

Ireland should have her own local Parliament in Dublin, and should send representatives to the Imperial Parliament in London; and quite recently Mr. Gladstone has fallen in with this view. Those who accepted such a plan could hardly fail to advance to a further application of their theory; and, as a matter of fact, "dear old Scotland" and "brave little Wales"—we think these are Mr. Gladstone's endearing epithets—are now in the field, or at least certain noisy representatives of these beloved regions. Apparently England is not so old, or so dear, or so little (this at least is true), or so brave. Poor England! We suppose we must not say, Poor dear England!

Let us then clearly understand the nature of these proposals. They mean that Great Britain and Ireland is to cease to be a United Kingdom, and is to become a federation. And this proposal seems to be made with a very "light heart," as though it were the simplest and easiest of all possible changes. Have the proposers really considered what is involved in this—that it positively is a revolution of a very thorough-going character, and that it may involve consequences the magnitude of which does not seem to have occurred to their minds?

We know tolerably well what the Irish agitators mean by the demand for Home Rule. They mean hatred of England, they mean the weakening of the Empire, and they also mean the plunder of the landlords. No doubt the agrarian question is the acutest of all, but the other ones lie very near to it. Now, we do not, for a moment, believe that the Scottish Home Rulers are, in any perceptible degree, influenced by such motives. For the most part they are moved by a sentimental nationalism which is very creditable, as it is creditable to the Welsh, or the Northumbrians, or the Cornishmen. We shall inquire presently into other aspects of the sentiment.

What Canadians mean by interesting themselves in these questions it is not quite so easy to determine. Of course, a good deal of allowance is to be made for the bumptiousness of a young people, as it is for the same quality in a young man. Then, naturally, there is a good deal of ignorance mixed up with the movement. We have a Federation in Canada, with local parliaments and a central parliament, why should they not have the same in Great Britain? *Sancta simplicitas!* It would be grotesque, were it not so serious.

There are two assumptions here, neither of which it is at present possible to verify. In the first place, it is assumed that Federal Government is an entire success; and in the second place, it is assumed that a method which succeeds in this country must succeed everywhere. Neither of these propositions can be demonstrated. We are near the beginning of our Federal system, but we are not at the end of it, we are not many years advanced in it; and even in our short life-time we have had our difficulties; and he would be a bold man who would say that the working has always been strictly according to the theory.

But even if Federal Government were the best for this country and for the United States, it does not follow that it would be the best for Great Britain. In the States it needed a great and bloody war to settle the relations between the local governments and the central one. When that war took place, the Constitution was not a hundred years old, and another hundred years may reveal fresh difficulties. But the case would be far more critical in Great Britain. Federal Government, on this side of the Atlantic, was perhaps the only way of binding together a number of independent States or Provinces, and the best must be made of it. In Great Britain it is the breaking up of one solidified State into fragments, in the doing of which there would be the shedding of an enormous quantity of bad blood which would fall to the earth, and become the seed of miseries untold for the future.

It needs the recklessness of Mr. Gladstone himself to contemplate the consequences of such a revolution without emotion. United Great Britain has, in God's providence, gained such a place among the nations of the earth as no country of the same size has ever gained under similar conditions. Are we prepared lightly to cast aside an order of things which has been attended with such results? Are we prepared to run the risk which is incidental to such a revolution?

On a former occasion we referred to the building together of modern France by the prudence, and sometimes the unscrupulous violence, of her far-seeing rulers. By welding the ancient provinces into one kingdom they made France what was long entitled "the prerogative nation of Europe." Will any one gravely propose to relieve the local grievances of the French people by introducing a new system of federal government, which shall give local parliaments to the ancient provinces? Yet the different parts of France are as widely distinguished from each other as the constituent parts of the British United Kingdom. In Western Brittany they speak a Celtic language akin to the Welsh; in some of the Eastern depart-

ments they speak a dialect of German; while in other parts, not to mention the unique Basque language, they speak dialects of Italian and of Spanish. Will any Scotchman deny the analogy? And will he dispassionately counsel French Home Rule?

It is, we hope, apparent that before we can be induced to take this "leap in the dark" we should be satisfied that it is recommended by very grave and sufficient reasons. We have carefully read the reports of the speeches made last week at the meeting of the association, and we confess that we cannot discover them. There was, naturally and innocently, the usual amount of "tall talk," but we do not complain of this. We like the Scotch for loving the "land of brown heath and shaggy wood." We admire the serene conviction which they entertain of their own pre-eminence in every department. They have almost persuaded mankind at large to take the same view of them. And this is really a considerable feat to have accomplished.

But this is not enough to show the necessity or the desirableness of Home Rule; and we find little of the nature of solid argument or reason—nothing but somewhat vague generalities. For example, we are gravely assured that Scotland has been losing its liberties since the Union. How Scotchmen, of whom apparently the meeting in Temperance Hall was chiefly composed, should have listened with equanimity to such a statement, passes our power of comprehension. How often have we "assisted" at the singing of "Scots wha hae," and glowed at the declaration of the patriotic king,

We will drain our dearest veins
But they shall be free;

and now we are told that, under the descendants of Robert Bruce, and especially, as it would appear, under one of the very last of them, and certainly under that one who has shown the most passionate love for the "land of the mountain and the flood," Scotland has lost her liberties!

In what way? Her laws and her institutions have been changed. *Latet dolus in generalibus.* Condescend to particulars. Tell us what laws and what institutions. As a matter of simple fact, we know that whilst the old common law prevails in England, as it does in Ontario and New York, the Roman Civil Law prevails in Scotland, as it does in Quebec. We doubt very much whether an English barrister would understand the very terms in use in Scottish law.

The gentleman who came as a representative of the association in Scotland said that two things had saved Scotland, her education and her religion. But surely these are very important institutions; and we are glad to find that England has not interfered with them. The educational system, by which Scotland became the best educated nation in the world, is certainly a thing for Scotchmen to be proud of. We imagine that it is the opinion of most of them that, under the Imperial Parliament, that system has been modified in a manner calculated to meet the changing needs of modern times.

In regard to the Church, we are a little afraid of hurting, at once, Scotch and English sensibilities. But the truth must be told. The calm student of history will probably decide that it was the alliance with England that saved the Presbyterian religion. Dr. Alexander Carlyle, himself a Presbyterian, declares that the Episcopalians were at one time more numerous in Scotland than the Presbyterians. It was the great Prince of Orange who threw his sword into the Presbyterian scale, not because they were Presbyterians, for he was about the same time becoming an Episcopalian, but because they were Whigs.

Nor is this all. "Bonnie Prince Charlie" swept Scotland from end to end, and was not only "king o' the Hieland hearts," but of a good many of the Lowland. It was this terrible England, which, alas! has been enslaving, of late, the sons of Fergus, which sent the young Pretender "on his travels," as his grand-uncle would have said, and saved the Presbyterianism of Scotland from destruction. Now, we can quite understand a Scotch Roman Catholic, or perhaps an Episcopalian, giving this example to show how Scotland had been deprived of her liberty, but it is an example which a Presbyterian will certainly not adduce as an argument for Home Rule.

There is one point, and only one, as far as we can make out, which can be urged as a reason for Home Rule in Scotland. Broadly stated, it is the complaint that the Imperial Parliament is too busy or too indifferent to attend to local needs in Scotland. There are certainly some persons who would be guilty of the levity of declaring that such a state of things was a blessing and a benefit, instead of an injury and a grievance; and they would point to the deluge of legislation with which Canada and the United States are afflicted. We will not urge this consideration, nor will we, at present, argue that English local affairs are in precisely the same condition. Even if the case were as bad as it is represented to be, which we do not