

# OVERLAND

*Eureka Centenary Number*

NUMBER TWO, SUMMER 1954-55.

ONE SHILLING



Burning the licences, 1854

by H. McC.

## WRITING BY:

Dr. H. V. Evatt, Vance Palmer, Hugh Anderson, William Hatfield, Laurence Collinson, Jack Lindsay, Allyn Vaisey, Jean Devanny, David Martin, John Manifold, Mick Lawson, Len Fox, Jock Graham and others.



## COLLINSVILLE

I wrote to a miner  
Who has the poet's craft:  
"Be sparing of blood and death,  
For they love and they laugh."  
But before the ink was dry  
Death went to the shaft.

The seven silent colliers,  
Their eyes are turned within.  
They lie and they listen  
To a far, secret thing.  
Like a mourning ribbon  
The black veins in their skin.

Like a mourning ribbon  
Two thousand marchers press  
Behind the seven coffins.  
More softly than the rest  
Walk the black-clad women  
In the widows' dress.

This is where they drank,  
And this is where they sat,  
And this is where they courted  
The girls that wear black:  
Their town and their lives,  
And the games they were at.

I wrote again to the miner  
Who is a poet by right:  
"Sing of the seven  
Who at Collinsville died.  
Sing how the seven colliers  
Went into the night."

I wrote again to my brother:  
"Oh, spare us no death,  
For death has in Collinsville  
Built a new nest.  
Blow us bitterness  
With seven men's breath."

DAVID MARTIN.

## RESPONSE

David Martin wrote to me:  
"Not too much tragedy.  
With love and laughter  
Your writings leaven."  
And as he wrote to me  
Death came to seven.

David Martin wrote again:  
"Once more take up your pen.  
Write now with bitterness—  
Write of the seven.  
Write of the dead men now,  
Write of the seven."

Write of the dead men.  
Write now of Death again.  
Write now of Collinsville.  
What shall I write?  
Seven more dead men  
Far from the light.

Limp bodies lying there  
Cut off from light and air.  
We have seen scores of them.  
Now only seven.  
But it was lack of care  
Brought death to seven.

No care for safety there.  
Anger and grief we share  
With those that mourn them,  
Seven times seven.  
Widows and children care—  
Mourn for the seven.

Profits count more than lives.  
Count more than bereft wives.  
It must not come again,  
That we must see.  
Seven men gave their lives.  
This must not be.

David Martin wrote to me:—  
"Write not of tragedy."  
And as he wrote to me  
Seven died needlessly.  
Death called for seven.  
I write of tragedy,  
Death has claimed seven.

MICK LAWSON.

## MAN OF THE EARTH

By profession and birth I'm a man of the earth,  
I burrow in it like a mole;  
I dig it and drill it, I blast it and fill it,  
For that great commodity—coal.

To some I'm a brave man, to others a knave man  
Who's puttin' the land in a hole;  
A stab-in-the-back man, a black and a slack man,  
Who plunders the country of coal.

It's narkin' at times to be blamed for their crimes,  
And placed in a villainous role;  
Invented by story, press-agent and tory,  
The grabbers of profit from coal.

No story of men who are suffering pain,  
Of heroes who starve on the dole;  
Nowt written or spoken of hearts that are broken—  
The widows and orphans of coal.

The court is the gauge which determines my wage,  
The parson looks after my soul;  
My hands are my boss's, his gains and his losses—  
My body is bartered for coal.

The gaps in our lines—the "Red Roll" of the mines  
Show death has been takin' its toll;  
While snipers at maimed men, and good men and  
famed men,  
Grow fat on the blood on the coal.

Yet through muck and mire and lung dust and fire,  
More clearly I'm seein' my goal;  
To work and unite and to preach and to fight,  
For socialist mining of coal.

JOCK GRAHAM.



# THE EUREKA STOCKADE

Herbert V. Evatt

## INTRODUCTION

TOO little known and quite insufficiently appreciated for its historical importance, Carboni Raffaello's *The Eureka Stockade* is a unique book. It is the only complete first-hand account of both the attack on the Eureka Stockade on Sunday, December 3rd, 1854, and the main events which preceded and followed. Raffaello was not only an eyewitness, but a prominent leader of the diggers. So prominent that he was tried for high treason in respect of his share in the business. After his acquittal by a Melbourne jury, he was elected by the miners of Ballarat as a member of the Local Court which was established after the fierce resistance of the miners to the tyrannical administration of the licensing system.

## I. RAFFAELLO AND HIS BOOK

W. B. Withers, the author of the important *History of Ballarat*, calls Raffaello's "a quaint polyglottic book." This seems a somewhat patronizing understatement, but Withers adds, with great accuracy, that Raffaello was possessed of "a warm poetic temperament, with considerable shrewdness of observation and faculty for description," and that "his narrative has colour and fire and incisiveness, and will make itself read."

Who was Raffaello? What more impressive introduction than his own? "Carboni Raffaello, da Roma, Member of the College of Preceptors (1850), Bloomsbury Square, professor, interpreter and translator of the Italian, French, Spanish and German language into English, or vice versa, late of 4 Castle-Court, Birchin-lane, Cornhill, London, now gold-digger of Ballarat." Raffaello's correct name appears to have been Raffaello Carboni, not Carboni Raffaello.

## III.\* THE CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that in substance the truth of Eureka is revealed in Raffaello's work. We make a reasonable discount for his likes and dislikes, his excitability, his burning indignation at what he regards as cruelty or injustice. We are able to do so, because Raffaello never conceals his feelings, so that the reader is never lulled into the belief that he writes purely as a remote historian. But, while his comment is free, he treats facts as sacred things. Whenever his assertions of facts can be

checked by independent testimony, they stand the test. His testimony is that of an honest witness; more than that, the picture he gives is in essential conformity with all the facts revealed by subsequent research, and those facts may now be re-stated. By 1854, when most of the miners were eking out a precarious living, the existing licence taxes were excessive. Certainly the system of organized "digger hunts" was revolting to all men who valued their self-respect. Unfortunately, a section of the police force, recruited from Tasmania in times of emergency, consisted of ex-convicts, and many of these were quite unfit to hold so responsible a position. Worse still, there was corruption among the magistracy on the mining fields, and harsh and tyrannical conduct on the part of some of the resident Commissioners. Although the diggers were compelled to contribute towards the revenue of the country, their civil status was impaired, they enjoyed no political rights. Little or no facility was afforded for leasing or purchasing Crown lands and becoming permanent settlers. Many of the miners were aliens, but most of them were men of ability, physique and courage, and, once admitted to the colony, they were entitled to just treatment.

The main responsibility for the tragedy of Eureka should be imputed to Sir Charles Hotham. During his life, and for some years after his death, much blame was unfairly attributed to Colonial Secretary Foster and the resident Commissioners on the goldfields. But Hotham not only approved the existing practice of "licence hunting" by armed police in company, which was probably illegal, but, with supreme folly, ordered its extension at a time of growing unrest. Although men of all races and nationalities were collected at Ballarat, it was the diggers of British race who were most prominent in the agitation. What united the diggers was not hatred of Britain or the British connection, but natural and inevitable resentment at the outrages to that feeling of self-respect which is common to all civilised humanity. The riot which ended in the burning of Bentley's hotel was quite illegal; yet, if there had been no riot, Hotham would not have ordered any enquiry into the charges of corruption openly made by the miners against both magistracy and police. The enquiry showed clearly that the charges were solidly based. Towards the end of November, Hotham, while justifiably refusing to yield to the "demand" for the immediate release of three digger rioters, gave assurances to the effect that the whole question of mining administration was then under review. Yet, at the very same time, he had secretly ordered strong detachments of military and police to be despatched to Ballarat. Their arrival accentuated hostility towards the administration; it meant that to the probably illegal force employed in the "digger hunts" was now to be added the further force of the military. The decision of the miners on Wednesday, November 29th, to burn the licences strongly suggested that the application of such further force would be met by armed resistance. Even then, patience on the part of Hotham and Rede would probably have caused a conciliatory move. Yet Hotham not only delayed the issue of the long overdue Royal Com-

\* Although widely referred to as the most penetrating study ever made of the Eureka Stockade, this essay of Dr. Evatt's has never been reprinted since it appeared as the Introduction to a limited edition (150 copies) of Carboni Raffaello's *The Eureka Stockade* in 1942 (Sunnybrook Press). We are therefore grateful to Dr. Evatt for permission to make the study available to the Australian general public for the first time. Owing to limitations of space and to the fact that of primary significance for the Eureka Centenary are Dr. Evatt's views on the Stockade as a whole, we have reluctantly omitted some parts of the essay which were less specifically directed to this end. We refer readers to the original (available in libraries) for the missing passages, comprising most of Section I, Section II (Chronology), Section VI.



mission of Enquiry (the mere announcement of which might well have pacified the miners); he actually ordered full scale "digger hunts" on Thursday, November 30th. Nothing was more calculated to cause violence and bloodshed. In the circumstances, it was an act of madness.

Despite its exceedingly flimsy structure, the erection of the stockade on Friday and Saturday was an act of provocation by the miners. But a wise Government would probably have ignored even this move, because, in spite of police spies and agents provocateurs, such as Goodenough and Peters, Raffaello is right in insisting that there was no intention on the part of the miners to attack the camps of the police or military. Had there been evidence of such an intention, it would certainly have been tendered during the many treason trials. It was not forthcoming. In an evil moment, Hotham and Rede determined to use all the force at their disposal and to destroy the stockade by open attack. Before dawn on Sunday, December 3rd, when the number of miners within the stockade was only 150, the attack was made by a superior force against defenders who were poorly armed and taken completely by surprise. As it was bound to be, the attack was successful. About 30 miners and 5 soldiers lost their lives. After the capture of the stockade a section of the mounted police disgraced their office by callous and atrocious behaviour.

Throughout Victoria public opinion favoured the miners and condemned the administration, particularly Foster (Colonial Secretary) and Stawell (Attorney-General). All thirteen miners who were committed for trial on charges of high treason were acquitted by Melbourne juries, despite Hotham's extraordinary attempts to obtain fresh juries who would view the Crown's case more sympathetically. Subsequently the report of the Royal Commission, which Hotham hurriedly appointed after the fateful December 3rd, was favourable to the main claims of the miners, and condemnatory of the mining administration.

It may fairly be said that the Eureka Stockade put an end not only to an unjust tax upon labour, but to a brutal and tyrannical method of enforcing that tax. It procured for the miners equality in political status, a franchise both in the general government of the colony and in the local administration of the mining laws. It accelerated a general movement towards unlocking the Crown lands of the country. It certainly hastened the inauguration of responsible self-government in Victoria. In the end, public opinion and popular agitation prevailed over mere legalism. Some writers who have failed to understand the importance of Eureka did not consider the affair in the light of Raffaello's narrative.

#### IV. RAFFAELLO'S CHARGE AGAINST HOTHAM

In one respect, Raffaello displayed almost miraculous sagacity as a historian. After the storming of the stockade there was a general tendency to blame Resident Commissioner Rede of Ballarat and Chief Secretary Foster of Melbourne as the persons really responsible for the ultimate tragedy. Raffaello would never accept such an interpretation, which, of course, tended to influence public opinion in favour of Hotham. In Chapter XLI, Raffaello insisted that Rede was only a marionette, and that "each of his words, each of his movements, was the vibration of the telegraphic wires directed from Toorak." "I would," adds Raffaello, "willingly turn burglar to get hold of the whole of the correspondence between him and Toorak. I feel satisfied I

would therein unravel the MYSTERY of the Eureka massacre."

Raffaello thus insisted that full responsibility for the attack was to be attributed to Hotham himself, and that Rede, Foster and the rest were merely the instruments of the Governor. Remarkable to relate, when the Select Committee on Foster's claim sat in the year 1867, 13 years after the stockade, it turned out that Raffaello's inference was correct. From the 1867 evidence, it is established, as Withers says, that "the irresistible conclusion is that the Governor, and not the Secretary, was the person directly responsible for the later severity of the enforcing of the hateful licence law." Withers adds:

Foster shows that the Governor ignored him and his officers generally, took outside advice, issued peremptory orders on his own mere motion, and both Foster and other witnesses show that just before the attack upon the Eureka Stockade the Governor held direct correspondence in cypher with some of the Commissioners, passing by not only the Colonial Secretary Foster, but the Chief Commissioner Wright.

It therefore appears that Hotham was in secret communication with Rede and others in authority at Ballarat, and that the attack on the stockade was made with his approval. Hotham never admits this frankly in his official despatches to England. Moreover, when he forwarded to England the report of the Royal Commission, the Governor's accompanying commentaries (dated April 2nd, 1855) deal with the stockade in a most unconvincing manner. He tries to excuse his failure to appoint the Commission until after the Eureka storming; but analysis shows that his excuses are not acceptable. It may well be that there are documents not yet produced which will establish conclusively that Hotham's share of blame is even greater than Raffaello supposed. Hotham's willingness to make a scapegoat of Colonial Secretary Foster (who countersigned the Governor's proclamation of martial law) is most discreditable. His message to the Legislative Council of December 5th was a most disingenuous and misleading document. For all he said was that:

Misguided men, assembled in armed bodies, under military leaders, have intimidated and plundered the well-affected, set the law at defiance, and fired on and killed some of Her Majesty's forces. Promptly to suppress this insurrection, the Lieutenant-Governor, with the advice of his Executive Council, has proclaimed martial law, confining its execution to the district in which the outrages have been perpetrated.

