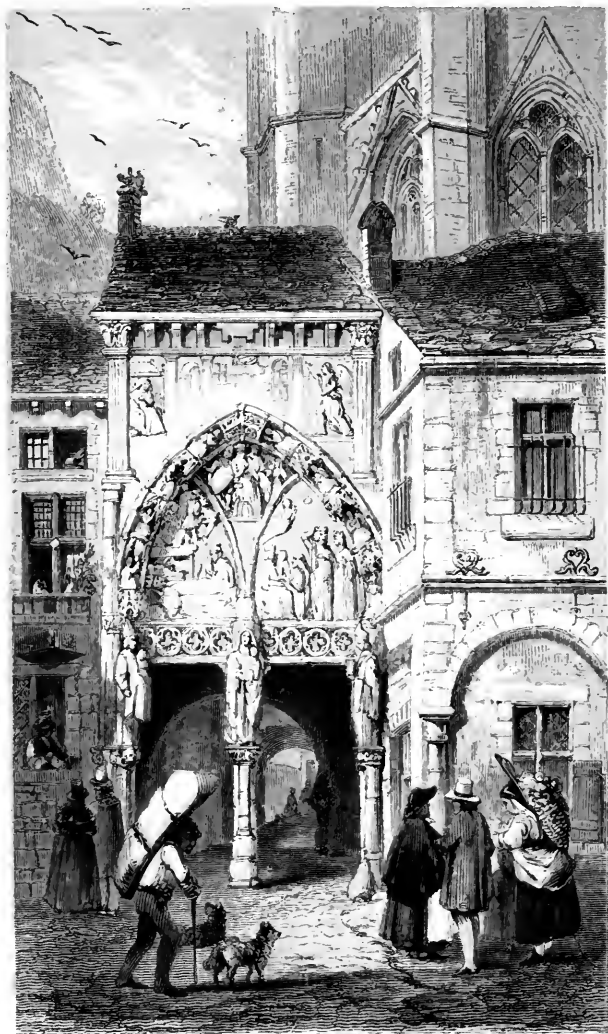


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A TOUR THROUGH
THE
VALLEY OF THE MEUSE.







Henry Vizetelly, Sc.

DETAIL DE LA VILLE DE LAUSANNE

A TOUR THROUGH
THE VALLEY OF THE MEUSE
WITH THE



LEGENDS OF THE WALLOON COUNTRY AND THE ARDENNES
BY DUDLEY COSTELLO.



"Un voyageur est une
espece d'historien; son devoir est de ra-
conter fidelement ce qu'il a vu ou ce qu'il
a entendu dire."—CHATELAIN.

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, 186 STRAND.



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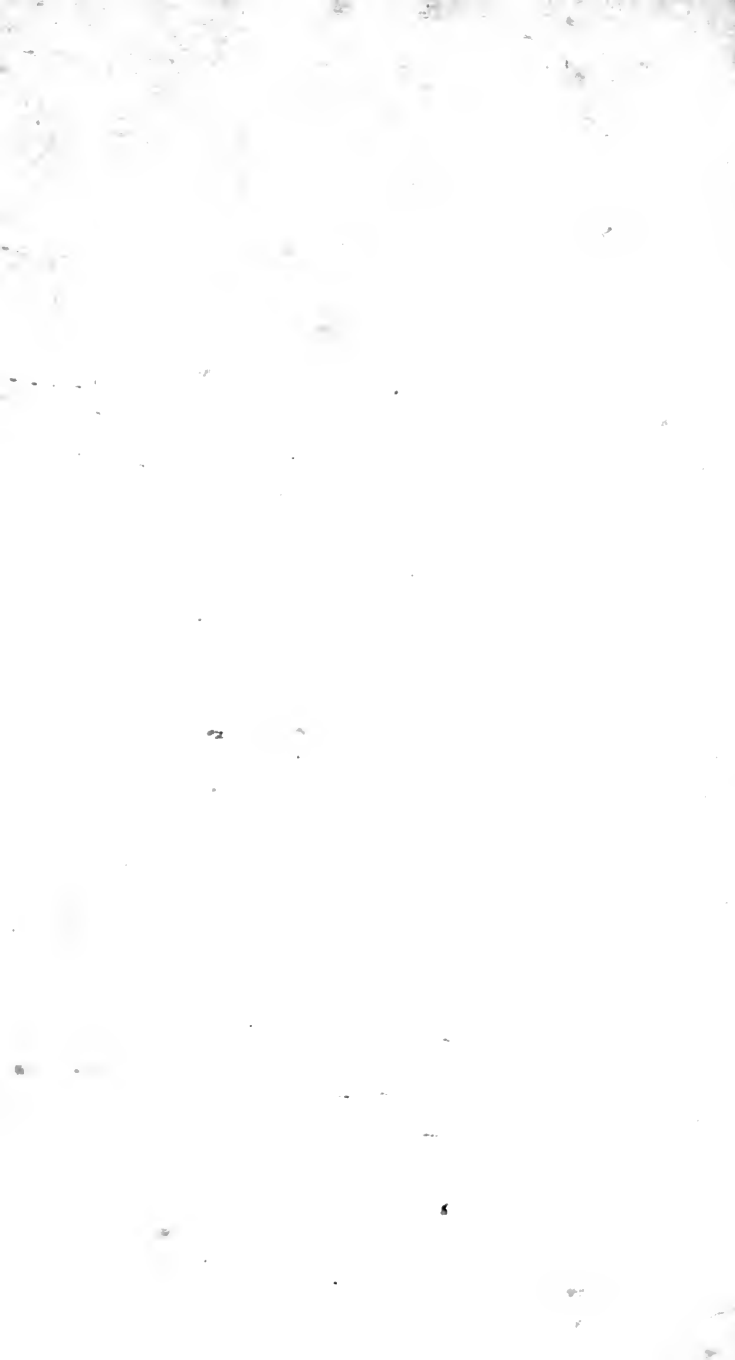
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SECOND EDITION.

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TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

M. SILVAIN VAN DE WEYER,

ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY

FROM

His Majesty the King of the Belgians,

WHOSE COURTESY AND KINDNESS, NO LESS THAN HIS HIGH LITERARY ATTAINMENTS
AND GREAT POLITICAL ABILITY, HAVE SECURED HIM THE REGARD
AND RESPECT OF ALL CLASSES OF ENGLISHMEN,

THIS VOLUME,

Descriptive of the most Picturesque Scenery in Belgium,

IS, WITH PERMISSION, RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY HIS OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

DUDLEY COSTELLO.

998484



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ENGRAVED ON WOOD BY HENRY VIZETELLY.



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PREFACE.



OF the numberless English travellers who every summer cross the channel, and a great proportion of whom traverse Belgium, there are comparatively few who, after visiting the churches and town-halls of Flanders, and feasting their eyes on the splendours of Flemish art at Bruges, at Ghent, at Antwerp, and elsewhere, pause on their way before they reach the Rhine, or bestow more than a cursory glance on the beautiful country which lies between them and that much sought river. Some there are who linger at Liége long enough to make the steam-boat excursion to Namur and back; others also avail themselves of the southern railroad from Brussels to strike the Meuse at Namur, and hastily descend the stream, leaving the beau-

ties of the upper valley, as far as Givet, entirely unexplored; but by far the greater number speed rapidly on, intent upon seeking at a greater distance those charms of scenery and association which are to be found so much nearer home. The facility of communication afforded by the South Eastern Railway* is now so great that a traveller, bent upon reaching his destination without delay, may find himself, four and twenty hours after leaving London, in the midst of some of the most picturesque scenery in Europe, the general features of which he may examine in a few days, or enjoy its details at leisure throughout the summer months. Additional inducements to examine this part of Belgium also offer themselves in the progress which is being made by the construction of the Sambre and Meuse railway, an enterprise not only of the greatest utility in a commercial point of view,† but one that will enable those who travel for pleasure, to visit

* The journey from London to Ostend by the South Eastern Railway occupies only nine hours under ordinary circumstances; four hours by land and five by sea. The distance from Ostend to Liège, by railway, is performed in about seven hours; so that, allowing for delays, the whole may be completed in the twenty-four hours. The route by sea, direct from London to Ostend, is rather longer.

† See the admirably lucid and satisfactory Report of Mr. Sopwith.

with ease scenery which hitherto has been almost unapproachable.

Without desiring to institute a comparison between the Rhine and the Meuse,—for they differ essentially in their characteristics,—or endeavouring to deter those whose aspirations lead them towards “the exulting and abounding river,” the object of these pages is to show that the Meuse possesses beauties of its own, which will amply reward all who seek them; that its history, its language, its customs, and its traditions, are replete with interest; and the lover of nature, and the inquirer into the past, may alike find food for admiration and reflection as he wanders between its banks.





THE VALLEY OF THE MEUSE &c.



CHAPTER I.

Across the Channel—The Flying Beacon
 —The Fierce Hairdresser—The Baths at
 Dunquerque—Summer Flowers—Let-
 ting an Apartment—The Statue of Jean Bart—The Valley of
 Roses—The Musical Fete—Route from Dunquerque to Bergues—Scenery
 at Rexpbonne—The Art of Packing—The Corking Pins—Belgian Beer—
 Town Hall of Ypres—Lace Makers—Diligence to Courtrai—Hotel de Ville
 —Vandyke—The Battle of the Spurs—Road to Bruges—The Pretty Auber-
 giste—Religious Character of the Brugeois—Railroad to Liege.



IT WAS early in the month of August, last year, when, having projected a journey to the Continent, by the route of the Valley of the Meuse, we left London by the South Eastern Railway for Dover, intending to proceed direct to Ostend. The wind, however, blew so fresh when we reached the coast, that the shortest passage became the most desirable, and we accordingly

changed our plans and crossed over to Calais, pitying ourselves, of course, for our brief sufferings, but with little feeling of commiseration for a party of pleasure, some hundred and fifty unhappy wretches, who left Dover Harbour in another steamer, on a day's excursion to Boulogne and back;—lucky, indeed, if they managed to get safely *there*, to say nothing of the comforts of the return voyage!

Restored to our proper equilibrium at Dessin's, we sought the earliest means of leaving Calais, and soon found ourselves on the road to Dunquerque, whose tall lighthouse beckoned us on so long after night fell, that we began to fancy we were pursuing a gigantic will-o'-the-wisp, rather than approaching a steady, respectable beacon. At length we contrived to lose sight of the light, under the shadow of the thick avenue of limes that terminates at the gates of Dunquerque, and the brief formality of passport-giving over, in a few minutes more we were comfortably housed in the Hôtel de Flandres, our wants most carefully attended to by the quaint old head-waiter, who speaks more English than French, and has passed the greater part of his life afloat, as captain's steward on board of British men-of-war; his reverence for the maritime prowess of his countrymen is consequently not very profound. It is scarcely necessary to add, that he does not entertain the warlike sentiments of *la Jeune France*; indeed, the feeling of enmity towards England is little prevalent in French Flanders, the utility of commerce being there

held in higher estimation than the noise and smell of gunpowder. One exception I found in Dunquerque, in the person of a fierce-looking hairdresser, whose professional services I required; but even his hostility, though he dealt in very bitter words, was limited to a demonstration after the manner of the Philistines, by cutting his enemies' hair as closely as it could well be shorn.

As we wished to bathe somewhere on the coast before we travelled further, we made inquiry here, having no desire, if it could be avoided, to go on to Ostend. The answer was highly in favour of the new "*Etablissement des Bains*," at Dunquerque, and after inspecting them, we were quite satisfied to remain. They are very well conducted and cheap; the bathing also is good,—on a fine, hard sand, though the water is not deep. The whole of the coast, from Calais northward, is a constant succession of low sand-hills, called "Dunes" (whence the name of Dunquerque), and it is consequently unpicturesque; but what the shore wants in beauty is, in a great degree, made up in wildness, and in the extreme fragrance of the hardy flowers that cling to the unpromising soil. It is seldom that a French town can be commended, on account of the odours that belong to it, but Dunquerque is one of the few, and deserves all praise, as well on this account as on that of its great cleanliness, exceeded by no place that I have met with in any part of Flanders. It is the delicious perfume of these summer flowers, wafted by the sea breeze, that makes one never tire of

the walk from the town to the beach, though the distance from the foot of the glacis to the pier-head is at least a mile. In the extreme heat of the day the *Etablissement* offers a most agreeable retreat, where English and French newspapers, plenty of books and maps, a good pianoforte, and an excellent billiard-table, afford the means of filling up the time as pleasantly as can be desired. Once a fortnight there is a *grande soirée*, when all the *élite* of Dunquerque assemble; but every evening there is impromptu dancing, for the natives are so far French in feeling, as to think that a *salle de danse* should contrive always to fulfil its destiny.

Of this fondness for dancing, or, rather, as an illustration of the *laisser-aller* that characterises our mercurial neighbours, whenever amusement is in question, the following instance may serve:—Preferring the quiet of a lodging, wherever it can be had, to the bustle of an hotel, after some search,—for Dunquerque is deficient in accommodation of this kind,—we discovered a very nice apartment. The terms, moderate enough, were soon settled, and we said we would send down our baggage in the course of the morning; to this, however, an objection was raised,—the hostess said she was very sorry, but it was not possible for us to come in till the next day.

“But why not?” we replied; “nothing seems to be wanting,—the rooms appear quite ready.”

“Oh, yes, the apartment is ready; but I am going

to give a little *soirée musicale* this evening to a few friends, and you see, therefore, the impossibility of my having the honour of relinquishing it to you."

As the necessity for entertaining her friends appeared greater than that of letting her lodgings, we were compelled to submit, but we thought it might have been as well if the words, "*à louer presentement,*" in the bill in the window, had been changed to—"to be let when convenient."

For those who seek a relaxation from bustle and fatigue, and wish to know how quietly and cheaply it is possible to live, a better place than Dunquerque can scarcely be named, and during the fortnight that we stayed we found it all we could desire. But even the quietest spots are not without their moments of excitement, and one afternoon we found the whole town in commotion, in consequence of a musical *fête* that was about to take place in honour of the hero of Dunquerque, the famous Jean Bart. As the naval illustrations of France are not very numerous, it is natural that she should wish to make the most of all whom she can by possibility claim as belonging to her; and therefore it is that she is proud of Jean Bart, who happened, by the chance of war, to be born a Frenchman,* though his feelings, habits, and language

* Dunquerque, which had for two centuries acknowledged the authority of Spain, and never belonged to France, was besieged and taken by the Duc d'Enghien, afterwards the Grand Condé, on the 18th of October, 1646. Jean Bart was born 22nd October, 1650.

and maritime education were essentially Flemish. Dunquerque, however, has reason to boast of her son, and it will not be long before the principal square in the town is adorned by the statue of the celebrated *chef d'escadre*. The excavation for the pedestal had already been begun, and it was to meet some of the contingent expenses that the musical *fête* was got up. Twice had the weather proved unpropitious, but on this occasion the heavens were serene, and all the world hurried out to the *Rosendael*, or Valley of Roses, a rather pretty but somewhat cockney kind of tea-garden, about half a mile outside the town, in the direction of Furnes. The price of admission was not ruinous, the tickets being ten sous each,—a modicum determined on for the benefit of “*Messieurs les Marins*,” who were especially invited by the *affiches* to attend; but whether the jolly tars had other occupations, something else to do with their money, or were indifferent to the memory of the Flemish privateer, certain it is that the aforesaid Messieurs mustered in very small numbers, leaving the honour of France in the keeping of a very warlike knot of gentlemen of the National Guard, the greater part of whom were performers upon wind instruments. The music was good, but as the selections were all from the newest operas, the *fête* might as well have been given in honour of Donizetti, or any other modern composer; however, the receipts, though not over abundant, constituted the real tribute to the memory of Jean Bart, and perhaps,

at the time I am writing, the inauguration of the statue of another hero may have been added to the Pantheon of France.

At the end of a fortnight, having profited sufficiently by our stay, we took our departure from Dunquerque, not coastwise through Ostend, as we had originally purposed, but by a pleasanter though more circuitous route inland. Meeting with a *voiturier* from Bergues, we made an agreement with him to take us as far as Ypres, there being no *diligence* to that place, and on the day agreed on he came punctual to his appointment. From Dunquerque to Bergues the road runs by the side of the canal that communicates with Lille, nor is there anything worthy of observation, except the singularly-mournful cemetery, filled with black crosses, that greets us as we turn towards the ramparts of Bergues. Beyond that town the country assumes a very different aspect,—the marshes disappear, giving place to the most luxuriant vegetation, and fields of the richest culture; it is the great butter district of this part of France, and stands in high estimation in the department. But the road itself is as beautiful as the soil is fertile, passing, at the village of Rexponne, through an avenue of lofty trees, the natural inclination of whose boughs forms a perfect Gothic arch of the most graceful foliage for upwards of a mile, till it reaches the frontier village of Oest-Kappel. A few yards further, and we stand on the territory of Belgium, where the Custom-House authorities lie in waiting to

vex the traveller's baggage, disturb his equanimity, and disarrange the system of his packing. It is well known to all who are in the habit of travelling, that the great art of packing consists in a nice arrangement of parts, without which the best-intentioned carpet-bags cannot contain one-half of what is intended to be crammed into them. Discompose the judicious order of the first plan, and even your own master-hand cannot restore it exactly to what it was before; as in a fine picture there are certain touches that cannot be imitated, so in a disturbed carpet-bag there are nooks and corners which will not be filled; the harmony that once pervaded the whole has departed. If the process of restoration be submitted to a stranger, and that stranger be a Custom-House officer, adieu to everything like the once-admired internal economy. Thus it befel with us at Rousbrugge, where our baggage was remorselessly seized, thrown down into the dusty road, and rifled as it lay there. Already had our portmanteau yielded up its contents; wistful eyes had already scrutinised many an article of apparel, eager to pronounce it unworn; already was the hand of the searcher deep in the bowels of a stout *sac-de-nuit*, when, with a sudden exclamation, French in its origin, but Belgian by appropriation, the groping was discontinued and the hand withdrawn, its owner wringing and squeezing it with irrepressible manifestations of pain. The fact was, that in the precipitation of his search the curious official had accidentally come in contact with a

chevaux-de-frise of stiff, sharp corking-pins, which were lying *perdus* in the middle of the bag, and the salutation they gave him instantaneously checked his ardour; he huddled the displaced articles into their receptacle, crushed them down by brute force, closed the bag, gave up the keys, and troubled us no further. Whether it be worth while to adopt the corking-pin system of defence on principle, I leave to the consideration of future travellers.

After passing through Rousbrugge, the quantity of hop-gardens on every side plainly intimated that we had exchanged the wine of France for the beer of Belgium: it remained to be seen whether the latter was likely to be a tolerable substitute. Accordingly, at Poperinghes, where we stopped for half an hour to bait our horses, I called for some of their best, which was handed to me in a glass mug with a handle. One draught was sufficient; I then perfectly comprehended the reason why every man we met had a pinched face and a sharp nose,—with beer like that of Poperinghes such a result was inevitable.

A word, *en passant*, on the subject of the staple drink of the Low Countries. There are great varieties of beer,—the principal being the *Bière de Louvain*, the *Bière de Diest*, the *Faro* and *Lembick* of *Bruxelles*, and a particular kind, brewed in the latter city, called *Bière d'Orge*; the last of these is tolerable, the first only is good,—the rest are execrable, at least to an English palate.

The pleasing character of the country increases as we approach the ancient city of Ypres, whose numerous towns are seen at a considerable distance, for the road takes a wide sweep before it makes direct for the town. Ypres is a quiet, pleasant-looking place, with its picturesque gable-ends, its spacious square, and magnificent Town-hall,—a gorgeous specimen of the architecture of the fourteenth century. The hand of restoration has been busy with its pinnacles and the rich fret-work of its windows, and all has been effected in perfect taste: for the sake of uniformity, one wishes that the east end, which was built in 1720, were made to resemble the rest of the building; it does not, however, injure the effect of the façade. We loitered for half an hour in the cathedral, beside the tomb of Jansen, and gazed upon the portrait of the persecuted bishop, as he stands in the long file of the prelates of Ypres. Our admiration of the finely-carved pulpit was freely given; nor were some curious antique pictures, of the age, if not by the hand, of Memling, passed over without admiring comments. But our chief amusement, on this fine summer's day, was in wandering through the streets, and watching the groups of lace-makers assembled at work in the open air, in the broad shadow of the churches or lofty houses. At every window, also, numbers of girls were seated, all intent on the Valenciennes lace which they make so deftly, and of which they show you the pattern so willingly, smiling with the utmost good humour, and speaking in low, soft

voices, a language (Flemish) which, for once, one is sorry not to understand. We had a pleasant walk, too, on the grassy ramparts, where the ditches, broad and deep as canals, were covered with water-lilies, as if these fortifications had never known anything of war's alarms. In the afternoon we set out in a *diligence*, open in front, that held nine persons inside, and was of course full. There was some little difficulty at first in bestowing the passengers, but a steady jog-trot soon settled everybody in his proper place, and we got on very comfortably, being edified on the way by experiments in the art of war, on the part of certain *braves Belges*, part of the peaceful garrison of Ypres, who were practising street firing and other military evolutions on the high road to Menin.

Of Menin, little is there to say, nor did we remain there long enough to observe more than that it appeared clean, and not altogether so dismal as some have described it.

About seven in the evening we reached Courtrai, crossing the picturesque bridge over the river Lys, beside which still stand the massive towers of its ancient castle, no longer an offence to the city, as in the days of feudal domination. It is something to discover an hotel that is both good and cheap, and in these particulars "Les Armes de France," in the street leading from the bridge to the great square, may claim honourable pre-eminence. Here we rested well, and gave the next day to the "sights," which, as Courtrai is

not visited by every traveller, it may be worth while to enumerate. The Hôtel de Ville stands first, not on account of its external architecture, for that dates only from the 17th century, but for the curious and elaborate carved chimney-pieces and other interior decorations, which are rendered familiar to the lovers of art through Haghe's beautiful lithographic drawings. One can never do wrong to enter the first open church in any of the Belgian cities, and in that of Notre-Dâme, into which we made our way somewhat circuitously, we met with what fully repaid us for a much longer *détour*,—the famous Raising of the Cross, by Vandyke. It is one of those pictures which,—like those in the gallery at Antwerp, exalt the master almost to the level of *his* master, Rubens; and again and again we returned to it before we left the church. Threading our way up a narrow street, at the corner of which stood an image of the Virgin in the midst of a forest of paper lanthorns, to be lit up in her honour at dusk, we stumbled upon the Museum, where, for a few sous, we were admitted to contrast the state of existing art in Belgium with what it was in the days of its glory. Without instituting a direct comparison, the modern Flemings have good reason to be proud of names such as those of Wappers and De Keyser, the last of whom has illustrated Courtrai by a noble picture which is now in the Museum. The subject is the celebrated Battle of the Spurs, fought in the year 1302, in the meadows

of Groeninghe, eastward of the city, where Robert d'Artois and nearly the whole of the chivalry of France fell before the "goedendags" of the roused communes of Flanders. The moment chosen by the painter is that of the Count d'Artois' overthrow, when horse and man were driven to the earth beneath the thundering blows of the terrific butcher of Ghent, who one knee on the Count's breast is preparing to give the fatal *coup de grâce*. Robert d'Artois, still clinging to his steed, has fallen backwards, and extending his sword in the vain hope of finding a nobleman to whom he might surrender, "rescue or no rescue." His proffer is met with savage disdain; for the fierce Flemings, resolved to give no quarter, replied to the unhappy Prince that "they did not understand French." The accessories of the picture are beautifully filled up, and the whole is remarkable for boldness of conception, vigorous drawing, and great harmony of colouring. A long price has been paid for it by the municipality of Courtrai,—I think 15,000 francs,—yet it is worth the money. Of the field of battle itself, little is now distinguishable, the railroad of Ghent runs across it, and a small chapel, in which hangs a single spur of gold, is the only memorial on the spot.

Instead of proceeding by the railway direct to Ghent, we chose the little-frequented road from Courtrai to Bruges, across a country cultivated like a garden. The harvest was not yet gathered, but its abundance spread over the fields like waving gold. Beyond these

rich plains the way lies through a thick forest, with sunny glades and long shady vistas,—offering every charm of which a level country can boast. At a little road-side inn, on the skirts of the forest, appropriately dedicated to St. Hubert, there issued forth, to offer refreshment to the passengers in the *diligence*, as pretty a girl as one could well hope to look upon—though bound to the city of Bruges, esteemed the head-quarters of Flemish beauty. Her dark hair, lustrous eyes, slender waist, and graceful figure, suggested no unapt resemblance to the fair Isabelle de Croy, when she waited on Maître Pierre, at Plessis les Tours; and a deep, demure-looking old priest, who formed one of the party in the *diligence*, might have sat for the portrait of the false merchant. Her liqueurs were not left untasted; and under their influence, the driver flogged his horses into a brisker pace, and we trotted merrily along till we reached the barrier at Bruges, where a careful perquisition was made, to see if we carried any contraband provisions, for the regulations of the good city will not admit the wing of a chicken duty free. Nothing having been discovered, we were allowed to move on, and in due time were installed in the hostelry called “Den Gouden Beer,” imaged forth as a formidable bear wearing a golden collar.

To give any detailed description of places so well known as Bruges and Ghent would be a work of supererogation, for all that can be told has been

written by countless travellers, to say nothing of Murray's excellent "Hand-book." Under such circumstances, one wishes rather to record impressions than furnish a catalogue of remarkable objects. Again, as in former years, I was struck with the devotional character of the religious worship offered by the Flemish people, more apparent, perhaps, at Bruges than any where else in Belgium, for there everything lends itself to the feeling: the air of loneliness which pervades the city, the sombre costume of its inhabitants, and the quaint style of its architecture. The expression of this sentiment is witnessed in its most picturesque form in the church of the Hospital of St. John, at the hour of the vesper mass, where the majority of the devotees are women, whose long black cloaks and hoods impart much of solemnity to the scene. While the last rays of evening struggle faintly through the narrow, darkened windows of the building, the blaze of light at the altar illumines the rich coffer of St. Ursula, which stands there displayed to the faithful, and falls upon the fantastically-shaped head-dresses of the sisters of the order, who still adhere to the costume of the fifteenth century; the air is filled with the odour of incense,—the pealing tones of the organ swell upon the ear,—the sonorous voices of the priests, and the choral response of the sisters, melt into the general harmony; the mind is abstracted from the present, and if religion itself be not impressed upon the spectator, a feeling akin to it, at least, is produced; for "the place becomes

religious, and the heart runs o'er" with an emotion which little else could excite. It will gratify all lovers of Gothic architecture to know that in Bruges, as in most of the Belgian cities, the restoration of time-worn edifices is going on actively and in excellent taste; and that the cathedral of St. Salvator—like that of St. Gudule, at Bruxelles—is rapidly regaining its former external beauty. Much also is being done to illustrate its monuments of art, pictorial as well as architectural, and of this evidence is afforded in a magnificent work now in progress, intituled "*Les Splendeurs de l' Art en Belgique.*"

Several days were devoted to Ghent, Antwerp, and Bruxelles, and some hours to Mechlin and Louvain, whose splendid town-hall is the architectural gem of Belgium; and then, taking up that route which our visit to those cities had interrupted, we sped on by the railroad to Liége,—the spot from whence we proposed to begin our tour through the valley of the Meuse.





THE PERRON OF LIEGE.

CHAPTER II.

Liege—General Appearance of the City—Its Early History

—Discovery of Coal—Employment of Children in Coal Pits—Calamities of Liege—The Warde des Steppes—Henry of Gueldres—Condition of the Liegeois—Henri de Dinant—The Perron of Liege—The Clergy and the Nobles—Rabus des Prez—Outrage on Henri de Dinant—Siege of Liege—Henry de Dinant quits Liege—His Return—He finally leaves the City—His Patriotism—Scandalous Life of the Bishop—The Pope's Remonstrance—Death of Henry of Gueldres—Le Mal St. Martin—Jean sans Pitie—Liege in the Fifteenth Century—Cruelty of the Duke of Burgundy.



LIEGE is a city of striking appearance, whether it be approached by land or water. Seated in a broad and fertile valley, at the base of lofty hills, which shelter it on the north and west, and

open to the south in the direction of the noble river whose rapid waters divide it from the populous faubourg of Outre-Meuse, it occupies a space on which the eye rests with pleasure as it embraces the general mass

or examines its details. It is perhaps from above the new bridge that Liége is seen to the greatest advantage, with the Meuse in the foreground, sweeping past the high-raised gardens that ornament its left bank, crowned by the lofty buildings of the Seminary and Royal College, and the picturesque towers and spires of the churches of St. Jacques and St. Paul, while far away stretches the town, gradually climbing the heights of St. Laurent and St. Walburge, above which rise the frowning battlements of the citadel

The general aspect of Liége, contrasted with the quaint old cities of Flanders, is comparatively modern ; but on the quays that extend below the Pont des Arches ranges of buildings appear, carved and decorated with all the fantastic ornament that used to mark the dwellings of the citizens during the 15th and 16th centuries ; the streets which intersect these masses are so extremely narrow as to be almost impassable for carriages, and many that are used for thoroughfares are accessible only to the foot passengers. It is in this quarter, chiefly, that vestiges remain of the old town, which, more perhaps than any other in Europe, has experienced the horrors and desolation of internal and foreign warfare. But the necessities of a large population, and the restored commerce of a great city, such as Liége, have led to a great deal of improvement within the last few years ; and new streets and buildings have risen in every part, replacing what was old and dilapidated, and giving an air of life and health to the whole. So great has been

the change wrought within the last fifteen years that any former recollection of the town was of little service in enabling us to find our way from the point where we were set down, the principal hotels in the neighbourhood of the theatre not being at that time in existence.

It may, at first sight, appear almost superfluous to dwell upon a place which, since the establishment of railroads, may be called the turnpike-gate of northern Europe; but there is so much in the early history of Liége connected with the history of the Meuse, that a brief detail of some of the most remarkable events which have befallen the former, becomes to a certain extent necessary. It may not, at the same time, be uninteresting to say something of the language and literature of the Walloon country, of which Liége was the capital.

From a very early period the Liégeois—like their Flemish brethren of Ghent and Bruges—were distinguished for an ardent love of liberty, and a firm determination to maintain the rights and privileges which, as the city grew into importance, they wrung from their successive rulers. Alternately oppressed by the harsh control of their bishops, who exercised a power both spiritual and temporal, and the tyranny of the nobles, who constituted a numerous and formidable body, the history of Liége is, for several centuries, the recital of one continuous struggle—the struggle of the many against the few—the weak against the strong—whose parallel may everywhere be found in the history

of feudal Europe, in all save the terrific visitations which it endured at the hands of its merciless masters.

Founded as early as A.D. 559, by St. Monulphus, Bishop of Tongres; enlarged and embellished by St. Lambert, who, after his martyrdom in 708, became the patron saint of the city; increasing and prospering under St. Hubert; fostered by Charlemagne; and endowed with churches and colleges by the celebrated Bishop Notger, Liége had, towards the close of the tenth century, assumed a prominent position amongst the cities of Europe. The early discovery of coal, and its utility for all manufacturing purposes, contributed in no slight degree towards the wealth for which Liége soon became distinguished, and her commerce became widely extended. The history of this discovery, as it is related by Gilles d'Orval and other old chroniclers, is curious, though the period at which they fix it is probably later than the real date.

“Under the reign,” says Gilles d'Orval, “of Albert de Cuyck (at the commencement of the thirteenth century), a certain old man, of venerable appearance, with long white hair and a flowing beard, and wearing a white robe, passed one day through a street of Liége, called *Coché*, and, observing a blacksmith at work, who was complaining bitterly that with all his toil he could scarcely earn a livelihood, owing to the great expense of firewood, stopped and addressed him. ‘Cease your lamentations,’ he said, ‘and go to the neighbouring mountain where the monastery stands;

you will there find certain veins of black earth, which you must dig out and burn : it will heat your iron far better than wood.' Having uttered these words, the old man disappeared."

Brustème tells the same story in different words :— " Passing through the *Rue de Coché*, the old man encountered the blacksmith, who was at his work, and politely accosting him, wished him ' good day,' and profit in his labour. ' What profit,' replied the blacksmith, ' do you think I can derive ? Nearly the whole of what I gain I am obliged to lay out in buying charcoal, or what the Franks call *cokis* ; there remains very little profit after that.' ' Friend,' returned the old man, ' go to the mountain where the monks live, dig there, and you will find a black earth very useful for your calling.' After saying this, the blacksmith saw him no more. He, however, made no mystery of what had been said to him, and the mountain being examined, coal was discovered, to the great advantage of the whole country." At a later period it was found out that the lucky blacksmith's name was *Hulloz*, and etymologists have hence derived the word " Houille," the generic name for coal throughout the *Pays de Liège* and the north of France. The old man of course passed for an angel, for the historian Fisen observes—" Angelus fuisse creditus est."

The Père Bouille, in his " Histoire de Liège," accounts for Fisen's opinion in an ingenious manner. " It is at least probable," he observes, " that this old

man was an *English* traveller, since coal had, according to the testimony of Matthew Paris, been used in England as far back as the year 1145 ;” an interpretation at which the Père Saumery, who quotes the tradition,* is exceedingly angry, accusing Bouille of never having read the authority whom he cites, which is not unlikely, as he places the year 1145 in the reign of Henry the Third, and calls the historian “ *Mathias*,” not “ *Matthew*” Paris.† But whatever the obligations of ancient Liège to angels or Englishmen, it is somewhat singular, in connection with the tradition, that modern Liège should be indebted to an Englishman for placing her manufactures on the footing on which they now are. The well-known establishment of Seraing will be a lasting monument of the benefits conferred on the country by the late Mr. Cockerill, whose name is never mentioned by the working classes of Liège without reverence and affection.

* *Délices des Pays de Liège*, 5 tom. folio, 1738—44

† The reader who recollects the Reports on the manner of working the coal mines in England, which were published by the House of Commons in 1843, may wish to learn how these matters were ordered in Liège a century ago ; he will be struck by certain points of resemblance as regards the employment of children in the pits. Saumery says : “ Comme ils ne trouvoient point facilement des Apprentis, ils ont soin de s’en faire, qui leur servent d’abord de compagnons. A peine les enfans ont atteint l’age de 9 à 10 ans, qu’ on les descend dans les fosses. Apprendre à marcher sur les mains, en même tems que sur les piés, est leur premier exercice. Il est vrai que pour les mettre en état de trainer la petite voiture, on leur attache a chaque main une espèce de petit banc, élevé de 4 à 5 pouces ; et on les forme, en très peu de tems à ce menage ; dont je ne crois pas qu’ on

The first calamity that befel the city, arose from the ambitious designs of Henry, Duke of Brabant, at the commencement of the thirteenth century; when, after the death of Albert, Count of Moha, he laid claim to that rich inheritance, and brought on the feud which is known as the war of the succession of Moha. The Bishop of Liège, who also claimed the county, as a reversionary fief of the church, took up arms to defend his rights, and a sanguinary contest ensued. Fortune favoured the first attempts of the Duke of Brabant; he entered the province of Liège with an immense force, and ravaging the country with fire and sword, surprised the capital on the 3rd of May, 1212, and quickly made himself master of the place. In four days the city was delivered up to pillage, and was then only saved from the flames by the oath of fidelity, which the clergy and people swore to observe.

puisse rendre d'autre raison, sinon que les pères, y ayant été formés, les dispositions qui y sont nécessaires, se transmettent aux enfans avec le sang. Qui ne se représentera des Lapins, des Bléreaux et des Renards creuser des terriers pour les servir de retraite et d'azile, voyant ces innocens condamnés par le sort de leur naissance à des travaux si dénicibles, et qui paraissent si peu proportionnés à la délicatesse de leur âge! Quoiqu'il en soit, plus de 30 personnes, parfaitement instruites de ces travaux, et qui m'ont offert de m'en faire instruire par mes yeux, m'ont assuré que ces enfans ainsi courbés tirent les voitures de charbon, avec une vitesse incroyable, non-seulement de 20 et 30 pas, mais de toute la longueur de la veine, eût-elle un quart de lieue, ou plus; en un mot, qu'au bout de 12 ou 15 jours, cet exercice est *pour eux un amusement et un jeu*, et qu'ils ne sont jamais si contents, que lorsqu'ils sont dans les fosses." The children were, however, only employed six hours a day.

But compulsory oaths are never binding, and easily released by the Pope from theirs, the Liégeois shook off their apathy, and burning with the desire of vengeance, retrieved their lost fame at the celebrated battle called the Warde des Steppes, which was fought on the 13th of October, 1213. The Duke of Brabant was completely defeated, and only obtained peace on the most degrading conditions: he was obliged to deliver up his sons as hostages, and come to Liège and walk uncovered and barefooted from the gate of St. Walburge to the cathedral of St. Lambert.

For a period the city prospered in peace and quietness, but evil days were in store, and soon after the election of Henry of Gueldres to the episcopal throne of Liège, a troublous time began.

Henry was the son of Gerard the Third, Count of Gueldres, and Margaret of Brabant. Too young to receive the order of priesthood he had obtained a dispensation from the Pope to govern his dominions, and hence the title which he at first bore of "The Elected of Liège." He was ill-fitted to exercise either the temporal or spiritual functions confided to him. Incapable of moderating his passions, he gave himself up to the most shameful debauchery, oppressed his people, wasted the property of the church, and trafficked in benefices, selling them to



the highest bidder, or bestowing them on the creatures who ministered to his vices. A knight rather than a priest, he was constantly at war with his neighbours and subjects: he revelled in luxury, and, passionately fond of dress, never showed himself in public without being covered with rich furs and precious jewels. To sum up all and complete a worthy picture, he possessed little or no information, and could scarcely read.* The reign of this prince, which was one of the most stormy in the history of Liége, originated the bloody revolutions of which the city was the theatre for nearly five hundred years. He was the first violently to infringe those privileges of the Liégeois which, originally known as the "*Loi Charlemagne*," and founded upon traditions of the old Roman law, had been confirmed to them by successive princes, and especially by Bishop Albert de Cuyck, at the close of the twelfth century, in the great charter which bears his name.

A few words may here be necessary, as to the social condition of the people and their rulers at this time. Like most of the cities of Belgium during the middle ages, Liége was a fortified town, and contained within its walls a few buildings of importance, such as the churches, the monasteries, the bishop's palace, the hôtel de ville, and the *maison des échevins*, called the *Destroit*. It was, for the most, peopled by merchants and artisans, who had sought shelter behind its ramparts from the

* Zantfliet apud Martene,—Hocsem apud Chapeavilli, et cetera.

tyranny and rapacity of the feudal nobles of the open country. The streets—narrow, unpaved, crooked, and of unequal length—were composed of houses almost entirely built of wood. Each profession, placed under the patronage of some saint, occupied a separate street or quarter, and the workmen of the different trades formed separately organised societies, with their own governor or elder. At the beginning of the thirteenth century Liège was divided into six great *vinâves*, or quarters, a name that is still retained, distinguished from each other by their different blazons and war-cries. The inhabitants of five of these *vinâves* were divided into *great* and *little*;* the sixth consisted of the nobles, who had isolated themselves in the quarter called Des Prez, on the opposite side of the Meuse. Those of the citizens who were termed “the great,” were the rich burgesses who followed the knights to war, and aided them in case of need in their enterprises against the people; “the little” were the artisans of the common trades, a vast assemblage of the poor and suffering, always oppressed, incessantly under the apprehension of fresh taxes and ruinous fines, and a prey to the most odious and arbitrary despotism.

It was from amongst the class of nobles that the *échevins* were elected—magistrates who were not only the judges but the governors of the city; and these, in

* “Ceis borgois on nommoit les *grans*, et les gens laburans des communs mestiers, on nommoit les *petits*.”—HENRICOURT, “Miroir des Nobles de la Hesbaye.”

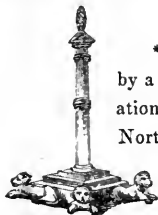
their turn, chose from their body two chiefs of the corporation, who were then called "*maîtres à temps*," and at a later period "burgomasters." These men, imbued with all the prejudices of their caste, not only looked down with contempt upon the working-classes, but kept the burgesses also in a state of hard subjection—a system that led eventually to the union which overthrew them.

There was yet another power in Liége,—the Church—to whom it might have been supposed the people had a right to look for support against their secular masters, but the clergy had hitherto taken part with their oppressors. A time was, however, at hand which completely changed the aspect of affairs: it was brought to pass by the genius and courage of one man, who merits as high a place in his country's annals as Rienzi has won in those of Rome. This man was Henri de Dinant.

Sprung from the nobility, he shared in none of the sentiments of his class in relation to the common people; his sympathies, on the contrary, were entirely enlisted in their favour, and all the actions of his life tended to endear him to them. He was affable and free of speech, and went amongst them without reserve, his earnest desire being to awaken them to the consciousness of their invaded rights, and rouse them to shake off the yoke under which they groaned. He explained to them the nature of their privileges, and taught them the doctrine of unity, by which alone they

could hope for success. He was eminently qualified by nature to become popular,—his countenance was expressive, his character noble and elevated, his courage tried, and he possessed a power of eloquence that captivated all who heard him. It was little wonder, therefore, that he became the idol of a people who had never dreamt that commiseration for their sufferings could exist. A favourable opportunity was alone wanting to enable the future tribune to execute the vast projects which he had formed; and he who knew as well how to take advantage of one as how to wait for it, saw it at length arrive.

A murderous outrage, committed on a citizen by one of the dependents of a canon of St. Lambert, furnished the occasion. The *échevins*, willing enough to strike a blow against the authority of the Church, demanded that the culprit, who had taken sanctuary, should be given up to the laws. The canons, claiming the right of punishing their own servants, resisted, and the magistrates, impelled by the popular effervescence, pronounced sentence of banishment against the offender, which was proclaimed at the Perron of Liége.* The canons, conceiving their privileges violated, appealed



* The Perron was a column of bronze, surmounted by a fir-cone of the same metal,—the symbol of association and independence amongst the inhabitants of the North. The base of the column was supported by four lions. The word "Perron" is derived from *Pinus rotunda*.

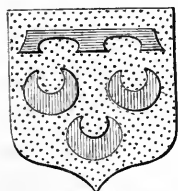
to the bishop, who excommunicated the *échevins*, and threw an interdict upon the city.

Henri de Dinant, who never for a moment lost sight of his projects for the freedom of his fellow-citizens, availed himself of this state of things to remind the people of their rights, and his friends and agents were active in the good work; he knew how to influence the passions of the multitude, and, following his advice, the citizens sometimes lent their aid to the nobility, sometimes to the clergy,—thus gradually widening the breach between the two rival powers. A second event, similar in character to the first, still further advanced his object. The bishop, appealed to this time by the people, promised himself to govern the city, and restrain the nobility. The *échevins*, who foresaw in this assumption of power, the ruin of their own authority, violently opposed it, and recourse was had to arms. Observing the wise counsels of Henri,* the people remained neuter in the struggle, and the nobles for a time obtained the mastery over the clergy.

It was thus, by showing the people how to profit by the dissensions between their rulers, and making it apparent to them that their weight was always sufficient to turn the scale, he taught them the true value of the power which he sought to place in their hands. It would occupy far too great a space in this volume, destined *materially* for another purpose, to detail the

* “ Si dist Henri, ne muchies point en ces querelles.”—*Chronique Manuscrite*.

events of the struggle for liberty, in which Henri de Dinant played so conspicuous a part. The account is full of interest; but I must necessarily limit myself to



HENRI DE DINANT

the mere facts. Elected by the people their own *maître à temps*, and thus invested with legitimate authority, his first care was to organise a powerful force of citizen-militia,—raising at once a third estate, to the astonishment and unconcealed dread of the

other two.* His next act was one of decided opposition, refusing his assent to a demand made by the bishop upon the military services of the citizens, to prosecute a war against the Countess Marguerite of Flanders, which he declared to be contrary to the great charter of the Liégeois: Henry of Gueldres was compelled to abandon his purpose, and left the city, vowing vengeance against the tribune. The nobles, whose influence he was daily diminishing, were no less inimical to him, and sought to remove him by assassination, but the project failed, and the exasperated populace rising against them, they also fled from Liège to join the bishop. The civil war now began, and was continued with various success, the advantage, however, being chiefly with the people, who, headed by Henri de Dinant, exacted heavy atonement for former wrongs.

* “Adont sont li esquevins esmayez et dient : nos astons dechius comme mesqueins ; nos avons brasseit une male brassé, si nos le convient boire.”—JEAN D’OUTREMEUSE.

At length two serious defeats, sustained in one day by the partisans of Henry of Gueldres, led to propositions of accommodation, and a hollow peace was concluded. The circumstances under which it was broken are too illustrative of the character of the age to be omitted.

To meet the expenses of the late war, Henri de Dinant had caused the levy of a new tax to be borne by all alike. The *échevins* vainly pleaded their exemptions: Henri went from door to door raising the tax, and came in turn to the *Destroit*. The *échevins* were assembled, and amongst them was Radus des Prez, one of the most influential personages in Liège,



RADUS DES PREZ

a proud and impetuous young man, full of ardour and courage, who fore-saw that if the principle of general taxation were admitted, there was an end of the privileges of his order: Furious at the boldness of the tribune, he rushed towards him, and

with a fierce expression of countenance,—“Traitor,” he cried; “vile and disloyal man, you have long plotted our ruin and sought our overthrow; but know, that before that day comes yourself shall die.” “Give a mark, Messire, as the burgesses have decreed,” replied Henri, coldly; “any of you who refuse to pay the tax shall be declared alien and banished.” “Thou banish me from Liège!” exclaimed Radus, exasperated; “from Liège! where my ancestors have dwelt since the days of Charlemagne and Ogier of Denn-marche, while thine

were only petty citizens of Dinant, who fled hither, doubtless, for their misdeeds ! Thou shalt never say so more—there is one who knows how to prevent it.” With these words, the knight drew a dagger that hung from his girdle, and rushing upon Henri, stabbed him three times in the breast. The tribune fell for dead, and the *échevins*, seized with terror, precipitately abandoned the *Destroit*, and took refuge beyond the Meuse in their own *vinâve*, calling in their flight upon all their friends to arm, to avoid being surprised by the people. Knights, squires, and men-at-arms were soon ready, and flew to defend the approaches to the *Pont des Arches*. Radus raised the drawbridges in the principal streets leading to the river, so as to cut off all communication, except by a narrow passage supported on a few beams, over which it was with difficulty that five men could pass abreast. The *Des Prez* posted themselves at the entrance of this dangerous passage, and swore that no citizen, nor even the foul fiend himself, should cross it.

While these preparations were being made beyond the Meuse, the disturbance rose to its height in the city. The news of the assassination spread with the rapidity of lightning; the citizens flocked in crowds to the *Destroit*, hoping that it was only a false alarm; but the lifeless form of Henri de Dinant, exposed to their gaze as it was borne homewards, roused them to ungovernable fury. The deep tones of the tocsin now swelled above the tumult; the shops and houses were all closed. The workmen seized the weapons with whose

use they were now familiar, and in large bodies hastened towards the *Pont des Arches*, uttering the well-known cry of "Liège and St. Lambert!" At the foot of the bridge they encountered the stern array of men-at-arms, headed by Radus des Prez and his brothers, John and Raes, and the noble knights of their lineage. In vain the multitude strove to break through the determined phalanx: at every blow that was struck a citizen fell, and for a time they were held completely at bay. At length the brave companions of Des Prez began to give ground, and upwards of two hundred of the assailants crossed the bridge; the narrow passage across the timbers was crowded with those who followed, when suddenly a loud noise was heard—the beams cracked and bent, and, yielding to the enormous pressure, they fell, and more than a hundred perished in the river, leaving a wide gulph between the bold burgesses who had crossed and the mass of their fellow-citizens who vainly strove to aid them. At the sight of this fearful catastrophe, a loud cry of distress arose. "Hahay! hahay!" was heard on all sides; "we must succour our brothers across the Meuse." Some threw themselves into boats, others tried to swim across the river; but none succeeded in reaching the opposite shore. Meantime, the brave citizens, whom no succour could reach, continued to struggle fiercely with the Des Prez. They had no hope left; before them was the whole chivalry of Liège—behind them a fearful abyss: to sell their lives dearly

was all that remained, and they fought with desperation. But their numbers diminished every moment—their strength failed them, and driven back by the knights, of whom they scorned to ask quarter, the wounded and the wearied found with the dead a grave in the rapid river.*

The people swore to revenge them, but night coming on put a stop to the conflict. They returned to the market-place, and there learnt, to their great delight, that Henri de Dinant was not dead, and that his wounds, though severe, were not dangerous. This was happy news for the citizens, and contributed in no slight degree to raise their courage. They resolved to attack the *vinâve* of the Des Prez on the following day, but the nobles, fearing the issue of the struggle, withdrew in the night; the bishop followed their example, and there only remained with the citizens the provost of St. Lambert and a few canons who had embraced the popular party.

