great despair and tried vainly to repress his tears. The father was reading the letter which the servant of Katharina had given to the lover of her mistress, and from time to time he stopped to bestow upon his son a regard full<sup>[286]</sup> of tenderness, but the contents of the letter were not of a nature to calm his sorrows, or to give him courage. It ran as follows:

"It is eight long days that I have not seen you, nor your worthy father, and I have not even been able to send you any word. Perhaps you have already accused me of forgetfulness and ingratitude. If it is thus, ask God to pardon your unjust suspicions, for never were reproaches less merited. If you knew my situation you would feel only pity for my unhappy fate, and you would not impute sentiments to me which are far from my heart. Since the day your father, my esteemed guardian, came to demand my hand, my father has changed so much that I can hardly recognize him. Not contented with forbidding me all communication with you, he will not even allow me to talk with any one; even my own maid is a prisoner like myself. Not a word from you or your father have I had. I have only been told you asked my hand in marriage. When I asked my father for an explanation he answered me that it was not yet time but that he would give me one later. I cannot comprehend it—<sup>[287]</sup> my father who has appeared to love me so tenderly and has always gratified all my wishes—to treat me suddenly with so much severity, so much cruelty. What can I say? He knows that I love you, and what adds to my grief is not to be able to tell you my troubles, and not to see you. He is not ignorant that I suffer and weep almost continually. I fear you will ascribe my silence to other sentiments. He has kept me from your father and all my friends who could speak to me of you. He has also changed so much that it astonishes me; he is always agitated, filled with a continual fear which it is impossible for me to understand; he trembles and turns pale at the slightest noise, speaks of thieves and robbers as if the city contained them by thousands; in the evening he dares not retire until he has assured himself that the doors are well fastened. His long, strange absences, of which I have formerly spoken to you, become more and more frequent, and they often last for hours. No one sees him go out, but he is nowhere to be found. Then suddenly he appears without any one being able to say how he has entered. He has forbidden me to go to the morning mass as I have always done, and it was with great reluctance that he accompanied me to the church of St. André to pray for the repose of the soul of my deceased mother, whose loss I have never felt more deeply than now. As I<sup>[288]</sup> have the hope of seeing you there, I know not why, I have written these lines, and confide them to Clara and pray that she may find means of giving them to you."

This letter did not appear to astonish Hochstetter much, but his discontent was none the less visible.

"Decidedly he is losing his senses," murmured he, throwing it upon the table. Then, turning towards his son, "Carl," said he, taking his hand, "calm yourself, you see that all is not lost as you feared, and you were wrong to doubt Katharina. The poor child loves you more than ever."

"But her father," sighed Carl, "her father. I avow that his conduct...."

"But I think I understand it. I have been connected with him twenty years and I think I know him well enough to flatter myself that he had much friendship for us, and that it must cost him something to sacrifice it for an idea; but still he shows himself uncivil, refuses to have any more transactions with me, and when I visited him to demand an explanation he would not receive me. He forbids his daughter, my ward, all communication with us, and for what?—because I have asked of him her hand in marriage for my only son, whose fortune is larger than that of any other in the city! He has seen this attachment in the games of your infancy and has always approved of it. If I regret one thing it is not the interruption of our commercial relations, or the loss of his friendship, but the sudden disappointment of the hopes which this union had made me form for you. Alas! do not be discouraged, my son; you have not so much to complain of, it appears to me. The young girl loves you, you cannot doubt it, and in spite of the severity of her father she finds means to communicate with you, and then she says that she does not comprehend her father's strange conduct, and gives us to understand that he must labour under some aberration of mind. I am sure that when he is reëstablished in health we shall find him the same old friend and tender father, who will be pleased to have you for a son-in-law. For where will he find one more suitable in every respect? Besides, you will be immensely rich."

"If Frügger will not accord me the hand of Katharina of what use will all the riches of the earth be to me?"

"Lover's words! Riches are always useful; you will learn that later. He will consent; but if he persists in his absurd obstinacy will you consent to marry her without any dowry, or even the fortune which belongs to her from her mother?"

"Instantly, even if she were the daughter of the most humble artisan."

"I will make another attempt. I know him well enough to prophesy that my offers will be accepted. Console yourself; all will be well." After this they separated, each to retire to his apartment.

#### IV

At the rue des Tailleurs de Pierres, in one of the rooms of the house of Frügger, took place almost at the same moment, a scene which, although of another character, still related to the same subject as the one which had just occurred at the house of Hochstetter.

"My child," said Frügger to his daughter, "you know that since the death of your mother I have loved no one but yourself in this world, and have endeavoured to augment my fortune only in order to make you the richest heiress of all the provinces reunited under the scepter of the Emperor Charles V. You, for whom I have done so much, for whom I continue to amass wealth, in order to elevate you so high that misfortune can never reach you, and whom all the world shall envy; you can do nothing for me? Why refuse me, who have never refused you the accomplishment of the slightest desire? Why refuse me the obedience that every child owes to its parents, even when they have not done for it what I have done for you?"

"Father," responded Katharina in a firm tone, "I have never refused to obey you, and have always endeavoured to prove by my obedience that I have not ceased to love and respect you, which is my wish and duty."

"It is probably with this intention," said the old man bitterly, "that notwithstanding my express will you still persist in loving the son of Hochstetter."

"Oh, Father," interrupted the young girl, blushing deeply.

"Try not to deny it," answered he with anger. "You love him, you love him madly, in spite of me or my strict orders, and the obedience which you declare you owe me."

Katharina was too much agitated to answer immediately. She hesitated, and then said with a trembling voice, which grew firmer as she proceeded:

"I love him more than I can say, more than I know myself, which renders me incapable of obeying you, when you require that I shall forget him. Can you make me commit a crime? Is it not you yourself who have taught me from my most tender youth to esteem and love Hochstetter as your friend, and the friend of my deceased mother, and to consider him as my second father? Is it my fault if in obeying you I have ended by loving his son, the friend of my infancy, the companion of my youthful days, the only child of my guardian? No, the fault is yours at first, yours alone, and in commanding me to change my sentiments you demand an impossibility and render me the most unhappy of all beings!"

"It is true," murmured Frügger, striking his forehead. "It is my fault, it is my fault. I have had too much confidence. I have delivered myself to them bound hand and foot, like an old fool that I was. But if with an effort you can satisfy me, render me happy?" questioned he, raising his voice.

"Render you happy, Father? I do not understand you. Why is your interest so great?"

"What interest, child," cried he, with a frightful expression upon his features, "what interest!—You know you are sure of my affection for you, but I believe, nevertheless, that sooner than let you persevere in this love I prefer to see you dead. Oh, yes, dead! Ask of me all you wish, demand my blood, my life, but I plead with you renounce this detested Carl, whom I hate as my enemy," continued he, seizing her arm and pressing it with savage energy. "Renounce him, I pray you; say that you will love him no more, that you will think of him only as an enemy—as the enemy of your father."

Katharina burst into tears. "I wish I could promise what you exact of me, but I feel it impossible to keep a promise to forget him."

"Oh! say to me that you will never abandon me, never leave me alone in my solitary dwelling," pursued the merciless old man, without appearing to have heard the words of his daughter; "say that you will not marry

while I live. You wish not my death, do you?"

"Your death!"

"Yes, my death! Listen! I lost your mother while you were an infant. It is needless to say what a terrible blow her loss was to me, but I have consoled myself with the idea that you remained to me, and with the hope of finding in you all her virtues. This hope has not been deceived. I see in you today my regretted Anne, with her beauty, all her precious qualities, and her incessant cares for my happiness. If in losing you I lose a second time all that is dear to me I shall not survive it."

"Father, I pray you."

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"Oh, I know what you wish to say, that your husband would be my friend, would prove a most tender and respectful son; perhaps even through pity he would consent to leave you with me; but the idea alone of knowing that when he wished he could take you from me would embitter my life. And now," said he, perceiving with joy that his words had made a profound impression upon the young girl, "Katharina, I appeal to your heart. Will you abandon the poor old man who lives only by you and for you? Can you reduce to despair and fill with bitterness the few days which yet remain to me? Would you kill me slowly and force me to curse in my last moments, my only daughter, whose abandonment will have caused my death?"

"Never, oh, never!" she cried, throwing herself in tears upon his breast. "Pardon me, my poor father."

"Thus you will remain? Always! You will never think of marrying while I live?"

"Never."

"Oh, I knew it," cried he, embracing her. "I knew I should recover my daughter! The conviction that you have assured the happiness of your father will soften the bitterness of your regrets."

She fell upon her knees sobbing, a prey to an indescribable emotion. He placed his hand upon her head, and raising his eyes to heaven said with an inspired air:

"God, who has promised long and prosperous days in this life, and in the other eternal felicity, to children who love and obey their parents, may he bless thee as I bless thee, and render thee tenfold the joy which I feel at this moment, at thy filial piety."

Raising the weeping Katharina he rang a bell placed upon a table near him. Her servant appeared. Katharina embraced him anew, and left the room, supported by the maid.

## V

Frügger waited until he heard her enter her apartment. Then he closed the door. A smile of satisfaction played around the corners of his mouth, and a look of triumph lightened his features. He remained at first motionless and silent. Little by little the air of contentment disappeared and gave place to one of anxiety. His face contracted; he rose and commenced to walk back and forth in the room.

"If she should change her ideas, retract the promise that I have extorted from her; if she should force me to consent to her marriage, or worse still, marry without it, what could I do then?—Oppose her design?—Impossible!—Here," said he, taking from an escritoire a parchment covered with several seals, "here is this abhorred writing signed by the hand of my wife, which exacts that when my daughter attains the age of twenty-five years—or sooner, if she wishes to marry—that I shall give her half of my fortune, and to complete the misfortune, confides to Hochstetter the guardianship of my child! Ah! my wife knew well what she did in making this will! She knew me, and was not ignorant that this gold, these bonds, these treasures, were my life, and that I would give my soul to preserve them, and would willingly sacrifice my eternal salvation rather than be separated from them. Part with them? Malediction! Another to possess and have in his power these riches, fruits of so many days of anxiety and nights filled with anguish—of so many unfortunate speculations!—Another to manage this wealth so laboriously amassed—to have the right to dispose of my money, to squander it perhaps, for I know these Hochstetters; they live like princes and entertain all the nobles of the land.—Grand Dieu! Not to be able to rejoice daily over the sight of these riches; to part with half. Never! that shall never be! I!—Yes! I will sooner kill the unfortunate child."

In exclaiming thus, the expression of his face was so terrible that it was almost fiendish. The violence of his emotions was so powerful that he was himself startled by their intensity. After a few moments of reflection he became more calm.

"I am wrong to agitate myself thus; she will not marry; she has promised it; and then have I not the testament in my own hands? But Hochstetter knows it; he possesses proofs of its existence. I fear he has a copy of it. Oh! he knows very well what he has done! My daughter, the wife of his son—*le misérable!* To abuse thus my friendship, my confidence; that calls for revenge. But no, I have merited it; it is my fault. She loves the son and respects the father more than she does me. I could cry with rage."

Pronouncing these words with ferocity he fell back upon his seat, somber and discouraged, and remained plunged in thought.

## VI

A half hour later, when he judged that all were wrapped in slumber he rose, took from a secret compartment of his escritoire a little key, lighted a dark lantern, and left the room. After having assured himself that there was no fear of meeting any one, he advanced softly and descended the staircase. Arriving in the spacious corridor, he first went to the street door to assure himself that it was solidly fastened, returned, opened



another door at the end of the corridor, and descended the stairs which led into the cellar. The dwelling of the miser was very large; the cellars extended under the street, forming a species of labyrinth. His father had constructed them upon a vast scale in order that they might serve as storehouses in times of trouble. Frügger went through them with a sure step which proved sufficiently that all the nooks and corners were familiar to him. After having traversed several of these subterranean chambers, he stopped suddenly before one of the last, and listened attentively, to assure himself that the same silence continued to reign, and that no one would come to interrupt him. As all remained tranquil he advanced towards one of the angles of the vault. This angle differed in no respect from the others; the walls were as damp and as dark, but hardly had Frügger introduced the little key into an imperceptible opening, which no one but himself could distinguish, when a solid iron door turned upon its hinges, opened, and permitted him to pass into another vault of which<sup>[299]</sup> no one would have suspected the existence. After having listened anxiously and persuaded himself that no one watched him, he entered; the massive door shut behind him with a loud clang that sounded through the subterranean apartments. A second after the silence of death reigned throughout the dwelling.



**INTERIOR OF AN OLD HOUSE, ANTWERP.**

The next day Hochstetter presented himself at the house. He had come for the last time to ask the hand of Katharina for his son. Knowing his friend for so many years he had discovered, notwithstanding Frügger's efforts to hide it, the inexorable passion which tyrannized over him, but he would never have believed that the miser would be dominated by this passion to such an extent as to cause the unhappiness of these two children. Seeing that this demon of avarice gained upon him every day he had come to propose the union of Katharina and his son, upon such terms as would be exceedingly gratifying to the old man. He would take his daughter without obliging him to part with the slightest portion of his colossal fortune, not even the heritage left her by her mother. He felt almost certain that his old friend would hasten to consent as soon as he made<sup>[300]</sup> known his intentions.

But Frügger could not be found. The servants, who for a long time had become accustomed to the prolonged absences of their master, at first were not anxious. They begged Hochstetter to return later in the day, which he did, but still no news of Frügger. As his disappearances had never lasted so long, when the whole day had passed, anxiety was at its height. On returning the third time, he insisted upon seeing Katharina. Their anxiety overcame their respect for the severe orders of their master, and they conducted him to her presence. The young girl was happy to see her old friend; grief had rendered her incapable of taking the necessary measures of searching for her father, which Hochstetter willingly undertook. He performed this task conscientiously, and did all that was possible to be done, sparing neither trouble nor expense to discover the retreat of his friend. He sent couriers to Germany, Holland, Italy, and to all the great commercial cities with which Frügger had had business connections—but in vain. No one had seen the rich German. No one could give any information of him.

Another circumstance astonished Hochstetter. He knew that the fortune of Frügger was one of the most<sup>[301]</sup> colossal of this period, and even if he had not known it, his books, kept with the most scrupulous neatness and exactitude, were there to prove that, far from diminishing, it had increased considerably; but then, in making the inventory of what he really possessed, they found only a quarter of what was expected. This circumstance caused much remark from the Antwerp merchants and the members of his family who came to Antwerp to convince themselves of the truth of such an incredible event. It was rumoured at the Bourse that Frügger the Rich had fled, or committed suicide perhaps, on account of the enormous losses that he had sustained, and that his fortune had diminished in an alarming manner. But Hochstetter knew too well the fortune and the speculations of Frügger to put any faith in these rumours. The only certainty was that he had disappeared and with him the greatest part of his riches, and that Katharina had become an orphan sufficiently rich but much below what she could have one day hoped for.

A little more than a year after the disappearance of Frügger the two lovers were married in the church of St. André. Long, very long, the miser's fate remained an inexplicable mystery, and would have perhaps so remained forever, if, as frequently happens, accident had not explained the enigma. After the marriage Carl and Katharina went to live in the sumptuous mansion of her husband, and the house of Frügger was more or less abandoned. Hochstetter had been dead many years when their eldest son was about to be married, and as the house of Frügger formed a part of his dowry they resolved to repair and alter it, and make it worthy of receiving the young couple. One day while the workmen were excavating in the garden they came to announce to Carl that they had found a few feet under the earth a vault of which no one knew the existence. It contained bars of gold and silver, coins of all countries, precious stones, and especially diamonds of incalculable value. On the floor lay a skeleton. From the pieces of clothing that still covered it it was recognized as that of "Frügger the Miser." In searching further they discovered a heavy iron door, communicating with the other cellars, and so artistically concealed in the walls that it was impossible to suspect its existence.

To open it, they were obliged to demolish it completely. A very small key was found on the other side of the door, still remaining in the lock. There was the explanation of his frequent absences and of the final disappearance of the old man. In his eagerness to enjoy the sight of his treasures, he had forgotten to take out the key upon entering his sanctuary; the door had closed upon him and he had remained alone with his gold, and starved in the midst of riches vast enough to have bought a realm.

#### IV THE BLACKSMITH OF ANTWERP

They were seated in a rich and shady arbour, over which creeping vines wandered in every variety of curve, suspending large clusters of precious fruits, while the atmosphere was laden with the mellow fragrance of the gorgeous plants which grew in wild, untutored luxuriance about the shady retreat. The fading light of day yet lingered, and gave a rosy hue to the face of the maid who sat therein, as she regarded with mournful tenderness the youth seated at her side.

"Nay, Quentin," said she, "say not so, it is duty which prompts me to say it must not be. Had I not affection for my father, do you believe I would act contrary to my own desires? would I cause you unhappiness?"

"Is this your love?" said the other, with a tone of fretfulness. "Methinks it cannot be a very ardent flame when it is so easily extinguished by the perverse and obstinate tyranny of a—"

"Stay your words," interrupted the girl, as she laid her delicate hand tenderly on his lips. "You will respect the father if you love the child." The noble mind of the youth was struck with the reproof, and although opposed to his desires her filial reply expressed such purity and excellence, that he instantly made reparation.

"Forgive me, dearest," he entreated. "I spoke hastily and unworthily. But your words have crazed my soul, which builds its happiness on the possession of you. If it may not be that I shall be your husband, oh! promise me that no other shall."

