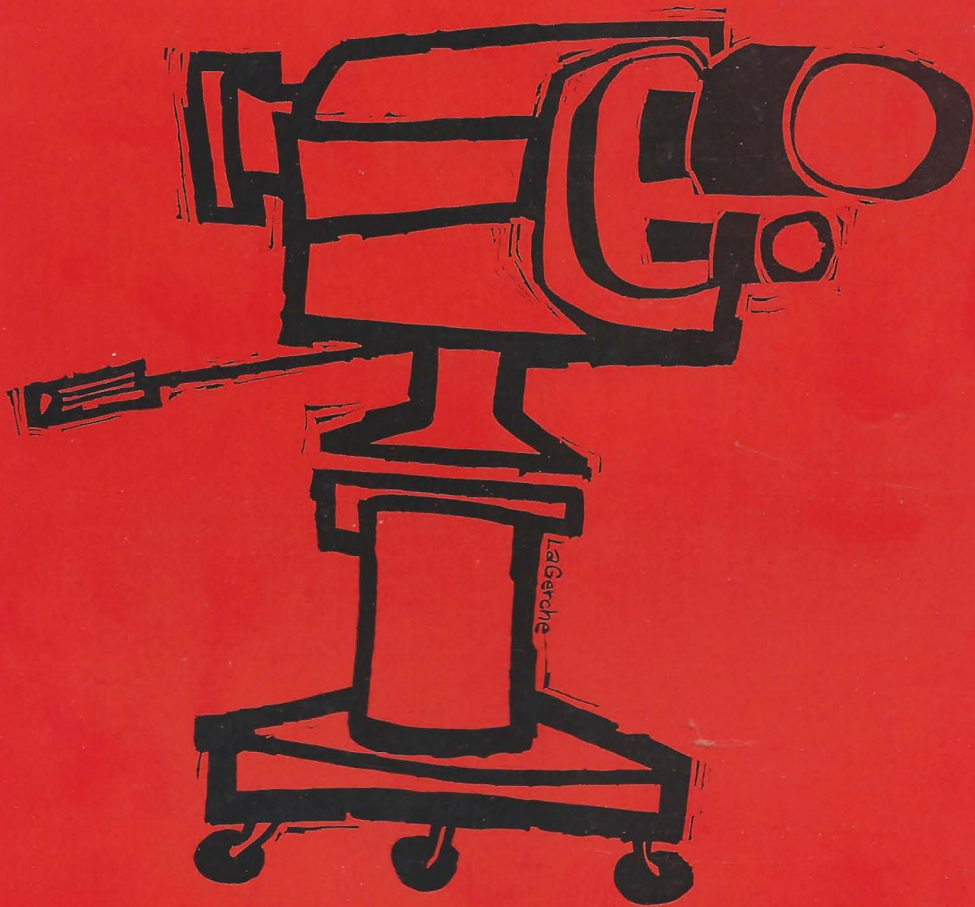


OVERLAND

Poetry Stories Reviews Features



EXTRACTS FROM THE PILKINGTON REPORT

A Story by Xavier Herbert

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TWO AND SIX

OVERLAND

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EGGS ARE COOKED

W. Alexander Gray



WHEN they came and told Henderson, lying on his side by the little smoky fire, roasting and eating peanuts, that he would have to go and kill the egg merchant, he was not greatly surprised.

He had been expecting them for the past five minutes, since Masauka had stalked away from him with the aggrieved look on his face, and Henderson had realised that the boy was not going to "forget it" as he had been blithely counselled.

As the creado had stalked away outraged for the second time that afternoon, Henderson had wondered whom he would seek to redress the injustice under which he suffered.

He shouldn't have to look far, he had thought; champions were never so easy to find.

And when the black boy had made a bee-line for Willis and Nevins as they played a desultory game of two-handed poker, Henderson approved his choice.

Masauka's got a good instinct, he noted; he couldn't have found better. Soon now you'll lose that harrowed look, my boy. Soon that big bright smile will be splitting your young face from ear

to ear again. Just tell Willis and Nevins your troubled story as you told it to me (no embellishments needed; you had no success with me, it's true, but you are working with better material now), and your troubles are over, and your enemy's just beginning.

And mine too, I imagine. The egg man belongs to me. To me belongs the right to put a bullet in his brain. Willis and Nevins will be fair. They'll follow the Golden Rule. They would be displeased if I were to usurp their prerogative by putting a bullet in the brain of anyone within their domain. They expect their rights to be respected and they'll accord me the same right. Accord?—they'll insist on it.

And if I had the brains of a louse, I'd get out of here while the going's good, instead of lying here, gorging myself with peanuts. What was that my old man used to say about peanuts? The man doesn't live who can stop eating them while there's any left in the bag. Only I'm not eating them from a bag; I'm eating them from a mess tin. But it doesn't make any difference; it still holds good. And, what's more, I'm burning my fingers and am half-blinded and choked with smoke, and liable to be besieged at any minute by the righteous Willis and Nevins, and still I lie here, eating the damned things.

*

"Have to kill him?" Henderson said, "Why?"

"Why?" Willis and Nevins echoed together, and Masauka, not comprehending the English, nodded his head and copied the "why" expression of the two white men.

"Is it true what Masauka told us?" demanded Willis.

"How do I know," Henderson replied. "I don't know what he told you."

A look of impatience crossed Willis' face. "He told us that you gave him money an hour ago to go out and buy eggs, and that the egg feller twisted his arm, took the money and told him, 'No eggs for Australian soldiers; only for Japanese.' Is that right?"

"Probably is," Henderson said. "I've never known Masauka to lie."

"Well, what do you intend doing about it?" Nevins demanded.

"I've done all that I intend doing," Henderson said.

"What have you done?" asked Willis. "Masauka said that you did nothing; only laughed at him."

"That's right," said Henderson. "It was very funny. Especially when the egg man added insult to injury by kicking his backside out of it. Didn't Masauka mention that bit—how he got his backside kicked, into the bargain? That was the funniest part of the whole story."

"How about losing your money," Willis said. "Was that funny too?"

"Not particularly," replied Henderson, "but I've paid a lot more for a theatre seat and not been half as amused."

"You've got a peculiar sense of humor, haven't you, Henderson," Nevins said.

"You say so," grinned Henderson.

"Well, even if you do think it's funny to have your creado knocked around, and you don't mind being robbed, the fact remains that this joker is an amigo Jap., and it's still up to you to go down there and bump him off."

"Why?" Henderson again asked.

And "Why?" they both re-echoed, Nevins continuing: "Because it's orders, for one thing. The O.C. said—"

"The O.C. says lots of things," Henderson interrupted. "O.C. says, 'Don't get drunk.' O.C. says, 'Don't go off without a pass.' O.C. says, 'Shave every day.' O.C. says, 'Always salute an officer.' O.C. says, 'Love the M.P.'s.' O.C. says, 'Keep all your buttons done up.' O.C. says, 'Don't gamble.' O.C. says, 'Leave the girls alone.' O.C. says lots of silly things, but only a few take any notice; certainly not you or I, Nev, or Willis here."

"I know all about that," Nevins said, "but this is different."

"Yeah," said Henderson; "this is different. O.C. is on the side of diversion this time. He's all for it. He believes in sportiveness. He's one of the boys. Hooray for the O.C."

"Jeer all you want," said Willis, "but something's got to be done. You can't let a native behave like that and get away with it. What about our authority? What about our prestige?"

"If our authority is being flouted and our prestige dimming," Henderson said, "it's not because we're not killing enough Jap sympathisers; it's because we're not killing enough Japs. If we were, there'd be no amigo Japs."

"As simple as that, eh?" Willis said.

"As simple as that," Henderson repeated. "If you yearn for love and respect from the natives, all you have to do is spread Jap corpses around the towns and countryside. Don't stint yourself; the more the merrier; and you'll have all the authority and prestige and adoration you want."

Willis snorted. "Aren't you overlooking a little something?"

"Could be," said Henderson. "What?"

"That we're outnumbered by two hundred to one," answered Willis. "Don't forget that."

"Oh, I won't," Henderson said. "I never overlook that fact and figure. It's with me day and night, believe me. It ruins my sleep; it plays hell with my appetite."

Willis looked down at the roasting peanuts. "I've never noticed it," he said. "Look, Henderson, I agree with you that if we got more Japs, the prestige situation would take care of itself, but how are we to get more unless we have the support of these people?"

"You figure on getting a man's support by killing his brother?" Henderson asked.

"Yes," Willis replied. "If his brother's an amigo Jap."

Henderson smiled. "I'm sorry, Will, but I seem to belong to a different school of thought."

"Look!" Willis said; "tell me what would happen if a guy stood up in Dilli, right in the middle of ten thousand Japs, and said, 'I'm an amigo Australian?'"

"I don't know," Henderson said; "I've never been to Dilli."

"Don't clown," Willis said. "What would happen?"

"They'd probably take him to the psycho ward for seven day's observation," Henderson said. "That is, if they go in for head-reading in the Jap army."

"The only interest they'd have in his head," said Willis, "would be in slicing it off his shoulders, and they wouldn't take seven days to do it either. Or if a guy stood up and said, 'No eggs for Japanese soldiers; only for Australians.' What would happen to him?"

"He, too, would need a visit to an alienist," said Henderson.

"He'd pay a visit to the chopping block," said Willis; "and well you know it."

"If it'll make you feel any better, Will," smiled Henderson, "I'll admit it."

"Well, if they can kill amigo Australians, why can't we kill amigo Japs?" demanded Nevins.

"A little while back," Henderson said, "you asked me if I wasn't forgetting something; and now the same question is boomeranging right back at you."

"What do you mean?" asked Willis.

"A matter of arithmetic," Henderson said.

"Arithmetic?" Willis repeated.

Henderson smiled. "Two hundred to one, or if you prefer, 40,000 to two hundred. If our unfavorable arithmetical situation prevents the military conquests we hunger for, it prevents also the political autocracy we, apparently, equally hunger for. Arithmetic, the great shaper!"

"To hell with arithmetic!" Nevins said. "School's out now. This is important. Are you going to keep on eating those bloody peanuts and talking nonsense, or are you going to go out and kill that amigo Jap bastard, like the O.C. says?"

"I'm going to keep on eating bloody peanuts and talking nonsense, and let that poor bastard live a bit longer," Henderson said. "Tomorrow he may refuse to sell your creado eggs, and then you can march down there and triumphantly blow his head off."

"I'm not going to wait for tomorrow," Nevins said. "Tonight he may lead the Japs to us, and there'd be no tomorrow. If you don't want to do your duty, Willis and I will do it for you."

"And then you'll sleep in peace tonight, eh?" said Henderson.

The Trap

"I love you" said the child;
but the parrot with its burning breast and
wing
flaunted in the high tree, love's very beck-
oning,
and would not be beguiled.

Look how first innocence
darkens through shades of knowledge and
desire:

the bait; the trap; the patience. When the
wire
snaps shut, his eyes' triumphant insolence!

"I loved it and it would not come to me."

Now love is gone.

Cunning and will undo us. We must be
their prisoners, boy, and in a bitterer cage
endure their lifelong rage.

Look round you; see the chains on every
one.

Quick: save yourself. Undo
that door and let him go.

JUDITH WRIGHT

"Yes, we will," Nevins said.

Henderson smiled. "You'll feel a bit let down,
won't you, if, after all your trouble, somebody
else—say, the egg man's brother—leads the Japs
in?"

"Come on, Willis," Nevins turned away; "let's
get going."

Henderson watched them going, with Masauka
running ahead, waiting for the two white men to
catch up, and then running ahead again.

"He's more eager than they are," he thought.
"Understandably so: a twisted arm, a stolen six-
pence, and a kicked backside are tangible argu-
ments."

After thinking it over for a minute or so, he
decided to follow on.

"Maybe," he thought, "I can argue or divert
them from their high duty."

Masauka, looking back, saw Henderson coming
and bounded back along the track, his face shining
and his entire body wriggling with pleasure "at
his Tuan's awakened manhood," Henderson grin-
ned to himself.

Taking in the fact that Henderson wasn't armed
right to the teeth, Masauka continued on past him
to the camp and overtook him before he had caught
up with the other two, carrying his master's
bayonet and grenade belt.

"Thank you, Masauka," Henderson said; "very
thoughtful of you."

"Tuan?"

Henderson smiled. "Terima kasih, Masauka."

*

When the three soldiers and the creado came
over the crest of the hill overlooking the village
they were bound for, they saw scores of people
darting from their dwellings and joining the long
line of villagers streaming along the track leading
over the next hill.

"The word has got around," Henderson said.
"Look at them flying before the Australian wrath
to come. Doesn't that sight make you boys feel
pretty pleased with yourselves? Think of it! Put-
ting a whole village to flight!"

"There's no need for them to fly," Willis said,
"as long as they're not amigo Jap."

Henderson laughed. "They've probably learned
long ago that bullets sometimes fail to discriminate
between amigo this and amigo that."

In another three minutes they were entering
the village and following Masauka between the
two rows of deserted houses.

"Might as well turn back," Henderson suggested.
"If the amigo Australians have all flown the coop,
it's a certainty that the lone amigo Jap is not
sitting on his perch waiting for you."

Neither of the two replied, but quickened their
pace to keep up with the creado, who was twenty
yards ahead and almost to the far end of the
village.

Twenty yards from the end he stopped on a
level with the second last house, and the three
coming on behind saw him throw up his arm
excitedly and point at it.

In a few seconds they were alongside him, and,
following the direction of his pointing finger, they
saw, standing in the doorway of the house, the
only two people left in the village; a man in his
middle thirties and an older woman—the amigo
Jap and his mother.

He walked out in front of his house and stood
with his arms folded across his chest; and in
answer to Willis' question, said that, yes, he was
an amigo Jap.

His mother burst out that he was no such thing;
that the whole family were amigo Australian and
always had been and always would be; that he
was mad and didn't know what he was saying.

She seemed to sense that Henderson was the
least vengeful one, and went down on her knees,
embracing his, pouring out an impassioned defence
of her son, covering his history from infancy, and
relating instance after instance of his perverseness.
Then she began his history on the other side, spec-
ifying his many virtues; chief among them being
his good care of her.

Throughout his mother's appeal he never said
a word or budged from his arms folded position.
Nor did he move a muscle when, at the end of
the appeal, a native soldado from the disbanded
local militia, who had wandered up, drew his
sword and slashed at his neck.

Henderson, unable to reach the soldado because
of the woman's grasp on his legs, just managed
to push her immobile son out of the sword's path.

The soldado made a move towards the fallen
amigo Jap, and Henderson, stepping out of the
woman's embrace, moved into his path, thinking,
"I don't like this feller. All the evil in the world
is in his face. I quite definitely dislike him. And
where did he come from all of a sudden? Perhaps
he's here just because a defenceless man is here,
regardless of everything else. Perhaps at any time
or place in the world's history a victim has only
had to open his eyes to see such a face looking
at him."

Henderson surprised himself by telling the sold-
ado that if he lifted his sword again he was a dead
man.

"How do you like that?" asked Nevins. "If that
isn't typical of the wrong-headed bastard; to
threaten a good amigo and yet not care about a
bloody traitor."

"Look, fellers," Henderson said quietly, "I'm
not trying to be wrong-headed. I know how you
feel, and I want to go on living just as much as

you do, but let's try to be objective about this. You can't murder this feller for just being sympathetic to the Japs. These people are not at war with Japan and they have no reason to hate the Japs. If they have any reason to hate anybody, it's the Europeans who have been lording it over them for centuries. And they certainly don't owe us anything."

"Go and argue with the O.C. if you want to," Nevins said. "I know what he said to do with amigo Japs, and I agree with him—if it is for the first time."

"But we can't even be sure that the man is an amigo Jap," said Henderson. "I know he claims to be, but then again, his old lady claims he's nuts. Why don't we wait and check with somebody else before we do something we can't undo?"

"There's nobody here to check with," said Nevins, "and there won't be anybody back till after we're gone. Anyway, that's only a story she cooked up to try and save him." And turning to the woman, he told her that they were very sorry, but that her son would have to die.

She burst out in another frenzied appeal for his life, in the midst of which Nevins raised his Tommy gun and placed its muzzle against the back of the amigo Jap's head.

"Wait," Henderson said, and wondered what he was going to say. It's futile, he thought, to attempt to save him by arguing along my former lines. The argument is lost. I was licked before I started. OK, if I can't save his life by winning the argument, maybe I can save it by throwing the argument out of the window. As an abstraction I'd stick by it till hell freezes over, but right here and now it's not giving much service to this poor bastard—or his mother actually, since he himself seems to be in love with the idea of death—so to hell with it.

"What for?" Nevins said.

"I've been thinking," Henderson said, "and I've come to the conclusion that you fellers are right. We do have to take a firm stand with amigo Japs, and beyond any shadow of doubt, this feller is one."

"I'm glad to hear you finally admit it," Willis said.

Henderson went on to declare that nothing short of the most severe punishment would fit the case, and proposed that they make an example of the amigo Jap by burning his house to the ground, confiscating his money and live stock, and stripping him naked to wander abroad as a deterrent to any others who might similarly be inclined to favor Nippon.

Watching Willis' and Nevins' faces for the effects his words were having on them, Henderson thought, they like the picture I've drawn. They find it enchanting—and so it is. It would divert the most dedicated assassin from his own blueprint for holiday.

"That's great, Henderson," Willis said. "That's a great idea. What do you think of Hendo, now, Nevins? Isn't that a beaut. idea?"

"I like the taking his dough part," grinned Nevins. "Money always comes in handy, even in a place like this. I didn't know you had it in you, Henderson."

"And think of all those chickens." Willis licked his lips. "And pork too—all those pigs are his."

Nevins looked over his shoulder at the house. "It'll burn well—all that bamboo and grass. It's been a long time since I've seen a good fire. I've always liked them, you know. As a kid I couldn't get around to enough—chased the fire engines everywhere."

They seem to be hooked, Henderson thought. Madam, your son's life is safe—providing these two happy fellers don't stop to consider that there's nothing in the whole wide world to prevent them from having all this and the butchery too.

"Take his money belt for a start, Willis," said Nevins. "Say, wait a minute! What's to stop us from killing him as well?"

Willis, looking up from his examination of the money belt, said, "Nothing."

Henderson groaned to himself. You've done it now. Have you got any more brain waves, you prize idiot? You'd better keep your big, stupid mouth shut, from this out, or you'll be getting the old lady killed as well.

Nevins raised his gun again and levelled it an inch from the amigo Jap's head, and the mother, babbling incoherently, threw herself once more at Henderson's feet.

"Nevins, wait!" Henderson said. "I thought you liked my idea."

"We do," Nevins said. "Don't we, Willis? We do like it, Hendo, and you can put the first match to the house if you like, seeing as how it was your idea; and you'll certainly get your cut from the money belt. We're grateful to you, Hendo. We're glad you came along."

"But what about the stripping him naked to wander abroad as a deterrent?" Henderson said. "Why, that's the best part. And we could even shave his skull. That'd really be something."

Nevins laughed. "He'll be deterrent enough lying here with his skull in pieces, won't he, Willis. How about that?"

He put his gun on automatic, and Willis clapped Henderson on the shoulder. "You're outvoted on this, Henderson," he grinned, "but we're still grateful to you for your other suggestions. Go ahead, Nevins."

The woman's clutch on Henderson's legs tightened, and for a second he looked down at her grey head before looking up at Nevins. "For God's sake, Nevins," he said, "if you have any pity at all, at least take him where she can't see it. This is his mother, man."

"Anything to oblige," Willis said. "Take him into the bushes, Nev, and spare the ladies the sight."

Nevins walked the amigo Jap into the bushes, and, as the short burst sounded, Henderson felt the clutch on his legs tighten and loosen. Averting his eyes from the woman, he saw Nevins coming out of the bushes, grinning.

"That's that," Nevins said.

"One amigo Jap the less," said Willis. "Good work, Nev."

"Don't you want to see him?" Nevins asked, still grinning.

"Sure I do," said Willis. "You coming, Henderson?"

When Willis, the ex-soldado and Masauka had followed Nevins into the bushes, the woman released her hold on Henderson's legs and, rising to her feet, walked into the house, drying her eyes as she went.

Alone in the yard, Henderson sighed.

"One amigo Jap the less," he thought; "one son the less; one fool or martyr the less. A credo revenged. An ex-soldado gratified. A tall soldier content. A short soldier elated. A woman—what? As a mother she does everything in her power to save her son and is devastated with terror and grief at the thought of his approaching end. As an ex-mother, once his death is an accomplished fact, she turns her face to life again without further lamentations or apparent concern. What is she doing inside now while strangers stare fascinatedly at the flesh she bore? Husking rice for

supper? Moving her sleeping mat to the hut's one good corner which the dead man had always monopolised?"

The four men, the two white and the two black, came out of the bushes, smiling. "And now let's get started on Henderson's plan," Nevins was saying.

"No dice," Henderson said.

"What?" said Nevins.

"The Henderson Plan is out," Henderson said. "It's null and void. It became so when you pressed that trigger."

"What is this?" Willis asked. "Are you off again?"

"This house and everything in it, and this live stock doesn't belong to the amigo Jap anymore," Henderson said. "It now belongs to his mother, and she's an amigo of ours. Therefore, the Henderson Plan is out."

By the time he had finished speaking, the smiles were completely off the white faces and half off the uncomprehending black ones.

"By God!" Willis spat out, "that's right."

And Nevins, after thinking it over for half a minute, said that he supposed it was. "But we're not giving up the money belt though."

*

In camp, half an hour later, they went about the dividing up of the money, Henderson not feeling obliged to absent himself from the operation, and not omitting to mention that he had to get sixpence out before it commenced.

"You want to get more out of this divvy than me or Willis?" Nevins asked. "I like your nerve, after the way you hung back and argued at every turn."

"I don't want to get more out of the divvy," Henderson said; "I just want to get my own money back before it starts."

"What money?" asked Willis. "What are you talking about?"

"The dough he took from Masauka," Henderson explained. "The sixpence that started the ball rolling."

"You said, before we went down there, that the loss of the zack didn't bother you," Willis said; "that it was worth it for the laughs you got out of it."

"Maybe I did," Henderson admitted, "but that was then; this is now. A lot has happened in the meantime. If nothing had happened, if you'd let things alone, if you'd continued your card playing and left me undisturbed to eat my peanuts, I still should be content to have lost it and much more. But you didn't leave things alone. You chose, instead, to take the comedy and turn it into a tragedy; therefore I no longer laugh; therefore I want my money back that I paid for a comedy. I refuse to be cheated."

"It seems to me," said Willis, "that you do nothing but start arguments."

"And lose them," Nevins said.

"Hell," Willis said. "Let him win this one. If he wins one it might cure him. Here, Henderson, here's your sixpence."

The money in the belt came to thirty-five shillings; Willis and Nevins getting eleven and sixpence each, and Henderson, twelve shillings even.

Going back to his fire, which Masauka was building up, Henderson took his boots off and stretched out on his ground-sheet.

"I want you to go shopping again for me, Masauka," he said.

"Tuan want eggs?"

"No. No eggs."

"More peanuts?"

The Bush-Fiddle

The bush-fiddle's broken.
A thin pale nylon
note unspoken
curls to silence.

The string unswinging
that fished for death
lives transfixed, singing
its one drawn breath.

Like a sprouting twig
of the mantleself
it hangs by a peg
and sings itself.

Tentatively
the little gourd
dreams its symphony
("The Unheard").

Keats would have liked it.
Keats died young.
But it's not unlikely
he knows the tune.

Calmly it ponders
the cold square hearth
and grows to the roundness
of sky and earth.

Its bush-fruit belly
is fat as the sun
and brown as a gully
and quite as long.

The calabash made once
a coolamon
for a black bush baby;
for me a song

a slow ripe fall
of fruit and tendril
so full so still
I cannot mend it.

JUDITH GREEN

"No peanuts."
"Tuan wants?"
"To get drunk, Masauka."
"Yes, Tuan. Toeak or samsoe?"
"Samsoe. You couldn't carry all the toeak I'd need. Here's twelve shillings."
"Twelve shillings, Tuan? Too much, Tuan. Samsoe only two shillings."
"It's not too much, Masauka; I want a girl too."
"Tonight, Tuan?"
"Tonight, Masauka. All night. Well, what are you waiting for?"
"Still too much money, Tuan. Much too much."
"Well, get two bottles of samsoe and two girls. Get in a party yourself, Masauka."
"Tuan?"
"Nothing. Just keep the change."



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"COME ON MURRI!"

Xavier Herbert

THE preliminary bouts were over. The referee, tall and white-haired, stood alone beneath the blazing ring-lights, calling the contestants for the premier event of the night, which was in fact the event of the year, the District Championship, the Golden Gloves . . . "Gordon Carey, at ten stone two . . . Marty McGann, at ten stone one . . ."

The crowd, from the merry mood in which they had barracked the slather-and-whack battles of the preliminary kids, had fallen silent, serious. For there was a good deal more to this contest than was being declared by the referee. It might mean that this backblocks town would eventually have a State Champion to brag of, who might go on to win the Australian Title, who might even establish the name of his home town in the great world.

But something even more than this caused the crowd to become serious. It was revealed with the appearance of the contestants.

First up through the ropes was a golden head and a torso gleaming white in the glare. Half the crowd clapped, yelled, stamped . . . "Good on you, Gordon!"

Gordon Carey, a handsome boy, superbly built, raised a hand in unsmiling salute.

Then the other half of the crowd, the dark mass in the gloom on the left side, let out an explosive yell at sight of a dark curly head and copper-brown body popping up into the opposite corner of the ring . . . "Marty . . . our boy Marty . . . show 'em murri . . . yakkarai!"

Marty McGann turned his Aboriginal grin on the whole house about him. There was a ripple of clapping for him from the white side. He was half-caste.

The fact that half the crowd were "murris", people of Aboriginal stock, did not mean that the district was populated in like proportion. Whereas it was simply the sporting section of the whites of the district who were represented, pretty well the whole of the colored population were there, denizens of that slum on the outskirts of the town called "Boongville", augmented by their brethren from the Government Mission and also by workers from the cattle stations for many miles around.

That there was antagonism here between white and color would have been denied, just as in any other Australian town. Indeed, the denial would be well supported by the way these boys, Carey and McGann, when called to the middle of the ring by the referee to show themselves and make their pact of fair dealing, gave each other a swift hug. Nevertheless, there was the existence of "Boongville", from one of whose hovels McGann had come this night.

"The best of six rounds!" cried the referee.

The boys went to their respective corners and the supporters there awaiting them. Marty McGann's second was a white man—or rather, a red man, so ruddily did his plump face glow. He was Tom Tasker, the publican, leading sportsman of the town. For the rest Marty's supporters were half-castes like himself. One of them was his father, a huge, fat, wheezy man, with a hide like old saddle leather.

Dong!

"Round one!" chanted the referee.

The crowd went wild as the boys stepped out.

"Good on you, Gordon!"

"Come on, murri . . . yakkarai!"

There was nothing to that first round except to show the style of the contestants and the fact that they were well matched. Carey was a dancing man, for ever on the go, advancing or retreating, menacing in his grim-faced eagerness. McGann used little footwork, seeming simply to glide, and yet to be exactly where he ought to be, effortless in every movement, grinning all the while.

Lead and parry and block and slip . . . it was a pretty exhibition, but hardly fighting. The crowd sat silent, waiting.

Dong!

The boys returned to corners. As Marty sank to his stool, Tasker, beginning to massage his dusky belly, said: "Get into him, son. You got to start wearing him down. Get him swingin'. You know that's his weakness."

Old McGann, flailing the towel, wheezed: "You got 'o 'it 'im, boy . . . you got 'o 'it 'im 'ard!"

Marty nodded, still grinning.

Dong!

"Round two!"

Carey came flying to the attack. He pressed it, left right, left right, jabbing and hooking. He got one in on Marty's jaw that made the white crowd roar and sent Marty staggering back, shaking his head, for all the retention of the grin.

"Get after him, Carey!"

"Give it back to him, murri!"

Carey tossed a straight left. Mart ducked, came up with an upper-cut.

Now the black crowd roared.

Lead and slip and counter.

Dong!

Back in the corner, Tasker said to Marty: "You are not hitting hard enough, son. You let him get points on you that round."

Dong!

"Round three!"

Out again . . . to the dancing, and the gliding, to the blocking and slipping and countering, lead and feint and hook. Carey was mixing it vigorously. Marty kept mainly on defensive, dodging, ducking. Carey jabbed viciously, right, left. Marty blocked most of it, and kept on grinning through what he took.

