Special features
on R. D. FitzGerald

OVERLAND

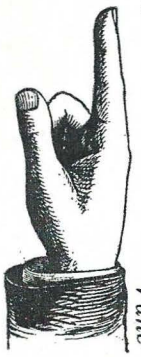
33

fifty cents

stories
features
poetry

THE Australian INTELLIGENTSIA

IAN TURNER



Registered in Australia for transmission by post as a periodical.

Overland is a quarterly Australian literary magazine. The subscription rate is two dollars a year (four issues), and the price of each copy is fifty cents. Manuscripts are welcomed, but will be returned only if a stamped, addressed envelope is attached.

All correspondence should be addressed:
Editor, Overland, G.P.O. Box 98a, Melbourne, C.1.

NUMBER 33 SUMMER 1965-66

OVERLAND

Temper democratic, bias Australian

AFTERNOON AMONG FLOWERS

Brian Gorman

HE brushed the dirt from his cheek and sat back on his haunches to relieve the strain on the leg muscles. He dimly realised that the right leg would be numb and tingle when he stood up. Remained squatting and directed his attention with furrowed brow at the tiny green shoots flapping in the breeze at the base of the wall. The wall was old, great rectangular stones, spattered with moss. Dirty wall on which uncountable hands, elbows and knees had rubbed through cotton, and the more or less oily backs of as many heads.

What does it feed on? No more than half an inch of soil between those rocks. Why, the gap only about quarter of an inch wide, can't be more than two or three inches deep. Every rain, some more nutriment must be sluiced down from higher up the wall.

He craned his neck painfully to look up, lost balance, put a hand behind to keep him from falling back. Propped on the heel of hand, estimated distance to the top of the wall.

Forty feet. About forty feet. Let me think, how would nutrition for a plant get on to this wall? Wind? Dust storms? Of course; I read—where?—somewhere—dust particles carried for miles on the wind. How plants grow on the islands in the ocean, Pacific. That and bird droppings. Yeah, bird droppings, too. Sit on the wall, at dusk maybe, when we're locked inside. Then they fly away . . . The droppings are washed down the side . . . feed little plant. That's why it grows at bottom, not half way up.

Although last year, was a flower half-way up, north wall in the old yard. Couldn't reach it; they'd think I was trying to climb out. Ha, wall too smooth, half-way up, slip. Leg's going to sleep.

He rose slowly hearing the crack of his knees and leaned against the wall on his palms, eyes down. It is going to sleep. It is asleep. Ouch! Wears off slowly, takes its time, sign of old age, never get reconciled they say.

Say many things. Plants need so much water, so much soil, so much, etc., But see the greenness of this plant.

Say that hope makes you live longer and so on, perhaps for plants too. Well, little plant, hope to grow tall as the wall? Ha, not the only one. But they'll chop you down mate, before you get half way. "Prisoners use the bloody thing for ladder." But hope, still.

Warmth and movement had returned to his leg. Holding on to the wall, lifted up each knee, waiting for the crack, wincing when it came. Now he dusted his hands, one against the other, turned from the wall to survey the exercise yard.

Sun sinking, men standing, some sitting on the long bench partly obscured by a jutting corner of the cellblock. Could hear murmur of talk from around the corner: occasional shouts, occasional laughter.

Sun now well below the top of the wall: he judged it to be sitting on the horizon for a last look round before sinking. All the yard in shadow. Like standing inside a yellow cardboard box in which scented stationery had arrived: the yard was scented with stale urine from the adjoining main toilet block. To be fair, only when wind in the west.

What wind from the sun
Blows messenger here
Hymn, dawn, free?

He started the walk across concrete toward the cell block corner. Glint from over the wall told the corner of his eye that the sun still a little above the horizon. He looked up, took in the clean, sheer blue of the sky, darkening slightly over the buildings on his right, but still pale and hopeful to his left where the sun was. Nursery wall blue and deep dark ocean, roll on. His steps carried him to the corner, and around. There the bench of men by B block wall, placidly waiting to be put behind it. He prepared.

"Hey, here's nature boy."

"Ha, ha!"

"G'day, old matey, how're the worms and that?"

He smiled back, slowing to join them on the bench. Chose a spot and occupied it with his broad behind. Always to smile, always to smile.

"I think he's studyin' the soil so he can dig 'is way out."

"Maybe 'e's trainin' the worm to dig 'is way out for 'im!"

Ha, ha, etc.

Act be natural (smile).

"The only thing the worms'll ever dig for 'im is 'is grave."

No laughter, just bloody old morose O'Connor, who should know better as everybody knew, and who always said the wrong thing as everybody knew, and whose life was in hock too, at Her Majesty's and so on.

Ah, that we have but one life to give. Best not to answer.

The conversation broke into groups. His knuckles became white, gripping the edge of the bench. He sat, listening to the sting of the words which, he knew, had been directed at him; who else? I'll not break. Sticks and stones, but names. Whereas one man laughs, he thought, another must hurt to get his point home, one who is hurt himself, most by his own impotency. He laughed inwardly a little, as was his discipline, and felt the pain ease from his chest and head, that strange constriction. A lump of wood on the head from behind on a dark night, he thought as a final fling. O'Connor was talking to someone about something.

Hum, hum, hum-de-hum. (Never to worry.) As long as they only think I'm stupid. He eyed the familiarity of the yard and men nonchalantly. Near him were backs, only further faces and sides, everywhere hum-de-hum of talk. Long as only think stupid, okay.

Eye roamed, idly . . . a beetle. Christmas beetle, ah. So late in the summer, have a short life span too. No one turned as he rose, stepped, propped, bent, picked, turned, stepped, plopped. Sitting, placed beetle on the palm of his hand, and it lay quite still. Funny little thing, playing dead. You can come alive, I'll not hurt. Perhaps it is really dead. But crawling when I saw it. Heart attack, what's that I heard about animals, when you corral, have to give sedative? Otherwise, heart attack.

Not a very heroic death, old beetle, eh. Why die when you can play dead? Why not the beetle fly? How long piece of string?

Fact is, he's probably old, yes. Finds itself in here, wonders why soil so hard, no give under its feet. The sun beats down and all that, too hot to fly, crawls, looking for a leaf. Or the fountain of youth. Or Christmas.

Let's see . . . December 25-February 25, two months. Like the cicadas, in the trees, trees, the trees. Old beetle, eh. Maybe, born later, last of the litter, second litter even. Ha, maybe in prison beetles live longer, is that so, beetle? Not wearing grey. But playing dead, that's good for a prison beetle.

At that moment the creature in his palm began to stir minutely, then inch forward, force out by degrees its wings, cautious, lift them, prepare, then . . . fly! Buzzz, sharply up like a helicopter, at the dark and blue sky, out of his sight out of his hand out of the prison yard. He followed its flight with his eyes into the quickening dusk.

Well, he thought, so much for making the beetle as old as I am. It's still a young man, still can fly.

Never mind, I've got some old friends. The tree in front of the infirmary, maybe 100 years old that. Parnell, the American Civil War, Federation. Old as the gaol, perhaps it was in the garden of a mansion that was here, before. Hum-de-hum. Three men in a drum.

Hum-de-hum and three guards emerged from a door in B block, saying "Away we go boys, inside now. Hurry up fellas, get along now, in we go."

(In we go.) A ritual, no pause to see that the order be executed. Too embarrassing, merely fill in with set phrases: "Hurray along, there." "In we go," not to look at the faces, not to face the looks. (In case of riot, add "hurry up.") Gets cold very quickly out here, a man's better off inside.

He took a place in the file with only a few behind him. The lights came on in the yard. Pretence of marching to a metal door in the block. Reached the threshold, and a quick glance across the yard, once. Above the blackness of the far wall, through the dazzling light from No. 7 tower, he glimpsed the faint yellow and orange sun-glow bathing the edge of the world, beyond.

My eyes are dim
I cannot see . . .

Then he was inside and fumbling with blinking eyes behind his spectacles. Passageway illuminated by naked bulbs, protected of course from those homicidal hands by wire nets, but not from moths. The shadow of these nets was all over the walls like porridge, so that even the walls had bars.

They All Tormented Me Sometimes

After Heinrich Heine—and for paranoids

They all tormented me sometimes,
  they bludgeoned me blue and pale—
the ones who pretended they loved me,
  and whichever sort sent me to jail:
They poisoned the bread I was eating,
  poured anguish into my glass—
the people I knew who were cheating,
  and some who spoke for my class:

But the ones I have suffered most from,
  who set me behind this wall,
they spoke of me never with hatred,
  but never knew me at all . . .

AILEEN PALMER.

At the end of the narrow corridor and without windows, an about right turn, then a long block of cells beyond a large barred door, open and guarded, surly-faced. Each cell fronted by a similar door, unguarded and open to catch them. A second storey, the same. Every cell could be seen from this big door. To his right, a table, a guard behind it, casual face and quick eyes missing nothing.

Each man walked to his own cell, stood outside it. Like morning commuters outside suburban bungalows, he had often thought, waiting for the wife to kiss them goodbye, one prison to another, the government owns each of these cells.

Kiss me goodnight, sergeant-major . . .

He walked past four cells on the left, stood before the fifth. No one spoke. The guard at the desk began to call names—as if anyone were absent—"My little Johnny can't come today. as he has the toothache real bad." Other guards lighting cigarettes.

"Clancy!"
" 'Ere."
"Strezlecki!"
"Here."
"Grey!"
"Here."
"Gervasi!"
" 'Ere."
"Kelly!"
" 'Ere."

He heard them no more. Presumably he had answered. A silence. His name was called, with urgency.

"Here."
"Why don't you answer the first time?"
"Sorry, sir." This was usual.

Jeanne d'Arc, here. Gandhi, here . . . hardly the same thing, old boy, though it used to work. Oscar O'Flaherty Wills Wilde, here. The call was over. An order from the guard at the desk, each man turned right around, stepped into the cell, all the doors slid, etc., shut, dum-de-dum, and, that was the end of a . . . er . . . day.

He did not sleep. Removed boots, pants, shirt, socks, underpants, singlet, lay naked on the bed. Dark, silent, and a man could think.

*

Thinking for me is choosing between thoughts that rush at me. Not that anyone is to be preferred to any other.

Now they shut the lights off straight away. The lights went out. When one escapes from a cell block, the whole block suffers. O'Malley. They rarely get very far. So the authorities make everyone suffer.

He often wondered why he did not have as simple a mind as other men. Three more weeks and restrictions end. Took the pot plants away, bastards. Bet they don't give them back. In the governor's cottage. His dear wife the lady governess waters them . . . with her tears of compassion, charitable compassion for the poor. Poor prisoners. Perhaps the dear lady will start a gardening club for us, and donate her pot plants. We can club her on the head with them, drag her into the cells, lock her up, smash the pots against her . . .

He shifted with unease. The end of that train of thought. Still got mousie, my visitor, can't take that. He felt in the pocket of his shirt, seeking the bread crumbs captured at dinner. Then he reached them under the bunk, over to the wall, and deposited them on the concrete. The mouse, he knew, would enter about nine o'clock from a hole in the wall, a little hole which for some reason, or none, had never been noticed by the guards. In this way, he thought as usual with satisfaction (as usual), nature gets around man's creations.

Now what? He was not at all sleepy. The mouse, and the usual train of thought attendant upon it, had occupied only a few moments of a night that had, for him, not of simple mind, thousands.

Guard outside the bars on padding feet. Stop; torch, shadow of bars on his nude body. He his own prison. He and the dark around him recoiled from the glare.

"Put your clothes on, nature boy, or mummy will spank you. You can do what you want to, under the sheets."

Laughter from the cells around. One man lost control, burst forth coughing. The guard yelled "Quiet!" And there was quiet.

"Sorry sir," said he, "just going to go to bed." And me a grown man.

"Well hurry up about it." The guard's joke, as usual, had been taken too far for his liking by the prisoners.

(And when I was a good boy, mummy would let me stay up late as an extra treat, and put my 'jamas on for me, an' . . . an' . . . tuck me in . . . an' . . .)

He pulled the pyjama pants over his feet, legs, ample hips. The slight jacket over his shoulders. And you won't stay awake and talk to Teddy Bear, will you, darling? Do up the buttons, one, two, three.

"Yes, Mummy."

Across the row: "Shut up, nature boy!"

The torch. "Get into bed."

"All right, all right." He climbed under the sheets in the usual way. Sheet up to his chin. The second stage toward sleep.

"Now shut up!" Torch gone.

They'll frighten the mouse away. Not as though he doesn't deserve their consideration. He's alive like them (not playing dead).

*

For a while he lay, becoming accustomed to the dark, thinking of nothing. By the faint light from the guard's table he perceived the objects in his cell. Basin. Mirror. (Not suicidal type.) Towel on hook, shelf, with toothpaste. Almost a room in a boarding house, such as he had known, many times, on the outside.

Saw a bird today, a seagull. Rare that. Noticed how he used the wind. Flying is not at all straightforward for a bird. Planes and angles, very subtle, like the sailor. This bird did not aid my theory about the nutriment on the wall, because it did not excrete.

His hand moved under the bed, felt for and found the bed pot; security. Not notice it when I put the crumbs out. Tomorrow. Yeah let me see. Well, after work go and see how the little plants gets on. Then . . . then . . . let me see . . . was something.

Ah yes, the cat, in the leather room. Last day there, have to say goodbye. Sees a lot of men come and go. Old cat, like. Ahhhh. Much better. Feel the sleep come on. Tum te tum.

*

Jesus! I can't bear it! Molly! Molly! Where are you, I gotta get out! Ooohhh, God in Heaven, Molly help me!

He rose out of bed, eyes wet and streaming down his cheeks, and walked unevenly to the bars. He shook them powerfully with both clenched hands.

"I want to get out!"

He had screamed. The row was alive with voices. Padded running. The torch full on him.

"I want to get out of here! I want to see Molly! Where is Molly? Let me out! Where is Molly?" Pounded with the heel of his hand against those bars. "Tell me where she is! Let me out! I don't have to stay in here!"

He choked on "have" and fell sobbing to the floor, still clutching the bars. His tears fell without restraint on to the concrete, as he broke the immense silence he had generated with his own desperate sobs. The sobs dragged at his lungs, suddenly sore, and rasped through his throat, suddenly hoarse. And as the fit began to pass from him amid the interminable silence, as quickly as it had come, his hanging frame becoming limper and limper, the concrete seemed to him to grow vaster and vaster, to fill more and more of the universe, until it enveloped him, and at length, lying flat upon it, he was still. Nothing but the faint regularity of his breathing told of the thread of life still in him. With the last conscious breath left in his lungs he said, almost soundlessly, "You can't keep me here until I die. You can't keep me here until . . ."

*

The guard stood still, and in their cells for a brief time the prisoners stood still also. Then, slowly and then quicker, the movement returned to the row, and the buzz of noise which for once was not stopped by the guards.

He lay still, unable to raise his fist to smash the concrete below him, knowing that he would not die, and that this was in no way, in no respect, the end, and that nothing he had done, or could do, would prevent him waking the next morning, perhaps in his cell, perhaps in the infirmary, but still with bars around him. Perhaps with the hook and the mirror still on the wall, perhaps not, but still in a . . . this . . . prison.

The last time, the other time, he had succeeded in smashing his hand against the concrete, hoping that it would die, and the dying would spread to the rest of him. He had broken one knuckle.

The guard was still standing there. He was aware now, somehow, that he had lost consciousness for a little time, and for that time away from time he had not been a prisoner. But he had no memory of where he had been.

There was no point in delaying it any further. He raised his head, surprised to find it so easy, and blinked wetly into the torchlight.

"I do not feel well. Will you call the doctor?"

"Yeah, sure. I'll tell 'im to give you some sleeping pills, too."

He padded away toward the desk. This was not unusual.

BRIAN FITZPATRICK

Robin Gollan

THE last word will be written about Brian Fitzpatrick only when people cease to be interested in what happened in the first half of the twentieth century in Australia. For he was in a very special sense as writer and citizen one of the makers of the last fifty years.

His first major books, "British Imperialism and Australia" (1939) and "The British Empire in Australia" (1941) decided many of the issues with which teachers and writers of Australian history have been concerned for a generation. Although there has been much criticism the books have still not been superseded. As a man and a citizen Fitzpatrick probably did more than any other individual to preserve fundamental human freedoms for Australians, against attack from above and erosion by prejudice and complacency from below. He did this with a degree of self-sacrifice, courage, wit and humility, that was known only to his closest friends. Material rewards were sparse, but as he remarked a few days before he died, "my withers are unwrung."

This is not the place to attempt a detailed estimate of Fitzpatrick as a historian. But something must be said. There are two reasons why Fitzpatrick was an economic historian of the first rank. First, his work was based on research of great extent and depth; of his predecessors only Sir Timothy Coghlan and of his contemporaries only the two Professors Butlin could be compared with him. Secondly, he brought to the evidence an economic and political theory which guided him and at the same time was tested against his evidence. His work was more than a technical exercise: it was a statement about the society he was examining.

Fitzpatrick's primary assumption was that Australian history in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was an aspect of British imperial history. He was concerned with Australia as an emerging economy and society in its own right; but a society emerging from dependence and exploitation. His critics were legion. At first they were yapping dogs snapping at a fact, a narrative or a generalisation. More recently the results of many years of massive and detailed research, made possible by the professionalisation of research in the universities, have placed in question some more substantial parts of his work. As he said of his own work, he had tilled the near-virgin soil with a hoe: his critics had the advantage of agricultural machinery.

It is not a matter for regret that other scholars have been able to show, for example, that Fitzpatrick underestimated the significance of certain internal economic processes; or that he put too much emphasis on wool and not enough on houses. This is the only way that knowledge can advance. But it is still true that no alternative economic history of Australia has been written. When it is, it may well be that the whole Fitzpatrick looks much better than the parts that have been so carefully scrutinised.

The other Fitzpatrick books are not of the same quality as his economic history but judgment should not be too hasty. For example, his "The Australian Commonwealth" (1956) has been criticised as an unbalanced and biassed account of the first half of the twentieth century. It is certainly not a rounded picture; in a sense it is an historical argument in defence of civil liberties. But biassed? Only if you consider that the Communist Party Dissolution Bill was not a profound threat to personal freedom, or if you believe that the Petrov Commission was a genuine attempt to rout out spies and not a political stunt designed to gain electoral and other support for the Government of R. G. Menzies.

Brian's writing was integrated with his life as a whole. Books such as "The Australian Commonwealth," "The Australian People," "A Short History of the Australian Labor Movement," and pamphlets like "The Rich Get Richer," were expressions of the man as citizen as much as the man as writer.

I don't know the full story of Fitzpatrick as the moving spirit, sometimes I expect the only spirit, of the Council for Civil Liberties. I know little about his life as a Labor journalist, on newspapers, and in recent years as a one man Labor Newsletter band, regularly beating out its biting criticism and salty wisdom. Others will tell that story.

I knew him best as a charming and witty companion and as the man who never had an academic job. It is a curious reflection on our society and times that one of the very few people who have brought a touch of genius to the writing of our history could not be accommodated within the swollen structure of our universities. Yet on the rare occasions when he did comment on the appointment of someone else, it was always without malice or envy.

SHOVA

Allan and Wendy Scarfe

THERE were always water birds around our house in the monsoon. In the early morning they poised, grey and white and delicate on the edges of pools, on the bunds criss-crossing the rice fields, on the edges of the stretch of dam water that lay between Sokhodeora village and the arc of the built-up road to Kawakol. To us they represented the delicacy and freshness of early morning, the respite we were always grateful for, before the oppressive humidity of day set the dark green grass steaming.

It was on such a morning, after we had prepared our breakfast of boiled eggs, home-made wholewheat bread and tea, fed Vidya and done the day's washing in buckets, that Shova's mother arrived.

She walked up the steps of the verandah with the lithe, hip-swinging movement usual in young village women but curiously at odds with her timid expression. Her face had a madonna-like quality: it could almost have been painted with a blue cowl on an ancient Italian church wall. The forehead was high and rounded, the face oval, nose slightly elongated so that it seemed to droop a little towards the mouth which turned down delicately and sadly at the corners. She was nervous and hesitated at the top of the steps by the verandah pillar. Her elderly mother, who had a deeply-lined face of dejected expression, paused by her shoulder.

As Wendy looked questioningly at the bundle hidden beneath her sari she drew the cloth aside.

"Look, memsahib," she said, and then at Wendy's exclamation of pity, horror and accusation she drew a piece of the tattered cloth of her sari across her face and sobbed.

The baby she had exposed was barely human. It was a sight to which we had become accustomed but never inured. The backbone protruded from the taut leathery skin; the flesh on the buttocks and thighs had fallen away to nothing, leaving sags of loose skin; the legs were spines of bone. The head bones were so softened that the baby's weight while sleeping had flattened them and all her hair had fallen out. It was the worst case of rickets we had yet seen.

"Allan, come here quickly," Wendy called.

As I appeared the two women retreated.

"Let me see," I asked quietly and the baby was uncovered again. We exchanged shocked glances.

"Can you come to Kawakol at once? I'll take you to the doctor there."

The women stood irresolute.

"Can you walk that far?"

They nodded but still hesitated.

"Never mind that I am a man. Come with me now. Your baby needs immediate attention."

They nodded again, silent in their desperation and distress.

While I put on my heavy boots to cope with the quagmire of village streets, Wendy prepared and brought a weak solution of boiled milk, water and sugar.

"What is your baby's name?" she asked gently.

"Shova, memsahib."

The mother spooned a few drops into the baby's mouth. Almost immediately the child turned to her breast, making instinctive but feeble sucking movements.

"Are you able to feed Shova?"

"No, memsahib, there is some milk—" she began and stopped, confused between her constant hope that she would have enough milk and her knowledge that this was not so.

Many village women suckled their children until they were as old as three years, and this was certainly to the child's benefit, because after they were weaned they rarely tasted milk. A baby that could not be breast fed had little chance of survival, for there was no knowledge of the preparation of milk for babies nor of the necessity for cleanliness in such preparation. Of course it was possible that Shova's state was the result of a long period of unattended dysentery—often the fore-runner of rickets.

"Has Shova had dysentery?" Wendy asked.

The reply, related only to present symptoms, was quite illogical.

"She has such a bad cough, memsahib," and the mother lifted her distressed face to Wendy's, for she had crouched to hold Shova and give her the milk. Wendy was used to such illogical answers because village people rarely thought in terms of cause and effect as she had been trained to do. There was no connection in the woman's mind between the past and the immediate and she did not press the matter.

*

"Namaste, Allan bhai," Surendra said warmly, "What can I do for you?"

"Namaste, Surendraji. Would you have a look at this sick baby?"

"You see how kind this man is," the doctor said to the women, "bringing you here to my hospital."

"It's nothing, Surendraji," I protested.

"Sit down. I'll see you after these people if"—he turned to me—"that is all right."

I nodded. The women sat humbly on the floor until the other patients had gone.

"What's the trouble, Allan bhai?" Surendra asked.

"They saw a quack and he gave them cough mixture and sulphaguanidine. Fortunately they called at our house on their way home because I'm sure that's not what the child needs."