The bishop—“*gros de fiel et de passion*,” as an old chronicler observes—“resolved from henceforth to do everything in his power to reduce his refractory subjects. He implored the succour of the neighbouring princes, collected all the vassals of the Church, and by these means set a large army on foot, with which he invested the city, vowing to reduce it to ashes, having first given it up to unrestrained plunder.

* Jean d'Outremeuse has preserved the date of this terrible event: it befel on the 19th April, 1256.

This last design was opposed by Radus des Prez at the head of the chivalry of Liége, who succeeded in turning aside the bishop's anger from the city and concentrating it upon Henri de Dinant. It was resolved to summon Henri and his principal abettors to judgment in the camp of Vottem, and in the event of their non-appearance to pass formal sentence upon them, which was accordingly done. Henri, on his side, was not idle, and made every preparation for resistance. The siege commenced, and hemmed in on all sides, the Liégeois soon felt the evils attendant upon it. Provisions failed, and the sufferings of famine increased the horrors of war. The citizens began to waver; but Henri and his immediate adherents were firm, till, moved by consideration for the people, he consented to their desire to make terms for themselves, knowing well that he must be excepted from any treaty. It happened as he foresaw; the terms were hard, and, above all, the bishop demanded that Henri and his friends should be surrendered to him unconditionally. The deputies who had been sent refused the conditions, and returned sadly to the city. When they were made known, a general desolation prevailed throughout Liége: the women wept, and the men abandoned themselves to a gloomy despair. It was then that Henri de Dinant demonstrated the nobility of his character. He summoned the citizens to the great market-place, and thus addressed them: "Good people," he said, "I have loyally served you night and day; it is on your account

that I find myself in this strait ; I am still, however, no less devoted to you than before, and I come to offer you my body that you make take it to the bishop. But be sure of this, that when once I am dead, you will fall into a state of slavery worse than the former one ; think, besides, of the shame that will fall upon the city if you conclude a peace without comprehending all the citizens : better that it should be entirely ruined than thus dishonoured !”

The result of this address was the endeavour to obtain better terms from the bishop ; but the prince was inexorable. A momentary re-action showed itself amongst the citizens ; but it subsided again, and no thought prevailed but submission. It was in vain that the Liégeois urged Henri de Dinant to remain amongst them, assuring him that they would care for his personal safety ; he felt that they were unworthy of the sacrifices which he made, and slowly passing through the crowd, he shook the dust from off his feet, and turned his back upon the ungrateful city, without the hope of finding “ a world elsewhere.”

Peace was concluded the same day, but the conditions were harder than those at first rejected. All the privileges for which the Liégeois had fought were annihilated ; the bishop possessed himself of the castle of St. Walburge, which he converted into a citadel, compelled the citizens to pay a large sum to defray the expenses of the war, and exacted a heavy fine because Henri de Dinant had not been delivered up to him.

The knights and nobles returned to Liége, in the suite of Henry of Gueldres; the burgesses swore to serve him faithfully henceforward, and he, on his part, promised to administer equal justice. These promises were idle words. The old rule was resumed, and fresh discontents arose; but the citizens had now no military organisation, and were without a leader. They sighed for Henri de Dinant, and finally resolved on sending a secret message to him, urging him to return to Liége.

In spite of his experience of the fickleness of the people, his love for the city was too strong to suffer him to resist their importunity, and he once more presented himself at the gates. He was received with rapture, hailed as the father of his country,* and conducted in triumph to his former dwelling. The bishop was absent at the moment, but the *échevins* prepared for the struggle which they knew to be imminent. It was averted only by the representation of the Dean and Chapter of St. Lambert, who went to Henri de Dinant, and set before him the fact that his presence in the city, far from benefiting the people, would only be the cause of greater evil. "The citizens," they said, "are weakened, ruined, and incapable of offering a long resistance to the bishop; they will soon lose courage, and will abandon or give you up to make their peace. Leave us, then, and thus prevent the

* "Revertendi processit obviam ingens armatorum multitudo, patrem populi salutantium."—*Fisen*.

misfortunes with which your country is threatened." Henri had only too much reason to admit the truth of these arguments; he felt that it was his duty, under such circumstances, to avoid the occasion of more blood being spilt; and once more sacrificing all he held dear, he silently quitted the city in the middle of the night, and never again re-entered its walls.

Meantime the bishop had heard of his arrival, and hastily returned to Liège, but Henri was already gone. He, however, wreaked his spite against him, as far as lay in his power, by causing his house to be levelled to the ground, and from some of the timbers a gibbet was constructed, on which he the same day hung the unfortunate Gerard Baisier, one of the chiefs of the people, whose great crime was being the friend of Henri de Dinant.

The tribune, after quitting Liège, took refuge with the Countess of Namur; but driven from thence, by the persecutions of the bishop, he fled to the court of Margaret of Flanders. Here he was hospitably received, and here, it is supposed, he passed the remainder of his days, having resisted the offer of the countess to enable him to wage war against Liège. "I have never yet committed treason," was his reply; "and I never mean to do so. The bishop is my sovereign, and Liège is my country; I will never fight with you against either."* Such is the last record

* "Onques mains trahison ne fys, onques ne feray," &c.—JEAN D'OUTERMEUSE.

that remains of this noble-hearted man. How the rest of his life was past is unknown; his name, however, survives in Liége as one of the watchwords of liberty!

In closing this episode of the city's history, something more remains to be said of its unworthy prince. After the final subjugation of Liége, the bishop abandoned himself without restraint to all his inclinations; he set no bounds to his licentiousness, and to find the means of gratifying his passions, he alienated the Church property, sold benefices, and taxed the people in a thousand ways, so that he was universally hated, and the name by which he became known was the disgraceful one of "*Grand Ribaud de la Cité.*" At length, having long disgusted the people, he committed a crime which converted his most faithful friends, the family of the Des Prez, into his bitterest enemies.

Coene le Frison, of Jupille, one of that noble race, had a beautiful daughter, named Bertha, for whose hand the greatest lords of Liége aspired. Henry of Gueldres saw and fell in love with her, and from that moment revolved the means of gratifying his hateful passion. He had even the audacity to attempt it in her father's castle, where he was received as a guest, and unhappily, by violence, he succeeded. Alarmed by Bertha's cries, Coene rushed to the spot, but too late to save his daughter's honour or avenge her. Henry had precipitately taken flight, and reached Liége in safety. His remorse, after the act, was in the

first instance unfeigned, for he knew how dangerous would prove the hatred of his former friends. He endeavoured in vain to enter into terms of composition with them ; their only answer was defiance and threats of revenge. The matter was referred by the Des Prez to the chapter of Liége, but Henry had no dread of the reproof of his canons. One of them, however, the Archdeacon Thibant de Plaisance, a man nearly eighty years of age, had the courage to reproach him with his scandalous life, and Henry, beside himself with passion, struck him to the ground. His temerity would have cost him his life, but for the interference of the archdeacon, who contented himself by saying, that as he purposed visiting the Holy Sepulchre before his death, he should, after having made the pilgrimage, inform the Pope of the whole affair. Thibant, a few days afterwards, set out from Liége, and was on his return towards Rome from Syria, when he learnt that he had in his absence been elected to the pontifical throne, under the name of Gregory the Tenth. Like Louis the Twelfth of France, he forgot his personal injuries when he became a sovereign, and strove, by mildness only, to reclaim the Bishop of Liége. He addressed to him a long, pastoral letter, in which he enumerated all his offences, and exhorted him to repentance : the only effect it produced was to elicit from Henry an exclamation, that the Pope was evidently afraid of him, and a threat that all the evil he had yet done was nothing to what he intended to commit here-

after. The Pope, finding that nothing could move him, ended by citing him to appear before the council of Lyons, and there, in 1274, he solemnly deposed him from his see.

Deprived of his ecclesiastical authority, he began a new career of rapine and adventure, and made himself a terror to the Liégeois, by pillaging castles and villages, and holding the inhabitants to ransom. The hatred against him in Liége was so general, that a price was set upon his head,—a reward of twenty *livres de gros* being offered to whoever should take him dead or alive.

Justice at last reached him,—he fell, in the year 1283, by the hands of Coene le Frison, who had long dogged his footsteps: the father at length avenged his daughter's outraged honour!

The events which succeed in the history of the struggle between the commons and their rulers, must be sketched more briefly.

The next great effort that was made by the people to shake off the heavy yoke of their oppressors, is commonly known in the annals of Liége, as "*La Mal St. Martin.*"* It was one fatal to the power of the nobles, who were utterly defeated, in the year 1312, in an attempt which they made to crush the citizens. The contest was bloody and fearful, excesses of the worst kind were committed, and the flower of the

* *La Mal, la male journée*,—the evil day.

chivalry of Liége was well-nigh swept away.* As a separately formidable body, they were no longer to be feared; the social war continued, but henceforward it was between the Prince and the people. The latter were now recognised as no longer existing by their sovereign's will, for in the peace of *Angleur*, concluded the year succeeding the *Mal St. Martin*, we meet with the following remarkable words,—“The candidate for admission to the magistracy *must belong to one of the trades!*”

John of Bavaria, who was elected to the bishopric of Liége in 1390, when he was only seventeen years of age, made his reign terribly conspicuous in the city's annals by the bloody characters in which it was written, and earned for himself the well-deserved epithet of “*Jean sans Pitié.*” The Burgundians now, for the first time, enter upon the scene, led by the fearless duke who murdered his cousin, Louis of Orleans, in the Rue Barbet, in Paris, and who afterwards perished by assassination on the bridge of Montereau. He gained the decisive victory of Othée† over the Liégeois, and restored the power which he had lost to John of Bavaria, who cruelly retaliated upon his subjects. The best blood flowed on every side, and to such an extent did he carry his thirst for vengeance,

* See for the details of this event, and many other curious particulars in the history of Liége, the “*Récits Historiques sur l'ancien pays de Liége,*” by M. L. Polain, Bruxelles, 1842.

† It was at Othée also that he gained the surname of “*Jean sans Pitié.*”

that the city appeared one vast slaughter-house. "The sanguinary rage of the bishop," says Merzerai, "was not confined to the chiefs of the revolt, but extended to women and children, priests and nuns. Around Liége, and the cities in its alliance, were only to be seen forests of wheels and gibbets, and the Meuse was choked with the bodies of the unhappy citizens, who, tied back to back, were thrown in pairs into the river." He abrogated the charter of the Liégeois, and despoiled them of all the privileges which they had been three centuries in acquiring, but his triumph was fortunately of short duration. Ten years afterwards the people re-conquered their rights, and John of Bavaria resigned the bishopric.

The conspiracy of Wathieu d'Athin, or "*Le Jour des Rois*," though involving many sad calamities, must be passed over, to advert to the days of Charles the Bold, when the heaviest misfortunes occurred that ever befel Liége.

In the year 1465, the wealth and power of the city were great,—its commerce was in the highest degree flourishing, and upwards of 120,000 inhabitants were numbered within its walls. The reigning bishop was Louis de Bourbon, elected to his high office at eighteen years of age. A pleasure-loving prince, and unequal to the consideration of serious questions, his thoughts were completely centered in his own gratification, and his rapacity kept pace with his wants. He soon sowed the seeds of discontent amongst his people; and chiefs

to lead them in revolt speedily appeared in Raes de Heers and Baré de Surlet, who sought to strengthen their hands by entering into secret negotiations with Louis the Eleventh of France, on the faith of whose promises they so implicitly relied, that when the dissensions between Bourbon and the Liégeois had reached their height, the latter hesitated not at once to declare open war against the Duke of Burgundy, who espoused the quarrel of his cousin, the bishop.

The history of this war has been too often told to render a repetition of it necessary here.* The heroic conduct of the six hundred Franchimontois, the perfidy of Louis the Eleventh, and the cruelty of the Duke of Burgundy, are indelibly engraven on its pages. The sacrifice of sixty thousand citizens, and the almost total destruction of the city, attest the sanguinary spirit of the age.

With the extinction of the feudal system, which gradually gave way in the course of the fifteenth century, ends the necessity for reference to the history of Liége, as far as the present work is concerned. The legends of the Meuse belong almost entirely to the period which has been dwelt upon, and it was principally with the view of connecting the capital with the country that this chapter was written.

* Philippe de Comines,—Le Mayeur,—Bouille, &c.

CHAPTER III.

The Walloon Language—Error of Sir Walter Scott—Flemish never spoken in Liege—Origin of the Walloon Language—Its Characteristics—The popular Dialect—War Cries—The Lord's Prayer—Hungaro-Walloons—Fetes de la Reine—Paskeics—Political Songs—Noels—The Cramignon—Paskeie—Walloon Chronicles—Walloon Dramas—Decline of Walloon Literature—Walloon Poet—Recent Efforts.



THROUGHOUT the country that borders the Meuse between Liége and Givet, embracing the Condroz and a part of the Ardennes on the right bank, and the districts of the Hesbaye and Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse on the left, the language of the people is perfectly distinct from those of its various neighbours. With the frontier of Prussia on one hand, and Brabant on the other, it resembles neither German nor Flemish, but remains what it has ever been, a language apart. This language is the Walloon.

Its origin and character have given rise to much discussion amongst the learned, and many ingenious theories have been raised by different philologists, who have sought to derive it from all but its most obvious source—some tracing it exclusively from the Latin, others from the German, others again from the Celtic,

and some unhesitatingly ascribing to it a Flemish parentage. This last derivation is esteemed by the Liégeois themselves, "the unkindest cut of all;" and it is on this account that, whenever the romances of Walter Scott are spoken of in Liége—and translations of his works are widely spread throughout Belgium—one of the comments invariably made is on the great error he committed, when, in *Quentin Durward*, he makes the citizens of Liége speak Flemish; for they justly assert that there is not a single monument, or street, or corner, in the old city, whose appellation is in the slightest degree connected with the Flemish tongue, to say nothing of the living proofs that exist in the still surviving literature of the Walloons, and the daily speech of the people.

Jealous, as the Liégeois naturally are, of the little nationality that time has left them, they deeply feel the attempt to confound their language with the unharmonious tongue of the Low Countries; and Sir Walter's mistake injures them the more from its having been carelessly adopted by others—Victor Hugo, in his recent work "*Le Rhin*," being one of the most notable examples.

But it is not by foreigners alone that this heresy has been propagated. Paquot, a learned man, and himself a native of the province of Liége, asserts in one of his works,* that a part of the inhabitants of Liége,

* "*Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire littéraire du pays de Liége.*"

particularly in the faubourg of St. Walburge, formerly spoke Flemish. He, however, adduces no proof, while, on the other hand, an authority of the greatest weight, the noble chronicler, Jacques de Henricourt,* who wrote, not in the last century, but in the year 1360, expressly states that it was the custom in the thirteenth century for the Liégeois nobility to place their sons as pages in the castles of the county of Looz, for the purpose of learning Flemish. This testimony is decisive against Paquot; but negative proofs are not the only ones in confirmation of a different origin for the Walloon.

That origin is undoubtedly Gaulish, though few traces remain of so remote a parentage: they are chiefly to be found in the names of places whose etymology is derivable from no existing language. Its principal modifications arose from the influence of the Latin of the cloister during the dark ages, an influence that eventually formed the "Langue Romane." As that learned archæologist, the Baron de Reiffenberg, remarks: †—"The Walloon is the 'Langue Romane,' or French language, directly sprung from the degenerate Latin; from the Latin which became the prevailing language of the Gauls. The Celtic, the *tudesque*, and other words borrowed from different tongues which are to be found in it, form only a secondary element; but the syntax of those languages has doubtless considerably affected it."

* "Miroir des Nobles de la Hesbaye," p. 281.

† "Cronique de Philippe Mousques."—*Introduction*.

Sanmery, who was not so deeply skilled in philology, observes in the "Délices du pays de Liége": "Let it not be imagined that the populace of Liége speak French. Their language is only a Gaulish patois—such as the Walloon; but so disfigured that the French understand but a few words of it, and then only by paying great attention when it is spoken. They are themselves perfectly understood by this people (the Liégeois), but they labour under the disadvantage of not understanding them. It must be owned that certain works of imagination, such as sonnets, epigrams, madrigals, satires, *bonmots*, and witty expressions in this patois, possess a delicacy and energy which it would be difficult to translate into any other language, and more particularly into the French. No person of intelligence who understands this language can refuse it his admiration."

Although there is every reason for believing that the Walloon idiom was spoken and written during the earliest periods of the history of Liége, yet no monuments exist to prove it anterior to the ninth century. It was certainly the common language of the people in the time of Bishop Notger, for he is described as employing it when he preached to them, whereas, in addressing the clergy he always spoke Latin:—

"Vulgari plebem, clerum sermone latino
Erudit et satiat magna dulcedine verba."*

The jongleurs, who about this time first made their

* Chapeauville, "Gest. Pontif. Leod. Script.:" Fisen, "Hist. Eccl. Leod."

appearance, necessarily used the common tongue, and the songs, *chansons de gestes*, and romances of chivalry which succeeded, and which formed the delight of the people, were composed in the popular dialect.

The war cries uttered on the field of battle are irrefragable monuments of the language spoken by the combatants. In 1213 the battle of the Warde des Steppes was gained by the Liégeois over the Brabançons. In the army of Liége were the contingents brought by the Counts of Limburg, of Namur, of Looz, &c.; and many of the latter were unfortunately slain by the Liégeois, owing to their speaking *Tudesque*, and being consequently mistaken for Brabançons. This distinction between the dialects of Liége and Looz prevails at the present day.

The idiom employed by Bishop Notger in the eighth century continued to be the medium through which the people were addressed by the preachers, and was so popularly identified, that when, in the year 1451, the apostolic legate, Nicolas Cusani, wished to interfere in the affairs of the clergy of Liége, the latter refused to obey him, alleging that the bull conferred on him as legate no jurisdictional power over the Walloons, but only over the Germans.*

The Lord's Prayer was also invariably recited in Walloon at Liége. The subjoined version, though somewhat Frenchified by the author who gives it,†

* Foullon, "Hist. Episc. Leod."

† Davity, "Description de l'Europe." Paris, 1660, in folio.

may serve to denote some of the characteristics of the language.

“ Nos peer kest â cîer, santifié se ti nom. Ti royâme nos avienn. Ta volonteï so faite en l'terr com â cîer. Diné no nos pein k'tidien ajourdhu: et pardon no pecheï com no pardonn no detteu. Et nos indus nin en tentation, mein delivre no de mal. Amen.”

As a proof of the identity of the Walloon language at an interval of four hundred years, the following story is cited by M. Henaux, who has devoted much time to the consideration of the subject:—“In the month of July, 1477, seven Hungarians, who had just made the pilgrimage to Aix la Chapelle, came by invitation to Liège. To the surprise of everybody, they spoke the most perfect Walloon, absolutely identical with that spoken in the city. Inquiry as to the cause being made, the strangers stated that they formed part of a colony of Liégeois, who, in consequence of famine in their native country, had left it and settled at Agra in Hungary, in the year 1052. The King of Hungary had readily admitted them into his dominions, and gave up to them an uncultivated district, which soon became covered with houses, and was called by the natives the “Walloon Villages” (*Gallica loca*). To ascertain the truth of this statement, the ancient chronicles of the city, preserved in the cathedral, were examined, and in them were found the details of the famine in the year 1052, which expatriated so many of the Liégeois. The

burgomasters and *échevins* accordingly signed and put the city's seal upon an attestation, which they gave to the Hungaro-Walloons, recognising that the latter derived their origin from the Pays de Liége.

With the exception of certain changes in the orthography, and some augmentations to the vocabulary, the Walloon language of the present day differs little from that of the fifteenth century; in pronunciation it remains the same.

The earliest work in Walloon, to which a positive date can be affixed, appeared in the year 1060, and consisted of a collection of popular enigmas in verse: it was made by Egbert, a monk of Liége, and met with much success. There are many evidences of the peculiar poetical tendencies of the Walloons, and they are particularly noticeable in the accounts which have been handed down of the Saturnalia which, under the name of *Fêtes de la Reine*, were celebrated in Liége about the middle of the twelfth century. On these occasions the clergy, as well as the people, appeared in grotesque dresses, and danced in the churches and streets, accompanying their songs, which were not remarkable for decency, with the beating of drums and the music of other instruments. Political songs were also much in vogue, indicating the popular feeling; and the satirical humour which has always been the first characteristic of Walloon poetry, rendered them extremely piquant. The first of these *paskeies* (the Walloon word for poetical satires), of which mention

is made, was composed and sung by the Liégeois on the capture of the castle of St. Walburge, in the year 1250, and from that time there appears to have been no lack of them. The scandalous life of Henry of Gueldres originated many of these satires; that which was made on the occasion of his infamous abuse of the hospitality of Coene le Frison, was sung in all the streets, and his deposal at the Council of Lyons gave rise, says Mélar, to numberless "satyres, vadevilles, et chansons diffamantes et bouffones."*

These political songs have all unfortunately been lost in the destruction which has swept away so many of the public records and monuments of ancient Liége; but the ordinary songs of the people, anterior to the political era, and transmitted carefully from father to son, yet survive. Most of these were of a semi-religious type, and were usually sung on Sundays and fête days, in the public squares, the cloisters, and often in the cemeteries, diversifying the games with which the people amused themselves. In the evening they assembled before the chapels or images of saints, at the corners of the streets, to sing canticles in the popular dialect—a custom that still prevails in the faubourgs and the country. Among these rhythmical legends are many Noels, which are very curious in several points of view. The following specimen, which is extracted from a collection of Walloon songs

* "Hist. de la Ville de Huy.," l. iii. p. 157.

and poems recently published, will give some idea of their nature :—*

NOEL.

MAREÏE.

Doux Diew, so-j'ewaraye ! qu'est c'qui j'ô dire ?
 In ang' vès les doze heûre est v'nou d'â cîre,
 Qu'a v'nou dire â † biergî, qu' estît â champs,
 Que l' Messeïe esteut v'nou, qu'on d'mandéf tant ;
 Oh ! ouiss' corez-v' si vit', kipér' Bietmé ?
 L' av' oiïou dire ossi d' ouss' qui vos v'nez ?

[Sweet God, how astonished I am ! what is it I hear ?
 An angel towards midnight is come from Heaven :
 Has come to tell the shepherds, who were in the fields,
 That the Messiah was come, so much asked for ;
 Oh ! where do you run so quickly, Father Bietmé ?
 Have you heard it also where you come from ?]

BIETMÉ.

Oh ! i n'y a rin d'pus vraye, kimér Mareïe ; †
 Tots les voësin coret po l'allé veïe ;
 Ji l'a veïou l'prumî, j'el pout bin dîre,
 Il est né d'vin on stâ, ci rivet des cîre,
 Comm' li pus pauv' dè mond', ca i n'a rin
 Qu' in' krippe et on pou d'four po l'mett' divin.

* "Choix de Chansons et Poesies Wallonnes." Recueillies par MM. B*** et D***. Liège, 1844. The collection is interesting, but it would have been more valuable had a glossary been added.

† As a slight guide to the pronunciation of Walloon, the reader must remember that the "â circumflex" is pronounced like "o."

‡ *Kimer*,—Scottice, *Kimmer*.

[Oh! there is nothing more true, gossip Mary;
 All the neighbours run to see him;
 I have seen him the first, I can well say so;
 He is born in a stall, this little king of Heaven,
 Like the poorest in the world, for there is nothing
 But a crib and a little hay to put him in.]

On bouf, in agn' sofflet po l' rischafé;
 Sins çoula, ji n' sé k'mint qu' i pout duré;
 Li binamé trôn' tot, i môur di freûd;
 Ji m'li va vit' poërté on bon cofteû;
 Li pauv' mère esst ossi tote égealaye,
 N'av' nin on pau dè legn' po fé n' blamaye?

[An ox (and) an ass breathe to warm him;
 Without that, I don't know how he could live.
 The well-beloved trembles all over, he will die of cold;
 I am going quickly to take him a good covering;
 The poor mother is also quite frozen,
 Have you not a little wood to make her a fire?]

MAREÏE.

Si fait, passez por cial qwand vos irez,
 Ji m' li va fa on fa, vos li poëtrez;
 J'a eco des lign'rai, j'el's i donret,
 Des beguins et des fahe et on bonnet,
 Et s' li poëtrèt j' ossi saqwant pan'hai,
 On pau dè souc, dè boûrre et dè lessai.

[Oh, yes, call for that when you go,
 I will make her a faggot, you will take it;

I have also some linen, which I will give her,
 Some hoods and veils, and a cap.
 I will also take her some small loaves,
 A little sugar,* some butter and milk.

* * * * *

This kind of dialogue is carried on through several stanzas; and after all the proposed offerings have been named, Bietmé politely offers his arm to Mary to assist her through the dirt.

Mareïe, tinez-m'po l'bress', ca vos toumrî,
 I fait bin trop mâva, vos v' degrettrî.

[Mary, take my arm, for you will tumble,
 The road is much too bad, you will make yourself all
 over mud.]

Arrived near the spot where the infant Jesus is lying, Mary exclaims:—

Qu'est c'qui j'veû là làvâ, est c'là qu'il est ?
 Ji veû comme in 'clârté dri ci croupet.

[What is that I see yonder, is it there he is ?
 I see something like a light behind that tuft.]

Bietmé replies:—

Awet, kimér Mareïe, là nos l'trouv'ran ;
 Vos n'avez mâie veïou on s'fait èfant.

* This was probably an addition to the old Noel, when sugar became the common substitute for other modes of sweetening.

Il est blanc comme in 'nîv', s'esst-i-rondlet ;
On l'magn'reût bin tot crou, si bai qu'il est.

[Yes, gossip Mary, there we shall find him ;
You never in your life saw so well-made a child :
He is white as an egg, and so plump ;
One could eat him undressed, he is so lovely.]

Mary, who has been followed by several companions,
is afraid to go in, and says to Bietmé :—

Vos inturrez l'prumî, kipér' Bietmé,
Ca por nos n'savan k'mint qu'i fât fé.
Nos loukran après vos ; mi feye, vinez,
Tinez-m'di drî po l'cotte, et s'-mi sùvez ;
Ai sogn' tot z-intrant dè fé l'honneur,
Et di v'jetté à g'no d'vant noss' Sâveur.

[You will enter the first, Father Bietmé,
For we do n't know what we ought to do.
We will look at him after you ; 'i faith, come,
Hold me behind by the jacket, and so follow me ;
Take care all as you enter to do him honour,
And to throw yourselves on your knees before our
Saviour.]

Bietmé is the pink of politeness ; he replies :—

Avou voss' permission, tot 'li k'pagnëie ;
Bonjoû, binamaye Dam' nos v'vinan veïe ;
N's apoërtan on qwâtron di novais ouû
Et in' mich qui n'est cûte i n'y a qu'on joû.

S'a-j'eco on cofteû, po afulé
Voss' pauv' pitit èfant qu'esst ègealé.

Bonjou, sàveur de mi am', mi binamé,
Qu'a-j'mâ m'cour di v'vei tant èduré !
Loukî, kimér 'Mareïe, à foëc' di freud
Les lam' tourmet d'ses oûie, gross' comm' des peu.
Ca, vos direz à l'mér, çou qu'vos estez,
Et fan vite in' blamaye po l'reschâfé.

[With your permission, all the company ;
Good day, well-beloved lady ; we have come to see you ;
We have brought a quarter of a hundred of new laid
eggs,

And a loaf, which was only baked yesterday.
I have also a covering, to wrap up
Your poor little child, who is frozen.

Good day, saviour of my soul, my well-beloved,
My heart is sore to see you suffer so !
Look, gossip Mary, the cold is so severe
It makes the tears fall from his eyes, as large as peas.
Now, tell the mother who you are,
And make a fire quickly to warm her.]

Mary next performs the hospitable objects of her mission, expressing herself all the while in the same simple and quaint language — as if she were rather ministering to the wants of a neighbour's child than to the Son of God—and before taking leave she asks permission to kiss him. The Noel closes with a moral reflection.

Several of these Noels begin with an expression of doubt as to the truth of the joyful advent, expressed sometimes in a dialogue between a herald-angel and a shepherd, sometimes in a discussion between two peasants. In the former case the angel generally speaks French, the shepherd Walloon, as in the following Noel, which is written in the dialect of Verviers.

UN ANGE.

Allons, pasteur, qu'on se reveille !
 Un Dieu vient de naitre en ce lieu ;
 Il est venu vous rendre heureux ;
 C'est l'objet sans pareil.
 Il fait éclater en tous lieux
 Ses merveilles.

UN BERGER.

Quu d'hez-v'dô, binamaie ?
 Quu v'nez-v'tant barbotter ?
 Allez ! v's estez troublaie
 Du nos v'ni tant temter.
 Rutournez au pus vite
 Au païs d'ou qu'vos v'nez,
 Ni mi, ni m'sour Magrite
 Nos n'nos saurin lever.

[What is it you say, well-beloved? What is it you have come to prate about? Go along! you must be crazy to come here to tempt us so. Return as fast as you can to the country from whence you came. Neither myself nor my sister Margaret will stir for you.]

L' ANGE.

Que dites vous, berger fidèle ?-
 Vous vous trompez on ne peut plus ;
 Venez reconnaître Jesus,
 Le fils de l'Éternel
 Qui vient réparer vos abus
 D'un saint zèle.

LE BERGER.

C'est on' furieux' misère ;
 On n' saurêût gott' doirmi,
 Avon lu tintamôres
 Quu vos v'nez fer voci.
 Jans ! faut veîe su c'est veur
 Cou qu' vos nos racontez.
 Portaut nos a' polans creure
 Tot veîant ciss' clôrté.

[It's a great annoyance ; one cannot get a wink of sleep for the uproar that you come and make here. Jans ! we must see if it is true what you come and tell us. However, we may even believe you, seeing this bright light.]

The remainder of the Noel exhibits the conviction and adoration of the shepherd.

There was one popular song of great antiquity in Liège, which had nothing to do with either politics or religion, though it was often looked upon with dread, as the precursor of popular disturbances. This was the famous *Crámignon*, known better as a dance than a song, but always accompanied by the latter. As

soon as winter was gone and the *fêtes* of the different parishes began, the *Crâmignon* made its appearance,



and lasted through the summer and autumn. It was danced sometimes by girls, sometimes by young men, but more frequently by both together, hand in hand, forming a chain of great length, which went winding and turning through the streets, along the quays, across the squares, and into every nook and corner of the city, waking the inhabitants, if any slept, with the loud chorus,—its accompaniment. To lead the dance, it was necessary to possess great physical force and strength of lungs; this was called "*miné l'Crâmignon*," as it is expressed in the old verse—

Prindè voss baston, Simon,
Es miné li Crâmignon.

The words of the song are trivial, and express the determination of a certain gentleman, named Pîron, not to dance unless he is supplied with every separate article of dress, each of the most approved kind. It begins thus:—

1.

Pîron n' vout nin dansé	}	bis.
S'i n' a des nous solés ;		
Et des solés tot ronds	}	bis.
Po fé dansé Pîron.		

[Pîron will not dance at all unless he has new shoes ; and shoes quite round to make Pîron dance.]

2.

Pîron n' vout nin dansé	}	bis.
S'i n' a des noûvès châsses		
Des châssettes		
Totes vettes,		
Et des solés tot ronds—		
Po fé dansé Pîron.		

And so on through all the articles of the toilette. But although the words of the *Crâmignon* are insignificant, the music to which it is set is pleasing, and, like that of the Noels, the melody is rather plaintive than gay.

The rulers of the Liégeois did not always look upon the *Chanson d'Crâmignon* as merely an innocent pastime. Under the apprehension of riots, edicts were

frequently proclaimed against it. One of these, in 1685, has for its object, “ to prevent that custom of the citizens of both sexes from assembling and running through the streets in great numbers, under pretence of amusement, during the festivals of the parishes ;” and prohibiting any meetings or dances after nine o'clock in the evening. The *Crámignon*, however, survived these ordinances, though it is now all but forgotten.

I have said that one of the tendencies of the Walloon muse was towards satire ; satire is, indeed, its principal characteristic, though it is by no means wanting in gracefulness of expression, picturesqueness of imagery, or power of thought. Amongst the most remarkable specimens of this kind, the *Paskeie*, called “ Les Aiwes di Tongue ” (the Waters of Tongres), written in 1700, is perhaps the best known. It was the production of a lawyer, named De Rickman, and, though composed only for the author's amusement, had the effect of entirely discrediting the efficacy of the mineral springs of Tongres, which, according to this poem, were of no value, while the medical men who gave it their recommendation, did so merely on account of the money which they received for their good word.

The few last lines state this opinion in terms sufficiently intelligible :—

Et ji v's assûr' qui l'pus grand bin,
 Qù'ill fret, ci seret âs flamins,

Qu' à ciss' fin là ont foirt payi
 Trint' deûx docteu's avou l' gazli.
 Hérôd' ni d'na nin tant d'ârgint
 Po fer mori les ennocints.

[And I assure you, that the greatest good they will do will be to the Flemings, who for this purpose have well-paid thirty-two doctors. Herod never gave so much money to procure the deaths of the Innocents.]

But, as may readily be supposed, the literature of the Walloons was not limited to poetical effusions, though these alone have, for obvious reasons, survived. Not only were all the municipal acts and public treaties written in Walloon, but it finally extended to the ecclesiastical courts, and was the exclusive language of the early historians. A brief enumeration of some of the principal of these may suffice:—Luc de Tongres wrote a history of the Liégeois in 1070; the Life of St. Bathilde was composed by Lambert le Bègue in 1173; Enguerran de Bar, a canon of the cathedral, wrote his “Chronique des Liégeois” in 1203; another work, bearing the same name, by the Canon Radulphus, appeared in 1216; and the “Chronique des Vavassours,” drawn up by Bishop de Pierrepont, followed in 1225; Guillaume de Pettersen, Jean de Bal, and Jean Dupin subsequently wrote histories in Walloon, and in 1390 the celebrated Jean d'Outremeuse gave his famous Chronicle to the world, which still remains inedited.

The "Miroir des Nobles de Hesbaye," written by Messire Jacques de Hemricourt in 1398, is the best known work of that period extant. It has passed through several editions, and is valuable for the genealogical information which it contains.*

The long years of anarchy and suffering which desolated Liége for the greater part of the fifteenth century, appear to have thrown an interdict upon all literary exertion, which extended to the seventeenth; and during this interval, the ascendancy of the French language became so great as entirely to supersede the Walloon, for all the purposes of biography or history. The popular dialect, in fact, only retained its hold through the medium of poetry; but, as if to avenge herself for the neglect which had fallen upon the sister muse, the triumphs of the latter were more brilliant than they had ever been before. The eighteenth century may, indeed, be looked upon as the Augustan era of Walloon poetry, when it flourished in every shape,—heroic, lyrical, and dramatic. We have already spoken of "Les Aiwes di Tongue," or "Tonk," as it is sometimes written, and this was followed, about 1725, by the "Pasquée critique et calotène so les Affaires del Médicène,"—an amusing and elegantly-written poem. In 1757 appeared the first of a series of Walloon dramas, intituled "Li Ligeoi Egagi," a burlesque opera, by J. J. Fabry; followed successively

* The best edition is that published in folio at Brussels, in 1672, by the Sieur de Salbray.

by "Les Ypocontes," of S. de Harlez; "Li Voëgge di Chofontaine," of de Cartier; and "Li Fiesse di Houte-si-Plou," of H. G. de Vivario. All these works had great success, and the merit of Hamal's music, to which they were married, may be inferred from the fact of its having elicited the frequent praise of the celebrated composer Grétry. But even before the popular admiration for these poems had subsided, the French language again predominated, and the Society of Emulation, founded in 1779, succeeded in banishing the Walloon from literature and society,—a task the less difficult, as the necessity for a richer and more copious language became apparent. Some swans, however, still sang their dying strains, the most noticeable amongst whom was Martin Simonis, who flourished so lately as 1831. He was a workman in an iron-foundry, and a true scion of the "genus irritabile," the caprices of his muse, at war with the constituted authorities, consigning him not unfrequently to the public prison. His greatest misfortune, however, was an uncontrollable fondness for *pequet*,* and from his indulgence in it he was rarely to be found sober. When reproached by a friend for this fatal predilection, and urged to abandon it, his reply was,—*Kiment, vos pinsez sûremint, vos! qui j'laireu là comme çoula on mesti qui n' a costé si chér à apprinde!*" (What! do you really

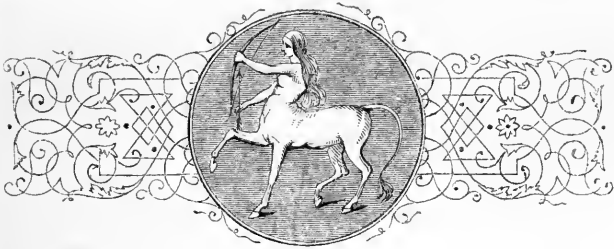
* The name of the juniper-bush, in Walloon, is *pequet*; and geneva, however made, is called by the same name.

think, now, that I shall leave off an art that has cost me so much to learn?)

At the present moment efforts are being made amongst the *litterateurs* of Liège to revive, if not the Walloon language, at least a knowledge of what it was, and foremost among these literary patriots is the author of "The Travels of Alfred Nicolas,"—a work that obtained some celebrity in Belgium about ten years ago. The "Wallonades," which he has lately published,* are written in an easy, agreeable manner; and although the satire of the principal poem, called "Montfort," is directed entirely against the wandering propensities and insatiable curiosity of our countrymen, the English reader will hardly fail to be amused by it. M. Simonon has also in the press a collection of "Poésies en Patois de Liège;" a "Dictionnaire Etymologique de la langue Wallonne" is in preparation; and to the "Etudes Historiques et Littéraires par le Wallon," by Ferdinand Henaux, I have myself been much indebted.

* Liège. Felix Oudart, éditeur. 1845.





LA BÊTE DE STANEUX.

CHAPTER IV.

Walloon and Belgian Superstitions—Kaboutermannekens—Sotays—Brownies—The Verd Bouc—The four Sons of Aymon—The Gattes d'Or—Exorcism—Popular Superstitions—The Court of the Cuckoo—The Bete de Staneux—Ridiculous Usages—May-day Ceremonies.



IN the Walloon country, and indeed in almost all parts of Belgium, a great deal of superstition still prevails amongst the peasantry. The belief in the existence and agency of good and evil spirits is more or less prevalent, and mountain sprites, dwarfs, and domestic goblins abound. The dwarfs are generally located in caverns and subterraneous places; they are called in Flemish, *Halvermannekens** and *Kaboutermannekens*,† names which sufficiently express their presumed appearance. The inhabitants of the village of Hasselt, in the Campine, say that a great number of these

* Half men.

† Little fellows.

dwarfs came into that part of the country, on the occasion of a great war; that they dwelt in holes dug in the ground in the middle of a wood, and that they sometimes came into the village to ask for one thing or the other, but never did harm to any one. When the wives of these dwarfs became old, their husbands, giving them a small fresh loaf, made them enter a hole in the ground, and carefully closed the aperture: the credulous peasants add, that the poor old she-dwarfs were quite content to die in this manner.

At the village of Gelrode, the country people show a hill, called *Kaboutenberg*, in which are excavated several caves, and gravely declare that these grottoes were the abodes of dwarfs, who served the miller who dwelt there, and that when the latter was desirous of whetting his grindstone, he had only to place it at the door of his mill, with a slice of bread and butter and a glass of beer, and in the night a dwarf came, who, for this trifling reward, performed the work, and the miller found the stone ready when he wanted it. The same assistance was given him when he wanted to have his linen washed. It is related, also, that, at a village near Mechlin, a miller,—the favoured race, apparently,—being engaged in sifting flour, and not having time to finish his task, put off the rest to the following day, and, going home, accidentally left behind him a slice of bread and butter, which had formed a part of his supper. Next morning he was very much

astonished to find that the flour was sifted, and the bread and butter gone. He resolved to repeat the experiment, and the same result ensued. On the third night, curious to know who the labourer could be who worked at night for such slight payment, he hid himself behind some sacks of flour, and about midnight saw a little dwarf make his appearance, perfectly naked, who immediately set to work. The miller, a modest man (a rarity in Brabant), and moved with pity at the nakedness of the laborious dwarf, added, on the following night, a complete suit of clothes to the unsifted flour and bread and butter; after which the good little spirit never showed himself again without being dressed from head to foot.

In some of the Flemish provinces the dwarfs are called *Dwergen*, *Aardmannetjes*, *Drollen* or *Trollen*, and *Werkgeesten*. In Holland there is a popular belief in a dwarf whom they call *Ongeborene Jan* (Unborn John); another *Oom Hendrick* (Uncle Henry); others, *Zwarte Piet* (Black Peter), and *Joris op de stelten* (George on stilts).

In the *Pays Liégeois* the domestic offices volunteered by spirits are performed by goblins of larger growth: they correspond exactly to the Brownie of the Scottish borders and the "lubber friend" of Milton. The name they bear is *Sotays*. It is said of them, that no labourer works so hard, is so active, and, above all, so disinterested. The *Sotay* thrashes the corn and winnows it, he mows, he cleans out the stable and the

cowhouse, nor does he omit to curry and rub down the horses, for which he has a particular regard. By daylight all the work of the house is finished without any one having seen *how or by whom*. The sole reward, and all he asks, for this labour is a bowl of milk—the “cream-bowl duly set.” Were these goblins numerous, their employment would render labour cheap. It would seem, however, that they are not always to be depended upon, for the Monk of St. Gall relates an anecdote of one of these spirits, whom he calls a *demon*, or *larva*, whose pursuits were somewhat questionable. He says that the goblin used to amuse himself by playing every night with the hammer and anvil of a smith, and, in return for the use of these instruments, was in the habit of filling the smith’s pitcher with excellent wine, which he stole from the bishop’s cellars hard by; that the bishop discovered the theft, and having exorcised the spirit, succeeded in making him assume the shape of a man, when he had him flogged and put in the pillory “*as if he had been a robber!*” No one can say that the prelate’s view of the case was not a sensible one.

The Sotays, though a kind, beneficent race, could manifest strong feelings of resentment if treated with ingratitude. The proud and ambitious Lord of Montfort was made to experience this change in a signal manner. He had contrived, though in what way we are not told, to form a close alliance with the King of the Sotays, called *Verd Bouc*, who, to the great regret of the villages, farms, and peasants’ cabins, abandoned

the country and established himself in the noble manor of Montfort, not far from Tilf, on the banks of the Ourthe. With such a powerful ally, the Lord of Montfort succeeded in everything he undertook. His granaries, his coffers, and his caves were alike well filled. His flocks were the most numerous, his war horses the finest, the best-conditioned, and the strongest in the country. If he went to war with his neighbours—an occurrence not very rare—by the aid of the Sotays he always gained the victory; and if his disputes were terminated by negociations, the ingenuity and sensible counsels of the Sotays always secured him the advantage. In short, the Lord of Montfort was only too well off, and, like most people in that condition, he abused his position. Covetous of more than the spirits could perform or ascribing less merit to their exertions than they deserved, he went so far as to quarrel with the *Verd Bouc*, and treat him with contumely, a proceeding which it was not in the nature of the goblin to forgive, for vengeance was an attribute dear to him in his double capacity of king and spirit. An occasion for exercising it was not long wanting. The four famous sons of Aymon, being at that time in the Ardennes seeking adventures, arrived in the neighbourhood of Montfort, and travelling near the castle, were set upon by the people of the count, who, forgetting they had to deal with knights-errant, sought to levy a toll from them. The only payment which they received was in hard blows, for the sons of Aymon

bestired themselves lustily, and quickly putting them to flight, followed up their advantage, and attacked their master in his stronghold. The castle, however, was strong, and it is probable their efforts to reduce it would have failed if they had not been aided by the *Verd Bouc*, who, in the guise of a ram—probably a battering ram—knocked down several thick walls and made a breach through which the Paladins could enter. Henceforward all resistance was vain. The terrible Rinaldo drove back all before him,—knights, squires, and pages were swept down like corn: the Sotays threw a yellow powder into the eyes of the men-at-arms; and at length the formidable blade of the Enchanter Maugis severed the head of the guilty Lord of Montfort. History says nothing more of the castle; but it appears that the Sotays, having had enough of great people, resumed their primitive habits, and returned to their country abodes. Amongst other pursuits, they addicted themselves to metallurgy, in which they became tolerably proficient, and the peasants dwelling near Dinant—in the olden time much famed for the manufacture of pots and kettles—often experienced the good offices of the amateur tinkers. If a cauldron were cracked or a saucepan out of order, it was only necessary to place it on the door-step and go away directly, and in the course of two minutes the damage was found to be repaired—*gratis*.

To almost every ruin in the provinces of Namur and Liège—and their number is “legion”—popular

superstition assigns a class of evil spirits, called by the Walloons "*gâttés d'or*," golden goats, from the Walloon "*gâtt*," goat. It is said that these familiar demons guard a concealed treasure in the depths of a precipice under the ruins, and the common people add, that if a man be rash enough to attempt to discover the hidden treasure, the *gâttés* employ a charm, or use a species of fascination, which draws the unwary seekers towards them, leading him on till he is lost in the bowels of the earth, when the *gâttés* disappear and he perishes. The crevices and cavities of the rocks, on which most of the old ruins stand, are pointed to by the peasants as the entrances to the abodes of these spirits.

It is not long since an instance occurred which shows that the belief in the existence of concealed treasure, indicated by the traditions respecting the Sotays, is not confined to persons of the least educated class. A *garde chasse*, who had long superintended the district in which the ruins of Logne are situated, was one day making his rounds beneath the old walls, when his attention was arrested by sounds that seemed to proceed from a cavity below them, and, looking upwards, he saw a slight smoke issue from the aperture. Curious, as well as bound by his duty, to ascertain the cause of a circumstance so unusual, he carefully and cautiously ascended the mountain side, and as he neared the cavern the sounds became more distinct, and were regular in their intervals. He groped his

way silently into the aperture, and had not proceeded far before, at a turn of the rock, he perceived three persons, two of them in peasants' costume ; the third in the dress of a priest. The former were busy with crow and pickaxe excavating the solid rock, which had already yielded beneath their efforts to a considerable extent. A small wood fire blazed on the ground, and over its flame stood the priest, with censer and mass-book in hand, chaunting litanies in a low and earnest tone. The *garde chasse* was surprised, as well he might be, at witnessing such a scene in the bowels of the earth, but his notions of duty were too strict to admit of his long remaining a passive spectator. He accordingly broke in upon the incantation, for such it proved to be, and then discovered that the priest was no other than the curé of a neighbouring village ; and from the broken exclamations of the peasants, he gathered that, under the auspices of the Church, they were seeking for one of the treasures supposed to have been guarded by a *gâtte d'or*. The success of the experiment may be inferred from the interruption ; but the curé did not escape merely with the disappointment of Douterswivel, —the story got abroad, and reaching the ears of the Bishop of Namur, the reverend treasure-seeker was suspended for some time from the exercise of his clerical functions.

