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THE SPELL OF FLANDERS

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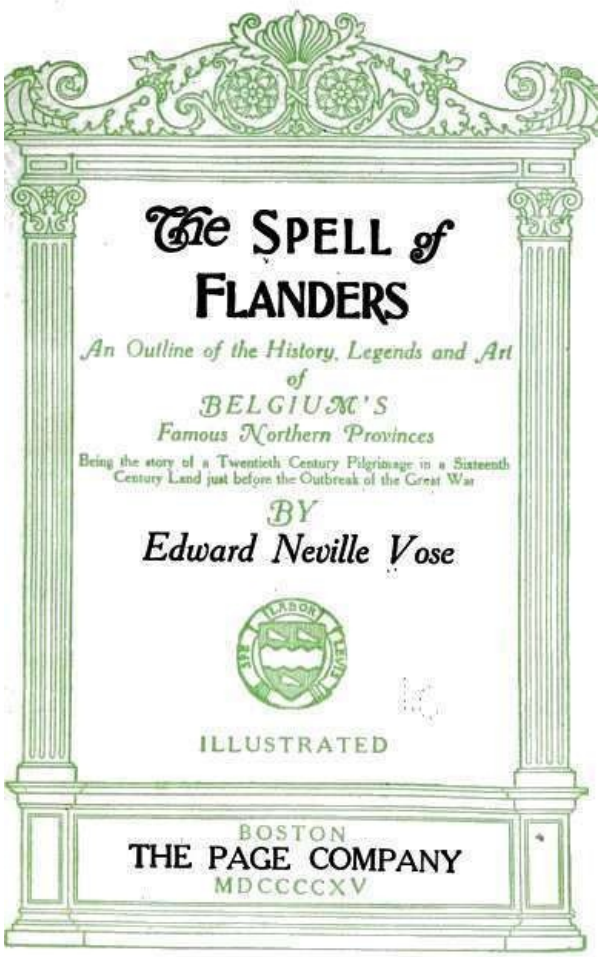
Cathedral of St. Sauveur, Bruges
(*See page 47*)



The Spell of Flanders

An Outline of the History, Legends and Art
of
BELGIUM'S
Famous Northern Provinces

Being the story of a Twentieth Century Pilgrimage
in a Sixteenth Century Land
just before the Outbreak of the Great War

BY
Edward Neville Vose

ILLUSTRATED

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To
ALBERT I.,
King of the Belgians,
the guiding star of a brave nation
and
the hero of the Battle of Flanders
in the Great War,
this book is dedicated

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Lord Beaconsfield once said: "Flanders has been trodden by the feet and watered by the blood of countless generations of British soldiers." This famous passage—which has received a new confirmation to-day—is typical of many references among English writers and statesmen to Flanders as a general term covering all of what is now known as Belgium. Among the citizens of that brave little Kingdom, however, and among most Continental writers, Flanders is recognised as being the name of only the northern part of Belgium. Small as that country is, it has for centuries been bi-lingual, the northern portion speaking Flemish, the southern French; and for centuries the history of the Flemish provinces was as distinct from that of the Walloon province to the southward as the early history of California or Texas was from that of New England.

Although eventually united under one Government with the Walloons and with what is now Holland, it was during the long period of their semi-independence that the Flemings achieved many of the artistic and architectural monuments that have made Flanders for all time one of the most interesting regions in the world.

While this book, therefore, does not attempt to describe the whole of Belgium, it does present a pen picture of the northern part of the country as it existed almost at the moment when the devastating scourge of the Great War swept across it.

FOREWORD

This book is the record of a vacation tour in the beautiful old Flemish towns of Northern Belgium beginning in May and ending in July of the Summer of 1914. The assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand and his wife at Sarajevo took place while our little party was viewing the mediæval houses and churches of Ghent and Audenaerde, but in the many discussions of that event to which we listened there was no whisper of the awful fate which the march of events was so soon to bring upon one of the most charming, peaceful and happy countries in the world.

Many of the descriptions in the following pages were written in or near the towns described, and within a day or so after the visit narrated. Then each old Flemish "monument" was in as perfect a state of preservation as the reverent pride and care of the Belgian populace and the learned and skilful restorations of the Belgian government could together accomplish. The fact that since these accounts were written many of these very towns have been swept by shot and shell, have been taken and retaken by hostile armies, have formed the stage upon which some of the direst tragedies of the world's greatest and most terrible war have been enacted, will—it is hoped—give them a permanent interest and value. As a painting of some famous city as it appeared many years or centuries ago is of the utmost historical interest, even though by an inferior artist, so these halting word pictures of towns that have since been wholly or partially destroyed may help the reader to recall the glories that have passed away.

In accordance with the plan described in the first chapter, the tour of Flanders followed a decidedly zigzag itinerary, frequently visiting some town more than once. The purpose of this was to follow, in a fairly chronological sequence, as far as possible, the development of Flemish history, architecture and art. The outline of the intensely fascinating history of the old Flemish communes that has been thus presented may prove of interest to many readers who have been thrilled by the superb bravery of the little Belgian army in its defence of Flanders against overwhelming odds. As these glimpses into the past clearly show, the men of Belgium have engaged in a battle against foreign domination from the earliest ages. That it was at times a losing struggle never for a moment diminished the ardour of their resistance, or the depth of their devotion to liberty and the right to rule themselves. And when we consider how, during these centuries of conflict, and in defiance of obstacles that would have daunted a less strong-hearted people, the men of Flanders found the inspiration, the patience and the skill to erect some of the noblest examples of mediæval architecture, to create a school of painting that ranks as one of the most priceless heritages of the ages, and to excel in a half a score of other lines of artistic endeavour, we surely must all agree that here is a people we would not willingly see perish from the earth.

If to be neutral is to stand by and silently acquiesce in the destruction of Belgium as an independent nation, then the author of this book is not neutral. In every fibre of his being he protests against such a course as a crime against liberty, against humanity. Happily, from every corner of the United States come unmistakable evidences that the American people as a whole are not, at heart, neutral on this subject. The embattled farmers who stood on the bridge at Concord and fired "the shot heard round the world" have thrilled the imagination and stimulated the patriotism of every American schoolboy, but no less heroic is the spectacle of the little Belgian army under the personal leadership of its noble King standing like a rock on the last tiny strip of Belgian soil and stopping the onrush of the most powerful fighting organisation in the world. At Nieuport and Dixmude and along the bloodstained Yser Canal, the men of Belgium fought for the same cause of liberty for which our forefathers fought at Bunker Hill. Whatever our sympathies may be with respect to the larger aspects of the great world war—and as to these we may most properly remain neutral—our national history and traditions, the very principles of government to which we owe "all that we have and are," cannot but confirm us in the profound conviction that no conclusion to this war can be just and right, or permanent, that does not once more restore the Belgian nation and guarantee that it shall remain completely and forever free.

On the other hand, while news of the damage done to some famous Flemish church or Hotel de Ville causes the author sensations akin to those that he would experience on learning of the wounding of a friend, this book will contain no complaint regarding German destruction of these monuments of architecture. At Ypres and Malines, where the havoc wrought cannot fail to have been fearful, the damage was done in the course of battles in which the most powerful engines of destruction ever invented by man were used on both sides. Much as we may deplore the results, we cannot blame the individual commanders. At Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges and many other famous Flemish cities the Germans appear to have made every effort to avoid wanton destruction and preserve the most notable historic edifices. After the war is over and we have learned exactly what structures have been destroyed, and under what circumstances, we can justly place whatever blame may attach to such a catastrophe where it belongs—but not until then. For the present we can only hope that the damage may be less than has been reported, and that in many instances it will be possible for the Belgians—so skilful in the work of restoration—to reconstruct the sections of famous buildings that have been damaged.

When the war is over many thousands of Americans and English will be eager to visit the battle-fields of Flanders and see for themselves the scenes of conflicts that will forever hold a great place in human history. The author ventures to hope that this little book may be found serviceable to such tourists as it contains much information not to be found in any guide book. If it aids any of them—or any of the far larger host of travellers whose journeys in far-off lands must be made by their home firesides—to understand Flanders better it will have achieved its purpose. It is one of the many ironies of the war that towns like Ypres and Malines, which were rarely visited by American tourists when they were in their perfection, will, no doubt, be visited by thousands now that the clash of arms has brought them at the same moment destruction and immortal fame.

EDWARD NEVILLE VOSE.

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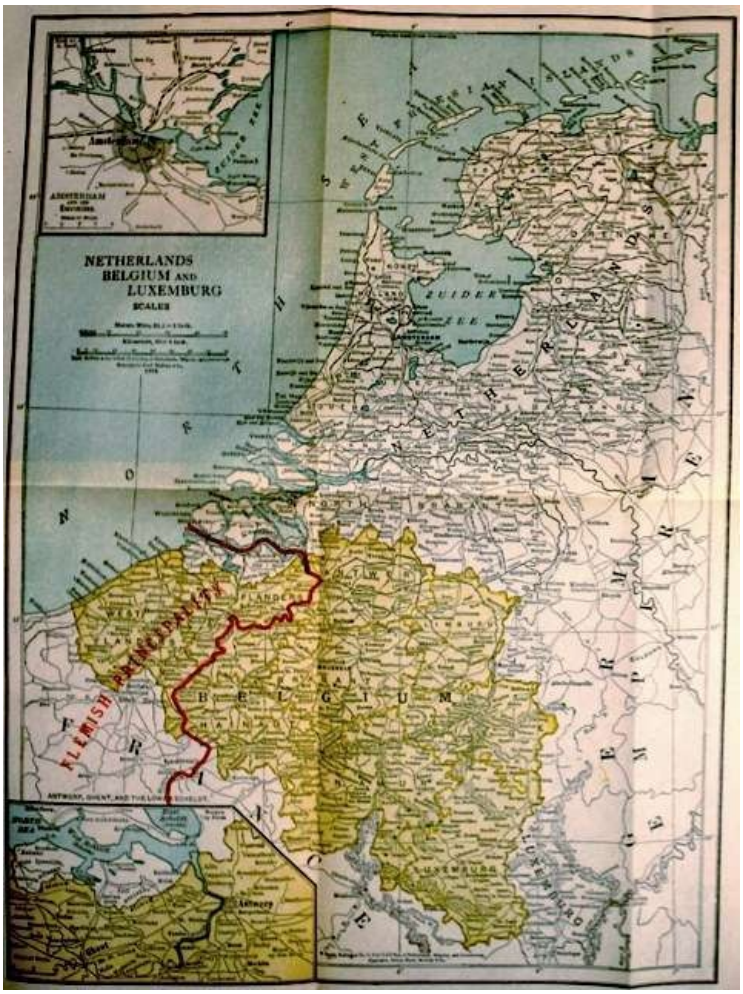


**MAP OF BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS,
SHOWING THE OLD FLEMISH PRINCIPALITY**

THE SPELL OF FLANDERS

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCING FLANDERS AND THE FOUR PILGRIMS

landers! Why, where is Flanders?”

“There! I told you she’d ask that question. You’ll have to start right at the beginning with her, and explain everything as you go along.”

We were planning our next vacation tour in Europe, which we had long before agreed to “do” together this year. That meant a party of four—the “Professor,” as I always called him, and his charming young wife, my wife, and myself. Like the plays in which the characters appear on the stage in the order that their names are printed on the programme, the arrangement I have just given is significant. The Professor is always first, a born leader-of-the-way. And I am usually last, carrying the heavy bundles.

Not that I am complaining. No doubt I was born to do it. Moreover, the Professor and I have been chums since boyhood. We worked our way through “prep” school and college together, came to New York together, and—in a modest way—have prospered together. At least, we felt prosperous enough to think of going to

Europe. For some years he has been the head of the department of history in an important educational institution within the boundaries of the greater city, while I have devoted myself to journalism—and am therefore dubbed “the Editor,” whenever he wishes to refer to me as a personage instead of a human being, which, happily, is not very often. Of the two ladies in the proposed party I do not need to speak—not because there is nothing to say, but because they can speak for themselves. In fact, one of them has just spoken, has asked a question, and it has not yet been answered.

“Flanders, my dear,” said the Professor, speaking in his most sententious manner—as if delivering a lecture in his classroom—“is the most interesting and the least visited corner of Europe. It has more battle-fields and more Gothic churches per square mile than can be found anywhere else. In other parts of Europe you can see mediæval houses, here and there—usually in charge of a smirking caretaker, with his little guidebook for sale, and hungrily anticipating his little fee. In Flanders there are whole streets of them, whole towns that date from the sixteenth century or earlier—but for the costumes of the people, you could easily imagine yourself transported by some enchantment back to the days of Charles the Bold, or even to the time of the Crusaders.”

“Yes,” I added, “and there is no region in the world where the history of the past seems more real, more instinct with the emotions that govern human conduct to-day, than these quaint old Flemish towns. You stand in front of a marble skyscraper on Fifth Avenue and read a bronze tablet that tells you that here the Revolutionary forces under old Colonel Putnam, or whoever it was, delayed the advancing British and covered General Washington’s retreat. Now, does that tablet help you to reconstruct your history? No, you are quite aware that the fight took place when Fifth Avenue was open country, but your imagination will not work when you try to make it picture that scene for you right there on Fifth Avenue where the tablet says it happened.

“Now, it’s different in Flanders. You read in the history about how the burghers of Bruges, when the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, tried to overawe the city by placing an army of archers in the market-place, swarmed out of their houses and down the narrow, crooked streets like so many angry bees. There are the same old houses, the identical narrow, crooked streets—a bit of an effort and you can picture it all—and how the Duke and his archers were driven back and back, while the burghers swarmed in ever increasing numbers, and the great tocsin in the belfry shrieked and clanged to tell the valiant weavers that their liberties were in danger.

“And take that other famous event, when they flung the murderers of Count Charles the Good—who lived and died five hundred years before the other Prince who, like him, was surnamed “the Good”—from the tower of the very cathedral in which they had murdered him. Why, you can climb the tower and look off across the same sea of red-roofed houses and down upon the same square, paved with cruelly jagged stones, as did the condemned men when, one by one, they were led to the edge of the parapet and sent hurtling down.”

“The point is well taken,” interrupted the Professor, “only that particular church is no longer standing—it was destroyed during the French Revolution. But really that makes little difference—there are plenty of other towers in Bruges that have witnessed stirring scenes. And all over Flanders it is the same way—nothing is easier than to make your history live again, for everywhere you have the original setting practically unchanged.”

“It’s all very well for you men,” observed Mrs. Professor, when her husband and I paused to get our breath, “who admire, or pretend to admire, battles and executions and that sort of thing, but if there is nothing else to see except places with such dreadfully unpleasant associations I, for one, don’t want to go there.”

“On the contrary,” I hastened to reply, seeing that the Professor was much disturbed at this unexpected result of all our eloquence, “Flanders has a lot of things to interest the ladies. Think of its famous laces and lacemakers—we can still find the latter at work in places like Bruges, Malines and Turnhout—of its rare old tapestries from Audenaerde and Tournai, and the fine linens of Courtrai. Then there are wood carvings the like of which you will travel far to see, and old Flemish furniture everywhere.”

“To say nothing of the pleasure of learning a little more about the great Flemish school of art in the very home towns of its most celebrated artists,” added the Professor, who was much elated to see that the frowns were leaving the fair face of his better half.

“That’s much better,” she announced. “I’ve always thought fine hand-made lace the most wonderful product of feminine patience and skill, and I should certainly love to watch them make it.”

“For my part,” remarked the fourth member of the party, who had been strangely silent during all this discussion, “while I like to learn a little about the history of the old towns I visit, and see the fine things—whether paintings, or town-halls, or lace or tapestry—for which they are famous, what I like the best is to study the people themselves. I mean the live ones, not those who are dead and gone that our husbands are talking about. I love to sit on the sidewalk on pleasant evenings and have dinner and black coffee while watching the people of the town go by. It’s better than a play. And on rainy days there is always some quaint old-fashioned inn or café where the whole scene looks like a painting by Jordaens or Teniers. The beamed ceiling and the pictures on the walls are grimy with the smoke and steam of countless dinners, the buxom landlady sits in state behind an array of bottles of all sizes and colours and labelled at all prices, her equally plump daughters wait on the tables, the very guests—including ourselves—form a part of the picture. Why, it makes me want to be back there again, just to think of it!”

“The Madame is right!” exclaimed the Professor heartily—all of our friends call my wife “the Madame” because she speaks French as fluently as English. “Our first object on this trip will be pleasure. A little knowledge of the history of Flanders, of tapestry and lacemaking, of architecture and art, may enhance our enjoyment of what we see, because we will thereby understand it better and appreciate its interest or beauty more keenly. But we are not going over as historical savants, or as authorities on art—or pretend that we

know any more about such subjects than we really do—”

“Which is just enough to enable us to derive sincere pleasure from seeing them, and having them explained to us, without troubling our heads about this, that or the other element of technique,” I interrupted, completing the Professor’s sentence for him.

“And the best part of the day will be, just as Madame says,” added Mrs. Professor gaily, “the dinners on the sidewalks, where we can watch the people as they go about and tell each other of what we have seen since morning. And, hurray! for the Flemish inns!”

“Well, as to Flemish inns,” observed the Madame, “what I said related to eating a dinner in one. When it comes to sleeping in them there are other things to think of besides beamed ceilings and picturesque interiors.

“A few years ago we had an experience at Antwerp that taught us the folly of arriving at a great continental city late at night without having hotel accommodations secured in advance. We had started at eight in the morning from Hamburg, intending to stop at Antwerp just long enough to transfer our belongings to a train for Brussels that, according to the time-table, would leave fifteen minutes after our train arrived. Now, from Hamburg to Antwerp is quite a long ride—short as the distance looks on the map—and when we finally arrived at our destination, half an hour late, it was long after midnight and our train for Brussels had gone.

“We were both tired out, and hastily decided that we would put up at Antwerp for the night and go on to Brussels in the morning. As we emerged from the great Gare Centrale we found despite the lateness of the hour, about a dozen red-capped hotel runners, each of whom clamoured for our patronage. They all looked very much alike, the names on their caps meant nothing to us as we were not familiar with the Antwerp hotels, and we selected one at random. To our dismay we discovered, when it was too late, that, whereas most of them had hotel busses in waiting—into which they leaped and were driven off—our cicerone was not so provided. He attempted to reassure us by saying that the Grand Hotel de —— was close by—a fact that produced the opposite effect from that intended, as we knew that the immediate vicinity of a large railroad station is seldom a desirable neighbourhood.

“However, the other porters were now gone and, unless we were disposed to sleep in the station, there was nothing to do but follow along. To our further alarm our guide presently turned into a most unprepossessing street on which several drinking places were still open, or were only on the point of closing. Into one of these he led us. After a short conference with the proprietress, who was sitting behind the bar counting the day’s receipts, he took a candle and a huge key and led us out into the court, then up a flight of stairs placed on the outside of the house, and through several narrow passageways. But for the flickering candle everything was completely dark, and when he finally ushered us into an immense room with a mediæval four-post bed in its darkest corner we involuntarily looked for the trap-door down which the murderous inn-keepers of the stories were wont to cast their victims.

“Lighting a pair of candles on the mantelpiece from his, and wishing us a civil ‘*Bon soir*,’ our red-capped guide now left us—to our great relief. Although we tried to dismiss our fears as childish, we both felt more insecure and helpless than we cared to admit, even to each other. None of our friends knew that we were in Antwerp. If we disappeared they would hardly think to look for us there—and still less on this shabby street, the very name of which we did not know.

“We barricaded the door against a sudden surprise, inspected the walls with a candle for signs of the secret door (at the head of the winding stairway up which the wicked innkeeper so often creeps upon his prey, according to the chronicles) and at last, the fatigue of the day overcoming our fears, we slept. It was broad daylight when we awoke, and the street was alive with people—mostly cartmen and peasants it seemed. With some difficulty we found our way down to the room where we had seen the landlady the night before. She greeted us warmly, our fears of the night had fled—and we sat down and ordered, and enjoyed, a most excellent breakfast. The hotel was quite a popular one, we learned, much frequented by people from near-by towns, and we had never been safer in our lives. Yet, just the same, we both vowed firmly that ‘Never Again’ would we take similar chances—and we never have.”

“I have thought of that incident more than once while talking over our Flemish tour with the Professor,” I observed, “and have decided upon this plan. When we find a hotel that suits us all, as regards cleanliness, cuisine and safety—or rather the sense of security, for I daresay we would be safe enough in many that we would hardly care to patronise—we will stay overnight in whatever town we may chance to be visiting. If, on the other hand, we have not had time to find such a place, we’ll take a train back to Antwerp or Brussels, where there are hotels that we know all about. We’ll get second-class *billets d’abonnement* every two weeks anyway, so the rail trip will only cost us our time.”

“And are Antwerp and Brussels both in Flanders?” inquired Mrs. Professor. “Between you, you have given me an idea that I should like to visit Flanders, but you have none of you answered my question as to where it is.”

“I think I can answer you, my dear,” replied her husband. “There are, as you probably know, two little provinces in the northern part of Belgium called East and West Flanders. The boundaries of the Flanders of history and of art, however, cover a considerable wider area than these two provinces. Over in France a considerable part of the Department du Nord was for centuries subject to the Counts of Flanders. On the other side, to the eastward, the cities of Antwerp and Malines were for many centuries independent of the Counts of Flanders, but their people spoke Flemish, their houses, churches and town-halls were built in the best style of Flemish architecture, and they became famous centres of Flemish art and learning. To my mind, therefore, they both belong to Flanders. Brussels, however, while its Hotel de Ville and Grande Place are splendid examples of Flemish architecture, is more French than Flemish, and belongs to the Walloon or French part of Belgium.

“Now, as the Editor here has proposed a plan which seems to me a good one as regards our hotels, I will venture to suggest one as regards our itinerary. It will make comparatively little difference which towns we visit first, and as some are more closely identified with the early history of Flanders than the others I propose that we visit these older towns first. At the time of the Crusades Ypres, for example, had two hundred thousand inhabitants when the population of London was less than thirty-five thousand and Antwerp was an obscure little town. Nieuport and Furnes were, at that time, the chief seaports of Flanders. Now they are miles from the sea. Dixmude, near by, was another important city of those olden days. Now all these places are country villages—‘the dead cities of Flanders,’ they are called, and scarcely a tourist from America ever visits them, although they are fairly familiar to our English cousins.

“If we start our pilgrimage in Flanders with Bruges, which was the first capital of the County of Flanders, and with these old towns—all of which are hard by—we can plan our journeys chronologically, so to speak, visiting first the monuments that date from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, then those of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and so on. In that way we not only can keep the little history we know straight, but we can trace with our own eyes the gradual development of Flemish architecture and art.”

This plan was unanimously voted to be a capital one—in theory, at any rate—and thus it was that in our subsequent wanderings about Flanders, under the guidance of the indefatigable Professor, we often crossed our trail, and now and then visited the same place more than once. In practice it did not accomplish quite all that was expected of it by its learned originator—but what plan ever does, or ever will? That it enhanced the interest of the trip manyfold we all agreed; it often sustained our flagging zeal, and it helped us to know Flanders—the Flanders of the past especially—far better than we would have done in any other way.

CHAPTER II

VIEUX BRUGES AND COUNT BALDWIN OF THE IRON ARM

It is not the purpose of this veracious chronicle to recount the doings and sayings, the incidents or lack of incident, on the voyage across. Suffice it to say that in due season the good ship *Lapland* turned its prow away from the white cliffs of Dover and straight toward the low-lying shores of Flanders. As she crossed the North Sea scores of fishing boats with brown sails hovered around her, while throngs of seagulls soared overhead, or now and then dashed madly into her foaming wake to grasp some morsel flung from deck or porthole, or fight fiercely with each other for its possession. Presently, in the haze ahead, a faint outline of land could be distinguished, and soon we could see through our glasses the heaped up dunes that mark the battle line between the North Sea and the fertile Flemish polders behind them. Here and there the shore was strengthened by rows of pilings to keep the waves of Winter from washing it away. As a “sight,” however, it was dreary and uninviting enough—not at all like the picturesque headlands of Merrie England we had been looking at only a few hours before.

Now, for a time, the ship kept its course parallel to the shore, but at a distance of a mile or more. Gradually the coast became more inhabited, and soon we could see a row of stone and brick buildings facing directly on the beach which some one said was Blankenberghe. No doubt there were other rows of houses behind the first, but either they were lower, or in the haze our glasses could not distinguish them. Then the panorama of the Flemish coast unrolled a little further and we saw the long curved breakwater of Zee-Brugge, with its white lighthouse. This is an artificial port connected with the ancient capital of Flanders by a ship canal. Entrance to the canal from the sea is effected by a large lock which was faintly visible. Another beach city, Heyst, next appeared—the ship seeming to stand still while the shoreline marched slowly past. Then came a smaller place, which from our maps we concluded must be Knocke. Here the coastline of the present Kingdom of Belgium ends, the little River Zwyn—once famous as the channel up which one hundred and fifty ships a day made their way to Bruges in the days of its greatness—forming the boundary.

The Dutch are apparently not interested in sea bathing, for there were no more watering places. In fact the whole coast seemed to be dead and deserted, and we were glad when the *Lapland* began to turn her prow inland. We were now in the broad estuary of the Scheldt, and soon the tiny city of Flushing appeared. It was over on the other side of the ship and we all scampered across to take our first “near look,” as Mrs. Professor expressed it, of the land we had come to see—for Flushing belonged for centuries to the great overlords of Flanders, the Dukes of Burgundy and their successors. It looked very small and compact from the towering deck of the big liner, but also very quaint and interesting, and we all agreed that as a sample of what we had come so far to see it was the reverse of disappointing.

Soon the propellers of the *Lapland* began to revolve again and the little Dutch city slowly slipped out of sight in the fast gathering gloom of a coming shower. As night came on the engines presently came to rest once more and we anchored to await daylight and flood tide which, the officers said, would come together. At four o’clock the following morning the Professor and I were on deck in order to miss as little as possible of the voyage up the “greyest of grey rivers,” as the Scheldt has been called. The *Lapland* had started while we were asleep, and we were already in Belgium. This circumstance disappointed the Professor not a little as he had set his heart on seeing the remains of the Dutch forts at the boundary line that for nearly one hundred and fifty years—from the Treaty of Munster in 1648 to the French occupation in 1794—closed the river to ocean commerce. Meanwhile, grass grew in the streets of the all but deserted city of Antwerp. The French

tore down the hated forts and for nearly forty years the ships from oversea went up the river unmolested. Then came the Revolution of 1830 and the establishment of the Kingdom of Belgium, whereupon the Dutch proceeded to impose heavy navigation duties upon all ships passing through the lower part of the river. While this did not stifle the trade of Antwerp, it seriously crippled it, since the duties formed a handicap in the keen competition for traffic between the Belgian port and those of Holland and Germany farther to the eastward. It was not until 1863 that the Belgian Government was able to arrange a treaty whereby all river dues were abolished in return for the payment of a lump sum of 36,000,000 francs—of which only one-third was paid by Belgium, as other powers were interested in obtaining freedom of navigation on this important river and gladly contributed the remainder. The imposing monument by Winders on the Place Marnix at Antwerp, which was erected in 1883, commemorates this important event, to which the port owes its present prosperity.

As the *Lapland* slowly steamed up the river we could look down from her lofty decks upon the broad and intensely cultivated plain, stretching as far as eye could penetrate in the misty distance. Here and there we could see compact little groups of farm buildings, usually arranged around a central courtyard and with their outer walls well-nigh windowless, as if the peasant proprietors still counted on the possibility of a siege such as their ancestors no doubt often had to sustain against the wandering marauders and freebooters who for centuries infested the country. Along every road and canal, and beside nearly every cross-country path, we could see long lines of trees set out at regular intervals and cutting the landscape into sections of varying sizes and shapes. Now and then a little hamlet could be seen, with its red-tiled roofs nestling close together and a tiny church steeple rising from the centre. Often the roofs of the houses nearest to the river were below the top of the high dykes which here enclose the Scheldt on either side. Close to the banks an occasional fort commanded the river—outlying links in the great chain of fortifications that was thought to be impregnable until the huge German siege guns so quickly battered it to pieces.

Presently some one with a keener vision than the rest cries that the spire of the Cathedral of Antwerp is in sight and we all crowd forward and peer eagerly through the mist until at last we make out vaguely the shape of that marvel of Flemish architecture rising above the flat plain. At each turn of the river it draws nearer and we can see more clearly its delicate tracery of lace-work carved in stone, while one by one other spires loom up through the grey dawn.

The traffic in the river becomes more dense as we proceed slowly onward—huge red-bottomed tramp steamers with their propellers half out of the water and churning furiously in a smother of foam, clumsy canal boats with Flemish or German names lying at anchor close to the banks, barges with dingy brownish sails and all manner of strange cargoes. Then, suddenly, we swing around the last turn and the entire city lies before us, its houses with their high peaks and dormer windows rising tier above tier, while at the left we catch glimpses through the lock gates of the vast inner docks with their hundreds of masts and funnels. Curiously enough the view to the right is entirely different—the green fields and farmsteads stretching in this direction from the very edge of the river as far as the eye can see.

But now we are warping up against the Red Star Line pier and all eyes are gazing down upon the motley crowd that has assembled thus early in the morning—it is not yet seven o'clock—to welcome the new arrivals from America. The customs inspection proves to be a mere formality, half of our trunks and bags are chalk-marked by the obliging inspector without lifting a tray or disturbing any of their contents. A commissionaire is waiting to bear them away to the cabs and, after generously bestowing five cents on this worthy for his trouble, we are off for the Gare Centrale—for the Madame has decreed that we must all proceed forthwith to the home of a certain Tante (Aunt) Rosa, not far from Brussels, where we can get our land legs safely on before starting on our tour under the guidance of the Professor.

Throughout the morning it has rained heavily at intervals, and as the *rapide* for Brussels steams out of the station the grey clouds are pouring down their contents in torrents. This circumstance disturbs us not at all, for we have agreed to pursue our course regardless of the weather and are prepared for anything short of a flood or blizzard. And right here it may be as well to state that any one who proposes to travel in Flanders must make up his or her mind to ignore the vagaries of the weather altogether. At Brussels the weather records show that it rains more or less during three hundred days in each year, and while there are many days when the showers are brief, and some periods when it is clear for several days, it is better to come prepared for anything. Somewhere in the direction of the English Channel there seems to exist a vast cloud factory, for day after day one sees the huge cloud masses rolling slowly eastward or southward across the country. Usually they are high overhead, with frequent intervals of brilliant sunshine, and the showers few and far between. At other times the clouds hang low and dark and the rain falls steadily, not in furious driving showers such as occur frequently during the summer time at New York, but with a monotonous continuity that is the despair of travellers who are equipped only for fair weather. It is no exaggeration to state that one may look out of his hotel window upon a cloudless sky and find that by the time he has descended to the street it is raining. Happily the reverse is equally possible, and frequently we looked out of the window while at breakfast at pouring rain and dripping roofs, only to find by the time we were ready to go out of doors that the shower was over, the sky clear and the sidewalks nearly dry. It is this rapid alternation of showers and sunshine that makes Flanders the land of flowers and vegetables, giving the former their brilliant colouring and the latter their indescribable succulence and freshness.

Another tip for the would-be traveller in Flanders is to come well prepared for cold weather even in June, July or August. The nights are always cool, and the prevailing winds are from the north or the northwest—the former cold, the latter wet. Many Americans contract serious colds because they come clad only for hot weather. Warm underwear, on the other hand, is best for the Flemish summer climate, with overcoats and wraps for evening wear. Raincoats, it is needless to say, should be in every suitcase—even for a day's outing, while a very handy article indeed is a *parapluie-canne*, or umbrella cane, such as can be purchased in Brussels for ten francs and upwards.

In less than three-quarters of an hour our fleet train was rolling into the Gare du Nord at Brussels; but Madame was in a hurry, so we became for the time birds of passage only and in another hour were already entrained again and speeding toward the steaming dinner that she assured us la Tante Bosa had awaiting us. Of the reception that we found when we arrived at last, and of the dinner which was presently spread before us, there is no need to say more than that the latter proved to be all that we had been led to anticipate. Served in the true Belgian style—customary alike in Flanders and in the Walloon provinces—it occupied our attention for the greater part of the afternoon, the courses following one another leisurely, with intervals between during which the men folk strolled about the garden and smoked. Two days later we started on the Professor's itinerary, completely refreshed after the fatigue of our voyage; and after a bit of shopping at Brussels, our pilgrimage into the heart of Flanders began.

It was a little after noon when we reached the old city of Bruges, and while we were eating our luncheon the Professor explained briefly the origin of the city and of the County of Flanders. In order to understand the kaleidoscopic history of Flanders it is necessary to forget entirely the Europe of to-day. Throughout the Middle Ages Europe was sub-divided into hundreds of separate sovereignties—duchies, counties, principalities large and small, whose rulers bore a score of titles. These, as a rule, acknowledged allegiance to some higher prince, while the most powerful yielded deference only to some King or Emperor. But this allegiance was usually a very shadowy affair, and the actual government rested absolutely in the hands of the local Count, or Duke, or whatever else his title may have been. The history of Flanders is, therefore, in a sense, the history of its Counts, for as their power waxed or waned the country itself grew powerful or weak. Gradually, however, the great cities of Flanders acquired from the earlier and better Counts rights and privileges that made them, in many respects, sovereign powers, and the most fascinating and instructive part of the history of Flanders is the record of the brave struggle made by its burghers to maintain their liberties in the face of a steadily advancing tide of tyranny and oppression.

The first Count of Flanders, who won his title and his domains during the period of storm and stress that followed the breaking up of the great empire of Charlemagne, was a Flemish chief, called Baldwin of the Iron Arm. He chanced one day to see Judith, the beautiful daughter of Charles the Bald, the son of Charlemagne, fell in love with her, and carried her off for his bride. Judith had been previously married to Ethelwolf, King of Wessex in England, when he was a very old man; and had taught her stepson, who afterward became Alfred the Great, much of his learning. The old King Charles, her father, for a time opposed the marriage with Baldwin, but finally it was celebrated with much splendour at Auxerre in 863, and Baldwin was thereupon given the title of Count of Flanders. On his return, Baldwin built a great fortress on an island formed by the intersection of the River Roya with its little tributary, the Boterbeke. This was called the Bourg, and soon contained within its strong walls the nucleus of the future city of Bruges.

Mrs. Professor interrupted at this point to ask if the name Bruges was derived from Bourg, to which our learned friend replied that it was not, but that most historians ascribed the name to the bridge (in Flemish, brigge) from the island to the mainland; while some take it from the purple heather (brugge) which grows plentifully hereabout, and in August can be seen alongside the railway tracks and in great clusters by the country roadsides.

The first afternoon's programme was to discover as much as we could of the old Bourg of Baldwin of the Iron Arm. Not much of it is left in the Bruges of Albert the First. The Roya still runs where it did in the days of the first Counts of Flanders, but only along the Dyver, a terrace of middle-class residences, can it be seen by the tourist. Since the eighteenth century it has been vaulted over for much of its course through the city, and the Boterbeke runs through subterranean channels for the entire distance from where it enters the city limits to its junction with the Roya at the corner of the rue Breidel. It flows close to the Cathedral, or possibly beneath it, and directly under the Belfry, which is built on piles. For part of its course it runs, like a subway, under the rue du Vieux Bourg. The only building in modern Bruges that dates from the first Baldwin's time is the crypt of St. Basil, under the Chapel of the Holy Blood. Here, or assuredly hard by, the founder of the long line of Flemish Counts, and his beautiful and talented Countess, no doubt worshipped; and, in the main, the little chapel probably looks today very much as it did a thousand years ago. In one corner, apparently outside of the original outer walls of the structure, the concierge showed us a miniature model of the ancient castle of the first Counts of Flanders as archeologists have reconstructed it, with the little Chapel of St. Basil adjoining it. On the opposite side, and near the entrance, is a smaller chapel which some authorities state was the one built by old Iron-Arm, the main structure dating from the middle of the twelfth century. Be this as it may, here is unquestionably the very oldest relic of the ancient Bourg and one of the oldest places of worship in all Flanders.

After our inspection of St. Basil we decided to devote the rest of the afternoon to tramping around the streets of the Vieux Bourg, or, in other words, the section of the city within the circle of picturesque old quays that mark the approximate boundaries of the island-fortress where the first Counts of Flanders laid the foundations of their power. To be sure, none of the houses now standing date from a much earlier period than the fifteenth century, but all were so quaint and charming that we cared little for the archeologists with their dates, and felt ourselves transported without an effort to the days when might made right and the whole world was governed by the simple law that "he may take who has the power, and he may keep who can." We little dreamed, as we journeyed about amid these peaceful surroundings, that within a single month the world was to revert to the rule of might once more; that, to quote from Kipling's noble poem, stricken Belgium, and, indeed, all civilisation could say:

"Our world has passed away,
In wantonness o'erthrown.
There's nothing left to-day
But steel and fire and stone.

"Once more we hear the word

That sickened earth of old—
'No law except the sword,
Unsheathed and uncontrolled.'"

CHAPTER III

BRUGES IN THE DAYS OF CHARLES THE GOOD

To those for whom the past possesses elements of romance, of mystery and of fascination that our more prosaic and orderly modern world lacks, Bruges offers endless opportunities for enjoyment. To be sure, the streets are a bit more crowded than they were twenty years ago, and one sees more frequent groups of people, carrying little red-backed Baedekers and evidently intent on seeing all the "sights," than formerly. But these are evils of which all old travellers complain, as one compares notes with them at the hotel after the day is over. One caretaker told us, with evident pride, that thirty thousand tourists visited Bruges in 1913. If one divides this total by three hundred and sixty-five, and the result again by the score or more of places that every tourist wants to see, it will be perceived that the number in any one place at the same time is not likely to be excessive. In point of fact our little party was almost invariably alone, save when we encountered a party of "personally conducted" travellers rushing at break-neck speed from place to place.

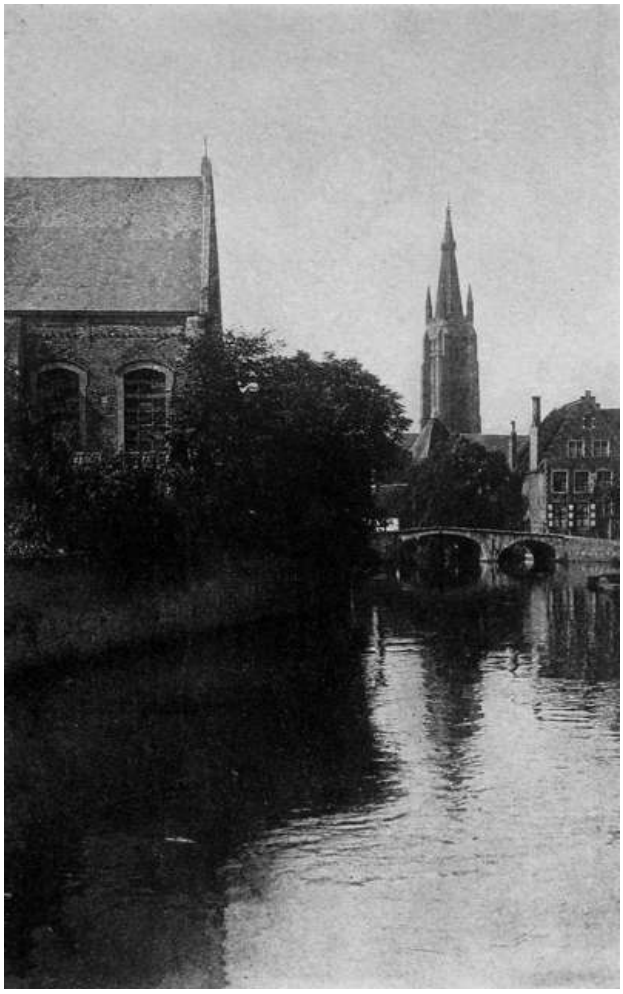
If, after seeing all the "points of interest" enumerated by the faithful red-coated guide, philosopher and companion above mentioned, one should stray down one or another of the narrow, crooked streets in the older parts of the town he is certain to find bits of mediæval Bruges here and there so well preserved and perfect that if the few passers-by only wore the picturesque costumes of the olden days the illusion would be complete. Take, for example, the rue de l'Ane Aveugle, the Street of the Blind Donkey, with its attenuated sidewalks along which a tight-rope walker could hardly advance without stepping off, its roadway too narrow for two blind donkeys to pass abreast, and its charming archway from the Hotel de Ville to the Maison de l'ancien Greffe Flamand; or the rue du Poivre, with its tiny one-story houses, many of them with one room down-stairs and one overhead—the latter lighted by the quaintest of gable windows—surely we have stepped backward half a dozen centuries, for nothing like this could have continued to exist until the prosaic present!

In fact these queer little one-story houses abound in all parts of the city, and the Madame was constantly darting across the roadway to peer within whenever she saw a door ajar. She generally returned highly indignant that any one could think of existing in such narrow quarters. "I'd as soon live in a tomb!" she exclaimed, nodding in the direction of one little house which consisted of one room and only one, being devoid even of the attic room with its customary dormer window. Inside sat an old lady, gazing tranquilly out of doors and doing nothing whatever. Indeed, as the Madame pointed out, there was little enough to do as far as housework was concerned. In the morning everybody in Flanders washes the stone floors of their living-rooms, and frequently the sidewalk and out to the middle of the street as well. This done, the housework for the day is over, except for preparing the meals. We had hoped to see old ladies by the score sitting at the doorways making lace, but on only one street—the rue du Rouleau—did we catch a glimpse of any, and they went indoors as we approached them. It was only the estaminets that we could inspect within. Whenever we found what appeared to be an exceptionally old house that bore the legend "Hier Verkoopt men drank" the Professor and I often used to go in and order a glass of *Vieux système*, simply to get a look at the interior. If, as sometimes happened, mijnheer and his vroue were very accommodating and kind, we summoned the ladies—despite the fact that the sign without appeared to mean "for men only"—and together we explored the old house from garret to cellar.

More than once, as we journeyed about among these delightfully old and quaint surroundings, the longing to see some one whose costume would, in a measure, suggest the period when these structures were built came back to us. "Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Professor, as we sat one afternoon in a particularly cosy corner of one of the oldest interiors we had yet seen, "if two or three knights in armour—or in their lovely costumes of velvet, silk and old lace—would stalk in and sit down at that table over there it would make the picture complete." We found, however, one spot in Bruges, dating from the twelfth century, in which even the costumes were unchanged. This was the Béguinage, close to the Minnewater and the ancient city ramparts—a city of the past where, shut off by high brick walls from the noise and bustle of the outer world, peaceful figures clad in sombre grey and white move noiselessly about as if the big figures on the calendar read 1114 instead of 1914.

Except for two institutions of the kind in Holland, Belgium is the only country in Europe in which these Béguinages have survived—all of them in Flanders. No institution of the present day recalls so vividly the conditions that existed at the time when Flanders was the name of a wild marsh country peopled by yet wilder men. In 877 the Emperor made the title of Count of Flanders hereditary—the oldest title of the kind in Europe. Baldwin II, son of Baldwin of the Iron Arm and the beautiful Judith, married Alfrida, the daughter of Alfred the Great. The second Baldwin was renowned chiefly for his work in fortifying the towns of Bruges, Ghent, Ypres and Courtrai as a means of protection against the robber chiefs who still—despite the energetic warfare of his father—infested this entire region. The necessity for protection against robbers, and occasional incursions of savage Danes from the North Sea, caused population to flock speedily into these walled towns,

and thus laid the foundation for the wonderful civic development of the next four centuries. The son of Baldwin II, Arnulph—often called Arnulph the Great—continued the policy of strengthening the cities, and also established or restored nearly a score of monasteries and convents for the protection of men and women against the many dangers of that lawless age. The famous chapter of St. Donatian's at Bruges was one of these, and while the Béguinage dates from a somewhat later epoch in the town's history, it admirably exemplifies many of the principles that made these early religious orders the strongholds, not only of piety in a period of semi-barbarism, but of learning and civilisation.



BÉGUINAGE BRIDGE, BRUGES.

The Béguinage at Bruges is much smaller than the famous Grand Béguinage at Ghent, which so many tourists visit, but is far more ancient—its arched gateway dating from the thirteenth century and its gloomy and barn-like chapel from 1605. How old the houses are no one seemed to know, but probably many of them are older than the chapel. The little bridge by which one enters its quiet precincts was first built in 1297, of wood, according to the records, but its present picturesque stone arches date from 1570—a respectable antiquity, even for Bruges. We found several of the little houses untenanted for some reason, but even the empty ones were spotlessly clean. The Béguines live in small communities or "convents," under the superintendence of a Lady Superior called "de Juffer"; or in "houses" where two or three live together. In the convents there are usually about twenty inmates. Each has her little cell, but these we were not permitted to see. We did, however, inspect the kitchen and dining-room of one of the convents—and the large sunny workroom, in which the Béguines were assembled. Each was chatting aloud as she worked, but whether in Flemish or Latin we could not tell. On every face there rested the same expression of absolute peace and quietness, nor did a single one betray the slightest interest or curiosity at our presence.

In the early annals of Bruges no story is more dramatic than that of the murder of Charles the Good. It is, in fact, the theme of the great Flemish novelist Hendrick Conscience's most famous book, *De Kerels van Vlaanderen*, and has been told by several contemporary chroniclers. When Charles became Count of Flanders the feudal system was slowly displacing the anarchy that had resulted from the breakdown of all centralised government as the Norsemen swept over northern Europe. Charles was an ardent believer in the new order, but was opposed in his policy of building up a strong feudal state by the Karls, a class of free landholders of Saxon descent, who stubbornly refused to swear allegiance to any feudal over-lord. The greatest of these was the house of Erembald. Desiderious Hacket, the head of the family, was Châtelain of Bruges, ranking next to the Count himself; while his brother Bertulph was Provost of St. Donatian, the principal ecclesiastical position in the County, and chancellor of the Count. The head of the feudal lords was Tancmar, Lord of Straten. Between the powerful houses of Erembald and Straten there was a deadly feud, which culminated in a challenge to mortal combat delivered to Walter, a nephew of Tancmar, by Richard de Raeske, a baron allied by marriage to the house of Erembald.

To the amazement of all Flanders the challenge, delivered in the presence of Count Charles and all his court,

was refused. Walter, whom the historians call “the Winged Lie,” proclaimed that he would fight only with a free man, and that the Lord of Raeske, by wedding a serf, had become a serf himself. This was in accordance with a law recently promulgated by Charles, but the house of Erembald, perceiving that its very existence was threatened by the charge, fiercely repelled the accusation and was supported not only by all of the Karls, but by most of the feudal nobility as well—the latter no doubt fearing lest one of their own houses might be attainted in a similar manner at any moment.

The country was plunged into what was virtually civil war, when Charles was suddenly summoned by his feudal over-lord, the King of France, to come to his aid at Clermont. On his return, assured of the King’s powerful support, Charles undoubtedly meditated the complete overthrow of the Erembalds, whom he had steadfastly claimed as his vassals since “the Winged Lie” had denounced them as serfs. He arrived at Bruges late in the evening, and early the following day, March 1, 1127, repaired to St. Donatian to hear mass. It was a foggy morning and the Count went almost unattended. Hardly had he knelt before the altar when a party of followers of the attainted house of Erembald swarmed into the church and he was struck down before he had time to rise, much less to defend himself.

If, in his lifetime, the Count was a dangerous foe to the Erembalds, in his death he proved to be far more deadly. As his body lay on the stone floor of the great church, clad in the crimson robe the chroniclers so often allude to, and surrounded with flaming torches, the heads of the house hastily consulted as to what was to be done with it. To inter the body at Bruges would be to risk an outbreak of popular passion at the murder, and it was decided to secretly convey it away. This plan was rudely frustrated by a mob of citizens who forcibly prevented the removal of the body, which was therefore laid to rest with imposing ceremonies in the very church where the Count had been assassinated.

Meanwhile the story of the murder spread far and wide, and, in a few days, a huge host was marching on Bruges from every part of Flanders. For a time the burghers stood by the Châtelain and the Provost, but when the city was entered by stratagem and the Erembalds driven back into the Bourg the mass of the citizens went over to the side of the avengers. After a short defence the Bourg in turn was captured—its defenders failing to guard one small gate by which their enemies entered unopposed—and the remnant of the Erembalds fled into the very church that had been defiled by their kinsmen’s crime, St. Donatian. Here, for a time, they were left in peace while the victors pillaged the rich palaces in the ancient Bourg.

The day before the capture of the Bourg Bertulph, the Provost managed to escape and fled to a little village near Ypres. Here, after remaining in hiding for some three weeks, he was captured. The next morning he was brought to Ypres, walking on foot all the way, although a horse was offered him. That he was going to his death he well knew, and asked for a priest to whom he confessed. The old man—who had been “a soft, luxurious prelate,” proud and haughty in his days of power—made his last journey like a martyr. As the prisoner and his captors neared the gates of the city a great throng came forth to meet them, beating the Provost with their staves and fists and pelting him with the heads of fish. Arrived in the market-place he stood amid the huge jeering throng, not one of whom looked with pity on him, and there, for his greater shame, he was fastened naked to a cross like a common thief. On his refusing in a steadfast voice to reveal the names of any of those implicated in the Count’s murder, “those who were assembled in the market-place to sell fish tore his flesh with their iron hooks, and beat him with rods, and thus they put an end to his days.”

The news of this tragedy was brought to the little band still being besieged at St. Donatian and caused great grief and terror. Of the very considerable army of Erembalds and their partisans who had taken refuge in the Bourg only thirty now remained, most having been killed, while some no doubt had escaped. King Louis, with a host of French knights, had joined the men of Flanders in the attack and it was seen that further resistance was hopeless. The only terms were instant surrender or instant death, and as they looked across the country from the church tower they could see no hope of succour and surrendered. After keeping them prisoners for a fortnight, Louis directed that all save one, who was of somewhat nobler lineage than the rest, should be flung from the tower of the now thrice historic St. Donatian. This sentence was duly carried out. The cruel soldiers told the condemned that they were about to receive a proof of the King’s mercy and they remained ignorant of their terrible fate until, one after another, they stood on the lofty tower overlooking the city for a brief moment and were then dashed down headlong to the jagged pavement below. The bodies were denied Christian burial and thrown into a marsh outside of the city, and it is related that for many years thereafter “no man after nightfall would willingly pass that way.”

The house of Erembald was well-nigh annihilated during this short, but sanguinary, war. The sole survivor of the band captured in the church was beheaded by King Louis as soon as he crossed the French frontier, while most of the great names in the family were heard of in Flanders no more—some having perished in battle, others in exile. Only one, Hacket the Châtelain, returned after the cry for vengeance had died down, was placed on trial for the murder, proved his innocence, and eventually recovered much of his former power and wealth. The charge of serfdom was never raised again, and his descendants for many generations stood high in the rolls of the Flemish nobility.

The church of St. Donatian no longer stands, having been destroyed during the French Revolution. In the small museum of antiquities in the Halles adjacent to the Belfry we were shown some stone railings, carved in imitation of rustic woodwork, that the concierge assured us had come from the ruins of the famous church. From a painting made in 1710 the student can obtain a fair idea of the appearance of the structure, which can hardly be said to have been imposing externally. It stood opposite the Hotel de Ville, and the statue of Van Eyck in the centre of the little shaded square is said to mark the spot where Charles the Good fell at the hands of his assassins. The stones with which the Cathedral was built were carried away, and some of them were used to build a château a short distance outside of the city. According to the peasants in the neighbourhood, ill-luck has always followed those who lived there. If so, the spirit of the murdered Count would seem to have been as dangerous in the nineteenth century as it was in the twelfth.

Every morning here at Bruges, and elsewhere throughout our pilgrimage, the Professor and I sallied forth

between five and six o'clock to explore as many of the by-ways and quaint out-of-the-way corners as we could before breakfast. The sun rises in Belgium long before five, in fact it is light as early as three in the summer time, but we found very few people astir, and those who were up were usually engaged in the morning scrubbing of floors and sidewalks—a fact that made us keep pretty much to the middle of the road on these expeditions. Cleanliness is certainly honoured next to godliness in Belgium, for this morning ablution of the premises is universal—the big department stores at Brussels observing the custom as faithfully as the tiniest *estaminet* in the remotest hamlet. Every one, rich and poor, performs this rite, and the tourist could safely eat his breakfast off the doorstep of any house when it is over. Nor is the rest of the interior neglected, for every pot and pan that we could see within the little houses as we passed their doors shone with a lustre that bespoke perpetual polishing. On the other hand, the good vroue herself, or her maidservant, was not so clean, and it is in this respect that the people of Holland are superior, for they somehow manage to keep themselves as immaculate as their little houses.

It was at Bruges that the Professor had his first experience with the Belgian species of barber. Instead of the massive reclining chair, with which all Americans are familiar, one finds in all parts of Belgium, save the big tourist hotels and resorts, stiff little arm-chairs with immovable head rests that look as if they could never serve the purpose for which they are intended. In point of fact they do fairly well, once one becomes accustomed to them. Razors in Belgium, however, are almost invariably dull—especially with the lady barbers who abound in the smaller villages. Avoid these sirens if you value your skin, for they certainly will slice off a bit of it. On Sundays and holidays, it appears, their husbands officiate, but week days the better half does her best to accommodate the public—but her best is none too good, and the experience is usually a painful one for the unwary tourist.

The shave over, the barber says, "S'il vous plaît, monsieur," or its equivalent in Flemish, motioning meanwhile toward a small wash basin that is placed in front of the chair. To the uninitiated this is somewhat bewildering, but the professor desires that monsieur will kindly wash his own face. The ablution performed, he proceeds to rub a piece of alum over the face, after which he sprays it with perfumed water, then dries and powders it much in the manner of the American barber. When one becomes accustomed to this performance—which costs two to three cents in the villages and five to ten cents in the large towns—he is apt to prefer it to the American method. Certainly it is vastly superior to the hot towel torture so deservedly caricatured some years ago by Weber and Fields. In the smaller villages of the industrial provinces we found that the first and second class distinction that one encounters everywhere in Belgium extends even to the barber's chair. The rough clad workman is simply shaved—a few fierce scrapes with the razor and it is all over—and is left to wipe off the remnants of lather as best he can, usually with a red bandanna handkerchief. For this the charge is only two cents—the alum, the spraying and the powder being reserved for first-class patrons only.

On our way back to the hotel from these early morning promenades the Professor and I kept on the look-out for some *patisserie* where *brioches* or *cuches au beurre* could be had with a pot of coffee. This formed our usual breakfast for, it may as well be admitted right now, we did not feel that we could afford the extravagance of a three-franc breakfast at the hotel. The ladies were ready to join us by eight o'clock—before that hour it would be useless to look for a place open for business—and we conducted them to the *patisserie* we had discovered. The *brioche*, it may be remarked, is a light spongy preparation—half cake and half biscuit—while the *cuche au beurre* is apparently made from a kind of light pie-crust, rolled thin and built up in several layers with butter between. When served fresh and hot from the oven the latter is most delicious, but when cold it is as tough and soggy as a day-old griddle-cake. The usual charge for these delicacies was five centimes (one cent) each, and as three made a very substantial meal, and the coffee cost three or five cents per cup, our total expenditure for four people was less than two francs. If, as often happened—in addition to getting everything hot and delicious—we were served on little tables out of doors with a view of a cathedral or Hotel de Ville thrown in, we felt that we were getting a very good bargain indeed.

Of the Bruges of Charles the Good the most important existing monument is the great Cathedral of St. Sauveur, which was rebuilt by him after having been partially destroyed by fire in 1116, the work being completed in 1127. Probably very little of the structure as we see it to-day dates from this period, as the edifice has been enlarged and restored many times, much of it dating from the fourteenth and part from the sixteenth century—the era when architecture in Flanders flourished as never before or since. The tower was begun in 1116, continued in 1358, and its upper portions added during the last century, so that nearly eight hundred years elapsed before it was finally completed in its present form. Many writers speak of this tower as clumsy and unsightly, but to me it is one of the most majestic and stately structures in Flanders. At any rate, there is no other tower like it, and the way in which it lifts its castle-like mass of tawny brick high above the tiny houses that surround it is profoundly impressive. The lower part of the tower is Romanesque, being, no doubt, the portion erected under the supervision of Charles the Good. The rest is Gothic, if so unecclesiastical a style can be so denominated.

The interior of St. Sauveur dates in the main from a much later period than Charles the Good, and as we visited this interesting edifice several times an account of its later constructions and paintings will be found in a chapter devoted more particularly to the art treasures of Bruges. It is not the purpose of this book to weary the reader with detailed descriptions of this and every other "monument" in Flanders. For those who are interested in architectural details there are numerous works written by experts and discussing exhaustively—if not exhaustingly—every feature of technical importance. Our little party was not learned and these random jottings will therefore record only such facts as seemed interesting to the average American visitor. Nor would it be possible to attempt a detailed account of the pictures and sculptures, either at St. Sauveur or elsewhere. Many of the great Flemish churches are literally museums of early Flemish art and a mere catalogue of their contents would fill many pages. For the most part the works are of mediocre merit, but nearly every church possesses one or more masterpieces—which the uninformed visitor can generally distinguish by the fact that a charge is made to uncover them. At times this practice becomes a bit annoying,

particularly when—in addition to paying the fee—one has to hunt around for half an hour to find the sacristan, who may live two or three blocks away; but, after all, it is the tourist who is under obligation for the privilege of visiting the churches when they are closed to the general public, and all the fees in Flanders add only a trifle to the expense account of one's tour.

In St. Sauveur on the occasion of our first visit we were especially interested in a curious painting of the Crucifixion located in the Baptistry and said to be the earliest picture of the famous Bruges school in existence. The savants assign a date prior to 1400 to this work, the author of which is unknown.

The name of Charles the Good is also associated with the Church of Notre Dame, part of the present structure dating from his reign. The bulk of the edifice was erected during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The spire was begun in 1440, torn down and rebuilt, being finally completed nearly a century later. There is a legend that the architect, in despair over the fact that it leans considerably to the east, threw himself from its summit. At present it is one hundred and twenty-two metres in height, which is said to be the greatest elevation ever attained by a structure of this kind built of brick. It can hardly be described as beautiful, the dark red of the top portion being out of harmony with the rich tawny grey of the lower part, but it forms a splendid feature in the sky-line of the city. Perhaps the most charming view of it is that obtained from the opposite side of the Lac d'Amour. Another excellent point of view is from the Dyver with the outline of the tower, reflected in the still waters of the Roya.

The interior of this church is, like the tower, built of brick, only the great supporting pillars being of stone. The general effect of the interior is greatly marred by a wooden rood-loft that separates the nave from the choir. In this church there is an interesting "Adoration of the Magi" by Daniel Seghers, a painter of the later Antwerp school, who became a Jesuit but continued to practise his art and was especially renowned for the flowers and butterflies with which he adorned his pictures. This work, which was finished in 1630, is thought by many to be the artist's masterpiece. Another notable treasure is the statue of the Virgin and Child by Michael Angelo, executed in 1503.

TOMB OF MARIE OF BURGUNDY, CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME, BRUGES.

The most famous of the possessions of Notre Dame, however, are the superb tombs of Charles the Bold and his daughter Marie of Burgundy, to be seen only by paying a small fee to enter the chapel in which they are placed. That of Marie is the older, and by far the finer of the two, and consists of a sarcophagus of black marble upon which rests a life-sized recumbent figure of the famous princess—"the greatest heiress in Europe"—who died at the age of twenty-five as a result of an injury received when hunting in 1482, less than five years after her marriage to Maximilian who later became Emperor. At the command of her son, Philip the Handsome, this masterpiece of stone and bronze was begun by Pierre de Beckère in 1495 and completed in 1502. Around the altar-tomb are exquisitely carved statues of saints and angels, with twining plants and scrolls and the heraldic shields of all the provinces and not a few of the cities within Marie's wide domains. The figure of the princess lies above all this with her hands folded as if in prayer, a crown upon her head and two hounds lying at her feet. The bronze has been cunningly carved to represent the finest lace and richly gilded until it seems to be pure gold. The body of Charles the Bold was brought from Nancy in 1550 at the command of Charles the Fifth, his grandson, and eight years later the funeral monument was begun by order of Philip II. It was completed in 1562, and is designed in imitation of that of Marie. The figure of "the terrible Duke" is shown clad in armour, with his helmet at one side and a lion crouching at his feet.

"Here, in this little chapel," said the Professor, "one can see the beginning and the end of the most interesting period in the long history of Bruges, the alpha and omega of her greatness. At the time of Charles the Good the little Bourg on the Roya was slowly emerging from obscurity and beginning to assume the aspect of a great capital. For three hundred and fifty years its power and fame grew until 'the Venice of the North' was everywhere recognised as one of the most beautiful and brilliant cities in the world. Then suddenly, almost within the span of a single generation, the fickle sea abandoned it and it became the quiet

inland city that it is to-day, living largely upon the memories of its splendid past. When the beautiful Marie was brought home to the Princenhof, dying from her fall at Wynandael, the decline had already begun, and when the remains of her father were placed beside her here in Notre Dame the end had already come and the city's merchants and prosperity had departed."

CHAPTER IV

HOW BRUGES BECAME "THE VENICE OF THE NORTH"

After the murder of Charles the Good had been so thoroughly avenged, the King of France sought to foist one of his own underlings upon the people of Flanders, but they would have none of him, and he fell fighting before the gates of one of the Flemish cities. Dierick of Alsace was the popular hero and became Count on the death of this rival. The King of France sought once more to interpose, but the burghers of Bruges retorted proudly: "Be it known to the King and to all princes and peoples, and to their posterity throughout all time, that the King of France hath no part in the election of a Count of Flanders."

