

OVERLAND

NUMBER EIGHT, SPRING 1956

ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE



Swag

The Editorial Board has decided to publish an index for all issues of *Overland* to date, and it is printed at the end of this issue. At the same time we have made arrangements for the binding of readers' copies to date. Cost will be £1 and copies for binding must be received by December 31. Readers please note that a few copies of issues number 4, 5, 6 and 7 are still available at the published price to help complete sets. Other issues are NOT available. Title pages for the set are available to readers.

★

Australian writers will be represented by Mr. Clem Christesen, Editor of *Meanjin*, as an observer at the first-ever Conference of Asian Writers, to convene in New Delhi on December 20. An Appeal to Asian Writers adopted by a preparatory meeting recently stressed that during hundreds of years of foreign domination the traditional strands of Asian civilisation were disrupted, and hence "the surviving amalgam of civilisations and culture patterns in Asia shows confusion in spite of the deep ferment in our midst." The Conference will set out to overcome these divisions. India, China, Vietnam, Burma, Korea, and Nepal are expected to be among the countries represented.

★

Arena, the New Zealand literary magazine which boasts the impressive total of 45 issues to date, now appears in larger and brighter format. *Arena* prints stories and poems only, not necessarily, but usually, of New Zealand origin. Editor is N. F. Hoggard, and subscriptions (7/6 N.Z.) can be sent to P.O. Box 6188, Te Aro, Wellington, N.Z.

★

New Frontiers is the Canadian equivalent of *Overland*, ably edited by Margaret Fairley at Toronto. The Spring, 1956, number contains material on a variety of topics, including Joe Hill, the French-Canadian authoress Gabrielle Roy—and Albert Namatjira (contributed by Eric Lambert). Enquiries concerning subscriptions can be made to the Editor of *Overland*.

★

"Rum and Coca Cola" is the name of Ralph de Boissiere's new book, which will be the next Australasian Book Society choice after the distribution of Alan Marshall's "How's Andy Going?" "Rum and Coca Cola" is a sequel to "Crown Jewel", the Book Society's first choice, which has been translated into several languages. "Rum and Coca Cola" has also been translated into Polish and German—prior to its first English-language edition, which must be almost a unique event. Ralph de Boissiere tells us, incidentally, that rum and coca-cola is one drink he has never tasted!

★

A street in Warsaw, capital of Poland, has recently been named "Winnie-the-Pooh Street", our (international) spies report.



Laurence Collinson's Poems

Overland has pleasure in announcing the forthcoming publication of a subscription edition of a first volume of poems by Laurence Collinson. Mr. Collinson's work has been widely printed in the *Bulletin*, *Overland*, *Meanjin* and other journals, and the subjects of the poems in the new book, entitled "The Moods of Love", range from social satire and criticism to studies of children, from portraits and caricatures to personal emotion.

The subscription edition of "The Moods of Love" will be limited to two hundred copies, each numbered, and each signed by the author. The attractive cloth-bound cover will hold 96 pages; and the selection will comprise almost one hundred poems including the sonnets of the sequence which gives the book its name.

The subscription for one copy is one pound; and the ordinary edition will not be available until subscribers' copies have been issued. If you wish to subscribe, please notify the Editor of *Overland* at G.P.O. Box 98A, Melbourne, C.1. Money need not be sent until advice has been received that the book is in production.

W.A. notes . . . The annual Joseph Furphy Birthday Celebration was held at Tom Collins House (the author's last home) at Swanbourne (W.A.) on September 23. Writer Henrietta Drake-Brockman (President, Fellowship of Australian Writers, W.A. Section) welcomed Professor F. Alexander who spoke to a large audience of writers and friends, on "Library Services in Western Australia in relation to the Creative Artist" . . . Temporarily at the University of Western Australia, Dr. and Mrs. M. Hertzberg (writer Nancy Keesing), and Dr. Ronald and Dr. Catherine Berndt . . . The Fourth Annual Report of the Library Service of W.A. indicates the vigorous growth of local libraries sponsored by the Service. In the past year books have been provided for six new public libraries, bringing the total to twenty-three. In Claremont, for instance, one of the new libraries, 47 per cent. of the total population are already registered as readers. Thirteen new local authorities applied for the Board's service during the year . . . Mr. Bert Vickers, whose "The Mirage" attracted much attention when published some time ago by the Australasian Book Society, has had his new novel, "First Place to the Stranger," just published by Constables, London. The title is from the Lawson poem "Shearers", and the story concerns the problems of British migrants in their contacts with both bush and city life in Australia . . . In view of many inquiries from *Overland* readers, we mention that Lloyd Davies, author of the popular short story "The Case of Walter Ogilvie" in our last issue, is a Fremantle solicitor in his thirties . . . Westerly, the three-times-yearly magazine published at the University of W.A., maintains its vitality and liveliness with its No. 3 issue for 1956. Amongst other things it contains important background material on the Tasmanian University crisis which was highlighted in a recent sensational Hobart law case.

THE KEEPER OF THE NIGHT

by David Forrest

EVERY third night, after tea, Kinivan walked along the main street. He sauntered, resplendent in his uniform of tan casuals, jungle-green trousers bought from army disposals, wind-breaker embossed with the figure of a bikini-clad female; the whole uniform being set-off with a black and yellow beanie on the back of his head.

"Good Grief" stuttered the conservative elements, and elderly tourists muttered darkly concerning the future of the nation.

Kinivan was a thin youth, sunburnt and laconic. His clothing was chosen for specific purposes. He never realised the effect that it had upon the stable element of the community.

His father died in one of the savage bayonet charges the dreadful day the Second Ninth Battalion went down to Cape Endaidere. His mother managed a boarding-house, devoted her spare time to Legacy and the Red Cross.

When Kinivan had come to the end of the third block he disappeared into an office beside an open shed. In the night there were the faint outline of cars in the shed. In the office, the occupant exchanged rude pleasantries with Kinivan, put on his cap, and went home to bed.

In Brisbane, Kinivan would very likely have enlisted in a surf club. In the rural sugar town of Kooloongana, he elected to camp every third night in the small dark room by the intersection.

As always when he entered the room, he paused for a moment to study the notice-board on the wall. There was only the one notice on the board and it caused him to grimace. The message was a warning, and read, "Mrs. Alex Randall—D Day minus five."

Kinivan searched for a pencil and wrote another message on the paper, "You don't frighten me."

He tossed the pencil down, switched out the light and lay down on the bunk. He lay there, fully dressed, except for his casuals. Beside his pillow, on the table, was the telephone. During the day, he worked in Woolworths. Every third night, he camped in the room. Sometimes, the telephone called him. Many nights, it made no sound.

He was one third of the Beanie Brigade, as a journalist once called them. Whittaker worked in the Commonwealth Bank. Harrison was a clerk in the Shire Council Offices.

This night, Kinivan yawned and pulled the muffler off the telephone.

"Ring tonight," he promised the phone, "and I'll kick your guts in . . ."

For a moment he listened to the cars and the voices moving along the street towards the cinema, and then he was asleep. He went to sleep, knowing that the telephone would wake him instantly. It was curious, that. There was always a watchfulness in the room, an alertness. The mind stayed alert, even in sleep.

At two minutes past seven, when the true night had barely come, the telephone snapped him awake. His arm came out from under the blanket. His fingers scooped up the receiver in the blackness.

"Yeh," he said softly. A voice rasped and squeaked in his ear. "Yeh . . . yeh. O.K."

Then the voice startled him and he said a curt word through his teeth.

"Harrison went to the pictures. Dig him out quick. Yeh. If you go outside now you'll hear me comin'."

He sat up in a smooth swing so that the receiver went back on its cradle and his feet slid into the casuals in almost the same movement. He never wore shoes to the small dark room. Shoe-laces wasted too many seconds.

No rush. No frenzy. Controlled haste.

He closed the side door with a practised flick of his fingers, opened the cabin of the big yellow car and slid in behind the wheel.

In the faint glow of the dashboard light, while he ran the motor in a brief burst, he appeared very slight and brown.

"The picture crowd," he thought absently, eyeing the passing traffic.

Then the shed was alive with noise and the big yellow car came out with its great red light flashing and the siren opening up the night with its sickening rising wail.

The picture crowd parted like the Red Sea before Israel. To Kinivan, the cinema was only a brilliance of light in the night.

After the car had streaked past, they stood about and said soberly, "Wonder where he's goin'?" And, "That was Whittaker, wasn't it?" "No. Whittaker was on last night. Must be Kinivan." "Yair, must be Kinivan." "D'ya see him come inside that Holden?"

Then, when Harrison had run out of the theatre and driven away to the small dark room, then they forgot Kinivan and turned to a Hollywoodian epic.

Kinivan had left them behind. He slid the big car to a halt in front of the hospital gates and Doran snapped the door open and stepped precisely into the seat. The car surged forward with a power that pushed the doctor back into the upholstery.

Doran said, "Drive like hell."

The siren began to wail again, halting pedestrians, scattering traffic, bringing small boys at the run. An Austin Seven side-slipped into the kerb with a foot to spare. The ambulance howled through the level-crossing with a demanding frenzy that made men's blood chill on their skin.

"Missed," said Kinivan and began to wriggle into the shape of the upholstery. His wrists flung the big car screaming around the long bend out of town.

Doran said with a touch of anxiety, "Can you go faster than this?"

"Stick around," said Kinivan.

He wriggled again so that he was comfortably back against the upholstery.

"Had a shiela once who wanted speed, but only from the buggy . . . not from me. So I waxed the seat and took a bend about fifty. We stayed together quite a while . . ."

With a stab of his finger he extinguished the light in the dash-board.

"Duralen," said Kinivan, "here we come . . ."

★

Duralen was not so much a town as a collection of buildings around a saw-mill. Stores, machinery, oil, barracks, cook-house.

In the cook-house, the man on the ground had begun to move.

"Steady," said McIntosh and rested his hand on the other's shoulder.

"Why don't they come," sighed the man on the ground.

"They're coming," said McIntosh quietly, "Kinivan's coming. You know he never let anybody down yet . . ."

"Why don't they come," sighed the man on the ground.

McIntosh studied the bandages again and his expressionless face turned towards the several workmen about him.

"Where's the boss?"

"In town."

"Wonderful!" he said,

"Where's Lacey?"

"In town."

He nodded without expression and folded the edge of a blanket around the man's shoulder.

"Sid, keep an eye on him for a moment."

He stood up and joined the other men at the end of the hut.

"Any of you blokes in the army ever?"

A few nodded; he said stolidly, "Remember your blood-groups?"

"A Two, I think."

"Think's not good enough. What about you?"

"O Four."

"Sure?"

"Yair . . . me and Bill here are the same. He give me a shot once."

"O.K. You two blokes be ready, just in case."

Armstrong, the tailer-out said, "That might have been all right for a war. The quacks are a bit more careful now."

"Not tonight they won't be," said McIntosh curtly and wrote some particulars on a table-top with a stump of lead-pencil.

He walked the length of the hut, squatted down and re-set a bandage.

"Why don't they come," sighed the man on the ground.

"It's thirty-six miles," said McIntosh.

He walked along the hut once more and said, "Bill, fetch a couple more blankets."

A certain amount of warmth had accumulated in the closed hut and McIntosh began to un-button his cardigan.

He was a very big man, hard and fit and rough.

He said with the hardness in his voice, "Which of you mugs decided to work right up ta dark?"

A pale youth at the rear said in a clipped voice, "I did."

The cold blue eyes glinted in the light . . . "Why?"

"The dough. I've gotta wife and kid to keep."

The big man had his fists on his hips . . . he said coldly, "Sonny, if you wasn't new ta this game, I'd make things so bloody willin' for you you'd be glad ta go back ta your cows. We drop enough fingers and arms in the normal course of events without goin' looking for trouble. There's been five accidents here in the last three years, sonny. Three of them were from blokes who thought they knew better—like the smart alec who took the guards off the bench so he could work faster. Fat lot of good it's done his widow."



"Missed," said Kinivan.

—Clem Millward.

Armstrong said, "Lay off him, Mac. He won't do it again."

McIntosh started to speak and changed his mind. He threw off his cardigan and rolled his sleeves up.

"From now on the riot act gets read to every mug before they're let near a saw . . . even if I have ta read it!"

He stumped outside and in the night his impotence boiled into naked anger.

"What's keeping that bloody ambulance?"

★

There was a quivering frenzy in the body of the ambulance which communicated itself to Doran and he braced his feet hard on the floor when he saw the sign-post. The winking redness and the horrible wail keeled under momentum and the big car dragged its tyres whining around the Duralen turn-off.

"Put two wings on her," said Doran, "and we'll fly."

Kinivan fought the car straight again and said seriously, "Her aero-dynamics are a bit weak."

He added, "There was a Car Trial bloke rolled over there doing that. Only doin' forty-five he said."

Doran imagined that the car gathered fresh pace. Kinivan said, "I might throw you about a bit now. This is the end of the bitumen."

Doran said helpfully, "You don't need the siren now, do you?"

"Leave it on," said Kinivan and his wrists and fingers drove the trembling steel with new concentration.

"I have a theory it makes the cows get off the road."

"Cows?" said Doran suspiciously.

"Cows," agreed Kinivan, "you know . . . four legs and four tits."

"Oh . . ."

"That's all they're good for, actually . . . giving milk. I come out of a bend on the Highway one night doin' seventy . . . and there's a great four-footed milk-factory standin' fair across me bows."

He fought a skid and drove furiously on the wrong side of the road.

"And what happened?" said Doran.

FLIGHT

"I drove around her," said Kinivan explanatorily, "I heard after she gave separated milk for a week."

He slid the car expertly across the road to the left again so that Doran almost flinched as a level-crossing raced at them and was gone far behind.

"Heard of a bloke once in this game," said Kinivan, "doin' seventy-odd on the bitumen near Bundaberg. When he was fifty yards or so from a level-crossin' his lights went on him. Bashed his foot on the dimmer. Bashed it again. Presto! Lights! No crossin'. Way behind him."

In the lights of the car Doran saw a petrol-pump and a shed at the edge of the road. Beyond that he fancied the outline of a house.

"Mitchell's Crossing," said Kinivan, "we'll be climbing soon."

Doran grunted and picked up the radio-telephone. "Base?" he said experimentally.

"Base. Who's that?"

"Doran."

"Where are you?"

"Just dive-bombed Mitchell's Crossing."

"Ah . . ." said Kinivan the connoisseur.

"I'll tell 'em you're comin'," said Base.

★

McIntosh heard the telephone ring in the mill-office. He sprang away from the cookhouse at the run. After a little while he emerged again and walked into the group of waiting men. He saw them all look at him and the action told him that his face was not as impassive as he had thought.

He said, "Four minutes ago Kinivan came through Mitchell's Crossing."

After a moment, someone said, "He only left town a couple of minutes after seven."

One by one, they turned to study the clock in the cook-house.

Armstrong said, "You know those silly buggers do it for nothin'."

The words seemed to bring McIntosh to life again. The thermometer, he noticed, had risen a trifle.

The man on the ground was very weak and he spoke no more. But when McIntosh squatted down, the eyes implored him . . . "Why don't they come?"

McIntosh's voice was soothing, "Kinivan's coming, Ern. He's comin' like a bat outa hell."

"It's cold," said the man on the ground, "God, it's getting cold."

After a moment, McIntosh said impassively, "It is cold, mate. Sid, get another blanket."

The restlessness was back in the big man. He paced along the hut and came to a stop in front of the pale youth.

"If you was as big as me, sonny, I'd take yer outside an' cut yer ta ribbons."

"Aah, hell!" he added and stared into the night.

★

In the night, the big car dipped across the river bridge and its tyres roared on the gravel in the cutting. Doran was silent while the guide-posts made staccato splats of whiteness.

The night was a fury of noise. The noise was the air whistling past the window, the heavy-duty tyres roaring on the gravel, the high-pitched whine of the engine, the siren howling to the star-lit sky.

The sound of the siren came wailing up the long ridge, through the high forest, through the night, right up to the mill. They heard it, thus, coming from afar off and it brought with it a sense of inevitability, as though all element of chance had been taken up ruthlessly and thrown to one side.

Kevin, I swear quite shortly we'll abscond,
Bidding farewell to every damned committee,
And leave the toiling masses of the city
To the bone-headed ways of which they're fond;

West or North-West, no matter, but beyond
All thought of economic or political
chores, we'll thumb a ride and travel pretty
Fast, with light heads and swags to correspond.

We'll find a country pub that has a garden
Where we can scandalously rest and rollick
Till we are legends and our arteries harden;

Or—which is far more likely—till we find
Ourselves grown partisans in some bucolic
Struggle as deep as what we left behind.

J. S. MANIFOLD

"He's mad," said McIntosh, in soft wonder. "The man's mad."

The sound came nearer, and now that it represented action, McIntosh was at once resolute and ready.

"Bill, grab a torch and flag him down. Dave . . . Blue . . . Sid . . . meself . . . stretcher. You two blood-group blokes stand over there. The rest of you get to hell out of it."

He saw the torch waving beside the road, saw the road light up in the head-lights of the car, heard the dying wail of the siren, heard the engine whine under the gear-change and for one brief second the heavy-duty tyres skidded on the gravel.

Doran was out of the car and gone before it was halted.

In the sudden silence of the car, Kinivan flexed his fingers and stepped down stiffly to the road. He walked around the car, tested the temperature of the heavy tyres with his hand, opened the van doors and pulled out the stretcher.

Someone in the darkness said, "Can I give you a hand?"

"Yair," said Kinivan. "take this stretcher in."

He leant into the cab and switched on the telephone.

"Kinivan, chum."

"Base."

"We're there."

After a moment, Base said, "You know, Johnny, I'll buy you a beer tomorrow."

"You're a jerk," said Kinivan rudely and switched off.

He turned from the car and plodded toward the rectangle of light in the darkness. As he walked, he mopped the film of perspiration from the palms of his hands onto his trousers and felt the onslaught of a weariness which he supposed was only reaction. He shrugged and walked into the hut.

And then he was looking at Doran and Doran was looking at him. The others were all looking at the ground.

Doran said impersonally, "Dead-heat, mate."

He searched for a cigarette.

There was a moment of complete stillness, until Kinivan broke it, with mechanical deliberation, pulling out a handkerchief and wiping his hands. When he had pushed the handkerchief away, he sat down, slowly, on a box and stared at the blanket bulged up on the stretcher.

"I never lost one before," said Kinivan.

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TRIBUTE TO MEANJIN

SOME time in the middle Nineteen-thirties I found myself on the washing-up board, next to Frank Wilmot, at a literary society meeting at which I had spoken during the discussion. Between wipes of the dish-cloth, Wilmot remarked to me: "You know, you oughtn't to be **talking** this stuff, you ought to be **writing** it." Rather taken aback, but willing to try anything once, I asked: "Where could I get it published if I did?" That stumped Wilmot; he could only ruefully admit that there was, indeed, virtually no outlet for literary criticism in Australia, and that its absence contributed largely to the mustiness of the contemporary literary atmosphere.

Early in the Nineteen-forties I picked up a copy of Meanjin Papers, then in its Brisbane infancy. It was a small and cheaply produced journal, but it attracted my notice by the vitality and enthusiasm which it was already displaying. As it happened my strongest reaction to that particular number was a sense of irritation at certain stylistic tendencies in its contributors, a reaction which moved me to compose a waspish protest. Meanjin promptly published it. A few months later, after the Melbourne University had brought Meanjin to Melbourne, Mr. Christesen happened to hear me talking on a subject about which I held strong views. He asked me to write an article on it. Not long after, he suggested another article on a subject I had never thought about—and which it was high time I did think about.