"I would fain do so," sighed the afflicted girl, "but if my father commands, can I disobey? I have had no mother's care since childhood, but I have scarce felt the loss. My father has thrown off the coldness of a man and been a very woman in his affection for me. Shall I repay his kindness with ingratitude? Alas! Quentin, if he tells me to love another, I cannot do so; but if he bids me wed, Quentin, you would not censure me?" The expiring rays of the setting sun fell on her features as she earnestly gazed upon her lover.

"Ah!" cried the youth, with a sudden start, as he struck his hand upon his brow, "why that blush, that agitation? Deceive me not, Elzia, you are not supposing a case. This has already happened; I see it all; your father has selected a bridegroom for you."

The maid sank her head upon his bosom, and through her struggling tears she sobbed, "Quentin, thou hast said it."

Desperate was the conflict in the bosom of the youth as he sat like one in a trance, his eyes fixed on hers, which, like the sun breaking through clouds of the passing storm, gleamed from under their dripping lashes. Soon he saw the rainbow of hope.

"Who is my rival?" he asked with a voice scarcely audible.

"Van Deg," she answered sorrowfully.

"Do you love him, Elzia?"

"How can you ask?"

"Will you marry him?"

"My father's happiness is dearer to me than my own. Think you I would wantonly sacrifice it?"

[306]

"But why van Deg?"

"Because he excels in my father's art."

"Alas!" cried the despairing lover, "why am I not a painter?"

The bed of Quentin was one of thorns that night, as he threw himself upon it and yielded to his agony of thought. How vainly, yet how ardently had he loved, how industriously had he laboured to procure her

affection. Just when he had achieved the victory over her confiding heart, all that he struggled for was lost—no, not lost—he could bear the thoughts of her death, he could weep over her grave, he could care for the flowers above it, but to think that the prize must be torn from him to be given to another’s embrace, there was madness in it. And then van Deg, that rough, haughty, distant man! how unworthy he to possess a jewel of such value, how unfit to care for such a tender plant, how unsuitable his unsocial spirit for the angel who needed some congenial soul to insure her happiness.

“Will she not droop and die in that cold atmosphere with him?” he asked himself, as at length exhausted nature yielded to weariness and he fell asleep.

The mind, however, yielded not to the fatigue of the body; on the contrary it seemed to have more abundant vitality. Quentin dreamed he was in the street. The bells rang, the people shouted, and gay equipages passed by. It was a day of public rejoicing, for Elzia, the daughter of Algini, was to wed van Deg, the nation’s favourite, the celebrated painter. People recounted the scenes he had delineated and lauded the artist to the skies. Quentin trembled and the cold perspiration gathered on his forehead as the nuptial cavalcade approached. They halted at the chapel and the groom conducted the bride all pale and trembling up the aisle to the altar. As the father was about giving his daughter away, Quentin rushed up and seized her; she shrieked and fell dead in his embrace. Her relatives and the priest all gazed in horror! Quentin raised his eyes, saw the misery in their countenances, and as his face fell upon the bosom of his lovely burden he expired—and at that moment awoke.

Still the people were before his eyes, fresh in his recollection as if he had beheld the awful scenes by the noonday sun. Impelled by an unaccountable impulse he arose and lighted his lamp, and taking a coal from the extinguished embers in his chimney, he commenced a picture of this scene upon the wall. He drew each face, recoiling in surprise at the perfect resemblance to the individuals. As he finished the outline he beheld in it a faithful transfer of his dream, wanting nothing but colour. A thousand thoughts darted through his brain. He flung himself on his bed, and when he next awoke the rays of the sun had gilded his apartment. His first object was to seek the mural picture, and he trembled lest it had all been a dream, but there it stood as if executed by a magic power.

“If this is the result of an effort with charcoal,” cried he, striking his breast in a delirium of joy, “what might I not effect with other means? What might be my reward?”

As daylight sought its slumbers in the bosom of night the lovers met again. “I’m doing wrong,” murmured Elzia, “in meeting you, since I am an affianced bride. This night must be our last. It is a sad thing to part with those we love; yet I act as virtue dictates, and we must meet no more, as—”

“Say not that we shall meet no more as lovers; say that we shall meet no more; for, Elzia, could we meet but to love, to upbraid fate which so cruelly divides us?”

“I must away,” said the girl; “if Quentin’s affection is pure he will condemn me for lingering.” [309]

“Farewell, then, sweetest. If I lose thee I will wander to some distant clime and strive to bury my regrets in new cares and new companions.”

He imprinted a kiss upon her willing lips. He watched her retiring form as it appeared and disappeared amid the foliage at intervals until it was finally lost to his anxious view; then he turned slowly and sadly away.

Never did father love his daughter with more fondness than Algini his child Elzia. Her good was his great aim. He was an enthusiast in the art of the pencil, and deemed that one of that profession would be most worthy of his child. The two passions of his soul mingled in such a manner that they became one. He considered the canvas a lasting monument to genius, and that he would best secure his daughter’s happiness by uniting her to one who would be alive to all posterity in his works. Algini had therefore selected van Deg, as he was the boast of his country, and the figures of his creation wanted nothing but motion to make them the exact counterpart of the living originals. Besides, he was wealthy and would add to the riches of the family. Finally, his daughter was not old enough now to judge for herself, and though she had confessed that she was prejudiced against her proposed husband, a few years of connubial intercourse would overcome that, and she would ultimately be benefited. [310]

Just as the father was at this point of reflection a letter carrier entered the apartment and handed him a letter, saying he would wait without for an answer, that he had been bound by oath not to disclose who had commissioned him to deliver this communication. Algini was astonished at these words, and as soon as the man retired broke the seal and read.

“If the parent consulted the daughter’s happiness would he not find out from her whether she loves another? I think she does. May it not be a mistake for van Deg to possess the fair being? May her marriage to the man of your choice not hurry her to another world? Her obedience causes her to submit. I lay claim to her affections, but do not pretend to alter your determination. You have the reputation of patronizing merit as it appears in painting. Defer the nuptials to this day twelve month, and let van Deg on that day place his chef d’œuvre on the left of the altar. If the one which appears on the right does not tell of a more skilful master I abide the result. If it does, then it is fair to leave your daughter the privilege of choosing her husband.” [311]

The father was delighted with the proposal, and agreed to the trial of skill in his favourite pursuit. He accordingly returned word of his acceptance of the terms and notified van Deg thereof.

A year passed away, during which the lovers never met. Elzia had lost sight of Quentin, and in answer to her inquiries concerning him, all that she had been able to learn was that shortly after their last interview he had left the city and had gone no one knew whither.

The wedding day arrived. Elzia kept a smiling face, although her soul was weighed down by grief.

The chapel was thronged with people anxious to view the ceremony, and as the bride, richly clad, was led to the altar by her father the latter announced that her hand was to be bestowed on the artist whose skill was to be determined by the merit of the pictures which stood veiled on either side of the altar. At the proclamation van Deg glanced triumphantly around, and striding to the picture he had painted, uncurtained it to their view. A burst of applause rose from the audience as he did so, and well merited was the cry of approval. The painting was of the chapel and the company assembled for the marriage. There was the priest all but breathing, while the bride and groom and their friends appeared as if in the full flush of joy.

Algini was about to speak in rapture of the performance when suddenly the other curtain was drawn aside and a cry of horror burst from the multitude as they pressed forward to behold it better. Van Deg gazed in breathless wonder and Algini uttered a wild shriek of despair—"My daughter!"

The picture represented Quentin's dream; each face in it was easy to recognize, except that of the youth, which was buried in the bosom of the bride. But before they had fully scanned it, it was thrust aside and another appeared in its place. This represented a lonely arbour in which Algini in his old age dangled a beautiful infant which bore a likeness to Elzia, who sat on an opposite seat with her head resting on the bosom of a young man, whose arm encircled her waist.

Every one was charmed and delighted beyond measure, and as they beheld the youth, every tongue cried, "The Blacksmith!"



WELL OF QUENTIN MATSYS, ANTWERP.

"Blacksmith no more," said Quentin, stepping from behind the canvas, "but the artist who demands his reward."

It is unnecessary to say more than that genius was rewarded, and to the happy husband Quentin Matsys, the Blacksmith of Antwerp, the world owes some of the finest relics of art.

## V THE MILK GIRL

### I

Long, very long before the city of Antwerp had attained the extent which it now has, the milk-women, who supplied the city with this indispensable liquid, met every morning in a public square, which was soon designated by the name of "Marché-au-Lait" (Milk Market). These women, like all business people at that time, belonged to a corporation which had its rules, rights and privileges. They were too proud to serve the "bourgeois" upon the steps of his door, so each servant was obliged to go to their stands to buy milk.

The pump now situated in the Milk Market is a very pretty monument. It is surmounted by a carved statuette representing a milk-woman, with the peculiar brass milk can of the country upon her head. It is the history of

this statuette which we propose to relate.

There still exists on the Milk Market an old house, which is, one would say, in nearly the same condition that it was three hundred years ago. Like all the houses of that period (which are so faithfully represented in the admirable paintings of the celebrated artist, Baron Leys) the front is of wood, ornamented with carving in the Gothic style, one story projecting over the other, and surmounted by a triangular gable. One would think it had not undergone the slightest alteration since the day it was built. The same small iron knocker hangs upon the old oaken door. There is not the slightest doubt that the same stone forms the threshold, it is so worn and polished; it was formerly a square but has now become nearly a cylinder. The whole aspect of the house is so little changed, that if the first person who dwelt in it should come back to earth today he would easily recognize it. The interior as well as the exterior is unaltered. There are the same straight somber stairs, the same large fireplaces, and gilded leather upon the principal room. Not a stone has been replaced, not a piece of wood removed. The repairs which must have been made in the course of three hundred years, have only served to retain everything in its original state. But what is still more singular, the individuals who have successively occupied this house, and their number must have been considerable, all resembled each other, in their manners and morals. Was it accident, predestination, or the unvarying aspect of the house, continually making the same impression upon its inhabitants, which finally made them nearly identical beings? <sup>[315]</sup>

The present inhabitant is a basket maker, as was the first, three centuries ago, and as have been all those who have occupied the house between these two periods. They were from the first to the last, people whose ideas were at least half a century behind the times. If we should search the history of this antique dwelling, we should probably find that the biography of one would answer for all. The basket maker who occupied this house in 1530 was named Klaes Dewis—his wife Gertrude. They were, as we have said, at least half a century behind, in their manners, opinions and dress. His neighbours called him the man of the good old times. Although possessed of a moderate fortune and without children, he was such a miser that he would, as the Flemish saying is, “split a match in four pieces,” which is certainly the height of meanness. <sup>[316]</sup>

A young peasant girl, fresh and blonde, with large blue eyes, and picturesque costume, came every morning and placed herself before his house, to sell the milk which she brought in a fine brass can, polished like a mirror. The custom of seeing her a few hours every day had gradually caused an affection between her and this worthy couple; although in part based upon personal interest, still it was deep. As the basket maker sometimes said, he had for Lyntje, (which was the name of the pretty peasant), a paternal love, and as for Gertrude, his wife, she said she loved her as she would a daughter.

When the weather was bad, if it rained or snowed, Dewis could not display his baskets, which were usually installed at the door, consequently Lyntje occupied their place and was sheltered from the elements. When it was cold, she came from time to time to warm herself in the kitchen. The milk girl was touched by these delicate attentions, and showed it by giving good measure to Mother Dewis, who for one *liard* had often more milk than her neighbours for two. These agreeable relations had existed for several years, when suddenly an unforeseen event terminated them.

One morning in the month of August, 1530, Dewis did not see the young peasant arrive at her accustomed <sup>[317]</sup> hour. He waited until the middle of the day before he put his baskets out, as it threatened to rain. Such a thing had not happened since the day he first made her acquaintance. Mother Dewis was so affected that she forgot to buy milk of another. This gave her husband an opportunity of saying that the use of milk was only a luxurious habit. But it made no impression upon his better half, to whom the absence of Lyntje was a cause of great inquietude.

“Can she be sick?” she asked him with anxiety. But then she recalled her robust constitution, her rosy cheeks, and dismissed that thought as impossible.

The next day no Lyntje. This was extremely grave, and their anxiety was at its height. The basket maker was on the point of going out of the city (which he had not done for perhaps twenty years) to the village where Lyntje lived. He would have executed this design if his wife had not observed to him, that he would gravely compromise the soles of his shoes. This judicious remark caused him to postpone his excursion until the next day. The next morning a countryman came to inform them of the death of Lyntje. The poor girl had been <sup>[318]</sup> taken ill and died the same night. Before dying, she had remembered her friends in the city, and had expressed the desire that some one would carry them the fatal news. The basket maker and his wife, smitten in their dearest affection, wishing to do something for the repose of her soul, formed the resolution that they would never again use milk!

## II

Several weeks had passed since the death of the generous milk girl, and her old friends had not been able to recover the calm of their former life. They seemed on the contrary to become more melancholy as the days and weeks wore on after that unfortunate event. Instead of taking the air upon their doorsteps and conversing with their neighbours, as they had been in the habit of doing, they never sat there now, and had become nearly invisible. They went regularly every morning to the cathedral, where as exemplary Christians, they attended the first mass. Then they had such a depressed air, the expression of their faces showed a grief so bitter, that not an inhabitant of the market dared to speak to them. When, however, one bolder than the others ventured to question them, he obtained only a few syllables in response. The neighbours, who all felt <sup>[319]</sup> a great sympathy for them, would have been glad to console them. They did not know what to think of such singular conduct, so contrary to all their habits.

“I cannot believe that grief alone, for a friend like Lyntje, could affect them to such a point,” said Mynheer Schuermans, the plumber, one day to his friend, Mynheer Dorekens, the baker upon the corner, who in the morning came to chat with one or the other of his neighbours while his last oven of bread was baking.

"It is true that they lost something," responded he, "because my wife says so, and she is incapable of telling a falsehood. You know, neighbour, Mother Dewis had more milk for her *liard* than we for two."

"And have you noticed," said the wife of Schuermans, joining in the conversation held before her door, "that Dewis completely neglects his business? Only yesterday he forgot to put out his baskets when he returned from the cathedral. They have not opened their door during the day. It is thirty years since we have lived upon the market, and I cannot remember such a thing to have happened. If it had rained—but such superb weather. Is their business in a bad state? I do not think so. He has money." [320]

"What can it be?" said all three.

At the same instant the basket maker's door slowly opened, and he came out with so much gravity, even solemnity, that the neighbours were struck with astonishment and suddenly ceased their conversation. There was reason for it. It was the middle of the week, notwithstanding which he had on his Sunday suit, which at this time never occurred except upon important occasions. To the friendly nod of his neighbours he responded by a silent and melancholy salutation, and advanced with slow and measured steps in the direction of a very fine mansion situated near the cathedral. They watched him until he had reached the mansion.

"Myn Gott! what does that mean?" gasped the plumber, leaning towards Dorekens, who was stupefied like himself. "I hope he is not going to knock at that door. That will be"—but before he had time to finish his sentence, Dewis already had the knocker in his hand, and let it fall heavily. The blow made the attentive neighbours shudder, and had the same effect upon their nervous systems as an electric shock.

"May all the saints come to aid us!" cried Schuermans. "How will this end?"

"Has Gertrude had an attack of apoplexy?" exclaimed his wife. "Then,"—But, before she could finish, the door [321] in question had been opened, and the basket maker had entered.

In order to understand the astonishment of the neighbours, it will suffice to say that the mansion which Dewis had so audaciously entered was the residence of the archbishop. As it was generally understood that a person must be in an excessively critical position before daring to address this high ecclesiastical functionary, one will easily understand the impression upon the neighbours of such an important act upon the part of the basket maker, who was generally known as rather a timid man. We will leave them for a moment discussing their opinions, to follow Dewis, but before all, we must make known to the reader the reasons which had induced the basket maker to take such an important step.

### III

It was hardly three days after the death of Lyntje, when one night they were awakened by a strange noise, occasioned it seemed to them by some one who had opened the door of their dwelling. They listened attentively. Nothing! The clock of the cathedral was just striking. They counted the strokes. As Dewis was [322] preparing to rise, he heard the cry of the watchman, "Midnight, and all is well," which convinced him that he was deceived. An instant after, however, he thought he heard the noise of some one slowly ascending the stairs which led to his room. He sat up in bed, listened with anxiety, and tried to find an explanation for these sinister and incomprehensible sounds. They became more and more distinct, and approached nearer the door.

"Who is there?" cried Dewis, with a voice choking with fear.

No answer. A cold perspiration covered his body, his teeth chattered, his eyes were distended, as he tried to pierce the darkness. Suddenly it seemed to him that his door opened. He had no strength to cry out, but waited more dead than alive. An icy wind penetrated the room, agitated the curtains and swept across the face of Dewis. Sighs and sobs commenced. What was it? Had it a form, a body? Was it a human being? Dewis knew not, although he heard only too well the groans and sobs and believed he distinguished steps, but he saw nothing, heard not a word, not a syllable. Nevertheless the strange intruder, the spirit or ghost, continued to moan. It advanced towards the bed, approached so near that the sobs sounded almost in the ear [323] of the terrified basket maker. Then slowly it departed. Dewis heard it go out by another door beside his bed and enter an adjoining room, where it continued to lament.

