

**THE INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS OF BELGIUM.
AN OBJECT LESSON FOR IRELAND.**

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THE recent perusal of two very interesting works on the present industrial position of Belgium suggested to me to select the above subject for this paper. The works are "Land and Labour Lessons from Belgium," by Mr. B. Seebohn Rowntree, and "La Belgique au Travail," by M. J. Izart, published in Paris in 1910. However, before dealing with the present state of affairs, it will be interesting and useful to glance at the industrial position of the country before the Revolution of 1830. Up to that period Belgium had been the shuttle-cock of Great Powers, and more than once the cock-pit of nations. But even under circumstances inimical to the arts of peace the abundance of its resources and the industry of its people had made it famous in the industrial annals of Europe. After the battle of Waterloo Belgium was annexed to Holland. The union from the very first was a hollow one. The historical, religious, and industrial circumstances of the two countries were completely dissimilar. On this point, the "British and Foreign Review" says, in the ninth volume—"The constitution by an unparalleled political fraud was forced upon the nation, and was the commencement of a course of injuries and oppression which, in their sixteenth year, produced their natural fruit, the Belgian Revolution." Long before 1814 the port of Antwerp was a great centre of commerce, but in that year it was broken up, the store-houses and docks were ordered to be destroyed, and to be divided between the French and Dutch. The town industries were flourishing; it was from Flanders that Queen Phillipa, wife of Edward III., brought to England the artificers who introduced the manufacture of cloth. An old monkish chronicler relates how they owed to them the advantage of wearing cloth, or, as he quaintly put it, clothes for the first time. Lace and woollens kept Verviers, Liege, and other towns busy. The only industry which appears at that time to have been neglected was that of agriculture, which is at this moment the dominant one in that country. But Belgium's undeveloped resources were all there, her

mines, her forests, and her fruitful, but untilled soil. The development of these became the great object, and then the question arises, how did Belgium get the necessary capital to develop her great resources and to start her new industries.

She had her financial difficulties, and at the beginning she succumbed to them. Her first National Bank failed. But other countries possessed of capital invested in this productive and industrious country. Germans, for many reasons, were shy of investing in their own country; they did so largely in Belgium, as did also the capitalists of France, England, and other countries.

Agriculture.

The first industry, and even now the main one, dealt with in Mr. Rowntree's book is that of agriculture. The cultivation of the land was the source of Belgium's industrial success. "Tillage," he says, "is the great feature of the present day, the proportion of permanent grass is the lowest of all countries, and this although it carries more live stock than any other country." The great amount of land under crops is accounted for by the amount of its products used for the multitude of town industries, to which I shall refer in their proper place; then the stall feeding of cattle entailed the culture of green crops, with the result of better stock, more manure, winter dairying, and large employment of hands. Belgium has not gained her pre-eminence in crops to the prejudice of live stock. "She stands (says Mr. Rowntree) at the head of the list in the number of live stock per square mile of territory, her cattle being 25 per cent. more than that of Denmark, and twice as many as Great Britain." As to smaller agricultural industries her market gardening is marvelous. "She not only feeds her own people with vegetables and fruits, but she is able to export £71,000 per annum, most of it going to England." To illustrate the intense individual industry which produces such results, Mr. Rowntree quotes the following instance:—"One of the best growers of cauliflowers in Louvain was formerly a bricklayer. By careful attention he earned a reputation for the produce, and he had, at the time Mr. Rowntree refers to, a farm of over 50 acres of vegetables. He had spent £1,600 on buildings, he gave some of his sons farms and others professions. In the autobiography of General Sir William Butler I lately read his felicitous references to this kind of culture. Having told a military friend at Aldershot that he was going to visit Belgium, the other soldier said: "What, to see turnips; you know you can't get blood out of a turnip." "No," said Sir William, "I

am going to see where the turnips are got out of blood." Side by side with this unequalled agricultural prosperity, town industries of every kind flourish in this marvellous little country. At page 70 of his work, Mr. Rowntree gives the number of trades and persons employed in them, they comprise every species of manufacture known to industry, and he estimated the total number of those employed in them at 1,102,244. In this connection, I gather from the second book, "Belgium at Work," above referred to, the following very interesting information.

In connexion with steel and iron industries, there is at present a society called the Cockerill Society. It is known all over Belgium. It was, says M. Izart, founded by "John Cockerill, one of two sons of Ireland, who introduced the manufacture of machines for spinning and weaving, and it was he who also introduced to the Continent the great invention of Bessemer steel, and in 1835 he laid down the first rails, and made the first locomotive of the Continent of Europe."

