

Overland

NUMBER 17

TWO AND SIX



CECIL HOLMES

EXPERIMENT IN SURVIVAL

WAL CHERRY

ON THE AUSTRALIAN THEATRE

JOHN MORRISON — DOG BOX

VANCE PALMER,
NORMAN LINDSAY ON A.G.S.

STORIES
FEATURES
POETRY
REVIEWS

Temper democratic, bias Australian

PUBLISHED
QUARTERLY

Edited by S. Murray-Smith

NUMBER 17
AUTUMN, 1960

OVERLAND

CONTENTS

STORIES	Page
DOG-BOX: <i>John Morrison</i>	3
THE WEDDING: <i>June Factor</i>	9
THE LAW OF THE LAND: <i>Alan Seymour</i>	13
THE OVERSEER: <i>Jack Hyett</i>	19
POETRY	
TOM FARLEY by <i>Colin Thiele</i>	11
and poetry by <i>K. Semmens, R. A. Simpson, Bruce Beaver, Judith C. Green, Keith J. Free, Aileen Palmer, Dorothy Hewett, Max Harris, Denis Kevans, Louis Johnson, Donald Maynard, R. G. Hay, Robert Clark, Laurence Collinson, Ian Mudie and J. S. Manifold.</i>	
FEATURES	
MORALITY—IN BLACK AND WHITE	5
HINTERLAND: <i>David Martin</i>	12
FATHER WORMS: <i>Mary Durack Miller</i>	21
SWAG	26
EXPERIMENT IN SURVIVAL: <i>Cecil Holmes</i>	27
READING "YANDY" AT PINDAN: <i>Barry Christophers</i>	29
DONALD STUART'S "YANDY": <i>Dorothy Hewett</i>	29
A. G. STEPHENS: <i>Vance Palmer</i>	30
LINDSAY ON STEPHENS	31
PITFALLS OF GRANDEUR: <i>Wal Cherry</i>	33
MISCELLANY	36
KYLIE TENNANT: <i>Leo Kelly</i>	41
REVIEWS	42

Overland is a quarterly Australian literary magazine. The subscription rate is ten shillings a year (four issues), and the price of each copy is two shillings and sixpence. Manuscripts are welcomed, but will only be returned if a stamped, addressed envelope is attached. Please add exchange to cheques. All correspondence should be addressed:

EDITOR, OVERLAND, G.P.O. BOX 98a, MELBOURNE, C.1.

DOG-BOX



I FIRST became aware of her just before the train pulled in.

Flinders Street Station in the peak-hour is a primitive place. You get pushed at from all sides, and if the pressure from one particular quarter is a bit more persistent than anywhere else the odds are that you won't even notice it. That is if you're a regular peak-hour traveller, have a long way to go, and are not as young as you used to be.

I was aware of this particular pressure, though. It turned out afterwards to be the edge of a wicker shopping basket, but it felt more like the lid of a garbage-can. However I held my ground and fought down a temptation to look around, because to have done so would have meant moving more than my head, thereby letting somebody else in.

The train came into sight running down from the yards, and a murmur of pleasant anticipation ran along the packed platform. Dog-box! We used to talk of the old dears with contempt, but have changed our attitude since the arrival of the Blue Hussies. It was like seeing the old brown teapot come to light.

It slowed to a stop. Those of us at the front pressed backwards as incoming passengers eased open the swinging doors. I was in a good position, but sensed immediate danger as I felt the lid of the garbage-can slide round into my left side. I looked down, frowning, because, for all the hurly-burly of the five-to-six rush, there is still a point beyond which most sufferers do not go.

She had Mum written all over her. I was close enough to get even the homely middle-aged smell of her; something of well-preserved clothes, wood-ashes, yellow soap, the stew-pot. Below a comfortable bosom she hugged her garbage-can battering-ram, a well-filled shopping-basket topped with what looked like a folded woollen scarf. Two bright eyes flashed up at me out of a face full of character and rich experience.

"Sorry, mister!"

I gave her a smile, and a few more inches of precious ground, but I knew she wasn't a bit sorry. She was as good as past me, and already digging her basket into the backs of two other women who had moved in from the other side.

Nobody got hurt, but Mum was only fifth in. She was beaten by the two women, a big workman, and a little clerk-type of fellow who must have been an old hand at the game, because he seemed to come from nowhere to take fourth place.

When I got in I found the two near window seats occupied by the clerk, and the workman. The three women were on the same side as the clerk, with Mum furthest from the window and apparently none too happy about it. In the fourth corner a tough-looking fellow wearing a black belted

raincoat and a cloth cap sat watching us troop in with an expression of sleepy insolence on his unshaved face. On his knees lay what was obviously a bottle wrapped up in brown paper. I sat down next to him before I realised that he was half drunk and that I hadn't noticed him before.

"Flinders Street," I said amiably. "This train's going back."

He turned on me a dull heavy lidded stare. "Back where?" he asked with a strong Scottish accent.

"Lilydale."

"Lilydale." He gave that a moment's consideration. "An' supposin' tha's where I want tae go?"

"Sorry. I didn't see you get in."

"An' supposin' I didna get in?"

Now experience has taught me that the best way to deal with a quarrelsome drunk is to meet him half-way. So I said firmly: "That's what I was supposing."

"An' supposin' ye're richt?"

I shrugged my shoulders and looked away from him.

But to my relief he suddenly relaxed and clapped a heavy hand on my knee. "A'richt, Pop. I been sleepin'. A' the way there an' back. I wanted Nunawading. First thing I know I open ma eyes and there's the bluidy cricket ground flyin' past again, the wrong way."

"You're all right this time," I said. "I'm going to Croydon. I'll have an eye on you at Nunawading."

★

In the meantime the compartment had filled up, even with a few standing passengers. During my exchange with Scotty I'd been aware of Mum on the other side taking some interest in the proceedings. But not much. She was pre-occupied chiefly with the basket and with the two women on her left. The one in the window-seat had lit a cigarette and seemed to want to keep to herself. The other, a stoutish matron in navy-blue overcoat

and beret, and laden with parcels, was beaming at all of us, ready to take on anybody who'd give her a fair hearing. She had the air of a woman who has made some bargains and feels she has topped off a good day by getting herself a seat on a peak-hour train going home.

Mum looked as if she were still nursing a grievance over being beaten to a corner seat. Without moving her head she kept darting angry little sideways glances. Her leathery face was grim and anxious as she felt under the woollen scarf to see if everything was still there.

On Mum's right a pale youth in black trousers and pink windcheater had opened up a Superman comic. In the far corner the clerk was reading a paper-back. On my side there was Scotty, myself, two mates, whose names I soon learned were Bill and Ian, and the workman, of whom all I could see were frayed trouser cuffs and a pair of big blucher boots. The standing passengers were reinforced at Richmond by a man who irritated Mum by flicking her face every now and then with the corner of a Herald hanging from a hand hooked on to the luggage rack.

Bill and Ian were discussing an item in the news: Stanley Yankus, the American farmer who was migrating to Australia because he had been fined for growing too much wheat. Ian, sitting next to me, was doing all the listening, so that I picked up most of what Bill was saying.

"What good will it do him, anyhow? It'll be on here again any tick of the clock. I just heard the other night over the air that hundreds of acres of sugar-cane in Queensland ain't going to be cut this year. My old man told me the best job he ever had in his life was dumping butter during the Depression. He used to work all day carting butter down and tipping it into the Bay. Then go home at night to a feed of snags and fried bread. One of his mates got the sack because they found some butter in his bag—"

I began to get interested, but at that moment Scotty came to life again. No preliminaries. I thought he was sleeping until he whispered hoarsely right into my ear:

"How about a whisky, Pop?" He tapped the brown paper parcel on his knees. "Nane o' your Australian tack. Real Scotch—White Horse. Have a nip?"

I told him, quite affably, that it wasn't my medicine. He frowned contemptuously.

"What do ye drink?"

"Beer."

"Supposin' I havna got beer?" He stared hard, as if I'd been demanding beer and what was I going to do about it now.

"That's my bad luck," I said.

"An' ye no want a whisky?"

"No, thank you."

On my left I caught Bill's voice: "I saw another case like Yankus only a few months ago. Only it was pigs. A bloke raising too many pigs—"

Ian must have moved, for the voice faded. And Scotty was still at me:

"Ony objections tae me havin' a nip?"

"No," I replied, adding impatiently: "It's your whisky."

He knitted his brows, and for a moment I thought I'd gone too far too quickly. I tried to appear interested in Mum, but was acutely aware of him keeping me under observation while he decided what to do about me.

Mum had been captured by Mrs. Blue-Beret. The latter was obscured by one of the standing passengers and I couldn't make out what she was saying, but for the last few minutes her voice had provided a steady overtone to all the other

noises in the compartment. Mum was only pretending to be listening. She kept turning her head and nodding sympathetically, but it was plain to me that her mind was never far from her basket. I began to wonder what was in it. She had it hugged close to her stomach, wrists braced against the arched handle, both hands turned inwards and spread out over the folded scarf as if ready to detect the slightest movement of something hidden beneath it.

★

BILL was flat out on the question of pigs. I'd stolen a peep at him and found him to be a man of middle-age with a worried expression on the kind of face that goes with ulcers or a nagging wife.

"Blokes was getting paid for pigs they didn't raise. Now just you get on to it! Say you're a little bloke, just big enough to raise pigs up to the quota. All nicely-organised, prices fixed and guaranteed. You get paid for, say, fifty pigs that stink and grunt and make pork. But I'm in it in a bigger way. I've got room for two hundred pigs. And I get paid for two hundred pigs. Only I get told to keep just a hundred and fifty—or else! So I declare a hundred and fifty pigs on the hoof and fifty on paper. And I get paid for them fifty paper pigs just like you get paid for your fifty pork pigs. And people everywhere screaming out for bacon. The game stinks."

Ian muttered something which was inaudible to me, and nodded his head to agree that the game did indeed stink.

I waited, curious to see where Bill would go from there, but Scotty had returned to the attack on the other side. He must have been brooding, because he took up his grievance exactly where he had left off.

"What ye're tellin' me is: this is a free country, eh?"

I pretended not to grasp his meaning.

"If ye don't want tae drink whisky ye don't have to. An' if I do want tae drink whisky—I drink whisky. That it?"

I smiled. "That's about it."

"It's as simple as tha', is it?"

"It was your idea!"

"I didna say it was my idea. I was suggestin' maybe it was your idea." He tapped the parcel again. "Supposin' a checker got in just as I cracked this bottle. Ye still say I can drink whisky if I want to?"

"That's a chance you'd have to take, my friend," I parried, still smiling.

"What ye mean is: this is a free country as long as I'm prepared tae tak the odds. Is that it?"

I shrugged my shoulders, and once again he retired into his alcoholic whirligig. A moment later, under the pretence of identifying a station we were pulling into, I stole a glance at him. Chin resting on elbow, he was staring out through the window with an expression of sleepy triumph.

Mum also was watching stations. We were in Auburn, and she'd been checking off every stop as if on her way to an appointment of life or death. Conversation with the woman in blue had become clinical. I caught the sentence: "Anyhow, he give me some tablets for him to take—" and guessed that the absent Mr. Blue-Beret was under discussion.

Mum was showing a little more interest, but still only between stations. Every time we stopped she leaned forward to peer out through the window, remaining like that until we were on the move again. She looked cold. She should have been wearing that scarf. It occurred to me that she

MORALITY—IN BLACK AND WHITE

IN this issue of Overland we devote an unusual amount of space to matters relating to the Aborigines. Cecil Holmes writes on Pindan, and Barry Christophers adds a postscript. (We would have reprinted, had space been available, Dorothy Hewett's fine ballad "Clancy and Dooley and Don McLeod", and those who don't know it will find it in "Freedom on the Wallaby", edited by Marjorie Pizer.) We print a review by Dorothy Hewett of Donald Stuart's "Yandy", a review by Alec Sheppard of Kylie Tennant's "Speak You So Gently", and an article on Fr. Worms by Mary Durack Miller.

This conjunction is not accidental. The recent South African killings, about which many Australian writers protested to the South African Government, emphasise for us that on the solution of racist prejudices and color discrimination the future peace of the world depends hardly less than on the suppression of nuclear arms.

Australian racialism is mean and ugly. It hides in the corridors of Parliament and in the fastnesses of the Melbourne Club, and in the ignorant and frightened minds of many who know nothing of these retreats. Its weapons are not Sten guns and armored cars, but complacency, institutionalised selfishness and an icy callousness.

Our Government's treatment of the colored people in New Guinea, the Torres Straits islands and in Australia is an object lesson in refined cruelty at a comfortable distance. Of course a few Aborigines and part-Aborigines live reasonably enough. Of course there are many humane sides to the New Guinea administration. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about the lack of medical care; the lack of education; the sickening paternalism; the jovial exploitation of unprotected labor (safely disguised from the public gaze). A stockowner in the Northern Territory is sentenced for beating his Aboriginal workers, and then is quietly handed back his labor permit. A New Guinea planter gets a nominal fine for the manslaughter of an employee. A Port Moresby clerk is sentenced because his wage of 6/3 a week drove him to steal. An ignorant white in a Gulf country pub refers to "the niggers".

Our Government is guilty for permitting these things and our people for condoning them. They breed in Australians a buried, uneasy guilt that becomes a malaise of cynicism. They smear us with the dirty hand of a prejudice that belongs no

TWO most promising experiments have matured in recent years, the Lockhart River Co-operative in northern Queensland and the Pindan Co-operative in north-east Western Australia. The first, created by an inspired missionary, Alf Clint, is based mainly upon cattle and pearl-shell and trochus fishing; the second, which depends upon mining, was founded by a tough miner, McLeod, and a few hundred rebellious Aboriginal stockmen and their families weary of a life of near-slavery. The story of their march across hundreds of miles of cruel country, spurred on by an old, one-legged Aboriginal woman, is an epic which seems to cry out for a film to celebrate it. Both are now self-supporting, and at both the natives still maintain their songs and dances and something more of their own culture. Above all they are able to rely upon the age-long Aboriginal tradition of communal living, of the sharing out of all benefits.

These two co-operatives were floated by money begged from the ever-generous Australian public. Surely the Commonwealth government should supply capital for many more such enterprises where all that is best in the Aboriginal tradition can prosper in independence?

This plea for a respite does not at all mean a "museum" policy for the preservation of primitive man in Anthropological Gardens. It is a plea that in many different ways the native Australians should be helped to maintain their valuable cultural traditions long enough for them to be gradually adapted to new ideas. Then they will emerge into full citizenship under their own leaders, and with the self-confidence to enable them to contribute to the variety of Australian life. They can add a sense of history to a raw young country, an example of common ownership and sharing to set against the competition and acquisitiveness of the West.

JACQUETTA HAWKES in the New Statesman.

longer in the world. And they inspire more and more decent people daily to say: "Put your censors and your vice squads to work to cleanse the real filth away."

had taken it off to protect something in the basket. A kitten? Chicken? Whatever it was she never for an instant removed her sheltering hands. Every now and then I saw the worn old fingers spread out, feeling, probing. Next to her the pale youth had been through the comic and was fighting a losing battle with sleep. Mum had had to straighten him up several times with discreet little nudges. But I'm a leftwise subsider myself, and I knew that nothing she could do would make him collapse in the other direction. Motherly type as she was, I believe she'd have let him go to sleep on her shoulder if it hadn't been for the basket. I saw her shift it a little away from him and bring her right elbow forward as a barrier.

Bill was in the full tide of the subject of the paper pigs.

"Them pigs that nobody raises get paid for in real money. The blokes that whistles pigs up say

you can't whistle money up—not for pigs, anyway. They say it's got to come from somewhere, and that somewhere always means you and me in the long run. Taxes. Say you're on the basic wage and you got a big family to feed. You'd give 'em all two cackles and a grunt for breakfast every morning if you could, wouldn't you?"

Ian must have agreed with that.

"But you can't, not on your pay. Eggs maybe, but not bacon as well. But, by jeese, you got to pay for bacon! Them paper pigs gets paid for with Government dough. And that's you! Now just work it out. You pay taxes to pay blokes to raise paper pigs so that the bloke who raises pork pigs can get a price you can't afford! Now tell me the game doesn't stink."

Ian evidently was still not prepared to say that the game didn't stink, and a sulky silence fell on my left.

At Camberwell several passengers, including the woman in the corner seat, got off. Nobody got in. Mrs. Blue-Beret, in full voice on her husband's clinical history, seemed unaware that the corner seat had been vacated until Mum gave her an urgent push. Both of them moved along, and Mum settled herself one place nearer the window with obvious satisfaction. The pale youth lurched violently, collected himself with great embarrassment, apologised, and promptly moved in close to her again. I think he didn't like the look of the passenger who was ready to drop into the empty seat, and felt that if he was going to subside on to anybody it had still better be Mum.

★

In the commotion Scotty came to life again. I noticed his hand tighten convulsively on the bottle of whisky in the very moment that sleep left him. He shook his head, peered out for the name of the station, relaxed, and after a few seconds' contemplation to thoroughly digest the fact that I was still there, once again began where he had left off.

"So ye think it's a free country, do ye?"

"Look here, my friend," I began irritably, "I've done a hard day's work——"

"A'richt, a'richt, a'richt." I'd been prepared for a different reaction, and was rather disconcerted when he bent on me a dry smile. "Why don't ye go tae sleep then? Ye're sittin' there wi' your eyes wide open——"

"Any objections?"

"No, no objections. If a man wants tae sleep he's entitled tae sleep. If a man doesna want tae sleep——" he waved his hand in a way that made me want to hit him, "och weel, it's a free country!" And there he left me again, seething.

I decided to have a piece of him next time, whatever the cost.

Mrs. Blue-Beret was a foot or two further away from me now, but with the standing passengers gone I could hear more of what Mum had to put up with.

"—— little pink ones this time. And do you think I could get him to take them? Not on your life! He said they made everything he ate taste like burned cork. And the doctor had gone out of his way to tell me they didn't have no taste at all. It just goes to show what imagination can do for you."

Mum, carefully checking the train through Canterbury, nodded shrewdly.

"He was particularly crooked on them spoiling his tea. So he said, anyhow. He's always liked his cuppa. So d'you know what I did I said to him: if you think they're not doing you any good then you'd better stop taking them. And I started putting them into his tea unbeknown to him! And now he's as happy as Larry. Says he hasn't felt better for years, and that them tablets must have been making him worse. Sometimes I could bust right out laughing at him. He looks at me across the table and winks and smacks his lips. 'By God, Sally,' he says, 'it's good to be able to enjoy a decent cup of tea again!'"

Mum chuckled, nodding vigorously, and, I thought, reminiscently. In other circumstances she might have told a good story back. At the moment she just didn't want to be involved in anything. There was that basket——

Bill was still getting a good hearing on pigs:

"The more you look at it the sillier it gets. If you ain't in the pig business you cop it three ways. You don't eat pork, even under the lap. You pay taxes to pay blokes not to raise pigs. And you pay more taxes to pay more blokes to see that

the other blokes don't raise pork. Because it's like everything else, it's got to be administered. You got to have an office, clerks, paper for forms to fill in so that blokes can say exactly how many pigs they ain't raising. One time farmers just raised pigs, and there wasn't any office anywhere that had anything to do with pig-raising. They just took the little pigs to market. These paper pigs is different——"

We had come to a halt somewhere between Mont Albert and Box Hill, and Mum was becoming increasingly worried. I believe she'd have given anything for Mrs. Blue-Beret's corner seat so that she could open the window and look out to see what was the cause of the hold-up. Mrs. Blue-Beret rambled on, regardless of the fact that Mum obviously wasn't listening. Mum looked thoroughly angry, as if nothing would suit her better just then than a chance to give the Victorian Railways Commissioners a piece of her mind. For the twentieth time I caught her withdrawing her hand from under the scarf, and had to fight down a temptation to lean over and ask her if it was still breathing. I wasn't sure how she'd take it.

More pigs——

"The trouble is, Ian, sooner or later the big blokes is going to take a wake-up to the lurk and go in for it in a big way. They'll monopolise it, get a corner in them paper pigs. They'll have 'em raising litters. They'll be claiming higher prices for 'em because of the rise in costs of all the tucker they don't give 'em to eat. They'll be going on overseas trips, tax-free, to study the latest developments in the paper pig-raising industry. They'll get their mates in Parliament to put a duty on imported pork so as to give the home-produced stuff a fair go——struth, we're at Box Hill! We made a quick run tonight——"

★

I felt a keen disappointment as the two friends reached for their bags on the luggage rack. It would have been diverting to see how far Bill would have gone in his dissertation on the controls of private enterprise. I noticed that the moment they were out on the platform he started again.

Some other passengers got out also. More came in. Mostly teen-age schoolboys.

Mum had just ridden out another lurch of the pale youth and informed him with a rather tight little smile: "You was nearly into me basket that time!" He was sitting stiffly now with a red face, trying desperately to find something in the comic that was worth re-reading. Mrs. Blue-Beret announced that she was getting off at Blackburn, and with a new passenger standing against the door I saw Mum gather herself for the slide into the corner seat. With that in prospect she listened quite sympathetically to the final anecdote about Mr. Blue Beret's stomach.

"He's supposed to eat brains, you know, but he says he's never sat down to the dirty things in his life and he ain't going to start now. So I give him fish-paste sandwiches in his lunch every other day. That's what he thinks, anyhow. If he's never tasted brains he can't be any the wiser. Sometimes he'll come in from work and say: 'By jeeze, Sally, that was a nice bit of fish!' He thinks it's Japanese flat'ead paste——"

I'd have liked more on that, but just then the tenacious Scot came in again:

"This free country business——"

"How about giving it a rest?"

"No offence, Pop. Ye're an Aussie, aren't ye?"

"Yes, I'm an Aussie."

Durban Chanticleer

How now the cockerel prince
Crows to the skies
As one who, strangely waking, sees for once
A black sun rise.

Who hears his Memnonian cries?
No sleeper inside.
But black with the lustre of feathers the yard stirs
In the dawn's furious tide.

K. SEMMENS.

The statue of the Ethiopian prince Memnon, outside the temple at Thebes, was said to utter a musical sound when touched by the sun's rays at dawn.

"An' ye say it's a free country?"
"Yes, I do."
"You always cast your vote at election time?"
"You bet I do!"
"An' supposin' ye dinna like ony o' the candidates? You still cast your vote?"
"I can always vote for the one I dislike least."
The corners of his lips drooped. "Ye ca' tha' an argument? The real point o' the matter is: ye got tae vote, havn't ye?"
"Voting is compulsory, yes."
Again the pontifically-waving hand. "Tha's jist ma point! A free country—an' compulsion wher-ever ye turn! In Scotland I never missed ma vote, simply because I was free tae please masel. Oot here the first thing they tell me is: Jock, ye got tae vote! Tha's enough for me. Ma hackles is up. If tha's wha' they ca' democracy they can keep it. I've never used ma vote since I set foot in Australia. I believe in real freedom."
And with that he retired, supremely confident of having finally flattened me, as indeed he had.

★

I WAS still reeling under the blow when we reached Blackburn and Mrs. Blue-Beret gathered up her parcels and go out. The man in the door-way stepped on to the platform to make way for her, so that Mum had no opposition in taking over the corner seat. I thought for a moment that she was going to open the window, but all she wanted was to make sure that it was in good working order. She just pushed it up a few inches, let it fall again, and immediately had another feel of the mystery under the scarf. If she hadn't looked so homely I'd have assumed then that she had some living thing she wanted to destroy, and was only waiting until the compartment was empty before pitching it out on to the line.

The schoolboys were involved in a lively discussion of TV. It might have been a golden opportunity for me to get an insight into juvenile perversion, but nothing now could divert me from Mum and her basket.

Except Scotty, who couldn't resist a final shot during the last lap to Nunawading. I knew for a good minute that he had turned his head and was watching me. I also knew, I don't know how, that he was smiling.

"Dinna let it worry ye, Pop."

"Do I look worried?"

"No, I'm no sayin' ye look worried. I'm referin' tae oor wee dispute."

I said nothing, but was careful to keep a pleasant expression. In spite of everything he had succeeded in making me feel a bit of a nark. We slowed into Nunawading, and he took a firm grip on his bottle of whisky and prepared to depart.

"No hurt feelings, Pop?"

"No hurt feelings, Mac. Good luck to you!" I was beginning to like him, but possibly only because he was going.

He lurched out, and, teetering alongside, gave me an ironic salute before banging the door.

"Never mind, Pop, there'll always be an England—as lang as there's a Scotland!"

