

HOME RULE.

(The Nation, July 19.)

THE question no longer is whether we shall have Home Rule; it is what shape and form the Home Rule arrangement is to take, and where the line is to be drawn between local and Imperial affairs.

During the past five years, through all the hard struggles of the Irish nation and the Irish party, in the midst of coercion and repression, and expulsions and suspensions, and under a fire of abuse, calumny, and contumely directed against Ireland's representatives, the Home Rule cause was being won. English statesmen were being educated up to it, even though there were few visible indications of the fact. Well might the brave soldiers of the Irish cause in those dark days say to their over-confident enemies and to the faint-hearted among their friends, in the words of an English poet:—

Say not the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as they have been, things remain.
For while the tired waves vainly breaking
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far off, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

To-day we can all see the in-rush of the tide. Home Rule has admittedly entered into the region of practical politics; its advocacy is no longer confined to Irish members: the leading statesmen of England, the young and vigorous politicians whose hands will soon have the ruling of the destinies of that country, now make it a portion of every speech they address to the public opinion of England. Irish self-government is, if we may adopt a current political phrase, a leading plank in the platform which is being constructed for the new Parliament; and we in Ireland may well congratulate ourselves upon a fact so full of glorious promise for our country.

It is really refreshing to read some of the observations on this subject made by ex-Cabinet Ministers since their hands have been freed and their tongues unloosed by the defeat of the Government. For years past these must have felt convinced of the truth and justice of the Irish demands, and in opposing them they must have been sinning against the light. To-day we find them denouncing the system of rule existing in this country in language apparently adopted from Mr. Parnell, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. Healy. Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at a meeting held at West Islington on the 17th inst., thus referred to Dublin Castle:—

"The time has come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle, to sweep away altogether those alien boards and foreign officials, and to substitute for them a genuine administration of purely Irish business. That is the work to which the new Parliament will be called."

In the same remarkable speech the right hon. gentleman said:—
"The pacification of Ireland at this moment, as I believe, depends upon the cession to Ireland of the right to govern itself in the matter of its purely domestic business. I do not believe that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule a sister country. It is a system which is founded on the bayonets of thirty thousand soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralised and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland, or that which was common in Venice under Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step, he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work without being confronted, interfered with, controlled, by an English official appointed by a foreign Government, and without a shadow or a shade of representative authority."

In language somewhat less forcible, but yet to the same effect, Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Herbert Gladstone have spoken. From prominent members of the Conservative party we have as yet had no similar declarations, but we have but little doubt that there are men amongst them whose opinions do not fall far short of the mark above indicated. If that be so, the sooner they speak out the better, for assuredly Ireland will give her preference to the party that will give her the fullest concession of her political rights.

To both parties we would say that as this Home Rule question is at last to be taken up with a view to the pacification and contentment of Ireland, the wisest course will be to deal with it in a large and liberal spirit. Petty reforms, though they may not be spurned by the Irish people, will neither end nor ease the strain between the two countries. It is better to strike the public mind, touch the public heart, and gratify the national sentiment by a frank concession of the demand for a native Parliament than to have recourse to miserable makeshifts which would satisfy no one and settle nothing. Ireland wants not a board to administer English law, but a Parliament to legislate for the Irish nation. On that basis a treaty of peace can easily be made between the two nations, and feelings of mutual respect and goodwill may follow in the course of time; but short of such an arrangement no stop or stay can be put upon Irish political effort. Unrest, agitation, and contention will continue to embitter the relations of the two countries. We hope the bolder and better line will be taken by the statesmen who have made up their minds to handle this great political question. We warn them that parochial or provincial arrangements will not suit in this case; we take leave to remind them that what they have to deal with is a nation—a nation that has been overborne and cast down, but never subjugated; a nation whose sufferings may be prolonged, but whose rights will never be surrendered. If they have a full appreciation of these facts we may hope that the scheme which they will present to the new Parliament will be one which Ireland can honourably accept, and which will deserve to be hailed with satisfaction and pleasure by the Irish race all over the world.

The only safe and sure cure for Gravel or Urinary troubles is American Co.'s Hop Bitters. Prove it. Read.

THE IRISH CAUSE AT ROME.