Surendra made his examination with a detachment all the more remarkable after our own surge of shock and pity. Shova's mother answered his questions monosyllabically, her eyes cast down to the floor.

"What's the matter?"

"Dried up."

It was the village term for such emaciated babies: strikingly appropriate, the loose folds of the skin looking like the wrinkled neck of a lizard. He took the sulpha tablets from her, explaining that they were no use.

"Why did you let the child get in this state?" he demanded, and both women burst into tears. Turning to me he whispered sympathetically: "I'd only give her another twenty-four hours to live unless you can get Vitamin D injections."

"Have you got any?" I asked anxiously.

"No. You'd have to get it from Nawada. Could your Mahadev be sent?"

"The bus has gone. Nobody could get there until tomorrow."

"You could try in the medicine shops here. But I don't think they will have it. If you do get it and I'm gone by the time you get back, the compounder can give the injection."

The women followed me to the other end of Kawakol and sat on the concrete steps of the shop. The owner searched through the bottles and boxes on his shelves and shrugged his shoulders.

"I could get them in for you."

"I want them immediately," I insisted.

"You could go to Nawada tomorrow."

I shook my head.

The shopkeeper brought out a dusty box with ampoules higgedly-piggedly in it and put it on the counter.

"You can have a look through these if you like. But I'm certain I haven't got Vitamin D. Colloidal calcium wouldn't do?" "No," I replied, obliged nevertheless to look at the ampoule which was put into my hand.

I stared at the label incredulously—colloidal calcium and Vitamin D, 10,000 units. The shopkeeper shared my surprise. There were five ampoules. They cost 7½d. each.

Shova's mother asked for a bottle and received a discolored one the size of a thumb. She filled it with water from a well and tried to get some of it into the baby's sucking mouth.

"Where are you going now?" the grandmother querulously demanded.

"Back to the hospital to have the injection."

"I can't go any further," she told her daughter.

"I've got to go with him."

The old lady inclined her head. "I'll wait here for you."

When we reached the hospital again it was after midday and the door was closed. Unable to find the compounder we crossed the shallow river at the east end of Kawakol, followed the road to the 'Block' gate and went through the compound to Surendra's house. To begin with he was irritated at being disturbed during his leisure and spoke sharply to the woman.

"I couldn't find the compounder," I insisted.

"Someone can go for him," he said vaguely. He told the woman to wait in a room and, getting over his mood, drew me companionably into his bedroom, where he proudly showed me his things. He had a quilt for his bed, a black box of medicines and instruments, three books and a small suitcase containing two spare shirts.

The two of us sat on the bed.

"She's got severe rickets," Surendra said, "I've just been looking up all about it." He brought his medical book and enthusiastically showed me the passage. Shova's symptoms were described in full: the flattened skull bones, the loss of hair, the bronchitis. Then he talked about the other common illnesses he met at the hospital, his annual budget of £27 for hospital and medicines which was equivalent to a penny per year per person in the area, and together we looked at other pages of the book.

My attention was divided between my anxiety for the woman and her baby waiting alone in the other room and my understanding of Surendra's loneliness.

"That baby could have died you know, Allan bhai, if they had trusted the quack and gone home instead of coming to you. It would have been murder, but they're too poor to be able to do anything about it. I'm trying to get an inspector here to do something about the unlicensed medicine shops in Kawakol. They're illegal. The government should try to stamp out quackery too. They tell lies about the hospital and frighten people away. I'll show you my medical box. I carry it everywhere with me. These are all samples. This medicine is for cases of tetanus," he said and indicated other drugs and their uses. "This is my hypodermic."

With Surendra feeling so proud of his work, I judged the time now ripe for my appeal.

"Couldn't you give Shove the injection?" I pleaded, and Surendra relented.

We returned to the other room as the grandmother wearily appeared. Surendra vainly felt Shova's arms, buttocks and thighs for any skerrick of flesh into which he could inject.

"There's no place to put it," he mumbled. "Completely dried up. I'll just have to try here.

He puckered up the hanging skin above one knee. Shova began to cry weakly.

I could watch no longer. It was not the sight of the injection but the state of the baby that made my stomach heave. I went outside.

*

The women could not face the return to our house in the heat for the powdered milk they would need for the baby, and they returned to their village, Jerawadi. By the time they had reached there they would have walked about eleven miles.

That evening Shova's mother came again to our house. Jerawadi was three miles away but she still carried the baby with her and her face had that stoical weariness which deadens all expression. She crouched once more on the verandah,

shifting her weight so that her back rested against the pillar and the baby's weight rested across her knees and thence on the flat of her feet. It was a posture peculiar to village people, especially women who did most of their cooking and household chores in this position.

Wendy made two cones of paper, poured powdered milk into one and multi-purpose food into the other, and handed them to her. She wrapped them in her sari, tying the cloth around the parcels. She made no comment on the day's events but, when Wendy offered a few words of encouragement, replied in a voice thin with fatigue.

"Memsahib, she is so weak," she said, and rocked the baby, alternately placing the cloth of her sari over the baby's face and then removing it.

Wendy told her how to prepare the milk, in what strength to mix the powder with the water, how to sterilize the container from which she fed the baby, how to cover the milk against flies and dust. The multi-purpose food, Wendy explained, was for herself. Later the baby might have some but now she was not strong enough. Then she told her kindly to go home since she seemed almost too weary to make the decision herself.

*

Shova's mother returned every week for the Vitamin D injections, the milk powder and the multi-purpose food.

At first we had to seek her out to remind her, and sent Mahadev two afternoons after her first visit to tell her that the baby's second injection was due.

Mahadev naturally wanted to know her full name, for the village was not his own. We unfortunately knew her only as Shova's mother and Mahadev resignedly set out to find a woman and child about whom he only knew the baby's name, the fact that she was ill and the fact that her mother had come to us for help. But such small affairs were of vital interest in a village from which people rarely travelled more than ten miles in their lifetime, and Mahadev found her without much trouble.

It was very necessary that we watch to see she did not fall a victim to another quack, for she and her family had no education. However, we need not have worried, for she had determined to abide by Surendra's instructions, and she persisted regularly with Shova's treatment for six months.

Four weeks or so after the treatment had begun Shova began to show more interest in the things around her. She began to reach for objects and she would follow other people and their movements with her eyes. But her progress was still unsatisfactory.

"How often do you feed Shova?" Wendy asked one afternoon.

"Twice a day." Then as Wendy frowned and she caught her disapproval, she shifted helplessly.

"What can I do? I have to work in the fields and I must take Shova with me. I feed her before I go out to work and when I return in the evening." She added needlessly: "We are very poor, memsahib."

Wendy knew it was very difficult for her, but begged her to try to feed the baby at least four times a day. The mother understood that Shova could still take only small quantities of food at a time and she must have managed something—perhaps a small brass or earthenware pot which contained the prepared milk was carried to the fields and left somewhere in the shade under a cloth—because Shova progressed more rapidly after this.

Her mother grew happier and more vital each time we met and she excitedly showed us Shova,'s increasingly rounded limbs. Soon the little girl was able to eat a porridge of multi-purpose food and milk powder. She was still being massaged with cod liver oil and taking vitamin tablets or drops, and occasionally we gave eggs and oranges for her.

"What do you feed your baby girl, memsahib?" Shova's mother asked one morning, smiling and nodding at Vidya whose little fat face peeped over the barricades we had erected in the doorway, our equivalent of a playpen. Wendy hesitated, miserable with sorrow, for it seemed only cruelty to list all the foods—oranges, eggs, bananas, vegetables, meat, milk—which Shova would never see. She hesitantly mentioned some and watched the woman's face become closer and resigned.

"We are very poor, memsahib," she said again.

*

Six or seven months after her first appearance Shova was fat as a toddler should be, and we were delighted. Her mother's face, having lost its anxiety, had even more of a madonna quality than before.

We never dreamed that she would thank us in the way she did. Taking me unawares and embarrassing me utterly she cast herself flat on our verandah and touched my feet with her forehead, insisting "You are God. You have saved my baby. You are God."

"No, I'm not," I replied hastily, "and get up, do please get up. It was the doctor who saved your baby, not us."

"No, it was you," she replied doggedly, "You are God."

Leonie Kramer

R. D. FITZGERALD—PHILOSOPHER OR POET?

"FORTY Years' Poems," R. D. FitzGerald's latest book*, represents the poetic achievement to date of a man who for many years has occupied a secure position in the Australian poetic 'establishment.' It is an impressive volume, which illustrates both the questing, experimental stylistic development of FitzGerald, and the consistency and continuity of his thought. The attitude which appeared early in his poetry have changed relatively little over the years; but his expression of them has ranged from the free lyricism of "Salvage" and "Moonlight Acre," to the self-conscious decorated rhetoric of "Essay on Memory," to the austere plainness of "Heemskerck Shoals" and "Between Two Tides," and to the terse, forceful dramatic speech of "The Wind at Your Door."

To select these points in his poetic growth is to do less than justice to the variety within each volume, but the line I have traced here does, I feel, represent the main road along which FitzGerald has travelled. His excursions down narrower tracks have not taken him far from the highway.

FitzGerald is not, and never has been, a fashionable poet. His dominant mood and attitude to life are optimistic. This is not to say that he is comfortably insulated against the harsher facts of life, but that in the end he believes in man's ability to triumph over them. In 1939 he criticised what he called the "silly fashion" of the "depressed spirit in verse," and castigated it as "out of place in a young soil." He spoke against importing into a young poetic tradition the dismal prophecies of the European waste-land and desert. It is easy to dismiss this view as naive, but to do so is to refuse to recognise one of the poet's characteristic stances. His prose statement on poetry is animated by the same spirit which found expression in "Essay on Memory," where he enunciates the creed of endeavor and progress. "We must build upward though we guess not to what skies."

Unfortunately for FitzGerald optimism has become almost disreputable, and its literary expression is now confined largely to the social realists, whose political faith gives them some hope for mankind. With the cultivation of pessimism, despair and agony as literary attitudes it has become increasingly easy for critics to persuade themselves that affirmative philosophies such as FitzGerald's are shallow, and that no one who has probed the depths of human experience could support them. When Judith Wright talks of FitzGerald's "practical and extroverted philosophy of Action," it is without enthusiasm, and she stresses more than once FitzGerald's "uncritical enthusiasm for action as such," and his lack of a sense of sin and of moral imperatives. Yet it is by no means clear to me that this is a valid criticism of FitzGerald's poetry—or indeed of any poetry. It is one thing to point out the direction of his thought; it is another to take him to task for not thinking differently. It has yet to be demonstrated that better (and more profound) poetry is made out of despair than out of hope.

Then FitzGerald has displayed an unfashionable interest in the long narrative and philosophical poem. He first attracted wide attention with "Essay on Memory," and "Between Two Tides" remains one of the most substantial poems written in Australia. I do not think that FitzGerald has entirely succeeded as a poet in "Essay on Memory," "Heemskerck Shoals" and "Between Two Tides"; but in them he has shown the structural ability and sense of design which are sufficiently unusual in modern poetry to merit special attention. His own dictum, "Form is the surest aid to clear thought," has been amply illustrated in these long and demanding works.

I have mentioned these two unfashionable aspects of FitzGerald's poetry in order to try to account for the curiously ambiguous critical attention it has received, most recently from his fellow-poet Judith Wright. Only a few months after the publication of "Essay on Memory" (in 1937) A. R. Chisholm hailed its author enthusiastically. "Here we have a true poet," he wrote, "and, if we are justified in judging him by one composition, a great poet. In fact, I doubt whether anything written in English in the last thirty years could be fairly said to surpass this "Essay on Memory." Chisholm's view was endorsed by T. Inglis Moore in "Six Australian Poets," and only this year in a spirited defence of his writing in the correspondence columns of the Sydney Morning Herald.

But the critical chorus has by no means been unanimous in its judgment. There is considerable disagreement about the kind of poet FitzGerald is. Chisholm spoke of the "metaphysical background" of the "Essay on Memory." Moore wrote of his translating (in the same poem) "metaphysics into metaphor." H. J. Oliver remarks that in the true sense of the word he is "not a metaphysical poet at all." To H. M. Green, on the other hand, he is a metaphysical poet. FitzGerald himself accepts as the label he can most comfortably wear, "philosophical poet," since, as he says, "the term philosophy is a wide one and can cover, though loosely, most expression of thought." H. J. Oliver, Vincent Buckley and Judith Wright, while ack-

* Angus & Robertson, 35/-.

nowledging certain substantial merits in his poetry, have expressed doubts about the quality of his thought.

From arguments about FitzGerald's poetic preoccupations, and from uneasiness about the kinds of views he is expressing, have been derived critical attitudes which seem to me to have deflected discussion of his poetry into a dead-end. The great bogey is the artificial distinction between form and substance. Anticipating the possibility that his poems would be dissected, FitzGerald wrote: "Yet when everything has been pulled apart I beg that the bits be put together again and the poems be read through undissected and seen as **form and substance emerging as units within a continuing process**" (emphasis mine). His plea can be appreciated when one examines his critics. H. J. Oliver, for example, considers that in "Essay on Memory" "the poetry never lets one down," while the thought does; and although he finds that in "Between Two Tides" the philosophy is "superimposed" on the story, he is able to accept "its merits as narrative verse, and its merits in the way, particularly, of description, of reflection, and of imagery." Vincent Buckley's comments upon "Essay on Memory" and "Heemskerck Shoals"—of the latter he writes "Monstrous! But one pennyworth of thought to such an intolerable deal of prose"—imply the same distinction. It is made yet again by Judith Wright. "Philosophies," she concludes, ". . . are not poetry; and even if FitzGerald's man-of-action viewpoint on the world does not always convince us, the poetry remains, and we would be very much the poorer without it."

*

The view that one can somehow separate the philosophy from the poetry, throw away the one and keep the other, does not constitute a judgmen upon FitzGerald's achievement, but rather an avoidance of judgment. A poem, it seems surprisingly necessary to say at this point, is not a series of thoughts joined together by "poetry"; nor is poetry, as the judgments quoted above seem to suggest, some kind of verbal embroidery which is detachable from sense and meaning. One's disagreement with a man's ideas, or lack of sympathy with his attitudes, does not make him an unsuccessful poet, nor entitle one to ignore what he says, while admiring his way of saying it. When FitzGerald succeeds, it is by thinking poetically—that is, by achieving precisely the union of form and substance of which he writes. When he founders, one cannot rescue just the philosophy or just the poetry from the wreck. Both go down together. Further, a successful poem is surely one which persuades one to accept its point of view, so that argument about whether the poet is **actually** right or wrong becomes irrelevant. This point has been admirably stated by T. S. Eliot: "The possible interests of a poet are unlimited . . . our only condition is that he turn them into poetry, and not merely meditate on them poetically. A philosophical theory which has entered into poetry is established, for its truth or falsity in one sense ceases to matter, and its truth in another sense is proved."

Rejecting the barren and fallacious distinction between poetry and thought, and bearing in mind Eliot's statement, it is possible, I believe, to arrive at an evaluation of FitzGerald's poetry which comes closer to distinguishing its special qualities. I can refer here to only a relatively small section of his work, but the examples I have chosen are "typical" and could easily be multiplied. As I see it, they represent both the source of his defects and the nature of his merits.

FitzGerald's interests have remained constant since the beginning of his poetic career. (I am not, by the way, referring to his profession as a surveyor, which has all too often been invoked as a substitute for more useful comment upon his verse.) One of his most important preoccupations is the relationship between time, history and beauty. His exploration of the problem of time began as early as 1927 in the sequence of poems "The Greater Apollo," which is now included in "Forty Years' Poems" under the title "Salvage." The first three poems in the sequence deal with the transience of beauty; the fourth declares faith in the sufficiency of the material world; the last three assert the continuity of time. Caesar and Catiline, he concludes, though long dead, may feel through the living poet "today's known bliss," since all three share a common humanity. There is a note of defiant confidence in his acceptance of an indestructible material world, and the poems ring with strength rather than subtlety. The writing is uneven. There is a good deal of conventional, sometimes tired romantic imagery, from which FitzGerald declines at times into bleak philosophical jargon:

> . . . for I rate
> animate and inanimate,
> life, time and substance, action, space,
> as oneness infinitely great.

The sequence as a whole suffers from a surfeit of unassimilated ideas. It is a curious mixture of observation and theorising, of concrete images and abstract argument. Yet with all its faults it has a certain air of authority. It has shape; its logic is clear and its attitudes are well-defined.

"The Greater Apollo" contains the germ of "The Hidden Bole" (1937) which according to Douglas Stewart is a poem FitzGerald regards highly. It is certainly one of his best. Time is its subject, time in its relationship to beauty. The two themes are caught together in the central images of Pavlova's dancing and the banyan tree. (One cannot avoid recalling the last stanza of Yeats's "Among School Children," where the chestnut tree and the dance together symbolise the undying and unified forces of life.) In "The Hidden Bole" FitzGerald has found the perfect central image for his subject. Vitality and transient beauty are transformed from mere concepts into concrete realities; Pavlova's dancing records and exemplifies precisely the meaning of the poem. A phrase from it describes FitzGerald's aim and achievement—to "rhyme her into fact." Her dancing is transient, yet the dance and its memory remain to proclaim the possibility of permanence. Her existence on the "edge of air" delineates the shifting boundaries between the permanent and the transient. (FizGerald's preoccupation with the "edge" of experience is one of his most interesting and individual notions.) So he is able to conclude, with a deliberation and exactness that any poet might envy:

> I praise your triumph for its transience,
> that the notes pass and fair dies into fair.

In "The Hidden Bole" argument—and the poem must be praised for its logic — blends perfectly with image to define the meaning of abstract concepts:

> We ask no more than let our joy be frail,
> since its whole wisdom is its passing hence;
> nor would we stamp on you the permanence
> which, only, is death.

There are weaknesses in the poem in the form of awkward archaisms and occasional thickness of texture. But though they dull the music of the

poem, they do not destroy its unity of substance and form, nor its clarity of vision.

*

To pass from "The Hidden Bole" to "Essay on Memory" is to pass from an accomplishment to a brave attempt which does not succeed. "Essay on Memory" in my opinion fails on several counts. Its argument is confused. The ingredients of the poem—abstract discussion of time, memory and history, patriotic fervor and exuberant confidence —do not blend happily. The poem's failure though is emphatically not merely a philosophical one. Nothing that FitzGerald has written better illustrates my thesis that one cannot separate his thought from his poetry. Where in "The Hidden Bole" he found the right central symbols for his argument, here he has found a symbol—the rain —which is at best ambiguous and at worst self-contradictory. The philosophical speculation of the first sections of the poem sorts ill with the activist propaganda of its conclusion. The confusions in the argument are perfectly mirrored in the uncertainty of the language. Vincent Buckley noted that there are too many images in the poem, a criticism with which I agree. But why are there too many? The answer, I suspect, is to be found in the divided, and in the end inconsistent aims of the poem. The introductory discourse upon time and memory simply does not lead to the conclusion at which FitzGerald arrives. More than once in the poem he offers a series of images for a single idea, not, I believe, because each adds to its definition, but because he is seeking definition and has not found it. Consider this passage:

> This hour, a gulp in the long throat of the past,
> swallows what once was future, but soon spent;
> this hour is a touch of hands, an accident
> of instants meeting in unechoing vast:
> it is a rail that bursts before the flourish
> of black manes and time's haste; it fails our need—
> now must decision be brief, must jump or perish
> under the feet and fury of stampede.

The alternative images offered here, so far from clarifying his conception of the present ("this hour"), merely suggest his own uncertainty as to its precise character. The images add nothing to each other. They do, however, underline the confusion inherent in the whole structure and argument of the poem. Here, surely, are ideas meditated upon poetically, but not turned into poetry. The reader, to quote Johnson on Pope's "Essay on Man," "feels his mind full, though he learns nothing."

The prosaic austerity of "Heemskerck Shoals" might seem to be a reaction against the adjectival over-indulgence of "Essay on Memory." Here FitzGerald seems to have taken Yeats's advice, and to have thrown away his embroidered coat. In this very different mode he still is not entirely happy. Yet one cannot blame simply the thinness of the thought or the flatness of the language, for both, being mutually dependant, are at fault. Quite simply, the poem lacks interest. Nevertheless it marks an important step in FitzGerald's stylistic experiments (as does "Between Two Tides"), since it is an attempt to write narrative poetry in a low key.

Like other critics, I find "Between Two Tides" only partly successful. The narrative is well-sustained. FitzGerald shows here the sense of structural logic characteristic of all his best poems. Into the story are woven several of FitzGerald's central ideas—his philosophy of progress:

> and life's like a wave breaking, not good or ill,
> or right or wrong, but action and pressing forward.

his preoccupation with time:

> What then was needed
> to reconcile—make whole—both present and past?

and his belief in action and endeavor:

> Only by acts
> of resolution does any man mould himself
> to something he'd know tomorrow.

H. J. Oliver believes that the trouble with "Between Two Tides" is that the moral does not arise from the story. There is some truth in this, but I do not see it as the chief fault of the poem. The moral—or rather the several morals—do arise in a general way from the story, and I would suppose that FitzGerald's choice of the action is explained by his insight into this very fact. My criticism rather is that the narrative is attenuated. It is stretched further than its interest or significance warrant. There are passages of good writing (as Oliver has noted), but there is also too much detail which does not bear sufficiently on the action or theme. Again, as in "Essay on Memory," though for almost opposite reasons, substance and manner decline together. The explanation of the poem's slackening of interest is not that the "thought" is superficial or at odds with the story, but that too much has been expected of the action. It is not large enough to sustain so extensive a poetic structure.

*

So far I have been engaged in comment upon FitzGerald's longer poems, in order to demonstrate my view of the essential consistency of his failures and his successes. In contrast to "Heemskerck Shoals" and "Between Two Tides," "Fifth Day" and "Transaction," like "The Hidden Bole," make their point with precision. Their actual dimensions are perfectly calculated; their substance and manner perfectly matched. When this kind of matching takes place, arguments about the merits or defects of the attitudes adopted are beside the point.

To illustrate my contention in a more positive way I could select several poems from FitzGerald's latest collection, "Southmost Twelve." The title poem provides an excellent illustration. The argument of the poem is plain enough. FitzGerald is debating, at a quite simple level, the philosophical question of causation and necessary connection. Can we be certain that the sun will rise tomorrow? It is conceivable, says the poet-philosopher, that the sun could rise in the west. From this point he expands his argument into an attack upon logic and "cold cause-and-effect":

> Myself, I never liked logic's rope, the theme
> that step should tie on step.

He goes on to describe himself as a "creature of instinct," and arrives at the conclusion that intelligence is "knowledge of what I touch." Now it does not matter whether or not this is a limited attitude, or whether the arguments FizGerald has reviewed would be known to a first year student of logic. They are real and valid in the context of this poem. The opening image of "the year's midnight turned towards dawn" is a poet's view of a philosophical commonplace. It is not metaphysics turned into metaphor; it is thought made concrete, and made convincing. This, surely, is what Eliot meant when he said that in poetry the truth or falsehood of a philosophy in one sense ceases to matter, and in another sense is proved. In "Southmost Twelve" one is in direct contact

with the poet's experience. His meaning is persuasively conveyed in terms of the world of his observation and imagination, and invites evaluation, not at the level of logic, but at the level of poetic consistency and power.

