

Ghent.

BY LIZZIE P. LEWIS.

IT was a dark night, and raining fast, when the Ostend train, whistling shrilly, drew up in the station at Ghent; but following the lead of a cheerful locking porter, in blue blouse and wooden shoes, we were soon snugly ensconced in a comfortable hotel. The next morning dawned fair, and as we intended to winter in the old Flemish city, we made haste to find lodgings where we might securely set up our household gods, and have a home, though in a foreign land.

There was no lack of room, cards bearing the words, *Appartements garnis à louer*, appearing in the windows of four houses out of every ten. Dictionary in hand, we bravely rang the door-bells, which were answered directly by white-capped maids, or well-rounded Vraus, from whom our question,

"*Parlez vous anglais?*" instantly elicited the response,

"*Pas un mot Madame. Ne parle-t-elle pas français?*"

When Madame gave a decided shake of the head, there was a smile, ending in a laugh, and a recourse to gestures, in which language the Belgians almost equal the French.

Back and forth we trudged, into all sorts of rooms, furnished in all sorts of styles, until we settled upon a quiet habitation in the *Rue de la Vallée*, where lived two gentlewomen, old maids and sisters. There, for the modest sum of forty-five francs (nine dollars) per month, we hired a parlor and two bed-rooms. An extra three dollars paid for the care of our rooms and the serving of our breakfast of coffee, rolls and butter, we paying, of course, for the provisions. Arrangements were made with a neighboring *café* to furnish us our dinner, which, through the coldest weather, reached us hot and savory. For four francs (eighty cents), soup, fish, one meat, two vegetables, and a dessert, were sent, enough in quantity to satisfy four of us, two of whom were children.

Thus, before the first snow fell, we were cozily settled, and prepared to see all the quaint old city had to show, and to enjoy all the hospitality the British colony in the Belgian town so generously offered. How charming in their oddity and discomfort seemed the narrow, crooked streets, where generally the sidewalks were only wide enough for one to walk, or where there was no sidewalk at all. The many canals and the three rivers, dividing the city up into twenty six isles, the bridges, one hundred and nine in number, the forests of masts, the rows of tall, narrow houses, sometimes rising straight up out of the water, the church steeples and towers and chapel turrets, peeping over the clusters of red roofs, formed a delightful *tout ensemble*.

One peculiarity which first attracted our

notice were little mirrors, standing wedge-like outside the windows, almost every house having two or three of these glistening prisms before the window-panes, telling that, though the Flemish women are a home-loving and home-keeping race, they have their full share of feminine curiosity.

Along the streets we met at every turn small wagons drawn by dogs, and laden with huge brass jugs, glistening as bright as a Prussian helmet, and filled with milk, and tidy country women with baskets of eggs and vegetables dangling from yokes on their shoulders.

A picturesque sight was the market places on Wednesdays and Fridays. The large, open squares were spotted with brilliant patches of almost every color. Never, I think, could Brussels sprouts appear more green, beets so red, carrots so yellow, cauliflowers so white, or red cabbages so vivid or metallic (a vegetable which must be cooked *à la flamande* to be appreciated)—the very potatoes being as clean as pebbles on a shingle beach. The market women sat in long rows, their white caps looking at a distance like ridges of snow. In front of them were piles of their particolored stores, and between the rows sauntered the servant girls to make their purchases, their *sabots* clattering against the stones.

We had been in our new home but a few days, when we were awakened one morning early by the sound of chanting, accompanied by a cornet. I sprang from bed to behold a procession of priests and acolytes, with cross and banner and swinging censer, bearing the host under a canopy of satin to some dying soul. The few persons on the street, chiefly servant girls and market women at that early hour, knelt on the cold, damp stones as the procession passed; and no strange sight I had hitherto seen, made me so conscious of my being "a stranger in a strange land."

