

OVERLAND

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TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

Katharine Susannah Prichard Issue



Katharine Susannah Prichard

Writing by

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Atomic Lullaby

Hush my baby do not cry
The mushroom cloud is in the sky,
Now I lay you down to die,
Lulla-lulla-lullaby.

Now I lay you down to sleep,
I do not cry, I do not weep,
But cry the Lord your soul to keep.
Lulla-lulla-lullaby.

If you should die before you wake,
I pray the Lord your soul to take,
But who will heal my bitter ache . . .
Lulla-lulla-lullaby.

O who will teach your feet to run,
And who will guide your lispng tongue,
And who will warm you in the sun,
Now that my body's work is done . . . ?

Thank you God for everything,
The bread we eat, the birds that sing . . .
O close your eyes, the soft rain falls,
God sheds his blessing over all.

The small, soft rain
That grows and heals,
That brushed the cheek,
That fell in the fields.

The small, soft rain,
The gentle rain,
That fell from heaven
And eased our pain.

God in his mercy send us grace . . .
That rain fell on my baby's face.

The sun is black, the rain rains death,
His face turns black, he chokes for breath.
O breathe against my baby's mouth,
The soft clean wind that tugs from the south.

But east and north and south and west,
The wind that blows is kissed with death.

I cannot sleep, my child will die,
The mushroom cloud spreads in the sky,
The sun is black, the black winds howl,
The rain is rotten . . . soft . . . and foul.

O where on earth can my baby lie?
Lulla-lulla-lullaby.

I cannot sleep . . . I cannot rest,
My babe is gasping at my breast,
I'll walk from east, west, north and south
With a cry for peace
On a burning mouth.

O praise the Lord from whom all blessings fall . . .
The gentle rain . . . the gentle rain from heaven
Has killed the children playing in the grass,
Even as they raise their bleeding arms to heaven.

Hush my baby, do not cry,
A mother's tears are never dry,
The mushroom cloud hangs in the sky,
But lulla-lulla-lullaby . . .

I did not ache that you might die,
The world will hear my savage cry . . .
So sleep in peace . . . and lullaby
. . . lulla-lulla-lullaby.

DOROTHY HEWETT

In Neon Pastures

Once again it is a wet Saturday night,
and city streets will all be paved
with neon signs.

We will drive down Rundle Street
over upside down advertisements
—red, purple, white, green, blue—
for talkies, underwear, tobacco, and nylons.
Across them our tyres
will draw black lines
that will disappear in an instant.

The city is never so lovely
as on wet Saturday nights
when the roadways blossom
into shining paddocks of neon lights
where petrol-blooded monsters
graze on electric flowers.

IAN MUDIE

★

Consolation

I closed the door behind me
As on an evil way;
Friendship a poisoned needle
In a stack of poisoned hay.

A sixpence and a shilling
I tinkled on the bar,
The whisky bottles twinkled
Their welcome from afar.

A big man and a small man
Were standing by their beer,
I drank my eighteen pennies
As if they'd cost a year.

The midday tipplers wondered
How folk have most to say
When six o'clock makes empty
The last jug of the day.

The landlord laughed: "Much stranger!
Some stand and jaw outside
Till one o'clock of morning
At what they jawed the night . . .

. . . Dave, Jack and John." Three faces
Were in my glass at noon;
Young men who like to argue
Under a southern moon.

I never saw yet loved them
Behind my spirit eye,
And heart to heart we trundled
The Wherefore and the Why.

So dies the pain of others.
I laughed and drank and went—
False friend, I find my brothers
In bar and barn and tent.

DAVID MARTIN

Overland, June 1953

J. P. Carroll

ANDY'S NIGHT LOOP

Illustrated by Clem Millward

EVEN the steel frame of the automatic staff exchanger clung mercilessly cold to Andy's hands as he set it in position. There was little he could do now but wait unsheltered from the howling sleet on this winter's night.

Instinctively he turned his back on the direction of the wind and cringed his head deeper into the large collar of his overcoat. This gave him little consolation for there, a few hundred feet away, was the inviting glimmer of his signal-box. And the tantalising knowledge that inside burned a cheerful fire made him turn with almost pleading eyes to look for a sign in the blackness obscuring the "Up" line. It was 1.32 a.m.

In a few minutes the headlight came into sight and a giant diesel locomotive throbbed louder and louder. There was a screeching whistle in harsh discord with the roaring of steel wheels on the rails and a sudden dazzling illumination of the loop. Then an instant darkness with noise quickly diminishing to a breathless muffled whisper as the red lights of the guard's van disappeared into the night. The express was through.

Barely had the metallic "thwack" indicated that the exchange was made, when Andy moved forward impatiently to retrieve the staff collected from the express. He was shivering miserably and, when he heard a shovel banging against the fire-hold door of the fast goods engine standing side-tracked in the loop line, he knew the comfort of his fire was a time off yet.

As he reached the signal-box he belted his rain-sodden hat against the staircase railing to extract some of the moisture, now leaking through the hat band and giving added discomfort where it trickled down his neck to his underclothes.

Once inside, he threw forward a lever to protect, with a red signal light, the single line section now occupied by the express. At the same time the high-lighted shining surfaces of the very lever he operated, the gleaming safe working apparatus brass-work and crystal-clear multiple windows all reflected the glow of the warm fire he could not yet enjoy. The "fast" had to be departed.

"Train Departure," Andy sent the bell code; telling the "Down" signalman that the express was heading towards him.

"Train Arrival," he now belled to the "Up" signalman; telling him the express had gone through.

He wished he could take off his wet overcoat but what was the use.

"Dong! Dong! Dong!", Andy called "attention" to the "Up" signalman and lifted the inter-section phone receiver. "Fast is ready to depart. Can y' give me a staff at 1.40 a.m.?"

At the other's consent Andy placed the staff, collected from the express, into the "Up" staff instrument. A succession of further bell codes. Then a long intermittent bell as the "Up" signalman charged Andy's instrument with an elec-



Andy

trical current to enable the staff for the "fast" to be withdrawn.

Again swinging on his signal levers Andy set the points from No. 2 road to the main line and then No. 2 departure signal to "all clear". This done, he replaced his now shapeless hat on his head and once more went out into the cold wet night.

There was still no let-up in the weather. Tarpaulins on the "fast" flapped wet edges against truck sides like gun reports. And more than once a rope lashing flicked whip-like against his face, now pain-sensitive with the biting cold.

As Andy approached the "fast" engine, he became envious of a crew in a warm cabin with engine-tender storm curtains drawn snugly tight. That is, until he saw the cab foot-plate almost flooded by rain sweeping in through the driver's gangway. Here was a paradox where a completely weather-proof cab would be stifling against the heat radiation from the boiler and fire box. Thus the crew chose the lesser evil and surrendered full protection for ventilation—they had to breathe to live even if it meant suffering for the privilege.

"Here's y' peg", Andy told the driver.

"It'd be a bugger in bed now wouldn't it?" the driver remarked blandly, throwing down the fire-shovel.

"Yeah!" Andy grinned wryly. "And in a hot stuffy bed-room too!"

This short-lived conversation was beyond mere facetiousness. It was that peculiar brand of attempted humor and plain resignation: pass-words, known and understood only by the brotherhood of men who work in the night.

Andy was heading back to his signal box when the "fast" driver looked over his gauges and hesitated before his mate who was still dozing on a hard backless seat. The fireman, barely nineteen years old, had taken his girl friend to a dance before signing on for the night run. The old driver knew this and remembered his own young days. Then and now it seemed no different. Most people had

J. P. Carroll is a locomotive engine-driver on the Victorian Railways.

it as a birthright, but not the night-shift railway man; if he was presumptuous enough to crave companionship then he must pay for it. The old driver gently roused his mate.

"Come on son. We've gotta go," he said softly.

A blare of the engine whistle. A green light from the guard; repeated back by the fireman. The mounting hiss of steam from open release cocks; punctuated by successive funnel exhausts rapidly rising to a harsh staccato as the fast gathered speed.

Somehow the pressing nature of shelter in Andy's mind took second place to an absorbing thought. And it made him pause at the steps of his signal box and watch the white incandescence that flared through the engine cab, lighting up the billowing smoke as if the whole locomotive was aflame and throwing dark shuddering silhouettes of tall eucalyptus trees as it travelled round the bend of the up line. Trucks rattled past him quickly and as the guard's van went by Andy and the guard yelled almost simultaneously "How're y'," in greeting and farewell.

After listening to the last trace of the train's echoing rumble, Andy put his thoughts into words.

"Christ! There must be more in life than this."

But almost immediately he cursed himself and scrambled up the steps.

"Bloody man feeling sorry for himself and getting himself in. Must be cranky standing out in that weather."

He paused just long enough to give his hat several vehement belts on the staircase rail, then greedily made for the fire. This time he could take off his overcoat.

It only took a moment for the fire to relieve his physical discomfort and consequently to mellow the frame of mind that went with it. He was soon back at his signal levers: resetting the departure signal to protect the "fast" and replacing the points again from the main line.

He brought his train register book up-to-date with departure and arrival times and the serial numbers of all staffs put through the instruments. Now to report to "train control" on the station selector phone.

"Fast goods No. 38 in at '27. No. 70 express through at '35. No. 38 away at '43."

After the acknowledgment from "control", Andy filled his pipe and threw another back log onto his fire. He knew he would have to brave the bad weather outside for yet another eight train crosses but the cheerfulness of his fire gave him the moral strength to face this. For after all, he pondered, at least between each cross he was in warm shelter whereas the crew on that fast goods, and many other railway occupations like shunters and coal stage men, had no let-up from sign-on to sign-off.

★

If his now settled temperament seemed in contrast with his earlier outburst against his job, there could really be no confusion in analysing this. For it seems the intricate pattern of our society calls often for one man to carry a greater burden than his fellow, and strangely enough there is always a man born who will carry a heavier load. And not always from economic causes, but for some indefinable reason that clearly marks a man for a vocation. Such men are easily identified. All they ask is a fair thing, to be left alone and to be allowed to growl about their job as often as they feel like it.

Who among signalmen would stick it out here in a place that bore no map name except "Single Line Crossing Loop No. 8"; an otherwise uninhabited location, dwarfed by the towering laminated strata of the Grampians ranges, and the only other communication being a rough road track flung



Jim

somewhat carelessly into the heavily timbered base slopes? A loop situated half-way between Melbourne and the South Australian border; existing solely for important trains that departed from both those terminals in the evening and crossed each other under Andy's control during the early hours of the following morning.

Again such a man had to be a type: the curious combination of railway-man and bush-man that was Andy.

So whilst he growled about it he never begrudged the continual night shift for it enabled him to satisfy both inclinations. At 9 a.m., after switching out his loop, he would wander off with a gold-dish, a cut-down dumpy shovel, a gunny bag of tucker and a note-book and pencil.

Depending on the availability of surface water, he would fossick around the old diggings till lunch-time, then set out to the felling-site of another occupational hermit; an old woodcutter who worked for the Forest Commission.

Both men, it seemed, claimed this part of the bush as their own province or, more to the point, a protectorate. What they did not know of the natural scene was little, but what they did know was often of interest to various bodies, from Government research departments down to field naturalist clubs and piscatorial societies. A request for a weather observation, a change in flowering time of a native shrub, or a report on the physical condition of a native creature, they considered an honorable charge. And a faithful reply would be framed by Andy; each word of his slow formed handwriting being checked with nodding approval by the woodcutter.

It was Andy the bush-man who went to bed at 5 p.m. in the afternoon. At 11 p.m. the same night it was Andy the railway-man who rose. And so his life went on.

★

Yet it was at a moment like now, sitting before his fire, that the two Andys intermingled. The beating rain outside reminded him of the next train cross. He did not relish the thought but, on the other hand, it told him that when daylight

came there would be plenty of surface water on the diggings. And then there was that technical school teacher at Stawell who had asked him to keep a look out for prospects of native mercury...

"Dong! Dong! Dong!" the "attention" bell code from the "Down" signalman. The "milky" was on the line. Andy the railwayman again became the dominant personality.

As the night wore on, Andy's overcoat became heavier with moisture, despite the regular attempts at drying, and his unfortunate hat suffered many more beltings on the staircase rail.

There was another change of attitude in Andy, however, as the first streaks of dawn appeared. He became restless with anticipation and kept watching the "Up" line; impatient, it seemed, that the slow-coming daylight was delaying the sight of something he urgently wanted to see. Yet he knew he must be patient, for old Jim would not arrive before his due time.

This also was the hour, a wide break in train crosses, which he usually chose for the nightly ritual of spit and polish. His eyes rested on the signal levers burnished with emery paper, the gleaming staff instruments and the windows; nothing cleaned a glass pane like plain newspaper, he thought meditatively. He surveyed the rest of his signal box with pride. Pride?—or was it bitterness?

Unconsciously, Andy reached up to where he kept the tin of cleaning materials. But somehow he could not bear to get them down. He went back to the window and resumed a vigil on the "Up" line.

At last Andy saw old Jim, the signal adjuster on his three-wheel trolley, coming on the "Up" line towards the loop. Andy moved the simmering kettle from the hob to the centre of the fire. When Jim entered the signal box, the tea was made.

"Morning Jim. Just in time," Andy remarked referring to the tea but anxious to get the other man settled. "Barstard weather, isn't it?" he added unnecessarily.

"Barstard weather all right," Jim agreed, then asked after the signal equipment. "How're they pulling?"

"Everything good," Andy quickly assured him and poured out two pannikins of tea.

Andy allowed only as much time to pass as would not betray his anxiety, then tried his best

to ask casually: "Did y' hear anything at the junction?"

"Yeah. It's all settled. They're startin' on this track next month."

There was a silence between the two men as they sipped their tea, each ruminatively concerned with his own thoughts.

Jim spoke first.

"Of course it doesn't matter much to me. I get superannuated this year and it's just as well. There'll be no place for a mechanical man when they get all this electricity business going. It'll be a young fellows' game." Jim hesitated then asked. "What about you, Andy?"

"Aw, I dunno. Th' engine crews are gettin' diesels an' outin' the steam. So I suppose it's progress." Andy rose jerkily and paced the floor. "Anyhow!" he continued almost too loudly, "Who in th' bloody hell wants to be workin' nights in this sort of weather. NO! I don't care much."

Jim looked hard at Andy and let it go at that. He had been long enough on the job to know when a line of talk had run its course.



It all happened so quickly. Andy's signal box and living quarters were demolished. They replaced his mechanical semaphore signals with black oval canopies that housed a set of three colored electric lights. And they coupled his points to electric motors. Then they installed a small grey concrete box, chock-full of electro-magnetic relays and circuit breakers and other mysterious glass, covered cages. They tethered the thing by a multi-wired cable fixed firmly into the earth where it then divided to become two dutiful leases subservient to the ingenious mind of men.

Anything that goes on there, now, can be observed on a indicator screen by a control officer many miles away. There are no staffs now. All trains run on the passage of automatic signals. And, such is the efficiency of the system, a train to be sidetracked can be signalled to a crawl through No. 2 road and, once in clear, another train can pass on the main line at seventy miles an hour. Neither train stops—and it's all arranged by a man many miles away.

They changed the name of the location too. Very imposing: "Remote Controlled Automatic Unattended Crossing Station No. 1". A simpler name would be "Automation". The train-men still call it "Andy's Night Loop".

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JOSEPHINA ANNA MARIA

by Katharine Susannah Prichard

WIND tore through the darkness, and rain was beating down in heavy showers, the night one of the Sicilian wood-carters came to the door of Ryan's Hotel and banged on it so that its shrunken panels rattled. Michael had shut-up at nine o'clock; bolted the windows and barred the doors against the wind and rain.

Roused out of his sleep, he got up, thrust his arms into an old overcoat, and barefooted went to open the door, cursing the fool who was out on such a night and might want a bed at that hour.

Mary heard him open the door, and the noise of wind and rain rush in over Denari's voice. She had been in bed with a cold all day. Michael had strapped a whisky pack to her back and shoulders before he went to bed himself, a few hours ago.

"But she's ill. She can't go out," Michael shouted.

The Sicilian cried out in a broken, distraught way; and Michael slammed the door.

"What is it?" Mary called from her bed.

Mick went to her.

"Denari says his wife's bad. You can't go, I told him. I will not have you running about after these people, and yourself ill. Why can't they make their arrangements? Didn't the woman know what was going to happen? They've just got into the way of depending on you, and be-God, it's got to stop. Does he think I'm going to have you catchin' your death going out on a night like this?"

"It's her first baby, Mick. The poor thing—"

Mick went out of the room to fasten the bolts of the door again. When he returned to the bedroom, Mary was standing with her clothes on. She had wrapped a shawl round her head and chest; dragged on her stockings and shoes.

"I'm going, Mick," she said. "How could I rest, thinking of the poor soul, and nobody to help her."

"You'll do no such thing," Mick blustered. "Go back to your bed, woman."

But he knew there was no arguing with his wife when her face took that set look: her eyes were seeing four mounds of earth which covered her own babies, down near the Salt Lake.

"Get the lantern. And we'd better take a couple of blankets," Mary said. "It's a broken-down shack Denari's living in. Scarcely a stick of furniture or a rag in it. I've got my own things in a bag here."

They went out into the wind and rain. Wrapped in great coats and carrying their bundles, they stumbled along the road by the light of the lantern Mick carried, until they came to the railway line, where three or four Sicilians, who carted wood for the mines in Kalgoorlie, had built themselves huts and makeshift shelters of bags and kerosene tins.

A light was burning in one of the huts. Mick and Mary could see two or three men standing in the doorway; a long moan and sharp sobbing howl came from it.

"Denari!" Mick called, as they came up to the doorway. "The missus would come," he explained to one of the men who moved towards him. Mary went into the hut.

The woman was there on a bunk against the wall, sitting up and rocking herself backwards and forwards, rain pouring down through the roof, all

round her. The bunk she was sitting on was wet, and the blankets about her. The only light in the place stood in a box to screen it from the rain: there was no fireplace in the hut. The men in the doorway gazed at the woman helplessly. They had given her wine to dull her pain, and half-drunk, with tumbled hair, Mrs. Denari, as she was called, stared at Mary Ryan from a swollen face, dazed, anguished eyes.

"Me no understand, meself," she moaned. "No understand." A shaft of agony shattered her screaming cry.

"See if they've got a fire anywhere, and get some water hot," Mary said to her husband.

She knew at a glance that this was no ordinary case of child-birth; but there was no place to move the woman: no time to take her anywhere before the child was born.

"Here, you," she commanded the men standing round the doorway, "get something to cover that hole in the roof, can't you? And Denari, hold up your wife while I put this dry blanket on the bed."

Denari supported the heavy, shuddering figure, muttering with rough tenderness.

She was wearing her everyday clothes: had no nightgown, it seemed. There were no sheets for the bed; for a pillow, a sugar bag, stuffed with feathers, lay under her head. And so, squalling and hustling, Josephina Anna Maria ushered herself into the hut. Her father named her as soon as he saw her. The rain christened her.

A fat, husky baby, she was, all red, with a mat of sooty fluff on her head, and the bright eyes of a little animal. Mary wrapped her in the other blanket she had brought, and went on attending to the mother. When she had washed Mrs. Denari and made her as comfortable as possible, Mary lifted the baby again. To risk washing the child in that draughty place would be madness, she decided.

"I'll take the baby with me, Denari," she said. "And bring her back in the morning."

"Si, si, signora," the man agreed gratefully, glad enough to have somebody to look after the little creature.

Through the wind and rain which had never stopped all night, Mick and Mary tramped back to the hotel with the baby rolled tight in her blanket. So, swiftly, fate had dealt with them. There had been no time to think about what they were doing. Mary had gone to that other woman in her need because she could not have it on her conscience to do otherwise; and she had brought Josephina Anna Maria back with her because there was nothing else to do. She could find no baby clothes in the hut: nothing to wash the child in. And the mother—a fearful stench hung over her.

"Will the woman die?" Michael asked.

He did not hear what Mary said. The wind snatched her words away: but he knew the indignation that went with her exclamation.

"And the child?"

Mary did not reply. Michael guessed with what fierce tender arms she was holding that small body against her own, protecting it from the rain, dashing into their eyes and soaking into their thick coats. They plodded home along the track, seeing long pools of dark water by the swaying gleam of the lantern. A gust extinguished it. They had to make the rest of their way in darkness.

In their kitchen, a fire was still smouldering in the great stove. Michael threw more wood on and lighted a lamp which showed the crockery glimmering in rows on the shelves, his own chair and Mary's, the table between them. Mary laid the baby on the table while she pulled off her own wet clothes and changed into dry ones.

Then she bathed the infant before the fire, swabbed out the bright eyes which should have been half-closed still, and rubbed the plump little body all over with olive oil. She dressed it in the garments she had made for her own babies, and put Josephina Anna Maria to sleep in the clothes basket.

Michael went about mixing a hot toddy, grumbling at the shiftless ways of people who brought children into the world as though they were puppies, and took a man's wife out of her home, to look after them, when she had been too ill to hold up her head all day. He took the hot drink to Mary when she got into bed at last; and scolded her roundly for all she had done.

"Oh, well," Mary murmured drowsily, "she's a beautiful baby, isn't she, Mick?"

They slept well into the morning. Cows were lowing against the fence to be milked, and two or three gins with their children shivering under the verandah, when Michael turned out to open the house, sweep the bar, and get breakfast for himself and Mary. He waved his broom at sight of the blacks.

"Be off with you," he yelled. "You'll be having babies, next, I suppose. Hauling a man's wife out of bed to be lookin' after you."

Aboriginal women usually went off into the bush, with one of the older women of their tribe, before a baby was born. The cooboo first saw the light of day under a tree, or beside some sheltering rocks, and was none the worse for it. But some of the younger gins, who had learnt the ways of white folks and liked to imitate them, would beg for Missus Ryan. And Mary had gone to see them, now and then, more out of curiosity than because she thought it was necessary to interfere with their own old women, crude and drastic though their methods appeared.