★

On again, with Mum and I exchanging understanding smiles across the compartment. I believe she'd have said something but for the fact that, as I noticed with some excitement, she also was near the end of her journey. She was like a cat on hot bricks, measuring off the miles between Nunawading—Mitcham—Ringwood. She must have been feeling very cold. The pinched little neck, where that scarf should have been, was all gooseflesh. Every now and then a shiver passed over her. Her cheeks and the tip of her nose had turned blue. Her feet, which just reached the floor, kept up a ceaseless tapping. But in the keen eyes and on the thin lips there was a smile of joyous anticipation. Both hands vanished under the scarf as if to give added protection over the last mile or two. I must have looked vastly interested, because when she caught me watching her she gave me a you-mind-your-business kind of stare plain enough to be embarrassing.

Ringwood. No, she didn't get off. But for all practical purposes it was the end of her journey. Everything favored her.

She must have known every stick and stone of that line, because, sitting with a firm grip on the catch, she shot the window up in the very instant that we hit the end of the platform. Out went her head and a frantically-waving hand. A long line of waiting passengers rushed past, slowed down, stopped. Mum was hidden from sight as the door opened, but I heard her urgent piping voice:

"Hi, Bill!"

People were getting off, others crowding around to get in. I got a glimpse of a good-looking young station-assistant, his startled face trying to see where the voice was coming from. He stepped forward and was blacked out at the other side of the doorway.

"Spare me days, Mum! Where've you been to?"

"In town. Here, cop this—it's a pie—it'll warm you up—"

"How's Elsie?"

"All right. How's Dad?"

"All right. How's Bubby?"

"Fit as a Mallee bull! Got another tooth—"

The changing passengers were clearing and I got a full-length view of him. He stood with one hand resting on the window-ledge, carrying on the conversation while casting hurried glances right and left along the train. His other hand held a small brown paper bag with a grease stain on it.

As the last doors banged he stepped backwards, one arm uplifted. The guard's whistle blew. The train tooted. We jerked into a start.

Mum's head was still at the open window.

"Ta-ta, Bill—eat it while it's hot!"

I thought I'd never seen a sweeter sight than that little woman sitting there with a happy smile as she wrapped the woollen scarf around her frozen neck.

Dear old Mum! To hell with the railways—eat it while it's hot!

New Books Worth Overlanding

A lively biography

FOUNDER OF A CITY

by Geoffrey Dutton

Colonel William Light (1786-1839), as the first surveyor-general of the colony of South Australia, founded Adelaide. Born in Penang, he became a soldier in the Peninsular Wars, then a sailor in the Egyptian Navy. His life was one of travel and adventure that culminated in a vision of order and greenery for a new city in a new land. Illustrated. 42/-

Fascinating history

THE DEBTOR'S WAR

by David S. Macmillan

A graphic account of the usury conflict between Scottish capitalists and the Australian government in the early 1840s. Illustrated. 30/-

Ideas for our theatre

THE MAKING OF AUSTRALIAN THEATRE

by Hugh Hunt

Here, in three strong-minded essays, are his ideas for the future development of theatre in Australia. The theatre can only become a burning experience, he says, through a fusion of five forces: playwrights, producers, designers, performers and audience. 12/6

For young Australians

CONQUERING THE CONTINENT

by C. H. Wright

This short history of Australia's colonial history is an imaginative blend of factual narrative and two-color illustrations drawn by J. H. Newnham. 11/6

Available at
all booksellers

Published by **CHESHIRE'S** 338 Little Collins St.,
Melbourne : MU 9532

★ ANNOUNCEMENT

ORDERS are now invited for

THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT — 1850-1907

Published by the A.B.S. for the Noel Ebbels Memorial Committee



Noel Ebbels

DOCUMENTS from contemporary sources collected by the late Noel Ebbels, edited by L. G. Churchward, M.A., Dip.Ed.

COVERING: Gold rush days; Chartism; Eight-Hour Day Movement; Trade Unions; 1890 Strikes; the Single-Taxers; Early Socialism; White Australia policy; Formation of the Labor Party.

OF PERMANENT VALUE to all who require additional information on Australia's vital formative years.

250 pp. 25/-

(20/- to A.B.S. members only)*

SEND NOW TO:

AUSTRALASIAN BOOK SOCIETY, 96 Phillip Street, Sydney,

Please sendcopy/s of THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT

* at members' concession price of £1 (post free)

I enclose the sum of £ : :

Mr./Mrs./Miss.....

ADDRESS.....STATE.....

* Please delete if not applicable.

THE WEDDING

AT the very end table—the furthest from the bridal group—sit Mr. and Mrs. Mukulsky. Even there they are conspicuous among the well-dressed guests, and the bride's mother, pecking nervously at her hors d'oeuvres, regrets once more her husband's obstinacy—Leonie's great day, and he should go and spoil it by inviting such misfits! Not a word against the reception, the delustrated satin wedding-dress, the studio photographs by the most expensive "artist"—and suddenly he insists on inviting his "relatives"—vague cousins of his mother, newly-arrived, green-horns, so out-of-place!

Mr. and Mrs. Mukulsky are fortunately unaware of the arguments and tears which preceded their invitation to the wedding. They sit placidly side by side, enjoying the superabundance of rich food, not understanding a word of the loud English spoken by their neighbors. They have been in Australia only three weeks, and have not yet learnt how commonplace new arrivals have become. It seems to them only fitting that Mr. Greel (anglicized, of course) should want his dear departed mother's second cousin and her husband present on such a joyous occasion. Dear Nathan, he seems to have done very well indeed in this new country—just look at his guests, how imposing they are! Remarkable how few of them speak their mother tongue—nothing but English. Mr. Mukulsky has twice attempted to start a conversation with his neighbor ("You remember me, Mrs. Rubin, I used to act together with your husband in the amateur theatricals back home"), but both times that lady stared at him blankly, and murmured that she had forgotten what little Yiddish she had ever known, "I'm sorry, I speak only English, if you will excuse me, Ophelia, pass me that plate of chulent please."

This is an upper-class wedding, a wedding of assimilated Jews. The Liberal rabbi wears a modern suit, and no beard, and fraternises easily with the wedding guests. When speech-time comes he refers to the bride and groom as his dear children, dear Leonie and Leonard, their souls, like their names, now linked together for ever, the parents so kind, so generous, such a beautiful atmosphere, such certainty of happiness . . . Mr. and Mrs. Mukulsky do not understand a word, but they have attended many weddings in their lifetime, and would probably be able to give a remarkably accurate account of what the rabbi says.

They are a little surprised at the brevity of the blessing, and a little shocked that so few of the men wear hats. (Mrs. Mukulsky is also privately of the opinion that the décolletage of some of the ladies is hardly becoming to pious Jewish matrons, but keeps this to herself.) They are bewildered by the noise and laughter, by the long, unintelligible speeches, by the cigarette smoke and the smell of wines and beer. Dear Nathan's friends seem quite foreign, really.

There is an accordionist who walks up and down between the tables, playing popular melodies and old Jewish folk songs. Some of the guests nostalgically hum the tunes, remembering the little village back home, the old Jewish school, and the pearly-white teeth of the girls long since dead.

Mr. and Mrs. Mukulsky welcome the music as a balm to their loneliness. Oh what a song that is, remember when they played it at that little cafe on the corner between the synagogue and the bakery? You were cross with me that day, Sarah, but the music won you over! Listen now, Sarah—Oh Jewish maiden, how beautiful you are, how good and fine and tender.

Everyone else falls silent. The bride's mother blushes, and tears of shame and rage come to her eyes. The bride giggles, the bridegroom frowns, the in-laws look down at their plates. At a better-class wedding one does not sing until much later in the evening, when the guests have mellowed a little. Even then, it is done decorously, not bellowed across the hall!

Mrs. Mukulsky, thinking the silence is in honor of her husband's deep baritone voice (he was for a time the cantor of the synagogue in their home town), beams at the shrivelled old man next to her. He's always singing—even in the midst of trouble, God protect us, he sings. Even in the ghetto, when we had eaten our last crust of bread, he would sit on the bench and sing and sing; praise the Lord, he said, and he will protect us as he did the Israelites of old. She sighs—perhaps God wanted more than song, that time. The old man does not reply. He understands, but is too tired to speak. He feels a certain sympathy for these green-horns—his own early days, thirty years back, are still vivid in his memory. They will suffer, he thinks, as I suffered, as we all have suffered. God will not help them, and man is too selfish. Suffering and suffering—such is a Jew's fate.

★

Mr. Mukulsky has stopped singing, and the accordionist is playing at another table. The atmosphere is normal again—laughter, jokes, wise-cracks, business troubles aired to uncaring friends. The bride and groom take the floor for the wedding waltz. Such a handsome couple, thinks Mrs. Mukulsky, God grant them a peaceful life and many children. Leonard whispers something to Leonie, and she laughs, happy as a bride, happy in her beautiful frock, slim straight figure, rubies glowing at her ears and throat. A blessing on them, sighs Mrs. Mukulsky, a blessing on their hearth and home.

Nathan Greel was at the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Mukulsky, many years ago. He thinks of it now as he watches his daughter and new son-in-law waltz gracefully round the polished wooden

floor of the reception hall. The dancing he remembers took place in the smallish room of a private house, where the men danced together on one side, and the women together on the other. The tables were spread with home-made delicacies, and he, a barmitzvah boy 13 years old—a real man—tried unsuccessfully to appear grown-up, at the same time handing down pieces of cheese-cake to his younger brother Morry, who sat contentedly under the table. He remembers how his mother caught them, and scolded them, and pushed them both into the next room, reserved for children. He smiles now, recalling how angry he was at being treated like a child.

He looks at the Mukulskys, and wonders again at the passing of time. Deceiving memory pictures a dark, slim girl and a handsome, bearded young man; reality—two middle-aged people, with grey hair and faces wrinkled, lined, like the faces of the very old. No other sign of their tragedy, no yellow star, no capital letters spelling out the word DEATH—death in ghetto, death in murder camp, death in agony—death of five loved children.

★

Mr. Mukulsky nudges Sarah and points to Miriam, Nathan's wife. What a lady he has there! Would you believe that when she was a child she used to run barefoot in the streets? Her mother, God rest her soul, never had enough food on the table for seven hungry children—widowed and struggling to earn a crust. But look at Miriam now—this is truly the promised land!

My friend, says the old man next to Mrs. Mukulsky, you are mistaken. The streets here are not paved with gold, and milk and honey are bought in shops, not provided free by God. Wait, wait till your back breaks over a machine, till you sweat in summer and freeze in winter; wait till you are spurned in the street for a Jew and a foreigner, and your children laugh at you for your broken English. This is no promised land! Here we eat the bitter fruit of exile!

Mr. Mukulsky is amazed, but not shaken. God will provide, he says. We are not afraid of work, and we seek no gold, only peace in our remaining years.

There is no peace on earth, says the old man.

Bah, such talk! Mrs. Mukulsky is flushed from anger. Look at those two, the newly-weds. What are you speaking—a curse on their wedding-day? If there is no peace here, then where, in God's name, can we live at rest? Our children have been murdered, our house destroyed, our whole past burnt away, and now you tell us that there is more suffering to come! May your words turn bitter in your mouth, for such a prophecy.

Sarah, Sarah! Mr. Mukulsky is quieter. Friend, let us not disturb the harmony of this day. We have come here seeking new life, and we shall find it. Listen to the music—it is full of God's grace. Sarah, celebrate this night with me—dance the wedding dance!

And Mr. and Mrs. Mukulsky, hands joined by a cloth, as is proper, step onto the polished floor and dance.

BOOKS OF CURRENT INTEREST

TREASON CAGE, by Sampson (illus.). The story of the arraignment of 91 Africans, black and white, on trumped up charges of sedition. The beginning in 1958 of the official apartheid policy that ended in today's massacres. Price 26/- (1/5).

TRANSVAAL EPISODE, by Harry Bloom. The story of a typical African shanty-town, officially known as a Location, that shows the real state of affairs in the life of African natives. Price 7/6 (11d.).

OLD AFRICA DISCOVERED. Basil Davidson tells of the ancient civilisations of Africa; a book for those interested in anthropology and archeology. Price 34/9 (1/5).

PROFESSIONAL EMIGRES, by Miklos Szabo, former official of the Hungarian Smallholders' Party. The inside story of the American sponsored uprising; the shocking fate of thousands of Hungarian refugees; the white slave traffic in Hungarian girl refugees; the wholesale swindling of money sent from abroad (including Australia) by fascists, criminals and former landowners.

THE SLAVES OF THE COOL MOUNTAINS, by Alan Winnington, the first European to visit the Norsu people, a primitive community of slaves and slaveowners living in a remote mountain area in Yunnan Province. 26 photographs; 224 pp. Price 37/3 (1/2).

INTERNATIONAL BOOKSHOP PTY. LTD.
57 Little Bourke St., Melbourne, C.1

DID YOU KNOW?

The collected verse of some of Australia's most outstanding poets is still in print—and selling at low prices set years ago when these works were printed.

A FEW COPIES ONLY

Collected Poems of John Shaw Neilson 18/6

Collected Poems of Bernard O'Dowd 15/-

Poems by Furnley Maurice
(Frank Wilmot) 7/6

Purple and Gold, Collected Poems by
Frank S. Williamson, 10/6

Available through Booksellers

LOTHIAN PUBLISHING CO. PTY. LTD.

**1 FLEMING PLACE,
MELBOURNE, C.1**

TOM FARLEY



TOM Farley, up to his knees in sheep
By the drafting yard, moves in a red fog
Of summer dust; moves, bent, in a rhythm deep
As the seasons, his hard-soft hands
Holding gentle conversations with his dog.

Tom Farley on his mid-north run
Has a face as fresh and kindly as his sheep;
Wears an old felt hat with its brim full of sun,
Sees the waves of wool move as soothingly as sleep.

Tom Farley lives a life of moving sheep:
Sheep flowing down the slopes
In broad falls
Or unwinding slowly like slack ropes
From knots at dams;
Cataracts of sheep in flood down ledges
Leaping and bucking in angles and edges,
Tossing up like flotsam the horns of rams;
Sheep held in the hollows and valleys
In friendly lakes rippling gently in the sun
On Farley's run.

And Tom, sometimes caught in the rucking tide
Of backs, feels them break against him,
Carry him forward in their jostle and surge
Till, fingers crooked deep in wool, he wades wide
To the fence and at last stands free
Like a tired surfer plodding from the sea.

But Tom finds himself most deeply once a year
When the sheep-dog trials come to dare his dog...

Then, by riddled stump or fallen log
He sucks his pipe and—eyes alight,
Though ringed by the crowsfeet treading round
their hollows—
Sums up the sheep and the brain of the dog that
follows;

But when Tom and his noiseless shadow slip
Onto the oval green where the renegade ewes
Fidget and shift, people pity the others' chances
For these two are always surer, a little faster,
Fluid with the knowing talk of nods and glances—
A spiritual union of the dog and master.

Tom Farley and his dog, they say, will wipe
The field—so much at one in paddocks, yards and
races

That folk would hardly be surprised
Some day to see them interchange their places—
See the dog stand up to fill his briar pipe,
And old Tom, dropping to the turf behind the flock,
Creep stealthily with feints and cunning graces
And, nose to the ground, sink his teeth in a
lagging hock.

COLIN THIELE.



The Bather

Though meek he has a refuge.
Not heeding jetsam-lives
Spread like weed and wreckage,

He walks towards the waves
That fall, extend and feel
Up to the children, wives

And dead men at a vigil.
He must undress. He stands
Upon a lonely towel

Of blue and this portends
A ritual that's done
With passion, and with hands,

Till he is flesh. The sun
That stares would punish him . . .
But look! the sea's begun

Her coquetry with foam
Like eyes that won't reprove,
And he will dive and swim
Till lost within his love.

R. A. SIMPSON.

"The Walk Along the Beach" is the title chosen by Mr. R. A. Simpson of Melbourne for his first book of poems, to be published shortly by Edwards & Shaw. Mr. Simpson's poetry has been widely praised both in Australia and overseas, and a special subscription edition will be available at £1. Orders should be sent to Mr. Simpson at G.P.O. Box 1386M, Melbourne, C.1.

HINTERLAND

A Comment by David Martin

YOU ask about National Culture; you say we must defend it. Well, certainly we must. Though, secretly, I believe that culture is something one lives or doesn't live, makes or doesn't make, enjoys or ignores, is or refuses to be a part of. More or less like life itself. Still, one can defend life, after all.

Of course, culture is national: Australian culture isn't just like Afghan culture but, there again, in the deepest sense a cultured Australian is much like a cultured Afghan—and both could be mechanics, fishermen or what-have-you. I don't think anybody has ever successfully defended his native culture by being defence-conscious, not even against a wealthier and worse or more aggressive foreign culture. Though that doesn't mean one should stand aside and let things drift. More universities, more literary grants, more music for the people: yes! We've got to have it and fight for it.

But as a literary magazine—how?

Not by rehashing again and again the well-known fundamentals of the democratic tradition until they start running out of our ears. That's neither education nor defence but lack of imagination and a weariness of the spirit. Plain fundamentalism.

Nor by reactively yelling "yes" every time someone else compulsively yells "no". Some fellows throw a fit each time a writer in *Quadrant*, *Prospect*, or some other magazine proves to his satisfaction that the democratic tradition is a literary myth. For neither the yell-yes nor the yell-no proves anything. A good, sappy, racy Australian story (and it doesn't have to be all that terribly Australian either) defends the tradition because it makes it.

Honorable memorials are no good. A war memorial establishes only that the dead are dead and that the living have somehow to find a place for them. Quite a few of our "democratic tradition" proclamations are such memorials. We protest too much. National culture is not an "issue" like decent pensions for the old; if you look at it squarely it isn't an "issue" at all. It is far too embracing for that. A young country must cherish its old homesteads but it is more important to build new ones. And the most important thing of all is the creativeness, the act of building. Not the stones.

Some people have a bad conscience and feel they've neglected their patriotic or social duty if they permit an opportunity to pass without striking a full blooded blow for National Culture, and they hammer everybody who doesn't join in right away. Still it's an easy way of fighting a war.

★

THE movement of culture goes by periods, more than by social systems and by geography.

How is it that many aspects of Soviet culture resemble American so much more closely than, say, French or English? The *New Yorker* is not a European, the *Moscovite* is. Of course, one of the reasons is emulation and rivalry: one always tends to become a little like the thing one resists, fights, wishes to surpass. But that's only one of

the reasons. You don't have to have a weak nation for its culture, or its civilisation if there's a difference, to be influenced by another's.

Have you seen Soviet documentary films lately? Noted how Russian motor-car design, grille, tail-fin and all, resembles American, and never the quieter lines of the French or English designers?

Have you seen the Moscow Ice Revue—girls dressed in penguin costumes skating about very gracefully? But the show could have been mounted and scripted in Hollywood, right down to the wriggling of the little, talented bottoms. I saw it the day Krushchev condemned the can-can in Hollywood. That can-can, which I also saw, was less suggestive and less "American" than yon Ice Revue.

But, for all that, do they need a movement over there to defend Soviet culture against American? Some might think so but I don't. At least I don't think so in the way you might. Though I humbly imagine that if the U.S.S.R. bothered less about surpassing everything American it would not only surpass it much sooner and much more beautifully and lastingly, but would also all the better create those really new traditions which, because they spring from the heart of a people's whole experience, are the ones most worth defending.

Footnote: I know quite well why Soviet cars are like American in design. And why *Moscovites* enjoy this kind of ice ballet now, alongside *Petroushka*, *The Snow Queen* and all the others, with Uzbek, Tartar or Ukrainian accents. It doesn't always help to get stuck on correct explanations. To see a thing comes first.

★

I AM a New Australian. If this disqualifies me from the debate, so much the worse, but I doubt it.

I love the Australian stage because it's just getting lively. Yet, I didn't care for Vance Palmer's "Prisoner's Country" because, with all its high seriousness, it wasn't lively at heart and it set up a problem which only a playwright of genius could have put life into . . . that hackneyed emotional setting of a decomposing outback station, our own cold comfort farm. This is only worth a satire, nowadays. "Desire under the Elms" a *l'Australienne*, plus a half-caste girl and a soldier returning from the dead: stale ingredients. However you stir it with the national spoon it remains cold porridge.

You want the old fire and the old spirit—that part of Lawson!—but new themes, exciting ones. "Reedy River" and the lagerphone are all right, and Diamond deserves a medal, but I'm glad to see the off-stage masquerade coming to an end— young blokes dressing up like old shearers over and over again to have a good song.

In the field of the theatre, this is how I see the defence of Australian culture:

● Firstly, to write good plays on new themes with good amateur and professional companies to act them.

● Secondly, to take a leaf out of the German book and bring into being a permanent theatre, partly supported by the State and partly by the parents, for children: a theatre where Australian youngsters can see the classics. Among these youngsters are also tomorrow's writers and I want them to see some of the plays of de Vega, Moliere, Schiller, Chekhov, Hauptmann.

Come to think of it, aren't they in the national tradition, their own and ours?

THE LAW OF THE LAND



CODY didn't notice the black car. It kept a little way behind him. He came out of the Chinese cafe and tried to walk straight along the footpath. There was no one about, it was easy. He knew he'd had too much to drink and he knew he should be going home. The grog had got a hold of him. That's what Myra said. She said he couldn't do anything once the grog had got a hold of him and he oughtn't to drink at all because he was always going to have just one and it was all right if he did have just one but as soon as he had more than one it was on. He knew he should be going home to Myra but the Chinese meal had just made him thirsty again. His mate Joey had gone home when they left the pub at ten o'clock. Joey had some sense. He knew he wasn't showing much sense but it was too late now. There was a pub up on the other side of the railway line where you could get a drink after ten o'clock if they knew you. He'd been there once and they might remember him. He came out of the Chinese cafe and started to move carefully along the street, his head up, looking straight ahead. He wasn't drunk but there was just enough grog in him to make him move carefully and put his feet straight.

The black car pulled up beside him and two policemen got out. Two steps and he found one on either side of him and hands gripping his arms. Cody, startled, jumped a bit and tried to spin round and throw a punch but didn't get started. They had this grip on him. But when he tried to hit out, one of them gave him a sharp crack on the ear and Cody's head rattled. By the time he'd finished shaking his head the strong arms had lifted him off the ground and Cody was in the car. A door slammed and the car shot away.

The driver was grinning. Cody was in the back seat with a cop on each side of him, but he knew the driver was grinning.

"Where you taking me?" he said. His throat was very thick from the beer. Phelgm caught in it as he asked them. It made him cough. One of the cops laughed and slapped him hard on the back a few times.

"Choke up, chicken," said the cop, pretending to help Cody clear his throat. But they were pretty hard slaps.

Cody managed to stop coughing.

The car had turned a corner and was now going up the hill beside the railway line. It turned left, after a few blocks, and was in a main street. Cody, blinking through eyes watered over from the coughing, looked out at a street he'd walked down hundreds of times in an ordinary way in his ordinary life. He felt now like a kid in a dream, watching the everyday world but kept

from it, wanting to yell and not able to. Another turn left and the car was heading back down another slope towards the part of town they'd come from, along another one-way street. Then, between blocks, it turned into a narrow lane next to a tall plum-colored building, and Cody didn't ask again where they were taking him.

His head was still down, but his eyes had cleared now and he was watching everything. He tried to get his brain going. He knew he had between now and the time the car stopped to sort out what he should do. That wasn't long, only a few seconds. What had he heard about this sort of thing? What did they do?

A ten bob fine. Something like that. But what should he do, that's what he began to think. What should a man do? They couldn't do anything to him. He was not drunk. He was just an ordinary citizen walking along the street, minding his own business. What did they think they had on him?

He thought a peculiar thing. In the books and magazines, if anybody was drunk and something like this happened to them, it always said: "Suddenly So-and-So was no longer drunk. In a flash his head cleared and he had never been so sober." And deep, way back in his throat somewhere, he grunted. He wished he was like that. But his brain was slow, his body was heavy, his mouth was thick and every limb seemed to weigh twice as much. He knew he had to think what to do, but his concentration kept sliding away. He couldn't focus his thoughts. He couldn't find any energy. He felt tired.

The car pulled up and they dragged him out. There was a light over the door. They held him tightly and went inside.

First they sat him on a bench. His head wanted to fall forward. He made himself sit up and look about him.

On the bench was an old man with a dirty beard, dribble-stained. His clothes were wrinkled; he

had only a couple of teeth. A smell of metho came from him. There was another smell in the air. Cody couldn't place it and soon didn't notice it. Next to the old man was a bodgie kid in jeans and a black sweater with gold thread through it. His lips were held very tight, hard and surly. There was a cut down his cheek and blood still oozing from it. His big, kid's eyes moved restlessly, watching everything. He sat very still and looked very bored except for the eyes. He was scared. At the end of the bench was a New Australian, Italian probably, in tight grey trousers and a hang-out shirt with horizontal black-and-white stripes. He looked as though he had been drinking, this Italian, but he wasn't drunk.

"Like me," thought Cody.

