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SOME REASONS
WHY I OPPOSE HOME RULE.

BY THE
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Belfast.

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REV. WILLIAM PATTERSON, D.D.,
Minister of May Street Presbyterian Church,
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First.—Because it would be a serious blow to the stability of the British Empire, as it would ultimately lead to complete separation from Great Britain. I know this is denied by Nationalists at the present time, and we can easily understand why. Every man who knows anything about the past history of that party is well aware that since the days of Dan O'Connell they have had as their goal entire separation from England. We have only to read the speeches of their great leaders, in their money collecting tours through the United States of America and Canada, to be fully convinced of the aim they have in view, for in language that could not be misunderstood, they have declared time and again that Ireland must be a nation. Patrick Ford and his American Hibernians have given their tens of thousands with a clear understanding that Home Rule is only a step in the right direction toward complete separation from England, which they so thoroughly hate, and always have hated. Actions speak louder than words. Witness their conduct in connection with the late Queen Victoria's Jubilee, the Boer War, and the Coronation of our present King. But why add, in respect to the incident since

every man who is not party blind knows that the Nationalists are what they were when the late Mr. W. E. Gladstone said, "They are marching through rapine and plunder to the dismemberment of the Empire."

Mr. JOHN REDMOND'S MOTTO.

At Kanturk, in November, 1895, Mr. John Redmond said :—

"Ireland for the Irish is our motto, and the consummation of all our hopes and aspirations is, in one word, to drive English rule, sooner or later, bag and baggage from our country."

And at Newry in 1897, he said :—

"I remember when Parnell was asked whether he would, on behalf of the United Nationalist nation that he represented, accept as a final settlement the Home Rule compromise proposed by Gladstone. I remember his answer. He said: 'I believe in the policy of taking from England anything we can wring from her which will strengthen our arms to go on for more. I will accept the Home Rule compromise of Gladstone as an instalment of our right, but I refuse to say it is a final settlement of the national question, and I declare that no man shall set a boundary on the onward march of a nation.' That is our motto."

Mr. JOSEPH DEVLIN ON "IRELAND AS FREE AS AIR."

At Philadelphia, in November, 1908, Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the power which is behind the Irish Nationalist movement, spoke these words: "I believe in the separation of Ireland from England until

Mr. JOHN DILLON ON "THREE
HUNDRED YEARS' SLAVERY."

Mr. John Dillon, who is called "honest" *par excellence*, speaking at Merville, in December, 1904, said: "I believe that in carrying on this great war against land-lordism, we are carrying on a great war against English rule in this country, and that we are breaking and destroying the machinery and the system by which our people have been kept in slavery for three hundred years."

But what would this mean to Great Britain? It would mean a hostile nation next door, a nation with splendid harbours, which would soon become strongholds for any power wishing to pull down our glorious flag: and because of her greatness, England has enemies who would gladly embrace such an opportunity to check her onward march or curb her power. At this time great and far-seeing statesmen in all parts of the Empire are advocating a closer union, and talking Imperialism, and surely this is not the time to pass any measure which would even point toward cutting a member off from the body politic.

Second.—Home Rule would be the greatest calamity that could befall the Irish Roman Catholics, for it would put them more completely under the power of the priests. It is bad enough now, but it would be worse then. In Protestant countries Roman Catholics are to a certain extent protected from the priests. For example, in Germany the Hierarchy dare not put into force the *Ne Temere* or the *Motu Proprio* decrees. What a contrast there is between the priest-ridden Catholics of South America and the Roman Catholics of the United States of America. In com.

most apparent things are the degradation, ignorance, and poverty of the people on the one hand, and on the other the magnificent cathedrals, churches, monasteries, and convents. Grant Home Rule to Ireland, and at once she will be under the iron and merciless heel of the Hierarchy, and the priests will have absolute power over the people. Some inform us that this is a strong argument in favour of Home Rule, for they say that in less than a century the people would revolt against the Papal tyranny, as they have done and are doing in other countries when the Roman yoke became too galling. But such arguments only reveal the spirit of those who use them. Have we any right to vote for a measure which we know will bring tens of thousands into greater bondage in the hope that the grinding wheel may be smashed by future generations?

