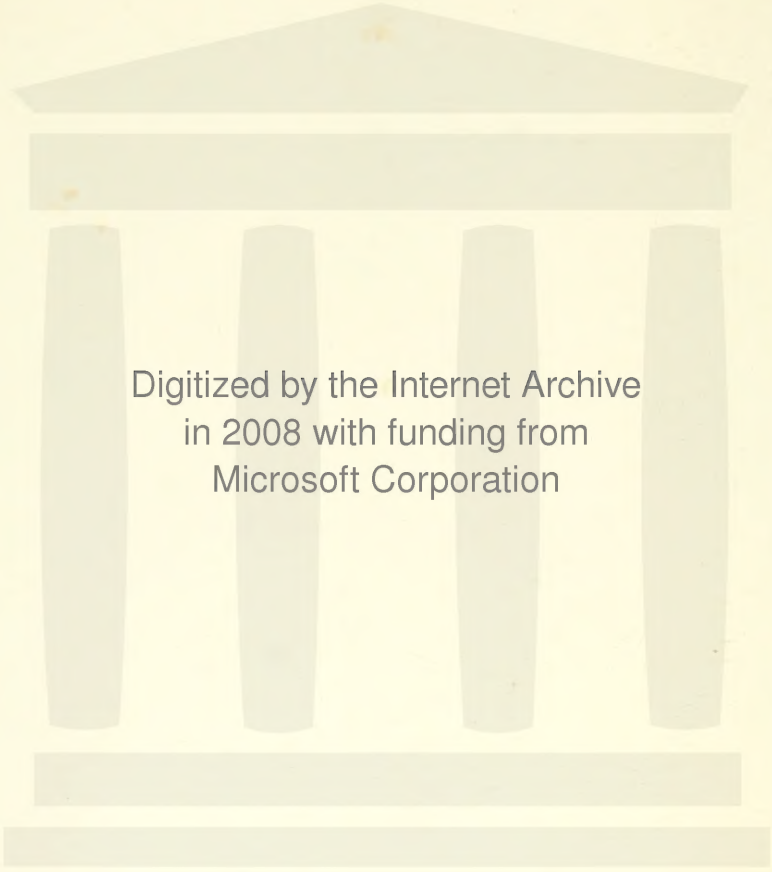
LIÉGE & THE ARDENNES

PAINTED BY A. FORESTIER

DESCRIBED BY G. W. T. OMOND

To Joe
from Rob

June 1914



LIÉGE

AND THE ARDENNES

PUBLISHED BY
A. & C. BLACK . SOHO SQUARE . LONDON, W.

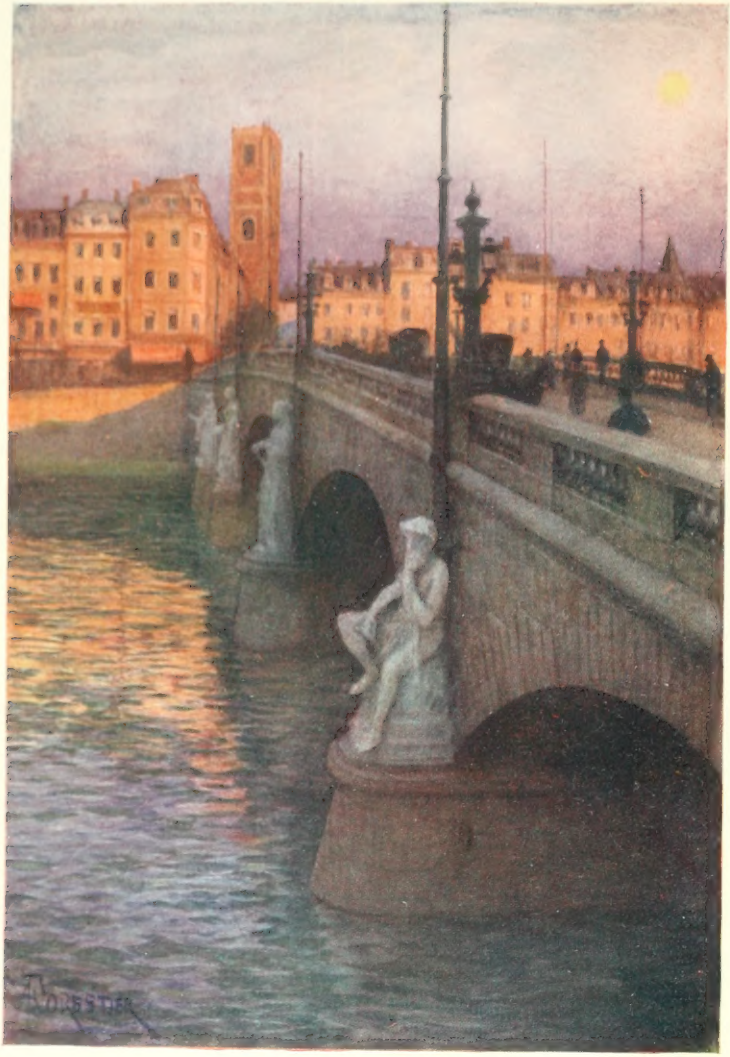
AGENTS

AMERICA . . . THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
64 & 66 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

CANADA . . . THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA, LTD.
27 RICHMOND STREET WEST, TORONTO

INDIA . . . . MACMILLAN & COMPANY, LTD.
MACMILLAN BUILDING, BOMBAY
309 BOW BAZAAR STREET, CALCUTTA

AUSTRALASIA . OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, MELBOURNE



PONT DES ARCHES, LIÉGE

LIÉGE AND THE ARDENNES · PAINTED BY AMEDÉE FORESTIER TEXT BY GEORGE W. T. OMOND · PUBLISHED BY A. & C. BLACK · SOHO SQUARE · LONDON · W

Contents

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

List of Illustrations

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE map of Belgium during the Middle Ages, and down to the period of the French Revolution, shows the outlines of a large territory lying to the south of Brabant. On the west it extends to the French dominions; on the east are Germany and the Duchy of Limbourg: the Duchy of Luxembourg bounds it on the south. This territory was known as the Principality of Liége.

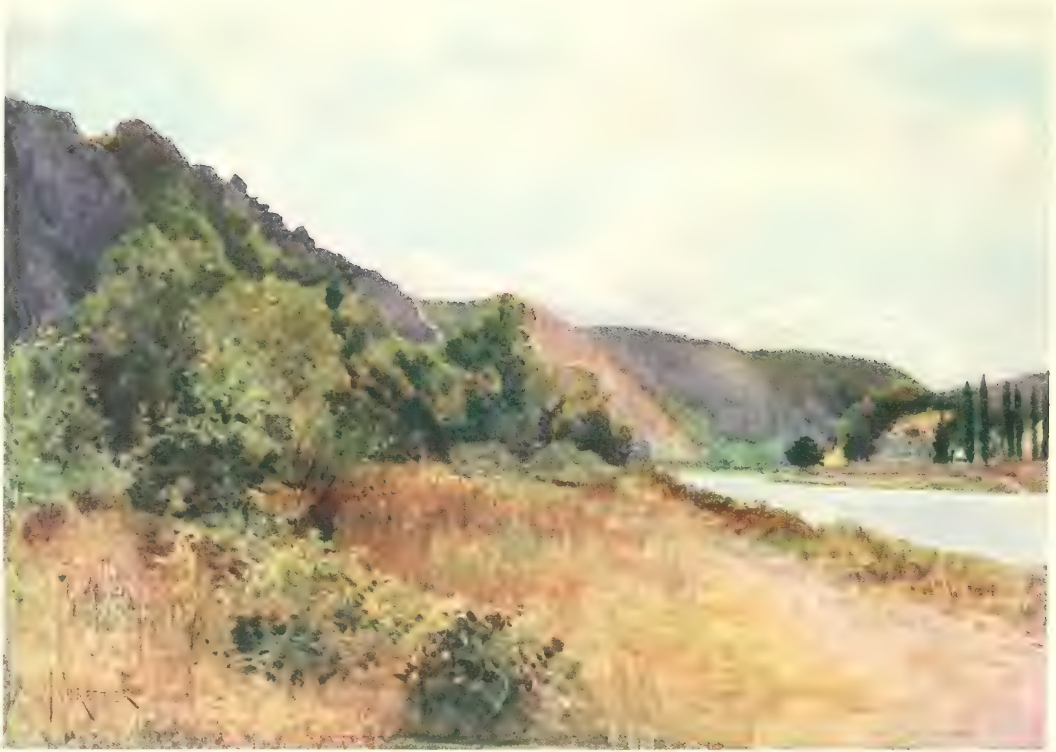
The aspect of this part of Belgium is entirely different from that of the other provinces. The River Semois, rising near Arlon, the capital of Belgian Luxembourg, flows through quiet meadows, a slow and placid streamlet, bordered by rushes and willow-trees, till it reaches the western extremity of the mountainous forests of Ardennes. There it enters a narrow winding valley, thickly wooded, with rocky dells, and banks so precipitous that in some places there is not even a footpath, and travellers must pass from side to side in boats

when making their way along the margin of the stream. Emerging from this defile, it crosses the French frontier, and joins the Meuse near Montherme. From thence the Meuse flows to the north till it enters Belgium a short distance beyond the town of Givet.

The romantic valley of the Meuse stretches on for miles, past Hastière, with its abbey of the eleventh century, peaceful Waulsort, in former times a Benedictine settlement, but now a favourite summer resort, and the picturesque château of Freyr, with its well-ordered gardens. On either side are steep slopes clothed with trees, and broken here and there by bold, outstanding pinnacles of rock. The sweet village of Anseremme straggles along the road beside the river; and near it the Lesse rushes down, between overhanging trees and towering cliffs, to meet the Meuse. Then comes Dinant, nestling on the right bank of the river, below the fortress which rises on the steep hillside. From Dinant the Meuse winds on to where the Sambre joins it at Namur, and so onwards to Liége and Maestricht.

To the south of this valley of the Meuse, for mile after mile, a broad, undulating tableland is covered by thick forests, where deer and wild boars

THE CHÂTEAU DE WAULSORT ON THE MEUSE



abound, or opens out into a wide rolling country, dotted with villages, farm-houses, church spires, modern châteaux, and the ruins of feudal strongholds perched on inaccessible rocks.

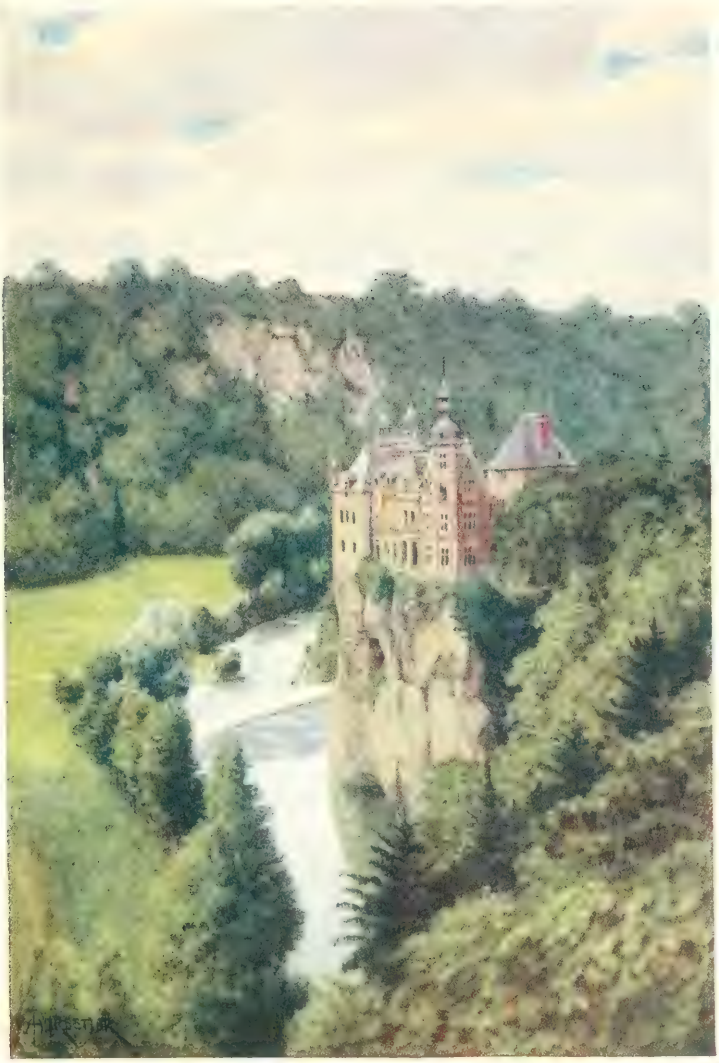
The appearance of this region has thus nothing in common with any other part of Belgium, with the flat, densely populated plain which extends southwards from the coast of Flanders. The people, too, are different—of quite another type, and speaking, most of them, another tongue. For this is the country of the Walloons, that hard-working race whose aptitude for strenuous labour distinguishes them from the light-hearted, easy-going people of Flanders and Brabant, and whose language is a form of old French mingled with words derived from German roots.

While, moreover, the old-time history of northern Belgium is the history of great commercial cities, rolling in wealth and trading to all parts of the world, with the merchant princes and the members of the guilds for their great men, the history of these southern provinces is the long story of how the Principality of Liége was evolved out of the chaos of small lordships which existed in the sixth century, and was governed, not by laymen, but by a dynasty of priests, who made war and con-

cluded alliances on equal terms with the surrounding princes. It is a story of feudal barons, of the romance of chivalry, of terrible deeds, of ferocious bandits, of bishops who led armies into the field and shed blood like water, often for very trifling causes.

When, at the end of the fifteenth century, Belgium was the most opulent country in Europe, the valley of the Meuse and the wide forest of Ardennes remained a waste. When, under the house of Burgundy, Flanders and Brabant flourished and grew rich, the Principality of Liége was impoverished and steeped in misery. It remained separate and independent, and has, therefore, a history of its own—the history of a State governed by the clergy, the nobles, and the people; where taxes could not be levied without the assent of these three estates; where no man could be condemned except by the judges, and in accordance with the laws; where such a thing as arbitrary arrest was unknown, at least in theory; where the home of the poorest subject was inviolable; but where, in spite of all these privileges, year after year saw one revolution follow another, all the horrors of foreign and domestic war, and innumerable acts of cruelty, oppression, and treachery.

CHÂTEAU DE WALZIN, IN THE LESSE VALLEY



This state of things continued, with scarcely a pause, till the close of the seventeenth century, after which the country, though exhausted, prolonged its independence for another hundred years, till, with the rest of Belgium, it was annexed to France, and broken up into several departments. In later days, from the fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna down to the present time, it has shared the fortunes of the modern kingdom of Belgium.

The whole story cannot be told within the compass of a few pages; but enough may be set down to excite, perhaps, the interest of those who may chance to travel in this part of Europe.

EARLY HISTORY OF LIÉGE—BISHOP NOTGER—THE COURT OF PEACE

CHAPTER II

EARLY HISTORY OF LIÉGE—BISHOP NOTGER—THE COURT OF PEACE

As to the town of Liége in early times, the story goes that one day St. Monulphe, Bishop of Tongres, being on a journey from Maestricht to Dinant, came to a rising ground, from which he saw a few wooden houses nestling beneath a mountain which overlooked the Meuse. Descending, he came to a streamlet which flowed into the river. He asked its name, and was told that it was called the Legia. Then the Bishop said to his companions that a great city, famous in the annals of the Christian Church, would arise on that spot. He built a small chapel there, which was replaced, in later years, by a splendid cathedral dedicated to St. Lambert, and laid the foundations of the temporal power of the Bishops of Liége by endowing the Church in the valley of the Meuse with lands which he possessed in the neighbourhood of Dinant.

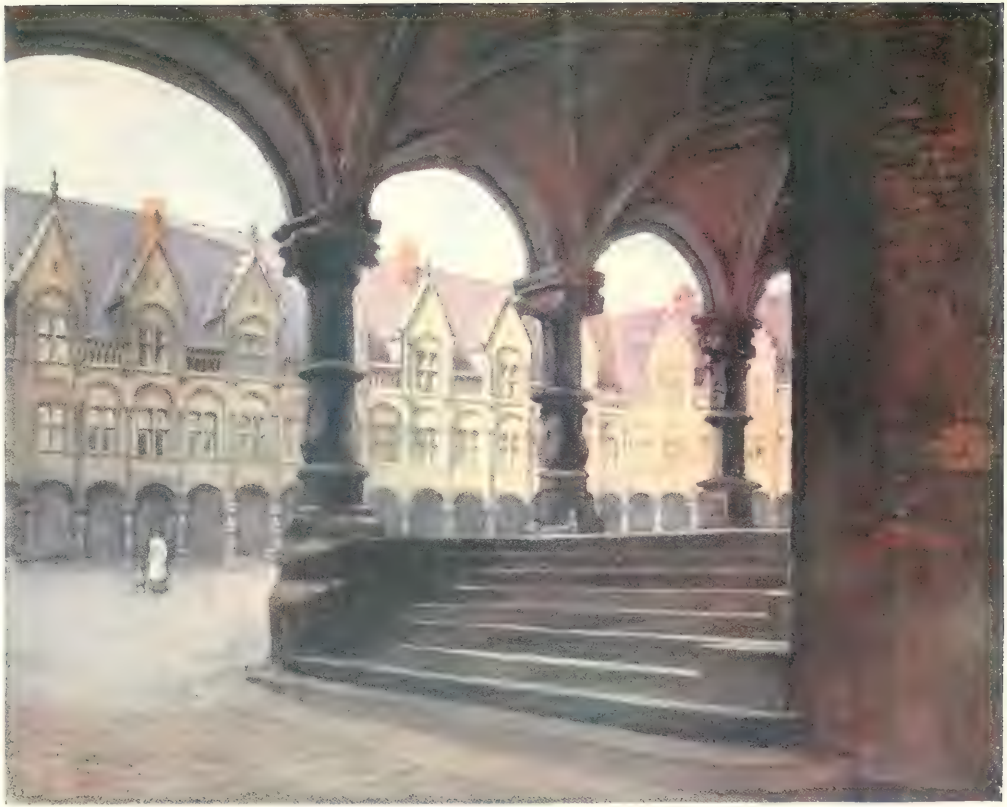
But at that time, and for many years to come,

Liege was an unimportant village inhabited by a few people; and it was not till the close of the seventh century that it became the seat of a bishopric, which was established there by St. Hubert about the year 697.