★

AT the desk a big cop was writing things in a book and talking on the phone. Somewhere else, from behind a partition, a speaker kept humming and a voice talked from it and at it—a two-way radio to the patrol cars, thought Cody. One of the cops who had brought him in sat on the near side of the big cop's desk. Cody waited for something to happen. Nothing happened. He got up and went to the desk. His legs weighed very heavy and shook as he moved.

The cop who had brought him in was trying to fix a key on a key-ring and looked up as Cody approached. "Sit down," he said.

"Listen . . ." Cody heard himself start out pretty well. "What am I supposed to be here for?"

"What do you think?" said the cop. "Sit down." "I want to know what I'm here for."

Through the thickness of the beer haze, Cody could feel something in him beginning to spark. Cody had a quick, hot temper. When he was wild he could hit. He started to feel wild.

"Get back to your seat, chum," said the cop.

Cody didn't like this "chum" business. He took a step forward towards the cop and said: "Now, listen—" and his hand went up to point what he meant home to the cop. This was wrong. Another cop was suddenly standing next to the first one. And the first one stood up and put the key-ring in his pocket.

"What did you say?" The cop took a step at Cody and started digging a finger into Cody's shoulder. "What did you say?"

Cody didn't like the finger-poking either. His hand came up again and brushed the cop's aside. "Get out—" he said, and that was all he said.

The second cop moved in and cracked him hard on the ear. Cody's head jerked back, he lost balance. Both cops moved towards him, something connected with his stomach and something with his ear again. They liked going for that ear, he thought. He could actually think as he fell back against the old man and the bench. The cops stood looking down at him. The old man was annoyed and pushed him away. He fell back into his old place on the bench.

One of the cops said: "We'll call you when we want you." They walked back to the desk.

Winded, Cody doubled up and straightened out again on the bench. He felt bad, stomach turning over and throwing the beer around. His head buzzed. His mouth was sour.

The old man was getting cranky and mumbled to him about behaving himself. The bodgie kid, bright-eyed, was watching him with a kind of respect. Cody's insides started to swim.

"OK," said the big sergeant, sitting at the desk. The two cops came over and lifted him up. They began to move him towards the desk.

He tried to stop it but he couldn't.

He vomited. The cops moved back quickly, noses wrinkled in distaste. Someone called out and a uniformed cop with a bucket and mop came over and started on the mess.

Now his head stayed down. They dragged him to the desk and he stood, unsupported, his legs shaking a bit. But the vomiting had cleared out the muck and the haze and he felt lighter and cleaner.

"And I suppose you reckon you're not drunk?" said the sergeant behind the desk.

"Of course I'm not drunk." Cody surprised himself. He couldn't lift his head but he could talk. His voice was thick. "I've had a few beers but I'm not drunk."

The sergeant nodded, disinterested. "Wipe your mouth," he said.

Embarrassed, Cody felt in his pocket for a handkerchief, took it out, wiped the vomit away from his lips and chin. There was mess spattered down the front of his sports coat and some on his trousers. He made a dab at these but stopped when the cops started to laugh at him.

The laughing more than anything else made him get a grip on himself. Managing to straighten up he stared down at the sergeant.

They went through some questions.

"Where'd you get him?"

"Johnson Street."

"What was he doing?"

"Drunk and disorderly."

Cody's temper flared again. He yelled: "I was walking along the street minding my own business—"

"He was drunk and disorderly."

"I wasn't!" He could hear his own voice, a bit like a little kid's, protesting against parents' injustice. Mixed feelings—fury, indignation—surged up in him. How could they say that? "I wasn't disorderly!" He looked at each of them quickly. Those on either side of him were grinning to themselves. Behind the desk, the sergeant looked bored. Cody addressed the sarge. "You ask anyone."

They all thought this was funny.

"Yeh?" said the sergeant. "Who?"

"Well . . ." He stopped. There hadn't been anyone around.

A long, slow breath seemed to come out of him, a quietening down, a levelling-off. They'd got him. He'd been fighting back without thinking about it. Now for the first time he began to realise. They'd got him.

No witnesses.

OK. He breathed quiet another minute, thought a bit.

OK. He'd have another go.

"I wasn't causing any trouble. No one can say I was."

"No one?" The sergeant looked up at the cops who'd brought him in.

Cody said: "I'd testify. I'd say just what happened. I was walking along a street, I'd testify—"

"Where?"

"In court. I'd testify in any court."

"Who said anything about a court?"

Cody shut up and listened.

"Who'd believe you anyway?"

"Why shouldn't they?" The temper sparked again.

"No witnesses," said the sergeant.

"Well, it'd be my word against yours—" He stopped. The words petered out. He felt foolish.

"All right," said the sergeant. "Let's get on with it." He had a notebook and a pencil in front of him.

What time had he come out of the cafe? He was obviously under the influence and had been drink-

Claustrophobia

Once, while eternal ticking afternoon
Filed me and the red-ribboned correspondence
On dusty shelves in Prince Alfred Siding's
Limbo of dead ambitious clerks,
I heard a buzzing like a hundred bees,
Felt somehow that their hive was in my throat
Or also that threat of strangulation stemmed
From the repressive memory of an image:
The hanged and undrowned mariner of Coleridge
Crucified to a fallen angel, over him
A buzzing like a thousand flies, upon him
The sombre scrutiny of the unliving
Crew of that dark immobile craft—
So leant my head against a grimy sill
Trying to breathe in chlorophyll and air
Through a broken pane, my own heart's bird
Stified within me, songless.

There were twenty
Men about me, here and there, not bothering
To breathe that afternoon, but not a one
Would lie down. So much for a system.

BRUCE BEAVER.

Inscriptions—Granite Belt

Round Stanthorpe, where the dust is pale
And straggling willows lean along
The creek, big apples marked with hail
But granite-hard, sell for a song.

And granite bulks in back-yards there,
Misshapen eggs denying birth,
Fruit littered by the savage air,
Bird-spotted, sterile, scars the earth.

On fruit-crops gleaned from fields of stone
Heaven's brand proclaims permission given.
Marking dead boulders for his own,
Man can but scribble ways to heaven:

Vote Lyell. I love you. Wrath of God.
God's choirs are silent. Paint-work sings,
Means more than hail, beats any bird:
Man's bigger, better spatterings.

JUDITH C. GREEN.

ing for some time—how long? Where was he going
when he came out of the cafe?

He didn't answer any of these questions. They
were addressed to him but the plainclothes man
gave the answers. But the last one made him think
of Myra for the first time. As soon as he'd thought
of her a few things fell into place in his mind.
At last he got into focus and remembered some
of the things you should do. Straightening up, he
tried a bit of dignity.

"I'm not answering anything," he said. "I want
to use the phone."

The sergeant looked very interested and put
down his pencil.

"Yes," he asked, very sympathetically. "And
who do you want to ring?"

"My lawyer," said Cody. He didn't have a lawyer
but he knew that always sounded good. And he'd
ring his mate Joey and get him to ring a solicitor
bloke he knew. It was quarter to eleven at night
but that didn't matter, a man's rights were involved
here. He watched to see how they took his answer.
He'd show the damn police they couldn't frighten
everybody the way they did these old metho addicts
and that lot. He was getting clearer in the head
now and he thought: "I'll show them I know they're
a lot of bluff."

The sergeant picked up the pencil again.

"You want to talk to your lawyer?" He grinned.
"They all say that."

Cody felt a slight cramping in the stomach but
he was still confident.

The sergeant talked amiably. "Blokes who have
not got two bob to their name reckon they're gonna
call their lawyer."

"You think I haven't got a lawyer?" Cody made
this extra-tough so they'd believe him. But it

came out sounding big-mouthed and empty. He
felt more uncomfortable than before.

"I don't care whether you've got a lawyer or
not," replied the sergeant. "You can't use the
phone."

"Why not?"

"Because we won't let you."

"I'm a bloody citizen—" Cody was yelling again.
He'd leapt forward and in the same moment the
two cops had his arms good and tight. But he'd
got closer to the desk and was glaring into the
face of the sergeant, whose voice stiffened up now.

"You watch your language when you're talking
to us."

"I want to use the phone," shouted Cody, blood
running hot in his head.

"You're not going to."

"You can't stop me."

"Don't make me laugh."

"I'll—I'll sue you."

They thought this was funny, too.

"First thing Monday morning I'll get my lawyer
and we'll see—we'll see how the newspapers like
it—the police won't let an ordinary citizen use
the phone when they get him on a charge they
can't back up—" He was warmed up now. "We'll
see how the newspapers like that!"

★

NO one seemed alarmed. They waited very
patiently until he'd finished. When he quiet-
ened the sergeant, hardly looking up, nodded to
the other two. Within a second the grip was on
him again and they were half-pushing, half-
dragging him along a corridor. The quick move-

ment brought waves of liquor nausea up again. He kept his head down and his mouth shut.

A familiar smell was all around him. It had been there all the time, he'd noticed it before, now it got stronger. Keys and doors clattered, there was a sudden noise which he realised had been there all along too though he'd hardly registered it. The noise came from many voices. There were growls and shouts and screams and laughter and thickly-mouthed obscenities.

They had put him in a cell. Cops stood outside. It was a communal cell, fairly large. But not all that large. It held—Cody counted them later—forty men. Most were like him—Saturday night drunks. Except that they were really drunk. Faces swam about him, bodies pushed him and fell away again. The noise never stopped.

He recognised the smell. It was vomit. At least vomit came through strongest, but there was everything else—the hot, sick smell of a lot of sweaty, dirty bodies in a small space—stale beer and thick, sickly plonk fumes—a bit of metho. again.

Feeling his way back against a wall, he looked around the cell. There were old men, young men, New Australians, bodgies, homosexuals. All were drunk or on the way, some no farther on the way than he was. Huge hulks of men numb or stupid with the grog. Queers, looking about terrified or screaming at each other. Pensioners silly from cheap plonk on empty stomachs. New Australians looking sulkily or nervously at the mob around them. Tough twenty-year-olds in black leather jackets and jeans. Drunks danced with each other, spewed on each other. In the corner three or four men were in a fight.

Sometimes a cop or two would come in and go over the troublemakers, the fighters, the man with his fly open. Bucketfuls of water would be emptied over the messy parts of the floor and anyone who was in the way.

Cody suddenly hit the limit. Three cops were pushing out after cleaning up a fight. Cody went for them. Suddenly he was shouting, and then he was screaming. He could hear his own voice, screaming with all the colossal rage that had built up in him breaking out of him. He didn't know what he meant to do, but he had to do something, had to break out, had to yell—and hit.

They hit back. Three of them worked him over. They would hit not with their fists but with the base of the palm, the hard part just above the wrist. It was quite a technique. They would connect with his chin over and over again. And the side of his nose. And the ear.

No one took any notice of this. The fighters started fighting again. The drunks screamed and swore and danced. The cops worked him over for a while and then left him. He fell back against the wall, his legs went on him, he slid all the way down and sat there, legs weaving about him. His head slumped forward. He wanted to pass out but he couldn't.

★

GRADUALLY the pain went away. He felt his ear but hurt his fingers more than the ear when he touched. The ear buzzed and thumped and he couldn't hear properly. He looked down at the fingers. They were grazed right across and swollen. He didn't remember how that happened. He went on feeling. His lips seemed to be cut and bleeding and starting to swell. His nose had an almost electric-shock tingle through it. His teeth seemed to be permanently locked from all the chin-bashing. Getting his mouth open finally, he felt about gently with his tongue. There was

blood, which he'd tasted already. And one tooth seemed out of place and hanging. A cold jangle went right through him as the tongue touched a nerve.

He was feeling very stiff and couldn't move or hold his head up. He stayed propped against the wall. He didn't know what to do.

★

They kept Cody there for four hours. He would get his strength and spirit back and struggle to his feet and stumble to the door and yell to be let out. He was strong and big and made the place shake with his rage. They would come and work him over some more and leave him to fall wherever he was. And gradually the fury died out of him. What use was it, he woke up to it at last, where was it getting him?

Some men went, were let go or taken somewhere else, he didn't know what. Many stayed, getting sicker and quieter or more sober and noisier or just sitting or standing still, looking about them, dazed, not knowing where they were or what was happening. Sometimes fresh loads of arrests came in and were thrown into cells nearby, more giggling or terrified homosexuals caught in toilets or trams-sheds, more old men, metho merchants, drunks. And there were others, a bit under the weather, heavy with grog, but dazed and uncomprehending, not knowing why they were there at all, men like himself.

At nearly three in the morning they let Cody go. He didn't know why he was kept this length of time, thought it must be because he kept abusing and fighting them. He was hustled out to the desk and fined and paid the fine on the spot. There was no talk of appearing in court. It seemed that when he walked out it would be all over.

The sergeant said: "Maybe you'll have more sense next time."

Cody felt tired, very tired and there was in him a feeling that if he had to open his mouth to talk he might cry like a kid. But he managed to say, thick through his throbbing teeth and lips: "Next time I what?"

"Next time you're drunk. Just keep out of our way."

Cody didn't even want to say that he hadn't been drunk. He turned and walked out.

★

THE night air was still and cold. It made him feel first sick again and then slowly better. A slight mist hung against the blue street lights. He couldn't remember where there was a public phone, but finally got himself to Town Hall station. He wanted to ring Myra to say he was all right and not to worry, he was on his way home. At Town Hall a couple of cops moved slowly along the street towards him. For a few panicky seconds he thought it was going to start all over again. But he saw a cab and ran towards it and fell into it.

He sat in the back seat and didn't talk. He wanted to talk, wanted to spill it all out to the first one who'd listen, wanted to give words and sense to the confusion of feelings inside him. But as soon as the words began to form in his head he felt small, ashamed. It sounded stupid, nothing at all.

Half an hour later he was home. The lights were on, Myra was standing on the verandah. He came slowly up the path to her. She looked down at his face and he saw the fear, the sick look come over her.

He said: "Have you got some money to pay the cab?"

A Tale Out of School

Sunday he slept late and all day Sunday he ached. They talked about it over and over, tried it from every angle. Myra annoyed him a bit at first.

She said: "Are you sure you weren't drunk?" Or: "Are you sure you didn't do anything wrong?" And she looked doubtful for a while, until the same story told over and over gradually reassured her. Wild at first because he'd been out on the grog, she soon got as furious and hurt and indignant and mixed-up as he had been. She said there must be something they could do.

They went down the street to the local doctor. They rang Joey and talked to him. They rang Myra's brother and he put them on to a solicitor. By Sunday night they were fighting mad and convinced that the police who—it was clear from that cell—did this all the time, weren't going to get away with it for once.

On Monday morning he went straight to the solicitor. The interview lasted less than twenty minutes.

"I understand how you feel, Mr. Cody," said the solicitor. "But I'm afraid I wouldn't like to touch it."

"It's a — very delicate business, trying to beat the law." He seemed just faintly amused at something.

"But you're a solicitor, aren't you? You're supposed to want to see justice done and all that. Was that justice?"

"It's not easy, Cody." The solicitor temporarily dropped his smooth manner and talked more man-to-man.

"What do you mean?"

"I've got a living to make same as everyone else. I want as far as possible to—keep on good terms with the police. I think you'd find most men in my position would feel the same."

Cody could find nothing to say. He sat awhile, holding his hat. He looked out of the window and then back at the solicitor.

"But—" He stopped. It was all bubbling inside him as it had on Saturday night. Still he couldn't get it out clearly. He tried to find all the protests he and Myra had talked over so loudly, easily, yesterday.

"But—what did I do?" he said finally. "I had a few in, all right, but I was just walking along a street—"

"You know, everyone knows, how they pick people up, especially on a Saturday night."

"But—" Suddenly it was too much for him again and he was on his feet. His ear was buzzing again. He pointed to it. "But I told you what the doctor said. I got a busted ear-drum. They did that. They busted my ear-drum. And look at my nose, and my tooth, look at me! Can they do that to anyone and get away with it?"

The solicitor shrugged. "Resisting arrest."

"Oh." It cooled him down instantly. He knew, cold and steady all the way through him, as he had known on Saturday night, that they'd got him.

Again the slight amusement seemed to be in the solicitor's eyes, a smile there, way back. "Anyway, Mr. Cody," he said, "are you sure—" there was a peculiar little twist of the head, "are you sure you've told me everything?" Cody didn't know what he meant. "You were as innocent in the affair as you say you were?"

Cody remembered Myra, Myra's doubts, Myra's questioning. That was it, then. Once it was you

Through half a dozen dipping cigarettes
Netted sunshine steams the messy slop
Of tealess cups and sandwich wraps,
Of Pepsi bottles and endless shop.

In this final fraction of mid morning
The givers of knowledge and guides to beauty
Shut from the wilderness of youth echoing
Revive for another tour of duty.

Jim Thickwood strips his car once more,
Old Fergo intones of discipline and respect
To young Ron—all ears as the staff loafer
Sticks old daggers in the deputy's back.

The Sportsman, chubby and well done muscular
Caresse a smile beneath his stubble brow;
Jaws cease, table attends the raconteur
Knowing something good is coming now:

"I was sitting there when Molly comes in"—
Covert glances with heads bent low
Where their favorite sips tea and innocence,
Old as the Department, frigid as snow—

"In she comes off playground, down on anyone,
'Who is to relieve me, Mr. Hill?' she says. In a
flash

'But deadpan,' I reply. 'Well, Miss Davidson,
'Here you are expected to relieve yourself!'"

The catchline does it, a roar of humor
Tilts all the heads up around the room,
Our athlete in side-splitting grandeur
Rises, the moment is to depart upon.

All solitary sitters and the women are much
Vexed to be out of such transcendent fuss,
"She didn't like it, either"—the finishing touch
As the bell rings out for all of us.

KEITH J. FREE.

against the police, no one ever quite believed you weren't somehow in the wrong.

He was dazed on this cold, sober Monday morning, he was dazed again. "But they beat me up," he said.

The solicitor shrugged. "I told you—"

"But—" Cody suddenly remembered how alone and cut off from the normal world he had felt there that Saturday night as he had asked to speak to someone. "They wouldn't let me get in touch with anyone. I couldn't have even rung my own wife. God almighty, hasn't a man got any rights? They wouldn't let me use the phone."

"They never do," smiled the solicitor. "Any other man taken into custody—even on a murder charge—may use the phone to contact someone. But a drunk—"

"I wasn't drunk!" bawled Cody for the last time.

"A man on a drunk charge," amended the solicitor, "is not permitted to use the phone because he's not—responsible. I'm afraid—" He gave another little shrug. "I'm afraid there isn't anything you can do."

A View of The Beach

The Distant Electronic Brain,
Geared to remark the fall of sparrows,
Cried: Holy radioactive arrows!
A whole damn planet's down the drain!

Think what I'll have to add, compute;
A sparrow, or a man, was real,
But on that scale you lose the feel
For living sorts . . . I'll play my flute.

Life is a fragrant stuff, when left
In younger stages, moored, amoebic,
Like seaweed on the plant Phoebic;
But since it formed that creature, deft

But loveless, dreaming some Almighty
Power of its own design, and using
Science for its own doom, I'm losing
Heart for my work . . . put on my nightie.

A whole damn planet down the drain!
So densely peopled by mankind
You'd think, among them, there'd be Mind . . .
But they were murderously vain—

They looked in mirrors, only showing
A segment of the human breed;
The rest were called a dangerous weed
The masters had to keep from growing.

Out, candle! . . . but there could be more
Dead worlds, unless life learns more sense;
All right, I'll tot up the expense,
The items, and the total score.

AILEEN PALMER.

★

There is Anguish in Knowing

There is anguish in knowing that I cannot reach
you.

This kiss can break no barrier of bone,
I know no ease of language that might teach you
In that last place where we must stand alone.
Only in bitter struggle do we grow wise,
Knowing no quarter, and no compromise.

There is anguish in knowing that I cannot break
you.

Beyond this wall of flesh you stand intact.
Ah! with what fingernails of hate I'll rake you,
Till love has ground its teeth on sour fact.
Eyes, mouth and hands made blind, compassionate,
Beyond the sting of love, the burr of hate.

There is anguish in knowing we can never meet
In this small room where we are most alone,
And yet the grass against the root grows sweet,
And yet the flesh tastes sweeter at the bone.
Four walls of love and sunlight on the floor,
And the Judas kiss that closes the last door.

DOROTHY HEWETT

On a Christmas Tree in The Commonwealth Bank

The Christmas tree does grow, oh,
High in the Commonwealth Bank.
The Christmas tree grows high, oh,
And the manager we must thank.

Adorned with florins silver, oh,
At its base are pennies brown;
The tellers sing loud Noel,
The comptometrists gather round.

The adding machines sing of child Jesus, oh,
Who on this day was born,
The wise men bring their interest rates,
Raised high on this lovely morn.

We oxen peer through the iron door,
We asses whinny and neigh:
We learn a little of holy things,
We silently kneel and pray.

All this for good Jesus' sake
In the bank on King William Street,
A Christmas tree as high as heaven
Glittering with money sweet.

MAX HARRIS.

★

Advice to a Young Poet

Scarcely bearded you must wait your turn,
Put down your banner of class-consciousness
And cool your versestocked fires lest they burn
Your novice fingers and leave you jobless, hopeless.

Pain, hunger and work are to be shunned,
Coast ahead lad, your time will surely come
When you can edit "Sport page" or "Where They
Sunned
On Saturday", ease up, act the deaf and dumb.

You have your beer, lad, the prospect of a war,
Of atom bombs, a lot of ashes and faceless heads,
There's adventure, the like of which you never saw,
Go on, write some spice about our newlyweds.

DENIS KEVANS.

★

The Hawk

Only the golden hawk
Flying nearest the sun
Looks with unblinking eye
Upon the blazing one.

Will not be tamed or trained
To a domestic plight,
His business is swift-winged,
Concerned with flight.

Then to be swift; to set
The target and fly high
And gaze upon the light
With an unflinching eye

Is how to move from where
Darkness prevails, despair
Shackles the heart to fear
Having no light to share.

LOUIS JOHNSON (N.Z.)

THE OVERSEER

AS I stepped out of the mixed train at the little wheat-belt siding I glanced up and down the platform to see if anyone was there to meet me. On relieving jobs in those Depression days one was usually met by a lean unshaven bloke, straight from the paddock, in work-stained clothes and heavy boots, who invariably said: "S'pose you're the new schoolie. Y're boarding at our place. The truck's over there." Later, on the way home, he'd add: "What these kids need is a firm hand. The last teacher was a woman and she let 'em run wild."

The only man on this platform looked more like the President of a suburban council than a struggling wheat-cocky. He was certainly dressed like one—dark blue suit, well-polished lace-up boots, gold watch-chain draped across a prominent waist-coat, and one of those stiff, winged collars above a gaudy tie tied in a broad knot.

He must have been surprised, too. I don't suppose he was used to seeing a teacher back out of the guards-van dragging a timid pointer bitch and tying her to the fence, or taking from the guard, in rapid succession, a suit-case, a gun-case, and what was unmistakably a carrying-box containing a ferret. However, he didn't express surprise. He "presumed", in a pompous voice, that I was the new teacher, introduced himself as the chairman of the school committee, and remarked that he would convey me to the farm where I was to board. I could hear disapproval in his voice. He led me past the great wheat-stacks, carrying a limp mail-bag and my case, which, I suppose, seemed the most respectable thing about me.

We didn't talk on the way. He made it plain without actually saying so that he didn't want the paintwork of his shiny new utility scratched, so I volunteered to travel in the back with the bitch. It gave me a better chance to look at the country and I noticed with approval the long stubbles, with a heavy undergrowth of the knotweed the quail love, and the frequent patches of stinkwort. We stopped at the post-office for ten minutes and then drove along a hard dirt road for a couple of miles, stopping every half-mile at a mail box. At last he drew up at a quite imposing farm house, a fairly new brick place with wide verandas, set among pollarded sugar gums. After introducing me to the widow who owned the farm, he refused a cup of tea and drove on to continue his mail run.

Mrs. Stacey, plump and grey-haired, seemed amused at the live-stock I'd brought although I had written asking her permission and warning her. Taking me into the big kitchen she plied me with tea and hot scones till I had to protest. She showed me my room which was large, airy and comfortable, and later took me out to Mick, the farm hand, who found me tools, nails, bird-wire and a couple of packing cases to make a kennel and a hutch.

After tea I wandered down to the old mud-brick house, the original homestead where Mick had his

quarters, for a yarn. He grinned when I mentioned the mail-man and referred to him as the Overseer. I had never heard this used as a nickname and guessed that he must be the ex-overseer of some big station; but as Mick gossiped on about what was apparently a favourite topic I began to get the picture.

Overseer was right. There didn't seem to be anything in the district that he didn't oversee. Post-master, store-keeper, mail-man, weigh-bridge operator, chairman of the school committee, president of the football and tennis clubs, elder of the church and superintendent of the Sunday School, he was in control of the lot. I decided I'd have to be careful, he was the type who'd want to run my life, too.