But are we sure the priest would lose his power if Ireland had self-government? What about Belgium, where they have had free government for centuries, and the clerical party is still in power. The same is true of Spain, notwithstanding the free institutions and self-government; and it is more than probable that such would be the case in this country; the power of the clerical party would be greatly increased, and no greater evil could befall the Roman Catholics of Ireland than to put them more fully under the power of the priest.

Third.—Home Rule would be a severe blow at Ireland's prosperity. It is hard to imagine a contrast greater than that of Ireland before the Union and at the present time. I think I can assert without fear of contradiction that few, if any, sec

and her Capital, Belfast. If the other three Provinces have lagged far behind, it is not the fault of the Union; it is not due to the climate or soil, as all who are familiar with Ireland know, because the South and West can boast a climate and soil far superior to that of the North. If it is the influence of Rome on the people of the South and West, which makes the difference (and who doubts it?), then by increasing Rome's influence you increase the undesirable conditions, and Home Rule would certainly do that. Dublin has 284 paupers to the 10,000, Cork 332, while Belfast has only 95 to the 10,000, one-half of whom are Roman Catholics, while only one-fourth of the population are Roman Catholics. Belfast pays 71 per cent. of all Irish taxes, and if we add the rest of Ulster to Belfast, we have that one Province paying 80 per cent. of all the Irish taxes, the other three Provinces together paying the remaining 20 per cent. The figures speak volumes as to the effect of Romanism on the prosperity of the people, and it is no wonder John Redmond did not want Home Rule without Ulster to pay the tax bill.

Not only has Ulster made rapid strides along the lines of prosperity since the Union, but the South and West of Ireland have made great progress during the last fifteen or twenty years. Mr. Sutherland, of Philadelphia, representing that great paper, *The North American*, made two tours through the South and West of Ireland some years apart, and in his letters to the paper referred to he speaks of the wonderful change for the better which he saw during his last tour. In the last fifteen years the imports and exports of the country, taken as a whole, have advanced 30 per cent. If the Nationalists were in lower

we have examples of this in the work of the Municipal Government in Dublin and Limerick, where the expense is so much greater and the local taxes so much higher than in the City of Belfast.

But if the Home Rule Bill is defeated, what alternate policy has the Unionist party to offer? We have this assurance that as long as Ireland remains an integral part of the British Empire it will be treated with the greatest generosity, and that the provisions of the Land Purchase Act of 1903 (which has now been virtually stopped by the present Ministry) will be carried out to completion; also that the agricultural parts of Ireland will be developed, and, so far as it is possible, every grievance removed. The policy of the Unionist party is not to give Ireland only what she pays for, but to give her out of the abundant funds of the British Exchequer, which she could not possibly get with an exchequer of her own. It is now clear that the great majority of the farmers in the South and West, who have purchased their farms through the Government money do not want any change, and the only way to develop and enrich Ireland would be by a continuance of the policy advocated by the Unionists since 1903. This would produce a happy and contented country, and settle the Irish question; whereas the imposition of Home Rule would only mean poverty, strife, and the continuance of the Irish question in a more acute form.

Fourth.—Home Rule would seriously interfere with the liberties which Protestants now enjoy. Every one who has looked into this matter knows that more than three-fourths of the members in a Dublin Parliament would be Nationalists, and would all be under the influence of the Hierarchy.

