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THE THEBAN LEGION.

BY PROF. W. M. BLACKBURN.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TYTHING OF MEN.

THE heroic spirit of mountaineers is proverbial. They love independence. They rarely fawn upon monarchs or bow the neck to a tyrant. Nor is this the effect of modern progress. It is even older than any type of educated freedom.

The people of those Alpine valleys, whose waters fill the Rhone and the Lemman lake, were children of liberty. They detested the Roman power. They thought themselves shaved close by taxation, in order to maintain the Roman grandees in luxury. To revolt from injustice was easy, for hiding-places were always near at hand. To hunt them down was a hard task. The rivers were their trenches, and the Alps their fortresses. So far as they knew the gospel, it taught them the equality of all men before God. Perhaps the first Christians in that region were the refugees, who escaped from the murderers at Lyons and Vienne, in the second century. The tribes who cast aside their Pennine gods, and received Christianity, might thank the refugees, but they scarcely knew for what to thank an em-

peror. His very title was odorous of persecution.

Maximian had not made musical the imperial name. He had not cared to win that best of titles for a ruler—"the father of his people." Rather was he their scourge. Housed in his palace at Milan, he could reach over the Alps and lay the rod upon them. Such cruelty as his was too great for a mere man; he gave the credit of it to the gods. Had this Hercules ever met Jupiter in the old temple, which stood in the pass of the Great St. Bernard? Votive tablets have been found among its ruins, but what were his vows none can tell. No great war was now upon his hands. He magnified some trifling offense of the people, and led an army toward the Lake of Geneva.

On the Rhone, not far above the lake, was the ancient Octodurum, now called Martigny. There, about the year 302, we find Maximian. "The soldiers will eat up everything," say the villagers. "And why are they here?"

"To teach us their religion," is the sharp reply. An altar was reared. Victims smoked upon it, and the fumes arose to please the gods of Rome. The warriors took an oath of loyalty

to the same result, and triumphing over those which are adverse to it. It is the wish to be loved, the joy at being loved, the joy in loving, which incline women to marriage, an influence so sure in its effects, so universal in its workings, that no one need fear that anything will ever destroy this susceptibility of their nature.

The conclusion clapped on to the end of this chapter does not seem to have much connection with the argument. To take up the subject it suggests would start me on another long

discussion. I think I will let it pass, and in my next letter take up the second chapter.

I have hardly time to add the usual messages of love, as Leonard is reminding me that I can not dress for Mrs. Curtin's party in less than thirty-five minutes, and we make a practice of being among the earliest on such occasions, both for the preservation of our own comfortable hours, and for the sake of the example, you know.

Truly yours, GERTRUDE M.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE NOTABLE WOMEN OF CHRISTIANITY. No. III.

Marguerite of Navarre.

BY PROF. L. J. HALSEY, D. D.

WITHOUT leaving the sixteenth century, distinguished alike for being the epoch of the Reformation in Europe, and for the revival of letters, we turn from the glowing page of Italian history to that of a nation on which the eyes of the world were then fixed, as the theater of the most exciting events. We pass from Italy to France; from the story of the beautiful and gifted Vittoria Colonna, the wife of Pescara, to contemplate the life and character of a woman equally illustrious for her genius and beauty, Marguerite of Navarre, the celebrated sister of Francis the First.

In Helena, the mother of Constantine, we have seen displayed the exalted character of the Christian mother; Vittoria's history presents a lovely picture of the devoted wife; while Marguerite commands our deepest admiration as the high-souled Christian sister. To quote the words of D'Aubigne: "She was the most beautiful and intelligent, the wittiest, most amiable and influential, and, with the exception of her daughter, the greatest woman of her age. Sister, mother of kings, herself a queen, grandmother of the mon-

arch whom France has extolled the most, namely Henry the Fourth, she lived much in the great world, in great ceremonials, with great personages, among the magnificence of the Louvre, St. Germain, and Fontainebleau. She possessed a moral virtue which resisted the seductions of the age, and kept herself pure in the midst of a depraved court."