The personal experience I have been describing has no public importance; but the process which it illustrates, and the effects of that process, have had an important influence on the climate of Australian intellectual-life. It happens that I was converted to an interest in Australian writing during the Thirties by a fortunate accident. As a result, contemporary university graduates with literary interests regarded me as eccentric, if not fatuous. Today a younger generation of graduates regard my expressions of that interest, not as eccentric, but as a fustily superficial dabbling in a subject about which they know more than I do. At that literary society which I have mentioned, I once suggested that we should devote an evening to the discussion of Australian work published during the year. The English President quietly pooh-poohed the idea, and his cringing colleagues meekly submitted—the more readily because they hadn't read any of the books I mentioned anyway. One can hardly imagine the same situation arising today.

There have been many factors contributing to this significant development of national attitude; but of those which one can specify, Meanjin has been the most potent. There had been, it is true, an older group of enthusiasts—including, in Melbourne, such people as the Palmers, the late Percival, Serle, Frederick Macartney and others—who had kept alive their despised cause. Southerly, in its staid manner, has progressed beside Meanjin. Rex Ingamells and his colleagues battled with an intransigently youthful vigor. Too little credit, too, has been paid to the literary pages of the Bulletin, which have remarkably retained breadth and vitality after these qualities faded from the other pages of that journal. But Meanjin has been the strongest single influence; if Australians with cultural interests now look upon their literature with warmth of interest and with a critical sympathy, rather than with either indifference or with a pro-



Clem Christesen

selytising and indiscriminating fervor, Meanjin is largely responsible.

Its success has been largely due to its essentially personal quality. It has grown steadily in size, range and gravity without degenerating into an institution, because it has been edited by a man with a sense of vocation. Mr. Christesen has never been content to let contributions fall upon him like manna from an uncertain heaven. He has actively cajoled, nudged, guided and developed his contributors—and they have included, at one time or another, most of the best writers in the community. For many readers, their first acquaintance with the poetry of Judith Wright and A. D. Hope, with the stories of John Morrison and Geoffrey Dutton, with the criticism of Vincent Buckley and Dorothy Auchterlonie, was through the pages of Meanjin. I have selected simply the first names of distinction which came to my mind—the list could easily be multiplied half-a-dozen times; yet those names alone would be enough to justify the existence of a literary journal.

The vitality of the paper has been greatly increased because it has never been content to be merely a literary journal. Its adventures into the discussion of the other arts and of social problems have helped to ward off the threat of taxidermist's stuffiness which always hangs over the exclusively literary. There has always been a flavor in it of what I may call "personal politics"—that is, of a trend of opinion to which the Editor was clearly personally sympathetic. Inevitably that has aroused criticism. For myself I dissent fairly strongly from the direction of these Meanjin opinions; I find them sometimes naive and sometimes crotchety; but I have never wished them away—nor, I think, would anyone in whom the democratic impulse was more than skin-deep. The essence of a democratic intelligence is that it is prepared to hear—and even to listen to—opinions with which it disagrees. For that reason, the expression of minority opinion in Meanjin has been valuable; even the naivete and the crotchettiness has added to the flavor and the individuality of the paper—and it is our feeling that it has a flavor which has done most to keep it alive.

Too much, however, has been made of this flavor of "personal politics" by the journal's critics. Shocked by this mild naughtiness, they have overlooked Mr. Christesen's readiness to publish—and even to seek—political opinions which differ widely from his own. Meanjin has published the views of Mr. R. G. Menzies, the late Sir Frederick Eggleston,

Time the Eternal Now

We measure out a day
And think we measure time—
Time the eternal now!
Like birds upon a bough
We sit and talk a while,
And then we are away.
But time, the bough, remains.

Now is but all man has,
For yesterday is gone,
Tomorrow is not yet.
Lose now, and all is done.
Time, his eternal now,
Man rests upon
As on a bough.

Then off he flies
And only time remains.
Time, life's eternal now.

MARY GILMORE



Shadows

"You'll be all right if you don't look back,"
They told her; but the road was black,
And as she walked, she grew less bold, her
Eyes went glancing o'er her shoulder.

"I'm not afraid where there is light,"
She cried, "but oh, it's such a night:
The dark, the wind, the lonely track . . .
I was all right till I looked back."

IAN HEALY

Lord Lindsay, Mr. J. F. Cairns, Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick and Mr. Len Fox. Can any other journal of political opinion in Australia boast anything like this breadth?

Meanjin's achievement has been the more remarkable because it has never known a moment of financial health. It has lived vigorously for fifteen years always in the shadow of imminent death. Probably no literary journal of comparable stature, anywhere in the Anglo-Saxon world, has had so little outside help. The Commonwealth Literary Fund—to its credit—has done something: Melbourne University has added its modicum: a few individuals who value it have sometimes dipped into their usually shallow pockets: but its only consistently generous patron has been Mr. Christesen himself. He has had to be at once the worried attendant prescribing financial transfusions, and the blood-donor-in-chief.

Today Meanjin faces a crisis rendered more serious by Mr. Christesen's departure for Europe. It is a matter of public moment that this crisis should be overcome. If, on his return, his journal cannot be handed back to him, alive, with its kick unimpaired, and freed from the exhausting drag of financial uncertainty, Australian culture will be the poorer—and Australian culture will be shamed.

Four Poems



—Ron Edwards

I.

Leisure after work
on army affairs; autumn wind
autumn rain and autumn cold
chills; then one hears
the sound of flutes
coming through the hills;
guerillas have returned
and I rejoice that wine enough
is left for them.

II.

Fifteenth
of the first month
a great round moon
and a river that seems
in the distance, to run
right up to the sky;
in the haze, we discuss
our work of fighting
and the whole boat is flooded
with the light of the moon.

III.

Moonlight comes through
the window, begging a poem;
but a soldier's work holds me
so I cannot compose one;
the bell in the mountain temple
resounds, bringing me out
of an autumn dream with the news
of victory on our frontiers.

IV.

As I read, the hill birds
look through the lattice;
the shadow of flowers falls
over the ink slab; so often
it is the tired horse
that brings back news of victory;
remembering you,
I write these lines to send you.

HO CHI MINH
(trans. Rewi Alley)

Flora Sydney Eldershaw

FLORA ELDELSHAW'S death at her sister's home near Wagga on September 20 brought to an end a literary collaboration unique in Australian writing, and perhaps anywhere: the collaboration that produced the series of novels, critical essays and historical studies that appeared under the signature M. Barnard Eldershaw. Many readers of Barnard Eldershaw's works are probably unaware that the name represented two people—Flora Eldershaw and Marjorie Barnard. Flora Eldershaw's published work all appeared under their joint signature.

Commencing to write in the late 'twenties, the two authors began to make their contribution to literature at a time when writers were still struggling to gain recognition for a literature that was genuinely Australian.

The Riverina district where Flora Eldershaw was reared found a direct reflection in her writing only in the single short story "The Plover" ("Coast to Coast," 1941) and as a kind of idyllic frame to the tough and stormy Sydney world shown in "Tomorrow and Tomorrow." Something of the Riverina atmosphere, though—the resourcefulness and endurance demanded of drovers, bush hospitality and mateship—colored Flora's thoughts and attitudes. For Barnard and Eldershaw literature was a collective enterprise, their work part of a broad current that flowed through the early folk songs and yarns, and democratic realism of Lawson and Furphy, and the novels and stories of our own times.

The feeling for history, which is a major characteristic of the Barnard Eldershaw works, arose when the two writers met as students at Sydney University. It was to Sydney, in which several generations of history were embedded and which formed the largest centre of population, that they turned for their human themes.

When "A House is Built" won the Bulletin competition in 1929, the two unknown young women who were its authors were astounded to find themselves sharing such an honor with the already famous Katharine Susannah Prichard. That book has remained their most "successful" novel, in the sense that it is usually in print and most large book-sellers can be relied on to have it in stock—a rare honor for any Australian classic. By the authors, though, it came to be regarded a little contemptuously—"a period piece", Flora Eldershaw used to call it, a family novel, conventional in pattern, perhaps a little reminiscent of Galsworthy or Thackeray. In its time, though, it was a pioneering story, taking its Australian setting for granted and dealing with it in realistic terms, and it remains a solid, readable narrative.

In subsequent novels—"Green Memory", "The Glasshouse" and "Plaque with Laurel"—the sense of the past and its intricate interweaving with present and future remained a haunting theme. "Plaque with Laurel" has the bitter theme of a number of writers fore-gathering to do honor to a writer who is respectably dead, while another rather like him is dying in the midst of loneliness and frustration.

Early Australian history was the subject of two studies, "Phillip of Australia" and the "Life and Times of Captain John Piper", which were notable, as Frederick Macartney remarked recently, for an imaginative penetration into character not always found in historians.

"Tomorrow and Tomorrow" is a historical work of another kind. Opening in an imaginary Australia four hundred years hence, the authors use this vantage point in time to portray the world of Sydney through the years between the two world wars and into an imagined cold war that turns out to be not only cold. It was the controversial, "cold war" aspects of the book that held up its publication till 1947 though it was completed in 1942. The version finally published had been subjected to some censorship—in case "our gallant ally" (of those days) became offended at the suggestion of Australia being forcibly drawn into a war against her by a "big brother" power, which threatened to take over Sydney by force if the Australians didn't fall into line.

The story of contemporary Australia ends in a tragic shambles—the Sydneysiders imitating the wild colonial boy, destroying their city and setting out on a trek to the outback, rather than be drawn into a quarrel which they feel is not their own.

Unconvinced as we may be by parts of the fantasy that frames "Tomorrow and Tomorrow", it stands as a penetrating imaginative record of the conflicts in Australia between the two wars. Its main character, Harry Munster, a returned soldier from the first world war, is sympathetically seen as he retains his dogged courage and humanity, journeying from one disappointment to another.

Written before the atom bomb was public knowledge, this novel is wound around the central problems of our times: must the individual be a helpless pawn in a world of economic chaos? Will this chaotic society end in violence? Must Australia submit to the orders of an elder brother sending battle-ships into the Harbor to maintain order? When a stable society is eventually established, how will individuals fare within its framework?

We may not, of course, agree with the alternatives as the book is inclined to pose them. The helplessness of individual man is perhaps given the undue weight it tends to occupy in the minds of many writers. Nonetheless "Tomorrow and Tomorrow" is a moving and intensely interesting narrative.

Writing for publication was, of course, only part of Flora Eldershaw's contribution to literature. President of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in 1935 and 1943, she worked with Frank Dalby Davison for the reconstitution of the Commonwealth Literary Advisory Board on a broader and more effective basis and served on the Board from 1939 till she retired owing to ill-health in 1953. Her devotion to the common aims of writers generally and her belief in the future of Australia were two of her outstanding characteristics that will always be remembered.



Testimonies to the work of Flora Eldershaw for Australian literature were paid at a Memorial Evening organised by the Australasian Book Society on October 10. Tributes were made by Vance Palmer, Jean Campbell, Frank Dalby Davison, Frederick Macartney and Leonard Mann. Messages were received from the Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies), the Leader of the Opposition (Rt. Hon. Dr. H. V. Evatt), Miss Marjorie Barnard and Mr. Leslie Haylen, M.P.

So They Say . . .

Soviet Ballet in London

“. . . Naturally, there have been carpers: English ballet criticism today reflects almost absolutely the fashionable choreographic view that theatrical quality in ballet is largely redundant, and pure dance invention and the exploitation of technique (which in some cases today has become wearily arid and acrobatic) are of prime importance.

“. . . The degeneration is ours of the West; and if we can teach the Russians some things in newer dance movements, we can teach them nothing at all, and should indeed learn from them, with regard to qualities of dramatic narrative and sheer lyricism of movement.”

London Special Correspondent, Melbourne Age,
October 27, 1956.

Bertold Brecht in London

The famous Berliner Ensemble of Bertold Brecht opened a London season on August 27. Brecht himself died suddenly, at the age of 58, a couple of weeks before the London visit. Here are two London comments on Brecht and his theatre.*



“Bertold Brecht died at the very moment when his work was beginning to gain world-wide recognition as probably the central event in twentieth-century drama . . .

“It is one of the many paradoxes of Brecht’s life and career that he has made, and is still making, his chief impact on the Western world, although he created his own theatre in East Berlin, where he lived for the last eight years, and called himself a Communist for half his life. Whether he really was one would take a long and profound study to decide. His stern moral pessimism and Puritanism is not easy to reconcile with Marxist materialist optimism, and his highly avant-gardist and individual style was certainly poles apart from the plushy Stalinist-Victorianism until recently rescribed; indeed his theatre, though in Western eyes the glory of East Berlin, had in recent years become rather an embarrassment to East German official critics, and the Party papers either ignored or attacked his productions.

“But the East German Government, to its credit, gave him unlimited facilities and with one notorious exception, full artistic freedom, and he rewarded it with unqualified loyalty as a citizen, whatever his reservations and deviations as a thinker and artist. Moreover, he was always a radical, and often a devastatingly precise critic of twentieth-century Western civilisation—nobody had a sharper and more merciless eye for its muddle, its cant, its moral feebleness, and its incidental and careless inhumanity . . .

* Australian footnote: One of the most successful of the recent London Brecht productions was “Trumpets and Drums”, an adaptation of George Farquhar’s 18th-century comedy “The Recruiting Officer.” This play was the first ever produced in Australia—on June 4, 1789, with Governor Phillip in the audience.

“All in all, he was probably the nearest equivalent to Shakespeare ever to appear anywhere—indeed, if one believed in the transmigration of souls, one could be tempted to think that he was Shakespeare reborn. The parallels are striking: on a lower plane, the combination of the dramatist and the theatrical producer, writing plays for his own stage, and the liking for adaptation of the work of others, which inevitably becomes all his own under his hands; in the higher sphere, the fantastic register of poetic language, reaching from the bawdy to the sublime and from the purest tenderness to an almost unbearable harshness, and the incredible fertility of character creation . . .

“It is perhaps the most moving thing in Brecht that often the creator in him gets the better of the moralist and teacher, and that figures which are meant only to provide a lesson and a warning example become so warm with life and humanity that we end up by loving them—a sure sign that their creator, too, could not help loving them despite himself.”

Sebastian Haffner in London Observer.
August 19, 1956.

★

“There has been almost alarming unanimity in failing to realise that the art of Bertold Brecht constitutes the most decisive step forward in the history of the theatre since the golden age of Elizabethan drama.

“Indeed, stemming in direct line from that theatre it has saved 20th century drama from the naturalists in the drawing-room and planted it firmly in the mainstream of life.

“Brecht was a realist. But a poetic realist. He was not anti-Chekov or anti-Stanislawsky, as many suggest. He was simply beyond them.

“They chained the theatre down within three walls and established immediately definable limits to what the theatre could achieve. Brecht kicked down the walls.

“With the realism of Chekhov we are no longer spectators. Chekhov created a theatre so much like life itself that audiences became participants rather than spectators . . . but passive participants.

“With Brecht you must be partisan, not passive. ‘I admire Chekhov’, he once told an interviewer. ‘But I do not want to go away from a play shrugging my shoulders and saying: “Life is like that”. I want to understand what is wrong and how to put it right’ . . .

“Brecht’s greatest play, the monumental ‘Mother Courage’, very frequently involves us emotionally.

“She batters on war like a fly on a rotting carcase. When all her children are dead she still pushes on hoping for the crust of bread from the spoils. She is at once the folly of mankind (pursuing war without question) and the heartbeat of mankind (refusing to give up).

“We cannot help but be emotionally involved in this, for we are watching a play as large as life itself. We are involved because Brecht is showing that war is evil and mankind only its victims.

“The author does not have to make Courage open her eyes at the end,’ writes Brecht, ‘his concern is with the eyes of the audience.’

"This deliberate retreat (or, rather, advance) from the magic theatre which seeks only a way to the audience's heart is of the utmost importance. It is an affirmation of the social role of the artist.

"For Communists, in particular, Brecht's greatness lies in the fact that he is probably the first Marxist artist to achieve a complete synthesis of form and content.

"Many Marxist writers have revolutionised the content of their art. Few have revolutionised its form. But revolutions are not carried out without opposition.

"In East Germany itself there is a substantial body of opinion opposed to his style of theatre, which is in far sharper contrast to German production tradition than it is to the British tradition.

"But for some critics to suggest that Brecht himself worked under duress in Eastern Germany is very far from the truth.

"They point to the fact that all his major work was written in exile. They forget the equally important truth that all his major work has only been produced since he returned to Berlin. And Brecht, who was no ivory tower writer, considered it essential that his theatre should reach a wide audience."

Paul Grahame in London Daily Worker.

Congress of Cultural Freedom

"The monthly bulletin distributed free by the Australian Committee for Cultural Freedom may help to elucidate the aims of the organisation. Beyond question, a remarkably large majority of contributions are clearly directed against the Soviet Union, China, and the countries of Eastern Europe on political, economic, religious and artistic levels. Certainly the reader is informed (in a recent issue) that 'The views expressed in these pages are to be attributed to the authors, not to the sponsors', but it is obvious that an official bulletin such as this is bound to reflect the aims of the organisation, even though it be only through the exercise of editorial policy in the selection of material for publication. Could it be significant that there are few Australian contributors, and that no analysis is made of restrictions on cultural freedom? . . .

"Funds which are received from the parent body are provided by a number of American foundations, such as the Rockefeller and Fairfield foundations, and by prominent British, American and Western European citizens', and although we are told that 'These funds are made available to the Australian Committee free of any conditions and directions' several queries spring to mind. It seems strange that businessmen should part readily with their money unless assured that it is to be used for purposes considered satisfactory to them. It would seem, therefore, that the Congress and its financial backers have confidence in the Australian Committee. If this is the case it would appear to indicate the existence of aims and objects in an explicit form in which they are not available to the Australian public . . .

"It appears that the various subsidiary national committees are in fact merely off-shoots of the Congress, which has apparently selected the committee of its choice in each country. Further, membership being by invitation, and the public admitted only to associate membership, it appears that the Australian Committee is particularly concerned to maintain itself as a self-appointed vigilance committee without the possible intrusion of members whose ideas of what constitutes cultural freedom differ from those of the original members . . .

Two Men Talking

Two men talking, and I overheard one say,
"If I had my way,
I'd line 'em up against a wall,
And shoot the buggers dead,
That's what I'd do with all them," he said.
Just talking on a corner,
In a peaceful, sunny street,
The blue sky above, and clouds,
Birds singing, blossom sweet.
That's what he said,
"Shoot 'em dead."

Then the street changed, became overcast,
And there were men with their backs to the wall,
And a line of others with rifles,
In uniform, straight and tall.
They shot them dead.
The men lay there, a foul mess, a human mess,
Dreams stopped forever.
And the street was washed with blood.
The widows and children mourned their dead,
The street ran again with a flood
Of tears, but it couldn't wash off the blood.
Dreams stopped forever,
And gutters full of blood.

Then the sun came out,
The blossom smelt sweet,
There it was,
The original street
And the two men talking.
I heard one say,
"If I had my way
I'd just line 'em up and shoot 'em dead."
Dead, dead, dead,
That's what he said,
"Shoot 'em dead."
The blossom still smelt sweet,
But there was blood in the street.

ANNE LAWSON

"This is why it is relevant to seek a clear statement of the aims of an organisation such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom, whose title implies the promotion of policies on which the Australian Committee has taken no action and made no statement. Apart from definition of its general aims, what particularly requires clarification is the extent to which the Congress is a platform for political crusading and the maintenance of the cold war."