St. Hubert was a son of the Duke of Aquitaine. Leaving his native country for political reasons, he took refuge at the Court of Pepin d'Herstal, father of Charles Martel, and grandfather of Charlemagne. Pepin's palace was then at Jupille, now a little town on the right bank of the Meuse, some three miles from modern Liége, but in those days the seat of a Court, and the favourite home of Pepin, who held royal sway over all the surrounding country.

The legend is well known of how Hubert was so devoted to the chase that he used to hunt even on the festivals of the Church, and how his conversion was brought about by seeing a stag one Good Friday with a shining cross between its horns. More sober history attributes the change of life which turned the mighty hunter into a priest to the pious counsels of St. Lambert, Bishop of Maestricht, who persuaded him to go on a pilgrimage to Rome, where he finally resolved to devote himself to the cause of religion. He was at

THE EPISCOPAL PALACE—OUTER COURT,
LIÉGE



Rome when the news came that Lambert had been murdered in revenge for having publicly censured the evil life of Pepin's mistress Alpaïde. On hearing of this tragedy the Pope made Hubert Bishop of Maestricht, and he removed the bishopric to Liége, which grew, under his rule, from a mere village into a large town surrounded by walls built on land given by Charles Martel, afterwards famous as the great champion of Christendom at the Battle of Tours, and son of that Alpaïde who was responsible for the death of Lambert. Municipal laws and courts for the administration of justice were established, and a regular system of government soon followed. Bishop Hubert spent much of his time among the woods and mountains, no longer as a hunter, but as a missionary; and the relics of the patron saint of huntsmen, who died in May, 727, are still preserved in a chapel at the town of St. Hubert, which lies in the midst of a wide forest on the southern tableland of the Ardennes.

Liége prospered under the Emperor Charlemagne, who conferred important privileges on the town, and enriched the bishops, who gradually acquired that temporal power which they wielded for so long a time, after the vast empire of Charlemagne had fallen to pieces during the ninth century.

The real founder of the temporal power of the bishop princes of the Principality of Liége seems to have been Notger, who was made Bishop by Otho the Great in the year 971. He strengthened the walls of the town, and made it known that law and order must be maintained within the diocese. But the great nobles had their feudal castles, from which they sallied forth to plunder and oppress their weaker neighbours, and close to Liége was the castle of Chèvremont. This stronghold stood on a hill near the site of the modern watering-place of Chaudfontaine, and was surrounded by the cottages of the baron's vassals, and by several chapels and religious houses founded by fugitives who had taken refuge there during the years of the Norman invasion, when Liége, Maestricht, Tongres, and the rich abbeys of Malmedy and Stavelot, had been laid waste.

When Notger came to the See of Liége, Immon, the châtelain of Chèvremont, was the terror of the whole country for miles around. He raided the villages, carried away the crops from the few cultivated fields, and sometimes rode into the suburbs of Liége, made prisoners of the inhabitants, and held them to ransom. The people implored Notger to protect them, but for a long time he could find

no means of subduing, or making terms with, his formidable neighbour. At last, however, he saw an opportunity. The lady of Chèvremont having given birth to a son, her husband, being resolved that only some high dignitary of the Church should have the honour of baptizing his heir, requested the Bishop of Liége to perform the ceremony. Notger hesitated, but in the end sent a message that he would do what was required of him.

On the appointed day the Seigneur of Chèvremont from his watch-tower saw the Bishop approaching the castle at the head of a long procession of priests clothed in gorgeous vestments, and chanting psalms. Praising the zeal of the prelate who had come to baptize his son with such unusual pomp, he ordered the drawbridge to be lowered and the gates of the castle to be opened. The procession entered, and, when all were assembled in the courtyard, Bishop Notger addressed Immon.

'Seigneur,' he said, 'this castle is no longer yours, but mine.'

'What do you mean?' asked Immon.

'I say,' replied the Bishop, 'that this place belongs to me, the only lord of the country. Immon, yield to necessity, and depart. I promise to give you full compensation.'

'It is fortunate for you,' exclaimed the châtelain, in a fury, 'that you entered my castle under a promise of safety, for otherwise you leave it torn in pieces! Scoundrel! Miserable priest! Fly, lest some evil befall you!'

Instantly Notger gave a signal to his followers, who, throwing off the surplices, albs, and other ecclesiastical vestments which had covered their armour, and drawing the swords which had been concealed about them, rushed upon the inhabitants of the castle, and slaughtered them without mercy. It is said that Immon threw himself in despair over the walls, and that his wife perished miserably with her infant son. The castle was razed to the ground; the religious houses which clustered round it were destroyed; and the revenue of the chapels, which were also laid in ruins, served to enrich the churches of Liége and Aix-la-Chapelle.

Whatever may now be thought of this episode in church history, it made Bishop Notger more popular than ever. Otho the Great and his successors added to the gifts by which Charlemagne had enriched the bishopric; and in 1006, two years before the death of Notger, the Emperor Henry II. confirmed all these donations by a charter, in which Namur, Dinant, Tongres, Maestricht, Malines,

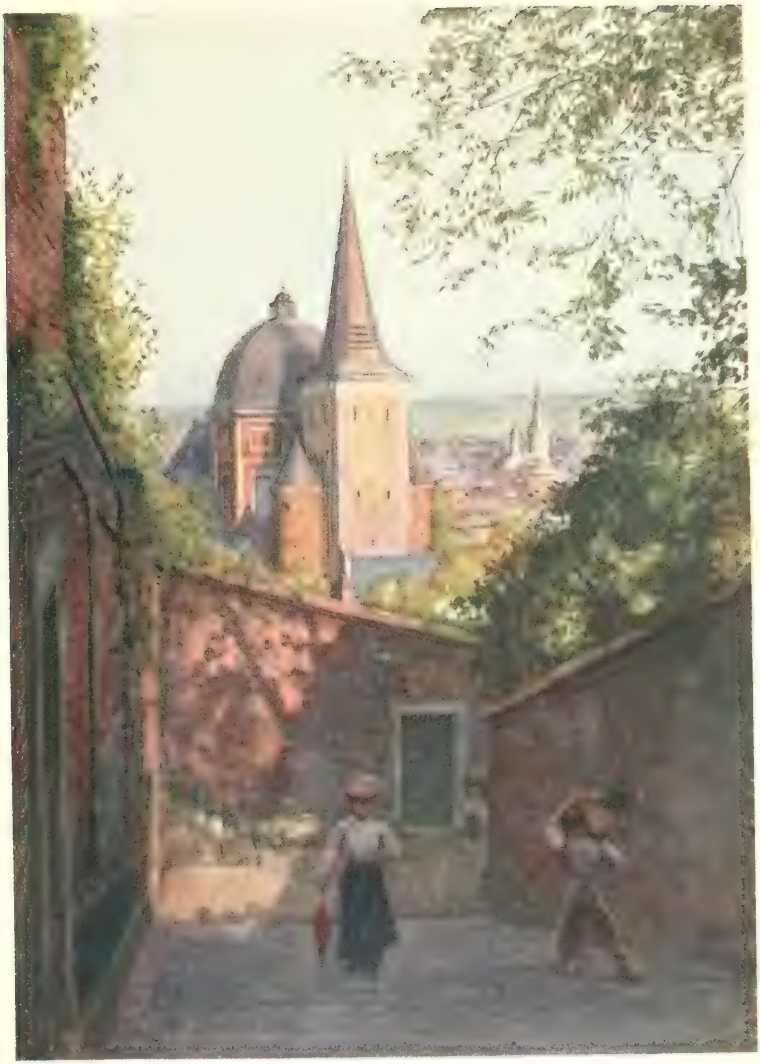
Gembloux, St. Hubert, and other important places are named as pertaining to the diocese of Liége. Thus, at the beginning of the eleventh century, the Bishop of the Principality was already possessed of extraordinary power. A few years later the Countess of Hainaut, being then at war with Flanders, sought an alliance with the Bishop of Liége, and, in return for his help, accepted him as her feudal superior; and the Counts of Hainaut, themselves amongst the proudest nobles of that day, were vassals of Liége until the times of Charles the Bold.

The frightful anarchy of the feudal period was nowhere worse than in this part of Europe. Murders, acts of revenge, robberies, took place without end. A state of war was the normal condition of society in the Valley of the Meuse and throughout the Ardennes. Noble fought against noble, and vassal against vassal. By the law or custom of these days, the feudal barons had the right of settling their disputes by force of arms; and their prince could not forbid them. But, though he could not interfere in his secular character, he could do so as bishop; and the influence of the Church, though the bishops themselves were often arrogant and ambitious, had been used

to promote the cause of peace by proclaiming a truce of forty days, during which prayers were offered up for the souls of those who had fallen in battle. A 'quarantaine,' as it was called, being appointed for the death of each knight, there was sometimes a whole year of peace, during which enemies met on outwardly friendly terms, visited each other's châteaux, and went together to tournaments or village fêtes. Sometimes, during these periods of repose, families which had been at deadly feud intermarried, and ladies who had been made widows, or daughters who had become orphans, married the very warriors who had slain their husbands or fathers. But more frequently, as soon as the 'quarantaine' was over, every one set to work again, burning houses and killing each other as before.

At last Henri de Verdun, who became Bishop of Liége in 1075, resolved to stop, if possible, the private wars which were the scourge of society. He assembled the nobles of the Principality and the surrounding districts, and urged upon them the necessity of at least making an effort to put an end to the ceaseless strife in which they lived. 'The only means I can think of,' he said, 'is to choose a supreme judge, with power to punish

ESCALIER DE LA FONTAINE, LIÉGE



those who are guilty of excesses.' The nobles consented to this proposal. He himself was appointed to the new office, and his successors in the bishopric of Liége were declared, for all time coming, judges of the 'Court of Peace.'

The rules of the 'Tribunal de Paix de Liége' decreed that on certain days it was unlawful to carry arms, and that any freeman who committed murder or acts of violence should be deprived of his estate and expelled from the Principality, while a slave was to be punished by the loss of whatever he might possess, and have his right hand cut off. From Wednesday to Monday, during the festivals of the Church, the *Trève de Dieu* was to be strictly observed. The Peace Tribunal was to decide cases of assassination, rape, incendiarism, robbery, and other offences which might lead to a breach of the public peace. Anyone who did not appear before the court, after being duly cited, was to be declared infamous, and was liable to a sentence of excommunication. But the accused could—such was the warlike spirit of the times—always claim to have his case decided by judicial combat.

The Dukes of Bouillon and Limbourg, together with the Counts of Luxembourg, Louvain,

Namur, Hainaut, Montaigu, Clermont, and La Roche, signed the Act which established the 'Tribunal de Paix'; and they all swore to obey its decisions, except the Count of La Roche, who refused to take any oath whatever.

On this the other barons made war upon him, and defeated him in a pitched battle. He fled to his castle and stood a siege of seven months, till, his provisions being exhausted, he saw nothing before him but surrender or starvation. Suddenly he thought of a stratagem. He fed a sow, the only animal which remained alive in the castle, with his last measure of wheat, and let it escape. The besiegers killed it, and, finding that it had just had a full meal, came to the conclusion that it was useless to continue the siege, as the garrison seemed well supplied with food. They therefore made peace with the Count of La Roche, who thus remained free from the jurisdiction of the Tribunal de Paix. The other barons also excused themselves; so did the clergy; and, in the end, the burghers of Liége refused to accept the decisions of the court, when, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, they obtained a great extension of their privileges under a charter granted by Albert de Cuyck, who had come to the episcopal throne in 1195.

Whenever there was a vacancy in the See of Liége, all the princes of Belgium, and often those of other countries, tried to obtain the nomination for one of their relatives. In the year 1193 Albert de Louvain, who had been chosen against the wish of the Emperor Henry IV., was murdered at Rheims by a band of German knights, probably under secret orders from the Emperor, who forthwith put forward Simon de Limbourg, then only sixteen years of age, as Bishop of the Principality. Simon de Limbourg was supported by the Duke of Brabant; but the Counts of Flanders, of Namur, and of Hainaut, refused to accept him. The Pope suspended his election, and Albert de Cuyck, backed up by the Count of Hainaut, took possession of the bishopric, and went to Rome to prosecute his claim against that of Simon de Limbourg, which was still maintained before the Holy See. Simon de Limbourg died, or was made away with, at Rome, and de Cuyck became Bishop.

He was now deeply in debt, having borrowed a large sum from the Count of Flanders, and spent it at Rome in bribery to secure his election as Bishop. This debt he got rid of by the sale of civil offices and ecclesiastical benefices; but more money was needed at Liége in order to repair the

walls of the town. For this purpose a tax was laid, by decree of the Bishop and the civil magistrates, on the people and the clergy. The latter refused to pay, on the ground that they had not been consulted. The magistrates and the laity insisted that the clergy must bear their share of the common burden. The Bishop took the side of the people against the clergy, and in order to make himself popular granted a charter, which was confirmed by the Emperor Philip II. in 1208.

This charter of Albert de Cuyck is an important landmark in the constitutional history of the Principality of Liége. It declared that the people might not be taxed without their own consent. It relieved them from the burden of lodging and feeding armed men, a constant source of discontent at that time; and it freed them from being compelled to follow the Bishop into battle, unless he was making war in defence of the Principality, and even then not till fifteen days after he had assembled his own immediate vassals. It provided that no officer of the law might enter a house to search for a thief or for stolen property without leave from the owner of the house. No freeman could be arrested or imprisoned except under a legal warrant. The justices of the town were to

be the only judges in a trial for any crime committed within the walls. No stranger might challenge a burgher of Liége to trial by combat, but must prosecute him before the judges. During eight days before Christmas and Easter no arrest for debt was allowed, though at other times a debtor, against whom judgment had been given, must either pay at once, find security before sunset, or go to prison.

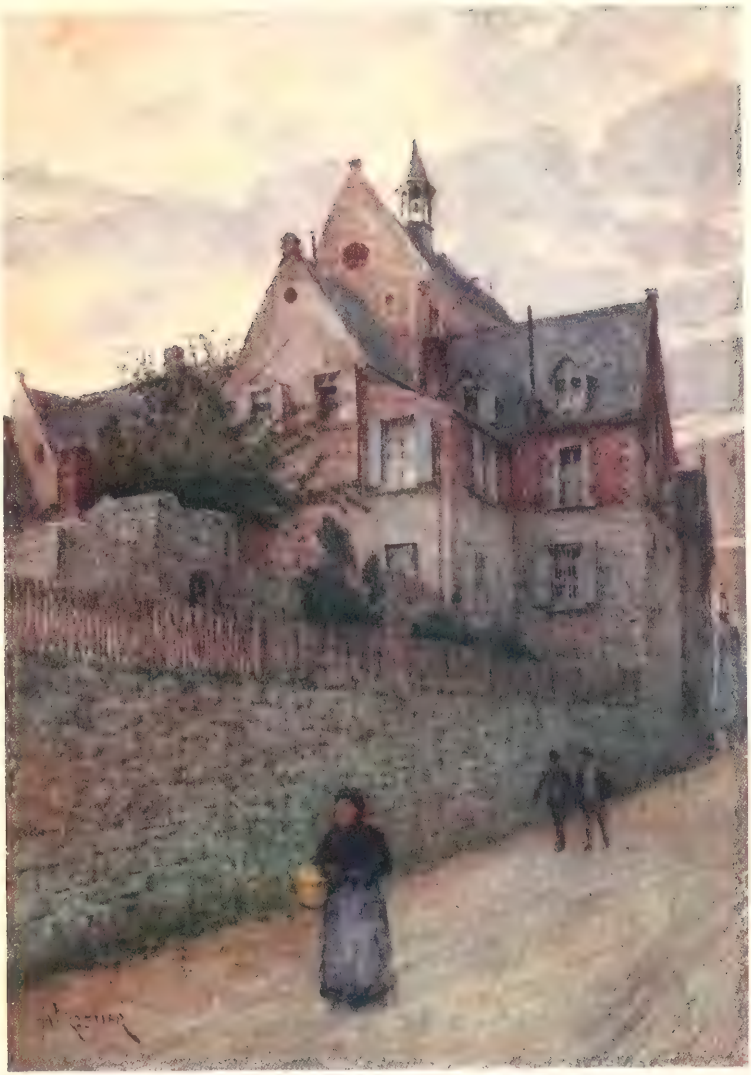
These, and other provisions of a similar nature, were the regulations set forth in the charter of Albert de Cuyck, the principles of which were afterwards embodied, from time to time, in other public Acts. It was, like the Joyeuse Entrée of Brabant, merely a declaration of rights, many of which had previously existed; but it gave these rights the sanction and authority of written law. Thenceforth the people began to assert themselves, and for many long years to come the history of Liége is a record of revolutions and intestine wars, the populace rebelling either against the bishops or the barons, and of feuds between the bishops and the barons, in which the populace took part, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. The people of the Principality, as soon as they had obtained the charter, refused to accept the jurisdiction of the

Peace Tribunal. Disputes were not settled, and one private war followed another.

The most trifling incident was often the cause of a sanguinary struggle; but perhaps the most foolish of all was that known as the *Guerre de la Vache de Ciney*.