★

The school was only half-a-mile from Mrs. Stacey's farm and the twelve kids were the usual shy but reliable bush youngsters who could carry on the work of the school for half the day with little supervision. The parents were friendly and co-operative and I was welcome to shoot on any of the farms. There were plenty of quail in the stripped stubbles and the pointer was working up to field trial standard. My average crept up to twentytwo birds to the box of cartridges, which is good going.

Rabbits were plentiful and the little doe ferret never once stuck up. This made feeding the animals easy. I could get stale bread out from the town twice a week and Mick was milking a house cow which gave more than enough milk for the house. Rabbit skins, too, made a welcome addition to my salary, for those were the days when the Union went cap in hand to a Premier who had been leathered pretty often at school and had neither forgotten nor forgiven.

Good board, an easy school to run, friendly people, the best shooting I'd ever had, a few bob coming in on the side—it was my idea of Paradise. I'd forgotten that Eden also had its serpent.

The first two months passed pleasantly, the only annoyance being the constant urging from the Overseer, usually after church on Sunday mornings, to join the tennis club, to take a class at Sunday School, to come to prayer meeting. I was polite but firm in my refusals. Then, out of the blue, came a letter from the Department demanding to know why I had started school a day late after the vacation and threatening to deduct the whole vacation's pay if my reason was not satisfactory.

I was in trouble. I'd lost or destroyed the memo. from the Department which I was certain had instructed me to start a day late, the practice in remote schools. I wrote, explaining and hoping they would take my word for it. In reply came a curt note stating that my school was not classed as remote, that my explanation was unsatisfactory and that the salary paid me from January 1 to the day I had opened the school, the 29th, would be deducted from future cheques at the rate of ten shillings a week. I protested but it got me nowhere.

A week later I got to school at five to nine to find the District Inspector wandering about the garden. Everything was in order and the visit was from my point of view a great success. After writing the best report I'd yet had and complimenting me on the smooth running of the school he showed me the letter which had caused him to make a formal visit and report on a reliever.

It had been forwarded from the Department for action. Beside informing them of my late start it alleged an alarming collection of irregularities—late arrivals, early closings, extended lunch hours and a general failure to teach the children anything. It was signed by the Overseer.

It was a shock. I couldn't understand the mentality of the man. I couldn't see any reason why he should make up such a pack of lies and send it to my employers. I had done nothing to him that could possibly justify what he had tried to do to me. It was my first experience of the type of mind that lies behind racial discrimination and religious and political bigotry. The type that fears and mistrusts and hates the stranger, the one who holds opposing ideas, the man who is different and therefore evil, and strikes blindly at the cause of that fear and mistrust and hate. I was appalled.

My first reaction was to go and have a piece of him, but on reflection I decided to keep my mouth shut. His lies had done me no harm; the Inspector's report would see to that. The true statement in his letter had cost me eighteen pounds, but it was a true statement. I could hardly kick about it. The school had been advertised and the position filled so I would only be in the place for another month. The best thing I could do would be to chalk it up to experience and try to avoid the Overseer. It was no use having a row.

I kept out of his way but he started to ring me up every two or three days with complaints he said he had received, always from unspecified sources, about my work. I managed to keep a tight rein on myself and avoided an open break though my replies were curt.

★

ABOUT a fortnight before I was due to leave I had a long day's shooting and got back to the farm after dark. Mrs. Stacey was very fond of quail, now that I had shown her how to braise them wrapped in a piece of bacon, and my tea was waiting in the oven. Before eating I took a hurricane lantern, fed the pointer, and collected the ferret's food tin. In the flickering light of the lantern I couldn't have shut the hutch door properly, because, as I came back with the warm bread and milk, the little doe came dancing into the lantern light to meet me. I put down the tin of bread and milk and grabbed, but she scuttled off into the darkness. I searched with the lantern till after midnight, making chirping noises till my lips were sore, but could not find her.

I was up at daybreak next morning, which was Sunday, expecting to find dead hens all over the farm, but none were missing. Though I searched the farm-yard all day, even crawling under the gratings in the shearing shed, she was not to be found.

I heard no more of her until the Monday morning before I left. When I came in for breakfast after running the pointer, Mrs. Stacey told me that Mr. Summers, the post-master, wanted me to ring him. "H'm", I thought as I went to the phone. "What complaint is the Overseer going to tell me he's been sorry to hear, now?"

But he started off cautiously. "I hear you've lost a ferret," he said.

"Yes," I admitted, "I did. Last Saturday night." "Well," he raised his voice a little. "It's down here." Then he got excited and began to splutter. "D-d-do you know what it's done? It killed six turkey poults and the gobbler I bought a month ago. I paid ten pounds for that bird." He added, sternly, "You had better come and see me before school."

I went out to Mick. "Look, Mick," I said, "the Overseer says he's got my ferret down there and

it's killed six turkey poults and a gobbler. He wants me to go and see him before school."

"Yeah," said Mick, "If it's your ferret he'll make you pay for them and pretty high, too. Cut him down as much as you can and bring the turkeys back with you. They're yours if you pay for them. Take the old Ford, he'll have a shot at you for being late for school if you walk."

I put the carrying box in the Ford and drove miserably down the road trying to work out how much I was going to be slugged. I was still paying off the eighteen pounds and now it looked as if all my savings were gone. When I got to the Post Office the Overseer was there to meet me. "It is your ferret, all right," he said. "Yours was a buck, wasn't it."

"— Yes," I said, "Yes, — that's right. Mine was a buck."

"It's under a box in the engine shed," he said. "It's your ferret all right."

As we walked down to the shed he was working out the value of the turkeys aloud. It sounded as if I was up for at least thirty pounds.

We walked into the shed and he indicated a box on the floor. I lifted it up. My ferret was underneath.

"Yours was a buck?" he asked again.

"Yes," I said, no hesitation this time. "Mine was a buck. This one looks smaller than mine."

"Oh, it's yours all right." He was sure of it.

I stalked the ferret with exaggerated care as it ran about the floor. "I think it's too small," I said, and pounced.

"Ah, look," I said, and held it up. "This is a doe, and in season, too. Might have come from anywhere, miles away perhaps."

"It's not yours?" He was taken aback.

"No," I said, "It's not mine. I told you mine was a buck."

He looked his disappointment.

"What are you going to do with this one?" I enquired.

"As it's not yours I'll have to destroy it," he said shortly.

"Well, look," I said, "I'm light a ferret. It's a shame to kill a young doe like this. Give her to me, it'll save you the trouble of killing her."

He agreed and I thanked him, put the doe in the carrying box, and hurried off to school.

★

I said a final goodbye to the Overseer on Friday afternoon. There seemed to be a dawning suspicion in his eyes as he watched me hand into the guard a timid pointer bitch, a suit-case, a gun-case and swing on board myself with a carrying box, obviously containing a little doe ferret, slung from my shoulder.

SPECIALIST IN AUSTRALIANA

KENNETH HINCE

Secondhand and Out-of-Print Books

Now Selling (and Buying!) Good Books.

Mail Enquiries Welcome.

Hicks Arcade, 377 Bourke St., Melbourne

Telephone: 67-2484, After Hours: WB 5372



Mary Durack Miller

FATHER WORMS: MISSIONARY-SCIENTIST

FEW besides scientists and students are likely to come upon a recent volume entitled "Australian Mythological Terms: Their Etymology and Dispersion", or to realise its significance as another link in a long chain of research into the mystery of Aboriginal life and antiquity. Fewer still will realise the significance of the writer himself or know that to the full blood natives of Kimberley he is "Ibala"—learned elder of the tribes into whose keeping they have entrusted so many of the secrets and sacred emblems of the past—the man who rescued their legends and languages from oblivion.

When, in 1957, Ernest Ailred Worms was invited to address an anthropological congress in Philadelphia, attended by delegates from as far afield as China, Japan, India, Africa and Soviet Russia, many must have been unprepared to find that he wore the black suit and clerical collar of a Pallotine missionary priest. Some may also have been surprised that the cool detachment and meticulous accuracy they had admired in his scientific writings had after all gone hand in hand with a burning faith in the nature and destiny of man:

Every small candle light of our research reflects more brightly the nobility of the human creature, the unity of the human race with its immense intellectual capacities . . . All sciences should lend their reverence to mankind, their admiration to the great natural law before which the research worker bends more deeply with every new glimmer of discovery . . . We should try to bring what we have found systematically to the knowledge, not only of our serious colleagues, but to the world in general . . .

★

It has been my privilege to know this remarkable man almost from the time he came, as a young priest, from his native Germany to the Kimberley district and to have followed, within the limitations of the unqualified, the unfolding of his life's work. From his headquarters at Beagle Bay mission near Broome he travelled about the country administering to his scattered flock and also, in the casual garb of the field worker, gathering the languages, law and legends of the dwindling tribes. Although well entrenched in the affections of station people of all denominations, his interest in Aboriginal culture was regarded as somewhat eccentric and his approach to the natives particularly odd for one of his calling. A manager, having one day escorted him to the station camp, was heard to observe in real bewilderment: "Funny sort of missionary that! Instead of spouting the Bible at them he's letting them spout at him, and writing it down, what's more. It'll be a pack of lies too, you can bet your life!"

Nor were outsiders the only ones to consider that his time might be better spent, for in those



days the general missionary tendency was to stamp out the Aboriginal background in every way possible. The majority of missionaries frowned, not only on practices more obviously offensive to white sensibilities, but also on the use of native language, the recital of legends and the singing of corroborrees. All these things must be cast out as part and parcel of their "pagan past". The scientific approach was revolutionary but found expression in the intellectual atmosphere of the Pallotine order, established at Beagle Bay and Lombardina, near Cape Leveque. Father Worms, with the backing of his superior, the gentle and cultured Bishop Otto Raible, realised all too well the blind futility of "tea-and-sugar" conversions and of assessing missionary achievement by a count of baptised heads. It was wishful thinking that a native's loss of faith in his own beliefs was synonymous with acceptance of Christianity. The old faith died hard but once dead it was scarcely possible to rekindle the spark at another fire. Something immeasurably precious had been destroyed, leaving a disenchanting people with little interest in life, but ready enough to feign belief for material ends. Summing up his attitude in a recent letter, Father Worms wrote:

As a farmer must know the soil for his seed, so the missionary must know the soil in which his flock has grown. He must understand the native background, religious, social, economic: otherwise he talks to a blank wall and will commit many grave mistakes which will not only offend but will destroy the confidence of those whose trust he seeks. He must first learn the past of the tribes he would approach and set about his work with respect for their traditions, otherwise he will find himself working in a vacuum. The missionary must be pre-

pared to work slowly, patiently and to expect little change within a generation.

Father Worms has had no difficulty in reconciling respect for the Aboriginal law with his work as a missionary. He has never ceased to wonder at the deep spiritual sense that was the mainspring of Aboriginal life, at the careful logic of the old laws and the high ethical standards by which the natives lived within their tribal system. To those who would ask him why, in this case, one should not leave the Aboriginals alone I think he would point out that everything that was good in native law breaks down with the inevitable clash of cultures that has occurred and is still occurring on the remaining frontiers of civilisation. Aboriginal laws become meaningless and impracticable with the breaking up of tribal and intertribal relationships. It is the duty of the missionary therefore to soften the harsh impact of that clash and, by a careful blending of the new with what was best of the old, to keep alive within the Aboriginal the life spark of spiritual faith that is so closely tied to his will to live and his pride of race.

This physically delicate and essentially humble scholar-priest set himself an exacting and many-sided task, the results of which he does not hope to see within his lifetime. When declared no longer fit for the rigors of parish and field work in Kimberley he was appointed Rector of the Pallotine University College at Manly, New South Wales, where he continues his writing and his research into tribal languages, in which he has specialised.

In 1950 Fr. Worms completed a tremendous volume, produced in collaboration with his old Professor, Dr. Nekes, also a Pallotine missionary father, who joined his pupil at Beagle Bay in the latter years of his life. The original manuscript of "Australian Languages" was deposited in the Anthropological Micro-Bibliotheca in Posieux, Switzerland, and has been produced in micro-film for public libraries and universities throughout the world.

★

IT has been long realised that in the study of languages lies a key to the mystery of Aboriginal antiquity and personality. Father Worms pursuit of significant key words and word roots through a labyrinth of tribal tongues indicates a definite link, previously denied, between the languages of the mainland and that of the vanished Tasmanians. From this, together with his finding of miniature rock paintings unrelated to the present Aboriginals, and the application of legendary references to a displaced people, he propounds, in a volume entitled "Contemporary and Prehistoric Rock Paintings in Central and Northern North Kimberley", the following conclusion:

We can assume that . . . in prehistoric times the northern spaces of Australia were filled with a dark race of small stature and of a higher artistic standard than that of the present Australian Aboriginals . . . Reports of the existence of dwarf-like people in West and North Kimberley, North Central Australia and West Arnhem Land, my rediscovery and study of five living pygmoid tribes in North Queensland and my brief indication of the existence of not a few Tasmanian root words in several parts of the continent all point to the identity of these people with G. Taylor's first negrito invaders allied with the Tapiro and Aeta. In fact, he may extend his zone of "Tasmanians" on his maps . . . from the region of Cairns to the opposite coast of Australia, on the Indian Ocean.

Another facet of Father Worms' research makes clear that Aboriginal culture, far from being a

Metamorphosis

This always was the season
for coming to grips.
this seaside sticky weather
for the senses.

Lying under a bosom moon
feeling centreboard.
feeling the shell-oil waves
breaking the toes of sand, and the soft centre
of the palm of her hand.
o sea-change
of she
into me
under the hot moon.

DONALD MAYNARD.

★

Spring's First Full Moon

Spring's first full moon blonde in blue
That's you
And of course there's roses almost red not quite
For red's too blatant and right
Up to the point of blatancy not over
Shade of your hair
And the curves where
Spring's first full moon
You are almost always midsummer noon.
Only I'd spoil everything
Not staying at moon and spring
But tipping you over
To sun and summer.
The trouble with which is
This
It's closer to winter.

R. G. HAY

static institution, was subject to an unceasing progression of cults, each with its specific rituals and ceremonies, each with its particular "heroes" and lesser spirits ever warring for supremacy. Old people of the Baad tribe of Cape Leveque still cherish the memory of the hero Galalang, whose code of commandments so surprisingly resembled the Mosifac law. Tempted into the dark cults of rival spirits, complete with all the sinister fascination of sorcery, blood rites and phallic symbols, the tribesmen destroyed their great teacher and cast his body to the sharks. "He was too good for us that one", an old man explained to Father Worms. "We belong to these others."

In his most recent work: "Australian Mythological Terms", Father Worms reveals common root elements linking the mythological foundations of the Dampierland tribes of Kimberley with those of all other parts of the continent. Deeper study into common derivations also throws new light on the "eternal influence of the world of the spirits on men and matter", and the intensive cultural and linguistic movement that occurred throughout the vastly dispersed tribes. It contains also the suggestion that anthropologists have been in some cases misled by insufficient understanding of these mythological roots into overstressing the sexual or material elements of Aboriginal culture.

Although the value to science of this great man's work is readily conceded, some may contend that his enlightened approach to the Aboriginals came too late. Before leaving Kimberley, however, he saw the establishment of a new mission on the desert frontiers south of Hall's Creek into which are drifting natives who had previously little or no contact whatever with white civilisation. No doubt it is realised by those with whom he made the original contact that over their inevitable entrance into the white man's world presides the wise and kindly spirit of "Ibala", learned elder of the tribes.

The Common Cloth

The blackbird sings to mark the territory
From which he warns all males who would invade.
The crofter weaves a common cloth to warm him
And has a tweed more wanted than brocade.

A ball is beautiful because it's shaped
To roll with ease. The man who makes of action
A lubricant for thought, feels at times
He could penetrate the haze that is life's question.

So be content to live by toil. The land
That crops each year grows flowers to your hand.

ROBERT CLARK.

History of a Despised Love—I

FIRST KNOWLEDGE

Sleep is my only freedom; burrowed there
in that enormous solitude I see
no dreams, or only dreams I care to see:
flowers glinting in urns, and weed despair
annihilated. Comfort of the womb
almost: the dull sedation of the blood,
the warm oblivion. My day-fierce blood
now rocks like dotage in an empty room;
cracked lullabies unwind a gramophone.
What do I hear? Nothing I do not choose.
You, where are you? Nowhere. I do not choose
you should be here—my mind, it sleeps alone.
But warder dawn unlatches sleep. I start!
And wake to find me fettered to my heart.

ROLES REVERSED

I thought you were the wiser of us two.
All that I have (save words) seemed common-
place.
you were the being spun of air and grace,
I was the hanger-on who took my cue
from every casual phrase that fluttered down
from that green tree I spoke of once before;
you were the lead who always knew the score,
I was the stooge, the genuflecting clown.
But O! in this event, of which you see
so little the atrocity, I'll prove
at last the wiser, for I'll hold my love
as my one faith while all the others flee.
I'll not betray. Because I need you? No—
but you'll need me, so I'll not let you go.

THE CHILD AND THE RAINBOW

I've said I love the child in you; it's true;
and yet it's false if that were all there is;
where children are, there's no analysis:
they run at rainbows just to touch the hue.
More than a child I love, more than a child!
I've seen you like a baby on a rope—
a human grown, yet like a child you grope
for rainbows. O your reasoning is wild!
So where's the one I love, that other part
who merely sees mirage of sun and cloud:
affectionate colossus of the crowd,
whose hands unwittingly encroached my heart?
The child has clutched the rainbow; when it's free
let it come consummately home to me.

LAURENCE COLLINSON.

OVERLAND AND THE QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE

"These cultural questions are questions about life. These cultural questions are not only questions of value; they are also, in the strictest sense, questions of political power. As even the giants of publishing pass from the scene, as Hultons and Newnes give way to Odhams, it becomes ever more clear that the fight to control and break up the mass media, and to preserve and extend the minority media, is as central in political significance as, for example, the fight against the Taxes on Knowledge in the 1830s; it is the latest phase of the long contest for democratic rights—a struggle not only for the right of the minority to be heard, but for the right of the majority **not** to be subject to massive influence of misinformation and human depreciation."

E. P. THOMPSON, in "The New Reasoner".

FOR the first time in six years of existence Overland is making a serious, large-scale appeal to its subscribers and readers.

Here is our argument.

No other magazine in Australia is doing the job Overland is doing. Others are making valuable contributions, too. But Overland has shown by its record and its circulation that it performs a task no others are equipped to carry out.

The importance of this task is growing.

Overland receives no subsidies or backing whatsoever from anyone except its readers. Now we have a bigger job than ever to do, and we must not be held back from planning better, more frequent issues by time-wasting attempts to find a few quid here and a few quid there.

We want £500 immediately to enable us to plan ahead with assurance and certainty over the next year at least.

We appeal to each and every one of our readers to assess the value of this magazine to him and to Australia, to disregard the 2/6 it costs, which doesn't even cover the cost of production, and to send us what they can towards our target of

£500

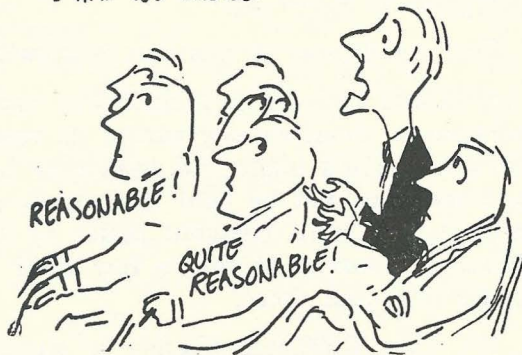
THE MEETING OF THE "I'M JUST DOING MY JOB CLUB" WILL COME TO ORDER. WE WILL BEGIN WITH A REPORT FROM MEMBER, ROCKWELL J.



I BEGAN AS A MONITOR IN GRAMMAR SCHOOL. WHEN I WAS CALLED DOWN FOR REPORTING MY CLASS MATES, I SIMPLY ANSWERED - "DON'T BLAME ME. I WAS TOLD TO DO IT."



LATER ON I WAS IN THE MILITARY SERVICE. IT WAS MY JOB TO CLASSIFY PERSONNEL. I DIDN'T LIKE TO SEND MEN TO WAR, BUT THOSE WERE MY ORDERS. I HAD NO CHOICE.



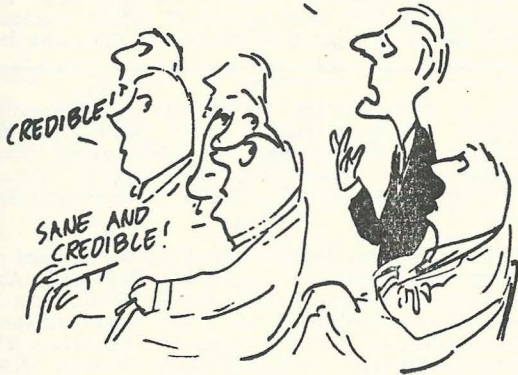
AFTER SERVICE I HAD TROUBLE FINDING MY NICHE. FOR AWHILE I WAS REALTY AGENT FOR A SLUM. THE TENANTS DIDN'T UNDERSTAND. I WAS JUST DOING WHAT I WAS HIRED TO DO.



FEIFFER

See review p. 46

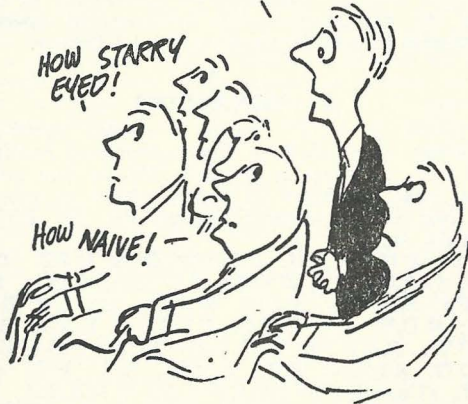
NEXT I WENT TO WORK AS A WITNESS.
I APPEARED BEFORE DOZENS OF
CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES. I DIDN'T
LIKE THE WORK. BUT I HAD TO DO
WHAT I WAS BEING PAID FOR.



AND NOW I'VE REACHED THE PINNACLE!
I'VE GONE TO WORK IN A STATE PRISON.
I DON'T NECESSARILY BELIEVE IN
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BUT SOMEONE
HAS TO PULL THE SWITCH.



OF COURSE SOME PEOPLE
DON'T UNDERSTAND. THEY
ASSOCIATE ME WITH THE
WAY I MAKE A LIVING.



NEXT WE HEAR FROM MEMBER
ARNOLD K. HE WILL SPEAK ON
INTERCONTINENTAL
BALLISTIC MISSILES



SWAG

IT'S good that we are able in this issue to introduce to Australian readers some account of Arnold Wesker and his work. The Times Lit. Supp. mentions Wesker in a recent issue when it comments: "It is rather ironical that, at a time when the British working classes seem to be growingly conservative in their political views and growingly middle-class in their tastes and habits, we should be enjoying for the first time in many years something like a renaissance of working-class literature." Certainly some remarkable work is being produced in England by Brendan Behan, Shelagh Delany, John Braine, John Arden, Ewen McColl, Walter Allen among others, and in the non-fiction field by Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, Clancy Sigal, Asa Briggs and now Dennis Potter with his "The Glittering Coffin". It seems unfortunate that many Australians, deeply concerned too at the problem of cultural alienation, should know so little of the work of these writers.

★

Perhaps one of the best ways we out here can see that there is an important, positive, rebel note now being struck in English writing is to glance at the book of "anti-angry" essays recently edited by Norman MacKenzie, "Conviction" (Macgibbon & Kee). It has much that's seminal in it, much that can help us in our own appraisals and re-appraisals. Interestingly MacKenzie is in Australia at the moment, writing a book on the status of women in our society. It's amazing to reflect that, despite all the thousands of theses so far written in Australia, this is just one of many key topics that almost no research work at all has been done on. Without such research, political campaigning is very much a hit and miss affair.

★

Talking of the problems of class writing, MacKenzie had this to say to Overland recently: "It seems to me that Australians have a challenging opportunity to explore the problem of two cultures, because this presents itself in Australia both as a conflict of class values and as a problem of national identity. The discussion of "cringe" and "anti-cringe" has traditionally recognised this problem at the national level, but it seems to have been insufficiently explored in its class aspects. The English connection—Lawler's "Twanging of the Umbilical Chord"—is essentially a class connection and its rejection by Australian nationalists presents exactly the same dilemmas of alienation that the committed British writer has to face when setting the cultural inheritance of Britain against its commercial perversion."