From Editorial, *Westerly*, No. 2, 1956.

Horrors of the Ming Dynasty

"In the endless Ming dynasty there have not been many acts of philistinism quite as humiliating to one's sense of national decency as the revolting oriental despotism displayed by the Prime Minister over the Chinese Classical Opera Company. While that red-hot Communist, Sir Anthony Eden, is queuing up to see the Bolshoi Ballet, our bird-brained national leaders have voted against the 2000 years consensus of civilised opinion that works of art are international and non-political in character . . ."

Mary's Own Paper, Adelaide.

(Editor's Note: "Mary's Own Paper" is a brilliantly written and witty monthly review of cultural events (primarily) in South Australia, written, we suspect, by Max Harris and available at 9/6 a year from Mary Martin Bookshop, 75 Rundle Street, Adelaide.)

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To: Joseph Waters, 360 Collins St., Melb.

Conviction

by A. E. Sturges

OLD Alva hurried down the drive, mumbling with excitement: Jenny'll be there, she'll be there today. He felt it as something positive, like the sun on his head, the chafe of rough serge on his legs. At the gate he stopped, and turned to look up at the Home clock. Twenty-five past three! He must hurry. Twenty-five past three, another five minutes; he could go a long way in five minutes, old as he was. How old **was** he now? Sixty? No, those chocolates with the roses on the lid were for his sixtieth birthday. Who from? Myra? No; Myra always gave him something useful—sox, a warm singlet, a scarf. Anyway, they were all gone now; he kept his handkerchiefs in the box. Had he brought a clean one? Yes, here. The lollies? Yes. Goodness, here he was, dawdling, as though he had time to waste. He hurried again, past the benches by the yellow stone wall, around the corner where the grey tower, castlelike, ivy-covered, dwarfed the houses, past the old church with straw-colored grass high about the gravestones, until there at the foot of the hill he saw the red tiled roof, the rows of flashing windows, the tennis court, the cricket pitch, and the tall white goalposts at either end of the playground.

The playground was empty. He was too late. He stopped, stood despondent, not caring to go on, hating to turn back. He reproached himself bitterly; he shouldn't have stopped for a second cup of tea. But it had been so hot in the garden, and he'd had to keep working, he needed the money for the pictures. And now he had missed her. The clock must be slow, it could hardly be a minute or so after half-past. Well, tomorrow he'd make certain, he'd—

Sudden and startling the school bell rang. He lifted his head, his eyes brightened. The quadrangle door slid back, letting out a river of children. They spread across the playground, running, skipping, walking.

Old Alva drew a deep breath, and hurried down the hill.

He stood a few yards from the gate, watching them come through. The boys passed unnoticed; he peered at the girls closely, turning his head this way and that like a man counting sheep. They gathered behind him, giggling and whispering.

"Who'll he choose today?"

"He's got the lollies!"

As the stream of children thinned he became more anxious, searching desperately now for Jenny's black hair and big brown eyes. Oh God, let her be here, he thought, and like a miracle, there she was! He saw her, he stiffened, his eyes shone; shaking with excitement his lean hand stretched out to hers, took it, held it. "Jenny!" he cried. Behind him the little girls held handkerchiefs to mouths to stifle their giggles.

His eyes devoured her. The child stared back, wide-eyed, not afraid, fascinated. "Jenny," he whispered. He bent over her, thin as a wind-curved reed; the young face, fresh-skinned and clear-eyed, the purity and innocence that shone there, touched him; a pang of love went through him, tears wet his eyes, and his heart was filled with joy. He sighed; then took from his pocket the bag of lollies and pressed them into her hand. The watchers danced with joy; the girl, hearing them, turned her head; her mouth twitched at their antics, she giggled, bit her lips, giggled again, uncontrollably. The old man, bewildered, stared at her, his mouth open, the

brightness fading from his eyes. Something was wrong; Jenny was looking at him queerly, as a stranger would. It **wasn't** Jenny! Where was Jenny? His mind whirled, the thoughts formed slowly. Myra said yesterday—was it yesterday? Said that Jenny . . . What was it she had told him—that Jenny was grown-up, and married, living a long way away. Myra was cruel to tell him such nonsense. Why had she? Jenny was only seven. Seven? Eight? He couldn't remember. Where **was** she? This wasn't Jenny. Yet he'd thought—he'd seen—he was sure . . . He felt old, tired, very tired. Tomorrow—perhaps tomorrow . . .

Miss Kingston paused at the top of the steps to stare at the group by the gate. As she watched, her lips tightened, her breathing quickened. She turned about, scurried along the passage to the headmaster's office, tapped perfunctorily on the door and burst in. The headmaster, surprised, half rose as he saw Miss Kingston's agitation.

"That old man—he's here again. Down by the gate, pestering the little girls."

The headmaster sat back in his chair, fingered his chin. "Mm. Do you think he does any harm? Frightens them? That last time, they seemed more amused than frightened. Remember? We don't want to . . ."

Miss Kingston's breast rose and fell with indignation. "You promised—you said that next time you'd do something. If we wait till something **happens**—what will people say if . . ."

The headmaster raised his hand. "All right, Miss Kingston." He pulled the phone closer, dialled. "Police Station? Oh, Rayner, Hamilton Street Primary School here. Rayner, headmaster. Yes. I wonder if you could spare someone to come over? At once, if possible. There's an old man—he's from the Home on the hill behind us—he hangs around the little girls as they leave. Three times. No. nothing definite. Yes. One of our teachers. Yes. That's right. Yes, the front gate. If you turn up—that's it. Thank you; goodbye."

"Now, kid," Detective-Sergeant Haynes, at the wheel of the patrol car, spoke to his brother from ten years' experience. "This is your chance. We've had complaints about this old bloke before, running after little girls in the park. You can't miss. And it's about time you got a conviction, or the Super'll be wondering why you're wearing a uniform."

When they stopped at the school gate the old man was still there, looking dejectedly at the little girls grouped about Miss Kingston, who clucked them close like a hen her chickens. The policemen got out, touched their caps.

"Afternoon, Miss. What's the trouble?"

Miss Kingston gestured towards Alva. "That old man—he's been pestering the girls. This is the third time. I told Mr. Rayner, but at first he wouldn't—"

"What does he do, Miss?"

Miss Kingston blushed. The constable dropped his eyes. The sergeant, hardened, chuckled inwardly.

"Do?" she asked.

"Yes. Does he . . . interfere with them? Touch them?"

"He holds their hands. Gives them lollies."

"Ah . . . holds their hands." The sergeant, satisfied, nodded at his brother. "Well, you leave him to us, Miss. We'll look after things. What name was it, Miss? Full name, please."

"Ogla Estelle Kingston." Miss Kingston blushed a second time.

"Thanks Miss." The sergeant put away his notebook, smiled at the children; his eyes met his brother's, he jerked his head in the direction of the old man. Old Alva watched them coming. He felt uneasy, as if something menaced him; the way they walked troubled him.

The sergeant spoke jocularly. "Now Pop, what's this I hear? Eh? An old man like you."

Old Alva, apprehensive, stared at him without speaking.

"What were you doing, eh?"

"Looking for Jenny."

"Looking for Jenny? And who's Jenny?"

"My little girl."

"You don't mean your daughter?"

"Yes."

The sergeant shook his head, smiled with a closed mouth. "Be reasonable, Pop. What'd you be—about seventy-five? Kid yourself, don't you?" He grinned at his brother; the constable's eyes wavered away. The old man stared, puzzled. The sergeant spoke impatiently. "Come on, then. You'd better come along to the station. Have a ride in the car."

Old Alva backed away. The sergeant took his arm. "Come on."

"I want to go home," the old man whined.

The sergeant tightened his hold. "Ah no, not yet you're not. We want to ask you a few questions." He pulled the old man gently towards the car. Old Alva struggled awkwardly. The sergeant breathed heavily. "Look Pop, I don't want to get rough. But if you don't behave yourself . . . Take his other arm, Fred."

Between them they forced him to the car; the constable got into the back with him. In silence they drove to the station.

"Now old fellow, you sit there. We're going to ask you a few questions, and write down your answers. Then all you'll have to do is sign your name."

Old Alva looked uneasily round the room. It was dim, gloomy. He felt weak, as if he had been bleeding.

"Like a glass of water?"

He looked up, surprised; it was the first time the young one had spoken. He had a kind voice.

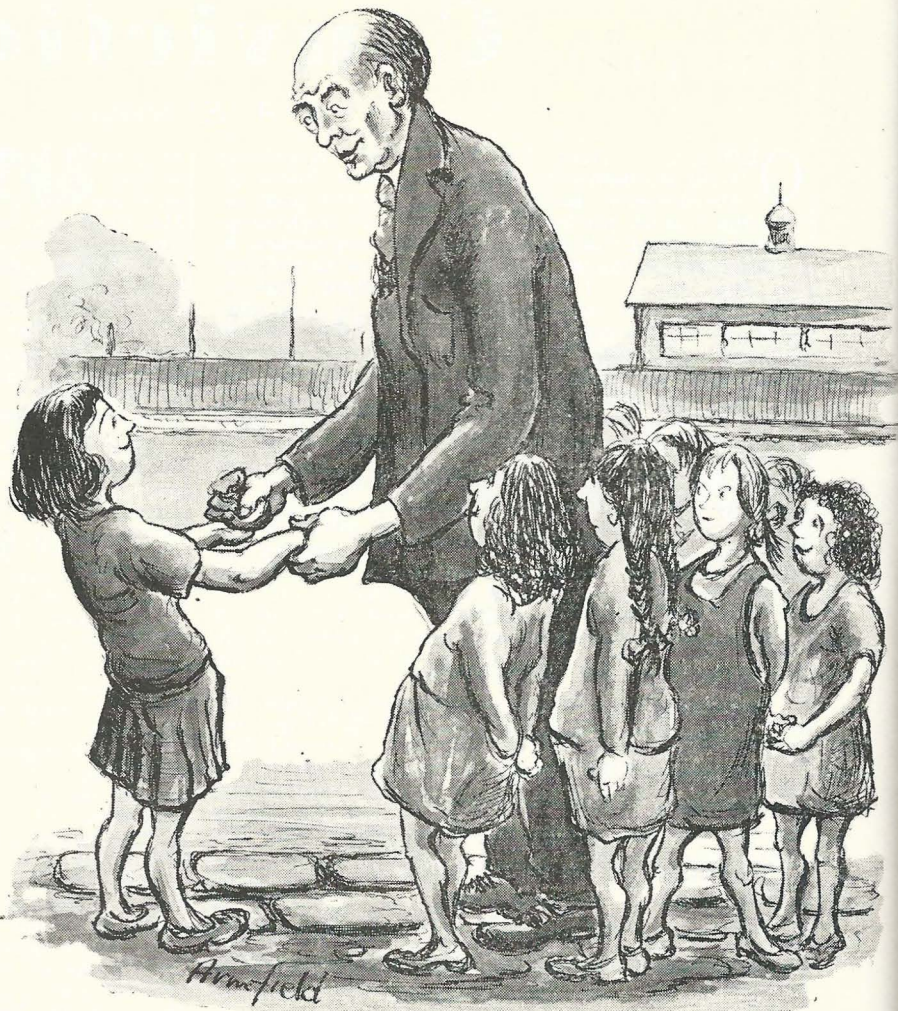
"Yes please."

As the constable left the room he motioned with his head to his brother. The sergeant followed him out.

"Shouldn't he dictate the statement?"

The sergeant gave him a withering look. "Think you'd get one?"

"And shouldn't that teacher be here? We didn't see him do anything."



The sergeant grinned. "Didn't we? Who says so?" He went back in. When the old man had finished his drink, the sergeant nodded to his brother.

"Right, Pop. What's your name?"

"Alva Sullivan."

"Alva?" The sergeant gave him a hard look. "Wouldn't kid me, would you?"

The old man frowned. "Alva Sullivan," he said again.

"OK, OK. Where do you live?"

"At the Home."

"What's its name?"

Old Alva frowned. "Just the Home."

"Mm . . . How old are you?"

"I . . . I'm not sure. Over sixty."

The sergeant cackled. "No kidding. All right; over sixty."

He leaned closer. "You like the little girls, do you Pop? Like to hold their hands?"

Old Alva stiffened. He was suddenly frightened; not by the words, but by the sergeant's attitude: still, tense, waiting—a spider watching a fly.

"How do you feel when you touch them, eh? Sort of excited; all worked up?"

Old Alva stared, saying nothing. The sergeant rapped out sharply, "What have you been hanging round the school for?"

The old man flinched. "Looking for Jenny?"

"Jenny, eh. And who's Jenny?"

"My little girl."

The sergeant's eyes narrowed. "Don't give us that stuff again. You haven't got any little girl."

Old Alva sat up straight. "Jenny's my little girl," he frowned. "I was looking for her. She came through the gate—I saw her, touched her. She spoke to me, held my hand. I gave her the lollies. Then . . ." His voice faltered. "Then she—I saw—she . . . she changed." His face crumpled, as if he were about to cry. "It—it wasn't Jenny." I don't know . . ." He sniffed. The sergeant pulled a face.

"All right Pop, all right; don't you worry any more. You just sign your name now, and it'll be all over." He put the pad and pen on the table in front of the old man. "There; sign there."

Old Alva looked at him sideways. "No," he said, suddenly cunning. The sergeant compressed his lips.

"Now look Pop. You sign, and there'll be no trouble. You'll just sleep here the night, see the P.M. in the morning, and then go home. But if you don't . . ."

Old Alva stared at him, open-mouthed. Sleep here? Here? Panic rose in him, he found it hard to breathe. There must be some mistake. "I want to go home," he whined, and stood up.

The sergeant pushed him down. Old Alva struggled to get up; the sergeant's hand slipped, and the old man's head caught him under the chin. The sergeant swore. He shoved the old man down roughly, picked up the pen, forced it into his fingers. "Sign."

Old Alva sat stubborn. The sergeant screwed up his mouth and stood for a moment breathing heavily, then slapped the back of the old man's head. Alva cowered down in the chair.

The constable stared at his brother. "You should not have done that, Joe."

The sergeant swung round, furious. "Shut up! You want your conviction, don't you?"

He turned back to the old man. "Now, come on." He tried to put the pen in Alva's fingers; their hands wrestled; the sergeant's, slipping, rapped against Alva's nose. Alva's head jerked back, then bent slowly forward. He put a hand over his eyes. Blood dripped slowly on to the table. Old Alva snuffled.

"There." The sergeant's voice was exasperated. "It's your own fault. If you'd only do what you're told . . ."

The constable took a clean handkerchief from his pocket and put it into the old man's hand, glared at his brother. The sergeant ignored him. Old Alva pressed the handkerchief to his nose, and sat sniffing. The sergeant spoke coaxingly. "Look, Pop, the longer you hold us up, the longer it'll be till you get home. See? Just sign this, and you can go in the morning."

In the morning. Home. Look for Jenny again. He wouldn't find her here, it was too dark. Jenny liked the light, the sun. Even as a tiny thing she wouldn't stay inside, but toddled out into the sun and light. (He took the pen without realising it as the sergeant pushed it gently between his forefinger and thumb.) He must remember to buy some more lollies. Jenny loved lollies. He could do a bit more weeding . . .

"Sign there."

Then he could go home, look for her again. He signed his name, stood up. The sergeant passed the statement to his brother without looking at him.

"I'll go home now," Alva said.

"Tomorrow, Pop. Tonight you sleep here."

Old Alva made a sudden dash for the door. The sergeant grabbed him; Alva struggled, but the sergeant was too strong, his fingers bit into Alva's arm, hurting him. Alva began to snuffle. The ser-

geant lost his temper, shook him. "What's the matter with you now?"

"I want to go to the pictures."

"You what?" The sergeant couldn't believe his ears.

"It's my night for the pictures. We're only allowed to go once a week."

"Pictures! What's an old man like you want to go to the pictures for?"

The old man stood sullen, silent.

"Come on, we'll go and see the bloke in the charge room. He'll write your name down in the book."

Old Alva started to cry, noisily, horribly. The constable went white. "Joe! Let him go. Let the poor old fellow go."

The sergeant went red. "What the —? You damned fool. You've got your statement, haven't you?"

"It wasn't got fairly."

The sergeant sneered. "Ar, come off it, will you. You kids are all the bloody same—want to arrest a murderer, or smash a dope ring or something. Why don't you grow up?" He pulled the old man a few steps towards the door.

"Joe!" The constable ripped the statement from the pad, tore it across, then again. The sergeant dropped the old man's arm, and strode up to his brother.

"You idiot. I ought to punch you on the bloody nose. Now what are we going to do? Eh? What are we going to tell the headmaster? That we got a statement and then tore it up? That we had him, and let him go? Sound nice, won't it?"

"Let them do what's right," the constable said sulkily. "He didn't confess. They should have sent the teacher here, to lay a complaint. We didn't see him do anything wrong."

The sergeant glared at him. "You'll get on." He turned to the old man. "All right, Pop, you can go. But you better not let me catch you hanging round any little girls again." He looked at his watch. "Hey! What time do you have tea at the Home?"

"Five o'clock."

"Hell! It's nearly half-past six. I'd better run you up in the bus."

The old man looked worried. He shook his head. "No; I don't want any tea."

"Why?"

"I'd be too late for the pictures."

The sergeant shrugged. "I'll tell you what. I'll give the Home a ring, tell 'em you're OK, having tea in town. I'll fix you with a few bob for a feed."

The old man looked full at him. "Thank you. You're very kind."

The sergeant stared at him suspiciously, then dropped his eyes. "That's OK, Pop," he mumbled. He took some coins from his pocket, put them in the old man's hand. "All right, Pop, you cut along. I'll ring the Home."

Old Alva hurried along the street. He was worried: it was getting dark; the street was a strange one; he wasn't sure of the way and he was hungry. But he mustn't be late; he'd just have a pie and roll and a cup of coffee. He must keep his eye open for a restaurant. He wished it wasn't so dark.

Suddenly the world brightened. Street lamps flicked on, and as Alva turned a corner he saw he was close to the heart of the city; the street was lined with shops and overhead the neon signs glowed and blinked. A few yards ahead of him a restaurant advertised itself in a blaze of color.

Old Alva's heart lightened. And suddenly, with a rush of excitement, he felt it: Jenny'll be there. At the pictures, outside, waiting—waiting for me. Yes, tonight she'll be there. Little Jenny. Dear Jenny. I know I'll see her tonight.



Australasian Book Society

17 ELIZABETH STREET
MELBOURNE - MB 2292

188 GEORGE STREET
SYDNEY - WX 1494

BOOKS . . . WRITERS . . . READERS

ALAN MARSHALL'S NEW BOOK

Popular writer Alan Marshall's new book, "How's Andy Going?", is the current Australasian Book Society selection.

The Society has arranged with Mr. Marshall's publishers, F. W. Cheshire, for a special edition of this new collection of stories for A.B.S. members and subscribers.

Mr. Marshall is well known to Australian readers as the author of the best-selling "These Are My People" and "I Can Jump Puddles." His latest book will not disappoint his many admirers; it contains a wide range of Mr. Marshall's work, from yarns of the Speewa to stories of childhood, from Aboriginal legends to modern city stories.

"How's Andy Going?" is at present being distributed to A.B.S. members, and is available to all who join the Society now. Mr. Marshall is speaking at a series of evenings arranged by the Society in his home city, Melbourne.

RUM AND COCA-COLA

The rush arrangements for issue of Alan Marshall's book—an opportunity which we felt we could not miss on behalf of our members—has set back slightly distribution of Ralph de Boissiere's new novel, "Rum and Coca-Cola."

