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## TOPICS OF AN OLD-TIMER

Takes up Goldwin Smith's Book "Irish History and the Irish Question for a Further Criticism—The Brehon Laws Defended—Home Rule Would Remove the Antagonism Between North and South—Ireland's Specific Grievances—The Difficulty and Cost of Legislation in London—Imperfection of the Land Legislation—The Markets of the Empire of no use to the Irish under the Union—An Irish Parliament would Revive Ireland's Spirit, Promote Her Industries, Help Her Endeavors, Advance Education and make Her an Apostolic Nation.

Mr. Goldwin Smith in his new book "Irish History and the Irish Question," puts a lot of suppositions that are hardly to be supposed by those who are laboring for Home Rule. I will take the liberty of taking up some of those suppositions and replying to them.

"Suppose Ireland had remained the land of the Septs, would her lot certainly have been more happy?" It would, because the Septs would be Irish and any Irish or native rule would be better than any foreign rule, especially a foreign rule leased on conquest—as British rule in Ireland ever has been. He remarks: "Neither at the time of the Norman Conquest or afterwards, do the Septs appear to have shown any tendency to a union such as would have given birth to a national policy and its attendant civilization. For aught we can see, they might have gone on indefinitely like the clans of the Scottish Highlands, in a state of barbarous strife fatal to progress of every kind. Even their common interest in the struggle against the Anglo-Norman invader produced no general or permanent union. The Brehon law, which was their principal bond, had no executive force and was in itself barbarous, not distinguishing public from private wrong. The Septs warred upon each other not less savagely than the conqueror warred upon them all. If anything like union came at last, it was not political but religious, and brought with it a fatal share in the European war of religions. Nor were conquests other than Anglo-Norman impossible. From the Highlands and islands of Scotland came bodies of marauding adventurers which might have been reinforced, and in the North at least, have prevailed. It is not certain that without the aid of John de Bermingham and his Anglo-Normans, the Septs would have got rid of Edward Bruce."

Unfortunately the Septs kept the people divided, but that was at a time when national unity was known but little anywhere. But it is not right to assume that a better condition would not have come with time. There were approaches to it at different times, for instance, at the time of the Danish or Scandinavian invasion, and the Confederation of Kilkenny. It still becomes a scholar like Mr. Smith to describe the Brehon law as barbarous, as men learned in the laws of nations recognize in them one of the best codes of laws that ever existed down to the Code Napoleon. It is an exceedingly unlikely supposition that marauding bands from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland could have prevailed in the North of Ireland, as similar bodies prevailed in the North of England, because the sea intervened for one reason, and the courage of the men of the North of Ireland was too good, for another reason.

"Not is it to be forgotten," says Mr. Smith, "that Ulster is a part of Ireland. When Ireland has Home Rule there will not be that antagonism between North and South that exists to-day, and to remove that ridiculous antagonism will be one of the benefits of Home Rule. That antagonism has been kept up to maintain the union, and when the union is abolished it will surely disappear as

the North will find there will be no Catholic ascendancy as there is a Protestant ascendancy now. Home Rule will place all sections on an equality, and equality is the forerunner of harmony.

"There is in England and Scotland," says Mr. Smith, a large Irish population, which, as was seen in the election of 1885, obeys the voice of the Irish leaders and at their command votes inimically to the country in which it lives and earns its bread."

This shows if there was no union among the Irish Septs of ancient history there certainly is a union among the Irish people of to-day, which is more to the point. It is hardly proper for the author to say that when the Irish in England and Scotland voted for Home Rule for Ireland they voted inimically to the country in which they lived, for they voted with the English Prime Minister of the day and with a large portion, if not a majority of the English and Scotch people; and the question was one between the English and Irish, but on a great constitutional question such as Home Rule was then and as it is to-day.

"As the first step it should be calmly settled," says Mr. Smith, "what are the specific grievances under which Ireland labors, and which the Imperial Legislature cannot, but an Irish Parliament could remove?" Mr. Smith ought to know what those grievances are as well as anybody. It ought to be enough to know that the Irish people are heartily tired of the union, that they hate it, that it was effected against their will by corrupt methods, that it brought them none of the results promised at its consummation, that nothing but misery and disaster has attended them with it.