THE following is the fifth letter of the remarkable series appearing over the signature "A Catholic and an Irishman," in the *Unita Cattolica*:—

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—As a Catholic and an Irishman I must, in the name of the Irish people, thank *Unita Cattolica* for the manner in which my letters have been received, and an opportunity afforded me for stating, as far as I can, the case of Ireland. Foreign opinion regarding Ireland is in a great measure formed from the English papers—a very prejudiced and deadly source. It is a great pity that Irish journals are not consulted by foreigners when they wish to know the truth about Irish affairs. As well might a man outside the true faith, anxious to know the truth about the Infallibility of the Pope, the Vatican Council, or the Syllabus, consult, as an unerring guide, Mr. Gladstone's book, entitled "Vaticanism," or the Freemason's journals; or, if he desired to know the truth about the Temporal Power, take as his guide the most Freethinking member of the Italian Parliament, as any foreigner take for his authority about Irish affairs the English journals, Mr. Errington, or the many English cliques in Rome (I don't care how pious the individual members may be). Mr. Errington—every time a question is asked about him in the English Parliament—Mr. Gladstone repudiates him as an accredited Minister at Rome. Surely, if he had a spark of manhood he would not occupy such a doubtful position. However, I think I shall let him alone for some time, as really the creature is not worth it. He has been untrue to the principles on which the Irish people elected him to enter Parliament. Poor fellow, history will, if it speaks of him at all, likely chronicle him as something very small, very mean, and scarcely worth contempt.

What was the Land League? What really were its objects? Land League. The name of Land League is a million times worse than Freemason in the eyes of many English aristocratic Catholics, to whom even Irish Catholicism is a thing to be admitted and spoken of, well, "as very good, you know," but, after all, vulgar. With them anything Irish is not *chic*. I have already spoken of Home Rule. I have told, too, of Daniel O'Connell's long constitutional agitations for a native Parliament.

Until the year 1870, the Irish people had to pay an enormous sum of money every year for the support of the Protestant Church in Ireland, although more than three-fourths of the population of Ireland was Catholic. An Act was also passed by Mr. Gladstone about the year 1860, to amend the Land Laws of Ireland. This Act gave in some measure a right to the land to the inhabitants of one province only in Ireland, and that was in Ulster, where by far the greatest number of Protestants lived. In the South, East, and West of Ireland the farmers got no benefit by this Land Act. The South, the East, and the West were Catholic. "*Ab uno disce omnes.*"

Manufactories had been discouraged in Ireland. In fact, in the Catholic parts of Ireland before the year 1800 the woollen trade had flourished. Special laws were passed to suppress it, while at the same time the linen trade was fostered by the Government in the so-called Protestant part of Ireland—viz., the North. In fact, in the Catholic parts of Ireland nothing was left to them but to be mere tillers of the soil—"hewers of wood and drawers of water." When they had tilled and fertilised the soil they were still at the mercy of the landlords, who could throw them out any day, no matter how long they or their forefathers had worked in that land. Or the landlord might come and raise the rent when he liked. Was this not a sad state of affairs? Yet such was, and even is, Ireland. The diocese of Meath, one of the most fertile spots in Ireland—richer far in a way than the fertile plains of Lombardy—had in 1846, 340,000 Catholics. Now it has only one-half—viz., 170,000 (one hundred and seventy thousand) Catholics. The Most Rev. Dr. Nulty, Bishop of Meath, can bear me out in this, I think. I appeal to him, although I only know him from the public Press. Think of what he saw in Mountaugant when he was a curate only, when, as I said, 700 people were evicted in one day, as I stated in my last letter, and ask yourself, if he sees, as he has, the heart of a good Catholic bishop, must he not feel sore-hearted over the state of his diocese. As he makes his visitation and sees the cattle grazing where he knew there were in olden times happy homes and firesides, must he not feel deeply the state of Ireland? I wonder he is so charitable. English papers have written strongly about his last pastoral. Put yourself in his position, and you must admire, as I take it, his charity and forbearance, "*Ab uno disce omnes,*" as I have said.

The Land League was founded by Michael Davitt, a name dear to Ireland. In his youth himself and his family had been thrown on the roadside. He went to England, where he supported his mother and lost his arm in a factory. His mind was filled with the terrible scenes he had witnessed and experienced. A young man at the time of the abortive and foolish attempt at rebellion in 1866, he threw himself into the cause. He was wrong, but he was young and his experience had been awful. I have often heard him since publicly state in meetings to young hot-blooded men, who cried out, "Let us appeal to the rifle or the sword!" that they were foolish and must be wise; that he had entertained those ideas, but that that was not the way to win the cause of Ireland. He has only one arm. I believe he would not only give it but his life for Ireland. What did he do? He sold arms in 1866, was condemned to fifteen years' penal servitude in 1870. In the prison he commenced to study, made himself a master of languages, and, above all, of political economy, until the very Government which imprisoned him set him free to examine him about prison discipline and technical education. I do not agree perhaps with all his views; neither do I agree with all the views of the Parliamentary Party; but I admire the men who are working so earnestly for a common cause, which must and will succeed, for the Irish are Catholic to the heart, and they pray for God's blessing on their work, and it must succeed. Catholics first, Irishmen afterwards. These are our watchwords. Michael Davitt was the founder of the Land League, I give now the objects of this League as