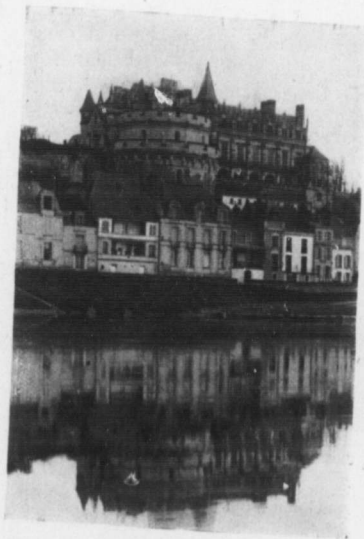


famous Marguerite, called the Pearl of Valois, and Francis, afterwards the great King. In the beautiful garden of the chateau and in the surrounding forest, Francis and Marguerite passed many happy days of their childhood. Here Francis, after his release from captivity in Spain, made arrangements to entertain his imperial captor, Charles V., amid great ceremony and



THE CHATEAU AT AMBOISE.

splendor, and, because his guest had a great aversion to climbing steps, he had built, instead of the spiral staircase formerly in the tower, that great inclined plane, up which a stage coach and its horses might go, and which is shown to the present day. Here the weak and sickly Francis. II. passed many happy days with his beautiful and beloved bride, Mary Stuart, and here the tender girl and her consort,

the King in name only, were forced to become unwilling witnesses of that bloody drama, the slaughter of hundreds of Huguenots, lured hither by false promises of a conciliatory edict by that fierce woman, Catherine de Medici, the real ruler of France. At her command her poor weakling of a son and his young queen were led to the southern terrace, where close beneath the windows of the chateau a scaffold had been built. It was draped in black, and beside it stood the executioner, clothed in scarlet, while his victims were ranged in hundreds along the ramparts, awaiting their doom with bowed heads. When the butchery was over, the corpses of the commoner victims were thrown into the Loire, while those of the chief conspirators were left hanging in chains from the castle walls. Here they succeeded in gaining some sort of revenge, for they rendered the chateau uninhabitable, even for the iron-nerved Catherine.

The chief architectural attraction of Amboise is the chapel of St. Hubert, erected under the direction of Charles VIII. in the full-blown Gothic of that period. Aside from its architectural beauty a sentimental interest attaches to it from the fact that here are enshrined the bones of Leonardo da Vinci.

After the assassination of the Duc de Guise at Blois, Amboise became a state prison, in which were confined the Cardinal de Bourbon, Fouquet and Lauzun, the Emir Abdel-Kader having been imprisoned here as late as 1852. At the present day it belongs to the family of Orleans, to whom it was given by the National Assembly in 1872, and by whose generosity it has become a retreat for military veterans.

As Francis I. and Henry II., two