One might apply this argument to many of the poems in "Southmost Twelve" ("Bog and Candle," for example) where FitzGerald, while often reaffirming or re-stating views which have occupied him since his earliest poems, has found for them more exact equivalents in the world of his experience. In his best poems he has found the voice Yeats sought for himself, that of "an active man speaking." His poetic voice—his own tone and accent—is not always easy to listen to. His poetry does not flow smoothly off the tongue, and even to read it silently is to be conscious of the thickness (and when he writes below his best) the coarseness of its texture. It is blurred speech, sometimes, though not always, because of its compression. It is overburdened with sibiliants and with breathy, tongue-twisting consonants tighly packed. The expression can be rough and awkward. "Well though it is that things—good, evil" is a horrible line, and there are many like it—lines where one's appreciation and understanding are actually killed by the sheer forced ugliness of the verse.

Yet the thick and muddied lines are matched by many where FitzGerald achieves clarity and grace:

> The wind blows to your door down all these years

or

> I will go out and hear the strain
> of rat-bag orators at large

My preference is for his lines of lucid and graceful speech, since the accumulation of words which seem wrung from the poet by an effort of will and endeavor is hard on the ear and on the mind, except when it is justified by the kind of meaning the poem holds. Yet no one who has studied FitzGerald's poetry closely would be so rash as to suppose that he has settled into a fixed poetic manner. "Southmost Twelve" contains some of the best poems he has written. In them there is a greater directness and plainness of speech than he has achieved before. The last poem in the collection is called "Beginnings." It might be a companion piece to the youthful "Caesar and Catiline are dead" which concludes "The Greater Apollo." In it FitzGerald regrets having come too late to have known the great men of the past, and the obscure thousands who lived and worked in their "cities under the sand." It is not a perfect poem, but it demonstrates the consistency, the forcefulness and the conviction of his view of the world. It fitly concludes a volume which could well open another phase in the poet's development.

*

FitzGerald's poetry, like that of any poet, is uneven and imperfect at times. Yet when it is, it is not because he has ceased thinking, or is thinking superficially, but because the process whereby the ideas in the poet's mind are changed into precise statements, and into images which immediately declare their "rightness," has not been completed. The transformation has been only half accomplished. To try to separate something called "poetry" from "thought," or to object that FitzGerald is an optimist rather than a pessimist, is to do injustice to him and violence to whatever sense there might be in literary criticism. That poetry can be made out of faith as well as out of scepticism, out of hope as well as despair, FitzGerald has abundantly demonstrated. To deny this is to fall victim to a fashionable literary fallacy which would disallow to those who affirm their belief in humanity, the privilege of having struggled to achieve and sustain it.

CURRENCIES

Being for this moment happily out of the ditch
of debt and the mud of troubles and, to be strictly fair,
always, for a rhymer, comparatively rich,
a shilling in my pocket makes me a millionaire.

He has excess of riches (for the immediate while)
who, with a coin for spending (and no immediate lack),
can wear an air like merchandise, like imports pile on pile,
and turn on banks or bargains the estimate of his back.

As for the toll-gate guardian who, on our journey hence,
will take this coin as tribute and tarnish it by touch,
he shall not prey on purchases we made with brighter pence—
with days that were confetti blown flickering from his clutch.

ROBERT D. FITZGERALD.

Robert D. FitzGerald

PLACES OF ORIGIN

I—A Bit Personal

MY father's ordinary speech quite often gave place to a distinct brogue; sometimes deliberately when he would put it on to tell a story or make some observation about things Irish, at other times unconsciously on occasions of pleasure or excitement or, again, as a shield for the self-consciousness he was known to feel among strangers or in formal company; and at these other times it was only the shadow of a brogue, though all the more noticeable to his family because he himself would be then so unaware of it.

He was born in Australia and was never in Ireland. The accent came to him at secondhand from the man of all mankind whom he had most loved and admired: his own Irish father. It was no affectation; and yet I often doubted whether, after the flight of years, it was an authentic accent still; for the Irishmen whom I might meet from time to time, born and bred on the old turf, never spoke quite as my father did or used the expressions that he used: "It's a fine soft day," when there was a grey drizzle; "It's better than a poke in the eye with a burnt stick" to express real satisfaction; and "T-thrue for you!"—with the initial "t" half aspirated and half dental—by way of expressing approval and agreement.

But, on my first morning in Tralee, when I came downstairs in the small private hotel in Denny Street and went to go out of the front door, the manager warned me: "The day's a bit soft"; and after I had spoken to folk in the street and in shops and offices I found I was hearing what I knew well. Doubtless in all countries there are variations in spoken language, and in Ireland more than one kind of Irish English. My father's lapses into a soft speech had had the true Kerry tone and cadence, as I now recognised.

However, if Kerry tongues could talk to me in accents already familiar, so almost could Tralee itself if only to say: "This, very little changed, is what they said good-bye to." When my forebears looked on it for the last time over a hundred years ago it was a new town built upon demolished antiquities. "If ever there was a new Town," wrote a contributor to the Kerry Magazine is 1854, "Tralee is one. There are in it men old enough to remember the building of almost every house now standing. Everything in it is new. There is the new court-house—and the new gaol —and the new barracks—and the new poor-house —new Church—new Scots' Church—new Chapel —new shops on all sides of the streets—new plate-glass fronts in their windows—new flagway underfoot—new light (gaslight we mean) overhead —the new canal—and soon we hope to see the new railway station." The new gaslight is now electric, and the flagway is now mostly bitumen, except for a few stone flags in the Square; and the new shops no longer look new, though I conjecture that most of them have the same names over the doors as when my great-grandmother would go shopping there with her daughters in preparation for the long voyage to Australia. And the staid office buildings in Denny Street, which have an air of never having been either old or new, are still numbered as they used to be, not with odd numbers on one side and even numbers on the other, as here, but with the numbers running consecutively down the left-hand side from the Mall and returning up the right-hand side. No. 23, from which business letters followed the family overseas, is No. 23 still; and the room in which they were written is occupied by a successor familiar with the original business. Tralee prides itself on being a busy, modern commercial city, just as once it prided itself on being new. It has neon signs and modern sanitation. But horse-drawn governess-carts still refuse right of way to motor cars in Castle Street; and the pattern of narrow thoroughfares is as haphazard as it must always have been. My great-grandfather would not feel lost if he were to return; he would find his way without difficulty to his old home by twists and turns familiar and unchanged.

*

I wanted to find that old home myself; but I had no idea where it was. I knew that there had been a house in Strand Street certainly, which my grandfather sold after his own father's death in Sydney's Balmain; but I believed it to have been a small letting proposition, not Adraville, the big house after which the home in Balmain had been named, and afterwards that in Hunters Hill. My grandfather, as a boy of twelve, had made a model of his home for his mother's birthday; and when the rest of the family followed him to Australia they brought the model with them. It is still in existence, and I had photographs of it: a big two-storied place with a row of chimney-tops surmounting a double ridge of roof; and there are several other distinguishing features.

But one could not go systematically examining every old two-storied house in and around Tralee; so I took the photographs along to the police, and put it to them that surely one of their number must have come across the place in the course of his patrolling the neighborhood.

They were helpful and friendly and even enthusiastic. Of course, they knew the house; it was two miles to the north, no, half a mile to the south. Then there was an argument as to whether it was not to the east or right here in the town. Eventually no, they could not place it at all, at all. "Ah well," I said—and I'm not sure that by this time a little of my father's accent was not creeping into my own voice, for all this was the fun of Cork—"Ah well, I don't suppose it's still standing. It was over a hundred years ago." The senior constable was quite shocked. "But a hundred years isn't old for a house," he expostulated. I did not feel I could tell him it would be rare antiquity in Australia.

From the police station I went along to the county and urban council chambers. There might be oblique ways of finding what I wanted, such as a record of sales—associated perhaps with a sale of farms which our people had once owned at Drumultane. Letters from No. 23 had shown that the Drumultane property had been worked by tenants, John and James FitzGerald, sons of "Old FitzGerald," and had been sold to one Pat Donovan "of the Square," who had also bought the Strand Street proposition. I have a feeling (based only on an old tale, however) that John and James may have been relatives of our own.

My enquiries and photographs aroused the same interest that they had aroused at the police station, but at first with little result. No one knew or had even heard of Drumultane. Eventually, however, I was passed on to the Chief Valuer, Mr. Foley, who seized on my problem as eagerly as if it had been his own. He knew where Drumultane was, a little place of a few houses, out towards Scarterglyn and beyond Castleisland. He had also, as a boy, known Pat Donovan. Pat surely lived to a great age, for quite a few people remembered him. There were still FitzGeralds at Drumultane, Mr. Foley told me, and they must surely have bought the place. It would be, he thought, when the special legislation was passed enabling tenants to do just that. Out came his records of 1902; and there, sure enough, was the sale from Patrick Donovan to John FitzGerald But there were no clues leading to Adraville. I showed him the photographs of the model, but he shook his head over them.

*

My wife and my daughter Rosaleen—over from London where she had been living—came in at that moment. They had been on another hunt—ancestors—and it had led them by the same kind of reasoning as my own, but from another direction and by another door, to Mr. Foley's Office. I was interested in ancestors myself (I understood they were of the Desmond branch of the Geraldyns) but I knew of none further back than those whom bad times drove to Australia; so I had abandoned the trail as hopeless in the short time available to me. My wife, however, was so dogged that I'm relieved she never dug up anything discreditable. Seeing us there she threw in the remark that the house was in Strand Street.

I didn't consider it helpful. "That," I said with some impatience, "was a small letting proposition. Why, it was sold for only £450!"

Mr. Foley seized on this at once. "Four hundred and fifty pounds!" he exclaimed, "but that was a lot of money in those days. It would be a big house. Let me have another look at those photographs." And then, "Yes," he said, "I think I know the place. It's alongside the Maternity Hospital. The O'Connors live there. It's called the Strand House. You go on up along Strand Street now and have a look at it."

So along we went. One of the Miss O'Connors kindly let us walk around and examine our find, with the photographs in our hands; and at point after point the identification was complete. Mr. Foley was right, and so was my wife; the Strand House is quite certainly Adraville. Later we were invited in for the evening by the kindness of Mrs. O'Connor, and enjoyed the charming company of her family. I sat in my great-grandfather's living-room and drank Irish whisky before a turf fire in my great-grandfather's great fireplace—the highlight of my travels. It was compressed turf like Victorian brown coal briquettes, but a turf fire all the same.

*

Next day Mrs. O'Connor introduced me to Sheila FitzGerald, a tall grey-eyed, beautiful girl, and to her brother Denis, an ambitious, energetic young man of business, both of Drumultane and both highly thought of in Tralee. I hoped they might be my very distant cousins; but I have no actual knowledge of any Irish cousins at all.

Indeed, when later in the morning I met Mr. Foley in the street, and he suggested: "Well, now we've found the house; we must see if we can find you some of your relations," I could only reply: "I never heard of any. So far as I know I haven't got any."

"But of course you have," he said. "There are FitzGeralds at Ardfert and at Scarterglyn and out on the Dingle and all around. Some of them would be yours."

"They'd all be good Catholics, wouldn't they?" I asked.

"Oh, that they are," he said, "all good Catholics."

"But my people were Protestants," I explained.

"But there's nothing in that," he assured me, "they were aristocracy. They changed their religion half-a-dozen times to keep their land."

I find that very gratifying. As Protestants isolated in the southernmost county of Ireland I had thought they could only have been religious fanatics of the most bigotted kind. It was a relief to know they were just practical and down-to-earth.

II—Not Quite So Personal

I want to tell you about George Glendenning; but a lot of other things should come first. Impressions of three crowded weeks tumble so together that the mind does not separate them into any sort of order; but certainly they start with the view of the green crazy pavement of fields below us as we came over from the Atlantic to land at Limerick Airport. Truly, we said, this is the Emerald Isle, be the phrase as hackneyed as you like.

They are irregularly-shaped fields in no kind of pattern, with very few roads giving access to them, just narrow paths, "boreens," here and there; and they are divided by low, dry stone walls, the kind you can see at Kiama on the New South Wales coast; though in the more fertile places vegetation breaking through the rubble masonry makes them look like hedges from the air or, in effect, they do become hedges, a darker green than the fields, except where patches of this growth are gorse in yellow flower.

And they are small fields. No doubt generation after farming generation have divided and subdivided their tenures among sons till the great-great-grandsons have had no alternative but to emigrate. The building of dividing walls can be seen, too, to have been an economic necessity as a means of clearing the ground of random stone; though in parts of the country—the Corkscrew Hill in Galway is an example—the surface boulders have been too many to be got rid of as walls. Loose and outcropping limestone breaks up the hillsides; and the black-faced sheep, scattered well apart as this breed seems to prefer, feed on sparse grass between the grey chunks. You never see them feeding as a flock even on undulating country carrying good grass. The best of such grazing land, however, is given over to cattle and horses—beautiful well-fed animals in wonderful condition.

Mountains, or steep-sided hills, like the sacred Croagh Patrick or Yeats's Knocknarea and Ben Bulben, are all completely denuded of timber. They look green enough but are usually somewhat eroded pastures. Those we crossed—the Slieve Mish out on the Dingle Peninsula, south of Tralee—often had little but shallow patches of peaty ground between the denuded outcrops. The cultivated plots and walled fields of the Irish-speaking farmers and fisher-folk did not extend beyond the foot of the range.

On the upland plateaus, further inland, moorlands open out widely, and consist to a great extent of deep beds of peat-bog—the turf which has been cut for fuel through centuries and appears to be inexhaustible. Perhaps it would be so if it continued to be cut by hand with narrow sharp spades and carried out on the backs of donkeys, whose hooves have the knack of not sinking deep in the bog. But near Ballina, after we had travelled through many miles of desolate waste country of this kind in the County of Mayo, we saw acres on acres of bogland being stripped by bulldozers to be fed as fuel to the big electric power station nearby. We were told that very few dwellings in the republic, even in outlying or isolated parts, are now without electric light and power. It is one of De Valera's great achievements for his country, reinforcing his earlier achievements as a liberator. There is plenty more turf; and even if it were all to be burnt for power, coal can be imported; and the drained pasture-lands incidentally opened up could be the bigger asset—provided the agricultural products can be disposed of at a profit.

As to that, I had the honor of an interview with Father Reedy, the Dean of Kerry, and he told me that power and the disposal of products are the two big problems. I had observed to him surprise at a published statement that if emigration were to continue at its present rate the country would be empty in ten years. Yet everything looked so good: the beautiful cattle, the fine fields and crops—with many fields lying fallow and so giving no evidence of overcrowding. And in Kerry, to a hasty observer, few signs of poverty. One professional beggar had worried us in Limerick; but you can get them anywhere and elsewhere. There seemed, certainly, to be too many young men hanging about unoccupied at street corners; but they were well-clad and did not look ill-fed. The children everywhere wore shoes and neat clothes. Father Reedy disillusioned me: "It's true enough," he said; "we have enough to eat but too few ways in which to give men work, and nothing to export but our population. We have no coal; we have no oil; we have no uranium; we have very little water power, and we have no minerals. We have no industries; we have only our agricultural products, which we sell to England, a very limited market; and the ocmpetition there from European countries like Holland and Denmark is just too severe. And with the use of modern farming equipment even agriculture can only employ about one-tenth of the men it used to do. Mind you," he added, "during the first world war we were some of us a little on the German side. What we didn't know was that if the Germans had won the war they intended to take Ireland over from top to bottom. And they were going to make it the most productive country in Europe. And they were going to make the Irish work. And they wouldn't have liked that!" Probably not under those conditions; but otherwise the remark must not be misunderstood; in Scotland and England I found that the Irish have the highest of reputations as workers.

*

Seeing just as much as I did of the prevailing conditions I could not but feel how right my own people had been not to struggle on in Ireland but to come to Australia. Yet without any wish or thought to be other than an Australian, of and in Australia, with a love of my own country and a pride in it, my visit confirmed in me the link which I suppose we all have with our places of origin. We may not always recognise it, but it is with us as an unsatisfied hunger unless and until we have the good fortune to set foot in the land of our forbears and pick up a handful of its very soil; whereupon it still stays with us, but now as an enhanced consciousness of kinship. At no time in Ireland did we feel that we were strangers there. One is justly annoyed with the Australian of the second, third or later generation who refers to England as "home"; this is either retrograde sentiment or "Bonds-of-Empire" propaganda.

I never heard an Irish-Australian call Ireland "home." But one can acknowledge the universal nature of the instinct which bids us retain a hold on our backgrounds.

Be that as it may, it would seem that Irish blood never really wears thin. You would have thought my own and my daughter's was a bit diluted by this time; but she told me that she too picked up a handful of earth.

We went to the pictures one night in Tralee. At the conclusion a tune played which I did not know and which, to my shame, I would not recognise even now. I wasn't listening to it but feeling under my seat for my overcoat and beret. Rosaleen thumped my arm and thumped it again till I looked up. She pointed at the screen: the orange, white and green flag of the republic was fluttering there—the symbol of liberation after centuries of blood and heroic struggle. We stood at attention like soldiers out of both respect and pride.

Twice more we went to the pictures, as much, I think, for the joy of standing with the Irish like that again as for any interest in the films. At Sligo, I remember, we went afterwards for supper to a small cafe where we sat on stools at a counter. The proprietress was the most jovial woman in all Ireland; I'm sure of that. Like others she thought at first we were English and—as always—when we let it out that we were Australians of Irish descent we got double attention and double friendship, partly to make amends for the injustice done us in thinking we were English. She saw fun in everything and gasped with laughter, as if at a great joke, when it came out that we had seen no shamrocks, and no hurley-game and had tasted no poteen. "Mary'll tell you about that," she said, and called over to the girl helping her, "she comes from where it's made. Did you ever see poteen made, Mary?" Mary certainly had; all her friends and relations had dealings of one kind or another with it. "Did you ever drink any of it?" I asked. She laughed, "I wouldn't be here if I had," she said.

In another town, too—I think it was Bundoran—we went to a cafe after the pictures and got into conversation with a man and woman at our table. By this time the feeling of the place had thoroughly got into us; for when, after a while, the man asked: "You're English, aren't you?" instead of answering him I turned to Rosaleen and said: "What did we ever do to him?"—"Yes," she said, "why should he call us names?"

This man, I remember, asked a little later if there were any movement for independence in Australia. I said: "Certainly not. Why should there be? Australia is independent already, under the Crown." He clearly did not believe me, simply because this is a paradox no one outside the situation can ever comprehend; and, of course, there are degrees and kinds of dependence besides political; but I wasn't splitting hairs.

*

Going to the pictures brought home to me an aspect of Father Reedy's explanation of the economic position. The young fine-looking unemployed lads at street corners, who have enough for food and clothes but little money over, turned up in fair numbers, but no young girls with them. Any girls present came with each other. One can see that the young men cannot afford to take their girls to entertainments, and even less can they afford to commit themselves to associations which would eventually lead to marriage. Consequently, the girls, too, do not marry young, many not at all; and the export of population, chiefly male population, goes on. De Valera is a true statesman; those who shall follow him will need to be. There could be greater problems ahead than ever independence was.

There is still wealth in Ireland; and still some big estates well looked after by owners who live on them; but many others are falling into decay, possibly through pressure brought to bear on absentee landlords and through absentee neglect. We saw one such estate near Boyle, with a high stone wall all round it, in bad repair. My wife, making a purchase in a shop in the town, commented on the wall. "Ah!" said the woman of the shop with evident glee, "the English landlord had all the tenants building that wall at sixpence a day for their labor; but the trees are knocking it down now; the trees are knocking it down."

*

And those devotedly Irish trees remind me: I was going to tell you about George Glendenning. There is in the little town of Westport an open space or "place" known as the Octagon, which, indeed, it is. In the centre there stands a tall column on a polygonal pedestal. On four sides of the pedestal there have been inscriptions, but they are obliterated; and on the top of the column where evidently there had once been a statue—nothing at all. We were all curiosity, and could only suppose it had been a monument erected in the days of British domination to some particularly hated oppressor. I could think of Lord Castlereagh. I dared not, in these circumstances, enquire about it of passers-by who might think me English. But we walked into Short Street, and I turned into a tobacconist's to buy a newspaper. By good luck the proprietor took me at once to be other than English, and asked me where I came from. So, with Irish-Australian status well established, I asked in my turn about the monument.

"It's a monument to George Glendenning," he said, and waited.

"And who was George Glendenning?"

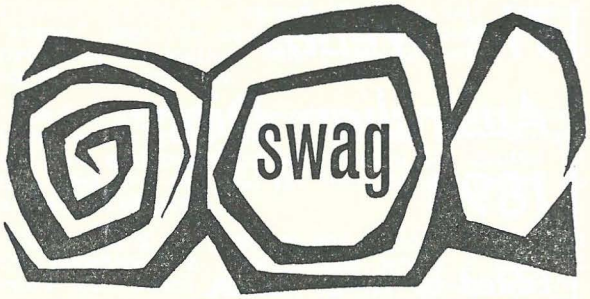
"He lived round here about the end of last century; and he was an agent; and"—in confidential tones—"you know what that means; it means really a moneylender; and you know those people aren't liked.

"Well, he died, and he left all his money to have a monument erected to himself. Well, he did have a few friends, and they got together and put up the monument with George Glendenning's statue on the top and the dates of his birth and death on four sides of the pedestal. The Irish didn't mind. If George Glendenning wanted to spend all his money that way after he was dead, that was all right; the monument did no harm. The Irish didn't mind.

"So there it stayed; and it wasn't the Irish that brought it down at all. It was the English. There was an English regiment quartered here in the time of the troubles; and they started using George's head for target practice; and after a while they cut it off altogether; so it seemed the decent thing to bring the statue down and to blot out the inscriptions. It wasn't the Irish that did it, though. It was the English. But the Irish didn't

mind. They never liked George Glendenning anyway."

Our visit was far too short; and I don't suppose I shall ever go again to Ireland, much as I would like to see more, to stay longer and to talk to more people. But we went from it; and I realised, in a true sense of that word, something of the pain of migrants departing for ever from whatever country was theirs and the home of their ancestors. We left as we came, by aeroplane; and as we rose over the green land towards the grey sea I thought of the young men at street corners, of the vanishing population and the untended fields. I could not help saying to myself again how well it was that our people had come to Australia. But I was sad. There was a hollow in my heart because it was so unlikely I would ever see this place again. "And if I feel like this," I thought, "after just three weeks, how, how did those others feel over a century ago, leaving this land where they had always lived, as had those of their blood before them?