Of all the Counts of Flemish blood Dierick proved to be the greatest and the wisest who ever ruled over the land. During his long reign of forty years (from 1128 to 1168) and that of his son, Philip of Alsace, who ruled until 1191, the country prospered and grew rich. Both princes encouraged commerce, industry and the arts, and were liberal in their policy toward the cities. It was during this Golden Age of Flemish history—the longest period of happiness the country ever knew—that municipal charters were granted to the cities of Bruges, Ghent, Ypres, Furnes, Gravelines, Nieuport, Dunkerque and Damme.

While the memory of Dierick of Alsace deserves to be fondly cherished by the people of Flanders as that of a wise and liberal ruler, his most famous exploit was bringing back the relic of the Precious Blood from Jerusalem. Like most princes of his time, Dierick joined in the Crusades, but, unlike many of them, he left his government so strong and secure that no harm came to the country during his absence. It was the second Crusade, and Dierick departed in 1147, and returned in 1150, bringing with him this relic, a portion of the most precious possession of the Holy Church of Palestine, consisting of a small crystal vial filled with what was alleged to be the blood of Christ, preserved by Joseph of Aramathea who prepared the body for burial. Deeming himself unworthy to bear so holy a relic, the Count entrusted it to his chaplain, who never parted with it until the returning crusaders delivered it to the chaplains of the court who placed it in the chapel built by Baldwin of the Iron Arm, where it still remains in its original receptacle.

On the 2nd of May every year from 1303 until now—save for a brief interruption during the stormy times of the French Revolution—the city of Bruges has celebrated its possession of this holy relic by the great Procession of the Holy Blood. At first simply a religious ceremony, the procession gradually took on spectacular features such as the Flemings love, including representations of the Apostles, the Nativity, King Herod, and so on. At present *La Noble Confrerie du Precieux Sang*, or Honourable Society of the Holy Blood, is a very wealthy and aristocratic organisation, even its affiliated members—of whom there are several thousands, of every nationality—esteeming their connection with it a great honour.

During the French Revolution mobs stripped the chapel of everything that could be torn down or broken, leaving it such a wreck that the municipal authorities were considering tearing it down, but were happily prevented from doing so by Napoleon. The lower chapel was, however, used as a jail for drunken and disorderly persons—and even as a pound for stray dogs—until 1818. The upper chapel meanwhile was roofless and windowless, a sad wreck of so ancient and famous a structure. Both have since been restored, the lower—or Chapel of St. Basil—being now just as it was in 1150, and, in the opinion of many critics, "the most beautiful and perfect specimen of Romanesque architecture in Europe." We had already inspected the lower chapel while exploring the Vieux Bourg of Baldwin of the Iron Arm our first day at Bruges, but had not spent much time in the upper one. Here the most interesting object was naturally the chasse, or casket, containing the holy relic after which the chapel is named. This is on one side of the little museum of the chapel and is of silver-gilt, standing four feet, three inches high. It was made in 1617 by a silversmith of Bruges and, while not regarded as a masterpiece of its kind, is very graceful and elegant. The chapel itself is richly decorated and has some excellent stained glass windows, all of this work dating from the middle of the last century.

Adjoining the Chapelle du Saint-Sang is the Hotel de Ville. This structure is a very fine example of Flemish municipal architecture, dating from the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Here the Counts of Flanders formerly took the oath to respect the rights and privileges of the city, this formality taking place in the last window to the right. Originally there were statues of former princes on the façade and six of these were coloured by Jean Van Eyck in 1435. All were destroyed during the Revolution. Part of the interior is still used by various government officials, while up-stairs the tourists usually visit the ancient Salle Echinivale, or Council Chamber. This was restored in 1895 and decorated with a series of twelve mural paintings representing notable scenes in the history of the city. Of these eleven are by Albrecht de Vriendt, and the last by his brother, Julian, the first artist dying just before his work was completed. As these pictures form an interesting epitome of the history of the city, the subjects are given herewith:

1. Return of the Brugeois from the Battle of the Golden Spurs at Courtrai in 1302.

2. Foundation of the Order of the Golden Fleece by Philip of Burgundy at Bruges in 1430.
3. Dierick of Alsace bringing the Holy Blood to the chapel of St. Basil in 1150.
4. The interior of the ancient Hospital of St. Jean.
5. Magistrates of Bruges renewing the privileges of the Hanseatic League.
6. Count Philip of Alsace granting a charter to Bruges (1190).
7. Magistrates visiting the Studio of Jean Van Eyck (1433).
8. The printing by movable type in Bruges by Jean Britto in 1446.
9. Count Louis of Maele laying the foundation of the Town-hall (1376).
10. Jacob Van Maerlant, father of Flemish poetry, born at Damme.
11. The Free-fair.
12. Opening of the new Zwyn canal in 1404.

Palais du Franc, Bruges

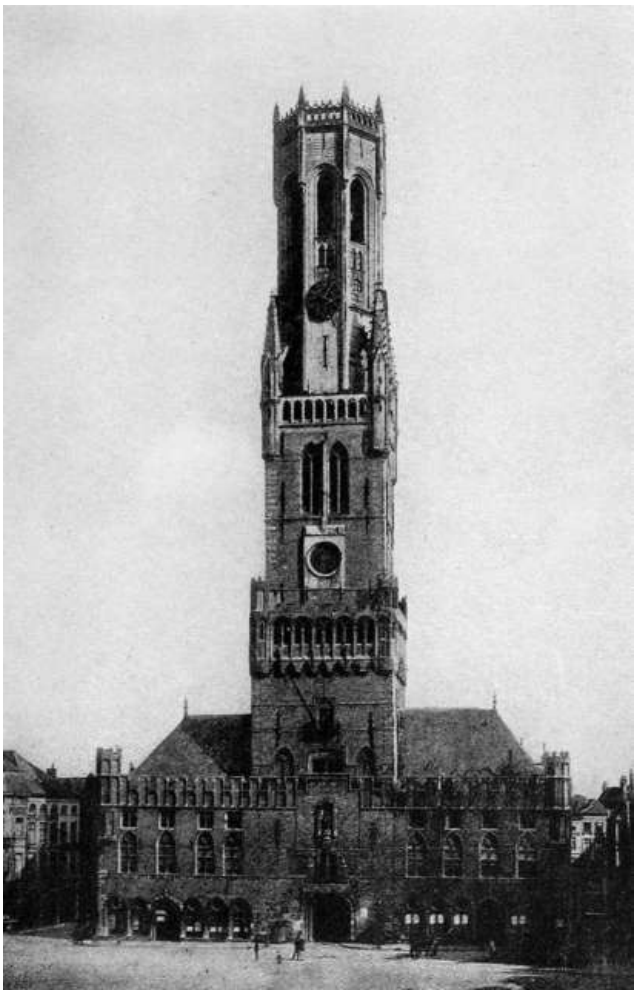
One of the most interesting of the almost innumerable mediæval buildings in Bruges is the Palais du Franc which, with its many quaint turrets and gables, overlooks the fish market on the Quai Vert. The associations and history of this sumptuous bit of sixteenth century architecture date from the twelfth century—1190 to be exact—when Philip of Alsace granted a charter to the region stretching to the northward from the city to the sea, and from Aardenburg (now just across the Dutch frontier) to Dixmude. This wide tract of territory was called the Franc or Liberty of Bruges, and comprised ninety-one parishes and the towns of Ostende, Blankenburghe, Eccloo, Lissweghe, Aardenburg, Sluys and Dixmude. Of these only the first two are known to the tourists of the present day, while one must needs search the map very closely to find one or two of the others at all, but in the time of Philip all were busy centres of trade and industry. This was the hereditary land of the Karls, whose revolt against the attempt of Charles the Good to force them under the feudal yoke cost that monarch his life.

The charter was called the *Keurbrief* and laid the foundation for the administration of a code of justice that, rude as it was, meant liberty for those who otherwise would have been utterly at the mercy of any feudal lord or wandering knight. It was the *Magna Carta* of a large part of the Count's dominions and even its stern eye-for-eye and life-for-life doctrine was tempered by equivalents in cash that might be paid. The life of a Karl was worth twice as much as that of a monk or priest, while for each injury there was an appropriate fine. He who broke a dyke must lose the hand that did the damage, besides forfeiting all his goods; for false weights the penalty was a fine of three livres for each offence. Fencing one's property against game entailed branding with a red hot iron, or trial by the Count—who might confiscate the goods of the guilty party, but his life and liberty were to be safe. This cruel game law was not repealed for nearly three centuries, and must have entailed much hardship. On the whole, however, the charter was liberal for its day, and the country under it flourished exceedingly—a sure evidence of wise laws.

The Keurbrief was administered by the Magistrates of the Franc in the Palais du Franc, which was therefore a sort of special court. The present edifice is not the one erected by Philip, or used by him for the purpose, but dates from the early part of the fifteenth century. Part of it is still used as the Palais de Justice, but that part of the present structure is for the most part modern. The most interesting portion of the edifice, and the only one shown to tourists, is the Court Room containing the magnificent Cheminée du Franc, or chimney-piece, erected in honour of the Ladies' Peace negotiated by Margaret of Austria while Regent of the Netherlands in 1529. The work was executed from designs by Lancelot Blondeel, a painter of Bruges, and was completed in 1530. The fireplace itself is of black marble, surmounted by a frieze in white marble containing four bas-reliefs representing the history of the chaste Suzanne. One cannot but wonder what was the connection of thought that suggested this story in conjunction with the commemoration of the Treaty of Cambrai, but at all events here it is. The reliefs are of varying excellence, the one showing Suzanne about to be seized by her aged admirers being very sharp and clear, while the fourth which shows the culprits being

stoned to death is rather indistinct.

The upper part of the monumental chimney is of oak and occupies almost the entire side of the room. In the centre stands Charles V, represented as a Count of Flanders, nearly life size and finely carved. At his right are statues of Maximilian and Marie of Burgundy, and at the left Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile —these being the Emperor's ancestors on his father's and mother's sides respectively. On the throne behind the Emperor are the busts of Philip the Handsome and Joanna of Spain, his father and mother, and below these are the portraits in small medallions of Charles de Lannoy, who won the victory of Pavia where Francis I, the King of France, was captured, and Margaret of Austria, who negotiated the treaty. As the last mentioned portrait is almost invisible in the shadow of the Emperor it hardly seems as though the chimney-piece does justice to the loyal and talented woman whose successful diplomacy the entire work is intended to commemorate. As an example of sixteenth-century wood-carving, however, and as a most important historical monument, this chimney-piece is by no means the least interesting of the many things to be seen at Bruges.



THE BELFRY, BRUGES.

Unlike most tourists, the Professor seemed to be in no hurry to inspect the famous Belfry, although we had passed it a score of times during our stay. Facing the Grande Place, and towering three hundred and fifty-three feet into the air, it could not be overlooked, while its loud chimes—which rang every quarter of an hour, and can be heard for many blocks around—insured that it could not be forgotten. Moreover, we more than once took our evening meal at a little restaurant just across the Place from it and saw its graceful octagonal parapet on one occasion outlined against the fast-flying grey clouds of a summer storm and the next day against the blue sky of one of the few perfect June days it was our fortune to enjoy. "Too soon," he said, in answer to our inquiring glances—"the Belfry belongs to the period of Bruges' splendour, while the buildings we have seen thus far date from the formative period when she was still little more than a fortress on a marsh."

The original structure dates from the very early Counts of Flanders—possibly from the time of the first Baldwin—but was practically destroyed by a fire in the year 1280. It was then that the present edifice was begun, at a period when the commercial and industrial importance of the city was already very great. The city's seal and archives were stored in a strong room within the belfry walls, where four wrought iron doors secured by ten locks and ten keys guarded them against abstraction by the emissaries of some Count who might desire to curtail the privileges of the city. Eight of these keys were kept by the deans of the eight leading guilds—the butchers, bakers, shoemakers, tailors, weavers, brokers, carpenters and blacksmiths—who thus virtually controlled the government. This room the Professor desired to see above all else in the old structure. We found the four wrought iron doors, but the archive chamber no longer contains archives or the city's seal. It was a most interesting old room, nevertheless, and one that ought to particularly interest the builders of the elaborate burglar-proof and earthquake-proof vaults that extend below so many great banking houses in America. Alas! neither the four doors nor the ten locks rendered this ancient strong-room for the

protection of the city's liberties proof against the cunning and power of tyrants, and the precious charters it once held were gradually taken away, despite the stout handiwork of one Erembald, blacksmith, who received eighty-one pounds for forging the doors in the year 1290.

To reach the bells one mounts a steep, dark staircase which is said to contain four hundred and two steps, although we did not count them. The chimes are claimed to be the finest in Europe, and comprise forty-nine bells weighing in the aggregate fifty-six thousand, one hundred and sixty-six pounds. They were cast by George Dumery in 1743 and are noted for their soft tone. The *tambour* which operates the chimes that ring every quarter of an hour weighs nineteen thousand, nine hundred and sixty-six pounds and is pierced by thirty thousand, five hundred square holes in which are fixed the pegs that pull the strings commanding the hammers hanging outside the bells. By altering the position of these pegs the tunes can be varied, but the programme played while we were in the city was as follows:

At the hour: "Rondo, 15th sonata," by Mozart; at the quarter past: "Le Carillon de Dunkerque," a popular air; at the half: "The Day of Happiness," by Mozart; at the three-quarters past: "The Three Drummers," a Flemish popular air. The official bell-ringer is M. Toon Nauwelaerts, a native of Lierre, where his ancestors have been bell-ringers for more than a hundred years. Although a young man, M. Nauwelaerts won an international competition of bell-ringers organised by the city of Bruges in 1911.

The view from the summit of the Belfry is one of the most superb in Flanders, especially if the visitor is so fortunate as to have fallen on one of those days when the clouds roll in great fleecy masses of dazzling white that form a wondrous background for the grim grey tower of St. Sauveur and the tapering red spire of the cathedral. As one looks down upon the sea of tiny red-roofed houses far below he is transported in fancy to the time, centuries ago, when watchmen peered off across these very parapets day and night to sound the alarm of an approaching foe, or announce the approach of their mighty Count or some noble visitor. In so doing he can realise what the old Belfry has meant to the city on the Roya. "For six hundred years," wrote M. Gilliodts, one of the city's learned archivists, "this belfry has watched over the city of Bruges. It has beheld her triumphs and her failures, her glory and her shame, her prosperity and her gradual decay, and, in spite of so many vicissitudes, it is still standing to bear witness to the genius of our forefathers, to awaken alike memories of old times and admiration for one of the most splendid monuments of civic architecture which the Middle Ages have produced."

The best time of all in which to study and admire the external aspect of this noble structure is when the sun is sinking to rest and its rays fall slantingly across the sombre pile of tawny brick, touching up its projections here and there with high lights that contrast sharply with the deep shadows behind them, and listen—as did so often our poet Longfellow—to the wonderfully sweet chimes as they ring the quarter hours:

> "Low and loud and sweetly blended,
> Low at times and loud at times,
> And changing like a poet's rhymes
> Ring the beautiful wild chimes
> From the Belfry in the market
> Of the ancient town of Bruges."

The Halles themselves, of which the Belfry is the chief ornament, are notable for their considerable size, forming a rectangle one hundred and forty-three feet broad and two hundred and seventy-six feet deep. The archeological museum in one wing—which is in course of removal to the Gruuthuise Palace—enabled us to see the interior of the structure, the extent of which indicates the volume of business that was transacted there when Bruges was known as "the Venice of the North." The great commercial activity of Bruges during the period of its prosperity, from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, was due primarily to the fact that the Counts of Flanders decreed that it should be the sole port of entry for the entire country. The burghers quickly perceived the priceless value of this privilege, and by their enterprise and liberality made the city the foremost metropolis in Europe in the volume and variety of its international trade. With London its relations were especially intimate and cordial, each city granting to the merchants of the other privileges that in those days were almost unheard of. For example, the merchants of Bruges in time of war were granted forty days of grace in which to dispose of their property and provide for their personal safety. On one occasion, while a war was actually going on, they were given a special truce of ninety days in which to traffic freely with the subjects of the King of England. The reason for these unusual favours was that Bruges was the great market where the wool of England, on which the prosperity of the country depended, was disposed of. Not infrequently the archives record instances where the Kings of England treated with the chief magistrates of Bruges on terms of complete equality, as if with a sovereign power.

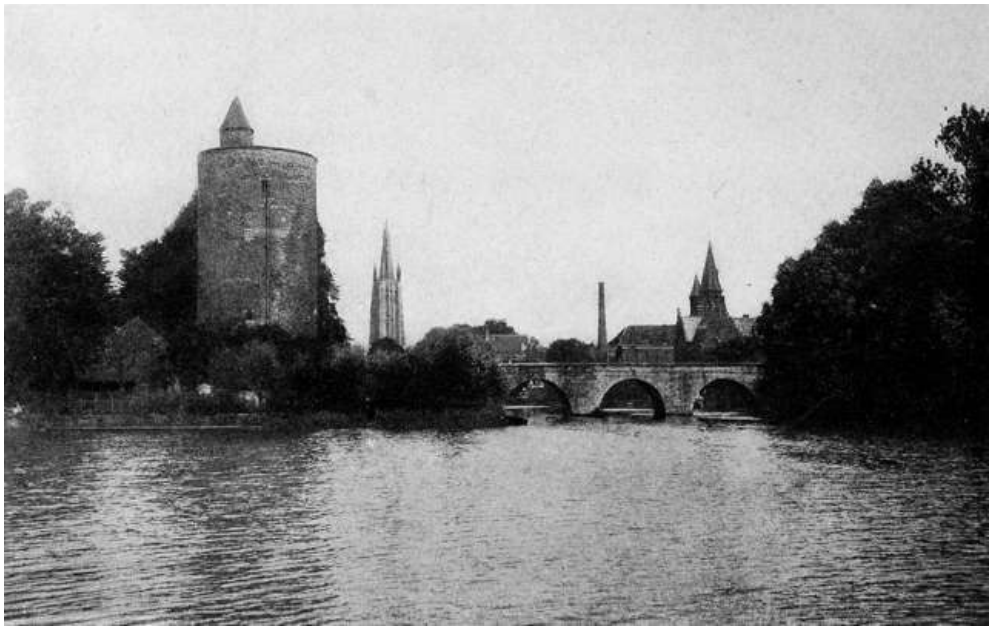
Nor was England the only country represented in the market places of Bruges during this period. The Doges of Venice often treated directly with the Burgomasters of the Italian city's Flemish rival, while the powerful Hanseatic League established here their chief establishment for the Netherlands. The list of the "Nations," as the groups of foreign merchants were called, makes curious reading at the present day. There were English, Scotch, French, Lusitanians, Castilians, Venetians, Genoans, Florentines; merchants from Aragon, Biscay, Lucca, Milan, Lombardy and Navarre. The German merchants from the Hanseatic towns of Lubeck, Hamburg, Cologne, Dantzig and Bremen numbered no less than forty houses in the year 1362, while the Italian and Spanish firms resident in the city were still more numerous. Many of these concerns were among the foremost trading and banking houses of the Middle Ages, with mercantile transactions extending into every part of the known world and strong enough financially to loan money to princes. When the Duke of Pembroke was captured by Du Guesclin in the Hundred Years' War between England and France it was in Bruges that his countrymen borrowed the seventy thousand pounds demanded as ransom.

As befitted the first mercantile city in the world, business methods were more advanced at Bruges than anywhere else. It is claimed that the first insurance policies ever drawn up were devised and signed in

Bruges about the year 1300. A form of registration of land titles was in use there as early as the fifteenth century. Its Bourse, or central exchange for merchandise of all kinds, is claimed to have been the first ever established.

In a single day in the year 1456 no less than 150 foreign vessels arrived at Bruges through its canals and the River Zwyn, and while these were, of course, small craft as compared to those of the present day there was then no port in the world that could boast of an equal quantity of shipping. Industrially, the town was no less important, having some fifty thousand artisans belonging to fifty-two different guilds.

The silting up of the Zwyn, rendering the approach and departure of shipping difficult and uncertain, started a downward movement that in less than a century destroyed all of this great activity and prosperity. Had it come alone it is probable that the sturdy merchants of Bruges would have found a way to overcome this adverse factor to their continued success, either by digging a new channel to the sea or by dredging, but misfortunes—as is their proverbial wont—did not come singly. In 1488, as a result of a conflict between the city and Maximilian, the stores and exchanges were closed for three months and all business came to a standstill. Seven years later it was said that nearly five thousand houses stood vacant and abandoned, no one caring either to buy or rent them. One by one the great merchants of the city closed their counting-rooms and went away; one by one the artisans departed. The last of the “Nations” to desert the declining city was the Hanseatic League, which stood by it loyally until 1516, when it removed its offices to Antwerp, by that time the acknowledged metropolis of the North.



THE MINNEWATER, BRUGES.

The Minnewater, or Lac d’Amour, is—apart from its exquisite beauty—of interest as another memento of the city’s former commerce. This was the chief harbour for shipping, and, no doubt, was thronged with sailing craft, while its banks must have swarmed with merchants checking their arriving or departing cargoes, stevedores carrying bales and boxes to and fro, clumsy wagons and carts for transporting merchandise to the warehouses of the city and all the varied noise and bustle of a great seaport. It is strangely silent and deserted now, and the grass grows tall around the round tower built in 1398 by Jan van Oudenaarde, and the white swans float slowly and majestically beneath the black arches of the adjoining bridge which is eight years older than the tower. It is said that he, or she, who stands on the central arch of this bridge at midnight and expresses a desire will have the wish fulfilled, but we did not try it. Before leaving this charming spot, however, we went along the banks of the little lake to a point where, looking back, we had the round tower and the bridge in the middle distance, the lake in the foreground, and the towers of the city on the horizon. This view is, without doubt, the finest the old town affords.

The visitor to Bruges who is interested in the past should devote at least half a day to a pilgrimage to Damme, distant about an hour’s walk along the canal that leads from the new port of Bruges to the sea. In 1180 this now all but forgotten town was made an independent commune with two burgomasters, and for two centuries thereafter it enjoyed a great and increasing prosperity. It became the chief entrepôt for the great commercial city of Bruges during its period of splendour, and most of the leading merchants maintained offices there. Its warehouses were crowded with merchandise from every corner of Europe—wines from France and Spain, beer from England, wool from Scotland, silk from Italy, all manner of cloths and stuffs, spices of all kinds, metals of every variety known to the metal workers of those days, rare and precious goods of every description.

To-day the very scene of all this mercantile activity has vanished. Gone are the busy warehouses, the docks and wharves, even the very harbour in which—according to ancient chroniclers—a score of ships of the largest size then built could anchor easily. All that remains is a diminutive Grande Place surrounded by several ancient edifices, and the ruins of a huge church. In the centre of the Place is a modern statue of Jacob van Maerlant, called “the Father of Flemish Poets.” Fame has surely never played any more astounding trick than that out of the great host who lived in this busy commercial town in the days of its prosperity—portly

burgomasters, skilled in winning the plaudits of the populace; shrewd, far-sighted merchants grown rich from the commerce with distant lands; skilled artisans and craftsmen in a hundred guilds—all, all are forgotten, while an obscure poet, whom very likely many of those who knew him derided as a fool, is alone remembered as the one great man of Damme.

Facing the Grande Place is the ancient Hotel de Ville, which, in addition to being the most notable monument of the dead town, is also an estaminet where the living can get a little refreshment. The main floor of this edifice is divided into three large rooms. The first one is the estaminet, with its array of bottles and its beer pump contrasting most incongruously with the remaining vestiges of its ancient grandeur.

Adjoining this is a large, irregular and unfurnished room, bare of ornamentation save for two corbels, or Gothic brackets, which support the main rafters of the ceiling. These are of wood, elaborately carved. One represents Van Maerlant in his study, seated at a desk, with what M. Havard calls a "chaste Suzanne" bathing in a tub over his head. The other shows King David with his harp, and is embellished with sundry other figures.

The remaining room is by far the most interesting, for it was here that Charles the Bold publicly betrothed Margaret of York. The room, which is officially termed the *Salle des Délibérations*, or Council Hall, has a fine old fireplace said to have been restored during the seventeenth century. It is decorated with two female figures in hoop skirts and bears the motto "*Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*." This quotation from Vergil (Æneid 6:853) sounds rather pompous and out of place in the council chamber of this now completely vanquished and ruined city, and must have seemed so even in the seventeenth century, but it may have been a survival of an inscription placed over the original fireplace in the days when Damme dared to close its gates even against the men from Bruges itself, and the puissant Counts of Flanders had to use force to compel it to open them.

It was in the year 1468 that this room in which we are now standing had its one great day and became, for a brief space, the setting of one of those splendid mediæval scenes that bards and novelists so fondly recall, and that—in our age of up-to-date inventions—the moving-picture men are so busily reconstructing and re-enacting. The Princess had landed at Sluys, near the mouth of the River Zwyn, where the Duke of Burgundy paid her a brief visit in secret—possibly to see what she looked like, for this was a marriage of state and intended to further his far-reaching ambitions. Probably if she had been as homely as a witch the wedding would have taken place just the same, but as the reverse was the case the preliminary inspection must have been very gratifying. The following day the royal lady and her company rode to Damme in a fleet of barges gorgeously decorated with gold, rich velvets and rare silks. Here she was lodged in this very Council Chamber of the Hotel de Ville, and here the Duke came in great state to perform the public ceremony of betrothal. The wedding ring was given in the presence of the English Bishop who had accompanied the Princess, and Charles announced that he would await her presence on the morrow at Bruges, where the wedding itself was to be celebrated in the Cathedral.

The wedding procession as it departed for Bruges the next day must have been another brave sight for the proud citizens of Damme. The bride, reclining in a litter borne by four white horses, wore a magnificent gown of cloth of gold, a crown on her forehead, a jewelled necklace, and a mantle clasped with precious stones. Around her pranced her ladies of honour, mounted on white horses gaily bedecked with crimson satin. Immediately behind this picturesque group came five decorated chariots bearing a score of beautiful ladies from the English court, and following these came the guard of honour, or escort, provided by the Duke—a squadron of counts, barons and knights, with their faithful squires, their horses covered with gold and silver, the riders resplendent in bright coloured velvet and rich lace. The good people of the Middle Ages dearly loved a pageant, and this surely was one to rejoice the heart of every citizen of Damme, for here was the pride of the chivalry of all Europe—fair ladies and brave men from oversea and from every corner of the great Duke's wide dominions—thronging the Grande Place as the procession formed, and then falling into their respective places as the long line passed out through the city gate and proceeded on the straight, tree-lined *grande route* that led to Bruges.

CHAPTER V
DIXMUDE AND FURNES

The tourist who desires to get away from the main thoroughfare of European travel, to explore out-of-the-way corners, and discover for himself wonders and beauties that the learned Mr. Baedeker never heard of, cannot do better than to turn away to the westward from the great Ostende-Brussels express route and visit the all but forgotten cities of Dixmude, Furnes and Nieuport. All but forgotten, that is, in June, 1914. The world has heard of them since, and it will be many hundreds of years before it forgets them again! These little places, which when we visited them were nothing but sleepy and quiet country towns, were great and prosperous cities in the period when Bruges was slowly rising toward its zenith, and the Professor therefore decreed that they must come next on our itinerary. We accordingly spent an evening studying the *correspondences*, or connections, of the State Railway and the *chemin de fer vicinal*, or local steam tramway, and started at daybreak the next morning.

Right here it may be said that the Belgian State Railway did its best to compensate us for whatever shortcomings we found in the weather or in the country generally. Perfect its service can hardly be said to have been, but it was excellent and amazingly cheap. Our party purchased every two weeks *billets d'abonnement* that cost us just forty-one francs each, or about $8.00, and entitled us to ride on any State-owned railway line in the country day or night for fifteen days. These were second-class, the third costing twenty-three francs, and first sixty francs. The last, by the way, is a useless luxury, as on the local lines the first-class compartments are identical with the second-class except for a white tidy placed at the back of the cushions. Frequently there was not even the tidy, but the sign, "*Reservé—Voorbehouden*," converted an ordinary second-class compartment into first-class—a distinction that gave the traveller very little for his money, save the privilege of riding alone.

On the main express routes that radiate outward from Brussels in every direction there were a number of *rapides*, or fast express trains, that made very good time indeed—a speed of a kilometre per minute being about the average. On the international express trains, some of which are first-class only, the speed was somewhat higher, but these we never had occasion to use. After the *rapides* came the express trains, generally marked "*direct*" or "*semi-direct*," according to whether or not they made any intermediate stops before reaching their final destination. These were only moderately fast, and, if they did stop anywhere, lingered so long that the time gained by their previous speed was largely lost. Then came the type of local train called *omnibus* or *ordinaire*, that stopped at every station. To the American these trains would seem astoundingly slow, even for a land that is never in a hurry. Each stop is dragged out, minute after minute, until it seems certain that either a terrible accident must have occurred ahead, or the train crew has gone on strike. Actually, more than once, we did see part of the crew returning from an estaminet hard by whither they had gone to have a friendly glass. Finally, however, the red-capped station master blows his whistle and the train reluctantly pulls away. To make a trip of sixty kilometres (forty miles) by one of these trains took, on more than one occasion, two hours and a quarter, and the train arrived on time!

This last point is a feature of the Belgian railway trains. They are almost invariably on time, and lateness is a matter for strict examination on the part of the officials and severe penalties for those responsible. However, there does not seem to be much credit attached to being on time when the schedule allows for a stop of from two to fifteen minutes at each station. The man primarily responsible for the movement of the trains is not the conductor or engineer but the *chef de gare*, or station-master. He, or his deputy if the station is a large one with many trains, must be on hand when each train pulls in, and give the signal for its departure. His dark-red cap, embroidered with gold braid, is therefore in evidence at every station, and until this high functionary gives the word no train moves. As it is, each leaves exactly on time—but not a second before, no matter if every passenger has been in place and the doors slammed and fastened for the last five minutes!

The foregoing description of the Belgian State Railway refers, of course, to the service as it existed down to the end of July. Since then the destruction of tracks, bridges and tunnels by one army or another has put most of the system out of operation. One of the saddest phases of the war is that every one of the thousands of employés of the Belgian State Railway—from the highest supervising official to the humblest track walker—was working faithfully and efficiently, and planning the future of his frugal life, upon the assurance that promotion and an old-age pension would reward his zeal. This obligation toward its employés the Belgian Government has ever faithfully observed, and in the course of our travels we met many middle-aged men who told us that they were looking forward to the day when their terms of duty would end and they would be pensioned on half pay to enjoy a few years of well-earned repose. Probably not one of these men ever seriously dreamed that an event could occur that would, in the course of a few swift weeks, blot out the record of his life work, and deprive him of all opportunity for promotion, for pension, and even for employment. No doubt the death toll of the battles on the plains of Flanders has been heavy among these courteous, capable and industrious men—many of whom were liable for military service in time of war—but let us hope that peace, when it comes, will bring to each survivor his old post again, with the old good service record unforgotten, and that he will receive the pension he rightfully expects and that his country would gladly give—at last.

To those who enjoy rambling through the byways of history there is no town richer in associations, yet less spoiled by the visits of the all but ubiquitous tourist, than Dixmude. At present this little city is situated fifteen miles from the sea, yet all the ancient chroniclers aver that prior to the thirteenth century it was a seaport with a commerce overseas and a not inconsiderable fishing fleet. As one looks across the miles and miles of pleasant fields, interspersed with waving windmills and tiny villages, this part of the ancient city's history seems utterly incredible, but it is too well authenticated to be disputed. Ten times, so the histories tell us, Dixmude was besieged and bravely defended by its citizens. More than once it was destroyed by fire and rebuilt, but at last the blight that destroyed the prosperity of its larger and more powerful neighbours, Ypres, Bruges and Ghent, struck at the heart of its industries as well and it sank by imperceptible degrees into its long sleep.

Like the abode of the Sleeping Princess, of whom Tennyson wrote, one might almost fancy that all life had stopped centuries ago at the wave of some magic wand. The summer's sun and winter's rain and snow of half a thousand years have left but the faintest traces on its old houses and its great parish church of St. Nicholas. The pride and joy of this church is its altar screen, or *jubé*, said to have been designed by Urban Taillebert, the architect of the Church of St. Martin at Ypres and many other celebrated works of around the year 1600. There is also an "Adoration of the Magi" by Jordaens, and the usual collection of minor works of art. To us, however, this old church was far more interesting externally than within, its huge clock tower resembling nothing else that we had seen in Flanders or elsewhere. The Grande Place, from which one can obtain a fine view of the old church with a row of Lilliputian houses nestling below it, is big enough to accommodate all the present inhabitants of the town in one corner. In its prime Dixmude is said to have had thirty thousand inhabitants, and all the room on the Place was, no doubt, needed on market days, but it does not have a fifteenth of that number now, and the wide, grass-grown expanse of cobble-stones is entirely deserted.

The *jubé*, or altar screen, already mentioned, is the one great "sight" of the little town, and every one asks without fail whether you have yet seen it. It is assuredly well worth seeing, being wonderfully graceful and dainty, and, perhaps, the finest thing of its kind in Northern Europe. The other famous *chef d'œuvre* of Dixmude is culinary instead of artistic. This is a kind of brioche called *zieltjenskoeken*, or *gateaux d'ames*—a sort of "soul cooky," as it were. Twice a year, on certain religious occasions, the inhabitants of Dixmude consume vast quantities of these confections, which are claimed to possess the property—if eaten on the prescribed days—of delivering one's soul from purgatory and sending it straight to Paradise. We were unfortunately unable to verify this, as our visit did not come on the right day, but we found the butter of Dixmude—which has enjoyed a great reputation for centuries—to be all that was claimed for it, although the Professor insisted on putting a shake of salt on his, to the great horror of the maid who served our dinner.

Had some Madame Thebes told us what the near future had in store for this sleepy and quaint old city we would have spent days instead of hours in it, but last June its importance did not seem to justify giving it a chapter so we planned to visit Furnes the same day. To-day the name of Dixmude has been heard to the farthest ends of the world, its great square echoes to the tramp of armed men, its old church—after standing for so many centuries—is said to have fallen before the withering storm of shrapnel and shells that for days rained down upon its defenders. It has been taken and retaken by each side in the gigantic combat more than once. It is asleep no longer, forgotten no longer; and, in years to come, reverent visitors from many nations will visit what may remain of the ancient town. For these the chief interest will not lie in the walls of the ruined church or the relics of the departed *jubé*, if any there be, but out in the open, pleasant fields where, in trenches that the kindly hand of nature will gradually obliterate, the brave men of four nations met in one of the fiercest and bloodiest death grapples of the great war.

But last July both Madame Thebes and the cannon were silent, so again taking our faithful *omnibus* after the dinner—which we obtained at one of the little restaurants overlooking the Grande Place—we next journeyed northward to Furnes, which is only a few miles distant across the flat Flemish plain. Furnes, according to the antiquarians, dates from as early as the year 800, and its day of greatness had come and gone centuries ago. Its crooked streets, quaint gabled houses, and picturesque corners seemed more mediæval than any place we had visited—surpassing even Dixmude in this respect. It was here, by the way, that Leopold I was welcomed to the country when he arrived after being chosen to be the first King of the Belgians in 1831. The Hotel of the Nobele Rose, near the Grande Place, is said to have been the Palace of the Countess Gertrude of Flanders in 1093, and if so, must be one of the oldest houses in Flanders. The widow of Count Philip of Alsace is also said to have resided here in 1218. More celebrated, in years to come, than any of these incidents, will be the fact that Furnes was for many months of the Great War the headquarters of the brave Belgian army, and the place of residence of Belgium's heroic King.

The great annual event at Furnes is the famous Procession, which takes place the third Sunday in July. It dates from 1100 or thereabouts, when, according to the legend, Count Robert of Flanders was on his way back from the Holy Land, bringing with him a piece of the true cross. His voyage across the Mediterranean, through the Straits of Gibraltar and past the stormy Bay of Biscay, was without incident, but as he was nearing home a fearful storm in the English Channel threatened to send his frail bark to the bottom. The waves were running mountain high and all the party expected each moment to be their last when the Count suddenly bethought himself of his holy relic and vowed that, if his life were spared, he would present it to the first church of which he might see the spire.

Immediately the storm ceased, the wind died down, the sea became as smooth as a mill-pond, and as the happy mariners looked toward the shore of their dear Flanders a ray of sunlight fell upon the tower of Ste. Walburge in Furnes. To this church, therefore, in fulfilment of his vow, Count Robert presented the relic, now doubly precious by reason of this miracle. To commemorate this event the canons of the church organised a procession which took place every year and was marked by various historical representations of the return of Count Robert. About 1650 an act of sacrilege committed by a soldier, who was publicly executed for his crime, led to the procession taking on certain penitential features by way of expiation on the part of the city for this sin. From that time on the procession has included representations, for the most part by peasants dressed up for the parts, of Abraham and the Prophets, the Flight into Egypt, the Visit of the Three Wise Men to the Cradle at Bethlehem, so often painted by the artists of the Flemish school, the Stable and the Birth of Christ, the Court of Herod, Jesus in the Midst of the Doctors, the Penitent Magdalen, the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the Feast at Cana, the Garden of Olives, the Betrayal of Judas, and a series of scenes representing the crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Following these tableaux come the penitents, walking masked and barefooted, clad for the most part in brown Capuchin robes, and singing or chanting certain lines in Flemish. Many of the leading actors in the tableaux have "speaking parts," all of them in Flemish and delivered with varying degrees of histrionic skill to the crowd that lines the streets. The whole performance, apart from its great antiquity, is of interest as being a local and original representation of the Biblical story—a sort of Flemish passion play, less refined and artistic than that of the Swiss peasants of Oberammergau, but none the less conscientious, earnest and sincere.

At one time Furnes ranked next to Ghent and Bruges among the cities of Flanders in official importance, if not in population and industry, its *châtellenie* comprising fifty-two villages. In 1297 it was besieged by Robert, the Count of Artois, who fell five years later at the great battle of Courtrai. At Furnes the French arms were successful and the city was captured and sacked, "more than two thousand houses being burned in two days," according to the contemporary chronicles. Philip the Bold, the first of the Burgundian Dukes to rule over Flanders, rebuilt its fortifications, and the city was deemed worthy under Philip the Good to be designated as the place of residence of the French Dauphin, who subsequently became Louis XI, when that remarkable young man was in exile through his father's displeasure. It may well have been here that the wiliest and most unscrupulous of all the Kings of France planned that tortuous and secretive policy that—steadily pursued year after year—brought the powerful House of Burgundy low at last and made France one nation instead of two or three.

The quaint old Grande Place of Furnes, while smaller than that of Dixmude, is equally picturesque. On one side is the old Meat Market, dating from the first quarter of the seventeenth century; and hard by is the *Maison des Espagnols*, or House of the Spaniards, formerly used as a town-hall and erected in the thirteenth century. The present Hotel de Ville also faces the Place and is well worth a visit, although none of its rooms are sufficiently notable to merit a detailed description. The ancient *Châtellenie*, now used as Court House, was begun in 1612—the year the Hotel de Ville was finished—and is chiefly memorable as the meeting-place of the Spanish Inquisition. This body held its sessions in the antechamber on the first floor and not in the main hall, which is decorated by a mural painting by de Vriendt representing Philip the Fair swearing to observe the rights and privileges of the city. The establishment of the Inquisition by his namesake and grandson, Philip II, affords a ghastly commentary on the manner in which that monarch kept the similar pledges with which he began his reign. Another fine old edifice on the Grande Place is the Belfry, square for half its height, then octagonal, and finally surmounted by a bulbous spire, heavy and clumsy, but none the less exceedingly quaint and picturesque. Not a few of the ancient houses around the Place and in the adjacent streets were sufficiently mediæval to have merited a visit had our stay in this fine old Flemish town been longer; but, so far as we could learn, none possessed any particular historical interest.

Besides Ste. Walburge, already mentioned—which was evidently planned to be a cathedral, but of which only the choir was ever completed—Furnes possesses the church of St. Nicholas, which has a noble square tower, also unfinished. Both churches are disappointing within, although the former is, no doubt, of great interest to architects as an example of the ogival style, while the latter is Gothic and dates from the fourteenth century. The choir stalls in St. Walburge are notable examples of the Flemish woodcarvers' art, although far less ancient than the church itself.

If the time of your stay is midsummer, as it will be if you come to Furnes to see the Procession, do not go away without a day on the dunes at Coxyde. This beach is less well known, as yet, than those at Ostende, Heyst and Blankenburghe farther to the east but it is increasing in popularity very rapidly. A land company, with head offices at Brussels, is engaged in erecting summer houses among the dunes which look too American in architecture and manner of construction for this country where houses are generally built as if intended to last a thousand years. A little *chemin de fer vicinal* runs from Furnes to Coxyde. In addition to the splendid beach and the dunes, which have a dreary grandeur that is always fascinating, the shrimp fishermen, or *pecheurs de crevettes*, will make the short trip well worth while.

SHRIMP FISHERMEN, COXYDE.

These weather-beaten men, with their rough oilskin hats and suits, are the modern representatives of an ancient Flemish industry—shrimp fishing having been carried on along these coasts literally from time immemorial. They are very picturesque, both while at work on horseback dragging in their nets, and while lounging along the shore, pipe in mouth. Jean Delvin has a fine painting representing them in the Museum at Ghent, while one of the most powerful of Meunier's statues is devoted to the same subject.

CHAPTER VI

NIEUPORT AND THE YSER CANAL

When the war is over, and the era of commemoration begins, Belgium, if she is free, should erect at Nieuport, close to the great locks that mark the outlet of the Yser Canal—or at some point along the canal where the fighting was the fiercest—a monument higher than that at Leipzig where the Germans recall their victory over Napoleon, higher than the great lion that guards the field of Waterloo. At its summit should stand a heroic-sized figure in imperishable bronze of a Belgian infantryman, one of the round-capped "demons" whose indomitable will and unwavering courage held this last bit of Belgian soil against overpowering numbers for days. It was here that Germany's magnificent rush from Antwerp to the Channel ports was stopped, and it was the last remnant of the little Belgian army that, turning on its foe like a lion at bay, hurled back every assault until the little Yser Canal ran red and until, at last, the great reinforcing hosts of the allies came.

The little straggling town of Nieuport, peaceful and sleepy as it looked last summer, is not a stranger to battles and sieges. In the time of William the Conqueror Lombartzyde, now a little hamlet on the *chemin de fer vicinal* behind the dunes from Nieuport to Ostende, was the shipping port of this region, but great storms filled the harbour with sand and the citizens established a "New Port" on another branch of the Yser in 1160. It was fortified three years later, and for several centuries was one of the strong towns defending the Low Countries on the French frontier. Its strategic importance made it the scene of many battles and sieges. It was destroyed by the English and their allies, the men of Ghent, in 1383. The lonely tower or Donjon of the Templars, standing on the edge of the town, is all that remains of a monastery of that order which was ruined at that time.

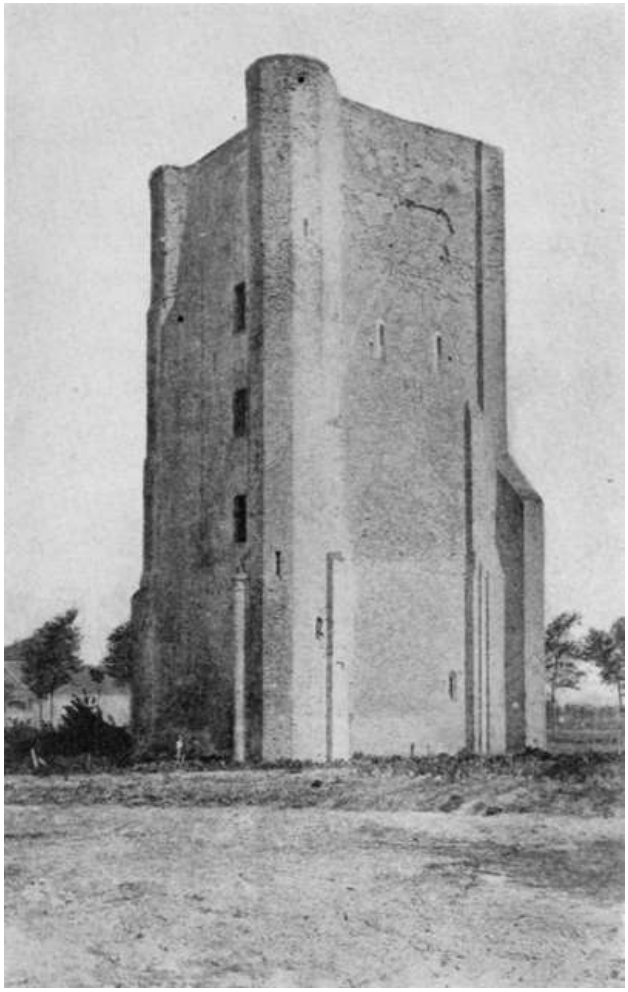
The city itself, however, was quickly rebuilt, and among other memorable sieges beat off a great French force in the year 1489. In 1568 the Spanish, under Condé, beat a French army commanded by Turenne not far from the city. Another famous fight before the walls of the old town took place in the year 1600 during the long war between Spain and her revolted Provinces. Count Maurice of Nassau, at the head of twelve thousand men from the United Provinces, had invaded Flanders, which still remained under the power of Spain, and marching rapidly from the Scheldt past Ostende, proceeded to besiege Nieuport. The Archduke Albert, hastily raising an army of fifteen thousand Spaniards, advanced unexpectedly on the Dutch, who were taken completely by surprise. Perceiving that he was caught in a trap, Count Maurice—in order to give his men the courage of despair—ordered the Dutch fleet to withdraw, and told his soldiers that they must either conquer or "be prepared to drink all the water behind them."

Meanwhile an advance guard of the Dutch army was driven back by the advancing Spaniards who, thinking they had met the whole army, sent couriers to Bruges and Ghent announcing the victory. Bells were rung to celebrate the Archduke's supposed success which, as the event proved, was a strategic victory for Nassau as it delayed the enemy several hours. It was three o'clock in the afternoon when the advancing Spaniards found themselves face to face with the main army of the republic, drawn up on the very beach outside the city walls. Perceiving their sturdy ranks and unyielding front the Archduke hesitated, but the Spaniards urged him not to let them lose their prey, whom they regarded as hateful rebels and heretics.

Thus encouraged, the Archduke gave the order to advance and the battle soon became general. The fate of the day was decided by the artillery of the Dutch which, by a fortunate order of their far-sighted commander, had been lifted off from the sand and mounted on platforms made from boughs, brush and such timber as was handy. That of the Archduke, mounted in haste directly on the beach, embedded itself in the sand at each discharge until it became useless, while that of the republicans became more accurate and deadly. At the same time the rays of the setting sun falling directly in the eyes of the Spanish soldiers, who were facing westward, blinded them and caused them to fire wildly. The Archduke performed prodigies of valour, having two horses killed under him and being himself slightly wounded, but as darkness began to fall on the bloody beach Count Maurice ordered a charge by a force of cavalry he had held in reserve. This fresh force proved irresistible, the Spanish lines began to give way on all sides, and the retreat quickly turned into a rout. Even the proud Archduke had to seek safety in flight, and the day, which had begun so auspiciously, ended in one of the greatest disasters of the disastrous war.

Nieuport and its sister cities in this, until lately, half-forgotten corner of Flanders were, in former times, renowned for other contests happily less bloody than these famous battles. Here, during the Middle Ages, flourished a group of societies devoted to rhetoric. In place of the still more ancient tourneys, where armed knights fought with lance and sword, these "Chambers of Rhetoric" held annual contests of oratory. From one end of Flanders to the other the movement spread; and these debating societies did much to cultivate a regard for learning and dialectic skill among the mass of the population. Sternly suppressed by Alva, implacable foe of every form of free thought, these societies were revived after the Spanish scourge was withdrawn, and some of them continue to the present day.

The visitor who wandered around the long, slightly hilly streets of the Nieuport of last July would have had little trouble in locating plenty of the "monuments" of its famous past, although the beach has now receded two or three miles to the northward and pleasant fields extend along the edge of the wide marshes which then were probably part of the sea. A curious old lighthouse with a pointed tower stands about midway between the present town and Nieuport *Bains*, as the beach town is called, showing where the coastline lay some three hundred and fifty years ago. Even this spot is now too far inland for the light to be seen at sea and a new lighthouse has been built on the rampart of dunes that runs, like a miniature mountain range, almost to Ostende toward the east, and westward to Coxyde and beyond.



TOWER OF THE TEMPLARS, NIEUPORT.

Our first visit at Nieuport was to the Tower of the Templars, a huge square pile of brick standing in the midst of a potato patch. This prosaic environment detracted not a little from the sentimental interest of the edifice, and we were unable to get into the structure, although one of the gens d'armes of the village was said to have a key to the low wooden door at its base. Equally disappointing was a visit to the ancient *Halle aux Draps*, or Cloth Hall, now used on certain days as a local butter market. Here again, the door was locked and no one seemed to know who had the key. Curiously enough, although situated very close to the French frontier, we found in this little town and its neighbours, Dixmude and Furnes, very few people who understood French. Flemish is the universal language hereabouts apparently, but it was only on this little trip that we were at all inconvenienced by our inability to speak it. Elsewhere in Flanders—even at Ypres and Audenaerde, where our friends said we would have trouble—we were able to make our French universally understood.

On the Grande Place, close to the Cloth Hall, we found a little inn, called the Hotel du Pelican, where the Professor proposed that we should get some liquid refreshment. We failed, however, to obtain any response to our raps and thumps on the door, and concluding that the establishment must be run for pelicans only we took ourselves and our patronage elsewhere. The Church of Notre Dame, which stands just off the Grande Place, we found to be a most quaint and interesting old structure dating, it is said, from the thirteenth century. While less imposing externally than St. Nicholas at Furnes its massive square baroque tower was very striking, and formed a fine picture in conjunction with the more slender tower of the Cloth Hall hard by. The approach to the main entrance of the church was beneath some lofty trees and we did not see a solitary human being either outside of the edifice or within it. This church has an interesting *jubé* or rood loft, a fine wooden pulpit, and we also noticed a curious winding stairway that seemed to lead upward within one of the pillars at the intersection of the transept and the choir. As the tower is not built at this point, but at one end of the edifice, it was quite a mystery where this stairway went and what its purpose might be, but as it seemed exceedingly narrow and dark we did not explore it, nor did we find any one to whom we could apply for information about it.

It was in this church, by the way, or possibly in one of those at Dixmude or Furnes, that the Madame developed a violent antipathy to a certain painting that seems to be one of the most cherished possessions of nearly every church in Flanders. As old Cotton and Increase Mather delighted in scaring and harrowing their audiences with word pictures of the tortures of the burning fiery pit, so nearly every old Flemish artist seems to have delighted in portraying most vividly the sufferings and martyrdoms of the saints, and one subject in particular appears to have caught the fancy of every one of them. This was the beheading of John the Baptist. At times the head is shown rolling in the dust or mire of the street, at times it is represented as being served on a platter—but to one and all of these works of art the Madame objected. This circumstance added not a little to the happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Professor, who were continually contriving to lead her artfully around to inspect some new wonder, which proved to be another representation of this agreeable scene. As works of art they were nearly all atrocities, but as jokes on the Madame they were one and all great successes, and it

was really surprising how many of them there were.

The Hotel de Ville, a somewhat commonplace looking structure, is said to contain a small collection of paintings, but we were unable to make any of the phlegmatic gens d'armes whom we found lounging close by take enough interest in our questions to inform us where admission might be obtained. In fact the whole town seemed singularly uninterested in tourists, apparently caring not a bit whether they came or stayed away. While the war will undoubtedly change this, still any one desiring to visit it will do well to make the trip from Ostende or Furnes, returning for the night to some point where hotel accommodations are more adequate. In our case we went over to Ostende, where there are many good hotels. No doubt a pleasant week or month could be spent in this corner of Flanders, but for such a stay the best plan would be to go to one of the many little seaside resorts between Coxyde and Ostende for one's hotel or pension, and explore the hinterland from there.

The ride by the little *chemin de fer vicinal* from Nieuport to Ostende is a very interesting one. At the outset the line crosses the huge locks that join the canals to Ostende and Furnes with the tidal river Yser. There are seven or eight bridges in all, the different canals and channels being separated by tiny islands. Had Madame Thebes only suggested that we explore the Yser Canals while we were there last July how much more interesting this part of the book would be! Unfortunately they looked then much as hundreds of other Belgian canals had looked and we gave them only a passing glance. While the newspapers in their accounts of the great battle of Flanders usually spoke of the Yser Canal as though there was but a single canal, in reality there are three canals that flow into the tiny Yser River at this point. One of these runs parallel with the coast to Ostende, and then onward to Bruges and beyond; the second runs behind the range of dunes westward to Furnes, where it divides and crosses the French frontier in two branches, one going to Bergues and the other to Dunkerque. It is the third branch that achieved immortality in the Battle of Flanders. This runs straight inland, at right angles to the other two, following the tortuous channel of the old river much of the way to Dixmude. A short distance beyond Dixmude the canal ceases to follow the River Yser, which here flows eastward from a source well across the French boundary, and ascends the Yser's smaller tributary, the Yperlée, to Ypres. It did not seem like very much of an obstacle from a military standpoint, but brave hearts can make the most of a small advantage. Below the big locks the little river runs in its own bed to the sea. Here the tide was out the day of our visit and a few small fishing boats were lying tipped over sideways in the mud, while two or three English ladies were busily sketching the not over-picturesque scene. There will be a great many people sketching in this vicinity by and by!

About two miles from Nieuport the train passes the church of Lombartzyde, within which is a statue of the Virgin known among mariners far and wide as the *Bonne Mére de Lombartzyde*, and who is devoutly believed able to protect the faithful seaman from perils by sea, to aid the farmer in his harvest, to cure the sick and succour the distressed. Many are the little ships, patiently carved by fingers hardened by toil and exposure, that have been reverently hung before the good Virgin's shrine. There are perhaps fewer now than formerly, but faith in her protection and power is still strong and will probably always continue to be so, for the Flemings are intensely loyal to the church.

Not a few of those who visit these little towns, rich in mementoes of the past, but otherwise apparently very sleepy and dull, wonder what the inhabitants do for amusement. No one who has ever spent a Sunday in a Belgian country village need ask this question. From one end of the country to the other, in the Borinage or mining provinces of the southwest as well as in the Flemish counties of the north, the male population devotes the greater part of the day to what may unhesitatingly be termed the Belgian national sport—archery. In the early part of the Middle Ages Flemish archers were as famous as the longbowmen of Merrie England, and on many a hard fought field they gave a good account of themselves. Curiously enough, the archery societies into which they formed themselves for practice have survived all the wars and changes of the centuries, have continued in spite of the invention of gunpowder and the perfection of firearms—an industry in which Liége, in southern Belgium, has led all other cities—and seem to be as vital a part of the national life of the country as ever they were. The fact that the bow and arrow is an anachronism troubles your Belgian peasant not at all; he shoulders his long bow as cheerfully on a Sunday morning as if he were carrying the latest model of smokeless powder repeater, with Maxim silencer and all modern improvements, instead of a weapon that was out of date and useless five hundred years ago.

As practised in Belgium, archery contests are carried on in two ways. There is first what is known as the *Tir á l'oiseau* or *Perche*. In the centre of the village green of the smaller towns, and in some open space in the suburbs of the larger places, the traveller cannot fail to notice what looks like a flag pole, the top of which, however, tapers to a slender point, from just beneath which four short arms point upward diagonally, while three cross arms are placed horizontally below them. On these are fixed the *oiseaux*, or birds—blocks of cork covered with tinsel or gaily-coloured paper, each with a tuft of feathers stuck at the top. The archers gather below the pole and shoot upward, aiming at the "birds" and endeavouring to knock them off cleanly. Each shoots in turn, and the prizes—which have been duly announced by posters for days beforehand—go to those capturing one of the "birds," the value varying according to its position. In the contests entitled "*Tir du Roi*," the archer bringing down the last bird wins the largest prize and is called the "*Roi*," or King, and as by that time the archers have one and all consumed a goodly portion of their favourite beverages there is general hilarity—especially if the victor is a popular favourite. Immemorial custom decrees that the King should deal liberally with his subjects and dispense in libations whatever sum he may have gained as a prize, after which he is usually escorted, or if necessary carried, home in great state with a band in advance and all the members of the contest following in a disorderly, but jolly, crowd.

The second form of contest is known as the "*Tir au berceau*," and consists of shooting at a target. The birds, in this case, are fastened about the bull's eye. The archers stand at a distance of one hundred metres from the target, which is usually placed at the rear of a walled court or garden. Generally a series of wooden arches placed at intervals along the line of fire serve to arrest any arrows that go wild, while the back of the target is reinforced strongly with straws about a foot long laid lengthwise with the line of the shooting and

packed under great pressure. There is invariably a public café or estaminet attached to the places where archery contests *au berceau* are conducted, while such places are always found close by the spot where a *Tir á l'oiseau* takes place. Between shots the men consume liberal quantities of lambic, faro, or the beer of some neighbouring brewer, and discuss politics or the news of the day. A circumstance that renders disorders comparatively rare is that each archery society consists of men of a single party. The Catholics have their favourite places that are patronised exclusively by Catholics, while the Socialists in the southern provinces, where that party is strong, have their own societies and places of rendezvous. The clergy are heartily interested in the Catholic contests, giving liberal prizes and attending in considerable numbers to cheer the victors and console the vanquished.

During the early part of the war numerous references were made in the despatches to the marvellous accuracy of the Belgian riflemen. To one who has attended scores of these archery contests it is not surprising that the Belgians are good shots. Out of date though the bow and arrow is, yet the sport cannot fail to train the eye and hand, and constant rivalry in such a pastime has made the Belgians literally a nation of sharpshooters. On one occasion the writer and a friend took a couple of shots with a carbine in one of the little shooting galleries that accompanied a village kermesse. We both missed. A young man standing by, who worked in the village sugar mill, politely asked which of the various pipes and other objects we were aiming at. We indicated one of them and, zip! his bullet had shattered it. Half a dozen shots in quick succession at different objects we pointed out proved equally accurate. It was an exhibition of marksmanship such as one frequently sees on the stage in the United States, but being made by a casual bystander in a village street it was most impressive. Nor was the lad, as I took pains to inquire, noted particularly for his skill in this direction—having seldom won prizes in the official contests.

All ages join in this sport, the small boys erecting diminutive poles in the fields around the villages, where they imitate their elders with toy bows and arrows, while men of seventy or eighty take their turn with beardless youths in the prize competitions. While I was visiting in the Borinage two years ago the uncle of my hostess shouldered his two-metre bow and started off to a "meet" despite his eighty-seven years. What is more, his hand had lost none of its strength and firmness, and his eyes none of their keenness, for twice while I was present he brought down one of the "birds," and I later learned that he had won one of the principal prizes. Only the year before he had been crowned "King" at one such contest, and the first time he ever won that coveted honour was when he was sixteen—or seventy-one years before. I doubt whether there is any athletic game in the world of which the devotees can point to a longer record of success.

This fine old athlete had two brothers older than himself alive at the time, the combined ages of the three aggregating two hundred and eighty years. One of them, aged ninety-four, recently expressed some anxiety as to what would become of him in the event of the death of the daughter with whom he was living.

"What will I do if Amèlie should die?" he asked of one of his other daughters.

"Why, papa, then you would come and live with me," she replied, adding with a flash of characteristic Belgian humour, "and when I am dead you'll go to live with Fèlicienne" (a grand-daughter still in her 'teens). As this provided safely for his future for at least another fifty years, the old gentleman was greatly relieved, feeling perhaps that if he survived Fèlicienne her children would by that time be old enough to take care of him.

While archery is everywhere the dominating pastime of the working class it is by no means the only form of popular amusement. The bicycle has not yet gone out of vogue in Belgium, and societies exist in hundreds of cities and communes for the encouragement of bicycle racing. The day of our arrival in the village where Tante Rosa spread for us the banquet mentioned in the second chapter, we were so fortunate as to witness the final sprint of a twenty-five kilometre race. A score of contestants had pedalled ten times over a course consisting for the most part of roadways paved with ragged cobble-stones, the rest being dirt roads filled with mud puddles owing to a recent rain. The riders, as they rushed by, were literally covered with mud and had evidently struggled hard to gain one of the five prizes which aggregated, as we afterwards learned, the munificent sum of eighty francs, sixteen dollars, of which the winner received thirty—six dollars!

Another favourite form of recreation is the racing of pigeons, and societies for the promotion of this sport exist in every part of the Kingdom. Frequently the birds fly from one end of the country to the other and many examples of remarkable speed have been reported, the winners bringing comparatively high prices:

No better idea of the variety of popular amusements can be given than to take the programme of one little commune that I had an opportunity of copying, entitled "*Fêtes Communales de 1914*"—this announcement being printed in French and Flemish. While many of the events were evidently organised by various societies the officials of the commune assumed responsibility for the proper conduct of the contests, and either provided the prizes or contributed a substantial sum toward them, the rest being raised by a fee exacted from each contestant which varied from one franc, thirty centimes for the smaller events to five francs for the more important ones. With one hundred contestants this would yield one hundred and thirty francs, to which the commune usually added fifty, making one hundred and eighty francs available in all. For the chief events the prizes aggregate 1,000 to 2,000 francs—quite a respectable sum for a commune of six thousand inhabitants. The difference between archery contests *au berceau* and *à la perche* has already been explained. The programme, much abbreviated, follows:

Sun., Apr. 19.—Archery contests, both au berceau and perche.
Sun., Apr. 26.—Archery contest, au berceau, and rifle contest (carbines).
Fri., May 1.—Fête du Travail (Labor Day) Archery contest and popular ball on a public square in the evening —dancing in the street, rain or shine.
Sun., May 10.—Rifle contest.
Thurs., May 21.—Archery contest.
Sun., May. 24.—Annual Fair with archery contests of both kinds, rifle contest and grand concert in evening with two bands.