The majority of the Ghenters are Romanists, those who are not being generally free think-

ers. Party spirit ran high during our stay, liberals fighting through their newspapers, and priests replying from their pulpits. The Ghenters are a safe and trusty people, slow in according their confidence and friendship, but true as steel when once given. Fixed in purpose, they pursue their aims with a steady persistence that nothing can abate. Above everything they love their country and their homes, their old customs and old institutions; clinging firmly to the rights and liberties which their fathers enjoyed, though understanding too, that ideas advance with time, and that what was grand and broad in the middle ages, may now appear mean and narrow.

In their houses they are as cleanly as their neighbors, the Dutch. The windows of their dwellings are so exquisitely clean that it seems as if there was nothing between you and the lace curtains behind them. Every morning, rain or shine, the maids may be seen vigorously scrubbing not only the front doors, but the strips of pavement in front of the house—and inside the halls, sweeping the dust from the cornices of the ceilings, by the aid of a long-handled brush. The maids too are as neat as the houses they tend, their caps and ample aprons and home-knit stockings showing under their short skirts, white as snow-drifts. And what a contrast to the ordinary kitchen in this land, ruled over by one of Erin's lovely daughters, is a Flemish kitchen. The copper *casseroles* and other utensils, are polished like golden dinner plate, even the brass hoops of their scrubbing pails being as bright as if burnished. Indeed, the articles which with us are made of tin or iron are in Belgium invariably of copper. They have copper dust-pans and slop-pails, copper milk-jugs and tea-kettles, for a Flemish housewife will scarcely tolerate anything in her kitchen which may not, once a week, be rubbed up to the luster of gold.

There are several fine squares in Ghent, the



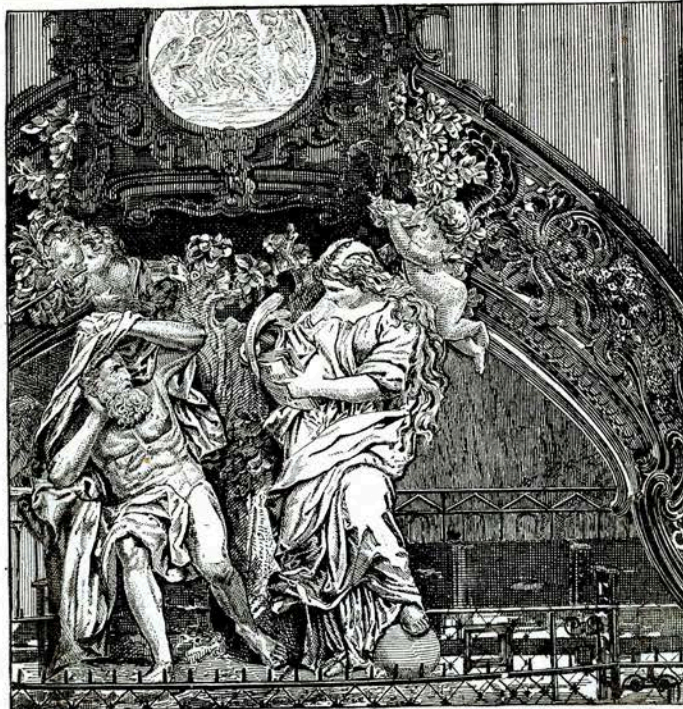
CONFUSE, GHENT.

most interesting of which is the *Marché de Vendredi*, or *Vrydags Markt*, so named from that being the day upon which great sales of linen took place. This square is surrounded by antiquated buildings, and on the left side is a gun, nineteen feet long and three feet wide at the mouth, called "Mad Meg," resembling "Mons Meg," in the Castle of Edinburgh. Above the touch-hole is the Burgundian Cross of St. Andrew and the arms of Philip the Good, so it must have been cast between 1419 and 1467. It was on this square that the most important events in the history of Ghent have transpired. There the trades people planted their standards when the nobility encroached upon their privileges; there, in 1345, occurred that terrible conflict between the weavers and fullers, in which fifteen hundred fullers, with their Dean, were killed; there, in 1477, Marie of Burgundy was forced to see two of her faithful friends and ministers beheaded, in spite of her tears and prayers. There the Counts of Flanders were inaugurated, in a style of magnificence not known in the present day, after they had sworn, "To maintain, and cause to be maintained, all the existing laws, privileges, freedoms, and customs of the county and city of Ghent."

