

The Waldenses first assumed the character of a distinct class of people about the commencement of the ninth century, during the life of Claude of Turin, their apostolic Bishop, the Wickliffe of his day. During the reign of the dark ages, the valleys of Piedmont, lying betwixt Genoa and Italy, and scarcely to be traced in any map of Europe, formed the asylum of pure religion and sanctity of morals. They dissented from Rome on the question of image worship; which they detested as sacrilegious blasphemy, while they contemned it as an insult to reason. They held by the simple ritual of their fathers, and have from age to age handed down the faith in a state of comparative purity. The infidelity of France and the neology of Germany can scarcely be said to have entered, far less to have conquered these interesting scenes; and amid the inflictions of cruelty which make our blood run cold in the mere detail, we perceive a simple and primitive people holding fast the faith "for the testimony of Jesus," and "counting not their lives

dear unto them," while they sealed their testimony with their blood. Shall we be so ungrateful as to forget that while in Bohemia their tenets were first preached by a Jerome and a Huss, they were embraced by a John Wickliffe in England, and by the Lollards of Kyle? A few years of interlude will bring them into connection with the Culdees of Iona, and thus establish beyond question the truth of the apocalyptic vision, by transforming it into a matter of historic fact, that the great Head of the Churches has never wanted his "two witnesses" to the purity of his truth, to the spirituality of his kingdom, and to the necessity of that personal holiness "without which no man can see the Lord."

"Diffused and fostered thus, the glorious ray
Warm'd where it went, and open'd into day.
'Twas their's to plant, in tears, the precious shoot:
'Tis ours in peace to reap the promis'd fruit.
By them the bulwark of our faith was built—
Our Church cemented by the blood they spilt:
In heaven's high cause they gave all man could give,
And died its Martyrs, that the truth might live."

A VOICE FROM THE PALATINATE.

EDUCATION IN BELGIUM.

I had lately the pleasure of meeting with a worthy Protestant clergyman from Belgium, and being curious to know, from so authentic a source, something of the ecclesiastical, and, if I may call them, the moral statistics of that country, I did not fail to question him on these subjects. The information thus obtained, though by no means copious, may still perhaps be deemed worthy of notice, seeing that it refers to a country in which every Briton must feel, both from recent and more remote circumstances and relations, a very deep interest—a country which once so much resembled in industry, ingenuity and wealth, what our own now is—a country, too, at one time drenched with the blood of Protestant martyrs, and at another filled with Protestant refugees; but which, unlike to this happy land, fell prostrate in all its interests, before the terrific and combined sway of secular and papal despotism.

The population of Belgium is about three millions; of these only about ten thousand are Protestants. Does not this naturally remind us of God's answer to the prophet, who had

imagined himself the alone worshipper of the true God in all the land of Israel? These ten thousand Protestants have no less than twenty-two pastors; a circumstance which would seem to indicate favourably both for the religious zeal and knowledge of their flocks; but perhaps it merely shews that they are thinly scattered over the country. They are chiefly, however, to be found in the French provinces of Hainault, Namur, and Liege. In these provinces, religious feeling, on the part of the Catholics, is comparatively liberal, and their cultivation of mind and manners comparatively high.

In the other provinces much rudeness and even fierceness of manners still lingers. They play, for instance, much at cards, and in doing so, often their naked daggers are displayed on the gaming table. In these provinces, too, the priests and lower grades of the people are extremely intolerant; as they may be expected to be, considering their ignorance. Three things are, however, greatly in favor of religious freedom; two immediately, and one pro-