When the people of Melbourne were informed of the truth—that the miners had been attacked while sleeping within their stockade, which, as Withers says, "was at first intended more as a screen behind which the diggers might drill than as a fortification,"—they were aflame with indignation. The Age insisted that the resistance of the miners was "not against the Crown, but against the pollutions and abominations covered by its sanction." The Argus declared that the Government has "sowed the wind and was reaping the whirlwind." A great public meeting of Melbourne citizens attributed the tragedy to "the coercion of military force" and to "the harsh and imprudent recommencement of digger hunting during the period of excitement."

Thus Raffaello's intuitive inference of Hotham's full personal responsibility seems to have been



entirely justified; and the judgment of history must be affected accordingly.

## V. REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION

In any modern analysis of the causes of the Eureka Stockade it is impossible to overestimate the value of a full investigation of the affair at a time when all concerned had a fair opportunity of presenting their case. Accordingly, I regard the report of the Royal Commission appointed by Hotham in December, 1854, as a document of crucial importance, and have relied upon it in my summary of events. I am satisfied that the report has never been sufficiently studied by the writers on Eureka. Some of its findings are of such importance as proving the general accuracy of Raffaello's narrative that I state them below.

1. The evidence brought before the Commission satisfied its members that:

The general voice expressed strong dissatisfaction with the present administration of the goldfields and the absence of a recognised political and general status for the mining population—such as is enjoyed by the other colonists.

2. The Royal Commission reported that the three main causes of discontent were: (a) the licence fee, (b) the land grievance, and (c) the lack of political rights.

3. The licence fee involved:

Repeated conflicts with the police and ill will to the authorities, from their almost continuous "hunt" to detect unlicensed persons, and the constant infraction of the law on the part of the miners, resulting sometimes from accident in losing the licence document, or from absolute inability to pay for it, as well as from any attempt to evade the charge.

4. The Commission discussed the general land grievance caused by the difficulty or impossibility of acquiring land, the settled policy being to protect the monopoly of the squatters.

5. The Commission condemned:

The want of political rights and recognized status, the colony's mining population having been hitherto, in fact, an entirely non-privileged body, invidiously distinct from the remainder of the colonists, consisting of large numbers without gradations of public rank, political representation or any system for self-elected local authority; in short, contributing largely to the wealth and greatness of the colony, without enjoying any voice whatever in its public administration.

6. The Commission reported that the offensive mode of collection of the licence fee "trenched very closely on the limits of human endurance."

7. The Commission was unanimous in recommending the immediate abolition of the licence fee, substituting therefor a miner's right costing only £1 per annum and entitling the holder to full legal protection of his claims and the exercise of the franchise.

8. With regard to the land question, the Commission reported:

They must, however, assert most peremptorily that, under any view of this case, the flocks and herds must give way to the human families. Until this question be entirely disposed of, and placed upon a footing incapable of misunderstanding, harmony can never be attained amongst the people at large, and it cannot therefore be reasonably expected amongst the masses at the goldfields. The piecemeal wrenching of the lands, and the reluctant action of the authorities during past years, have only involved all parties in angry contention.

9. The Commission reported favourably of the fitness of the mining population to be granted political rights: "A degree of intelligence, indeed, that is perhaps but inadequately represented by an assertion that it is second to that of no other industrial interest throughout the colony."

10. They recommended that the miners should be entitled to full political status, and that eight elected and four nominated members of the existing Legislative Council should be assigned to the goldfields. They also recommended the establishment of local Mining Courts to be presided over by a mining warden and to include eight others, all elected by the local miners.

11. Resident Commissioner Rede's conduct at Ballarat was criticized, the Commission stating:

An officer irresponsible to all around him, and with a camp of police at his command, ought in the first place to possess the command of himself; he may otherwise have opportunities far more hurtful to those around him than this slight but illustrative case displays. As a fitting sequel, therefore, it may be remarked that the same Commissioner, who was in charge at Ballarat during the outbreak, to be presently alluded to, appears to have given occasion to precipitate that movement. These incidents are not necessarily inconsistent with the case of a brave and honourable public officer; but they indicate a temper or judgment that may not suit every department of the service, and the goldfields least of all.

12. The Commission found that the burning of the Eureka hotel on November 17th was a consequence of the widespread resentment at the summary dismissal of the murder charge against Bentley, the keeper of the hotel. The Commission reported that the corruption and bribery suspected by the miners was established against the chairman of the bench, Dewes, and the sergeant of police. Of Dewes they added: "From evidence subsequently tendered to the present Commission, they do not hesitate to say that, had their predecessors' enquiries been extended, still grosser practices would have been ascertained against the same individual."

13. The Commission found that the "digger hunt" of Thursday, November 30th, "only precipitated a crisis," "many of the people became seriously alarmed at the prematurely violent procedure of the authorities, and many more were highly incensed."

14. With regard to this "digger hunt," it was stated:

Whatever might have been intended by the official procedure, it was in reality only a premature defiance of the people, ineffectual for any good purpose whatever, and only tending to goad them to the very extreme that both parties should have laboured to avoid. The evidence of witnesses on this point is distressingly emphatic and distinct. In any popular movement, however unexceptionable the conduct of its main body there is a section always in readiness to precipitate an extreme, and but too glad for a good excuse. Such an excuse was here given; and the Commission are disposed to agree in a very general view that, but for the police proceedings in question, the subsequent outbreak might not have occurred.

15. The Commission found that the military manoeuvre attacking the stockade was "well-timed and well-executed," but that, even after the miners built the stockade, "the Commission are not entirely unanimous that, even at this stage, there should



have been on the part of the authorities a deliberate shedding of human blood."

16. The Commission found that, after the attack on the stockade:

The foot police, as a body, appear to have conducted themselves with creditable temper; but assuredly on the part of the mounted division of that force there seems to have been a needless as well as a ruthless sacrifice of human life, indiscriminate of innocent or guilty, and after all resistance had disappeared with the dispersed and flying rioters.

17. The Commission also criticized:

The excessive array of police upon the goldfields. This expensive body, obnoxious in its duties, and banded together upon a camp as if in hostility to the people, seems to have been a deep-seated cause of popular irritation. Nor is this the only view of the case. To the Commission it appeared that the authorities were naturally led to comport themselves towards the people according to the force of troopers and police with which, in any emergency, they could make sure to coerce them.

18. The Commission also held that:

The crisis which was evidently gathering on the goldfields would have been differently and more opportunely met had there been no military arm to rely upon. The introduction of the military into this colony was a measure connected with other and very different considerations than those of civil commotion. [This is a reference to the outbreak of the Crimean War.] The rough hand of the soldier is a prompt cure; but it is a cure of the surface only, and it remedies nothing permanently any more than effectually.

19. The Commission finally criticized Hotham's refusal to grant an amnesty:

They express a regret that the Government should have been unable to accede to their views, and thus have closed a dark and reproachful incident, with the causes of which the Government themselves were not entirely unconcerned, and which there is perhaps a good ground of hope may never occur again.

## VII. RAFFAELLO TRIED FOR HIGH TREASON

Hotham having persisted in refusing any amnesty, two of the thirteen "State prisoners" were "presented" before the Chief Justice in February, 1855. But public opinion still ran high against the administration. Both men were acquitted, but Hotham still persisted in proceeding against the remaining eleven, hoping that a new jury panel would prove more successful. Raffaello's trial did not take place until March 21st, more than three months after his arrest. Mr. Justice Barry presided. Raffaello was defended by barristers Ireland and Aspinall, J. M. Grant acting as his attorney. Raffaello's enthralling description of his own trial is contained in Chapters LXXXIV and XCI.

Attorney-General Stawell prosecuted with vigour, thinking that he might arouse feeling against Raffaello on account of his foreign origin. Although it was Foster whom Hotham sacrificed to public opinion, Stawell's part in the events leading up to Eureka seems to have been more sinister than is commonly supposed. However, by March, 1855, public opinion was venting its indignation upon Stawell, the Age stating:

Then, neither is Attorney-General Stawell exhausted, indeed he never is exhausted; for

there is a bottomless depth in that Mephistophelian mind, with its legal quirks and quiddities; its ingenuity in distorting motives and misrepresenting facts; its eternal stream of small verbiage, which never rises to eloquence and never sinks to sheer nonsense; and, above all, with its hard incapacity for recognizing the claims of simple truth, honour, honesty. Ah! it is a dreadful bargain which a man makes when he barter faith in humanity for the sardonic scepticism of your practised pettifogger.

The chief witnesses against Raffaello were the police agents provocateurs, Henry Goodenough and Andrew Peters. Raffaello describes them as "Vandemonians" and as "spy-major" and "sub-spy." Goodenough gave evidence of the proceedings at the miners' mass meeting on Wednesday, November 29th, and of the activities of the diggers within the stockade. He admitted that on both occasions he was present as a spy. He swore that he took notes at the meeting, but these notes (he said) had mysteriously disappeared. This miserable witness made the worst of impressions on the jury. He was obviously terrified by the cross-examination, when he had to admit that he had pretended to take the oath of loyalty to the diggers beneath the folds of the Southern Cross. He said: "I knelt down. I did not move my lips. I do not know the object the meeting had in view in kneeling down. My object was to be allowed to remain there. I did not say 'Amen.'" Apparently "Amen" stuck in his throat also.

Typical of the witnesses against Raffaello was one Webster. He swore that, at the meeting on the Wednesday, Raffaello had torn up his miner's licence and thrown the pieces into the fire, urging others to follow his example. Unfortunately for Webster, Raffaello had not destroyed his licence, and it was subsequently produced in Court to Webster's extreme discomfiture.

Another curious feature of the trial was that witness after witness swore that, during the attack on the stockade, Raffaello, armed with a pike, had put to fight some of the soldiers. One soldier, Gore, actually swore that he had run away from poor Raffaello! Another swore that he snapped his musket at Raffaello, but it misfired. Raffaello's bright red hair made him so conspicuous that an honest mistake in identity was almost impossible. And, in Chapter LXXXVII, Raffaello solemnly asserts that he never saw any of these witnesses until he saw them at his trial. The truth was that Raffaello took no part whatever in the actual fighting, but only succoured those who were wounded. It follows that there was wilful perjury on the part of the Crown witnesses. But the net result was that Raffaello acquired a reputation for pugnacity, even ferocity, which was entirely undeserved. While this seemed to increase his popularity at Ballarat, it greatly worried him. In Chapter XCIV, he gives an explanation which is at once frank and pathetic: "I was not sorry at the Toorak spiders having lent me the wings of an hero—the principal foreign hero of the Eureka Stockade. My credit consists now in having the moral courage to assert the truth among living witnesses."

In his address to the jury, barrister Ireland fiercely attacked the maladministration at Ballarat. He charged the prosecution with keeping Com-



missioners Rede and Johnston out of the witness box lest they should be cross-examined as to the provocative "digger-hunt" on the Thursday. He assailed the mounted police:

How, Ireland asked, had the valorous policemen acted after the firing from the stockade had ceased? Had not they set fire to the tents containing defenceless women and children, and yet it had taken seven of these men of valour to arrest the prisoner at the London Hotel. (The Age, March 22nd, 1855.)

Ireland also denounced Rede's refusal to meet a deputation from the stockade (which had included Raffaello):

These men had been accused of trying to subvert the Queen's authority; why had the prisoner gone with others to Mr. Read, who is Queen there and Governor paramount, and had asked him in God's name not to precipitate matters in the way he was doing, and that for the preservation of law and order, instead of acting on his unchecked will, and that additional forces were coming which would be the means of restoring peace to the community, not to push matters to the extremity? But no, it did not suit Mr. Read to wait for these reinforcements. Here Read was absolute, he would collect the licences he liked, how he liked, and when he liked. (ibid.)

This comment again makes it necessary to ask why Rede ordered the attack on the Sunday morning. Ireland's unequivocal suggestion was:

The force went there on that Sunday morning, because they wanted to have their quarrel out with the diggers before the arrival of the additional forces and in order that they might reap all the glory which was to be derived from such a valorous expedition. If they had taken the advice of the prisoner, and those who accompanied him to Mr. Read, the authorities might have averted the precipitation of this melancholy conflict. After a review of all the circumstances he was confident that there would be no man in this colony who would have a doubt but that it was the wish of Mr. Read and his myrmidons, having a private quarrel with the diggers, to make the attack before the arrival of the additional forces might prevent it. (ibid.)

Prior to Raffaello's trial, three prisoners (Josephs, the American Negro; Manning, who was Irish; and Lang, who was English) had been acquitted. So Ireland commented:

The Government had failed to ensure conviction in the case of the black man, the Irishman and the Englishman; and now they had got this poor Italian, this "foreign anarchist," and they thought it would tell well to send home an account of his being hanged, drawn and quartered. The jury would never assent to his coming sixteen thousand miles from Austrian tyranny to have less liberty than there. There had been neither mercy, decency, nor Christianity in the proceedings against these persons; it was law, law, and nothing but law; and just as the law was going to be abolished, they had decided on this obnoxious enforcement of it, which had been attended with these disastrous results. (ibid.)

Attorney-General Stawell's reply did not improve matters for the Crown. He said:

The licence fee was the law of the land. He regretted than an impost should have to be

collected at the point of the bayonet, but when they were otherwise unable to effect their object, there was no alternative. It was a sorry excuse to say that the collection of this fee had precipitated the outbreak. (ibid.)

