"Galmahra" is the aboriginal word meaning "Spokesman of a tribe."

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DRAWINGS by Joy Roggenkamp.
"She was small ... and slender ... and her dark hair fell to her shoulders in sleek groomed waves" - (page 48).
Preface

This preface differs from most of its kind in being worth reading by both critics and contributors. It has attained this peculiar merit because it contains a list of the prize-winners in the various fields of literary endeavour for which these bribes, baits, rewards, or what you will, have been offered.

However, anticipation whets the tooth of appetite, so we will defer mention of the fortunate few, and proceed to acknowledge our indebtedness to all those whose active help, interest and criticism made the task of the editorial staff so much the lighter.

We are eager to acknowledge, for, alas, we can never repay, our debt to Mr. A. K. Thomson for the time and trouble he has taken to judge the entries for the various prizes.

We wish to thank Mr. McKenzie and his staff at Shipping Newspapers Ltd. for the manner in which they tackled difficulties caused by the unavoidable delay in publishing this year's "Galmahra”. Miss Eleanor Cooke has performed valuable work in the reading of copy and proofs, and we hasten to acknowledge our gratitude. Finally, we must thank Miss Joy Roggenkamp for her outpouring of precious talent, time, and energy which has helped so much in making this "Galmahra" the success we confidently (and modestly) proclaim it to be.

Of the actual contents, we dare not say much, for obvious reasons. We do not feel, however, that our invitation to the poets, authors, essayists, and bellelettrists within the University to drown us in a sea of ink were remarkable for the instantaneous and overwhelming response recorded to them.

Indeed, the contributions are the work of a smaller and less representative group than we could have wished. Be that as it may, the contents, while not all brilliant, are at least of sufficient standard to provide, especially when considered in conjunction with Miss Roggenkamp's excellent illustrations, an exceedingly difficult mark for future generations of students to reach. There is little of the "preciousness" which is often so flourishing a weed in the kindly soil of University publications. Most of the stories, poems and articles found herein are sufficiently robust to stand by their own merits in the hard, cold world of "outside" publications, and this is a healthy sign.

You will have observed that this is a large, fat, and bulky "Galmahra", a well-nourished kind of book. A far cry from the "slim volumes" in which most young University artists spring their creations upon an unsuspecting world. So we have the carping critic and the pompous papa in a cleft stick. Let them rail as they will about the quality of the work. That is
their privilege. But let them beware should they touch upon the quantity. And with that piteous acknowledgment of supersatiation, every reader of this preface must perforce agree. Amen.

The prizes (of four guineas) for contributions to this year’s “Galmahra” were awarded as follows:—

   Short Story: ALAN ROBERTS and BETTY WILLIAMS.
   Poem: “TOM-THE-GRYMER” (alias VAL VALLIS).
   Article: WALLIS A. SUCHTING.

Footnote: By a piece of low cunning unprecedented in student history, namely, by causing this magazine to be published late in the year, the Editorial Staff have ensured that the decision of the judge is final, and absolutely no correspondence will be entered into.
“Gee. Oh, gee. There’s nothin’ here.”

Mick held on to the picket fence, his lips pouting with child-like distress. He had never felt such a cold wind as the one that was striking malevolently at him now. He stood there, supported by a strange fence, in an alley he did not know, with the straight, high back walls of the houses on either side shepherding the aggressive cold into his shrinking vitals.

Mick was an inch or two over six feet, a few pounds less than seventeen stone, and the possessor of a paunch that swelled a shade more even than his mighty chest. He was wont to slap this abdominal expanse proudly and declare that beer put it there; or, more cryptically, that it had cost him pounds.

And yet, the expression of woe on his face was really child-like, for two reasons. You felt it had no right to be there; you felt also that it would soon be gone. He had a big, happy face, with a big, happy nose.

But he was deeply unhappy now. He looked timidly up the alley, and found no friendship in those dark ramparts on either side. He was an outcast, and the wind had pounced on him.

That beautiful glow, born of the whisky, the gramophone, the songs, the girls, was draining from him, scurrying before the wind. The warm, loud, fleshy party he had just stumbled away from was a million miles distant. A few steps, and he had entered another world.

In panic he turned around and looked for the door in the fence. But it was so dark; he peered, took a couple of uncertain steps and then grabbed hastily at the fence again, as houses moved in a magnificent sweep across his blurred vision and the pavement rose up threateningly. Suddenly he remembered—he had to be sick. He had left the party to be sick, and been betrayed into this bleak alley.

“I’m a sick man,” he told the fence, questing for sympathy; but only the wind responded, with a pitiless gust. He was alone, alone and miserable beyond words.

He sought for something to blame. The beer! If he had stuck to the whisky he would have been all right. He shook his head sadly and tried to remember how it had happened!

“Said to Alf,” said: “Where is it?” “Where’s what?” “Just where is it? Can’t expeck me to say any more,” I says, “on account of ladies present.” Laugh! Couldn’t stop laughin’. Everybody.”

He began to laugh again out there in the alley, at the memory of his joke. His big body shook.

“‘Tact,’ I says. ‘Got to have tact, Alf. You know me—Tackful Mick! That’s what they call me, don’t they?’ ‘Got to remember your company, ay? Go to consider ladies, ay? ‘Shrieks!’ Joe on the floor!’”
He never could control his laughter at all. It poured out, convulsing him, till tears came to his eyes and he could only shake his head feebly between gusts. Quite suddenly he became grave, and frowned forbiddingly around him as if to discourage such of the houses as might still be laughing.

"Pres'nt p'sition," he said weightily. "C'nsider pres'nt p'sition."

Down the hall, to the right and then down the stairs, Alf had said. Yes, he had gone that way; but there was no lavatory, there was only this alley. Suddenly he felt an ominous disturbance in his stomach and a sinister tightness in his jaws. He let go the fence, walked unsteadily to a telephone post a few yards away, wrapped one arm around it, and leaned over the gutter.

After a few minutes he straightened up and heaved a contented sigh. His duty was done. He had been sick, and now he could go back to the party; but not by the way he had come out. He looked fearfully at the back fence, an endless succession of identical palings and indistinguishable doors; no, he would not enter that labyrinth.

The alley made a right-angle turn and led to the street in front of Alf’s place. He would enter by the front door and astound them. He chuckled at the thought, that he would astound them; and then, pulling his coat tighter at the neck, he strode into the very teeth of the wind, glowering pugnaciously to subdue it.

II.

It had been bad enough before, in the gloomy canyon of the forbidding back walls, to be lost and friendless. But here, surrounded by warm-looking lighted windows, in a well-lit street, it was twice as bad; for they mocked him.

He was appalled by their self-evident treachery. “Come in! Come in!” the lights seemed to say; and yet, suppose he took them at their word—suppose he walked into one of those houses, and smiled, and said, “How are yer. Mick Denham’s me name. Mind if I join in?”—what would happen? Why, they’d throw him out on his ear, and pretend he had no right to walk in at all; they grin, and snicker, and talk stuff that bewildered him; and end up tricking him properly, make him think he really was in the wrong.

He knew! He knew! And he was afraid of it; afraid of the monsters people were, till you got to know them. And he was glad of the whisky in him, that set his brain working fast enough to foresee this treachery and avoid it.

So with deliberate steps he walked off up the street, turning his back on those alluring windows, and smiling as he went; a bitter smile, a superior smile. Trick him, after all these years? But his heart was heavy and he wished the world remade.

He must have taken the wrong turning, as he came out of the alley. He would find somewhere to sit down, till the whisky wore off a little and
he could remember where Alf's place was. He knew the number—it was 32; rather, 42. No, it was 23; well, a little rest and he would remember it.

He came to the building on the corner of the street, and stopped to blink up at it. It was a hall, unadorned, rectangular, inhospitable. He peered up at the white notice board and read aloud the words he could make out:

"PUBLIC MEETING."

He looked down at the pavement and frowned in heavy concentration. Public. Oh, yes, public. Meeting. That was easy. Suddenly his brow cleared and an eager smile came to his lips. "I'm public! I'm public!"

There were lights inside the hall, warm, expansive, cheerful lights; lights that shone on hundreds of people and protected them from the wind and misery. His heart leaped up, and almost before he knew it he was at the door, he was past the door, he was standing inside with his heart full of inarticulate gratitude.

He hardly remembered the path he had run across, the steps he had lightly ascended; everything was happening so fast, now that he was no longer alone in the universe. What had happened to time? Everything was racing past him as he stood motionless in this new world full of people.

A woman sitting near the door turned her head and then swivelled it back again, with a speed that dazed him still further. Someone uttered an incredibly accelerated burst of coughing. A man was speaking from a platform at the other end of the hall, and his voice was loud enough certainly—but oh, how he gabbled, how he rattled out his words, so that a man might try ever so hard and still not understand him.

He saw an empty chair and dropped into it. Ah, the lights, the people, the warmth and friendliness of it! Gradually his time sense adjusted itself to some extent. He could make out the speaker's words and follow the impassioned wave of his arms.

"And I am not exaggerating, when I say that his own mother would not have recognised that poor unhappy soul. When I recalled to myself how he had carried himself not three years before, his clean-cut face, his clear, sparkling eyes, I could not believe... ."

Mick jumped uneasily.

Here he brought his hand down with a bang! on the table before him.

"I tell you, I could not believe... ."

His voice dropped to a hushed tone.

"That this was the same man."

He paused and took a sip of water. Mick stared at him in wonder. He guessed that something terrible must be coming when a man changed so much in less than three years.
Those eyes, which used to be able to look the whole world in the face without faltering—those eyes were now swollen, bloodshot, shifty and fearful."

Mick sat entranced, excited by the postponed denouement. "His features, which had borne the proud stamp of a well-respected man, were now coarse and sodden, ineradicably imprinted with the marks of dissipation and vice."

A man two chairs away from Mick coughed loudly. Mick turned his head and glared at him, annoyed by the churlish interruption. The man, started on the point of coughing again, looked at him in amazement, his mouth half-open and a white handkerchief held in his hand. Oblivious, Mick turned eagerly to the speaker once more. Freed from Mick’s menacing scowl, the man defiantly finished his cough, but it was drowned by the speaker's voice thundering anew.