The Society still exists and, says the writer, when the visitor to Seraing passes by the old Chateau of the Prince Bishops, which William the First gave to Cockerill, he should not forget to pay homage to the statue of John Cockerill, whose name is engraved on the pedestal. The first Cockerill risked his liberty by bringing from England some secrets regarding the manufacture of woollen goods. In the beginning, he and his family had to work in secret and amid many sufferings, but at last they succeeded in starting the first spinning mill known on the Continent." A very recent correspondent, under date of August, 1911, writing to me from Brussels, refers to the existing influence of the Cockerill Society in connection with many flourishing industries

One cannot write of Belgian industry without making special reference to its home industries, for instance, the lace manufacture. In 1896 50,000 persons, almost all women, were employed at this work, gentle and simple seem to pursue it. Mr. Rowntree does not omit from his book a special reference to the great industry of Forestry. He says of it: "The question of the afforestation of waste lands early attracted attention, and Belgium has of late years pursued a vigorous policy of afforestation. In 1905 there were 1,321,788 acres of woods, being 18 per cent. of the entire country. In this great work the people did not entirely depend upon the State, for 62 per cent. of the forests were owned by private persons and 31 by companies. For a long time the State managed only 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. But it soon perceived that for the preservation and

extension of a national asset private possession was not the best.

"The experiment," says an official report of 1867, "has demonstrated that private individuals are the worst proprietors. If all the trees now destroyed had been the property of the State, what valuable resources they would have been for the timber supply of the country; what work would they have provided for the working population." After some years of State management the annual wages for Forestry amounted to £400,000.

TRANSIT.

And now, having described all the sources of employment from great ports, great tillage, thousands of industries, we come to the knitting of them all together by the magnificent system of transit, which absolutely annihilates space. On this important subject it is desirable to quote Mr. Rowntree at length. On page 312, he says: "The Belgian system of inland waterways is one of the most complete in the world. There is a whole net-work of them connecting her industrial and agricultural centres with each other, with her ports and with adjacent countries; then there are large canals leading to Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, and Zerbrugge, while the Scheldt, leading to Antwerp, and artificially deepened in parts, is one of the most important water-ways in the world. The canals are an immense advantage to towns like Liege, engaged in the production of heavy goods, which can be sent by water to the port twice as cheaply as by rail, although the latter is cheap."

"There is no country in the world with so great a length of railway in proportion to her size as Belgium. In 1907 she had 2,859 miles, or 30.29 per 100 miles of country, as compared with 22.33 in Great Britain, and the light railways play in her prosperity an important part. The passenger fares are very low, and transit still lower. A Belgian farmer can send 44 lbs. of vegetables 94 miles at carriers' risk for 7*d.*; this would cost in England 2*s.* 1*d.* The cost of the constitution of the line is very moderate, the cost per mile including rolling stock, stood in 1890 at £2,753, and in 1908 £3,756. The cost in Great Britain in 1906 was £5,860. In fact, it is evident up to the time of Mr. Rowntree that labour must be co-operating with capital to produce general prosperity.

"It is quite clear that Belgium regards her railways as a valuable factor in her industrial success." "It is evident," said the British Consul-General for Belgium, "that to them Belgium greatly owes her present prosperity. Belgium experience also shows clearly the advantage of

unity of administration." But of all her transit arrangements the most important is her system of light railways.

"While England," says Mr. Rowntree, "has been endeavouring vainly to develop this means of transit, Belgium has covered her surface with a system of light railways more complete than that of any other country in the world."

Acting on the suggestion of a Commission the State has granted the construction and control of light railways to a society known as the National Society. Referring to the light railways, Mr. Rowntree says: "There is no country in the world with so great a length of railways in proportion to her size as Belgium. The advance of the seaports and commercial towns is on a level with that of the agricultural districts. Antwerp, Ghent, Ostend and Bruges need only be quoted. Over 13½ million tons entered these ports in 1907, 11 millions of which went to Antwerp. On this one port alone, the Government of this little country, not much more than a third of Ireland, is at the present moment spending £8,000,000 in improvements.

AND NOW I COME TO IRELAND.