Protestants would always be in a hopeless minority. The safeguards so much talked about would not be worth the paper they were printed on. The safeguards which were to protect the Protestant minority in the Province of Quebec were as good, if not better than any safeguards the Irish Protestants could have, and what did or do they amount to? But in Ireland under Home Rule the case would be much worse, for the Canadian Dominion Government has more power over that Province of Quebec than Great Britain would have over Ireland. Let us take a local, an Irish illustration. The safeguards provided by the present Government in their recent Act establishing a University in Dublin have now been admitted to have been a failure, and the National University of Dublin, instead of being a non-sectarian University, has become a purely denominational one. The same would certainly be true of the much-talked about safeguards in connection with the present Home Rule Bill, and safeguards which do not guard are of very little use. We are frequently reminded that in past generations Protestants persecuted as well as Romanists. This is a statement which no one acquainted with Church history will deny. But we must always bear in mind that when Protestants persecuted they were violating the foundation principles of Protestantism, but when Romanists persecute they are carrying out the underlying principles of Romanism. Protestantism stands for liberty and fair play, and all the liberty enjoyed by the English speaking people the world over, and by many on the Continent of Europe who speak in other tongues, can be traced back to John Calvin, and other great reformers. We cannot blame Protestantism

that Rome is carrying out her principles when she persecutes we have only to call on witnesses such as Rev. Dr. Horton, who knows Romanism as well, if not better, than any man in England; and he is unbiassed since he is a devoted follower of the present Government, and an ardent Home Ruler. He admits that Home Rule must mean Rome Rule in Ireland, and he assures us that the Church of Rome must persecute heretics in accordance with her principles; and since Protestants are the greatest of heretics, therefore she must persecute them when she has the power to do so, and Home Rule would give that power. And he evidently thinks she will exercise that power, for he suggests that if the worst comes to the worst the Protestants of Ulster can move over to England and Scotland, where they will be made welcome. (See Dr. Horton's letters to the *British Weekly* last spring.) The Doctor and the Nonconformists who think as he does, justify, or try to justify, their position in favouring Home Rule by saying they are following a political principle. It is not necessary to call for further testimony on this point, for we all know from what Rome has done, and is doing where she has the political power, she would do in Ireland were the power granted her; and Home Rule would do that. I am thoroughly convinced that, as a minister of the Gospel, I should do all I can against a measure which I believe would most seriously interfere with the civil and religious liberties which Protestants now enjoy in Ireland. Roman Catholics enjoy all the rights, civil and religious, which are ours, and they have some special privileges. We do not wish to take any of these from them, but we refuse to give up the heritage our fathers purchased and handed down to us.

Some one put the whole matter in a nutshell by saying the question is, "Shall we be governed by the King of Great Britain or by the Pope of Rome?" Our answer is that we will never submit to Romish rule, and to show that we are in earnest we have followed the example of our Scotch forefathers by signing a Solemn League and Covenant in the following words:—

"Being convinced in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster, as well as the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship, and perilous to the unity of the Empire, we, whose names are underwritten, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George V., humbly relying on the God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, do hereby pledge ourselves in solemn Covenant, throughout this our time of threatened calamity, to stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. And in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us, we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognise its authority. In sure confidence that God will defend the right, we hereto subscribe our names. And, further, we individually declare that we have not already signed this Covenant."

Over 218,000 men over sixteen years of age in Ireland have signed this covenant, 11,000 Ulstermen in Glasgow, Scotland, and 8,000 men in other parts have also signed, while over 228,000 women have signed a covenant to the effect that they will stand

by their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons, in carrying out their resolutions. With us this is not a political or party contest, but a life and death struggle for civil and religious liberty, as it was with our fathers at Derry, Aughrim, and the Boyne. In bygone days the Scot and the Ulsterman gave up their lives rather than the sacred principles for which we now contend, and shall the sons be less brave than the fathers? But we hope it will not come to that; for we are hopeful that our fellow-countrymen of England and Scotland will have their eyes opened to see the gravity of the situation, and then they will use their influence to overthrow a measure so fraught with danger to Ireland, to the Empire, and to the cause of Protestantism.

