



The Queen and Farel.

Queen Margaret.

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QUEEN MARGARET.

BY

MRS. JULIA McNAIR WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "ALMOST A NUN," ETC. ETC.



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I HAVE told you of many great men who helped to keep the Church pure, but there have been great women also who have aided in this good work. From the days of Moses there have been good women who loved and kept the truth. You will read

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about many of these in the Bible.

I shall now tell you of one noble woman who lived in France some hundreds of years ago. She was rich; she had many friends; she was a queen, and, with so much to tempt her to love the world and please herself, she loved the Church best and tried to please God. I shall show you how this woman used her

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power, her money and her talents for good.

Her name was Margaret, and she is known as Margaret of Navarre. Marguerite in French means pearl.

She was Queen of Navarre, and was born in the year 1492. Navarre is now a part of Spain. It lies just south of France, and at one time belonged to France.

People called her the "Pearl

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of Navarre.” This was partly because her name meant pearl, but more because she was pure and gentle and lovely.

Margaret was beautiful—what is better, she was wise; and better still, she was good. Margaret had great friends and relations: her grandfather, her cousin, her brother and her husband all were kings.

A writer says of her, “It was the study of her life to do

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good and prevent evil.” This was a high aim ; it can be the aim of every girl and boy who reads this book. You can all set your hearts to do good and prevent evil ; you can do this if you ask the help of God, who “ works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

In the days when Margaret lived people often chose something as an emblem or type of what they were or wished to

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be. This object they stamped in wax on their books and letters and on many of their goods.

What do you think Queen Margaret chose for her emblem? A marigold.

“A marigold!” you say; “that is a mean little flower, indeed. Mother don’t think them nice enough to have in *our* garden; and grandmother has them under the side win-

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dow, but *she* never puts them in a bouquet because they do not smell nice.”

I will tell you why Queen Margaret of Navarre chose this common flower as her token; but first, let me say that it showed her humility that she took this instead of some more favorite flower, as the rose or tulip or lily.

Margaret chose the marigold because it looks like an

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image of the sun in its little disk or centre, with the fringe of leaves about it; and besides, it turns on its stem and follows the course of the sun in the sky. Look at marigolds, and see how they do this. Around her marigold emblem Margaret wrote these words: "I seek not things below."

She said that God was the Sun of her soul, and she desired to follow him in all her

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life and to lay up her treasure in heaven.

When quite young and in much trouble once, she was crying. A friend said to her, "Oh, my dear princess, what can we do for you?"

She replied, "I can henceforth give my heart and life to God, who will never desert nor deceive me, and who is worthy of all my love."

Margaret was born a Roman

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Catholic, and during all her early days knew nothing but what the priests taught; she had no Bible nor good books. Her mother was a handsome and witty but very wicked woman.

Her brother Francis, who was afterward King of France, was very fond of Margaret.

Margaret loved study and books, and this love kept her out of the company of many

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rich but wicked people who came to her mother's palace.

I could tell you much of Margaret when she was a little girl, playing with her brother Francis in the Castle of Amboise, where they lived; or when she wandered through the gardens with her favorite dog jumping about her, or sat reading under the trees, or spent hours at her books, with an old priest for her teacher.

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Margaret was sharp enough to see that the monks and priests were not as well behaved as they ought to be, and she sometimes made fun of them and of the stories of ghosts and witches which they told her.

When she grew older and had learned better, she grieved over sin instead of laughing at it.

Margaret had a little cousin,

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the daughter of the king—her name was Renee. She also became one of the noble women of the Church, and of her and the good she did I will tell you in our next book.

While Margaret was living at the gay court of King Francis, her brother, she was very often grieved at the wickedness of her mother and of the people about her. She was seeking God in the dark, long-

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ing for his love and peace, but with no Bible and no teacher to show her the way. At this time God sent a messenger to her.