Marguerite of Navarre was the daughter of Charles of Orleans, and Louise of Savoy. She was born at Angouleme in 1492, and was more than two years older than her brother Francis, the heir presumptive of the throne of France. Her childhood was spent in retirement, under the care of her accomplished mother, who, left a widow in the bloom of youth and beauty, devoted herself to the education of her idolized children, for whom she cherished the most ambitious designs. In the quiet seclusion of Angouleme and Amboise, Marguerite and her youthful brother were the wonder and admiration of the choice circle which Louise had drawn around her in her enforced absence from court. In this atmosphere of elegant refinement the little Mar-

guerite learned Spanish, Italian, and Latin; and cultivated that taste for literature and the fine arts, which, in after years, made her the patron of men of letters of all classes. At the early age of thirteen she delighted in the study of theology, and astonished the grave professors of science by her attainments. As a child, her personal beauty and grace were remarkable, and the sweetness and vivacity of her manners fascinated alike prince and scholar.

Francis, when but a child, had been affianced by the king, Louis the Twelfth, to his daughter Claude, and when Marguerite was seventeen, Louis looked around for a suitable match for her. It is said that a mutual attachment existed between the young girl and Charles, Duke of Bourbon, afterward the celebrated Constable of that name, a man who was as distinguished for the splendor of his personal appearance, as for his intellectual endowments and military exploits. But the king preferred the Duke d'Alencon, a prince of the royal blood, with no recommendation save his high rank and handsome figure; and Marguerite was compelled to yield to state policy, and marry a man every way the inferior of the object of her choice. But Bourbon was not forgotten. It was at her request that Francis, on his accession to the throne, conferred upon him the office of Constable of France.

Marguerite, on her marriage, retired with her husband to his castle of Argentan in Normandy, and from this time until the death of the queen, a little more than a year before Francis became king, there is no account of her appearance at the court. Whatever may have been the reason of her seclusion, it is certain that the magnificent solitude of the Duke's ancestral abode was very irksome to his beautiful young wife. She felt deeply her separation from her mother and brother, to whom she was warmly attached, and looked with coldness and contempt upon the man for whom she had sacrificed so much. Cut off from the brilliant society of which she had been the highest ornament, and condemned

to the companionship of an uncongenial husband, she did not attempt to conceal her unhappiness and discontent. At length she turned to literature as her only resource. As she could no longer move amid the gay scenes for which she was so well adapted, she determined to be known by the splendor of her genius. In her nineteenth year she commenced a series of tales, which, after her death, were collected and published under the title of *L'Heptameron*. But the blight which had fallen on her life had injured the purity of her writings. Her tales were greeted with applause. Their graceful flowing style and energy of expression increased the luster of her literary fame. They present vivid satirical pictures of the corruption of the times, and were principally aimed against the vices of the clergy; but in their composition the author did violence to many of the principles and virtues which afterward adorned her life. The pure and lofty Marguerite stooped to acquire popularity by gratifying the depraved taste of the age. These brilliant, though unworthy memorials of her youth have left the only stain upon the purity of a character which has won the admiration of the world.

The most devoted affection existed between Marguerite and Francis. Her love for him amounted almost to adoration, while he could not but admire and reverence, in his sister, qualities which he did not try to imitate. Immediately on his accession to the throne he sent for her; and Marguerite, emerging from retirement, found herself, at the age of twenty-two, the idol of her brother's brilliant court. Young, lovely, and gifted, she yielded herself up to the allurements of society, without a care for the present, or thought for the future. The gentle Claude was queen in name, but all bowed before the genius and beauty of the sister of Francis. Her transcendent loveliness was the theme of every tongue. In person she was tall and slender, displaying exquisite grace in every movement. With her complexion of dazzling fairness, relieved by a delicate

color in the cheeks, dark violet eyes, and golden hair, she presented a picture of youthful beauty rarely exceeded.

About this time a change took place in the minds of men; an inquiring literary spirit was abroad; and a universal cry arose for reform in the church. Marguerite became deeply interested in the cause. Wearied with the pleasures of the court, which could not long satisfy such a nature as hers, sick at heart, and disappointed in her affections, she turned with eagerness to the study of the new doctrines, as they were called, and sought, and found consolation in the gospel. Her influence was all powerful with Francis, and she determined to show herself the friend and protector of those men whose learned innovations, brought down upon their heads the anger and persecution of the bigoted priesthood. Francis shared many of her opinions at this time; and it was to Marguerite that the struggling Reformation was indebted for the toleration at first shown to it by the king.