Sun., May 31.—Kermesse, with archery contests of both kinds and a popular out-door ball in the evening.
Sun., June 7.—Bicycle Race—outdoor course around the village ten times, 25 kilometres.
Sun., June 14.—Archery contest au berceau and Tir du Roi (perche).
Sun., June 21.—Kermesse in another quarter of the commune, with rifle contest and concert in evening, followed by popular ball.

Sun. to Tues., July 5, 6, 7,—Annual Kermesse in the centre of the commune, with archery contest (perche) on Sunday, au berceau on Monday, and Tir du Roi with public games and sports on Tuesday. Itinerant amusement enterprises of all kinds make these annual kermesses a miniature Coney Island while they last.
Sun., July 26.—Tir du Roi and Grand Fête Gymnastique, followed by concert, Fête de Nuit and a ball.
Sun., Aug. 9.—Fête d'Enfance, distribution of prizes to school children with public exhibition of school gymnastics, etc.
Sat. and Sun., Aug. 15 and 16.—Kermesse in a third quarter, with archery contests and concert.
Sun. Mon. and Tues., Aug. 30 to Sept. 1.—Annual Kermesse, with archery contests of both kinds, concert and sports and games.
Sun., Sept. 20.—Archery au berceau and rifle contest.
Sun., Oct. 25.—Same.
Sun., Nov. 21.—Archery, perche.
Sun., Dec. 13.—Rifle contest.

It must be confessed that this programme is somewhat monotonous, but in the larger towns it is considerably amplified and varied. Still to one who was brought up in a small country village in New Hampshire it seems very good, both as an evidence of the popular desire for healthy and rational out-door enjoyment, and of the disposition of the Government to promote and foster legitimate amusements of all kinds. The kermesse is an European rather than a Belgian institution and requires no description further than that it is a jolly good time for everybody. It has existed in Flanders and throughout the Walloon provinces from time immemorial, as ancient paintings and still more ancient historical references conclusively show. Its most interesting feature to the American visitor is the night dancing out of doors on the rough cobble-stones of the town square or on the soft grass of the village green. Lighted by flaring gas torches, or sometimes only by the moon and such stray beams as fall on the dancers from the open doors and windows of adjacent cafés, the spectacle of the gaily dancing couples carries the observer back to the days when the world was young, and love and laughter and happiness reigned supreme.

AN ANCIENT PAINTING OF THE FLEMISH KERMESSE, BY TENIERS.

CHAPTER VII

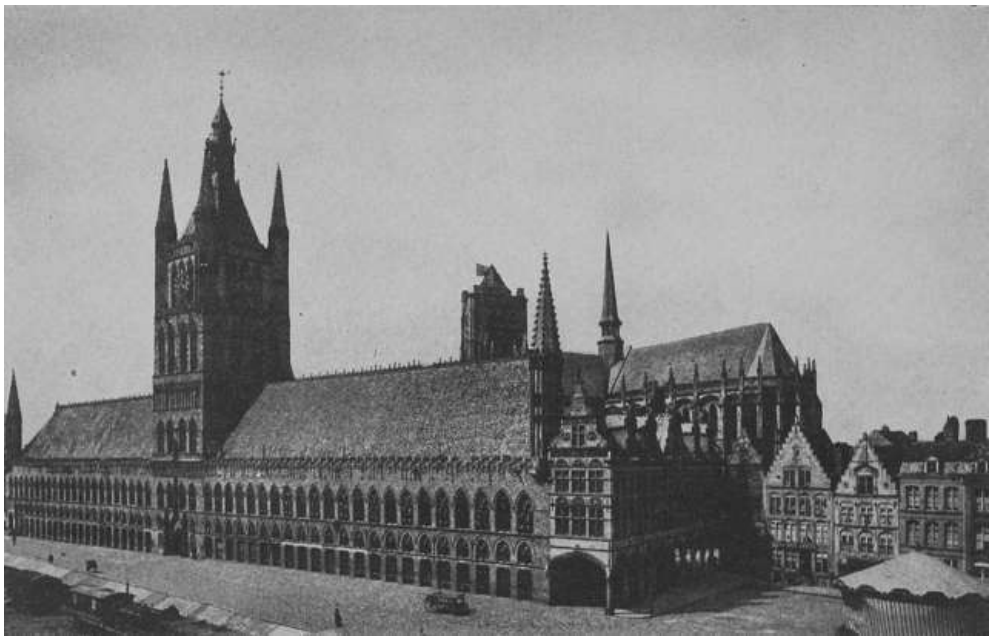
WHEN YPRES WAS A GREATER CITY THAN LONDON

As we returned from our trip to Dixmude, Furnes and Nieuport, the Professor announced that our next destination would be Ypres. If he had said that it would he Chingwangtao, or the Comoro Archipelago, the ladies could hardly have stared at him more blankly. They had never heard of it. Since October the whole world has heard of it, and the name of the all but forgotten old town is familiar to every schoolboy—and will continue so for generations to come. The record of our visit that follows was written amid the pleasant and peaceful scenes that it describes. When we were there the swans were swimming majestically in the waters of the moat that still surrounded the remnants of the old city walls, but we were told that for military purposes all this was obsolete. No doubt it was, but the brave old town was none the less able—with the help of its stubborn English defenders—to withstand the most furious, determined and bloody assaults in all history. To the German host the mediæval term *la morte d'Ypres* was revived in those awful weeks of October and November, 1914, for the grim, low-lying ramparts of the town meant death to countless thousands.

Whether anything whatever is still standing of the old structures described in this chapter it is at present impossible to say. The British trenches were under a well-nigh continuous storm of shells for many weeks, and the town itself must undoubtedly have suffered severely. Late in November it was reported that the old Cloth Hall had been destroyed by the furious German bombardment, or, at least, severely injured. The account of the various points of interest in the famous old town as they appeared in peaceful June—together with some brief sketches of its former greatness—may be all the more interesting now that its ruins lie in the lime-light of the world's attention. As compared with the half-dozen tourists that averaged to visit Ypres each day before the war the return of peace will see it become the Mecca for daily thousands. To these the remains of the town itself should vie in interest with the trenches of the famous battle-fields of the Great War, for during a period two or three times as long as the entire duration of the nation known as the United States of America, Ypres was one of the greatest and richest cities in the world.

It was hard to believe it, however, as we rumbled into the railroad station and, stepping out upon the almost deserted platform, took our first look at the place. As is usually the case in Flanders, the train deposits the visitor some distance from the centre of the town. The very first view was full of delight and promise of better things in store, however, for as we emerged from the station we found ourselves facing a pretty little park or square on the opposite side of which we could see a bit of the ancient city walls which stretched away toward the right most invitingly.

Postponing the pleasure of inspecting these renowned ramparts till a later occasion, we made our way through narrow winding streets direct to the Grande Place, pausing now and then to admire the quaint gabled houses on the rue au Beurre (Butter Street). At the Grande Place the Professor led us directly to the huge Cloth Hall, which completely fills one side of it, for here—he said—we would find the best introduction to the history and romance of the city. The concierge proved hard to find, and we wandered up-stairs and through a deserted corridor, trying several doors that proved all to be locked, before we located the familiar sign. Our fees being duly paid—fifty centimes each, which was little enough for the privilege of inspecting the finest monument of its kind in Flanders, or for that matter in all Europe—one of the doors was obligingly unlocked and we found ourselves immediately in the great Guild Hall.



CLOTH HALL, YPRES.

The *Halle aux Draps*, or Cloth Hall, is the largest civil edifice in Belgium, and without doubt one of the largest in the world. It is four hundred and thirty-three feet long by more than two hundred in width—or larger than Madison Square Garden. Its huge bulk, and that of the former cathedral hard by, contrast strangely with the present dimensions of the little city. Yet when they were built Ypres was the powerful rival of Bruges and Ghent, then at the apex of their glory, and one of the foremost cities in the world. The Cloth Hall was begun in 1200 and completed in 1304, or two years after the Battle of the Spurs, a victory won by the guildsmen of Ypres and Bruges against the chivalry of France. During that period the city had two hundred thousand

inhabitants, its woollen weavers operated four thousand looms, and more than four hundred guilds responded to the calls to arms that sounded, at frequent intervals, from the belfry.

The greatest wonder of the edifice is the immense gallery, or hall, which occupies the side next to the Grande Place. This extends for the entire length of the building, broken only by the belfry in the centre which forms a sort of transept across it. In height it reaches clear to the roof, the huge roof beams forming its ceiling. There is a veritable forest of these, massive, sturdy, and as perfect as the day they were hewed from the fair oaks of the countryside roundabout. The concierge will not fail to tell you, if you pause to admire this majestic timber-work of six hundred years ago, that from that day to this no spider has ever spun its web there—nor is any spider ever seen. Like the story of the snakes in Ireland, it would be a big pity to spoil this by finding one and pointing it out—one must needs be a good runner to do it, and be very sure which road leads to the railway station, for it might go hard with him—but we could not see any the day we were there. In fact, the legend has been repeated by many writers since the sixteenth century and is now such a matter of local pride that no doubt the concierge who permitted one to get in and set up housekeeping in this spiderless Eden—for it certainly must look like the Promised Land to a spider—would not only lose his or her job, but be severely punished by the indignant city fathers into the bargain.

Looking at the Cloth Hall from across the Grande Place it has the aspect of being a low building, but within this gallery one gains precisely an opposite impression—of unusual loftiness. Just how high the vast room is can best be estimated by noting the wooden façade of an ancient house that has been taken down and erected against one wall in its entirety. With its three stories and high peaked top this structure appears to be literally lost, looking like an undersized pea in an extra big pod. The great inner walls of the main gallery, facing the windows that look out upon the Grande Place, have been decorated by modern frescoes of great historical and artistic interest painted by two artists of widely different methods and ideals. The portion into which one first enters, extending to the break formed by the tower, was decorated by Ferdinand Pauwels, Director of the Royal Academy of Dresden. Both the art critics, and those who make no pretence to superior knowledge in such matters, agree that this work has been magnificently done. The vastness of the wall spaces made it possible to paint the pictures on a scale of size and with a wealth of detail surpassing the fine frescoes of the Hotel de Ville at Bruges and the general effect upon the beholder is impressive in the extreme. The pictures represent notable events in the town's history down to the fourteenth century, and were begun in 1872 and completed in 1881. The subjects selected by the artist are as follows:

1.—Visit of Count Philip of Alsace to the Hospital of Our Lady in 1187.
2.—Count Ferdinand of Portugal orders the Magistrates to fortify the town in 1214.
3.—Countess Jeanne of Constantinople setting prisoners free on Good Friday, 1206.
4.—5.—The Magistrates give the Countess Margaret the ransom of her son William, who was made prisoner during the 7th Crusade.
6.—Building the West wing of the Guild Hall in the time of Guy of Dampierre, 1285.
7.—8.—Return of the armed forces of Ypres in 1302 after the Battle of the Spurs.
9.—The Plague, known as la Morte d'Ypres, in 1347.
10.—11.—Banquet offered in this very hall to Mahaut, Countess of Flanders, and Matthew, Duke of Lorraine on their marriage in 1314.
12.—An episode of the siege of Ypres by the English and the men of Ghent in 1383.

As will be noted, the pictures are not arranged in exact chronological order, but, taken together, they form a wonderful pictorial summary of the city's history—down to the Fall of 1914, which merits a separate gallery by itself. To us the most impressive of the series was the vast picture in two sections showing the triumphant return from the Battle of Courtrai and the tragic representation of the Black Death, which swept through all the densely populated Flemish towns; but was more destructive at Ypres than elsewhere. The visitation here represented was by no means the only one in the city's history, and for centuries *la morte d'Ypres* was a name of terror throughout the countryside.

In the section of the Great Hall beyond the belfry the mural paintings are the work of Louis Delbeke, a painter of Ypres. His pictures were the subject of violent criticism when they were first exhibited, and are entirely unlike those in the other portion of the chamber. The artist endeavoured to give his work an archaic appearance, in keeping with the antiquity of its surroundings, and it was his intention to symbolise the various manifestations of the public life of the city—Civic Freedom, Commerce, Industry, Charities, Literature and so on. The work was interrupted by his death and has never been completed.

Another room of great interest is the *Salle Echevinale*, where for five centuries the magistrates of Ypres held their sessions. Between 1322 and 1468 local artists painted on the wall above the three Gothic arches in this room a frieze comprising portraits of the early Counts and Countesses of Flanders, beginning with Louis of Nevers and ending with Charles the Bold. When the French occupied the town in 1794 they covered these "emblems of superstition and portraits of tyrants" with a thick coat of whitewash which was only accidentally knocked off in 1844, exposing a bit of the ancient and still brilliantly coloured painting. The discovery created quite a sensation, as the very existence of this work had been forgotten, and a native artist was commissioned to remove the whitewash and restore the paintings, which he did in a manner that is not entirely satisfactory, but none the less gives us an opportunity to view once more this interesting work—one of the earliest pieces of mural painting in Flanders. On the north wall of this room is a modern fresco by Godefroid Guffens, representing "The State Entry of Philip the Bold" in 1384, while on the other side of the room is a monumental Flemish chimney-piece carved by Malfait of Brussels, with mural paintings on each side by Jean Swerts—like Guffens, a painter of the modern Antwerp school. These represent the Magistrates of Ypres issuing an order regarding the maintenance of the poor, in 1515; and the visit of the Magistrates to one of the Free Schools founded in 1253—thus illustrating the early interest taken by the commune in free education and public charities.

Leaving this interesting building we went across a small roughly paved square to the Church of St. Martin,

which dates from the thirteenth century, and was for many centuries a cathedral. The unfinished square tower was erected in 1433. The choir is Romano-ogival, while the nave and aisles are early Gothic, and the edifice has many other peculiar features of interest to students of architecture. It contains the usual paintings, of which none are of remarkable interest, and some excellent choir stalls. The most famous of the Bishops of St. Martin, while it was a Cathedral Church, was Jansenius, one of the leading figures in the Reformation, who died of the Plague in 1638. His great work on St. Augustine occupied twenty-two years of his life while at Ypres and caused a tremendous discussion. It was finally declared to be heretical, but its teachings had already given rise to an ardent group of followers of the learned Flemish churchman, who were called Jansenists. The archives of the city and church contain much interesting material regarding this celebrated mediæval theologian. His tomb, which still stands in the church of which he was once the head, formerly contained a long and highly eulogistic inscription, which, by an order from the Pope in 1655, was cut down to the bare remnant that still remains.

The Grande Place of Ypres is another of the surprises that this tiny city has to offer to those unacquainted with its history, for it is one of the largest in all Flanders—a veritable Sahara of a Place on a hot summer day, albeit a Sahara bordered with many pleasant oases where cooling drinks, if they do not bubble up from the ground, can at least be had without much difficulty. During most of the week the vast paved space is almost deserted, save for an occasional peasant's cart that rumbles slowly and clumsily across it, but on market-days it is full of picturesque and swarming life. Then the peasants come in from the countryside by the thousand, while the itinerant hucksters and pedlars who, in Belgium travel from one fair or market-place to another, set up their canvas-covered booths in long streets from one side of the Grande Place to the other. The country people press along between these rows of tiny shops and haggle energetically with the proprietors for whatever takes their fancy. An astounding variety of wares are offered for sale on these market days—dress goods of every description in the great Cloth Hall, which for a brief moment reflects a feeble glimmer of its ancient glory; ready-made garments for man, woman and child; footwear, headwear, and every conceivable kind of hardware, of tinware, of crockery. In short, the display is a veritable department store, for the most part cheap stuff, it is true, but now and then one runs across laces for which the prices asked are quite high. Then, of course, there is the inevitable array of everything possible to eat—from the butchers' stalls in the basement of the Cloth Hall to the huckster selling live chickens from a bag on the corner, and the scores of stands selling fruits and vegetables of every seasonable variety.

At last, however, the market comes to an end, the hucksters and market gardeners take down their booths and drive away in their heavy Flemish carts; the country people, after a more or less protracted visit to the places of refreshment around the Place and in the adjacent streets, go homeward, and the Grande Place settles down again into its sleep of centuries. While we were there the moon was at its full, and as its white light fell upon the grass-grown Place and the huge grey mass of the Cloth Hall it was not hard to picture the old days come back again and review, in fancy, some of the stirring times that the old houses around it have looked down upon. The great bell in the Cloth Hall tower rings and from far and wide come hurrying throngs of sturdy artisans, with their lances, pikes and clubs. The *Serments*, or oath-bound corporations, take their positions gravely and in good order—men of substance these, portly, well-fed, and prosperous. Then the *Métiers*, or lesser craftsmen, assemble—no doubt more noisily and boisterously, as would be expected from their rougher class and lower breeding. Each of the four hundred guilds assembles around its respective banner, the Count and others of the nobility come riding up; and with them, on terms of full equality, the commanders of the citizen soldiery confer. Then, as the trumpets sound, or mayhap the great bell peals again, the hosts march off in serried ranks to the city gates, or to take their positions along the walls. The old streets echo to the sound of their tramping feet, the noise of their shouts and cries dies away, and once more the still moonlight falls upon the deserted old Place.

As we sat in one of the cafés facing the Cloth Hall, our minds filled with these and other fancies of the olden days—the moonlight, the old houses all around us, and the many quaint and ancient things we had seen during the day all contributing to the dreamy sense of enchantment—the Professor told us something of the legend and history of that far-off thirteenth century when much of the Ypres we had seen that day was built. It was an age when men firmly believed in magic and fairies and delighted in tales of mystery and enchantment. Some of the most famous stories told by the old Flemish chroniclers relate to the career of Baldwin IX, who came to be known as Baldwin of Constantinople. After the long and wise reigns of Dierick of Alsace and his son Philip, Flanders had become one of the richest and most prosperous countries in Europe. The French, who looked upon its fertile plains and fair cities with covetous eyes, composed these lines, which no doubt expressed their sincere conviction:

> "La plus belle Comté est La Flandre,
> La plus belle Duché est La Bourgogne,
> La plus belle Royaume est France."

Baldwin was not only Count of Flanders, but also Count of Hainaut, of which Mons was the capital—his dominions therefore extending from the North Sea to the River Meuse and including much of the Ardennes. It was in this region—the true fairy-land of Belgium—that the Count met with an adventure, according to certain of the chroniclers, which gave his reign a most sinister beginning. It happened in this wise. The Count was very fond of hunting, and very neglectful of the duty his loyal subjects felt that he owed to them—of getting married and securing children to insure the succession. For nothing was more disastrous to a country than to have its line of princes die out, leaving their title to be fought for by all who felt themselves strong enough to seize it. The Count was to have married Beatrice of France, the most beautiful princess in Christendom, but to the neglect of this important matter he went hunting in the Ardennes, where from time immemorial the wild boars have been very large and fierce.

Here, after a day of poor sport, the Count came upon a black boar of enormous strength which killed several of his dogs and even wounded one of his companions. Pursuing the savage beast eagerly the Count lost sight

of his followers and when he finally brought it to bay he was alone. With a blow from his javelin he finally killed it, and then cut off its monstrous head. As he paused to get his breath he heard a slight rustle in the bushes and there was the most beautiful lady he had ever seen, seated on a palfrey. Upon his inquiring who she was, and why she was there in the forest alone, she replied that she was an Eastern princess and had come to find and wed the richest Count in Christendom, adding that she had learned that the Count of Flanders was the noblest lord in all the West, and it was therefore that Count for whom she was seeking.

To this the Count, who had already fallen deeply in love with the beautiful stranger, whose dark eyes flashed upon him with a glance at once mysterious and entrancing, replied that he was the Count of Flanders and the richest Count under Heaven. He then and there proposed to the damsel, offering to marry her at once, nor did he perceive that the wild boar he had lately slain had disappeared, and even the blood of the battle was gone, while as for the huge head that he had cut off with his own hands the palfrey upon which the Eastern princess was seated stood on the very spot. He then blew so loud a recall upon his horn that it was heard for miles through the great forest, and presently the lesser counts and knights who formed his train came riding up. To these he introduced the strange princess and, despite the prudent counsels of some that it might be well to learn more about the lady, he forthwith repaired to Cambrai where they were married in great splendour. The Countess, beautiful as she was, did not become popular, the people attributing to her the heavy taxes they had to pay. It was also whispered that she never attended the elevation of the Host at mass, always leaving before the bell was rung.

Notwithstanding her unpopularity, and the gossip of the busybodies, the Count still loved his bride who bore him two children, Jeanne and Margaret, and ever remained as wonderfully beautiful as the day they first met in the forest. As they were celebrating Easter one year at Wynandael with a great feast a pilgrim arrived from the East with news that the Saracens were besieging Constantinople. He was forthwith invited into the great hall of the castle and food placed before him, which he ate eagerly. Just then the Countess entered, with a train of ladies. At sight of her the pilgrim stopped eating and trembled, while the Countess turned deadly pale and whispered to her lord to send that stranger away as he was wicked and meant only evil by coming there. But the Count bade the pilgrim say whereat he was alarmed, whereupon the stranger rose and in a loud voice bade the devil who filled the body of the Countess to depart from it. At this the Countess rose and confessed she was indeed one of the devils cast out of Paradise who had inhabited the body of the most beautiful maiden of the East, the soul having departed from it. With this confession, at which all present were naturally appalled, she rose in all her beauty before them and vanished through a window of the hall, nor was she ever seen or heard of again.

Other chroniclers and historians deny this story, pointing out that the Count was, in fact, happily married to Marie of Champagne and that it was the beautiful French Countess and no princess of satanic origin who bore his two daughters, Jeanne and Margaret. This, in truth, was the case, but many of the superstitious Flemings believed the tale about the devil none the less, and the Count’s brilliant but tragic later career caused the story to be repeated and handed down for many generations.

Only five years after coming to the throne Count Baldwin announced his intention of going on a crusade, and in the presence of a vast throng both he and Marie took the cross in the church of St. Donatian at Bruges. This was in 1199, but the Count was not able to leave his dominions at once and in the following year he and Marie came to Ypres to dedicate the foundation stone of the great Cloth Hall. He finally set out in 1203, but the Venetians compelled the crusaders, in payment for their passage, to make a campaign which resulted in the capture of Constantinople, the founding of the Latin Empire, and the election of Count Baldwin as the first Emperor. Marie, meanwhile, had gone to Syria by another route and there she died of the plague, only learning in her last hour that her husband had become an Emperor and that she was an Empress. Her death was the first of the reverses of fortune in Baldwin’s meteoric career. A year later, in 1205, he fell wounded in a battle before the walls of Adrianople—or, perhaps, slain. Certain it is that he disappeared from the world of men and for a space of twenty years was heard of no more.

Then, in the heart of the great forest that in those days stretched from Tournai to Valenciennes, some wood-cutters found a long bearded, white-haired old man, his face covered with scars, living the life of a hermit in a hut none of them remembered ever having seen before. Gradually this wonder attracted more and more of the people thereabout to see the stranger, and men began to say that he resembled the good Count Baldwin. Some of the nobles who had known the Count heard of it, visited the hut in the forest, and declared that this was indeed Count Baldwin and the Emperor.

If he was the Count his country needed him sorely, for the King of France, Philip Augustus, had during his twenty years’ absence all but made Flanders a French province. When it became clear that Baldwin was either dead or a prisoner of the pagans Philip had seized his two daughters—Jeanne being then a girl of fourteen, and Margaret still in her cradle—claiming their wardship as the dead Count’s suzerain. Five years he kept them, nor did he permit them to return till he had married Jeanne to a kinsman of his own, Ferdinand of Portugal, who he thought would be a mere puppet in his hands. Ferdinand, however, proved to be a man of determination and resisted Philip’s seizure of St. Omer and Aire, two Flemish towns. Philip invaded Flanders with a great army, capturing Cassel and destroying Damme and all the merchandise stored there, Lille, Courtrai and many smaller towns. Ferdinand, unable to resist the superior forces of Philip single-handed, brought about an alliance with King John of England. The battle of Bouvines shattered this alliance, and for twelve years Ferdinand languished in a French prison, while King John was forced to grant the Magna Carta to his English subjects. Thus a victory for tyranny in Flanders resulted indirectly in a greater victory for the cause of freedom in England. Jeanne, while her husband was in prison, was the titular Countess of Flanders, but Philip kept her completely under the influence of his counsellors. Margaret, meanwhile, had been married, but her husband was unable to make head against the far-reaching power of the King of France.

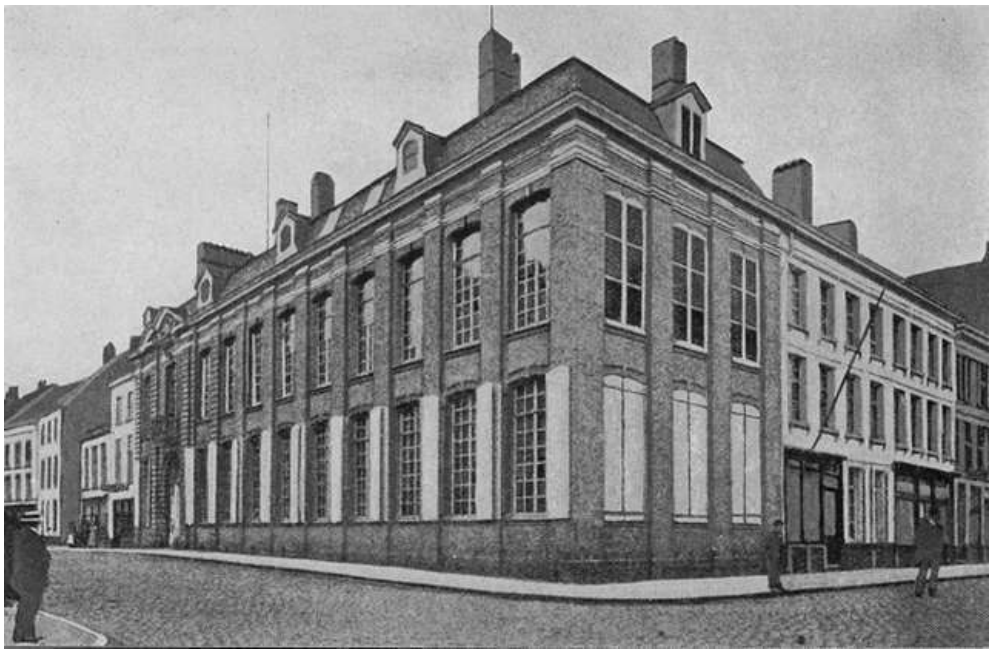
It was under these circumstances that the hermit who men thought resembled Count Baldwin came on the stage. If he was an impostor his *coup* was shrewdly planned, for Jeanne was as hated by the Flemings as her

father had been loved. If he was really the good Count and the Emperor his arrival in Flanders seemed to that distracted country like a direct interposition of Providence. A great delegation from Valenciennes went out to the forest and hailed him as their Count and then he at last admitted that he was indeed Baldwin of Constantinople.

His tale was a strange one, but more easily believed in those wild days than it would be now. He had, he asserted, been wounded before Adrianople and made a prisoner by the Bulgarians. While a captive a Bulgarian princess saw him, fell in love, and contrived to effect his escape after he had promised to marry her. Once free, however, he repented of his pledge to marry an infidel, and murdered his benefactress. This wicked deed was quickly followed by his recapture by the barbarians, who made him a slave and even a beast of burden. Escaping at last, after many years, he had become a hermit in penance for his great sin.

The men of Valenciennes believed this story, and pardoning his self-confessed crime as of little moment, since it affected only an infidel, proclaimed him their Count. The great towns of Flanders flung open their gates to him wherever he went, and finally he held his court in Bruges. His neighbours, the Dukes of Brabant and Limbourg, and his former ally, the King of England, acknowledged his claims, while his daughter Jeanne fled to France for protection.

The chief reason for believing that Baldwin was an impostor is the fact that at this crisis of his career he failed signally to show any of the decision and judgment that twenty years before had made the true Baldwin Emperor. To be sure, twenty years of slavery, and the haunting memory of the beautiful Marie of Champagne who had followed him to her death, and of the Bulgarian princess whom he had so basely slain, may have enfeebled his intellect. He was now an old man. At all events, after a period of indecision he did the very thing he never should have done—he appealed to Philip for aid against his daughter. Summoned to Péronne, where the King of France was then holding court, he was subjected to a trial by the royal Council, which clearly showed its determination to convict him as an impostor. Perceiving that he had blundered into a trap, the old man fled from the castle and escaped to Flanders. Here, however, the appeal to Philip and its result, together with much French gold judiciously expended in behalf of Jeanne, caused the nobility to turn cold. He determined to lay his cause before the Pope, but while on his way to Rome was captured and sold to Jeanne who ordered him to be hanged in chains in the market-place at Lille between two hounds. If he was the true Baldwin, after all, few careers in history offer wider contrasts of glory and shame.



HOTEL MERGHELYNCK, YPRES.

Whether one stays at Ypres a day or a week he will not lack for objects of interest, for the Cloth Hall and the Cathedral are but the beginning of the list. A day is hardly too much to devote to the rue de Lille alone, for here are the Hospice Belle, with a number of valuable old paintings, and the Hotel-Musée Merghelynck. The latter is an institution as unique as it is admirable. Built in 1774 by François Merghelynck, a Treasurer and Grand Bailiff of Ypres, this fine mansion is filled with furniture and objets d’art of the eighteenth century coming from Flanders, Holland and France and collected with rare taste and judgment. In its entirety it represents the residence of a nobleman of the period, complete down to the smallest detail, with every article in its proper place, as if the owner had just stepped out and might be expected back at any moment. The seven principal rooms are panelled with carved wood. The dining-room is decorated with bas-reliefs representing all of the principal implements of husbandry. These were carved by Antony Deledicque of Lille and have been compared with the work in some of the smaller rooms in the Palace of Versailles. The music-room is similarly embellished with representations of musical instruments, and all have fine panel friezes and gilded carvings. In each room the proprietor of the mansion, Arthur Merghelynck, the great-grandson of the original owner, has collected a complete equipment of eighteenth-century furniture. The dining-room has rare porcelain from Tournai, with the precious gilt marks of the choicest make, the music-room has an old-time harpsichord, the kitchen possesses an array of old-time pewter, copper and brassware. In the chambers the same plan has been faithfully carried out, even to placing the owner’s uniforms and gala raiment in the

wardrobes. Permission to visit these delightful rooms is freely granted to all visitors to Ypres without charge, other than an optional fee to the attendant. We were told that natives of the city are not admitted, but forgot to ask the caretaker if this was true.

A little farther down this same rue de Lille is an old edifice that for many years has been called the House of the Templars. It has been restored and is now used as the Post Office—it was for a long time a brewery—but it is not now believed that this was ever the House of the famous mediæval order. The Templars, however, did erect at Ypres their first house in Europe, and it may well be that this structure was copied from it. Beyond this interesting edifice we encountered a grim-looking old church, that of St. Peter, within the doorway of which is a most curious mediæval Calvary. This church is one of the oldest in Flanders, having been built in 1073 by Robert the Frisian, one of the early Counts. On this street also stands the Hospice St. Jean which was founded in 1277. It contains one fine timbered ceiling room, with panelled walls, called the nuns' workroom, and some paintings by Kerel van Yper, an obscure local artist of the sixteenth century.

CHURCH OF ST. PETER, YPRES.

In this section we were so fortunate as to see the lace workers, of whom there are still several hundred, making *point de Valenciennes* outside the doors of their tiny houses. Mrs. Professor never tired of watching these women,—who are for the most part middle-aged, while some of them are very old—as their nimble fingers dexterously shifted the innumerable little bobbins to and fro, while the delicate fabric slowly took the design upon which they were working. It is said that more Valenciennes lace is made here at Ypres, and at Courtrai and among the little Flemish towns between these two cities, than in the French city from which this fine point derives its name.

It is along the rue de Lille that the visitor will (let us hope!) find the wooden house that is the last, or nearly the last, survival of a type of architecture that was once very common in Ypres. It is inferior to the one in the Cloth Hall, which also came from this street, but is still in use—although it seemed to be closed when we passed it. A few steps further on we came to the Porte de Lille with its three semi-circular towers, erected in 1395. The Porte is connected with the open country beyond by a bridge across the wide moat, in which a stately white swan was swimming. The ancient walls, built by the famous military engineer Vauban, extend here for a long distance in both directions and are in a fairly good state of preservation. At the Porte de Thourout, where the fortifications end on the northeastern side of the town, there is an open-air swimming pool which, according to the local guidebook is free during certain hours for men Saturday and Sunday, for women Wednesday, for soldiers Thursday and Friday, and for ladies Tuesday. The distinction between the women who can come on Wednesday and the ladies who are admitted Tuesday is not stated.

From the Porte de Lille we walked along the top of the ramparts toward the railway station—a promenade full of interest and charm. The broad moat in which a dozen snow white swans were swimming, the huge trees arching overhead, the quaint little houses to our right, with now and then a narrow street bending back into

the town as if inviting us to follow and explore it—everything seemed to combine to make this one of our pleasantest experiences in Flanders, and we regretted that we did not have weeks instead of days in which to study this rare old town and visit some of the charming old Flemish villages by which it is surrounded.

The causes for the decline of the city from the proud position it occupied in the Middle Ages to its comparative insignificance to-day can be sketched in a very few words. Like the rest of Flanders, it had flourished exceedingly in consequence of the Hundred Years' War between France and England. As commerce and industry in these two great neighbouring countries declined, that of the Low Countries—which were then enjoying a prolonged period of comparative peace—augmented with abnormal rapidity. It was inevitable that when peace across the frontier was restored much of the trade that France had temporarily lost should return to it. A series of great sieges cut off the wool traffic with England that formed the foundation of the city's industry and prosperity. The first of these was in 1383 when the guildsmen of Ypres successfully beat off a powerful army from Ghent, aided by a large contingent from England. The plague, that terror of every overcrowded industrial town in those days, swept off thousands of people in 1347 and in 1490, and a third of the inhabitants in 1552. These disasters still further crippled the cloth industry. In 1583 and 1584 an eight months' siege and the plague together reduced the population so fearfully that when the town at last surrendered to the Prince of Parma barely five thousand remained. After the religious wars were over it recovered some of its ancient prosperity, but between 1648 and 1678 it was besieged no less than four times, being a border town and one of the first to be attacked as the fortunes of war swayed, first one way and then the other. Roused by the ravages of the plague the magistrates cleaned the city, passed stringent sanitary regulations, paved the streets and built a costly system of sewers—Ypres being one of the first cities in Europe to have these modern improvements. Wise as these steps were, they came too late to arrest the decline of the town's industries and commerce. One by one the artisans gave up the battle against the forces that were sapping the foundations of their prosperity and moved away—some to Ghent and Bruges, both of which were already beginning to decline; others to far-off England, where they remained to lay the foundations of the vast textile industry that has since grown up across the Channel, but which traces its origin back to the artisans of Ypres in the days when the fame of that until lately all but forgotten town was known from one end of the world to the other.

CHAPTER VIII

COURTRAI AND THE BATTLE OF THE SPURS

Our next expedition, after the delightful visit at Ypres, was to Courtrai, which is only twenty-two miles distant, although the two plodding little *omnibus* trains that we took, one after the other, were more than an hour getting us there. It was an hour most pleasantly spent, however, for we were constantly on the lookout for the fields of flax that we had read covered the valley of the River Lys as far as eye could see. If this was ever so it certainly was not the case in the summer of 1914, for there were more and larger fields of barley and other small grains than of flax. Still, we saw a great many plantings of the latter, and as the plant was in full bloom the sight was a very pretty one—the delicate green of each field being faintly tinged with the blue of the tiny flowers. It did not seem to be very tall, but it was still early June and a very backward summer. We also passed many fields in which the flax of the previous season was stacked to bleach, evidently the crop from several fields being concentrated into one for this purpose. The water of the River Lys, from which some authorities say the French Fleur de Lys derives its name, is said to be superior to that of all other rivers for the retting of flax, and at all events the raising and preparation of this important staple has been the leading industry in this region for centuries, although Ghent is more important as a flax manufacturing centre.

Presently our destination, of which the Flemish name is Kortrijk, came in sight, and we started—with the Professor leading the way, as usual—for the Grande Place. Here we found a market going on, with numerous booths and stalls arranged in crooked little streets, and crowds of thick-set peasant women with big baskets examining the wares displayed gingerly as if afraid that too great a display of interest would cause the merchants to enhance their prices. Amid this bustle and confusion we worked our way slowly to the centre of the Place where stood the small ivy-covered Belfry, which dates from early in the fourteenth century, and is one of the prettiest in Flanders. When the city was sacked in 1382, after one of its many sieges, the Belfry was one of the few edifices to escape injury. Repaired or restored in 1423, in 1519, and again in 1717, this little monument of the Middle Ages has come down to us in an admirable state of preservation. Originally connected with a small public market, *les petites halles*, it gradually came to be surrounded with private houses until only its spire was visible, but in 1899 these were torn down and the Belfry left isolated as it is now. The clock originally placed on this tower is said by the historian Froissart to have been "*l'un des plus biaux que on seuist trouver decha ne dela la mer*"—one of the most beautiful here or abroad—but was removed by Philip the Bold, the first of the Burgundian Dukes to rule over Flanders, to Dijon, the capital of Burgundy. This was in 1382, but in 1395 the people of Courtrai had replaced it by another equally ingenious. We tried to enter the old tower, but found one entrance guarded by the alarming sign, "*Haute tension—danger de la mort*," indicating that the electric light company used the lower part of the edifice as a transforming station. There was another small doorway, but it did not appear to have been opened for a long time, and we could find no one who knew who had the key.

When we first announced our intention to spend a Summer in Flanders many friends protested, “But you do not speak Flemish—how do you expect to get along?” Right here it may be stated that this bugbear proved without foundation. Even in Ypres, where our Belgian acquaintances said we surely would have trouble, we found only two or three of those with whom we had occasion to converse who did not understand French at least well enough to give us the information we required. On a few occasions, when touring the poorer quarters of some old Flemish town, we were non-plussed for a moment, but the children helped us out in these emergencies by running off eagerly to find some one who spoke French. Everywhere we found the people accommodating and courteous, never surly as one author says those he met in these very same towns were when he visited them half a dozen years ago. To be sure, our visits seldom took us into the very little towns, where, no doubt, Flemish is often spoken exclusively—as our experience in Nieuport showed.

The most curious fact about the little Kingdom of Belgium is that it is sharply bi-lingual, the line of demarcation between the French and the Flemish speaking provinces running across the country from southwest to northeast a little to the south of Brussels; that city, however, being far more French than Flemish. Most of the towns have two names, which usually mean the same but are often so different in form that it is a wonder the people themselves do not get mixed up now and then. For example, the French name for the capital of the province of Hainaut is Mons, meaning mountain, while the Flemish name is Bergen, which means the same thing but looks very different. The important railroad junction of Braine-le-Comte between Mons and Brussels bears the queer Flemish name of ’s Graven-Brakel. Even the postage stamps and the paper money are printed in the two languages, while the silver money is apparently minted in equal quantities of each. All public employés are required by law to know both languages, so that the public has no trouble either at the railway stations or post-offices. According to official statistics published while we were there, 38.17 per cent. of the population of the country speak only French; 43.38 per cent. speak only Flemish; while 18.13 per cent. speak more than one language and a few speak German only. Of the bi-linguals over 60 per cent. declared that they ordinarily spoke Flemish.

Facing the Grande Place, and only a few steps from the Belfry, is the Hotel de Ville, an unprepossessing structure externally, although the historians say that it was once much better looking. It has, at all events, been restored, and the statues of the Counts of Flanders that were destroyed during the Revolution replaced by modern ones carved by a local sculptor. After finding the concierge we were shown a small collection of modern paintings by Belgian artists bequeathed to the city by one of its wealthy sons. This, however, was merely *en route*, as it were, to the great show-place of this—as of all other Flemish hotels de ville—the Salle du Conseil. Here the *pièce de résistance* is the great chimney-piece, carved in 1525 by unknown sculptors, who probably were natives of the city as there were several of good renown residing and working there at that period. The elaborate carvings with which this masterpiece is decorated comprise three tiers. At the top the figures represent the virtues: Faith, Humility, Charity, Chastity, Generosity, Temperance, Patience and Vigilance. In the middle section a series of pictures carved in stone typify the vices: Idolatry, Pride, Avarice, Sensuality, Jealousy, Gluttony, Anger and Idleness. The lowest tier contains reliefs that are supposed to show the punishment for these vices, although the idea is not always quite easy to follow. In niches projecting from the middle section are fine statues, carved from wood, of Charles V in the centre, with Justice and Peace on the opposite sides. At the right and left sides of the chimney-piece are two more tiers of carvings, but of inferior interest to those on the front. The beamed ceiling of this fine room is worthy of at least a glance, for on the corbels supporting it are some of the most curious carvings to be seen in Flanders, representing the conquests of woman over man—beginning with Adam and Eve and Samson and Delilah, and including several examples from pagan mythology.

We were next conducted down-stairs to the Salle Echevinale, where there is another fine chimney-piece which, however, was much less interesting than the one we had just seen. This room is further embellished with several frescoes by Guffens and Swerts, examples of whose work we had already seen at Ypres. The former artist painted the large composition entitled the “Departure of Baldwin IX for Constantinople,” and the latter the more interesting picture of the Consultation of the Flemish leaders in this very room the day before the Battle of Courtrai. Smaller frescoes depict other notable scenes in the old town’s history, while small carvings near the ceiling represent the chief virtues of an upright judge.

On a hot July day, in the year 1302, there took place, just outside the ancient walls of the city, the most famous event in the history of Courtrai. This was the great “Battle of the Spurs.” In order to understand the significance of this conflict—which justly ranks as one of the decisive battles of the world—it is necessary to go back three-quarters of a century to the Baldwin of Constantinople, or the impostor who assumed his name and came to an ignominious end on the gibbet at Lille. This was in the year 1225. The following year Philip Augustus forced or persuaded Margaret, Baldwin’s younger daughter, to leave the loyal Fleming to whom she had been married almost since childhood and wed one of his retainers, William of Dampierre. Then, during a period of more than fifty years, the Kings of France were able to exert a steadily increasing influence in Flanders and reduce the country more and more completely to a French province. Finally, in 1296, the exactions of the French monarch—who, at that time, was Philip the Fair—became so humiliating that Margaret’s son, Guy of Dampierre, then the reigning Count, rebelled. A brief war followed, ending in Guy’s utter defeat and imprisonment, and in 1300 all Flanders was formally annexed to the French crown.

Instead of submitting tamely to this act of aggression, the Flemish burghers were roused to fight more furiously for their fatherland than they had ever done for their Count. At Bruges a true leader of the people appeared in the person of Peter de Coninck, the dean of the then all-powerful Guild of the Weavers, and one of the most picturesque figures in mediæval history. Small and ill-favoured in face and figure, with only one eye, and speaking no language but Flemish, he was able to arouse the citizens to the wildest pitch of fury against their aggressors. Another popular hero of the hour was John Breidel, Dean of the Butchers’ Guild, and reputed to be one of the richest men in Bruges; while a third was William of Juliers, Provost of Maestricht—a Churchman turned soldier for the cause of liberty. These three raised the standard of the Lion of Flanders to which rallied the Clauwaerts, as the Nationalist partisans were called; while the friends of France were

named—after the Lily of France—the Liliaerts. The latter naturally included the magistrates and office-holders of the leading towns, and in 1301, when Philip made a triumphal progress through the chief cities of his new dominions, he was everywhere received with much outward pomp.

STATUE OF PETER DE CONINCK AND JOHN BREIDEL, BRUGES.

At Bruges the official reception was the most gorgeous of all, the rich gowns of the wives and daughters of the burghers causing Queen Isabella to exclaim, “I thought I was alone Queen, but here I see six hundred!” The mass of the people, however, were cold and sullen, and when the King proclaimed some public games no one would take part in them. Hardly had the royal party left the city before an insurrection broke out. De Coninck was arrested, but his followers burst into the prison, and, for a time, the leaders of the Liliaerts were behind the bars. A French force soon entered the city and set them free, and De Coninck fled to Damme, where the Lion of Flanders waved unmolested over a rapidly increasing host of Clauwaerts.

On the 17th of May, 1302, a still stronger army of French entered the city, and it was rumoured that a general massacre of the Clauwaerts was planned for the morrow. Without waiting for the blow to be struck, the men from Damme and the surrounding towns, under the leadership of De Coninck and John Breidel, poured into the city before daybreak and roaring “*Schilt end vriendt*”—a battle-cry and password that no Frenchman could pronounce—they overwhelmed the partisans of the Lily. So sudden and unexpected was the attack, in the darkness and among narrow streets with which they were not acquainted, that the two thousand French knights who had entered the city so gaily on the previous day could offer no resistance and were slaughtered almost to a man. Barely forty escaped to tell King Philip of the massacre, while no record was made of the number of Liliaerts among the Flemings themselves who were in the heaps of dead that for three days thereafter were being buried in the fields outside of the city. This was the famous Matin de Bruges, hardly a glorious day’s work considered as a feat of arms, but bold enough when regarded as a defiance by the artisans of a single industrial town of the most powerful monarch of the age.

Philip, as was to be expected, was furious, and at once gathered an army the like of which had never before been seen in France; while all Flanders, with the exception of Ghent which the French still held, rallied to the support of De Coninck and his comrades. Scores of Flemish nobles were at that time languishing in French prisons, but those who were free to come enlisted under the Lion of Flanders. The army of defence consisted for the most part, however, of workingmen—members of the great guilds of Bruges, Ypres, Audenaerde and the other Flemish towns, with seven hundred even from Ghent. Each guild marched under its gorgeous banner, the men armed with long pikes, iron lances, short swords, and a sort of club which they derisively called “*goedendag*,” or “good morning.” On the eve of the battle a conference was held by the leaders of the army of defence, this being the scene depicted in the fine fresco in the Hotel de Ville.

About nine or ten in the morning of the following day the French army, some forty thousand strong, was seen approaching, led by the youthful Count of Artois. After a reconnoitre two experienced officers advised the

young Prince not to attack the Flemings at once, but to worry them with his archers and separate them from the town where their baggage and provisions were. “These people have to eat three, or four times a day—when they start to retreat, fall on them, you will quickly win,” they counselled him.

This sage advice did not appeal to the impetuous young Count, or to his valiant knights, who were burning with eagerness to avenge the Matin de Bruges. They confidently expected that at the very sight of their host, for the most part mounted knights, the cowardly townsmen would turn and run. Nor did they pay much heed to the shrewdness and skill with which the Flemish leaders had chosen their position. In the marshy ground in front of the Flemish army were many streams and canals, the water concealed by brushwood, while the River Lys and the fortifications of the town protected them against an attack on either flank or in the rear.

As the French knights rode forward the first ranks plunged into the hidden canals and streams with which the marsh—since known as the Bloed Meersch, or Bloody Marsh—was intersected. Then, as five centuries later at Waterloo, each succeeding rank pushed in the one before it, the canals became choked with drowning men and struggling horses, and it was not until these obstacles were literally filled with dead bodies that any part of the great French host could approach the Flemish lines. Then the Flemish guildsmen were for a moment hard pressed, but they quickly rallied and the proud French nobles were beaten down beneath their cruel pikes and clubs by hundreds. The Count of Artois himself led the reserves into the mêlée when the day was all but lost and fought his way clear to the great standard of the Lion of Flanders, at the foot of which he fell. Their leader killed, the French sought to flee, but the rout and slaughter lasted through the long summer twilight and far into the night.

According to an ancient chronicle, twenty thousand Frenchmen went down to death that day, including seven thousand knights, eleven hundred nobles, seven hundred lords, and sixty-three counts, dukes or princes. As to these statistics they differ in every history, but certain it is that the flower of French chivalry perished in unheard of numbers before the onslaught of the Flemish townsmen, and it is said that in all France there was no great house that did not mourn a father, a brother or a son.

To the men of Flanders, on the other hand, the victory was complete beyond their wildest dreams. They piously gave thanks to Notre Dame de Groeninghe, the Abbey overlooking the Bloody Marsh, and hung up seven hundred golden spurs taken from the battlefield in the Church of Notre Dame. For a time Philip the Fair sought to prolong the conflict, but his losses had been too terrible in this battle for him to risk another one against the now thoroughly aroused guildsmen, and a few years later a treaty was signed that completely rescinded the act of annexation and recognised the independence of Flanders once more.

In the little Museum of Paintings we found a most interesting picture of the famous battle by the great Belgian artist, Nicaise de Keyser. It is said that the historian Voisin suggested this subject to the painter, then a young man of twenty-three, and he devoted eight months to its execution. Exhibited at the Salon at Brussels in 1836, it made a sensation through its merit, the historical importance of the subject and the youth of the artist, and was purchased by the city of Courtrai by means of a popular subscription. It represents the decisive moment of the battle when the Count of Artois, unhorsed and disarmed, is about to be killed by the leader of the butchers’ guild, John Breidel. The museum contains a number of other interesting works by Belgian painters, chiefly modern, including one by Constantin Meunier, and a number by natives of Courtrai. This last feature is characteristic of all these little museums and is a most happy idea. In France the museums of fine arts in the provincial towns often form in themselves admirable memorials of the famous artists who were born or worked there, the names of the most important being carved about the frieze or brought to mind in some equally prominent way. In years to come it is to be hoped that these little Flemish towns can follow this example and erect suitable structures to house their art treasures—of which such a collection as this one at Courtrai forms a fine nucleus—and in so doing strive to commemorate all of those to whom the town is indebted for its artistic fame. In the case of Courtrai the roster would be a long one, for local authorities have recorded the names of more than two hundred painters, sculptors, architects, engravers, metal-workers, miniaturists and master-makers of tapestries.

Unlike many Flemish towns, Courtrai is less renowned for its churches than for its civic monuments. The great church of St. Martin, whose picturesque Gothic tower rises high above the Grande Place, although the edifice itself is some hundred yards distant from the Place itself, dates from 1382, when an older church on the same site was burned by the victorious troops of Charles VI when they sacked the city after the Battle of Rosbecque. It was completed in 1439 and contains a number of interesting paintings and carvings, several of them by local artists and sculptors. The more important Church of Notre Dame, with its square unfinished tower, dates from 1211 and was founded by Baldwin of Constantinople. At that time the Counts of Flanders had a castle at Courtrai and it was at the side of this that Count Baldwin and his fair wife Marie located their great church, of which the foundation stone was laid before the Count departed on the crusade from which he was destined never to return. In the Chapel of the Counts, which was built in the fourteenth century, are mural paintings of the Counts and Countesses of Flanders, the earlier ones dating from the century during which the chapel itself was constructed.

The artistic masterpiece of this church is the “Raising of the Cross,” by Van Dyck. This fine picture was painted for this very church and was delivered by the artist in 1631, the church still possessing his receipt for the one hundred livres de gros (about two hundred and twenty dollars) paid for it. In 1794 the picture was carried to Paris and placed in the Louvre, and on its restoration to the Netherlands was several years in the museum at Brussels, being returned to its proper place in Notre Dame in 1817. During the night of December 6th-7th, 1907, it was mysteriously stolen, its disappearance causing a great commotion, but January 23rd it was discovered in a field at Pitthem, where it had lain exposed to the rain and sunshine since its removal from the church. Apparently the robbers had become frightened and abandoned it, or possibly were prevented from returning to get it by the hue and cry that had been raised. At any rate, it did not seem to be much the worse for its little outing, and was duly hung up again where any tourist who has a franc to spare can see it.

It was in Notre Dame that the victors after the battle of Courtrai hung up seven hundred golden spurs, more or less, picked up from the battle-field. These were hung in a little side chapel at present decorated by two black lions, but the original spurs were taken away when the French sacked the city after the disastrous battle of Rosbecque.

A little beyond this interesting old church the rue Guido Gezelle—named after the poet who for many years was a *vicaire* at Notre Dame and whose bust stands in a little *bosquet*, or wooded parklet, hard by—conducts us to the famous old Broel towers which guard an ancient bridge across the Lys. These fine specimens of mediæval military architecture are in an admirable state of preservation. The Spuytorre, or Southern tower, was first built by Philip of Alsace in the twelfth century, was pillaged, and perhaps wholly destroyed, by Charles VI and restored or rebuilt by Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1386. There was not much to see in this tower, save some dungeons below. The Inghelbrugtorre, or South tower, was built at the same time as the bridge, in 1411-1413. There was formerly an archeological museum in this tower, but we were told that it had been removed to the Grandes Halles, near the railroad station, which have recently been restored. We subsequently visited the collections there, which were very interesting but too miscellaneous to be described. Returning from the towers by the rue de Groeninghe we paid a brief visit to the fine monument of the Battle of Groeninghe, which is the Flemish name for the Battle of the Spurs. At the summit a bronze Pucelle of Flanders brandishes a *goedendag*, one of the celebrated war-clubs that did such deadly work on that famous day. This monument, by Godefroid Devreese, a native of Courtrai, was erected by popular subscription in 1905.

It is in these smaller Flemish towns that the visitor who takes the time to journey a little away from the closely built houses and rough paved streets of the city will find himself after a few minutes of brisk walking out in the green fields and winding lanes of the open country. The trip is well worth the small exertion, for nowhere in the world can one see such marvellous wild flowers—*fleurs des champs*—as in Belgium. Every wheat field is sprinkled with the most wonderful poppies, of a rich deep red that even the choicest artificial flowers in America cannot equal; with blue corn-flowers growing tall and big and of an indescribably deep blue that at times shades into purple; and along the edges is a thin fringe of small purple flowers, shaped like morning glories but much smaller, the English name of which I do not know. In the grass of the pasture lands are innumerable tiny white marguerites, with here and there a tuft of daisies. Along the country lanes one can pick a score of other varieties of wild flowers which here bloom all summer long, not to mention the exquisite purple heather that makes every hillside glow with colour in August and throughout the fall. To us, however, the wheat fields with the poppies and corn-flowers were by far the most charming as we wandered up and down West Flanders in the month of June. Often one or the other grew so profusely as to give the whole field a rich mass of colour, at times all red, in other places a solid blue.

As we strolled along through these flower gardens of the fields we enjoyed still another treat, for everywhere in Belgium the skylarks abound in myriads. To one who has never heard them there are few enjoyments more exquisite than to watch and listen as these tiny minstrels of the sky go through their little performance. Suddenly, almost before the eye can locate it, one shoots upward from the waving wheat in front of us, his rich trills fairly making the air vibrate with melody. Higher and yet higher he goes, his little wings struggling wildly, as if the effort of flying and singing at the same time was too much for him. Never, for an instant, however, does the music stop, and as his tiny form rises farther and farther into the air he gradually begins to drive forward in a wide curve—but still rising and still fluttering madly—until he becomes a mere speck against the sky. Then, all at once, the fluttering wings spread outward and are still, and he begins to volplane slowly downward in a long slow sweep, while his notes become if possible more shrill and vibrating than ever. Then, like a flash, as he nears the ground, he darts sharply out of sight and the song is over.

All day long the pleasant, flower-bedecked fields ring with this music—at times a dozen are singing in the air at once. When the sun is high the birds often rise until completely out of sight, only their falling music telling the listener that they are still there. Toward evening the flights are shorter, but as the calm of approaching night settles over the broad and peaceful fields it seems as if the songs are sweeter than at any other time.

Two of the greatest English poets have given us wonderful word pictures of this marvellous little bird, which surely sings as sweetly in Belgium as in England. Shelley in his famous Ode, describes the song itself; his metre imitating the breathless rush of the aerial notes:

> “Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
> Bird thou never wert,
> That from Heaven, or near it,
> Pourest thy full heart
> In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.
>
> “Higher still and higher
> From the earth thou springest,
> Like a cloud of fire;
> The deep blue thou wingest,
> And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.”

In Wordsworth’s noble lines the thought is less upon the song, but dwells upon the mother bird and her hidden nest:

> “Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
> Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
> Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
> Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
> Thy nest, which thou canst drop into at will,

Those quivering wings composed, that music still!”

CHAPTER IX

GHENT IN THE DAYS OF THE FLEMISH COUNTS

During the Middle Ages Ghent was, for nearly five centuries, one of the greatest cities in the Occidental world. “If you have ever been in Flanders,” wrote Jean Froissart, near the close of the fourteenth century, “you are aware that Ghent is the sovereign city of Flanders in power, in wisdom, in government, in the number of its houses, in position and in all else that goes to make a great and noble city, and that three great rivers serve to bring to it ships from every part of the world.” After further eulogising the three rivers referred to, which were the Scheldt, the Lys and the Lieve, the chronicler of Valenciennes added that the city could put eighty thousand men in the field, and that it would require a host of two hundred thousand warriors to capture it. These statements, though no doubt exaggerations, do not seem to the tourist so impossible of belief as corresponding figures regarding the former greatness of the other cities in Flanders, for Ghent is still “a great and noble city,” while some of its once puissant rivals are now little more than country villages. In fact, to the visitor who approaches the centre of the town from either of its two principal railway stations—it has five in all—the city seems to be essentially a modern one, with fine streets similar in every way to those to be found in Antwerp or Brussels, and it is therefore with a shock of surprise that he suddenly finds himself riding past one hoary old structure after another whose frowning grey walls and massive architecture bespeak an antiquity strangely at variance with their surroundings.

To the Professor, and to all students of the thrilling history of this famous old Flemish town, the most interesting of these reminders of the Ghent of five hundred or one thousand years ago is the imposing Château des Comtes, or Castle of the Counts, the ruins of which stand in the very heart of the town with the busy life and bustle of the Ghent of to-day surging about them. Hither, as soon as our belongings were safely deposited in the hotel, we came—almost as a matter of course. In part this magnificent relic of the feudal ages dates from the ninth century, when it was called the new castle, *Novum Castellum*, to distinguish it from a still older castle situated hard by that was destroyed about the year 1010. Two of the three stories composing this original structure are still intact and can be seen by the visitor when he inspects the cellar of the keep. Here the columns and arches are of later construction, but the walls—which are over five and a half feet thick—are the work of builders who put these stones in place more than a thousand years ago. It was in 1180, according to the Latin inscription that can still be read just inside of the main entrance from the Place Ste. Pharaïlde, that Philip of Alsace—son of the Dierick of Alsace who brought the Holy Blood to the chapel of St. Basil at Bruges—erected the present structure. Its purpose was “to check the unbounded arrogance of the inhabitants of Ghent, who had become too proud of their riches and of their fortified houses, which looked like towers.” The Count had been in Palestine two years before and had greatly admired some of the strong castles erected there by the crusaders and instructed his builders to imitate these models, which he no doubt described to them.

CASTLE OF THE COUNTS, GHENT.
Photograph by E. Sacré.

After inspecting the remains of the earlier castle we mounted the staircase at the left of the entrance tower. This leads to the top of the outer castle wall and can be followed entirely around the great ellipse formed by

the complete structure. From every side fine views can be had of the surrounding city and the moat and River Lieve which guard the castle on the opposite side from the Place. Coming to the square tower behind the entrance gateway we were shown a room on the first story formerly used as a prison and torture chamber. From the top of this tower the banner of the Count was hoisted when the men of Ghent were called upon to follow their over-lord to war. The gateway below, at the corner of the Place Ste. Pharaïlde and the rue de la Monnaie, has a tragic interest from the fact that here were placed the two railings, called *les bailles*, between which those sentenced to death by the Council of Flanders were executed. Executions also often took place in the outer courtyard between the exterior wall and the Keep, or inner structure. In this yard, in 1445, the procession of the Order of the Golden Fleece formed for its march to the church of St. Bavon, and one can imagine how gay with banners and fair ladies the old castle must have been on that occasion.

The inner castle, usually styled the Palace, was the actual residence of the Counts of Flanders whenever they chanced to be stopping in the city. Thanks to the skilful restoration of the government, the various parts of this edifice can be seen in approximately their original condition, save for the rich tapestries and the scant but solid furniture with which the rooms were formerly made habitable. The chambers of the Count and Countess are particularly fine specimens of the living quarters of the mediæval nobility, quite apart from their many historic associations. Below the former is the entrance to the underground prison built by Philip of Alsace. It is eighteen feet deep, and extends ten and one-half feet below the level of the courtyard, while one of the walls is seven and the others six feet thick. A little air filters in from a zig-zag opening in one wall, but no light. The prisoners were let down into this horrible cavern by means of a ladder, or a basket attached to a rope, after which even the opening by which they entered was closed and they were left alone in the dark. For more than six centuries this cell was in constant use, and one cannot but wonder whether milady the Countess in her sweet chamber overhead ever had her dreams troubled by visions of the despairing victims in their beds of slime who were here awaiting the Count’s decision as to their final fate. It seems that this prison, fearful though it must have been to those incarcerated there, was not one of those *oubliettes* of which the Bastille and many another mediæval castle had so many. So far as known, it was only used for prisoners awaiting trial, or as a species of solitary confinement for serious crimes. In 1657 a school-teacher accused of teaching heretical doctrines to his pupils was confined here thirteen months, but there is no record of any one being flung down into this pit to be “forgotten.” Still, it must be said that such proceedings would not be likely to become a matter of record, and very little is known about what went on behind these grim walls when the Counts of Flanders and Dukes of Burgundy held absolute and undisputed sway. Any one who asked inconvenient questions would very probably have come here himself!

The Great Hall, which is about one hundred and twenty-five feet long by from fifty to sixty feet in width, is a chapter in the history of Flanders by itself. Here the Counts, and their successors, the Dukes of Burgundy, held many of their great banquets and state functions of various kinds. Louis of Maele in 1346 and Philip the Good in 1445 gave state banquets in this hall of which long accounts have been preserved in the contemporary chronicles. The latter, which was held on the occasion of the seventh meeting of the Knights of the Golden Fleece already mentioned, must have been quite a tremendous affair. At one end of this Hall the Council of the Vieux-Bourg used to pronounce sentence upon prisoners, and half a dozen famous treaties and many of minor importance were proclaimed in this room. No doubt, also, the Great Hall was used as the chief living-room of the castle on less formal occasions, when the Count and Countess perhaps dined on a raised dais at one end, while the throng of courtiers and retainers feasted noisily farther down the hall. On such occasions one can imagine how the great stone fireplace, a dozen feet wide and seven or eight feet high, must have roared, while the torches and candles used to supplement the feeble light from the narrow windows flared and sent their smoke up to the grimy rafters overhead. The great room, now so empty and silent, was then gay with the variegated costumes of the olden time, while its walls echoed to the songs and laughter of the boisterous throng.