Facing the square is a very ancient building with curious towers. There the damaged linens, taken to market and sold as perfect, were publicly exposed from an enormous iron ring, cemented in the wall. (The ring is still there.)

The *Place d'Armes*, in the center of the city, is the rendezvous of the fashionable world. The house where John and Hubert Van Eyck lived and painted, and Hubert died in 1426, is on the east side of the square, and also the residence of Jacques Van Artevelde, the Dictator of Ghent. This square is planted with lime trees, and every Sunday and holiday it is decorated with rows of shrubs and flowering plants, while the garrison band executes brilliant symphonies in the presence of gayly dressed, smiling crowds.

The *Marché aux Grains* is, as its name indicates, the resort of those who deal in the products of the harvest field, and is the noisiest and busiest square in the city. On one side is the church of St. Nicolas, the oldest church in the city, and built in primitive Gothic style. It is flanked by turrets of a style imported into Europe by the Crusaders. This church suffered greatly during the religious



PULPIT OF ST. BARONS, GHENT.

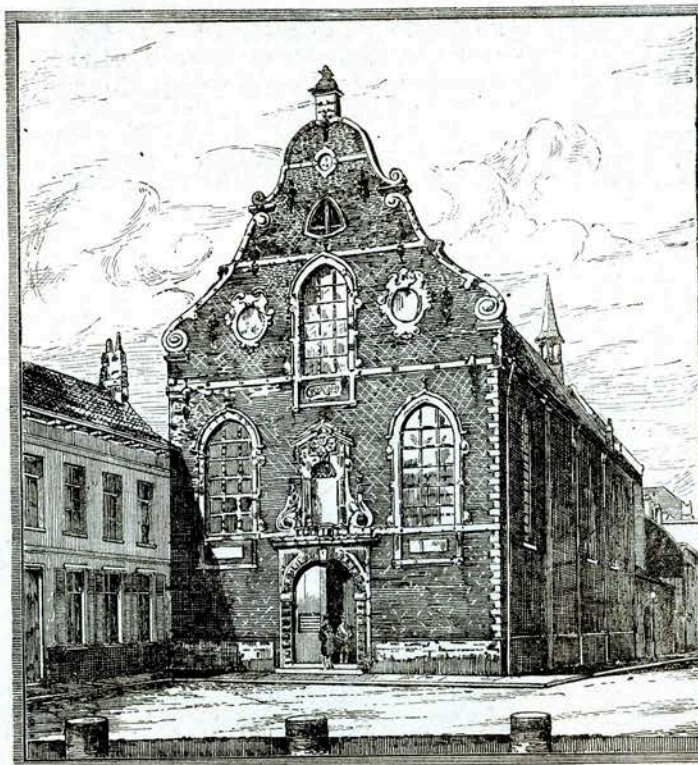
wars which desolated the country, being used a long time as a stable, and afterward as a hay granary. An inscription under a small painting in the nave records that Oliver Minjau, his wife, and thirty-one children, are buried there. When Charles V. made his entry into the city, the father and his twenty-one sons, who walked in the procession, attracted the attention of his majesty. Shortly after, the entire family was carried off by the plague.

given twice every year, exhibitions which have gained a European reputation.

