

Lord of Coniston. I will have that title, and those lands, of which thou wast the heir, while I, as the poor younger brother, was slighted, insulted, and defrauded, for such a thing as thou!"

"Miserable boy!" exclaimed the Earl, "art thou not yet content with the misery thy wild passions have caused. Thou hadst not even the poor excuse that the damsel of Egremont was betrothed against her will to thy brother. Thou the Lord of Coniston! That thou shalt never be. Not a coin from my coffers, nor a rood from my land shall be thine. Go, then; never let me see thy detested face again; and bear with thee the malediction of thy father!"

"It shall not rest with thee, my lord, whether I own the lands of Coniston, or die a beggar thou wouldst make me. I seek neither favor nor wealth from you, who, reckoning from love, were the father of but one son. I call not yonder catfif, brother; nor own you as a sire. Therefore to him, and to you also, do I swear a portion of that revenge and hatred which in future I will owe to all mankind. Doubt it not that I—I will be the Lord of Coniston. Yea, though I invoke the powers of darkness to my aid!"

"Miserable, unhappy youth!" exclaimed the abbot, "the power of the Evil one has been upon thee this night. The fiends are at thy heart, and thine ear. Down—down upon thy knees, wouldst thou not abandon thy soul to them for ever! Behold this cross, the sacred emblem of our redemption, stained with an aged man's blood, shed by thee;—shed in this holy place, on the threshold of the sanctuary itself! Cast away that sword, which sought a brother's life. Kneel to thy brother for forgiveness, he hath had great wrong from thee. Kneel to your father, and beseech his pardon. And, more than all, kneel to an offended God!"

Oswald who had been about to rush from the bell-tower, was staid in his fury by the words of the abbot.

His hard defiant looks, too, softened for a moment, as he looked on the blood that streamed from the abbot's hand, which had been wounded when he rushed between the infuriated brothers.

Unhappily, however, his eyes encountered also the face of Randolph, pale, and wrung with pain and rage, but with the white lips curled with a sneer of mingled malice and triumph.

"Ho! ho!" he exclaimed furiously as he pointed at Randolph. "I will not mock the heaven I have offended!" I tell thee, Lord Abbot, the fiends who beleaguery my soul, would whiten, the foulest of them all, beside yon demon in a human form, whom thou callest my brother. Avaunt, old man! nought can, either time or eternity, give me that is equal to revenge! From seizing upon that, heaven would not tempt, nor the regions of eternal hell affright me!" With a desperate gesture the unhappy Oswald waved the abbot aside, then casting a glance full of anguish on the corpse of Evelina, he rushed out into the darkness and the storm.

THE MARQUIS OF RIPON'S CONVERSION.

THE 'Church Herald' contains this remarkable article:—"The conversion of the Marquis of Ripon to the Catholic faith, in the form accepted by our Roman brethren, has a good deal startled the 'Times' and the irreligious and unreflecting public generally. And yet there is nothing remarkable about the event except that it is probably first of a goodly series of similar defections. Brought up in a school of rigid Evangelicalism, Lord Ripon's mind was too honest, and his heart too warm, to be content with the traditions he inherited. An instinctive rejection of the narrow scheme of Calvinism left him—as it has left thousands of those who, in their early years, have learned nothing better—a Liberal and a Broad Churchman. But Lord Ripon is a man both of deep religious feeling and of large culture. He has read enough to find out that our Lord and his Apostles not only enlightened the world by their teaching, but also founded a Church; and when, like Lord Bute, he looked around him to find the only divinely-grounded religion which had the right to claim his submission, he failed to discover its characteristics in a religious organization superintended, in the latitudinarian interest, by Archbishops Tait and Thomson, under the control of a Parliamentary majority. Therefore like an honest man as he is, he accepted, what had become to him the only alternative, and, with it, whatever obloquy it may bring from those who are unable to appreciate his motives. We respectfully offer to his Lordship our congratulations. From our own point of view, doubtless, he might have done better; and had he been brought up in the Catholic faith in the Church of England, there might have remained, all difficulties notwithstanding. At any rate, he has fairly escaped out of the slough of latitudinarianism. The 'Times,' of course, represents his Lordship as little better than a goose; but common sense will retort that a man who believes that our Lord founded a Church, and has left its teaching and worship to the guidance of Mr Disraeli and those other organs of public opinion—the 'Times,' 'Telegraph,' and 'National Reformer'—must be at best an idiot. And in the end common sense will prevail. If our Erastian Archbishops are allowed to have their way, Rome or Infidelity will soon be the only alternatives open to intelligent Englishmen. The present race of State-appointed prelates have all but destroyed the citadel which has hitherto been the security of Anglican adherents to the Catholic Faith. Until the mischief thus done can be repaired, secessions to Rome must be constantly expected, and may as well be regarded with equanimity.