There are half a score of other rooms to be seen: the kitchen with its fireplace big enough to roast an ox whole; the residence of the Castellane or keeper of the castle; the small audience chamber near the bedrooms of their highnesses—which was used on ordinary occasions instead of the great hall—and several others. Of them all the most interesting is the ancient stable, which is entered from the castle yard. It seems hard to believe that this vast vaulted room, with its splendid columns and Romanesque arches was ever designed or used as a stable, but such the historians all aver was the case. In appearance it resembles an early church or chapel. In a glass case at one side is a gruesome collection of skeletons that were uncovered here in 1904, presumably those of prisoners who were secretly executed no one knows how many years ago. After the fourteenth century the castle ceased to be occupied by the sovereigns as a residence, and the stable, no longer needed for horses, became a torture chamber and continued to be used for this purpose until the close of the eighteenth century. It is here that the beautiful and unfortunate Jacqueline, Countess of Hainaut and Holland, is said to have been confined by Philip the Good when that amiable monarch was trying to persuade her to part with her patrimony. She resisted bravely and was finally released, but her powerful and wily antagonist subjugated her at last. The Professor read, or was told, that there is another prison cell below the waters of the moat, and also a passage, miles in length, leading out to the open country and intended for escape in case a foe besieging the castle seemed likely to take it, but these we were not able to discover nor did the official guide to the castle appear to know anything about them.

Speaking of sieges, the castle has witnessed more than one. The *Novum Castellum*, which preceded the present edifice, was besieged in 1128 by Dierick of Alsace. In 1302, a few months before the Battle of the Spurs, the citizens of Ghent rose en masse against the sheriffs of King Philip of France, who took refuge here. The infuriated crowd, armed with pikes, axes and swords, beat upon the gates and finally set fire to the castle. At this the besieged gave up, and all within were forced to run a fearful gauntlet. Without the castle gates the people formed a dense mass, bristling with pikes and spears, through which a narrow lane was kept open. As the late defenders of the castle emerged they had to pass down this avenue of steel, and whoever had committed any crime against the burghers never reached the farther end alive, whether he was one of the lord high sheriffs or a page. In 1338 the Count himself, Louis of Maele, was here besieged by Jacques Van

Artevelde, and forced to make terms with the great tribune.

The later history of the structure itself is interesting and curious. Already in 1302 hovels had been built against the castle walls on the land side. In 1350 a mint was installed within the castle, where it remained until suppressed in the sixteenth century, and from the same year the Court of the Count held sessions here. It was used less and less as a residence after this, but from 1407 to 1778 was the seat of the Council of Flanders, which succeeded the Court of the Counts. In 1779 the buildings used by the court were sold and in 1797 and 1798 those of the Assembly of the Vieux Bourg also passed into private hands. The Castellany of the Vieux Bourg was for many years a public inn, and in 1807 a factory was established in the Keep, the Great Hall being used as a machine-room. The Castellany then became a cotton spinning mill, was partly burned in 1829, but rebuilt and continued in use as a mill until 1884. Meanwhile other small buildings were erected around the old walls until they were entirely concealed, and a guidebook of this period states that of the old castle “nothing now remains but the entrance.” In 1887 some archeologists stirred the municipal and national governments to action with a view to saving and restoring this splendid monument of the Middle Ages, the Gateway having already been acquired by the nation in 1872. The work of demolishing the buildings that had clustered about the old walls and of restoration lasted from 1889 till 1913, when at last the structure was brought into the condition that the visitor beholds to-day. In its present form it is unquestionably one of the most interesting and important examples of feudal architecture in Europe. Within its sombre walls the student has, in records of stone, an epitome of the history of ten centuries.

The Professor informed us that, in the course of his researches, he had run across a reference to some legend or popular tradition concerning a siege of Ghent in the year 930, or thereabouts, by the Kings of England, Scotland and Ireland. The city, according to this tale, was bravely defended by Dierick, Lord of Dixmude, and all the attacks of the besiegers were repelled for many months. Their majesties from across the Channel were naturally much incensed at this unexpected resistance, and warned the burghers and their valiant chief that if they did not surrender within twenty-four hours, they would raze the city to the ground and sow corn on its ruins. Notwithstanding this threat, to the fulfilment of which the kings aforesaid took a mighty oath, the men of Ghent fought stubbornly on, and finally the besiegers were forced to give up their enterprise. The English monarch, however, in order to fulfil his vow and thereby ease his conscience, humbly begged permission of the victors to allow him to throw a grain of corn in the market-place. This modest request was granted, but to prevent any such stratagem as the one that proved so successful in the famous siege of Troy, a tiny hole was made in the city wall and the monarch required to crawl through alone, returning the same way after the corn-throwing performance was over. From this circumstance the name of Engelande-gat was derisively given to the little street leading from the Bestroom-Porte to St. Michel—a name which Pryse L. Gordon in his book on Holland and Belgium, written in 1834, stated was still retained at that time. We were unable to find it, however, in one of our early morning tramps, although we found a rue d’Angleterre which runs into the Place St. Michel directly in front of the church, and may have derived its name from that of the earlier street which, quite possibly, it may have replaced. The great plan of the city drawn by Hondius shows a vast number of streets and lanes that to-day have entirely disappeared. The legend, however, may have had some basis in fact, although the three kings were no doubt a fanciful embellishment added by the peasants as they repeated the story of some early attack. There were plenty of small potentates in those days prowling about to seize whatever was not well defended, or gave promise of rich booty, without going across the Channel to look for them.

It was at about this period, in fact a little earlier, that another of the famous “monuments” of Ghent was erected. This is the Abbey of St. Bavon, which alone would justify a visit to the city if there were nothing else to see. A primitive abbey on this site is said to have been founded about the year 631 by St. Amand, an early missionary, who dedicated it to St. Peter. One of this prelate’s converts was a rich nobleman named Allowin, who took the name of Bavon on his conversion and retired into a monastery. A second abbey took the name of St. Bavon, the deceased monk having been canonized, and around these two religious institutions a little settlement grew up that was destined to expand into the mighty city of Ghent. At St. Bavon, therefore, the visitor beholds not merely the ruins of an ancient and famous abbey but the birthplace of the city that has played so great a part in the history of Flanders and of Europe. When Baldwin II died his widow, the daughter of Alfred the Great, had him buried at the monastery of St. Peter, to which she made liberal donations. Successive Counts and Countesses followed this example, the two abbeys becoming rich and powerful, and the town soon became the home of numerous merchants who took advantage of the protection afforded by these religious institutions, and also of the strategic location of the town at the junction of three rivers. The Quai au Blé and the Quai aux Herbes date from this epoch, the merchants speedily establishing a market for the sale of grain and other products. The Fish Market and the famous Marché du Vendredi, or Friday Market, soon followed and Ghent had begun the development that was destined to make it, for three centuries, one of the greatest trading centres in the world.

The present buildings of the Abbey date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the original structures having been destroyed during the tenth century. It was during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that the Abbey attained the zenith of its power. Here, in 1369, was solemnised the marriage of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, with Margaret, the daughter of Louis of Maele, the last of the Counts of Flanders to be known by that title only. This event virtually ended the long line of Flemish Counts, for the title thereafter became one of many similarly held by the powerful Dukes of Burgundy and their successors and was only used on state occasions, or when it served their purpose. The unfortunate Michelle, the first wife of Philip the Good, was interred here. By a strange irony of fate it was Charles the Fifth of all men, the valiant Protector of the Faith, head and front of the monarchs who remained steadfastly loyal to the Catholic Church, who began the work of destroying this splendid and ancient monastery. To build the great fortress by which he held in awe the turbulent citizens of Ghent he ordered the demolishment of a considerable part of its buildings and the erection on its site of his citadel, the *Château des Espagnols*. The Calvinists continued the work of destruction in 1581, the French wrecking the buildings still further, and the revolt of 1830 completing the ruin of what was in its day of prosperity one of the finest monastic institutions in Europe.

Since 1834 the ruins have been carefully protected against further injury; and, as they stand, give the observer a most imposing realisation of their former grandeur. The Refectory, or dining-hall, is still fairly intact, and is used as a museum of sculptures saved from the wreck of the other buildings, and including some found in other parts of the city. One of these is a tombstone thought to be that of Hubert Van Eyck, while another is the *Homme du Beffroi*, one of the four stone statues erected in 1338 on the corners of the Belfry. A baptismal font found in the ruins of the Abbey contains a curious bas-relief representing Adam and Eve being expelled from Paradise. It is not, however, in these detached items that the visitor will find the chief interest and inspiration of the ancient Abbey, but in the general views that in every direction give a conception of the former vast extent and richness of the buildings. In their present condition the ruins form a series of pictures of wonderful beauty, not only in the remains of their architectural and artistic splendour, but because Nature, kinder than man, has covered the scars made by the despoilers with her choicest tapestries of trailing vines and glowing flowers and spread her softest carpets of verdure along the silent and deserted cloisters.

RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF ST. BAVON, GHENT.

Returning to the heart of the city, another memento of the earliest period of the city's growth attracted our attention. This was the Château of Girard le Diable (Girard the Devil) the first of the "monuments" to be encountered if one arrives by the Southern railway station. This edifice, now completely restored and used as the depository of the provincial archives, dates from 1216. Apart from the exterior, however, which reproduces the original appearance of the castle, the only portion of interest to the visitor is the crypt which is over one hundred feet long and nearly forty-five feet in width, making it one of the largest in Flanders. The vaulted roof is supported by massive round columns and forms a notable example of the ogival style of architecture. We sought in vain to find what the noble Sir Girard did or did not do to receive his satanic appellation. From the records he appears to have been a tolerably worthy citizen, holding, as did his father before him, the position of Châtelain of Ghent. A fortunate marriage, apparently, gave him the means to erect this exceptionally fine castle, which has—like many of the old buildings in the city—had a most varied history. For two or three centuries it remained the residence of the Châtelains of Ghent, then, for a time, was used by the city as an arsenal, was occupied by the Hiéronimites, and then became in succession a school, a mad-house, an orphan asylum, a house of correction, and a fire house. Its spacious halls now contain the precious charters of the Counts of Flanders and innumerable historic documents of Ghent and the other cities of the province.

The most ancient church in Ghent is that of St. Nicholas in the Marché aux Grains. It was founded in 912, or slightly more than a thousand years ago. The original edifice was burned in 1120, so that the present structure dates from that century. A picturesque feature of the exterior is the row of tiny one-story houses snuggling up against the side of the great church on the rue Petite Turquis. The west window is an extremely lofty lancet of great beauty. The doorway on this side was for many years crowded between commonplace three-story houses, the church builders of Flanders apparently caring very little how the imposing majesty of their noble churches might be marred by adjacent buildings, but these have now been removed and this front of the structure cleared.

Among the treasures of this church are the relics of St. Anne, said to have been brought from Jerusalem by Godfrey of Bouillon. In the sacristy is some oil from the tomb of St. Nicholas of Myra and Bari, after whom the church was named. This saint died in 342 and is the subject of many picturesque mediæval legends. Even in infancy he is alleged to have observed the fasts, refusing the breast of his nurse. He used to look particularly after children, young women, sailors and travellers. On one occasion he came to an inn where the wicked inn-keeper fed his guests with the flesh of young children. St. Nicholas immediately went to the tub where the bodies of the innocents lay in brine and, reviving them, restored them all alive and whole again to their parents. This incident is frequently depicted by Flemish painters. After his death the bones of the Saint were buried at Myra, but were stolen some centuries later—according to certain monkish chronicles—and, after

many adventures in which the spirit of the deceased prelate participated, the oil which was found in his sarcophagus was brought here. Jean Lyon, Dean of the guild of boatmen, and one of the heroes of the White Hoods in their resistance to the cruel Louis de Maele, was buried in this church.

One of the other churches of Ghent, the Cathedral of St. Bavon, dates in part from the same early period as the other monuments described in this chapter. Originally dedicated to St. John, the name was changed to St. Bavon in 1540 and it became a cathedral nine years later. It is not, however, the cathedral—of which the nave and transepts were not completed until 1533 to 1559—but the earlier church of St. Jean that figures in the history of Ghent under Counts of Flanders. Of this church the crypt, which dates from the eleventh or twelfth century, and the choir, dating from the thirteenth century, still remain. Our exploration of the cold and gloomy crypt served to bring back the earlier period of the history of Ghent in two ways—not only is its present appearance undoubtedly much the same as it was eight or nine centuries ago, when the city of the weavers was just beginning to make its power and fame known in the land, but the historian sees here the tombs of many of the great men of the city. For the most part there were merchant princes, aristocrats, the leaders of the Liliaert faction—those who sided with the King of France and took his lilies as their emblem.

Under its early Flemish Counts, the history of Ghent was, on the whole, one of rapid and almost uninterrupted expansion. The merchants who flocked to the little town around the Abbeys of St. Peter and St. Bavon were followed by similar throngs of artisans, and as the commerce of the city grew apace so its industrial importance expanded. On the death of Philip of Alsace, who had erected the Château on the Place Ste. Pharaïlde to hold the city in check, its burghers wrested from the feeble hands of his widow the famous *Keure* of 1191, a sort of local Magna Carta which confirmed all pre-existing privileges and granted others. The same year the Treaty of Arras, by which Baldwin VIII ceded Arras and the County of Artois to Philip Augustus, the wily and land-grasping King of France, made Ghent virtually the capital of Flanders—a position that had hitherto been occupied by Bruges. Like its rival on the Roya, Ghent had become an important centre for the woollen trade with England, and also for all the branches of woollen manufacture, the “scarlets” of Ghent being renowned far and wide. The thirteenth century—in consequence of the folly of Baldwin of Constantinople who, as we have seen, went off on a fanatical enterprise to the Far East, leaving the richest county in the world at the mercy of his enemies—saw a steady decline in the power of the Counts; and, while the Kings of France profited mightily by this situation, the shrewd burghers of Ghent, Bruges, Ypres and the other powerful Flemish communes were not backward in extending and securing their own powers also. The result was that the successive Counts and Countesses were forced to submit to repeated encroachments on their authority. In 1228 Count Ferrand established a Council of thirty-nine members which soon became a virtual oligarchy and the actual ruler of the city. This body, while maintaining at first fairly friendly relations with the Counts, soon began to treat with other nations and the other cities in Flanders as if it was the actual sovereign. Then, as the King of France, toward the close of the thirteenth century, began to give evidence of an intention to seize the rich county of Flanders for himself—thus despoiling both the Counts and the burghers at the same time—Ghent joined heartily in the general movement toward a national resistance. In 1297 the Count Guy granted the city a new *Keure*, or charter, even more liberal than that of 1191, and formed an alliance with England against the common foe. This, however, came to nothing, and all Flanders was over-run by the victorious French troops. Ghent, after a brief resistance, yielded, and the French King, making liberal concessions to win the support of the most powerful of all the Flemish communes, the Liliaerts, or supporters of the Lily of France, were temporarily holding the upper hand when the astounding tidings came of the Battle of the Spurs.

CHAPTER X

THE AGE WHEN GHENT WAS GOVERNED BY ITS GUILDS

It was on the 12th of July, 1302, that the guildsmen of Flanders—chiefly, as we have seen, those from the two cities of Bruges and Ypres—humbled the chivalry of France and demonstrated the fact that the guilds of the great Flemish communes were a power to be reckoned with. Obviously, when the greatest monarch of the day had been so decisively beaten there was no longer any question as to the relative importance of the guilds and the local Counts of Flanders. The latter, though still figuring prominently in the history of the time, were unable to cope with the might of their united subjects, and only by the help of their overlords of France, by bribery and even by downright treachery, were they able to maintain themselves on their tottering thrones at all. This period is the most interesting in the long history of Flanders, for it was during the fourteenth century that the land of the Flemings just missed becoming a nation, and, possibly, a republic. That it failed was due to the fact that, while there existed a splendid and indomitable spirit of freedom in every true Flemish breast, the sense of loyalty was local instead of national. To his guild and his commune the Fleming was intensely loyal, but his patriotism—fine as it was—was too narrow. Each commune acted solely for itself, uniting with the others in time of great and impending peril, but often sending its armies to fight a sister commune over some trifling dispute as soon as the common danger was over. The princes were able, by cunningly taking advantage of this defect in the Flemish character, to play one commune against another and, by dividing the hosts of the guildsmen, to establish finally a tyranny too powerful to be thrown off. For one hundred and fifty years after the Battle of the Spurs, however, the guilds—although now and then temporarily defeated—were, in the main, supreme throughout the length and breadth of Flanders, and it was still another century before the last spark of civic freedom at

Ghent was finally extinguished.

Two days after the great fight at Courtrai the victors, headed by the redoubtable Peter de Coninck, William of Juliers and Guy of Namur, entered the city of Ghent and “converted” the too lukewarm magistrates to the popular side. The patrician Liliaerts were expelled from the magistracy and many were killed or driven from the city. The Count fought stubbornly on, nor did the war with France end immediately, but in almost every instance the guildsmen were able to maintain the results of their great victory and firmly establish the foundation of their power. In the government of the commune of Ghent their voice was a potent one. Naturally the wool-spinners and weavers were the dominant organisations, while the *petits-métiers*, or minor industries, were also represented.

The apprentice system was rigidly enforced among all the guilds, but the policy of the organisations was liberal in this respect—for example, an apprentice was often sent for a year’s journey in other cities or countries in order to obtain a wider knowledge of his craft. The guildsmen had a hearty and honest pride in good and skilful workmanship, and the officers of the guilds supervised the quality of the goods turned out and imposed penalties for poor workmanship or the use of inferior materials. Each guild had its own house or meeting-place, and while the fine guild houses on the Marché aux Grains date from a somewhat later period, they were no doubt preceded by earlier structures. It was one of the dreams of the Professor to rummage about in these ancient edifices, poring over the archives of the guilds and inspecting the rooms and halls where their ofttimes stormy meetings were held. In this he was destined to be disappointed, for while the exteriors of several of these historic buildings have been carefully restored, the interiors are now devoted to private uses and contain little of interest to the visitor. The archives have been, for the most part, preserved in the ancient castle of Girard the Devil. Some of the old guild banners still exist, but the guild houses themselves are only the empty shells of the powerful organisations that once made them their homes.

POST OFFICE, CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS, BELFRY AND CATHEDRAL, GHENT.
Photograph by E. Sacré.

The most famous structure in Flanders dates from this epoch in the town’s history. This is the Belfry that has looked down on the red roofs of Ghent for nearly six hundred years. The first Belfry was begun in 1183, but the present structure was built in 1313-1339, since when it has been several times modified and “restored”—not always successfully. The latest restoration was carried out by the municipal authorities as a preparation for the International Exposition held at Ghent in 1913 and was carefully and intelligently done. There are three hundred and fifty-five steps in the staircase by which visitors ascend the tower, and the climb is one that richly repays those who make it. On a clear day one can see beyond Bruges to the northwest, as far as Antwerp to the east and Audenaerde to the south. So densely peopled is the Flemish plain that these great cities lie almost close enough together to be within sound of great Roland.

This was the renowned bell which the burghers of Ghent had cast and hung high on their Belfry as an emblem of the city’s freedom from tyranny and a tocsin to summon the sturdy guildsmen to its defence when

danger threatened. It bore the following inscription in Flemish:

> Mynen naem is Roelant, als ick clippe dan ist brant
> Als icke luyde, dan ist storm in Vlaenderlandt.

Freely translated, this is what the bell gave as its autobiography:

> My name is Roland; when I speak softly there is fire at hand,
> But when I roar loudly it means war in Flanderland.

The original Roland was cast in 1314, or twelve years after the Battle of the Spurs. It weighed twelve thousand, five hundred pounds and was the pride of the city, but was destroyed by order of Charles V when he forced the burghers abjectly to submit to his despotism in 1540.

In the lower part of the tower is the “secret room” where from 1402 the burghers kept, behind triple doors as at Bruges, the charters and privileges of the city. The famous dragon at the tip of the spire was for centuries said to have been brought from the Orient at the time of Baldwin of Constantinople, but recent researches in the archives of the city have shown that it was made at Ghent in the year 1377-78. Adjoining the Belfry is the Cloth Hall erected for the most important of the city’s four hundred guilds. The upper hall is now used as a Bureau of Information for Tourists, while the lower one is a Rathskeller. Here the columns and vaulted roof greatly resemble the crypt of Girard the Devil’s castle, save that the little tables and excellent Munich and Pilsen to be had there make it decidedly more cheerful. The edifice was begun in 1425 and finished, or, at least, the work was stopped, in 1441. Behind the Cloth Hall, but nestling close against it, is the quaint little entrance to the communal prison, which was built in 1741 when the prisoners were confined on the lower floor of the Cloth Hall. Over the door at the top of the façade is the celebrated bas-relief representing the legend of the Mammelokker. The carving really tells all there is to the story; which is, in brief, that, on one occasion, when an old man was condemned to die of starvation, his daughter—who just then had a baby whom she was nursing—secretly gave the breast to her aged parent, thus saving his life.

While the Belfry was being built by the burghers of Ghent, France and England were drifting into the Hundred Years’ War. The Count of Flanders, Louis de Nevers, was ardently loyal to France and utterly blind to the interests of the great woollen manufacturing communes over which he ruled and to those of his own dynasty. In 1336, no doubt at the instance of the King of France, he ordered all the English merchants in Flanders to be arrested and their goods confiscated. The King of England, Edward III, promptly retaliated by prohibiting the exportation of wool from England to Flanders and the sale of Flemish woollens in his Kingdom. In a few months the Flemish communes of Ghent, Bruges and Ypres found themselves facing utter ruin as a result of this economic conflict. The spinners and weavers were idle, the markets deserted, actual starvation existed, and many of the guildsmen were forced to wander off into the countryside to beg for food.

It was at this critical moment that the great figure of Jacques Van Artevelde appears upon the stage of Flemish history. Son of a rich wool and cloth merchant who had been long prominent among the Clauwaerts, or foes of French domination, Jacques Van Artevelde was a man of wealth and position who by ancestry and calling was inclined to the popular rather than the aristocratic side. On December 28, 1337, he harangued the men of Bruges in behalf of peace with England, in spite of the obstinate and fatuous policy of the Count. As a result of his eloquence, abundantly enforced by the ruin and misery then prevailing on every side, the people decided unanimously to establish a revolutionary government, which was accomplished peacefully on the third of the following month. Van Artevelde was recognised as the foremost of the five captains then chosen to administer the government of the city, and was given a larger guard than his colleagues. The helpless Count of Flanders, unable to resist, was obliged to ratify the new policy of the burghers, and by the middle of the year 1338 the embargo was formally raised on both sides, the woollen industry started up once more, and Flanders was declared to be neutral as regarded the contest between its two powerful neighbours. In short, the wise policy of Van Artevelde was completely triumphant and the country again placed on the road to renewed prosperity.

Under the direction of the great tribune the weavers were now the dominant factor in the government of Ghent, and soon the influence of Van Artevelde made itself felt in Bruges, Ypres and all the other Flemish communes, where the guild leaders became likewise the heads of the magistracy. The Count strove to reassert his power, but Van Artevelde stormed the Castle and the prince was forced to accompany the men of Ghent to the annual procession at Tournai wearing their colours. The “White Hoods,” as the warriors of the popular party were called, destroyed the castles of several of the lesser nobility who dared to resist their authority and throughout all the land Van Artevelde reigned supreme. Edward III, after vainly endeavouring to win the Count of Flanders to his side by flattering matrimonial offers, ended by treating directly with Van Artevelde as if with a sovereign prince.

It was the genius of the great Ghent captain that conceived the brilliant idea of overcoming the reluctance of the Flemish communes to take sides with England against their feudal suzerain, the King of France, by having Edward claim the crown of France, and it was in consequence of his arguments that the English monarch finally took this bold but adroit step. On the 26th of January, 1340, the communes formally recognised Edward as their suzerain on the Marché du Vendredi at Ghent—one of the many great events that have taken place on that historic spot. The King made Ghent his headquarters, and it was in the old Castle of the Counts that his third son, known in English history as John of Gaunt (Ghent), was born. In the same year occurred the great Battle of Sluys, in which Edward III led the English ships of war into the harbour of that town where the French King Philip had assembled a vast fleet. The defeated Frenchmen leaped overboard in hundreds only to be slain by the Flemings as they swam ashore. No man dared tell the King of France of this great disaster until the royal jester broke the news by exclaiming, “The English cowards! Oh, the English cowards!” On the King’s inquiring what he meant by this, the jester replied, “They were afraid to jump into the sea as our brave Frenchmen did at Sluys!”

This brilliant year, however, saw the climax of the power of Van Artevelde. Already the other Flemish communes were beginning to grumble at his rule, outbreaks occurring at Audenaerde, Dendermonde and Ypres. King Edward began to besiege Tournai with the aid of Van Artevelde, but on the French King agreeing to a truce he returned to England, leaving his faithful ally to take care of himself as best he could. To make matters more difficult, he failed to pay the subsidies he had promised, and the tribune was violently accused of having played the people false. Meanwhile the guildsmen began to dispute between themselves, and on Monday, May 2, 1345, in spite of the entreaties of Van Artevelde, the fullers and weavers engaged in a bloody battle on the Marché du Vendredi in which the former with their *Doyen*, or leader, were massacred. This sad day was called the *Kwade Maendag*, or Bad Monday.

Early in July Van Artevelde had a last interview with Edward at Sluys. On his return to Ghent a mob of malcontents, led by men in the pay of Count Louis of Nevers, besieged the great tribune in his house, crying that he had betrayed the country. After vainly trying to argue with them, he reluctantly permitted himself to be drawn away from the window by his followers, who sought to persuade him to seek safety in flight. It was too late, however, as the mob had already burst into the house and one of them struck Van Artevelde dead on his own threshold. For nearly nine years he had been virtually a king in Flanders, his policy bringing unexampled prosperity to the country and to his native city.

Although often called a demagogue and a tyrant, Jacques Van Artevelde ranks as one of the foremost statesmen of his time. He died the “victim of a faction” and of treachery rather than a popular revolt against his policies, for the English alliance was steadfastly continued after his death. To-day his statue stands on the Marché du Vendredi, where, in 1340, he burned the papal interdict against Flanders. It represents him in the act of delivering the famous speech by which he won the allegiance of his fellow citizens to the English alliance. Count Louis profited little by his treachery, for a little over a year later, August 26, 1346, he fell in the great battle of Crécy where the English archers, fighting by the side of many Flemish guildsmen, gave the death blow to mediæval chivalry and utterly crushed the power of France.

The weavers, who under Van Artevelde had become the dominant power in all of the Flemish communes, soon had good reason to regret his fall, for the new Count, Louis of Maele—named like most of the Counts of Flanders from the place where he was born, the great castle of Maele—was able by liberal promises and the restoration of ancient charters and privileges to win the support of most of the cities. At Ghent the butchers, fish merchants, and boatmen’s guilds submitted, followed by the fullers and minor industries. The weavers, although their numbers had been greatly reduced by the plague, held out stubbornly, but were massacred on the Marché du Vendredi, Tuesday, January 13, 1349, their captain and their *Doyen*, Gérard Denys—the man who had slain Van Artevelde—being flung into the Lys. The victors called this bloody day *De Goede Disendach*, or Good Tuesday, and it certainly amply revenged the Bad Monday four years before when the weavers were the aggressors. The members of the unfortunate guild were now hunted down like dogs throughout all Flanders, great numbers fleeing to England where they established the weaving industry—King Edward wisely welcoming the exiles and giving them every aid in his power to settle in his Kingdom. Later the competition of these fugitives and their descendants gave Flanders good cause to rue the folly of the internal strife that thus drove away some of the best workmen in the country.

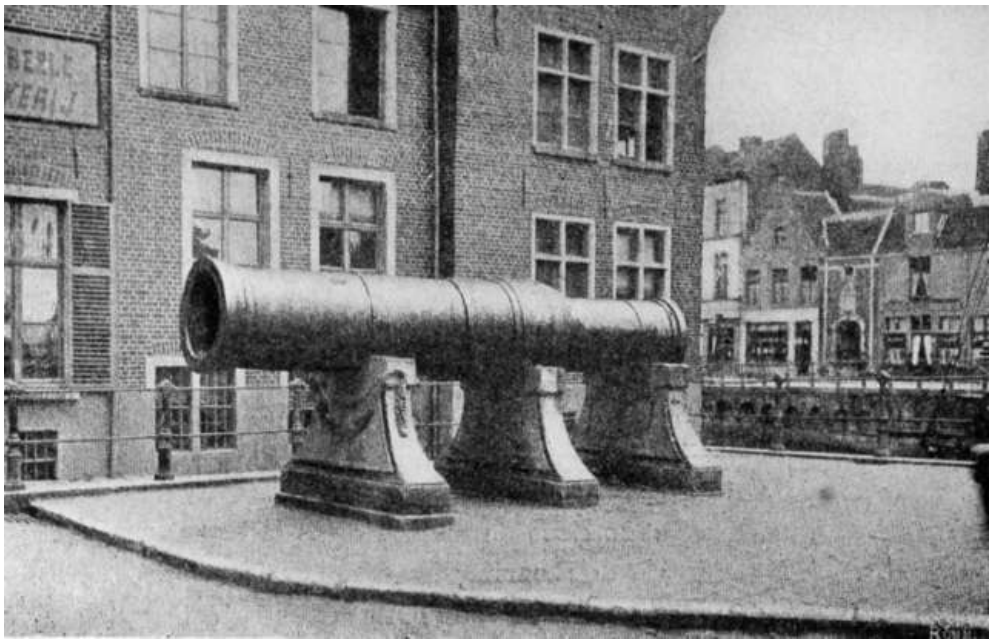
The numerical superiority of this guild, however, and the fact that its members were necessarily more skilled than the fullers, led to its gradual recovery, and by 1359 the weavers were again admitted to a share in the government of the communes and the fullers were relegated to the inferior position to which their smaller numbers and less skilled work entitled them. Louis of Maele made Bruges virtually his capital, but during the greater part of his reign of forty years was able to continue on fairly peaceful terms with the turbulent city of Ghent by means of a careful and detailed adjustment of the order of precedence between the various guilds which was devised about the year 1352 and continued in effect for nearly two centuries. In 1369 the daughter of the Count married Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy and brother of the King of France—an event full of dire significance for the guildsmen as it led to their having, in after years, the powerful Dukes of Burgundy as their over-lords instead of the comparatively feeble Counts of Flanders. In 1377 Count Louis held a great tournament in the Marché du Vendredi. Despite the long conflict between the guilds the city was at this period very prosperous.

The Count, however, who was always short of money, sold to the citizens of Bruges the right to construct a canal from their port to the River Lys. At this Ghent, headed by the Boatmen’s Guild, flew to arms and a civil war broke out in 1379, the men of Ghent fearing that they might lose their monopoly of the grain traffic. After various successes and reverses the Count besieged the city and had very nearly reduced it by starvation when Philip Van Artevelde, son of the famous tribune, came forward and was made Captain-General of the city, in 1382. The new leader, and a motley crowd of five thousand half-starved followers, marched on Bruges, where the Count, at the head of a host of over forty thousand, attacked them under the walls of the city. The larger army, however, was a mere rabble—over-confident and half intoxicated—and Van Artevelde won a complete victory. The Count of Flanders was compelled to hide for the night under a heap of straw in a poor woman’s hovel, and later escaped to Lille and so to France. Van Artevelde treated the captured city with generosity and was soon captain of all Flanders. His next battle was with the King of France, but this time he was less fortunate, and at Rosbecque, November 27, 1382, the Flemish host was cut to pieces and its leader slain. Louis of Maele himself died two years later, leaving the reputation of being the worst and weakest of the line of Flemish Counts, as well as the last. It was at his request that the French had invaded the country, which they swept with fire and sword after the defeat of the Flemish guildsmen, but the victory was of no benefit to the broken-down old man who no longer dared to show himself in Flanders and died at Paris in poverty and neglect.

As an offset to these remarks regarding the weakness of Louis of Maele it is only fair to that worthy to relate a little legend generally attributed to his reign. It is said that on a certain occasion the magistrates of Ghent—which was at the time renowned as the most opulent city in Europe—were invited to a great feast given in honour of some foreign king. Those in charge of the arrangements forgot, however, to put cushions on the

chairs and the men of Ghent accordingly threw their richly embroidered cloaks upon them, and retired when the feast was over without putting them on again. When reminded of this the Chief Magistrate replied, “The Flemings are not accustomed to carry their cushions with them.” Not only the grandees but the bourgeois citizens at this period were said to wear purple and fine linen. The baths, “stooven,” frequented by both sexes, became the scenes of great vice and disorder and one ancient chronicler reports an incredible number of murders as occurring during a single year at gaming tables and drinking places. All this would seem to show that Louis of Maele was not so bad a sovereign—for at least the country prospered under his rule—but in reality he had, as we have seen, very little to do either with the actual government or public policy during his long reign.

No visitor to Ghent fails to take a look at De Dulle Griete, or “Mad Margery,” Philip Van Artevelde’s big cannon that stands in the Mannekens Aert. According to Froissart, Van Artevelde took with him to the siege of Audenaerde “a bombard which was fifty feet in length, and shot stones of immense weight. When they fired off this bombard it might be heard five leagues off in the daytime, and ten at night. The report of it was so loud, that it seemed as if all the devils in hell had broken loose.” Mad Margery seems to have shrunk considerably since Froissart’s time, for she is now nineteen feet long and three feet in diameter at the mouth. The gun was made of wrought iron and weighs thirty-four thousand, one hundred and sixty-six pounds, and was capable of throwing a stone weighing seven hundred and eight pounds.



DE DULLE GRIETE, GHENT.

Another interesting monument dating from the same period in the city’s history as the Belfry is the Hospital of the Biloque or Biloke. Some of the buildings are of much more recent construction, but the Gothic chapel was built early in the thirteenth century, apparently about 1228, with a double gable and immense timber roof. The former Refectory offers an example of early brick work at one of its ends, *le beau pignon*, that is a joy to architects, and has often been described and illustrated in the technical books. The timber roof of this structure is also noteworthy. It is now used as a hospital for old men. This edifice is a century later than the chapel, while some of the other buildings date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Ghent contains two Béguinages, a circumstance that gives not a little trouble to visitors who in trying to visit one are about always—at least that was our experience on two occasions—directed to the other. Both are large, but one is more notable for its antiquity and the other for its size and the perfection of its appointments. The first Béguinage in Ghent was founded by Jeanne of Constantinople in 1233 as a place of refuge for women disciples of the church who in those evil days felt the need of protection, but did not desire to enter the conventual life. Little houses sprang up and the institution proved so popular that a second Béguinage was soon established which came to be called the Petit Béguinage. Protected by the successive Counts, and particularly by the patronage of the Countesses of Flanders, both institutions flourished and expanded steadily. The present Petit Béguinage de Notre Dame dates largely from the seventeenth century, and the Chapel and streets of tiny houses inhabited by the Béguines are most picturesque. It has accommodations for three hundred sisters. The Grand Béguinage de Ste. Elisabeth was confiscated during the French Revolution and the property presented to the almshouses of the city of Ghent. The Committee in charge of the almshouses suffered the Béguines to remain undisturbed, however, until 1872 when strained relations resulting from this arrangement led to the Béguines giving up their establishment, which was modernized by the authorities and many of its interesting features destroyed. The church remains, having become a parish church, and the rue des Prébendières retains its original appearance. Meanwhile, the Duke of Arenberg purchased ground for a new Grande Béguinage at Mont St. Amand, and here a little city of small houses, designed in fifteenth-century Flemish style, and a new chapel were erected, the work being completed in 1874.

WORKROOM, PETIT BÉGUINAGE DE NOTRE DAME, GHENT.

We spent a very charming afternoon visiting the Grande Béguinage. Passing through the lofty gateway we were greeted by the pleasant-faced Béguine who receives all visitors and who directed us how to reach the buildings we were permitted to see. As at Bruges, the cells were not shown to visitors. Altogether at St. Amand there are fourteen “convents” and eighty houses, the former accommodating twenty or thirty inmates and the latter two or three, with occasionally some lady from the outer world who is taken as a lodger. Each little house is numbered and also has a name, usually that of some saint. Arriving at the convent we had been permitted to visit we were first conducted down a long, clean corridor, painted a glaring white, to a parlour or reception room, of which there appear to be several. Then, after the Lady Superior had been notified of our presence and had come to welcome us, we were taken to the *refter*, or dining-room. The inventor of the kitchen cabinet could have taken points from this curious apartment. Along the walls and between the windows are a dozen or more cupboards, of which one belongs to each Béguine. Here she keeps her napkins, dishes and cooking utensils, and even her bread and provisions. A board can be pulled out near the middle, which serves as a table. These cupboards are so constructed that no Béguine can see into that of her neighbour, and apparently they take their meals one at a time, as one was eating her frugal repast when we entered, and when we passed through the room again a little later her little private refectory was closed and another one was seated at her little shelf or table. Adjoining this queer dining-room was a large kitchen, with an extremely big cook stove, on which a half-dozen little pots were simmering gently. One Béguine, we were told, has the duty of attending to the kitchen for three weeks, then another, each taking turns. The Béguines prepare their own meals to suit themselves, the one in charge of the kitchen merely looking after the actual process of cooking.

We next visited the workroom, where a group of Béguines were busily engaged in making lace. The bright sunshine streaming through the large windows on the silent group of workers, each clad in her sombre garb of black and white, made a pretty picture. All seemed to be care-free and contented, though the expression on their faces could hardly be described as one of happiness. As in all conventual institutions, the inmates are required to go through quite a series of devotional exercises from morning mass to the Benediction Night Prayers. The scene in the little chapel attached to each convent, or in the large chapel of the entire Béguinage, when the sisters are assembled for service is a very picturesque one and gives the visitor an impression likely long to be remembered.

Speaking of the peculiar dining customs of the Béguines reminds me that in Flanders the judicious should not overlook the importance of doing justice to the culinary treats that are provided by even the little hotels. For those travellers who look upon eating as one of the disagreeable necessities of existence, to be shirked or evaded as far as possible, and, in any event, to be hurried through with quickly lest something be overlooked that the immortal Mr. Baedeker said must be seen, this is one feature of Flemish life that will make no appeal. On the other hand, for those who are neither mentally nor bodily dyspeptic; who agree with the French aphorism that “the animals feed, while man eats”; and who are still able to enjoy a good meal well planned, well cooked, and well served, a trip through Flanders will bring a new pleasure every day. A peep into any Flemish kitchen will convince the most sceptical that here, at all events, one’s stomach is not likely to be forgotten. Pots and kettles, casseroles and pans, pitchers and jugs, large and small, hang around the walls or rest upon long shelves—all of brightly polished copper and ready for instant service.

The great meal of the day in all parts of Flanders is the dinner, and it cuts the day in two—coming between noon and two o’clock and usually lasting an hour or more. The evening meal, or supper, is much less important, save in a few hotels catering largely to tourists. To get up a real Flemish dinner, cooked and served in the best style of which the Flemish cooks are capable, the housewife first ascertains when the local butcher has fresh-killed meat and plans accordingly. Vegetables in Flanders are always good, in their respective seasons, but to get the finest quality of meats one must buy just after the butcher has made a killing. To Americans, who have been accustomed all their lives to eat meat that has been kept on ice, it almost seems as though one has never tasted a roast of beef or a shoulder of mutton before—so deliciously

sweet, tender and juicy are they when cooked and eaten before the ice has robbed them of their richness and flavour.

It was while we were browsing around Ghent that the ladies discovered a bit of handicraft that seems worth mentioning. We subsequently saw the same thing at Brussels and Antwerp, so that it appears to be distinctly a Belgian industry. In a large window they noticed two women engaged in what from over the way might have been taken for lace-making. Mrs. Professor hurried across at once to investigate and she and the Madame spent half an hour watching the operation. Each of the two women was engaged in repairing, the one a pair of trousers and the other an overcoat. In each case the repair consisted of literally weaving a new segment of cloth in place of the damaged portion. First cutting out all of the latter they frayed out an edge of the goods at some point where there was sufficient material turned under for their purpose. This done they took short strands of each of the various coloured yarns and, with infinite patience and skill, wove them together in an exact reproduction of the design of the original textile. So cleverly was the work done that when completed the reparation could not be detected. It is possible that repairing of this kind is done in America but none of us had ever seen or heard of it. In Belgium it seemed to be fairly common, being styled *Reparation invisible*, and the price varying from one to three or four francs for each hole repaired, according to the nature of the goods and the design. We also saw rugs being repaired in the same manner, as well as ladies' dress goods of every description.

It is one of the most deplorable features of the war that its most fearful destructiveness should have been wreaked upon a little country where every small economy and patient utilisation of trifles had been practised for centuries. All Belgium is pre-eminently a land of thrift, of painstaking husbanding of small resources, and to beggar half the population of such a country means a calamity to each family group and individual far more poignant than would be the case where frugality was less deeply ingrained as a national characteristic.

CHAPTER XI
PHILIP THE GOOD AND THE VAN EYCKS

s the sunset is often the most beautiful hour of the day, so the splendour of the old Flemish communes reached its zenith at the moment when many of them were about to sink into their long sleep. This was the period of Burgundian rule. Upon the death of Louis of Maele the County of Flanders ceased to be a separate sovereignty, as it had been since Baldwin of the Iron Arm, for the husband of Margaret, the old Count's daughter, was Duke of Burgundy and brother of the King of France—a foreign prince whose interests in France far out-weighed in his mind his interests in Flanders. The new ruler, Philip the Bold, was acknowledged as Count of Flanders in 1384, but was only able to enter Audenaerde by stratagem after a siege, and was defied openly by the sturdy burghers of Ghent. The following year, however, Philip effected a family union by which he virtually controlled the two important States of Brabant and Hainaut. His eldest son was married to Margaret, daughter of the Regent of Hainaut, while the latter's son married Philip's daughter. These marriages were celebrated at Cambrai, in April, 1385, and at the same time the Duchess of Brabant recognised Philip's second son as heir to the Duchy. Brabant at that time was less rich and powerful than Flanders, but its chief cities, Brussels and Louvain, were growing rapidly. Hainaut, on the other hand, had been termed by one of its leaders "a poor country of proud men"—its chief cities, Mons and Valenciennes, being places of third-rate importance, and its present vast mineral wealth then undreamed of. The marriages of Cambrai are worth remembering, however, as explaining the rapidity with which the House of Burgundy extended its sway over nearly all of what is now Belgium.

Ghent still resisted its new Count, but an army of one hundred thousand French and Burgundians—gathered primarily to invade England—destroyed the seaport of Damme, which had been rebuilt since its previous destruction by the French, and plundered "the Four Trades," as the fertile region thereabout was called. Ghent, however, had suffered enough to make it sue for peace and acknowledge Philip's sovereignty. The invasion of England project came to nothing—as have so many others before and since—but it had at least enabled Philip to establish his power in Flanders.

On Philip's death in 1404, he was succeeded by his son, John the Fearless (as the old chroniclers call him). The life of this prince belongs to the history of France rather than Flanders, as he had little use for his Flemish towns except to extort money from their burghers—who granted him such sums as he required on his renewing acknowledgment of their liberties and privileges. In 1407 John caused the murder of his great rival in the government of France, the Duke of Orleans. Then came the battle of Agincourt, where the power of France was ruined by Henry the Fifth, and in 1419 the son of the Duke of Orleans avenged the murder of his father twelve years previously by murdering John the Fearless at Montereau.

The son of John the Fearless was Philip, called by the chroniclers "the Good." A better term would have been "the Magnificent," for goodness was hardly his chief characteristic. The murder of his father caused Philip to take the side of England in the long conflict between that country and France that was still raging—a policy that pleased his Flemish communes, which depended for their prosperity on the wool trade. Meanwhile Philip took advantage of the matrimonial difficulties of Jacqueline of Bavaria, Countess of Hainaut and Holland, to compel that beautiful but unfortunate princess to abdicate in his favour. The dungeon in the Castle of the Counts at Ghent, where the fair Jacqueline was for a time confined, has already been mentioned. He also

succeeded in making himself Duke of Brabant, thus uniting in his own person the government of these rich provinces with that of Flanders and Burgundy and his other possessions in France.

In 1430 Philip married the Princess Isabel of Portugal, a great-granddaughter of John, Duke of Lancaster. This marriage cemented the English alliance, and the English made Philip Regent of France, over which they still claimed sovereignty. It was Philip who captured and indirectly caused the execution of Jeanne d'Arc at the darkest period of French history.

The now all-powerful Duke of Burgundy signalized his marriage by establishing at Bruges the famous Order of the Golden Fleece. This consisted of himself, as founder and sovereign prince, and twenty-four knights—naturally the highest in the land—and in renown and lustre the new order quickly took rank as the very pinnacle of mediæval chivalry. Membership was an honour than which there was none higher, while members also enjoyed a personal security against the tyranny of princes in being amenable only to their comrades of the order. The head of such an institution naturally exerted powers equal, and, in some respects, superior, to those of any crowned monarch. The fêtes with which Philip celebrated the establishment of the order were without precedent in the history of Europe for magnificence, and the old city of Bruges was for days thronged with the bravest knights and the fairest ladies to be found in the Duke's widespread dominions.

Up to this date the policy of Philip had coincided with the interests of his great communes in Flanders and his popularity throughout the county was unbounded. Not only did friendship with England protect and stimulate trade between the two countries, but the misery and ruin of France also contributed to extend the commerce of the great towns just over the frontier whose trade and industries were unmolested. In 1435 Philip concluded the treaty of Arras with Charles VII, King of France, by which, for the sake of peace, the French King ceded to him a number of counties in France and made him, during his lifetime at least, an independent prince owing no homage to the French Crown. This treaty naturally enraged the English, who at once declared war on Burgundy, destroying many Burgundian vessels and raiding its coast towns. In revenge Duke Philip marched on Calais with an army of thirty thousand Flemings whom he induced to join in the war against their ancient ally chiefly through their confidence in his good intentions and against their own better judgment. The siege proved to be a long one, and the Flemings becoming discontented finally set fire to their camp and crying, "*Go, go, wy zyn all vermanden!*" ("Go, go, we are all betrayed!") marched back to Flanders, leaving their Duke raging at his discomfiture.

This fiasco determined Philip to adopt a new policy toward the communes and compel them to obey his orders. On May 22, 1437, he camped outside of the city of Bruges with a considerable force of knights and Picard footmen, informing the burghers that he was on his way to Holland. The next day, telling his men "That is the Holland we have come to conquer!" as he pointed to the city, Philip led his forces to the market-place. The tocsin in the old belfry instantly sounded the alarm, and angry guildsmen and burghers came pouring down the narrow streets in thousands. Philip's small force, taken at a disadvantage, was forced to retreat to one of the gates. It was shut, its heavy bolts securely drawn. Already some of the French force had been killed, and in a few moments the Duke himself would have perished but for Burgomaster Van de Walle, who brought a smith and broke the lock. The Duke escaped with most of his followers, but many who were caught in the rear lost their lives. This was the Bruges Vespers—to distinguish it from Bruges Matin, the year of the Battle of the Spurs.

Philip now set about humbling the proud city in grim earnest, cutting off the commerce upon which its prosperity depended, and even its food supplies. To add to the horrors of the siege the plague broke out within the city, while leprosy was also prevalent. No less than twenty-four thousand died of pestilence and famine before the brave burghers at last gave in. Philip's terms were hard. The city officials were required to meet him bareheaded and barefooted the next time he deigned to visit the defeated commune, and on their knees give him the keys of the city. A heavy fine was imposed and forty-two leading burghers were excluded from amnesty and beheaded—including Van de Walle, who had saved his life at the Bouverie gate. This was the "Great Humiliation," as it is sometimes called, but—finding that continued hostility to the chief trading centre in his dominions was driving foreign traders away—the Duke now took Bruges again into his favour and never again molested it during his long reign.

The proud city of Ghent was the next to feel the weight of the powerful Duke's displeasure. Rebelling in 1448 against the imposition of a tax on salt, called the gabelle, the city defied the Duke's authority for five years. Meanwhile Philip gradually cut off its supplies, as he had done with Bruges. Ghent was more populous, however, and its burgher armies took the field and carried open war as far as Audenaerde, which they besieged. Several small battles were fought, the advantage resting mainly with the Duke, until on July 23, 1453, the decisive conflict took place. The Duke's forces were encamped at Gavre, a few miles from the city. Spies within the gates told the burghers that it would be easy to surprise the camp and destroy Philip's army. The tocsin therefore was sounded and the hosts of guildsmen and burghers marched out to attack the enemy. The Duke's forces, aware of the manner in which the Flemings were to be betrayed, were placed where the open ground favoured the Burgundian horsemen. In spite of this advantage, the contest was a stubborn one, both the Duke and his son Charles narrowly escaping death on one occasion. At last the Flemings began to give way, and the battle became a slaughter, more than twenty thousand of the guildsmen being slain on the field, while all prisoners were hanged. This struggle was called "the red sea of Gavre." As the men of Ghent were fleeing toward their city Philip sought to pursue them by the shortest way and intercept their flight. He accordingly called for a guide. A peasant of the neighbourhood volunteered, and, after leading the Burgundian army across fields and by-paths for several hours, conducted the victors—not to the gates of Ghent, but back to their own camp again! This nameless hero was incontinently hanged to the nearest tree, but he no doubt saved the city from pillage and rapine that night.

Philip by this victory completely crushed the spirit of the communes, for none dared resist when Ghent the all-powerful had failed. He seems to have had at least a fleeting realisation, however, that victories of this sort were not matters for unmitigated satisfaction. The day after the battle the women of Ghent were

searching the ghastly heaps of dead for the bodies of their husbands, their brothers and their lovers when Philip exclaimed—possibly touched by the sad sight—"I do not know who is the gainer by this victory. As for me, see what I have lost—for these were my subjects!"

The privileges of Ghent were somewhat curtailed, and the dearly loved guild banners carried away by the conqueror, but Philip, on the whole, was very moderate. The obnoxious gabelle, the cause of the war, was removed, and all citizens guaranteed their individual liberties. The following year, Philip, possibly to celebrate his now undisputed supremacy, gave a series of fêtes at Lille that surpassed even those held on the occasion of his marriage at the foundation of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Upon one dining table stood a cathedral, with a choir singing within; another held a huge pie, inside of which an orchestra of twenty-eight musicians played; a third contained a pantomime representing Jason in search of the golden fleece. These fêtes and tournaments lasted for days, and were the wonder of Europe.

During the remainder of his reign of fifty years Philip never again had occasion to make war on his Flemish subjects, and while he seriously curtailed the power and importance of the communes, his rule was, on the whole, a period of great prosperity for Flanders. Both merchants and artisans were waxing rich, while the chief cities were being beautified on every hand. It was under Philip the Good that the cathedral at Antwerp was begun, and the town halls of Mons, Louvain and Brussels erected. It was also during his reign that William Caxton learned the art of printing at the house of Colard Manson at Bruges, but the prejudice of the burghers led to his banishment as a foreigner—thus depriving Bruges of the lustre of his achievements. The greatest event of Philip's reign, however, was one of which the glory is shared by both Bruges and Ghent—the establishment in Flanders of the school of painters in oils whose masterpieces loom so large in the history of art.

Like most men whose commanding personality dominates the age in which they live, Philip the Good was many sided. The Professor admires him because he was, in his judgment, one of the greatest constructive statesmen of the Middle Ages—aiming steadily throughout his long reign to weld together, by fair means or foul, a compact Burgundian nation. On the other hand, I look upon him as a foe rather than a friend of true progress, because he crushed the self-governing communes and guilds, the bulwarks of personal liberty in feudal Europe. Mrs. Professor cares nothing for either of these aspects of his career, but looks upon him as great for all time because he was an ardent friend and patron of the fine arts.

In this she is undoubtedly right, for no greater glory belongs to any of the long line of princes who ruled over Flanders than that which is associated with his reign—the birth at Bruges of the art of painting with oils and of the wonderful school of painting represented by the early Flemish masters. In his *History of Flemish Painting* Prof. A. J. Wauters recounts the names and some faint traces of the work of a few Flemish painters who lived prior to the period of Philip the Good. At Ghent there are two interesting frescoes dating from about the end of the thirteenth century. At that city in 1337 the first guild of sculptors was organised, under the patronage of St. Luke, and similar corporations were instituted at Tournai in 1341, in Bruges in 1351, at Louvain by 1360 and Antwerp by 1382. To this guild from the very earliest period the painters belonged, sometimes the goldsmiths and goldbeaters being also associated with them. In the same way the illuminators of Bruges and Ghent, and the tapestry workers of Arras, Tournai, Valenciennes and Brussels were organised into guilds, and these associations of men whose work was in a high degree artistic soon resulted in the transformation of the artisan into the artist.

Philip the Good was not the first of his line to give encouragement to art and artists. One Jehan de Hasselt was court painter to Count Louis of Maele, while at the same period the better known Jehan de Bruges was *peintre et varlet de chambre* for the King of France. By the end of the fourteenth century not only the great Dukes of Burgundy and the Kings of France but many minor princes had their chosen painters, imagers, illuminators and tapestry workers. Philip the Bold, the first of the Dukes of Burgundy to rule over Flanders, retained his father-in-law's painter, Jehan de Hasselt, on his pay-roll for some time, and later employed a resident of Ypres, Melchior Broederlam, whose masterpiece was an altar-piece for the Carthusian monastery at Dijon founded by his patron. Part of this has been preserved and is now in the museum of Dijon. It is of interest as the first great painting of the early Flemish school and represents the Annunciation and Visitation, the Presentation in the Temple, and the Flight into Egypt. John the Fearless, the next Duke of Burgundy, likewise had his official painter, but it was not until the reign of Philip the Good that any of these Ducal artists, with the exception of Broederlam, achieved more than mediocre results.

The reason for this may have been the medium with which all painters in those days were accustomed to work. This was called tempera, the colours being mixed with water, the white of an egg or some other glutinous substance, then dried in the sun and varnished over. The colours, however, soon became dull and pale—often fading away altogether, especially in course of restoration—and the process of drying was slow and unsatisfactory. To Flanders belongs the honour of the great discovery of the art of painting with oils that revolutionised this branch of the fine arts and made the master-works of the artists of the brush imperishable for all time.

This epoch-making discovery, which is justly looked upon as the birth of modern painting, was made by the two brothers Van Eyck about the year 1410. The early accounts attribute the invention wholly to Jean, the younger of the two brothers, relating that on a certain occasion he had placed a painting on wood, which had cost him much time and labour, in the sun to dry when the heat of the sun caused it to crack. Seeing his work thus ruined at a blow Jean sought to find some substance that would obviate the necessity of drying his paintings in the sun and, after many experiments, discovered that linseed oil and nut oil were by far the most rapid in drying. He further found that the colours mixed better in oil than with the white of an egg or glue. They also had more body, a far richer lustre, were impermeable to water and—what was best of all—dried just as well in the shade as in the sun. Later scholarship is not inclined to give the entire credit for this discovery to Jean alone, however, and his elder brother Hubert is looked upon by some as the one to whom the glory is due. Probably it was the joint result of innumerable experiments made by both, each profiting by

the mistakes and successes of the other—just as was the case with the Wright brothers in perfecting the greatest invention of our own times. There were, of course, other pioneers who contributed to the great discovery.

The brothers were born at Maeseyck (Eyck-sur-Meuse) near Maestricht, and took the name of the village as their own in a way that was then very common. Literally they called themselves Hubert and Jean of Eyck. They first obtained service under the prince-bishop of Liége, and were illuminators of manuscripts and statues as well as painters. The increasing wealth and luxury of Flanders under the Dukes of Burgundy drew the two brothers to that country and they appear to have been in the employ of the Count of Charolais, afterwards the Duke Philip the Good, at about the date assigned by the early historians as that when the art of painting with oils was discovered. The Count was residing at that time in the Château des Comtes at Ghent with his young wife Michelle, sister of the Duke of Orleans. In 1419, when the news of the murder of John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, by the Duke of Orleans on the bridge of Montereau arrived at Ghent, Philip rushed into his wife's room crying, "Michelle, Michelle! Your brother has killed my father!" The shock of this terrible intelligence, and the subsequent suspicion of her husband that she knew of the plot, caused the poor little French princess to pine away and die two years later. As a tribute to her memory the guild of St. Luke was asked by the Duke to grant the freedom of the guild to her favourite painters, the two Van Eycks, which was done.

Jean, however, did not remain at Ghent, but took service for a time under John of Bavaria, whose capital was at The Hague. In 1425 he became painter and varlet de chambre of Philip the Good, a position he retained until his death. For a time he seems to have travelled about with his ducal master, but he eventually settled at Bruges, where most of his best work was done. Hubert, meanwhile, remained at Ghent, painting for the rich burghers of that prosperous city. Here he presently received an order from Jodocus Vydts for an altar-piece for a chapel he had founded in the Cathedral of St. Bavon in his native city of Ghent. Hubert began work immediately, planned the great work and lived to partially complete it when overtaken by death in 1426. Hubert was recognised as a great painter in his day, the magistrates of Ghent on one occasion going in state to his studio to inspect a picture he was painting—which was no doubt the altar-piece for St. Bavon. He was, however, wholly forgotten by early historians of art in Flanders, and it is only recently that he has been given his proper place as one of the first of the great masters of the Flemish school.

The subject chosen by Hubert for the proposed altar-piece was the Adoration of the Lamb, and the artist, while true to the conventions of the age in which he lived, achieved a work that is still full of interest and charm. Like Shakespeare's plays this, the first great masterpiece of the Flemish school, belongs not to an age but to all time. In its entirety the work consists of twenty panels and comprises more than three hundred separate figures. How far it had been completed at Hubert's death there is no way to tell, although it is customary to attribute to him the architectural frame, the central panel showing the lamb, and the large upper panels. Other critics believe that Jean practically painted the whole picture when he was commissioned by the donor to complete it. The books on Flemish art devote many pages to an analytical description of this picture,[1] which was finally completed by Jean in 1432. The Duke Philip, his patron, and the magistrates of Bruges visited his studio in state to inspect the finished picture, which was afterwards publicly exhibited at Ghent. When it is considered that this is the very first painting in oil that has come down to us it is in every respect a most marvellous performance. The three large central panels in the upper portion are especially noble and impressive, that of "God the Father," in the centre, being finely expressive of majesty and repose. In the panel to the left of the Virgin Mary is a group of youthful angels singing, who are so skilfully painted that "one can readily tell from looking at them which is singing the dominant, which the counter-tenor, and which the tenor and the bass," according to an early critic. We were told by a Belgian curé with whom we talked about this wonderful picture shortly before our visit to Ghent that the work is so fine in its details that in the case of the figures in the foreground who are holding open in their hands copies of the Scriptures the very passage at which each book is opened can be distinguished! We verified this remarkable assertion by the aid of a glass loaned us by an attendant.

[1] See "The Early Flemish Painters," by J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle, pp. 49-63; and "Belgium, Its Cities," by Grant Allen, pp. 164-175.

The subsequent history of the painting is interesting. Philip II, who carried many Flemish masterpieces away to Spain, admired this one, but contented himself with a copy by Michel Coxcie, for which he paid four thousand ducats—which was quite likely more than the Van Eyck brothers received for the original. About 1578 the Calvinists of Ghent wished to present the painting to Queen Elizabeth in return for her support of their sect. For a time it was placed in the Hotel de Ville at Ghent, but was finally restored to the cathedral. After several other escapes from destruction or shipment abroad the work was finally dismembered out of deference to the views of Joseph II of Austria, during the period of Austrian rule in Flanders. He objected to the nude figures of Adam and Eve as unsuited to a church, and these were accordingly removed. The entire work was carried away during the French Revolution, but was returned some years later. The wings, however, were not restored to their original position, and were finally sold to a London dealer for four thousand pounds sterling. He, in turn, sold them to the King of Prussia, and they are now in the Museum of Berlin. The wings now at St. Bavon are the copies made by Coxcie. The original panels of Adam and Eve were stored for many years in the cellars of St. Bavon, and then were exchanged with the Belgian Government for the Coxcie wings just mentioned. They are now in the Brussels Museum. The Adam and Eve at St. Bavon are not even copies of the originals.

“SINGING ANGELS” FROM “THE ADORATION OF THE LAMB.”—JEAN VAN EYCK.

Jean Van Eyck enjoyed the confidence and affection of Philip the Good until his death, and was often sent on diplomatic missions of great importance. On one occasion he was sent to Portugal with an embassy appointed to propose a marriage between his ducal patron and the Princess Isabel. Jean was also commissioned to paint the portrait of the fair Isabel so that his master could judge for himself whether her charms were as great as he had fancied them to be. This portrait was duly painted and in the inventory of the possessions of Margaret of Austria there was a painting by Jean Van Eyck called *La belle Portugalaise*, which was, no doubt, the very one painted for Duke Philip. It must have been pleasing, for he married the lady. As late as 1516 *La belle Portugalaise* was still in existence at Malines. It represented a lady in a red habit with sable trimmings, attended by St. Nicholas. It has since disappeared—one of the many thousands that were lost or destroyed during the wars of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, but both historically and artistically one of the most interesting of them all. There are a considerable number of authenticated paintings by Jean Van Eyck still in existence. Several of these are in the original frames with the artist’s famous motto, “*Als ik kan*” (As I can), more or less legible. It is by no means unlikely that in time to come one or more of those now lost will be discovered, thus adding to the priceless heritage that the world owes to his immortal brush.