This messenger was named William Farel, and I shall write you a little book about him. Farel was preaching to people of the love of Jesus, telling them that he who loves the Son of God must fly from sin ; that Jesus is the only

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way, truth and life, and the one door of heaven ; that God is the Father of our bodies and our spirits, and that he is a God of comfort.

The echoes of this preaching crept into the court, and Margaret heard them. Her heart leaped for joy. Here was just what she wanted.

She sent for Farel to visit her. He came, and in that gay, noisy, wicked court of

France he preached Jesus to the beautiful sister of the king. Margaret's heart was opened to the love of Christ. She became the humble, holy child of God.

Lovely and good as she had ever been, she now became better still. She plainly told her gay friends of her new hope and joy.

“What!” they cried, “has Margaret, the greatest woman

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in the kingdom, the woman whom all the world praises, become a heretic? Has she sins to lay on Jesus? Does she pray?"

Some laughed; some were sorry; some were glad.

There was a good man at the court, a bishop named Briconnet, to whom Margaret talked, asking him to teach her of the way of salvation. He gave her a precious gift, a

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Bible, telling her to read it every day.

There were also at court some pious ladies who went to hear Farel preach; they brought to Margaret some little printed books, called tracts.

Early each morning, Queen Margaret sat alone in a little room, reading her Bible, singing hymns and praying. She began each day by an hour or two spent in this way.

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Margaret wrote some very pretty poetry and hymns. In her letters to her friends she wrote much of Jesus.

Some of the priests were so angry that they went to the king and told him that his sister was a heretic; that he must take away her Bible, and make her worship the Virgin and go to mass.

They did not make much by this, for the king said, "I love

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my sister too well to let her be troubled by any one. Her life is better than yours, if she be a heretic!"

We are told that "Margaret despised no one; she was gentle to the poorest; she gave many alms to the needy." Thus she showed what true love to God makes us.

In these things you may be like her if you try; and if you have not so much money to

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give as she had, yet you can give your little cheerfully.

You remember what Jesus said about the poor widow who gave two mites, which together are less than one penny? If you forget, ask your Sunday-school teacher to tell you what it was.

But even the best of people have faults. Only one person has ever been perfect, and that was our Lord Jesus.

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Margaret had a fault which, while it came from the tenderness of her nature, prevented her from doing as much good as she might. She lacked *moral courage*—that is, she did not like to say what would be disagreeable to others even if it were right to do so. She had some of this courage, but not enough.

Her brother, King Francis, loved her so well that she

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might have told him of his faults, and perhaps persuaded him to do better. But Margaret loved her brother so foolishly that she would not hurt his feelings by plainly telling him when he was wrong. She often kept silence when it was her duty to speak.

While King Francis permitted his sister Margaret to separate herself from the Roman Catholic Church, her mother

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openly opposed her. She gave her all the trouble that she could, and urged on the priests to persecute the Protestants, and most of all the pastors, who were friends of the Reformed Church in France. This caused Queen Margaret much grief.

One of Margaret's favorite friends was a preacher named Toussaint. I am afraid you can never remember such a

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long French name. It is pronounced Too-sant. Toussaint was a very holy, simple-minded man. A priest took Toussaint captive and shut him up in a dark, wet dungeon. There was in it but one spot where he could stand out of water; and there he had to stand, with his back to the wet wall, and his head bent so that it would not hit the roof. Was not this horrible? The dun-

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geon smelled very badly, and he had hardly any food; his flesh wasted away, and pain and fever came upon him. He had once been rich and had many friends; now he was poor and a prisoner.

All this he suffered for the sake of Jesus his Lord. He had one friend left on earth; this was Queen Margaret. She heard where poor Toussaint was, and she at once went to



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the king, her brother. She knelt, weeping, at his feet, telling him of the good man's troubles and begging him to order the priests to let him go free.

“I know nothing about it, my darling,” said the king; “but if he were ten times a heretic I would not have you caused to cry for him. Do as you like; rescue this lamb of a preacher from these wolves

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the priests. I generally let them have their own way, but I can deny you nothing."