The superstitious opinions which are generally held by the Walloon people are common to all the Belgian peasantry, as they originally were to all the nations

claiming a northern origin. They believe much in omens, among which several that are local may be enumerated. For instance,—to meet a priest, when on the way to accomplish any unusual undertaking, is held to be significant of its failure, and the experimentalist invariably turns back, looking upon his day as lost. Perhaps this superstition may arise from the supposition that the priest, as a spiritual director, is sent *in opposition* to the undertaking. The cries of owls, the howling of dogs, the crossing of forks, the spilling of salt, and the number thirteen at a feast, are here, as everywhere in the north, received omens. There are few who like to throw reeds into the fire, because they look upon them as contributing towards the support of oxen, and *an ox was present at the birth of our Saviour*,—a *sequitur* which might save many other objects, from conflagration! They are very careful in placing the bed of a dying person, lest the rafters of the room should be in a contrary direction, for they think that if so, the agonies of death would inevitably be protracted. In washing linen they are careful not to say, the *lessive* “boils,” but that it “plays,” otherwise the linen would be destroyed. To take a wren, threatens misfortune or death in the family of the captor. The value of a caul is universally recognised, and the child that is *né coiffé* is looked upon as “born to good luck.” Precious stones are supposed to possess, beyond their value in the market, uncommon virtues,—the turquoise preserves the wearer from falls

and other accidents; the magnet possesses properties still more precious; and the aërite is considered invaluable in the detection of thieves. The mode employed to discover them is by grinding the metal to dust, and mixing it with bread, which is given to the suspected person, who, if he be "a true thief," is unable to swallow it.

Diamonds, emeralds, and pearls—*precious* stones, indeed, among peasants—were formerly used to detect infidelity,—a fact that might readily be supposed if the peasants' wives wore them. On Easter Sunday it was, in many places, the custom to breakfast on two eggs laid on Good Friday, in order to keep off fever: perhaps if those who frequent the Kermesse at Easter were to drink rather less, the result would be no less satisfactory. There are many persons who still abstain from eating meat after Lent, to ward off the tooth-ache,—an equal abstinence from sweetmeats would doubtless be as effectual. On Christmas-eve the yule clog is burnt, and a fragment carefully kept and put under the bed, to act as a preservative against lightning, in the same way as the willow-branch, blest on Palm Sunday, is kept in a sacred corner. If the custom of affixing formularies against the incursions of rats and mice has vanished, and the prayer against the wolf has fallen into desuetude, we may easily believe that cats and mouse-traps are more useful than heretofore and wolves less frequent; but the peasants, in some remote villages, still smear the walls of their houses with

chalk, in the form of a cross, to guard them against fire. It may be presumed, that those who adhere to this custom have no faith in the efficacy of fire insurances, or are unable to pay for their security.

At the town of Fosses, in the province of Namur, a superstition exists which induces the women of the country round, at the period of the annual fair, to flock thither with osier wands, with which they touch the image of St. Bridget,—a saint highly venerated there. When they return home they touch their cattle with the same wands, either to cure their ailments or preserve them from the murrain.

Although the mountainous districts of all countries are the strongholds in which a belief in the intercourse with the world of spirits finds refuge, there is yet no want of this kind of faith in the lowlands. For instance, at Willsbeeck, Vyve St. Bavon, and other villages near Courtrai, a curious custom is observed, which obtains in other parts of Belgium. When a person dies, the clergy of the parish come in procession to conduct the body to the place of interment. If on their way they come to a spot where four roads meet, the bearers of the coffin set down their load, kneel in silence, and utter a short prayer. Their reason for doing so, arises from the belief that those who have quitted this world may yet return to it; but, as there might be some difficulty in the dead man finding his way home again, his friends pray for him in the cross roads, that he may hit upon his path the more readily.

and not be misled by evil spirits—"Kwaedegeesten." But at Oostmallen, near Turnhout, a far more extraordinary custom exists, for which it would be difficult to assign a satisfactory reason. When the husband dies, his widow seats herself astride upon the bier, and in this demonstrative manner accompanies the corpse to the grave!

The ceremony called the Court of the Cuckoo, which used to take place annually at Polleur, was, however, amongst the most singular observances of the whole country. Polleur is a very ancient village, near the famous castle of Franchimont, at the bottom of the valley watered by the Hægne, lying between Verviers and Spa. Here, on the first Sunday after the 15th of August, was celebrated this remarkable fête, and the concourse of people who came to it was immense. A mock court of justice was formed, with a regular president, and the members assembled in the first instance at the principal cabaret of the village, situated close to the bridge which joins the commune of Polleur to that of Sart. From the cabaret the court adjourned to the bridge itself, and here were summoned to appear before the tribunal all those husbands whom their wives had deceived, or beaten, or who had proved too complaisant in exercising their marital authority, or to whom, in short, was attached any ridiculous mark of notoriety. The proceedings began with pleadings of the most burlesque description,—not very dissimilar, perhaps, to those called "judge and

jury" clubs in London,—and the strangers who looked on were often appealed to, and absurd questions asked of them, not always of the most delicate nature, which provoked peals of laughter from the assembled crowds. The accused, who were of course always found guilty, were then condemned to pay a fine, the proceeds of which were expended at the cabaret; and now and then, to give variety to the scene, the delinquent was compelled to get into a cart, which was backed off the bridge till it reached a stagnant dung-pit, where it was tilted over, and the unhappy inmate was half smothered in a bed which was of anything but roses. To close the proceedings out of doors, the last married man in the village was brought before the court, and the fact being clearly proved against him, he was very summarily thrown over the bridge into the waters of the Hægne, a process which, however, only ensured him a good ducking. The remainder of the day was passed in the cabaret, *how* it is scarcely necessary to say.

There was another curious feature in the ceremonies of the "Cour du Coucou:" this was the exhibition of a banner on which was painted the likeness of a monster called "La Bête de Staneux." It represented a kind of centaur, half woman and half horse, with the tail of a lion. The hair was long, and floated down the back, and the feminine conformation very fully developed. The figure held a bow in its left hand, and an arrow in its right. This picture was

exposed to view in the cabarets of the village, and continued to be produced in public until 1789, when the fête of the "Cour du Coucou" was suppressed. From time immemorial it had been carefully preserved in the parish church, but it was only during the last sixty years that the curates had allowed it to be seen beyond its walls. At the same time there was also paraded a figure rudely carved in wood, which ordinarily stood in the porch of the church; this image was burnt.

According to the most received opinions, the Bête de Staneux was supposed to represent the ancient goddess of the Ardennes, where Diana, under various forms, was worshipped. The people of Polleur have a tradition that the exhibition of the picture was made to commemorate the victory gained by their ancestors over a monster that formerly infested the forest of Staneux, hard by. There was at one time scarcely a house in the village of Polleur that did not possess a small framed picture of the Bête de Staneux.

Ridiculous usages were practised besides in other parts of Belgium. At Moerbeke, in the district of Termonde, it was the custom to conduct to an old chapel called Hoog-Castelle, in the lordship of Castelle, a woman, very well dressed, seated upon a cart loaded with dung, and drawn by four wretched horses. When she reached this place she descended from her throne amidst the shouts of the spectators, most of whom entered the chapel with her, and there she commenced

her task of conferring offices, that had a satirical application;—as, for instance, the post of receiver on him whose accounts had not been kept in the most correct manner; that of huntsman on him who, in pursuit of game, had fallen into a ditch; that of coachman or waggoner on him who had upset his vehicle; that of counsellor on him who had, on some important occasion, given ridiculous advice, &c. Various things were also put up to auction,—as a preserve of grasshoppers for hunting,—fishing on a hill without water; and other absurdities. Every peasant in the parish who failed to attend this fête was carried thither, his hands and feet being tied with straw bands.

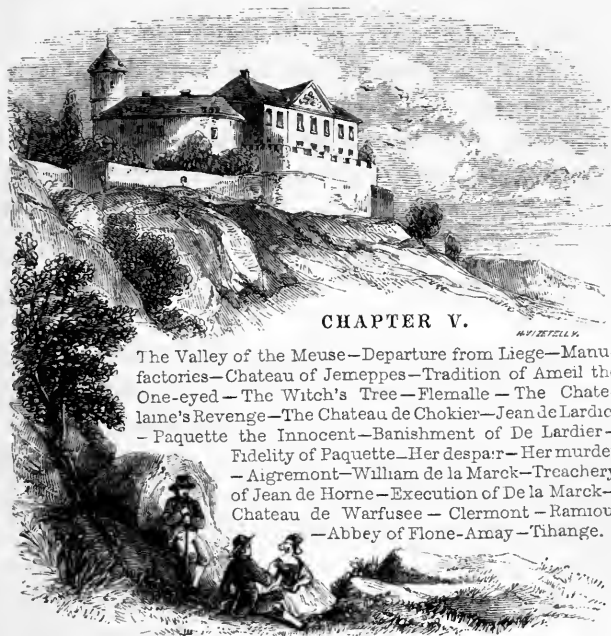
The custom of celebrating the opening of the month of May existed everywhere in the neighbourhood of the Meuse, and at the present day maypoles are still planted before the roadside chapels, and images of the Virgin, and before the house of the curé. At Aerschot, and several other places in the Campine, a maypole is set before the doors of the unmarried women,—the young and pretty having one covered with leaves and flowers, while that of the old maids is nothing better than a dry and withered trunk.

The last observance that I shall notice here, is that which is retained in the church of Nivelles, where there is a crypt, in which, between the wall and a pillar, at a short distance from it, is a hole, above which the people believe that none in a state of mortal sin can pass. As the space between the pillar and the wall is very

narrow, it is, perhaps, rather the corpulence of the sinner than the magnitude of his offences that prevents a free passage.

Tallement des Réaux tells a story of a "white lady," the tradition of whose appearance is preserved in the families of Angewweiler, Croy, Bassompierre, and Salm, all of whom it severally affected. This fairy had given to one of the counts of Angewweiler, as a token of love, a crystal goblet, a spoon, and a ring, which at his death he was to leave to his three daughters, as a wedding portion that would ensure good fortune to the families into which they married. The goblet passed by marriage into the house of Croy. The Marquise d'Havré, a descendant of that house, wishing one day to show it to a friend, let it fall and broke it into a hundred pieces. She picked them up again, and said, "If I cannot keep it whole, I will at least preserve every fragment." She then locked them up in a casket. On the following day, when she opened the casket, she found the goblet as perfect as before the accident.






CHAPTER V.

BY J. H. ZETZEL, V.

The Valley of the Meuse—Departure from Liège—Manu-
factories—Chateau of Jemeppe—Tradition of Ameil the
One-eyed—The Witch's Tree—Flemalle—The Chate-
laine's Revenge—The Chateau de Chokier—Jean de Lardier
—Paquette the Innocent—Banishment of De Lardier—
Fidelity of Paquette—Her despair—Her murder
—Aigremont—William de la Marck—Treachery
of Jean de Horne—Execution of De la Marck—
Chateau de Warfusee—Clermont—Ramioul
—Abbey of Flone—Amay—Tihange.



It was on a bright and lovely morning, towards the close of August, when we took our departure from Liège to explore, at leisure, the beautiful scenery on the banks of the Meuse, as far as the French frontier. Desirous of pausing on our route to visit any out-of-the-way place that might offer, or of stopping, just as inclination prompted, we allowed the steam-boat to Namur to proceed with its freight of some thirty or forty passengers, amongst whom we remarked a large proportion of priests, and set out in a light open carriage, which

we had hired at a very good repository in the Rue de la Pommelette, having for our driver one of that civil, obliging race which seems to be indigenous to Liège. There was every appearance of steady weather, and as we drove along the Quai d'Avroi, beside the sparkling waters of the Meuse, we caught glimpses of woods and meadows and distant heights, from which we might fairly infer the beauty of the country we were about to enter.

After quitting the faubourg, we lost sight of the river, and the road ran for three or four miles through a rich and fertile plain, crowded on the left hand with manufactories in full activity, and cultivated on the right, to the very summit of the hills that enclose the valley, with waving corn-fields below and vineyards above; at intervals also appeared the country-houses of the wealthy proprietors of the establishments whose tall chimneys rise like landmarks of commerce. After passing through the long villages of Sclessin and Tilleur, we rejoined the Meuse at Jemeppe, near which are still to be seen two very ancient châteaux, erected in the thirteenth century. They stand on the banks of a narrow stream that takes its rise at Hologne-aux-Pierres, and comes brawling down the valley. The first of these, whose walls are overgrown with moss and ivy, was built by the Sire Antoine de Jemeppe, at the fatal period of the war between the powerful families of the Awans and the Waroux. Antoine had espoused the cause of the latter, and the Sire d'Awans having

learnt that he was just on the point of completing the great tower of his castle, resolved to destroy it. Accompanied by a number of friends, always ready for an expedition of this nature, he set out to accomplish his object, but was met on his way by the lord of Jemeppe, who, with an equal number of knights, had posted himself at the village of Loncin to dispute his approach. The combat was long and bloody, and when the day went down the Sire d'Awans, his three valiant brothers, and several other knights of his party, lay dead upon the field. Notwithstanding its antiquity, there are many apartments in the building still habitable. Of the second château, which was almost entirely rebuilt about seventy years since, the only old parts remaining are the towers which formerly protected the drawbridge. A little higher up the stream there is yet a third château, that formerly belonged to the family of Courtejoie, but is now in the occupation of a farmer.

The lover of the marvellous may meet, in this part of the country with enough to gratify his appetite. Only a few miles from Jemeppe, in one of the numerous valleys that intersect the Hesbaye, is the pretty village of Fontaine, close to which stands the old castle of Lexhy, on whose donjon tower formerly stood the beacon which served to guide travellers on their way from Tongres to Amay, along the road that was called the *Chaussée-verte*.

The following singular tradition is related of one

the former owners of this castle :—“ Ameil de Lexhy, of the noble family of Dammartin, was a bold and



AMEIL DE LEXHY.

adventurous knight, and led a free and jovial life,—somewhat too free, indeed, if all the stories told about him were true; but then he was young and handsome, and much that was said to his discredit might have arisen from envy. It chanced one day that Ameil found himself alone in his castle; the heat was intense, for it was the middle of August, and, desirous of enjoying the refreshing coolness of the fountain of St. Oude, he bent his steps down to the village. The season of harvest having just begun, not an inhabitant was to be seen, and Ameil pursued his way without encountering any one till he reached the fountain. As he drew near, to his extreme surprise, he perceived a lady, richly attired, seated beside the bubbling waters of the spring, and gazing intently upon them. At the sound of Ameil's footsteps, she raised her head suddenly, as if startled by his approach, and the young knight beheld a countenance whose loveliness surpassed all he had ever heard or dreamt of. The momentary astonishment over, which the sight of the beautiful stranger had caused him, Ameil, with all courtesy, addressed her, and begged to be informed who she was and whence she came. These questions the lady declined answering, contenting herself by saying that she was nobly descended, and from a

distant land; that being on a pilgrimage to Aix-la-Chapelle, and overpowered by the heat of the day, she had paused to rest beside the fountain, while her attendant was gone to obtain some provisions at the nearest town. It was of little moment what answer the lady made, for her glances had already fascinated the susceptible Ameil, and he lent only a too ready credence to the tale she told. The more he gazed upon her the stronger grew the passion which swelled his heart, and it was not long before he proffered love. The unknown at first was coy and reserved, and turned a deaf ear to his protestations; but by degrees the eloquence of the Sire de Lexhy made some impression, and, unmindful of the mission on which her attendant had been sent, the lady at length agreed to accept the hospitality of the châtelain. He accordingly conducted her to his castle, and did everything in his power to make her welcome. A splendid entertainment was prepared, the lady was pledged in the richest vintages of the Rhine—every appliance that love could lend was remembered, and every precept that morality inculcates was forgotten! The stranger consented to become the ladye-love, "*par amours*," of Ameil de Lexhy.

When the morning came the fair one rose, and gracefully thanking Ameil for his hospitable care, she asked him if he knew who she was to whom he had extended his kind courtesy. The châtelain replied in the negative. "I will tell you then," exclaimed the damsel, with an expression of countenance hitherto

foreign to her features; I will tell you;—know that you last night slept in the embraces of the devil!” Ameil was for a moment confounded with horror; but quickly recovering his courage, with the natural hardihood of his character, returned, “The devil!—Be it so, —return then to hell, and say that for once the devil has tasted happiness!” Ameil paid dearly for his temerity. The fiend glared upon him with fury; the beauty of her form and features suddenly disappeared, and a hideous monster stood before him, who darting upon the knight, with fierce talons tore out his right eye. Ever after the châtelain of Lexhy was known by the name of “Ameil the One-eyed.”*

Legends of this nature were the common property of the writers of the middle ages. There is a story told in the celebrated chronicle of Philippe Mouskes, bishop of Tournay, respecting the mother of Eleanor of Aquitaine, which in many particulars resembles the one just narrated.†

Not far from Fontaine stands a tree, which is celebrated throughout the country as indicating the spot where a wretched creature, the reputed scourge of the district, was executed for witchcraft. The spells which she cast upon man and beast were so numerous, that at length the peasants all rose against her; she was tried,

* “*Ameil à l’Œil*.” The story is told by Hemricourt, “*Miroir des Nobles de la Hesbaye*,” p. 138.

† “*Chronique de Philippe Mousques*.” Par le Baron de Reiffenberg, 2 vols. 4to. Bruxelles, 1838.

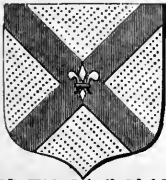
and, of course, found guilty, and was sentenced to be burnt alive. The last surviving witness of this cruelty is old and withered, and still bears the name of *Lâp del Makrall* "the Witch's Tree."

Immediately opposite Jemeppe, and connected with it by a light suspension-bridge, is Seraing, the vast establishment for the production of machinery of the late Mr. Cockerill, formerly the palace of the prince-bishops of Liège. We had already visited this remarkable foundry, as well as the crystal works which are manufactured in what was once the Abbey of Val St. Lambert, situated higher up on the same side of the river, so that there was no inducement now for turning out of our path. The next place we reached was Flémalle, where there is a very old church, built as far back as the year 807 by Zuentibold, King of Lorraine, at the instance of his only daughter, who retired from the world, and shut herself beside it in a lonely cell, and was canonised as St. Relinde. The *château* which adjoins the church is also of great antiquity, but no vestiges remain of the famous *Tour de la Heid*, where dwelt the noble Damoiseau de Flémalle, who perished with his brother, the Sire d'Awans, at the fatal fight of Loncin. This tower, like every other relic of the feudal ages, recalls a bloody tragedy. The widow of the Damoiseau de Flémalle having learnt that Warnier, of the family of Sclessin, had boasted that her husband fell by his hand, resolved to revenge his death. She summoned her nephew, Guillaume

Cossint, to her aid, and by dint of tears and earnest prayers, *and the bestowal of a large sum of money*, induced him to undertake to be her avenger. Cossint, knowing that Warnier and his two brothers occupied a tower, called Bellefroit, at Fragnée, on the Meuse, embarked with an armed party, and suddenly attacked the fortress one morning at daybreak. The resistance was determined, but Cossint succeeding in cutting through the piles which supported the building, the tower fell with a tremendous crash, and Warnier and one of his brothers perished in the ruins. The younger brother fled and took refuge in the abbey of St. Gilles, where he thought himself in safety, but such was the anarchy of the time, that this holy place was not respected; the sanctuary was violated about three months afterwards, and the unhappy knight was slain. The Château de Flémalle was in later days the abode of the venerable Breuché de la Croix, the pastor of the village, a man of refinement and an elegant poet.

After passing through Flémalle the scenery becomes extremely fine,—the hills rise to a greater height, and their surface is more broken and picturesque. At a turn in the road we suddenly came in sight of the magnificent towers of the Château de Chokier, apparently suspended above the village,—so deeply are the rocks on which it stands mined on this side. Though burnt by the people of Huy, in the time of Englebert de la Marck, about the middle of the fourteenth century, the château has resisted the

hand of time, and escaped the fury of the many wars, civil and foreign, that have desolated the Pays de Liège. Saumery says of it, that “the bravest and the most ferocious troops have always looked upon it with respect.” The title of De Chokier is an illustrious one in the annals of Liège. It belonged to the noble family of De Surlet, whose descendants are distinguished even to the present day.



JEAN DE CHOKIER

Respecting one of this house, Jean Surlet de Lardier, who occupies a conspicuous place in the history of his country, an affecting incident is told. This nobleman, who had distinguished himself above all others by his bravery on the fatal day of the *Mal St. Martin*, escaped the bloody retribution with which the people visited their tyrants, and was amongst those who were permitted to return to Liège when the peace of St. Martin was concluded. His great object after his return was popularity, and he obtained it by the general courtesy of his demeanour. In the year 1314 he was elected *échevin* and *maître-à-temps* of the city, and, directing all his energies to the defence of the people's rights, he acquired the flattering surname of *Civis Maximus*. So great was his influence, and so highly was he esteemed in Liège, that it was a common saying amongst the citizens,—“No harm can happen to me to-day, I have seen the beau sire De Lardier.” To such an extent did this sentiment prevail,

that even when the Host was met in the streets, if Jean de Lardier passed at the same time, the people bent the knee to him rather than to the holy symbol.

There dwelt at this time in the faubourg St. Laurent, at Liège, a young girl, named Paquette, to whom nature had not only denied beauty but ordinary intelligence, for which cause she was known in the city as Paquette the Innocent. She had reached her eighteenth year, but in every action of her life was a helpless child. One ray of understanding alone had reached her mind; it was the sentiment of admiration so universally felt for Jean de Lardier. The poor innocent conceived a violent passion for the great citizen, but had no thought of demonstrating it otherwise than by gazing upon him. Every morning, as regularly as the day came, Paquette used to seat herself on the steps at the door of his house in the Rue du Souverain-Pont, and wait patiently till he came out, when she cast herself on her knees, and strove to kiss his hand, or the hem of his garment. If she succeeded in the attempt, she returned home happy for the rest of the day. This was the sole intercourse that existed between the Innocent and the noble *maître-à-temps*, for Paquette possessed neither wit nor beauty.

There never yet was a popular idol who did not, sooner or later, experience "how mutability hath sovereign sway" in the affections of the multitude. Jean de Surlet was not an exception. After years of fidelity to the people, sustaining their cause through good and

evil report, he was at length accused of betraying their interests in his devotion to the new bishop, Englebert de la Marck. To accuse was to condemn, and Jean de Lardier, lately the theme of every man's praise, was ignominiously banished from the territory of Liège.

In this reverse of fortune, there was yet one heart "amongst the faithless, faithful only found;" it beat in the bosom of Paquette the Innocent. Unable to comprehend the guilt of the *maître-à-temps*, or, if comprehending, unwilling to credit it, she still continued to haunt the spot where she had been so long accustomed to see him. Every day she took her place beside the steps on which he used to tread, and there she would sit with upturned head and watchful eyes, as if she expected at each moment to behold him. When the day closed she rose, and, with a heavy sigh and dejected countenance, went slowly back to the faubourg St. Laurent.

When the thirst for vengeance is excited in certain minds, it knows no limit. Independently of the popular frenzy which now ran so high against him, Jean de Lardier had many bitter personal enemies, whose animosity was not satisfied with simple banishment. They would gladly have taken his life; but as he was now beyond their reach, they resolved to stab him in a part where he was still vital:—

"Frustrate of their will,
Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill,"

They remembered the devotion of Paquette the Inno-

cent, and the many kind words and gentle actions of Jean de Lardier whenever he saw her, and they rightly imagined that the sacrifice of this poor girl would painfully affect him. The death of poor Paquette was consequently decreed. It cost them nothing to convict so unresisting a victim. Her innocent love,—the daily act which bound her to existence,—offered the ready means of accusation. It was alleged that she, the poor innocent, who knew not the motives for her own acts, was in secret communication with the enemy of the city for the overthrow of the state. It was only necessary to utter the magic word “treason,” to excite the people. Knowing well where Paquette was to be found, the mob rushed to the Rue du Souverain-Pont to seize her. Instinctive fear at the sight of the ferocious crowd caused her to fly; and the same instinct of self-preservation led her for refuge to the church of St. Catherine, where she threw herself before the image of the Virgin, embracing its feet, and calling aloud for protection and mercy. The statue wrought no miracle in her favour, and the hearts of her pursuers were cold as the marble to which she vainly appealed. They dragged her from the altar, and hurried her away through the streets till they reached the Pont des Arches, and without a word of shrift, though she had little need for such preparation, they hurled her into the river. Her last words, as she struggled faintly with her executioners, expressed the thought of her whole life,—“Adieu,” she cried, turning her eyes from

the crowd, " adieu, beau sire De Lardier!" He for whom she had been sacrificed, was suffered after many years to return to Liège, but neither happiness nor fame were his again, and he did not long survive. He died in 1347, and his remains were buried in the church of the Dominicans. On his tomb was this inscription:—

**HIC JACET DOMINUS IOES SORLET DE LARDERIO :
MILES SCABINUS ET MAOISTER LEODENSIS.**

Our admiration of Chokier had not subsided, when, on the opposite side of the Meuse, we beheld the towers of Aigremont, built also on the crest of a precipitous rock. Its first walls, according to tradition, were raised by the four famous sons of Aymon, but only the foundations of the ancient edifice remain. The present château was completely rebuilt in the course of the last century, and owes the interest which now attaches to it solely to its picturesque situation. But it was not so in former days, when its walls recalled the memory of the deeds of the sanguinary William de la Marck, for here the Wild Boar of the Ardennes took up his principal abode.

After the death of Louis of Bourbon at the bloody fight of Wez, his successor, Jean de Horne, became apparently reconciled to the scourge of the bishopric, and offered him every demonstration of friendship: as a token of peace, the bishop and William de la Marck even shared the same bed. But treachery was all the

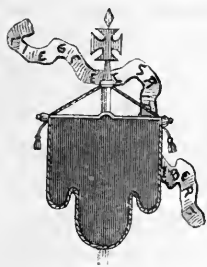
time silently at work, and it was determined to take possession of his person at a grand banquet to which the Wild Boar had been invited by the Abbot of St. Trond. When the guests rose from table, the Sire de Montigni and his brother Jacques de Horne, who were to do the deed, made business at Louvain the pretext for their sudden departure. The Bishop of Liège gaily offered to ride with them a short distance from St. Trond, and invited William de la Marck to be of the party, which he, suspecting nothing, willingly agreed to. They had scarcely ridden a mile, when Montigni, affecting to slight the appearance of William's horse, challenged him to try its speed; his only reply was to bury his spurs in the sides of his steed and set off at full gallop. In a few minutes he was out of sight of his suite, and fell into the ambuscade which had been prepared for him, and Montigni following closely, came up and showed him the Archduke Maximilian's order for his arrest.

"Say rather for my death," was all that De la Marck uttered.

He foresaw his end but too certainly. Scarcely had he reached Maestricht, the place assigned for his detention, when he was brought before his judges, and after the mere form of trial, sentenced to be beheaded, the remainder of the night being all the time allowed him to reconcile his soul with heaven. The next morning he was brought out upon the square of the Vrythoff, and led towards the stone scaffold, ornamented with four

bronze lions, which was only used at the execution of criminals of high rank. Before he ascended the steps, De la Marck cast his eyes round him, and perceiving the Bishop Jean de Horne, by whose treachery he had fallen, he addressed him in words of brief but bitter reproach; then taking his long beard in his hands, and holding it back with his teeth, he courageously extended his neck to the headman's axe.*

To the lordship of Aigremont was attached the high dignity of Haut-voué of the Hesbaye. By virtue



of this title the Lords of Aigremont alone enjoyed the privilege of carrying the standard of St. Lambert, and leading the armies of Liége into the field. This noble ensign was borne by a long line of gallant knights.

From gazing on these distant towers, we turned to the nearer view of the magnificent ruin of a mountain, half of which, shorn away by a deep

* "In the year 1674 some workmen digging near the high altar of the church of the convent of the Dominicans at Maestricht, found a skeleton wrapped in a robe of red silk damask: a skull, covered with a red cap of the same stuff, lay beside it. The Père de Heer, who was present at the discovery, after examining the silk garments, said that they were almost perfect, and distinctly recognised stains of blood on the dress. They were the remains of the famous William de la Marck, Comte d'Areberg, who was beheaded by Jean de Horne, Bishop of Liége, in 1485, at the corner of the Vrythoff, and who was interred in this church by the Dominican monks with all the honours due to nobility."

quarry, has left behind a broad surface of pale yellow streaked with rich veins of deep red, which glowed in the bright sunshine like stains of blood. These are the rocks of Engis, and in the plateau above, reached by a steep winding path, stands the modern château of Warfusée, belonging to the Comte Emile d'Oultremont. It is built on the foundations of the old château of Warfusée, celebrated in the olden time for the loves of the beautiful Châtelaine Alix and the valiant Raës, Comte de Dammartin, from whose union sprung the noblest houses in the Hesbaye. Le Mayeur, in his poem, "La Gloire Belgique," thus alludes to them:—

" Tel fut chez le Liégeois ce Raës de Dammartin
 Que la sensible Alix par un fécond hymen
 Avait rendu l'auteur d'une tige vaillante,
 Non moins riche en vertu qu' heritière puissante."

One could have wished that the charms of the lovely Alix had been sung by a better poet.

From Engis, looking across the Meuse, may be descried the height where stood the old château of Clermont, whose origin is supposed to date from the days of Pepin de Herstal, the father of Charlemagne. It was in the twelfth century the residence of Giles the Leper, Comte de Duras, of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Near Clermont are also seen the turrets of Ramioul, where dwelt the greatest hero of whom the middle ages can boast, the illustrious Godfrey of Bouillon, who before his departure for the Holy Land, gave the territory to the chapter of St. Servais

at Maestricht, on condition of their offering up constant prayers for his soul. The château has been rebuilt, with the exception of the two wings, which are old.

Pursuing our route towards Huy, we passed beneath the extensive vineyards of Jehay, which give their name to all the wine that is made in this part of the country. We tasted some of the produce, said to be of a good year, but found it sharp and rough. The abbey of Flone next greeted us; it is an old, and was once an important monastery of Augustines, the abbots of which formerly owned the greater part of the coal and lead mines which abound in this district. It is now a compact brick building, having an air of more comfort than beauty. It was rebuilt in the seventeenth century. Beyond Amay, which is remarkable for its pretty church with three spires, the scenery increases in beauty. The rocks rise perpendicularly above the Meuse, leaving barely space for the road; their summits are crowned by thick woods, and wherever a cleft appears some hardy shrub has cast its roots, and spread its waving foliage to the breeze. Where the acclivity is less precipitous, a few patches have been reclaimed for vineyards; but though they are cultivated amongst the scoriæ of zinc mines, the vintage has gained nothing by it. At Ampsin, as well as we could discern, through the glimpses afforded by the intermission of the smoke from the furnaces of Corphalie, we caught sight of Tihange, celebrated for the tournament given by Basin, Comte de Huy, who poisoned the

Comte de Loos, the victor in the lists, by presenting him a cup in which to drink the health of Charlemagne. For this and other felonies he was seized by Ogier of Denn-Marche (commonly called Ogier the Dane), who had him taken to Paris, where he was condemned to be flayed in boiling water and afterwards burnt, a sentence which was carried into effect. A little further, in following the sweep made by the Meuse, we came in sight of the lofty citadel of Huy.





CHAPTER VI.

Huy—The Houyoux—Marguerite de Navarre—The Cathedral—Interior—
 —Portal de la Vierge—Peter the Hermit—Singular Capture of Huy—
 —Love of Liberty—The Mehaigne—Search for the Ruins of Moha—
 The Castle of Moha.



HE Hôtel de la Poste at Huy is so delightfully situated on the river, that one's choice of an inn is made while crossing the bridge that connects one half of the town with the other. There is, indeed, another, the "Aigle Noir," apparently very comfortable, but it has not the advantage of situation to recommend it; and as its rival lacks nothing that can render a traveller's stay agreeable, it claims the preference.

There are few towns more picturesquely placed than Huy. The Meuse here makes a sudden curve, retreating from the hills which have for some miles confined

it on the right bank, and sweeping now beneath the ridge that protects the left.

Like Soracte's height, which on "the curl hangs pausing," the citadel of Huy seems suspended above the cathedral, as if to threaten it with instant ruin; and until one has fairly crossed the bridge, it is difficult to imagine where the road runs that is to let one out of the town again. Then, indeed, it becomes apparent; but there is not much space to boast of between the perpendicular rock and the river. The first time I travelled along the valley of the Meuse, I passed through Huy without being aware of the town on the right bank, and supposed that the citadel and the cathedral were all it contained. On this occasion, as we had leisure to examine it, I was undeceived,—for wandering to the end of the street, at the foot of the bridge, which seems to lead nowhere, I saw a narrow bridge on the left hand, and heard the rush of rapid waters, which proved to be those of the Houyoux,—a noisy torrent, whose frequent *débordements* have earned it a bad reputation, ever since the days when Marguérite de Navarre and her suite were nearly drowned by a sudden inundation.* Beyond this stream lies the

* Mélar, in his "Histoire de Huy," says that the Queen of Navarre imagined that the inundation was *contrived* for her annoyance: "qu' on eust tiré toust expret des escluses de certains estangs pour la perdre et noyer, de quoi elle en partit fort fachée et mescontente." In her memoirs, however, Marguérite says nothing of the kind, but ascribes the flood to natural causes: "Il s' émeut un torrent si impetueux, descendant des ravages d' eau de la montagne en la rivière," &c. Et voilà comme on écrit l'histoire!

greater part of the town, its market-place, town-hall, churches, and principal streets,—everything, in fact, that constitutes the *matériel* of a town, though the approach to it is so completely masked, that its being overlooked need excite little surprise. After all, the traveller who sees only the cathedral, need not disquiet himself if he sees nothing else. It is a massive and well preserved specimen of the architecture of the early part of the fourteenth century, having been begun in 1311. The interior is all of dark grey marble, and the roof, which is lofty, is painted exactly like the borders of the illuminated manuscripts of the period, in a graceful pattern of many-coloured flowers. There is scarcely a fragment of stained glass left, but the form of the windows, and particularly of the rose window at the west-end, is extremely beautiful. Many of the shrines are exceedingly curious, and, as well as a series of grotesque heads in the apsis of the cathedral, belong to a much earlier period than the present building. There is one picture (an Adoration of the Magi) worth examining, chiefly in reference to the time when it was painted, which, from the costume, must have been in the fourteenth century. Several tombs of the bishops of Huy decorate the interior; but the most interesting feature of the building is the curious gateway forming the entrance from the street. It is called the “Portail de la Vierge,” and merits description.

The lower part, which is open, is supported by three pillars, forming a double entrance, whose gro-

tesquely carved capitals are surmounted by three figures, the size of life,—the Virgin and Child in the centre, and two bishops, one of them the founder of the cathedral, at the sides. The upper part, which contains a high, pointed arch, subdivided into compartments, is covered with quaint sculpture in high relief, the subjects of which are the Nativity, on the left hand, and the Adoration of the Magi, on the right. In the central compartment is represented the Murder of the Innocents, and figures of saints and angels, under richly-carved canopies, border the arch. The Annunciation, and Descent of the Holy Spirit, are figured above. The whole of this sculpture is uninjured and is stained a deep yellow.

In the church of the Holy Sepulchre was formerly to be seen the tomb of one whose eloquence wrought so great a change in the condition of Europe in the middle ages. This was Peter the Hermit who, in the fulfilment of a vow made during a tempest, on his return from the Holy Land, built a monastery at Huy, called the “Neu-Moustier,” where he afterwards was buried. In the year 1242, more than a century after his death, his grave was opened, and the body found uncorrupted. It was removed to a little grotto, constructed under the tower of the church, where it remained exposed to the gaze of the public, separated only from the street by an iron grating. At a later period the remains were transferred to the sacristy, where Villenfagne saw them as recently as 1786. He

says * that the head was then in good preservation ; he counted all the teeth, not one was missing, and they were all large and fine. During the unhappy period of the Reign of Terror, the sacristy was plundered, the coffin of Peter the Hermit broken open, and his ashes scattered to the winds, none daring to collect them again.

Huy has witnessed numerous sieges and has been frequently taken. The castle was once singularly surprised, in 1595, by the famous Haranguer, renowned for the boldness with which, a few years before, he effected the capture of Breda. At the head of thirty men, having climbed by ropes into a small house beneath the castle walls, he lay in ambuscade in a spot which the inhabitants of the garrison were obliged to pass to go to mass, and seizing upon them as they approached, one after the other, he tied their arms and legs, threw them into a deep hollow, and quietly marched into the castle, which offered no resistance.

The Hutois, like their neighbours and allies of Liège, always held their freedom in great estimation, and a memorial of their love of liberty existed till lately in an inscription upon the stones, which formed the limit of the commune of Huy. It ran as follows :—

“ Mieux vaut mourir de franche volonté,
Que du pays perdre la liberté.”

All that is interesting in the town of Huy may well

* Villenfagne—“ Recherches sur l’Histoire de la ci-divant Principauté de Liège.”

be seen in a couple of hours, including even the citadel; but no lover of the picturesque should leave the neighbourhood without devoting a day or two to the banks of the little river Mehaigne, which falls into the Meuse above the town, at the faubourg of Statte. The Mehaigne, which rises between Gembloux and Namur, takes its course through the district called the Hesbaye, and passes many a feudal tower on its way to join the Meuse. We crossed it by a little bridge beneath the high rock, on which is built the church of Statte, and, passing through some corn-fields, ascended by a rugged road, resembling a deep water-course, to a broad plateau, waving also with golden grain. Half-an-hour's walk across the plain brought us to a cluster of cottages, at the entrance to a narrow lane that led to the village of Moha. Here we inquired, adopting as much Walloon *patois* as we had contrived to pick up, whereabouts the ruins of the castle were situated; but whether from imperfect pronunciation on our part, or ignorance on that of the peasants, the inquiry was fruitless, and its repetition only excited laughter. Having reason to believe that there were ruins somewhere near, knowing their history by heart, we pursued our way through the village till we reached the churchyard, where the sexton, like Hamlet's friend, was singing, as he delved "a pit of clay." He proved more intelligent, and, rising from his work, came to the churchyard wall, and pointing up the valley, desired us to look under the branches of some trees that overhung the road. We did so, and

could then discern a solitary grey tower, half covered with ivy, about a quarter of a mile distant, which he told us was all that remained of the once famous castle of Moha, for the possession of which, and the wide territory dependent on it, the long and bloody feud arose which was called "the War of the Succession of Moha." But the sexton knew nothing of the past, nor was he old enough to remember the latest changes that had come over the building, for the chapel of St. Gertrude, which stood within the walls, was only destroyed during the French revolution. Still less could he give us any information about Friar George, a hermit,—the last of his order,—who dwelt beside the chapel, and died there in the middle of the last century. Satisfied, however, with the fact that the ruins which he pointed out were those we sought, we descended the steep path, by courtesy called a road, and more than shared by a sparkling stream, which gushed from a spring about half-way down, and rapidly took its course to swell the torrent of the Mehaigne. From the valley, below a pretty foot-bridge, we obtained a beautiful view of the ruins crowning a steep hill on the right bank of the stream, above which it rises precipitously, and having gazed our fill, we took the only path by which the castle is accessible, and soon stood in the midst of the few broken walls which once formed the stronghold of the powerful family of Moha. Will the reader pause with me here, to listen to the story of its beautiful *châtelaine*, as I have gathered it from contemporaneous chronicles.



SEAL OF GERTRUDE DE MOHA.

CHAPTER VII.

Gertrude of Moha—Thibaut de Champagne—Albert of Moha—The Tournament of Andenne—Emulation of the Young Damoiseaux—Their Tiltng Match—Fatal Issue of the Combat—Vow of the Count and Countess—Stone Crosses—Henry of Brabant—Cession of Moha—Birth of Gertrude—Death of Count Albert—Education of Gertrude—War of the Succession—Gertrude's Beauty—Thibaut of Champagne—Betrothal of Gertrude—Theobald of Lorraine—Gertrude's Marriage—Battle of Bouvines—War against Lorraine—Hatred of the Emperor—Sodaria—The Duke Poisoned—Gertrude a Widow—Her Return to Moha—The Letter—Thibaut in Provins—Thibaut's arrival at Moha—Gertrude's Second Marriage—A Marriage of Love—Thibaut's Inconstancy—Gertrude's Death—Destruction of Moha.



IN the "Chronique de St. Denis," as in most of the chronicles of the same period, in treating of the history of the famous *trouverre*, Thibaut de Champagne, King of Navarre, we find the following simple record of one of the events, and that certainly not the least important, of his life:—"Thibaut eut trois femmes; de la dernière, qui étoit de la maison de Bourbon, naquirent les enfans qui lui succédèrent."

This, in the eyes of the chronicler, is all that is worthy of notice. Thibaut was a king, and had fulfilled his destiny ; the royal race which he, for a time, represented, failed not through him ; a Bourbon wife continued his line :—

“ The rest is ———— silence ! ”

And yet how much may lie concealed beneath the few words that tell of the earlier claims upon the love of one whose name has been so widely spread as a poet and a lover. How much remains untold of the wives who are not even named in this brief memorial ! To rescue one of them from oblivion, and, perchance, inspire an interest in her fate, is the object of the narrative now written.

Of all the nobles of the Hesbaye, at the close of the twelfth century, there were none so powerful, or whose territory was so extensive, as Albert, Count of Moha, in the principality of Liége, and of Dasbourg, in the province of Alsace. He had married Gertrude, the only daughter of the Count de Looz, and their union was blest by two sons, who, as they grew towards manhood, gave promise of inheriting their mother's beauty and their father's valour.

Albert of Moha was an accomplished knight, and delighted greatly in those passages of arms which formed the chiefest recreation, as they were the necessary pleasure, of the chivalry of the middle ages. To train up his sons in the career of glory to which his own

life had been devoted, Count Albert omitted no opportunity of showing them the splendours of all the tilts and tournaments that were held throughout the country, and the ardent boys entered as eagerly into the spirit of the scene as their father could desire. Their conversation by day, and their dreams by night, were ever of splintered lances, cloven helms, hacked shields, and shivered swords, and already they beheld themselves, in imagination, victors in the lists, and proudly wearing the prize bestowed by beauty. In an evil hour this passion was nurtured, for misery and death came in its train.

When Baldwin, Count of Flanders, assumed the Cross, to celebrate his departure for the Holy Land, he gave a grand tournament at Andenne, on the Meuse, between Huy and Namur, at which were present, Philip, Count of Namur; Louis, Count of Looz; Hugues de Florinnes, and the flower of the nobility of Flanders, Hainault, Brabant, and Liége. The Count de Moha, so skilled in knightly exercises, was a distinguished guest, and rendered himself conspicuous in the jousts.

On his way homeward, his mind still full of the glorious pageantry of which he had borne so notable a share, his discourse to his sons, William and Henry, who accompanied him, turned entirely on the events of the tournament; the good fortune of one knight in tilting; the misadventures of another; the gallant bearing of a third; passing in review all the incidents of the mimic fight, and commenting upon all in the

tone of one thoroughly acquainted with his subject. His sons listened eagerly, though silently, to all he said; and their hearts beat high in their bosoms when the count pointed out to them the path leading to renown, which they were destined to follow. He little thought that the seed which he had sown was so nearly ripe, and how fatal would be the harvest!

It was not many days after the tournament of Andenne, that the Count de Moha was compelled to absent himself for a brief period from home, and the opportunity presented itself which the unhappy boys had so long sighed for. Much as their father had said to them of deeds of chivalry, and however earnestly he had exhorted them to perform their knightly devoir when the day came for them to add to the fame of the illustrious house of Moha, he had never yet permitted them to bear other arms than the light weapons which the custom of the times allowed to children of noble birth. They were already skilled to ride; but the management of the warlike lances, to wield which was the great object of their ambition, had hitherto been denied them. "Their tender years," said the count, "unfitted them as yet to grasp the weapons of men;" but he promised them that the time was not far distant when they should regularly enter the novitiate of their future career. Alas, for the impatience of youth! content with nothing but the immediate accomplishment of its wishes! No sooner was the count departed, than his sons hastily sought the armoury; and, yielding to their earnest

solicitations, the armourer suffered them to have two of the lightest but sharpest lances in the rack. They wished for them, they said, only for an hour, to show how well they could carry them on horseback; and they were suffered to depart. The instant they obtained permission, they hurried to the stables, joyfully mounted their favourite steeds, and galloped off to a meadow about a mile from the castle. It was a beautiful spot, lying on the borders of the Mehaigne, which here formed a curve almost surrounding the field. Around it rose, on three sides, the steep banks of the river, richly clothed with wood, save here and there, where some bold rock thrust its huge grey mass above the slope. It was, indeed, almost a perfect amphitheatre, and seemed as if designed by nature for the exhibition of warlike games and exercises. The road that led to it ran zigzag along the hill side from the castle gate; it then traversed the neck of the valley, crossed the stream, and pursued the same serpentine track to gain the ascent on the opposite side, in the direction of Meefe, whither the Count de Moha had that day gone.

The noble boys rode gaily down the valley, and dashed across the level sward, brandishing their lances, and shouting their father's well-known *cri-de-guerre*, "*Frapez por Moha!*" After two or three turns round the meadow, they reined in their horses, and drew up to agree upon the way in which they should run the tilt they so anxiously longed for. The terms were soon settled; for all their experience had failed to teach

them how many precautions were necessary to prevent the most friendly joust from becoming a service of danger. They thought only of the delight of couching their spears, and galloping their horses against each other; nor once remembered the precaution of the barrier and the blunted lance. Accordingly, they wheeled round, and, riding to opposite extremities of the field, prepared for the headlong charge.

It is a matter of too common observation to induce us to speculate upon the cause which, when Count Albert left the Castle of Moha that morning, filled his breast with an undefinable sense of apprehension. Every one in the course of his life has experienced the feeling, without being able to account for it,—the shadow, at some period or other, has fallen on every man's heart. Count Albert stood high in every one's estimation; all things prospered with him: he was a happy husband and father, a powerful noble, a successful warrior; he lacked nothing to make the measure of his happiness complete. And yet when he slowly paced his way along the road to Meefe, a thrill of something more like fear than he had ever experienced, shot through his bosom, and cast a gloom over his spirits. He strove in vain to shake it off, and at length, finding it beyond his control, he suddenly turned his horse's head, and, to the extreme surprise of his attendants, who had ever known him constant in his undertakings, gave orders for their immediate return with him to Moha. Having issued the order,

he struck his spurs in his courser's sides, and set off at a quick pace in the direction of home, leaving his people to follow him as they might.

It was not long before he came in sight of the well-known turrets of Moha, shining in the sun on the opposite side of the valley. He drew his rein for a moment while he paused to look on them, but scarcely had he done so, before his ear caught the sound of the heavy tread of horses somewhere beneath him. He was too practised in such matters not to be aware that the sounds proceeded from the regular pace of horses in quick motion, and his curiosity was excited to know what was the cause at a time and place so unusual; if he needed further stimulus it was presently given by the echoes of his own war cry, resounding shrilly through the valley. He hesitated no longer, but galloping down the steep, reached a turn of the road commanding a full view of the meadow. To his infinite astonishment and dismay, he at once discovered the cause of his inquiry; for there, at either end of the field, mounted on his finest destriers, and holding lances in the rest, sat two youthful figures, with no defensive armour on, preparing to joust.

The quick eye of a father instantly recognised his sons in the imprudent assailants, and his agony was intense, for he was still at least a quarter of a mile from the spot where they stood, and the road was steep and hidden amongst the trees. It would be impossible to reach them in time, for already their horses pawed

the ground impatient for the loosened rein. He rose in his stirrups, and stretching out his hands towards the field, shouted with the utmost power of his voice. "Henry, William! stop, rash boys! stay, I command you!"