As in the case of Belgium, but more prolonged, the history of Ireland has been one of unrest and consequent undevelopment of industrial progress. Though not the shuttlecock of nations, it has been the battle-ground of parties, and with the exception of one favoured province provided with more protection for industry, the absence of security contributed to the presence of unrest. I cannot say as yet that the causes of that unrest are all gone, but there is no doubt many have been removed, and, as in the future more favourable circumstances arise, so more industries and prosperity will follow. My object in this part of my paper is to demonstrate that, as in Belgium before 1830, there are in Ireland great resources capable of development, and the germs of many industries capable of indefinite extension. I shall treat the points I submit in the same order as I have dealt with those of Belgium, and first, with regard to capital, I am hopeful that if political rest and security could be achieved, and when her resources and possibilities are known, capital will pour into Ireland as it did in Belgium. I am fortified in that view by the published opinion of the well-known Irish-American, Mr. Richard Croker. In an interview with a reporter of New Bureau Association at New York, he said: "Ireland is full of minerals, coal, lead, and iron are found there; the only trouble is that there is at present no money to develop them. While I am over here I will most probably get in

touch with gentlemen interested in the matter, and then we may try to help things along. Englishmen will not invest money in Ireland. That is why these mines have not hitherto been worked." I agree with Mr. Croker in everything but the last opinion. My own belief is that where an Englishman sees his way to a return he will invest his money.

Already, although the perfect rest and security which followed the self-rule of Belgium is not ours, yet we have every day instances of the intention of English capitalists to invest in Irish enterprises, and undoubtedly the field for such investments is ample. As in the case of Belgium, I take first the great undeveloped field of agriculture.

Unlike Belgium, agriculture was always the main industry of Ireland, but, in three provinces at least, want of knowledge and insecurity of tenure resulted in very slipshod and imperfect methods. Referring to this ignorance and want of enterprise, M. Emile de Lavaleye, in his essay in the Cobden Club Series, published in 1883, says: "Were two or three intelligent farmers in each district of Ireland, having become owners, to borrow from Flemish agriculture such processes as are applicable to the soil and climate, a complete transformation of Irish farming would ensue. In the province of Hainault the example of a single farmer was sufficient to bring about the system of rotation of crops." "Could," he says, "nothing be done to produce agricultural progress in Ireland?" Since 1883 the ownership has been largely increased. The result where it has occurred has not only led to better farming, but to peace and order.

During the last Spring Assizes, the Judges have from the Bench referred to this change. Mr. Justice Ross—the Land Judge "par excellence"—having to go as a Lord Justice of Assize, said at Limerick: "The satisfactory state of the country he attributed to the operation of Land Purchase, tenant ownership—here as elsewhere contributing to peace and prosperity."

How well do I remember that in that very county in the time of my boyhood, there existed the land system, on the one hand, and the wild justice of revenge on the other. In his essay M. Lavaleye comments upon the system of Belgian stock raising, as compared with that in Ireland. In the former country the cattle are stall-fed, by which better stock is reared, more manure produced, green crops tilled and employment promoted. This is what the Vice-President of the Irish Agricultural Department is trying to promote in this country. Ownership alone will work out his ideal. In Ireland itself we have an instance in agriculture and other industries, of which not ownership,

but even protection from arbitrary oppression can affect, the existence of tenant right in the North, known as the Ulster custom, which at least helped to prevent capricious eviction and to encourage more industry. To the security the Belgian farmer enjoys, M. Lavaleye ascribes their industry and peaceable lives. He says: "There are no measures more conducive to the maintenance of order than those which facilitate the acquisition of property in land by those who cultivate it; there are none more fraught with danger than those which concentrate the ownership in the hands of a few families."

We saw in Belgium the small extent of land in permanent grass. Unfortunately, we know in Ireland of its great predominance; the land is comparatively unproductive, there is no employment of labour. A well-known authority described this state of affairs when he said: "The chief employment of an Irish farmer was to lean against a wall and watch the grass growing." He is raising stock, no doubt, but in Belgium, as we have seen, there is more live stock, more manure, better crops, and, above all, more employment. Under such a system it is no wonder that the population, which in 1840 stood at 4,000,000, now amounts to over 7,000,000.

Under the Irish system, it is no wonder that the population which stood at over seven millions, now has diminished to less than four and a half millions. But under the influence of the Agricultural Department we are improving in that direction also. I was glad to perceive that in the year 1910 there was an increase of 70,000 acres in tillage, as compared with 1909.

