

in Ireland silences all those whose views are opposed to those of the dominant faction; so that any estimate of the real state of feeling is impossible. It is said that no one can doubt of this who listens to the kind of talk which is heard all over Ireland. But this is no more a trustworthy test of the state of feeling than the number of votes. Every one knows that it is the discontented who speak, while those who are satisfied with their condition generally say nothing about it. Grumbling is always more common than gratitude, even when the grievances are few and the blessings multitudinous. We have no reason to believe that Irish grievances would have an end when an Irish Parliament was sitting in Dublin.

There is one thing on which a great many Irish tenant farmers seem to be agreed, and that is, that they should pay no rent. It is not mere equity that they want, compensation for improvements and the like. Rent itself, as such, is a badge of subjection, an injury inflicted on the toilers of the soil, and therefore must be swept away. This is a question that will not bear arguing. We have no more right to confiscate the property of landlords than that of tenants. People who refuse to pay rent would soon be unable to understand why they should pay taxes; and no doubt the suspension of government would lead to a thoroughly Irish method of life, every man protecting his head and household with his own shillelah.

There is still another view of the matter. If Home Rule is conceded to Ireland, why not to Wales or Scotland, or to any of the ancient Kingdoms that made up what was called the Heptarchy? They do not want legislative independence, it may be said. But the time may come when they shall want it. Must it then be granted? Wales was as much a conquered country as Ireland was. In some respects it was more difficult to conquer. Probably there is fully as large a proportion of Celtic speaking inhabitants in Wales as in Ireland. The Welsh still have the grievance (if it is one) of an Established Church, to which the large majority of the people do not belong. Some day an anti-Saxon feeling in Wales may demand separation. Is it to be granted? Or to Scotland? It may be said the Scotch are too long-headed to want separation. Just so. But if the Irish are not, that is no reason why they should be allowed to hurt themselves and others.

If Ireland is to have Home Rule, then why not the separate provinces of Ireland? Ireland never was one United Kingdom apart from England; there is no reason applicable to the legislative separation of Ireland as a whole from England, which would not apply to the separation of Ulster and part of Leicester from the rest of Ireland. If it is said that the Irish people do not love the English, it certainly cannot be believed that the people of Ulster have a greater affection for the rest of the Irish.

Home Rule, then, is involved in absurdities, and would be productive of hardly anything but mischief. Any

English minister who should propose it would be a traitor to his country. We cannot believe that such a measure will ever be seriously proposed or even meditated.

P. P.

PROHIBITION IN THE NORTH-WEST.

If there ever was any true meaning in the term Prohibition in the North-West it has now become an empty symbol, without any true significance whatever. To any one who has travelled in the country and carefully examined the effect of these so-called prohibitory measures, it is at once apparent that so far from prohibiting they actually encourage the very evil which they are intended to destroy. The whole power of granting permits is vested in the hands of the Lieutenant-Governor, who, in the discharge of this function, is irresponsible, and with an autocratic freedom grants or denies, solely at his own caprice, the privileges asked of him.

However theoretically advantageous this system of paternal government may be, in which an irresponsible personage watches over the moral well-being of the people, it is plainly not adapted to this country, in which the people for the most part are enlightened and educated, nor would it ever be suitable, even for the most rude or semi-civilized community, except under one condition, and that is when a ruler can be found whose actions are uniformly unbiased and impartial—a phenomenon which has never yet occurred in the world's history. The petty 19th century potentate who rules the North-West Territories is certainly not a contradiction to this verdict of the past, but is one who, "clothed with a little brief authority," grants his favours to those who make the worst use of them, and again withholds them from others whose conduct is irreproachable.

That the evils of this system of permit-granting are not exaggerations, but have borne and are bearing the bitter fruits of an only too disastrous reality, I can testify from personal observation in one of the most important far west towns, which is a fair example, although perhaps a rather extreme one, of many others.

Here permits are almost always brought in by people least fitted to have them—men who, in the language of the country, "treat the boys," and their arrival is the signal for a general debauch, in which wild excess throws off the cloak of conventionalism, which is at best a flimsy garment here.

In these far western towns, where civilization's boom is but faintly echoed, drunkenness is seen at its worst. The people have to a certain extent thrown off the restraints of civilized life, consequently, when such an appetite as drink is aroused, all attempts at decency are blown to the winds; unbridled passion runs riot, and the community gives itself up to a mad Saturnalia of the lowest kind of animal enjoyment.