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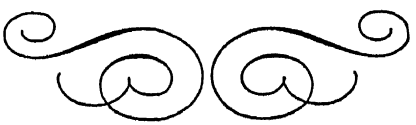
Margaret
OF AUSTRIA

Margaret
OF AUSTRIA

Regent of
THE NETHERLANDS



By Jane de Iongh

TRANSLATED BY M. D. HERTER NORTON

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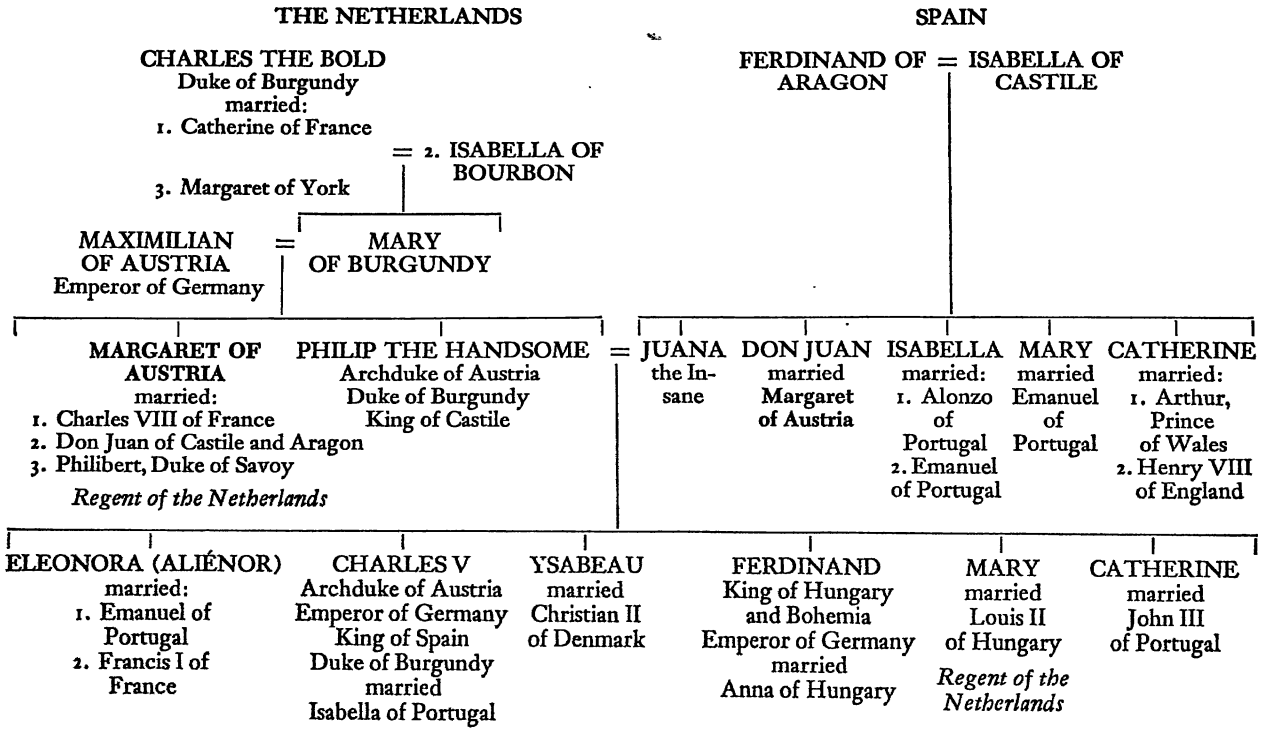
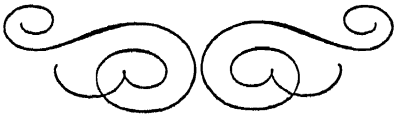
Margaret
OF AUSTRIA


THE NETHERLANDS
SPAIN
CHARLES THE BOLD
Duke of Burgundy
married:
1. Catherine of France
= 2. ISABELLA OF BOURBON
3. Margaret of York
MAXIMILIAN OF AUSTRIA
Emperor of Germany
=
MARY OF BURGUNDY
FERDINAND OF ARAGON
= ISABELLA OF CASTILE
MARGARET OF AUSTRIA
married:
1. Charles VIII of France
2. Don Juan of Castile and Aragon
3. Philibert, Duke of Savoy
Regent of the Netherlands
PHILIP THE HANDSOME
Archduke of Austria
Duke of Burgundy
King of Castile
=
JUANA
the Insane
DON JUAN
married
Margaret
of Austria
ISABELLA
married:
1. Alonzo
of
Portugal
2. Emanuel
of Portugal
MARY
married
Emanuel
of
Portugal
CATHERINE
married:
1. Arthur,
Prince
of Wales
2. Henry VIII
of England
ELEONORA (ALIÉNOR)
married:
1. Emanuel of
Portugal
2. Francis I of
France
CHARLES V
Archduke of Austria
Emperor of Germany
King of Spain
Duke of Burgundy
married
Isabella of Portugal
YSABEAU
married
Christian II
of Denmark
FERDINAND
King of Hungary
and Bohemia
Emperor of Germany
married
Anna of Hungary
MARY
married
Louis II
of Hungary
Regent of the
Netherlands
CATHERINE
married
John III
of Portugal

Illusion in Stone



THE church stands outside the town, as if set down by chance beside one of those straight French highways, opposite some low cottages, a little inn. It takes its name of Brou from these poor outskirts. The neighborhood is quiet. For Bourg-en-Bresse, which begins a little further along the road with a few scattered houses, while once the center of the Duchy of Savoy, is now a dreamy provincial town where the steps of a school child echo distinctly between the gray French houses.

The town has been forgotten. But the church of Brou is full of memories. Through its cool spaces a gentle light sifts between the blank white walls. There in graceful petrified motion rise the three princely tombs with their embracing garlands of twining flowers and clustered fruits.

Chiseled in marble, hewn in stone, incised in bronze and brass, there runs along the walls like a whisper, the wise device of the woman who built this church in fulfillment of a promise, in memory of her own brief happiness:

Fortune, Infortune, Fortune . . .

A simple decoration and yet full of mystery, alternating with a border soothing in its delicate intimacy: the interwoven initials P.–M.—Philibert–Marguerite—which make this church interior a shrine of other than divine love alone.

The cool light surrounds the tombs standing motionless in the silence. The figures of those whose repose was the sole purpose of this perfect flower of late Gothic art lie outstretched under their baldaquins, ringed about by frolicsome cherubs, by elegantly clad "virtues" with courtly air. They lie there in dual representation, both as life knew them, in the costume of their princely existence, and as idealizing death left them to posterity: Philibert of Savoy, called the Handsome, and Marguerite, his wife, who never forgot her short-lived joy and who, after a life full of responsibilities and struggles, returned to this quiet spot where she had prepared her own tomb beside her husband's, and beside that of the mother-in-law whose pledge she had redeemed by the building of this sanctuary.

Inside, the windows sparkle with their enchanting light, the only spots of color in all the still whiteness. They represent the two young rulers in all the splendor that surrounded them during their few happy years of married life. They gleam like jewels, these windows, and enhance the calm solemnity of the interior, filled as with a soundless music by the rhythm of its architecture. The grief that gave rise to this structure is transfigured into an angelic joy, a touching beauty that echoes like a cry of jubilation in the heart.

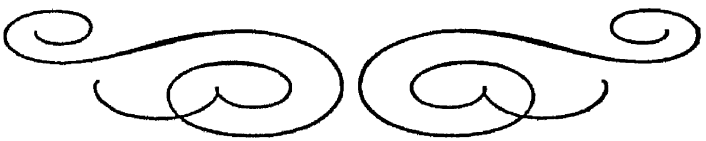
Fortune, Infortune, Fortune . . .

This jewel of Flemish Gothic, which stands in the now

French country of Bresse, is like a crystallization of the life of its builder: Marguerite, Archduchess of Austria, Duchess of Savoy, Regent of the Netherlands.

The straight highway leaves Bourg-en-Bresse in a northwesterly direction. It is the road that leads to the native land, the field of work, the deathbed of a great woman. The road that takes us to Flanders, to the good city of Ghent. . . .

THE
Pawn



Le temps est trouble, le temps se esclarcira;
Après la plue l'on atent le beau temps;
Après noises et grans divers contens
Paix adviendra et maleur cessera.

Mais entre deulx que mal l'on souffrera!
Dire on pourra par ung modérer sens:
Le temps est trouble.

De murmurer qui se desrivera
Mal il fera, car, ainsi que j'entens,
Au temps qui court temps perdent regretens,
Taire est bien bon à cil qui pensera:
Le temps est trouble.

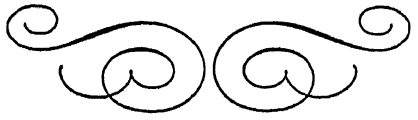
The time is troubled, but the time will clear;
After rain fair weather is awaited;
After strife and cruel great contention
Peace will arrive, misfortune cease to be.

But meanwhile how much evil we shall suffer!
One may well say in another sense:
The time is troubled.

But anyone who murmurs in complaint
Does ill, for, as I understand,
In this our time, regretting but wastes time,
Silence is best for anyone who thinks:
The time is troubled.

CHAPTER ONE

Archduchess of Austria



THE Damoiselle of Burgundy had no brother.

Her father, after the early death of her mother, had indeed remarried. But Mary remained a lonely child amidst the bizarre magnificence of that travel-smitten court. Time went on. Mary's stepmother remained childless. And increasingly Mary's fate took form according to the all-dominating fact: she had no brother. Some day she would inherit the lands over which her father ruled with all the recklessness of his bitter and determined temperament.

For her father was Duke Charles, busy acquiring for himself the name of "le Téméraire" which has clung to him through the ages and which in English became "the Bold". Had it been granted his subjects to decide by what name this duke should be known to history, they would perhaps have called him "the Scourge". But a people, which bears the burdens of its rulers' fame and sees its business and its industry destroyed, its flourishing cities go to ruin, cannot be unprejudiced, and it is as well that it seldom stands godfather to its princes.

Mary was eleven years old when her father married again. She was a gentle and obedient child, who knew how to adjust herself to the inevitable, and she understood to the full the responsibility that rested upon her when, on a certain fine day in the year 1468, in the company of her grandmother, Isabella of Portugal, and with a glittering escort of nobles and ladies of the court, she journeyed to Sluis to greet her new stepmother, who had arrived there the previous day from England. Mary was accustomed to travels and journeyings, and formal receptions were nothing new to her. But this meeting was not merely a dramatic show which she might watch with her prematurely wise child-eyes. This event closely concerned herself, and it seemed she must be conscious of the weight of the moment when she first looked up to the radiant creature who now, somewhat embarrassed, but touched to gentleness by the girlish face before her, entered into her life.

For Margaret of York this moment was no less moving. With the resignation every princess had sooner or later to learn, she had accepted her lot when European politics made desirable her marriage with the morose but powerful Duke of Burgundy. But her personal fate as a woman was still undecided. It might yet turn to good or bad. Of what awaited her she knew but this: a fabulously rich, famous, and fame-seeking husband, about whose virtues and manly charms she had been told unverifiable wonders; a mother-in-law related to the Lancasters, the arch-enemies of her own house; a stepdaughter who was still a child. The sea trip, that dangerous voyage, had for many reasons been exciting. And now she was standing face to face with Mary, a gentle and very small girl in a heavy and stately festive dress, and she rec-

ognized in the soft gray-brown eyes, in the smooth, very pale child's face, the victim of a fate, like hers still undecided: a human being whose lot was sacrifice.

Margaret embraced the child. The Burgundian retinue, their attention divided between this moving little scene and the beauties from England who surrounded the new Duchess, nevertheless felt the emotion of this meeting. Beauty quickly wakens tenderness. And Margaret of York brought to her Burgundian marriage not only the advantages of a close relation with England that were essential to the welfare of the Low Countries—she brought not only a tireless energy, an excellent intelligence, a practical common sense, but an impressive beauty also, which was to inspire Hans Memlinc to one of his most perfect, most enchantingly wordly Saints.

She was tall and slender and her bearing was of an exceptional grace. Memlinc later painted her as Saint Barbara in a dress of refined simplicity. The meticulously plucked eyebrows and the very fashionable jeweled turban on her tightly smoothed hair, shaved away at the temples and across the forehead, accentuate the noble structure of an intelligent and controlled countenance. Margaret was entirely woman of the world—of a world in which she was to play a great role and to accept heavy responsibilities. But the shadows of a disturbed and often tragic future did not yet darken this first meeting with her stepdaughter in festively decorated Sluis.

The first contact with her new country was like a lucky omen. At a single glance Mary had shown herself won over for good. The Dowager Duchess, who, being the daughter of a princess of Lancaster, beheld in Margaret's triumphant ap-

pearance the glory of the House of York, knew how to hide her feelings politely behind the courtesy of etiquette. A gala dinner closed the important day. The Duke himself was expected shortly.

From now on, the lives of these two women, Margaret and Mary, circled like two planets round one and the same radiant center. Charles was their star. His obstinate tyrant's will was their law. They followed him, ruler over many lands, on his wanderings from one to another of his various residences. They appeared side by side at court festivities and glorious entries, and the people of Bruges, of Ghent, of Middelburg, ran out and stared with open mouths at the two charming beauties: the Damoiselle of Burgundy, growing to attractive maturity, and the young Duchess, who was said—and it seemed scarcely believable—to be able now and then to induce that most stiff-necked of Europe's princes, Duke Charles, to change his mind. That was an achievement which none of the courtiers, none of the Knights of the Golden Fleece even, could rival. What Margaret did accomplish now and then was a miracle. People whispered that it was not her beauty through which she exercised her influence. Charles was not susceptible to feminine charm. His lot had been that of many a crown prince, of many a son, and he had grown up in unconscious opposition to his father, Philip the Good, the duke of innumerable mistresses, of countless bastards. Amidst the elegant and voluptuous courtiers, who also in matters of love followed eagerly the example of the old Duke, Charles, Count of Charolais, lived in a morose asceticism, to be explained by a passionate, often wounded attachment to his mother and frequent outbursts of aversion to the unbridled eroticism of his father. And by the time the Good

Philip had closed his eyes, after a life of popularity and fabulous successes which he had himself once likened to a dream, the personality of his son had become fixed and was scarcely amenable any more to softening influences. To Philip, life had meant a rare show, amid the pompous settings of a theatrical and hollow chivalry, which gave him as well as his subjects a deep satisfaction. To his son it meant battle and disruption, ambition never completely satisfied, hatred, resentment, and cold loneliness.

Over against this man even Margaret's charm was powerless. But no one understood as she did the art of breaking down his resistance to everything that came from others. By means of the fire of a highly effective eloquence it was possible for her to press home to his powers of perception, often clouded by sudden wrath, the conclusions of her lucid brain.

Charles recognized her mastery. He was even grateful to her, in his own brusque and silent way, for whatever she did for him. The court even noted with surprise certain signs of an awkward tenderness toward his Duchess, a tenderness his daughter Mary had never been able to arouse. Margaret, in the eyes of the courtiers, was a magician.

And yet how little even she accomplished! For Charles's whole nature of an introverted and stubborn fanatic was driven by a boundless greed and an even more boundless hatred. Greed for fame for himself and for his family, hatred for whosoever came in the way of his ambition, primarily for the royal house of France; these were the passions that in the son had taken the place of those much more human desires which in the eyes of his contemporaries did honor to the father. No unbounded eroticism gave direction to

Charles's life, but a craving for fame and power that verged on madness. What his father had harvested was for him but a beginning.

And yet the ducal crown of Burgundy, under which so many lands were united, shone more brilliantly than those of the French king and the German emperor, in name still liege lords, in reality powerless competitors. The Franche-Comté and the Duchy of Burgundy; Flanders, Artois, Réthel, Nevers and Namur, Brabant and Limburg, Zeeland and Hainaut; the cities on the Somme: Abbeville, Péronne, Amiens; finally Luxemburg—thus had the might of Burgundy grown. Thanks to Philip's wise policy the Flemish cities had been able to work in peace and earn treasure. The Low Countries, haven of rest, prosperity, and order between a torn France and an England which the bloody Red and White Roses had made into a hell—the Low Countries rightly counted as an earthly paradise, a land of promise.

But this was not enough for Charles. It was not the welfare of his subjects but his own glory for which he strove. The crown he wore was to him a constant reminder of a former subordinate position. He was vassal, if not in fact yet still in name, to the French crown for one part of his possessions, to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire for another.

French suzerainty was the sharpest thorn in his flesh, for in Charles's youth the impoverished French king had always been far less kingly than his own father, the Duke, head of the glorious order of the Golden Fleece, into which the highest French nobility were well pleased to be received, as a feudal demonstration against the aspirations of the common liege lord. The Golden Fleece thus embraced the whole opposition of the nobility, still powerful but already fossilizing

into rigid magnificence, against the rising kingship, which surrounded itself not with showy decorum but with shrewd men of law and able burghers. The court at which all the threads of political intrigue converged, whither journeyed embassies from temporal and ecclesiastical rulers—if their lordships did not trouble themselves to go in person—this court was not one of the sombre castles where the French king was wont to stay, but the residence of the "grand duke", the court of Burgundy.

So strong was the antithesis between Charles VII of France and his first vassal, Philip the Good of Burgundy, that the two successors to the two thrones, Louis and Charles, each in opposition to his own father, sought in their turn support from that father's adversary. Thus the Dauphin Louis, later to be called the Eleventh, gentle and modest, courteous toward the ladies, subservient toward the Duke, had slipped into the court of his "Uncle of Burgundy"; had nested in there and, grateful and polite, had begun to undermine the surroundings of his good host. For while now, having fled before the troops of his hated royal father, he was dependent on Philip's protection, in time he was to succeed his father and with that act to inherit also the enmity toward the powerful vassal at whose board he now sat, an ideal, modest guest, and at the baptism of whose granddaughter Mary he graciously functioned as godfather. If the phrase "to govern is to foresee"—"gouverner, c'est prévoir"—contains any truth, the Dauphin Louis was born a good ruler. He foresaw. And he saw reality.

Reality for him was not his "Uncle" Philip, his father's rival. A little patience—and no one knew better how to wait than this Louis—and Philip's throne would be occupied by

the young Count of Charolais, who now kept away from all the brilliant court festivities in stern opposition. Not Philip, but Charles, would become Louis' opponent. And during his five-year stay at the court of Burgundy he had sufficient opportunity to study his future enemy, to discover the weak spots in the Burgundian power, by all appearances so strong, to learn to know the intelligent collaborators of the Duke and of the Count and, ever so quietly and unnoticeably, to win them to himself. Louis had no need to regard his Burgundian years as time lost. They were to bring him dividend upon dividend.

To Charles, Louis' sojourn at his father's court was one torture the more. For this Dauphin, upon whom his feignedly humble gratitude sat so well, was according to etiquette the superior of the Duke himself; protocol decreed that the Duchess kneel before him in the dust, and, while their son met with the same marked bonhommie with which the Dauphin charmed the entourage of his host, Charles nevertheless felt continually driven into the background by the presence of his future suzerain. He avoided the court, remained by preference in the Northern Netherlands. And by so doing missed the unique opportunity of acquiring that thorough understanding of his opponent through which he would later have been the better able to combat him.

But perhaps it would have been of little use to him after all if his vanity had allowed him to remain at the Dauphin's side. It was never granted Charles the Bold to know reality. What he saw was the world of his own dreams and wishes, formed in his mind by reading the lives of classical heroes, emotionally colored by his burning desire for glory. No shriller contrast is imaginable than that between these two

rivals: Louis XI of France and the last of the Burgundians, representatives of an arising and of a dying world, of modern national kingship and of separatist, moldering feudalism. Of this last world Charles was one of the last phenomena. Always looking toward the past, with ideals and aims that fell outside the possibilities of a growing nationalism, he was in no position to see the present or to guess the future. Impelled by the last spasms of an obsolescent conception of life along a road that had no outlook, Charles was unarmed against the Machiavellian arsenal of his formidable adversary. The most modern artillery, the best-disciplined army was unable to stave off the defeat with which a mercilessly approaching future threatened dying feudalism. The Burgundian bombardes were in the end to seem as powerless as the unbridled passion with which Charles fought for a cause that was doomed by time.

Compared with their French opponent, the second liege lord of the Burgundian dukes, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, seemed far less threatening. For what, in the eyes of the wealthy Burgundians, could be the prestige of a poverty-stricken old potentate like Frederick III, whom the wrangling Electors had selected because it seemed nobody had anything to fear from him? No wonder that Philip the Good, that Charles the Bold—who to the fury of their French suzerain called themselves dukes by the grace of God—shrugged their shoulders over the powerless pretensions of this Habsburger, who put on old clothes when it rained. Of this Emperor, who could rattle no precious "golden rider" coins in his pocket, and who comforted himself with the tuneful sound of the mysterious vowels: "A.E.I.O.U."—"Austriae Est Imperare Omni Universo", or

"Alles Erdreich Ist Oesterreich Unterthan", "Austria shall rule the whole world".

The Imperial power had meaning only for lovers of antiquities. The feudal prestige of the impoverished and constantly skimping Frederick consisted merely of a quantity of fine-sounding fictions with which not a single one of the young powers wished to be bothered. What did the Italians do, the Swiss, the Hanseatic cities, but laugh at this highest authority? What could have inspired the princely Burgundians with respect? Countless were the rulers in the surrounding territories of the Empire who willfully went their own political way.

And Frederick let them. He had other worries than the emperorship. He had to establish a dynasty; he had a son who ought to be married off as advantageously as possible. Power Frederick had not, but he had time. His opponents could have their way, it did not trouble him. "Arma gerant alii, tu, felix Austria, nube": let others bear arms, happy Austria need only enter into matrimony. . . .

For meantime, while Louis XI, the "great spider of Europe", was spinning the inescapable web of his intrigues, while Frederick III was waiting and growing old, the destiny of Europe, the destiny of Burgundy, was being fulfilled. It lay, in those days, in the spasmodic hands of Charles. Fascinated by a vision that had already conjured up before his father the possibility of new luster—the kingship over a great, rounded-off Burgundian realm—Charles the Bold, as if blinded by too strong a light, threw himself into a future of glory. The kingship—then over Brabant—had once before been the subject of discussion between the Emperor, who had it to bestow, and Philip. But it had remained at that and the

sole effect had been psychological: Burgundy became accustomed to the idea of a royal crown. The vision changed. Perhaps Charles's blind assault upon the future already had another sparkling jewel as its aim. For the emperorship of the Holy Roman Empire was not the hereditary possession of a family line favored by God's grace. It rested on the knees of lesser deities, the Electors, the real rulers over the enormous, formless realm. The Emperor Frederick was old—and was anything impossible when one possessed the treasures of Flanders, the best artillery in the world, an ambition that knew no limits and could exercise no patience? Duke of Burgundy, King of the Romans, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire—what was the fata morgana that drew Charles on, sleepless and haggard, until the repulse at Granson, the defeat at Morat, up to the moment when, mortally wounded, he crashed on the ice near Nancy? It is doubtful whether he himself knew.

The greatest tragedy about Charles is surely this: that his ambition had no future. The crown, whichever it was he thought to conquer, was to add no lasting luster to his dynasty's name. The mythical jewel that he, the lost knight, saw hovering before his mind's eye, was never to adorn the boyish head of any young Burgundian. For the ducal family included, besides the Duchess Margaret of York, concerning whose childlessness no complaint has come down to us, only Madame Marie, last princess of Burgundy, heiress to all the realm, to all the ruin of her father's existence. And this gentle little duchess with her somewhat sleepy eyes would bring with her the whole conglomeration of heterogeneous lands as dowry for the bridegroom her father should select for her: the French provinces with their vineyards and orchards,

which in spring spread a mist of blossom over the hills; the Flemish cities with their riches, their cliques, their disrupting privileges; the Northern Netherlands, scarcely more than morass, soggy peatbog, endless shallow broads, among which a highly enterprising people was growing up that from sheer poverty went forth to seek its fortune out upon the very element that sought to drive it from its homes. All this and much more was Mary's dowry. And no prince in Europe who, to acquire it all, would not have competed for this bride.

Upon Charles rested the task of himself selecting the heir who should take the place of the son never born to him. And this choice, upon which was to depend the future of the barely consolidated Burgundian realm, the future of Europe too, must be made in cool consideration, with weighing of pros and cons. It had to be like the determining move in a game of chess, the first and therefore the most thoroughly considered of a sequence projected with strictest logic, the ultimate result of which must be the winning of the game. Here nothing was to be achieved by personal courage, nothing by quick-tempered command of lordly authority. To the taking of this extremely important decision gifts and qualities were necessary which Charles did not possess: patience, understanding of people, political genius. The last above all. And it was just this talent, difficult to define more closely, the mixture of reason and intuitive sensing of the future, that Charles lacked.

But the Duchess Margaret of York possessed it. She was, moreover, not hampered, like her husband, by aversion to a decision which must set before his eyes with bitter clarity the irrevocable end of his own glory and dominion. To choose a young and vigorous prince as son-in-law and suc-

cessor is a more difficult task than the christening of a newborn heir, a weak, helpless, and appealing creature that seems not at all dangerous in the eyes of an ambitious father, even though—if God wills it—he will one day grow up to take over the crown and the rule and the glory. A crown prince is a gift from heaven. But the consort of a crown princess is a usurper, is the future itself in its most inexorable form.

It was too much for Charles to make this irrevocable choice, to whom to give his daughter Mary as wife, his realm of Burgundy as prey. The possibilities were countless, and their multiplicity in a way helped to conceal the fact that Charles indeed was looking for a son-in-law, for a new ruler over his lands, but would not, out of inner impotence *could* not, designate him.

Philippe de Commines, who knew the Duke, was of opinion that he did not even want a son of his own, who would have compelled him to see his actual rival growing up under his very eyes. Charles the Bold had made many plans, sometimes even simultaneous plans, for the marriage of Mary, which no less than seven times led to her being affianced, but to this unprotected crown princess, who would have treasures to guard, he never granted a husband.

Mary had never expected of life either independence or personal happiness. She knew herself, from her youth up, a political pawn in the hands of her father. He was her god, who had the disposal of her life. She feared his attacks of rage, when in his dark face the fierce blue eyes lost all their color, no less than the numbing cold that could emanate from him when merely his displeasure was aroused. Without the Duchess Margaret, without the two devoted, motherly ladies in waiting, Madame de Commines et d'Halluin and Anne

de Salins, who were charged with her care and education, Mary's life would have been a hopeless waiting for an uncertain future. Above all, Margaret's affection was essential to Mary. With her she sought refuge from the terrifying moods of her father, in her she found a guardian of her fate and a protectress when mourning and loneliness fell to her lot. Until, once again thanks to Margaret's intervention, there came the brief fulfillment of her marriage with the man who was in so many respects the complete opposite of her gruff, unloving father: Maximilian of Austria, the son of Emperor Frederick III.

He was, oddly enough, not the last fiancé intended for Mary, but the first. When she was six years old—already a substantial age for the heiress to such costly possessions—her grandfather, Philip the Good, had for the first time consulted with the House of Habsburg over her marriage with the then four-year-old Maximilian. Five years later it was her father who thought that the Emperor, by reason of an alliance between his son and Mary, would incline to support the Burgundian candidature for the imperial succession. Yet Charles the Bold at that time too expected more than was possible. The Emperor refused, and once more Mary, now twelve, was at her father's disposal for a further political transaction. The French king's brother, who suddenly died (by poison, rumor said), Nicolas of Calabria, the pretender to the throne of Naples, and Philibert, Prince of Savoy, followed each other in betrothal to poor rich Mary, until Charles the Bold once again—this time after his conquest of the Duchy of Gelre (Gelderland) had fanned his desire for fame to the verge of insanity—turned to the aging Frederick III to see whether he could now sell the hand of

his daughter against a royal crown for Burgundy. But the Emperor, who had let himself be persuaded to a personal meeting with the Duke, sought protection from the Burgundian pretentions in scarcely imperial flight, leaving his guest behind in possession of already acquired and now useless royal insignia.

This humiliating incident was not advantageous to the good understanding between the two fathers, and soon after Charles had been forced to experience his first defeat by the Swiss he agreed, without the promise of the kingly crown, to the engagement between his daughter and Frederick's son. Once more Mary's life was disposed of in obedience to motives that were not inspired by any personal preference, any human affection. Her father had taken—and perhaps this time again only temporarily—a decision to which she had to submit.

The month of May, 1476, covered the world with a haze of young green. Mary wrote a correct letter to the youthful Maximilian, sent him, from her riches, a diamond ring in token of betrothal. Margaret of York was delighted over the future of her foster-child, though she had herself often worked for a marriage between Mary and her brother, the Duke of Clarence. But Margaret had once met the fair Austrian Archduke and had received a favorable impression of him, and she saw the value for Burgundy of an alliance with the Emperor's son, who indeed possessed neither wealth nor power, yet was surrounded by something of the prestige that still radiated from the imperial crown.

The mood of the Burgundian court, despite the absence of the Duke and many of the nobles, was in this spring of 1476 for the first time in many years colored by optimism.

But in the east, in Lorraine, at the hands of the Swiss lancers, fate was being consummated with the speed and the violence of a tornado. The Burgundian army defeated, the famous artillery lost, the treasures Duke Charles had taken with him—costly vessels, velvet tents, noble armor—prey to the rustic enemy. This was the first news that penetrated to Burgundy, and it caused Duchess Margaret to reel as on the brink of a precipice. Where was the Duke, in what condition? It was not yet known, but his death was feared. It seemed an impossibility, a too great calamity to some, to many too great a blessing. One heard the truth but did not accept it. The people dreaded his return. Was he not in hiding? Was it not said that he had gone into a monastery, undertaken a pilgrimage to Jerusalem? Were they really freed from the Scourge?

Margaret and Mary, in Ghent, did not doubt. The Duke was dead. The abyss had opened, the end of Burgundy, of their whole world, loomed up before the eyes of the two women, the one widowed and powerless, the other heiress and a prisoner. For the burghers of Ghent were the first to realize the truth; they sprang to action, to arms, they pressed about the walls of the ducal palace where Margaret and Mary, helpless and in tears, could no longer expect comfort from courtiers and councilors. The King of France, Louis, the Spider of Plessis-les-Tours, had been waiting for this event. The Duchy of Burgundy itself, a male fief, reverted to the French crown. It was occupied by the French even before the King was certain of the death of Charles the Bold. Louis' ambassadors and spies swarmed forth to take over the remaining Burgundian lands, to deprive the heiress of her possession, to set her restive subjects against her, to

encourage revolt, and to see Mary herself handed over as the bride of the eight-year-old Dauphin Charles.

It was Ghent primarily that had to help realize these plans. Ghent, the wealth and the menace, the strength and at the same time the weakness of the Burgundian realm, Ghent with its always insurgent burghers, its inclination toward separatism, its inability to see the welfare and future of the Netherlands in the consolidation of all forces, which Charles, after all, had also had as his life's aim. Ghent only wanted its old rights back which Charles had nullified and crushed underfoot. It knew the powerless duchesses were within its walls and it demanded and obtained from Mary a return to the past in the form of the "Grand Privilege of Mary of Burgundy"—from poor Mary, who gave it her name but through it lost her sovereignty.

The people of Ghent knew the aim of the French king. They hated Duke Charles' councilors, Hugonet and Humbercourt above all. These two were members of an embassy that had gone seeking to enlist Louis' clemency for the lonely Damoiselle of Burgundy. But they were at the same time secret bearers of a letter in which Mary begged the King to deal only with these two and not with the rest. Louis XI, whose moment of revenge upon the glory of Burgundy had come at last, forthwith betrayed Mary and her councilors to a new embassy, made up of Flemish burghers, which had come to France to arrange the marriage of their princess with the Dauphin.

Revolt was already growling in the streets of Ghent when these burghers returned with the information that their mistress, despite her promise, had sought to deal with the French king behind the back of the States General. The Damoiselle

herself they could not touch, but Hugonet and Humbercourt, her instruments, were lost. The day of their execution amid a populace howling for vengeance brought Mary the greatest grief, the most violent emotion of which her placid nature was capable. While she, the chief offender, was being spared, her obedient friends were to be broken on the wheel, dragged to the scaffold, lost beyond rescue. Distress, indignation, and shame broke the chains in which an upbringing of strict etiquette had bound Mary's spontaneity. She, who had never before left the palace alone, who had seldom stepped outdoors on foot, found the courage to go herself and beg for the life of her councilors. Unattended, without even Margaret, who had always watched over her, Mary dashed out of the palace, sobbing, crying for mercy for her two friends.

The astonishment of those who saw her, their compassion, knew no bounds. The Princess herself, unprotected, in deep mourning, her hands outstretched toward the raging people —who among the impulsive citizens of Ghent would not have willingly died for her? They would readily have granted her the life of the two men; here and there a cry was heard that they should after all be spared. But the Damoiselle, in her wretched anxiety, had already turned to another group, had already vanished in the tumult that filled the streets. Her pitying supporters forgot their short moment of compassion. Around her roared the furious people, who had not seen or had not recognized Mary. Her heroic deed—for such was this action of the young princess raised in safe isolation—had been in vain. The enemies of Hugonet and Humbercourt, fearing lest Mary find once more the courage of her despair, hastened the mock trial, the result of

which had already been predetermined. The heads of her advisers fell. And the day after the verdict, on Good Friday of that year so bitter for Mary, the executioners of her two friends laid before her a declaration for her signature that she had given her consent to what had happened. Mary signed.

She was alone. They had taken her stepmother, Margaret, from her. She was nineteen years old, and not educated to command. She was surrounded by treachery, feared even for her life. She had signed, and her heart broke because of what they had done to her.

She learned from the people of Ghent that they loved her, wanted to be true to her, intended to seek a good husband for her. They still thought of the Dauphin Charles, a weird, gaunt little boy of eight. But had not Mary's governess, the kindhearted Madame de Commines, who could nevertheless be cattish if something displeased her, on some earlier occasion made the deprecating remark that the Damoiselle of Burgundy needed not a child but a man, and then would herself see to having children?

Mary's only hope was Maximilian. He was her betrothed. He had her ring—but he was far away, infinitely and unattainably far away, hunting in the Tyrol perhaps, or watching the armorers in their workshops engraving the suits of armor that he loved as a woman loves new clothes. How could Mary, in Ghent, prisoner of her rebellious subjects, call him to her side, the only person in whom she could still trust, the prince, the knight, whose task it was to protect the innocent?

She wrote. She managed to have her letter sent secretly out of the palace, though it was surrounded by halberdiers.

Margaret of York too, separated from Mary and waiting in helpless rebelliousness in her palace at Malines, wrote to the Habsburg court, begged for the coming of Maximilian, the only person who could put an end to the desperate situation in which the two, the Young Princess and the Old, found themselves. And while Mary was more than ever surrounded by suitors who vied for her hand—Adolf of Gelre (Gelderland), Adolf van Ravestein, son of the Duke of Cleves, not to mention the Dauphin Charles—an embassy of princes and churchmen journeyed to Flanders in the name of the Emperor to conclude by proxy the marriage of the Duchess of Burgundy and the Archduke of Austria. The States gave their assent—and Mary could regard herself as united to the young foreign prince and safe from the attempts of the people of Ghent to give her hand and her lands away to an aspirant from whom they expected advantage to themselves.

After the violent emotions of this tragic spring of 1477 there now began for the young Burgundian Duchess a period of tense anticipation. Her husband, Maximilian, was poor, and far away. He must make a worthy entry into the Netherlands, and without the wealth of Burgundy this was not possible. His new subjects, accustomed to splendor and show, their quick tongues ready enough to malign, must receive a good impression of their young prince. He must come in brilliant company, for all to see that no expense had been spared. The Emperor could not provide all this. Therefore funds must be sent, and patience practiced, so that the preparations might be carried out.

At last the day did break when the little Duchess was able to receive in her audience chamber a wearied messenger, white with dust, who announced to her that he had

seen with his own eyes the entry of her archducal spouse, had heard with his own ears the joyous acclaim of her exuberant subjects. And shortly thereafter Mary, standing on the steps of her palace, beside her stepmother, whose impressive beauty took away the breath of the somewhat rustic German knights, could greet as her lord and master, her savior and her refuge, the young Archduke who was her husband.

In body and mind Maximilian was cut out for the role that fate, and Mary's imagination, had bestowed on him. He looked like an archangel as at this stirring moment he mounted the steps of the ducal palace in one of those magnificent suits of armor, incised with most skillful art, that even now are the pride of famous museums. His young sportsman's figure was all riveted in silver, and over that shining armor he wore a black velvet Burgundian cross, a charming attention toward his bride. Maximilian was bareheaded, like the knights who accompanied him, and on the radiant blond hair that fell in a wave upon his shoulders he wore a wreath of pearls and precious stones.

At this festive and dramatic moment of his life he was utterly happy. He knew himself awaited as rescuer and liberator by a helpless young woman who was already his wife. He was eighteen. His heart beat high against his silver armor as, followed by three knights, who like him wore the cross of Burgundy in black velvet over their cuirasses, he mounted the steps and raised his eyes to the two elegant women who awaited him: Margaret, the Old Princess, still the more striking of the two duchesses, and Mary, his wife, for whom, because of her helplessness, he already felt a tender affection. Maximilian, who all his life was to enjoy seeing himself as

the eternal *jeune premier* in the tragi-comedy of his princely existence, felt himself at this moment in the center of particularly flattering footlights. The stage setting was perfect, the role as if written for him. And the *jeune amoureuse* who stepped forward to meet him and greeted him with a shy kiss and a few words of French which he did not understand, fitted perfectly into the ideal picture he had formed for himself of this first meeting.

She was small and dainty and moved with a light grace that was at the same time full of dignity. For Maximilian's romantic and enthusiastic heart, love at first sight was a question of a few moments. To his friend Prüschenk he was later to write full of tenderness about Mary's little face, her mouth with the thick underlip that she was to pass on to the Habsburgs, about her snow-white complexion and her brown-gray eyes with the slightly swollen lids giving the impression that she had just awakened. At the moment of their meeting this little face looked radiantly up to him with such thankful, shy adoration that Maximilian's delight blossomed forth like an orchard in May sun. He was admired, he was indispensable! Was this not sufficient to fall in love? Maximilian was indeed in love. He was the happiest man in the world, Mary was in his young eyes the most beautiful, the most adorable of all women.

In a few moments his dream of happiness was being shared by Mary. The young prince who was her husband and who had come to free her from a critical situation, to support and protect her for the rest of her life, was moreover a delight to the eye. In his silver and black velvet he radiated youth and the joy of living. His strong, very striking face with the large aquiline nose, the prominent underlip, was not

handsome; but it showed a very lively personality, an unmistakable charm, and the large dark eyes lent it a warmth that immediately melted Mary's carefully cultivated reserve. Her heart overflowed with gratitude, admiration, emotion. She too was in love. She was the happiest woman in the world, the wife of the noblest, the bravest, the most attractive prince.

And so it remained for the few years during which these two were to go through life together. That they did not speak each other's language and could at first exchange only their feelings and not their thoughts, scarcely hindered them in their overwhelming happiness; on the contrary, it increased the suspense, made their relationship ever more fascinating. Mary taught Maximilian French, he taught her German. They burst out laughing, like children, at each other's mistakes. During the long evenings of their first winter they read together the old romances, in which they recognized their own love, their own happiness. But most of all they enjoyed hunting, the favorite sport of both. Mary on horseback was at ease and tireless, radiant with courage and gaiety, the ideal comrade of a born hunter like Maximilian. Both of them loved animals. Mary's swift greyhound, which slept in their room, was the pride of her young sportsman husband. "If we had peace, we should be living in a garden of roses", Maximilian wrote at this period of his life. But there was never peace.

For though to Mary and Maximilian the experience of this great happiness might now seem the ultimate goal of their marriage, what had brought it about was something quite different. The realm of Burgundy had to be kept from disintegrating and had to be defended against that formidable

enemy, Louis XI, who, after the marriage of the Damoiselle, laid off his fatherly mask and showed himself in his true form. Not to love but to command was Maximilian's task. And he took it on with the same youthful fire, the same enthusiasm, with which throughout his life he always flung himself upon anything new that appealed to his imagination.