The Horticultural Society was instituted in 1808, and has since made rapid strides. Mother of all the institutions of similar nature in Europe, it soon attained such proportions that a triennial festival was established, in which all Europe was invited to participate, and which attracted the most renowned botanists to the city. The object of the society is

to promote the science of agriculture, rural economy, and horticulture; to encourage the culture of the most useful indigenous plants; to naturalize exotics, and to foster a taste for botanical research; and it has well accomplished its mission, its success having provoked a noble rivalry in other countries, in a science then not greatly known, but which has since become a social need. Let any one stand on the Cathedral Tower and cast his eye over the city, and he will be struck with the number of gardens and glass-houses, whose polished surfaces reflect the sun's rays, like lakes enframed in the greenwood. Well does Ghent deserve her surname, *La Reine des Fleurs*, for she annually exports whole cargoes of camellias, azalias, and other hot-house plants to England, France, Germany, Russia, and America. In the suburbs there are eighty nurseries, and more than four hundred hot-houses.

The most splendid private conservatory in Belgium, if not in Europe, belongs to the present burgomaster, Count de Ker-



THE ENGLISH CHURCH, GHENT, FORMERLY A CHURCH OF THE CAPUCHINS, A.D. 1632.

chore, and where are to be seen the finest collection of palms outside of Kew Gardens, London.

The city has also a Botanical Garden, considered one of the most remarkable on the continent. The glass-houses form an octagon, finished by an eight-sided pyramid, and covering an area of two thousand square yards. Part of the garden is devoted to plants classified after the Linnaean system, about four thousand species; and another portion is classified according to Jussieu. There is an immense pond, peopled with gold-fish, in the midst of aquatic plants; and the *bosquets*, lawns, and terraces are adorned with statues and busts of celebrated Belgian botanists.

Not very many years ago, the common folk of Ghent were plunged in the most complete ignorance. Material prosperity was everything in the eyes of the government, moral and intellectual progress counted for nothing. But the shadows have insensibly dissipated. Learning is no longer the appanage of the rich; the poor have their share too. There is, besides the regular communal schools, a special school for girls, which is frequented by children of the better class, and by children of the English residents. For tuition superior a charge of five dollars a quarter is made, and there, as in the ordinary schools, instruction is given in a branch which may almost be classed, with us, as among the lost arts—I mean the art of mending.

A daughter of the writer came home from school one day, with a request for a stocking.

"For what?"

"I don't know; but Mademoiselle Léonie said I must bring one, and if it had a hole in it, so much the better."

The stocking was given, and a new one, and brought back in the evening with a piece cut out large enough to put my hand in. That stocking was never again put to the use for which it was woven, but in three months' time it had become a mass of darns, one upon another. Yet never was there a more profitable stocking, for by it an accomplishment (I speak thoughtfully when I say accomplishment) had been acquired, which could never have been learned half so beautifully and thoroughly under home tutelage.

The Industrious School, also free, is very prosperous, and is frequented principally by young mechanics, after their day's work is over. The course of study embraces algebra, linear and mechanical drawing, geometry, mechanics, general chemistry, and chemistry as applied to art. There is a special school for industrial drawings, as applied to designs for calicoes, *foulards*, damasks, laces, and carpets.

The University is a handsome edifice, though showing poorly because cramped for room, and has several laboratories, besides valuable collections of natural science, coins, medals,

and Roman antiquities. Ghent and Liège possess the only universities supported by the government. That of Ghent has forty-four professors and about five hundred students. The public library is the most complete in the kingdom. It contains one hundred thousand books, seven hundred rare manuscripts, and three hundred incunables, and is open free to the public every day but Sunday.

The Conservatory of Music ranks high, and is supported by the government, the mere nominal entrance fee of one dollar being all that is exacted from the pupil. For this amount, the student will be taught harmony, composition, organ, singing, declamation, the violin, piano, and a dozen other instruments, should he desire.

