

must recognise this distinction. Our proposal is not communistic, neither is it revolutionary. It aims at destroying over-centralisation, but it does not violate one single principle of the Constitution (applause). Let me consider whether I am justified in saying that the scheme is reasonable in theory. In order to do this, I will ask myself three questions: First, Is it reasonable, judged by the test of common-sense? Secondly, Is it reasonable, judged by the test of political philosophy? And thirdly, Is it reasonable as having the sanction of successful working elsewhere at other times, and, indeed, in the British Empire of to-day (cheers)? Sir, what are the facts of the present political situation? Here we have two counties, as I have already said, closely connected geographically and socially, with many common ties, yet distinct in historic tradition, in religion, in national instinct; speaking the same language, belonging to the same empire, and to some extent composed of an administration of the same races, yet presenting characteristics as distinct as any two nations in the universe. Historically, Ireland is the elder. She can boast of having been a civilised nation when England was but a barbarous province of the Roman Empire (laughter and cheers). But, sir, long, long years ago England reversed the balance. She has been great, and prosperous, and free, while Ireland has been poor, and miserable, and subject. Age after age, in the midst of unparalleled sufferings, the Irish people struggled on for the preservation of their nationality and their freedom (loud applause). For over seven hundred years Ireland had a Parliament of her own. True, it was more or less subject, but still it was a distinct Parliament. In 1782 Henry Grattan, backed by the Irish Volunteers, declared that "No Power on earth had a right to legislate for Ireland, save only the Sovereign, the Lords and Commons of Ireland" (cheers), and laid down the doctrine—"We know our duty to our Sovereign, and we are loyal; we know our duty to ourselves, and are determined to be free" (enthusiastic applause). In that happy day England yielded, and for the short space of eighteen glorious years Ireland advanced in prosperity with enormous strides, and made considerable progress in the arts of peace. But history tells us that a conspiracy was entered into to destroy the liberty she then enjoyed. The scheme by which Pitt and Castlereagh effected their purpose has been condemned and branded as infamous by English writers of all shades of political thought. Carried into effect by bribery and corruption, by violence and murder, it is not strange that it should ever since have caused so much strife and proved so fruitful a source of misery and heart-burning (hear, hear). Sir, one of the leaders of the present agitation in Ireland has laid down the doctrine that what is morally wrong can never be politically right (applause). Judged by that test the Union was the highest political crime and blunder of the century. From that time to to-day Ireland has been ruled by Englishmen and Scotchmen. Sir, it needs no words of mine to prove the failure of the system—a system which has necessitated fifty-two Coercion Acts in the space of eighty-three years, every one of which deprived the people of some advantages of the constitution; which has caused half-a-dozen famines, some four unsuccessful rebellions, and which now necessitates a standing army larger than any England had in the Crimea to fight Russia (loud applause). One of the acutest thinkers of the present day, Mr. Lecky, has said:—"Pitt's scheme centralised, but did not unite; or rather, by uniting the legislatures it divided the nations." It is true Ireland sends representatives to Parliament, but they are persistently outvoted by English and Scotch members on Irish matters. It is literally true that Ireland to-day, in every matter of detail affecting her social and political life and existence, is ruled by Englishmen and Scotchmen. History tells us that at first she was ruled brutally; but I am one of those who are glad and proud to admit that there is to-day a large and rapidly increasing number of Englishmen willing to do justice to Ireland (loud applause), but neither have they time to attend to her wants or the knowledge necessary to understand them (cheers). The Imperial Parliament is overburdened with work, every day the pressure is getting greater, and all thoughtful politicians acknowledge that reform is necessary. The effect of the Union on Ireland was disastrous. She became pauperised and depopulated: men of wealth and genius quitted her shores, drawn to the centre of government; and her people, despairing and disaffected, were left a prey to desperate and designing men. One thing only has lived through it all—and that is Ireland's imperishable faith in the ultimate triumph of her nationality (loud applause). Sir, these are the facts of the present political situation which, for everybody's sake, we entreat Englishmen to face. Surely their common-sense must approve of some such scheme as would be likely to relieve the Imperial Parliament of the burden of a task it has neither the time nor the ability to accomplish, and that alone can be done by relegating Irish matters to those who alone can be expected to understand them. I think I am justified in saying that I have now shown that the only comprehensible scheme of Home Rule we can propound is sound and reasonable, judged by the test of common-sense; but as a politician I am free to confess that common-sense standing alone counts for very little in the political world (laughter). I now come to the second question, Does Home Rule appear reasonable, judged by the test of political philosophy? The Federal system we propose is no new-fangled plan; it is as old as the earliest civilised times in history. From the earliest times nations have been bound together for common interests, yet so distinct in character, religion, and race that they could not be welded into one nation. To suit this state of thing Federalism was invented. Let Mr. Freeman, then, explain what Federalism means, and its treating of this matter in his "History of Federalism," the distinguished historian makes no allusion either to England or Ireland. "The Federal system," he says, "requires a sufficient degree of community in origin, or feeling, or interest, to allow the members to work together up to a certain point. It requires that there should not be that perfect degree of community, or rather identity, which allows the members to be fused together for all purposes. When there is no community at all, Federalism is inappropriate—the cities or states had better remain wholly independent. When community rises to identity, Federalism is equally inappropriate—the cities or states had better both sink into the counties of