But this morning Michael was in no mood to be bothered with Polly Ann, Bidgee, Lucy, and the rest of them when they came round the kitchen door for scraps of food and old clothing, flooded out of their camps though they might be, and looking forlorn and draggled scarecrows in the fresh sunlight.

Later, Mary declared she was well enough to get up and go about her work. The baby had slept until daylight, blethering a little, and then Mary fed her with warm water and Josephina Anna Maria had gone to sleep again. Mary, herself, looked quite excited, having the child to look after. She said the cold was not so heavy on her after all. It had done her no harm to be out in the night air; and would Michael go up and see how Mrs. Denari was: take her some milk and a billy of hot tea.

Indeed, he would not, Michael swore. Let Denari come down and tell them how his wife was. It was the least he could do, the lazy hound, to let a woman lie there with the rain pouring down all round her, and never turn a hand to mend the roof: or give her anything but that mucky hole to live in.

Men who went into the bar for something to warm them, before going to their work, that morning, found Michael surly and taciturn. Mary had to send one of the blacks with the billy of tea and bottle of milk for Mrs. Denari.

Denari, himself, came back with the gin, his swart dull face sagging under its high cheek bones; fear and horror of the night in the beads of his eyes.

"Is mad," he gasped. "Throw herself about. Shout and cry out. Toni and Severino hold her while I come for you."

Mary took off her apron, wrapped her shawl of Donegal tweed round her shoulders, and went with him. But, by the time she reached the hut, the woman on the bunk was lying heavy and unconscious.

"Maddalena! Maddalena!" Denari exclaimed, gazing down on her. "She will die?" he asked Mary.

Mary's head moved slowly in acquiescence. There was nothing to do as far as she knew. Denari followed her as she went out of the hut.

A short, thick-set man, with small eyes, and black brows which met in tufted bristles over a blunt nose, he looked scared and dumb-founded at this calamity which had overtaken the pleasant, easy-going way of his life. He muttered something in his own language, and Mary guessed he was asking if there were nothing he could do.

"There isn't anything you can do for her," Mary said. "Except moisten her lips with a little water, now and then."

Her anger against the man was so great she could not look at him; and Denari followed her with the eyes of a dog that has been kicked, he does not know why, as she went away over the earth, washed clean and cool by the rain and flashing silverly where pools and puddles still lay.

Was he to blame that he had no money to buy a fine house for his wife; and that there was no doctor or priest for hundreds of miles in any direction?

In the evening, Michael said one of the men from the wood-cutters' camp had told him Mrs. Denari was dead. He forbade Mary to go and lay out the body; assured her he had told the men what to do, sent a sheet of canvas to wrap the corpse in; candles to burn beside her.

Mary saw Denari driving a dray and horses he used for carting wood, towards the Salt Lake, next morning: men from the camp walking after it in dreary file. Michael would not let her join them; but in the afternoon, Mary carried the baby down to the rough mound the men had left on the edge of the lake.

She put the child in a shawl on the ground, while she gathered a few early wild flowers and spread them over the grave; promising the woman who was dead to be a mother to Josephina Anna Maria, all her life long, if need be.

A little further along were the four small mounds of red earth, under their coverlets of salt crystals, where her own babies lay. As she stood there in the mild air, beneath a cloudy blue sky, with samphire on the edge of the lake throwing a broad fringe, emerald, rose and mauve, about her, Mary thought of Maddalena Denari and of her own babies.

In summer, the lake stretched, snow-white and dazzling in the sunshine, under dim pale skies. Many a prospector in the early days, lured by gleam and shimmer of the salt, thinking that there in the distance was water in abundance, had perished and been embalmed where he fell on its broad expanse. But today there was water in the lake: the samphire had a fragrance of violets.

So strange, it seemed to Mary Ryan, that the Denari woman should be lying there with her children, and she be walking the earth with the foreigner's baby. The poor slatternly woman with

(Continued next column)

GRANDPA AND THE BULL

by Robert Clark

IF anything was to be done properly, Grandpa had to do it. If anything could be mucked up, Steve or I could be safely left to tackle it. That, anyway, was Grandpa's view.

So, when the bull calf broke his halter the afternoon Grandpa was due to return to the City, there was hell to pay. "Those damn boys," he stormed, "pair of useless numbskulls, they wouldn't know what to do with their own heads if they rolled off."

Fortunately Grandpa was in his best clothes and there was only twenty minutes to train time. He arrived at the siding at the same time as the train, and we bundled him into the carriage, still fuming and cursing over the bull calf. But before the train steamed out he issued an order, and extracted a promise, that the bull calf would be recovered the next day and sent to market the following week.

A promise given to Grandpa was not to be lightly dismissed. The farm was his, to say nothing of some City properties and a number of gilt edged securities, and a man can still do what he likes with his own. So Grandpa was inclined to put the rule over us on his occasional visits to the farm: but fortunately they were not frequent and in the intervals he seemed benign and far away.

So it was over the bull calf. Not that we had any intention of disobeying Grandpa. It wasn't that. But you know what it's like on a farm when you're opening up virgin country and haven't had time to provide the ordinary necessities, let alone amenities, of life. We spent the day after Grandpa's departure drenching the horses that had got into the wheat while we were at the siding; the next day we mended the fence round the stables so they wouldn't get there again; then there was the fallowing in the front paddock, and rolling the scrub where the stock yards would some day be, and the host of other things that can be done on a mallee farm. We didn't forget the bull calf, but we always left him until tomorrow. Tomorrow and tomorrow, until we received a letter from Grandpa saying he was coming down for another annual stay.

Then we went for the bull calf. He'd been seen some months back in the scrub block, and we'd known by counting distant heads that he some times visited the steers in the mill paddock. We gave the distant steers a cursory glance as we mounted and made straight for the scrub block. It was obvious, even from that distance, there was no calf among the steers. It was a hot day and, if you know anything about scrub, you know it's twice as hot there as anywhere else. We combed that paddock until the sweat ran off us in rivers, but never sign of a calf, or of any animal, did we find.

her, Mary Ryan's babies, so loved and yearned for before they were born: and she with the child no one had looked forward to, rejoiced over, in the queer world into which she had thrust herself.

Yet how did she know what was in the mind of the woman who was dead, Mary asked herself. She had known no more of child-bearing than Mrs. Denari when her first babies were born—and died during those first years of drought and typhoid on the goldfields.

"Must've kicked the bucket," said Steve placidly as we met for the third time at the gate.

I don't know why I looked at the mill paddock, but I asked Steve whether he thought it was the heat, or my eyesight, or were there really thirteen head of stock over there. Steve made it thirteen too. We rode over in silence. He came to meet us, a lovely animal with lean thighs and powerful shoulders, and he bellowed as he came, holding his head down as if he intended to charge. And he did charge, coming full tilt at Steve's mare. Somehow I couldn't think of him as anything but a rather clumsy calf, but the horses didn't see him in that light at all. They let out a squeal and bolted. As we flashed past I noticed two feet of rope hanging from behind his dewlap and a crease in his neck like a well fed baby's. That bull was as wild as his ancestor from Bashan. We decided to let him go and take a chance on the old man remembering him.

The bull calf was not mentioned for the first few days and we had wild ideas of keeping him hidden in the back paddock for five weeks until Grandpa went home again. But on the fourth day Grandpa came out sniffing the early morning air and decided to take a walk. We warned him not to go too far because of the heat, but we knew, as we spoke, it was useless. He had a habit of finding out things.

He was in a towering temper when he returned. It was the bull calf—why he kept calling it a calf I don't know. We explained that a bull on the place would be an asset and would save the periodic visits with the cows to Stanley's farm. But that wasn't what was biting him. It was the rope round the animal's neck. Cruelty to dumb animals! Not on his farm. He'd see the place sold first.

The situation wouldn't stand any fooling. We had four weeks of Grandpa's visit still before us. There was nothing for it but to catch the beast and get rid of the damn rope.

The only thing we had in the way of yards in those days was the fowl house, so the next morning saw the rooster and his hens hustled protestingly out into the paddock before they were half way through their breakfast. The plan of campaign was to hang a noose across the narrow gateway and drive the bull into it. Some one would tighten the noose and hold the animal, while some one else dashed up with a knife and cut the offending rope. This, Grandpa decided, was the trickiest job of the lot and it would be trusted to no one but himself.

Grandpa went out in the buggy with Sam, the aged hand, while Steve and I ambled alongside on horseback. Grandpa seemed to think we'd just drive the bull in—Steve and I were a bit vague just how we'd go about it, but we knew it wouldn't be as simple as that. We mentioned it to Grandpa when we arrived there, but it only confirmed him in his opinion of us. We were standing in the corner of the paddock with our noses together discussing the matter when the bull crept up from nowhere. Steve and I did a flying leap over a post while Sam and Grandpa went backwards through the barb wire as if a cannon ball had hit them in the middle.

Nothing had hit them, of course, but from that moment the whole affair took on a different complexion. It became a personal matter between Grandpa and the bull, a determined business on both sides.

It soon became obvious that Bunny, as Sam named him, would not go through the gate or anywhere, for that matter, that we nominated. At first it looked as if any nominating would be done by him, because the first half hour he spent in chasing one horse and then the other. But that gave Grandpa an idea—quite a simple one—that we should keep him at it until he was exhausted. Grandpa and Sam would assist by standing at opposite ends of the fence, hallooing and waving a red handkerchief or anything else they could find.

It certainly kept the bull busy. He snorted and charged from one end of the fence to the other, until we, at any rate, were exhausted. Grandpa's hallooing and spidery antics seemed to grate on his nerves in particular, and he spent a good deal of time at that end, pawing the ground and missing Grandpa's backside by inches.

The plan began to work after a time. The bull did become exhausted. So did we, and when at last he consented to go through the gate it was difficult to say who was the sorrier sight. The horses were limp with sweat, the dogs, tongues out, tails down, seemed to hug the ground in weariness and Grandpa's face looked like a fried egg. But he sat erect in the buggy, flapping the reins along the horses's back, as if he alone had done it.

At the house we took a moment off before the final act to have a cup of tea. It was a mistake. Tea is no drink to have inside you when you're chasing round after a bull, and the bull found the rest just what he wanted. We soon found we had all our trouble over again. Round and round the house paddock we went, but this time it was even more difficult, because Steve was standing on the fowl house at the other end of the rope while Sam had taken his place on the mare. Sam was too pre-occupied with hanging on to take much notice of the bull, and the mare spent most of her time keeping out of harm's way. So I did the treader act on my own, while Grandpa danced round the fowl house, brandishing the carving knife and whooping language at me for being such a fool.

I thought that morning of mad galloping would never come to an end, but at last I ran the bull into a more reasonable frame of mind. The dogs, who had been watching on the side lines, came to my help then, and we shepherded the young fellow to the fowl house gate. It was a tense few moments as we followed. Every step he took we expected him to make a dash for it, but closer and closer he went; then suddenly he stopped at the very gate and peered round sniffing at the posts as if they were infected. We held our breaths and stood suspended, Steve on the roof ready to heave back on his rope, Grandpa hiding behind two sheets of iron, crouched like a nervy clock spring over his naked blade, Sam and myself hanging on to our horses and watching.

Then the kelpie bitch sneaked in from behind and nipped the bull on the hock. The effect was instantaneous. Bunny buckled from behind and leapt through the gate as if he had a charge of shot in his tail. Steve lunged back on the rope, the bull seemed to prance into the air and Grandpa rushed forward.

I remember all that clearly, then pandemonium was loose. Grandpa reached the bull's neck, I saw the knife come down, but the next second Steve was toppling backwards off the fowl house and Grandpa was hurtling through the air like a sheaf of hay. I heard his scream, "Dammit, I've cut the wrong rope," and then the bull backed out with a bellow taking one of the gate posts with him. The next moment I was struggling with my horse,

Sputnik

Flung by the hands of men, not demon nor god,
To skim its busy circuit; this little moon
Heralds a modern Hermes, rocket-shod,
Speeding to Venus, Mars or Jupiter. Soon
A new Prometheus tapping the sun's own source
Or Pygmalion moulding molecular life shall show
Today's impossible is tomorrow's course
And mystery only what we do not know.

MEG SCULLY

as the bull sped past us for freedom, with two feet of rope still dangling from his neck.

We picked Grandpa out of the laying mash. He looked as if the mice had been at him. He seemed a little stunned at first, but the sight of my helpless laughter brought him round. He stormed up and down, calling us all the idiots and numbskulls he could think of, and demanding that we go out after the bull that instant. But we pointed out that the fowl house gate had to be put back first. He had no come-back to that.

Somehow we didn't get to the gate that afternoon and Grandpa was very quiet. We did the gate the next morning and spent the afternoon finding the hens that had gone bush. The next day Grandpa demanded we go after the bull, but some one had to go into the siding for the stores, and the day after we ran out of chaff. Then it rained. Each day Grandpa went for a walk in the direction of the scrub block. We all agreed the bull must be done tomorrow, but tomorrow, when it came, always found something so pressing that even Grandpa could grumble but not object.

So the days passed and Grandpa's visit was drawing to an end. The bull still roamed the paddocks with his rope necklace, and Grandpa, after each walk, grew more surly and uncommunicative. Then one evening I came in off the stripper and saw the .303 missing. The next moment we heard a shot, then another, and another in quick succession.

I didn't stop to saddle. The mare took the fences like a steeplechaser and we reached the mill paddock in record time. I looked anxiously round in the falling light, but it was some time before I saw him. He was by the water trough, the rifle under his arm. On the other side of the fence the bull bellowed defiance and invited Grandpa to come across and fight it out man to man. Behind the bull lay two of our prize Jersey heifers, dead as beefsteak.

"It's the light" muttered the old chap, turning for home.

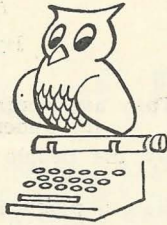
I didn't say much. There was no need. The power of Grandpa's spell was broken. He returned to the City the next day.

The following day I found a bit of rope hanging on a projecting mallee bough. I rode across to the well paddock to inquire. The bull's neck was as smooth and glossy as seamless velvet.

That all happened a long time ago. The bull died last year after having supplied us with a champion strain of milkers for many seasons.

But we saw very little of Grandpa while he was with us.

★ COMMENT



E. V. Stevens (Q.) writes:

As an inmate of an old people's home let me relate the sequel to the pumpkin that Sniffy Connors won in Frank Hardy's story "The Crooked Raffle ever Run" (Overland No. 11). Sniffy would not be aware of it as he left the district after the fire that destroyed his pumpkin and home. A seed from that giant pumpkin grew into one even larger, became a menace to the district in fact. The Chairman of the Shire at last prevailed on the Queensland Government to accept it. Eventide Home became the unlucky recipient and we have been eating it ever since. Some idea of its size may be gained by the fact that when the Queen Mother recently visited these parts she was driven round it; after allowing half an hour to boil the billy en route the trip took half a day.

Fred Jones (V.) writes:

I don't think the following poem by Henry Lawson has ever been published. My father, who was a close friend of Lawson's, gave me the poem, which, he said, was written by Lawson on the back of a beer bottle carton in a hotel. In those days beer bottles were in cardboard cartons with advertising matter on them, and my father explained to me how Lawson scribbled the poem on a side of the carton, torn off for the purpose.

We drink deep to the day, oh my masters,
Though the draught be as bitter as gall,
And we'll drain to the dregs in our misery
The last sour cup of them all:
For we know that your system is crashing,
We know that your power is done,
So we laugh in our pains and our suffering
And we drink to the dawn of the sun.

Though we starve for the food we've created,
And we freeze for the garments we've spun,
Still we drink to the day long awaited—
To the day that your system is done.
And it dawns, Oh my pot-bellied masters,
With your gardens, your mansions and bowers,
So we drink to the day in our hovels,
For the day that is coming is ours.

In your mines and your fields we have labored,
In your mills and your ships sweated on,
Till at last of your bountry we've tasted
And we starve mid the wealth we have won
So we drink once again—and drink deeply
To the day of equality's birth
When freedom shall come to the nations
And the worker inherits the earth.

H. Roth (N.Z.) writes:

I would like to correct Dr. Roderick's most interesting article on "Henry Lawson and New Zealand" (Overland No. 10) in one minor respect. If

Henry Lawson arrived in New Zealand "just in time to see the women vote for the first time" he cannot have left Sydney on 20 December, 1893, because the New Zealand elections took place on 28 November.

"Fair Play", a Wellington weekly, reported on 2 December that Lawson had arrived unexpectedly from Sydney the previous Monday, which was November 27, the day before the elections. If this is correct, however, then Lawson cannot have travelled on the "Tasmania". The only ship from Sydney which reached Wellington (via Auckland) on 27 November was the "Waihora". The "Tasmania" left Sydney on her first trip to New Zealand on 29 November, and reached Auckland on 4 December and Wellington on 7 December.

In "Henry Lawson by his Mates" it is mentioned that the Union Steam Ship Co. had offered Lawson a first-class ticket but that he preferred to travel steerage. This would favor the "Waihora" which was owned by the U.S.S. Co., while the "Tasmania" belonged to Huddart-Parkers.

The "New Zealand Times" announced on 8 December that Lawson was in Wellington and that the editor of the "New Zealand Mail" had arranged publication of a short series of specially written sketches of Australian life. The first of these sketches, "That there Dog o' Mine", was reprinted in the "New Zealand Times" of 11 December.

Other Lawson contributions to the "New Zealand Mail", which the "New Zealand Times" reprinted in its Saturday supplements during December 1893, were the poems "The Cambaroora Star" and "For'ard", and the story "Coming Across—a Study in Steerage". "Fair Play", that same month, published two poems, "Here's Luck" (specially written for the paper) and "The Free-Selector's Daughter", also a portrait and brief biography of Lawson, and an article "New Zealand from an Australian Point of View".

Among those who influenced Lawson in his decision to go to New Zealand was possibly Arthur Desmond, a New Zealander who played an active part in Sydney radical politics in the early nineties and who was one of the small band of socialists who congregated at McNamara's bookshop. Soon after Lawson's arrival in Wellington, Desmond got into trouble with the New South Wales authorities over an Active Service Brigade he had organised. He was bitterly attacked in "Fair Play" of 23 December, but in the following week's issue there appeared a poem in defence of Desmond, signed "An Australian Exile," which, I would think, was written by Lawson.

Another poem, "The Windy Hills o' Wellington", appeared in the "New Zealand Times" of 27 January 1894, under the signature of "The Exile". If, as seems likely, this also was written by Lawson, it would give some clue to his reasons for returning to Australia soon afterwards. I am enclosing copies of both these poems as they are probably not known in Australia.

Tom Mills, who befriended Lawson during his first visit to this country, died only two years ago, at the age of ninety. Mills' father, an old Cumberland radical, was president of the Shearers' Union in South Canterbury during the nineties. Mills himself, a compositor and later journalist and newspaper editor, had been secretary of the Otago Trades Council in 1890 and was a leading member of the Typographical Union in Wellington.

THE WINDY HILLS O' WELLINGTON

The windy hills of Wellington were black and cold
that night,
The rain came down at times enough to drown the
'lectric light;
An' like a hymn of hate and want from black mis-
fortune's choirs
I heard the cruel, spiteful wind go snarling thro'
the wires.
An' from the winches by the wharf a rattle and
a clank,
While sitting by a Sydney chum who's drawn New
Zealand blank!

He'd sent for me, in all the land the only chum
he knew,
His health and hope and cash were gone—and he
was going too,
His frame was shrunk, his face was drawn, his
eyes were bleary'd and dim,
For drink and poverty and want had done their
work for him;
And when I came, he turned to me, his features
pale and lank—
"I'm glad you came, old chum," he said, "I've
drawn New Zealand blank!"

"New leaf, new land," my motto was—"I did my
very best.
'Twas want of work that threw me back—An'
liquor did the rest.
But nothing matters now, old man—it never did,
no doubt
(Excuse a little nonsense when a fellow's peggin'
out).
I'd live and fight if I had hope or money at the
bank.
I've lived too long in '94, I've drawn New Zealand
blank!

I looked out through the window as the rain came
pelting down;
The great black hills they seemed to close and
loom above the town.
And in a strained and tired voice, that filled my
heart with pain,
He said, "Old man, I'd like to stroll down George
Street once again.
I had myself to 'battle' for; I've got myself to
thank.
Perhaps it ain't New Zealand's fault that I've drawn
New Zealand blank."

The breezy hills of Wellington are fair as they
can be.
I stand and watch a Sydney boat go sailing out
to sea.
And while the sun is setting low on blue and
brown and green,
I think of cruel things that are, and things that
might have been,
And while the same old sun goes down in clouds
a golden bank,
I sadly think of my old chum who drew New
Zealand blank.

No headstone marks his resting-place—no autumn
grasses wave—
And not a sign of loving hands is seen above his
grave;
For he recover'd from the spree—the doctors pulled
him through;
His health came back and his luck turned—(and
so did my luck, too)—
He now has houses, land and shares, and thou-
sands in the bank;
He doesn't know me now, because—I've drawn
New Zealand blank.

THE EXILE.

ARTHUR DESMOND

By An Australian Exile

They are stoning Arthur Desmond, and, of course,
it's understood
By the people of New Zealand that he isn't any
good.
He's a plagiarist they tell us, and a scamp—but
after all,
He is fighting pretty plucky with his back against
the wall.

When I see a fellow sinner face about and stand
his ground,
All alone and undefended, while the crowd is
howling round—
And his nearest friends forsake him, just because
his case is slim—
Why, I think it's time that someone said a word
or two for him!

They are damning Arthur Desmond for the battle
that he fought—
For his awful crime in saying what so many people
thought.
He was driven from the country—but I like to
see fair play—
And to slander absent brothers—why it ain't New
Zealand's way.

Once I met with Arthur Desmond "and I took him
by the hand,"
But I scarcely think the action spoilt my chance for
Promised Land;
And I think of Arthur gazing, with his earnest,
thoughtful eyes,
Out beyond the brighter ages that we cannot
realise.