The whites roared: "Into him, Carey . . . you're gettin' him!"

The murris screamed: "Hit him, Marty . . . hit him!"

Carey shot a vicious straight left to Marty's face. Marty slipped aside, flung the aggressive glove high, then upper-cut. The black side rocked to the yelling and the stamping. But Carey did not go down as he should have to such a blow. Indeed, so slightly was he stopped that he was back in a moment, jabbing, hooking, forcing Marty to smother . . . while the crowd ramped.

Dong!

Tasker spoke angrily to Marty: "You should 'a dropped him with that upper-cut. What's the matter with you?"

Old man McGann, working with the towel, wheezed: "He been too much friend long dat boy. I been tell 'im before it ain't no good."

Tasker, massaging, growled: "There's no friends in the ring."

*

It was, in fact, the very rivalry into which they had been pressed to make a champion for the district that had brought Marty McGann and Gordon Carey together. It was a curiously dignified friendship for a pair so young. They were both eighteen. They would stroll together through the township, drop in at Con's Cafe, solemnly discussing the latest in boxing as reported in the metropolitan press. They lent each other sporting papers and romantic novels dealing with the noble art. Occasionally they went to Tasker's billiards saloon and played a game together, ignoring the admiring mob that invariably clustered round them there. Once Carey took Marty home to tea and introduced him to his mother and sister. It was the first white home Marty had been in. It was a poor enough place, because old Carey was only a fireman at the timber mill: but it was a palace compared with what Marty came out of. The Careys had treated him very nicely.

*

Now attending Marty there in his corner, Tasker added to what he had just said: "Don't forget this's your big chance, son. Don't go losing it being silly."

Old McGann said: "You got 'o win, boy . . . you got 'o, for us lot murris."

Dong!

"Round four!"

Both leapt into the fray, to mix it with such vigor that the crowd were brought yelling to their feet.

"Into him, Carey!"

"Come on, murri!"

"Ah!"

"Got 'im!"

"Yakkarai!"

Back and forth, retreat, advance, to jaw, to body, parry and block and lead and cross, straight left, right hook, jab, and upper-cut.

"Carey, you beaut!"

"Marty, our boy Marty!"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

Dong!

Old man McGann grabbed Marty as he came in, hugged him, wheezing: "Good on ya, boy . . . good on ya!"

While Marty lay back panting, Tasker, working on him, muttered: "You got him, son. He can't stand that pressure. He's startin' to swing. Another half-minute you'd 'a had him. Get stuck right into him this time, he won't last half a round. Finish him off."

Still Marty grinned.

Dong!

"Fifth round!"

Again they went at it full pelt . . . while the mob bellowed and shrieked and made thunder leaping on their seats.

"Come on, Carey!"

"Come on, murri!"

"Stand up to him!"

"You got him!"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

"Yakkarai!"

Carey was fighting desperately, swinging wildly, staggering to the jabs to the body he took every

Captain Cook's Cottage

As I walked past the cottage door
A little boy said: "I say, Miss,
Is there a ghost inside?"
Well, if the Captain walks this earth
He'd hardly keep his spirit warm
In this transplanted shell.
More like he'd linger by a site,
With fireweed rankly overgrown,
Along some Yorkshire lane
To hear the robin's autumn wail
Out from the rusty elder bush
That shades the weedy well
Where once he'd caught a star or two
(Before he'd heard of Southern Cross)
Within his mother's pail.

Meanwhile his cottage glumly sits
And bakes itself the summer through
Beneath the spiteful light.

It shrugs the jacaranda blooms
And glares out of its hooded eyes
At tree-ferns by the ride . . .

Perhaps the Captain stands to muse
By that remote sea-smothered strand
Where once he dipped his sail.

Seeing the two dark figures posed,
Dumbstruck against the dazzling sand,
Stork-legged to fly or fight;

Sensing perhaps as the wave slammed
This was the death gun of their race—
Doomed not to rise again.

D. A. ROOK

time Marty ducked his flying arm. His face was white and twisted.

"Kill 'im, Marty!"

Carey took a straight left to the mouth that tore out his mouth-guard, so that it dangled down his chin. He staggered back to the ropes, gasping, goggling.

"He's done, Marty!"

"Finish 'im off, murri!"

Carey was trying to push the mouth-guard back into place with his gloved hand, defending himself with single arm cover, but defending unnecessarily, because Marty held off.

Then Carey spat out the guard, and came stumbling to attack. He swung wildly with his right. Marty knocked up the swinging arm, crouched, as if to deliver the knock-out, but just hung there.

The black crowd screamed its disapproval: "Hit 'im, murri . . . drop 'im!"

Carey came back swinging with the left. Again Marty flung up the blow, this time stepped aside. But Carey was recovered now. He turned smartly, shot out his right, caught Marty in the midriff. Marty staggered. Carey hit him in the neck. Marty sank to his knees.

The crowd gasped: "Oh!"

The referee leapt between the contestants, began counting over drooping Marty: "One, two, three, four, five . . ."

Marty was rising.

The referee stepped aside.

Carey leapt in, brought his left up under Marty's unguarded chin.

"Oh!"

Marty crumpled in a heap, with the referee counting over him: ". . . seven, eight, nine—out!"

"Yah!"

"Boo!"

"Carey . . . good on you, Gordon!"

"Chucked the fight away!"

"Hooray!"

"Boo-oo-oo!"

Carey lent a hand to help Marty to the corner. Marty looked yellow as soap now. But opening his eyes to find Carey's hand patting him, he grinned again.

As Carey withdrew, the referee seized him and took that hand of his and raised it in triumph. The whites roared and whistled and stamped. The murris were silent. There was silence also in Marty's corner.

*

Marty, outside the ring with the others, grinned through the presentation of the trophy to Carey, hugged Carey on the way to the dressing-room, and fondled the trophy.

The boys had their best clothes with them, because Tom Tasker was giving a party at his pub. Marty's outfit was blue-grey terylene strides, green-striped yellow nylon shirt, a green tie with a picture of Joe Louis.

The boys travelled the little distance into the neon-lit centre of the town, sitting together in the back of Tasker's big car. Only Carey spoke: "It was a great fight, Marty." After a while he added: "You nearly had me, mate." Marty only grinned.

They alighted at Tasker's, went through the bright hall to the dining-room at the rear. A crowd was already there, milling about the tables on which were jugs of beer and piles of food.

The boys were hailed. Carey was mobbed, to have his hand pumped and his back pounded. Someone took his trophy and put it in a proud place on the central table. Others brought beer.

Marty and Carey raised their glasses to each other: "Good luck!"

Then somehow Marty was shouldered away from Carey and left grinning at no one in particular. Tasker, carrying a jug of beer, thus found him, filled his glass for him, and raised his own to him, saying: "Good luck!"

Tasker stood for a moment silent, staring at the crowd. Then, looking at Marty, he said: "Well, son, you chucked away your big chance."

Marty dropped his dark eyes to the patent-leather shoe with which he kicked against a table-leg.

Tasker went on, with an edge of anger to his tone: "It couldn'a been a worse chuck-away if you'd of laid down."

Kicking, Marty muttered: "Aw . . . I on'y was givin' him a go. I didn' reckon he had a punch left in him."

Tasker sighed: "You give it away, son, you give it away. I ain't happy about it, neither. I put a lot o' time into bringin' you up."

Marty swigged off his beer and shoved the glass towards Tasker. They drank together again. Then Marty asked: "What you reckon I better do now, Tom?"

"Better do 'bout what?"

"'Bout fightin'. Reckon if I go down south . . ."

"No good, son. You ain't got what it takes."

"Eh? You reckon I've first-class . . ."

"I didn't know you properly, son. You'll never be a fighter, givin' the other bloke a go."

Marty concentrated on his shoe again.

Tasker said: "Aw, well . . . better be seein' to my guests."

Marty stood for a while, sipping his beer, watching the milling mob, eyeing the trophy, grinning. Then he set his glass down, and moved to the door that led to the back veranda, and stood out there for some minutes, looking at the starry sky. At length he stepped off the veranda and made his way across the dark yard, went out by the back gate. He went through the residential part of the town, to the road leading out to that other part unofficially called "Boongville", away beyond the limit of the lights.

"Boongville" suddenly revealed itself with a few dim points of light, then with an uproar of dogs. Marty made his way through the darkness to a glimmer that eventually became a hurricane lamp. The lamp stood on a bush table in a bark lean-to that served as kitchen and dining-room to a sprawling hovel built of bark and rusty iron. The table, though clean, was swarming with red meat-ants.

As he entered, a barefoot woman came from somewhere within, a lean half-caste woman, mahogany-skinned, as such people become with age, with scraggy grey hair and eyes so deeply sunken that only a glint betrayed them. She said: "Lo, Marty . . . you 'ome hearly."

"'Lo, Mumma."

She studied him for a moment: "You got beat, eh?"

He answered casually enough: "Yeah."

She moved to the ant-bed fireplace, saying: "More better, too. Dat fightin' bus'ness no good. You like 'im dring o' tea?"

"No more, Mumma. Goin' 'o bed."

A couple of hours later, as he lay in sleeping-shorts in his sacking bunk, he was roused by voices. A moment later several half-caste men burst in upon him, foremost of them his massive father, who was waving a lantern and vociferating drunkenly in that wheezy voice: "There yu'are . . . blurry dingo!"

Marty jumped up.

His father reeled before him: "Lettin' all us murris down . . . lettin' white bukker win . . . come ou'side, I give 'im you givin' dat fight away."

Marty shoved him off, muttering: "Lemme 'lone!"

"Doin' me dough on you . . . 'ere, some'dy take 'im dis lamp . . . I goin' 'o belt him!"

The man who took the lamp got in between them, pushed old man McGann onto the bunk, then shoving Marty through the rest of the gathering, said to him: "Go for y'life, Marty!"

Marty had had to do the disappearing trick often. He slipped out and away from the humpy. Now it was palely light outside with the late moon's rising. He went down to the creek, and amidst the granite boulders found a patch of silky sand. With a sigh he lay down. Somewhere away in the timber standing ragged against the hump-backed moon an owl was calling . . . mopoke . . . mopoke!

*

In the early morning Marty came back home. The adult males were then dead to the world, with no reason for early rising, since it was Saturday. He had breakfast with the kids, ignoring their questions about the fight.

Later, when he heard the men stirring, he slipped out again, back to the creek, but this time to follow it down to the river. He spent the day by the river. He swam, dived for cockles, caught yabbies and had a meal cooked blackfellow-fashion in the coals. He slept a little. But mostly he just sat staring at the sliding water, his bruised chin cupped in a slender copper-colored hand, his deep eyes brooding.

Girl on a Swing

A child no more,
A child again, she swings
In autumn sunlight by the dahlias
Swaying like this hopeful season, through
red

And green, through many yellow failures
Falling where fresh grass springs
From its hard bed.

All body she,
All loosed emotion, hair
Afloat as soft as smoke, her waist
As flexible as rope, and all her curves
Pressed tight as arcs that have no haste
Nor nerves but praise the air
On bending knee.

Her joy exists.
Such arcs describe her, no circle
Closes round her, nothing final,
Her rise and fall takes winter boughs to
spring,
Sends out from each stiff vertical
Tremors from spine to wrists,
This girl on a swing.

GEOFFREY DUTTON

He came home stealthily in the red evening. His father's wheeze could be heard raised in disputation in a distant humpy. He went into his own place and sat while his mother got him a meal. His mother asked him if he were going out again. He said he would take a stroll in for a game of billiards.

He went into town and to Tasker's. The billiards saloon was crowded. Carey was there, playing pin pool. The usual crowd of admirers were there. They all hailed Marty. He responded with his grin, and came up to stand beside Carey. But whereas the admirers had always fawned as much on Marty as on Carey, now they forgot Marty and concentrated on Carey, whom they were calling "Champ." Marty's grin slowly faded, and gradually he retreated from the billiards table, to sit at last on the high bench against the wall.

The pool game dragged through. Carey won it, and rising from the winning shot, shook his golden head like a proud young colt, and turned his happy grin on the lesser ones about him. Marty, sitting chin in hand, met the grin stonily. But as Carey turned away to put his cue up in the rack, Marty's face suddenly jerked in the Aboriginal way that betrays deep emotion.

Carey turned to leave the saloon.

Marty leapt off the bench and came after him, muttering: "Eh, wait a minute!"

Carey halted, with blue eyes widening at sight of the quivering dark face: "Wha's wrong?"

Marty's voice was strangled: "What 'bout you'n me 'avin' 'nother go?"

Carey paled. He asked thickly: "What you mean 'nother go?"

"You never been beat me dinkum las' night, Carey."

Carey swallowed, said deliberately: "Says who?"

"Says me!"

Carey's lips thinned in a slight sneer: "The ref's decision'll do me, mate!"

Marty struggled to answer that. Carey turned away. Marty grabbed his arm: "Wait on!"

Carey jerked himself free, hissing: "I got an appointment."

Marty slipped in front of him: "You got a 'pointment with me first."

Carey snapped: "Talk sense!"

He tried to pass. Marty grabbed him again. Carey swung on him with fists up.

Up came Marty's fists: "Okay, you wan' it bare mitts!"

But Carey dropped his hands: "I can't go brawl-in'. I'll get disqualified."

"I'll disqualify you, Carey . . . come'n put the gloves on!"

"I told you I got an appointment, Marty."

"You mean you ain't game for another go."

"I mean I got no time to argue the toss now. I'll see you about another go later."

Carey turned from him. Marty grabbed his shoulder, spun him round, hissing: "You won't put 'em up—well, cop this!"

He slapped Carey's face.

Up came Carey's fists. Marty's left shot out, caught Carey under the ear. Carey staggered, came back swinging his right. Marty ducked under it and slammed his own right into Carey's ribs, and as Carey went off balance, leapt in and upper-cut him. Carey staggered back to the table. Marty went after him, hammering. Carey smothered.

Then Tasker and others came running in from the adjoining bar, Tasker roaring: "Eh . . . break it up!"

Tasker grabbed Marty's shoulder. Marty swung on him, hit him under the ear, sent him sprawling.

Carey came out of his smother as Marty turned, aimed a rabbit-punch. But Marty saw it out of the corner of his eye, ducked, pivoted, came up to sledge-hammer Carey in the solar plexus, and as Carey went at the knees, brought his left crashing under his chin.

Carey toppled backward, fell heavily, striking his head on the concrete step below the wall-bench—**crack!**

Carey lay still, while Marty stood over him panting and the crowd pressed round goggling.

Then there was a clatter of hastening steps, and a powerful voice demanded: "What's going on here?"

A policeman pushed through the crowd, looked at Carey, then at Marty asking: "What's this . . . a grudge from last night?"

A snore broke from Carey, and from his gaping mouth a bloody bubble burst. The policeman bent to examine him. Blood was now oozing from the golden hair. The policeman said: "This boy's hurt bad. Someone call the ambulance."

There was a sudden movement towards the exit. Marty moved to join it. The policeman leapt up and laid a hand on his shoulder: "Where're you going?"

With face jerking again, Marty muttered: "Off 'ome."

"Well, just stick around here."

Marty pulled away from the restraining hand, panting: "Lemme go. I ain't done nothin'. It was fair fight."

The policeman took hold of him again and pushed him to the wall-bench, growling: "Just you stay quiet, boy. Looks like you're in enough trouble as it is."

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Geoff la Gerche

TWO PEOPLE MISSING

Tom Errey

I HAD always enjoyed walking for pleasure but was a novice in this brotherhood of bushwalkers when I came to Tasmania a dozen years ago. For a long time most of my walking was still confined to day-trips on Mount Wellington, near my home, but still a marvellous practising-school to be at the backdoor of a capital city. Competing interests and, especially, an ill-filled pocket, hindered my acquisition of the gear for more ambitious walks into regions without any shelter-huts, but within the past year I had about realised the aim of being completely equipped with 3-man tent, ground-sheets and sleeping-bags, cooking and messing-gear, hatchet, compass and hard-wearing weatherproof clothing and boots. Not only I, but Catharine also, thirteen years old, the second of my children and the one with most zeal to follow in my tracks. We two had previously done some five or six trips, each involving at least one night away from home, before this Easter of 1962.

Yes, from months earlier Easter had been bespoken for a longer trip—way back at the year's beginning. A friend, Jock, was eager to make it a foursome, taking in himself, his wife, Catharine and me. We left open the choice of an area to visit and the route to take until as late as the second week-end before the holiday. On that Saturday various alternatives were discussed, as we quickly flipped through past issues of "The Tramp," a biennial walk-record of the Hobart Walking Club. "How about this one," I said. A fairly numerous party from that Club had at Easter 1949 climbed Wyld's Craig, a Sphinx-shaped semi-isolated mountain 4,400 feet above sea-level which stands to the west of the Lyell Highway, the road linking Hobart and the copper-mining town of Queenstown, in the West Coast region. Some of the party had returned the way they came, on the highway side, but a second group went on and over the crest, descending its western aspect into the upper valley of the Gordon (largest, in volume of flow, of all Australia's rivers, so I've heard), following this valley to the Adamsfield Track twenty miles or so farther south, thence returning to the Derwent Valley by this track leading over a high pass on a mountain named by or for some Hibernian, Tim Shea.

I was trying to wean Jock away from an area he favored more strongly, and in the end it was this plan that got endorsement; but with Jock's amendment that it be in the reverse direction, so that it would be completed with our climbing Wyld's Craig from the Gordon River on its west and descending by one of its eastern spurs to a new private forestry road in the Florentine Valley, promising an easier outlet route in 1962 than the Walking Club had available to them thirteen years previously, before this road existed.

Here was plenty of hard going, we knew, but if the party consisted of four fit and adequately equipped walkers it should be within their ambit over the six-day Easter-cum-Anzac Day holidays, unless very adverse weather dictated either retreat at some point or—as is no infrequent experience for walkers beset by heavy rains or snow—staying put in a camp somewhere until river-levels subsided. Jock took away my copy of "The Tramp" intending to make contact with one of the people in the 1949 party, looking for any further advice that might be volunteered on this seldom-visited area. In the upshot this contact wasn't made. Jock himself, lacking several essential items of camping-gear, failed in endeavors to borrow them, and on the Monday of Easter week rang me to say he and M. would have to cry off the trip.

*

Why then did the Erreys go on to tackle it alone? The bushwalker needs to organise his efforts if they are to bring him back from his trips in safety. He leaves behind most of the usual amenities when he goes into the scrub—what he needs in there, knowledge of the route, protection against the weather and other natural hazards, food and beverages and the means to prepare them—all these he must carry with him. In Tassie's rugged, wet and densely-forested terrain such requirements are more critical, more elaborate, and consequently impose a more heavily-weighted pack than would be called for by a trip of similar length in mainland hiker-infested areas. And a party of two is foolishness.

But I was not thinking or acting rationally in those pre-Easter days. I made no effective preparations, nor once entertained the obvious thought of switching the route to confine it to country with clearly-marked tracks, which should have been

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The third volume, on JOHN OLSEN, is now in the printer's hands, and will be published later this year. The book on ALBERT TUCKER, by Alan McCulloch, promised for this year, has been unavoidably delayed, and will now be published in the second half of 1963.

Books for publication in the first half of 1963 will be SIDNEY NOLAN, by Bernard Smith; and JOHN PERCEVAL, by Margaret Plant. Later volumes on RUSSELL DRYSDALE, by Professor Joseph Burke; ARTHUR BOYD, by Franz Philipp; and JOHN BRACK, by Ursula Hoff, will follow.

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my first reaction to the default of half the intended party. A mind too utterly vexed with immediate questions, a physique wracked day and night with pain, were sustained only by a vision of the bush. I excluded all consideration of the likely hazards of the Easter trip, overlooked the importance of enquiries in quarters where I might have learned more detail of the country, and finally—worst error of all in its consequences—I packed no more tucker than I've often taken for two persons over a long week-end, with allowance for emergencies. In effect we had about four days' reasonable supplies, where prudent calculations would have suggested twice the quantities.

It may have struck you as odd that Catharine didn't notice this last deficiency. But all of the rations were to be carried in my pack, and she had left their assembling to me. Nancy, most forbearing of wives, had also trusted me to work out this scale and procure my supplies accordingly; as I have done on all earlier trips without serious misjudgment.

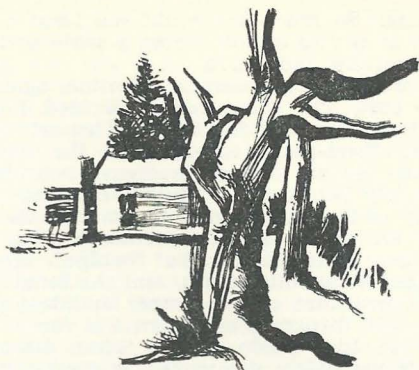
With the weather offering almost sinister blandishments we knew no real hardships in our first three days. On the second we crossed the Gordon by man-hauled flying-fox at the great bend, where the river turns west, soon to enter a most formidable gorge. But our way led upstream, via the western bank, mainly over undulating seas of button-brush and bauera on the lateral creeks, which drain the waters of the Denison Range into the Gordon.

Here and there in the valley are magnificent stands of eucalypts, Australia's "Mountain Ash," denoting pockets of richer alluvium, though the surrounding expanses of button-brush indicate shallow, peaty soil overlying morainic deposits from a past glacial period, and it is characteristic of such areas that the natural drainage is clogged and unpredictable. When the button-brush has been burned to its stumps and the intervening soil is not wholly saturated from recent rains progress across it is easy enough; but when well-grown, its spinous clumps jostling each other and concealing the frequent bog-holes between them, "mesomelaena sphaerocephalus" forces one into a plunging, weaving, most un-rhythmical gait, and the tall stands of gums beckon from afar as places of shade and relief. On the edge of the tallest of these islands of forest, a former osmiridium miner named Ernie Bond with prodigious energy carved out a clearing many years ago, and created a very comfortable homestead of split palings, with various out-buildings, including a bakehouse. Here he lived alone, but often had company, for he was known to hundreds of walkers, parties of surveyors, and other odd callers as the King of the Rasselas—as this section of the Gordon, north of its great bend, is called; and I had been grateful for the chance to enjoy his conversation and his celebrated kangaroo stew in January 1951, not long before he retired from the selection at the age of 60-plus to the easier-found life of the city. Ernie Bond died in Hobart the day after we were found.

*

Now, eleven years afterwards, I had brought Catharine to this agreeable oasis on Easter Saturday night, where no tenant stirred save a bronze-wing pigeon that flew low through the dusk across the clearing from a clump of wattles. The Easter moon in no time had hoisted itself into the open heavens and laved the camp and its guardian ring-barks in a soft light.

When Ernie gave up his camp he left it in trust to the Hobart and Launceston Walking Clubs, which now and then send parties out to make and



mend where it is needed. We found the huts dry and in very reasonable order and elected to put up in one called "The Office," having the smallest interior to warm up. The interval between supper and bed-time we spent in a close study by candle-light of all entries in the Camp "Logbook" in the disappointed hope of finding some account of a party having arrived there from Wyld's. I should have been disconcerted by drawing such a blank on details of the Craig's perimeter, but that night was one to dispel any unease. "The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit." Read Joyce and be glad.

Nor was this sense of well-being much eroded during the sunlit hours next day, although we failed to make as fast progress as I had hoped up the Vale of Rasselas. Our camp that Easter-day evening was in a belt of gum-scrub, on slightly higher ground west of the button-grassed valley. Here at last I began to realise the significant void in our tucker-bag; it grew into alarm as I mentally measured the distance and estimated the hazards separating us from journey's end. Sleep was murdered then, as the dreadful possibilities crowded through my mind. But this was an unshared burden and the one course that might have lightened it, a decision to return on the relatively easy route by which we had come, I would not entertain.

Wyld's Craig was within sight. In the dawn-light we took a compass reading on it. Since we were already in an elevated valley the "net" climb couldn't be much more than 3,000 feet; and the summit once attained we should see the Florentine Valley before us, our road only about three map-miles distant, worming through its depths. Daunting the country might be, but not impassable, with three days (rations for only one and a half) to do it in. Backtracking would have involved a far greater mileage. It was St. George's Day and the Dragon must be faced.

So we went on. As we advanced up the valley on that Monday morning, skirting the foothills of its western side both for the easier walking and to keep Wyld's in better view to judge the right mode of approach, we were able to discern a broad chimney on the high scarp of the mountain, which suggested itself as a likely means to the last stage of the assault. But the heavy timber of the lower slopes tended to conceal the lie of the ridge by which we could attain to the base of the chimney. A couple of miles further north a major creek emerged, flowing nor-westerly into the Gordon. The ridge forming its southern and partly eastern rim was the one we must ascend by. It divided the watersheds of two systems of streams, the one just mentioned, feeding the Gordon, the other first falling south then wheeling easterly to pass beneath the southern, highest feature of Wyld's—the "Sphinx's head" as I saw it—and render its tribute on the far side of the mountain to the

Florentine. So much we could see from our map, but this map was of too coarse a scale to be more than generally indicative.

Now we had to cross the Gordon again, from west to east, and this crossing divided the stages of the journey quite decisively. Through swampy, thicketed flood-plain we reached the river-bank at about eleven on an overcast morning—and immediately before lay a bridge—of sorts! Formed naturally of two fallen trunks, one from each bank, making an obtuse angle concave to the current where they intersected, the "bridge" lay partly submerged about midstream, and the longitudinally ridged appearance of the longer and lower of the trunks, that thrusting out from the far side, bore witness to the whole having often been under water. Nevertheless it augured as good a crossing-place as any we might stumble on in a couple of hours' tedious searching, and I went ahead to test its practicability.

The tilt of the near log was rather steeply downwards, and my worry was to avoid gathering too much momentum before arriving at the awkward angle of transfer, in two planes, to the segment of the farther trunk that lay submerged. My pack threatened to unbalance me, but somehow I contrived the tricky manoeuvre and stood up to my hocks on the sunken part, which proved to be badly split. The black river flowed with no more than a faint gurgle beneath the big log and on the downstream side produced an evil-looking vortex. Under me there was an ominous trembling of the split trunk, but I edged onwards, and after a few more yards was able almost to stride forward with confidence on the firm and wider-girthed part of the tree until I reached the far bank.

In the meantime Catharine had been taking off her boots, which being rubber-soled where mine were hobbled might have behaved treacherously on the more slippery part of the bridge. I returned, first to take her pack over, then once more to lead her across. All of this we managed, rather tremulously but without mis-stepping, and at last were over our Deep River, a barrier at least one hundred feet wide safely passed.

Compared with the rather stunted scrub of the opposite bank the over-arching myrtles on this eastern side looked enticing. The river appeared almost motionless close inshore over a shoal, and though the color of tea it allowed us to see its pebbly bed, perhaps not more than four feet down. Here was a pleasant place for lunch, which we had without boiling a billy. The Gordon water, stained by button-grass, nevertheless tasted well as a cold draught.

*

We had hardly got to our feet again when we met and straightway recognised the bane of walkers in the Tasmanian rainforest—horizontal scrub. Whiskered with a rich green moss the superimposed arches of the scrub looked lovely—and malevolent. Frustrated by this obstacle, in my intention to move north for some distance along the bank, we climbed uphill, through myrtle and later through gum forest. To recite the story of this next day and a half in the forest would be tedious. Wyld's Craig has redoubtable defences on this side. Checked at various times by undergrowth too thick to penetrate, we writhed to left and right, without any glimpse of the rocky ramparts that were our goal. We had virtually to "feel" for the divide between the watersheds and not till about noon on the following day were we sure we had attained it. Though we had been obliged to descend into several creeks and climb steeply out of them, our general progress had been upwards, and now we could trace ahead of us the line of the spur

leading up towards the Sphinx's shoulder. Yet here the difficulties increased. It was critically important to hug this spur, but the going was desperately slow, every step contested by the thick understorey of vegetation. Where, unencumbered by packs, we might with reasonable agility have wormed our way forward, the very bulk of man-cum-pack simply would not go. For three hours that afternoon I had no other recourse than to hack a way through the fortifications of young beech, celery-top pine, bauera, and—most intractable of all—virtual groves of close-growing giant heath, *richea pandanifolia*, the trunks of which were often as thick as a wrist, while the confined space hampered the use of my hatchet.

