

She roused herself likewise to converse, striving to conceal from me the lowness of her spirits and the agonising fear which weighed upon her. While we sat, thus the gun at the Fort caused Marian to start and shiver, telling of vessels that had arrived. Had it not been for my presence, I verily believe, that despite the inclement weather she would have stolen forth, pursuing her inquiries. She sat still, however, with head lowered over her frame, and I perceived that the silks grew tangled and that she tugged at them nervously.

It was wearing late when the double knocker sounded. It was an unwonted hour, and our negro boy went to answer the summons with some apprehension, for the times were unsettled, evil-disposed persons had been observed about the town, and robberies had of late been frequent.

Marian stood up from her place at the fire, and before I could so much as speak she had slipped into the hall. The negro boy came back, with eyes rolling in their sockets, to apprise me that a tall man in a cloak stood without. Hastily seizing upon a blunderbuss which hung upon the wall, I hurried out, and there I beheld a tall man, in truth, holding Marian's two hands and gazing into her face. As I made a hasty movement forward I heard these words, and the tone in which they were uttered will never leave my memory.

'Maid Marian,' the stranger murmured, 'Maid Marian, Maid Marian!'

Just two words and no more, but they went to my heart, old and battered as it was. The stranger, whom I knew from that to be Philip, spoke as a famished man who beholds bread, or one perishing of thirst to whom water was vouchsafed. I stole away softly, but Marian did not for very long forget me. She came flying into the room, and it was as though she had suddenly grown young and was a child again in the convent garden.

'Philip has come back!' she cried. 'Philip has come back!'

And in another instant she was dragging the big figure into the room and planting him in a chair beside me. The hat and cloak were thrown aside, and there were the same honest eyes looking into mine, the same smile, and no change in the countenance save that it had grown pallid from a residence in unhealthy climates.

Well, we sat up half the night, there was so much to tell; nor did it seem as if we could ever get tired of asking questions and hearing what had befallen after we had left the ship. There had, in truth, been a fight, wherein Philip and the captain had fallen wounded. The strange vessel, which had been standing to the northward, after our departure grew momentarily bolder. She sent shot after shot, so that presently the mainmast was sprung and there was a leak in the gunroom. The captain would not give up, however, and continued the struggle, though he had lost the topmast and the vessel was much shattered. Philip stood at his side throughout until he was disabled by a shot which carried him off his feet, and in another instant the captain's leg was gone. There was nothing for it then but to haul down the flag, the privateer sending a pinnace under the quarters and conveying the wounded men and the rest of the crew to the attacking vessel.

Philip had likewise to tell of his sojourn in Martinico and other outlandish places and all that transpired there. While his tongue talked his eyes likewise maintained another language with my little Marian, and I had to shut my own once or twice, or be taken with a fit of coughing, when the lad's hand sought hers, holding it close and warm.

Well, there were wedding-bells very soon after this event, and a merry-making that stirred up the good city of New York, at which assisted his Excellency, my Lord Cornbury, who was then the Governor; the Lady Katherine, his wife, and other notables. But all that took place among long years ago, and my grandchildren, the young rascals, laugh when I forget that their father is no longer a boy, or that their comely and sedate mother was my little sprite, Maid Marian.—*Bensiger's Magazine.*

Catholic Belgium

The Belgium Chamber of Deputies (says a writer in the 'Catholic Times') is renewed on the system of half the members retiring every two years, the retiring member being eligible for re-election. The fact that the elections just held have resulted in a decrease of the Catholic working majority has been made by some of our non-Catholic contemporaries the text for unfriendly remarks on the administration of the Catholic Party, and predictions that its long term of power is nearing its end.

The Belgian Chamber is a much smaller body than our House of Commons. There are between 160 and 170 members. There are three parties, Catholics or Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists. The Liberals are Secularist and 'anti-clerical' in their policy, and the party name in Belgium has a much narrower meaning than in England. The Catholics, on the other hand, hold a Conservatism of a much more democratic type than that of stalwarts of the Primrose League. Before the elections the Catholics had a majority of twelve over the united forces of their opponents. This majority is now reduced to eight. It would roughly correspond to a Government majority of about twenty-four in the House of Commons. Governments have worked successfully on a narrower margin, especially where they have to face an opposition made up of two sections. The fall in the majority has been the result of forces that always tend to come into play when a party has been long in power. Organisation becomes relaxed, differences arise on minor points of policy, personal ambitions tend to disunion. But there is no doubt the next two years will see a general pulling together of the Catholic Party's organisation, and that at the next biennial elections they will hold their own, even if they do not gain ground. By that time, too, certain questions on which the politicians of the party are divided will have been settled, notably the constitution of the new Congo Colony.

During its long term of power the Catholics have been distinctly progressive in their policy. They have widened the electoral franchise, introduced a new code of labor laws, and settled the education question on lines that secure Catholic teaching for Catholics without infringing in any way the freedom of those who do not belong to the Faith. The Catholics came into power in virtue of an overwhelming vote of the electors against the system of enforced secular education imposed by the Liberals. In view of the oft-repeated fable that Catholicism is opposed to national prosperity it is interesting to note the marvellous economic progress of Belgium under Catholic rule. The Liberal Government left as a legacy to their Catholic successors a large deficit. This was swept away in the first year, and without additional taxation, and only by means of good administration there has been a surplus ever since; this, too, in spite of the fact that there has to be a large extra expenditure on the national defences. The steady expansion of the revenue under the influence of growing prosperity provided for this.

In France the population increased in the twenty years between 1885 and 1905 from 38 millions to 39,300,000, an increase of only three per cent. But for foreign immigration and the higher birth-rate of the Catholic districts there would have been a decrease. In Belgium in the same period the population rose from 5,800,000 in 1885 to 7,100,000 in 1905, an increase of 22½ per cent. Belgium is the most densely populated country in Europe, but with a thrifty, hard-working people under a good Government.

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According to the opinion of many doctors in New Zealand, that dreadful scourge, Consumption, has obtained a strong hold in the Dominion, and anything that will tend to counteract its terrible ravages should be welcomed as a boon and a blessing to mankind. It is well known that a slight cold, neglected in its earlier stages, is frequently the precursor of phthisis, and many a valuable life could have been saved had an effectual remedy been applied before the disease had established itself in the system. Such a remedy is to be found in TUSSICURA, and the innumerable testimonials received by the inventor of this preparation, which has earned a world-wide reputation, proved conclusively that it is a certain cure for all pulmonary complaints. A dose of this mixture administered when a person is suffering from a bad cold or a harassing cough will not only give instant relief, but will also strengthen the organs affected, thus preventing more serious trouble in the future. Prevention is better than cure, and for this reason no household should be without a bottle of TUSSICURA, as its timely administration will obviate suffering in after life and preserve the constitution from disease. One feature of the preparation should not be overlooked—namely, that it is applicable to both the adult and the infant, all that is necessary being the adjustment of the doses to the circumstances according to the directions. TUSSICURA is obtainable from all chemists and medicine dealers throughout the Dominion.