The internal difficulties above all were overwhelming for the eighteen-year-old foreigner that, after all, Maximilian was. On coming to the Low Countries he had, it is true, been greeted by the people with rejoicing and with eloquent triumphal arches upon which one read that he was the true ruler of Burgundy and must fight Burgundy's battle. His heroic figure had made an impression and his winning smile had been applauded. But when the first festive joy had died down, there proved to be no place for the young prince consort. One thing, however, was certain for his turbulent subjects: the real sovereignty would have to rest not with this inexperienced ruler, but with the burghers.

But first battle must be done against the arch-enemy Louis, whose hordes were laying waste the Burgundian lands. Maximilian, who seldom hesitated to translate plans into action, put to use the now violently anti-French mood of his subjects and called them to the national war against the French. He raided the treasure chambers so carefully filled by Mary's grandfather Philip, and sold valuables to the tune of a hundred thousand guilders in order to have cash at his disposal. The Flemish banking world had confidence in the young fighter, of whose personal courage wonders were told, and gave him credit, more necessary than a hero's heart. And without asking the always recalcitrant States for subsidies, Maximilian was able to make his preparations for the protec-

tion of those lands which he now looked upon as his own.

But Louis, who never fought if he could still achieve something by diplomacy and delay, broke the Burgundy enthusiasm by repeated armistices. Nevertheless Maximilian was constantly in the field. Mary, in a thousand fears lest something happen to her recklessly brave husband, saw her happiness continually threatened. Trembling for Maximilian, she awaited her first confinement. And it was Margaret of York, Madame la Grande, as they now called her, who, in June of that year 1478, carried Mary's first-born, Prince Philip, later to be surnamed the Handsome, to the baptismal font. Burgundy and Austria had acquired an heir. Banners and flags flapped in the summer wind, garlands and festoons decorated the streets of all the proud cities, through which thanksgiving processions wound, and the nights were red with the sooty flames of torchlight parades. There were festivities in all the lands of Madame Marie.

The struggle with France dragged on. With more enthusiasm than ever Mary's subjects now flocked to the leadership of the young Archduke, who was the father of a crown prince, a new "natural ruler" over the realm of Burgundy. One year after the birth of Philip, Maximilian defeated the French army at Guinegate. But against Louis weapons were always of little use. Alliances were more to the purpose. And so Maximilian, who would have loved nothing better than to pursue the enemies of his beloved Mary sword in hand, saw himself obliged to take refuge in the political game of intrigue and ruse, betrayal and deceit, in which Louis was such an unsurpassed master. His policy became the traditional Burgundian policy. He sought approach to everything in France that opposed the absolutist king. He allied himself

with England, the natural opponent of France, strongly supported in this move by Margaret of York, whose well-tested policy was thus continued. The end had remained the same: nor was it necessary to change the means. In July, 1478, a trade agreement was reached; a year later the betrothal was arranged of the year-old Archduke Philip and Princess Anne of England.

Maximilian was to deal the French king one more severe blow. The Duke of Brittany, once before united with Charles the Bold against their common suzerain, now ranged himself again on the side of Burgundy.

Maximilian's star stood high in the heavens. Fortune smiled upon him. His love for Mary, her boundless devotion, the warm affection of the Old Princess for the young couple, the joy over the baby Philip, made of the domestic life of the Austro-Burgundian family an idyl such as the children of princes are seldom granted. When Maximilian returned home after his victory at Guinegate a celebrated commander, Mary was expecting her second child. On the 10th of January, 1480, she gave birth to a daughter, who was baptized in the cathedral of Sainte Gudule.

The newborn Archduchess of Austria was named Margaret, after Madame la Grande.

Le tout va mal et sans loy est la terre,
Ou puissance tient le lieu de justice
Et ou le jour fait de la nuyt l'office
Et le fuir tient lieu de bonne guerre.

Se vous voules ces trois ditz bien enquerre,
Vous trouveres que par tel malefice
Le tout va mal.

Mais on ne veult congnoistre que l'on erre,
Car pour vertus ung savoir d'aute lice
L'on exaulce et louhe l'on le vice,
Dont jurer puis, par monseigneur Saint Perre,
Le tout va mal.

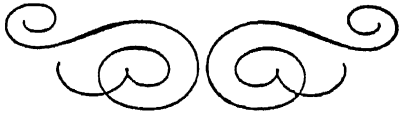
All goes awry and lawless is the land,
Where power takes the place of justice
And where the day does office for the night
And men will flee instead of bravely fighting.

If you will well examine these three sayings,
You'll find it is by such maleficence
All goes awry.

Unwilling to acknowledge that we err,
We heed familiarity with licence
As if it were a virtue, praising vice,
So I can swear, by my lord Holy Father,
All goes awry.

CHAPTER TWO

Queen of France



THE tenth of January, 1480. It was eleven o'clock in the morning when the good news flew through the halls and galleries of the ducal palace at Brussels of the happy birth of a little Archduchess of Austria. Shortly thereafter two messengers left the city to carry the joyful report to Maximilian. They did not spare their horses, and they were richly rewarded. The birth of a daughter was certainly of no less importance to a princely dynasty than that of a son, especially now that the succession was already assured.

The instant she came into the world the fate of the little Margaret was determined, and courtiers and burghers made no pretense of concealing the reasons for their delight. She would be expected to make possible some strengthening alliance for the dynasty—"quelque bon renfort d'aliance pour la Maison"—as Margaret's historiographer, Jean Lemaire de Belges, candidly set it down.

For among princes, just as with farmers, children were a help in the business. And daughters, docile and thoroughly imbued with their sense of duty, offered more chance of ad-

vantage than younger sons, who only too often inclined to set themselves up as centers of dissatisfaction and rebellion among nobles or burghers. Daughters offered exceptionally good political material. It is not unlikely that Mary, holding the baby girl in her arms for the first time, called to mind the course of her own life and feared for a future upon which she herself, a mere woman, would be able to exert so little influence.

The baby was the pride of her young parents. She was sound in health and perfectly formed, which increased her future value considerably. To Margaret of York her little godchild was a source of lasting joy. Her life had received a new content that in a way made up for the loss of her own position. She had already had several opportunities to contract an advantageous second marriage. The Old Princess, they called her—but she was not yet thirty, and her beauty and intelligence were praised far beyond the frontiers. Yet she rejected every good match. Burgundy had become her life's task. With the purposeful intelligence characteristic of her she watched over the young family, gave indispensable support to Mary during Maximilian's absences, and was, as in the time of Charles the Bold, the real center of the Burgundian court.

All Margaret's strength of mind and spirit was to be needed sooner than anyone could have expected. The stars under which the infant Margaret of Austria was born were to lead her, later on, to adopt the device that said so much—*Fortune, Infortune, Fortune* . . . —and now it was not long before they made their disturbing influence felt.

In September, 1481, Mary had again given birth to a son, who died soon after. It seemed that the sorrow over this loss

was never to leave her. She lived as if under a shadow and suffered deeply from the anxiety that Maximilian's absence during his French campaigns again and again caused her. In vain did Margaret of York try to put some heart into her, in vain did her advisers praise the military talent and the ability Maximilian had always shown as a soldier. Each parting was martyrdom for Mary, each reunion beclouded by new fear. Each time she bravely fought against the depression for which she could give the troubled Maximilian no single reason. She had every cause to be happy: she was awaiting her fourth child.

It was in 1482, on one of those unexpectedly mild spring days among the buffetings of March, that Mary suggested a plan for a hunting party, in the hope that sun and fresh air might help her out of the inexplicable heaviness of spirit that had now been torturing her for weeks. She was advised against it: would she not, in view of her condition, be content with a quiet ride? But she yearned for exercise, for danger, for forgetfulness. And they rode forth.

Mary, her falcon on her wrist, was followed by the ladies of her court, while the Archduke, at the head of his nobles, soon vanished from sight. The early spring morning was fresh and exhilarating. The young Duchess breathed deeply, enjoyed the rapid exercise, the swift flight of the birds of chase, the stately sailing of the herons. The shadow seemed to leave her, her voice sounded gaily over the awakening countryside.

She urged her horse to greater speed, not to lose her hunting falcon from sight. A ditch caused her mount to hesitate. Mary struck it with her open palm, it took fright, turned suddenly. . . . The disaster had happened. The Duchess

was thrown against a tree, the horse went down, its crushing weight falling full on Mary's body.

Seriously injured, bleeding heavily, she was picked up and carried to Bruges. A prey to helpless modesty, she refused to let herself be examined. She understood what her fate was to be, and now in the days during which she slowly bled to death she showed again the heroic courage that had once driven her to fight for the lives of her councilors. She comforted Maximilian in his despair, said she believed in her recovery. But whenever he left her chamber for a few moments, she wept in the arms of Margaret of York, wept for her young life, her children, her love.

Pilgrimages were undertaken. Bareheaded, Maximilian strode through the streets of Bruges in a penitential procession, followed by the whole court, by thousands of sorrowing citizens. On his return he found Mary exhausted, but smiling.

The Knights of the Golden Fleece, devoted followers of the late Duke Charles, were called in. Weeping they stood around the bed of the Duchess, while she besought them to remain faithful to her husband and her children, to defend her country and her subjects.

She begged forgiveness of God for the worldly life she had led, of her friends for the sorrow she might have brought upon them. She bade farewell to the knights, to the ladies of her court, to Margaret, to her children . . . to Maximilian. She died on the 27th of March, 1482, at the age of 25. She had been gentleness and docility itself. In the lives of Margaret of York and Maximilian she left a void that could not be filled. Her children had scarcely known her.

Hospital of St. John, Bruges

Margaret of York. Detail representing St. Barbara from the altarpiece by Hans Memlinc.

Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin

Charles the Bold, by Rogier van der Weyden.

There was one person whose joy over Mary's death knew no bounds: Louis XI of France, who had held her at her christening. It was the last of his many passive triumphs, this death and its consequences. Himself on the edge of the grave and trembling with the fear of death, persecuted by rapidly repeated strokes that each time deprived him of speech and that each time he managed to overcome, Louis accepted the demise of the young Duchess as a gift from Heaven. It prolonged his wavering life by a few months of which he managed to make use in masterly fashion. Partially paralyzed, hiding in the darkest room of Plessis-les-Tours so that people should not be aware that he was dying and hence fear him the less, Louis went on weaving at the fatal web in which Burgundy was to be enmeshed to its destruction.

News reached him that the two children, Margaret and Philip, were in the hands of the citizens of Ghent as instruments of power over their father. With the young and inexperienced Maximilian, who possessed scarcely any influence, he had no need to reckon. The bells that rang for Mary's death announced to Louis the end of the Burgundy he so hated. Ghent would now, as so often before, be his willing tool.

And Ghent was ready. Forgotten the revulsion which, in a flood of loyalty to Mary, it had felt for the French King. Forgotten the triumphal arches with which it had welcomed the Archduke of Austria as the true ruler over Flanders. Ghent now thought only of the times when it had been enslaved by Charles the Bold, remembered only its hatred of the house of Burgundy, despised Maximilian, the poor foreigner, who had nothing else to offer than war against

France and very dubious victories that would cost a great deal of money. Louis' promises were much more attractive to burghers and workmen. He spoke in clinking coin, and they knew his voice of old. His offer meant peace.

Thus Maximilian found himself after Mary's death in circumstances that truly bordered on the desperate. The loss of the woman who had been the joy of his life had simultaneously robbed him of the political position he had acquired through his marriage. Mary had indeed signed a will, three days before her death, by which she had appointed her children heirs to her lands and possessions, and had named Maximilian guardian, governor, and regent of the realm until the majority of Philip, successor to the ducal throne. But what should this hastily made will mean to the States of the Burgundian provinces who had not been consulted in Mary's decision, and who all too gladly—and rightly—saw in Maximilian the successor to Duke Charles, the Scourge? Louis' spies were sneaking around Flanders, scattering promises and costly gifts. . . .

One month after the death of their "natural princess" the States-General met in Ghent. They accepted the Archduke of Austria as guardian and regent, although Flanders, more rebellious than the other provinces, still deferred its judgment. But the war with France was definitely ruled out. Wars cost money, cost blood, the States argued. The people wanted peace in order to work in quiet and security, to grow rich and to enjoy life. What did the Flemings care about the Duchy of Burgundy, since Charles's death in the hands of the French? They could live without the Walloons, who were probably quite content to belong once more to the country whose language they spoke. The States had learned

that King Louis favored a very reasonable peace, that he wished to do the little Archduchess Margaret the honor of a marriage with Charles the Dauphin. Could Maximilian imagine a more illustrious and useful union for the small princess?

No matter how the Archduke pleaded that they should leave him his daughter, that they should not hand her over in exchange for a shameful peace which he, at the beginning of a glorious military career, did not wish, the influence of Flanders, and particularly of Ghent, was so strong that he had to give in.

So, on the 23rd of December, 1482, at Arras, the peace treaty between France and Burgundy was signed by which the two-year-old Archduchess of Austria made her entrance into history. She became the affianced bride of thirteen-year-old Dauphin Charles, whom the burghers of Ghent had chosen for her mother five years before, and who was now obliged to break his engagement to a daughter of the King of England. Margaret's dowry included Artois and the Franche-Comté, the lands of Mâcon, Auxerre-en-Salins, Bar-sur-Seine and Noyons, which instantly passed into the hands of the French king. By this arrangement she gave up the right to further demands she might have made on her mother's inheritance. The treaty, so bitter for Maximilian, finally included the condition that the little bride should be promptly delivered over, in order that she might be brought up in her future husband's country, far from her father and his anti-French influence, to become a worthy queen of France. The King on his part agreed that the Dauphin should wed the little Archduchess as soon as she should have reached marriageable age. The Grand Privilege, which had been wrung

from Mary after the death of her father and which meant sentence of death upon the central authority of Burgundy, was—with understandable satisfaction—ratified by Louis.

A few weeks after the conclusion of the treaty the little bride celebrated her third birthday. Deep mourning hung over the court at Ghent. Margaret of York grieved at the approaching separation from her godchild, who had sometimes made her forget for a moment the loss of Mary. Maximilian, since the death of his wife more than ever a foreigner in the Low Countries, was obliged to look on helplessly while the last trace of authority was taken from him. In contradiction to the decision of the States, who had recognized the Archduke as governor and regent, a regency council was set up for Philip, in which the strongest influence was exerted by Ghent. As his two children had been taken hostage, the young and battle-loving Maximilian was deprived of any possibility of resistance against the decisions of his rebellious subjects. Only the circumstance that the long journey in winter might endanger the life of the little princess prevented the burghers of Ghent from delivering her over immediately to her grasping father-in-law.

While execution of the treaty thus dragged on in expectation of the mild spring weather that should make Margaret's long journey possible, strange rumors began to circulate in the Low Countries. Something was said to be wrong with the marriage of "Madame Margaret". What were these Ghent fellows up to? They had, so the whisper went round, married off this daughter of Burgundy to a boy who did not exist. Had anyone ever seen a French crown prince with his own eyes? Was it not said that the hated and feared Louis had never had a son of his own? This was a son, they declared,

of Louis' son-in-law, the Sieur de Beaujeu, to whom Margaret had been given in marriage. Shame on the people of Ghent, who had sold the reputation of Burgundy for their own advantage! Protests and complaints rained down—and in Ghent itself suspicion raised its head.

To put an end to all these evil rumors an embassy set forth from Ghent to France, to convince itself with its own eyes of the existence of Dauphin Charles. At Amboise he was in fact shown to these ambassadors. But their servants, fearing to be deceived nevertheless, if they too had not kept themselves properly informed, raised a clamor outside the castle gates, threatened to unmask the embassy on its return home, demanded entrance to the castle where the ambassadorial gentlemen were satisfying their own curiosity. The excited noise penetrated to the rooms in which the governors of the Dauphin were exhibiting their charge. And to remove all doubt, they flung the portals wide and let servants and grooms, fools and barbers, into the royal presence. Everyone was satisfied, and to the pleasure and reassurance of his public little Charles gave an exhibition of sharp-shooting, trotted around to show that he was a strong and healthy boy, and finally took off his little tabard of costly gold brocade, which, with all appearance of frank spontaneity, he gave away to a fool who had come in with the Flemish servants and who carried it back with him in triumph to Flanders.

Without his coat Charles was even better to be seen, and letters from eyewitnesses told admiringly of his sturdy calves, calling him a fine beginning of a prince—"ung très beau commencement de prince". . . . His three-year-old bride might rest content.

After this experience the ambassadors journeyed to Tours,

where King Louis, his dying body enveloped in the luxurious furs and satins he had disdained all his life, received the gentlemen of Ghent in a castle defended by sharpshooters, its iron gates guarded by bloodhounds. They found him in a little prisonlike room, without light, so that they could scarcely distinguish him. He spoke with difficulty, and only a few words, apologized because his right hand, which he carried in a sling, was somewhat weak. He took his oath upon the treaty with his left hand.

The gentlemen from Ghent, who had quite a different picture in their minds of the powerful French ruler, giver of so many princely presents, were nevertheless most deeply impressed by this scarcely visible deathly apparition. They feared the pale, ghostly face. They did not know how to show sufficiently their willingness to please. The King, who would have been content if little Margaret had received either Artois or the Franche-Comté as dowry, acquired both through the largesse of the people of Ghent. This he greatly prized. Their pockets full of gold, a princely tip, the ambassadors returned to Flanders.

Toward the end of April, when the roads had become passable for a slowly and carefully traveling train of carriages, the moment of parting came. To Margaret the tears of her grandmother, who was so young, and the silence of her usually so talkative ladies in waiting must have been quite incomprehensible. Why should they be crying, while she was being dressed as for some festivity? "Madame la Dauphine", as she was now generally called, must make her entry into France in worthy style. For this great journey she wore a little black satin dress all embroidered in gold thread, and a black velvet hat without a brim, over a white muslin veil. A heavy pendant of pearls and large jewels made

this scarcely youthful toilette if possible still less childish. The unknown artist who shortly before her departure painted her in all this melancholy black, managed admirably to set down in his rather stiff little portrait the tragedy of these early years. From the pale infant face two dark eyes look into the distance with a resignation that is just as unchildish as the costly dress. The family trait of the Habsburgs is clearly to be recognized: the protruding chin that both her grandfather Frederick III and her father Maximilian possessed and that in Margaret was further accentuated by the thick underlip which gave her such a strong resemblance to her mother. The little nose is rather broad and plump and gives rise to the suspicion that the prospective Queen of France was to be no spectacular beauty. But the melancholy little face with the striking eyes and the very pronounced little mouth already bears all the characteristics of the personality that was later to develop.

The burghers of Ghent, who had sold the little Archduchess, saw to it that she should be escorted by a strong and brilliant cortège—if only to be sure that Maximilian would not attempt at the last moment to free his child by force from the hands of those who were going to deliver her over to the arch-enemy of Burgundy.

The coach, borne like a litter between two horses, in which Margaret traveled sitting on the lap of her nurse, Jeanne de Bousanton, was accompanied by her mother's cousin, Adolph of Cleves, lord of Ravestein, and various Flemish nobles who had chosen the side of Ghent and the French king. After this escort followed no less than ten gilded carriages, carved with the proud arms of Burgundy and canopied with cloth of gold. In these sat the ladies in waiting who

were to attend Madame la Dauphine on her journey. They had spared no expense and vied with each other in fashionable toilettes and costly ornaments. After these covered carriages rode ten young noblewomen, mounted upon white palfreys.

The brilliant procession moved laboriously over the rough roads. Margaret and her nurse swayed with the motion of the broad-backed Flemish horses. The ladies in their covered carriages were jolted and flung about over holes and bumps. It was a tiring expedition, and the ladies, though pleased and flattered to have been selected for such an important mission, complained to each other in their distress, shortening the time by exchanging guesses as to how they were likely to be received.

They traveled in easy stages, took three days to get from Ghent to Lille, where a long halt was made because time must be allowed for the French embassy, on its way to meet the prospective crown princess, to reach the city of Hesdin, where the solemn reception was to take place. After nearly two weeks word came that all preparations had been made and that Madame la Dauphine was awaited at Hesdin.

No less a personage than King Louis' daughter, Madame Anne de Beaujeu, had gone with her husband to meet her sister-in-law-to-be. Monseigneur de Beaujeu, with a brilliant retinue and in the company of the municipal authorities of the good city of Hesdin, received the Burgundian cavalcade outside the gates and led the little Dauphine to the castle where Anne de Beaujeu, surrounded by countless ladies, awaited her. Excitement ran high in the slowly approaching Burgundian carriages. Madame de Beaujeu, those occupants who could see ahead noticed from afar, was wearing violet

satin, and the lining of her dress seemed to be cloth of gold. The two noblewomen on either side of her were dressed like twin sisters in black velvet lined with crimson. But the greatest sensation were the brimless black hats these two ladies wore and the very fashionable hanging curls that appeared from under those hats. The Burgundian noblewomen, who until this day had been happy with their hair shaved at the temples, the style so flattering to the noble countenance of Margaret of York, suddenly felt like country cousins. How daring French fashions always were, really! Jealousy mingled with admiration in the hearts of the ladies from Flanders.

They were now about to descend from their carriages, and most of them just managed to catch a glimpse of how Madame de Beaujeu twice sank to her knees before the little Dauphine, now the "first lady" of France, sitting upon her nurse's arm. The nurse, utterly overcome to see the elegant French princess kneeling at her feet, now also wished, though she still had Margaret on her arm, to make a low curtsy. But Monseigneur de Beaujeu prevented her from doing so with a charming kindness that completely broke the ice of this first meeting. The French ladies then embraced and kissed the little Archduchess, spoke friendly words, exchanged courtesies with the Burgundians. The entire company presently followed the Dauphine to the room that had been prepared for her, and left her there alone with her nurse.

But Anne de Beaujeu still had a very important part of her mission to fulfill. Together with her husband she went a few days later to the apartments of the little Archduchess and informed the Burgundian ladies in waiting that the King had commanded her to assure herself that Madame la Dau-

phine would be a worthy daughter-in-law for His Majesty even without the all-covering satin of her little dress of state. Just as the gentlemen from Ghent had been able to see the Dauphin without his tabard, Madame de Beaujeu and her husband now gazed with great seriousness upon the little princess undressed, "at which they were well content, being greatly pleased in every way"—"dont fort se contenterent et sy leur pleut grandement en toutes manières"—as Brésin tells in his chronicles.

And now nothing further stood in the way of the official engagement ceremony. The French and Burgundian ambassadors met in the castle where Margaret was staying, and they attended her "levée" in full state. When mass had been read, everyone adjourned to the great hall, where the Chancellor of Brabant, in the presence of the whole glittering company, proceeded to give a thoroughly dull reading of the endless marriage contract. Margaret, who attended this ceremony on the lap of her nurse, was thereupon solemnly confided to the care of Monseigneur de Beaujeu, who, however, at once returned her to the nurse. Herewith the official delivering over of the prospective crown princess had been accomplished and the Flemish embassy had concluded their important task. The knights and noble ladies were given to understand that they could now return home with a clear conscience.

"So that was all?" the Burgundian ladies asked themselves. Was it for this cold and boring morning ceremony that they had brought on this long journey their finest attire and their most costly ornaments? Was this the far-famed French politeness? Would these people dare be so rude as to let so many

distinguished personages depart without paying them the attention of at least one evening festivity, at which they might show off their jewels in the flattering light of candles and torches? Did they really intend to dismiss the cream of Burgundian court circles like a company of insignificant lady's maids and governesses?

The indignation of Madame de Ravestein, Madame de Gruuthuse, the many young noblewomen, knew no bounds. The day of departure was set—and not a single invitation came to soothe ruffled feelings. Could one allow oneself to be treated like this? There still was such a thing, the ladies felt, as Burgundian pride.

They took revenge in their own way. On the morning of their departure they all donned their most brilliant gowns, put on the necklaces, the tiaras, the bracelets and earrings they had so gaily brought along in their costly cases. And went, attired as for the most elegant evening party, to take their leave of Madame la Dauphine and of the mannerless gentlemen and ladies of the French court. Like a company of queens they entered the palace, and left it again immediately, too angry, too offended, to feel sad at having to take leave of Madame Margaret. Thus, in their velvets and satins, glittering with jewels the like of which the French noblewomen had never beheld, the Burgundian ladies stepped into their covered carriages, mounted their white palfreys. Like a fairy-tale cavalcade they left the city of Hesdin, stared after by a few astonished burghers to whom chance had granted this unexpected opportunity. A mile outside the city, far from the staring eyes, the gaping mouths of those unmannerly French, the procession halted so that the ladies might

exchange their gala dresses for practical traveling clothes. Pro-French they certainly had not become through this incident.

After the departure of her indignant suite Margaret remained behind in France among total strangers. Only her nurse, Jeanne de Bousanton, was allowed to stay with her. How did the child react to these shocks, to the tiring weeks that followed, when she entered France in triumph? Did they lay the foundation of the premature self-assurance, the independence, the self-esteem, that were soon to characterize her?

It was part of the dying Louis' propaganda campaign to make the little Dauphine's journey through France into a triumphal progress. Her prospective subjects, who disliked the devastations of war as much as the burghers of the Low Countries did, hailed her as the symbol of everlasting peace, praised the King for his wise conduct of affairs, for the excellent intentions he seemed to have toward his people. Paris was filled with the sound of festivities when "La Marguerite des Marguerites" entered its gates on the second of June, 1483. Between the houses hung with tapestries and costly fabrics, past squares where the guilds of the city exhibited the most bizarre fantasy in their symbolic representations, through streets filled with excited shouting crowds, the royal litter went its way, swaying on the backs of the two finely caparisoned horses.

Not much could be seen of the child—only a few people were able to relate how royal, how engaging she had looked. But the procession was magnificent, the torches flickered in the soft June evening. . . . There was peace. The Parisians

celebrated far into the night. Impressive and moving ceremonies still awaited them. For the three-year-old Crown Princess did as the queens of France were wont to do at their coronation: from every Parisian guild one journeyman, perspiring with joy and emotion, was promoted to the rank of master by Madame la Dauphine herself.

But these festivities and ceremonies were merely incidental. The journey had to be continued, and on the 22nd of June Margaret arrived with her French train at Amboise and met at last her counterpart in the displays of which she had so far been the center. Her prospective husband fulfilled his role admirably, though his outward appearance did little to help. The gentlemen from Ghent who had had the privilege of viewing the Dauphin Charles had been so carried away by the fact that a genuine crown prince really seemed to exist that they had scarcely noticed how unattractive the little fellow was. And Margaret had as yet no eye for the appearance of her bridegroom: a thin, undergrown youngster with a hollow chest, crooked legs, and a head much too big, dressed in crimson satin which further accentuated his pallor.

The Dauphin made his reverent obeisance before his three-year-old bride. But this first meeting could only be of short duration, for he was in a hurry to put on a fitting costume for the next scene. He was hastily brought to a house in the neighborhood where he changed his red satin for a long tabard of cloth of gold. Suitably attired for the real betrothal ceremony, he proceeded to a place that had been roped off for the occasion, where "Madame la Delphine" joined him a little later.

Thus, in the open air, the children's betrothal took place.

The protonotary, in a loud voice that all could hear, asked the Dauphin whether he wished to take Margaret of Austria in marriage, to which he answered in the affirmative. After which the little Archduchess was asked whether she desired Charles the Dauphin as her husband. "Yes", came the child's voice. Her hand was laid in his and Charles, aware of his new dignity, bent down to the little girl who was willing to marry him and kissed her twice.

It was not a long engagement. For on the very next day the marriage was consecrated by the same curé who had christened the Dauphin thirteen years before. The children took the oath "as one does in marriage, for better or for worse"—"comme l'on fait en mariage, c'est a savoir de non changer pour pire ne meilleur". The Dauphin put a tiny ring on the little hand that was held up to him. Margaret's first marriage tie was tied.

Her French education could now begin.

Although much tragedy lay hidden in the fate that befell the little fair girl from Flanders, it also had its brighter side. In France she was in very good hands. Amboise, situated among the rolling fields of Touraine, on the shining, many-castled Loire, was assigned to her for her residence. The people, who looked upon her as the symbol of a glorious French victory and of peace, treated her with gentle respect. The French court had nothing to fear from her, and even less when, a few months after Margaret's wedding, Louis XI died at last and his daughter Anne de Beaujeu assumed the regency for her minor brother, now Charles VIII.

With Anne, who was twenty and according to her father the least foolish woman in France—"la moins folle femme de

France"—the joy of life returned to the various royal residences from which it had been driven out by fear and suspicion during Louis' rule. The castle of Amboise, where the Dauphin had lived like a prisoner, so withdrawn that rumors of his nonexistence seemed plausible, now became the center of a lively and elegant court life. Although "la petite Royne" took no part in it, the atmosphere in which she spent these first French years was bright and harmonious and of a warm friendliness.

Anne de Beaujeu, energetic and intelligent, watched over the so recently wrought unity of the kingdom, and over the little Queen. She gave Margaret an excellent governess, Madame de Segré, who cared for the lonely child like a mother. In later years, when she herself was charged with the upbringing of four motherless children, Margaret was often to remember this warm-hearted, understanding woman who had given her such a happy youth.

Though she was often called by the comfortable name of "Mademoiselle de Flandre", Margaret's way of living yet conformed entirely to her queenly dignity. Her court was organized according to the strictest royal norms. Her Grand Master was the Seigneur de Segré, the husband of her governess, and this functionary ruled over a numerous household. Twenty ladies in waiting, six lords in waiting, a Master of the House, a treasurer, a doctor supported by an apothecary, an almoner, a chaplain, two secretaries, and numerous servants surrounded the little Queen with the routine of their daily activity, prescribed by etiquette, and gave to her mode of life the regularity that was so conducive to a balanced physical and mental growth. Her nurse too was still there to look after her, assisted in this task by two valets and two

chambermaids, a "lavendière de corps", and two laundresses. The table and kitchen personnel, the latter made up of expert specialists, was highly impressive. Besides the six lords in waiting whose duty it was two by two to pass the roast, the bread, and the wine at Her Majesty's meals, it consisted of two "chefs of the bread", three cellar masters with one aide, three kitchen chefs and two cooks, two specialists for the soup, one for the roast, three cook's boys, one "saulcier", and an "aide de saulcerye". The French kitchen lived up to its name; its servants at the castle of Amboise were many and skilled.

The accounts of her treasurer, maître Loys Ruzé, which because of her insufficient years were countersigned for her by Madame de Segré—"Première dame d'honneur de la Royne, pour et au lieu de la dicte Dame, pour ce qu'elle n'est en aage souffisant pour signer"—give an idea of the various amusements the little Queen was allowed to enjoy and which she would pay for, often with her own hand and always in gold. Many personages who for one reason or another considered themselves important or worth looking at or thought they could contribute something to the royal pleasure visited the miniature court at Amboise and were presented with gold pieces: a dwarf came to show himself to the Queen and a man who had been captured by the heathen; a female choir came to sing a New Year's song; two children did contortionist stunts; a priest came to preach; another contortionist, and even a "gentleman" who understood this art, delighted Margaret with their twists and turns.

When such extra performances were not to the fore, Madame amused herself with her dolls, the expense of whose dresses was also mentioned in the accounts. And then there

were the castle doves which she fed, the parrot that lived in a large green cage and was perhaps the same "Green Lover"—"Amant vert"—that was to keep her faithful company in later years.

There were also serious duties to be performed. On Whit-Thursday in the year 1485 the five-year-old Queen washed the feet of thirteen poor persons, who also received the gift of a golden half-ducat each. In July of the same year the court went to Tours to see the Passion plays, for which the treasurer rented special grandstands. And on the occasion of a visit of Madame's to Montrichard, beds were even hired for the ladies in waiting from certain burghers of that city, while the tapestries of Margaret's own room were taken along in order that she should be surrounded by her accustomed comfort even on a journey.

On all occasions Margaret appeared in dignified but very tasteful clothes. With her red-gold hair and her milk-white complexion, people liked to see her in black, and her wardrobe included a choice of black satin, damask, and velvet dresses, with which she wore little black velvet caps and in winter a little coat of curly lambskin. To keep her completely in style, even her ABC booklet had been covered with black velvet. But on festive occasions she also wore gold brocade and gold-brown satin, purple velvet and scarlet cloth. Kind Madame de Segré chose the jewels for her foster-child with much care and taste, and thus Berthelot Clabault, the goldsmith, received the commission to make a golden belt for Her Majesty, studded all over with her initials, M.M., in red and white enamel. The gold used for this ornament was taken from one of the heavy chains Margaret had brought along from the Burgundian treasuries and which Madame de Segré,

with her elegant French taste, probably found too heavy and too impersonal.

Yet the products of her native land were not altogether despised. The little shirts and drawers, the knee-protectors—"gardegenoulx"—the little caps and handkerchiefs that were made for her were of the finest Holland linen. The little Queen was not to be pitied. She lived in a beneficent climate of warm sympathy and kindly care, in a milieu of refined taste, in the midst of a typically French landscape, silver and green under a limpid sky.

Her education was French, and therefore probably more one-sided than if she had lived in Flanders, where her knowledge of languages would certainly have received more attention, where Madame la Grande would have taught her English and Maximilian undoubtedly German, and where Flemish would surely not have remained unknown to her. These languages were now considered beneath the dignity of a queen of France. But Madame de Segré, under the supervision of Anne de Beaujeu herself, did not fail to initiate her into all the fine arts, those noble occupations which formed and refined her taste, filling her with a passionate love for beauty and harmony that was never to leave her, that was in time to be a consolation to herself, an inspiration to countless others.

So Margaret learned as a child the elements of drawing and painting, industriously studied singing and the lute, became familiar with the embroidery needle, learned with little hopping steps the stately dances, the danses basses, that were danced at the court balls. She was the Queen of France, and now and then she received a visit from her husband, surrounded like herself by courtiers and tutors. No shadow

darkened these first years. She was a happy child, who had scarcely any recollections of that other world in which she had been born: rich and unruly Flanders, the ever traveling court of Burgundy.

Although the little Flemish-Austrian princess dwelt at the court of Amboise as a symbol of eternal peace, European history did not stand still. Maximilian's innate resilience had not forsaken him after the death of his wife, after the shameful peace with France and the departure of little Margaret. Nor had his subjects become any easier to deal with, and the French nobility were as little as ever inclined to submit to the monarchy, now that it was being represented merely by a minor boy and a young woman of twenty. The treaty of Arras, Margaret's marriage with the Dauphin Charles, had been but a pause, a slowing down by which the stream of history had only gathered more force, to rush on afterward with greater speed.

In the death of his arch-enemy Louis, Maximilian saw the chance for revenge he so burningly craved. He immediately gave rein to his optimistic love of action. An ambassador went to Charles VIII to protest against the peace concluded at Arras; with Ferdinand the Catholic of Aragon, with England, new relations were initiated, aimed against France. And in complete accord with the former anti-French policy, which he had taken over together with the lands of Burgundy from his father-in-law, Charles the Bold, Maximilian sought anew a rapprochement with the Duke of Brittany, last of the great French vassals, who up to now had managed to escape Louis' policy of centralization. The blow France had dealt him through the marriage of his daughter Maximilian now

sought to counter by means of the same weapon: he sued for the hand of Anne, daughter and heiress of Francis, Duke of Brittany.

At home too Maximilian took his measures. The burghers of Ghent still had the little Archduke Philip in their hands and thought to control the Regent of Burgundy through this instrument of power. But the other provinces were revolting against the dictatorship of Flanders; they supported Maximilian, and civil war against rebellious Ghent became a fact.

And not against Ghent alone. For Ghent, as of old, called upon the French King, who, as worthy successor to his father, declared that he would maintain with all his power the rights of his "brother" Philip that were being threatened by Maximilian. He even made an alliance with his little brother-in-law, behind whose childish person Ghent's separatist endeavor ran riot. But Charles did not lend much support. The Flemings saw themselves threatened by the German soldiers Maximilian had taken into his service. One by one the rebel cities, their military capacities no longer abreast of the times, fell before the excellent professional troops with their modern equipment. Ghent too was obliged to open its gates, with all the consequences of that act.

Once more it lost all the privileges it had won back since the death of Charles the Bold. And at the same time it lost the most powerful privilege it had possessed: Archduke Philip was removed from the city and transferred to Malines.

Peace now reigned at last in the Low Countries, an outward but no inward peace. Now that his guardianship over his son was recognized, Maximilian was free to follow up his own interests, which lay no less close to his heart. Was

he not in the first place Archduke of Austria, only son of the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire? The succession to Frederick III had to be settled, and so Maximilian left for Germany in November, 1485. He traveled in more than princely style, and his train included among others a carefully selected choir, whose members wore long vermilion tabards lined in different colors according to the parts they sang, tenor, baritone, or bass. What an impression this choir must have made on the musical German princes, who would be obliged to choose Maximilian as successor to the old Emperor! It was an exceptionally good piece of propaganda, as were also the touching scenes enacted in order to make the meeting between father and son into an advertisement for the succession.

Maximilian achieved his purpose. In February, 1486, he was in fact chosen King of the Romans, successor to Emperor Frederick III. In April his dedication followed and his coronation, by three archbishops, with the ancient German imperial crown. Radiant with new dignity, Maximilian, now bearer of a royal title, returned to his Burgundian lands.

After this he had no other aim than vengeance against France, power for himself. What purpose could the wealthy lands of Burgundy better serve than that of strengthening the prestige of the House of Austria during the minority of their natural prince, Archduke Philip? The war between France and Burgundy broke out anew. After a few victories for Maximilian the struggle swept northward again. The French were now gaining the upper hand. Flanders' aversion to the foreigner who had broken the precious peace of Arras, who was furthermore losing the war, taxing them more heavily than Charles the Bold had ever done, and whose

troops were looting the countryside as though it were enemy territory, increased every day. In Ghent indignation flared up again. The last defeat was forgotten, the rebellious guilds took control and the city acted in accordance with the rights the Grand Privilege had given it: it called the States of Brabant and Hainaut to a meeting within its walls.

True, these bodies did not respond; but the voice of Ghent penetrated to the ears of the French king, always ready to support the rebel subjects of Burgundy. Not Louis XI now, but Charles VIII took their part, granted them special rights. Once more Ghent and France stood together against the Regent of Burgundy. Maximilian, confident in his new royal dignity, confident above all in his excellent troops, did not hesitate to proceed to action. He convened the States General at Bruges, counting upon their support, and himself arrived in that city with a small bodyguard a few days before the meeting.

And then the little people, the carpenters and masons, the smiths and potters of Bruges, attempted for the last time to establish the authority of the burghers over that of the ruler. Maximilian was inside the walls of the murmuring city, his troops were still outside. The burghers closed the gates, refusing to his soldiery the entry which Maximilian demanded in person. The people sprang to arms, brought up guns, transformed the market into an armed camp. They scarcely took in the circumstance that they had the King of the Romans, the prospective Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, the Regent of Burgundy, in their power.

Taking refuge in a spice shop on the market place, Maximilian realized that he was the prisoner of his subjects, who did not know what to do with their prey. But they began

by treating him to a series of executions, carried out in the market square under his very windows. City magistrates, merchants, officials and councilors of the Regent—it was all one. The people wanted to see torture and blood, to take revenge, to make their power felt in a blind rage.

Who was responsible for the fact that the trade of Bruges, once so flourishing, was dying out? That the great foreign merchants who had brought treasures to the city were moving their offices to Antwerp? That the inhabitants of Bruges were diminishing in number, her craftsmen could scarcely earn their bread, her houses were standing empty? The central Burgundian government. And the torture rack was dragged to the market square so that everyone could enjoy the cries of the victims. Under Maximilian's windows the blood-drunk masses howled with excitement.

From the windows of the castle at Amboise the little Burgundian Queen of France looked out upon the bright reflections of the Loire, the wintry fields of Touraine. No rumor of revolt and cruelty penetrated to her. And though her entourage did learn the disturbing news that a future emperor was in the hands of those who should kneel before him in the dust, Margaret's peace was not in any way troubled.