In his summing up, Mr. Justice Barry told the jury:

His Honour would remark, in reference to this irksomeness of having to carry a licence about the person, that diggers were not the only people who had to carry about with them a badge of privilege or authority. Soldiers, policemen, cabmen, and many others were expected to do so; and why not diggers? If a digger was insulted by a policeman, he had his remedy; he could prosecute him. Referring to the collecting of licences, His Honour remarked on what "was indecently called a digger hunt." If the diggers had allowed themselves to be dispersed by the magistrate, it would have been neither treason nor felony. If the jury believed the facts, their duty would be to say if the prisoner was connected with those facts. If the jury found the troops marching on and commencing the affray, they could not convict the prisoner. It had been called un-Christianlike to set fire to the tents in the stockade, but there had been no evidence whatever to connect this fire with the acts of the police and soldiers. (Mr. Aspinall interrupted to observe that Allen, a Crown witness, had sworn that the tents were set fire to after the attack was over.) (ibid.)

Raffaello's narrative well describes the exciting scenes which followed upon his acquittal. Public opinion was sufficiently reflected in the Age, which, in its leading article headed "The Fourth Defeat," said:

And Raffaello also is acquitted—as every sane man in Victoria saw he would be. The sentiment of gratification at the four-fold victory of truth and justice over legal fiction, perjury, and every other instrument of exasperated tyranny, is absorbed in that measureless scorn which one feels for a Government which so determinedly follows out its suicidal course. Is this infatuated Government of ours satisfied now? Have these four terrible defeats taught it anything of its own weakness, and of the invincibility of that popular instinct of justice to which—thanks to the remnant of genuine British liberty which still remains to us—it was compelled to make its last appeal. (ibid.)

The Age sarcastically entreated the Government to continue its mad course, not to remit in any degree, but to go on and try all the prisoners until each and every one was duly acquitted.

To be sure, the poor Chief Justice is a little the worse of the Lang verdict and the Josephs and Manning verdicts; but the puisne (alas no longer the "Acting Chief"), Justice Barry is, even after two adverse verdicts, still vigorous, if not fresh; though, after all, freshness is not essential, seeing that the elaborated and most pedantic and pompous "charge" will serve for a dozen cases as well as for one. (ibid.)

#### VIII. AFTER RAFFAELLO'S ACQUITTAL

Raffaello's health was seriously impaired by his sufferings and imprisonment. In great dejection of spirits, he trudged back to Ballarat. There he found that his tent on the Eureka had been robbed of everything that was worth taking, even his



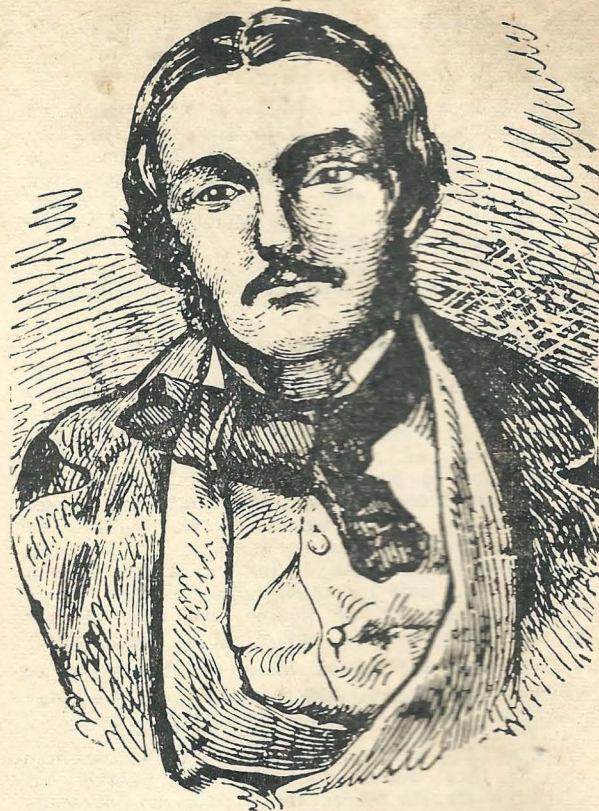
blankets. But, on July 14th, 1855, he was unanimously elected member of the newly established Local Court of Ballarat. Numerous disputes were adjudicated upon by the Court, and in several months the total property claims involved nearly £500,000. The administration of the Court during Raffaello's tenure of office was satisfactory, Withers's judgment being: "Indeed, it is not too much to affirm that if the Parliament of the colony had been—in relation to the goldfields—composed of men as honest in intention and as earnest in endeavour as have been the Local Courts and the Mining Boards, the main industry of the country would not have so long suffered from the want of suitable laws."

While Raffaello was a member, the Court summoned a meeting of miners to decide whether members of the legal profession should be allowed to plead. Raffaello's speech is set out in full in Chapter XVI of his narrative. What a remarkable personality is revealed! Towards the end of 1855, Raffaello completed his term of office on the Local Court; thereupon he disappeared from the stage of Victorian history. Nothing of his subsequent life has yet been discovered. But he had already done enough for glory. His book has an attraction which it is difficult to overestimate. He deals with a great topic in an original yet satisfying manner. There is a rhythm and flow about his best chapters which are unsurpassable. Although his narrative breaks across mere chronological order, it is redeemed by a deeper unity of personality and theme. He does not discard fun and ridicule and boisterousness. But for the most part he is in deadly earnest. The dignity of his best passages is most impressive. It is impossible to deny him greatness as writer and historian. He enables us to see all the persons, the places and the things which really mattered at Ballarat.

Eureka marks a turning point in Victorian and Australian affairs. Apart from its importance in our history, Eureka will always be regarded as evincing the spirit of deep comradeship and self-sacrifice in a great common cause. Something of this spirit was caught and preserved by the very word "digger" with which the Australian soldiers of 1914-1918 were wont to greet each other. Moreover, the symbol of the Southern Cross of the Eureka miners, though trampled underfoot by those who stormed the stockade, now finds perpetual honour by its inclusion as an important part of the flag of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Despite the attempts of many writers to discount Eureka, Withers, H. G. Turner and R. S. Ross are right in stressing its extreme significance. But the greatest literary and historical achievement is that of Raffaello himself. Whether his peculiar knowledge of other languages turned out to be a special help in his expression of the English language it is impossible to be sure. Whatever the causes, his work is a masterpiece.

One last thought gives me concern. I rather feel that, if Raffaello himself could read and sub-edit what I have written, he would generously besprinkle the appreciation with the expressive phrase which he used to correct overstatement and which grew to be his nickname on the diggings of Ballarat: "Basta Così—Great Works."



Charles Thatcher

**NEW THEATRE presents**

SONGS, DANCES, COMEDY, DRAMA

SONG  
OF  
'54

BY  
LEN DOWDLE

NEW  
THEATRE

ALL ONE PRICE 4/-

Thurs., Fri.,  
Sat., until  
December 18.

92 Flinders St.,  
Melbourne.

C. 4845.

The affair at Eureka has been the theme of several plays, the best known of which are Louis Esson's "The Southern Cross" and Leslie Haylen's "Blood on the Wattle." Now young Melbourne playwright Len Dowdle has just completed "Song of '54," with what Leslie Haylen has called "the true beginning of the Australian story" as its main theme. Re-worked folk-songs, old jigs and a new ballet help in the portraying of some of the vast procession of people who landed in the young colony of Victoria in the early fifties.



# COLONIAL MINSTREL

by Hugh Anderson

IT has always seemed strange to me that no historian writing of the Australian goldfields has yet drawn upon the extremely valuable material left by Charles Richmond Thatcher. There remains to mark his passing some two hundred and more topical songs in booklet form alone, and to these must be added the unique collection of Thatcher manuscripts held by the Melbourne Public Library. This total does not include the songs dealing with his New Zealand experiences, or those set in Tasmania and Adelaide. Charles Thatcher's contemporaries considered his songs "give a much better idea of life at the goldfields than most of the elaborately written works upon them do": to present-day Australians they remain virtually unknown.

When he arrived in Victoria in 1854, Charles Thatcher was only in his late twenties; tall and solidly built, he wore long hair and moustache a la mode. His family was of the merchant class, and his father had something of a local reputation as a natural history collector in his native city of Brighton, England. Thatcher was a capable performer on the flute and cornet-a-piston, of slight but pleasing voice, witty and well-educated. In all, a talented young man.

We gather from the reminiscences in some of his parodies that he modelled his songs on the work of such popular music-hall performers as Paul Bedford, Wright, Miss Woolgar, and others at the Vauxhall Gardens.

One of the earliest newspaper references to Thatcher as a songster is in the Argus, 7 April, 1854:

One of the chief attractions at the theatre here [i.e., Bendigo] has been the songs composed and sung by Mr. Charles Thatcher, a digger, who has been engaged as a member of the orchestra. These songs have been extremely popular. . . They bear the test of careful reading, much better than could have been expected, seeing that they were written merely for the passing moment. They are all humorous, abounding in local allusions, as a matter of course; and if circulated in England, would give a much better idea of life at the goldfields than most of the elaborately written works upon them do.

From this we gather than Thatcher was a "digger." The probability is that he had staked a claim on Ballarat and, when Bendigo was rushed, had followed the general movement; at least Thatcher was at Ballarat in January, 1854. The theatre was the Royal Victoria, then owned by C. H. Rignold, which opened in April near the present Town Hall.

The Melbourne Public Library holds six excellent examples of Thatcher broadsides which lack dates. The broadsides are similar to the English "ballad on a subject" in style, composed and sung by the

balladmonger. The format is not readily distinguished from the English street ballad.

"The Bendigo Milling Match" tells the story of a fight between Sydney Dick and Geelong Jack. Beneath the title is the information that this is a "new original song, written and sung by Mr. Thatcher, at the Bendigo Theatre." Two of the songs deal with a minor rush to Bryant's Ranges (which took place in January, 1854):

Most blackly looked the weather,  
The showers down did gush;  
As Joe and I together,  
Were tramping to the rush:  
We slept beneath a tree,  
Our swags wet as could be,  
And there we lay,  
Till next day,

On the road to Bryant's Ranges O.  
Successive verses treat Joe's illness through "drinking lots of beer," the shortage of water at Bryant's run, and the failure of the yield.

We sunk a hole together,  
And out some stuff did knock;  
Whilst scorching was the weather,  
And the ground as hard as rock:  
The carting cost fifteen bob,  
But, we thought we might get a lob;  
Out of the blessed lot,  
One pennyweight we got,  
And so we've come back from Bryant's  
Ranges O.

A fourth example is "Where's Your Licence?" This song was sung with "deafening applause" at the theatre and tells of a licensing hunt:

Now a tall, ugly trap,  
He espied a young chap,  
Up the gully a cutting like fun;  
So quickly gave chase,  
But 'twas a hard race,  
For, mind you, the digger could run.  
Down the hole he did pop,  
While the bobby up top,  
Says—"Just came up," shaking his staff—  
"Young man of the crown,  
If yer wants me come down,  
For I'm not to be caught with such chaff."

Of course, you'd have thought,  
The sly fox he'd have caught,  
By lugging him out of the hole;  
But this crusher no fear,  
Quite scorned the idea,  
Of burrowing the earth like a mole:  
But wiser by half,  
He put by his staff,  
And as onward he went sung he—  
"When a cove's down a drive,  
Whether dead or alive,

He may stay there till doomsday for me."  
An ex-trooper, detailing his adventures in the Australian constabulary, refers to Thatcher's song:



One favourite dodge to evade taking out licences used to be, for the man on the top of the hole only, to be provided with a licence, while his mates who were working below had none; these fellows would then jeeringly invite the constable to do his duty in the following words of a then popular song:

Young man of the Crown,  
Why don't you come down?

But the police knew better than go down a hole, among such a lawless set of ruffians, and had to give up the pursuit, in many instances, as hopeless. (1859)

"The New Aristocracy" is the name given by Thatcher to the miner who has made a rapid pile. The other broadside in this collection is entitled "Two Years Ago," and in reminiscent vein deals with his life in England.

Saturday night in Pall Mall, Bendigo, was a time of noisy relaxation and entertainment for the gold-diggers. The sober element were able to buy their provisions from the many fruitshops or the wandering vendors soliciting custom at "eight-pence a p-e-ound." There were piemen calling "All 'ot, all 'ot"; there was a cockney youth leaning against a post singing his favourite White-chapel airs to the music of his accordian. In another section of the Mall, a German band gave a regular performance, while near Williamson Street, a group of German girls sang and danced for coins. The bowling alleys thundered above the lighter cannonade of the bagatelle tables.

In the concert rooms of the township a varied bill of fare was available: dancing and dance music at the Commercial, Burgess' humorous ditties at the Victoria, a minstrel show at the Shamrock, and a fat boy attracting the curious at a shilling per head at Abbott's Lyceum. Typical of the rooms made available by the local hotels for purposes of entertainment—and profit—was the Royal Exchange Restaurant which opened in January, 1854. The "public room," as it was known, was seventy-three feet long and thirty feet wide with slate walls eight feet high and rising to sixteen feet in the centre. This room could seat six hundred people.

Charles Thatcher was not the only performer in those days by any means; several others sang topical songs. Appearing at the Royal Victoria with Thatcher was an Irish comedian named Gibson. J. R. Greville, who began his career at the Theatre Royal in Bendigo, had a successful engagement for his own comic songs. In comparing Greville and Thatcher, the Argus stated that Greville "is a better singer, and has more comic in his singing, than the latter gentleman, but in point of merit his songs in general will not bear comparison." At the same time, Coxon, whose **Comic Songster** contains important gold songs, was engaged at the Epsom Hotel Concert.