First and foremost from a legislative point of view, it is grievously deficient. Legislation of any kind it is difficult to accomplish. The avenues are congested and the methods inefficient. It is true the votes are no longer taken on tally sticks, but for three kingdoms to depend on one set of houses for their legislative wants, and their methods quaint, is an objection of itself. The mode of procedure is awkward and contrary to expedition. The people cannot send the representatives they want to the British Parliament because they need a property qualification and are not paid for their services. Mr. Smith ought to remember how Dickens once described the ridiculous short-comings of the "circumlocution offices" that still exist in many instances. To have to go to London for the passage of every little local bill is a great inconvenience and to wait on committees week after week and year after year, is out of all modern reason. That there are steam packets plying between the different countries is far from a sufficient answer. The cost of this local legislation is great as well as tedious. The wheels are clogged and the House of Commons and the House of Lords ought to be left free to discuss great Empire questions and effect reforms that are now held in abeyance. This is the economic side of it.

Does not Mr. Smith know it is often exceedingly difficult to get any matter—especially an Irish matter—before Parliament? Irish members have to complain that parliament after parliament has come and gone without their being able to get pressing bills before the House? Would this be the case if they had a parliament of their own? Of course not.

The great Land Bill of 1903, on which the British Parliament wasted so much time, is well known to be full of imperfections. Those imperfections would not exist if it were the work of an Irish parliament composed of Irish members in place of a house composed of a majority of Englishmen and Scotchmen?

"Ireland has now no established church," says the writer. True, but how long has she been without one? She had until lately an established church, but not a national church. But she has an educational question, and time and again the Irish have failed to get their wrongs redressed, being voted down every time they managed to get the bill before the House by a hostile anti-Catholic majority.

If her priesthood would let her, she would have a complete system of national education," says the historian. There are other people in Ireland besides priests and they know what they want in education, but this the English parliament says they cannot have and the English men-

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bers are a majority. They want to de-Catholicise as well as de-Nationalize the Irish people, and the education that will do this is the "complete system of national education" that Prof. Smith refers to. If they had their own parliament they could suit themselves in this as in other matters.

Her land law is now far more favorable to the tenant than that of the other kingdoms, and she has been and still is, receiving government subscriptions in aid of the tillers of her soil. The bills that effected this should have been passed and made law at least fifty years ago, and would have been if there existed an Irish parliament. And after all the time they have taken up, they are still imperfect. The monies that have been voted to enable the tenants to purchase their holdings are Irish monies and would not necessarily cease if Ireland became independent.

It is one thing to have the markets of the whole Empire with something to send to them and another thing to have them without anything to send to them. English competition and English legislation have made the latter condition. Where is the cotton trade and manufactures that existed in Ireland? Gone! Where is the woollen trade that formerly existed? Gone since the union. Where is the shipping trade that existed even in the first half of the last century? Gone. Of what value, therefore, are the markets of the Empire to the Irish? Why Ireland cannot have her own markets to say nothing of the markets of the Empire. Surely an Irish parliament would not deprive her of them. An Irish Parliament would foster her trade, her commerce and her manufactures. Hostile English legislation destroyed them. Mr. Smith says the protectionists did not do it, but what matter to us whether the protectionists or others did it, so long as it was effected by English legislation!

Surely Mr. Smith will not deny that Home Rule would be beneficial to the Irish people. What is the motive, then, that would keep it from her? A purely selfish motive on the part of Unionists. If Ireland, had her own parliament it would revive her spirit, promote her industries, help her endeavors, advance education, and make her an apostolic nation. Her people have a genius for governing, for legislating, for manufacturing, for trading, that now lies dormant and wasted.

Why not give her an opportunity to show what she can do? She has begged for it, she has prayed for it, she has petitioned for it, and there can be no mistaking what she desires. The union has been her greatest curse. It has mostly been taken up with protecting landlordism with all its abuses. Now that the landlords are going, the union ought to go with them. Home Rule is the panacea for all of Ireland's ills and no just people, no sympathetic people, no people who want to see Ireland prosperous and happy would keep it longer from her. She is now making another supreme effort to secure it, and every Irishman and friend of Ireland in Canada will assist her in the endeavor.