"Three years before, a respected citizen; now, a social outcast, in the hands of the police force, accused of a most serious crime. You will naturally ask, 'How? How did it happen, that this man should have been brought so low?'"

Mick felt a little dizzy. He leaned forward, that his bemused faculties might miss nothing of the climax. The speaker's voice rose and thundered forth.

"Ah, could there be any but one answer! Is there any more than one of Satan's tools that acts so viciously and so swiftly! That man, brethren, that poor unhappy wretched man, was made to forget the soul which Our Lord Jesus Christ saved for him, was made to descend to the level of the beasts of the field and wallow in filth as they do, by the most deadly of Satan's snares . . ."

He drew himself up and slammed the table once more.

"... by DRINK!"

There was a general hum of approval.

Mick stared open-mouthed for a moment, and then sat back in his chair with a little relieved sigh, not at all dissatisfied. The speaker had put it over well; and it was true, too. The men he knew who'd drunk themselves to death—still, it was a great way to die.

There seemed to be a lot of kids in the audience, up front. He let his eye rove about the hall, and abruptly confronted a middle-aged woman in the next row, who was staring at him with unconcealed disapproval. He smiled lazily and winked at her in a friendly way; she gasped and turned her head quickly. Mick looked her up and down with sedate and vague concupiscence, and thought she was well set-up for her age. He would have liked to tell her so; but a shrewd notion that women didn't like having their age mentioned held him back. Mick chuckled to himself; he was no mug, especially about women.

Suddenly the whole audience burst into song. He fairly jumped in his seat. It was a strange song, but he instantly recognised the tune:
"Three Blind Mice." The din exhilarated him; and he joined in, singing the words of the original tune:

"Three Blind Mice,
See how they run!
They all ran after the farmer's wife
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife,
Did ever you see . . ."

But they went on to repeat the song three or four times, and he soon picked up the curious title, "No Spare Parts!" and most of the words.

"No Spare Parts! No Spare Parts!" he bellowed happily. His thunderous baritone drew encouraging nods from the platform, and affronted glares from the people closer to him, who were in a better position to know the reason for his enthusiasm.

"No Spare Parts!
A bad habit starts,
And if you don't stop it you'll wish that you had
Because it will weaken the health of a lad
Who didn't remember that his body had
No Spare Parts!"

It was a wonderful song. It was wonderful, to sit there with two hundred others and sing it. And the idea—what a wonderful idea it was, and how true! To think of it—it had never occurred to him before and yet it was so true—nobody had any spare parts!

The novelty of the conception kept him chuckling long after the singing stopped. He looked around for others who were sharing his enjoyment; and, drawing only more stares of disapproval, refused to let it depress him.

The meeting abruptly broke up. He stood slowly and walked to the door, still pleased with himself, but uneasily conscious that things would be different outside. Oh, if he could only put lights and friendly people everywhere, and do away with the back walls of houses and let everyone know who he was and shout them a drink till the whole world resounded with "No Spare Parts!"

As he stood on the pavement outside the hall, looking sidewise at the world in timid mistrust, a shout reached his ears from across the street.

"Mick! There's Mick!"

He could have wept with joy. Indeed, and his eyes were a trifle moist as he slapped Alf on the back and reeled in turn under Alf's hearty pummelling. Rose was with him, a bottle of beer in her hand and wet stains down the front of her dress.

"Where'd yer get to? Where'd yer get to?" Alf cried.

Mick winked ponderously and shook a reproachful finger, "Now, where'd yer think? Ay? Where'd yer think?"

Rose giggled in a high-pitched scream.

Rose screamed again and swayed unsteadily.

Alf laughed unroariously. “That’s just what I said! Wasn’t it now, Rose—d’yer remember, we came down the steps and I . . .”

“Hey,” Mick cried suddenly, grasping the lapel of Alf’s coat. Alf stopped, staring at him. Mick’s face was contorted in an agony of recollection, his lips working furiously. Suddenly his face cleared, and with a glad smile he began to sing—

“No Spare Parts!
A Bad Habit Starts!”

His happy baritone filled the little street. Rose and Alf listened enraptured. It was a great song and a great singer, and they could have listened all night; but as he was starting for the third time, it occurred to Alf that the coppers mightn’t like it. Besides, there was Enid back at the flat, whose right to the joys of “No Spare Parts” was equal to anybody's.

So they put Rose in the middle, and Mick took the bottle of beer off her, and they each put a friendly arm around her waist. As they strolled
back, Mick said how true it was, too, as well as being a great song, that nobody had any spare parts; but Rose thought it was not strictly correct. Because people did get glass eyes and wooden legs, not to mention iron lungs, didn't they?—and this started an argument which conveniently lasted till Alf turned the key in the door of the flat.

Then all three disputed with one another for the prized honour—which Mick won—of initiating Enid into the mysteries of “No Spare Parts”; and of Mick's singing they could think of nothing finer to say, than that it sounded even better in a small room than it did in the open street.

But little their compliments, however sincere, could matter to Mick; to a man who had just wandered into a dark and friendless hades, and emerged with the delicious beauty of a song.

THE END.

Are You Tailors of Time?

Are you tailors of Time?
Come, cut my cloth!
I have laces of rhyme
On wings of moth:
Come, cut my cloth!

Are you cobblers of Themes?
Come, cobble my shoe;
I have sandals of dreams
And slippers of dew;
Come, cobble my shoe!

Are you wreathers of Hours?
Come, bind my hair;
I have crescents of flowers
Full-blown and fair:
Come, bind my hair!

Are you spinners of Love?
Come, spin my veil;
I have wings of a dove
Soft-plumed and frail:
Come, spin my veil!

Are you weavers of Fame?
Come, weave my thread!
I have feathers of flame
And silks of red:
Come, weave my thread!

—MARIE LEAVER.
Some Notes on William Dobell

By Wallis A. Suchting.

"Art lapses into artificiality when it gets out of touch with the realities of life. . . . It is from foundations in the solid ground, from the life of the people, that a literature draws its vigour and rejuvenation."—Andre Gide.

The greatest art " . . . is impersonal, in the sense that personal experience is extended and completed in something impersonal, not in the sense of something divorced from personal experience and passion."—T. S. Eliot.

William Dobell is one of those artists who have become known to the general public not out of the essential nature of their work, but from the reaction which it has had upon the art-world. Until the memorable litigation over the 1943 Archibald Prize, the name of Dobell was relatively little known, although his direct influence as a teacher at the East Sydney Technical College had been great.

The account of the hearing in the Supreme Court of New South Wales, at which two artists moved that the Archibald Prize be denied to Dobell's "Joshua Smith" on the ground that it was a caricature and not a "real" portrait, is most interesting, and shows how little those concerned understood the principles of portrait-painting. The general reaction by most critics and, of course, their public further illustrated the unbelievably primitive state of artistic thought in some quarters, and was an excellent example of the confusion which exists between real and pseudo-criticism.

In a world where most of the work of our artists in all fields is simply amusement art, the critic must distinguish carefully between what merely amuses for a time, and what is really of artistic excellence. This important distinction is one which few critics realise, with the result that criticism becomes simply an orchestration of the likes and dislikes of themselves, or of the class to which they belong, and so has little really to do with the value of the work which they purport to criticise. This is clearly shown in the case of the portrait of Joshua Smith, the portrait of an artist destroyed by a society which consistently demanded amusement art and received instead a picture of its own decay. The outcries of the dismayed critics were those of Caliban looking at his own face in the mirror, and they hastened to malign the creator of such a revealing work.

For Dobell showed when he returned to Australia from Europe in 1939 that he did not intend to dissipate his genius amusing wealthy art-buyers, and set about synthesising the principles which he had learnt in Europe, and the special characteristics of Australian subject. He had already taken up his position in the Realist trend of art.

The Realist in each branch of art seeks his subject matter in the great historic forces which ever surge to and fro within the social organism, and which change it in accordance with inexorable laws of development. "The realist is able to reveal his own time as the historian is able to reveal the past." There have come to the surface in our age the forces of change which have worked almost unnoticed for a long period of time, and so an
abundance of material presents itself to the hand of the realist artist. It is a legitimate reaction from the state of affairs at the beginning of the century, when the cleavage existing between the artist and society resulted eventually in a consumptive art which slowly died because of the removal of its roots from real life, and the pursuit of mere technique as an end in itself.

I have often thought that by careful selection one might arrange some of Dobell’s pictures in an analogous manner to the five movements of Eliot’s “The Waste Land”, for indeed the effect produced by a sensitive reading of the poem is comparable to that made by a study of the work of Dobell.

Dobell’s view of modern society is not optimistic as his paintings of the middle and upper classes in particular show—the self-satisfied “Woman in a Restaurant”, the nervous, affected, “Little Milliner”, and as a climax “The Duchess Disrobes”, an indictment of the corruption of upper class life. The duchess stands half-naked before us, a maid removing the rich vestments from a body made hideously flabby by self-indulgence; it is a symbol of the artist stripping the slight covering of pretension from our dying society and exposing its moral grossness.

Dobell takes his subjects from all classes of society and reveals each with the incisive penetration of the typical realists. His portrayal of the working classes often seem strangely sympathetic, but who could doubt the artist’s own feelings towards the brutish fall of “The Billy Boy,” the stupidity and apathy of the “Woman Watching a Funeral” and “Maid at a Window.” He shows us a world which feels a secret contempt for itself, a conviction that its life is not worth preserving—

“... voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted walls.”

Sentiments which manifest themselves in the disillusion present in nearly all of Dobell’s portraits; on the face of the sad “Irish Youth,” for example, or “David Chambers”; and even it seems on that of the “Fair-Haired Boy.” The happiest is that of the “Sleeping Greek”—his brow is smooth and the furrows have passed from the forehead.

William Dobell’s pre-eminence as a portrait painter in Australia would seem to be assured after such works as “Joshua Smith” and “Margaret Olley” even if those of Brian Penton for example, or “Scotty” Allan did not exist. The essential idea of portrait painting which so many people seem to forget when criticising Dobell’s work in this field, is that the portrait painter does not desire that his picture should resemble the original exactly, but that the emotional effect produced by the portrait should be similar to that produced by the original. “When a portrait is said to be like the sitter, what is meant is that the spectator, when he looks at the portrait ‘feels as if’ he were in the sitter’s presence.” If verisimilitude were the only aim of the portrait painter, then the photographer would soon displace him.