★

Swag has been cruelly cut short this issue, so that various undertakings about the inclusion of other material could be honored. The very briefest references are all we can afford to matters that deserve much more space . . . the forthcoming Soviet writers' delegation, for instance. Next Overland we will have more to say about this and the whole important question of cultural exchange with other countries . . . We may applaud in this connection the Hungarian action in releasing a number of imprisoned writers (a large number of Australian writers signed an appeal for their liberty). It is certainly a contribution to the relaxa-



Mr. Gordon Bryant, M.H.R., presents the Emu Egg trophy to Meanjin's Editor, Clem Christesen, at the conclusion of the second Meanjin-Overland Test Match at the Mt. Eliza (Vic.) oval on March 6. Meanjin won by four runs. It is understood that next year a qualified accountant will be engaged to take charge of the score book.

tion of international tension . . . Meanwhile a number of Australian writers cabled the South African Government early in April saying "Express horror at your racist policies leading to current massacre and inevitable further consequences".

★

Prizes in the 1959 Mary Gilmore Award went to Thomas Riddell (Vic.) and Ric Throssell (A.C.T.) in the play section, Lloyd Davies (W.A.) and E. A. Gollschewsky (Q.) in the short story section and Denis Kevans (N.S.W.), Laurence Collinson (Vic.), Bernard Meyer (Vic.) and Merli Glasson (N.S.W.) in the poetry section . . . Following the banning of Erskine Caldwell's "God's Little Acre" in Victoria, anyone who loans a copy to a friend is liable to a year's gaol. Overland is considering the publication of a comprehensive article giving the facts about Australia's present censorship laws . . . Corrections to the Miller-Macartney "Australian Literature" volume can be obtained free by sending a postage stamp to F. T. Macartney, 66 Stanley Street, Black Rock, Vic. . . Playwrights are invited to send scripts of unpublished plays to Eunice Hanger, English Department, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Brisbane, for possible copying and inclusion in the Fryer Memorial Library.

★

DONATIONS

"Here's a quid," wrote a recent stout-hearted renewer. "Ten bob to keep Overland coming, and ten bob to keep it going." That's the spirit we like, and the kind of spirit which is responsible for our biggest-ever donation list of £82/18/10. Thanks to:

Anon. £10; K.D.G. £5/5/0; D. & B.J.D. £5; J.H. £5; O.A.M. £5; D.G.D. £4/11/0; A.G.S. £4/5/0; E.W.I. £4; P.A. £3; I. & H.H. £2/2/0; B.W.McI. £2; R.D.B. £2; C.B.C. £1/17/0; E.A.J. £1/10/0; M.B.W. £1/10/0; D.M. £1/10/0; R.H. £1/10/0; K.D.G. £1/1/6; B.R., L.M.H., E.S., F.T., all £1; J.W. (Canada) 18/4; R.M. 12/-; M.J.S.B., A.G.M., E. la M., T.J., J.T., A. von B., A.B., K.T., B.M., H.T., R.G., S.Y.T., Anon., J.B., F.O., E.H., V.O'D., F.C.K., H.H.W., S.H.J., A.B., J.F.C., R.B., F.H., R.P.S., A.C., G.B.S., N.F., N.McK., all 10/-; B.M., K.H.M., J.S., R.J.S., V.H.V., M.M., all 5/-; A.M., S.H., 2/6; O.S.G. 2/-.



Peter Coffin

Cecil Holmes

EXPERIMENT IN SURVIVAL



Ernie Mitchell

IT is about a thousand miles north of Perth and a thousand south of Darwin. Port Hedland is a mere pin prick on the map. Not too many years ago it was scarcely that—just an outlet for some stock, a port for delivering stores, a pub and a post office. Now it bustles. On the high tide the big manganese boats move out, the two pubs roar with the conversation of prospectors, truck drivers, wharfies, seamen and laid-off station hands working their way through a week-long drunk. Wherever you look there are dark faces. Two things make this country move—minerals and natives. It is no longer the stations; neglect and overstocking of what is pretty poor pastoral country anyway has led to their gradual absorption by companies. Drive through the country along the straight red-rutted roads, past the charred spinifex, the dying cattle and sheep (a drought has only just broken after two cruel years) and the long windmills. Keep driving, and in an hour or so the topography changes. The shallow hills with the cut-off tops start rising. Stop a moment; get out and kick over a few stones. Pick them up—they are heavy and they glitter.

Now we are amongst the minerals and soon you pull in at the first mine of the several run by the Pindan Co-operative. This is Strelley. A clean pleasant camp of tents and humpies and friendly folk. They dig tantalite. They yandy it and they use machinery. They blast with gelignite and big compressors drive the jack hammers. It is tough industrial labor.

The dust rises, innumerable flies bite fiercely, the heat is searing. Yet these people have time for a laugh and a joke. There is almost an air of contentment. And why shouldn't there be if you are working for yourself instead of merely selling your labor?

★

DON McLeod is a prospector, as was his father before him. His father was illiterate but taught himself to read and write, and then taught his son. Since Don was a child he has heard talk of mines and minerals, and he has an immense practical knowledge of the natural wealth of the north-west—one of the richest areas in the world. Seventy-two per cent. of all known minerals are minable in the Hedland (Pilbara) district. Rio Tinto has built a town costing £250,000, Union Carbide are having a look around, B.H.P. and A. G. Sims have some interests here. McLeod views their activities with a canny eye. He talks, with careful vagueness, about rich deposits of lead and copper waiting to be dug out of the earth.

Cecil Holmes has recently completed a tour of the north-west of West Australia where he has been engaged in research on a documentary film dealing with the problem and condition of the Aboriginal people. This film will be produced by Paul Rotha, and the story is currently being written by Gavin Casey.

This flinty, wiry little man, not much more than five feet, fifty-two years of age, sporting a grey, nicotine-stained beard, never wearing anything more than a ancient pair of khaki shorts, lives—or exists—in a tiny windowless tin hut on a native camp. He sleeps on a blanket surrounded by piles of dust-covered correspondence books and magazines. He taps industriously at a typewriter. It may be a letter to Rewi Alley, Pandit Nehru, a professor of anthropology in America or the Anti-Slavery League in London. He sustains himself with damper, occasional kangaroo meat and black tea. His conversation ranges as widely as his correspondence and can go on for hours at any time of the day or night. But it will always come back to how the blackfeller has been robbed.

★

ERNIE Mitchell is one of those big quiet sultry sort of men. A half-caste, a law carrier of the tribe, his English is slow but careful. He is a man who measures, who is wary, who thinks his way right through a thing. About forty years of age, a little grey, neat and punctilious in appearance. He will hitch his pants, say a word or two—and do a good deal of listening. Ernie is a hard, committed militant, yet he believes that some compromise is necessary in order to make Pindan work, and it was he who was largely responsible for the fifty-fifty deal made with A. G. Sims whereby Sims provide machinery and capital and the Aboriginals provide the labor. Don McLeod does not agree with this. Ernie takes the view that results are needed now, McLeod argues that it is better to look toward the future, far off though it may be.

This difference of opinion could well be the rock upon which Pindan may founder. There are legal

arguments, split families and some bitterness. McLeod and Mitchell are both inflexible men. The people look and listen. There is fear and confusion. Yet it is really a family quarrel which can only be sorted out by the people themselves.

Ernie Mitchell cannot read or write.

★

WE had made camp in a river bed at the Twelve Mile—one of the old reserves. The flies were pretty bad, there wasn't too much water, and we started to open a few tins for our guests—Dooley and Daisy Bindi. The two of them quietly drifted over after a while. Dooley was Don McLeod's mainstay in the 1946 strike; he was in truth the leader of his people. Don was perhaps the guiding hand, but it always rested with Dooley to talk to his own folk and persuade them to a course of action. He is a law carrier and Song Man, a dreamer of dreams. He commands immense respect amongst his people, regardless of the particular tribe. Sixty-seven years of age, a flowing mane of white hair, a splendid moustache, strong teeth and deep eyes—Dooley loves nothing better than a willing listener to his stories of the palmy days of 1946 when they took the squatters down a peg or two.

He grasps very well facts of conflict between groups and classes in society, regardless of color. Yet he was a man of over fifty when he plunged into this very conflict, existing in an unbelievably remote part of the earth, unable to read or write, sustained only by the belief that all men are equal. He has been to gaol several times on political grounds. In 1949 he and many of his friends and relatives were thrust into confinement during their fight to obtain for Don McLeod the right to live on a native reserve. The fact that they won their case eventually proved to Dooley—and many others—that even if you have very few legal rights, and labor under the disadvantage of skin pigmentation, you can still win a battle or two. Dooley perhaps reflects many of the most remarkable qualities of his people—gentleness, strength, resilience, a sense of humor, and above all a capacity to survive.

As he speaks he smooths the sand and draws strange configurations with his forefinger. He will drift off into recounting some timeless legend, then express courteous thanks for a poor plate of cold beans. His growing sons give him great pleasure, for they are not only well initiated and knowing in the ways of their people, but they have also learned to read and write.

★

DAISY BINDI does not spend too much time dreaming dreams, however. She is a sharp practical woman who is currently concerned about the problem of pensions for the old folk. She enjoys nothing better than a good vigorous row with the local Native Welfare Officer (who happens to hold her in some awe, not only for her bargaining capacity, but because she is possessed of a quick, merciless wit). Daisy once led several "mobs" of native workers and their families from back of Marble Bar to Hedland to join the main mob. They walked about three hundred miles through this arid country—men, women, children, babes-in-arms, others tottering with age. The story is told that an officer of the then Native Affairs Department drove slowly past them in his car and derisively sung out: "Ah, you'll never make it". Daisy looked at him for a moment with quiet hatred and said: "We always get where we are going". Then redoubling their efforts, the mob urged themselves on to a quicker pace. Daisy is a tiny woman, thin and worn with endless work on the stations over the years (her husband used to get ten shillings a week, she got nothing but

worked just the same). She has one good leg, one wooden one.

We finished our meal. Daisy drained the bean tin which served as her mug, then proudly produced some photographs she had taken in Perth. These showed her with members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary delegations then visiting that city. She was seen chatting to ministers from India and Barbados. She said they were good men who understood what the problems of her people were. Then she got to her feet—refusing assistance—and wandered across to a group who were chanting quietly round a fire.

★

PETER Coffin is Ernie Mitchell's deputy at Pindan, his right arm and field organiser. I drove two hundred miles with him in one day. In that twelve hours he settled an argument at one of the mines, fixed some machinery at another, carted water from a windmill bore to a thirsty camp, helped me with some filming, picked up two wandering natives who were out of work, checked claims made by prospectors near some Pindan leases and still had enough energy left over to sing some songs with his people. Peter is a half-caste but is married to a full-blood and is an accepted and respected member of the Nyamel Tribe. He is maybe 25 years of age—he does not know exactly—athletically built and very good-looking. He also is blessed with a lively sense of humor. He had a habit of walking around with a rifle under his arm, presumably in case some stray kangaroo leapt across the horizon, and I twitted him about this. His rejoinder was sardonic, "Well, you never know your luck, I might spot a squatter". As we raced through this harsh exciting country (Katharine Prichard's descriptive writing of the north-west in "Coonardoo" has yet to be bettered), Peter recalled the aftermath of the Pilbara Strike in 1946. "They brought up young jackaroos from Perth, they were really green. They rode their horses like cowboys in Western pictures. In the end they brought us back—at better wages—and we rounded up the sheep and cattle and the jackeroos as well."

When we camped one night at a new mine there was no kangaroo meat, just damper and black tea. Peter had some provisions in the back of the Land Rover, in case he was ever stranded, but they were inadequate to share among so many people. He did not touch them, desperately tired and hungry as he must have been. The tea and damper sufficed. Then he led the folk in a few songs around the fires.

Such is the stuff of leadership. Peter Coffin also can neither read nor write.

★

THE man who works in Pindan is not a rich man. Maybe he is poorer than many thousands of other Aboriginals throughout the country. It is hard for a tiny organisation to trade in minerals, such are the vagaries of the world market. Accumulated stockpiles of beryllium have suddenly become useless, because this element has been displaced by another in the production of atomic energy. Yet here is a community which has already proved something, even if it failed tomorrow economically (which it will not). It is unique for it has shown that at least a fragment of an oppressed minority in an alien society is capable of finding some kind of solution through sheer tenacious endeavor. It is perhaps a community unique not only in Australia but in the world.

Poor these people are, but they have level eyes and a strong handshake. They stand up straight.

DONALD STUART'S "YANDY"

THE ability to get under the skin of the Aboriginal, to grow into the skin of the land itself, until man identifies with country, and man and country fuse in struggle, this is the power and the poetry of "Yandy" (Georgian House and Australasian Book Society, 18/-).

The exploitation of the Aboriginal is not a new theme in Australian literature, but a completely new vision is the Aboriginal triumphant with hope, building joy out of tragedy. And this is what Donald Stuart has given us.

Here are a whole people struggling out of death to a life created by themselves, each character set against a radiant backdrop of "miles of space and light" until he or she becomes greater than themselves, a symbol of the triumph of man.

"Yandy" is described as a documentary novel on the flyleaf, and it is documentary insofar as it deals with a true story . . . the strike of Aboriginal station hands in the north-east of Western Australia in 1946, and the establishment of their mining co-operative under the leadership of the white man, Don McLeod.

It was an exciting enough true story . . . the jailings, the racial and political persecution, the hysteria amongst nor'west squatters, awkward questions in the United Nations, an almost complete blackout in the Australian press.

But Donald Stuart has made of it much more than an ordinary documentary. He has brought vision and poetry and a kind of down-to-earth symbolism to this story, so that even the old truck "Beade", laden with picks and shovels, people and potatoes, becomes a symbol of exultant struggle.

The first six chapters, although obviously written to build up a richly imaginative picture of the land and its people, fail to fuse completely with the rapid, documentary style of the rest of the book. McLeod too never becomes more than a shadowy figure, the one who will, Christ-like, lead them into the Promised Land. But these are minor defects.

To anyone who visited Hedland in those years, who sat by McLeod's campfire down the railway track, while the white town seethed with hatred behind him, who met Clancy McKenna and his people secretly at night, in the dip of the hills, while the Aboriginal guards against the skyline watched for "coppers" and "squatter's men", who listened to tales of the daring of Dooley, away organising round the stations, this book has a kind of ringing truth, that is beyond truth.

The story of the Pilbara men becomes the story of the unity of man, his courage, his weakness, his ability and his tenderness.

DOROTHY HEWETT.

READING "YANDY" AT PINDAN

IT was night time at the Pindan Co-operative. Dooley had heard me say that I had a copy of Donald Stuart's "Yandy", which had just been published. He asked me to read the book to the mob: none of them could read themselves, and they were curious as to what Stuart had said about them.

One of the blackfellows fetched a kerosene lamp, and a few others squatted around the stretcher they had rigged up for me at the Two Mile camp. More and more drifted over as I started reading, until all at the camp were sitting or standing around, listening.

They were enthralled by the story, which I started at Chapter VII. Pledged as they are to non-violence in the settlement of disputes among themselves, these earlier chapters could have offended them. But once we started dealing with happenings recognisable to them they listened intently, some quietly interjecting agreement with the details as they unfolded.

No comment was made on the fictional characters of Lambi and Wawallu, and there was no need to read slowly, for they followed the story with ease. Their tolerance of the white man's strange ways was admirable. When the Justice says: "And so you say that this calendar idea was your idea, and your idea too that you should go around all the stations rousing the natives for a strike on May the first? Is that right?" Dooley interrupted, and, just as in the book, said: "Yes, thass right." And all the mob roared with laughter at Rob's story of the nanny-goating at Maggangarra.

A few nights of this and the book was finished. Dooley asked that a copy of "Yandy" be sent to him—the school teacher at Port Hedland would read

it to them again. He explained that a "lot of the young fellas are getting weak in the law" and that the book would "do 'em good".

These people are quite unaware that they are the human material of a story of a blackfellows' Eureka. "Yandy" could hardly have gone under another title. The yandy, the curved wooden tray in which Aboriginals cunningly toss and separate mixed-up substances into their component parts, is the means by which the blackfellows of Pilbara have emancipated themselves from the squatter. When they went on strike it was the yandy, and the presence of minerals in the earth, that gave them the alternative means of earning their living. Now they have been on strike for nearly fourteen years.

Yandy is the answer to those who say these people will do only menial tasks. It is the answer to those who say integration will take generations or decades. Nomads have joined the mob—within a few days they have become industrious members of a mining company.

These people know their strength and they know their worth. A squatter drove up to Two Mile while I was there. He stepped out of his expensive car, walked over to Ernie Mitchell and asked him for six workers to do windmill repairs and fencing. He offered good housing, food, and £6 a week each. Ernie shook his head. Next day he returned, offering £10. "OK," said Ernie.

Don McLeod's attitude to the book? He thinks Donald Stuart has not done justice to the Rev. Peter Hodge and to Old Kitchener. Apart from that the book was "all right"—rare praise indeed from Don McLeod!

BARRY CHRISTOPHERS.

A. G. STEPHENS

by Vance Palmer

THEY say that criticism must come before creation, and the writers who were beginning to learn their craft in the nineties were lucky in having a critic with superb gifts—one who could tell them exactly where they failed, if they did fail, and hand out bouquets when they succeeded. The name of A. G. Stephens has become a legend. It was not so well-known at the time. Stephens was a mysterious being, hidden behind the initials A.G.S. on the Red Page of the Bulletin. It was the belief of Archibald, the Editor, that both he and his staff should remain as anonymous as possible.

"Only the unknown is terrible," he used to say.

And so only a handful of people knew anything about that brilliant but austere personality that, about 1895, became the acknowledged authority on everything relating to Australian letters.

Stephens was then a young man of thirty, but already he had had a varied experience. The son of a newspaper-owner in Toowoomba, he had been apprenticed as a printer, first in his home town and then in Sydney. Afterwards he had turned to journalism, and at twenty-three was editor of the *Gympie Miner*, giving it what one of his contributors called "a literary touch and a soul". A little later he was having his wander-year, loitering through America and Europe, and coming back with material for a book, "A Queenslander's Travel-Notes". It was not as a critic of literature that Archibald had pounced on him for the *Bulletin*, but as perhaps the brightest young journalist of the day. For instance, there was the pamphlet he had written, tilting at many undemocratic things, particularly plural voting, which he mocked with a humorous logic that was irresistible.

"The assumption is," he said, "that a man and a house are entitled to more votes than a man, because possession of the house implies that the man is a better man, and more qualified to take a share in the government of his country. Consequently a man with two houses is better than a man with only one, and a man with ten than a man with two. The ideal electorate would therefore be composed of a single man with an infinite number of houses, exercising an infinite number of votes."

★

That was Stephens: dry, devastating, making his points with a poker-face; and it was the sort of writing Archibald liked. So, when it was pointed out to him that the *Bulletin* would be better for a literary page, he called in Stephens and gave him an absolutely free hand.

It wouldn't be true to say that Stephens was responsible for the emergence of a fresh growth of Australian writing—for the work of Lawson, Paterson, Joseph Furphy and others: all these men would have developed without him. But he was



largely responsible for creating an audience for them. Joseph Furphy, for instance, with his long, unwieldy "Such is Life", was an unlikely author to get published in the circumstances of the day. Yet Stephens took up the manuscript, read it carefully, and persuaded the author to alter its form slightly. Afterwards he hammered at Archibald till he consented to its publication and so launched it on the stream.

He had an eagle eye for what had significance, even if it came to him in shabby dress. There lingered still in the country, especially among bookish people, a feeling that any work done in Australia was, for some reason, inferior. There were sneers about horse-poets, mockery about the use of native names. Literature was not to be achieved, apparently, by people looking honestly at the world around them, but by . . . well, how? One classic mating with another in the dim corners of a professor's library, perhaps.

Stephens could poke delicious fun at this attitude and show how silly it was. There was a dexterous lightness about him when he took up his pen to defend the new work being done. He knew that the crude heartiness of Paterson and Steele Rudd was quite in line with the tradition of English letters, and that the instinct to run it down often sprang from a queasy colonialism. He himself had a foot in both camps. He lived among books and was as well-read as any of the academic people; but he also knew the life of the country and revelled in its idiom; he even knew something

about the national sport of buckjump-riding, and wrote very well about the art of Billy Waite. Horses had been part of his early life, and I remember him telling me that when he took up the editorship of the Gympie Miner he rode up the hundred-odd miles from Brisbane on horseback.

★
I DIDN'T know him in his Red Page days; I first met him when he had left the Bulletin and was running a little literary journal of his own, The Bookfellow, from an office in Rowe Street. It was never quite clear why he had made the break, but it was an unfortunate one for him and his many readers. For though there were plenty of them, scattered all over the continent, they were not the sort of people who would buy a purely literary journal. The Red Page might have become part of their lives, but Stephens himself was a comparatively unknown personality. That was the catch about Archibald's craze for anonymity; it tied readers to the paper rather than to the people who wrote for it and made it. How were simple bushfolk to know that the A.G.S. who signed his initials so casually was the body, beak, and bones of the Red Page?

Stephens, however, was not disturbed by the difficulties of keeping his little paper alive. A stoutish figure, in an open-necked Crimean shirt with sleeves rolled up to the elbow, trousers sagging a little at the waist, he would pad about the office talking copiously and stopping to fix his very clear, blue eyes on you if you said anything that interested him. Literature had become almost his sole preoccupation, and he had dedicated himself to the task of keeping up Australian standards. His chief enthusiasm just then was for the poems of Shaw Neilson, for whom he was trying to find a public. He corresponded almost daily with Neilson who was working at a navvying job in the country, and on any excuse would draw out the manuscript-book that contained his verses and read some poem through in a curiously quiet way, every word colored with feeling.

"Ah, that's poetry," he would say, "the finest yet written in this country. Neilson has the essence of lyric poetry in him. He nearly approaches the quality of Blake."

He had never met Neilson, I think, yet he poured out his criticism and advice to him in letters. Blessing and cursing, admonishing, praising—and often bringing models to his notice, so that Shaw Neilson, navvying away there in the Mallee and nearly blind, might know what Heine, or perhaps Victor Hugo, had written on the same subject, though the names might mean nothing to him.

"He's been a wonderful friend to me," Neilson said afterwards, "though I couldn't always take his advice. Now and then I screwed up my courage to go my own way."

And he bitterly regretted that most of Stephens' wonderful letters had been lost when the mouse-plague of 1917 had swept over the Mallee.

"They were the only belongings I had that I grudged them," he said.

★
But there was usually a bite in Stephens' criticism that other people didn't take so well. One of the writers whose skin he used to penetrate was Lawson, who had been with him on the staff of Lane's Boomerang as early as 1890, and whose early work he had done so much to make known. In later years he qualified his praise somewhat; he felt that Lawson, like some of the other writers he had backed—Brady, Quinn, Bedford—had not quite fulfilled his first promise.

"His true fame has not been enhanced by the collections of casual newspaper verses he is now
Continued next page

Lindsay on Stephens



The swagman, on his uppers, pulls an undertaker's mug,
And he leans across the counter and he breathes in Charlie's lug—
Tale of thirst and misfortune. Charlie knows it, and—ah, well!
But it's very bad for business at the Bulletin Hotel.

THE above illustration is Norman Lindsay's frontispiece to the first edition of Henry Lawson's "When I Was King" (1905). The second edition, published a year later, has the frontispiece re-drawn, the publican now having a moustache only. It has been claimed that A. G. Stephens was the model for the stout publican (see G. Mac-kaness' "Annotated Bibliography of Henry Lawson") and that he took offence at the satire.

Norman Lindsay comments to Overland: "I have a highly developed faculty for forgetting my past works, especially those done in the hurried and harried days of the nineteen hundreds, and done as a trade job, anyhow.

"I can't recall the cover you mention, nor can I imagine that if A. G. Stephens had registered an objection to it, George Robertson would have paid any attention to him. In general terms, it would be quite in order for A.G. to have raised an objection to any work of mine, for he objected to everything I did, having conducted a holy war against me for years, for mysterious reasons secreted in the dark recesses of A.G.'s peculiar psychology. Not that I minded. It did no harm and no doubt contributed to A.G.'s income in a minor way.

"In my very early days at the Bulletin, when A.G. was publishing books under the Bulletin imprint, I did a number of illustrations for some of them, and I never recall doing a drawing which A.G. did not insist on having altered, scouring green ink with variations on it, so that the damned thing had to be done all over again. He was the most exasperating editor I ever worked for, since he suffered from the illusion that a pen drawing could be sub-edited on the same terms as a piece of writing. Also, when I supplied the illustrations to his Oblation verses, one of which presented him in person, toying with the souvenirs of his past love affairs, if I remember it rightly, I had the devil of a job making repeated drawings from him before he was satisfied that I had caught something of the Hellenic perfection of his profile. Possibly the legend about the altered Lawson cover derives from that little event."

From previous page

publishing," he said once, "they are merely the jaundiced reflections of melancholy hours. He wrote so much that is strong and brave that one cannot be satisfied with weak sarcasm or dismal doggerel."