A peasant of the province of Namur, named Jallet, went to a fair at Ciney, the chief town in the district of Condroz, in the forest of Ardennes, and there stole a cow belonging to one of the townsmen. He took the animal to Andenne, on the Meuse between Liége and Huy, where the Duke of Brabant and the Counts of Namur and Luxembourg, with many knights and ladies, had met for a tournament. One of the company was Jean de Halloy, the baillie of Condroz, and to him the owner of the cow, who had followed the thief, complained. The baillie promised pardon to Jallet on condition that he would take the cow back to Ciney. Jallet started, driving the wretched beast before him, but as soon as he entered the district of Condroz, the baillie had him arrested and hanged. On this Jean de Beaufort, feudal lord of Goesnes, the village in which Jallet had lived, assembled his friends, and proceeded to attack Condroz. Then the people of Huy flew to arms, and burned the

THE HOSPITAL, DINANT



château of Goesnes. Forthwith the Duke of Brabant, with the Counts of Flanders, Namur, and Luxembourg, joined in the fray, burned the town of Ciney, and threatened to devastate all the country round Liége. Next the people of Dinant came on the scene, invaded Namur and Luxembourg, burned many villages in the Ardennes, and slaughtered the villagers. For three years the war continued, until at last, when, it is said, no fewer than 20,000 people had been killed, and the whole country of the Ardennes, from Luxembourg to the Meuse, had been laid waste, the combatants came to their senses. It was resolved to end the struggle by arbitration. Philip the Hardy, King of France, agreed to act as peacemaker, and, being of opinion that both parties were equally to blame, decided that each must bear its own losses! History says nothing about what became of the cow.

THE DUKES OF BURGUNDY— DESTRUCTION OF LIÉGE BY CHARLES THE BOLD

CHAPTER III

THE DUKES OF BURGUNDY—DESTRUCTION OF LIÉGE BY CHARLES THE BOLD

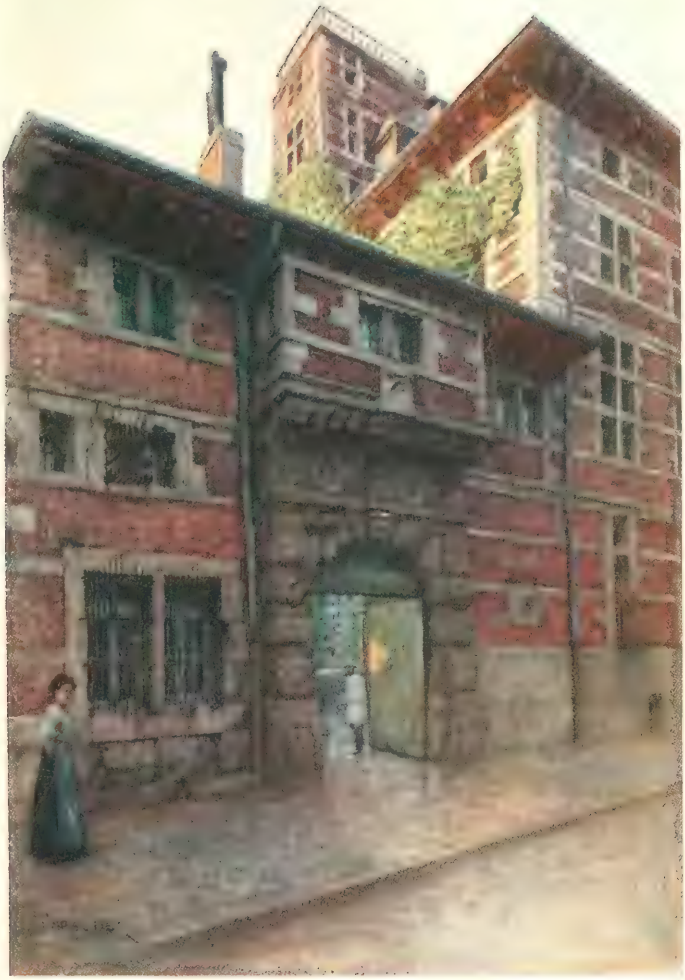
THE whole story of Liége and the Ardennes is full of episodes, like the war of the cow of Ciney. It would be easy to fill volumes with tales of adventures in the Valley of the Meuse, and under the walls of Liége — how castles were taken by strategy or by open assault; how ladies were carried off, and rescued by some daring feat of arms; how desperate encounters were fought out in the depths of the forest; how bandits roamed about, killing and robbing as they pleased; how almost the only place where a woman felt safe was a convent; how the peasants were oppressed; and how the common people of the towns lived in a state of chronic mutiny. All these things make up the story of how men and women lived in what is now one of the most peaceful regions in Europe. The glamour of chivalry does not conceal the fierce and revengeful spirit of every class. A history of

this part of Belgium, written as Sir Walter Scott wrote the history of Scotland, would be as entertaining as the 'Tales of a Grandfather.'

Nowhere could a richer field be found for the plots of historical fiction; and it is not strange that the author of 'Ivanhoe' should have chosen it as the scene of a romance. In 'Quentin Durward' history is, of course, subordinate to fiction. The murder of the Bishop of Liége is represented as taking place fifteen years before its real date. The description of the tragedy has no resemblance to what actually happened. The people of the Principality are made to speak Flemish instead of French or their native Walloon. But such dryasdust criticisms would be absurd, and the 'true king of the romantics' has reproduced, with inimitable skill, the spirit of the long, bloody drama in which Louis of France and Charles of Burgundy were the chief actors.

About the middle of the fifteenth century the House of Burgundy was at the summit of its power, and held sway over Flanders and Brabant, Hainaut, Namur, and Luxembourg. But the ecclesiastical Principality of Liége, though wedged in between Brabant, Luxembourg, and Namur, remained a separate state. Ever since the charter of Albert de

LA MAISON CURTIUS, LIÉGE



Cuyck the power of the commons had grown, and with it their determination to maintain their liberty and independence. Nor were the nobles more inclined to exchange the bishops for other rulers, especially if these were to be the Dukes of Burgundy. For the House of Burgundy had been detested in Liége since the winter of 1408, when Bishop John of Bavaria—*Jean sans Pitie*, as he was called by his subjects—had crushed a revolution, which his tyranny had produced, by calling to his aid the Duke of Burgundy and the Counts of Hainaut and Namur. On November 24, 1408, in a battle at Othée, near Tongres, the revolutionary army of Liége, 30,000 strong, had been defeated, and a massacre followed, the horrors of which had never been forgotten. The triumph of John of Bavaria and his merciless oppressions were due to the support which he received from the arms of Burgundy, and the result was that afterwards, during the struggle between Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, and France, the sympathies of Liége were always on the side of France.

In 1430, when Jean de Heinsberg was Bishop of Liége, the Burgundian Governor of Namur forbade the town of Dinant to repair its walls. The men of Liége marched towards Dinant, burning castles

and villages on their way. Another war seemed inevitable; but the Bishop, who had accompanied the army, apparently against his will, prevented this calamity by going on his knees to Philip and humbly asking pardon for the excesses which his vassals had committed. The people of Liége, however, indignant at this humiliation, became so turbulent that the Bishop was several times on the point of resigning. It appears, nevertheless, that his resignation was forced upon him by the Duke of Burgundy.

Heinsberg had promised a certain benefice to Louis de Bourbon, the Duke's nephew, but gave it to another claimant. Philip having sent an envoy to demand an explanation, the Bishop said: 'Let His Highness have patience. I intend him for a better benefice than that.' 'Which?' he was asked. 'The one I hold myself,' he replied. He soon repented of this rash promise, and was about to journey into France and ask protection from the King, when Philip invited him to The Hague. There he was treated with all honour till the day of his departure, when the Duke suddenly asked him if he intended to fulfil his promise about the bishopric. Heinsberg declared that he would certainly keep his word, but was, in spite of what

he had said, taken into a dark room, where he found a Franciscan and an executioner, clothed in black and armed with a naked sword, awaiting him. 'Most Reverend Seigneur,' said the Franciscan, 'you have twice broken faith with the Duke. Resign at once, or prepare to die.'

At these words, so the story goes, Bishop Heinsberg was so terrified that he signed his resignation on the spot in favour of Louis de Bourbon, who was not yet in Holy Orders, and was, indeed, a mere youth of eighteen, a student at the University of Louvain, whither his uncle had sent him to be educated. The Chapter of St. Lambert, by whom the bishops had always been chosen, complained; but the appointment was confirmed by the Holy See, and the whole spiritual and secular administration of the Principality passed into the hands of the young prelate.

This was a triumph for the House of Burgundy, which had long aimed at extending its influence to the Principality of Liége; but in a few years the clergy, the nobility, and the people united against the Duke's nephew, and combined to drive him from the management of their affairs. In order to protect themselves against Philip, who might interfere on behalf of his nephew, they appointed

as regent Mark of Baden, brother-in-law of the Emperor Frederick III., who came to Liége attended by a body of German troops.

The prospect of a war in the Belgian provinces, which would compel the Duke of Burgundy to withdraw a part of his army from France, was hailed with joy by Louis XI. He promised help, both in men and money, to the people of Liége, who forthwith assembled in arms. Charles the Bold, Philip's son, at that time known as the Comte de Charolais, was then fighting in France; but a force of Burgundians, sent by his father, had no difficulty in defeating the raw army of Liége, which, left to its own resources by the Germans, was cut to pieces on the field of Montenac in the autumn of 1465. Louis XI., instead of coming to the assistance of the Liégeois, sent a letter advising them to make peace with Philip before the redoubtable Comte de Charolais made his appearance in their territory; and a convention was signed which laid the Liégeois at the feet of the Duke of Burgundy, who became Regent of the Principality. Peace was duly proclaimed at the Perron in the market-place of Liége. But the ruling party at Dinant were so foolhardy as to declare war against Namur. On this Charles the Bold besieged Dinant

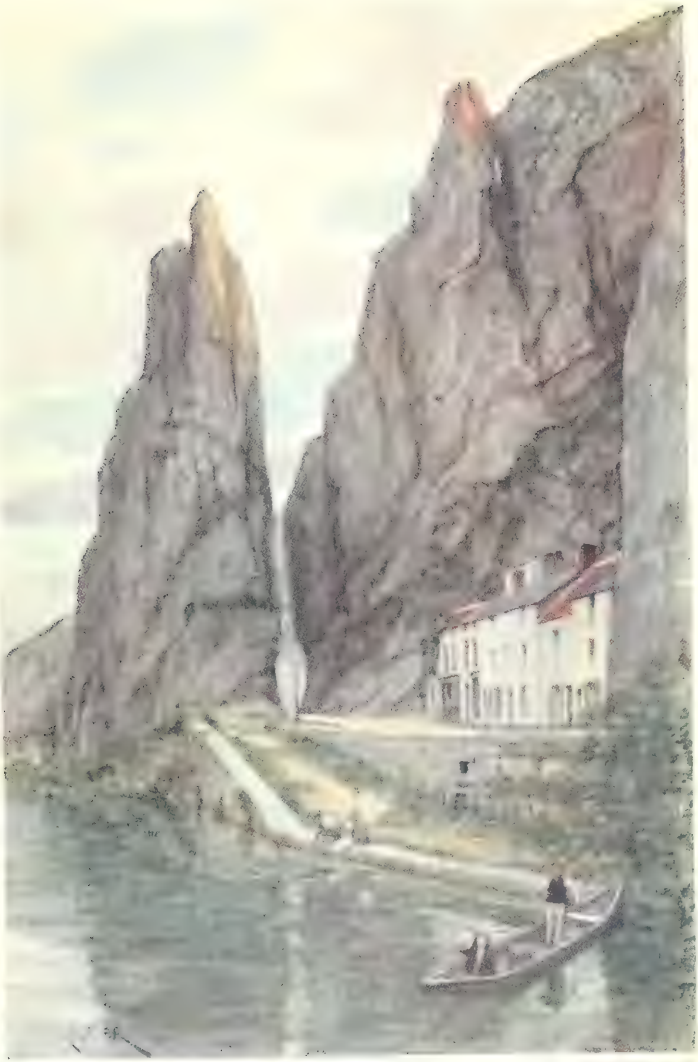
Messengers sent from the Burgundian camp with a summons to surrender were murdered by the townsmen, who in a short time saw their walls breached by heavy guns brought from the arsenals of Brabant. Then they offered to negotiate for a capitulation, but the offer was refused. Dinant was taken, sacked, and burned. The Hôtel de Ville was blown up by an explosion of gunpowder. The cathedral was almost entirely destroyed. A number of wealthy citizens who had been made prisoners and confined in a building adjoining the cathedral were burned alive. Eight hundred persons, tied together in pairs, were thrown into the Meuse and drowned. The work of vengeance was not finished until every house had been demolished; for Charles of Burgundy had declared that a day would come when travellers, passing up the Valley of the Meuse, would ask where it was that Dinant had once stood.

Philip the Good died at Bruges in June, 1467, and Charles the Bold became Duke of Burgundy. The new reign began with troubles in Flanders and Brabant, and these had scarcely been overcome when there was a fresh rising at Liége, so dissatisfied were the people with the terms of peace, which, arranged after the terrible Battle of

Montenac, left them subject to the House of Burgundy. Frenchmen, sent by the King on the pretext of mediating between Louis de Bourbon and his vassals, encouraged the popular discontent, which rose to such a height that the town of Huy, where the Bishop lived, was attacked and plundered. The Bishop fled to Namur, but some of his servants and some partisans of Burgundy were slain. Charles, exasperated beyond all bounds, marched against Liége. On his arrival, 300 of the burghers came forth, imploring mercy and offering him the keys of the town. He spared their lives, but only on the condition that he was to enter the town and there dictate his own terms. This condition was accepted, and Charles rode in. The Bishop of Liége and Cardinal La Balue, the Ambassador of Louis XI., were with him. On one side of the street stood the burghers, and on the other the priests, all as penitents, with heads uncovered and torches in their hands. Charles dismounted at the Bishop's palace, where, a few days later, in the presence of a vast assemblage of people, he pronounced sentence on the town and Principality of Liége.

Most of the privileges which had been granted from time to time since the charter of Albert de Cuyck were abolished. An appeal from the civil

LE ROCHER BAYARD, DINANT



judges to the Bishop and his council was established. The seat of the bishopric was removed from Liége, and it was ordained that the spiritual court was to sit at Maestricht, Louvain, or Namur. The Bishop was forbidden to levy taxes on produce carried up or down the Meuse without leave from the Duke of Brabant, and the Counts of Hainaut and Namur. It was decreed that the people of the Principality must never take arms against Burgundy, go to war, or make alliances without the Duke's permission. The walls and gates of Liége, and of all other towns in the Principality, were to be destroyed; the manufacture of arms was forbidden; the Perron was to be removed, and the Duke was to do with it as he pleased.

These articles, and many more, all of them framed for the purpose of curbing the spirit of the Liégeois, were embodied in the deed which was read aloud in the Bishop's palace on November 26, 1467. The Bishop and all the notables having sworn to obey it, Charles told them that if they kept true to their oath he, in return, would protect them. The sentence which was thus pronounced was rigorously executed. Many of the popular faction fled to France; others took refuge among the Ardennes; some were executed. The Perron

was carried away to Bruges, and there engraved with an inscription full of insults to the people of Liége; the walls of the town were thrown down; spies went about the country districts watching the villagers and gathering information. So universal was the feeling of suspicion and fear, and so heavy were the taxes levied on the wealthy, that many families abandoned all their possessions and went into exile.

These doings had been watched at Rome; and presently a papal legate, the Bishop of Tricaria, came to Liége, and advised Louis de Bourbon to resist the violence of the Duke's agents, and recall by degrees those who had fled or been banished from the country. But the youthful Bishop preferred to live at Brussels, where the brilliant and luxurious life of the Burgundian Court was in full swing. He took such delight in the fêtes for which the gay capital of Brabant was famous that he actually attempted to reproduce them in his own desolate Principality, and on one occasion came sailing up the Meuse from Maestricht in a barge painted with all the colours of the rainbow, and made his appearance before the ruined walls of Liége surrounded by musicians and buffoons.

Meanwhile, in the dark recesses of the Ardennes

a band of the exiles had been wandering about, sleeping on the bare ground in the open air, clothed in rags, starving, and ready for mischief. These men, under the leadership of Jean de Ville, hearing that Liége was unguarded, and that war was likely to break out once more between Burgundy and France, marched from the forest to Liége, and complained to the Pope's legate. He went to the Bishop, who was then at Maestricht, and laid before him the miserable condition of the country. The Bishop promised that he would return to Liége; but Charles the Bold, from whom nothing was hid, wrote and told him that, as soon as he had settled his affairs with the King of France, he was coming to the Principality to punish these new rebels against his authority. On this the Bishop, instead of going to Liége, went with the legate to Tongres.

This desertion drove Jean de Ville and his followers to despair. They made a night march to Tongres, surprised the Bishop's guards, some of whom they killed, and persuaded, or, rather, compelled, Louis and the Pope's legate to come with them to Liége. The war on which the insurgents counted when they thus captured the Bishop did not break out. On the contrary, negotiations had commenced, and ambassadors from France were

discussing terms of peace with Charles at the very time of the raid on Tongres.

The summer of 1468 was a time of splendour at the Court of Burgundy. On June 25 Margaret of York, attended by a brilliant company of English lords and ladies, sailed into the harbour of Sluis, where she was met by Charles the Bold. A week later they journeyed by the canal to the ancient town of Damme, where their marriage was celebrated at five o'clock on the morning of July 3. On that same day they entered Bruges in state, followed by a train of sixty ladies of the greatest families of England and Burgundy, and surrounded by nobles and princes who wore the Order of the Golden Fleece. The famous tournament of the Tree of Gold was held, after the marriage feast, in the market-place, and the revels continued for eight days longer. All was bright and gay in Flanders ; but far away among the Ardennes dark clouds were gathering over the Valley of the Meuse.

In the beginning of October the headquarters of the Burgundian army were at Peronne on the Somme. Louis XI. went thither with only a small escort, and sought an interview with Charles. Whatever his motive may have been for putting himself in the power of his rival, he had soon good

reason to repent of his rashness. A party of Burgundians from Liége arrived at Peronne, accused the rebels of gross cruelty to the Bishop and to the Duke's friends, and asserted that some Frenchmen had taken part in the affair at Tongres. Charles, on hearing their statements, burst into one of his fits of uncontrollable anger. 'I know,' he cried, 'who is at the bottom of all this,' and forthwith locked up the King of France in the citadel of Peronne. After three days, during which Louis went in fear of his life, and Charles meditated all sorts of vengeance, the King was set free, and swore a solemn oath that he would assist Charles to punish the Liégeois.