In real portrait-painting then, the subject is followed to a certain extent more or less closely, but after that, the artist, in striving to
achieve the desired effect of a similarity in emotional atmosphere between subject and portrait departs from the original, and this deviation, rather than being a sign of incompetence in the artist is indeed the real test of his ability. The “Boy at the Basin” and “Summer Composition at Slade School” show clearly the technical skill which underlies Dobell’s character portrayal. The difference between this real portrait-painting and a mere recording of likeness may be seen by comparing “Lord Wakehurst” with say, “Norman Schureck.”

His finest portrait is, to my mind, “Margaret Olley,” the Archibald Prize Winner for 1948, and the subject for much controversy, like “Joshua Smith” throwing the art-world into two opposing factions.

Standing before the portrait in the Sydney National Gallery, and surveying the other portraits hung about it one cannot avoid feeling a certain commonplaceness in all else but the likeness of the impassive woman. These other portraits are, it seems, little more than photographs, mere faces in a mirror, faces seemingly unaltered by the passage through the artist’s mind on to the canvass.

But then Margaret Olley!—with the wide hat golden-flowered, the curiously coloured green gown, and diaphanous scarf of amethyst lying strangely across the arms of discoloured marble. An oppressiveness of feeling is here, like the humid heaviness of a hot-house where exotic flowers bloom in colours “intricate and delirious.”

We see afterwards that this is partly the effect of much yellow placed about the figure in broad strokes. Green, too, yellow and green, these are the dominant colours in the portrait. It is an almost hectic yellow, as of an actual physical disease hardly begun to deflower the flesh, but which yet shows itself in long languors and jaundiced bodily hue; and green, which Wilde reminds us “is always the sign of a subtle artistic temperament, and in nations is said to denote a laxity if not a decadence of morals.”

There had been noticed something of the smile of La Gioconda in the face, and certainly much about the portrait reminds us of her whom Pater fancied had lived and died, like the vampire, many times, and returned with the mysteries of the grave. We might imagine her to have been painted after she had arisen once more fresh and clear from the damp earth, and had lived awhile in our perplexed time, absorbing herself in the stream of its experience with a sensibility made more exquisite and many-sided by participation in the energies of all the ages, the gently folded hands once portrayed by Da Vinci now fallen wearily apart, and the formerly firm flesh becoming a little flaccid and coarse in texture, by continual exhaustion of spirit and body.

Apart from this great social significance, Dobell’s characters often express what Brian Penton calls . . . “a personal dichotomy, a conflicting horror of and delight in the crude flesh . . . a disillusioning failure of the spirit to master the gross, mean, spiteful or pretentious flesh.” It is this
conflict between spirit and flesh which makes the portrait of Joshua Smith so remarkable. We feel as though the separation is near at hand; the flesh is loath to cling to the frame any longer; the body seems preserved only by virtue of some embalming atmosphere about it, and the wearied soul is about to escape into some “diviner air” clear and salubrious. In contrast with this is “The Red Lady” in whom the flesh has almost complete control and the tired spirit is numb.

Are we then to look in the work of the artist for any solution to the problems he shows us? “Give, Sympathise, Control” was the plea of Eliot in “The Waste Land”; but in William Dobell I can find no such saving formula. It is difficult even to draw from his work a mental picture of the artist himself, so completely does he seem to have “extended and completed” his own experience in the subjects he paints. To some this would appear a grave fault, but to me it is enough if, by the imaginative expression of his own feelings through his particular medium, he can point out to us the really significant threads in the web-like complex of our life.

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Storm at Coolac

See the destruction of the storm
blowing the petals into the air
and he, Tom Foolery, lightning at his lips
making the thunder blare,
the warm blanket of the road worn under him.
Shouting with the wind, stumbling he goes,
wearing the storm like a growing rose.

—“Bushranger.”
The cocks were rehearsing for the dawn when Jacqueline heard the thunder of the bombers coming back. She slipped out of bed and went to the window, a pale square in the soft light of a dying moon. Away to the east, the long swords of the searchlights probed into the night sky, and the sparkle of tracer shells showed where the night fighters stalked the bomber herd like lean, grey wolves.

Often she stood here while the growl of engines shook the sky over France, but could not explain to herself why she did so. She shivered as a chill little dawn wind came through the partially opened window, and played with cold fingers around her ears. Almost over the village, a bright red glow lit up the sky, exploded into a huge falling ball of fire and disintegrated into glowing fragments, which fell earthwards like a thousand meteors.

The ghostly light of early dawn was creeping about the farm house, and she could see the black shapes of the houses in the little village only a mile away. The woods loomed black and secretive, stretching away for many leagues to the west, and the roar in the sky faded into a faint murmur. She turned reluctantly and went back to her bed, a small white figure in the dawn-light.

She went about her tasks that morning in a curiously dream-like mood, so that her aunt scolded her, and her cousin Charles grumbled because his breakfast was burnt. A strange fellow, this Charles, gruff and taciturn, consorting at night with many queer people, lean, silent figures who travelled by night, and who knew much of fire and destruction and sudden death.

The girl left the house when the sun was high, and walked across the barley fields towards the woods. She did not come here often, not since the grey-clad troops had come marching from the west when she was quite a little girl. But she loved their dark coolness, their mystery, the romance and adventure which might be found around every turn of a winding path.

She saw a squad of soldiers returning to the village, and guessed that they had been searching for the occupants of the plane shot down in the night. They seemed empty-handed, and she was glad. The shadows enveloped her, and she left the path, and threaded her way easily between the mossy trunks of the beech trees. The tall bracken brushed against her legs, and the rich, damp earth deadened the sound of her passing.

It was in a rocky place where the trees were few, and the undergrowth high and tangled that she saw the tell-tale white of the parachute. She scrambled over a rock, and stood staring at the man on the ground, who looked up at her with eyes gray and pain-wracked as a stormy dawn.
It had been fully light by the time he recovered sufficiently to gather his parachute into an untidy bundle, and try to tend the gaping hole in his leg. He managed to stop the blood which had welled out in a slow, remorseless stream. The agony clutched with fingers of fire at his brain, and the sickness in his stomach made him weak, his fingers fumbling and uncertain. The memory of the terrible moments in the sky was fading, and the shock was passing when the sun came up.

He managed to crawl between the big grey rocks, and had pressed close to the earth as it warmed to the heat of the sun. He sought to sink into it, to become one with it, to take comfort from that which had nurtured ten million years of life on its broad bosom. The earth is life, he told himself. The earth, from which all things came and to which all returned in death.

The sun climbed high and bathed the rocks in strong white light, and he began to feel the sickness and the weakness again. The light shimmered crazily up from the stone, and the big grey rocks seemed to bake, to contract and expand like living things as the sunlight smote them.

He was almost in a coma and his lips were cracked and dry when he heard the small sounds of someone approaching. He reached weakly for the revolver inside the leg of his flying boot, but before he could grasp it, the girl stood there, looking down on him, and in her eyes he saw compassion, and a gleam of excitement.

Neither spoke as she knelt beside him, and gently examined the wound in his leg. Her face was white, and her teeth clenched tight on her lower lip, but she rewound the bandage neatly, firmly. She picked up the parachute and harness, and walked with them to a nearby thicket, the heavy buckles swinging against her legs. She took his helmet, and returned with it full of water from a nearby brook. She came towards him through the bracken, and though he was sick and weak, and his head was light, he noticed how lovely she was, tall and slender as a young sapling in search of the sun.

With great difficulty, she made him understand that he must wait for nightfall, and left him. Charles would know what to do, she thought, and her trust was not misplaced. There was much coming and going of silent figures as soon as darkness came, and the wounded man was safe in the barn which had been thoroughly searched by the Germans that morning. The parachute and harness was burning on a dozen hearths, part of the smoke that rose softly into the cool blue of the evening.

The weeks that followed were full of fear and a strange wild excitement for the girl. She learned to dread the very sight of a German near the farm, and they came by fairly frequently. Especially a blond young Lieutenant, who spoke faulty French, and told her of his mother, and their home in Dresden. In other circumstances, she could have liked him, for he was young, and seemed gentle, and very lonely.

She often sat by the rough bed in the barn, and talked with the airman until gradually they came to understand each other, if they talked slowly
and carefully. She liked these visits, to sit beside him in the darkness, with the sweet smell of the new-cut hay like an incense in the air.

For him, it was as if time had stopped, and he lived in a strange new world, adrift, helpless, dependent. He thought often of his home, his comrades; of the warm bars, the smoky dance halls, filled with loud voices and hard, bright laughter, and above all, the blare of swing music, shouting “Forget! Forget! Forget!” as men and women fled from a life that had suddenly, strangely, filled with the threat of death. It became difficult to realise that that was the real life, because it seemed so far removed from him. Only the bare walls about him, and the dark girl who came to mean so much to him, were real.

The barley fields grew golden, and then were bare. The evenings grew cold, and clear, and still. Darkness came early. They made him a crutch, so that he could move about the loft of the barn that was his home. His leg healed well, and soon he walked on it, until he was well enough to walk with her on dark nights, across the fields, and to the edge of the forest near the little brook.

Both felt oddly reluctant to talk of the day he must leave, because they knew it was now so close. She told him one night, as they sat in the darkness under the trees, that the plans were laid for his escape. They were quiet awhile, and the minutes fled by like the falling leaves, foretelling the emptiness that would follow their passage.

He lay silent beside her and she stroked his hair with her fingers. A calm that was almost terrible filled her, and she drew comfort from the knowledge of his strength and his love.

He was quiet, but through his mind raced a million thoughts, of life and death and destiny, of love and fate and fear. The rich earth beneath him filled his nostrils with the smell of life, and above him the stars marched slowly, majestically, across the roof of heaven. He knew the sweetness of life, for now he had lived it fully. All men, he knew, must live and struggle and love, and the measure of their fulfilment lay in how they lived, and for what they struggled, and why they loved. And above him the drone of the bombers heading into Germany mocked his thoughts, snarled their song of hate and terror, left him suddenly cold and empty.

