

**A PLEA FOR THE
HOME GOVERNMENT
OF IRELAND**

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A Plea for the Home Government of Ireland by John George MacCarthy

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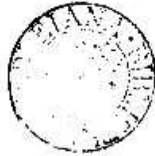
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JOHN GEORGE MACCARTHY

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A PLEA
FOR THE
HOME GOVERNMENT
OF
IRELAND.

BY
JOHN GEORGE MACCARTHY,
AUTHOR OF
"IRISH LAND QUESTIONS PLAINLY STATED AND ANSWERED"
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CHAPTER I.

Prefatory.

THE proposal to let the local affairs of Ireland be administered by an Irish Representative Assembly has now 'come to the front' for public discussion and parliamentary settlement. As usually happens with new or newly-revived political proposals, it is the subject of all sorts of misconceptions. Hence it may be of some use to state shortly what the proposal is, why it is considered reasonable, what practical advantages are expected from it, and what answers are suggested to the objections raised against it.

This has been done already by Mr. BURT, M.P., and others, with an ability and authority which I do not possess.* But, however the proposal be disposed of, it is an important one, and ought to be considered from many points of view. Candid and impartial enquirers may like to know how it looks from the point of view of a professional man living in an Irish provincial city, minding his own business, having no quarrel with anybody in Ireland or out of it, and whose only interest in the matter is, that whatever is really best for all concerned should be done.

'Tall' talk may, I think, be advantageously omitted from both sides of the discussion. It is natural and excusable that Irishmen should sometimes write angrily about England, and that Englishmen should sometimes write scornfully about Ireland. But anger

* See Mr. BURT's statesmanlike brochure on *Irish Federalism*, of which three editions have been published by Mr. Falconer, of Dublin; the remarkably able and thoughtful series of articles from the pen of Mr. MAGUIRE, M.P., which appeared in the *Cork Examiner*, and are now in course of republication; also the eloquent and learned addresses made to the Dublin Corporation, by Messrs. O'NEILL DAUNT, MARTIN, M.P., and Professor GALBRAITH, republished by the Home Government Association.

and scorn, however natural and excusable, are not conducive to the useful discussion of weighty matters, to the clear statement of one's views, or to the fair appreciation of the views and arguments of others. Besides, it may be hoped that the time for anger and scorn between reasonable Englishmen and Irishmen has passed. 'Byegones' may now be 'byegones.' No fair-minded Irishman can fail to be touched by the generous efforts which Mr. GLADSTONE and most Englishmen worth counting have recently made to find out what is best for Ireland and to do it. No fair-minded Englishman can fail to see the unreasonableness of expecting other people to think precisely as he does, and denouncing anybody who differs as a knave or a fool. 'Centuries of not always ill-intentioned mistakes' may be, and ought to be, forgiven by the nation that has suffered them; but they should, at least, leave behind them a lesson of caution to the nation that has committed them. I trust it is not offensive to suggest that those who have admittedly made a series of disastrous blunders in the past ought not to be