But to the Emperor Frederick, to the Empire, came reports that the recently elected King of the Romans was being held prisoner by the populace of Bruges, that his councilors were being tortured and murdered, even that his life was endangered. The Emperor himself moved up with an army to release his son, the Archbishop of Cologne threatened to

excommunicate the rebels, the entire apparatus of temporal and spiritual power was set in motion to persuade Bruges to let her precious prey go free. The people of Bruges had also to defend their prisoner against their co-rebels of Ghent, who demanded that Maximilian be turned over to them. They refused to deliver up the Regent, but they could not prevent Ghent's once more taking the leadership into its own hands. Ghent dictated the conditions of Maximilian's liberation, and just as Mary had done in 1477, her husband now did. While the German army was already approaching that should set him free, he accepted in mortal fear the demands of his subjects and betook himself, pale and thin after months of anxiety and humiliation, to the same spot where he had seen his councilors brought to their death, and where now, on a platform decorated with tapestries and greenery, an altar had been erected, a "triumphant siège pour le roy" set up. Maximilian granted forgiveness to the rebels, knelt down before the altar and swore to the pact, which included a restoration of Mary's Grand Privilege, robbed him of the regency over Flanders, and obligated him to remove his troops within four days from the province and within eight days from the other provinces. He paid 25,000 pounds Flemish as remuneration for the hirelings who would have to drive his soldiery out by force if they did not depart voluntarily. Philip of Cleves, lord of Ravestein, was to remain behind as a hostage in the hands of Ghent and to consider himself released from his obligations to Maximilian should the latter break his oath. . . .

Eight days later the released prisoner reached the army of his father the Emperor. The tension, the mortal jeopardy of the last months were forgotten. Here were the lansque-

nets, the German knights, the Emperor himself, indignant over the humiliation to which the King of the Romans had been subjected. Here was the chance to take revenge upon the rebels who had so deeply offended him. For Maximilian the future was always more important, always more real than the past, sacred though the oath might be that he had sworn in that past. Possibilities interested him more than facts, illusions more than experience. As Regent of Burgundy he had sworn to this peace; as King of the Romans he was bound to obey the command of his Emperor to move against Ghent. And he solemnly declared to his hostage, Philip of Cleves, that this fight had nothing to do with the peace concluded at Bruges.

Once again there was war in Flanders. Maximilian's hostage took upon himself the leadership of the people of Ghent and announced his readiness to fight for the young Archduke Philip against Maximilian, for the national House of Burgundy against the foreign House of Austria. All in the Low Countries who were averse to the centralizing authority of their sovereign lords joined with Philip of Cleves, who under the ironic cry of "Vive Bourgogne!" was determined to drive Maximilian the foreigner, with his German soldiers, off the scene. On the help of France, of Archduke Philip's brother-in-law, he could count. The German army, which had moved up in order to liberate a prisoner who meantime had bought his own release, had because of this lost much of its desire to fight. It got thoroughly bored before the walls of Ghent, petered out, slunk away. The Emperor himself returned to the Empire, Maximilian followed him three months later. He left behind his formidable field marshal, Albrecht of Saxony, to find a solution for the chaos in the Low Countries.

For new plans were occupying the King of the Romans. *Arma gerant alii, tu, felix Austria, nube. . . .*

If battles brought no success Maximilian could always move along other roads to reach his goal, the humiliation of France. For while the struggle of revolting subjects against their ruler had been raging in Flanders, events had been taking place in France that were to prove of international significance. The last independent French duke, Francis II of Brittany, had died without male issue and was succeeded by his daughter Anne, for whose hand Maximilian had already been suing. Here again was a hereditary princess waiting for a protector; again Maximilian felt himself called upon to hasten to the help of a young archduchess, an impressive dukedom.

Anne of Brittany, aged thirteen, accepted him. But her bridegroom had not limited his plans to the peaceful conquest of Brittany. When Anne had given her consent, he remained in the neighborhood of Vienna, involved in one of the endless wars that seemed to be indispensable to him, this time against the Hungarians. His union with the daughter and heiress of Brittany had to be carried out by proxy, just as had been the case with his marriage to Mary of Burgundy. Anne, too, he had never seen when, separated from him by the whole of Europe, she became his wife. He did not know her sad, distressingly ugly little face, her pathetic little figure, which, shy and slightly lame, one would have expected to meet in the sculleries of the ducal palace rather than on the ducal throne itself. But the Duchess of Brittany knew what she wanted. Immediately upon her unreal marriage she assumed the glorious title of Reine des Romains—Queen of the

Romans. And thought she had secured the safety of her country.

But she had reckoned without that other Anne, the Regent and least foolish woman of France, Madame de Beaujeu, the true image in all things of her father—"vray image en tout du bon roy Loys son père"—who knew only too well how the good King Louis would have acted under these circumstances. Brittany must not be lost to the French crown. The House of Austria must not ensconce itself in one of the most important regions of France. There was but one way: to undo the marriage of Anne de Bretagne. There was but one new candidate for marriage: the young French king himself. And all this despite Charles's "marriage" with little Margaret, Mademoiselle de Flandre, despite Anne's "marriage" with Maximilian, Margaret's father. A remarkable "changez vos dames" had to take place, which could certainly not be realized without force. But Anne de Beaujeu knew what she had to do.

A French army marched on the Breton country. Charles VIII himself took command of the military expedition.

The preparations for this first campaign of her husband's could not escape the notice of "la petite Royne". Quick tongues did not fail to betray to her, this girl of eleven, what lay hidden behind the show of war that this time had come to disturb the quiet life at Amboise. And when the young King came to take his leave, Margaret confessed in tears what they had told her: that he was bound for Brittany to marry another woman—"qu'il s'en aloit en Bretagne espouser une aultre femme".

Charles comforted her. His father had given him Margaret

to wife, said he, and as long as she lived he would take no other. He embraced and kissed her. Charles had a kind heart and he was fond of the little girl, upon whom he had now looked for so many years as his queen. When she besought him to take her with him to Brittany, since he had no intention of marrying anyone else, he thought it a good plan. Margaret traveled with him to Montils-les-Tours. But Charles' advisers considered that under the circumstances this conjugal affection was going too far. Charles saw the point, that his personal inclination had nothing to do with the safety of France. . . . And the little Queen remained behind.

Brittany was defenseless against the approaching troops, and Duchess Anne, Queen of the Romans, at the mercy of the French, was faced with a painful choice: to keep her duchy and marry Charles VIII, or else to follow her still unknown husband and leave Brittany for good. She would be able to keep the royal title she had taken on with so much satisfaction. And "Reine de France" must have sounded more impressive than "Reine des Romains" in the ears of a Frenchwoman, to whom the Romans were a very vague conception indeed and who could have no picture whatever in her mind of the German Empire that loomed behind Maximilian's title. Anne chose her duchy and the new title, so much more comprehensible. Her marriage with Charles took place on the 6th of December, 1491, three weeks after the last Breton city to protect her had fallen.

This act robbed Maximilian of Austria of his wife, his daughter Margaret of her husband. The work of Louis XI was done.

C'est pour james q'un regret me demeure
Qui sans seser, nuit et jour, a tout eure,
Tant me tourmante que bien voudroie mourir,
Car ma vie n'est fors seullemant languir,
Et sy faudra a la fin que j'an meure.

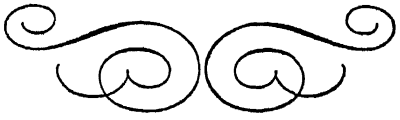
De l'infortune pansoie estre bien seure
Quan le regret maudit ou je demeure
Me coury sus pour me fere mourir,
Car ma vie n'est fors seullemant languir,
Et sy faudra a la fin que j'an meure:
C'est pour james.

For ever there remains with me one longing,
Ceaselessly, day and night, at every hour,
Tormenting me so I would gladly die,
For my life is nothing but a pining,
And in the end I'll have to die of it.

I thought myself quite sure against misfortune
When that accursed longing in which I dwell
Overtook me, intent that I should die,
For my life is nothing but a pining,
And in the end I'll have to die of it:
For ever.

CHAPTER THREE

Crown Princess of Spain



FORTUNE, INFORTUNE. . . . It was the first turn of the inexorable wheel, and it robbed Margaret of the crown of France and made her an outcast, she who for years had lived the privileged life of a queen.

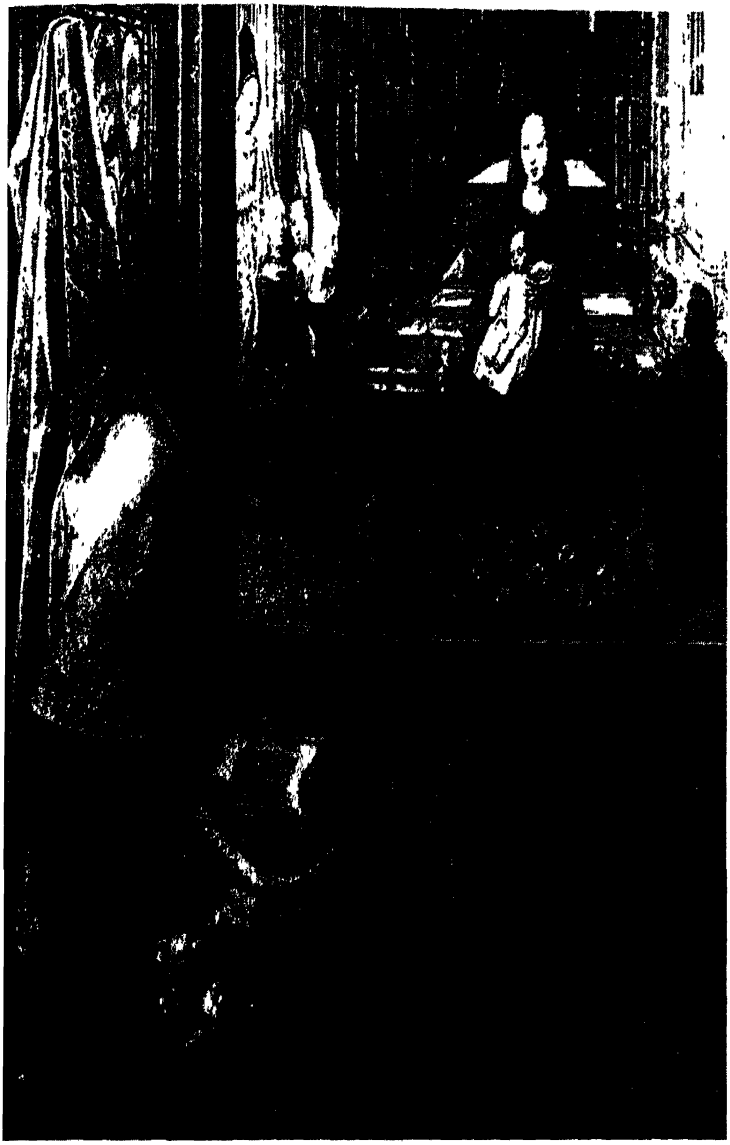
The child experienced her degradation as a whiplash, as a shame and a humiliation, against which her self-respect, cultivated in the surroundings of royalty, rose in bitterest revolt. For the first time the power of treachery and deceit invaded her consciousness, and it engraved upon her nature a motif of cynicism which, softened by the influence of time and of a beneficent humor, was to become one of her most attractive characteristics.

She had for some time been feeling the approach of the changes that threatened her. Charles's good-natured assurance that since she was his wife he would marry no one else had, it is true, at first set her mind at rest. But when he had had to leave her behind and had set out toward Brittany, the same suspicion, caught by sharp childish ears from whispered conversations, returned again and again and quickly became

a certainty. The gay and untroubled entourage of the little Queen had more to fear than she herself from a reversal in Charles's marriage policy. They had lived in the castle of Amboise as in a miniature garden of Eden, the ladies and gentlemen of Margaret's court, and now they could not hide their anxiety over a future that became increasingly uncertain as the rumbling artillery of Charles's army drew closer to the bastions of the Breton cities. It was these poorly defended walls that must protect them against the changes of fate. The tensions, the nervous forebodings of her courtiers communicated themselves to Margaret. They oppressed her in her sleep, and the story of one of her dreams has come down to us, which, though it belongs in the realm of anecdote, bears the mark of authenticity.

She found herself in the midst of a park, Margaret dreamed, and had been charged with watching over a little daisy that grew there. Suddenly there came a donkey—"une asne"—which tried in various ways to reach the flower in order to eat it up. Haunted by fear, Margaret sought to drive the creature away—but she did not succeed. The flower was eaten. Margaret was so upset by this that she woke with a start, and all the following day felt herself oppressed as by a heavy burden. Did Madame de Segré recognize in this dream of her young charge the symbolism for something she already knew with certainty: that "Anne" of Brittany would drive the little Flemish Margriet (daisy) out of the garden of France?

When the definitive report reached through to Amboise, Margaret realized the full extent of the disaster that had befallen her. Everything familiar, everything she knew and loved, she must now leave. In tears she poured out her trou-



Hofbibliothek, Vienna

Mary of Burgundy. Miniature from the prayer book of her father, Charles the Bold.

Gemälde Galerie, Vienn

Emperor Maximilian I, by Albrecht Dürer.

bles to her faithful governess. She did not want to go back to Flanders, "et avait regret au roy Charles". And Madame de Segré said wise words of comfort to this eleven-year-old girl, of the kind that when they are spoken are not believed: "Madame, vous ne devez ennuyer; vous estes fille d'un grant roy et soeur d'un grant prince; vous ne pouvez faillir d'estre une grant princesse; puisque vous n'avez peu avoir le Roy, vous en aurez ung aultre"—she should not fret; daughter of a great king, sister of a great prince, she could not fail to be a great princess; since she could not have this king, she should have another.

There seemed to be nothing more now to keep Margaret in France. But while Charles VIII had been glad enough to marry Anne of Brittany, who thus delivered over the last French duchy to the French crown, he was less inclined to part with the earldoms his first little wife had brought with her at their marriage. Under present circumstances Margaret could indeed no longer remain at the royal residence of Amboise, but neither could she leave France. Accompanied by Madame de Segré and a still royal suite, she moved to Melun to await the decision of her fate. What solution could Charles find for the problem of acquiring the new dowry without losing the old? Should he actually follow the advice of an old councilor of Louis XI, never to give back "fille ne fillette, ville ne villette"? Mademoiselle de Flandre was the prisoner of her own dowry.

But new plans, new conquests were demanding the attention of Charles, who yearned for knightly honors. Italy had called him, the eternal temptation of everyone who lived beyond the Alps. France had been consolidated, but the royal French crown would acquire greater glory if Charles'

claims on Naples could be realized, which he had taken over, by singularly roundabout ways, from the House of Anjou. If the King wanted to go South with his army, then there must be peace in the North, peace with Maximilian, the robbed husband, the offended father, who at various meetings of the Diet had been using his most convincing eloquence to persuade the imperial princes to an expedition of revenge against France. Theoretical support Maximilian found in plenty, in Burgundy as well as in the Empire. Legend had swiftly got hold of the events in France, and in the German Empire the rumor that Anne of Brittany, on her way to Maximilian, had been forcibly carried off by Charles VIII aroused particular indignation. The Pope, who had to grant dispensation for Charles's sudden marriage, also believed in the possibility of abduction; at any rate, he had the new Queen of France declare that her marriage had her own complete consent.

Poets made propaganda for the scorned King of the Romans. But Maximilian could not destroy French cities with their indignant verses. And the German arms were slow to set in motion for a cause that was of small importance to the Empire. They were not going to excite themselves over an insult that in fact had been addressed to the marital honor of the House of Habsburg and not to the imperial dignity. Only Maximilian's hereditary Austrian lands bore the expense of some hired German and Swiss troops that actually occupied a few towns in the French Alps.

The Italian adventure tempted Charles VIII with undiminished force. The peace in the North was worth a few sacrifices to him. And thus in May, 1493, the Treaty of Senlis came into being, which meant the release of Mademoiselle

de Flandre from her painful position in France. Her dowry, and even more, was given back to her father. Maximilian on his side was merely obliged to part with the title of "Duke of Brittany", which he had flourished since his paper marriage with Anne.

Once again young Margaret journeyed through France as the symbol of peace concluded—but now the carriages of her suite rolled toward the north. Though she had wept at first at having to leave France, the news that she could go was nevertheless a relief. After the harmonious years of Amboise, where she had been the center of royal honors and of warm affection, her sojourn at Melun had been a good deal like captivity. So great was the contrast that she sought the help of Anne de Beaujeu, who had received her in France and whom through the years she had called "Madame ma bonne tante". It is the first letter of Margaret's that has been preserved, short and clear, a touching expression of youthful determination. If one compares it with the vague and blurred epistles Maximilian used to write, Margaret in her twelfth year appears to have far surpassed her father in capacity for expression and in conciseness of style. King Charles now even wanted, she complained to Anne de Beaujeu, to rob her of a girl friend "qui est tout le passetemps que j'ay, et quand je l'auray perdue, je ne scay plus que je ferais"—"all the pastime I have, and when I have lost her I don't know what I shall do".

Did her cry of despair help? We do not know. Margaret must have had to console herself over the bitter moments, so numerous at this period of her life, which from time to time caused her to find acrid words of irony, as little child-like as the black velvet and brocade with which fifteenth-

century fashion emphasized her royal dignity. It was upon her return journey to Flanders, on being offered a wine of honor that was sour in consequence of a bad harvest, that Margaret with ironic politeness toward her former subjects made a cutting play on words in which she compared the oath (serment) of the King to the grapevines (sarment), both of which had this year proved to be worthless. And when at her entry into Valenciennes, festive despite everything, the populace did not withhold its sympathy for the attractive blonde girl whom for years it had regarded as its queen, and greeted her joyfully with the selfsame cry of "Noël, Noël!" that had so often rung in her ears, then Margaret's rising bitterness found vent in the sharp comment, through which echoed the familiar pride of Burgundy: "Ne criez pas Noël, mais bien Vive Bourgogne!"

Vive Bourgogne! Soon this cry that had come back to her in a moment of irony would rise to meet her in cities and towns. On the 12th of June, 1493, ten years after she had been solemnly handed over at Hesdin to the representatives of France, Mademoiselle de Flandre was delivered by a brilliant French embassy of temporal and spiritual princes to the ambassadors of her father. In Cambrai she was awaited by her grandmother, Margaret of York, who saw the pale child whom the burghers of Ghent had led away ten years ago returning as a very well-brought-up, very elegant, witty young girl. The ten years during which she had looked upon the world from the throne of a queen of France had left their traces upon Margaret, and Madame la Grande rejoiced in the grace and sweetness, the dignity and the brave self-control with which her grandchild at parting with her faith-

ful French courtiers handed them the presents she had chosen for them.

Especially Madame de Segré, who had never left her side in all these years, had been magnificently remembered: she received a gold dinner service from Margaret's hands. But it gave her no joy, for she was taking leave of what had been her life's whole purpose during those ten years. Her grief melted the cool self-command with which Margaret had defended herself against the pain of this parting. And when the little Duchess, who had at first appeared so poised, gave free rein to her tears, the ladies of her train wept aloud, and also the gentlemen who had accompanied her, and the Burgundian nobles who had come to fetch her, and there were many tears shed on this side and on that—"et furent plusieurs larmes plorées d'ung quartier et d'autre".

When Margaret of York arrived on the 22nd of June, 1493, at Malines with her newly returned grandchild, she was well aware that the coming back of her namesake to Flanders was no more than a preparation for another departure. As on the day of her birth, there was still expected of young Margaret "some strengthening alliance for the House", some marriage advantageous to the dynasty.

This dynasty was now no longer primarily the House of Burgundy, for which Charles the Bold had fought in vain. It was now the House of Habsburg, headed by Maximilian, Emperor Maximilian I since the death of his father Frederick III, and its interests lay already at this period in very different parts of Europe. These "interests" were in large measure the butterfly imaginings of Maximilian's tireless brain, and he pursued them with his unquenchable energy, his irrational

optimism. To be Duke of Brittany, or King of Hungary, Emperor of Byzantium, leader of the Holy War against the Turks—all this appeared, alternately or simultaneously, upon his program. Giving himself no time for regret over whatever escaped him or for lengthy speculation upon the results of this mercurial butterfly chase, Maximilian wandered about through the Empire, through Europe, inconsequent and charming, the despair of his councilors, the delight of his subjects, the idol of his hunting friends, the laughingstock of perspicacious ambassadors like Machiavelli the Florentine, or Quirini the Venetian.

In realizing his variable plans Maximilian followed two systems, one martial, the other peaceful: fight and let fight, marry and make marry. Because fighting was more expensive than marrying and he never commanded sufficient funds, he evolved a technique of alliances by marriage that was to make his dynasty into the most powerful royal house of Europe for hundreds of years.

His two children, Philip and Margaret, were invaluable material for this purpose, and he used it with complete indifference to their personal happiness. Margaret particularly, with her excellent education, her French-trained intellect, her Northerner's common sense, was a precious pawn in the hands of her father the Emperor, to be played with care but also with spirit and imagination.

In the beginning Maximilian had had only the Burgundian interests of his wife and of his children to defend, principally against the French king. But his election as King of the Romans and the death of his father, Emperor Frederick, broke through this limitation. The throne of the Holy Roman Empire bestowed wider perspectives upon its occupant. Europe

unfolded under his gaze. And it was a Europe where new forces were busy making their way, where a new sense of life was awakening that expressed itself in faith and creative urge, in prayer and preaching, in building and painting, in song and poetry, in travel and trade. From Granada to Copenhagen, from London to Rome, this old world was seething with a strange ferment. Everywhere a new youth broke through the impediments of a petrified past. Eastern and western oceans gave up their secrets, thanks to the marvel of the compass. Exciting treasures, gold, jewels, spices, burst upon an eager Europe, grown indifferent to the bliss and the threat of an all-too-often heralded hereafter, trembling with desire for the taste, the smell, the riches, and the temptations of an unfamiliarly beautiful today. Other and higher worlds were revealed thanks to the art of printing, which for the first time made accessible to the multitudes the conquests of the great in the provinces of the mind. A rejuvenated and flexible Latin created the crystal-clear atmosphere in which mutual understanding could grow unhampered by the confusion of national tongues. Europe traveled, Europe corresponded, awareness widened, differences melted like mist in summer sun. European man stepped across the threshold of a new century as a creator of beauty, and armed with the achievements of his intellect he conquered the obstacles that for centuries had prevented the maturing of his genius. It was a rebirth such as this old world had never seen, the freeing of human personality from the shackles of tradition, obedience, and rigidity.

Amid all the magnificence and glory of the European Renaissance, however, amid the dazzling luster of art and culture, various fields of human activity remained shrouded

in darkness. It has never been given Western man to arrive at a completely harmonious unfolding of all his possibilities. At the end of the fifteenth century, when it seemed as though beauty blossomed wherever men's hands had labored, the political and social life of these creators and lovers of art remained in a state of brute barbarism. Power had always been the warp and woof of any social canvas upon which cultures had worked the bright colors of their own characteristics. This power used to be held divine and—at least in theory—imbued with love. Divine power on earth rested in the hands of the Holy Father, and—provided neither of the two was able to outshine the other—he shared it with his worldly brother the Emperor.

It had been this way for centuries, until beside these two, and overreaching them, new bearers of power worked their way upward, supported by newly rising social groups, by slowly forming territorial domains. In the fifteenth century the consolidation of the national kingdoms in Europe became a fact, and worldly power, armies, weapons, wealth, and authority slipped from the hands of Emperor and Pope to fall into those of the pugnacious and war-loving national princes, for whom power became the immediate and sole aim of life, power for themselves and for the dynasties they looked upon as the continuation of their own personalities. These robber-baron kings were to sacrifice everything—the prosperity of their lands, the welfare and property of their subjects, the lives of their wives, their sisters, their daughters—to their *idée fixe*.

This was the Europe in which Maximilian—despite everything one of the most human of these megalomaniacs—was to realize his unbridled dynastic egoism.

Margaret of York, herself bound to the triumphal car of the conquerors, had seen her foster-child and friend, Mary of Burgundy, a will-less pawn in their hands. Should Mary's daughter undergo the same fate? Already the difference in character between the gentle, somewhat indolent mother and the precocious child, returned from her French adventure hurt, indeed, but not broken, and ready now to meet any challenge, was making itself clear. Only externally was her fate separated from that of the French king. A deeper connection, not to be severed by human interference, held Margaret's future imprisoned in the spell of France. Her fate remained, as before, circumscribed by that of her former husband. It was Charles's chimerical crusade—Rome, Naples, Constantinople, Jerusalem—and his archaic chivalresque imagination that intervened in Margaret's existence.

Once before she had served to cement a peace with France. This time she was the obvious binder for the league that was to be formed against Charles, who had carried out his plan for an Italian campaign, and whose artillery, on New Year's Eve of 1494, caused the houses of Rome to quake and the hearts of the terrified Romans to tremble.

Rome was but a stopping-place for Charles, whose ambition reached toward the imperial crown of Byzantium and the conquest of Jerusalem. The Kingdom of Naples, ruled by princes of the House of Aragon, had first to be conquered. Without striking a single blow the French marched into Naples. They imagined themselves in a paradise. Was it necessary to go farther? Charles presented himself with the titles of King of Sicily and King of Jerusalem, decorated

himself with imperial insignia, rejoiced in the charms of Naples and of the Neapolitan beauties.

But in the North of Italy ambassadors of his recently pacified enemy, Maximilian, of his Italian friends who hated him, of Ferdinand the Catholic of Aragon, whose blood relations had been driven out of Naples, had met together with legates of the Pope. The League of Venice became a trap for the French king, and it became furthermore the basis of a collaboration between Ferdinand of Aragon and Emperor Maximilian that was to be of the greatest possible significance for the fate of Europe.

Not only of Europe. For the fate of the children of the two united rulers also, Juan and Juana of Aragon and Castile, Margaret and Philip of Austria-Burgundy, who were to provide living seals to this alliance.

Margaret's brother, Philip the Handsome, had been discharged from the guardianship of his father in September, 1494, and had begun his career as an independent Burgundian prince under omens that augured much good for the Low Countries. For years the restless Maximilian had not troubled himself about the education of his son, and the Burgundian lords who had been his tutors had pretty well failed to take account of the fact that someday Philip, in addition to the Low Countries, would also have to govern the hereditary Austrian lands. They had made a "Netherlandish" prince of him, and so thoroughly that they had not even had him learn the language of his father, of his Austrian possessions. Philip the Handsome was popular from the moment when, as the "natural ruler" of Burgundy, he held his joyous entries into the capital cities of his provinces. In the eyes of his subjects he had every advantage over Maximilian,

the foreigner, whose wars abroad for foreign interests had sucked the Netherlands money-tills dry. And under the influence of his Burgundian councilors the young Archduke accentuated the difference between his own policy and that of his father, the Emperor, so strongly that for the sake of peace with France he even maintained good relations with his former brother-in-law, Charles VIII, against whom Maximilian was busy forging the League of Venice.

In these circumstances marriage between Philip and Juana of Aragon and Castile on the one hand, of Margaret with the Spanish crown prince on the other, was a brilliant stroke on the part of Maximilian, who in this way tried to curb the pro-French policy of his all-too-Netherlandish son. And both son and daughter obeyed the head of their House.

The wheel of Margaret's fortune turned anew. After France, Spain. A foreign land that bore the mark of that mysterious continent, Africa. Another world to the Burgundian princess accustomed to the moderation of the Netherlands, the harmony of Touraine. Burning under a Moorish sky in summer, assailed by biting snowstorms in winter, a country in which the nobility had been but lately tamed under the royal couple, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, Spain in these years was being swept by the fire of Torquemada's Inquisition. After their marriage had welded the two kingdoms, the Catholic sovereigns undertook to clear the Iberian peninsula of all who did not believe in the one God, whose hallowed instruments they considered themselves to be. In order that Spain should become a single kingdom, ruled by a single ruling house, kneeling at a single altar. With this intent, Ferdinand and Isabella had turned their homeland into a battlefield, a prison, a smoking

funeral pyre. This was the country where Philip the Handsome had found a bride, and where Margaret's bridegroom was someday to possess the crown of Aragon and Castile.

The Spanish Infanta, Juana, was the first to undertake the journey to her bridegroom. A fleet of not less than one hundred and thirty ships was considered necessary to bear the young princess safely along the inimical French coast. A brilliant retinue surrounded her when she took leave of her mother, Queen Isabella, in the harbor of Laredo. Her trip to Flanders was full of adventure. Several of her ships foundered in the autumn storms that howled across the Channel. But the princess reached her destination unscathed, to fall a victim instead to the languishing charms of the handsome Philip.

The same fleet that had brought Juana was to carry Philip's sister to her new country. It was well understood that many dangers would threaten her upon her voyage: tempests and hurricanes and the risk of having to land on French territory, of falling into the hands of the enemies of Austria and Spain. But since it was known by experience how slight was the likelihood that the Church would uphold a marriage it had sanctified if it were not reinforced in a very human manner by the lovers themselves—Maximilian's marriage with Anne of Brittany still lay fresh in the memory—it seemed best nevertheless to let Margaret, as Princess of Castile, undertake her hazardous journey. A marriage ceremony was staged, and Maximilian honored his daughter, if not with his imperial presence, yet with many gifts. He sent her cloth of gold for her bridal dress and had her brother Philip present her with the two rings that Maximilian had given at his own wedding to Margaret's mother, his beloved Mary.

At Malines on the 5th of November, 1496, the Archduchess of Austria, within a few months of her seventeenth birthday, married her unknown Prince of the Asturias, who was represented by the Spanish emissary, Francisco de Rojas. On this dark winter's day the interior of the church of St. Peter shone with the light of a thousand candles as Margaret, radiant herself in her golden bridal gown and with a golden crown upon her red-gold hair, knelt before the altar. Her appearance did honor to her new royal title. Her new sister-in-law, Juana, made but a dull impression beside all this luster. It was whispered that in her first ecstasy over her husband she had already been broken by severe disillusionment.

Margaret's Spanish journey was to be full of tribulation. After her marriage all preparations for the voyage had been made, but the weather remained ominously bad and the Spanish admiral who bore the responsibility for the venture did not dare to leave the safe harbor of Flushing. At last, on the 22nd of January, 1497, the splendid company embarked. Archduke Philip himself escorted his sister on board, after spending a few days with her in the Abbey of Middelburg.

Scarcely had the fleet sailed out of the harbor when the storm that had been roaring up the Channel for weeks broke loose afresh, and the fragile vessels barely made the refuge of Southampton harbor. Three weeks they waited there for better weather, but when they set sail again despite a strong wind, the flagship bearing Margaret and her Burgundian escort collided with one of the other galleons. The princess was put into a small rowboat which, battered anew by the southwester, managed to take her back to Southampton.

A week later they tried again. The flagship took off first.

It became separated from the rest of the fleet, lolled about in a calm for a few days in the Bay of Biscay, and was then attacked once more by a gale, even worse than those that had been raging in the Channel. For days the Spanish seamen fought for the life of their crown princess. No one on board but had taken leave of his own life.

Even Margaret. And in the midst of her sick, desperately wailing ladies in waiting, she was able to summarize her own short existence as a princess with refreshing mockery in a two-line epitaph, which, it was said, she had someone bind to her hand, together with a purse of gold pieces for a royal burial:

> Cy-gist Margot, la gentil' damoiselle
> Qu'ha deux marys et encore est pucelle.
>
> (Here lies Margot, the gentle maiden
> Who had two husbands and is virgin still)

Not an epitaph alone, these words, but an avowal as well of an attitude that briefly outlines a personality. Among the primitively egocentric utterances of her fellow-rulers, "Margot" in the storms of Biscay reveals an ironical self-criticism, a humorous sense of proportion, that are the more surprising in a seventeen-year-old girl who could have known only the norms of princely pride. She was already more than Archduchess of Austria, Princess of the Asturias, Queen of Granada and Leon; she was a woman who in the face of death dared to express with a smile her belief in the relativity of all values.

Her ship was washed ashore at Santander, where no one expected her. Messengers hurried inland to announce the news of the arrival of the Princess, while Margaret with her

bruised and battered suite restored themselves to their official dignity.

After a few days she was welcomed by a procession of nobles, who had sent a caravan of mules in advance laden with tapestries and vessels of gold for her comfort. They then journeyed inland with their new mistress, and, six miles from Santander, Margaret at last encountered her young husband, who had come by rapid day stages with his father, King Ferdinand, to meet her.

Beside his robust and warlike father, the Prince of the Asturias seemed no more than a slender boy. He was nineteen, and his pale, narrow face with its dark-ringed, somewhat melancholy eyes was that of a young student rather than of a man of action. The too rapid journey on horseback had greatly fatigued him, and the solemnity of the moment evidently weighed upon him. Don Juan, fond of belles lettres and with a passion for music, was not happy at official receptions of this sort, least of all when he himself, instead of his royal parents, had to be the center of interest. With a still, set face he had watched the approach of the escort that was bringing him his life-companion.

He knew she was fair-haired and fair-skinned, but the immobile features of the court portrait that had been sent him could have given him no impression of the charm, the easy and natural manner Margaret always showed at a first meeting, and which fitted so little into the trammels of Spanish court etiquette that had smothered Juan's own spontaneity. Margaret did indeed follow closely the prescriptions of the protocol: she kissed the hand of King Ferdinand, though he politely sought to prevent her, and in this manner she also greeted her husband. But when clarions

and trumpets, tubas and horns thereupon let forth a blaring fanfare so loud and high that "one could not have heard the Lord thunder"—"tant extrême et fort haulte que l'on n'eusist peut oyr Dieu tonner"—she forsook her role of Spanish princess, unable to conceal her consternation at the sudden deafening noise. A smile crossed Juan's pale face, which Margaret answered with radiant frankness. Sinning against etiquette, she stole the heart of her husband, taught to consider etiquette more important than life itself.

The patriarch who had accompanied King Ferdinand and Don Juan now gave the young couple his blessing. The journey to Burgos was continued on horseback. Margaret, gracefully at ease upon her ambling palfrey, rode between the King and the Prince, stared at by farmers and burghers who had come to applaud and to admire their new crown princess from the North. Never had they seen their king so gracious and so charming as in the company of his lively daughter-in-law. Ferdinand, who saw to it that Queen Isabella—bearer of a royal crown in her own right, who unhesitatingly donned a coat of mail and mounted a charger when her troops needed exhortation—should in his presence ride a mule as more suitable to her inferior position of spouse, astonished courtiers and lackeys by himself assisting the Princess of the Asturias to dismount when she arrived at Burgos.

Much else happened on that day. All the southern Moorish splendor Spain could flaunt, the glory of her church treasures and holy relics, the enchantment of her palaces, the elegance and luxury of her court attire, all passed before the eyes of Margaret and her suite like scenes from the Arabian Nights. Together with the King she visited the

cathedral. Under a costly baldaquin, which the Governors of the city themselves held over their heads, they then proceeded to the city hall, all hung with gold-brocaded hangings and noble tapestries. There at last Margaret met the woman who had contributed even more than Ferdinand to the building of Spain's power: Isabella the Catholic, Queen of Castile and Aragon.

Ninety ladies in waiting, all in cloth of gold, surrounded the great queen as Margaret, graceful and distinguished in her toilette of French cut, entered the reception hall. She sank upon her knees before her mother-in-law and kissed her hands. Her attendant ladies also kissed hands, and thereafter the new Crown Princess herself had to submit to this formal greeting, ninety times extending her hand to a humbly kneeling figure, ninety times feeling the touch of respectful lips.

Next day was Easter. The royal family withdrew to the convent of the Holy Trinity, and it was on this quiet Sunday, amid the murmurs of the cloister's plashing fountains, that Don Juan's last reserves melted under the warm laughter of his foreign bride. Margaret, accustomed as she was to the sans-gêne of the Burgundian courtiers, the freedom of her Flemish ladies in waiting, was both surprised and touched by the embarrassed and retiring manner of the young Prince, whom she had looked upon as her husband ever since their first meeting. Had she not been united to him by God before the altar of St. Peter's in Malines—even if it had not been his slim young person that knelt beside her there, but the hardly attractive Francisco de Rojas? Did Juan really need to keep such a distance? She was too absorbed in the joy it gave her to look at him to be offended

by his ceremonious bearing, his prudery, at which she could only laugh.

On that first Sunday, in her excitement over the unexpected happiness she felt approaching, she forgot all the lessons in Castilian court etiquette that she had been taught. She called upon the help of her mother-in-law, who would certainly have more understanding of what was a young bride's due.

The Queen—whose adaptable genius enabled her to be whatever the hour demanded, so that she became diplomatist or mother, field marshal, economist or humble spouse, all according to circumstances—surrendered completely, during these hours in the convent garden of the Holy Trinity, to the happiness she saw awakening for her son. She recognized without hesitation in Margaret's natural, childlike openheartedness, in her joy of living above all, the qualities she had wished for in the wife of the serious, easily dejected Juan. In this Flemish daughter-in-law Isabella found an ally whom she was to support with all her influence as both mother and absolute monarch. The small company that had the privilege of sharing in the Easter celebration of the royal family was disturbed by the candor with which the new Crown Princess behaved like a gay friend of her Catholic Majesty, neglecting the family ceremoniousness with which the royal princesses always bore themselves so respectfully toward their mother.

Before the two women, his mother and his bride, Juan's shy reserve gave way. The lively blond girl from the North, with her flashing intelligence and her French wit, brought about what no Spanish beauty had been able to achieve. Juan fell in love.

Margaret's victory was as complete as it was sudden. That Easter Sunday in the Holy Trinity, filled with the sound of the convent bells and the playing of the many fountains, was to remain with her throughout her life of cares and responsibilities as a beginning so full of promises that no fulfillment would ever exceed its expectations.

On the Monday, at eight in the morning, in the intimacy of the convent chapel, the marriage of the young royal couple received the blessing of the church in all privacy, even in secrecy. Isabella's wisdom granted them a week of undisturbed happiness in the seclusion of Santa Trinidad before the tumult of the public wedding festivities should overwhelm the early shyness of their love. For after the Archbishop of Toledo had performed the official marriage ceremony in the cathedral of Burgos on the third of April, the young couple was swept along in such a maelstrom of celebrations, joyous entries, tournaments, bullfights, and banquets, that the single week they had been able to spend together paled to a shadow of recollection.

Margaret's invincible resilience withstood these weeks of festivity and happiness. Beside the frail figure of Don Juan she sparkled, tireless, in the legendary jewels Queen Isabella had pawned during the war against Granada and redeemed as a wedding gift to the bride of her only son. Margaret was joyfully hailed as the first woman to be queen over a united Spain, freed from the blemish of unbelief and heresy, a Spain to which the fabulous realms of the "Indians" discovered by Columbus were to offer uncounted treasures in tribute. The whole peninsula was jubilant over the princely couple, and Juan's elegant wife was continually

the center of all courtly ceremony, the magnetic focus of all admiration.

But what could scarcely affect Margaret's fair freshness seemed too much for Don Juan's frail constitution, accustomed to a careful equilibrium both physical and mental. The endless journeys on horseback, the receptions that compelled him to listen for hours to imposing speeches of princes of the church and pompous magistrates, the banquets that made no allowance for the very abstemious way of life necessary to his health—all this deepened the dark circles under his melancholy eyes and bowed his too slight figure in a posture of complete exhaustion. Blinded by the festivities, the honors, the pomp that surrounded her anew each day, carried away by her own feeling, to which Juan responded with all the recklessness of a first, a finally discovered passion, Margaret was too young, too egoistic, and above all too strong to comprehend what danger threatened her happiness. A few months after his marriage his physicians had become alarmed at the overfatigued condition of the Prince of the Asturias. They had called in the help of Queen Isabella, had begged her to separate the all too irresistible Crown Princess from her husband for a while. But the Queen refused to interfere between those whom, according to her honest conviction, God had united.