“I’ll be back,” he told her, suddenly, the words coming quickly, in a kind of desperate rush. “I’ll come back for you, after the war is over. Wait for me.” She seemed to understand, and her voice was soft as she replied.

They were silent again, and he felt a strength rising within him, coming to him from the earth and the silence and the huge, strong trunks of the trees.

“Remember,” he said, “if I do not come, if anything happens to me, that we have cheated death of complete victory. For the only way man cheats death is in what he leaves behind him, in the things he has done, in the people he has known and loved. And if I die, you will live on, and
remember, and then I will not go out like a spark in the darkness, leaving no trace.” She stopped him, and they were quiet again, living a lifetime in fleeting hours under the trees.

The countryside was filled with rumours about the Germans' knowledge of the wounded flyer. It seemed definite that a thorough search would be made soon, and a small, fair man visited the barn one night, accompanied by faithful Charles, bearing the stub of a candle. This was lit and carefully shielded.

“You will have to leave the day after to-morrow,” the stranger told the man in the barn, and he spoke very good English. “You will be hidden in the forest the first night, and then you must make your own way through the wood to a canal shown on this map, where you will find a barge. You will be taken on board, and well hidden, and we should get you through. I'll leave the map with you.” He spent some time explaining the map and the route which must be followed, and then rose. “Good luck,” he said, and held out his hand. The airman took it, and the other went with Charles, the two of them moving like wraiths into the darkness.

Fate stepped in the next evening, when the blond young German Lieutenant called to see Jacqueline. She was leaving the barn as he approached, and he noticed her paleness and the quickness of her breathing as she almost ran towards him. A faint suspicion stirred within him, and he looked up at the one window in the hay loft. In the uncertain light, he thought he saw a movement, but could not be sure. He was about to turn away, with a mental note to search that barn within a very few hours, when a glance at the girl's terrified face confirmed his suspicions. He walked swiftly, purposefully towards the barn, and his fingers loosened the flap of the holster at his belt.

She stood before him as he reached the door, and he pushed her roughly aside. She clutched his arm, and almost screamed, “No. Come back. There is no one there.”

“Except the British flyer you’ve been hiding, eh?” he asked, sarcastically, and his face reddened. “You bitch,” he added in German, and struck her brutally across the face.

The blued steel of the pistol in his hand glittered as he mounted the ladder to the loft. Suddenly, the ladder was pushed away from the edge of the trap door, and he fell with it six feet to the floor. Before he could regain his feet, a dark shape dropped on him from above, and he fell again, half-stunned, the pistol flying from his grasp.

A pair of strong hands clamped around his neck, and he saw death in the bitter eyes above him. He struggled, and normally would have been a match for the weakened fugitive, but now he was breathless, half-stunned from the effect of his fall.

Gradually, his struggles grew wilder, but more futile. He whistled hoarsely as he tried to breathe, and his face was flushed, almost black with blood. His swollen tongue protruded from between grinning lips,
and his whole face was high-lighted in ghastly fashion by the last rays of light entering the open door.

At length all movement ceased, and the other dropped the body in disgust. He had never killed a man with his bare hands before, and he felt sick and weak. He slowly straightened his cramped fingers, and looked to where the girl stood against the wall, her back to him, her face buried in her arms, her shoulders shaking. He stepped on the dead man's outstretched hand as he went to her.

Charles helped him carry the body deep into the woods that night, and they concealed it carefully in a thicket. The Frenchman went back to the farm and left him there, with his revolver, his map, and a small pocket compass from his escape kit. He ate some of the food Jacqueline had given him as they parted, an anxious, pain-filled, hurried parting.

He did not sleep that night, but managed to doze for a while the next day, while all about him the relentless search went on. Late afternoon came, and he decided to move a little nearer to the canal, which was about three miles away, according to the map.

The sunlight slanted down through the almost leafless trees, and made golden the bracken and the bushes of the woodland. All was still as he moved quickly between the mossy trunks of the beeches, and far away above the barley fields a lark sang its evensong.

He skirted a patch of thick undergrowth and came face to face with a German soldier. He felt more amazement than fear as his eyes took in the crumpled uniform, the beefy face, the staring eyes.

One of a line of pickets, he told himself, and cursed the luck that had deserted him. The revolver cracked as the other raised his rifle, and a little round hole appeared in the soldier's forehead, just below the edge of his cap. The shot echoed, terrifyingly loud, through the forest; the soldier's heavy boots, thrashing among the fern, finally were still.

The other turned and ran, but soon heard shouts ahead of him. He veered off to the left, and headed towards the little brook which ran near the farm. Panic rose within him, and the flesh of his back crawled in anticipation of the bullet which he expected to come crashing into him at every moment. He forced himself to be calm, and reasoned that if he could gain the hillside near the stream, he would reach the other stretch of wooded country which lay in unbroken line to the canal. He knew he would have to cross the bare hill-side, but hoped that the sun would be down by then, and the swift autumn night would cover him.

He forced himself on, gasping, his mouth dry, his legs weak. Faintly, behind him, he heard the sounds of his pursuers. His wounded leg was hurting him, now, and he limped badly.

The sound of the revolver shot had reached the sentry patrolling the banks of the stream. He stopped, and lifted his head. He had been thinking of a day's leave he would soon be spending. He turned slowly to face the wood, and waited.
The runner reached the edge of the trees, and saw the flood of light on the grassy hillside. He knew he couldn’t stay here. He would have to take a chance on getting across unseen. Three hundred yards he judged it to be. Three hundred yards before the kindly cover of the trees on the other side of the bare slope would receive him. His leg was hurting badly now. The cold clutch of fear was at his throat. He broke from cover; and ran desperately, jerkily, across the open ground.

The soldier by the stream saw the dark, running figure, and shouted a challenge. Still the fugitive kept on and the sentry raised the rifle to his shoulder. He saw the wedge of the front sight through the V-cut of the rear and swung them on to the target. He saw the distance was two hundred yards, and he raised the muzzle a little. His finger squeezed the trigger gently, gently. The shock of the recoil drove the butt back into his shoulder.

The dark figure kept running, and the German grunted in disappointment. He swung the rifle back on to its target, a little ahead of it, and fired again. The man on the hillside stopped suddenly, abruptly. He fell slowly forward, and his fingers plucked at the grass tufts. The right hand closed tightly on some earth and grass and little dried leaves. Then he was still.

The sound of the shots had brought Charles to the hillside, where he obtained a quick glance at the still figure before he was ordered away by
an irate sergeant. He returned to the house, where his cousin waited on
the little path at the back, and she read the answer to her question in his
face. He placed a hand on her shoulder in rough sympathy, but she did
not notice it.

He is dead, she thought, and felt like an empty thing, a straw caught
in the swirling winds of space. He is dead and without him there is noth­
ing for me. She thought of the night in the forest, and the words he had
spoken. “Man lives on, in the things he has done, in the people he has
known and loved.” And the thought came to her that man was greater
than death. She wanted to believe it, and she repeated the words to
herself, like a charm, or a prayer, over and over.

Out of the west the bomber stream came. She could see them,
coming out of the gold and purple twilight like a great armada. And the
thunder of their engines caught up her words, and tossed them mockingly
to all the universe. Greater than death. Greater than death. Greater
than death. The sound of their mockery filled the earth, filled the sky,
filled the future.

THE END.

Jive for Sundays

Christ for three days chose the grave,
And hoped thereby all men to save.
“God shall wipe away all tears...”

See, our latest Fool appears,
Scratching much his cranium
Science finds uranium
A D’s most exciting prize.
Now to wipe away all eyes.

Peace on earth, goodwill to men,
Till Science scratch his skull again!

—Tom-the-Grymer.
An Interpretation of Liberty

BY S. D'Urso.

Human society, like everything else, is not static, but dynamic and changing; and each historical period has a Liberty peculiar to itself. These premises are made on the observations that among the forces of social development, economic forces are the decisive ones. Further, the prevailing mode of economic production of a society is the real foundation upon which is upbuilt the ideological superstructure of the time. With change in the economic foundation of society the entire superstructure undergoes transformation. Liberty, as an integral part of a society's ideology cannot be adequately explained unless an examination is made of the operation of underlying economic forces.

The development of productive forces* within the specific property relations of a society gives birth to a new class which becomes increasingly conscious of its economic interests. In the process of its growth, this class finds existing social practices more and more irksome, fetters shackling the realisation of its aims; the prevailing Liberty is meaningless; it is a purely formal Liberty because it does not allow the nascent class scope for the fulfilment of its socio-economic ambitions.

As the strength of the class increases with the steady development of productive forces, the conflict becomes more acute between the defenders of the extant social order and those who seek to alter it. In essence, the struggle is one between long-established productive relations† and more recently highly developed productive forces which can no longer be accommodated within the framework of these relations. As the forces of production are the truly revolutionary element they necessitate the establishment of a set of productive relations corresponding to their own stage of development.

Ideologically, this elemental conflict is fought under the banner of Liberty; participant classes interpret the term in the light of their conscious social demands. In its intensity, the clash of social forces may issue in revolution or civil war, with the capture of the State apparatus by the rebel class (and its' allies). Having control of the State, the new masters alter the institutional arrangements of society so as to gain the fullest freedom in the pursuit of their economic interests. The transformed institutional and ideological practices which now arise really mean that a new Liberty has replaced the old; the new Liberty gives adequate scope for the economic activities of the newly dominant class.

The 17th century Civil War in England marked the bid for political power by the vigourous, youthful middle-class. It was a successful bid; the middle-class gained control of the State machine.

* The instruments of production and the people operating them.
† The definite relations established in production between people, and more particularly, between classes; expressed legally, and simply, property relations.
Confident of its power and aggressively certain that the future belonged to it, the middle-class felt the restrictions which the extant productive relations imposed upon their rapidly expanding activities—productive relations evolved to meet the requirements of feudal production. The potential development of the new productive forces might never be accomplished if obsolete productive relations were permitted to remain. These feudal restrictions had to be shattered.

