

FOREWORD

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differs from mine, you are much more likely to be right, because you have lived in Australia all your life and I was but a scampering visitor for a few months.

I have been in precisely the same box. I know Britain well ; I have lived most of my life in it. But every now and then I read a book or a newspaper article written by an outsider, an American, sometimes an Australian, and I have caught myself crying out, "Heavens, the fellow is ignorant or grossly prejudiced." Sometimes I have resented the criticism passed upon the British people. Occasionally, however, I have known the writers, competent men, widely travelled, keen students of humanity, able to form stable judgments, and neither ignorant nor prejudiced. So, instead of flying into a tantrum, I have tried to appreciate that the writer, though his acquaintance with England may be short, has brought a new vision to bear upon us, that he has a quick eye and a shrewd brain, and he has seen things which impressed him, but which I have not noticed because I have seen them so often that my sight and conscience have become blunted. Hence the shout "That is an exaggeration !" which escapes from the lips when some sentence cuts into the raw of my Britishism like the lash of a well-directed whip. Thus I come to recognise, quietly and philosophically, I trust, that the people of my own land do not necessarily possess all the virtues, and that we do not suffer when a visitor directs a glance to our faults, towards which, naturally, we have been a little blind. And what I give to others I am prone to