

CHAPTER II

THE IMPERIAL AND NATIONAL SPIRIT

"She is not yet; but he whose ear
Thrills to that finer atmosphere
Where footfalls of appointed things,
Reverberant of days to be,
Are heard in forecast echoings,
Like wave-beats from a viewless sea—
Hears in the voiceful tremors of the sky
Auroral heralds whispering, 'She is nigh.'"

JAMES BRUNTON STEPHENS.

AUSTRALIA presents a paradox. There is a breezy, buoyant Imperial spirit. But the national spirit, as it is understood elsewhere, is practically non-existent—though one sees the green leaf sprouting.

This seems strange. Yet the explanation is simple enough. The population in all the States has been drawn from one common source: the British Isles. There is a warm and generous love for the Motherland. When the Australian uses the word "home," he does not mean his home. He means England.

And that one word "home," more than arguments about the advantages of Imperial trade or demonstrations in favour of Imperial cohesion, has soaked into the brain of the Australian, and he appreciates—not always by reasoning about it, but with the regard a son has for his father—that