As Petergorsky says, "... the bourgeoisie rebelled against the old order because it was burdensome and oppressive. They had to deny a body of social thought that sanctioned the practices against which they protested. They had to capture political power ... and establish ... institutions which would give effect to their own purposes and ambitions." In short, bourgeois Liberty replaced feudal Liberty.

Some moral justification was required for the Revolution of 1688. John Locke's political writing sanctified the cause of the bourgeoisie with a system of natural law. The importance of the individual was exaggerated without a rational analysis of the dependence of the individual upon society. Locke interpreted natural law as a claim to innate, indefeasible rights inherent in each individual; of such rights that of private property is the typical case. Such natural rights are inviolable; they cannot be infringed by any external authority, for they are divinely bestowed upon the individual.

The middle-class embraced this scheme of thought which, in the sphere of morals, gave the stamp of righteousness to their economic practices however ruthless these practices might be. Here was a philosophy which hallowed the actions of the individual, which, indeed freed him from social responsibilities. But in reality this philosophy justified the actions of the bourgeoisie; and their actions, unhappily for lesser men and women, were backed with economic power. Natural law was nothing but the political philosophy of the ruling class, their Liberty in the sphere of ideology.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, England underwent the Industrial Revolution, which thoroughly consolidated the foundations of capitalism laid down in the Civil War. Now there emerged the industrial and middle class.

Locke's natural law was largely the precursor of the laissez-faire doctrine whose exponents claimed that the greatest welfare of the greatest number would be obtained if each individual were left entirely alone to pursue his own rational ends. Non-interference by the State in the economic life of the nation was the key-note of laissez-faire dogma.

Heinous social crimes were committed by the bourgeoisie under the moral protection of this philosophy. Appalling human suffering and unmitigated misery accompanied the establishment of industrial capitalism.

With the Reform Bill of 1832 came the full triumph of the industrial bourgeoisie; political power was now essentially concentrated in the hands
of capitalists; and the official Liberty of the State was the Liberty of the bourgeoisie.

What is this Liberty under which the bourgeoisie has for so long masqueraded its exploitation of labour? Essentially, it is the Liberty of one man, one vote, the hollow Liberty of political democracy. Once every three or four years working people have the gracious right to elect some political party to misrepresent them in Parliament. By this method the bourgeoisie attempts to maintain the popular illusion of Liberty, to disguise its own vicious practices.

Wars and economic depressions have convulsed the 20th century capitalist world; for wars and depressions are the natural diseases of capitalist decadence. The horror of modern war and the fear of economic insecurity! The bourgeoisie can offer the world's workers only those poison fruits, wrapped, of course, in the tinsel paper of "Liberty". But through labour organisations, and trade union movements, the working class has become aware of its needs. It has detected the formality of bourgeois Liberty; it appreciates that political democracy is an empty shell lacking the fertilising content of social equality. In short, working men have now come to challenge the very foundations of bourgeois society.

In desperate defence of their economic practices against the forces of progress, the bourgeoisie attempt to silence their most outspoken enemies and to divide the ranks of the workers. In their efforts to break the solidarity of working class opposition, the bourgeoisie inevitably convert their bourgeois democracy into a fascist dictatorship. This tendency is visible at the present time. Just as Italian and German monopoly-capitalism resorted to Fascism in destroying the Socialist forces of the post-World War 1 years, so, indeed, in our own post-war era, monopoly-capitalism has already commenced to march along the road to Fascism. Under the respectable cry of "democracy" the bourgeoisie is now using every means at its disposal to smash the power of the trade unions. It resists the demand of the masses for improved living standards, and calls for greater national expenditure on armaments. This is the preliminary pattern for Fascism, the Liberty of moribund monopoly-capitalism, the scourge of the working class. To-day as never before, the workers of the bourgeois world must consolidate their ranks; failure to do so will see "a new iron age descend upon mankind in which the very memory of civilised living may well become no more than a traditional legend."

It is abundantly clear that the productive forces of capitalism have developed to the stage where bourgeois property relations can no longer contain them. "Ours," says Harold Laski, "Is that age the coming of which was foreseen by Marx, in which the relations of production are in contradiction with the essential forces of production. . . . At the historical stage we have reached, the will of the people is unable to use the institutions of capitalist democracy for democratic purposes. For at this stage
democracy needs to transform class relations in order to affirm itself, and it will not be allowed to do so by the owning class if it is able to prevent that achievement. . . . The time has come for a central attack on the structure of capitalism. Nothing less than wholesale socialisation can remedy the position. The alternative in all Western civilisation outside the Soviet Union is a rapid drift to Fascism in which the working class will be at a definite disadvantage by reason of the division of its forces.”

Social progress in our time demands higher relations of production corresponding to the modern forces of production. Only under Socialism can this be achieved; for under Socialism the social production of wealth will move within property relations where appropriation of wealth is social. On this economic basis, Socialism can give to the masses that social equality which is first prerequisite of a true democracy.

With the advent of Socialism on a world-wide front, more and more of the world’s workers will have won their Liberty. For the working class of all countries Liberty and Socialism to-day comprise a complete unity

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**China Service**

Fifty years she’d counted off by months—
The Stradbrooke sandhills spilt from sky to sea
Her private hour-glass. Once the “Stockrington”
As “Hou Fong” she begins her China service.
Sooner she’d slip when plates lip in the tide
Down to a coralled vault in Queensland seas
To bleed her rusted wounds on friendly shoals,
But where Time wanders as a silted river
Her screws, that, singing, threshed an ocean’s green
Must labour in a sullen field of mud;
Where, when her engine’s pulse no longer throbs
The buoyant houseboats leeching on her sides
Will keep afloat the skeleton of steel,
And alien voices festering on the wind
Will break upon her sleep, denying death.

—Val Vallis.
The Inconvenience of E. M. Forster

BY KEITH WILTSHERE.

"His Excellency," prophesied Old Moore's Almanac, "is inconvenient": he is doomed by the stars, then, to "an increasing neglect." A rather odd prophecy, certainly of rather odd inspiration, but one that is probably being fulfilled. It was pronounced in 1936 upon Mr. E. M. Forster, who is, or was, a novelist; (he is not dead, but suddenly stopped novel-writing twenty-five years ago).

Forster was born in 1879; a Welshman, he studied Classics and History and eventually became a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, which ought not to be held against him. Cambridge moulded Forster; for one thing it brought him into close contact with the great Lowes Dickinson, and he became a humanist. He therefore writes such words as these:

"My lawgivers are Erasmus and Montaigne, not Moses and St. Paul. My temple stands not upon Mount Moriah but in that Elysian Field where even the immoral are admitted. My motto is 'Lord, I disbelieve—help thou my unbelief.'...

And these:

"They may say that if there is another war writers of the individualistic and liberalising type, like myself and Mr. Aldous Huxley, will be swept away. I am sure that we shall be swept away, and I think further that there will be another war. It seems to me that if nations keep on amassing armaments, they can no more help discharging their filth than an animal which keeps on eating can stop itself excreting."

"During the war," says Henry Reed, "Forster has seemed a great and distinguished figure, bold, honest and incapable of being hoodwinked."

Forster, the novelist, has written sparingly: a group of four short novels was published between 1905 and 1910, and after a long spell of travel, war service and, I believe, artistic mediation by the author, there appeared in 1924 his best-known book, "A Passage to India," which also remains his latest. The first four may be considered a tetralogy: they are all very much alike in manner and theme.

The first of them was called "Where Angels Fear to Tread" and it provides the shortest cut to Forster's world. It tells of the sudden marriage of Lilia, a young English widow, to a small-town Italian named Gino, her death in childbirth (about halfway through the book), and the attempts of her relatives at home, anxious for the family reputation, to "rescue" the baby from its dirty surroundings, which include its father. The action is a little fantastic, but we turn the sharp corners without stumbling.

There are thus two sets of characters: one trio representing, say, Sham, another trio representing Reality. The suburban English relations, mother, son and daughter, lead a false existence, says Forster, because one channelled by false, conventional morality, by its pride, selfishness and self-righteousness. Lilia and Gino, however, are both slightly
ludicrous, "vulgar" in fact. They are not even respectable, but then they do not pretend to respectability. They are irrational but true to themselves. They are later joined, morally speaking, by Lilia's female cousin.

The author has a serious enough purpose: its implications probably touch everybody at some time or other, but most people laugh off such grave matters; which is exactly what Forster does. Social conflict gives the book its final shape and meaning, but social comedy provides the framework. Philip Herston and his pious sister Harriet, the two leading conventionalists, attend the local opera in a small Italian town; it is "Lucia di Lammermoor."

"Harriet shook her head and shushed again. The people were quiet, not because it is wrong to talk during a chorus, but because it is natural to be civil to a visitor. For a little time she kept the whole house in order, and could smile at her brother complacently. Her success annoyed him. He had grasped the principle of opera in Italy—it aims not at illusion but at entertainment—and he did not want this great evening party turned into a prayer-meeting. But soon the boxes began to fill, and Harriet's power was over. Families greeted each other across the auditorium. People in the pit hailed their brothers and sisters in the chorus, and told them how well they were singing. When Lucia appeared by the fountain there was loud applause, and cries of "Welcome to Monteriaro!"

"Ridiculous babies!" said Harriet, "I wish we'd never——"

Lucia began to sing, and there was a moment's silence. She was stout and ugly; but her voice was still beautiful, and as she sang the theatre murmured like a hive of happy bees. All through the coloratura she was accompanied by sighs, and its top note was drowned in a shout of universal joy."

Sighs, and shouts of joy: one suggests the humourist, the other the moralist, the humanist; these at any rate together make Forster, the novelist.

David Cecil writes that Forster "tells a story as well as anyone who ever lived"—which, apart from possible exaggeration, may be misleading. The emphasis lies not on the story (which Forster considers the "lowest of literary organisms"), but on the telling. And here humourist and humanist join forces, very cunningly indeed.

