

HOME RULE FOR SCOTLAND.

It is with a strange feeling, akin to satiated disgust, that the active politician scans the columns of Parliamentary news. Like the dull monotonous roar of a troubled sea is the seemingly endless discussion on that, to all parties, hateful coercive measure the Government have thought it their duty to introduce. Ireland, Ireland, its troubles and its claims, is echoed and re-echoed with a doleful cadence that carries with it a sickening, stupefying gloom, through which the mind's eye strives vainly to discern the dawn of brighter days; the return of Parliament to its normal state, and to the consideration of material measures affecting the interest of all its provinces, vast numbers of which lie as if dormant awaiting the vivifying warmth of a returning summer. England feels helplessly confused as she strives wildly to meet the ever-increasing wants of her precocious children. Ireland she simultaneously chastises with the rod of coercion and propitiates by a sugar-plum Land Reform; while Scotland whimpers unnoticed in a corner, uncared for because unpretentious; and all around the little voices of a hundred dependencies are heard calling for her attention. Such is the picture of the mighty British Empire presented to the gaze of a sneering world. And why is it thus with the greatest existing Empire? The cause is found in the ever-increasing magnitude of its territorial, commercial, and consequently political connections. And to meet the exigencies that have thus arisen no equivalent administrative changes have been made; the one Assembly still tries to rule, and it is an Assembly that in its own internal constitution is daily becoming less capable of coping with its difficulties. What, then, can be done, that, while keeping united the several parts of the Empire, will meet the existing necessities and soothe the rampant disaffection? An answer is found in the cry of the loudest complaint. Home Rule is what Ireland seeks; and might not Home Rule, in a more or less modified degree, be the true solution of the perplexing problem? If to Ireland and Scotland were extended such a privilege, the burden under which Parliament now labours would be greatly lightened, and the way cleared for deliberation on purely Imperial affairs.

In the conception of such an arrangement there is involved the separation of the general from the specific Parliamentary functions. The Imperial Assembly would confine itself to the consideration of matters affecting Great Britain and Ireland collectively; the management of all foreign affairs; and the adjustment of Imperial finance; while in the local assemblies would be vested the power of legislating for the various provinces under their supervision. The benefits that would result from so important a change would be both numerous and beneficial. Under the present system many measures that are submitted to Parliament do not—indeed, cannot—receive the attention they merit;