The defeat of Pavia, which made Francis a prisoner, and plunged the nation into mourning, was a crushing blow to Marguerite. Not only was her idolized brother a captive, but her country was prostrate before the conqueror, and her husband had proved himself unworthy of the trust reposed in him by his sovereign. On that terrible day, when the tide of battle turned against the French, and many of the bravest knights of the kingdom lay stiff in death around their king, and many more were taken prisoners with him, the Duke d'Alencon alone sought safety in flight. He might have turned the fortunes of the day, or at least have saved the king by a desperate charge with the reserve; but he was not equal to the emergency. He seems to have been rather weak than wicked, and before he reached Lyons, overwhelmed with shame and disgrace, he became extremely ill. Here he was compelled to present himself before the haughty regent, Louis of Savoy, who received him with stern contempt; while his wife refused to have any

thing to do with the betrayer of her brother. Deserted by all his friends, and in momentary fear of arrest, the unhappy Duke took to his bed, where he remained anxiously awaiting death. It was then that the Christian graces, which adorned Marguerite's character, were displayed. In the light of her resentment she had refused to see her unfortunate husband; but hearing of his desolate condition, she went to him immediately, and remained with him until he died, within a month after the defeat. Francis was much exasperated at the desertion; but at the earnest request of Marguerite he sent to him a gracious message. It is probable that had d'Alencon lived until the return of Francis, his near relation to the king's sister would not have saved him from the loss of his dignities, and banishment from court.

The fate of her captive brother now occupied all the thoughts of the Duchess, and the whole energy of her powerful mind was directed to his honorable release. It was a joyful moment when she at last set out for Spain, empowered to treat with Charles the Fifth. Every thing depended upon her courage and firmness. Not only were the life and liberty of Francis endangered by the design of the conqueror, but should Charles succeed in his purpose of prostrating France, the Reformation would receive its death blow. She alone could save both. It was said that she had the best head in Europe; and the friends of the Reformation looked to her alone for protection and support. With a heart fluctuating between joy and sorrow, hope and suspense, she journeyed into Spain. Crossing the plains of Arragon and Castile, she gave vent to her feelings in the following lines, which show at once the intensity of her sisterly devotion and the dependence of her soul upon God.

I cast my eyes around,
I look and look in vain,
The loved one cometh not;
And on my knees again
I pray unceasing to my God
To heal the king—to spare the rod.

The loved one cometh not,
Tears on my eyelids sit ;
Then to this virgin page
My sorrows I commit :—
Such is to wretched me
Each day of misery.

“Nothing, to do you service,” she wrote to Francis, “nothing, even to casting my bones to the wind, will be strange or painful to me; but rather consolation, repose and honor.” She reached Spain to find her king and brother dying to all appearances. He was insensible, and did not recognize her. Controlling by a powerful effort her overwhelming grief, she set to work to nurse him back to life. With tact and decision she altered the state of things around him, changed the treatment, and soon had the happiness of seeing her devotion rewarded. Francis slowly recovered, and in subsequent years he would often say, “But for her I was a dead man.”

With unabated energy Marguerite hurried from the bedside of her brother to Toledo, to intercede with the Emperor for the liberty of his captive. Francis could not have chosen a better advocate. The Spaniards were in raptures over the grace and sweetness of the Duchess: Even the cold heart of Charles was touched by her beauty and heroism. In burning strains of eloquence she urged the prisoner's cause, but in vain; Charles would not recede one inch from his exorbitant demands. Her troubles were now increased by the persecution of the Lutherans at home; but her courage did not falter. She was only strengthened in her determination to effect the king's release at any cost without sacrificing honor. Louise Savoy, who, on the capture of her son, had been made regent, was a zealous Catholic, and countenanced the severest measures against the Reformers; and the flames of persecution blazed forth. Berquin, the friend of Erasmus, was imprisoned on a charge of heresy, while Lefèvre, Roussel, and other distinguished scholars had to fly for their lives. Marguerite besought Francis to interfere in their behalf. He could

not refuse the request of such a sister, at such a time, and gave orders to the parliament not to proceed further in the business until his return. The Reformation gained time, and Marguerite hoped for the best when Francis was once free.