But even in Ireland itself we have instances where, in the favoured province, partial security of tenure and the resulting industry produced plenty in the home of the farmer. In Down intense culture and small holdings saved that county in the terrible year of famine, the same system of small culture still continues there, and the same prosperity. As a proof of this, this tillage county, as compared with those in the south and west, where pasture and insecurity prevailed, when the standard poor rate had to be struck under the Local Government Act, that of Co. Down was struck at 10*d.* in the £, that of the Co. Limerick, a grazing county, at 2*s.* 2½*d.*

From the great branches of tillage and grazing, let us come to the minor market gardening, and compare the production of vegetables and fruit with what we have seen in the little Kingdom of Belgium, not much more than a third of the size of Ireland. In that excellent book of reference, the new edition of the Report of the Recess Committee, of which our President was a member, and

Mr. T. P. Gill was secretary, I find that, instead of exporting many thousands of pounds' worth which she could spare, Ireland, in common with the United Kingdom, had to import an immense quantity for her own use. The only place in Ireland in which I saw anything approaching the market gardening industry was in the district of Tagoat, Co. Wexford, where one active priest, Canon Doyle, had literally "renewed the face of the earth," every scrap of ground being tilled or planted—an example which should be followed in every parish of Ireland. But thanks to the efforts of the Agricultural Departments market gardening and fruit culture is progressing by leaps and bounds and promises sources of great profit. From this possible development of the agricultural industry, let us look to the hitherto undeveloped sources of hundreds of industries lying at our door. First let me take our waste lands. Great engineers, like Sir Richard Griffith, Mr. Nimo, &c., after a survey of Ireland in 1814, estimated the waste lands to be 6,000,000 acres. Select two of the description dealt with, the bogs and unplanted land. Half of the waste land was deemed if reclaimed suitable for agriculture and half for planting. Holland sets an example of the possibility of reclamation; the lake of Haarlem was reclaimed and turned into 45,000 acres of valuable meadow. In Ireland, where bogs abound, little has been done. Mr. P. C. Cowan, Local Government Board Inspector, said lately at the meeting of the Civil Engineers of Ireland, "that there was now some hope that this problem of utilising peat was attracting attention." He related how, at a weaving factory at Portadown, a peat engine has been lately erected, by which power is attained at a fuel cost of only one-sixteenth of a penny per brake horse power. The peat itself is cut from a bog near Lough Neagh. At a late meeting of the Electrical Engineers, Mr. Tomlinson estimated the gross value of the peat of Ireland and reclaimed bogs at £1,200,000. All this attention is due to the late famine of coal. But Holland has no coal, and drives her locomotives with peat, and from peat furnaces has filled our Irish kitchens with the pottery called from one of her towns, Delft. I cannot close this reference to the undeveloped bogs of Ireland without alluding to the following interesting and pathetic story of that great authority on Irish industrial resources, the late Sir Robert Kane:—"When passing one day by the Bog of Allen some stalwart men approached him. They came, they said, not to beg, but to ask for employment. 'Alas,' he said, 'I could give them none, but I knew that round about me on every side were sources of employment for them and of wealth for Ireland.'" So much for the prospects of the development of the bogs,

and I now come to that other abundant, but as yet comparatively undeveloped source of wealth, health, and employment, afforestation.

AFFORESTATION.

We are now practically a treeless land, but everywhere there are indications of a former well-wooded country. The trees under the old Brehon laws were sacred; to destroy or mutilate them was punished by heavy fines. To enter into the causes of the destruction and neglect of trees is not quite within the province of this paper. Why are their re-culture and preservation not practised in Ireland, and what would be the consequences of re-afforestation? But to the neglect of the State is due the non-planting and non-protection of trees; it is a national work in Belgium and every other country of Europe, and even for India there is a Forestry Department, by the work of which, Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India, says millions of pounds of assets are being piled up. He had no such story to tell when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland.

But why, it may be asked, did not the Irish farmers plant and protect trees? The answer is easy: The trees on the land of an Irish farm belonged to the landlord, the trees planted by the tenants belonged to the landlord. When felled, his ranger took them off. So in the eyes of the Irish tenant farmer they but encumbered the ground. As to the benefits of trees, we know they are sources of health, of climatic value; they prevent the disastrous effects of torrential rains, and they are the source of vast employment and national wealth. Let me give an instance of the wealth and employment. Two years ago I passed through the Landes Province of France, and witnessed the revolution worked there from sandy marsh to busy and prosperous towns—from extreme poverty to enormous wealth, from wretched and unemployed waifs to healthy and happy workers; but when I have the transformation described in the eloquent words quoted in the Report of the Recess Committee, of which our President was a member, why should I use my own? The quotation is from the Report of the County Council of the Garonne to the Forestry Department of the Minister of Agriculture: "This is one of the most beautiful pages in the history of civilization and progress, a region which 30 years ago was one of the poorest and most miserable in France, must now be ranked amongst the wealthy and prosperous. There are at present one and a half million acres of pines on the Landes, although the soil is of the poorest. Where a few thousand poor and unhealthy

