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Superintendent.

HOME RULE AND NATIONALITY.

(BY RT. HON. ARTHUR J. BALFOUR, M.P.)

(Concluded)

If then neither Irish institutions, nor Irish culture, nor Irish descent be a sufficient ground for the claim of Home Rule, can we find that ground in its geographical isolation? It is a perilous argument; for geographical isolation is at the mercy of mechanical knowledge; and it changes with the progress of invention under our very eyes. If anything is certain in hypothetical history it is that there never would have been a separate Parliament on College Green had Dublin always been within ten hours of London. I quite understand that a system of subordinate provinces may be convenient in a country of vast area and scattered populations. But to acknowledge separate nationality, or even to create a separate administration, in a district which is neither remote nor difficult of access, for no other reason than that it is surrounded by water, seems to be a highly irrational use of geographical information.

Perhaps at this point in my argument my reader will be disposed to say to me, "You began by admitting that there was an Irish difficulty; you have since been occupied in proving (or attempting to prove) that the difficulty was not due to certain causes often alleged in explanation of it. But of what importance is this if the difficulty exists? You cannot cure a disease merely by exposing an incorrect diagnosis. So far you have not even suggested a diagnosis of your own."

The nature of the disease I have indicated. It is a sentiment of hostile and exclusive local patriotism, which deems itself outraged by the full inclusion of the locality on any terms, even the most generous, within a larger national unit. But if this be its nature, what is its explanation if we exclude as irrelevant or negligible differences of race, of institutions, of culture, or of geographical position?

The Explanation

The explanation is to be found in the tragic coincidences of Irish history. The circumstances attending the slow increase of British power were in themselves a great misfortune. If Ireland had remained isolated from her neighbours she might gradually have evolved central institutions and a civilised policy of her own. If her warring clans had been rapidly and effectively subdued, as the Highland clans were subdued after the '45, the native Irish population might have immediately shared the advantages of the more advanced social and economic polity with which she had become associated. But nothing could have been more both for the English and the Irish than what actually occurred. Long continued guerilla warfare is the most demoralising of all forms of warfare; and it never took a more demoralising form than it did in Ireland. To the English it was of slow and dubious advantage; to the Irish it was sheer loss. Yet the melancholy story would long ago have been forgotten and forgiven but for sectarian differences and agrarian wrongs. Unhappily it was impossible anywhere, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to exclude religion from politics; and it was certainly impossible in Ireland. Do not, however, let us suppose that either the Protestants or the Roman Catholics concerned were of a type peculiarly bigoted or vindictive. As far as my knowledge goes this was not so. But unfortunately Ireland was dragged by British statesmen into the English and Scottish civil wars; in these religion and politics were inextricably mingled; and the final defeat of James the Second left the majority of Irishmen convinced that the cause of Ireland was the cause of Roman Catholicism, and the majority of Englishmen convinced that the cause of Protestantism was the cause of Liberty. Ireland was divided into two camps; and divided into two camps she still remains.

Sorry Combination

What wars and massacres, confiscation and reconfiscation could not have done, has been effected by the combination of these with religious oppression. And though the days I am speaking of are long gone by, they have left behind them a tradition still sufficient to confer on Irish patriotism of the Nationalist type an anti-British flavour.

What, in these circumstances, should British statesmen do? In my personal opinion—I speak for no one but myself—there are only two policies open to them. They may maintain the Union and keep Ireland in full political communion with England and Scotland. Or they may give Ireland (with or without Ulster), complete autonomy, requiring her to manage her own finances, pay her own bills, borrow on her own credit, con-

trol her own rebels, settle her own constitution;—remaining, if she so desire it, a self-governing colony within the limits of the Empire.

This is evidently a counsel of despair. None of the great Dominions—not Canada, nor Australia, nor South Africa—would tolerate such a severance of their territories as is implied in this scheme. The United States has fought the bloodiest war of modern times in order to avoid it. Must we submit where they would resist? In my opinion, never.

Yet the remedy, however desperate, is apparently suited to the disease. It gives Nationalist Ireland what it professes to desire; it should satisfy Irish patriotism in its narrowest and most hostile form. And those who really think that Ireland is a nation unrighteously held in bondage, or who deem that whether this be true or not, the majority of Irishmen will always think so, are bound to consider it. It is at least a solution of the Irish Nationalist problem; and this is more than can be said for Home Rule in any of its various shapes.

Something Must Be Done

But if this complete surrender be regarded as impossible, can the alternative policy be persevered with? Can we remain as we are, refusing any concession to that hostile form of Irish patriotism whose origin I have endeavoured briefly to explain, and even in a measure to excuse?