"Now what was this? An apparition, a specter, or simply the effect of an hallucination?" he asked himself. Again he heard the same noises as before. This time they resounded above him in the attic, then ceased, and at last the house became silent. It will be superfluous to say that after the departure of his frightful guest, he was in a pitiable state. He did not dare to rise, and he could not sleep. The rising sun found him terrified and overcome. As to his wife, she had immediately after the first noise gone to sleep again. When her husband related to her what he had heard she appeared incredulous, and did all in her power to soothe and quiet him. She succeeded in partly convincing him that what he believed to have heard was the result of tired and excited nerves.

But when the following night at the same hour the groans recommenced, he had the presence of mind to awaken her. They both listened attentively. Like the preceding night, the same sighs and sobs were heard, first softly, then they seemed to enter the chamber, going out at the second door and finishing in the attic. [324] This time there was no doubting that the apparition was real. What was to be done? The basket maker was a member of the society instituted at the cathedral to perform rites for the repose of souls, which gave him the privilege of joining in the processions, covered with a mantle of black silk. He had ever been animated with the laudable desire of delivering souls from purgatory, and did not for a single instant doubt that this was some poor soul in trouble, who had come to recommend himself to his powerful intervention.

But whose soul was this, and what body had it animated in this world? The soul of Lyntje? That could not be. They prayed every day for her, and had resolved to use no more milk, for the repose of the soul of this very

regretted friend.

We have said before that they attended regularly every morning the first mass in the cathedral. In consequence of these reflections, they resolved hereafter to hear two masses a day, the second for the soul in trouble which had chosen their dwelling to manifest its desire to be delivered from purgatory. They had a firm belief in the efficacy of prayer, but unfortunately the masses failed to have any good result. The apparition returned every night, the sighs and groans increased in violence. At first, they were not discouraged, but soon lost confidence in their prayers, and with that, courage. They slept no more and during the days conversed only of the incredible events of the nights, and to complete their sorrow, they dared not speak of it to any one for fear of being called superstitious or visionary. It was not astonishing, then, that the neighbours noticed a great change in the habits of Dewis. Both he and Gertrude became more melancholy and grew thin and pale. Their shop remained shut for days in succession. At last they concluded they could no longer endure this state of things, and accordingly Dewis told his wife that he was going to the archbishop to tell him of the affair, notwithstanding the gossip such a step would give rise to. Far from opposing, she applauded his design. And this is the reason why the basket maker had dared dress himself up in his best suit to make this visit, so well calculated to astonish his neighbours.

Admitted to the presence of this worthy ecclesiastic, he informed him fully of the grave motives which had forced him to take this step. He spoke to him of the remedies employed—the sprinkling of holy water, prayers repeated with fervour, and long masses. He did not hide from him that all this had been of no avail, which had occasioned in himself and wife a certain lack of confidence in their pious practices. In conclusion, he explained the nature of their relations with the deceased milk girl.

The high dignitary listened with patience to the explanations and griefs of the basket maker, and when he had finished made him a little sermon upon his lack of faith in prayers and masses. He promised to come to his house that evening, to see or at least to hear the specter, to exorcise it, and to deliver the house from the obnoxious visitor. His words filled the basket maker with great joy, and if he had not been forbidden, he would have cried aloud in the street that the archbishop was to honour him with a visit that evening. Thus on returning before his neighbours his looks evinced so much joy and pride that Schuermans and his wife, also Dorekens, were perhaps more puzzled than they were an hour before at his profound sorrow.

The archbishop came in the evening to the dwelling of Dewis, and remained very late at night. What did he? What saw he? What was his opinion of the specter, and in what category of phantoms did he place it? Did his prayers dissipate it? These are questions which it is impossible for us to answer, as no one ever knew what transpired. But tradition says that from that night the house of the basket maker was no more troubled, and everything resumed its customary appearance. They contented themselves with their morning mass, as formerly, and held their usual conversations with their neighbours at the door.

#### IV

But a few days hardly had passed after the visit of the archbishop when one morning the Milk Market was in great commotion, all the inhabitants formed in groups, men and women talking and gesticulating with vehemence.

“Have you seen it? Have you heard it? What will become of us?” Such were the interrogations which were heard from all. The answers appeared to satisfy no one and only served to increase the general agitation. The milk girls mixed with the groups, neglecting their business to listen with astonishment to the interesting explanations of Schuermans and his friends. It must have been something very grave, for the inhabitants of the neighbouring streets came in crowds to learn the cause of the disturbance. The sighs and groans which had so long troubled the old basket maker and his wife had been driven from the dwelling of Dewis. Immediately after midnight the specter had promenaded back and forth in the streets, and each time that it passed, had stopped before the door of its friends, and had filled the air with its lamentations. It complained now in a more distinct manner, and cried frequently:—

“Half water! Half milk! Small measure! I have lost my soul!”

It was this the plumber heard, and his wife, and the baker and others. But no one except Dewis could explain these exclamations. He could be silent no longer. He called Schuermans and a few others, and confided to them the secret of what had happened to him. They all agreed that it was the soul of Lyntje alone which troubled the repose of the inhabitants. If it was not, why had it always showed a marked predilection for the house of Dewis? They now recollected that they had often had suspicions of the colour of the liquid which Lyntje sold, and many housekeepers had complained of the smallness of her measure, which applied so well to the words of the ghost:—

“Half water! Half milk! Small measure!”

The following night the same cries and lamentations were heard. There was no more sleep for those that dwelt on the Milk Market. Many of the inhabitants decided to move immediately rather than continue to reside in a street visited by specters and phantoms. They foresaw the time when the market would present the appearance of an abandoned village—when, happily, the plumber Schuermans had a brilliant idea. He proposed to place upon the middle of the market a monument representing the material form of the soul of Lyntje.

“It was,” he said, “a sure remedy against invasions of specters, and had been proved successful many times.” He went on to explain the virtue of this remedy. “Specters, it is well known, are souls which some crime or sin obliges to wander over the earth until they can find some one who will replace them in this world. A statue serves perfectly well as a representative, and consequently produces the same effect.”

Dewis then made known to them that the archbishop had counseled him to erect a statue of the Holy Virgin.



After long deliberations it was resolved that they would place two statues at the expense of the neighbourhood. Before the end of the week they set up both. The statuette of Lyntje was placed over a well at the north of the market, that of the Virgin at the south, near the dwelling of Dewis. It is useless to add that<sup>[330]</sup> from that day they have had no more trouble with specters.

The legend explains the origin of the two images which are still to be seen at the "Marché au Lait." Several years ago, when wells were replaced by pumps, they put the statuette of the Milk Girl upon the top of the pump. It is a veritable work of art, a jewel. We regret that the name of the sculptor is unknown to us.

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## CHAPTER XIV IN THE WALLOON COUNTRY

[331]



**THE** line of the old Flemish principality ran from Antwerp southwest to Courtrai, but today the line that divides the French and the Flemish speaking Belgians runs due east and west, from Visé to Courtrai, with Brussels midway in its course.

North of the line are the fertile plains and gardens, the busy cities and the factories, of Flanders. Through them flows the Scheldt, the river of commerce.

South of the line are the mines and the mountains, the foundries and the forests, of Namur, Liège, Hainault, and the Ardennes. This is the Walloon country, through which runs the Meuse, the river of romance.

In the north live the stolid, easy-going, devout Flemish peasantry, while in the south are the lively, energetic, enterprising Walloons. They are a larger people physically than their neighbours, more heavily built, and of darker colouring, for there is a strain of Spanish blood in their ancestry. Many Walloons came to America in<sup>[332]</sup> the seventeenth century, and we have had few immigrants of better stock. Showalter says that the women are "famed for their industry, thrift, cleanliness, capacity for hard work, and cheerfulness whatever their lot."

The country of the Meuse and the Sambre is by far the loveliest part of Belgium. It abounds in myths and legends suited to the wild, romantic scenery of its hills and valleys. It abounds also in the villas and châteaux of the Belgian *noblesse* and *haute bourgeoisie*. The wealthy people of the cities delighted in their summers among the mountains of the Ardennes, while many families of ancient lineage but lesser fortunes lived the year round in their old-world houses.

Some of the châteaux were of exceptional beauty. Our trip to Belœil, the seat of the de Ligne family, will never be forgotten, for it was the finest château in Belgium. His Highness the Prince de Ligne had asked us out to luncheon, and we started about nine, motoring out toward Hal and Enghien.

It was a bright, sunny day, and the country rolled away on every side, checkered with its crops in varying stages of ripeness into fields of green and orange and lemon and brown. The roadside was flecked with red<sup>[333]</sup> poppies and blue cornflowers, and quaint farmhouses dotted the landscape. We passed deep forests, too, with glimpses of old châteaux through the vistas.



*A Village in the Ardennes*

At Hal there was a lovely old church, with a Virgin famous for miracles. We stopped and went in; choir boys were singing antiphonally, and there was a sweet smell of incense and a soft, religious light.

At Enghien there was a château which was favoured with a fairy *protectrice*, no less than Melusine, so famous in song and story. Long, long ago she married a mortal, Comte Raymond de Forêt, and raised for him a castle which she never ceased to guard. Always before the death of a member of the family "*la fée Melusine apparaît sur la terrasse du château.*" The Luxembourgs and other noble families changed their pedigrees in order that they might claim descent from fairy Melusine.

Of lower degree but even greater service were the fairies who dwelt aforesometimes in a cave at Arquenue. The good folk of the neighbourhood used to leave their soiled linen there of an evening, with some food. In the morning they would return to find that the "little people" had done their work and left the clothes all clean and white.

After passing numberless quaint and picturesque villages we came at length to the gates of the park behind which stood the château of Belœil, with its courtyard and inclosing wings. We followed the road lined with orange trees and crossed a bridge over the moat into the broad court with the façade of the house on three sides. Footmen lined the steps as we mounted into the cool vestibule, from which we passed through various rooms into the handsome salons.

The house was a museum of valuable and historic things—*potiches*, curios and rare furniture. On the walls were great pictures representing scenes in the story of the de Lignes, and presentation portraits of kings and queens.

Through the windows we could see the wide moat outside, and the English garden opposite with its beds of brilliant flowers and its background of trees and foliage. Soon after luncheon we went out into the sunny glare and the great heat of the open terraces, and crossed into the cool alleys of the French garden.

A great lagoon opposite the main terrace was continued in a vista through the forest off to the horizon, broken by a monumental sculpture which was reflected in the water. The wood was divided formally by alleys leading to some architectural or natural detail, and open glades were arranged with pools, while a little rivulet, made artificially natural, went winding through the woods with a pretty path alongside.

The Prince permitted the greater part of the garden and park to be used by the people of his little town, but Belœil was so out of the way that strangers never went there. I use the past tense, because the château has been razed to the ground since the war began. I also learn that two members of the de Ligne family have been killed.

In order to carry out our plans we had to leave Belœil in the heat of the early afternoon. Motoring out again across the rolling landscape we came to Mons, passing on the way through some of the de Croÿ properties and forests. This region is the great coal-mining district, the Borinage, and the beauty of the scenery is rather spoiled by the huge, conical mountains of the detritus which is brought out of the mines, and by the black, sooty look of things.

Mons was a dull, quiet old town, rather picturesque in its way, with its old church and belfry crowning the hill. As we came out of the church the chime of bells in the tower musically rang the hour, sounding sweetly in the sleepy silence of the place. The stillness has since been broken by other sounds than those, for Mons figured largely in the battle of the Meuse.

From there we were off once more to visit the ruins of the old château of Havré, once the stronghold and residence of the de Croÿ family. It rose high out of a stagnant moat, all gray and pinkish, with irregular architecture and a tall tower with a bulbous top. From this rose the cross of Lorraine, for the de Croÿs quartered their arms with this great family. The château was quite stately and magnificent, and its courtyard, all grass-grown, must have seen fine sights in its day.

Not far from Mons is Binche, a town celebrated for its carnival held on Mardi-Gras—the festival of the Dancing Gilles. In spite of the fact that it has always been a source of much pride to the Belgians, its only unique feature was that of the Gilles, which distinguished it from other carnivals.

These Gilles, or dancing men, were characterized by their headdress and humps. The former was most striking and elaborate, resembling in shape the old top-hat of our great-grandfathers, and surmounted with magnificent ostrich feathers three or four feet long, giving the wearers the stature of giants. From each hat,<sup>[337]</sup> besides, flowed wide, variegated ribbons. The trousers of a Gille were bedecked with trimmings of real lace, and ribbons matching those on the hat. About the waist was a silk belt from which hung small bells. Each Gille wore a mask.

The entire outfit cost from forty to fifty dollars, which was a large sum for the peasant youths who were generally chosen by the carnival committee. But the honour of being a Gille was so great, since only good dancers could be selected, and carried with it such prestige among the local damsels, that the young men were only too pleased to make the necessary financial sacrifice.

On the afternoon of Mardi-Gras the Gilles, in full uniform and preceded by the local brass bands and musical clubs, appeared in procession and marched, two hundred strong, to the Grande Place, dancing to the music of the band. At every few steps they stopped, bending this way and that to make the bells at their waist ring more effectively. Their streamers floated to and fro with every motion, enveloping them in a rainbow of ribbon. The simultaneous ringing of bells and thumping of wooden sabots on the cobblestones sounded like<sup>[338]</sup> the echo of a cavalry charge.

Each Gille had a straw basket hanging from one side of his belt and filled with oranges, with which he bombarded the spectators as he danced along, men appointed for the purpose following close behind to see that the baskets were kept filled. A general battle of oranges between Gilles and carnival merrymakers ensued, lasting till the procession reached the town hall. In front of this, on a platform, sat the mayor and his officials, and here the Gilles terminated the day's festivities by a sort of war dance which gave them a chance to show what they could do.

The public joined in the fun, and soon thousands of persons—men, women and children—were gaily waltzing around the Grande Place. The sight of an entire population in carnival costume and masked, dancing in the open air to the music of the bands, was not one to be easily forgotten. The sport continued till late evening, when it was brought to an end by the mayor, who formally awarded a gold medal to the Gille who had proved himself the most expert dancer of them all.

From Binche we motored on again, calling on Prince Henri de Croÿ's cousins who lived in the château of Le<sup>[339]</sup> Roeulx, where Prince Henri himself had been born and brought up. Part of this house dates from 1100 A.D., and after its destruction in succeeding wars was rebuilt and added to repeatedly. For six centuries the de Croÿs have lived there without a break.



In passing through a small town one came suddenly on its gate and saw the wide-standing façade of the château facing across the terraces of the park. Inside there was a Gothic vestibule, and the rooms stretching into the wings were old-fashioned and interesting, some of them with old Chinese paper on the walls. On the rear side, towards the park, the ground fell away abruptly, so that the building seemed to stand very high, and one looked out over the tops of the trees of the forest. The living room was, strangely enough, at the top of the house, and was approached by a great double stairway with very old carved balustrades and paneling.

Of still a different type was Ophem, the seat of the de Grunne family. The château was very quaint and pretty, an old monastery with a simple, vine-covered façade surrounding a little flower-bordered and parterred garden with a high balustraded wall at one side, shaded by overhanging trees. The front had been added at a later time and was quite rococo in style, with many heavy moldings. This looked out over a terrace with a bit of park sloping down to a lagoon. Flowers in formal beds and rows gave colour everywhere. Near by was a dear little chapel with a statue in a niche outside; we were told that the niche had been designed by the Comtesse de Flandre.

After tea we set off for home, scooting down towards Wavre and Perwez, through the land of Brabant. From the broken, hilly country we dropped gradually back among the rolling fields once more, all aglow with their crops, through the tree-lined avenues of the Forêt de Soignes, and so into Brussels.

The château life was not one of gaiety—in fact, I think perhaps most of us would have considered it rather dull. There was some riding on horseback, walking, and a little tennis, but on the whole not very much outdoor exercise. Some one has said that “they raised the habit of doing nothing in the open air to the level of a science.”

The chief interest of the men was shooting and hunting. On many of the properties the game was carefully preserved. When the season opened, château life became for the time quite gay, with *déjeuners de chasse* and *dîners de chasse*, lively reunions of the fashionable set. They hunted foxes and hares, and a few kept packs of hounds. Over the border in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, where some Belgians held property, the wild boar was occasionally hunted.

As the Belgians are nearly all musical, the children of the family were taught to play various instruments, and the evenings were passed pleasantly enough, some member of the group singing while others played the piano, 'cello, or violin.

In the Ardennes country the houses were often near enough for frequent calls and visits, made in the late afternoon when all would assemble round the tea table. The quiet days were rarely broken by even the smallest excitement. These families certainly passed from one extreme to the other during the early months of the war.

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Another motor trip took us somewhat farther afield, by Liège and Spa into the Ardennes, and back through Dinant and Namur. This is the Belgium of the Middle Ages, of Emperor Charlemagne and all his kin, of wars, and of wonders without end. Even its once famous watering place we found a thing of the past and not out of harmony with the legendary land round about.

Liège is the capital of the Walloon district, and with its dozen strong fortresses was, with Namur, considered the chief defense of the Meuse valley. Namur was supposed to block the road between France and Brussels, while Liège was to fend off Germany from the Belgian capital. It commands all the roads from Germany, indeed it was the door to Belgium which, once forced open, left the whole country at the mercy of the invaders. In ten days from its fall, the government officials removed from Brussels to Antwerp, later to Ostend, and finally to Havre. In a fortnight the Germans had hewn their way to Charleroi. Liège as we saw it had about two hundred thousand inhabitants, and was beautifully placed on a high bluff overlooking the river, with hills and fertile valleys surrounding it.

