

OLD CATHOLIC CONGRESS
CONSTANCE

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CONSTANCE, Sept. 13.
This morning telegraphed to you the what is felt here as an important event—namely, that British Old Catholicism is confined to the field of Literature, but red upon its active phase at Constance. abterranean Church, which no doubt exists in England and Ireland, will owe a t of gratitude to the author of "Catho- d the Vatican" for having been the first ambers to "bell the cat." The question h Mr. Whittle spoke was purely one of org- nization, as, indeed, have been all the of discussion at the sittings of the up to the moment of my writing. Pro- r Synodal Representation and Parochial lies or Councils, and kindred institutions, og to the Church-life of the Old Catholics, tremely important for the future welfare eclesiastical system, would be of little interest to the general public, and I herefore, only remark at present that posed constitution of the Church s far more liberal than that of any al Church on this side of the Atlantic. s this may be an additional reason for the terest which the Anglo-American Episcod clergy continue to manifest in the pro- d movement. They are primarily inte- n it, I am sure, on account of the help they will ultimately give towards the reunion -separated Churches. That I know to have view entertained by the venerable Bishop yland, whom I met last year at the Cologne es; and the same feeling prompted the of Albany, himself a distinguished prelate n of the very widely-loved Bishop Doane, e a special journey to Constance, though he nly spare the evening of Thursday and the g of Friday.

id that the Protestants of this town are a warm interest in the movement, and re very favourably impressed by the moral ty which the presence of dignitaries such as op of Albany, the Bishop-Elect of North a (Dr. Lyman), and the Dean of Chester, Anglicans, and the Arch Priest Vassilieff, Russians, lends to the cause. They are also lves represented by a delegate, Dr. Holtz- of Heidelberg, who ranks second only to untchli, of Cologne memory. But the alistic party, represented in Germany by the stanten Verein," of which Bluntschli and arin are the two leading members, openly itself unable to give more than a negative by to the Old Catholic movement, because ovement stands on a definitely dogmatic n basis, which a large number of German ants have long since abandoned as in their incompatible with modern culture. This s—was admirably hit off by one of the guests, who said to me that Holtzmann's at the reception might have been delivered pulpit, or spoken at a social gathering, mosque. Vital Christianity, as it would be ood by either Canon Liddon or M. de Presse- seems to have no place in this school testantism, though doubtless there is much al piety left, as is the case among y similarly situated French Protestants. s piety will, I think there can be little soon find a more congenial home among d Catholics, and therefore it is not sur- that they should follow the progress of vement with a deep interest which will grow per when the time comes for the initiation of l Church Reform. Patient, as probably Ger- nly can be, the Old Catholics bide their time, other than absolutely necessary reforms. th equal patience, too, some Protestants who nts that their own Church system does not supply, but who could not conscientiously Old Catholic body in its present state, bide - till the day of reform-dawns. Then, at

FREE-TRADE PRINCIPLES AND THE
COAL QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY NEWS.

Sir,—It has now become an axiom with all liberal thinkers that complete freedom of exchange between nations and countries of the various products each has in superabundance and can best spare, for others which it requires, is for the benefit of both parties; and this principle is thought to be so universally applicable, that even when it produces positive injury to ourselves and is certain to injure our descendants, hardly any public writer who professes liberal views ventures to propose a limitation of it. It seems clear, however, that there are limitations to its wholesome application, and that there are certain commodities which we have no right to exchange away without restriction, for others of more immediate use to the individuals or communities who happen to be in possession of them. These commodities may be briefly defined as those natural products which are practically limited in quantity, and which cannot be reproduced. What is meant may perhaps be best explained by taking what may be considered a very extreme case as an illustration. Let us suppose, for instance, a country in which the springs or wells of water were strictly limited in number, but sufficiently copious to supply all the actual needs of the community who had always had the use of them, on making a nominal payment to the owners of the land on which they were situated. Acting on the principles of unrestricted free trade, and anxious to increase their wealth, one after another of the landowners sold their springs to manufacturers, who used up all the water except that required to supply the wants of their own workpeople, thus rendering the remainder of the country almost uninhabitable. A still more extreme case, but one rather more to the point, would be that of a country possessing a surface soil of very moderate depth, but of extreme fertility, and supporting a dense population on its vegetable products. The landowners might find it very profitable to them to sell this surface soil to the wealthy horticulturists of other countries; and if the principle of free trade is unlimited, they would be justified in doing so, although they would permanently impoverish the land, and render it capable of supporting a less numerous and less healthy population in long future ages.