He'll be shot or gaoled they tell us (so were
others in the van)
Be it prison cell or bullet, he will meet it like
a man.
And 'twere best to have been neutral when his
stormy path is trod,
And we all are brought together level at the bar
of God.

Dr. Colin Roderick (N.S.W.) writes:

Mr. Roth's interesting comment would seem to
suggest that Lawson wrote his reminiscences from
recollection and not from notes. It was some years
later that he made the footnote to "For'ard" to the
effect that he had written it on board the Tasmania.
One thing does emerge clearly, and that is, that in
those days New Zealand and New South Wales
were closer to each other than they are now, air
travel notwithstanding . . . Many thanks, Mr.
Roth: I will check the newspapers here to see
what the record of the departure of the Waihora
might yield.

The Critique of Dr. Knoepfelmacher

IN a recent number of *Quadrant*, the Australian quarterly sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, there is a review of the book "Paths to Peace" (edited by Victor Wallace, Melbourne University Press, 25/-), which is a signal example of essentially destructive criticism springing from a fanatically prejudiced point of view.

The review is worth considering, as a specimen of reactionary thinking and of a type of book-reviewing that *Quadrant* seeks to purvey, oddly, in the name of culture and freedom. In particular, it is considerable as the type of a pretentious and really muddled, anti-rational attitude on central questions concerning the proper role in our community of left and liberal intellectuals.

"Paths to Peace" is a collection of essays, subtitled "A Study of War, its Causes and Prevention", designed as an integrated whole and written by men who have been highly trained in many different departments of knowledge. Indeed, the list of contributors reads as though it might be somebody's list of the twenty best-known Australian specialists and commentators on public affairs.

The authors are Professors Crawford, Elkin, Partridge, Oeser, Macmahon Ball, Wadham, Oliphant, Duncan, Murdoch and Sawyer; Doctors Emery, Wallace, Cunningham, R. C. Johnson, and J. F. Cairns; Messrs. Geoff Sharp and Glanville Cook, and Sir Frederick Eggleston. The foreword is by Jawaharlal Nehru.

The *Quadrant* reviewer, who anathematizes their book, is a Dr. F. Knoepfelmacher.

The form and substance of his review reveal how, when an intellectual gives himself up to the anti-Communist obsession, all balance, proportion, power of calm, measured, analytical judgment, desert him; and he ends in a position of self-deception and unreality.

Either Fools or Knaves

At the beginning of his review, Dr. Knoepfelmacher makes a show of exercising some sort of discrimination and objectivity. He deigns to tolerate some of the contributions as harmless, technical, apolitical essays. On the other hand he damns "the general tendency" of the book, which he describes as "typical United Front stuff . . . a hard Stalinist core camouflaged by a haze of lofty and more or less dishonest pseudo-liberal irrelevancies". He magisterially warns us that to follow the book's advice "would lead us to the Pax Sovietica of Kadarized Hungary". You see, he generously gives us the choice: the contributors are all specialists who must be, as it were, either fools or knaves.

Towards the end, however, he abandons the "dishonesty" and "stupidity" line of attack. He says he is "depressed" by the participation in this book of people he magnanimously describes as "genuine progressive liberals" who may "honestly claim to be spokesmen of a great intellectual tradition".

But then, he ruins any effect of ingenuousness he may have made by that. He loses his temper with the contributors completely, provoked beyond bearing by Professor Sawyer's observation that there is hope for peace inasmuch as both of the dominant powers have a civilian and equalitarian ideology and both are in the main "satisfied", so that negotiated settlements based on acceptance of the status quo are therefore conceivable.

"Satisfied!" Dr. Knoepfelmacher echoes, in unspeakable revulsion. He simply cannot stomach the idea of any communists anywhere on earth being allowed to remain in any state of "satisfaction". Accordingly, he fulminates against "the post-prandial smugness with which so many liberals are trying to ignore the nasty features of life". And, himself sadly afflicted with stomachal sourness, he goes on irascibly to declare, outright, "The sooner such liberals disappear from the public scene, the greater the chances that liberal values will survive!"

Carried away, evidently, on this wave of angry resentment, Dr. Knoepfelmacher goes still further, and most revealingly. He concludes his review with

The May issue of "The Free Spirit", organ of the Congress of Cultural Freedom in Australia, accused Overland of "a shameful attack" on a Dr. F. Knoepfelmacher.

Dr. Knoepfelmacher had violently attacked the book "Paths to Peace", in a manner to which Overland took editorial exception.

"The Free Spirit" says that Dr. Knoepfelmacher's article was "rationally argued", and protested that if his point of view was to be controverted it could only be "by the assembly and analysis of facts and the development of rational argument based thereon."

We are pleased to accede to "The Free Spirit's" suggestions by printing Mrs. Vassilieff's article, commissioned by us, we may point out, as soon as Dr. Knoepfelmacher's original attack on "Paths to Peace" appeared.

the extraordinary, sinister prediction that for "intellectuals who still persist in their flirtations with the Stalinist machine" there will be "unpleasant consequences". They will incur "the justified fury of the public at having been made game of by some eggheads". There will be "an upsurge of generalised anti-intellectualism". What he means by this curious language and this strange, dark threat he explains by implication in the remark that a similar "silliness of some American intellectuals contributed to the rise of McCarthyism".

That is to say, writing in the guise of a disinterested intellectual who would deplore and seek to avoid such a phenomenon as McCarthyism in Australia, Dr. Knoepfelmacher makes his review of this book an occasion to attack the role in fact being played by progressive liberal thinkers and actually to predict, justify and invoke some form of McCarthyism!

And this in the organ of a "Congress for Cultural Freedom!"

What a Congress! What Culture! What Freedom!

Thank you, I will look elsewhere for the preservation of mine.

★

What, precisely, are the elements of the "United Front stuff", that Dr. Knoepfelmacher finds in this book and abhors?

The points of unity among the contributors are summarised in a brilliant chapter of conclusion

by Professor Sawyer. "So we are left", he says, "with a picture of possibilities, a hope and a challenge".

It is this basic historical optimism, this confidence in the power of human heart and reason to take up the challenge and dare to defy the leviathan of circumstance, this central assurance that the prospects of building a stable peace are fair to good, that on balance the world is in fact getting better, that we may and indeed must cast out fear and hatred and be trusting and hopeful, by which Dr. Koepfelmacher is revolted and outraged.

He would have us self-righteously hang on to hate and to the idea that things are **not** getting better; and to the pessimistic belief that the prospect for peace is poor, and anyway depends on our preparing for war and generally resigning to its likelihood.

Specifically, the contributors are agreed that war is not an inescapable feature of human life: that it is not biologically necessary and not economically inevitable.

Wars, they say, are due to many different causes, usually involving a balance of considerations and urges, rational and irrational.

Ideologies may be contributing causes of war but have never been the most important factor and are not today.

War is today so destructive that it can never be regarded as on balance a worthwhile risk and all reason must refuse to gamble on its outcome.

Many specific steps are available now to individuals, organisations and governments by which the likelihood of war will be reduced. These range from education for peace and disinterested aid to backward countries to controlled disarmament and trade and cultural exchanges.

It is encouraging that the social evolution of man is in fact in the direction of progressive integration into larger and larger wholes, and that in the twentieth century the establishment of world order and peace has become technologically possible.

The Debit Side

On the debit side, the contributors agree, war though not a probable, may remain a likely occurrence. And indeed the nuclear arms race is extremely dangerous, in that there may easily be mistaken decisions, wrong estimations of relative strengths, failures of nerve and gambles by governments.

As for the peoples, there are unfortunately today too many on both sides who do not understand or want to understand that war is the worst of all alternatives. Some, fanatical anti-communists, like the Knoepfelmachers, would prefer war or the risk of war to the peaceful triumph of communism; some, communist fanatics, would prefer war or the risk of war to the return of private enterprise. All such people must be brought to realisation of the utterly catastrophic nature of nuclear warfare. Beside the fact of the present peril of all humankind from the nuclear arms race and its risks, all other questions are insignificant. For "What will it matter", as Bertrand Russell puts it, "who was right and who was wrong when no human beings have survived?"

Finally, it is necessary to beware of the dangerous possibility of either or both sides accepting some doctrine of "limited" or "controlled" or "graduated" warfare, and then finding themselves actually involved in a war and being unable to limit or control it.

These are some of the ideas and attitudes on which the distinguished contributors to "Paths to Peace" present a "United Front" and which Dr.

Knoepfelmacher characterises as "Stalinism disguised by pseudo-liberalism". If that were the case one could only admire the enlightenment of those isms. In fact of course they are ideas and attitudes in themselves so sensible that all people of reason and goodwill, having examined them, may accept them, whoever may put them forth.

There are many interesting points of difference among the contributors, mainly differences of emphasis, concerning the nature of the policies and the specific steps that are desirable to reduce the likelihood of war.

Professor Sawyer, for instance, puts the stress on long-term measures of a visionary kind: developing men's reliance on patience, reason and tolerance, gradual reform of popular education to remove praise of war and violence and to decrease the influence of war propaganda and hysteria, the application of psychological discoveries to improving organisation and leadership, the obligation on more prosperous nations freely to help the poorer ones, and the development ultimately of some form of world government which will have as its chief purpose the avoiding of major, unlimited war.

Mr. Nehru, while agreeing with the concept of world government and world law as an ultimate objective, stresses that "the problems of our age cannot wait for this consummation", and points out, with profound correctness, I think, that the nations can and must at once take action to survive and progress, and to advance towards ever greater spheres of co-operation, by gradual stages. And that in our time a most necessary and practical immediate step is for nations to agree to co-operate in tolerance, recognising diversities, with respect for one another as sovereign nations, not interfering by force in one another's affairs.

Tolerance and Respect

Regarded in this light, the doctrine requiring respect for national sovereignty, far from being a "decadent" or "hysterical" doctrine, as Professor Sawyer sees it, is in essence a doctrine calling for the exercise on the national scale of that same tolerance and mutual respect which we extol in individuals. Nationalism of this healthy kind sees self-respect and respect for others as interdependent. It is the very opposite of chauvinism, in the same way that personal integrity is the opposite of empty, personal conceit and arrogance.

Thus, respect for national sovereignty is a doctrine of living and letting live, of basing human hopes, not on fear and force, arrogating to one's own nation the monopoly of virtue and truth and seeing others as evils to be exercised, but on the power of example and persuasion, on the possibility of step by step building up confidence and agreements as we go along, and on the necessity of utilising areas of agreement in controversies, instead of alone stressing disagreements.

Professor Elkin puts the same point as Mr. Nehru, in his own dynamic way: "The third phase (of biological history) is upon us, the struggle of humanity as a whole to adapt itself by satisfactory international relations to this one world, geographical, social, economic and political. (And) while we work for the establishment of this one world, through the United Nations Organisation or in other ways, we know that it will always be a varied world: variety in unity. Just as each nation has its own past and wants its own future, so it will ever be. Differences in language, custom, religion and in values will continue and will be cherished . . . A study of man in the past and everywhere shows that there is no escape from this. Neither idealistic propaganda nor force can

prevent it. Therefore, each and every nation, its leaders and people, must accept the situation and consciously work out an adaptation to the world which is not uniform and monotonous, but sparkling in its variety and always challenging through its changes. . . . Mutual knowledge and understanding must increase amongst the peoples of the world, and with it respect, tolerance and appreciation . . . Underlying this knowledge, however, there must be charity as described in St. Paul's famous thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians. There is to be found the attitude and the emotional tone which would carry the nations through the present difficult process of making the one world actual. Probably nothing else will."

Frothing at the Mouth

It is, of course, just this unfanatical, optimistic attitude towards the possibility of our peacefully co-existing, in mutual respect, alongside the communist nations, that causes anti-communist zealots such as Dr. Knoepfelmacher to froth at the mouth.

They are absolutists, for whom all right to be respected is absolutely on their side.

"Keep your eyes on the nasty features of communism!" they exhort us. They would not allow, still less measure, its remarkable social and economic achievements.

"Look at the stupidities of Zhdanovism and the police methods characteristic of Stalinism!" They would not have us take account of historical origins, nor the significance of the fact that the evils were publicly revealed by the Soviet leaders themselves, on whose initiative legality is being restored, secret police powers curbed, thousands released from unjust imprisonment, many new freedoms allowed to youth and to cultural workers and the vast bureaucracy pruned and reformed.

"Look", they cry, "Look at the Soviet intervention in Hungary!" They would not have us remember how this (whatever view one may take of the rights and wrongs of the action), was in large measure due to legitimate Soviet fear and mistrust of the west in the light of the tensions created by the Suez intervention and by the rearming and renazifying of Germany.

Above all, such people would have us never look with objectivity at the nasty features of our civilisation and our foreign policies. Never mind the poverty and despair of millions in Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Turkey, nor the enslavement of the colonial peoples of Africa and of South America, nor the famines and plagues of Asia.

Never mind that our side everywhere systematically implements foreign policies of "strength" which in fact increase tensions and involve dire risks of war; and this in order everywhere to take the side of the privileged, to defend capital, the big landholdings, rather than the people.

To observe such features and to advocate instead policies of aid to the underprivileged and peaceful co-existence is to be called "flirting with Stalinism" and being "accomplices in a grossly anti-social racket!"

Realists and Idealists

To Manicheanist minds like that of Dr. Knoepfelmacher, co-existence with the socialist states is a proposition which can be advocated only by people whom they call, by turns and even in the one breath, unrealistic woolly idealists and selfish, materialist, cowardly realists, who value their own skins more than the teachings of their favorite saints.

Not only are we exhorted to keep on looking exclusively at the "nasty features" of the socialist half of the world, but we are asked to place our faith in Dr. Knoepfelmacher's wishful, self-satisfied, question-begging proposition that "the main chance of peace depends on the outcome of the decisive struggle between the Stalinist bureaucracies and the downtrodden masses in the communist orbit". (And incidentally, he talks of other people's "turgid prose"!)

It would seem to follow from this proposition that Dr. Knoepfelmacher's notion of "paths to peace" is, like that of Mr. Dulles, to foment and support internal subversion of every kind, in the socialist world; and in the meanwhile, against failure that way, to build up superior "strength" and be prepared ultimately to employ it in a crusade to "liberate" those "downtrodden masses" from those "nasty features".

And never mind the nasty features of a nuclear world war!

A Social Challenge

Mr. Dulles, Dr. Knoepfelmacher and their kind do not understand—or is it that they understand too well?—that communism is a social challenge, not a military threat, a world-wide historical development, not a diabolical conspiracy; that the Soviet leaders really do want to end the cold war and the arms race by agreements between the powers, in the belief that this is in the interests both of their state and of the spread of communism by political and economic means.

The fact is, these diehard anti-communists do not accept the basic concept of the U.N. Charter, that we and the communist nations have a common interest in maintaining peace which overrides all differences, and that our relations should be based on principles of mutual respect, co-operation and conciliation, rather than on H-bomb power politics.

They do not want to allow the communist regimes, as such, any rights at all. They do not even really want to help them "reform" themselves into socialist democracies, as they sometimes claim to do. In effect, they want to destroy them just because they are socialist.

So they tie themselves to cold war attitudes and aims which make negotiated settlements impossible. They postulate the likelihood of war because their attitudes and actions do in the end make war profoundly likely.



Today, clearly, is it not those who are producing books such as "Paths to Peace" who sincerely seek peace, and who face facts?

And does not the notion of trying to abolish war rather than trying to abolish communism look like practical common sense?

The very virtue of those left and liberal intellectuals whom Dr. Knoepfelmacher execrates as "fellow-travellers" and "flirters with Stalinism", the value of the role they play in our society, resides in their realism. And this is of a twofold nature. It consists in their integrity in maintaining their differences with the communists; and their sanity in at the same time recognising that the essential superiority of the existing communist regimes over all other claimants to socialist or non-socialist "authenticity", in respect of the governments concerned, is the fact that they exist.

Their proper role as intellectuals, in respect of the situation of cold war, is, precisely, to body forth to us as they have done in this book their truly disinterested insight, their wise understanding that there can be no just, workable or durable solutions which do not take this fact into account.

RICHARD BEYNON AND "THE SHIFTING HEART"

BY the time this is in print, Richard Beynon's play "The Shifting Heart" will probably have been seen by 200,000 Australians.

That is an enormous audience for an Australian play, equalled this century only by Ray Lawler's "Summer of the Seventeenth Doll."

Following its first prize in the Sydney Journalists' Club 1956 competition for an Australian play, and third prize in the London "Observer" competition for a play in the English language (Judges: Alex Guinness, Peter Ustinov, Kenneth Tynan [the Observer theatre critic], Peter Hall [a leading director], and Michael Barry of BBC television), "The Shifting Heart" was accepted by the Elizabethan Trust and given professional productions in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.

Sponsored by the N.S.W. Arts Council, it has played in 67 N.S.W. country towns, everywhere to capacity audiences. (The management carry with them two boards: "House Full", and "Bring Your Own Chairs".) It is shortly to go on tour in Victoria under Council of Adult Education sponsorship.

The play has been bought by Sir Laurence Olivier for presentation in London, and Beynon is leaving for U.S.A. and Britain in July to undertake negotiations for publication as a book, for a Broadway season, and for film rights. Ten countries have so far asked for translation rights.



RICHARD BEYNON

"The Shifting Heart" tells the story of an Italian migrant family living in the Melbourne suburb of Collingwood. Their daughter, Maria, came to Australia before her family; she is married to an Australian, Clarrie, a truck driver. Her young brother, Gino, works with Clarrie on the truck. The play's conflict is in the prejudice which meets Gino in his attempt to live a normal Australian life, and the tragedy which results; and in Maria's belief that Clarrie, her husband, himself retains prejudices against her family, and the resulting threat to their marriage.

Beynon is a man with a lot of ideas about the theatre, and about his own play, ideas which bubble out of him so quickly that his tongue is hard-pressed to keep pace.

Just thirty, he is slightly built, dark, crinkled hair set high off his forehead, his face sharply lined and pointed and very mobile, reflecting immediately the meaning of what he is saying.

On stage, playing Gino in his own play, he falls easily into the volatility, the expressive use of voice and face, hands and body of a young Italian. His movements are quick and sure, each directed to telling those watching him something more about what he is and what he is feeling.

Watching him off stage, and talking with him, it is pretty obvious that here is a man of lively intelligence, of warm feeling, with the same directness and effectiveness of expression that he reveals in the theatre.

Because Beynon is a serious playwright and actor, he has thought carefully over the roots of his play in Australian life, and its place in Australian theatre. Here are some of his ideas, noted hastily in the course of a quick-moving discussion.

● "The Seventeenth Doll", "The Shifting Heart" and the Australian theatre:

"I still kick mentally when 'The Shifting Heart' is coupled with the 'Doll'. They're utterly different plays. 'The Shifting Heart' is the first 'social problem' play to have a full-scale production since Louis Esson's time. It's about an Australian problem.

"The 'Doll' has far more universality. You could pick up the characters in the 'Doll', and drop them down anywhere, and they would be recognizable. Their problem is one that everybody faces—growing old. But how will 'The Shifting Heart' go in Norway, for example, where there is no migration problem?

"Lawler's style, the construction of his play, seems to me to be in the English tradition. In my play, I tried to create a construction that reflected the rhythms of Australian life. The slow pace of the first act represents the leisurely patterns of our life, the way we put our problems aside until tomorrow. It also serves to get Australians to like these Italians—necessary before they'd share their problems. The sudden dramatic climax in the second act comes from the conflict between Australian and Italian rhythms of living.

"I'm working on a new play now which has grown out of a different sort of conflict in Australian life—the spread of the city, and city values, to an Australian country town, the swallowing up of the small towns by the big. Like 'The Shifting Heart', it is a play about something pretty general in Australian life, which grew out of something small that actually happened."

● Play competitions:

"One of the most exciting things about the 'Observer' competition was that, when the five judges whittled the 2,000 entries down to a short list of twenty-five, four plays by Australians were among them. Apart from mine, there were plays by Alan Seymour and Ray Mathew, both from Sydney, and a fourth by an Australian who has been living in London for some time.

"I think these play competitions are useful.

"In my case, if the Sydney A.J.A. competition hadn't been announced, my play wouldn't have been finished when it was; in fact, it would probably have never been finished without the stimulus of the competition."

● The Australian Character:

"Our country wasn't born of love, it was created in bitterness and violence and hate. And from

the first days the people who lived here had to fight the country to get a living out of it. This bred a resentment of the land, and from this evolved that rugged, gritting-the-teeth character you find in a lot of Australians. People were so occupied with giving birth to a new country that they didn't have much time for getting to know themselves.

"Today it's different. The country has been opened up, and there's a pride of possession, a sort of unexpected success in our attitude that wasn't there before.

"Before the war, we were pretty isolated and insular. Today, Australians are the greatest travellers in the world. We're learning about other people, there is an opening of our minds.

"But there are still a lot of Australians like Clarrie (the truck-driver, husband of Maria). I know them and I've lived with them. One of the cast said about Clarrie: 'I know him, it's my brother'. You can't break them down; their emotions are so deep inside them that you bash and bash until you break through. That's what happened to Clarrie in the play."

● What the play is about, and how people have taken it:

"I expected to be crucified for this play. Instead, I get five or six letters every week, the general tone of them is 'Thanks for putting it into words'.

"Among them have been letters from New Australians, saying that they feel sorry for Clarrie. And that's important, because it's a two-way problem—it's important for migrants to know, too, that because a man is like Clarrie, it doesn't mean that he's without humanity.

"Once, when the play was over, a judge came back-stage. We talked for a long time about the problems raised by the play. As he went, he said,

'I'll go back to my bench a better judge for having seen it'. That really moved me.

"One night recently, during the last act, when Clarrie is deciding what to call his son (this is after Gino has been killed), I heard a whisper from the audience: 'Gino'. I hadn't heard it before, but others in the cast had. That, too, moved me; it showed that the audience felt the problem as theirs and were trying to help to solve it, too.