And Lawson, meeting him in the street (after this or similar criticism) poured out such a stream of abuse and vituperation that he attracted the attention of passers-by. There was rather a painful scene; Stephens' companion tried to get him away. But he merely stood there, listening silently to Lawson's accusations, a touch of surprise in those wide-open blue eyes of his. When he did turn away it was only to say reflectively:

"Poor Henry! This is not one of his good days."

He could not understand writers taking criticism in a personal way. Why should they? The man who could detect your weakness and point it out was your friend, not your enemy. He took for granted that other people's attitude to literature was as objective as his own, and though he sometimes seemed to drop writers he had once praised warmly it was not usually for personal reasons. Yet in spite of his austere pose and his almost scientific approach to literature, he was an emotional man, and could easily be touched by evidence of feeling in a story or a poem.

"Feeling makes the form," he would say, "that is the miracle of art. The load creates its vehicle."

Or again, speaking of a writer whose occasional slovenliness annoyed him:

"He may lack grace and elegance, but when he both feels and writes the flood of his power sweeps away cavils and demurrers."

★

To a certain extent Stephens' great gifts were wasted in his later years. He had to spend too much time in the mere journey-work of earning a living. There were no literary fellowships in those days and, apparently, no sinecures for him in the public service or at any of the universities. He had to fritter away his time in enlisting support for one of his successive Bookfellows or in preparing schemes for text books that came to nothing.

Yet I never heard him complain of the hard lot of writers. He even seemed suspicious of any governmental plan to subsidise writing or make the publication of books easier. Literature, he argued, was a wild plant that was inclined to wilt if attempts were made to grow it under glass. But I think that, at the back of his mind, there was a recognition that we already suffered from a lack of independent thought; that the Australian people might be physically courageous but that they were intellectually tame; and that this tendency toward conformity to the current clichés and slogans would grow worse if writers, of all people, were brought into line by payments from the public purse. Ever since, as a young man, he had written that sparkling pamphlet, "The Griffilwraith", which had had the wit and ebullience of Shaw, he had been robustly outspoken himself about anything that was on his mind. You couldn't imagine him tailoring his opinions to meet the fashion of the day.

Stephens' criticism was a valuable gift to the writers of the day, and there is still life in it. After a space of fifty years the judgments he made on the writers of the nineties remain valid. He chose to pioneer a field in which there was little hope of reward and what he said of Victor Daley could be fittingly applied to himself: "Very sane, very tolerant, with a very just idea of the value of his own work and the work of others. There is no one to replace him."

To The Pure

I had hoped it would be apparent
how lofty my motives are, but
most people who look at my photos
seem to view them as nothing but smut.

They sadly misjudge my collection;
I've no filthy postcards at all.
Works of artistic conception
are all that you'll find on my wall.

Each one is an ideal creation
arranged by a master of line.
For instance, that woman being fondled
by six men—what a lovely design!

The scenes of seduction, you'll notice,
are in the best possible taste,
and the photographs of perversions
are all of them classically chaste.

Don't flinch from the rape-scenes and brothels,
or wince from those groups in the nude—
they're there for significant meaning,
not because what they're doing is rude.

My pure academic intention
I feel sure, should be obvious, but
it seems that the bulk of my critics
think I've a fixation on smut.

But please don't misjudge my nice photos,
they're not really filthy at all;
no scene without symbolic content
ever hangs on my lavatory wall.

IAN MUDIE.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

There is a growing diversity about Australia's intellectual and literary life.

It costs you very little to keep in touch with what is going on in every field of literary activity.

£4 PER YEAR

Three quarterlies, with different values, and of complementary character have joined together to offer you a £4 group subscription.

YOU WILL RECEIVE—

MEANJIN—The oldest and most famous of the nation's literary magazines.

OVERLAND—The quarterly which expresses the Australian democratic temper in verse, story, and criticism.

AUSTRALIAN LETTERS—The lively illustrated review, which presents Australian thought to a wider reading public.

So send £4 to any of these magazines, and the group subscription will be arranged for you automatically. You'll find it entertaining and important, to acquire a wide conspectus of Australian literary life for such a small annual sum.

**SEND £4 AND ASK FOR A
GROUP SUBSCRIPTION**

PITFALLS OF GRANDEUR

Hugh Hunt and the Australian Theatre

by Wal Cherry

IN Australia we have had the benefit of advice from a number of overseas visitors on what should be done about our theatre. Donald Wolfitt, Derek Farr and others have proclaimed our need for national theatres, permanent companies, writers to express the people and faith in Australian talent. Unfortunately, none of these departing visitors mentions how these goals are to be achieved. England has been talking about a national theatre since the 'twenties. The issue has even been debated in the Commons. Nothing constructive has ever been done.

Hugh Hunt is an Englishman, also departing, who has worked hard for the establishment of some sound basic theatrical organisation in Australia, and whose work as Director of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust has laid bare many of the problems which will have to be solved if the Trust is to reach beyond its present level and if the Australian theatre, of which the Trust is only a part, is to develop beyond adolescence. As a parting gift, Mr. Hunt leaves us his book, "The Making of Australian Theatre" (Cheshire, 12/6) which contains the text of three lectures delivered at the University of Sydney during 1959. The lectures offer a good deal of advice about the needs of the Australian theatre. Much of this advice is pertinent and all of it worth listening to, for Hunt has learnt from experience.

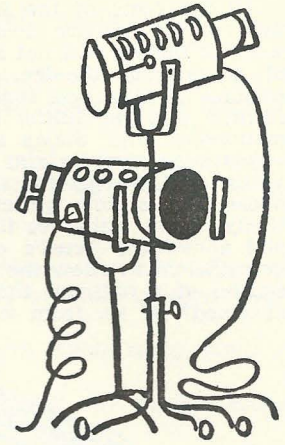
Hunt believes that the Australian theatre needs money and buildings, actors, producers and administrators of international standard, writers who can write, audiences who will come, and a repertoire which includes the classics and the best contemporary work, both Australian and foreign.

National Theatre

To achieve this Mr. Hunt wants a well-endowed national theatre in Sydney, administered with a "judicious combination of practical thought and artistic ability". This theatre would provide a focal point for the art of the theatre and secure employment for a group of theatrical personnel. It would act as a storehouse for all that is best in the past and develop its own dramatists with an awareness not only of contemporary theatre, but also of the theatrical roots. It would need a sufficient subsidy to sustain itself until the period of foundation was over, and to remain sufficiently endowed to remove from it the curse of commercialism.

If this national theatre is to be a reality, according to Hunt, Australian writers must begin to break from their tradition of violent realism and begin a renaissance in the English poetic tradition. Actors and producers must be given not only security of employment, but also considerable basic training. Hugh Hunt sees the National Institute of Dramatic Art as a beginning of this training. They must be imbued with a sense of group work and a sense of the art of the actor as conveyed by Stanislavsky. They must have integrity.

Hunt sees the Sydney opera house as the base for the new national theatre. He therefore limits the foundation of the national theatre to Sydney. Australia hasn't the tourist trade which keeps the Old Vic. and Stratford alive. If the opera house is to be filled it has to have something worthwhile on its stages and it must be filled by Australians.



"The book is valuable because it sorts out and poses a number of problems facing the Australian Theatre but its value is limited because the solutions it offers do not seem to be relevant to our present cultural state. For all Hugh Hunt's genuine interest in the future of the Australian theatre, his book is essentially the work of a man looking backwards rather than forwards. Hunt admits his mistakes but he sees them as mistakes in degree rather than kind and he sees them in the context of the English theatre."

How can the Australian theatre gain a sizeable audience for good quality work? "There is not," he says, "one audience, but many. The majority audience for plays is the middle-aged audience which seeks light entertainment, whether it be comedy or melodrama. This audience requires their entertainment to be hallmarked with overseas celebrities. There is a younger minority audience for contemporary drama of a more serious purpose; another for classical drama, and so on, but these minority audiences are not yet large enough to support professional theatre, except in rare instances . . .

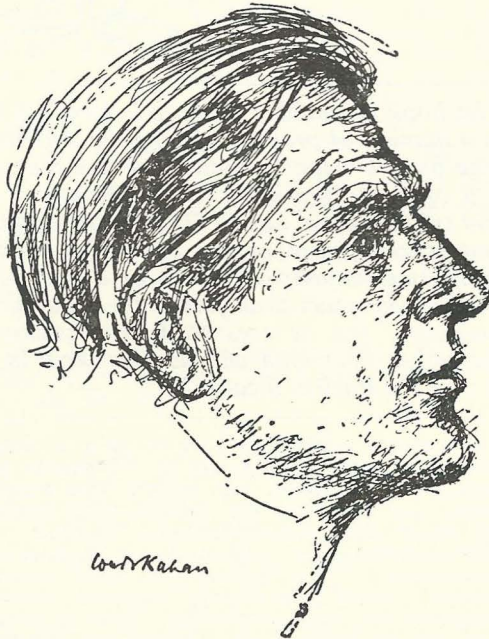
"Look around you when you visit such plays, not on the first nights, when they attract a crowd of well-groomed socialites whose ages it would be ungallant to guess, but on other nights, and you will find few young people in the audience. The lost audience for plays is the young audience, the audience of tomorrow."

Hunt sees the solution of this problem in drama education in the schools and universities, and the development of a drama with a wide imaginative range which will appeal to the audience of tomorrow.

★

THE argument of Hunt's book rests on three assumptions. Firstly, he assumes that enough money can be forthcoming for a National Theatre of the sort he envisages, and that this money will continue to come during the long years of building a large audience. Secondly, when set up, drama schools and national theatres will form their own artistic policies without a basic philosophy. Thirdly, the youthful Australian audience has no use for "little" theatres and "little" contemporary plays, and an Australian theatre movement, in order to achieve success, must be grandiose and imaginatively spectacular.

All the facts of the Australian politician's attitude to the theatre seem to indicate that large sums of money will not be spent on the foundation of a national theatre. To many Australians a national theatre was founded when the Trust was formed and the initial money raised. The Commonwealth and States are heavily committed to educational projects, and the New South Welsh and Victorian Governments are committed to an opera house and a new gallery-cultural centre respectively. Hunt estimates that an extra £50,000 over and above the Trust's opera commitments would be sufficient to allow the Trust to set up the organisation of a national theatre. Can this money be obtained? If so, from where and how?



Hugh Hunt

It is a miracle to me that in the present Australian cultural climate the Trust receives as much money as it does. Where are the actors to staff this theatre which plays, among other authors, Moliere, Racine and Shakespeare? Does Hunt seriously believe that the graduates of N.I.D.A. will be suitable material? What actors in England will come home? Where are the producers? Only one Australian producer has been given regular employment by the Trust during the past five years. Where will the foundations of the theatre be discovered if the national theatre is set up in four years time in the opera house in Sydney?

It is not enough to say that the development of the Australian theatre will take years, as Hunt does, and then to say that the Trust could establish the beginnings of a national theatre immediately. This is putting the cart before the horse. If the term national theatre has any meaning, it lies in the crystallisation of a need on the part of the community to house its dramatic expression, and its own conception of the classics, in a permanent form. The Australian theatre does not appear to have reached this point of articulate expression. The Australian theatre needs opportuni-

ties—to make experiments, to fail, but not disastrously, to learn, to find its own forms.

Perhaps a central Australian theatrical authority should be concerned with spreading theatre, as well as centralising it, with encouraging it wherever it raises its head in genuine professional fashion, and with maintaining a permanent company of its own, which should reach the highest standard, be the pinnacle of our expression, and grow gradually into the national theatre of which Hugh Hunt dreams.

It is better to lay one's initial plans within the limitations of one's finance, than to rest all one's plans on the assumption that more will come. Twenty years hence is of interest, but what do we do today? It would seem that security is more likely to be given to six theatres in the six capitals, needing a yearly subsidy of £10,000 each, than to one theatre in Sydney needing £50,000.

Artistic Policy

Hugh Hunt draws a distinction between realistic and poetic drama but he gives very little indication of the sort of artistic policy which he believes will succeed in this country. He does not write of the role of the committee in theatrical administration and the independence of the artist, or of theatrical architecture and the concepts of modern staging, although theatres will have to be built. He does not reveal what is taught at N.I.D.A. and how many students are enrolled because they are good, and how many because they can afford it. If he purposefully ignores these factors it is a costly omission, for these are practical questions which need answering in our bureaucratic and conformist society. He reveals that his own taste is classical and that he has scant respect for contemporary drama. He makes no mention of contemporary movements in the theatre and how they might affect Australia.

What is Hunt's philosophy of the theatre? It can be simply what appears on the surface—a hankering after the sweep and dignity of classical theatre, to compensate for a lack in modern life, a simultaneous liking for and distrust of a rational approach, a deeply ritualistic feeling, and a longing for fine emotions subtly evoked and expressed. Could anything be further from the Australian scene? This book should see all his guns blazing; Hugh Hunt is a missionary from European civilisation who has grown far too wary of his mission.

The need for strong artistic leadership both of the Trust and of any proposed national theatre is obvious, especially in a country whose local tradition is negligible. Right or wrong, artistic leadership must be placed in the hands of one man and he must be followed. How is untrammelled leadership to be achieved? A national theatre must have an artistic policy. Who is to provide it? The present day theatres of distinction are ultimately the expression of one man's point of view—shaped and reshaped by his assistants and disciples. Committees can administer theatres—they cannot formulate artistic policies.

Hugh Hunt gives only one clue to the sort of artistic policy he considers will bring the Australian theatre close to the Australian people. It is when he says that "Young people in Australia are not intensely interested in the social problems of England and America," and adds that "Contemporary plays are, in fact, passing through a stage of 'littleness'. The themes are little, the action is little, the dialogue is little, the staging is little, and many of the theatre buildings in which these plays are presented are not only little, but pocket-size. Under such circumstances, can we wonder that their appeal is little?"



Wal Cherry, 27, was for three years Director of the Union Theatre Company at the University of Melbourne. He is now Director of Theatre Workshop and Actors'

Studio, Melbourne, and is formulating plans for a new theatrical venture.

THIS is an extraordinary piece of thinking. Hugh Hunt's criticisms of modern drama may be true, but how can he possibly justify the jump from "little plays" to "little theatres"? The grandeur of literature is important; the grandeur of theatrical architecture only has meaning when there is a national style to enshrine. The Australian theatre has a right to expect fine plays, but it can also learn the lessons of success of theatres that are not grand buildings and which provide nothing to draw the people except sheer artistic brilliance and the social relevance of their work. Shakespeare's wooden O, and Joan Littlewood's Stratford Workshop, are fine examples.

The great sickness of the Australian theatre is over-capitalisation. Far too much money is spent on imposing, out-of-date edifices and stage machinery, scenery and paraphernalia, and far too little on local artists. The effect is that costs of production are high and seat prices soar with them; when a lot of money is involved in overhead only a nerveless gambler will take the risks necessary to follow his artistic policy. Most theatres in Australia suffer from this disease. Almost every production in an Australian theatre is old-fashioned because we are hide-bound by the conventions of thirty years ago. These are the conventions we have bought at enormous expense.

The sort of national theatre Hunt envisages might well find its home in the Sydney opera house, but how can the style of its work possibly match its new surroundings? Most productions in Australian theatres are distressingly similar in concept and style to the provincial English repertory theatre.

Large Scale Works

In Hugh Hunt's distrust of the small theatre and in his failure to see that the acquisition of the huge Elizabethan theatre at Newtown, and the presentation of large scale works in the English manner of the 1940s, meant a false blowing up of Australian drama before it was time, rests, in my opinion, the major criticism of his regime. It is a pity that he should want to recommend the immediate continuation and expansion of this policy. There must be some lessons in the fact that Hayes Gordon's converted theatre-in-the-round is Sydney's most exciting theatrical venture.

But "The Making of an Australian Theatre" is more a treatise for the study than a practical manifesto. Many of the perceptive and intelligent things which Hunt says about the theatre are general reflections on the art form as such. He never tries to wrestle with the facts.

The most important thing Hugh Hunt could have done at this stage for the Australian theatre would have been to point out the practical difficulties of his task during the past five years and to show

Advice to Small Manifolds

Banksia scrub gnawn down by the wind's teeth
Teems with devils who, squatting on boughs,
debate

What they shall do to the children passing beneath.
"Damned intruders!" they growl: "Shall I drop,
or wait?"

"Drop on the nape of a light-brown neck? Or jump
"With a creak of spite at their shoeless toes?
Or fall

"Thump from my stump on a plump rump, scatter-
ing their comp-
"any shrieking and single? Or shall I scorn
them all?"

Risk it, letting them natter, and thread the track
•Boldly to Cylinder Beach through the banksias.
Still,

In the event that a goblin jumps on your back,
Be prepared to stand up to him. Call him a dill.

"Dill!" you can say, "Do you think I'm a Balt, or
a Pom?"

"Five generations ago you'd have brought it
off!"

And you'll see him climb right back where he
started from,
With or without a slight hypocritical cough.

J. S. MANIFOLD.

how these will hinder future development, not only of the Trust, but of the serious theatre as a whole.

The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust is not the national theatre of Australia nor is it the total Australian theatre. It is a facet of the development of the medium in this country. If the Trust is to lead that development somebody will have to think constructively about all those committees and their powers; the Trust's top-heavy administrative machinery; the internal politics and the interstate jealousies; the snob value of the theatre; the attitude of newspapers and political parties and churches; the attempt of the Trust to increase prestige by centralising theatrical power; the preponderance of business men in the organisation and the lack of artists; the complete lack of youth; the assumption that the Australian theatre is a natural extension of the English; the employment conditions of its artists.

The making of a theatre in this country is partly the work of the Trust and of any national theatre which might grow out of it. But that theatrical Establishment will wither and die if it has no contributory theatres around to nourish and stimulate it, and to rebel against it. The concept of grandeur which underlies this book provides a dangerous mirage in the Australian cultural desert. Hunt's kind of grandeur means large sums of money, and money in this country means conformity, not necessarily to commercial standards, but, more dangerously, to the standards of art of the people who provide it.



ARNOLD WESKER AND THE BRITISH THEATRE

WHEN developments in the British theatre during the '50s are finally assessed the name of Osborne will fill a relatively minor place. The angry young men will have passed like shooting stars through the night. What has followed in their wake at the end of the decade is something deeper and more lasting.

It was towards the end of 1958 that an almost unheralded play was presented at the Royal Court Theatre. The Royal Court itself had decided against producing the play but had agreed to give it a limited London season if the Belgrade Theatre Company of Coventry produced it. In this way one of the most important playwrights of our day was introduced to English audiences.

The Royal Court had abdicated from the role of midwife. The responsibility was, apparently, not worth the risk. The play dealt with communists; communists who were real people with human doubts and fears and with a deep appreciation of moral principles. The play asked questions—and there could be no guarantee that the British public would pay for all this.

But the British public *did* pay; the critics applauded and the season was extended. The author was given an Arts Council grant to continue writing the trilogy he had planned. Since then the second play in the trilogy, "Roots", has appeared in the West End.

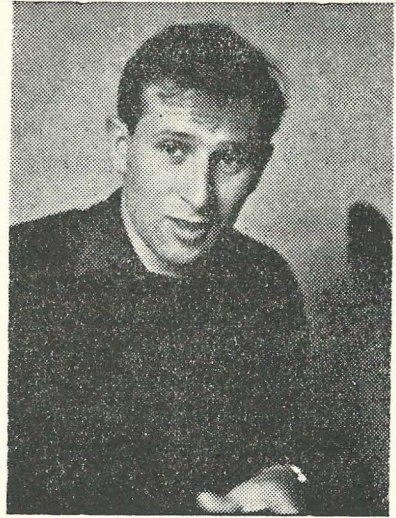
The Royal Court had again refused to accept responsibility for producing "Roots". It rejected the play initially. Later, however, Dame Peggy Ashcroft recommended it to Joan Plowright, who appeared in the leading role. Once again the Belgrade Theatre Company accepted the play, and this time the critics travelled to Coventry for the opening night. "Roots" was then brought to London by the Royal Court and later moved to the Duke of York Theatre just off Piccadilly. The play was hailed as a masterpiece and its author praised as the most important British playwright since the war.

Recently, a third play, "The Kitchen," has been given a Sunday night "performance without decor" before a select audience at the Royal Court. "The Kitchen", which is not the final play in the trilogy, has been described by the New Statesman critic A. Alvarez as "without any qualification the best play of the decade". It is yet to be publicly produced. From all reports Wesker has here abandoned Ronnie Kahn and his family surroundings for a setting which shows the ordinary working man and his day to day struggles to get a living.



THE new voice in British Theatre belongs to 27-year-old Arnold Wesker who insists: "I am concerned and not vindictive, I am sad and bewildered and not angry—at least only a little angry."

It has been said that this would be the age of the refugee and the emigrant. It's highly likely. Wesker therefore has a logical right to give expression to the voice of this age. His art arises from the fusion of three cultures cultivated in an adopted land. His parents are Jewish; his mother comes



Arnold Wesker

from Russia and his father from Hungary. But he was born in the East End of London—and on Empire Day.

It is obvious that Ronnie Kahn who emerged as the central figure of the trilogy in "Chicken Soup With Barley" bears a striking resemblance to Wesker himself. Wesker makes no secret of this and his mother, when I questioned her, replied: "It was all just like that. Arnold has caught it all so well."

"Chicken Soup With Barley," the first of the three plays, tells of a communist home in the East End and of friends within the party. It opens with preparations for the party's reception for Mosley's fascists when they marched through the Jewish sections of the East End before World War II.

It is within this closely knit group that Ronnie grows up. He sees his father gradually disintegrate, both physically and mentally, under the pressures of life, until he is left a helpless wreck entirely dependent on his family. Ronnie hears of friends fighting and dying in Spain and sees others returning, disillusioned. The disillusionment is strengthened during World War II.

The group itself disintegrates and, leaving the Communist Party, its members settle in different parts of England. Ronnie, however, plans a career as a great socialist writer; but his occupation is that of pastry-cook. He goes to Paris, and it is while he is there that Russian tanks roll into Hungary. When Ronnie returns to England and his home he is mentally shattered. He is also beginning to display the same symptoms of complacency and despair seen earlier in his father.

The stage is left to Sarah, the little old Jewish mother whose words, shouted at him, carry the whole message of the play: "You'll die, you'll die—if you don't care you'll die. Ronnie, if you don't care you'll die."

Just prior to this Sarah has used the symbol of an electric fuse to try and explain Hungary to her son: "If the electrician who comes to mend my fuse blows it instead, so I should stop having electricity? So I should cut off my light? Socialism is my light, can you understand that? A way of life. A man can be beautiful. I hate ugly people—I can't bear meanness and fighting and jealousy—I've got to have light."

Hungary obviously disturbed Wesker, but characteristic of his whole approach to questions of this

nature is his note to the version of the play published in the Penguin collection: "Chicken Soup With Barley" was not written as an anti-Soviet play . . . The author would further remind all concerned that an indictment against the Inquisition is no more an attack on Christianity than the indictment based on recent Soviet admissions is an attack on socialism. Let no mud be thrown; few people's hands are clean. Just let us think again."

In "Roots," the second play, Wesker has succeeded in presenting inarticulate people in stage terms. His scene shifts to a Norfolk farm where Beatie, daughter of a farm-laborer's family, has returned for a holiday. Throughout the play she talks of Ronnie whom she has met in the city, and of Ronnie's socialist beliefs.

Ronnie, it appears, is never tired of telling Beatie of how socialism is to transform their world; how people should be taught to appreciate the good things of life more; how people should be aware of what is going on around them, they should know and be able to give reasons for their actions. In the first act of the play, Beatie challenges her brother-in-law to say why he is so proud of his activities in the Territorials; what it is he is preparing to defend with his life. In fury and frustration the brother-in-law's only way of answering is to forbid her ever to talk politics in his house again. He has no answer.

In the last act Ronnie is to join Beatie on her holiday and the family is gathered to welcome him. But Ronnie doesn't come. Instead there is a message breaking off their relationship and saying he has become a neurotic intellectual. The whole family turns on Beatie. Without Ronnie's words she is left completely defenceless against their attack. Then, suddenly, she begins to speak and, for the first time, the words are her own. She has come to a sudden realisation of her own personality and individuality and that she, too, has a right to voice her own opinions and feelings.

★

"Roots" is a slow play about slow, dull people but because of Wesker's genius in interpreting people in stage terms the play is far from dull and one leaves the theatre with a feeling of new hope and inspiration. There is nothing here of the desperation, frustration and futility of Osborne's Jimmy Porter or, for that matter, George Dillon.

This is the result of his own individual outlook. "Surely," he says, "if it is true that the aristocracy knew and know how to live with grace and dignity and enthusiasm then it is not so much that one wants to do away with that aristocracy as that one wants to see us all aristocrats, living as dignified human beings with enough time and space to be enthusiastic."

Wesker is concerned. He shows a deep love and understanding for his characters and there is no spite or vindictiveness. His characters are real people drawn from his own surroundings. They are sad and groping and bewildered, but gradually they are finding a way, and Wesker has no doubt that they will find the right way.