But the warning came too late: in the excitement of the moment the youths heard it not, for their own voices were raised, or, hearing, could not check their impetuous career. Their steeds thundered across the meadow, and the unhappy Count of Moha sat rooted to the spot. But his suspense was not of long duration. In a few moments the space that separated the boyish combatants was cleared—the horses drove against each other—their riders, with their lances levelled, thought not, or were not skilful enough to turn aside the points—no corselets covered their fair breasts, on which floated the scarfs of the colours of their house, which their mother's hands had that day tied across them—they wore no shield or helm to protect their light, frail figures—their lances were directed too truly, and in the shock that followed, each was unhorsed, and, weltering on the ground, their heart's blood dyed the green grass on which they fell.*

* "Un accident mémorable et du tout tragic digne d'estre ici rapporté c'est qu'estant nostre comte en l'an MCCI., de retour de certaine feste et tournoy qu'on avoit celebré à Andenne, ses deux fils ieunes garçon qui l'avoient accompagné voulant esprouver leur dexterité sans avoir prins esgard aux armures et autres circonstances s'entre-tuerent courant l'un sur l'autre."—Butkens: "Trophies du Brabant," livre ix. p. 647. Melart, in his "Histoire de la Ville du Huy," and Renacle, in his "Cabinet Historial," describe this unfortunate event in a similar manner.

The Count de Moha uttered one wild and terrific cry, and then sped like lightning down the rocky way. It was all in vain,—the boys were past all earthly care, and he who but an hour before rejoiced in two fine sons to perpetuate his name and honours, was now childless!

Deep and bitter was the grief of the Count de Moha, and sad and heavy the task which fell on him to be the bearer of such woful tidings to the wretched mother. He accused himself—he even accused Heaven,—and then with passionate tears he prayed for mercy from an offended God! But on none other would he devolve the duty of imparting the sad tidings. He entered the castle, and going straight to his wife's apartments,—

“Madam,” said he, abruptly, “if God had refused us heirs to our name, to what use would you have devoted the wealth you possess?”

“Albert!—gracious God!” she replied; “what is the meaning of this sudden question, which fills me with terror? Why have you returned so speedily?”

The count, gazing on her stedfastly, repeated the question.

“Heaven pity me!” cried the countess, who instinctively trembled for her children; “if I am to learn a fatal truth only at this price, I will answer: I would build a monastery in honour of the mother of God, that people might pray there for the repose of our souls.”

“So be it then,” returned her husband: “Gertrude, your sons are dead!”

It was after a death-like swoon of many days that the unhappy lady of Moha learnt the full extent of her misery. Who shall describe the sorrow and gloom that hung like a funeral pall above the Castle of Moha? At one blow everything seemed to have been torn away. Albert and Gertrude felt that they had grown old in a single day. They had now nothing to live for, and passed their hours in tears and prayers, and fruitless regrets. They never quitted the precincts of their castle, save to inspect the progress of the Abbey of Val Nôtre Dame, which they immediately began to build; there they caused to be erected a lofty tomb to the memory of their sons, and in the field where they met their death, still called “Le Champ des Croix,” they raised two stone crosses, on each of which might be read the following inscription:—

CI : A : ESTE : OCCIS : LI : FILS : ALBERT : NOBLE :
 QUENS : DE : MOHA : LAN : MCCI :
 PRIZ : DIEI : POR : SON : AGE :

The crosses stand there no longer, but a tree has been placed to mark the spot, which may even now be seen at a little distance from the road that leads from Huy to Meefe.



Time wore on, but the grief of the Lord and Lady of Moha had lost nothing of its poignancy. The

nearest relation of the count was Henry, Duke of Brabant, his nephew by the mother's side. He was cruel, greedy, and avaricious, and little love subsisted between the relations; but the lack of affection is, in high places, often supplied by sentiments of pride, and, looking round him, Count Albert could discover none who shared his blood so well qualified from position as Henry of Brabant to succeed to his wide domains. He, therefore, entertained the idea of constituting him his heir, but not without exacting certain conditions. These were, that Henry should, within the space of three years, pay into his hands the sum of fifteen thousand silver marks, a proposition which was readily agreed to by the duke. But from whatever cause, whether unwillingness on Henry's part to ratify his agreement, in the hope, perhaps, that the count's death might intervene, or from after considerations originating with the count himself, the negociation fell to the ground, and Albert of Moha resolved upon an entirely different disposition of his property.

Hopeless, now, of ever having another child to inherit his domains, and the thoughts both of himself and his wife becoming every day more and more withdrawn from the world, Albert formed the resolution of dedicating all he possessed to the Church, by a formal cession of his territory to the Prince Bishop of Liége, his old and valued friend.

There were conditions annexed also to this act, for it was stipulated between the count and the bishop that

the latter should pay the sum of fifty thousand marks of silver for the succession, and that if it so happened that an heir should be born to the estate, the child should inherit, though only holding the property as a fief of the church.*

The cession was made according to the custom of the time, on the altar of St. Lambert at Liége, by the symbolic offering of a live turf and the branch of a tree.† But scarcely had the conditions been ratified when an event occurred which was least expected: the Countess of Moha was found to be *enceinte*, and before the close of the year gave birth to a daughter, who was christened Gertrude, after her mother.

This event caused a complete revolution in the count's mind, and induced him to endeavour to annul the deed of cession; but, however warm a friend, the Prince Bishop thought the succession of Moha too valuable to be lightly parted with, and stedfastly refused his consent, so that the count was obliged to let the matter rest as he had ordered it.

Meantime, the joy of possessing another child to replace those which she had so cruelly lost, proved insufficient to remedy the shock which the countess had suffered, and not many months elapsed before she too was numbered with the dead.

Albert of Moha, heirless and broken in spirit, sur-

* Villenfagne, "Essai Critique sur l'Histoire de Liége," tom. 2, p. 259.

† Butkens, Preuves. p. 234.

vived her yet a few years. His glory had departed, and but for the love he bore the little Gertrude, his life had sooner ended. But the time came, when, worn with sickness and sorrow, and finding his end approaching, he felt that he must provide for his daughter's safety, for he knew the nature of Henry of Brabant, and foresaw the coming storm. He accordingly dispatched couriers to the Prince-Bishop of Liége and to his relation and old companion in arms, Ferry, Duke of Lorraine, praying them to come as speedily as they might to hear his last request. They were soon by his bedside, and, taking a hand of each as they leant over him, he said:—"The moment draws near when I shall be again united to the objects of all my love. I should die without a single regret, were it not for the thoughts of my daughter Gertrude. Duke Ferry, be to her as a father in my stead; she will be worthy of your care, for I already see in her the virtues of her sainted mother, whose image she is. My most earnest wish is that, when old enough, she should become the wife of your son Theobald. And you, venerable Hugues de Pierrepoint," he added, addressing the bishop, "be you also her protector; watch over her as the child of your adoption. Preserve her inheritance of Moha, which one day will belong to your church." Then calling his child to him, as she stood weeping at his feet, though scarcely comprehending her deep cause for sorrow, for she was barely eight years of age, he bade her dry her tears, and receive his

blessing. He kissed her tenderly, and pressed her to his heart, praying that from her head might be averted the woes which her mother had endured. The sorrows of Gertrude were destined to be of a different nature.

Exhausted by the exertions which he had made, the Count of Moha now took leave of his friends, and begged to be left alone with his confessor Helwin.

On the following day he died.

The first care of the Duke of Lorraine was to remove his infant ward from the house of death, and, leaving the obsequies of his deceased friend to be performed by the Bishop of Liége, he set out at once for Metz, where he placed her under the care of the pious Abbess of Romorontin, the friend of his amiable duchess, until the time should arrive when the young châtelaine might appear in the world. Here her education was carefully looked to, according to the fashion of the time, and Gertrude grew as fair a maid as ever inspired the vow of enamoured knight or woke a minstrel's strain.

Meanwhile it fared ill with her heritage, for though the Duke of Lorraine did all that lay in his power to improve her estates and collect her revenues, he could not guard against the ambitious designs of one who was as powerful as he was cunning and unscrupulous, especially as his own dominions were so remote from Moha.

But it is not our purpose here to enter into the

details of the sanguinary "War of the Succession of Moha," as it was ever afterwards called. It is enough, perhaps, to mention that it was originated by the Duke of Brabant, who, with disappointment rankling at his heart, resolved to obtain by force that which at one time he had nearly possessed by negociation. As the nephew of the late Count of Moha he assumed to be his heir, and demanded that the Prince-Bishop of Liège should give up to him the castle of Moha, its dependencies and revenues. Hugues de Pierrepont evaded his demands by proposing to submit his claims to the arbitration of the emperor; and the duke, in revenge, collected the forces which he had long held in readiness, and at the head of twenty thousand men marched upon Liège. The particulars of the sacking of the city, and of all the horrors which ensued, are to be found detailed at length by the historians of the province,* as well as the account of the bloody fight, called "La Warde de Steppes," in which the Liégeois, in their turn triumphant, eventually quelled the usurping Henry. Be it our task to return to the story of the heiress of Moha.

The beautiful Gertrude, nurtured with the tenderest care in the convent of St. Ursula, under the immediate eye of the Duchess of Lorraine, made her appearance at court in the fifteenth year of her age. All the chroniclers agree in describing her as one of the fairest

* *Vide* Chapeauville, Mélar, Bouille, Foullon, Gilles d'Orval, Villenfagne, and others.

creatures that ever the eye beheld, and as remarkable for the sweetness of her disposition and the accomplishments of her mind, as for the graces of her person. The brilliancy of her beauty was perhaps subdued, but a softer charm was added, by a shade of melancholy which often passed over her features, when in riper years she recalled the misfortunes related to her of her childhood, and those which had preceded her birth. But her spirits were not saddened nor her happiness marred by these recollections, and if at times they imparted a pensive expression to her countenance, it suited well with the dignity of her form and the grace of her demeanour.

Her appearance at the court of Duke Ferry was the signal for a succession of splendid fêtes. The nobles of Lorraine vied with each other in their endeavours to attract her notice and win her smiles; but none devoted themselves to her service with a fervour and assiduity comparable with her youthful cousin, the gay, the handsome, the accomplished Thibaut, Count of Champagne.

This celebrated *trouverre*, whose numerous poems attest his proficiency in the "gaie science," and place him at the head of the poets of the thirteenth century,* was at this time in the flower of his youth, and was looked upon as the first among the *preux chevaliers* of

* *Vide* "Poësies de Thibaut de Champagne, Roi de Navarre," by M. Levesque de la Ravalliere; also, "Specimens of the Early Poetry of France," by Miss L. S. Costello.

the time. His high descent—the prospect of the crown which he afterwards wore—the splendour of his appearance—the beauty of his person—his skill in every knightly exercise—and more than all, the charms of his muse,—made him an object whereon men fix their eyes with envy, and women with admiration. To the fair Gertrude were dedicated the earliest offerings of his lute; from her society alone, as he told her, he gathered the inspiration which gave his verses whatever charm they possessed. What wonder then that the preference which Gertrude felt should ripen speedily into love!

But a serious obstacle, of which Gertrude had never thought, interposed to ruffle the current of that stream which never yet ran smooth. She had forgotten that, when yet a child, she had been affianced to her nearer relative, Count Theobald, the eldest son of the Duke of Lorraine. It was only as a child that she had seen him when first she was brought to Metz, for when she left the convent for her uncle's court, her cousin Theobald was winning his spurs in the south of France, in the terrible wars then waged against the Albigenses. His name had always been dear to her as one worthy of a sister's love, for his virtues were the theme of universal praise; but she dreamt of him only as a brother, nor deemed that he suffered wrong when she encouraged the attentions of his cousin, the all-accomplished *trouverre*.

The Duke of Lorraine, engrossed by affairs of state,

and little versed in the signs that denote affairs of the heart, witnessed the gallantry of Thibaut, and the frequent pre-occupation of Gertrude without mistrust; if he rallied her occasionally on fits of absence which sometimes stole over her, it was jestingly to reprove her for the gravity that did not suit her years: he had no conception that her thoughts demanded a more careful scrutiny.

But the Duchess Agnes, his wife, was less shortsighted; she guessed too truly that Gertrude had fallen in love, and, tenderly attached to her, was deeply grieved at the discovery, both for her own and her son's sake. An explanation ensued, in which the duchess calmly represented to Gertrude her duty, and the danger of encouraging the evident admiration of the fascinating *trouverre*, and after a long struggle, Gertrude's sense of propriety gained the ascendancy, and in addition to the feelings of gratitude which the duchess's kindness had inspired, a new sentiment arose in her mind; it was the proud thought of having sacrificed her love to her duty, the holy sense of her obedience that stirred within her, and made her feel even pleasure in the act which banished her happiness for ever. She resolved to return to the world, and armed herself against all weakness when she should once more encounter her lover.

But they were not destined to meet. Thibaut had left the court. The duchess had made him aware that as a man of honour, and a loyal friend of her son, he could no longer remain where his presence was likely

to prove so dangerous. Gertrude wept over his absence, but remained firm in her resolution to think of him no more in the light of a lover.

The war against the Albigenses was now over, and Theobald of Lorraine returned to his home. His name was not only renowned as a warrior, but he had gained the happier reputation of distinguished humanity,—a quality rarely shown in the fierce contentions of that age, and almost unknown in the exterminating wars of religion, amongst which that preached by St. Dominick may be reckoned as the fiercest on record. The Duchess Agnes had not praised her son without cause. He was in every respect worthy of admiration; and the three great qualities, “*cuer vaillant et li don d’ amor et de constance*,” which formed the character of a noble knight, were fully developed in him.

It was impossible that Gertrude de Moha could behold him without confessing that he was worthy of any woman’s love,—not from the graces of his person, for such attractions are fleeting (though Theobald was esteemed “*un des plus beaux hommes de son temps*”),* but from the generosity of his heart, and “the whiteness of his soul;” and but for the magical power of a first impression, she felt that she could have resigned herself to become his bride without a sigh. She had, however, not only schooled her heart to forget the

* Dom Calmet—“*Histoire de Lorraine.*”

past, but to welcome the future; and the noble qualities of her affianced husband exacting her esteem, the task of dedicating herself to his happiness lost much of its bitterness. Theobald himself saw nothing in Gertrude but an object of exclusive worship; she was not only the acknowledged "dame de ses pensées," but the undisputed mistress of his heart, and he looked forward anxiously to the day when he might call her his own. His mother had predicted rightly; Gertrude having once recognised his merit, her affection soon followed. There was nothing to divert the current of her thoughts from the course of duty, and when the time was fixed for their union, Gertrude went willingly to the altar.

The marriage took place at Colmar, in Alsace, with a splendour and magnificence worthy of their exalted rank, in the presence of the Emperor, who bestowed on the Duke of Lorraine the title of Vicar of the



SEAL OF DUKE FERRY
OF LORRAINE.



Empire, and granted him the privilege of bearing the Roman eagle on his banners, and three alerions on his

shield.* But the rejoicings on occasion of the wedding were unexpectedly interrupted by a melancholy event,—the sudden death of Duke Ferry, the father of Theobald. He was deeply regretted by his family, but by none more than by Gertrude, towards whom he had ever conducted himself as a kind and affectionate parent. The funeral obsequies were performed at Nancy, and Theobald succeeded his father as Duke of Lorraine.

Scarcely, however, had he assumed the reins of government when a fresh war broke out, which called him from his country, and from the arms of his young and lovely bride. The Emperor Otho and John, King of England, united by the same motive of hatred against Philip Augustus of France, resolved upon his ruin, and decreed the partition of his dominions between them, drawing numberless vassals of the French crown to their ranks by the promise of restoring to them the feudal rights which it had ever been the policy of Philip to abrogate. The consequence of this expedition,—the glorious battle of Bouvines, in which the Imperialists were utterly defeated,—is an event too well known to admit of repetition here.† Theobald, a vassal of

* At the period of the first institution of coat-armour the bearings possessed a significance, which in after times was less considered. Thus the *alerions*, “eagles without beaks or talons,” were used to denote enemies disarmed, or put *hors de combat*.—*Vide* Le Père Menestrier—“*Origine des Tournois*.”

† The best account of this celebrated battle is to be found in M. Capefigue’s “*Histoire du Regne de Philippe Auguste*.” M. Capefigue has closely followed the metrical Latin chronicle of Guillaume le Breton.

the empire, fought on the side of the vanquished, and could personal prowess have redeemed the day, his efforts might have availed; but it was otherwise ordained, and all that the Duke of Lorraine could accomplish was a better retreat than was effected by many of the grand feudatories who fought beneath the banners of Otho.

During his absence the treachery of friends had been at work, and Frederick, King of the Romans, who was bound to Theobald by many ties, had thought the opportunity a favourable one for taking possession of the town of Rosheim, which formed part of the territory of the Duke of Lorraine, as Count of Dasbourg, in right of his wife.

Allowing himself barely time to embrace his beloved Gertrude, the duke quitted Metz to recover the lost town; but the enemy suddenly entering Lorraine with an overwhelming force of cavalry, he was obliged to throw himself into the small town of Alrance. Frederick laid seige to it, and summoned the Count of Bar, and Blanche, Countess of Champagne, to come and join him. Notwithstanding their relationship to Theobald, they acceded to the desire of the King of the Romans, and their united forces attacked Nancy, which they pillaged and then set on fire. The unhappy Duke of Lorraine, seeing the danger which threatened him, vainly implored the aid of his friends. He was compelled to surrender to Frederick, to whom, as well as to whose allies, he made immense concessions. He

hoped by doing so that he might be permitted to return to Metz, to forget, in the endearments of home, the misfortunes he had experienced. But an adverse fate denied him that comfort, and contrary to the faith of the treaty agreed on, the perfidious conqueror kept Theobald prisoner, and bore him a captive to Würzburg.

In the meantime the Duchess Gertrude, shut up with her mother-in-law, Agnes, within the walls of Metz, was barely able to hold the place against the hordes of German troops that desolated Lorraine. She wept for her husband's captivity, and knew not where to seek for aid to procure his release. In this extremity she had recourse to Conrad, Bishop of Metz, who had always been the fast friend of Theobald, and possessed great wealth. The bishop yielded to her solicitations, and what the force of arms could not wrest from Frederick, the power of gold performed. He consented to set Theobald at liberty and grant him peace, on payment of the sum of twelve hundred livres, "monnoie de forts."*

The time was now come when, after all his misfortunes, the Duke of Lorraine hoped, in the arms of Gertrude, to bid defiance to his evil star, but still it shed its lurid light upon his track. The hatred of Frederick followed him as he bent his steps homewards, and again it assumed the guise of treachery. The duke had reached the Rhine on his way to Lor-

* Dom Calmet.

rairie, when, halting for the night, an adventure, which he deemed an accident, befel him. A lady, apparelled and attended as might become one entitled to carry hawk on glove and ride an ambling palfrey, and moreover of surpassing beauty, presented herself at the hostelry where the duke was staying. She feigned great surprise at finding that the house was occupied where she had purposed passing the night; and, in the spirit of the age, which granted everything to a lady's lightest wish, the duke placed himself entirely at her disposition, and invited her to share the supper which was in preparation. The lady, after a little hesitation, accepted the offer, and during the repast availed herself of the opportunity which she had been seeking ever since Theobald left Würzburg. Hers was no casual encounter with the duke; she was an emissary of the King of the Romans, and had dogged his footsteps for many days. The time was now come for accomplishing the murderous designs of Frederick, and the unsuspecting Theobald received from her hands a poisoned cup, with which the feast was crowned. In the stillness of the night she quitted the place, and left the duke to languish beneath the slow but certain effect of the poison.* In a short time its consequences became

* *Vide* Ducange—art. “Sodaria.” “Quamdam meretricem, quam Sodariam vocant, post Ducem direxit.”—Chronic. Senoniense, lib. 3, cap. ult. Dom Calmet ascribes the duke's death to jealousy, and calls the lady by the name that implied her calling. He says:—“Lorsqu' il eut passé le Rhin, une courtisane, nommé *Sodaria*, qu' il avoit connu en Allemagne, étant venu le joindre, comme ne pouvant se separer de sa

apparent, in the gradual wasting of his frame and diminution of his strength. He reached Nancy, and again beheld his adored Gertrude, but the hand of death was on him: he lingered for some weeks, and then died in the arms of his afflicted and desolate wife.

“Who is there,” says an historian whom we have already quoted, “but must lament the untimely fate of



so accomplished a knight, whose career was so full of promise? This valiant prince, so zealous in the cause of religion and justice, and whose views for the prosperity of his dominions were so enlarged, died in the flower of his

age, without leaving an heir to his body. It is thus that Providence often sports with those designs of men which appear the best concerted.”

The grief into which Gertrude was plunged, on the death of her kind and affectionate husband, was excessive. She gave way to it uncontrolled, for the heart of the Duchess Agnes was too deeply wounded by the same blow to enable her to offer consolation. Nancy

personne, lui fit avaler *un poison lent*, après quoi elle disparut.” If, however, jealousy had been the motive, it is more probable that she would have had recourse to a *quick* rather than a *slow* poison; that he might never again meet his wife. Revenge, such as Frederick sought, works willingly by slow degrees. I think, therefore, that Dom Calmet’s version of the story is scarcely the authentic one.

had been assigned as her dower and place of residence, but she resolved rather to seek the charming valley in which she had passed her infancy, and live once more beneath the turrets of Moha. Resisting, therefore, the kind importunities of her relatives, who would gladly have retained her in Lorraine, Gertrude returned to the banks of the Mehaigne, the remembrance of whose verdant glades had always haunted her like some happy vision. Alas! in dreams of happiness, never realised, Gertrude's life passed on till its close!

Her return to Moha was the cause of great joy to all her vassals; the family name had long been endeared to the country, and under the sway of one so gentle and so good as the sorrowing duchess,—a widow at sixteen,—her retainers had little to fear for their future welfare. The life she led was a solitary one, her only visitors being the good Bishop of Liége, who had so nobly defended her patrimony, and her near relations, the Countess of Neufchâteau and her daughter Alide. It was in vain that the nobles of the Hesbaye sought admission to the castle of Moha, or strove by the splendour of their feasts, to withdraw her from her retirement. Their courtesies were as courteously declined, and the widowed duchess continued to live in quiet if not in content.

But a circumstance at length occurred which awoke Gertrude from her dream of tranquillity, and gave an entirely different direction to her thoughts. Amongst a packet of letters which she one day received from the

Duchess Agnes of Lorraine, was one from Conrad, Bishop of Metz, who had proved so warm a friend to her late husband. After dwelling upon the misfortunes which she had endured, the letter went on to say:—

“If anything can alleviate the bitterness of your regrets, it is, I trust, the assurance that your sorrows and the resignation which you have shown, have gained you the esteem of all who have heard your name. Amongst those who have visited Lorraine, since the death of your husband, has been the Count of Champagne; he arrived in Metz only a few days after your departure, and was much grieved to find that you were gone,—the more so as his desire to offer you consolation, which the ties of consanguinity permitted at the court of Lorraine, could not with propriety be rendered in your castle of Moha. He returned almost immediately to Provins, where he appears to have remained almost entirely since his first abrupt departure from his uncle’s court. We hear that his sole occupation consists in cultivating that art whose exercise has already made him so famous. You owe him some consideration for the affectionate manner in which he spoke of you.”

Thibaut, then, had not forgotten his early passion. He had hastened to Lorraine to calm her grief and share her sorrows! He had spoken of her with interest! He had been grieved at her departure! Could it be true that Thibaut, indeed, loved her still,—her who had wed another?

It was no longer treason in Gertrude to encourage

ideas which conjured up the image of former love. She had paid the debt of obedience to her father's will; she had, at whatever cost, fulfilled the promises made by herself; she had honoured and wept over the unfortunate Duke of Lorraine, and once again she was free, without disrespect to his memory, to yield up her heart to its first possessor. Everything that Conrad had written betokened that Thibaut still remembered her, and she knew by her own heart that *memory is love in absence*.

Time wore on, and Gertrude received no further direct tidings of Count Thibaut. The prescribed period of widowhood was past, and yet he neither sent nor came. It was said that he still held his castle at Provins, where it was rumoured he had caused his verses to be graven on its walls and windows; but no more positive indication of his former love reached the châtelaine of Moha, and her heart began to sink beneath the sickness of hope deferred.

One day when Gertrude was seated at a little turret window, which commanded the view of the approach to Moha, the clattering hoofs of a steel-clad horseman were heard on the drawbridge, and, looking up, the châtelaine recognised the pennon of the Bishop of Liége. It was a messenger from Hugues de Pierrepont bearing a letter, in which he craved permission to visit her on the morrow, and dine at the castle, bringing with him a noble stranger, who was now staying with him.

Gertrude's heart promptly suggested who the noble stranger might be, but she restrained her joy while she replied with all reverence to the bishop, that whatever her castle afforded was ever at his command; then, dismissing the messenger with an ample largess, she abandoned herself to the fondest and most flattering anticipations.

Her long-cherished hopes were realised. It was yet early on the following day when the Bishop of Liége arrived at Moha, attended by a splended train, amongst whom were the Counts of Looz and Warfusée, the Dame de Haneffe, Alide de Neufchâteau, and others of her friends; but Gertrude's eye sought only one form amid the gay assemblage, and there, conspicuous above all, in her estimation, rode Thibaut, Comte de Champagne. Before the close of the solemn banquet, which was that day held at Moha, Count Thibaut had secured the promise of Gertrude's hand, and the last health that was drunk before the guests departed, was that of the future Countess of Champagne.

The conditions of the contract were drawn up without delay,—the marriage was celebrated in the castle of Moha,—and Thibaut and Gertrude set out immediately for Provins.

At length Gertrude had achieved the object of her dearest wishes. She was wedded to the one whom her young heart had first chosen;—he possessed every external quality that could gladden the eye, and excite

the admiration of the world ; and the cultivation of his mind appeared to promise that all resembled them within. But Gertrude of Moha was not the first to discover that a marriage of love is not invariably the happiest. For the first year of their union not a cloud arose to shadow the brightness of their hours ; but, as if he had merely sought a new sensation, dependent on no fixed principle for its endurance, at the expiration of that period his affections towards Gertrude became estranged, his manners grew cold, his periods of absence frequent. It may be that Thibaut who, besides his illustrious descent, which he traced to Charlemagne, had made a name for himself in an art that began to be esteemed no less than the profession of arms, was disappointed to find himself childless ; or, perhaps, the natural inconstancy of his disposition prevailed, for the judgment that has been passed upon him appears, when we consider the various acts of his life, to be a just one.

“ Nul homme n'eut moins de constance dans ses projets et dans ses entreprises, dans ses haines comme dans ses affections.”*

* It would seem as if the creed of Thibaut de Champagne, in regard to the marriage vow, had been literally founded upon the judgment rendered by his ancestress, the Countess of Champagne, at the famous Court of Love, which was held in the middle of the twelfth century. When the question was formally put, whether true love could exist between married people, the Countess answered :—“ L'amour ne peut étendre ses droits sur des personnes mariées ; car les amans s'aiment et se livrent volontairement : les époux sont tenus par devoir de ne se refuser rien l'un à l'autre ; ”—“ Biographie Universelle ”—art. Thibaut.

But whatever the motive that influenced him, its effects were sufficiently plain. On a heart like that of Gertrude, formed for tenderness and love, and keenly alive to coldness and neglect, the estrangement of Thibaut fell with withering force. She questioned herself to discover the painful cause, but in the rectitude of her own mind and the truth of her affection, she found no subject for reproach ; she then with tears besought an explanation from her husband, but her inquiries were at first eluded, and afterwards coldly repelled. At last, the fatal blow was struck, and Thibaut reproached her with sterility, adding—as the sure precursor of his acts—that plea which cruelty had so often sheltered itself behind, that they had been married within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity.

It was enough for Gertrude ; she saw her fate. It was evident that Thibaut intended to repudiate her. There were none to say him nay, for the Church sanctioned the deed. The performance of a hollow penance could release him from ties that had become hateful ; and the accomplished knight,—the loyal gentleman,—the tender hearted poet,—the adoring lover,—could avail himself of such means to break a heart, whose only fault was loving him.

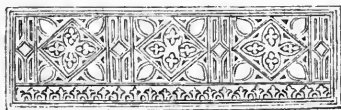
The divorce between the Count and Countess accordingly took place,* and Gertrude returned to Moha to die !

* “ *Quam tamen ventilatâ postmodum affinitate.*”—Chronicle of Alberic des Trois Fontaines.

She had only attained the twenty-first year of her age, when her sorrows were ended in the grave.

Count Thibaut survived to marry the Lady Agnes de Beaujeu, from whom after a time he was alike released by divorce. His third wife was Margaret of Bourbon, who brought him children. The finger of suspicion was pointed at him on the death of Louis the Eighth of France, and scandal had been busy with his name and the fair fame of Blanche of Castille. He died thirty years after Gertrude de Moha, and many believe by poison.

The castle of Moha was destroyed by the Hutois in 1376, but the memory of its lovely châtelaine has not perished with her dust.



CHAPTER VIII.

Scenery of the Mehaigne—The Sire de Fallais—The Sire de Fumal—Marie de Fumal—Collard Baldin—The Casting of the Pear—Procession to St. Sauveur.—The Pilgrimage—Insolence of Baldin—Preparations for Marie's Marriage—The Rescue—Death of Baldin—Marriage of Richard and Marie—Treason of Henry of Gueldres—Richard's Vigilance—Discomfiture of the Bishop.—The Field of Dammartin—The Sire de War-
emme—De Hemrcourt and his Steed—The Combatants—Preparations for the Fight—The Battle.



THE scenery of the Mehaigne is extremely beautiful. Immediately opposite Moha the rocks rise abruptly in dark, naked masses above the river, whose turbulent waters fret and foam at their base. Higher up the valley assumes a more sylvan character,—thick woods wave upon the heights, and rich meadows of emerald brightness are spread below; but the river is everywhere the same rapid, impetuous stream.

As we were desirous of exploring as much as could be seen in a long summer's day, we continued our course beside the Mehaigne for four or five miles, until we reached the villages of Fumal and Fallais, the first on the right bank, the second on the left. The situation of these villages is highly picturesque, and to the ancient châteaux belonging to them, some *débris* of

which still exist, is attached a legend, which independently of its illustrating a curious local custom, may perhaps afford some interest.

About the year 1255, there dwelt at Fallais a noble knight, named Richard, the son of Count Arnold, the lord of Beaufort sur Meuse. He was young, handsome, and brave, and delighted in the military pastimes of the age, no less than in its sterner occupations. He was equally ready to splinter a lance for a fair lady's smile, as to arm in defence of his country; and to these chivalrous qualities he added the rarer one of being the friend and protector of the poor. His name was consequently revered throughout the Hesbaye.

It was far different with the fierce châtelain of Fumal whose towers rose within sight of those of Fallais. He was as rapacious and violent as the Sire Richard was kind and courteous; he gave no thought to the poor but to oppress them, and cared for nothing but his own gratification, passing his time in hunting while abroad, and in feasting and carousing at home. His wife, of a noble race, had been sacrificed to him on account of his wealth, but his coarse and brutal habits soon broke her heart, and when she died she left two children, a son and a daughter, both of tender age, though with a few years difference between them.

Philip, the elder, brought up, or rather left uneducated, by his father, acquired at an early age the habits of those who surrounded him, and became, like them, licentious, violent, and dangerous. He soon discovered

that the dissipated life of the Sire de Fumal would inevitably waste his inheritance, and being of a roving, venturous disposition, he resolved to seek a fortune for himself elsewhere, and for this purpose entered into the service of Henry of Gueldres, Bishop of Liége,—a prince whose vicious character attracted rather than repelled him.

Marie de Fumal was in all things the opposite of her brother,—pious, charitable, and simple: she owed much to the tender care of her nurse, Marguérîte, a kind, good woman, who watched over her with a mother's solicitude. Isolated with her in a remote part of the château, the pursuits of Marie were tranquil and uninterrupted; the female accomplishments of the age were few, but their acquirement was fortunately within her reach, and by the time she had attained her eighteenth year, her mind had developed charms as attractive as those of her person.

This calm, happy life was not, however, destined to endure; it was broken in upon by the presence of a stranger at Fumal, whom Marie soon learnt to look upon with fear and aversion. This intruder was the Sire Collard Baldin, of Hosden, a lordship on which the fief of Fumal was dependent—a circumstance which, combined with others, gave him authority over the Châtelain of Fumal.

Baldin was a man of about forty years of age; he had passed his time chiefly in foreign countries, from whence he seemed to have returned imbued with every

vice. The first sight of Marie inspired him with a violent passion, which he resolved, at every risk, to gratify, and his visits to the château became more and more frequent. Not only were his tastes and habits those of the Sire de Fumal, but the large sums of money which he had lent to the latter, gave him an all-powerful influence, and placed everything at his disposal; an authority which he was not slow to exercise. It was in vain that Marie represented to her father the discomfort which was thus created; he was indifferent to her complaints, and she was compelled to endure the arrogance and insolence of Baldin, without the means of redress. He, who now saw himself virtually lord and master of Fumal, did not stop here; but urged his addresses to Marie in a tone and manner that excited both indignation and dread.

At this period in the history of Fumal, the season arrived for the celebration of a singular custom of the country, called the "Casting of the Pear;" a custom which was not discontinued until the close of the last century.*

About a mile from Fumal, on the left bank of the Mehaigne, between Fallais and Vieux-Waleffe and the hamlets of Pitet and Drée, is a valley, in the midst of which rises a high rock, which separated the jurisdictions of Fallais and Warnant. The limits of the two communes were so uncertain as to render an

* "La Jetée de la Poire."

annual ceremony necessary to determine them. It began with a grand mass in each of the village churches; and then all the inhabitants, formed in procession, marched to the sound of cymbal and trumpet, till they reached the rock, on the summit of which were planted the banners of Fallais and Warrant; and where a young man stood, dressed in the gayest colours, and chosen for his strength and agility from the flower of the peasantry. To him was presented, on a trencher, a thick slice of a pear or an apple, which he took, and, turning towards the east, threw it as far as he could. The spot where it fell formed the boundary for the next year between the two communes.

It was not alone the ceremony of casting the pear, that attracted such numbers to the spot; the day was one of religious solemnity, celebrated by pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin, in the chapel of St. Sauveur, who was specially prayed to on this occasion. High and low mixed freely in the procession, no distinctions of rank being made; and another peculiarity was observable—the person who offered up prayers always associated eight others in the intercession; an act which was called a *neuvaine*.

On the day on which this ceremony took place, in the year 1255, Marie de Fumal was amongst the first to offer her vows to the Virgin, surrounded by a crowd of young and ardent devotees, whose choral hymns awoke the echoes of the village as they slowly moved

towards the antique chapel. There were many youths of noble lineage who strove to touch the heart of the beautiful Marie, but they all had sighed in vain; she had never yet seen one to whom she could freely give her affections; but her time at length was come.

It chanced that Richard de Fallais had returned from a distant expedition only the night before the *Jetée*, and hearing that it was about to take place, resolved to witness it. His sudden presence caused a great sensation; he was welcomed enthusiastically by all, and the frankness and grace of his demeanour corresponded with the cordiality of his reception. He was not seen without emotion by Marie, for she contrasted his appearance and the evident joy of his friends at seeing him, with the evil reports which her father's companions had spread respecting him; and her embarrassment increased when he came to ask her hand for the dance. What happened may easily be imagined, and needs few words to tell. Richard de Fallais and Marie de Fumal fell deeply in love, and the summer day on which they met was the happiest that either had yet known.

If her home had previously been distasteful to her, how much more so did it now become; for there, at every moment, she was exposed to the persecutions of Baldin, who, having heard of the attentions of Richard de Fallais, dared even to utter threats, declaring that in spite of herself he would force her to be his wife before many days were over. Sunk in the

lowest stage of debauchery, the Sire de Fumal, who had no will but of the dissolute companion of his pleasure, yielded a ready assent to the demand which Baldin made for his daughter's hand, and it was agreed that the marriage ceremony should take place at Hosden.

Baldin was absent for three days, making the necessary preparations. On the evening of his return to Fumal, he abruptly announced to her that it was her father's order to get ready to set out on the following morning for Hosden. It was in vain that Marie wept, Baldin was inflexible; nor would he even suffer her to see the Sire de Fumal. He took occasion, also, to dismiss from her service the faithful Margu rite, who had so long attended her; but it was in an evil hour that he did so, for, availing herself of her liberty, she made her way that same night to Fallais, to tell the impending fate of the Ch telaine Marie to the enamoured Richard. The gallant knight hesitated not a moment what course to adopt. Calling for his arms, he threw himself on his steed, and, followed only by one squire, he galloped off towards Hosden, and by daybreak reached the *Bruy re de Tilleul*, where he paused to await the arrival of the recreant who was bearing away his beloved Marie.

It was not long before he descried a party of men-at-arms, escorting a closed litter, and at their head rode one in complete armour, whom Richard de Fallais at once recognised as the Sire de Hosden. The moment

he saw him approach he set spurs to his horse, and, galloping up, in a loud voice commanded Baldin to stop and declare who that litter contained.

“By what right,” returned Baldin, “do you interrupt my progress; and what matters it to you whom I convey?”

“It matters much,” said Richard; “and by our Lady of Andenne I will know this moment:” and, riding up to the litter, he heard the voice of Marie de Fumal, calling upon him for protection.

“You hear, Baldin,” exclaimed the knight, “it is the daughter of the Châtelain de Fumal, who cries to me for aid; no lady ever yet appealed to Richard de Beaufort in vain, and least of all shall she.”

“Traitor,” exclaimed the Sire de Hosden, trembling with rage, “she is my affianced bride—her father has given her to me—I will part with her only with life:” and, uttering these words, Baldin set lance in rest, and rushed upon the Sire de Fallais.

Richard coolly awaited the shock: with one hand he thrust aside the wavering ill-directed weapon; and, as Baldin passed him in his career, he rose in his stirrups, and with his gauntleted hand dealt him so heavy a blow on the helm, that he rolled him in the dust, from whence he never rose, for his neck was broken in the fall.

The men-at-arms stood dismayed when they witnessed the marvellous prowess of the Sire de Fallais. He left them to the care of the body, and commanded

the bearers of the litter to accompany him to the castle of Fallais. He had little difficulty in consoling Marie for the loss of her destined husband ; nor was it with aversion that she listened to the suit which he preferred. After a short rest at Fallais, he conducted her to the convent of Solière, and placed her under the care of the abbess, until the celebration of their nuptials ; an event which was deferred for a time by the death of the Sire de Fumal, the victim of intemperance.

But the anxieties of the Sire de Fallais and his lovely wife did not end with their marriage. Their happiness and the lady's beauty became the common theme, and at length reached the ears of Henry of Gueldres, whose character closely resembled that of our own Henry the Eighth. He was desirous of satisfying himself if all that was said of her loveliness were true, and if so, of winning her to his will. There was, however, a great difficulty in his obtaining access to the château of Fallais, for the Sire Richard was no partisan of his, but belonged to the popular side. He accordingly addressed himself to Philip de Fumal, and won him over by gifts and favours to assist his views. Richard received his suzerain coldly, but the bishop seemed not to notice it ; he soon found that fame had not spoken too highly of the charms of the young châtelaine, and at once acknowledged himself their slave. He frequently made himself the guest of the Sire de Fallais, but was careful, at first, in preventing

the motive of his visits from transpiring. One day, however, heated with wine and stimulated by the flatteries of his companions, he made the libertine exploits of his life the subject of boastful discourse, and said enough to put one far less watchful than Richard de Fallais on his guard. It was, therefore, with deep but dissembled suspicion that he heard the bishop announce to him, shortly afterwards, that he had nominated him provost of the city of Bouillon, where his presence, he said, was immediately necessary, and whither he ordered him to repair on the following day.

Richard made no reply, but had no intention to obey the mandate, and remained quietly at Fallais. Three days elapsed, and the bishop, thinking the coast was clear, presented himself at the château. He was greatly irritated at finding the châtelain still there, and demanded why he had not gone to Bouillon.

“ Instead of going to Bouillon,” replied Richard, “ know, bishop, that I remain here to take care of my wife. Dissimulate as you may, beau sire, be assured of this, that you will never see her again. Keep your office of provost: I renounce it. I am rich enough to be indifferent to your gifts.”

The bishop, in a furious rage, rode away from Fallais, vowing to God that he would level the walls to the ground. He attempted, indeed, to make good his word, and marched against it with a strong body of troops; but the people of Huy, who were the fast friends of their *Franc-Bourgeois*, the Sire Richard,

rose at once in his favour, and the bishop was obliged to raise the siege. It was characteristic of the age that when Henry of Gueldres gave orders for breaking up his camp, the Châtelain de Fallais appeared at one of the windows of his castle, and, leaning out, exclaimed, in a tone of derision, "What, my lord, are you going away, leaving Sire Richard to sing in his cage, beside the fair lady whom you covet so much?"

The bishop uttered not a word, but took the road direct to Liège.*

The Sire de Fallais and his wife lived henceforward without molestation. Two sons and a daughter were born to them; the former sustained their father's line, the latter finished her days in the cloisters of the abbey of Val Nôtre Dame.

We returned to Huy by the paths that cross the table-land above the left bank of the Mehaigne, and, on our way, caught sight of the plain of Dammartin, whereon was fought, in 1325, the great battle between the powerful factions of the Awans and the Waroux, which ended in the complete discomfiture of the latter. It was not a simple feud, but one widely embraced; for there is not an ancient family in the district of the Hesbaye that had not an ancestor in the field. The leader of the Awans was the redoubtable Châtelain of Wareme, a man of such gigantic bulk, that, when he was encased in his armour, it required the assistance of

* Chronique de Jean d' Outremeuse.

two squires to lift him into his saddle. His friends expressed to him their fear that he was too heavily armed, but De Waremmé replied, "Have no fear, for I swear to you, by God and St. George, that since it has required two men to seat me on my good steed Moreal, it shall take at least four to make me get off again:" and this was no idle vaunt, as the events of the day proved.

Another gigantic warrior who fought for the Awans was the Sire de Hemricourt, an ancestor of the noble chronicler, whom we have had frequent occasion to quote. His strength of limb and massiveness of frame were such, that, except his stirrup-leathers broke, it was impossible to unhorse him; and, in confirmation of his prowess, the following story is told:—Being engaged as one of fifty knights chosen to fight on the side of the King of Sicily, against an equal party for the King of Arragon, a war-horse was sent to him by the king to ride on the day of battle. But Hemricourt, like the champion of Israel in the choice of his weapons, would not trust his steed till he had tried him. He therefore mounted, and, accompanied by some friends and attendants, rode out into the country, and, coming to a large lime-tree, he got off his horse, and made his squires fasten the girths as he directed. He then mounted again, and having had his legs tightly fastened to the girths, he seized a thick branch of the tree with his right hand, and drove his spurs into his courser's flanks, but in spite of all its

efforts the horse was unable to get away.* Hemricourt, therefore, sent back the animal to the king, saying, that it wanted both strength and courage, and was dull to the spur. The king then sent him another, which he submitted to the same test, and the contest between man and horse was long and violent. At length, owing to the girths and the *poitrail* breaking, the *destrier* got away, leaving the knight and his saddle suspended from the tree. This horse the Sire de Hemricourt kept, though an ignominious fate awaited it. When the knight and his associates came to the place appointed for the combat, the Arragonese did not appear, and the King of Sicily, taking advantage of the circumstance, meanly required that the horses should all be returned. When the messenger came to De Hemricourt, "What," cried he, "has the king, your master, only lent me this carrion † to defend his honour at the risk of my life,—I, who am no subject of his? Is it thus he shows his gratitude? By the eyes of God he shall have his present back again, but in such a state that no knight shall ever mount him again with honour!" So saying, he had the horse brought out of the stable, and, with his own hands cutting off his mane and tail, desired the groom to lead him away.

There were also amongst the knights who fought

* Mais onkues le dyestrier ne soy pout parler ne le dit suignor de forchier ne departir du tilhoul."—"Miroir des Nobles de la Hesbaye."

† "Coronge,"—charogne.

on the same side, two whom circumstances rendered remarkable—these were the Seigneur de Clermont, and the aged Wilkar d'Awans, both of whom were blind, but who, nevertheless, were resolved to share in the common danger.

An equally strong impulse moved the partisans of the Waroux, for in the ranks of the latter were seen the Sire de St. Servais, who had lost the use of both hands and one foot, and was fastened in his saddle. The Waroux were led by the Sire de Hermalle, the ruins of whose castle are still to be seen on the right bank of the Meuse, a little below Huy. Two hundred and seventy knights and a large body of retainers constituted the force of the Awans: the chivalry of the Waroux amounted to three hundred and fifty.

The two armies were drawn up on the plain of Dammartin, with standards displayed and pennons floating in the air. A deep silence prevailed; each knight was bareheaded, his helmet hanging to his saddle-bow until the signal for the fight should be given, when two horsemen were seen spurring across the plain. They rode up hastily between the opposed ranks, and, in the name of the Prince-Bishop of Liège, prohibited the fight, proclaiming what was called a *quarantaine*, or truce, for forty days. They might as well have cast their proclamation to the winds. It seemed indeed as if this had been the signal expected, for at the sound of the heralds' voices every knight put on his helmet, laid lance in rest, and dashed forward

against the foe. The shock was terrible, and many fell to the ground who never rose again. In the *melée* that ensued the Sire de Hermalle was slain on one side, and the two brothers of the Châtelain de Waremme on the other. Many more noble knights lost their lives in this fatal fight, which lasted till the close of day, and but for the defection of the lords of Ville and Berloz, who drew off their forces, the issue might have been doubtful; but the Waroux, weakened by this loss, at length gave way, leaving sixty-five knights dead on the field of battle, besides an uncounted number of *manans*, "*que ne vallaient le parler!*"





CHATEAU DE BEAUFORT.

CHAPTER IX.

The Chateau de Beaufort—La Guerre de la Vache—Destruction of Beaufort—Andenne—Ancient Inscription—Rocks of Samson—Tomb of Sybilla of Lusignan—Tomb of the Sire de Goumesnie—Abbey of Marche les Dames—Namur.



THE scenery after leaving Huy increases in beauty; the features of the country assume a grander character, the heights are loftier and their crests more broken, and the more frequent windings of the Meuse offer greater variety in the landscape. The road now runs on the right bank of the river, and soon passes beneath the

high rock on which are seen the ruins of the once famous château de Beaufort, the cradle of the four illustrious families of Fallais, Goesne, Spontin, and Celles. Beaufort was formerly a stronghold of great importance, as its commanding position and the extent of the walls that still remain sufficiently testify. There are deep, subterraneous passages below, reaching as far as the Meuse, which were no doubt used for *sortie* and retreat by the garrison of the castle. In one of these passages is a large hall with seats cut out of the solid rock, where flows a fountain of delicious water. Beyond this point it is dangerous to explore, owing to the foulness of the air which extinguishes the lights. The superstition of the peasants assigns to this impenetrable cavern the abode of the *Chèvre d'Or*. The castle sustained many sieges in its time. The most remarkable was that which it underwent in the course of the memorable war which is known by the name of the "*Guerre de la Vache*." It originated, as its name implies, in a quarrel for a cow.

Andenne, which is higher up the Meuse, was a celebrated place for tournaments. In the year 1275 a very splendid one was held there, at which were present the Comte de Namur, his brother Godefroid de Courtenay, the Duke of Brabant, the Counts of Luxembourg and of Bar, and a great part of the nobility of the country.