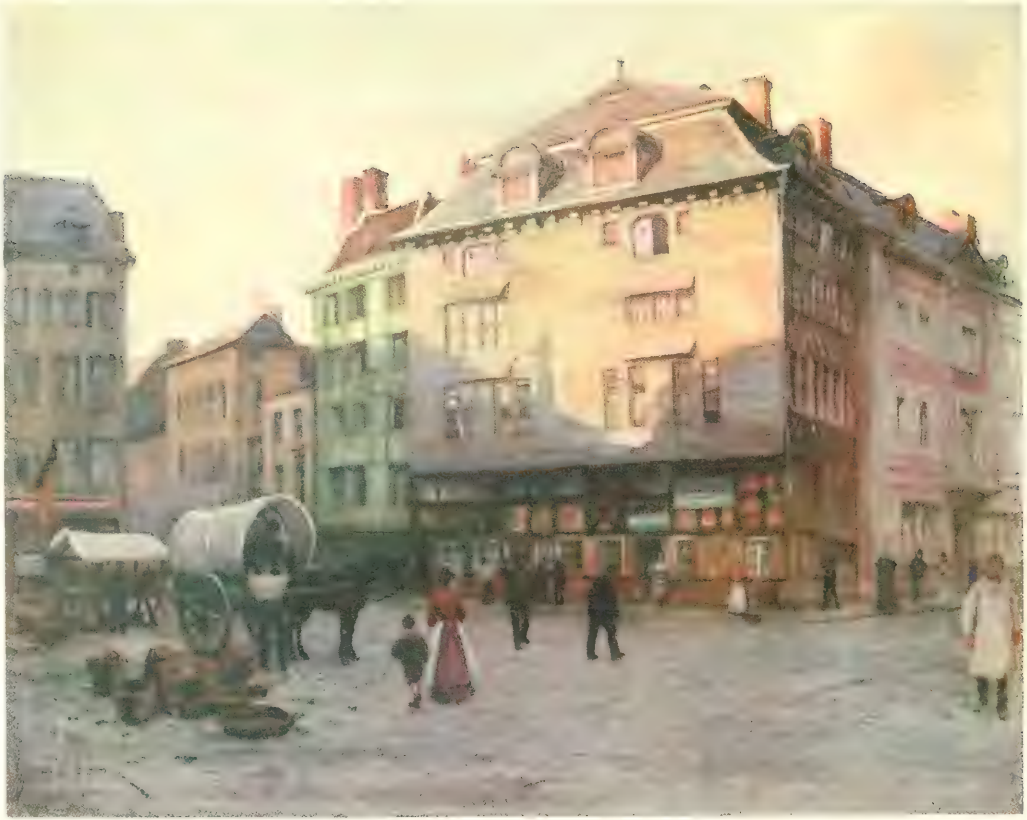
Then the allied forces of France and Burgundy marched into the Principality. When they approached Liége the Bishop and the papal legate met them, and endeavoured to make terms for the people, throwing themselves on their knees before Charles, and beseeching him not to punish the innocent and the guilty alike. The Bishop, it was pointed out, had pardoned the affront which he had received; but the Duke forbade them to speak of pardon. He was master, he said, of the lives and property of these incorrigible rebels, and he would do with them as he pleased. After this

there was nothing more to be said. The doom of Liége had been spoken.

A sally, made during the night by Jean de Ville and his men, though it threw the Burgundian outposts into confusion, had no effect but to increase the Duke's anger; and on Sunday, October 30, he entered the town at the head of his army, passing over the ruins of the old walls. There was no resistance. The streets were empty. The wealthier inhabitants, and all who had made themselves prominent in the recent disturbances, had fled to the Ardennes with their families, taking away as many of their possessions as they could carry. A great multitude of poor people, women, children, and old men, had concealed themselves in the cellars of their houses. Charles and the King rode through a deserted town till they came to the Hôtel de Ville. Here the Duke waved his sword on high, and shouted, 'Vive Bourgoyne!' The King of France drew his, and shouted likewise, 'Vive Bourgoyne!' and at this signal 40,000 soldiers were let loose.

The people were dragged from their places of concealment and slain. Many who escaped immediate death ran to the churches for shelter. The priests, with crucifixes in their hands, came to the

OLD HOUSE OF THE QUAI DE LA GOFFE,
LIÉGE



doors and implored the soldiers not to enter. They were cut down, and those whom they had tried to protect were killed, even on the steps of the altars. Old men and children were trampled underfoot. Young girls were outraged before their mothers' eyes, or put to death, shrieking and imploring mercy. Churches, convents, private houses were alike pillaged. Tombs were broken open in the search for plunder, and the bones of the dead were thrown out. Those who were suspected of possessing valuables were tortured to make them confess where their treasures were hidden. As the day went on every street in Liége ran with blood like a slaughter-house, till at last the soldiers grew tired of killing their victims one by one, and, tying them together in bundles of a dozen or more persons, threw them into the Meuse, where men and women, old and young, perished in one struggling mass. It is said that nearly 50,000 died, most of them in the town or by drowning in the river, but many from cold and famine among the Ardennes.

The horrors of the sacking of Dinant had been surpassed. Charles, however, was not yet satisfied. His real wish was to wipe Liége from the face of the earth—to destroy it utterly; but before doing

so, he made a pretence of consulting Louis of France. The King, who understood him thoroughly, replied: 'Opposite my father's bedroom there was a tree, in which some troublesome birds had built their nest, and made such a noise that he could not sleep. He destroyed the nest three times, but they always returned. At last, on the advice of a friend, he cut down the tree, and after that he was able to repose in peace.'

Charles took this hint as it was meant, and gave orders that Liége was to be set on fire, and every building of stone, except the churches and the houses of the clergy, pulled down. These orders were carried out to the letter. The flames consumed row after row of houses, and any edifice not made of wood was undermined by the pickaxes of an army of workmen who laboured for seven weeks, till at last nothing remained of Liége but churches and the dwellings of the priests standing forlorn amidst a heap of smoking ruins. While the work of destruction was in progress Charles embarked for Maestricht, sent the Pope's legate back to Rome with the news of what had befallen the bishopric of Liége, and, having ravaged all the country for miles around, departed for his own dominions.

The years passed on, and at last there came a

time when the voice which shouted 'Vive Bourgoyne!' in Liége was silent, the sword fallen from the hand which had waved it as a signal for the massacre, and the proud head of the conqueror brought very low. On Tuesday, January 7, 1477, two days after the fight at Nancy, in which Duke René of Lorraine had defeated the Burgundian army, a young page, Jean Baptiste Colonna, son of a noble Roman house, was guiding a party who were searching for the body of Charles the Bold to where he thought he had seen his master fall during the battle. Not far from the town, near the chapel of St. Jean de l'Atre, they found a heap of dead men lying naked among snow and ice and frozen blood in the bed of a small stream. One of the searchers, a poor washerwoman who had served in the Duke's household, saw a ring which she recognized on a finger of one of the corpses, and exclaimed: 'Ah! Mon Prince!' When they raised the head from the ice to which it was frozen the skin of one cheek peeled off. Wolves or dogs had been gnawing the other. A stroke from some battle-axe had split the head down to the chin. But when the blood had been washed from the disfigured face it was known, beyond all doubt, for that of Charles the Bold.

They buried him before the altar of St. Sebastian in the Church of St. George at Nancy, where the body of the great warrior remained till 1550, when, in the reign of Charles V., it was carried into Flanders, and laid beside that of his daughter Marie in the choir of Notre Dame at Bruges.

THE WILD BOAR OF ARDENNES

CHAPTER IV

THE WILD BOAR OF ARDENNES

Though the churches and the houses of the clergy had been left standing, in accordance with the orders given by Charles the Bold in 1468, the town of Liége was ruined. After a time, however, those who had escaped with their lives began to return, and by degrees a new Liége arose. The Principality also recovered to some extent; but its prestige was so much diminished in the eyes of Europe that an alliance with the bishops was no longer, as of old, an object of ambition to other states.

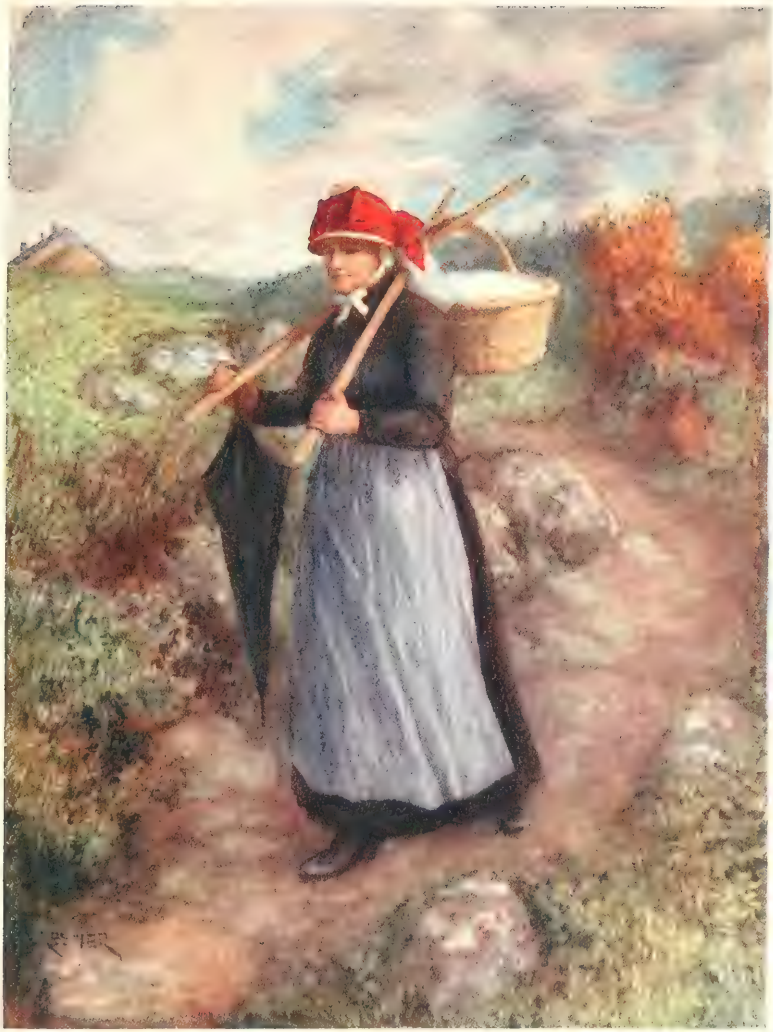
On the death of Charles the Bold Louis de Bourbon, who was still Bishop, made up his mind to devote himself in future to the government of his Principality. As uncle of the young Duchess Marie, who was the only daughter of Charles by his second wife, Isabelle de Bourbon, he had sufficient influence at the Court of Burgundy to obtain important concessions in favour of Liége. A yearly tribute of 30,000 florins, which the late Duke had

exacted, was remitted, and the Liégeois were promised the restoration of their ancient charters and privileges. The Perron, to the possession of which the people attached great importance, was sent back from Bruges, and the townsmen showed their gratitude to the Bishop by voting him a substantial sum of money.

When he came to Liége, among the first to greet him was William de la Marck, head of the ancient house of Arenberg. Two of his ancestors had been Bishops of Liége, and the family was one of the greatest in the Principality. This William de la Marck had been a warrior from his youth. He was one of the handsomest men of his time, but to make himself an object of fear to his enemies he wore a long shaggy beard, and imitated the ferocious manners of the brigands who had from time immemorial haunted the most inaccessible part of the Ardennes. On his coat of arms there was the head of a wild boar, and, either for that reason or because of his fierce character, he was nicknamed the Wild Boar of Ardennes.

After the destruction of Liége Louis XI., anxious to raise fresh troubles in the Principality in order to embarrass Charles of Burgundy and the Bishop, had employed as his agent de la Marck,

A PEASANT WOMAN OF THE ARDENNES



who, for the purpose of picking a quarrel with the Bishop, caused one of the vicars, against whom he had no cause of complaint, to be murdered in cold blood. His favourite haunt was the Castle of Aigremont, a fortalice perched on a hill above the left bank of the Meuse, to the west of Liége. This place the Bishop destroyed. Thereupon de la Marck, who let it be understood that he was acting in concert with the King of France, and by this means obtained a numerous following among the outlaws whom Charles of Burgundy had banished, declared open war against both Louis de Bourbon and the Duke.

But when the Bishop returned to Liége, on the death of Charles and the accession of the Duchess Marie, de la Marck hastened to make peace. The Bishop granted him a pardon, made him Captain of the Guard and Governor of Franchimont, rebuilt the Castle of Aigremont, and loaded him with favours. But it was soon apparent that the Wild Boar was untamed. He set the rules of the Church at defiance, refused to go to Mass or confession, insisted on eating what he pleased in Lent, ruled all who were under his authority with a rod of iron, made himself universally hated by the nobles, and at last, taking offence at the remonstrances of the

Bishop, resigned his appointments, and left the Court. It having been discovered that he was in correspondence with Louis XI., who was plotting the annexation of the Principality, a sentence of banishment was pronounced against him as a traitor. He retired into the Ardennes, where, assisted by gifts of arms and gold from France, he gathered a strong band of French, German, and Swiss adventurers.

Suddenly, in August, 1482, news came to Liége that the Wild Boar was on the march at the head of 4,000 horse and foot. The Bishop went forth to give him battle on the slopes of the Chartreuse, on the right bank of the river opposite the town. De la Marck, hearing from his spies that the Bishop was coming on in front of his main body, and attended only by a feeble escort, lay in wait for him at a difficult part of the ascent. The surprise was complete, and the escort was cut to pieces. The Bishop, alone in the hands of his enemy, cried out: 'Grâce! Grâce! Seigneur d'Arenberg, je suis votre prisonnier!' But one of de la Marck's followers struck him on the face. De la Marck himself drew his sword, and wounded him in the neck, and, turning to his men, told them to make an end of it. In an instant the Bishop fell from

his horse a dead man. They stripped his body, and left it lying in the mud for hours ; and it was with difficulty that the clergy obtained permission to bury him with the honours due to his station.*

De la Marck, now master of the situation, called together the clergy of the diocese, and pressed them to choose a new Bishop, suggesting his own son, Jean d'Arenberg, a young man who was not yet a priest, as the most suitable person. Some of the canons, with whom the election lay, left Liége to escape voting. Those who remained were terrified into obedience, and the Wild Boar's son was declared Bishop. De la Marck, at the same time, appointed himself Governor of the Principality.

The murder of the Bishop, and the election of the murderer's son to succeed him, led to new commotions. A meeting of the canons who had fled from Liége, and their brethren who had been coerced into voting, was held at Namur. In that town, out of the Wild Boar's 'sphere of influence, having declared the election of Jean d'Arenberg null and void, they proceeded to vote again. On this occasion they were divided into two parties. Some supported Jacques de le Roy, the Count of

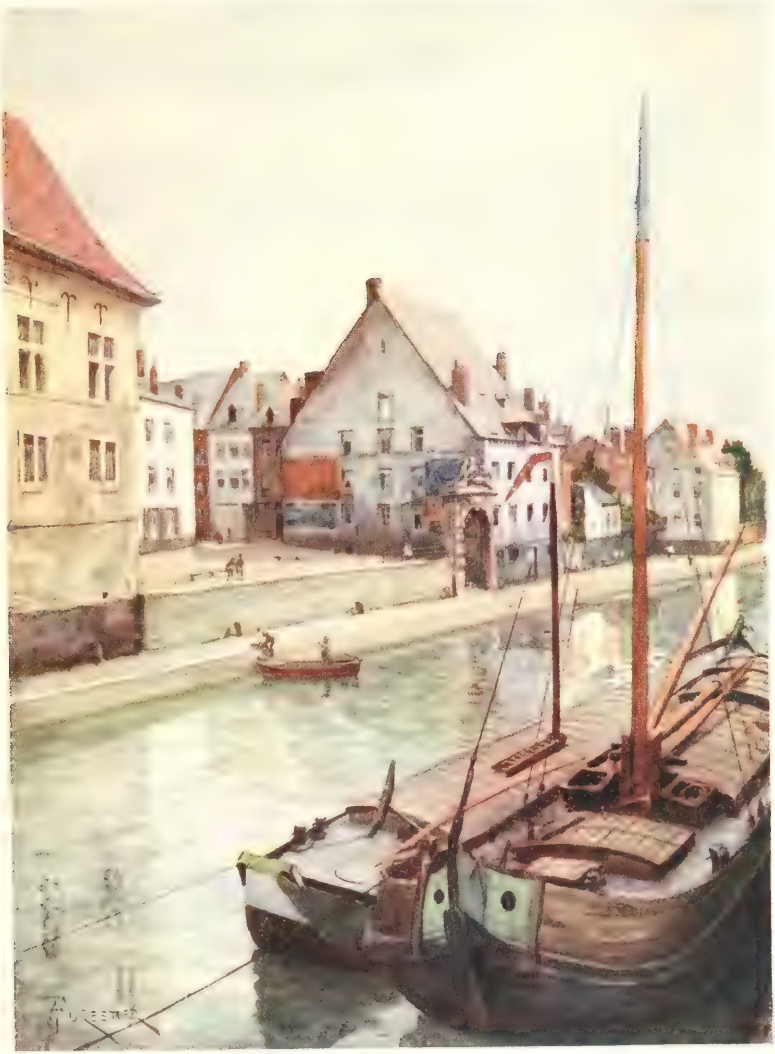
* Bishop Louis de Bourbon was only forty-five at the date of the murder.

Chimay's brother, while others were in favour of Jean de Horne, a great noble who had been made prisoner at the Chartreuse, but had afterwards escaped.