Within himself, however, Wesker is full of doubts. Full of the doubt that he will survive his changing circumstances and the effect that these may have on his work. When the time came for him and his wife to settle, Wesker was half inclined to go back to the third-storey room in the East End where he had lived most of his life with his parents and sister. When the idea was finally rejected as impractical he bought a house a few blocks away

from his parents' Council flat—far away from the bright artificial lights of the West End.

Ronnie Kahn is already a powerful figure on the British stage but with the emergence of Wesker's third play in the trilogy it is possible that he will become a symbol of his age. An age in which people like Ronnie must face the problems arising from the clash of socialism and capitalism; an age where success could lead to crippling complacency. But Wesker is made of sterner stuff. He will not cease to care. He will not die.

GILLIAN HEMING.

★

Strong Man, Sad Pierrot

PAVLOVA was my goddess, my white swan, my pearl beyond price. Her almond eyes, the arch of her throat, the arch of her foot glowed from the pages of childish scrapbooks. I prattled in my measles delirium of the little dark head nestling in a hood of white fur and rosy satin, the lovely wrist extended for the kisses of a score of gallants while the first snowflakes drifted, drifted past a lighted Christmas window.

Reality was blistered feet and bruised toe-nails and the back row of a dancing class. It was the only sort of class then in existence, in which the front row was a flowering of ringlets, a troupe of befrilled first cousins to Shirley Temple, each one the possessor of a pair of achingly thin legs balanced with shaky virtuosity on lumpy toeshoes tied to the ankle with a drooping bow. In response to a bold arpeggio on the piano these star pupils would assemble in one corner of the room, smirking in anticipation of their tour de force, the pose *pirouette en tournant*. Off they went one by one like a flight of slightly drunken fairies revolving dutifully in diagonal.

I was bitterly jealous of the fairies for to me their technique seemed perfect. I was sixteen, tallish and too old to start, my feet were agony and I didn't know the steps. It was all torture, but Pavlova drove me on. Over my scarlet perspiring brow floated a mirage of the beloved Swan. For some it was an abortive and spirit-breaking state of affairs, hard work with no prospects. But a door was soon to open on a wider field and the man who opened it was Edouard Borovansky.

In 1938 the de Basil Company came to Melbourne for the first time. Word was sent to the dancing schools that girls were needed for walk-on parts as courtiers in "Aurora's Wedding." Mild curiosity on the part of the chorus girls, terror and delight curdling the blood of the dedicated few. We went along to His Majesty's. A shortish man with a dancer's flexible walk and the firmly-modelled face of a Slav shepherded us without fuss onto the stage. Monsieur Borovansky was in charge of the engagement of "extras". We were not required to dance. He simply looked us over with a somewhat melancholy air and chose four. Two for their height and statuesque proportions, one dark and one fair; another who was exquisitely pretty with the small nose and delicate cheek bones that "come across"; and myself!

Borovansky turned to the rejected ones and said with a little bow: "Thank you . . . I am ter'ibly sorry, that is all. But there will be much need of you another time. I will need many girls for other ballets".

It was a dismissal full of courtesy and dignity; it presupposed that they were serious artists, that they were seriously disappointed, and that it was an honor to have the chance of even such a modest appearance with the Russian Ballet. It was a little different from an audition for "Rio Rita."

So it is for kindly and charming manners that I first remember Boro; and this may surprise some who suffered under his unprintable sarcasms in rehearsal, and others who experienced his impatience of the well-meaning hanger-on, deplored his tendency to use people for just so long as they were useful to him. Intolerant but kind-hearted, gloomy and vivacious by turns, he was a man of extreme contrasts . . . that was his fascination.

During that first de Basil season we who had walk-on parts got to know him a little. He would come to our dressing-room to check our make-up and give instructions, and sometimes, if he wasn't in the ballet himself, stayed to chat. And during that time Melbourne saw him as a dancer.

He was still playing his full repertoire of roles for de Basil as well as taking an important part in stage management. Australia knows him best as teacher and impresario; the tributes paid him at his death have mostly been for his foresight, his genius for presentation, his stubborn determination and his courage. We forget that he was first a truly great character dancer. He had that mastery of mime which enabled him to alter not only his mobile face but also, it seemed, his mobile body with each different part. He was in fact short in stature; but how do we remember him in his delightfully ponderous character of the circus strong man in "Beau Danube"? Surely as an enormous man, powerful but fleshy, in fact a man entirely made of pink ham. The next night his very bones have shrunk, are bowed and creaking at the knee. He is the elderly lover, paunchy with a hint of corsets beneath the velvet and lace, sweeping his tricorne to the ground with finicky stylishness. It is the very essence of "L'Amour Ridicule", adorably ridiculous. He had a deep insight into both pathos and comedy, and he combined them both to the point of heart-break in that role which became perhaps his signature, the sad Pierrot in "Carnaval".

★

But I think his greatest part was one which has been passed over by Australian audiences; that of Malafesta's court Fool in the original version of "Francesca da Rimini" composed for de Basil by David Lichine. It was an interpretation with a deep sense of history behind it. Never was there a Fool who was less of a Fool than this one. Borovansky made of him an evil and repulsive cripple with a crooked scheming mind. A balletic Iago, he slunk, dragging a leg and dangling a withered hand, through the panoply of a mediaeval princely court, planning his machinations for the downfall of beauty and young love. Borovansky had a quality which made his own corner of the stage magnetic to the eye of the audience. At the same time he never detracted from the general pattern. He was too much of an artist and an old hand to do that.

As everyone knows he stayed behind when de Basil sailed away in 1939. He was shrewd, he was past his first youth and had always wanted security and the good things of life, and he foresaw dark days in Europe. Perhaps above all he wanted to be his own master. I don't think he knew what he was in for. It is difficult for Australians to understand the extent of the frustrations which beset him, the disappointments which made reasonable his depressions and his tirades. He was trying to make his mark under conditions entirely foreign to



him where ballet dancing, instead of being an accepted profession, was a pastime for dilettantes or was prostituted to musical comedy. It was war time, there was no spare money to risk for culture.

First of course he had to establish his school, and this he did early in 1939 with his wife Xenia. Only those who studied in her classes and Borovansky himself knew what an all-important but unobtrusive part Madame played in forming the Borovansky Ballet. There wasn't a samovar in the Borovansky Academy but the gas-ring behind a curtain did duty, and an endless succession of cups of tea was borne into the classroom to ease the tired throat of Madame while she counted: "And a one two, and a one two, and Up! and Up! . . . How you expect to jump, my darling, if you not bending the knees in plie?"

Then in would stride Boro., throw himself into a chair, chin on chest, eyes lowering and critical; he would stab in a comment, she would counter, they would break into Russian, we would be glad we didn't understand the meaning of the words. But he had a profound respect for her judgment. As he was fond of saying: "I am just a bloody peasant. My wife, she is aristocrat. You listen to Madame, what she is telling you, my dear guerl."

But sometimes he would roar with exasperation. "My Gord," he would bawl, "you ter'ibly heavy today, Annushka! Vot you have for lunch . . . the pork pie and the big sausage?"

By the end of 1940 the first real ballet, "Autumn Leaves," was ready; and it was a real ballet, not just a stiff class of pupils performing for their mamas. Boro had a great flair for making an effect with easy movements and for composing simple but beautiful groups. The corps-de-ballet might not be able to do very much more than run across the stage, but the running figures did look like leaves swirling beneath the wind of autumn.

Back in the studio the leaves were learning to be a swirling river, the Vltava no less; and in the next rehearsal Jota dancers from a Spanish village. It was an important step into the future when

Borovansky was able to put on his first full program of four ballets for two nights at the Comedy Theatre.

Gradually and surely things began to hum. 1941 was the constructive year. 1942 saw a week's engagement at the Princess, this time salaried by J. C. Williamson. The persuasive tongue was proved by press notices to be telling no lies. Boro. had said that he could produce traditional ballet and a good "show" at the same time, and he was doing just that. In 1943 there were two seasons of a month or more at a time, with two or three changes of program. And at last, in 1944, the Maestro achieved his ambition. Opening in Melbourne with a five weeks' season at His Majesty's Theatre, the Borovansky Australian Ballet Company set off on its first tour of Tasmania, the States and New Zealand, a company of dancers who were at last enabled to give up their other jobs and call themselves professionals. It was a far cry from the modest class of half-a-dozen hard workers who had been his first pupils.

So he went on to larger conceptions. Of the many new names, the many new ballets, the large productions I cannot speak except as a member of an audience.

★

Just lately I have been making another scrapbook. A trip abroad makes it necessary to tidy out the drawers, to spill out the past in a tumble of yellowing newsprint and old programs. The stage-door pass comes to light, the telegrams, the tags from the bouquets; and most revealing, the war-time letters, their pages excitably brimming with news of the ballet world and Boro. said this, Boro. did that. So to hear that he is dead is especially strange and poignant. How flatly the obituaries read as I fix them in the last pages; how haunting the photos of the well-cut shoulders, the jaunty bow-tie, the debonair smile and the curiously sad pierrot eyes.

Yes, Boro. was a Strong Man, a forceful personality and a fine artist. He demanded and earned respect and obedience. And yet there was something appealing naive about him, something of the lovable Clown. I remember the big fish, the biggest he had ever caught, and he was a passionate fisherman. Alas, just at the moment of landing it into the boat it slipped through his fingers and was gone. Consternation . . . no fish! A roar of pain escaped from his lips and he was almost in tears on the way home. It was the Clown and the Butterfly all over again, the moment when the confident character is completely undone and which draws forth indulgence from every human heart.

I am glad to have been in at the beginning, to have been a dancer and to know the indefinable enrichment of life which understanding of any art must bring. I am grateful for the training which, in the midst of contented but often harassed domesticity, still teaches not to slump when you are tired but to find the fulcrum of balance in the spine and make some large and releasing gestures of the arms; for the sense of deportment which remains in the very bones long after muscle has lost its strength and elasticity; and for the best lesson of all, that happiness and satisfaction lie in unremitting effort. I am fond of the voice which warns in my ear: "Annushka, you ter'bly heavy today . . . vot you have for lunch?" It was a hard life, but . . . My Gord, it was abSOlutely marvellous.

ANNE CHLOE ELDER.



THE ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

THE Adelaide Festival of Arts was a splendid success. In a fortnight in March some sixty performances and recitals were held, all well attended by South Australians as well as interstate and overseas visitors. In many instances admittance charges were well within the pockets of working people—a factor which clearly added to the success of the Festival.

The uniformly high standard of the program was another important factor making for success. There were brilliant performances by world-ranking artists like Lois Marshall, the Canadian soprano fresh from her great Moscow success, the violinist Gioconda de Vito, the Janacek quartet from Czechoslovakia, and Australia's Joan Hammond. Adelaide too was fortunate to have the Sydney and Melbourne symphony orchestras as well as its own orchestra playing frequently during the Festival.

Apart from the Turners and the exciting Mexican collection on show at the Art Gallery, most of the art exhibitions were of Australian paintings. For my taste too many of the Australian painters tend towards the abstract and do not reflect nature or the life around them. However there were excellent exhibitions of ancient and modern Aboriginal art, an interesting exhibition of William Dobell's work, and the pictures of Streeton, McCubbin, Roberts, Withers, Davies and Conder in the fine Adelaide Gallery were as always a delight. An estimated hundred thousand people viewed the pictures on display during the Festival.

The South Australian Fellowship of Australian writers contributed considerably towards giving the Festival a theme—the advancement of Australian culture—by the publication of a valuable anthology of South Australian writing, "Southern Festival", and by organising a writers' fortnight that included public forums and readings of prose and poetry.

The well-attended forums, which considered such important questions as "The Status of the Writer in Australia", "Publishing in Australia", "Critics and Australian Writing" enabled writers from all over Australia to exchange views, and helped to enlighten the public on the problems and perspectives facing Australian writers. The success of the forums was largely due to the fact that every type of literary opinion was freely expressed.

The public readings were an even greater success, and a testimony to the popularity of Australian literature when made freely available. There was spontaneous applause for the poets who read their work in Elder Park, and at the last public poetry reading many were actually turned away because the Mawson theatre was full.

I am partial to the work of Flexmore Hudson, Nancy Cato, Ian Mudie and Robert Clark and I

Thoughts at the Opening of the Adelaide Arts Festival

Hail far-famed Torrens, graceful stream!
On whose sweet banks I often linger,
Soothed by the murmur of thy waves,
(And plumb the bottom with my finger).

—Author unknown; 1843.

Poor Torrens, dammed and dislocated,
how must it feel to lose
your tumblingdownness and be rated
a RIVER? Not yours to choose

nomenclature, since further on
(I wonder if you think it queer?)
they name you, where you flow through town,
a LAKE! They build a weir

to give you breadth and suavity;
cement your banks to stop a leak.
You must be glad to reach the sea,
poor sad little CREEK.

DONALD MAYNARD

(A Queenslander who knows a river when he sees one).

was delighted with the enthusiastic reception these Adelaide writers received at the public readings.

Robert Clark and Dr. John Bray, Q.C., another leading South Australian poet and member of the Fellowship, defended the editor and writer Bohan Rivett, whose trial during the Festival on charges of seditious and criminal libel (resulting from the part he and his newspaper played in ventilating the Stuart case) threw light on another aspect of South Australian civilisation. Dr. Bray's address to the jury, which I heard, was one of the highlights of the Festival. Rohan Rivett was acquitted on eight out of the nine charges preferred against him. But he is to go on trial again on the one remaining charge.

I hope that writers throughout Australia as well as readers of *Overland* will call on the Playford Government to withdraw this one charge.

During the Festival the South Australian Fellowship played host to the annual conference of Australian Fellowships. One of the matters discussed was the visit in August or September of this year of the Soviet writers' delegation to Australia. A national reception committee was set up and a complete itinerary will shortly be prepared.

Altogether the South Australian Fellowship, under the chairmanship of Ian Mudie, who is federal President as well, worked very hard before and during the Festival, and set an example to other Fellowships throughout Australia in its work for Australian literature.

The Festival as whole is a challenge to all Australian capital cities, and particularly Melbourne. There the organisers of the Moomba Festival this year eliminated the only original Moomba cultural function, the Book Fair. Attempts should now be made to transform Moomba into a cultural festival with the Book Fair restored.

It is to be hoped too that the Adelaide Festival will be held every two years as proposed. Future festivals might profitably stage more Australian plays and might give the Aboriginal people opportunity to display their dances and their songs as well as their paintings.

JUDAH WATEN.

Doctor, not Patient

FROM Swift to Shaw—not to say from Brisbane to Adelaide—the way of the satirist is a hard one. In fact, the satirist is the man who chooses the hard way of making his point. Two hundred years after "A Modest Proposal" it still needs to be said occasionally that Swift did not advocate cannibalism.

Tom Lehrer is a satirist, but the word doesn't fit into newspaper headlines as easily as "sick" or "ghoul". So Lehrer travels the world, making his hard-hitting, healthy protest against what he sees as false or horrific, swathed in a veil of misleading publicity. His targets are mainly from his native America—Billy Graham, the Ku Klux Klan and the F.B.I., commercialised Christmas, atomic tests and the whole gamut of phoney culture from Tin Pan Alley to the purveyors of folk-songs "who confuse authenticity with merit".

He has a particularly keen eye and ear for popular song stereotypes. He fixes on the song of the archaic occupation such as "The Old Lamplighter" and turns up with "The Old Dope Pedler", complete with the tinkling accompaniment which is Tin Pan Alley's ritual cliché for nostalgia. His cowboy song, with bars of inane yodelling, scores off atomic tests. For the bogus sentimentality of the "when-your-hair-is-old-and-grey" type of song, there is a particularly dreadful corrective. His parody of a rollicking, revivalist hymn makes perhaps his most serious point—"We'll all go together when we go". It's a laugh at Billy Graham, but the message is straight from Einstein, Bertrand Russell and Linus Pauling.

For most of the time, Lehrer is his own composer, pianist and singer. The shock effect of his lyrics with their delicious economy of phrasing ("now there's a charge for what she used to give for free") often overlays his gifts as a pure musical satirist. Fortunately at his crowded, enthusiastic concerts here in Australia he gave this side of his talents full rein, taking off Gilbert and Sullivan, Mozart, rock 'n roll and several other musical idioms.

Like the cartoonist Feiffer*, Lehrer belongs to the current in America which is concerned with analysing mid-twentieth century society, in mid-twentieth century terms; in Lehrer's case fighting contemporary social corruption with its own vocabulary. His records should go on the shelf alongside "The Hidden Persuaders", "The Organisation Man", "The Status Seekers"*, "The Affluent Society" and other similar works of thoughtful social discussion. (And how Lehrer would laugh at such a suggestion!)

His first tour of Australia is now history—half-an-inch of history in the still unclosed dossier of censorship and bumbledom. Queensland banned one of his songs, but versatile South Australian officialdom managed to run an Arts Festival with one hand and ban five Lehrer songs and raid a wine-tasting with the other.

Soon after his arrival Lehrer was foolish enough to say that he could see no suitable subjects in Australia for satire in song. Enriched by his experience of our police chiefs, politicians and boy scout leaders he should feel differently when he returns for his concerts in Sydney and Melbourne next May. "Click Go the Shears" should be an admirable vehicle for a song against censors.

K. D. GOTT.

* See review section of this issue.

KYLIE TENNANT

I HAVE known Kylie Tennant intimately for nearly a quarter of a century, yet after all this time I am not certain that I really know her.

Basically, of course, there is always Kylie the eternal girl—fresh and dewy-eyed—just out of the Brighton Ladies' College.

After that comes Kylie the sterling Roman wife of Roddy (the man who makes her write), Kylie the amused mother of Benno and Bimbi.

Then come all the other Kylies—Kylie the teenage painter of tapestries, the wall-writing poet, the Renoir girl in the dark shadow of a red flaming coral tree, the elfin creature in a little costume and beret who loved sweeping other people's studios.

The same but different is Kylie the frustrated pioneer woman, the cussing pants-wearing driver of a flivver called the Old Grey Nurse, the blonde-wigged Kylie disguised as a prostitute and ogling a policeman, Kylie the battler, the stoic, the champion of the underdog, the hilarious raconteur, the saint who endures fools and bores gladly.

Last and only as an after-thought there is Kylie the novelist and celebrity—a vague audio-visual montage of newspaper features, old and new radio sets and a face on t.v.

★

Mulling it over, the Kylie who arises uppermost in my mind is Kylie the rational and humorously kind.

Kylie Tennant will help anyone whether they are down and out workers, bewildered bourgeois, peevish clergymen, sectarian hacks, exploited Aborigines or writers without talent amen.

She will work her fingers to the bone for needy people, drive all night to nurse the sick, cheerfully shoulder the irksome tasks of others.

She will not only do this for individuals but for organisations too—often to the detriment of her writing time.

Why does she take on all this—and is there any virtue in it?

God only knows. But this much is certain when the chips are down we can only be grateful for people like Kylie who for some odd reason have made their decision for humanity.

I think that she believes that life and human beings can be if not completely changed at least radically improved.

Luckily none of this stops her from seeing people exactly as they are at the moment.

For this reason she chuckles ironically over most things and most people.

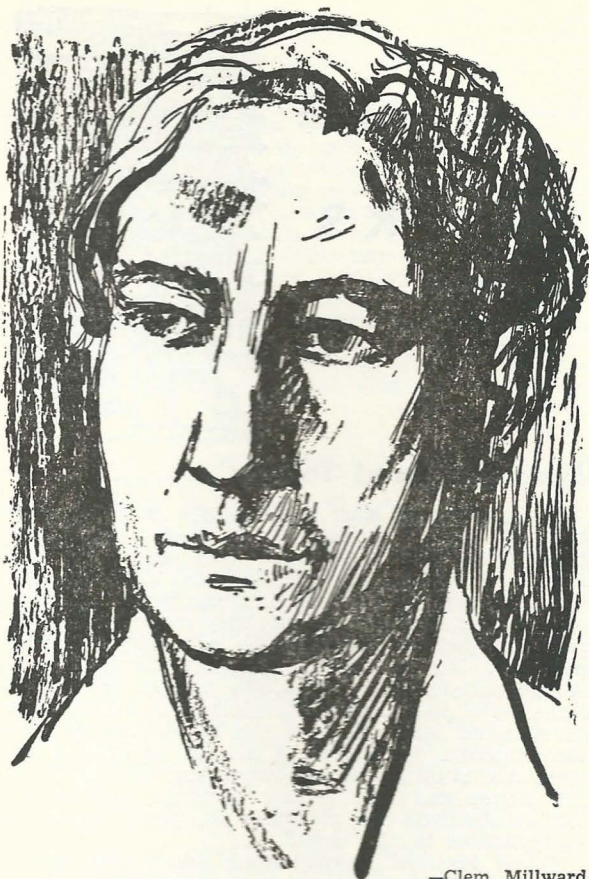
At the same time it would be ridiculous to infer from this that Kylie is spinelessly tolerant of social and individual evil in any form.

Pity help the person or the cause or the event which violates her sense of what should be.

If necessary, she will fight the battalions single handed, vanquish the death adder with a toothpick.

★

Kylie Tennant is warm and quick in her responses, but at the same time her reason, her intelligence, is always in control.



—Clem Millward.

Because of this I sometimes sense that while she understands all she does not feel all.

At times I feel Kylie's almost excessive consciousness and control stand in the way of her complete fulfilment as a writer.

I have read all of Kylie's books and adored them because they were written by Kylie and because they were books in their own right.

They have amused, instructed, edified and stimulated me.

BUT—and here I must say publicly what I have never said privately—they have not always shaken me to the depths.

For some odd reason I want big books to do this to me.

Only recently Kylie told me that the Snowy Mountains seemed rather frightening to her.

"They are weird—all right for Patrick White but not for me. I'm just a journalist. I bolt from anything weird!"

Kylie is of course not merely a journalist—as she sometimes likes to pretend. She is a creative writer of extraordinary observation and power.

However, I think it might not be a bad idea for her to go and dwell for a time in the weird mountains of creative aloneness and forget this fetish of collecting copy; create more from within than from without for a change—give the emotions fuller reign.

Then perhaps will come the Big Book for which all the other big books were but a preparation.

Once thing is certain—this stranger—Kylie Tennant—will ride on.

—LEO KELLY

BOOKS



Mass Produced Society

In America at least most people seem to have accepted the standards and mores of a materialist society, whether they wear grey suits or blue. The egg-heads are the exception, but although their behavior may at first sight appear to be anarchic, within their own conventions they conform as much as those whom they accuse of petty-bourgeois morality. Nor is America more than a forerunner of the pattern of industrialised society, for Americans have no inherent characteristics which make them alone susceptible to the attractions of consumer goods. Europeans of the east as well of the west are showing an embarrassing proneness to put stoves and cars before spiritual satisfaction, and Australians are probably the most assiduous suburbanites in the world.

Vance Packard's entertaining description of the social behavior of Americans in "The Status Seekers" (Longmans, 26/-), is thus not only an interesting account of a people in their own natural habitat in the manner of a writer discussing the natives of the Trobriand Islands, but very likely to prove an illuminating indication of what lies ahead of us. He lists the important changes which have influenced American society since the war—the spectacular increase in individual wealth and the changed distribution of wealth which has resulted in a diminishing contrast between the lives of the rich and the poor; the shift in vocational skills from manual to white-collar and professional workers, and the fall in the numbers of self-employed and employers in the work force; the tendency to increase the size of the unit of industry or government enterprise together with the narrowing down of the specialisations of work; and the increase in the mobility of the population and the mass production of homes. Packard shows that these changes have led to the increasing stratification of society and greater rigidity in the social class structure, although the main barriers to class movement are no longer in moving from manual to white collar groups, but in passing from the non-university to the university-degree group of the upper-middle and upper classes. He is forthright in discussing the position of the underprivileged in American society—particularly Jews and Negroes—and points out that even though social patterns are repeated within these groups, to move from the underprivileged to the privileged is difficult, and for the Negro people at least, impossible.

Packard claims that the geographical mobility of the population, together with increasing social rigidity, has led to more emphasis on status symbols, and this has resulted in great personal tension

and fears for a large proportion of the American people. He is at his best illustrating the status symbols whether in the office—"Pecking Orders in Corporate Barnyards"—or in the home, where he describes the latest approach of real estate operators in capturing trade: The 40,000 dollar house sold as a "love" symbol to the nouveau riche husband who is assumed to have been neglecting his wife to make money is surpassed by Long Island houses for those who have arrived, advertised as "a Georgian split, with a bilevel brunch bar in a maitre d'kitchen". Our real estate promoters are doing their best, but the dreary expanse of mosquito—and sand-fly—infested tidal creek flats on the Gold Coast still only rates as "Miami Keys". The purchase of genuine family antiques and portraits of ancestors is a status symbol not only of America, but one resorted to in Vaucluse and Toorak as well.