shepherds were walking about on stilts, there are now saw mills, wood-working factories, charcoal kilns, turpentine distilleries, and farmers and foresters by the thousand are finding a healthy and prosperous existence." The enterprise has added fifty million pounds sterling to the wealth of France. I wish our Minister of Agriculture could receive a similar report from the Forestry Department of Ireland. And it is quite possible. I visited a place near Bundoran a few years ago, and saw the pines sown by the late Lord Palmerstown flourishing on the shores of the Atlantic as the pines of the Landes on the Bay of Biscay. But there has been no Government to develop the possibilities of this country. As another instance of the wealth derived from woods, I may mention there is in Prussia a surplus income of over £1,200,000. Some years ago a number of English artisans in the iron industries of Birmingham visited Prussia. One wrote an interesting account of his experience, and made the following remark: "We heard there were only five golf links in Prussia; there are over 1,000 in the United Kingdom. There was no land to spare for pleasure, it was all either tilled or planted." And the planting was not only for landscape or sport, but for commerce, and the employment from the forests and the incidental industries yields millions per annum, supplying this country and England with almost all the timber we have, either raw or wrought. Had we the same supply here all our furniture and many other importations could be produced at home. One particular instance is typical of many, and that is paper. The pulp is produced from spruce, and one of the highest authorities in wood culture, Sir Wm. Schlich, has declared that Ireland is particularly well suited for its growth, and he asks why it is not cultivated. Before the Special Committee on Irish industries, presided over by Sir Eardley Wilmot, in 1885, the late Professor Sullivan, President of the Queen's College, Cork, stated that in 1848 he recommended the draining and planting of Ireland, and that if it had there and then been carried out, this country would be fifty millions richer than she was in 1885, but nothing had been done. - As an outcome of that Committee, the Government sent a Danish expert, Mr. Howitz, to inquire into and report upon the prospects of re-planting Ireland. In his report, he said it was admirably suited for planting; that if it were carried out Ireland could support twenty millions of people instead of five, as it was then. Nothing was done, and Ireland's population is another million less since then. The same story has to be told of the other resources, such as minerals, like coal, &c. The late coal crisis has drawn attention to this and the

coal fields of Ireland are now being inquired into on all sides. Mr. Parkinson, of the Co. Kildare, has told what the Queen's County Collieries could do, and how suitable it is for all purposes. I understand the County Council has the matter in hand. In Lisburn, a proprietor, Mr. McFindan, states that he owns 2,000 acres of coal fields only wanting capital to develop. Mr. Lefroy writes from Killaloe that the coal fields on the Western shore of Lough Allen have coal excellent for the production of steam; they want but capital and transit facilities. This brings me to the transit system of Ireland.

TRANSIT SYSTEM.

I had to relate that Belgium had the best transit system in the world. I cannot say the same of Ireland. Were her canals in a proper state, we ought to have a direct water-way from Derry to Cork; but owing to the different construction of the locks, &c., the boats of one cannot be used on the others. There has for many years been in my mind the possible construction of a ship canal from Galway Harbour to Kingstown Harbour. The space at the narrowest breadth of Ireland is not more than 130 miles. If ships could pass on to England, *via* it, and the exports from England could pass to the western world, both avoiding the long route by the West, South and Eastern coast of Ireland. But the cost would be looked on as a complete barrier. But were Ireland as rich in development as Belgium it could bear it, for that little country constructed the port of Antwerp at a cost of many millions, and is at this very moment improving it at a cost of over eight millions sterling. Then our railway system disconnects by high tariffs, and delays, the very centres it ought to unite. We saw the Belgian system of light railways connecting all the centres of production and diffusion together at almost nominal rates. But I must not forget to mention that during his time of office in Ireland, Mr. Arthur James Balfour helped to promote the few light railways we have, and his name in the localities where they exist I found associated with them. But now that the resources I have mentioned are likely to be worked, and as, like Belgium, even under difficulties, Ireland has existing a number of industries and could produce a great number more when she has similar opportunities as Belgium has had for the last 90 years.

Amongst the existing industries there is the great protected and promoted manufacture of linen in the Northern provinces. There was once a fine woollen trade

in the Southern provinces, until it was ruined by legislation to promote the interests of the manufacturers of Bristol.

