

which had been destroyed by the fire were not rebuilt, and this alone was a great loss to the people. There was nothing left for them to do but to turn their attention strictly to farming, which they did; from that time on, farming, stock and wool-raising, butter and cheese-making were the main occupations of the Belgian settlers.

Three years after the great conflagration of 1871, we find the Belgians in better condition and circumstances than ever. Twenty years before, they had renounced their allegiance to their king, and declared their intention to become citizens of the United States; they were now American citizens, and were proud of their citizenship. They were adopting many of the American ways; cheese-factories were being built, and a fine article manufactured; they were farming with new and improved machinery; some of them had steam threshing-machines, and many had stump-pulling machines with which they were clearing their fields with ease.

And so it has gone on, to the present day. Some settlements, such as Rosière and Granlez, have taken down their fences; and it is a beautiful sight in summer time to see fine crops of wheat, rye, barley and oats covering fenceless and stumpless fields with an even height along the highways. The wilderness of forty years ago begins to look like the fields of Belgium. The original settlers are growing old, but their sons are coming into manhood and are fast becoming Americanized. Their modes of living and dressing are changing; the young generation are casting aside their wooden shoes, although at the date of this writing (1893) they are still manufactured in the settlements, and worn by many.

Neither the old settlers nor the new, nor their descendants, have ever lost sight of education, that all-important factor which develops man's intelligence and liberty,—that liberty which is dear to all men, especially to Belgians, whose native fields have for centuries been saturated with their blood, fighting against the tyranny of a Charles V., a Philip II., or a Louis XIV.