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## DIocese of Hamilton REVELATIONS TO A GOOD SHEPHERD NUN

General Thanksgiving for the Return Home and Recovery of the Bishop After a Prolonged and Severe Illness

The following circular from His Lordship was read at Mass on Sunday last in all the churches and chapels of the diocese.

To the Reverend Clergy of the Diocese of Hamilton:

Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers,—Thanks be to God, to the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and to the fervent prayers that have been offered for me, after an absence of nearly five months at St. Joseph's Hospital, Guelph (where I gratefully acknowledge having received the best of care on the part of physicians and attendants) the consolation has been afforded me of returning home in restored health, in time to participate in the celebration of the great festival of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, the Patroness of our Cathedral and of our Diocese. For this signal favor and blessing I now earnestly invite and request all my good priests, all the religious communities, and all the faithful of the Diocese to unite with me in prayer and solemn thanksgiving to Almighty God. It was indeed a matter of deep regret to me that the suddenness and severity of my illness prevented me from asking, before undergoing two serious surgical operations, public prayers in all the Churches. Fortunately, however, such an appeal was not necessary, as I am assured that my friends, not only among my own priests and people, but also among eminent dignitaries of the Church, and even the Holy Father himself, in their great charity and kindness, without any merit of mine, were good enough to make special remembrance of me in their pious prayers. To the efficacy of these earnest and constant prayers I feel that under God I am indebted for my recovery. My most fervent thanks are therefore offered, first to Our Holy Father the Pope, who "in Audience" granted on the 20th day of November last, was graciously pleased to send a special blessing to the Bishop of Hamilton, together with his prayers for a speedy recovery." And, secondly, to their Eminences Cardinal Merry del Val and Cardinal Goetti, both of whom were kind enough to send messages of sympathy and kind regards. My special thanks are due also to His Excellency the Governor-General, the distinguished representative of His Holiness in Canada, who at considerable inconvenience, honored me with a special visit of sympathy on learning of my serious illness at the Hospital. Finally, I most heartily thank all the Prelates, Archbishops, Bishops and Priests, who were kind enough to honor me by personal visits or messages of sympathy, which I heartily appreciate. I also thank the members of the Religious Communities, the pupils, orphans and aged under their care (not forgetting my Indian children at Cape Croker) and all the faithful of the Diocese, for whose valued prayers and sympathy I shall be forever grateful. May God bless and reward them all!

In humble supplication, therefore, to Our Blessed Lady, under whose patronage I was consecrated, and in gratitude to Almighty God who was pleased to hear the prayers offered in my behalf and grant me the privilege of being spared to inaugurate and celebrate worthily with my good priests and people the forthcoming Golden Jubilee of the Diocese, I hereby direct that on the Sunday within the Octave of the Immaculate Conception the Litany of the Blessed Virgin shall be recited after each Mass, and the Te Deum sung or read after the principal Mass in all the churches and chapels of the Diocese.

With best wishes to all my priests and people for a most happy and holy Christmas, I am, Reverend and dear Fathers,

Your faithful servant in Christ,  
THOMAS JOSEPH DOWLING,  
Bishop of Hamilton.

J. P. HOLDEN,  
Chancellor.

FOUND AT LAST

Mr. McGill, Analyst of the Dominion Inland Revenue Department, after an analysis, reports that the best English and American goods are inferior to the Canadian-made brand known as "Japanese" writing ink.

Here is the text of this most precious document:

Most Holy Father: In deepest confusion, I return to the feet of your Holiness to most humbly ask you to permit me speak to you again on the subject upon which I wrote to your Holiness in the month of June last. Then, scarcely passed through a crisis of life and death, my strength permitted me only to dictate a letter. Now, although upon my sick bed, I can at least write with a quill pen. In my last letter I confided to your Holiness certain graces which Our Lord in His infinite mercy deigned to accord me without regarding my unworthiness. It is with confusion that I confess to your Holiness that He has since continued to treat me with the same mercy. Please express or (Continued on page 5.)

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