The Shamrock was taken over by Heffernan and Crowley in May, 1854, with a free concert provided for the customers on Saturday. Kelly, in **Life in Victoria** (1859) praises the proprietors for "producing a hall that might not blush in holding up its head side by side with the most aristocratic place of resort of the same in the United Kingdom." Although no entrance charge was made, the Shamrock realised some £500 a week from the sale of liquor. The best entertainers available were engaged for long periods; for example when Thatcher's benefit came round the programme covered these items: Linley's ballad "Constance"—Madame Sara Flower; "Gentle Goddess" from Norma—Madame Carandini; "Ye Tormentors" from

Opera of Cinderella—Frank Howson; Balfe's "I Love Her"—Mr. Lyall; "Marliani's Aria"—Mrs. Handcock; grand chorus from Lucrezia Borgia—Company; "The View Point Chemists," "The National System of Education," "The Chinese Joss House," and "Why Don't You Shave?"—Thatcher. George Mackay, author of **The History of Bendigo**, writes of Thatcher:

It was not an uncommon thing for Thatcher to be recalled six or seven times. Owing to a misunderstanding between him and the proprietor he was off the programme one Saturday evening. The audience, however, would not allow the entertainment to proceed unless the popular favourite appeared. An effort was made to explain the situation, but the voice of the speaker was drowned by the cry "Thatcher—we want Thatcher" from scores of throats. Eventually the "Inimitable" was sent for and was received with great cheering and other demonstrations of delight.

On other occasions his reception was not so pleasing. He had composed a song dealing with a local scandal, and during its second performance at Abbott's Lyceum the offended person jumped on the stage and attacked the singer. This was the signal for a free-for-all, but Thatcher showed that he could strike from the shoulder as well as "strike the lyre," and his attacker was carried off in a rather dilapidated condition. Being charged in the local court, Thatcher was fined the sum of one shilling.

On another occasion Thatcher did not escape so easily. An ageing actor, Thomas Pope Besnard, at whose benefit Thatcher had agreed to sing the following week, walked into the long room at the Criterion Hotel where Charles Thatcher was reclining on a couch and demanded to know what Thatcher had said about his daughter at the breakfast table. An argument took place and Besnard, in truly melodramatic style, produced a loaded whip. On being charged at the local court Besnard was fined £5.

Not content, Besnard went to the Shamrock hall and, so the witnesses reported, sneered at Mr. Thatcher in "defiant insolence." He was then knocked down, dragged to the street, and thrown in the gutter by one of Heffernan's barmen. Off to the local court once more. This time Thatcher received forty-eight hours' imprisonment at the Camp. His reaction was a letter to the local press complaining about the conditions at the gaol—"never did I hear such language—never witness such mental debasement."

Thatcher was well received from his first appearances, the Argus correspondent giving his opinion of the songs on 23rd January, 1854:

They are really good, full of point and local allusions, humorous and well written, and elicit tremendous applause.

A review of **The Colonial Songster** (1857) a few years later shows his popularity unabated. It is taken from the Bendigo Advertiser.

During the four or five years that have elapsed, the author has extended his knowledge of the goldfields and of the colony and his productions have consequently a wider range of subjects and a more general interest. The publication before us comprises songs upon almost every phase of colonial life, many of them most laughable parodies with occasional colonial sketches not strictly belonging to the goldfields. All the pieces display the quality of graphic sketching of life and manners with



# SWAG

a profusion of verbal wit and happy hits and occasionally touches of real humour. Everything is offhand, pointed and dazzling. . . In these humorous songs and clever sketches, a digger's life with its peculiarities and vicissitudes is happily portrayed to persons at a distance and will be familiar to future generations when the digger of the days of rushes, eight feet claims and piles got out in a few days, will be only by tradition. The goldfields have some reason to be proud of a poet who so happily and graphically illustrates their characteristics. . .

Although many of Thatcher's songs have a political or social twist, most deal with the everyday happenings on the diggings. A list of his songs reflects most of the interests of the Bendigo miners. The main entertainment seems to centre about questions of grog and grog sellers. Dog racing was another popular pastime, but the dog nuisance became so acute that even dogs needed a licence. The census of 1854, gold duty, the Chinese question, loafers, shepherding, land sales; these and numerous other subjects form the burden of yet more songs at the Shamrock.

The following is a list of the song titles in Thatcher's *Colonial Minstrel* as issued in 1864—this is just one small booklet in a series of four. It will give a more direct indication of the songster's range. This series, incidentally, marks Charles Thatcher's return to Victoria from a very successful tour of New Zealand: Taking the Census, Who Wouldn't be a Digger, The Loafer's Customs, Parody on Grenadier, The Rowdy Mob, Life of a Warden, Laying Information, Dog Nuisance, Getting Colonized, Old Acquaintances, Colonial Courtship, The Lady and the Bullock Driver, Chinamen in Court, Bendigo Races, Sailors on the Diggings, The Public Man, Trotters O.

The more serious side of Thatcher is shown in such songs as "Hurrah for Australia," which was sung to an original air "with immense applause." The reader might well remember Thatcher's own words as he reads the words of "Hurrah for Australia." Thatcher said he desired his sons to be "regarded as a popular history of the time. They are the songs of the people, and speak in the popular voice."

Hurrah for Australia the golden,

Where men of all nations now toil,

To none will we e'er be beholden

Whilst we've strength to turn up the soil;

There's no poverty here to distress us,

'Tis the country of true liberty,

No proud lords can ever oppress us,

But here we're untrammelled and free.

Oh, government, hear our petition,

Find work for the strong willing hand,

Our dearest and greatest ambition

Is to settle and cultivate land;

Australia's thousands are crying

For a home in the vast wilderness,

Whilst millions of acres are lying,

In their primitive wild uselessness.

Upset squatterdom domination,

Give every poor man a home,

Encourage our great population,

And like wanderers no more we'll roam;

Give, in mercy, a free scope to labor,

Uphold honest bold industry,

Then no one will envy his neighbour,

But contented and happy we'll be.

(To be concluded.)

We pay tribute to Katharine Susannah Prichard, whose 71st birthday falls on December 4th, the day after the anniversary of Eureka. It had been planned to do honor to K.S.P. in this issue of *Overland*. The significance of her life and work, however, proved too great a theme to be handled without considerable preparation, and thus material on one of the most distinguished of all Australians will appear in a later issue.



An evening dedicated to Furnley Maurice and R. H. Long was held by the Australasian Book Society in Melbourne on August 30. Mr. Frederick Macartney spoke on Maurice and Miss Aileen Palmer on Dick Long. An expanded version of Mr. Macartney's talk is to be published next year in book form. Many may not be aware that Furnley Maurice's collected poems are still available and, priced at 7/6, are obtainable from the Australasian Book Society at 360 Collins Street, Melbourne. An attractively duplicated booklet of Long's verse is also available at 2/6.



No less than 53 people attended the inaugural meeting of the new Sydney Realist Writers' Group on September 28. Those present ranged from well known writers to young beginners and all showed real enthusiasm in laying plans for future activities. At a subsequent executive meeting William Hatfield was elected President and Mona Brand Secretary. Short story, poetry and playwrighting groups will meet apart from the fortnightly general meetings, which will be mainly reserved for manuscript readings. Readings already given include extracts from Walter Kaufmann's novel in progress which is set on the Melbourne waterfront. In the new year a series of discussions will be conducted on "Literature and Society" with Frank Hardy in the chair.



Those who read Eric Lambert's views on the recent anthology, *Australia Writes*, in *Overland* No. 1, will be interested in the views of the *Times Literary Supplement* on the same anthology. "The American influence," says the *Times* reviewer, "one of the least happy in Australian post-war writings, is all too clearly discernable in the opening story, 'The National Game,' by T. A. G. Hungerford, and in 'Johnson Needs a Hand,' Roderick M. Daw takes the same American-Australian tough-guy-good-mate formula for a cattle duffing story which he drowns in boozing beastliness. One has only to set these stories beside 'The Cutting,' by H. V. Clarke, a P.O.W. story of naked horror told with the Australian soldier's laconic understatement, or the tender under-statement of 'The New Mate,' by Lyndall Hadow, or the simple humanity of 'Read Politics, Son,' by Judah Waten, or 'Easy Money' by John Morrison, and their forced note of tough virility jangles badly off key."



Another story of John Morrison's which has been praised in the *Times Literary Supplement* is "The Incense Burner," published in *Meanjin* No. 1, 1954. The story is called "tautly written and moving," and the reviewer adds: "Strangely enough, although the setting is English, this comes nearer than anything else in the present issue to expressing a purely 'Australian' spirit and outlook."



# SWAG

With the exception of the mid-war year of 1943, not since 1939 have fewer books been published in Australia. The Commonwealth Librarian's latest figures, just released, have created widespread consternation. They show that only 516 books were published in 1953. This compares with 440 in 1939, 583 in 1940, 973 in 1944, 1228 in 1946, 745 in 1950 and 627 in 1952.



A breakdown of these figures, however, shows that the situation is even more alarming than it appears. The trend is downwards, compared with an upward trend in Britain (18,257 titles in 1953) and the U.S.A. (12,050 titles in 1953). The Australian list of 516 books includes any book or pamphlet of over four pages, for a start. Then there are only 106 works of imaginative literature in the list, and these include many reprints such as overseas children's books. It would be hard to find twenty works of fiction that amount to a contribution to Australian literature in the list.



**Overland** No. 1 has completely sold out a printing of 1000 copies. We regret our inability to meet the many requests for No. 1. The present issue of **Overland** is in a first printing of 1500 copies.



The publication of Australian books appears to be gathering momentum in East Europe. In Czechoslovakia **Winged Seeds** by Katharine Prichard is to be published in Czech, and **The Roaring Nineties** and **Golden Miles** are also to be republished, so that the trilogy will be issued as a whole. The trilogy has already appeared in Slovak. Eleanor Dark's **Storm of Time**, Ralph de Boissiere's **Crown Jewel** and Judah Waten's **The Unbending** are also likely to be published shortly. In Hungary Eric Lambert's **The Twenty Thousand Thieves** has appeared, and also a selected Lawson. Poland is publishing a selection of Australian short stories, a selection of John Morrison's tales, and S. F. Bannister's **God's Own Country** and **Tossed and Blown**, and has already published **Crown Jewel** and its sequel, **Rum and Coca Cola**. Russia is publishing a selection of Frank Hardy's recent writings, and has just published a collection of 24 Lawson stories and Katharine Prichard's trilogy. Rumania is also publishing **Crown Jewel**, which has already appeared in Eastern Germany.



From Queensland we also hear that David Forrest's war novel is in its final stages. Jim Crawford's **Outline History of Queensland** is being serialised. Bill Grainger, veteran balladist of Wynnum, is at work on a history of Queensland's armed forces. "Ironbark" Singleton, one of Australia's finest "folk poets," has a book of ballads ready for publication.

**WRITERS AT EUREKA:** Among writers who participated in the struggles of the diggers were Henry Seekamp, Editor of the **Ballarat Times**, described by Robert Ross as a man "extraordinarily aflame with the passion for freedom"; John Manning, one of Seekamp's journalists, who fought at the Stockade, was arrested, tried for treason and acquitted amidst wild applause; and George Black, miners' leader and Editor of the **Diggers' Advocate**. Names of latter-day Australian writers who have taken inspiration from the Eureka struggle are legion, but include Dame Mary Gilmore, Marcus Clarke, Henry Lawson, Jack Lindsay, Rex Rienits, Leslie Haylen, John Manifold, Victor Williams, Helen Palmer, Leonard Mann, Louis Esson and E. V. Timms.



**NOTABLE BIRTHDAYS:** Leonard Mann (November 15), Katharine Susannah Prichard (December 4), Ethel Turner (January 24). We also remember: Chris: Brennan's birthday (November 1, 1870), Victor Daley's death (December 29, 1905), Bartlett Adamson's death (November 4, 1951).



A recent highlight in Sydney was the 89th birthday party for Dame Mary Gilmore, given to her by the Australasian Book Society at the Lyceum Club. Writers, artists, musicians attended this unique function, for "one of the greatest Australians of all time," as Clive Evatt, M.L.A., said in his speech. While cinesound lights glared and cameras turned, Dame Mary praised the work the Australasian Book Society is doing for Australian writers. Miss Davies, representing Angus & Robertson's, drew attention to their publication of Dame Mary's new book of poems. Professor Mitchell of Sydney University presented a masterly appreciation of Dame Mary's poetry, and Leonard Thiele read selections from her verse. Gavin Casey and Pixie O'Harris were host and hostess for the evening, and Miss O'Harris's announcement that the Australasian Book Society proposed establishing a Mary Gilmore Bronze Medallion prize for the Poet of the Year was received with warm applause.



**DONATIONS:** **Overland** is still costing far more than 1/- a copy to sell to our readers, and we can only keep going with extra help from those who think we are doing a good job and want to see it continued and improved. Our increase in size (by 50 per cent) in this issue is a gesture of faith that our readers will back it up. We acknowledge with thanks the following donations: S.Z., £10; K.S.P., £10; C.M.C., £1/15/-; L.H., £1; D.M., £1; A.M., £1; H.M., 15/-; J.C., 15/-; A.G.S., 15/-; G.H., 15/-; E.M.M., 11/-; M.H., 9/-; H.A., 5/-; P.W., 5/-; R.S., 5/-; D.A., 5/-; A.M., 5/-; J.H., 5/-; W.B.A., 5/-; J. McN., 2/6.



Members of the Writers' Group of Unity Artists (Auckland) have written a revue "Slimelight," depicting the "solving" of the city's many problems by 1984. The revue had its premiere in Freeman's Bay, an Auckland working class suburb, and scene of many of the city's problems, at the end of October. "Slimelight—or The Mayor's Nest—or Everything's Ripe in Auckland City," is the first big achievement of Unity writers and Unity players and singers.