But the Duchess was not destined to remain longer at the Spanish court. Charles saw that her presence encouraged Francis to resist his demands, and determined as soon as her safe conduct expired, to take her prisoner. A friend warned her of her danger, and she was obliged to fly. With the abdication of Francis in her hands, she left Madrid for Alcalá. Here the emissaries of the Emperor were close behind her, and the safe conduct had almost expired. She rose at six o'clock in the morning and mounting a horse made the journey of four days in one, and entered France just an hour before the truce terminated. But her mission was accomplished. The abdication of Francis changed the aspect of affairs, and Charles soon consented to release his illustrious captive.

It was while ambassadress at the court of Charles the Fifth, that Marguerite again met the lover of her girlhood, the Constable de Bourbon, then a traitor to his country and in arms against his king. In an age which produced such men as Gonsalvo di Cordova, Colonna, Pescara and Bayard, the military talents of De Bourbon placed him in the first rank of distinguished chieftains. He had once been the wealthiest and most popular noble in the kingdom, and the strongest bulwark of the French throne. Such a man, in such a position, became a splendid mark for the arrows of envy and jealousy, and his ruin was determined on. Francis had a personal dislike to him on account of a boyish quarrel, and willingly consented to his downfall. He was deprived of his lands and rank, and had the mortification of seeing his bitterest enemy exalted in his stead, Stung by the ingratitude and neglect of his sovereign, Bourbon had left France forever, and entered the service of the Emperor. He was one of the generals in command at the

battle of Pavia and came very near making Francis his own prisoner on that day. He was however occasionally admitted to the presence of the captive king, and it was here in attendance on her brother, that he had again met Marguerite, whom in all the vicissitudes of his career, he had never ceased to remember. His proud sensitive spirit must have been deeply wounded by the cold courtesy of Francis, and the studied reserve of the Duchess, herself the soul of honor. He had a confidential communication with her on political points, but old associations were not revived. What were Marguerite's feelings is not known, but we can imagine that she could not easily forgive or forget treason to her brother and her country.

During these transactions, an event occurred which was destined to exercise an important influence over Marguerite's future life. This was the escape of Henry d'Albret, the young King of Navarre, from the fortress of Pavia. He had been taken prisoner at the battle of Pavia, and detained in close custody under the surveillance of the Marquis of Pescara. Charles was unwilling to release a prisoner whose claims on the crown of Navarre had been the cause of so much bloodshed. He was preparing to exact from him the renunciation of his rights, when Henry cut the matter short by a perilous flight from the fortress, resolved to risk his life sooner than cede his heritage. He let himself down by a rope ladder from the window of his chamber, which was situated at a fearful height, in the principal tower of the castle; and disguised in the dress of a page, succeeded in passing the courtyard without recognition. Outside the city walls, a horse had been provided; mounting it he rode rapidly toward Piedmont, and did not pause for rest or refreshment until he reached Lyons. Here he met with Marguerite on her return from Spain; and an attachment soon sprang up between them, notwithstanding the disparity in their ages, she being some years his senior. Gay, handsome, and distinguished, Henry d'Albret possessed every quali-

ty calculated to captivate the heart and fancy of Marguerite. His bravery in the field, and daring escape from prison had made him the hero of the day; and what was a greater recommendation to the favor of the lady of his love, he had shared the captivity of her brother. His mind was highly cultivated, and his bearing noble and chivalrous. Charles the Fifth, on his visit to France some years after, said of him, that of all the knights and nobles he saw while in that country, the King of Navarre was alone the model of a perfect gentleman. What was probably of more importance to Marguerite was, that Henry was tolerant in his religious views. Knowing her attachment to the Reformers, he warmly espoused their cause, and in council voted in favor of the persecuted Christians.