Amongst the spectators attracted hither was one Rigaud de Corbion, an inhabitant of Ciney, a town in

the Condroz, who, seeing a peasant from a neighbouring village pass by, leading a cow, which he recognised as having been stolen from Ciney on the last market-day, went and informed Jean de Halloy, the high-bailiff of the Condroz, who happened also to be present at the tournament. As Andenne was out of his jurisdiction, he had no present power to arrest the thief; he therefore went to him, and by fair speeches induced him to agree to take back the cow to its owner, promising him faithfully, if he did so, that no harm should happen to him. The peasant trusted to the high-bailiff's word, and set forth with the cow; but no sooner had he entered the territory of the Condroz than he was arrested, condemned, and hung upon the spot.

The village of Jallain, to which the unfortunate peasant belonged, formed part of the lordship of the Sire Jean de Goesne, the brother of Henri de Beaufort; and he, enraged at the duplicity of the high bailiff, and the infraction of his own rights as *suzerain*, complained to Jean d'Enghien, then Prince-Bishop of Liège. The bishop gave him no redress, and Jean de Goesne therefore took the law into his own hands; and associating with him his brothers of Beaufort and Fallais, his cousins the lords of Spontin and Celles, and numerous friends beside, he ravaged the Condroz as far as the gates of Ciney. The Bishop of Liège, irritated at the audacity of his great vassals, raised a large force and invested the château of Fallais; while the people

of Huy besieged Beaufort, and the Bailiff of the Condroz attacked and burnt the château de Goesne, at Tihange-le-Marets. These proceedings, joined to the appeals which were made to them, induced the Counts of Namur and Luxembourg and the Duke of Brabant to take up arms for the Beauforts, and the war became general. It lasted for three years, in the course of which not less than thirty thousand men lost their lives—for the sake of a cow !

Peace was at length restored through the intervention of Philippe le Hardi.

The destruction of the château de Beaufort occurred nearly two centuries later, when, holding out for the Burgundian party, it was surprised by the Hutois, sacked, burnt, and dismantled. *

Beneath the shadow of woods which thickly clothe the steep sides of the mountains, and beside the murmuring waters of the Meuse, we continued our course till we reached Andenelle, remarking on the other side of the river the pretty village and shining quarries of Seilles. Andenelle is a hamlet on the Meuse, and about a quarter of a league inland lies Andenne, as famous now for its pipes and pottery, as formerly for its passages of arms, when spears and shields seemed scarcely less fragile. Here stood in ancient days a

† “ Le surprendrent, le bruslerent, et demantelèrent, en sorte que l'on voit à present, qui nous fait voir de quelle rage et animosité noz ancestres estoient portez contre leurs ennemis.”—Mélart. Hist. de Huy.

celebrated abbey, founded in 686 by St. Begge, the daughter of Pepin of Landen. The chapter of Andenne was one of those, of which several examples existed in this part of the country, composed of men and women. It consisted of thirty canonesses and ten canons, it being requisite that the ladies should be of noble birth. It was ruled by a provost and an abbess. In 1785 the establishment was, by order of the Emperor Joseph the Second, transferred to that of Moustier at Namur. There are no remains now of the ancient abbey, but a singular monument still exists in the faubourg of Hors-Seille, at Andenne. It is called the "*Fontaine de l'Ours*," where, on a kind of terminus representing the head of a bear, or rather that of a wild-boar, may with difficulty be deciphered the following inscription:—

CHARLES: MARTEL: DE: PEPIN: II: FILZ: NATUREL: EN: LAN
SEPT: CENT: PLUS: ME: MIST: IGY: A: MORE: CRUEL.

A league beyond Andenelle is Sclayn, one of the prettiest villages on the Meuse, and here we proceeded on foot, wishing to loiter beneath the magnificent rocks that border the way as far as the ruins of Samson. It is in this part of the Valley of the Meuse that the peculiar character imparted by the castellated forms of its numerous crags becomes first apparent. Broken into separate masses and standing out in high relief against the clear blue sky, with fissures like "refts of ruin," it is impossible at a distance to distinguish them from the gray walls of feudal times, and the deception is the more natural from the frequent

apparition of ruined towers and battlements throughout the valley. At Samson, where the rocks lie scattered in the most picturesque groups, are the remains of one of the oldest castles to be found in the country. It is said by some that the foundations originally supported a temple dedicated to Mercury, the work of the Romans; others assert that the building rose in the time of the early Frankish kings. Its antiquity is, however, indisputable, and as far back as the twelfth century we find that the lordship was hereditary in the family of Lusignan, for in the chapel of the Priory of Namèche, on the opposite side of the Meuse, was formerly to be seen the tomb of Sybilla de Lusignan, the sister of Baldwin the Fourth, King of Jerusalem, and wife of Guy de Lusignan. On the tomb was a female figure carved in blue-stone, in full costume, with a purse at her waist, an antique head-dress (the width of the stone), and a little dog at her feet. Round the edge of the tomb was the following inscription:—

ICQ : GISC : LY : DROITE : BRETAINE : CHATELAIN : DE
 SANSON : RI : JUST : DEL : LIGNAGE : LI : ROY : DE
 JERUSALEM : POTS : POR : LAIR : RE
 DEUS : CONSOLE.

Sybilla died in the castle of Samson, and was buried in the priory at Namèche, but when that building fell into decay in 1690, her remains were transferred to the parish church, where the effigy is still to be seen. Another sepulchral monument in the same chapel attested the hereditary title of Châtelain

of Samson. It was to the memory of the Sire de Goumesnie, who was represented armed *cap-à-pied*, with a long sword in his right hand, and his left resting on a shield bearing a cross. The epitaph ran thus:—

CY : GIST : MESSIRE : NORES : DE : GOUMESNIE : RI
 JUST : CASTELLAIN : IRETABLES : DE : SAMSON
 SY : TRESPASSA : EN : LAN : DEL : INCARNATION
 NOSTRE : SEIGNEUR : MCCC : LXXXIIII
 APRES : LA : NOSTRE : DAME
 PRIEZ : POR : L'AME.*

The moon rose before we left Samson, and gave us light enough to trace distinctly the outline of the modern château of Marche les Dames, at the foot of the high rocks which give so imposing a character to the left bank of the Meuse, below Namur. This building, the property of the Duke d'Arenberg, stands on the site of an old abbey, which was founded by a number of ladies whose husbands had gone to fight for the holy sepulchre. Thither they retired, addicting themselves solely to religious exercises, and offering up constant prayers for the success of the arms of the Christians in Syria. As the church of Nôtre Dame de Marche was then in a very dilapidated state, these pious ladies built a new church, which was consecrated on the 17th of January, 1103, by the suffragan of Liège, in presence of Godefroid, Count of Namur, the Comte de Namèche, and other knights and nobles.

* This epitaph is preserved in the chronicle of Paul de Croonedael, in the "Monuments pour Servir à l'Histoire des Provinces de Namur, de Hainaut, et de Luxembourg," par le Baron de Reiffenberg. —Brussels, 1844.

Several of the ladies were afterwards happily reunited to their husbands, on their safe return from the Holy Land ; but the widows of those who died for the Cross remained faithful to their resolve of secluding themselves from the world, and passed the rest of their days in the abbey. It was not until the year 1440 that it was expressly dedicated to a religious community, when the nuns of the order of Citeaux were formally installed at Marche les Dames, which owes its name to the motive which prompted its founders.

It was nearly midnight when, after passing through the faubourg of Jambes, we crossed the bridge at Namur, immediately under the walls of the citadel, and drove to the Hotel de Harscamp.





CHAPTER X.

Namur—The Blancq' Klocq'—View on the Sambre—The Stilt-Fighters—The Melans and the Avresses—The Field of Battle—The Canon of St. Aubain—Poem on Stilt-Fighting—Rules of the Combat—The Brigades—Edicts against the Stilters—Revival of the Games—The last Fight—Renewed Prohibition—Attempts at Revival—The Bleus and Nankinets—The last Exhibition.



THE situation of Namur, at the confluence of the Meuse and Sambre, is very fine; but the city itself does not contain much that is attractive,—at least for those who visit Belgium in the expectation of meeting everywhere with fine pictures and quaint architecture. It once boasted a

noble Gothic cathedral, dedicated to Our Lady ; but this last vestige of antiquity falling into decay, was demolished, and the church of St. Aubain, rebuilt in 1767, was raised to the dignity of metropolitan. The period at which it was erected says quite enough to account for the absence of all interest in examining its architecture ; but it contains one object that claims attention,—a slab of marble behind the high altar, beneath which is deposited the heart of Don John of Austria, the hero of Lepanto. There is also a fine mausoleum, erected to the memory of Bishop Pisani de la Gaude, the work of one of the most distinguished amongst Belgian sculptors, Parmentier of Ghent. The church of St. Loup, built by the Jesuits, is, like all the edifices erected by them, profusely decorated with various-coloured marbles of very elaborate workmanship : it also contains some very bad pictures. The collegiate church of St. Peter was once amongst the finest buildings in Namur ; but this, too, was destroyed about a century since, when the French bombarded the city. The church was burnt ; and, with other objects that perished at the same time, was a famous bell, called in Walloon the *Blanco' Klocq'*. This bell, which contained a great deal of silver, was cited for twenty leagues round as the best toned throughout the provinces ; and the inhabitants of Namur held it in such veneration, that they made relics of its fragments. It bore the following inscription :—“ Quand je sonne je fais trembler le cœur de

l'homme,"—signifying that it always tolled at public executions.

There is one part of Namur which still has an air of antiquity, and is certainly picturesque,—the part seen from the bridge which crosses the Sambre, where the numerous balconies and conservatories that overhang the river, and a mill-race somewhat higher up, produce a very pleasing effect. The distant citadel, that crowns the height above Namur, is also seen from this point, and adds greatly to the beauty of the view.

But, if the city contain little that is ancient, and if its general history be comparatively deficient in interest, one local peculiarity which formerly distinguished it, renders a somewhat lengthened detail not inadmissible. The use of stilts, as a general custom, is commonly supposed to have been confined to the wide sandy plains of the Landes, between the Garonne and the Adour, but they have for centuries enjoyed a far greater celebrity at Namur. The frequent inundations of the Meuse and Sambre, which formerly used to flood the whole city, led, doubtless, in the first instance, to their employment; but that which was originally a necessity, became, in the course of time, an amusement, and one that developed singular features. As far back as the eleventh century may be traced the existence of games on stilts; these games gradually assumed a party character, and the players finally resolved themselves into distinct bodies, ready at all times to do battle against each other, even to the peril of life and limb. They

were known as the contending factions of the *Mélans* and the *Avresses*, the former representing the old town, as it existed before its third extension at the commencement of the fifteenth century; and the latter, the faubourgs of Namur and the parts subsequently added. They wore distinguishing colours, those of the *Mélans* being yellow and black, the blazon of the house of Flanders; and those of the *Avresses*, red and white, the colours of the shield of Catharine of Savoy, the mother of Count William the Second, during whose reign the city was extended. Each party had its banner borne by an officer, called the *Alfer*,* whose duty it was to display it from the Hôtel de Ville, during the heat of the contest, encouraging the combatants by their cries, and not unfrequently descending to the arena to share the dangers of the fight.

These combats were conducted with great formality whenever a sovereign or other great personage honoured the city with his presence. The market-place of St. Remy was usually selected as the *champ-clos*, and there the opposing brigades assembled to the number of from fifty to a hundred each, besides those who were called *Souteneurs*, who came into the field to aid their comrades in case of accident, and when disabled to

* Some antiquarians contend that the word *Al-fer* is derived from the Latin, *Aquila-ferens*, bearing the eagle, the old Roman standard. But, admitting this interpretation of the origin of the word, it is more probable that the people of Namur adopted it during the rule of the Spaniards, than inherited it from the remote domination of the Romans, *Alferes* signifying, in Spanish, an ensign.

supply their places. These bodies were regularly marshalled under proper officers, and there being frequently as many as twelve brigades on each side, the number of combatants amounted sometimes to nearly two thousand. Few spectacles could have been more animated than those which were presented in Namur, when these conflicts took place: the whole of the population were present, — every window, roof, and “coign of vantage,” was filled with eager spectators; and amidst the ranks of the stilted warriors might be seen the wives and daughters of the combatants stimulating their husbands, sons, and lovers by their reproaches and exhortations, and giving effect to the stimulus by administering the refreshment of strong waters. It was, in short, a scene of universal excitement, and its influence over the minds of those who shared in it was so great, that, as an instance, a story is yet remembered in Namur, of a certain canon of St. Aubain, who, leaving the field of battle for the cathedral, was so impressed with all he had heard and seen, that for every *amen* and *oremus* which he should have uttered, he substituted the war-cries of “*Mélans*” and “*Avresses*.”

The struggle usually lasted for some hours, until, at length, worn with fatigue, one party declared itself vanquished. The victors then in token of their triumph, did what was technically termed “*lever l'échasse*,” that is to say, hopped upon one stilt while they held the other in their right hands, the drums and

fifes struck up a merry tune, and the troops marched off in as regular order as the casualties of the fight permitted.

A long account of one of these battles is to be found in a poem published anonymously in 1669, but presumed to be by the Baron de Walef, a Liégeois poet of some merit, bearing the title of "Les Echasses," where we read that,

" Sur des bâtons ferrez des hommes vigoureux
Surpassent les géans des siècles fabuleux."

The interest of such a poem is, however, purely local, though the "moving accidents" of the field are vigorously while circumstantially told.

Like the jousts and tournaments of the middle ages, the combats on stilts were regulated by fixed laws, any departure from which was visited by severe censure. Thus, in endeavouring to dismount an antagonist it was only permitted to strike with the elbow, and *pitter*, or strike, with the foot of the stilt against the same part of the adversary's prop. But however loyally the game might be played the risks were many, and broken ribs, that "sport for ladies" in the forest of Arden, were frequently the consequence of the heavy falls which the combatants suffered. Sometimes, when unusually excited, a general cry arose for what was termed the *boute-à-tot*, a word that signifies a duel *à l'outrance*, when the struggle became one of life and death, it being then allowable to strike at will with hand or foot or stilt; or recourse was had to what was

called "*donnant l' avion*," a mode of attack of the most formidable kind, which consisted in charging with the stilt in a horizontal position, and overthrowing all that came in the way.

Several amongst the bodies of the trades gave their names to the brigades to which they belonged. Thus, amongst the *Mélans* were found the brigades of the street-porters, the butchers, the boatmen, the lawyers, (called "*de la Plume*") and the brewers, who were commonly designated "*la Maison du Roi*," in consequence of their occupying the post of honour and wearing the richest habiliments; it was hinted, by-the-bye, that these gay brewers preferred fine clothes to hard blows. Certain streets also furnished their respective quotas to the *Mélans*: the Rue de la Croix sent forth the brigade of Soubise; the Rue du Pont-Spallard, that of the Prince de Ligne; and the square of the Pied du Château, and the neighbouring quarter, the brigade of the Black Grenadiers. Many of the costumes were very splendid: the *Maison du Roi* wore round hats with plumes of white feathers and breeches of red satin, and their leaders were decorated with scarfs of gold or silver tissue; the butchers wore a fur cap; and the brigade of Soubise, a tin helmet, adorned with a red grenade.

On the other side, the *Avresses* recruited their brigades amongst the brickmakers, the tanners, the stone-cutters, the wood-cutters, and others, whose occupations belonged to the suburbs or were pursued outside

the city. The tanners wore white breeches and waistcoats and long red stockings called *hozettes*; the Montagnards, amongst whom were the wood-cutters, &c., appeared in a costume in which the colours of the Scottish plaid were conspicuous; and the brigade of Vedrin added to the gaiety of their apparel a magnificent white banner, on which was figured the image of a cow, in all probability a memorial of the famous *Guerre de la Vache*. There was still another brigade, distinguished less for its costume than its value on the day of battle. It was composed of veterans, who were kept in reserve for important occasions, like Cromwell's Ironsides, or Napoleon's Old Guard; they were called the *Racasseux*.

These details may serve to show how completely the sport of stilting was identified with the inhabitants of Namur; indeed, there was not a single citizen whose name was not enrolled in some brigade; the first thing a boy was taught was how to go on stilts, and in every house were several pair of different dimensions suitable to all ages.

A sport so exciting as stilting, which kept, as it were, an organised body of citizens always on foot, ready, if need were, to turn their skill to their own proper account, in opposition to authority, was of a nature to create mistrust and jealousy in the minds of rulers who followed the system of Spanish or Austrian policy; and accordingly we find that, during the eighteenth century, the magistrates of Namur exerted

themselves to the utmost to bring the custom of stilt-ing into disrepute. In 1732, a blow was aimed at it, in an edict prohibiting the spectators from mingling with the combatants, under the pretext that "the disorders which arose on these occasions proceeded, for the most part, from the indiscreet zeal of quarrelsome men, who threw themselves amongst the ranks of the stilters, inciting them to violence by insults and blows." A few years afterwards, an edict of the 17th of December, 1755, interdicted the stilters from assembling in the market-place of St. Remy, and limited them to the Place Lillon, with a prohibition against passing the refuge of Floreffe; at the same time the amusement was licensed but from the Epiphany till Ash-Wednesday, and then only after the hours of Divine service. Those who infringed this decree were threatened with being seized and taken at once to prison, without any other form of process, and subjected, moreover, to the penalty of a fine of three florins. The military governor of Namur, a certain Baron de Schwartzenburg, whose representations had led to this decree, on his part threatened to fire upon the stilters, if they assembled in front of the guard-houses. Another decree of the 17th of February, in the following year, revoked the verbal permission that had been given for a general combat in the Place Lillon at the approaching carnival, "to prevent the consequences which might arise from dissensions and quarrels."

Not content with these regulations, the magistracy

took other steps, less direct but not less to the purpose. A decree of the 20th of August, 1756, revoked the privilege granted by the Archduke Albert, of admitting beer and other liquors free of duty to the stilt-fighters.* But it was difficult to extirpate a custom that had taken so deep a hold, and the decree of 1755 was so frequently disobeyed, that, in 1766, severer enactments were ordained, suspending all stilt-fighting whatever throughout the year, the pretext for which was the recent death of the Emperor Francis the First. This prohibition was renewed every year, until, on the 9th of February, 1796, a final decree appeared, which was thus worded:—"The mayor and municipal authorities of Namur having been informed that, preparatory to the stilt-fight in which the *Mélans* and *Avresses* were about to engage on Sunday last, in the Place de Gravières, differences of opinions and quarrels arose, which reached such a pitch that they led to serious disorders, in which many were hurt, and the lives of several endangered; have, therefore, in order to prevent the recurrence of similar acts, decreed, that in future no

* The Governor of Namur having learnt that the Archduke Albert, newly arrived in the Low Countries, was about to visit the city, sent a message to inform him, that, on his approaching Namur, he should dispatch to meet him two troops of combatants, who, being neither on foot nor on horseback, would yet display a mode of fighting which he trusted would interest the Prince. Albert was so highly gratified with the exhibition that he asked the stilt-fighters what privilege they desired to have granted, and learning their wishes, he forthwith exempted them from the payment of the duty upon all liquors consumed at their exercises.

Mélans or *Avresses*, whether in the city or without, nor any other person of what quality or condition soever, shall fight, or even mount, on stilts, or appear in them at any time whatever in any part of the city, unless such combats be duly authorised by the municipality, under pain of being immediately apprehended and taken to prison, to be kept there on bread and water for the space of six weeks; revoking to this effect all former edicts which may have permitted, at certain seasons of the year, the indulgence in combats of this nature."

Such was the condition of the latest enactments against stilt-fighting in Namur at the period of the arrival, in 1774, of the Archduke Maximilian, when, to do honour to the prince, it was proposed to entertain him with the spectacle of one of these combats. Many difficulties arose to prevent its accomplishment, but they were finally overcome, and full permission was obtained for the celebration of the stilt-fight,—the last that is worthy of the name.

The Place St. Aubain, in front of the cathedral, was once more selected for the exhibition, and some hundreds of cart-loads of sand were strewed upon the pavement to soften the violence of a fall. A large semi-circular enclosure was formed with posts and ropes, and two companies guarded the entrance. The archduke, travelling under the title of the Count of Burgaw, had arrived in Namur the evening before the combat, and had been met at the extremity of the faubourg by the

magistracy of Namur, accompanied by the brigades of stilters. On the following day, the 31st of May, 1774, after having visited the fortifications, and dined at the palace of the governor, the Prince de Gavre, he proceeded with his suite to the palace of the bishop, where, from the broad balcony that overlooked the square, a perfect view of the mimic field of battle was obtained.

The *Mélans*, who had assembled their forces in the Place St. Remy, were the first to arrive, and entered the arena by the lower part of the Place St. Aubain; the *Avresses*, whose muster had been made in the Place Lillon, soon made their appearance at the opposite side of the square. Both bodies marched in regular order, preceded by drums and fifes, and every man proudly carried his stilts over his shoulder, while on the flanks capered a number of hobby-horses, whose business it was to keep off the crowd. At five o'clock in the afternoon of a splendid day the ceremony began.

As soon as the contending parties had entered the camp, the order was given for mounting, and after having defiled before the archduke, each side prepared to do its *devoir*.

The *Mélans* were drawn up on the left hand in two lines; the first was composed of the brigades of the captain, the volunteers of Gavre, the brewers and the boatmen; the second of those of the porters, the men of the pen,* advocates, notaries, &c., the butchers, and

* "La Plume."

the guards. The brigades of the hussars, placed on the left flank of the two lines, formed the reserve. The *Avresses*, more numerous, were disposed in three lines—the brigades of the captain, of the hussars of Wepion, and La Plante were in the first line; those of St. Croix, of Astalle, and the stone-hewers, formed the second; and the third consisted of the mountaineers, the tanners, the cuirassiers, and the commune of Jambes, on the other side of the Meuse. The porters and tanners, who constituted the *élite* of each force, were posted in the last line.

On a signal being made by the governor the battle began, the foremost lines advancing with slow and steady pace to the attack; and soon the arena resounded with the rattling weapons of the combatants, and many a "tall fellow" measured his length on the sandy plain. The fortune of the day was various; sometimes the party of the *Mélans*, headed by their valourous chief Castaigne, seemed to be carrying all before them; anon, the *Avresses* would rally, and, led to the charge by their captain, Godinne, drove back their impetuous assailants. It was not long before the sustaining lines joined in the affray, and the reserve, disdaining to be idle, made the *mêlay* general. The struggle was long and fierce; and in the moment of excitement many a voice was raised for the *Boute-à-tot*; but the leaders, fearing the consequence in the presence of the archduke, refused to give the word, and the fight was therefore marked

by no more fatal consequences than distinguished those "gentle passages of arms," where fractured collar-bones and broken legs and arms rewarded the exertions of the adventurous knights of old. The battle lasted for two hours, and then the *Mélans*, whose lines were completely broken, whose reserve had been put to flight, and whose best champions had fallen before the "clanging blows" of their adversaries, were compelled to yield to the superior numbers of the *Avresses*. The stilt was raised, the drums and fifes joined in a martial strain, and the colours of Catherine of Savoy waved triumphantly over the field.

When the stilt-fight was over, the prince was entertained by the now obsolete amusements of the *Danse des Machabées* and the *Jeu des Anguilles*,—games always highly popular in Namur, and which seemed to amuse the archduke mightily; in the evening a grand masquerade, given by the Prince de Gavre, at which all the notabilities and many of the stilters were present, closed the entertainments of the day. It was one memorable in the annals of Namur, for it witnessed the downfall of an amusement that had subsisted for centuries. The prohibitive enactments were renewed, the allowance which the stilt-fighters had been in the habit of receiving was withheld, and their number fell off greatly, so that in a few years little remained but the name of an amusement that had once been part of the existence of the Namurois.

Two attempts were made at subsequent periods to

revive the games on particular occasions, but they proved comparative failures; for when once the nationality of a custom is destroyed, its revival can be but for an hour.

The first of these efforts was on the arrival in Namur, on the 3rd of August, 1803, of Napoleon, at that time first consul. But there was a striking difference between this exhibition and that of the thirty years previous. Instead of the numerous brigades which then defiled through the streets, it was now scarcely possible to muster even three. The old denominations of *Mélans* and *Avresses* were lost, and the two parties were represented only by the porters and tanners, who called themselves *Nankinets* and *Bleus*; the first from the stuff of which their dress consisted, and the last from the colour of their garments. The whole number of combatants did not exceed a hundred and fifty men, exclusive of the reserve of the hussars, who, to render the sides equal, were divided into two bodies. But the battle was not fought fairly; old prejudices awoke, and the hussars, who had been made *Bleus* against their inclination, joined the ranks of the *Nankinets*, who thus gained the day. The world's great master might in this slight incident have beheld, foreshadowed, the event which led to his first great defeat in the land of his former triumphs. At a later period of the day, the *Bleus*, burning to avenge the treachery by which they had suffered, attacked their adversaries in a part of the town called the *Quatre*

Coins, and, asking no permission, assailed them with the *Boute-à-tot*; nor was it till the military interfered, that the combatants, after sustaining much personal injury, were separated.

The second and last public exhibition took place on the 26th of September, 1814, to celebrate the return of William of Nassau to his hereditary dominions; but it proved but the ghost of former games. Few in number, and unsupported by popular enthusiasm, the stilt-fighters exhibited their art with as little advantage as the tilters of a more recent day; and the arena was never again opened.

The use of stilts is not, however, forgotten by the Namurois; at fairs and village festivals groups of half a dozen may still occasionally be seen amusing the crowd with their antics, and sometimes, though rarely, engaging in single combat



CHAPTER XI.

Namur and Dinant—Beauty of the Valley—Forest of Marlagne—Convent of Bare-footed Carmelites—Chateaux and Villages—Lustin—Profondeville—Burnot—Riviere—Rouillon—The Adventure of Jehan Cornu—The Valley of the Bocq—Intermittent Spring—Chateau de Poilvache—Crevecoeur and Bouvignes—Siege of Bouvignes—The three Ladies of Crevecoeur—Their heroic death—Masses for their souls—Dinant.



RUINS OF THE CASTLE OF CREVECOEUR.



O traveller should leave Namur without ascending to the citadel, from whence the view is superb beyond description. The toil of climbing to the battlements, even in the hottest weather, is well repaid; for wherever the eye turns, it rests upon the loveliest scenery imaginable. Northward, the Meuse extends its glittering waters till they are lost beneath the grey rocks of Marche les Dames; to the west, lie the fertile plains of Brabant and the Hesbaye; to the east, the Condroz,—the granary of Belgium, and frontier of the Ardennes; and turning to the south, appears the district of “Entre Sambre et Meuse,” rich in mineral wealth, and covered

with waving forests. In this direction the view is closed by the high promontories of the upper valley, which reveals just beauty enough to stimulate the desire for more. However beautiful the Valley of the Meuse below Namur, it falls far short of the part between Namur and Dinant.

The navigation of the river is practicable only for the long flat-bottomed barques that are towed against the stream; for the attempt that was made two years ago to run a steamer to Dinant, proved a failure, owing to the shallows and accidents of the current. But there is little lost in being compelled to journey by land, for the road follows closely every winding of the river, being seldom distant from it more than a hundred yards, and in many places running by the very margin. The scenery is, on both banks, an alternation of richly-wooded heights, cultivated to their base, with massive grey rocks that assume the most picturesque forms, and sometimes rise perpendicularly over the valley to the height of two or three hundred feet. The Meuse is here a broad and rapid stream, resembling, in the volume of its waters, the Moselle rather than the Rhine, but losing nothing by comparison with either river, though marked by different characteristics. Its combinations are full of beauty, and it lacks neither history nor tradition to impart to it a permanent interest.

The pretty village of Wepion was the first place that arrested our attention, lying sheltered beneath the

steep slopes that form on this side the boundaries of the ancient forest of Marlagne. This forest has been celebrated since the earliest ages of Christianity as the chosen abode of saints and hermits, who led a life of austerity in its wild recesses; but the dwellings of these solitary men have all disappeared, with the exception of the hermitage of St. Hubert below Namur, which is much visited by the curious, not only on account of the beauty of the situation, but the remains of its Gothic architecture.

In the year 1615, the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella, desirous of leaving a monument of their piety in this part of the country, made a grant of a large tract of ground in the forest of Marlagne, for the purpose of forming a permanent establishment of barefooted Carmelites; but it was not appropriated until two or three years afterwards, when the Provincial of the Low Countries, the reverend father, Thomas de Jesus, a Spaniard, desirous of gratifying his passion for solitude, obtained not only the direction of the grant but other endowments from Albert and Isabella, who themselves laid the first stone of the church. The monastery was soon built and peopled with Carmelites, who, up to the period when Galliot, the historian of Namur, wrote, continued to lead a life of austerity; but after the French Revolution they were heard of no more.

A little beyond Wepion, the road runs through orchards of walnut-trees and gardens of the richest

produce, beside the château of Folz, and on the opposite side of the Meuse is seen the château of Dave, an ancient feudal *manoir*, of whose former authority one monument still exists in the old pillory that stands before the gates. A succession of villages and châteaux follow, each rivalling the other in picturesqueness of situation:—Lustin, which stands on the right bank, on a distant height; Profondeville, lying in a deep valley in front, where the river makes a sudden bend; Burnot and Rivière, at the mouth of a swift stream, which in its course turns the wheels of numerous iron forges; and the château of Rouillon, from whose grey, crumbling walls may have been witnessed the remarkable adventure which is said to have occurred beneath them, the account of which I translate from the old black-letter authority:—*

“A.D. 1188. Of an adventure which befel Jehan Cornu, knight, and cousin of Count Baldwin, of Hainault. Of a very bold enterprise which he undertook on the Meuse.

“Certes, it must not be forgotten how Messire Jehan Cornu, all armed and mounted on his horse, leaped from the banks of the River Meuse into a boat, where he defeated several men-at-arms, who had been lying in ambuscade for him on his return to Namur from the siege of Bovines.

* “Croniques et Annalles de Haynnau, par Maistre Jacques de Guise;” one of those rare and curious volumes printed by the famous Galliot du Pré, at Paris, in 1531.

“ One day, the Count of Hainault being before the town of Bovines, to which he was laying siege, and Messire Jehan Cornu at Namur, to defend that city for my lord the count, it happened that the count having occasion for him, sent a message requiring his presence, in consequence of which Messire Jehan set out for Bovines, accompanied only by two knights, and seven servants, well armed. And when he had performed the count's bidding, he returned towards Namur. Now, it chanced that some of the followers of the Count of Namur, about forty in number, strong and well appointed men-at arms, resolved to lie in ambush for the said Cornu, and some amongst them took a boat, by means of which they passed the river Meuse, and concealed themselves in a narrow way by which the said Cornu was obliged to pass. The brave knight, who was riding greatly in advance of his company, no sooner perceived them than, knowing he could not avoid their attack, he determined at once to assail them, and, galloping forward, charged them so fiercely, that they all took flight, and made towards their boat.

“ Now the said Messire Jehan Cornu, who with great eagerness followed them, as soon as he reached the brink of the river, drove his spurs so deeply in his horse's sides that he made him at once leap into the boat, and came down so heavily into it that it sank, and several of the men in it were drowned, while the others tried to save their lives by swimming. But the

said Messire Jehan being still on horseback swimming amongst them in the midst of the river, slew one of them, and took another prisoner, whom he dragged out of the water with him, without himself receiving any harm or accident. For which thing and hardy enterprise he was much loved and feared by all men, and also praised and honoured."

After passing Rivière, where the Meuse suddenly turns again, sweeping past the château of Godinne on the right bank, and the village of Annevoye on the left, the shining rocks of Yvoir come in view, whose bare, precipitous clefts offer a striking contrast to the rich gardens and woods of the modern château of Hun, beyond which they rise. Yvoir is a very ancient village at the mouth of the little river Bocq, a narrow but deep and rapid stream, which in its course from the lakes of Champ de Bois in the Condroz, turns the wheels of many forges. The gorge through which it runs is extremely picturesque, the mountain sides now rising perpendicularly in abrupt masses of dark grey rock, and then throwing out broad sweeping curves, feathered to the summit with the lightest and most graceful foliage. The valley that lies between is sometimes so narrow as to afford little more than room for the stream and the path beside it, and then,—the hills receding,—wide meadows spread themselves out, whose brilliancy is heightened by the profusion of lilac crocuses which cover them. About three miles up the valley, in a narrow strip of meadow land,—the landmark to guide

to it being an enormous conical rock in the wood above,—exists, what a few years since was known as an intermittent fountain, which rose and fell every seven minutes; but the curiosity of the peasants, who have choked it up by the number of things they threw into it, has destroyed its properties, and the water now has ceased to flow at all. It was with difficulty we found the spot, and when found there was nothing worth seeing: but the walk up the valley would compensate for any trouble.

At Moulin, from whence we crossed the Meuse on our search, in a ferryboat which is propelled by a rope extended above the river, are now several copper and brass works and iron forges, where once stood an abbey, founded in 1231, for nuns of the order of Citeaux, and richly endowed by Baldwin de Courtenay, Count of Namur and Emperor of Constantinople. About half a mile further, the valley opens: in front are seen the broad plains of Anhée, one mass of golden grain; beyond them the distant church of Senenne and the ridge of Haut le Wastia; and, a little to the left, the winding Meuse, flowing beneath the towering heights of Poilvache, whose widely spread ruins cut the sky with their clear dark outline. Poilvache is so closely connected with the history and traditions of the Meuse, that I shall reserve a description of it till a later period, when it became the object of a separate excursion. The high land, which had receded near Moulin to form the wide basin of Anhée, closes again

upon the river about half a league further on, and the road runs beneath a wall of naked rock on the left bank of the Meuse; while, on the opposite side, the valley and heights of Bloquemont and Barcq are cultivated as far as the eye can reach. The river flows here in a deep but narrow channel, but widens higher up, where its course is broken by several islands. At a little wayside chapel, built beneath a lofty rock and dedicated to the sufferings of our Lord, with this inscription,—“*Passant considerez les douleurs que j’ay souffert,*” we first caught sight of the ruins of the château de Crèveœur, and the town of Bouvignes, sheltered below it. There are few sites more picturesque than that of these old ruins, and their history is full of interest.

The castle, of which these shattered walls are the only remains, was built in the year 1320, and the name it still bears was given it as a taunt and defiance to the people of Dinant, the mortal enemies of those of Bouvignes, who the following year retorted by the erection of the castle of Montorgueil. Crèveœur was not however the only defence of Bouvignes, for two centuries before a strong castle had been built to protect the town by Godefroid, Comte de Namur; and it was moreover surrounded by walls and towers, but of these only a few shapeless buttresses exist. Bouvignes itself, once so flourishing, consists now of little more than a single street; it was formerly the dreaded rival of Dinant, and their mutual hatred, which had endured for cen-

turies, led the way to their mutual ruin. After sustaining many sieges and rude assaults, and keeping its enemies both far and near at bay, the day of destruction at length arrived, in the war between Henry the Second, of France and the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Henry having assembled a powerful army on the Meuse, a strong body commanded by the Duke de Nevers, approached Bouvignes about the middle of June, 1554. The terror of the inhabitants was great, when they saw themselves surrounded by so formidable a force; they decided, however, upon a vigorous resistance. But all their bravery was ineffectual; they were compelled to yield to numbers and the heavy fire which was poured on them for several successive days. On the 30th of June the French effected an entrance into the town, and the defenders took refuge, some in the castle of Bouvignes, others in that of Crèveceur. But the former were soon obliged to surrender, and Crèveceur alone was left with its banners flying.

It is to this period in the annals of Bouvignes that the romantic story is attached, which has immortalised the three heroines of Crèveceur.

Amongst the brave men who had thrown themselves into the castle to defend it, were three of the most distinguished knights in all the country. Their wives, young and beautiful, determined to share their husbands' danger, took refuge with them, and contributed in no slight degree to encourage the garrison,

both by word and deed. They were seen on the ramparts, fighting beside their husbands, tending the wounded and dying, and aiding in repairing the battered walls of the castle, unflinching beneath the heaviest fire. Even when their husbands had fallen they "shed no ill-timed tear," but courageously maintained the defence; and having now no hope but in a glorious death, fought on with desperation, rivalling the bravest men around them. One by one of their companions in arms were slain, till at last these three heroic women were left alone. The French troops, seeing no other defenders, slackened their fire, with the intention of taking them alive. But there was one thing which the ladies of Crèvecœur dreaded more than death, that was dishonour; and they apprehended their lot but too truly, if they became the prisoners of the licentious soldiers of the Duke de Nevers. When, therefore, all hope was gone, when the power of resistance was over, and death from their enemies' hands evaded them, they boldly compelled their fate. Hand-in-hand they ascended the parapet, and slowly walked to the extreme verge of the battlements, then, raising their eyes for a moment in prayer, they threw themselves from the tower and were dashed to pieces on the stones below. The name of Hermeline has alone been preserved, those of her sisters in heroism are unknown.

This memorable event took place on the 2nd of July, 1554, and to this day the anniversary is celebrated in the church of Bouvignes by masses in their

honour, for which purpose an annual sum was devoted out of the rents of the farm of Rostenne, a hamlet at a short distance from the town.

A modern poet, Monsieur A. Quetelet, has left some lines sufficiently descriptive of the dilapidated town and ruined castles of Bouvignes :—

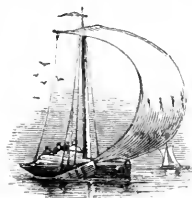
“ O voyageur ! cette enceinte tranquille,
 Et ce castel étonnent tes regards ;
 Mais ce hameau fût jadis une ville
 Dont un vainqueur a brisé les remparts.
 D' un meilleur sort sans doute elle était digne,
 Car ses guerriers sont morts avec honneur ;
 Tu vois, hélas ! les debris de Bouvigne,
 Et ce castel se nommait Crève-Cœur ! ”

As we quitted the narrow street which runs through the town, the bridge, the cathedral, and the citadel of Dinant came in full view. In a quarter of an hour we were comfortably established at the Hotel de la Poste, at the corner of the market-place.



CHAPTER XII.

Dinant — Its former Flourishing Condition — Commerce — Insulting Message to the Burgundians—Revolt—The Duke of Burgundy's Preparations—Renewed insults—The Duke's vow—Violent outrage of the Dinantais—The Town besieged and captured—Cruelty of the Burgundians — Plunder of the City—The City burnt—Its entire destruction—Marguerite de Valois at Dinant—Her singular reception—Her danger — Her stratagem — Another risk — Her escape — Marguerite at Florennes—Her safe return to France.



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 ID not the history of the world afford numberless examples of the entire ruin of states and cities, once great and flourishing, it would be difficult to believe, from the present appearance of Dinant, that she ever held the high place which historians have assigned her amongst the cities of Europe.

Hemmed in between the Meuse and the high chain of rocks, which rise almost perpendicularly at the distance of only a few hundred feet from the river, the space which the town occupies could never have been greater in breadth than it is at present, though it must have been considerably longer, if it contained a population at all proportionate to the wealth ascribed to it. According to Duclerq and others, it even exceeded Liége itself in riches, and from the warlike

character of its people, combined with the strength of its position, had never been subjected to the vicissitudes which, at one period or other, had desolated almost every city on the continent.

The great commerce of Dinant consisted in the manufacture of copper utensils, which procured for their wares the name of "Dinanderies," and for themselves the sobriquet of "Kopères," freely bestowed upon them by their rivals of Bouvignes and Namur. As far back as the fourteenth century, the Dinantais were celebrated for their workmanship, and the wealth that resulted from it; and it was in the jealousy of "the trade" that the long wars originated, which broke out between Dinant and Bouvignes, in 1317, and from whence an enmity arose, that as long as either was independent was never extinguished.

But the period of the greatest prosperity of Dinant was that of its downfall; and modern history has perhaps no parallel to offer to the sudden and complete destruction of a city so rich and powerful.

It was in the year 1466 that this fatal calamity befel, when the spirit of hostility which the people of Dinant had always manifested against the House of Burgundy, and which was secretly fomented by their treacherous ally, Louis the Eleventh of France, declared itself so violently, that war became the necessary consequence. It proved, unhappily, a war of extermination.

Misled by the false reports which circulated through

the country after the battle of Montlhéri, and believing that the Comte de Charolais had been completely defeated there,—though his victory was perhaps the most undecisive affair that ever was fought,—the inhabitants of Dinant, following the example of the Liégeois, at once declared against the Duke of Burgundy, or rather against his son; for the hatred which they bore to Charles the Bold was even more personal than political. Their first exploit was to attack and pillage Bouvignes, which belonged to the Duke of Burgundy, where they displayed the effigy of the Comte de Charolais hanging to a gibbet, taunting the Bouvignais with these words:—“Behold the son of your duke, the false traitor, the Count of Charolais, whom the King of France means to hang like this figure here, if he has not already done so. He calls himself the son of your duke, but he is a villain bastard, and was changed at nurse with the son of the Sire de Heinsberg, our former bishop. Did *he* think to ruin the King of France?” In fact, there was no kind of reproach that these violent people did not utter against the Comte de Charolais, who, when he was informed of these things, registered a vow against Dinant, which he only too truly fulfilled.

The magistrates of Dinant, wiser and calmer than the people, succeeded in moderating this intemperance for a time; and the Duke of Burgundy was willing enough to accept a sum of money for the outrage committed at Bouvignes,—his earnest desire being to detach the Dinantais from their alliance with the Liégeois.

For another year, therefore, they remained at peace; but about the middle of the year 1466, instigated by some banished men of Liège, the people of Dinant rose in revolt, and put to death the magistrates who had compounded for their previous conduct with Duke Philip. For this they were placed under a sentence of excommunication, but they refused to obey the pope's authority, and constrained the priests to celebrate mass, drowning two or three who resisted them.

When news was brought of these events to the Duke of Burgundy, though his health and strength were failing fast, he gave orders for the immediate assemblage of all his vassals and men-at-arms at Namur; but a sudden attack of apoplexy had nearly prevented his taking the field. He recovered, however, though not to lead his forces in person, and the Comte de Charolais assumed the command.

The campaign, whose object was the subjugation of the entire province of Liège, was begun by the siege of Dinant. The Liégeois had sent thither a garrison of four thousand men, and had promised to come to their assistance with forty thousand more. Confiding in this promise, and relying on the protection of Louis the Eleventh; the people of Dinant resolved to defend themselves to the last. The Comte de Charolais marched against them with a large force. "Il avoit devant luy tous ses archiers, et estoit son estendart battu d'or, à l'enseigne de l' image de Saint George à cheval, perchant ung serpent de sa lanche." The

Dinantais made a sally to defend the faubourg on the left bank of the river, but were driven in; the faubourg was carried, and Charles took up his head-quarters in the abbey of the Frères Mineurs, immediately opposite the centre of the town. The Comte de St. Pol, the Constable of France, who followed Charles, not as a subject of Louis the Eleventh, but at the head of his vassals of Picardy, established himself on the right bank of the Meuse, and, after preparing his batteries, summoned the town to surrender.

But, however imminent their danger, the Dinantais had lost neither their courage nor their pride, and returned an insulting answer to the proposition:—

“What folly,” they replied, “has possessed your old mummy of a duke to come here to die? Has he lived long enough, that he seeks now a villanous death? And your Count Charlotel,—what does he want here? He had better go back to Montlhéry, to fight with the noble King of France, who has promised to come and succour us, and will not fail. As for your count, he has come here to meet his fate; his beak is too young to hurt us.* The Liégeois whom we have here will speedily dislodge him with shame.”

The Dinantais, however, soon found to their cost how vain was the trust reposed on a monarch like Louis the Eleventh, who, having made his own peace, cared nothing what befel his former allies; and for this

* “Vostre Comte, à malle heure y vint il oncques; il a le becque trop josnes.”—DU CLERCQ.

and other insults, both Philip and Charles swore they would have ample revenge. They vowed if they took the city to destroy it from roof-top to foundation, and *sow iron and salt upon the ruins*,—"comme anchiement on faisoit quand on destruisoit une ville;" "and," adds the chronicler, with terrible brevity, "ainsy en fust faict."

Though the feuds of centuries had divided the people of Bouvignes from those of Dinant, as effectually as the broad river that flows between the two places, the former were anxious, when they heard of the fearful threats of the duke, to save their old enemies from destruction. The presence of an army, however friendly to themselves, was in itself a misfortune to the whole country, and, moreover, the commerce of Dinant was too valuable to be lost,—its manufactories supplying all the neighbouring towns with copper and pewter utensils. Interest, therefore, stimulated them as strongly as humanity.

But the people of Dinant themselves were as much opposed to conciliation as either Philip or Charles, and seemed madly bent on rushing upon their destruction; nothing could induce them to listen to reason; like those whom superstition declares to be doomed, they plunged headlong on their fate. They cut off the head of the messenger whom the Bouvignes had sent to advise them; and on the bearer of a second letter, a poor imbecile child, they committed even more cruel outrages. These acts were not of a nature likely to moderate the temper of one so violent as Charles the Bold.

The siege was straightway begun. The Comte de Charolais opened his batteries on one side, and the Constable of France on the other. For six days the firing continued without intermission, and the town presented little more than a heap of ruins; the walls of the city, nine feet thick, exhibited wide rents, "for ruin's wasteful entrance," and the principal breach, was already sixty feet wide. Upwards of seven hundred of the besieged had fallen, and at length fear fell upon them. They now sought to capitulate, but the Duke of Burgundy would no longer listen to terms; he refused to receive their envoys, and, with a refinement of cruelty, instead of at once ordering the assault, the *good* Duke Philip continued for two days more to batter the defenceless town. The garrison of the citadel, amongst whom were many French, contrived to effect their escape, and nothing remained for the Dinantais but to await the coming blow. For a moment there appeared a chance of rescue, for they learnt that the Liégeois were afoot to relieve the city; but the same intelligence was also communicated to the Duke of Burgundy by Louis de Bourbon, the Bishop of Liége, and Philip having called a council of war, determined on an immediate assault. Everything was accordingly prepared for the purpose, but the besieged saved him the trouble; they surrendered at discretion, and gave up the keys of the city, without demanding any pledge or guarantee for their safety.

The Comte de Charolais placed guards at all the

gates, and gave orders that none, under pain of death, should enter the city before he had received the orders of his father, who was at Bouvignes. It was at first the duke's intention to have entered Dinant; but, it being represented to him that, *as he did not intend to show any clemency*, it was more proper that he should not show himself. The billets were regularly distributed, as if it had been the duke's intention quietly to occupy the town; and when every soldier had reached his quarters, the signal to plunder was given.

It was obeyed with pitiless cruelty. The Burgundians were excited by the opposition their arms had met with—they had treasured in their memories the taunts and insults of the Dinantais—they were waging war with an excommunicated people—and, more than all, they were stimulated by the wealth of the conquered city. Nothing escaped them, and not a citizen remained in Dinant whose property was not seized: the streets were crowded with carts, and the Meuse covered with boats laden with the spoil.

Hitherto the fury of the conquerors had been restrained. Blood had been shed only in the way of war, or for what was deemed retribution; and the honour of the women was protected. The Count de Charolais issued an order prohibiting violence to their persons, and rigidly enforced his decree. A gibbet was erected in the market-place, where three archers, who had endeavoured to carry off a woman against her will, were hung up as an example. Children and

priests were also excepted from harm. All were collected together, and an escort given to conduct them to Liège.* It was a melancholy sight to behold this multitude leaving their homes to be pillaged; their husbands, their fathers, and brothers to be delivered over to the fury of the Burgundians. They wept with loud lamentations, which created pity in all who beheld them; and when they took leave of the city, which they were doomed never to see again, three loud cries of distress burst from them, which caused a shudder of agony in all who heard.