There is a school, too, of painting and sculpture, entirely free. This academy possesses a valuable art library, and a museum. The Gallery of Antiquities is a fine collection

have are the names and armorial bearings of the Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Two chapters of the order were held there, one, the seventh after its institution, presided over by Philip the Good, its founder; and the last meeting of the order, July 23, 1559, presided over by Philip II. The grand portal is ornamented by a statue of St. Baron, in ducal robes, and a falcon on his fist. There are twenty-four chapels, all rich in works of art. The eleventh contains the celebrated picture of the adoration of the Immaculate Lamb, painted by John and Hubert Van Eyck, the inventors of oil painting, for Philip the Good, in 1420 to 1432.

The subject, taken from the Revelations, represents the Celestial Lamb, surrounded by angels, and adored by saints of the Old and New Testaments, disposed in four groups. Above, in the background, are martyrs bearing palm branches, in front are the bishops and heads of the monastic orders. The towers of the heavenly Jerusalem, said to be copied from Maas, the native town of the painters, are discerned between the mountains which bound the horizon. This *chef-d'œuvre* of the first Flemish school is as remarkable for its excellent preservation, as for the charm of its composition. Though painted more than four hundred years since, the freshness and brilliancy of its tints make it appear as if fresh from the *atelier*, and tempt one to think that the brothers Van Eyck let the most important secret of their marvelous invention die with them.

According to the custom of those days, the picture was inclosed by eight wings, of which Ghent now possesses only copies. The whole picture was carried to Paris by the French, and while there, six of the wings fell into the hands of a dealer, who sold them to an Englishman for twenty thousand dollars, and who again sold them to the King of Prussia, for eighty-five thousand dollars.

The four massive copper candlesticks, bearing the English coat of arms, and standing in front of the high altar, once belonged to the unfortunate Charles I., and were sold during Cromwell's protectorate.

In the crypt are fifteen chapels, used for interments, and intended as a remembrance of the early age of Christianity, when the faithful assembled to worship in the catacombs at the tomb of the martyrs. In one of these chapels lie the remains of Hubert Van Eyck and his sister Margaret. The services are always imposing, the music grand.

"Bearing on eagle-wings the great desire
Of all the kneeling throng, and piercing higher
Than aught but love and prayer can reach, until
Only the silence seemed to listen still;
Or gathering like a sea still more and more,
Break in melodious waves at heaven's door,
And then fall, slow and soft, in tender rain,
Upon the pleading, longing hearts again."

The pulpit is a marvel of carving, strange and rare.



THE CANAL, GHENT.

of copies of *chefs-d'œuvre* of Florence and Rome. Another room contains ancient paintings, Rubens, Jordaens, Van Cleefs, etc., while still another room is devoted to modern art. In addition to the scholastic advantages already mentioned, there are many other schools, some for boys, under charge of the city, where the prices are higher than in the corresponding schools for girls; some conducted by ecclesiastics and nuns, and various guilds for the promotion of art and learning.

Ghent is rich in churches, the Cathedral of St. Baron eclipsing the other cathedrals of Belgium by the purity of its architecture and its interior ornamentation. The crypt was consecrated in 841, but the choir and chapels of the upper church were not finished until 1288. The walls of the choir are partially covered with black marble, the balustrades are of white or variegated marble, and the chapel gates are of bronze. High up in the

"Ivy that trembled on the spray, and ears
Of heavy corn, and slender bulrush spears,
And all the thousand tangled weeds that grow
In summer, where the silver rivers flow."

On holy Thursday, the bishop, a venerable man, washes the feet of twelve old men, in memory of apostolic days. It was a little amusing to Protestant eyes to watch the old men take off their shoes, unwind their garters, (I am sure some of them had three or four yards of string around them), and draw off their long stockings. Then the successor of the apostles, in his white cashmere robe, went from one to another, preceded by one deacon bearing a silver basin, and another a jug of the same precious material; a homœopathic quantity of water was poured over the old men's feet (they had been well scrubbed for the occasion), and then the bishop, after wiping them dry with the border of his robe, kissed them, or, more correctly speaking, kissed *at* them. I couldn't help thinking it savored a good deal of humbug, especially when the old men, after receiving each a loaf of bread and bottle of wine, made haste to leave the church.