"I wrote about migrants because I don't believe that the migrant problem has been solved. I dedicated the play: 'To Mr. Leczycki, who need not have died that Christmas.' Leczycki was a Polish Jewish migrant who cut his own throat, because his work-mates could not understand him, and tormented him. At the inquest, his widow said: 'Of his workmates, what can I say? They didn't know what they were doing'. And these were people who came to Australia from the concentration camps.

"I, however, wrote particularly about Italian migrants because it seemed to me that, as Italians are the biggest single migrant community, they should be written about, and because the contrasts between the Italian and the Australian temperaments are so striking, have so many dramatic possibilities.

"The problem of Maria and Clarrie and Gino in 'The Shifting Heart' is not a problem that can be solved by governments. It can only be solved at the level of humanity, and it hasn't been solved, as some suggest, just because migrants have been coming to Australia in large numbers and have been here for a few years.

"It is a problem of human relations, of the human heart. And it's a problem that's still with us. After all, why are we still so petulantly anti-semitic? And we still have wars, don't we?"

I.T.

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THE HIROSHIMA PANELS

SUFFERING and CRUELTY

THE National Gallery of Melbourne (like those in the other capitals) is, to the public, a holy place. People who walk through it tend to keep their voices low, to walk softly, to shush their children. They gaze at the paintings as if the frames contain hallowed relics rather than the creating of human beings living in a particular environment at a particular time. This exaggerated reverence is due perhaps less to an appreciation of art than to a knowledge of the high monetary value of the paintings, the separation of art from everyday life, and the prisonlike atmosphere of the Gallery caused by the guards at the entrance, the overwhelming and gloomy halls, and the drably-uniformed and ever-watching attendants. If art is something that adds to the enjoyment and significance of living, then the concepts about its display held hitherto by gallery trustees will have to go; and it must be admitted that Mr. Eric Westbrook has done a great deal to dispel the depressing effect of a visit to the Melbourne Gallery since his appointment as Director.

But the atmosphere in the hall displaying the Hiroshima Panels was of a totally different quality. Partly responsible for this was the layout of the exhibition which, impressive as it was, could have been even more impressive with more powerful lighting. The Panels themselves, however, were an even greater cause. There was reverence, but it was a reverence springing from knowledge rather than ignorance; people were subdued but not over-awed; there was a quiet animation, for these were paintings that forced the spectators to think about them and discuss them, a comparatively rare phenomenon in any gallery. Although the record number of visitors were faced with a style of painting (a combination of traditional Japanese art and modern European expressionism) utterly unlike the naturalism they were used to, there were no jeers or puzzlement. The subject was immediately comprehensible, if the form was not. The Panels struck the heart before the mind; there could be no hesitation, for although the figures were Japanese, the method alien, the events historic and in a different country, the spectator recognised that he himself was the subject. When this idea became conscious the effect was numbing; most people were unable to take the Panels in on the first visit: they returned once, twice, again. It is doubtful if man's suffering and man's cruelty has been conveyed so massively, so effectively, and so genuinely in any work of art since Goya's Disasters of War.

A side result of the exhibition, and yet one that will perhaps eventually be of major importance, is the stimulus it has given to many art students and younger artists. A large proportion of Australian artists have been floundering about in the morass of abstractionism. This is not to deny the value of original abstract work, but it has become as conventional to the present generation as the gum tree was to an earlier one. Many young artists have been afraid to break away from it since it has the support of so many teachers and critics here and abroad. Representational painting may label a painter as a feeble academic or an eccentric, particularly among "fashionable" artists and

The Hiroshima Panels, painted by the Japanese artists Iri Maruki and his wife Toshiko Akamatsu, are at present touring Australia.

Shown to date in the cities of Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide and Sydney, the public response has been overwhelming.

Gallery directors report an unprecedented interest in the exhibition. In several cities the galleries had to open at night to keep pace with public interest. In Adelaide crowds waiting for admission queued out into the street. Newspapers have written editorials on the Panels. The Melbourne exhibition was specially extended. Art critics have acclaimed them. It is probably true to say that Australian public opinion has never before been so affected by an art work directed against war.

"Before I saw them I thought we were right to drop the bomb on them," a man was heard saying as he left the Perth Gallery. "Now I'm not so sure."

their "social" patrons where the indifference or antipathy of the general public to the artist's work is reckoned as meritorious. Paintings reflecting the human predicament in realistic terms may be objects of derision to this self-appointed elite. Often their sneers are valid, but the Panels have shown, in the most powerful manner, that it is still possible to create a work of art that can be appreciated by connoisseurs and laymen alike, from all sections of the community, without compromising the artist's integrity. The Hiroshima Panels have pointed the way, as no paintings have done for many years, towards a movement for a truly popular art.

LAURENCE COLLINSON



A Sort of Beauty

Here is a sort of beauty, that must give
To all these shattered histories, their voice:
Here is the moment when there is no choice
What words to use to help a neighbor live;

Here is the moment—known, but soon forgotten
By all, except the people you can see
Here, on the panels, now: they have to be
Forever brave, though soon or slowly rotten;

Here's the continuing fear our minds reject:
But these could be ourselves, our children, crying:
Was it for this your wisdom, all your art?

Here's the continuing courage of the heart:
Loveliness lives, within an inch of dying:
Eyes of creation, pause here and reflect.

AILEEN PALMER

THE HIROSHIMA PANELS



Part of the crowd of over 5,000 people which queued to see the Hiroshima Panels exhibition in Adelaide. Over 70,000 people have seen the Panels in Adelaide alone. The Gallery Director, Mr. Robert Campbell, described the interest shown in the Panels as "fantastic and phenomenal".

CAUSE and EFFECT

THE gallery was not crowded. It was early afternoon after the lunch-period visitors had returned to labor. Twelve, perhaps fifteen, moved slowly, engrossed, along the centre of the gallery. Some gazed fixedly to the right, others to the left wall.

Faces displayed emotions, chiefly horror or disgust. A gasp, a pointed finger, a whisper to a companion.

An arrogant young man wearing a challenging tweed jacket, black stove-pipe trousers, thick rubber-soled shoes and brilliant green socks, smirked and remarked cynically to his pony-tailed, sweet-faced companion:

"Serves 'em damn right!" Her blue eyes widened as she flashed a surprised look at him.

"Oh, I don't know," she spoke firmly if humbly, "After all, they are human beings."

"Ahh," he scowled, "Though I never went to th' blue, I read things . . ." They moved on.

Other viewers were women and very old men wearing heavy overcoats and squinting with watery eyes.

"Look," whispered a tiny boy to his mother, pointing, "That man's got no pants on." Mother hushed him, quickly.

There is no discrimination in modern warfare. Men, women and children, even a dog and fowl (roasted, on its back with legs pointed accusingly to heaven) are victims.

The panic, the despair. Agony even before the pain. The flash of explosion. The pressure of the hot blast and the very air people breathed burst into flame.

Parched, burnt and in agony, the "lucky" ones, despite broken limbs and skin-naked bodies, struggled to water to be sucked in and devoured as if by a viscous demon.

Many screaming and wishing for death.

A great stillness, even more hushed than this awe-inspiring gallery where people move reverently and whisper as if full of fear.

The torrential rain was followed by a glorious rainbow. What was not swept into the sea lay in human decomposition.

The devastated city, the human annihilation. Even the young on errand to the river to bring water to the town reservoir, largely remained by the stream in heaps of human debris.

The survivors waited helpless, but no help came. Though wounded and suffering they helped themselves and each other.

"It makes one think!" Muttered thoughts, unconsciously.

When a red-faced man stared hard, to cover embarrassment at being heard talk to oneself, I remarked:

"Yes, it makes one think. The church teaches us a beneficent creator is concerned for all. What was God doing when that bomb fell?"

The man drew himself up with a superior jerk.

"They're not Christians." Snappish.

"They're human and God is God of all or no God at all."

"We won the war. Who shall we thank but God?" Dogmatic.

"The soldier, sailor and airman . . . to say nothing of the service-women and those who labored at war work . . ."

"Sir!" Clenched fists, opening and shutting with great self-control, "I have no desire to argue further with the likes of you!"

He strutted to the far end of the rice-paper panels. What did the horror executed so dramatically in black india ink and vermilion mean to him?

"But God is omnipotent. Couldn't He have prevented man . . .?"

"Mankind is sinful . . . free will . . . God loves truth and freedom . . ."

Yes, there is an answer to every question just as a cause to each effect. We don't always know the cause but the effect is always apparent.

The causes of war are many and complicated. The panels depict the effect. If we don't know the cause, we know the effect . . . and the solution.

Outlaw war. Truth is the divine way to Peace.

E. LEWIS HENRY

THE HIROSHIMA PANELS

The Panels

There are no words to tame such grief
As stricken eyes here gravely find
Has roused a heart to cry relief
That better slept when left more blind.

The tangled lusts of clever greed
Have mocked a sunset with their hell
And bloomed a rose of ravenous seed,
Of which these acts now slowly tell.

It seems their still and formal grief
Becomes that city in the mind
Wherein we wander, past relief,
And hang and weep; we were so blind.

Enormous light is swiftly cast,
A threshold pause upon a name
That flings a shrill tremendous blast
And shatters Autumn down in flame.

These people rushed with hands in air,
Stark ghosts upon enormity,
Then each one sank down in despair,
Was caused to wail most bitterly.

Those parched, those dying, craved relief,
Were sharply thrust the Christian stone
While every turning sprang a thief
That stripped and tainted to the bone.

Duped by fiends in a countermand,
Behind, then smashed with history's fist,
Spun and dumped in the aftermath—
A rain, a rainbow's pointless tryst.

O come, the wind has a broken face,
It moans a child in the bamboo stems,
It dies and moans in every place,
And dies again in the bamboo stems.

Take up the cloak the naked wear,
The unseen remnant from each arm
That comforts more than flesh can bear
And leads, and fails, towards the calm.

And go with them into the fields
Where the dreaded flowers will say
The loss that all such empire yields;
That man as beast is man to pay.

NOEL MACAINSH

Have you seen the

HIROSHIMA PANELS' CATALOG?

A fine example of good Australian printing

The official Catalog for the Hiroshima Panels' Australian Tour is a beautifully produced work of art in itself. For those, either in country or town, who have not had the opportunity to see the Panels, or who want a lasting reminder of them, this Catalog is essential. The Catalog tells the story of the paintings, and gives full reproductions of two of the Panels. It is produced by the well-known Master Printers, Edwards & Shaw of Sydney.

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S W A G

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

John Donne.

The Perth Environment

When in Perth recently I had the pleasure of meeting for the first time a number of West Australian writers, and of speaking to a gathering of the Fellowship of Australian Writers at their club-rooms, Tom Collins House.

Perth has become one of Australia's most active literary centres (the judges of the Miles Franklin competition recently pointed this out). Certainly it's hard to point to any other centre where so much active writing is being carried out, by established writers like F. B. Vickers, Mary Durack, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Lyndall Hadow, J. K. Ewers and many others.

I'm sure the general atmosphere of Perth helps in this. It hasn't reached the stage of Sydney or Melbourne, where some of its functions as a city and a social entrepot have begun to atrophy.

Perth's position as the most isolated major city in the world, much closer to Djakarta than to Melbourne, for instance, must help, too.

And undoubtedly the role of Tom Collins House itself is important. Built by Joseph Furphy with his own hands, it's a fascinating memorial to the man . . . and, in its double-fronted, fully detached conformity, to an age of domestic architecture which, alas, is still well and truly with us.

Funds are urgently needed to maintain Tom Collins House, which is a national, not just a provincial, asset. Any donations sent to Overland will be passed on. Overland itself has already made a small donation.

The Frontier States

I always think one of the advantages of Australia's distances has been the way fascinating differences in social customs, vocabulary and so much else have grown up between the various States.

Take W.A. and Queensland, for instance. Australia's two last frontier States, vast and potentially rich, you'd think they'd have much in common. But as far as I can see it's not so.

Queensland was once described to me as "the only banana republic west of Nicaragua". In its

mixture of an authoritarian political regime where the writ of the law runs, and Wally and the Major anarchy where it doesn't, I could see what they meant. And I'm told that in matters such as women's rights and treatment of Aborigines Queensland has less than any other State to be proud of.

The West is much more sedate. One writer told me there that you couldn't understand W.A. unless you realised it was settled by English gentleman farmers fleeing from the Industrial Revolution. And despite its supposed poverty, I'm told it has more cars per head than any other State. Just as Queensland is the only State without any lag in telephone installations (because its more decentralised).

There are solid economic, political, social reasons for all these things. It would be fun to turn a really good journalist loose to do a comparative study of life and attitudes in the various States. But think of the strife when the stuff was published!

Australian Writing

An interesting survey of the teaching of Australian literature in teachers' colleges—and elsewhere—is made by Mr. L. J. Blake in the March and April issues of *The Educational Magazine*, published by the Victorian Department of Education.

How many tertiary educational institutions in Australia have courses in Australian literature? Mr. Blake points out that Mr. Tom Inglis Moore of Canberra University College gives a one-year course. Australian Literature is an elective course (taken by about ten per cent.) in Victorian teachers' colleges, and I understand that there are lectures in the subject in West Australian teachers' colleges and at the Newcastle Teachers' College.

Apart from these institutions, the only other such course I know of is at the Kindergarten Training College of Victoria, where first year students have a full year's series of lectures in Australian literature.

Mr. Blake rightly points out the scandalous neglect of this subject by the universities. He also gives interesting details of his own course at the Geelong Teachers' College. Of the 108 who studied the subject, 106 thought the course successful and worthy of retention. Of those, 96 wanted to do further second-year work!

Authors most enjoyed, in order of preference, were Katharine Susannah Prichard, Steele Rudd, Ion Idriess, Miles Franklin, Eleanor Dark, Furnley Maurice, Henry Lawson, Judith Wright and Mary Gilmore.

Awards

Best book of verse 1957 (Crouch Gold Medal): Randolph Stow's "Act One" (Awarded by Australian Literature Society). Runner-up: Leonard Mann's "Elegiac and Other Poems".

Miles Franklin Award (£500) for 1957: Patrick White's "Voss".

Sydney Journalists' Club Short Story Competition (£100): Hal Porter's "Uncle Foss and Big Bogga"; runners-up: Helen H. Wilson and Mrs. M. D. Cooper.

Books off the Leash

It would be interesting to know how many of the rights and liberties that our grandfathers took for granted have been wheedled out of the grasp of the citizen of the Century of the Common Man.

At any rate the release of approximately 800 books from censorship is a move in the right direction, and, when the news of it gets abroad, may lift us, in international eyes, slightly above South Africa, the Republic of Ireland and Franco Spain.

As Clive Turnbull commented: "The individual may soon be able to enjoy as much freedom as was available, say, in the Middle Ages".

The censors, cunning blighters that they are, did not tell us what books we now could read.

Instead, they just told us of the 178 magnificently assorted titles that are still kept locked up, like those old medical books with their frightfully indecent pictures of the human body, in granny's top cupboard.

But the taking where necessary of normal legal action, and not a bureaucratic book-list, however abbreviated, is the answer to the problem of censorship in any country.

Coming Up!

We've got two really outstanding things coming up. We've obtained the rights to print Bill Harney's A.B.C. talk "Harney's War", an account of his experiences in the First World War which created a sensation when it was broadcast recently. It's the best expression of the ordinary soldier's attitude to war I've read since "The Good Soldier Schweik".

The other big feature is A. A. Phillips' introduction to the recent publication of 40 Australian short stories in the U.S.S.R. Not only an excellent survey of the Australian literary tradition in itself, Arthur Phillips' article has the added interest for us of reading over the shoulder of several hundred thousand Russians, and observing what they are reading about our country and its writing.

A Knock for the Knockers

I don't want to be hysterical or even unduly touchy about slights to this magazine, fancied or otherwise. We're selling more copies than any such magazine has ever sold in Australia, and that's a powerful consolation. But, just for the record, I would like to point out:

- Several Australian publications, including the Melbourne Age, the Adelaide Advertiser and the Sydney Bulletin have adopted the laudable practice of periodically reviewing the Australian literary magazines, in portmanteau reviews. Only the Sydney Bulletin (which has also banned Overland advertising) systematically excludes any mention of Overland in these reviews on its Red Page.
- The new Australian Encyclopaedia, a magnificent and worthy production on most counts, has an interesting article on "Periodicals". Overland, despite its considerable achievements over recent years, gets no mention in this article. (I have recently learned that the omission was due to the article's having been written some years ago.)

- A.B.C. reviewers have dealt less than handsomely with Overland of late. The reviewing of Overland's publication, "The Moods of Love", by Laurence Collinson, was handed to a reviewer who could have been expected, *prima facie*, to review it unfavorably (which he did). And the last issue of Overland was reviewed on the "Today's Books" session: but, of all the rich material it contained, the reviewer chose to mention solely two lines in one of the obscurer book reviews, which stated that Australian and Russian literary traditions have much in common. I felt the reference did far less than justice to the stories, articles and poems in the issue, which were ignored (Vance Palmer's piece on Barbara Baynton, for instance, is the first piece on that neglected writer I remember seeing in an Australian magazine). However, Australian and Russian literary traditions *do* have much in common, as readers can learn from Arthur Phillips' essay which will appear in the next Overland.

Stockholm Congress

The vexed question of international copyrights will be one of many topics discussed at the World Congress for Disarmament and International Cooperation, at Stockholm in July.

This will be the greatest meeting of its kind ever held at a non-governmental level, and committee discussions will be held in a number of different fields. Delegations will be attending from almost every country in the world, and there will be a sizeable delegation from Australia.

The Organising Committee for the Congress has suggested that cultural workers should be interested to discuss copyright questions. As most people know, the U.S.S.R. recognises no copyrights. In these days of increasing international exchanges there have been many heartburnings over this matter, and it seems to me inevitable that sooner or later the U.S.S.R. will have to come into line on copyright. It is just as unfair to Russian writers and musicians whose work is pirated in other countries as it is to foreign artists whose work is pirated in the U.S.S.R.

Among the many distinguished sponsors for the Stockholm Congress in Australia are the A.C.T.U., many Labor Members of Parliament, and well-known writers and artists.

A Wider View

One of the most interesting developments in the Communist countries in recent years has been the development of literary magazines dealing with foreign literature, and often offering a representative selection of the writings of people like Graham Greene, Faulkner, Hemingway and others who were not published there for a period of some years.

Thus there is now Svetova Literatura (World Literature) in Prague, Inostrannaya Literatura (Foreign Literature) in Russia, Yi Wen (Foreign Literature) in China, and doubtless there are other examples. The enormous popularity of such magazines as these is one of the literary phenomena in these countries today.

Svetova Literatura in its May number has a solid slice of Australian material: ballads; stories by Morrison, Waten, Hardy, Palmer, Marshall; an article by Frank Hardy on Henry Lawson, and another by myself on Francis Adams. A Prague correspondent writes: "I felt the selection of ballads could have been better, but was told that much depended on translatability. The editor wrote up a brief introduction to the whole section—mainly on the Australian ballad—adapted from Douglas Stewart's introduction to 'Australian Bush Ballads'. He picked up and generalised, I notice, a purely personal, rather partial view of Stewart's: that the Australian ballad is a Scottish product essentially—the old Border Ballad reborn in a new land. I think this is quite unsound literary history (Stewart partly destroys his own argument by admitting the very considerable literary-aesthetic differences between the Australian and the old Scots ballads). So many of the Australian ballads are related to real conditions of life, including actual work environment and activities. . ."

Apart from the important new Russian publication, "Forty Australian Stories", which we will cover more fully in our next issue, it is interesting to note that Inostrannaya Literatura has recently published articles on Lawson and Dame Mary Gilmore, and Yi Wen on Mary Gilmore and Francis Adams, with examples of their verse.

Competitions

For poem of "Australian color, suitable for musical setting", £50. (Queensland Authors' and Artists' Association.)

For the best novel (or, under certain circumstances, play) published in 1958, £500 (Miles Franklin Award).

For a television play, £3,000 (GTV-9 and Shell Company).

For a stage play, £300 (Elizabethan Trust and General Motors).

Details from the Editor.

Passing Round the Hat

Donations: Did you know that paper alone for one issue of Overland costs £75? Gratefully received: P.J.D., K.S., £2; J.S., £1; J.H., J.C., W.A.J.D., E.D.L., E.M., C.W., L.K., H.W.M., F.C.M., E.L.H.S., L.F.H., J.B., T.T., A.M.A., K.B., R.McN., K.F., N.B., E.V.S., D.R.M., T.M., F.D.D., W.P., W.D., C.M., M.P., 10/-; V.D., 6/-; E.S., H.H., S.W., G.B., N.G., A.L., L.R.P., 5/-; C.B., 2/6. Total: £20/3/6.

Melbourne Film Festival

No room in this issue, unfortunately, for an account of Melbourne's recent film festival—which now has international rating giving it the same status as the festivals at Edinburgh, Venice, Cannes and Karlovy Vary. But I've been asked to advise Overland readers of the best films shown at the festival, so that they can watch for the chance to see them in forthcoming weeks. My informant listed the four most outstanding films in this order: first, the U.S. production "Paths of Glory", quite the best film shown and one of the most remarkable anti-war films ever made; second, the Russian "Don Quixote", an authentic version of the Spanish classic; third, the French "He Who Must Die", made in Greece, and virtually a transposition of the life of Christ to modern times; fourth, the Polish "Kanal", a film of the Warsaw Uprising. It is believed that Australia's major film circuits have declined to exhibit "Paths of Glory".

Overland, June 1958

Films and Peace

The London Observer has recently drawn attention to an important film script competition which has been launched in England. The Johan J. Smit Foundation of New York is sponsoring the competition, which is on the theme of peace and international understanding, and the prize for which is £1,000. Judges are Mary Field, Anthony Asquith and Michael Redgrave, and their task is to choose the script which would be "best calculated to promote international confidence, understanding and tolerance". The British Film Institute is administering the competition.

It would be fine to have such a competition in Australia—the only trouble being that we have no film industry to make a film from any such script.

Last year Japan made 443 feature films, and Australia none.