This A.B.S. selection has now finished printing, and will be delivered to members close on the heels of the Alan Marshall book.

The Society is arranging to present the West Indian teams now visiting Melbourne for the Olympic Games with copies of Ralph de Boissiere's two novels of life in Trinidad.

WALTER KAUFMANN IN AUSTRALIA

A.B.S. members will be glad to welcome back to Australia Walter Kaufmann, author of "Voices in the Storm."

After a two-year stay in Europe, Mr. Kaufmann has returned to Australia as an official of the German Olympic Games team.

He says that he has finished one novel and nearly finished another during his stay in Europe. He hopes to spend some weeks in Melbourne and Sydney after the Games.

FRANK HARDY RETURNS

Frank Hardy's flying tour of Europe, during which he visited several countries, and spoke to many writers (including the popular Russian writer, Ilya Ehrenburg), promises good developments for Australian writers.

Mr. Hardy reports that European publishing houses are favourably considering translations of work by Alan Marshall, John Morrison and other Australian authors.

CAPITAL FUND:

THE HALF-WAY MARK

A.B.S. is glad to report that its appeal for the £3,000 capital needed to ensure its effective operation has already been half-filled by advances and donations from the Society's members.

Nearly all this amount has come from individual members in Sydney and Melbourne.

Support from other States, from country areas, from organisations which support the Society, will go a long way to filling the fund by Christmas.

TO A.B.S.: A MANAGER

The Society is glad to welcome to its staff Mrs. Joan Hume, who has taken up the position of Manager. Mr. Ian Turner continues as Secretary. This promises to be a real help in sorting out the Society's many problems of administration.

NEW BOOKS OF INTEREST

Recent publications of interest to A.B.S. members include: **The Australian Commonwealth**, Brian Fitzpatrick's survey of Australian life in the last half century (337 pages, 31/-). **Australian Signpost**, an anthology of Australian writing edited by T. A. G. Hungerford and including contributions by Alan Marshall, John Morrison, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Roland Robinson, Russel Ward, Judith Wright (308 pages, 19/6). **The Overlander Songbook**, a collection of 70 Australian bush songs, words and music, edited by Ron Edwards (8/-). These are available from A.B.S., as are all books reviewed in **Overland**. Above prices include postage.

To The Australasian Book Society.

Please send me: Information about joining A.B.S.

Further information about the A.B.S. capital fund.

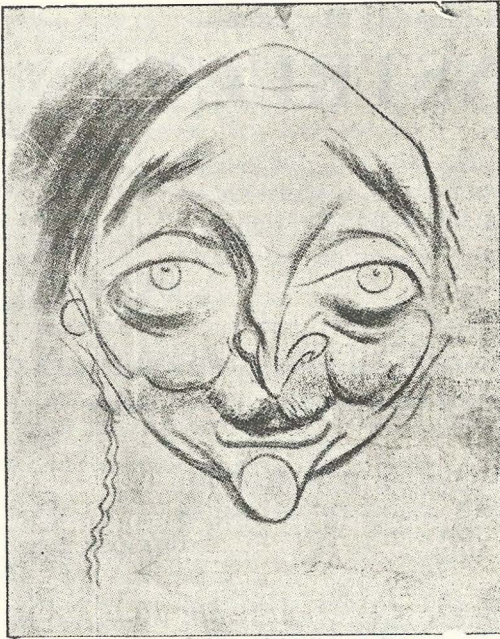
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ALAN MARSHALL



Noel Counihan

WHEN I first knew Alan Marshall I was impressed by the intense devotion with which he was setting out to master his craft. This shouldn't have been so unusual in a young writer, but it was. He had already won several short-story prizes; he had a novel in progress which afterwards became "How Beautiful Are Thy Feet." And it seemed as if all the highly-strung mechanism of his will that had carried him over so many obstacles in life was keyed up to this new task of forging a literary style and method for himself. How to make every verb in his writing flash with movement, every sentence flow rhythmically into the next, every paragraph snap shut with a click! He had a tight, limited ideal of what was effective in a story, and he worked assiduously to achieve it. Often he did achieve it brilliantly. You remember that early story of his, "Bulls", where the heavy brute of a farmer who revelled in his animal power was eventually done to death by that other animal he had hazed and tormented? It was, in its way, a little masterpiece.

But I think in those days Alan Marshall was a little too attracted by what had an obvious punch, and this sometimes led him into melodrama. Perhaps a memory of the part which had played in his life tempted him into an over-emphasis on will. His talent was essentially lyrical, a delight in the variety and richness of the everyday scene, a power to observe and to listen, to note what ordinary people lived by, to seize on the significance of the thing half-said. Often the point of his best stories was to lie in just that—the subtle placing of a casual idiomatic phrase. And his development was to make itself felt in a rather different direction from the one he had first thought effective. He

really began to find himself in the loose, rambling pages of "These Are My People"—that picaresque story in which any conscious tautness of style or spirit would have spoilt the tone.

It is quite twelve years since this book was first published, and yet not a trickle of its original verve and gaiety has leaked out of it. I hope it is a pattern for many more books Alan Marshall will write; he could wander over any other stretch of country in his caravan and make it come alive. "You've a long lead ahead of you," says a drover in the beginning, "but the road 'll treat you well. There's great people on the road." The truth of that phrase Alan has demonstrated in a way peculiarly his own. He has found great people on the road, but chiefly through his genius in making contact with them, in breaking down those troublesome barriers that stand between one person and another, in seeing the face behind the mask. Other people might have moved along the same road and experienced no such richness of scene and character; to a good many our whole earthly pilgrimage is only a dusty journey along the Birdsville track.

I don't know any writer who convinces you as fully as Alan that life is a circus flickering with lively turns—lively turns in the flood-lights and significant and symbolic things standing like his donkey in the shadows. And I often find myself wondering how much the humorous vitality of his stories comes from something inherent in Alan himself and how much from those austere years of apprenticeship to a delicate and difficult art.

Vance Palmer

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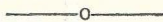
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THE FAILURE OF BOY LEVY — A True Story

For Rod Anderson

Boy Levy's flaccid father is of God an intimate; not just a friend of friends, but **close**; and every word that like a petal or kettledrum or H-bomb from the Lord (descending truth in an ascending scale: the louder then of course the truer!) hears he, and as frequently as if he purged his soul with pills for regularity. Thus ecstasy slides easily through his gut, and he, a lubricated saint, expels this holy matter every day, and offers it to everyone he knows. Alas—although with mumbled gratitude they take his gift, they fast retreat and drop it on their way . . . overcome, perhaps, as much by smell as by significance, and he, although dismayed by such frailty, will not forgo their spiritual needs, and hurls grenades of imprecation after them, which fall too short, and they uncaring smile: "Poor Levy's getting cranky in his dotage." And so in sin they amble toward their doom.

The martyred Levy clutches at his thoughts which hum like summer insects round his head. "I'm spurned! I—so close to God . . . An unacknowledged prophet. But I bear no grudge." (He really didn't think he did.) And caught at last an idea that he thrust within the matchbox of his mind. There was a creature who would not, could not, escape: his son, Boy Levy, flesh of his later years. He'd dedicate his son unto the Lord. Parents are people, and merely having children adds not a unit to intelligence, nor even makes them wiser in those ways statistics cannot enter. And so they use their children thus: fingers to touch a world that has been cruel and left them unimportant; and children, who feel but cannot comprehend, will claw and tear themselves and break upon its stony centre.

Boy, as soon as he could speak, almost before he walked, was taught to pray to God, a family friend who was never to be seen but always present . . . his father told him. Voiceless yet as sonorous as a gong, earless yet no ant could creep unheard, a threat hewed out of air, a monstrous eye that peered from every point. Boy hated Him. Through keyholes, from the fire, through the cracks in blinds that hung anxiously askew, His antennae would search for him. Behind, above, in front, around. Boy hesitated even to move: grew slow and soft and silent like a figure of smoke in a day that cannot breathe; and in the area of thought he moved meekly and with hesitation, for could not God see **there** as well as anywhere else; even the half-thought of evil: the extra spoon of jam seized by stealth, the prayer averted, the dream of freedom, or the wish to be a wizard, must be—no, not concealed—but driven far behind the mountains that thrust their tender peaks between the conscious and the lost. It seemed that only with such banishment could God's devouring being be outwitted. Boy hated Him.

O ardently did Levy love his God and ardently his Jewish heritage. So fiercely that there was no other life, could be no other life. He picked (he thought) a diamond from the street, but could not see that it wast mostly clay, and when he washed

it underneath the trickle of his mind the jewel slid away . . . and mud was left. Thus those who once tamed history were lost in a fungus forest of words and angry dreams; only the legends and the lies remained to cushion an old man vexed with life and death.

And so to God Boy was consecrated, and all his hours were intolerable. God before breakfast, God with the toast, God a prescription after every meal; God was his only playmate and their games lacked laughter; God was the skipping rope that turned into a whip, the seesaw on which was poised good and bad behavior. From morbid dawn to prayerful bedtime God was hurled at him.

His only intermission was at school. Free of old Levy he could uncurl a little the spring of fear that twisted in his belly. Yet even school was perilous, for Boy exhausted by religion was unable to secularise himself sufficiently to hold his weight of the curriculum so nicely shared out by the teacher who thought backward boys were backward out of spite. Boy sat, the puppet of the classroom, head flopped on one side, eyes that seemed not to see mouth open as if to catch what he could not see or hear, and though he tried to understand, ideas were a mist that whirled around his senses: he failed it but it would not disappear or take the needed shape. He was confused. And more confused still each time the teacher, sarcasm in the flesh, directed his embittered attention to Boy. Boy would cringe (Old Levy had never been above assisting God with a cuff or two about the ears of Boy—sacred penitential blows) and stammer and be silent while the class, cruel in its simplicity, laughed. Boy was the classroom idiot, the butt for joke and fist; nobody could be more stupid or more weak than he. The others shone with superiority, while Boy sat shivering, the dirt of dullness streaked all over his face.

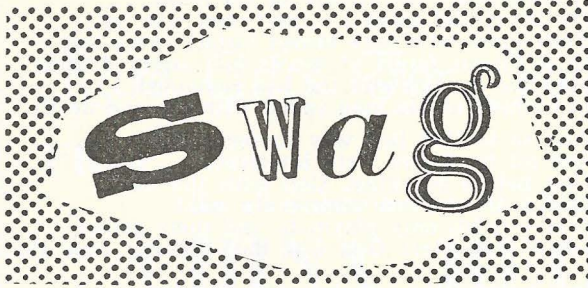
When testing time came round, not teacher, nor pupils, nor even Boy himself were in the least bewildered when Boy failed to alchemise the leaden words of learning, so heavily compounded by the teacher, into the gold of knowledge. The school sent home a report which proved with mystic figures the inadequacy of Boy, his vegetable outlook, his stumbling contempt of hallowed sport, his alpine obstinacy confronted by the decrees of monarch-teacher.

Levy became a gale, foamed into the classroom, then tremblingly subsided, and spoke forth before the astonished teacher and his class: "That I should have such a son. If he doesn't work it's because evil's got in him. Beat him hard."

Sometime later Levy in the night was awakened from his beatific dreams by sounds of stifled weeping from Boy's room. He called, but no reply. The house was quiet. "What should he have to cry for!" Levy thought.

Boy in the darkness saw how life might be made of flowers and clouds, or flying kites after school the way the others did, or having friends to kiss, or wearing love like a warm coat, or anything but God.

And Levy, having said another prayer, slept on.
LAURENCE COLLINSON



Queensland notes . . . The Brisbane Bush Music Club, now approaching its first birthday, announces a total of 53 performances to audiences totalling more than 15,000. This figure does not include those who heard the band in the Australia Day parade (75,000) or broadcast audiences of 4GY, 4IP and 4QG . . . Issue No. 3 of the Bush Music Club's bright little bulletin, the "Queensland Bush Telegraph", has appeared. It contains valuable material relating to folk-music, not only in Australia. Inquiries to Mr. Stan Arthur, Secretary, Bush Music Club, 5 Corella Street, Rocklea, Brisbane. The "Bush Telegraph's" Editor is Mr. A. Lewis . . . "The interpreter of life on the land" is engraved on the tombstone of Arthur Hoey Davis (Steele Rudd), unveiled by the Premier of Queensland (Mr. Gair) in Toowong Cemetery on October 14. The memorial was erected on the initiative of the Queensland Authors' and Artists' Association (Fellowship of Australian Writers, Queensland section), and with the support of many donors, including Overland . . . The largest crowd ever to attend a university public lecture in Brisbane, more than 600 people, heard John Manifold lecture on "Literary and Popular Elements in the Australian Ballad" on July 10. Mr. Manifold's lecture, which he illustrated by singing ballads to his own guitar accompaniment, was sponsored by the Commonwealth Literary Fund. Overland is now fortunate to have the opportunity of publishing Mr. Manifold's lecture in a future issue.

★
After a vigorous life of some four years the Sydney magazine Voice is at last putting up the shutters. The magazine, we are told, had a reasonable circulation and much goodwill; but failure to get enough money to put the magazine on a permanent footing finally settled the issue. Everyone who read Voice must frequently have had differences with much the magazine printed; itself a tribute to the useful role it has played. Overland records its regrets at Voice's demise, and its appreciation of the work of its Editor, Harold Levien.

★
An interesting feature of recent literary life in Communist countries has been the appearance of a number of literary magazines devoted to foreign literature. The editors of the Chinese magazine "I-Wen" (Foreign Literature) have informed us that it has so far published four of Lawson's stories, one of Katharine Prichard's and two of Frank Hardy's; in addition the magazine reports activity in Australian literary circles and has reviewed Overland. Meanwhile we learn that the Czechoslovak magazine World Literature is to publish an Australian issue early in the New Year; and the Soviet publication, Foreign Literature (published only in Russian), has invited the Editor of Overland to contribute to a forthcoming issue in which Foreign Literature, according to Editor S. Dangulov, will "give the floor to our foreign counterparts—literary magazines of other countries." Overland is asked to supply details of ideas and plans for 1957.

An interesting report on the readers' questionnaire in our last issue was recently compiled by Editorial Board member Jim Gale for the Overland Board. It was unfortunate that less than thirty readers replied, Mr. Gale pointed out. Some details from the report:

Most popular item in our last issue: "The Case of Walter Ogilvie" by Lloyd Davies and "Italy the Romantic" by Dymphna Cusack.

Among items that came under heavy criticism were Eric Lambert's "How to Organise a Charity Appeal" and Laurence Collinson's verse.

"There is a regrettable tendency among some Overland readers who wish to excommunicate those who shock or offend," Mr. Gale writes. "Until it can be unanimously agreed which flowers are good, it is risky to root out any plant."

It would appear that the most immediate attraction in Overland is short stories. The general tone of the magazine is widely approved, and a number of the detailed suggestions for improvements are to be acted on by the Editor.

Sydney notes . . . Mr. W. E. FitzHenry of the Bulletin staff and Mr. Leslie Haylen, M.P., spoke at a successful pilgrimage to the Lawson statue during September, in commemoration of the 34th anniversary of Lawson's death. Another commemoration was held at Como, a Sydney suburb, where Lawson lived for a time. It was organised by the local progress association in Henry Lawson Park, and federal and state politicians took part. More than a thousand people saw local high school boys perform a hilarious comedy entitled "Saltbush Bill's First Fight", the Bushwhackers' Band performed and an open-air art exhibition was held . . . Another ceremony was held at Mudgee by the Cudgegong Council, and at the site of the Lawson family home at Eurunderee . . . Poems by Kenneth Slessor (Editor of Southerly) and Chris Brennan were featured on a microgroove record released during October by the Recording Society of Australia in a limited edition. Further recordings in this unique venture will feature poetry by A. D. Hope, Dame Mary Gilmore and Judith Wright. Enquiries to the Society at 31 The Park, Parramatta, N.S.W. . . . Over £500 was collected at Dame Mary Gilmore's 91st birthday celebration at Paddington Town Hall on August 15 towards the Chair of Australian Literature Fund. The celebration of Dame Mary's birthday, said Mr. Leslie Haylen, M.P. (Chairman, Fellowship of Australian Writers, N.S.W. Branch), had become "the greatest literary event of the year." More than 700 well-wishers attended the party, which was chaired by Dr. Colin Roderick. Any donations for this fund sent to Overland will be forwarded to Dr. Roderick . . . It was good to see the enthusiastic press comments on Douglas Stewart's play "Ned Kelly", recently produced by the Elizabethan Theatre Trust in Sydney. The chief previous stage performances were Dolia Ribush's in Melbourne, two by May Hollinworth in Sydney and a tour of New Zealand by the New Zealand players. But there was much disappointment in Melbourne when plans to stage the play during the Olympic Games were cancelled. A Sydney correspondent reports that the play, while taking about £1000 a week, was still about £1000 a week down on the cost of running an ambitious production with a large cast in a huge theatre, and the Trust could not afford to shift the play for a few weeks say to Brisbane prior to the Melbourne season. It's to be hoped that the cancellation does not mean the loss of all Melbourne's chances of seeing a full-scale professional performance of "Ned Kelly".

THE NECESSITY OF FREEDOM

A DISCUSSION OF THE NOVELS OF JAMES ALDRIDGE

EVERY writer who takes his job seriously reveals much of his own philosophy, his way of looking at life, in his work. But it is only rarely that the novelist or poet centres on philosophical conflicts, the clash of ideas about man and his world, as the moving force of his writing—and then perhaps only in periods of great social stress, when sharply opposing ideas assume so much weight in men's minds that they become a powerful social force.

Examples are not difficult to find: Milton's exposition in "Paradise Lost" of man as his own master; Voltaire's sparkling defence of rational enlightenment in "Candide"; Anatole France's critique of religious dogma in "Penguin Island". But, for most of his history, man has been concerned rather with himself, his family, his friends and lovers, than with his place in society; and, in any age, the preoccupations of the writer tend to be those of the people among whom he lives.

In our time an old society is dying and a new society is being born. The anguish and pain of birth and death force their way into men's consciousness, willy-nilly. War, crisis, revolt have shattered the old life. Where there was order, there is tumult; where there was stability, there is alarming uncertainty. Habits of living are shattered—and with them habits of thought. New situations, new problems, new worlds come into being, and men have to look at themselves and their environment with new eyes.

There are those who try to set up walls to protect themselves from the storm; those who ride before it, seeking to mould its force to their purposes; those who are tossed helplessly, head over heels, this way and that. But for all men there is the storm, and none can escape it.

There are writers who try to escape; writers who close their eyes on the storm, and look inwards on themselves; writers who seek to rise above it and look down with detachment on the mannikins involved. And there are writers who live in the storm, who seek to understand it—where it came from, where it is going, what it is doing to the people whom it catches up, how its gigantic force can be harnessed and given a direction.

It is this storm of change which has engulfed the minds of the writers of our time.

For the writers of those nations where great social changes have already occurred, the main concern has been the tensions and contradictions created in men by the transition, and the place of man in the new society.

In the West, and in the colonial countries, the most serious and significant of contemporary writers have turned time and again to the problems of human freedom, to the relation between men and their society.

Sophisticated American writers have been fascinated by McCarthyism, the conflict between the demand of the state for conformity and the violation of conscience demanded by the McCarthyites of the friendly witness. French writers, particularly of the Sartre school, have been perplexed by the seeming contradiction between participation in the organised movement of their people for social justice, and the apparent abandonment of intellectual liberty which this involves. German writers understandably have sought to penetrate the

corruption of human values and freedom that swept over so many of their people with the rise of fascism.