St. Michael's Church, begun in 1445, and completed in 1480, was used in 1794 as a Temple of Reason, and afterwards, when Robespierre decided there was really a Supreme Being, as a Temple of the Law. There, upon the high altar, was seated, on the days of *Décadi*, a prostitute, habited as the Goddess of Liberty, before whom all marriages were required to take place. But as nothing is stable under the sun, one of the five directors of the French republic dreamed, on a certain fine morning, that he had been born, like Mahomet, to found a new religion, and so from his brain issued a new sect, which he called *Théophilanthropes* (adorers of God and friends of mankind). Thereupon the Temple of the Law changed its name again, and every tenth day the initiated listened to the sermons of a priest, who, robed in white, with a blue scarf, offered to the Eternal baskets of lovely flowers and delicious fruits.

To make the affair still more absurd, the tricolor flag floated from the church tower, surmounted by a Phrygian bonnet, where once the cross had stood. Finally the consul was declared, and then St. Michael's was again the house of prayer and praise.

In one's daily walks through Ghent, many ecclesiastics are to be met—monks and friars, in various habits, gray and blue, white and black, bare-headed and barefooted—besides those wearing the regulation cassock, fastened with tiny buttons from neck to feet, low shoes

with silver buckles, and broad-brimmed felt hats. The sympathy of a certain dear little boy was greatly excited, one very cold day, by meeting one of these bare-footed monks, trudging along through the snow, with his heavy bag.

"See, mamma! poor man's dot no stockin's. Div him some."

Besides these, there are many women in peculiar garb, who are called *Béguines*, members of an order founded by a Duchess of Brabant, in 680. There are two institutions of the order in Ghent, containing about a thousand sisters. Some of them live in a community, under the direction of a superior, but others reside alone, in small houses. They are not bound by permanent vows, and can leave the order whenever they see fit. The *Grand Béguinage* resembles a small village, surrounded by walls and a moat. There are several narrow streets, tiny houses, with small gardens, and a pretty little church, within the walls. There a solitary woman may go with her servant, rent one of the *maisonnettes*, and spend, in quietness and security, the rest of her days, or as many as she desires, the only requisite being the wearing of the dress of the order. The most exquisite laces are made by the *Béguines*, as well as other kinds of fine needle-work. They take old laces and literally make them new again, for a very trifling charge. When old age overtakes them, or their resources fail through illness, they are tenderly cared for by their associates. In the most excited revolutionary times this sisterhood have been respected in Ghent. The poor love them, because their self-abnegation and devotion may be relied upon in any calamity, the fulfilling the law of Christian charity, in the broadest sense of the word, being the sole aim of these excellent women.

Upon the *rue Digne de Brabant* stands an old church, plain and weather-beaten outside, and equally so within, which has been used since 1817 as the English and Protestant house of worship. It was built in 1632, by Capu-



GHENT, FROM THE CANAL.

city roofs is an old tower, surmounted by a campanile of iron, gracefully and artistically moulded. This belfry was constructed in 1183, and is built of Tournai stone, the iron campanile having been added in 1853, to replace an old one of wood. On the highest point of the campanile is a gilded dragon, ten feet in length, taken from the Mosque of St. Sophia, Constantinople, in 1204, by Count Baldwin, of Flanders, and presented by him to the Ghenters. The belfry contains the best carillon, or chimes, in the country. It is composed of forty-four bells, in one of which is a hole, made by a cannon ball fired by the Austrians, in 1789, to prevent the citizens from ringing an alarm. The ball did not miss its aim, but it failed to effect its purpose, for the tone of the bell continued unimpaired. One of the oldest and heaviest bells, cast in 1314, bears the following inscription, in Flemish, "My name is Roland; when I am rung hastily, then there is a fire; when I resound in peals, there is victory in Flanders."

