

What Home Rule will mean for Ireland.

“**H**AIL 1912!—Ireland’s year,” such is the cry so frequently heard nowadays in the Emerald Isle. After the threshold of obtaining their heart’s desire—many years of perseverance the Irish people are on Home Rule. What a noble battle has been fought! Sometimes the coveted prize seemed to be within grasp, at other times it was almost lost sight of. But not even for a moment did Erin’s sons give up the struggle; they continually kept in mind the well-known axiom: “Persevere and success will surely crown your efforts.”

It was back in the seventies that Sir Isaac Butt, an Irish non-Catholic member at Westminster, first commenced the agitation for Home Rule for Ireland. Since then, Parnell and Redmond have faithfully kept Ireland’s just demand, before the British Parliament, and, indeed, before the eyes of the entire speaking world. In the past, the Veto Power of the House of Lords has been the one obstacle to the granting of Home Rule, but happily, by the Veto Bill of recent date, the Upper House has lost its obstructive and preventative powers. The present Liberal Government is pledged to pass a Home Rule measure, and the Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrell, chief secretary for Ireland says: “At the very earliest opportunity next session the government will introduce a Home Rule Bill, and I am sure that the government will have the people of Scotland and Wales behind them.” Mr. Asquith, the Prime-Minister, declares that the “very earliest opportunity” will be on April the ninth or tenth. Is it any wonder then that true Irishmen the world over rejoice and cry out—“Hail 1912!—Ireland’s year.”

Now what will Home Rule mean to Ireland. Those opposing the measure predict terrible things, but every student of history, and every fair-minded man is of the firm opinion that it will bring hapiness, contentment and prosperity, to a hitherto persecuted people. The benefits are many. There are some of imperial importance, some of national importance, and some of local importance.

Home Rule will encourage Irish loyalty. Ireland is a part of the Empire in name only. Centuries of persecution has created an intense feeling of hatred against the persecutor—England, and even today this feeling is still fostered in many Irish breasts.