She had gone with King Ferdinand to Alcantara on the Portuguese border to celebrate the marriage of their daughter, the Infanta Isabella, with the King of Portugal, when the news reached her that her son, amid the festivities of his entry into Salamanca, had been attacked by fever and lay in danger of his life. Ferdinand left the same day, scarcely resting till he had reached Salamanca. He found Juan dying,

quite prepared for the end, full of a calm wisdom, a noble resignation. He recovered for a moment his happy smile of the last months, when he told his father that the Crown Princess was expecting a child—was perhaps to present an heir to the throne of united Spain. On October 4th, 1497, five months after his marriage and at the age of nineteen, he died.

Queen Isabella listened to the news of Don Juan's death with majestic self-command. Tall and erect amid her horrified ladies in waiting, her clear blue eyes fixed upon the tear-stained face of the messenger, she stood motionless before his sobs. "The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord", she whispered.

Consternation was indescribable throughout the land that had hailed the happy young royal couple. The whole population went into mourning for the Prince, from whom a reign of goodness and wisdom had been expected. The brothers of all the guilds in Aragon and Castile laid down their work for forty days. Rich and poor went about in black, the mules of important citizens wore mourning saddle-cloths that swept the ground. Black banners waved from all the city gates.

And Margaret? Her life seemed ended. She laid aside her gowns of gold brocade, in which Juan had loved best to see her, and donned a mourning dress of sackcloth. Her health gave way under the double strain of her grief and the pregnancy that now seemed to be her only reason for existence. It was always possible that she, the widow of one crown prince, might become the mother of another.

But the premature birth of a daughter, who died shortly

after, broke the last threads that had still bound her to Don Juan, to Spain. Isabella's motherly affection could not conceal the fact that Margaret, though Crown Princess Dowager and very popular with the Spanish people, had nevertheless become a foreigner. And she felt this the more deeply when new sorrow struck the King and Queen through the death of the Infanta Isabella, the Queen of Portugal, who had been heir to the Spanish crown since the death of Juan. Her son Miguel, Crown Prince of Portugal, whose birth had cost her her life, was recognized by Aragon and Castile as heir to the throne. But the little prince had been born under the disastrous constellation that now governed the life of Spain. He died when barely two. And the crowns of Aragon and Castile, of Granada and Leon, still worn by the two builders of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic monarchs, became the heritage of a tragic young woman, the Infanta Juana, "the Mad", whose life had but a single content: to let herself be ruled by her passion for that frivolous, inconstant, and irresistible husband, Philip the Handsome.

Thus Margaret's fate, which now seemed to be definitively separated from Spain, was once more to be drawn back into the orbit of Spanish history. For Juana, her sister-in-law, was soon to give birth to the prince who would be Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, King of Spain, and finally also Emperor of Germany: Charles V, whose rise to this last dignity was to be the work of his aunt, Margaret, the former Crown Princess of Spain. Thus were France and Spain, the two facets of Margaret's lost royalty, to continue coloring her life with their changing reflections.

Margaret's Spanish role was done for the moment. Yet she remained for two years more in the entourage of her

mother-in-law, perhaps of her own free will, perhaps too because Ferdinand was glad to have in his hands a weapon against his ally Emperor Maximilian, and particularly against his son-in-law, Duke Philip the Handsome, who after the death of the Infanta Isabella had appropriated the title of Prince of Castile and whose influence on his daughter Juana Ferdinand not unjustly feared.

At last, in September, 1499, the Crown Princess Dowager took leave of Granada and the Spanish court, to return to the Low Countries—robbed this time not alone of an ambition and an illusion, but of a love as well, and of the only child she was ever to bear.

Espoir j'ay ey partant de mon enffance,
Et tousjours ay et veulx avoir espoir
La ou l'ay mis, car vous debves scavoir,
Que tout mon bien il gist et mon avance.

Pour la source et bonne redevance
De tout malleurs que je pourroye avoir
Espoir j'ay eu.

Tout tant que j'ay, sans point de defaillance,
De la me vient, non pas de mon pouvoir;
Si peult l'on bien, par mes ditz, parcevoir
Que contre tous maleurs pour resistance
Espoir j'ay eu.

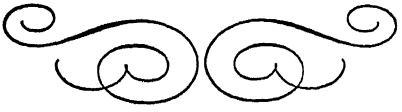
I have had hope ever since my childhood,
And have it still and want to have it there
Where I have laid it, for you should know that all
My welfare lies in it and my advantage.

As source and for good revenue
From all unhappiness that might befall me
I have had hope.

Whatever I have, and with no failing ever,
Comes to me thence, and not from my power;
Thus, by my words, one may indeed perceive
That against all misfortune for resistance
I have had hope.

CHAPTER FOUR

Duchess of Savoy



THROUGH Spain, where the people had acclaimed her as Crown Princess, through France, where once she had been hailed as Queen, the Princess Dowager of Castile journeyed back to the land of her birth. She had been permitted to take with her the gifts that Ferdinand and Isabella had showered upon her at her wedding. A train of heavily laden mules followed her on her tragic way through Spain. Priceless jewels, golden vessels, Moorish carpets and gold-interwoven tapestries, paintings and precious manuscripts made up her baggage. But Ferdinand had not wished to take the expenses of her journey upon himself and Margaret saw herself obliged to borrow money from Spanish merchants in order to reach the French border.

At Bayonne she was awaited by a magnificent Burgundian escort sent by her brother Philip. Familiar and trusted faces beamed upon her. With warm gratitude Margaret greeted Madame de Commines, her mother's former governess, who had been present at her birth and after her return from France had acted as her Mistress of the Robes.

The company moved northward by slow day stages. That Margaret this time traveled overland was the consequence of far-reaching shifts in European relations that had taken place during her sojourn in Spain. Not only there had death demanded its toll and played with crowns. Charles VIII of France, once Margaret's husband, had suddenly died in April, 1498. His marriage with Anne of Brittany had brought him neither happiness nor descendants. His successor, the Duke of Orleans, who called himself Louis XII, understood that he had better not neglect the wife of his predecessor if the French crown was not to lose anew the dukedom of Brittany. What more plausible than a marriage with the Queen Dowager? Anne, who still knew very well what she wanted, saw her opportunity. She accepted Louis' proposal, but under the provision that she alone should rule over Brittany and control the giving of all offices. Had the new Queen, as evil tongues alleged, actually been the new King's mistress when he was Duke of Orleans? The serious and homely Anne remained Queen of France and carried on her needlework. She knew more than the scandalmongers of the European courts. She worked at her embroidery and held her peace. And thought, perhaps, with some wistfulness of her romantic bridegroom Maximilian, whom fate had withheld from her.

He liked the Tyrol best, the hunter Maximilian. But the death of Charles VIII, who had once so grievously injured him, gave him the idea of more lasting prey than the chamois he was wont to pursue among the mountains. Had he not once called himself Duke of Brittany, when he thought Anne was to be his wife? Could he not derive some right to the duchy from that fact? But this butterfly of his imagina-

tion was too unreal even for Maximilian. He followed it for a while, but at the same time began to see still another possibility. Why not lay claim to the Duchy of Burgundy, his first wife's old inheritance which, being a male fief, had passed into French hands upon the death of Charles the Bold?

No wonder Louis XII did not even trouble to react to this absurd demand. But Maximilian, as of old, did not stop at demands if he thought himself in a position to take something. He sent troops into France, who could achieve nothing, however, since the French remained calmly inside their walled towns and gave no battle. Maximilian had hoped that his son Philip the Handsome would find the conquest of Burgundy, from which he borrowed his ducal title, an undertaking that deserved his sympathy and support. But he had reckoned without the Netherlandish influences at work upon the young prince. The Low Countries, most consistently, wanted peace with France, and a sudden attack to restore a loss that had hardly been noticed at the time made no appeal to them. On the contrary, Philip was already in negotiation with the new French king, and Maximilian was finally obliged to let himself be dissuaded from any aggressive step. For how, without becoming ridiculous, could he continue to stand up for Philip's rights when Philip himself had affirmed to Louis that so long as they both lived he would raise no claims to the dukedom of Burgundy? The powers with which he was allied—Spain, England, and the Pope—which could have helped him with his plan for a Burgundian war, left him in the lurch and signed a treaty with Louis XII. Venice as well let itself be roped in by Louis. So the Emperor remained alone in his hatred against France,

and he could not prevent his daughter from choosing to make her way home from Spain across that country, where, both as former Queen and as sister of Philip the Handsome, she received a sympathetic welcome.

Margaret's wearisome journey, which lasted from the end of September, 1499, till the beginning of March, 1500, was not yet at an end when she received the good news that her sister-in-law Juana had given birth to a son. She hastened her progress, arrived at Ghent on the 4th of March, and three days later functioned as godmother at the christening of the little prince, named Charles after the last Duke of Burgundy.

All of Ghent turned out for the stupendous celebration. So that the populace should be able to enjoy as much of the spectacle as possible, a continuous wooden platform, spanned by thrice thirteen triumphal arches, decorated with armorial shields and ten thousand flambeaux, had been erected from the ducal palace to the church of St. John. Along this flame-lit way, between the houses that glowed to their very roofs in the warm reflection from the hundreds of moving lights, the christening procession wound toward the church. Hundreds of high dignitaries, Knights of the Golden Fleece, members of the law courts, deans of the guilds, all with torches in their hands, passed by, followed by a few high nobles bearing the christening vessels. The enthusiasm of the multitude rose to its highest pitch as the widow of Charles the Bold, Madame la Grande, Margaret of York—who had also borne the father of the present child to the baptismal font—appeared with the little prince in her arms. Beside her walked the Princess Dowager of Castile in deep mourning. But the people scarcely heeded

her, for after her came Seigneur Jehan de Luxembourg carrying upon his arm Princess Aliénor, sister of the new Prince Charles, who had never been seen in Ghent before. The sight of that little face, staring in wonder at the wavering lights, drove the crowd into transports of joy.

Never before had the city of Ghent, so accustomed to festivity, seen such a spectacle, and till early morning the people milled through the streets, scrambling after silver coins strewn by rich burghers from their decorated dwellings and gazing at the lights, the velvet-draped houses, the suspension bridge all hung with lanterns and torches that connected the Belfort with the tops of the spires of St. Nicolas.

Margaret remained for a few weeks in the circle of her relatives, sharing their joy over the new heir to the throne and their concern about his mother Juana, who was showing ever more signs of what was later to be called her mental derangement. She lived in silent seclusion, no longer seeking consolation even in an exchange of letters with her parents. Even Margaret's arrival bringing news from Spain could not break through the sullen lethargy in which her spirit had sought refuge—from who knew what torments? Margaret, full of good will toward her apparently deeply unhappy sister-in-law, was unable to penetrate Juana's abnormal aloofness.

Was it Juana's wish that Margaret should not stay long at the court of Ghent? Or did Duke Philip prefer to isolate his lively and intelligent sister somewhat from Burgundian political circles? He hastened in any case to have the Chateau of le Quesnoy, south of Valenciennes, at a safe distance from

Flanders, made ready for her. He spared no expense to provide his sister with a residence to which she might retire in all dignity with the shades of her two royal crowns. The castle lay in the midst of a vast park, where Charles the Bold had attempted to keep camels and dromedaries. Philip supplied a less exotic menagerie: stags and fleet-footed deer were introduced, whose graceful silhouettes were to delight the Princess of Castile on her morning walks.

Margaret still bore this title, as she still wore her mourning and her grief for the young lover who had been her husband. But she knew that her father and her brother were busy once more preparing a new move that should shortly displace her into a fresh field of the European chess tournament. While she was still staying at the Spanish court the first rumors of a prospective marriage for the Emperor's daughter had already raised their heads in diplomatic dispatches. Louis XII had been mentioned, who had just arranged to divorce his wife, Jeanne of France. Louis, however, had rejected his consort not for the sake of the fair Margot, his playmate in the days of Amboise, but for that of the dukedom of Brittany, which the Queen Dowager Anne kept in her workbasket.

Other candidates for Margaret's hand had also been named: first, Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, surnamed il Moro, a faithful ally of Maximilian. Margaret was still on her way through France to Flanders when the Spanish ambassador in London informed her father-in-law, King Ferdinand, that the King of Scotland appeared to have plans for a marriage with the Princess of Castile. And a few months later the same diplomat named Arthur, Prince of Wales, who was engaged to Margaret's sister-in-law, the Infanta

Catherine of Spain. This report decided Ferdinand to send Catherine to England as soon as possible, to forestall Prince Arthur's entering with another woman into the "unbreakable marriage" to which he had solemnly bound himself.

These must have been exciting years for the scheming Maximilian, these years in which he could once again dispose of his daughter's hand. Was it perhaps more advantageous to marry her off to Vladislav, King of Hungary? The proposal to this monarch was already on its way. And meanwhile Margaret, powerless to take her fate into her own hands, wandered like a prisoner among the deer of le Quesnoy and awaited which was to be her lot: Scotland or England or Hungary?

While Maximilian hesitated between countless possibilities, Philip the Handsome settled the matter. Now that his wife had become the only heir to Spain, he wished to go to that country as soon as possible to have himself recognized as the prospective ruler of Castile and Aragon. To this end peace with France was essential. Untroubled by the continuously anti-French policy of his father, Philip was able to set the seal upon such a peace by the betrothal of his small son Charles to the recently born daughter of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany, Claude de France. And for his sister Margaret the diplomatic Philip made a choice with which both Louis of France and the Emperor Maximilian could agree: the young Duke Philibert of Savoy.

Whether Margaret also showed satisfaction with this arrangement may be doubted. For when Philip the Handsome presented her with a document to sign in which she was to declare that no form of pressure had been used upon her, Margaret refused to set her name to it. By this action she

showed herself to be no longer the totally will-less pawn of whom ambition and arrogance could dispose at pleasure. But she still lacked the courage to oppose this new marriage which Philip for his own selfish political reasons forced upon her.

The Dukedom of Savoy, whither Margaret now saw herself bound, stretched in a wealth of varied climate and landscape from Macon in the wine-clad fields of Burgundy, along the borders of France and Provence, to Nice on the Mediterranean. It was bounded on the east by the Swiss confederacy and the dukedom of Milan, and its situation gave it the greatest strategic importance, especially at the time when a much-divided Italy exercised an irresistible attraction upon the robber-barons north of the Alps. Not only Louis XII of France but the Emperor Maximilian as well was bound to appreciate the need of living at peace with this important buffer state, which could close off the approach to the Italy they coveted.

The ducal House of Savoy had for more than half a century been under predominantly French influence. The young Duke who was to become Margaret's third husband enjoyed an annuity from the French king, and his sister Louise of Savoy, married to Charles of Valois, earl of Angoulême, was later to see her son ascend the throne of France as Francis I.

This was the country and the ruling house that Philip of Burgundy had picked out for his sister. And Philibert, the Duke?

He was some months younger than Margaret, and carried his name of "the Handsome" with the graceful ease of a

Museum Chateau de Versailles

Margaret of Austria at the Age of Three. Anonymous artist.

Private collection, France

Margaret of Austria at the Age of Ten. Anonymous artist.

perfectly built athlete. Philibert was a fairy-tale prince, for whom life meant an uninterrupted series of festivities, of tournaments, hunting parties, balls, and banquets. He was a whirlwind of a fellow, unable to hold out for very long in any one place, avoiding repose and routine and skating over the ice of his international relations with a flourish. His people adored him for his youth and strength, his radiant, daredevil spirits, his happy-go-lucky sensuality that could enjoy all the good things of this earth. Life smiled upon him. He did not need to bother with affairs of state and other boring business, for fate had blessed him with a bastard brother who desired nothing more than to take over the task of governing. Philibert thanked heaven and his sensible father, and went on dancing.

In body and mind he was the complete opposite of the pale, learned, spiritual Infante Juan of Castile who had taught Margot from Flanders what love meant and whom she had worshiped for all his endearing qualities of poet and dreamer, for his dark, always weary good looks, for his utter devotion, given to herself alone. Could Margaret ever have chosen such a contrast of her own accord? But her brother had decided—she had to go where he sent her.

The marriage contract was signed at Brussels on September 26, 1501. Philip promised his sister a dowry of two hundred thousand pounds Flemish, to be paid in ten yearly installments at Geneva. The Duke of Savoy pledged her, in case she survived him, an annuity of twelve thousand gold *écus* out of income from certain earldoms. He himself gracefully accepted the Order of the Golden Fleece, awarded him by the Duke of Burgundy, and named his half brother, the Grand Bastard René, as his representative at the marriage,

which according to custom was to be solemnized by proxy.

And so Margaret once again took leave of her grandmother Margaret of York, of her brother Philip and his taciturn wife Juana, of the little Princess Aliénor and the little Crown Prince Charles, of her ladies in waiting and her courtiers, and for the third time in her young life undertook a journey of many weeks to an unknown husband. She went through France, where this time too she was received with festivities, gifts, and sweetmeats. In this spirit the population of Rheims went to meet her in solemn procession with an offering of four vats of hippocras, a stag, a wild boar, does, peacocks, pheasants, partridges, hares, and rabbits. Every day had its picnic feasts, washed down with the excellent wine of the country, for all along the royal route names of the noblest vineyards of France gave forth their fragrance. Almost daily new carts heavily laden with barrels joined the baggage train accompanying the Duchess. For the courteous French magistrates with gracious generosity defrayed the costs of transport for the wine Madame could not consume on the spot.

On November 22nd Margaret met the Grand Bastard of Savoy at Dôle, and a few days later the marriage in which he stood proxy for his half brother was performed by the bishop of Lausanne. It was a simple ceremony, and Margaret, with womanly tact, wore a black velvet tabard lined with black lamb's wool, without, however, appearing to be in mourning, as Molinet the chronicler, who had a flair for the nuances of fashion, reported with much appreciation.

But after the church ceremony Margaret could regard herself as the Duchess of Savoy and freed from the mourning she had been wearing for the last four years for the

Infante Juan. At the ball given that evening she appeared again for the first time in the glowing gold brocade that so became her, and only the cut of her gown, designed in the Spanish fashion, recalled her Castilian past. When she left her room to go to the ballroom a jewelled girdle, set with diamonds, rubies and pearls, was presented to her in the name of Duke Philibert.

The Grand Bastard appeared to be a most engaging talker and an excellent dancer. And the somewhat ridiculous ceremony that took place after supper was carried out in a spirit of lighthearted comedy and playful coquetry. In her golden bridal gown, Margaret had to stretch out upon a bed of state set up in the reception hall, and the Grand Bastard laid himself down beside her in his costly suit, which, however, did not make a very neat impression since, by the demands of protocol, he had been obliged to bare one of his legs. A throng of courtiers filled the hall in which this ceremony was going forward, and they much admired the easy grace with which the two principals behaved in their singular situation. They jokingly exchanged a few polite words, after which the Grand Bastard got up from the bed and asked his sister-in-law for a kiss, which was granted him. And to close this idyllic scene in style, he went down on his knees before the bed and declared himself the humble servant of his Duchess.

Margaret, remembering in what a helpless manner the representative of her Spanish husband had acquitted himself of his task when obliged to act out the same nuptial comedy, was completely charmed by the courteous Savoyard. She bade him rise, said good night, presenting him with a fine diamond ring, and they both withdrew—"Madame le fit

lever", says Molinet, "et, en disant bonne nuit, lui donna une bonne bague de dyamant, et chescun se retira".

And after that, the meeting with her new husband, in a convent not far from Geneva.

The moment Philibert rode through the convent gate his zest for life set the tone. Hardly had he greeted his bride and refreshed himself after the trip on horseback, when the ball began, while the convent church was made ready for the wedding. They danced till midnight, after which the gay company attended the ceremony, conducted by the bishop of Maurienne.

Again Margaret had been married in a convent—but what a difference between this boisterous, scarcely conventual party and the quiet days in Santa Trinidad! The first weeks of her stay in Savoy were taken up with such a dizzying whirl of feasts and receptions that she hardly had time to take in her new surroundings, let alone acquaint herself more thoroughly with the character of this young and most fascinating prince, whom all the women envied her.

It began with her entry into Geneva. Geneva, where at that moment one could hardly move through the streets, either afoot or on horseback, barred as they were by the countless platforms that had been set up. Upon these were exhibited the most extraordinary allegorical representations, unrestrained in their bizarreness, past which the new Duchess, seated on a white palfrey with saddlecloth of gold, held her glorious progress. Iron trees, lacquered in blue and gold, upheld with difficulty enormous blossoms that bore inside their calyxes living figures representing Margaret's forebears in their imperial and royal finery. Wild men and women

frightened the onlookers with their grimaces. Mountain landscapes, decked with snow-covered pine forests, moved by, and on the topmost pinnacle of a tower of Babel a lone figure waved a banner with the arms of Savoy.

It was overwhelming. The abundance of Flanders, the riches of Spain, the luxuries of France, all were overshadowed by the extravagance of this entry into Geneva.

Banquets and tournaments followed, and there was dancing, dancing. This was how life should be, according to Philibert, radiant in his reckless beauty beside his ravishing wife. Only with reluctance did he at last give his consent to the departure of Margaret's Burgundian escort, which, elated over so much homage, such entertainment, was finally obliged to part from all these delights in order to return to Flanders.

After the guests had gone Margaret and Philibert visited a great number of cities in the duchy, which received them with festivities and gifts. But such receptions succeeded each other at increasing intervals. Things quieted down around the young couple and at last Margaret had an opportunity to learn to know her new consort, her new surroundings, somewhat better.

Philibert was indeed no stranger to her any more. Perhaps she did not guess, was never to guess, the emptiness that lay hidden beneath his restless gaiety, his craving for variety, for ever-new stimuli. His good looks, his charm, his untiring youth blinded her to the shallowness that lay beneath all this brilliance. With her adaptability, cultivated by much experience, it cost her no effort to fit in with his capriciousness of a pampered charmer, and Philibert helped by being passionately in love, which pleased and flattered her. Mar-

garet's Flemish ways, her zest for life, her inclination to luxury and show, her robust humor, her straightforward sensuality found an echo in this gay beau who was her husband. And what she had scarcely dared to hope began to happen: the past with all its tears grew dim. She blossomed in a new happiness, perhaps less sudden and overwhelming, but riper and more harmonious than her feeling for Juan could ever have become in the few months of their life together.

But Margaret was more than a good dancer, a liberal and laughter-loving mistress, an entertaining table companion. She had been brought up by the Regent of France, Anne de Beaujeu, and had known and admired Isabella of Spain, but she had also seen the humiliating misery of Juana, the helpless slave of a husband as irresistible as Philibert. The rush of festivities attendant upon her wedding had barely died down when Margaret discovered that another task lay in reserve for the Duchess of Savoy than that of being playmate to the Duke—a task in which Philibert would never take an interest and which he had with careless unconcern allowed to slip from his hands: the task of government.

It was René, the Grand Bastard of Savoy, who with cunning amiability and unlimited ambition had managed to take all cares of state from Philibert's elegant shoulders. He was lieutenant general of the dukedom and in fact absolute ruler over the country, which he regarded as a personal conquest of his own.

The discovery that her husband had not the slightest influence in his own territory filled Margaret with alarm and indignation. She dealt with the Grand Bastard swiftly and effectively. Charged with having conspired with the dangerous Swiss, he saw himself condemned as a traitor to his coun-

try, robbed of his dignity and his possessions and even of the letters of legitimacy granted him a few years earlier by the Emperor. From this first political struggle, which she had conducted with all the means her injured pride had inspired her to find and with all the force of her strong will, Margaret emerged as conqueror and absolute monarch of Savoy. Had her accusation of the Grand Bastard been grounded on a real misdeed? Or was she already making use, in this her first political appearance, of those means justified by their end of which her generation always knew how to avail themselves with so much ingenuity?

However this might be, after the defeat of the Grand Bastard, who sought refuge at the French court, the skies of Savoy seemed to shine cloudless above the young ducal couple. Philibert amused himself, and Margaret was the perfect consort, missing no single ball or tournament, joining in every hunting party. Margaret on horseback, with her ivory hunting horn on a bandoleer over her shoulder, was a picture of sportive elegance, the pride of Philibert, whom she never left out of her sight for a moment, for fear that, without her admonishments, he might overdo his hunter's recklessness.

Tourneys and hunting parties and feasts might fill Philibert's life, but to Margaret they were only a pastime. Her real interest, which with the years was to grow into a passion that completely absorbed her, lay elsewhere. Affairs of state, and foreign policy in particular, fascinated her. The chateau of Pont d'Ain, where she spent most of her time, became the center of the political life of Savoy, the young Duchess with a small number of highly capable secretaries and councilors wielding the actual power, while the Duke

basked in the sun of his popularity and, amused at the masculine interests of his so very feminine consort, gladly left the worry of governing to her.

Margaret did not limit her attention to Savoy alone. The quiet of the ideally situated castle gave her ample opportunity to go more deeply into the stirring political events, to make a study of the relative powers of the rulers who held Europe in the grip of their unscrupulous ambitions. And though she was not yet strong enough to interfere in the game in which until now she had been little more than a pawn, the Duchess of Savoy was in a better position than any of the robber-baron kings to judge and even to foresee the clashes between their interests, and above all between their characters. For she had an advantage over them: while they scarcely knew one another, Margaret knew most of them from personal contact. Her woman's intuition, sharpened by humiliations, and the intelligent use of her special experience had given her, young as she was, an insight such as few of her contemporaries could achieve. The Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was her father and she knew him as it were by instinct. The Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Handsome, was an open book to his sister, although her active life had for the most part kept her far from him. She knew France, the French mind, the French king, as well as the great enemy of France, Ferdinand of Aragon, whose political methods she had been able to learn from his gifted consort, Queen Isabella.

In addition to all this rich experience she possessed one privilege that was more powerful the less it was known and recognized: she was a woman. She disposed over invisible, silent weapons, while these belligerent potentates rocked

Europe with their war cries. Tact, insight, flexibility that is stronger than the strongest fortress, intuition and charm, womanly levelheadedness and common sense made up the arsenal upon which she was to base her power. Margaret, with velvet gloves and a smile on her lips, was often to appear more powerful than the plumed and armored figures of her masculine opponents.

During her years of study in Savoy she knew how to surround herself with a few excellent advisers and assistants, whose admiration bound them inseparably to her. There was in the first place the jurist Mercurio de Gattinara, head of her Privy Council, a shrewd judge of human nature, a refined stylist and an untiring worker, who was to rise in her service to Grand Chancellor of Castile, finally to Cardinal. The amiable Louis Barangier, who acted as her secretary during the years in Savoy, had previously accompanied her to Spain and had been her chamberlain after her return to the Low Countries. Her second secretary, Jean de Marnix, grandfather of Marnix of St. Aldegonde, the great poet and musician of the Netherlands, was never to leave her till her dying day. He became her treasurer-general and was her principal assistant in foreign affairs, in which his influence was widely sought and often royally rewarded.

With these three faithful and devoted collaborators at her side, the Duchess of Savoy pursued her study of international events and their significance. After her departure from the Netherlands it had been primarily the activity of her brother, Archduke Philip, that had attracted the attention of the courts of Europe. His position and his prestige were radically changed after the inheritance of the Spanish lands had fallen to his wife, the helpless Juana—that is to

say, to the ambitious Philip. His policy, which up to this time had been purely Netherlandish and hence in opposition to the dynastic interests defended by his father, Maximilian, also changed under the influence of the powerful territories, spread over the whole of Europe, that were to be united in his hands. Austria, the Netherlands, Aragon and Castile, Granada and Leon, Naples and Sicily, and the undefined realms of the New World Columbus had added to Spain's possessions—all this would in future come to Philip. The fact that Ferdinand and Isabella were still alive prevented the immediate exercise of his world power, but this in no way restricted his pretentions. In the company of his wife, the real heir to the throne, he traveled across France to Spain, in order to receive the homage of the Cortes as prospective king. On his return, he went twice from Lyon to visit his sister, at the castle of Pont d'Ain and at Bourg-en-Bresse, where Duke Philibert provided a rich variety of amusements, while Margaret made use of the opportunity to compare her views on international relations with those of her brother, the "Prince of Castile". She entirely approved of Philip's policy of an always closer rapprochement with France and must undoubtedly have encouraged him in his endeavor to bring Maximilian also, whose dislike of everything French had gradually become second nature to him, into the camp of Louis XII. From Savoy Philip moved on to the Tyrol, where in fact he was able to win his father over to this policy. The Treaty of Blois, concluded in September, 1504, between Maximilian, Philip, and Louis, announced the miracle that these three autocrats were henceforth to be a single soul in three bodies.

September, 1504, month of glory and triumph for Philip the Handsome, brought the deepest misery to his sister Margaret.

It had been a scorchingly hot, dry summer. The hazy blue distances that had made the terraces of Pont d'Ain famous seemed to be shrouded in a film of burnt brown. It was too warm to eat, too warm to hunt, too warm to dance. Philibert, visibly suffering under his enforced lack of activity, begged Margaret like a spoiled, obstinate child to grant him but a single day of hunting pleasure, if she did not want him to die of boredom, sicken for want of exercise. Margaret argued that he must be careful, must spare himself for her sake, his servants and his horses for theirs. Philibert yielded, sulking: this was no life for a man, hanging round all day among his wife's ladies in waiting, being burdened by her councilors, who thought they should consult him if he was always within range. The heat, the ducal impatience made the otherwise so harmonious atmosphere of Pont d'Ain oppressive and restless.

Until one fine day Margaret weakened and restrained him no longer. Philibert, happy as a child, made plans for a boar hunt in the environs of the castle. It was one of the first days of September and even early in the morning the sun was burning over the withered countryside of Bresse with a tropical intensity. The hunting horns echoed through the park of Pont d'Ain. The triumphant sound drew further and further away. Quiet reigned in the halls and rooms of the castle, where Margaret's secretaries were beginning their day's routine of state affairs.

The day passed in silence. The Duchess worked undis-

turbed. Until in the afternoon a messenger came to inform her that at his midday meal the Duke had been attacked by a sudden and serious indisposition. In a panic of fear the Duchess heard out the story of what had happened.

After hunting all morning at a pace which the other knights had not been able to maintain in the oppressive heat, the Duke had finally arrived, exhausted and perspiring, at the spring where the company was to meet for lunch.

Gasping with fatigue, he had thrown himself upon the ground in the shade and demanded beaker after beaker of the ice-cold spring water, and had drunk in so rapid and uncontrolled a manner that his nobles had repeatedly cautioned him. Shortly thereafter, an excruciating stitch in the side made him writhe, and before the end of the meal it was clear that the Duke could not continue the hunt. With the greatest circumspection he was brought home by his companions.

Physicians were hastily summoned. But when they finally arrived from Bourg, they found the Duke already in mortal danger, and their primitive science was powerless against the inflammation of the lungs which in a few days brought the young athlete to the edge of the grave. In vain Margaret tried to do something to save him. She spent whole nights praying, made solemn vows to undertake distant pilgrimages, if her life's joy might only be preserved. She had her priceless pearl necklaces crushed to powder, and the doctors prepared a drink, worth fortunes, but useless. Margaret had to be told that there was no longer any hope of saving her husband's life. Her own was saved by her courtiers when in her despair she attempted to throw herself from a window.

It seemed as if the young Duchess would not survive her husband. With the same passionateness with which she had been happy, she gave herself over to a despairing grief. She refused to be parted from the dead body, and her courtiers, dreading lest her reason could not withstand this strain, kept close watch over her day and night for fear she might again attempt to take her own life.

But her healthy nature kept the upper hand. Countless decisions, formalities, and regulations which she had to obey demanded her attention. She was not only a deeply unhappy woman—she was at the same time, for the moment, still the ruling head of Savoy, although Philibert had been succeeded in name by another half brother, Charles III, an insignificant youth of eighteen. The problems that came up for settlement were still submitted to the judgment of the Dowager Duchess. The reading of masses, the burial of the deceased, the national mourning, were all cares that compelled Margaret to wrench herself away from her sorrow.

She answered with the greatest decision the question of where the mortal remains of the Duke should be laid to rest. On his deathbed Philibert had reminded her of the vow his mother had taken in order to save the life of his father, Philibert of Bresse, when in 1440 he lay at death's door because of a hunting accident. This sacred promise included the condition that the Duchess would restore the old Benedictine cloister of Brou that lay just outside Bourg-en-Bresse and that through poverty and neglect had fallen into ruin.

Philibert's mother, Marguerite de Bourbon, had not redeemed the promise and Margaret, reminded in so tragic an hour of this debt, resolved to carry out what her mother-in-

law had failed to do. The cloister of Brou was to be reconstructed and the simple chapel in which Marguerite de Bourbon lay buried, to be rebuilt into a worthy mausoleum for the man who had given Margaret a few years of happiness.

Six days after his death Philibert's embalmed body was brought to Brou and laid beside his mother. His heart—that tempestuous heart with which he had loved good living and his fair young wife—Margaret kept at the castle of Pont d'Ain, where she was still to stay frequently during the next two years. She remained for the time being in Savoy, where she had been happy and where countless spiritual and practical cares continued to demand her presence. Six months after Philibert's death she acquired the first pieces of ground for the construction of his mausoleum, and appointed the contractors who were to carry out the first stages of the work. The rapid realization of her plans brought with it from the start enormous expenses that had to be met from the proceeds of her dower. The regulation of this matter, however, brought Margaret into conflict with the new Duke of Savoy, young Charles III, who could not share his sister-in-law's concept of her place and her task in his country.

Margaret's commanding nature did not adapt itself to the fact that together with Philibert and her married happiness she had lost the task of governing, which had filled her days in these last three years, had kept her mind busy, and had satisfied her ambition. She, the Dowager Duchess, no longer had any right whatever to the place that Philibert had so gladly left to her.

For the domains that had been in part promised to her at her marriage, in part given her later by Philibert, were only the guarantee of her annuity, and she could no longer exer-

cise governmental control over them. Young Charles III was, it is true, still less capable of ruling independently than Philibert had been, but this did nothing to alter the fact that in any case the helm must be taken out of the widowed Duchess's hands. Nevertheless Margaret saw in the circumstance that Charles was no more than an awkward and helpless child a possibility of being awarded sovereign power at least over the lands of her dower. She actually succeeded in coming to an agreement with the intimidated young Duke, thanks to the fact that she was able to bring the authority of her father, the Emperor, to bear on the case. Thus Margaret by the Treaty of Strasbourg retained Bresse, Faucigny, and Vaud, where she continued to dispose of the most important offices and where the conduct of internal affairs remained in her hands. Only the highest judicial power continued to lie with the Duke, who set the further condition that Vaud should under no circumstances whatever be separated from the dukedom of Savoy.

Margaret's position as Dowager Duchess of Savoy appeared to have been satisfactorily settled. Yet the future was to make clear how much room the Treaty of Strasbourg left for chicanery on the part of Duke Charles, which Margaret opposed with the resolute energy of her ever increasing authority. "My lord brother is listening to wrong advice to treat us in this manner", she once wrote in later years to one of Charles' advisers concerning the experience she had been having with her brother-in-law, "and whoever it is who gives him these counsels has neither his advantage nor his honor in view, and in this way he will lose more than he can ever gain. You should know that we have no inclination to tolerate such things, which dishonor and harm and grieve

us. If my lord brother thinks that by such unmannerly treatment he can reduce us and put his intentions through, he has the wrong idea. For all that we are a woman, our heart is of a different nature, and we cannot do any good to those who work us harm"—"Car jaçoit que soyons femme, si avons le coeur d'aultre nature. . . ."

This woman's heart of hers that wanted to be happy and to make others happy, that had rejoiced in expectation, only to be hurt again and again, this heart Margaret had buried in the church of Brou, at which she was to build for five and twenty years before she should herself at last be laid to rest there.

But she never forgot the song that heart had taught her, and whenever it came to her mind in the long years in which she "could do no good to those who work us harm", a gentleness came over her of which the pages of her poetry albums speak:

Le temps m'est long et j'ay bien le pourquoy,
Car ung jour m'est plus long qu'une sepmaine,
Dont je prie Dieu que mon corps tost ramainne
Ou est mon cueur qui n'est plus avec moy. . .

Time is long to me and I have reason,
For one day to me is longer than a week,
So I pray God to bring my body soon
To where my heart is that is no longer with me. . .

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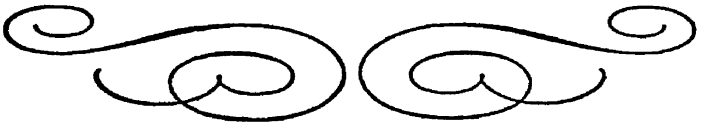


Tant que je vive, mon cueur ne changera
Pour nul vivant, tant soit il bon ou saige,
Fort et puissant, riche, de hault lignaige:
Mon chois est fait, aultre ne se fera.

Il peult estre que l'on devisera;
Mais ja pour ce ne muera mon couraige,
Tant que je vive.

Jamais mon cueur a l'encontre n'yra;
D'ung franc vouloir l'en ay mis en ostaige;
De l'en oster point ne suis si voulaige;
Ou je l'ay mis a toujours mais sera,
Tant que je vive.

Long as I live, my heart will never change
For no man living, though he be wise and good,
Strong, powerful and rich, and of high lineage:
My choice is made, different it will not be.

Quite possibly there will be whisperings;
Nevertheless they'll not disturb my courage
Long as I live.

Counter to this my heart will never go;
Of a free will in hostage have I placed it;
To take it thence, so fickle am I not;
Where I have laid it, it evermore shall be,
Long as I live.

CHAPTER FIVE

Regent of the Netherlands

MONOTONE and imperturbable, the Ain rippled along the terraces and vineyards of the castle, and the same sound of steadily flowing water that had once formed the accompaniment to such harmonious happiness now rang as undertone to Margaret's sorrow.

The costly gala dresses hung unused in her wardrobe. Her jewels, her pearl-broidered caps of gold brocade, all the golden ornaments with which she had so gladly enhanced her fairness, lay neglected behind the heavily studded doors of her cupboards. On the few occasions when the Dowager Duchess left the safe seclusion of Pont d'Ain she appeared in black, without jewelry. A close-fitting white widow's cap covered the ruins of the golden hair for which she had been so much admired and which, as a most personal expression of mourning, she had cut off. This cap of finely pleated batiste Margaret was never again to exchange for any more worldly headdress. Never again was she to display her greatest beauty. Though she did let her hair grow again, it re-

mained concealed under the white gossamer linen that for years was to be her only finery. And thus, in black, her pale face bordered by the widow's cap, Pieter van Coninxloo painted her at the castle of Pont d'Ain, at her brother Philip's command.

This moving portrait was not intended for Philip himself. He needed it for the complicated plans that filled his program since, through the death in November, 1504, of his mother-in-law, Queen Isabella, her royal crown had become his own. Philip the Handsome, King of Castile, had acquired other interests than those of Philip the Handsome, Prince of Castile. He was preparing for a journey to Spain, so that the Cortes might render him homage as their ruler.

The fleet bearing the royal couple was, however, cast upon the English coast by storms. Philip fell into the power of the English king, Henry VII, and in this critical situation he did not hesitate to sacrifice to his dynastic policy, which Henry would have to support, one of the most essential interests of the Low Countries, the favorable trade agreement with England of 1496. A new agreement was concluded, the advantage of which lay entirely on the English side. "Intercursus malus", the Netherlanders called it, and it was to be sealed by two marriages. The young Burgundian Crown Prince Charles, formerly betrothed to Claude de France, was to marry Henry VII's daughter, Princess Mary Tudor —and Henry himself, but lately widowed, fell in with the idea of letting the last years of his avaricious, money-seeking life be cheered by a young and wealthy widow: Philip's sister Margaret.

This had in any case been for some time the wish of the King of Castile, and the portrait that van Coninxloo came

to Pont d'Ain to paint was intended to give the sickly old miser an impression of the charms of his prospective wife.