I think we can; and I think so (in part) because neither reason nor experience suggests that this sentiment is destined to be eternal. Even now signs are not wanting that it is undergoing the same kind of change which has (for example) converted loyalty to the Stuart dynasty from a practical creed to a historic emotion. And the reasons are analogous. The wars and confiscations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the religious and economic injustices of the eighteenth century, the religious and economic injustices of the eighteenth century are long passed away; and there is no reason known to me why they should disturb the unity of the United Kingdom more permanently than the intestine horrors of the Thirty Years' War disturb the unity of a United Germany. If indeed Nationalists were expected by Unionists to sell their birthright, if the larger patriotism of a citizen of the Three Kingdoms was, in its essential nature, incompatible with the affection separately owed to each one by its children, we might well despair. But as I have tried to show, this is not the case. And even now those who will take the trouble to enquire may easily convince themselves how much there is of genuine Irish Nationalism which has no real desire either for independence or for Home Rule.

Middle Policy.

"But," it will perhaps be here objected, "you have so far not argued the case of Home Rule at all. You have discussed autonomy and (potential) separation; you have discussed the maintenance of the Union. The middle of policy of Home Rule you have not discussed at all. This is true. And the reason is

that if the Irish difficulty is due to Irish Nationalism, Home Rule does not deserve to be described as a policy at all. It provides no solution of any Irish problem, or Irish problem either. It is not a constitutional remedy; it is a parliamentary device.

A very few words will make this clear. If the subject be approached from the side of Irish nationality, which is the line of approach suggested by history and followed in this paper, the absurdities of Home Rule lie on the surface of the measure. The limitations imposed on the new Irish Parliament are such as were never desired by England in the case of the American Colonies before the War of Independence; nor would they ever be tolerated by any one of the self-governing Dominions. How then can they be permanently accepted by those whose policy is professedly based on the indefeasible claims of Irish Nationality? And if it be replied that the Nationalist members profess themselves content, we are compelled to ask by what right they attempt thus to set limits to the aspirations, in their opinion the just aspirations, of their fellow-countrymen, either now or hereafter?

Constitutional and Administrative.

If again the subject be approached from the side of constitutional equity or administrative convenience, the Bill is utterly without defence. No doubt there are many persons who think that a large delegation of parliamentary power to subordinate assemblies would be a great constitutional reform. I am not disposed to agree with them; but the case is arguable. What is not arguable is the supposition that the Home Rule Bill is a serious contribution to this object. There is not in it from beginning to end the faintest indication that its authors ever supposed that its provisions could be applied to other parts of the United Kingdom; nor could they ever be so applied. In the meanwhile it leaves Ireland grossly over-represented in the Imperial Parliament so far as

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April 31, 1914

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Daddy's Good Night Story

By GEORGE HENRY SMITH



W H R—R! Whir—r—r! The great wind was whirling around Bret

Rabbit's house while Billy Bunny was writing a new story.

"It seems to me that while you write stories I ought to be drawing the pictures," said Jack Rabbit.

"Go ahead," replied Billy, "but don't bother me. I am very busy."

Billy did not look at his brother, who was standing in front of the looking glass with a piece of soap in his hand.

Looking at the glass he saw his head and great ears. He went nearer the glass and began to draw the outline of his head and ears on the mirror with the piece of soap.

He worked and worked until finally he stood off a little ways and, sure enough, there was a rabbit right in the glass. Then he stole softly down stairs.

Billy finished his story and looked around for Jack. He was nowhere to be seen.

"I wonder if he left his drawing anywhere," said Billy to himself. Looking at the wash stand, he saw the face in the mirror.

"Goodness!" he exclaimed. "Do I look like that?" Then he looked behind him to see if any one else was in the room. Turning again to the glass he said:

"What are you looking at me so funny for?" The rabbit in the glass didn't say a word.

"Don't you look at me like that!" he fairly shouted. "Come out of that looking glass or I will throw something at you!"

The rabbit in the glass kept quiet.

Then Billy picked up the soap dish and said threateningly:

"Are you going to speak to me?"

The picture didn't answer.

"Speak to me or I'll hit you," said Billy.

"What's the matter with you?" asked a voice behind him.

Turning, he saw Jack.

"I'm going to hit that rabbit in the glass," said Billy.

"Don't! Don't!" cried Jack. "That's my picture. I drew it with a piece of soap."

"Oh!" said Billy, and turning to the rabbit picture he said:

"My, but you came near getting hurt."