They were two rather depressing camps that we spent in the forest, without a fire on either occasion, for the shortness of the days limited the amount of effort we could expend over and above merely winning ground, while, on the other hand, our small rations seemed scarcely to warrant any elaborate preparation. Most of our food was edible in cold form, anyway. My apprehensions of disaster, moreover, again gathered in and tormented me out of sleep during those nights. In each of them a mountain shower came on, and although both times it ceased in about half an hour it filled me with anxiety over the risk of a real break in the weather, which would bog us down for days during which our tucker would run out.

*

But the rain did not, in fact, set in, and on Anzac Day morning, as we struck our tent after that last cramped forest-camp, perhaps 3,000 feet high on the spur, the dawn looked very promising. Fairly soon we broke free of the worst of our trammelling undergrowth and began the steeper part of the ascent, with more and more rocks obtruding now amid the prickly mountain-berries and gum saplings. Upwards we panted, resting now and then to recover breath and survey the steadily enlarging vista to the west. Now, looking back and over the roof of the forest we had forced a way through, we could see the gaunt grey shapes of dead King-Billy pines rising above the greens of living trees, and it was fairly apparent that one or more big fires must have roared up these slopes at no very remote past time, and the regrowth we had fought through was its legacy to us. Turning back to our present business, and traversing a few chains to the left, we reached the base of the chimney described from so far back, and to our delight it was an even more negotiable staircase than my best hopes had dared make it. Somewhere about ten we began the climb in the chimney, and being tucked in close to the western face of the mountain would have felt cold in its shade but for our exertions. Now that attentions were less distracted by such obstacles as marked the assault course lower down, and only the gradient presented any difficulty, we became more conscious of our enfeeblement, and it seemed to me to take an unconscionable time to get up those last hundreds of feet to where the sun was striking over from the east.

Glory be! About eleven we were there, on the crest, the cairned summit visible to our right, not more than three hundred yards of sharp ascent. Earlier we had agreed that we'd be content with crossing the backbone of the mountain; but now, on this crystal-sharp morning, the temptation was irresistible. Downing packs, in spite of our feeling of weakness we almost scampered up to the cairn. High elation! We were near enough to being in the centre of the island, and on an islanded peak, from which in that clear autumn atmosphere practically every range, all around the compass, was

Invitation

Summer's done, it's winter now;
Fresh and green for brown and dusty,
Earth's dry crust turned lush and lusty.
Smooth the long, doubt-furrowed brow.
Surcease for desire's hot aching,
Fireside kisses, dear disrobings,
Sweet involvements, midnight probings,
Summer drought, but winter slaking.
Songs they made for me to sing you,
I, the canvas and the crayon,
I, the instrument they play on.
These, and more than these, I bring you.
Tunes I'd make for you alone,
Portraits that I cannot paint,
(Spirit willing, flesh so faint),
Uncut miracles of stone.
Live with me and be my sweet,
Breath to breath and heart to heart.
Thrones and powers may fall apart,
Let there be one thing complete.

O. D. WATSON

seen sharp-etched and easily identifiable. At the city shrines the annual Anzac essay in morbid remembrance of a bloodbath was being conducted. For us the luminous sky and the soft airs of the high places. We had the best of it; and now we were going to come down, on the east side of the Craig, to our outlet road by the Florentine. Against all odds, against my own stupidity, we had brought it off. Not much tucker left in the bag, but it was the moment for a victory banquet. On the plateau of Wyld's Craig we had our first cooked meal for over forty-eight hours. The last of our bacon, the last of our raisins, but the stern visage of the quartermaster had momentarily relaxed.

What misplaced confidence! For Wednesday's pride was to have its sequel in Sunday's humiliation. Unable to discern any recognisable track on the Florentine side we decided to navigate by compass. The going was not easy, mainly because of fallen spars, and maintenance of a steady course was impossible. Our weakness was telling on us now, and I, in particular, fell often. My judgment clouded by impatience, I led Catharine into a creek-system not shown on the map, and kept on descending through it, until darkness obliged us to desist from the attempt to wind any further through what had become a labyrinth of huge criss-crossed, moss-wet, fallen trunks, lying at all sorts of angles to the cascading creek. There are degrees in misery and that night's camp in point both of its location, between two trees on a 30-degree slope, and what it represented in frustrated hopes, was like the trash-rack of the world.

*

In the fourteen hours of painfully-drawn-out darkness my torments continued. The things present as spectres only on former nights were beginning to assume the shape of reality. Though the road could not be, at most, more than half-a-mile below us, the labyrinth seemed to close it off from us. It was murder for Catharine, with those wretched rubber soles, to keep her footing on those slimy-mossed logs. We were now overdue; at home

concern would be mounting at our non-appearance Tomorrow we must escape from this infernal maze of trunks, and the only way to do that would be to clamber out of the watershed onto its southern rim, and follow down the spur.

Thus spoke reason, but there were other voices in the night. In the rushing waters of the creek I caught an over-sound, something like a babble of human speech or singing. It had a sinister quality and the image that accompanied it was of some obscene revelry, as though the hideous creatures of Hieronymus Bosch had joined in song and dance. I fought off this horror, but it kept recurring.

At last sounded the raucous calling of mountain-parrots, and in came the dreary dawn. Our camp chores were simple, but we weren't yet packed when a plane flew over, high up, invisible above the forest roof. It could hardly be that aircraft would so soon be brought into a search for us; but I had been living on conjectures for days—and nights. Just perhaps! So we lit a heap of debris on the forest floor and stayed by to feed the fire for three hours, till noon; but as the plane did not return I reverted to the plan to save ourselves by our own efforts. We set off again, up the slope, laboriously climbing over, or along, or around the enormous logs, all naturally fallen, and were put to various devices, as usual, to cross the broken ground in between. But two hours later, and three more creeks behind us, all apparently curving around to join the deep one near which our fire had been lit, I realised I'd come to the end of my tether.

The last of my stamina had ebbed away, like the last sputter of an engine run out of juice, and no will remained either to drive my leaden legs uphill or to face again the laced-up gullies. When I saw a moderate enough slope to provide a tolerable camp-site, and half a chain away from it a large splintered branch fallen out of one of the towering swamp-gums, I threw down my pack and said to Catharine: "This is where I'm going to camp. All my energy has suddenly run out. I couldn't carry this pack another hundred yards. We'll get this splintered wood alight and keep the fire going until they see it and come to fetch us out. We'll pitch the tent up there, and seeing that the road is so close, they can hardly miss seeing our smoke. Anyway it shouldn't be later than tomorrow."

*

That's about how I recollect it. Until this dreadful feeling of utter exhaustion overtook me I hadn't ever thought of us as detached from society. We were physically apart from the towered cities and busy hum of men, but on our way to rejoin them. Now it was as though a shutter had fallen and cut the familiar world off from us. We were here, marooned in the bowels of the forest, and beyond its bounds, invisible, amorphous, were they, the rest of mankind.

Catharine was terribly dismayed. She knew that our food supplies were now desperately short, down to two meals a day, and soon nothing but a little brown rice would remain. But mainly she was concerned at my physical weakness, patently worse than her own condition, and the prospect of my becoming more helpless still.

In anguish I pondered the mounting apprehension of Nan back at Fern Tree, and of other kinsfolk, especially our mothers, Nan's and mine, both in Adelaide, if there were much delay in our being found, and their fearful speculation turned over the whole cardpack of horrors. My thoughts ranged very widely during those hours. Largely they were concerned with the domestic mess if I did die. There was, besides, a film society that

would find itself without a secretary, and there was an appointment with a Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry, which would not be kept. Ha! That's a rich one. Stirred up by the clamor of Tory bastards to bring back Port Arthur penology, the birch or the lash for delinquent youths, I had submitted written evidence on the futility of such methods to a Select Committee enquiring into Crime, Punishment and the Police, and now they wanted to question me upon it. Sure, and was I not the biggest delinquent of them all, the murderer-designate of my child, the ruination of my family, the violent embarrassment of my friends?

My daughter is of taciturn temperament, and our conversation during these days was desultory. After one hesitant overture I drew back from any direct attempt to plumb Catharine's feelings. We had with us Mick Sharland's book on Tasmanian birds, and a Penguin volume of several Shaw plays, and Kate wolfed the latter, prefaces and all, but for myself I had little impulse to read. Yet there was an intimacy present that had little need of speech. The kid helped bathe and bandage the wounds I had incurred as track-cutter of the expedition (and which made further use of my hatchet almost intolerably painful), and in various ways affirmed her trust in the eventual success of our enterprise, which was narrowed at this time to the single object of hanging on till help arrived. I watched covertly the rare spasms of despair that seized her, but which showed in no more than a face stained by tears. Not once did she utter a reproach. It was so short a time before, a bare three months, that we had been among the tens of thousands who had waited torn by anxiety for news of her schoolfellow, a 15-year-old lad who got separated from a party on a southern Tasmanian mountain, and was not seen again, though a search by scores of bushmen had gone on for weeks. Now, though immeasurably better equipped for survival, we were the "missing" and could

come a little closer to the sensations of the lost who never are found. But still a long way off. For our privations must not be exaggerated. We had food to eat each day, water to drink; our clothes though badly ripped and our tent and sleeping-bags gave us protection from the elements. Finally, we had fire.

*

On Friday morning, when the sky was blue where visible through our forest ceiling, an aircraft flew over, and now we knew that its flight concerned us. Our smoke, stained by the gases from saturated beech-logs flung on the fire for that purpose (with small need of the hatchet we were able to feed the fire adequately with debris from a 30-yard radius) dispersed somewhat between the trees, but I felt sure enough of it must rise above the forest to attract attention in the search-plane. Later in the morning we heard the engine's drone again, and though it seemed fairly high up we still retained some hope that from it our fire would have been seen. Disconsolately we turned in that night when no help came, and then purgatory descended on us with the long-feared bust in the weather.

At nine on Friday night the rain began. Thunder crashed on the Craig a couple of miles away, and reverberated through our trees. After each big clap the rain beat down harder, but no real slackening occurred all night. When the sun should have risen the forest remained tenebrous. The rain kept on during the morning, but during its quieter intervals we heard the creek roaring below us. Our tent remained rain-proof, but there was not enough light to read by: confetti of beech-leaves, shaken down by the storm from the ceiling above, flecked such daylight as did penetrate the japara cloth. To keep the fire going seemed fatuous under such conditions, but it was my only gesture against total despair. Kate and I sang

AUSTRALIAN NOVELS

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AT EVERY BOOKSHOP

HEINEMANN

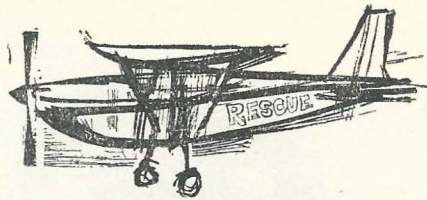
songs, sacred and profane; we played word-games, recalled poetry, tried to fill our minds with distractions. By the afternoon there was a tapering off of the showers but the cloud ceiling kept low. No question of a plane sighting us, but if a ground party were sloshing through the area they might just happen to smell or catch sight of our smoke. And thus we came to our fourth night overdue. From sheer weariness I slept an hour or two, but in the longer wakeful hours my familiar devils were present again, carrying on their obscene choruses.

Sunday seemed reluctant to show its face at all. When at last enough light had filtered through the tree-canopy, we could see that the forest was enveloped in mist. Unless it cleared our signal smoke again would be vain. But this was Sunday, and there would be prayers offered for us. That we knew, and I tried to convince Catharine, who like me but not through me is a religious sceptic, that the concentration of so many minds upon our plight must issue in an intensification of activity in the search for us. The truth is that I pinned my last hopes on Sunday only because, as a rest day, it would allow larger numbers to be involved in the search, and I felt with one part of my mind a distrust of the almost light-hearted mood that took possession of me during the day. I had decided in any event that, as we had left only two of our serves of boiled rice, we must attempt to move again on the Monday morning, jettisoning all our gear save the tent and sleeping-bags. The lightness of our food consumption would have told against us, but in other ways I felt fitter than when I had stopped. I had benefited by the rest, and most of the twenty-odd wounds and scratches incurred in my contest with the bush, a number of which had become pus-laden, were beginning to heal. Catharine at no time was so physically reduced as I. It is ironic to reflect that, had our deliverance by external agencies not been effected when it was, we would have emerged on the road the next morning, for the tract of forest separating us from it was neither as extensive as my fevered surmise had made it, nor nearly as formidable as the country through which we had recently struggled.

*

But on Sunday afternoon the mist lightened and lifted to some extent. Enough for the searching Cessna to spot our smoke. It came roaring in at treetop level, circled twice and made off again. As I write this account of it, that ineradicable memory surges up, and the emotions that accompanied it. We were crazy with joy and relief. "Hope I can meet the pilot to thank him," said Catharine when we had stopped leaping about like leprechauns, "Won't Mummy be glad!" Sundown was barely half-an-hour off, and I didn't give us a chance of seeing a ground party arrive that night. (This was deranged thinking also, for the search leaders, police officers, had to make sure we were both there, and uninjured, and to allay general disquiet). So we turned in for the last time at that camp, for what we reckoned would be the longest night of all. It was soon after seven that we heard the first axe-blow. Then another, closer-seeming. I charged from the tent to make the fire flare up, and soon could see the strong torch-beams probing up towards us. About twenty minutes after the first sound reached us the rescue party, six strong, came up to the fire. Before that, as soon as they were within hail of us, they'd had their big question answered, that **both** of us were there, and both well.

In the firelight we could see that the burly bushman who had axe-blazed the way, directed



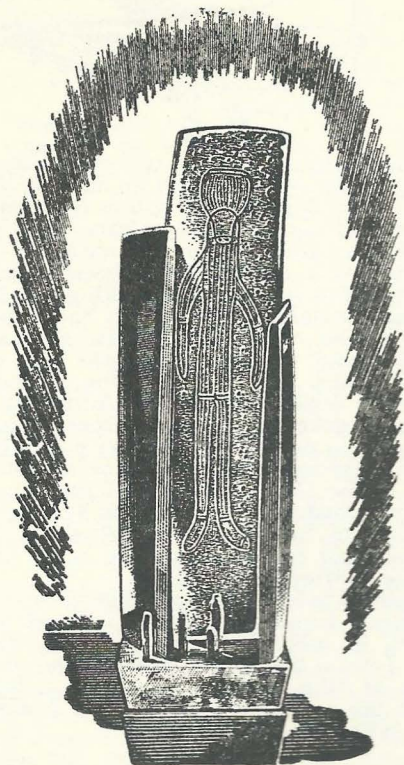
by the compass-bearing of the leader, was swimming in sweat. They lost no time in swooping on our tent and gear, and within minutes had begun to help us out, down the blazed trail, to the road. I asked whether, by good chance, the pilot of the aircraft was among them, because my daughter wanted to thank him for spotting us. No, said one of the constables, but here is the bloke who saw your smoke, and then when the Cessna circled, he spotted your tent, too. That was how we met Don Frankcombe, who had led the ground party in. Logging Superintendent of Australian Newsprint Mills, Frankcombe is a vigorous, quietly efficient bloke, who probably found the publicity that came to him through this episode as distasteful as ours was to me. He certainly had no cause to respect me, who had trespassed on the Forestry Concession granted to his Company and given him endless trouble, but no-one was more to be thanked than he for extricating us.

Shame, indeed, had quickly succeeded the joy of being found, for me. It seemed so small an effort, in relative terms, to reach the road and now I could begin to apprehend the untiring exertions of "the others," no longer a faceless mass, since the emergency began. But I would have to live with this mortification.

*

In my end is my beginning. The news went out that we were lost, and a wave of emotion rolled back towards my family, expressed in letters and telegrams from all parts of the Commonwealth and by support rendered by those close at hand. The news went over that we were found, and a new wave rolled in. A clod, it was feared, was about to be lost to the main. Somewhat later there came relief; that clod will wash away in time, but its time is, after all, not yet . . .

Without radio and press headlines would a whole community have been stirred so much by the thought of losing two of its members? Surely not, for every day the community suffers such loss, and often more grievously in point of the quality of those for whom the knell is sounded. Yet in all Australians save the newest arrivals there dwells a scarcely-veiled horror of death by starvation or thirst, in isolation in the bush. It is expressed in our short stories, in our verse, it was produced to an unutterable poignancy in the film "Back of Beyond". And even today, when our search and rescue equipment is comparatively well developed, a few hapless ones pass through its meshes and die in circumstances we would prefer not to imagine. A year or so ago in the Flinders Range near Wilpena an 11-year-old lad failed to return, on Tasmania's Mount Picton the high-school boy disappeared only last January. No marvel then that pathos invests every report of threatened loss, and the deep roots of community are exposed in the response to it. It is not, I think, a demeaning of Donne's devotional thought to suggest that our national history has so wrought on the imagination of Australians as to make them peculiarly aware in this specific situation that "any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind." Perhaps we can go on to cultivate our compassion more widely, starting from this still centre.



This outstanding bronze trophy is awarded to the winner of the GMH Theatre Award. It was specifically designed from an aboriginal motif by Lyndon Dadswell.

Building a Creative Tradition in the Australian Theatre —

THE GMH THEATRE AWARD

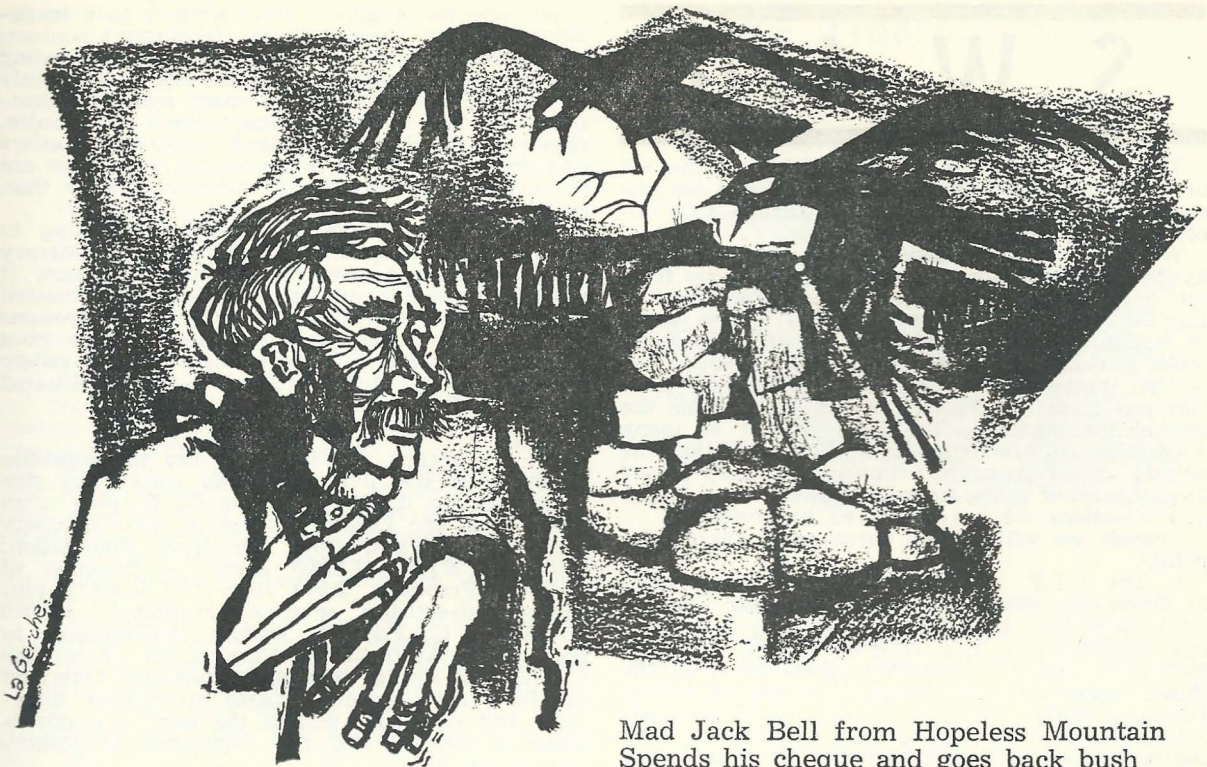
To progress, a nation must develop culturally as well as industrially. Strong in this belief, General Motors-Holden's established, in 1958, a series of annual awards for creative work in the Australian theatre. Under the terms of this award, GMH offered a first prize of £300 and a bronze trophy, together with a second prize of £75 and a third prize of £50 for the best play written by an Australian but not previously produced. Winner of the first prize was Peter Kenna. His play, "The Slaughter of St. Teresa's Day", has since been successfully performed by both amateur and professional companies. In 1959, the General Motors-Holden's Theatre Award was offered for the best production by

a wholly professional company. The 1960 award was again offered for an original Australian play and was shared by four authors. The next GMH Theatre Award will break new creative ground. This time, it has been decided to confer the award for a full-length musical play. Interested Australian writers and composers are invited to obtain conditions of entry and an official entry form from the organisers, the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. By offering this practical incentive, General Motors-Holden's stress the conviction that Australians are capable of creating a "musical" as vital, exciting and theatrically valid as any from overseas.

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MAD JACK'S WEAKNESS

W. N. Scott

Mad Jack Bell from Hopeless Mountain
Spends his cheque and goes back bush
To the jagged gullies, bitter rockholes,
Speargrass flats and evening hush.
Golden beetles bore in his skullbones,
Peer from behind his pale gold eyes;
Heart as cold as an old grey ghost-town,
Hands as restless as the flies.

Mad Jack comes from Hopeless Mountain
Twice a year and all alone.
Sneers at the township (how we hate him!),
Picking his path through the broken stone.
Flour, salt, a bag of bullets,
Plug tobacco, tea, and rum
Slung on the packhorse; then he'll vanish
Back to the silence, to his home.

Young Tom Conway tried to find his
Rumored reef, but rumor lied.
Tom got bushed and missed a rockhole,
Filled his mouth with sand, and died.
Mad Jack found him six months later
White where the crows and ants had fed.
"I left him there," he told the Sergeant,
"He shouldn't have come out bush," he said.

Knobbed and grey as a weather-bleached
fence-post,
Lonely and grim stalks Hatter Jack.
Quartz-white hair and bleak gold eyeballs,
Never a word when we pass on the track.
Ashamed that I should know his weakness
Who found, with the Sergeant, a cairn of
stones
And the old blue blanket he had wrapped
So gently around the pitiful bones.

S W A G

This year's exclusion of Overland from the aid of the Commonwealth Literary Fund has become such a public issue throughout Australia that our comment is hardly necessary.

We could refer in detail to the protest signed by distinguished literary and academic figures from all over Australia, including six professors of English; to the airing of the issue in the pages of *Nation*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and many other publications; to the Parliamentary questions on the matter; to the unsolicited letter we have received from Mr. Patrick White, offering us the use of his name; to the joint protest of many Australian editors signed in Sydney recently (the editors of all Australian quarterlies have joined in protests); or to the unprecedented flood of letters and donations we have received in protest.

Instead, we will confine ourselves to three brief points.

1. The C.L.F. Advisory Board* ruled recently in Overland's favor for the second year running (it is said that this year, unlike last, there was one dissident). The recommendation was rejected by the Parliamentary Committee of the Fund, consisting of Messrs. Menzies, Robertson (Country Party) and Calwell, by (it is believed) a two-to-one vote. The Menzies Government thus continues its tradition, established in recent years (notably in censorship cases), of rejecting the advice of its own advisors.

2. While the entire burden of obloquy cannot be removed from the Advisory Committee of the C.L.F. who are, as national figures, in a position to take action against their own humiliation, nevertheless it is undesirable that the responsibility for the Overland scandal should rest with them. This was a political decision taken at a political level, and its political implications for the quality of democratic life in this country need to be understood.

3. The Overland case is, unfortunately, fast bringing the Commonwealth Literary Fund as a whole into disrepute. This body does invaluable work, much of it on a humanitarian level not known to the public. It is therefore tragic to see it, on the Prime Minister's responsibility, drawn into the political arena and smudged with the dirty finger-prints of bias. The issue is thus much bigger than Overland itself, and the nature of the response to the latest rejection shows that a public nerve has been touched.

*

Special mention is necessary of an attempted defence of the C.L.F. by Kenneth Slessor (*Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 28th August 1962). Mr. Slessor makes some remarks of astonishing naivety: ". . . the best kind of literature has no wings, either right or left, and . . . a truly 'literary' magazine should have nothing to do with politics and everything to do with good writing," for instance.

One doesn't know where to start tackling this old-fashioned piece of obscurantism. Whether to tell Mr. Slessor that politics is about life and so is literature; whether to ask him if it is meant as a defence of the decision to bar Overland and,

* Members of the C.L.F. Advisory Board: Dr. A. Grenfell Price (Chairman), Mr. Kenneth Slessor, Mr. Douglas Stewart, Miss Kylie Tennant, Mr. Harold White (National Librarian), Assoc. Professor T. Inglis Moore, Professor A. R. Chisholm.

if so, how he squares it with support to a magazine of greater political (but right-wing) content; or whether just to say that it is an outstanding example of cowardice to state the above (obviously in relation to the Overland case) and then comment: "It may be left to the readers of *Meanjin*, *Quadrant*, *Southerly*, *Overland*, *Australian Letters* and the rest to decide which of the magazines are wholeheartedly devoted to literature rather than politics . . ."

No, Mr. Slessor. In this case it is not up to our readers, but up to the Commonwealth Literary Fund. If this is your view about Overland, it should be brought out into the open and discussed openly. If the secrecy surrounding the operations of the C.L.F. means that this kind of view goes unchallenged, then it is indeed time that the public become uneasy at the prospect of a debilitated diet of "safe", committee-type literature.

*

For the record, the following are the subsidies received by the five Australian quarterlies this year: *Meanjin* £1,000 from the C.L.F., plus extra funds from the Lockie Bequest of the University of Melbourne and from the Myer Foundation; *Quadrant* £1,050 (£800 from the Congress of Cultural Freedom, £250 from the C.L.F.) plus special advertising revenue; *Southerly* £1,000 (from the C.L.F.) plus certain "advantages" in publishing; *Australian Letters* £250 (from the C.L.F.) plus special advertising revenue. Overland usually covers its actual losses by readers' donations, but only just, and at the cost of impoverished production and few payments to authors and artists.

The situation does make one reflect on Cyril Pearl's comments on the A.B.C. Critics' session recently, when he asked how any subsidised magazine could claim that it was reflecting public demand. Subsidies have, of course, kept alive magazines which should have been allowed to die a natural death. Yet monopoly and mass-communications have created a wasteland where we can be quite sure that desirable music, drama and literature will not flourish without some kind of superphosphate sprinkled around. *Meanjin*, for instance, is by far the most important quarterly in Australia today, and one of the finest in the English language, yet could not survive in its present form a month without its aid. So we have to decide that "committee literature" is not the only alternative to admiss, and fight to find ways to ensure this. The kind of problem, of course, that Alan Hughes is grappling with in his article in this issue.

*

If space had permitted I had intended to write a short article on the recent literary seminar held in Sydney by the Congress of Cultural Freedom. The editors of nearly all Australian literary periodicals were present, as well as critics and observers such as Leonie Kramer and A. D. Hope. Also present were editors from the U.S.A., Nigeria, New Zealand, Korea and the Philippines.

The occasion was a unique and welcome one, though not without its contradictions: the overseas visitors, for instance, tended to prevent the Australians tackling local technical and organisational questions, and were clearly puzzled at some of our indigenous problems and approaches. Yet William Phillips (*Partisan Review*, U.S.A.) and Robie Macauley (*Kenyon Review*, U.S.A.) brought a sophistication and a broader perspective to our discussions; I was particularly interested in Macauley's excellent paper on "Are literary journals obsolescent?", in which he spoke of the need "to keep our culture from becoming merely

sociological", and spoke of the responsibility of the little magazine "to emphasise and exalt those valuable things that the age seems to ignore":

In a lax, easy and self-satisfied age it should practice a vigorous cultural criticism. In an age that goes in heavily for excellent reportage and critical examination, it should do its utmost to preserve and encourage imagination, sensibility and philosophical speculation. One of the foolish glories of the unpopular magazine is to offer poetry when everybody wants to read reports or editorials.

A useful comment, I thought, on the questions regarding "sociology" that I raised in this column in our last issue.

