

and Spanish, who learned Greek to understand Latin better, and who spoke also French and Italian can be regarded in no other light.

Marie never married, and when young, was kept from entering a convent only by her father's promise that she need never go to the ball-room or the theatre, that she might go to Church at will, and that she might dress as simply as she chose. Ultimately upon her father's death she did take the veil and devote herself to the study of theology. She gave up her worldly goods to the poor or sold them not retaining even the jewels and other presents given by noteworthy persons as rewards for her great learning. Such is the outline of her life other than scientific. To return to the latter.

By the age of nineteen she was conversant with the whole range of science of her time. The father who was very proud of his daughter's ability used to invite learned men to his house and have Marie converse with them upon scientific topics. The following extract taken from De Brosses' "Letters written in Italy" will give an idea of one of these disputations. He is writing to a friend and says:—"I have just returned from the home of the Signora Agnesi. I was shown into a large and beautiful room where I found thirty people from all the nations of Europe, ranged in a circle, and Mlle. Agnesi seated in the centre upon a low stool with her little sister beside her. She is a young lady of eighteen or twenty years and has a simple expression. I expected when going there to speak to her just as one ordinary person to another. Imagine my surprise when Count Belloni (who brought me) started out with a beautiful speech in Latin to which she replied quite modestly. They entered upon a discussion about intermittent springs, still speaking in Latin. She spoke like an angel upon this matter; I never heard anything which pleased me more. Then Belloni turned to me and invited me to enter the lists stipulating that the subject be mathematical or philosophical. I was almost stupified because I was quite uncertain of my Latin. However I complimented her and we started into a discussion upon how the brain gets hold of sense perceptions; then we criticized the emission theory of light and lastly spoke of the primary colours. Loppin who was present entered into a conversation with her upon the transparency of bodies and upon the geometrical properties of certain curves. Of this last subject I understood nothing."

At her father's request when she was about twenty-one Marie devoted herself wholly to Mathematics and published a book called "*Institutions Analytiques*." The work appeared in two volumes the first upon Algebra and the second upon the Infinitesimal Calculus. The order, clearness and precision of the work commended it and it became the one book upon the subject.

In the preface Marie said she started the work for amusement and to aid her brother who showed a leaning towards mathematics. The book was praised upon all sides and Pope Benedict XIV always anxious to encour-