The plunder of the city had now lasted four days; and its wealth being exhausted, the Burgundian troops, impatient for revenge, hastened the work of destruction. On the 29th of August, 1466, a fire broke out in the quarters of the Sieur de Ravestein, which was certainly not accidental, and in all probability originated with the soldiers. It was even said that Charles had caused it to be done secretly, in order to put an end to the pillage, and restore order in his army. This has been denied; but, when his after-acts are considered, is by no means unlikely. He publicly gave orders for extinguishing the flames, and exerted himself personally to suppress them; but this was more with the idea of saving the relics in the cathedral, than from motives of humanity; for when his troops had all retired from the city, he fulfilled his original

* Du Clercq: "Mém."

threat by issuing counter-orders to burn, and the suburbs fell with the body of the town. The flames arose on every side; the Hôtel de Ville, which had been made into a temporary powder-magazine, exploded with fearful effect; and, while the pious Burgundians were intent on saving the Chasse of Saint Perpetuus, they suffered a number of rich prisoners, who had been shut up in the cathedral for ransom, to perish without an effort to relieve them. In other parts of the city, murder and fire went hand-in-hand in completing the work of death.

As soon as the heat from the smouldering ruins permitted, the Comte de Charolais, determined to leave no part of his vow unfulfilled, sent out a proclamation to the peasants of all the country round, promising three *petars* a day to all who would come and assist in the demolition of the walls which yet remained standing. They set to work in good earnest, for they expected to find a rich booty amongst the ruins. Nor were they disappointed; for it was said that the furnaces of the coppersmiths produced as much as was valued at a hundred thousand florins! In four days, walls, towers, gates, and houses,—all were razed to the ground, the body of the cathedral being alone preserved.* In the place of a rich and flourishing city, nothing was to be seen but a heap of ruins and ashes; and the poor women who, after the retreat of the

* It is evident, from the architecture of the nave of the cathedral, that its columns and pointed arches must have been left standing.

Burgundians, returned sadly to the spot to seek out their lost abodes, were unable to recognise where they had stood.

Thus fell the unfortunate city of Dinant! Never since the destruction of Jerusalem had any city experienced so terrible a fate. As the old chronicler observes, whose account we have followed, "Ceulx qui regardoient la place où la ville avoit esté, povoient dire, 'Cy fust Dynant!'"

To what extent the unfortunate city recovered from its ruin is not known, its archives being lost in a second disaster, scarcely less terrible than the first, by which it was visited about the middle of the sixteenth century under Henry the Second of France; but as the particulars of this event are more generally known, I refrain from inserting them here. One more incident, connected with the history of Dinant, may not, however, be inappropriate.

In the year 1577, the celebrated Marguérite de Valois, the beautiful wife of Henri Quatre, on her return from Liége, whither she had gone on a political errand, under the pretext of taking the waters of Spa, chose for her route the lovely valley of the Meuse, and leaving Huy early in the morning, arrived at the close of the day at Dinant. It was at an unfortunate moment, for a spirit of discontent had spread throughout the towns in the diocese of Liége, and the Dinantais were in open revolt. The presence of the Grand Master of the court of the Bishop of Liége, who accompanied

Margu rite, did not increase her welcome; and, to add to her misfortune, it was the day for electing the burgomasters of the city.

The queen has described the scene so well, that her own words can alone do it justice.* “ Everything was that day in disorder—everybody was drunk—no magistrates recognised; in short, a complete chaos of confusion. This town,—when the people were in their proper senses,—declared for the States; but Bacchus now ruling, they could not declare for themselves, and recognised nobody. As soon as they saw us approach the suburbs, with a retinue so large as mine, they were quite alarmed. They left their glasses to run to arms, and, all in tumult, instead of opening the barrier they closed it upon us. I had sent on before a gentleman with the quarter-masters, to beg them to allow us to pass, but I found them all stopped there, and shouting without being heard. I then stood upright in my litter, and, taking off my mask, I made a sign to the nearest to say that I wished to speak to him; and, being come to me, I begged him to procure silence, in order that I might be heard. This being with some difficulty accomplished, I represented to them who I was, and the reason of my journey; that, so far from seeking to bring evil upon them by my coming, I would not give them the slightest reason for suspicion, and that all I begged of them was to let me

* “Memoires de Marguerite de Valois,” 1713, in 8vo.

enter, myself and my women, and a few of my people, to pass the night, and the rest might remain in the suburb. They were content with this proposition, and granted my request. I then entered the town with the principal persons of my train, amongst whom was the Grand Master of the Bishop of Liége, who unfortunately was recognised as I entered my hotel, and followed by all the people, drunk and armed. Then they began to utter loud cries and threats, and sought to beat down the good man, who was eighty years old, and wore a white beard that reached to his middle. I made him come into the hotel, on which these drunkards poured the shot from their harquebusses against the walls, which were only of clay.* Seeing this tumult, I asked if the master of the house were within. By good luck he was at home, and I begged him to go to the window, and invite the principal amongst them to come that I might speak to them, which, with some difficulty he agreed to do. At last, having called out loudly from the window, the burgomasters came to speak to me, so drunk that they knew not what they said.† I then assured them that I had not known that the Grand Master was inimical to them; I remonstrated with them as to the im-

* It is evident, from this fact, that Dinant had not recovered, in 1577, from the effects of the last bombardment of the town, else in a country where stone is quarried so easily, Marguërite would scarcely have been so poorly lodged.

† These notable burgomasters were named Huart Davant and Jaques Maigreit.

portance of offending a person of my quality, who was the friend of all the principal lords of the States; and that I felt certain the Comte de Lalain, and all the other chiefs, would be greatly annoyed at the reception which I had met with. When they heard me name M. de Lalain, they changed all of a sudden, and paid him more respect than all the kings to whom I belonged. The oldest amongst them came forward, and, smiling and stammering, asked me if I was really a friend to the Comte de Lalain; and seeing that claiming relationship with him would serve me more than a connection with all the potentates of Christianity, I replied, 'Yes, I am not only his friend, but his cousin also.' Then they all did reverence to me, and tendered me their hands, and offered me as much courtesy as before they had proffered insolence; begging me to excuse them, and promising me that they would say nothing to the good old Grand Master, and that they would let him go away with me."

The sequel of Margu rite's adventures, as they concern the Dinantais, will not be out of place here.

The Queen of Navarre had scarcely escaped from one danger when she fell into another. Du Bois, the agent of Henry the Third to Don John of Austria, having sold himself to the Spaniards, came to seek her, and told her that having received orders from the king, her brother, to facilitate her return to France, he had asked from Don John a troop of cavalry, commanded by Berlaimont, to conduct her safely to Namur,—he

ended by begging Margu rite to induce the Dinantais to receive this troop into their town. The Austrian prince hoped by this means either to take possession of Dinant or of the queen ; but Margu rite, suspecting the motives of Du Bois, told the inhabitants of the danger which awaited them, and advised them to arm themselves and carefully guard the gates of the town, making them see of what consequence it was not to open them to any but Berlaimont alone and unaccompanied. She succeeded in persuading them, and they promised to expose their lives in her service, and gave her a guide to conduct her across the Meuse, which she wished to leave between her and the troops of Don John. Admission into Dinant was then granted to Berlaimont, who proposed to introduce his men. At this demand the citizens, in anger, were ready to massacre him, and threatened to fire upon his people if he did not withdraw them from the ramparts. Nevertheless Berlaimont and Du Bois endeavoured to persuade Margu rite that Don John of Austria waited for her at Namur. In order the better to deceive them she pretended to give herself up to their control, and, accompanied by two or three hundred armed men, she quitted the house in which she had passed the night, and then amusing them both by light conversation, she took the way towards the river, and, followed by her suite, entered a large boat, which was speedily rowed across the Meuse, notwithstanding the ineffectual remonstrances of Du Bois, who persisted in crying out to her

that the king's intentions were for her to return to Namur.

On the other hand, the Dinantais continued to threaten Berlaimont with cannonading his troop if it approached too near the town, and by this means facilitated the flight of the Queen of Navarre, who, assisted by the guide, reached the lower court of the castle of Florennes, where she demanded permission to be lodged in the donjon keep. The barony of Florennes belonged at that time to Charles de Glimes, a friend of Margu rite, but he was absent from the ch teau; and the ch telaine, a sister-in-law of Berlaimont, raised the drawbridge, and resolutely refused admission to any one whatever. Another circumstance arose to increase the difficulty of Margu rite's position. Don John of Austria having received intimation that Margu rite intended to sleep at Florennes, sent out three hundred horsemen to cut off the road leading to it, and seize the ch teau. These troops, persuaded that the princess had taken refuge in the donjon, encamped at some distance from thence, in order to surprise her on the following day. The Queen of Navarre redoubled her entreaties with the ch telaine of Florennes, but she was inflexible, and Margu rite's danger became imminent, when, happily, towards the close of the day, the baron himself arrived, and by his orders the drawbridge was raised, and Margu rite placed in security. To guard her against surprise on her way, he told her that he had been

ordered by the Comte de Lalain to accompany her into France, where, finally, she safely arrived. The king, the royal family, and the court all went to meet her at St. Denis, where, she says, "they had great pleasure in making me relate the honours and magnificence of my journey to Liége and sojourn there, and the adventures which befel me on my return."

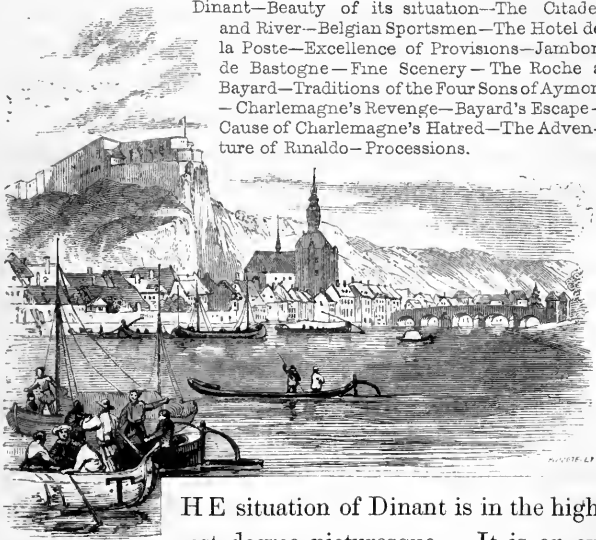
A century elapsed before Dinant again experienced the vicissitudes of war, but the day of her destiny was not yet over, and in 1674 she had to sustain a third siege, and was taken by the Imperialists, under the Count de Souches.

The unfortunate Dinantais seemed, like the ass in the fable, always exposed to the blows of every master. Within a year the Marshal de Crequi, commanding the French forces, was sent to drive out the Imperialists. He took the place without much resistance. At the peace of Nimeguen, Louis the Fourteenth endeavoured to keep possession of Dinant, but the Bishop and chapter of Liége refused to consent, and it returned to its old allegiance.



CHAPTER XIII.

Dinant—Beauty of its situation—The Citadel and River—Belgian Sportsmen—The Hotel de la Poste—Excellence of Provisions—Jambon de Bastogne—Fine Scenery—The Roche a Bayard—Traditions of the Four Sons of Aymon—Charlemagne's Revenge—Bayard's Escape—Cause of Charlemagne's Hatred—The Adventure of Rinaldo—Processions.



HE situation of Dinant is in the highest degree picturesque. It is an extremely long and narrow town, consisting of little more than one street, which runs for nearly a mile from one extremity to the other, its breadth being in few places more than a hundred yards. Below the bridge the houses are built close to the river, and above it are separated only by a long quay, planted with trees, which serves for recreation as well as commerce. At the foot of the bridge is a tolerably spacious market-place, one side of which is filled up by the cathedral, whose singularly shaped spire barely reaches to the base of the walls of the citadel, which rise immediately above it. The town is backed by a

steep ridge, cultivated here and there about half-way up in terraced gardens, which have been formed upon the ledges of the rock, whose grey and broken crest, crowning the height, seems like the dismantled parapet of some former defence. In two or three places adventurous hands have cut a path nearly to the summit, indicated by a pleasant summer-house; but for the most part the surface of the mountain that overhangs the town is wild and bare, and marked only by the fissures, in one of which, it is said, was formerly the oracle of the goddess who gave her name to the place.*

At a sharp angle of the ridge, formed by a deep ravine, up which the road winds to the plains of the Condroz, is built the citadel, a formidable fortress, which commands all the approaches to the town, and appears to laugh a siege to scorn. The Meuse is, at Dinant, about three hundred and fifty feet wide, and flows beneath a fine bridge of five arches in a strong deep current, though both above and below the town there are dangerous obstructions to the navigation. On the left bank of the river is the pretty faubourg of St. Medard.

It was on the 3rd of September that we arrived at

* The etymology of *Dinant* is, according to some antiquarians, to be found in the name of Diana, to whom the town, situated in the midst of a great hunting country, was originally dedicated. It was called by the Romans *Dionacum*, or *Dionatum*, from the goddess, who uttered her oracles in a cave (*Dianæ autrum*) above the town. *Vide* Duchesne—"Recherches."

Dinant—the first day of the shooting season in Belgium—and it was not without difficulty that we succeeded in getting an apartment, the house being full of sportsmen. If we had not been told that this was the case, we might have guessed it from the endless howling of the *chiens de chasse*, who, locked up in their masters' bedrooms, gave utterance to every description of canine melody, rendering sleep impossible till long after midnight, when the festivities of the chasseurs, no less riotous than their dogs, broke up. If there is one thing more than another that distinguishes a modern Belgian from his kind, it is his excessive fondness for making a noise. No time or place appear to have any influence in subduing his clamorous tendencies, as if to howl and shout like an *enragé* were the great aim and object of his existence. These sportsmen, who were chiefly from Brussels, gave us another taste of their quality as soon as day began to break, and if they exercised their lungs to the same extent when they got to the field, unless the birds were deaf, their sport must have proved a blank.

As we purposed making some stay at Dinant, our first thought was to establish ourselves in a lodging; but accommodation in this respect is rare, and, after some inquiry, we found we could not possibly do better than remain where we were, at the Hôtel de la Poste. Its situation, at the corner of the market-place, opposite the cathedral, has everything to recommend it, and our good-natured, obliging landlady, Madame

Lallieu, promised to make us as comfortable as we could wish, and she was quite as good as her word; no imposition was attempted, our fare was admirable, the servants were civility itself, and the most economical could not have found fault with the charges.

The means of living at Dinant are worth a passing comment. Nothing can equal the richness of the milk, the bread and butter are both excellent, the water is delicious, and the eggs and vegetables are plentiful and cheap. The Meuse and the many streams that water the valleys produce abundance of fish,—trout, grayling, and perch; and, for those who are fond of them, the ditches yield crawfish of enormous size, the largest being sent to Brussels, and often sold in the market there for twenty francs apiece. Hares, partridges, pigeons, *grèves*, and *gelinottes* are abundant, and of exquisite flavour; the mutton of the Ardennes vies with its venison, and for the epicure there is one dish that is incomparable:—this is the *jambon de Bastogne*, which we found so good that we begged the *chef* to give us his receipt for curing it, and here it is:—“The ham is cured in a brine of salt, saltpetre, and aromatic herbs, viz., a few bay leaves, wild thyme, a handful of juniper berries, and a little garlic. It is steeped for about six weeks, and then dried in the smoke of the chimney, over a wood fire. When wanted for dressing, it is buried in the ground for twenty-four hours, and then boiled, with the addition of the same aromatic herbs, in the water. After

boiling, the bone is taken out, and the ham is pressed under a heavy weight." As a corollary to the dressing, it may be added, that it often happens that the ham, when produced at table, disappears at one sitting. As the late Lord Blayney did not think it beneath his military dignity to tell how hams were boiled in hock at Bayonne, this simple notice of the treatment of the ham of the Ardennes may be permitted here. As a dinner is everywhere on the Continent incomplete without a dessert, the denizen of the Hôtel de la Poste, may, if he chooses, take his, *al fresco*, in the terraced garden at the back of the house, where grapes, pears, peaches, figs, and apricots cover the walls.

Dinant offers the best head-quarters for a traveller who wishes to explore the Ardennes, and our first inquiry, as soon as we were settled, was for saddle-horses. The horses were promised at once,—“*impossible de trouver mieux*,”—especially a black one that had carried a lady; but respecting a side-saddle there was some demur; however, that was *promised* also when the time should arrive for making the proposed excursion. In the meantime, we devoted our days to exploring the beautiful scenery on the river, and in the lovely valleys around, and found that there was enough to occupy us for months to come, if we could have spared the time.

The greatest natural curiosity in the neighbourhood of Dinant, is the singular, pointed rock, called the “Roche à Bayard,” which stands about three-quarters

of a mile from the town, on the high road to Mezières, and rises perpendicularly above the river, in shape like one of the Swiss "aiguilles," leaving only just space enough for the road to run between it and the mountain, of which ages ago it probably formed a part. A more perfect resemblance to a ruined castle, than is formed by the broken outline of the rocks which slope towards the Roche à Bayard, it is difficult to imagine; everything is there to complete the illusion,—tower, turret, loop-holed window, and ivy-covered buttress; even a name has been given to the isolated fragment below.

What right it has to the name it bears none can tell, though the valley of the Meuse is rife with traditions respecting the valiant sons of Aymon, and their matchless courser, Bayard. From Aigremont to Poilvache there is scarcely a ruin that does not recal some daring exploit of the stout Rinaldo de Montauban and his cousin, the sage enchanter Maugis; and the tradition is still current in the Ardennes, that Bayard yet lives, and may occasionally be seen scouring over the desolate heaths of that wild district; while the belated peasant is said often to hear the shrill neigh of the noble steed, resounding through the depths of the forest.

That delectable romance, the "Histoire des Quatre Fils Aymons"—the "Legenda Aurea" of Belgium—says, that when Charlemagne at length acceded to the urgent desire of the twelve peers to make peace with

the sons of Aymon, he did so upon these conditions,—that Rinaldo, the eldest of the brothers, whom he mortally hated, should clothe himself in poor attire, and undertake the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, and give up his horse Bayard to the emperor. Rinaldo with reluctance accepted the terms offered, and prepared for his journey. “Alors il commença à s’habiller d’ une serge violette, se chassa de gros sonliers, et se fit donner un gros bourdon pour le porter à la main,” and Charlemagne became the possessor of the steed which he had so much coveted for the revenge which he now proposed to take. The manner of it is thus told:—

The king then commanded that the camp should be broken up to return to Liége, and when he came upon the bridge over the Meuse, he caused Bayard, the good horse of Rinaldo, to be brought to him. As soon as he saw him he said—“Ah, Bayard, you have often caused me much annoyance, but I have at last attained the means of vengeance.” He then ordered a heavy stone to be fastened to his neck, and caused him to be thrown from the bridge into the Meuse, where he sank at once to the bottom. When the king saw this, he was filled with joy, and said,—“I have now all I wanted—he is at last destroyed.” Bayard, however, was not so easily got rid of. When he found himself plunged into the river, he “struck out so vigorously with his feet, that he succeeded in breaking the stone, and, rising to the surface, swam boldly across the Meuse. When he reached the

opposite shore, he neighed loudly, and then galloped off with such rapidity that it seemed as if a thunderbolt urged him. He then plunged into the forest of the Ardennes. Charlemagne, seeing that Bayard had escaped, was very much irritated, but all the barons were exceedingly glad."

"Beaucoup de gens disent," adds the romance, "que Bayard est encore vivant dans le bois des Ardennes, mais quand il voit homme ou femme, il fuit et on ne peut l'approcher."

The cause of Charlemagne's hatred to this paragon of coursers arose from the frequent discomfitures which he had experienced through his agency, in his feuds with the sons of Aymon. The popular romance from which I have quoted contains several stories in which Bayard plays a very conspicuous part, but in none more so than the following, which, as I am speaking of a spot that bears his name, may perhaps not inappropriately figure in this place.

The extraordinary speed of Bayard was one of the qualities that distinguished him above all other horses. Rinaldo constantly turned it to account, but never more signally than at the races which Charlemagne caused to be run at Paris, for the purpose of procuring the best horse in the world for his nephew Roland. The Duke Naïmes had advised the emperor to publish, at the sound of the trumpet, his will that all the horses of his army should run, and that to the owner of the fleetest should be given a crown of gold, five marks

of silver, and a hundred pieces of rich silk; that by this means he would discover the best horse, and could then buy the steed and give it to Roland. Charlemagne approved of the plan, and caused lists to be constructed, placing the prize at the end of the course. A certain squire, being on his way into Gascony, passed by Montauban, and told Rinaldo of the emperor's design, adding that the period fixed upon for the race was the approaching festival of St. John. When Rinaldo heard this news, he laughed, and, turning to his friend, the famous necromancer Maugis, the son of the Duke of Aigremont, he said,—“Charlemagne shall see the best trick in the world, and I will win his crown; I will mount Bayard and put it to the proof.” Maugis at first dissuaded him, but seeing that Rinaldo was resolved, he made him consent to let Maugis accompany him, and, for greater security, to take with them a number of knights well armed.

When the time arrived for them to set out, Rinaldo took leave of his wife, and with his brothers and friends departed on their way to Paris. When they arrived at Orleans, they gave out through Maugis, who spoke for all, that they were Béarnois, and were going to Paris to try their luck at the race. They continued their route, and arrived at Melun, where they remained in the town. On the eve of St. John, Rinaldo called Maugis to him, and said,—“Cousin, what shall we do? The race takes place to-morrow—we must there-

fore go and sleep in Paris." "You are right," replied Maugis; "but leave everything to me." He then took a certain herb, which he peeled, and squeezed the juice into some water; he then rubbed Bayard all over with the decoction, so that he became perfectly white, making it impossible for any one to recognise him. At the same time he anointed Rinaldo with an elixir, which gave him the appearance of a youth of fifteen years old. When Maugis had thus metamorphosed Rinaldo and his horse, he showed them to the other sons of Aymon, and asked them what they thought of the transformation,—“See,” he added, “how old Bayard is grown.” They knew not what to say; but Rinaldo having mounted his horse, told them to be under no apprehension on his account, for his disguise was complete. The brothers then confided Rinaldo to the care of Maugis, and they set forth.

Charlemagne, perceiving that his barons were now all arrived, assembled the Duke Naïmes, Ogier of Denn-marche, Foulques de Morillon, and others, and said to them, “Seignors, take with you a hundred knights. well armed, and go out on the road towards Orleans, in order that no one may pass you without your knowing who they are. I have an idea that Rinaldo may come, and if the thought struck him he would soon be here.” “Sire,” replied the barons, “we will obey your commands, and if Rinaldo is mad enough to come he cannot escape being taken.” They accordingly took the road towards Orleans, and halted when at the

distance of two leagues from Paris. They were some time there before any travellers passed; at last, when Duke Naïmes saw that none came, he said to Ogier, "By my faith, the king's commands make us look like fools, to bring us here to wait." "Sir," replied Ogier, "you are right;" for my part, I will stay here no longer;" and as he was about to return, Duke Naïmes saw Rinaldo and Maugis approaching from afar. Foulques cried out, "Here is Rinaldo! he cannot escape us!" "It is true," said Naïmes; "that horse resembles Bayard, if he were at the court." Foulques then drew his sword, and advanced to Rinaldo, but he was surprised not to discover him. Rinaldo and Maugis moved on, and Duke Naïmes seeing them pass by, called Maugis to him and said, "Who are you, and whither do you go!" "Sir," replied Maugis, "I come from Peronne; my name is Josuraius." Naïmes then asked him if he could give him any news of Rinaldo, the son of Aymon. "Yes," answered Maugis, "he rode two days in our company." Naïmes, seeing that Rinaldo said nothing, observed, "I think that he who is there without speaking is ill disposed towards us." "Sir," answered Maugis, "he is my son, who is not able to speak French." Then Duke Naïmes said to Rinaldo, "Can you not give me some account of Rinaldo?" To which the knight replied, "Imi scaius prena Franches en prenant par cheval à Paris couronne ri non draphonis gagnir mi."

At this Naïmes burst out laughing, saying, "Who

taught you your language? I can't understand a word you say;" and so they passed freely, continuing their way until they reached Paris, when, as they entered the city, Rinaldo was recognised by a man whom they met. A great many people followed them, and when the man saw that a great crowd had assembled, he became emboldened, and seized Bayard by the bridle, but the noble animal gave him so furious a kick that he stretched him dead upon the ground. The crowd seeing this, quickly withdrew, and Rinaldo and Maugis pressing on were not recognised again. Not finding any inn where they could stop, they put up at the house of a shoemaker; and when they dismounted, Maugis tied up one of Bayard's feet with a piece of waxed silk. The host, who saw him do this, asked him why he tied up his horse's foot, and who the knight was who rode him. "Sir," answered Maugis, "I have tied up the foot of this horse because he is lame; he who bestrides him is my son." As Maugis spoke, he accidentally let fall the name of Rinaldo, "Ah!" returned the host, "you have said enough, the young man, without doubt, is Rinaldo who slew Berthelot, the king's nephew; he shall learn the news of this event before the day is much older." Rinaldo, though much excited, made answer, "You are mistaken, I do not know who Rinaldo is, I have never seen him." "Hold your tongue," said the host; "I know you well enough:" saying which, he was on the point of leaving the house, but Rinaldo, running after

him, dispatched him with a single blow. When Maugis saw the host fall, he cried out, "Oh, my cousin! what have you done? We are lost, unless God help us." Maugis then went to the stable, saddled Bayard, made Rinaldo mount him, and immediately they left the spot. When the man's wife and children discovered what Rinaldo had done, they began to utter loud cries and lamentations; but Rinaldo and Maugis rode on so quickly, that no one could tell whither they had gone, for they mixed themselves amongst the crowd. Bayard went on hobbling towards the gate of St. Martin, and there they rested all that night. On the following day, Rinaldo and Maugis went to mass with the other barons, and then to the meadow, near the Seine, following the king. Charlemagne commanded that his crown should be placed at the extremity of the course, with the five marks of silver and the silk, which having been done by Ogier and Naïmes, the knights mounted their horses, every one expecting to gain the prize. The king then directed Duke Naïmes, Ogier, Guidelon of Burgundy, and Richard of Normandy, to take several well-armed knights to keep the course clear. The knights who were to contest the prize now drew up, and seeing Rinaldo, began to jeer him on account of his lame horse, saying to each other, "This fellow will certainly win the prize;" and one knight, addressing Rinaldo, said, "You were quite right, valiant sir, to bring your horse; he cannot fail to win."

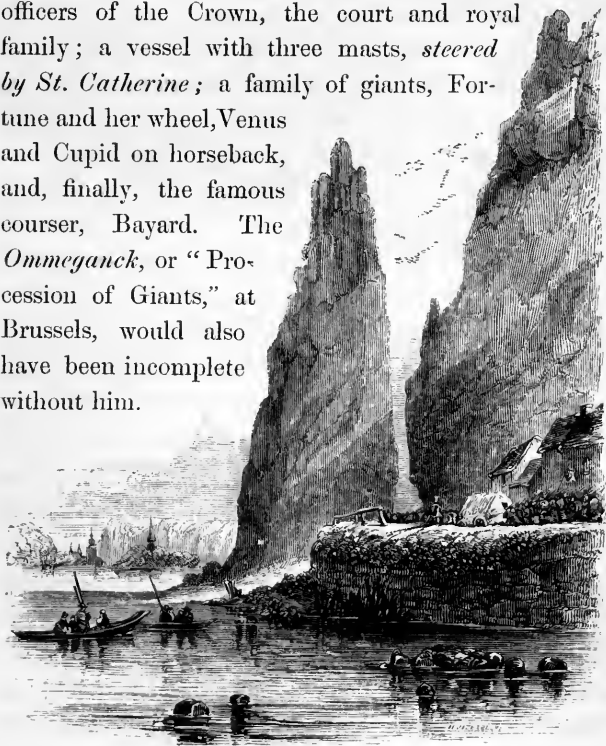
When Rinaldo heard these speeches he was very much angered, but, for fear of losing the prize, he said nothing. The king, too, was exceedingly angry with the speakers, and commanded, on pain of his displeasure, that no one should reproach the new comers. When Duke Naïmes and Ogier saw that all was ready, they gave the signal for the trumpets to sound, and every one set off. Maugis immediately untied Bayard's foot, but before he had done, the others were a long way in front. Rinaldo now seeing that it was time to make an effort, said to Bayard,—“ We are a good deal behind, and if you are not the first you will be blamed for it.” When Bayard heard his master's words, he snorted, threw out his neck, and dashed forward with so much spirit, that the earth seemed to shake under his feet, and in a few moments he passed all the others. When the knights who kept the course saw him run, they were very much astonished, and said to each other,—“ How rapidly that white horse runs; a little while ago he was lame, and now he is the best amongst them.” The emperor called Richard of Normandy to him, and said,—“ Did you ever see so many fine horses race before?” “ No, sire,” replied Richard; “ but the white horse has passed them all. Great God! how like he is to Bayard, if he were not of a different colour; and the rider, too, is lighter than his master.” Now, you must know that Bayard ran so well, that he reached the goal first, and Rinaldo dismounting, took the crown which lay

there, and put it under his arm, leaving the money and the silk. When he had taken the crown, he rode slowly towards the king, and Charlemagne, who saw him come, said, smilingly,—“Stop, friend, wait a little; if you wish to keep my crown, you may have it, and I will give you such a price for your horse that for your whole life you will never know what it is to be poor.” “Parbleu!” said Rinaldo; “these fine words are worth nothing—my name is Rinaldo, and I carry off your crown; seek another horse for Roland, for you will neither have your crown nor Bayard.” Having uttered this speech, he turned and galloped off like lightning. When Charlemagne heard these words, he was at first so enraged that he could not speak; but when he recovered himself, he cried,—“Sir knights, it is my enemy Rinaldo, the son of Aymon!” On which the knights drove their spurs into their horses, and rode after Rinaldo in pursuit, but in vain; for Rinaldo, leaving them far behind, swam Bayard over the Seine, and then dismounted. By this time the king had reached the bank of the river, and called out to Rinaldo:—“Son of a valiant man,” he said, “give me back my crown, and I will restore you thrice its value, and grant you a truce for two years!” Rinaldo answered,—“I will have nothing of the sort; you shall never see your crown again; I will sell it, and pay my knights; I will put the great carbuncle that is in it in front of my castle, that all who go on the pilgrimage to St. James may see it.” Charlemagne knew

not what to reply to this; and Rinaldo then joined Maugis, who counselled their immediate return, and they therefore set out for Melun, where they were met by Allard and the rest. Rinaldo and Maugis told them what had happened, and they all took the road to Montauban, where they arrived safely, much to the delight of all the vassals, who were delighted to hear of what their lord had done. But it is not alone on the banks of the Meuse that Bayard and the four sons of Aymon are renowned: their celebrity extends to all parts of Belgium, their names are recorded in the streets of their principal cities, and they formed a leading feature in many of the religious processions.

In the year 1490, on the day of the *Kermesse*, a famous procession was instituted at Louvain, to commemorate the victory gained over the Normans *six hundred years before*, viz., in 891, and it was renewed in 1656, 1660, 1663, and 1681. Behind the members of the university came Bayard and the sons of Aymon. The enormous quadruped bore the arms of his masters, “De gueules au chef de même, et chargé de trois pals d’azur vairé d’argent.” Bayard reappeared at the fête of Malines in 1825, in company with many notabilities, marshalled “in most admired disorder:” there were, for instance, winged allegorical figures on horseback; standard-bearers; troops of young girls, also *en Amazone*, representing the arts and sciences; a car, containing the famous Pucelle of Malines; another car, that held the whole court of Rome, with Pope Stephen

the Third conferring on St. Rombant his mission to the Low Countries, and surrounded by a group of cardinals, no doubt very much astonished to find themselves in the presence of a pope who flourished several centuries before the first creation of cardinals. With these came a crowd of saints, allegorical personages, heralds, huntsmen, pages, chamberlains, the great officers of the Crown, the court and royal family; a vessel with three masts, *steered by St. Catherine*; a family of giants, Fortune and her wheel, Venus and Cupid on horseback, and, finally, the famous courser, Bayard. The *Ommegauck*, or "Procession of Giants," at Brussels, would also have been incomplete without him.



THE ROCHE A BAYARD.



CHATEAU DE WALZEN.

CHAPTER XIV.

Excursion to the Chateau de Walzen—Walloon Guide—Magnificent Amphitheatre—The River Lesse—Profusion of Fruit—The Old Castle of Walzen—A Dinner *al fresco*—Paradise for Bees—Exaggeration—Pont sur Lesse—The Weir—Excursion to Freyr—The Chateau—The Cicerone—Discovery of the Grotto—Anseremme.



LITTLE beyond the Roche à Bayard, a fine broad road on the left hand leads to the heart of the Ardennes; but our first excursion being to discover the château de Walzen, which we were told stood *somewhere* on the Lesse, about three or four miles off, we continued straight on through a very pretty village, completely overshadowed with walnut trees, where some travelling artists were

studying effects, until we arrived at a small cabaret. Here we thought it advisable to ask our way of an old one-eyed cobbler, who was seated beneath the withered branch of *pequet*, that served as a sign to the cabaret, and who was busily engaged in the surgery of old shoes. His answer, "*Podri l' mohonn,*" was rather unintelligible to those not yet sufficiently versed in Walloon to know that it meant "behind the house;" and as our looks bespoke our embarrassment, the little man nimbly jumped up from his work, and, taking us round, pointed to a narrow lane on the left hand, as the direction we ought to follow. It was a steep ascent, leading into corn fields, and opening out into a fine expanse of country, from whence the deep valleys of the Meuse and the Lesse could be distinctly traced. Here—at the foot of a solitary tree, the only guide-post—a path to the right soon sinks into a hollow road, which seems to lose itself in a thick wood. As we descended, the sound of rushing waters was distinctly heard, and, at a sharp turn of the road, a magnificent scene opened before us. It was a vast amphitheatre of oval form, the largest diameter being about a mile, and the shortest nearly a thousand yards. The walls of this vast colosseum are lofty hills, covered with living foliage, and whose verdant slopes are occasionally broken by enormous masses of gray rock, as fantastic in shape as if the hand of man had purposely fashioned them. The arena is one wide meadow of the brightest green, round which, at

the base of the woods and rocks, rush the rapid waters of the Lesse, murmuring hoarsely beneath a stupendous cliff, where a weir has been thrown across. The stream appears completely to encircle the meadow, and where it goes to seems a mystery, for there is no apparent outlet; in its approach, too, it is only visible at intervals above a small wooden bridge, the entrance to the amphitheatre. The whole scene resembled, though on a much larger scale, the beautiful valley above the ruins of Moha, and in the days of chivalry no more appropriate site could have been found for a grand passage of arms.

We pursued a winding road till we reached the bottom of the slope, when our course lay through orchards, meadows, and gardens, rich in fruit, corn, and autumnal flowers, and through thickets which afforded a pleasant shelter from the burning rays of the sun, now riding high in the heavens without a cloud.

A fine château, belonging to M. Delaert, is a prominent feature in the valley, and it indicates either great liberality or confidence in the owner, that apricot and peach trees are trained on the *outside* of the high garden walls, where the fruit grows within reach of every wayfarer. Seeing that numbers had fallen uncared for, we put a liberal interpretation on the display, and found the peaches as delicious as they were tempting. After passing the château, another amphitheatre appears, less regular than the first, but possessing many of its attributes; this form, indeed, distinguishes the valley of the Lesse, a turbulent stream

that seems to run impatiently round and round, to force itself a passage through the mountains. Following the path across some corn-fields, bordered by a thick hedge of hazel and wild cherry, both abundant in fruit, the next bend of the river brought us in sight of the modern château of Walzen, perched on the summit of a perpendicular rock above the deep waters of the Lesse, but far lower than the ancient castle, the ruins of which are visible on another height about half a mile beyond.

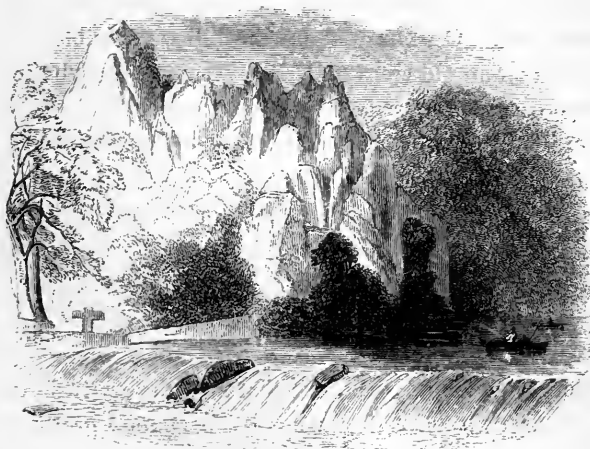
Little remains of the old castle; and of its former lords, all that is told by Hemricourt is, that it was the abode of the "Bon Escuwier, Wathi de Walzen," who flourished in the fourteenth century. Below the château is a water-mill, and seeing a ferry-boat we hailed the miller, and under his pilotage crossed the river, seated comfortably in chairs, with a dry board placed beneath our feet, a necessary accommodation, the boat being half full of water. Meaning to stay and dine here in the open air, we asked the miller, a sturdy, well-limbed, good-natured fellow, what he could give us; he promised milk and potatoes, which, with the contents of a travelling panier, made an excellent dinner. An angler who was whipping the water with a fly suggested thoughts of trout, but the sun shone too brightly for the fish to bite, and the fisherman abandoned his sport without any result. Beside this brawling stream, —for on our side of the dam its course was broken by large stones, while beneath the château it was still and

deep,—we lingered for two or three hours, and then, re-crossing the ferry, began the ascent to the ruins. A good-natured farmer seeing us about to take a circuitous route, rode after us to tell us we were at liberty to shorten the distance by crossing the grounds of the château, and we were glad to profit by his suggestion. Here we found walks, admirably well kept, leading by zigzag paths to the very top, amid plantations of fir and lilac, interspersed with juniper and wild cherry, the natural growth of the soil. A young man and a girl were beating the juniper bushes to collect the berries for the distiller at Houyel, a village a few miles off; and the air was filled with their aromatic odour, mingled with that of the young fir-cone and the perfume from the purple heath. This region must be a perfect paradise for bees, for everything that they most love grows in profusion. The ruins are difficult of access, and the walls are such mere shells that it is better to leave them “alone in their glory,” and allow them rather to form part of the fine view which greets us from the table land above them.

Having gazed our fill we descended by a different path amongst thickets of filbert trees and blackberry bushes, and crossed a broad piece of stubble, envying the possessor of such wide domains in so lovely a spot. A covey of eighteen partridges suddenly rose, and their whirring wings put all our speculations to flight, or rather gave them a new direction, and we fancied every tuft a bird till we were fairly out of the field. At the

foot of the hill we met an old woodcutter whom we questioned about the château. "It belonged," he said, "to the young Comte d' Hamal;" and he then entered into a long, melancholy story about the death of the late count and seven of his family only a month before in Paris! He succeeded in exciting our commiseration, but it was afterwards very much modified when we found that there had been only one death in the family. The fondness for exaggerating evil, the propensity of common minds, was probably the source of this fiction.

On our way home, we crossed the bridge leading into the large amphitheatre, and passed through a small farm or rather cluster of cottages, called the hamlet of Pont-sur-Lesse, where we entered the meadow that



THE WEIR, ON THE LESSE.

had so much attracted us at first. It proved as beautiful on a closer examination, as we had at first thought it; and, crossing to the weir, we sat down in front of the magnificent rock which rises there from the bed of the river. It is a most secluded spot, the haunt of numerous kingfishers, who, no doubt, find their account in selecting this locality, to judge by the numbers of fish which we saw incessantly leaping against the weir,—not with the hope of reaching the upper water, for it was too high, but seemingly only for sport, as if they were trying which could leap furthest; for a moment their silver scales glittered in the air, and then the rushing waters whirled them away into the glassy depths below the fall. We loitered here some time, and then the sinking sun, having already cast the valley into shadow, warned us to retrace our steps homeward. On our way up the hill we stumbled by chance on an old cross of dark grey stone, nearly buried in the earth at the foot of a huge rock. An inscription in very legible letters,—slightly obliterated at one extremity,—told of a fatal accident that had happened on the spot nearly two hundred years since; it was as follows:—

CY : AC : ESTE : OCCIS : MATTHEW : FILS : HENR :
 DEVILLE : AGE : DE : 15 : ANS : LE : 24 : MAYE : 167 :
 PRIEZ : DIEU : POUR : SON : AME.

The boy had most probably fallen from the rocks above.

Our next excursion was to the famous grotto of Freyr, in the woods behind the château of the Duchesse

de Beaufort Spontin, about three miles above Dinant, on the left bank of the Meuse. To enjoy the shade we crossed the bridge, and followed the towing path through the faubourg of St. Medard; with smiling gardens and rich orchards, on one hand, and the deep, full river, flowing rapidly, on the other. For the first mile the road is overshadowed with fine walnut trees, and as they disappear the scenery becomes more picturesque, and the rocks of Anseremme rise towering above the river, the chosen abode of hawks and crows, always at war with each other, and screaming in their circling flight. The river here makes a deep bend as it passes the island of Moniat, and then a broad basin appears, shut in like a lake by the rugged mountains above the Château de Freyr.



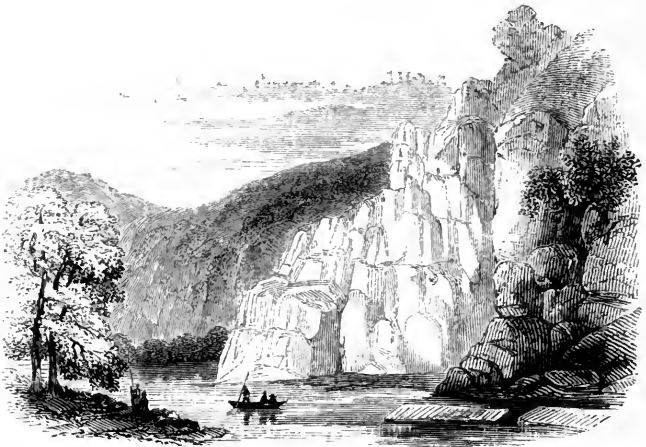
CHATEAU DE FREYR.

This château, which figures in diplomatic annals, being the place where the famous treaty of commerce between France and Spain was signed in 1675, was the seat of the ancient barony of Freyr, which passed into the family of Beaufort Spontin, by the marriage, in 1410, of the Seigneur de Sorinne with Marie d'Orjot, the last descendant of the counts of Agimont and Walcour. The château itself, an immense parallelogram, flanked by four towers with pointed roofs, presents nothing remarkable; but its situation is in the most romantic part of the Meuse, which here exhibits every charm that woods, rocks, and waters can lend. The gardens of Freyr, though laid out in the formal style of two centuries ago, are still not wanting in attraction; and the sparkling fountains, gay parterres, and long walks, glowing with ripe autumnal fruit, greatly relieved the monotony of their construction. The gardener's son was our *cicerone*, and a youth of less intelligence it is perhaps difficult to meet with. His discourse, as he led us through the woods, was chiefly about serpents, and he questioned us very particularly in regard to the quantities which he had heard existed in England. He then dilated upon the adders of Freyr, which he said were as thick as a man's body, and very numerous! No doubt, if he had been pressed on the subject, he would have peopled the caverns with dragons; but we prudently abstained from asking more than the modern history of the grotto, leaving to other authorities the responsibility of de-

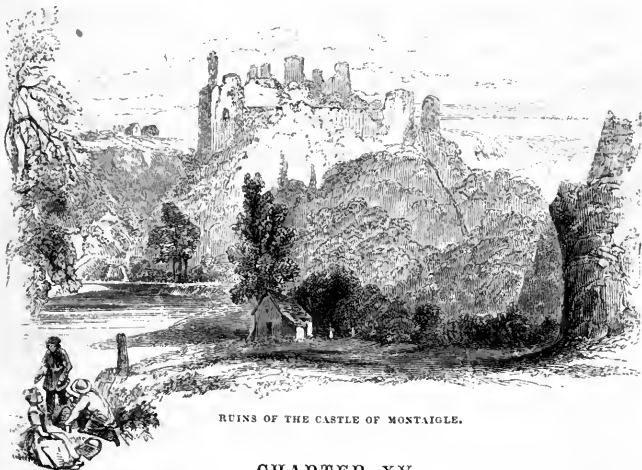
giving the name Freyr from the Scandinavian Venus, Friga.

It is only five and twenty years since the grotto was accidentally discovered while the late duke was out shooting. His dog, in the pursuit of a fox, ran into an earth and disappeared so long that he was thought to be lost; but in the course of about half an hour he was distinctly heard yelping at a considerable distance from the spot where he entered, and on closely examining the rocks a deep fissure was found, opening out into a spacious chamber, and communicating by a long and sinuous passage with the fox earth. Some labourers were immediately set to work with pickaxe and mattock; and, the lower aperture enlarged, formed the entrance to a series of eight beautiful galleries, thickly encrusted with stalactites, and terminating in the lofty hall first discovered, which admits a ray of daylight through the brushwood that nearly covers the fissure. The grotto is three hundred and fifty feet in length, and many of the clusters of stalactites are extremely beautiful. Amongst the curious objects which it contains are a mushroom, *agaricus rotula*, which becomes fossil by the absorption of the water falling from the stalactites charged with carbonate of chalk. The thermometer of Reaumer always remains at eight degrees above zero, summer and winter. Some bones and two or three skulls are shown; but whether they are the relics of ancient sacrifices, the remains of venerable hermits, or the *disjecti membra* of refugees or murdered

travellers, tradition is silent. Our guide said that an iron vessel and a poignard were also found when the grotto was first opened ; but, as his tendency was evidently towards the marvellous, we were willing to suppose them merely an accompaniment to his gigantic adders. We returned from the grotto by a different path, passing under a very fine natural arch or open cavern, and slowly followed the course of the Meuse to Anseremme, where we entered one of the flat-bottomed boats that ply at the ferry, and, with a pretty girl for our Palinurus, paddled down the river till we reached the quay at Dinant.



ANSEREMME.



RUINS OF THE CASTLE OF MONTAIGLE.

CHAPTER XV.

The Collegiate Church of Dinant—Saint Perpetuus—Dangerous Rock above the Church—Its Removal—Excursion to Montaigle—Refuge at Sommiers—The Cure of Sommiers—Road to Montaigle—Ruins of the Castle—Picturesque Situation—Formerly a Roman Station—The Legend of Gilles de Chin—Processions of Dragons—The Dragon of Mons—Le Lumecon—Exploits of Gilles de Chin—Procession at Wasines—Banners and Pictures—Death of Gilles de Chin—His Statue—His Epitaph.



THE Collegiate Church of Dinant, whose oddly shaped spire seems to have been raised on no conceivable principle of art, possesses some features worthy of notice. It is of fine proportions, and built of two kinds of calcareous stone, gray and white, and the black marble of the country has not been spared in its construction. The architecture is early pointed—of the beginning of the thirteenth century—but its antiquity is

apparent only in the nave and baptistery and southern porch, the rest of the building having suffered so much during the frequent sieges. The baptistery is extremely curious, and contains an ogive sweep opposite the window, richly ornamented with figures in the arch, besides others on pedestals. Here was formerly shown the great treasure of the church—the statue of Saint Perpetuus, the patron of the city—in solid silver; but that has long disappeared, and the saint is now only figured in stone in one of the aisles. Though it is difficult to understand how anything so fragile could have been preserved, some fine old stained glass is still left here and there; and some of the windows, particularly those in the south transept and over the western entrance, are of very beautiful forms. The font, too, is a fine one, and the sculpture over the south portal is curious and elaborate. In the tower is a fine carillon, whose melody rings in the air every half quarter of an hour—a little too often, perhaps, on a first acquaintance.

Besides the chances of war the church has run several risks from fire, and on one occasion was almost buried beneath a mass of rock which fell from the heights under which it is built. This catastrophe befel when the church was full of people, during the funeral ceremony of one of the principal citizens.

