

the reasons alleged for this may be summed up in three words, each conveying a charge which, if proved, would be destructive of a claim to practical, as distinguished from theoretical, patriotism. The Liberal party is accused of factiousness, sentimentalism, irresponsibility. Those who are proof against the sound of words, however explosive, those who know how often half the cartridges are blank, will face these charges coolly. They will remember that in politics bad names frequently stand for good qualities: it is often a mere question of degree whether a man is humane or sentimental, independent or irresponsible: and upon questions of degree opinions will always differ. Moreover, the particular charge of factiousness is one of which we may almost say that it is so necessarily true as to be unfair. The Progressive and the Conservative differ temperamentally as active and passive: strictly speaking, the Conservative can hardly be called factious so long as he is opposing action of any kind; but the Progressive is liable when in opposition to be confronted with the argument, "You would go as far yourselves, and farther, if you were in office"; and yet it is for the purpose of criticism that an Opposition exists, and even a forward step may not unreasonably be the subject of debate if the guides are suspected of secretly favouring a retrograde movement. So much then may be said at once by all good Liberals: but in their own private councils they will do well to look more closely into these charges against them, for there is no denying that, whether it is with justice or injustice that the party has been found guilty of them, these are real crimes. There is a sharp line between wholesome criticism and the fierce desire to give an opponent a fall: between honest and courageous protest against wrongdoing on our own side, and the encouragement, direct or indirect, of our country's enemies while the issues of war and peace are in the balance. As for sentimentalism, in a private individual it may perhaps be regarded as a foible: but it must not be forgotten that in the life of communities its indulgence involves a breach of trust and is to be classed among the luxurious vices.