There were thus three Bishops-Elect, and another civil war broke out. The Archduke Maximilian* sent an army from Brabant into the Principality, under Philip of Clèves, to avenge the death of Louis de Bourbon. De la Marck laid waste the lands of Jean de Horne, seized Tongres and other towns, and marched, at the head of 16,000 Liégeois and a number of mercenaries, against Philip of Clèves. But his troops were no match for the trained veterans of Brabant. The mercenaries were driven back upon the Liégeois, who broke and ran. This defeat did not quell the spirit of de la Marck; but Louis XI., on whom he relied, died next year, and the Pope declared in favour of Jean de Horne. De la Marck then saw that his wisest course was to make peace, and in June, 1484, a convention was signed at St. Trond, the terms of which show that the Boar of the Ardennes was no mere bandit chief,

* The Duchess Marie of Burgundy, who married the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, afterwards Emperor, had died at Bruges in March, 1482; and Maximilian then became Regent of the Austrian Netherlands during the minority of his children.

THE RIVER SAMBRE SEEN FROM THE PONT DE SAMBRE, NAMUR



but an astute diplomatist, and a man of great influence in the Principality. An indemnity of 30,000 livres was to be paid him by the town of Liége, in security for which an assignment was made in his favour of the lands of Franchimont and the Duchy of Bouillon. If he should be attacked by any who felt aggrieved by his recent proceedings, the Bishop was to help him at all costs. Excesses committed by either side were to be pardoned, and those whose property had been damaged were to have no claim for compensation.

When Jean de Horne, now duly accepted as Bishop, made his state entry into Liége de la Marck rode beside him, and the two soon became inseparable. They usually dined together at the Bishop's table. They gave each other presents. If there was a fête, they attended it in company. They are said to have even slept in the same bed, at that time a favourite sign of friendship among the great. But, though it seemed as if they were bent on setting the people an example of mutual forgiveness and brotherly love, there were some who shook their heads, and hinted that the friendships of great men who have been estranged are seldom sincere.

Next year there was a fête at St. Trond in honour of the Bishop of Liége, at which all the nobles of

the Principality, with their wives and daughters, had assembled. De la Marck, of course, was there. Feasting and dancing went on till late in the afternoon, when the Bishop's brothers, Jacques de Horne and Fréderic de Montigny, called for their horses, saying they must start for Louvain. The Bishop proposed to de la Marck that they should ride part of the way in company, and to this he agreed. So the Bishop, his two brothers, and de la Marck rode together till they reached a level plain, where de Montigny challenged de la Marck to race him to a wood which was some distance before them. They started, and left the others behind. De la Marck, who was mounted on a very swift horse, was soon in front, and galloped on till he reached the wood. The moment he drew rein a band of soldiers, who had been lying in ambush, rushed out and surrounded him. Then de Montigny rode up and said: 'You are my prisoner.' De la Marck, who was not armed, asked what he meant, on which de Montigny produced an order for his arrest signed by the Archduke Maximilian, and told him they must now go to Maestricht. 'Then,' said de la Marck at once, 'it is to my death.'

They reached Maestricht in the evening, and soon

de la Marck was told that he had only a few hours to live. During the night he was visited by the Prior of the Dominicans, from whom, having made confession, he received absolution. Early next morning they brought him to the scaffold in the market-place. A prodigious crowd had gathered round it, and in a window close at hand, openly rejoicing at the scene, was the Bishop of Liége. De la Marck called to him in a loud voice, reproaching him for his treachery, and uttered a solemn warning that the Wild Boar's head, then about to fall, would 'bleed for many a day.' He asked the nearest of the spectators to carry his last farewells to his wife and children. To his brothers and friends he left the work of avenging his death. He took off his cloak himself, and threw it to the crowd. Then, lifting his long beard so that it covered his face, he bent down, and the executioner struck off his head with one blow.

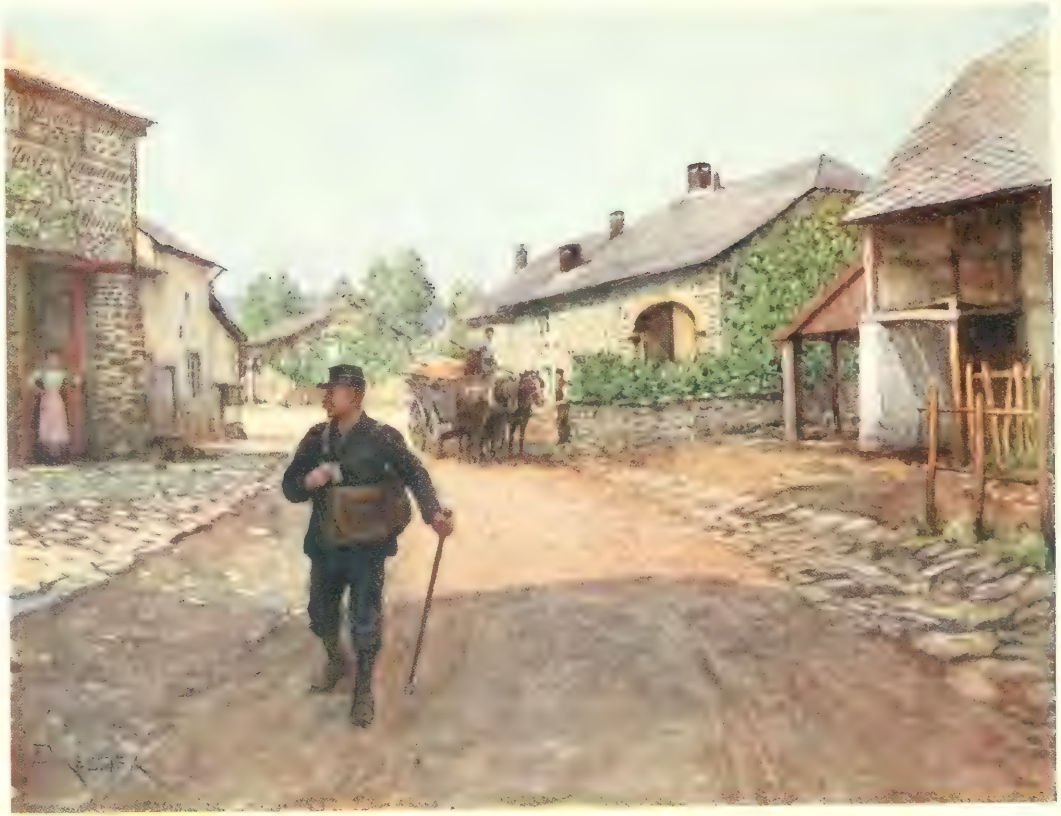
The Archduke Maximilian had ordered the arrest of de la Marck on the ground that he was engaged in some fresh plot with France; but the conduct of the Bishop and his brothers was loudly condemned even in that age of perfidy. The family of de la Marck swore vengeance, and the Principality of Liége was once more bathed in blood.

Calling to his aid the common people, who had always loved the Wild Boar, and assisted behind the scenes by the King of France, who wished to excite the Liégeois against the Archduke Maximilian, Everard de la Marck, William's brother, made war against Jean de Horne. A sanguinary struggle, in which no mercy was shown on either side, went on for seven years, but at last the Bishop and his friends made up their minds to sue for pardon.

A conference was agreed to, which took place on a meadow near Haccourt, on the Meuse between Liége and Maestricht. On the appointed day the Bishop-Prince, attended by his nobles, but himself unarmed, met the brother of the man whom he had so treacherously ensnared. Dismounting from his horse, he approached Everard de la Marck, and said: 'I ask you to pardon me for the death of your brother William.'

Everard looked on him coldly, and said nothing, whereupon the Bishop burst into tears, and sobbed: 'Seigneur Everard, pardon me. Pardon me, I implore you by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ!' Then Everard, weeping also, answered: 'You ask pardon for the death of my brother in the name of God, who died for us all? Well, I

LA GLEIZE, A VILLAGE IN THE ARDENNES



pardon you.' So saying, he gave his hand to the Bishop, and they swore to live at peace with each other.

This strange reconciliation, which took place in 1492, was soon confirmed by the marriage of the Bishop's niece to Everard de la Marck's son, and thereafter there were no more feuds between the families of de Horne and Arenberg.

Three years later, in 1495, the Diet of Worms established the Imperial Chamber, and put an end to the system of private wars.

ÉRARD DE LA MARCK—THE PRINCIPALITY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER V

ÉRARD DE LA MARCK—THE PRINCIPALITY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

JEAN DE HORNE was Bishop of Liége for twenty-three years, during which the diocese was seldom free from party warfare. At the time of his death, in 1506, the family of Arenberg was so strong and popular that the Chapter of St. Lambert chose Érard de la Marck, the Wild Boar's nephew, as Bishop.* He came to the episcopal throne resolved to end the strife of factions and the family feuds which had been the sources of such misery. He forbade his subjects, under pain of banishment, to rake up the old causes of dispute. He declined to hear those who came to him bearing tales against their neighbours. He chose the officers of his Court without enquiring into their political opinions, and let it be seen that, so long as the law was

* Érard's father was Robert, Prince of Sedan, Count of Arenberg, la Marck, and Cleves, and brother of William de la Marck, the Boar of Ardennes.

obeyed and public order maintained, no one was to be called in question for anything which might have happened in the past.

His foreign policy was equally wise. The Principality of Liége lay between two mighty neighbours, and at first the Bishop's aim was to remain neutral in any disputes which might arise between the Emperor and the King of France. But when, on the death of Maximilian, Charles V. and Francis I. were rivals for the imperial crown, he went to the Diet at Frankfort, and supported the claims of Charles. From that time the Principality, though independent of the rest of Belgium, which formed part of the dominions of Charles V., was in as close relations with the German Empire as the electorate of Cologne and other ecclesiastical fiefs.* The bishops, chosen by the Chapter of Liége, and confirmed by the Pope, were invested by the Emperor with the secular power, and belonged to the Westphalian circle of the German confederation.

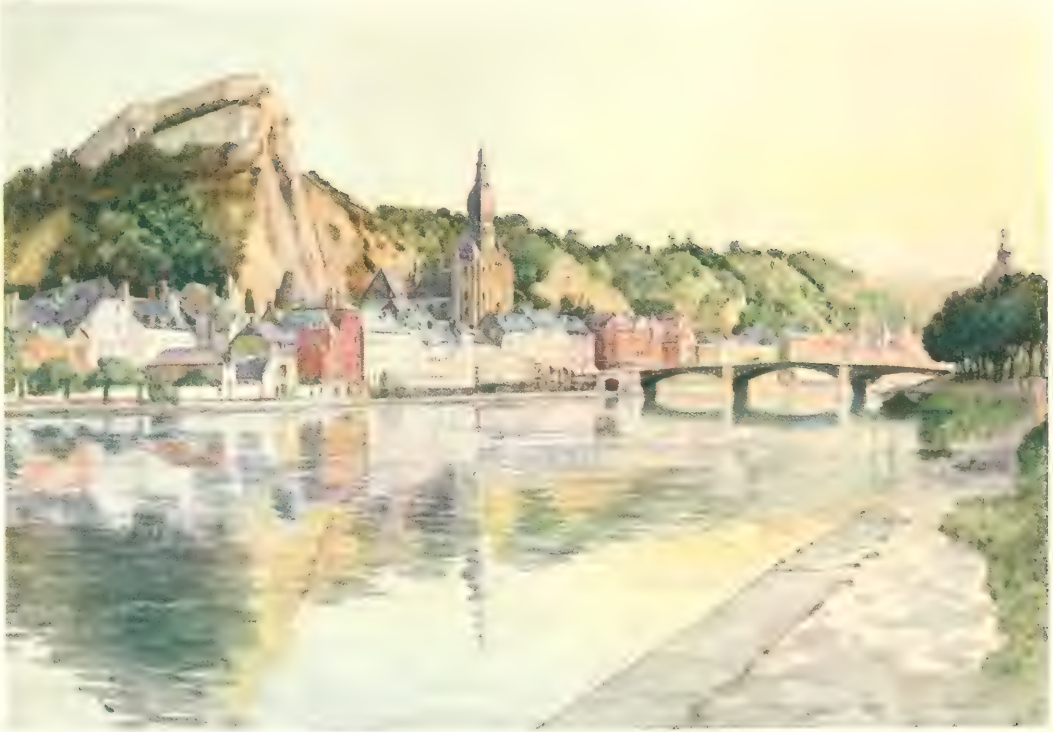
* It may be convenient to remind some readers that Charles V.'s father was Philip, son of Maximilian and the Duchess Marie, daughter of Charles the Bold, and that his mother was Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand of Spain. On the death of Philip he succeeded to the Netherlands, on the death of Ferdinand to Spain, and on the death of Maximilian the Electors of Germany made him Emperor.

In the strong hands of Bishop Érard the Principality had one of its rare intervals of peace. He found the city of Liége in debt, and the public service disordered by want of money. Many plans for raising funds were laid before him. He examined them all, and then said to his council: 'If you will leave everything to me for four years, I promise to meet all your debts, and put your finances in order without oppressing anyone, and without imposing new taxes.' This offer was accepted, and, so great was his talent for business, in two years Liége was free from all liabilities. During his reign almost every trace of the destruction wrought by Charles the Bold disappeared. The citadel of Dinant was restored. Huy and other places rose from their ashes, and the Bishops' Palace, which stands in the Place St. Lambert at Liége (the *Palais de Justice* of to-day), was built. He died in 1538, having kept the turbulent community of Liége quiet for thirty years.

When the religious troubles of the sixteenth century first began the reformed doctrines made rapid progress, and the persecutors were busy in Hainaut, Artois, and other Walloon districts in the south-west of Belgium and along the French border. Almost the whole population of Tournai in Hain-

aut was Calvinist. But the Principality of Liége, governed by the bishop-princes, and independent of Spain, did not suffer like the rest of the Netherlands during the struggle. Nevertheless, before the death of Érard de la Marck the spirit of revolt against the Church of Rome had touched the valley of the Meuse; and, in 1532, Jean Camolet, a Carmelite father, came to Liége empowered by the Pope to conduct an inquisition. The claim of the Holy See to interfere with civil government was known to the people; and the magistrates published a declaration that the judges of the land were the only persons who had the right to deal with offences of any kind committed by the citizens. The Bishop told them that the inquisitor was sent by the Pope only to make enquiry into the beliefs of those who were suspected of heresy, not to interfere with the ordinary courts of law, and that there was no intention of setting up the Spanish Inquisition in the diocese. But the magistrates replied: 'We have our own laws. Our own judges can deal with civil and criminal cases. In matters of religion our own ecclesiastical courts are the only competent tribunals, and we will not permit any infringement of our ancient privileges.' Érard de la Marck, who was far too wise a man to risk the

GENERAL VIEW OF DINANT



dangers of a revolution, took upon himself the responsibility of enquiry into cases of heresy, and thus saved the Principality from civil war.

But, at a later period, when the Netherlands were in revolt from end to end, and William of Orange was engaged in his stupendous contest with Philip II., Gérard de Groisbeck, who was Bishop from 1565 to 1580, found himself in a position of peculiar difficulty. The Principality was at the mercy of both parties. The reformers pillaged the abbeys of Hastière and St. Hubert, and held a great meeting at St. Trond, where the famous battle-cry of 'Vivent les Gueux!' was shouted, and defiance hurled at Philip and at Rome by a tumultuous assemblage under the leadership of Brederode. The Prince of Orange himself, driven out of Brabant, demanded a free passage for his army, and endeavoured to obtain possession of Liége. In this he failed, but a garrison of Spanish troops was sent to occupy the town, and the Bishop had to risk the enmity of Alva by refusing to admit them. At the Pacification of Ghent, in 1576, the Principality of Liége was invited to join the United Provinces of the Netherlands; but the people were, like the Walloons in the other parts of Belgium, intensely Catholic, and the invitation was refused. Bishop

de Groisbeck was resolved to maintain the neutrality of his domains. Liége, he announced with consent of the three estates, was to remain a neutral State, and take no part in the quarrels of its neighbours. By this means he hoped to protect it from the ravages of war, and, on the whole, he succeeded, though there was fighting from time to time in the Valley of the Meuse, and the Siege of Maestricht, with all the horrors which followed the capture of that town, took place almost at his own door. His ideas of neutrality, however, may be gathered from the fact that he sent 4,000 miners from his coal-mines to help the besiegers of Maestricht. But the Walloons were, at that time, Catholic beyond any other of the Belgian races, and if the 'cry of agony which was distinctly heard at the distance of a league,' which arose from the heroic defenders as the Spaniards rushed in, could have reached Liége, it probably would not have touched the hearts of many among the Liégeois. At all events, the Bishop's policy was rewarded by a comparatively tranquil reign, disturbed only by a series of petty squabbles with the magistrates of Liége, who claimed the right of holding the keys of the town, a right which the Bishop maintained belonged to him.

Gérard de Groisbeck died in 1580. There had often been a question whether it would not be better for the people of Liége if the bishops were chosen without regard to their family connections. Men of high position, it was said, born in palaces, and accustomed from their birth to flattery and the deference paid to social rank, were more likely to be overbearing and ambitious than persons of humbler station. On the other hand, it was argued that a small, turbulent State, surrounded by powerful neighbours, required a ruler who could both secure useful alliances against foreign aggressors, and command the respect and obedience of his own subjects. De Groisbeck had always thought that the Bishop of Liége should be chosen from some royal family; and on his death-bed he recommended as his successor Prince Ernest of Bavaria, grandson of the Emperor Ferdinand.

When the time came for the election of a new bishop the States-General of the United Netherlands, and the Courts of Spain and France, each brought forward a candidate, but the Chapter of Liége, wishing to remain neutral between these rival interests, decided in favour of Prince Ernest of Bavaria.

