

men—all back in my life now, happening thousands of miles away, but, as I write in the quietude of my London home, bright and fragrant in memory.

Many of you put the question, "Are you going to write a book about Australia?" and I always told you I did not know. I did not. I had seen other countries—oh, a great many other countries: new lands, old lands, had studied life and the state of labour in them, and I found myself looking at you sometimes as a people apart, sometimes as people working out problems other people had wrestled with; sometimes, and this more frequently, I looked at you with eyes that quivered with the haze of comparison. Somebody once wrote something nasty about comparisons. Yet it is only by comparisons that we arrive at safe judgments about men or about countries.

Thus I came to admire much in Australia. But now and then I knocked against something which jarred, which hurt. Then, thought I, "No, I will not write a book. Why should I criticise? How ungracious even to hint all might not be well." I said this to myself because I liked you, and I did not want any of you to murmur as you turned pages I had written, "He might have left that unsaid."

What, for a long time, kept hand from pen was a recognition of your "touchiness." Do you know that many of you would talk to me by the hour about what a horrible place England was to live in, and when I hinted that there might be some respects in which England was a better land than Australia you stuck up your feathers and intimated I was just one more of those muddy-brained Britons