Prima facie one would have expected a seminar organised by the Congress of Cultural Freedom to be concerned with getting good value in terms of anti-Communism for the five or six thousand pounds expended. I would have expected a stronger emphasis than we got on the "there is no third way" line, now run very strongly by the Sydney Bulletin, many Catholic intellectuals and the right-wing generally. In the intellectual world it is, of course, the expression of that fury and distrust American senators feel for the countries that refuse to line up with one of the great power blocs.

Only one speaker, Mr. Harries of the Tutorial Classes of the University of Sydney, took us to task in this way. He defined for us the "pseudo-liberal" who is interested in prison reform, the death penalty and summit meetings, and contrasted him with the "real liberal" who lacks "the pervasive sense of guilt that paralyses pseudo-liberals" and who "takes a definite stand on communism". It was interesting to have such a clear-cut expression of what might be termed the intellectual death-wish of our time.

No; far from having this kind of thing drummed into us one of the main complaints I would make about the seminar was the lack of in-fighting, the difficulty of attacking and discussing issues, including those Mr. Harries raised. Too much of the talk was on a high moral level; it was refreshing to hear Wole Soyinka (Black Orpheus, Nigeria) ask us what we were doing about the development of New Guinea and Aboriginal writers.

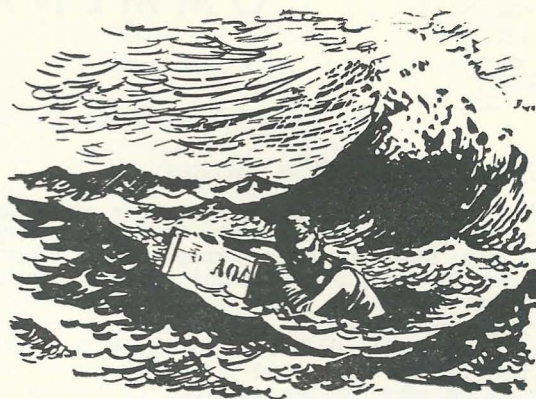
There is no doubt that the Congress of Cultural Freedom is dedicated to the anti-Communist fight, and has envisaged it, in this country at least, in black-and-white terms. The dangers to civil liberties in this campaign were excellently manifested in the spurious (and fortunately, abortive) attacks mounted not long ago on the Melbourne University lecturer Geoff Sharpe. It would be idle to deny that the right-wing today holds a certain initiative largely because of the failings of the left; yet perhaps an occasion such as this literary seminar helps to obstruct the polarisers, and as such is destructive to the more sterile aspects of the Congress' work. One attends it as one attends a peace conference or some political gathering, knowing that manipulators are at work but determined to do a bit of manipulating oneself. In present circumstances this seems to me a useful attitude for the unorganisational man to take.

*

Further to my remark last issue on a "take-off point" in Australian publishing, the latest figures are to hand in "Australian National Bibliography" for 1961. Publications in Australia last year numbered 1840—a dramatic rise from 839 the year before. Works of literature rose from 146 to 185, including poetry from 19 to 24 volumes, fiction from 84 to 116. Travel, biography and history rose from 123 to 161.

S. MURRAY-SMITH

The Floating Fund



This magazine has a deliberate policy of publishing under cost, in order to keep our price to a popular level. This means we have a circulation far higher than any other magazine of this nature in this country; in fact, there are few such magazines anywhere in the non-Communist world which circulate as widely. What money we do get goes into saying more rather than into the finer points of production—not that we wouldn't like a more expensive-looking job if we could afford it. And a high circulation forces us to think of **people** all the time, not of our own amour propre.

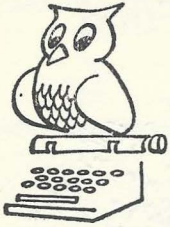
The best thing about this rather crazy-sounding policy of ours is that it works, and it works because our readers understand it and back it. Here is the proof—£309/8/9 received in donations since our last issue.

Very many thanks to:

Anon £50; GMH £25, EHT £21; KHF £20; CBC, ML £10; GGM £9/10/0; KK £6; AGA £5/5/0; RC, JDMcL, SB, JVB, PL, MM, IW, HH £5; GB £4/10/0; DM, PB, DP £4; GKS, RW £3; WRP £2/10/0; KSP, DG, KTF, MC, FD £2/2/0; AGD, KWMcC, MG £2; OR, BR, RT, ES £1/12/0; HM, KM, HJH, AF, JVB, ADE, JvonM £1/10/0; FO £1/9/6; JCH £1/2/0; DNR, RAW £1/1/0; RDB, NF, JJ, JS, CWC, FM, LD, RGE, WWM, GS, JKE, EWI, JT, VL, AT, MD £1; MB 15/9; MWP, RJP 15/-; WCG, GK, RDMcL 11/-; GK, WMT 10/6.

HRG, DW, JB, HB, JB, SMA, GS, IG, KCM, RT, LB, EM, EH, OL, BB, SYT, JH, EJWM, JB, JB, LK, TT, JN, IB, FDD, ELHS, HP, ENH, WY, JK, DMcL, LRP, EH, RBR, TS, ACJ, CS, JZ, OSG, KF, LCR, CW, BG, CE, WP, GLB, AF, ML, LC, TJ, MU 10/-.

JRL 7/6; AM, DM, YE, NDM, HH, MEB, DB, RW, ES, LLR 5/-; RT, CAB 2/6.



★ COMMENT

Nettie Palmer (Vic.) writes:

Overland is to be congratulated on publishing in its last issue a supplement on Spain, the country that more than any other perhaps in our lifetime seemed the focal point for the kind of idealism inspiring the letters of Whitman and O'Dowd.

"Spain was a death to us: Munich a mourning," Day Lewis wrote in 1940, in a poem beginning: "Where are the war poets? the fools inquire," and explaining why, at the outbreak of the second world war, poets had nothing to say, for they had seen it all coming, when those who betrayed Spain's natural hope for justice "rigged the market for the ruin of man."

At the present time, though, we are constantly reminded that the period when the struggle in Spain focussed all the world's eyes is pre-history to the generation now in its 'twenties; and also that, throughout the lifetime of this generation, people in Spain have been serving terms in gaol. Marcos Anna, the young poet released last year after learning to write in jail, was only one of many who served terms as long as 22 years in Franco's; and in recent months people have been condemned to as much as 18 years' imprisonment for actions that in no democratic country would be considered a crime.

So it seems a pity that the only article in your supplement, dealing historically with the struggle in Spain, should have been limited to discussion of a particular book, and gave little to put the Spanish war in perspective for those who know little or nothing about it. The Spanish Republic, David Martin says in the course of his review, could not have survived for six months (after the outbreak of war) without help from the Soviet Union. True or otherwise, this remark can only be discussed in relation to the general picture of the war in Spain—a struggle for independence, as Einstein called it, carried on by those loyal to the elected government of the Republic against a clique of treacherous generals, armed by and serving the aims of Italo-German aggression in Europe.

The Republican government of Spain was one enjoying wide popular support, as I had ample opportunity of seeing when in Spain in 1936. Without the state of affairs then prevalent in Germany and Italy, the war in Spain would never have happened, let alone lasted six months.

Adrian Rawlins writes: "One editorial cut in my article on Australian art, which appeared in the last Overland, seems to me injurious to my intention. I refer to the deletion of the second half of the sentence: "Painting is, after all, largely a matter of using paint creatively; ostensible subject matter is of only secondary importance." The cut tends to render the sentence empty portentous. I consider it of prime importance to stress that pictorial art is a process of creation rather than depiction.

Apopemptic Hymn

All was as it was when I went in:
The pictures right-side up, the chairs in
place,
The flowers stood stiff upon the mantel-piece;
I knew the voice, I recognised the face.

Outside, the same sky held the same earth
fast,

The green leaves shone, dogs barked, the
children played;
But suddenly, inside, the air grew cold,
The evening ceased to sing; I was afraid.

The chairs began to dance, the pictures
screamed,
The suppurating flowers smelt sickly-sweet;
The white walls crashed together, silence
howled,
The floor collapsed in darkness at my feet.

The door slams shut, the wind is in my hair,
The sky has gone and in its place there
stands

The mighty stranger, blotting out the sun:
I turn and feel my way with cold, blind
hands.

But where I turn he stands before me still,
Annihilating time, bestriding space;
Chaos is come, my daughter is unborn,
And blank and featureless my young son's
face.

No point of recognition but the grass—
Even the tree betrays me in the end—
Oh blind hands, feel the toughness of the
blades,
And the cold ground beneath them as your
friend.

DOROTHY AUCHTERLONIE

"In this country, as has been shown in the recent controversy in the letters column of the Melbourne Age, a strong reactionary movement has persisted, headed by a group of academic and debilitated post-Impressionists and popular portrait painters employing, to use Noel Counihan's phrase, 'slick photographic naturalism'. This group has persisted because a large section of the public is not able to distinguish between creation and depiction. While things are changing for the better, it is still imperative to point out that the success of a painting rests not on the 'realism' or 'abstraction' of its subject's rendering but on the internal logic of the overall image and how the medium of paint is used to create that image."

Looking Back

Strange, how often solitude and sadness
dominate the written imitations
of my thoughts and underline their oddness.

But when I'm happy I cannot convey
my tumult—life is much too full to bother.
Control and polish have no part in joy.

Yet at times like this I feel compelled to
write:

outside, the house has stifled in the mist
and I've sat here remembering you all night.

RODNEY HALL

On Going to Sleep

There comes a time, the tide at the ebb,
The mind receding, the wooden drift
Of strong affections bedded in sand,
When the blue haze over the sea's lift

Lowers and broods on the decline
Of the afternoon's last lambent hour.
Then desire, receding, leads on
Illusion lest the wind swing sour

On the day's past pace, the night's dance
When you turned the wits to work at wit,
Then pen to punctuate the running words.

But now you sleep: and there's an end on it.

MAX HARRIS

Epitaph for a Monster of our Times

The age admires precision
and this man was precise,
a passion for names and numbers,
they say, his only vice;

a kindly man, with blue
and inoffensive eyes,
a public servant, slightly
smaller than life-size,

who sat at his desk, a slave
to files and paper-clips,
while children died and cities
burned at his finger-tips;

a Caligula by proxy,
stiff-collared, dispassionate,
whose crablike hand made entry
of number, name and date,

using the regulation
form, the official quill,
to sign with equal flourish
death-warrant, laundry bill;

an organisation man
par excellence, whom we
need only convict at last
of gross efficiency.

DAVID MALOUF

Park Orator

All questions asked, the final answer's lost
Like men diminishing where paths begin.
The orator now amplifies the cost

Where only paper's blown on lawns, and thin
Dogs speculate. Upon his broken stand,
He awaits their ridicule. But dogs can't grin.

Next Sunday, crowds will stay and under-
stand

The speech upon these steps—and quickly
cheer

His cause and banishment from every land

Where fools comply with bricks around
their fear.

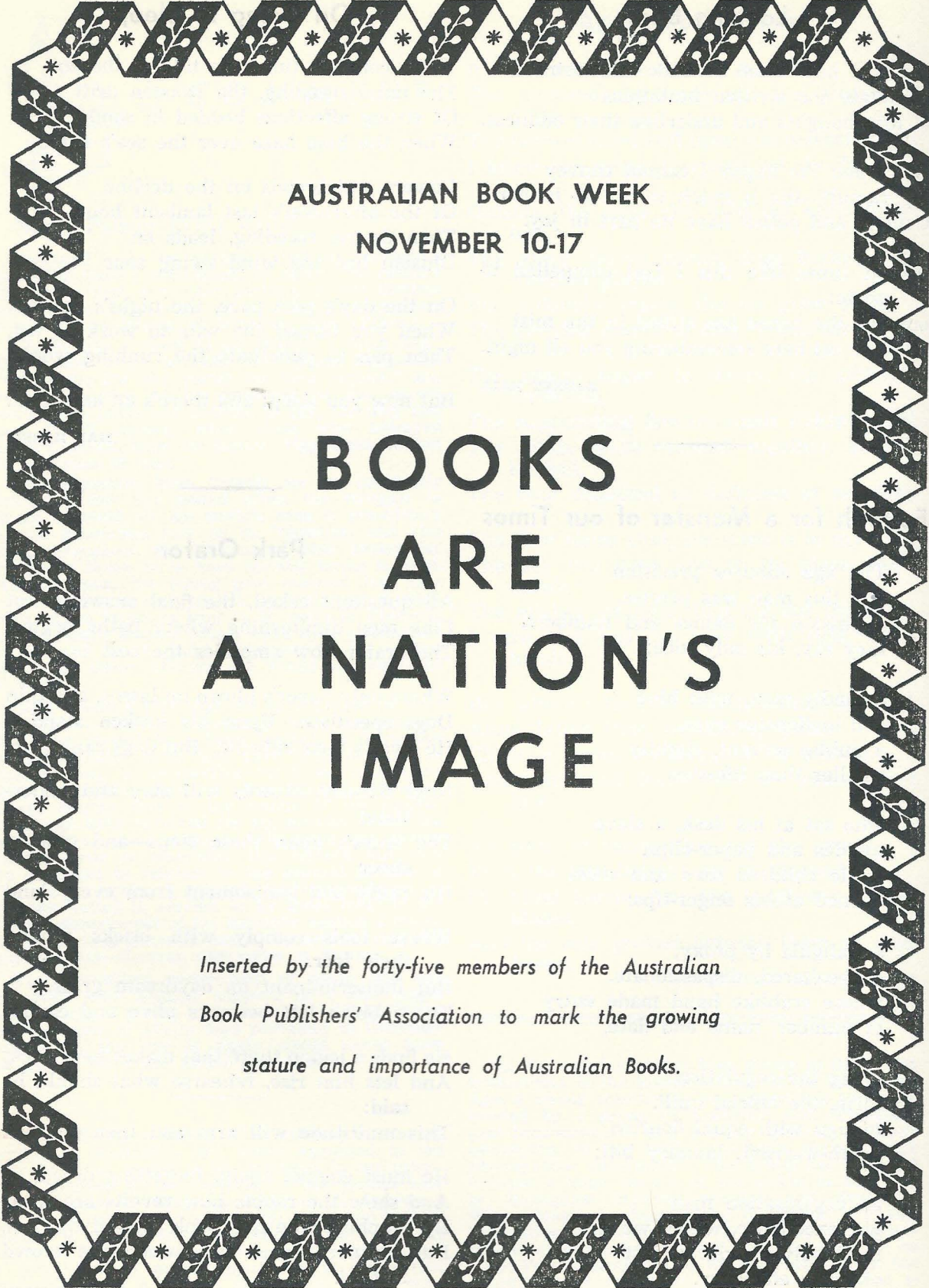
But indiscriminant on daydream grass,
The rubbish left becomes alive and clear:

He finds a legion there that makes new stress
And lets him rise, rehearse what should be
said:

This multitude will arm and then oppress.

He must compel again, forgetting dread,
And show the rabble how revolts are won
By prophets who may look toward the sun.
But cleaners come and sweep the crowd
instead.

R. A. SIMPSON



AUSTRALIAN BOOK WEEK
NOVEMBER 10-17

BOOKS
ARE
A NATION'S
IMAGE

*Inserted by the forty-five members of the Australian
Book Publishers' Association to mark the growing
stature and importance of Australian Books.*

WILL DYSON

Vane Lindesay



Will Dyson

TO state that the golden age of political cartooning is over is to enter only inches deep in argumentative waters. For the truth is that today political cartooning lacks three essentials. One is the humanism established by Hogarth, Daumier, Steinlen and Forain and carried forward by Will Dyson, with its hard hitting comment on humbug, hypocrisy and the important issues of life. The other two missing essentials are the technique and the artist's independence.

W. E. Pidgeon (WEP), the Sydney artist and cartoonist, recently put it this way: "The daily life of the people is today reflected back to them in terms of gentle, even inane satire. Jocularly is wearing out a million pencils and the straight cartoon is as rare as a bonus. On such stately and portentous occasions as the cessation of war, the birth of a princess, or the death of a prime minister, the modern cartoonist groans and trembles and produces a funnier drawing than ever."

For the trend today in draftsmanship is more and more to the "cute and dinky" style of drawing. With the rise in popularity of the Halas- and Batchelor-type animated cartoons for television, this style is predominant in the younger black-and-white artists the world over. Worse still, since Thurber's whimsical diagrams caught on, it seems internationally accepted that any old scratchy lines on paper may pass for drawing. Hundred-weights of this stuff are syndicated from overseas, reinforcing the fashion here.

Even the styles of well-known cartoonists, like Giles of the London Daily Express (with his

imitators), and Vicky of the New Statesman, are too light to express dignity on important themes and issues.

Assuming the artist has the technique he still faces the problem of his independence, a problem which needs little explanation. Today, in a world of newspaper combines and takeovers, editorial policy is partisan and powerful: the cartoonists are there to express it.

But it was not always so. Late last century, when Australians were more concerned with national independence and vigorously reacted to foreign pressures, the weekly Bulletin was founded. One of its strong features was its drawings and cartoons. They soon became famous around the world. Its discoveries, like Phil May and David Low, moved on from Sydney to become international celebrities. Despite this, very little attention has been paid to the remarkable contribution our satiric and humorous artists have made to the Australian achievement. The Ballarat-born brothers, Will and Ambrose Dyson, who were schooled in the old Bulletin nursery of hard hitting satire,

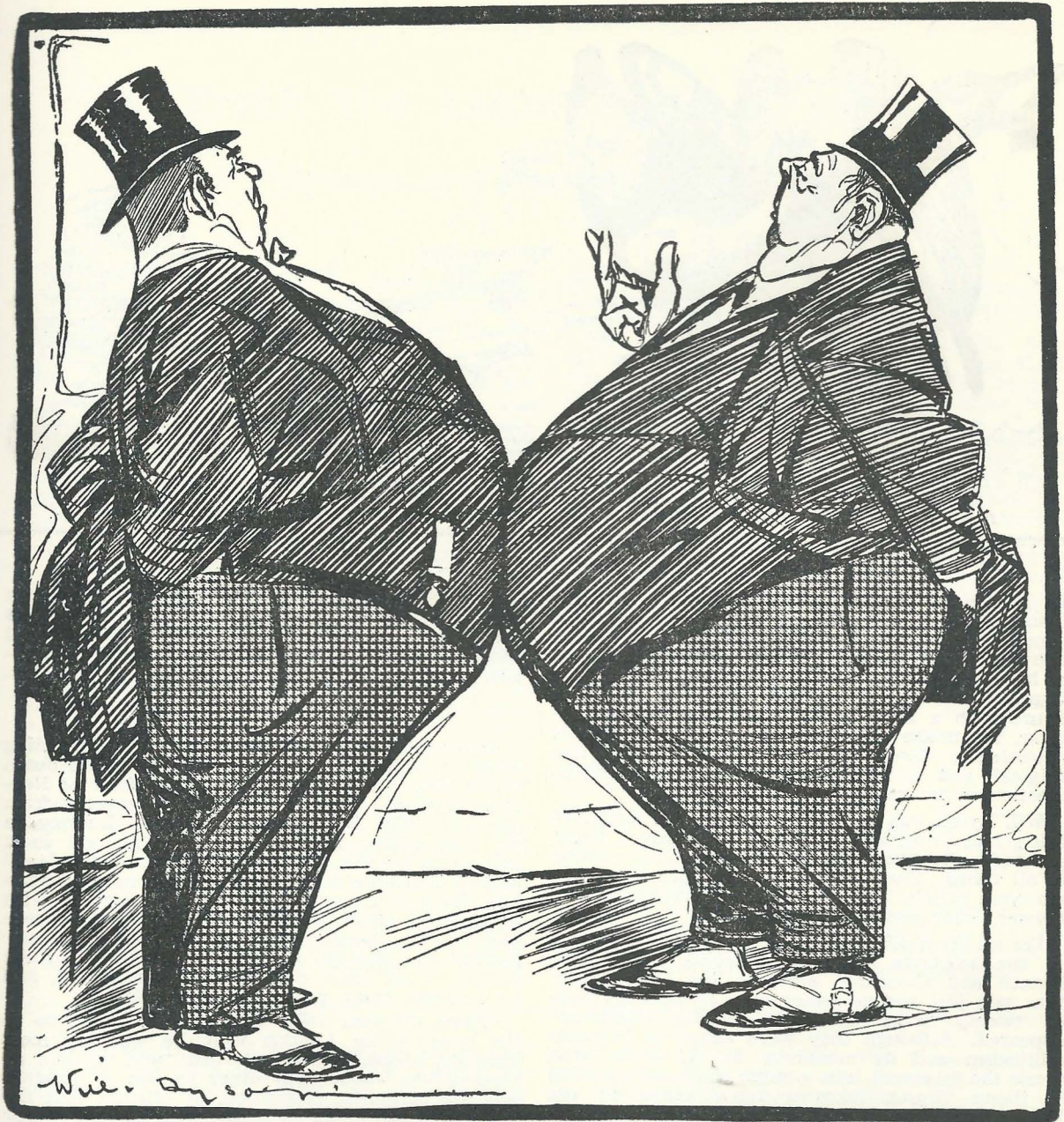


IN THE MIDLANDS: "Mummer, why don't they forcibly feed us?"

were in the forefront of this achievement: in an unbroken line for over half a century until 1952 (when the third Dyson died) there was a Dyson working in the radical tradition.

The most famous and influential satirist Australia has produced is Will Dyson, who at the age of 17, in 1897, started submitting his self-taught drawings to the Bulletin. Curiously enough Will was to become known in Australia only by his illustrations to his brother Ted Dyson's book

"Fact'ry 'ands", and by his caricatures of Commonwealth personalities, which (published in the Bulletin's sister monthly "Lone Hand") started him on the road to success. Norman Lindsay, who was Dyson's closest friend in this period, states that Will left Australia in 1910 for London because he could not make a living here. Black-and-white freelance work was very badly paid for in those days and the only journals available for it were the Bulletin, Melbourne Punch, Table Talk and



RIGHT-THINKING PERSON: "The visionaries and Socialist demagogues may rant against us, my boy, but they can't alter the divine law of the Survival of the Fattest!"

(in Adelaide) the Critic. The most Will ever received for a drawing was ten shillings.

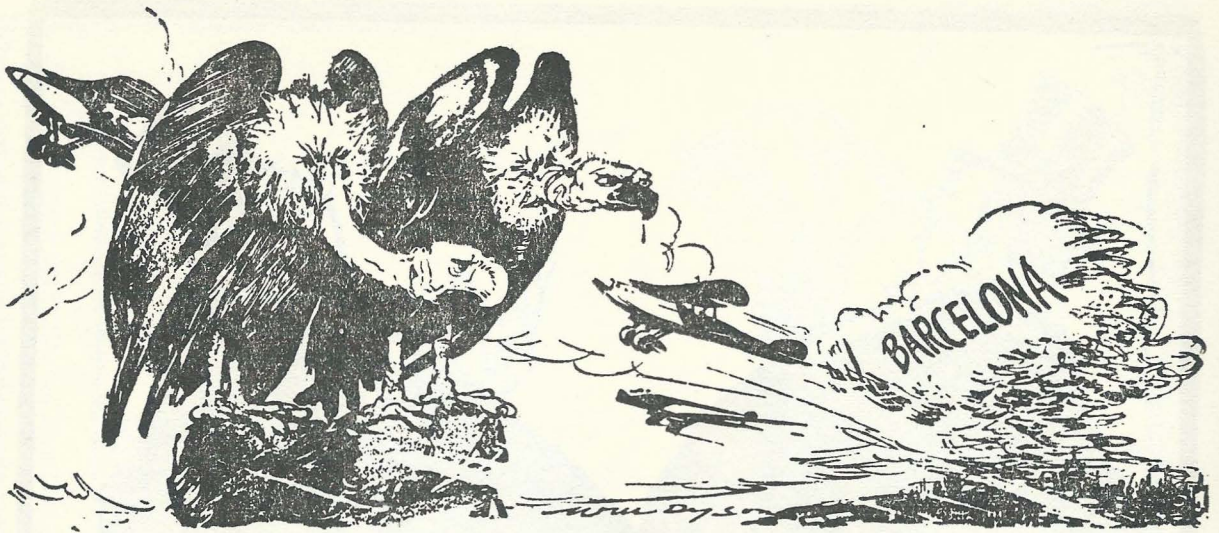
Dyson, like Low, longed for a larger field and wider horizons than the Bulletin could offer him. But in London initially he did not find it easy though Vance Palmer, who was in London at the time, has described how amazed he was at the quick way in which Dyson sized up the field he was invading—its politics, papers, public men—although he had only landed in England a few weeks before.

His big chance came when he was appointed cartoonist-in-chief to the newly started Labor paper, the Daily Herald, where he was given carte

blanche to express his own ideas. His work, published full newspaper page size, was sensational; it stunned the intellectuals and delighted connoisseurs throughout the world. For the first time in England since Gillray, rebel frankness had entered into satiric art again.

Dyson, who was a convinced socialist, hacked into the pomposity and humbug of pre-war England and again became the first major cultural figure since Dickens to champion the working man forthrightly and without reserve.

Dyson's approach was intellectual. His thinking was in humane concepts—universal truths addressed to the ruler, the employer, the responsible man.



"Once WE were the most loathsome things that flew!"

It was reported yesterday that 400 were killed and 1,200 injured in a ninety-seconds' air raid on Barcelona.

In British cartooning before Dyson the working man had been depicted as a pathetic figure, a depressed person in bowyangs lacking any human dignity. Dyson drew him young, militant, an image of hope with fist upraised. His cartoon symbol for Capital, Finance and Power was "Fat"—a gross figure with a large paunch, top hat, spats and a cigar, the image of a bully in a world of ignoble advantages. Hackneyed now, the symbol was original and a notable, successful and justified creation in its day.

Will Dyson was an artist of genius. He employed this genius to fight slum landlords, the court, Labor renegades, the press, exploitation and Tory reaction in all forms. These cartoons of the pre-First War era were grimly bitter in attacking unemployment, hunger, want and suffering.

For all his militancy, Dyson, like most supporters of the majority Labor movements of Britain, France and Germany, accepted the First World War as a just and necessary one. In 1915 his book of twenty large drawings—"Kultur Cartoons" appeared. Although they were aimed at Prussian militarism and its monarchy H. G. Wells, who wrote the foreword, saw a more profound meaning in them: "Dyson takes a figure based on the Kaiser, but essentially a symbol, on which to concentrate his hatred of the foolish assumptions, the cruel vanities, the vile waste of opportunity, the perversion and destruction, which is his case against militant monarchy."

In 1915 Dyson became an Australian official war artist and was twice wounded sketching. Some of his magnificent war drawings were published in the book "Australia at War" in 1918.

Dyson lost his wife just after the war. This, together with his doubts about the peace, his unsettled mood and general disillusionment resulted in his return to Australia in 1925. He accepted the offer of a large salary to work on the staff of the Melbourne Herald, where he was soon edged from his special field into the turning out of pleasant comic drawings. Perhaps from frustration, Dyson became interested in etching and dry-points. After five years in Australia he returned to England via America where he exhibited his etched satires in

New York, St. Louis and other American cities and then in London. These etchings and dry-points were not political comments so much as social satires. While they helped to reinforce his reputation they lacked the impact of his pre-war cartoons.

*

Commentators have noted how the fire and sting went out of Will Dyson from the time of the death of his wife (she was Ruby Lindsay, sister of Norman Lindsay). It is true he never recovered from the loss. Will Dyson visited Norman Lindsay in the late 1920s. Lindsay has recently said in a private letter that Dyson was "born disillusioned of all pretensions to generous emotion in the human ego. He had a mordant wit and could use it with devastating effect, when so inclined, and he was one of the best after-dinner speakers I ever listened to. But an embittered conviction of the futility of all effort dogged him through life, and he suffered black periods of depression."

"From the year 1898, when we first met, up to the year of our London visit, he was my most intimate friend," Lindsay writes, "and we had no reservations about each other or life in general, and my optimistic conviction, or illusion, that the job was worth doing conflicted with Bill's dispeptic insistence that life was a fraud, perpetrated on us without our consent, and that suicide was a logical finality to it. That at least was his pronounced opinion when he returned to Australia. Like all expatriates who stay too long away from their own country, he found Australia intolerable, with all his interests in England. I had a strong conviction that a man should work out his destiny in the country of his birth. A man who leaves it to live in another country leaves half of his identity behind him.

"I found this to be the case with Bill Dyson.