A description of his coming to Liége may give

some idea of the ceremonies which attended the installation of the bishop-princes. On June 15, the day of his arrival, the magistrates went to meet him on the outskirts of the town, and placed in his hands a copy of the oath which his predecessors had always sworn: that he would maintain all the privileges of the townsmen and their municipal laws, and would never encroach on their liberties, nor allow them to be encroached on by others. The Prince having taken this oath, the keys of the town were presented to him. He returned them to the burgomasters with the words: 'Hitherto you have guarded them faithfully, and I leave them in your hands.' Then the Bishop's horse was led forward to the gate, but as he drew near one of the company of crossbow-men stepped forward and closed it. The attendants shouted, 'Open for the Prince!' but the gate remained closed till a town servant had three times demanded in name of the burgomasters that it should be opened, when this quaint formality came to an end, and the Prince rode under the archway. Within the walls he was met by the guild of crossbow-men, to whom he promised the preservation of all their rights, privileges, and liberties, after which the procession marched on, led by a member of the

Equestrian Order bearing the sword of state. Next came a band of mounted halberdiers, riding before the governors of the chief towns, who were clothed in mantles of embroidered silk. These were followed by the lords and gentry of the Principality. Philip de Croy, Prince of Chimay, was there at the head of 150 horsemen, together with the Prince of Arenberg, the Duke of Juliers, the Duke of Bavaria, and a long calvacade of nobles from other parts of Belgium, and from foreign lands, each with a numerous retinue of cavaliers. The Bishop-Prince himself came last, riding between the burgomasters of Liége, and attended by 800 gentlemen-at-arms. A triumphal arch had been erected in the street, on which stood a number of gaily dressed maidens. When the Prince reached it the procession stopped, and from the top of the arch a large wooden pineapple, representing the arms of the town, was lowered into the roadway to the sound of music. It opened, and a beautiful young girl came out, who recited some verses in honour of the day, and presented the Prince with a gilded basket full of jewelled ornaments and silver cups In the market-place there were three stages. On the first were four boys, representing the ecclesiastical estate, who presented a golden statue as a

symbol of the Christian Faith. At the second a sword of honour, decorated with gold and precious stones, was given by the estate of nobles. A golden heart was the offering of the third estate. Close at hand there was a platform, on which a man of the common people knelt before a judge, holding in his hands a scroll, on which were the words, 'Let both sides be heard.'

At the door of the Cathedral of St. Lambert the leader of the choir laid his hand on the Prince's saddle to signify that, by ancient custom, he claimed the horse and its trappings as the perquisites of his office. When the procession had entered the building the canons welcomed the Bishop in the name of the Chapter, clothed him in a rich cassock, and conducted him to the high altar, where, the Bishop kneeling and the whole assemblage of nobles and Churchmen standing round, the oath sworn by every Bishop of Liége was read aloud.

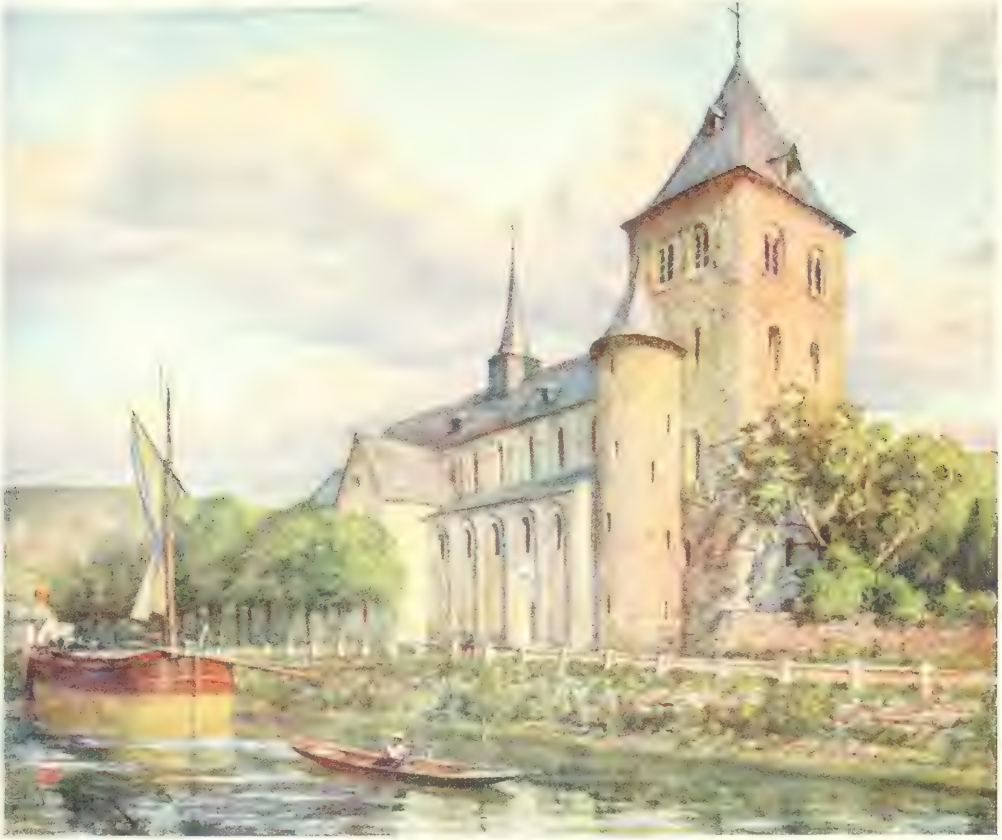
By this oath he bound himself to maintain unaltered all the rights of the diocese. If he became a cardinal, he must defend these rights before the Holy See at Rome, and, above all, the right of the Chapter to elect the Bishops of Liége. He must not alienate any portion of the Principality without

the consent of the Chapter, nor suffer the country to become tributary to any foreign State. His usual place of residence must be within the Principality, and if he had to leave it for a time he must return when his presence was deemed necessary in the interests of the people. He must impose no taxes without the consent of the three estates. He must not abandon any of the national strongholds, and the commanders at such places as the castles of Bouillon, Huy, and Dinant must be natives of the country. No foreigner might hold any office of State; and the Privy Council must be composed of canons and other persons who had taken the oath of fidelity to the Chapter. No alliances must be made, no war declared, and no engagements of any kind entered into with foreign Princes without leave from the Chapter.

These are only a few of the many obligations which were imposed upon the Princes of Liége. Ernest of Bavaria swore to them all, but it was soon apparent that it was impossible for the Principality to hold aloof from all connection with external politics. By this time the Reformation had triumphed in the greater part of Germany; but the House of Bavaria remained firmly attached to the Catholic Church, and when Gérard Truchses, Arch-

bishop of Cologne, and William de Meurs, Bishop of Münster, abandoned the old faith, the vacant Sees were conferred on Prince Ernest, who thus not only held three bishopries at the same time, but had to defend his position by force of arms against the Protestant princes. He spent most of his time in Germany, while the Principality of Liége was entered by Spanish and Dutch troops, who behaved with equal harshness to the inhabitants. A small party of Dutchmen surprised the castle of Huy and took it, though without any lives being lost on either side. Prince Ernest complained on the ground that the Principality was neutral, but the Dutch replied, and with perfect truth, that the neutrality of Liége was a mere pretence, as the Bishop was an active partisan on the side of their enemies. He, therefore, asked help from the Spaniards, by whom Huy was stormed and recaptured after a stout resistance. But, on the whole, it appears that, in spite of the strict orthodoxy of the Liégeois, the Catholics were even more unpopular than the Protestants, for the Archduke Albert having complained that the countryfolk showed more animosity against his soldiers than against the Dutch, he was told that people generally hated those most who did them

THE ROMANESQUE CHURCH, HASTIÈRE



most harm. Prince Ernest himself spoke bitterly of the way in which money was extorted for the support of the Spanish garrisons in the Ardennes.

It was not till the Twelve Years' Truce was concluded between the 'Archdukes' Albert and Isabella and the States-General that the Principality was freed from the incursions of foreign troops. This was in 1609. Three years later Ernest of Bavaria died, and was succeeded in the episcopal thrones of Liége and Cologne by his nephew Ferdinand.

THE CHIROUX AND THE GRIGNOUX— THE TRAGIC BANQUET OF WARFUSÉE

CHAPTER VI

THE CHIROUX AND THE GRIGNOUX—THE TRAGIC BANQUET OF WARFUSÉE

FERDINAND OF BAVARIA'S reign was one long quarrel with the magistrates of Liége. He soon found that during his uncle's frequent absences in Germany the burgomasters had usurped many powers which had hitherto belonged to the Bishop. They issued their own decrees without his authority, and sometimes cancelled his orders without consulting him. They took upon themselves to appoint officers, to call the citizens to arms, and to send representatives to foreign Courts. Their pretensions, in short, had risen so high as to make it evident that they aimed at nothing less than supreme power.

At last a time came when matters were brought to a crisis by the election as burgomasters of two popular candidates, William Beeckmann and Sébastien La Ruelle, whom the people insisted on choosing against the wishes of Ferdinand, who

had irritated the Liégeois by bringing German and Spanish troops into the Principality to support his rights. Beeckmann died suddenly. A rumour that he had been poisoned by the Bishop's friends inflamed the passions of the mob, who listened eagerly to La Ruelle when he told them that the intimate relations of their Prince with Austria and Spain were dangerous to the independence of the country.

There were at this time two factions in Liége—the 'Chiroux' and the 'Grignoux.' It appears that some young men of rank had returned from a visit to Paris dressed in the latest fashion, with white stockings and boots falling over their calves, which made the wits of the town say that they were like a breed of swallows known as 'Chiroux.' One day, at the Church of St. Lambert, some of the populace, seeing a party of these dandies, called out, 'Chiroux! Chiroux!' The others answered back with cries of 'Grignoux'—that is, *Grognards*, or malcontents. Hence the nicknames. The Chiroux supported the Bishop, while the Grignoux opposed him. The former were, like Ferdinand, for maintaining close relations with Germany, while the latter were supposed to court a friendship with the King of France. At this juncture we come across one of the most curious episodes in the story of Liége.

LE PERRON LIÉGEOIS, LIÉGE

A Baron de Pesche, who lived in the district between the Sambre and the Meuse, having a lawsuit before the judges at Liége, requested one of his kinsmen, the Abbé de Mouzon, a Frenchman, to manage the case. De Mouzon, an acute man with a talent for political intrigue, made full use of his opportunities, and soon knew all about the feud between the Chiroux and the Grignoux, the existence of German and French factions, and everything that was going on in Liége. He informed the Ministers of Louis XIII. that the people of Liége were at heart favourable to France, and that the ties which bound them to Germany could easily be broken, as the Bishop was very seldom in the Principality, and had no real influence with his subjects. He had, he told the French Government, made friends with the most important men in the city, and was in a position to render great services to France, provided he was furnished with proper credentials. The result was that he received a commission as French resident, or envoy, at Liége. He then paid attentions to La Ruelle and his party, for the purpose of persuading them to further the interests of France and break with Germany, and played his part so well that the Chiroux leaders, becoming alarmed, sent a message

to the Bishop, advising him to be on his guard against the intrigues of the French envoy and the Grignoux.

Ferdinand, on receiving this warning, despatched Count Louis of Nassau to Liége with a letter to the magistrates, in which he reprimanded them severely, and accused them of a treasonable correspondence with France. La Ruelle answered in acrimonious terms, declaring that the country was being ruined by German soldiers sent there by the Bishop. To this Ferdinand replied that, as the Liégeois would not do their duty as loyal subjects willingly, he would find means to compel them; and presently an army of Imperial troops marched into the Principality, and encamped near Liége.

And now a new actor comes upon the scene. The Count of Warfusée, who had been employed in turn by Spain and Holland, and betrayed them both, was at this time living in banishment at Liége. Posing as an adherent of the French side, he secured the confidence of La Ruelle and the Abbé de Mouzon, for both of whom he professed a warm friendship; but, in reality, he was in correspondence with the Court at Brussels, and had promised that, if a few soldiers were placed at his disposal, he would crush the French party in Liége.

On April 17, 1637, he gave a dinner-party, to which La Ruelle, Abbé de Mouzon, and other guests were invited. When La Ruelle arrived, accompanied by a young manservant named Jaspar, Warfusée gave him a jovial greeting. Then, noticing Jaspar, he exclaimed, 'Ah! there's my good friend; I know him well,' and showed the way to the kitchen, saying: 'You must enjoy yourself to-day, and drink to the health of Burgomaster La Ruelle.'

The company sat down to dinner in a room on the ground floor, the windows of which had iron bars across them, and opened on a courtyard in the middle of the building. Count Warfusée sat next the door, with M. Marchand, an advocate, beside him. La Ruelle and the Abbé were on the other side of the table. Baron de Saizan, a Frenchman, and several other gentlemen were present, and also some ladies, among whom were the Baroness de Saizan and Count Warfusée's four daughters. Every one was in the highest spirits. The Count declared he felt so happy that he intended to get drunk, and invited all the rest to follow his example. Calling for big glasses, he challenged de Mouzon to a revel. The Abbé proposed the health of the Most Christian King;

and this toast was duly drunk, the gentlemen rising, and uncovering their heads.

During the first course the merriment of the party increased; but suddenly the Count's manner changed, and one of the company was bantering him about his gravity, when, as the servants were bringing in the second course, his *valet de chambre* came and whispered in his ear. Warfusée nodded, and immediately twenty soldiers, each holding a drawn sword in one hand and a firelock in the other, entered the room, bowed, and surrounded the table. The guests supposed that this was some pleasantry devised for their amusement; and La Ruelle asked his host what it meant. 'Nothing,' answered Warfusée—'do not move;' but as he spoke a band of Spaniards appeared at the windows, and levelled their muskets through the bars. Warfusée, pointing to Jaspar, who was waiting on his master, ordered the soldiers to remove him. He was seized and turned out of the room. The Count then shouted, 'Arrest the burgomaster!'

'What? Arrest me?' exclaimed La Ruelle, rising and throwing his napkin on the table.

'Yes, you,' replied Warfusée, 'and Abbé de Mouzon, and Baron de Saizan also.'

The soldiers took La Ruelle, and dragged him

out ; and Warfusée, shouting at the top of his voice, declared that he was acting under the orders of the Emperor, and of His Royal Highness the Bishop. They had, he said, borne long enough with the intrigues of the French, and the authority of the Prince must be re-established. A scene of the wildest confusion followed. Warfusée rushed into the courtyard, and loaded La Ruelle with insults. 'Ropes, ropes for the burgomaster!' he shouted. 'Ah! you traitor! your heart is in my hands to-day. See, here are the orders of the Prince'; and he pulled some papers out of his pocket. 'Make your peace with God, for you must die.' Jaspar, the servant, who was standing near, already bound, is said to have exclaimed, when he heard these words, 'Oh, master, have I not always said what would happen?'

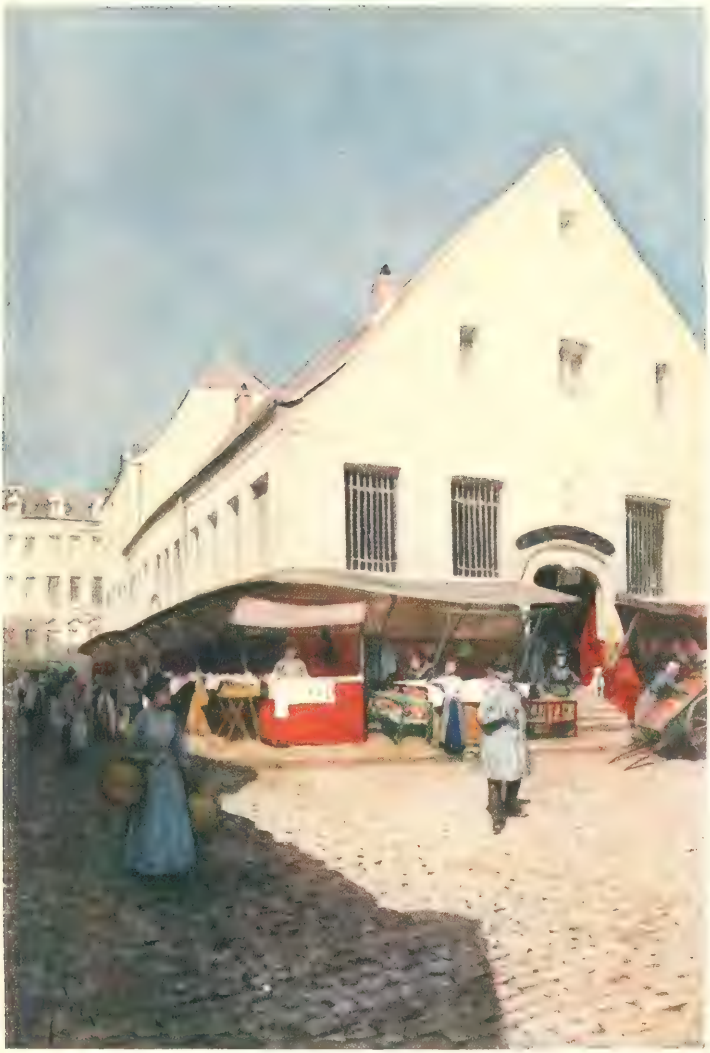
All in vain La Ruelle begged for mercy. Two Dominicans, sent for to shrive the victim, implored the Count to pause ; but 'Kill him, kill him! Make haste. Lose no more time,' was his answer to their entreaties, and to those of his own daughters, who besought him, with tears, to spare the unfortunate man's life. Some of the soldiers refused to touch the burgomaster, and told Warfusée to his face that they were not assassins. But at last three

Spaniards drew their daggers, and stabbed La Ruelle repeatedly till he was dead.

His cries were heard in the room where De Mouzon, fearing that his own last hour had come, was waiting with the other guests under guard of the soldiers. The Dominicans entered ; and all were crowding round them, pouring out confessions and clamouring for absolution, when Warfusée came to the door, and told them that the burgomaster was dead, and that he had died repenting of his misdeeds, and seeking forgiveness from God, the Emperor, and the Bishop. Having said this, he went away again.

In the meantime a report had spread through the town that something unusual was happening. It was said that a band of Spanish soldiers had been seen to cross the Meuse, and go to the Count of Warfusée's house, where the burgomaster was known to be dining that day ; and every one suspected that they had been sent to arrest La Ruelle, De Mouzon, Warfusée, and their friends. So a cousin of the burgomaster's went to find out if this was the case. When he reached the door of the house he found a crowd of people, who told him they had heard cries from within and the clash of arms, and that there was a rumour that the burgo-

LA VIEILLE BOUCHERIE, LIÉGE



master had been murdered. On hearing this, he knocked at the door, which was opened by the Count, who let him enter with a few of his friends.