The extraordinary Japanese figure has been achieved by a quota system on exhibitors, by Government support for Japanese participation in foreign film festivals, and by Government awards and other measures.

Similar proposals for Australia have been put forward by Mr. Cecil Holmes and other film workers. The distinguished producer John Heyer ("Back of Beyond") said on 22 June that there was no hope of a major revival of the Australian film industry without Government assistance. Some form of protection for Australian films was necessary, he said.

"It is sad that films such as 'The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' will not be made by an Australian production company, but by Americans," Mr. Heyer said. "We have all the talent one could wish to make them, including scriptwriters, directors and actors—though these people have been dispersed by lack of opportunity at home."

The Moods of Love

The signed-and-numbered edition of Laurence Collinson's "Moods of Love", as well as the soft-cover edition, have both sold out.

A few copies are left of the normal edition, and can be obtained from the Editor, Overland, G.P.O. Box 98A, Melbourne, for 18/9.

Probably no book of poetry has sold as well in recent years in Australia as this book of Collinson's—with, I believe, the solitary exception of A. D. Hope's "The Wandering Islands".

"J.K." Dies

As Overland was going to press J. K. Moir died. So much has been written of his services to Australian letters that it is redundant to say more here. However, the Latrobe Library, which will house the fine collection he gave to the people of Australia, will be the kind of memorial he would wish: and his death is an additional incentive to interested circles in Victoria to press for action on the building of the library.

"The Land I Love"

"The Land I Love", printed on page 26 of this issue, originally appeared in The Home Annual in 1936. A lengthened version later appeared in the A.B.C. Weekly.

S. Murray-Smith

Hugh McCrae

SOME of its joy has gone out of life with the death of Hugh McCrae. He was so much a poet of the joy of life. He vaunted that when he wrote:

I blow my pipes, the glad birds sing,
The fat young nymphs about me spring,
I am the lord,
I am the lord,
I am the lord of everything!

And saw Man as the supreme power in human affairs. He says it again in "Creative Effort":

Man is Man's God, created of one breath . . .
Who masters life, the same shall master death.

Those early poems are full of gay insurgence: a pagan defiance of the wowsers of the period. "Satyrs And Sunlight" is more than a fantasy of nymphs and centaurs—though many people do not look beyond them. I feel sure they were for Hugh symbols of the life source and force, its mystery, intransigence and sublimity. His words flow in a way that delights and stirs us, even when he seems to wander in an unreal world: a world of mythical adventures and mediaeval roistering. His lyrical magic captivates. Every image is perfect.

Later poems give his joy in the little realities of every day, as in "Camden Town", "A House", "The Worm" that goes "wobble-wobble all the way".

Would a kind worm
Who did know,
Show a worm,
Who didn't know
Which way it had to go
(Wobble-wobble all the way)?

He leaves "off work to wonder":

At seeing a wild wasp bring
Buff-colored clay to build with
A home for its breed in Spring.

And there's that lovely "Song of the Rain":

Night,
And the yellow pleasure of candlelight . . .
Old brown books and the kind fine face of
the clock
Fogged in the veils of the fire—its cuddling
tock.

The cat,
Greening her eyes on the flame-litten mat;
Wickedly wakeful she yawns at the rain
Bending the roses over the pane,
And a bird in my heart begins to sing
Over and over the same sweet thing—

**Safe in the house with my boyhood's love.
And our children asleep in the attic above.**

Hugh McCrae was a poet of rare quality and distinction. English and American critics accord him high place among modern poets in the tradition of Keats and Shelley. But his poetry is definitely Australian in its iconoclasm, humor and atmosphere. "Memories", for example, relates him to his environment, as do many other lines throughout the poems.

In "Camden Town" there is a flash of the "aggressively Australian" when he writes:

Behold the milkman in his cart!
(First cousin to a knight, or bart:)
All people, here, are more or less,
(But mostly more, I'm sure; O yes;)
Related to the—can you guess?
I am the one and only pleb,
Who still conserves the canaille ebb:
And proud of this I am as Punch.

"This is my stubborn creed", Hugh McCrae says in "Credo". To quote only two verses:

To know that life once more holds something to be striven for,
To laugh at stings of storm, to lift above the languid mesh
Of lust and love-gone-mad; to smite the Satyr to the core
And well-spring of his heart; to rise with winged heels a-thresh . . .

To cast all doubt away, to grasp the issue of my fate
And make it on my enemies' deeds; to seek good and friends,
To let my conscience rule, yet not create One coward sentiment; to give wide berth to sordid ends:

"The Ship of Heaven" shows Hugh again in his gayest, most freakish mood. He describes it as "butterfly nonsense", "a plotless fairytale for authentic children, young and otherwise". The "otherwise" caught the spirit of the comedy, in a production, with music by Alfred Hill, at the independent Theatre in Sydney.

I don't think it is necessary to rank Hugh in the galaxy of Australian poets. He is a bright star; in my opinion, shines with a more dazzling and penetrating light than Christopher Brennan, who remains a little aloof from the ways and ideas of ordinary men and women. Each of our major poets, however, has individual appeal. Hugh McCrae did not wrestle with the problems of existence which concerned Bernard O'Dowd and Frank Wilmoth, but they also hold a place of honor in our regard and affection.

Hugh McCrae's prose was as exquisitely wrought as his poetry. He was a master of English. There is word magic in the lightest, slightest thing he wrote. Even the letters to friends, adorned with delicate, wispish drawings, as his thought flew to them, are little masterpieces. His poetry was so much part of him that it expressed itself in casual associations as well as in material for publication.

It gleams through "The Du Poissy Anecdotes", "Georgiana's Journal", "My Father and My Father's Friends", and "Story Book Only".

In prose as in poetry, Hugh McCrae's vitality, his broad human kindness and gay humor endeared him to us. His ecstasy for beauty in myths of the past, and in the common things of every day, communicated something of his own joy.

And yet, he invokes the night, clouds and trees:

Wrap me for ever in your solemn shade,
And when the sun, returning o'er the seas,
Flashes his eye where late my footsteps strayed,
Let the soft wind blow out that little mark,
Let memory fail and no man know of me;
Only at dawn, to speed my soul, the lark,
Pleasing the gods, shall carol joyously.

Like his wild women of the woods, those of us who were Hugh's friends are burning rue and lamenting that he is dead. We believe that Hugh McCrae and his poetry will never be forgotten.

KATHARINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD

THE CHANGING FACE OF AUSTRALIA

Notes on the Creative Writing of Katharine Susannah Prichard

THROUGH the long period over which her creative writing extends, Katharine Susannah Prichard has opened up new territory, both in terms of places and of human experiences.

Her settings themselves have been extremely varied. They include, to name only those pictured in her novels, South Gippsland in the days of the early settlers ("The Pioneers", 1915), an opal-mine in New South Wales ("Black Opal", 1921), the karri timber country in the south-west ("Working Bullocks", 1926), the sparsely inhabited north-western cattle country ("Coonardoo", 1929), the surroundings of Perth ("Intimate Strangers", 1937), the goldfields around Kalgoorlie (scene of her last three consecutive novels, "The Roaring Nineties", "Golden Miles", and "Winged Seeds", published between 1946 and 1950), and the cross-country travels undertaken in "Haxby's Circus" (1930). Something of this variety of settings is also reflected in her short stories, published in two collections, "Kiss on the Lips" (1932) and "Potch and Color" (1944).

In each of her novels the primary interest is in the people themselves: kindly, generous, and likeable for the most part, their quick understanding and sympathy for each other's needs derives from long association at work or in similar surroundings. Life in each locality or social setting is shown from an intimate acquaintance with the ways of the people who inhabit it, and whose relations with the whole of their surroundings reveal their weaknesses, courage and strength.

In these pictures of an increasingly complex reality there is no place for the kinds of heroes and heroines used by some authors to communicate their own private fantasies, or abstract notions of humanity: the humanity of Katharine Prichard's people is felt in their response to the various forces at work in their world, with its hardships, cruelty and beauty.

A delight in the beauty of the natural and human world illuminates all her writing, from "The Wild Oats of Han", a story of her own childhood in Tasmania, written in 1908, to the last, concluding volume of her goldfields trilogy, "Winged Seeds". The symbolism in each of these titles is characteristically taken from things growing in the world described, just as the images to which her characters relate their feelings occur from natural things in the world of their experience.

Katharine Prichard's first published novel was called, significantly, "The Pioneers". Before its appearance in 1915 she had been one of a number of little known writers who were setting out, perhaps in unawareness of each other, to pioneer new ways of giving expression to their belief in the strength and potential of the Australian heritage.

Born in 1884 in Fiji where her father was editor of "The Fiji Times", Katharine Prichard grew up with a belief in the value of writing as part of her early environment. From necessity she commenced work early as a journalist, joining the staff of the Melbourne "Herald".

Many of the then current barriers to the free expression of thought and feeling were matters of which she was vividly aware, even as a child. Standards and ideals imported from the class-ridden society of another land were still dominant

in the cultural field, and writers intent on the truthful portrayal of their country and its people were apt to encounter an indifference such as that with which Furphy's "Such Is Life" was generally received till many years after his death.

Like several other writers, Katharine Prichard felt impelled to seek publication and contacts overseas as a necessary prelude to recognition at home. While in London she wrote "The Pioneers", drawing on memories and notes taken during a stay in South Gippsland where she "absorbed as much as possible of the gossip, the feeling, the life color, and atmosphere of the place".

The interest aroused in 1915 when "The Pioneers" won the £250 prize offered by a London publisher for a novel with an Australian setting could be compared in its significance for the period with the probable influence in the dramatic sphere of Ray Lawler's much more recent "Summer of the Seventeenth Doll". The achievement of its author as a representative of Australia overseas was acclaimed by the State Cabinet of Victoria, which, on Katharine Prichard's return from overseas in 1916, gave a lunch in her honor and granted her a free pass for six months on the Victorian and New South Wales railways!

While "The Pioneers" has not the depth of reality found in Katharine Prichard's later work, it is a courageous book. In its treatment of the convict theme, from which Australians were still inclined to shy away, it gave some indication of the attitude subsequently taken by its author to accepted superstitions or social prejudices. The power of environment as a stronger force on human character than the suspected influence of heredity was confidently asserted, notably in the final words of the old convict woman to her grandson:

They may talk about your birthstain by and by but that will not trouble you, because it was not this country that made the stain. This country has been the redeemer and blotter out of all those old stains . . . There will be a great future for the nation that comes of you and boys and girls like you. It will be a nation of pioneers . . . You belong to the hunted, too, and suffering has taught you. You will be a pioneer of paths that will make the world a happier, better place for everybody to live in.

This vision of Australia, and its possibly redeeming role, was finding expression among an increasing number of writers at that time. Poets like O'Dowd, Furnley Maurice, Vance Palmer, and R. H. Long were questioning the concepts carried over from European society, and during the first world war many writers were drawn together in a loosely linked fraternity concerned with each other's achievements and opportunities for free expression.

In "Essays in Australian Fiction" (1938) Barnard Eldershaw speaks of Katharine Prichard coming to literature "in the van of a renaissance". Life in Australia was developing in complexity with the growth of cities and the rapid industrialisation of the war years. Among writers this was beginning to be reflected in a forward-looking realism, aware of overseas developments in literature and thought, but concerned above all with the establishment of

THE LAND I LOVE

I LOVE every inch of Australia.

The rugged coasts from Gabo and Otway to the Leeuwin, our western shores with all their jade green bays and little towns, Carnarvon, Cossack, Broome and Wyndham: the silken summer seas, from which innumerable faery islands rise and fall along the dim horizon: Cape York, the Hinchinbrooke Pass, Great Barrier Reef, Brisbane and Grafton with jacaranda blossoming in the streets.

I love the forests of Gippsland, messmate, blackbutt and mountain ash, climbing the range in primeval wildernesses: the valley of the Tarwin, and maize barns stacked with ripe red gold: clearings about farms and orchards, hillsides of dead trees ghostly in the moonlight: homesteads with plushy calves baa-ing near the milking sheds: stockyards and scattered townships: markets and mines.

The mountains of Eyre Peninsula, brazen at sunset: silver and copper mines hidden beneath rough wild hills: the Lofty Ranges, mist-veiled, fold on fold, and Adelaide beneath its almond blossom in the spring. Forests of the West, hundreds of miles of karri, marri, jarrah, standing dark and formidable beside the winding tracks: karri columns thronging grey and silver, twenty feet to the first branch, with butts a horse and cart could stand on, and looking no more than moss from distant billows of the spur.

I love the apple orchards and lush verdure of tobacco plantations. The Porongorups and boronia swamps. Sawmills and callers' camps. Nornalup, the broad and quiet river, mirroring trees—those great white stanchions of the karri, like organ pipes for winds to blow their storm themes on—and shadowy backwaters where wild swans breed and black bream gulp the prawns of wily anglers.

I love our wheatlands, fallows and ploughed land, the green blush of springing wheat, the lip and rustle of blonde stalks, flowing over wide-spread acres, deluging the country with a golden flood.

Orange gardens, through which you drive for days, fey with their perfume: vineyards, stretching as far as the eye can see, laden with clusters of amber and purple grapes. The fertile distances of pasture lands, over which the shadows of clouds march, sapphire and indigo, after rain. Peaches and nectarines fluttering their leagues of frail pink petals against grey skies.

I love the great inland plains of New South Wales, blue-grey under salt bush and cotton bush, with all their flocks and herds, galahs rising over them and wheeling to show the rose underlining of their wings. Plains, dove-grey and green, under mallee and curari bush, beyond Meekatharra and the Ashburton, broken by the blue backs of hills like prehistoric monsters: red earth of the gold fields, torn by the shimmering wraiths of salt lakes and dead rivers: the gorgeous tapestry of

a literature that would give utterance to Australian attitudes in the idiom of the Australian people.

From this time onwards Katharine Prichard watched with intense interest the work of other writers, and moves for the development of an Australian theatre, to which she was able to contribute with her play "Brumby Innes". Her contacts with writers were for a long while mainly from a distance, as she settled in Western Australia when she married in 1919. The time for her literary activity had to be organised in a life that combined a number of other demands—the rearing of a son, "adorable but exacting", an occasional break from domestic chores to address a timberworkers' meeting, a battle with bushfires during her husband's absence at a gold-rush after which she returned to milk a number of cows; but, as she remarked, "I wouldn't swop one moment of it with Henry Handel Richardson" (who was then

able to devote herself almost exclusively to literature in the orderly remoteness of her London home).

Katharine Prichard's vision of life and style of presenting it are particularly her own. She was never the adherent of a "school" or clique that followed certain fashions. The criticism she valued was of the kind she gave when she felt it necessary, as when, in a letter of praise to another novelist, she nonetheless insisted that he should not make his aborigines use the word "king" (which doesn't exist in any dialect) or wrote: "The only serious comment I have to make is the use of 'it' when speaking of a horse . . . That may be done by a 'greeny' outback for a little while. But no back-country boy would refer to a horse except as 'he' or 'she', 'a mare', 'gelding', etc. It's odd, how precise they are . . ." Elsewhere she regretted the use of the word "picaninny" (of American origin)

by Katharine Susannah Prichard

the sand plains in spring time, woven with wild flowers pink, yellow, saffron, purple, blue and scarlet.

I love the cities that have grown on all this natural wealth of our country, with their great buildings, busy streets, trim suburbs, picture shows, parks and playgrounds.

I have loved the working people of Australia: yarning with bullockies and fallers in their camps, with miners of gold, coal and opal, with fishermen and pearl-ers, with navvies on the roads, stockmen, drovers and rouse-about, farmers and fruit-growers, teachers, jockeys and factory workers.

And yet there are things in Australia, I have hated.

To see relief workers, and their wives, living in the Western forests under shacks of bagging and boughs, through which the rain streamed—women with babies in their arms. To find abandoned farms and hear stories of a tragic struggle for existence in the wheat-growing areas. To watch men and women and their children sweltering through heat and dust storms in unsanitary hovels on the goldfields. To know that hundreds of Australians, young and old, have lived on the brink of despair because they could not find work or wages to feed and clothe themselves, in this rich and lovely country of ours.

Why should there be in Australia, people who have not sufficient food or clothes: who are unable to enjoy the beauty and natural wealth about us? Who

are forced to live in filthy slums and houses not fit for cattle? Who in the bitter struggle for existence cannot afford to buy books: to know anything about the art and poetry of their native land, or provide a cultural background for national expression?

Our culture has been jerry-built, like the houses so many of us live in. Based on cheap foreign patterns, imitations of the antique. We have starved our writers and poets: listened to imported claptrap in the theatre: permitted our artists, for the most part, to live on the smell of an oiled rag, cold-shouldered into oblivion any composer who dared to make an original suggestion in music.

We have submitted to a censorship of literature which neither the English nor American people would tolerate: accepted a scheme of things which thwarts any attempt at national virility.

If we love Australia, and the Australian people, we must realise, surely, that Australia will only have a culture with any roots in reality, and worthy of the infinite wealth and beauty of her natural resources, when the foundations of our national life are based on the right of the people to satisfy the every-day needs of existence: on the right to hear, see and read, what the artists, writers and musicians of the country have to say about it: on our right to cultivate international relationships which will preserve us from future wars and the iniquities of a decadent economic system.

to describe aboriginal babies while good words existed in the aboriginal dialects, "cooboo" and others, that could be used in writing.

This care for exactness of terms is an integral part of the conception of realism expressed in Katharine Prichard's own writing. Each of the localities and social settings portrayed in her novels is revealed, not as an outsider might observe it, but through the perceptions of the characters themselves, in their own words or the images that cross their vision. In this way she achieves an approach as near as is possible in writing to the various outlooks of the people concerned. The development of this intricate realism requires not only an exact observation of the elements making up the external world (a landscape as it changes with the seasons, the structure of opal, the ways of animals) but an awareness of their meaning for people whose existence they deeply affect.

Thus an overall insight is given into the variety of pressures under which her characters feel and act. The mateship of men, the loves of men and women are not factors arising and operating in a vacuum. The necessity from which they arise, and the meaning of the legacy of concepts that may inhibit their free expression are suggested in the two quotations with which the novel "Intimate Strangers" opens: Plato's—"But do you think it possible rightly to understand the soul without understanding the nature of the universe?" and Briffault's—"The international chaos, the social chaos, the ethical and spiritual chaos, are aspects of one and the same disorder."

ON the minefields of "Black Opal" or "The Roaring Nineties", or in the remote timber country of "Working Bullocks", the respect and consideration of their mates is almost a necessity of men's existence. In these newly settled

regions they are equals, observing the same customs, understanding each other's moods and impulses without need for explanation.

In the novel "Coonardoo: the Well in the Shadow" a different kind of understanding links the Watt family, Mrs. Bessy and her son Hugh, with the blacks who work their station in the remote north-west. This understanding is based on a measure of mutual respect and affection, but operating within accepted limits.

The rugged, indomitable Mrs. Bessy Watt is fair according to her own rigid and exacting lights—that are not too rigid to let her approach the blacks in terms they can understand, and win their devotion. When she dies, they mourn her as one of their own people, going through the rites that always follow the death of one of their own tribe, wounding themselves with sharp stones.

The Aboriginals' view of life, adequate to the needs and problems they have known, and undisturbed by Mrs. Bessy's teaching, absorbs her last instructions as part of the tradition of the place, their tribal ground. They will look after Hugh, her son, when she is dead, otherwise she will return to haunt them in the shape of a white cockatoo.

"Coonardoo" is a gently flowing story, of which Katharine Prichard said, soon after completing it: "Coonardoo" is to me the things and people I love". It contains the most remarkable and perceptive picture in our literature of a primitive people, as yet uncorrupted and undebased by long contact with the invader's civilisation. The author's ability to reveal the world of Coonardoo's vision is one measure of the breadth of her sympathy, that goes out easily to people anywhere who are kindly and unpretentious.

Coonardoo's actions have their own profound logic. She is able to give her love to Hugh, the playmate of her childhood, and watch over him devotedly, without breaking any of her tribal laws—till, overwhelmed by jealous rage because he learns she has given herself once to a visiting white man, Hugh attacks and abuses her and orders her out of his sight and away from her tribal home.

Hugh Watt is also seen sympathetically, as a man of humane intention. He tells the wife he is bringing back from the city that the blacks she will meet on his station are good people: they have not had any contact with white people before. They're all right if you treat them right, he explains; but treating them right is a more complex problem for him than it was for his mother. Appreciative as he is of their skill and devotion ("if you can't be trusted, who can," he asks Coonardoo, as he hands her over the keys of the station storeroom) they are hedged about in his mind as beings of a different race that a white man can never accept as equals or legitimately love.

Thrown off his balance by his mother's death, he wanders restlessly around in the bush, under the vigilant eye of Coonardoo, who follows him night after night on his frenzied journeys and finally gives herself to him. To her husband and the other blacks there is nothing wrong or degrading in her action: they have undertaken to look after Hugh and, within their precepts which require no provision for linking property to paternity, it is not uncommon for a man to lend his wife to another man. To Hugh, though, it is an episode not to be admitted or again referred to. Despite his dependence on Coonardoo, he is determined not to instal a black gin at the station as his woman. The behavior of other men at neighboring stations gives him reason enough, it seems, for believing this could only have a degrading effect on both.

Nevertheless, after his breach with his wife and the death of Coonardoo's husband, his love for

Coonardoo becomes obsessive—a love for a being genuine and beautiful, to which he will never openly admit.

When he has driven Coonardoo away ("she had gone, his will carrying her, when she did not know where she was going"), the station goes through a series of dry seasons, and Hugh is finally forced to surrender it to the banks. The blacks think it natural that things should go badly since Coonardoo, the trusted one, "the well in the shadow" as her name means, has been driven out. A man from a neighboring station hears their stories in puzzled wonder.

But what sort of a man was Hugh, Bob asked himself, to let a thing like that prey on his mind, break him up? Most men treated a gin anyhow and never turned a hair.