English writers seem to have been, to some extent, insulated from the full effects of the storm of change. The excitement of the anticipated post-war revolution was dissipated in the reforms, mild in their extent and gentlemanly in their execution, of the Welfare State. Life was drab rather than exhilarating; struggle was dour rather than bitter. Only the national sentiments of the Welsh, Scottish and Irish minorities, and the national risings of Britain's colonial empire, seemed to produce a warm and invigorating response among the writers.

And among the writers in England who have so responded to the new social and intellectual environment, the Australian-born James Aldridge stands out.

★

Aldridge started writing as a journalist, and his first three novels ("Signed With Their Honour", "Of Many Men" and "The Sea Eagle") are the novels of a journalist. Written during the war, these were stories of men in battle, in Greece, Crete, Egypt, Finland, the U.S.S.R.

Documentary in their approach, with the vividness of the skilled feature-writer, tough and fast-moving, these novels did not dig far below the surface of the fighting man.

True, men fought for their freedom against the barbarity of fascism: this is implicit in Aldridge's war novels. But it is as if the urgencies of war left neither fighters nor writer time to ponder the significance, the purpose, of what they did.

These first three novels have their own interest; but there is little in them to point to the rich fulfilment of the second three.

★

Many novelists have tried to write novels of ideas, and most of these have failed.

The novel is, in the first place, a story of individual men and women—their emotions, their ideas, their relations with their fellows; their inner contradictions, their change, their decline or growth. A novel is successful only insofar as it recreates in the mind of the reader a convincing picture of real people living in a real environment.

All too often the starting point for the novelist of ideas is the ideas themselves, and not the people who hold them. His characters become mouthpieces for his philosophy or his social aims, but fail to come to life. And, when this is so, no matter how worthwhile the ideas may be, no matter how much the reader may approve the writer's standpoint, such novels eventually become tiresome, and are laid aside, because they tell the reader no more than he can learn from an essay in politics or economics.

It is where the philosophical and social views of the characters of the novel are an essential part of their individual being, where these flow from and in turn influence their personalities and their life experience, where these ideas illuminate their inner contradictions and determine them, that the novel of ideas excites the reader, seizes his imagination and enlarges his understanding.

In this lies Aldridge's strength. In the last three novels, "The Diplomat", "The Hunter", "Heroes of the Empty View", it is McGregor, McNair, Gordon above all who interest Aldridge. That he should be interested in just these people, and not in the characters who fill the minds of Graham Greene ("The Quiet American" aside), or Joyce Cary, or Kingsley Amis, is probably because he is interested in their ideas, their philosophical wrangles with themselves. But Aldridge has the novelist's eye: it is first as individuals, and not as idea-bearers, that he sees them.

★

"The Diplomat" is a novel of the Anglo-American-Soviet dispute over Iran and Iranian oil. Deeper down, it is a novel of conscience, of commitment, of duty.

McGregor, a micro-paleontologist (a special sort of geologist who is particularly useful in the search for oil) is attached as technical adviser to Lord Essex, a senior British diplomat, on a mission to Moscow. Essex's job is to try to talk the Soviet Union out of her concern for Iran, in order to safeguard Britain's position on the Iranian oilfields. McGregor, in Moscow, is suspicious of Essex's professions of concern for the well-being (and the independence) of the Iranians; with Essex, he visits Iran, and his suspicion becomes certainty. On their return to London, he exposes the reality of Essex's purpose to the press and is dismissed from his post with the Foreign Office, following a bitter debate in the House of Commons.

There is intensely exciting drama in "The Diplomat": in the embassies and the Foreign Office of Moscow; in the strife within Iran, between warring nationalities, and between the Azerbaijanian (Northern Iran) separatists and the corrupt central government; in the furious debate which rages around McGregor's "betrayal" in the Commons. But it is inside McGregor that the essential dramatic development of the novel takes place.

McGregor is the variable element in this novel. His problem is twofold: whether it is enough for a man to do the job he wants to do and to leave society to fend for itself, or whether he must take part; and, having decided for commitment, whether his duty is to the society in which he lives (which means the social order and the government of the day) or to his conscience.

The positions of the other characters are fixed. They serve largely to determine the direction, and the speed, of McGregor's development: the detachment of Katharine Clive driving him towards commitment, and the finally self-interested cynicism of Essex driving him back on his personal conscience.

What faces McGregor is this: to go back to his chosen profession on terms which violate his conscience and which will eventually destroy him, or to involve himself in diplomatic and political activity from which will follow the (at least temporary) abandonment of his profession? To accept Essex's concept that his duty is to defend British imperial interests in Iran, which will involve the betrayal of the Iranians, for whom he has a deep attachment; or to follow the demands of his own conscience—and to accept the consequent, almost automatic exclusion from his life's work, the study of the microscopic fossils of Iran?

Here are two completely opposed philosophies in conflict: social duty, regardless of personal integrity, against the need to be true to oneself, regardless of the demands of the existing society. The conviction of the novel lies in the exploration of the protagonists, McGregor and Essex. The ideas of each are deep-rooted in their characters, and the conflict of ideas becomes a conflict between the

two men, and within each of them, for each absorbs something of the other, but finally returns to himself.

McGregor's stand, finally, is for personal integrity; without thinking his way right through the problem, his position is the same as that of Ned Gordon in "Heroes of the Empty View": "A man's duty is owed only to his human conscience."

And nothing else was possible for McGregor. At three stages of his argument with himself and with Essex he moves decisively, in a way which determines his future course of action. First, when he turns over an Iranian officer who has murdered an Azerbaijanian rebel to the rebel forces. Second, when, almost by force, he drags Essex away from trying to form an "independent" tribal confederation which will bolster British interests but harm the cause of Iranian independence. Third, when he writes to the Times, exposing the nature of the Essex mission. And each time he acts impulsively, without considering the consequences—and in a way which is consistent only with the belief in personal integrity which he comes finally to accept consciously.

And, by implication, Aldridge carries the argument further, to suggest that this contradiction between duty and integrity can only be resolved in the search for the just society.

McGregor is neither philosopher nor hero; he is simply a scientist with a conscience. And when his conscience forces him into the final, irrevocable step, it is its own reward, for defeat becomes victory, and his disgrace becomes his honor.

★

Perhaps in allowing McGregor to argue out the rights and wrongs of social commitment, James Aldridge was seeking solutions for himself. Certainly, there is in Aldridge a very real sense of identification with primitive communities and remote localities untouched by machine civilisation: the Iranian mountains, the Canadian wilds, the Arabian deserts.

It is to the problem of commitment that Aldridge returns in his next novel, "The Hunter". But this time it is commitment at a different level. McGregor's problem was a moral one: should a man, a member of society, take sides in the conflicts which exist within society? Roy McNair, the hunter, is concerned not with morality but with necessity: can a man live apart from his fellows, without society?

Roy McNair is a fur trapper. His base is in a small town on the edge of the forest—on his brother's farm, in the home of Jeannie Andrews with whom he lives. He has a territory allocated to him by the Government, as do each of his fellow trappers, which they work in season, returning to their base only to dispose of their furs, to rest, and to renew their supplies. But these territories are almost trapped out, and Roy's brother is losing out on his hopeless struggle to make a living out of the farm. While he is out on his territory, Roy learns that the Government plans to close down most of the worked-out trapping area; he is told, also, that Jeannie's husband has returned to the town, after twelve years of silence. He decides to trap on the nearby Game Reserve, and narrowly escapes capture by the Game Warden. On his return with his illegal furs he finds that his brother has walked off the farm. Jeannie, however, has sent her husband away, and has bought a part of the McNair farm. His social base secure again, Roy applies to the Warden for a new trapping territory, further north.

Aldridge creates an entrancing picture of the Canadian wilds, and its wild-life. More than that, of the tribes under British leadership, on the



James Aldridge

he illuminates his characters by depicting their differing personal approaches to the natural environment. To Roy, the realist, the animals, the cycle of their lives, the conflicts between species, are something to be observed and accepted; for him, intervention in the process is only justified by the necessity of gathering fur or food. To Scotty, animals assume human characteristics, and are to be judged accordingly; those which err by human standards of morality or social behavior deserve to be exterminated. To Moose, all animals are the natural prey of man. To Zel, any interference with the natural process is justified if it serves his immediate needs.

There is drama in "The Hunter", too: Roy's personal entanglements; the stimulation of the hard-drinking, hard-living, hard-working trappers; above all, the sheer excitement of Roy's escape from the Game Warden. But again the essential dramatic conflict of the novel is within Roy—the struggle of ideas.

His deep need of a sense of "belonging" to a group, to some part of society, is felt from the beginning. The decision to move into the Game Preserve is at the same time a recognition of defeat, and a renunciation of society. But this proves self-destroying; no man can deny his social nature and existence, and Roy's decision is inevitable:

"He wanted to get out of here before he was caught and disfranchised and isolated for good. He wanted to get off this Preserve, back to the trapping, back to his normal life, back to the safety of a living community, back to Saint Helen."

On the edge of the final act of renunciation, Roy cannot take the last step. Above all, he wants to keep on trapping. But if the choice is between trapping and a share in the society of his fellows, then there can be only one answer—and that answer is given before Roy knows that his ties with his base in Saint Helen have not been destroyed.

This is Aldridge's affirmation that man is born both an entity and a part of a whole, and that he can destroy neither his individuality nor his social being without destroying himself.

★

There is a strong trend in contemporary writing to isolate the individual from his social context, to treat only of the individual-in-himself. Allied with this is the tendency of contemporary criticism to belittle the role of ideas (philosophical, social, political) in literature.

Certainly, there is some justification for the critics' harsh reaction to the brash, naive treatment of such ideas in many novels inspired with a radical purpose.

But what is at the heart of these tendencies is a turning away from society, prompted perhaps by disgust and frustration in the face of social evil, a denial of the place of the individual in society. And what is implied is that freedom is freedom **from** society, not freedom in and through society. This is, perhaps, the central argument of our time.

Aldridge begins his answer to this question in "The Hunter." True, Moose and Zel enjoy freedom in one sense; there is an absence of restraint, in that their actions are not governed by any man-made laws. But they are outlaws, living apart from society and against society, and because of this they are denied many other freedoms—freedoms which Roy is determined to preserve for himself.

That is the essence of the argument, but it is barely stated and not at all developed in this novel. Rather, it is in his most recent novel, "Heroes of the Empty View", that Aldridge examines and resolves this question, in all its complexity.

Ned Gordon is an Englishman who has allied himself to the Desert Revolt in Arabia, because he believes that freedom exists only among the Arab tribesmen in their untouched condition. His attachment to the tribes brings him into conflict with the British military authorities in the area, who are guarding oil interests in the south, and have armed the rulers of the peasant community, the Bahrazi, in the north as a counterweight to the tribes. The tribes rise, but are defeated, and Gordon is forced to surrender. He is sent back to England, having given his word never to return to Arabia.

In England, he seeks for a political solution to the problem of preserving the Arab tribes from contamination by the machine civilisation. He investigates the various solutions offered: Tory, Liberal, Labor, Communist. He discusses with Americans and Russians. None offer the answer he seeks—the traditional parties because they are concerned with English interests and not with Arab; the Communists because their conception of freedom is the opposite of Gordon's. He hears of the new outbreak of the Arab revolt, and decides to return to Arabia.

Back with Hamid, the leader of the revolt, he learns that the tribes have allied themselves with the workers' and peasants' revolt. This, for Gordon, means the death of Arab freedom, and when the revolt breaks out he seeks to destroy the British oil installations, the visible symbol of the threat to his conception of the Arab. As he is preparing this act of destruction, he is shot by the leader of the workers' and peasants' movement.

Gordon is, and is not, T. E. Lawrence, "Lawrence of Arabia." He is the Lawrence that many people believed and still believe in, the perfect Lawrence, and not the Lawrence of history.

In truth, Lawrence had a schoolboyish passion for the desert tribes; but his motive was not the freedom of the tribes, rather it was the organisa-

southern flank of the British war against Turkey. For Lawrence, there was no conflict between his position in the tribes and his British citizenship.

Gordon has Lawrence's passion for the tribes, but it is more mature, and it is based on a consistent philosophy of life. For Gordon, there is and can be no community of interest between the English and the Arabs, and he has made his choice. "All I can do now to survive, or be worth surviving," he says, "is to go back and find my cause again in the Tribal Revolt."

What is the desert to Gordon? It is "Man . . . his nobility, his poetry, his hard cry for individual liberty. Uncorrupted man. That's what makes the Arab a cause in himself."

"I came to the Arab a puzzled man, overladen with the English Gods, and the history Gods . . . but the ignorant tribesman stripped me, and taught me that the only freedom is the man," says Gordon to Hamid, the desert leader.

And Hamid accepts the alliance—but it is unstable, because they fight for different objectives.

For Hamid, it is: "As for me, I have only my people. I know no other. I only seek their liberty, their freedom. I simply want my people free in their deserts and unmolested by foreign wealth and Bahraz soldiery. My own people at peace in their own land. What is more simple and right than that before heaven and man?"

But for Gordon, that is not sufficient: "We are hung like slaughtered sheep on the accumulated past. That's the real war we fight here, Hamid. It's against history itself . . . To destroy inevitability—that's the aim of all liberty."

Here is the essence of Aldridge's thesis: freedom—is it the recognition of inevitability? or the destruction of inevitability?

And, one way or another, that is the heart of the political and philosophical dispute of our time. Is freedom the absence of restraint, or the understanding or natural and social laws? Is freedom to be found apart from society, or through society? In the competitive society, where each man is for himself, and supposedly has complete freedom of choice, or in the co-operative society, where each man accepts the necessity of all working together in order to gain a greater mastery over society and nature?

"The Tribal Revolt is for an individual choice, by perfect free will," says Gordon. But, in the event, the free will of the tribes, their choice of the Revolt, proves illusory, because they have not considered sufficiently the necessities which must determine their choice if it is to be effective.

And so Hamid talks with Zein, the leader of the City and Peasant Revolt. And Zein has a new concept of freedom, one that rests on the achievement of practical objectives. "We offer our workers and peasants their salvation. How? Not by offering them free-will, or each man his own intellect. What use is that? How would that better their misery? We offer them reality: no more landlordism, no more exploitation, an end to foreign rule, to poverty, wretchedness, starvation, misery. And a real end, not a promised end. Independence! Land for the peasants! Self-rule for the city workers! That's our dogma!" For Zein, freedom means not to destroy the machines, but to seize them and turn them to new purposes.

In the end, of course, Hamid makes terms with Zein, as he must. The logic of the tribes' position demands it. And Gordon remains alone with his final, apocalyptic act, the destruction of the machines which are destroying his desert freedom. And, in the last moment, it is Gordon who is destroyed—by Zein, his brother in revolt, not knowing who it was he killed, determined only to save the new world of machines and science for the Arabs.

Alan Marshall, the true Aussie storyteller, has a big tuckerbag full of his best yarns.

HOW'S ANDY GOING?

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★

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This, finally, is Aldridge's answer to the dilemma of our time: that man cannot tear himself apart from society; that there is no freedom without society; that human freedom resides in the ability of man to take to himself all that human history has created for him, and to shape it to his own conscious purpose.

★

In many ways, such an analysis as this is unfair to Aldridge, the novelist.

It does not speak of the well-planned construction of his last three novels, each built around the dialectical pattern of thesis: antithesis: synthesis. Thus, the contradiction between the world of diplomacy and the world of real life is resolved in the action of McGregor; the contradiction between tribal, desert society and machine civilisation, between the two freedoms, is resolved in the combination of the desert revolt with the workers' and peasants' revolt.

It largely ignores Aldridge's great ability to create living character, to sustain movement and interest, to achieve dramatic height. It says nothing of the clarity of his prose and the sureness with which he reveals his warm sympathy with the people and the communities of which he writes.

There is much that could be said; but here the point is that Aldridge is one of the few writers in the English language who is consciously writing of the central problems of our time, of the great sweep of new ideas which so occupies the minds of men in our time—and that of these he is the most successful.

Aldridge is a writer who lives at the centre of the storm, but he has the vision to see in the confusion of sharp gusts, strange eddies and sudden calms the pattern which informs the storm, and the courage to channel the storm-forces to the purposes of men.

THE OLYMPIC POOL

THE new Olympic Swimming Pool is our only monumental structure within the last century to receive approbation from both layman and professional. For the layman it possesses all those indefinable qualities which in a building produce excitement, awe and not a little pride. To the professional, architect or engineer, it presents the easily definable qualities of an exciting theme carried out skillfully and at a high technical level.

Possibly never since completion, within two crowded decades, of the Treasury Building, the Mint, Houses of Parliament and the Exhibition has the private citizen of Melbourne had such a free architectural 'frisson' on a Sunday.

Each week-end throughout the last winter more than 7,000 people have crawled over the pool's huge concrete emplacements, climbed its outward sloping galleries and encircled its first level promenade.

Across the river the rather ridiculous Temple of the Winds in the Botanic Gardens has at last been given a reason for existence. It offers by chance a perfect view of the new structure from the south.

Citizens' affection for the new Pool hardly comes as a surprise.

For so many years Melbournians have been deprived of such sources of architectonic delights. Yet this delectation is surely one of the justifications for urban life.

Twenty-five years ago the Shrine of Remembrance was completed behind high walls. In the middle of a major depression its erection aroused unpopular feelings and unfortunately the building has never found its true place in the hearts of citizens.

Similarly the Police Headquarters and the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the giants of the pre-war decade, were rushed to completion in troublesome times. This fact together with their functions, which hardly emanate joy, have not contributed to their popularity and esteem.

One has to trace time back a century to find a period of justifiable public interest in public architecture.

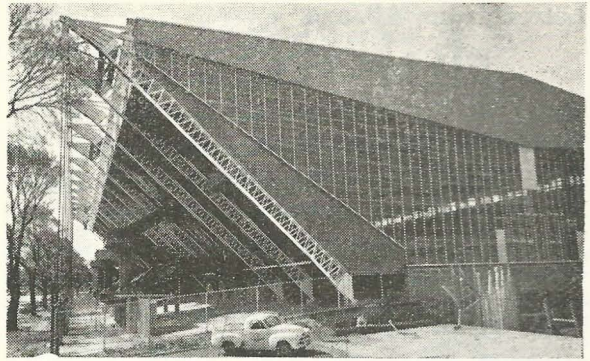
To an architect the reason for the sad decay in public interest in architecture is not difficult to find. It follows the slow downward curve of the quality of our architecture. This falling off in quality is surely caused by the bureaucratization of design.

One hundred years ago every public building was the sole product of an individual architect. Therefore the work varied directly according to the skills and enthusiasm of the chosen consultant.

Over the last half century government—local, State and Federal—has employed hundreds of salaried architects and engineers and all public construction is automatically channelled through these huge designing departments.

With few insignificant exceptions all officially designed buildings erected since 1900 have been entirely lacking in any architectural merit. The Olympic Pool, being both architecturally superb and designed by private architects, poses and answers many obvious questions.

Very few buildings of note throughout the world have resulted from architectural competitions. The League of Nation's Palace and the Chicago Tribune Tower are two of the more spectacularly unsuccessful results of such contests.



The Olympic Pool, jointly designed by Kevin Borland, Peter McIntyre, John and Phyllis Murphy and W. Irwin.

The Olympic Pool Competition was won by a group of four architects and one engineer. Their average age was 27 years.

Winning design was certainly avant-garde but this was not exceptional under the circumstances. What was unique was the fact that the original design was almost literally transposed into a working drawing and eventually into the structure we see today. The only major alteration was the elision of four of the original 18 bays due to a reorganised budget.