“George Van der Paele, Canon of St. Donatian worshipping the Madonna” Jean Van Eyck

Two of the most celebrated of Jean Van Eyck’s paintings can be seen at Bruges. One of these is in the Museum and shows George Van der Paele, Canon of St. Donatian, worshipping the Madonna. Of the portrait of the worthy donor Max Rooses, the Director of the Plantin-Moretus Museum at Antwerp, says: “The Canon’s face is so astoundingly true to life that it is perhaps the most marvellous piece of painting that ever aspired to reproduce a human physiognomy. This firm, fat painting renders at once the cracks of the epidermis and the softness of the flesh. Beside this head with its lovingly wrought furrows and wrinkles gleam the dazzling white of the surplice with its greenish shimmer, the intense red of Mary’s mantle, St. Donatian’s flowing cape, and the metallic reflections of St. George’s breastplate.” Equally fine as an example of faithful portrait painting is the picture of the artist’s wife which also hangs in this interesting little gallery of old masters.

Four years after Jean Van Eyck’s death, which occurred in 1440, another Flemish painter of note acquired citizen’s rights at Bruges. This was Petrus Christus. The most celebrated of his paintings depicts the Legend of Ste. Godeberte. The story was that this young lady’s parents had planned a rich marriage for her, whereas she preferred to enter a convent. The prospective bride and her groom visited a jeweller’s to select the wedding ring and there encountered St. Eloi, or Elisius, who was both a goldsmith and a bishop. The Saint, knowing the wishes of the maiden, placed the ring upon her finger himself, thereby dedicating her to the service of the Lord. This picture was painted for the Goldsmiths’ Guild of Antwerp, passed into the collection of Baron Oppenheim, of Cologne, and is now in a private gallery.

Besides the “Adoration of the Lamb,” the Cathedral of St. Bavon possesses enough other notable works of art to equip a small museum. One of these is the wooden pulpit, carved by P. H. Verbruggen, and representing the glorification of St. Bavon. Another is the famous tomb of Bishop Triest carved by Jerome Duquesnoy in 1654. This represents the Bishop reclining on a couch, and has been termed “the most beautiful piece of statuary in the country.” Still a third masterpiece is “St. Bavon withdrawing from the World,” by Rubens. There are a score of other paintings and pieces of sculpture of interest and importance, but all are so over-shadowed by the famous polyptych that the average tourist scarcely notices them unless he goes back to this remarkable church several times. In front of the Château of Girard, and close to the cathedral, stands the impressive monument to the two Van Eycks erected by the city in 1913. It is by the sculptor Georges Verbanck and represents the brothers receiving the homage of the nations.

CHAPTER XII
TOURNAI, THE OLDEST CITY IN BELGIUM

As the ladies were somewhat fatigued by our rambles around Flanders it was decided that they would spend two or three quiet days with la tante Rosa while the Professor and I made daily excursions into wonderland, returning to the home of our hostess every night. The nearest point of interest was the city of Tournai, the oldest city in all Belgium. There was no direct railway line, however, and—as on many other occasions during our pilgrimage—we had no little trouble studying out a *correspondence*, or set of connections, that would take us there and back without loss of time. We started each morning before six o'clock and found the trains at that time of day made up mostly of fourth-class coaches filled with working people. The Belgian State Railway sells *billets d'abonnement* for these trains at incredibly low rates—a few sous a month for short trips from one town to the next, and a few francs a month for rides half way across the Kingdom. I have known clerks residing in the extreme southern end of the Department of Hainaut, close to the French frontier, who ride every day to Mons, ten or fifteen miles distant, and there take a train for Brussels. The object of this low rate of fare is the paternal desire of the Government that labourers should be able to obtain work wherever it may be found and still retain their homes in the villages in which they were born and raised. Home ties are very strong in Belgium, and the people cheerfully travel considerable distances under this plan rather than move away from their relatives and friends. Economically it is a very good thing for the country as a whole, since it enables the labourer out of work to look for a place in a hundred different towns and the employer to draw his help from an equally wide area. Thus in times that are not abnormally bad there are very few industrial plants without their full quota of hands, and very few hands out of work.

The fourth-class coaches are built like the third-class, with cross divisions making several compartments, but the division walls do not extend to the roof so the passengers can toss things to one another over them. Separate cars are provided for men and women, many scandals having resulted from the promiscuous herding of both sexes which prevailed some twenty years ago. The occupants of the men's cars are of all ages, from tiny lads who seem to be hardly more than eight or nine—but are no doubt older, as the Belgian laws no longer permit minors of that age to work—to grandsires of eighty. All are roughly clad, ready to take up their respective tasks the moment they arrive—no one thinks of having a separate suit for travelling as most of the workmen who commute to and from an American city would do. In the women's car the occupants are mostly young girls from fifteen to twenty, with a sprinkling of little girls and some women up to thirty, but very few who appear to be older than that. They always seem to be happy, singing and "carrying-on" with the utmost abandon. They are ready to start a flirtation at a moment's notice and occasionally, when their car halts in a station next to some other train in which there are young men near the windows, the whole bevy of charmers devotes itself to making conquests—opening the windows and shouting a volley of good-natured raillery to which, if they are natives and used to it, the youngsters retort in kind. Then, as the trains start, the laughing crowd throws kisses by handfuls and the flirtation is over.

As our train jolted along, with frequent stops to take on and let off fourth-class passengers, the Professor explained to me that to be consistent to his plan we really should have visited Tournai first. However, it was far out of the way as a starting point, and its history did not dominate that of all Flanders in the way that the early history of Bruges did. In fact, while in early times subject to the Counts of Flanders, it was often subject to the French Crown for generations at a time, and is usually regarded as a Walloon rather than a Flemish city. Its influence on Flemish art and architecture, however, led us to include this Ville d'Art in our itinerary.

According to the scholars Tournai is the *Turris Nerviorum* of Cæsar, the capital of the Nervii, and one of the oldest towns north of the Alps. In 299 it was the scene of the martyrdom of St. Piat, who founded a church on the site of the cathedral. As the visitor gazes at that magnificent structure he can reflect that the ground on which it stands has been consecrated to divine worship for more than sixteen hundred years. During the fourth and fifth centuries Tournai was the capital of the branch of the Franks that ruled over the greater part of what is now Belgium, but the history of these early days when the Roman Empire was tottering to its fall is very meagre, and more than half legend at best. The first kings of the Merovingian line are shadowy, mythical personages who stalk across the pages of history like the ghost in Hamlet—far off, dim, but awe-inspiring.

Childeric is one of the most picturesque of these early kings. Expelled from the tribe owing to his youthful gallantries, he fled to the court of Basinus, King of the Thuringians. The queen, Basina, welcomed him even more warmly than her husband, and hardly had Childeric returned home, on being recalled by the tribe some years later to rule over them, than she followed him. Arrived at his court, she announced that she had come to marry him because he was the bravest, strongest and handsomest man she had heard of. She added, naïvely, that if she knew of another who surpassed him in these particulars not even the sea could keep her from such a rival. Basina, who from all accounts should be the patron saint of the suffragettes, won her suit and they were married. On the night before the ceremony mony, according to an ancient chronicle, she bade Childeric go into the courtyard of the palace at Tournai to see what he might see. He went at her bidding three times. On the first occasion he beheld a long procession of lions, unicorns and leopards, struggling and snapping at one another, but all without a sound, nor did the beasts cast any shadow. The second time he saw huge bears shambling across the courtyard which vanished even while he was gazing at them. Then came packs of wolves which ran in circles and leaped, but silently. On his last visit he saw dogs of huge size and many colours, and innumerable cats which always looked behind them. From these portents Basina explained to him the qualities of the race of kings of which he was to be the ancestor. Clovis, one of the greatest of the early Frankish kings, was the child of Childeric and Basina.

In the sixth century Tournai figured prominently in the narrative of the furious wars between Fredegonda and Brunehault, one of the great epics of the early Middle Ages. Fredegonda, who was the daughter of a bondsman, became by virtue of her beauty and imperious will the wife of Chilperic, King of the Franks. Brunehault, equally beautiful, but a king's daughter as well as the wife of a king—Sigebert, brother of Chilperic—began the contest to avenge the death of her sister Galeswintha, whom Fredegonda had caused to be slain. Chilperic and Fredegonda were besieged at Tournai in 575, but the latter caused the murder of Sigebert, upon whose death the besieging army dispersed. Incidents in this siege are depicted in the stained-

glass windows of the cathedral. The contest between the two fierce queens lasted more than half a century, Brunehault at the last being torn to pieces by wild horses, when more than eighty years old, by the son of her life-long rival.

In 880 the Norsemen fell upon the city and its inhabitants fled to Noyon, where they remained for thirty-one years. In its subsequent history the old town sustained more than its share of sieges, the common lot of all frontier places, and changed hands oftener than any other European city. For many generations it was subject to the early Counts of Flanders. Philip Augustus then annexed it to France, to which it belonged until the reign of Francis I. In 1340 occurred the most famous of all its sieges. It belonged at that time to France and was attacked by the English under Edward III, a huge army of Flemings under Jacques Van Artevelde, the Duke of Brabant and the Count of Hainaut with their followers and many others—a host estimated by Froissart at one hundred and twenty thousand men. That delightful historian devotes more than a dozen chapters to a gossipy account of the siege, which lasted more than eleven weeks and was only raised by the approach of a French army when the supply of provisions was reduced to three days' rations. In 1513 Tournai was captured by Henry VIII, who gave the see to Cardinal Wolsey, but soon sold it back to the French. The huge round tower a little distance to the right as one enters the city from the railway station was erected by the English King during his short rule. In 1521 the city was captured by Charles the Fifth, becoming a part of his domains, and in 1581 it sustained another famous siege. In common with the rest of Flanders and the Low Countries, the city had revolted against the atrocities of Philip II. It was besieged by the Prince of Parma and heroically defended by Christine, Princess of Epinoy, whose statue stands in the Grande Place. She was herself wounded and had lost more than three-fourths of the garrison before she surrendered.

Tournai once more passed into the hands of the French in 1668, when it was captured by Louis XIV and afterwards elaborately fortified by Vauban, was retaken by Marlborough in 1709, returned to Austria five years later, and captured once more by the French after the battle of Fontenoy in 1745. Four years later it was again restored to Austria, but was twice taken by the armies of the first French republic, remaining French territory till the battle of Waterloo. It would be a difficult matter to say how often its fortifications have been built, demolished, rebuilt and again destroyed.

The most noteworthy of these later sieges was that of 1745, during the War of the Austrian Succession, which brought the English and French into conflict even along the frontiers of their far-off American colonies. Austrian Flanders became the arena of the decisive campaign in this war—in which its inhabitants had absolutely no interest or concern whatever—and Tournai was the prize for which the armies fought. It was during this and the preceding century that Flanders became "the cockpit of Europe"—foreign armies sweeping over its fertile plains in wars the very purpose of which was unknown to the peasants who helplessly saw their cattle and crops swept away and their farmsteads and villages destroyed. It is curious to remark how frequently the English were engaged in these conflicts, particularly in the vicinity of Tournai. In the words of Lord Beaconsfield, "Flanders has been trodden by the feet and watered with the blood of successive generations of British soldiers."

An English force formed the nucleus and the backbone of the allied army, which was commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, brother of King George II. The French forces were led by Maurice de Saxe, the greatest military leader of that generation, as Marlborough had been of the one before it. King Louis XV—for almost the only time in his long reign—played the part of a man throughout this campaign. When Saxe explained his plan of campaign, which involved a scheme of field fortifications, the "carpet generals" protested loudly that Frenchmen were well able to meet their foes on open ground. Louis silenced these arm-chair critics and replied to his great field-marshal, "In confiding to you the command of my army I intend that every one shall obey you, and I will be the first to set an example of obedience."

For a time the allies, which consisted of English, Hanoverian, Dutch and Austrian troops—very few Flemings taking part in this campaign on either side—were in doubt whether Saxe intended to attack Mons, St. Ghislain or Tournai. With his usual rapidity of action, the French leader, when his forces suddenly appeared before Tournai, had that city completely invested before the allies knew where he was. It was early in the month of May, and very rainy, when the allied army started from Brussels and marched through the mud toward the beleaguered city. On the evening of May tenth, eleven days after the siege had begun, they arrived within sight of the quintuple towers of the cathedral and the adjacent belfry. Their position was southeast of the city, on the route to St. Ghislain and Mons, and the towers were therefore sharply outlined against the sunset as the army, standing on rising ground, gazed across the rolling country that was to be the morrow's battlefield.

Saxe had made the most of the slowness of the allies' advance by choosing the ground where he would give battle, and strengthening his position with field redoubts, using the little village of Fontenoy as a base. The allies attacked from the direction of the little village of Vezon, while Louis XV watched the battle from a hill near the intersection of the Mons road with that leading from Ramecroix to Antoing. The attack began at two o'clock in the morning, the English advancing in a hollow square, and it was not until after two in the afternoon that Saxe, after bringing every man in his forces into action, had the satisfaction of seeing the great square falter and turn slowly back—halting every hundred yards to beat off its foes. The fiercest unit in the French army was a brigade of Irish volunteers who fought like tigers, the men flinging themselves against the stubborn English square again and again. A learned historian, who has devoted more than eighty pages to a description of the battle, fails to give so clear an idea of its decisive moment as does the poet Thomas Osborne Davis in half as many lines:

> "Thrice at the huts of Fontenoy the English column failed,
> And twice the lines of Saint Antoine the Dutch in vain assailed;
> For town and slope were filled with fort and flanking battery,
> And well they swept the English ranks and Dutch auxiliary.
> As vainly through De Barri's wood the British soldiers burst,

The French artillery drove them back, diminished and dispersed.
The bloody Duke of Cumberland beheld with anxious eye,
And ordered up his last reserves, his latest chance to try.
On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, how fast his generals ride!
And mustering came his chosen troops, like clouds at eventide.

“Six thousand English veterans in stately column tread;
Their cannon blaze in front and flank, Lord Hay is at their head.
Steady they step a-down the slope, steady they climb the hill,
Steady they load, steady they fire, moving right onward still,
Betwixt the wood and Fontenoy, as through a furnace blast,
Through rampart, trench and palisade, and bullets showering fast;
And on the open plain above they rose and kept their course,
With ready fire and grim resolve that mocked at hostile force;
Past Fontenoy, past Fontenoy, while thinner grew their ranks,
They broke, as broke the Zuyder Zee through Holland’s ocean banks.

* * * * * * * * *

“‘Push on my household cavalry!’ King Louis madly cried.
To death they rush, but rude their shock; not unavenged they died.
On through the camp the column trod—King Louis turns his rein.
‘Not yet, my liege,’ Saxe interposed; ‘the Irish troops remain.’
‘Lord Claire,’ he said, ‘you have your wish; there are your Saxon foes!’
The Marshal almost smiles to see, so furiously he goes,
How fierce the looks these exiles wear, who’re wont to be so gay!
The treasured wrongs of fifty years are in their hearts to-day.
On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, nor ever yet elsewhere,
Rushed on to fight a nobler band than these proud exiles were.

* * * * * * * * *

“Like lions leaping at a fold, when mad with hunger’s pang,
Right up against the English line the Irish exiles sprang;
Bright was their steel, ’tis bloody now, their guns are filled with gore;
Through shattered ranks and severed files and trampled flags they tore.
The English strove with desperate strength; paused, rallied, staggered, fled;
The green hillside is matted close with dying and with dead.
Across the plain and far away passed on that hideous wrack
While cavalier and Fantassin rush in upon their track.
On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, like eagles in the sun,
With bloody plumes the Irish stand—the field is fought and won!”

On our first day’s visit the Professor devoted most of the time to the cathedral and the remains that still exist of the earliest period of Tournai’s long and varied history. As we approached the city, past the vast excavations around Antoing connected with the lime pits and kilns and cement works that there abound, we could see the five spires of the cathedral in the distance. Antoing is only a mile and a half from Fontenoy, and the battlefield—marked by a monument erected in 1907—is happily free from the pits that scar so much of the countryside thereabouts, and no doubt looks to-day very much as it did on the day of the great fight.

The cathedral of Tournai is the oldest, the most vast, and decidedly the most imposing religious edifice in Belgium. Its five great towers dominate the entire city and are visible for miles across the surrounding plains. The oldest portions of the present structure date from about 880, when the inhabitants of Tournai returned after the invasion of the Norsemen. The side porches of the naves belong to this earliest period. In 1054 a fire destroyed the upper part of the cathedral and it was shortly after this that the towers were built. There were originally seven of these, the one in the centre being a gigantic square structure rising above all the others. The group as it then stood was without a rival in Europe, but the two towers to the east of the central one were removed with the ancient choir and the height of the central tower reduced. In their present form, however, the towers compose a magnificent assemblage.

GENERAL VIEW OF TOURNAI AND THE FIVE-TOWERED CATHEDRAL.

The four outer towers, which surround the now much shorter central one, are two hundred and seventy-two feet high, and, although apparently alike at the first glance, are not entirely so—a circumstance that enhances rather than detracts from the picturesqueness of the group. Placed at the crossing of the nave and the transept these towers, from without, suggest the fantastic idea that instead of one there are two cathedrals, each facing the other, and with the central tower uniting them.

In reality, the edifice is large enough to make two cathedrals and more, the interior being four hundred and twenty-six feet in length and two hundred and twenty feet in width across the transept. Built at different epochs, this imposing edifice constitutes a veritable history in stone of the development of mediæval architecture. The nave was completed in 1070 and the transept in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Both are in the Romanesque style, while the choir—originally Romanesque—was rebuilt in 1242-1325 in the early Gothic style. It is both longer and almost fifty feet higher than the older nave—a fact that leads the observer looking at the structure from without to mistake it for the nave itself. In addition to the main edifice there is a small parish chapel built against the north side of the cathedral, a Gothic edifice dating from 1516-1518, while attached to it by a passage over a picturesque arch called *Le fausseporte* is the Bishop's palace. Here there is another chapel, the Chapel of the Bishops, dating from the twelfth century.

Like most religious structures in Belgium, the cathedral was for many years surrounded, and almost entirely obscured, by small private houses of all kinds built up against it. These have now been removed, although there are still a few more that we were told were destined to come down in order to give a better view of the structure from one side. There are three entrances, of which two are noteworthy. One of these, called the Porte Mantille, is on the north side facing the Place des Acacias, and dates from the twelfth century. It is the oldest part of the exterior, and looks it, the round arch of the doorway being surrounded by quaint Romanesque sculptures. The winds of seven hundred winters have worn these bas-reliefs down considerably, but they are still surprisingly clear, the faces, armour and costumes of the figures being quite distinct. They are among the oldest stone carvings in Europe and show that the art of sculpture was practised at Tournai within a century or two after the retirement of the Norsemen.

Even more interesting is the fine façade just behind the groined porch that faces the Place de l'Evêché. From a distance this end of the cathedral is hardly pleasing, the sixteenth-century porch concealing the early Romanesque façade and being out of harmony with it. After passing within the arches, however, the visitor forgets all this and is lost in wonder and admiration at the wealth of stone carving that decorates the walls on both sides of the main entrance. There is no such decoration in stone to be seen in all Flanders, for the churches of Tournai escaped the fury of the iconoclasts—Tournai, at that time, belonging to France. Here the sculptors of Tournai have achieved a veritable masterpiece. The work is in three tiers and belongs to three different periods. The lowest tier, carved in blue stone quarried in Tournai itself or near by, is the most remarkable, and is regarded by the critics as the finest in artistic merit. It dates from the thirteenth century and represents Adam and Eve and various prophets and fathers of the church. The second zone is in white stone, now grey with age, and was the work of the sixteenth century. It comprises a series of small panels carved in bas-relief, those at the left depicting—so the authorities at Tournai tell us—a religious procession, and those at the right various incidents in the history of King Childeric. The highest tier comprises a series of large statues in high relief of the apostles, the Virgin Mary, St. Piat and St. Eleuthereus. Although the figures are boldly conceived and well executed, and, in the main, fairly well preserved, they are artistically less important than the others. In its entirety, however, this entrance—"*le portail*," "*the* entrance," as the people of Tournai style it—is a place of wonderful interest, a place to be visited again and again under different lights and in different moods.

Passing into the interior of the cathedral the visitor is again given the impression that here he is not in one church but at least two and possibly more. The ancient nave, with its vaulted roof supported by three series of Romanesque arches placed one above another, seems somehow to be complete by itself and to have no

relation to the far-off choir which is partially cut off from it by an elaborately carved rood loft, which—in its flamboyant Renaissance style—seems out of place and tends to mar the general effect of the vast interior. The pillars in the nave are not uniform, but have a wide diversity of capitals—some decorated with the lotus or conventional foliage, others with beasts or birds or quaint, fantastic heads. At the intersection of the nave and transept the great pillars supporting the central tower are of tremendous proportions and the view looking upward from this point is one of extraordinary grandeur. Here, too, the rood loft, or *jubé*, can be studied to best advantage. The work of Corneille Floris of Antwerp and executed in 1572, it is undoubtedly one of the masterpieces of sculpture of its period. The Doric columns are of red marble, the architectural outlines of the structure in black marble, and the medallions and other bas-reliefs in white. Passing through one of the three arches of this portal we come to the noble choir. This is the most beautiful portion of the cathedral, its vast height and the richly coloured light that streams downward from its fine stained-glass windows creating a very atmosphere of majesty and inspiration.

While we were inspecting the choir and the ambulatory, which contains several paintings and carvings of no little interest, the Professor discovered that the hours had been slipping by faster than we had imagined and as there were several relics of the earliest period of the city's history that we wished to visit on our first day we decided to betake ourselves to the Grande Place and postpone our visit to the far-famed treasury of the cathedral to another day. We found a little place to dine directly facing the Belfry, and with the Princess of Epinoy, in her coat of mail and brandishing her battle-axe, standing on her monument hard by. The Place is a very large one, but most of the houses facing it have been so modernized as to lose much of their mediæval aspect, although the ancient Cloth Hall—which has recently been restored—no doubt looks much as it did when in its prime.

The Belfry was naturally our first stopping place after we had done justice to the excellent dinner in half a dozen courses that two francs had secured for us. This edifice dates from 1187, and stands slightly back from the apex of the triangle formed by the Grande Place. According to some authorities the peculiar shape of the Place is due to the intersection of two Roman roads at the point where the Belfry now stands. Externally the tower, which is two hundred and thirty-six feet high, strikingly resembles the Belfry of Ghent. Within, after climbing a winding stairway for some distance, we were shown several large rooms with heavy timber ceilings that were once used as prison cells. They looked fairly comfortable, as compared with the dungeons in the Château des Comtes, and one of them was then in use by the small son of the concierge as a play-room and was littered with toys—mostly of his own manufacture, apparently. The doors to these "cells" were of massive construction and locked by keys nearly a foot long, or at least it seemed so, though we did not measure them. The view from the top of the edifice is picturesque and well worth the climb. A melodious set of chimes is installed near the top, which ring every half hour. The big bell, *la Bancloque*, which called the people to arms, was cast in 1392, and must have been rung quite frequently during the stirring days when Tournai was being fought for by armies from half the countries in Europe.

THE BELFRY, TOURNAI.

From the Belfry we visited the ancient Church of St. Brice which stands in one of the very oldest quarters of the city. Almost facing the church are two buildings known as the Roman houses. Although hardly dating from the time of the Romans they are undoubtedly very ancient. Only the outer walls, however, remain of the original construction, the interiors dating from a much later period. One of these houses was untenanted when we were there, and the other was an estaminet. We entered it and ordered drinks, and asked if we could see the up-stairs rooms, but apparently they were not very tidy as the landlady declined to show them, assuring us that there was nothing to see. At No. 18 on the same street, rue Barre-Saint-Brice, is another estaminet in a house of very ancient construction. After quite a search we found the caretaker of the church. As old as the oldest part of the cathedral this structure is a remarkable example of Romanesque architecture. Externally it looks from the rear like three stone barns built close together, but its square tower is lofty and imposing, although much injured by a silly sort of hat which was stuck on early in the last century. The most interesting object within was a quaint Tournai tapestry representing a variety of Biblical subjects.

In the year 1653 archeologists and historians throughout Europe were greatly excited over one of the most interesting finds of ancient relics ever recorded. In the house now No. 8 on the Terrace Saint-Brice, on one side of the church, was dug up at a depth of eight feet a veritable museum of arms and jewels since known as the Treasure of Childeric I, whose marriage with Basina was preceded by so many portents. More than a hundred gold coins of the Byzantine Emperors were found, several hundred golden bees, a quantity of silver money of great antiquity, divers clasps and buckles—all mingled with the remains of human bones, which may have been those of the Merovingian King and his imperious spouse. One ring bore a bust of a man with long hair holding a lance, with the inscription *Childerici Regis*. After passing through various hands the collection came into the possession of Louis XIV, and eventually into the Bibliotheque Royale at Paris. Here, in 1831, it was stolen. The thieves were pursued and threw their booty into the Seine, where a few pieces were afterwards recovered and are now in the numismatic collection of the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris.

Not far from this interesting old quarter are some picturesque remains of the ancient city walls, two ivy covered towers facing a moat in which there is still some water. These are called the Marvis Towers, and were erected during the thirteenth century. On our way back to the station we made a little detour in order to see the curious *Pont des Trous*—literally “the Bridge of the Holes,” meaning loopholes—the most ancient specimen of mediæval military architecture in Belgium. The tower on the side farthest from the centre of the city was built prior to 1259, the other in 1304, and the bridge with its three ogival arches in 1330. Across the bridge at short intervals are narrow loopholes to enable the defenders to fire at foes approaching by way of the River Scheldt. One of the towers is said to contain a fine vaulted room, but as we were unable to find any one who knew who had the key to the little door at its foot we did not see this room or the passage-way across the bridge. Between this bridge and the railway line we noticed a high stone wall of ancient construction which, from its location, may also have been a fragment of the city walls. Further on is the Henry VIII tower, which was built by the English monarch after he captured the city in 1513, as part of a citadel intended to hold the citizens in check. The tower is slightly over seventy-five feet in diameter and the walls at the base are said to be twenty feet thick. The rest of the citadel has long since disappeared and this vestige of it is now the centre of a pleasant little park much frequented on sunny days by nursemaids and children. Amid these peaceful surroundings it was, when we saw it, hard to picture the old tower as having ever been the scene of fierce conflicts with furious foes striving to batter a breach in its massive walls or scale it with long ladders, while its defenders fired volley after volley through its tiny windows and flung down big stones or boiling tar from its parapet.

The strategy of the early part of the present war did not call for a protracted defence of Tournai, with the result that, as this is being written, the old city is reported to have suffered little or no damage. In view of the frequency with which it had been contended for in former wars it is to be hoped that this one—which has so far been more destructive than all previous wars put together—will pass quaint old Tournai by and that the great cathedral with its five towers and marvellous stone carvings may be spared for generations yet to come.

CHAPTER XIII

SEVEN CENTURIES OF TOURNAISIAN ART

he citizens of Tournai of to-day have given to their beautiful city the name of “Ville d’Art.” To be sure, the same title is claimed for Bruges and Ghent, for Antwerp and Malines. The first two are justly proud of their many beautiful monuments of the past and their associations with the work of the early Flemish painters, Antwerp of its connection with the later development of painting in Flanders and the most artistic of the early printers, Malines of its lace and its splendid examples of religious architecture and art. Tournai, however, has a broader title to the phrase than any of them in that the artistic activities of its gifted sons have not been confined to one medium or two, but have been independently developed along half a score of different lines and during a period covering more than seven centuries. Not only is the city a rich repository of the artistic productions of past ages, but it is still more notable in having been one of the most prolific producers of beautiful and artistic things. To the true connoisseur a stay of several weeks in this fine old border town would be none too long to afford opportunity to study all of its collections and rummage in out-of-the-way corners for stray specimens that the dealers and bargain hunters have overlooked. Unfortunately, neither the Professor nor I can lay claim to more than a rudimentary

knowledge of such matters and in the chronicle of our rambles in the City of Art there may be much to make the judicious grieve. It is not, however, so much in order to give an account of what we saw that this chapter is written as in the hope that it may suggest how much there is to see for those whose eyes are better trained and more discriminating than ours.

Tournai looms large in the history of early Flemish painting, for it was here that the next important group of masters after the Van Eycks appeared. As early as the first half of the fourteenth century paintings on cloth were executed at Tournai, followed by what was termed “flat painting” for panels. About 1406 the first of the great artists whose names have come down to us settled at Tournai. This was Robert Campin. He acquired the right of citizenship in 1410 and died in 1444, being thus a contemporary of the Van Eycks. He is known to have painted many works, but until recently none of these had been definitely identified. Now, thanks to the earnest and patient study of Belgian scholars, he seems likely to be given his rightful place as one of the greatest of the early Flemish masters—after having been completely forgotten for nearly five hundred years! His most important work is an altarpiece in the possession of the Mérode family at Brussels, while the Frankfort Museum and the Prado at Madrid contain some fine examples of his skill.

It is known that Robert Campin was the master of two other Tournai artists, Rogier Van der Weyden and Jacques Daret, of whom the former soon far surpassed his teacher in renown. Daret entered the atelier of Robert Campin in 1418, when a lad of fourteen, obtained the title of apprentice in 1427, and became a member of the Guild of St. Luke in 1432. One of his pictures, a panel showing the Nativity, was in the collection of the late Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. Van der Weyden, whose Walloon name was Roger de la Pasture, became one of Campin’s apprentices in 1427—the same date as Daret—and was admitted to the guild of the painters at Tournai in 1432. He spent much of his time at Brussels, however, and is sometimes considered as belonging to that city rather than Tournai. A “Descent from the Cross” now at the Escorial is his most famous picture. It was painted for the Archers’ Company at Louvain and a copy of it, made by the master himself, was hung in the Church of St. Pierre in that city. About 1430 Van der Weyden was commissioned to paint four large panels for the Hall of Justice in the new Hotel de Ville at Brussels. Two of these showed Trajan, the Just Emperor, and the other two depicted the Justice of Herkenbald, and for more than two centuries the series was regarded as the finest group of paintings in the Low Countries. They were destroyed at the bombardment of Brussels in 1695, but tapestries copied from the originals still exist in the Museum at Berne, having been captured by the Swiss when Charles the Bold was defeated at Granson.

In 1443 the artist began what in the judgment of the art critics was his most important work, an altarpiece representing “The Last Judgment” for the chapel of a hospital at Beaune, near Dijon in Burgundy, where it still remains. The museum at Antwerp contains a triptych of the Seven Sacraments by this master, showing the interior of a cathedral suggestive of that of Tournai—and, in fact, it was for the Bishop of Tournai that it was originally painted. Nearly every important art gallery in Europe contains one or more works by Van der Weyden, who not only was very industrious, receiving numerous orders from the great men of his day, but fortunate in having most of his masterpieces preserved from the destruction that overtook so much of the work of the early Flemish artists.

The former Cloth Hall of Tournai, erected in 1610, was completely and very successfully restored in 1884, and is now used to house an admirable little collection of paintings and a museum of antiquities. The paintings are, for the most part, the work of Tournai artists, and most of its three hundred and eighty titles are of local rather than international interest. There are several works, however, of the highest rank, and the museum as a whole serves admirably to illustrate the fact that the traditions and inspiration of the first great masters of Flemish painting, whose work has made the name of Tournai illustrious for all time, have never been wholly forgotten in their native city. To be sure, there is nothing to represent Robert Campin or Jacques Daret, nor had the caretaker ever heard of either of them—a fact hardly to be wondered at, since the works of the former have not yet been fully identified by the critics. Van der Weyden is credited with a “Descent from the Cross” in the museum catalogue, but many critics hold this to be a copy of a lost work by Hugo Van der Goes. Those in charge of the museum have wisely included some excellent photographs of the more famous works by Van der Weyden in the leading European galleries—a plan that might well be followed with respect to the other notable works by Tournaisian artists. The masterpiece of the collection is the well known “Last Honours to Counts Egmont and Horn,” by Louis Gallait, the greatest of Tournai’s modern artists, whose statue stands in the little park before the railway station. A replica of this fine but gruesome work was painted by the artist for the Antwerp museum. The Tournai museum contains nearly a dozen other works bequeathed to the city by this painter, including several admirable portraits—a branch in which he was especially skilful. The powerful “Abdication of Charles V” by this master hangs in the Brussels museum, and his notable “Last Moments of the Comte d’Egmont” in the museum of Berlin.

A TRIPTYCH OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS BY ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN.

Equally fine in a very different way, but less widely known, is a spirited painting by a comparatively unknown artist, Van Severdonck, representing the Princess of Epinoy valiantly defending a breach in the walls during the siege of Tournai in 1581. We were unable to obtain a photograph of this admirable work as it is so hung that it is difficult to get a good light upon it. A fine portrait of St. Donatian is attributed in the catalogue to Jan Gossaert or Mabuse (from Maubeuge where he was born). By some critics it is assigned to Bellegambe, who was born at Douai in French Flanders and was a contemporary of Gossaert. The museum also contains works by Hennebicq, who painted the historical picture of Philip Augustus granting a charter to the city of Tournai in the Hotel de Ville; Hennequin, the teacher of Gallait; Stallaert, whose “Death of Dido” is in the museum of Brussels, and several other natives of Tournai who are less well known. From Robert Campin, who settled at Tournai about 1406 and died in 1444, to Louis Gallait, whose three great masterpieces were painted between 1840 and 1850, and to Stallaert and Hennebicq, who laid aside their brushes in the first decade of the present century, there extends a period of five hundred years during which the noble art of painting has been practised and taught at Tournai by men of commanding genius—a record in the history of art that no town in the world of similar size has ever equalled.

It is worthy of remark, in passing, that the art of sculpture which was practised at Tournai with such notable success as early as the thirteenth century, and steadily thereafter for several hundred years, has not survived to the present day. There are no modern sculptors in the list of Tournaisian artists, but the cathedral is a veritable museum of the stone carvings of the past. The men of the chisel, moreover, must be credited with giving some of the inspiration that made the work of the early artists of the brush so notable. Van der Weyden, particularly, shows the influence of sculpture and a marked appreciation of its effects in the framework and backgrounds of many of his pictures. Moreover, for several centuries the sculptors of Tournai enjoyed a renown that extended throughout Flanders and northern France. In the churches of Tournai and of many other cities examples of their work can be seen that show a continuous record of achievement from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries.

Closely allied to the carvers of stone were those who worked in metals and of these Tournai had its full share. A street of the Goldsmiths (rue des Orfévres) near the Grande Place indicates the importance of that industry in ancient times. The best example of this branch of Tournaisian art is to be found in the treasury of the cathedral. This is the superb Chasse, or Reliquary of St. Eleuthereus, which is considered to be one of the finest products of the goldsmith’s art during the Middle Ages. While the name of the maker of this masterpiece is unknown, it is unquestionably of Tournaisian origin and was completed in 1247. Built in the form of a sarcophagus, and made of silver, heavily gilded, it is almost bewildering in the richness and intricacy of its decorations and filigrees. At one end is a large seated figure of Christ, at the other of St. Eleuthereus, while the sides contain figures of the Virgin and the Apostles. Around, above and below these chief figures the artist has placed a labyrinth of minor ones, of churches and landscapes, of columns, arches and architectural embellishments, all carved with a richness of design that cannot be adequately described. Still older, for it dates from 1205, is the Chasse de Notre Dame, another treasure of the cathedral. This was made by Nicolas de Verdun, a citizen of Tournai, and is of wood, painted and adorned with curious bas-reliefs representing incidents from the New Testament. A third chasse, which on account of its great value is kept under lock and key in the treasury, like that of St. Eleuthereus, is called the Chasse des Damoiseaux. It is made of silver and bears in relief, and enamelled, the arms of some of the patrician families of the city in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the Confrerie des Damoiseaux held many brilliant tournaments in

Tournai and other cities. This chasse, the keeper told us, was not made at Tournai, but at Bruges. Although very beautiful, it is not considered so notable a work of art as its companion.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Tournai rivalled Dinant as a producer of fine copper and brassware, and in this industry the artistic instincts of its citizens soon led them to produce pieces of remarkable distinction. One of the finest of these is the baptismal font in the church of Notre Dame at Hal, made in 1446. The artisans of Tournai turned out a prodigious number of fine products of the copper-smith's art during the two centuries mentioned—lamps, candlesticks, chandeliers, funeral monuments, crucifixes and other religious articles; and, in fact, it was not until the eighteenth century that this industry declined, only to give place to the manufacture of gilded bronze ware.

The cathedral and the museum of antiquities contain some choice examples of another great Tournaisian art industry of the Middle Ages—the manufacture of rich tapestries. During the fourteenth century the renown of the products of Tournai in this field was already considerable, and between 1440 and 1480 its artisans surpassed even those of Arras. In richness of colouring, diversity and sprightliness of subjects, beauty of design and workmanship, the tapestries of Tournai rank among the finest art productions of the Middle Ages. In 1477, when Louis XI seized Arras and dispersed its workmen, many of them fled to Tournai, Audenaerde and Brussels, establishing the industry in those cities. Tournai, where it had already made great progress, was the first to benefit by this emigration and for a time became the leading tapestry-making centre in Europe. It was the school of Tournai that was the true forerunner of the still more famous tapestry weavers of Brussels in depicting historical and mythological scenes of the utmost vivacity and richness, while the ateliers of Audenaerde specialised more largely in quieter pastoral scenes and landscapes. Philip the Good, the most fastidious connoisseur of his age, ordered several tapestries at Tournai, including the history of Gideon in eight panels to decorate the Hall of the Order of the Golden Fleece. In the cathedral the most notable of the Tournai tapestries illustrates vividly the story of Joseph, while one of the best in the museum depicts the history of Abraham—the angels announcing the birth of Isaac. The border of a Tournai tapestry usually bears the mark of the ateliers of that city, a castle tower, which is plainly to be seen on the one last mentioned. The cathedral also possesses a remarkable tapestry of Arras, made by Pierrot Féré in 1402, and depicting incidents connected with the lives of St. Piat and St. Eleuthereus and the plague at Tournai. This masterpiece originally hung above the stalls in the choir, and more than half of it has been destroyed at one time or another. The remainder has been placed in a continuous panel, like a panorama, around a semi-circular chapel back of the treasury, and constitutes one of the most curious relics of the mediæval art to be seen in Europe. According to some authorities the designs for this work were drawn by one of the artists of the Tournai school of painters from which Van der Weyden subsequently received his instruction. At all events the scenes are extremely naïve, and the artist has inserted sundry little devils who are giving expression to their contempt of the various religious ceremonies depicted in some of the sections in a manner that, to say the least, is most unconventional.

The wars and troubles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries very nearly extinguished the art industries of Tournai, the number of master-weavers of tapestries declining from two hundred and fourteen between 1538 and 1553 to forty in 1693, and twenty-nine in 1738. It was only a few years after the last date, however, when a new art industry became established in the city. In 1751 a native of Lille, named François Péterink, began the manufacture at Tournai of fine porcelains. Dinner sets elaborately decorated and daintily formed, vases, statues and statuettes of "biscuit" equal to the finest products of Sèvres, Saxony or England, were turned out in considerable quantities for more than a century, and the porcelains of Tournai became so renowned that princes vied with one another to secure these works of art. It is still possible for the collector to secure some of these fine products, the trademarks being a rude castle tower or two crossed swords with tiny crosses at their intersecting angles. In the finest tableware these are usually in gold, but red or some other colour should not be despised, as the genuine Tournai ware is becoming rare and already brings high prices. These marks, it should be added, have been imitated, and the amateur will do well to consult expert advice before purchasing.

Still another noteworthy art industry of Tournai merits at least a word in passing. From the very earliest period after the art of making stained or painted glass was invented the ateliers of the "Ville d'Art" have excelled in this fine branch of handicraft. During the fifteenth century Tournaisian artists made the seven stained glass windows in the transept of the cathedral that depict in glowing colours the history of the contest between Childeric and Sigebert and the donations and privileges granted to the bishop and the cathedral by Chilperic. Not only are these scenes of the utmost interest historically, but the student of costumes and customs during the Middle Ages and the student of early Flemish art will both find in them abundant material for study. It has already been said that the cathedral of Tournai is in itself a history of Flemish architecture covering a period of well-nigh a thousand years. It is also a veritable museum of Flemish art, and especially of Tournaisian art, in almost all of its many branches.

In the eighteenth century the apparently inextinguishable artistic spirit of Tournai found expression in the production of carpets that recalled the best period of its tapestry weavers. The carpet in the cabinet of Napoleon at Fontainebleau and the celebrated carpet of the Legion of Honour, which was shown in the French pavilion at the recent exposition at Turin, were made at Tournai during this period. At the same epoch the goldsmiths and coppersmiths, whose activities had never entirely ceased during the centuries of trouble, began once more to turn out their artistic products in considerable quantities, nor have these ateliers entirely ceased operations at Tournai to this day. Truly the name "Ville d'Art" has been fairly won and kept by this little city, if seven centuries of almost uninterrupted artistic endeavour and achievement count for anything!

It is a somewhat remarkable feature of modern Belgium, however, that while its cities abound in beautiful and artistic things, the common people—both the working classes and the *bourgeoisie*, or fairly prosperous middle-class of small merchants and manufacturers—seem to have very little interest in pictures or works of art, and little or no desire to acquire them. The average Belgian home is utterly bare of ornament, save perhaps a crucifix or a religious image or chromo—if these can be termed ornamental. Reproductions of the

fine masterpieces of painting and statuary in which this little country is so rich are incredibly scarce and difficult to procure—save only the very famous pictures, of which copies have been made to sell to tourists in the larger cities. Even these the native Belgian apparently never buys, and the art stores carry very few coloured prints of moderate price such as are to be seen everywhere in the United States. In fact, of those we saw a considerable proportion were of American manufacture. Of course these remarks do not allude to the stores handling original paintings by ancient and modern masters, costly water-colours and etchings. These are purchased in Belgium, as everywhere else, by the wealthy class, whose homes are as rich and artistic as any in the world. It is the absence of interest by the two classes first mentioned that seems to me so remarkable in a country that for centuries has been passionately devoted to art in all its manifestations, and, for its population and area, is without doubt the world's largest producer of beautiful things.

On the other hand, the Belgian of even the humblest social standing is invariably fond of flowers. In the cities every woman on her way to or from market buys a bouquet for the table, while in the country there is no garden without its little flower-bed, or flower-bordered paths, or rambling rosebushes climbing up the high brick garden wall or arching over the entrance. This shows an intense and inborn love of the beautiful. Why is it, then, that men and women whose daily lives are spent in creating beautiful things—rare lace, fine wood-carvings, rich brass or copper ware—are content with homes that are as bare of ornament as any prison cell?

CHAPTER XIV

THE FALL OF CHARLES THE BOLD—MEMLING AT BRUGES

There are few careers in history more fascinating, more spectacular, more dramatic, than that of the last Duke of Burgundy who ruled over Flanders—Charles the Bold. Heir to dominions that included all of what is now Belgium and Holland, nearly a third of France, and portions of what is now Germany, Charles was by far the most powerful of the feudal lords of his day, surpassing the King of France, and even the Emperor in the splendour and wealth of his court and in the number of feudal princes and knights whom he could summon to his standard. He not only had dreams of becoming a king himself, but was, on one occasion, offered a crown—the Emperor Frederick III proposing to make him King of Brabant. This he refused—a serious error, for he could easily have extended his royal title, once legally acquired, over the rest of his dominions.

In "all the pomp and pageantry of power," however, Charles was every inch a king—magnificent in his hospitality, exceedingly ceremonious and punctilious in court etiquette, and fond of showing his vast power on every occasion. On the other hand, he was profoundly ignorant of the fact that the real source of his wealth and strength was in the great industrial communes of Flanders, Brabant and Liége, and the cruelty with which he destroyed the cities of Liége and Dinant cost him the affection and good will of all his people. His great antagonist was Louis XI of France—also one of the most picturesque figures in history—but the exact antithesis of Charles in almost every respect. While Charles never received a delegation unless seated on a throne, the loftiness and grandeur of which filled every eye, Louis dressed plainly—often wearing the grey cloak of a pilgrim, and almost invariably a pilgrim's hat, with a leaden image of some saint in the hat-band. On one occasion, when he paid a visit to his subjects in Normandy, riding in company with the gorgeous Duke of Burgundy, the peasants exclaimed, "Is that a King of France? Why, the whole outfit, man and horse, is not worth twenty francs!"

Charles, like his father, held his ducal court wherever he might happen to be—both princes often carrying a lengthy train of baggage, including even furniture and tapestries, from one castle to another. Bruges, however, is identified with some of the most important events of his career, and he held his court there much oftener than at the ancestral capital of Burgundy, Dijon. During the last years of the reign of his father, Philip the Good, Charles acted as Regent, and it was during this period of his rule that he astonished and terrified Europe by the ferocity with which he avenged an insult to his parents' honour by utterly destroying the prosperous city of Dinant and slaughtering most of its male inhabitants. On his accession to the ducal throne, however, the great communes of Ghent, Bruges, Malines and Brussels were able to extort from their new Duke all of the privileges that his father had taken away during his long reign. Charles granted these with fury in his heart, vowing openly that before long he would humble these presumptuous burghers. Fortunately for the liberties of the Flemish towns, their Duke's attentions were speedily called elsewhere and he found no opportunity to carry out his threats.

Fomented by the emissaries of Louis XI, the turbulent citizens of Liége—already a large and prosperous manufacturing town, as advanced in the metallurgical arts as the Flemish cities were in the textile industries—rose in insurrection against their Bishop-Prince, an ally of Charles. With an army of one hundred thousand feudal levies Charles quickly suppressed this revolt. The following year Louis ventured to place himself in Charles' power by paying him a visit at his powerful castle of Péronne. This famous historical incident is brilliantly described by Sir Walter Scott in *Quentin Durward*. To the king's alarm and very extreme personal danger, the people of Liége took the moment of this visit to rise again. Charles was furious, and, not unjustly considering Louis to be the author of this attack on his authority, had that monarch locked up in a room in the castle. Nor was he placated until Louis signed a treaty still further extending the power of the Dukes of Burgundy in France, and agreed to join Charles in the expedition to punish his unruly subjects. This time the

city after being captured was given over to the half-savage Burgundian soldiery to be sacked, some forty thousand of its inhabitants perishing.

Returning to Flanders, Charles bitterly denounced the cautious policy of the burghers in refusing to pay tax levies for his armies unless they knew how the money was to be spent. “Heavy and hard Flemish heads that you are,” he cried to a delegation from Ghent, “you always remain fixed in your bad opinions, but know that others are as wise as you. You Flemings, with your hard heads, have always either despised or hated your princes. I prefer being hated to being despised. Take care to attempt nothing against my highness and lordship, for I am powerful enough to resist you. It would be the story of the iron and the earthen pots.”

Presently Louis, repudiating the recent treaty as being extorted by force, invaded Charles’ dominions and captured several cities on the Somme. Charles sought to retake them and was repulsed both at Amiens and Beauvais, the defenders at the latter place being urged to stronger resistance by Jeanne Hachette, one of the heroic figures of French history. Charles now turned his attention to the German side of his dominions, and here also the implacable enmity of Louis stirred up enemies for him in every direction. In Alsace the people rose in revolt and slew the cruel governor Charles had set over them, while the Swiss defeated the Marshal of Burgundy. Charles set forth to re-establish his authority with an army of thirty thousand men, the flower of his feudal levies. The Swiss, alarmed, sued for peace, assuring the powerful Duke that there was more gold in the spurs and bridles of his horsemen than could be found in all of Switzerland.

Charles, however, was bent on punishing these impudent mountaineers and ordered the invasion of their country. The defenders of the little fortress of Granson surrendered on the approach of his army, but in flagrant violation of the terms he had just granted the Duke of Burgundy ordered the entire garrison to be hanged. This act was speedily avenged, for the Swiss a few days later utterly routed the Burgundian forces just outside of Granson. The mountaineers in this battle advanced in a solid phalanx against which Charles’ horsemen and archers could make no impression. The blow to the pride and prestige of the Duke was far more serious than the loss of the engagement and the scattering of his army. With great difficulty he raised fresh levies, the Flemish communes granting aid only on condition that no further subsidies should be demanded for six years to come. The battle of Granson took place March 2, 1476. By June he had raised another and a larger army, and on the 22nd met the Swiss again at Morat. On reviewing his host before the battle, Charles is said to have exclaimed, “By St. George, we shall now have vengeance!” but the vengeance was not to be always on one side, for the Swiss, making their battle-cry “Granson! Granson!” in remembrance of their countrymen, whom Charles had treacherously slain, almost annihilated his army. The Swiss showed no mercy and took no prisoners, while the number of killed on the Burgundian side amounted to eighteen thousand. Charles escaped with his life, accompanied by a small body of his knights.

For a time it seemed as if his rage and despair at these two defeats would cause the proud Duke to lose his reason, nor could his threats or entreaties secure more assistance from Flanders. He managed, however, to keep the field, and with a small force sat down to besiege Nancy—which had been lost to him again after Morat. The town held out stubbornly, as all towns did, now that Charles’ cruelty and treachery to those who surrendered were known, and the Burgundian forces suffered much hardship from the cold, for it was now mid-winter. On January 5th Charles gave battle to an advancing force of Swiss, was again crushed and the greater part of his little army killed. After the battle the Duke could not be found, and no man knew what had become of him. The following day a page reported that he had seen his master fall, and could find the place. He led the searchers to a little pond called the Etang de St. Jean. Here, by the border of a little stream, they found a dozen despoiled bodies, naked and frozen in the mud and ice. One by one they turned these over. “Alas,” said the little page presently, “here is my good master!” Disfigured, with two fearful death wounds, and with part of his face eaten by wolves, it was indeed the body of the great Duke.

Even his enemies did honour to the dead prince. Clothed in a robe of white satin, with a crimson satin mantle, his body was borne in state into the town he had vainly sought to conquer, and placed in a velvet bed under a canopy of black satin. His remains were interred in the church of St. George at Nancy, where they remained for more than fifty years. The Emperor, Charles V, then had them brought to Bruges and placed in the church of St. Donatian. His son, Philip II, removed them, five years later, to the wonderful shrine in the Church of Notre Dame where they remained until the French Revolution, when they were scattered to the winds as the bones of a tyrant. The sarcophagus, however, of the Duke and his gentle daughter, Marie, still remain, as we have seen, and are among the finest in existence.

The death of the powerful Duke of Burgundy made a profound impression throughout Europe, and still remains, as Mr. Boulger in his admirable *History of Belgium* says, “one of the tragedies of all history.” His downfall was mainly due to the implacable hostility of Louis XI, whom he had once publicly humiliated at Péronne and affected at all times to despise. Many of the Swiss and Germans who fought against him in his last fatal campaign were hired mercenaries in the pay of the King of France, while some of his most trusted followers and advisers were traitors in constant correspondence with his wily and unscrupulous antagonist. Had Charles sought to conciliate his great Flemish communes instead of intimidate them his reign might have been prolonged by their powerful aid, and his dream of establishing a kingdom of Burgundy have been realised. As it was, he failed signally in most of his undertakings, and with all his fury and vainglory and cruelty lost in ten years the huge power that his father had taken fifty years to accumulate.

Marie, Charles’ only daughter, was left by his sudden and unexpected death “the greatest heiress in Christendom,” but also well-nigh helpless to rule over or even hold her widespread dominions. To prevent the King of France from taking advantage of this situation her Flemish counsellors advised her to accept an offer of marriage from Maximilian, son of the Emperor Frederick III, and in August of the same year that saw the battle of Granson they were quietly married at Bruges. This event made Flanders a still smaller unit than before in a vast aggregation of states that in the course of events was being combined under the rule of the House of Hapsburg, nor did Marie’s untimely death, less than five years later, in any wise delay the process of consolidation.

Bruges, during the stormy reign of Charles the Bold and the quarter of a century of anxiety and troubles for its burghers that followed after the battle of Nancy, was steadily losing its population and material prosperity, and, at the same time, acquiring its greatest claim to fame—for it was between the year 1462 and 1491 that Memling, the foremost of the early Flemish painters, executed the wonderful series of masterpieces that have come down to us. And it is to Bruges that the student of art must come to see the famous Fleming at his best, for there are more of his important works here than in all the rest of the world put together.

In common with many others in the early Gothic school very little is known of the early life of Hans Memling, but the recent discovery in an old manuscript of a note stating that he was born at or near Mayence gives a most interesting clue both as to his birthplace and the origin of his name. In the Rhineland district near Mayence there is a small tributary to the great river called Memling, and a village named Memlingen. It is probable, therefore, that—just as the brothers Van Eyck called themselves Hubert and Jean of Eyck—so their most famous successor called himself Hans of Memling. For lack of authentic details regarding his early career legend has supplied a most interesting history—that he was wild and dissolute in his younger days, was wounded while fighting with Charles the Bold at Nancy, dragged himself to the door of the hospital of St. Jean at Bruges, and was there tenderly nursed back to health and strength, in gratitude for which he painted for the kind sisters the little gallery of fine works that are still preserved in the original chapter house of the institution. All of this romance, and that of his love for one of the sisters, makes a charming background for many of the accounts of his life and work, but the painstaking scholarship of modern days has shown that at the time when he was supposed to be lying wounded and destitute at the hospital he was in fact very prosperous, having lately bought the house in which he lived and his name appearing as one of the leading citizens of whom the commune had borrowed money. It is perhaps pleasanter on the whole to think of the artist as rich and honoured instead of at the other extreme of the social scale—but the legend is, after all, so much more romantic that we cannot give it up without regret.

At Bruges the first spot for the admirer of Memling to visit is, of course, the hospital of St. Jean, and at the hospital the first thing to see is the world-famous shrine of St. Ursula. Little it is, yet beyond price in value. It was constructed as a casket to contain the relics of the Saint and was completed in 1489. In design it is a miniature Gothic chapel two feet ten inches high and three feet long, with three little panels on each side which contain Memling’s famous pictures setting forth the life and martyrdom of the Saint and the eleven thousand other virgins who shared her fate. The story of the famous pilgrimage to Rome and its melancholy ending at Cologne has been told so often that it need not be repeated here. Ask one of the sisters to tell it to you in her charming broken French—for they are Flemish, these sweet-faced sisters, and, as a rule, understand neither French nor English.

SHRINE OF ST. URSULA, HOSPITAL OF ST. JEAN, BRUGES.

This fact is said to have served them in good stead on the terrible day when the bandit-soldiery of the French Republic clamoured at the doors of the hospital in 1494. “The shrine! the shrine!” they cried, “give us the

shrine!" ("*La châsse, la châsse, donnez nous la châsse!*") The nuns, who had never heard it called by that name, but knew it only by its Flemish name of *Ryve*, replied that they did not possess such a thing as a *châsse*, and their voices and expressions so clearly showed their truthfulness and innocence of any deceit that the rabble of soldiers went away and the shrine was saved. Early in the nineteenth century the Mother Superior refused a most tempting offer to purchase the shrine, replying, "We are poor, but the greatest riches in the world would not tempt us to part with it."

While the paintings on the shrine are the most famous of Memling's works, they are not regarded by the critics as being his best. As Mr. Rooses expresses it, "The artist seems to have been less intent on perfection of detail for each figure than on the marvellous polychromy of the whole." The hospital of St. Jean possesses three of the master's greatest works—two triptychs entitled "The Marriage of St. Catherine" and "The Adoration of the Magi," and the diptych representing the Madonna and Martin Van Nieuwenhove. The museum at Bruges contains still another masterpiece, a picture showing in the centre St. Christopher, St. Maurus and St. Giles—the first bearing the Infant Christ upon his shoulders—while the two shutters contain the usual portraits of the donors. One of Memling's most important works was a picture of "The Last Judgment" which was painted for an Italian, Jacopo Tani, and placed on board ship to be sent to Florence by sea. The ship was captured by privateers in the English Channel, and as its owners were citizens of Dantzig it was presented by them to the Church of Our Lady in that city, where it still remains. There are several admirable works by this master at the museums of Brussels and Antwerp, while others are scattered throughout Europe, and one particularly fine example of his art was brought to America by the late Benjamin Altman and now hangs in the Altman collection at the Metropolitan Museum at New York.

While the chief interest to the visitor at the hospital of St. Jean is the remarkable collection of works by Memling, the old buildings themselves merit more than a casual glance. Some of them date from the twelfth century, and the view looking back at the ancient waterfront from the bridge by which the rue St. Catherine here crosses the river is particularly picturesque. The old brick structures go down to the very water's edge, and sometimes below it, and the entire pile from this side must look much as it did in Memling's day.

Another artist whose work sheds lustre on the old town of Bruges was Gheerhardt David. For nearly four centuries his name and even his very existence were forgotten, his paintings being attributed to Memling—in itself a high evidence of their merit. Recent studies by James Weale and other scholars have given us quite a complete life of this artist, who lived between 1460 and 1523, and a number of his works have been identified. All of these seem to have been painted at Bruges, and some of the more notable ones still remain there. The municipal authorities commissioned him to paint two great pictures representing notable examples of justice such as Van der Weyden had done for the Hotel de Ville at Brussels. These depict the flaying alive of the unjust Judge Sisamnes by Cambyses, King of Persia, and are still preserved in the museum at Bruges. The museum also possesses another masterpiece by this artist, "The Baptism of Christ." Others that have been identified through painstaking study of the old archives of the city and contemporary sources are located in the National Gallery at London and in the museum of Rouen.

The prosperity of Bruges was declining very fast while David was painting the last of his religious pictures and the merchants were steadily leaving the city for Antwerp, which was now rising into importance. The artists, whose prosperity depended upon the wealth of the burghers were also drifting to the new commercial metropolis on the Scheldt and the famous school of Bruges was near its end by the middle of the sixteenth century. The last artists who worked at Bruges were of minor interest. Adriaen Ysenbrant, Albert Cornelis and Jean Prévost belong to this period, and their most important works are still preserved in the city where they were executed. "The Virgin of the Seven Sorrows," in the church of Notre Dame, is attributed to the first, a triptych in the church of St. Jacques to the second, while the museum has several pictures by Prévost, including an interesting "Last Judgment," and another striking representation of the same subject by Pieter Pourbus, of which there is a copy in the Palais du Franc. The masterpieces by Jean Van Eyck in this museum have already been mentioned, and the small but exceedingly rich collection also includes a fine production entitled "The Death of the Virgin," which is now generally attributed to Hugo Van der Goes—one of the comparatively few works by that master that have come down to us. There are also several other works by P. Pourbus, and a powerful allegorical picture by Jean Prévost representing Avarice and Death. There is undoubtedly no collection of paintings in the world of which the average value is so great as that of the little group in the hospital of St. Jean, and the one in the Bruges museum—while it has quite a few of minor interest and value—would also bring a very high average if subjected to the bidding of the world's millionaire art lovers.

An Illumination by Gheerhardt David of Bruges, 1498; St. Barbara

Bruges possesses another museum of great interest which dates from the days of the last Dukes of Burgundy. This is the Gruuthuise mansion, of which the oldest wing was built in 1420, and much of the finer portion about 1470 by Louis, or Lodewyk, Van der Gruuthuise, who here entertained Charles the Bold and his pretty daughter—becoming one of the latter's chief advisers on the death of her father and one of the two Flemish noblemen who witnessed her marriage. The stately old palace is therefore rich with historic associations. As we entered its broad courtyard, however, we were most unfavourably impressed by its rough-paved surface with the grass growing thick between the stones. Surely this must have looked very different in the days when knights and fair ladies swarmed here like bees, and the city, which has so carefully restored everything else, would do well to at least park this otherwise very pretty little enclosure. The interior is both pleasing and disappointing. The edifice itself is superb as a survival of a nobleman's palace of the fifteenth century, and as an example of Flemish interior architecture. The grand stone staircase, the massive fireplaces, also in white stone, and one or two of the rooms in their entirety give a fine impression of the splendour of the establishment maintained by the great Lord of Gruuthuise in the days when he counted King Edward IV of England and Richard Crookback among his guests, and was engaged in collecting the marvellous library now in Paris. Everywhere, over the fireplaces, and in various stone carvings, one reads the proud motto of the powerful builders of this palace, *Plus est en nous*.

When the palace was in course of restoration some years ago the workmen uncovered a secret chamber behind the great stone fireplace in the kitchen, concealed within the masonry of the huge chimney, and within it the skeleton of a man. A secret staircase was also discovered here which led to two underground passages branching off in opposite directions. Strangely enough neither of them has ever been explored, but one is supposed to lead to the vaults beneath the adjoining church of Notre Dame, and the other to some point outside the city walls. Some have conjectured that it leads to the Château of Maele, some four miles distant, but probably it went to the manor of the Lords of Gruuthuise at Oostcamp. Within this mansion a modern Sir Walter Scott could easily conjure forth a new series of Waverley novels treating of the stirring days when Bruges was virtually the capital of Flanders and Flanders was the brightest jewel in the Burgundian crown.

All this is most fascinating, and, as far as it goes, helps us to reconstruct in fancy the great days of the past. The disappointing feature about the palace is the museum itself, which, although interesting and valuable, utterly spoils many of the fine rooms by converting them into mere exhibition places. In a measure the authorities have followed the admirable plan of the owners of the Hotel Merghelynck at Ypres, and the immense kitchen, for example, contains only kitchen utensils of the Middle Ages—a most complete and interesting collection. The same is also true of the large dining-room on the same floor, but as one proceeds farther the atmosphere of antiquity becomes lost and it is all nothing but museum. The palace contains a splendid collection of old lace, the gift of the Baroness Liedts, but it seemed to us that it would have been much better to have housed this and the various collections of antiquities in some less famous and historic structure and endeavoured to restore all of these rooms to approximately their condition when Charles the Bold stalked through them.