Margaret took Toussaint from his prison, and kept him at the palace until he got quite strong. She then sent him to another country, where he could preach and write good books without being persecuted.

Margaret was married to Henry, King of Navarre.

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When she married him he was a Catholic; he was a kind man, and loved Margaret. Margaret had one little daughter, named Jeanne.

Margaret and her husband wished much to do good to the poor people of their kingdom, and what they did I shall presently tell you. But first of all, I must tell you how Margaret persuaded her husband to become a Protestant

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and to help the Reformed Church. In this account you will see how great is the power of kindness, and how truly, as the Bible says, a “soft answer turneth away wrath.”

The priests came to King Henry, telling him that Margaret was turning all the people in the kingdom into Protestants, and was giving all her money to preachers and poor people. They finally

made King Henry quite angry at his good wife, and he spoke very unkindly to her. King Francis, of France, heard this and flew into a rage. He traveled to Navarre, and told King Henry that Margaret was the "Pearl of Pearls," that no one should speak roughly to her; that she was the noblest woman in France, and should go to his own court to live in splendor. Francis was a far

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greater king than Henry of Navarre, and Henry was afraid of him.

Now what did Margaret do? Did she go off with her loving brother?

No; she said, tenderly, to her husband, "Henry, you did not mean to be unkind. You were over-hasty. I know you love me. You have been deceived by these bad priests, who hate me. I will not leave

you. Dear brother and king," she said to Francis, "do not quarrel with my husband; forgive him, and be his friend."

Francis could not deny his sister's request. Tears stood in Henry's eyes.

"Your goodness conquers!" he cried. "Is it your religion that makes you so much better than other people? Then it is a better religion than mine, and I will study it."

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Brignonnet, who gave Margaret her Bible, had said, "This war is fought by love!" So Margaret found it. Like Jesus, his people conquer by gentleness.

Margaret's husband, King Henry, now studied the Bible, joined in singing the Psalms of David, and at last became a member of the Protestant Church.

We cannot tell you that he

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ever became a pious man; he seemed to join the Reformed Church more from love of his wife than from love to God. However little good such a course did him, it was a great help to a small, feeble Church, which was persecuted and poor. Henry, after this, protected the Reformers, as his wife did.

Margaret, Queen of Navarre, was a friend to John Calvin,

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the great French Reformer and teacher, about whom I wrote for you a book.

The priests were very angry when they found that they had lost King Henry by their lies and cruelty, instead of gaining Queen Margaret.

Queen Margaret's child, Jeanne, was educated as a Catholic by her uncle, King Francis, but her love of her good mother and that mother's

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prayers turned her heart to the Reformed Church. When she grew to be a woman and a queen she was a Protestant, and tried to serve God and help his people.

I will now tell you something of Queen Margaret's life in her palace.

As I told you, she did not set her heart on the glory of this world. To Bishop Briconnet she writes, "I am as a

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sheep in a stray country.” “I am the blindest of the fold, pity me.” “The times are cold, and my own heart also is icy.” “I am the poor Margaret, hungry, thirsty and frozen for the love of God!”

King Henry had his palace at Pau; it is a town in Bearn, on the side of some mountains called the Pyrenees, which lie between France and Spain. You can find it on the map of

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France. A beautiful river ran through the town.

To Margaret came the poets and the writers of history, painters and singers and musicians. She welcomed all, for she wished her home to be not grand and wicked, like the court of her brother and mother, but a place where decency, goodness and wisdom were found.

She asked good people, pas-

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tors and teachers, and holy men and women, who had been driven from their own homes by wicked priests, to find their home with her.

The Bible says, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor," and God blessed the princess who opened her house and heart to his friends.