Take it all in all, there are few cities of its size and population (it now numbers 120,000 souls), which have such a history as Ghent. Begun in 629, by St. Amand, who was sent over by Dagobert, King of France, to christianize the people, it grew slowly and quietly until the twelfth century, when it started into prominence as the populous and opulent capital of Flanders.

Soon after that, bloody insurrections troubled its peace, and a man arose, more powerful than any counts who had preceded him. This famous man, of noble birth, and a warm partisan of the English alliance, was Jacques Van Artevelde, born in 1290. In the war then raging between Edward III. of England, and Philip VI. of France, the Flemish, naturally enough, leaned towards the side of England, for the only industry of Ghent and other towns in Flanders was the fabrication of cloth and linen. The native wool was quite insufficient for their use, and much was imported from England. When this importation was stopped, great distress was caused among the work-people, until Van Artevelde suc-

Rising above the



A FLEMISH FAMILY.

ceeded in securing a treaty of peace and commerce with England for Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres.

For three years the Flemish lived peaceably by their firesides, maintaining an absolute neutrality with the warring nations. But at the end of that time, Count Louis of Flanders attempted to force his vassals under the French king's banners. The people arose *en masse*, and chose Van Artevelde as their leader, giving him the title of *Rurwaard*, Guardian of the Public Peace, with the power of dictator. For a long time he was the idol of the people, until some one suggested that he wished to deliver Flanders into the hands of England, when a general feeling of indignation broke out, and he was slain in a riot.

So it continued—peace, then war—though Ghent continued rich and powerful through all disquietudes, until the rebellion of 1540, when Charles V. entered the city. He despoiled his native town of its privileges and immunities; he confiscated its revenues, its arms, and even the celebrated bell, Roland, which had played so prominent a part during the rebellion. The old forms of government were abolished, the magistrates were appointed by the sovereign, and the chief citizens were condemned to appear bareheaded and barefooted, clad only in their shirts, with a halter about their necks, to ask pardon of the emperor; while, to enforce order, a strong citadel was built, the corner-stone of which was laid by Charles himself.

During the reign of Philip II., Ghent suffered greatly from religious wars, as did the rest of Flanders and Holland. Then ensued various vicissitudes, until she dropped out of special notice. For twenty years she lived under French rule; for some time she was a part of the United Netherlands, until, in 1830, the Kingdom of Belgium was created, and the Prince of Saxe-Coburg was elected king, under the title of *King of the Belgians*. He was greatly beloved, and being a Protestant he secured many privileges, such as special government grants for the support of the English church, in every town which can show a certain number of English residents.

Leopold I. was the uncle of Queen Victoria, of England, for whom he showed a father's love and care. He married Charlotte, Princess of Wales, who died in less than a year, and afterward, Louise, daughter of Louis Philippe, King of France. Leopold II. ascended the throne in 1865, and married Marie Henrietta, an Austrian princess. They have but one child, a daughter, their only son having died some years since, so that the present heir to the crown is the Count of Flanders.



GHENT FASHIONS, HUSBANDS IN FRONT.

A Love-Match in Paris.



"A H, si vous voulez!" cried Madame Martin suddenly, in tones of comic pathos, as we stood chatting and listening to the varied noises from the neighboring boulevard, upon our adjoining balconies. Madame Martin was my next neighbor. We lived in the fifth story of adjoining houses in a side street directly off the boulevard Malesherbes, and the inevitable balcony that decorates the topmost story of all the newer and more pretentious houses in Paris made lively neighborly intercourse between us possible, without the necessity of leaving our respective dwellings arising thereby. Indeed, we were separated only by our balcony railings, otherwise we might have visited one another without undertaking a serious journey up and down five flights of stairs and return. Without the latter ever having taken place, we lived in the most friendly and neighborly relations. At first, when we met accidentally, we had exchanged smiling greetings as neighbors, according to universal Parisian custom. Then a sergent de ville had given us occasion for a hearty laugh together by emphatically signaling to Madame Martin's little son not to float down any more bits of paper upon the hats of passers-by in the street below. And very soon nothing of interest in and about our petits ménages took place that we did not mutually call one another to witness and discuss. "Ah, if you would!" repeated the little woman with increased vehemence, and regarding me with doubtful looks.

