

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 Stewart 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, 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 internecine horrors of the Thirty Years' War disturbed 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.

"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 maintainance of the Union. The middle 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 British 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