Packard based his book on the findings of American sociologists and market researchers, and it unfortunately bears the imprint of empiricist confusion of the original works. "The Status Seekers" is eminently readable, and Packard has done the sociologists a service in boiling down their thick and often indigestible tomes into a best-seller, but except where he is drawing on his own experience of the commercial world he is maddeningly confused, unperceptive, and touchingly naive. He fails to distinguish between the two main features of American development during the last fifty years—the exhaustion of the frontier, and the growth of a mass-production, industrial society. As a result he fails to see what is new in the situation merely for America, and what is new for society as a whole.

Thus for example there is no novelty either in rigid social divisions, or in the existence of status symbols. When glass was scarce, the number of windows indicated one's place in the world. In the days of the horse-drawn carriage, the quality of the horses was a status symbol. For centuries servants have been regarded as the touchstone of social position in practically every country of the world. The growing importance of status and status symbols is significant only in the countries of the New World—particularly in America and Australia—where the open frontier till the end of the nineteenth century tended to offset the rigidity of social class.

★

What is new in society today is the development of large, bureaucratic, impersonal organisations whether in business or in government offices, and the lessening importance of the individual worker. This has led to the isolation of people at work, and often in the social context as well, and has led them to seek their chief satisfaction, not in relation to their work and to other people, but in the accumulation of goods. Since the value of goods is ever declining, it has meant the accumulation of status goods. Packard unfortunately does not explore the vast area of the middle- and lower-income status seekers and their pre-occupation with the acquisition, replacement, arrangement and re-arrangement of material possessions, a trend which Australian market research findings would suggest is no less pervasive here than in America. Packard does point to the smothering effect of the media of mass communication on cultural standards, and argues for increased educational opportunities to broaden social mobility and lessen rigidities of class, but he fails to see how the cultural vacuum of the television age contributes to the materialist society.

It would be dangerous to transpose conclusions about the American scene to Australia without qualification, but at the same time there is more

to be learned from Packard about the social behavior of the inhabitants of Latrobe and St. George electorates than from any book written about Australia. Partly this is because Australian sociologists have not even begun to make the sort of detailed investigation that forms the basis of "The Status Seekers", and partly because the works of fiction devoted to contemporary urban life which form some of Packard's most telling sources have no parallel in Australia. Where would an Australian writer find novels and stories which analyse and describe the life of the people in the cities, in the new and modern factories which today predominate, in the glass house offices and airlines? Where would he find descriptions of the thousands of satisfied voters of the vast sprawl of suburbia who provide the willing and eager customers for new refrigerators, gleaming stoves, steam irons and power tool kits which are the current symbols of status and means of self-expression for Joe Blow, Australian?

★ HELEN HUGHES.

Two Poets

"The Music of Division" by Chris Wallace-Crabbe (Angus & Robertson, 9/6); "The Earthbound And Other Poems" by Charles Higham (Angus & Robertson, 10/6).

It is always tempting to make generalisations about the state of Australian poetry, its direction, its main tendencies, where the young writers seem to be heading and to what "school" they belong, particularly at this stage, where certain "divisions" and currents are fairly clear: tempting, but unnecessary. The two books which open Angus & Robertson's new series of Modern Australian Poets will certainly provide a great deal to satisfy the tendency-and-movement hunters and cataloguers.

At least half of the poems in Mr. Wallace-Crabbe's volume are concerned in one way or another with poetry, poetic creation, art, painting and architecture; the basic theme of his book is his profound respect for the great achievements of the human spirit, the contrast between the world of art and the shabby suburban-city world in which most of us have to work and live. Mr. Wallace-Crabbe is deeply concerned with man as a social being, but even more with the fundamental dilemma of man, who is the bearer, in his ephemeral existence, of the conscience of the universe. Mr. Wallace-Crabbe sees the creation of a work of art as an act of heroic exploration, a constant moving beyond the frontiers of the known and reassuring; and he celebrates man's ability to impose order on chaos, to face the unknown and to stake out his claims on the edge of darkness. At the same time he is deeply aware that this can only be done while the known is being re-lived and made personal, assessed and ordered.

Mr. Wallace-Crabbe refuses to idealise the triumphs of the past or of the world of art. They may seem to represent the permanent; but great houses can crumble, and admiration for the work of other great poets can block the real sources of inspiration. The only certainty is "the tough resilience of man". Mr. Wallace-Crabbe does not express contempt for or even exasperation with our shabby daily world, but a baffled compassion for its inhabitants, and the sense of his own total involvement in it. It is "the area where love begins".

This inability or refusal to express hatred or contempt seems to me to mar the middle section of the book, where the poems, except for the wholly delightful and successful "A Word of Advice", lack bite, particularly as the poet seems to be attack-

ing those attitudes which are an evasion of a full awareness and acceptance of the human condition.

The tone of Mr. Wallace-Crabbe's poems is always carefully modulated and well-bred. They have a natural ease and dignity which is admirably exemplified in the first and third sections of the book and particularly in such poems as "Lines to a Friend in Winter" and "The Coming of Autumn". But they have something more than this: a quiet strength and tenacity, a toughness of mind which shows itself just as much in the shape of the poems as in what is clearly a deliberate refusal to indulge in mere lyricism. This occasionally gives some of his poems a slightly willed quality.

Because Mr. Wallace-Crabbe is fully aware of the difficulties of being human, he is a deeply affirmative poet. Those who are interested in hearing a genuine poetic voice will be grateful for this book.

★

The bulk of Charles Higham's poems are based on mythological subjects or are recreations of certain moments in the lives of great men like Saint Augustine or Byron or attempts to convey the atmosphere of certain paintings or stylised places and landscapes; but there is a section of "Australian" poems which express Mr. Higham's reactions and feelings to his adopted land; and a moving direct personal note comes through these poems, which is sometimes absent from some of the more "impersonal" or set pieces. Unlike the writer on the dust-jacket, I would not describe Mr. Higham's poems as spare, except in one or two instances. It seems clear to me that in Mr. Higham's case the intensity of the emotions is not expressed through or as a refining or paring down of the language, but through verbal accumulation, at times congestion, which he controls through his occasionally intrusive but most accomplished metrical dexterity and richness of rhyme. There seems to be a general opinion that Mr. Higham is a sort of "intellectual classicist"; but it is obvious from these poems that his sensibility is deeply romantic and that he is an intensely romantic poet. Perhaps that is what makes "Still Lives" such a fine poem; and a poem like "The Hospital" so disappointing.

Mr. Higham's book ends with three translations: Marteau's "Homage to Gongora", Valery's "Ebauche d'un Serpent" and Mallarmé's notoriously difficult "The Afternoon of a Faun". If these last two poems are not translated as perfectly as some of the French and German poems John Manifold, Harold Stewart and James McAuley have turned into English, no one who knows exactly what Mr. Higham has undertaken and the extraordinary difficulties of translation could refuse to praise these renderings highly.

VIVIAN SMITH.

★ Lockhart River

Kylie Tennant's "Speak You So Gently" (Gollancz, 22/6) is both an excellent travel-biography and another argument that there is such a thing as an Australian literature. Not because it is only about true Australians, colored and white, written by one steeped in an Australian outlook; but also because it is fairly obvious that only an Australian could have written it. In a way I am sorry that it was published by a typically English publisher with absolutely no interest in Australia; but probably this has ensured greater sales and better royalties.

The main character, of course, is that well-known anomaly, Alf Clint, a Clerk in Holy Orders of very High Church Anglican persuasion and a real radical. Kylie Tennant is not the only one

who has decided to become a Christian instead of merely a member of the Church of England because of the impact of this member of the Christian Socialist Movement. The book shows clearly Alf's likes and dislikes, which might be summarised. Likes: A Fair Go for All. Native People (colored or white). A Glass of Beer. Dislikes: Large Mining Corporations. Slackers of all kinds. Bishops who have not served their time in New Guinea and Carpentaria.

Although the book is concerned mostly with the native co-operatives at Lockhart River and Moa one gets a glimpse, tantalising and clear, of what has been done and could be done in other areas of New Guinea and Northern Queensland. (The word "clear" comes to a reviewer's mind so often because that is the centre-point of this book—clarity, both of vision and writing.) Just as certain, also, was the tremor of fear that went through the co-operatives when the Labor Government destroyed itself in Queensland and gave way to a government which put the large mining companies first and the interests of the Aborigines last. Fortunately things have not turned out as badly at Lockhart River as in the nearby Presbyterian mission area of Weipa, possibly because the ores are not as good at Lockhart, possibly, also, because the Presbyterians did not have an Alf Clint to stir up a hornet's nest in Queensland and N.S.W., particularly amongst the trade unions, where he gets most of his support.

The job that Clint and his merry band of workers have in front of them is to make native reserves a place where the people can live, instead of a place where they can die, as was the intention of the original Act of Parliament.

Inevitably, this book must be compared with "Yandy" and the important story of Don McLeod. It is a far better book, not necessarily because its characters are better; but because it is written as a book to give pleasure as well as instruction. It drives home similar lessons much more surely and it is written with great charity and understanding. It made at least one reader wish he were twenty years younger and had more knowledge of cattle and mining, for here surely is a job much more worthy than, for example, learning how to fight a war. Here is a chance to work out a real destiny. That is the impact of this book. You feel glad to know that there are people like Alf Clint, John Warby, the kindly Aborigines who run their own co-operatives and are really lifting themselves by their own efforts, and Kylie Tennant who put up with a lot of hardship (and got a lot of fun) getting the material for this book.

If you are not interested in knowing about our native people, how they live and think, you can still enjoy this book merely as a first class travel book written by Australia's best Australian writer.
A. W. SHEPPARD.

★

1959 Poetry

What did the poet's crop for 1959 give us? Did it interpret our country anew for us, did it fire us with a new vision of man and reality, did it turn our common world into something rich and strange?

Unfortunately, none of these things! It's true that the Australian poet is learning to handle the speech rhythms of his countrymen with more ease and less self-consciousness, but there is little excitement and much pedestrian slickness in his work.

Two 1959 anthologies, Angus & Robertson's "Australian Poetry 1959" (15/-) and "Verse in

Australia" (Mary Martin, 15/-), have a general level of mediocre competence, but few poems give that shock of revelation, that joyous surprise that comes when part of life is revealed to us, truly and whole, as if we never really saw it before.

A. D. Hope's "Friday", Thomas Shapcott's "Woman at the Bar", David Martin's "The Gift" and the superbly vitriolic "Unsolicited Sonnet to a Sydney Policeman" run close to fulfilling these needs, but there is not another poem in either anthology to touch Robert Fitzgerald's "The Wind at the Door".

"Australian Poetry, 1959" includes this poem, and it is also published by Talkarra Press in a limited edition of 275 copies (10/6). It is easily the most satisfying and remarkable poem published in Australia last year. In language deceptively close to ordinary speech and thought, yet lucid, rich and powerful, FitzGerald explores the interrelation between Martin Mason, his doctor-ancestor, Maurice FitzGerald, Irish convict and patriot, the jaiyard that widens to take in the whole country, the burden of guilt from the past, and our common heritage of truth and courage.

W. Hart Smith hasn't got FitzGerald's controlled power, his ease with words and speech rhythms, but the best of his sixty-four "Poems of Discovery" (A. & R., 18/-) have FitzGerald's sense of history and discovery through the compact image; poems like "Lyre Bird", "El Dorado", the H-bomb poem "Aikitch Kuboyama" and many of the "Christopher Columbus" sequence . . . "masters, a ship, a ship, for my youth dies".

"These are poems of affirmation", Hart-Smith tells us on the flyleaf, and it is just this sense of involvement in life, of exciting and sensuous discovery that is the stuff of poetry:

I need some star
Of courage from his firmament, a bar
Against surrenders: faith. All trials are less
than rain-blacked wind tells of that old
distress

writes FitzGerald.

The same star of courage is needed by Australian poets, and faith and a bar against surrenders, before this vast and complex land can be truly discovered and richly interpreted.

DOROTHY HEWETT.

★

Maoriland

Maurice Shadbolt has carefully divided his eleven excellent stories in "The New Zealanders" (Gollancz, 22/6) into three sections which roughly describe New Zealanders in the country, in the cities and overseas.

But the special locality that he celebrates in two of his finest stories, "The Waters of the Moon" and "The Woman's Story", is the Hokianga Harbor in the sub-tropical north. Hokianga has the oldest European settlements in New Zealand yet today it has become a rural backwater populated by people of mixed blood: it is Mr. Shadbolt's "Faulkner" country. Here, he builds a setting for symbolic characters in whom he tries to sort out the features of national identity and the patterns of thought and emotion. These characters are painted against a landscape that is humid and oppressive and, like Faulkner's characters, they seem almost to merge and become indistinguishable from the hills, the trees and the mangroves of the mudflats.

This is not to say that his characters lose individuality but rather that the effect of his atmos-

phere and tension is to give them a larger and more mysterious existence.

Mr. Shadbolt has put some of the deepest quality of his observation and compassion into studies of the talented young men and women who make up a "beat" fringe of New Zealand society; this fringe seems to be quite as tangled in its apathies and enthusiasms and quite as numerically significant as anywhere else in the world.

One interesting deviation from a general New Zealand literary trend is that few of his characters are children, and another significant thing is that his Maori characters are not the "bush Maoris" of much fiction but are usually educated and hold their own with the Europeans. The main distinguished feature of the Maoris in these stories is their still basically Polynesian attitude to money, work and love. This is brought out in a brilliant story, "The Strangers", which contrasts a European farmer working to pay off his mortgage and his Maori cow-hand who saves to have a summer of pleasure: neither can hope to understand the first thing about the other.

Some of the situations in the book turn around left-wing problems. "Knock on Yesterday's Door" handles aspects of university socialism and, in "After the Depression", he weaves a delicate pattern of nuance and dialogue into the story of a jobless leader of the unemployed and his wife and child which mark this story out as one of the book's most polished accomplishments.

Stylistically, Mr. Shadbolt spreads himself into quite long stories with little economy of thoughts and words—indeed he manufactures quite a few new verbs into the bargain—yet he avoids a clumsy and meandering style with his precise constructions of dialogue and situation.

Altogether, this volume of stories by a twenty-seven year old New Zealander, which has already been enthusiastically reviewed in Britain, is a remarkable instance of the trend that has seen much of the best contemporary writing in English come from countries outside England.

KEVIN IRELAND.

★

Bushman's Year

As a prophylactic against the falsities and affectations of literature, Stendhal liked to read letters and memoirs. There are fewer good writers of memoirs in English than in French, but more field naturalists; and I find that men like Hudson, Barrett, Durrell, and now Jack Hyett in "A Bushman's Year" (Cheshire, 30/-), serve Stendhal's purpose admirably.

Like Mme. de Sevigne and Roger North, the naturalist writes in order to transmit facts. But the struggle to observe facts minutely and set them down exactly seems to give the best of the naturalists a beautifully pure and lucid style which the professional literary stylist might well envy. Like so many of his predecessors, Hyett writes simply, clearly and vividly, conveying his own delight in things without strain or self-consciousness.

His book consists of short essays on the beasts, birds, insects, fish, flowers, trees and meteorology of the Victorian countryside. The sequence is seasonal; it opens with the flowering of the Hyacinth Orchid and closes with Christmas Trees. In between, the author glances at such varied subjects as The Fantail's Wineglass, A Dog's Dreaming, Screams in the Night, and Rainmakers.

No matter how much you know about the bush, Hyett will keep you interested. Sometimes his

actual facts are novel: when he talks about bees in the sheoaks, for instance, or upsets the received taxonomy of magpies. But even more often he holds you with the very freshness of his personal vision, and with his gift for seeing the laws of nature embodied in something as ordinary and habitual as the boiling of a billy.

The photographs by Don Wirth and decorations by Ron Edwards are worthy of the text. The indexing is really careful and thorough. Alan Marshall's introduction assures me that I am not alone in finding this a fine and valuable book.

J.S.M.

★

Saturday Afternoon

Miss Neilma Sidney, in her short-story collection "Saturday Afternoon" (Cheshire, 22/6), writes with meticulous delicacy and tastefulness in her use of language and despite a few strained similes her overall style is unpretentious. Each story is told with charm and clarity. And this clarity of language is matched by naturalness of setting and plot. The stories concern normal people performing normal, everyday functions. That Miss Sidney can imbue this everydayism with the illumination of deeper things shows that she is a writer.

At her best, in stories such as "Warm Darkness", which tells of a mature romance during an Italian holiday, she writes with great beauty of the more intimate and essential qualities of love, the love of concordant personalities moving towards empathy.

Her ability to sustain this theme is a welcome antidote to the popular concept of love as terrifyingly influenced by the untruths of the Hollywood Sex Image.

ADRIAN RAWLINS.

★

Two Novels

The Sydney firm of Ure Smith has recently published two novels, "Strike Me Lucky" by Joy Cleary (18/-) and "Summer Glare" by Gerard Hamilton (19/6), both dealing with aspects of life in small country towns.

"Strike Me Lucky" falls into that category of literature known as "light reading", although its humor and style raise it to a higher level than that description usually suggests.

Of the two books, however, it is "Summer Glare" that leaves the most powerful impression. Certainly I can't think of any other Australian novel that deals so uninhibitedly and, according to my limited experience, so honestly with the lives of the inhabitants of a bush township. The novel is, in fact, almost an anthropological study: although the plot held my interest and the characters and their conflicts grew to considerable reality in my mind, it was the portrait of Shannon's Flat, "this little Australian town high in the New England hills", that most impressed me. Shannon's Flat with its two hundred inhabitants is revealed through the words of the narrator, Ken Collins, as a village of ignorance and boredom, where drinking and sex are the primary amusements. Yet the author unfolds this portrait with so much affection for the people and the countryside that I was, despite myself, absorbed and deeply moved.

L.C.

Purity and Purpose

This posthumous little book, "The Remaking of Man and Other Poems", by Nat Seeligson (Guardian, Melbourne, 5/-), commemorates a man of great purity and noble purpose. Nattie Seeligson's poetry is the product of a dedicated life. His sole interest in art—or almost his sole interest—was directed towards its social usefulness.

When dealing with such poetry one can make two mistakes. One can say that compared to its lofty content any defects of form are unimportant. Or one can say that formal defects invalidate its higher aim. Both are wrong attitudes because the first would be patronising and the second destructive.

It is true that Seeligson was not a particularly good craftsman in verse. (He was a good and exceptionally painstaking journalist.) But, as sometimes happens, in his best moments his work takes fire from his objective. "Comrades Come" has a flavor of Shelley:

See the sun light up the summits
Far above the hanging clouds:
So the light of human reason
Soars above fear's darkest shrouds.

For his wife he wrote:

I am alloy,
mix of metals,
some debased
and some refined;
can I sift
the slag-like dredgings,
remake myself
both heart and mind?

All his days Nat Seeligson wanted to help remake man, and himself as a humble part of human-kind. He had a strong lyrical urge which he strove to infuse into all his verse, proof not only of his faith in but also his ache for his fellows. Nothing that could move a man left him untouched, and it is moving to see how he labored to merge in every line the lyrical with a sterner passion. He loved the domestic virtues best because he found in them a symbol of man's essential goodness, as well as a support in his own, not easy, life. He sings "in praise of sedition, which was, which is, which ever will be", but he was in many, and good, ways a conservative being—there's not necessarily a contradiction.

One is glad that "The Remaking of Man" was published, though sad that the author, always modest about his own work, did not live to see it. There is a place for such poets and an honorable place for their poems.

D.M.

★

Cartoonist

Jules Feiffer, like the inspired creators of Pogo, Colonel Pewter and a very few other strips, has brought originality into the highly derivative field of the comic strip and cartoon. Like the best cartoonists of all days and ages he is primarily a satirist of his own day and age—and notably in

this case of the social hypocrisy, fashionable psychopathology, artificial tensions, gimmicks, phony "revolt" and other "sick" aspects of contemporary prosperous capitalist civilisation in general and of the U.S.A. variety in particular.

Feiffer, whose first book "Sick Sick Sick" (Colins, 13/3) has just appeared, isn't a bit sick himself. He's a thoroughly healthy, superbly witty, devastatingly accurate critic of the American scene. And he doesn't only take his compatriots' pants down. It must be a very myopic man who can't see some reflections of himself in Feiffer's work.

The appearance of Feiffer, like that of Lehrer, from the American scene is cheering. OK, their humor is egghead humor, appealing to a minority. But so has a lot of other damaging social satire been in the course of history. And one only has to observe the reaction of young people to Tom Lehrer to be given reason to ponder. Here, perhaps, is a clue to that touch-stone the politicians of the left are seeking—how to get across a message so that people will stop, look and listen.

One can welcome the contribution of the Lehrers and the Feiffers at the same time that one recognises that it is essentially a minority audience that is aimed at, that these are useful darts in a duel that demands big guns. As George Kennan has pointed out recently, many of the so-called "critical" books about America and "western" civilisation today reflect "in their cynicism and in their hopelessness precisely the same evils against which they were written," and he reminds us of the real angries—Sinclair Lewis, Steinbeck, dos Passos, Wolfe, Anderson, O'Neill—of thirty years ago.

S.M.S.

E. L. Wheelwright & Bruce McFarlane
write on

Labor and Inflation

in the current issue of the bi-monthly
independent socialist review

OUTLOOK

Also A. W. Sheppard, Dr. Owen Chapman, Barrie Dallas, J. D. McLaren, R. G. Haworth, and

Africa: Explosion Point

OUTLOOK invites every Australian socialist
to become a read and contributor.

Next issue: What's new about the New Left?

Annual subscription: 15/- from Box 368,

Post Office, Haymarket, Sydney.

Just out: Discussion Pamphlet *Yugoslavia* by
Barcan and McFarlane (2/-).

OUTLOOK — an independent socialist
review

Editor: Helen G. Palmer

VOSS

by PATRICK WHITE

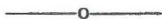
will be available in Australia as a Penguin on

APRIL 28th

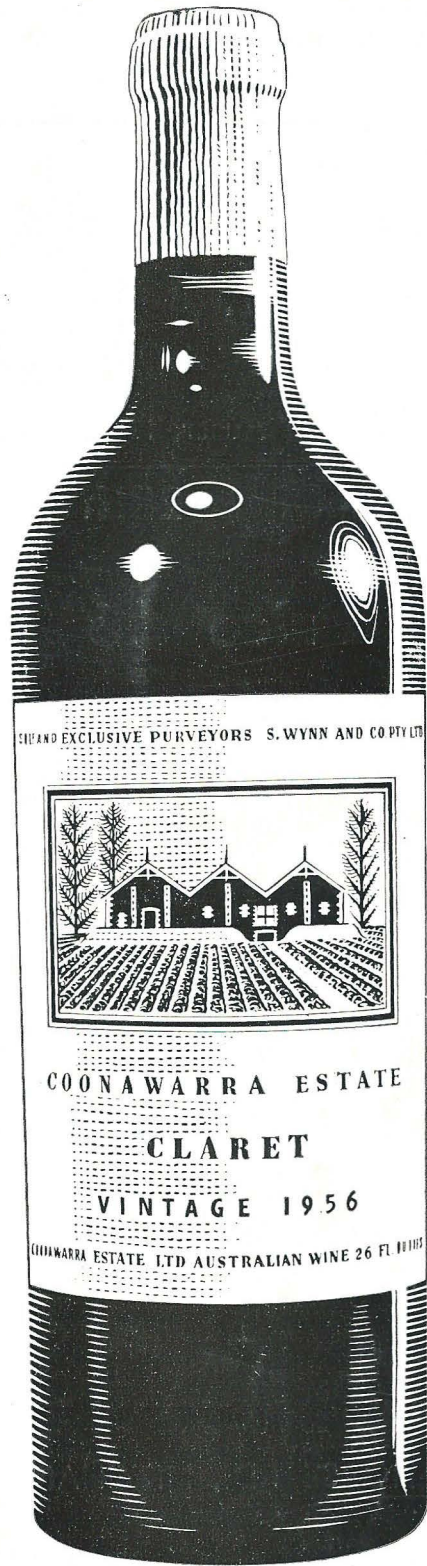
Price 7/6

FROM ALL BOOKSELLERS

The first W. H. Smith Annual Literary Award of £1,000 was awarded in November 1959 to Patrick White for his novel VOSS. The object of the W. H. Smith award is to give encouragement to authors of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. It is made to the author of the book which in the opinion of the judges makes "the most outstanding contribution to English literature" during the period under review—namely the 24 months ending 31st December preceding the presentation of the award. It is particularly gratifying that the first award should be made to an Australian writer, to whom we offer our sincerest congratulations.



PENGUIN BOOKS PTY. LTD.
762 WHITEHORSE RD., MITCHAM, VICTORIA



Your life is more pleasant with Wine

C6R