

which a wise statecraft might become able to take advantage. And I should protest that it is a little unfair to attempt to have it both ways round at once, to stigmatise us as unduly quarrelsome when our quarrels can be made appear ludicrous, and to complain that we are unduly unified when our unity makes us unpleasantly powerful. But, gentlemen, we are not tonight on the defensive, and if there is one occasion in all the year when we can afford to make frank admission of our faults, it is to those generous minded friends who come to rejoice with us at the festival of our patron saint.

And so let me frankly confess, as one who has responded here more than once to the toast of Ireland, that during these troubled years this task at the national anniversary has not been free from embarrassment. One cannot, after the fashion of the after-dinner speaker, simply wave the flowers of a panegyricising rhetoric. The record has not been free from stain. What our people has exhibited to the world has been a strange mixture of good and evil, of uncalculating generosity and short-sighted impatience, of disciplined heroism and impetuous passions. These are qualities which have always mingled together in the racial temperament. The story of this war, like the story of almost every war in which Great Britain has been engaged, is crowded with the exploits of Irish soldiers, with the triumphs of Irish generals, with the glory of Irish seamen. It is likewise streaked with the disorder of Irish factionists, with the criminality of foreign agitators who have managed to delude an ingenious but an uninformed peasantry, with the narrowness and self-seeking of partisan leaders, both north and south. We may boast of Sir David Beatty and Sir Bryan Mahon, but we cannot quite forget Roger Casement and Edward de Valera, although the last-named, thank God, like so many of those who have made trouble in Ireland, is an importation from outside. We can speak of the Connaught Rangers and the Dublin Fusiliers, but we must bestow a passing malediction on Sinn Féin.

It is, of course, essential that we should preserve a true perspective in such judgments. If the war were over, and one were writing its history in the calm clear light which patriotism forbids us just now to bring to bear, one would have to assign