But again was Marguerite destined to be thwarted in her love, and this time by the brother for whom she had done so much. Francis had other designs for her hand. Thinking that Henry the Eighth might enable him to humble the pride of his haughty conqueror he determined to effect an alliance with England through his sister. Regardless of her known preference for another, and of the fact that Henry had not yet obtained a divorce from his queen, Francis outraged all decency by entering into negotiations with Cardinal Wolsey. Had the affections of Marguerite been disengaged she would have shrunk in abhorrence from such a union. She could not take the place of the noble Catherine of Arragon. Her opposition, however, would have been of little avail had not Henry himself decided the question. He elevated Anne Boleyn to the dignity of queen-consort; and the pure and lovely Marguerite of France was not destined to swell the number of his illustrious victims. Francis, finding his efforts to place his sister on the throne of England unsuccessful, yielded a reluctant consent to her marriage with the King of Navarre. The ceremony was performed at St. Germain, January 24, 1527. Owing to the state of the kingdom, and the captivity of

the children of Francis, who were held as hostages by the Emperor, the event was not distinguished by any extraordinary rejoicings at court. Their union was, however, celebrated in prose and verse by all the poets and learned men of Europe. Poems, allegories, letters, orations and addresses, written in the learned languages, and in every modern tongue, poured in upon them, rendering homage to Marguerite's renown, and testifying to the deep and universal interest felt in her fate.

At this period Marguerite was in the zenith of her beauty and fame. Poets vied with each other in singing her praises, and the greatest scholars of the age were proud to be numbered among her friends. A poetess herself, she had early entered the lists with Marot, the best poet of his time, and had long corresponded with Erasmus on important subjects. She was known as the most enlightened patron of art and literature throughout Christendom, and was at once the tutelary saint of the cavaliers, the good angel of the king, the friend of philosophers, the protector of the struggling Reformation, and the idol of the people. Allowing for a spice of adulation, and the well-known chivalry of the times, we may quote the following glowing description of her personal attractions from the pen of a writer of a shortly subsequent period. "The Queen of Navarre had a tall, elegant figure, and in her whole air something so graceful and engaging, that it was impossible not to be in love with her. Her beauty was absolutely dazzling, and her eyes so brilliant, that it was difficult to bear un-moved either their sparkling fire or downcast softness. Her mouth was a wonder for shape and color, and the regularity of her fine teeth enhanced the beauty of lips, which seldom opened but to cheer the bystanders with wit and wisdom. The voice in which these oracles were delivered was sweet-toned and harmonious, and its gentle music irresistible." In harmony with this description of the lovely lady, we append a portrait of her by her poet secretary, Marot, who celebrates in verse:

"A sweetness living in her beauteous face,
Which does the fairest of her sex eclipse;
A lively wit, of learning ample store,
And over all a captivating grace,
Whether she speaks, or silent are her lips."

After their marriage, the King and Queen of Navarre took up their abode at St. Germain, while the court removed to Fontainebleau. For the first time in her life Marguerite saw the departure of her mother and brother without sorrow and impatient longing to be with them. A warm attachment united her to her husband, whose noble bearing and energy of character inspired her with the respect and admiration she had never been able to feel for d'Alencon. A similarity of tastes existed between them and contributed greatly to their happiness. They both loved literature and art, and though Henry's religious feelings were not as deep as those of Marguerite, he respected the views of the Reformers, and was anxious to secure their toleration. Their domestic happiness was soon to be interrupted. Francis had a high opinion of the abilities of the King of Navarre, and soon sent him off on a mission of importance to another part of the kingdom. Marguerite, feeling that he was doing good service for her brother, cheerfully submitted to the separation, as she did to the numerous other sacrifices Francis called upon her to make. She spent the months of Henry's absence at Fontainebleau in correspondence with Erasmus, and in pursuance of her usual literary avocations. It was here that a warm friendship sprang up between her and the aged Lefèvre, who had returned from his exile, and, at her request, had been appointed preceptor to the young Duke of Angouleme, one of the sons of Francis.

Up to this time, Marguerite's powerful intercession had alone kept the struggling spark of Reform alive throughout the kingdom. Important political events had occasioned a short cessation in the persecution of the Reformers, but now, in a season of comparative tranquillity, the activity of the enemies of the new doctrines revived. To the great grief of Marguerite, Francis now showed himself less favorable to toler-

ation. Foreseeing the calamities about to befall her friends, and feeling herself powerless to do them any good, she resolved to quit the court for a time. She accompanied her husband into his hereditary kingdom of Béarn, which she visited for the first time. It was during her absence that Berquin was again imprisoned for heresy, and this time with the consent of the king. Marguerite had saved him twice before, but now her intercession was in vain. The Sorbonne had determined on his ruin, and he was condemned to the flames. On her return from Béarn, Marguerite accompanied her mother to Cambray, where Louise was to meet the Archduchess Marguerite of Austria on important political business. When this was concluded they retired to Fontainebleau, where Marguerite remained in attendance on her mother, whose health was rapidly declining. Louise died during the absence of her son. Although she had been ill for some time her death was, at last, unexpected, and Francis was unable to reach her in time to receive her last farewell.