A few days after our arrival we found that the apprehension of a similar accident was entertained throughout Dinant, a deep crack having suddenly

made its appearance on the surface of the rock, impending over the church and neighbouring houses. To prevent the mass from falling unawares, it was resolved at once to dislodge the most suspicious looking fragment, and the whole town was in commotion to witness the operation. The market-place, the bridge, and the opposite shore of the Meuse were crowded with gazers, and eager heads were thrust from every window that could command a view of the spot. The inhabitants dwelling on the dangerous side of the church, were obliged to evacuate their dwellings, and the result was looked forward to with the greatest anxiety. Many wise heads were shaken, and not a few of the alarmists predicted the entire destruction of the church and buildings adjacent. One old woman fell on her knees, and, with many tears and lamentations, put up prayers for the preservation of her abode, and one could not but sympathise with her solicitude, though some who professed themselves acquainted with the precise position of the rock, declared that there was no real danger.

We had intended that day to visit the ruins of the castle of Montaigne, about six miles off, in the district *Entre Sambre et Meuse*, and stopped on the bridge to witness the engineering experiment. At the hour appointed, a workman was lowered by cords from the parapet of the citadel, and there, suspended over an abyss, some three hundred feet deep, with apparently no resting-place for his foot as he swung from point to

point, he plied both pickaxe and lever for about half an hour, till the threatening mass was sufficiently loosened for the *grand coup*. He gave it at last, and down it thundered, an avalanche of stone, shivering in its descent into a thousand splinters as it encountered the unequal surface of the rock below, but falling perfectly harmless, the direction given to it having been well calculated. A cloud of dust rose as it fell, and when that had cleared away, the workman was seen standing on a narrow ledge at the foot of the walls of the citadel, busily engaged in smoothing the surface of the rock from whence the enormous fragment,—which it was supposed weighed about forty thousand pounds,—had been detached. The people shouted with exultation, the devotee clasped her hands, and wiped her eyes, and we ascended the steep winding road that led to the heights opposite Dinant, but stopping frequently to gaze upon the rock, where the miner was still unconcernedly at work.

When the level ground is reached, a broad expanse of corn land appears, dotted with farm buildings of large extent, and many of them having that fortified character which is peculiar to Belgium, and did such good service at Hougomont; in the distance the horizon was skirted with thick woods, towards which we made our way.

The previous night had been tempestuous, with a good deal of thunder and lightning, and the skies were not yet entirely clear, as we found to our cost in tra-

versing the wide plain between Bouvignes and Sommiers; for when we were about midway across, without a tree or hedge in sight, the rain came suddenly down in torrents, and drove us for shelter into a corn-field, where the sheaves of rye were yet standing, with which we raised a defence against the storm. When its fury was spent, we scrambled on over a very yielding, slippery soil towards Sommiers, to dry our feet, and ascertain whereabouts the ruins of Montaigne were hidden, for this country is so deeply intersected that most of its beauties come upon us by surprise.

The cabarets in the village looked much too dark and dirty to tempt one to enter, so we waded on to the upper extremity, where the only building stood, into which we thought it worth while to venture. It was apparently a farm-house, and while we stood asking for admission of a group of children, who were staring at us from an open barn, a tall man, wearing the clerical *soutane*, opened the door, and courteously begged us to enter. He was the curé of the village, and a better specimen of the simple country pastor it would be difficult to meet. He led us into his parlour, and immediately pressed refreshments upon us: "Would we have coffee? No? Then, as he had just dined (it was only twelve o'clock), we must take our share with him of a bottle of Bordeaux,—that could do no harm; on the contrary, as we felt damp, it would be exactly the thing." A sprightly looking

girl of fifteen, the curé's niece, instantly disappeared, but speedily returned with wine-glasses, followed by a clean, good-natured looking old woman, bearing the promised bottle. She was the curé's mother, and took her seat beside the stove, while the good priest drew the cork, and filled bumpers all round. It was impossible to refuse hospitality so earnestly proffered.

The curé was a quiet good-tempered man, about forty years of age, of plain, farmer-like aspect, with contentment legibly written on his broad, shining face. His cure consisted of about five hundred souls; the duty he said was "très facile," for his parishioners were "des manants bien doux;" and he passed his time in this quiet village much at his ease, except perhaps in the winter season, when the distance at which the different farms in his parish were separated, rendered his duty rather more severe. He was simple, untravelled, and unlettered, knowing little beyond his *métier de prêtre*, and at this season was occupying his leisure in making and setting springes for grives,—*"le meilleur oiseau qui existe, après le becasse."* He had been curé of Sommiers about ten years, and never left it except once a year to go to his native place, Namur, where all his brothers and sisters lived. He said that the owners of the farms and châteaux all round were his friends, and that he led a very tranquil, happy life. It was easy to believe him.

An hour soon passed in conversation, and during

that time the skies again became bright, and having received minute directions as to the route we were to follow, we took a cordial farewell of the curé, and resumed our progress towards Montaigle.

About a mile beyond Sommières the path lies through thick woods, which clothe the sides of a deep valley. Emerging from these by a hollow road, arched over with oak, and ash, and hazel, with a gleam of light in the distance, immense gray rocks come suddenly in view, their surface broken by innumerable clefts, the nests of hawks and crows ;—beyond these extends a broad, emerald mead, a nearly perfect amphitheatre, where on a bold promontory, on either side of which flow the sparkling waters of the Flavion and the Sosoye, stand the ivy-grown towers of Montaigle, presenting an *ensemble* more complete than any we had yet seen.

The situation of Montaigle is well chosen both for aggression and defence. It is perched at one extremity of a high, narrow peninsula, commanding three separate valleys, by which alone it could be approached. There are numerous towers still standing ; we counted eight nearly entire, save where some deep rents had scored their sides. A quantity of ivy grows on the walls, and there is much foliage within of beech, birch and mountain ash. In one tower is a steep staircase descending two stories deep, but the way down to the vaults is difficult and dangerous. Access to the ruins can only be obtained on one side

over a narrow footbridge that crosses the Flavion, and then the road climbs a steep, rocky pass till it reaches the level greensward at the foot of the castle.

Montaigle was formerly a Roman station, and derives its name from that which they bestowed on it, "Mons Aquilæ." It is supposed that when Julius Cæsar made the conquest of Belgium, one of his legions wintered at this spot under the command of Quintus Cicero, the brother of the immortal orator. The castle bore also the name of *Faing*, which some derive from *Fanium*, and assert that a Roman temple once existed here, while others, with more probability, deduce the etymology from *Faigne* or *Fange*, which in Walloon signifies generally a place covered with brushwood. But whatever may be the remoteness of its origin, it is certain that in the middle ages it was a castle of great importance when it belonged to the noble Hainault family of Berlaimont, from whom it was re-purchased in 1289 by Philippe de Courtenai, Count of Namur. In 1431 the Liégeois besieged and took Montaigle, which they burnt and devastated, and its walls have never been rebuilt.

Of the lords of Berlaimont, the former possessors of Montaigle,—the most celebrated in history is the famous Gilles de Chin, the hero of Mons, whose memory is kept alive in that city to this day. Although the scene of his greatest exploit be distant from the Meuse, yet as his name is conspicuous in the roll of the feudal Châtelains who foraged on its banks,—I

cannot deny myself the pleasure of telling his story here.

Amongst the religious ceremonies, half Pagan in their origin, which are not yet quite obsolete in various parts of the Continent, the procession of the dragon, on Trinity Sunday, at Mons, is perhaps the most remarkable. The dragon, whether as an object of religious aversion or a necessary appendage to the earlier ages of Christianity, has always occupied a conspicuous position before the public. At Tarascon, where it was called "La Tarasque;" at Poitiers, where it bore the name of "La grand gueule ou la bonne St. Vermine;" at Rouen, known as "La Gargouille;" at Rheims, as "La Kraulla;" at Troyes, as "La Chair Salée;" at Metz, as "La Graoulli;" at Paris, as "The Dragon of St. Marcel;" at Vendôme, as "The Dragon of St. Bienheureé;" at Louvaine, Ramillies, and elsewhere, under other local designations; the annual fêtes in honour of St. Martha, St. Radegonde, St. Romain, St. Marguerite, St. Victor, and a host of other Saints, not forgetting our own patron Saint, St. George, and the Archangel Michael; all of whom vanquished Dragons or their similitudes, were long observed; and still at Mons, the monster victim is paraded with much pomp and circumstance.

The dragon is there carried in procession,—an animal of enormous size and surpassing hideousness, whose ferocious appearance is set off by a number of figures grotesquely appavelled, like the knaves of cards,

and mounted on hobby-horses of wicker-work; these attendants are called, in the *patois* of Mons, “Chinchins.” After the procession, the towns-people assemble in the principal square, opposite the Hôtel de Ville, where a furious single combat takes place between the dragon and a man armed at all points like a knight, who represents St. George. The dragon, after fighting most gallantly with claws and tail, is of course finally vanquished, St. George giving him the *coup de grace* by shooting him with a pistol! During the procession, and, indeed, until the monster has received his death-wound, the multitude continue to sing a popular song, called “Le Dou-dou,” the words of which are as follows:—

Nos irons vir l' car d' or a l' procession de Mon,
Ce s'ra l'poupée St. Georg' qui no' suivra de long.

C' est l' doudou, c' est l' mama,

C' est l' poupée, poupée, poupée,

C' est l' doudou, c' est l' mama, c'est l' poupée St. Georg' qui va.

Les gins du rempart riront com' des kiards de vir tant de carottes,
Les gins du culot riront com' des sots de vir tant de carot à leu' pots.

There are many more verses, but as they are not more remarkable for either sense or elegance, those I have given may suffice.

While the combat lasts, the city guard march round the square, occasionally discharging their fire-arms. The whole ceremony is from this circumstance called “Le Lumeçon,” the *patois* of Mons for *limaçon*—the circular movement of the burgher guard being compared to a screw.

The popular tradition concerning the origin of this custom is, that it was instituted to keep in remembrance a celebrated feat of arms, performed by a knight named Gilles de Chin, the lord of Berlaimont and Chamberlain of Hainault, who, in the year 1133 slew a terrible dragon which abode in the forest of Wasmes, a league and a-half from Mons, and desolated the entire province. The head of this pretended dragon is still shown in the public library of the city, and has given rise to much discussion amongst the learned but unscientific writers who have described it. The Abbé Hôsart declares the head to be that of a hippopotamus, and endeavours to show that it was violently cut off with a hatchet, while M. Hoverlant is equally strenuous in asserting that it is the head of a *real dragon*, and, in support of argument, writes eighty pages of *history* to prove the existence of dragons.* All the naturalists, however, who have examined the skeleton, pronounce it to be the head of a crocodile, which was, in all probability, brought from the East by one of the Crusaders,—perhaps by Gilles de Chin himself, whose deeds of arms have been recorded both in chronicle and romance.† That he was a notable *preux*, there can be

* *Vide* "Essai sur l' Histoire de Tournay," par Hoverlant.

† On our way homeward, through Hainault, we stopped at Mons, and had the satisfaction of making a personal acquaintance, not only with the crocodile's head in the public library, but with the dragon himself, whom we found shut up in a lumber-room at the back of the Hôtel de Ville. The person who showed him said that he was supplied with a new mune, and that his coat was freshly painted every year. He is truly a formidable beast, and merits the immortality which he

little doubt; for in his first essay of arms at the tourney of "La Garde St. Remy," we are told that he overthrew four knights with his lance, and "puis Gillion de Chin, mist la main à l'espée, sy encommença à ferir à destre et à senestre, puis quant il n'avoit espace de esmer son cop, il frappoit du pumel de son espée sur ces healmes par sy grant force qui les estonnoit, en tel manière que tous estourdis, ilz tomboient par terre, &c."* Gislebert de Gembloux, the famous chronicler of Hainault, testifies, in a more positive manner, to one of his exploits in the Holy Land, though the beast which he slew was neither a dragon or a crocodile, but a lion. He says:—"Hic equidem Egidius de Cindum vixit omnium militum in hoc sæculo viventium probissimus in armis dictus est, qui in transmarinis partibus cum leone ferocissimo solus dimicans illum vicit et interfecit non sagitta vel arcu sed scuto et lancea." † This, and other feats of arms, the valiant knight may have performed in the Holy Land; but there is no evidence to show that his warlike arm ever rid his

appears likely to enjoy; for the people of Mons, notwithstanding their locality in the midst of railroads and coal-mines, would part with many things more willingly than their dragon.

* "La Chronique de bon Chevalier Messire Gilles de Chin, publiée d'après un manuscrit de la Bibliothèque de Bourgogne à Bruxelles, par la Société des Bibliophiles à Mons." 1837.

† The type of the combat of the Seigneur de Berlaimont with his dragon may be found in that described by the Abbé Vertot, in his history of the Knights of Malta, where he gives the details of the manner in which a knight, named Dieudonné de Gozon, vanquished a terrific crocodile in the island of Rhodes.—"Histoire de l'Ordre de Maltre," ed. 1726, tom 2, pp. 22, &c.

native country of such a monster, though the popular belief, aided by painted and graven records, asserts the fact. The country people at Wasmes pretend to show the cavern in which the dragon dwelt, and every year a procession takes place, on the Tuesday after Pentecost, in memory of the event. At two o'clock in the morning the priest says mass, and at four the *cortège* sets out. Besides the image of Our Lady of Wasmes, another banner is borne, depicting the combat between Gilles de Chin and the dragon, with the Virgin appearing to him. On one side these lines are written in large characters:—

“ Attaques Gilles de Chin ce dragon furieux
Et tu seras de lui par moi victorieux.”

Previous to 1789, six brotherhoods, in different costumes, accompanied the procession, which lasted four hours, and had the right to pass in any direction, even across the standing corn.

In the church of Wasmes may still be seen a very badly painted picture, representing the knight on his knees before the Virgin, and these rhymes beneath:—

“ Sainte Vierge en ce jour
Je viens pour t'implorer
De détruire en ce jour
Un dragon qui vient nous dévorer.”

Amongst the written authorities for the story is one contained in a MS. of the public library at Mons, which, under the head of “ St. Gislain,” gives the following note:—

“ Au dict cloistre de Saint Ghislain gist Gilles de Chyn, mais sa sepulture est toute brisée; l’écriture qui estoit sur son tombeau est telle et portait les armes de Couchy.

“ L’an mil cent et xxxvii, iij^e jours devant le my-aoust, trespassa messire Gille de Chin ly boins chers qui fut tué d’une lanche, et est cius qui tua le gayant, et en fet-on l’obit* a Monsieur St. Ghislain en l’abbaye où il gist, trois jours devant my-aoust, aussi solemnellement c’on fait du roy Dagobert qui fonda l’égle, ne quy d’abbet en l’an quiconque puisse dire, ne pour feste qui soit ou ne liroit à faire son service.† Et fut tué à Rollecourt Gille de Chyn d’une lanche.”

De Bossu, in his history of Mons, quotes an epitaph which was to be seen in the vaults of the abbey of St. Ghislain at the village of Wasmes, which, however, is only another version of that which still exists on the shield of the statue of Gilles de Chin, in the possession of the conservator of the public library at Mons.

This curious statue is in the black marble of the country, but not being polished, it has the appearance of hewn stone. It is slightly mutilated, but the workmanship has been carefully executed. The knight is

* The arms of Coucy in Picardy, and of Berlaimont in Hainault were the same: “ Fascé de vair et de gucule.” The arms of Chin are the same, with a canton *argent* for difference. In Hemricourt’s “ Noblesse de la Hesbaye,” the arms of Berlaimont are charged, in addition, with six escallop shells on the fesse, three, two, and one.

† This mass is still celebrated annually on the 12th of August.

represented with his hands clasped on his breast, a helmet on his head, and a hauberk round his neck, over



Gilles de Chin
Sr. de Berlaymont.
MCCXXXVII.

which is his surcoat. His shield, bearing the inscription, is sustained by a thong, which crosses his body diagonally, and is placed on the left of the figure, His feet rest upon a dog, a remarkable feature, for dogs,* the emblems of fidelity, were only placed at the feet of women, while those of men always rested on lions. The face of the statue is of white marble, as were also the hands, but they have been broken.

The inscription on the shield—probably of three centuries later date than the statue—is as follows:—

“Cy gist Messire Gilles de Chin, chambellan de Haynnau, Sr. de Berlaymont, aussi de Chievres et de Sars de par sa femme Dame Idon. Personnaige digne de memoire tant pour son zel au service de Dieu que pour sa valeur dans les armes; lequel aydé de la vièrge tua un dragon qui faisoit grand degast au terroir de Wasmes. Il fut enfin occy à Rouillecourt l’an 1137. Et icy ensevely ayant donné de grands biens à ceste maison au village de Wasmes. Requiescat in pace.”

* A dog was perhaps chosen on account of the assistance rendered by one in the attack upon the dragon.



CHAPTER XVI.

Poivache—Early History of the Castle—originally called “The Emerald”—Changed to Poilvaque—Its destruction—The Gatte d’Or—Bertha of Bierloz—Her beauty and perfidy—Her strange death—The ruins—Beauty of Scenery—Tour de Moniot—The Gleaners—Possible Feud.



THE ruins of Poivache, once the strongest and most formidable castle in the Walloon country, stand upon a broad and lofty promontory about three miles below Dinant on the right bank of the Meuse. The immense height of the rocks, rising full 300 feet perpendicularly above the village of Houx, rendered the castle inaccessible on the river side, while on the east it was defended by a strong line of walls and towers, and on the west by a deep ravine, besides being protected by a donjon keep on a neighbouring height, which still bears the name of the tower of Monoï or Moniot. It once held a town within its walls, but in

the vast space which they still enclose nothing but a few crumbling fragments now remain.

The first authentic record concerning Poilvache dates from the eleventh century, though tradition assigns it a still greater antiquity, being named in romance as one of the castles which were attacked by the four valiant sons of Aymon, in the course of their long feud with Charlemagne. It was certainly a fief of the empire, for in the year 1086, the Emperor Henry IV., bestowed it on Conrad, Count of Luxembourg, as a marriage portion with his daughter Clemence. From his family it passed into that of Limbourg, in the person of Count Waleran who held it in 1237. In 1280, it became the property of Henri l' Aveugle, Count of Luxembourg, who held it in fee of the Counts of Namur.* At his death a violent dispute arose as to whether it should belong to the houses of Limbourg or Luxembourg; but it was at length agreed that the latter should retain it, and thus it continued in the family of Luxembourg till the time of Charles, the Blind King of Bohemia, who fell so nobly at Crécy, and who, previous to the campaign

* A charter of this year (1280), published in the "*Monuments pour servir à l'histoire des provinces de Namur, &c.*" by the Baron de Reiffenberg, specifies the nature of the tenure of Poilvache: "Nous Henris, coens de Luxembourch, et Marchis d' Erlons, faisons savoir à tous cheaus qui ces lettres verront et orront, ke nous le chastiel et le ville de Poilvache, &c. &c., avons reprins et reprendrons eu fief et en hommage perpetuelement et hiretaulment pour nous et pour nos hoirs singneurs, &c., de no très chier et amei singneur et fil, Guyon Conte de Flandres et Marchis de Namur, à tenir de luy, &c."

against the English, sold it in perpetuity for 27,300 florins to the Count of Namur, who then formally annexed it to his territory.

During the time that Poilvache belonged to the King of Bohemia it was called "Castrum Bohemorum," but it originally bore the poetical designation of "The Emerald," before it was known as Poilvache. Philippe Mousques, whose chronicle was written in the earlier part of the thirteenth century, described it as "Poilvake li fors castiaus," but adds that, "the envious and evil-speaking people of Huy and Dinant * who dwelt near, looked upon the castle as an ill-neighbour, and called it out of spite 'Poilvaque,' † because their swine and cows and all their cattle were carried off from before their doors, although in the country of (Count) Waleran (Limbourg), it had, *by ban*, been proclaimed 'Emerald.' But the name of Polivache clung to it."

The castle withstood repeated sieges, the most remarkable being those under the conduct of Jean d'Eppe, Prince Bishop of Liège, in the thirteenth century, and of Adolphus de la Marck at a later period, when it was almost entirely destroyed. It was afterwards rebuilt and restored to its original splendour; but its day of ruin came in 1430, when Bishop Jean de Heins-

* Mais la gent envieuse et baude
Cil de Hui et cil de Dinant
Ki là entor ièrent manant, &c. &c.

† "Poilvaque," literally "robber of the cows' hide." *Vide* Roquefort, "Gloss. de la Langue Roman;" art. "Poiler."

berg at the head of the old enemies Poilvache,—the people of Huy and Dinant,—attacked and took it, leaving nothing but the broken walls which still crown the rocky heights, to tell the tale of its former grandeur. Poilvache is one of those ruins to which the superstition of the Walloons has assigned an important rank. The *larvæ*, or familiar demons called “*Nutons*,”* are supposed to haunt the caverns in the rock; and a tradition prevails here of the existence of the *gatte d'or*, the treasure-fiend who has chosen his dwelling at Beaufort, at Moha, at Franchimont, at Amblevè, everywhere, in short, where subterranean passages are to be found.

Not far from Poilvache, on the banks of the river Bocq, is a high rock on which are still to be seen the ruins of an old tower, which, in the early part of the thirteenth century, was tenanted by an old knight named Gauthier de Bierloz, one of the class called *Milites casati*, who, possessing small fiefs, lived in dependence on some prince or high justiciary. He had but one child, a daughter named Bertha, of surpassing beauty. She had, of course, numerous ad-

* The word *Nuton* is derived from *Noctis homines*, in Walloon, *Nutte homs*; in the same manner *sotay* comes from *subterra*, *soterre*. Philippe Monsques, speaking of the former, says:—

“Quar nient plus, comme s'il fust *nuituns*,
Ne sorent qu' il devint *cascuns*.”

In clearing a forest, the labourers often find the remains of old forges which they call “*Crayats de Nutons*,” and if any scoræ of iron or lead are amongst them, they give them the name of “*Vesses de Nutons*.” The belief is constant everywhere in the country that these gnomes were the first to teach mankind the value of iron.

mirers, but had distinguished above them all a young esquire named Alard, in the service of Waleran, Duke of Limbourg, her father's suzerain, who dwelt at Poilvache.

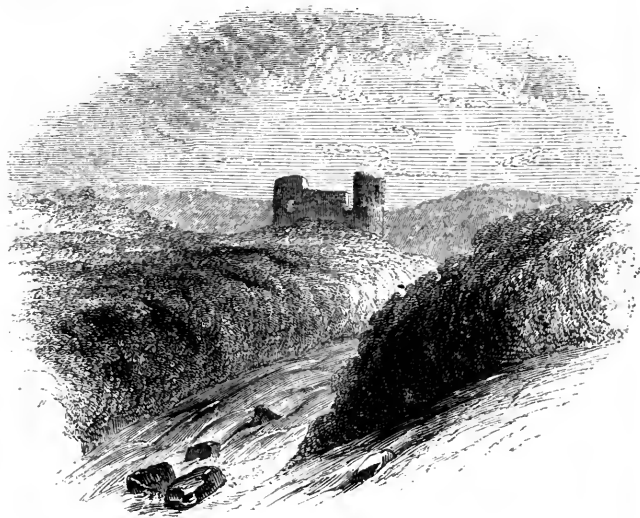
The mutual love of Bertha and Alard was known to the Duchess of Limbourg, who approved of their union, which was on the point of being celebrated, when Bertha, for the first time, came to the Castle of Poilvache. Her beauty caused such a powerful effect on the duke, that it overcame every sentiment of honour and fidelity; and the duchess being suddenly obliged to visit her domains at La Roche, Waleran took advantage of her absence to declare the passion which Bertha had inspired. Dazzled by his rank and the splendour of his offers, Bertha forgot the vows she had proffered to Alard, and yielded to the spirit of avarice which formed the basis of her character. Her unfortunate lover was thrown into one of the deepest dungeons of the castle, where, it was said, he perished miserably, and Bertha became the avowed mistress of the duke, who gratified her love of personal splendour by heaping upon her all the wealth of which he was master, while she consoled herself for the execration of the world by appearing, on all occasions in public, decked in the most costly attire, and wearing the richest jewels.

Her hour of triumph was however brief; for one day she suddenly disappeared, and none could tell whither she had gone. Waleran caused every search

to be made for her, and at last, all of mortal that belonged to her was found. Her body, loaded with gold chains, was discovered in one of the vaults of the castle—the same that had witnessed her lover's last sigh. How it came there, or what was the immediate cause of her death, none could imagine; but, ever since that time, the story goes that the *gatte d'or* has haunted the caverns beneath Poilvache, where it has been often seen blazing with gold and jewels, and luring to the edge of a fearful precipice those who have been bold enough to enter. The peasants believe that the *gatte d'or* of Poilvache is the spirit of the avaricious Bertha of Bierloz, who still guards the treasures which, in her lifetime, she prized beyond her truth and fame.

Though not treasure-seekers, we were very desirous of exploring the ruins of Poilvache, and though the ascent was infinitely more difficult than we had anticipated, we succeeded in scrambling up to them on the eastern side, and entered by a window broken down to a doorway, at a part where the castle hangs nearly perpendicularly over the village of Houx. The walls are on two sides still entire, and the whole *enceinte* is clearly defined, occupying ten acres of ground or more. It is very much overgrown with shrubs, wild cherry, dwarf oak, hazel, and barberry, and the turf is one carpet of wild thyme filled with bees. Nearly in the centre of the area is the vaulted entrance to a deep well supplied by the river, into which we very

cautiously peeped; but though we looked with reverent gaze, none of the spirits of the mountain were visible. The view of the country from the battlements of Poilvache is most magnificent, and the course of the Meuse may be traced for several miles, both above and below the castle. Between Poilvache and Dinant the scenery is of a sterner character than in the direction of Yvoir, the hills being more bare and the rocks more naked and abrupt.



TOUR DE MONIOT.

The rock on which the ruins stand is the abode of the largest and fiercest hawks to be found throughout the country — apt representatives of the old feudal seigneurs.

After lingering for some hours in this enchanting spot, we took a different and easier path to descend, where the stream of the Houx divides the heights of Poilvache from those of Moniot. On our way home we observed in some large corn-fields, where the labourers were carrying oats, a vast concourse of women and children, many of whom had passed us on the road, who were assembled for the purpose of gleaning. They had taken up their station, rake in hand, in different parts of the plain, and it was as much as the labourers could do to prevent them from falling to before the ground was clear. As soon as the last pile of sheaves was carried the signal was given, and the whole were let loose; tongue and hand went together, all screamed with anxiety and delight, and plied their rakes with so much good-will that in a quarter of an hour the field was bare. Hardly was this labour of love accomplished, when a cloud of light-armed female peasantry swept down upon the plain in the direction of Dinant; but they came too late—the harvest was already gathered. We encountered several groupes of women after we left the field, moving leisurely towards the scene of action.

“If you don’t move a little quicker,” we observed, as they passed us, “you will be able to glean very little.”

“Comment!” was the reply, “on nous a dit pour six heures.”

“Précisément—et on a commencé à quatre heures.”

The same story repeated, served to quicken their pace astonishingly. At last came one old woman and her daughter; the fatal news was imparted. At first she seemed scarcely able to comprehend so violent a breach of faith; but when assured of it she shook her rake in anger, shrieked out to her daughter, "Jésus! Térésa; on a meschiné!"* and scurried away as fast as her legs could carry her, and her voice still rent the air, long after she was out of sight.

It is the custom during the season of harvest for the farmers to send word to the different villagers at what hour the gleaning is to begin. Some perfidious emissary, a partisan of those of Houx, had purposely deceived those of Dinant, a deed to beget ill-blood.

* Moissonné.



CHAPTER XVII.

Preparations for the Ardennes—Horses—The Side-saddle—The Law Suit—Riding Habit—The Musical Tailor—The Serenade—The Side-saddle again—The Black Barb—Departure for Givet—Road to Givet—Frontier—Douaniers—Difficulty of Entrance—Guarantees—Admission to La belle France—Givet—Legend of the Comte de Chimay—His fondness for Hunting—Its Consequences—His Imprisonment—The Young Cross-bowman—The Discovery—The Message—The Messenger—The Rescue—The Count's Speech and Revenge—His Death.



So one of our objects in fixing ourselves at Dinant had been to make it the point of departure for the Ardennes, for which its situation renders it so convenient, we began, after a three weeks' sojourn, to make preparations for the expedition.

It may be asked what preparations were necessary? The high-roads were good, they were traversed by diligences, the boars and wolves had not yet been driven by winter from their lairs, the country was free from robbers, and, as the advertisements say, "the most timorous might venture with safety."

It will, however, be remembered that in order completely to explore the country, it had been our intention to ride through it, nor did this seem of difficult

accomplishment, for horses of first-rate character were confidently promised, and one in particular, “un noir qui a porté une dame Anglaise,” was vaunted by our host as second only—though the simile was not his—“to the flying camel of the Prophet.” In the article of quadrupeds, therefore, all seemed satisfactory, though, for some reason or other, we could never succeed in obtaining a sight of the animals; but we were told—as is the custom wherever the French language is spoken—to make ourselves “parfaitement tranquilles,” so we thought no more about them.

But if horses were plentiful and first-rate, it did not appear that their equipments were equally so; and the question put by M. Lallieu was, to an English lady, rather startling.

“What kind of saddle would Madame like to have?”*

We replied there was but one kind, “a side-saddle.”

“Ah! oui—je comprends; pour se mettre d’un côté.”

“Of course; that which the lady had who rode the black horse.”

“C’est bien vrai, Monsieur, mais il faut que je vous explique un peu;—desirez vous acheter la selle?”

“Buy the saddle! No; who ever heard of buying a saddle when one hired a horse? If you sold the horse with it, well and good. Havn’t you got a side-saddle?”

* In the Ardennes, and generally throughout the Walloon country, the women ride à *califourchon*.

“ Quant à moi, Monsieur—non ! Mais je vais vous dire, il y a une selle dans la ville que je pourrais vous procurer.”

And then—to depart from colloquy—M. Lallieu proceeded to explain the state of the case.

It seemed that an English lady and gentleman, who, like ourselves, had been staying at the Hotel de la Poste, were desirous also of riding, and there being at that time no such thing as a side-saddle in Dinant, the gentleman sent to Namur and bought one, and when he went away parted with it for a consideration to M. Lallieu, who, in his turn, disposed of it to the saddler of Dinant—there being only one of the craft ; but in the course of the latter negotiation some misunderstanding arose which led to a procès, and the saddler and mine host were consequently at feud. A more unlucky demand than ours could therefore hardly have been made. M. Lallieu’s proposition was, that the difficulty should be solved by our buying the saddle. But as, in all probability, we should not have required it for more than a week, and as we could not well have packed it in a carpet bag or portmanteau when we set out on our travels, we were obliged to reject the offer, and M. Lallieu, being very desirous of obliging us, promised, by diplomacy or otherwise, to obtain the desired object.

A riding habit was the next thing necessary, and attracted by certain engravings from the *Petit Courier des Dames*, representing Amazons in various attitudes,

which figured in a tailor's window, we inquired whether it were possible to have one made.

“ Il n’y a rien de plus facile,” was the tailor’s reply, and so he would have answered had he been required to steer a seventy-four, or ride a steeple-chase; for to a tailor—whatever may be his country—“ il n’y a rien d’impossible.” To him, therefore, was confided the task of building the habit, which was promised within two days; but certain misgivings afterwards arose in our minds, when we met that same tailor, that very afternoon, at the head of a band of musicians, himself the bearer of an enormous French horn, proceeding along the banks of the Meuse, to practise *al fresco*, for the approaching fête of Bouvignes. He betrayed no symptoms of embarrassment at being thus caught “ in the manner,” but with a bow of the most graceful kind, as if he had been the *maitre de la cour* to his majesty King Leopold, saluted us with a flourish of his hat and a sort of self-approving gesticulation as he turned to his companions, which seemed to him a sufficient compensation for any delay that might happen to arise from his indulgence in his musical propensities. Our misgivings, however, were more than confirmed the following day, when we passed the shop and saw no signs of work, though the sounds which issued from a little back parlour intimated only too plainly that “ music had charms.” However, at the end of four days, the work was finished,—

“ If ‘ finished ’ might be said where *fit* was none;”

and perhaps it was as much in token of triumph at the accomplishment of the arduous feat as for any other cause, that the tailor's tremendous horn poured forth its unmistakeable tones in a serenade that took place the same night beneath our bed-room window. The loudest in exultation as the serenaders cheered when they departed, was unquestionably that tailor!

As we had been requested to name beforehand the day on which we intended to set out, to give time for the famous black horse to be brought in from a distant farm, we gave the intimation for the second day following, and again the saddle became the subject of discussion. To influence our decision, a large book was produced, containing engravings of all the saddles that ever were used since the days of their first invention, our particular attention being directed to one as "bien commode," which bore a striking resemblance to an easy chair of the largest dimensions. By good luck the right species found one representative in the volume, and this alone we said was admissible. It was a tolerably-faithful portrait of the cause of litigation between the saddler and our host, and seeing that we were bent upon having this and no other, it was finally promised, *moyennant* a certain sum for its hire, and the hire also of a whip and bridle!

All the preliminaries being now settled, the day broke which was to witness our equestrian experiment. We had resolved, before we actually proceeded to the Ardennes, to give the horses a trial, in an

excursion that should last only one day, and we had reserved the scenery between Dinant and Givet for this purpose.

At an early hour the clattering of hoofs beneath our windows announced the arrival of the steeds; but when we came to the door of the hotel we looked in vain for the spirited black barb. In its place stood a seedy-looking animal, the picture of passive dejection; and its companion, a stouter beast, belonged manifestly to the team of a diligence. Vain was our reclamation, vain our objurgation: these were the horses, and there were no others to be had in Dinant.

“Ils sont accoutumés à faire de longues courses tous les jours,” was the eager exclamation of M. Lallieu, “il vous mèneront parfaitement bien, je vous en répons.”

No one who looked at these unhappy brutes could have doubted for a moment their habit of making long journeys—the only question was, whether they had not been too much accustomed to do so; but as better might not be, and as it often chances that “the dullest will show fire,” we determined to accept our fate,—at least for that day, and to the great delight of the good people of Dinant, who had simultaneously come to their doors and windows to gaze on the *habit Amazone*, and catch a glimpse of the wondrous saddle, we clattered merrily through the street, and soon left the Roche à Bayard behind. It was not long before we found that the *cheval de diligence* and the *cheval de*

selle are two distinct animals, and the necessity for revising the treaty, and contracting another on a new basis, at once became evident; but as we were bent on making out the excursion, like the lady Banship, we "rode on."

The day was rather overcast and threatened rain, but there was a fine, cool breeze, and the road itself was delightful. A little beyond Anseremme, at the bridge over the Lesse, we began to ascend, climbing the mountain which overlooks the valley of the Meuse on one side, and that of the Lesse, on the other. The gardens and turrets of Freyr were soon passed on the right, and the spire of Hulsonniaux on the left, and, passing through Falmignoul, we got into a thickly-wooded country, picturesque in the extreme, from the great variety it offered. Near Blaimont the descent is very rapid, the road winding quite round the base of a mountain, and crossing a high bridge of a single arch, over a valley, dry at this season of the year, but in winter filled by a tributary of the Meuse. At the extremity of this valley we caught a glimpse of the ruins of Agimont—a little above the two villages of Hastière-Lavaux and Hastière-par-delà; near which was formerly an abbey, built in the tenth century, but burnt and destroyed by a body of French Calvinists, under the command of the Seigneur de Genlis, in the *religious* war of 1568.

As we approached the frontier the character of the scenery suddenly changed; the hills were wide and bare,

and the Meuse now flowed between level banks entirely devoid of beauty. The last Belgian village is Heer,—a straggling, dilapidated, miserable place, noticeable only on account of the quarries of red marble in its neighbourhood. A little further on we crossed the frontier, and with the fine fortress of Charlemont in view rode down the avenue that leads to Givet.

At the drawbridge we met with a slight interruption. At the sound of our approach two officers of the *douane* came forth from their *gîte* by the wayside, and laid a hand on each bridle.

“Pourquoi ça, mes amis?” was the interrogatory.

“Il faut donner une caution avant que d’entrer dans la ville.”

“A guarantee! for what?”

“That you do not intend to sell these horses in France!”

It was impossible to help laughing at the idea, for both our steeds together would have been dear at a hundred francs; and I asked the *douanier* if he thought it at all likely that I *could* sell them, even if I were so disposed.

“I don’t know, indeed,” he replied, grinning in spite of himself; “but for all that you can’t enter without giving a *caution*.”

While this colloquy was going on, my own poor beast stood quietly enough; but its companion, as if to show that it really *was* worth something, manifested the greatest impatience, and in spite of the sentinel

who brought his bayonet down to the charge, endeavoured to dash across the drawbridge, so, fearing some mishap, as the ditch of the fortification was inconveniently near, I pulled out a note with which I had been supplied by my host at Dinant, addressed to him of the *Mont d'or* at Givet, and asked if that would satisfy him that we had no intention of smuggling the valuable animals we rode. He glanced at it,—gave it to a man to carry to the hôtel,—took off his cap, welcomed us to la belle France, the sentry raised his musket, and we entered Givet in triumph.

However beautiful France may be in the interior, she rarely displays her charms on her frontiers,—at least on the northern boundary; and no one who enters Givet would willingly stay there longer than is necessary to change horses. But as we were not permitted to change ours, we were content to bait them, and ordering a dinner to be got ready by our return, we pushed on to Vireux, passing by the picturesque ruins of Hierches, and skirting the ancient forest of Couvin, which in former days extended to the banks of the Meuse, and was as famous then for its wild boars and wolves as it now is for its mines and quarries. Of a certain lord of that forest, who flourished in the fourteenth century, the following singular story is told:—

Jean de Croy, created by Charles the Bold Comte de Chinay and Grand Bailli of Hainault, was a brave and warlike baron. Always ready to break a

lance, to fly a falcon, or track a boar, he was surnamed "Le Comte à la Houzette," on account of the long boots



which he constantly wore. His chiefest delight was in the chase, and, like the Wildgrave of the German ballad, he suffered no consideration to mar his sport; he never stopped for anything, but rode furiously straight on, little

heeding the damage he did to the crops of the unfortunate husbandmen. No representation availed them with the reckless count, whose only reply was a haughty expression of contempt, or threat of punishment; until, at length, finding remonstrance useless, a few of the most resolute amongst them entered into a secret combination, to put an end to this destruction of their principal means of subsistence. They determined to lie in ambuscade for the count, to take advantage of some unguarded moment, and having captured their tyrant, either to put him to death, or confine him so closely, that no mortal should ever know whether he were alive or dead.

The opportunity for carrying their design into execution was not long wanting.

One day when the count was hunting in the neighbourhood of Couvin, and, according to custom, devastating the fields and gardens that lay in the way as he swept over them with horse and hound,—the

confederates who had been anxiously watching his progress, took advantage of his having outstripped his companions in the eager pursuit of a stag which he had followed into a thick wood, and suddenly falling upon him, tore him from his horse, bandaged his eyes, tied his arms behind his back, and in this condition led him away prisoner, suffering his steed to run loose, and thus give to his followers the appearance of their master having been thrown over some precipice, or into the river. They dragged the count through the wood, and, knowing the country thoroughly, they led him round about, and up and down, for the greater part of the night, in order to impress him with the idea of having been removed to a considerable distance, though, in point of fact, they had kept him constantly traversing the same ground.

Besides this mystification, they had another object in view in keeping him a prisoner under their own eyes. The dungeons of the castle of Couvin were well known to some of them, and there they could confine the count secretly, and, at the same time, supply him with what was necessary for keeping body and soul together. Accordingly, at daybreak, he was conducted to the deep fosse of the castle, and there conveyed by a secret passage into a cell, where they left him, perchance, to languish for the remainder of his days.

In the meantime, great was the grief that pervaded the castle of the Sire de Croy, when the sudden absence of the count was known. Days passed away,

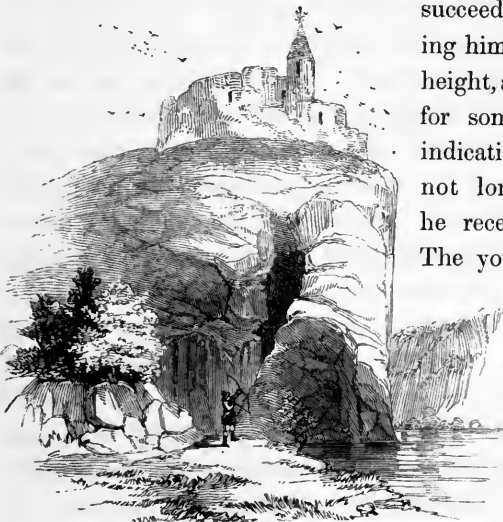
and no tidings came to tell of where he was, nor was there any positive indication of his fate; and the noble Countess of Croy, believing herself a widow, mourned for her husband as dead. The wretched prisoner, ignorant of the place of his confinement, and having no knowledge of his captors, endured seven years of dreary captivity; which, however, would have been embittered still further, had he known that his prison was barely three miles from his own castle of Chimay, and that many a time his friends and retainers had passed within a bow-shot of the place where he lay.

But the punishments which Heaven inflicts on man are sometimes remitted even on earth, and thus it befel the Comte de Chimay. The dungeon in which he was confined formed no portion of the castle of Couvin, but was merely a hollow in the rock on which it stood. All the light that entered it came from a narrow, oblique fissure, only a few inches wide, hardly visible on the outside, for the rock rose high and steep above a beautiful meadow watered by a clear deep stream, which, from the shadow that fell upon its surface from the dark woods around, was called the "Black Water." This meadow was the frequent resort of the youth of both sexes, for games, and sports, and rustic dances; and here, one summer's day, a young shepherd, named Jehan Basselaire, having left his flock on the hill side, came to shoot with his cross-bow at the hawks that haunted the crevices of the rock. The first arrow that he shot

missed its object; but, by a singular chance, passed through the fissure which gave light to the dungeon of the Comte de Chimay, who, seeing the arrow fall, was at first no less astonished than afterwards he was delighted, for he thought some friend had found out the place of his captivity. and had adopted this mode of awakening his attention, and, perhaps, of bringing him succour. By dint of great exertions,—for the count was weak from long confinement, and the ascent to the aperture was both difficult and dangerous,—he

succeeded in raising himself to its height, and waited for some further indication. It was not long before he received one.

The young shepherd had watched the flight of his arrow, had seen it strike the rock and



THE CASTLE OF COUVIN.

then disappear. He could ill afford to lose it, and, moreover, was curious to learn whither it had gone, so he resolved to search the rock and endeavour to

recover his weapon. The task was no easy one; but, mountain-bred, and accustomed to clamber similar heights from causes less urgent than this, Jehan Basselaire was not long before he accomplished his object. He reached the aperture, balanced himself carefully on a projecting ledge, and thrusting his arm into the hole began to grope about for his arrow.

The count, who had drawn himself as near the entrance as possible, perceived by the shadow that darkened the crevice that some one was near, and presently saw a hand and arm approach. The moment it was within reach he grasped it in his clutch, and held it with all his strength. Loud were the cries of the unhappy boy as he clung to the face of the rock, believing firmly that he had been seized by a *nuton*,—one of those spirits that are supposed to this day to haunt caverns in the recesses of the mountains, where they jealously guard immense treasures. By turns he prayed to the blessed St. Genevieve and invoked the mercy of the demon, and it was long before he could sufficiently master his fear to believe that the hand which held his wrist was a mortal one. The count soon gathered from the boy's exclamations, that accident alone had caused the arrow's flight; but the fact was still most gratifying, for it showed him how he might make it the means of deliverance.

Soothing the fears of young Basselaire, the count's first question was to know the place of his confinement, and to his astonishment he learnt that his dungeon

lay beneath the towers of Couvin. He then inquired the boy's name, which he recognised as one familiar to him, and finding that he had a father, he desired the young shepherd to return home, and without saying a word to any one else of what had happened, to inform his father that the Comte de Chimay, so long lost to the world, lay there in durance, and desired his presence, with the materials for writing, in return for which service, he promised, on the faith of a nobleman and a true knight, to establish both father and son on his estates for the rest of their lives. He then released the boy, and bade him "God speed."

Fear operated equally with the hope of reward in making the shepherd boy a trusty messenger. He reached home, and privately told his father all that had happened. The elder Basselaire was not one of those who had any resentments to gratify by the imprisonment of the Comte de Chimay; on the contrary, his interests were directly in favour of his release, even had he not been assured of the gratitude of the noble family of Croy. It was not long, therefore, before he obeyed the count's wish, and great was the joy of the latter at the prospect of freedom which now opened before him. He wrote a brief but explanatory letter to his wife, urging her to lose no time in getting ready his vassals to release him at whatever price.

Before the sun rose on the following day Basselaire was at the gate of the castle of Chimay, and as soon as the drawbridge was lowered, he presented himself for

admission, saying that he was the bearer of a letter which conveyed important tidings to the countess. The warders, whose duty it was not to admit any whom they did not know, and seeing only a *villain*, poorly clad, refused to allow him to pass, in spite of his earnest entreaties. A squire who was present, when he heard the purport of his visit, offered to be the bearer of the letter, but to this Basselaire would by no means agree, his orders being to deliver it into no other hands than the countess herself. When the warders saw how obstinately he adhered to his purpose, they told him he must then be content to wait until the châtelaine left her apartment to attend mass in the chapel of the castle.

He waited accordingly, and at length, at the usual hour at which she went to mass, the châtelaine, attired in deep mourning, approached the drawbridge to ascend to the chapel. Basselaire, advancing with profound respect, knelt before her, and delivered the letter which he brought. The moment the lady saw the superscription she recognised the handwriting of her husband, and fell in a swoon into the arms of her attendants.

When she recovered herself she thanked the messenger with earnest expressions, and at once gave orders to her people to assemble all who owed allegiance to the house of Croy, and soon the inhabitants of seventeen villages who called the lord of Chimay their suzerain were collected beneath the castle walls; and

with all the arms they could muster, they set out for the town of Couvin, and summoned the bourgeois of the place.

Great was the surprise of the Couvinois at this unexpected apparition. They knew nothing of the imprisonment of the Comte de Chimay, for the confederates had kept their secret closely, and the magistrates of the town went forth and anxiously demanded the meaning of this warlike summons. It was no less a surprise when they were told that beneath the turrets of their castle lay hidden the long absent Comte de Chimay. Had they been disposed to resist the warlike châtelaine, their propensity would have been checked; but they had not been sufferers from the comte's fondness for the chase, and they at once readily offered to assist in the search. Guided by Basselaire, the cell in which he was confined was soon discovered, an opening was forced, and by their united exertions the prisoner was released from his dungeon.

Hunger, sorrow, and neglect had so changed the features of the noble Jean de Croy, that those who had known him best could with difficulty recognise, in the pale-bearded spectre who now met their view, the once gay and gallant knight who called himself their lord and master. Scarcely a vestige of clothing remained on his wasted limbs, and that which he wore crumbled into dust beneath the touch of his anxious deliverers.

Their grief at his evident sufferings soon yielded to joy at finding that it was indeed the seigneur de

Chimay, and with loud exultation they bore him away from the hateful place of his confinement.

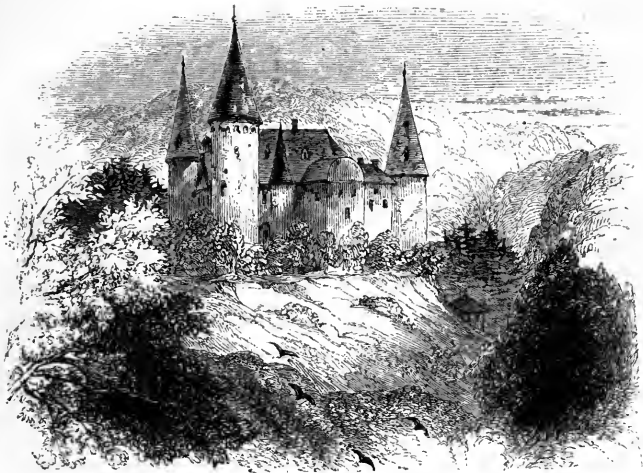
A few days sufficed for his recovery,—a few more were given to the society of the affectionate Marguerite de Craon, his dearly loved wife, and then the Comte de Chimay resolved upon taking a signal revenge. It is true the authors of his wrong remained ever unknown to him, but he was no less resolved to leave “a token and a sign” that the great ones of the earth suffer no slight to pass unnoticed. He armed his vassals, and marched upon the devoted town of Couvin. The axe, the torch, and the battering-train soon did their work upon the ancient walls of the castle; and what the traveller now sees above the dark current of the Eau Noire is all that remains to tell of the spot where the Comte de Chimay passed so many years in sad captivity.