And Phyllis, Hugh's daughter, educated in the city, tries to explain it to her station-owner husband:

"Do you know, Bill, it's my belief our dear Youie took my mother like most men take a gin, and Coonardoo's been a sort of fantasy with him." "Cripes!" Bill exclaimed irritably. "A man doesn't love a gin, not a white man."

The story of Coonardoo is a poignant commentary on two opposed moralities—one evolved to meet the simple needs of a way of life that has continued unchanged for centuries, the other transplanted from a changing world and jagged with contradictions. In the tenderness and sympathy of its telling, none of the elements making up its tragic reality are avoided: the author herself draws no moral, makes no accusation, but leaves us with the image of Coonardoo, very thin and wasted with disease, returning, under the impulsion of memories that the song of her childhood carries, to die on the earth that was her tribal home. Frail and defenceless against the incomprehensible demands of the invader, to the end she will not acknowledge defeat.

"Coonardoo" has a unique place in our literature because its author has brought to the beauty and blind cruelty of its world the same clear, unprejudiced vision that she brings to human society in other settings.

The world of "Haxby's Circus: the Lightest, Brightest Little Show on Earth" is one where human beings are apt to be measured by their contribution to the success of the show. Illusion and reality have their own particular media of expression in the cruel, arduous, brilliant world of the circus:

A world of wandering mushroom tents, spawning on bare paddocks beside some small town and then off again; trailing the long, dusty roads between harvest fields . . . camping by rivers to fish, crossing blue tumbled mountain ranges and coming on green valleys with farms about them, farms and herds of cows; places that smelt of milk and wheat, where the farmer gave you milk and apples, or melons; you got fresh water to drink and a bath sometimes. A dirty, strenuous world. Cruel, courageous, a hard, hungry world for all the glitter and flare of its laughter; but a good world, her world . . .

That is how Gina Haxby remembers it with restless longing from the hospital bed where she lies recovering from an accident that smashes her spine and ends her career in the ring as a circus rider.

The struggling circus created by Dan Haxby is very much a family affair, manned mainly by the children Lotty Haxby produces on the road or wherever the circus happens to be: their train-

Story of an old man -
 piper -
 old McDiarmaid -
 Jack aban. no name.
 Grand-man. di' grand -
 Come up. to the mine & I'll give ye
 a job -
 Manager - "What's y'r job?"
 "I'm a piper."
 "A piper - are ye?"
 Give him an pipe - pulling

It's Maxine - all Irish
 What's y'r name. Flynn.
 Stand over there.
 "Clark."
 Sorry. No work here.
 Right -
 Murphy...
 Stand over there.

Only Scotsman on another job.

A PAGE FROM KATHARINE PRICHARD'S NOTEBOOKS

This page from a notebook used during the writing of the Goldfields' Trilogy reads:
 "Story of the old man—piper—old McDiarmaid—
 (?)—"Grand, man, it's grand—Come up to the
 mines and I'll gie ye a job" . . . Manager: "What's
 y'r job? . . ." "I'm a piper" "A piper, are ye?"—
 Puts him on pipe-pulling.
 "Job at (?)—all Irish . . . "What's yr' name?"—
 "Flynn"—"Stand over there"—"What's y'r name?"
 —"Clark"—"Sorry, no work here"—". . . Murphy"
 —"Stand over there."
 "Only Scotsmen on another job . . ."

ing as acrobats begins almost as soon as the children can walk. Lin, the timid boy born just after Gina's accident, becomes the object of her particular care and devotion, after she returns to the circus—a hunchback, useless for the particular purpose for which she was designed. Gina's concern for the success of the show doesn't end, though: she is only too willing to take on any dirty, arduous jobs that are part of the life and relieve the others of strain.

Though this generosity, which is part of her nature, was probably the cause of her accident, she gets no thanks or kindly words from her

father: as a showman his complete belief in himself is a tool of trade from which he can never be parted, and the sight of Gina, maimed because of his negligence, is a threat that most of the circus people feel with some unease. The cruelty of their attitude to Gina is most resented by Billy Rocca, the dwarf—the most-prized artist, who never fails to bring laughter from the crowd by ridiculing his own deformity. His anguish is in the knowledge that sight of him is a reminder to the once beautiful, athletic Gina that now she is as he is—a figure of ridicule.

When Rocca leaves the circus, Dan blames this, too, on Gina, who bears all blame with a quiet courage, born of her understanding for its causes, for she is circus-trained, and, except for the hospital, has never known any other world than the circus. What she is not prepared to tolerate, though, is the subjection of Lin, the timid youngest, to trials beyond his capacity for endurance. After the death of Lin, during Gina's absence, she makes up her mind that the next child of the Haxby's will have a different chance. Supporting her mother and the new child, Maxine, she lives away from the circus for several years in a mining township till at last Dan turns up there, and his wife is at once persuaded to go back taking the child, and Gina necessarily follows.

Sustained both by her respect for Dan's ability and her distrust of his recklessness with the lives of others, Gina never has time for self-pity. A bequest from Rocca who, after leaving the circus, became a successful actor in Hollywood, places them in a different position: Gina becomes the owner of the circus, with Dan engaged as manager. Nothing has really changed in the attitude of both to the show, only in the eyes of others Gina no longer represents misfortune. Her money naturally goes into the show, to engage more artists and obtain more animals and provide for transport by train.

Dan's flair for seizing on anything that will attract more interest to the show extends even to the marriage of his daughter, Maxine, which is celebrated on the grandest scale with publicity that takes full advantage of its possibilities as an advertisement for Haxby's Circus. After his death Gina's interest in the show appears to be flagging for the first time, as though, with all the antagonism between them, she had found in her father's personality both an inspiration and a continuing challenge. When she learns, though, that the casual attitude spreading among the circus hands has gone so far as to include deliberate cruelty to an animal, Gina immediately shows she is capable of the same rigorous discipline as her father.

What the show needs to lift its declining fortunes is something to make people laugh. Here, too, Gina at last is able to make her deformity serve her purpose, thinking over the lessons she learnt from Billy Rocca:

She seemed happiest, really, when, in her clown's dress, made-up with plastered face and rouged mouth, she waddled into the ring and tumbled about, making herself grotesque and hideous, to get the brittle, crashing merriment of the crowd that could hurt her no more, in whose laughter she could join, at the order and harmony of a world to which the circus held the dim surface of its mirror.



(To be concluded)

A L A D Y O F T H E L E F T

Gavin Casey

I N the mid-1930s I was earning my living at the lively but not very cultural occupation of selling motor cycles. This, I'm afraid, did not make me meek in the company of my intellectual betters.

I had read a great deal, in a disorderly way, and had ideas—including a lot of wild and woolly ones—on just about everything under the sun. I'd had a few stories accepted by the *Bulletin*, and my mind was crowded with half-ideas for dozens more. I suppose I was a bit of a freak in the motorcycle business, but I enjoyed it, and did all right.

My list of literary acquaintances had about three names on it, and they were those of strugglers on the outskirts, like myself. The main things I did have were plenty of cheek and a determination to keep on writing. When a letter of invitation came from John K. Ewers it pleased me, but seemed quite to be expected.

The invitation was to a luncheon to meet Hartley Grattan, visiting American critic and student of Australian affairs, particularly our literature. John said in his note that the party might not be truly representative, as he had naturally only been able to invite those writers whose addresses he could discover somewhere.

I forget just what people were there, and who wasn't, but the luncheon was most enjoyable in itself, and started most interesting and exciting activities. Grattan was at his witty best, and one of the things he urged was that we should have a section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in W.A. Ewers got the idea between his tenacious teeth, and it was as good as started.

Nobody who belonged to our Fellowship in those days, and shares my belief in freedom of speech, can have forgotten the experience. Our meetings were places of roaring argument, extreme opinion about everything, no respect for persons—and no hurt feelings afterwards.

People's most cherished beliefs and faiths were outraged, they were insulted and they hurled insults back, and in the heat of debate they often got very angry indeed. But in several years only once or twice did anybody burst into tears and resign. It was all far too stimulating and crowded with ideas to drop out, however much it boosted your blood-pressure and made you gnash your teeth.

Don't get the idea that I'm disparaging the Fellowship as it is today, or has been at any time, but that particular era had to end, and did, when the war began and grew more serious. Mr. Menzies banned the Communist Party, and some of our liveliest debaters started thinking too much before they spoke. Others cautiously stayed away. Male members disappeared in large numbers into the Forces, and the general pattern had to change.

Then, as now, the two outstanding figures in the West Australian literary scene were Katharine Susannah Prichard and Professor Walter Murdoch. They had a strong background of well-established writers like Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Ewers, James Pollard and the late Molly Skinner, but they were the ones who had done best and most, and they were very properly respected.

For me, meeting these people whose works had so delighted and inspired me was a great event in itself. My only fear was that they may be like the writers I had read about in novels of the London literary world—spiteful, insanely jealous of each other, without manners, and wise and gracious only when they wrote. But I discovered immediately that we don't breed them like that in W.A., and in later years that we don't to any extent in any part of Australia.

Katharine was not very active in the Fellowship. She had far too much to do and then, as now, lived in her rambling old home which overlooks Perth from the slopes of Greenmount, a long drag to attend minor meetings. When she did come to our shows, however, they were even better than usual.

The word spread swiftly that "Katharine's coming", and the attendance shot up. Those who opposed her political views came to tear her into small shreds. Those who agreed with them felt that with the champion on their side they'd have a night of nights, after which the "enemy" would be licking his wounds for weeks.

Katharine was nearly always soft-spoken, infinitely patient, courteous to all. But she could be very firm indeed, and against views really repugnant to her rise to heights of passion that swayed an audience. She impressed me then, and ever since, as a lady of the Left.

Not a lady in the degenerate sense of tea-party airs and graces, well-to-do husbands and idle, useless lives. Just the opposite of that, but none the less a gentlewoman (or gentle woman) not merely displeased but torn and shattered by the injustice in the world.

Katharine Prichard's life has seldom been easy or comfortable, as she might easily have made it had she not been, as a young woman, so appalled and distressed by the lives all over the world of millions of innocent but unfortunate people. She was not the sort of person to deplore it and regard it as none of her business.

★

I'm not the one to assess Katharine's books and stories in their order of importance and value. They have all delighted me, some more than others, of course, but all to such an extent that I have got a bit hot under the collar when anybody has shaken his head wisely over a new volume and said, "Katharine has slipped a bit this time."

However, I have no hesitation in assessing the place of her work as a whole in Australian literature. It is in a very small and select company right at the top, among the finest examples of integrity of purpose, brilliance of writing and construction, and deep capacity to feel and experience as well as to observe life.

But to get back to those personal contacts with her, and the Fellowship of Australian Writers through which they began, Katharine Susannah Prichard, with all her literary and political activities crowded upon her, with private griefs and hardships that have not been few, and in health that has sometimes been far from robust, has never, I believe, failed to find the time to encourage and help any young writer who she thought had real ability.

(Continued next column)

Katharine Prichard

In Long Recollection

MY recollections of Katharine Susannah Prichard go back a long way, for she was young in years and at her beginning as a journalist, her being (memory is doubtful now) employed by the Melbourne Herald and its editor Colonel Reay, with whom two of my brothers had been in the Boer War.

We ourselves had been back only about four years from our Cosme Colony (New Australia) in Paraguay, whence we had gone to the Argentine and then to Patagonia—my husband adding Chile to his travels. On our return we had settled in Western Victoria, where some of my father's people, the Camerons and the McEacharns, had taken up the first stations there, "Argyle" and "Strathdownie", while the Gilmore boys had grown up at "Burnside" on the Glenelg.

But at this time I was living in the town of Casterton, writing the Women's Page for the Australian Worker. I went for a short holiday to Melbourne. As we were still very poor after the expenses of our return from South America to Australia, I was still wearing what had been my "best clothes" in Patagonia (after we left Paraguay), and as you may guess they were very shabby and out of date.

Going for a walk I was standing for a moment near the kiosk in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens when, hearing bright and happy voices, I looked up and saw two beautiful girls, dressed in lovely, fashionable and perfectly fitting frocks, with flower-covered, be-ribboned hats; gloves and parasols just as they ought to be. How I looked at them and, because of something about them, how I longed to speak to and be one with them! There was intellect in their speech and grace in their appearance: for which I was hungry after being so long away from my own Australian people.

At the time when the early-war Menzies Government banned the Communist Party and all its works, the first series of university lectures on Australian literature was about to be given, and in W.A. Katharine had naturally been chosen to prepare and deliver several.

She was as keen as we all were that this important educational innovation should be launched successfully, and spent much time and labor preparing her talks to the students. Then the authorities got nervous, apparently under the impression that this "dangerous red" might tell the impressionable young that Henry Lawson exchanged regular and affectionate letters with Lenin when he was in exile, or that "The Sentimental Bloke" was in reality a heart-cry for revolution. She was summarily informed that her lectures would not be required.

The effect of this on the Fellowship was inspiring to watch. Useful though it was and is, it had never and has never since to my knowledge shown the slightest capacity to act as a united force in industrial matters or anything like them. But now the W.A. Section came together like filings around a magnet.

People who loathed and feared just about every political idea and ideal in Katharine's head were as solid as those who habitually stood and cheered

One girl was dark and slender, with finely-drawn features, the second girl was as fair as the first was dark. The one was Katharine Susannah Prichard, the other Hilda Bull—Hilda (who in later years was married to Louis Esson) still at the University studying Medicine. Katharine (the journalist) had inherited "ink" from her father, who had edited a paper in Fiji. Katharine was born in Levuka on the night of the worst hurricane the island had ever known. With the roof blown off the house, in the roar of the wind, the child came into the world. The Fijians in their quick way named her "The Child of the Hurricane".

I stood in my shabby out-of-date frock and hat, in an intensity of longing to speak to them—my own kind and my own people! At last, unable to resist longer, I stepped across to them. They turned to me, and I doubt if they even saw my unfashionable dress, they were so eager to meet someone who had been in South America.

I was at once invited to lunch with them at the near-by kiosk. We had a "silver grill" which had been prepared for Lady Dudley, who had sent word that she would not be coming. And how we talked! Katharine's special work on the paper was to meet notable foreign visitors to Australia, as she spoke French and German. But in addition to her ordinary work she had had, even then, a book of verse published in London, and had written a play. When she had to go back to the office it seemed as if the sunlight went with her.

That hour stands out in my life. It keeps K.S.P. for me, for she has never altered. My heart is still warm as I think of her; generosity was a part of her. But she was not alone in this. She belonged to an unusual family. Of her two brothers (and they were all young then) one was a special writer on the Argus, the other was a doctor. A child, on whose throat he had to do a tracheotomy operation for the then dreaded diphtheria, was choking. The young doctor, with his life before him, bent down and sucked the tube. The boy lived. Such was Katharine Susannah Prichard's family. Of such was and still is she.

MARY GILMORE

whenever she spoke. This was injustice of the worst sort, and in no circumstances to be countenanced.

All we could do was carry motions, write letters, pour out our indignation when anybody would listen, plague professors and pester politicians, but we did plenty of that. How much good we did I don't know, but we tried with all our might and we were triumphant when, eventually, Katharine received a fee for having prepared the lectures. She was not allowed to deliver them, though.

The translation of her books into many foreign languages has helped this Lady of the Left to have a more comfortable time financially these last few years.

Only the most narrow and bitter of right-wingers can grudge her this, for her life has been one of great and unceasing effort for those things she believes most deeply to be right. She has stood in the open and stated her convictions on the problems of her day, and as a writer she has illuminated and made alive for the perceptive people of two generations significant aspects of the life and history of our own land and our own people.

She has reached the eminence upon which Dame Mary Gilmore is probably the only other Australian to stand—one from which they can say what they think without losing hosts of friends and admirers who think the opposite.

NOTES FROM THAILAND

I'LL never forget the Old Duck in the train at Beta Basan, where the Singapore-Bangkok express enters Thailand. Falstaff's sister, with a face out of the Canterbury Tales; old, wrinkled, shrewd and mischievous, and a fat, jolly body, quivering with energy, still bearing the imprint of many men's hands. Her head was big, her hair frowzy, and her hands were plump and restless. She wore a bodice, tight over the experienced bosom, and the cylindrical Siamese skirt, silver-embroidered at the hem.

Facing her sat a **bikhu**, a yellow-robed monk, who read Life Magazine and drank Seven-Up. On the table between them lay the monk's cloth wallet. All travelling **bikhus** carry these green or yellow wallets, slung from their shoulders. One imagines that they contain perhaps a book, prayer beads and the railway ticket.

But this wallet contained much more. There were in it at least twenty wrist watches, a couple of score of fountain pens, ditto assorted bracelets, rings and costume jewellery. Also a small heap of bottles of perfume essence. Enough to fit out a whole monastery—or a whole convent.

The Old Duck, operating in full view of the unperturbed compartment, had handed the stuff over to the monk in dribs and drabs ever since we left Alor Star. It had come out of a dozen or so handbags and parcels which she kept in the luggage rack, on the floor and on the seat beside her. In between transferring these worldly possessions, she would fish out wings of fried chicken, pancakes, succulent cuts of sugar cane and little flasks of brandy which she distributed to her fellow travellers. I, being a stranger, got more than the rest. But the monk only sipped his Seven-Up.

When we pulled into the station the train was invaded by half a regiment of soldiers and customs officials, all dressed like so many General MacArthurs. I had to get out to make sure that my passport was not left behind. It was returned to me in the station office of the Frontier Police, a large, white-washed room with a huge portrait of the King and his beautiful Sirikit and a great, flower-decked altar on which sat a gilded Buddha in front of the Thai flag.

The Old Duck was surrounded by a bevy of officials when I regained the train. She had filled in some forms and was arguing wildly with a shouting captain. In her lap lay two bracelets and a few packets of cigarettes and apparently she was haggling about the duty. Somehow one had the impression that the Old Duck and the captain were acquaintances, for all the furore. Junior officers joined in the clamor, passengers laughed, the Old Duck cursed and the monk read Life Magazine. I thought the departure of the train would be delayed but in the end some settlement was reached. I don't know how much she finally paid but it can't have been a lot. The *soldateska* took itself off with its forms, the Old Duck was still muttering, the whistle blew and the train passed across into the Kingdom.

It was hardly well under way when something happened that embarrassed me. The Old Duck began to undo her bodice. Out came more watches, more essence bottles. From round her midriff she unwound two gold chains, and a small package, wrapped in tissue paper, appeared from between her breasts. Then she crouched on the seat, hitched up her skirt—and I looked out of the window at the strange, fortress-like rocks which rose up from the emerald paddy fields.

When I turned back to her she was contentedly munching sweets and emptying the monk's wallet into her own receptacles. The **bikhu** had gone to the lavatory. The Old Duck produced a large fist of notes which she stuffed into the now empty wallet. The monk returned. He said nothing. And he did not bother to pick up his wallet till a few stations further along when he finally left the train with complete serenity.

★

At the Silpakorn Theatre, in Bangkok, I had watched a performance of the **Khon**, a masked pantomime with music, representing scenes from the Ramayana. It had been delightful to see this ancient Indian tale of Hanuman, the monkey god, and of Rama and Sita, the immortal lovers, subtly changed from its solemn and lofty Hindu origin into something rather less epic but even more lyrical, gay and fairy-like. Whatever the Thai touch, whether it comes from China or India or even from the West, turns to grace and lightness in their hands.

But what I most wanted to see was a shadow play, and that eluded me. The Siamese shadow play, I was told, is somewhat like the Javanese. But, try as I might, I did not manage to see one, for it is becoming rare, even in the countryside. I had missed one at Ayuthia, where a temple fair was closing the day I arrived, and at Chiang Mai, in the north, where one was supposed to be shown during the great winter carnival but did not materialise. And I was unlucky for the third time at Chiang Rai.

At Chiang Rai the combined girls' schools of the province were having their New Year bazaar. A Thai friend told me that the night before the children had put on a traditional shadow play. It could not be repeated, but this night they were going to put on a straight performance of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Did I care to see it?

Good Lord, I thought. Snow White! All that way to see Snow White? But I went . . .

The theatre was an airy bamboo structure in the fair ground. The music was supplied by one harmonica player and two drummers, off stage. The main tune, the leit motif, repeated with a dozen variations, was "The Sleepy Lagoon."

Before the play began, a dance. A nine-year-old girl, robed like a grown woman, with a heavy silken dress and large ear-rings, performs the Dance of the Good Fairy. Only a child, but absol-

ute control; not a muscle moving out of place, every finger gesture precise. Her large eyes are on us, solemn and sweet—nothing more feminine can be imagined. Then the first act.

The evil queen and Snow White, the scene with the mirror. Snow White is a tall, slender girl, perhaps thirteen years old. She is dressed like any Snow White in a London or Melbourne school play, but her technique, her movements, are borrowed from the classical Thai theatre. She hardly seems to move at all and only flinches slightly when the cruel mother beats her with a stick. Both speak their lines in a high, clear falsetto. But Snow White is quite ravishing, she is the very embodiment of youthful innocence. The queen radiates evil, simply by contrast. Impossible to say how it is achieved, but up there, on that make-shift stage, evil and goodness become personified in two school girls. This is as different from the conventional thing as pathos is from sentimentality: these children have taken a new element, the most highly formalised **passion**, and grafted it on to a European fairy tale. The result is immediately obvious: here is art.

First interval. The Orchid Dance. A group of six and seven-year-olds, gravely circling; petals folding and unfolding.

The second scene is the scene of the huntsman, when he finally refuses to slay her but kills a deer instead. But first she kneels down, awaiting the death stroke. Her kneeling and his drawing of the sword is done with appalling deliberation. The old poetry is all here: death and love, death and beauty. Slowly, half inch by half inch, his sword comes from the scabbard and she leans forward, ready for the sacrifice. There is a high, almost a religious seriousness in their playing which cannot be accidental. These girls know fully what they are doing, what they are conveying. So that the act of reprieve is the victory of mercy, a triumph of the spirit. But, again, stripped of everything secondary. He sheathes his sword and she looks up at him—a moment of recognition and of insight, deeply moving.

