

NOTE ON THE WORD "ENGLISH"

The words "England" and "English" as used here require a word of explanation, if only to anticipate the ire of the inevitable Scot. To begin with, the word "British" involves a similar awkwardness. I have tried to use it in the one or two cases that referred to such things as military glory and unity: though I am sure I have failed of full consistency in so complex a matter. The difficulty is that this sense of glory and unity, which should certainly cover the Scotch, should also cover the Irish. And while it is fairly safe to call a Scotsman a North Briton (despite the just protest of Stevenson), it is very unsafe indeed to call an Irishman a West Briton. But there is a deeper difficulty. I can assure the Scot that I say "England," not because I deny Scottish nationality, but because I affirm it. And I can say, further, that I could not here include Scots in the thesis, simply because I could not include them in the condemnation. This book is a study, not of a disease but rather of a weakness, which has only been predominant in the predominant partner. It would not be true, for instance, to say either of Ireland or Scotland that the populace lacked a religion; but I do think that British policy as a whole has suffered from the English lack of one, with its inevitable result of plutocracy and class contempt.