

THE
CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR.

APRIL, 1860.

“THAT THE SOUL BE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT GOOD”—Prov xii.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF POPERY ON NATIONAL
PROSPERITY.

BEING A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE NOVA SCOTIA PROTESTANT ALLIANCE, AT HALIFAX, ON TUESDAY, 10TH JANUARY, 1860;

By the Rev. George Patterson.

[Continued.]

But let us pass on to the continent of Europe, and enquire how far, on review of the whole countries in which Protestantism and Popery respectively bear sway, the same thing is found to hold good.

We begin with Belgium, because it is that country which Roman Catholics are most ready to claim as an exception to our theory, and which is on the whole the most flourishing Roman Catholic country in Europe, we of course do not mean the most powerful as a nation, but in which the largest amount of material prosperity is diffused through the community. And mark here, that it has every advantage in its favor. It has a rich soil and a free government. It has freehold farms—it has the Protestant element, and the arts and manufactures which found a refuge there from the storms of persecuting eras in other countries. Here then are all advantages. Yet the same rule applies. The most Protestant parts the most prosperous. Those portions where the exiled Huguenots settled, enjoy the highest degree of prosperity. The South West, where Popery settles densest, exhibits such a picture of indolence and wretchedness, as to be called the Ireland of Belgium. It is liable, like Ireland, to periodical famines, and its condition forms as frequent a subject of discussion in the Belgium Chambers, as does Ireland in the British Legislature, and that its general prosperity is overrated, is evident from the fact, that no country but Ireland suffered such horrors from the failure of the potatoe crop.

But contrast Belgium with the small Protestant state to the North of it. Originally a few sand banks at the mouth of the Rhine, Holland has been rescued from the sea. How little did she owe to na-