I've often wished I could publish some good, locally-written science fiction in Overland, and I'm reminded of this by one of the books I'm reading down here at Port Fairy, where I'm writing this. In his excellent "Profiles of the Future" (Pan Books) Arthur C. Clarke, the well-known scientist and S.F. author, says: "**Only** readers or writers of science fiction are really competent to discuss the possibilities of the future. It is no longer necessary, as it was a few years ago, to defend this genre from the attacks of ignorant or downright malicious critics; the finest work in the medium stands comparison with all but the very best fiction being published today . . . A critical reading of science-fiction is essential training for anyone wishing to look more than ten years ahead. The facts of the future can hardly be imagined by those who are unfamiliar with the fantasies of the past."

*

It seems a pity that so few Australian authors of standing have any competence or interest in the scientific and technological world. I can't think of any country where the literary culture is so bloody literary. We've got tight little imaginations when it comes to choosing subjects for writing, as you can see by the novels published here and the stories that arive in the mail for magazines like Overland. It would be a pity if the new mature mode of writing about relations between people (in many ways a welcome divergence from bushwhackery and romance and adventure stories) should make us forget that the relations between people and things are also of prime importance to a literature. And in Australia, above all, you would hope tht the writers would feel the gravitational need to write in the context of a continent waiting to be pulled into shape by the hand of man, a continent awaiting, in Furphy's phrase, her bridal day.

*

It's good to see George Stewart's classic S.F. novel, "Earth Abides" (Corgi) back in print again, and it's been pleasant to renew acquaintanceship with a book of such profound anthropological and social interest. It tells of a world in which disease leaves only a few tiny scattered communities alive, and of their gradual, independent evolution of new cultures to meet their new needs and circumstances. It's an interesting exercise in the organic, and often irrational roots, of even the most sophisticated social cultures. Perhaps Port Fairy's a good place to read such a book. It's a still largely unspoilt bluestone township in south-western Victoria, essentially a farming and fishing community, and certainly the kind of place I'd like to be in if some apocalyptic tragedy did devastate the world. Ringed as we are down here by extinct volcanoes, I'm amused and impressed at the way man has tenaciously clutched at and dug his fingernails into this rich soil. And moved, too, at the way the tough fishermen live between the two elements, like the air-breathing mud-skippers in the primaeval pools, making forays in their shark-boats out into the rough waters of Bass Strait: perhaps the last survival in today's world of an essentially paleolithic technology. As I've written elsewhere recently, to be with the fishermen in their rolling boats out beyond the steamer lanes, and to observe them pausing every few minutes in their work of hauling in lines and cutting sharks' throats to sweep the horizon with their eyes for possible dangers, is to be reminded very forcibly of the trepidation with which early man must have forsaken the shelter of his cave.

*

Is there a single street in all Australia
Called after an artist, a poet, or a scientist?

asked Geoffrey Dutton in his poem in Overland No. 29. Now Dr. Walter McRae Russell, a long-time Overland subscriber, writes to say that his research work indicates that the eggheads haven't done so badly. There are eight Kendalls in Melbourne, thirty-three Gordons (but surely the General comes in here?), eighteen Scotts, eleven Miltons, five Shelleys, fifteen Byrons, two Burns, five McCraes but, alas, only six Shakespeares (Overland is printed in one of them, a point that our critics might sometimes take into account). I notice that in Canberra they have streets named after Marcus Clarke and Boldrewood, and even after a scientist or two, like Liversidge. But I suspect that in Canberra it was all rather official and is badly in need of updating: is there a Prichard or Davison street, or a suburb called Palmer? And in Melbourne the literary nomenclature obviously reflects the tastes of the nineteenth century enlightenment rather than any current interest. How about a White Mountain (there's a famous one in Bohemia, after all), a Lake Nolan, or even a Max Harris Boulevard? If officialdom won't act, perhaps some of our subdividing subscribers might take notice. Incidentally, all praise to the idea of nameplace committee, such as recently instituted in Victoria, which is going to try to stop people calling new suburbs Beverley Hills or Sunset Drive.

*

Talking of Max Harris, I really find it pretty worrying the way there seems to be a pathological fringe of people who foam at the pen-point when they write letters about him to the Australian. I mean, sometimes the stuff isn't funny . . . when it seems that some people seem to be able to whip themselves up into a kind of hatred-at-a-distance because of alleged indiscretions and inaccuracies. I hold no brief for everything Harris says; obviously he often says too much before he checks his facts. But thank Christ for someone who is prepared to say too much rather than too little—who doesn't mind raising the issues so that their real nature can be canvassed in public, rather than obscured in the slime of public relations and backstairs "fixing." When intellectual life is become more and more a matter of academics and institutions, places where levity and decent anger are depreciated and can affect one's career, how important to have as many Harrises as possible. Actually, if anyone ever bothered to assess Harris's real role in Australian cultural life, they would probably find that, though he is essentially a diffident and rather shy bloke, he has done more than any other single person in this country for authors, publishers, librarians, artists and scores of people in other categories working in the creative world. Perhaps what is most worrying about the open season that seems to exist on Max Harris is the evidence it presents of

Australia as a country in which gratitude, loyalty, mutual responsibility and some form of intellectual solidarity hardly exists. Intellectual activity has become commodity culture, and only a few people harking back to other places and other times exist, to remind us of its proper purpose and nature.

*

Passing from the values of our intellectual culture to the values of our mass communications, the death of Brian Fitzpatrick presented an opportunity for ironic comment. Here was one of the great Australians in the field of ideas; also one of the great Australians in the humanist tradition which has contributed to much to our make-up. Certainly one of the three or four top Australian historians, in an age when history has become (for reasons which it would be interesting to analyse some day) one of the dominant intellectual concerns. That "great" paper, the Melbourne Herald, couldn't bestir itself to the extent of running an obituary: some spokesman or other is alleged to have said that that kind of thing could be left to the Nation. A scratchy obituary was published in the Melbourne Age: journalists were said to be greatly inconvenienced by not being able to find any reference to Fitzpatrick in "Who's Who in Australia" (published by the Herald, for which Brian, incidentally, once worked). No doubt Brian Fitzpatrick would have been much amused by all this. He was a contributor to the first issue of Overland, and I like to think that he would have agreed with me when I say that the obituary that this incident called for was one on the intellectual and cultural status of the Australian press, of those who work for it (with some notable exceptions), and on those who direct its affairs. The ignorance of those who run the press, and their lack of general knowledge about Australian intellectual life, has never been greater in the history of this country.

*

We asked Dr. John Burton, now in London, to write us a personal kind of obituary on Doc Evatt, but he declined, saying he felt too involved in the whole subject. I suppose we should have run something notwithstanding in this issue, but I rather felt it should be either Burton or nothing. Evatt was always friendly to Overland, and fought hard to get this magazine recognition by the Commonwealth Literary Fund. He took me to lunch once at the Hotel Windsor, and introduced me to a senior Labor man in the Victorian Parliament. During the course of the lunch he said to this other chap: "Do you remember that dinner we had here of State and Federal members to celebrate the victory of the 'No' case in the 1951 referendum?" "Certainly," the other guest replied. "There were about eighty present," said Bert, "how many do you reckon voted 'Yes'?" "About sixty-five," was the answer. (My figures may be slightly awry, but the proportions are about right.) I also remember Evatt insisting on calling a taxi and going up to the Wilson Hall at Melbourne University to see Tom Bass's sculpture of "man triumphant," or whatever it might be called. "I never miss going up to see that when I'm in Melbourne," Evatt said.

*

Some announcements. Stories wanted for the seventeenth issue of "Coast to Coast," published or unpublished, to be sent to the Editor at Angus & Robertson Ltd., 221 George Street, Sydney, by 7th March, 1966. Entries for the Mary Gilmore poetry award (£50) close on 1st May at Box 32, Trades Hall, Goulburn Street, Sydney. Miss Anne O'Donovan, of Jacaranda Press, 73 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, is seeking contributions from writers, poets, illustrators and journalists under twenty-five years of age for the publication "Under Twenty-five," to be published in 1966.

*

We regret the necessity of using the euphemism "have intercourse" on page 39. It is neither what Wayland Young or Laurence Collinson wrote, nor what we would wish to print if we were free agents in this matter.

*

A few copies of Aileen Palmer's poems, "World Without Strangers?" are all that are left of an edition of five hundred published last year. We can supply them for 15/- while they last. Those who have subscribed to the Overland edition of Laurence Collinson's "Who is Wheeling Grandma?" will be glad to know that financing problems have been overcome by a generous loan, and that the book is in production. (Copies may be ordered for £1.) We will also be publishing a book of Dorothy Hewett's verse this year; the title is not yet decided upon.

S. MURRAY-SMITH.

The Floating Fund

A very helpful donations list this time, lifted by a very useful cheque received on account of the profits made at a Melbourne function held in November to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Overland. The first item acknowledged below is a cheque for £50 which considerably assisted us in organising a nation-wide tour for the visiting Czechoslovak publisher and 'Australianist,' Zorka Wolfova, in November and December. (We owe thanks to many Overland supporters for hospitality and many kindnesses shown Mrs. Wolfova in the various states.) Prices are rising all the time, and these donations, in bridging the gap between income and expenditure, are the basic factor in enabling us to survive. Many thanks to those who have contributed a total of £186/15/1.

NG £50; Function £37; FM £10;DL £7; IP £5; J&RL EM JC £4/4/-; JW £3/12/-; JM £3/4/-; NH £3/3/-; NF £2/4/-; VH £2; BS £2/3/1; JW £1/12/-; MS JH PR LO'N £1/6/-; EH RS MM BW £1/4/-; RMcN CG JC GP HS £1;RGT 18/-; ZR BH OH OM RS AB DB DL VMcK LC BH AM EF MJ NMcK KC 14/-; JT 10/6; GD JG CD CP 10/-;WD SJ RF ES JK JK JH 9/-; CR LF GE WL 8/-; BY 7/6; WT EW MF LL JB RB 5/-; RS MB PD CS EG IF JS RB CB BS MC PM BMB KMcE CJ VD WA PP HP TN HN MB WF GF EM EM IH PM JL EP PM WmcD A McD VV HP HW CT JS GC RR MB GP JG JL AB RS BG AC TMcA DP MM ES JR WC DD 4/-.

THE HERO

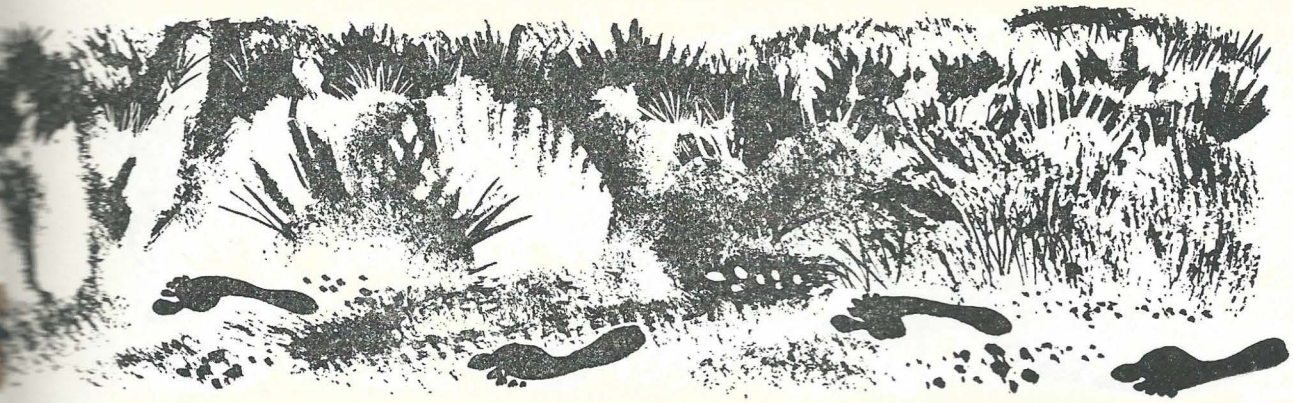
Geoffrey Dutton

Over Eyre's country, Great Australian Bight

The purest heroism is hidden like a crime
Whose aim is clear, whose motive never is revealed.
Those explorers who set straight for the horizon,
Who were bent by chance, then set their course again,
No one knows what vision appeared to them
Labelled in sun-gold and opal something like DUTY,
Except perhaps the seven-day thirsty horses,
The rebellious and the faithful natives, and the overseer
Before the ball blew him across the wasteful Bight.
All one can later do is set a scale
For the will, and search amongst the scrub for the scar
Where the track was bent along the line of will.
For it is always as it was in myths,
Only those who look back are condemned.

Of course it is cheating to watch from an aeroplane
Where Eyre slept on his walking feet.
It is hardly fair not to have to think
About the sources of one's food or drink,
To watch the sand blow and not feel its sting,
To ride cool shade beneath a polished wing.
Yet, being there, it is not neat like this at all,
Sureties fall away, thousands of tons
Topple from cliffs that munch the sea, so tall,
So endless, there is no scale for greatness.

A man on the cliffs would be a measure of smallness,
But there is nothing, not a kangaroo, nor a sheep, nor a rabbit,
And the wombats are all in their darkness under the ground.
In the air there is one very small plane that could fall,
There is nothing to listen to but the motor's even sound
That could always be uneven. Flying is never a habit.
So a little bit of danger is shared with the tattered explorer
Who left a scar across the remembered world.



In a century and a quarter scarcely one thing more
Has been added. A fence, and four hundred miles further,
An abandoned truck. One house in eight hundred miles.
The old telegraph poles wading into the creamy sand
And drowning. A monument in the scrub to a murdered man.
The rest is the same, just as if it were the sea, and great piles
Of the edge of Australia have strengthened their kinship with that.
The striped cliffs four hundred and fifty feet high,
The fluted, moving sandhills higher. The flat
Beach vanishing from sight with not one gull,
Then a bay the shape and color of a butterfly,
Sheltered by islands smooth as snoozing whales,
Where Eyre and Wylie found a ship at anchor
And a dream of butter and Dutch cheese and tales
Of wars fought between men, with blood and rancor
Instead of the indifferent abrasion of sand
Against the will of man. Who then went back on land.
The last three hundred miles were easy to understand.

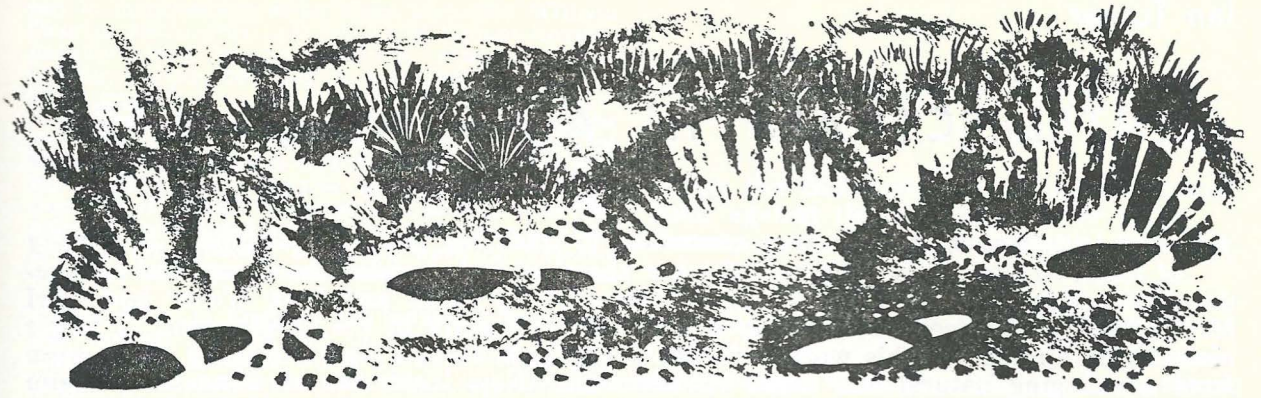
An aeroplane leaves no such trail,
And on its own, there is no scale,
For in the purity of flight
There is no terror left in height.
But looking down, if there can be
Between the frightful cliffs and sea
One albatross, slowly swinging,
That is enough, the great bird bringing
Its tiny presence to immensity
Like a moth in a deserted city.
Drifting between the lifting swell
And the monuments where red rock fell
Down the striped cliff-face, this bird alone
By will and knowledge is stronger than stone,
But time is like air when it is gone,
No mark is left where white wings shone.

There are no roads behind the cliffs or sandhills
But sometimes wheel-tracks, wandering parallels,
Have imposed some pattern of regularity,
Shared only by the horizon endlessly
Disappearing. These are marked, they have some history,
Where the Aborigines, like kangaroos
Could move, yet leave the landscape quite alone.

History has always been paced out with shoes.
Wheel-tracks make a double presence known
Like echoes of the drays Eyre left behind,
The sense of going somewhere, to hope, to find.

Look! A stopped thing stands at the centre.
An empty truck. The aeroplane
Circles round, its wing points down
At an open door, clothes on the seat,
Stores in the back, the tyres all up,
And circling far outside the plane,
Through arcs of sea and scrub and land,
The cool sky falls to the hot horizon.
The wheel-tracks end, no sign of life,
This metal a proof that time is made
Of broken regularities.
Somewhere against the far-off cliffs
The albatross is unconcerned,
Still casting out its rings of flight,
For all things have to take their chance
But only man can make it luck.
There is a history of rocks, a cycle
Of eggs and feathers on the beach;
Cracks slowly widen in the cliff-edge
And when one finally lets go
The albatross swings out to sea.
Chance kills or saves a man, like Eyre
Finding water in the sandhills
On the seventh day of his distress.
But sometimes chance can restart time,
Set lost man on another track
All waits for man to break or bend.
An abandoned truck, an ended track,
The geared and driving will broken down,
The observing aeroplane above,
The landscape waiting all round;
Somewhere on the plain the tracks
Of chance and duty intersect.

From an aeroplane in flight
Everything is exposed, nothing explained.
Even banking through a question mark
Nothing is answered, no shout is heard.
Free and fast, one must assume.
Man bound and slow below,



Yet beyond this image of desolation
There is somewhere an obstinate man
Walking for help, carrying his bones.
While still alive we are never
Victims; chance reveals to us
What we dare to think we are.

No one wants a hero afterwards,
Like criminals they leave their prison to die,
Or go in deeper than they did before.
It is not irresponsible to fly
Above their tracks, for above their stones the sky
Was freedom, even though the sun was duty
And the hero's freedom climbs inside its laws.
The pilot knows this, outside his six feet of air,
That all his undimensioned, unscaled world
Comes gliding back to earth on law.
Only man's actions link infinity.
For him they do not die or end at all.

Yet how ridiculous the truck, spilling its domestic innards!
Hom comical the explorer, floundering after bolting horses
Through the porcupine spinifex, or heating a rifle barrel
In the fire to melt a jammed ball, which suddenly
Whizzes past his ear on an unexpected explosion.
Everything goes wrong, there are always near disasters,
Nothing proceeds nobly like a classical tragedy.
Heroes must be prepared to be undignified;
They are weights in the cosmic balance, knocking it askew.

Though Eyre found no rich river, fat with mud,
No seagull from an inland sea, his track
Is like a scar the abandoned telegraph line
Leaves open through the scrub. And even where the poles
Are topped by sand, there is a sense of going on,
And when they emerge again it is like a sign.
The deserted truck flops out its open doors,
The albatross will never lose control,
The bones of the murdered overseer are lost.
Only the driven hero, driving his body on,
Rises beyond absurdities and grace,
Proving the more intolerable his fate
The more his passionate duty to walk it down.

Ian Turner

INTELLECTUALS IN AUSTRALIAN LIFE

AT first, intellectual history was concerned to trace the linear development of a body of ideas, to show how each new thinker absorbed and modified the thought of his predecessors. Then the historians of ideas, influenced by Marx and Max Weber and Karl Mannheim, began to see discontinuity rather than continuity in the development of man's ideas about himself and his world, and set out to demonstrate how changing ideas arose from a changing natural and social environment. Now historians of ideas have begun to look at this process from below, to examine how society and various social groups have responded to ideas and the men who carry them.

This is what Richard Hofstadter seeks to do in his book, "Anti-Intellectualism in American Life" (Jonathan Cape, 70/-). The title explains his purpose precisely: to examine the sources of hostility within American society to intellectuality and the men who profess it. His essay is an extended and intensive commentary on a thesis first suggested by the French diplomat and scholar, Alexis de Toqueville, in his book, "Democracy in America," which was first published in 1835—that democracy provides an unfavorable climate for intellectual endeavor.

Hofstadter's argument may be stated briefly. Anti-intellectualism has been a continuing and powerful force in American life. Its origins are in religious fundamentalism, which prized revealed truth above human inquiry; in egalitarianism, which distrusted the claims of an intellectual elite for special consideration; in the business ethic, which valued practicality and success; in the concept of "education for citizenship," which preferred social conformity to lonely intellectual endeavor. So American society rejected its intellectuals, and they in turn wore their rejection as a badge of pride. The characteristic posture of the intellectual was isolation within society and alienation from it. But modern technology has created a new role for intellectuals; both their practical skills and their ability to think in abstract and fundamental terms are needed by government, by business, and by defence. So the intellectuals are driven into ambivalence; reconciliation with society both attracts and repels them. Formerly they were secure in their isolation, but now all certainty is gone. Hofstadter has both a social conscience and a respect for intellect; he hopes that social and intellectual responsibility do not finally prove incompatible, but he is not sure.

This brief summary does violence to a brilliant book. I include it because people should know what the book is about; for the rest, I intend to pay Hofstadter the compliment of accepting the stimulus of his ideas, and discussing them in an Australian context.

But first the matter of definitions. Hofstadter suggests a distinction between "intelligence" and "intellect"—the former is "unfailingly practical," while the latter is "critical, creative, and contemplative." The distinction is important, for, while almost everyone praises "intelligence," many are suspicious, even frightened of, and hostile towards, the claims of "intellect."

*

Philosophical speculation about the nature of man and his environment was still, in the late 18th century, the prerogative of the man of leisure, and there was no place for such men in convict Australia. The gaol society which was created in New South Wales was truncated. It lacked a leisured aristocracy and gentry. What was there in the rigors of a newly established penal settlement that could conceivably attract them?

Intelligence there was in plenty—in Phillip and Collins and Tench and others of Phillip's officers, and among the convicts. The need to carve a beach-head out of the untouched bush, to parry the thrust of starvation, filled the days and the thoughts of the settlers. In the background was faith in progress, or hope for salvation, or despair; in the foreground was work and oblivion and death. From the moment the first skiffs ground on to the sands of Sydney Cove, practicality was the overshadowing spirit of the colony. And so it remained. Even Macquarie, who had faith in God and man, was called "the Builder." Australia was colonised not from principle but from necessity.

Had the Church been different, there might have been some counterweight to practical concerns. But the Church of England predominated; and, troubled though it was by the centrifugal tendencies of Methodism, its practitioners remained serenely confident of their established place in an ordered society. There were few to challenge the rigors of convict discipline or the despoliation of the Aboriginals with the call to a common humanity and brotherhood in Christ. (One who did—Alexander Maconochie of Norfolk Island, who sought to penetrate the nature of man—was dismissed his post.) As to the convicts, crime was immorality and must be punished; redemption must be sought hereafter. As to the Aboriginals, to Christianise meant to civilise, to transform the sons of Ham into sons of Japeth. This was conventional wisdom, and little questioned.