Margaret let herself be painted—but about a marriage she thought no more. While at Pont d'Ain she was devoting her whole attention to the plans for the cloister and the church at Brou, Philip the Handsome in March, 1506, signed the contract that was to make her Queen of England. But Margaret had matured from a child under guardianship with no say in her own affairs into a person who knew very well what she wanted. She refused to let herself be used any longer in the political game of which she had now mastered the rules herself. Her father and her brother had traded her off three times, she said bitterly, and not once had she stood to benefit. And while acrimonious letters passed back and forth between Philip the Handsome, Maximilian, and Henry VII, while the Emperor worked himself up over the fact that Margaret's refusal would cause him to lose the subsidy Henry, his son-in-law-*in-spe*, was to have given him so that he could at last get himself crowned in Rome—Margaret sat in her quiet castle, bowed over the drawings of Brou, her heart filled with memories, her head full of plans for Philibert's mausoleum.

The pledge she had taken over from her mother-in-law included primarily the reconstruction of the cloister at Brou, and for this Margaret did in fact destine the first available, still very modest funds. In place of the Benedictines who had abandoned the dilapidated structure, some Augustinian monks came from Lombardy to give their advice, and under their influence the simple sketches changed into plans for a roomy and sunny convent. The monument to the dead must give way before a home for the living, and of the new church

only the first stone had so far been laid. It was Margaret herself who, on August 28, 1506, carried out this ceremony in a pouring summer rain.

Her creation at Brou, growing slowly under her continual supervision, gave Margaret a deep satisfaction and was her consolation in the lonely years before she was called to the task that later was to absorb her completely. Here at Pont d'Ain, where the sound of the river was never drowned out by noises of festivity, Margaret built herself a new existence, a new content for her life, among the books and manuscripts of her ever growing library, among the animals, the dogs and birds, to which she gave her affection, among the building plans and drawings of Brou. Whereas during Philibert's life she had been surrounded by nobles and courtiers, her court now took on a more and more artistic and cultural stamp. It was in this period of her life that she found the versatile device in which the dissonance of her disasters resolved itself into a harmony that could once again be hopeful: *Fortune, Infortune, Fortune.* The insight born of suffering showed Margaret new values in life, and for all her loneliness she discovered herself sometimes richer than before. . . .

Until in the autumn of 1506 the disconcerting news flew through Europe, penetrating to the castle of Pont d'Ain, that the King of Castile, Philip the Handsome, had suddenly died at Burgos on the 25th of September. He had dined in the Carthusian monastery of Miraflores, had played pelota after the meal, and had become very much overheated. After that he had drunk cold spring water. . . . Few particulars were needed to make clear to the Dowager Duchess the course

things had taken. The death of that other young prince, also surnamed the Handsome, remained engraved in her memory with all its cruel details. And when rumors hissed through all the European courts that Philip the Handsome had been poisoned at Burgos at the instigation of his father-in-law, Ferdinand of Aragon, Philip's sister was not among those who attached any belief to them. Had she not once before seen a strong young life ebb away under her very eyes, seen the cleverest physicians powerless against a sickness stronger than the treachery of poison?

The death of her brother struck Margaret while she was still barely restored from the loss of Philibert. She gave expression to this new sorrow in a few lines of verse, not in French, in which she often set down her feelings with a melancholy grace, but in the much more disciplined Latin, which lends a stern dignity to her plaint:

Ecce iterum novus dolor accedit
nec satis erat infortunatissime Caesaris filiae
conjugem amisisse dilectissimum
nisi etiam fratrem unicum
mors acerba surriperet.
Doleo super te frater mi, Philippe
Rex optime,
nec est qui me consoletur.

Behold once more new sorrow falls
nor was it enough in utmost misfortune to lose
the husband deeply beloved of Caesar's daughter
without bitter death now snatching
her sole brother.
I grieve for you, brother mine, Philip
best of Kings,
nor is there anyone who can console me.

"Nor is there anyone who can console me". More cruel than the new loss was the lack of any consolation that might have mitigated it, and the loneliness that could not be shared with any equal.

In the midst of her mourning life challenged Margaret, and a task was laid upon her which in the eyes of today seems unbearably heavy for a young woman of six-and-twenty. Through the death of Philip the Handsome a minor child—later to be called Charles V—had become master of the Low Countries. And once more, as at the death of Mary of Burgundy, Maximilian, grandfather of Prince Charles, was designated regent of the Burgundian provinces. Although the Emperor had expected it would cost him a hard fight to be recognized as guardian and regent by the States General of the Netherlands, who still looked on him as a foreigner, this happened without much friction. The Netherlands had, thanks to a period of national governmental policy, learned to regard themselves more as a unit than before, and now adapted themselves more easily to the leadership of Holland, Zeeland, and Brabant, which favored Maximilian's regency.

But in addition to Burgundy, the Kingdom of Castile had also become the heritage of six-year-old Charles. It seemed obvious that the regency over this country should be entrusted to the real heir, Charles' mother, the Infanta Juana, in whose name Philip the Handsome had actually been ruling. But Juana, who had already shown signs of being extremely unbalanced, suffered after the death of her husband from a serious mental derangement. The confusion in Castile, where all leadership was lacking, increased day by day, finally bringing its natural solution: Ferdinand of Aragon,

whom the Castilians knew and feared, was appointed regent over their country during the minority of Charles V.

Thus was the regency settled in the two parts of Charles' future empire. But while Ferdinand could without difficulty be present in Castile whenever circumstances demanded, it was impossible for the Emperor to leave his empire in order to take on the government of the Netherlands. It was necessary to appoint a lieutenant general, and Maximilian's choice fell upon his daughter Margaret, Dowager Duchess of Savoy, who had originally been co-heir to the Burgundian lands.

The Emperor, who as a rule was not guided by any sense of reality, had here taken a decision that spoke for his knowledge of people and his political insight. For in his daughter Margaret were united a number of qualities which, in spite of her youth, made her better suited than many a statesman for the particularly difficult office of Regent of the Netherlands. She was a child of the land over which she was to rule and the people knew her as the daughter of their beloved Duchess Mary, and sister of Duke Philip. Though she spoke neither Flemish nor Dutch, she had been born in Brussels, the people of Ghent had hailed her as a baby, and the citizens of Middelburg and Flushing had watched her departure for Spain as Princess of Castile.

But Margaret was cut out for this office not alone through her birth in the Netherlands. She knew the customs and the governmental forms of many European realms, and in her journeys, in her solitude as well as in her happiness, she had acquired a ripe knowledge of human character. "She has tested", writes Lemaire, "the loyalty, the service, the kindness and the constancy of some; the falsity, the unkindness,

the meanness and the frivolity of others, the perseverance and the mutability of diverse human affections"—"Ha expérimenté la foi, le service, la gentilesse et la constance des uns: la fraude, la nuisance, la vilité et la legereté des autres: la perseverance et la muableté de diuerses affections humaines". She knew what human loyalty and affection were worth, she recognized the note of dishonesty in the voice of the flatterer, the chink of gold in the assurances of the venial. She knew the relativity of all worldly values, of all human convictions; she had learned to remain vigilant in prosperity and to give her confidence only to those who had shown themselves worthy of it. And she possessed the inestimable gift that made it possible to carry responsibility: a self-confidence that never became overestimation and that was continually checked and kept in equilibrium by a healthy self-criticism.

It was this self-confidence that made her accept without hesitation her father's proposal that she should leave the peaceful castle of Pont d'Ain for the Netherlands, to carry on the government for her minor nephew in the name of the Emperor. On October 29, 1506, she left the Duchy of Savoy for good, traveling to Germany in order to visit his Imperial Majesty her father in Rottenburg on the Neckar and later in Strasbourg. On March 18, 1507, Maximilian signed her appointment as his "procureur général", entitling her to receive the oath of the States General, which they were obliged to give Maximilian as guardian over Archduke Charles. Equipped with this authorization and accompanied by certain of her Savoyard councilors and secretaries, Margaret journeyed on toward the Netherlands, to meet the task of her lifetime.

That task did not appear an easy one. The young Regent was indeed welcomed with enthusiasm. The people were grateful for her appointment, and from the moment when, before the States of Brabant at Louvain, she first took the oath to respect the Privileges, her poise and tact, her natural charm, and her true majesty made an excellent impression. The people of the Low Lands were at that moment fully prepared to take her to their hearts. Her life as a princess, full of suffering and sorrow, worked on their imagination, her widow's weeds compelled their respect, and they were charmed by her humorous eyes and generous smile. At her festive entry into Brussels the populace wept tears of joy and gratitude for their "national" princess, and when two days later she went to the town hall, where the oath-taking ceremony took place, and appeared on the balcony to show herself to the people, their enthusiasm knew no bounds and she received ovations such as she, the much hailed, had never yet experienced.

But Margaret was too sensible to let these demonstrations of devotion blind her to the difficulties of her still very uncertain position. She knew the way of the Netherlanders, who acclaimed their rulers but were suspicious of their government; who wanted to govern themselves and had always refused to let themselves be used in the service of interests they could not look upon as their own. At her last visit to her father she had understood to the full that Maximilian was proposing to continue his old dynastic policy and to employ the resources of the Low Countries to satisfy his demand for power. She was quite prepared to contribute her share to the good name of the House of Habsburg, for which she knew herself co-responsible. But in the Netherlands she

had also taken upon herself a personal task and she was firmly decided to give her utmost to make her regency a success. Maximilian had perhaps hoped to possess a willing tool in his daughter; but he had not reckoned with the fact that, woman though she was, she was not like other women. Margaret knew herself that she possessed "le cueur d'aultre nature", that her own heart was different. She had her own ambition and bore her own responsibility. She was convinced that she could not better serve her House and therewith her father, the Emperor, and her nephew Charles, the prospective ruler of the Netherlands and Spain, than by advancing the prosperity of the Low Countries, which had been entrusted to her care. And whenever her views differed from those of the Emperor, she was not prepared to let herself be guided by his authority if this would compel her to act against her own firm conviction.

Immediately after her arrival in the Netherlands Margaret showed her fine political instinct by choosing as her residence, not one of those Flemish cities always ready for tumult and revolt, like Bruges or Ghent, but the quiet, very Burgundian-minded Malines, where Margaret of York, to whom it had belonged, had lived so happily. She was no longer there, Madame la Grande, to welcome her energetic granddaughter in her high function. She had died in this very Malines about two years before. But the sympathy she had won from the population of the town flowed forth to meet her granddaughter as soon as she entered the city. Malines was proud that the Regent herself now came to live here, for since 1501 it had had the privilege of sheltering the

heir to the throne and his little sisters under the care of Madame la Grande.

Besides the function of regent Margaret had taken a second, not less important task upon herself: to be foster mother to the four children Philip and Juana had left behind in the Netherlands. They were the eight-year-old Eleanora, Madame Aliénor, as she was called, the seven-year-old Archduke Charles, and the Archduchesses Ysabeau and Marie, aged respectively five and one. Their three-year-old brother Ferdinand, poor little hostage, was at the Spanish court far from his mother. After the death of her husband Juana had given birth to still another daughter, Catherine, who had remained with her at the castle of Tordesillas.

With the death of Madame la Grande the court of Malines had lost its center and the city lived withdrawn into itself and peaceful behind its ramparts and canals. Across the drawbridges, through the gates, a rural traffic moved all day long of carts and wagons, pedestrians and horsemen. The artisans of Malines, the bell and cannon founders, the tanners and drapers, brought their products along the waterway; and in the center of the intimate little town, along the quays of the Dijle, there was always a flapping of sails, a rattling of cranes and pulleys. Outside the walls meadows and farmlands stretched toward the hazy Flemish horizon, the ditches that bordered them drawing strips of light through the ever-moist green land, while countless windmills turned industriously in the Flemish breeze. It was a good life within the walls, behind the safe bastions, in the narrow wooden houses of Malines. They hugged each other close, these houses, around the few stone structures the

town possessed: the bell tower, the court of justice, the old, old market halls. The court of justice, moreover, housed a national authority: the Grand Council, Burgundy's highest court of law.

On her arrival in this quiet provincial town Margaret found no proper archducal palace in which she could establish herself. The city government had bought back the "Keizerhof" where her foster children lived and which had formerly been the property of Madame la Grande. Opposite this modest house, which scarcely merited the name of palace, Emperor Maximilian bought a house from a certain van Watervliet and this was furnished as the Regent's residence, largely at the expense of the city itself. It was a simple brick building, with two wings which housed the service quarters and the stables, built around a court.

This unpretentious "Court of Savoy", as it was to be called, was to be Margaret's home for the rest of her life. Here she was to prepare the great political conquests that were to win her a place of honor among the great statesmen of her time and to bring to her foster son, Monseigneur the Archduke Charles, a world-wide power. Here she was to assemble the art collections, the paintings and manuscripts which, together with the music of her famous choir, constituted her chief distraction from her double task of regent and foster mother. In the peaceful privacy of this modest palace she, in whose hands converged the threads of every European political intrigue, was able to create for herself a setting of feminine comfort and quiet harmony. The Regent of the Netherlands surrounded herself with poets and painters, architects and men of letters. The nobles and ladies of her court reflected the influence of the taste and preferences

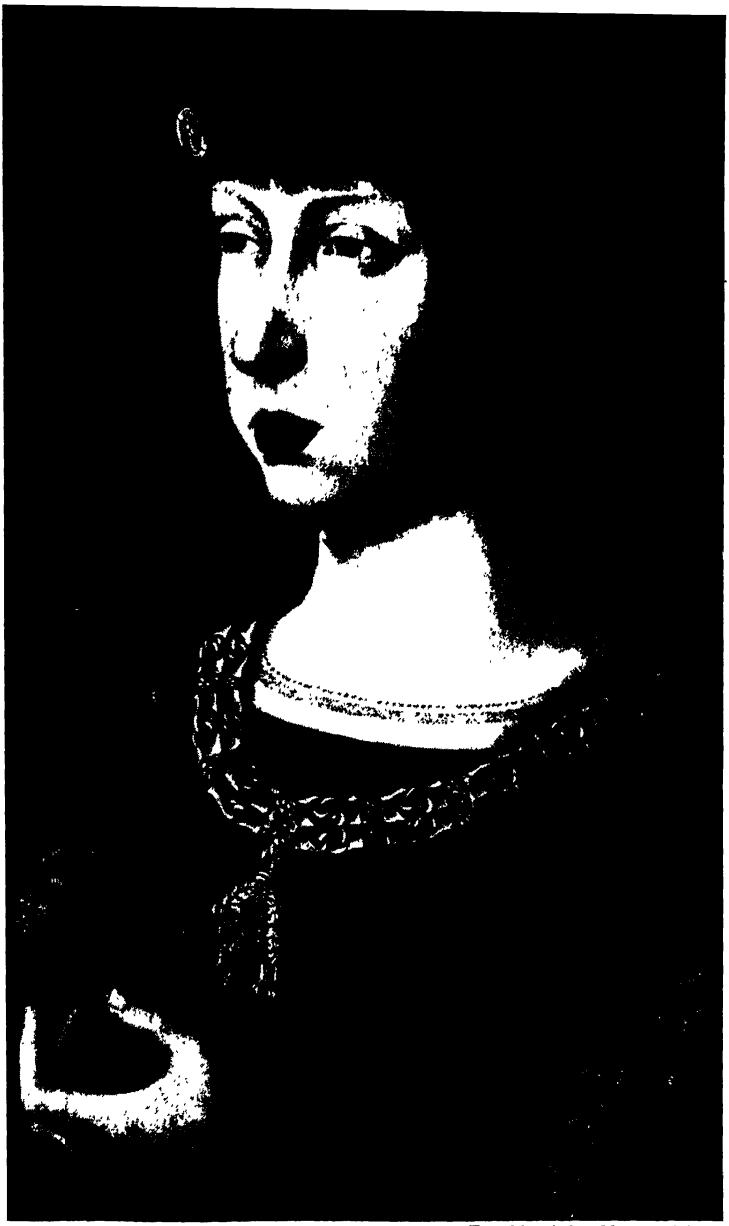
of their mistress. They made music, wrote poetry, composed and recited at this little court in the quiet and seclusion of Malines, and the spirit of courtesy and culture that reigned here contrasted favorably with the loose and drunken manners of so many other courts.

Margaret—Madame, as she was known to her entourage —was the moving spirit that gave life to this small world. Here she commanded in the capacities of ruler, of devotee of art and music, of educator and foster mother, of excellent housewife. Her common sense had at once made her realize that the honorable function with which her father had entrusted her would make heavy demands on her treasury. And although she possessed a double dower, the Spanish and the Savoyard, when she settled in the little palace in the narrow street of Malines, Margaret understood that in this country over which she now ruled and of which she had been co-heir, she in fact could call not a single square foot of land her own. She had been obliged, when she went to France as a bride at the age of three, to give up all her rights to her inheritance from her mother, Mary of Burgundy. Margaret knew that her office of regent would be only temporary and she foresaw that in her old age she would have no bit of land and no house to retire to without danger from others— "que en notre viel eaige neussions ung pied de terre ny une maison pour nous retirer sans dangier daultry". She sent her trusted friend Gattinara to her father to beg that she might be given for her own some part of the Burgundian lands, to which after all she had an equal right with her deceased brother. She armed her messenger against all the objections she knew her father would make. If the Emperor said he would give his daughter a pension when her task as

regent was finished, Gattinara must not let himself be dismissed with this, but must answer that, while Madame indeed had little experience of life, she knew very well what it meant to act as regent for a young prince. This was always an ephemeral office and, however well one cared for the interest of one's pupil, once he became independent all the good work was likely to be forgotten.

And Margaret, with the realistic outlook of the wise housewife who sets aside provision for the winter, asked the Emperor for the earldom of Burgundy (Franche-Comté)—that good land to the east of the dukedom of the same name where she had always been received with so much sympathy. The earldom, an imperial fief of which Maximilian had the disposal, adjoined Margaret's former duchy of Savoy. If she was Countess of Burgundy, she declared to Gattinara, she would be able to keep the Savoyard lands of her dower well in obedience and subjection—"en bonne obéissance et subjection"—which might stand the Emperor in good stead if the neighboring Swiss ever made difficulties for him. "Otherwise not", the practical daughter of this adventurous father concluded with realistic terseness—"Autrement non".

The argument did not fail of its effect. Though only after prolonged and difficult negotiations, Maximilian finally agreed that his daughter might regard a number of lands and manors, primarily the earldom of Burgundy, as her own. And after February, 1509, Margaret could call herself: By the grace of God Archduchess of Austria and Duchess of Burgundy, Dowager Duchess of Savoy, Countess of Burgundy, Charolais, Romont, Bâgé en Villars, Dame of Salins, Malines, Château-Chinon, Noyers, Chaussin, La Perrière



Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Philibert of Savoy and Margaret of Austria. A medal of 1502.

and of the lands of Bresse, Vaud and Faucigny. But not until she had expressly assured the Emperor once more that all these properties should remain the possession of the House of Habsburg and that she had no intention of diminishing the inheritance of her nephew and nieces, since she was of a mind to use the proceeds in the service of their interest and had no wish for any other heirs.

Joyous entries, oath-taking ceremonies, and receptions belonged to the past. The palace at Malines was nearing completion and at last the Regent found the peace to dedicate herself wholly to her new function, and to go more deeply in detail into the problems she had taken over from her late brother.

They were not unknown to Margaret, these problems of the Netherlands. She knew the history of her mother's House, she knew the experiences that her father, Maximilian, had had to go through with the troublesome inhabitants of the Low Countries. She knew their virtues, which in the eyes of a ruling prince became failings: their unbounded urge for independence, their unbending, stubborn resistance to compulsion, which in countless instances had made them altogether ungovernable.

Margaret was no stranger in this country as Maximilian had been. She was a child of Flemish soil and her heart beat with the same tough rhythm of dour inflexibility as the hearts of Ghent and Bruges. Margaret also, like her new subjects, was easily led by those of whose loyalty, insight, and talents she was convinced. But in most cases she preferred—just as her Netherlanders did—her own insight to that of others, trusted herself rather than others, and was

never to employ the talents of others without using her own critical capacity.

The young Regent had still more characteristics in common with her subjects which placed her in a better position than anyone else to understand and value them. She too was industrious and practical, realistic and thrifty, fond of order and regularity. She was averse to the romantic, artistic chaos in which her father, the Emperor, felt so much at home. Like the Netherlanders too she had respect for money, which is acquired with so much difficulty and which Maximilian was accustomed to spend with the royal indifference of the bohemian as soon as and in whatever manner it came into his hands. Chance—which always played such a role in Maximilian's life, and by which he let himself be led because of his own weakness in following any straight line he might have drawn for himself—was for his daughter a factor to be eliminated as far as possible and to which she would certainly never leave any important decisions.

But besides these very positive qualities the Regent possessed gifts that are seldom met with in combination with them: tact, flexibility, adaptability—pre-eminently feminine virtues, necessary though they are in that most masculine of all professions, leadership of an army. And in fact the talents of a field marshal were necessary in the battle that Margaret now had to conduct in the Netherlands. It was in part a silent battle against those subjects who feared in their Regent the representative of the foreign master Maximilian; against the coterie of nobles who had so easily been able to make Philip the Handsome—Follow-Advice, as they called him—do what they wanted and who now assumed they

could apply the same methods in dealing with his sister. But it was also a real battle of fire and sword that Margaret had to carry on where her brother Philip had left off: the war against Gelderland, that bitter heritage from Charles the Bold.

To achieve victory in these two wars, the diplomatic and the armed, the Regent needed more power than her original commission granted her. Two years after she had begun her function she was able to extract from her father a general mandate, so that her authority in the Netherlands was no less than that of the Emperor and guardian himself.

And herewith Margaret had attained what she wanted and indeed had also earned: the independence she required in order to defend unhampered the interests of her House and of the provinces that had been entrusted to her care. She no longer needed to fear she might become what Maximilian in his broken French called "ung person perdu et oblié, mis errier de la monde"—"a person lost and forgotten, hidden in a corner". She herself had suggested these contemptuous words to her father when she refused to enter into the idea, which once more began to appeal to Maximilian's optimistic imagination, of her marriage with old Henry VII of England.

The Regent indeed agreed with her father that it was of the greatest importance to keep the English king in a good mood. But she had other and more real reasons than those of the Emperor. She had not needed to look about the Netherlands very long in order to observe how harmful the last trade agreement with England had been for her subjects, that agreement which Philip the Handsome, shipwrecked

and powerless, had been forced to conclude in England and which the Netherlanders had called the Intercursus malus. Her first act as Regent of the Netherlands in the field of foreign policy dealt with the restoration of the earlier, far more favorable state of affairs. And Henry VII, who still had not given up the hope of one day making the Dowager Duchess of Savoy Queen of England, most graciously met her halfway, with the result that by Margaret's efforts the Intercursus malus, concluded in an evil hour, was annulled.

Friendship with the English king was excellent, Margaret felt. But it must remain friendship. Even though Maximilian wrote her bluntly that she could only serve the House of Burgundy if she agreed to a marriage with Henry, and even though he declared that Margaret's fear lest in England she would be no more than a prisoner of Henry's was entirely unfounded. For, wrote the Emperor, the happy bridegroom would be made to promise that the bride could spend four months a year on the continent in order to exercise her governorship of the Netherlands, or longer if that seemed necessary. And if Margaret would only say yes, everybody would be happy, because Maximilian would henceforth be left in peace by that hardheaded Henry, and Margaret would be ruling over England as well as the Netherlands and would have no reason to feel herself neglected or slighted.

But Margaret stood her ground. Her troubles were enough for her not to want the government of England and the withered, greedy English king in addition. The trade agreement that had been her first aim was in the bag. In the quiet of her palace at Malines the Regent warmed herself before her own wood fire, lived according to her own rhythm in surroundings attuned exclusively to her own

views, her work, her relaxation. She had declined the prison Maximilian had so temptingly set open before her. No kingly crown of Europe would ever counterbalance the freedom that at last, after so many years of sorrow, had fallen to her share.

She had her freedom, yes, but also her cares. There was William of Croy, Sieur de Chièvres, whom Philip the Handsome on his departure to Spain had appointed Governor of the Netherlands and who now saw himself driven out of this important post by a woman. There were the Flemings, the States General, who followed their old policy and refused to grant subsidies for Maximilian's undertakings and for the war with Gelderland which, they said, was nothing more than a dynastic affair the Emperor should pay for out of his own pocket. And finally there was Charles of Gelre, who gave the Burgundian government no rest and the fight against whom was costing always more money without producing any conclusive results.

It was an old quarrel that had arisen at the time when Charles the Bold, in the seventies of the previous century, had offered himself as arbiter in the struggle between the old Duke of Gelre, Arnout, and his restless, rebellious son Adolf. To put an end to all this wrangling Arnout had then simply sold his rights to Gelderland and Zutphen to Charles the Bold. The Golden Fleece, which had to pass on this matter, without hesitation recognized the rights its chief, the Duke of Burgundy, had acquired by purchase and condemned young Adolf to prison for life—for his rebellious and inhuman behavior toward his poor old father. His children, Charles and Philippa, were fetched away from Nij-

megen, which was occupied by a Burgundian army, and were entrusted to the care of Margaret of York. And thus Gelderland had become a Burgundian province, though not in the view of the Gelderlanders themselves: they had never had much sympathy for old Arnout, against whom they had all joined Adolf in rebellion.

Incorporated in the Burgundian realm, Gelderland was always to remain ready to take up arms against the dynasty that had bought it. Its young Duke Charles grew up at the court of Burgundy. From Charles the Bold's successor, Maximilian, he learned the art of war, which was to stand him in good stead later in defending his own lands. During one of Maximilian's campaigns against Charles VIII, this heir to the throne of Gelderland was taken prisoner and thus became a weapon in the hands of France. In 1491, thinking the moment had come to make use of him, the French sent him back to Gelderland, provided with money and troops, to the jubilation of its people and the long-lasting annoyance of Burgundy.

This was the background of that "Gelderland war" which was to cause Margaret so many sleepless nights, a war repeatedly interrupted by armistices and futile treaties, which remained an irritating guerilla but nevertheless devoured a great deal of money. And the States were never prepared to provide the necessary funds, although the Regent sought to convince them that their own interest would be served if Gelderland could be pacified. Margaret had to pay her troops out of an empty treasury. To her father she wrote in 1511 concerning her desperate financial situation, that "if all were to be lost for a thousand florins the treasurer says he has no way of finding them"—"Et si tout se devoit perdre

pour mil florins, le trésorier dit n'avoir moyen de les trouver". Even when she went to inspect the army before it left for Gelderland, she was forced to recognize that she had indeed an excellent artillery, but very little powder, and she wrote the Emperor that she was collecting this indispensable article from all quarters but would certainly not have enough money to pay for it. She offered a part of her own income and would gladly have pawned all her jewels if anyone would loan the necessary sum—"s'il se trouvoit homme qui voulsist prester ladite somme dessus; car, Monseigneur, vous scavez que suis vostre seulle et unicque fille" —"for, Monseigneur, you know I am your one and only daughter."

Yet she heard from her subjects the reproach that the Emperor was squandering good hard Netherlands cash outside the Netherlands borders. So tense was the mood in the country during the first years of her regency that Maximilian, who still cherished his costly plan of finally getting himself crowned Emperor in Rome, even wrote Margaret that he would postpone his "vyage de Rome" if the Low Countries should mutiny—"sy le pays d'embas vouderant tonber en mutery". But Maximilian could not go back on his Roman journey just for the sake of the people of Gelderland. The Regent would have to handle them without his help.

Margaret saw but one way to this end: to create a good understanding with her former playmate of Amboise, Louis XII, without whose support Charles of Gelre had always remained powerless. And by chance Maximilian was in a good mood to let his daughter try out a rapprochement with France. For he had asked the consent of the Venetians to

pass through their domain with an army on his way to Rome and to his indescribable indignation this had been refused. Reason enough for Maximilian to attack the Venetians. But his expedition had little success. The Venetians conquered a number of cities that belonged to the hereditary Austrian lands, and the Emperor was finally compelled to a three-year armistice by which he had to leave these losses in the hands of his opponents.

It was at this moment that the Regent of the Netherlands presented him with the idea of seeking a rapprochement with France, in order to take vengeance together with Louis XII upon the arrogant Republic on the Adriatic. Maximilian would, to be sure, have to make some sacrifice to this end. In order to win Louis' favor, he would have to abstain temporarily from the war with Gelre which he was so gladly conducting at the cost of the Netherlanders. The Regent too would profit by such an arrangement; her dissatisfied subjects would be left in peace and could keep their purses shut. To Charles of Gelre a favorable armistice must be offered. Later, at some suitable moment, the Emperor could always hold a reckoning with him.

Sulkily and with a certain irony Maximilian agreed. Let Margaret, since she seemed to know best, just try it out herself with the French. It would do her good, he wrote, if for once she became the dupe of their fine words, so that thereafter she would be more careful—"afin que cy après y prenez meilleur garde". In October, 1508, an armistice was concluded with Charles of Gelre, and one month later Margaret journeyed to Cambrai, where she had convoked a meeting with the leader of French foreign policy, the Cardinal-Legate of Amboise. This dignitary would also repre-

sent the Pope if, as was expected, other more important European problems came up for discussion in addition to the question of Gelderland.

There was no doubt that peaceful Cambrai was about to experience days of great political significance. The countless ambassadors with their followings of secretaries and servants, with their bodyguards and military escorts, brought an unaccustomed bustle into the little city, and on the advice of her solicitous father the Regent had requisitioned one half of the city for herself and her suite, while the Cardinal-Legate of Amboise disposed of the other half. The Sieur de Chièvres and the other personages of Margaret's Council settled at Valenciennes in order to be at hand if the French should play delaying tricks according to their custom—"vouldroient jouer des trainneries selon leur coustume", as Maximilian expressed it.

But Margaret was not to be intimidated by the adroitness of the impressive Cardinal-Legate. She, the twenty-seven-year-old princess, in her dignified tabard, her spotless widow's cap, went to this, her first great diplomatic conference, with an unbounded self-confidence. And she had not misjudged herself. The negotiations had often given her a headache, she wrote to her ambassador in England, and she and the Cardinal-Legate often got into each other's hair, but in the end they had been reconciled and had become the best of friends. But not until after the energetic princess had had to threaten her opponent with her own instant departure from Cambrai if the King of France did not agree to include the King of Navarre, a faithful adherent of Emperor Maximilian, in the covenants that were being drawn up.

The Legate agreed—and after two weeks of exhausting

discussions Margaret could return to her peaceful residence with the knowledge that she had brought to heel one of the cunningest diplomats of Europe and had, moreover, given life to a political constellation which would stagger that continent for more reasons than one. To Maximilian the treaty proclaimed on December 10, 1508, in the Cathedral of Cambrai, meant a satisfaction such as he would never have been able to provide for himself. Officially, to be sure, there had come under discussion only the lifelong peace concluded between the Emperor and his grandson Charles on the one hand and the King of France on the other; the one year's armistice with Charles of Gelre, and the investment of Louis XII with the dukedom of Milan. But Margaret had made use of those two weeks of personal contact with Amboise to conclude a secret agreement concerning Venice which was to prove the real content of the treaty of Cambrai. This secret treaty bound the Emperor, the Pope, the King of France, and the King of Aragon to attack the Venetian Republic, and divided the booty meticulously among them. If any one of the allies had conquered his own portion, he promised to help the others get possession of theirs. England might also join in if it wished, and Hungary, Savoy, Mantua, and Ferrara were to be invited to take part in the happy feast: the Venetian table was richly enough provided and a few guests more or less would make no difference. The Pope was to add luster to the whole by excommunicating the people and government of Venice and proclaiming the war against the Republic a holy undertaking. Furthermore, he was to release Maximilian from the just-concluded three-year peace with the Signoria by calling him to the defense of the Church.

This was the daring plan by which Margaret's tact and the

cunning of Amboise sought to sweep the mighty Venetian Republic off the chessboard of Europe. A plan entirely in accord with the spirit of the time, and in which the Regent of the Netherlands made use of the same means that the greatest opponent of her house, Louis XI of France, had applied with so much success against Burgundy. But her aim was not exclusively the annihilation of proud Venice. Her personal interest, peace in the Netherlands, would be served in this way. For through this raid sanctified by the Pope she was able to divert the bellicosity of those two former enemies, Maximilian and Louis XII, away from the provinces for which she now bore the responsibility and to direct it upon a far distant part of Europe. She flung a precious booty to the grasping potentates in order to win time for the consolidation of her own position in the Netherlands, which would only obey a ruler who brought them peace. Margaret brought them that peace—and it did not go against her own moral conviction nor that of her subjects that this should take place at the expense of a state which had always lived in harmony with the Low Countries. The States voted a sum of 60,000 pounds as a gift to the Regent, who had been able to protect her country from the ravages of a new war.

From the point of view of the Netherlands the League of Cambrai might have been a success; as a European undertaking it was doomed to failure. At first everything seemed to go according to the agreed schedule. Louis XII marched over the Alps with an irresistible army and destroyed the Venetian forces in a battle near Agnadello. Like vultures Pope Julius II and Ferdinand of Aragon flung themselves upon their appointed shares of the booty—only the Em-

peror was obliged to hold back ignominiously from the robbers' feast, because the Empire and the hereditary Austrian lands had refused him money and troops for an attack on Venice. Insufficiently armed, Maximilian had had to watch the successes of Louis, and it was not long before a chilling suspicion crept into the Emperor's mind that perhaps the triumphant French arms in Italy might eventually be turned against himself. The mistrust was reciprocal. The friendship formed by the charming Regent of the Netherlands and the jovial Cardinal after they had matched strength at Cambrai had not yet been accepted by their superiors. The suspicion grew among the allies of Cambrai, while the Venetians, though beaten on the continent, relied upon their tested diplomacy, the oldest and most experienced of Europe. Pope Julius II was the first to conclude peace with the Republic. He had conquered what he wished to possess, and he completed his work by calling up his other allies to a holy war against France, which was threatening to get the whole of Italy into her power.

Ferdinand the Catholic gladly lent an ear to this call. He had hardly welcomed the victories of France. In October, 1511, a treaty came into being between the Pope, Ferdinand, and Venice, ostensibly for the protection of the Church. This alliance was called the Holy League, and its holy purpose was to drive the French out of Italy. On Louis' side there remained but one suspicious and undecided ally: the Emperor. Following Cambrai, another treaty, concluded at Blois in November, 1510, had once more underlined their vacillating union. Once again France brought a powerful army into the field and defeated the combined Spanish and Italian troops at Ravenna. But the French commander, Gas-

ton de Foix, brother to the new Queen of Aragon, lost his life in the battle, and this disaster so discouraged the French that their victory proved useless. Three months later they had abandoned all their conquests and stood once more at the foot of the Alps, over which they had marched into Italy so shortly before.

And history repeated itself. The allies of the moment—Pope, Aragon, and Venice—fell a-quarreling over the division of the spoils. The battered Venetian Republic took note that her allies were not going to let her keep her position as a great power. And before her fate could be sealed by Ferdinand and the Pope, she joined in with that same France which, by the treaty of Cambrai, had sold her to almost the whole of Europe.

In March, 1513, the Regent of the Netherlands was obliged to take stock of a complete shift in the relationships which her first interference in European history had temporarily brought about. Like a landslide of suspicion and hate, greed and jealousy, the consequences of her policy spread over the continent. She remembered her old enmity against the House of Valois, her father's hatred of the Venetians. Only one thing did she wish to rescue at any price, and that was the good understanding with England, where in 1509 young Henry VIII had succeeded his father.

When she thought the right moment had come, Margaret did not hesitate to abandon totally the principles of that creation of her own, the League of Cambrai. At her urgent request the Emperor finally broke his connection with France, and on April 5, 1513, a new treaty between Maximilian and Henry VIII, known as the League of Malines, in which the Pope and Ferdinand of Aragon also took part,

came into being in Margaret's residence. The object of this alliance was a joint attack upon France.

This time too it was apparent what interests the Regent of the Netherlands was defending in this her second venture into politics. The condition was expressly set that the Low Countries should remain neutral in this war against France, while furthermore a new armistice of four years was concluded with the still dangerous Charles of Gelre. Once again Margaret had acted in the spirit of the provinces entrusted to her care. The torch of war, set ablaze in Malines by the hand of the Dowager Duchess of Savoy, was to carry out its destructive work beyond the boundaries of the Netherlands. And when the last visits of courtesy had been received, and the last baggage wagons of the special emissaries had rattled away over the cobblestones of Malines, the Regent could return to her more peaceful work: the daily burdens of government and the care of her foster children, in whose hands lay the future of her House and of Europe.

Belles parolles en paiement
A ces mignons presumptieux
Qui contrefont les amoureux
Par beau samblant et aultrement.

Sans nul credo, mais promptement
Donnes pour recompence a eulx
Belles parolles.

Mot pour mot, c'est fait justement,
Ung pour ung, aussy deulx pour deulx:
Se devis il font gracieulx
Respondes gracieusement
Belles parolles.

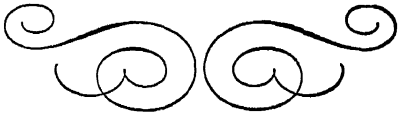
Fair words in payment
To those presumptuous charmers
Who would lovers counterfeit
By fine pretense and otherwise.

With credence none, but promptly
Give for recompense to them
Fair words.

Word for word, 'tis done exactly,
One for one, also two for two:
If they converse with graciousness
Do you graciously reply
Fair words.

CHAPTER SIX

Notre Bonne Tante



DIPLOMATIC messages, missives to the Emperor, letters to commanders in the field and to ambassadors at foreign courts—Margaret's secretaries knew no rest in those first years of her rule over the Netherlands. The days of the young Regent were as full as those of a modern prime minister. In contrast to her father, the Emperor, who was always roving around the Empire, Margaret did not leave her beloved Malines save when it became necessary. Overburdened with work, she seldom found time for distraction, and only for short periods when the health of her foster children demanded it did she exchange the rather damp air of Malines for the wooded scenery of Brussels, where Monseigneur the Archduke Charles amused himself with hunting and archery.

Margaret's program of work was organized on the strictest principles and the Court of Savoy lived entirely in the rhythm set by her occupations. When Madame attended a meeting of her Privy Council a respectful silence reigned even in the inner courtyard of the palace, otherwise so full of animation. This council was the brain of Margaret's govern-

ment, and it was made up principally of old associates of hers who had followed her from Savoy to the Netherlands.

From the President of the Council, Gattinara, a thoroughly schooled government official, Margaret learned the practical technique that every head of a great office must command. In Savoy her occupations had been limited, and her chancery had been able to permit itself a certain dilettantism; but this was no longer possible in the Netherlands. Thus the Regent learned never to sign any letter that she had not read through, and to set up a copybook of outgoing letters, so that, particularly in her correspondence with the Emperor, she should not contradict herself. And when upon occasion in letters to her father she showed her feelings too clearly, her secretaries took care that such impolitic effusions were not sent out. A letter has been preserved from the first years of her regency, when its cares seemed insurmountable and revolt threatened even in the Low Countries; a pathetic letter in which her solicitous secretary, Marnix, replaced Margaret's despairing words by more measured terms. For could one allow the Regent to confess that she was mortally afraid at the angry words of her people? Or that she had incurred debts in order to cover expenditures? Or that she dreaded lest her worries make her sick? Or that she should express her sensation of helplessness by saying that many times she wished herself back in the womb of her mother—"et vouldroie maintes fois estre au ventre de ma mère"?

At first there may have been frequent alterations in the routine of Margaret's chancery, but in later years its activities were regulated by fixed prescription. Twice a week at two o'clock in the afternoon the Privy Council, which consisted of some twelve members, met in a special room of the

Court of Savoy in the presence of the Regent. All affairs to be dealt with were first submitted for Madame's judgment. In legal matters it was the decision of the whole Council that stood; but when mercy was to be exercised the Council simply laid its advice before the Regent and left the verdict to her discrimination.

Every Saturday afternoon the secretaries handed over the decisions they had formulated to President Gattinara, who set the Regent's seal upon them. Thereafter the document was inscribed and finally signed by Margaret herself. Urgent affairs and secret political correspondence were entrusted to one of her secretaries who enjoyed her full confidence. And if in very special circumstances she did not wish to inform even her most devoted associates of her plans, she wrote her letters in her own hand, in that rapid and intelligent script which even in moments of discouragement retained its strength and resilience.