English and Scottish affairs are concerned, and grossly under-represented as far as Imperial affairs are concerned. It gives the Irish much more power than they ought to have in moulding legislation which applies only to Great Britain, and much less power than they ought to have in controlling national policy and national taxation. How can such a system last in Ireland? How can it be extended to England or Scotland? How can it be seriously regarded as the solution of any problem whatever,—national, constitutional, or administrative?

Raises Many Problems.

But if it solves no problem, it raises many, and of these the most urgent is Ulster. To the ordinary Radical voter in England or Scotland the evils of Home Rule may appear shadowy and remote. He regards the Irish question as a nuisance of long-standing, and, if his leaders assure him that their scheme is going to bring it to an end, he is prepared to submit and pay. Very different is the feeling in the north-east of Ireland. There the maintenance of the Union is not deemed a matter of convenience or of personal sentiment; it is a matter of life and death; and as such, it will most certainly be treated.

And have the men of Ulster no justification for such a view? If the Irish of the south and west have an inherent moral right to claim administrative separation from the United Kingdom, has not Ulster an equal right to claim administrative separation from the rest of Ireland? If the Nationalist demand be founded upon race, is not Ulster in this respect as different from the rest of Ireland as the rest of Ireland is from England? If the Irish Nationalists profess to approve a plan which, like the Home Rule Bill, limits their rights as citizens of the United Kingdom, why should the wider patriotism of Ulster consent to the sacrifice? The Roman Catholics of the south and west certainly would not have considered themselves secure if, under whatever paper safeguards, they were placed in the power of the Ulster Protestants. Why should the Ulster Protestants be content to be placed in the power of Leinster, Munster and Connaught? And if it be said that such a view ignores the modern spirit of religious toleration, I would remind the reader of what I have already insisted upon, namely, the historic part which religious differences have so unhappily played in the creation of the Irish problem. If England, through her misfortune or her fault, has been responsible for making Nationalist Ireland what it is, not less has she been responsible for making Unionist Ulster what it is, and the idea that Britain can save herself all further trouble by a partial and half-hearted withdrawal from Ireland, retaining the duty of protecting minorities, but abandoning all power of doing so effectually, seems to me to be, from the point of view of expediency, amazingly short-sighted, and, from the point of view of ethics, profoundly immoral.

General Conclusions.

My conclusion, then, from the arguments which I have indicated rather than expressed in any developed form may be summarised as follows: The Irish problem, now that all Irish

grievances connected with land, religion, and finance have been removed, is essentially due to the exclusive and often hostile from which Irish patriotism outside Ulster has assumed.

This finds no justification either in differences of race or in the memories of native institutions destroyed by foreign usurpation. It has its origin in the unhappy circumstances of Irish history, and especially in the inextinguishable fusion, both in fact and in the memory of the Roman Catholic Irish, of wrongs due to religious divisions with others that followed on the heels of rebellion and civil war.

The memory of these unhappy events was kept alive long after the events were over by the social irritation due to one of the worst systems of land tenure which has ever existed; and though this and all the other causes which have produced the Irish problem are now removed, their effects, as is inevitable, survive them.

Desirable Combination.

Those who think, as I do, that these effects are diminishing, and are destined to disappear, look forward to a time when Irish patriotism will as easily combine with British patriotism as Scottish patriotism combines now. They ask only for time, and not much of that. Although more than eighty years have passed since Roman Catholic disabilities were removed, yet it is only about a quarter of a century since the problem presented by the congested districts in Ireland began to receive special treatment; it is only about fifteen years since local government on a popular basis was set up; it is only about ten years since the land system was remodelled under the Wyndham Acts; and only about five years since provision was made to meet the special wants of the Roman Catholics in respect of University education. Measured by the standard of a nation's life such figures are insignificant. Give these remedial measures a chance, and do not in the meanwhile meddle with the constitution of the United Kingdom for other than purely administrative reasons. To those who reject this policy, who think that Irish patriotism, in its exclusive and more or less hostile form, is destined to be eternal, I would respectfully say that they must seriously face the question of giving Ireland outside Ulster complete autonomy even though this involves potential separation. Such a policy, however perilous to Great Britain, would at least satisfy the most extreme claims of Irish nationality; and nothing else will.

For these claims, if they are genuine, can never be satisfied by the Home Rule Bill; and if that Bill were really to put an end to the Nationalist agitation, it would be conclusive proof that the agitation was factitious, and that the cause of Irish patriotism in its exclusive form was already lost.

But if Home Rule cannot really satisfy Nationalist aspirations, from every other point of view it stands condemned. Financially, administratively, and constitutionally, it is indefensible; and considered from these points of view few indeed are the Home Rulers who sincerely attempt to defend it.