

Address
delivered at the
Saturday Night
meeting of the
New England Society
Brooklyn
N.Y.

No 21

Subject
Hand Rule

Address
Belmont at the
Department of the
Interior of the
United States
Washington
D.C.

1891

Supper
at the

*Can't sing to
himself in the
middle of the day*

1.

HOME RULE! Mr. President:

Really one might well, in these days, be puzzled not a little over the meaning of "Home Rule."

The grand old man of England, finding a home shattered because of the positive inability of a proper lord to rule his house, has, we fear, *(by his active conscience)* made a muddle of the whole business.

True, O'Shea is *now at last* emancipated from the privilege and duties of home rule; and the unwise Parnell has not yet, in proper and legal form, assumed them. So, Sir, there is *at present* neither a peaceful Parnell-home, nor an original O'Shea-home to speak of.

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Meanwhile what a display of sides among the Kilkenny cats. One great one has had his ears boxed and his face scratched by his own

kittens; and his antagonist, guarded by another screeching set of felines, has been nearly blinded by the clouds of lime-dust that came from the cats covered with the alkali getting out of the bag.

The female cats claim it was not lime-dust, but mud.

Even Mr. Seward's crooked telescope, which ~~placed at the capital~~ in 1861 uncovered the rebellion, taken from the archives and aimed across the ocean, could not now discover the slightest shew of "Home-rule", if indeed, there is any Rule at all, in old Ireland.

Home-rule, even in New York in the winter time, is at rather a low ebb. So I judge when I find husbands almost universally wandering off to what has been called "stag feasts" against the most solemn protests of their wives.

Think of these imported dinners, from Germany, Holland, Wales, Scotland, England, New England

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Think of those imported dinners from Germany,

Holland, Wales, Scotland, England, New England

and Ohio; where husbands in white neck-ties abound, but there is never a solitary housewife; unless by some extraordinary political influence she, half starved, ~~she~~ ^{in peeping} succeeds from some lower corner or upper gallery, in absorbing fragments only of the intellectual desert; where she often gazes upon confusion so confounded that she can scarcely distinguish her own spouse. The tendency, Sir, of these feasts is against Home-rule!

But, to be more serious. Have we outside of our own homes, home-rule in New York or Brooklyn? I think we have, Sir!

In the last election the Clergy, home and foreign, ~~was~~ ^{were} eloquent. Merchants came back from their suburb and sea-side homes; the Navy-Yard, ships in the harbor and neighboring Army garrisons minded their own business; while poli-

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ticians, with hearts and mouths full of reform, filled the newspapers with their letters and speeches; and the press with its great power exerted itself early in the morning and late in the evening. What resulted from all the eloquence, the coming back, the careful registration, the published speeches, the business-minding of sailors and soldiers, and from the early and later rain of the public press? What resulted? Why, Tammany won; and Home-rule prevailed.

But, my friend whispers, do not be so narrow. Take the whole country in. Strange to say, at our last voting, in spite of all the reasoning of reasonable men, just as it often happens in a concrete house where obstinacy sets in, dishes break and doors slam, and broomsticks get the mastery, a perfect cyclone of

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the most wilful and uncontrollable Home -Rule swept over the whole country. Elderly, gray-haired, wrinkled faced citizens have their mouths wide open still, trying to comprehend and account for the situation: "Is it Reciprocity! Is it honest national support! Can it be international ^{or internal} improvements! Surely it cannot be the happy home protection offered by the Ohio Statesman!"

No! No! friends, possess your souls in peace, it is only a windy freak of an obstinate, wilful national spirit, properly named "Home Rule."

The young ox fractures the stanchel and eats the corn from the crib. The three year old colt smashes the dash-board, breaks the reins, frees the carriage and runs wildly through the village. The farmer's well-bred dog suddenly

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wakes in the night, and springs through the kitchen window, runs yelping around the house, and then steps and howls at the moon! And we learn from good authority that at times inanimate things like shirt-studs, sleeve buttons and business banks have an inconceivable perversity, that nobody can account for, nobody restrain or control.

So with the voting population of this blessed country. Here, Mr. President, is the ^{presentative} patient philosophy - what we cannot cure. That we must endure!

Home-Rule that sometimes strays and gets wild, will in time, bring us good oxen, safe horses, fine watch dogs, capital studs and buttons and substantial banks. How many thousand things have even at last done themselves to the general satisfaction of mankind.

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I have long clung to the idea that the Home was itself an institution. Christian homes sprang from the "May-flower", and so, where Christian Homes most abound there is the best Home-Rule.

From experience we all know that the rule inside of the model home varies from time to time. Now the mother is on the lead, and in some places the mother-in-law. Occasionally a grand father, strong and determined, bears sway; and I have known a beautiful bride for an indefinite space to have her own sweet will. But, Sir, every where and always, the baby in the house has completely and persistently for months controlled and directed the entire home-life.

Listen ^{about this} to Jacob Abbott as he speaks on the sixth of December, 1620.

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Listen to Jacob Abbott as he speaks on the

sixth of December, 1836.

"On board the "May-flower" about this time a baby was born. The baby was a boy,- the son of Mr. White. They named him Peregrine. ^{He} ~~He~~ Notwithstanding the scenes of suffering and hardship, among which he made his entrance into the world, seems to have been a healthy child, for he lived more than ~~80~~ years."

Strange that Mr. Abbett did not perceive that the health and strength of that first-born son was due to his having one hundred servants on board the "May-flower" to carry out his behests and supply all his needs.

How singularly gentle and yet potent is the presence and influence of a dear little child. We are not afraid of this sort of Home ruling, are we Sir?

Before closing let me reiterate my profound admiration for what Mr. Abbett says is "the

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first example in the history of mankind of the foundation of a civil state, by a written constitution, on the basis of universal suffrage."

Listen to some of its provisions: It begins:-

"In the name of God, Amen."

"We whose names are underwritten x x x x having undertaken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents, solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and of one another, covenant and combine ourselves together, into a civil body politic, for our better ordering, and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid:

and by virtue hereof, to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances,

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acts, constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the public good of the colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience."

This is the foundation of State and National Rule that came from the colonists on the "Mayflower." There was no dissenting; for every man subscribed his name. The sovereignty ~~from King and Kingdom to people~~ after 156 years was changed, but the covenant itself is our inheritance.

"The advancement of Christianity" and "the honor of our country" - are indeed objects worthy of universal subscription. If our people forget this early promise ~~of our fathers~~ may not our common Lord withhold his favor and blessing?

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