

Nevertheless they make human society possible ; they do more, they make it noble. It is such sentiments which induce a man to sacrifice ease, and profit, perhaps life itself, for something which wholly transcends his narrow personal interests. Therefore, whether mistaken or not, there is always in them an element of greatness; and even if I thought that an Irishman should forget in what part of the United Kingdom he was born—and I think exactly the reverse—I should still regard his feelings of patriotism as worthy of respect.

But patriotism, though it expresses a simple feeling, need have no exclusive application. It may embrace a great deal more than a man's country or a man's race. It may embrace a great deal less. And these various patriotisms need not be, and should not be, mutually exclusive. As civilization advances, it becomes more and more necessary for men to learn how they are to be combined without being weakened ; how a narrow provincialism is to be avoided on the one side, and a selfish indifference, masquerading under the name of enlightened cosmopolitanism, is to be shunned on the other.

As a matter of fact some combination of different patriotisms is almost universal among thinking persons. If I consider the case I know best, (namely my own), I find that, within a general regard for mankind, which I hope is not absent nor weak, I am moved by a feeling, especially patriotic in its character, for the group of nations who are the authors and the guardians of western civilisation, for the sub-group which speaks the English language, and whose laws and institutions are rooted in British history, for the communities which compose the British Empire, for the United Kingdom of which I am a citizen, and for Scotland, where I was born, where I live, and where my fathers lived before me. Where patriotisms such as these are not forced into conflict, they are not only consistent with each other, but they may mutually reinforce each other ; and statesmanship can have no greater object than to make conflict between them impossible.

It is easy to see, even from this very summary statement, how various are the centres round which patriotic sentiment