'Tell me, gentlemen,' said Warfusée, 'do you wish to be Spanish, or French, or Dutch?'

'No,' they replied, 'we wish to remain what we are—neutrals and true Liégeois.'

'What would you think,' the Count asked them, 'if you heard that La Ruelle has sold your country to France?'

'We would not believe it,' they all replied.

'Do you know his signature?' Warfusée inquired, showing them some documents.

'These are forgeries,' they told him.

'No matter!' exclaimed the Count; 'I had orders to kill La Ruelle. He is already dead, and I hold Abbé de Mouzon and Baron de Saizan prisoners. Would you like to see La Ruelle's body?'

To this they replied 'No,' and asked permission to leave the house.

By this time the news of the burgomaster's death was known in the town, and a vast crowd had gathered in front of the house, shouting 'To arms!' and demanding admission. The Count ventured to open the door, and allow the burgomaster's cousin and his friends to escape. The

noise increased, as the people knocked loudly at the door, and uttered threats of vengeance upon the Count. Warfusée, now trembling in every limb, pale and terror-stricken, ran hither and thither between the courtyard and the garden, and at last hid himself in a room on the upper story, just as an armed crowd of townsmen burst in, and forced their way to where the soldiers were guarding Abbé de Mouzon and the other prisoners. Baron de Saizan at once called on the Spaniards to give up their weapons, and promised them quarter. They allowed themselves to be disarmed ; but the townsmen instantly attacked them. There was a short, but desperate, struggle, during which the ladies, cowering on the floor, protected themselves as best they could from the musket-balls which flew about, and the sword-cuts which the infuriated townsmen dealt in all directions. In a few minutes the Spaniards were slain to the last man ; and then some of the burghers, moved by pity, led the daughters of Warfusée from the blood-stained house to the Hôtel de Ville, where they obtained shelter.

Their father at this time was lying on a bed upstairs, where he was soon discovered by La Ruelle's cousin, who had returned, and some of the

burghers, who dragged him down to the door of the house and threw him out into the street. The mob rushed upon him, stabbed him, and beat him to death with bludgeons, tore off his clothes, pulled him by the feet to the market-place, hung him head downwards on the gallows, and finally tore the dead body to pieces. A fire was lighted, his remains were burned, and the ashes thrown into the Meuse.

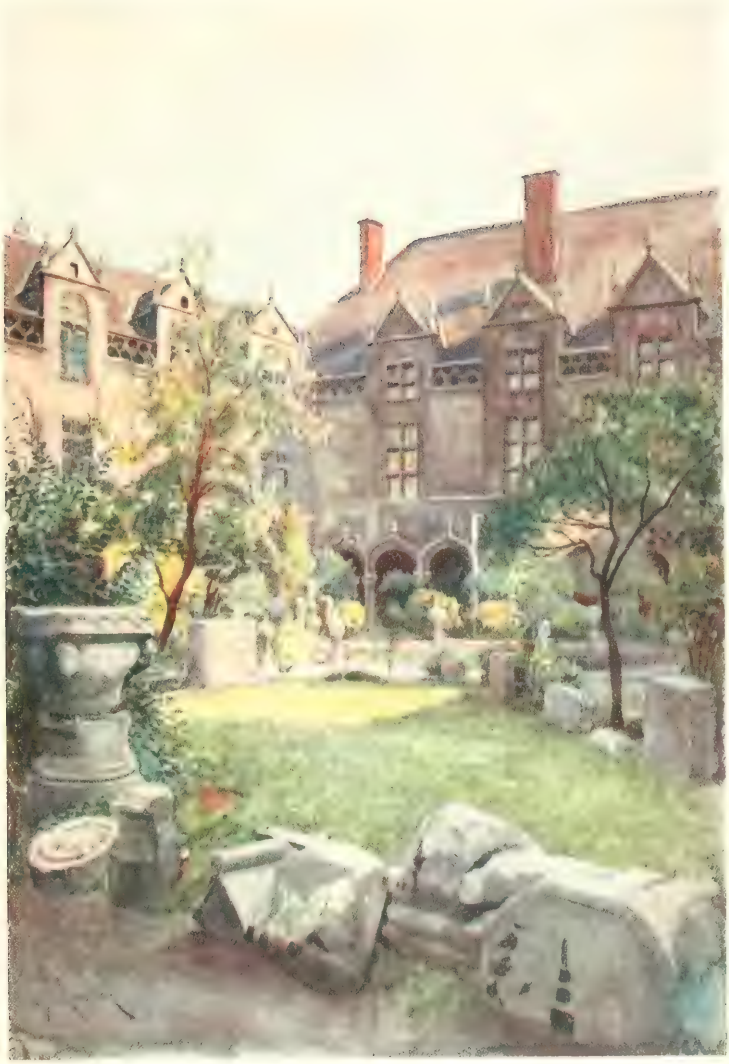
Even this revenge did not quench the thirst for blood which consumed the people of Liége. The advocate Marchand, who had been one of Warfusée's guests, and another eminent citizen, Théodore Fléron, fell under suspicion, and were slaughtered. It is said that one of those who slew Fléron was so mad with rage that he flung himself on the dead man's corpse, tore it with his teeth like a wild beast, and sucked the blood. The church of the Carmelites, who were also suspected of some guilty knowledge of Warfusée's plot, was sacked. The Rector of the Jesuits was murdered, and the members of that society were driven from the town. The mob went through the streets shouting, 'Death to the Chiroux! Death to the priests!' A list was drawn up of suspected persons, who were condemned, without trial, on a charge

of having conspired against the State; and many of the Chiroux faction were hung on the gallows.

Such is the horrible story of the 'Tragic Banquet of Warfusée,' as it is called in local history. The motive for the crime, as foolish as it was brutal, was obviously the wish of Warfusée to gain, at any cost, some credit with the Emperor, though there seems to be no proof that either the Emperor or Ferdinand had really authorized the murder of the burgomaster. Nor is there evidence to show that La Ruelle had plotted to hand over the Principality to France. The only explanation of Warfusée's extraordinary folly seems to be that he had entirely misunderstood the sentiments of the Liégeois, and had under-estimated the popularity of La Ruelle and the strength of the Grignoux faction. Otherwise, desperate villain though he was, he would scarcely have ventured to commit such a crime with no support save that of a few oldiers.

A semblance of peace followed; but soon the feud between the Chiroux and the Grignoux broke out again. Once more the Grignoux obtained the upper hand. The Episcopal Palace was taken by the mob. Two hundred citizens of the upper class were ordered into banishment; and when the

THE EPISCOPAL PALACE—INNER COURT,
LIÈGE



Bishop was on his way to Liége, hoping to restore order by peaceful means, he was met by the news that the gates were closed against him. He therefore sent his nephew, Prince Henry Maximilian of Bavaria, with an army to reduce the town. In a skirmish near Jupille one of the burgomasters was killed. The Grignoux lost heart, and opened the gates. Then came a wholesale arrest of the popular leaders, four of whom were executed. The mode of electing magistrates was altered, the Bishop reserving to himself the right of nominating half of them. The loyalists who had been banished were recalled. To overawe the people, a citadel was built upon the high ridge above the town; and when Ferdinand died, in 1650, the Principality was more at rest than it had been for many years.

THE GAMING-TABLES AT SPA—THE FRENCH REVOLUTION—ANNEXATION OF THE PRINCIPALITY

CHAPTER VII

THE GAMING-TABLES AT SPA—THE FRENCH REVOLUTION—ANNEXATION OF THE PRINCIPALITY

Already two Princes of Bavaria had been Bishops of Liége, and now a third succeeded, Prince Maximilian Henry, who filled this uneasy throne from 1650 to 1688.

During most of that time the armies of almost every nation in Europe swept like a flood over the Principality; but the most important transaction of Maximilian's reign was the establishment of a new system for the election of magistrates. This system, which came into force in November, 1684, and was known as the 'Réglement de Maximilien de Bavière,' deprived the lower classes of that direct power of election which they had so long abused, and divided it between the Bishops and the middle class. The result of this measure was that there was quiet, if not harmony, within the walls of Liége for the next hundred years. During that period,

from 1684 to 1784, the valley of the Meuse was frequently the seat of war in the various campaigns of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

More tranquil times came with the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, when the Austrian Netherlands were restored to the Empress Maria Theresa. It was, indeed, only a calm between two storms. But for some years the arts of peace flourished in the valley of the Meuse; and side by side with a remarkable progress of industry and commerce the intellectual activity of the people increased. An association, called the 'Société d'Emulation,' was formed, chiefly for the study of French literature; and soon the works of Voltaire, of Diderot, and of d'Alembert were read by all classes. The clergy tried to forbid the purchase of such books, but in vain. Amongst the working class the favourite authors were those who attacked the clergy; and the writings of Voltaire became so popular that secret meetings were held in many of the country villages for the purpose of hearing them read aloud. Thus, beneath the surface, the spirit of inquiry and free thought was fostered. Already in France the first murmurs of the coming storm were heard; and in Liége people began to speak about the 'rights of man,' to question the dogmas of the Church, and to

ridicule the priests at whose feet their forefathers had knelt for so many hundred years.

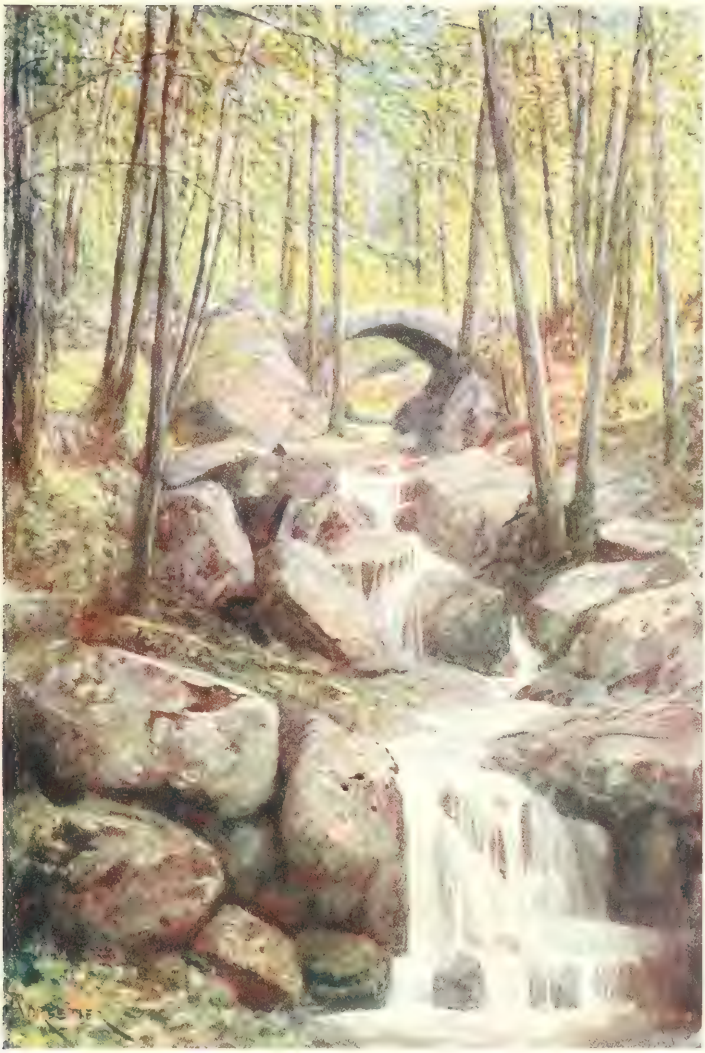
While these new forces were gathering strength, César de Hoensbroeck, one of the Canons of St. Lambert, became Bishop, on July 21, 1784. A trifling dispute with which his reign began was the prelude to very serious events. For many years a company called the 'Société Deleau' had enjoyed a monopoly of the gaming-tables at Spa, under a grant from the Bishops of Liége, to whom a third of the profits were paid. In 1785 one Levoz, a citizen of Liége, opened a new gambling-house, which he called the 'Club.' The Société Deleau protested against this infringement of its monopoly. Levoz and his friends replied that by law the Bishops had no right to grant a monopoly without the sanction of the estates; and at last the case was laid before the Imperial Chamber of the German Empire.

This petty quarrel, so trivial in its origin, had run its course for more than two years, when suddenly it was raised into a grave controversy by one of the partisans of Levoz, Nicolas Bassenge, who published a series of letters in which he declared that the liberties of the country were at stake. 'It is not,' he said, 'a mere question about a game of hazard.'

Which is to be supreme, he asked, the Prince or the people? Who has the right to make laws or grant monopolies? The chief of the State is not its master, but merely the instrument of the national will. Others followed Bassenge in the same strain; and more letters, fresh recriminations, hot words and angry answers, added fuel to the fire.

Levoz, tired of waiting for a decision from the Imperial Chamber, leased his Club to a manager, Paul Redouté, who opened it with dancing added to the attractions of dice and cards. The Bishop sent 200 soldiers to Spa, who closed the Club tables, and forbade all gaming except in the rooms to which he had granted the monopoly. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Redouté and M. Ransonnet, who had fought in the American War of Independence, and was now a leader among the disaffected party in Liége. The latter fled to Brussels, where the Brabant revolution against Joseph II. was approaching its climax, and sent letters to Liége, in which he said that a plan was on foot to establish a republic consisting of Brabant and the Principality of Liége. Would it not, he asked, be a glorious work to confine the Bishops to their Apostolic mission, as in the days of St. Hubert? Words like these made a deep im-

PONT DU PROPHÈTE, PROMENADE
MEYERBEER, SPA WOODS



pression at a time when the old influences of tradition and custom were beginning to lose their force.

In the spring and summer of 1789 there was much suffering among the poor, owing to a bad season; and the Bishop arranged to celebrate July 21, the anniversary of his election, by a distribution of bread among the destitute. But before July 21 came, horsemen had galloped up the Valley of the Meuse with tidings of the wonderful things which had been done in France. 'Workers of iniquity,' Bassenge wrote, 'behold Paris, and tremble!'

The Bastille had fallen on July 14, and a month later almost to a day, on August 16, the revolution in Liége began. For two days the people did nothing but march about the streets; but very early on the morning of Tuesday the 18th the tocsin was sounding over the town, and soon the market-place was filled by an immense crowd, all wearing cockades of red and yellow, the national colours. Baron de Chestret marched at the head of 200 armed men into the Hôtel de Ville, and expelled the burgomasters. This was followed by the election, at the famous Perron, of new burgomasters, one of them being Baron de Chestret, who, later in the day, went with a number of the

insurgents to the Bishop's palace at Seraing, and demanded his presence in the city, and his written approval of what had been done. The Bishop, adorned with a red and yellow cockade, was hurried to Liége by the mob, who crowded round his carriage, shouting, blowing trumpets, and beating drums. The horses were taken out, and the rioters drew him to the Hôtel de Ville, and brought him into a room where the light of a single candle showed a number of men waiting for him sword in hand. A threatening voice came from the darkness, saying, 'The nation demands your signature. Make haste!' and the Bishop forthwith signed a number of documents which were placed before him, without waiting to read the contents. On the morrow he returned to Seraing; but a few days later he departed secretly for Tréves.

For nearly two years the Imperial Chamber was occupied with the question of Liége; but at last, when the revolution in Brabant had been suppressed, an Austrian army entered the Principality. Everything which the revolutionary party had done since August 18, 1789, was declared null and void. The burgomasters who had been expelled were restored to office. Those Canons of St. Lambert who had fled were brought back, and the Bishop himself

returned. The Société d'Emulation, which had done so much to encourage the study of Voltaire, was suppressed. Sentences of banishment, and even of death, were pronounced against some of those who had led the revolt; and there can be little doubt that Bishop Hoensbroeck earned the title of 'prêtre sanguinaire,' which was given him at the Courts of Berlin and Vienna. He died in June, 1792; and in August of that year his nephew, the Comte de Méan, was elected by the Chapter. But before the new Bishop's inauguration the army of the French Republic, fresh from its victory at Jemappes, having driven the Austrians beyond the Meuse, took possession of Liége. This was on November 28, 1792.

Dumouriez, who had entered Brussels without opposition, received a hearty welcome at Liége, where the popular sentiment was in favour of an union with France; and in every part of the Principality resolutions were passed for incorporating the country with the Republic. It is said that, shortly before August 18, 1789, Mirabeau dined at Liége with Bassenge and some of the revolutionary leaders, when the conversation turned on the affair of Spa. The constitution of Liége

was explained to him. 'And you are not contented with that?' he said. 'Gentlemen, let me tell you that if in France we had enjoyed half your privileges, we would have thought ourselves happy.' But there had always been a charm in the word 'Republic' for the people of Liége. 'Men of Liége,' said Nicolas Bassenge, when the National Convention at Paris decreed the annexation of the Netherlands, 'our lot is fixed: we are French. To live or die Frenchmen is the wish of our hearts, and no wish was ever so pure, so earnest, or so unanimous.'

Thomas Bassenge, brother of Nicolas, was at this time a member of the Municipal Council of Liége; and in February, 1793, he persuaded the magistrates to celebrate the revolution by destroying the Cathedral of St. Lambert, which stood near the Episcopal Palace of Érard de la Marck. The front of this church, the finest ecclesiastical building in the Principality, was a mass of elaborate carving. Statues of angels and archangels, of patriarchs and prophets, of martyrs and of saints, rose one above the other, and over them innumerable pinnacles were interlaced by a maze of slender arches, crossing each other with tracery so delicate as almost to resemble lace. Beneath this profusion of stone-

work the great doorway was adorned with marble statues of the benefactors of the church from the chisel of Lambert Zoutman, a sculptor of Liége; and in the interior of the building, with its marble columns and windows of old stained glass, were many paintings, the tombs of the Bishops, rich tapestries, a jewelled bust of Lambert, and many objects of value, amongst which were two golden statues sent by Charles the Bold to the shrine of the patron saint, as an act of expiation after he had destroyed the town. This building, which had survived the great disaster of the fifteenth century, was now completely wrecked. The statues and the monuments were cast down. The mausoleum of Érard de la Marck was sold and broken up. The graves were opened, the bones thrown out, and the lead of the coffins used for bullets. The clocks were sent up the Meuse in barges to France, and there turned into copper money. Everything valuable was removed, and soon nothing remained but the bare walls, which in a few years crumbled into ruins. Thus the long line of the Bishop-Princes of Liége, and the place in which for centuries they had been inaugurated, fell together.