"It is asserted by those who knew the Marquis of Ripon, that he has been led to take the step in question mainly from a careful study of the subject of Christian education. His Lordship has come to almost the same conclusion as ourselves, viz., that *Christian Education in England has become practically destroyed by the recent Education Act*—a conclusion likewise come to by Mr E. S. Ffoulkes, whose masterly anonymous pamphlet recently obtained so much attention at Oxford."

BELGIUM THE MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY IN EUROPE.

THIS IS THE EFFECT OF GOOD LAWS.

(From Meddills letters to Chicago 'Tribune'.)

BELGIUM is only a small patch of territory, containing barely 10,400 square miles; but on this little area there is supported in comfort and independence 5,400,000 souls! Can your readers realize that, on a space not exceeding one-fifth that of Illinois, there is concentrated the population of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota? But such is the fact. Belgium supports.

ONE HUNDRED FAMILIES TO THE SQUARE MILE.

England which contains one city of 3,000,000 inhabitants and a dozen others ranging from 200,000 to 600,000 each, is less densely populated than Belgium by 100 persons to the square mile. And what is still more singular, England which boasts of her scientific and perfect system of landlord and tenant cultivation, scarcely produces half the bread or meat consumed by her population, but imports four millions of tons of breadstuffs, and three millions of tons of fresh and salt meats, cheese and butter—making seven millions of tons of food per annum; whereas Belgium, which contains 25 per cent. more inhabitants to the square mile, imports scarcely a pound of breadstuffs or a pound of meat, but actually exports more food than she imports. Not only does Belgium produce sufficient food for her population, including barley for the manufacture of beer, of which large quantities are consumed, but she grows nearly enough sugar-beets to supply her people with what "sweetening" they need; and in the mountain districts of Ardennes grapes enough are grown to produce a considerable part of all the wine consumed in Belgium.

This dense population is attributed to the breaking up of large estates into small farms, to the removal of restraints on commerce, giving the people the benefit of free trade, and to cheap transportation brought about by the government, becoming a competitor with private enterprise in transporting merchandise. The example and success of Belgium is an interesting fact for the American people.

There is now no hereditary land monopoly and no idle land in Belgium. Not an acre is devoted to deer parks, pheasantries, or other sporting purposes, for the enjoyment of a luxurious and dissolute aristocracy, while masses of men are starving for bread. As I travel through Belgium, I see swarms of men, women and children cutting down and gathering a harvest of grain and grass, where the wheat will yield 30 to 40 bushels per acre, the oats 50 to 75 bushels, and the hay $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 tons per acre; while the ensuing product of flax and of root crops—potatoes and beets—will be beyond American conception of possibilities. The strawberries, red raspberries, and gooseberries, brought to market, while not superior in flavor to those sold in Chicago, are twice or thrice as large.

These enormous yields of agricultural and horticultural products are not in consequence of better soil and climate than in America, but are the results of heavy manuring, deep ploughing and spading, subsoiling, and underdraining when required, irrigation when possible, watchful hoeing and weeding, free use of guano and other fertilizers for top-dressing, and careful harvesting, and storage of crops, whereby nothing is wasted, lost, or allowed to rot in the fields. This perfect system of tillage never was adopted or thought of until the land became the property of the cultivators of the soil, and the relation of landlord and tenant ceased to exist.

THE PRICE OF LAND

in Belgium ranges from \$200 to \$1000 per acre, and a fair average would be \$400 to \$500; but there is very little offered for sale. Most of the sales take place in cases where rich manufacturers or bankers want a country seat; or, more frequently, where the older heirs purchase the interests of the younger ones,—the latter taking up their residence in the cities. It is perfectly surprising on how small a freehold patch of ground the Belgium peasant is able to raise a family in comfort, and supply all their reasonable wants. Of course they realize high prices for every article they have to sell,—about double what an Illinois farmer gets; while they purchase all their store-goods for less than half of what the western farmer must pay for his supplies. Ownership of the land and good prices for the crops are the incentives which make the Belgium farmers strive to make the earth yield its utmost production.

THE FOREIGN COMMERCE

of Belgium is immense for so small a country. Last year the imports amounted to \$280,000,000, and the exports to \$250,000,000. Like the British, the Belgians seek to have "balance of trade" against themselves, as that proves they receive more property than they send abroad in exchange for it. Hence the "balance of trade" against them measures their clear profits; at least they think so; and by pursuing that course steadily for thirty or forty years past, they have become rich, in spite of the adverse "balance of trade."

The revenue of the government for 1873 was \$38,000,000, and the total expenditure \$35,600,000. The surplus was applied in payment of the national debt, which now amounts to \$183,000,000—the interest on the same being \$7,200,000. The Belgian debt consists of two parts—first, the portion of the Dutch national debt, which they were obliged to assume after obtaining their independence, as adjudged by the Great Powers; second, the amounts expended for the construction of State railways and telegraphs. The former, or Dutch debt part, amounted to \$97,500,000; the latter, or cost of the railroads, to \$126,000,000; total \$223,500,000, of which \$40,000,000 has been paid off. Belgium is one of the nations which are liquidating their national debts, or whose revenues are greater than their expenditures.