Not far from there is the ancient little town of Jupille, which they say is haunted by the shade of Pepin the Short, who lived there long ago. They still showed one the ruins of an old mill at the lower end of the village where Pepin's wife, Bertha of the Big Foot, took refuge from her irate lord on the occasion of some misunderstanding between them.



GENERAL VIEW OF LIÈGE.

This Bertha was the mother of the great Charlemagne and lived to a ripe old age, coming down to us as the heroine of many legends. It is claimed that her famous son was born in this same village of Jupille, although this is much disputed. The author of "La Meuse Beige" suggests that the Emperor may have been born in a carriage or at some village inn, for "Pepin his father constantly found himself on the high roads about 742, and Bertha his mother was obliged, like the honest woman she was, to go from one place to another to meet her lord."

At Liège we crossed the river, with its pretty embankments and bridges, into the more hilly country, climbing up winding roads that followed the ravines and streams, into higher places where the air was fresh and fragrant. Some of the towns through which we passed had a really Alpine look. Finally we turned into the long avenue which led us into Spa.

This pretty town, so famous as the first watering place in Europe, and for a long time the most fashionable, was deadly quiet that warm summer afternoon. On the terraces of the casino there was not a soul to be seen, and only two or three forlorn-looking drinkers at the spring-house. Even the promenades were empty.

We thought it might be the hour when people were resting, so later we fared forth to see the gaieties of which we had heard so much. This time we found half a dozen others walking aimlessly up and down the streets. At dinner, silence reigned. In the evening we tried our best to cheer up, and went to the casino where a few persons were scattered about the auditorium listening to music. This seemed to be the height of the season at Spa, whose name has come into our language as a synonym for gaiety and relaxation.

So we got away next morning and ran up a long, steep, splendid road on to fine rolling uplands that waved away like the Bohemian Highlands, with lovely views in the blue distance. We were some fifteen hundred feet up, and the air was very refreshing as we sped along. Now and then we dipped again into valleys with wooded slopes and ravines with palisades. We were in the real Ardennes country, the famous "Forest of Arden" of "As You Like It," which was sung by Ariosto a century or so before that.

In this region was the church of St. Hubert, to which peasants made Christian pilgrimage. Under the choir was a crypt where they knelt. A thread from the stole of the ancient saint was said to have had the power to cure hydrophobia, if aided by cauterization. But more easily, "one may prevent hydrophobia by carrying on the finger a ring or wearing a medal which has touched the relics of the saint; also by eating or making one's animals eat the blessed bread of St. Hubert." This bread is given chiefly to dogs, I believe.

We ran by picturesque La Roches and Rochefort, with fine smooth roads following the beds of little rivers in the valleys and climbing in zigzags the low mountains till we came, about one o'clock, to Han. Here we went at once, of course, to the Grottes de Han, which were very popular with tourists. It was an experience worth having. We passed through endless passages, grotesque and beautiful with stalactites and stalagmites, the varied effects well lighted by electricity. The finest thing, most terrible and impressive, was the Salle du Dome, where the black shadows were lost in the immensity of the vault. It is a cavern four hundred feet high and more than that in breadth, with a sort of mountain of broken boulders up which winds a path into the dusky gloom and blackness of the upper regions. But I must say it was more suggestive of the lower regions than the upper, especially when a guide with a flaring torch climbed and climbed, disappearing behind cliffs of darkness and reappearing on precipices till he stood at last, a tiny figure far above us, in Satan's Pulpit, and lighted a fire that seemed to burn in another world.

Later we came to the banks of the subterranean river that flows through the mountain, and got into boats. As we floated down, the vaults reëchoed the singing of our fellow-travelers. But presently we saw ahead of us the light of day, peering in through the end of the cave, and slipped out—into the rain.

The car met us there, so we were able to get away again quickly. Off once more over the fine roadways, we passed Ciergnon, the summer château of the King, on its high bluff overlooking the vast landscape. Through



more broken country we came down into the valley of the Meuse at Dinant, then one of the most picturesque places in Europe. Its palisades and striking cliff formations were crowned with ruined castles, like a miniature Rhine. The city has since been destroyed.

The abbey of Waulsort, which became a château, was at one bend of the river. According to tradition, it was founded by Count Eilbert in the reign of Louis IV—about the middle of the tenth century. The Count went one day to a fair in Picardie, and there he saw a horse which was much to his liking. He had no money with him,<sup>[347]</sup> but offered the priest who owned the animal his beautiful graven beryl as a pledge till he could send home for funds. The priest accepted the offer and gave him the horse, but when the Count returned with the money he denied that he had the jewel or had so much as seen the Count before in all his life. In a fury Eilbert collected his men-at-arms and attacked the city where dwelt the forgetful cleric, sacking and destroying it, even to the church. Then his anger cooled, and he regretted his hasty vengeance. As a sign of penitence he not only rebuilt the church, but erected the abbey also.



*Château de Waulsort on the Meuse*

Just down the river from Waulsort is the cave of Freya, near a château of the same name. The cavern is not large but is very beautiful, with shining white stalactites, pointed columns piercing lofty vaults, and jeweled cascades. One of its chambers has an opening in the roof which lets in the daylight. Some young men who were anxious to avoid the conscription of the Empire are said to have let themselves down into this cave by means of ropes. They lived there for some time, cooking by a small fire whose smoke blackened the walls of the cave, as you can still see. They were contented to stay quite close to this one room, without much<sup>[348]</sup> exploration, and it remained for a dog to really discover what lay beyond.

The dog was a small one, and in chasing a fox he followed it through a hole in the earth and into the farther depths of the cave. Hearing his barks reëchoing weirdly, the hunters enlarged the opening which he had found and followed him into the series of halls and galleries which make up the cavern. On the walls are traces of pagan ceremonies which lead scholars to believe that the place was used in ancient times for the worship of the goddess Freya, who was the patron of love and liberty in the Scandinavian mythology.

Speeding along the river toward Dinant we came to the famous Rock of Bayard, a tall pinnacle split off from the main cliff, with the road passing through a narrow gorge between. It has been renowned since the days of Charlemagne, when Bayard, the enchanted horse, with the four sons of Aymon clinging to his back, leaped across the chasm in mad flight from the vengeance of the Emperor. As one of the brothers was no less than sixteen feet in height, and the other three nearly as tall, it was really something of an achievement.

But Bayard was a very remarkable animal. The sons of Aymon had received him as a gift from their cousin Maugis, along with an excellent sword named Flamberge, whose very wind would cut off a man's head. It<sup>[349]</sup> seems that this Maugis had heard of a wonderful steed reared on an island in the Meuse and kept there by a giant named Rouart. So he went over and called on the giant, telling him stories till he fell fast asleep. Then he set out to find the horse, which he soon discovered in a cavern stable guarded by a dragon. With no other weapon than a fork, Maugis slew the monster. When Bayard came forward to see what was going on, the young man asked politely if he might mount him. As the horse made no objection, Maugis mounted and rode him down to his boat.



**ROCK OF BAYARD, DINANT.**

After many adventures, Bayard and the four sons of Aymon were all captured by Charlemagne, who pardoned the young men on condition that the eldest should make a pilgrimage beyond the seas and free his horse before he went.

But the older brother was hardly out of sight when the Emperor ordered Bayard brought to a bridge across the Meuse for his inspection. "Ah, Bayard," said he, "you have plagued me many times, but I have you now!" With that he had a great stone fastened about the horse's neck and the animal thrown into the river. When he<sup>[350]</sup> saw that Bayard sank to the bottom he cried out, "I have nothing more to ask. Finally he is destroyed!" But Charlemagne rejoiced too soon, for the horse struck off the weight, rose to the surface, and set out for shore. There he shook himself, gave a loud neigh, and was off at top speed for the sheltering depths of the forests of the Ardennes, where, they tell you, he still lives to this day.

Of Dinant so much has been written that there is little new to be said. In the Middle Ages it was famous for the work of its brass and copper smiths, and for its cakes. These were made of a sort of gingerbread and were often celebrated in song. One rime tells of the plight of the bakers who, in their anxiety to entertain properly the governor of their province, made in his honour a cake so large that the biggest oven in town was a foot too small to hold it.

Because of its odd Latin inscription, the bridge of Dinant has also been much sung. Says one of the ditties:

"Although the bridge of Dinant is a fine bridge of stone,  
Its beautiful inscription is finer still, I own.  
'Tis writ in perfect Latin, so read and do not jeer:  
'Hic pons confectus est'—it was built, you see, right here!"

All around Dinant it is a storied land. There was, for instance, the cow of Ciney, who made quite a stir in her day. It happened in the year of our Lord 1274, when the counts of Luxembourg and Namur were holding tournament at Andenne, and all the knights for leagues around had come flocking to show their prowess in feats of arms. Into the throngs gathered to watch the spectacle came a peasant, leading behind him the cow of cows. "He knew that after the heroic strife the contestants were accustomed to eat largely, and however much their glory, nothing was so comforting as a quarter of roast beef. Consequently he brought to sell to the butchers of Andenne a cow, superb and without faults, save for a slight blemish which did not in the least detract from the savour of the meat—she was not really the property of the young man, for he had stolen her."

The cow belonged by rights to a good bourgeois of Ciney whose name was Rigaud. As it happened, he was in the crowd and recognized his property. Finding near him the sheriff of his town he stated his case and demanded instant justice on the robber. Now the sheriff was out of his own province, and had no authority to act. So he engaged the young man in conversation and led him artfully out of Andenne till they had crossed<sup>[351]</sup>



the boundaries of his own territory. Once there it was, of course, a very simple matter to seize him and hang him by the neck till he was dead.

But the matter did not end there, in spite of the good sheriff's precautions. The peasant was not a native of either Ciney or Andenne, but of the village of Jallet. His fellow villagers considered themselves affronted, and complained to their overlord. He was more than affronted—he was positively outraged. Summoning his vassals he set forth to Ciney for the purpose of sending to its long rest the soul of the sheriff thereof. Ciney, however, closed its gates and sent to its brother towns for aid. Jallet likewise called upon its friends and laid siege to Ciney. The Duke of Brabant became involved in the war that followed, along with the counts of Flanders, Namur and Luxembourg. The Marshal of Liège invaded the Ardennes with fire and flame.

Presumably the cow of Ciney returned to her master's home on the night of her abductor's death. But for more than two years the war on her behalf was waged, and fifteen or twenty thousand men were killed. At last the King of France was called in to settle the dispute, and the weary disputants accepted his verdict thankfully enough. It was to the effect that each side being equally to blame, they must bear their own losses and leave things as they were before the war—so far as they could. Thus ended "*la guerre de la vache de Ciney.*"<sup>[353]</sup>

Beyond Dinant lies the little village of Bouvignes, whose ruined tower of Crève-Cœur has its story, too. In the sixteenth century the French laid siege to the place, which was an important town at that time. Among its defenders were three men of Namur whose beautiful wives had followed them to the front, fighting always at their sides like Amazons. When they saw their lords fall dying before them and realized that the enemy was making the last assault, they climbed to the top of the tower and, joining hands, threw themselves upon the rocks below.

There have been forts in Namur since Roman days, and perhaps before that. A year ago there were nine, for the city with its thirty thousand inhabitants stands at the junction of the two rivers, Sambre and Meuse. Namur was the door to France, and the nine forts were its bolts and bars. On the 22d of August the Germans attacked it, and the next day the French, who had come to its defense, were forced to withdraw, defeated.

Namur as we saw it was a busy and prosperous town. The Sambre is a water route to the Borinage, and the Meuse a financial asset to any city. Its streets were wide, with many parks. One feature made it specially attractive—on the lamp-posts hung circular baskets just beneath the light, filled with flowers and hanging vines.<sup>[354]</sup>

Not far from Namur is the old hermitage of St. Hubert, clinging to a rocky cliff. There, in the Middle Ages, it was customary to illustrate Bible stories by the use of marionettes, small wooden figures which moved about the stage at the will of the monks. They were capable of acting out before the eyes of the marveling country folk the story of the Passion, of the cock that crowed thrice, and the penitence of Peter, stirring sluggish imaginations to renewed devotion. "At the right, against the wall, you see a table. There, you should remember, rested the scaffolding in the midst of which was played the Passion. From the opening below, the man of God pulled the strings of the machine.... The man of God was the hermit, at once the author of the actors and of the piece, and impresario of the troop which he had made with his own hands."

Such was the Walloon country, as we saw it in our journeyings. It was our last trip in Belgium, for my husband received word that he had been named Ambassador to Japan. So we packed up our things and sadly said good-by to all the friends who had been so kind to us. Little did we think that there was soon to be war, and that many of them we should never see again.<sup>[355]</sup>



**OLD HOUSES ON THE SAMBRE, NAMUR.**

But Belgium has been through many wars before this, many sieges and sackings and burnings, so we can feel sure that the spell of its enchantment will survive the gray wave of soldiers which has swept across the land during these last sad months.

# CHAPTER XV

## A LAST WORD

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### I

#### SYNOPSIS OF THE WAR

Last night, when the half moon was golden and the white stars very high, I saw the souls of the killed passing. They came riding through the dark, some on gray horses, some on black; they came marching, white-faced; hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands.

The night smelled sweet, the breeze rustled, the stream murmured; and past me on the air the souls of the killed came marching. They seemed of one great company, no longer enemies.

*John Galsworthy.*



WE were in America when the war broke out. It was as unexpected to me as an earthquake, notwithstanding the warning I had when we were in Brussels. Not knowing the situation then—that war was bound to come—I remember my interest in the excitement of several diplomats who dined with us one evening. They knew that trouble was brewing among the European nations. They could see the spark from the fuse of the bomb that was to throw all Europe into war. The bomb at last exploded, but not until June<sup>[357]</sup> 28, 1914. The Servians in revenge for Austrian oppression killed the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, when he and his wife were in Sarajevo, Servia, on an official visit.

Two of the principal events leading up to this situation were the assassination of King Alexander of Servia, son of King Milan and Queen Draga, in June, 1903, and the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria in 1908.

Under King Peter, Alexander's successor, Russian dominance over Servian affairs grew stronger.

When the heir to the Austrian throne was murdered the German Emperor sent a telegram to the Czar which read:—

“The unscrupulous agitation which has gone on for years in Servia has led to the revolting crime of which Archduke Francis Ferdinand was the victim. Undoubtedly you will agree with me that we two, you and I, as well as all sovereigns, have a common interest in insisting that all those morally responsible for this terrible murder shall suffer deserved punishment.”

The Servian and Austrian governments could not come to an understanding, and Austria declared war on Servia.

In answer to the Kaiser's telegram the Czar replied:—

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“A disgraceful war has been declared on a weak nation. The indignation at this, which I fully share, is immense in Russia. I foresee that soon I cannot withstand the pressure that is being brought to bear upon me, and that I shall be forced to adopt measures which will lead to war.”

So it developed that Russia backed up Servia, and Germany backed up Austria.<sup>[10]</sup>

Germany needed to expand her territory and commerce and was thoroughly prepared for war. At that time Germany, Austria and Italy were in a Triple Alliance; Russia, France and England a Triple Entente; Italy refused to aid Germany and Austria, however, because she was not bound by her treaty to do so in an offensive war. She was humorously classed with Greece and Roumania in “the triple attendre,” but on May 22, 1915, she joined the Allies, declaring war on Austria.

One of Germany's excuses in entering upon the war was to keep the “barbarian Russians” out of Europe, but<sup>[359]</sup> curiously, at this time King Albert received an ultimatum from the Kaiser demanding that the German army should be given the right of way through Belgium. The King replied that the Kaiser must respect the independence and neutrality of Belgium, and refused to let the Germans pass through the country. A second ultimatum was delivered, which demanded that a reply be given within seven hours. If within this time no answer was returned, or an answer unfavourable to Germany, war would be declared.

On August 2d the Germans entered the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. On the 3d they entered Belgium.

The statement made by the Imperial Chancellor von Bethman-Hollweg in the Reichstag on August 4th acknowledges the violation of Belgium.<sup>[11]</sup>

“We were compelled to over-ride the just protests of the Luxembourg and Belgian governments. Our troops have occupied Luxembourg and perhaps are already on Belgian soil. Gentlemen, that is a breach of international law. It is true that the French Government has declared at Brussels that France is willing to respect the neutrality of Belgium so long as her opponent respects it. France could wait, but we could not.<sup>[360]</sup> The wrong—I speak frankly—that we are committing we will endeavour to make good as soon as our military

goal has been reached.”

The Germans motored into Belgium by three different roads. Fifteen hundred picked soldiers came in advance in one hundred and fifty automobiles. The army followed at such speed that their commissariat could not keep up with them, and they did not even wait for their heavy siege guns. They expected to live on the country, and so some straggling parties of German soldiers were captured by peasants with an offer of food.

The charming little border town of Visé was the first to be destroyed by the Germans. “This district contains a large population of gun-makers familiar with the use of firearms and unfamiliar with the ways of warfare, and it seems proven that several citizens of Visé did take part in the hostilities and that they fired at the enemy. The Germans retaliated with ruthless severity.”<sup>[12]</sup>

Among the weaknesses in the defense of Liège were the lack of sufficient soldiers to man the forts, and the long distances between the different fortresses, as well as the lack of support by rifle entrenchments. The fortresses did not prove impregnable because they were built to withstand a horizontal fire, while the German howitzers dropped shells from above. The three German army corps under General von Emmich made attack after attack. On the third day they lost twenty-five thousand men, some of the crack regiments from Berlin suffering heavily. The forts held out long after the town was occupied by the Germans for the reason that they were built to defend the river approaches rather than the town, and until August 5th the Germans were unable to cross the Meuse.