"In youth he could be very gay. In those days, when there was no such thing as potted entertainment of the radio or television order, we manufactured our own entertainment, which was mainly of the sort which put on absurd acts in caricature of character creations, sometimes of each other, or mutual acquaintances. Bill was amazingly good

TO COVER THE EARTH WITH A NEW DEW

Television and the Pilkington Report

CONTROL of the mass media presents socialists and liberals with the epitomy of their old, their very old, dilemma: reconciling defence of the public interest with liberty of the individual. Confronted on the one hand by the arbitrary power of the entrepreneur, the titleholder or the self-made but unaccountable private manager, and on the other by narrow-gutted bureaucrats, our concern must be with the discovery and clarification of a third way.

And with television, what a job it is! The potency of the medium, the hideously low standard of our commercial channels and the rich pickings easily won by sponsors and licence-holders alike immediately suggest public control. That is, until we look at the present condition of the A.B.C., where considerations of the public interest have been securely married to a horror of giving offence. A third way here will be hard to find, but it must be found if producers and artists and audiences are to be set free from their several captivities. And some recent debate in Britain has approached this problem. Any solutions, hints, clues?

The Pilkington Committee, set up by H.M. Government in 1960 to "consider the future of the broadcasting services in the United Kingdom" has now, after nearly two years, published its Report. It is in some ways an impressive document, written in a pleasing vernacular unknown to Australian official texts: an Establishment affair, confidently delivered, admirably public-spirited and hostile to commercial interests. It has turned out a real

smack in the eye for the Independent Television Authority. But not, alas, any sort of answer to the central difficulty.

The present position in the U.K. is this. There are two channels, one controlled by the B.B.C., one by another semi-independent public corporation, the I.T.A., set up in 1954. The latter has a regulatory function only. The business of programming and transmitting is done by a number of licensed, privately-owned companies, principally Granada, Associated Television, Associated Rediffusion and A.B.C., who carve up the available time by mutual agreement and carry one another's programs on their stations. These sell advertising time-spots (up to six minutes an hour) but are not permitted to sell particular programs to a sponsor. Their compound service is known as Independent Television. They rely exclusively on advertising revenue, from which they make profits which are very big indeed. The B.B.C. is dependent entirely on listeners' and viewers' licence fees.

The ban on the sale of programs to a sponsor is not particularly significant, since advertisers are still free to buy whichever time-spots they wish. In order to create the most attractive advertising opportunities, I.T.V. must consistently seek the largest possible viewing audience, not just four, or eight, but up to fifteen million. The idea of a program directed at a **minority** audience, one which takes into account the special tastes of any particular group of viewers, of whatever kind, must be anathema to it.

This is the characteristic and fundamental vice of commercial television as it is at present constituted. It has lots of others, of course, with some of which you may happen to be acquainted.

at such antics. He could put on an act which sent everyone into belly-aching laughter. Randolph Bedford was another expert at extemporising monologue, and when and Bill put on an act, I've never heard anything better for mad humor."

Norman Lindsay is referring here to the days of the Ishmael Club, a bohemian group, formed in Melbourne, typical of the many literary and artistic gatherings at the turn of the century. Old photographs of the Ishmael Club show Will Dyson as a very handsome young man, and his brother Edward, Randolph Bedford and the three Lindsay brothers—Norman, Lionel and Percy—were among the eleven members.

Lindsay says that Dyson's humanistic outlook, as defined in his cartoons, was generated in Dyson's youth, when the conflict between labor and capital was emerging as the dominating theme in Australian politics. But by the time Dyson returned to Australia it was clear that his normal pessimism had devalued any Utopian altruism he may have expressed in his work.

Back in London in 1930 Will Dyson returned to the new Daily Herald and worked there until his sudden death in January 1938, aged 58. During this period his cartoons suffered from the editorial treatment they received. Dyson drew very large—as much as 24½" x 19½"—with a beautifully- and delicately-drawn pencil framework, which was inked in with a flowing brush, a dry brush, and pen work. His cartoons did not look their best in the small spread to which the Daily Herald reduced them.

Dyson never called for bloody revolution, but was stronger in his demands for social justice than most progressive intellectuals of his day. His last cartoon, published on the day of his death, showed, curiously enough, the old Dyson fire. The drawing depicted two vultures crouched on a rock watching Franco planes bomb defenceless Barcelona. The comment runs: "Once we were the most loathsome things that flew!"

Will Dyson was one of the robust minds of his age. In his irony and force he has not been approached as a cartoonist by any Australian, then or since.

The main recommendations of the Pilkington Committee must be accounted restrictive. They are as follows:

1. The I.T.A. should take over the programming function from the privately-owned companies;
2. The program companies should produce items for sale to the I.T.A., some competitively, some on contract;
3. The I.T.A. should also take over the business of selling advertising time, using the revenue in the first place to finance the purchase of programs;
4. After provision for reserves, the I.T.A. should transfer surplus funds to the Exchequer;
5. The B.B.C. should provide the next additional television service, and should be authorised to do so as soon as possible.
6. An extra channel should be made available to independent television only if it succeeds in providing more satisfactory service after such a reorganisation. This decision, it is hoped, may be made within five years.

In beating a path to these proposals the Pilkingtonians march at a rather unexciting pace through a great deal of comment on The Purposes of Broadcasting, and Violence and Triviality, both of which they associate particularly with I.T.V. Some of the more interesting passages are reprinted below. It seems clear that, if they have their way, some good may be done. The real cause for complaint is the shady ballet of lost opportunities which moves in their train.

Public reactions have been various: the daily newspapers, many of which have substantial shareholdings in the program companies, have in the main been bitterly and predictably critical. Among the weeklies, the *New Statesman* was uninhibited in its enthusiasm: "... a vital document which may rank with the Webbs' Royal Commission on the Poor Law and the Wartime Beveridge Report on social security ... it epitomises a shift of public opinion against the acquisitive society ... What is the case for extending the scope of commercial T.V.? The answer can be found in the Pilkington Committee's strictures on the six-year period. There is no case at all—save for the desire of a small group of speculators and hucksters to find a lucrative pitch in the market place."

FLOOD OF CLICHE

This ripe flood of cliché leaves quite a few questions bone dry. It was not without rivals.

The *Economist* headed up its editorial "T.V. with Auntie" and commented "The worst has happened. The Pilkington Committee ... has fallen hook, line and sinker to its own dogged good intentions." It went on to complain of "compulsive nannying" and later tore off its mask and demanded from the government "a pretty precipitate decision to lift the wraps and allow the maximum expansion of television—which means attracting the maximum available capital as rapidly as possible". One can scarcely go all the way with these boys. Puts me in mind of Noel Coward's Uncle Harry:

"In all those languid latitudes the atmosphere's exotic:

To take up moral altitudes would be—too idiotic."

Perhaps the most significant turn was taken by the *Spectator*, which featured Henry Fairlie, a television writer who has been articulate and liberal on the subject for some time and is no friend of I.T.V., or indeed, of anyone much: "If it had not by caricaturing its own arguments and

conclusions, already ruled itself out of serious consideration, the Pilkington Report would be disastrous. In the event, it is only stupid, and a sad waste of time. . . . not for the first time, the belief that something (which other people enjoy) may (possibly) influence their tastes, values, and morals (for the worse) becomes the excuse for fussing, but still real, restrictions of freedom."

Now, this, surely, is the main defect of the Report: that it is content to settle for an arrangement which by no means guarantees free expression within reasonable limits. It is intolerable that such a powerful medium of communication should be monopolised by two statutory corporations. The Committee at times makes a feast of pious attitudes: "All broadcasting, and television especially, must be ready and anxious to experiment, to show the new and unusual, to give a hearing to dissent."

But it is not enough to exhort to such virtues: a situation must be created which gives them some real meaning. The proposed reorganisation of I.T.V. may detach producers, writers and artists from the tyranny of the advertisers, but it places them securely under the direction of the agents of the State, since no third, fully independent service is proposed. This may well provide for the public interest and possibly be more to the taste of those working creatively in the industry, but it brings us sharply to a special set of problems. Bureaucrats are not, I suppose, always cultivated, tolerant and courageous people, constantly on the lookout for risky and exciting programs and way-out public discussions. Nor is it always clear that the Committee is passionately concerned that they should be so. Its rather nagging insistence on responsibility and moral principle, in which the hand of Mr. Richard Hoggart may be detected, suggests that the lines may be drawn rather astringently:

"... broadcasting must be in a constant and sensitive relationship with the moral condition of society."

"... a constant and living engagement with the moral condition of society."

"... a constant and living relationship with the moral condition of society."

"... a responsible engagement with the moral condition of society."

The qualifications which accompanied this high-tone stuff were themselves enough to make one uneasy. Some of the submissions placed before the Committee were summarised thus: "Emphatically, this was not to say that where there was virtue, there could be no cakes and ale; that gloom was good and gaiety godless; that there could be no pleasure on Sundays. Nor was it to say that the sordid and harsh truth must not be shown."

How confidently could one ask such people for naked women wrestling in mud?

The sort of daring which the Committee contemplates here seems to indicate a preparedness to put up with a good deal of triviality, which they extravagantly castigate elsewhere as "more dangerous to the soul than wickedness." We learn, however, that "a program may be gay and frivolous—as light as a soufflé—and yet not be trivial."

A trivial approach is defined as "a failure to respect the potentialities of the subject matter, no matter what it be, or in a too ready reliance on well-tried themes, or in a habit of conforming to established patterns, or in a reluctance to be imaginatively adventurous."

This bold position is immediately abandoned at the threat of Violence: "Some Westerns are shown in the B.B.C.'s program between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., but this is children's hour and the Westerns shown



"How gorgeous, an artist for our very own!"

during it are usually of the conventional, stylised kind. Provided that there are not too many of these, and that they are counter-balanced by other programs, these are regarded by the public, the sociologists and the producers as harmless."

ESCAPE FROM TRIVIALITY

It seems to me that one necessary condition for an escape from triviality and the polite banality of official committees is that some broadcast time and facilities be controlled by independent, private agencies. Without this one cannot begin to feel assurance that there will be a margin of freedom in the medium. The same fundamental principle should surely apply as for the press: that any group which has something informative or entertaining to say, and can demonstrate this by commanding an audience which is willing to assist and sustain its activities, should be permitted to communicate. The imposition of a code on violence and obscenity is, it would seem, a necessary and desirable qualification to such a right: and so would be the protection of the audience from the wretched burden of advertising. The problem is to discover some means of deriving revenue for such independent services which neither corrupts their quality nor forces them to seek a mass audience, but preserves some relationship between the worth of their programs and the volume of cash return.

Pay-T.V. seems to be the answer to this central question. This is a system which enables the viewer to unscramble the image carried by a specified channel or channels by placing a coin in a slot or starting a meter which records information on the date, time and channel: the viewer can then be billed by the month or the quarter. In this way a direct relationship can be preserved between the size of the viewing audience for a particular program and the revenue which it earns. The fee per set may vary from program to program; figures mooted are of the order of 6/- for a nice night's entertainment. Several pay-T.V. systems are already in operation in Canada and the U.S.

The special merit of pay-T.V. is that it makes minority programs a feasible commercial proposition; and the substitution of a minority audience for a mass audience seems to me the second necessary requirement for that rescue from triviality. If T.V. writers and artists are forced forever to address a mass audience without identifiable characteristics they will not be able to develop either meaningful communication or meaningful art. Only by reducing the size of their audience and entering en rapport with a viewing group with specific tastes and interests can they hope to do this. Such minority audiences may not, of course, be high-brow: they may simply be pigeon-fanciers or drug addicts, victims of Barry Humphries, a ship of fools, anyone with an interest in anything which won't attract everybody.

POTENTIALITIES OF PAY-T.V.

It is a tragedy that the Committee gave only cursory consideration to the potentialities of pay-T.V. and recommended against its introduction for the time being, even on an experimental basis. Their views on the proper pace of expansion in the medium are about as reckless as those of the Victorian Government on slum clearance. The available broadcast space for T.V. is much more limited in Britain than in Australia, but if bands IV. and V. in the ultra high frequency range were utilised some ten additional channels with national coverage would be possible. Ultimately, a number of these might be made over to pay-T.V. services, some to the B.B.C. and reconstituted I.T.V., some to groups of universities willing to arrange formal educational programs.

There seems to be no reason why one channel should not be made available immediately for a pay-T.V. service, even if necessary with financial assistance from the Treasury and initially some measure of control by an independent commission. Broadcast time and production facilities could be leased in the first place to independent groups, such as writers', producers', or actors' co-operatives. A number of organisational devices could be used, if it were thought necessary or desirable to shape the character of the service; but these should be of a type which offered incentives for the type of program desired, and not of ones of a restrictive kind, except in the case of violence and obscenity. The Commission might offer a differential pattern of subsidies for various types of programs which would supplement but not outweigh income from viewers' fees. Preference in booking broadcast time and production facilities might be given to program-producing groups without connections with the press or commercial interests. A graduated tax could be levied on viewing revenue in excess of some (fairly high?) figure to provide a diminishing scale of cash rewards for attracting audiences above a given size. And so on.

Once the independent groups concerned with program production had collectively mustered sufficient know-how and financial resources to manage the channel, the Commission could surrender to them its powers of immediate control over transmission facilities, whilst continuing to administer the allocation of subsidies, the codes on violence and so on. The service would then be independent, and as free as possible of private or public bureaucratic control.

What of the Australian television wasteland? The institution of some such pluralist scheme as

has been outlined, one which involves a greater degree of public control and yet more real freedom for viewer and telecaster than exists at present, is a matter of urgency, like many other remote possibilities. The character of the measures needed here is not difficult to define:

1. Refusal to grant more licences on the present basis.
2. The restriction of advertising time to some reasonable level. (Existing Australian Broadcasting Control Board program standards in this respect are at present cheerfully ignored.)
3. The adoption of an arrangement akin to that suggested by the Pilkington Committee in respect of **existing** commercial services. This would entail the abolition of sponsor control and the creation of a second statutory authority which would sell advertising time and exercise extensive powers over program planning.
4. The establishment of an experimental pay-T.V. service on at least one channel, if necessary with the assistance of subventions from the Commonwealth Treasury channelled through an independent commission.
5. Preference to independent groups, such as associations of T.V. writers and actors, in leasing broadcast on such a service.

6. The establishment of an educational service controlled by universities.

Reforms of this kind are not easily won under Australian conditions, partly because of the greater truculence of our commercial interests and the reluctance of the Commonwealth Government to collide with their views. They are inconceivable here except under a Labor Government, and are unlikely in any case unless supported by the recommendations of a Committee of Enquiry or a Royal Commission. A public investigation and exploration of the potentialities inherent in the medium must be the first step for which we should press. Somehow or other the control of this superb and unrivalled form of communication must be torn from those interested only in a quick profit and placed in hands capable of using its power to enrich and enliven common experience.

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by Oswald Pryor

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what someone thinks they ought to like. Indeed, it has been held that, for this reason, it is not of great relevance to criticise television at all. We found this last a deflating thought.

44. We were bound to examine these alternative and opposing views. "To give the public what it wants" seems at first sight unexceptionable. But when applied to broadcasting it is difficult to analyse. The public is not an amorphous, uniform mass; however much it is counted and classified under this or that heading, it is composed of individual people; and "what the public wants" is what individual people want. They share some of their wants and interests with all or most of their fellows; and it is necessary that a service of broadcasting should cater for these wants and interests. There is in short a considerable place for items which all or most enjoy. To say, however, that the only way of giving people what they want is to give them these items is to imply that all individuals are alike. But no two are. Each is composed of a different pattern of tastes, abilities and possibilities; and even within each person the emphasis on this or that part of the pattern is not always the same. Some of our tastes and needs we share with virtually everybody; but most—and they are often those which engage us most intensely—we share with different minorities. A service which caters only for majorities can never satisfy all, or even most, of the needs of any individual. It cannot, therefore, satisfy all the needs of the public.

46. No one can say he is giving the public what it wants, unless the public knows the whole range of possibilities which television can offer and, from this range, chooses what it wants to see. For a choice is only free if the field of choice is not unnecessarily restricted. The subject matter of television is to be found in the whole scope and variety of human awareness and experience. If viewers—"the public"—are thought of as "the mass audience", or "the majority", they will be offered only the average of common experience and awareness; the "ordinary"; the commonplace—for what all know and do is, by definition, commonplace. They will be kept unaware of what lies beyond the average of experience; their field of choice will be limited. In time they may come to like only what they know. But it will always be true that, had they been offered a wider range from which to choose, they might and often would have chosen otherwise, and with great enjoyment.

MISLEADING PHRASE

48. In summary, it seems to us that "to give the public what it wants" is a misleading phrase: misleading because as commonly used it has the appearance of an appeal to democratic principle but the appearance is deceptive. It is in fact patronising and arrogant, in that it claims to know what the public is, but defines it as no more than the mass audience; and in that it claims to know what it wants, but limits its choice to the average of experience. In this sense we reject it utterly. If there is a sense in which it should be used, it is this: what the public wants and what it has the right to get is the freedom to choose from the widest possible range of programme matter. Anything less than that is deprivation.

49. The alternative is often presented as this; that the broadcaster should "give the public what he thinks is good for it." This philosophy too we would reject as patronising and arrogant. But it

was never advocated to us in evidence; and it is not, as is sometimes suggested, the only alternative. The choice is not between either "giving the public what it wants", or "giving the public what someone thinks is good for it", and nothing else. There is an area of possibility between the two; and it is within this area that the choice lies. The broadcasting authorities have certainly a duty to keep sensitively aware of the public's tastes and attitudes as they now are and in all their variety; and to care about them. But if they do more than that, this is not to give the public "what someone thinks is good for it." It is to respect the public's right to choose from the widest possible range of subject matter and so to enlarge worthwhile experience. Because, in principle, the possible range of subject matter is inexhaustible, all of it can never be presented, nor can the public know what the range is. So, the broadcaster must explore it, and choose from it first. This might be called "giving a lead"; but it is not the lead of the autocratic or arrogant. It is the proper exercise of responsibility by public authorities duly constituted as trustees for the public interest.

50. The antithesis: "broadcasting should give the public what it wants, and not what someone thinks is good for the public" is, then, a gross oversimplification of a complex and continuing problem; a statement which presents unreal extremes of view as though they were the only choice. That they have become the usual expression of two alleged and opposing philosophies is unfortunate; and for this reason we cannot escape using them. But they should be recognised for what they are: slogans which are largely deceptive. . . .

TELEVISION—NO EVIDENCE

81. As we have already noted, disquiet derived from an assessment, which we fully accept, that the power of the medium to influence and persuade is immense; and from a strong feeling, amounting often to a conviction, that very often the use of the power suggested a lack of awareness of, or concern about, the consequences. The consideration which gave rise to this feeling was usually that, for the sake of easy appeal, television portrayed too often a world in which the moral standards normally accepted in society were either ignored or flouted, and that for a similar reason it showed excessive violence. There is no doubt that concern is widespread and acute. It cannot be dismissed as the unrepresentative opinion of a few well-meaning but over-anxious critics, still less as that of cranks. It has been represented to us from all parts of the kingdom and by many organisations of widely differing kinds: by political parties, women's clubs and associations, local authorities, religious denominations, educational bodies and others. . . . Further, the concern these views reflect was reinforced by the opinion of those experts in sociology and psychology who gave evidence to us on the probable effect of television on society. The experts agreed that the information available to them was very far from complete; but this was not to say that there was no information. Dr. Hilde Himmelweit told us that all the evidence so far provided by detailed researches suggested that values were acquired, that a view of life was picked up, by children watching television. Professor Eysenck told us there were good theoretical grounds for supposing that moral standards could be affected by television, and that these grounds were largely supported by experimental and clinical evidence.

Goossens, 1956

Sir, your fate gives pleasure to
The medium man, the mean, the norm
A pleasure simple, rich, and true,
Vegetative, soft, and warm
An intimate easing satisfaction
At a high man's destruction.
O Sir, your famous fall confers
Catharsis on your punishers,
Dissemblers of their native heat,
Who execrate what they excrete.
You are thrust out, you are flung down,
Less for your fault than your renown
A wiped-off snob-cult sacrifice
To suburbs of uneasy vice.
Your virtue, meanwhile, rare and large,
Passes unnoticed in this purge.

JOHN THOMPSON

VIOLENCE

84. We deal first with violence. This was widely defined by those who criticised its portrayal as including not only physical violence, but also an unfeeling or cruel disposition of mind which might express itself in speech or apparently casual habits alone, and not necessarily in acts of overt violence. On the whole, the critics recognised that the stylised conventions to be found in Sherwood Forest or in Ruritania, or in the old-fashioned "Cowboys and Indians" programme, robbed violence of much of its effect, and thought that such programmes were in themselves harmless. But this could not be said of some of the newer "sophisticated" Westerns which depict recognisable psychological problems in an atmosphere of violence and brutality. And the constant repetition of even the most stylised scenes of violence was thought to be harmful.

85. Disquiet at the portrayal of violence was expressed on three main grounds. The first was that scenes of violence frightened small children, that small children were disturbed by any programmes which suggested a threat to the world which they knew and in which they felt secure; and that the most cruel threat was violence. The second was that such programmes might lead children to dangerous, and even disastrous, experiment. The third was that showing violence encouraged anti-social, callous and even vicious attitudes and behaviour. These three grounds were not always differentiated, for the same programme will affect different people differently. To show that it does not affect one part of the audience is not to show that it affects no other part. The disquiet was, then, about the general effect of violence, and it led to two main criticisms of programmes in which it featured. The first criticism was simply that too much violence was shown on television. Some put this criticism to us merely as an example of lack of balance—where time was limited it was given undue prominence. But most claimed that it was the constant repetition of violence, rather than the fact that it was shown at all, which was damaging. The second main criticism was of the treatment of violence. Many

submissions recorded the view that it was often used gratuitously, that it often did little or nothing to develop plot or characterisation and that it was, presumably, thrown in "for kicks". Another common opinion was that it was often unnecessarily emphasised by being shown in close-up and by being lingered over. The damage was not necessarily repaired by ensuring that, in the end, the good were seen to win and the bad to lose, and that crime did not pay: conventional endings of this sort did not penetrate to the level at which the portrayal of violence had its emotional effect. What mattered was that violence provided the emotional energy, the dramatic content, of the programme.

86. Though the damage was said to be to all age groups, submissions criticising violence in television were almost without exception especially concerned about its effect on children. It was not enough to produce between the hours of 5 and 6 p.m. programmes suitable for children. Until 9 p.m. audiences, we were told, included a great many children. . . .

DISSATISFACTION WITH T.V.

92. We now deal with the other broad class of criticism put to us about television, criticism which expressed dissatisfaction because, in the critics' view, television had signally failed to realise its possibilities for presenting worth-while programme material. . . .

93. The first constantly recurring theme was that the range of programmes was not sufficiently wide. There were a number of variations on the theme: that programmes were far too often designed to create a mass audience, that all the many tastes of the public deserved consideration but disappointingly few were catered for, that there were not enough programmes for minorities, and that there was too heavy a reliance on tried, tired and interminable favourites. In short, the range was too narrow, and within it the emphasis wrong. This theme was not confined to any particular section of opinion; it was a chorus.

97. On the general quality of television programmes, viewers expressed both disquiet and dissatisfaction. Indeed, one of the main impressions left with us by written submissions and spoken opinion is that much that is seen on television is regarded as of very little value. There was, we were told, a preoccupation in many programmes with the superficial, the cheaply sensational. Many mass appeal programmes were vapid and puerile, their content often derivative, repetitious and lacking in real substance. There was a vast amount of unworthy material, and to transmit it was to misuse intricate machinery and equipment, skill, ingenuity, and time. Their presentation, too, showed a lack of willingness to experiment. In all, one had to infer either that those who provided these programmes mistakenly assumed that popular taste was, uniformly and irremediably low, and popular culture irresponsible; or worse, that they did not care about them.

149. The B.B.C. know good broadcasting; by and large, they are providing it. We set out to consider how far the main causes of disquiet and dissatisfaction were attributable to the B.B.C.'s television service. The B.B.C. are not blameless; but the causes are not, we find, to any great extent attributable to their service. This is the broad consensus of view revealed by the representations put to us by people and organisations which spoke to us as viewers. Their view is perhaps seen most significantly in this; that whatever criticism they

made of television, they nearly all went on to say that, if there were to be an additional television programme, it should be provided by the B.B.C. We have no hesitation in saying that the B.B.C. command public confidence. If this is a test of the discharge of a public trust, then the B.B.C. pass it. There are blemishes, too; mistakes, as there must be, of judgment. And we repeat that there was criticism of a more general kind which, we felt, had some substance; that the B.B.C. had lowered their standards in some measure in order to compete with independent television. But our broad conclusion is this; that, within the limits imposed by a single programme, the B.B.C.'s television service is a successful realisation of the purposes of broadcasting as defined in the Charter.

175. The kinds of programme which were cited to us as tending to erode moral standards were, we recall, these: some crime and adventure programmes, quizzes in which valuable prizes were offered, programmes which ridiculed and humiliated ordinary people, and some forms of drama. Here, too, most of the submissions did not single out for blame one or other of the two broadcasting organisations, but where they did, they blamed independent television.

209. The disquiet about and dissatisfaction with television are, in our view, justly attributed very largely to the service of independent television. This is so despite the popularity of the service, and the well-known fact that many of its programmes command the largest audiences. Our enquiries have brought us to appreciate why this kind of success is not the only, and is by no means the most important, test of a good broadcasting service. Indeed, it is a success which can be obtained by abandoning the main purposes of broadcasting. Just as significant a pointer to popular opinion is this: that of all those many organisations which spoke as viewers and have no other interest, none speaking from a consideration of the character of the service to be provided advocated that "the third television programme" should be allotted to independent television; and those very few who did so explained that they were concerned to ensure that any new service would not be a direct charge to the public. Many indeed specifically urged that the service of independent television should on no account be extended. We conclude that the service of independent television does not successfully realise the purposes of broadcasting as defined in the Television Act.

This issue of Overland completes our third volume. Subscribers who wish their own copies bound should send them to the Editor by 30th November, 1962. The cost will be 30/-, including return postage. Subscribers' incomplete sets (Nos. 17-24 inclusive) can be completed at a cost of 2/6 a missing copy. Complete bound volumes of volume two (Nos. 9-16) and of volume three can be obtained for £2/10/0. Title pages are available.



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AUSTRALIA—A BEGINNING AND AN END

THE title chosen by Professor Manning Clark for his work, "A History of Australia"* (the present is the first volume, "From the Earliest Times to the Age of Macquarie", of what will finally be a four-volume work), contains a philosophy of history. Clark does not believe that there is one history, whose truth only awaits its revelation, but that there are potentially as many histories as there are historians, so that no man (and, he would probably add, least of all himself) can write "The History of Australia." There is one body of facts about the past, and that is common to all historians; but unique to each is how he selects and arranges and interprets his facts.

(It is obligatory of course for historians to have a due respect for the facts—neither to overlook, nor to distort, not to suppress them—and no Australian historian has more of this respect than Professor Clark. I make that point explicitly, because of an evil-tempered job of hatchery on Professor Clark and his book by Mr. M. H. Ellis in *The Bulletin* recently. I have not yet had time to check on the details, but I am prepared to predict that Mr. Ellis' splenic attack will add up to no more than three or four minor changes in the second and subsequent editions of this work.)

This then is the first part of a history of Australia, well-informed, well-written, full of ideas, provocative and highly personal. It is not elementary history; it is for those who already know the shape of these early days and want to know more of their inner life and of the hearts of the men who lived them; and it is history in the grand manner, as befits its creator, an exciting teacher who has felt it his mission "to tackle the mighty task of the coming of European civilisation to Australia."

It is good history not because the facts are there and in their right order—for these facts and many more can be found in many books—but because this is a book whose perspectives will force writers and students of Australian history to turn their eyes and their minds away from books and documents, their primary and secondary sources, and onto their society and themselves. Whether it convinces, convulses or confounds is not immediately the point: this book is an action which demands a response, and it is the more likely to get it because of the familiarity with which the new and arguable is clothed.

For some years Professor Clark has asserted the necessity of "rewriting Australian history," of ridding it of the assumptions about the inevitability of progress, and the working class (from convicts to diggers to shearers and miners and wharf-laborers) as the inevitable instrument of progress, which many recent Australian historians have tended to accept. This book is his rewriting: "European civilisation," for Clark, is not primarily the material culture with which the white man conquered the Aboriginal inhabitants and environments; rather, it is the great ideologies of Europe—Catholicism, Protestantism, and the "enlight-

ment" (the belief in Reason and Progress)—the ideas which, at different times, men brought to Australia, and which moulded their conduct and therefore (in Clark's view) influenced in important ways the sort of society they built.

