

may crystallise. Its occasion may be found in a real or supposed community of race, of language, of religion, of institutions, of culture. It may be due to geographical conditions; or it may be the offspring of common memories, or of common hopes, or of common interests. Only of this you may be sure, that whatever its real origin or justification it will endeavour to draw nourishment from all sources, and will be especially apt to justify its existence by a version of history which at the best is one-sided, at the worst is purely mythical. Therefore beware!

Now what is there in the character of Irish patriotism which, in the case of the southern and western portions of the island, produces or keeps alive the desire to break up the Union? It is not the sense of present grievance either agrarian, financial, or administrative. The agrarian difficulty is in the way of solution under the Wyndham (and other) Acts; the financial position is more favourable to Ireland than to Great Britain; the administrative grievance is largely imaginary. What then is it?

Judging by Nationalist speeches you might suppose that it was the destruction by England of Irish institutions, built up by an Irish race, and giving political unity to an Irish nation. On this theory Ireland is a kind of Poland, deprived by stronger neighbours of its constitution and its independence: so that the proper remedy is now to undo this ancient wrong, and to give back to the Irish race in Ireland that of which they should never have been deprived.

I believe this view, held more or less explicitly by most Irishmen of Nationalist leanings throughout the world and by many who are not Irishmen, is at the root of all the sentiment which has lain behind the Home Rule propaganda from the days of O'Connell to the present moment. But in truth it is a complete delusion. The history on which it is based is imaginary history. Ireland has often in centuries gone by been hardly used by her more powerful neighbours. But she has never been deprived of her national organisation, for she never possessed one. Ask an Irish Nationalist what institu-