"Eh bien?" I questioned, astonished that Madame Martin's pleasant fluency should have come to a stoppage—an unusual event with my little neighbor.

"Ah, if you only would, it might be *very* profitable!"

I laughed. For lately Madame Martin had busied herself night and day to conjure up a radical cure for the continued low tide in both our financial conditions. She could not comprehend the fact that I could be quite content in my *fière indépendance* on a very modest income. Frequently she had proposed to me to engage with her in some undertaking; now it had been this, now the other. That I was to take part in it, and would be of use to her, seemed to be an assured fact. Of late it had become a favorite idea that she and myself should give "cours" in the languages, in painting, drawing, music, dancing, gymnastics, etc. We would engage professors as assistants, certainly, yet would endeavor to teach as much as possible ourselves. She herself would undertake the French language and dancing, and if I would teach German, English, and gymnastics—I couldn't help laughing when the idea of pupils and gymnastics in our tiny rooms presented itself to my mental vision.

Madame Martin had formerly been an *ouvrière*, then had married her honest student, and Docteur Martin had supported his family modestly until the war ruined him. His

clientèle was scattered to the four winds, and poverty stared them in the face. Then, with the hope of bettering his practice, he removed from the Quartier Latin to the elegant quarter of the Madeleine. This ill-considered step proved a fatal mistake. What was to be done? What could she do without compromising her husband's position? If her true vocation could be found, the field in which to exercise her talents, success, with Madame Martin's energy, was assured. She soon saw that teaching was the only thing available. But how a little woman with a pronounced provincial dialect, and to whom orthography was an undiscovered country, was to win place and position in that profession, by ready-witted fluency of tongue alone, was a mystery to me. I really did not know how to help the poor woman. I always gave her a willing ear and sympathy, all I had to give, while she unfolded manifold and animated plans to me.

"Tiens!" I would say, "what is there to prevent us?"

"Hélas! I can do nothing with you, *Quel malheur*, that you cannot be made to see your own advantage!"

And now for ten minutes my incomprehensible neglect of my own opportunities was the theme of her lively tongue.

My slow pen cannot do justice to her animated flow of language. At last, vexed by my silence and the patient smile with which I had endured her eloquence, she broke off the thread of her discourse, and cried in another tone, "I know very well that a note of a thousand francs would not be at all objectionable to your pocket, though perhaps mine needs it more. Ah, you may smile, *Mademoiselle*, you have not a husband and three children to care for as I have. I really do not know what to do; it is getting worse every day; and besides all that, my husband is the greatest gourmand that you can imagine. To be sure he makes himself as useful as possible in the house, *mon pauvre petit mari*—helps me, and teaches the children, *pauvre chéri*; it is not his fault that no patients are attracted by that fine new inscription down below: '*Docteur Médecin*,' of which every letter is as large as my head—and that old patients do not pay! Pleasant state of affairs! wife and child of an *ouvrier* are ten times happier."

"If I could help you to earn a thousand francs, dear Madame, I would with the greatest pleasure, but I do not see a possibility."

"Possibility (with indignation) possibility! not possibility but certainty; if you are willing we could arrange a marriage!"

"Un mariage!" I echo slowly, as I see the thousand francs rapidly melting from my mental vision.

"Certainly, it will be the simplest thing in the world. You are a friend of *Mademoiselle S.* I know the *Duc de*—; if you consent we will arrange a marriage."

"But *Mademoiselle S.* wants to marry for love!" I cry out out between amusement and amazement.

"Amour ou ambition—do not forget what you told me recently. *Mademoiselle S.* understands but two kinds of marriage—for love or ambition."