Forster sees human beings in close relation to other human beings; if this "personal relation" fails, as his fellow humanist Montaigne says, "we hold ourselves no more, we inter-know one another no longer!" In this problem of "inter-knowing," based on self-knowledge, is involved a struggle, usually between convention and non-convention, or between two other social opposites; whatever its form, it is the old problem, restated, of the choice between good and evil. This moral does not simply "emerge," nor is it dragged in by the heels; it is inseparably part of the
books themselves. One reader confesses to a “slightly exaggerated boisterousness of behaviour” as his reaction to Forster’s earnestness. But this may reasonably be attributed to the other most conspicuous element in his work.

Unlike his moral view of life, Forster’s comic genius has a wide range: from robust whimsicality in the description of “characters,” such as Gino, through delicate intellectual irony, found everywhere, to swift and penetrating satire of anti-individualism and false refinement. It never loses the “subtlety and delicacy” stressed by George Meredith as essential to comedy; it may well be the one thing for which he will be remembered.

Forster’s narrative is a highly intricate blending, therefore, of humorous description and moral observation, as the passage beneath should plainly show. It is from “Howard’s End” (1910)—“A Room with a View” and “The Longest Journey” must be passed over: the first is undistinguished, and I have not read the second; the Schlegels and their German cousins are listening to Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, “the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated the ear of man!”

“. . . Here Beethoven, after humming and hawing with great sweetness, said “Heigho,” and the Andante came to an end. Applause, and a round of “wunderscnoning” and “pracht” volleying from the German contingent. Margaret started talking to her new young man (a Mr. Bast); Helen said to her aunt: “Now comes the wonderful movement: first of all the goblins, and then a trio of elephants dancing”; and Tibby (an undergraduate brother) implored the company generally to look out for the transitional passage on the drum.

. . . “No; look out for the part where you think you have done with the goblins and they come back,” breathed Helen, as the music started with a goblin walking gently over the universe, from end to end. Others followed him. They were not aggressive creatures; it was that that made them so terrible to Helen. They merely observed in passing that there was no such thing as splendour or heroism in the world. After the interlude of elephants dancing, they returned and made the observation for a second time. Helen could not contradict them, for, once at all events, she had felt the reliable walls of youth collapse. Panic and emptiness! Panic and emptiness! The goblins were right.

Her brother raised his finger: it was the transitional passage on the drum.”

Characterisation, humour, moralising—and an impressionistic account of Beethoven’s music—all are here interwoven; it is economy of means used with remarkable skill and effect.

This novel, “Howard’s End,” the last of the tetralogy, is much more elaborate in form and manner, much more intense emotionally and intellectually than its predecessors. The expected Forster characters fight the expected struggle between illusion and truth. The Wilcoxes, Philistines and worldly men of business, see life steadily, “but with the steadiness of
the half-closed eye.” Behind their solid foreheads, which seem now like
like world-defying bastions, and now like blank walls, there is something
akin to the “panic and emptiness” of above, perhaps the soul gone dry.

Opposite them are the Schlegels, Margaret and Helen, excellently
drawn blue-stockings who cultivate the “inner” life of “personal relations”
and who see life whole, if a little, vaguely.

“Money pads the edges of things,” said Miss Schlegel. “God help those
who have none.”

“But this is something quite new!” said Mrs. Munt, who collected new
ideas as a squirrel collects nuts, and was especially attracted by those that
are portable.

The book also contains the comic and pathetic Cockney, Leonard Bast,
tottering on the edge of the economic and moral abyss, and in his desire
to become cultured, trying to adapt the style of Ruskin to the needs of
daily life. And set apart are old Mrs. Wilcox and her house, “Howard’s
End,” both of them shadowy and apparently ineffectual, but casting a
strange spell of severity and wonder over the book’s small world.

Nor is Forster’s prose here lacking in a quality of wonder, in an
astounding sensitivity that is almost poetical. Margaret Schlegel is nearing
the end of a journey by car. “She looked at the scenery. It heaved and
merged like porridge. Presently it congealed. They had arrived.” Forster
also illuminates the Italian scene and character, in his first two novels, with
such power and precision that one suspects, as he himself said of a fellow
writer, that “he is most at home when he is abroad.” Certainly his greatest
novel contains descriptive passages of India which in their presentation of
nature as a brooding force over men’s lives recall the wuthering heights of
Emily Bronte.

And although this book, “A Passage to India,” written over a period of
twelve years, has a larger world, in which problems of race and group rela-
tions subordinate those of the individual, in which the conflict becomes
one of ruler against the ruled, it has the same virtues of the tetralogy, and
some of the vices.

Forster’s particular vice, as every critic knows, is a seemingly airy
disregard for such things as probability and logicality in the development of
plot. The worst example is in this last book, where a native is charged
with the raping of a young white woman, and though he is acquitted, the
matter is of great importance in Forster’s story. But no one knows—
except perhaps Forster himself whether the crime was or was not com-
mitted—which even respectable critics consider is a question of some
literary significance. I should say that it has nothing to do with the book’s
“larger purpose”.

Forster’s characters are more open to criticism. Preoccupied, almost
obsessed, as he is with the presentation of two ways of living, he is apt to
deal himself too strong a hand in drawing those with whom he sympathises
—Gino, the Schlegels. These are more “round”, more alive than those whom
he dislikes and satirises—the conventionals, the Wilcoxes, who are often
"flat", one-sided. A few flat characters are, however, needed; Forster has probably a no higher proportion of them then most novelists.

Forster's presentation of Anglo-Indians, for example, can be criticised on this score; at any rate, it drew bitter attacks and denials from past and present members of that race. His friend, Lowes Dickinson, seems to have grasped the truth, as usual; his words put in a nutshell what Forster suggests on his large and brilliant canvas: ... "of all the western nations the English are the least capable of appreciating the qualities of Indian civilization, and the most capable of appreciating its defects. ... Indians want to talk philosophy and religion; Englishmen want to talk polo and golf. To an Englishman, practical efficiency, honesty and truth are the chief and indispensable goods. To an Indian ... all these things are indifferent."

Forster's sympathetic portraits of young Dr. Aziz—perhaps his best creation—and his native friends, bear this out. "He raised his voice suddenly, and shouted for dinner. Servants shouted back that it was ready. They meant that they wished it was ready, and were so understood, for nobody moved." Aziz has a poet's nature, which expresses itself rather in his continuous eager imaginative love for the world and for other poetry, than in his own sad verses. The sick-room scene, in which he is visited by an amusing crowd of friends, is one of the best in a book which is a masterpiece:

... "He held up his hand, palm outward, his eyes began to glow, his heart to fill with tenderness. Issuing still farther from his quilt, he recited a poem by Ghalib. It had no connection with anything that had gone before, but it came from his heart and spoke to theirs. They were overwhelmed by its pathos; pathos, they agreed, is the highest quality in art; a poem should touch the hearer with a sense of his own weakness, and should institute some comparison between mankind and flowers.

The squalid bedroom grew quiet; the silly intrigues, the gossip, the shallow discontent were stilled, while words accepted as immortal filled the indifferent air. Not as a call to battle, but as a calm assurance came the feeling that India was one; Moslem; always had been; an assurance that lasted until they looked out of the door.

Of the company, only Homidullah had any comprehension of poetry ... Yet (the others) listened with pleasure, because literature had not been divorced from their civilisation. The police inspector just sat with his mind empty, and when his thoughts, which were mainly ignoble, flowed back into it, they had a pleasant freshness. ... Aziz it left thinking about women again (but), he never knew beforehand which effect would ensue; he could discover no rule for this or for anything else in life."

Forster's books seem sometimes inconclusive. "Howard's End" finished with a compromise, one gathers, between the two ways of life presented, the "inner" and the "outer". Here is the closing paragraph of "A Passage to India": Aziz and the Englishman Fielding are riding together:

"Why can't we be friends now?" said the other, holding him affectionately. "It's what I want. It's what you want."
But the horses didn’t want it—they swerved apart; the earth didn’t want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single file; the temples, the tank, the goal, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap and saw man beneath: they didn’t want it, they said in their hundred voices, “No, not yet,” and the sky said, “No, not there.”

If one could sum up E. M. Forster’s varied achievement, it would perhaps be “balance”. In form, he gains balance by the division of characters into opposing moral sides, by the use of contrasts of scene and race—Italy and England, English and Indian—by the mingling of tragedy with comedy, and of high moral observation with an Austen-like irony. The view of life expressed in the novels suggests a “balance” in the author’s mind, a sanity and justice which are the first qualities of the humorist. His prose, too, is conspicuous for its balance, its precise and unruffled beauty.

Perhaps it was this essential balance of Forster’s work which was in J. B. Priestley’s mind, when he wrote that Forster is “surely the most civilised writer we have.” Those words are, at all events, sufficient witness to his excellence; they would also explain his inconvenience, and the increasing neglect which Old Moore and his stars unhappily foretell.
Sonnet Sequence

“Birth, and copulation, and Death.
That's all the facts when you come to brass tacks:
Birth, and copulation, and death.
I've been born, and once is enough.
You don't remember, but I remember.
Once is enough. . . .”

—“Sweeney Agonistes”—T. S. Eliot.

THEATRE BIRTH.
In pain I was conceived:
Force me not in drugged ease
to slip from loins deceived
by audiences' numbing brain
that seeks sedatively to appease
torn birth cries; had I not lain
throbbing in body of double heart
with foreknowledge of passion and peace
I might emerge, a tranquil part
to play: but only pain can release
my clouded spirit: I must tear
at fleshy wall with unformed nails
and breach an entrance to compare
with ecstasy of creation: Pain prevails.

Bounding blood: The foetus, I,
in Little Ease of nurture lie
caged in womb of shadowed wing
pulsing for scalpel cue on navel string.
Dialogue's rhythm, a resounding wave,
momentary quickening gave.
O shatter me on luminous shore—
Nun motive in satin-bodied whore
Offends not: Creation is all.
Last rhythm rocks its strength:
my body feels its folded length
touch tired echo of curlew's call.
The life pain: I lunge and strive:
Light: my first cry: Dear God I am alive!
THEATRE COPULATION.

Life. movement, voice: All are mine.
Footlights and unseen eye assign channel, but in my veins their flood converts like Communion wine.
Drink ye all this: It is my blood.
No priest officiates: As pagans plight troths let our free wills combine to obliterate rehearsal of vulgar rite.
A bartered climax will mean shamed tatters of seamless robe so waiting flesh gently probe.
Now grows horn of inspiration keen:
Central glow flames out in one red throb—Consummation's joyous sob.

