

And, *per contra*, let us see what a substantial addition has been made in ten years to the *quantity* of goods we have sent abroad.

Articles Exported.	1870.	1880.
Cotton Piece Goods ...	3,266,000,000 yds. ...	4,495,000,000 yds. ...
Jute Manufactures ...	51,000,000 " ...	183,000,000 " ...
Silk Piece Goods ...	3,854,000 " ...	6,218,000 " ...
Woollen Cloth... ..	32,000,000 " ...	50,000,000 " ...
Iron and Steel ...	2,825,000 tons ...	3,792,000 tons. ...
Coal ... ..	11,000,000 " ...	18,000,000 " ...
Hats ... ..	338,000 doz. ...	922,000 doz. ...
Paper ... ..	177,000 cwt. ...	472,000 cwt. ...
Sheep and Lamb's Wool	9,000,000 lbs. ...	17,000,000 lbs. ...

This list might be extended, but it is long enough to justify the assertion that "the amount of minerals and manufactures we export will almost seem incredible to the future historian. No country of ancient or modern times has surpassed us; none but ourselves can be our parallel."

The item of shipping comes naturally after that of foreign trade. Great Britain commands more than half the carrying-power of the whole world, and in ten years our shipowners increased their tonnage from 11,345,000 to 19,010,000. The quantity of merchandise actually carried by British ships in 1870 was 30,000,000 tons, and in 1880 it was 52,000,000 tons, the "freight-age" for the latter year being estimated to have realised about £51,920,000.

The progress of our wonderful railway system has been much greater than appears from a simple comparison of the "length of lines" open in 1870 (15,537 miles) with the length open in 1880 (17,945 miles). It is when we learn that the number of passengers carried in 1870 was 336,000,000, as against 603,000,000 in 1880, that we begin to see how rapidly the facilities for travelling have developed. The amount of capital invested in British railways is only

£50,000,000 less than the National Debt; it is now £728,000,000, being an increase of £200,000,000 over the capital of 1870, and the total earnings of all the railways rose from £43,417,000 in 1870 to £61,958,000 in 1880.

The total earnings of the people have increased from £961,000,000 in 1870 to £1,156,000,000 in 1880: an increase of nearly 200,000,000, which equals nearly £6 per head of the entire population. And since the annual expenditure of the people is rather less than £1,100,000,000, it follows that there is a surplus of £60,000,000 per annum to add to the accumulated wealth of the nation. What this "accumulated wealth" now amounts to, must seem absolutely fabulous to those who have never studied the subject. It was £8,310,000,000 in 1870; it had grown to £8,960,000,000 in 1880, being an increase of £650,000,000 sterling in the short space of ten years. And yet, strange as it may appear, it is the fact that while our wealth has thus accumulated, our use of gold and silver in the transaction of all this business has steadily declined. Sir John Lubbock showed some time ago that the British people now manage to transact £100 worth of business while actually employing no more than a single half-sovereign in the coin of the realm!

Lastly, we may find some comfort even in that part of our balance-sheet in which stand the appalling figures of our National Debt. It was £797,943,000 in 1870, it was £768,703,000 in 1880, a decrease of £29,000,000. Such a decrease may not be much to boast of, but it is something to be thankful for, especially when we consider that during the last ten years the sister-nations of Europe have increased their debts by £1,500,000,000.

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## HOW WOMEN ARE EMPLOYED IN BELGIUM.

FROM A LADY CORRESPONDENT.



HOUGH much has been written of late on the subject of employment for women, yet the following remarks written from personal observation as to how that question is treated in several countries abroad may not be found uninteresting. It cannot be denied that in England much suffering and anxiety are often undergone by the daughters of a family, simply from a great want of forethought on the part of the parents or guardians. When we see the daughters of a middle-class family brought up in comfort, if not luxury, the enjoyment of which depends upon the father's life, may we not truly say there is at least a kind of thoughtless cruelty in leaving them exposed to what may turn up? No doubt a suitable marriage may often occur, or the prolonged life and prosperity of the parents may secure their children's comfort in advancing years, but how often the early death of the head of the family leaves

the daughters without either a home or resources! The negligence of parents in this matter is surprising, for even the most thoughtful stop at giving their daughters what they think a good education, forgetting that, as education is now so common, as a means of living it is really of little value. Those who advertise for governesses are often saddened by having hundreds of applicants, many of them willing to engage themselves on any terms; and it not seldom happens that the best qualified accept the lowest salaries. Again, how few of these governesses have been thoroughly trained for their work, and how many of them have no liking for it! A step has been taken in the right direction in the raising of teachers' salaries in the Government schools; it is to be hoped it will have a favourable influence on public opinion, so far as the salaries of governesses in private schools and families are concerned. At present the miserable pittance received by many a governess will scarcely keep her

in decent clothes, while, if she would lay aside the smallest sum, she must bravely deny herself many things which to her are intellectual luxuries, such as books, music, &c., and which might be to her so many helps in her profession.

