

At my feet the city slumbered. From its chimneys, here and there,
Wreaths of snow-white smoke, ascending, vanished, ghost-like into air.

Not a sound rose from the city at that early morning hour,
But I heard a heart of iron beating in the ancient tower.

Then most musical and solemn, bringing back the olden times,
With their strange, unearthly changes, rang the melancholy chimes,

Like the psalms from some old cloister, when the nuns sing in the choir :
And the great bell tolled among them, like the chanting of a friar.

Visions of the day departed, shadowy phantoms filled my brain ;
They who live in history only seemed to walk the earth again.

All the Foresters of Flanders—mighty Baldwin Bras de Fer,
Lyderick du Bueq and Cressy, Philip, Guy de Dampierre.

I beheld the pageants splendid, that adorned those days of old ;
Stately dames, like queens attended, knights who bore the Fleece of Gold ;

Lombard and Venetian merchants with deep-laden argosies ;
Ministers from twenty nations ; more than royal pomp and ease.

I beheld proud Maximilian, kneeling humbly on the ground ;
I beheld the gentle Mary, hunting with her hawk and hound.

I beheld the Flemish weavers, with Namur and Juliers bold,
Marching homeward from the bloody battle of the Spurs of Gold.

And again the whiskered Spaniard all the land with terror smote ;
And again the wild alarum sounded from the tocsin's throat ;

Till the bell of Ghent responded o'er lagoon and dyke of sand,
"I am Roland ! I am Roland ! there is victory in the land !"

Then the sound of drums aroused me. The awakened city's roar
Chased the phantoms I had summoned back into their graves once more.

Bruges had an ancient reputation for the beauty of its maidens
—"*formosis Brugæ puellis*"—but they had an unintelligent ex-
pression that, to me, was less attractive than the bright looks of
our quick-witted Canadian girls. A blight and mildew—the
effect of Romish superstition—seem to have overgrown the place ;
one-third of the population are said to be paupers—and very
homely-looking ones they are—the women in long blue cloaks,
and wearing clumsy wooden shoes.