The first building complete, the colonists turned to consolidate and extend their hold. They stretched far across the land, but their reach did not exceed their grasp; their concerns were acres and wealth and power, the practical concerns of pioneering men. From this time came the first denunciations of Australian materialism. A "too engrossing pursuit of riches . . . prejudicial to the cultivation of science and literature," a writer in the Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine found in 1835. "The whole population . . . are bent on acquiring wealth," observed Charles Darwin in 1839; ". . . without intellectual pursuits [society] can hardly

fail to deteriorate." Even those who, like William Charles Wentworth, saw visions of "infant turrets" proudly rising in the southern skies imagined nothing unique, but only "a new Britannia in another world."

Practicality, the solution of the immediate, the recreation of the familiar, had become a style of thought. Improvisation had become a style of life; the colonial elite, outside government, achieved wealth and aspired to power, and prestige was distributed accordingly. There was as yet no hostility towards the intellect, for there were no intellectuals to call into question the newly established order.

Meanwhile, in England, the industrial revolution was leading intellect out of the studies of the leisured and into the world of affairs. The new sciences created the men; the technology, administration, and education required by urban-industrial society created the demand for their services. From pastime, intellectual activity became profession.

The first significant numbers of professionals reached Australia in the years of gold. They set about creating cities in their own image; but they too were builders first. They built art galleries—and filled them with pretentious reproductions of poor sculpture; libraries—and stocked them with conventionally accepted classics; cathedrals — and hired smooth comforters to preach for them; universities—and instituted the utilitarian disciplines appropriate to a growing, wealthy nation. What they built were monuments to their own perspicacity and diligence, rather than temples of learning.

Practicality had marked the men of the professions, too. They founded journals, and debated colonial politics and economics. They formed Royal Societies, and discussed sewerage. They instituted democracy and universal education, for the best of common-sense reasons. Almost their only intellectual debate was over Darwin—and that, in a land where the antiquity of man was proved 300,000 times over, came twenty years late.

On the outskirts of this satisfied society, the winds blew cold on the few who sought to create. Adam Lindsay Gordon suicided; Marcus Clarke drank himself to death. The professional intellect was institutionalised; the creative intellect was destroyed.

*

The first serious intellectual challenge to the received wisdom of colonial society came from below, from the working-class and radical intellectuals of the end of the century. Against the life hereafter, it asserted heaven on earth; against redemption in Christ, it asserted redemption in mateship. It rejected the accumulated wisdom of the old world as founded on superstition and injustice. But its egalitarianism and its nationalism alike predisposed it against the claims of intellect as such. Those who professed intellectual standards were among the mighty who must be tumbled from their seats. Only those who put their minds at the service of the cause were acceptable, and even they were not safe from the suspicion of back-sliding. There were few rewards for intellectual or creative talent offered by the radical democrats of the nineties, or by the Labor men who succeeded them. Francis Adams put their case well:

> Yes, let Art go, if it must be
> that with it men must starve—
> if Music, Painting, Poetry,
> spring from the wasted hearth!

Yet Adams could also complain bitterly of:

> A small class made up of our squatters, professional men, and wealthy tradesmen, forming a sort of spiritual and intellectual aristocracy; our Upper-class not only itself intellectually and spiritually dull, but debasing and dulling all the better spirits which, in their social ascension, pass into it from the ranks of the People.

Lawson bitched continuously about his "cultured critics," but it was not they who drove him out of the country. It was the lack of a creative intellectual community sufficient to sustain him. And there were many others who went—Tom Roberts, Streeton, Conder, Vance Palmer, Miles Franklin, Louis Esson, Henry Handel Richardson, Gilbert Murray, the list could continue almost indefinitely. Few would have gone so far as the visitor, D. H. Lawrence, who declared the "inner life" of Australia dead (but pronounced no benediction); although A. G. Stephens had commented earlier that "explorers in the interior of the Australian temperament bring back tales of a Great Emotional Desert." But many agreed that the intellectual climate was stifling to creative thought, and that the social climate did little to ventilate it.

The reasons for this were clear enough. Most men of intellectual training reflected pale glimpses of European models; they left serious discussion and creation to their elders and betters, and concentrated on hitting practical targets and building pious monuments to the old-world civilisation, while the egalitarianism of those who rejected the old world models created no new place for the independent intellect. Yet most of the expatriates returned, for they found no ready acceptance in the old world; nor could they readily accept it, for there was something in the land and the openness of the society which held them.

In Australia as in Europe, it took a war to transform dissatisfaction into disaffection. Lacking a

Stone-Age Implements

LAKENHEATH, ESSEX

Across the Breck, cut by a wind that hones
Itself against the steel of sky, we walk
Searching amongst the grass and sand for stones;
A quiet excitement punctuates our talk.
Like this we look for Adam-father here,
Chilled as he was: our clothes inadequate,
And though we have exchanged his shape of fear
The cloud we own decides all mankinds' fate.

Finding a flint that bears his mark, I shout
As he lies quietly in my palm, the man
My ancestor, and call the children out
Saying "If you're able, see, I grip his span—
Nothing has come between us but the rain
And time; my flesh and his are overlain."

LOLA JACKSON

secure social base outside themselves, Australian intellectuals of the '20s and '30s reacted in two ways. The characteristic note of Sydney intellectuals was to retire into the secure isolation of a self-sustaining cultural elite, living its life outside the conventional norms. In Melbourne, the note was a guilt-ridden attempt to transform a society which combined injustice to the many with disregard for the intellectual minority. Was the difference merely one of tradition, or was it in some way related to the characters of the cities? No one yet has supplied a satisfactory answer; perhaps it was that Melbourne was a more compact city, and the sources of power seemed at the same time more evident and more accessible. However this may have been, with no place in the mass Labor movement and no significant revolutionary challenge to society, intellectual disaffection remained inchoate.

At the outbreak of World War II Australian intellectuals remained a tiny group, not regarded seriously by the practical men of industry or government. Respectable "cultural" opinion lagged far behind Europe; the post-1918 revolution in science, philosophy, the arts, morality had barely caught up. The awareness of intellectuals of European developments only enhanced their isolation; their alienation from society was almost complete, their group existence was limited, and there seemed no way out.

Once more war changed their situation. New technologies, new complexities of government, new demands for education, created new demands for intelligence and even a new respect for intellect. The professions multiplied many times over. University expansion created institutional situations for creative thought—and stifled it as the universities were transformed more and more into trade-training establishments. Respectable cultural opinion caught up with Europe and created a market for artists—at the same time limiting them by demanding the familiar and proven. Government and business demanded original thought in science, technology, economics—and institutionalised it. Few creative minds now had to leave the country because of lack of opportunity, but many went in search of deeper discourse and richer reward. Australia, like America, has confronted its intellectuals with a new dilemma: whether to accept institutionalisation or the rewards of the market (and with it a measure of social responsibiliy); or whether to stay with an alienation which they had come to accept, if not to welcome.

What practical people fear about intellectuals is their impatience with partial solutions, their desire to push the argument as far as it will go. Logical consistency and self-realisation are more important to intellectuals than the balance of power. Unlimited criticism is the pre-condition of their creativity. The "conservative" half of society is prepared to tolerate elites so long as they are tame. The "radical" half distrusts elites. Both halves demand practicality; both are now willing to hire the services of intellectuals, provided that they can establish the limits; neither is prepared to concede anything in the way of power. Society no longer isolates its intellectuals; but it still fears and disapproves their intellectuality. How much room for manoeuvre still remains?

SABOTEUR IN THE WORKSHOP

"Je me trompais moi-meme"
Racine: "Andromaque"

Mister the foreman jars me harder than brakes
"Come here—yes, you." I drop my spanner hard
and wipe my hands across my thighs—it takes
until he squirms, and then my point is scored.
"Look sharp," he yells. The whole shed turns to stare.
"Easy now" I say—but not out loud;
you get to know where each day's limits are.
Going to him then, as soft as turd,
extremely nice, I say, "You want me, boss?
There's something you want done?" (I know the words
sure to bring blisters where they rub.) He tries
to hide it, but his anger merely pleads.
How can he curse me now? He must retreat
from his authority, what can he say
further than "Come on, ease off bludging, mate"?
Easy to give men cages. He hears, too late,
derisive laughter toss his key away.

THOMAS W. SHAPCOTT

AMONG FAIR BUILDINGS

David Martin

Among fair buildings my youth was spent,
By beautiful bridges with noble arches;
There were courts and cloisters on every hand
With pillars and columns as graceful as larches;
And everywhere and all about
Were squares so finely designed and laid out
That they gladdened the heart like new wine in September.

Yet of all that proud charm I scarcely remember
A gate or a gable. The minster at Spire,
The Moorish Giralda that mocked our dreams
As we yearned in the trenches where, tier on tier,
It rose from Toledo; Saint Mark and its dome,
The Burg at Buda, the fountains of Rome:
Because they were old I took them for granted.

And whether a tower stood upright or slanted,
A castle decayed, a buttress faltered,
I little regarded — may crumble what must.
But see how the case of the spendthrift is altered!
Now no Herr von Schliemann could more enjoy
Unsealing the seven layers of Troy
Than I to discover some handsome interior.

Having learned to distinguish the strong and inferior
In warehouse fronts at Williamstown docks,
My soul is nourished by cast-iron railings—
It exults over Battery Point and The Rocks.
The eyes which were dulled by the minarets
Of Omar's Mosque light up like a cat's
At a Greenway church with a Georgian steeple.

I've forsaken the past and returned to the people.
I can tell when blue-stone is integrated
With dormer windows, Port Fairy fashion,
Where the flowering of Victorian Corrugated
Achieves its fulfilment in Adelaide . . .
Not a Footscray or Carlton balustrade
Is too slight for my ardent investigation.

I have rebuilt my aesthetics on a new foundation,
Remoulded my taste to my neighbor's present;
His split level sleep-out surmounted by chrome,
Topped off by a roof like the wing of a pheasant.
Roaming the suburbs I often conjecture
How the world's become full of architecture
Since I was expelled from my fertile crescent.

We conclude our series of articles on and by Frank Anstey with this memoir by a well-known member of the House of Representatives

AS I KNEW ANSTEY

E. W. Peters

WILLIAM HAZLITT, who as well as being an essayist was a reporter of the debates of the House of Commons, confessed he was unable to convey to his readers the effects that the oratory of Charles Fox had upon those who heard and saw him speak. So it was with Frank Anstey. His speeches as reported in newspapers or in Hansard fail to import the fire of their crusading enthusiasm, their pathos, satire and bitter disdain. The written words do not move their readers as the spoken words did the listeners. But research workers delving through the Victorian Hansards from 1902 to 1910, and through Commonwealth Hansards from 1910 to 1932, will come upon the speeches of Frank Anstey, and the ideas, the wit, the logic and the picturesque prose, despite every imperfection of reporting, will make their impact.

I knew Frank Anstey from before the first world war until his death. I studied his writings, listened with close attention to many of his speeches and enjoyed his conversation, which was often as entrancing as his speeches. His conversation, as is often the case with public speakers, was often expanded into speeches. This does not mean that Anstey treated his listeners as a public meeting—as Queen Victoria complained Gladstone did her. Mostly self-taught, Anstey left school at an early age. A sailor who spent much time in travelling, he gained an extensive knowledge from experience and from wide reading, which a retentive memory retained. He agreed with Demosthenes that practice and more practice were necessary to develop an orator. He, however, used to tell of a character in one of the books of Disraeli—I think it was "Coningsby"—who stressed the importance of "Filling yourself with great thoughts." He never ceased doing this until the end of his long, colorful career.

Anstey employed an exceptional histrionic ability to grip the attention of his audience from the start of his speeches. There was the time when he was opposed by the Rev. Mr. Judkins, a well-known clergyman who plentifully besprinkled his political addresses with biblical quotations. Labor arranged an open-air meeting. Five or six thousand were present. Anstey came on the platform, his coat collar up about his ears, his hat on with brim down all round. He had a large-size Bible under his arm. He looked like the most pious of parsons. He quoted text after text from Holy Writ—"By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt earn thy bread." "Sell all your goods and feed the poor." "Love they neighbor as thyself." "Do good to your enemies." "He that does not work neither shall he eat." "It is as hard for a rich man to enter Heaven as it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle." Quotations such as these and a dozen others, that make Karl Marx sound like a reactionary, left no doubt which side the Bible favored in that election.

Another occasion he was opposed by Maldon Robb—"the keenest wit the Tories ever put against me." He opened his meeting by simulating the deepest grief and sobbingly announcing that on the following day he would lose the election. The whole of the press was saying so. The listeners were amused. Their attention was gained and held to the end of the address about two hours later. Two hours was not unusual for an election speech by Anstey.

William Morris Hughes had spoken to a vast meeting on conscription in the Melbourne Cricket Ground. It was reported an attempt had been made to assassinate him. Cleaners after the meeting had found a jack-knife. A few nights later Anstey opened a vast anti-conscriptionist meeting in the Melbourne Exhibition. He said, "This night here will be an attempt to assassinate me." After describing the movements of his would-be assassin with a pea-rifle lurking in the shrubbery, he declared, "I will clearly prove to all the world that an attempt has been made upon my life. I will produce the pea."

*

Cheap gimmicks, perhaps, but performed by Anstey they approached the perfection of dramatic art. Anstey was a mob orator with all the tricks of the mob orator. It did not matter, however, how the mob was constituted. It was equally held and gripped by his amazing histrionic performances whether made up of workers, university graduates, or members of parliament—the least responsive of audiences.

Speaking was Anstey's main talent, but he did some writing. Among his publications was "Land Monopoly," which drew attention to the way the best lands in the Western District of Victoria were kept out of full production by a few families whose forbears had received them almost as grants for doubtful services rendered to the penal governments of Australia. Anstey had not long written this pamphlet when legislation was introduced into

the Victorian Parliament for the purpose of resuming for closer settlement purposes vast stretches of land between Geelong and Ballarat. Anstey used to bitterly complain that he was rightly the butt of those responsible for this project. His book had been written to promote closer settlement, but he was constrained to vote against the proposal. The State Labor Party considered political strategy was best served by opposition. He considered the betrayal of Labor's land policy was too high a price to pay for a temporary political advantage.

Another of his books was "The Kingdom of Shylock." This work, issued during the conscription campaign of the first world war, showed how men gave their lives for their countries while predatory capitalists made money. The book was the subject of a special wartime regulation which set out that a person convicted of having a copy in his or her possession would be liable to six months' imprisonment for each copy. The number of copies I held for distribution would have entitled me to incarceration for over one hundred years. I saw Anstey about this problem. Anstey said, "Don't worry, they only want to get me." He was right—William Morris Hughes and his followers were frantically anxious to silence him. "The Nation" and "Hughes and His Views"—two of his pamphlets—as well as his speeches were sledge-hammer blows at the policies of Hughes. It is interesting to note that Maurice Blackburn — ex-speaker of the Victorian Parliament and successor to Anstey in the Federal seat of Bourke— said he had started to accumulate material to write the history of conscription campaigns of the first world war. He refrained from proceeding with the history because "his researches made clear that it would be mainly a glorification of Anstey," whom Blackburn declared was a confirmed conscriptionist. Anstey had said there was no difference, in principle, in taking a man by the scruff of the neck and the seat of his trousers and compelling him to fight at Port Melbourne and in taking the same man and forcing him to fight in Europe. But he contended that the best interests of Australia would not be served by spilling Australian blood without limit upon overseas battlefields. He doubted that the frontier of Australia was the Rhine. Anstey believed that conscription of the manpower of a nation to resist aggression was not wrong, and this was the view of most socialists. He opposed conscripting forces to fight in Europe but supported the conscription of forces to fight in Australia in its defence. This was the Labor view when it introduced compulsory military service before the first world war. Blackburn opposed compulsory military service at all times and in all places. He considered both Anstey and Curtin fought brilliant fights against compulsory overseas service during the first world war but for wrong reasons. But Anstey was very definite that the war to end all wars, to make the world safe for democracy and to make a world fit for heroes to live in, would do none of these things. He was right.

*

It was toward the end of the war, after a voyage to Europe, that Anstey wrote "Red Europe"—the story of the rise of Russian Communism. Then came "The Good Old Days," a pamphlet setting out living and working conditions in the none too distant past. He brought out a revised edition of "The Kingdom of Shylock," renamed "Money Power," and also "The Facts and Theories of Finance," which was published when Labor was the government fighting economic depression.

Labor had been in opposition since the conscription split of the first world war. It gained office in 1929 without a majority in the Senate. The man-generated economic blizzard was sweeping the world—unemployment and destitution were everywhere. Anstey was anxious that Labor should force a double dissolution of Parliament which would give it power or put it back into opposition. Other views prevailed. Labor hung on to ineffective office. Anstey had welcomed Theodore into the Commonwealth from the Queensland Parliament as one who shared his opinions on banking and finance. It was alleged that £5,000 had been paid to a sitting Labor member to vacate a safe Labor seat in the House of Representatives to ensure the election of Theodore. It was contended that Anstey had been offered the money. A Royal Commission was established to investigate the allegations. Anstey was a star witness, and answered every question with a short speech. He made it clear that if a member of the Labor Party was paid by members of his own party to relinquish his seat to a better worker and advocate then no question of corruption was involved. It was compensation. He quoted instances of Labor members paid with gifts of position or cash to induce them to weaken their party by desertion. He told the stories of Senators Ready, Higgs and others. He also, at length, told of an effort by anti-Labor forces to get him to stand down. He considered acceptance of money from Labor's enemies to weaken Labor's fighting strength as dishonest and corrupt. Had the Commission been held after the destruction of the Scullin Government he could have recounted the tale Scullin used to tell. For a period before the defeat of Labor the train from Canberra used to be met by a luxurious limousine belonging to a newspaper magnate. It used to whisk the Rt. Hon. Joseph Aloysius Lyons to private conferences. Lyons later left Labor and became Prime Minister. Scullin believed arrangements were made at these meetings by which Lyons was convinced that in return for his defection he would receive the outstanding prize of the Australian Prime Ministership.

Anstey had said Theodore was the type of man that came once in a generation. He was big in body but still bigger in mind, a physical and mental dynamo. Before Labor had reached office disillusionment was taking place. The idol had become an oriental twister with feet of clay. Later, Anstey told the story of Labor in office. Theodore had been relieved of his place in the Ministry due to the Mungana scandal. Theodore complained that Scullin refused to give him an interview, and said Scullin was treating him as a child. He persuaded Anstey to intercede for him. Scullin saw Theodore and he was brought back into favor. Anstey said it was not "because Scullin was convinced of his innocence."

Anstey was a Minister in the Scullin government. He was also a member of a committee consisting also of Scullin and Theodore which was to formulate Labor's financial and monetary policies. As he was always the minority he ceased to attend the committee meeting after a period of ineffectiveness. About March, 1930, a Commonwealth loan for about £12,000,000 was due for renewal. Anstey wanted the government to repay the loan, and suggested that those with investments in the loan be given deposits in the Commonwealth Bank equivalent to their holdings. They could draw upon these by cheque. He believed the result would be the stimulation of industry much as would result from a fiduciary note issue. Twelve million pounds was a relatively small amount and used in this way could do little further harm; if the stimulation of industry did not take place the

loans of the future falling due for renewal could be treated in the traditional way. Anstey sought to secure the support of Theodore for this plan, but Theodore refused, pointing out that Anstey himself could put his case to his colleagues. The reply of Anstey was, "the Cabinet consists of Theodore and his heelers, get Theodore and you get his heelers." The meeting took place, and Anstey put his case and asked members one by one where they stood. One by one they repudiated his proposal. The proposition was not very different from the proposed fiduciary issue of £18,000,000 which came at the following election —much too late. The Labor government had been a party to slashing pensions and wages.

It was when the government, with the aid of officials, were seeking ways and means to put people to work and to alleviate destitution at home while paying debts abroad that Anstey became aware of a plan to reduce pensions being put forward by Treasury officials. I was then secretary to Anstey's Election Committee, and also a member of the Central Executive of the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party. I sought to get the Victorian Executive to spearhead a fight against pension reductions. Anstey had failed in Parliament, and the Executive failed him, too. The "Premiers' Plan" was implemented. Pensions, wages and interest were reduced by 20 per cent. Not lack of goods but lack of purchasing power had caused disaster, and the remedy applied was the further reduction of purchasing power. Labor was thus a party to the destruction of living standards, and this was as bitter as gall to Anstey. His outspoken views in the Premiers' Plan were embarrassing, and it was being made clearer each day that his ministerial colleagues would appreciate his resignation. Branches of the Labor Party inside his electorate told him to hang on. Though he might not achieve much, his supporters were confident that it was much better for Australia that his position in Cabinet be not taken by one more willing to implement the instructions of Sir Otto Niemeyer and the banking institutions. The Commonwealth Bank, too, was an accessory of private financial institutions. So Anstey remained a minister, but not right until the end of the Scullin government.

*

Anstey used to surround himself with young men to whom he was a leader and instructor. John Curtin and Anstey became important factors in each other's lives. A meeting of friends and supporters of Anstey's for one of his early elections was held in a butcher's shop in East Brunswick. Anstey spoke. There was silence for a time. A boy in his early 'teens mounted the butcher's block and moved that the meeting go "flat-out for Anstey." The boy was Curtin, and so commenced a friendship and political partnership that was only interrupted a short time before the Labor defeat of 1932. Anstey had supported and helped Curtin in his days of mental depression, and when he was at a very low ebb had helped him obtain employment as editor of the West Australian Worker, the journal of the Australian Workers' Union. It was said that when Hughes announced his decision on conscription Anstey, Curtin and Frank Hyett spent a whole night on a seat in the Royal Park at Melbourne fixing their attitude to the proposals of Hughes. When they decided their attitude they were indeed the outstanding trio fighting conscription for overseas service. Frank Hyett was secretary of the Victorian branch of the Railways' Union. He was an outstanding athlete-wicketkeeper for the Carlton Cricket team. He might have been only partly serious, but he illustrated his devotion to cricket when he said if he were offered either the position of Prime Minister of Australia or wicketkeeper for the Australian Eleven he would choose to be wicketkeeper. Hyett's promise of a brilliant career ended when he died a victim of the influenza epidemic that ravaged Australia after the first world war. Probably it was the influence that Anstey had on the lives of men like Curtin and Hyett, and influences that they had on so many others, that caused his ideas to gain acceptance and bear fruit. Perhaps it was because he felt that services rendered by him to Curtin in the past should have gained unquestioning support for his ideas, or because of a sense of frustration, that he had a temporary break in his later days with his friend. He said to him, "For the future treat me as though I have leprosy." Curtin, however, always acknowledged his great obligation to Anstey, and they were later reconciled.

