

WHAT IS THE IRISH QUESTION?

N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

We have no doubt there are still some people, and possibly very intelligent people, who "want to know," or profess to want to know, "what is meant by Home Rule," and why Ireland wants to have it. To such people, but more particularly to those who really desire that information, that is, who are in ignorance on the subject, and who honestly wish to be enlightened thereon, we could not do better than commend a reading of the speech delivered a couple of weeks ago in Glasgow (Scotland) by Mr. John E. Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary party.

In that speech the Irish question is made very plain, so plain that no man can fail to understand it who understands the English language and reads the speech. Of course, even without such explanation, or any explanation, the meaning of "Home Rule" ought to be, and is, plain enough. It is a self-explanatory phrase, and applied to Ireland what else does it, or could it mean but rule or government of Ireland at home, in Ireland, by the people of Ireland? Who, that has common intelligence, could understand it as meaning anything else?

As to why Ireland wants Home Rule it is obvious that the question should rather be, why Ireland shouldn't want it, and have it? To ask why Ireland wants, or why she should have Home Rule is as foolish a question as to ask why a man should be master in his own house? Who else should be master? Who else should rule Ireland but the Irish people? Who should rule America but American citizens? "Look around, the Frenchmen governs France, the Spaniards rule in Spain." Who else should rule there? The question is one that calls for no "solution" or argument whatever any more than an axiom in geometry.

Nevertheless, there is an Irish question, and it means Home Rule. It means Ireland's demand for Home Rule. It means that because of the want of it, and for no other reason, Ireland is the poorest country in the world to-day, whereas in her wealth of natural endowment and resources she has the materials through which she could be made one of the richest. But her people are not permitted to do anything that would bring this about. They have no hand or voice in the government of the country, as John Redmond thus stated in his Glasgow speech.

"The Irish people have no voice in the management of their own affairs. I don't mean to say we have no voice in the House of Commons. But the curious thing about our position in the House of Commons is that we are powerless in the settlement of Irish affairs. In the House of Commons we are on Irish questions in a permanent minority. In the government of our country at home the representatives of the people have no power to appoint or dismiss even a sub-constable of police. We cannot build a bridge, we cannot construct a tramway, we cannot do any of the elementary duties of local government even, without coming to the House of Commons for the permission of Englishmen and Scotchmen. We have no voice in Irish legislation, in Irish taxation, in Irish administration.

And, needless to say, the matter of taxation and taxes and the expenditure of them is a mighty important one, involving, to a vast extent, the well-being or ill-being of the country. How is Ireland taxed? How are the taxes spent? What is the cost to the people of the bad government forced upon them by England? On these points Mr. Redmond gives interesting information. He says: "In proportion to the population of the country, Ireland is the most expensively governed country in Europe, or in the world. The civil government of Ireland per head of the population costs just double what the civil government per head of the population costs in Scotland or England. Law, justice, and police in Ireland costs just three times what they cost in Scotland."

"The cost of the government of Ireland is increasing. Ten years ago the total taxation of Ireland was about seven millions. To-day it is near ten millions. Who has gained by the additional three millions? Is it the Empire? No; because, while the taxation of Ireland has gone up from seven to ten millions, what is called Imperial contributions—that is, the surplus which remains over after spending for the cost of the internal government of Ireland—has not materially increased. It is the cost of the government of Ireland itself that has increased; and is it not a monstrous thing that, as the population of Ireland



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a week they left me. After I had taken a box of the tablets my headaches were quite cured. My appetite was also poor and my stomach was bad and now my appetite is splendid and my digestion is excellent. I have been taken in all three boxes of 'Fruit-a-tives,' an exceedingly grateful to 'Fruit-a-tives' for curing me and I give this unsolicited testimonial with great pleasure.
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is steadily going down, as her trade and industry remain stagnant, as no effort is made to improve the commerce of wealth of the country, that the cost of governing the country should have gone up by three millions in ten years?"

A monstrous thing, truly. But how could it be otherwise under such a system of government? There must be always monstrous things in a country ruled by any other than its own people.

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CATHOLIC NOVELIST

Publishes a New Book on the History of Southern Italy.

How delightful history may be when told by a born story-teller, Mr. Marion Crawford showed us in his "Ave Roma Immortalis." What that work did for northern Italy, a new work which has just been published by Macmillan of New York, "Southern Italy and Sicily," does for the peninsula below Naples and Manfredonia (about the ancient Magna Graecia) and Sicily. A series of vivid historical pictures, painted often with all the glamor of romance, sets this field before us for over two thousand years—the rule and passing of Sicilians, of the Greeks, the Romans, of Goths and Byzantines, Saracens, the Normans, German Hohenstaufens, Charles of Anjou's French, and the Spanish house of Aragon. The story in detail stops with the establishment of the sovereignty of the Emperor Charles V. in 1529. In the introductory pages the main events of the late history are sketched. The stage upon which this age-long drama was enacted, the minor localities, and portraits of the leading figures are saliently depicted; and there are side-lights on art, literature, science, philosophy, religion, moral and economic changes, race characteristics, government. Nothing is wanting to give a rounded (if necessarily somewhat general) view of the period.

Mr. Crawford's long residence in and intimate acquaintance with Italy, his knowledge of languages, and his narrative gift made him preeminently

the man for this task. The occasional glances beyond the strict limits of the subject that place it in its setting and give the handling its philosophical completeness are admirably supplied from his cosmopolitanism of thought, acquirements, and personal observation and experience. Indeed, it is hard to see wherein, within the limits, the work could have been better done. The intricacy of the Norman and later periods is inseparable from the facts. We seem at times, indeed, to feel a certain superlativeness in the statement of the Greek part—the extravagances, as it were, of an admiration beyond control. As always in Mr. Crawford's writings, felicities of thought and expression occur: e. g., "poetry, which is itself that fourth dimension in our understanding wherein all is possible, and all that is possible is beautiful, and all that has beauty is true." Appended is an account of the modern Sicilian "Mafia" that breathes into that word, for most a word of vague import, a definite and beyond doubt its true meaning.

Modern brigandage in Sicily, the Mafia, "a certain lawlessness among the country population," Mr. Crawford seems to be the first to trace back to the far distant wars of the revolted Roman slaves—in the second century before Christ. Her fertility and natural wealth, which made the island for centuries a prize to be striven for, ever

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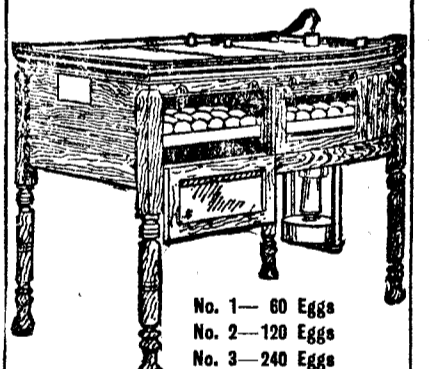
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