LIÉGE AND THE VALLEY OF THE MEUSE IN MODERN TIMES— BOUILLON

CHAPTER VIII

LIÉGE AND THE VALLEY OF THE MEUSE IN MODERN TIMES—BOUILLON

THE territory which the Bishops had governed was now merged in four of the nine departments into which the National Convention divided the annexed Austrian Netherlands. The department of 'Forêts,' with Luxembourg for its capital, included the Ardennes. The western portion of the old diocese was sunk in 'Sambre et Meuse,' of which Namur was the chief town. 'Ourthe' was the name given to the district in which Liége was situated. To the east lay the department of 'Meuse Inférieure,' with Maestricht for its capital. Thus the old boundaries of the Principality were entirely obliterated. The Convention conferred the rights of French citizens on the people of these districts, and commissioners were sent from Paris to divide the country into cantons, and establish a new system of local administration on the French model.

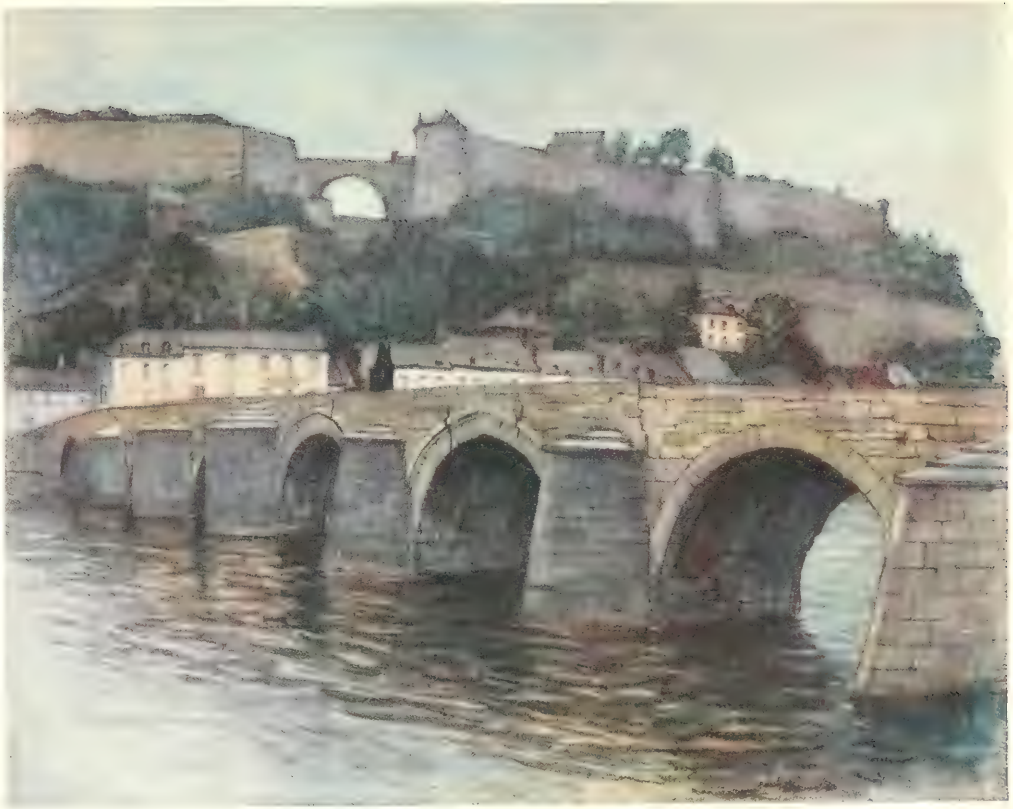
The departments of Forêts, Sambre et Meuse,

Ourthe, and Meuse Inférieure were in the same condition as the rest of Belgium during the closing years of the eighteenth century and down to the fall of Napoleon. After that they formed part of the 'Kingdom of the Netherlands,' under the House of Orange-Nassau, and were called the provinces of Luxembourg, Namur, Liége, and Limbourg.

When the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the chief constructive work accomplished by the Congress of Vienna, fell to pieces in 1830, the Liégeois went with the rest of Belgium in the revolution against William I. As soon as they heard of the insurrection at Brussels, the townsmen of Liége met, as of old, in the market-place, put on the national colours, and helped themselves to weapons from the armourers' shops. A company of 300 volunteers, with two pieces of cannon, marched across Brabant into Brussels, and took a prominent part in the street fighting, which ended in the retreat of the Dutch troops, and the triumph of the revolution which led to the separation of the Catholic Netherlands from Holland, and the election of Leopold I. as King of Belgium.

Long ago, in the days of Prince Maximilian of Bavaria, a fortress was built on the only bridge

PONT DE JAMBES ET CITADELLE, NAMUR



which at that time crossed the Meuse at Liége. This fortress, armed with cannon which could sweep both sides of the river, left only one narrow waterway, nicknamed 'The Dardanelles,' by which boats could pass up and down the stream. It has long since disappeared, and the present Pont des Arches now occupies the sight of the old bridge. The irregular outline of the houses on the bank of the Meuse, with their fronts of grey, white, and red, the church towers appearing over the roofs of the town behind, and the ridge of the citadel rising high in the background, are best seen from the Pont des Arches, from which the modern Rue Leopold leads straight into the very heart of Liége. to the place on which the Cathedral of St. Lambert stood. It is just a century since the last stones of the old church were carted away ; and now the Place St. Lambert, like the Place Verte, which opens on it from the west, and the market-place, which is a few yards to the east, has a bright look of business and prosperity, with its shops and cafés.

The Episcopal Palace, now the Palais de Justice, the erection of which took thirty years during the commencement of the sixteenth century, has undergone many alterations since the days of Érard de la Marck. Two hundred years after it was finished

a fire destroyed the original front, which had to be rebuilt, and the rest of the vast structure was restored in the nineteenth century. The primitive façade has been replaced by one moulded on severely classic lines; but the inner squares, with their picturesque cloisters, are strangely rich in types of every style, a medley of Gothic, Renaissance, Moorish, as if symbolic of the vicissitudes undergone by the Bishop-Princes who inhabited this immense building. Most of the grotesque carvings, the demons in stone, and the fantastic figures which surround these courts, were conceived by the luxuriant imagination of Francis Borset, a sculptor of Liége.

Close to the Episcopal Palace is the market-place, where so many of the scenes described in these pages took place, and where now stands the modern Perron, designed by Delcour at the end of the seventeenth century to replace the old column, at the foot of which the laws of the Principality, peace, or war used to be proclaimed. There is nothing about it to recall the history of the stormy times when Charles the Bold carried it off into Flanders; but the tradition of the ancient Perron still survives.

At Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, Louvain, the Hôtels

de Ville retain their aspect of the Middle Ages, when they were the centres of that passionate civic life which throbs through all the history of the Netherlands. But the Hôtel de Ville of Liége is modern, of the eighteenth century. It would make a commodious private mansion, but has nothing in common with the architectural gems which adorn the great cities of Flanders and Brabant.

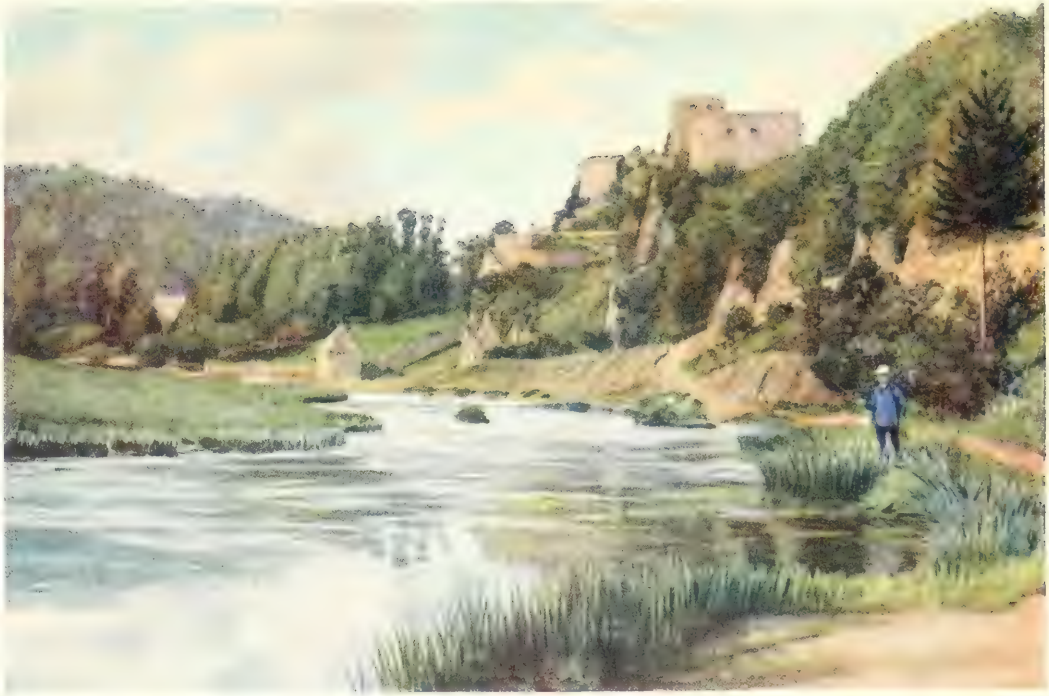
This lack of architectural distinction is characteristic of modern Liége. The hammers of the French Revolution, in destroying the Cathedral of St. Lambert, completed what the fires of Charles the Bold began, and of the really old Liége almost nothing remains. But the fiery spirit which once led to so many wars and revolutions now finds an outlet in useful work. The industrious character of the Walloons is perhaps most highly developed in other Walloon parts of Belgium—among the carpet factories of Tournai, the iron-works of Charleroi, the flax-works of Courtrai, and in the coal-mines of the Borinage, which blacken the landscape for miles round Mons. But the people of Liége have always been famous for their skill in working steel and iron. In the old days they forged the weapons of war which they used so often; and at the present time there are in the

town many flourishing companies who turn out large quantities of guns, engines, and machinery, while up the Meuse there are coal-mines, furnaces, and factories, where the Walloons toil as laboriously as in Hainaut.

In the year after Waterloo William I. and John Cockerill, an Englishman, established iron-works at Seraing, within a few miles of Liége. In 1830, when the Kingdom of the Netherlands was broken up, Cockerill became owner of the business, which has grown since then, until it is now one of the largest iron manufactories in Europe, with some twelve thousand workmen constantly employed in its coal-mines and engine-works. The Palace at Seraing, from which Bishop Hoensbroeck was carried by the revolutionary mob to the Hôtel de Ville at Liége in the summer of 1789, is now the office of the well-known firm of John Cockerill and Company.

Beyond Seraing the Valley of the Meuse winds up through the centre of what was once the Principality of Liége, and at every turn there is something which recalls the olden time. The white Château of Aigremont, where the Wild Boar of Ardennes used to live, stands boldly on its hilltop on the left bank of the river. A little

CHÂTEAU DE BOUILLON, IN THE SEMOIS VALLEY



farther, and we come to the Condroz country, with its capital Ciney, notorious for the insane 'War of the Cow,' and Huy, with the grave of Peter the Hermit, and its long history of suffering. The whole valley is so peaceful now, full of quiet villages, gardens, hay-fields, and well-cultivated land, that it is difficult to realize that for centuries it was nothing but a battlefield, and that in these regions the people suffered almost as much from the depredations of their friends as from the enemy, even long after the barbarism of the Burgundian period was a thing of the past. 'We have,' says Field-Marshal de Merode, during the campaigns of Louis XIV., 'eighteen miserable regiments of infantry, and fourteen of cavalry and dragoons, who are just six thousand beggars or thieves, for they have neither money nor clothing, and live by plunder on the highways, stopping public and private coaches, robbing travellers, or, pistol in hand, demanding at least a *pour boire*. Nobody can go from one place to another without meeting them, which ruins business and the whole country.'

The situation of Namur, at the junction of the Sambre and the Meuse, made it a place of great importance in every war, not only in the Middle

Ages, but also in later times. When the Grand Alliance was formed against France, it was in Brabant that the main body of the Allies gathered; but before long the tide of war rolled into the Valley of the Meuse. Liége was bombarded for five days by Marshal Boufflers, and the Bishop, from his place of refuge in the citadel, saw the Hôtel de Ville and half the town set on fire by the shells which flew over the river from the French batteries on the Chartreuse. As the struggle went on, Huy was destroyed by Marshal Villeroi, Namur fell into the hands of Louis XIV., and farther afield it seemed as if no city, however strong, could stand a siege against the genius of Vauban, while the victories at Steinkirk and Landen made the arms of France appear invincible. But at last, in 1695, came the siege and capture of Namur by William III. The taking of Namur was the turning-point of that war, and led to the Treaty of Ryswick, by which Spain recovered Luxembourg, and all the conquests which the King of France had made in the Netherlands.

Again, when the War of the Spanish Succession began, the English army, on its way to Germany, marched into the Principality of Liége, took the town and citadel of Liége, drove the French over

the Meuse, and carried the war to Blenheim on the Danube. But though the first of Marlborough's chief victories was thus gained in Bavaria, the second of his four great battles was fought to obtain command of the way to Namur. Marshal Villeroi's object in giving battle at Ramillies was to protect that town, which he regarded as the key to the Valley of the Meuse; but fortune had deserted France, and the combat of May 23, 1706, decided the fate not only of the Principality of Liége, but of all Belgium, though the war continued, through the carnage of Oudenarde and Malplaquet, till the Peace of Utrecht.

Even now the shadow of a possible war overhangs this part of Europe; and if those who think that, sooner or later, the neutrality of Belgium will be violated are right, it is very likely that the line of the Meuse, with its navigable stream, its railway, and its roads, so well adapted for military purposes, will be used. It is in view of this danger that the fortifications along the valley are maintained. Within a radius of six miles round Liége there are twelve forts. The citadel of Huy, planned by William I. soon after the campaign of Waterloo, was enlarged and made stronger so lately as 1892. Namur is surrounded by nine forts at a distance of

about six miles from the town; and the citadel of Dinant forms an outpost to the south-west.

The last occasion on which any part of Belgium, so long the 'Cockpit of Europe,' had a glimpse of war was in the autumn of 1870. The battle of Sedan had been fought within a few miles from the southern slopes of the Ardennes, and during September 3 thousands of wounded men and prisoners from the beaten army were crowded in Bouillon, a little town which lies in the gorge of the Semois, just over the Belgian frontier.

This place was once the capital of a Duchy. On a lofty rock, almost surrounded by the dark, brown waters of the many-winding Semois, stands the ruined castle of the Dukes of Bouillon, a large pile of grey walls and towers, which gives some idea of the immense strength of the fortresses which, even in the remote forest-land of Ardennes, the feudal lords built for themselves. The age of this stronghold is unknown, but there seems reason to believe that a fort was erected on this rock by the Princes of Ardennes so early as the seventh century. In the eleventh century it was ceded to the Principality of Liége by the famous Crusader Godfrey of Bouillon; but this part of the Ardennes, on the borders of France and Luxembourg, was a kind of

'Debatable Land,' and there were frequent struggles for the Duchy between the Bishops of Liége and the family of de la Marck. The Wild Boar of Ardennes obtained possession of it, and his son usurped the title of Duke of Bouillon; but one of his descendants having incurred the wrath of Charles V., the castle was taken, the town sacked, and the Duchy restored to the Bishops of Liége. They retained it till it fell into the hands of Louis XIV., by whom it was given to the family of La Tour d'Auvergne, the representatives of the de la Marcks. It became a small Republic after the French Revolution, but was included in the Kingdom of the Netherlands from 1815 to 1830. Since then it has formed part of Belgian Luxembourg.

Bouillon, with its mountains and woods, and its romantic ruin, being one of the loveliest spots in the Ardennes, soon became a favourite place for holiday-makers, and had for many years a peaceful existence before the storm burst so near it in that eventful year 1870. 'I was there,' M. Camille Lemonnier says, 'in the midst of the *débâcle*, and, sick at heart, and in the horror of those days, wrote these words: "A furious coming and going filled the streets. We found the *Place* crowded with

townspeople, peasants, lancers, prisoners, and wounded men struggling among the horses' hoofs, the wheels of wagons, and the feet of the stretcher-bearers. A horrible noise rose in the darkness of the evening from this tumultuous crowd, who moved aimlessly about, with staring eyes, lost in agony, and scarcely knowing what they did. A stupor seemed to weigh on every brain; and all round, looking down on the seething mass, lights twinkled in the windows of the houses. Behind the white blinds of one house, the Hôtel de la Poste, at the corner to the left of the bridge, a restless shadow moved about all night long. It was the shadow of the last Bonaparte, watching, and a prisoner, while near him the frantic cries wrung by defeat from the wreckage of the French army died away in sobs and spasms."'

Next morning Napoleon III., who had spent the night in the Hôtel de la Poste, left with a guard of Prussian officers, climbed up the road, through the woods which lie between the valleys of the Semois and the Lesse, to Libramont, whence he journeyed by train to Wilhelmshoe.

Since then Bouillon has returned to the quiet times which preceded the Franco-German War; but that student of history must have a very dull

imagination who does not find much to think of in this narrow valley, on the frontiers of Belgium and France, where the past and the present meet, the day when Duke Godfrey rode off to plant his standard on the walls of Jerusalem, and the day when his castle looked down on the humiliation of the ruler who began his reign by making war about the Holy Places of Palestine.

INDEX

BILLING AND SONS, LTD., PRINTERS, GUILDFORD