News has come to hand of a live group of writers—the Coalfields Writers Group—on the Cessnock coal field of New South Wales. Comprising only five members, this group has been represented in the awards' list of every competition of note in the past twelve months or so. Most outstanding success was in that recently conducted by **Common Cause**, the miners' union weekly. Poet Jock Graham won the poetry section; scribe Allyn Vaisey pulled off the short story section (his story is reprinted in this issue); June McNaughton received high commendation for her story; Jim Comerford collected a second in the historical article section. The fifth member of the group—Mick Lawson—took out the poetry section in the Newcastle May Day literary competitions. In addition the group is busy writing and producing a Coalfields anthology for the Australasian Book Society. Members of the Group point out that Group criticism is more likely to bring out good work than individual plodding. They emphasize that a Group that is allowed to deteriorate into a mutual admiration (or backbiting) society or a mere talking party is finished. Group occupations include a mine engine-driver (retired), a caretaker, a mine roadlayer, a housewife (and very pretty), and a miner's union official. Membership of the Group, which meets monthly, is open to all, with only one rule—members must write—and there are no fees of any kind. **Overland** hopes to hear more of this Group, which has now accepted a joint seat on the Editorial Board of this magazine.

★

For those increasing numbers who are taking their Australian literature, and their libraries, seriously, membership of the Book Collectors' Society of Australia is important. The Society issues a monthly *Bulletin*, sometimes running to many pages, on such topics as "Collecting Australiana To-day" (J. A. Ferguson), "Australian Bibliography" (E. Morris Miller), a lengthy critical review of *Settlers and Convicts* by Colin Roderick, bibliographical surveys and checklists of leading Australian writers, etc. You could write to Walter Stone, 64 Young Street, Cremorne, N.S.W., for details, or send him 10/6 subscription straight off.

★

Mr. H. L. White, Librarian of the Commonwealth National Library, has written to the Editor asking for a set of **Realist Writers**. Can any readers oblige with back numbers, especially copies of No. 1? The **Realist Writer** was precursor to **Overland**.

★

"Historical Studies—Australia and New Zealand," published at Melbourne University, is issuing a special supplement of 80 pages in November to mark the Eureka Centenary. This supplement will represent a considerable volume of new research into Eureka, and includes Dr. Geoffrey Serle on Causes of Eureka; Mr. Lloyd Churchward on Americans and other foreigners at Eureka; Mr. R. D. Walshe on the Significance of Eureka in Australian History; Mr. Hume Dow on Eureka and the Creative Writer, and a bibliography of Eureka. The supplement is available separately at 6/- from the Treasurer, Historical Studies, University of Melbourne, N.3.

The September issue of "The Free Spirit," the organ of the "Congress for Cultural Freedom" in Australia, has its front page devoted to a tirade against the success of the Geneva Conference (which brought to an end the war in Indo-China), against the United Nations and against the recognition of China. The remarkable similarity between this prominently featured "cultural" item and the line of the U.S. State Department on these matters re-directs one's attention to Patrick Carpenter's remarks in **Meanjin** (No. 1, 1954): "There are many uncharitable people who believe that the whole of this set-up is American-inspired and that the Congress is an 'American-front organisation.'" Writing from London, Mr. Carpenter sums up the tendency of "Encounter" (the Congress' magazine) as "anti-humanism," and adds: "Wherever the American midas-touch is to be found, there the de-humanisation is most in evidence."

★

One also notes with some interest the fact that both Dr. A. Grenfell-Price, of Adelaide, the new Chairman of the Commonwealth Literary Fund, and Mr. W. C. Wentworth, M.H.R., the leader of the attacks on the Commonwealth Literary Fund, are on the Committee of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. An Adelaide correspondent in the *Bulletin* of October 20 complains of the alleged past leanings of the C.L.F. Board towards "Left" writers, and adds: "Dr. Grenfell Price is out to alter this sorry state of affairs, but he faces a formidable task." *Bulletin* readers are asked to help by writing to their M.P.s and demanding that no more grants be given to "those who write with a Communist or fellow-traveller slant."

★

It is time that this hypocritical attack on the C.L.F. for favoring "Left" writers was exposed for all time—and here are the facts. Since 1940 fifty-nine Fellowships have been awarded, to F. D. Davidson (twice), Xavier Herbert (twice), Miles Franklin, D. B. Kerr, Ernestine Hill, Marjorie Clark, Marjorie Barnard, E. J. Brady (twice), Roy Connolly, K. S. Prichard, S. J. Baker (twice), J. H. M. Abbott, Dame Mary Gilmore, Jean Devanny, James Devaney, J. S. MacDonald, S. Tomholt, Frank Reid, Mrs. Daisy Bates, Eric Muspratt, Roy Bridges, Brian Vrepont, Ian Mudie, Dymphna Cusack, Flexmore Hudson, Betty Roland, H. M. Green, John Morrison (twice), Lewis Lett, J. N. Rawling, P. L. Grano, C. P. Mountford, K. S. Mackenzie (thrice), J. K. Ewers, Jean Campbell, Judith Wright, Rex Ingamells, E. E. Lowe, D. C. Clarke, E. F. Lambert, Dal Stivens, Judah Waten, Kylie Tennant, Victor Kennedy, Frederick Macartney, Darcy Niland, Margaret Trist, Roland Robinson, Tom Ronan, Alan Wood, Gavin Casey and Alan Marshall. That list should finally dispose of the calumny—and show that what the attackers are really aiming at is not "Left" writers, but literature and the C.L.F. as a whole.

★

The most substantial book of Victor Williams' verse to date, **Harvest Time**, published by Jindjorobak in 1946, is long out of print, but **Overland** has managed to acquire a few copies. The price to those anxious to make this important addition to their shelves of Australian poetry is 2/6 posted. In a recent **Meanjin** David Martin writes: "**Harvest Time** contains some poems of rare beauty and power . . . It is a collection to possess."



# To stand truly by each other

Allyn Vaisey

HERE to-night in the log lock-up concludes a period of work and wandering on the goldfields of Victoria. It may be that from this day's doings in the stockade on Bakery Hill of Ballaarat my life will conclude too, and with mine that of many of my mates among the diggers, for who knows what this day might bring forth. I must remain anonymous, one of the thousands of men of all nations gathered here in this town by the call of gold, one who fought against injustice and failed; and now I must pay, perhaps with the life that is all remaining to me of my possessions. It would not be fitting that any one among the men who fought at the barricades to-day should be singled out for mention above his mates unless he distinguished himself by some deed of striking valor, and this I did not do.

Let me review these past two years that you who read should understand the steps that led to my incarceration with scores of others in this compound of ignominy, with my freedom lost and my youth yet scarcely a shadow behind me.

There were four of us, runaway sailors all, that tramped and begged rides from the docks of Yarra Yarra to the goldfield at Ballaarat. Arrived there, we set up our tent on Canadian Flat and went up to the Camp to procure our licences, as we had heard we must do if we wished to dig for gold. These cost us thirty shillings each, on payment of which sum we were duly licensed to dig, search for and remove gold. We thought thirty shillings a small sum to pay for the fortune waiting to be found in the earth.

Though the sun was set, we must take a look at the famous Golden Point ere night should fall. Here the earth was pitted with holes, three feet diameter and five to eight feet deep, abandoned when gold was found close to the surface in other localities. In my excitement, I jumped into one of these and commenced work at a feverish rate. Soon I uncovered a little pocket of the yellow boy. I had struck gold. Mug's luck perhaps, but it was gold. On the morrow, we were into the hole at daylight, pausing for meals only when hunger's demands could be stilled no longer.

Day by day, we drove that shaft down through the rock, discovering barely enough gold to pay for our tucker, but the dreams of opening up a jeweller's shop made compensation for aching arms and magical ease for stiff backs; and it was hard work, for never before had I used pick and shovel. Later, we abandoned that shaft and took over another nearby, and here we found it—17 ounces at 10 feet.

One hot morning when it was more comfortable to be down the hole working than resting on the

surface, I heard a noise among the bushes and climbed out to see what it might be. It was made by a six-footer in a blue shirt and heavy boots, a scoundrelly-looking individual if ever there was one. He was armed with a carbine and fixed bayonet.

"What do you want?" I asked him, eyeing his weapons.

"Your licence, mate," he replied, and having seen it went away. He was a trap, a Joe, a trooper of the Government, earning his living by seeing that men who worked paid heavily for the right to sweat and ache in airless holes. I boiled at that indignity, but later became accustomed to being commanded from my work to produce the paper, and it was only when I had to go through with it three times in one day that I was provoked into anger. And it was when this occurred two or three times in the one week that anger flared into thoughts of revolt.

Other parties returned to Canadian Gully. On the hill opposite where I was working, gold was found at 60 feet in two superb masses. The news spread and Canadian Gully again became populous. Diggers came back from Mount Alexander and Bendigo to the gully they had deserted, and the Joes came too. Now they became a public nuisance. A public meeting was called for Bakery Hill to protest against the exorbitant licence fee. At this time, Joseph Latrobe, Esquire, the Governor, was recalled from office as incapable and appointed in his stead was Sir Charles Hotham. In August of this year, 1854, His Excellency came to see the goldfields which provided so much revenue to the State from our licences and received so little in return. He inspected a shaft at the Gravel Pits close to the Eureka Dining Rooms, walking over a path made of shaft slabs laid over the mud by the diggers lest the Vice-Regal boots should be soiled. Afterwards, he addressed us: "Diggers, I feel delighted at your reception. I shall not neglect your interests and welfare. Again, I thank you!"

Consider now the bother to us of the licence searches. Suppose a miner has carried his dirt a quarter of a mile down to the creek and is working his cradle waist deep in muddy water. When Joe demands his licence, he must leave his work to walk up to his claim, and then back to the creek with it. Suppose further that he must do this several times a month, sometimes twice in a day. Suppose again that he has labored six months getting his shaft down a hundred and twenty feet to the reef and then finds he has bot-tomed a shicer, and all the time his wife and children are on short rations that he might pay for his licence till he could pay no more. And



when the digger was fined £5 for having no licence, saying in extenuation that he has a wife and children to feed, he is told the law applies equally to all. Just suppose these things, and you will know how we felt, for they are a commonplace on the diggings. Do you not boil too?

The high regard of Governor Hotham for the diggers now became manifest. Up to mid-September, the search for licences happened only once or twice a month. In October and November, the Joes rode out like a regiment every second day. One day would be Gravel Pits, another the Eureka, another Rad Hill, invading the shafts like an army of occupation, and so soon as they appear in sight the cry of "Joe! Joe!" is shouted over the diggings that all may be warned of the scoundrels' approach. In exasperation, a public meeting was called for November 11 to set up a Reform League, and we demand: (1) An immediate change in the management of the field by disbanding the Commissioners, and (2) The total abolition of the diggers' and storekeepers' licence tax.

These are the demands we mean to have, for we diggers have union among us, and there is nothing like tyranny and injustice to unite all races, colors and creeds.

We have our flag too, as free and Australian as the midnight sky. In truth, our banner is a representation of the sky; the ground is dark blue and on it are the silver stars of the Southern Cross. To us, it symbolises our united spirit.

Then happened an event seemingly far removed from licence hunting, yet which in its repercussions had a direct link with this stockade in which I found myself to-day. Scobie and Martin, two old mates who had been separated years, came together in Ballarat and celebrated their reunion. They came to the Eureka Hotel and knocked at the door, but were refused admittance, so they went away, perhaps heaping imprecations on Bentley before they departed. And this was the last seen of them in ship-shape order, for 50 yards from the hotel they were set upon. Scobie was killed and Martin left unconscious.

Bentley, his wife and another were charged with the murder, but the magistrate acquitted them. Our people, however, were not satisfied that justice had been done and a meeting was called for Eureka Hill, where stood Bentley's hotel. When we assembled there, we found the troopers there also, all the available police and troopers having been assigned to guard the hotel and they angered the crowd of indignant diggers with their provocative antics. The crowd began to shout at them, and shouting was followed by a stone which broke a window of the hotel. I do not think the stone was intended to hit anything more fragile than a policeman, but the effect of this one missile was that immediately a shower of sticks, stones, bottles and anything else that could be thrown was despatched in continuous stream until not a whole pane of glass remained in the hotel. Yet while all this was proceeding, the craven police rode round and round the hotel and took no vigorous action to halt the destruction.

That night three men were taken from their tents and charged with rioting. Later, they were convicted and gaoled.

Another repercussion was that on the last Tuesday of November there arrives the Twelfth Regiment from Melbourne to reinforce the garrison. Their Commanding Officer, to make a parade of strength, had them brought across the Eureka, riding in carts drawn by three horses. Soon there were cries of "Joe! Joe!"; the soldiers were pelted with anything to hand and there was no retaliation.

Next day there was a meeting to receive the report of the deputation we had sent to Melbourne to demand the release of the three men taken and charged with rioting the night following the hotel burning. We were 10,000 present. The deputation reported that His Excellency was favorably disposed to the diggers' wishes, but could not accede to a "demand"—the diggers should "pray" for the release of their mates. Also, the delegates reported, the Governor would appoint a Committee of Inquiry to investigate our grievances. The meeting rejected His Excellency's rejection of our demand, but gave three cheers for his Committee of Inquiry.

In truth, this period became a time of meetings. There was much ventilation of our spirit against licence hunts and the licences themselves. The outcome of this was that we resolved all licences should be burnt at a great bonfire, thus ending for all time the licence persecution; those who burnt their licences were to have the full protection of the Reform League. Those who had not complied with the general resolve by a fixed date would be outside the orbit of the League. Having pledged ourselves to rescue any digger taken up for not having a licence a volley of rifles and revolvers and several hearty cheers signalled the kindling of the fire, and all who had licences present cast them into the flames.