The Scullin government went to the country in 1932. Frank Brennan, who had won the Batman seat only three years previously by 30,000 votes, was defeated. Labor was annihilated. On election night Anstey, who also at the previous election had won by about 30,000 votes, appeared likely to lose his seat. Press men gathered around him at his committee rooms pestering him for comments on the tragedy of Labor. He declined to comment. He directed his driver to bring him to the Princes Oval, where, at the side of the Melbourne General Cemetery, he and a few friends spent some hours until the counting of votes ceased for the night. Those with Anstey heartily agreed with him when he said: "The cemetery is the most suitable place to be on such a night as this." The political volcano that was Frank Anstey undoubtedly became extinct at the side of the Melbourne General Cemetery on Election Night in 1932. Anstey took little political action after 1932. He left his Victorian electorate to reside in Sydney and failed to nominate for a further term.

Blessings

The rain is on the roof,
And what is in my heart
But the growing?
Trees that we have planted
Are throwing out green foliage
Against the summer sun.

The sun says, "How you must need me
To spread my blessings all upon the world.
And yet you hide your tap-roots
As if you hate me.
Out of my way tree!
Have you no sense?"

And the tree replies,
"I like it this way—I am dense."

MERV. LILLEY.

NOTES FROM A COLONIAL

THE so-called Commonwealth Arts Festival has come and gone with not much more than a ripple on the pebbly shores of host England. English culture still stands firm—self-possessed, patronising, arrogant. The Commonwealth countries will need to seep in subtly—humble, cap-in-hand, forelock at the ready—if they hope to be accepted. Only the United States can penetrate the superficially genteel English way of life—and at present seems to be dominant in the areas of fiction and that absurd and booming mixture of art, folksiness, trickery, and self-deception known as "pop-culture".

For the festival many amiable, stirring speeches were made about love and friendship among the participating nations. Politicians and cultural diplomats (not to mention Royalty) declared that the times were propitious for the Commonwealth arts to come together. An enormous amount of publicity was engendered; no doubt sufficient money was spent on the activities of P.R. and its offshoots to keep a couple of hundred artists and writers and musicians alive and making use of their talents for a number of years. Yet the main campaign—it seems a suitable noun in the circumstances—revolved round the question whether the women of certain African dance-groups should or should not reveal their breasts during a lunch-hour performance in Trafalgar Square. That, at least, is how Mr. and Mrs. English Everage, not particularly concerned with either the arts or the Commonwealth, must—through the admittedly bleary eyes of the popular press—have seen the festival.

As far as I could judge, the emergent African nations and the West Indians preponderated in terms of popularity and news-value. It is impossible not to wonder if this was a deliberately nurtured matter: a grand celebration intended to compensate for, or even black out, the Labor Government's discrimination against colored immigrants.

What must be exercising the minds of many people connected with the arts in the various Commonwealth countries is who chose what, and why; and to what extent was the material selected representative of the countries concerned. One African government, it was announced, refused to allow a play to be exported to England because it took a mildly critical look at the newly established state.

Anyone wishing to gain some knowledge of the condition of the creative arts in Australia would have been hard put to it to obtain even a narrow conception at a shallow level of what is going on. Ballet probably was served best, with performances by the Australian Ballet at the Royal Opera House; there was a little poetry (some urban material, but the bushwhackers were triumphant), a little music, a little cinema. Emphasis was on the interpretative artist rather than the creative, but I suppose that in a sense this accurately reflects the Australian situation.

Australian drama, to judge by the festival, is practically non-existent. Except for a production of Lawler's "Piccadilly Bushman" in Glasgow, and, I think, a new one-acter by Alan Seymour, the only other Australian play performed was Hal Porter's "Toda-San," re-named "The Professor" for London; but this, as far as I know, was an entirely commercial venture and not part of the festival at all. "The Professor" was, for the most part, very badly received by the critics, who seem to vent a great deal more spite on plays by 'colonials' than on even the weakest efforts by English writers. They treated Porter's play in much the same way as they treated Ray Mathew's sad and honest "Spring Song" some time back—as an excuse for a revelation of their own sarcastic wit. Of all the journals that reviewed "The Professor" only the Times was enthusiastic, and only the Guardian seemed to me to attempt any sort of objective judgment. I must confess that though I thought many of the criticisms unnecessarily harsh, I did feel that the play suffered by trying to force human behavior into the constricting framework of an extremely artificial and exotic plot, with the result that characters, motivations, and story often became almost incredible.

Why was Australian drama so inadequately represented? Rumor has it that the Elizabethan Trust threatened to withdraw support from the festival unless a Patrick White play was performed. The festival drama panel had already considered and rejected White, and had other plays in mind; it refused to tolerate the Trust's polite blackmail and so no Australian plays were done in London or in two out of the other three main centres. Not that a White play would have done the festival any harm, in my opinion. Despite the current discussion as to whether White's drama technique is avant-garde or thirty years behind the times, they are works of some integrity; and there are few plays now running in London that could compare with his in terms of truthfulness, humor, and depth of philosophy. But it would be interesting to know the full story behind the Trust-festival relationship in the field of drama.

*

To me, the most important publishing event here in recent months (and possibly the most important "cultural"—in the fullest sense of the word—event, also) has been the publication of Wayland Young's "Eros Denied". This is so outspoken, so rational, so **wise** a book that I feel toward it as I have rarely felt toward any book previously—warm, affectionate, even loving. I would like to buy hundreds of copies (impossible at 45/- sterling) and distribute them to everyone I know. It ought to be a set text for adolescents in their late teens and for teachers—particularly the latter. It ought, in fact, to be distributed free to everyone by the government and placed on the family bookshelf along with the dictionary, the cookbook, and—if you're that type of family—the Bible. It could even replace the Bible, not perhaps as literature, but certainly as a moral and ethical guide.

"Eros Denied", which is banned in Australia (understandably, to anyone conversant with the mentality of Australian officialdom), is a book, not about sex, but about the exclusion of sex—sexual words, images, and actions—from Anglo-Saxon western society. And in examining the reasons for the exclusion of sex from society, Young has actually written a book about freedom: "The system within which we in England and America [and Australia?] live gives us many admirable freedoms, but rather conspicuously denies us . . . the full freedom, the **run** of ourselves and our societies, by staining, by flawing, by cutting off, demarcating, labelling with a notice saying 'this is a special corner' the area where physical desire and fulfilment have their function," and if, as he says, we exclude sex from the realm of the normal, "we even extrude it, so that it becomes strangulated or gangrenous, like a limb beyond a tourniquet."

Young observes the double standards behind our 'morality'. The general ones: "There are great, creaking anachronisms at large in our sexual morality today; injunctions and prohibitions which once had meaning and function, but are now left without, high and dry, and generate resentment and depression . . . since the religious structures which created them and gave them meaning are now over . . . they are bedevilling a kind of people who did not formerly exist at all."

And the particular ones: "But our society does not like them [teenagers]; it keeps a nice little cautery stuck into their vitals. They must not [have intercourse], which is as much as to say that they must not be what they are. We feed them well with one hand and make them healthy; with the other we block them off from the waist down."

Young's comments, too, on chastity, marriage, and fidelity are sensible and humane; so much so that one can imagine the guardians and censors in Australia absolutely writhing all over the wall-to-wall in anger and indignation.

"Eros Denied," however, is not merely a series of sociological and philosophical commentaries—it is an historical study that must have taken many years of research; and some of the examples of literature, art, and life from the past that Young brings to light are delightful and inspiring. The ultimate intention of the book is to effect a change in society's attitude to sexual matters more in keeping with contemporary living. Such an aim is hardly new in 1965, but its exposition in so salty and sagacious, so comprehensive and comprehensible a manner must be unique.

*

Most of the modern plays I've seen recently have been unsatisfactory in one way or another—though the sincerity and genuine humanity of Ann Jellicoe's "Shelley" and Wesker's "The Four Seasons" are unquestionable, despite denigration by the critics. But the majority of London playhouses are occupied by commercial trivia. So also, no doubt, are the London cinemas, but in their case the turnover of new programs proceeds at a much faster pace, and the opportunity of seeing good films is correspondingly increased. And with the advent of the London film festival in November . . . The truth is that even a fastidious film glutton like myself can find plenty of savory fare. In this addict's opinion, the best program in London at present is the double-feature at the Academy Two cinema.

The first film, "China," made by Felix Greene, whose books on China have already made a valiant effort to bring enlightenment to the mysterious West, is a splendid color documentary showing that immense nation as it was, as it is, and why it is. Naturally a film lasting about an hour can be expected to show a limited amount of material, but what it does show should be sufficient to make audiences who view it without preconceptions wonder just why anyone has any preconceptions about that astonishing society. (Interesting to note that perhaps England is on the verge of a breakthrough regarding its knowledge of China today. The Sunday Times magazine of October 10 was a special issue featuring, not at all unsympathetically, "What's happening in China?")

The feature at the Academy Two is "Peter and Pavla," a film by Miles Forman, a Czech director, so that the whole program may be regarded as a sort of socialist coup. Neither film gives us any reason to suppose that our "western" way of life differs in essence from that of our communist counterparts; perhaps social life in England and Australia is a little drab and lacking in enthusiasm compared with that in China.

"Peter and Pavla" is the only really veracious film I have ever seen about adolescence. The teenagers I know and knew are there complete with their pimples and sweat and smut and pain and shyness and braggadocio, poised on, yet fearing to enter the world of, adult maturity. They love their parents; they hate their parents; and neither generation has the least inkling of what the other it about. I insist on the veracity of this film—which is very funny and very touching—because I suppose that such a large proportion of novels, films, and television plays (fifty per cent.?) nowadays are devoted to the affairs of teenagers; and after this film, which is comparatively short and ranges over only a small number of characters and their environment, all these other works seem false or unreal or, at best, merely partially true. And a society that can make such a film—or, as the quibblers might put it, that permits such a film to be made—can't be as restrictive as we are led to suppose. Perhaps **our** society is the more restrictive one! Perhaps they **are** human over there!

THE NEXT MUSTER

TO prophesy is to tempt the gods, but I am wondering what our next "Overland Muster" will be like, ten years from now. Let us assume that there will still be an Australia then, with writers, essayists, poets and reviewers, and that I shall still be about to enjoy the book, as I enjoyed the first.

When the time comes I shall not expect to find again such a piece as that contributed by Anon to the current collection—"The Story of the Greatest Whinger on Earth." Not that whingers will have died out, but the type this story presents, the particular hero, will finally have gone into smoke. He is nearly gone already, that hard-bitten bloke under the slouch-hat; his wings have started to moult not in heaven but here below. The digger who, somewhere in Vietnam, cleans his nails with his bayonet is not his brother but his stepbrother, sired by a different father in a different likeness. The lad balloted into the army like a chook in a raffle, to fight in an unjust war, won't stir the folk imagination . . . he probably won't want to stir it, anyway. How would he bloody well be? Fed up, but in a new way. Ginger Mick would hardly recognise him. Writers who write about our old friend will write about a ghost. The roots have withered, in bush and city. Goodbye!

This doesn't mean that another Eric Lambert may not produce another guide on "How to be a Returned Soldier". Old soldiers do die, but an R.S.L. doesn't fade away so easily. It has too many uses, one way or another.

I am also a bit dubious whether even Frank Hardy will stumble across many more of his enormous pumpkins. They, too, seem to me to belong to a species gradually and sadly becoming extinct. All these various and delightful Speewah Micks—notice how many Micks have made the Australian tradition—are retreating before the onslaught of lawn-mowers and automatic car washers. The national climate doesn't suit them any more: too wet. Legendary as they have always been, they are becoming legendary now in a different sense. If am not much mistaken, the lore to which they belong is somehow tied up with the Depression. It got another kick-on after the war, but the impetus has exhausted itself, or pretty nearly. The all too brief run of socially-based nationalism in the Australian theatre points the same way. Perhaps a new, more sophisticated nationalism will have taken over in a decade, but, worse luck, it doesn't look as if it will owe much to the working class. The tall tale is up against the still taller one of the adman: where all is king-size, what price a pumpkin?

John Morrison, I hope, will find many more themes as true and good as that which inspired "Morning Glory". But I have an uneasy feeling that his brilliant brand of story-telling will have no successors. The man who says to the boss, "I've got my cheque. I'll eat on the road," is growing rarer. The spiritually-free, casually stiff-necked, footloose fellow whom we love is going into forced retirement. Within ten years, four-fifths of the people of the eastern States will live in big cities, where this chap is not really at home. The old conflict between the man who respects himself as a man, and the other who respects himself as a proprietor, will have taken on new forms. So far they are not as dramatic as the ones we knew.

Ours, I think, is also the last generation which will understand, more than just cerebrally, what "Harney's War" has to tell us. If the North doesn't get a move on soon it will simply stagnate and become a bore, Ansett's tourists notwithstanding. The white man who could be free there will have joined the swagman in the billabong, but the dark man—not quite the same we see now—will have taken his place in Overland. Odd that, as a character, he hasn't found his way more robustly into the current "Muster".

*

Will Furphy be inopportuned once more with appeals to settle arguments about Temper and Bias? The way things are going, the quarrel won't raise much dust in 1975. (Only 5,200 more days to that Christmas!) In this, the democratic, department the most hopeful signal has been hoisted by Pat Mackie in a piece which was published too late for the round-up. Good for him. Over the years some of the best prose in Overland has come in reportage rather than in stories, or in stories that were close to reportage. If the trend gathers force Muster II will be more broadly topical and controversial than its forerunner. Not that Number One was pallid, but it held certain issues too much at arm's length.

I won't guess what kind of poetry we'll get. Perhaps it will be much the same, since girls are ever made to love and kiss. (Are they, though? Some may even yet bash themselves a path into Parliament . . . nothing is impossible.) Poetry may one day recover its lost echo, and poets their confidence. There is an artificial heart which baffles the surgeons but which beats, after its own fashion, outside the walls of hospitals. It does not respond too well to the stimulus of song and strong emotions.

There was good satire in the first "Muster"; in the next there should be a lot more. It will go deeper—beyond the confines of censorship and similar minor idiocies — and be tougher and more destructive. We are still held back by a false sense of responsibility. This is the age in which the country is going down the line for foreigners and pawning its tomorrow . . . for what? An age in which "human interest" has lost the vigorous meaning it had to the reporters of Marcus Clarke's day, without having found a new one; an age in which moribund dodderers are allowed to lead us —where?—practically unchallenged. They are whispering in King's Cross that the next "Overland

Muster" will throw sparks like a bomb. Up the Dean Swifts!

Many subjects which have not yet been written about will crowd the coming pages. They will create a new style for themselves. One day someone will send in a script in which the hitherto inarticulate soul of the chap who works in a garage in Dandenong or Newcastle, in a shop off Rundle Street, will have been articulated. We are waiting as for the Messiah for the one who can let an Australian Bloom loose in an Australian town. He who roars his head off in the outer and who glares savagely at barmaids—how we want to know what streams through his consciousness! With any luck we may meet him first in Overland.

When the envelope arrives it might well bear the name of a New Australian as sender. Let me quote two extracts from a letter which was sent to me recently by a newcomer to this country, a man who was a novelist in his own.

"Now and then I get the feeling that the Aussie is almost impossibly chaste, inviolate; hangover from frontier days when women were almost unapproachable. Did you ever hear of such brutality as in the murders here, the wife-bashings, all out of proportion to the infidelity committed, and almost bestial because the man's cherished sense of property has been offended."

And this:

"To me, Australia has been a crippling experience, no matter how much money made in business, soft life, etc. But it has to break you all the way down before you can get up again. Like those God-awful boulders here, compressed to the irreducible. What's left is valid. No half-ways here. No compromising. When you get to see yourself here you really do. "Timeless" is right. If you look past the people, timeless is what you get, no matter how much you don't like it. Something final. Greek. This country will sing in a thousand years, if the people can match it."

Yes, but maybe we won't have to wait for the hundredth Muster.

THE DEATH OF NON-LOVE

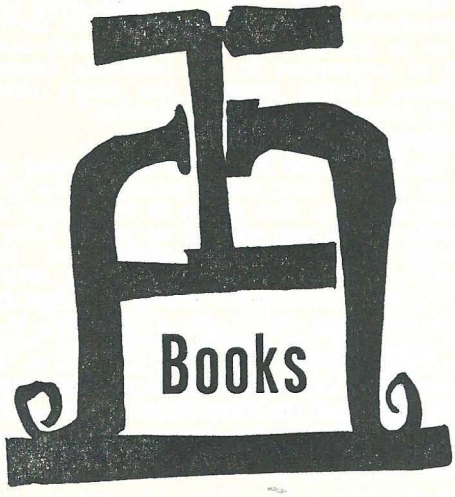
Not in the usual sense a war.
It's true
you placed your forces; I laid siege to you;
but not **this** you—my abstract enemy
was the bureaucrat of yearning here in me;
but **you** turned up, equivocal surprise:
my enemy a lover with blue eyes.

The city fell triumphant. In my flight
to victory I ride your tank of white
toward the central tower where you wait ,
submissive master of my tiny fate,
to sign with me a treaty ending peace.

But, as I stare around, my soldiers cease
to march—they sob and run; my air force swoops
asunder; and my genteel navy droops
like battered birds, and drowns . . .
Then I, alone,
ascend, and you descend, and I atone,
midway, for every skirmish I have won
and thereby lost.
My execution done!

But when you wrench the heart out of my breast
you hold it and it beats and has no rest.

LAURENCE COLLINSON.



Deakin

J. A. La Nauze: "Alfred Deakin—A Biography" (M.U.P., £6/10/0)

Deakin's life would have been worth writing even had he not been prime minister (uniquely among them), because of the high strenuousness of his youth, the charm and complexity of his character, and the quality of his life-long self-scrutiny. That precocious senility cut him off from doing the job himself was tragic, for he believed with full-blooded romanticism in the power of art to redeem triviality, waste, and failure, and had amassed a long, dogged shadow-life on paper in order to reshape it at the end. In fact, he might not have written so differently from Professor La Nauze, whose sympathy with his subject approaches appersonation, but we feel cheated of a potential transcendence and final integration.

From his first remembered experience, on his mother's knee,

> white-gowned and glowing from his bath, out of which his sister had just tenderly lifted him, of his father, reading by an oil-lamp, watching the effect of his first gift . . . Page 1 of Chapter 1 of the first book [of animal pictures],

to what, in a merciful world, might have been almost his last,

> a whispered monotone from my subconscious self (gravely earnest and yet with suggestions of whimsical ease so that it is in no sense even mandatory but joyously floats to the surface from unplumbed depths of intuition, inheritance and foresight) . . . "Finish your job and turn in",

Deakin's journals are of a quality to make his biographer's task awesome: our gratitude to one with such material to dispense is mixed with impatience at his standing between us and the full texts.

Thus this book triumphantly passes the first test of a good Life—that it should show its subject changing, by growing up to, and through, a series of cultural situations, described both objectively and as the individual privately sees them. Cutting from public to private face is here so constant we forget its luxury, though the tone tends to be resigned, wry, deprecatory; there's little enough of will, resolve, strategy, or assertion.

It satisfies the test, too, of firmly establishing the subject in his family setting—source of his interests, values and abilities (one direction in which Professor Murdoch's sketch is notably expanded), and in the wider social circle into which he was born, a case of the group plus one; which would have been much the same if he'd never appeared, but which formed him, and gave him—in the end—his chance.

> [Actor, playwright, poet, critic, preacher] Door after door which I should have preferred to open, proved beyond my power to unbar . . . Every aim I had was thus abandoned until my faculty, such as it was, ran into the mould furnished by my environment—from 1880 to 1890 I became a politician.

But it does not cope nearly so well with the task of bringing out the continuous related character of its subject's experience through childhood to adulthood. In a political biography we need accounts—full-length, formal and articulated—of the man's outlook, and of his style of work, and of how both are enmeshed throughout life with his personality. Here, after childhood background, we get in meticulous detail a chronological explication of the events of a public career. This is to run the danger of underrating constant elements in the subject, especially his tendency to react predictably in situations he sees as old ones repeated.

Yet there are tantalising notes like these on leadership style,

> [His leaving Melbourne—1903] is consistent also with a pattern of events which was to repeat itself more than once: a withdrawing, leaving the field clear, followed by his own return when another had failed.
>
> He made once again [1909] the gesture of renunciation, which in the past, in situations of perplexity, had allowed him to feel that the outcome would leave his own conscience clear: he would stand aside . . . Let someone else try,

which point to a life-long trick of "polite" but ironic self-effacement when his pre-eminence was questioned. Again, there was his mastery of the exact style—deferential, wheedling, compromising—demanded for success in the peculiar conditions of the Victorian parliament. And his inability sufficiently to adjust this to the harder world of the new federal house:

> Deakin was never a member of a government with a firm majority . . . That tactics and personal persuasion might have no place in the passing of an Act, or that compromises might be unobtainable left him somewhat bewildered.

Again, there's an undue aggressiveness, surely, in his dealings over three decades with English politicians and officials? Establishing themes like these lifts us above the clutter, even though fixing their genesis in early development often proves impractical.

A chapter called "Minister of State" which brings together scattered testimony to Deakin's office habits might have explored more fully the character and basis of his great administrative competence. "He could concentrate remarkably on the facts relating to material issues," claims an old school friend. This is a side of him (unrepresented in his journals) we get too little sense of? **This** Deakin certainly surprises us by badgering

Barton with a complete blue-print of the federal bureaucracy to be, a year before the first parliament meets.

Both biographers, indeed, seem so warmly identified with the Deakin of the journals—the literary Deakin condemned to a treadmill of tedious routine and demeaning company—that they may slightly warp his real achievement. There have, after all, been more scholarly politicians (Balfour) and even more reluctant ones (Heathcote Amory); and, endearingly well-read as he was, there's a sense in which Deakin never turned the oven on. Certainly he cuts a charming figure on his first campaign, preparing

> on the way to Bacchus Marsh an elaborate description of a magnificent sunset, and thinking of the sensation he was sure to make by introducing such a passage into an electioneering speech. But when he stood up to face an audience of stolid farmers he felt suddenly that this was no place for a Ruskinian word picture.

But he soon enough buckled down to complaining that Flemington station was too short, and that the Rabbit Extermination Bill did not go far enough; and the details of such an apprenticeship are surely worth someone's study. We are given a party leader untroubled by party organisation. It's not always clear in Victoria what he's Minister **of**; a change of electorate goes unnoticed.

Two wings of Deakin's outlook are thoroughly spread out—his ideas of Empire, and of protection. For the rest we hear mostly his second reading speeches, and it remains a bit mysterious what sort of radical he was. Murdoch quotes him in favour of a swingeing land tax in 1882; he performed disappointingly under the Webbs' catechism in 1898. He had, we learn suddenly in 1902, been preaching White Australia for years. We hear Syme's voice, and the rattle of Labor planks—but "Deakinite Liberal" means less close up than it did at a distance.

The first volume closes with the story of the federation movement, conventionally told. It was all very well for Ernest Scott to see federation as a "political change that amounts to a large stride is cosmic progress"; one expects less of the civics book today. Deakin's contribution is less interesting than his **power** to contribute: he evidently represented perfectly a new social type, the true native-born Australian of the better sort. The Victorian government sent him to London in 1887 very much as an exhibit in this line; "London" concurred. To the boredom of the federalist cause he brought an enlarged image of themselves that young boosters all over the country could identify with. Deakin's father—so clearly present in his son's first and "last" memories—must take much of the credit for this: but we lack the means yet to appraise such contributions.