To return to the subject of this paper, let us see how a daughter's future is regarded in some Continental countries. I have lived in several, and I must confess that in all the way of treating this question has impressed me very forcibly. I think it was Luther who said, "Take care of and be kind to your daughters, your sons will be able to take care of themselves;" and in the different countries where I have lived, the parents seem to act upon this idea. In Russia, from the daughter's birth, the mother begins to provide for her future, and for that purpose lays aside money, linen, &c., until her marriage. Without abating a jot of an Englishwoman's ideas as to ours being the better way in leaving marriage to inclination and mutual liking, is there any harm in preparing for it in that way as a possibility, and does any one in England object to a wife having a small personal fortune? And should the daughters remain single, is not the provision all the more necessary? While on this subject let me add that old maids do not appear to be so numerous in many Continental countries as in England, and if men abroad seldom marry portionless wives, it would appear that more marriages in proportion take place than in England.

In France and Belgium the idea seems to prevail, either to lay up a sufficient provision for the children, or to place them in some business which will support them. Even professional men who have perhaps a sufficient income for their present needs, but not enough to endow their daughters, will often engage in business for their sake. Of this I have seen many instances. A gentleman with a large family of daughters, having come into possession of a small fortune, has invested it in a large grocery business. His daughters, though beautiful and accomplished, serve in the shop, and they are not the less thought of in society for doing so. The same thing is done when a reverse of fortune is experienced. I know a hosiery and trimming shop which is kept by the daughters of a lawyer. They are making a comfortable living, instead of starving in genteel poverty, as is often done by ladies placed in similar circumstances in our own country. It will thus be seen that in the countries I have mentioned there are none of those foolish prejudices against trade which are now fortunately disappearing from English minds. In Belgium, whence I write, the employment of women in shops and offices is much more general than in England. It would be difficult to mention any kind of shop where they are not to be found. At the railway stations they serve not only in the refreshment-rooms, but in the ticket-office. While I write, instances of women occupying themselves in an unusual way, at least to our ideas, crowd upon my mind. I know a widow who possesses an iron-foundry, and who, after her husband's death, mastered the commercial details of the business, and now goes daily to the office to inspect the accounts.

Another lady of my acquaintance, the wife of a gun-maker having a large business, keeps her husband's books. I feel that I am trenching on the difficult question of home *versus* public life for women, into which at present I do not enter; I give these instances merely to show what a woman is thought capable of in this country.

There is another vexed question upon which it is difficult to decide, I mean the equal division of money, property, or value of business among the members of a family which prevails in many countries. While I think that the parcelling out of landed property, when carried out to the letter, cannot be the best for the country at large, and while I think that the enterprise of Englishmen, which has led them all over the world, and enriched their native country by her immense colonies, has at least been partly the result of younger sons being thrown on their own resources, would it not be fair to give the daughters some compensation for their stay-at-home life, as they cannot rove about the world like their more fortunate brothers? This reminds me of a conversation I had the other day with a lady, the mother of several sons, who excused herself for not being more economical in her way of living by saying that as she had no daughters to provide for it did not matter, for her sons would always be able to make their way in the world.

Some may urge that I have altogether ignored family affection and the sense of honour which would make brothers help their sisters, but experience proves, and we accept it as a thing most natural, that when the brothers marry, and take on them new responsibilities, their first duty is to provide for their own household.

I have hitherto only mentioned business of nearly all kinds as employment for women, but I find something also to admire here in the training of those who have chosen teaching as a profession. They are really trained, if for general teachers, in the normal schools, and for the musical profession at the *Conservatoire*, or academy of music, where they go through a regular course. They are, therefore, accepted by the public with all confidence, and treated according to their merits. I admire also the forethought which is shown for the future of the sons, who at an early age have their inclinations consulted, the future held up before them, and their studies arranged and directed accordingly. Can it be said that this is always done in England? for often the boy's education is supposed to be finished before anything has been decided as to his future business or profession; and when we reflect that in the great accumulation of human knowledge one's choice must be very limited, is it not better to have a choice which will be useful in after-life?

In conclusion, let no one suppose these to be the views of a pessimist who thinks that everything is better managed out of England than in it. I am thoroughly persuaded, and recognise with pardonable pride, that in many things England is decidedly in advance of many Continental countries. At the same time, it would be ungenerous to others, and unprofitable to ourselves, neither to give praise where it is due, nor to imitate what is worthy of imitation.