THEATRE DEATH.

They do not die who feel not death:
Fixed on wheel of perpetual return remote I watch waxen hands burn with funereal flowers whose breath from other deaths in stagnant tombs snuffs illicit flame with chuckling fumes.
Return I must to seek perfection:
Interpret life as resurrection ought; weave again ephemeral connection with shadows that expect reflection:
Know not their shades are bought by my thousand deaths—Satan's price.
Oh to love Death oft grimly fought:
Submit: Then on to thousandth sacrifice!

—ELEANOR COOKE.
How McHughie Conquered the Co-an

By K.M.G.

“When McHughie swims the Co-an!”—that’s what wise parents would say when the young bloods of the Co-an Flat asked for racehorses or mo’bikes, as the fancy took them, for there was about those words a touch of eternity and decisive finality which is usually associated with blue moons and Armageddon. Those knowing winks and those smug glances, how they exasperated the disappointed, but how they served the purpose.

Everyone used the expression—it had become proverbial. Smart Mrs. Emelie Parsons considered it excellent repartee for little evenings with the Women’s Guild. Jackie Hibbins, lounger and punter was heard to say that Poppy’s Pride would come home “when McHughie swam the Co-an” (he, poor fellow, “did” his last halfpenny on the same excellent mare the Saturday before).

Who was the proverbial Mr. McHughie, you say? And why should he swim the Co-an?

Well, one thing at a time; Matt McHughie was a pleasant old fellow, one might say he looked the picture of the congenial uncle, and what is more a person of some slight indulgence. Physically, he was as robust as he was jovial, a blush-tinted nose rose sharply above a dashing moustachio which had been the height of elegance some decades past; greying hair, heavy overhanging eyebrows and a decided squint, completed the portrait. When he was not at Pop Perry’s (widower and local publican) passing the time in mellow conversation, he knocked about the various stations doing odd jobs and giving a hand-out here and there. Matt loved to talk about his youth: O, those times with the boys at the timber mills, those wild, virile days in the droving camps and the excitement and bustle of the wharves! He could do anything (so he said)—everything, anywhere. And swim? Like a—fish he was.

“Yeah, Matt”, they’d say. “Bet ya ain’t game t’swim the—Co-an here!” And they’d said that so often that the challenge had become ritualistic; indeed, it was an indispensible item in the evening’s round at the “Royal Bull’s Head.”

So that’s how the saying originated, eh? But what of the Co-an?

The stream itself was sluggish, but it deserved the name of river all right. If you could have seen it in flood—a raging, foaming, tormented wall of water—you’d understand how empty McHughie’s boast seemed to the locals.

And did he ever actually swim it?

Perhaps he did and perhaps he did not, you’ll hear for yourself in good time. The seasons came and went, sometimes good and sometimes dry, but in general the small township prospered and grew—so did McHughie—in the later sense I mean. He became more rotund still (which was an
indication of the solid worth of Pop Perry's malt), and at night with the boys regularly offered to swim the Co-an, but as regularly declined in the sobering light of reality.

However there grew a change in McHughie—he became moody, and, what was more surprising frequently lapsed into long periods of silence. All the town wondered, but it was to Pop Perry's sympathetic bosom that McHughie unburdened his troubled soul.

"Been thinkin', Pop," he began heavily—Pop paused expectantly in the middle of cleaning a glass. "Just passed fifty th' other day—a man's gettin' old, I says to meself. A man gets tired o' boilin' his billy, cookin' his scran every blinkin' day, besides he could get lonely—he could at that, couldn't he, Pop? 'An I say now Pop's bin through it once 'an ain't no worse for it, so why not Matt McHughie?"

"Yer can't mean—?" gasped Pop, hardly believing his senses.

"Matreemony! That's what I says!" triumphantly returned McHughie now that the deed was done. Heroically Pop rose to the occasion.

"Have one on the house, McHughie, me boy!" he boomed. "'An whose to be Mrs. Matthew McHughie, you sly old dog?" However, Matt confessed that that aspect of the business had quite escaped him and now anxiously sought Pop's experienced guidance. His advice was nothing under ten stone nor over thirteen, the former having a tendency to crankiness and the latter to dominance. It went without saying that she have the qualifications of cook, cleaner and sewer—Matt was insistent in that. Pop named several local attractions, but Matt was either hard to please or indifferent to their charms.

"Tell you what," said Pop in a burst of inspiration, "I'm goin' to town ter-morrow, an' I'll put an ad. in the paper. How's that suit yer?" The novelty of the suggestion tickled Matt's romantic fancy and so, not long after, there was to be seen in a city journal the attractive prospect of a presentable bachelor offering a home and haven to a suitable spinster or widow (the last was Pop's addition). Out of numerous dubious communications Matt decided for a Mrs. Tessie White, and in the light of her culinary and housewifely prowess he was induced to overlook the fact that she had already buried two husbands. Pop undertook the delicate task of composing the reply as McHughie was rather reticent in matters concerning the heart. A whirlwind correspondence sprung up, and almost before McHughie could completely comprehend the situation a telegram arrived advising him that Mrs. Tessie White would be on the Southern Mail the following afternoon, to give Matt the "once over". A sickening dread assailed the wooer and his courage failed him; only Pop's eloquence, his sense of duty, his manly pride and a good stiff rum prevented him from hasty flight.

That night it rained; a violent downpour roared on the roofs and beat the sodden ground. The elements raged on high; thunder shook the buildings to their foundations; vivid flashes played over the tree-tops; but what was that to the turbulence in McHughie's mind! The muffled roar of
the angry Co-an roused the town on the morrow where its smooth yellow expanse buffeted the flood-gates and descended to the bridge in a series of swirls and eddies.

“She’s sure a banka!” commented Pop, as both he and McHughie viewed the fairly distant Co-an from the steps of the “Royal Bull’s Head”. However, McHughie had no heart for the scene, and could only shuffle unhappily beside his friend, and it was “shuffle”, too, for the new shoes might be commendable for their brilliant reddish tan, but they sadly lacked the ease and comfort of the old pair now cast off and lying in disgrace on the town dump. Tying with the shoes in gaiety was a rose carnation in jaunty pose. With conscious effort Matt climbed the short slope to the station, aware of the curious glances and humorous nudges among the few faithful who were always to be found at train time.

Pop drew out his watch, and after a quick comparison with the station clock settled for 4.20. Matt could not be persuaded to wait at ease on the stiff-backed, splintery form especially provided for the travellers’ comfort by a thoughtful department. Soon a faint, long-drawn-out whistle roused the watchers; then the rails began to vibrate, faintly at first, but with increasing agitation in unison with the thundrous motion of approaching wheels. The engine loomed suddenly large amidst a spray of steam. Goods vans rattled past, dragging in their rear the solitary passenger coach. The siren wailed a mournful dirge.

“It’s come”, McHughie mumbled, his voice strangely thick, and he and Pop, caught up in the excitement of the moment stumbled forward to greet the coach which had come to a standing stop, some yards further along the platform. Pop caught the reluctant McHughie by the arm and dragged him in his wake.

“Watch out there!” a raucous voice bawled, and Pop hastily stepped back a pace on to the polished tips of Matt’s new shoes which were in danger of further abuse from a stack of ports which Ben, the one and only porter, unceremoniously dropped at that moment. Further examination was stilled when McHughie and Pop saw lying at the head of the pile, a small suitcase on which was stamped in ornate design the letters T.W. Quick to display his chivalrous nature, McHughie trod on a brown valise on the outskirts of the pile for a stepping-stone and rescued the stamped suitcase. The lady’s luggage was there, but where was she? In trepidation they waited—poor McHughie, red and bashful—then! A guttural shout bore rudely into their consciousness. There was dead silence on the small platform. McHughie and Pop wheeled around, and there facing them stood—not a demure, plump little woman—but an irate amazon, ablaze in red silk and gold sequins, vociferously demanding the port. There she stood, towering immense rolls of fat.

“Gawd’s struth!” choked McHughie. “That’s ’er! A-a flamin’ black gin.”

“Hey you’m boss,” the black virago bellowed, and went to seize McHughie’s arm, but on the face of imminent danger to his person and
overwhelming disaster to his love, McHughie fled, unfortunately retaining his hold on the port. Down the gravelled platform he raced with the lubra in hot pursuit. In stunned surprise the onlookers stood rooted to the spot till the clasp of the case broke and feminine drapery fluttered out in his wake. With one accord the men cheered, the engine-siren screamed and car horns tooted. Down a deeply-rutted alley McHughie sped, the flapping lid twanging against the stones.

"You'm come back! No get'm 'way!" shrilled the lubra and McHughie, innocent of the real cause, wrongly imagined her grief to be jilted affection. He could feel those entwining black arms, a mountain of pudgy black flesh rose in a mental vista before him, vision of red silk, gold sequins and thick possessive black lips sent shudders of repulsion throughout his frame. But alas! he was tiring, his feet were becoming like lead weights, when fate played him a final blow: there right in his path was the foaming Co-an, no bridge at hand. It was a choice between two evils, and McHughie took the Co-an. As he paused irresolute, the destined sposh! sploosh! of padding feet reached his ears. All hesitation fled before his panic. Down fell the port and McHughie was exerting all his strength to remove the tight new shoes.

Wildly and vainly he pulled at the tenacious footwear, but those laces were wet and wouldn't budge. The haloing crowd rounded the corner to see a perspiring McHughie bobbing up and down on one bare foot and tearing at the other shoe. The hoarse panting and cursing of the lubra warned him that precious moments were being lost. The veins stood out on his forehead when, with a crisp snap! the laces came asunder and towards the flood rushed McHughie. A cheer rose from the loungers and betting was keen.

"Catch 'im, Missus!" urged the traitors.