This is the real point to be argued, rather than the over-eagerness of radical historians (which Clark has noted) to make every stirring among the poor and the oppressed the harbinger of social revolution: is the belief and intention of individual men of primary significance in the history of society, or is it rather, as Engels wrote in his famous letter to Joseph Bloch, that "what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no-one willed"? Or, to put this into early Australian terms, did the sort of society which emerged from 1788 grow out of the ideas and decisions of Phillip and Bligh and Macarthur and Macquarie, or was it determined willy-nilly by the natural environment and the economic circumstances into which these men were thrust?

It is this question which is at the heart of Clark's argument with the traditional radical historians, who seek patterns of social movement lying beneath the conflicting individual wills, for his preoccupation is with "the never-ending tears of humanity." (Mr. Ellis, in a curious and revealing phrase, found him "obsessed with the little things of mind and spirit.") His vision is of men driven by faith and doubt, greed, pride and ambition, torn apart by their own contradictions, by the evil that is in every man, self-destroying, frustrated by "chance and circumstances," and therefore foredoomed to defeat. So that, for the individual, history is tragedy; en masse, it is irony. Thus did Macarthur's madness cheat him of fulfilment, Phillip's prejudice shape the colony more than his faith, Marsden's greed deny him the respect he craved, Macquarie's self-righteousness destroy him at the moment of his achievement. And, with broader sweep, the ambitions of Hindus and Chinese and Muslims and Catholics in the southern seas were each in turn frustrated by men with stronger arms and newer gods, until the British implanted in Australia their institutions and their religion—and were in turn supplanted by the institutions and ideas of the "enlightenment," the dream of progress and perfectibility which has left so deep a mark on Australian society and on its historians.

This is a history of why men acted as they did and how they were defeated; like all great history, it is rich with passion and compassion—more for the mighty than the humble, perhaps because the mighty were more articulate, perhaps because their fall was more spectacular. It is contradictory because Clark is contradictory, divided between Christ's redemption of the individual and Karl Marx's redemption of the collective man, "waiting patiently for the day when Rome accepts 1917 just as in the past Rome came to accept 1789." How to reconcile the inevitable individual tragedy with the evident, though not inevitable, reality of social progress: that is the question which seems implicit in this book.

The last quotation comes from Clark's essay on "Faith" in the collection of essays edited by Peter Coleman, "Australian Civilisation".* Mr. Coleman attributes the "greatest importance" to Professor

* C. M. H. Clark: "A History of Australia, Vol. I: From the Earliest Times to the Age of Macquarie" (M.U.P., 57/6)

* P. Coleman (ed.): "Australian Civilisation" (Cheshire, 35/-)

Clark's influence in the "post-war counter-revolution" which has "released [Australian] history from the prison of the radical interpretation." Mr. Coleman also helps to edit *The Bulletin*, in which appeared Mr. M. H. Ellis' vituperation, under the heading "History Without Facts." The irony of this will hardly escape Professor Clark, even though Mr. Coleman has grossly oversimplified his position.

The essay on "Faith" suggests that "the main confrontation in Australia today is between the main schools of faith which divide the unbelievers"—essentially, Clark thinks, the "progressive" ideology common among Melbourne intellectuals—and the "elitist" attitudes of Sydney. If this is a legitimate distinction (and I think that with some qualifications it is), then "Australian Civilisation" is firmly in the Sydney camp.

The title of the symposium is pretentious; is it Mr. Coleman's tribute to the strength of the "Australianist [i.e. nationalist] legend" which he sets out to confound? "Civilisation in Australia," perhaps—but can we justly claim a unique Australian civilisation? In any case, the book is too selective to justify such a title. Despite the contributions of S. Encel ("Power"), A. A. Phillips ("The Schools") and K. S. Inglis ("The Daily Press"), the tone of this collection is to settle what civilisation there is in Australia firmly in an intellectual elite, perhaps even, in Vincent Buckley's thinking (the essay "Intellectuals"), in an aristocracy of sensibility, not unlike that created by Patrick White. "Naive humanism," the belief in the possibility of human happiness, is rejected—and along with it concern for social welfare. The "Australianist" contempt for imported hierarchical institutions and an aristocratic culture is torn down—and in its place is erected a temple for an indigenous elite. The concerns of this symposium are intellectuals, artists, businessmen; they are the inhabitants of Australian civilisation, and beneath them there is only a grey, undifferentiated mass, meriting little interest and no respect (for all Max Harris' denial of a "clear-cut differentiation of living patterns" between working and middle classes). The challenge is not new, but in a society in which affluence blunts rebelliousness and work and leisure conspire to impose conformity, it is formidable. Do the few exist for the many, or the many for the few?

The starting point for most of the contributors is that Australian society has traditionally been concerned with the pursuit of happiness, which Australians have identified with material progress, and that this has resulted in a depreciation of the standards of intellect and taste—a not unfamiliar point. Despite this, it is argued, urbanisation, the growth of a bourgeoisie and a professional class—and consequently of an intelligentsia, the assimilation of world standards and a concern for what is universal rather than what is unique—all these demonstrate that, some time in the last three decades, Australia has grown up, become mature.

Many of the contributors make acute observations, all the more interesting because, in an Australian context at least, they are new—such as Max Harris' comments on the Australian "bullshit" philosophy (in an essay to several parts of which the philosophy might well have been applied), Vincent Buckley's diagnosis of the situation—and the silence—of Australian intellectuals, Sol Encel's analysis of the decline of party politics. But the after-taste of this symposium is a weary depression. "There seems to be no alternative to the foreign policy of the Menzies Government" (Wolfsohn) . . . "The concentration of power seems to be an ineluctable feature of modern industrial society" (Encel) . . . "The masses are more con-

cerned with security than liberty, and so are the intellectuals and the new men of talent" (McCallum). The depression derives not from the criticism the contributors make of contemporary Australian society, nor from their swipes at traditional radical attitudes about Australia, but from the feeling that so many of them, in Manning Clark's words, profess not only an unqualified fatalism, but would not have things any different if they were given the power to change them, because they are "indifferent to the fate of the uneducated masses" and believe in "culture for the elect."

A consideration of the assumptions which underlie most of this book forces a reconsideration of past choices and present alternatives; but I remain an unregenerate Melbourne meliorist, progressivist, historicist, what you will. I would accept as accurate (at least as applying to me) Douglas McCallum's comment that "no thoughtful socialist now feels that the perfectly free, perfectly just, ideally equal co-operative commonwealth is a viable vision for Australia's future." But this is not because of any specific quality of Australian politics or society or even civilisation; rather it springs from the central contradiction between pessimism about man's individual condition and hope for the society of men. To know that man is imperfect and imperfectible does not mean that social amelioration is illusory; indeed, it may well be the case that only social amelioration can enable the confrontation of man and his own imperfect nature.

This seems to me to be the resolution of the conflict implicit in Professor Clark's vision of history. Outside circumstances or self-contradiction may always defeat the individual will, and therefore the individual's history may be tragic: but what happens in history is not what anyone wills; rather, it is the "innumerable intersecting forces, which give rise to one resultant—the historical event." And, if this is so, then it is possible, while accepting an inevitable individual frustration and defeat, to talk of probably social progress—but not as an inevitable process; for progress does not turn out to mean what individual men expect it to mean, while in our day it carries close beneath the surface its own opposite, the "common ruin of the contending classes."

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The New Fore-Runners

Elizabeth Vassilieff-Wolf

"REBELS and Precursors" is the title of a large and important exhibition organised by the National Gallery of Victoria, shown there during August, and on show at the Sydney Gallery during September and October.

It is the most important of a series of "Surveys", designed to give the public a chance to assess past and present aspects of Australian art, which have been staged at the Victorian Gallery during the past six years under the enlightened dispensation of Director Eric Westbrook.

"Rebels and Precursors" presents a selection of works done in the years 1937-47 by six Melbourne painters: Bergner, Boyd, Nolan, Tucker, Perceval and Vassilieff. It recognises them as key figures of that vital decade, shock-troops in that bitter and prolonged battle for the liberation of art in this country from Bumbles and Philistines which was fought in those years and, for the most part, won.

The whole corpus of work by these six very individual yet connected artists is a microcosm of the larger intellectual world of the time. And for all of us who, for the better part of our lives, have been involved, in one and another way, in that same battle, to see this exhibition is to re-live the ardors of our youth, to take stock of what has happened to them and to see the present condition of individuals and society in a clearer light.

"Rebels" indeed they all were, then; outsiders, and of most various kinds: dreamers, debunkers, protestants, iconoclasts, satirists, explorers, and affirmers.

But though they were rebels, alienated from society, they were not alienated from each other. They formed a united front, and an aggressive one, against all the values of commercial, bourgeois civilisation.

They were united, literally, against the Government, and in particular against Prime Minister Menzies, who stood behind the weird proposal in 1937 to found a Royal Australian Academy. They were against academies and all establishments, against elites, against professional-expertophilia, against technocracy, against fascism, against racism, against glib and arid rationalism, against all dogmas aesthetic and otherwise, against the philistines, against the stock response.

They were true egalitarians, democrats, affirming the value and dignity of the individual. Their criterion was the quality of the individual's own response to life, and of that, they said, he was in the end himself the only proper judge. They saw the history of art as one aspect of the general history of human progress.

They believed in the concept of historical progress, both in individual and society. They had hope of this world.

They rejected the outmoded nineteenth century concept, then prevailing, of some sort of automatic "progress" through technology and universal suffrage. The essence of true progress they said was of a different order.

It lay in the creation of human values, which was to say, in human-kind's becoming ever more conscious, refined, subtle, complex, powerful, free and responsible. Or to put it another way, in being raised to higher levels of self-knowledge and responsibility (and their accompanying states of anxiety).

They read, argued about and digested the new values imparted by Freud and Marx; by the French symbolists and Rimbaud and Verlaine; by the German existentialists and Kafka and Buber; by anthropologists such as Frazer and the "Golden Bough"; by the English, American and Irish expatriate novelists of the inner world, Forster, Lawrence, Huxley, Woolf, Hemingway, Joyce, Stein; by the poetry of Eliot, Auden, Spender, MacNeice and Thomas; and by Gropius, LeCorbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright.

They were the inheritors of these great European pioneers of the beginning of the century, and were their counterparts in our country.

Then they, and all the progressive elements in our culture stood together. They had faith in the power of organised human effort to overcome the common enemy; vested interest in spiritual darkness. They did organise, and in that way, they broke the grip and threw off the dead hand. They advanced the frontiers of true progress in our country. They were fore-runners.

But their avant-garde solidarity was precarious. The battle for artistic freedom being for the most part won, "things fell apart, the centre did not hold." And today the Australian scene, developed on the bases of freedoms established by the fore-runners, is, like the European scene, one of chaotic fragmentation.

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Among the younger men, many have been led astray from the great mainstream of progress, which is humanistic and secular, by the preachers of dogmas, aesthetic, social, moral, religious, political. Others by the art-dealers, the public relations men of culture, who have moved in with the alluring promise of business-like administration of the sordid affair of selling instead of the old bohemian muddle, to "promote public images", to create tastes and fashions, in art as they do in soap and toothpaste, and to corrupt the innocent with formulas for fortune. (Picasso to Marevna Vorobev: "Between ourselves, I sometimes paint dung—good for idiots. I often have to work for people who are ignorant of art. My dealer is always asking me to paint something to astonish the public.")

We have no longer a united intelligentsia. They are atomised. There are a lot of intellectuals, alienated from each other as the people in society at large are alienated, and growing more so.

Nowadays most of us, and artists more noticeably than others, are psychopaths, insofar as, for complex reasons, we fail to establish normal ties of affection or of respect with other people and other forms of being, and cannot therefore identify ourselves with them. We regard others as alien species, essentially different from ourselves. And so we seek, as do all psychopaths, to bolster self-esteem by defeating or surpassing others (whether in success or in martyrdom), since hope of winning their affectionate regard has been abandoned.

To this end, we may even come to believe our own lies, and live in a twilight zone between truth and falsehood. This may make us successful as false pretenders, but, as we are also self-deceivers, it makes us really failures.

This is the sickness of our whole society, and is most clearly to be seen among the artists. Measured against the attitudes of the fore-runners certain widespread artistic attitudes of today are sick and retrograde ones.

Many of the new men are against rather than with ordinary people and objects and events, regarding them as shabby and mean, and take a perverse pride in declaring they are for nothing and nobody in particular. They renounce hope of this world and the idea of historical progress through organised human effort, and devote themselves to saving their own precious spiritual skins by aspiring to join the ranks of one or another other worldly elite.

They go into Retreat, in private myths, seeking salvation through mysteries and revelations, and prate of analogues and absolutes and martyrdoms and redemptions. They are a lot of auto-flagellators, sitting on pole-tops beating their breasts and talking to themselves, each in a symbolic language only he can understand.

Indeed, the search for private iconologies has become so self-conscious as to be, in the witty observation of Mary McCarthy, a socially competitive enterprise: "The best critic or artist is the one who puts in or detects the most symbols in a given stretch . . ."

And the excitement is all in the chase. "The fox when caught is a bedraggled little wretch, meaner than any real object or event could be." Whereas, if one gets the messages of reality correctly, one will not have to search for and put in symbols, "but will find they are there, staring at one significantly from the commonplace."

Moreover, as McCarthy goes on to say, this exasperated cult of symbolism which is so fashionable "is centrifugal, and flees from the object, the event, into the incorporeal distance, where concepts are taken for substance and floating ideas and archetypes assume a heiratic authority." In sum, this produces merely an unfocussing of reality, "an invitation to the self-indulgent imagination to indulge itself further."

What these practitioners will not do is steel themselves to bear reality, which means historical responsibility and personal doubt.

Some others among the intellectuals of today have stormed the citadel of the establishment and occupy it as critics, functioning as a this-worldly elite. And strange it is to hear the very ones who in the Angry Forties most passionately inveighed, as amateurs, against "academicism," now calling for "professionalism," "expertise" and "scholarship"! Or perhaps it is not strange, but just typical of the ceaseless battle for power between the older and younger generations.

But happily, among the younger and older dissenters from the fashions of the moment, are some who foreshadow the swing of the pendulum from the long-drawn agonies of romanticism, not backwards to the old but forward to some new, enriched kind of classicism; some kind of realism which will be raised to a higher power by its recognition of the validity of the non-rational orders of experience, and its sympathetic comprehension of them.

The future must lie, I think, with an art which will seek endlessly to know, in the fullest sense, ever more of life; to embrace, to connect, to unify, to contain, to reconcile all the contradictions of the self and of the world.

It will be, essentially, an art which will not accept as valid such a dictum as Patrick White's "There are no lifelines to others' lives", but will

itself create them. Nothing "other" will be alien to it. It will be an art intelligent, self-disciplined, secular, humane. Such an art is what our condition calls for. Anything less would be subhuman, unreal; and nothing less will do.

The Schools

Peter Gill

Australians have always been interested in what other people, particularly "experts", think of their society. When Freeman Butts, of Columbia University's Teachers' College, published his remarks on Australian education back in 1955, it was not only educators who sat up and took notice. For here was a new, invigorating and surprisingly accurate analysis of many of the assumptions underlying our education structure, and, moreover, it was the sort of analysis that no Australian had yet bothered, or dared, to put in writing.

Not that Butts said anything really new. To be told, for example, that we lacked "a widespread feeling of ferment or dissatisfaction or criticism . . . a bubbling up of ideas and experiments" was no novelty. Nor was his statement that "Australian teachers, imbued with the trade union tradition, are over-organised on matters of salary, security and tenure, but under-organised with respect to professional stimulation, exchange of ideas and mutual criticism." Privately at least, we knew these things and accepted them, back in the fifties.

Have things changed much since then? At first glance, there appears to have been something of an educational renaissance during the last decade. Educational journals and hardback publications have appeared; seminar and workshop programs have been multiplying, and are being patronised by growing numbers of teachers; subject associations no longer depend for their very existence on small bands of dedicated enthusiasts; and the College of Education has been established. Educators are flexing their muscles to a degree that might surprise Butts if he were to return to the Australia of the sixties.

Just how deep these developments go is another matter, however, and to interpret them as signs of a genuine "intellectual ferment" would be mere wish-fulfilment. Basically, things haven't really changed. The fundamental flaws which inhibit the development of a truly professional attitude in our educational structure stem from forces outside the educational system—in fact from the quality of our national life itself.

Firstly, we are a nation of trade unionists. And although there are signs that matters of "salary, security and tenure" are not dominating the minds of teachers quite so much nowadays, there is a long way to go before Australian teachers and educators are as vocal as their American (or even English) counterparts on professional matters. In a sense of course, this is understandable, for it will always be easier to fill a town hall with pay-conscious teachers than to half-fill a lecture theatre with devoted teachers of maths, or history. But the trade union mentality goes deeper than mere agitation for pay increases. The emphasis on unity within the ranks, the doctrine of the "fair go" for everybody including the time-server and the incompetent, the distrust of the "conchie", the intellectual and the theorist—these are the sorts of forces which perpetually hinder the full development of strong professional thought and action in Australian education.

Secondly, the centralised nature of our educational structure has profound repercussions on the way teachers think and act. Directives, suggestions and programs of study come from headquarters, and, however well-meaning they are, the net result is that teachers are tempted to rely on these external crutches, rather than their own initiative. There is always somebody who is ready to tell them what to do, and there is always somebody whose views should be sought, respected, and followed, if the teacher wants to "get on". A strong personality in a key position at the nerve centre can impress his ideas and methods on a generation of teachers—all over the State, acolytes of the great man teach in the accepted way from the accepted textbooks, through fear, through genuine conviction, or simply because they have never had a real chance to hear other opinions or try other methods.

A teacher can, of course, stage a private revolt. But private revolts are usually clandestine, guerilla affairs, rarely leading to full-blooded public discussion, and rebels tend to remain isolated and disorganised. Such teachers cannot be blamed, for example, if they are reluctant to talk openly with inspectors (the potential catalysts in such a system as ours) during their annual flying visit, for these people represent the Establishment.

Thirdly, through the accidents of geography and history, we are an insular nation, with few home-grown educational ideas of our own, and with a marked preference for adopting, rather than adapting, overseas ideas. And because of our insularity, any educational "new wave" from overseas is a mere ripple by the time it gets here, and like a ripple, it is already old. Ideas are muted, controversies muffled; both lack the bite of freshness and originality. As in other things, the time lag operates against us, and we tag along respectfully, a couple of laps behind.

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A classic example of this belated and uncritical adoption of overseas ideas is the current enthusiasm, in Victoria at least, for the S.R.A. Reading Laboratory program in English. Produced some years ago in America, this program is now being adopted by an increasing number of schools throughout the State as the best way to improve the reading, vocabulary, and comprehension of our children. How it works is unimportant here. What is significant and frightening is that the whole apparatus has been adopted without a single change. Among the reading material in one primary grade kit, for example, are stories about Babe Ruth, the Yankee stadium, Buffalo Bill, Davy Crockett, and "Uncle Sam's Smoke Jumpers". The language is pure American, and the range of events and experiences almost completely foreign to Australian children. And they are being fed this diet under the banner of progressive, forward-looking education. The television companies must be delighted at this softening up process.

The final banality is that the Australian Council for Educational Research is believed to be bringing out an "Australian" version of the S.R.A. kits later this year, which is not expected to be as good or as glossy as the original. Austerica strikes again.

Against such forces as these, there is little the individual teacher can do except cultivate his own garden, actively help to make his professional and subject associations more powerful and vocal, and read anything he can lay his hands on about overseas developments. Martin Mayer's "The Schools" for example (Bodley Head, 37/3), is just

the sort of book that could help turn private revolts into public revolutions, and could jolt us out of our educational jog-trot.

Mayer is education's John Gunther. After having visited 150 schools, talked to 1,500 educators, and digested 50 linear feet of books and monstrous piles of periodicals, he found himself with 6,000 pages of notes on what he had learned about the schools of America, England and Europe. From this material he has distilled a fascinating four hundred page account of what is actually happening in the schools. And, like the popular image of the American, he hasn't been afraid to voice his opinions. The book is a mine of facts, statistics, anecdote, quotation and comment. Mayer never let a good story or an interesting fact escape his filing system, and the result is a disconcerting but tremendously readable narrative.

Some of Mayer's comments are worth recording here. For example, when we really start worrying about the education of talented children, and when the so-called "quest for excellence" movement hits Australia, the following remarks may be worth remembering: "There is a great danger that the current 'quest for excellence' will turn into an emphasis on the education of the easily educable . . . A decade ago, the line of least resistance for the schools was to organise a program so easy that nobody could get mad at the superintendent because his child was flunking. Today, the line of least resistance is to work only with children who don't need much work . . . 'Excellence' resides in the child rather than in the school, and excellent children are usually self-starters."

Or his comment on the place of "citizenship training" in schools: "Some commentators seem to believe that this concept of 'citizenship education' is a novel American contribution. In fact this is what the schools are about everywhere: American schools make American, British schools make British, Russian schools make Russian citizens. What else can they do? . . . But let it be recognised by those who work within the schools that 'citizenship' is second-best. Underdeveloped nations, countries which are still industrialising, societies which have an overriding need to bring their members to conditions of decent physical existence—their school systems must hammer at 'citizenship'. Teachers in nations as rich and self-satisfied as the United States and Great Britain should be able to afford the luxury of hoping that the children in their classes will grow up to be resourceful, perceptive, imaginative men and women—not just citizens. What a man does with his time in the bathroom every day is ultimately far more important than what he does in a voting booth once a year."

Mayer is particularly severe on the mediocre quality of much of the humanities teaching in America, and a lot of what he says is disturbingly relevant here in Australia. Moreover, he is brutally frank about the future. "Humanists must somehow face the fact that nothing keeps literature at the centre of the secondary program today except social class pressure and the inadequacy of teaching methods in mathematics and science . . . Teachers of English in the United States have been operating from a protected position, as proprietors of a 'compulsory subject' which deals with relatively attractive material generally accepted as necessary for anyone who wishes to call himself 'educated.'"

Is it anything more than this "protected position" which allows Australian teachers of English to teach from the mediocre, dull, and often antiquated textbooks that are still to be found in

schools? If, for instance, Mayer had unearthed the Seventh and Eighth Readers used by the Victorian Education Department, he would have discovered two collector's gems. These books should have disappeared long ago, but they seem indestructible. The Eighth Grade book, for example, is a confused jumble of snippets from "English Literature" and an earnestly unimaginative collection of Australiana, got out in the dullest conceivable fashion by the Government Printer. What Victorian 12 and 13 year-olds can make of Milton's "On His Blindness," Henry V's speech before Agincourt, or Lord Dunsany's little piece "The Hen" "All along the farmyard gables the swallows sat arow . . ." can be imagined. And who can blame them for being put off "English" for life by such racy openings as "The dignity of labour! Consider its achievements. Dismayed by no difficulty, shrinking from no exertion, exhausted by no struggle, ever eager for renewed efforts in its persevering promotion of human happiness, 'clamorous Labour knocks with its hundred hands at the golden gate of the morning', obtaining each day, through succeeding centuries, fresh benefactions for the world."

And this is supposed to be English, for jet-age Australian youngsters! Nor are they better off when they turn desperately to the Australian section. Whoever would have guessed that C. J. Dennis could have started **anything** with "Summer is in her prime, and all the Bush seems like to swoon with drowsy luxury." But he did, and here it is, enshrined for all time apparently, for the spiritual enrichment of our children.

What is wrong with us, that this sort of outlandish, irrelevant and dreary material should have flourished for so long without causing a storm among educators and parents? Because this sort of thing (and examples can be multiplied) calls for more than personal, clandestine, private revolts. It calls for uproar.

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Of more general interest perhaps are Mayer's comments on such sociological questions as the effects of class bias on the schools. Like many before him, Mayer hits hard and accurately at the pervasive influence of class in American and English schools. "Class bias hits the American school-child from the moment he begins formal instruction. The reading books are all about nicely dressed children with a pet dog and a lawn to play on; Daddy comes home from the office . . . in the arithmetic texts the problems deal with how much money a well-scrubbed child can make by mowing lawns at forty cents an hour, or how long a little girl practised the piano each week if she practised forty minutes a day . . . All over the world, people work not to keep alive, but to help their fellow man, and no job is ever seriously tiring or painful or degrading . . ." Students of the Eighth Reader will know what he means.

It is easy to become over-indignant about this sort of thing, and fatally easy to mis-direct one's indignation. For after all, nothing much can be done about the bias. Schools in America, and Australia, are always going to encourage middle-class values because the community they serve is overwhelmingly middle-class in orientation and self-image, and until that changes, it is simply unrealistic to expect schools not to reflect the bias.

This is not a counsel of despair, however, simply a suggestion that we cease wrestling with the invulnerable tide and concentrate our energies where they can do most good. To admit the bias is not to accept all its present implications and

excesses. Wherever the implication is that we cease trying to give a decent, realistic and provocative schooling to "culturally deprived" children, for example, then we ought to fight, and fight hard. In Australia at the moment, this could mean that we fight for a better deal for technical school children—that growing number of students who are, in many cases, shunted off to techs. by "academically" brought up primary teachers, who follow the rule "Johnny is no good with his brains, maybe he'll be good with his hands." Johnny goes off to the local Junior Tech., learns the rudiments of tradework, a little science and maths., a smattering of Social Studies and some very basic English from the school's chronically understaffed and unqualified humanities department, and is sent off to join in the increasingly competitive race for jobs not knowing what has hit him.

Lack of money may be the obvious reason for this shortchanging of our youth, but it may not be the only reason. As Mayer says, it is terribly easy to quit on lower class children, temptingly easy to reflect "He's too dumb. Let's give him shop." And with those teachers and administrators who have already sold this pass, those who continue to fight will be resented and resisted. Have too many educators in this field become too completely adjusted to the "hard facts of social circumstances"? Have they lowered their sights too far?

Another field where the class bias operates, of course, is in the field of I.Q. tests. Brian Simon's treatment of this subject ("Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School") is only one of many critical accounts of the whole business, but perhaps the most persuasive of them all. "Intelligence tests can never be 'objective', can never reach the supposed elusive and independent inner essence of mind which psychologists attempt to measure. Instead they are bound sharply to discriminate against the working class." Mayer would agree completely with this, and more importantly points out that even a "culture fair" test does not get to the root of the problem. "The central problem in education is not that intelligence tests are biased . . . but that the schools themselves are biased . . . It is important to know that the tests are class-biased, not to change the tests but to change the schools." And, as he points out later in a shrewdly incisive but very fair account of the English schools, the bias inherent in such tests is less than the bias to be found in the classroom.

At a time when I.Q. tests and other measuring devices are being used increasingly in Australian schools for all sorts of purposes, it seems to me important that we stop complaining about the nature of the tests, and concentrate on getting them in proper perspective. They are here to stay, and the sooner parents, teachers, and administrators clearly understand their valuable but essentially limited role, the better for the victims. As Ben Morris pointed out in 1952, they are essentially instruments for guidance, and nothing more. It is vital that we keep them that way.

It is almost impossible to discuss Mayer's book adequately without writing another book. He ranges far and wide over the whole field of education, and whatever may be the reader's main interest in this field, he will find something in Mayer—teaching techniques, contemporary learning theories, teacher training and status, the impact of John Dewey on American education—the list is almost endless. Though not always profound, the book is stimulating, frequently provocative, always readable, and excellent value.

Our Press

Bruce Muirden

It is too simple to see the intellectual deficiencies of the Australian daily press as a function of the greed of private ownership.

Thankfully there is a point beyond which debasing of standards in pursuit of higher dividends no longer pays. For this we can largely thank the expansion of secondary and tertiary education.

But too many of our newspapers cannot be prodded far past the compromise point of "near enough". To achieve advance requires either a proprietor with a vision we have long become accustomed not to expect, or an editor with ability to bypass managerial opposition or disinterest.

While "second best" still suffices in so many ways in Australia, a hangover from the pioneering need for makeshift, we can hardly expect a body of protest large enough to force significant improvement. In fact Beth Thwaites had something in her famous Argus article of 1952 entitled "When you slate the newspapers, remember . . . YOU ASK FOR IT!" Publishers, she said, danced to the tune called by the readers, and readers preferred human-interest sob stories, form guides and cheesecake.