He soon joined his sister at Fontainebleau to weep with her over their common loss. Whatever may have been the faults of Louise of Savoy, and they were many, and of an aggravated character, she had been a devoted mother, and was long and sincerely mourned by her children.

After seeing every honor paid to her mother's remains, Marguerite again accompanied her husband into Béarn, where they were received with delight by their warm-hearted subjects. They were obliged to leave their little daughter, afterward the celebrated Jeanne d'Albret, in France, under the guardianship of the king, her uncle, with whom she was a great favorite. As the heiress of Navarre, Francis was unwilling, from political motives, to permit the young princess to leave his dominions. Marguerite found the quiet of Béarn more congenial to her feelings than the gayety of the French court, and, as her husband preferred to reside in his own dominions, they remained there for some time. They

devoted themselves to the improvement of the condition of their subjects, by whom they were greatly beloved, and welcomed to their little court every stranger who was distinguished for either genius or virtue. In the meantime the cause of the Reformation had steadily advanced. After the battle of Pavia, the flames of persecution had stopped for a time the spread of the gospel, but it had revived through the influence of Marguerite. Its early leaders had all been removed by death, apostasy, or flight; but others had arisen to take their place. There was now at Paris a student in one of the universities who was destined to become one of the most powerful of the opponents of Rome.

This was the celebrated John Calvin, then but a youth. A sermon composed by him was preached by the Rector of the Sorbonne before the university. It was full of the Reformed doctrines, and was denounced to the Parliament.

The Rector sought safety in flight, and Calvin was obliged to leave Paris. This introduced him to Marguerite's notice. She interfered and obtained permission for him to reside at Angouleme. From this time she maintained a constant correspondence with the young Reformer, and was consulted by him on many occasions.

The Sorbonne, furious at the escape of its intended victims, determined to attack the Queen of Navarre. She was denounced to Francis, who summoned her to Paris to answer for herself. She successfully defended herself against the charges of her enemies, and assured the king that she had never sought to overthrow the authority of the Pope; she had only wished to strengthen the church by reform. Francis was satisfied with the conduct of his sister, but was determined on the persecution of the Protestants. The Reformers had to fly. Calvin, among others, fled to Basle. Here he continued his correspondence with Marguerite, and besought her interposition in behalf of his persecuted brethren. He rebuked her timidity, and enjoined on her the avowal of their

common faith. But Marguerite's affection for her brother kept her from taking a step which she knew would incur his displeasure. She never openly left the Church of Rome, although she had long rejected its doctrines.

On the invasion of Provence by the Emperor, all the energies of Marguerite's character were again called forth. She undertook the government of Béarn, and the defense of the Spanish frontier, while her husband levied troops for Francis. When peace was established we find her prominent in all State ceremonies, retaining to the last the love and respect of her brother. She gradually gave up public life, and resided principally at Béarn, where she devoted herself to literature and the study of the Scriptures. The last meeting between Marguerite and Francis took place at the castle of Plessis les Tours. It was an affecting one on both sides. Both had seen affliction; both were in failing health, and were greatly changed since the days of their youth, when together they had presided over the most brilliant court in Europe. They met soon after the death of the favorite son of Francis, and he turned to his sister for consolation. But her efforts were unavailing to cheer his gloom and despondency. Restless and unhappy, he could not long remain in one place, and the brother and sister parted, never to meet again. Francis died soon after at Rambouillet, a mournful wreck of his former splendor. It was some time before Marguerite was informed of his death, and when it was at last made known to her, her grief was agonizing. But the faith which had so often supported her in time of trial did not desert her now. She found religion more precious than ever, and sought and found consolation in the Scriptures. She had a presentiment that she would not long survive her beloved brother, and from the time of his death her health gradually declined. She appeared but once more in public. This was on the occasion of the marriage of her daughter. After this event Marguerite left forever the court which recalled so many memories of the past,

and, accompanied by her husband, journeyed from place to place in search of health. She finally took up her abode at the castle of Odos, in Bigorre, where she died in 1549. Her death was hastened by a severe attack of pleurisy. She died murmuring the name of Jesus. Her remains were visited by hundreds of her poor subjects, whose tears were a fitting tribute to her whose blameless life had endeared her to all classes. Henry retired to Pau overwhelmed with sorrow, and never ceased to regret her loss. He never knew until she was taken from him how much he had relied upon her sound judgment and gentle wisdom.