The period of Philip the Good and his terrible son was the one in which mediæval Bruges took on substantially its present form. In addition to the Gruuthuise Palace scores of important edifices, public and private, were built or rebuilt at this time, while hundreds of smaller houses were constructed—of which many remain in existence to-day. The greatest and most famous edifice dating in large part from this epoch is the cathedral of St. Sauveur whose grim, castle-like tower dominates the entire city. The lowest part of the tower dates from 1116-1127—as already related in the chapter on Bruges under Charles the Good—when the church was rebuilt after a fire that destroyed the primitive structure erected on the site a century or more earlier. Between 1250 and 1346, or for almost a century, the men of Bruges were slowly piling up a noble church in the early Gothic style, but another fire in 1358 necessitated rebuilding the nave and transept—a

task which occupied the next ten or fifteen years. In 1480 work was begun upon the five chapels of the choir and nine years later the Pope, Innocent VIII, granted a special Bull of Indulgence in favour of benefactors of this work, which appears to have been delayed for lack of funds. Work of various kinds was continued until the middle of the sixteenth century, but, in the main, the great church was nearly as we see it now by the year 1511. The upper part of the tower is comparatively modern, dating from 1846, and the spire from 1871. While it has been criticised by some as ungainly and cumbrous, the effect of this tower, from whatever angle it may be viewed, is very pleasing. The high lights and shadows on a sunny morning, or late in the afternoon, make it far more beautiful than its sister of Notre Dame, while against the grey cloud masses of a typical Flemish sky its huge tawny mass stands out sharp and clear, the embodiment of majesty and strength.

The interior of the church is very large, measuring three hundred and thirty-one feet by one hundred and twenty-five feet, with an extreme width of one hundred and seventy-four feet across the transepts. Its polychrome decorations and stained glass windows are modern. In another place the wealth of art treasures in this church would merit a chapter, but in Bruges they are so overshadowed by the many masterpieces to be seen elsewhere that we felt somewhat satiated after such a feast and spent very little time looking at the pictures here. The most famous one is a “Martyrdom of St. Hippolytus,” by Dierick Bouts, which is interesting because so few examples of this primitive master are in existence. It is a triptych, the central panel showing the saint about to be torn to pieces by wild horses, on the left an incident in the life of the saint, and on the right the donors. The last picture has been attributed by many critics to Hugo Van der Goes, and for many years the entire picture was thought to be the work of Memling. Bouts delighted in unpleasant subjects, which he depicted with great realism.

“THE LAST SUPPER.”—THIERRY BOUTS.

Dierick, or Thierry, Bouts settled at Louvain about the middle of the fifteenth century. Beyond the fact that he came from Haarlem nothing is known of his early life and training, but as Van der Weyden of Tournai had done some important work at Louvain it is likely that Bouts may have derived some of his inspiration from studying the methods of that master. He was a contemporary of Memling. Two of his paintings, “The Last Supper” and the gruesome “Martyrdom of St. Erasmus,” were executed for the wealthy brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament and were hung in the church of St. Peter.[2] Bouts became the official painter for the city of Louvain and produced a “Last Judgment” for the hall of the échevins which has since been lost, and two panels for the council-room of the Hotel de Ville representing “The Judgment of Otho.” These are now in the museum at Brussels. The Queen having accused an earl of offending her honour, the latter is decapitated. The head is then given to his Countess, together with a glowing bar of iron. In the second panel she is shown triumphantly holding both, the hot iron refusing to burn her and thereby vindicating her husband’s innocence. The result of the ordeal is shown in the distance where the false Queen is being executed at the stake. These pictures were ordered, in imitation of those painted by Van der Weyden for the Hotel de Ville at Brussels, as part of a series of panels designed to instill the love of virtue and justice into the minds of the

magistrates and people. The artist's death prevented his completing two other panels that the archives of Louvain show had been ordered. Besides this "Martyrdom of St. Hippolytus" a comparatively small number of other works from his brush are listed in the catalogues of various European museums.

[2] They were probably destroyed during the burning of Louvain by the Germans.

Of the other structures in Bruges of to-day there are a score that merit a visit from those who are interested in the city's splendid past, and that date for the most part from the last years of the Burgundian period. In the rue des Aiguilles there still exists a fragment of the Hotel Bladelin, the town house of Peter Bladelin, who was for many years Controller-General of Finance, Treasurer of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and the trusted agent of the Dukes in all manner of business and private affairs. Peter subsequently built the town of Middleburg, for the church in which Van der Weyden painted one of his most famous pictures. The Ghistelhof in the same street also dates from this epoch, and was built by the Lords of Ghistelle. Then there is the Hotel d'Adornes and the church of Jerusalem, which was formerly the private chapel of the rich brothers Anselm and John Adornes. There is still a fine mediæval atmosphere lingering about this group of buildings, although much altered from what they were in their prime. The church itself is most curious, and beneath the choir is a crypt that leads to a reproduction of the Holy Sepulchre, said to be a facsimile of the one in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. It would take a volume to cite all of the fine old structures of which traces still exist in this, the most picturesque of all the Flemish cities. The reader who desires to find them all cannot do better than to take Ernest Gilliat-Smith's brilliant *Story of Bruges* with him and look for them, one by one. For those who cannot devote a week or more to this delightful task a quicker way to see the Bruges of Charles the Bold is to stroll slowly along the Quai Vert, the Quai des Marbriers and the Quai du Rosaire and let the beautiful vistas of the Vieux Bourg with its quaint red roofs and noble towers become engraved upon the memory, for here, more completely than anywhere else, one can see the Bruges of the past much as it looked in the day of its greatest splendour when it was about to sink into its long sleep.

Thus far Bruges has not suffered seriously from the war, and it is profoundly to be hoped that no bombardment such as crumbled its fair neighbour Termonde into utter ruin will create similar havoc amid these indescribably beautiful scenes. A few hours would suffice to destroy artistic and architectural treasures of a value that would make the destruction of Louvain seem of little consequence in comparison.

QUAI VERT, BRUGES.

CHAPTER XV

MALINES IN THE TIME OF MARGARET OF AUSTRIA

Since this chapter was written the ill-fated city of Malines has been swept with shot and shell for many days together, its once happy and prosperous inhabitants driven far and wide—many of them into foreign lands—and it is doubtful if a single one of the various ancient edifices which we visited last June has escaped injury. Notwithstanding these sad facts it has seemed best to retain the chapter substantially as it was written, inasmuch as it affords a pen picture of the old town as it looked on the very eve of its destruction. Let us hope that when the war is over it will be found that most, if not all, of its famous old structures can be restored again. As the scene of some of the most stubborn conflicts of the great war, it is likely that the city will be more generally visited by tourists than was the case when its architectural and artistic treasures were uninjured, save by the gentle hand of time. To those who thus visit it the following account of the Malines that was may prove interesting.

Situated midway between Antwerp and Brussels, on a route formerly traversed by scores of *rapides* every day, the ancient city of Malines—which is the French spelling, the Flemish being Mechelen—was exceptionally easy to visit, yet during the three days that we spent wandering along its entrancing old quays and streets and inspecting its many “monuments” we saw not a single tourist. This was the more remarkable because Malines is not only one of the very oldest cities in Northern Europe, but was for centuries among the most famous. For a considerable period it was the capital of all the Netherlands, and it is still the religious capital of Belgium—the archbishop of its cathedral church exercising authority over the bishops of Bruges, Ghent, Liége, Namur and Tournai.

No matter from which side one approaches the city the first object to be seen is the vast square tower of the Cathedral of St. Rombaut, and as this huge structure—the eighth wonder of the world, according to Vauban—dominates the town, so the church itself has dominated the history of the city on the River Dyle for more than eleven centuries. According to tradition St. Rombaut, or Rombold, to use the English spelling, sought to convert the savage tribes inhabiting the marshes that extended along the river about the middle of the eighth century, the date of his martyrdom being placed at 775. A Benedictine abbey was shortly afterwards established near his tomb, which steadily grew in importance and power until by the twelfth century it had become one of the most important religious institutions in the region. During the thirteenth century the prince-bishops of Malines became the virtual sovereigns of the city, one of them—Gauthier Berthout, sometimes called the Great—defeating the Duke of Gueldre, who attempted in 1267 to assert his authority over that of the prelate. At this period many of the religious institutions of Malines were established under the patronage of Gauthier Berthout and his successors.

CATHEDRAL OF ST. ROMBAUT. MALINES.

Meanwhile the comparative immunity of the city from the ravages of the wars that so often raged at that period between the various feudal lords of the region caused great numbers of artisans to settle there, particularly weavers, while the cloth merchants' guild came to be recognised as entitled to a voice in the civil affairs of the commune. Ships, according to the chronicles, came up the River Dyle in such numbers as to make the commercial activity of the town rival that of Antwerp—a statement that is hard to believe when one gazes at the tiny River Dyle of to-day. However, the ships in those days were very small, and the river, like so many others in Belgium, was no doubt broader then than it is now that the marshes have all been drained. The weavers and other artisans were a turbulent lot, and it soon became evident that the bishops lacked the power to hold them in check.

This led to a series of alienations of the temporal power over the commune to neighbouring princes whose armies were strong enough to keep the unruly burghers in restraint. The first of these was effected in the year 1300 between the prince-bishop, Jean Berthout, and Jean II, Duke of Brabant. In 1303 the news of the great victory gained over the nobility by the Flemish communes at Courtrai caused the citizens to revolt against their new master, the Duke, who besieged the city and finally reduced it by starvation. Until this time the Dyle had never been bridged, its waters flowing over a broad marshy bed. This made the siege the more difficult as the attacking forces were separated by the river, and it was five months before the sturdy burghers yielded. To this day an annual procession, called the *peysprocessie*, perpetuates the memory of this famous siege.

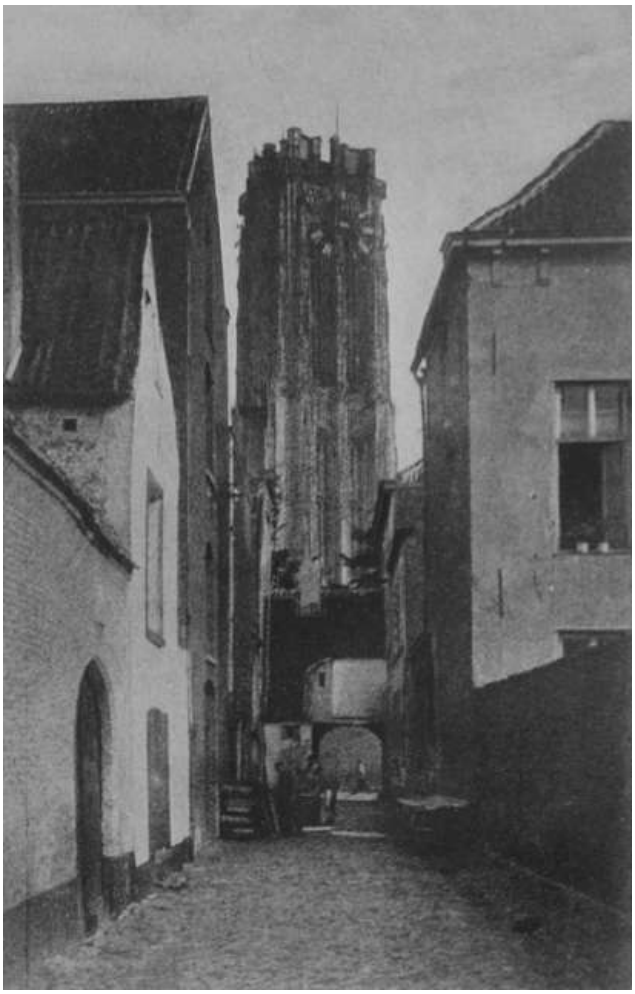
During the next half century the civil authority over the city became a veritable shuttlecock of politics and war, shifting back and forth between the Dukes of Brabant and the Counts of Flanders. It was bought and sold like a parcel of real estate, but eventually rested with the Counts of Flanders, who had first acquired it by purchase in 1333, and were finally left in undisputed possession by a treaty signed in 1357. Four years later a violent insurrection of the weavers and other artisans broke out that was only mastered after the city had been in their possession fifteen days, but with the advent of the Dukes of Burgundy to the supreme power over all of Flanders, Brabant, Hainaut and Holland, the unruly workmen were no longer strong enough to resist these redoubtable princes. Great numbers of them emigrated to other cities, and the cloth industry, after languishing for a time, finally disappeared.

Like most Flemish towns, Malines has its principal railway station located on its very outskirts, and as far as possible from the Grande Place. A tram car was standing in front of the station on the morning of our first visit, but it seemed that it did not start for ten minutes. A score of roomy two-seated carriages invited our patronage, but we valiantly decided to walk. We soon regretted our decision as the walk proved to be long and hot, with very little of interest to see, as the houses in this part of the town are comparatively modern. At the bridge across the Dyle we paused for a few moments to admire the fine views that can here be had of the old Church Notre Dame au delà de la Dyle to the westward and the equally picturesque Notre Dame d'Hanswyck to the eastward. Just beyond the river is the entrance to the Botanical Gardens, and as our first visit chanced to be on a Friday we walked in unmolested and enjoyed the welcome shade and the beautiful landscape effects of this charming little park. Later on we learned that Friday is the only week-day on which admission is free, a fee of ten cents being exacted on other days.

As is the case in most Belgian cities, the street from the station to the heart of the town, although continuous and straight, changes its name more than once. At the outset it is the rue Conscience, then the rue d'Egmont, and from the bridge across the Dyle to the Grande Place it is named Bruul. Entering the Place from this side we paused to admire the tremendous tower of the cathedral which here burst upon us in all its majestic grandeur, although the edifice is situated a little to the west of the Place itself. In front of us, on the right, was a singularly dilapidated ruin, which we learned was the old Cloth Hall. Part of it is used as a police station, part is vacant with its window openings devoid of sashes or glass staring blankly at the sky, while part is devoted to housing a small museum of municipal antiquities. The first Cloth Hall at Malines was destroyed by fire in 1342, and the new one that was begun to replace it was never finished, owing to the ruin of the cloth industry during the struggles between the artisans and their overlords, and a belfry which it was proposed to erect similar to that at Bruges was never begun. The museum contains a number of pictures by Malines artists, of historical rather than artistic interest, a "Christ on the Cross," by Rubens, and a variety of relics of the city's famous past. Curiously enough, there is not a single piece of lace in the collection, nor anything to represent the great cloth weaving industry—the two branches of manufacture to which the city owes so much of its former wealth and fame.

Adjoining the *Halle aux Draps* to the north is a fine modern post-office built from designs drawn by the great Malines architect of the sixteenth century, Rombaut Keldermans, for a new Hotel de Ville, which was never built. Unfortunately its principal façade overlooks the narrow rue de Beffer instead of the Grande Place, and its beautiful details cannot be seen as effectively as could be desired. In the Vieux Palais, the ancient "Schepenhuis," or house of the bailiffs, situated a little south of the Place, we were shown the original design by Keldermans. It is kept in a sliding panel on the wall and, although somewhat dim with age, can still be studied in detail. The modern architects of the post-office have reverently followed the plans of the great master so that at least this one of his many brilliant architectural dreams has come true, and now stands carved in imperishable stone just as his genius conceived it nearly four centuries ago.

To the ancestor of this architect, Jean Keldermans, is generally attributed the honour of designing the tower of St. Rombaut, the architectural glory of Malines and one of the most magnificent structures of the kind in the world. There are a thousand places throughout the city where the photographer or painter can obtain attractive views of this masterpiece, but perhaps the best of all is from a point some distance down the Ruelle sans Fin (Little Street without End) where a quaint mediæval house forms an arch across the narrow street, while behind and far above it rises the majestic tower. From whatever standpoint one regards the great tower, whether gazing up at its vast bulk from directly beneath—a point of view that the camera cannot reproduce—or from any of the little streets that radiate away from it, its grandeur and beauty are equally impressive.



TOWER OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. ROMBAUT FROM THE RUELLE SANS FIN.

Begun in 1452, work on the great tower advanced slowly. In 1468, according to a memorial tablet near the southern side of the tower, Gauthier Coolman was buried there. It was the custom in the Middle Ages to thus recognise the *magister operis*, or creator of the work, but it is generally acknowledged that Jean Keldermans is entitled to share in the credit for this achievement. Jean was the first in a family of famous architects, his brothers André, Mathieu and Antoine I, following the same profession, and their skill being handed down to later generations, of whom the most famous were Antoine II, Rombaut and Laurent. At the beginning of the sixteenth century work on the great tower was stopped, owing to lack of funds, after attaining a height of three hundred and eighteen feet. The plans, of which sketches are still preserved at Brussels, called for carrying the spire upward to a total height of five hundred and fifty feet, and in the ambulatory of the cathedral we found a plaster cast showing the spire as it was proposed to erect it. The stones to complete the work were already cut and brought to Malines, but were carried away between 1582 and 1584 by the Prince of Orange to build the town of Willemstadt. Apart from its height, this tower is remarkable for its great bulk, measuring no less than twenty-five metres in diameter at the base.

On each side for most of its height the architect designed a series of lofty Gothic windows. Of these the lowest are filled in with masonry, except for a tiny window in the centre. In the higher ones stone blinds fill in the openings, while the topmost pair are wide open to the sky. The well-known legend about the over-excitable citizen of Malines who cried “Fire!” one night after seeing the full moon through these windows gave the people of the town for many years the nickname of *Maanblusschers*, or moon extinguishers, and also gave rise to the slur in the last three words of the following Latin distich in which an old monkish poet compares the six chief cities of Belgium:

> *Nobilibus Bruxella viris, Antwerpia Nummis,*
> *Gandavum laqueis, formosis Bruga puellis,*
> *Lovanium doctis, gaudet Mechlinia stultis.*
>
> Brussels is renowned for its noble men, Antwerp for its money,
> Ghent for its halters, Bruges for its pretty girls,
> Louvain for its scholars, Malines (Mechelen) for its fools.

This seems rather hard on Malines, and also on Ghent, the allusion to that city referring to numerous occasions when its sovereigns humbled the burghers by forcing them to plead for mercy with halters around their necks.

On the outside of the tower, close to its present summit, is a clock the face of which is claimed to be the largest in the world. As the same claim is made for the great clock on an industrial establishment in Jersey City I will simply give the dimensions of the one at Malines and let those interested make the comparison for

themselves: Diameter of face, 13.5 metres; circumference, 41 metres; length of hour hand, 3.62 metres; height of figures, 1.96 metres. The minute hands were originally 4.25 metres long, but are missing on all four sides. This renders the time-piece hardly one to be consulted if one is catching a train, as the exact minute can only be estimated from the position of the hour hand. Furthermore, the gilding on the hour hands and on most of the figures has become so dim that only the strongest eyes can distinguish the former, and some of the latter can only be made out from their position. As the city appeared to be exceedingly proud of the size of this clock it seemed strange that the authorities did not authorise the expenditure of the small sum necessary to re-gild it.

It is a hard climb to the top of the tower, but one well worth making, not only for the fine panorama of the city that unfolds itself wider and wider as one mounts higher, but for the opportunity thus afforded of seeing the fine *carillon*, or set of chimes, and the curious mechanism operating the clappers that strike the hours. Just before reaching the floor upon which these are placed the guide conducts the visitor to a trap door from which one can look down into the interior of the cathedral—a thrilling experience to be enjoyed only by those who are not inclined to be dizzy. The massive timber work supporting the huge bells was constructed in 1662, but the oldest of the bells dates from 1498, or six years after the discovery of America. The two biggest bells are named Salvator and Charles, of which the larger one weighs 8,884 kilos, or more than nine tons, and requires twelve men to ring it. There are four other big bells and forty-five for the entire *carillon*, most of which were cast by Pierre Hémony of Amsterdam, the Stradivarius of bell founders, in 1674. Altogether they form four octaves, the giants chiming in with the others as the music demands. The keyboard which operates the little hammers is operated by both hand and foot power, and the *carillonneur* who operates it is worthy of the splendid instrument at his command, being Josef Denyn, the son of an equally famous *carillonneur*, and reputed to be the finest in Europe. M. Denyn not only gives frequent concerts at Malines, but also at Antwerp and Bruges, as well as in many European cities outside of Belgium.

We made a special trip to Malines one Monday afternoon in June solely to listen to one of these concerts, which takes place on that day between eight and nine in the evening, during the months of June, August and September. The sleepy old town was thronged with automobiles, for the renown of these famous concerts has spread far and wide, and some of the cars, we were told, had come from points as far away as Ostende, Blankenburghe and Heyst, while scores were from Antwerp and Brussels. The crowd gathered quietly in the streets surrounding the great tower and a great silence seemed to pervade the entire city as the hour of eight approached. Then, faint and far at first, came the first dulcet tones from this great organ of the sky, until—as the music swelled and more of the larger bells began to blend their notes in the harmony—the very air seemed vibrant with celestial sounds. The selection, as we afterwards learned, was one of the *Volksliederen*, or pieces of folk music for the rendition of which M. Denyn is famous. As we listened we realised as never before the part the ancient *carillon* was meant to take in the daily life of the people. It is, in truth, as a French author has beautifully expressed it, the orchestra of the poor, giving expression through its wondrous notes to their joys and their sorrows. On the occasion of great fêtes its music is light and gay, in attune with the popular rejoicing; in times of public grief the *carillon* gives utterance to notes of lamentation; when a famous citizen is being borne to his last resting-place through the streets lined with silent mourners the *carillon* sends the deep notes of its funeral dirges across the city; in time of war or sudden danger the great bells roar the wild tocsin of alarm; in time of peace their softest notes breathe a sweet prayer of peace and benediction at eventide.

While we were visiting the tower we were shown the *tambour* cast in copper by means of which the clock strikes the hours, the half hours and the quarters. This was cast in 1783, and two years were required to make the sixteen thousand, two hundred square holes into which drop the teeth that actuate the striking hammers.

The interior of St. Rombaut, while majestic and imposing, is hardly as masterly as the tower. On the occasion of our first visit a high mass was being celebrated and we reverently joined the throng of worshippers. In addition to the choir there was a body of some two hundred young men in the centre of the cathedral who participated in the singing, a curé beating time for them. Their strong manly voices blended finely with the higher notes of the distant choir boys and the deep tones of the organ. From the top of the choir long crimson streamers were suspended, terminating at the back of the high altar and giving a rich note of colour to the interior, while the light from the stained glass windows overhead poured downward in many-coloured rays upon the throng of black-robed priests, with a sprinkling of higher dignitaries clad in purple. Truly a picture that filled the eye with the pageantry of religion, even as the rolling notes of the sonorous chants filled the ear!

After the service was over, and the great cathedral, but now so crowded, was deserted, we started on our tour of inspection. It would be a tedious task to chronicle all of the objects of interest. The carved stalls of the Gothic choir are far less elaborate in workmanship than those at Amiens. The altar by Faid'herbe, a native of Malines, is imposing, but not of remarkable merit. The carved pulpit in the nave, however, is a veritable masterpiece of wood carving by Michel Van der Voort of Antwerp, and dates from 1723. Below, St. Norbert is shown flung from his horse by a thunderbolt, above is the Crucifixion at the left, with the Virgin and St. John standing below the cross, while at the right is shown a charming representation of the Fall, with Eve offering the apple to Adam, both figures embowered in a mass of foliage that twines up the stairway to the pulpit and lifts its branches far overhead. The masterpiece of the paintings is an altarpiece by Van Dyck representing the Crucifixion, a notable representation of the gradations of grief in the faces of the Virgin and Mary Magdalen. The attendant requires a franc to uncover this picture. "The Adoration of the Shepherds," by Erasmus Quellen, in the opposite arm of the transept, while less famous, is a noble piece of work.

As would be expected from its great religious importance, Malines has numerous minor churches that contain much of interest to the visitor. The largest of these is Notre Dame au delà de la Dyle, situated across the River Dyle from the oldest part of the city, but dating from the fifteenth century. Here the tourist usually asks to see "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," by Rubens, a highly coloured triptych that is only uncovered when

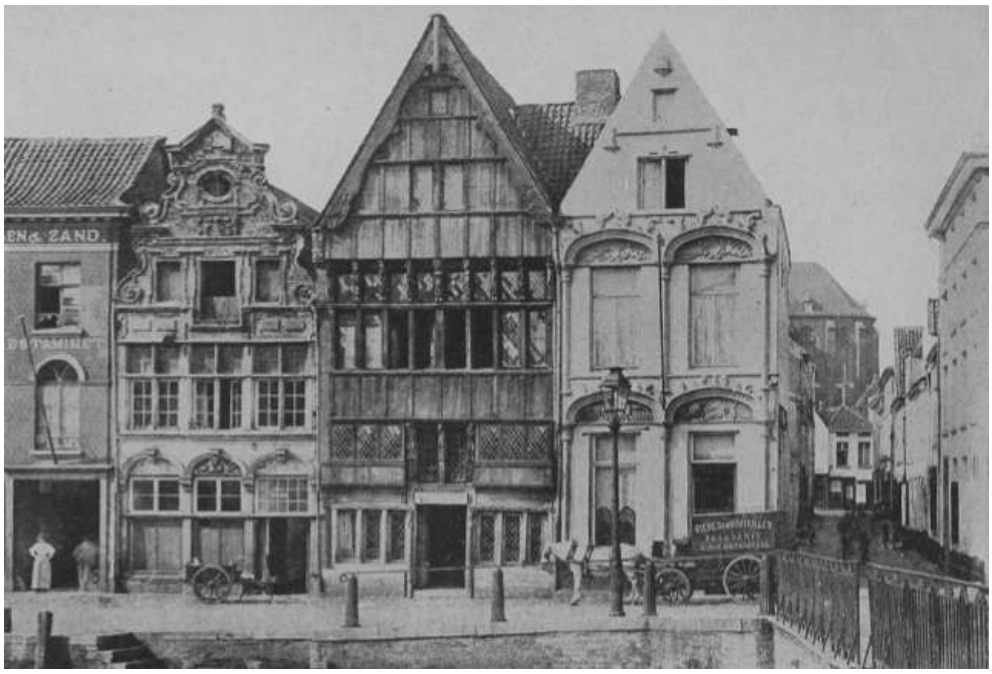
one pays a franc to the attendant. As this master produced some seventeen hundred known works it would cost a small fortune to see them all at a franc apiece, but this one dates from the artist's best period and is fully worth the price charged to see it. It is vigorous in treatment, and the Fishmongers' Guild, which purchased it from the artist in 1618 for sixteen hundred florins, certainly got very good value for their money. The wings are painted on both sides. This church also contains the curious Virgin with the Broken Back. According to the popular legend her sharp leaning to the right is due to the fact that one day, when the sacristan of the church failed to wake up in time to ring the angelus the lady obligingly did it for him, but wrenched her spine in the effort. Her smug smirk of satisfaction, as if over a duty well performed, no doubt also dates from the same incident.

Hardly less interesting is the ancient church of Notre Dame d'Hanswyck, situated on the same side of the Dyle as the other Notre Dame just described. A chapel was erected on the site of this church soon after the country was converted from paganism by St. Rombaut, and a large church was built near the end of the thirteenth century. This, however, was pillaged by the iconoclasts in 1566, riddled by shot from the cannon of the Prince of Orange in 1572, and finally completely demolished eight or nine years later by the Gueux. It was not until 1663 that the present edifice was begun. It was designed by Luke Faid'herbe, the famous sculptor of Malines and a pupil of Rubens, and was built under his personal supervision. The church itself is a veritable museum of the works of this master. The finest and most famous of these are the two bas-reliefs in the dome, one showing "The Nativity," and the other "The Saviour Falling Under the Burden of the Cross." The pulpit, by Theodore Verhaegen, is a fine example of Flemish wood carving. In this church the chief treasure, from the standpoint of its priests and parishioners, is the miraculous statue of the Virgin, which dates from 988, or earlier, according to some authorities. It is made of wood, painted and gilded, and is life size. Not the least miraculous feat of this interesting relic of the Middle Ages is its escape from destruction, at the hands of the iconoclasts, the Gueux, and the French revolutionists. At the period when the church itself was destroyed the statue was hidden in a secret subterranean passage for nearly a century; during the French Revolution it was successively lodged in various houses in the rue d'Hanswyck—each time being replaced in the church, after the danger was over, amid great popular rejoicing.

Another church that is a small art gallery is that of St. Jean, not far from the cathedral. Here is the fine "Adoration of the Magi," by Rubens, which many critics consider one of the four best of his ceremonial works. It was painted in 1617, the year before "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," at Notre Dame de la Dyle, when the artist was fresh from his studies in Italy, and before his success had caused him to employ a throng of students to assist in the production of his works. Furthermore, it was executed for this very church, which still possesses his receipt for the final payment, written in Flemish, dated March 24, 1624, and signed by the artist, "Pietro Paulo Rubens." The price was eighteen hundred florins, but for good measure the church obtained three small paintings by the great master to be hung below the triptych. In 1794 these pictures were taken to Paris and the "Adoration of the Magi" was not restored to its original position until after the fall of Napoleon. Two of the small pictures, "The Adoration of the Shepherds" and "The Resurrection," are now in the museum of Marseilles—having never been returned—while the third, "Christ on the Cross," after changing hands several times, was at last purchased by an amateur who recognised its authorship and history and restored it to the church of St. Jean. The two little pictures on either side of it, often attributed to Rubens, are by Luc Franchoys the younger. This church also boasts some marvellous Flemish wood carvings. Around the two pillars of the transept where it intersects the nave are some bas-reliefs, six altogether, by Theodore Verhaegen and his pupils, that if there was nothing else to see would alone justify a visit to St. Jean, while the pulpit by the same master, representing "The Good Shepherd Preaching to His People," is one of the most noteworthy of the numerous examples of pulpit carving to be seen in Flanders. Below the organ are two more admirable bas-reliefs carved in Flemish oak by Pierre Valckx, a pupil of Verhaegen.

Of the many other churches in the old town it would be tedious to speak. Nowhere in all Flanders did we see so many black-robed priests walking solemnly about—although they do not lack in any part of the country. All Belgium, in fact, is full of priests, monks and nuns, owing to the expulsion of the religious orders from France some years ago. We frequently engaged them in conversation to ascertain more about the monuments we were visiting and invariably found them courteous and well-informed, and not infrequently we were indebted to them for suggestions or information of much value. At the same time, it must be said that it seems to a layman as though there are far too many for so small a country, but their fine spirit of devotion during the war—when thousands of them shared cheerfully the hardships of the soldiers—will never be forgotten.

Of the civil edifices in Malines the most important is the Hotel de Ville. Architecturally it is disappointing, save for the older portion, which was called Beyaerd, and was purchased by the commune in 1383. The greater part of the edifice was reconstructed during the eighteenth century. The many rooms in the interior are pleasing but hardly notable, nor are the paintings and sculptures important save to the historian. In the Vieux Palais, the room in which the Great Council of the Netherlands held its sessions from 1474 to 1618, is still preserved in its original state, while one of the ancient paintings on the wall shows the Council in session. In this building also is the curious statuette of the Vuyle Bruydegom called "Op-Signorken," whose grinning face and quaint mediæval costume are reproduced on many postcards. The history of this worthy is best told in French—and in whispers!



***IN HET PARADIJS* AND *MAISON DES DIABLES*: TWO FIFTEENTH CENTURY HOUSES, MALINES.**

In our tramps around the narrow, crooked streets of the old town, and along its picturesque quays, we found many fine examples of fifteenth and sixteenth century architecture. On the Quai au Sel is the House of the Salmon, the ancient guildhouse of the fishmongers, which dates from 1530, and on the Quai aux Avoines we visited the little estaminet entitled *In het Paradijs*, with its two painted reliefs of the Fall and Expulsion from Eden, and the *Maison des Diables*—so called from the carved devils that decorate its wooden façade of the sixteenth century. The Grand Pont across the Dyle to these old quays itself dates from the thirteenth century, as its grimy arches testify.

After the defeat and death of Charles the Bold at Nancy his widow, Margaret of York, transferred her residence to Malines, and here she raised and educated the two children of her daughter, Marie of Burgundy, Philip the Handsome and Margaret of Austria. Their father, the Emperor Maximilian, was so occupied with affairs of state over his widely scattered realm that he seldom came to the city, but from 1480 onward the States General of the Netherlands often met here, and in 1491 Philip the Handsome presided at a chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece at the cathedral of St. Rombaut. On his premature death, in 1506, Maximilian again became Regent, as Philip's eldest son Charles was barely six years old. The following year Maximilian made his daughter Margaret of Austria Governess-General of the Netherlands and guardian of Philip's children. Margaret at once chose Malines, where she had herself been educated, as her seat of government and there she reigned as Regent until her death twenty-three years later. This period was the golden age in the history of the city on the Dyle, its brief day of splendour.

In her infancy Margaret had been betrothed to the son of the King of France, Louis XI—the cunning enemy of her house whose plots had brought about the ruin of her grandfather, Charles the Bold. She was only three, and the Prince Dauphin, afterwards Charles the Eighth, was only twelve. Nine years later a more advantageous alliance caused him to renounce this betrothal, and Margaret was subsequently married by proxy to the son of the King of Spain. On her voyage from Flushing to Spain a storm arose which nearly wrecked her ship, and after it had somewhat subsided she and her companions amused themselves by each writing her own epitaph. That composed by Margaret, then a sprightly girl of eighteen, is well known:

> *Cy gist Margot la gentil' Damoiselle,*
> *Qu' ha deux marys et encor est pucelle.*

Eventually, however, she arrived safely at Burgos, but her young husband, Prince John of Asturias, died suddenly seven months later of a malignant fever. At the age of nineteen, therefore, Margaret had already missed being Queen of France and Queen of Spain. After two years at the Spanish court, where she was very popular, she returned to Flanders, arriving in 1500, just in time to be one of the godmothers at the christening of her nephew, Charles, at the church of St. Jean in Ghent. The following year Margaret married Philibert II, Duke of Savoy, surnamed the Handsome, who was the same age as herself. This time her married life proved to be only a little longer than the other, for her husband died in 1504. Left twice a widow while still in the bloom of youth, the Duchess devoted herself to poetry and the erection of a church at Brou in her second husband's duchy of Savoy.

There, on the walls, woodwork, stained glass windows and tombs she repeated her last motto:

> FORTUNE . INFORTUNE . FORT . UNE

which has generally been interpreted to mean that Fortune and Misfortune have tried sorely (fort) one lone woman (une).

The palace of Margaret of York stood on the rue de l'Empereur, where some vestiges of it still remain, but

Margaret of Savoy and of Austria found this edifice inadequate to the requirements of a Regent and acquired the Hotel de Savoy opposite. This has been restored and is now used as the Palais de Justice, but—apart from its pretty courtyard and one fine fireplace—we found very little to recall the glories of the period when the great men of all the Netherlands gathered here. The edifice was largely reconstructed by Rombaut Keldermans, and it was here that the boyhood of the future Emperor Charles the Fifth was passed, watched over by his Aunt Margaret. At the time of her accession as Regent Margaret was twenty-seven years old—"a fair young woman with golden hair, rounded cheeks, a grave mouth, and beautiful clear eyes," according to one observer. Her father, the Emperor Maximilian, was very fond and proud of her, and the greatest treasure in the library in the Vieux Palais is a "graduale," or hymnbook, which he presented to her in recognition of her services in educating his grandchildren. On one of the pages in this book is an illuminated picture showing Maximilian himself seated on a throne surmounted by the arms of Austria, with Margaret and the youthful Charles and his sister forming part of the group gathered in front of him. The other illustrations in this priceless volume, all of which we were permitted to examine, consist of religious subjects.

The events connected with the regency of Margaret of Austria belong to the history of Europe. More than once she aided her father in solving the great problems of government and diplomacy with which he was confronted, notably in the prominent part she took in the negotiations resulting in the League of Cambrai, which was directed against France—the nation to which she always showed an unrelenting hostility for the slight put upon her in childhood. In 1516 Charles became of age, and two years later—while the new King of Spain was visiting his Spanish subjects—Margaret was again proclaimed Regent of the Netherlands. In 1519 Maximilian died, and five months later Charles was elected King of the Romans, and was chosen Emperor the following year, succeeding to the widest dominions ever ruled over by one man in the history of Europe. In fact it is doubtful if any sovereign since has exercised so vast a power, as the Kings and Emperors of later years have had their authority more restricted, while that of Charles was absolute.

In 1529 Margaret brought about the negotiations that resulted in the famous Ladies' Peace between the Pope, the Emperor Charles, and the Kings of France, England and Bohemia. Margaret represented Spain, and Louise of Savoy, her sister-in-law and the mother of Francis, the King of France, represented that monarch. The result of the conferences was a treaty that was highly advantageous to Spain, and a great diplomatic victory for Margaret; but as all Europe was tired of war the terms were accepted and peace proclaimed amid great popular rejoicings, the fountains at Cambrai flowing wine instead of water. The splendid mantelpiece in the Hotel de Franc at Bruges was erected to commemorate this treaty, although it hardly does justice to the prominent part taken by Margaret in negotiating it. The conclusion of the Treaty of Cambrai marks the climax of Margaret's career and also that of the House of Austria. In addition to the vast empire ruled over by Charles, his brother Ferdinand was King of Bohemia, and his sisters Eleanor, Isabel, Marie and Katherine, Queens of France, Denmark, Hungary and Portugal respectively. All owed their brilliant positions to the patience and skill of their Aunt Margaret who, as her correspondence shows, was looking forward to the time when she could hand over the government of the Netherlands to the Emperor and spend her remaining days in quiet seclusion.

Under her wise rule the Netherlands had attained the greatest prosperity ever known. Industry and commerce flourished, peace and safety reigned throughout her broad dominions. At her court in Malines Margaret gathered a brilliant group of artists, poets and men of letters. Mabuse (Jan Gossaert), Bernard Van Orley and Michel Coxcie were among the famous Flemish artists patronised by the Duchess. Rombaut Keldermans received many commissions as architect from the great Lady of Savoy and her Imperial nephew for important edifices not only at Malines but at Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent and throughout the Low Countries. In 1451 the Pope, Nicholas V, had proclaimed a Holy Year at Malines and enormous numbers of pilgrims visited the city in consequence. Their lavish gifts made possible the rapid erection of most of the splendid religious edifices with which the city is so amply provided, and it was during the reign of Margaret that these structures were completed and decorated. Among the beautiful buildings executed during this period may be mentioned the Belfry at Bruges, the tower of St. Rombaut, the Hotel de Ville at Ghent, the spire of the cathedral at Antwerp, the cathedral of Ste. Gudule at Brussels, and many minor churches throughout the Low Countries.

Margaret displayed rare taste for works of art, and her palace was a veritable treasure house of masterpieces, as an inventory prepared at her direction shows. One of the most famous of these was the portrait of Jean Arnolfini and his wife by Jean Van Eyck, which—after many vicissitudes—has now found a permanent resting place in the National Gallery at London, unless some militant suffragette adds another chapter to its chequered history. Another treasure has been less fortunate, namely the portrait of *La belle Portugalaise*, wife of Philip the Good, which was painted by Jean Van Eyck under circumstances already described in another chapter. This famous picture disappeared during the religious wars and has never been discovered. The inventory lists a great many other paintings, of which some are still in existence and some have been lost. The descriptions are often quaint and charming, and may have been dictated by the Duchess herself, as for example: "*Une petite Nostre-Dame disant ses heures, faicte de la main de Michel (Coxcie) que Madame appelle sa mignonne et le petit dieu dort,*" and "*Ung petit paradis ou sont touxs les apôtres.*" Other artists of note in the collection were Bernard Van Orley, Hans Memling, Roger Van der Weyden, Dierick Bouts, Jerome Bosch and Gerard Horembout.

PORTRAIT OF JEAN ARNOLFINI AND HIS WIFE BY JEAN VAN EYCK.

Among the men of letters whom Margaret gathered around her were Jean Molinet, her librarian and a poet who often celebrated her charms; Jean Lemaire de Belges, who became her historian; Erasmus, Nicolas Everard, Adrian of Utrecht, Cornelius Agrippa, Massé, Rénacle de Florennes, Louis Vivés, and many others. Her library was as choice as her collection of paintings and included a Book of Hours and several other illuminated manuscripts now in the Bibliotheque Royale at Brussels, and many of the mediæval classics. History records few great personages whose personality, considered from every aspect, is more pleasing than that of this gracious lady, whose very pets are known to us through the frequent references made to them by her literary courtiers. Her career, though shaded by sadness and disappointment, was a great and noble one, and, while she lived, the land over which she ruled remained in almost uninterrupted peace and prosperity—the wars of the Emperor being for the most part waged far away on the plains of Italy or in France.

On the last day of November, 1530, the Regent Margaret passed away at her palace at Malines in the fiftieth year of her age and the twenty-third of her regency. For forty-five days the bells of the churches throughout the city tolled at morning, noon and night in expression of the profound grief of the people at their great loss. The dirges may well have been for the departure of the city's greatness as well, for the death of its great patroness proved the beginning of its decline. The new Regent, Marie of Hungary, removed her court to Brussels, and although Malines, by way of compensation, was made the seat of an arch-bishopric it never recovered its former splendour and sank rapidly into the quiet town that it was when the great war added a new and tragic chapter to its history.

CHAPTER XVI

GHENT UNDER CHARLES THE FIFTH—AND SINCE

But for the great disaster at Nancy, it is altogether probable that Charles the Bold would, before very long, have sought to chastise the burghers of Ghent as he did those of Liége, but his unexpected death, and the ruin of his plans, gave the citizens at least a brief period of respite from the tyranny that had been pressing more and more heavily upon them since the "bloody sea of Gavre." His daughter, Marie, was only nineteen when her father's fall placed her at the mercy of the turbulent

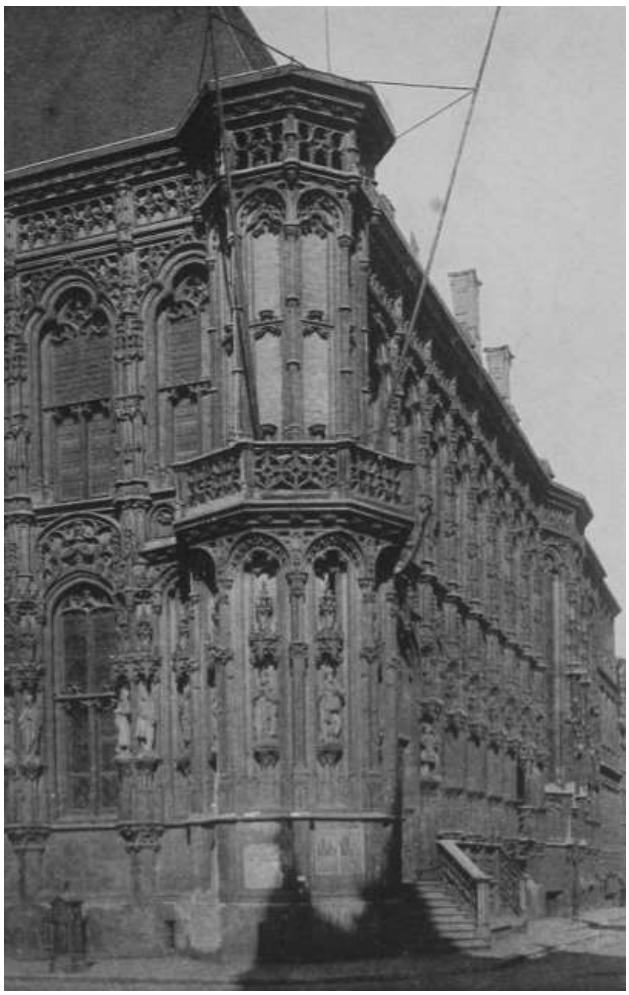
communes, and at Ghent as well as Bruges she was forced to grant a charter restoring the many privileges that Charles and Philip the Good had taken away. She was even helpless to save the lives of two of her most trusted counsellors, who were accused by the men of Ghent of treacherous correspondence with their wily enemy, Louis XI, and—in spite of her entreaties and tears in their behalf in the Marché de Vendredi—were publicly beheaded in the first year of her brief reign.

Shortly after the untimely death of this princess whose popularity might have held the communes in check, her husband, Maximilian, began the long war that finally resulted in establishing his authority over all of Flanders. This accomplished, he established his daughter, Margaret of Austria, as Regent and during the twenty-three years of her wise and gentle reign the country remained for the most part at peace and its commerce and prosperity returned.

It was during the struggle with Maximilian that the Rabot was constructed at Ghent, in 1489. The previous year the Emperor Frederick III, father of Maximilian, had threatened the city at this point, where its fortifications were weakest, and the two famous pointed towers were built as part of the protective works designed to render a similar attack impossible. Although somewhat mutilated in 1860, the twin towers still stand, and with the curious intervening structure constitute one of the finest bits of military architecture of the fifteenth century that has come down to us. Historically, they form a monument of the victory gained by the commune over Frederick and his son in their first attempt to curtail its liberties and privileges.

On the 24th of February of the year 1500 the city of Ghent learned that a baby boy had been born at the Cour de Princes, to its sovereigns, Philip the Handsome and Joanna of Spain, who was destined to become the most powerful monarch in the world. On the day when this fortunate baby was baptised with the name of Charles, the city gave itself up to rejoicings that might well have been tempered had it known the fate that was in store for it at the hands of its illustrious son forty years later. As it was, joy reigned, and at night ten thousand flaming torches flared, the great dragon in the belfry spouted Greek fire, and on a rope suspended from the top of the belfry to the spire of St. Nicholas a tight-rope dancer performed prodigies of skill for the cheering crowds that thronged the streets below.

Fifteen years later, when Charles was declared of age, it was at Ghent that he was proclaimed Count of Flanders. The following year he became King of Spain, and in 1520 Emperor; thus at the age of twenty ruling over all the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Northern Italy, Spain and the vast empire in the new world—then in course of conquest by Pizzaro, Cortés and the other Spanish conquistadores. While the city’s most famous son was advancing to the zenith of human power and wealth, its own fortunes were steadily declining. The long contest with Maximilian and the competition of England had struck a death blow to the cloth industry, which languished for a time and then gradually decayed and disappeared. The Cloth Hall was therefore left unfinished, which accounts for its insignificance as compared with similar structures in other Flemish towns where the textile trade was far less important than that of Ghent in the days of its greatest prosperity. The city continued, however, to be the centre of the grain trade as before, and the fine façade of the Maison des Bateliers (House of the Boatmen’s Guild), on the Quai au Blé, was built at this epoch, in 1534.



Photograph by E. Sacré. MAISON DE LA KEURE, HOTEL DE VILLE, GHENT.

A still more notable structure, the Hotel de Ville, dates in part from the time of Charles. This edifice in reality comprises a group of buildings erected at different epochs and for diverse purposes. Architecturally the most beautiful of these is the Maison de la Keure, which forms the corner of the Marché au Beurre and the rue Haut Port, extending for most of its length on the latter somewhat narrow street. This was designed and built by Dominique de Waghenakere of Antwerp and the famous Rombaut Keldermans of Malines, and was erected between 1518 and 1534. The actual edifice represents only a quarter of the fine design of the architects and lacks an entire story with various decorative features which would have greatly improved its appearance and made it one of the finest Hotels de Ville in Flanders. As it is, this part is by far the best of the entire structure. The Maison des Parchons facing the Marché au Beurre was built in 1600 to 1620 and is in the Italian Renaissance style and vastly inferior to the fine Gothic structure of a century earlier. The other portion of the building comprises a Hall for the States of Flanders, in the ruelle de Hotel de Ville, built in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the grande conciergerie joining this to the earlier Gothic Maison de la Keure and built in 1700; and a Chambre des Pauvres built by order of Charles V in 1531, of which the present façade dates from 1750.

The inner rooms of this collection of buildings, of different ages and different architectural styles, are of relatively minor interest. The Grande Salle de Justice de la Keure is somewhat imposing with its large fireplace, but its lack of other decorations makes it rather cold and gloomy and we were glad to leave it. Much more beautiful is the Salle de l'Arsenal, built half a century later. In the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, which adjoins the Salle de Justice in the most ancient part of the edifice, and is now used as a Salle des Mariages, is a fine picture representing Marie of Burgundy begging her people to forgive Hugonet and Humbercourt, her two ministers who—despite her tearful pleas—were executed in the Place Ste. Pharaïlde hard by.

On the death of Margaret of Austria the Emperor appointed his sister, Marie of Hungary, Regent of the Netherlands. The steady decline of its trade and the increasing poverty of the people caused the city of Ghent to seethe with discontent, and in 1539 an outbreak occurred that gave the Regent great alarm. Under the leadership of a group of demagogues the *Métiers* or lower associations of artisans, overawed the magistrates and seized Liévin Pyn, an aged and honourable member of the Council and Dean of the *Métiers* who was unjustly accused of giving the Queen Regent a false report on the situation and of having stolen the great banner of the city. This unfortunate old man was subjected to fearful tortures in the Château des Comtes, but resolutely refused to confess to any of the acts charged against him. Nevertheless, he was finally executed on the Place Ste. Pharaïlde—one of the most pitiful and unjust of the many cruel tragedies enacted there. Broken and weakened from the tortures to which he had been subjected, he had to be carried to the place of execution, where his indomitable spirit was such that before bowing before the axe of the executioner he sternly reproached his judges with their cowardice, and predicted that the people would soon have occasion to regret the fatuous course they were pursuing.

The dying old man spoke the truth. The Emperor was then in Spain and matters connected with the government of his world-encircling realm demanded for the moment his attention, but he was none the less kept well informed as to what was going on in his native city, where affairs meanwhile progressed from bad to worse, until a veritable state of anarchy prevailed. When Charles learned of the virtual insurrection against his authority that prevailed, and of the death of Liévin Pyn, he was furious and vowed to inflict upon the rebellious city a vengeance that would deter all other cities in the empire from ever following its example. Slowly, but with a deliberateness that boded ill for the foolhardy rabble who for the moment guided the destinies of the commune, the Emperor made his preparations for a trip to the Low Countries. Two months after the execution of Pyn it became known in the city that their puissant sovereign was on his way. The news filled the mutineers with terror. No longer was Ghent in the proud position she had occupied under the Counts of Flanders and the first Dukes of Burgundy—the premier city of the realm and a foe to be respected and even feared. The power of Charles V was too vast for even the most ignorant to think of armed resistance to his authority, now that he was about to assert it in person. Many of those responsible for the period of anarchy fled, others went into hiding.

Early in the year 1540 the Emperor arrived at Cambrai, proceeding next to Valenciennes and Brussels. Meanwhile a strong force of German soldiers entered the city—meeting with no resistance from its now thoroughly terrified inhabitants, many of whom no doubt wished they could restore the dead Doyen des Métiers, whom they had so cruelly sacrificed, to life again that he might plead their cause with the dreaded Emperor. They had good reason to tremble, for in a few days the ring-leaders of the late troubles began to be arrested and all men were forbidden, under penalty of death, to harbour them or aid them to escape their sovereign's wrath. A few days later nine of the mutineers were executed on the Place Ste. Pharaïlde where Liévin Pyn had perished at their hands six months before. The magistrates were now filled with terror and abjectly pleaded for mercy. The Emperor haughtily replied that he knew how to be merciful and also how to do justice, and that he would presently give judgment on the city "in such a manner that it would never be forgotten and others would take therefrom an example."

This disquieting response was followed by the Emperor's famous visit to the top of the cathedral tower in company with the Duke of Alva. It was on this occasion that the latter, with the ferocity that afterwards made his name a by-word for cruelty for future ages, counselled his sovereign to utterly destroy the rebellious city. To this the Emperor responded with the *bon mot* that showed at once his sense of humour and his moderation. Pointing to the wide-spreading red roofs of the populous city he asked, "How many Spanish skins do you think it would take to make a glove (*Gand*, the French spelling of Ghent, also means glove) as large as this?"

PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF ALVA BY A. MORO.

Meanwhile, under the direct supervision of the Emperor, a huge citadel began to be erected on the site of the ancient little town surrounding the Abbey of St. Bavon—a choice that involved the destruction of many of the Abbey buildings. The Emperor, while this work was going on, remained at the Princenhof where he held his court, but gave no sign as to what the fate of the city was to be. It was not until April 29th, 1540, that he finally—in the presence of a great throng of princes, nobles and the members of his Grand Council, with the city magistrates on their knees at his feet—gave his long delayed decision. In a loud voice the Imperial herald first read a list of thirty-five crimes committed by the people of the city, declaring them guilty of *dèsléalté*, *désobéyssance*, *infraction de traictés*, *sedition*, *rébellion et de léze-magesté*. In consequence of these crimes the sentence deprived them forever of their privileges, rights, and franchises. It directed that the charters, together with the red and black books in which they were registered, should be turned over to the Emperor to do with them as he pleased, and it was forbidden ever again to invoke or appeal to them. It pronounced the confiscation of all the goods, rents, revenues, houses, artillery and war material belonging to the city or to the *Métiers*. It confiscated the great bell Roland and decreed that it must be taken down. It further directed that three days later the magistrates, thirty members of the bourgeois or middle class, the Doyen of the weavers, six men from each *Métier* and fifty “creesers” should beg pardon of the Emperor and Queen. The suppliants on this occasion were dressed in black, with heads and feet bare, and cords about their necks, and were compelled to beg the pardon of the Emperor on their knees in the market-place. Besides this public degradation the magistrates were required to wear the cords about their necks thereafter during the exercise of their functions. It is said, however, that before very long the hemp was converted into a rich cord of gold and silk, which they wore as a scarf—as if it were a badge of honour instead of one of disgrace.

The walls of the city were to be still further demolished, and the sovereign reserved the right to specify later which towers, gates and walls should be torn down to erect the citadel. Finally, a heavy money indemnity was exacted, and the following day a new code of laws in sixty-five articles was promulgated—the famous Concession Caroline—which served as the basis of government until the end of the old régime during the French Revolution. The city, no doubt, breathed a sigh of relief that the Emperor exacted no further toll of human life, but the conditions were none the less heavy enough. In brief, these terms ended, once and for all, every vestige of self-government, and swept away all of the privileges for which the burghers had fought for so many centuries. The year 1540 marks the end, therefore, of the long and brilliant history of the Flemish communes—for no other city dared resist the Emperor’s authority after this—and thereafter Flanders became a mere province in the wide dominions of sovereigns who seldom visited its cities and frequently did not even speak the language of its people.

Among the tombstones in the Cathedral of St. Bavon one that deserves more than a passing glance is that of Bishop Triest. Designed by the celebrated sculptor, Jerome Duquesnoy, it is a notable example of Flemish sculpture, besides possessing an added interest by reason of the fact that the artist sought to destroy it when complete. More important, however, than the monument and its story is the fact that Bishop Triest was the

father of the art of horticulture for which Ghent is so renowned today. It was in his gardens—which were famous throughout the seventeenth century—that rare and exotic plants were for the first time planted out of doors in Flanders and trained to grow in the form of pyramids, arches, summer-houses, and a hundred fantastic shapes. The “Belvedere Gardens” of the worthy prelate became the model for other gardeners, and the seed, planted in fertile soil, from which sprang a great industry.

Not content with cultivating his own gardens the Bishop sought to encourage in every way the humble gardeners of the city, giving them his august protection, his friendly counsel, making loans to the needy, and uniting them into a society under the patronage of St. Amand and Ste. Dorothy. This noble example was speedily followed by the city, which also encouraged the horticulturists. In 1640 William de Blasère, an alderman of the city, constructed the first hothouse ever seen in Europe. It was a hundred feet long, made of wood and glass, heated with huge stoves, and sufficiently high to accommodate the exotic plants that, in summertime, were set outdoors. This novelty made a great stir and brought many visitors to Ghent. Soon afterward a society of horticulturists was founded, and by the end of the century a botanical garden was established.

In the opening years of the nineteenth century this institution very nearly came to an end. It was costly to keep up, produced little or no revenue, and Napoleon, who was then First Consul and included Ghent in his rapidly widening dominions, decided that it should be suppressed. A friend of the garden skilfully took advantage of a visit of Josephine to Ghent to enlist her aid in persuading her husband to spare it. Inviting the future empress to visit the establishment, he contrived that the plants and flowers should plead their own cause. Between two palms at the entrance he had a huge placard suspended bearing the words: “*Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutamus*.” Then, along the different walks, each flower and plant bore a card proportionate to its size and containing a verse alluding to its approaching destruction. Naturally surprised at this outburst of poetry on the part of the “nymphs” of the garden, as the flowers styled themselves in their effusions, Josephine inquired the reason for it. This gave her conductor his opportunity, and he pleaded for the preservation of the garden with such ardour and eloquence that he won her assurance that if her wishes had any weight his beautiful garden should be preserved and its “nymphs” should not perish in exile. The event proved that he had secured a powerful ally, for the edict of the First Consul was rescinded and the garden was saved.

To-day Ghent boasts of her title of “the City of Flowers.” The Botanical Garden is protected by a Royal Society, there are many private collections that are worth going far to see, and more than five hundred establishments, large and small, are engaged in horticulture as an industry, the annual exports amounting to millions of dollars. Bishop Triest can therefore be thanked for giving Flanders one of its great industries.

Speaking of Napoleon, it is not generally remembered that Ghent was, for the brief space of one hundred days, the capital of France. When Napoleon returned from Elba, and was received with open arms by the very troops sent to attack him, Louis XVIII fled incontinently to Ghent where he set up a feeble court at his residence on the rue des Champs. Here Guizot, Chateaubriand, and his other ministers met formally every morning to discuss with His Majesty the chances of his ever getting back to Paris again—Paris where, by the way, the mob was singing mockingly:

“Rendez nous notre père de Gand
Rendez nous notre père!”

It would take a satirist like Dickens or Thackeray to describe the scene when the fat monarch sat down to his mid-day meal, in the presence of whoever might wish to watch the curious spectacle. He conquered enormous quantities of food, but depended on Wellington and Blücher to conquer the army of Napoleon. The forms of sovereignty were none the less carefully observed, as the little court waited day by day for the great event that all men could see was drawing steadily nearer. At last, as the thunder of Napoleon’s guns startled the allies from their dance at Brussels, and the tramp of his advancing squadrons shook the fields of Waterloo, this fat little fly on the chariot wheel of European politics prepared once more for flight. Coaches were made ready to carry the entire court to Ostende, where an English vessel awaited them if the battle went against the allies. All day long the horses stood in the courtyard, the drivers whip in hand. History does not record what gastronomic feats His Majesty performed that day, but late at night the tidings came that the Grande Armée was in retreat, and that King Louis could return to his kingdom.

Ghent shares with Bruges the glory of being the birthplace of Flemish painting. The famous “Adoration of the Lamb,” by the brothers Van Eyck, was ordered by a wealthy burgher of Ghent for the cathedral of St. Bavon—where the greater part of the original work still rests. It was at Ghent that Hubert, the elder brother, planned the masterpiece and completed his share of it. But Ghent also had masters belonging to the early Flemish school whose fame she does not have to share with any other city. One of these was Josse or Justus, usually called Justus of Ghent, who visited Italy in 1468 and there painted several pictures. Another was Hugo Van der Goes who gave promise of becoming as great a master as Jean Van Eyck when he suddenly gave up his chosen profession and entered the Monastery of Rouge-Cloitre, near Bruges. He was admitted to the Guild of Painters at Ghent in 1467, and left the world of action in 1476—eventually becoming insane and dying six years later. There is a story to the effect that he once painted a picture of Abigail meeting David for a burgher of Ghent who lived in a house near the bridge called the Muyderbrugge, and while engaged on this work—which was painted on the wall above a fireplace—fell in love with his patron’s daughter. The painting proved a great success, but the stern parents frowned on the suit of the young artist, and the daughter, in despair, entered the convent of the White Ladies known as the Porta Coeli, near Brussels. The house, which was said to have been entirely surrounded by water, has long since disappeared, together with the painting, but the story may be the explanation for the abandonment by the artist of a promising career when he was still in the prime of life. One of the finest pictures in the Modern Gallery at Brussels is that by E. Wauters representing the madness of Van der Goes. The painter is shown seated and staring eagerly at some phantasm before him—perhaps a vision of the fair Abigail—while a group of little choir boys are striving, under the leadership of a

monk, to exorcise the evil demon that possesses their famous brother by means of sacred songs and chants. It is said that this method of cure was indeed attempted while he was at Rouge-Cloitre, but without success.

The best work of both of these artists is, unfortunately, far from Flanders—being found in Italy, where Flemish painters were in their day very highly regarded. “The Last Supper,” which was the greatest masterpiece of Justus, was painted as an altarpiece for the brotherhood of Corpus Christi at Urbino and still hangs in the church of Sant’ Agatha in that Italian town. “The Adoration of the Shepherds,” which was the greatest work of Van der Goes, is in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence. At Bruges there are two paintings attributed to this master, “The Death of the Virgin,” in the museum, and the panel representing the donors in “The Martyrdom of St. Hippolytus” in the church of St. Sauveur. The greater part of the paintings by Van der Goes in Belgium were destroyed by the iconoclasts in the sixteenth century, including several of which his contemporaries and other early writers spoke in the highest terms. Frequent mention is made of his skill as a portrait painter, and Prof. A. J. Wauters, after a careful study of his known works throughout Europe, ascribes to him the famous portrait of Charles the Bold in the museum at Brussels. The early writers state that private houses at Bruges and Ghent, as well as churches, were filled with his works. Let us hope that some of these—hidden away during the religious wars or at the time of the iconoclasts—may yet be discovered and identified.

Ghent, during the fifteenth century, was the artistic centre of Flanders, and the names, but not the works, of many of its painters have come down to us. One of the most celebrated of these in contemporary annals was Gerard Van der Meire, to whom tradition has assigned the triptych of “The Crucifixion” in the cathedral of St. Bavon. This artist rose to high rank in the Guild of St. Luke, to which he was admitted in 1452, and a considerable number of paintings in various European galleries are attributed to him. An Italian writer ascribes to him one hundred and twenty-five of the exquisite miniatures in the famous Grimani Breviary, now in the library of St. Mark’s at Venice. If this were true, Van der Meire was indeed a great artist, but this book was illustrated after his death.

“THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.”—HUGO VAN DER GOES.

