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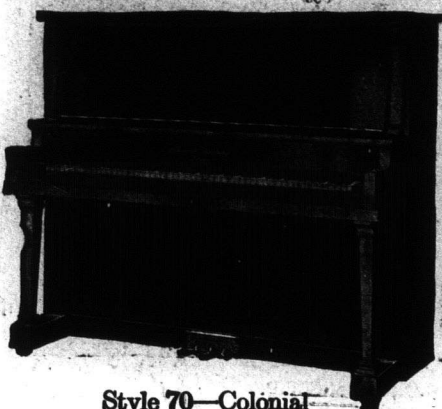
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Home Rule: A Retrospect

By Rev. J. F. Johnston

THERE is an old Greek myth about the giant Antarus, son of Goa, the earth. Antarus wrestled with the mighty Hercules, and whenever his feet left the soil his strength departed; but the moment he was thrown and came in contact again with the earth his strength came back to him, and he returned to the conflict with renewed vigor. It is a myth of patriotism and the invigorating force of love for the soil. Its truth is illustrated in every battlefield of history and in the greater and more important conquests of peace. Its modern counterpart is in the saying of an Hibernian who once remarked that "an Irishman should be true to his native land no matter where he was born."

It is something over fourteen hundred years ago since St. Patrick returned from his wanderings in Gaul to lead his beloved children out of the darkness of paganism into the light of Christianity. Fourteen hundred years ago on Beltane night he kept the candle burning which announced the downfall of the pagan

her three years to subdue the Boers; but she has been more than seven hundred years trying to subdue Ireland, and has not succeeded yet. Incessant warfare, marked by massacres, assassinations, cruelty and oppression of every sort, rising to a climax at the time of the invasion by Cromwell, continued down to the eighteenth century. Its result was not to subject Ireland, but to bring to the fore patriots and heroes whose names and deeds have always been and are today the inspiration of the deathless continuance of the struggle.

With the progress of civilization and the development of more humane ideas these dark pages came to a close in the eighteenth century. Ireland was given a parliament of her own, and under the inspiring leadership of Grattan and Lord Fitzwilliam demonstrated conclusively her capacity for self-government; her regard for the rights of all her citizens; and her willingness to work with her big sister across the channel. But England was not satisfied with this. Notwith-



Berg Lake and Pack Train

standing her sad experience with the American colonies, her dreams of imperialism led her to withdraw from the Irish people even the semblance of independence. The Act of Union was passed abolishing self-government in Ireland and renewing the attempt once more by force to make all Irishmen English. Edmund Burke, one of the keenest jurists and statesmen that England ever heard, raised his voice in protest. Henry Grattan, as broad-minded a patriot as ever graced any legislative assembly, warned England of the consequences of her act. But all to no avail. The step was taken, the undoing of which has been the single aim of Ireland ever since, and the consequence of which has been a policy on the part of England of coercion, modified by reluctant concession, the obstruction of the business of Parliament, the incessant turmoil at elections in both islands, and the rise and defeat of administration after administration on the question of Home Rule. The question of the restriction of Ireland's ancient rights has hung over Great Britain for a century like a cloud, and the cloud will never be lifted until these rights are restored.

"Upon this sea a thousand dolphins
swam,
Tossing their nostrils up to breathe
awhile;
And here the lumbering leviathan
Lay heaped and long like some half-
foundered isle;
When from the west a low and antique
sail,
Swelled with soft winds which wafted
prayers before,
Bore thy frail bark, Columbus of the
Gaul,
Far from thy native Connaught's
sheltering shore."

But the fairer the jewel the more it is coveted. The peace, the progress and the prosperity of Erin aroused the envy of her English neighbors; and Henry the Second, in the twelfth century, undertook what he thought would be the conquest of the island. England imagined she had a task on her hands at the end of the nineteenth century when it took

England has all along recognized this. She has been giving back to Ireland one by one the ancient rights violently torn from her. Almost a century ago she enfranchised the great majority of the inhabitants of the island by removing the religious disabilities. A little while later she blotted out another great wrong when the Church was disestablished. It is difficult for us today to realize what it meant to our forefathers to have to support by their toil a church which was alien, if not antagonistic, to them.