In allusion to the name by which the castle was called by the country people, *Couvé*, instead of *Couvin*, the Comte de Chimay is said to have exclaimed:—“*Couvé couve, couvé tu m’as, couver jamais plus ne pourras.*” *

The pursuits of the Comte de Chimay were afterwards less hostile to his dependents and more so to the enemies of his country. He fell at the fatal battle of Granson.

PREZ DIEU POUR LE REPOS DE SON ALME.

* “*Couvé* cover thyself, thou hast covered me; thou shalt henceforth cover nothing more.”



CHATEAU DE CELLES.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The last evening at Dinant—Thunder and lightning—Road to the Ardennes—The Château de Celles—Beauty of its situation—Its structure—Decay of the interior—Its antiquity—The Château of Ardennes—The Château of Ciergnon—Scenery of the Ardennes—Cross Roads—Village of Han-sur-Lesse—Approach to the Cave—The Cave—Its great beauty—Variety of forms—Its numerous halls—The Salle du Dome—Effect of daylight—The Nigrum—Inscriptions—Road to Rochefort.

OUR excursion to Givet having fully satisfied us that we should gain nothing by attempting to ride through the Ardennes, the treaty of the saddle was annulled on the following day; and it was arranged that we should have a light carriage instead, eking out on foot what we failed to accomplish *en voiture*.

The last evening we passed at Dinant will long live in our recollection, owing to the superb effect of a storm

which we watched from the bridge over the Meuse. Nothing could equal the splendour of the lightning as it glanced across the river, or the magnificent voice of the thunder rattling amongst the crags above the town; and it was only the deluge of rain which followed that drove us from our "stance."

The next morning, though the skies were still black, we set out on our journey. A little beyond the Roche à Bayard, we bade "a vain adieu" to the Meuse, as we turned from its lovely banks in the direction of the Ardennes. For nearly three miles the road was one continuous ascent between lofty hills, thickly covered with beech, birch, and aspen; but having gained the table land, a wide extent of country lay before us of shining corn-fields, intermingled with dark woods, and in the distance could be faintly traced the shadowy outline of the heaths and forests of the Ardennes.

The first object we were desirous of seeing was the ancient château of Celles, lying out of the high road about half a league to the right. Inquiring the nearest way of some woodcutters, we left the carriage in the village, and walked across some corn-fields, till we reached the entrance of a lonely dell, where the road descended with many windings, amongst high rocks and over-hanging woods, the features of the scenery increasing in grandeur and beauty at every step. While we were questioning each other as to the possible whereabouts of the château, its turrets and pointed roofs came suddenly in view.

It was as if we had accidentally opened a page of an illuminated chronicle, or stumbled upon a picture by Memmling or Van Eyck, so perfectly in keeping with the period of construction were all the visible external walls. The building is of irregular quadrilateral shape, and is protected at each angle by a circular tower with a pointed roof, none being equal in size. The few windows apparent are of more recent date than the arrowslits in the towers, except one or two in the angles. The château stands on a high conical hill, commanding a view of four different valleys watered by two clear streams, the Celles and the Mirande; the mountains which surround it are all higher than the château; but before the employment of artillery they were too distant to offer any advantage to an enemy. A narrow isthmus leads to the only door at the foot of the principal tower, through which admission to the interior can be obtained. This portal is coated externally with iron in horizontal bands, which are fastened by large nails; and a ponderous key, nearly a foot long, turns the only lock. The entrance, through a vaulted passage, is oblique and winding, and leads into an irregularly-shaped court-yard on a steep slope. On one side are two rows of open galleries, one above the other; on another is a closed gallery, curiously tessellated with stone; and on the side opposite the entrance are the principal apartments. The interior is in a sad state of dilapidation, the rooms being chiefly used as stores for fruit and vegetables—apples, pears,

onions, and potatoes lying about in heaps. The château has not apparently been inhabited by the family for at least a century,—some wretched pictures over the fire-places, one or two damaged looking-glasses with the gilding sadly smirched, and some broken furniture, affording evidence of their origin in the time of Louis the Fifteenth. If these things only had been suffered to fall into decay it would not much have mattered, but the neglect to which the building is exposed threatens more serious consequences, in the breaking up of the floors and crumbling of the walls. It is impossible to give an exact idea of the interior, the rooms are so numerous and so oddly shaped, adapting themselves to the irregular outline of the building, and occupying corners in which there is scarcely room to turn round. There is a line of communication all through, but to preserve it all kinds of passages must be threaded, for the most part deprived both of light and air. In one turret is a small chapel, where a *prie-Dieu*, decked with faded velvet, yet remains, amid other tinselled trumpery.

The Château de Celles boasts a high antiquity, the walls of the original foundation having been raised, it is said, by Pepin de Herstal, in the eighth century; but the present construction dates, apparently, from the fourteenth century, and, externally, it is almost a perfect specimen of that period. It is one of the cradles of the noble family of Beaufort, and belongs

now to the Count Auguste de Liedekerke Beaufort, a rich man, who seems content to let the old walls stand as long as they will, without troubling himself about the interior, and quite satisfied with the château as long as the gardens yield their rich produce. He has other châteaux, one at Villers sur Lesse, but lives, when in this neighbourhood, at the Château de Noisy, about a mile from Celles, on a steep and well-wooded height. It would, no doubt, cost a large sum to restore the old place; but, if restored, it would be a perfect gem.

Having regained the high road, we proceeded through a deep gorge, watered by a clear stream, to the village of Custine, where the mowers were busy in the valley cutting a third crop of grass; and as soon as we reached the top of the high hill beyond the village, we observed a small tower on the right hand, built after the fashion of those at Windsor, and like them in colour, indicating the entrance to the domain of Ardenne, the king's *château de chasse*. A drive of about half-a-mile through young plantations of ash and fir, brought us in front of the building, which we passed to reach the stables. Having ordered breakfast to be got ready at the little cabaret "Aux bons enfants," we hurried to the château, and knocked for admission, for the long threatening rain now began to fall fast.

Till within the last two years no strangers were admitted without a special order; and even an ambassador figured amongst the disappointed; but travellers

now are made welcome, and the gates were opened to admit us. It is a modern building, considerably enlarged since the king purchased it, but possessing no architectural beauty. The *corps de bâtiment* is very long and narrow; it is very plainly fitted up, and except that the Tournay carpets are all of one pattern, the decorations are not at all remarkable. There is a full-length portrait of the King by Scheffer, and one of the Queen by Dubufe, both good likenesses; and in another room are full lengths of the young Duke de Brabant, and his brother, the Comte de Flandres, painted two or three years since. The execution is very good, and the portraits highly interesting.

These are all the pictures; the rest of the château is merely a country house, unadorned even by the trophies of the chase, though the king is so fond of sporting, comes here at all seasons, and goes out in all weathers. On the roof of the building is a small *belvédère*, from whence, we were told, the view on a fine day is superb, extending as far as St. Hubert; but, as it now poured in torrents, we could not see beyond the *jardin potager*, which is cultivated, to the exclusion of flowers, beneath the very windows of the château! The same cause that spoiled the prospect prevented us also from going down to the pavilion, built on a high rock over the Lesse, about a quarter of a mile below; we indemnified ourselves, therefore, as well as we could, by the excellent breakfast which we found ready at the cabaret, and then resumed our route.

Our destination was now the famous caves of Han-sur-Lesse, distant about eighteen miles from Dinant and ten from Ardenne. The road thither is mountainous and picturesque in the extreme; now buried in deep forests of oak, then forcing its way apparently through deep clefts of rock, and anon stretching across wide heathy plains, but at every moment developing some new feature of beauty in the landscape.

The rain fell heavily at first, but in about an hour the weather cleared, and as we drew near Ciergnon, where the king is building another *château de chasse*, about two leagues from Ardenne, the view was unimpeded. It stands well on a bold height, and has a good middle-age aspect, though new. After passing through some deep perpendicular cuttings of slate, we crossed the Lesse at Vegnée, here, as everywhere in its course, a rapid winding river; and a few miles further on another stream, the Wimbe, warned us that it was time to exchange the smooth high-road for a blind track on our left hand, that led across a dreary moor.

It is here that the wild character of the scenery of the Ardennes first becomes evident. Nature appears suddenly to have assumed a rugged, intractable aspect, and in place of the rich plains and smiling valleys that mark the country near the Meuse, a vast expanse of dark heath spreads before the traveller, broken by rocks and scattered clumps of fir and pine, and intersected by deep gulleys, whose stony beds have been ploughed by the mountain torrents.

Bad cross-roads abound on the continent; but one might search Europe through without succeeding in finding a worse than that which leads to Han-sur-Lesse. It must at all seasons of the year be execrable; but at this moment, when the rains had swelled the floods, its bad qualities came out in high relief. If we had walked we should have been up to our knees in wet and mire, and the rain had again begun to drive, so we were fain to sit still in the carriage at the risk of being overturned at every step, an event which was more than once on the point of being realised. At length, after fording three deep streams, with the water over the fore-wheels, crossing a large pond, and finally the river Lesse itself, at a place where a herd of cattle set us the example, we found ourselves in the village of Han, having reached it by the only carriage-road that exists between it and Dinant. As a considerable tax is paid by visitors to the cave, which goes to the owner of the property in which it is situated, it is at least bad policy not to afford greater facility of access. The village of Han is one of the most wretched dreary places it is possible to imagine—something resembling the worst one meets with in the remoter valleys of the Pyrenees,—Gavarnie for instance. But its cave is scarcely less a miracle of nature than the wondrous Circus. We stopped at the only inn the village boasts—a mere road-side cabaret—and, accompanied by two guides, made the best of our way to the cave. The person who leases it for the show has thrown a gaily-painted

wooden bridge across the Lessé, and built himself a comfortable-looking house near the entrance, but nothing could well be worse than the path which we were obliged to follow ; however, it is to be hoped that time, which “ sets all things even,” will one day macadamise the road, and render “ *facilis*” this “ *descensus averni.*”

Unlike the generality of caverns the entrance to that of Han is by water, beneath a low-browed arch in the rock, of about sixty feet span, from whence flows the Lesse, in a deep, slow current, having buried itself on the opposite side of the mountain, about a mile and half off in a straight line, but nearly four miles (6000 mètres) in its presumed windings. Provided with long torches and a large bundle of straw, we followed the guides into a flat-bottomed boat, and slowly paddled against the stream, which is here twenty-five feet deep ; the only sounds we heard being the ripple of the water, and the shrill screams of multitudes of bats, disturbed by the glare of the torches. After a winding course of about ten minutes, the boat was moored to the foot of a rock, the straw was thrown out, and we landed to explore the recesses of the cave. In consequence of the late rains, the percolation of water was greater than usual, and the paths we were obliged to ascend were slippery and difficult, and in many places deep in mire ; but however toilsome the way, the beauties of the cavern are more than sufficient to repay any trouble.

I have seen many caverns in different parts of the

world, and had always been of opinion that those in the Bermudas surpassed all others in magnificence ; but I am compelled to acknowledge that they will not bear comparison with that of Han-sur-Lesse. The masses of stalagmite are of wondrous size, and their surface glitters like diamonds, while the stalactites hang in countless numbers in the most beautiful groups imaginable, assuming every possible variety of picturesque shape. In one place may be traced the form of a swan suspended by the neck ; in another, a salmon hanging by the head ; here are wreaths and clusters of flowers,—there heads of animals,—the semblance of Gothic arches, with all their delicate tracery,—statue-like masses of snow-white stone that seem fresh from the sculptor's hands,—every image, in short, that fancy can suggest finds here a representative.

The names of some of the various caverns will give a tolerable idea of their appearance. There is the Salle des Drapeaux, in which the vault appears hung with banners ; the Salle des Jumeaux, where two lofty stalagmites rear themselves like phantoms in the shade ; the Rocher aux Fleurs, covered apparently with flowers ; the Boudoir de Proserpine, a crypt fit for a goddess ; the Salle de la Cascade, where the water seems to have frozen as it fell ; the Salle de Mont-blanc, a vast stalagmite, like a mountain covered with blocks of ice ; the Salle du Trône, a spot that might have witnessed the conference between Manfred and Arimanes ; and, finally, the Grand Dôme, a spacious

cavern whose vault, glittering with stalactites, is upwards of three hundred feet high. The grandeur of this cavern was fully shown when the guides ascended to a high rock in the midst of the Salle du Dôme, and waved the blazing straw to and fro, illuminating, for an instant, the darkest recesses, and revealing its immense extent.

To examine the cave minutely would have required at least four or five hours; but we could not spare so much time underground, as it was necessary to husband the daylight, to give us a chance of reaching Rochefort in safety; for we were given to understand that bad as the road had proved from Vegnée, it was much worse in the opposite direction! Our stay was, however, long enough to enable us to see and enjoy all its chief beauties, and then we prepared to return the way we had entered, though there is a sortie on the other side of the mountain. Perhaps the finest effect in these subterranean expeditions is witnessed as the explorer comes back again to the daylight; we certainly thought it not amongst the least as we first caught a glimpse of its clear blue ray falling upon the stream, as we turned the last projection of the rock.

When we got back to the inn at Han it needed a glass of *pequet*, the only restorative the place offered, to dispel the chill of the cave, before we ventured to inscribe our names in the *Nigrum* of the hostelry. This book, which is a good deal dilapidated, and much

scribbled over, contains a fair proportion of the inanity and false enthusiasm usually vented in places of this kind. Two of the inscriptions amused us: the first was a specimen of the sublime, the writer a Frenchman, and doubtless of the *école romantique*:—

“ Dieu!!! Quelle grotte!!!!!! ”

“ H. AMAREL.”

The other, by a Belgian, was an experiment in the English language, somewhat of the quaintest:—

“ Nothing can exceed the beauty of the grot of Han. I am extremely glad to have had the pleasure *of have see him to-day.* ”

“ V. VIGNERON, from Mons.”

Having paid our guides (the tariff, by the bye, for a party of three or fewer persons is six francs), we hastened our departure, resisting the importunity of the innkeeper, who would fain have persuaded us to pass the night in his miserable *auberge*, and who by way of inducement, when he learnt that we were bound for St. Hubert, observed, “ Vous ne serez plus avancé à Rochefort qu’ ici,” forgetting to throw into the account the difference of the accommodation between his den, and the comfortable hotel of the widow Souka.

In giving directions to our driver to proceed to Rochefort, we found that his knowledge of the country ceased at the village of Han, so we were obliged to take a guide to set us in the right track for crossing the mountain; but bad as the road proved, it was

quite worth while to take it, to witness the singular effect of a high cross that stands beside a withered tree on the mountain side, and stretches out its spectral arms as if to bar the traveller's passage. At this point our guide left us, and though the rest of the way was neither easy to find nor pleasant to follow, we managed to escape being benighted, though darkness overtook us before we got into the high road that leads to Rochefort.

It was with some difficulty we effected a passage through the town, for the pavement was "up," and no light of any kind shed its friendly ray to guide us on our path. We were fain, therefore, to trust to chance; and the same good fortune that had saved our necks so often in the course of the day befriended us still, and carried us on in safety.





RUINS OF THE CHATEAU DE ROCHEFORT.

Hotel at Rochefort—Picturesque Situation of the Town—Stratagem of the Comte de Rochefort—The Leper Knight—Appearance of the Ardennes—Beauty of the Scenery—Appearance of St. Hubert—The Abbey—The Abbey Church—Origin of the Name of the Ardennes—St. Hubert's Stole—Ceremonials for the Cure of Hydrophobia—Controversies—The keys of St. Hubert—Prayer to the Saint—Brotherhood of St. Hubert—Rules and Regulations—Singular Customs—Auction in the Open Air.

THE Hôtel de l'Etoile at Rochefort, kept by Madame Souka, is as comfortable an inn as a traveller can well desire, and its cleanliness and cheapness equally recommend it. Our dinner of trout from the river Homme, and mutton from the heaths of the Ardennes,—for we were now fairly within its precincts,—was a favourable specimen of the fare that is usually met with in this district.

The situation of Rochefort is very picturesque; it is encircled by rapid streams, whose course may be traced through lovely valleys, bright with verdure; and

above it rise the ruins of the old castle, once a place of great renown, and celebrated for the siege it sustained for seven months against the Prince Bishop of Liège and his allies, who, failing in their direct attacks, sought to reduce it by famine. The Comte de Rochefort who defended the castle, was really straitened for provisions; but, in order to deceive the enemy, had recourse to the stratagem of feeding a sow with corn, and turning her out into the hostile camp, where, as he had expected, she was taken and killed, and from the nature of the provisions on which she had been fed, the conclusion was drawn that corn was plentiful in the fortress. Terms of accommodation were accordingly proposed, and the siege was raised.

Rochefort was formerly one of the lordships of the famous Gilles de Duras, a passage in whose history is curiously illustrative of the moral effect produced in the middle ages by the leprosy, that scourge of rich and poor. The story is thus told in the "Chronique de Hainault:—

"A. D. M.C. III. XX. IX. In the time of the aforesaid Baldwin the Courageous, Count of Hainault, lived the Count of Duras, named Giles, a valiant and bold knight, who besides the castles which he possessed of Clermont between Liège and Huy, and Rochefort in the Ardennes, was *Advoué* at St. Trond and Dinant. The said Giles had two brothers, one named Conon*

* Of Count Conon it was said: "S'il estoit petit de corps, encores l'estoit il plus de couraige et de science."

and the other Peter. This Giles, by the will of God, was a leper, and for this cause, he laid aside the arms of chivalry, which all his life he had much loved and used, and gave to his brother Conon his county of Duras and other fiefs, and to Peter, his other brother, he assigned another portion of his territories, reserving only for his lifetime the town of Joudogne, which young Henry of Louvain, by the permission of the Count of Flanders, a relation of the said Giles of Duras, afterwards took possession of. Now it happened that when the said Giles, who was a leper, heard of this, he asked pardon of God, and straight-way resumed his arms to take his revenge, and set himself against the Duke of Louvain, and took up his abode at Clermont, from whence he issued to harass and infest the territory of the duke, taking prisoners the merchants of the country, and robbing them of "escarlattes," wines, cloths, and other merchandise, with all their gold and silver, and keeping them in confinement till they had paid a heavy ransom. He also carried off the cattle, horses, and vassals of the Duke of Louvain, holding the latter to ransom, and in this manner he did much damage, and the war lasted a long time."

The chronicle adds, that when Gilles de Duras was fully avenged he renounced all knightly employment, and returning to the poor and suffering condition of a leper, in that manner ended his days; his brothers, who had no heirs, gave all their possessions to the chapter of St. Lambert at Liège.

Between Rochefort and Wavreille, on the road to St. Hubert, those features of the Ardennes exhibit themselves, which an intelligent Belgian writer has thus described:—

“ The Ardennes in general, and that country called particularly Ardenne, extending from France to Prussia, in breadth about ten leagues, along the crest which separates the waters of the Meuse and the Moselle, require to be distinguished.

“ In the first the earth is tolerably productive, and wheat, rye, maslin and beet-root are cultivated; fruits abound and are of fine growth; *in the second*, on the contrary, the fields produce only light crops of rye, oats and potatoes; fruits are more rare, and vegetation less vigorous; the tops of the hills are almost always bare, and the climate is colder, because the ground is higher and more exposed to the wind. The arable land, for want of manure, remains fallow for many years, and then abandoned for grazing, it serves to feed quantities of horses, sheep, and oxen, which acquire those qualities such as no other cattle in Europe can surpass; the horses are strong, active, and muscular; and the flesh of the horned animals, and the sheep in particular, is of a fine aromatic flavour. The game is excellent, the rivers swarm with fish, and the extensive woods, where commonal rights are exercised, offer a great resource to the poor people, whom they supply with abundance of fire-wood.”

For the first few miles the country is broadly sweep-

ing, wild and sterile, and then descending into a well-watered valley, thick woods arise, the outworks of the deeper forests that lie beyond. Few labourers and fewer travellers are seen, and an air of extreme solitude prevails, the silence being only broken by the chattering cry of the jay, or the shriller scream of the towering hawk. At Croupont the wildness of the scenery is "tempered into beauty," by the fertility of the narrow valley through which runs the little river Homme, now foaming impetuously on one side of the road, and then abruptly crossing to the other, its waters being swelled by gushing streams, which seem suddenly to burst from the mountain's side. Here and there the valley widens, affording room for a level mead of emerald brightness, and anon it contracts till little more than the width of the road is left between the hanging woods that clothe the opposite steps. The flocks of sheep are more numerously dotted along the hill slopes; and here as everywhere else throughout Belgium, the shepherd and his dog invariably march in front, and are closely followed by their fleecy care.

Nothing can well be imagined more smiling and pretty than this little valley; but at Avenne a change takes place, and the dark forests of the Ardennes begin to spread across the country. For about four miles the road gradually ascends, taking its course through a limb of a vast forest of beech and oak, the wayside being thickly fringed with hazel and wild raspberry bushes, the fruit of the latter of the most delicious

flavour. Game is plentiful here, our path, as we walked in front of the carriage, being frequently crossed by hares, and more than once by the no less timid *chevreuil*. The forest at length opened out into a broad expanse of moor land, and as we strained our eyes to note the features of the landscape, the imposing towers of St. Hubert were distinctly seen rising like a landmark in the waste.

It would be difficult to meet with—indeed almost to imagine—a greater contrast than exists between the miserable town of St. Hubert and its magnificent Abbey Church, though, when we consider the estimation in which the Hunter Saint has always been held by Roman Catholics since the period of his canonization, our wonder at the splendour of his shrine is changed to surprise at the poverty of the place which contains it. But the Abbey Church is of much more ancient date than the town, and originally stood alone in the forest, a place of pilgrimage for devotees from distant lands. By slow degrees a town arose, but possessing from its situation no commercial advantages, and the inhabitants being for centuries almost beyond the pale of civilization, it never rose into importance, nor exceeded the limits of a large village. Except in costume and a few other particulars, the inevitable consequence of the progress of events, the town of St. Hubert at the present day can boast of little improvement over what it was three centuries ago.

It is built on the slope of a barren moor, formerly a

dense forest ; but the trees have now receded for several miles, and the country round bears only the name of what it once was. The Abbey Church stands in the centre, and one side of the square or market-place in front of it is occupied by a very large building, anciently the Abbey, but now the "Maison Centrale de Detention," or public prison of the province of Luxembourg. The monks of St. Hubert were of the order of St Benedict, and the Abbey originally bore the name of Andaine, but when the remains of St. Hubert were removed from Liége, where they were first interred, it took the name by which it was ever afterwards known. It is recorded that on more than one occasion the holy brotherhood greatly relaxed from their piety, but the fame of St. Hubert's shrine, though frequently the subject of controversy, still remains.

The church is built in two very opposite styles, being of Greek architecture without and Gothic within ; the Tuscan, Ionic, and composite orders decorate the exterior ; and the interior exhibits in the nave, the aisles, the choir, and the crypt, the pointed arch of the thirteenth century ; there is also an equal contrast in colour, the outside being all of black marble, and the inside marble of various hues. It is profusely adorned with sculpture and carved wood, the most striking object, frequently repeated, being the stag bearing between his antlers the miraculous crucifix from which issued the voice which effected the conversion of St. Hubert.

The history of the saint's conversion as he hunted in the Ardennes* is too generally known to require repetition; but some particulars respecting the worship that is paid to him may not be out of place.

The custom of going, for the cure of hydrophobia, to St. Hubert's shrine, which is still practised, is of very ancient date. The anonymous author of the "Life of St. Lambert," written about the end of the eleventh century, makes mention of several persons who were there cured in 825. The legend relates that the stole of St. Hubert, which works the miracle, was brought from heaven by an angel, who gave it to St. Hubert while praying at the tomb of St. Peter in Rome, with these words:—"Hubert, the Virgin sends you this stole. It will be a sign to you that your prayer has been heard, and a perpetual token that she will never forsake you. You will possess a perfect knowledge of all that concerns the functions of your ministry." St. Peter also brought him a golden key while he celebrated mass at the time of his episcopal consecration, assuring him that God would grant him a special power over evil

* Speaking of the Ardennes, Saumery says:—"A number of altars were raised in different parts of the forest to Diana, and hence the etymology of Ardenne, 'Ara Dianæ.' At a place called Amberloux an antique marble was found with the inscription 'Curia Arduennæ.'" Thierry, in his "Histoire des Gaulois," gives the following more probable derivation:—"This great extent of forests, which covered the space comprised between the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt, was called in Celtic *Ar-denn*, that is to say, *the profound*. These forests were as old as the world."

spirits. The following is the rubric of the regulations to be observed by those who are taken to be cured, in order that the miracle may stand some chance of succeeding; it was printed in 1671.

“The person who is attired with the stole in honour of St. Hubert, must begin by confessing and communicating for nine successive days; must sleep alone either in white sheets newly washed, or else entirely drest; must drink alone, and not bend the head down in drinking at fountains or rivers. Item, may drink red and white wine and “clairet,” mixed with water, or water only; may eat white and other bread; pork of a male pig not more than a year old; capon or pullets of the same age; fish having scales, such as smoked herrings and carp, and hard-boiled eggs; all of which must be eaten cold, and in no other manner. Item, the head must not be combed for forty days, and if the person receives a wound, or the bite of any animal drawing blood, he must practice the same abstinence for the space of three days without returning here. Item, on the tenth day he must have his bandage taken off by a priest, and cause it to be burnt, and the ashes cast into the piscina. Item, he must keep the feast of St. Hubert every year, viz., on the 3rd day of November. Item, he may grant reprieve to all persons bitten by any mad animal from forty to fifty days.” The Sorbonne condemned all these practices as superstitious by a declaration of the 10th of June, 1671, and as early as the fifteenth century the celebrated theologian Gerson had

pronounced against them. The clergy of St. Hubert, in defending their practices against the attacks of the Sorbonne, drew up an explanation of all the means employed in the cure of people who had been bitten, and caused it to be approved of by the Bishop of Liège and the faculty of theology of Louvain. This explanation did not, however, prevent a canon of Rheims in 1709 from undertaking to refute and attack the miracles of St. Hubert in a letter which he wrote to M. Hennebel, a theological doctor of Louvain. It is reprinted in the "Critical History of Superstitious Customs," by Father Le Brun. The author attacks in it the vulgar opinion of the non-diminution of the stole of St. Hubert, and maintains that the greater part of the afflicted who go to the shrine of St. Hubert become mad, and cites several instances derived, for the most part, from the "Treatise on Superstitions," by Thiers.

"Those who are cured," he observes, "have either not been bitten by dogs really mad, or have had other ailments distinct from hydrophobia; or it has been the strength of their constitutions, or the physical remedies which have cured them, and not the miracle denied by the most skilful theologians and medical men." He treats the practice of the '*neuvaine*' as eminently superstitious, and finally refutes the system adopted.

Of course the clergy of St. Hubert replied to this attack, but by arguments which failed to meet the objections raised; and the question appears since to have rested where all such questions remain: the

world of common sense deny the miracle, the superstitious and priest-led affirm it.

What are called *the keys of St. Hubert* consist of an iron, heated red-hot, and applied to the animals bitten by mad dogs. It appears never to have borne the form of a *key*; for in the town of St. Hubert itself the amulet was an iron ring inserted in the wall of one of the houses in the principal street, opposite the hotel kept by M. Margerotte. It no longer exists, though the belief in the potency of St. Hubert is, among the peasantry, as strong as ever. In other places where St. Hubert is especially venerated, the form of the exorcising instrument in no way resembles the key given by St. Peter; at Liège it is also an iron ring, and at Utrecht an iron cross.

The prayer, which is preferred to the saint when a cure is desired, is as follows:

“Grand St. Hubert, patron des Ardennes, qui avez eu *l'avantage* de voir l'image du Christ entre les cornes d'un cerf, et qui avez reçu une Sainte Etoile miraculeusement par le ministère d'un Ange, nous vous prions de nous appliquer la vertu de ce present divin, nous préservant, par vos mérites, de tous dangers, de rage, fureurs, tonnerres et autres malheurs; et faites que nous eussions le bonheur de vous voir un jour dans le Ciel Ainsi soit il.”

The miraculous stole is preserved in a rich coffer in the treasury of the church, and it is believed that however often fragments may be cut from it, it always

remains entire. St. Hubert's ivory crozier, the sole of one of his shoes, and his comb, are also preserved. We did not hear that any use was made of the latter, though to judge from the appearance of the townspeople it might not be undesirable. The saint lies buried in some part of the church, but his place of sepulture is kept a profound secret.

Connected with the reverence in which St. Hubert is held in a country that offers such attractions to sportsmen, the following account of a brotherhood bearing his name will perhaps afford amusement. It was instituted at Louvain in 1701, and the Duke d'Areberg declared himself at its head. Some of the regulations are sufficiently curious. Thus runs the preamble:—
“As it is well-known that emperors, kings, and other potentates have from the most remote times manifested the most anxious interest in the pursuit of the noble and illustrious sport of the chase, and have not only followed it themselves, but permitted it to their subjects:

“We, as true lovers of the chase, have thought good, for the maintenance of the same, to constitute a brotherhood under the following rules and regulations:”—I give only the most prominent.

The third article declares that “None shall be admitted into the brotherhood who are not noble, or persons born in wedlock, or otherwise honest and virtuous.”

The fifth, “That the brotherhood shall each be obliged to keep a good sporting dog, and be provided

with a game bag, powder, ball, and a good fowling-piece, and to wear at all assemblies a little hunting-horn attached to a green riband."

Article 6. "That there shall be the following officers belonging to the brotherhood:—the noble lord general of the chase; the chief (kooftman); the provost, colonel, major, captain, lieutenant, ensign, fiscal advocate, two treasurers, a secretary, an inspector of arms, and a master of the ceremonies (*introduceur*), who shall be changed every year, with the exception of the principal officer, whose office continues during life."

Article 7. "That the provost of the brotherhood shall cause to be celebrated every year a solemn mass on St. Hubert's day, at which all the brothers shall attend before they take the field."

Article 8. "That no one shall be excused from going out on the first day, except for good and sufficient reasons, and that after having been permitted to absent himself, he shall pay a crown for the expenses of the hunters."

Article 9. "That all the game which shall be shot on St. Hubert's day shall be carried into the town of Louvain, and placed at the disposal of the treasurer of the brotherhood, whose duty it is to furnish the dinner."

Article 10. "That every year, on the Sunday after the fête of St. Hubert, a dinner shall be given, to which the protector of the brotherhood shall be invited, and from which no brother shall be absent under any pre-

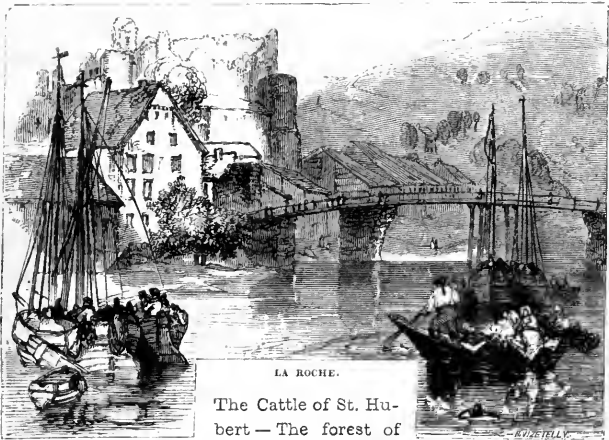
text whatever, under pain of paying double the amount paid by a brother present at the banquet," &c.

In the church of St James, at Louvain, a solemn mass is annually celebrated on St. Hubert's day, at which are present all the sportsmen in the city, who, the day before, have had a grand battue. The produce of this chasse pays the expenses of a grand supper for the sportsmen. On this day every one goes to the church porch to buy small loaves, which are sold there, and are supposed to possess the property of averting madness. In order to render this preservative efficacious, it is necessary the bread should be eaten after fasting, and devoutly reciting a pater and an ave. The article of prayer is not dispensed with even in the case of animals; but as they cannot pray for themselves, their masters do it for them. This last custom exists almost everywhere in Belgium.

Besides the Abbey Church there is positively nothing to be seen in St. Hubert, and the rain coming on heavily, we were driven into our hotel, which combines the comforts of an inn with the attractions of a general shop, where cloth, linen, spirits, wines, hardware—in short, everything wanted, can be bought, except books; for on inquiry we found there was no printing-office or dépôt for the sale of literature in the place.*

* This will appear less surprising when it is known that in so large a place as Dinant there is no such thing as a cutler's shop. The reason assigned for this is, that all the cutlery in Belgium being made at Namur, there is no necessity for selling it in other places.

From our chamber window we noticed some of the peculiarities of the town's people. Immediately opposite we observed a great crowd assembled at a public sale that was going on in the open street. The lower floor of one of the houses had been converted into a store for various kinds of merchandise—coloured calicoes, cotton handkerchiefs, ribbons, lace, stockings, shirt collars, &c.—all of which were separately handed out by two girls to the auctioneer, who stood on a high flight of stone steps, where he vociferously proclaimed the excellence of his wares. Whenever the bidding waxed slack, an old woman might be seen threading her way through the crowd with a bottle of *pequet* in one hand and a glass in the other, stimulating the slow and prompting the wealthy by the potency of her liquor. That it was potent there could be little doubt, for every now and then a scuffle was improvised, which had its origin in the desire of some townsman to *bonnet* some female peasant, a proceeding to which he seemed irresistibly attracted by the absurdly antique shape of the ladies' head-gear. A reversed coal-scuttle with two enormously-high peaks before and behind, suggests but a faint image of the *chapeau des Ardennes*. In spite of the torrents of rain, the sale lasted till dark, and the cabarets resounded till a late hour with the voices of those who had bought and sold.



LA ROCHE.

The Cattle of St. Hubert—The forest of

Arden—Truth of Shakspeare's description—Scenery—Beech Trees—La Roche—The Aeronaut Blanchard—Preparations for the Ascent—Blanchard's trick—His threatened punishment—Fete of the Balloon—The Patron Saint and the Virgin—Ardennes—Marche—The Calvaire—The Forest—Champlon—Bastogne—Arlon—The Controversy—Inscription on the Altar—Farewell to the Ardennes.



It was in a thick fog, on a very cold morning, that we left St. Hubert, at an hour when nothing seemed stirring except the pigs and cattle, which slowly made their way to the doors of the different houses, by the passage common to all the inhabitants,—men and animals alike,—where they stood gazing wistfully up and down the street as if extremely unwilling to venture forth.

We left them in their perplexity, and set out across a desolate moor, in the direction of Champlon; a large kite that kept circling over our heads being the only companion of our journey. After a time he too left

us, having, no doubt, scented his quarry, and for some miles we pursued our silent, lonely route. As we advanced deeper in the forest an occasional woodcutter might be seen ; in some of the more open spaces large coveys of partridges were feeding ; and in one sylvan spot we were agreeably surprised by the apparition of a superb fox, leisurely cantering across the road as if on his way—which was probably the case—to breakfast at somebody's expense. We stopped for ours at Champlon, a large inn standing alone at a point where four roads meet, on the skirts of the most picturesque part of the forest.

It is here truly the scene as Shakspeare has painted it, a perfect picture of sylvan beauty. Except the "green and gilded snake," and the "lioness, with udders all drawn dry," that laid in wait for Orlando's elder brother, all the features of "the forest of Arden," in "As You Like It," are drawn to the life. The truth of the description arises of course from the poet's quick sense of the beauties of nature, and his ready apprehension of all that unites to render forest scenery delightful, whether in England or beyond the Meuse. Nurtured in tradition, and steeped in the recollection of the days when he

" ——— did lay him down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dreamed uncounted hours,"

the forest of Ardennes was to him as real an object as the woods that bordered the Avon ; and thus the scenery of his unrivalled comedy is as true as the

personages with whom he has filled these wilds are instinct with life. At every step we meet with

“Oaks, whose antique roots peep out
Upon the brooks that brawl along the wood ;”

we cannot penetrate beyond the glades, without disturbing some “careless herd, full of the pasture,” the “dappled fools” that formed the subject of the moralising reverie of the “melancholy Jaques ;” we linger in many a spot where still seems to echo the song of the forester lord, nor can we refrain from chanting with him—

“Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to lie i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas'd with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither ;
Here he shall see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.”

It would have been *lèse-majesté* to Shakspeare to have loitered in the “forest of Arden,” without following the example of Orlando, albeit our case was not so seemingly desperate as his ; and the bark of one fair tree was certainly “marred” in consequence, with what effect future travellers who sojourn for a few hours at Champlon must determine. The indications are carved on a noble beech* which stands alone at the very angle of the forest on the road to La Roche.

* Although oaks are numerous in the Ardennes, beech trees are still more so. The peasants call the beech “le brochet des bois,” because it prevents all other trees from growing near it. Its Walloon name is *fays*, from the Latin *fagus*, and many plants are called after it ; Beau-fays, Thirifays (beech of Thierry), Fayenbois, &c.

A drive through the forest of about two hours brought us to La Roche, a pretty village, most picturesquely situated upon the little river Ourthe, which, in its course to join the Meuse at Liége, passes through scenery of the most beautiful description. Here are the ruins of a fine old castle, one of the many that are scattered throughout the ancient district of the Ardennes, the cradles of some of the most illustrious families in Europe, where the feudal system lingered longer than in any other part of Belgium. But the division of the country between the Counts of Namur and Luxembourg and the Bishop of Liége, whose territorial rights were ill defined, involved the *noblesse* of the Ardennes in fierce and frequent wars, which laid the foundation of the ruin that was hastened by the dukes of Burgundy, and consummated by the armies of France and Austria, in the violent struggle that brought on the invasion of 1554. Few of the old feudal castles have survived that stormy period, and their walls are now "all tenantless save to the cranny wind."

The village of La Roche was, about sixty years since, the scene of an occurrence which sufficiently shows how isolated it was, and how completely ignorant its inhabitants were of what was then causing the liveliest sensation throughout the country.

It was at the time when the discovery of aerostation had begun to excite attention, when Blanchard, the aeronaut,—unworthy, however, as he appeared of the title of "*intrepid*," which has always been the property,

de rigueur, of those who sail the skies,—arrived at Liége. He obtained from the authorities permission to construct his balloon in the citadel, and establish a laboratory to supply him with the gas necessary for inflation.

Everybody in the city and its neighbourhood impatiently awaited the issue of an experiment fraught to them with so much novelty; and the 18th of December, 1786, was fixed upon for the ascent. On the day appointed, the crowd to obtain admission to the citadel was so great, that a serious accident had nearly occurred, from the great pressure of the people anxious to secure the best places; it was, however, happily averted, and the numerous spectators, amongst whom were the Prince Bishop and all the municipal officers were finally accommodated in safety.

At a signal given by the discharge of artillery, the covering that concealed the balloon was all at once withdrawn, and the many-coloured orb appeared, held down to the earth, from which it seemed eager to escape, by a dozen men who grasped the cords. Blanchard was seated in the car. The immense machine was gently swayed over to where the Prince was stationed, and Madame de Berlaimont, who sat beside him, descended from the platform with a bouquet in her hand, which she presented to the aeronaut. Blanchard, affecting to stoop to receive it, desired the soldiers to cut the cords, and at the same time that the balloon flew up with the rapidity of lightning, quietly

slid down to the ground, where he lay as if stunned by the fall.

The Prince rose in anger, and turning to those who sat near him, exclaimed, "I was warned of the trick which this fellow intended to play us; but I could not believe that the impudent Frenchman would have audacity enough to sully his honour and reputation by an act offensive to a whole people." Then turning towards Blanchard, who still pretended to be in a swoon, "I am not the dupe of your miserable jugglery," he added, "you shall not be lost sight of till you have constructed another balloon; and if you do not go up in it, you shall be handed over to the arm of justice, and lose your head like a common robber." Having uttered these words, he immediately got into his carriage, and returned to the palace.*

In the meantime the tenantless balloon soared majestically into the air, was for some time kept in view, and finally disappeared in the direction of the Ardennes.

Now it happened, *sur ces entrefaites*, that a great discussion had arisen in the little village of La Roche, in which piety and poverty were at issue. The images of the patron saint and the Holy Virgin were both in a pitiable condition as regarded costume,

* In consequence of this threat Blanchard constructed another balloon, in which he actually did ascend on the 27th of the same month; but the Prince Bishop, César Constantin Hoensbroeck, was so indignant at the aeronaut's conduct, that he refused to witness the ascent.

and the inhabitants were too poor to supply the wants of each; a collection was made, but it did not realise more than enough to purchase a robe for one. Opinions were divided, some declaring for the patron saint, others for Our Lady; the partisans of the former were in the majority, and on the day of his fête he appeared, "*clinquant-neux*," in a garment of great splendour. But scarcely had his image received the honour due, when a wondrous object greeted the astonished eyes of the villagers, by the appearance in the sky of an enormous globe of resplendent hue, which descended directly upon the tower of the church. It was found on examination to be composed of silk, and the inhabitants of La Roche were at once convinced that it was a present from the Virgin to deck her image! They acted immediately upon this impression,—the balloon was at once cut into pieces, and a series of robes was made that have honourably sustained the credit of the Virgin's wardrobe from that day to this.

We next turned our steps in the direction of Marche, the capital of the fertile district called "La Famène," but still a part of the Ardennes. The road was rough and hilly, but the beauty of the scenery amply repaid the toil. It is in this part of the Ardennes, as well as near the Amblève, that those streams are met with, in whose beds are found a large mother-of-pearl mussel, containing pearls, which though not large are of a very fine colour. They belong to the

class of the *anodon cygneum* of Cuvier. It was evening when we arrived at Marche, and took up our quarters at the Cloche d'Or, the first house that one meets in approaching from the forest. It is a nice quiet inn, with a very good-natured landlady and attentive servants, and the supper of *grives* which they served up, was good enough to dispel our remorse at being obliged to eat them.

Marche is a small town seated in a smiling valley amidst low hills, for the most part highly cultivated; but the distant heights are thickly covered with wood. It looks very pretty at a distance, but the streets are dirty and ill-paved, and it contains little to interest the traveller. Near it, on a rocky eminence, are the remains of a very old fortress, of which nothing is left but the ruined wall of the donjon-keep, of immense thickness, at the base of which some straggling wild vines cling for existence. The view from this height over the Famène is very pleasing. Westward of the town is a pretty walk of half a mile, along an avenue of beech, leading to a Calvaire, the various stations being marked by singularly-shaped altars surmounted by crosses. At the extremity of the avenue, on a bold rock that overlooks the plain, is a small chapel, built in 1626, and beneath it a crypt, dedicated to our Saviour, arched over by the natural vault of the rock, and approached from the outside. It is much resorted to for prayer. In the neighbourhood of Marche are many other chapels, which attract devotees from far and

near. After visiting the ruined castle and the Calvaire, on the following afternoon we were again *en route* through the forest, performing nearly the whole distance as far as Champlon, about twelve miles, on foot, the better to enjoy the beauty of the scenery. After crossing the Hèdre and the Wame, two foaming mountain torrents, we kept by the left bank of the latter stream almost till we reached Champlon, and discovered, perhaps, even more sylvan loveliness than we had already been charmed with. The moon rose before we had cleared the forest, and added infinitely to the romance of the scene, though it was impossible to augment its beauty. Imagination might well have pictured the enamoured Orlando appealing to "the thrice-crowned queen of night" in such a spot!

Champlon is a good inn, but were it not so one might well compound for slight inconveniences, by the reflection of having slept in the very heart of the forest of Ardennes. We passed the whole of the next day "under the shade of melancholy boughs;" and having dismissed our carriage, which was taken back the nearest way to Dinant, we waited patiently for the arrival of the *diligence* from Namur, to take us on to Luxembourg. It arrived about midnight, and luckily there were places vacant. The bright moonlight had a different task assigned it now to that of the preceding night. *Then* it "left that beautiful which still was so,"—*now* it "made that which was not;" for we had to cross the dreariest part of the Ardennes, the grim

capital of which is Bastogne, where we arrived about three o'clock in the morning. An hour's delay, while the innkeeper, the ostler, and the horses were being woke-up to enable the *regular diligence* to proceed, enabled us to gaze our fill at a town that has been satirically named "Paris in the desert." Not being well able to discern the materials of which the houses were built, it struck me as bearing a greater resemblance to a new settlement in North America, than to anything else. Bastogne is, as I have already said, the *chef-lieu* of those delicious hams which form the glory of the *charcutiers* of Brussels, but it was in vain that we clamoured for a few slices for supper; neither that nor anything else that was eatable was forthcoming, and when the horses at length arrived, we slowly wended on our journey. The sun rose as we entered the last woody outpost of the Ardennes, and never had I witnessed a more glorious effect, as it seemed, when seen through the trees, like a vast red ball of fire coursing through the forest. At length, about seven in the morning, we began to ascend some steep, sandy hills, and when we had laboured for some time the town of Arlon appeared, standing at the highest point of elevation in this part of the country. As the clock was striking eight, the *diligence* drew up at the Hôtel du Nord, and the German salutation that greeted us, in a dialect that closely resembles the Transylvanian or old Saxon, reminded us how close we were to the frontier.

Although Arlon is rising in importance, and bears a name celebrated for its antiquity, its attractions are not such as to make any long sojourn necessary. The derivation of the name of the city gave rise, about a century ago, to a very bitter controversy between Père Berthollet, a Jesuit, and a Capuchin; who wrote under the name of the magistrates and people of Arlon.

The Père Berthollet disputed the signification of the figures on an ancient altar found here, denying that it was other than an ordinary funeral monument, while his adversary held out manfully in favour of what was called "the old tradition of Arlon." This old tradition held that Arlon was a place where the worship of Diana was particularly celebrated, and that the etymology of the word Arlon was *Ara Lunæ*, confirmed by the discovery of the altar. This was the general belief, and in substituting an image of the virgin for the statue of Diana, the following lines were engraved on the pedestal:—

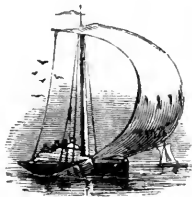
Ara fuit Lunæ, quæ nunc est ara Mariæ ;
 Virginis intactæ simbola Luna refert.
 Sic urbs Arlunum quæ Lunæ diceris Ara,
 Arluni Dominam, rectè vocabis eam.
 Nomen et a sacrâ jam jure resumito Lunâ,
 Arlunum Lunæ, quod dedit Ara Deo.

Vestra ferunt Lunam Arluni monumenta profanam,
 Turmatim populos hi coluisse Deam.
 Mistica Luna pari per vos celebretur in Arâ
 Quæ Virgo nobis arrha salutis erit.
 Huc ergo celerate pedem, juvenesque senesque,
 Audiet una pias mistica Luna preces.

“The moon in this place, formerly a famous idol, has yielded to Mary, being her symbol. If her profane altar gave the name to Arlon, Arlon now takes that of Mary, and renders to your new and divine mistress the honour formerly paid to the goddess.

“Its profane remains prove that your ancestors flocked in crowds to this place to address the idol, to offer the same worship to the mystic moon. It is the assurance and pledge of your safety. Hasten, then, old and young. Mary will reward your prayers twofold.”

It was to witness at Treves a scene of superstition as gross as ever was offered at the shrine of a Pagan divinity that we hurried from Arlon, and bade farewell to the Ardennes.



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