During the next interval some tiny tots, costumed as Karen women, with red kerchiefs, red blouses and white skirts, entertain us with a folk dance, accompanied by singing. "Do not drink and do not smoke opium." How professionally they wriggle their little hips, and how earnest they are, and yet, withal, how gay!

The play goes on, the seven dwarfs appear, and then Snow White is among them: seven odd little men and one girl. She eats the apple and she dies—Ellen Terry would have died like that—and the prince arrives. Resurrection. Every episode is experienced, by actors and audience, as a commentary upon life. It would be ridiculous to suggest that school girls in Thailand are very different from school girls in the west. Plainly, they are not. But it seems their own traditions—traditions of religion and of stories—means much more to them than it means to our girls, and that they are much close to the **sincerity** which is at the heart of a fairy tale.



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Or it means that I have been blind all my life and had to go to Thailand to understand what Snow White is all about. Whatever the reason, this was the deepest artistic experience of a trip through four Asian countries.

At the end of the play, there was another dance, an interminable solo, performed by one lone little girl. The audience, impatient, started to leave. I, too, wanted to go, but my friend reproved me. "If she were left to dance all by herself in an empty theatre, what a bad ending it would be to such an evening!" So we stayed to the last curtain.

★

About tolerance.

Missionaries (some of whom showed me much kindness during my stay in Northern Thailand) often complain that they may spend a life-time without converting a single Thai Buddhist, for all the good work they are doing in fighting leprosy, building schools and looking after the sick.

The following lines, taken from a book by an American Christian lady who spent years among the hill tribes of the Thai-Burma border region, may explain why this is so.

"Another memory," she writes, "is of saffron-robed monks of the Buddhist temple asking us for the loan of our gospel records in order to play them on their own superior record player in the temple proper. You can imagine our inner jubilation when we heard the glorious message of saving grace resounding through those courts—the seat of idolatry and a den of Satan!"

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BOOKS

The Parable of Voss

"'Voss did not die,' Miss Trevelyan replied. 'He is there still, it is said, in the country, and always will be. His legend will be written down, eventually, by those who have been troubled by it.'"

I finished Patrick White's 200,000-word novel "Voss" (Eyre and Spottiswood, 20/-) (named for its central character, Johann Ulrich Voss, explorer of the Australian interior), wondering if it would not be wiser to give it for review to someone who knows much more than I of the historical character of Christ, and of Christian theology. For the legend of Voss is the legend of a man who believed himself to be a Christ; and indeed sometimes it seemed in this book, that Patrick White was seeking an allegory for the historical Christ.

The parallels are so many, even to an observer who is ignorant in the field: Voss has his disciples, his persecutors and his betrayer; his agony and his reconciliation; his stigmata and his crucifixion. He is the divinity who humbles himself before the least of his servants. And he troubles the minds of men, and they record his legend.

This is the story. A wealthy Sydney merchant promotes an expedition to explore the interior, and, if possible, to cross the continent from east to west. Its leader is Voss, a German, who collects around him a group of men ill-fitted to his purpose. Before his departure from Sydney, Voss meets and becomes emotionally involved with Laura Trevelyan, niece of the merchant.

The expedition fails miserably—largely because of Voss' ineptitude. His party splits: half turn back; half, holding to their belief in Voss, continue with him. All but one are lost, Voss dying by the hand of an Aboriginal who had been one of his followers. At the height of his suffering, Voss finds, in his humility, a spiritual one-ness with Laura.

A search party fails to find trace of the missing explorers. Only one survives, and his mind is gone. His rambling inaccuracies are the basis for the legend of Voss, which Laura accepts, knowing it to be untrue.

Above everything, "Voss" is a study of pride and humility, of the human will in conflict with the divine. Voss is one (like Satan, in "Paradise Lost").

... whom now transcendent glory rais'd
Above his fellows, with Monarchal pride
Conscious of highest worth.

But it is his own consciousness, his own will, which raises him on high, and few, even of his original party, accept him at this valuation: there is only Frank, the poet, who looks for salvation from Voss and in the end comes "to expect damnation"; Harry Robarts, the simple boy who finds in Voss a vision of life; Jackie, the Aboriginal, for whom Voss is the serpent-father; and Voss himself.

Man aspiring to be God—this is the stuff of tragedy. Voss believes in himself; in his mission to make the Australian continent his own (spiritually rather than physically) and thereby to establish his divinity; in his ability, through an exercise of will, to effect this.

"The gifts of destiny cannot be returned," he writes to Laura Trevelyan. "That which I am intended to fulfil, must be fulfilled . . . I am convinced that my mission will be accomplished . . . Dear Miss Trevelyan, **do not pray for me**, but I would ask you to join me in thought, and exercise of will, daily, hourly, until I may return to you, the victor . . ." (It is clear, incidentally, from an earlier passage, that what is necessary for Voss is that Laura should pray to him, and not for him.)

Laura, his other self, tells him this fact. "This expedition of yours is pure will." "Everything is for yourself." "I am to understand that I have destroyed myself. But you, Mr. Voss. It is for you I am concerned. To watch the same fate approaching someone else is far, far worse . . . It is for our pride that each of us is probably damned."

But Voss stands fast on his own ground.

"Ah, the humility, the humility! That is what I find so particularly loathsome. My God, besides, is above humility."

(. . . What though the field be lost?

All is not lost: the unconquerable Will,

And study of revenge, immortal hate,

And courage never to submit or yield . . .)

"It would be better that I should go barefoot and alone. I know."

(. . . this enterprise

None shall partake with me,

said Satan, setting out to conquer Earth.)

Surely the stuff of tragedy—if only Voss were a convincing hero, a hero whose tragedy was wrought of his own pride and will.

But Voss' tragedy is far less exalted. The plain fact is, he is incompetent. Incompetent in his choice of men; incompetent in his planning; incompetent in his management of the expedition—with an incompetence as gross as that attributed to Robert O'Hara Burke. And few Australians would sense a divine mission in the miserable Burke; rather do we see arrogance, ineptitude and greed as the sources of his failure.

Only Voss and Laura are significant. The others—explorers, squatters, merchants, officers, the ladies of Sydney's early society—are toy pieces in the struggle that is between Voss and Laura, and within Voss himself. On the one side there is pride, the unconquerable will, the erection of God in man. On the other, humility, the immolation of man in God. When Voss is defeated by his own incompetence, his final inability to impose his will on man and nature, it is humility which prevails. For Laura, the triumphant trumpets sound.

"When man is truly humbled, when he has learnt that he is not God, then he is nearest to becoming so. In the end he may ascend."

And then, after this agonising parable of human divinity, comes the curiously earthly, sceptical humanity of the closing chapters. The physical Voss has gone, in his new humility; perhaps he has "ascended". And, at the unveiling of the inevitable statue, Laura meets the man who searched for Voss, and there they speak with Judd, the ex-convict, leader of those who turned away from Voss.

"He would wash the sores of the men," says Judd. "He would sit all night with them when they were sick, and clean up their filth with his own hands. I cried, I tell you, after he was dead. There was none of us who could believe it when we saw the spear, hanging from his side, and shaking . . . It was me who closed his eyes . . ."

"Your saint is canonised," says the man who searched, to Laura.

"I am content."

"On the evidence of a poor madman?"

"I am content."

And finally, Laura, at the garden party, to the smug, insensitive visitor who is pressing her about Voss: "His legend will be written down . . ."

"By which time," the book finishes, "she had grown hoarse and fell to wondering aloud whether she had brought her lozenges."

Is this Mr. White's warning of the emptiness of false gods, graven images—and legends? Or is Voss Christ, and the new-born myth of Voss the whole of the Christ-legend?

Are we to take it that Mr. White is condemning man's presumption in aspiring to divinity? That he is asserting man's weakness, the inability of the human will to survive the final challenge of physical destruction, the inability of passion and humility to survive even such humdrum necessities of living as a packet of perhaps-forgotten lozenges?

Or is Mr. White asserting, more boldly, that all the legends of the gods who came among men, shaped in their likeness, are no more than the legend of Voss?

What are we to make of Mr. White's parable?

One of its most curious effects has been the sharp division of the critics. By and large, English and American reviewers of "Voss" have praised, and their Australian colleagues have damned. And those Australians who have approved the book have tended to dismiss the local condemnation with the well-worn suggestion that we, as a nation, reject what is most civilised and intelligent in us. But such an explanation is too easy.

First, let me say that I think Mr. White is a very serious man—he tries for big things—and that "Voss" can't just be geyed, as several of the Australian critics have done. Mr. White's style of writing is a parodist's pushover, and Australians are brought up to prefer the plain weaves of their own writers to the Gothic embroidery which is characteristic of "Voss". But neither are Australian preferences in writing sufficient to explain the critical differences.

It is much more a question of how Australians see themselves, and whether they can see themselves in Johann Ulrich Voss.

For Australians, the qualities which conquered the continent were human skill, hard grafting, and a fair measure of luck. Courage, fellowship and understanding counted for more than the exercise of will. Against mountains and deserts and the bitter earth, the assertion of dominance was worth little; it was the ability to use one's strength effectively, and the guts to keep going, that were needed. Pride and humility had little meaning as alternative ways of meeting the Australian situation; confidence in one's own ability, founded on a recognition of the real possibilities, held the greater truth.

Australians recognise themselves more readily in the natural drama, the morality play, than in the religious mystery, the parable. Good and evil have a meaning in a social rather than a metaphysical context. "He's done well"; "He's a good mate"—the sort of judgment depends on the social position, but it is made in terms of the society we know, rather than of moral absolutes.

A rational realism is more characteristic of our way of thinking than is the contemplation of infinite mysteries. For us, there is more tragedy—our sort of tragedy—in Rory O'Halloran, who lost his child in "Such Is Life", or in Tom Hopkins, who lost his youth in Lawson's "Settling on the Land", than there is in Johann Ulrich Voss, whose will was humbled in the Australian desert. For

these could have been our tragedies, too, or our fathers'; by and large, we have been too busy battling with a tough country to battle with ourselves. And when we have finished with the job in hand—and it has beaten us, or we have beaten it—we have been too tired to wonder whether God exists in us, or we exist in God.

So it was with the men and women from whom we have come. Maybe it's not so today; the hardest of the work is over. But the values are the same. For us, still, the good life is the ability to live fully, in reasonable comfort, and to take our pleasures in the manner of our choosing.

Our tragedies have been forced on us by our surroundings, rather than our natures. And so they have not seemed to us inevitable, or beyond our own control, and we have met them without despair. Certainly the gap exists between aspiration and achievement, but it is not unbridgeable, for we aspire to the mastery of our own lives on earth; we do not seek to do "dubious battle on the Plains of Heaven".

Although we speak continually (and usually sardonically) of men's imperfections, we are still optimists, believing in the perfectability (given a better society and an improved land) of man.

And this, it seems to me, is why Patrick White has not succeeded for Australians—because he is exploring, in an Australian environment, a mind, a way of thinking, that is foreign territory to most Australians. It is a mad world—one in which all the familiar signposts are standing, but are all pointing in the wrong directions, towards no land of experience that we can recognise as our own. And that is why, in the end (although reluctantly, because there is power in White's writing, if not conviction) my vote is with the local majority.

★

Since this was written, Patrick White's first statement of his own ideas about Australia and his writing, has appeared in the quarterly Australian Letters (Vol. 1, No. 3). In this, White says of "Voss":

"I wanted to give my book the textures of music, the sensuousness of paint . . . Above all I was determined to prove that the Australian novel is not necessarily the dreary, dun-colored offspring of journalistic realism. On the whole, the world has been convinced, only here, at the present moment, the dingoes are howling unmercifully . . ."

IAN TURNER

★

Message from Ayers Rock

The mulga trees are sighing in the night's breeze of this old desert land, and in my tent before the mountain of Uluru I am re-reading once again the ballads of a poet who has been described as "The last of the balladists".

Beside a mulga fire outside, my old Uluritdja friend Kadakadeka is chanting a song about the mountain before us. The old native Songman is telling to all the story of this land, and hearing him I read in Ted Harrington's "The Swagless Swagie" (Australasian Book Society, 16/6), of how he too found his Avalon in this country where:

Deepest silence, sweetest sound,
In this valley I have found,
Where the ramparts east and west
Guard this valley of the blessed.

The Aboriginal Songmen, and balladists like Ted Harrington, and a host of others before him,

recorded the history of the country in a language its people knew, and reading them we can feel with the bush around.

As I read I am with "Tom the Saddler":

By a quiet creek in years long gone
In an old slab hut that was roofed with bark.

And with him I ride in dreams with the "Lords of the Weddin Range", where

A lantern swings by the shanty door,
And its shadow light is cast
A moment's space on the gang—no more—
As the riders thunder past.

Ted Harrington's book is written in the language of the bush by one who knew the country and its people. Can anyone read his verse and not laugh at his humor, sorrow with those who battled for a cause, or felt the heat, dust and flies as did the returned Diggers who

Toiled like niggers to clear our blocks, we
slaved in the dust and heat,
Lured on by the vision of thriving flocks
and paddocks of waving wheat.

"The last of the balladists". Well, I suppose that is the way of all things in this land. For after all, what should one expect in a continent that has fully 60 per cent. of its people in big cities, and most of the others cluttering the larger towns around them?

Today it is a far cry from the old swagmen who emulated the bards of Ireland by writing a poem about those who refused them hospitality.

As a lad in the bush I heard them around the camp-fires of the cattle stations and droving camps, and much of our education in those days came from these people. Reading Ted Harrington's "Swagless Swaggie" I sincerely hope that he is not the last of his clan.

I myself am a great admirer of Ted and his ballads, and many times have I listened to his unassuming wisdom.

In the Alice at the Stuart Arms Hotel, amidst the fumes of tobacco smoke and the babble of bushmen's voices, he recited to a group of us his "Flynn of the Inland", that now has a pride of place in the John Flynn memorial church at Alice Springs.

To read Ted's verse is to feel the bush as it was and still is. The poets of today with their modern verse shall "Hear a different kind of drummer" in keeping with the cities, but for they who wish to ride with the Kellys, or fight the Red Steer

As he roars through the ferns and gums
Over river and ridge and creek

they must go back to the ballad makers and relive, in the pages of this book, a life that has gone by, yet still lives on in the outback.

Ted Harrington's verse is about our forebears and their struggles in a time when, as in his moving verse "In Memory of J. K. McDougall", he writes:

I knew him and learned to love him way
back in the far off years,
When he fought for the rights of Labor, and
the sons of the pioneers.

March on old clobber. As the "last of the balladists" you are as one with the Bards and the Songmen of this land. May Ted's pen give us more of such books as this.

W. E. HARNEY

In his accompanying letter Bill Harney writes: "The swaggie on the dust cover I thought was a bit off side. He certainly don't look like the chaps I knew when I was

among them. Of course I never got in touch with the gang down in the south, but generally they were a tidy lot with a little bag for everything, including a case for the pair of scissors they carried. As professionals they never got out of tune, most of them were folk that were tramping from one job to another."

★

A Gimmick Book?

Recent news items tell us that "They're A Weird Mob" by "Nino Culotta" (Ure Smith, 16/-) will soon have sold 100,000 and that it is to be published in England. The sales of this novel are phenomenal for the local market and for this reason, as well as for the fact that it may be taken as a dinkum picture of Australia by English readers, it merits some attention.

Its initial success was undoubtedly due to Mr. O'Grady's excellent ear for the Australian language, particularly its more "logical-illogical" aspects, and his sympathetic, if limited, approach to the Australian character.

Initially, too, the publicity stunt of it being the work of an Italian migrant with the consequent naive narrative may have contributed to the interest it aroused.

My own reaction on first reading the book—before the authorship was publicly acknowledged—was that there was too great a contradiction between the narrative style and the handling of the slang for this to be the work of a foreigner. It seemed doubtful that an author with the credentials listed could have done the job.

But it was accepted by others, well-read in Australian literature, as genuine, so this undoubtedly played a part.

The disclosure of the true authorship probably gave another fillip to the sales—basically because of curiosity.

O'Grady's handling of the language is good, particularly in the more bizarre flights of fancy and elaboration to which we are prone. He could, however, have taken a lesson from Eric Lambert (who has, undoubtedly, the best ear of contemporary writers for our language) and given away the attempt to render it "phonetically".

Many of the passages appear grotesque because of the adoption of this method.

The story is flimsy—not necessarily a fault, as it has to serve merely as a vehicle for the presentation of language and attitude. However I, for one, could have done without some of the sentimentality and religion.

It is in its more serious comment on Australian life that there is distortion of the picture. Mr. O'Grady, in this account of the life of small building contractors seems to honestly imply that the Australian is the best of all possible blokes and that Australia is the best of all possible countries as the situation stands at the present time.

The untruth of this must be evident to any thinking person. And so I must agree with Arthur Phillips in the criticism of "They're A Weird Mob" implicit in the letter he wrote to the Melbourne Age (May 6, 1958) taking Bruce Grant to task for suggesting that the tradition of Australian writing is one of "passive good nature".

If the above sounds a bit sharp it is not because of the characterisation of Melburnians as a weird mob; although, should Mr. O'Grady visit us, he will find that we're not so weird.

J. H. MULLETT

Mr. J. D. McLaren (V.) writes:

The Australian novel already has a long and creditable history, but very few writers of more than ephemeral or descriptive books have been received by their fellow countrymen with such immediate enthusiasm as the writer of "They're A Weird Mob". Moreover, the book is a serious endeavor to show us as we are in this industrial age, without any romantic carry-over from the days of Lawson and Paterson.

The book, then, demands serious consideration, not only because of its intrinsic merit, but also because it is written about working men in a modern city without any self-conscious proletarianism or patronage. It is this same quality of treating men as important in themselves, regardless of their social background, which so impressed English critics of the "Doll".

Although "The Mob" shares those characteristics of democratic humor and intolerance of old-world mannerisms which distinguish the work of other contemporary writers, it adds a slightly cynical acceptance of things as they are which is new to the Australian novel, even though it is characteristic of the Australian male.

This attitude among the characters in the book is probably due to the fact that, working men though they may be, they are also prosperous householders. They are, to all intents and purposes, members of the middle class.

Although they might vote Labor from inclination or tradition, or from a lofty contempt for the obviously prosperous, Nino and his heroes are members of that vast majority which, unmoved by ideological controversies, is content to enjoy its beer and its sport without too much thought for the morrow. For the first time an author has shown us that essentially classless society which populates the Australian city.

In doing so, the author has caught very accurately the atmosphere of suburbia, the rhythm of our slang, and the preoccupations of our males. Yet at the same time he has avoided the sentimental rosiness and quaintness of C. J. Dennis. Nino's friends live through their speech, not because of it.

Yet, although the author shows those free and easy social relationships, casual recreations, and embarrassment at any show of feeling or sentiment, which will be recognised by any Australian, "The Mob" remains as vaguely unsatisfying as a digest account of "The Most Unforgettable Character I Know."

For, despite his occasional meditation on the inconsistencies of our character, "Nino Culotta" makes no attempt to examine the deeper springs of conduct. So his book, unlike Lawler's play, never starts to achieve any universal relevance.

This is the more disappointing because, for once, an author has discarded his serious role for a while in order to hold up a mirror and invite us to laugh at ourselves. Yet when the salutary experience is over we cannot help feeling that the mirror's image was too blurred by the haze of alcoholic good fellowship to be either accurate or disturbing.

It is simply not true that the laborer speaks the same tongue as the clerk, or that he has the same opportunities to own his own home. The feeling for a classless society may be there, but the opportunity is not.

The clue to the unreality of the whole book comes in the grossly sentimental conclusion. While the author has been describing people, he has carried us along, but when he tries to moralise his book falls flat. His rosy picture of one big happy family together is so plainly false that the whole novel is relegated from a worthy attempt at self-

analysis to a slight piece of amusement for the leisure hours.

According to the dust jacket, the author is now writing his second book in Samoa. If he shows the same powers of observation and the same sense of the ridiculous, he should achieve another success. But we need a writer with a sharper and, perhaps, crueller, pen, to explain as well as to portray our weird mob.

★

Three of Vance Palmer's

These days when a novel is declared a masterpiece by "those who know", is a Book Club choice, particularly in the U.S.A., and is strenuously pushed by booksellers, then it will most certainly contain all or most of the following ingredients—a reactionary philosophy of life, an illusion of depth, queer and brutal sex, mystical twaddle, a general detestation of life and a swollen, pretentious style.

Vance Palmer has not written that kind of novel. He is a humanist and realist who writes plainly and truthfully about life as he feels and sees it. His new novel "Seedtime" (Angus & Robertson, 17/-), which is the sequel to his "Golconda" and the second of a projected trilogy, continues the story of Macey Donovan, the union organiser of Golconda who is now a Labor member of the Queensland parliament. As it does not possess any of the ingredients of the modern masterpiece it will not qualify for publication as an abridged novel in the Reader's Digest, but it will certainly be of considerable interest particularly to those Australian readers interested in the Labor movement.

"Seedtime" is the story of a militant but not politically-conscious trade union organiser who is gradually tamed and moulded into the typical Labor politician of the Theodore-Hanlon-Gair eras. That is to say, a politician who knows how to use militant language while serving the interests of the monopolists. Naturally this kind of Jekyll and Hyde conduct demands considerable mental agility; it cannot be acquired all at once. Macey Donovan is shown the technique by Lambert the Premier, a wily opportunist ably portrayed by the author.

At the end of the novel the reader is left with the feeling that Macey Donovan has absorbed Lambert's teachings and that he might shortly qualify for a ministerial post which will not only bring honor to himself and his newly acquired wife but also wealth, in the manner of ministers of the Theodore-Hanlon-Gair type.

Reformism then is one of the main themes of this novel. Vance Palmer is really one of the first Australian novelists to deal with this important aspect of our national life. Apart from Frank Hardy's "Power Without Glory", "Golconda" and now "Seedtime" are in fact almost the only Australian novels set against the background of the Labor movement.

Inevitably there is something forlorn about the chronicle of a Labor misleader—it is a story devoid of ideals, filled only with personal calculations.

