

buildings, while beyond the stone gateways of the town stretch the wide and fertile plains of Flanders. Then the chimes pealed forth, and the hour struck—one, two, three—would they never cease? I put my fingers in my ears, but the whole earth seemed to reverberate. At last they reached twelve, and I breathed once more. But no; still another, a bell, was struck by hand with one sharp note. This was the signal given by the watchman that all is well; I was surprised to find two old men living up there, like the keepers of some remote lighthouse, for they rarely descend to earth. They look after the vast machinery of the chimes and give the signal of fire—a flag by day and a light by night—to all parts of the city. They also warn the inhabitants of the approaching enemy, and in their spare time, with true Belgian thrift, they cobble shoes, while other odd coins come their way in the tourist season.

"Ah, madame is English? She would like to see the 'House of the Seven Towers,' where King Charles II. lived in exile? It is there, and yonder is the Guildhall of the Archers of St. Sebastian, where Charles had the golden Bird of Honour hung around his neck."

Poor Charles! He and his court were always in debt; they could not even pay for their meals during their stay in Bruges, and he had to leave his furniture behind him for arrears in rent, but he was well liked there nevertheless, for he entered into the sports of the people, and was playing tennis when the news of the death of Cromwell was brought to him. The town is still a resort for impetuous English gentry, and perhaps it is the cheap living as much as the beauty of Bruges that attracts such a large colony of artists there every summer.

I would have lingered in the tower, but a sound warned me that the chimes were about to ring again and I fled down, down, into the dark,

with the bells ringing in my ears.

In the square below the etcher was at work, seated at a table in front of a café. The people glanced at her as they passed by, but she was undisturbed, for artists are no novelty in Bruges. As I approached, however, an old woman planted her hands on the little iron table and thrust her face close to that of the etcher, who recoiled a little, but went on with her work.

"*Qu'est-ce que vous faites là?*" said the old woman.

"*Rien du tout,*" replied the etcher, who prides herself on her French accent. Whereupon the old woman broke out in a strong Irish brogue.

"Aha! I knew you were not French. If you were French you would be more *polite!*"

I walked about the town, and everywhere I saw artists painting—painting the canals and the red-roofed houses, the stone bridges and the swans, painting the historic buildings, the quaint narrow streets and the cobble-paved squares. In the Place du Bourg, beneath the shade of the trees, were a group of German art students, mostly girls, who were studying with a popular artist from Munich. They were daubing away vigorously, but their work was interspersed with a good deal of laughter. It was clear that they liked to be near one another, in order to carry on the arts of painting and conversation at the same time.

I sat down near the Statue Van Eyck, in the shade of which were women selling flowers, while rows of potted geraniums and pansies were laid out on the pavement. Now and then a black-robed nun or a barefooted Carmelite passed by, and between the trees and the group of artists I could get a glimpse of the beautiful Hotel de Ville. I tried to imagine the scene in the days when the Flemish court was the most magnificent in Europe, and when the Count of Flanders, attaining to office, would show himself at the window opposite