The character of Marguerite of Navarre is one of the loveliest in all the annals of history. Her transcendent beauty, her rare genius, her winning courtesy, and heartfelt piety, form a combination seldom equaled. Gentle and unassuming, she was as much loved for her goodness as admired for her personal attractions. Elevated to the dizziest heights of earthly splendor and renown, she was unspoiled by the adulation of the world, and remained pure and single-hearted to the close of her eventful life. As an author she ranks with the best writers of the age, the style of her prose compositions being vigorous and forcible, while many of her poems are remarkable for their elegance and beauty.

Marguerite has been censured, justly perhaps, for her adherence to the Church of Rome, when she should have boldly avowed her faith, and allied herself with the cause of the Reformation. While we regret the timidity which kept her from taking this important step, we must remember the trials and difficulties of her position. Had she taken the part of a leader in the great movement in the church, she would have been placed in direct opposition to the brother whom she had been accustomed to regard with the utmost respect and love. By an open separation from Rome she might have become to France what Luther was to Germany; but she justified her course by the example of many men of emi-

ment piety, and did all she could for the Reformation consistent with her duty to her brother and her connection with the Church of Rome. We are aware that in regard to many events in

the life of the Queen of Navarre there exists a variety of opinions, but we have followed what seem to be the best authorities on the subject.

BRUSSELS IN 1563.

BY MRS. C. A. C.

TOWARD the close of a bright December day, more than three centuries ago, a few plainly dressed people might have been seen collecting in the upper story of a frame house, used as a place of storage, in a retired street of Brussels.

The proceedings of these persons, assembled in a rude room, remarkable only for its dust and dirt, were well worth observing. A man of sixty years, on whose fine face gentleness was mingled with resolution almost amounting to severity, occupied a central position, returning with easy grace the reverent salutations of all who entered. At a certain time he closed and locked the door, seated himself on a wooden box, and gave out one of Luther's Hymns. This was sung. Then he read from a small copy of the New Testament, and addressed his audience with an eloquence that would have fitted the pulpit of Notre Dame.

"Let iniquity flourish in high places," said he; "let all the enemies of God conspire to overthrow your faith; yea, let the devils in hell do their worst, 'I will never leave you, nor forsake you,' saith the Almighty. And the glory which shall be revealed to you in that day when ye pass through the fire shall outweigh a life of exquisite torture." With such grand words, did Father Francis, as he was called, inspire his hearers to noble endurance; and it seemed verily as if the Spirit of God had spoken from that rude pulpit, the people's hearts were so filled with zeal for the faith.

Such secret meetings were common then; and those who went, well knew

that they were perhaps placing their necks under the ax, or, more horrible still, were dooming their bodies to the stake. The famous edict of 1550 was in full force, Philip II. having devoted himself with a devilish insanity to the extirpation of heresy. The Inquisition (a word not to be spoken even now without a shudder) had unlimited authority over life and property. Its proceedings were horribly simple. The suspected person was quietly seized, taken to the hall of inquisition, allowed no advocate, often condemned without knowing his accuser. The judges presided with masked faces, and no friend was permitted to minister to the doomed one. Swiftly the fiendish court went through its routine; the mock trial, the rack, the execution. Death by fire was inflicted if the heretic remained obstinate; if he recanted his errors, he was mercifully allowed to be first strangled. Sometimes women were buried alive, and the nobility were in rare cases beheaded. A little later, when popular fury prevented public executions for heresy, the deed was done inside the prison wall, by drowning in boiling oil or water. Let us remember; scarce ten generations have passed since the greater part of Europe was thus held in terror by the Inquisitions established in Spain, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. We are horror-struck when we contemplate the most Catholic King, and the highest church authority, the Pope, sanctioning these cold-blooded murders, and stimulating the religious assassins to renewed exertions by liberal rewards; but we are