Well, though it was so crushed, it has arisen again. It got a great impetus from the National Exhibition of 1882. Before that time, Irish woollens had to be marked as Scottish to sell in Dublin; now Scottish have to be marked Irish to sell at all. At that Exhibition awards were made for almost all the requirements of household life. These existing industries, fighting under their many difficulties, could be supplemented by others, such, for instance, as the manufacture of beet-root sugar, a commodity now largely imported. But absolute ignorance prevails as to its manufacture. In his evidence before the Select Committee in 1885, in my own hearing, the late Professor Sullivan related the story of its failure in Mountmellick. It was commenced at the wrong season, old worn-out boilers from Belgium were used, which consumed tons of unnecessary coal. No one connected with the manufacture ever saw a ton of sugar made in his life. The only commendation of the man in charge was that he had been a soldier in the Italian army, and, said Dr. Sullivan, "if that does not account for its failure, I have no more to say." Another promised industry is that of cotton; a Lancashire firm is about to start a factory in the Boyne Valley. We learn from the last report of the Department of Technical Instruction that glove making as a home industry has been started in Tipperary. In olden days the city of Limerick was famed for this manufacture. These are but some of the many promised industries in the future. Then there is the great industry of lace. We saw its commanding position in Belgium. I am indebted to Mr. Hughes, of Messrs. Atkinsons, for the following remarks on our Irish Lace production. He says: "Anything that would tend to injure this industry, in which so many girls are being trained, and which affords a good deal of remunerative employment, should be regarded as a public danger." "The crochet has been sought after by Americans so much so that they cannot obtain enough, with the result that in France and Austria depots subsidized by the Governments have built machines for making imitation Irish Lace, which is sold as Irish Crochet—and there are even imitations by hand. It can be sold under Irish price." Mr. Hughes says: "This is to be combatted, not by inferior, but by even better work. In Limerick the turning out of inferior work ruined the Lace trade. Mrs. Vere O'Brien is trying to revive it in Limerick, and so are the nuns at Benada Abbey, Co. Sligo." Let us hope this great industry will be preserved.

I think, then, on the whole, if we could get the same state of affairs in Ireland of rest and settled government, as exists in Belgium, we could follow in her footsteps. But we must first have rest, we must have industrial education, and, above all, we must have the intense industry and thrift of the Belgian worker. As to the necessity of industrial knowledge, from long experience, I say it emphatically, there is little or no industrial education in the schools of Ireland. Many years ago, a great Irish poet wrote practical words on this point, for Thomas Davis said: "Upon schools much has been written. Almost all the private schools of this country are bad. They merely cram the memory of the pupils with facts and words without developing their judgment or invention, or teaching them the application of any knowledge. Instead of being taught the natural productions and history of their own and other countries, they are buried in classical frivolities, and languages which they never master." It is a true description of many of the schools of to-day. The volume of Davis's essays which contains these words is compiled by the late Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, who has said himself: "When I was Premier in Australia, every day young Irishmen came over looking for employment; but they knew no trade, nor had they been versed in business habits, and so many dwindled into such positions as waiters in hotels." I fear at this very moment that would be the fate of many of our young men going to the Colonies for employment. If we would take a lesson from Belgium we must alter all this.

Before concluding a paper which has for its object a comparison of the two countries of Belgium and Ireland, I wish to refer to a memorable occasion when a comparison was instituted between them by an eminent statesman in the House of Commons. In the debate on the Address, on the 24th February, 1865, the annual lament on the misery of Ireland was repeated. Some hon. members attributed it to the religion of the people, when up rose the late Lord Salisbury, then Lord Robert Cecil, and said: "I look to Belgium, and I find there a people second to none except the English, singularly prosperous, having improved to the utmost the natural resources of their country, but distinguished amongst all the peoples of Europe in the earnestness and intensity of their Roman Catholic belief." And then the noble Lord quoted the still more forcible and appropriate words, uttered in that same House in 1785, when Mr. Pitt said: "The House would recollect, from the Revolution to a period within the memory of every man who heard him, the system had been that of barring Ireland from the employment and use of her own resources. Ireland was put under such

restraint that she was shut out from every species of commerce."

This clear appreciation of Ireland's position, this noble sympathy with her wrongs, ended only in eloquent words. But perhaps we are on the threshold of brighter days, when, without disrupting the Empire, a means may be found of granting to this country the blessings of contentment, of industry and peace.

These are the lessons I would wish to learn from the modern history of Belgium.