It is perhaps this which prompted Marjorie Barnard (Meanjin No. 1, 1958) to suggest that "Seedtime" was a study in failure.

It is that undoubtedly—Labor misleaders are failures, for all the fame and wealth they might gain. They are guilty of betraying their class, and they can never overcome feelings of guilt.

Insofar as the failure of Donovan is shown in "Seedtime" the novel gains in significance, but because all the other characters are also failures it tends to lose in impact.

This general sense of failure which pervades the novel might have been obviated if the author had deliberately set out to depict the whole of Queensland's Labor movement. Then Vance Palmer could not have helped but present other characters, men and women with confidence in themselves and in the future of the working class. He would in fact have introduced a rank and file Laborite of a kind who has recently changed the Labor Party there, and Communists and Communism, the dominant reality of our time since 1917, in Queensland no less than in the rest of the world.

However Vance Palmer is not that kind of writer. "Seedtime" might have been different, but it is not. Nevertheless it is a significant novel dealing with an important subject, treated with skill and sensitivity.

"Seedtime" is Vance Palmer's tenth novel. We cannot help reflecting that few other writers have contributed as much to the development of the Australian novel. His work constitutes an important link between the realists of the Lawson epoch and the realists of our time.

A warm welcome is extended to the re-appearance of two older Vance Palmer novels, "The Passage" and "The Swayne Family." "The Passage", which first appeared twenty-eight years ago, four years before "The Swayne Family", is the better known of the two—it has been taught in the schools and it was widely circulated in the paperbacked Commonwealth Pocket Library series. "The Swayne Family" was out of print for many years.

Perhaps not surprisingly newspaper critics have given "The Passage" a better reception than "The Swayne Family". It may well be that "The Passage" is the more successful novel, yet the positive qualities of "The Swayne Family" seem to have been entirely overlooked. Although it is a story of Melbourne middle-class life during the great pre-war economic crisis, it is not dated by all the period details. Today we stand on the threshold of a new crisis with all its consequences, above all the loss of illusions. This is just what "The Swayne Family" depicts. The novel is timely and a salutary reminder of the unpleasant realities of our society.

The hardships endured by a family in a small fishing community in Queensland are realistically shown in "The Passage", which also contains some of the best descriptive writing in our literature. In the words of Professor A. D. Hope (Southerly No. 4, 1955), "the basis of 'The Passage' is the solid, permanent and vivid sense of place which is built up and sustained throughout the book."

JUDAH WATEN

★

The Songs They Used to Sing

The Black Stump,
Sunday.

Dear Mr. Editor,

I see where that bloke and the cliner down in Sydney has put out another of them books about the songs that me and me old mate Skeleton Ned used to sing when we was knocking around these parts as youngsters.

It was me and Ned, you might say, who made up most of the songs the Banjo put in that book he got out fifty years back. So when we sees about this here new one called "Old Bush Songs" [edited by Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing, Angus & Robertson—Ed.] we bites Charlie Webb, who's running the pub up here now, for 25 deeners and sends off for it.

Mind you, 25 deeners is a lot of dough for a book—more than we'd have got for shearing a hundred cobblers in the old days—but we wore out the Banjo's book in 1922, and we wanted to get hold of some of them songs again.

Well, all I can say, Mr. Editor, is there's a rattling good lot of songs in that there book, and me and Ned hopes that some of them flash young coves what hang around in the barber shops in Sydney will start singing the likes of "Stir the Wallaby Stew" and "The Bullockies' Ball" instead of the muck they put over that new-fangled wireless contraption. You can tell them that if they want to know how the tunes go, they can find me and Ned in the pub here at the Black Stump any day bar Sunday after half past three. It's a pity them coves that made the book couldn't have put a few of the tunes in—not that it matters to me and Ned, our concertinas don't seem to fit those notes the music blokes write down.

Well, Mr. Editor, if you see that missus Keesing what wrote the Preface to the songs, you can tell her from me that all the coves up here say she's done a real good job.

But we reckon she's got a few ring-ins that want cutting out next time she musters the mob. There's a few there we reckon was written by squatters and jackeroos and new-chums and such like, that no self-respecting shearer would sing. And there's a few more we reckon nobody ever sung—leastwise, they don't fit in with any tune we ever heard of.

There's a few blues, too, you ought to tell her. She's got one song there written by a cove called Vox Silvis that's a dead ringer for one old Uncle Harry used to sing—except he sang it better.

Well, this Vox (adj.) Silvis, as me mate Dixon the bullocky calls him, he's got the song:

The lairds of fat wethers assembled in force,
And with them their dames, as a matter
of course,
While here may be seen the spruce manager,
too,
And the best of good fellows, the gay
jackeroo.

The best of good fellows be (verbed), Dixon says to tell you. Uncle Harry says the song goes like this, and he ought to know—he learned it off the blokes in the sheds:

Like stringy old wethers, the shearers in
force
All rushed for the bar as a matter of course;
While waltzing his cliner the manager cursed,
For someone had caught him a jab with
his spurs.

I see up the front of the book, in this here preface, that missus Keesing says the songs are "folk-songs" and "an interesting aspect of our social tradition and an important part of our literary heritage." Dixon's offsider, Willoughby, that pommy bloke with all the long words, told us what that meant. I've forgot what he said, but it sounded all right. Me and Ned didn't go much on that bit about us being crooked on the lags and the bushrangers, though.

Well, Mr. Editor, that's all for now. Me and Ned has got to go up to the pub to sing some of these here songs over for the young blokes. They've been reading the book, and they reckon it's goodoh.

Yours till we dig out last post-hole,

Jimmy from the Wire Fence.

P.S.—If any of them young Sydney fellers are looking to come up here with tape recorders, you'd better tell them to bring their own electricity. We haven't got any at the Black Stump.

I.T.

Slessor's Poems

Kenneth Slessor's "Poems" (Angus & Robertson, 16/-) is in fact a reprinting of Slessor's famous "100 Poems", with (so far as I can gather) only three more recent poems added. But it is a most welcome reprint. "100 Poems" was first published in 1944, when Slessor had already been silent for some years; and, despite reprintings, it has always been hard to pick up a copy since then.

Now he has been silent for nearly twenty years, since the writing of "Five Bells"; and the three poems with which he has punctuated that self-elected silence are of neither the ambitiousness nor the stature of "Five Bells". So this volume gives us an opportunity of estimating his importance far more confidently than we could do with those of his contemporaries, such as R. D. FitzGerald, who are still writing.

What is his importance? Certainly he has influenced a good number of poets, some for the better, some for the worse. Almost anyone who writes now of Australian city life in verse is indebted in some way to Slessor: if not to the Slessor of the slightly brash "Last Trams", then to the Slessor of "Five Bells", who has made the romantic properties of the Sydney streets and the expansive echoing of the Harbor his characteristic domain.

But his importance is not merely to be deduced from his influence. It must be fairly clear by this time that he is the poet of greatest stature to come between Brennan and Hope. At his best, he is a poet who approaches world ranking. And he is important, perhaps most of all, because the development of his work presents us with a remarkable paradox.

A paradox certainly: even, in his less successful poetry, a contradiction. And it is a paradox in which he is representative of certain dilemmas in Australian poetry as a whole. In his experiments he has always been concerned with bringing to a point of realisation, of poetic self-sufficiency perhaps, elements in the real world as it can be touched and heard and recorded by the sympathetic observer. (Perhaps there is too much in him of the mere observer.) But his emotional attachment, and so his guiding preoccupation, has always been to the fanciful, the bizarre, the **other**—the lands of parrots and colored stones and smoky brilliant light and fat Lindsay-ish wenches, lands which lie beyond the horizons of the sea or of history. He is, in short, a poet of fancy trying to be a poet of the creative imagination which bases itself on everyday reality: as Yates saw in "The Circus Animals' Desertion".

When he fails, as he often does, he betrays his gift to a blurred fantasy or to the "feature-writer's" sort of journalistic notation. When he succeeds, we find imaginative insight and a powerful rhythmic drive replacing his fanciful Cockaigne and its primitive counterpart, the Happy Isles. And the struggle comes to a triumphant climax in "Five Bells", which is as good a poem as any written in this country.

That is where the paradox of his chosen silence comes in. He stopped writing with "Five Bells", when he was in his mid-thirties. Not that there is anything very mysterious about that. It was a decision which came of creative necessity. "Five Bells" was what the better part of him had been struggling all along to express. It left room for little development to follow it.

But it was a courageous decision just the same. Very few men in their mid-thirties are capable of withstanding that beating in the brain and

nerves, that itching of the pen-finger, which drive them to repeat their failures when the time for success has passed them. But that is what Slessor seems to have done. "Poems" is a monument as well as an achievement.

In a way, the breaking on three separate occasions of such a dense silence is an additional proof of courage. It is as important to know when to break silence as to choose it at all. One of these poems is a pleasant, mildly experimental love poem, "Polarities"; the other two are poems of the late war. Of these, the extremely moving and poised "Beach Burial" (moving partly because the poise is so determinedly maintained) is well known. The other, "An Inscription for Dog River", seems to be ironically addressed to the achievements of the late General Blamey:

We, too, are part of his memorial,
Having been put in for the cost,

Having bestowed on him all we had to give
In battles few can recollect,
Our strength, obedience and endurance,
Our wits, our bodies, our existence,
Even our descendants' right to live—
Having given him everything, in fact,
Except respect.

Even when he is not being a fine poet, Slessor is unmistakably an honest man.

VINCENT BUCKLEY

★

Music in English Drama

I have often noted that while dramatic producers will take much trouble and pains over the accuracy of costume, decor, and even adherence to tradition in production, the trouble and pains are all too rarely extended to cover the incidental music. We have innumerable authorities on period drama, we have equally innumerable authorities on period music, but Mr. John Manifold is the only person to my knowledge who has specialised equally in both branches. And yet the two aspects of period drama must be complementary if the original intentions of dramatist (and perhaps composer) are to be conveyed. Mr. Manifold certainly has an advantage in that his profound studies into the recorder and cognate instruments have pointed the way to many of their common uses in past centuries, but that, after all, was only his starting point.

To achieve "The Music in English Drama" (Rockliff, 31/6) (concerning which incidentally an English reviewer is said to have asked plaintively "How can such a good book come out of Brisbane?"), Mr. Manifold has obviously studied in detail hundreds of Tudor and Restoration plays, analysing the stage directions for the music, and drawing reasonable inferences from the large number of cases where such directions were absent.

This analysis has produced some interesting results, for it would appear that the dramatists might be divided into three classes: those who gave careful thought to their music, even specifying the exact instruments; those who desired music but were not so particular about its style or provenance; and those who left the use of music to be inferred from the text. We find those three types of dramatists paralleled even today, and it is interesting to find our Shakespeare, tho' musically minded, falling into the third category.

Mr. Manifold describes in clear detail the instruments used, and offers lists of music probably or

certainly employed so that there is no reason why any intelligent producer should not give us a Shakespearean or other play in which the music, while vital and interesting, is as much in period as the costumes and the decor.

The second part of the book skips a century and describes the revolution which took place in theatre music between the beginning and the end of the seventeenth century. As Mr. Manifold truly points out:

"The political and economic aspects of this revolution are, one might say, matters of breviary; the artistic aspects have never received adequate attention."

This was all concerned with the invention and development of "opera"; the foundations of our modern orchestra had been laid; overtures and act tunes began to be standardised, and for the first time music was thought of as something to be listened to passively. In Elizabethan times music had been written to be performed where ever three or four were met together. Now it became the fashion for listeners to employ others to perform the music for them, and Mr. Manifold treats the subject with logic and interest.

He ends with specific suggestions for the performance of a handful of plays ranging from Marlowe to Dryden. This is a book which should be in the hands of every dramatic producer who values sincerity in his music, equally with every other aspect of his performances.

ROBERT DALLEY-SCARLETT

★

King O'Malley

Most Australians now take a romantic and sentimental view of their country's more remote past—the convicts and bushrangers, the gold rushes, Eureka Stockade, the explorers and the valiant struggles of the selector.

Yet Australia only started to come of age, to reach adolescence, when it achieved a degree of independence at the turn of the century. The subsequent twenty-five years saw the marking out of the form of social structure and political divisions which persist to this day and no doubt will for some time to come. It is an odd thing that many of the men and women associated with this coming of age are rarely written about, their deeds—and misdeeds—have largely gone unrecorded.

The virtue and value of Dorothy Catts' biography, "King O'Malley" (Publicity Press, 25/-), is not only that it fills a part of this gap, but that it so strongly suggests the immense wealth of material lying around awaiting collation, or treatment in fictional form. This book, dealing with a politician, does evoke a remarkable impression of the ferment, the richness and variety of political life of this time. The men who dominated it in those days were big men. They were tough, shrewd, ruthless fellows who traded two blows for one. Yet they were not cynical, they believed, most of them, in the potential and greatness of their crude, primitive and sparsely settled land. Today your professional politician is often a blase, cynical little fellow, slyly accepting his cut from the big corporations, a pygmy compared with these blatant, blustering giants from the past.

King O'Malley was such a one, an American, who came to Australia at forty years of age, dying of T.B. He lived in a cave near Rockhampton for two years, tended by Aborigines. Nursed back to health he **walked** to Adelaide, selling insurance

on the way, went to Tasmania and got himself elected into politics by a tiny, forlorn electorate.

A dashing dresser, a spectacular showman, the masses adored him and his witty orations. Yet behind the buffoonery was a clear, hard mind and mixed in with this, a curious visionary streak. He was an odd amalgam. A fanatical opponent of smoking, swearing, gambling and drinking ("stagger juice"), he lived austere and amassed a fair fortune (he always doffed his hat to his tenants when he passed them by—"Brother, I always tip my hat to anyone who pays me money"). He had plenty of political enemies but few personal ones, he was loyal to his friends, successful or otherwise. Amongst his achievements can be mentioned the building of Canberra, the construction of the Trans-Continental Railway, the erection of Australia House in London (as a symbol of Australia's maturity in the midst of the imperial capital), bringing West Australia into the Federation and, of course, the creation of the Commonwealth Bank. In order to stimulate interest in the Canberra project, which looked like lapsing, he arranged for the plans to be stolen. The vote in Labor caucus on the Bank was carried by a forged proxy vote—forged by "The King" himself, of course.

Dorothy Catts has compiled a loyal and faithful record of the man in his more personal moments. She possesses an incredible memory for incidents and anecdotes. The weakness, inherent in such an approach, is that the drama of the large occasion tends to be missed. The book is a cosy intimate study, it lacks size. The nearest we get to this is a reproduction of O'Malley's oration when Canberra was founded, a splendid and serious statement. Here is one apt extract: "Science is triumphing over all barriers. It is shortening distances, universalising languages, pulverising diversity of habits and customs, paralysing prejudice and bigotry, penetrating the heavens by means of aerial navigation, and is gradually dissolving in the modern crucible of knowledge all the ancient hideous nightmares of superstition and ignorance." The year was 1913.

King O'Malley left Parliament in 1917, his political throat at last having been successfully cut by his devoted enemy, Wm. M. Hughes. He died in 1953 at 99, and was buried in a coffin built by himself.

CECIL HOLMES

★

An American Novel

We blunder out of one colonial status, in which we called England "Home", into another, in which we call the United States "America".

America, as a glance at the atlas will confirm, is a continent in the Far East, beyond New Caledonia. Its languages are Spanish and Portuguese, in both of which its literature is impressive; yet of this literature we know as little as we do of Albanian.

Here, at last, is a novel that has run the linguistic blockade and made a considerable name for itself: "Los Pasos Perdidos", translated with some loss of evocative power in the title as "The Lost Steps" (Gollancz, 18/9). The author is Alejo Carpentier, of whom I knew as little as you do until a few weeks ago.

The publisher's blurb suggests, however, that the process of translation is still incomplete; that the words have come over, but left their sense behind; for a more misleading piece of nonsense I have never read. From the blurb, you would

gather that you have to do with a cross between science fiction and some sort of pagan mysticism like D. H. Lawrence's.

In fact the story is simple, realistic and moving. Chance takes an embittered young composer away from Hollywood, where he makes money but feels artistically sterile, and shoves him up the Orinoco on a musicological expedition. He passes through communities which get progressively less Hollywood and more genuine. He fetches up in a happy primitive-tribal society, miles from anywhere, and begins to feel his lost artistic force returning to him. And then the story gets really interesting . . .

Carpentier (who appears to have Greek and Spanish in him as well as French) is well equipped to write such a book. He evidently knows the Venezuelan bush and jungle geographically and historically, with his mind, his muscles and his memories. He evidently knows and loathes the bogus-intellectual smart-Bohemia of our commercial civilisation. He knows how to convince you that his composer is a composer, not a fake. His prose is very Spanish; there are pages which still read like Spanish in the English, and my view of translation is that the final English version should read like English.

But what distinguishes him from the ruck of adventure-story-writers is his profound sense of the realities of human history, human society and the human nature which they condition. This is a book to read and return to. Let us hope that we hear more from Senor Carpentier.

J.S.M.

★

The Australian Tradition

Mr. Phillips' excellence and importance as a critic lies in the facts that he is a man with a professional and life-long knowledge of literature; that he is bound by no critical dogmas but vitally interested in the relationship of writing to the society that produces it; and in the fact that he himself wields a witty and laconic pen. All in all, we have probably not seen a critic so able to advance the cause of writing in this country—as distinct from being parasitic on it—since the days of A. G. Stephens himself.

When Mr. Phillips' essays on Lawson and Furphy appeared in *Meanjin* they aroused wide interest, and so did his *Overland* essay on "The Democratic Tradition". They are now collected, together with several other essays of lesser weight, in "The Australian Tradition" (F. W. Cheshire, 19/6).

Mr. Phillips' book was discussed at some length at a symposium held in Melbourne recently by the Australasian Book Society, which also issued the book as a "choice" to its members.

Participating in the symposium were Mr. Judah Waten, the novelist; Mr. Vincent Buckley, the poet; Mr. Ian Turner, the publisher, and Mr. Phillips himself.

Mr. Waten said that in his view the Australian tradition is essentially a revolutionary one; stemming from the days of the first settlers, this tradition in the Nineties found its expression in the Australian labor movement, in belief in the ideas of socialism. He said that the weaknesses revealed by the labor movement in the early years of this

century adversely affected literary activity, but that the inspiration of the ideas of the Russian Revolution was felt by Australian writers in the Twenties, so that today few Australian writers are not affected by these ideas, the logical fulfilment of the democratic traditions of our literature.

Mr. Buckley criticised Mr. Waten for giving the word "democratic" too many specific political overtones: by translating it into "socialist". In Buckley's view the major Australian writers, such as Brennan, Slessor, Hope, Wright, Henry Handel Richardson, Patrick White, Furphy, are not guided by openly stated political considerations. These writers are concerned with society, but not in terms of pre-occupation with whether or not it is sufficiently democratic. Socialist writers should get outside their narrow and restricting political aims.

Mr. Turner said that the literature of the Nineties took over completely the social attitudes expressed in the unwritten literature of the early Australian community—its anti-authoritarianism, its egalitarianism and its sardonic humor. These values and social ideas continue today in the mainstream of Australian writing, in the work of Prichard, Palmer, Xavier Herbert and many others. It is these values which should be central to the work of Australian writers today.

Mr. Phillips said that he believed that the democratic tradition is often not shown in direct political ideas: it is a climate in which certain political institutions and controversies are likely to thrive, and is expressed in a sense of achievement rather than of dissatisfaction. "Confidence in the common man is the essential element": "It is a tradition which enables us to feel our common humanity—and that is a contribution which we Australians can make uniquely to the Anglo-Saxon world".

My reason for quoting this symposium at some length—it's a pity we haven't room for a full summary of discussion—is to emphasise the richness of this topic and the fruitful thinking that can emerge from a consideration of it.

We have now reached the stage in our writing when it is necessary to attempt to generalise the lessons of our development—in fact, it is vital to, in order to progress. There is certainly no book more likely to act as a well-cleaned spark-plug, with the gap nicely adjusted, than Arthur Phillips' "The Australian Tradition".

S.M.S.

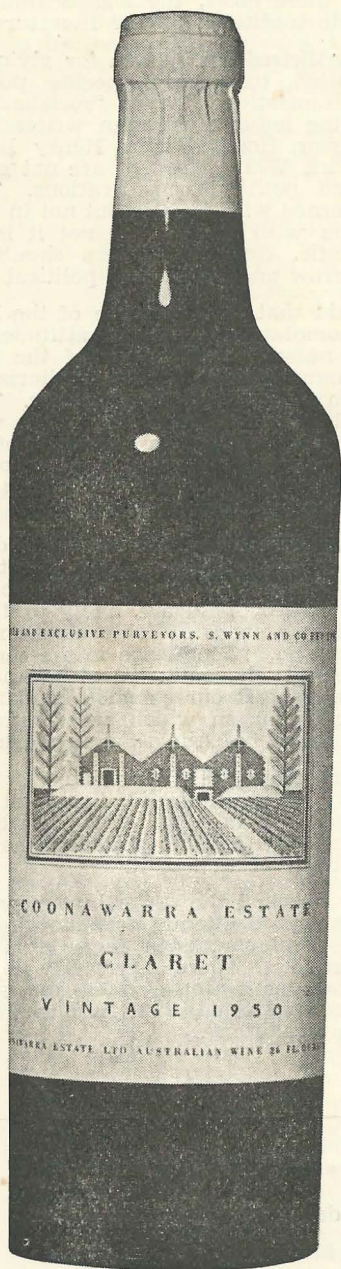
OVERLAND

"Temper democratic, bias Australian"

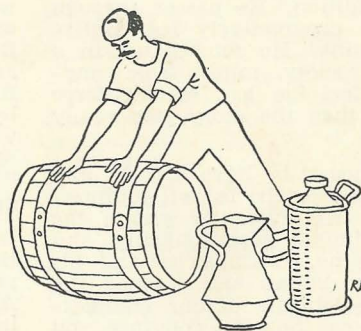
Edited by S. Murray-Smith.

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