Certain members of the Privy Council formed a Financial Commission—"les gens des Finances"—who handled Margaret's private revenue from her Spanish and Savoyard dowers and controlled its expenditure. The commission had a separate office in the palace at Malines, and whenever the Regent journeyed elsewhere for a short time there appeared among her baggage two heavily ironbound trunks, which contained the papers relative to the financial management of her household.

The house—"la Maison de Madame"—included that entire world of councilors, secretaries and clerks, clerics and artists, ladies and gentlemen in waiting, maids of honor and pages, with their personal servants and the domestic staff, who throughout the day filled the establishment with a colorful

activity. Of the approximately 150 persons who formed the daily entourage of the Regent only a few lived in the palace. The rest were housed in the city, and when early in the morning the heavy gate that gave on the Keizerstraat was opened, the captain of the watch checked with great punctiliousness the horde of clerks and servants that already thronged the street, waiting to be let in.

From nine o'clock on, when the personnel went to its daily work, until the moment when the porter made the rounds of all offices to announce that closing time had come, a lively bustle filled the inner courtyard. Mounted messengers rode in and out, heavily laden carts came rolling across the pavement, and through the open doors of the service quarters one could see bakers, poulterers, and butchers at their work, while in the kitchens the fires were being laid and lit.

It was customary for the personnel that lived outside to take their midday meal in the palace, so that the archducal household had to handle a table d'hôte of 150 persons after twelve o'clock noon. They did not all sit down to table at the same time, but in groups constituted according to strictest etiquette. The table at which one ate—"le plat", as it was termed—was the measure of dignity at the court of the Regent of the Netherlands, as at all ruling courts.

Madame went first to table, in company with her Grand Mistress. If royal guests were present or ambassadors from foreign powers who deserved this honor as representatives of their masters, they sat down with the Regent. "Le plat de Madame" had first choice from the elaborate menu, which consisted largely of meat dishes and game, with pastries

("oublies"), fruit, and cheese to follow. Plates were seldom used, forks not at all, and for this reason bread was a very important aid. The regulations of 1525 for "les plats de l'hôtel de Madame" prescribe that at her midday meal she should receive four rolls to eat ("pains de bouche") and six pieces of brown bread for plates ("pour ses assietes"). Her Grand Mistress, however, had to do with less. For her were prescribed one *pain de bouche* and one plate of brown bread ("une assiete de pain bis").

What remained of Madame's dinner was eaten by the nobles on duty, the "maitres d'hôtel", as they were called, after they had first served the meal of their mistress. Upon this followed a "plat" for the ladies in waiting, one for the maids and female servants of the Grand Mistress, and one for the keepers of the wardrobe, who ate simultaneously but at different tables. And after that all sorts of people had their turn, valets, porters, clerks, menservants, the tailor, and the drummer.

With this prescribed hierarchy no interference was brooked, and if certain nobles sometimes took the liberty of having a table set up in their own quarters, they were punished with "l'indignacion de Madame" and were suspended from their functions for one month.

The same strict household etiquette prescribed that the gentlemen in waiting themselves should serve Madame and should not leave this task to their assistants, unless they were ill or had leave of absence. The baker must make the pastry for Madame with his own hands and himself bring it to the kitchens. If he sent it by a boy, the chief cook must refuse to receive it. Nor could the valets on watch in the private apart-

ments of the Regent leave their duty to a lesser servant if Madame wished to retire, or eat alone in her room, or if she was not dressed or felt indisposed.

"La Chambre de Madame"—this was the sanctuary to which only a few privileged persons penetrated, where Margaret found rest and refreshment after the fatiguing burdens of her rule. Entering here, she, around whose heart the loneliness of her office and her widowhood often seemed to draw an iron band, was no longer alone. There were always the dogs, who sprang up from the white cloth cushions in the corners of the room to greet her with wagging of tails. The guinea pig she had once bought from a Frenchman for not less than ten pounds came nuzzling for her caresses. The green parrot whistled in coaxing tones from his great cage, and from a spacious aviary came a continual piping and fluttering of the other little birds that were in the chamber of my lady—"aultres oyseletz estans en la chambre de madite dame".

The creatures were Margaret's comfort. Their dependence, their need for affection, filled a void of which she was often bitterly aware. Their playful unconcern could bring back her laughter, which amid all her problems she was in danger of forgetting. She was grateful for their gratitude, and found time to look after them in the midst of her most pressing business. And with tender patience she would lay the green cloth over the bird cages when sometimes the twittering disturbed her too much.

Before the wood fire in her bedroom with its green taffeta hangings, or in the stately luxury of her "librarye", where ancestral and family portraits hung between the lecterns with precious manuscripts, Margaret forgot her daily care,

losing herself in ancient romances, the works of the classic writers, the lives of the saints. On the blue and yellow damask walls of her sitting room hung the paintings that time and again brought her delight, the luminous tenderness of Jan van Eyck, the worldly graciousness of Memlinc, the piety of Rogier van der Weyden, the disturbing fantasies of Hieronimus Bosch. When in the intimacy of her writing room she sat in the black velvet seat at her ivory writing case to busy herself with her private correspondence, the heaviest cares fell from her in the atmosphere of this little museum. And then she would invite her Grand Mistress or one of her ladies in waiting, and would take from the cupboard the old painted box with the chess game of chalcedony and jasper—"de casydoine et de jaspe"—or perhaps the silver chessboard with the silver and gilt pieces. Then silence reigned in Madame's cabinet, among the rich tapestries. And with cautious movements, lest the wide ermine sleeves of her black velvet tabard disturb the positions of the game, her dark eyes in her pale nun's face fixed in tense concentration on the priceless figures, Madame would play the game of perspicacity and calculation that was so closely related to her political activity in the world of Europe, of which she could now, by a single move, influence the future.

But the pieces in the European game were not of jasper nor of silver. What Margaret manipulated with the same circumspect moves in this chess tournament were the lives of the three little girls who lived with their brother, Monseigneur the Archduke of Austria, in the old imperial palace opposite the Court of Savoy. Monseigneur himself, the pale, slender boy with the sleepy little face, was, as future head of the House of Habsburg-Burgundy, the most important

piece in the game; he must be most circumspectly handled and in his service the defenseless little pawns, "Aliénor, Ysabeau, Marie", might be sacrificed if necessary.

In Margaret of York's modest little palace in the narrow Keizerstraat, close by the bastions of Malines, the four children, "our Malines descendants"—"nostre lignaige de Malines"—as their grandfather Maximilian called them, lived in a conventual seclusion. The fact that their aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Savoy, came to occupy the building opposite their palace seemed at first to have scarcely any effect on the imperturbable uniformity of their lives. On their parents' departure for Spain they had been confided to the care of Anna de Beaumont, one of their mother's Spanish ladies in waiting who, already at the birth of the heir to the throne, had taken over the task of the melancholic Archduchess Juana. She was at the same time Grand Mistress of the House to the royal children, for although they were still in the care of nurses and "cradle rockers", Aliénor and Charles, Ysabeau and Marie lived in royal state and their court was conducted according to the same protocol that was in force in Margaret's establishment.

But the two eldest in particular, Aliénor and Charles, were soon to notice that with the coming of their aunt something in their lives really had changed. Margaret, who had known only the sorrows of motherhood, bent over the little orphans who were the future of her House with a protective tenderness. Their sicknesses, the measles and the much-dreaded smallpox, gave her anxious days in the midst of her problems during those first years of her rule, and her letters to her father are full of solicitous reports about his grandchildren. She seldom took a decision without consulting Maximilian,

and he on his side showed a boundless interest and concern for his grandson and the little princesses, whom in his awkward French he was accustomed to allude to as his "very dear little girls"—"noz petites et très chières filles". In the midst of his endless campaigns, in encampments before the walls of beleaguered cities, scarcely recovered from some exciting battle, Maximilian takes pen in hand to warn his daughter that she must not admit to the presence of Monseigneur a doctor who belongs to the much-hated and dangerous Venetian people; or to express his joy that young Charles is making such good progress in the noble sport of hunting—for were this not so, writes the Emperor, it might be thought that the boy was a bastard and not the real grandchild of his grandfather, the hunter par excellence.

Maximilian did not need to fear, in any case, that his daughter would not watch over the royal children as over her most precious possession. He knew that she, like himself, had only one aim left in life: the greatness of the House of Habsburg, a greatness that was dependent upon the future of these children.

With the passing of the years Margaret's attachment to her foster children grew. When in 1511 the war with Gelderland claimed all her attention and she went to inspect the troops that were going to fight the rebel in the north, she left her pupils behind in Malines with great concern. She had enjoined upon the governors of this faithful city that they must take particular care during her absence that nothing should happen to the children, she wrote to her father, for nowadays one did not know on whom one could rely—"car aujorduy l'on ne scet en cuy l'on se doit fier". Margaret knew too well the political methods of her contemporaries

not to fear for her children, for Charles, in whom they already dreaded the prospective ruler over two continents, for the little princesses who would one day divide between them the disposable crowns of Europe and would make Margaret "bonne tante" to practically all the ruling houses. Trembling for her precious charges, Margaret left Malines, and was not at rest until she had returned and found that no incident had disturbed the peace of the imperial court.

With the same care that she expended on the present of her foster children, Margaret attempted to prepare their future. She who herself had been the victim of that custom of her time which a French historian has rightly called "a trade in princesses"—"traite de princesses", proved to be a good pupil of Maximilian, whose policy was always based on marriage, his own and that of others. It seemed as though the Regent had forgotten what the woman had suffered, and the terms in which Margaret corresponded with her father about the alliances of her small nieces leave nothing to be desired in cruel directness.

Already in 1509 the Dowager Queen of Portugal had approached Margaret with the proposition that the young son of the reigning Portuguese king should marry her eldest foster child, Madame Aliénor, with whom he would match very well in age—the children were both ten years old—or perhaps Madame Ysabeau who, however, was only just turned eight. Furthermore they might also negotiate a marriage between Madame Marie and one of the other young sons of the king, who, Margaret wrote to Maximilian, "I understand has three or four". "Monseigneur", she added, "in view of the small number of princes at present alive, and

the wealth of the King of Portugal, I believe it would be sensible to conclude one of these two marriages, or both, if you agree, and you would still have two of my lady nieces to make another alliance elsewhere"—"et encoires aurés deux de mesdames mes niepces pour en faire allieurs autre allience".

Nothing came of these intentions, however. For the Emperor already had other plans for little Mary, and in her seventh year she was actually betrothed to the Crown Prince of Bohemia and Hungary. The little princess Aliénor, it is true, was still available, but Maximilian wanted to postpone the move he intended to make with this eldest granddaughter for very well-considered reasons. The good "grandfather of Austria" possessed four granddaughters and herein foresaw the possibility that one day, if heaven still granted him a number of years, all heirs to European thrones would call him great-grandfather. There were three crowns from among which he wished to choose for Aliénor: those of France, England, and Poland. But alas, at the moment they still adorned three other female heads—and therefore grandfather Maximilian could not decide about Aliénor's future until one of these three queens should have exchanged the temporal for the eternal. Thus for the time being there could be no question of a Portuguese marriage.

Madame Ysabeau, however, who in 1509 was in any case too young to be reserved for the French or English widower-*in-spe*, was nevertheless married off a few years later to a ruler twenty-two years older than she: Christian II, King of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

Christian had given his emissary the commission in the first place to sue for the hand of Aliénor, and only if that did

not appear possible to ask the younger princess Ysabeau in marriage. Since Aliénor was waiting for the sound of the funeral bells for the queen of either France or England, it was in fact her thirteen-year-old sister who had to pay with her happiness, even with her life, for Maximilian's marriage policy.

After Christian's representatives had asked Maximilian for the hand of his granddaughter they departed for Brussels, where the Regent of the Netherlands was staying. And when the necessary formalities had been carried out, the ambassadors requested that the marriage should be performed by proxy on the following day, a Sunday, since their master, King Christian, was then celebrating the anniversary of his coronation.

To stage a royal wedding ceremony within twenty-four hours was no simple task, and Margaret furthermore feared lest the honor of the House be not fully and properly complied with. But she also understood the importance for the future if Christian's coronation day coincided with his wedding day.

The following morning the ceremony was carried out in the great hall of the palace in Brussels, and with motherly pride Margaret reported to the Emperor the details of the marriage of Ysabeau, her niece, who was certainly good to look at—"ma niepce, laquelle certes il faisoit bon veoir".

Anxiously brief though the time for preparation had been, the imperial honor had not suffered. The foreign ambassadors had been given their rightful places at dinner, to the satisfaction of all concerned, and after the gala supper there had been dancing in expectation of the symbolic ceremony that would end the day. Like her Aunt Margaret before her,

the thirteen-year-old "dame des nopces" had stretched herself upon a bed of state and the ambassador of King Christian had laid himself down beside her, one leg bared, as was customary among great princes—"comme il est accoustumé faire entre grands princes".

Her grandfather might be convinced that her marriage with "the Nero of the North" would bring honor and advantage to the House of Habsburg and be welcome to the Burgundians through the good commercial relations it would create; to the little blue-eyed princess it brought only the bitterest suffering, the most cruel humiliation. When at the age of fifteen the little Queen made her entry at the court of Copenhagen, she discovered that her husband, her senior by twenty-two years, whose wild leonine appearance terrified her, was the slave of two women, mother and daughter, of Netherlands origin. They were Duiveke, his mistress, and her mother Siegebritte Willems, the real ruler of Scandinavia. How should Ysabeau, timid and gentle child that she was, have been able to win a place for herself in this atmosphere?

The degrading treatment meted out to his grandchild was not concealed from the Emperor, and he sent a special envoy to Copenhagen to make Christian see the error of his ways. But the fate of the little Queen was not improved by the fact that her husband, his fists clenched in anger, had to listen to the truth in a lecture from an imperial ambassador. Even the death of the royal mistress, Duiveke, brought no amelioration for Ysabeau. Her first born, Crown Prince Johan, was taken from her by Christian to be brought up by Siegebritte. Powerless to stand up for her most elementary rights, Ysabeau pined away in loneliness and mortification.

Those who were finally to take her part only increased her sorrows. In the spring of 1523 Christian's subjects rebelled against the disgraceful regime of Siegebritte, protesting against the shame brought upon their innocent Queen. Jutland and Sweden revolted, and the Danish nobility even went so far as to depose the King.

Had the gentle Ysabeau possessed the character of her aunt, the Regent of the Netherlands, she could undoubtedly have taken the government of the Scandinavian kingdoms into her own hands in the name of her small son. But Ysabeau, will-less and broken, no longer had the strength to be independent, and she followed her husband into exile. Their flight brought them with their children to the Netherlands, where Ysabeau found protection and comfort with her Aunt Margaret and where her husband hoped to find support from his brother-in-law Charles, the mightiest ruler in Europe, who since 1519 had been Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

But Margaret was unable to do much more for her unfortunate young niece, whose delicate health had been destroyed through anxiety and humiliation, whose resistance had been broken by years of loneliness. She languished and died in the land where, under the care of her good aunt, the few happy years of her brief life had been spent.

After the tragic death of the Queen of Denmark disturbing rumors went the rounds of Europe. It was whispered that the young Queen, sister of the Emperor himself, under pressure from her husband had become converted to the abominable heresies of Martin Luther, of whom Christian

was a follower. What would happen to Ysabeau's children? Was there really a possibility that the nephew and nieces of the Emperor might be lost to the true faith and become weapons in the fight which the disaffected German princes were carrying on against him?

Christian understood to the full the significance his children could have for his brother-in-law, the Defender of the Church, and no one more clearly realized this fact than the Regent of the Netherlands. After endless negotiations, which Christian repeatedly tried to escape by fleeing with his precious children to Germany, Margaret finally succeeded in literally buying the little prince and the two little princesses from their father. She paid Christian's debts and granted him a yearly stipend of fifteen hundred guilders, in return for which she acquired the right to take Ysabeau's children to live with her and be brought up under her guidance. Now again Margaret took pity on three deserted youngsters, once more the voices of children resounded in the halls of the old palace.

Before poor Ysabeau had gone to meet her fate, her younger sister, the Archduchess Mary, had already left the familiar surroundings of Malines as the bride of the Crown Prince of Bohemia and Hungary, to find a future in the most easterly outpost of Christian Europe. After her young husband had lost his life in the war with the Turks, she too was to return to the Low Countries, whither her brother, the Emperor, called her in 1531 to succeed her Aunt Margaret. Beside the frail Ysabeau in her tragic submissiveness, her sister Mary appears like a strong blond amazon in the history

of the Netherlands: a woman who had the strength to be herself in a world that sought to use her and her kind simply as instruments of policy.

In the summer of 1516 only the two eldest children of Philip the Handsome and Juana of Aragon remained behind in the Netherlands. The harmonious atmosphere of the "Keizerhof", where they had spent their youthful years in the charge of their "Tante et Bonne Mère", had in more than one respect been broken up, and not alone through the departure of the two princesses. Between Monseigneur the Archduke Charles, who in January, 1515, had been declared of age, and the woman who for years had worked for his future according to the best of her knowledge, a wall of suspicion and jealousy had risen, built of thwarted ambition and an urge for independence. What Margaret had sensed at the beginning of her regime had become a fact: her foster son had turned away from her under the influence of the nationalist Burgundian nobles and of his tutor Chièvres, to whom he clung with boyish devotion.

When Margaret took up her office in the Netherlands in 1507 she had immediately been aware of opposition from the man whom her brother Philip had appointed governor of the Burgundian provinces upon his departure for Spain: William of Croy, Sieur de Chièvres. He was at this time already forty-nine years old, a considerable age in those days for a statesman who had until this moment been little to the fore. His family tradition made him the leader of the French-minded nationalists at the Burgundian court, of the feudal nobility that was always ready to oppose the centralizing authority of the dukes, and especially where this authority

Musée Royal des Beaux Arts, Brus

Margaret of Austria, by Barend van Orley.

Graathouse Museum, Br

Charles V as a Boy, by Conrad Meit.

had, through the marriage of Mary, the last Burgundian ruler, come into the hands of the House of Habsburg, which in Netherlands eyes always represented foreign interests.

Thus Margaret, who before all wished to serve the future of her dynasty and who in her personal life had had the worst experiences with the French royal house, promptly found herself opposite this man who feared her rule would cause the end of his own political objectives and whom the death of Philip the Handsome had deprived of his office of Governor.

But it appeared that Margaret was not willing to be exclusively her father's tool. Her insight into the demands of reality speedily convinced her that her country needed peace with France as well as with England. She set herself to make her influence a factor of balance between the two great powers that were her neighbors. And her rapprochement with France, which took shape in the League of Cambrai, signified at the same time a rapprochement with the opposition in the Netherlands, with Chièvres himself, who shortly after Margaret's triumph was appointed first chamberlain and tutor to Monseigneur Charles.

For the development of the prospective ruler of the Spanish-German world empire the politically inspired choice of Chièvres was extraordinarily fortunate. For Charles's character bore the stigma of an inner discord which caused him always to vacillate between the somewhat indolent passivity that seemed to be his most common characteristic in childhood and the sudden flashes of impatience which, according to the perspicacious Venetian ambassador Quirino, made him resemble Charles the Bold of Burgundy. His childish moods alternated between a sleepy apathy and fits of tem-

per which made him wholly uncontrollable. His physique seemed still further to accentuate this incongruity. The hereditary peculiarity displayed in his prominent lower jaw hindered him in his speech, and this defect was aggravated by his short thick tongue, which made articulation difficult. In repose Monseigneur's too pale, too long and narrow face with the always open mouth and the eyes which, as a spiteful ambassador remarked, looked as if they had been stuck on and did not belong to him, sometimes caused his entourage to fear that this heir to the imperial throne was neither mentally nor physically equal to his great task.

The contradiction in Charles's nature found in the ripe wisdom of his tutor the support he needed to help him outgrow the threat of a lasting inner disharmony. Chièvres, for whom even the sharp pens of foreign diplomats found only kind words and whom they characterized as gentle and kind, surrounded his pupil with that unflagging and yet respectful affection necessary to overcome Charles's uncertainty and to use the contradictory tendencies in his character. And though Chièvres knew that the Regent was still not entirely won over, so that there always remained that contrast between their views which was one day to end in a total break, he could but appreciate her wholehearted devotion to the interests of Monseigneur. He shared her anxious concern for their charge's feeble health, and his letters to her are full of details about the boy's life. He has a pain in his leg, but when the doctors come whom Chièvres hastily summoned, he suddenly feels better. He is indisposed and goes early to bed, but next day he is gay again and goes with the princesses at midday to the Count of Nassau, who had prepared a veritable feast for his young guests, and the prince has suffered

no harm as a result. The Regent often passes these reports on to Grandfather Maximilian, and when Monseigneur the Archduke has danced too long at the marriage feast of his sister Ysabeau and is obliged to stay in bed next day with a temperature, daily couriers hasten through Europe with letters from Margaret, because even a slight illness in the person of such a prince gives one cause to think—"pour ce que, en la personne d'ung tel prince ne peult avoir si petite maladie, qui ne fasse bien à penser". The future of the House depended on this, alas, rather weak boy—and Margaret had seen stronger young princes removed from the scene by sudden fevers. And when Monseigneur is well again after ten days his aunt hastens to announce the fact to the Emperor in order to relieve him of all anxiety—"pour vous mectre hors de toute mélancholie", as she writes.

So Charles grew up under the care of his aunt and the sympathetic and enlightened guidance of his kind and amiable tutor. Though still a child, he was treated as the real sovereign, and therefore also he was included as much as possible in all ceremonies at which his aunt appeared as his representative. She knew she was only the servant of his future, and once when she showed the young Archduke to a number of officers who were leaving for the war in Gelderland, she exclaimed with truly feudal pride: "Gentlemen, see for whom you take up arms!"—"Messieurs, voyez pour qui vous prenez les armes!"

So long as the League of Cambrai preserved the appearance of harmony between France and Habsburg-Burgundy, the struggle between the Regent and the tutor of Monseigneur consisted merely of hurt feelings and politely disguised unpleasant remarks. But it was sharpened when Margaret

felt that the time had come to sacrifice this creation of hers for that other combination, more in accord with her personal preference, namely, the League of Malines, between the Emperor, Henry VIII of England, Ferdinand of Aragon, and the Pope. This mighty coalition was clearly directed against France, the country that at heart she still considered as the natural enemy of Burgundy and Habsburg, since it had always threatened the safety of Monseigneur's Low Countries and laid claim to Naples and Sicily, to Monseigneur's Spanish inheritance, and to Milan, border territory of the Austrian lands. Thus politically the Regent found herself once more in conflict with Chièvres, while on the other hand she saw his influence on young Charles increasing daily.

In the beginning it looked as if Margaret would emerge victorious from this struggle. The year 1513 saw her at the apex of her career. This seemed to be the moment when France should be rendered powerless for good. Henry VIII, young and wealthy, longed to dazzle Europe by the brilliance of his exploits. The title of King of France he could merely dig up from the treasuries of English royal tradition, and Margaret did not grudge the vain young fellow, who was in a position to give the Emperor subsidies to support the Netherlands in the war against Gelderland, this high-sounding if somewhat insubstantial satisfaction. Henry might call himself whatever he chose, it was more important that he crossed the channel with an impressive and well-paid army to put Margaret's theory into practice. And that Henry turned his expedition into a demonstration of his own splendor could only add luster to the common cause. Power must be visible and audible. Therefore the sails of Henry's ship were of cloth of gold, and they sparkled in the summer

sun above the light-green, white-foaming water. A fleet of small cargo boats, laden with the costly trappings that Henry considered necessary for this his first European appearance, sailed ahead of the royal flagship.

The Emperor decided to go in person to bask in the glow shed by his "son" of England with his golden hair and his jingling gold pieces. And his daughter, seeing her dearest wish fulfilled—a meeting between her ally and her father—joyfully declared in one of her letters that this made her happier than anything that could have befallen her in this world—"J'ay esté si joieuse que de chose qui m'eust sceu advenir en ce monde".

Gray-haired Maximilian appeared on the scene of battle like a legendary king. Without an army, accompanied only by a small suite, he had traveled north in rapid day journeys. There at Guinegate, a battlefield where as a young and radiant bridegroom he had achieved his first victory against the arch-enemies of the House of Burgundy, he suddenly appeared, bareheaded and mysterious, in the midst of the German mercenaries the English king had taken into his service. Those who did not recognize him by the graying hair that flowed down to his shoulders, grasped the truth when they saw the imperial standard, a black eagle on a gold ground, waving against the blue of the summer sky. The Emperor himself! A joyous cry of "Long live the Emperor!" went through the German ranks. The English took it over—and the French, who heard the shouts and recognized the standard, could hardly believe their eyes and ears. The Emperor himself!

The French were put to flight. Thérouanne was taken. The cannon founded in Malines, affectionately called "the

twelve apostles of King Henry", bombarded Tournai. The city capitulated. The combined English and German arms seemed to be blessed by divine favor, but not so the English-German friendship for which Margaret had hoped. Like a condottiere without an army, the Emperor had put himself at the command of his "son", the English King, and thus the head of Christendom stood subservient to a young ruler who ought to have ranked beneath him. The English subsidies paid to Maximilian made it appear that the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was accepting pay from Henry —and countless spiteful insinuations went the rounds. And Henry, with his resounding title of King of France, had himself acclaimed in Tournai by his new subjects in total disregard of the wishes of his grizzled brother-in-arms, who would gladly have added that city to Burgundy.

Once again Maximilian remembered the diplomatic talent of his daughter, and he requested her to come and greet the English king at Tournai. Margaret, for whatever reasons, made certain objections to this plan. If her father thought that she could be of service to him by coming, she was prepared to do whatever he wished, but otherwise it was not for a widowed woman to trot about visiting armies for pleasure, this thirty-three-year-old widow felt—"mais sans cella ce n'est le cas de femme vefve de troter et aller visiter armées pour le plésir". But Maximilian's will was her law, and at the end of September the Regent traveled to Tournai in the company of numerous ladies in waiting and damoiselles, who on their side cannot have taken the objections of their mistress too seriously. All Europe was talking of the gallant English king, of the brilliance of his court festivities, the lavishness of his hospitality, the good looks of his young

English officers. Margaret's ladies had nothing against "trotting about visiting armies for pleasure".

Nor had they expected too much from their trip. Never before had Tournai, accustomed to the luxury of its rich merchants, looked upon so much wealth as in those sunny September days of 1513 when the Emperor, the King of England "and France", the Regent of the Netherlands, and the Archduke of Austria gathered inside its walls. For the thirteen-year-old Charles had followed his aunt, and the serious pale boy was the center of all attention, more even than Maximilian, who purposely withdrew from the showy exhibition, more even than Henry VIII himself, who, in his crackling golden-yellow satin, his plumed bonnet on his round blond head, rode ostentatiously through the streets of defeated Tournai upon a charger jingling with gold chains and little silver bells. In the slight figure of the young Archduke, dressed in plain dark velvet, the people saw the future ruler over ten kingdoms, over two world empires, and the trumpets that announced his arrival created a silence more impressive than all Henry's barbaric clatter.

Although she still did not exchange her widow's cap for any more worldly headdress even on these very festive days, the Regent of the Netherlands did appear at Henry's luxurious feasts in richer dress than had been her custom of recent years. With all the tact at her command she sought to restore the harmony that Maximilian had not been able to preserve, and her brocade tabards, her priceless jewels, the elegance of her ladies in waiting, were so many weapons on her side in this battle of ingratiation. It cost Margaret no effort to enchant her young and easily flattered host. She, who had loved Philibert the Handsome for his blond youth, knew

by nature what the twenty-two-year-old Henry would like to hear from the lips of a witty and attractive woman. And the young Englishmen accompanying the King discovered that the Regent could smile most endearingly, though they understood nothing of the rapid French of her quips and jests.

One of them, the Master of the Horse Charles Brandon, surrounded her in these days with daring attentions which the jovial Henry loudly applauded and which Margaret accepted with amused indulgence. One evening, after supper, when Henry in Margaret's presence encouraged his enamored friend to go ahead and ask the charming Regent in marriage, the seductive Charles knelt at her feet and took from her one of her rings.

"Thief!" Margaret joked with a smile to Henry, who was gleefully watching this scene. But Brandon understood no French and one of the Flemish ladies in waiting had to be called to make clear to him that Madame had scolded him for a thief. Despite Margaret's protest that the ring was too well known, Brandon kept it until Margaret, not wishing to become seriously angry lest she spoil Henry's childish pleasure, had given him another ring instead.

The little scene had not escaped the all-seeing eyes of the courtiers—and the rumor that Madame had at last decided to bid her widow's weeds farewell made a sensation of the first order in international society. And this for the sake of Brandon, the son, it was whispered, of Henry's nurse!

Though Margaret had still frequently to combat this persistent rumor, she had not in vain used her charms in support of her politics. Henry VIII had forgotten his annoyance with Maximilian, and after Margaret had invited him to leave

his "kingdom" to be her guest in Lille, she was able to win him over to the extent of signing a treaty that fell in with her own political wishes. Money for the upkeep of troops during the winter, agreement to a second attack on France in the coming year and to a new meeting with Maximilian and Margaret to celebrate the marriage between Archduke Charles and Henry's sister, Mary Tudor—Madame had only to mention these things and Henry agreed.

Margaret's fame as a diplomat was more brilliant than ever. Yet now a new turn of the fateful wheel of fortune was to bring her, after these triumphs, the bitterest disappointments.

Tousjour loyal, quoy que advienne,
En tout et partout l'homme doit estre,
Tant soit il seculier ou prestre;
Droit dit que loyalté l'on tienne.

Dieu veult, certes, qu'on s'entretienne,
En fortune bonne ou senestre,
Tousjour loyal.

Pouser le cas qui mesavienne
Et que le tout ne vient a dextre,
Je ne scay mieux du monde en l'estre
Pour l'homme, fors qu'i se mentienne
Tousjour loyal.

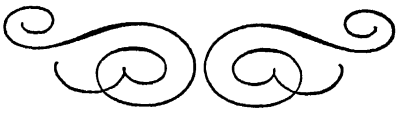
Always loyal, whatever comes,
In all and everywhere man must be,
Whether secular or priest;
Right bids one to keep loyalty.

God wills, for sure, that we remain,
In fortune good or sinister,
Always loyal.

Suppose the case of misadventure
Where all does not come right, I know
Nothing better in the world
For man than to maintain himself
Always loyal.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Roman Crown



THE triumphant days in Tournai and Lille, when Margaret had managed to leave her stamp on the future of Europe's international politics, appeared to have given her some of the overboldness characteristic of the young King of England. In Lille she had succeeded in all her efforts, and these achievements in foreign fields seemed to have blinded her to the serious problems of her domestic government, which, as the years went by, had become more and more threatening.

While she possessed really sovereign power, Monseigneur the Archduke Charles, living opposite her in Malines in the "Keizerhof", which resembled a cloister rather than a royal residence, would in the near future be taking over that power from her. Those who sought to play a role at Margaret's court, to set their mark on men and events, to capture their share of the power over which Monseigneur would one day have control, looked upon the young Archduke as the future itself. Whoever controlled Charles had the fate of Europe in his hands. Whomever Charles wished to follow, two continents would obey.

Hence behind the scenes of that feudal stage on which Charles lived his life of a sovereign-to-be, a struggle was being waged for the possession of this boy, and the parties to it were the same that were fighting each other in the great European tournament: France, Spain and the Habsburgs, England and Burgundy. Between them stood the Regent, Burgundian by birth, Habsburg in her politics, related to Spain and materially dependent on Ferdinand's favor, feared by France and for economic and traditional reason allied with England. And still the one plea of her subjects was for peace.

For a short time at least the Treaty of Cambrai had established a balance between the contending interests. The House of Habsburg ruled over Monseigneur and his Low Countries in the person of the Regent. France was pacified. Chièvres, leader of the Burgundian national party, occupied the most important function of tutor to the prince. He shared his apartments, even his bedroom. Though his influence was subordinate to that of Madame, it was Chièvres who was molding the still formless character of Monseigneur to the shape he thought best for him. In Spain, Ferdinand was for the moment satisfied with the regency of Castile. Relations with England had been settled by the betrothal of Archduke Charles to Princess Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII.

But this treaty had been only a temporary arrangement. It was shipwrecked on its own success—and the Holy League between the Pope, Aragon, and Venice against Louis XII was the result. Nor did this Holy League survive success. Venice deserted her allies and joined with France once more. It was at this moment, in the spring of 1513, that Margaret

considered the time ripe for dealing Louis a crushing blow. After the victories of her English ally it also seemed to her a good moment to restrict the French influence in her own government, to eliminate it if possible. Chièvres, Charles's tutor, must be rendered powerless.

His party carried on a strong opposition to Margaret's politics, particularly since she had taken up with greater energy the struggle against that outpost of France, Charles of Gelre. It consisted of the Burgundian feudal lords who saw in Margaret primarily the representative of alien Habsburg, and who looked forward eagerly to the moment when Archduke Charles should be declared of age and freed from the regency of his grandfather and his aunt. Margaret knew that this moment was very near: according to Burgundian custom, on the fifteenth birthday of the young ruler. The more necessary was it therefore to remove him beforehand from the pro-French, anti-Habsburg influences of Chièvres and his followers, to win him over definitely for her own policy, so that Charles should continue even after his emancipation in the direction that Margaret wished to select for him.

Her meeting with the young and triumphant Henry VIII presented her with a means of undermining Chièvres' authority without removing him from office. She had a new ordinance drawn up concerning the "gouvernement de la personne" of the young Archduke because, as she wrote Maximilian, the King of Aragon had complained that he had no way of exerting any influence on the boy for whom he was conducting the regency in Castile. To meet this legitimate objection it was now decided that the Emperor, the King of Aragon, and the King of England should each ap-

point a good man—"ung bon personnaige"—who should be given the competency of a first lord in waiting at Charles's court and for this purpose should dispose of a key to the archducal apartments. One of them should sleep, together with Chièvres, in Charles's bedroom. The trio should, moreover, attend all private meetings of the Council—in short, no single detail of Charles's private life and of the actions of his government should remain unknown to them.

This ordinance, published in the presence of Henry VIII in Lille, meant practically the elimination of Chièvres, whose party thereupon made indignant protests to Maximilian. But the Regent stood her ground. She had not yet completed the execution of her program for protecting her authority over Monseigneur. Still other influences working against her policy must be removed.

Besides the friendship with England, Margaret's efforts in recent years for a better understanding between the two grandfathers of her pupil, Ferdinand of Aragon and the Emperor, had apparently met with success. But Ferdinand had been the first to withdraw, through Pope Julius II, from the League of Cambrai. And although he was included in Margaret's plan for an international attack on Louis XII, it was a question whether he would in 1514 be willing to support the Habsburg policy. For at the bottom of Ferdinand's heart lay hatred against the Habsburg dynasty of his son-in-law Philip the Handsome, into whose hands the premature death of his own heir, Don Juan, had delivered the Spanish heritage, and who had encouraged the rebellion of Castile against Aragon.

Margaret knew the real inclination of her former father-in-law, and she determined, after her triumph over Chièvres,

to bind him more closely to the Habsburgs by making an end of the Castilian influences at the Court of Malines which were trying to get young Charles, who would some day be King of Castile, into their power. Since Ferdinand's regency over the lands of Queen Isabella, Don Juan Manuel de la Cerda, leader of the Castilian nationalists, had been living as a political refugee at the court of Maximilian, which he left in 1512 in order to prepare the future of an independent Castile in the immediate proximity of the young Archduke. Don Juan Manuel was received with distinction by the Burgundian court circles. He had been a favorite of Philip the Handsome, who had even taken him into the Order of the Golden Fleece; and his position at the court of Malines was such that Ferdinand of Aragon was obliged to consider him a threat and a danger.

Margaret was aware that her father-in-law had for some time been trying to get Don Juan Manuel into his hands. A ship fitted out by Ferdinand lay for months in a Netherlands harbor ready to bring him alive or dead to Spain. Nor did Margaret herself look favorably on the disruptive Castilian influence at her court. Her close collaboration with Henry VIII, who in such instances never hesitated, and her victory over the Burgundian nationalists, made her decide on a step that was to unchain forces the consequences of which she realized too late. She had Don Juan Manuel taken prisoner with intent to deliver him over to Ferdinand of Aragon.

The impression this action of hers made upon the court of Malines was indescribable. She, a woman, had dared to have a knight of the Golden Fleece lifted from his bed like a common criminal, ignoring the statutes of the Order which gave its members the privilege of being judged only by their

equals. She, a woman, who could never aspire to the honor of knighthood, who, though a ruler of imperial blood, could never approach the glory of the Golden Fleece, had dared to violate these statutes, which were held no less sacred than the highest laws of the land.

Since the death of Philip the Handsome the Order had been without a leader, as the Duke of Burgundy, its head, was, in the person of Archduke Charles, still a minor. The indignant knights did not hesitate to draw Monseigneur into the defense of rights that should be sacred to him. So that one day shortly after Manuel's imprisonment the Regent saw herself faced with a most painful situation: her nephew at the head of a deputation of knights, among whom Chièvres was not lacking, came to complain of the unworthy treatment of his confrere. The knights demanded that they, and they alone, should be informed of the accusation against Don Juan Manuel, and that meanwhile his imprisonment should be mitigated as much as possible.

For this sudden, threatening reaction of the Order the Regent had not been prepared. She was not yet aware that she had injured feelings which to her, a woman, had only theoretical significance, nor that she had overreached herself in interfering with something sacred that she, the uninitiate, had looked upon as a fine but somewhat worn bit of scenery. The visit of the angry deputation made her see that she had been playing with a fire which might well singe her own wings, and though she severely pointed out to Monseigneur that the Order had not been called together with her consent, in her first consternation she promised her visitors not to deliver Don Manuel over to Ferdinand.

Nonetheless Margaret's legal advisers went ahead with the trial that had for its purpose the destruction of Don

Manuel's power, and a second time Monseigneur came with a few knights to declare that the Regent was treading the country's laws underfoot by doing violence to the statutes of the Order.

In the audience chamber of the Court of Savoy a dramatic tension reigned. Erect and haughty, her eyes flaming in her pale face, the Regent took Monseigneur to task for having listened to bad advice in coming to invoke the laws of the land against the bearer of the highest authority. She lashed at the nobles with words of scorn, in which echoed her own helpless anger that she, the Emperor's daughter, was forever excluded from the sacred circle. The gentlemen wished to lay the statutes of their Order in her way, to use a laughable, infantile ruling as a means of hampering her political work? "Ah, Messeigneurs!" the Regent cried, "if I were such a man as I am a woman, I would make you bring your statutes to me and make you sing out passages from them!"

Both parties appealed to the Emperor. Maximilian, who could not let the Order down and did not want to disavow his daughter, commanded that Don Juan Manuel be sent to Germany, where his case would be investigated. Therewith the painful incident was apparently ended. But it had done more harm to the authority of the Regent than she could guess. It had for the first time brought young Charles into open conflict with his aunt, who had evidently no conception of his glorious Golden Fleece, and had brought him into closer contact than ever with his beloved tutor, the defender of the Order. The foreign triumvirate might share Charles's bedroom—it did not share his heart, nor his confidence. Through Margaret's faux pas Chièvres had won the battle for the immediate future.

Robbed of every support from the Burgundian nobility,

the Regent presently found herself facing political calamities that were to deprive her of the last vestiges of her authority. It was now that the League of Malines shared the fate of the League of Cambrai and fell apart as a result of the mutual suspicion of its members. After Ferdinand of Aragon, as Margaret had feared, had become reconciled with Louis XII, Maximilian too let himself be persuaded by Ferdinand to an armistice with France. The Emperor was well aware that by this act he was undermining the policy of his daughter, the more so since he had also concluded the armistice in the name of his English ally, who had not the remotest knowledge of it. He took good care, "le bon père Maxi", not to keep his daughter posted about his actions.

