

# **THREE WEEKS IN BELGIUM**

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Three weeks in Belgium by Anonymous

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IN BELGIUM**



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IN

BELGIUM.

BY AN IRISHMAN.

DUBLIN

JAMES M<sup>c</sup>GLASHAN, 21 D'OLIER-STREET.

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## THREE WEEKS IN BELGIUM.

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### WEEK I.

It was the month of August when,  
Fatigued with Irish life and men,  
    Whom strife and want o'erwhelm,  
I left the growling rich and poor,  
And took me thought to take a tour  
    Thro' Belgium's little realm.

It was a day of sun and calm,  
(One needed not to keep him warm,  
    My doom of starting late);  
When from that house I urged my feet,  
Which for its privilege to cheat,  
    Holds forth the sweetest *bait*.

It was an hour which might inspire  
The poet's mind, the minstrel's lyre,  
    o wake a strain divine;  
When gliding down the living Thames,  
(I marvel if the reader blames)  
    I thought it best to dine.

Then paced the deck beneath a sky,  
With that of southern climes might vie,  
    So brilliant blazed its stars;  
Long gazed, until a distant gun  
Awoke the thought, 'tis time to shun  
    In sleep the traveller's cares.

A splash! a call! I start, I peep,  
But four hours rest, yet off with sleep,  
    A boat is at our side;  
And morning's herald, that fresh grey  
Which promise gives of glorious day,  
    Is brightening far and wide.

Ah! little think the lazy crowd  
Of revels sick, of fashion proud,  
    What heavenly sights they lose—  
The rising sun—but truth will out,  
Tho' their bad taste I cannot doubt,  
    Full oft their fate I choose.

And was this sober-looking town  
Deemed worthy of that nation's frown,  
    Which boasts to rule the seas?—  
Van Tromp's vain broom—say was it vain?  
Ask her who now doth sweep the main,  
    What vengeance she can seize.



Poor little Flushing, thou may'st rise  
From out thy weakness, and despise  
    The might that made thee reel;  
For shame at Chatham's shameless feat,  
As long as England boasts a fleet,  
    Must each true Briton feel.

But Walcheren retribution boasts—  
Her foggy pestilential coasts  
    With pleasure fill my sight;  
Not that they gave our soldiers graves,  
But that they ever keep the waves  
    Vain battling for their right.

Her roofs just peering o'er the dyke,  
With wonder do the stranger strike—  
    Her fertile fields with hope;  
What difficulties now can foil,  
The bold determined sons of toil,  
    Who patient with them cope.

Napoleon—thine a mighty scheme  
To make this dead and idle stream  
    A rival to the Thames;  
But commerce, for a century killed,  
Revives not thus; it yet on Scheldt  
    No resurrection claims.

And He would have to ruin hurled  
The vast emporium of the world,  
For one himself had made ;  
For Antwerp?—nay, but for a town  
In his conception raised, and down  
With that conception laid.

Now creeps the lazy river 'tween  
More straightened banks ; no longer seen,  
Old Holland, is thy shore ;  
The little nation that would be  
Without thee, or what it calls *free*,  
Invites me to explore.

Hail, then, superb and noble port !  
The merchant princes' old resort,  
What wealth dost thou display ?  
Hail ancient Bourse, in olden time  
The mart for goods from every clime,  
Hail proud S.P.Q.A.

But what is it the stranger greets,  
Deserted quays, and empty streets ?  
Nay, judge not quite so soon ;  
Behold what cabbage-stalls are here,  
And women, half in Spanish gear ;  
'Tis market day—and noon.

What mighty changes since the hour  
Yon boasted net-work lace-like tower,  
    As Babel rose on high ;  
For men in priesthood's palmy days,  
Thus built, in hope their souls to raise  
    As *lightly* to the skies.

What mighty changes since the time  
Old Charlemagne gave it a chime,  
    And wished it a glass case ;  
What guide ? " Ah Monsieur oui, c'est vrai,"  
Then sore it puzzles me to say,  
    Where he could find the glass.

Albeit, the vital spark had lit  
Th' English monk who invented it,  
    Say where was then the spire ?<sup>a</sup>  
But Charles the Fifth, as stories go,  
Stood sponsor to its bell, and so  
    Felt bound its grace t' admire.

The Dutch here struck it, p'raps you'll tell  
What made them hold that citadel  
    'Gainst swarms of French so long ;  
The " brave Belges" *might* have driven them out,  
They *could* do so, which *should* one doubt,  
    *Would* prove a grievous wrong.