

Brussels.

Brussels, the capital of Belgium, is situated in a fertile plain on the Senne, twenty-seven miles south of Antwerp and one hundred and ninety-three north-east of Paris. It communicates by canal with the Scheldt, and so with Antwerp, and railways connect it with Germany, France and Holland, as well as with all the principal towns of Belgium. The city has a circumference of about five miles, and is built partly on the side of a hill; some of the streets are so steep that they can be ascended only by means of stairs. Brussels may on the whole be pronounced one of the finest cities in Europe. The upper town is the newest and most fashionable quarter, the King's palace, public offices, chief hotels and mansions of foreign ministers are here. The lower town has peculiar interest to visitors on account of its closely built old streets, with their numerous handsome buildings, formerly belonging to the Brabant nobility, but now occupied by merchants and traders, giving a fine picturesque appearance, while some of the public edifices are unrivalled as specimens of Gothic architecture. This part has also several noble churches, but it is now wholly given over to trade. French is spoken in the upper town, but in the lower Flemish is prevalent, and in one quarter the Walloon dialect is spoken. The English language, owing to the large number of English who reside here, is also very common. The walls which formerly surrounded Brussels have been removed, and their place is now occupied by pleasant boulevards extending all around the old town and shaded by alleys of limes. The *Allée Verte*—a double avenue along the Scheldt Canal—forms a splendid promenade, and leads towards the country palace of *Loeken*, three miles north of the city. Besides the fine park in the upper town, covering an area of some thirty-two

acres, ornamented with fountains and statues, and surrounded by the palace and other state buildings, Brussels has several other squares or places, among which the most noteworthy are: the *Place Royale*, with its colossal monument of Godfrey of Bouillon; the *Grande Place*, in which is situated the *Hôtel de Ville*, a splendid Gothic structure, erected in the beginning of the fifteenth century; it has a spire of open stonework three hundred and sixty-four feet high, and it was here, in 1568, the patriot counts, Egmont and Horn were beheaded by order of the Duke of Alva; and the *Place des Martyrs*, where a memorial has been erected to those who fell in the revolution of 1830. Among the churches the largest and finest is the Cathedral of St. Gudule, which dates from the thirteenth century, and is built in the pointed Gothic style, with many richly painted windows, and a pulpit considered to be the masterpiece of Verbruggen. In the *Palais des Beaux Arts* is the picture-gallery, containing the finest specimens of the Flemish school of painting; a valuable museum; and the public library, with over 250,000 volumes and about 22,000 manuscripts, many of the latter being beautifully illuminated. The new *Palais de Justice*, built in 1856-83 from designs by Poelaert, at a cost of more than \$10,000,000, is one of the most magnificent buildings in Europe. The Royal Palace and National Palace are important buildings. Brussels is the seat of the provincial government of South Brabant as well as of the general government of the kingdom. In commercial and industrial matters Brussels is very prominent. Its lace is particularly famous. Of the carpets which pass under the name of Brussels carpets only a few are manufactured here, most of those of Belgian make being produced at Tournai. Carriage building is a prominent industry. The population of Brussels and suburbs is 561,782.