But Margaret's informers did good work. Reports reached her about Spanish visitors received by the Emperor, and it was Ferdinand of Aragon himself who imparted to his daughter-in-law the fact that her father had thwarted her political efforts. Margaret wrote to Maximilian that this was big news and very different from her understanding—"Monseigneur, ce sont nouvelles, qui sont bien grandes et différentes de mon entendement". How would the English king, who was still carrying on his preparations for the campaign of the following summer, receive this betrayal? And did Maximilian not understand that France wanted to conclude peace only to break the mighty alliance of the four great powers? Aragon and even England did not need to fear France. Between the Catholic King and France there were great mountains, and between France and England the sea: but between the Low Countries and France there was no separation; and her father knew the great and inveterate enmity the French bore to his House—"Monseigneur, entre le

roy catholique et France il y a de grandes montaignes, et entre France et Angleterre est la mer: mais entre ces pays et France n'y a point de séparation; et vous scavés la grande et invétérée inimitié que les François portent à ceste maison".

But the Emperor had already gone too far. And when Margaret urged with the greatest emphasis that at least he should hasten the marriage between Charles and the English Princess Mary, so that Henry VIII should not feel himself utterly betrayed by the Habsburgs, Maximilian kept postponing this decision as well—until it was too late and Margaret's last chance to rescue the friendship with England was lost. In August, 1514, Henry was reconciled with France and gave his sister, the eighteen-year-old fiancée of Archduke Charles, in marriage to the French King Louis XII himself, who had lost his wife, Anne of Brittany, a short time before.

The break between England and the Habsburgs was a crushing blow for the Regent of the Netherlands. The treatment her father had meted out to her, who in her letters would refer to herself as the one who day and night thought only to do him service—"celle qui nuit et jour ne panse que de vous faire service"—had injured her deeply. Her authority in the Netherlands was hopelessly undermined. She feared more than ever that the opposition would let things come to open revolt, and she foresaw that Chièvres would very soon be approaching the Emperor to have the now fourteen-year-old Charles declared of age. She knew that her opponents spoke evil of her to her father and more and more felt herself slipping from the Emperor's confidence. Was it not said that the Emperor no longer kept her informed of his wishes in important affairs—"son vouloir et

intencion sur les grans affaires"—because Margaret could not keep a secret and told everything all over Europe? The opposite was true, declared the Regent in a tragic memorandum to the Emperor. She had never received so much of His Majesty's affection and confidence that he was willing to keep her informed of things that were not already known to everybody else, so that foreigners knew the important events before she did. The Emperor must remember that it was he who must maintain her authority, because with the loss of hers he would also lose his.

But all these warnings came too late. The party of the opposition had taken care that the Regent should not get back her lost prestige. Under the influence of Chièvres the States General demanded in 1514 the emancipation of Monseigneur Charles. If the Emperor agreed to this, said the States, they would make him, who was always short of cash, a present of 100,000 gold guilders. That was the price they were willing to pay to be relieved of the imperial government, freed from the imperial lieutenant.

Without informing the Regent, Chièvres negotiated with the Emperor in the matter. And Maximilian did not spare his daughter this bitterest disappointment: she received his order to proceed with Charles's emancipation without having been consulted in this decision that completely altered her own position. And while the star of Margaret of Austria sank in the political sky of Europe, Monseigneur Charles, serious and somewhat backward for his almost fifteen years, but with a formidable future ahead of him, occupied the impressive seat at the table of the Privy Council from which his aunt had steered the fate of Europe. In place of her fine widow's cap of lawn this blond youth's jewel-studded

bonnet now bent over the documents of state. And when the Emperor, according to his habit, sought the advice of his daughter, she answered from the seclusion of her writing cabinet that she was no longer mixing in any affairs and it would be necessary for him to write to Chièvres—"maintenant je ne me mesle d'affaire quelconque, et sera nécessaire, que escripves audit Sieur de Chièvres. . . ."

Quiet descended on the Court of Savoy. Madame's apartments were stripped of their tapestries, the bed of its damask canopy. For etiquette commanded that the former Regent should accompany her nephew, the young Archduke and "Prince d'Espaigne" as he called himself during the life of his grandfather Ferdinand, upon his triumphal journey through his provinces. Everything that could contribute to Madame's comfort, carpets and wall hangings, plate and bed furnishings, was taken along in the baggage train of Monseigneur's party. Malines, Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges were the first places the young ruler visited. Bergen-op-Zoom, Delft, the Hague, Haarlem, Leiden, and Amsterdam were the cities in the north privileged to accommodate Charles and Margaret and their impressive suite for a day or more. In the middle of July the royal cavalcade left the Northern Netherlands, and on the 26th Monseigneur and Madame de Savoie returned, after a six months' journey, to a festive Brussels.

Many bitter experiences had fallen to Margaret's share during those months. Now that she no longer represented the highest authority, criticism of her conduct of affairs came to her more frankly than had been possible before. Her secretaries did not withhold from her that Monsei-

gneur's entourage emphasized with satisfaction the discontent with her government. She was reproached for having encouraged the war with Gelderland, for not having been able to maintain the peace of Cambrai. Some even went so far as to accuse her of having run the government solely for her own benefit, of having plundered the treasuries of the poor provinces for her useless campaigns and of having, moreover, ruthlessly enriched herself. From all sides complaints of this sort penetrated to Monseigneur and his Council, poisoned the atmosphere, injured feelings, upset confidence. Evil rumors surrounded the Dowager Duchess of Savoy like an invisible wall, and in the midst of the festive show of Charles's entries she often felt herself bitterly deserted, exposed to an intangible threat. She asked herself, and wrote the Emperor, whether she would not do better to retire graciously to Burgundy and devote herself to her own "small interests".

After the return to Brussels she frankly told Chièvres, now the head of Charles's government, how depressed she was by these sneaking and untrue charges which were constantly being made behind her back and which had robbed her of Monseigneur's confidence without her being able to defend herself against their invisible attacks. The Governor, in calm awareness of his complete victory over the woman he had for years looked upon as his opponent, advised her to defend herself by openly bringing up in Monseigneur's Council what others had until now been whispering. Chièvres knew Margaret's talents and, rather than make her a dangerous enemy, he tried to win her to his plans, which, moreover, did not differ very much from the methods of her own government. Her sense of reality had again and again

convinced the level-headed Margaret of the necessities by which Chièvres was now also bound: only a policy of neutrality and friendship with the great powers who were Burgundy's neighbors could in the long run reconcile the unwilling Netherlands provinces to the central authority, which was in the last analysis dependent on their good will.

Accordingly Madame de Savoie read aloud at the meeting of Charles's Council on August 20, 1515, a memorandum in which she candidly spoke of the accusations by which it had been hoped to undermine Monseigneur's affection for his aunt. She gave a survey of the political events that had made her conduct of affairs necessary, of the war she had had to wage against Charles of Gelre, always strengthened anew by the French in his revolt against Monseigneur's authority, and she showed how she, instead of having enriched herself through her office of Regent, had on the contrary run into debt for the sake of the Archduke.

Both young Charles and his tutor made speeches after the reading of this exhaustive document. They considered Madame altogether cleared of the charges, spoke many kind and appreciative words, made promises for the future. It appeared that the atmosphere at the court had been clarified. And at last, after her strenuous years of rule, after her fatiguing journeys with Monseigneur, Margaret found the quiet to go once more about her own affairs, to devote herself to her art collection, her library, to that distant structure which already on a previous occasion had made her forget the lack of any political work: her church at Brou.

Many years had passed since on that stormy August day in 1506 the first stone of the church that was to be a mauso-

leum for Philibert the Handsome had been laid. When President Gattinara had visited Brou in 1509 to give the Regent a report on the state of its development, he had been enthusiastic about the grandiose appearance of the only partially completed cloister. "Madame", he wrote with that southern fire with which he customarily expressed himself about anything in which he was interested, "if you had seen what has come into being, you would rather sell the most expensive tabard you possess than fail to collect the thousand écus necessary to complete it".

In that same year of 1509, when Margaret had acquired the Franche-Comté of Burgundy and was less dependent upon her income from her Savoyard widow's pension, she had decided on important enlargements and embellishments to the still very sketchy plans. And not for material reasons alone. In the will she had had drawn up in 1509 she expressed the wish to be buried in the land where she had spent such happy years, and in this church of Brou, beside Philibert the Handsome.

It was the French painter-engineer Jean Perréal, Margaret's drawing master in the happy days of Amboise, who now received the commission to make of this modest church a mausoleum worthy to enclose three royal tombs.

Perréal was an all-round man and not likely to let slip an opportunity in any field. He knew how frightened patrons can become on learning what their plans will cost, even though they may be of imperial blood and rule over wealthy provinces. He found it more sensible to conceal the real facts and send Madame attractive designs to study, without mentioning the amounts these plans would consume.

To execute the three tombstones, the jewels to be enclosed

in the costly shrine, Perréal had employed the cooperation of one of the greatest French sculptors, Michel Colombe, who, although already eighty years of age, "very ancient and heavy, gouty and sickly"—"fort ancien et pesant, goutteux et maladif", was inspired with a youthful fire to accept the royal commission. From the sketches of Perréal, Colombe was to prepare models which would be sent from Tours to Malines, so that Madame could have the tomb of Duke Philibert complete before her eyes.

But the conceited and selfish Perréal fell to quarreling with the monks of Brou. The bickerings reached the ears of Madame, the monks complained to their protectress, and Perréal, who had thought himself in clover for the rest of his life, was dismissed. As his successor a mason, as he modestly called himself, was appointed, one Louis van Boghem, a practical and matter-of-fact Fleming, who set to work industriously after having regulated his reward in detail. Seven years after Margaret had renewed the "pledge of Brou", the work that Perréal had kept dangling with so much artistic finesse at last began to take shape. New "patterns" were drawn, and the death of old Michel Colombe made necessary a new design for Philibert's tomb as well. A studio of Flemish artists was set to work, and thus there came into being in southerly Bresse a monument related in style to the "Maison du Roi" in Brussels and the town hall of Ghent. Jan van Roome of Brussels, famous for his tapestries, designed the tombs, the choir stalls, the wonderful windows. Conrad Meit, a German by birth, but living in Flanders, received the commission for the memorial statues. Sketches and models were sent to Margaret, and during the years 1515 and 1516, when "grans affaires" more or less

passed her by, she selected those final designs that were to make this monument of Brou into an incomparably beautiful example of Flemish gothic.

Margaret was never to see her own church. Sooner than she could have guessed in 1515, the task of government was once again to command her attention. She, who in her youth had traveled over the whole of Europe, was scarcely to leave the Netherlands again in the second half of her life. Until a sad procession went the same way that the bride of Philibert the Handsome had once gone, a procession bearing the embalmed body of the Regent of the Netherlands to its rest in the grave she had prepared for herself.

While Madame de Savoie was enjoying life and looking younger and more attractive than ever, as the Venetian ambassador Pasqualigo noted, events took place in Europe that were once again to raise her to highest political power. Once again it appeared how well the constant turnabout implied in her device—*Fortune, Infortune, Fortune*—characterized her life's course. And as so often before, once again it was Death that took a hand in her career.

Louis XII had not long survived the triumph he had achieved over young Archduke Charles of Austria by marrying his lively bride, Mary Tudor. With an exuberant company of young English courtiers, under the leadership of that same amorous Charles Brandon, now Duke of Suffolk, who had once paid court to Madame de Savoie, Mary had arrived in her new kingdom. On the voyage she had fallen under the spell of the engaging Suffolk and had already deceived her ancient bridegroom Louis before she had even laid eyes on his decrepit form.

Her buoyant personality was a revelation to poor Louis, whose late wife, Anne of Brittany, had had little charm. Mary had everything her own way, and the King, accustomed to living carefully and going to bed with the chickens, as his courtiers mockingly said, let himself be dragged about in the mad festivities the enamored Queen gave in honor of her English companions. It was too much for Louis, and a few months later the new Queen of France stood by the deathbed of her husband. With indignation Margaret heard the startling news that Charles Brandon had taken the widow back to England and on the way had persuaded her to marry him, something it was difficult for her to get into her head, as she wrote her father, since there was no sense in it nor any sign of good—"Ce que bonnement ne peult entrer en ma teste, car il n'y auroit nulle raison ny apparence de bien". . . . Wherewith she expressed her opinion on marriage for love in general and on the jovial Suffolk in particular.

Louis' death brought to the French throne a reckless young daredevil, Francis I, the son of Margaret's sister-in-law, Louise of Savoy, Duchess of Angoulême. Five years older than the Archduke of Austria and Prince of Spain, Francis, lively and intelligent, lighthearted and casual, unfaithful and unpredictable, felt infinitely superior to that young Charles who talked through his nose, could not close his mouth, and was ruled by his aunt. He, Francis, was idolized by his mother, and he was Charles's feudal lord for Flanders and Artois. He was immensely wealthy—seemed to be so, at least, to judge by the feasts he gave and the state kept by his mistresses and his followers. He was strong, agile as quicksilver, an ideal tournament hero, the darling and the downfall of women. For Francis there was no doubt

that he, and no one else, was the chosen leader of Europe, the hero who would save Christendom from the Turks, against whom the powerless old Maximilian of Habsburg had for so long been figuring out hollow plans.

Upon his accession to the throne Francis had expressed himself in a condescendingly friendly and somewhat contemptuous manner to the Burgundian ambassadors who had visited him. Charles need have no illusions, he said, that he, Francis, would let himself be led by him, the way Maximilian and Ferdinand of Aragon had led his predecessor, Louis XII. If anyone was to rule the roost in Europe, Francis would do so and no one else. And to let them see that he would not be trifled with, he made preparations to reconquer the dukedom of Milan, which Louis had had to abandon.

Being a vassal of the young French King, Archduke Charles was invited to attend the coronation festivities of his new rival. But with circumspect politeness Chièvres excused his young master, who daily had to deal with most important and pressing affairs. The point was to keep the easily offended Francis in a good mood so long as Charles's power still rested exclusively on Burgundy. This delicate commission was well entrusted to Chièvres, whom the world knew as French-minded. Reason the more to keep Madame de Savoie, who was denounced at the court of Francis for being "pure English", well in the background.

But one year after Francis I was crowned, Death once again brought alterations in the balance of power in Europe. Ferdinand of Aragon died in January, 1516, and the dominions over which he had ruled—Aragon and Castile, Granada and Leon, Naples and Sicily, and the "Indian" realms of the New World—came to increase the prestige of the sixteen-

year-old Archduke of Austria, whom Francis so haughtily treated as a vassal. Burgundy still needed to keep on good terms with France, for the Spanish inheritance had not yet been confirmed by the Cortes, and rumors reached through to the Netherlands of a wish to proclaim Archduke Ferdinand, Charles's young brother who had grown up under pure Spanish influences, as King of United Spain. Hence there was haste for Charles's coronation journey, and the same necessities held for him that had also compelled his father, Philip the Handsome, to peace with France. Chièvres' policy, which in the beginning could afford to be strictly Burgundian, must now be altered to a European policy. As leader of Charles's government he would soon have to undertake the voyage to Spain with his young master.

Peace with France—but also peace with England. This was an objective which Madame de Savoie could understand. With tense nerves Margaret caught every mood at Charles's court, which she never left for a moment. The English ambassadors, their finger on Europe's pulse, reported to Windsor that they were not so certain any more whether Madame de Savoie was still the same devoted servant of English interests that she had formerly always been considered. They thought they would do well, they wrote Henry VIII, not to let Madame so much into their secrets any longer.

For evenings on end Margaret played backgammon with Chièvres, and the rattle of their dice spelled trouble for the English ambassadors. Even though the Burgundian government did not yet have entire confidence in her, it was nevertheless clear to everyone that the star of Madame de Savoie was rising again. At the same time the Emperor was doing

his best, from his side, to strengthen the position of his daughter, for the warnings he would not listen to when the Netherlands had jingled the tempting gold they wished to pay for the emancipation of Charles, had proved correct. With Margaret's authority in the Netherlands Maximilian's also had declined, and to his amazement he had been obliged to observe that the government of his grandson was going its own way and no longer troubled itself about the imperial wishes. He had to admit that under Margaret's regime it had been different. And in the warmest terms he wrote to Charles, "King of Castile and Aragon, Granada and Leon", about the former Regent, urging him above all to take his good aunt—his "sy virtueuse et bonne taente"—into his confidence, to assign her a yearly stipend, and never to forget that Charles, his grandfather, and his aunt "were one and the same thing corresponding to one and the same desire and affection"—"une mesme chose correspondant à ung mesme désir et affection".

Nor did the Emperor leave it at letters. In February, 1517, he came himself to the Netherlands in order to effect a complete reconciliation between his daughter and his grandson. Maximilian's warm, enthusiastic personality did not fail to make an impression on the still not very independent Charles, who up to now had let himself be ruled entirely by the calm and temperate Chièvres. Grandfather Maximilian spoke of the future, and his dreams imparted themselves to Charles's half-awakened consciousness in visions of heroism and world domination. Spain, Austria, and the Netherlands, declared the Emperor, together formed a territory greater than that of any other ruler in Europe. But Charles would be irresistible if to the royal crowns he already possessed there should

be added that ancient and honorable jewel, symbol of divine power on earth, the imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.

It did not lie with the Emperor, it is true, to have his grandson appointed to succeed him. That important decision rested with the German Electors, who usually had their own motives in making their choice. But the Electors, Maximilian knew by experience, were amenable to a certain clinking reason, susceptible to the persuasive power of that most eloquent of advocates: gold. The Emperor, alas, possessed no gold—but Charles's future empire should provide sufficient security for the German bankers, who had already so frequently rescued Maximilian himself from pecuniary distress.

The Emperor had indeed once had other plans, had made other deals with the crown, which he would presumably not wear much longer, and the cash value of which he was well able to estimate. In the camp before Tournai he had roused in his jovial "son of England" illusions concerning the emperorship, which the treasury of the wealthy and fair-haired Henry would certainly be able to afford. Even to the strongest competitor of Charles and Henry, to Francis I of France, Maximilian had made an offer to influence the Electors in his favor, and with the object of having several strings to his bargaining bow, he had approached Louis of Hungary, the young husband of his granddaughter Mary, with the same plan. But in the end the old Habsburg had after all preferred to keep the imperial crown for his own family, and Charles, hesitant at first to take on, in addition to his cares in the Netherlands and Spain, the responsibilities of that unsurveyable empire, finally succumbed to the luster

of Maximilian's pictures of the future and, a few days before his departure for Spain, declared himself prepared to accept the candidature.

If the Spanish problems were at that moment scarcely to be assessed, those of the Netherlands were assuredly burdensome enough. Charles of Gelre, whose activities became always more threatening as the mood of France became less benevolent toward Burgundy, had received support in the north, where revolt against the all-encircling House of Habsburg had manifested itself among the Friesians, always jealous of their independence. In Utrecht and Overijssel, Drenthe and Groningen, the movement had also raised its head, and soon Holland was laid under tribute by armed bands, while on the Zuider Zee the dreaded pirate, "Big Pete", left no merchant ship alone and caused the entire crew of a defeated Dutch squadron to walk the plank without quarter. The "Black Bands" of Gelderland pressed to the very gates of Amsterdam, and the peaceful little cities of the Northern Netherlands—Medemblik, Alkmaar, Beverwijk, Asperen—were reduced to smoking ruins, until at last help from the southern provinces brought relief and it was possible to conclude an armistice. On his departure for Spain Charles left Count Hendrik of Nassau behind as captain general of the Burgundian troops, for the protection of the battered northern areas.

Besides the military authority, Charles also settled the government of the interior before leaving. And on the regency council, of which Maximilian was honorary chairman, and on which sat the Princes of the blood and the Knights of the Golden Fleece, a modest seat was assigned to the woman who had once exercised the whole power of

Collection of H. M. the Queen of the Netherl

Charles V, by Joost van Cleve.

Bayerisches National-Museum, Munich

Margaret of Austria, by Conrad Meit.

Burgundian government. Madame de Savoie, after two years without work, was once more included in the government, even though her influence was confined to the vote she could cast in the meetings of the council.

But as soon as Margaret had again acquired a firm foothold in Charles's administration, her talents and her changeable stars were quickly to bring her back again to the place she had occupied before. Early in 1518 the chairman of the council and the chancellor Sauvage, who had opposed Madame de Savoie's influence with special vigor, both died. In July of that year Charles granted his aunt the right to sign all state papers and to control the finances. An annuity of twenty thousand pounds was granted her. Only the official title of Regent was lacking—but this too she would speedily manage to earn.

In the midst of the problems that he, the ruler of the Netherlands, had to solve in Spain, Charles decided to take measures toward the realization of his grandfather's idea, and to have himself elected King of the Romans, successor to the Emperor. A special ambassador, de Courteville, left Spain for Maximilian's court, and in his baggage he bore instructions to support the efforts of the Emperor with money and promises, and a sum of 100,000 gold guilders in letters of exchange—which was indeed to prove no more than a drop on the sizzling platter of greed.

For the seven Electors—the Archbishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne, the King of Bohemia, the Duke of Saxony, the Count Palatine of Bavaria, and the Margrave of Brandenburg—were aware that besides Charles, in his capacity of King of Aragon and Castile, Francis I also wished to sue for

the highest dignity of Christendom, and they resolved to sell the Stone Throne of Charlemagne to the highest bidder. It was nothing new for the Electors to sell their vote in the imperial election. New, however, were the prices the two competitors appeared willing to pay, and new were the methods of financing that Charles applied. It was with the money and the credit of the Augsburg banking house of Fugger that the cost of the Roman Crown was to be met.

They had begun some time ago to make themselves indispensable to the aging Emperor, these Fuggers. For his campaigns and his as yet unrealized coronation journeys, even for his household and his daily necessaries of life, they had loaned Maximilian now enormous, now modest sums, receiving as security first the revenue from the silver and copper mines of the Tyrol, then a number of counties and estates that were never redeemed. The reputation of these Augsburg bankers increased with Maximilian's debts. Their name and their gold resounded over the whole of Europe, their offices formed the principal sight of many great centers of commerce.

It was bills of exchange on the Fuggers that Charles's ambassador had brought along to Germany. But this money was to be paid over to the Electors only after the imperial election, and, as Maximilian reported to Charles, those gentlemen had already accepted considerable sums from the French king and were to be satisfied only with cash.

How difficult it was to collect this cash in sufficient quantities would soon be apparent. The effort of Francis I to raise large loans from the bankers in Genoa and Lyons had failed, and only Francis's doting mother, Louise of Savoy, was prepared to lay her fortune in the balance for the pleasure of

seeing her darling crowned Head of Christendom. For Charles too, far away in Aragon, the problem of how to come by sufficient money had many angles. Payment to the Electors had to go through Maximilian's hands, and in that process, the initiate of all Europe knew, some part of it always adhered to his fingers. No wonder Chièvres recalled the businesslike calm with which Madame de Savoie used to play backgammon, and that, since she had the Fuggers and other large banking houses right at hand in the wealthy city of Antwerp, he should call upon her help.

Thus in that summer of 1518 Margaret once again found herself in the thick of the European battle, waged this time not with weapons but with ducats and gold écus, against that ancient enemy of Burgundy, the French royal house. Still other valuables were at her disposal. Where gold did not suffice human lives must be sacrificed, and to the Elector of Brandenburg, who must at all costs be won over to the Habsburg candidature, the hand of Charles's youngest sister, the unhappy Catherine at Tordesillas, was to be offered for his son.

In August, 1518, the Emperor called a meeting of the Diet in Augsburg, where he could exercise his influence upon the Electors in personal discussions. His success was overwhelming, and de Courteville excitedly wrote Margaret from Augsburg that everything was going well. Five of the seven Electors had promised their votes to Charles, and the two others could be dispensed with. The costs of this victory were enormous. The Elector of Brandenburg sold his vote for a life annuity of eight thousand guilders and a hundred thousand guilders in cash, to be paid on the day of the election. The Infanta Catherine, whom his son was to marry,

would bring in a considerable dowry. The three Archbishops, of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne, had been no less mundane in their demands. Mainz was to receive a yearly stipend of ten thousand guilders and thirty thousand gold guilders in cash, as soon as the other Electors should have given their votes to Charles; Cologne got the promise of an annuity of six thousand guilders and twenty thousand in cash; and the Count Palatine demanded not less than one hundred thousand guilders and a yearly stipend of twenty thousand for his brother. And then there were presents and pensions to friends and members of the family, even to secretaries and servants of these covetous gentlemen. The total of Maximilian's commitments at Augsburg came to 514,000 guilders in gold, comparable to some fifteen million dollars today.

Charles, shocked at such reckless expenditure, made use of a picturesque metaphor in his correspondence with Margaret. The horse upon which his aunt would like to see him ride was a very expensive one, the young Emperor-*in-spe* felt. Margaret had to admit as much, but she thought it a horse which its purchaser could easily acquire at that price, and now that it was trained to Charles's hand she was of opinion that he must not let it escape, whatever it might cost him. . . .

But the bargain was not yet struck. The Pope, who in the long run would have to crown Charles Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, was well aware what power he would be granting to the House of Habsburg which, in Italy, at only forty miles' distance from the Papal States, possessed the Kingdom of Naples. Sufficient motives could be found for declaring the election of Charles as King of the Romans an impossibility. There was the fact that Maximilian had never

been crowned Emperor in Rome and therefore himself had a right only to the title of King of the Romans. Thus it was excluded that during his lifetime this dignity should be conferred upon another. Francis I seized upon these papal motives with enthusiasm in order to undermine the candidature of his rival.

In the midst of these uncertainties the death bells tolled yet again over Europe. Maximilian, who, convinced of victory, was already prepared to call the Diet together in Frankfort to proceed with the elections, had suddenly passed away. And while mourning her father, whose charming personality she had loved despite the humiliation he had brought upon her, Margaret saw the future of her House endangered once again. For both Henry VIII of England and Louis of Hungary remembered Maximilian's promises and entered the struggle for the imperial crown.

Francis I doubled his prices, multiplied his intrigues tenfold. His ambassadors made no secret of the fact that their king would get himself elected by love, by money, or by force—"soit par amour, soit par argent, soit par force". They traveled through Germany with a train of mules laden with gold. Because the Banking House of Fugger would accept no French bills of exchange, it was said in Germany that the French were transporting their gold in secret, in sacks tied to Rhine ships. Margaret, to whom all these reports came, whose days were entirely filled with them, and who handed them on to whoever could use them to advantage, saw but one way: no empty promises, but to give with full hands, "so that the preacher should have good credit"—"qui faisoit avoir le precheur bon credit". Chièvres had judged correctly: Madame de Savoie did not let herself be hampered

by unbusinesslike scruples on this unsavory terrain. She held the threads of intrigue firmly in her hand, saw through men and their greedy motives and was able to intervene in events at the right moment and with great determination.

And not only in the matter of money. Rumors reached Margaret that Francis I intended to have himself crowned in Rome, however the decision of the Electors turned out; in fact, that he was even going to Frankfort in order to dictate the decision. French troop concentrations were observed, and the Burgundian government, under Margaret's resolute leadership, recruited infantry, reinforced the cities close to the French borders, and proceeded to the mobilization of everyone in the southerly provinces who could carry arms.

While Francis I was intriguing in Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia, in Rome and even in Spain in the very entourage of his opponent, Margaret sent her confidential secretary, Marnix, to the Reich with new promises, new warnings. If the Electors, Margaret declared, should really place the King of France on the Imperial throne they would be signing the death warrant of their own authority. They only needed to remember the action of the French crown against the independent dukes, against the French nobility. If they did not wish to choose the King of Spain, it would be preferable that they should crown one of their own candidates, a German ruler, as emperor. But this piece of advice must be a last resort for Marnix. The instructions Madame gave him contained first a large number of other suggestions which he must not leave untested. And Marnix went to work: he tried to win over the venial Lutheran condottiere, Franz von Sickingen, and the Swiss; influenced the cardinals in Rome, flattered the Electors who had already promised their

votes; conferred with Jacob Fugger, in whose coffers the bills of exchange were kept which Italian, Netherlands, and German banking houses had handed over to the King of Spain. Count Hendrik of Nassau, who had a very good name in the Reich, was also called in to exert his influence on the Reichstag itself. And to lend additional strength to all this activity, the merchants of Antwerp were forbidden to loan money to any foreign power, so that all their wealth should remain at Charles's disposal.

The principal result of these intrigues proved to be that the Electors raised the price of their votes. Brandenburg demanded double the amount promised him, a double dowry for the Infanta Catherine, and complete assurance that the money would actually reach him. He did not want to run the risk, he said with commendable frankness to Margaret's envoy, of falling between two stools.

Charles had to hand out more than a million gold guilders to resecure the votes Maximilian had already bought for him. The three archbishops alone, with their brothers and nephews, their councilors and valets, laid hold of not less than half a million gold guilders, again something over fifteen million dollars in today's currency.

Gold, gold, gold. The struggle for the imperial crown continued, holding all Europe in breathless suspense. The Pope suddenly declared in favor of the "Catholic King", Charles of Habsburg. Charles distrusted this benevolent sentiment, had papal letters intercepted, and discovered that the Holy Father was intriguing to have one of the German rulers elected Emperor. Toward the end of February, 1519, the confusion was so shocking, the position of the Electors so enigmatic, that Margaret, considering Charles's chances

completely lost, thought the honor of the House of Habsburg could be rescued only through launching Charles's brother, the Infante Ferdinand, as a new candidate for the emperorship.

But against this plan Charles protested vigorously. Ferdinand's candidature was withdrawn. And the struggle continued, for and against Charles, for and against Francis, with money and promises, warnings and threats. Only one thing was certain in all this chaos: the German people did not want the Frenchman and were prepared for armed revolt should the Electors designate him. The day of the election approached, and the news flew through Europe that the French king had gone to Lorraine. Did he intend to carry out his plan of having himself elected, sword in hand? The German cities armed. Charles, having agreed to protect the Electors from violence, had Frankfort surrounded by 25,000 mercenary troops.

This last measure it was that settled the matter. On the 17th of June of that eventful year of 1519 the Diet met in Frankfort. The presence of Charles's troops gave the Margrave of Brandenburg and the Count Palatine of Bavaria, who both still stood on the side of the French King, such a fright that on the very day of the election they returned to the safe side. On the 28th of June, at seven o'clock in the morning, the seven Electors betook themselves in solemn procession to the Church of Saint Bartholomew, and four hours later Charles of Austria, Lord of the Netherlands, King of Spain, of Naples and Sicily, was elected King of the Romans by unanimous vote.

Two days later the news reached the Netherlands. And the head of the government, Madame de Savoie, who saw

her months of incessant labor crowned with success, made the joyful news known to the people in an impressive fashion. Forgotten were the quantities of gold, the machinations, betrayal over and over again bought back, the baseness which, as one of Margaret's ambassadors had expressed it, made the bribers themselves blush for shame. In immaculate flight Margaret's proclamation soared above this earthly mire. Bonfires were to be lighted, thanksgiving feasts prepared, and prayers and honor must be brought to God, "because the Lords Electors of the Holy Roman Empire, unanimously, inspired by the Holy Ghost, without any vacillation whatever, had elected her Lord and nephew King of the Romans".

Le temps m'est long et j'ay bien le pourquoy,
Car ung jour m'est plus long qu'une sepmainne,
Dont je prie Dieu que mon corps tost ramainne
Ou est mon cueur qui n'est plus avec moy.

Il est vers vous, repousant sans requoy,
Et pour cela que j'en suis en grant painne,
Le temps m'est long.

Je vous jure, et sans mentir ma foy,
Que pensement non plaisant me promainne
Ou que soye, dont forment je m'atainne
Et rescripre je vous puis orendroy:
Le temps m'est long.

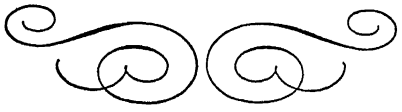
Time is long to me and I have reason,
For a single day seems longer than a week,
Hence I pray God soon to return my body
To where my heart is that is no more with me.

It is near you, without tranquillity
In its repose, and since I am in great pain
Time is long to me.

I swear to you, nor perjure my good faith,
Wherever I may be unpleasing thoughts
Drive me about, whence I am much harassed,
And can repeat it to you even now:
Time is long to me.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Ladies' Peace



MESSENGERS hurried through Europe. And although in all his lands the treasuries stood empty while notes with his signature were piling up in the offices of the Fuggers, the Welsers, the Gualterottis, those who spread the joyful report throughout Charles's empire were rewarded with generous hand. The good city of Malines even gave a gratuity to the postmaster's boy who had accompanied the first messenger with the news.

The young Emperor was well aware of what his aunt with her tireless staff of secretaries had managed to achieve for the good cause. The differences that had existed in the past between his chancellor Chièvres and Madame de Savoie had melted away in the excitement of the election campaign. The narrow Burgundian interests Chièvres had formerly defended now merged for him into the problems of Charles's empire. To serve his Emperor it was no longer necessary for him to work against Madame de Savoie. And even before Charles learned of the decision in the struggle for the imperial crown, on the first of July, 1519, in Barcelona, he signed the letters in which, in view of the inestimable and praise-

worthy services—"grands, inestimables et louables services" —she had rendered and was still rendering, and of the complete and extraordinary confidence he had always placed in his "très-chère dame et tante, dame Marguerite", he named her Regent and Governess of the Low Countries and charged all his subjects to obey her as they would himself.

Charles did set restrictions upon this apparently unlimited power, by secret instructions in which the bounds of Margaret's competency were narrowly prescribed. But before the eyes of the world Madame de Savoie was completely rehabilitated, and how highly Charles valued her help in his election became clear when, a year later, he presented her with the city and the land of Malines for the duration of her life.

A mature woman now in her thirty-ninth year, Margaret faced for the second time the task she had first undertaken twelve years before under entirely different circumstances. Then she had ruled in the name of a minor child, under the supervision of her father, whose wayward fancies she often could not follow and who in the end destroyed her loyal work by his capricious interference. Now she was the deputy of an emperor-king who had accepted her authority in his youth and upon whose confidence she now thought she could reckon. Margaret looked back upon her first period in office as a training school that, sometimes through bitter experience, had given her wisdom. The problems of her second regency were indeed already gathering like menacing cloud-masses on the horizon, but she felt better able than ever to handle the rudder.

They were ominous enough, in fact, the difficulties with which the young Emperor would have to contend. The rivalry between the royal houses of Habsburg and France

had been sharpened by the struggle for the imperial crown to a personal competition between the two young monarchs, Charles and Francis, who seemed destined by nature to mistrust and hate each other. Over against Francis in his glistening satin, beringed and beplumed, boundlessly vain, frivolous and faithless, swift and sly in his reactions, in body and mind as flexible and agile as a rapier, stood Charles, pious and modest, slow of tongue and tardy of comprehension, just as tenacious as his opponent was variable. No reconciliation seemed possible between these two characters, between the claims of each to world domination. Whom should Christendom choose for its leader against the ever-present danger of the Turks: the brilliant and polished Frenchman, who recklessly disposed of his subjects' possessions and the revenue from his well-rounded, homogeneous territory, or the sluggish Habsburger, whose disconnected lands lay spread over the old world and the new, and whose titles stood for some archaic pretense rather than for real power?

In less than a year Charles and his grasping ministers had made mortal enemies of the Spaniards. "Our Indians", the Burgundians called their ruler's new subjects. Chièvres and his friends took what they could get: offices and dignities, titles and prebends. Charles was a foreigner in Spain. He disdained Spanish fashions and ordered his tabards, his doublets, hose, and boots, in Flanders. He knew no Spanish. He and his were despised. The Spanish nobility went over to the French king and the population was prepared to take up arms in order to drive the hated foreigner and his robber knights of the Golden Fleece out of the country.

In the Netherlands sentiment was divided. People glowed with pride that the "natural ruler" of the Low Countries had achieved the imperial dignity. But there was no disguising

the fact that Charles would not consider his Burgundian provinces as the center of his Empire, and they feared a return to the policy of Maximilian, who had treated his grandson's lands as conquered territory.

And in the German Empire, an undefined conglomeration of ecclesiastical and temporal principalities totally lacking in any unity of purpose, in these first days of Charles's emperorship people were listening full of hope and emotion to a mighty and a stirring sound, the rough but genuine ring of Martin Luther's voice. His message penetrated to German ears, in which the chinking of all those gold ducats still echoed that had poured into insatiable hands in payment for the imperial crown. Still another sound had dismayed the pious German people in those days: the rumbling of the money chests with which a representative of the Archbishop of Mainz and an agent of the Fugger Bank had traveled through the country gathering in the solid Rhenish guilders which the citizens were obliged to pay for the remission of their sins. The Archbishop of Mainz was to use half the proceeds to pay off to the Holy Father in Rome the purchase price of his archiepiscopal dignity, which the Fuggers had advanced to him. The other half was destined for the building of St. Peter's. And if sins already committed did not produce enough, Fugger's agent with businesslike accuracy collected sums with which one could buy absolution for misdeeds one would be committing in a distant future. . . . The voice of Brother Martin rose—and in the Holy Roman Empire the fuse was lit that was to set Europe in flames.

Insurrection, rebellion, and lack of funds, spiritual ferment and an irrepressible drive for renewal—these were the internal problems of that unstable Empire. And at its bor-

ders lowered the Turkish menace, barely held off by a heroic Hungary.

Margaret sent a fleet from Zeeland to transport her nephew from embittered Spain to the Reich, where princes and people were clamoring for their new ruler, not yet suspecting that they had placed a foreigner upon the imperial throne. Charles made ready to take over these dominions, only to disappoint his German subjects as he had the Spaniards. On the first of July, 1520, the fleet landed in Flushing, and five days later the Regent of the Netherlands greeted her nephew the Emperor in Ghent, amid the rejoicing of the people.

Charles was able to report to his aunt, who still counted as "bonne angloise", on the meeting he had just held with his "uncle", the Most Serene King of England. He had made good use of his brief stay in Dover. Toward Henry, who thought himself the indicated mediator between Charles and Francis I, the young Emperor had borne himself with flattering modesty, and the all-powerful Cardinal Wolsey had radiated charm for the sake of a yearly stipend of seven thousand ducats, hinting in cautiously disguised words at the papal tiara, his boldest dream. Would Francis be able to influence fourteen cardinals? Seventeen were already prepared to carry out Charles's wishes. The Pope was known to be incurably ill. Perspectives of unlimited power, of fabulous wealth, opened before Wolsey's greedy eyes. He was the humble servant of His Imperial Majesty.

Margaret was full of admiration for the diplomatic talents of her pupil. That her former ally Henry VIII was again won to the Habsburg cause signified the triumph of her

policy. And though Henry had immediately come over to France after his meeting with Charles, to outdo his "brother Francis" with the showy excess of his riches, only to be himself outdone by the incomparable luxury of Francis's "Field of the Cloth of Gold", Margaret did not fear this competition too much. She hoped that Charles in his modest dark velvet had piqued Henry's vanity less than Francis, who might perhaps be thought to have a more beautiful beard, handsomer calves, more success with women. Margaret looked forward to going with Charles to greet the English king as soon as the meeting with Francis should have taken place, so that she could receive Henry's first impressions, and if necessary color them according to her own wish.

One month after she had welcomed the Emperor, Margaret traveled with him to Calais. Henry VIII, who had emphatically declared himself to be "neutral" between the rivals, Charles and Francis, on this occasion sided altogether with the Emperor, who knew how to flatter him by that slow helplessness of his and did not irritate him by any challenge of bejeweled show. Wolsey, the vision of the triple crown before his eyes, seemed as wax in the hands of Madame de Savoie.

On his return to the Netherlands Charles was awaited by ambassadors from the Electors, who requested him to make speed with his crowning. Once again Margaret's palace at Malines was bared of its hangings, its silver plate. For Charles's possessions could not equal the art treasures of his aunt, and she loaned him for his coronation banquet her incomparable dinner services and her world-famous tapestries. With her ladies and damoiselles in waiting and in the company of the Dowager Queen of Aragon, Germaine de Foix, Margaret journeyed to Aix-la-Chapelle to attend the solemn

ceremonies. Her bodyguard of halberdiers received new jerkins and new bonnets for the occasion. The suite accompanying the Emperor-King displayed a luxury that was little short of fabulous. The States General had once again made available some hundred thousands of pounds Flemish for the festivities.

