

"The Heptameron" of Margaret of Navarre

THE FACETIOUS tales of Queen Margaret of Navarre, newly translated from the authentic text of M. Le Roux de Lincy, appears in five good-sized volumes, with an "Essay upon the Heptameron," by Mr. George Saintsbury, M.A., and the eighteenth-century plates and head and tail-pieces, the former by Freudenberg and the latter by Dunker. Freudenberg was one of those "little masters" of the last century whose work has been brought once more into vogue by the Goncourts and other enthusiasts. His plates are here very well printed on smooth, imperial Japanese-paper. Dunker's little copperplates are separately printed, as they originally appeared, on the paper that bears the text. Except for the more open type, and margins not so well proportioned, this edition has the appearance of a handsome eighteenth-century edition. Only two fully illustrated editions of the "Heptameron" have been published since its first appearance in 1558. The first of these was published at Amsterdam in 1698, with drawings by Roman de Hooze, and is principally of value on account of its rarity. The second is the one from which the illustrations in this new edition have been reproduced. It was published at Berne in 1778-1781, and Longueuil, Halbou and other well-known French engravers of the period were employed to make the plates from Freudenberg's drawings. Dunker, it may be added, was the artist specially employed by the Duc de Choiseul. The Berne edition fetches an almost fabulous price to-day, and it is but rarely that a copy is put upon the market. The illustrations in this new edition of the work have been printed from the actual copper-plates used for the Berne edition. A portrait of Queen Margaret, from a crayon drawing by Clouet, preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, forms the frontispiece of the first volume. M. de Lincy's text was prepared at the request of the Société des Bibliophiles Français. His researches in the National Library at Paris brought to light many tales that had been lost and passages that had been omitted in the previous editions of the work, and his version, as here translated, must be considered as final. It is supplemented, moreover, by all the important notes to be found in the principal French editions, with the addition of numerous others from original sources, and a *résumé* of the various suggestions towards the identification of the narrators and actors of the tales with well-known personages of the time. Among its most curious features are the quaint Prefaces of the earlier French versions, while a bibliography of the various editions which have issued from the press completes the work. With the exception of the slight lack of proportion in the margins referred to above, everything that has gone to the making of these volumes—paper, type and binding, the literary quality of the translation, and the beauty of the illustrations—renders this edition worthy of the society of book-lovers that is to be thanked for its publication. (London: The Society of English Bibliophillists.)