Any arrangement by which a private architect can work within the framework of the public service has hitherto been considered impossible, but if such a young group of raw graduates can erect a £500,000 building of such quality, need we put up with any of our post offices, schools and banks any longer?

The young group's first contact with officialdom is of interest. The Premier of Victoria, receiving and congratulating them and asking them to be seated, then asked them to reduce their fees. Professional skill may not after all be the prime necessity for a successful public career.

The Pool tends to dominate, but our building program for the Olympic Games has thrown up much that is good.

This makes an interesting contrast with the city's preparations for its centenary. Never one for festivity, Melbourne at that time made a sad little effort to whoop it up. Has the temper of the city changed in 22 years? Certainly it has grown enormously in sophistication. But then what city if not an Australian one could fail to become excited and organised at the prospect of an international sporting festival?

It has been said that we build two things well, houses and hospitals. Now the third and most logical building-type at least can be added.

The Olympic Pool's extraordinarily popular success is surely due in no small measure to its purpose. It is an altar (contemporary-style) fit to enshrine the god-head of the crew-cut swimmer.

The neuter figure over-muscled, under-dressed can here display its prowess. Spread over the towering galleries the typical sport-loving Australian can suck his American soft drink while he is vicariously thrilled by another's display of athletic development.

It is thoughts of such future thrills that have brought even throughout the winter thousands of admiring citizens to the Pool, its concourses and its promenades.

Or is it a native and long frustrated appreciation of beautiful civic architecture?

FILMS EN FETE

It used to be called Karlsbad, but after the war the Czechs changed this German name to Karlovy Vary. It's the one-time holiday resort of Central Europe's vanishing aristocracy, but now it has become well known as a venue for one of the international film festivals. Last July some six hundred visitors from about forty countries gathered there for three weeks, to look at films, to swap ideas and knowledge and to do business. Like plenty of other people from the West I had approached this particular festival with a few misgivings; maybe we would have socialist realism shoved down our necks, maybe we would have to gaze at a series of long-winded Russian films extolling the virtues of the New Man, and maybe the lavish hospitality would simply have the effect of our dulling our critical faculties. Happily these preconceptions proved to be illusions. I cannot once remember hearing the phrase "socialist realism," there were more films from the West shown than from elsewhere (the French and Japanese carried off the main honors), and in fact the Soviet films screened dealt pretty honestly with the social problems that they face in their kind of society. The entertainment was indeed extravagant but fittingly enough as part of the atmosphere generated at these kinds of banquets. It was certainly astonishing to observe East and West Germans slapping each other on the back and a certain prominent American film mogul talking earnestly with a Chinese film producer. As a matter of fact a great deal of business was done; the East and the West were busy trying to sell each other their products. Indeed, the intense activity on this front rather excluded discussion about technical and artistic problems, which seemed a pity.

But what does one recall?

Jan Weric, the great Czech actor and comedian, making outrageous anti-government remarks, though not too soberly; Andre Debrie, one of the living pioneers of the cinema, looking incredibly like the late Lloyd George; Guy Desson, the President of the Cannes Festival, introducing the superb French film "The Best Part" on the last night of the Festival before an audience of ten thousand people in the open air cinema; the vigorous brilliant Italians; the hearty jolly Soviet director Grygory Roschal, who was so enormously popular; the charming speech by the American Ambassador before the presentation of "Marty."

How worthy the Edinburgh Festival is, with its immense array of Music, Drama, Films and Art Exhibitions! Yet how provincial, how dull in so many ways! The eating and drinking facilities—and three hundred thousand visitors flocked there this year—are even less adequate than those in Sydney or Melbourne. The rain drizzles down, the flags hang limply. But the tiny committee of efficient methodical Scots men and women who run the film festival (without anything like the resources of the Czech government) deserve some special kind of mention. The films themselves are selected with the utmost taste and intelligence; and the programs are carefully planned and rarely fail to live up to the theme of "the living cinema."

The remarkable independent American production, "On the Bowery," which had its first public showing at Edinburgh, is a good enough example. Here was indeed a social document, a tough courag-

eous film. It was also personally gratifying for my own picture "Three in One" to be so kindly received . . . On the other hand, however, the not too oblique efforts of the Rank organisation to dominate the Festival seemed to me rather out of keeping with the spirit of this and other festivals. Charles Frend—the famous British director—delivered a lecture on realism in the British cinema in the course of which he made a plea for peace. But this created no comment even though a Danish director, who made a film in New Guinea called "The Last Cannibals," publicly called for the banning of atomic weapons.

Pleasant recollections . . . arriving from Prague after a few hours' air travel and going to the American Ambassador's reception, talking to Anthony Asquith there about new trends in cinema and meeting Paul Brickhill who came for the premiere of his "Reach for the Sky."

The Rapido from Milano races across the rich and rolling landscape of North Italy to Venice and you stop for a while at those magical places—Vicenza, Padua and of course fair Verona. I only got there for the tag-end of the Festival and certainly it does not lack for gloss and glamor and glitter. The parading film stars, the waving searchlights, the television boys, the tired pressmen making it up as they went, the Windsors and Elsa Maxwell springing rival parties with the a-la-mode drink being peach juice and champagne. Yet this was as serious and as worthwhile a festival as any, thanks largely to John Grierson, who was the jury president. It was interesting that on the last night "Bus Stop" was shown as well as a Czech film "Play for Life" about the Resistance. It was well balanced and had a genuine international flavor.

Grierson enjoyed himself enormously. He conducted the entire proceedings in French, "You know, I haven't spoken the goddam language since 1947" . . . refused to award a major prize, pointedly snubbed the big shots (the "international interlopers" as he called them) and dished out free tickets to waiters and taxi-drivers. This pint-sized dynamo who speaks a rough Scotch-Canadian dialect, witheringly and openly rubbished the British film industry, to which he himself had made no little contribution. For my benefit he also made some savage and succinct comments about the state of the Australian film business. Yet he had ideas about what could be done, both in promotion and production. Even in Australia.

Memories . . . the gay, vital intelligence, the devotion to the cinema of most of those who went there . . . and listening to Ermler, the famous Soviet director, and Grierson, engaged in intense but friendly intellectual combat.

—Cecil Holmes



CONTRIBUTORS

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- T. Square is the pseudonym of a well-known younger Melbourne architect.
- Merv Lilley is a seaman on the Australian coast. He hails from Queensland.
- Allan Morris is Headmaster of a Victorian High School, and author of "Rich River".
- Ho Chi Minh is President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

A BUSH MEETING—PRE-WAR

by Merv. Lilley

TWO sulkies meet at a big double gate. They are going in different directions. One is returning from the railway station, having delivered cream and picked up morning goods, the other is going to the station to deliver cream and pick up goods.

It is afternoon, since no one can do the morning's work, get the cream ready for the factory, get the horse in and harness up and drive six or eight miles to the railway without the morning escaping into the afternoon.

So Bill and Jack meet at the gate, and having seen each other coming decide to cut the conversation short, since there is much work to do. But the preliminaries have to be gone through and a matter of bush courtesy, and anyway the horses would refuse to move on until things had been done properly; horses know what has to be said, and when to move on when enough has been said. They hang their heads a bit and wait.

"Goodday, Bill."

"Goodday Jack."

"Hot today, Bill."

"Yes, hot today Jack."

"Might be a thunderstorm, eh?"

"Yus, might be a thunderstorm, some clouds over there, Jack."

"Yes it could rain all right, well, I'd better get along, Bill, before it rains."

"Yus, might come up quick, the creek might come down."

"Yes, it could do, came down quick once before, all the school kids had to wait until it went down, and Tommy and me got caught on the far side, so we drove old Jim's plough horse into it, to see how strong it was running, and that old horse turned over a few times and was thrown onto the opposite bank before he knew he was in there. Runs fast, that creek."

"Yes, runs fast all right, I rode into it once, when I thought it had gone down enough, and my pony went straight to the bottom, didn't know before she couldn't swim, some horses can't swim you know."

"Or yes, all right Bill, well, I got to get along, lot of work to do."

"Yes, well so long, we could do with a good fall of rain, country's dry."

"Yes, always bloody droughts, I don't know what the Government is doing."

"No, you're right there, what about coming along to the Local Producers' meeting tomorrow night. Old Ernie is going to kick up a row he tells me, get all the councillors out to front us about the roads, about bloody time too, even if that miner bloke is behind old Ernie, putting ideas into his head."

"Yes, the rates have gone up, the price of cream has gone down, roads have got worse, the cows are gone off their milk, they're just living on water now, not worth milking, but you got to keep them in milk in case it rains, or there won't be anything when the rain does come. Well, I've got to get the cows in and milk before dark, no use working in the dark, enough work to do in the day without working in the dark."



—Ron Edwards

"Yes, unless it is Saturday night at the dance, Bill, no trouble to work on Saturday night, that's what I say."

"You're right there Jack, see you Saturday night for sure, and what about bringing a bottle?"

"Good idea, Bill, and be careful where we plant it this time, those ringers pinched it last time, think they are smart, I'll punch that big Buck right on the nose on Saturday night, show him a ringer can't push a cow cocky round."

"Good idea, I'll be in that if anything starts, well, hope sister has got those cows in and started milking, or I'll never get finished, and the pigs will be squealing blue murder for a feed, and the puddy calves. And Christ ormighty, I got to pump water, see you Saturday night."

The two horses move at the same time, as the last words are spoken, and both cockies hope that they will not meet anyone else.

PANIC

INSPIRED BY WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

I can't go out until I lift my face,
How did it ever sag away down there?
O God, please help me overcome my hair!
They're **my** legs simply captioned: "A Disgrace!"
My female characteristics fill their space
With columns of reproof—how damned unfair
Being born without regard to what fits where!
I don't meet these requirements any place.
I look repulsive wearing a sarong,
Hate knitting lacy stoles, loathe repartee;
My hands scream "Housework"—that's where they
belong—
I never face the new day laughingly;
No handsome man has ever done me wrong;
"Don't let this happen to you" **has** happened to me!

PAT BULLEN

* COMMENT



Lorraine Russell writes:

It seems clear by now that the success of Ray Lawler's "Summer of the Seventeenth Doll" was not just a flash in the pan.

It is a good play and deserves its success, but even Ray Lawler himself feels that its production came luckily at a time when Australian nationalism is running high.

This was fortunate, but independently the "Doll" seems to have proved several things.

First, that an Australian can write a good play. Secondly, that a good Australian play can be more uniformly successful than an importation. The "Doll" has played to capacity houses wherever it has been shown, whereas, previously, commercial managements have regarded as almost axiomatic the fact that if a show goes in Sydney it will flop in Melbourne, and vice-versa. Thirdly, and this is vital to a healthy Australian theatre, the production of the "Doll" proved that, in a good Australian play, Australian actors are best. Ray Lawler is so certain of this that when the "Doll" goes to London, the Australian cast will go with it.

This, incidentally, makes theatrical history and is one of the many things of which the Elizabethan Trust may be justifiably proud. The Australian cast retaining the real Australian quality of the play may make all the difference to its success before sophisticated West End audiences. It is not just a matter of the Australian "accent". The characters in the "Doll" are real Australian people. Anyone of them can be found a dozen times over amongst the people we know in our own suburbs.

But the Australian Theatre can not live by the Trust alone, however good and encouraging its work may be. It is time for Australian commercial theatrical managements to take note of the fact that Australians are now taking pride in their own cultural achievements.

I was talking to Helen Roberts, English star of the present Gilbert & Sullivan Company, who says that this pride in Australia and Australian theatre is something that has developed fantastically since her last visit here. She pointed out that not only are the people themselves developing this Australian feeling, but it applies even to the critics, who, during the current Gilbert & Sullivan season, have been all for the local performers.

Now this situation exists, the Firm, Garnet Carroll and other entrepreneurs might well look to the pens of Ray Mathew, Dymphna Cusack, Oriel Gray, Morris West and others for plays to give us, as Leslie Rees said in his excellent article in *Overland*, new hope for Australian drama.

Lyndall Hadow writes:

It seems to me that Ray Lawler's "Summer of the Seventeenth Doll", in its presentation of the Australian worker as such a hopeless apathetic, will do Australians a disservice abroad, and if presented in Melbourne during the Olympic Games.

The play's virility, I thought, was essentially of the phoney variety which has tended to be a feature of some recent, catch-penny Australian writing.

It is inevitable that comparison will be made with Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire."

It's to be hoped that the English theatre-goer will realise that the decadence, the apathy, the resignation, the vacuum which are represented as making up the lives of the people of Carlton and The Cane are not representative of the Australian working class, any more than the facets of life in "Streetcar" are representative of the American nation of today. So little being known of Australia in England, so much known of America, possibly the English theatre-goer won't be in a position to make the comparison, and Ray Lawler's slant on the lives of the Carlton working class will color the E.T.G.'s picture of the Australian working class as a whole.

At risk of offending Melbournians I might mention that Fitzroy's Cazaly is little known here in the West and those who do remember him remember him not as "Up there Cazaly" but for dubious football tactics. Lawler's implied elevation of Cazaly to hero status is to my mind as phony as the rest of his play.

And what can one think of the omission of any (passing, even) reference to the fact that during the 17 years from 1935-1952 there'd been six years of war in which Australia figured? Even if the two heroes had been manpowered into their seven months of canecutting and refused permission to enlist (though many canecutters *did* enlist and were sent back from New Guinea to their cutting and then returned to their battalions), they certainly wouldn't have been allowed to "lay-off" in Carlton for five months of the year.

Peter Hickinbotham writes:

I should like to enlarge a little on Edgar Waters' definition of folk-song, in his interesting article in *Overland* 6. Hugh Anderson's comment, in *Overland* 7, illustrates once more, as did his "Colonial Ballads", that he has the most confused notions about what constitutes a folk-song.

I would define folk-song as songs made up by illiterate people (illiterate means not conversant with the educated musical and literary conventions of their period) and transmitted by word of mouth. Other songs also are transmitted by word of mouth, including more or less debased reminiscences of composed songs. In this other category oral transmission may introduce a "folk" element, but when the hand of the educated poet or musician can be detected the song is not **pure** folk-song.

A folk-song by the very nature of its growth, i.e. oral transmissions, will always exist in many forms; consequently we have here in Australia a number of songs which have grown up out of the anonymous ballads of other nations. Such songs are no less **Australian folk-songs** than are those which are purely "home-grown". Of the former type there are naturally many more. The Scottish, Irish and English martyrs, whose spirits refused to be broken, sang their native songs on the convict hulks carrying them to Australia. As these folk became assimilated so also did their songs. Out of "All in a Misty Morning" grew a Victorian version of "The Wild Colonial Boy", and "The Derby Ram", a song of pagan England, becomes "The Ram of Dalby".

Examples of "home-grown" folk-songs are, "O.T.I." ("O Thursday Island"), some versions of "The Banks of the Condamine", "Gorianawah", "Bound for South Australia", "The Old Bark Hut", "The Sheepwasher's Lament". Most of these are to be found in Paterson's "Old Bush Songs." So much then for Anderson's statement that "... our songs are mostly bastard offspring from the popular ditties of the last century."

Laurence Collinson writes:

The "Red Rosary" poems contain so much that is powerful and splendid, and their technique is so obviously that of a craftsman, that I was at first inclined to accept John Manifold's commentary on his sequence without demur. Several re-readings and prolonged meditation, however, led me to conclude that some of his ideas were irrational.

What is a sonnet? If we accept traditional definitions the English sonnet emerges as a fourteen-line poem the metre of which is iambic pentameter (very occasionally tetrameter) with a few irregularities, and the rhyming-scheme of which is dependent on the historical form (such as the Shakespearean or Petrarchan) to which the poet is prepared to subject his ideas.

It is true that in recent periodicals and anthologies one sometimes finds a fourteen-line free-verse poem which is labelled a sonnet. It is true also that one occasionally comes across a fifteen-line poem labelled a sonnet. It is true also that John Manifold writes a fourteen-line poem in trochaic tetrameters with a vague assonance instead of rhyme and labels it a sonnet. Why should these poems not be labelled sonnets? Why should we not call a desk a chair or an elephant a giraffe? It is purely a matter of personal taste; where art is concerned why should the social usage of a word be relevant?

The application of Marxian principles to literature, though no new activity, is usually commendable—the more so when it is valid and useful and helps us to re-examine and re-assess old and at times well-worn concepts. Very often, however, we find more zest than value in such application; dialectics can be applied to ideas in much the same way as an oversize spanner can be applied to a nut: it fits over well but to no purpose, although observers and even the spanner-wielder himself may be so thrilled by his intelligence and so awed by all the muscle-bulgings and wrist gyrations that they do not realise that the nut is simply not being twisted.

Sonnet-form, says John Manifold in a moment of revelation, is the unity of opposites. So what? I must query. What poem, what play, what painting, what film, what flower, what planet, what star, what anything is not a unity of opposites? But John Manifold is expansive. Further to enlighten the ignorant he tells us: "The sum of the rules that govern it (sonnet-form) is: **maximum overall unity plus maximum internal opposition.**" (J.M.'s. emphasis). What does this mean? Doubtless John Manifold knows, and doubtless many interpretations could be found. But the laws of poetry do not apply to prose; poetry may often be ambiguous, prose never; prose must be precise; it must, as far as is humanly possible, offer a meaning that admits of no misinterpretation.

The sentence is meaningless. Instead of being "a closer definition than may appear," it can hardly be said to define anything; I for one know nothing more about sonnet-form after being told it is a unity of opposites and a maximum this plus maximum than I knew before, irrespective of what the "definition" has in common with the "strictest French critics" (who, language pronunciation being what it is, must be eyed suspiciously if they want to formulate rules about English poetry).

The pedantry in the fifth paragraph was rather puzzling. It seemed to me that John Manifold's "definition" of sonnet-form must be extraordinarily elastic and the strictest French critics extraordinarily strict to permit so much on the one hand and exclude so much on the other. "The common

(Cont. on p. 38)

Swag

Melbourne notes . . . Judah Waten's "Alien Son", which has sold out two Australian editions, has been accepted for translation into Chinese. It is believed to be the first Australian novel so favored . . . Malvern City Council sponsored an ambitious Arts Festival in October to mark the centenary of the municipality. The Festival, supported by many prominent local citizens, featured Australian ballet, theatre, films and painting, as well as talks by Australian writers and a concert of Australian folklore . . . Well-known actor Peter O'Shaughnessy recently returned from three weeks in Rumania at the invitation of the Rumanian Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries . . . The Melbourne Society of Realist Writers greeted their most energetic member, Bernie Meyer, at his 70th birthday party in July.

★

Novelist James T. Farrell recently resigned from the Chairmanship of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. He said that his recent world tour, especially in Asia, had convinced him that Asians considered Americans had "a rigid, one-track, hysterical fear of communism." Mr. Farrell, who prior to his resignation toured Australia for the Australian Committee for Cultural Freedom, also accused the American Committee of failing to delve deeply into American life and of not contributing sufficiently to the fight against censorship. Meanwhile we learn that the Australian Committee for Cultural Freedom, backed with considerable overseas funds, will launch a quarterly magazine, *Quadrant*, in December. It will be edited by poet James McAuley.

★

Many Overland readers will wish to send greetings to Katharine Susannah Prichard on her 73rd birthday on December 4. Her address is Greenmount, Western Australia. Miss Prichard (Mrs. Hugo Throssell) is contemplating a trip abroad next March. Meanwhile her son, Ric Prichard Throssell, has achieved a notable success with his play on the H-bomb threat, "The Day Before Tomorrow." This play has been performed twice over the A.B.C. and by the Western Australian team at the recent national University Drama Festival in Hobart. After the play was performed for four nights in Perth critic Keith George termed it "a brilliant piece of dramatic work."

