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## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

WHAT HAS  
BECOME OF  
HOME RULE?

In the *Nineteenth Century* for November, Mr John E. Redmond asks this question, and gives a view of the situation that at least deserves repetition. Mr Redmond refers to the suggestion of supporters of the Government, and even of some of their mem-

bers, that the next object of the Liberals should be the ending or mending of the House of Lords. He admits that a plausible case may be made out for this. But, he asks, does anyone believe that, without a revolution, the House of Lords could be abolished within the next fifty years? Even the taking away of their veto could not be effected without convulsing England from end to end. Home Rule would be dead and buried, he says, before it was accomplished. "The population of Ireland would have been reduced by another million, a fresh cause for cutting down still further the Irish representation at Westminster being thereby furnished; and thus the last state of that country would be worse than the first." Neither England, Scotland, nor Wales, explains Mr Redmond, has now, where each is personally concerned, any just cause for rising against the Lords. The veto has only been exercised against Irish Bills. Great Britain got all she wanted with the exception of the Employers' Liability Bill, and she would have got that if Government had omitted one sub-section, on which workmen and even Liberal Members were divided. Mr Redmond claims that an earnest of the failure he predicts has already been given, in that of the agitation begun by a meeting in Hyde Park soon after the rising of Parliament—and which was almost laughed out of existence. The writer contends that it is not necessary in the interests of Home Rule to end or mend the Lords. The Lords, he says, never persisted in resisting the country. They invariably succumbed to the force of public opinion. "If the next election should result in a clear verdict in favour of Home Rule, obtained on a clear issue, the House of Lords must and will succumb again." But would the 2nd Chamber set up in their stead be equally powerless? asks the writer. "The new House of Lords, or whatever it might be called, might well become almost the equal of the House of Commons, and might, perhaps, be at the same time more anti-Irish." Therefore, the party of which the writer is a leader pleads for "an early dissolution and a direct appeal to the constituencies, on the issue of Home Rule unencumbered, as far as possible, with other issues, so that the House of Lords may not again have any excuse for saying that the country voted not on Home Rule, but on other questions, and on that ground again refuse to pass a Home Rule Bill." Mr Redmond denies that the Liberal party have fulfilled their pledge to Ireland of making the triumph of the Home Rule policy their great aim until it was secured. He, again, denies that the Liberals of Great Britain have anything to demand as urgent for them as Home Rule is for Ireland. "The concession of Home Rule is vital not only to the peace and contentment, but to the very existence of Ireland as a nation." As to the argument that the Liberals will be beaten if they go to the country on the single issue of Home Rule, Mr Redmond points to the patent fact that the longer a Ministry remains in office the less its chance of obtaining a renewed lease of power—and the more certain it is to augment the number of its venomous foes. "It suffers from its very virtues." "Besides, even if the Liberals won on a composite programme, the result would in all probability be no advantage to Ireland. The House of Lords might again say, as it said after the last general election, that the country did not vote so much upon other questions and might again reject a Home Rule Bill on that pretence." And even if the Liberals were beaten on the single issue of Home Rule, it would be better for Ireland than that they should win on the other issue. The condition of things in Ireland at present is that while Home Rule has been put off into the 'infinite azure of the future,' Castle government remains what it was in the days of Mr Balfour, the administrators of the law for the most part, as well as the spirit of their administration, being the same. The only difference is that, whereas a considerable amount of public money was

spent, or authorised to be spent, in Mr Balfour's time on public objects, there is nothing spent in that way now, and that whereas, in Mr Balfour's time, the whole National party was arrayed against the Government, now a great portion of that party tolerates in that Government acts and omissions which formerly it would have denounced, while corruption and demoralisation are working their way silently but surely, by reason of the bribes held out, in the shape of petty honours and offices of emolument, to various persons who, under a Unionist régime, would be ashamed or afraid to touch them." A new coercion régime, in short, Mr Redmond declares, would be preferable to a continuance of this state of things, as again combining the strength of the National party against the foreign domination. Better, he says, it should be repeated, "than that a Liberal majority should be returned to hang up Home Rule once more, and at the same time to paralyse, at least for some years, the National movement against foreign rule by poisoning some of the very springs from which such a movement must always derive a great part of its strength and vitality." Mr Redmond concludes by advocating a return to the means by which Home Rule was, in 1886, forced into the first place among the urgent political questions of the day—that is blocking the business and paralysing the action of Parliament. The writer quotes Mr Gladstone as approving of this measure. "He expressly said that he was not surprised at it, and that he could not complain of it; and if he is still a genuine Home Ruler, as one must believe him to be, he must be both surprised and disgusted to find its promulgation by an Independent party made a ground of complaint against them now by professing Irish Nationalists in regard to whom he predicted—assuredly in the hope that they would fulfil his prediction—that they would continue to 'block the way' till the 'primary' question of Home Rule was satisfactorily settled."

"IN the prohibition States of America (writes Max ODDS AND ENDS. O'Bell in the *North American Review* for November) I have seen men drink liquor like castor oil, out of little graduated glasses, in the drug stores. Everybody in America knows that this is so. Once a day, after lecturing, I take a little stimulant, a glass of hot grog. In the prohibition States I had to take it behind the counter of a chemist, or down in the cellar of the hotel. On one occasion it was sent to my bedroom, carefully wrapped up in brown paper with a label, 'the mixture as before.'" "This," says the writer, "is truly edifying! It seems to me that the sly obtaining and drinking of spirits in this fashion is likely to do as much harm to a young man's moral character as even the dram itself could do to his body." Mr O'Bell draws the following moral:—"But this is always the attitude of Anglo-Saxon pharisaism. 'Let us hide certain failings out of sight and pretend to the world that they do not exist, while we draw attention to our virtues and pray for the conversion of the French.'"

As to the views of Mr J. E. Redmond which we have quoted, they seem to us founded on fact. We have all along feared that in looking to an abolition or an emendation of the House of Lords for the success of Home Rule, the friends of Ireland were over-sanguine. Concerning that Mr Redmond certainly does not exaggerate. The fact is, disheartening though it may be to face it, that the fight, in all probability, remains to be fought over again. A united phalanx under the guidance of a leader qualified for the task must once more, as Mr Redmond insists, block, for the salvation of their country, the business of the House of Commons. The difficulty, meantime, seems to be in the discovery of a leader. We have the utmost respect and admiration in various ways for Mr Justin M'Carthy. But he has had ample time now to give proofs of the necessary qualifications. It is evident that he has neither the tact to unite nor the strength to control. Mr Parrell, in short, though the expression of his disapproval was unjustifiable in manner, has been justified by the results in his condemnation, if not in his ridicule, of the successor to him, as such, who had been chosen. Mr Redmond, we say, seems to take a tolerably correct view of the situation. Let us hope that the necessity of the hour may bring to the front the man duly qualified to meet it.

Mr Gladstone, in his translation of Horace, has met with the common fate of such translators. His work is a failure. Most of

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