a kingdom. But in the intermediate set of circumstances Federalism is the true solvent. It gives as much union as the members need, and not more than they need." I contend that the intermediate set of circumstances Mr. Freeman here alludes to subsists in our case, between England and Ireland, and therefore I am justified at once in saying that our proposal for self-government is reasonable in theory, judged not only by the test of common-sense, but also by that of political philosophy (applause). Then comes the question, Is it reasonable, as having the sanction of success in other nations, and even in the British Empire? The superabundance of evidence on this subject is my chief difficulty. Were I to deal with it fully I should have to relate some of the most glorious chapters in history. Let me quote one or two instances from the past and present. And to begin at the beginning, in ancient times the most remarkable instance of a successful Federal government is presented to us by the history of the famous Achaean League. In the heyday of Greece every city was a state, but the fall of Athens necessitated combination for a common defence against Macedonia. But each state still retained supreme power and control over its own local affairs, and we have it on the testimony of Mr. Freeman that that system of Federation arrested Hellenic decay for ages. In Mediæval times there is the case of the United Provinces of the Netherlands—an instance of a number of communities so bound together by common interests, yet so distinct as to prevent their being welded into one nation: they were all united under one Sovereign, with one army, but each retained the control over its own affairs. Thus did they prosper and hold their country against Spain, when Spain was the mistress of the world (applause). Switzerland to-day presents another and notable instance of Federalism begun long ages ago, and continuing to the present moment, though the differences between the various cantons which prevented their being welded into one nation were not half so marked as the characteristics distinguishing England and Ireland at the present day. Each Canton is self-governed, while the General Government watches over the honour and prosperity of them all (cheers). The most remarkable instance, however, is that presented by the great Republic of America (loud cheers). It is no part of my duty to explain or defend the American Constitution. It has its defects, no doubt; but then I have never heard of a constitution that was perfect. But the defects in the American constitution appear to flow from divergencies from the principle of Federalism. Be that as it may, the fact still remained that Federalism in America has built up a great, free and united nation (applause). Each State has a Parliament of its own, with supreme control over local affairs, while Congress watches over the national welfare. De Tocqueville says:—"Every American citizen defends the Union, because in defending the Union he knows he is defending the increased prosperity and freedom of his own State." Sir, in 1814 Norway and Sweden adopted the Federal system, and later still—within the recollections of the youngest of us—Austria yielded to Hungary, after a long, bitter and useless struggle, the same demands we now ask of England for Ireland. But those instances that most directly appeal to an audience such as I have the honour of addressing are those taken from the history of the British Empire itself. In each of these Australian Colonies the people possess the full measure of Home Rule, and I have repeatedly asked, and I now ask again, for some intelligible reason why you should refuse to concede to us Irishmen that which you acknowledge to have been the source of your own prosperity and the cause of your loyalty (loud cheers). What England has granted to Australia she has also granted to Canada. I hold in my hand a list of no less than twenty-five portions of the Empire to which England during the last fifty years has conceded Home Rule, from Canada and Australia down to the little Isle of Man. Aye, that little Isle of Man, only some seventy-five miles in circumference, is in possession of the full measure of Home Rule which is now denied to five and a-half millions of Her Majesty's subjects in Ireland (laughter and applause). I may be told that in none of these instances are the circumstances precisely the same as in Ireland, but then I know of no two instances in history that are precisely the same. Still, I think any impartial man will admit they are sufficiently similar to show the demand for Home Rule to be reasonable, judged by the test of the experience of other countries in other times, and of the British Empire at the present moment (applause). Having established my first proposition, as to the reasonableness of the demand, I will now proceed to show that it is a proposal likely to prove advantageous when put into practice. As a first proof, I may point to the instances already quoted of its successful working elsewhere, and it is for my opponents to produce some intelligible reason in support of their contention, that what has produced prosperity and loyalty in Australia and Canada is likely to have a contrary effect in Ireland (cheers). As with a man, so with a nation, no one can transact so well its business as itself. Unless a community be mad, it must understand its business better than anyone else (hear, hear). Deprive a man of the right of managing his own affairs, treat him as a fool or a child, and what happens? If he submits, you turn him into a slave—you kill in him all genius, all talent, all enterprise, all energy, all interest in life. And so with a nation. Treat a nation in the same way, and with no sense of responsibility left to them you may make the people reckless. You ruin self-reliance, you kill energy, and enterprise, and industry. No nation so treated has ever prospered, and yet that is the position which you insist on keeping Ireland in to-day. It cannot be said that we are unfitted for self-government. It is acknowledged that when Ireland was self-governed—sir, their own historians, every man of them who ever wrote upon the subject, admits it—she advanced in prosperity, and in the arts of peace, as she never did before, and as she never has done since (cheers). During those glorious 13 years I have spoken of already—the records of those 18 years show it—Ireland presented to the gaze of the world and to the admiration of posterity a galaxy of great men, whose names will live as long as the English tongue (loud applause). From that day to this these turbulent, disloyal and unruly Irishmen, who are said to be not fit to govern themselves, have gone forth from Ireland into the world to