★

We are offering a book prize for the most witty verse satirising the Commonwealth Government's directive (under admitted U.S. pressure) that the Chinese Classical Opera should not perform in Melbourne during the Olympic Games. Closing date January 21, and limit twelve lines.

★

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THE BIG RIVERS—III

by Allan Morris

THERE was grim humor in the telegram allegedly sent to the Premier of New South Wales by Echuca's first town clerk, C. E. Pascoe. At a time when the Murray River was surging through the streets of Echuca, Pascoe invited the Premier to remove his New South Wales river from a Victorian town.

Pascoe was right, for the 1855 Constitution Act of New South Wales declared "that the whole of the watercourse of the said river Murray is and shall be in the territory of New South Wales", an absurd decision in more ways than one, and unparalleled anywhere else in the world where a river is a border between states. Elsewhere, the middle of the river has been named the boundary.

Defending counsel in a remarkable law suit at Moama—on the New South Wales bank of the Murray opposite Echuca—developed the absurdity when in 1879 he defended the father of a boy who had kicked a dog from the high bridge spanning the river. Challenging the jurisdiction of the Moama court to try the case, counsel claimed "the dog fell with his two feet in the Murray river, and with his two legs and head on the Victorian bank, so that the major portion fell in Victoria, also that the river was very high and the water had encroached upon Victoria so that the dog actually fell in Victoria, also that the river was very high and the water had encroached upon Victoria so that the dog actually fell wholly in Victoria but fell into a little New South Wales water." His opponent was equal to the occasion. He claimed that "although the dog might have fallen into Victoria, the offence was the kicking of the dog, which occurred in New South Wales; moreover, the wind in the long descent drove the dog partially into Victoria." The magistrate dismissed the case.

Implicit in the above argument is the working definition of the boundary that developed; the Victorian border is at the waterline on the southern bank of the Murray at **summer level**.

The famous dispute between the governments of New South Wales and Victoria over the ownership of the two Pental Islands, in the Murray near Swan Hill, also hinged on the question of just where was the border. These islands are very close to the Victorian bank, and are separated from the main stream of the Murray by a tiny anabranch. In 1848, the New South Wales government had ruled them to be in Port Phillip District which in 1851 became Victoria; the lessees paid £44 p.a. regularly to Victoria. In 1863, however, New South Wales demanded £40 rent which the lessees paid for the sake of peace. By 1866 the New South Wales demand had risen to £225 p.a. backed by the threat of eviction—rent was still being paid to Victoria. The lessees went to law, supported by the Victorian Government. Protracted litigation ended in the Privy Council which decided for Victoria.

Ownership of the whole river also affected navigation insofar as the New South Wales government would do nothing to clear the Murray of snags, a menace to the steamers, all of which traded from Victorian or South Australian ports. In 1864, when the Victorian Assembly was debating whether to allot £10,000 to clear the Murray above Echuca, James McCulloch was asked whether any approach had been made to New South Wales, the owners. He replied that four approaches had been made, all to no effect, but that he felt the improvement



—Ron Edwards

of the Murray for navigation was so important that Victoria was justified in allotting the money. Furthermore, said McCulloch, should the New South Wales government interfere, it would then be proper for Victoria to apply to the Imperial Government to have the border fixed at the middle of the river.

In fact, the Victorian government subsequently maintained snagging boats on the Murray for many years.

By far the worst feature of the Murray as the border between the colonies was that it cut off a large slice of New South Wales from its natural economic bases, South Australia and Victoria, particularly Victoria. It was therefore a bad border. Sydney, the seat of government, was remote from most of this area compared to Melbourne and Adelaide and was cut off by the eastern highlands—a considerable barrier to teams, and for many years to the development of railways westward from Sydney. Steamboats working the vast Murray network merely boosted Victorian and South Australian trade. Political neglect by Sydney of an area virtually lost economically was inevitable, so too was the dissatisfaction of the inhabitants of Riverina.

Victoria took the initiative in the struggle for the control of the hinterland when it decided to build a railway from Melbourne to Echuca, the nearest point on the Murray. Dubbed by John O'Shanassy "the iron horse to tap the Riverina", the railway reached Echuca in September 1864. For two years previously, the political air was heavily charged with propaganda—for annexation by Victoria of the Riverina, or for the setting up of a new state. From Sydney, resistance to both.

In 1863, the Victorian Parliament set up a select committee—the Loader Committee—"for the purpose of securing the trade of the Riverine district for the Victorian Railways." By Riverine was meant the territories watered by the Darling River, the Lachlan, the Murrumbidgee and the Murray, a much broader area than is now indicated by our modern idea of the Riverina.

In March 1864 Loader gave notice of five resolutions he would move in the Victorian Assembly. They were debated in April and recommended permanent internal communications with the Riverina to be connected with the Victorian Railways; the clearing of the Murray and its navigable tribu-

aries at the joint expense of Victoria and New South Wales; the construction of railways from Echuca to Deniliquin and Hay, and further to Menindie on the Darling; the extension of the boundaries of Victoria to include the district known as Riverina.

Loader recommended the Victorian Government to negotiate with New South Wales to discover whether the latter would cede Riverina to Victoria "on equitable terms". Should such negotiations fail, he insisted that the whole case be put to the Imperial Government "to point out the impolicy and injustice of the wealthiest, the most populous and the most enterprising of the Australian colonies being restricted within such narrow territorial limits, and to pray for such re-adjustment of the boundaries of Victoria as shall give its inhabitants an outlet to the north, and thus afford them access to those vast districts of the interior which were first explored by expeditions organised, equipped and maintained at the sole expense of this colony."

He was obviously referring to the Burke and Wills expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria. A rather entertaining theory this, which, had it been applied generally to all Australian exploration, would provide an extraordinary political map of Australia today. Loader pursued his thought to its logical conclusion when, developing the approach which should be made to the Imperial Parliament, he declared that "especial stress should be laid on the just claims of Victoria to incorporate with her present territory, under one form of government, that portion of the Australian continent situate on the Gulf of Carpentaria which was discovered by the Victorian exploring party."

There is no doubt that the New South Wales government, or the most influential section of it, was determined to retain the Riverina and to indulge in delaying tactics. A very necessary bridge over the Murray from Moama to Echuca was delayed many years because of the fear that such a bridge would facilitate the extension of the Victorian railway gauge into Riverina. Some years after the Loader Committee's report, the New South Wales Commissioner for Roads reported to his government with a forceful plea for the building of a line (N.S.W. gauge) from Moama to Hay, thence to Sydney itself, declaring that such a line would pay from the first day of its opening and would exclude the Victorian gauge, which if laid down, would be "tantamount to a cession of more than the extent of the country through which the line passed."

The pawns in this game of political put and take, the inhabitants of Riverina, had their own attitudes. There was much talk of annexation to Victoria in 1862 by townspeople in Deniliquin and on the border. The squatters, on the other hand, objecting to the Robertson Land (Selection) Act of 1861, were strongly opposed to annexation because Victoria had passed similar legislation. The squatters were keen to have security of tenure, which meant no free selection. If selection had to go on, then the squatters wanted it confined to selected areas. They felt that, if the New South Wales Government refused to meet them, they should be granted provincial government of Riverina, or else complete independence. Annexation to Victoria was, to them, anathema.

By April 1863, when the Riverine Association held its first meeting at Deniliquin, the townspeople (annexationists) had thrown in their lot with the squatters (separationists). The Association had as its aim the independence of Riverina and claimed members from Wentworth, Fort Bourke, Wagga Wagga as well as from the southern Riverina. Its first action was to send a delegation to Sydney

asking that more revenue be spent in Riverina, that there be increased representation in the Legislative Assembly, and that the necessary alterations be made in the Land Act.

The report to the first annual meeting, April 1864, pointed to the failure of N.S.W. to provide a bridge from Moama to Echuca "while Victoria had acted with frankness and promptness. Victoria appeared willing to expend portion of the customs paid by Riverine inhabitants for the purpose of clearing the rivers, but such willingness had not been met by the Sydney Government who had stated that Victoria has no right to facilitate the operations of Riverine trade."

The doughty champion of independence movements, the Rev. Dr. Lang, who came from Sydney to address the meeting, strongly urged the Riverine Association to petition the Home Government direct. He thought there was no finer site for a great city than Deniliquin "which could easily be connected by rail with the colony of Victoria".

But there was dissension inside the Riverine Association. The first President, Mr. Gideon Lang, was censured by one section because he had been persuaded in Sydney that Riverina could be linked by rail once the mountain range had been conquered, and by some squatters because he was thought to be abandoning the land question—security of tenure, with free selection in limited areas only.

In June 1864, Corbett, the secretary of the Riverine Association, stated: "It is agreed by all parties that if we can obtain a full measure of good government from New South Wales, we shall rest content without either separation or annexation. You are all aware that this Council has never entertained this question of annexation."

Corbett, attacking the editor of the Pastoral Times, Deniliquin, described him as "not only a rogue who falsified telegrams, but who also wrote under non-de-plumes to the Sydney Morning Herald disparaging the movement in one way and another, and with being a secret agent for annexation to Victoria."

But the Sydney government, in September 1864, imposed customs duties on goods crossing the Murray from Victoria. This move, timed to coincide with the opening of the Victorian railway to Echuca, infuriated the inhabitants of Riverina, most of whom would have to pay double duty on the goods they received—once at Melbourne, the second time on the Murray.

Intense activity marked the last few months of 1864. The Association sent lobbyists to Melbourne and Sydney, and determined to approach the Secretary of State for the Colonies direct. Following a dispute as to whether Wagga and Albury should be in the new state, or whether the boundary should be at the 148th meridian, it was decided to leave the eastern boundary to be decided by the Imperial Parliament. In November 1864, Dr. Lang gave notice in the New South Wales Assembly that he would move for the separation of Riverina on the lines of the petition to the Queen, on the principle of a Customs Union of the proposed new state with Victoria—a common tariff—thus abolishing all customs houses on the Murray, with joint revenue to be shared according to population.

The Melbourne Age proposed at this time that Riverina be bought from New South Wales for one million sterling. Shortly afterwards it was rumored that Victoria had offered two million.

May 1865 saw the petition on the way to London, closely followed by a delegation from the Riverine Association sent "to sustain the cause of separation." The dispatch from Downing Street, dated

(Cont. next page)

• Reviews •

How's Andy Going?

Alan Marshall is in the happy position of not needing to care what the critics have to say. He has a public! The members of his public have only to learn that a book of his is available and they queue at the bookshop counter. They know it's going to be good, so they read the critics only subsequently, if at all. The purpose of this notice, then, is to help let Marshall's public know that his book of short stories, "How's Andy Going?" (F. W. Cheshire for Australasian Book Society, 16/-) can now be obtained at the usual places; and anything further to that is just one more reviewer nattering away to the length requested by the editor.

I have read most of the stories in this volume previously, in literary reviews, anthologies, and magazines; and find that they mostly stand up well to the severe test of a second reading. It takes a good story to do that—when you recall pretty well how the narrative goes and are dependent for your interest in savoring once again manner of the telling. At his best Marshall is perfect; and only the luckiest writers ever touch perfection, even briefly.

The stories range in quality from literature to journalism of the special feature description; and there might easily be some dispute as to which is which. Every man to his own opinion. I merely note that when Alan Marshall is producing literature he uses a lean reportorial style that is horribly misleading if you've never tried to turn off some masterly trifle in that particular manner. In his second best vein—and it is always readable—he occasionally drops into a style that is more conventionally literary and somewhat less effective. Stories like "Tell Us About the Turkey, Jo"; "Cardiac", "Crossing the Road", "Trees Can Speak", "Street Scene at Midday" and "Wild Red Horses", might appear to have been jotted down by any bystander with an eye for significant detail and an ear for the characteristic word. That is where the magic comes in. Vestiges of the process are absent. I

21st December 1865, setting out reasons for refusal, read in part:

"I have to inform you in reply that I have been unable to advise her Majesty that any steps ought to be taken for giving effect to the wishes of the petitioners. I regret the inconvenience to which the inhabitants of the Riverine district are at present subjected to by their distance from the seat of Government . . . I am convinced that it would not be for the present or future benefit of Australia, that a tract of country comprising it would seem nearly half of New South Wales, inhabited by an extremely scattered population, and having no direct access to the sea, should become a separate colony."

Subsequent events may be noted. In 1876, the Victorian gauge was extended to Deniliquin, but attempts to have it continued to Hay failed. (By 1926, Victorian railways reached Balranald on the Murrumbidgee.) In Echuca's peak import year, 1880, 43,975,692 lbs. of wool, in 97,000 bales crossed there from New South Wales. In 1873, however, the N.S.W. railways reached Wagga Wagga, and in 1882, Hay. Nevertheless, Southern Riverina is still virtually Victoria; in the depression years a second secession movement, again based on Deniliquin, failed.

could read "Wild Red Horses" more than twice. It deals with men talking about bushfires while at their work timber-logging in the deep forest. Its scenes and events live in their own right. You forget it had an author.

In one or two stories the narrative is really a framework for more important things. In "Singing in the Sun" a man saves the life of a wild duck from another who would have shot it. He is a returned soldier and recalls being shot at himself. The motive is quite credible but unimportant. The big experience is in lying beside him among the reeds, secretly watching the behavior of the duck out on the still water between the lignum and trailing redgums—and seeing it rise to the air after he has thrown a warning stick. It is all very finely observed and cleanly told. The mind goes back to it; and there are other stories offering the same sort of reward for the reading.



An illustration by Ron Edwards in "How's Andy Going?"

I take a dim view of only one of Mr. Marshall's stories. It is called "Blow Carson I Say", and is about a fight between two bulls. I would have thought that I, about 25 years ago, had covered that subject well enough for all practical purposes! John Morrison has recently said that he thought "Blow Carson, I Say" is one of Marshall's best stories. This, from an attentive and sensitive reader, must carry weight. Others will agree, I am sure; and I bow to their judgment; but to me "Blow Carson, I Say" must ever remain merely a few corroborative remarks about a subject already disposed of. Blow Marshall, I Say!

—Frank Dalby Davison.

★

Poet on the Way

A man can write too much poetry but, assuming he's a poet, he can also write too little. It is not just that poetry demands practice to achieve skill and fluency—and, there again, a man can be too skilful and too fluent—but that the occasional poem fails to take in enough of life, that it is almost bound to compress too much, with the risk of abstract generalisation. It is just possible that Max Harris is extremely selective about his work, burns many manuscripts, and that this slim booklet, "The Coorong, and Other Poems" (Mary Martin Book Shop, Adelaide, 9/6), does present only the distilled essence of his poetry over the last decade; though, somehow, it does not seem likely.

All of which is merely another way of saying that he is an interesting enough poet for one to regret that he does not try to publish a little more freely.

Mr. Harris' prose and poetry display many similarities. In his novel, "The Vegetative Eye", there were two levels of action which did not become one level of consciousness. One part of the story, often poignant, could be easily followed and understood in its own right, while the other did not merely require some sympathy and understanding for the spirit of Baudelaire and Proust, but actual an intimate knowledge of these two writers. This is to say, Max Harris did not integrate Proust and

Baudelaire into his own work (as Joyce did), but merely "built them into" his novel which, therefore could only have been read by literati with enjoyment. In its straight-forward passages the novel whets one's appetite for more knowledge about the author's background; there is a heady, bitter-bucolic South Australian Germanism in it which, in parts, reminds one of certain Schlunke stories.

"The Coorong" still shows the same division, but the balance has shifted.

The "Allegory of Dante and The Apes" ends like this:—

They sing yet of that miracle
in my business hours;
but the wonder is worn and gone.
My dead powers,
apes I lead down Collins Street,
dear Dantes in reverse,
you have cursed me with your blessing,
and blessed me with your curse.

If "The Coorong" contained nothing better than this, which the most willing intuition cannot follow or respond to, even when read whole, the outlook would be discouraging. But it does contain better things.

"Incident at the Alice" is the opening poem. It tells of two men at Alice Springs, a laborer and an electrician, of the landlord of a local pub, and a man who died in the gibber country.

Alec Drage moves like a six foot eagle
Above the browsing bull ants of the 'drome,
Never looks up, lets his leather fingers
Be bitten, then crushes them lovingly.

A passionate electrician, he hates
All light that is not cased in glass,
Like a blind conductor he leads in
The DC3's that sing down with the sun.

But at night he calls the winking birds
Home in their great hum of desire
As if he were a bed or a womb,
His heart searching the sky with its light.

And later:

Bert Mulcahy, publican and computer
Of every toss and throw in human chance
Gives his big-eared silence to their talk,
His thumbs like gravestones on the bar.

This poetry works from the specific to the universal; it does not, like the Collins Street apes who are dear Dantes in reverse, imply an unshared and unshareable detail in their intellectual shorthand. Poetry does not have to be "real", in the same way as prose (and in any case, prose works the other way round, from the idea, the universal, to the specific), but it has to have its own reality which we must be able to discern into whatever small or unusually shaped seed it has been compressed. I would say there are other and possibly better ways of bringing Alec Drage poetically to life, but Mr. Harris' way is as adequate as any Drysdale painting of a man whose loneliness is stressed without making him merely an abstraction of loneliness. It is a social loneliness, let us say.

When this poet can link his images with people, he does in fact achieve a Drysdaleish feeling; a similar irony not unmixed with compassion. It does not even have to be some, to him observed, character. Kingsley Martin of the New Statesman and Nation also does quite well, though obviously more symbolically. There is a poem, "On Throwing a Copy of the New Statesman in the Coorong", which seems to owe quite a bit to the Angry Penguins, but which comes off pretty well, at least to those who know what it is all about. Only I wish there was a truce at last to the sinful habit of using a single adjective (like "promethean" death) to serve as a sort of compressed simile. It's odd how this stamps poetry as belonging to a certain

school and tendency! It again is the technique of prose and of the essay, and even with Dylan Thomas and Christopher Fry it can only come off in a play, as part of the shock-tactics of dialogue.

As one who cannot share the problem instinctively, I do not know why Max Harris, and some other poets, have such difficulty in uniting their commentary with their observation, unless it be that they run altogether on separate lines.

There's a verse in "Apollo Bay to Kingston" which runs:

Out from Apollo Bay vast treeferns
Lift from legendary valleys. Axe
And bellbirds clash across the gullies.
Mountains, ferns, beeches, dead wood
Split logs breathe out a moist secret.
In this fierce noon the treeferns steam,
And uncanny rivulets creep to your feet,
Lie curled there like tame snakes,
Whispering rivulets curl at your feet, tame.

But ten lines further down the Morris Minor makes its entry:

God made the Morris Minor to deliver us
From geological evils, to deliver us
At the cliff-faces of the sea where saints
Of rocks lie tumbled on a known elevation.

Stephen Spender has described his excitement at first discovering Auden's use of essentially non-poetic images for what he thought was a new poetry. But surely, by now it is clear that the Morris Minor does not operate in this department? The Morris Minor's use, here, is to make fun of (I beg the poet's pardon) the unimaginative bourgeoisie whose internal combustion engines spoil the uncanny mystery of the rivulets. But what happens is that the trick works in both directions: it knocks over the edifice of Apollo Bay's ferns and mountains, including that strong line of the axe and bell bird clashing across the valley, while it feebly debunks the Morris Minor and all its implications. God made the motor car to deliver us from geological evils . . . And similarly, why must the saints lie on a "known elevation?" The poet, as a man, may not be able to reconcile the Morris and the fern, but as a poet it is still his job to synthesize them somehow. It's no doubt quite a job, but unless it is tackled we are left with a three or four level satire which makes nonsense of the passion that underlies Mr. Harris' feeling for landscape and its meaning.