It was difficult for the Germans to get the proper range for their big guns, and the story is told that a German soldier with a white flag of truce walked towards a fort in order to get the correct distance. His white flag was respected until he arrived at a spot where he signaled back to his comrades. It is needless to say that he was then killed. From the moment when the Germans were able to get the proper range with their heavy siege artillery, the fate of Liège was sealed. Toward the end of August, all the forts were occupied by the Germans.<sup>[362]</sup>

“The resistance of Liège is not only one of the most magnificent achievements in military annals;—it is also one of the decisive events in the world’s history.”

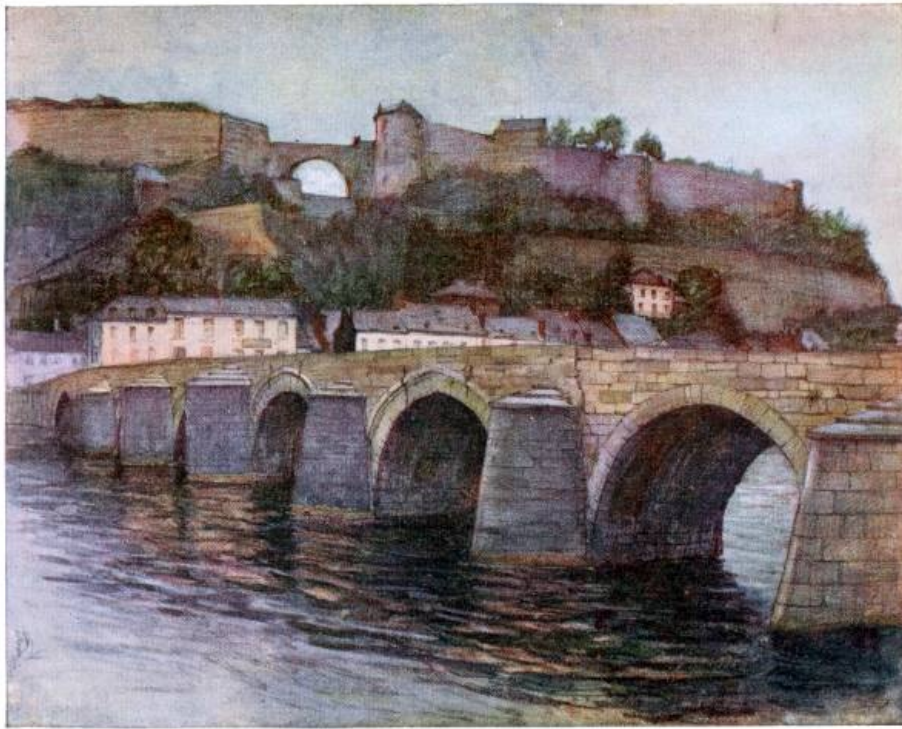
It has already been the inspiration of much poetry and prose. The following extract is taken from the poem called,

#### “HOW LIÈGE HELD THE ROAD”<sup>[13]</sup>

We were pounding at the anvils when they pounded at our gate;  
“Open,” cried the German squadrons; “let us pass, or meet your fate!  
We are millions; dare deny us and Liège is but a name.”  
But we chose to die in honour than to buy our lives in shame.  
So we banked our eager fires, and we laid aside the sledge,  
Reckless only that our sires had endowed us with the pledge  
To maintain an ally’s honour, to uphold the Belgian code,  
And we answered with our cannon, THAT LIÈGE WOULD HOLD THE ROAD!

Here are a few of Verhaeren’s remarks on the fall of Liège:

“It is true that for the moment our factories are silenced and seemingly dead, but as soon as the war is over they will awake again like sleeping monsters. We were a little too sure of the tomorrow. War in our eyes was other people’s business. It has come to us, formidable and terrible, at a moment when we did not look for it; like a mountain whose crumbling rocks are falling upon us to crush us William’s army has come upon us. Our numbers were small and we stood alone. We were attacked with disloyalty and betrayal. We hastily raised our forces at Liège in old forts. All that was done in a day, in an hour, in a moment, and at once we became the marvel of the world. The fate of the Spartans was like that of the Liègeois. Today, as then, a handful of men saved the world. We should have only room in our hearts for pride. Tears dishonour us.” [363]



*Citadel, Namur*

Namur, another great stronghold of Belgium, was bombarded on August 21st, and thirty-six hours later the Germans entered the town. When the forts were destroyed only twelve thousand out of the twenty-six thousand Belgian soldiers were left. Ammunition was so scarce in this region that the Civic Guard had to give up their weapons to the remaining Belgian troops. The French and the British as well suffered a terrible defeat at Charleroi August 22d, and were obliged to retire. Fighting all the way, they made their masterly retreat through Mons into France by way of St. Quentin.<sup>[364]</sup>

Between the fifth and twentieth of August the poor wounded and dying soldiers were brought into Brussels. When the crowd in the streets shrieked and howled "Vive la Belgique!" the wounded tried to wave their arms (those who had them), and show some sign of appreciation. Houses were opened and prepared by the Red Cross Society to receive them. The refugees as well, from Charleroi and Liège, and from the districts where the fighting was going on, rushed to Brussels for protection, but the Germans were close behind and entered the city on August 20th without firing a shot.

At the beginning of the war hardly any food was to be had in Brussels and other Belgian towns, and what could be bought went up to very high prices. Flour cost fifty cents a pound, and bread one franc for two pounds. Salt was not obtainable.

Adolphe Max, the Burgomaster of Brussels, was forced to take charge of all supplies. The city fed the Germans for eight days without pay. After this period the Mayor refused to furnish food longer without compensation. Then field kitchens were established in several prominent squares—in the Grande Place<sup>[365]</sup> before the Palais de Justice, and in front of the King's palace—where the beautiful trees of the park were cut down for firewood. The museums and hotels were turned into sleeping places for officers and men. The Palais de Justice was made not only a kitchen but also a bath house. The railway stations, too, were used for this purpose.

No carriages or bicycles were allowed to leave Brussels. The people lived in constant terror from German aëroplanes that were flying overhead. After the Germans occupied the city no one dared to speak English.

The Germans thought that Belgian weapons were hidden in the ponds, and so they drained them, and carted away the fish to be eaten by themselves. Fish and bread could not be bought by the people, even if they offered to pay for them.

Every day fresh troops and aëroplanes and ammunition passed through or over Brussels. Cartloads and trainloads of dead Germans were brought night and day to the Gare du Luxembourg to be shipped on to the Fatherland. The moaning of the wounded and the dying was pitiful.

Non-combatants of all nations fighting the Germans were taken prisoners and sent to Germany. All women<sup>[366]</sup> between the ages of fifteen and forty were kept under German guard; those over forty were told to report every few days to the German authorities.

Villages like Hofstade and Sempst were taken and retaken again and again. Dinant and Termonde fell within a week after the occupation of Brussels. The bombardment of Malines lasted three weeks. Termonde changed hands twice, Malines three times.

The siege of Antwerp began the 26th and lasted several days. The Zeppelin raid before the bombardment was most terrible, but the Germans did not accomplish their purpose of striking the palace and killing the royal



family. After this, the Queen went to England for a time with her children, returning later, but the King remained in Antwerp and led the defense.

The small Belgian force had at least kept the Germans out of Antwerp until the valuable oil tanks had been destroyed, as well as the ships in the harbour and the precious stores of rubber from the Congo. The English marines appeared toward the last, and gave some assistance, but the city was finally captured by the Germans, before whom, on September 5th, the Belgian army retired to La Panne. Ostend was occupied by the Germans the 16th of October. Severe fighting took place at Nieuport the 23d, and Westende and Middelkerke were destroyed. Dixmude fell November 11th. Between the 12th and the 15th, 100,000 Germans were killed, and the Yser Canal flowed with human blood.



*Nieuport*

November 18th, Flanders, as in days of old, was flooded from the sea-coast almost to Ypres, drowning out the enemy. In December, activities were renewed along the Yser, but the trenches about Ypres, "the key to the coast campaign," were only captured February 15th. Ypres at last fell in May, after repeated attacks.

The exodus of a bleeding race was one of the saddest sights in history. The Belgians literally swarmed into Holland, where they are cared for in camps even today. The reason of this exodus to England and Holland is found in the treatment of the Belgians by the invaders. I will not go into the subject of atrocities, but simply give an extract from the report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Violation of the Rules of International Law, and the Laws and Customs of War.

"From the total mass of evidence received by us we are able to deduct and prove absolutely true the following conclusions....<sup>[368]</sup>

"I. The first was the barbarous device of compelling bodies of citizens, old and young, male and female, to march in front of German troops in order to shield them from the fire of the Allies.

"II. The second was the imprisonment, either under the title of 'Hostages,' or on other pretexts, of individuals, families, or groups of people, who were arrested at hazard and for no good reason, shut up without air, without sanitary precautions, and without food, in churches, barns and stables, and carried off to Germany, where they were kept under conditions which made hygiene and decency impossible.

"III. The third series of acts consists of wholesale murders of civilians and of the sack and burning of dwelling houses; concerning these incidents the light of evidence grows daily stronger."

These men were in command when the atrocities were perpetrated: The Governor-General of Belgium was Field Marshal Baron von der Goltz; von Buelow was in command of Namur and Liège; von Boehn was in command at Termonde. Others in this list were von Emmich, von Nieker, von Luetwitz, and Major Dieckmann.<sup>[369]</sup>

But the Belgians are a brave people and they are used to misfortune, so we may believe that though seemingly conquered, they will finally be triumphant. Long live the Belgians! Long live their King!

## LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

I insert a few extracts from letters written by reliable people about Belgium, or by Belgians during the war, in order to show the true state of affairs. Most of them were written in French and have been translated. With the exception of the Cardinal's letter,<sup>[14]</sup> none of them have been published.

Extract from a letter from Brussels in August, 1914.

"We are living in suspense now, as the Germans are getting very strict and angry. Boys and young men leave daily to join the army, and the different ways of crossing the frontier are very amusing. The Germans have<sup>[370]</sup> forbidden the letter by the Cardinal of Malines to be read in the churches, but needless to say, we all have it."

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Extract from the Pastoral Letter of His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, Belgium:

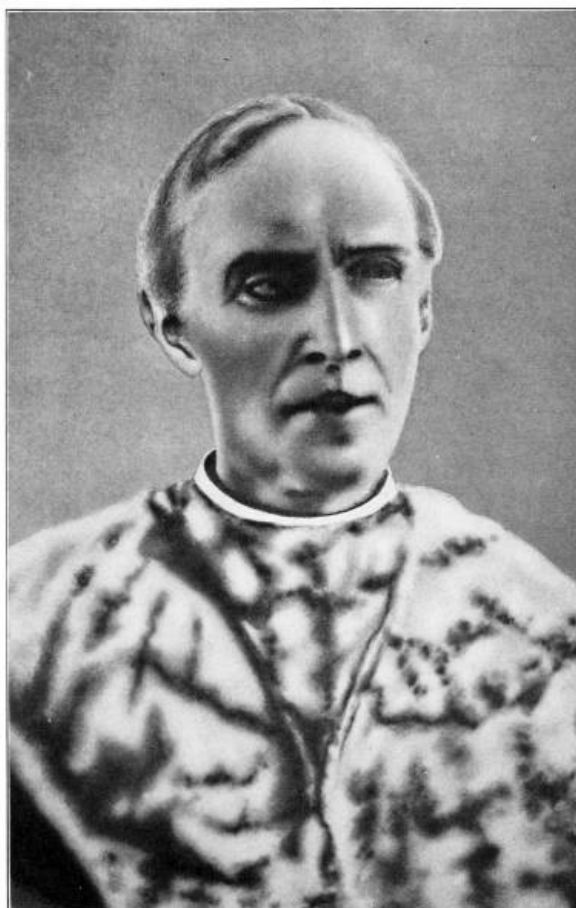
"My very dear brethren:

"It was in Rome itself that I received the tidings—stroke after stroke—of the partial destruction of the Cathedral Church of Louvain, next of the burning of the library and of the scientific installations of our great university, and of the devastation of the city, and next of the wholesale shooting of the citizens and of tortures inflicted upon women and children and upon unarmed and undefended men.

"And, while I was still under the shock of these calamities, the telegraph brought us news of the bombardment of our beautiful metropolitan church, of the church of Notre Dame au delà Dyle, of the episcopal palace, and of a great part of our dear city of Malines....

"I craved courage and light, and sought them in such thoughts as these; a disaster has visited the world, and our beloved little Belgium, a nation so faithful in the great mass of her population to God, so upright in her patriotism, so noble in her King and Government, is the first sufferer. She bleeds; her sons are stricken down within her fortresses and upon her fields, in defense of her rights and her territory.

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CARDINAL MERCIER.

"Soon there will not be one Belgian family not in mourning. Why all this sorrow, my God? Lord, Lord, hast Thou forsaken us?..."

"When, immediately upon my return from Rome, I went to Havre to greet our Belgian, French and English wounded; when, later, at Malines, at Louvain, at Antwerp, it was given to me to take the hand of those brave fellows who carried a bullet in their flesh, a wound on their forehead, because they had marched to the attack of the enemy or borne the shock of this onslaught, it was a word of

gratitude that rose to my lips. 'O valiant friends,' I said, 'it was for us, it was for each one of us, it was for me, that you risked your lives and are now in pain. I am moved to tell you of my respect, of my thankfulness, to assure you that the whole nation knows how much she is in debt to you.'

"For, in truth, our soldiers are all saviours. A first time, at Liège, they saved France; a second time, in Flanders, they arrested the advance of the enemy upon Calais. France and England know it, and Belgium stands before the entire world a nation of heroes.

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"Never before in my life did I feel so proud to be a Belgian as when, on the platform of French stations, and halting awhile in Paris, and visiting London, I witnessed the enthusiastic admiration our Allies feel for the heroism of our army....

"I have traversed the greater part of the districts most terribly devastated in my diocese, and the ruins I beheld and the ashes, were more dreadful than I, prepared by the saddest of forebodings, could have imagined.

"Other parts of my diocese, which I have not had time to visit, have in a like manner, been laid waste. Churches, schools, asylums, hospitals, convents in great numbers are in ruins. Entire villages have all but disappeared. At Werchter Wackerzeel, for instance, out of three hundred and eighty homes one hundred and thirty remain. At Tremeloo, two-thirds of the village is overthrown. At Beuken, out of one hundred houses twenty are standing. At Schaffen, one hundred and eighty-nine houses out of two hundred are destroyed; eleven still stand. At Louvain, a third of the buildings are down, one thousand and seventy-four dwellings have disappeared. On the town land and in the suburbs, one thousand six hundred and twenty-three houses have been burned.

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"In this dear city of Louvain, perpetually in my thoughts, the magnificent church of St. Peter will never recover its former splendour. The ancient college of St. Ives, the art schools, the consular and commercial schools of the University, the old markets, our rich library with its collections, its unique and unpublished manuscripts, its archives, its gallery of great portraits of illustrious rectors, chancellors, professors, dating from the time of its foundation, which preserved for its masters and students alike a noble tradition, and was an incitement to their studies—all this accumulation of intellectual, of historic and artistic riches, the fruit of the labour of five centuries—all is in the dust....

"Thousands of Belgian citizens have been deported to the prisons of Germany, to Munsterlagen, to Celle, to Magdeburg. At Munsterlagen alone, three thousand one hundred civil prisoners were numbered. History will tell of the physical and mental torments of their long martyrdom.

"Hundreds of innocent men were shot. I possess no complete necrology; but I know there were ninety-one shot at Aerschot and that there, under pain of death, their fellow citizens were compelled to dig their graves. In the Louvain group of communes one hundred and seventy-six persons, men and women, old men and sucklings, rich and poor, in health and sickness, were shot or burned....

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"We can neither number our dead nor compute the measure of our ruins. And what would it be if we turned our sad steps toward Liège, Namur, Audennes, Dinant, Tamines, Charleroi, and elsewhere? Families hitherto living at ease, now in bitter want; all commerce at an end, all careers ruined, industry at a standstill; thousands upon thousands of working men without employment; working men, shop girls, humble servants, without means of earning their bread, and poor souls forlorn on the bed of sickness and fever, crying, 'O Lord, how long, how long?'

"Thirteen ecclesiastics have been shot in the diocese of Malines. There were, to my own actual personal knowledge, more than thirty in the diocese of Namur, Tournai, and Liège....

"On the 19th of April, 1839, a treaty was signed in London by King Leopold, in the name of Belgium, on the one part, and by the Emperor of Austria, the King of France, the Queen of England, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia on the other; and its seventh article decreed that Belgium should form a separate and perpetually neutral state, and should be held to the observance of this neutrality in regard to all other states. The co-signers promised, for themselves and their successors, upon their oath, to fulfil and observe that treaty in every point and every article without contravention or tolerance of contravention. Belgium was thus bound in honour to defend her own independence. She kept her oath. The other Powers were bound to respect and to protect her neutrality. Germany violated her oath, England kept hers....

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"Accept, my dearest brethren, my wishes and prayers for you and for the happiness of your families, and receive, I pray you, my paternal benediction.

*"D. J. Cardinal Mercier,  
"Archbishop of Malines."*

Here is a letter from a soldier at the front to his parents:

"TIRELEMONT, 8 August, 1914.

"My dear Parents:

"Here I am at Tirlémont, where we are occupied in reforming our scattered regiment! Many are killed and injured, some are taken, others lost. It is a terrible mix-up, and it will take a long time to get it straightened out, and I am profiting by this moment to write you and let you know what has happened in the last few days.