According to the Royal Commission of Art and Archeology of Belgium, Ghent contains more noteworthy antiquities than any other town in the Kingdom. The Commission, it appears, divides the “antiquities” into three classes, according to their relative importance, and credits Ghent with thirteen of the first class, ten of the second and six of the third—or twenty-nine in all. The figures for the other Flemish cities are: Antwerp, seven first, five second, six third, total eighteen; Bruges, four first, six second, six third, total sixteen; Tournai, three first, six second, six third, total fifteen; Malines, four first, eight second, two third, total fourteen. Many places are credited with two or three each. We tried to get a copy of the Report of the Commission giving the names of the antiquities in each class, and the reasons for ranking them, but were unable to do so during our stay in Belgium. It would have been a learned check on the list of places we had found most interesting. Quite likely we would have found that the Commission gave the first rank to some “antiquity” we did not see at all, and maybe never heard of! However, we saw enough to occupy every minute of our brief vacation, and the majority of those we missed—wilfully at least—were churches, of which Flanders has enough to fill three books like this were one to faithfully report them all.

In Ghent there are, as at Bruges, many interesting private houses scattered throughout the city. The Professor and I on our morning walks looked up many of these, but the list would be tedious to enumerate. One of the most famous is the “Arriére-Faucille,” formerly the home of a rich seigneur, but since 1901 used as a Royal Conservatory of Music. Its castle-like tower is very picturesque, but we saw nothing of interest in the interior. Near by are two very old houses with typically Flemish gables, called the Zwarte Moor and the Groot Moor. Built in 1481, or thereabouts, the Confrerie of St. George had its headquarters here for many years.

OLD GUILD HOUSES, QUAI AUX HERBES, GHENT.

The guilds have already been mentioned, and the façades of all of the more famous of the guild houses have been carefully restored. These include the Maison des Mesureurs de Blé and the Maison des Francs Bateliers on the Quai aux Herbes, the Maison des Maçons and the Maison des Bateliers non francs. The ancient Grand Boucherie, recently restored, is another interesting "monument." It seems that the Butchers' Guild at Ghent owed its prosperity to the fact that Charles V chanced one day to fall in love with the pretty daughter of a Ghent butcher. This young lady obtained for her son and his descendants an imperial monopoly of the slaughtering and meat-selling business which survived all the various dynastic changes till the French Revolution. The butchers were called *Prinse Kinderen*, or Prince's Children, and seem to have made a very good thing out of the blot on their family escutcheon. Another old edifice is the Maison de l'Etape, or Staple House, a granary dating from the thirteenth century, which stands beside the guild houses on the Quai aux Herbes. In short, the tourist can easily find enough of interest in this rare old Flemish city to occupy many days of leisurely sight-seeing. Ghent, like Bruges, has thus far been spared the destruction that has overtaken so many of the smaller Flemish towns during the war and, as far as is at present known, all of its twenty-nine monuments are still intact.

CHAPTER XVII
AUDENAERDE AND MARGARET OF PARMA

It was on a pleasant morning in June that the Professor and I set forth on a little expedition to the famous town of the tapestry weavers, leaving the ladies to rest and shop at Brussels. The poplar-trees that line the country roads and canals in all parts of Belgium were in full bloom and their light cotton-clad seeds were drifting like snow in every direction. Moreover, contrary to our experience for some time past, the sun seemed likely to shine all day and our old friend J. Pluvius was in complete retreat. Our route lay for a considerable distance through a charming hop country, the plots being much smaller than one sees in Kent or in Central New York State, but very numerous, and, no doubt, aggregating a considerable acreage. Farther along we passed through a superb stretch of hilly country where many of the houses and barns had thatched roofs and were so picturesque, both in themselves and in their surroundings, that we would fain have descended at one of the little stations and spent the day exploring and photographing this charming corner of Flanders. The most beautiful spot of all bore the pretty name of Louise-Marie—the thatch-roofed houses nestling cosily together upon a hillside. This little station, by the way, is on the line from Blaton to Audenaerde (in Flemish Oudenaarde), as we were approaching our destination from the south instead of directly from Brussels. Presently the great tower of Ste. Walburge loomed up ahead on our right, and we could even catch a glimpse of the famous Hotel de Ville. Instead of stopping, however, our train went on past the church, past the town, past everything, until we began to fear that our faithful "*omnibus*" had suddenly gone crazy and fancied itself a "*rapide*" bound for goodness knows where. At last, however, the station came in sight, but we even sped past that, coming to rest finally some distance down the railroad yard. As we walked back toward the "*Sortie-Ausgang*" gateway we debated whether we would drive back to the town in a cab or take a tram. Emerging on the street we promptly decided to walk, since neither cab nor tram-car could be seen.

There was no danger of losing our way, for there, straight down the long street before us, we could see the huge mass of Ste. Walburge towering far above the little houses around it. After a leisurely walk of five or six minutes we arrived at a large bleak-looking square, called the Place de Tacambaro, at the centre of which stood a monument that—had we been in a carriage or on a tram-car—we would have passed without more than a passing glance. As it was, we paused to read the inscriptions and found that, for Americans, they told a story of no little interest. It appears that this is a memorial erected in honour of the volunteers from Audenaerde who died in Mexico in the service of the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian. The south side of the monument, which represents a reclining female figure by the sculptor, W. Geefs, bears the following inscription:

> “Ordre de Jour
>
> Officiers et Soldats! Vous avez pris votre part des travaux
> et des luttes dans la guerre du Mexique, votre
> valeur dans les combats, votre discipline
> dans les fatigues des longues
> marches ont honoré le
> nom Belge.
>
> Au moment de vous rembarquer pour aller revoir votre
> patrie recevez les adieux de vos frères d’armes du
> corps expeditionaire français.
>
> Dans quelques semaines vous aurez revu les rivages de votre
> patrie y conservez, je l’espère, bon souvenir de leux
> qui ont soufert et combattu à vos cotes,
> ainsi que du Maréchal de France
> qui a eu l’honneur de
> vous commander.
>
> Le Maréchal de France, Commandant en Chef.
>
> BAZAINE.”

Proceeding along the street, which still led straight toward the great church, we discussed the strange fate that had led these valiant Flemings to give their lives in a war of conquest so many thousands of miles away—a futile sacrifice as the event proved, with this little monument as their sole reward.

Almost before we were aware of it we found ourselves at the Grande Place with the Hotel de Ville right in front of us. We were on the west side of the little structure, which on the rue Haute adjoins the ancient Halle aux Draps. An old doorway gives on the rue Haute, but is no longer used, the entrance being now through the Hotel de Ville.

While the two principal churches of the town have suffered severely from the fanatical ravages of the iconoclasts, or image breakers, the Hotel de Ville can be seen in almost its pristine magnificence. Architecturally this monument is generally considered as one of the finest, not only in Flanders, but in the whole of Europe. Little it undeniably is, although it towers up bravely above the low two-story buildings surrounding it, but its very smallness gives its marvellous façade the richness and delicacy of the finest lace. Begun in 1525, it was completed twelve years later at a cost of “65,754 livres parisis, 16 sols, 2 deniers.” Those who are curious can ascertain the modern equivalent of the “Paris pound” of 1537, but even when we add the 16 sols, 2 deniers, it seems as though the burghers got very good value for their money.

HOTEL DE VILLE, AUDENAERDE. Photograph by E. Sacré.

Late Gothic is the period to which this gem in the galaxy of splendid Flemish town halls belongs. It is considered the masterpiece of its architect, Henri Van Péde, who also designed the superb Hotel de Ville at Brussels and that at Louvain. The many little niches on the front once contained statues of the noble lords and dames of Flanders, including no doubt several of the great house of Lalaing, the Count Philippe de Lalaing having laid the corner stone. Unfortunately these were all destroyed during the religious wars and the French Revolution and have never been replaced. This seems a great pity, as Flanders still possesses many stone-carvers of great skill, and the kindly hand of time would soon mellow the new work to harmonise with the old. As it is, every niche contains the iron projection that formerly held its statue in place, so that the work of restoration would consist of simply carving each of the little statues in the sculptor's own atelier, wherever it might be, and afterwards placing them in position.

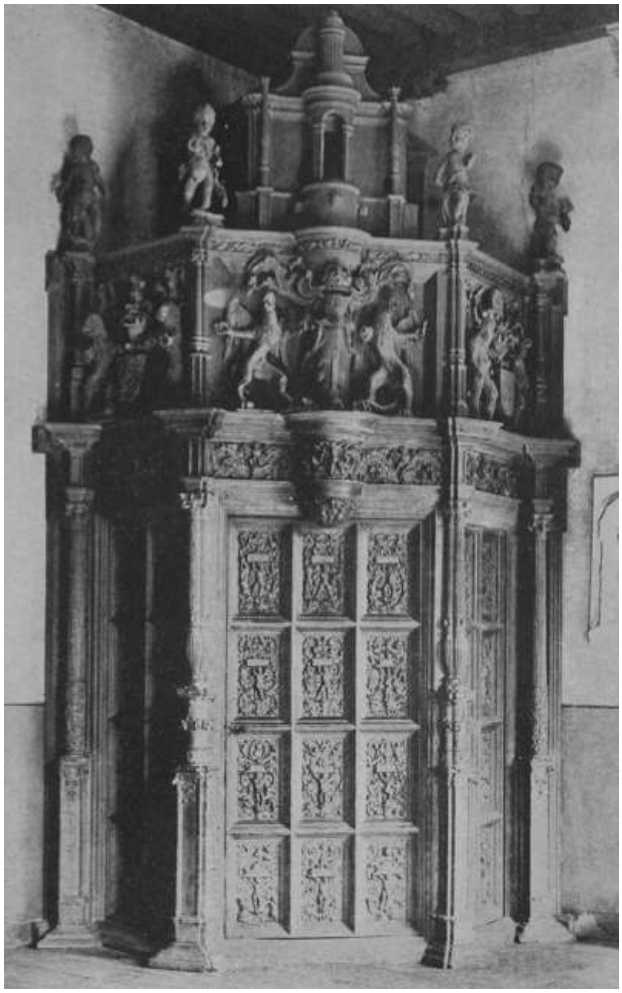
One of the original statues still remains in place, however, and is entitled to the honour of being styled the oldest citizen of Audenaerde. This is none other than Hanske 't Krijgerke, Petit Jean le Guerrier, or Little John the Warrior, who, with his diminutive standard bearing the arms of the city, stands on the topmost pinnacle of the tower. His gaze is ever toward the South, with a far-away look in his eyes, across the Grande Place and toward the distant hills. During the three hundred and seventy-eight years that he has been standing there, braving the winter rains and the summer sunshine, how many changes have taken place in the great outside world while little Audenaerde has stood still!

Even without its statues the principal façade of the Hotel de Ville merits more than a passing glance. In the admirable harmony of its proportions, the delicate beauty of its details, in the excellence of the stone carvings —almost perfectly preserved—that form wreaths and festoons of stone about its Gothic windows, there is nothing finer to be seen in all Flanders. The high pointed roof, with its tiny dormer windows, is exactly as the architect intended it, and the charming little tower seems as perfect as the day the last of the sixteenth-century masons left it.

The interior is worthy of the exterior. On the first floor a large hall, called the Salle du Peuple—Hall of the People—extends from one side of the building to the other. This contains a fine stone fireplace surmounted by a splendidly carved Gothic mantelpiece with statues of Ste. Walburge in the centre and Justice and Power on either side. Below are the arms of Austria, Flanders, and of Audenaerde. This masterpiece was carved by Paul Van der Schelden. The walls on each side of the fireplace are decorated with modern mural paintings depicting Liederick de Buck, the first Forester of Flanders, Dierick of Alsace, Baldwin of Constantinople, and Charles the Fifth. Between the windows overlooking the Grande Place are the Arms of Castile and Aragon, while at the ends of each of the great beams that support the ceiling are carved the arms of the various kingdoms and principalities belonging to Charles V.

Already we perceive that the shadow of the great Emperor rests heavily on this little city of Audenaerde, and

as we proceed further in our explorations the more dominating and omnipresent does his personality become. Even the very arms of the city bear a mute evidence to his generosity and sense of humour. It is related that on a certain occasion the Emperor and his stately train approached the city without being perceived by the sentinel stationed in the tower of this very Hotel de Ville to announce his arrival. On reaching the gates, therefore, the Imperial cortège found no one to welcome the great monarch. The Burgomaster and the members of the Council, who should have been there in their robes of state, were conspicuous by their absence. Had this happened to his ancestor Charles the Bold, whose fiery temper brooked no discourtesy, even when unintended, it might well have gone hard with the unfortunate officials. As it was, the Emperor overlooked the slight, but not long afterwards he maliciously inserted a pair of spectacles in the arms of the city, remarking that in future they would thus be able to see more clearly the approach of their sovereign.



WOODEN DOORWAY, CARVED BY VAN DER SCHELDEN, HOTEL DE VILLE, AUDENAERDE.

Adjoining the Salle du Peuple is a smaller chamber, the Salle des Échevins, or the Council Chamber of the ancient commune. Here there is another stone fireplace slightly inferior to the one in the larger hall, but resembling it in general design. The statues here represent the Virgin Mary in the centre, with Justice and Hope on either side. The chief masterpiece in this room, however, is the wooden doorway carved by Van der Schelden, who was instructed by the burghers to make it as beautiful as possible. How faithfully the artist performed his task the result shows. Around its top stand wooden cupids surmounting a richly carved entablature containing the arms of Charles V in the centre with those of Flanders and of Audenaerde on either side. The first is supported by two griffins, the second by two lions and the last by two savages. The panels of the door itself and of the sidewalls forming the complete portal are richly carved, each design being different from all the others. For this bit of wood-carving the frugal burghers paid the sum of one thousand, eighteen livres parisis, or nine hundred and twenty-three francs—something over $175—and the artist furnished the wood!

Formerly the walls of this room were decorated with tapestries of Audenaerde, but at the time of Louis XIV these were all removed and taken to Paris. Most of the tapestries in the town overlooked by le Grande Monarque were subsequently taken away by Napoleon, so that the Hotel de Ville of the city that gave these treasures to the world, and that should possess the finest collection of them, has been stripped completely bare. In their stead the Council Chamber at present contains a collection of paintings of no special artistic merit but of great historical interest. There is, of course, a portrait of Charles V, wearing the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece. A portrait of Louis XIV on horseback and bearing a marshal’s baton, by Philippe de Champaigne, forms a poor substitute for the tapestries filched by His Majesty. This collection also comprises several portraits of personages famous in later Flemish history. Of these the most noteworthy is that of Margaret of Parma, which hangs close to that of her father, the Emperor.

Just across the Grande Place from the Hotel de Ville stands the Tower of Baldwin, undoubtedly the oldest structure in the city, and erected by Baldwin V, a Count of Flanders who died in 1067, making it date from

the Norman Conquest. The concierge of the Hotel de Ville informed us that this little tower, which adjoins another ancient edifice now used as a brewery, was the birthplace of Margaret, but this does not appear to be altogether certain. Some authorities state that the honour belongs to a little two-story house with a high, steep-sloping roof that also faces the Place. If the walls of these old houses had the ears that proverbially belong to all walls, and were still further provided with lips to whisper the secrets they overheard, they could no doubt settle this question; and at the same time throw some additional light upon a famous bit of mediæval romance and scandal.

Of all the natives of the ancient town of Audenaerde the most famous was Margaret, afterwards the Duchess of Parma, and for many years Regent of the Low Countries, over which she ruled with an almost imperial sway. Her father was the great Emperor, Charles V, who dallied here for several weeks as guest of the Countess de Lalaing, wife of the Governor of Audenaerde, while his soldiers were besieging Tournai in the year 1521. The attraction that kept him so far from his army was a pretty Flemish maiden named Jehanne or Jeanne Van der Gheynst. According to the none too trustworthy Strada, this young lady was a member of the Flemish nobility, but according to the city archives it appears that she belonged to a family of humble tapestry workers residing at Nukerke, a suburb of Audenaerde. At all events, her pretty face attracted the attention of the youthful Emperor—whether at a ball, as Strada says, or while she was serving as maid of the Countess de Lalaing, as many writers assume, or perhaps at a village Kermesse which Charles might well have attended incognito. After the little Margaret was born the mother received an annual income of twenty-four livres parisis from the Emperor. In 1525 she married the Maître de Chambre extraordinaire of the Counts of Brabant, and died in 1541. Charles took his little daughter and had her brought up as a princess. In 1537, when she was only fifteen years old, she was married by the Emperor to Alexander, the Duke of Urbin, a cruel and dissolute Italian prince who, however, died the same year. The following year she was married to Octavio Farnese, a grandson of Pope Pius III, who was then only fourteen. She was herself strongly opposed to this marriage, but the Emperor was obdurate and she finally yielded. Her son, Alexander Farnese, was the famous Duke of Parma who became the foremost military leader on the Spanish side during the sanguinary war between Philip II and the Netherlands. On the death of her father, Margaret was made Regent of the Low Countries by her half-brother Philip II. She arrived at Ghent, July 25th, 1559, and on August 7th the King presented her to the States General, saying that he had chosen her as his representative because she was so close to him by birth and “because of the singular affection she has always borne toward the Low Countries where she was born and raised and of which she knew all the languages.” She retired from the Regency in 1567, but was called back once more in 1580 at the personal request of the King. As her son Alexander was then at the zenith of his power, and opposed to her resuming the regency, she finally declined the honour which was reluctantly given to him. She died in 1586 at the age of sixty-six.

It was her fortune, or rather misfortune, to rule over the Netherlands at a period when the seething forces of religious unrest and protest were becoming too violent to be restrained. Had Philip II, her half-brother, been less bigoted, less cruel, and less blind to the best interests of the country and of his own dynasty, it is possible that the great popularity of the Duchess—who was sincerely loved by the majority of her subjects and respected by all—might have enabled the Government to restrain the rising passions of the people. If, instead of a policy of savage repression, the King of Spain had authorised Margaret to pursue a policy of moderation and conciliation, the fearful history of the next eighty years—the blackest page in human history—might never have been written. Unfortunately, moderation and conciliation were as foreign to the nature of that sombre monarch as to Torquemada himself, and fanaticism fought fanaticism with a fury that was as devoid of intelligence as it was of mercy.

The first act in the drama of blood was the sudden outbreak of the frenzy of the iconoclasts, or image-breakers, which swept over the greater part of the Spanish Netherlands in the month of August, 1566. Scarcely a church, a chapel, a convent or a monastery, escaped the devastation that resulted from these fanatical attacks. Paintings, statuary, altars and chapels, even the tablets and monuments of the dead—the accumulated art treasures of centuries—were torn to pieces or carried bodily away. In some places the work of destruction was completed in a few hours, in others organised bands of pillagers worked systematically for days before the local authorities—taken completely by surprise—recovered their wits and put a stop to the work of desecration. The loss to art and civilisation effected by the iconoclasts in Flanders is beyond computation. The Regent acted with energy and decision, her spirited appeals to the magistrates finally bringing them to their senses and resulting in a speedy restoration of order. Philip, who had just cause for resentment, meditated vengeance, however, and in 1568 replaced the too gentle Margaret by the Duke of Alva.

For the Professor the Hotel de Ville contained still another room of inexhaustible interest. This was the museum of the commune which occupies the entire second floor. For some reason—certainly not from fear of the suffragette, which is a non-existent species in Belgium—this is closed to the public, but we were admitted by courtesy of the Secretary of the Commune. The collection is of the utmost value to the historian and archeologist, but is rather badly kept. Among the most interesting objects were four chairs once used by Charles V; the ancient keyboard of the *carillon* which formerly hung in the belfry of the town hall but is now installed in the tower of Ste. Walburge, and some water-colour designs for tapestries. A large painting of the Last Judgment covered a considerable part of one wall. This is attributed to Heuvick, and originally hung in the Salle des Échevins. It was the ancient custom to have a painting of this subject, covered by curtains, in the olden justice halls. When a witness was about to be sworn the curtains were suddenly drawn back and the sight of the picture, which represented with great vividness the destruction of the damned, was intended to prevent false testimony. The collection also included a variety of ancient arms and coins, several curious mediæval strong boxes, and two huge snakes which hung from the rafters overhead. There are no snakes in Belgium to-day, but our guide assured us that a crocodile had once been taken in the River Scheldt near Audenaerde, so the snakes may have been natives after all—assuming, of course, that the crocodile story is correct.

Back of the Hotel de Ville proper is the still more ancient Cloth Hall, dating from the beginning of the thirteenth century. Its small, high windows were built slantingly, to prevent archers from sending arrows directly into the interior. At some comparatively recent period two large windows were cut through, the walls on each side, but a goodly number of the earlier windows still remain, and the beams that support the high, pointed roof are still as sound as the day they were laid in position.

CHURCH OF STE. WALBURGE, AUDENAERDE.

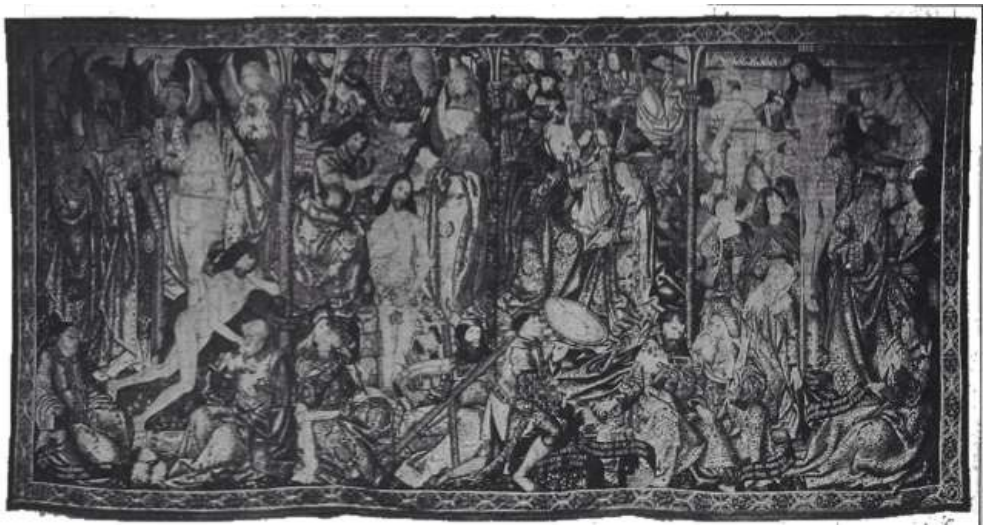
To the west of the Grande Place, and scarcely a stone's throw from Baldwin's Tower, rises the vast grey mass of Ste. Walburge, with ten or twelve tiny fifteenth or sixteenth century houses nestling snugly up against it. This splendid church dates from the very foundation of the city, an early chapel erected on this site having been sacked and burned by the Norsemen in 880. Twice after this the church was destroyed in the wars between Flanders and France, but in 1150 was begun an edifice of which some portions still remain. When John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, chose Audenaerde as his Flemish place of residence the burghers determined to enlarge and beautify their church and erected the semi-circular portion of the choir in 1406 to 1408. Soon afterwards the great nave was begun, but was not completed for fully a century, in 1515. The tower, one of the finest in the world, advanced still more slowly and was not entirely finished until 1624. Its original height was three hundred and seventy-three feet, but in 1804 the wooden spire was struck by lightning and burned. It has never been rebuilt, and the present height of the tower is two hundred and ninety-five feet. As it is, it dominates the little city and commands a wide view across the broad valley of the Scheldt in every direction. It was a stiff climb, up a perpetually winding stone stairway, to the top, but the view well repaid us for the exertion.

The interior of the edifice suggests a great metropolitan cathedral rather than the chief church of a small provincial town. The choir, which suffered severely from the ravages of the iconoclasts, has recently been restored with great skill, and is now one of the most beautiful in Europe. This church contains several paintings by Simon de Pape, a native of Audenaerde, whose father was the architect of the spire burned in 1804, also an "Assumption of the Virgin Mary" by Gaspard de Crayer, a follower of Rubens, who painted more than two hundred religious pictures. This, like all the others, is of mediocre merit. To the student of history and of ancient art one of the most interesting treasures of the church is its collection of tapestries of Audenaerde. Three of the more important ones represent landscapes—in fact the majority of Audenaerde tapestries that I have seen may be thus described—with castles, churches, and farmhouses in the centre and roses, tulips and other flowers in the foreground. Like most Audenaerde tapestries also they are crowded with winged creatures—birds flying or singing in the trees and hens, turkeys and pheasants strolling in the grass. A tapestry of a different genre is one belonging to the Confrerie de la Ste. Croix, which shows an Oriental landscape with Jerusalem in the distance, and at the four corners the figures of Herod, Pilate, Anna and Caiphas.

Tapestry weaving was introduced into Flanders during the time of the Crusades, the reports of the returning

crusaders regarding the splendid carpets and rugs of the Orient arousing a desire on the part of the Flemish weavers to imitate them. Castle walls, however thick and strongly built, were apt to be damp and cold and a great demand speedily sprang up for the new productions for wall coverings. Starting at Arras and Tournai, the manufacture of tapestries spread to all the cities in the valley of the Scheldt and received a particularly important development at Audenaerde, which soon became the leading tapestry centre of Flanders. The weavers adopted Saint Barbara as their patron, and in 1441 were organised into a corporation. In their original charter it was stipulated that each apprentice must work three years for his first employer. Despite the severity of this regulation the manufacture of tapestries expanded with such rapidity that in 1539 no less than twenty thousand persons—including men, women and children—were employed as tapestry weavers at Audenaerde and its environs.

Among the famous Flemish artists who painted designs for the tapestry weavers of Audenaerde may be mentioned Floris, Coxcie, Rubens, David Teniers, Gaspar de Witte, Victor Janssens, Peter Spierinckx, Adolphus de Gryeff, and Alexander Van Bredael, while there were a host of others. Gradually, however, the artisans began to be discontented with their rate of pay, which the master tapestry makers kept at a low figure, and the advent of the religious wars found them eager to join any movement of revolt. After the outburst of the iconoclasts and the arrival of the Duke of Alva many fled to the Dutch provinces and to England, never to return. This emigration continued well into the seventeenth century, as various decrees passed by the magistrates between 1604 and 1621, confiscating the possessions of such emigrants, testify.



A FLEMISH TAPESTRY OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Another cause that contributed to the ruin of the tapestry industry at Audenaerde was the active effort made by the Kings of France, Louis XIII and Louis XIV, to induce the best weavers and master-workmen to emigrate to Paris. Philippe Robbins, one of the most celebrated master-weavers of Audenaerde, was invited to come to France in 1622 and was afterwards proclaimed at Beavais to be the *Chef de tous les tapitsers du Roy*. Many of the weavers who went to Paris and Brussels on their own account established ateliers where they manufactured what they proclaimed to be *veritables tapis d'Audenaerde*, and this competition still further injured the industry which soon afterward disappeared entirely from the city that gave its name to this type of tapestry and has never since been re-established there. With the departure of its weavers the little city on the Scheldt rapidly declined in importance, and for the past two centuries has been the sleepy little market-town that it is to-day.

On the other side of the River Scheldt, which flows through the town and is crossed by several bridges, is the interesting Church of Notre Dame de Pamela, which dates from the thirteenth century, having been constructed in the remarkably short space of four years and completed in 1239. It thus belongs to the transitional period between the Romanesque style and the pure Gothic and is of interest to the student of architecture as one of the most perfect examples of this period in Flanders. The general effect of the interior, especially when viewed from the foot of the organ loft, is noble and imposing in the highest degree. Our visit was during a sunny afternoon, and the effect of the long beams of light falling from the lofty windows of the nave across the stately pillars below was indescribably beautiful. Truly this masterpiece of stone expresses in its every line the truth of Montalembert's beautiful remark that in such a church every column, every soaring arch, is a prayer to the Most High.

One of the most curious of the paintings in Notre Dame de Pamela is a triptych by Jean Snellinck, a painter of Antwerp and a forerunner of Rubens who was greatly in vogue among the tapestry weavers of Audenaerde. This work represents the "Creation of Eve" in the central panel, the "Temptation" at the left and the "Expulsion from Eden" at the right. The figures are all finely painted, especially those in the left wing, and the entire work is an admirable example of early Flemish art. The church also possesses an interesting work by Simon de Pape representing the invention of the cross. Beneath the organ loft were three tapestries of Audenaerde workmanship which the caretaker obligingly spread out on the church floor for our inspection. All were in a poor state of preservation. One represented a woodland scene with three peasants on their way to market in the foreground. The second had a curious group of fowls in the foreground, while the third showed a sylvan scene with a mother and three daughters, each of the girls bearing a basket of flowers.

Both Ste. Walburge and Notre Dame de Pamela suffered severely from the fury of the iconoclasts, although

the storm broke in Audenaerde at a later period than in the larger cities farther to the eastward. The curé of Ste. Walburge and four priests of Notre Dame de Pamela were thrown by the rioters into the Scheldt and drowned October 4th, 1572, while both churches were sacked.

On our way back from visiting the smaller church we paused on the quay named Smallendam to admire the superb view of Ste. Walburge across the river. A bit further on we entered a quaint little estaminet bearing the inviting name of *In der Groote Pinte* which we freely translated as “the big pint.” Apparently our Flemish was inexact, for the beverage with which we were served was not notable for quantity. It proved, moreover, to be exceedingly sour and unpleasant, and we left our glasses unfinished. In the course of a tour around the town we inspected what remains of the ancient Château de Bourgogne, the early residence of the Dukes of Burgundy. The principal building is now used by a Justice of the Peace, and we found little of interest save some old walls and a massive inner courtyard. At the hospital of Notre Dame, opposite the great tower of Ste. Walburge, we found two more Audenaerde tapestries in an admirable state of preservation, while a dozen fine mediæval doorways in different parts of the town attracted our attention. For so small a place there are a great many religious institutions, many of them of great antiquity. Among these may be mentioned the Convents of the Black Sisters (Couvents des Soeurs-Noires), the Abbey of Maegdendale, the Convent of Notre Dame de Sion, and the Béguinage—the last an especially charming little spot with a delightful street entrance dating from the middle of the seventeenth century.

It is hard to believe, as one wanders about the half-deserted streets of this sleepy old Flemish town, that in its day of greatness it was a city of no mean power, holding its own sturdily against the greatest princes in the world. Of its ancient walls and towers not a single trace remains, yet those vanished ramparts four times in less than two centuries defied the armies of the neighbouring—but, alas, not always neighbourly—city of Ghent, even the redoubtable Philip Van Artevelde retiring from in front of them discomfited in 1382. Three centuries later, in 1684, Louis XIV was beaten off from an assault on these same walls, but in revenge he ordered the bombardment of the city. This resulted in a conflagration from which it had not fully recovered half a century later. In 1708 the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene of Savoy won a great victory over the French under the walls of Audenaerde. To this day along the frontier between France and Flanders the peasant women lull their babies to sleep with a crooning ballad which begins:

Malbrook s’en va’t en guerre,
Mirlonton, mirlonton, mirlontaine;
Malbrook s’en va’t en guerre,
Dieu sait quand il reviendra.
Il reviendra à Pâques,
Mirlonton, mirlonton, mirlontaine,
Il reviendra à Pâques,
Ou à la Trinité. (bis)

Small wonder that even the nursery songs tell of war and chant the name of the great Duke two hundred years after the Battle of Audenaerde, for during three centuries the Flemish plains were the battlefield of Europe. Happily the present war has not as yet smitten Audenaerde with any serious damage, although Le Petit Guerrier, from his perch on the belfry of the Hotel de Ville, has no doubt looked down upon long lines of marching men and gleaming bayonets.

CHAPTER XVIII
OLD ANTWERP—ITS HISTORY AND LEGENDS

While Bruges and Ghent were in their prime as centres of Flemish commerce and industry a rival that was destined ultimately to supplant and eclipse them both was slowly growing up along the banks of the River Scheldt at a point where that important stream, which flows entirely across Flanders, becomes a tidal estuary. From the most ancient times the prosperity of Antwerp—which in French is called Anvers, in Flemish Antwerpen—has been closely connected with the river. According to the legends a giant named Antigonus once had a castle where the city now stands and exacted a toll of all who passed up or down the river. Evasion of this primitive high tariff was punished by cutting off both the culprit’s hands. Of course this giant just had to be killed by the hero, whose name was Brabo, and who was said to have been a lieutenant of Cæsar. Brabo cut off the dead giant’s right hand and flung it into the river in token that thenceforth it should be free from similar extortions. The visitor will find this legend recalled in the city’s arms—which has two hands surmounting a castle—and in many works of art. Brabo is said to have become the first Margrave of Antwerp, and to have founded a line of seventeen Margraves, all bearing the same name, but the deeds and even the existence of these princes is as mythical as those of their ancestor—or the famous legend of Lohengrin, which belongs to this period of Antwerp’s history.

Like London, Antwerp is situated sixty miles from the sea. In olden days commerce was rather inclined to seek the more inland ports, as being safer from storms and less exposed to sudden attacks. The size of ocean-going ships was, moreover, slowly but steadily increasing from generation to generation, and this increase favoured Antwerp, which had a deep, sure channel to the sea, as against its early rival Bruges, whose outlet,

the little River Zwyn, was gradually silting up. The fact that the town was situated just outside of the dominions of the Counts of Flanders probably helped its early growth, for the jealous men of Bruges might otherwise have obtained from the Counts decrees restricting, and perhaps prohibiting, its expansion. As it was, the great Counts ruled all of the left bank of the Scheldt from Antwerp to the sea, and also the waters of the river as far as one could ride into it on horseback and then reach with extended sword.

The Tête de Flandre, opposite the centre of the older part of the city, marks the end of Flanders proper in this direction. As already explained by the Professor, however, Antwerp is none the less essentially a Flemish city in its art and architecture, its language and literature, and for many centuries of its brilliant history, and for these reasons deserves a place in this book.

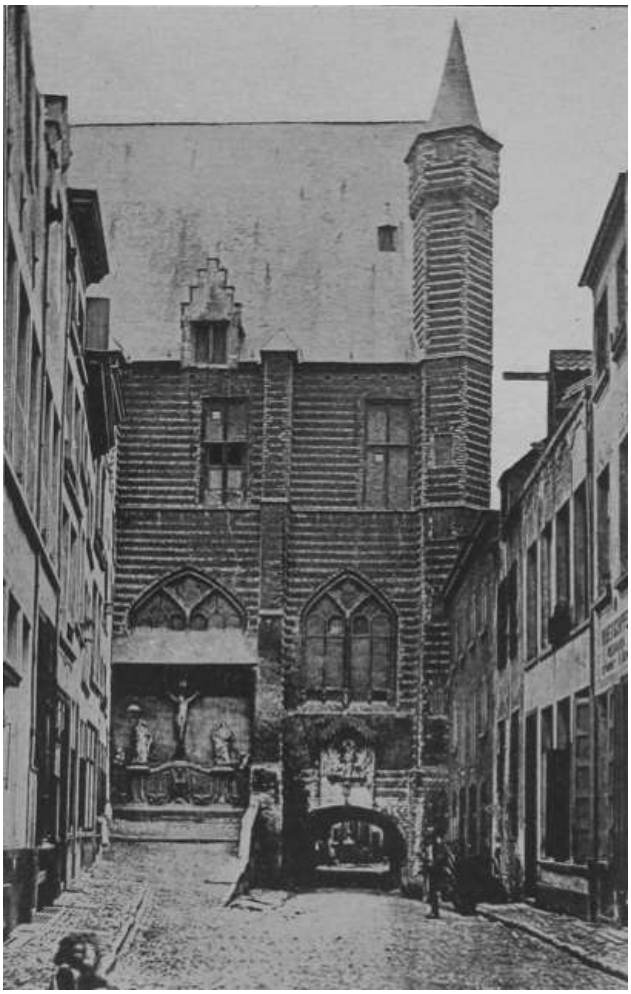
Like the County of Flanders, the region surrounding Antwerp was an outlying “march” or frontier district of the Empire, and its rulers therefore derived their feudal title from the Emperor. About the year 1100 the Emperor bestowed the march on Godfrey of the Beard, Count of Louvain and first Duke of Brabant. To the Dukes of Brabant it thereafter always belonged until that title, with so many others, became merged in those acquired by the Dukes of Burgundy and united in their illustrious descendant, Charles V. On the whole, the Dukes, being absentees, were easy rulers—the shrewd burghers seizing upon their moments of weakness to wrest new privileges from them, and relying upon their strength for protection in times of danger. From time immemorial the burghers claimed a monopoly right to trade in fish, salt and oats. Other trading privileges followed, and by the time of the first Duke of Brabant the town was already an important one, with a powerful Burg, or fortress, surrounding five acres of land and buildings. Among the latter was the Steen, or feudal prison, a part of which still stands close to the river and is used as a museum of antiquities.

The early Dukes greatly extended the commercial rights and privileges of the town, Henry III granting a charter that allowed its citizens to hold bread and meat markets and trade in corn and cloth. Duke John I granted rights in his famous Core van Antwerpen, dated nearly five hundred years before the Declaration of Independence, that were remarkable for wisdom and liberality. “Within the town of Antwerp,” the charter read, “all men are free and there are no slaves. No inhabitant may be deprived of his natural judges, nor arrested in his house on civil suit.” In 1349 Duke John III granted a charter that not only confirmed all of its ancient privileges, but gave exceptional rights and liberties to foreigners—causing many of them to come and settle there. Among these was the right granted to any dweller within the city to sue: citizens according to local customs, foreigners according to the laws of their own lands. As at Bruges and Ghent all these precious charters were kept in a box having many locks, of which the keys were kept by delegates of the Broad Council of the city. “This box,” said Mr. Wilfred Robinson, in his valuable historical sketch of Antwerp, “might only be opened in the presence of all the civic authorities, while they stood around it bareheaded and holding lighted tapers in their hands. Truly it must have been a quaint and solemn scene!”

Some fifty years prior to the charter last mentioned Duke John II married one of the daughters of Edward I, King of England, and gave that monarch the city of Antwerp as a fief. Edward III used the city as a naval base, and in 1339 signed there with Jacques Van Artevelde a treaty of alliance with the communes of Brabant and Flanders. The Kings of England did not, however, retain their suzerainty over Antwerp very long, for it next passed—once more by marriage—to the daughter of Louis of Maele, Count of Flanders. The city sought to resist, and Count Louis was obliged to besiege it and punished the burghers severely for their disobedience. On his death it passed to Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, along with the entire County of Flanders of which it was then a part, and thereafter remained under the Burgundian Dukes and their successors.

In 1446 Philip the Good—whose policy had proved so disastrous to Bruges and Ghent—laid the foundation for the commercial greatness of Antwerp by a liberal charter which he granted to the Merchant Adventurers of England. The English merchants had already left Bruges, where the River Zwyn was fast silting up, and now came to Antwerp and established there a most extensive trade. They were followed by the merchants of the other nations, and in less than seventy-five years after the granting of the charter the population of the city had doubled twice—from less than seventeen thousand to over forty—four thousand inhabitants.

It was during this period that many of the most interesting structures of “old Antwerp”—the portion of the city between the Steen and the cathedral and north of the Hotel de Ville—were built. We spent several interesting mornings tramping these quaint old winding streets, some of which are still as mediæval in aspect as any to be seen in Europe. The *Vielle Boucherie*, recently restored, dates from the reign of Louis of Maele. In its time it contained stalls for fifty-three butchers. The streets surrounding this quaint structure of ragged brick are well nigh as ancient and interesting as the “monuments” which one encounters here and there while exploring them. The Steen itself dates, as we have seen, from the very earliest period of the city’s history, but is only a remnant of what it was. In the days of the Spanish Inquisition this grim old structure became a place of dread, and its gloomy dungeons—which the cheerful and smiling guide showed us by candlelight, for two cents a head—were in constant use for the entertainment of guests of the Margraves and their successors, the Burgundian Dukes, for nigh on to eight centuries.



THE *VIELLE BOUCHERIE,* ANTWERP.

In 1485 the rivalry between Antwerp and Bruges reached the point of open war. The men of Bruges built a fort commanding the River Scheldt at a point near Calloo, mounting on it no less than sixty cannon. The Antwerp burghers met this challenge by building a similar fort at Austruwel, and then attacked and captured the Flemish fort on April 23—St. George's Day. A yearly procession still commemorates this victory in the long contest to maintain the freedom of the river. A fleet of forty-nine merchant vessels that the Flemings had detained came triumphantly up the river, and the conflict for supremacy between the old sea gateway of the Netherlands and the new was settled once for all—as far as poor Bruges was concerned—in favour of Antwerp, the new maritime queen of the North.

The river itself seemed to favour the prosperity of Antwerp, as if proud and eager to become the handmaiden of so valiant and beautiful a city, for the western entrance of the Scheldt gradually deepened at about this period—from causes that in those days no one tried to understand. This gave the port a deep channel to the sea to accommodate the growing draught of ocean-going ships. The discoveries of Columbus and Vasco da Gama helped the port also. Until then Venice had enjoyed a monopoly of the sugar trade of the East. Now it came sea-borne to Antwerp, and the formerly profitable overland sugar trade between Venice and Germany was ruined. This caused the Portuguese to establish a factory at Antwerp. The Spaniards followed, while the English and Italians enlarged their warehouses. Several great German trading houses opened premises in the city, although the Hanseatic League did not abandon Bruges for Antwerp until 1545—being the very last to go.

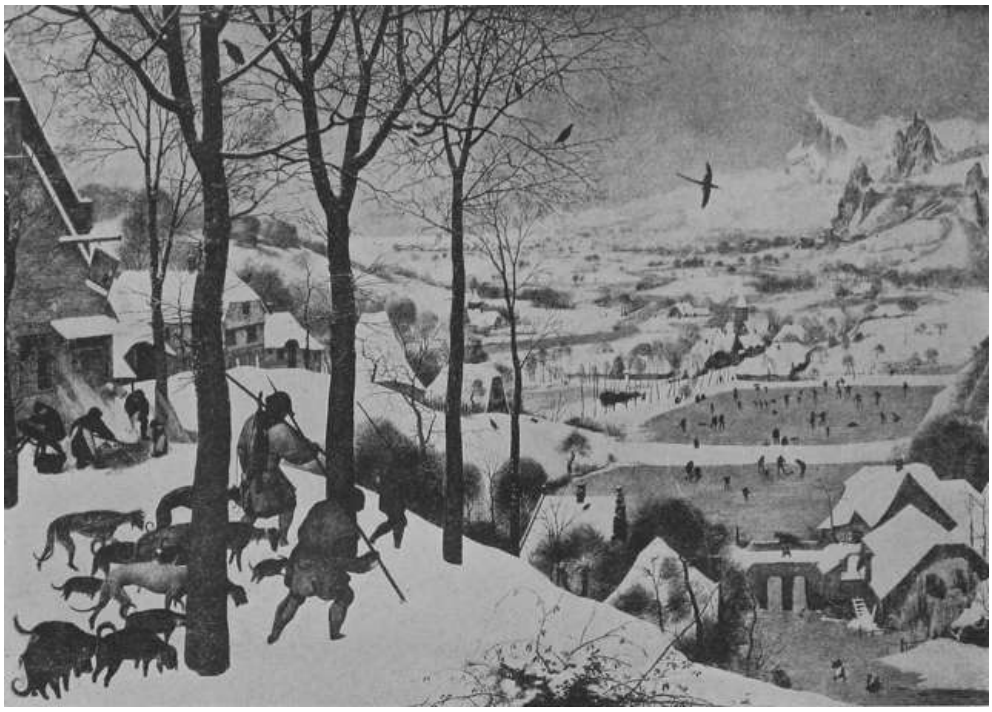
While the decline of Bruges led the painters of that city to desert it for its fast-growing rival on the Scheldt, Quentin Matsys, the greatest of the early Antwerp artists, does not seem to have derived much of his inspiration from the masterpieces of the Bruges school. The early chronicles give a most romantic account of the life of this painter, who was born at Louvain about 1466. According to these more or less legendary stories he was at first a blacksmith, and changed to a painter through love for a damsel whose father was a great patron and admirer of that art. Another account has it that he took up painting owing to illness, first colouring images of the saints such as were then given to children during the carnival. Blacksmith he certainly was, as his father had been before him, and the wonderful cover for the well in front of the cathedral is his handiwork. It seems probable, however, that he first learned the art of painting at Louvain, probably as an apprentice to the son of Dierick Bouts. At Antwerp he soon fell in love with a beautiful girl, who may have been the model for some of his charming Madonnas. The story is told by one old chronicler that the maiden's father opposed the match because the young suitor was not a sufficiently skilful artist. On a certain occasion Matsys, finding his intended father-in-law out, painted a fly on one of the figures in a painting belonging to him. On his return the owner of the painting started to brush the fly off and, seeing his mistake, heartily admitted that the young artist who had painted it merited all praise and gave his consent to the nuptials.

The museum at Antwerp is rich in masterpieces by Matsys, including his greatest work, “The Entombment.” This is a triptych, the panels showing Herod’s banquet with the head of John the Baptist lying on the table, and St. John in the boiling oil. The “Madonna,” in the same museum, is one of the sweetest faces ever painted among the hundreds of Madonnas that abound in mediæval art, and one cannot but feel that it is the very face that won the heart of the artist and caused him to adopt painting as his profession. Its resemblance to the face of the Madonna now in the Berlin museum strengthens this theory. At Antwerp also there are to be seen “The Holy Face,” a companion painting to the “Madonna” just mentioned, and the gruesome yet appealing “Veil of Veronica,” showing the livid face of the Saviour with drops of blood from the cruel crown of thorns trickling down across it. The museum at Brussels possesses another masterpiece, and the oldest dated picture by this artist, “The Legend of St. Anne,” which was completed in 1509 for the brotherhood of St. Anne at Louvain. He also painted several strong and striking portraits, of which the best is that of Erasmus at the Städel Institute at Frankfort. Matsys was one of the first Flemish artists to present subjects of every-day life as well as religious episodes and characters. “The Banker and his Wife,” at the Louvre in Paris, is the finest example of this kind. There are authenticated works by this master in a number of European museums, while a considerable number of his pictures have become lost or have not as yet been identified.

“THE BANKER AND HIS WIFE.”—MATSYS.

Matsys is the greatest name in the history of Flemish art between the masters of Bruges and the school of Rubens. It was his success that made Antwerp the Florence of the North. Among Matsys’ successors Frans de Vriendt, better known as Frans Floris, was one of the most notable. He was a member of the Antwerp guild of St. Luke at the age of twenty-three, and produced a vast number of works, many of which can still be seen scattered among the churches and art collections of Flanders. He had over one hundred pupils, of whom Martin de Vos achieved the greatest fame. As this painter worked after the destruction of the image-breakers many of his religious subjects survive to this day. The Antwerp museum contains no less than twenty-three of his works, as against only four by his master. Both of these artists, however, were profound admirers of the Italian school, and the work of Floris especially—though vastly admired in his day—is now looked upon as more Italian than Flemish, more imitative than original.

This cannot be said of the next really great painter to appear in Flanders, Peter Breughel the Elder. Born at the little village of Breughel, near Breda in Brabant, about 1526, this artist studied for a time in Italy—as did all of his contemporaries—and then settled at Antwerp. Here he obtained the themes of many of his most famous compositions. “In the port, in the tavern, in the fairs of neighbouring villages,” says Prof. A. J. Wauters, “meeting now a young couple in the giddy dance, or a drunkard stumbling in his path, he sought the humble spectacle of homely things, the noisy mirth of rustic festivities, and was always in quest of every-day subjects, which earned for him, at the hands of posterity, the surname of ‘Breughel of Peasants.’” He later removed to Brussels, where he received many commissions, particularly from the Emperor Rudolph II, who greatly admired his work. Several of his chief masterpieces are therefore in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, but the Royal Museum at Antwerp contains four of his works, while several others are scattered about Europe.



“WINTER.”—PETER BREUGHEL.

To the lover of Flemish paintings Breughel is one of the most characteristic and charming of them all. His art is distinctively Flemish, in subject, treatment and inspiration. Somewhat influenced perhaps by Jerome Bosch, a Brabant painter of the previous century renowned for his weird and eccentric conceptions, Breughel is never conventional. His work is that of a humourist, a satirist who sees the follies of the world but laughs at them. His pictures are admirable in their colouring, execution and the grouping of the figures, and they are especially interesting in their vivid portrayal of the every-day Flemish life of the times in which he lived.

The visitor to Antwerp cannot fail to observe the images of the Virgin placed at the corners of nearly every street in the older quarter of the city. These are said to be due to the Long Wapper, a somewhat humorous but none the less grim and terrifying fiend who was wont, many centuries ago, to play weird pranks upon the good people of Antwerp after nightfall. He used to lie in wait for wayfarers upon deserted by-streets in the uncanny hours between midnight and dawn. Pouncing upon his terrified victims, he would carry them off, sometimes never to return. Now and then he assumed the form of a lost baby, to which, being found by some charitable mother, the breast was given. Presently the good woman discovered to her horror that the foundling was swelling and becoming heavy, and when she put it down the Wapper assumed his own shape and ran off shrieking. At times he peered into church windows and howled and gibbered at the worshippers, and afterwards frightened them terribly as they went homeward, or, stretching his body to an incredible length, he peered into the upper windows of people’s houses. Men feared to speak evil of the Long Wapper, for something terrible was certain to happen to those who did. At last it was found that he would never pass an image of the Virgin, and that is why so many were erected that finally the evil fiend had no more streets left in which to play his mad pranks and left Antwerp for the lonely moors and dunes along the seacoast where he is still said to be seen.

The place most frequented by the Long Wapper was a little stream which came to be called the Wappersrui in consequence, and a bridge across it the Wappersbrucke. Here he often strode out of the water with his long thin legs extending far down into its dark depths like two black stilts. Once he had reached the embankment he shrank instantly to a diminutive size—usually taking the form of a schoolboy. These first appearances were generally between daylight and dark, when the twilight made it difficult to distinguish faces clearly, and he always took the place of some boy who happened to be absent. A favourite game of the boys, who were then returning from school, was called shove-hat. In this game one boy tossed his hat on the ground and the others shoved and kicked it about with their feet while its owner sought to regain it. When it came the turn of the Long Wapper to throw down his hat the first one to give it a kick broke his wooden shoe to pieces and fractured his toes, for the hat proved to be a heavy iron pot. Then the street echoed with a jeering “Ha, ha, ha!” but the Wapper had disappeared.

His pranks upon grown-up people were apt to be far more serious in their consequences than those just described. Often he paused at some tavern door and joined the party seated there in a game of cards, which invariably resulted in a violent quarrel in the course of which one or more of the players was usually killed. On another occasion he appeared in broad daylight selling mussels. Encountering four women sitting outside their door at work he opened a mussel and offered it to one of them. She tasted it, but it turned into dirt in her mouth. Apologising, he opened another, which all could see was a sound, fine mussel, and offered it to another of the women. No sooner was it in her mouth than it turned into a huge spider. The women thereupon set upon him, but he defended himself so rudely that two of them were nearly killed, when he suddenly vanished, leaving only an echo of wild laughter.

In the country to the east of Antwerp there are many quaint legends still told at the peasants’ firesides on stormy winter nights about the Kaboutermannekens who in ancient times frequented that neighbourhood.

Near the village of Gelrode there is a small hill on the sides of which are many little caves which were formerly the abode of these fairies, the hill being called the Kabouterberg to this day in consequence. There is a similar hill, called Kaboutermannekensberg, between Turnhout and Casterle. They were also called Red Caps or Klabbers, and were usually clad in red from head to foot, and often had green hands and faces, according to those who were so fortunate as to see them. These little gnomes or elves seem to have resembled their kind as reported in the folk-lore of other northern countries, being the willing and loyal slaves of those who treated them kindly, and the bitter, and sometimes dangerous, enemies of those who misused them.

Still another local sprite—this time a spirit of evil resembling in some respects the Long Wapper—was known as Kludde. This fiend was often met with after dark in many parts of Flanders, and even in Brabant. At times Kludde would appear to the peasants as the dusk of twilight was deepening into the intense darkness of night on the Flemish plains, in the guise of an old, half-starved horse. If a farmer or stable-boy mistook him for one of his own horses and mounted on Kludde he instantly rushed off at an incredible speed until he came to some water into which he pitched his terrified rider headlong. This accomplished to his satisfaction he vanished, crying “Kludde, Kludde!” as he went away, whence came his name.

CHAPTER XIX

THREE CENTURIES OF ANTWERP PRINTERS

The joyous entry of the boy prince who was afterward to become Charles V was the signal for ten days of rejoicing by the citizens of Antwerp. This was early in the year 1515; and, in truth, the city prospered mightily under the rule of the great Emperor, who favoured it on many notable occasions. The bankers and merchant princes of Antwerp became renowned the world over for their wealth and magnificence. Anthony Fugger, who was the banker of Maximilian and Charles V, left a fortune of six million golden crowns, and it is said that his name survives to this day as a synonym for wealth—the common people calling any one who is extremely rich a *rykke Fokker*, a rich Fugger. It is related that another rich Antwerp merchant, Gasparo Dozzo, on being privileged to entertain the Emperor in his house, cast into the fire a promissory note for a large loan he had formerly made to his sovereign.

This period of wealth and prosperity continued till the very end of the reign of the Emperor, but under his successor, Philip II, the city was plunged into misfortunes and miseries as swift and as appalling as those that befell in the terrible Fall of 1914. In 1556 Philip opened a chapter of the Knights of the Golden Fleece at St. Mary’s, afterward the cathedral, in Antwerp—thereby recognising the supremacy of this town over the others in his Flemish dominions. Among the new knights to whom he gave the accolade were William the Silent and the Count of Horn. Little men thought on that day of festivity and good will what the future held in store for them all!

On August 18, 1566, the miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin was taken from its place in St. Mary’s church and carried through the streets of the city in a solemn procession—as it had been for nearly two hundred years. This time there were murmurs of disapproval from the crowds that lined the streets, some stones were thrown, and the procession hastily returned to the church. The next day a small mob, composed for the most part of boys and men of the lowest class, entered the church and destroyed the statue and the entire contents of the sacred edifice, including some seventy altars, and paintings and statues almost without number. The organ, then the wonder of Europe, was ruined, and the rabble dressed itself in the costly vestments of the clergy and carried away the treasures of the church and even the contents of the poor boxes. This was the beginning of the work of the image-breakers, as they came to be called, which spread throughout Flanders until scarcely a religious edifice had escaped the destruction of its movable contents, while a few here and there were burned. As noted in the chapter on Audenaerde, Margaret of Parma was Regent at this time and acted resolutely to suppress the disorders—which were largely due to the supine attitude of the local magistrates at the beginning.

She had all but succeeded in restoring peace and quiet throughout Flanders when Philip suddenly decided to send an army there, and selected the Duke of Alva to command it. The story of the eighty years’ war that followed is familiar to every American through Motley’s account of it, although that brilliant writer is more concerned with the details relating to the Dutch provinces than those regarding the portion of the Netherlands that remained subject to Spain. Two events, however, in the long war were so directly concerned with Antwerp, and loom so large in its history, that they cannot be passed over here. Both have a renewed interest in view of the history of Antwerp’s latest siege in 1914. These are the Spanish Fury, and the great siege of the city by the Duke of Parma.

Alva, who superseded the gentle Margaret of Parma as Regent of the Netherlands, quickly took stern measures for the repression of further disorders at Antwerp, which he regarded as a hot-bed of heresy. A huge citadel was built at the southern end of the town, near the Scheldt, in 1572, in the centre of which Alva erected a bronze statue of himself. On the marble pedestal the inscription related how “the most faithful minister of the best of Kings had stamped out sedition, repelled the rebels, set up religion, and restored justice and peace to the country.” So far were these boasts from being true that only the following year, in 1573, Alva stole away to Spain secretly, his government a failure, his army mutinous, and half of the country

he had been sent to rule in open and successful revolt. War with England had ruined the commerce of Antwerp, Alva's fiscal policy and incessant taxes had half beggared the people of the entire country, while thousands of the noblest and bravest in the land had met death on the scaffold or in the torture chambers of the Inquisition.

Requesens, the next Regent, was unable either to stem the rising tide of revolt or to pay his soldiers—King Philip failing to send funds until the pay of the Spanish veterans was at one time twenty-two months in arrears. The sudden death of Requesens in 1576 left matters in a nearly chaotic condition. The veterans who had been fighting in Zeeland against the Dutch mutinied and returning to Flanders captured the town of Alost, where they forced the citizens to give them food and shelter. On November 4th, 1576, the mutineers marched to Antwerp, some two thousand strong, where they joined the Spaniards and mercenaries in the citadel. They were under the command of an *Eletto*, or elected leader. Jerome Roda, a Spaniard, had proclaimed himself the commandant of the fortress until the new Regent, Don John of Austria, should arrive in Flanders. Under these two worthies the combined forces in the citadel, some five thousand men in all, proceeded to attack the city. The citizens, on their side, had for some time feared such an attack and should have been able to repel it. There were fourteen thousand armed burghers, four thousand Walloons and an equal number of German troops—twenty-two thousand in all. It may have been that they felt unduly secure against an attack on that day because it was Sunday. It is certain that they were badly commanded.

Shortly after noon the Spaniards rushed from the citadel and across the broad open esplanade cleared a few years before by Alva, shouting their war cry, *Sant Jago y cierra España*. The *Eletto* was the first to fall, but the rush of furious soldiers was not to be stopped by a single volley. The Walloons put up a brave fight but part of the Germans treacherously lowered their pikes and let the Spaniards pass down the rue St. Georges. On the Place de Meir the defenders made another stand, but were swiftly swept back in a confused and disorganised mass by the Spanish cavalry. At the Hotel de Ville the burghers fought fiercely until the mutineers set fire to the edifice. In the conflagration that followed not only this noble structure, one of the finest in Europe, but the adjoining guild houses and some eighty other buildings were consumed. Of the Hotel de Ville only the blackened walls remained. By nightfall the Spaniards and the German mercenaries, most of whom had joined the victors in order to share in the spoils, were masters of the doomed city.

That night the scenes of pillage and rapine as the savage and half drunken soldiers swept through the streets and ransacked the houses of all who did not instantly pay a stiff ransom, exceed the descriptive powers of the contemporary historians. One of the burgomasters was stabbed to end a quarrel as to his ransom. Many burghers were killed near the town hall, or were burned within it like rats. For three days the city was given up to be sacked. The number who were killed, including women and children, has been variously estimated at from seven thousand to seventeen thousand of the citizens and defenders of the city, and from two hundred and fifty to six hundred of the Spaniards. The loss in property amounted to many millions, but no accurate estimate could be made of it, as many who suffered most in this respect lost their lives as well. Cartloads of plunder were sent out of the city, while much of it was actually sold by those who did not care or dare to keep it in a temporary market-place at the Bourse. Some were said to have concealed their wealth by having sword hilts and breastplates made of solid gold. Like the ill-gotten gains of the Spaniards in America, however, none of this booty—the reward of treachery, of assassination, of cruelty and the sudden setting free of all the basest elements in human nature—profited its captors very greatly. In a few days after the arrival of Don John, the new Regent, the mutinous soldiers were paid off and marched away to Maestricht and presently to other battlefields, from Flanders to Lombardy, where, no doubt, most of the golden breastplates and sword hilts fell—in due time—to other conquerors. Such was the Spanish Fury—until 1914 the worst blot on civilisation that history records.

Soon after the Spaniards left the city permission was given to the people to destroy the citadel that the tyrant Alva had built to overawe the town. The entire population flocked to this welcome task—men, women and children, each taking a shovel, a basket or a barrow. It is related that even the great ladies of the city took part in the work of demolition—so hated had the grim fortress become. The statue of the cruel Duke that he had so vaingloriously erected in the centre of the citadel only five years before was torn down and dragged through the streets by a cheering throng. Charles Verlat has given the world a vivid picture of this incident which hangs in the Antwerp museum.

“DRAGGING THE STATUE OF THE DUKE OF ALVA THROUGH THE STREETS OF ANTWERP.”—C. VERLAT.

Six years later the Duke d’Alençon, who had been made nominal sovereign over the Low Countries by William the Silent, planned to treacherously attack and sack the city with his French soldiers, some three thousand, five hundred strong. This time, however, the citizens were not caught napping and when the tocsin in the cathedral called the alarm the burghers rushed out in thousands. The French swashbucklers proved to be less stubborn fighters than the Spanish veterans and soon were driven back in a confused mass to the city gates, most of them being killed and the cowardly Duke only saving himself by flight. This episode has been derisively called the French Fury. It happened January 17, 1583.

The following year Alexander Farnese, the Duke of Parma—and the son of the Duchess of Parma, whose career as Regent of the Netherlands was briefly described in the chapter on Audenaerde, her birthplace—determined to besiege Antwerp, which, since the Spanish Fury, had fallen into the hands of the revolted Provinces. Unfortunately for its defenders, William the Silent had just died at the hands of an assassin and his plans for the protection of the city by flooding all of the marshes surrounding it were not followed. The butchers opposed flooding all of their pasture lands and the important Kowenstein Dyke was not cut. The Prince of Parma, who was the greatest military leader of his age, swiftly captured the forts on the Flemish side of the river, seized the Kowenstein Dyke—which extended on the Brabant side from a point opposite Calloo to Starbroeck—and began to build a bridge across the river itself. This daring project, if successful, would completely isolate Antwerp from the sea and its Dutch allies and render certain its ultimate subjection by starvation.

The bridge was built partly on piles, as far out as the water was sufficiently shallow, then the intervening gap was spanned by means of thirty-two large vessels anchored at both ends and lashed together by chains and heavy cables. The structure was completed in February, 1585, to the amazement of the besieged burghers and the great joy of the Prince’s army. It would seem a small affair to the pontoon bridge builders of to-day, being two thousand, four hundred feet long and twelve feet wide, but at that time it was deemed one of the most notable achievements ever known. The defenders of the city sent huge fireships down the river to destroy the bridge. One of these actually exploded against the structure and another off Calloo, destroying more than eight hundred Spanish soldiers and endangering their intrepid leader himself. The bridge was wrecked, but Farnese repaired it before the people at Antwerp learned of the success of their attempt.