Seated upon a magnificent white charger and clothed in his own colors of gold, silver, and crimson, the young Emperor rode to his coronation surrounded by a mounted bodyguard. The horsemen wore red, yellow, and white, and on their backs Charles's device, "Plus Oultre", was to be read embroidered in letters of gold. Five of the seven Electors had ridden forth to meet their chosen ruler, and the ceremonies of welcome outside the city gates were so protracted that the glorious cavalcade entered the venerable coronation city only at the fall of dusk, Charles's white steed but a pale spot among the countless darker forms of the surrounding horses.

Everyone went early to rest. For at the crack of dawn, at six o'clock of the crisp autumn morning, while all the bells of Aix boomed out their bronze-throated tones over the city, the temporal Electors came to conduct the King of the Romans to the Church of Our Lady, where the three Archbishops awaited him and blessed him "like a bride". In the sacred vaulted precincts, upon a platform hung with gold and silver fabric, sat the royal ladies of Charles's suite, the Dowager Duchess of Savoy and the Dowager Queen of Aragon, surrounded by their noblewomen. In the dusky light of the thousands of candles and torches they were "all cloth of gold, tissue of silver, and great chains and necklaces of gold and precious stones"—"tout drap d'or, toille d'argent

et grosses cheines et quarquans d'or et pierre précieuses".

Awe-inspiring in their sanctity were the consecration, the anointing, the crowning, the girding with the sword of Charlemagne. Margaret, a striking figure in her festive brocade gown and severe widow's cap, heard and felt the solemn music that accompanied the ceremony, and she became aware that this stirring moment signified the fulfillment of her life's work. As Charles lay stretched in the form of the cross before the high altar, as the holy rites were performed over him, she knew that that work had not been in vain. The motto of her grandfather, Emperor Frederick III—"All the world is subject to Austria"—seemed to have become a reality.

While the Emperor sat at the gala banquet, where the food was served on Margaret's silver services, while in the narrow streets of Aix the people gave themselves over to delirious festivity, and on the squares whole oxen were being roasted and silver coins and oats scattered among the excited masses, there flickered over the Low Countries the lightning of an approaching thunderstorm. And when on the day following the coronation the trumpets echoed through the city and a papal declaration was read out to the effect that his Royal Majesty should from now on bear the title of Emperor-Elect of the Romans, the moment had come for Margaret to leave Aix. Reports reached her that French troops were threatening the southern borders of the Netherlands and that in the north the Gelderland revolt had broken out anew. The Regent hastened to return to her provinces. By the second of November she was already back in Brussels, all her attention immediately absorbed by the ominous aspect of the situation. A few months later, in March, 1521, a border incident

sufficed to precipitate once more the struggle between France and Burgundy.

The Regent, who was at the same time superintendent of the Burgundian army, had taken her measures. At a sitting of the States General held in Ghent in July, 1521, she delivered with dramatic eloquence her accusation of faithlessness and treachery against Francis I, in a compelling challenge to the States to support their young master with money and troops. This time the States allowed themselves to be convinced. The presence of the Emperor, who, Margaret declared, stood ready to throw into the balance his life, his possessions, and all that God had given him, in order to rescue and protect his subjects, made them forget their guiding principle, that the best way to keep the peace was to refuse money for war. Enormous subsidies were promised—and they were more than welcome. For in the month of August Cardinal Wolsey crossed the Channel from England as "mediator" between the "Most Christian King" Francis and His Imperial Majesty Charles.

A mediator, both parties felt, is only useful when benevolently inclined. While the French representatives regaled Henry's powerful minister with the noblest French wines they could lay their hands on, Margaret forestalled the wishes of this splendor-loving and not very sporting cardinal, who detested riding on horseback, by sending him a luxurious red velvet litter, entirely upholstered in green satin so that his purple should stand out the more tellingly. Two large mules with red leather harness bore this comfortable conveyance, and in it the Cardinal, after his conference with the French ambassadors, went on to Bruges in order to supplement his mediator's work with a treaty between his master and the Emperor.

No expense was spared in receiving the prelate with princely luster. The members of his suite were overloaded with presents in money, from the Bishop of Durham down to the trumpeters and choirboys who went everywhere with His Eminence. To these resonant manifestations of friendship Madame de Savoie added those flattering attentions of which only a woman thinks. The English gentlemen were quartered with prominent burghers of Bruges, and every morning officers of the imperial household delivered at their dwellings a basket of fresh rolls, two silver pitchers of wine, a pound of sugar, some white and yellow candles, and a torch to light their bedrooms.

The courtesies were reciprocal. The Cardinal's musicians sang and played at the meals Margaret offered her distinguished guests, and the result of all this was a treaty, which the charming hostess could not have improved on had she wished. Once again it was agreed that the Emperor should wed an English princess, named, like the first one, Mary Tudor; but now it was not Henry's sister, but his only little daughter, heir to his crown, who was to make young Charles happy. An offensive alliance against France, still complacent over the good results of Wolsey's "efforts at mediation", was appended to the marriage contract.

Of the Regent of the Netherlands, however, one sacrifice was asked. She must expressly declare that this time the Low Countries would not remain neutral in the prospective war against France. The Pope was invited to take part in the league, and the Swiss and the Venetians were also to have their share of the booty when Francis I should have been driven out of Italy altogether and for good. Just as she had once made plans at Cambrai with the French Cardinal of Amboise for the destruction of Venice, so Margaret now

discussed with the English prelate how France could be eliminated as a great power. Madame de Savoie had experience with princes of the Church, and this time also her success was complete.

The Emperor certainly had need of England's friendship. The situation in his Spanish kingdoms was becoming more menacing than ever and his presence there was highly necessary. In the German Empire Martin Luther was steadily acquiring more followers, the breach was steadily widening between Rome and the people, between traditional authority, represented by Charles, and his subjects, who knew that the Emperor understood no German and whose national feelings were aroused since they now for the first time heard sermons preached in the language of their own country. In all parts of the Empire a young national consciousness was growing that looked upon this Habsburger as a foreign oppressor.

Before he left the Low Countries in an attempt to preserve Spain from civil war, Charles settled one matter for which no solution had yet been found: the claims of his Aunt Margaret and his brother Ferdinand to the inheritance of Emperor Maximilian.

For the sum of 250,000 pounds Flemish, to be paid in ten yearly installments, Margaret waived her rights to her father's heritage. Archduke Ferdinand, who after Charles's coronation had remained behind in the German Empire with the title of Regent and Head of the College of Electors, obtained the hereditary Austrian lands, which Charles resigned in his favor. And so the House of Habsburg was split into two branches: the Spanish, of which Charles V remained the head, and the Austrian, which was soon to develop into a notable power through the passing of Hungary

and Bohemia to Ferdinand's wife by the death of her brother Louis.

At Charles's departure for Spain the Netherlands found themselves in not very happy circumstances. A severe plague epidemic had ravaged the population. The people of Friesland and Gelderland repeatedly threatened the northern provinces, and Christian of Denmark, who had not yet received all the dowry Ysabeau was to have brought with her, gave Charles, his brother-in-law, two choices: to pay, or to make war. Once again the States were called upon for subsidies, and once again, this time out of fear of the Danish warships and of the measures Christian could take against Netherlands merchant shipping, the demands of the government were met. In July, 1521, the Danish king came in person to Antwerp, ostensibly to receive the remainder of Ysabeau's dowry, in reality to persuade Charles to a war against the Hanseatic cities, primarily against Lübeck.

Charles was not disinclined to oblige his brother-in-law. It was Margaret who realized what a war in the Baltic would mean for her provinces: the end of commerce with the Hanseatic cities, the impossibility of importing grain; high costs and starvation in the Netherlands. Once again the Regent showed that she knew herself to be no mere instrument of the Emperor's authority, but the guardian of interests that could not be brought into line with the Habsburg plans. Strongly supported by her Council, she was able to persuade Charles of the futility of an alliance with Christian.

After the Emperor had gone, Margaret prepared for a journey through the provinces, attending various meetings of the States in the hope of moving them to replenish her alarmingly empty coffers. But most of her visits were fruit-

less. And again she would have resorted to the pawning of her jewels. But the Antwerp bankers scorned this sort of collateral. By now they had acquired some idea of the enormous loans the Emperor had had to take up for his election campaign. They realized that their foreign colleagues too, who had financed this undertaking jointly with them, had not yet seen any repayment on the loaned sums. The Fuggers, the Welsers, and the Gualterottis wailed that they would go bankrupt. And Jacob Fugger, who assessed a doubtful debtor at what he was worth even though he wore the holy imperial crown, demanded payment in a letter to Charles in which he did not hesitate to call a spade a spade. "It is well known and clear as daylight," he wrote to his overlord, "that your Imperial Majesty could not have got the Romish Crown without my help".

Was it any wonder that in these circumstances the Emperor's creditors would have been overjoyed to lay hands on even half of their millions? Or that the Antwerp bankers declined to loan money on a few rings and other ornaments belonging to Madame de Savoie?

In the midst of her priceless art treasures, the luxury of her Court of Savoy, the Regent lived in desperate anxiety about the morrow. She was faced with an insoluble dilemma. If the troops which the struggle with France made necessary were not paid, they would plunder their remuneration together out of the very area they were supposed to defend against the French raids. If the States thought they could not impose any further taxes, they would quickly see their citizens plunged into poverty and misery in another way. An ineluctable fate seemed to hang over the Netherlands. Peace was not anywhere in sight.

Thus the years of Margaret's second regency dragged on.

Threatened by the French in the south, by Gelderland and Friesland in the north and east, looted by pirates, ravaged by plague, floods, and hunger, the unhappy inhabitants of the Low Countries saw their last pennies claimed by a government that wanted to make war in Italy. In every city resistance grew. Even in the loyal Burgundian stronghold of Malines the people began to stir.

Lack of funds, insurrection, war—lack of funds, insurrection, war. They were always the same problems that troubled Margaret's days. The demands of the imperial world policy on which the fame and glory of her House depended, and the interests of her stricken provinces—these were sometimes totally contrary objectives which the Regent must attempt to reconcile. But whenever this proved impossible, whenever not a single way suggested itself of obliging the Emperor without dealing her subjects a deathblow, then the Regent with unshakable determination chose the side of her provinces, always managing in the end to see that her views prevailed.

When in 1523 Christian of Denmark, fleeing before his rebellious people, came to ask his brother-in-law's help in getting back his crown, it was the persistent watchfulness of the Regent that saved the Netherlands from the destructive consequences of a war with Scandinavia. Even the supplications of her foster child Ysabeau, who dared to plead with her aunt on behalf of her infamous husband, could not soften her heart. She paid Christian and Ysabeau a yearly stipend, tried to bring order into the confusion of their household, gave presents to the children; but, as two years before, she refused to let her lands, already so severely afflicted, be involved in a quarrel which could only result in endless disasters.

The English troops that were expected to help carry the war into French territory did actually land at Calais in August, 1523. In their first bellicose enthusiasm they even pressed to the very gates of Paris. But when the autumn rains made the terrain impassable, and the region had been practically plundered empty, the English Generals bethought them of the warm hearth-fires at home. In November they embarked again. Military honor had been satisfied.

Again the Burgundian troops were demanding their pay. Although the revolt in Friesland had been put down and Emperor Charles, in his capacity of Count of Holland, was recognized as lord over Friesland, Gelderland went on with its struggle. Money was also needed again for defending the cities of North Holland. The States proposed to the Regent that it would be better to burden the ducal domains with mortgages, or even to sell them, rather than appeal again to a desperate population.

But against this measure, by which the power of the House of Habsburg in the Netherlands would become a mockery, Margaret's feudal notions rebelled. Power over a people, she opined, ought to rest upon possession of the ground on which that people lived. And there remained nothing for her but to write her nephew the Emperor that no more financial support was to be expected from the Netherlands. Her last attempts had been met by the population with such flaming indignation that all the provinces threatened to revolt. The measure of their misery was full.

At this point an event occurred abroad which changed all the relationships involved. Francis I had set forth to reconquer Milan, that illusion of the French, so often lost and lost again. Milan was indeed taken, and Francis continued further into the country in search of enemy troops that had

entrenched themselves inside the walls of Pavia. He laid siege to this city and lingered for several months in a dolce far niente on one of those idyllic country estates of North Italy where life can be sweeter than anywhere else in the world. Francis seemed scarcely to remember that he was busy besieging a city.

A sudden attack by the imperial troops scattered the French. Their king, who had defended himself bravely, was wounded in two places and attempted to save himself by flight. But he was recognized, and it was Charles de Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples, who received the sword from the hands of the royal prisoner.

The impression this news made throughout Europe was overwhelming. Now that he had caught the French king for him, Charles V wrote to his triumphant general, he himself had hardly anything else to do than begin the war against the heathen. In the Netherlands Margaret saw to it that bonfires were lighted and processions held to thank God that the French king, France itself, was in the Emperor's power. Francis I was taken off to prison in Spain.

This was the opportunity, thought the Regent, for an attack upon the enemy along his northerly frontiers, to put an end for good and all to French presumptuousness. The Netherlanders, indeed, looked with admiration on the bonfires, treated the thanksgiving parades with suitable respect; but they obstinately refused the money for which the Regent again asked. Once more Margaret hoped for the help of the English. But for some time now the friendship which Henry VIII and his minister Wolsey had announced with so much enthusiasm had been cooling. Charles had repeatedly borrowed large sums from his "uncle of England" and now saw little advantage any more in a marriage with Mary

Tudor, from whose dowry his debts would undoubtedly be deducted. In spite of his solemn engagement to the English princess, he had for some time been paying court through his representatives to Isabella, the daughter of the wealthy King Emanuel of Portugal, to whom Charles's elder sister Aliénor had been married off, after he had already been married to two of her aunts, daughters of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Isabella's dowry would certainly be paid in cash. Her "Indian" possessions were more attractive to Charles than the English friendship, which it would always be easy to buy back again with Isabella's ducats.

Nor was the atmosphere in England the same as before. Instead of Cardinal Wolsey, Adrian of Utrecht, Charles's former teacher, had been elected Pope, and when Adrian died in 1523 after bitter disappointments, Wolsey saw the triple crown elude him once again. Was this the way the Emperor kept his promises? The Cardinal remembered the excellent wines the French Queen Mother, Louise of Savoy, had had sent to him at Calais. He found his master quite prepared to make other arrangements for the future of his only daughter. Negotiations were opened for her marriage to the King of Scotland.

Thus Margaret's last support fell away. An empty exchequer, pillaging and mutinous troops, impoverished and rebellious subjects, who were trying to help themselves and who behind the government's back had sent representatives to France and England to rescue at least their commerce and fisheries—such were the circumstances Margaret found herself facing at the beginning of 1525.

In enemy France the King's mother, Louise of Savoy, who ruled as regent, lived amidst cares just as desperate as those of her sister-in-law Margaret. The son she worshiped con-

fined in a tower and facing the choice between lifelong imprisonment and handing over half his kingdom to the hated Habsburg; her country threatened by the imperial troops, her treasury empty, the population of North France tormented and pillaged by English and Burgundian raids—there seemed no possible way out for the French Queen Mother either, unless the Emperor could be persuaded to make peace. She determined to turn to her sister-in-law, Madame de Savoie.

This rapprochement was for Margaret too the only way out. She proceeded to Breda, where a conference had taken place between French representatives and some of her councilors under the leadership of Count van Hoogstraten. An armistice was concluded, the herring fisheries were to be protected, and the sea declared free for transport of merchandise. In anticipation of a settlement concerning the liberation of the French King, Netherlands commerce was at least temporarily saved and the Burgundian troops could be used to suppress the revolutionary movements that were cropping up all over the Low Countries.

With all the inflexibility of her unbending character the Regent fought against this resistance to her authority. She, who in her diplomatic dealings had always given proof of so much tact and adaptability, showed herself in her struggle with the Netherlands cities a true descendant of Charles the Bold. In Limburg, in Brabant, at Bois-le-Duc primarily, which was even besieged by Margaret's troops, the recalcitrance of the population was very severely dealt with. A bitter enmity grew up between the Regent and the people which in its gatherings drew strength from the new teachings of Brother Martin, who, albeit against his will, had brought about the all-destroying peasant revolution in the

German Empire. But however threatening this popular movement became, Margaret was not to be distracted by any opposition from her life's aim: to keep the Netherlands as a coherent and consolidated entity in faithful subjection for her nephew the Emperor, the leader of Christendom, the head of her House.

The armistice with France served to establish the conditions on which Charles would be prepared to release his rival from the prison in Madrid, where Francis, the much adored, surrounded and admired, sickened with hopeless loneliness. The people of the southern Netherlands knew well what they would propose to do with the prisoner whose armed bands had trampled and looted their countryside:

Que ferons nous du roy,	What shall we do with the King,
De nostre prisonnier?	This prisoner of ours?
Que feist-on à duc Charles	What did they do to Duke Charles
Quand fut prins à Nanchy?	When he was taken at Nancy?
On ne sceut qu'il devint,	They never knew what became of him,
On le scet bien en France;	They know it well in France;
Qui lui feroit ainsy	If the same were done to him
Ce seroit la vengeance.	It would be vengeance.

Thus sang the Burgundians, who had forgotten what they had thought at the time of their "Duc Charles", the Scourge. But the Emperor, who in his slow deliberation never let himself be carried away by first impulses, informed himself of Henry VIII's disposition and of his Aunt Margaret's opinion.

The Regent saw the question entirely from the Netherlands standpoint. Cession of the French territory up to the Somme, of Thérouanne and Boulogne, were her first demands. The French feudal sovereignty over Flanders and Artois was to be ended and Francis must give up for good his alliance with Charles of Gelre. About the restitution of

the dukedom of Burgundy, which was one of the points on Charles's program, Margaret did not speak. It would be of no use to the Netherlands, and once more the Regent showed that the interest of her provinces weighed heavier with her than any increase of territory, which would mean principally a rehabilitation.

The tension in Europe mounted, and the prisoner of Madrid, who until now had been looked upon as a menace against whom one must defend oneself by leagues and treaties, acquired through his helplessness, through the presumption of his opponent, a tragic halo of injured chivalry, of noble martyrdom. What Francis would never have been able to bring about in freedom he succeeded in doing in his Spanish prison: Europe began to look favorably upon him, and a call to the Emperor to exercise clemency toward his powerless enemy echoed from all sides.

In the Imperial Council opinion was divided between two possibilities: rendering France harmless for good, or binding the king so closely to Habsburg that he would never again attempt resistance against his original rival. But practically everyone agreed that no one could carry this affair through to a successful issue as well as the Regent of the Netherlands, "cette mère de sa Majesté", a better judge of what was to the Emperor's advantage and more sincerely devoted to it than anyone else in the world. Voices were raised: Madame de Savoie, and she alone, should be given the task of negotiating with the Regent of France, the Queen Mother Louise.

But before this happened there came an end to the uncertainty and suspense in which Europe had been living for a year. Francis I was suddenly found ready to grant all the demands of his imperial opponent. He promised to give back Burgundy to Charles, grandson of Duchess Mary, six weeks

after his return to France. He resigned his feudal sovereignty over Flanders and Artois, his claims to Naples, Arras, and Hesdin. He left all allies whom he had incited against the Habsburgs, alternately or simultaneously, to their fate. He would pay back the Emperor's debts to Henry VIII and promised him ships, troops, and money, to get himself crowned in Rome. A double marriage was to seal this agreement. Francis himself was to marry Aliénor, the Dowager Queen of Portugal, and her little daughter, the Infanta Maria, was to marry his son the Dauphin. The King should immediately be set free, and his two sons should substitute for him in Spain as hostages. If he did not hold to the letter of the agreement—and what a cruel one it was!—Francis was to return to Spain and be locked up again in the tower in which he had been imprisoned for a year.

This "treaty of Madrid" was received in the Netherlands as a blessing and a relief. A solemn torchlight procession, in which the Regent herself took part, wound through the streets of Malines to thank God for the peace. For nights on end bonfires flickered over the Low Countries, the populace was regaled on vats of Rhenish wine, and in the drunken atmosphere of festivity of those days it suddenly seemed that a royal signature to a shameful document had put an end to all misery.

But no one in the Netherlands lived long in this blissful folly. Debts were just as oppressive, the default in payment of the troops just as dangerous for the countryside, where plundering bands of soldiers continued to take what was due them. The bonfires had scarcely gone out, the Te Deum had scarcely died away, when it became evident that the Peace of Madrid had done nothing to alter the state of affairs.

For Francis had only concluded this peace with the inten-

tion of breaking it as soon as his feet were on French soil again. While still in captivity he had secretly declared that his consent had been given only under pressure of necessity to this treaty which, in the words of a later verdict, as a Frenchman he should never have made and as a knight and man of honor should never have broken. The notables of the country, nobles and ecclesiastics, declared that the King had had no right to alienate the French inheritance. The States of the Duchy of Burgundy made known that they would defend their land with arms if the imperial troops made any attempt to execute the treaty by force.

Margaret's agents announced to her that the French king was already exploiting in Europe the popularity he had won in prison, and that the league between Francis, the Pope, the Venetians, and other Italian rulers was threatening the Emperor in Italy. A new war seemed unavoidable and the imperial authority in the Netherlands appeared to be threatened with extinction. In Flanders and Brabant the desperate people had already revolted, in Namur it was necessary to punish the cry of "Vive le Roi de France!" by public whipping.

While the battle against the Habsburgs was flaring up in Italy, where Milan was occupied by the imperial troops and the allies were defeated at Genoa and at Naples, Henry VIII dealt the conquering Emperor a heavy blow by breaking the still formally extant treaty and joining with his enemies. An invasion by united French and English troops threatened the unprotected Netherlands, when it became known that the imperial troops had taken Rome and had made of the Eternal City a terrible scene of pillage and murder. The Emperor, Protector of the Church, the Catholic King, whose Inquisition in Spain was exterminating the heretics,

whose anger raged against Luther's followers, who defended the old faith by means of the stake, had abandoned the heart of the world, Rome itself, to a barbaric army that intended to proclaim the new teachings of this Brother Martin by destroying the treasures of Rome and desecrating its churches. All Italy, all Europe now knew but one enemy: The Emperor, whose world power threatened to stifle everybody else.

Charles's triumphs in Italy were of short duration. As always, money was lacking now too for the German and Swiss mercenaries. The French moved into Lombardy and recaptured Genoa, and tortured Italy now welcomed as liberators the armies it had once feared.

While the Emperor received with cool politeness the envoy of his former ally Henry, who came to announce the declaration of war to him, he treated the herald of the French King with the lashing disdain that he felt for the cowardly betrayal of his master. "I would hold you for craven and wicked if you failed the faith I have in you"—"Je vous tiendrois pour lasche et meschant si vous me failliez de la foy que j'ai de vous", Charles had said to Francis in an interview with his prisoner in Madrid. And "craven and wicked" the King now was in his eyes, the King who had broken his promises and had not returned to prison, not even to save his honor. It seemed impossible that so much hatred, so much contempt, so much reciprocal offense, could ever be wiped out.

Yet Europe could not go on living under this enmity. The English people, who blamed the wounded ambition of the hated Wolsey for the war, rose in revolt, and Henry VIII, whose popularity had suffered greatly through his passion for Anne Boleyn, for whom he wished to repudiate his queen, Catharine of Aragon, determined to drop the Cardi-

nal in order to keep Anne. Ambassadors left England to suggest to "la bonne Angloise", Madame de Savoie, an armistice between Henry, Francis, and Charles.

Even before she had received the consent of her nephew, Margaret caught at this straw. And when an imperial representative had arrived in England an armistice was quickly arranged. The treaty left the Regent a free hand once more to reinforce Charles's authority in the Netherlands. The resistance of Gelderland against Burgundy was broken. Margaret had once more succeeded in preserving the unity of her provinces. In October, 1528, a treaty was concluded with Charles of Gelre, whereby he recognized the feudal sovereignty of the Emperor over Utrecht, Overijssel, and Gelderland. It seemed that at last the disastrous war years that had destroyed the prosperity of the Netherlands provinces would be followed by a period of peace.

The years of unceasing work that had again and again brought her fresh, practically insoluble problems, had worn Margaret out in both body and mind. Her characteristic generous and sunny disposition had given place to a severe inaccessibility toward those from whom she expected criticism or opposition. After the death of Philibert the Handsome her personal life had become a lonely one. No tenderness mellowed the contours of her character any more; no longer did her commanding temperament find the counterbalance of a self-effacing love. Her affection for her brother Philip's children may for a while have done something to fill the gap, but her heart lay buried in Brou and no longer helped to temper the ready combativeness that had always been one of her most marked characteristics.

Countless disappointments in men and their promises had

made her hard, and she had been embittered by the suspicion with which her subjects and even those who called themselves her servants regarded her. Incapable of grasping the significance of the forces in revolt against her absolute regime, she saw in the protests of her impoverished and tormented people only criminal rebellion. She did not understand the despair that was growing in a religiously and economically disrupted world. And to the extent that she resorted to more and more severe measures, she lost the authority she had once acquired through her conciliatory attitude, her tact, her warm humanity. Her mental resistance gave way under the pressure of never-ending worries. A deep despondency frequently came over her, a longing to be freed at last from the struggle, the discord, the rebellion, the mistrust.

But she knew that she could not be spared yet, and she resisted her own longing for rest, for some peaceful haven, with the same hardness with which she compelled the population to resign itself in obedience to the absolute monarch, which she held to be the God-given order. She would fulfill to the utmost her duty, which lay in preserving the Emperor's Burgundian lands intact in their subjection. A hard life had caused her to unlearn leniency both toward herself and toward others.

But with her mental resilience Margaret also had lost the robust health that in the past had so often rescued her from depressions. Some trouble with her leg hampered her movements seriously, and while she had heretofore been able to moderate opposing views by her presence, she was now obliged to leave much of her task of government to her councilors, who all too readily took advantage of the increasing helplessness of their ruler. Although she still fulfilled her role

in European politics with undiminished authority, in domestic affairs she felt the reins of control, which in the beginning she had held with so much self-confidence, slip from her hands.

Was it any wonder that, though not yet fifty, Margaret felt old and weary of life and that she sometimes considered laying down her task and retiring to surroundings where she would find rest and affectionate care? For a long time she had supported the convent of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows at Bruges, and as the years went on, always heavier with sickness and worries, Margaret more often surrendered herself to the consoling thought of seeking refuge with the Reverend Mother Ancelle, whom she called "my good mother, my friend"—"ma bonne mère, ma mie". But her time had not yet come. Once more all her talents were to be called upon in the service of her Emperor and her House, in order to restore to an exhausted and moribund Europe a few moments of peace.

In January, 1529, the Pope and the Emperor had concluded an "eternal" alliance, in which the Pope had promised his new ally that he would come and crown him the following year in Boulogne. And now that the Italian points of dispute were settled, the possibility of coming to an agreement with France also seemed greater than before. At the ratification of the armistice with the Emperor, Francis I had been noticeably charming to Margaret's ambassadors, and he had given them the assurance that he would most gladly come to an understanding with their mistress. The Queen Mother, Louise of Savoy, Madame d'Angoulême, asked the Burgundian ambassador with emphasis whether her sister-in-law, the Regent of the Netherlands, had not given him a letter for her. She had already used all her powers of persua-

and to ease the hatred which might cause the downfall of all Christendom. She wished to beg Margaret also to use her influence upon the Emperor, so that the two of them, as wise and peace-loving women, might put an end to this heart-rending war.

And Madame d'Angoulême did more. In deepest secrecy and without the King's knowledge she sent a special envoy to Malines with a peace proposal to be tested against the ideas of Madame de Savoie. And after these two princesses, with utmost circumspection and entirely upon their own responsibility, had thus entered into contact, they sounded the two enemies themselves concerning the possibilities of a rapprochement. The Emperor, who saw the Turkish attack upon the Christian world drawing nearer, and whose empire was being torn by the struggles of the Reformation, was already prepared to drop his claims to the dukedom of Burgundy. Francis I, who had perceived that he could expect little satisfaction from his Italian dreams in the immediate future, was quite ready to promise to forget them entirely. The two monarchs, who a few years before had assailed each other with insults and challenges, seemed to have realized that they could make their names immortal in other ways than by despoiling their own and others' subjects. The Emperor sent his aunt a mandate to undertake the negotiations in his name, but his instructions included such high demands that Margaret decided on her own responsibility to keep her commission secret, in the hope of rescuing the peace in a personal discussion with her sister-in-law, without disappointing the Emperor too much.

For Margaret did not doubt that her diplomatic mastery would get the upper hand of the French Queen Mother. And as so often before, she once again reinforced the effect of her talents by a rich and impressive setting, a grandiose

presentation of the drama of this meeting that was to take place in the same Cambrai where her conference with the Cardinal-Legate of Amboise had once before brought about cooperation between her nephew and France. For the trip to Cambrai Margaret's ladies received new dresses. Her pages and lackeys looked gay in their new doublets and hose, the archers of her bodyguard resplendent in brand-new white taffeta bonnets and striped hose, half white, half brown-and-white. Even Neuteken, Madame's "pastime", the little dwarf, who cheered her with her jokes when she could find no distraction any more from her pressing cares, was put into a little costume of iridescent striped satin—"bon et beau satin rayé de couleur changeant"—in which she was doubtlessly meant to enchant the eye of Madame d'Angoulême.

Margaret knew the effect of luxury and splendor, the persuasive power of outward show. In newly upholstered litters, on horses whose costly harnesses aroused the admiration of everyone, the Burgundian embassy traveled to Cambrai. And the Abbot of St. Aubert, who had the honor of lodging Madame de Savoie, was one of the first to be impressed by the imperial air with which the Regent of the Netherlands made her entry into his abbey. Not until her litter had been carried into the building and set down before the door of her room did she step out. She had not thought it desirable that attention should be drawn to the fact that she could hardly walk.

Opposite the abbey of St. Aubert in which Margaret stayed, Madame d'Angoulême had taken up her residence in the "hôtel St. Pol". Across the street separating the two buildings a covered passage had been constructed for this occasion, so that the rulers actually lived in one house and

could visit each other without the formalities etiquette demanded whenever they left their houses. And they knew the value of keeping out of the public eye. For representatives from the whole of Europe had flocked to Cambrai, to keep informed of the expectations, the suppositions, the chances, and the rumors. No less than eight cardinals, ten archbishops, three-and-thirty bishops, four princes of the blood, fifteen dukes, and countless nobles and ecclesiastics of lower rank filled the monasteries and the houses of distinguished citizens with their colorful display. The small streets were too narrow for the festive throng of courtiers and churchmen, clerks and halberdiers. The city was like a multicolored beehive and buzzed with excitement, while the two ladies, invisible save to their most confidential councilors, decided the fate of Europe and the future of Christendom.

For three weeks the negotiations between the two sisters-in-law were carried on. And finally, after the last points of difference had been removed by which the conference had more than once almost come to grief, on July 24, 1529, they settled the definitive wording of the peace of Cambrai, that "Paix des Dames" which was to live in history as the masterpiece of Margaret of Austria and the triumph of feminine diplomacy over masculine force. What the Emperor had not been able to conquer with weapons, his aunt had been able to achieve with the persuasive power of her elegance, her tact, her tenaciousness—and her gold. No influence that could be won in the entourage of the French Queen Mother had been too trivial for Margaret. Just as Neuteken the dwarf had been given a new costume, so her little counterpart from France—"la sotte de madame la régente de France"—had been honored with a crimson hood. An at-

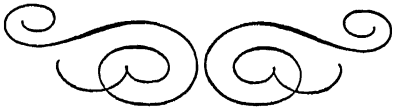
mosphere of benevolence toward Burgundy grew up around Madame d'Angoulême, thanks to Burgundian gold. And the French regent finally signed an agreement that was scarcely less humiliating to France than the treaty of Madrid had been. Only his possession of Burgundy did the Emperor waive, and only for the time being, reserving his rights for some later occasion.

Margaret's victory was complete, and the concession she had made in the matter of Burgundy was richly compensated through the hundreds of thousands of guilders paid by Francis I in ransom for his sons, in liquidation of Charles's English debts, and in contribution to Charles's journey to Italy. The Ladies' Peace assured the safety of the Netherlands borders, relieved Flanders and Artois from their feudal allegiance to France, paralyzed the enemies of Habsburg who had always been dangerous only through the support of France. The Regent experienced the hour of her greatest triumph. The aim she had set herself at the beginning of her regency had been reached. And she had furthermore presented her nephew the Emperor with a world power with which not a single competitor could interfere.

For on the day the conditions of the peace were published, the English ambassadors hastened to conclude a treaty of peace and friendship with the representative of the all-powerful Emperor. And on that same day the Queen Mother of France, the Regent of the Netherlands, and the English envoys knelt before the high altar of Notre Dame of Cambrai, and swore to the treaty that was to restore the illusion of peace to an afflicted Europe.

The church ceremony was at an end. Fanfares blared. And the vaulted arches of the cathedral echoed the cry of the herald-at-arms: "La paix est faite!"—"Peace has been made!"

Fortune, Infortune, Fortune . . .



THE wheel turned. Out of cares and disappointments Margaret's stars had lifted her once again to peaks of power, to summits where every ambition was gratified, where scarcely a shadow darkened the glorious moment. What could the world still offer her after these triumphs? Her work was completed, her task fulfilled.

On the 27th of February, 1530, she had been able to inform her subjects in the Netherlands that their lord, the Emperor-elect, had received the imperial crown from the hands of the Holy Father himself. The time was drawing near when her longing for rest could at last be satisfied, when she would be able to render account of her stewardship to her nephew, in order then to seek, amongst "all her dear daughters", the sisters of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, the repose her office could never give her.

The leg ailment which had repeatedly troubled her during these last years and for which her doctor had been treating her during the conferences at Cambrai tortured her in the early days of November, 1530, with cruel pains. The doctors, who thought their mistress was suffering from the gout, resorted to the treatments their inadequate science prescribed

in this affliction. But their error soon appeared. The pains increased, and a high fever showed "that the humors of the leg were mounting upward"—"que les humeurs de sa jambe montoient en haulte". The three physicians decided to give Madame relief by opening her badly swollen leg, "to evacuate the humors"—"pour faire evacuer les humeurs".

It seemed at first that they had judged correctly. Improvement set in, the fever subsided. It seemed that their patient would speedily get well.

But the next evening it became evident that their science had failed them. Signs of infection appeared, the patient suffered unbearable pain. And while the most skilled practitioners of Flanders were commanded to the sickbed of their ruler, the "black sisters" of Malines attempted to ease her torments, supporting her with hastily contrived down pillows.

The patient herself was the first to understand that she would not recover from this illness. She demanded her father confessor and her notary, and signed a number of legacies for her servants, for the weeping women who were tending their mistress in her misery with touching devotion. On November 30th she was so exhausted that she felt the moment had come to hand over her powers of government to Count van Hoogstraten.

It was no longer granted her to render account to her nephew and Emperor, nor had she been able to transmit her wise counsel to the young ruler over whose fate she had watched for so many years. But she could not go hence without a last greeting, a final counsel to this man whom she looked upon as her own son.

Her secretary seated himself beside her deathbed. And

Margaret dictated her letter to Charles, a letter reflecting in simplest language the thoughts and feelings that filled her in these last hours of her life and that were not to be driven out even by the most intolerable suffering:

"Monseigneur, the hour is come when I can no longer write you with my own hand, for I find myself in such an indisposition that I doubt my life will be but brief. I am prepared and at rest in my conscience, and in all ways resolved to receive what it pleases God to send me; I have no regrets whatever, save for the privation of your presence, and that I can neither see nor speak with you once more before my death, for which I shall (on account of the doubt above mentioned) compensate in part by this my letter, which, I fear, will be the last you will receive from me. I have appointed you my sole and universal heir in everything, and executor of my will; the carrying out of which I recommend to you. I leave you your lands over here, which, during your absence, I have not only maintained as you left them at your departure, but have greatly augmented; I turn back to you the government of these, in which I believe I have loyally acquitted myself, and so much so that I hope for divine remuneration, for your contentment, monseigneur, and for the good will of your subjects. I particularly commend to you peace, and especially with the Kings of France and England. And, finally, I beseech you, monseigneur, to let the love it has pleased you to bear this poor body be a reminder of the salvation of the soul, and a recommendation of my poor servants, commending you lastly to God, whom I beseech, monseigneur, that he grant you prosperity and long life. At Malines, the last day of November, 1530. Your very humble aunt, Margaret."

"Monseigneur, l'heure est venue que ne vous puis plus escripre de ma main, car je me trouve en telle indisposition que doubte ma vie estre brefve. Je suis pourvue et reposée de ma conscience, et de tout résolue à recevoir ce qu'il plaira à Dieu m'envoyer; je n'ai regret quelconque, réservé de la privation de vostre presence, et de ne vous pouvoir voir ni parler encore une fois avant ma mort, ce que (pour le doubte que dessus) suppléray en partie par ceste mienne lettre, qui, je le crains, sera la dernière que aurez de moy. Je vous ay institué mon héritier universel seul et pour le tout, au charges de mon testament; l'accomplissement duquel vous recommande. Je vous laisse vos pays de par deçà que, durant vostre absence, n'ay seullement gardés, comme me les laissâtes à vostre partement, mais grandement augmentez; je vous rends le gouvernement d'iceulx, auquel me cuyde estre léalement acquittée, et tellement que j'en espère rémunération divine, contentement de vous, monseigneur, et gré de vos subjects. Je vous recommande singulièrement la paix, et par espécial avec les roys de France et d'Angleterre. Et, pour fin, vous supplie, monseigneur, que l'amour qu'il vous a pleu porter au povre corps, soit mémoire du salut de l'âme, et recommandation de mes povres serviteurs et servantes, vous disant le dernier à Dieu, auquel je supplie, monseigneur, vous donner prospérité et longue vie. De Malines, le dernier jour de novembre 1530. Votre très-humble tante, Marguerite."

In the face of Death she was able to put into words her deepest convictions, those unassailable certainties with which she was herself imbued and which she wished to pass on to her foster son. She, who during years of power had known only struggle, and who in consideration of her man-

date had had constantly to go against the longing of her subjects for peace, found on her deathbed the strength to recommend peace to her belligerent nephew. After a lifetime of dynastic quarrels with France, she realized in this hour the necessity for friendly cooperation with the royal house she had feared and humiliated.

That strength of soul with which, already in her youth, amid the storms of her journey to Spain, she had faced death did not forsake her now that she lay, stretched helpless in an agony of pain, knowing that her last hours had come. But the ironic resignation with which she had accepted her lot in those days had made way for the calm and exalted resignation with which she now took leave of her earthly possessions, her earthly affections. Her last prayers were for the repose of her soul, and for her "poor servants", whose tears even could not make this parting bitter for her.

"I have no regrets whatever". It was the voice of one who had done with happiness and sorrow, with the bitterness and sweetness of this life.

A procession wound through the streets of Malines that day to implore the help of Heaven for the preservation of the Regent's life. At the Court of Savoy mourning descended upon the hearts of those who had devoted their lives to the service of a human, considerate mistress. In the night of November 30th, between midnight and one o'clock in the morning, this heroic woman's heart ceased to beat. Margaret of Austria had fought her last fight.

The mausoleum she had built in distant Brou, so that she might repose there beside the husband whose undying youth

had remained her finest illusion, was not yet ready when Margaret closed her eyes. Her embalmed body was therefore temporarily conveyed to the convent of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows at Bruges, where she had wished to end her life and to which, in gratitude for what she had hoped to find there, she had willed her heart. Here, before the altar in the convent chapel, where the gray nuns with their scarlet scapulars came to pray for the peace of their founder's soul, the mortal remains of the Regent lay until, upon a day in May, 1532, a slow funeral procession left the tender-green land of Flanders to undertake the long journey, past cities and villages that had once greeted the young bride of the Duke of Savoy, past orchards and vineyards, along fields where the country-folk, astonished at the sight of such luxurious mourning, looked up from their work in the eternal earth, under the eternal skies.

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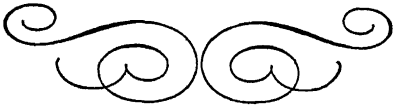

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