In devoting the whole of his second volume to Deakin in the Commonwealth parliament Professor la Nauze has had to turn to and write a general history of its first decade. This is a massive and fascinating addition to our knowledge of our politics, and deserves a review in itself. The New Protection turns out to be not quite what we thought—and distinctly smaller. Nation building was slow work, and the political tempo an amble.

Deakin's character—we come back to this—is the great gift in this book. It is endlessly fascinating, and there is no call to make up our minds about it at first reading. If our ideas of his political achievement shrink, he remains not one whit less a Worthy, worthily done. My gratitude to this book is more personal still, since I have two grandfathers firmly embedded in the world of its narrative, and the evocation in such richness of their circumstances adds, as only good history can, to one's own roots.

A. F. DAVIES

New Novels

The novelist is the historian of our inner consciousness. As we enter into the lives of his characters, so we explore the societies they live in. These may not be contemporary societies, but the novelist's own preoccupations cannot but be of his own time. Thus when T. H. White re-tells the story of King Arthur and his knights, it becomes a tale of moral symbolism and psychological development quite alien to the mind of the Sir Thomas Malory who appears on the last page in the role of amanuensis morituri. Similarly, David Martin and his literary detective, Steve Turner, expand the evidence of a Murray valley smith's artefact into a bushranging epic of Freudian dimensions. For good measure, this is interwoven with a modern saga of rural snobbery and social intrigue, and a tasteful romance in which the eternal triangle is extended to accommodate a fourth member. Finally, any deficiencies in the object of Turner's folk-researches are fully compensated by the activities of the other denizens of Tooramit.

"The Hero of Too," by David Martin (Cassell, 40/-) purports to describe what happens in the township of Tooramit when a young school teacher's investigations into the true story behind the legends of Dick Grogan, the local bushranger, get tangled with the shire president's plans for a centennial celebration. Predictably, the town splits into factions, with one side enthusiastically pressing for a commemoration of Grogan during the festivities, and the other equally firmly demanding that sole attention should be paid to the respectable incidents in the township's history. These factions become entangled with love affairs, football and religious feuds, kangaroo hunting, and the ambition of an unsettled Hungarian aristocrat to become the proprietor of a licensed restaurant.

It is unfortunate that the plot at times becomes reminiscent of Dymphna Cusack's unfortunate "Picnic Races," but the similarity soon becomes swamped beneath the author's onsurge of comic invention. Again, many of the incidents seem to have little to do with the plot or with the unfolding of character, but their inclusion is justified by the author's undisguised delight in describing them. Captain de Mantoky-Horvath's unfortunate little affair with the horse-dealer could be omitted without any serious loss to the novel as such, but at the very least its inclusion adds value to a book whose readers may include prospective horse-buyers. The football match may be only distantly relevant to the final destinies of any of its participants, but it fully justifies itself, both as a classic account of a noble engagement, and for the subsequent romantic purposes to which Steve turns his injuries in a later scene which David Martin dwells on with loving attention to detail.

However, although the book appears to knock the stuffing out of a great range of Australian legends, including our ideas about mateship, manliness, sport, diggerdom, politics and bushranging, when the dust of battle clears away it seems that Martin's targets have been outsize dummies

whose destruction leaves their real-life counterparts untouched. This is possibly because he is too kind a man to identify the casual intolerance and self-righteous viciousness which are the significant characteristics of our country towns and national prototypes. These qualities are too tough to succumb to the genial salvoes of the author of Too; they require the ruthless nasty-mindedness of a Patrick White or a Barry Humphries.

Yet the book's failure as satire can be attributed as much to its conception as to its manner. This book is conceived from the outside by an author with a vast enjoyment of rural enthusiasms and a deep affection for the characters of his creation. As a consequence he creates a world of his own which is like a distorted and superior image of reality. Our reaction to it is not an exclamation at the truth of his picture but rather a wistful regret that life is never quite as exciting as David Martin paints it. For the sad truth is that few people are prepared to engage as fully in life as the characters of Too, and certainly no event stirs the passions of a country township as deeply as this writer would have us believe.

The really great satires are written from within by people who share the outlook of their characters, at least in significant respects. Certainly the events they portray must be, if the satire is to accomplish its purpose, those of everyday living. The important reality of small-town life is its essential sameness—a quality which is shared by places as far apart in every other sense as Jane Austen's England and Sinclair Lewis' America. David Martin has attempted to show the inner quality of Tooramit by challenging it with an extraordinary event which will bring all its representative characters into play, not only in this generation but also in the past. But if he has failed in his satirical purpose, he has succeeded in showing us what life might be if we had the courage to live it with the zest he brings to writing about it.

*

Another writer who creates an individual world is Thomas Keneally, whose second novel, "The Fear" (Cassell, 27/6) takes the reader into the inner demon-haunted world of a child in wartime Sydney, and later in a coastal fishing village. The characters are larger than life, not because they are unreal but because they loom this way in the child's consciousness. The central figure in the story, the Comrade, a drunken, brutal figure whose communism is at once his sole redeeming quality and the source of the terror he inspires in the narrator, would no doubt be a shabby and pathetic figure to adult eyes, but we are not allowed to see him in this way. Because we see him through the eyes of the boy we are both less conscious of his human limitations and more conscious of the human effects of his actions.

Technically, the novel has weaknesses, particularly the abrupt shift of people and places between the first and the second parts of the story and the rather flat digression into the life of the P.O.W. camp before the prisoners' outbreak. This second fault leads to a general weakness in the finish, when the fear is finally exercised during a grotesque flight up the coast on a fishing vessel captured by the Japanese officers who planned the escape. On this voyage the Comrade is incongruously brought into the companionship of the local priest, but the possible significance of this is not developed. The emotional and dramatic impact of the finale is further reduced by the absence of the main narrator.

Keneally's first novel, "The Place at Whitton," was about good and evil, but the metaphysical significance did not seem finally to take on flesh and blood reality in the characters, but remained a partly arbitrary pattern imposed on the construction of the book. In this novel there is not quite such a tidy pattern, but the moral qualities are more firmly housed in their mortal habitations. The Comrade may be evil, but he is also human, and therefore not wicked. Finnie is good in the sense that he is morally sound and healthy, not that he is goodness personified. Moreover, any symbolism emerges naturally from the context. There is an unforced naturalness about the contrast between the slum tenements packed under the railway embankment, where the Comrade is in his natural element, and the salted air of the beaches and headlands where he is an intruding figure.

This story is seen through a child's eyes and told by a man looking back, but there is none of the wide-eyed innocence which often characterises these excursions into the past. "The Fear" is a death-haunted book which still manages to affirm the value of life. Death is in the story, death by violence in its most shattering forms, and death is in the symbols—the black entrance to the air-raid shelter beneath the altar, the twisted limbs of the Comrade's elder boy, the stolen grenade, the snake in the log and the cliff from which, years before, the climber had plunged into the hungry ocean. But these symbols are assimilated into the consciousness of the boy without diverting him from his urgent task of growing on. The affirmation of life is the stronger because it is not easy.

*

It is hard to say whether Peter Cowan's attitude to life is one of affirmation or resignation. In his latest book, "The Empty Street" (Angus & Robertson, 22/6) there are ten short stories and one which could almost be a short novel, but all seem to have the same theme. In each one he takes a moment, an incident, an episode, where human beings either do or do not take the opportunity of a brief contact. The choice seems immaterial, for whichever it is they are left with the same loneliness.

The title story has some affinity with Camus' "The Outsider". It tells of a man who, like Camus' existential hero, kills for no apparent reason other than that life has left him nothing else to do. But Cowan's hero does have a certain faint motive of disgust, and his killing brings him no sense of freedom. In fact, he dismisses it from his consciousness until the coming of the police forces him to act. He then flees from home to a nursery garden he had previously looked at, and here he finds for a week-end the human contact which he seems to have missed all his life. Needless to say, this contact has to be broken, and the story ends.

Each of Cowan's stories is convincing in itself, but he seems to have nothing new to say. Each story seems to be as short as it is because there is nothing more that could ever be said meaningfully about the characters it introduces. The casual liaisons, the odd drinks, are, we are sure, the only significant things that will ever happen to these people. Occasionally Cowan tells us their names, but we forget them, for these people are destined always to be anonymous. But this is where our dissatisfaction comes in, for we seem to be watching over and again the same characters in the same drama, changing the lines as the mood takes

them, but keeping to the same situation and plot. This book tells us neither more nor less than his novel, "Summer," nor more nor less than any one of its stories.

*

In "A Waste of Shame" (Cassell, 27/6) George Turner strips the facade from another household in Treelake, but this book has no essential relationship to his other two novels with this setting. This time he writes a novel along traditional lines. Joe Bryen and Arthur Craig are respectively a drinking and a dormant alcoholic. At the beginning of the book Bryen calls Craig an unforgiveable name, and a fight results. Craig is sent to hospital, Bryen again goes on a binge. As the novel progresses, they become friends, but each man is being driven on by his own marital inadequacy. The novel ends with Craig's suicide and Bryen's descent even further into alcoholism. The easy solution of "Cupboard Under the Stairs" is avoided.

As a tract on alcoholism the book is only a partial success. Both the compulsions of the alcoholic and the logic of his situation are conveyed, as well as the horror which surround him and stands in the way of any attempt he may make towards reclamation. Part of the book's success is in the way Turner shows the final catastrophe arising almost inevitably from the success Bryen and Craig have achieved in re-building their lives and their capacity for friendship. Bryen's newly aroused concern for his daughter sends him back on the binge, incidentally destroying his wife's evening, and his binge eventually leads him back to Craig, whom he encounters in an emotional trough. Bryen fills Craig with beer and then returns to put an axe to his home while Craig makes a last doomed attempt to win back his wife.

But if Turner accurately diagnoses the arrogant self-pity at the heart of the alcoholic, he does not fully dramatise his diagnosis. Too often he breaks off into passages of explanation and sermonising about matters which would better be conveyed as part of the experience of his characters. His vision seems too limited, and he confines himself to the narrow world which the alcoholics see for themselves. It is too narrow for a full understanding of their problem, and it extends only the scope, not the depth, of Turner's work as a whole.

*

"The Apprentices," by D'Arcy Niland (Angus and Robertson, 22/6), is the author's fifth novel, according to the publishers. It is a moral fable about two young people and two older people who fall in love and get married. Most interest centres on the younger couple. He falls in love with her when she serves him in lieu of an alarm clock. She wants him to ravish her, and later on he wants to ravish her, but fortunately their feelings do not coincide until they are safely in bed after a white wedding. We accompany them into bed, but no farther. The older man's arms are cut off, the younger man's guide, philospher and mate is incinerated in a peculiar fashion, and the book ends. Fortunately.

JOHN McLAREN

The Auden Era

The introduction to Robin Skelton's "Poetry of the Thirties" (Penguin Books, 8/-) is correct in the large, the selection and arrangement misleading and undistinguished because prepossessed with incompatible interests: a coyly literary scheme of the components in the thirties image, mixed with an outsider's guess about the fashions of the time. Amongst my very few rediscoveries were: the charm and competence of MacNeice's poetry, which I had hardly looked at for fifteen years; the almost inaudible but representative voice of Bernard Spencer; the surrealists' (later, apocalyptics') sheer negligibility; confirmation of a dislike for C. Day Lewis; a reluctant and irritated respect for Norman Cameron. Though it was good to be reminded of John Betjeman's humane poem of 1937, "Come, friendly bombs, and fall on Slough, It isn't fit for humans now," in this collection he is greatly over-represented, if not completely out of place. And, as a curiosity from 1932—yes '32—consider John Lehmann:

> This excellent machine will illustrate
> The modern world divided into nations:
> So neatly planned, that if you merely tap it
> The armaments will start their devastations,
> And though we're for it, though we're all convinced
>
> Some fool will press the button soon or late,
> We stand and stare, expecting to me minced—
> And very few are asking Why not scrap it?

One of the liveliest things in the book is a disclaimer printed by the editor: "Mr. W. H. Auden considers these five poems to be trash, which he is ashamed to have written." The five are "Sir, No Man's Enemy," "A Communist to Others," "To a Writer on his Birthday," "Spain," and "September 1, 1939," in their early versions. The eight others by Auden in this collection have not on the whole "the preacher's loose, immodest tone" of the five; nor, on the other hand, do most of them remind us, as do some of the five, how in 1929 a new voice and accent broke into English verse. I went from this collection to a 1938 reprinting of the 1930 "Poems." There they were, as fresh as paint; tall, narrow Skeltonian stanzas learnt from Graves and Laura Riding but turned even further than those two had from Romanticism. My first response to them twenty-five years ago had been "They are not poetry, of course; they are just a wonderful new word-game." I got round to reading them only because of the socially-relevant poems, including several of the five now anathematized; and those, as homework, though inspiring homework, in the interest of the revolutionary cause. (The one I remember most begins "Out on the lawn I lie in bed,/Vega conspicuous overhead," which took a snapshot of the pleasantly conspiratorial setting of a Labor Club conference, though I can't remember any lawns then to be slept on.) But the point about Auden's poetry is not the social relevance, but that it avoided 'frisson.'

Like many others, I had been brought up to believe that Poetry consisted of lines and phrases that made the hair stand up at the back of one's neck and brought tears to the eyes (e.g., "Magic casements opening on the foam," "Once out of nature . . .", "Paint me a cavernous waste shore"). Poetry was mysterious, thrilling, alien, and thereby nourishing. My friends and I asked for Yeats as school prizes, and took Eliot with us to army camp, not realizing that we were hearing the last voices of Romanticism.

What was new in Auden was a bright, sharp and dry denial of Romantic satisfaction. A poem displayed its clean, sparse imagery like a juggler, revealed and concealed its sense as in a conjuring trick. Part of one's pleasure was in working out a prosodic brain-teaser. The verse was not fashionably free, but elegantly paragraphed in a laconic conversation, often eschewing the iambics of declaration for the trochees of a good talker's throw-away remark. Clearest examples in this anthology are "May with its light behaving" and that least Gothic of grotesques, "O for doors to be open."

Another source of interest was Auden's crypto-Christianity. In the early thirties it was hidden perhaps even from himself and nowadays it is very rarely one of his "subjects". He is not, as Eliot was, a religious poet: poetry for him is play, religion serious. So the Divine turns up in his poems as a questioner and ironic observer—the "watcher in the dark."

Faith of that sort helps explain the shifts and changes in Auden's politics. He has never sought to be a manipulator of society nor, even in the earliest period a rebel; but for nearly ten years he was able to be the poet of a revolutionary moment (abortive, as it turned out), while remaining nevertheless "a selfish pink old liberal to the last".

This brings us to another question: to what audience was the poetry of the thirties directed? Mr. Skelton very nearly gets it right in his introduction:

> They talked in an almost empty theatre as if it were a packed Wembley Stadium. They argued, proved, disproved, and judged, as if the whole nation were listening. They had, in fact discovered a drama and invented an audience. This, of all the thirties phenomena is perhaps the most fascinating. These poems of social criticism were almost all aimed at people who did not exist, at least in the roles assumed by the poems. Their assurance and poise is a pretence. Their prohecies are made to a handful of the converted.

The trouble with this begins with "Wembley Stadium," which suggests an intended mass or collective audience. The "whole nation" addressed was exactly the same social entity that Dryden, Swift and Johnson wrote for—the self-elected society of the literate, mostly gentlemen living in London. The thirties poets' jokes and references were private, somewhat as were Pope's in the "Epistle to Arbuthnot"; and, rather more than that England of Whigs and Tories, the public they addressed was also a national polity.

A. L. BURNS

Classes and Convicts

"Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851" by Michael Roe (M.U.P./A.N.U., 55/-)
"The Convict Settlers of Australia" by L. L. Robson (M.U.P., 55/-)

Socially and culturally Australia is, by comparison with most countries, remarkably homogeneous. Despite our geographic diversity, sectionalism plays little part in our national life. Yet, one suspects that there are those who regret these facts. When historians label each other as "whigs" or "imperialists" one detects a latent wish to find in our past stirring conflicts—perhaps between colonists seeking self-government and the mother-country—more likely between social classes within the colonies. The fuss in recent years over the "whig" and "imperialist" interpretations is now beginning to subside; not only the homogeneity of our origins remains, but also some of the more persistent stereotypes about it.

In fact, neither the "whigs" nor the "imperialists," whatever their claims to the contrary, have produced any work which seriously challenges the accepted picture of Australian history as a wine-glass: thin, uninviting base; austere colonial stem; and after 1890, a bowl of amplitude, a self-sufficiency and confidence. The difference between the schools is largely one of emphasis. The "imperialists" concentrate on that paternal British hand, loosely grasping the colonial stem; the "whigs" still drink the heady red wine of nationalism from the bowl. One school is concerned with the shape of our past; the other with its content.

No doubt one day this ugly Victorian glass will break. One may reasonably guess that many of the myths of both schools will never be resurrected after that day. This reviewer looks forward happily to the death of the pragmatic colonist, the gently-coaxing imperial statesman, the fatally-flawed founding father, and the city dweller with a void in his heart as big as the outback. To speed the day, he recommends a reading of these recent publications by Michael Roe and L. L. Robson.

Both books are sophisticated in their approach and techniques. Robson's statistical sampling method matches Roe's interest in concepts like authority and power; both historians have learnt much from the findings of other disciplines We may be grateful for the growing professionalisation of historical writing in Australia which is revealed in their pages; grateful also for the opportunity, in Roe's case, to examine the difficulties involved in relying on the old signposts for directions into new territory.

Roe's concentration on ideas and attitudes is a healthy antidote to the myth about the purely derivative nature of colonial thought. A native-born colonist, Charles Harpur, used the phrase "moral enlightenment" to describe the ideology which the colonists in the 1840s fashioned out of the impact of nineteenth century liberal attitudes on the social and physical peculiarities of a new country. With patience and some wit Dr. Roe has shown the diverse paths taken by this rationale for "improvement" activities in culture, education, sport, science, gardening, temperance, even if other parts of the world felt a similar impulse at this time.

If Roe had simply described the new faith, as he has in his last three chapters, his book would have been more satisfying but less important. By telling us **how** he thinks "moral enlightenment" was created Roe correctly emphasises that the forties were years of change, and his view about "the quest for authority" then takes on the character of a theory of change in early colonial times. In the penal settlement days "brute force" had been the authority for the government's sole exercise of power. Later, after the Bigge reports, the government sought an authority from conservative attitudes and social forces: the Anglican Church and the gentry. As society became more complex after 1835 a number of material and ideological factors, like the rise of the squatting system and political radicalism, the secular and sectarian spirit of protestantism and the "Pat**riot**-ism" of the Catholic Church, disrupted "con-

servatism" and replaced it with the new authority, "moral enlightenment". These factors Roe outlines in the longest and most controversial section of the book.

As an explanation of the dynamics of the pre-gold rush period, this is clearly inadequate. Two criticisms may be made: Roe persistently presents the power-structure in non-pluralist terms; and after 1835 a purely ideological consensus is given as the authority for power. But whose power? An alliance of government and gentry presumably operated on conservative premises before 1835. But who, in the forties, wielded power in the name of moral enlightenment? A study of the period reveals, in fact, that power was stabilised by the demands of three overlapping groups, definable less in terms of social class or occupation and more by their perspectives of the course of colonial development. Holding the balance through its authority from the Colonial Office, the government and its supporters emphasised the imperial connection. Secondly, there were the large squatters who tried briefly between 1843 and 1846 to develop their own system of authority through a pastoral ideology. Lastly, the emerging urban middle classes were the focus for a group of nostalgic gentry, bumptious radicals and eager entrepreneurs. "Moral enlightenment" may certainly be considered as the ideology of this last grouping, but they saw it as a weapon to achieve dominant political power. Here views about self-government, economic freedom and social mobility were as important as, and related to, morality, self-assertion and rule of reason.

"Moral enlightenment" is described by implication in the first paragraph of this book as a "form of power". Power is nothing if not political, and Roe's refusal to explicate this point is one of two closely related weaknesses in his argument. The other is his misreading of the class structure of society in the forties. Moral enlightenment is a bourgeois faith, but Roe believes that the colony lacked a politically-conscious middle class. Thus he finds it difficult to connect vision with action. The only treatment in the book of politics is negative; politics, it seems (or, rather, radical politics), merely disrupted the old conservative system, contributing nothing to the new faith.

A belief in the weakness of the middle class in Australian history usually accompanies an emphasis on the role of the working class. Sure enough, Dr. Roe sees the migrants of the forties extending "the range of British working-class struggles" and creating a distinct working-class political movement after 1843. Evidence about the impulses to immigration and the political experiences of most of the settlers in this period is very scanty. Dr. Roe has made one surmise; in contrast, why should we not surmise that most of them wanted to escape the political and social struggles of the "old world"? Further, middle-class goals and attitudes permeated the radical movement, and much of the rest of political activity on the land, labor and constitutional questions. Certainly, there were wage-earners, but did they function as a "class"? The contemporary use of the term "working-class" and the existence of trade societies does not prove anything, for the term was meant to include employers, and the societies were mainly benefit and self-improvement agencies.

Here are three examples of the effect of Roe's anti-political, monistic and "working-class" argument on the history of the forties. The radicals are presented as disruptors of the conservative establishment; but they also looked to the government for protection against the effects of "class legislation" and for sustenance in times of depression. Furthermore, the government under Gipps was fairly sympathetic to these claims. Likewise, the squatters are also seen as disruptive. So they were, before the middle of 1845. Thereafter, the "cormorant' squatters quickly became a bulwark of the status quo. Indeed liberalism, the political side of moral enlightenment if you like, was developed as much against the pastoral ideology of the squatters as against the conservatism of the gentry and government. Lastly, to talk about anti-transportation as the "sole mass movement" in the 1845-7 period conveniently ignores the "corn question" of 1845, in which the middle class made their first claim to political leadership of the anti-squatter forces.

Personally, I share Dr. Roe's belief in the "strong influence exercised by the working class" on Australia's social and political character. But I cannot see the value of misinterpreting the role of that class and underestimating the role of the middle class. In his last pages Dr. Roe suggests that later in the nineteenth century the working class made moral enlightenment its own. Here is an insight which points up why the working class came to operate so distinctively: put crudely, because its mores were so assimilable to the middle class norms of the nineteenth century. Since one of the main problems is to explain how this came about, surely the rise of middle class political power in the mid-century should be examined carefully, and in conjunction with the development of colonial thought and changes in the social structure? When this comes to be done, historians will find Dr. Roe's book has many fruitful things to say. More than any book I know, his captures the "personal" pulse of a period whose complexity has usually been obscured by "whig" or "imperialist" preconceptions.