As critics hammer away in journals of minority opinion documenting their case (surely not necessary to recapitulate) that the Australian press has failed to report the world fully and fairly and to provide intelligent comment, the monster keeps grazing on the small change of the masses—doped with sob stories, race form and cheesecake—plus the all-important, largely tax-deductible advertising millions.

Keeping up the murmur of no-confidence must, of course, have some effect even by the uncomplicated Thwaites theory. It can force the toughest managerial operatives on to the defensive at times, sending them scratching around for bromides. It can and does work on the minds of those executives and editors who can see beyond the cash register. One of these was John Hetherington who, in his final year as editor-in-chief of News Ltd. in Adelaide, circulated a memorandum to his staff including these passages:

Many of the community's more serious people regard The News and The Mail as pedlars of trivialities, rather than serious newspapers. We who produce these newspapers know that such an indictment could not bear full examination; but it has a small foundation in truth. I want to see that foundation destroyed. Some of our critics can never be converted. They are the people who regard as sensational any newspaper that uses what they call "big headlines". But I believe most of our critics can be taught a new respect for The News and The Mail if we try harder than we have tried in the past to make presentation of real news our primary aim . . . always. . . . I want sub-editors and reporters to combine their energies to present solid news as it deserves to be presented, and never, in any circumstances, as supporting material in a newspaper tending to feature trivialities . . . A newspaper can still reflect life in a bright, youthful and interesting manner and yet behave in an adult way.

Unfortunately there are few Hetheringtons. At times surveying the field one feels that Osmar White was right when, in a university journalism lecture in 1952, he said: "The job is too big for the people doing it".

The people to lead the rebellion for better things would, at first sight, seem to be the journalists themselves, those "ill-educated and self-confident romantics" of Paul Hasluck's poem—but here we find that, what economic necessity cannot quite consummate, years of conditioning completes. The threat to his job, a very real thing with so little competition, tends to keep the journalist privately captious, publicly quiescent. Conditioning turns whatever intellectual curiosity he might have had into more nosiness.

Even so the journalist might have more sympathy with critics outside the industry if they understood better the institution they were attacking. So often are attacks misdirected.

To judge our daily newspapers and to judge them fairly the critics must allow for the operation of various technical and legal limitations. For instance, some defence to the charge that newspapers give too little Asian news must surely be conceded from the 2/5 per word cable rate from Bangkok. The general Commonwealth rate is 1d.

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Until Prof. Sprague Holden's recent "Australia Goes to Press" (M.U.P., 37/6) there was no compact guide to information of this sort, although some British publications like the Kemsley Manual were a help. Holden, Professor of Journalism at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, catalogues all the essential trivia in a fairly knowledgeable way. He has limited himself to the dailies in the six capitals and bases his Fulbright-financed study on 13 months study here in 1956-7. He sets out to show how news is gathered and how it is presented, with some American parallels. At some points he carries his survey well beyond 1957; footnotes take it in places to 1961.

Holden talked to hundreds of journalists—many have their names listed in Appendix A, perhaps as a warrant of the author's industry—and left behind the impression of being a good fellow. But a study of this nature requires more than successful public relations. Unfortunately he sticks to what might be called the "official" view, rarely bothering to see how it chimes with reality. This detracts significantly from the value of the study.

To take one instance from my own experience: on page 40 he states that The News has about 200 country correspondents and they are "carefully coached in the selection and writing of news stories". As I daily survey the pile of rubbish sent in by these "carefully coached" correspondents—20 of whom only are at all active—the thought of what might have been weakens me. Prof. Holden, I then wonder, what else have you got so hopelessly cock-eyed?

"Shock" is a word of five letters and as such handy to use in large type headings across narrow columns, like the words hit, bid, row, probe and slate. This simple explanation is not enough for Prof. Holden, who sees the recurrent use of the word in headlines and on posters as being possibly due to the fact that the word is a staple of Australian conversation!

Holden gives only a patchily critical account of the Australian press and ends by claiming strangely that his is no sociological study. If so, why bother, as he does, about public reaction to press performance? And is it unreasonable to expect a man who sets out to tell how news is presented to devote some attention to how well it is presented?

We cannot blame Holden for being no Inglis. It would be unfair to match a peripatetic U.S. professor of journalism, with all the academic background that that must entail, against an acute local historian. Thus Inglis, in his 30-page essay

on the press in the symposium "Australian Civilisation", is at once more systematic, sympathetic and to the point.

For instance, Holden, looking at the surface, sees an inadequate supply of what he calls "serious scriveners". Inglis puts it differently—that in every newspaper office in Australia there are men mentally under-employed.

Holden knows that a balance must be struck between giving the reader what he wants and what he ought to have; only Inglis points out that nobody has seriously tried to discover just what readers do want.

Holden methodically records the task of a features editor and how he does this—and that, including the farming out books for review. It is Inglis who is disturbed at how haphazardly are these reviewers equipped.

For a man so concerned with itemising the occupations of the various types of journalist, it is surprising that one has to go to Inglis to find the entertaining but far from frivolous conjecture: what happens to old journalists?

Holden has not failed to point out the baleful influence exerted on newspapers by concern for circulation at the expense of quality, and he knows all about anti-labor bias. He might have gone further and kicked around the idea (yes, it's in the Inglis essay) that perhaps newspapers in socialist societies or those published by labor interests may have just as serious shortcomings?

Holden's study is no view from El Vino's (to borrow Hoggart's phrase). Equally it is not the reverse, an austere but unchallengeable scholarly text. It lacks too many names, places and dates for that. This is not to suggest that the faculty man is entirely submerged in the good fellow. In what could have been one of the most colorful sections of his study, the final stupendous years of that magnificent experiment, the London-directed Melbourne Argus, Prof. Holden staggers forth with: "There may be a symptomatic truth in the epitaphic assertion that The Argus, transmogrified, was too racy for Melbourne's sedate tastes."

"Australia Goes to Press" often ventures daringly into potted Australian history—and comes out with only a small quota of errors. To take just one—the belief that the "unlocking of the lands" in the 1860s gave the poor man a chance to buy small tracts and farms is, to say the least, extremely arguable.

Prof. Holden becomes more gullible when he becomes more up-to-date. Who fed him with the story, on page 103, of the newspaperman who scooped his mates with news of Labor's move to nationalise the banks? Prof. Holden might consult L. F. Crisp's "Ben Chifley" (page 328) for a different version.

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However, in his wide net Prof. Holden could hardly help but gather some of the key points at issue. He has got to many of the obvious questions even if he hasn't got beyond the obvious answers.

Rightly, he sees the "fetish of cadet training in mechanics with a special obeisance to shorthand" at the heart of many of the deficiencies of the Australian daily newspaper. The vision of too many journalists has been narrowed by enforced concentration on the technicalities of their craft.

Holden notes that The News had an ambitious scheme to counter this by encouraging staff to undertake university courses. He should now be aware that when Rohan Rivett left in 1960 this scheme, like so many other good things, came to a sudden stop.

Twenty-Third Flight

Lo as I pause in the alien vale of the airport
fearing ahead the official ambush
a voice langorous and strange as these winds of
Oahu

calleth my name and I turn to be quited in orchids
and amazed with a kiss perfumed and soft as the
lei.

Straight from a travel poster thou steppest,
thy arms like mangoes for smoothness,
o implausible shepherdess for this one ageing
sheep,

and leapest me through the righteous paths of
the Customs
in a mist of my own wild hopes.

Yea though I walk through the valley of Im-
migration

I fear no evil, for thou art a vision beside me
and my name is correctly spelled
and I shall dwell in the Hawaiian Village Hotel
where thy kindred prepareth a table before me.
Thou restorest my baggage, and by limousine
leapest me
to where I may lie on coral sands by a stream-
lined pool.

Nay but thou stayest not?

Thou anointest not my naked head with oil?
O shepherdess of Flight Number Twenty-Three
only

thou hastenest away on thy long brown legs to
enchant

thy fellow-members in Local Five of the Greeters'
Union

or that favored professor of Commerce mayhap
who leadeeth thee into higher courses in Hotel
Management.

O nubile goddess of the Kaiser Training Program
is it possible that tonight my cup runneth not over
and that I shall sit in the still pastures of the lobby
whilst thou leapest another old ram in garlands
past me,

and, bland as papaya, appearest not to remember
me?

And that I shall lie by the waters of Waikiki, and
want?

EARLE BIRNEY (CANADA)

Encouragement from a lively, intelligent, in-
dependent editor can work wonders with a news-
paper staff. Rivett proved this, and the burgeoning
of The Argus is part of the same type of story.

Inglis notes that in 1960 there were only three
reasonably independent editors—Rivett, Cyril
Pearl and Angus Maude—and finds it relevant to
comment that all were also authors (like Hether-
ington and Brian Penton). All, of course, are now
no longer editors.

To get higher quality journalism men like these
will have to be put in the saddle—without too
many riding instructions. It is quite beyond me to
suggest practical means of achieving this.

I cannot conclude, as does Holden, by saying that
the metropolitan daily press of Australia "is a
credit to the nation, a worthy supporter of the
traditions of Western journalism, is frequently a
bastion of strength, a noonday illumination and a
staunch member of the all too small free press
of the world". I can agree with his further remark
that "it must become increasingly [sic] better."

BOOKS



Australian Literature

The first thing to say about H. M. Green's two-volume work, "A History of Australian Literature" (Angus & Robertson, £8/8/-), is that it exists—the greatest history of Australian literature yet published, and likely to remain so for many years. In sheer volume and scope it outclasses Hadgraft's recent book, by just as much as it outclasses E. Morris Miller's older two-volume "Australian Literature" in organisation, accuracy and critical balance. Green sees Australian literature steadily and sees it whole, but he sees it too in the context of the literature of the major English-speaking countries. This does not mean that he is forever comparing Lawson with Dickens or "Love Me Sailor" Close with Conrad, but that he is, on the whole, decently aware of the relatively modest scale of Australian literary achievement. Few Cape Barren geese are mis-described as splendid colonial swans.

One of the most impressive features of these volumes is the art with which the author has marshalled into a significant unity the great mass of detailed information which his scholarship has unearthed. The result is not, of course, the only possible pattern nor, necessarily, the most significant one; but it is a better one than any other scholar has yet produced for the critical wolver to test their sometimes false teeth on. Green divides Australian literature into four periods: (1) Conflict 1789-1850 (2) Consolidation 1850-1890 (3) Self-Conscious Nationalism 1890-1923 (4) World Consciousness and Disillusion 1923-1950.

These headings will seem to historians just as suggestive as they are to "pure" litterateurs, and this fact points to another of the "History's" great merits. Though aesthetic purists will not agree with him, Green believes that a poem or a novel cannot be studied—without loss to itself—simply as a work of art, in isolation from its social matrix. He never forgets either that pieces of writing, which may be of almost negligible literary value, may yet be of considerable importance as social or historical documents.

Because this broad—some will say outmoded—concept of literature is an integral part of his thinking, Green has cast his net very wide. Thus, the full title of the book is "A History of Australian Literature, Pure and Applied": and in the fourth period, for example, there are chapters on Verse, The Novel, The Short Story, The Drama, Magazines, Newspapers, The Sciences, and others headed

Essays, Criticism, Scholarship, Philosophy, Psychology, Education, Religion, History, Biography, Description and Economics, Politics and Administration, Social Criticism, Law. When we add to this a good index and copious footnotes, we have a splendid reference-book or encyclopaedia of Australiana—as opposed to the more factual and statistical "Australian Encyclopaedia": but Green's "History" is a history and not merely a reference book. It gives readers a coherent narrative account and an artistically unified, though complex, view of the development of Australian writing in its relationship to Australian society.

The coherent unity springs partly from the inner logic of the material itself and from Green's understanding of this, but partly also, I think, from the writer's own personality. Those who know Mr. Green personally, as I do not, may find what follows wrong-headed. It may be that a lifetime's work on material of a certain sort moulds the character of the worker as much as, or more than, his character moulds the material. Certainly to read the "History" from cover to cover is to know a man whose nature seems uncommonly fortunately attuned to that of his subject. He is Australian to the core but not "offensively Australian". He hates snobbery and affectation: he is democratic, but by no means in the sense of being indiscriminating. He has a strongly practical, common-sense approach to his material, but he never appears to think that "near enough" may be good enough. He loves our country and its written image as deeply as he knows it, yet he knows so much more that he can define also its limitations.

This last quality is reflected naturally in his style which seldom shows even a trace of the carelessness that mars so much Australian writing. He uses long sentences and longer paragraphs, but both are built up with counter-point and balance so as to make the often complex meaning perfectly clear at the first reading. Generally his writing is scholarly and judicious without being in the least ponderous or pretentious. Often it is enlivened by vigor and wit. Consider, for example, his appraisal of D. B. W. Sladen, the English visitor who compiled three anthologies of Australian verse in 1888, and who wrote patronisingly of the first two that their contents were:

The work of people who have meditated in the open air, and not under the lamp; and if (their) contents often-times want the polish that comes only with much midnight oil, they are mostly a transcript from earth and sea and sky, and not from books.

Green comments:

But it is not the hairy-hoofed warrigal or the ungroomed stockhorse that one finds in these paddocks, but the second- and third-rate hack; open air freshness is just what is lacking in most of these verses. Australian literature is indebted to Sladen for a selfless and painstaking enthusiasm, but it is necessary to mention its defects.

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What of the defects in Green's own work? Every reader, in proportion as his view of the subject-matter differs more or less from that of the author, will naturally find the "History's" shortcomings great or small. For my part I think he both underestimates the germinal importance for Australian literature of its popular, oral component and also misunderstands, in quite large ways, the nature of that component. This seems to me the greatest "overall" weakness in the book, but others may well feel that my reaction shows more about my

prejudices and limitations than it does about Green's. Moreover to say that he underestimates the importance of popular yarns, songs and recitations is by no means to say that he is unaware that they were important. Indeed his general introduction ends with the words:

Crude, but full of life and color, this inchoate mass of observations, impressions, fancies is in its way as close to the base of Australian literature as Harpur's deliberate and determined attempts to set aside his inherited spectacles, to escape from traditional attitudes and points of view and observe with his own eyes.

Here only the faintly patronising phrase, "in its way", gives a hint that bush and back-street ballads will not really be considered very seriously. In fact the whole matter of oral literature is dismissed in 14 out of the total 1418 pages of text. For comparison, 72 pages are devoted to newspapers and nearly as many, but with more justification, to magazines. I think many students would agree that, in shaping what is distinctive and characteristic about Australian literature as a whole, oral literature has been more important than newspapers and probably not less so than magazines. As it is, we search in vain for even a reference to "the Inimitable Thatcher", easily the most prolific and talented composer of popular songs in our literary and social history. Charles Thatcher trod the boards at Bendigo, Ballarat and other gold-fields centres during the 1850's in what were the contemporary equivalent of travelling variety-shows such as Sorley's or Smoky Dawson's today. But instead of retailing the latest overseas songs, he composed many hundreds of topical ballads which made articulate the experience and aspirations of his audiences. His songbooks still formed part of the stock-in-trade of bush hawkers fifty years later and a few of his ballads, like the beautiful "Song of Ballarat" ("The Cry 'Look out Below!'") were taken up by bush singers, passed on orally and improved in the process, until they became genuine "anonymous" folk-songs. This, however, brings us to an aspect of what seems to me to be Green's misunderstanding of the nature of folk-culture.

Fifty years ago most students defined "folk" material, as Green still tends strongly to do, by reference to its origins. A folk-song can be genuinely such, according to this view, only if it has indubitably been composed anonymously, and at that collectively, by unlettered persons, or at the very least by an unlettered individual member of "the folk". I think most folklorists would now agree that any song, irrespective of its origins, becomes truly a folk-song in proportion as it is re-created by the process of oral transmission. If an incontestably genuine holograph of the original version of "Sir Patrick Spens" were discovered in Scotland next month, would scholars thenceforth deny that it nevertheless became a folk-ballad? Green would. In a note he writes that "The Maranoa Drovers"

... would certainly have deceived me. But Dr. H. O. Lethbridge, of Narrandera, who belongs to an old squatting family, said in a letter . . . that "the author, a Bill Davis, worked for us on Forest Vale Station (West Queensland). He went with my brother from Forest Vale to Gunnedah on one trip with bullocks and en route composed this song.

Others may, more properly I think, see this as additional external evidence of "The Maranoa Drovers" being a genuine folk-song. It has certainly been re-created in many versions, and Dr. Lethbridge assures us of its genuineness even by

the test of origin—it was composed by an actual drover on the job, one Bill Davis. H. P. ("Duke") Tritton, a septuagenarian shearer and author of "Time Means Tucker", is only one of several folk-singers who would vigorously contest Green's assertion that "perhaps nobody now alive has been present at the birth of an Old Bush song."

My quarrel with the author on the essential nature of folk-song can be epitomised by quoting what is no more than a casual aside on "Sam Holt," the old bush song which begins in its original version with the evocative lines:

Oh! don't you remember Black Alice, Sam Holt—

Black Alice so dusky and dark—

That Warrego gin with a straw through her nose,

And teeth like a Moreton Bay shark . . .

Green writes:

Incidentally, Sam Holt is not a true Old Bush Song: references and an atmosphere about it which suggest that it may owe something to Bret Harte.

True as far as it goes; but Green might have added—to clinch his point—that "Sam Holt" was first published in the Bulletin of 26th March, 1881, over the signature of its author "Ironbark" (G. H. Gibson), and that it was in fact the prototype of all the reams of bush balladry that were published in the Bulletin subsequently. Ninety-nine per cent. of this verse has been long forgotten or else re-published in collections of the work of Lawson, Paterson or others. "Sam Holt" is one of the rare "literary" ballads to suffer an opposite fate. It was taken up by bush singers, passed on orally in innumerable versions, and its individual authorship forgotten. Precisely for this reason, it seems to me, it is, or became, a genuine Old Bush Song. For all we are ever likely to know, the original version of "Chevy Chase" may have been composed by a highly literate court minstrel.

Every reader will doubtless find judgments which, to his own taste, seem faulty or even wildly erroneous. The value of Ada Cambridge's best verse or of Catherine Spence's best prose seems, for example, to be greatly overestimated. Perhaps the most striking example of faulty taste—or insight—occurs in Green's account of Eve Langley's novel, "The Pea-Pickers". He writes of one of the heroine's (Steve's) suitors:

Probably imagination played a large part in his making; but it is hard to imagine any man replying in such a cheaply "literary" manner as this to Steve's appealing accusation of coldness and self-sufficiency: "No, Steve. My love for you is pure. I do not need to touch you. I am with you; that is enough. From other women coarse self-satisfaction may be obtained, but you give the uncloying cleanliness of your mental passion to me, and I am satisfied."

Anyone who has read the novel would find it not "hard to imagine"—in realistic terms—but impossible. But whatever else it is, surely "The Pea-Pickers" is not for a moment meant to be realistic in this sense. The suitor is not meant to exist except as a projection of Steve's high-flown, late-adolescent day-dreaming. And most certainly, I think, Miss Langley did not mean the suitor's "language here to be realistic in any sense. The words which are put into his mouth are those which Steve's "poetic" soul would like such a man—or not like such a man—to have used in the given situation. In short, is not the passage a tenderly ironic and humorous "spoof" on love's young dream?

It would not be difficult to make other detailed and general criticism of Green's "History". Some

have been made by other reviewers who have not always, I think, been fair enough to acknowledge his tremendous positive achievement. In view of "Tom Collins" words at Overland's masthead, I feel it proper to say to such blokes: "Well if any of you reckon you could do better, 'ave a go, mug!" Some will accept the gentle blandishment and one day, after someone else has devoted a lifetime to the subject, we shall doubtless have a greater "History of Australian Literature". Its author, like the rest of us, will be standing on H. M. Green's shoulders.

RUSSEL WARD

Recent Novels

A novelist may work in at least two quite different ways. He may take himself right into the life of his characters, worming himself down inside until he really knows all there is to know about them, and then surfacing to show the reader what he thinks is good for him to know. During this subterranean journey, he may be instinctively comparing, criticising, and evaluating, or otherwise meditating on the significance of what he sees, and thus his novel will vibrate with an immediate relevance to life. The experience of reading it will both shape and enlarge the life of the reader.

But the novelist may also stand at a distance to his subject. He observes, selects, records. His method is akin to that of a sculptor, except that, when his modelling is complete, he gives it a twist, imparts to it a motion of its own, and presents it to the reader to take it or leave it.

This is David Forrest's method in "The Hollow Woodheap" (Jacaranda, 22/6), but of course his selection has given us a picture which has sufficient exaggeration and distortion to direct our attention to the ridiculous. For the events in it are truly ridiculous, overwhelmingly, shoulder-shakingly, truthfully ridiculous. Yet the humor comes neither from knockabout farce nor from the faded colors of colloquialism, but from the carefully restrained style which sets the puppets whirling while holding us back to observe. We are invited to watch, not to participate.

The style has its roots in the authentic nicknames given to the principal characters in the Brisbane bank he writes about. St. Joseph the Bloody Worker, the Keg and Himmler can be found within the walls of any large institution, but the pseudonyms serve another purpose than merely delighting the reader. They distance him from the characters without making them any less human.

This same effect of distance is maintained in the description of such incidents as the Rugby Union Football match, or the police raid on the Gold Coast. Both episodes are narrated in the dry, poker-faced manner of the bar-room raconteur, yet both are free of the exaggeration characteristic of Australian folk-humor. The facts are allowed to speak for themselves.

The total effect of the novel is of the absurdity of human pretensions and of our life in society, but it is shot through with fleeting impressions of the possible warmth of human relationships. The hero himself has some of the epic qualities of the man from the west who conceals beneath a mask of naivete the ability to outdrink, outwork, outwit and outswear any of the smart city push; but beneath the worldly abilities the author subtly suggests another level of genuine candor. Earl Douglas Lucas is not ashamed to seek the conventional destination of a virginal encounter on the bed of marriage.

The plot of the novel is slight but sufficient, and the occasionally bizarre incidents are in keeping

with the mock heroic character of the book. The characters are similarly adequate to their function in the novel, but the author's style manages to convey the impression that there is more to them than he has chosen to reveal. They may not be portraits in the round, but they definitely convey the feeling that a person in the round exists behind the portrait.

Whenever we come across a satire we are tempted to try to label it as attacking society, the establishment, human beings or human endeavors. Yet this book does not in fact attack anything. The acid in the mixture is intended to clean, not to corrode, and it does not so much destroy our illusions as correct our eyesight. One critic has remarked that satire maps out those areas of intellect which we can no longer inhabit. This book rather shows us the thorns in the area which we must inhabit, but it shows us the sap in the thorns as well. It is also one of the best pictures of the modern white-collar working world, and of its youthful entrants, that we have so far seen.

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In "Yaralie" (Georgian House, 18/-), Donald Stuart has adopted the other approach. He takes us through the common story of a young girl's development to maturity, in the common situation of a half-blood between the worlds of white and black; although in this case both the girl and her father accept, and are accepted by, the black community. However Stuart has given to these themes the additional dimension of man's continuing quest for dignity and independence, and this becomes more important to the book than the more immediate themes of the plot.

Stuart is at his best when describing the passionate relationship between the girl, her father, and the land from which they wrest their living by prospecting, yet he perhaps misses the essential element of cruelty implicit in man's bending of nature to his will. This may be why he is less successful when the girl, Yaralie, goes to work for the pathetic Templeton and his alcoholic wife. He sees these white station owners as intruders and ravagers in an alien land, rather than as humans who have failed to meet the land's demands, and who have been destroyed by it. Yet his bitterness at the thought that these people are the official owners while Mrs. Mendoza and her noisy, uprooted, troubled but essentially harmonious clan are the dispossessed is well justified.

The feeling for the land, together with the feeling that the girl is the heir to all the ages, accounts for the success of the death scenes with which the novel opens and closes. None of the grief is avoided, yet we never lose the sense that this is just the end of one stage and the start of another. The dead live on in the living, and the living are strengthened by their heritage. This constant feeling of the timeless onsurge of life extends from the people to the land itself and its tiniest creatures.

"Amid the Plenty," by Gavin Casey (Australasian Book Society, 22/6), deals convincingly with the experience of unemployment in a time of plenty. The incidental characters are well portrayed, although we meet them as acquaintances, and we share the sense of futility and isolation, of having been discarded and passed over, which envelops Jack when a new manager gives him the sack as part of the firm's efficiency program. Meanwhile, he has to shoulder the family responsibilities of a daughter who has to marry, a son who gets mixed up with a pack of delinquents, and another son whose sense of responsibility

drives him to seek a second job at the cost of his night-school and future prospects.

The novel portrays a world of essential decency temporarily undermined by economic and social troubles. It is a little heavy-handed with the teenage dialogue, but still an honest piece of social reporting. But although the author has responded to his character, he has not quite got down past the immediate problems of their separate beings.

This is more than could be said for "Picnic Races," by Dymphna Cusack (Heinemann, 20/-), which has a fast-moving narrative, plenty of colorful characters, a lively country town and an essentially hollow ring to it.

The plot deals with the different stories of the conflict over the Gubba Centenary celebrations, the treatment of the local blacks, the love of youngsters from the opposing camps of citizens, and the personal feud between the two oldest local identities. These themes are not really integrated until the rather too conveniently happy ending.

The book does at times seem to suggest some of the complexity of human relationships, but the author is too ready to gallop away after the next purple phrase from the Philipps to allow any of the characters to develop beyond a stereotype. Cusack's professional skill as a writer enables her to get away with a quite inadequately conceived story.

"Blow the Wind Southerly," by Kay Brownbill (Rigby, 22/6), is mainly concerned with the mystery in the past of the family of Peter de Frene, an Englishman who migrates to South Australia in 1890 to clear up the problems presented by a letter from his deceased father. After some interesting description of social life in Adelaide in the 1890's, and some conspicuous name-dropping, the book settles down to a fairly routine mystery story. The shadow the plot casts forward to the twentieth century hinges merely on the question of mixed blood, which seems a clumsy and unnecessary device.

"Don't Speak to Strangers," by G. R. McCallum (Macmillan, 17/-), is a first novel by a Queensland writer. It is full of promise which is never realised. Characters are given imposing entrances, but they never develop, and the plot is mechanical and unconvincing. However, the book is worth reading for the imaginative picture of the boy, Dummy, suffering from a mental trauma which has made him "go away inside himself," and slowly unfolding under the influence of sympathy and kindness. If we accept the situation, the boy's response is perfectly credible, as is also the response of his ultimate foster-mother.

JOHN McLAREN

Cabinet Government

"Cabinet Government" has been virtually synonymous with the British system of government ever since Bagehot wrote his study of the English Constitution nearly a hundred years ago. Although the beginnings of cabinet government in Australia extend back over a century, Dr. S. Encel's book "Cabinet Government in Australia" (M.U.P., 65/-) is the first Australian book on the subject. That it is a pioneer study ought not to be forgotten—its omissions and shortcomings are similar to those found in many pioneer works. Yet the book is immensely valuable and goes a long way towards filling in the gaps in the existing literature on Australian government.

The writer of any book on cabinet government is immediately confronted with the difficulty of

what should be included and what should be excluded—how much coverage should be given to elections, parties, parliaments, civil service, and to extra-parliamentary pressure groups. This problem is further complicated in a federal system. How much emphasis should be given to cabinet government in the States? How far does the federal system itself introduce important modifications to the operations of the federal cabinet? Dr. Encel throws his net widely on both these matters. There is equal coverage of state and federal politics. The book is a mine of information on the history of Australian ministries.

Comparisons between the Australian and British systems are inevitable in any book on Australian government, and Dr. Encel devotes his introductory chapter to this problem. Like many writers seeking to emphasise the peculiarities of the system being analysed he often exaggerates the differences between these two systems. He lists seven characteristics of British cabinet government—that it represents the top of the ladder of power and prestige; that its strength rests firstly on the constitutional supremacy of parliament, and secondly, on the relations between ministers and civil servants; that the administrative class of civil servants has strong social affinities with the great bulk of ministers; that the system depends on a stable two-party system; that strong central government is an historic consequence of the need for defence; and finally, that the private pecuniary interests of ministers ought not to conflict with their public duty. He then asserts that, "in Australia, each of these seven characteristics is either absent or replaced by its antithesis." This is clearly an exaggeration and Encel does much to correct it in the latter chapters.