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"We had been fighting all day Wednesday, and when evening came on we were told to dislodge a troop that occupied the space between the two forts. They gave us the message very simply: 'It is death, but it must be done.' Nothing more. We were under fire all night. We kill without seeing any one. The bullets whistle, a shrapnel explodes five meters from us, we have several killed, and we stay under this rain of bullets and it is awful.

"I could not tell you my impressions. I recited about one hundred vows; I wondered what it felt like to be in heaven, because I was certain that every moment would be my last.

"The Germans advanced more and more, and we retreated, surrounded on all sides, and at four in the morning out of one hundred and sixty in our company only seventeen remained; all are not dead; there are injured and prisoners. We shall return under fire if this keeps up. I will take my part in it; I am ready and prepared, and know that if I die I shall do so with confidence. Do not think that it is with despair that I shall die; it is with the utmost resignation. Do not cry or be sad. I resign myself to my fate, and I ask you to take things in this way also. Adieu, with all my heart. It is perhaps only for a short while, and I shall wait for you above. Much love to the family. I am in good health but very tired. Thousands of affectionate kisses. I have had my photograph taken and they will send you the proof. For my part, I take care to keep your photographs on me, and every day, after looking at them, it gives me fresh courage. Adieu."

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I give next a letter from the Mother Superior of a convent at Liège, written the night after Liège had been attacked:

"In the morning the sound of cannon again shook the chapel.

"The sisters were told to go and get their bundles, and in five minutes to be at the gate, where they would each receive five francs and their papers, and then they were told to run to the station. They did, through the rain, and to the accompaniment of the whistle and whine of German bullets. The Germans were on the heights, and were approaching every minute. The younger sisters helped those who were ill or old. Arriving near the station two sick ones were obliged to go to bed in another convent, and the others installed themselves in the cellars and small hallways. An immense explosion occurred—it was only a bridge they were blowing up, but the garden was filled with broken pieces of iron and steel. Eighteen sisters got into a train filled with wounded and arrived at Brussels at midnight, nearly dead from fright.

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"They went up the Boulevard Botanique, where they found an ambulance wagon, which took them to the Mother's house. The General Superior came to open the door for them, with her white apron and her arm band of the Red Cross. They slept in beds prepared for the wounded, and the next day they were sent to different institutions.

"People knew nothing but false news, given out by the Germans. We had no news for three weeks, so I didn't even know a new Pope had been elected."<sup>[15]</sup>

This letter is from a Belgian nun:

August.

"My sister Catherine, not being able to get away from Brioux, was obliged to stay there thirteen days, and it was the priest that brought her back to Bosel in tram and cart. He will go back there and show the soldiers the retreat. The Reverend Father von Volkson stayed in Malines till the last, and quietly kept on reciting his mass while they were bombarding the city. He was in civilian dress: but we don't know where he is now. Have you heard that the Reverend Mother of Tournai had her arm lacerated by a bullet, which then went and hit Mother de B—, who was standing behind her, in the region of the heart, and both of them died, hit by the same bullet? They were going into the loft to see from which direction the Germans were advancing to take possession of the city.

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"It is a just war, for God and country. It is this that gives the King and our soldiers superhuman strength. As soon as it was known that Germany was going to insult Belgium, thousands of men offered themselves to fight, and the priests accompanied these brave men to give them spiritual help and encouragement."

"OSTEND—end of October.

"During the week of the 31st of October the Belgians resisted the attacks of the enemy, and the King had the dangerous honour of commanding the Allies' left wing while they put up a terrific fight to defend Calais, which was the principal prize of this terrific struggle. For six days our Belgians stood the fire of 250,000 Germans, who were afterwards reinforced by 100,000 others. With these forces the enemy had to pass the Yser, which was filled with bodies. Although the fight seemed ended, 'the Belgians'—to quote Cæsar—'continued to dispute the mastery of the last parcel of their territory. With a rage bordering on grief they thought they would have to capitulate immediately.' The Belgians lost 10,000 men. They attacked again, and the enemy was forced to repass the Yser red with blood, and they were chased ten miles towards the north.

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"But still, though we have lost so many, we have not lost courage. In the midst of our ruined cities and our burnt and ruined crops, higher than our burnt towers, higher than the cruel deeds, stands our hope, and higher than the ignominy our proud independence, our love for the King and our land. Not for one instant has the Belgian spirit regretted the call of honour that has caused us such calamities, and tomorrow she would still refuse, even at the same price and at the cost of the same martyrdom!



THE BELGIAN ARMY.

"If you could only hear our injured and wounded speak of the King. When an officer fell the King took his place, crying out, 'Come, my children, shoot now, like this, all together.' And you should see how they killed their enemies! Today is the fête-day of our poor little Queen; what an anniversary! At the Palace Hotel they give the wounded wine in her honour, and they sing the 'Brabançonne,' and 'Vers l'Avenir.'"

I give two verses of the "Brabançonne":—

"Fled the years of servile shame,  
Belgium, 'tis thine hour at last,  
Wear again thy ancient name,  
Spread thy banner on the blast.  
Sovereign people, in thy might  
Steadfast yet and valiant be,  
On thy ancient standard write—  
Land and Law and Liberty!

"Belgium, Mother, hear us vow,  
Never will our love abate,  
Thou our hope, our refuge thou,  
Hearts and blood are consecrate.  
Grave, we pray, upon thy shield  
This device eternally,  
Weal or woe, at home, a-field,  
Land and law and liberty."

From Countess ——:

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"BRUSSELS—October.

"Food is easy to get if not plentiful and the bread eatable in Brussels. V. got out of Belgium this time without being caught. We are full of hope. We are well and busy. Every one is trying to help those in need. There is much to do. Those who still remain here see each other often. We meet at each other's houses for tea and bring information. A. was wounded in the head and has been taken prisoner. Mr. Whitlock's untiring devotion to his work is more than appreciated by every class. He is just the man for the place. The Spanish Minister is a great help. We have had no letter since August. I knit madly to keep calm. I hope the day may come when I may say all that is in my heart. It is a suffocating feeling to have a foreign occupation. We have such a time getting the papers. One sheet appears a day, and all we want to know is carefully left out by the Germans."

In October there comes a moan from Luxembourg.

"LUXEMBOURG.

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"We are crying for flour. Nothing sent from America can reach Luxembourg. The railways are destroyed by dynamite, *toutes les routes ravagées*; not one way of communication at present. The rich as well as the poor are dying of hunger and cold. All the horrors of our enemies are, alas! quite

true. We are ruined, our money gone, the villa burnt. Tears are dropping on the letter as I write. This letter which may never reach you."

"October.

"My good Mother,

"I have thought of you very often since it has pleased God to visit upon us the horrors of war. What damages have been caused by the Germans in our country! At Dinant Mr. Wassege has been shot with his two sons because he did not want to open the safe of the bank or give the combination. Seventy-five other civilians had the same fate, also hundreds of little children. The horrors the Germans have committed here are fit for Turks or savages; I could state hundreds of cases. In Antwerp two beautiful estates, which were situated near the forts, belonging to well-known German society people, were found to have underground passages leading to the fortresses. By chance, barrels were found containing German uniforms for those we have received with so much kindness, to put on when the German soldiers occupy the city, as was seen in Verviers. In several houses in Antwerp wireless plants were discovered. In Antwerp hundreds of spies were found, who dressed in all manner of clothing, as nuns, priests, and nurses.

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"They are taking the civilians away to serve as soldiers in the German army, or to gather their crops. In Namur they have started to write down the births, deaths, and marriages, and the people must take German names, or be shot.

"Eight thousand people fleeing from Louvain were forced to march a great distance by the Germans, eight in a line, and they had to keep their hands in the air all the time. They had to fasten Helen P——'s baby on her back—she is the niece of Mother V. E—— so that she could walk in this way. Our soldiers often have Communion, and are full of courage and confidence. They love the King, who shows himself full of courage. He marches at the head of his troops, and after a battle shakes hands with the soldiers; we can be proud of him.



**BELGIAN REFUGEES.**

"A magistrate on his way back to Brussels was given a letter to deliver. He told a friend on the train he had the letter on his person, but did not know where to hide it. His friend said he was doing a very dangerous thing, for if the letter was found on him he would be shot. He also said: 'You must read it, then tear it up, and transmit the news orally.' This he did. Later the train was surrounded by Germans, who announced that no one was to descend, and that it was forbidden to carry letters, and in consequence every one was going to be searched. Terrible fright! Of the people carrying letters, one managed to eat his, when he found that it could not be hidden and he was not able to throw it away.... The magistrate presented himself at six-thirty at the proper place, and recited the contents of the letter and told the story of his trip."

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"LONDON—November.

"As for the Belgian refugees, it is getting to be a great problem what to do with them. There are thousands and thousands like droves of frightened sheep, not a particle of clothing but what they stand up in, and not a penny in the world. You just cannot realize it unless you see them. Ladies and gentlemen of fine position and peasants all together, and all helpless and homeless.

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"It seems so horrible to think that our only thought is to kill, and that we rejoice when the enemy has lost men. I hardly dare think of it. It seems as though we had all gone mad.

"The King Albert Hospital is working well, and three more Belgian hospitals have had to be opened. They now all work under military authority, and so they do not need our assistance any more, I mean, in the way of our being there daily.

"Mrs. B—— and I have now put our hearts and energies into a Maternity Home for Belgians, that is, we have two, one for ladies and one for working women. They are both such sweet, pretty homes, that it really must help them to forget the cruelties of being far from their husbands and homes. They nearly all call their sons Albert, and the daughters either Elizabeth or Alberta.

"The streets and shops are filled with Belgians, one hears French in busses, everywhere in fact. One often hears Flemish too. I was surprised when I first heard it, for it sounded so like German. *L'Echo Belge*, a Flemish paper published in London, has on the first page: '*Voor God en Vaderland*'—'*Pour Dieu et Patrie*.' A great many papers are published here for the Belgians and French. There are innumerable appeals, many for Belgium, such as: Belgian Relief Fund, the Belgian Soldiers Fund, and so forth.

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"Limericks are very common among the soldiers and are very good. Here is one about a Belgian girl. Please remember that Ypres is called Wipers by Tommy Atkins.

"There was a young lady of Ypres,  
Who was hit in the cheek by two snipers,  
The tunes that she played  
Through the holes that they made,  
Beat the Argyle and Sutherland pipers."

"The shop windows are full of war games, such as: 'Storming the Citadel'—'Kill Kiel'—and the 'Dreadnaught game.'

"Tommy gives the bombs such amusing names, 'Black Marias,' 'Aunt Sally's Nephews,' and 'Eagle Eggs.' The German trench motor is called 'The Undertaker.' The anti-aircraft gun is nicknamed 'Archibald' and the German howitzer which emits a thick white smoke is called 'The Woolly Bear.' He calls these picturesque names 'Slanguage.'"

"BRUSSELS—November.

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"We are passing horrible hours. You cannot imagine what it has been the last three months. Everywhere misery, *crêpe* and ruin. To add to the horror of the situation, famine has arrived. Most of our friends have had their *châteaux* pillaged. The buildings even are often destroyed. Our friends arrive in the night on foot, with all that they own on their backs and their children following them. They often walk miles before finding a roof to shelter them, for many villages are burnt to the ground, deserted, and many of the people shot. *C'est affreux!*

"Henri has won two *galons* for his bravery in battle. The last news we have of him is good. *Dieu merci*. Jean has been slightly wounded. What a relief to have him safe for the moment in a hospital. George de Ligne, Henri d'Oultremont, *tués*, Guy Reynteins *blessé*. Two of the Cornet Counts have been taken from their *château*, which was burned, and no one knows what has become of them. Every day the Germans are more brutal and more hateful. They are worse than they are depicted.

"We are indeed grateful to the American Minister. He is intelligent, active and kind, as well as a charming man.

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"It is difficult to get the food distributed in the villages, for there are no means of conveyance, except motors run by twenty-four young Americans. They are doing fine work and are a great help. The d'Assches, de Mérodes, Beeckmans and de Beughems are here."

A letter from Switzerland reads:

"November.

"I have been at a camp of French and Belgian soldiers in Germany, nearly fifteen thousand of them, all without blankets. They dig holes in the ground and get into them, and then spread their coats over the top in order to sleep and keep warm."

A letter from a cousin at a hospital in France says,

"Today seventy French soldiers were brought in, all with their right hands gone."

"BRUSSELS—end of December.

"The weather is awful, the fighting in the North has been again very violent. We have little wool to knit with. We need flannel too for the soldiers. It is freezing. We are trying to get warm clothes to the soldiers. We are having a snowstorm such as has not been seen for twenty years, in fact one might be in America. The snow has lasted five days. Everything is all frozen and one slips and the trams are all crowded. Hospital things are particularly necessary.

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"My husband asked a German, an old friend of his, if it was possible for me to take clothes to the English prisoners here. He was refused. No one has been able to help the poor English, and God only knows how they are being treated by these brutes. We have been able to help the French prisoners."

"February.

"I saw at Ostend an old woman of ninety, who had walked from Waterloo. I do not like to write much, as it is safer not to do so. The money that was sent will go at once to a woman with five children, whose husband was wounded. I have been taking care of him at the hospital. He is well again and leaves today for the front. The wounded try to get well as quickly as possible, as they want to return to the front.

"My villa à *Duinbergen près de Heyst sur mer* is occupied by the Germans. My maid was left in charge. The Germans ordered her to give them our clothes. I hear my house is a house *de debauché et d'orgie*. *La femme de chambre a été molestée par un soldat ivre*. When the old gardener and his wife tried to interfere, the soldiers said if they did, they would shoot them. Oh, when will this cease and the world know the truth? *Cette abominable race!* My heart is broken."

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"THE HAGUE, Feb. 22, 1915.

"My uncle and aunt are in Anjou. Think of the life they lead, constantly struggling against all sorts of plunder, the worst elements of the population now having free play. Anarchy is uppermost in many places.... They have no respect for anything. What ruin on all sides, and to think that our poor little country was always so hospitable to those Germans!

"As to the Royal family: I know the Queen never leaves La Panne (the last Belgian village). Every day she is with the wounded and goes very near the trenches. She is admirable in her courage and strength, and I know she suffers terribly from the conduct of her compatriots (she is Bavarian), but in justice I must say that the Bavarians have everywhere behaved better than the others. The Prussians have been terrible. The old Princesse de Ligne, widow of Prince Edward, who is the Mother of the Councillor of our Legation here in The Hague, arrived here in October. She stayed one month and a half at the Château de la Neuville, near Liège, and under German dominion. Although speaking German perfectly, as she is Austrian by birth, she had a great deal to suffer. A German colonel with his revolver in his hand followed her all over the house and made her show him everything. (The same thing happened to the Comtesse de Mérode at the Château de Waterloo; everything was opened, searched, and in part plundered.) The Princesse de Ligne replied to one officer that a certain old salver of repoussé silver was not for sale, when he wished to buy it. The next day that and other pieces of silver were gone. At Conjoux they passed days of anguish during the burning of Dinant. There was a battle in the wood back of the little house where we had so often had tea.

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"The plundering of Dinant was most terrible, and what has been told of the horrors of that time is not at all exaggerated. Up to the present time they have exhumed 981 bodies of civilians, of which one hundred are children between three months and ten years. All this is official. There have, of course, been exaggerations, but how many horrors are still unknown!

"There were just such massacres at Audennes, Visé, Louvain, Aerschot and Termonde, not to speak of the smaller villages, and J. told me when he passed through here to join the army that in going through Dinant between Aisny and Philippeville there was not one village that had not been completely destroyed. At Liegnon (the station where one leaves the train in going to Conjoux) they imprisoned 900 peasants in a church for seventeen days. No one was allowed to go in. Two women were confined and were unable to have a doctor. The curé of Lorinnes, near Conjoux, had his lungs pulled out on each side with the hooks that are used for the tires of motor cars. I could go on telling you of just such incidents for pages and pages.

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THE CHÂTEAU OF ARDENNE.

"The Château of Ardenne, which had become the property of the State through the gift of Leopold

II, has been completely emptied. There is not one piece of furniture left, nor a frame, nor a picture; everything is gone, and this is the case in many châteaux.

"At Ghent my family have suffered a great deal from the presence of the enemy in their homes. I have already told you of their installing the passport office in our grandfather's drawing room; you remember the one where the picture hung and the chests that belonged to Marie Antoinette. You may imagine the filth, and they insisted on putting in gas, saying it was so dark they could not see. It is true it was dark, but they had no right to ruin everything. It is curious that our grandfather still has papers giving an account of the Cossacks' sojourn in 1814. In the very same house, a Russian colonel was lodger. According to these papers, there were far fewer injuries and complaints than in 1914 against the Germans. At Laeken, in the royal chateau, the Germans held a veritable orgy and ruined everything; such dirt; and horrors so ignoble that I dare not describe it further. The fact is that everything in that beautiful chateau is in a deplorable condition.

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"The Germans hope to demoralize us by circulating false reports. Every day despatches from the Kaiser announcing their victories are posted on the walls of the towns; this also to encourage their troops. The soldiers arriving in Ghent think they are within a few miles of London. The people have naturally taken a mischievous delight in undeceiving them and telling them they were by no means near London, but near the Yser. They actually wept, for the Yser is their nightmare, and with reason. That is easily understood. They do not advance; quite the contrary.