The brilliant and deeply felt poem on Oblomov ("Aubade") and "Incident at the Alice" show that Max Harris is far from being a split personality. He is also quite devoid of that so-called bawdy fecklessness which fashionably passes as daring or democratic. When he writes only out of his mind, his lines tend to break at flow-destroying points, which he does not need to discipline romanticism, because at his best his eye and his language are both disciplined and ample. Perhaps he needs a change of scene to start him working more broadly. If so, he should go after it, and not only for his own sake. The best is yet to come.

—David Martin.

★

Welcome Nugget

"Laughter Not For a Cage" by Miles Franklin (Angus and Robertson, 25/-) is undoubtedly the most stimulating and exciting volume of criticism of Australian literature, novels in particular, ever to appear in Australia. The comparative dullness of most, if not all, the previous volumes of this nature, make this book a Welcome Nugget indeed.

This book is provoking, witty, outspoken and radical. It is a book to read with enjoyment, underlining with a pencil, then going back over it and retasting.

Who but Miles Franklin could write thus of Anzac (and be published)? "At certain anniversaries you will hear in windy rhetoric from countless platforms that Anzac (Gallipoli) made a nation of Australia. But what is nationhood? What is the value of nationhood if achieved only through murdering the pick of the male population in its youth? What intelligence, splendor or freedom is there in motherhood that will submit to the 'superb specimens' of its travail being wasted as cannon fodder?"

Who but Miles Franklin could poke such effective borak at modern "psychological" writing as she does in discussing an autobiography by Ada Cambridge, one of our early novelists. "Correct ladies did not then caricature their friends or betray their relatives for literary notoriety, not become the vogue by torturing their libs or ids or what-not to discover incestuous cravings or other abominations."

The potted summaries of novels scattered through the volume all contain some penetrating comment that makes one see a familiar book in a new way. Even if one cannot always entirely share her forthright dislikes, her drubbing of Henry Handel Richardson and "The Fortunes of Richard Mahony" shows a refreshing disrespect for sacred cows and a capacity for brilliantly independent judgments that is all too rare in Australian literary-historical writing.

One of the most interesting chapters is a comparison of the life and work of Henry James and Joseph Furphy, who were born in the same year but who had little else in common. Of James she remarks, "his work plus his life lends itself so admirably to psychoanalysis and other mumbo-jumbo that elaboration of the Jamesian elaborations and conjectures assumes the proportions of a secondary industry."

The social development of Australia is sketched in throughout the book with more understanding in the first sections, covering the foundation and early development of the convict colony, than in the later sections covering the nineties and after. One feels that, because Miles Franklin was so much a product of the nineties, her interpretation is nostalgic rather than historically accurate.

The stature of Miles Franklin as a creative writer will grow with the years, especially when her responsibility for the Brent of Bin Bin novels is admitted. "Laughter Not for a Cage" establishes her as a critic whom not everyone will like, but whose individual and independent views, in a country which has always suffered from a grievous lack of capable critics, can only be welcomed with warmth and appreciation.

—Marjorie Pizer.

★

Under Two Fires

"A Book of Australian Verse", selected with an introduction by Judith Wright (Oxford University Press, 18/6) is a puzzling collection. Although the poems are arranged mainly in chronological order, commencing with Charles Harpur, our earliest important writer, and ending with Ray Mathew, possibly the most prominent of our younger poets, the anthology is not in any way a piece of historical research. Miss Wright would certainly not claim it as such; and indeed most of the book is devoted to recent and contemporary poets. It is not possible to argue with Miss Wright's standards for, although she has much to say about verse-

writers who are poets and verse-writers who are not, and about the "problem" of Australian poetry, and about the subjects with which poetry should and should not be concerned, nowhere does she attempt to define, even tentatively, what she understands by poetry; so that the reviewer who seeks reasons for the omission of certain poets and poems and the inclusion of others is at a loss, finding side by side with the magnificence of Baylebridge and Gilmore the bathos of Harold Stewart and the pretentiousness of some of the under-thirties.

The poets of the past who helped form our literature are treated very cursorily: "... a good deal of Australian verse—particularly early Australian verse—while it has had its function and importance in the growth of Australian consciousness, has little value beyond that function; its interest is historical rather than immediately poetic, a distinction unfortunately too seldom made by the more patriotic of Australian critics." O Miss Wright! You force patriotism on me, for I cannot so offhandedly thrust away Brady and Banjo, Daley and Dennis, Ogilvie and Adams; I cannot ignore, from the exquisite if undefined heights of true poetry, those who "... did not contribute anything to the solution of the problems of Australian poetry (what does this mean?), except incidentally in the emergence and solidifying in their work of an attitude to life which has come to be part of the Australian's idea of his own character—a kind of devil-may-care ironical swagger, self-conscious and adolescent enough, yet with elements of true masculinity."

There is too much left out for the anthology to be regarded as a serious collection even of contemporary poetry. These omissions are so gross as to be distortions; where are poems by Lesbia Harford, Vance Palmer, David Martin, Alexander Craig, Peter Bladen, Flexmore Hudson? If a "justification" of an anthology is "that it can act as a map does", surely these people are as much entitled to be marked within its frontiers as many of those who are included! Where is "Clancy and Dooley and Don McLeod" (if our balladists did nothing else they prepared the way for this poem) and where are the satires of Muir Holburn? If young writers like Charles Osborne and Patricia Excell are included where then are Marie Reay, Vivian Smith and Ron Simpson, surely as accessible and certainly as meritorious?

Be frank, Miss Wright; you have predilections. And why not! But at least have the honesty of your predilections and do not claim that you "... thought it best to give as broad an indication of the general shape and direction of the verse written in these years (1939-1955) as seemed possible." Say rather that these are poets who have impressed you, who fulfil in some degree your conception of what poetry is.

This anthology is too purposeless, too incomplete, too biased. Yet, as far as it goes, may show to readers abroad, for whom perhaps it is primarily intended, that Australian poetry need not fear comparison with that of England or America, and that in Ray Mathew, Nancy Keesing, John Manifold, Alec Hope, and Ken Slessor we have contemporary poets whose work may be placed with considerable pride alongside the work of poets who are internationally great.

★

And Judith Wright too belongs in the same company, as her "The Two Fires" (Angus and Robertson, 15/-) proves.

This is a book of magnificent poetry.

Poetry is inexplicable: verses, stanzas, whole "poems" may have all the elements of poetry—music sprung from metre and rhyme, imagery

clever and sincere, fastidious language, truth—and yet be as far from poetry as ink is from art. Poetry is the indefinable quality verse attains in the hands of someone who, like Judith Wright, is craftsman transformed into artist. We may respect verse, we may be impressed by it, amused, even saddened; but **poetry** carries us beyond thought to the region of sharply-felt emotion. We are moved by words, and we are astonished by the world of these words; but the words are no longer objects of meaning; they are words transfigured, mysterious; they are incantations, they are magic; and we are transfigured too. In poetry words have their renaissance: they are used in a new way; the world has its renaissance: we see it in a new way; and we with words and the world, are reborn also.

Contemporary verse is the occasion for a great deal of controversy. "This is poetry!" declares one person. "O no it isn't!" cries another emphatically, in a discussion of some poem published in recent years. But there can be no controversy about "The Two Fires." Every page in the book is a revelation to the reader. It is not merely that Judith Wright writes "poetry", but that she is able to sustain her brilliance. There is not a single poem in the book that does not leave us shaken with the wonder of it. It is almost impossible to illustrate her achievement, for each poem is a unity, and an extract torn from its context pales and dies.

What is the content of Judith Wright's book? The content is fear:

"What do you learn of the world? I hold
your hand;
but even my touch is cancelled by that
wind;
because the wind is my own breath
whispering that the heart of man condemns
the world to death."

Fear that man in his idiocy may turn the earth into the fire it once was:

"Look, the whole world burns.
The ancient kingdom of the fire returns."

In this world of fear, love, man's greatest attribute, becomes ever more important:

"... but the lame shadow stumbles at
my back,
still sick for love; the battle of flesh and
blood
will hardly come to quiet while I live."

Not merely love between woman and man, but love of all human beings for each other. But it is late; this is not a world for love:

"... for to love in a time of hate and to
live in a time of death
is lonely and dangerous as the last leaf on
the tree
and wrenches the stem of the blood and
twists the words from truth."

This is a philosophy of despair; we may or may not agree with it; nevertheless it is not an uncommon philosophy for the era that invested the atom bomb, and in the stating of it Judith Wright shows its validity. She writes humanly and humanely of and for her times—and a more powerful and poetic evocation of these times I have yet to discover.

—Laurence Collinson.

★

Neilson

Collectors of Australiana will welcome this carefully compiled checklist, "Shaw Neilson: An Annotated Bibliography" (Walter W. Stone, 64 Young St., Cremorne, N.S.W., 15/-), from the pen of Hugh Anderson, who is steadily making a name as a literary researcher. One recalls his "Guide to Ten

Australian Poets", his "Bibliography of Furnley Maurice" and various articles of criticism in *South-erly*, *Meanjin*, *Overland* and other journals.

Because of the fact that few of our younger writers have either the aptitude or the patience to enter the field of research, much valuable information is being lost. A complete study of Neilson has not yet been attempted and, when it is, such works as the one in hand will prove indispensable.

Referring to the poet in the foreword, Mr. Anderson (with commendable discernment) states: "... there is a regrettable tendency to oversimplify both his methods and his products. Neilson's poetry is a more complex substance than we have been led to believe in the past. One day he will be clearly seen as a deliberate writer of deep sensibility who, in recording a simple yet vigorous sensuous life, sought always to build a precise language for his needs, by tone and attitude rejecting the sentimental and seeking an intellectual restraint in his lyricism."

There is little fault to be found with the format of this checklist; but the spacing in one or two places could be improved. For instance, on page nine the listing of "Heart of Spring" calls for the same space as employed later. Also with reference to the information about the two editions of "Ballad and Lyrical Poems", description of only one binding is given. If my memory serves me correctly, there were two—the green and white striped paper boards with green cloth spine and printed labels on both cover and spine (as stated), and white paper boards with black cloth spine, the spine embossed in gold lettering and the cover carrying a printed label.

However this is a minor quibble. This book is a **must** for serious collectors.

It has come to my notice that Mr. Anderson has completed similar checklists of the following Australian writers: O'Dowd, Brennan, Brady, Boake and Dyson. I am eager for their publication.

—Cyril E. Goode.

★

Russian Novel

From Russia comes an intriguing book—**The Book—Herald of Spring** by S. Mstislavsky (Foreign Languages Library, Moscow, 1955). Written for teenagers, perhaps also for the adults of the less literate Soviet Republics, it is at once a treatise on Marxism, an account of the struggles between Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Tsarists during the period 1900-1905, and a first-class thriller complete with heroes and villains, hair-breadth escapes and conspiracies in darkened rooms. The political lessons are punched home by means of conversations between the various characters and these characters are etched in sharply with no more than two sentences: Bauman is a laughing confident revolutionary with a beard and a scar, Irina independent and bright-eyed with a "deep melodious voice," Mikhailchuk incredibly furtive and ferret-like.

The translation is competent but the translator, D. Shvisky, has a wealth of old-fashioned English phrases and clichés and this adds to the already naive style of the writing, while the question-and-answer manner in which the political material is presented, and the extreme simplicity of the answers, gives a curiously Victorian and admonitory effort reminiscent of the Sandford and Merton of our great-grandparents.

This book is not for the sophisticated, but forget to be an adult and read it as an adventure yarn and your 7/6 will be more than well-spent, especially as it is pleasantly bound, printed and illustrated. One can criticise it, even smile at it and yet be unable to put it down.

—Hilary Richmond.

Irish Songs

"Irish Songs of Resistance" (Wattle Recordings, Sydney, 6/6) is a small volume by the Irish singer and folk song collector Patrick Galvin. It will be of interest and value to all those interested in Irish influence on our early politics and on our culture, particularly our folk music.

The study of our folk music is still in its early stages, but it is quite clear that the strongest influence on it was Irish. And Irish national feeling is strong in some of our early songs and ballads.

Most Australians who are conscious of their history realise the importance of the Irish influence. Few, however, have any clear idea of the kind of events which shaped the attitudes of the Irish migrants. "Irish Songs of Resistance" takes the form of a short history of the Irish struggle against the British occupation of their country; embedded in the text are a goodly number of songs which both reflect the struggle, and were weapons in the struggle. The history is there to explain the songs, but it seems to me that it is good history. Both history and songs will enable Australians the better to understand their own history and songs.

A good many of these songs of resistance are folk songs; most of the others are set to folk tunes. A number of the tunes printed by Galvin were well known to Australian folk singers. Some examples are the tunes given for "The Smashing of the Van" (sometimes used for "The Wild Colonial Boy"), "The Station of Knocklong" (used for a version of "Bold Jack Donahue"), and "O'Donnell Aboo" (very popular as a dance tune, under the name of "Bourke's Dream").

Since many of our early folk ballads appear to be the work of Irish-born singers, it is not surprising that one should see points of resemblance between our folk ballads and some of the Irish folk ballads printed by Galvin (compare, for example, "Johnny Grey" and "Bold Jack Donahue"). The present writer, however, was surprised to find in Galvin's book evidence of much resemblance between the more literary Irish ballads and our own literary bush ballads. T. D. Sullivan's "Michael Dwyer" reminded me very forcibly of some of our literary ballads about bushrangers; Paterson's, for example. Here is a problem to which I do not think our literary historians have given much attention. Was there a parallel development in Ireland and Australia, the same kind of literary ballads developing from the same kind of folk balladry? Or was there, quite late in the nineteenth century, a strong direct influence from Irish literary ballads on our school of bush balladists? One would think both. In any case, it seems to me a subject that would repay investigation.

—E.W.

★

Australian Literature

"Australian Literature", a bibliography to 1938, by E. Morris Miller, extended to 1950; edited with a historical outline and descriptive commentaries by Frederick T. Macartney (Angus and Robertson, £4/4/0).

The title of this work implies that it is an extension of Dr. Morris Miller's massive reference on our literature; in actuality Macartney's "Australian Literature" has little to do with the previous volumes. In justice to Miller let us be clear on this matter.

Miller's production was a comprehensive two volume bibliography with descriptive commentaries and critical reviews. He treated each type and phase

of Australian writing chronologically; he gave excellent biographical notes on authors, analyses of novels and drama; he classified poetry, fiction, drama, essays, criticism and anthologies.

The new publication has attempted to compress the essentials of Miller into one volume and abandons the subject arrangement for the alphabetic. Macartney limits himself to works of imagination and selected author annotations. This book is in essence one of ready reference, taking its proper place as an index to Morris Miller's "Australian Literature." The basic bibliographic material has been extracted from Miller's work and checked and added to by Mr. Macartney. The material covering 1939-1950 was assembled by Miss Hine of the Mitchell Library. Frederick Macartney wrote the new commentaries and the historical outline, but as editor he must also be held responsible for the shortcomings of the work.

Others have spoken of Macartney's "dispassionate" and "reliable" notes, but a comparison of items in Miller and Macartney discloses the difference in treatment. Miller is literary, critically balanced, while Macartney is subjective. It is difficult to see the reason for commentaries on some of the writers when others of equal importance are neglected. Surely the sensible thing to do, when a compact one volume coverage was decided upon, was to limit the commentaries as well as the book lists to bibliographical proportions. Such an attack would have allowed the inclusion of valuable material, the fiction index of Miller for instance.

By pruning the descriptive annotations, room could have been found for such important material as critical references on individual authors. On the other hand, the extra space might well be devoted to a summary of the contents of the previous two volumes. The thorough chapter on Criticism and the valuable Introduction by Morris Miller are two sections worthy of reference here. As an alternative, assuming Frederick Macartney has read all the novels from 1938 to 1950, he could easily have brought the index of Fiction from Miller up to date.

A striking inconsistency is the misuse of the terms "biography" and "descriptive" in what purports to be a bibliography limited to creative writing. Compare, for example, the booklists under Frank Clune and Jack McLaren. Should not, by his terms of limitation, Macartney have excluded all descriptive books not fictitiously presented? Otherwise all books of biography and description are entitled to a bibliographical entry.

While this emasculated Morris Miller does serve a useful purpose as a quick reference book, it must be said to fall far short of the high standard of the now out-of-print two volume work published in 1940.

—H. Anderson.

(Footnote: As most readers will be aware, Mr. Anderson is not the only critic to find fault with Mr. Macartney's latest work. We have had our attention drawn to the publication by Mr. Macartney of a pamphlet, "An Odious Comparison," in which the criticisms of "Australian Literature" are taken up by Mr. Macartney. This pamphlet is available gratis from the author at 66 Stanley Street, Black Rock, Victoria.—Ed.)

★

Historical Studies

The May 1956 issue of the half-yearly journal, **Historical Studies** is probably the most interesting for the general reader of the 26 issues published to date.

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(1,4 means Issue Number 1, page 4)

Professor Manning Clark's paper on the origins of the convicts makes it clear that there has been plenty of inaccurate "romanticising" of the convicts as largely innocent victims of a noxious social system; in fact the overwhelming majority at all periods were from a professional criminal class, rather than from persons driven temporarily into crime through economic misfortune.

While it is good that Professor Clark draws attention to the over-simplifications with which well-meaning people have been all too ready to obscure Australian history, it does seem that he himself often constructs a romanticised and over-simplified picture of the person or opinion he then sets out to de-bunk.

Professor Fitzgerald contributes an essay on "Continuity in Chinese History", and Michael Roe a paper which intriguingly commences: "At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of New South Wales totalled a bare five thousand. Yet already the first battle for survival had been won and a colonial life with patterns and peculiarities of its own was beginning to evolve. The study of this growth is perhaps the most interesting facet of early Australian history."

Mr. Roe's contention that that society, despite its convict base, was basically a normal and an optimistic one is convincingly stated in his argument.

An important and timely section of this issue of **Historical Studies** contains a delightfully written "Plea for Regional Histories" in Australia by Eric Irvin, of Wagga; a contribution on local records and the problems of the archivist; a valuable list of writings bearing on Australian history which were published in 1955; and a list of accessions of manuscripts to the main Australian and New Zealand libraries.

This journal is far more than a professional historians' mouthpiece; it should be read and thought about by all those interested in Australia Yesterday and its bearing on Australia Today.

Subscription 21/- yearly (two issues) to the Editor, **Historical Studies**, University, Melbourne, N.3.

—A.P.L.

(Cont. from p. 29)

licences of the anthology sonnet" (what derision there is in the latter epithet!) had never appeared to me especially obnoxious, least of all the terminal couplet which is one of Shakespear's greater glories. As for rhymes in short "-y", I must confess my own addiction has weakened all sense of disgust towards them. And what, by the way, are swap-tailed rhymes?

John Manifold, I am sure, means well, even at his most obscure and inflexible. For the sake, however, of young poets who, wishing to attempt sonnets, might be intimidated and bewildered by the academic and unequivocal tone of his commentary, may I, being one of them, advise them to go, like myself, their own sweet immature ways; and to obtain an intimate knowledge of the form by reading, not commentaries, but the actual sonnets of some of the most respectable practitioners of the form, among whom I would include Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, E. B. Browning, W. H. Auden, George Barker and—John Manifold.

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