Implicit in the list of the seven important characteristics of cabinet government in Britain is the view that the cabinet system both in Britain and Australia can only be understood by reference to the social structure of these countries. Yet this oblique recognition of the class basis of politics is not followed up except to the limited extent of recognising that the predominance of the upper middle class in both cabinet and civil service is absent in Australia. There is no attempt to explore Australian politics and the cabinet system in terms of class. On the contrary, Encel finds the key to the differences between the British and the Australian systems in superstructural factors, not it is true in constitutional but in political factors, above all in the party system.

These are important elements in the problem but they would appear to be less fundamental than differences stemming from the different economic basis of the two societies. While both Britain and Australia are monopoly capitalist societies, Australian society is more purely capitalist than British society, lacking entirely the consequences of the nineteenth century British compromise between the old aristocratic ruling class and the new capitalist ruling class. Australian capitalism is younger and is still expanding. It is moreover a more dependent economy than that of Britain and the rivalry between Australian, British and American economic interests is more compelling.

These basic factors must be recognised before any understanding of Australian parties, parliaments and cabinets is possible. While Encel occasionally concedes the influence of monopoly capitalists (such as the Collins House influence on the promotion of Lyons as prime minister in 1931 and of Menzies in 1939) his basic model is not a class one but a modified group model. He accepts J. D. B. Miller's thesis that the organs of

government in Australia are neutral agencies which various "syndicates" (or pressure groups) seek to operate in order to produce material advantages to themselves. Thus the Country Party is used by various primary producer interests to gain benefits for themselves such as differential rail freights. This is undoubtedly true but it is incomplete. Both the railways and the rural interests are monopoly-controlled or dominated, and this is reflected in recent decisions on government expenditure for railway construction in Queensland, Western Australia and the Commonwealth.

The implication in Encel's argument is that pressure group politics is more prominent in Australia than it is in Britain and that it is enhanced by the strong Australian tradition of the need for state intervention. But state intervention has been a common characteristic of all capitalist states since the late nineteenth century, and has assumed increasing importance both in Britain and the United States since the depression. While public pressure has influenced some aspects of this intervention in the public interest, the basic explanation of this development is that monopoly capitalism has found it increasingly necessary to get government assistance in all aspects of the economic process—in regulating supplies and markets, in controlling the labor force, in penetrating foreign markets, in underwriting uneconomic enterprises, in providing defence contracts, etc. The "welfare state" is still a capitalist state and "welfare economics" is first and foremost for the welfare of the monopoly capitalists.

The same approach limits Encel's analysis of the internal politics of Australian parties, especially those of the Labor Party. Conflicts within the Labor Party tend to be analysed in terms of conflicts of interest between the trade union or industrial wing and the political wing, although he recognises the influence of ideological differences on the 1955 split. His basic explanation of the conflict is that trade unionists seek to persuade Labor governments to govern in the interests of trade unionists while any Labor government must of necessity be concerned with mediating between a broader array of interests. But the factions within the Labor Party seldom follow strictly along the division between trade unions and politicians. Factional struggles within the Labor Party invariably reflect policy and ideological differences as well as differences of interest. They also reflect the class divisions within the Labor Party—the perennial struggle between working class and non-working class elements. This is related to the struggle between socialist and non-socialist sections but it is not identical with it. The fundamental internal contradiction of the Labor Party is a class one. The A.L.P. is a party with a class potential to issue a challenge to the capitalist system but because of its complete acceptance of the rules of the democratic party game it can never hope to do anything but provide an alternative capitalist government.

One methodological weakness of the book is that the empirical analysis is not closely related to the thesis as stated in the introduction. In bits and pieces some elements of the thesis (for example, those relating to the absence of a status-group link between cabinet and civil service personnel in Australia) are substantiated, while others are ignored or even contradicted (as his recognition that the necessities of cabinet government produces the same striving to tailor Australian politics to a two-party system as in Britain). Some of his most pertinent observations do not relate to his outline of the characteristics of British cabinet government. Thus, "In Australia, the basic con-

vention is not collective responsibility within cabinet, but the individual responsibility of each minister to his party." The book is inadequate in its examination of the precise mechanisms by which cabinet supremacy over parliament is maintained. This is an important omission, particularly as Encel recognises that the position of governments relative to parties has increased in Australia in recent years.

Yet if the grand design of the book is not fully implemented the more pedestrian claim that "The development of cabinet government in Australia illustrates the tension between a constitutional structure, elaborated in one political system, and the expectations engendered by a rather different political system" is clearly established. The book will quickly establish itself as the essential companion volume to Professor Crisp's "The Parliamentary Government of the Commonwealth of Australia" in every library of Australian politics.

LLOYD CHURCHWARD

Migrants and Melbourne

Migrant artists from Europe have already enriched Australian painting in every State: the Danila Vassilieffs and Sali Hermans have reinterpreted our cities for us, just as Louis Buvelot in the early days interpreted the gum-tree.

We have gained less in a literary way. Painting is an international language, while writing demands a whole new vocabulary, or else translation. An exception is David Martin, whose original tongue was German, but whose later poems and novels have been written and published in English. And he is completely at home not only in English but in the Australian idiom, as anyone will know who has read poems like "Jack Underwood" and "Bush Christmas".

Here is a man whose sympathies break the frontiers of language and custom. He has written of Spain, Malaya, India, and now of the Greek community in Melbourne, with deep understanding.

In this latest novel, "The Young Wife" (Macmillan, 22/6), he tells the story of Anna, a simple and beautiful village girl from Cyprus, who comes to Australia to marry a man she has never seen.

Yannis is an obstinate, inarticulate man, not very handsome, not very young, not very clever, who has been pushed into the marriage by his mother's desire for a grandson.

Between his smart and wealthy brother, who is not above shady practices, his strong-minded mother, his friend Criton who has been involved with dangerous politics in Nicosia, his acquaintances from the Greek Club and from the intellectual set at the University who "take up" migrants as interesting curiosities, he and Anna are driven into an impossible position.

There is a quality of Greek tragedy about the novel, though the protagonists, instead of being kings and heroes, are fruit-shop proprietors and footballers. The Chorus is provided by Maria, Yannis' old blind mother, and Elena, his sister-in-law. There is an analogy with the play "Alceste," though this is not made very clear, and with the legend of Aphrodite.

The book is well-constructed, the threads of the plot being most carefully but not obtrusively laid, and the lines of interweaving lives are handled with skill.

It is also a compassionate and ironical work, saying that we carry within us the seeds of our own destruction. The people are tormented by private demons; Patricia by the memory of her

Old Hands and New

baby son who died, Criton by his failure in Cyprus which resulted in the maiming of two boys, the Professor by the fear of growing old.

Criton, the artist, consoling himself with a sophisticated Melbourne woman and an uncomplicated Australian country girl, does not admit to himself his love and desire for Anna, but sublimates it in painting her, secretly, as Aphrodite; Anna does not understand her own heart, but tries to be an obedient and loving wife. Yet the tragic climax works itself out inevitably. The irony comes from the fact that these two, after being neighbors in a small island, and coming out to Australia in the same ship, do not meet until too late.

The setting is always convincing. The pictures of an intellectual party in Melbourne, of the life that goes on behind the windows of those mysterious "Greek Clubs," of the frenetic excitement of a football match between teams of different nationalities, or of a dance in a country hall; all are etched sharply, with that detailed observation which conveys the breath of reality.

Here is the ironical introduction to the football match:

Australia is the happy country where teams are abused when they run onto the field before the first whistle—run on, by the way, through a heavy wire enclosure resembling the race by which lions enter the circus . . . it also protects the contenders when they return to their dressing rooms.

And here is the atmosphere of Melbourne:

Melbourne was lovely at night; very lovely at this time of year. Those small weatherboard houses in the plane-tree squares, with their rusty, cast-iron balconies—they had a charming, old-fashioned intimacy, and so had the wide, empty streets, smelling of autumn to come and of the sea. One could imagine oneself back in the nineteenth century . . .

The style is clear-cut and economical, and in the description of even violent scenes, a football brawl, an attempted suicide, a wife-beating, there is a laconic avoidance of melodrama, far more convincing than heroics. Only one slip in the use of English is noticeable, and this is prevalent among writers born to its use—that is "disinterested" as a synonym for "lacking interest" or "not interested".

This is the description of the hall where the dance is to be held, immediately recognisable:

The weatherboard hall . . . had recently been used as a polling booth; the election by-laws were still nailed to the door. Empty beer bottles were lying about in the long grass. Paper snakes festooned the inside of the hall, where they had hung undisturbed since the New Year Ball. But the floor, marked for basketball playing, had been polished and sanded.

People were sitting on benches around the wall, men on one side and girls on the other, warily eyeing each other . . . Small boys were playing slidey on the empty floor. A matron came up to sell them their tickets. "Youse from the railway? Any more coming up? Glass of beer costs a bob, soft drinks ninepence."

The excellent dust-jacket, perfectly in keeping with the story, is also by a migrant artist, Louis Kahan: it shows a Grecian frieze against a Melbourne skyline, with a classical Greek figure in the foreground. The Commonwealth Literary Fund is to be congratulated on helping to make the writing of this novel possible.

NANCY CATO

"Verse in Australia 1961" (Australian Letters, 17/6).
"Australian Poetry 1961" (Angus & Robertson, 15/-).
"Here in the Grass" by Irene Gough (Edwards & Shaw, 15/-).
"The Dogman and Other Poems" by Robert Clark (Cheshire, 17/6).
"Penniless Till Doomsday" by Rodney Hall (Outposts, 5/-).
"Poems" by J. J. Bray (Cheshire, 17/6).

Normally, the two annual poetry anthologies, "Verse in Australia" and "Australian Poetry," differ widely in their assessment of the poetic scene. This, of course, is not surprising since the two publications are independent and have different selection-methods. "Verse in Australia," published in Adelaide, selects from work that has already appeared in periodicals and, in addition, it has some continuity of policy through its relatively fixed panel of editors. On the other hand, "Australian Poetry," published each year in Sydney, employs a different guest editor, who selects from material submitted. Last year's editor was Dr. Leonie Kramer, well-known critic from Sydney University.

It seems at first glance that these two anthologies again are pursuing separate paths. They have only six poems in common. Yet, of the 33 poets in each book, 24 appear in both. Whatever the reasons are for this surprising overlap of poets and divergence of poems, it indicates a relatively stable view of the current scene or, at least, of the people who make it. It also indicates the way in which editorial preference can vary the impression a writer makes. For example, selections in "Verse in Australia" are more concrete, extroverted in attitude, compared to those of "Australian Poetry," where emphasis is more on the interior life of intellect and feeling rather than on the senses. In this respect, the two anthologies are complementary.

But what, if one accepts the theory-book notion of poets as "sensitive barographs of national spiritual weather," etc., is to be made of the present indications? What are the general features of Australian contemporary poetry?

Overtly, these poems show little direct concern with the issues of the day. No one is "singing the Nation". National progress, the huge projects and prospects lauded by press and politicians, is curiously absent from our poetry. The militant optimism of an O'Dowd might never have been. Public dreams have gone and private ones are not intense. In place of these, there is a seemingly hypnotic lull in which a circumspect conservatism has its way but is not really listened to. For this reviewer, it is difficult to resist the impression that for most poets an "inner migration" has occurred—a disengagement, a withdrawal from our present socially-defined reality and a testing of other alternatives to it—nature, the past (personal and historical), religion, individual psychology, anything that holds promise of an asocial affirmation of the ego, anything that excludes our present society from an essential definition of the self. By and large, there is no triumph in these explorations. The tone is autumnal. Not that one expects copious social statement, but the present almost total lack of anything decisive in this sphere does loom significant when viewed in the context of the history of Australian poetry.

Turning to individual poems and dealing with Dr. Kramer's anthology first, one finds a number of interesting works. Among those who stand out is Robert FitzGerald, who resolutely confronts the problem of human decay and, in his "Bog and Candle", extracts one of his typical uncompromising meditations from it. Charles Higham, with a rather fin-de-siecle air, has an aetherial and well-

wrought poem on a child who, grasping for the moon, plunges to her death. Gwen Harwood is well represented, together with her celebrated doppelgaenger Walter Lehmann who, after his widely acclaimed farewell message to the Sydney Bulletin, has now removed to a professorial post in Germany—sic transit gloria. Douglas Stewart is delightfully ebullient with his "Professor Picard" whose picaresque individualism could hardly be imagined as squaring with the modern emphasis on scientific team-work. From the Left, John Manifold, in a skilful and unrhymed sonnet, declares that he will have nothing to do with the "lunatic autumnal poets". David Martin, somewhat sentimentally meditating the end of the world by the Bomb, asks us to aspire—

So that the nothingness, if it could hear,
Shall be compelled to judge us and admire.

The few other more public utterances are rather non-committal or unexcitingly conservative. There is good work from Roland Robinson, Francis Geyer, Geoffrey Dutton and others, together with a rather arch poem of A. D. Hope. All in all, and subject to the general remarks above, it is a good anthology and Dr. Kramer is to be thanked for the almost uncanny neutrality with which she has mediated the current scene.

"Verse in Australia 1961" is a good issue also, with a possibly larger number of substantial poems in it. Again, Robert FitzGerald stands out with his "Relic at Strength-Fled". By comparison, A. D. Hope seems somewhat immature but makes a strong poem out of his fascination for the impersonal cruelty of the biological-sexual order of things. Jessica Aldridge, Randolph Stow, Francis Geyer, Thomas Shapcott and Roland Robinson are all well represented. Douglas Stewart is again deftly energetic in his evocation of "Gang-Gangs"—a poem dancing with a fond empathy for its subject. T. H. Jones writes well on war-experience, Robert Clark includes his well-known poem, "To My Son", and Chris. Wallace-Crabbe meditates on old cars. In terms of present-day poetry in Australia, it is a well-chosen selection.

"Here in the Grass", by Irene Gough, impresses at once by its fine quality of printing and design—yet another tribute to the apparently unrivalled supremacy of Edwards and Shaw. It is surprising to realise that this is Irene Gough's first book, as her poems have been appearing in periodicals for quite a number of years. Collectively, her poetry makes a very pleasing impression. It has a quiet integrity that, poem by poem, grows into an authentic presence of country life. In longer poems, the influence of the American, Robert Frost, is strongly suggested and though the comparison in no wise detracts from Frost's performance, the attempt to treat Australian themes on these lines is justified. This book is modest in range and power but expresses the lot of a country woman in such a way as to add an individual facet to our poetic contemplation. It has suggestions of a quiet staying-power.

Robert Clark's book, "The Dogman and Other Poems," has two distinguishing features—firstly, an obvious maturity of experience and, secondly, a preoccupation with issues which the present reviewer had thought of, perhaps naively, as left well behind. This second aspect is a little difficult to formulate precisely but, briefly, it amounts to a kind of puritan concern, an "inner-directed" questioning of life that moves towards a pantheistic reconciliation of personal religious feeling, nature and society. Sometimes this has an Eastern quality. For example, in one of his longest poems, "The Nearing Transit", the fear of death is confronted, not in Christian terms but more in those of Buddhism:—

My error is a common weed—exulting
In my otherness I thought myself distinct,
My birth to be new life, a thing apart,
Too rare to end in death and be extinct.

More concretely, Robert Clark shows a love for the Australian landscape, as in his "Six Moods of the Mallee" and "To My Country", together with a persistent concern for morality in human dealings.

To this reviewer, it is this latter concern which shows Robert Clark at his best. When writing on nature or meditating on large themes he is on traditional ground and gains little by comparison with other poets. But in those relatively objective poems such as "The Wall of Glass", where he is drawing on his professional experience as a lawyer, he has things more to himself and, by advancing on these lines, could give us something unique. As it is, he is inclined to overlook his true capital and hanker for a kind of artistry which he hasn't got. With Robert Clark, one is reminded of Miles Franklin's view of Joseph Furphy—a man writing, not a writing man. This of course can be of tremendous advantage but has its reverse side as well. Ultimately, we value Furphy, not for his speculative, ruminative passages, but for his success in mediating the human concourse about him.

Rodney Hall's English-produced, 16 page booklet contains 19 poems referring to experiences both in Australia and overseas. Predictions are risky, but on the assumption that the author is still young and continues to write, it is likely that he will be an interesting addition to the local scene. More recent poems in periodicals encourage this view. There is a welcome truculence and strength of observation about these poems that gives pleasure even when expression is blurred. At times there is a sudden strength of imagery:—

Here my father parted
from his four companions;
jumped to shatter almost
half a mile below—
deep in my genetic canyons.

We look forward to more from the same hand.

J. J. Bray's book is well produced and looks like a book of poetry until, on closer inspection, it turns out to be almost entirely a high-spirited and rather amateurish romp. For the most part, it is lightweight satire—often clever, and murderously flippant with the language. However, there are some passages that indicate possibilities. For instance, I was rather taken with the following lines from a poem, "To Magellan":—

If you had steered your westward course
more south,
And taken what you found for God and
Spain,
Would they have tamed it to Castilian modes,
Duenna-guarded girls with rose in mouth,
Bull-fights on ovals, friars on the Domain,
And Quixote riding up the bare bush roads?

More on these lines would be welcome. In their absence, we can only admire the author's fortitude and wish him luck.

NOEL MACAINSH

Morrison's Stories

There has been a persistent rumor for some years now that the short story is a dying thing. Where it first originated I don't know, nor do I know how long it will take to convince people that it is not true. But if any proof is needed, John Morrison's new collection, "Twenty Three" (Australasian Book Society, 21/-), should certainly help to silence the pessimists.

I suppose that amongst more commercial reasons, part of the trouble came with the impact of professional criticism (in newspapers, journals, etc.) on all literary forms. The demand for something more than mere story raised the question: Is the short story a viable art form at all? It is too short for the extended exploration of the novel. And generally (but not always) the language is too relaxed to have the kind of significance poetry can have.

But the short story has its own function. It is ideally suited to capturing those crises, those focal points, which suddenly and unexpectedly throw light on life, which give us a new angle or insight into what we are.

At his best, Morrison does this very well. He is primarily an observer and a storyteller. His work is concerned with people's attitudes—to themselves, to others, and to things; and his strength lies in his close notation of people's reactions to incidents—often seeming quite trivial, such as a train holdup or the killing of a snake—in such a way as to show their attitudes or values in a wider and clearer perspective.

But "Twenty Three" is a mixed bag, and by no means uniformly successful. The chief fault is that too often the perspective is not wider, but narrower. At times, Morrison's socialist beliefs seem to come between him and his characters, and determine how much of them he will see and sympathise with. This is strange in a writer who is characterised by detailed observation. An example of this is the satirical fable "The Judge and the Shipowner". The exec's. are a fair mixture of good and bad, but the dock hands completely escape his satiric vision, and are all too pure.

The most disturbing result of this is a kind of sentimental response to the brotherhood of the underdog, seen in such stories as "The Ticket," "The Last Three Years," "Bo Abbott," "Way of Life," and "To Margaret." Here Morrison's socialism provides a formula and pushes him the easy way—his sympathies go all to one side, and the breadth of vision is lost.

But the book has far better stories than these.

One of Morrison's main concerns is people's attitudes to money. One of the best stories, "It Opens Your Eyes," is about a couple winning Tatts. This is a recurrent theme in the book. The story is set on the morning of a proposed week's fishing trip, and the room is cluttered with gear. Here we see a wife's avarice flare and gradually engulf her husband, utterly wrecking his long friendship with the man who actually gave him the ticket and who naturally (but rashly) expected a cut. It's an old theme: greed fed by the sudden possession of wealth corrupting and destroying friendship. But here it's handled with fresh observation and re-invested with meaning. The transition from happiness to hatred is finely handled. The last paragraph brings the point home:

He was gone, and in the clean sunshine of the quiet kitchen Colin Ogilvie stood looking miserably at his wife, at the little colored paper lying on the table, and at the pile of fishing gear near the door.

The theme of conflicting loyalties provides two of the best stories in the book: the fine and worldly wise comedy of "The Drunk" and the near-tragedy of "The Children." "The Children" is the picture of a man who, entrusted with the task of saving the children from a school threatened by bushfire, sacrifices them for his own family. We see his haunted and guilty mind trying to rationalise his actions; and we realise that here is one of those contradictions, those faults in life, for which there is no answer. How can we condemn a man

for saving his own family; yet how can we condone the death of twenty other children? The conflict is brought out almost entirely by monologue as the man's mind twists and turns.

Morrison's close observation is shown again at its best in such almost purely descriptive pieces as "The Hold Up" and "Ward Four." In the former, we follow his sharp eye as it notes the various reactions of the other passengers in a train waiting between stations. As in "Ward Four" (a warm tribute to Melbourne's nurses) and "Dog Box," the value of the story lies in the succinct capturing of each character's individuality and response to the situation.

But although he deals entirely with the ordinary working man, Morrison is surprisingly varied. "To Kill a Snake" and "Morning Glory" are very different stories, but they both show him at his best—detached, observant, sympathetic, clear-sighted and basically very sane. They are both very good stories.

But the best story in the collection is "Goyai." It is a haunting and almost horrible re-creation of the terrifying logic of an insane mind. "Twenty Three" would be worth buying for that alone. But of course it is by no means the only good story in the book. Despite the fact that it's a mixed bunch, this new collection clearly and decisively adds to the stature of one of Australia's best short story writers today.

ANDREW TAYLOR

Tynan the Terrible

Kenneth Tynan: "Curtains: A Critic's View of Plays, Players and Theatrical Events 1950-1960" (Longmans, 32/-).

In this country we do not have a Tynan; in fact we do not have such an animal as the revered drama critic in the English sense whose pronouncements can condemn or acquit a play and hence stamp success or failure on its career. In England and America the Tynans and the Brooks Atkinsons are the makers or breakers of theatre; in Australia drama criticisms are read by relatively few people who may not be particularly influenced by the opinions of the critic. Here an actor or producer may get up early the morning after the opening night's party to read the Herald or Age crit., but he does so more from deference to an overseas tradition or coy masochism than from a bread-and-butter necessity. The Australian theatre public's attitude is more conditioned by the efficacy of commercial publicity and word-of-mouth reaction than by the utterances of critics. In Sydney a few years ago, after the remarkable success of "The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll", at least one scribe had to write a re-evaluation of the play to atone for his initial indifference, a view which audiences had treated with characteristic irreverence.

In many respects this book of Tynan's is bewildering—a 75-page eclectic of reviews, essays and pontifications on British, American, French and Russian theatre from 1950 to 1960. Its value is two-fold: firstly, it presents an astonishing panorama of a decade of drama, and, secondly, it gives an interesting picture of a man and the development of his ideas. Tynan himself emerges as a fascinating individual. The full-page dust-jacket profile catches him, in a rather studied pose, replete with bow-tie, cigarette in fingers, thumb on a retreating chin—aseptic lips, somewhat supercilious eyes, high-domed forehead, hair swept back not too carelessly over a high crown; in short, rather too conventionally non-conformist, a little too obviously iconoclastic. This slight tendency to pretension appears sporadically in his writing,

particularly in his early work, yet, because he follows in the tradition of liberal humanism, he is able to absorb changing social attitudes and modify his own ideas accordingly.

The young Tynan of 1951, three years after he "came floating down from Oxford", shows dissatisfaction with the current state of British theatre—its superficiality, restricted themes, "lack of weight" in actors, its general ineffectuality and insipidity and its paucity of directors "none [of whom] measures up to the Continental definition of confessor, inquisitor and sage"—which manifests itself mainly in delicious sallies against his pet hates—such as Anna Neagle, Donald Wolfit, John Neville, John Gielgud, Terence Rattigan and the Old Vic—and in absolute joy at the appearance of something of quality, as Richard Burton's Henry V., or Claire Bloom's Juliet. He is still deceived by things he will later dismiss: he treats Eliot's "Confidential Clerk" with a respect it hardly merits, and writes too kindly of Noel Coward; Greta Garbo and James Cagney earn almost Hollywoodian rhapsody, while, as late as 1954, a lengthy essay on Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams is irritatingly superficial.

But by 1954-55 a change is visible: the rationale of his dissatisfaction becomes more articulate: "Our dramatists do not hold the mirror up to nature; they hold it up to other mirrors. They ape the theatre of the past, instead of shaping the life of the present. They will wear gags and blinkers, spread half-truth and smoke-screens—anything rather than stare life in the face and set down the form and passion of what they see." By 1958 he has formulated something of a credo: he looks now for "evidence of the artist who is not content with the passive role of a symptom, but concerns himself, from time to time, with such things as healing." He shall reserve his cheers, he says elsewhere, "for the play in which man among men, not man against man, is the well-spring of tragedy". Accordingly, in an essay on German theatre, he writes twenty of the best pages I have read on Brecht, and concludes a survey of American theatre almost defiantly with a quotation from Christopher Caudwell.

What influences produced this shift in Tynan's thinking, from that of a reviewer obviously skilled in his craft and dedicated to his task, to that of a critic with a more-or-less coherently defined aesthetic? The main immediate reason was the appearance in England of a body of young playwrights who rejected the old platitudes and clichés which for so long had haunted the British stage and who began to examine deeper and more fundamental subjects in a new and vital way. These writers were mainly associated with the Angry Young Movement and one of Tynan's most significant pieces is on the A.Y.M's.

But one can go further than this. Tynan's development and the emergence of the new playwrights are symptomatic of the remarkable change which has taken place in European attitudes generally over the past seven years, reflected in England in Aldermaston and the Polaris base demonstrations: not the expression of another lost generation, but a reaction to a world of turmoil and crisis dominated by an overwhelming consideration which has not yet stirred Australia to the same extent: the Bomb.

Doris Lessing touched on this in one sense in "To Each his own Wilderness": the world is in a mess, and the young generation are the victims; "Look Back in Anger" expressed it, too, as did Wesker's Kahn trilogy and the exuberant anarchy of Behan's "The Hostage". Arden, Simpson, Kops and Willis Hall all reflect the same trend. The

Communist Brecht fits into the same pattern; his vogue in Australia is almost an intellectual fad, but in Britain his resurrection after years of fame on the Continent springs from the pertinence of his themes to contemporary life: he poses problems with which increasing numbers of people are becoming concerned, and his plays seek clear and sober judgment on them.

Tynan himself is acutely aware of the effect this dilemma has had on the "new intelligentsia created by free education and state scholarships". The "young angries" are reminiscent of other young radical writers from Blake and Shelley to the Americans of the 30's such as Steinbeck and Odets, but what distinguishes them from their predecessors is that "they came of age around the time their elders invented the hydrogen bomb". So they were led to question practically every traditional belief and institution in Britain, particularly reserving their barbs for the "Establishment"—"the hard core of top people . . . who still seemed . . . to be exerting a disproportionate influence on the country's affairs".

From the maze of protest—nihilistic with Colin Wilson, vehement but aimless with Osborne, devastatingly satirical with Behan, passionate and positive with Wesker—Tynan, like Lindsay Anderson in the cinema, extracts one basic aesthetic principle: that of commitment and engagement. Not commitment to any particular philosophy, let alone that of social change (he is certainly not a Marxist), but to "reality and social truth", and it is with this yard-stick that, after 1956, he measures art and artists. No longer can the tawdry and superficial be tolerated, either in plays or players: he greets enthusiastically the "new school of provincial actors" such as Albert Finney (of "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning" fame), and the unorthodox brilliance of Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, and attacks the falsity of the Method, "that modish acting technique, mistakenly associated with the teachings of Stanislavsky, whereby gesture precedes utterance by at least five seconds". Henceforth Western drama is subjected over-all to much more searching analysis than in the early essays: the "facile pessimism" of Beckett ("for him man is a pygmy who connives his own inevitable degradation"), the "self-imposed vacuum" of Ionesco, the "wanton exploitation of human vulnerability" of American drama, especially in the isolation and anti-humanism of Tennessee Williams. Against all this he poses the vitality of the new British drama, the directness of Brecht and the genuine skill of his Berliner Ensemble, and the depth and "rich mobility" of Russian actors.

Thus Tynan emerges as a man of considerable ability, a critic of integrity and insight who possesses that rare attribute of a critic: knowledge of what he is talking about. It is said that in the U.S.S.R. critics undergo a seven years' training course, two years longer than that of the actors they judge: Tynan has had a much less formal but perhaps even more arduous schooling, and his survival and development are a tribute to his resilience.

It is a truism that no art-form can develop without a body of criticism to aid it, and drama is no exception. Tynan says of the propaganda play, "one of [drama's] most ancient sources of energy", that its aim is "to start you thinking"; the same might be said of criticism, and, of the theatre's energy, he is himself a considerable source.

ROGER MILLISS

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