**CROWN PRINCE LEOPOLD, DUC DE BRABANT.**

"The King and Queen are still at La Panne. Little Prince Leopold, thirteen years old, is with them now. The other day all three on horseback reviewed the new recruits on the beach; all the time the German aeroplanes were throwing bombs.

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"We have a new army of 200,000 men, and it increases every day. The spirit of the troops is excellent. The other day the Queen went with little Prince Leopold as far as the second line of trenches to see the soldiers. It was near Nieuport. She sat down amongst them, and after she left the soldiers made a little sanctuary of the spot where she had sat. Our sovereigns are adored by their troops, and they well deserve it. Nothing matters to them—neither suffering, fatigue, danger nor money, for they are wonderfully generous. Nearly all the Relief Societies for Refugees in Belgium, here in Holland, in England, and in France have had gifts from them, and in some cases they have been considerable. It is thought now that the barbarity of the Germans and their cruelty has ceased since they have been stopped at the Yser, but this is not so. Naturally massacres are less systematic than during the first three months of the war, but there are constantly peasants and civilians shot and priests sent to Germany. At Cortemarch (near Roulers) they sent the curé and the vicar to Germany because they accused the village of having had a spy. This they posted themselves in all the Flemish towns. The number of people who have had to pay ransom for one or another *soi-disant* reason is countless. Our cousin, living at Wielt, has been imprisoned and forced to pay one thousand marks fine for daring to lift his voice feebly against the requisitions, without even payment by note, that were levied on the farmers.

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"The Germans have now forbidden disinterment of the bodies, as the proof of their cruelty was too

obvious. At the time of the flight of our poor population here the little children, seeing the Dutch soldiers dressed in gray, took them for Germans, and lifted up their little arms as these latter had obliged them to do. There are still in Holland 250,000 poor refugees. They are nearly all settled in camps of wood which in the beginning were very bad, but are improving now every day. After the taking of Antwerp there were one million here for one or two months.

"My brothers are well, thank God.—Pray.—Let us pray together if you will, for all. God will hear us and will give us the joy of acclaiming our King in Brussels when he reënters at the head of his army. It is the goal and dream of all the Belgians. It will be a day of wild and mad delirium. It gives me the shivers even to dream of it."

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From the son of Dr. Depage to his mother while she was lecturing in America:—

"April.

"La Panne<sup>[16]</sup> has changed a great deal these last few weeks. The tourist that would come here would think himself in an exhibition, just before opening day.

"On all sides one sees tents that spring from the ground. The floors would make fine skating rinks when the war is over.

"Truly the medical career is full of surprises, and I sometimes ask myself if my father, who as a youngster poached in the Forêt de Soignes, ever thought or even dreamed that he would one day be not only a great doctor, but a superior officer in the Belgian army.

"Life is a strange thing, Mother dearie, but I think that it can be very beautiful, if one understands it,—and also very sad.

"As to the war, the wounded are taking the illusion from us that we are having a vacation at the seaside.

"The weather has been so beautiful since the first day of spring that one is sometimes surprised not to see parasols of flaming colours, and the silhouettes of pretty women walking on the beach, or to see happy children building forts, which the incoming tide soon destroys. Alas! are we not all big children, we Belgians, that resist the incoming tide, and our forts no better or stronger? But I think the tide is high now, and soon it will go down.

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"As to Y. P.— I think that we must give up all hope of seeing him again. We thought for a while he was a prisoner, but though we tried to find him we could not. And then, he would have let his mother have news from him, don't you think?—since the 22d of October.

"We must not think of him now, we must remain courageous and keep on hoping.

"After the war, it will be time to count the spaces in our ranks, and I fear there will be many. My comrade was killed in our first bayonet charge. (You know we fight as much as possible in pairs.) I was about to kill a German when the man begged so pleadingly for his life, saying he had a wife and children, that I faltered for a moment—in that moment he half turned and quickly killed my comrade."

"BRUSSELS—end of April.

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"Everybody here deprives himself to help the more unfortunate. Thanks to America the famine has been averted. The American Minister is adored and blessed by all. He is so simple and modest that he doesn't like manifestations of thanks, but after the war we hope to show our appreciation. The d'Assches, Woelmonts, Pierre van der Straten and other faithful ones remain here until the day of deliverance. The Germans, after they have massacred and pillaged, now remain more quiet. They are ashamed, with reason, of their infamous doings, and I think the cruelties are past. But how does one know with barbarians? We are waiting for the Roumanians and the Greeks, and the Italians to enter on our side. The whole world wants to get all and risk nothing. I am writing to ask you if the singers in New York will not be able to organize something for the benefit of their dear brothers and sisters here. No music is possible. Professors and artists die from hunger....

"I want to tell you that my little Marie is going to make her first communion privately. It is a sweet consolation for me to prepare her. She is so simple and religious that I believe her prayers must be acceptable to the Lord. She is very young, only just seven; but as you know, Pope Pius Tenth wished that children should take their first communion at that age. In these grave days we wanted her to receive this great favour that she may unite her innocent prayers with ours in order that the Lord may hear us the better."

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"LONDON, May 1, 1915.

"It is very wearisome waiting to be sent to La Panne—but the shelling of Dunkirk does not bode well for our speedy departure. We simply have to wait from day to day, ready to start at short notice. The American Red Cross doctors and nurses—of the two new units, just arrived from America—are waiting also in London. The rules are stricter and stricter for leaving England.... No one may now leave for nursing without having been definitely engaged in a hospital over there. People are often turned back from Dover in spite of passports which are apparently perfectly correct.

"You see La Panne is at present under shell fire—the King and Queen have been headquartering there, an added reason for the Germans to try to demolish it. But I hear that just now they have been too near La Panne to be able to get so short a range, and Dunkirk as you know has been the

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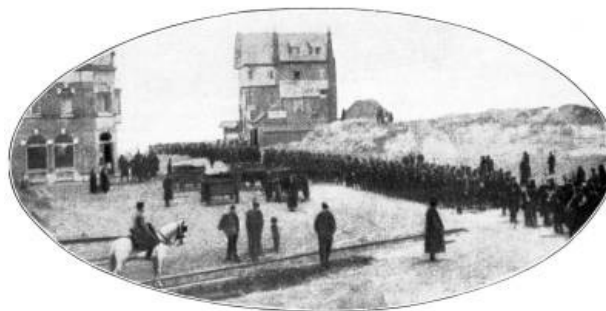
victim. Many hospitals there are being evacuated.... In the meantime I have been rather enjoying some free time here in London. I was busy for a while getting my new uniforms for La Panne—and odds and ends necessary for the 'war zone.' The uniform is of dark blue, and we wear caps with a long white veil behind. In order to get my certificate I had to take an oral medical examination—in French—before five Belgian doctors. A very trying ordeal, for it was really a stiff examination, with questions which are asked of trained nurses in their third year. But I got through somehow, and am now the proud possessor of a certificate giving me '*le droit de me mettre au service de la Croix Rouge de Belgique en qualité d'infirmière*' signed by all the doctors.

"All the food for La Panne is sent out from London on Monday of each week by the Admiralty boat. They send only once a week, as it is necessary for supplies to be watched and escorted all the way—otherwise they get stolen. One day we saw a lot packed up all ready to start—some friends of Mother's have charge of the whole fund, and also of the refugee fund which distributes food all over London and neighbourhood. They have been very nice to me, and offered me a job to drive a motor-van for them, carrying food to Belgian hostels and families. I went out with another girl once or twice, but have had no time yet to do anything regularly.... We are told that they are *very* much in need of ether at La Panne—and I want to send out some with the money which has been given me. But this last week or two *nothing* could be sent—fortunately there is a reserve supply of food at La Panne and another in Dunkirk, so it has not mattered much.... Since I came from Paignton I have been staying at the Nurses' Hostel in Francis Street, off Tottenham Court Road, with Nurse Walsh and Nurse Scott. It is very big and comfortable—and very cheap—well known all over the world. And nurses are pouring in almost daily from Canada and Australia. It is quite an experience staying there, and I slept in a cubicle the first three nights to see what it was like!

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"One day we went to an exhibition by the Women's Signaling Corps. Women and girls are learning flag-signaling, and they are also to take up bicycle despatch-riding, telegraphy, etc. The idea is of course to free men for the front. Miss D—, who is the chief officer of the women police, and a remarkable woman, came to dinner with us last week. They have been enrolled with the aim of providing a body of trained women for the service of the public.

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THE BELGIAN ARMY AT LA PANNE.

"I inclose you a copy of a letter from Lieutenant X—, who was in command of two companies of Gurkhas at the fight at Neuve Chapelle. It was written to his family on his twenty-eighth birthday."

The letter from Lieutenant X— follows:

"March 15, 1915.

"I ought to consider myself lucky to see another 15th of March, after the last five days. It has been absolute hell, but anyhow we won ground and killed more than we lost. The best way of telling you will be to quote my diary again.

"March 9th we spent in billets very cold, frosty and snow showers. Marched off at 11.30 P. M. for the Neuve Chapelle front, so we got no sleep that night.

"March 10th. Arrived in a trench line at about 3 A. M. after a march full of checks, owing to the crowded roads. The action about to take place was not a small one, but one by a front of three divisions, of which we were the center one. At 4.30 A. M. punctually, 480 guns opened fire and never I should think in history has there been such a bombardment. Our guns blazed away—the country behind was a mass of gun flashes—and in front of us a mass of smoke and shell bursts. There was not a second in which you could say, there is no gun firing—it was a continuous rattle and roar, and you could not hear yourself speak. We had to lie very low in our trench and there were several short bursts of our own shell going overhead; in fact I picked up two shrapnel bullets on my right hand side, and the base of a fuse on my left hand side. According to arrangements, at 8 A. M. our guns increased their range, and our first attacking line advanced under the enemy's trenches. The first and second lines reached the enemy's trenches with very little loss comparatively, as the enemy were quite disorganized by our shelling. They passed over two lines of trenches and reached an old trench line dug in the early days of the war—called the Smith-Dorrien line—about 1,200 yards beyond. I followed close behind, and Major B— came last—we had about 96 casualties in the first advance. We all reached the Smith-Dorrien line with the Germans in full retreat, our guns firing shrapnel on them. At this point we could have advanced still further, but that for one thing our guns were still dropping shells just in front of us, and for another the division

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on our left had not advanced sufficiently to support us. My double company only got about thirty prisoners and two machine guns. We immediately started digging ourselves in against an expected counter-attack. Some snipers from a trench on our right troubled us for some time; the regiment on our right had somehow advanced beyond the trench without killing its occupants.... At dark another brigade passed through us and advanced towards a wood 1,000 yards in front of us, and entrenched themselves 250 yards in our front. Maxim and rifle fire was opened on them by the enemy from the edge of the wood, but they did not suffer very heavily.

"March 11th. The entrenched line ahead of us was held all day. We got heavily shelled all day—the heaviest shells dropped behind, Jack Johnsons and Woolly Bears, while we had shrapnel, bombs and nasty double-acting shells which burst first with white smoke, and fifty yards further on with black smoke. We also got a good share of a shell which gave out the most beastly-smelling gases. Major B — was wounded in the head by a bomb which burst on our parapet within a foot of my head, blowing a large hole in the parapet and covering me with earth. The explosion of it, so close, instead of deafening me seemed to clear a passage through my head from ear to ear, and I went through all the processes of death. It seemed to me I was a goner, and it was some seconds before I realized I was alive and unhurt. The brigade in our front was ordered to retire in the night, and we were told to hold their evacuated trench with pickets. I sent out a picket from my double company—they remained out until 5 A. M., when I was ordered to withdraw them.

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"March 12th. They had only just come in when the Germans were seen advancing, and a fearful fusillade of rifle fire from our trenches began. After a time the firing slackened and dawn came, when in front of us were lines of dead Germans. We counted about one hundred in our immediate front—there were lots more to right and left, and the trench just evacuated in our front was thick with them. We had some very useful pistols with us, which fire a big cartridge and light up the ground in front. I fired fifteen rounds with mine to enable my men to see to fire. Only a few live Germans remained in the trench to our front, and these a British regiment turned out in an attack at 1 P. M. Their first line advanced through us, but suffered rather heavily from fire from a trench to our left front. Their second line was about to advance, and the officer in command of it jumped lip close by me and shouted 'Second line advance,' when he dropped, shot through the head. The third line never advanced. On our right the — Gurkhas advanced to the front trench and suddenly white flags began to appear, and after some difficulty we got our men to stop firing, and a few of the Gurkhas began sending prisoners back. In a moment both sides were standing up out of the trenches, on our side we were waving to the Germans to come in, and on their side they were waving flags and calling for us to go and fetch them—but this we could not do, as they continued to fire and we could not trust them. But the — Gurkhas collected a lot on the right and more followed, many of them wounded, and came into our lines. About a hundred came like this, I should think. Many more would have liked to come from further to the left, but it was difficult to arrange, as they kept firing and at the same time did not trust us sufficiently to leave cover. However we got a fair bag.

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"March 13th. All to-day and yesterday too we had absolute hell from enemies' artillery. All day we lay flat against the front parapet in fear and trembling—we were very crowded in our trench as a British regiment was there too, and such crowding added of course to the casualties. The shells dropped all round us—many dropped close in front and behind, putting the fear of God into us. All this time our artillery was firing too and the noise was terrific. The men behaved absolutely splendidly and did not move from their places. At 5 P. M. we got news that we were to be relieved—we were pleased and the men bucked up at once and started chattering away. We hoped to go out at dusk, but were disappointed, as a message came to say a German counter-attack was expected, and we must remain for the time being. However I got away about 8 P. M., and reported to the Colonel, who told me to march off to billets. Off I went with my men and myself, all as happy as could be, but I only got as far as our brigade headquarters a mile away, when the General said, he was very sorry but the — and — Gurkhas had to stay in reserve to the brigade who had relieved us. This was a bit fat after five days and nights without any wink of sleep for any one; for we had to work all night at improving our trench and repairing it where shells had damaged it, digging graves for killed, seeing to wounded going back; and in the day it was impossible to sleep for the noise, and casualties occurring now and then, and the fear of a German attack. However there was nothing for it, so I explained the situation to my men, who I must say took it very well. I almost cried for pity at their disappointment, for they were all dead tired: in fact none of us could walk in a straight line, and they were looking forward to a good sleep and some decent food again. However they turned and marched forward again, but no sooner had I arrived than a staff officer of the other brigade came and said the — and — Gurkhas were no longer required—so about turn again and back we went at a snail's pace. I halted at one place for water, as the men had been rather short of water the whole time, and I gave them an hour's sleep by the roadside at another point.

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"March 14th. It was about four miles to our billets and we got in just at dawn—our billets are near to L—. After some food they started to get some rest, but at 12 noon we had to change to another house half a mile away. Poor fellows, they have had a time, but the whole regiment has behaved splendidly and they are as cheerful as ever. Many acts of individual bravery were performed. During the attack there was a house full of Germans, but the difficulty was to get them out. One of our fellows went in and called upon all of them to surrender—and he brought out nine of them. On another occasion some of our men had to bring up ammunition along a *nullah* which was swept by machine-gun fire. One of the men was wounded, but another coming up behind stopped, put down the ammunition box he was carrying and dressed the wound, remaining under fire till he was killed. A Jack Johnson burst near one of our machine guns and buried every man except one, who was only buried up to the waist. He got out and dug out the others, and all were saved. Poor Major F— was

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shot through the head during the German counter-attack and killed. In my own double company I had Major D— wounded, 30 men wounded, and 9 killed. Our regimental casualties were 1 British officer killed, 2 Gurkha officers killed, and 39 rank and file killed, 3 British officers (Major B—, Major T— and Captain S—) wounded, not seriously; 2 Gurkha officers and 170 rank and file wounded, 35 missing, probably killed or wounded. Losses in the other four regiments in the brigade were much the same. A great many of the Germans against us were found to have bullets in them with the tips snicked off with cutters, making them act like dum-dum bullets—in fact three were shot for this on the spot. Several of our wounded showed dum-dum wounds....

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“You noticed perhaps that Sir John French’s despatches, after the recent fighting, thanked the Worcesters ‘a second time’—and everybody does not know that the first time was at Mons. Towards the end of that battle, Sir Douglas Haig came and said he thought they couldn’t possibly hold on any longer. General French agreed reluctantly, and gave the order for a general retreat. But immediately Sir Douglas Haig came back in haste to report that the Worcesters were still holding on, and the General said, ‘Then let us all hold on a little longer.’ The tide turned and the Germans retreated—and so it was that a plain little company of Worcesters saved Europe! Three separate times General French started to go and thank the Worcesters, and three times he had to turn back—he couldn’t speak for the choke in his throat....”

### III AMERICAN RELIEF WORK

At first there was some discussion as to the advisability of America’s feeding the Belgians. International law told us that it was the duty of the army occupying foreign territory to feed the civilian population. English soldiers felt that by importing foodstuffs into Belgium, America was helping the Germans. But Germany was unwilling to take upon herself this additional load, and some one had to do it. While the discussion was going on, seven million people were beginning to starve. “The hungry stomach knows no politics, and when a man is drowning, pull him out and not ascertain who threw him in.” So America came to the rescue.

After the destruction of Louvain a committee was formed in New York to collect funds for the Belgians, headed by Mr. de Forrest. His Excellency, Mr. Emmanuel Havenith, and His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, at once started a general movement, thinking that a comparatively small sum would be needed. The Millers’ Belief Committee, headed by Mr. Edgar in Minneapolis, was among the first to respond. My husband started the New England committee at that time.