Yet the following Monday there was another licence hunt. I ran in great excitement to Bakery Hill together with thousands of digger mates. On the stump, rifle in hand, stood Peter Lalor calling on volunteers to fall into divisions. "Those who have no arms," he cried, "let them procure a piece of steel five or six inches long attached to a pole." Then we marched in good order, a thousand strong, equipped with all manner of arms from rifles down to the pick and shovel, to the Eureka, led by the Southern Cross banner. Here Lalor gave orders to defend ourselves among the holes should the licence hunt come our way. But the assault did not come, for the redcoats had retired to their Camp, possibly having no stomach to come into conflict with a multitude of our temper, or so we thought and this we hoped would be the end of licence hunts.

In the leadership of Lalor, is an instance of the moment producing the man, for Lalor was not one of the triumvirate directing the Reform League. After the incident, he said simply that the diggers were disorganised for want of a leader when they rushed to Bakery Hill and that he felt it his duty to do what he could in face of the defection of those whose place it was to lead. The upshot of



it was that brave Peter was that day elected Commander-in-Chief of the diggers' forces. At his election, he said, ". . . I shall not shrink; I mean to do my duty as a man. I tell you, if I once pledge my hand to the diggers I will neither defile it with treachery nor render it contemptible with cowardice."

Now he stood again on the stump, holding his rifle, butt resting on his boot. He said, "Now it is my duty to swear you in and to take with you the oath to be faithful to the Southern Cross. I order all persons who do not intend to take the oath to leave at once. Let all divisions fall in round the flagstaff!" At his command, some 500 armed men advanced soberly. Lalor, kneeling bare-headed, pointed to the standard and said in a firm voice:

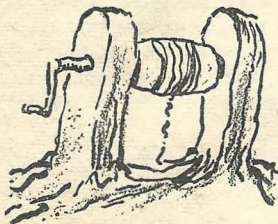
**"We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other, and to fight to defend our rights and liberties."**

A magnificent sight it was. There stood the diggers drawn up in divisions with their captains saluting at their heads, there knelt Lalor administering the oath, and there above all fluttered the Southern Cross on a straight pole 80 feet in length.

In the afternoon, the camp round our Southern Cross was enclosed with a stockade made of slabs from our shafts and, such was our determination, we sent a deputation to Commissioner Rede to demand: (1) The immediate release of those men taken up by the troopers that morning in the licence hunt; and (2) A pledge that there would be no more licence hunts, for we had burnt our licences and would have no more of them.

Father Smyth and the Italian Raffaello, the deputation, returned to say that Mr. Rede, a kindly man in character, had refused to give any pledge other than he must administer the law. So now we knew there would be no retreat on their side and could not be on ours.

Comes Friday. Armed diggers are coming into the stockade; soon they are drilling. Not one digger went to work his claim that day. By afternoon, a forge is going inside the stockade, at which a blacksmith is beating sundry pieces of steel into pikes. Our camp was stocked with bread and meat, but arms and ammunition are short. Saturday followed in similar fashion. That night most of the men returned to the tents to spend the night, the morrow being the Sabbath, leaving but 150 men to guard the flag.



Dawn on Sunday, December third; keep it holy. It was not yet full daylight when I was awakened by a discharge of musketry outside the stockade.

We rush to the slab fence and see a party of advancing redcoats some 300 strong coming up the gully west of the stockade. Our guards returned the fire, the gallant men of the Canadian Revolver Brigade. Now came shouts that the dragoons, from the south, and the troopers, from the north, were trotting towards the stockade.

As they came I thought: This day, under the banner of the Southern Cross, we diggers must acquit ourselves well lest it be said after we are gone into the dust that our ideals were set among the stars while our guts remained in the mullock and slime. Yes, even as the redcoats charge against our stockade of shaft slabs, we must fight bravely that the names of Eureka and the Southern Cross may in future years be spoken with pride, heads held high and hearts a-brim with freedom.

The mine shafts within the stockade had been logged over for safety of body and limb. Lalor, standing on top of the one nearest the stockade, gesticulated to the defenders to retire into the holes until our mates should come, attracted by the shots. Then he was hit in the left shoulder. A full volley from the military mowed down all those who had their heads above the barricades. The pikemen, waiting at the hilltop fences to stick the cavalry, suffered heavily.

We heard the command to "Charge," and the soldiers rushed forward with fixed bayonets. A few cuts, kicks and pulling down, and their job was done; but all too quickly for their liking, for they continued on, thrusting their bayonets into the dead and wounded lying on the ground, firing into the holes. Amid their laughter and cheers they tore down our beautiful Southern Cross. Now all hope was lost. We were beaten by force of numbers before our reinforcements could arrive. Those who could do so escaped in the confusion; those who could not surrendered and were marched in chains down the gully to the lock-up.

And still it was not all finished, for the troopers then entered the stockade in the wake of the foot soldiery. They seized firesticks from the fire in the centre of our camp, around which we had spent the night, and set fire to every tent within the stockade. The cries from the burning tents were horrible. The wounded inside them were being burnt to death; those who had laid down their arms and retired to their tents were kicked and made prisoner.

Those who fell among us to-day were 14 killed, eight who subsequently died of their wounds, and 12 who recovered; about half of them were fellow Irishmen and of the others were those who came from most countries of the world—all good Australians.

It may be, even at this despondent moment, that we shall win the fight though we lost the day and many good mates; for we have learned that working men must unite in defence of their rights and liberties, and that in unity is our strength. Therefore, let the names of Eureka and the Southern Cross be remembered with pride in the years to come, and let men everywhere say of the diggers that they stood and fought for all working men. And so be it.



# Miles Franklin

(Died September 19, 1954)

**"To-day came a most interesting magazine, alive in every pore. That is the way to do it when the population is not big enough to support pompous glossy affairs full of rhetoric, notes on minor issues and sawdust. I will subscribe to Overland if I live.—Miles Franklin."**

AND so Miles Franklin is dead. Her friends will find it hard to believe, will wonder what Miles would have to say to it? That small, frail woman in Grey Street, with the canny, secretive little smile, the brilliant, perverse arguer . . . all that terrific intuition: no more. How strange is genius. With her it was an extraordinarily personal thing. Too complex, perhaps, for her own country and countrymen and yet, in another sense, as direct and as simple as the things she made immortal: a young woman riding into Goulburn, the passion of a singer, the light of a spring morning over Monaro.

Poor Miles Franklin! She hated the thought of death, but not only for herself. It was this that made her a pacifist. There was never a writer less able to take the detached view. What was bad for her was bad for the world. As her own writing, to the very end, was best when it dealt with young people, so she would have liked to give mankind the gift of eternal youth. That all change was a rebirth she did not care to understand. Beauty, youth and love were absolutes to her: from this stemmed her hatred of the old hands of greed and possessive desire.

To think that a novelist with her urbane wit and satirical powers was essentially a writer of country people! To be the Bernard Shaw of the Australian Bush, and a woman to boot, must have been a heavy burden. That it did not completely embitter her was due to the robustness of her imagination, to nothing but her boundless creative energy.

All her books are books about love. At the heart of most of them is a gifted young woman who fights against the oppressive, practical-minded averageness of her society, the lower rungs of the Squattocracy. Whether they appear in "Ten Creeks Run" or "Back to Bool Bool" or "Cockatoos," all these young women are re-incarnations of Miles Franklin. They are essentially tragic heroines: singers, artists or just creatively gifted people who usually lose out in the end.

Why, then, has Miles Franklin not given us a great tragic novel? How is it that her books do not read like tragic books, that their tragic themes are disguised? The answer is a twofold one. Miles Franklin lacked a clear conception of the full scope and implications of her approach. Unlike Henry Handel Richardson (with whom her work has certain similarities, and who is her only rival in vigor of dialogue), she could not subjugate her exuberant detail to a central, organising and tragic idea. She was too domestically interested in all her characters, probably because she knew them all so well. This is what makes it sometimes hard to read certain chapters—the family-tree enthusiasm becomes tiring at times.

But there is something more important. Miles Franklin shared the prejudices of her circle as she shared its strength. She could satirise them

effectively, but so strong were her ties and the affection that bound her to the Oswalds, the Mazerers and the Pooles of her novels that she never quite managed to grow beyond them. She had all their good sense, their shrewdness and their love of the bush. But she had their superstitions and limitations too. Thus, her bitterly sincere and scathing dislike of the exploiting appetites of the male sex never becomes a real indictment or the reflection of even more far-reaching depravities, but remains a somewhat dated idiosyncrasy. Miles Franklin's own position was tragic, although there is an optimistic driving force behind her work. Her wit, insight and genius alienated her from her own class, at the same time as her outlook in many ways bound her to it. Both in time and place she was caught in a contradiction from which she had never quite the strength to escape.

Miles Franklin had an uniquely rich and complex period sense. But she had little sense of history—she did not believe in history.

She could not create living symbols, therefore, as Lawson and Furphy did. With one great exception—Fearless Danny. Fearless Danny Delacy is a symbol, an archetypal Australian hero. In him she has grasped the root strength of the people she loved, all their positive human qualities are embodied in him. Fearless Danny of "All That Swagger," the man who built Australia, takes his place with poor Richard Mahony, the rejected. They are opposites, but they make a whole, and they are the most completely realised and the two most moving characters in the whole of Australian fiction.

I believe that future generations will study her work very closely. It is full of clues to Australian reality. Despite the fact that she could make a jest of it, her big stories are as democratic as the slip rails. But above all she will be revered and read for her unmatched mastery of language. As long as there are people to love a prose that sparkles like the Snowy and crackles like a bush fire, as long will her books give delight. They cannot die while ten creeks run.

To know Miles Franklin well was to love her. She was as full of "tricks" as a company of Irish sharpshooters, but that was because she was so uncompromisingly herself. Her sympathies were boundless, and her understanding generous. She detested humbug and sentimentality. She was looking with growing respect and hope to the younger writers in the popular and democratic tradition, probably sensing instinctively that they and their friends alone were capable of bringing to fruition the things she really cared for, of finally liberating the singer.

She may yet have new surprises in store for us in her books awaiting publication. Her work on the Australian novel is looked forward to with high expectations.

DAVID MARTIN.



OVER twenty years of friendship, staying in her home for weeks at a time and once for months, I came to know Miles Franklin as well perhaps as it was possible for anybody to know her. She could be summed up as the epitome of all that one could imagine a writer should be; her mind was quicksilver, her temperament effervescent, her speech, gloriously idiomatic and epigrammatic, was pungent with mordant wit, wisdom and a prancing humor. And for all a puritanical streak she was fearless in face of life's realities. Like every important personality she could be "difficult," but her faults were idiosyncratic and easily forgiven.

Some good writers are notably bad letter-writers but Miles was a "natural" at it. Page after page of close type were poured out spontaneously—witty comment, intuitive understanding of day to day events, often events of which technically she was completely uninformed, stark and ruthless criticism interlarded with the saving grace of humor and commonsense, advice, offered with true humility yet instinct with shrewdness and discernment, and over all the patina of indomitable courage.

"When those who know us and are bound up with our lives go into the silence," she once wrote to me, "there is left a blank for which nothing compensates." Certainly for me life will not be quite the same again. A brightness, a revitalising flame, is extinguished. But Miles was the last one to want mournful dirges to be sung over her departure. Last year she told me seriously that she felt that she was failing, adding briskly: "But don't go howling around when I die. We've had some understanding times together. Remember that."

Again she wrote: "The worthwhile writer must have the patience of a cat at a mouse hole and the courage of my pin-up hero, the bulldog ant, whom I have seen attacking a waggon wheel. . . Every writer feels at times that he is of no importance . . . but you can't lie down and whine. . . It depends on yourself and the will to live and impose yourself, if possible, on your generation to howsome ever small an extent. The writer's life is always there to start afresh, on a clean ream of paper."

Vale Miles Franklin, one of the greatest of all Australians.

Vale, truest of friends.

JEAN DEVANNY.

# AUSTRALIA

Land of the tortured convict  
Bringing from over the sea  
Hatred of lord and of tyrant,  
Dream of a land wide and free.

Land of the keen-eyed bushmen  
Doggedly seeking ever  
Rich green valley hidden  
Beyond the Never Never.

Home of the mate and the digger,  
Poet and dreamer and seeker,  
Shoulder to shoulder together  
Raising the flag of Eureka.

Unionists facing the police line  
Barring the city street,  
Wives who stood with their menfolk  
Battling on making ends meet.

Lawson dreaming of mateship  
In a land that at last is ours,  
With ships on our inland rivers  
And deserts covered with flowers.

This is our past . . . and our present,  
This is our blood and our bone,  
Chart for the hard tracks before us,  
The country we love, our own.

This is our land, Australia;  
See on our banner still  
Freedom's stars that the diggers  
Raised on Eureka's hill.

LEN FOX.

**Overland has the privilege of publishing, for the first time, this historic letter in which Henry Lawson in 1900 recommended publication of Miles Franklin's "My Brilliant Career" to Angus and Robertson's. (By permission of the Trustees of the Mitchell Library.)**

To Mr. Robertson,

Enclosed Australian novel was sent to me some 4 months ago for advice. I started to glance through it—then read it with interest. The truth and vividness of the work was startling even to me. After reading I got author's permission to keep novel and submit to you

on your return. In fact I have full authority to place the work. In my opinion it is the Australian "African Farm" and immeasurably ahead of "Jane Eyre," to the readers of which last book it would also appeal. The drought and selection sketches are perfect—McSwab's sketches especially. McSwab's diary and Horace's letter, etc. (marked by slips) are gems. Altogether—with the exception, perhaps of some too emotional passages in middle of novel—and as a vivid yet humorous description of selection and farming life in Australia—I think the work goes deeper, is more vividly realistic and more perfect than my own. Kindly read at your earliest convenience and let me know result.