Most persons will admit that in both these cases the exercise of the unrestricted right of free trade becomes a wrong to mankind, and should on no account be permitted; and it will perhaps be said that such cases could never occur in a civilized community, as public opinion would not allow the landowners to act in the manner indicated even were they disposed to do so. I believe, however, it may be shown that, under circumstances far worse than those here supposed, the landowners in the most civilized community on the globe do act in a very analogous manner, and, moreover, are not yet condemned by public opinion for doing so. Let us first, however, deduce from such supposed cases as those above given a general principle determining what articles of merchandise are and what are not the proper subjects of free trade. A little consideration will convince us that most animal or vegetable products or manufactured articles, the reproduction and increase of which are almost unlimited in comparatively short periods, are those whose free exchange is an unmixed benefit to mankind; the reason being that such exchange enriches both parties without impoverishing either, and, by leading to improved modes of cultivation and an increased power of production, adds continually to the sustaining power of the earth, and benefits future generations as much as it does ourselves. On the other hand, all those articles of consumption which are in any way essential to the comfort and well-being of the community, and which are, either absolutely or practically, limited in quantity and incapable of being reproduced in any period of time commensurate with the length of human life, are in a totally different category. They must be considered to be held by us in trust for the community, and for succeeding generations. They should be jealously guarded from all waste or unnecessary expenditure, and it should be considered (as it will certainly come to be regarded) as a positive crime against posterity to expend them lavishly for the sole purpose of increasing our own wealth, luxury, or commercial importance. Under this head we must class all mineral products which are extensively used in domestic economy, the arts or manufactures, and which are in any way essential to the health or well-being of the community, and more especially those which form their bulk, weight, and extensive use could not be imported from distant regions without a very

of the mental faculties, and so well vary and supplement the labours and the profits of agriculture or trade, that a people, who wholly neglect these branches of industry, can hardly be said to live a complete and healthy national life. By considering our rich stores of coal and iron as held in trust by us for the use of the present and future populations of the islands, we should probably stimulate and secure a healthy civilization in many countries, which the most lavish expenditure of our own minerals, aided by our capital and engineering skill, fail to benefit.

Lastly, I would call attention to the way in which the lavish production of minerals disfigures the country, diminishes vegetable and animal life, and destroys the fertility (for perhaps hundreds of generations) of large tracts of valuable land. It would be interesting to have a survey made of the number of acres of land covered by slag-heaps and cinder-tips at our iron and copper works, and by the waste and refuse mounds at our various mines and slate quarries, together with the land destroyed or seriously injured by smoke and deleterious gases in those "black countries" which it pains the lover of nature to travel through. The extent of once fertile land thus rendered more or less permanently barren would, I believe, astonish and affright us. How strikingly contrasted, both in their motive and results, are those noble works of planting or of irrigation which permanently increase both the beauty and productiveness of a country, and carry down their blessings to succeeding generations.

This brief sketch of some of the more salient features of the subject of mineral export will serve to show how many and various are the evil results which flow from allowing these invaluable treasures to be wasted at the dictates of mad speculation and the eager race for wealth. These considerations have a very practical bearing at the present time. The recent enormous rise in the price of coal has brought up the question of the advisability of an export duty upon it. The press, almost without exception, have opposed this as being "contrary to the principles of free trade;" and it has further been argued that such a duty would have little or no effect, because the real cause of the high price of coal is that so much is used in the excessive manufacture of iron. But it is evident, from the considerations here set forth, that the export both of coal and iron requires to be regulated or forbidden, and for the same reasons; and if the "principles of free trade" are opposed to this, so much the worse for those "principles," since they will be opposed not only to the true economy of human progress, but also to the clearest principles of social and national morality. Many persons will now ask whether those can be true principles which lead to the exhaustion of our coal-fields for the purpose of lighting South American cities with gas or building railways in every insolvent South American Republic, while our own hard-working population has to suffer the pangs of cold in winter, in consequence of the high price of coal which such reckless projects tend to cause. And the fact that all parties concerned—landowners, colliery proprietors, speculators, and legislators—are so far from seeing anything wrong in what they are doing that their one aim at the present moment is to secure a larger annual output, and an increased export, will be to many an additional argument for taking the property in land altogether out of private hands. Waiving that question, however, for the present, I maintain that it is a wrong to our own population, and a still greater wrong to the next generation, to permit the unlimited export of those mineral products which are absolute necessities of life, but which once destroyed we can never reproduce. To do so is to sell and alienate for ever a portion of our land itself, and should no more be permitted to private individuals than the selling of the land surface to a foreign State.

Whether or not the period of the total exhaustion of our coal-fields can be approximately estimated, it is clear that the present vast and increasing rate of consumption must be stopped. The numerous evils of the present system I have briefly indicated—where are the benefits which counter-balance them? And the benefits, if they exist, must be large and clear and positive indeed to justify us in recklessly scattering over the whole world the mineral products of our land. It is to their possession that we attribute much of our wealth and power and national prosperity, yet we are doing our best to deprive future generations of any of the advantages we have derived from them.

It appears, then, to be clearly our duty to check the further exhaustion of our coal supplies by at once putting export duties on coal and iron in every form, very small duties at first, so as not to produce too sudden a check on the employment of labour, but gradually increasing, till, by stimu-