Later, Mr. Whitlock informed Mr. Page, our Ambassador in London, of the great devastation in Belgium, as a result of which millions of people were on the verge of starvation. So a commission of Americans was formed in England, headed by Mr. Hoover. They sent Mr. Lindon W. Bates over here to organize committees throughout the United States. The British and Belgian governments promised to help, as well as the Spanish, and Germany gave permission for foodstuffs to be distributed to non-combatants in Belgium. The Spanish and American Ministers in Brussels, and their committees in other towns in Belgium, had charge of the distribution.<sup>[17]</sup>

This Commission perfected a wonderful system of shipping and of giving out the supplies. Everything was issued from the principal and branch stations of the Commission in Belgium into the hands of the “Commission Nationale Comité de Secours,” a well-organized Belgian association.

The appeal to the governors of states and to the Rockefeller Foundation met with the most generous response. The American railways and express companies for a time gave free transportation, and then coöperated to ship at reasonable prices. The Rockefeller Foundation also undertook to furnish free ocean transportation, and chartered the first ship that sailed from America with food for the Belgians, the *Maesapequa*, which left here November 4th and reached Rotterdam the 18th. The Foundation also contributed foodstuffs.<sup>[414]</sup>

Throughout the winter everybody knitted madly. The unemployed were set to work at small pay making garments, and people literally took their clothes off their backs to send. Plays, concerts, lectures, moving picture shows and rummage sales took in money which was later turned into food.

The way in which this food was put up was original and quite American. Boxes were filled with nourishing food suited to the needs of three classes of refugees—infants, convalescents, and adults.

“A package for infants and young children should include thirty pounds of evaporated, unsweetened milk; about two pounds of milk sugar, five pounds of barley flour, five pounds of cornmeal, five pounds of oatmeal, and two ounces of salt. This will sustain from two hundred to two hundred and fifty infants or young children for one day.

“For packages for convalescents the following is recommended: Fifteen pounds of evaporated milk, fifteen pounds of malted milk; one pound can of olive or cottonseed oil; two pounds of canned chicken, five pounds of brown rice, seven pounds of whole wheat or white flour, three pounds of sugar, two pounds of tea, and six ounces of salt. It is estimated that this will sustain from one hundred to one hundred and fifty convalescents for one day.<sup>[415]</sup>

“A package for well adults should contain: Five pounds of canned baked beans, eight pounds of dried lentils, peas or beans, five pounds of canned salmon, five pounds of oatmeal, five pounds of cornmeal, fifteen pounds of whole wheat or white flour, two pounds of sugar and six ounces of salt. This will furnish a sustaining ration for fifty adults for one day.”

“Not one mouthful has gone down a German throat yet, nor do I believe it ever will,” wrote Mr. Hoover; “we

have had nothing but help from the Germans in the distribution of American foodstuffs in Belgium. Belgium raises less than forty per cent. of its own food. The war struck it in the midst of the harvest, and Belgium had made no provision to feed itself in time of trouble. The minimum monthly requirements of the Belgian population are sixty thousand tons of grain, fifteen thousand tons of maize, three thousand tons of rice and peas, at a cost of four or five million dollars."

There was no milk for thirty thousand babies at the end of November. The cows had all been killed or taken<sup>[416]</sup> by the Germans for the army. The starving mothers could give little nourishment to their infants, and the supply of condensed milk was quickly used up. This picture was brought by an American from Belgium:

"I stood one morning by the back door of a German cook camp, watching a group of Belgian women grubbing through the trash heap piled up behind the camp. All these women carried babies. 'What are they doing?' I asked a German sergeant with whom I had struck up an acquaintance. 'Scraping our condensed milk cans,' he said. 'It is the only way to get milk for their babies. I have seen them run their fingers round a can which looked as bright as a new coin, and hold them into the babies' mouths to suck."

Six thousand meals a day were served in Brussels alone in the autumn. In some places one large baker's bun a day was all that was issued by the authorities; in other places, one bowl of cabbage soup. By April there were forty-seven soup kitchens in Brussels.

A shipload of food meant one day's rations for the Belgians. When the first ship arrived at the Hook of Holland, the city of Rotterdam rejoiced. While the unpacking went on, speeches were made and banquets<sup>[417]</sup> held, and American national airs were played. The cargo of the ship was put into canal barges, which by German permission were allowed to make their way to the different towns.

To show how quickly the food is distributed—in three hours sixty thousand people received bread. Three hundred and sixty sacks of American flour arriving at Verviers was distributed in the form of bread the following morning. According to the system of the Commission, each person receives three cards. "One is kept at the office, the other two are given to the applicant. One of these he keeps and presents each day for his quota of rations, i. e., bread. The other he gives to his baker. With this card the baker makes application to the storehouse for the necessary flour to cover the demand of the bread card. The bread card calls for 325 grams of bread; the baker's card for 250 grams of flour. When there are not full rations to be had, the applicant gets the percentage available. This applies to every one, rich and poor alike."

Thanks to the efficient work of the Commission, fully seventy-five per cent. of the Belgians receiving food were able to pay for it. This was due to the clever financiering of Mr. Hoover and his committee, who<sup>[418]</sup> managed, by an ingenious method, to raise the depreciated paper currency to par value.

Putting gift and purchase cargoes together there were delivered in a single month, "twenty-five thousand tons of wheat, thirty thousand tons of flour, eleven thousand tons of maize, fifteen hundred tons of rice, five hundred and forty-six tons of peas, four thousand tons of beans, one hundred and seven tons of potatoes, one hundred and twelve tons of salt, with thirty-six hundred tons of sundries."

In the spring Antwerp and Brussels were feeding about two hundred and eighty thousand people twice a day. At least four million people are getting their food through the National Commission. Those who can pay for it do so. Food is given in the bread line to those who cannot pay. At first only workmen appeared in the line, then small shopkeepers, and later professional men.

West of the road from Antwerp to Mons the people are being fed. East of the road the Germans did not permit it during the winter. In April, however, it was arranged that the Commission should also feed Northern France. In June General von Bissing permitted the Commission to furnish grain for seed, to be planted and<sup>[419]</sup> harvested by Belgian peasants for their own use. The report of the Commission for the first year of the war showed that for the people of Belgium and the 2,500,000 French people hemmed in behind the German battle front, an expenditure of \$10,000,000 a month was required.

The despatch of a shipload of food every other day from America during the winter constituted the largest commissary that the world has ever seen. "The Fleet of Mercy is constantly making voyages." Every cent collected in America for the purchase of food was spent in America. It is said that up to May 1st the United States made gifts amounting to about six million dollars. The American Relief Commission today has branches not only in the United States, Canada and Holland, but also in London and Belgium and France. From sixteen American seaports food has been sent direct to Belgium. Forty-eight States, the District of Columbia and Hawaii, organized Belgian Relief Committees, and endless sub-committees. Thirty-seven of the States of the Union are represented by the women's section.

Queen Elizabeth, now called the "Wandering Queen," sent this letter to thank the women of this Commission:

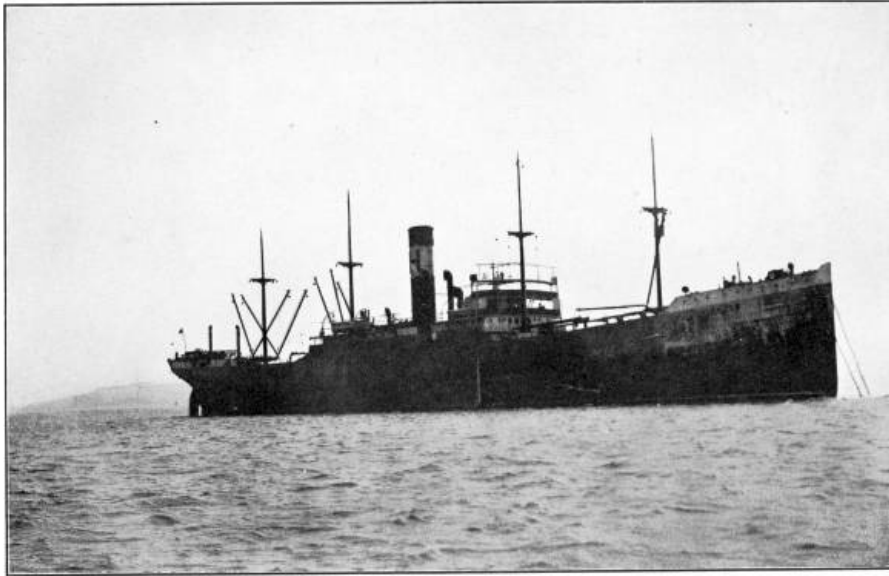
"It gives me great pleasure to accept the invitation which has been transmitted to me to become a<sup>[420]</sup> patroness of the Women's Section of the American Commission for Relief in Belgium. I wish to extend to the women of America the deep gratitude of the women of Belgium for the work which they are doing for my people. The food which your country is daily providing to our women and children comes like a ray of sunshine in the darkest hour in Belgium's history. The Belgian women have fought a brave fight, and are still fighting for the common cause of human liberty, so dear to every American woman's heart.

"ELIZABETH."

By May 1st the New York Belgian Fund amounted to more than a million dollars. California raised over a hundred thousand in a day. Chicago has been conspicuous with large gifts. Kansas sent a great quantity of

flour, and Mr. Wanamaker of Philadelphia shipped cargoes worth half a million dollars.

The New England Committee believes that its results up to May first are substantially as follows: Cash collected, \$300,000; value of goods collected, \$100,000; money sent from New England direct to New York, \$50,000; and goods sent to New York, about \$50,000. The Kermesse Flamande cleared \$15,000, and Madame Vandervelde's meetings raised about \$14,000 in Boston alone. Three ship-loads of food and clothing left Boston harbour.



**THE HARPALYCE**

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The *Harpalyce* was the first and largest of the ships. She sailed on January 7th, reaching Rotterdam the 23d. On April 10th, while on another voyage, she was torpedoed in the North Sea. She carried a crew of fifty-three men, twenty-six of whom were drowned, among them the captain, whom we knew personally.

The work of Madame Vandervelde while she was in this country deserves special mention. She is an English woman, the wife of Emile Vandervelde, the leader of the Socialists in Belgium. He had several times been offered a place in the Cabinet but had refused. When the war broke out, however, feeling that he could be of real service to his country, he became one of the Ministers of State. He came with the Minister of Justice, Monsieur Carton de Wiart, an old friend of ours, and several others, as one of a commission sent to America in the autumn of 1914. Madame Vandervelde followed shortly to make a lecture tour in the United States. We found her a charming and well-educated woman, and a speaker of unusual power. She came to this country in a spirit of splendid patriotism for the sake of helping Belgium.

Before the food question became urgent, she asked for money to help the Belgian refugees return to their homes. But this did not seem wise, as we shall see from a report quoted below, so the money that she collected was turned into food.

"For example, the towns Waelhem, Malines, Duffel, and Lierre, are reduced practically to ruins and are certainly not in a condition to receive back more than one-third of their ordinary population. There is, moreover, a smell of decay in the air, which probably proceeds from corpses buried in the ruins, which may, at any time, breed a pestilence. To send people back to their homes when those homes no longer exist, I believe to be cruel. Visé and Tamines and, I suppose, ten or a dozen other small towns in Belgium, are practically in the same condition as those I visited, desolate and uninhabitable, half of their houses wrecked, many scattered and isolated farmhouses practically destroyed, and a considerable portion of the land under cultivation laid waste, either by military operations or by inundation for defense.

"There is no work. The factories are closed because they have no raw material, coal, or petrol, and because they have no markets. And yet war taxes are falling with hideous pressure upon a people whose hands are empty, whose workshops are closed, whose fields are idle, whose cattle have been taken."

In one of her lectures Madame Vandervelde said: "The sight of the poor refugees streaming into Antwerp from Louvain and Malines, women with babies in their arms, older children clinging to their skirts, men wheeling their decrepit fathers in wheelbarrows or helping along a crippled brother or son, is more pitiful than any words can express."

From the reports in the daily papers, Madame Vandervelde said, one knows little of the overwhelming nature of the tragedy. She told many interesting stories of the land which had been ravaged by the horrors of war, and the murderous raids of the Zeppelins.

Her mission was not a political one; it was a plea for help. She arrived in September, bringing good letters of introduction. Wherever she spoke—in private houses on Long Island, at Beverly, Mass., or Dublin, New Hampshire, or in cities—she was so attractive, and her appeal was so pathetic, that people wept and opened

their pocketbooks. In the big cities of Canada she spoke in halls and churches, and was most enthusiastically received. From Syracuse she went to Chicago, also to St. Paul and Minneapolis, starting committees where they did not already exist. At Chicago, Philadelphia and Boston she was especially successful in raising money. She was present at the sailing of several of the food ships, when hundreds of people crowded the docks, speeches were made, and patriotic music played.

Three thousand people attended the mass meeting at Tremont Temple, in Boston, and over a thousand were turned away. She went to Providence and then to New Haven, where she was introduced by ex-President Taft. She was introduced in Boston by Bishop Lawrence, and in Baltimore by Cardinal Gibbons. A large meeting was held for her in Cooper Union Hall in New York. During her stay in Washington she visited the Belgian Minister and his wife. Where committees were already started, she turned over the money she made to them. She sailed for Europe on the third of April, having raised about three hundred thousand dollars.

Her last lecture before sailing contained these words: "We, the Allies, do not want peace. We appreciate the well meaning, high minded, noble Americans who are planning a conference at your national capital whereby the neutral nations shall decide on some peace plan to be submitted to the belligerent nations without armistice, but we cannot hear of peace at this or any other time until Prussian army caste has been wiped from the face of Europe. We want peace, but only peace with honour, and lasting peace. Peace now, before militarism has been conquered, will not be lasting peace. At the most, it would only be for five or six years, until Prussian militarism could reconstruct itself, and then the whole reign of terror for all Europe would begin again. We can scarcely understand an attitude that would even suggest peace at this time. Such an attitude is embarrassing."



**MADAME VANDERVELDE.**

Just as Madame Vandervelde left the country, Madame Depage arrived to take her place. She had had experience in the Balkan War, when she accompanied her husband to Constantinople and acted as an auxiliary nurse. She directed the equipment of the hospital and within a very short time had turned the building into one of the best military hospitals in Europe. During the present war she has aided in the establishment of a large number of military hospitals, not only in Brussels but also in other Belgian cities.<sup>[426]</sup> When Brussels was taken the Germans seized the hospitals and devoted them to their own uses. The Governor-General of Belgium issued a decree breaking up the organization of the Belgian Red Cross. All the funds were seized, and the archives were handed over to a German officer, who was appointed to carry on the work. It is said that forty thousand dollars' worth of Red Cross supplies was taken over. As the National Belgian Headquarters of the Red Cross were in Brussels, the heads of the organization were temporarily cut off from the army.

Dr. Depage stayed with the King while his wife remained in the capital until she received word from him that she was needed at the front. She made her way to Holland, then to England, and then to Calais. Her husband was at that time in charge of the Gendarme Ambulance. He gave her some orderlies and told her to proceed to La Panne and select a site for a military hospital. She found an empty hotel, and had things ready with three hundred beds when the Doctor arrived from Calais to take charge. Now there are a thousand beds, and

he has a large corps of assistants.

As Belgium was not receiving American Red Cross supplies, for the simple reason that it seemed impossible<sup>[427]</sup> to reach their headquarters, Madame Depage came to this country to solve the difficulty. She was here only a short time, but obtained a hundred thousand dollars by her lectures. Our American Red Cross had previously contributed thirty thousand dollars through the Belgian Relief Commission, and gave Madame Depage thirteen thousand more, besides promising six surgeons and twenty-four nurses to Belgium, furnishing two field hospitals and paying for their maintenance for six months. The total gifts of the American Red Cross organization have amounted to about \$100,000. Fortunately the money that Madame Depage raised was deposited here, for this brave, executive woman went down on the *Lusitania*.

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## FOOTNOTES:

- [1] The story of the de Buisseret misfortunes since the war began has been a sad one, like that of many of the Belgian aristocracy. Their château, which we visited so often, has been destroyed, Madame de Buisseret has died, and the children are scattered.
- [2] From "The Great Duke."
- [3] Roland de Marès (*Le Temps*).
- [4] Max Rooses.
- [5] The description of technique is quoted from Hunter's "Tapestries."
- [6] "Gems of Modern Belgian Art."
- [7] Conway.
- [8] Conway.
- [9] Translated by Edward Thomas.
- [10] The best authorities, of course, on the causes of the war are:  
The English White Paper  
The German White Book The Belgian Gray Book  
The Russian Yellow Book  
The Austrian Red Book  
The French Yellow Book
- [11] From the German White Book.
- [12] From "How Belgium Saved Europe," by Dr. Charles Sarolea—as is much of the following.
- [13] From the volume of poems entitled "The Song of the Guns," by Herbert Kaufman.
- [14] Note:—I have heard the spreading of the Cardinal's letter by Mme. Carton de Wiart was one of the reasons of her arrest, trial and imprisonment.
- [15] The young English lady who took this letter to Roehampton was made a prisoner, from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon. Although she had to show the letter, the German officials let her go, as it was unimportant, but her husband was taken prisoner. They asked him his age, and told him that they needed soldiers, and that he might be of use to them.
- [16] The Belgian army retired from Antwerp to La Panne.
- [17] I am indebted to the official bulletin of the Commission for Relief in Belgium for much of the following material.

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