H. L.



# VIEWS and REVIEWS

## *The Australian Coast to Coast*

Some part of a country's story lies in its laws, its institutions, its political conflicts, and this is the part that gets written down in history-books and taught in schools. But unless it reflects the life of the people, with their self-created idiom and their particular way of looking at things, it will be dead matter. Until lately, a good deal of our written history has been just that. The gift of self-government, Parkes and his Education Bill, the clash between the soul-stirring ideas of Free Trade and Protection. . . But what about the anonymous mass that found the uses of stringybark and greenhide, turned "currency" into good coin, and made fresh words for the things it lived by till now they amount to a whole vocabulary?

You will get a quickening glimpse of this anonymous mass in Bill Wannan's hearty, comprehensive, and amusing book, *The Australian* (Australasian Book Society, 18/6). For years he has been collecting the songs, yarns, legends and proverbs that have been a sort of by-product of our living, and now here they are, arranged with skill so that one section leads to another. Part One deals with "Heroes and Rebels"; Part Two with "The Yarn-Spinners"; Part Three with "Superstitions and Fallacies," and so on. There are six parts in all, prefaced with a little initial condiment: Australian Salt.

"The proper way to cook a cockatoo is to put the bird and an axehead into a billy. Boil them until the axehead is soft. The cockatoo is then ready to eat."

This is perfect in its concision and sardonic tone, and at the beginning of the book it is a sort of guarantee that the country's accent has been definitely caught.

But I think Alan Marshall is wrong in saying in his foreword: "There is nothing here that is the creation of one man." We have very little of that oral literature that seems a group-creation, worn smooth by being passed from mouth to mouth. A good many of these songs and anecdotes are signed, and one story that is not—"The Phantom Bullocky"—is less like a group-creation than Skuthorpe's version of the same theme, "The Champion Bullock-Driver," which seems to have gained rhythm by being told round countless campfires. "The Phantom Bullocky" might have been invented by a journalist who had heard the original, but whose ear was not subtle enough to reproduce the incantation of the easy drawl.

This, however, is a small criticism. As a whole, the book records the flavor of popular speech, popular wit and humor. In it you feel a people moving, talking with exuberance, playing with the new words they have coined, giving full play to their imagination. *The Australian* is not a library-book; it is one to be bought and carried in the pocket. Bill Wannan is to be praised for conceiving the idea of it, and for his skill and industry in carrying out his conception.

Vance Palmer.

The editor and publishers have once again provided a feast of reading in this year's *Coast to Coast* (Angus and Robertson, 16s.) with as wide a picture as the title promises, from Katharine Prichard's powerful vignette of the dying western gold-town and the remnants of the displaced Aborigines it drags down with it, a saddening thing, to the flippant froth of Porteus's roistering lugger-skippers in the Coral Sea, and from Gavin Casey's uproarious extravaganza of skiting among the banjo-artists of the Boulder all the way to Alan Marshall's beautiful plea for the reprieve of the wild ducks.

Clem Christesen's "The Albatross" gives a refreshing glimpse of boy-and-girl awakening in a beach scene, and Younger Hillman's "White Dingo" achieves the same thing up in the heights of the Dorriggo, the age-old theme that can become so paltry without this skilful handling. And at the other end of the scale are Walter Kaufmann and Lance Loughrey with similarly masterful treatment of hard-boiled lovers, the coastal seaman and his barmaid, and the side-showman giving a moll back her self-respect at the altar.

This volume achieves a remarkable compass in extremes. Dal Stivens's "Hard Working Ghost" is not only screamingly funny, but can contrive at the same time to deal a resounding smack at mean, money-grubbing employers. Art Hausler has a bash at the same theme in "The Year of the Good Spring," but with just a sprinkling of American idiom through the writing that robs it of the 24-carat Australian ring. Possibly one shouldn't make that a point for criticism, because undoubtedly a lot of Australians are taking to copying Americanisms, and another generation might talk wholly American. Then, poles apart from that breeze and rush of the confident, toughened hard-yakker experts, we have the dogged persistence through the near-dilirium of fatigue of Sturges's victim of circumstances in "Break."

Sturges puts you down in that airless quarry with the bull-necked foreman glaring down at you more blisteringly than the brazen sun and makes you dream, too, of the foaming pint of beer somewhere away off beyond the end of this age-long first day in the stone pit. Like Henry Studley you want to toss it in, get back up there in the air, but this is A JOB—the break!—and there's the missus and kids. They've got to eat.

Quite a few foreign immigrants appear in this volume, in tales of their struggles to re-adapt their lives; notably in stories by David Martin and Judah Waten, both already well-enough known. And to add a pinch of city spicing to a mainly rural pie there is M. G. Vincent's light bright tale of doings in a Melbourne office.

Only one story mars the collection—a piece of melodrama by Roland Robinson which rings as false as the things collected by Weiner for the Saturday Evening Post after a three weeks' stay here some twenty years ago on a well-known show-station thumbing-up data on the flora and fauna for atmosphere. There are big cattle-stations in the Northern Territory, Victoria Downs (about



as big as Holland) being the biggest in the world, but the father of "Mary Lindsay" ran a place stretching "from the Arafura Sea to the spinifex and the gibber plains," which would make Victoria Downs (14,000 square miles) look like a horse-paddock.

He "was a man who wore riding-breeches and polished leggings and boots. He wore a holster at his belt and carried a quirt in his hand. Before sunrise he would walk down to the yards where the stockmen waited with their horses saddled and give them their orders." (Shades of Nat Gould and Charles Garvice!)

It would need to be a 60,000-acre place somewhere in fenced country for such capers. The stock-camps on the big stations only see the homestead every month or two when they're in to cut out some worked Sundays and put together a fresh plant for another muster.

The yarn will not bear analysis anywhere. This ravishingly beautiful seventeen-year-old daughter of Henry Lindsay "was not intended for any stockman or battler. . . Drovers and stockmen and travellers found excuses to call, but such visitors never laid a hand on the gate of the enclosure of the homestead."

And yet (yes here it is in black and white) "She had grown up with the native children. They had been her only companions as a child. She knew the ways of the natives and could speak their language as well as they could. One, a boy named Merin, was her favourite. Merin became her accepted servant at the homestead. . . Coming to the plain, she would call on Merin to race her. . . As Merin drew level she would be pulling her mount up, laughing at him with her white, evenly spaced little teeth. . ."

Of course, the whole thing might be written as a parody on those wicked parodies written about Australia outside Australia, and if it is it succeeds splendidly. Imagine this arrogantly wealthy squatter, (wealthier than the famous Lord Vestey and the Bovril Estates combined, for their bits of selections would lie in odd corners of Lindsay's domain) having his jewel dragged up in the blacks' camp, and watching her go off riding alone at seventeen with her "accepted servant at the homestead," a black boy!—In the Territory, stiff with racial prejudice, if ever a place was!

In the publisher's notice "Mary Lindsay" is listed as a tragedy. It isn't a tragedy, it's just a pity.

William Hatfield.

★

## ***Desert Values***

James Aldridge's latest novel, **Heroes of the Empty View** (The Bodley Head, 15/6), is at one and the same time about the Arabs, about all oppressed and struggling colonial or semi-colonial peoples; and about the problem of the individual in a fiercely changing world. It becomes a deep-searching critique of all our moral values, in England as in the Arab world—though, oddly, the reference back into our own kind of society comes out more strongly when Aldridge is dealing with the Arabs

than when he shows Gordon (his central character) lost in an England where he can find no satisfying contact.

I first came on James Aldridge's work in 1942 when I was in the Signals and had been discussing the campaign in Greece and Crete with fellow-soldiers who had fought there. Noticing that a novel on the subject, **Signed With Their Honor**, had been published, I managed to get it and to my surprise recognised, despite certain immaturities, that here was a writer of depth, power, and passionate sincerity.

With each new book by Aldridge I found that my conviction had been justified.

After such a success as **The Diplomat** justly won in 1949, a writer, especially a young writer, has a difficult task. He has to find a theme large and stirring enough to develop his powers and not cause disappointment in his readers.

Aldridge's good critical and creative sense has not failed him in turning to the Arab world, which fascinates him for its political, human and cultural aspects alike. Here, in the struggles of an ancient and rich civilisation with the combined oppressions of ramshackle feudalisms and advanced monopoly-exploitations, is material to test a writer with the finest gifts of insight and dramatic energy.

He comes out nobly from the test. His theme is at root the failure of the tribal revolt, the national revolt that looks back to the clan-brotherhood of the desert, to solve the problems of the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean to-day; the need of the intact tribal forces to unite with the new proletarian forces of the ports, of the oilfields, in order effectively to claim the land's resources for the people.

But to give this theme its full dramatic impact and to bring it home to the English reader, he shows the issues as they express themselves in the inner conflict of a "Lawrence of Our Time."

This man, Gordon, has the deep sympathy for the Arab way of life that has driven so many remarkable English characters into the desert; but he advances far beyond the position of Lawrence. For he has given up the effort to link the tribal revolt with the needs of imperial Britain; he has staked everything on the right and power of the free tribesman of the desert to live his own life, in his proud independence and self-reliance.

To him, then, both the capitalist and the socialist ways seem an equal disaster, a destruction of the innermost virtues that make a man. (In this he has certain links with the other Lawrence, D. H. and not T. E.; but his idea of manhood lacks the sexual mysticism of D. H. However, in his frenzied rejection of the contemporary political choice, he does fuse something common to both the Lawrences and carries it forward into the post-1945 world.)

When the tribal prince Hamid unites with the Marxist leader Zein of the town, Gordon is excluded; he must either develop along new lines or perish. He perishes, a figure who embodies in heroic form the forces of individualist revolt which have no future unless they break their hard constrictions and find a new and fuller human union.

Jack Lindsay.



# Rob the Robber

The entire daily press of Australia, as Brian Fitzpatrick pointed out in the last *Overland*, has maintained an impenetrable silence on the subject of **Rob the Robber** (**Rob the Robber, His Life and Vindication**, by Spinifex. Joseph Waters, 5s.). This is not surprising. **Rob** is a virile, brilliant piece of writing, a political satire of a very high order. It requires from its critics and reviewers an honest, objective approach such as one rarely finds today.

The writing of political verse in this country goes back almost to the beginnings of the settlement at Sydney Cove. There were the anonymous "pipes," doggerel lampoons levelled at the early governors or prominent citizens. Some of these "pipes" were the work of officers of the N.S.W. "Rum Corps" and their tendency was reactionary. But others were circulated to draw attention to abuses of officialdom. The *Song on New South Wales Rebellion*, for instance, was a vindication of Governor Bligh's handling of Macarthur and the rum monopolists.

Some of the convicts were likewise vocal in verse. Frank Macnamara ("Frank the Poet") beloved of his fellow-convicts, composed in a racy, flowing style several poems on corruption in high places. From such humble traditions there grew up a tradition of political verse-writing in this country which Australians can claim with pride as an important part of their literary heritage. Charles Thatcher, Marcus Clarke, Francis Adams, Dowell O'Reilly, Victor Daley, Lawson, David Martin, Manifold, Victor Williams, R. H. Long, immediately come to mind in this connection.

And now we have Spinifex joining them with his **Rob the Robber** and adding a sparkling new page to the tradition.

Spinifex—let us respect his anonymity in this passing era of tapped phones and police informers—is steeped in the Australian way of life as well as in the satire of 18th century Europe. His poem has the lightness and sureness of touch that marks the best work of Voltaire; the irony of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild the Great*; the savage hatred of humbug and cant that we associate with the name of Dean Swift; and the deep humanity and love of people that are a part of Burns.

Spinifex is heir to these. He is also heir to "Frank the Poet" and "Creeve Roe." His work breathes the true spirit of democratic Australia.

**Rob the Robber** presents a world of inverted moral values in which, as in the world of *Jonathan Wild the Great*, the murderer, the pimp, the perjurer and the traitor are extolled as the best among mankind. **Rob** is possessed of all these qualities. He uses them to carve out his great career. From that decisive moment in his youth when, during World War I, he relinquishes his army commission in order to keep his home fires burning, to the final glory as he awaits, with proud military bearing

"the deathless battle of the Brisbane Line",

we are treated to the details of a most remarkable biography.

I have already used the word "brilliant" to describe this poem. The word comes automatically. Almost every couplet has a distinctive lustre, and taken together, the lines have the scintillating effect

of a jewel. One is tempted to quote large passages.

But brilliance does not always denote depth; and **Rob the Robber** has depth—the deep understanding of a poet who has a wide and rich experience of life to draw upon, and a keen appreciation of the conflicts that are convulsing Australia today.

Spinifex has written a poem which is eminently readable because it touches on the things which are close to our lives and our hearts. Added to this, it is tremendously rich in wit, in a true sense of the comic. Altogether, it is the most remarkable book that has come my way since **Power Without Glory**. Don't under any circumstances miss it!

Excellent illustrations accompany the text.

"Greenhide."