The queen did not spend all her time in her palace talking to her visitors. She put on

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plain, modest clothes, and went about to the houses of the poor people who were the subjects of King Henry. She would sit down in their cabins by the bedsides of the aged, along with the weary mothers, take the little children on her knee, and tell them about Jesus, who "loved them and gave himself for them."

Was not this charming work for a queen? Margaret was

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not ashamed of Jesus. She felt the name of Christian to be her highest honor.

No queen had ever treated these poor people thus kindly. They could hardly believe that this kind, humble, pious woman was the king's wife and came to them from the palace. They looked on her as little less than an angel. Her words sunk into their hearts. They saw that the queen only de-

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sired to do them good. She gave them food and clothes. With her own hands she tended the sick. She gave them Bibles; she gave them tracts; she sang sweet hymns to them, and knelt down in their poor cabins and prayed with the dying.

These people had always thought queens sat on thrones, dressed in splendor, and wearing crowns on their heads,

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doing nothing, but devoting their time to looking grand and enjoying themselves; yet here was a queen who was a mother and friend, moreover a Christian.

Did not they esteem a religion that made a queen so gentle and so wise? Yes.

Margaret commended to her people the love of God. They called her "the good queen," and loved her with all their

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hearts; and from her lips they learned of Jesus, the King of kings, who for our sake became poor, who went about doing good.

These people of Bearn, Navarre and Vendome became known all through the world for their purity of life, for their earnest piety and their zeal for the Reformed Church.

Margaret had all the preaching and church services carried

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on in French, which was the language of the people. Before this it had been in Latin, which language they did not understand, and of course it did them no good.

Margaret had some young ladies—daughters of great people of France—at her palace: these she brought up as her own children, and every day she spent some time in talking to them and teaching them.

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She desired to have them grow up wise and noble women. She taught them that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ; that “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ;” and told them “ To seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”

We cannot tell how much good the queen did in this way. These young girls grew up and had homes of their

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own; and we shall find, most likely, that the good lessons of Queen Margaret grew in their hearts, and brought many of them, and of their children, at last to see God on high.

There is one thing you should notice about Queen Margaret—she thought no work too small to do for Jesus; she despised no office, if it led people nearer the Lord she loved.

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Margaret was not a dull, sleepy Christian. She did not believe that God had called her for herself alone, but she had heard him say to her soul, "Go, work to-day in my vineyard," and she was ready to obey.

Among other things which Margaret did to help on the cause of the Reformed Church, she wrote a poem, called "The Mirror of the Sinful Soul,"

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which was printed, and was much liked by pious persons.

The priests wished to get all the copies of this poem so as to burn them up, but King Francis would not let them do it.

King Francis, the brother of Queen Margaret, died when Jeanne her daughter was nearly twenty years old. Margaret was much grieved, for she loved her brother very dearly.

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Margaret died quite suddenly, about two years after the king, in 1549.

A few days before her death, Margaret said to her friend, "I am about to leave this dear earthly home for ever, but I am not afraid. I have a better home on high, and God, I am sure, will not turn me out of doors. God will carry on his work. He helped me to begin something here, and

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when I am gone he will teach my child Jeanne to carry it on. God loves his Church, and will keep it to the end."

The hope of Queen Margaret was not disappointed; her daughter Jeanne became one of the wisest, bravest and strongest friends of the Reformed Church. She feared no one; death had for her no terror; she lived to do right. She had a son, who became a

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king of France as Henry the Fourth, and who was a Protestant.

It is a great blessing to a child to have a pious mother. Jeanne could thank God for her mother, Queen Margaret, who taught her the true faith which is shown in the Bible; who showed her that kings and queens should be examples of piety.

A king of France, Henry,

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the nephew of Queen Margaret, said of his aunt, "If it were not for my aunt, Queen Margaret, I should often doubt that there was in the earth any real goodness; but in her I have never been disappointed. She is ever true."

It was God who kept Margaret of Navarre always true. God kept her from yielding to temptation, and she remained humble and gentle to the end.