A tremendous attack was next made on the Kowenstein Dyke, with a view to cutting it—a feat that could have been done without any trouble if the Prince of Orange’s counsels had been followed a few months earlier. A fleet of one hundred and fifty Dutch ships joined in the battle from the sea side, while a strong force of Flemings, English and Dutch from Antwerp attacked the dyke from the land side. After a fierce struggle it was cut, the waters rushed through and one vessel loaded with provisions for the beleaguered city made its way past. That night Antwerp rejoiced, but in the darkness the Prince of Parma made another furious assault and finally drove back the allies, capturing twenty-eight ships of the Dutch fleet and filling in the dyke once more. This victory—which as a feat of arms was one of the most brilliant of the war—sealed the fate of the city, which finally capitulated August 17th. So important was this success to the Spanish, cause that Isabella, the daughter of King Philip, was awakened by her father during the night by the tidings, “Antwerp is ours!” Its fall settled approximately the extent of the region that was left to the Spanish Crown out of the wreck of its former empire in the Low Countries. Thenceforth all of the provinces to the west and south of Antwerp—the region now comprised in the Kingdom of Belgium—remained subject to the King of Spain and his Austrian successors until the great French Revolution. The remaining provinces became the Dutch Republic and now form the Kingdom of Holland.

The Spanish Fury and the great siege had together well-nigh destroyed the commerce of the port, and the heavy fine imposed by the conquerors upon the city for its rebellion completed its ruin. Packs of wild dogs are

said to have roamed unmolested through the outlying villages, which stood deserted, while even wolves were seen. Grass grew in the once crowded streets of the city, and famine added to the miseries of its fast declining population. It would hardly be conceivable that a quarter of a century of hideous misrule could have so utterly obliterated the prosperity of this once opulent city, but for the fearful object lesson afforded in 1914 that war is still as potent a breeder of destruction and despair as it was in that dark age.

Enough, however, of wars and sieges and the sack of cities. Antwerp's past includes many pleasanter stories as well—stories of progress and achievement. To those who are interested in the noble art of printing, and the various branches of the fine arts that serve as handmaids to the printer, Antwerp possesses one of the rarest treasure-houses in the world. This is the Museum Plantin-Moretus, for three centuries the head office and workshop of the great printing-house whose name it bears.

Christopher Plantin, the founder of this famous establishment, was by birth a Frenchman—having first seen the light of day in the vicinity of Tours in the year 1514. Fleeing from the plague with his father to Lyons, he went from there to Orleans, to Paris, and finally to Caen in Normandy, where he learned the art of printing from Robert Mace. Here also he met Jeanne Rivière, who became his wife in 1545 or 1546. The couple soon went to Paris, where Plantin learned the art of bookbinding and of making caskets and other articles of elegance from leather. In 1549 he came to Antwerp and the following year was enrolled as a citizen and also as a member of the famous guild of St. Luke with the title of printer. He does not appear to have followed this profession, however, but speedily gained much renown for his exquisite workmanship as a bookbinder and casket maker, finding several wealthy patrons and protectors-among them Gabriel de Çayas, Secretary of Philip II, then the most powerful monarch in Christendom.

In the year 1555, while on his way to deliver in person a jewel-case he had just made for this client, he met with an adventure that changed the course of his career. It was quite dark before he had completed his errand, and as he made his way along the narrow, ill-lit streets of the old city he was set upon by a party of drunken revellers who mistook him, with the casket under his arm, for a guitar player against whom they had some grievance. One of the party ran the unfortunate casket-maker through the body with his sword, and he had barely strength enough to drag himself home, more nearly dead than alive. Skilful medical and surgical aid finally saved his life, but left him unable to do any manual work. He therefore gave up his casket-making and resumed the trade of printer, which he had learned at Caen. Instead of a misfortune, as it no doubt seemed at the time, this sword thrust proved the turning point in his career, for in his new profession he was destined to achieve undying fame.

There were at this time no less than sixty-six printing establishments in the Low Countries, of which thirteen were at Antwerp, some of the latter rivalling the best printers of Paris, Basel and Venice in the beauty of their productions. Plantin's first book was issued the year of his accident, in 1555, and was entitled "*La Institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente*." During the next seven years his presses turned out a limited number of works, but in 1562 his office was raided by order of the Regent, Margaret, the Duchess of Parma, and three of his workmen seized and condemned to the galleys for a heretical book they had printed unknown to him, entitled "*Briefve instruction pour prier*." Plantin fled to France, and to avoid confiscation he had some of his friends, acting as creditors, sell and buy in his printing plant. The following year—having convinced the Government of his orthodoxy—he returned to Antwerp and organised a company consisting of himself and four partners, including some of his pretended creditors. While this arrangement lasted, from 1563 to 1567, more than two hundred books were printed, and forty workmen kept constantly employed. His work was already considered notable for the beauty of its type and excellence of the paper used.

Soon after the partnership was dissolved Plantin undertook what was destined to be the greatest work of his career, and one of the most notable in the history of printing, the famous *Biblia Regia*. This was an edition of the Bible in four ancient languages, Latin, Hebrew, Greek and Chaldean. The Hebrew type was purchased from a Venetian printer, while the last two were cast expressly for this book. His friend Çayas interested Philip II in the project and that monarch sent the great scholar Arias Montanus from Alcala to supervise the work. At the suggestion of Cardinal Granville, Syriac was added to the other texts, so that, including French, there were six languages in all. The first volume of this "Polyglot Bible," as it came to be called, appeared in 1569 and the eighth and last in 1573. The work proved to be exceedingly costly, and to help meet the expense the King of Spain advanced 21,200 florins, and granted Plantin a monopoly for its sale throughout the Spanish dominions for the period of twenty years. A similar monopoly was granted by the Pope, the Emperor, the King of France and the Republic of Venice. In spite of all this, the book brought its printer no profits, but kept him in debt for the rest of his life. Pensions promised by Philip II to himself and his son-in-law, Raphelingen, were never paid.

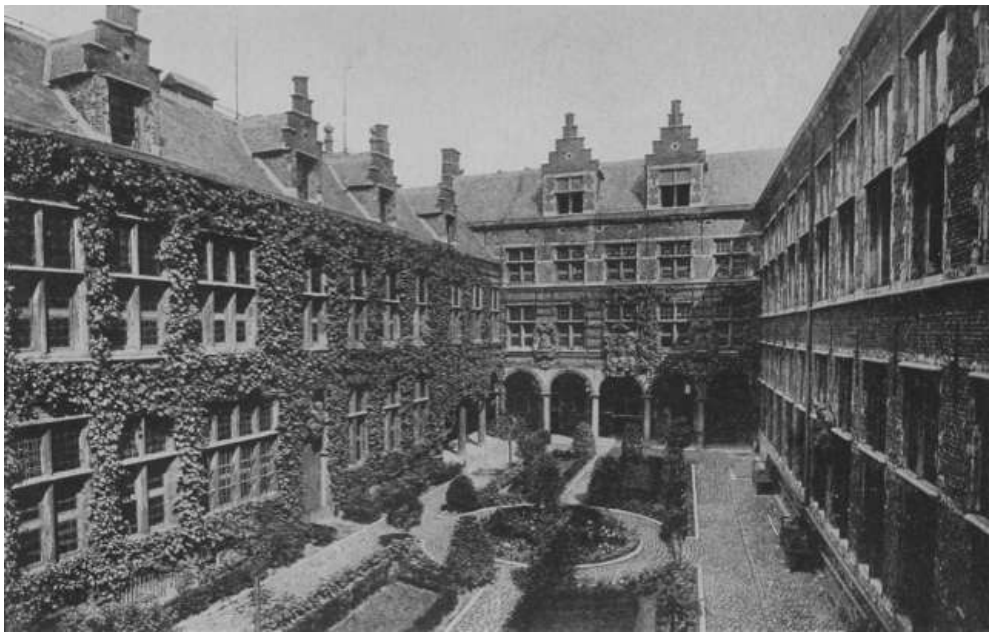
Between the editor of the great Bible and its printer a strong friendship sprang up. "This man," wrote Arias on one occasion, "is all mind and no matter. He neither eats, drinks, nor sleeps." And again, "Never did I know so capable and so kindhearted a man. Every day I find something fresh to admire in him, but what I admire the most is his humble patience towards envious colleagues, whom he insists on wishing well, though he might do them much harm."

Besides the *Biblia Regia* Plantin, now at the height of his fame, managed to turn out a vast quantity of printed matter. High in royal favour by reason of this worthy work, he had no difficulty in obtaining for himself and his heirs a profitable monopoly for printing and selling missals and breviaries throughout Spain's wide dominions. While the largest printers at Paris rarely employed more than six presses, Plantin kept twenty-two constantly at work, had agents at Paris and Leyden, and sent a member of his family every year to attend the fairs at Leipzig and Frankfort. In 1575 his office is said to have had seventy-three kinds of type, weighing over seventeen tons.

In 1570 he was appointed by Philip to the newly created office of Prototypographer in the Netherlands. Masters and men in the printing trade had to apply to him for certificates as to their fitness, while he was also required to draw up a list of forbidden books. In this, curiously enough, one of the earlier products of his

own press found a place—a rhyming version of the Psalms in French by Clement Marot. This office does not seem to have paid much salary, if any, or to have given its first possessor anything but a lot of worry.

The Plantin Press was located at various places about the city until 1576, when it was established on the rue Haute near the Porte de St. Jean. Three years later Plantin purchased from the owner of this property the premises occupied by the present museum and extending from the rue Haute through to the Friday Market, with a large gateway opening into the latter. Plantin had been only eight months in this new location when the Spanish Fury broke out. He was away on a journey himself, but his son-in-law, Moretus, had to pay a heavy fine to save the printing-office from pillage. The next few years were full of trouble and anxiety. For a time Plantin had to leave Antwerp, going to Leyden, where he met Justus Lipsius and was made printer to the University. During the great siege of Antwerp he fled, with many other Catholics, to Cologne, where he thought for a time of establishing his chief printing-office. After the siege he hurried home, but a short time later his health began to fail.



COURTYARD OF THE PLANTIN MUSEUM, ANTWERP.

It was in the house on the Friday Market that the dying printer gathered his family about him. His only son had died in infancy, but his five daughters had all lived to be married, three of them to men associated with him in the printing office. The eldest, Margaret, married Francis Raphelingen, the chief proof-reader and an able linguist; while the second, Martina, married Jean Moretus, the father of a long line, of which the eldest sons bore the same name so that they came to be distinguished by numbers, the first being Jean Moretus I—like a line of kings. This son-in-law was Plantin's business manager. The third daughter aided the mother, who ran a linen business in the frugal way that many Flemish housewives have of helping their husbands. A fourth, Magdalen, when only a child, corrected proofs on the *Biblia Regia* in five languages, and later married her father's Paris agent. The fifth married a brother of Jean Moretus I, who became a diamond-cutter.

Plantin had from a very early date adopted the motto "*Labori et Constantia*," together with the emblem of a hand holding a pair of open compasses, which may be seen over the Friday Market gateway to the museum. This emblem, with the motto entwining it in the form of a scroll, or appearing above, below or across it in a hundred variations, is the mark by which connoisseurs can distinguish the products of the Plantin Press. It must have been constantly in the mind of the great printer himself, for on his deathbed he composed the following French couplet, which expresses and describes his own character better than any epitaph could do:

> "Un Labeur courageux muni d'humble Constance
> Resiste à tous assauts par douce Patience."

On July 1, 1589, this "giant among printers" breathed his last, and was buried in the ambulatory of the cathedral, his friend Justus Lipsius writing the inscription for his tombstone. While his name is not associated with the earliest beginnings of the art of printing, and the products of his press do not therefore command the almost fabulous prices paid for the rarest productions of some of the first printers, Christopher Plantin was not only the greatest printer of his age, but one of the greatest in the history of the art. Almost from the first he knew how to gather about him the foremost scholars and artists of his time, making his establishment not merely a printing-office but an institution of learning, a home of the fine arts. Arias Montanus, editor of the *Biblia Regia*, aided by a host of the most learned churchmen of Europe; Justus Lipsius, lecturer before Princes at the Universities of Leyden and Louvain; Mercator and Ortelius, the geographers, from whom the world learned the right way to make maps and atlases; Crispin, Van den Broeck, Martin de Vos, and a score of the foremost Flemish artists, who were employed by Plantin to illustrate his books; these and many more no doubt were frequent visitors at the printing-house during the lifetime of its founder.

These noble traditions were fully maintained under his successors. Jean Moretus I ruled over the destinies of the house until his death, in 1610, leaving it to his two sons, Jean II and Balthazar I. The latter was the greatest of the dynasty of printers after Plantin and Jean Moretus I. He was a warm friend of Rubens, who

illustrated many of the publications of the house during this period. In the fourth generation, represented by Balthazar III, who ruled for half a century, from 1646 to 1696, the family was ennobled, but after this period the house confined its output and commerce to missals and breviaries, under the monopoly granted by Philip II for the countries under the rule of Spain. This business was completely destroyed by an edict prohibiting the importation of foreign books into the Spanish dominions, and in 1800 the printing office ceased operations. It resumed activity on a small scale once or twice during the nineteenth century, but finally closed in 1867, after an existence of three hundred and twelve years, and in 1876 the last representative of the house, Edouard Moretus, sold the entire establishment, with all its priceless collections and furnishings, to the City of Antwerp for the sum of 1,200,000 francs, to be maintained as a museum.

During the splendid period of activity in the first half of the seventeenth century, the throng of famous men in the libraries and the corrector's room of the old establishment surpassed that of the days of Plantin and Jean Moretus I. Rubens, Van Dyck, Erasmus Quellin and a host of other artists; Lævinius Torrentius, bishop and poet, Kiliaen, the lexicographer, and scores of other learned men; Princes and Dukes innumerable, the patrons and protectors of the house—all these and many more were constant visitors. To the student the museum of to-day recalls these great names with a freshness and vividness that the ordinary museum fatally lacks, for here are countless mementoes of their presence in the very proofs and prints they handled and corrected, in the letters they wrote, in the sketches drawn by the greatest artists of Flanders and engraved by the foremost engravers of the time.

As a detailed description of the Plantin Museum can be found in all the guidebooks, while an excellent handbook regarding its treasures by Max Rooses, its renowned curator, can be purchased for a franc, it would be unnecessary as well as tedious to recount them here. To those who have but a little time at their disposal a liberal honorarium to the attendant in each room—all of whom are garbed in brown with a quaint cap of the same colour, as the printers of the house were wont to be dressed in the great olden days—will bring forth a wealth of curious and interesting information not to be found in any book, anecdotes of distinguished visitors, bits of lore about this or the other treasure, that will make the trifling investment well worth while. In our case we made our first visit in this way, roaming about the splendid old rooms and dipping into this case or that at random—like butterflies amid a bower of roses. Visitors were few that day and we had each attendant to ourselves. Later on we made another visit, armed with letters of introduction to M. Denucé, the learned assistant curator, and through his courtesy revisited each room once more. A single book—one of the marvellous collections of early Bibles—was, according to the attendant in that room, made the object of an offer of a million francs, or maybe it was a million dollars, by a well-known American millionaire. The collection in its entirety, if dispersed by auction, would doubtless fetch many millions—but it belongs exactly where it is. Like the collection of Van Eycks and Memlings in Bruges, it would be a world calamity to despoil it or disperse it. Even the very furnishings of the chambers up-stairs are associated with the house of Plantin, were used by the family for many years; the paintings that crowd the walls like an art gallery are for the most part by Rubens—portraits of leading members of the family. Then there are numberless drawings, prints and engravings that represent the work of half of the greatest artists of the Flemish school during the century of its greatest splendour—an inimitable, indescribable collection!

Among other pictorial treasures we saw a collection of views of old Antwerp that the Professor said he would gladly have spent a month in, if only his vacation were a little longer. Then there were the books—and again words fail to convey an adequate idea of the richness and interest of the collection. There are nearly a score of early German Bibles, including a fine copy of Gutenberg's *Bible latine* of 1450; rare German and Italian incunabula, choice examples of the work of the early Flemish printers, including *Les dicts moraulx des philosophes*, printed by Colard Manson at Bruges in 1477. There are examples of early French, Dutch and Italian printing; there are Aldines, Estiennes, Elzevirs; books from the first printing presses of Switzerland, Spain and Portugal. Truly the historian of the early art of printing might come here and complete his work within these charmed walls—he would need no other materials! Naturally the collection of books printed by the house itself is large, though not complete, and there are a great many products of other Antwerp presses. Most valuable of all is the collection of manuscripts, which includes a huge Latin Bible completed in 1402 and ornamented with the most marvellous miniatures. Here are also several superb Books of Hours and many other books with choice miniatures.

The printing-rooms also deserve all the time the tourist can spare. The proofreaders' room is a gem, architecturally, artistically, and from its historic associations with one of the world's finest arts. A few old proof sheets are still lying on the high desks, near the stained glass windows with their tiny panes. The typeroom has still some of the old fonts of type and original matrices, while the composing and pressroom has two presses of the sixteenth century, and many quaint and curious devices then in use. All these rooms, together with the large state rooms, which contain the manuscripts and choicest examples of early printing, surround a charming courtyard which is still kept bright with flowers as it was in the days of the founders of the great house. The City of Antwerp is justly proud of this noble monument to its great family of great printers, which serves to keep green the memory of their achievements and of their fine artistic taste and skill as no other form of memorial could do.

ANCIENT PRINTING PRESSES AND COMPOSING CASES, PLANTIN MUSEUM, ANTWERP.

CHAPTER XX

ANTWERP FROM THE TIME OF RUBENS TILL TO-DAY

If there is one name more honoured in Flanders than any other—more often employed as the name of hotels, restaurants or cafés; more frequently on the lips of guides, caretakers and sacristans; more constantly in the mind of every tourist, be he or she American, English or Continental—it is the name of the greatest of Flemish painters, Peter Paul Rubens. No book on Flanders, and most assuredly no work touching on Antwerp, would be complete without some reference to the life and work of this prince among painters, yet no task can be more superfluous, since nothing can be said that will add in the slightest degree to his fame. He ranks in the history of art with the greatest masters in the world—with Michael Angelo, Leonardo, Rembrandt, Raphael, Titian and Velasquez—and it is probable that more books have been written about him than about Antwerp itself.

Occasional references have been made in previous chapters to notable paintings by Rubens to be seen in various churches throughout Flanders—particularly to “The Miraculous Draught of Fishes” at Malines, which is said to have been saved from the destruction of that city, having been carried away before the first of its many bombardments. It is at Antwerp, however, that the tourist who desires to study the work of Rubens will find him at his best and in greatest profusion. And the most famous spot enriched by his unrivalled art is the cathedral. Here hang his two greatest devotional works, “The Elevation of the Cross” and “The Descent from the Cross.” The former was painted in 1610 and gave the young artist—he was then only thirty-three—instant and enduring fame. The companion work was completed the following year. Neither was originally painted for the cathedral. “The Elevation of the Cross,” the earlier and inferior of the two, was intended to be the altarpiece for the church of Ste. Walburge, while the other was painted for the Society of Arquebusiers, to adjust a difficulty that had arisen over apportioning the cost of a wall separating Rubens’ house from that of the guild. Both, however, are in an ideal location where they now are, and form an admirable starting point from which to see, first the cathedral, and then the work of Rubens as a whole.

“THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.”—RUBENS.

The Cathedral of Notre Dame is without doubt the most beautiful Gothic church in Belgium, and has thus far happily escaped the ravages of the present war—passing unscathed through the furious German bombardment of the city. Begun in 1352 it was, like other churches of its size, centuries in reaching completion. The exquisite lace-work in stone of the north tower was completed during the sixteenth century, but was not wholly finished when the iconoclasts ravaged the interior of the edifice. Originally the church of St. Mary, it became the Cathedral of Notre Dame in 1560. The nave and transepts were not vaulted until 1611-16, or the very period when Rubens was painting the famous pictures that now hang in the south transept. Work on the south tower was discontinued in 1474, which seems a pity, as its completion would have made the cathedral one of the most perfect specimens of Gothic architecture in the world. As it is, the single tower dominates the old part of the city and is a familiar feature of its sky line. The chimes of the cathedral are famous, and are often played by Jef Denyn of Malines. There are forty bells of various sizes, of which the greatest was named Charles V, and requires the strength of nineteen men to swing it. This bell was founded some eight years before the young Duke Charles made his joyous entry into Antwerp, and no doubt rang lustily on that occasion.

The interior of the cathedral is very vast, comprising six aisles, but is too well known to require description. Among the numerous paintings with which the chapels are adorned is one, a “Descent from the Cross,” by Adam Van Noort, the teacher of Jordaens, and said to be the first who taught Rubens how to handle a brush. In the second chapel on the south is an interesting “Resurrection” by Rubens, which was painted in 1612 for the tomb of his friend Moretus, of the famous printing-house of Plantin. The fourth chapel on the same side contains the tomb of Christopher Plantin, with an inscription by his colleague and friend, Justus Lipsius, and several family portraits. The visitor will find many other points of interest in this vast church, which is a veritable museum of art, architecture, history and human progress. The high altarpiece is another famous Rubens, an “Assumption”—a subject which he painted no less than ten times. There are half a dozen other notable paintings by other artists, but the majority are of minor artistic importance. The rich Gothic choir stalls, however, are worth more than a passing glance, for the wood-carvings here are very fine, although modern—having been begun in 1840, and completed forty years later. The elaborately carved pulpit was made in the eighteenth century by the sculptor Michel Vervoort, and was intended for the Abbey of St. Bernard.

After the completion of the two great masterpieces now in the cathedral Rubens was by universal acclaim acknowledged to be the foremost painter in Flanders and of his time. His studio was besieged by artists desirous of becoming the pupils of the brilliant master. As early as 1611 he wrote that he had already refused more than a hundred applicants. In 1614 he painted “The Conversion of St. Bavon,” now in the cathedral of St. Bavon at Ghent; in 1617 “The Adoration of the Magi” in the church of St. John at Malines, and “The Last Judgment,” now in the Pinacothek of Munich; in 1618 “The Miraculous Draught of Fishes” at Malines; in 1619 “The Last Communion of St. Francis,” now in the museum at Antwerp, and, according to Fromentin, his

greatest masterpiece; in 1620 the “Coup de Lance,” now at the museum of Antwerp, and his finest work according to some other authorities. In 1622-23 he produced the twenty-four superb paintings of the Galerie des Medicis. The “Lion Hunt,” and the “Battle of the Amazons,” now in the Pinacothek at Munich, belong to this decade, together with the six paintings of the history of Decius in the Liechtenstein Gallery, and thirty-nine pictures for the church of the Jesuits, of which all but three were destroyed at the burning of the church in 1718. The three are in the museum of Vienna.

“COUP DE LANCE.”—RUBENS.

Here, in the space of a little over ten years, were nearly a hundred masterpieces—works of such magnitude that two or three would have sufficed to immortalise any other painter. Yet in addition to these labours he designed for the tapestry-workers of Brussels the life of Achilles in eight parts, the history of Constantine in twelve, and many other cartoons of extraordinary merit. His friend, Moretus, in accordance with the high traditions of the house of Plantin, came to him for designs for many books, and he drew borders, designs, title-pages and vignettes, and illustrated himself a book on cameos. He even painted triumphal arches and cars for ceremonial processions, and these works in his hands acquired a permanence of artistic value that is in itself one of the highest tributes to his genius. The fine portraits of Albert and Isabella, now in the museum at Brussels, were painted for a triumphal arch in the Place de Meir—yet they are masterpieces of portraiture, perfect and splendid down to the minutest detail!

According to a report made in 1879, by the *Commission Anversoise chargée de réunir l’ouevre de Rubens, en gravures ou en photographies*, there are altogether no less than two thousand, two hundred and thirty-five pictures and sketches by this amazingly prolific artist, and four hundred and eighty-four designs—a total of two thousand, seven hundred and nineteen known works. At Antwerp alone there are upwards of one hundred pictures, of which more than a score are masterpieces of world-wide renown and incalculable value. Besides the great trio at the cathedral, and the family portraits in the Plantin Museum, the museum catalogues more than thirty subjects of which the “Spear Thrust” (*Coup de Lance*), “Adoration of the Magi or Wise Men,” the “Last Communion of Saint Francis,” the “Christ on the Straw” (*à la Paille*), “The Prodigal Son,” and “Virgin Instructed by Saint Anne” are among the more notable. Both here and at the Plantin Museum the student of Rubens can find many interesting prints, sketches and minor examples of the great master’s work. At the museum also is the interesting Holy Family known as “*La Vierge au Perroquet*” (Virgin with the Parrot) which was presented by Rubens to the Guild of St. Luke when he was elected President of that famous organisation in 1631. Near the Place de Meir is the house of Rubens, largely a replica of the original built in the eighteenth century—few vestiges of the building in which the great painter held his almost royal court remaining. It is worth a visit, but is far inferior to the Plantin Museum as a memorial and in the interest and importance of its contents.

***"LA VIERGE AU PERROQUET."*—RUBENS.**

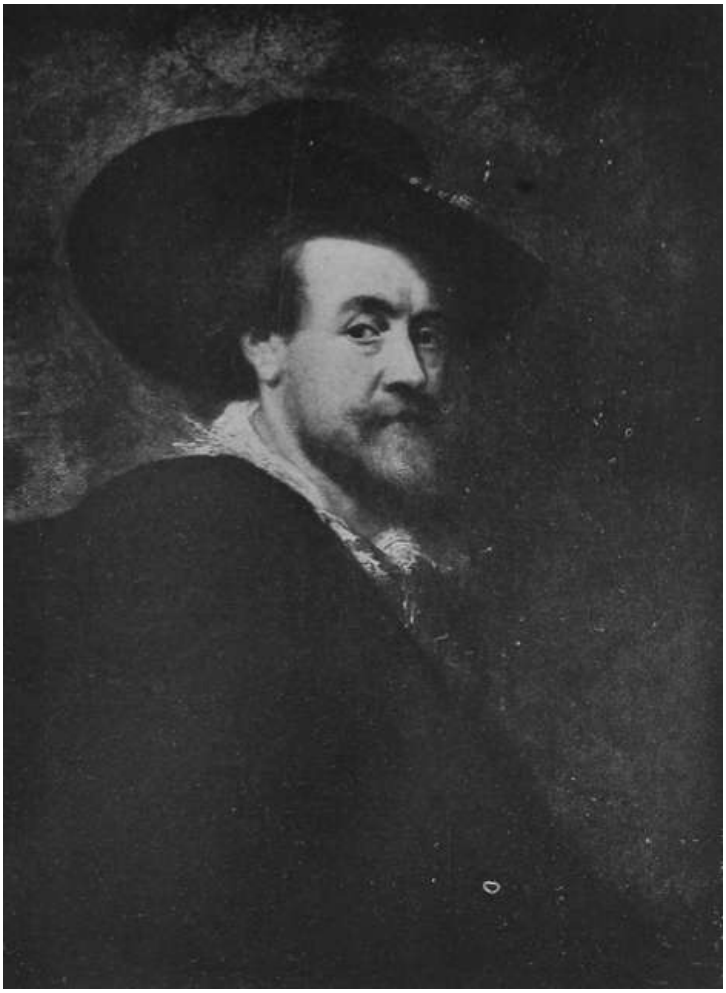
On his death in 1640—"twenty years too early"—the artist was buried in the church of St. Jacques, an edifice rivalling the cathedral in size and interest. It was the burial-place of many of the wealthiest families in Antwerp. The Rubens chapel is in the ambulatory, behind the high altar, and contains a picture of the "Holy Family" which, according to the critics, is one of the worst of the artist's pictures. Several of the faces are those of his own family, which probably was the reason why his widow placed it here.

Besides the paintings in various churches and museums in Flanders there are twenty-three by Rubens in the museum at Brussels, seventy-seven in the Pinacothek at Munich, ninety at Vienna, sixty-six at Madrid, fifty-four in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg and the same number in the Louvre at Paris, sixteen at Dresden, thirty-one at London, while a considerable number can be seen in various public and private art collections in the United States. "He is everywhere," writes Prof. Wauters with justifiable enthusiasm, "and everywhere triumphant. No matter what pictures surround him, the effect is invariable; those which resemble his own are eclipsed, those that would oppose him are silenced; wherever he is he makes you feel his presence, he stands alone, and at all times occupies the first place.... He has painted everything—fable, mythology, history, allegory, portraits, animals, flowers, landscapes—and always in a masterly way.... Is he perfect? No one is. Has he faults? Assuredly. He is sometimes reproached with having neither the outline of Raphael, the depth of Leonardo da Vinci, the largeness of Titian, the naturalness of Velasquez, nor the chiaroscuro of Rembrandt. But he has the outline, the depth, the largeness, the naturalness and the chiaroscuro of Rubens; is not that enough?"

To appreciate fully the magnitude of this greatest of all Flemings it is necessary to recall, for a moment, the times in which he lived. Fourteen years after the capture of Antwerp by the Prince of Parma, Philip II determined—when on his deathbed—to give the Spanish Netherlands partial independence by transferring the sovereignty over the loyal provinces possessed by the Crown of Spain to his daughter Isabella and her husband, the Archduke Albert. The arrival of the Archdukes, as they were called, in 1599, was made the occasion of a joyous entry that, on the whole, was justified by their Government—which was a great improvement over anything that had preceded it since the days of the unspeakable Alva. To be sure, the war with the States of Holland still dragged on, and the Scheldt was closed. But the burghers wisely sought to replace the loss of their sea trade by encouraging industries. Silk and satin manufactures during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gave employment to upwards of twelve thousand hands, and diamond-cutting became an industry of growing importance. While the commercial stagnation was severely felt, the city did not decline like Bruges, but held much of its population and recovered some of its former wealth.

The Archdukes, who were relieved of the paralysing necessity of referring every important act to Madrid, did their best to heal the terrible wounds of the early years of the war and restore some degree of tranquillity and prosperity to their dominions. Religious persecutions ceased. Eager to win the love of their subjects, the Archdukes welcomed Rubens to Antwerp when he returned to his native city on the death of his mother in 1608, and in order to keep him from returning to Italy made him their court painter in 1609. During the remainder of his lifetime their favour never ceased, and on many occasions Rubens was sent as a special ambassador of the Government on important diplomatic missions. His courtly manners and stately appearance favoured him, as well as his now tremendous artistic reputation. He was knighted by Charles I, while on a visit to England, and created a Master of Arts by the University of Cambridge. Among his friends

he numbered—besides his royal patrons, Moretus, the printer, and Rockox, the burgomaster—many of the most famous scholars and statesmen of his time. He was interested in literature and science as well as art in all its branches and wrote a vast number of letters on an astounding variety of subjects—one calculation places the total number at eight thousand!



PETER PAUL RUBENS.

As if his own achievements were not enough, the genius of Rubens was the torch that set aflame a renaissance of Flemish painting that made the later Flemish school, which justly bears his name, the peer of any in the long history of art. Of his many pupils the greatest is Anthony Van Dyck, who was born at Antwerp in 1599 and entered the studio of the master at the age of fifteen. In the little church of Saventhem, not far from Brussels, is the most famous of Van Dyck's early paintings which shows his precocious talent. Rubens had urged his promising pupil to visit Italy, and not only gave him a letter of introduction but provided funds for the long journey. The youth set forth, but in a little village on the way there happened to be a kermesse into the merriment of which he entered heartily. Among others with whom he danced was a beautiful country girl with whom the artist fell so deeply in love that he was unable to proceed any further, but devoted himself for days to courting her. Meanwhile his funds ran out, and he bethought himself with horror, when it was too late, that this meant the abandonment of the trip to Italy. In his extremity he applied to the parish priest and offered to paint an altarpiece for the village church on very moderate terms. It is related that the priest smiled indulgently at the youth's pretensions that he was a historical painter and put him off, saying that there were no funds. Van Dyck, however, persisted, and offered to paint the picture if provided only with the canvas, and leave the matter of the price to the curé's liberality.

These terms could hardly be refused, and the young artist set to work with such energy that in a few weeks the picture was finished. The priest admired the work greatly, particularly the beautiful figure of the Saint—the subject selected having been Saint Martin dividing his Cloak among the Beggars—and sent for a connoisseur from Brussels to decide if he should keep the picture. The verdict was favourable, and the price paid to the artist enabled him to proceed on his journey to Italy. It is not reported whether the future painter of kings and courtiers ever returned to visit his fair inamorata of the kermesse, but this pretty story, which is told in a rare little book, "Sketches of Flemish Painters," published at The Hague in 1642, was written by a contemporary, and may quite possibly have been true. At any rate, there is the painting itself to prove it.

On his return to Antwerp in 1625 Van Dyck left behind him in Italy more than a hundred paintings, in itself a prodigious achievement. He now began to work in his native city with a rapidity and perfection resembling his master's and produced the altarpieces that are among the master works of Flemish churches. Here also he painted a marvellous galaxy of portraits of the great artists of his time and of the Flemish, French and Spanish nobility. His marvellous etchings also belong to this period, so that Antwerp is associated with much of his finest work in two great branches of art. In 1632 the artist went to London, which he had visited on one or two previous occasions, and became painter to the court of Charles I. Here he remained for the rest of his

lifetime, painting more than three hundred and fifty pictures portraying the royal family and nobility of England. He died in 1641, or only a year after his master, leaving a record of varied achievement comprising more than one thousand, five hundred works. The museum at Antwerp possesses twelve of his paintings, of which one of the most interesting is the “Christ on the Cross” painted for the Dominican nuns in recognition of the care and tenderness with which they had nursed his father during the old man’s last illness. The catalogue of the museum somewhat conceals the artist’s name under the Flemish form, Antoon Van Dijck, which hardly suggests the brilliant and debonnaire Sir Anthony of Whitehall and the beauties of England under Charles the First. There are sixty-seven works by this master in Vienna, forty-one at Munich, thirty-eight at St. Petersburg, twenty-four at the Louvre, twenty-one in Madrid and nineteen in Dresden, but England possesses the largest collections of his productions, most of those he painted at London still remaining in the public and private galleries of that country.

It would be a tedious task to recount the names and works of the throng of lesser artists who studied at the feet of Rubens and Van Dyck during the fruitful years when those masters were giving their talents to the world with such amazing prodigality. Erasmus Quellin I, the Elder, was one of the first—a sculptor who founded a family of notable sculptors and painters who lived and gained renown at Antwerp for more than a century. Faid’herbe, whose work abounds at Malines, was another sculptor of the highest rank who was a direct pupil of Rubens; Dusquesnoy, Grupello and Verbrugghen were renowned sculptors who owed much to his influence.

“AS THE OLD BIRDS SING THE YOUNG BIRDS PIPE.”—JACOB JORDAENS.

After Rubens and Van Dyck the greatest name in the Flemish school of this brilliant period was that of Jacob Jordaens, who learned his art under Rubens’ old master, Adam Van Noort, and married his teacher’s beautiful daughter Catherine, who posed for many of his pictures. The numerous family gatherings depicted by this master are famous, one of the most characteristic of them all being the well-known “As the Old Birds Sing the Young Birds Pipe” in the Antwerp museum. His satyrs and peasants and rural scenes are among the finest products of the Flemish school. The religious pictures of Gaspard de Crayer and Gerard Zeghers, the portraits of Cornelius de Vos, and the animal pictures of Francis Snyders and John Fyts all belong to this epoch when Antwerp, although sinking in commercial and political importance, was making herself for all time one of the art capitals of the world.

In pictures of homely Flemish life David Teniers, who belongs to the next generation of Antwerp artists, achieved a fame that places him in a sense in a class by himself, for none of the earlier masters surpassed him in his particular field. He, too, was prolific—one catalogue enumerating no less than six hundred and eighty-five of his works. Of the same genre is the work of Adrian Brauwer, whose early death prevented him from leaving so great a legacy to posterity. Besides these masters of the first rank, Antwerp boasts an almost innumerable throng of minor artists—pupils of Rubens, Van Dyck and their successors—much of whose work is of excellent merit. Any half-dozen of these would have rendered another city notable in the history of art, but here their achievements are lost as are the heroic deeds of the private soldiers in a great army. The mind cannot retain so many names, cannot appraise and classify so bewildering a mass of productions.

For this reason the tourist who is a philosopher will not regard too seriously the dicta of the learned as to which of these lesser paintings is or is not of the first rank in the order of merit. What of it if the guidebook does not indicate by its little stars that this is a picture for one to go into raptures over, if the sacristan or guide passes it coldly by? If it appeals to us by all means let us pause and admire it, let us study it, find out about it, learn something of its history and that of the unknown artist who painted it. Indeed, if on such closer inspection it still appeals to us, let us buy it if we can—but at all events let us enjoy it to the utmost, for of such joys Flanders is full. In out of the way corners everywhere one can find genre pictures like those of Tenier, brilliantly coloured groups suggestive of Rubens, scenes of bucolic feasting in imitation of Jordaens. And here and there, who knows, perhaps one may yet discover an original by one of these greater artists or their rare predecessors, and retire on the proceeds! Who knows?

The visitor to the Royal Museum of Fine Arts at Antwerp should not leave without devoting at least a day to the modern paintings. To an American, accustomed to museums where long walls filled with dreary mediocrities are illuminated only at rare intervals with something altogether fine and satisfactory, these modern galleries are a treat. Picture after picture, room after room—all are beautiful and worthy, many are splendid. The collection of modern paintings is not large as European galleries go, some five hundred and fifty altogether, but the general average of quality is exceptionally high—much superior in this respect it seemed to us than the far larger collection at Brussels, though it is not so regarded by the critics. The interiors of Henri de Braekeleer, and his charming Nursery Garden, for example, what could be finer? The "Ancient Fishmarket" at Antwerp by Frans Bossuet, a native of Ypres; the "Lull before the Storm," by P. J. Clays, of Bruges, one of whose paintings is in the Metropolitan Museum at New York—all these are notable. So are the historical pictures of Baron Leys, Guffens, Louis Gallait and Charles Verlat—but the list is too long. These pictures are not to be described, they must be seen. Individually the savants may quarrel as to their merits, but, taking them all together, these paintings—for the most part by Flemish artists—prove that the great traditions of Rubens and Van Dyck, Jordaens and Teniers, have not been forgotten in their native land and that modern Flemish art is a worthy successor to the greatness of the past.

The lover of the beautiful has yet another treat in store for him when he visits the famous old Hotel de Ville. It had hardly been completed, in 1565, by Cornelis de Vriendt when it was partially destroyed during the Spanish Fury. Rebuilt a few years later in its present form, it contains some of the most beautiful rooms to be seen in all Europe. The vestibule and grand staircase are richly decorated with coloured marble, while imposing frescoes depict the zenith of Antwerp's commercial and artistic splendour. The great reception-room is decorated with four superb historical frescoes by Baron Leys, while the exquisite Salle des Mariages is completely surrounded with allegorical paintings portraying the history of the marriage ceremony by Lagye, a pupil of Leys. In the rooms of this edifice the history of the famous old city lives again, while in its splendid fireplaces and minor decorations one can see examples of every branch of Flemish art.

HOTEL DE VILLE, ANTWERP.

While the Hotel de Ville is most gratifying to the eye and the imagination, it is not, however, intimately associated with many important events in the history of the city. Albert and Isabella, while they ruled, were virtually independent sovereigns, but on the death of Albert without issue, in 1621, the country reverted to Spain. Thereafter, for more than two centuries, the city, together with Flanders, Brabant and the other loyal provinces of the Netherlands, became the football of European politics, and Belgium received its sinister name of "the cockpit of Europe." The people, as a whole, took little interest in the great wars of the Spanish and of the Austrian Successions that were fought largely to decide who should rule over them, since there seemed no likelihood of their in any event ever being able again to rule over themselves. Marlborough, after his great victory at Ramillies, occupied the city with English troops in 1706, and in 1715 the Hotel de Ville was the scene of the signing of the treaty that ended the war. By this treaty the Spanish Netherlands were ceded to Austria, becoming subject to the Emperor Charles VI. Thirty years later the French victory at Fontenoy made them masters of the city, and Louis XV had a joyous entry the following year. Two years later, in 1748, the country was handed back to Austria and Charles made a joyous entry in turn, the people apparently welcoming any change of government with complete impartiality. The Empress Maria Theresa was popular in her Netherlands dominions, but her son Joseph II made Austrian rule so odious that there was a revolt, and in 1790 Antwerp was taken by the patriot army, to the immense joy of its citizens. The Austrians soon crushed the revolution and reoccupied the city, but the great victory of the French republicans, under Dumouriez, at Jemappes destroyed the power of Austria in the Netherlands, and in 1792 the army of the *sans-culottes* entered Antwerp. The defeat of Dumouriez at Neerwinden resulted in the Imperial forces again occupying the city in 1793, but the French victory at Fleurus the following year turned the tables again and Antwerp once more became subject to the republic.

All these years the Scheldt had been firmly closed, Joseph II having made a feeble attempt to free the river, which had collapsed at the first shot from the Dutch forts. In 1795 the free navigation of the river was

decreed by the French, and a ship came up and was received in state by the delighted burghers. It is stated that the value of real estate in the city increased tenfold in consequence of this decree. On the other hand, the *sans-culottes* very nearly rivalled the image-breakers in the vigour with which they destroyed the city's religious monuments. The cathedral and churches were despoiled, and it was even proposed to tear down the cathedral, because (they said), "it cannot be reckoned a monument of any value except for the lead, iron, copper and timber it contains." Fortunately Napoleon seized the reins of power at Paris at about this time, and put an end to such nonsense. In 1803 the First Consul visited Antwerp, which—as he afterwards said—was "like a loaded pistol pointed at the heart of England." Filled with this idea, he systematically sought to revive the commerce of the port and erected great docks there for his war vessels, portions of which still remain. In 1814, after the Emperor's defeat and abdication, Antwerp, under Gen. Carnot, was the last French stronghold in the Netherlands to yield.

After the second defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo Antwerp succeeded in recovering most of the paintings that had been carried away to France by the republicans in 1794. The treaty that followed the last Napoleonic war gave all of what is at present Belgium to the King of Holland, William I, who favoured Antwerp in many ways. As the Scheldt still remained free the commerce of the port was considerable and prosperity seemed to be returning. In 1830 began the revolution that resulted in the independence of Belgium. One of its first events was the bombardment of the city of Antwerp by the Dutch troops holding the citadel. The following year Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was elected by the National Congress as King of the Belgians under the title of Leopold I. The war with Holland was not yet over, however, and in 1832 the English, French and Belgian troops began a siege of the citadel at Antwerp, which was still in the hands of the Dutch. The fortress had one hundred and forty-three guns, and the besiegers two hundred and twenty-three, and it is stated that sixty-three thousand projectiles were fired against it. The fortress was a mass of ruins before its sturdy defenders capitulated.

From 1832 until 1914 Antwerp and the liberty-loving Flemings of ancient Flanders remained free, happy and increasingly prosperous under the wise and moderate rule of their chosen Kings. Leopold I reigned until his death in 1865, and proved to be one of the wisest monarchs in history. For Antwerp his greatest achievement was the final freeing of the River Scheldt in 1863, after more than ten years of diplomatic negotiations, from the tolls which the Dutch had insisted in levying since 1839. Under his successor, Leopold II, one of the most efficient chief executives it was possible for a nation to have, the fine Belgian public service system was developed and the prosperity of its cities and citizens promoted in every practical way. In the two decades following the freeing of the Scheldt the commerce of the port of Antwerp increased six-fold, while that of its rivals, London and Liverpool, doubled and that of Hamburg and Rotterdam tripled. Since then the business of the port has advanced even faster, and the imposing modern business buildings that now line the Place de Meir, one of the handsomest commercial streets in the world, afford abundant testimony to its prosperity and wealth—as do the fine residences of its merchants to be seen in drives through the outskirts of the city. Under Albert I the wise policies of his predecessors were continued, and the little country was enjoying peace and contentment such as never came to it during the centuries of foreign oppression and tyranny that began with the acquisition of Flanders and Brabant by the Dukes of Burgundy. It is the greatest moral issue in this war whether Belgium, after being free for less than eighty-five years, shall once more pass into the hands of a foreign power. Its people have demonstrated conclusively that under the limited monarchy they have chosen they are capable of governing themselves far better than the best of their self-appointed masters ever did in the bad old days that, they had hoped, had forever passed away.

CHAPTER XXI

WHERE MODERN FLANDERS SHINES—OSTENDE AND "LA PLAGE"

ur last stopping place in Flanders was the one that many tourists visit first, the gay watering place of Ostende. Here a little fleet of fast Channel steamers convey the traveller to Dover in four or five hours, while an excellent service of through express trains connect the Dover end of the water route with London, and the Ostende end with Brussels, Berlin and half the capitals of Europe. Our stay in Flanders, however, was drawing to a close, and we were headed for Liverpool, where the new *Aquitania* was waiting to bear us home.

The tourist who expects in Ostende to find much that is reminiscent of the Flanders of the sixteenth century, of which so much has been said in the other chapters of this book, will be disappointed. To be sure, it is not a young city, being mentioned in the chronicles of Flanders as far back as the eleventh century. In the Eighty Years' War between Spain and her revolted Dutch colonies Ostende was for a long time held by the Dutch, who beat off two severe attacks by the Spaniards in 1583 and 1586, the former led by the all but invincible Farnese, Prince of Parma. In the year 1600 the Battle of the Dunes took place at Nieuport, in which the troops of the Archduke Albert were defeated by a Dutch army under Maurice, Prince of Nassau. This victory, while it gave great encouragement to the enemies of Spain by demonstrating that the renowned Spanish soldiers were not invincible, was otherwise barren of results, and in 1601 the Archdukes determined to besiege Ostende, which was the last stronghold of the Dutch in Flanders.

Prior to the war with Philip II Ostende had been little more than an obscure fishing-village, but since it had

been fortified by the Dutch, and had so successfully maintained itself against all assaults, the place was fast becoming a “thorn in the foot” to the government of the Archdukes. Queen Elizabeth, whose defeats of Philip’s armadas had made England mistress of the seas, was determined that Spain should not regain so important a strategic base, and had kept an English garrison there under an English commander. Since Albert’s accession the town had been greatly strengthened by new ramparts, bastions and fortifications of every type, then known in the engineering art of warfare. To protect Flanders against this hostile fortress in its very midst the Archdukes were obliged to erect eighteen forts around Ostende and keep them constantly garrisoned and supplied. This cost ninety thousand crowns a month and kept the rich province in a state of perpetual war. Towns in the vicinity were compelled to pay tribute in order to escape pillage, and commerce —then, as always, dependent upon peace—languished.

The Estates of Flanders under these direful conditions offered the Archdukes three hundred thousand florins a month as long as the siege to rid them of this menacing stronghold might last, and three hundred thousand florins additional as a bonus to be paid in instalments—a third when the city was invested, a third when a breach was made in the fortifications, and the balance when the place was taken. These terms are curiously similar to those employed in drawing building loans at the present day and show that the Flemings had lost none of their ancient caution.

On July 5th, 1601, the Archduke Albert arrived before Ostende and formally began its investment. The Infanta Isabella came with him, and often shared camp life with her husband during the weary months that followed. The siege from the very first developed into a contest of engineers and military strategists on the taking and the defence of fortified places the like of which had never before been known in Europe. In fact nearly all Europe was directly engaged in the conflict. On the Archdukes’ side were Spaniards, Italians and Walloons; on the ramparts of the defenders were lined up side by side English, Dutch, French, German and Scotch forces. The fortress was commanded by Sir Francis Vere. The operations of the siege consisted of mining and counter-mining, the erection and destruction of batteries, storming of outlying works—all the devices of attack and defence known to the military science of the day. Never before had the world seen such cannons and engines of destruction. The siege became Homeric, epic, a seventeenth-century Siege of Troy.

The great difficulty of the besiegers was their inability to cut off the town from receiving new provisions and supplies, and a constant stream of reinforcements, by sea. The Dutch, English and French ships came and went almost at will. All the summer and fall of 1601 the siege dragged on, and through the cold winter that followed. In 1602 Sir Francis Vere and a large part of the garrison were relieved and a new commander and garrison installed without the Archdukes being able to prevent the manœuvre. In 1603 Ambrose, the Marquis Spinola, a young scion of a rich Genoese family, offered to take charge of the siege of Ostende and to capture the city. As the Archduke Albert had made a complete failure of the job, and was unpopular besides among his troops, whom he had not been able to pay with any regularity, he welcomed this offer and Spinola assumed the command. His wealth enabled him to pay and feed his soldiers, while his youth and ambition made him a wary and energetic commander. Day and night he took part in person in supervising the mines, assaults, trenches and erection of new positions. Gradually, under his vigorous leadership, the besiegers began to burrow their way into the town. Maurice of Nassau, unable to pierce Spinola’s network of entrenchments around the town created a diversion by besieging and capturing Sluys. In spite of this, however, Spinola clung doggedly to his prey and on September 13th, 1603, Sand Hill, after a resistance of three years, was captured. Seven days later the Governor, who now controlled nothing but the heart of the town, capitulated and on September 22nd, the garrison marched out with all the honours of war. Hardly a soul of the former population of Ostende remained at the time of its capture, and it is said that the Archduchess Isabella “wept at the sight of the mound of earth, all that remained of the city which she had been so anxious to capture.” It was estimated that the place, which had been little more than a village, cost the besiegers one hundred thousand lives and the defenders sixty thousand. The siege had lasted three years, two months and seventeen days, but the “thorn” had at last been extracted.

For several years after this Ostende remained a city without inhabitants, the Archdukes rebuilding the place but population coming to it but slowly. In 1722 The East and West India Company of the Austrian Netherlands was founded at Ostende, chiefly by Antwerp capitalists and merchants, who were deeply interested in the enterprise. Factories were established in India, but the Emperor Charles VI dissolved the company in 1731 in order to secure English and Dutch support for his Pragmatic Sanction. The next century was one of stagnation, the town reverting to a fishing-place, but almost at the moment of Belgian independence—or from about 1830—it began to be renowned as a watering-place. It owes much of its present prosperity to Leopold II, who made it a place of royal residence during the summer, and whose royal palace still looks down upon the *Digue* not far from the racetrack. The coming of the cross-channel steamers still further stimulated its growth, and at present it is one of the most beautiful and picturesque of all the Flemish cities.

Our visit was unfortunate—as we regretfully told one another at the time—in that it came in July, before the season had really opened. August is the time to come, the waiters and hotel porters all assured us, for then the Grand Dukes come from Russia, the long special trains from Germany roll in one after another loaded to capacity, the Channel steamers arrive three times a day with decks black with English tourists, and Ostende’s many kinds of gaiety are in full swing. However, the opening of the August season in 1914 was conducted under circumstances that made us rather glad we were there in July. The Germans came, to be sure, but the gaiety departed.

No one in Ostende foresaw a bit of the terrible future when we were there in July. The long curving beach was crowded with people, little people for the most part, and most of the queer little beach-houses—summer cottages on wheels—were gradually getting rented. The beach is splendidly broad and smooth, but the slope seaward is so slight that at low tide one must needs go very far out to get into the water at all. This did not seem to trouble anybody very much, for we saw few who ever went near the water, most of the pleasure-seekers staying on the warm, dry sand up near the big sloping sea wall of the *Digue*. For families with small

children the little summer-houses seemed rather attractive, as papa and mamma could sit within, sheltered from sun or rain, while the youngsters rollicked all day long in the deep sand.

The *Digue* just mentioned is a high artificial seawall or embankment, faced with sloping stone on the sea side and surmounted by a broad boulevard—the Esplanade. It slopes gradually on the landward side, one row of stately hotels and lodging-houses facing directly on the Esplanade, while on the side streets the buildings drop each below the other until they reach the level of the town, which is some forty or fifty feet lower than the summit of the embankment. Here the fashionable crowds promenade at the proper times, while the unfashionable promenade all day long and far into the night. Even in July the sight is a most fascinating one, and the Bohemianism of the crowd and its diversity of national types most interesting. Here, as everywhere in Belgium, the cafés and hotels place their tables and chairs far out into the roadway, so that we can sit outdoors in the manner that the Madame so much enjoys and eat our dinner, or sip our coffee and cognac, while watching the ever-changing crowds go by.

At Ostende the scale of expenses for everything, rooms, meals, service, pleasure, cigars, tips, and even for the English newspapers, increases or falls according to the proximity or remoteness of the *Digue*. If you are on top of it—look out! To Americans the charges, even in the finer big hotels, do not seem particularly excessive—though in August they are usually much higher than in July—but there is a constant succession of incidental expenses that make the voyager as a rule hurry more than once to the banker where his letter of credit can have another illegible notation made on it. Externally the hotels are very imposing and stately—making a brave show as one looks down the long line that extends for several miles from the harbour entrance westward to Westende and beyond half way to Nieuport. Within they are pretty much like all Belgian hotels of the better class. For the novelty of the thing we thought of renting one of the tiny *apartements meublés*, that, each with a charming broad window—usually open all day long like a piazza—look out directly upon the sea. The price was a thousand francs a month, which seemed too much for what was after all little more than one big room with an alcove. The landlady informed us that she attended to all the details of the *ménage*, cooking and serving the meals and providing maid service, but that messieurs must provide the provisions, both solid and liquid.

The great show place of Ostende is, of course, the Kursaal, a huge structure of glass, iron and stone belonging to no particular school of architecture, but in the main making a pleasing impression and serving very well indeed for the somewhat diversified uses for which it is intended. In the daytime the Kursaal is a place of relatively little interest, although well-dressed people flock through it at all hours. At night it is the scene of much animation, and is, as it was meant to be, the centre of the gay life of the town. A large orchestra gives a concert every evening in a very pretty concert hall, which, when we were there, contained numerous little tables for refreshments, although I have seen pictures in which the room was filled with seats in solid rows, like a theatre. It was much more comfortable the way we found it, and the concert was very enjoyable. At the intermission, however, we observed that nearly everybody rose and flocked off into an anteroom leading out of the concert hall. The Professor and I decided that there appeared to be “something doing” in that direction and followed the crowd, leaving the ladies to look after our wraps, and promising to return and get them if we found anything worth while.

I fear that the narrative of our experience may sound a bit like an extract from *Innocents Abroad*, but I will relate the thing as it happened and make no pretence that we were a bit more sophisticated than we really were. The crowd seemed to be headed through a long and handsome corridor toward a distant room. We followed along, passing on the way what looked more or less like the office of a hotel, with a register book and two or three clerks, to which we paid no attention. Arrived at the end of the corridor we found ourselves in a large circular room around which were a number of small tables on which visitors were rolling balls down toward a group of pockets—some such a game as one sees at Coney Island or any popular American amusement resort. The price was two francs for three shots, and barkers were shouting lustily to all comers to try their luck. On one side a doorway was heavily curtained with velvet draperies and here occasional groups of the guests were silently disappearing. We approached this mysterious passageway and sought to pass like the others when two tiny lads in brilliant livery demanded our cards. On our replying that we had none, a large man, also in livery, appeared from somewhere behind the draperies and courteously informed us that special membership or admission cards were required from all who wished to proceed further.

We thereupon returned to the ladies and reported what we had seen, and took our turn at looking after the wraps while they visited the circular room. They likewise returned, reporting that admission beyond the curtains had been refused. After the concert was over we decided to make another attempt—as both the Professor and I surmised what attraction lay beyond the mysterious portal. Pausing at the hotel office we had previously noticed, we asked bluntly how admission to the hidden room could be secured, and were told that a card would be given each of us on the sole formality of registering. This we accordingly did, giving our names, hotel address, home address and one reference. This done, we each received a card admitting two and departed to find the Madame and Mrs. Professor.

Arriving at the doorway armed with the cards we had received, we were ushered at once into a very handsome room where perhaps three hundred people were gathered about half a dozen roulette tables. No one paid the slightest attention to us, nor did any employé appear to care whether we played or contented ourselves with merely looking on. Practically every one in the room, however, was playing—with all the tense earnestness that this game of chance seems to impress upon its devotees. White chips, we observed, cost five francs, reds twenty, round blues a hundred—or twenty dollars. There were, in addition, a large ovalshaped blue, marked five hundred and an oblong one marked one thousand. In less than three minutes one player lost eight of the thousand franc chips, and then, this being apparently enough for the evening, lit a cigar and started for home. While he was playing we observed an over-painted young woman who had just lost her last stake solicit a loan from him. He tossed the girl a hundred-franc chip and left without pausing to see whether she won or lost with it. We were more curious. She lost.

THE “SALLE DES JEUX” IN THE KURSAAL, OSTENDE

At about this period of the evening the Madame raised a commotion by discovering that her reticule was open and a piece of money had fallen out onto the thick carpet. The Professor and I instantly got down to look for it, and even the croupiers at the adjoining gaming table paused to take in the incident. Two or three attendants and waiters hurried up to help when the Madame spied her lost coin and triumphantly seized it. It was a one centime piece—worth a fifth of a cent! I have never seen a more disgusted-looking group of attendants, and doubt if so small a coin had ever been seen before in this northern Monte Carlo. The Madame, however, was serenely indifferent to their opinion. This was the nearest, I may add, that we came to losing any money there.

At the end of the Esplanade is the Estacade, a pier that extends well out to sea. Pleasure steamers start here for short trips along the coast, and turning to the right at this end of the town one comes to the harbour and the broad basin where hundreds of little brown-sailed shrimp fishing-boats congregate. Several of these came in while we were there and sold their cargoes, almost as soon as they were tied up, to groups of eager market-women with big baskets. Several girls sat along the quay wall mending huge nets also used in the shrimp fishery. The little back streets in this vicinity, and around the quaint fish-market, are the oldest in the town—and the most crooked.

The principal business street of the little city is the rue de Flandre and its continuation, the rue de la Chapelle, which together take one from the Digue de Mer straight to the railway and boat stations. On one side of this street is the Place d’Armes, where a military band played every evening, and facing which is the Hotel de Ville. Our last day was spent poking about this part of the town in a pouring rain, with an occasional peep into huge cafés designed to accommodate a thousand guests, but which were then almost deserted. The rain ceased suddenly toward nightfall and we returned to the Digue for a farewell look at the crowds and the long beach. It was night before we had seen enough, and then, after ordering and enjoying to the utmost our last Flemish dinner, we made our way to the Gare Maritime to take the night boat for Dover. As we steamed out past the long Estacade and looked back upon the gleaming lights along the Digue we saw the moon rising redly above the masts in the little harbour. This was our last view of Flanders, and, as we regretfully saw the lights of the city sink out of sight behind the tossing waves that gleamed brightly under the moonbeams, we knew that our pilgrimage was over.

CHAPTER XXII
THE SPELL OF FLANDERS

In this little book the author has endeavoured to portray as clearly as his limited powers of expression permitted, some of the many elements that make the spell that Flanders lays upon the minds and hearts of those who know it and love it well. It is a complex influence, composed of many and widely diverse factors. If in the narrative a thread of history has been permitted to obtrude itself, sometimes perhaps at undue length, it is because before all else Flanders is a land whose interest lies in its long and romantic history, and in the marvellous manner in which its artists and sculptors have portrayed its famous past. As Mr. Griffis in “Belgium, the Land of Art,” has well expressed it, “No other land is richer in history or more affluent in art than is Belgium. In none have devout, industrious, patriotic and gifted sons told their

country's story more attractively. By pen and in print, on canvas, in mural decoration, in sculpture, in monuments of bronze and marble, in fireplaces and in wood-carving, the story may be read as in an illuminated missal. Belfries, town halls, churches, guild houses, have each and all a charm of their own." If these pages have caught ever so little of that charm they have served their purpose.

To the student of history, of art and architecture, of tapestry and lace-making, of the origin of the great woollen and linen industries, of guilds and the organisation of labour, of the commune or municipal republic in its earliest and finest development, and—before all else—of liberty in its age-long conflict with tyranny and oppression, Flanders is a land of endless interest and inspiration. Nowhere else in the world can there be found within so small a compass so many monuments of the past, so many of the milestones of human progress. That some of these relate to a past so remote as to be all but forgotten, while others are hidden away in spots where few tourists ever penetrate, only enhances the pleasure of those who are so persevering or so fortunate as to find them.

Like rare wine, Flanders has mellowed with age, the storms and sunshine of succeeding centuries touching its fine old houses, its noble churches and splendid town halls and guild houses but lightly—imparting the majesty of antiquity without the sadness of decay. Its dramatic and tragic history—some of which was so terrible in the making—lives again, without the old-time rancour and hatred, as the foundation upon which artists with chisel, brush or pen have created some of the finest of the world's masterpieces.

That to-day Flanders has once more, as so often in the past, become the battleground of warring Europe gives an element of inexpressible sadness to these feeble attempts to sketch its glories as they were only a few short months ago. Already some of the splendid monuments described in these pages have been shattered by engines of war more destructive than all those of all former wars taken together. The noble Hotel de Ville at Ypres, the fine old church of St. Nicholas at Dixmude, the incomparable cathedral of Malines—we know that these at least have suffered fearfully, that they may have been injured beyond any hope of restoration.

In this last sad chapter of Flemish history, it is a pleasure to be able to record the fact that the people of the United States have for the first time entered its pages—and in a work of mercy. To the American people have been given the opportunity, the means and the disposition to play a noble part in this later history of much troubled Flanders—to feed the starving, care for the widowed and orphaned non-combatants of the great war, to help bind up the nation's wounds and restore hope and courage to its fearfully afflicted people. This is our part in the history of Flanders—our duty to the people of the brave nation of which Flanders forms so important and so famous a part. May all of those on whom the spell of Flanders falls do their share, however small, to help in this great work so long as the need lasts!

And when the great war is over let no American tourist omit Flanders from his or her European itinerary. Its churches and town halls, its quaint crooked streets and sixteenth-century houses, have received a new and greater baptism of fire that has made them, one and all, shrines to which every lover of liberty should make a pilgrimage. Even the pleasant Belgian fields, with their bright poppies and corn flowers, have a more profound interest now that so many of them have been stained with a deeper red than the poppies ever gave.

THE END

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