## Shipyard Verse

It is obvious from the first line of Victor Williams' *Hammers and Seagulls* (Perth, privately reissued, 1954, 1/-), that the poem is going to be one sustained metaphor—the familiar use of the hammer to symbolise, on the one hand, the power of the workers, and on the other hand, the callousness and ruthlessness of the bosses, is an easily understood one. Throughout the title poem there are many startling metaphorical hammers illustrating this power and this ruthlessness. The hammer idea holds interest all the way through, but it's a welcome relief, every now and again, to come across such simple, straightforward unmetaphorical statements of fact as "As the ship grew, so my muscles grew," and the fine four verse insert, one verse of which reads:

Our ears are plugged with pain  
As the plates writhe and jerk;  
The white steel in the press  
Spits at us as we work.

The most effective part of the hammer idea is in the tracing of capitalism's path in the last ten years or so and in the explanation of capitalist crisis, leading to the confident resolution of this crisis by the "molten tide" and the "one great hammer" of the workers' unity.

But what happens to the strike Victor Williams mentions? The blokes in the shipyard all stop—and then we hear nothing more of them as a group until they are building a peace ship ten verses later, and a ship of liberty in the last verse. Certainly a big step towards the resolution of the economic hardships of the workers lies in building a peace ship, and their final emancipation in the building of a freedom ship, but a verse or two taking the actual conduct of the strike further would better bridge the gap . . . a gap which unfortunately but definitely exists in the consciousness of most workers between going on strike and welcoming home a peace conference delegation.

Throughout the poem the author refers to "hammering" rivets—if he's worked in a ship-yard I guess he ought to know, but any rivets on construction are knocked down with a gun and held up with a dolly—a hammer doesn't go near them.

I enjoyed the title poem tremendously. The other poems are fine, straightforward poems and express the average worker's sentiments on the subjects accurately.

Colin Scott.



# "THE BANJO"

JOHN MANIFOLD

(Concluded.)

## VII

THE law, the overdraft, the city: three aspects of capitalism: three enemies of Illalong.

Yet, by the time Paterson was old enough to take notice, Illalong itself had been absorbed into the capitalist system. He put a good deal of Illalong into the Kuryong of **An Outback Marriage**, a station managed by one of "the old family" but owned by the capitalist, Bully Grant—a bad employer, an autocrat, a slave-driver:

He had a row with his shearers one year, and offered Jack Delaney a new Purdey gun if he'd fire the first two charges into the shearers' camp at night.

Billy the Bully has gone to live in England, where he brings up his daughter Mary in the autocratic traditions:

To Mary it seemed incredible that in the nineteenth century people should be able to steal sheep without suffering for it.

Mary becomes Australianised just sufficiently to marry her manager after the Bully's death; but that is only an individual solution. Paterson never imagined a general reconciliation with capitalism by marriage or any other way.

His generalised, typicalised symbol of the good life is the Illalong of pre-capitalist times. His own memories of a free and happy boyhood blend with and reinforce the reminiscences of his old stockmen friends. And no individual happy ending is allowed to blur the horror and degradation that overtakes Kiley's Run at the hands of capitalism. I have quoted earlier from the poem, at the beginning of Section IV, but quotation does not do justice to it. You must read the whole of **On Kiley's Run**.

It was not until later that he acquired first-hand adult experience of a life resembling the ideal of Kiley's in its prime. That was in the Queensland outback and the buffalo-hunters' camps in the Territory. They gave him the adjective he had been looking for—the adjective which Marx before him had applied to pre-capitalist relationships—"patriarchal."

Those Patriarchs of old time, when all is said and done,

They lived the same as far-out men on many a Queensland run—

A lot of roving, droving men who drifted to and fro,

The same we did out Queensland way a score of years ago.

### Saltbush Bill on the Patriarchs.

For confirmation, once having found the word, he took it back home with him to the mountains in his last book of verse:

An owner of the olden time, his patriarchal shed

Was innocent of all machines or gadgets overhead;

And pieces, locks and super-fleece together used to go

To fill the bales at Carmody's a score of years ago.

### Shearing with a Hoe.

He lavished all his powers and all his superlative technical skill on the depiction of the patriarchal, pre-capitalist life, and scattered its symbols through book after book. He could hardly do otherwise: it was an advancing and expanding capitalism that was against him; the good life was on the defensive; to remain faithful to his own experience he had to counterattack from a position that is, in the best sense, conservative. But it is as clear as daylight that he did not envisage any turning back of the clock in practice. Kiley's symbolises what is worth fighting for, the community of equals, human relationships as against the naked cash-nexus. The destroyer of Kiley's is still the enemy, still to be fought. But Kiley's itself is a thing of the past:

For I know full well that the strangers' faces  
Would meet us now in our dearest places;  
For our day is dead, and has left no traces  
But the thoughts that live in my mind to-night.

**Black Swans.**

## VIII

In the practical, day-to-day struggle, it is as clear as can be that Paterson favored direct action. He must have learned a good deal about it from the Doyles and the Donahoes of Kiley's Crossing. They were the people who, in Ireland, under Captain Moonlight, had specialised in making the lives of landlords and police a burden and a misery. They had brought their songs, their unwritten history, and many of their habits to Australia with them. They taught young Paterson the history of the United Irishmen, which he turned to good account when he wrote a preface for the 1899 edition of Marcus Clarke's **For the Term of his Natural Life**. They taught him **Rise Up Now**, **William Riley** and **Bold Jack Donahue**. They goaded Bully Grant into a permanent state of frenzy. And the police were certain that they sheltered the bushrangers. There may be more than coincidence in the naming of the Captain Moonlight who was shot at Wantabadgery when Paterson was fifteen.

Naturally Paterson stood by his comrades, the militants of the Shearers' Union, in the troubles of the 1890's. He wrote them **A Bushman's Song**, the clear and unequivocal statement of outback militancy. Indeed there is some evidence that he expected more from the shearers than a mere struggle for wages and conditions; for he reproached Lawson, for political inconsistency, in these terms:

He spoke in terms prophetic of a revolution's heat,

When the world should hear the clamor of those people in the street;



But the shearers chaps who start it—why, he rounds on them the blame,  
And he calls 'em "agitators who are living on the game"!

**An Answer to Various Bards.**

Read that carefully. Paterson is assuming that the shearers were starting a revolution. At the time, of course, he was not on the spot but in Sydney under unfavorable conditions for learning the facts; but he does not seem to have been in the least dismayed by the prospect of revolution!

The strike was defeated. The Labor movement took a parliamentary not a revolutionary course. Like many other bushmen, Paterson seems to have lost interest in the struggle as soon as it became parliamentary and respectable. "Politicians" were apt to be city-dwellers; and Paterson's opinion of politicians (as opposed to militant shearers) was much like his opinion of lawyers:



And from the beasts he let escape,  
The bushmen all declare,  
Were born some creatures partly ape  
And partly native-bear.  
They're rather few and far between,  
The race is nearly spent;  
But some of them may still be seen  
In Sydney Parliament.

**When Dacey Rode the Mule.**

Once, it is true, when he was rather younger, he had believed that parliamentary methods could reform the agrarian situation, and had written a pamphlet, *Australia for the Australians*, in that belief. But since then he had come to see that no Land Act could restrain Bully Grant:

Before Billy Grant had been in the firm long, he had secured all the good land, and the industrious yeomanry that the Land Act was supposed to create were hiding away up the

gullies on miserable little patches of bad land, stealing sheep for a living.

**An Outback Marriage.**

There were two courses, however, which the men of Monaro adopted. Those who did not like the prospects of "stealing sheep for a living" would push out westward to the very rim of capitalism, tireless wanderers in search of something which perhaps they never defined very clearly, something which lay beyond the realm of bourgeois property-relations and lawyers' law.

Paterson wrote more than one poem about this. The phrase "they could not fixed abide" re-echoes from volume to volume of *The Collected Verse*, and is made as explicit as possible in *Old Australian Ways*:

And we must travel far and fast  
Across their rugged maze,  
To find the Spring of Youth at last,  
And call back from the buried past  
The old Australian ways.

Youth meant Illalong; the old Australian ways were incarnate in Kiley's. Perhaps they might be re-created somewhere else?

Beyond the Queensland side,  
Beyond the reach of rule or law.

The legend builds itself up of a West that contains "The town of Come-and-Help-Yourself," Brumby's Run, unlimited herds of wild buffalo as common stock, and a tribal freedom and equality barely distinguishable from that of the myalls.

But in fact Paterson had travelled far and fast enough to feel the pull of home once more; and in 1908 he became part-owner of Coodra Vale station, in his home district. The poems *The Road to Hogan's Gap* and *The Mountain Squatter* seem to date from this period. It would hardly be far-fetched to say that Paterson at this stage was reconciled to "hiding away up a gully and stealing sheep for a living."

Hogan's Gap is the place to which writ-servers and "the traps" can penetrate only at the risk of their lives:—

He reckoned, if he faced the pull  
And climbed the rocky stair,  
The next to come might find his hide  
A landmark on the mountain side,  
Along with Hogan's brindled bull  
And Hogan's old grey mare!

The mountain squatter, living in a spot almost as inaccessible, preys philosophically on the flocks of his richer neighbors:

So when we say adieu  
And close the boarding job,  
I always find a few  
Fresh ear-marks in the mob.  
And what with those I sell,  
And what with those I keep,  
You pay me pretty well,  
O Riverina sheep!

Hogan's Gap is not Kiley's. It is smaller, barer, poorer, with less graciousness and more danger. But a bloke can be independent up there, and hope that

The tenants soon will carry arms  
On Kiley's Run,



and watch the West, and think of Clancy.

If you watch the West and the past with enough concentration, you come round again to to-morrow's sunrise. I don't know exactly where Clancy finished up; but recently I saw a photo of the dead spit of him, astride a big chestnut pony with a white blaze, on a collective farm in the Kuban steppe.

**TAILPIECE**

There is far more to say about Paterson. His nationalism, his debt to folksong and his repayment of that debt in **The Old Bush Songs**, his unadvertised transformation of the bush-ballad from a literary genre to a popular one, his sharp-eyed grip of significant detail, and the great range of his sense of comedy (based on an unshakeable sense of proportion) all demand notice. Technically—and I do not mean only from the rhythmic aspect—his best ballads will bear endless study. There is both humor and skill, for instance, in his habit of lifting a metre from Poe or Tennyson, putting his own brand on it, and sending it out unrecognisable on his own errands.

I know I have skimmed these aspects of him. Perhaps, in return, I may have tended to see examples to support my thesis where no example exists. But I have two-thirds of his poems (more accurately, 96 poems out of 152) on my side, as well as much that is scattered through the novels and the short stories.

If the "pattern of conflict" which I think I find in Paterson had been subjective and personal, like that in Keats, for instance, then Paterson could never have seized and held the affection of the outback as he did. His wide and enduring popularity rests on the fact that his "personal" conflict is rooted in an objective social conflict. His solutions, too, are social phenomena.

His philosophy is no longer mine; but I approach Hogan's Gap in the spirit of respect and homage to a masterbard whose greatest tribute is the affection he has inspired and retained in the hearts of his own people.

**OVERLAND**

is a quarterly Australian literary magazine. Price 1/-, 1/3 posted. Subscriptions (5/- year, posted) and MSS. to the Editor at G.P.O., Box 98A, Melbourne, C.I. Editorial Board: S. Murray-Smith (Editor), Eric Lambert, Jack Coffey, Ian Turner, Ralph de Boissiere (Vic.), Joan Clarke, Len Fox (N.S.W.), John Manifold (Q.), Joan Williams (W.A.), Jock Graham (for Coalfields), Brian Fox (New Zealand).

Please enrol me as a subscriber to **Overland**.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

I enclose a donation of.....

**WARNING**

(After reading "The Axe of Wandsbeck")

And also they plucked roses from the stem  
For buttonholes (they too thought they were sane)  
Reproached the sun, and spoke about the rain  
This is how it must have seemed to them.

Their proper topics too concerned the weather,  
The marriages of princes, and the rout  
And retinues of sportsmen (then a lout  
Betrayed his father and forsook his mother).

And when a Jew was beaten some said "Pity,"  
And stared with earnestness at pretty flowers;  
With clowns and whores they too forgot the hours.  
(Though there were hints that death was in the city.)

And when two chemists climbed across the border,  
And when a poet hanged himself at dawn,  
A stranger closed his paper with a yawn;  
"Our football team retired in disorder."

And as the blood of seven Communists  
Dripped gracefully from seven severed heads,  
A whisper went: "That ought to teach the Reds."  
(And seven names were crossed from several lists.)

Thus the sly beginnings. This is how  
It must have seemed to them. Thus the mutter  
Of evil peeping from dark places. O utter  
The warning scream; the deadly here and now!  
LAURENCE COLLINSON

**BANDICOOT BALLADS**

are cheap and beautiful reprints of  
traditional Australian songs

★ **Previously printed—**

The Wild Colonial Boy; Van Diemen's Land; Banks of the Condamine; Death of Ned Kelly.

★ **Now selling—**

Bold Jack Donahue; The Drover's Dream; Moreton Bay; Andy's Gone With Cattle.

★ **Coming shortly—**

Bound For South Australia; The Sheep-washer; Bill the Bullocky; Farewell to the Ladies of Brisbane; The Queensland Drover, etc., etc.

**LINOCUT, TEXT AND MELODY**

on the one sheet ..... 6d.

Set of four ballads in folder-cover, 2/6

Postage extra.

Enquiries, suggestions and subscriptions to:

**R. Edwards, The Ram's Skull Press,**  
Lording St., Lower Ferntree Gully, Vic.

or to:

**J. S. Manifold, Wynnum North, Q'land**

Published by S. Murray-Smith, Mt. Eliza, Victoria;  
printed by Coronation Press Pty. Ltd., 16 Corr's Lane, Melbourne, C.I.