*

The chief merit of Dr. Robson's book is not, as its title may suggest, an account of the contribution of convicts to economic and social development. Rather it answers the perennial question about the origins of the convicts. By producing a fairly definitive list of all convicts transported to Australia, Dr. Robson was able to feel confident that his sample of every twentieth convict was representative. On this sample of 6,131 male and 1,248 female convicts, supplemented by contemporary impressionistic evidence, Robson rests his conclusions. To sum up his findings: the convicts were not "village Hampdens" but in general members of an urban criminal fraternity. So romanticism about the origins of our convicts must cease. We may hope that somebody will now feel encouraged to make a realistic study of the role of the convict system in the colonies.

T. H. IRVING

Upper-Class Rebels

"The Webbs' Australian Diary 1898, edited by A. G. Austin (Pitman, 37/6).

Beatrice Webb was a rebel from the English upper-middle classes who had raised the skull-and-crossbones of Intellectualism and of political views of a decidedly "not done" flavor. She might therefore be expected to have been sympathetic with the egalitarian and radical-minded Australia of 1898. She wasn't. Queen Victoria herself could not have been more snootily unamused.

That was partly due to the limitations of the Australian community, partly to those of Beatrice Webb. She was a member of that most puritanical sect, the nineteenth century agnostics-by-conviction, and consequently thoroughly disapproving of the ramshackle paganism of the Australian cities

(she found Adelaide the most agreeable). Moreover her revolt against her upper middle-class breeding was more apparent than real. No doubt any visitor to Australia in 1898—even more than in 1965—would have found it necessary to use the epithet "vulgar"; but Beatrice uses it altogether too often and with too assured a sense of its dismissive finality. Perhaps one is most aware of her English upper-class attitude when she comments with obvious disapproval on the children of a station manager "who were 'tumbling up' like so many children of the bush, with plenty of food and no discipline or training, spending the whole lifelong day playing in the garden or by the river." The ages of those kids were six, four and three. Maybe my diagnosis here is wrong. Many upper-class Englishwomen would have had warmth and good sense to applaud that childish freedom. Perhaps it is not to much the unredeemed Lady as the sapless Blue-stocking who delivered that verdict.

Every now and then Sidney Webb takes over the duty of making the diary record, and one is immediately aware of a more sympathetic approach. Unfortunately much of his contribution is restricted to catalogues of stringy facts, the staple diet on which the Webbs somehow sustained life. Mr. Austin, however, has given in an appendix two passages from other sources in which Sidney summarises his views of Australia. They are the most valuable pages of the book, necessarily limited in their range, but emphasising certain points which are not always fully recognised.

One cannot help regretting that Sidney did not write more of the diary, not merely because it would have been less disturbing to sensitive Australian hackles. Depth of understanding is impossible without sympathy, and Beatrice lacked it. Moreover she did not grasp what the real political problems in Australia at that time were (nor, I suspect, did Sidney).

Perhaps that regret is misdirected. Certainly if Sidney had written the diary it would have been duller, for Beatrice had the livelier mind. Moreover, being a woman, she was more interested in personalities. The Webbs met practically every important political leader of the time, except Watson and Forrest (whom Beatrice would have detested). Her portraits are a little unbalanced by her fondness for finding faults—she can even make a virtue sound like a fault: "that curious sort of tolerance of political opponents which seems characteristic of these colonies" (Sidney would not have written that betraying "these"). Nevertheless, she has a waspish acumen, and she almost always add a vividness to our image of these personalities. She detected in Deakin a stain of ineffectiveness. She shrewdly comments on H. B. Higgins, "He is not nearly so agile and acute as Isaacs; but he is more anxious to find out the truth and act accordingly." Although she was well aware of George Reid's political irresponsibility—a fault which she did not share or regard lightly—she was conquered by his charm. One realises more fully how formidable a political weapon Reid's shrewdness in handling people must have been.

Her general picture of Australia has value, too, although it has a serious limitation. The greatest interest of the country at the time lay in its evolving a new type of "folk." The Webbs were passed from governor to governor and had contacts organised for them with the wealthy and the politicos; and they hadn't the temperament which could improvise effective contact with ordinary people. Once, in her understandable detestation of the Australian "society" women—rich, vulgar, flashy, materialistic, mindless and idle—Beatrice breaks out, "One felt that one would have more in common with these ladies' servants who would probably be more vivid and entertaining in their gossip." One has hopes for her then; but she adds, "and with whom one might discuss the technique of their profession." The Webbs did meet some station managers of good type, and Beatrice recognised their quality: but they never made those chance contacts with ordinary people which are the highest delight and the most illuminating experience of travel.

Beatrice's Australia, then, is rather like Hamlet without the Prince; but her picture of the wealthier classes is vividly etched—etching is a medium in which the effecting agent is acid. It also has value. It firmly establishes for us two facts which are important to an understanding of the period and of its influence on subsequent Australian development: that in any European-style society of the time, the upper grades of the bourgeoisie had a dominating position, and that the Australian representatives of that class were woefully ill-equipped to give a real leadership or to impregnate the community with a humane culture. Incidentally one understands better the exasperations which drove Archibald and his men to ping their shanghais at every bell-topper in sight. (The Webbs, by the way, had Archibald to lunch, but maddeningly, Beatrice has nothing at all to say about him.)

Mr. Austin has edited the book without pedantry, with thoroughness, and with an imaginative sense of the reader's probable needs and curiosities. His introduction is a model of how such tasks should be handled.

A. A. PHILLIPS.

A Bunch of Ratbags

William Dick's first novel "A Bunch of Ratbags" (Collins, 28/6) is what appears to be a largely autobiographical account of an underprivileged childhood and bodgie adolescence in "Goodway" (a thinly disguised Footscray), one of Melbourne's western industrial suburbs. It is this last fact which makes the book especially interesting; there exist quite a few Australian autobiographies and autobiographical novels, but this one tackles the rather neglected theme of slum life in a large Australian city in the late forties and fifties.

As a novel "A Bunch of Ratbags" is perhaps not very successful. It has no structural unity, for example, not even a strong narrative line. For after an excellent opening chapter, in which a carefully detailed description of the bodgie's house suggests also the atmosphere of his family life, the book tends to become a series of only loosely connected incidents. A tenuous thread of self-analysis does, however, help to hold the early sections together; we can half-understand why Terry Cooke becomes a bodgie, in the face of poverty, a neurotic father and disappointing experiences at school. But the last part of the novel is not so plausible. Terry turns away in disgust from "the bunch of ratbags" with whom he had gone around, and settles down with a nice girl in a nice suburb. It is a symptom of the book's partial failure as a novel that Terry's turning away is incomprehensible, and this is because we neither really understand him nor the attraction of the influences which wean him away from Footscray. Indeed his surrender to his girl-friend's respectability, and to his psychiatrist's folksy advice and socialite values, seems either "senti-

mental nonsense", as one reviewer has put it, or perhaps a sell-out to the bourgeois. Certainly Terry's priggish attitude to his old mates, and his worship of "success" as we see it in the last couple of pages, are repulsive; but Mr. Dick seems to want us to take this seriously. Terry Cooke is no Jonah!

But despite the above, the book has many merits. If most of the characters are flat, Terry's wild "old man" is not; Mr. Dick, by a skilful piling up of relevant, fascinating detail, here creates a striking portrait, and significantly enough it is this precise analysis which makes the father the book's only character who can meaningfully bear the explanatory role given him in Terry's twisted development. And if the book's concluding effect is unfortunate, one cannot deny Mr. Dick's ability to write honestly and forcefully. "A Bunch of Ratbags" is written in a style which is a cross between the Footscray vernacular and bodgie cant, and I suspect that the book is most successful insofar as it is a very memorable series of vignettes of Footscray life written artlessly in the vernacular. In a real sense, then, the book is less a novel than an autobiography or memoir; one senses less that a novelist's critical intelligence is shaping the book, than that a writer of some natural ability is putting down in random fashion scenes from his youth.

As a factual record, then, almost as a historian's source, "A Bunch of Ratbags" is most interesting. As a "Goodway" boy of Mr. Dick's vintage, I can testify to the accuracy and value of his account. While almost no Footscray children went hungry, poverty by Australian standards did exist in Footscray in that period; if Terry's ulcers were partly caused by bad food, as one of the ratbags suggested, perhaps it was because he ate only tomato-sauce sandwiches for lunch, as did some children I knew. The roughness of manners is realistically captured. Mr. Dick's characters would be at home with the family I remember, all of whose members cheerfully called each other "shithead" in an affectionate sort of way. We are faithfully reminded, too, that Mr. Dick is writing about the fifties; the "dagoes" and "balts" get their fair share of bashings, and there is an extremely interesting chapter on bodgie reactions to the "new" rock and roll. Altogether, this book may interest the social historian as much as the literary critic in a few years' time.

I would question only one aspect of Mr. Dick's picture of Footscray; here and there he implies that the novel is anatomising Footscray society, and as vividly as he has painted a vital part of the Footscray scene, Terry Cooke's family is not a microcosm of the Footscray macrocosm. Footscray people resent their suburb being called "slummy", and assert that it is "different' from the inner suburbs, perhaps with some justification. For Footscray is rather like a country town; it has a social hierarchy of its own, solid burghers as well as the Cookes. If Footscray ever finds its historian he will have to draw attention to this fact; nevertheless he will find Mr. Dick's book an interesting and illuminating source.

BILL KENT

Square Peg

Mr. Peter Heydon's admirable and well written book "Quiet Decision: A Study of George Foster Pearce" (M.U.P., 67/9) is something of a rarity in Australian historiography; it is written from a right wing or conservative point of view. It is not that it is partisan or in any way unfair to the Labor Party. The fact is simply that Heydon accepts as normal and proper Pearce's whole system of social beliefs. He gives a sympathetic and engaging account of a man who was, in the terms of the mid-1960s, a hopeless square.

Let us look at the record. Brought up a Congregationalist. Pearce continued in later life to attend regularly one or other of the nonconformist churches. He was shocked by blasphemy, for example by the popular song of the day "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum". He was a strict teetotaller and suspicious of continental cooking. He liked reading historical novels, was tone deaf but liked "good plays" and frequently watched films, but would never accept free tickets. Stanley Bruce enjoined both golf and bridge to make him human. He took very seriously the formal duties of the Executive Council and once when a young Attorney-General called Menzies made some quip he told him to "stop this nonsense."

Pearce drew "considerable satisfaction" from the honor of arranging the royal tour of the Duke of York in 1927 and the consequent confering of his knighthood. He strongly supported the exclusion of Mrs. Freer in 1936. He hoped though vainly, that his portfolio of External Affairs would take him either to the Jubilee of George V in 1935 or the Coronation of George VI two years later. When he retired, after his electoral defeat in 1937, he declined a suggestion of a small dinner party at which officers of External Affairs could say good-bye to him. He thought they might be embarrassed later if they lost a Minister they did not care to entertain. After his political career he was assisted by Massy-Greene to obtain company directorships. In his old age he got great pleasure from the Liberals' return to office in 1949 and also from the fact that Menzies addressed him by his first name in corespondence. One can see how the other half, or the upper tenth, live. I am reminded of a bank manager some years ago who visited Government House at the time of a royal visit. He was bubbling over with excitement because he had spoken to the Queen. "Mind you," he said, "we only discussed the weather, but I talked to the Queen!"

But it would be wrong to dismiss Pearce as a narrow-minded snob, because Heydon makes it quite clear that he possessed, together with all his limitations, a vast political ability and a scrupulous personal integrity. He deliberately avoided legitimate sources of income so that he might devote his whole energies to the service of his country. His shares and bonds were an embarrassment to his private secretaries who prepared his income tax returns because they were of such fiddling amounts.

Pearce's political abilities, though great, were not spectacular. He was neither demagogue nor orator. He was a competent rather than a brilliant Leader of the Senate. It was typical of his behavior that Pearce made important statements of policy, not by handout to the press. but, as he believed proper, in his parliamentary speeches.

Pearce was a superb administrator. Heydon's account here is also superb for he served for a while as Pearce's private secretary and watched him in action. Hard work, order, regularity and observances of the rules, all the virtues of the square, ensured that his departments ran efficiently.

But Pearce's greatest political talent was for deciding policy in cabinet, both in formal cabinet meetings and in private consultation with his colleagues. On this point, too, Heydon is particularly strong. His own wide experience in the public service and particularly, no doubt, as Sec-

retary of the Department of Immigration, has given him an intimate and extensive knowledge of the workings of cabinet which enables him to discuss Pearce's contributions here with great authority.

Pearce's great role was that of a man of common sense. He had, apparently, a great ability to estimate how both the public and also his party would react to government decisions. This political judgment, re-enforced by a wide and deliberately acquired knowledge of Australia and added to by long experience (he was twenty-five years in cabinet) placed him always in that inner circle of ministers upon whom prime mininsters necessarily rely. Heydon believes that, after the prime minister's, Pearce's voice was the most influential in the governments of Hughes, Bruce-Page, and, possibly, Lyons.

It is, of course, idle to look for any original political ideas in the life of such a conventional man as Pearce. Heydon is not very interested in the question as to why he left the Labor Party, nor, indeed why he first joined it. And perhaps these questions are not of much importance, for Pearce seems to have been consistent in his simpleminded belief in Australian nationalism. It is true he was mildly critical of the Boer War, but he seems to have had no difficulty in combining with his nationalism wider loyalties to "Empire" and "Commonwealth". The careers of Holman and Hughes, as they approach the crisis of 1916, are probably best understood as those of radicals moving rapidly to the right. But with Pearce it would seem to be merely the case of a square peg getting out of a round hole.

D. W. A. BAKER.

On Strenuous Wings

"On Strenuous Wings" is a fitting title for the selection of Katharine Prichard's work recently edited by Joan Williams and published by the East German firm of Seven Seas Books at 7/6. Katharine Prichard has always been a strenuous person, coping with all kinds of chores, but winged: that is, she has the poetic touch. "On Strenuous Wings" is the kind of title she would have chosen for one of her novels—titles which have always aimed at suggesting something living or natural rather than abstract: "Black Opal," "Working Bullocks," "Winged Seeds." The actual phrase itself comes from a poem Katharine Prichard wrote during the second world war, in which she protested against another poet's urging of returned servicemen to settle down to "simple things, in the warm, workaday world that once they knew." She replied:

> Let us have done
> with simple things
> and dare to soar into the future
> on strenuous wings,
> made strong by their example . . .

This new selection of the work of Katharine Susannah Prichard illustrates the variety of her talent. Although best known for her novels she is also the author of several books of poems, short stories, reportage and a play. This latter. "Brumby Innes," has never been produced, but is printed in this anthology. It is on an Aboriginal theme, and Katharine Prichard's sympathy with and understanding of the Aboriginals is also illustrated by the famous short story, "The Cooboo," and by the moving conclusion of "Coonardoo," both printed here.

"On Strenuous Wings" is a fair, representative selection of Miss Prichard's work. It contains extracts from seven novels of her earlier years, a few poems, the play I mentioned, a number of vignettes from her occasional writings, and extracts from her major goldfields trilogy. The publication emphasises her international stature and reminds us once again of Walter Murdoch's remark that, "In the Parliament of world literature" Katharine Prichard "is the Member for Australia."

AILEEN PALMER.

Book Chronicle

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

Three recent biographies, in descending order of distinction, are J. B. Barry's **The Life and Death of John Price** (M.U.P., 50/-), an important historical study of a minor colonial despot, with psychological and penological undertones; K. M. Bowden's **Captain James Kelly of Hobart Town** (M.U.P., 35/-), a short study of a sealer, adventurer and circumnavigator of Tasmania; and Clifford Tolchard's **The Humble Adventurer** (Lansdowne, 32/6), an account of the life and times of James Ruse, Australia's first farmer. This latter book is heavily padded.

There are three works of considerable autobiographical interest. **Tom Barker and the I.W.W.** (Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Australian National University, Canberra, 10/-) is a transcription of the tape-recorded reminiscences of Tom Barker, sometime editor of Direct Action and a notable revolutionary socialist of the first world war period. This is an important and carefully edited work. Morton Herman, the architect and writer, has produced an elegant edition of **Annabella Boswell's Journal** (Angus & Robertson, 32/6), a colonial journal of charm and social interest. L. J. Hartnett's **Big Wheels and Little Wheels** (Lansdowne, 45/-) is not nearly as interesting for its personal revelations as for the important detail it gives on Australian industry in the tween-war years and during the second world war. Harnett, of course, ran General Motors between 1934 and 1947, and was the true begetter of the Holden car, the story of which is told here.

O. W. Parnaby's **Britain and the Labor Trade in the South-west Pacific** (Duke University Press, $6.25 (U.S.) is the first major study of the blackbirding trade and of the policies of the British and the Queensland governments in regard to it. Susan Priestley's **Echuca: A Centenary History** (Jacaranda, 35/-) is an excellent local history by a trained historian, well illustrated and pleasantly written. Henry Mayer's **Marx, Engels and Australia** (Cheshire, 20/-) is a detailed monograph on the Democratic Association of Victoria, the Australian affiliate of the First International. This is an interesting footnote to history, added to by a glossary of everything Marx and Engels had to say about Australia.

John Hetherington's **Witness to Things Past** (Cheshire, 45/-) is a reprint of his ably-written articles in the Melbourne "Age" on a selection of pioneer buildings, chosen for their associations rather than their architectural value. This job was well worth doing, and has been done so conscientiously and so nostalgically by Mr. Hetherington that we can only ask for more.

In his **Convict Department Record Group**, section three of the Guide to the Public Records of Tasmania, Tasmanian State Archivist Peter Elder-

shaw has produced, for ten shillings, a valuable detailed guide for the research worker, as well as a scholarly essay on convict organisation which is worth the money in itself.

TRAVEL AND REPORTAGE

Denis Warner's **The Last Confucian** (Angus & Robertson, 37/6) is an angry, able account of the progressive deterioration of "western" policies in South-East Asia, leading to the present lamentable situation in Vietnam. Warner is at his best when he shows how little western governments have understood the political, social and economic structure of the country they are meddling in.

Ivan Southall's **Indonesia Face to Face** (Lansdowne, 45/-) is a warm, moving and sensitive account of an Australian writer's reactions to Indonesian life and the Indonesian people. Despite the relatively brief acquaintanceship that Southall had with the country, goodwill combined with intelligence have produced a work of basic value to Australian-Indonesian understanding.

Kevin Hartshorne's **Czechoslovakia: From the New World** (Macgibbon & Kee, 46/-) is a slangy, insightful account of a young Australian's experiences over several years in a country where he learns the language, takes a job and writes of people, good, bad and indifferent, as they really are. But this is a far from superficial book: it has a poetic quality about it, and must rank as one of the most successful works of foreign reportage to be written by an Australian in recent years.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The Occasional Papers produced by the Australian Language Research Centre of the University of Sydney are great fun as well as useful scholarly contributions. The six issues so far include material on **Australianisms in Early Migrant Handbooks**, by Robert D. Eagleson, and **The Terminology of the Shearing Industry**, by J. S. Gunn.

An Introduction to Australian Literature, edited by C. D. Narasimhaiah (Jacaranda, 30/-) is an offprint from an Indian cultural magazine which recently ran a special issue on Australian literature. This is a useful collection of essays by well-known Australian critics and writers.

ABORIGINALS

E. G. Docker's **Simply Human Beings** (Jacaranda, 37/6) is important not only as a descriptive work of sympathy and feeling, but as the best history of Aboriginal-white relations we yet have.

Aborigines Now, edited by Marie Reay, and published by Angus & Robertson at 32/6, is a collection of essays discussing the validity of the official policy of assimilation for the Australian Aboriginals. Oscillating between heavyweight anthropological writing and more popular and discursive material, this book nevertheless provides some badly needed guidance for discussion and thought.

Old and New Australian Aboriginal Art, by Roman Black (Angus & Robertson, 50/-) is a popular account of Aboriginal art by a visiting artist who is especially interested in the application of Aboriginal themes in contemporary industrial design. Roland Robinson's **The Man Who Sold His Dreaming** (Currawong, 25/-) is a collection of myths of the New South Wales Aboriginals. It is not clear, unfortunately, to what extent this material is verbatim and entirely authentic.

FOLK SONG

Australian Tradition, the Melbourne-based folksong magazine, is now appearing in more ambitious format. The most recent issue contains a number of new songs as well as articles on song makers and song festivals. Fifteen shillings a year from 27 Swallow Street, Port Melbourne, V.

John Joseph Jones, the Westralian singer, has recently issued four records, which might be best described as "made-up Australian folk songs." They cost 17/- each, and enquiries should be addressed to 178 Kew Street, Kewdale, W.A.

PENGUIN BOOKS

Among recent Penguin books of special interest to Australian readers are C. P. Fitzgerald's **The Birth of Communist China** (8/-), Patrick White's **Riders in the Chariot** (10/6), **Investment in Australia**, by Donald Marry and Gordon Bruns (8/6).

Other publications of interest from the same firm include Raymond Williams' **Drama from Ibsen to Eliot** (19/6), **The Penguin Book of American Folk Songs**, by Alan Lomax (17/6), **Discrimination and Popular Culture**, edited by Denys Thompson (6/6), Ian Stephens' **Pakistan** (9/6), and **The Diaries of Franz Kafka**, edited by Max Brod (25/-).

G. M. Trevelyan's **Illustrated English Social History** (four vols., 13/6 each) is, technically, a brilliant piece of publishing: the small format hardly seems to affect the impact of the illustrations. Trevelyan's work is, of course, a standard text which it is most fortunate to have available so cheaply.

NEW ZEALAND

The Land of New Zealand, by Michael Turnbull and Ian A. McLaren (Longmans, 16/6) is an admirable compilation of carefully edited documents to accompany Michael Turnbull's history, **The Changing Land**.

Forbush and the Penguins, by Graham Billing (Reed, 21/6) is a novel about a young biologist left to himself for several months in a historic Antarctic hut. Witty, interesting and moving, this book is notable in its own right, as well as for being one of the first novels to come out of Antarctica.

Dick Scott's **Winemakers of New Zealand** (Southern Cross Books, N.Z. 32/6) is a splendidly illustrated and produced history of winemaking in Maoriland, of historical as well as oenological interest.

MISCELLANEOUS

Peter Lawrence's **Road Belong Cargo** (M.U.P., 50/-) is a profound discussion of the cargo cults of New Guinea, with special reference to that led by the famous cultist Yali. Lawrence's book deeply relates to current Australian policies in New Guinea, and is a work of seminal value to all concerned with our work there.

George Mackaness's **Bibliomania** (Angus & Robertson, 45/-) is a further collection of this author's fascinating essays on the collecting of Australiana, covering a field that ranges from our first printers to Norman Lindsay. The book contains much valuable bibliographical information.

Bill Sutton's **Snow and Me** is a collection of his satirical squibs from the pages of the Queensland Guardian. Its publication follows the success of his little booklet of short stories, **Leave the Heads on 'Em.** The former costs 2/6 plus 5d. postage, the latter 2/- plus 5d., from the author at 11 Wren Street, Bowen Hills, Brisbane.

Published by S. Murray-Smith, Mount Eliza, Victoria; and printed by "Richmond Chronicle," 3 Shakespeare Street, Richmond, E1, Vic.