



AUSTRALIAN SENTIMENT.

It is a very curious thing that the native-born Australian, who has developed the almost universally-felt sentiment of love for his pride in his native land, is still sometimes misunderstood, not only by his British born fellows, but even by those of his Australian brethren who, like a few in all countries, feel no thrill of pride or affection for the land of their birth.

The position is one which must exist, for a time, in every new country, and has been prolonged in Australia to a unique length by the extraordinary peaceful character of our early history. There has been no battle whose name can be blazoned on our banners; no dramatic and sudden event marks the establishment of the great community which has grown up with a continent upon which to develop its activities and sentiments, and frequently, when the gradual feeling of nationality which has grown is expressed by those who, like the Australian Natives' Association members, are not ashamed to proclaim their love of country, we hear a distinctly unsympathetic and repressive tone in the comments of other members of the community.

So far as we can judge, this attitude is not only unfair to the Australian, but also unwise, from the point of view of preserving the brotherly regard which exists between natives of the widely-separated "five nations," as Kipling calls them, which make up the Empire. Australian sentiment, thanks to our lack of a long history, is free from many of the provincial, provincial, and sectarian prejudices which English, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh natives imbibe in their earliest years, and which they must preserve and conform to, if they would not become aliens to the social and political circles in which they are reared.

In this happy land, where all our ancestral races received together the inestimable privilege of a perfectly new commencement, in a virgin land, persons of all classes, creeds, and nationalities were thrown together into an atmosphere of physical and intellectual freedom, perfectly pure and unburdened by the traditions or prejudices of the past. The result of this has been the taking of a perfectly untrammelled attitude in regard to all old-world problems, to perhaps, some millions of the King's subjects in the Commonwealth. To these, Australia is their motherland, as Scotland is to the Scot, Ireland to the Irishman, and England to the Londoner. It manifests itself in various directions.

With regard to religion, it may be safely said that while Australia is one of the most truly moral countries in the world, yet it is the one where differences of sect are the least bitterly regarded, and where the popular attitude of the native-born is most in favour of perfect liberty on the part of every man to mix as freely as he chooses with all of his fellow-citizens, in or out of their churches, and at the same time to claim that he shall not be censured by anyone for doing so. The Australian claims that he is friendly to all, though bound to none but his own, if any, and that whosoever shall say that a man must allow himself to be classed as tied in all things to this or that sect is an enemy to the greatest hopes for a noble and generous national spirit for our wide and glorious Australia. Some evidence this spirit by avoidance and some by a friendly recognition of all imported predilections alike, reserving their pledged faith and love for their native land.

In regard to the defence of the country this spirit is invaluable beyond calculation. No nation can successfully defend itself without patriotism, and it must be a patriotism of the hearth and home, of the early memories and future hopes of wife and child, of all the things that swell the heart of under a patriotism of the hearth and home, of the early memories and future

hopes, of wife and child, of all the things that swell the heart of man, or it will not be sufficient. Australia stands in a position when she may at any moment have sore need of the valor and sacrifice of all her sons, and it is to be noted and remembered that, in the haste which is being made to rapidly throw together an adequate defence force, those who are prepared to devote themselves to the task, and face the unpopularity of proposing or supporting compulsory service, are all of those parties who have been aroused by the name of Australia.

The smug Conservatives, who have not been ashamed to try to promote the interests of their party by spreading defamatory misstatements as to its treatment of strangers in the matter of defence, as in all others, openly neglect or sneer at the Australian aspect of the question, and seem actually not to care whether we are adequately defended or not, should the storm burst while these unhappy men are yet alive, when buildings totter and fall before the hail of bursting shells, when corpses lie scattered about the streets, and the shrieks of the wives and daughters of Australian men ring in the air of conquered cities, they will be lucky, should they succeed in preventing preparation for defence, if they are not slain by their maddened fellow-countrymen.

So far as present appearances point, however, they are likely to be swept out of politics, or at any rate kept from office, by the force of that sentiment which they are too small in soul to feel, and when the hour of trial comes, Australia will be found armed and prepared, begirt with regiments of trained and patriotic men, citizen soldiers, able to repel all enemies, even if there come the whole world in arms." But the basis and foundation, the support and justification of any such hope as this, lies in the cherishing of a national spirit, which shall be truly and warmly Australian.

To the same sentiment may be traced the determination of so great a majority of the people to protect and foster Australian industries. The desire to know that the profits made from manufacturing the vast quantities of raw material which the Commonwealth produces shall go to Australian workmen labouring for Australian employers.

And what sensible reason can be given why we should like to see our wool, for example, go to Germany, to return to us in the form of clothing, after it has paid the wages and provided the profit for factories full of German artisans and their employers. In many other ways does this spirit make itself visible; and in every way it is good. Upon it here, as in every other country, must be founded all hopes for the race's future in the portion of the globe allotted to it.

In Australia now, as elsewhere and in other times, it will nourish virtue and unselfishness, and tend to exclude the self-seeker and the really immoral. Without patriotism, a man is, as Scott says, one whose soul is dead; with it, few men can really be bad. In breeding it, the A.N.A. is doing a greater work than, perhaps, even its members know.