"Giddy up, Matt," roared the faithful. Excitement mounted—the onlookers could hardly contain themselves in the thrill of the chase; the lubra gained: in a frenzy, Matt's supporters howled encouragement. Would he make it? No! Yes! No! opinions wavered, when with a mighty splash McHughie flung himself into the arms of the Co-an. He'd won; but no sooner was he waist-deep than the current tore him off his feet, and with terrifying momentum propelled him struggling into mid-stream. A ragged tree trunk bore down upon him, but at the critical moment was deflected by a cross-current and sucked up by a neighbouring eddy. Bobbing tins, pots, pans, swaying limbs and plants joined the mad race to the flood gates. McHughie, looking like a sportive porpoise, was swept down with the refuse, all the while clinging stoutly to the legs of a battered chair.

The onlookers for a second time that afternoon stood motionless, staring at the doomed McHughie, for doomed he must surely be when he struck the flood gates. Thus they waited for him to be flung with a sickening thud against the barrier—but no, McHughie caught the bare wires which had been stripped of thin palings in earlier floods. With the
strength of desperation he clung on despite the pull of the fierce current, till crawling by inches along the unexpected life-line he was able to throw himself onto the opposite bank, a sorry figure, relieved only by a gay rose-pink carnation in jaunty pose.

"Attaboy, Matt!" they shouted, laughing and slapping one another on the back as they raced for the lower bridge to welcome the survivor.

Meanwhile, what of the lubra? She shook her fist, packed up her scattered belongings and McHughie's shoes, and was last seen making for the "Royal Bull's Head."

And Pop Perry?

Ah! A shrewd man, Pop Perry! He recalled that the Southern Mail was not a Northern Goods Train (which Matt had overlooked in his haste), waited and met the real Mrs. Tessie White: What's more, he married her despite the two husbands late lamented.

And how did McHughie like that?

Him care? Not McHughie; he was a hero now, for as one old-timer croaked over a pint that evening: "By criky, Pop! McHughie's swam the Co-an."
Douglas Stewart’s Verse Dramas

By Kowra.

Drama in Australia has been scarce. Some few men of vision and hope have appeared, but for many reasons their work has not achieved stature and dramatic vitality. The facilities and sympathy of the Theatre in Australia being limited as they are, it is not surprising to find that the best drama has been written for Radio. Within this medium there is wide scope for experiment, both with subject and with form while the technical limitations offer a challenge and impose a salutary restriction which can mould creative writing dramatically and artistically. Amongst what has been written here to this pattern the plays of Douglas Stewart are outstanding in their easy excellence. They are small in number but large in achievement and in memory.

“The Fire on the Snow” came first, in 1941, and up to date it has remained first in quality. In this poetical telling of the story of Scott’s last epic journey to the South Pole Stewart has realized all the technical possibilities of Radio and has fired that technical ability with the living and deep truth of the dramatist who is a poet. Knowing that words are what matter most “over the air”, that characterization has to be made through verbal personality alone, he has shot his fabric with vibrant imagery, sometimes chill and sharp, sometimes richly glowing, always poetically alive. Early there vividly comes an example of a frequently recurring Stewart image, that of a woman and her hair:

“This is a wide land, and all this land is white.
In the kinder places of the world we have seen the wind comb
The green hair of the grass and the golden tresses of the wheat,
But this is a dead woman,”

and this is later recalled in the Narrator’s words:

“It is better to climb the ridge
And stare on chasms of air,
Or stroke from the sea-cliff’s edge
The sea’s dark strangling hair
Than to run like a rat for cover
When truth comes storming by.”

There are graphic pictures of such fine etching as

“It is worse in the tent at night when the place of his absence
Is as deeply marked as the form of a hair in grass,”

of such exciting originality as

“The mind holds like a pebble the thought of dying,”

of such freezing aptness as

“Beneath a tree of silence on the ice.”
“And like the old people I’ve watched, whose hands
And voices tremble like water, we must learn to be patient.”
“My brain’s a snowdrift.”
Throughout, warming and welding the richly woven threads, is the
title image of Fire, which burns in many forms:

“I say what I have to say: ‘Death’,
The word that drops in the room like rain
Making the live coals gasp for breath
And blackening slowly among the brain
When a man is sitting up late, alone.”

“Let them come to us now, these five men struggling
Like dark tough flames on the snow.”

“And afterwards light in the tent a lamp of voices
Cheery in talk or song that rayed away
Like autumn leaves, colouring the icy distances.”

“Everything’s dark; but talking is like a candle.”

This slowly burning, quietly growing flame image of living men in a
desert of ice is developed as bitingly as fire until it reaches the searing
consummation of the play which proclaims that

“Triumph is nothing, defeat is nothing: life is
Endurance; and afterwards death. And whatever death is
The endurance remains like a fire, a sculpture, a mountain
To hearten our children.”

This as we leave

“. . . . a dying man remembering
The burning snow, the crags towering like flame.”

Added to the taut imagery there is everywhere apparent a significance
and penetrating feeling in the use of words which flow and leap, leap and
flow always as intrinsic threads of the pattern. In the opening speech the
Narrator introduces “Death” with a heavy dramatic thud, and then turns
to describe in smooth, bleak contrast to the bustling world the quietness,
the soft, dead silence of the White South. In this passage contrasting
plosive and continuant consonants are used with striking effectiveness as
they are in many other places throughout the play. Particularly note­
worthy is the recurrent “K” plosive which sharply breaks, like the ice,
amidst the smoothness of “L’s”, “S’s”, “W’s”, in words like “speck”,
“black”, “chuck”, “rock”, “luck”. Stanza forms are varied with an aptness
which almost becomes symbolistic, especially in the Narrator’s poems which
are an outstanding feature of the work. In the Narrator or Announcer
Radio has what Archibald MacLeish has hailed as “the most useful
dramatic personage since the Greek Chorus”. In his manipulation of this
device Stewart has invested the idea and the person with a rich importance
in the play as well as an independent poetical validity.

Within the web of this technical power are grouped five men of distinct
and definite personality, brave men stripped and bared on the snow for us
to see and know the reasons for their courage, the kinds of their bravery.
Humorous touches are added now and then to paint more fully and
truly the picture of men who sacrifice and die, remembering things lost,
not sentimentally but with strong resolve, as they do so. This human
perception and sympathy make the work a drama as well as a poem, and it is the intricate fusing of the two elements which makes it a dramatic poem of fine quality and a Radio-piece of the first rank.

In 1942 Stewart's second play, "Ned Kelly", received its first production (in an abridged form) by the A.B.C. To this Australian epic story Stewart has given a breadth and an excitement which are thoroughly set in atmosphere by the use of Australian bush metaphors and similes and by the fluid passage back and forth from colloquial prose to an unrhymed rhythmical pattern in the verse. There is more opportunity for multiple characterization on this larger canvas and, while giving real distinctness to the protagonists, the four members of the Kelly Gang, Stewart has added many smaller but living drawings of other people. Gribble, Living, Curnow are well outlined, with curt, adverse comment given on them and implied even in their names. The Roo is memorable as the representative of sympathy with the Gang, the sympathy of a woman which meant so much to these men. As always, Stewart here gives the particular its wider application and universal significance as when he has Brett say of Gribble:

"...... Gribble will bring you down.
Not Gribble himself, but the thing the parson stands for,
The men behind him with all his fear of the bush
And none of his understanding; hundreds of Gribbles,
Thousands of little men who fear or hate you
Or simply don't understand you, and take the right
To condemn you out of their moral indignation."

He has made of Byrne, one of the Gang, an aloof, observing poet-figure who unofficially performs the duties of Narrator with a Chorus-like dignity. From him the direct poetical statement of the play comes with reminiscences of the Scott epic in the frequent choice of images of Fire:

"The bushfires start in the mind as well as the mountains."
"A scar of fire in the mind."
"I'll light a fire in the mountains before I'm finished."
"...... But I'm warning you, Ned,
We'll be ash before this fire burns out."

Byrne's distillation in poetry of situations and feelings gives cohesion and fine point to many scenes and triumphs finally in his sad good-bye to the Barmaid at Glenrowan which says what all the Gang, those "four dead leaves in a sunset", felt—

"...... I like the view, darling.
The fires, the shadow, the cool depth of the night.
Lovely and white lady, the dark of the night
Is more to me than you, so weep for me
For I liked to love."

The constant excitement in the action detracts from the dramatic sweep at times, making the play not completely successful as drama. There is some very effective, tense writing, however, which reaches its zenith in the Third Act with the death of Sherritt. The resolution and
tragic determination of Ned and the others build to a fighting climax at the point of which, realizing

"It's late and too late to be crying for what we've done;"

Ned can shout proudly and exultantly that

"... say what they like, 
We've lived like men; we weren't afraid to gallop 
And we rode with a laugh."

There is certainly tall majesty and strong drama in Stewart's depiction of

"The mad, lonely life, and the lonely ending, 
The man against all the world in the bush at Glenrowan."

For his next play, "The Golden Lover" (1942), Stewart turned to his native New Zealand for a subject, choosing one of fantasy and symbolism in the Maori Faery Folk Tale of Tawhai and her lover, Whana. The story is goldenly told in rich, colourful blank verse with a thoughtful and often-times amusing depiction of hum-drum domestic living contrasted with the lure of the glowing world of beauty which the Golden Lover personifies. The characterization is excellent. It is kept vividly individual against a vague, grey background of no time which enables it to be given an immediate existence. The early scenes of banal living are pricked with a sharp, cynical criticism by Tawhai who is unhappy and dissatisfied with her dull, flabby husband, Ruarangi, and with the life of the pa generally. From the beginning, she is established as a self-willed young woman who does "not see why a wife should do all the work"; and from the beginning also the ugly drabness of her surroundings is unmistakably established making the climax of her escape from them the more imperative and meaningful. The writing is given a musical lilt by such verbal devices as the use of phrases of words in groups of three, for example, "field or forest or river." The love scenes are written with freshness and pulsing delight, reaching their respective climaxes, significantly, in the image of Fire:

"You are not a woman beside me but the earth burning, 
Your dark hair smoulders, and your body under my hand 
Is all one flame."

"... a woman awake with love is a burning spirit 
Carrying in pride and joy her burden of fire, 
The gift of her body to lay at the feet of her lover."

It is unfortunate that the broad, domestic humour which chuckles heavily in many places threatens to disperse the never securely established atmosphere of fantasy by making too close and suburban this symbolic tale of wonder from the past. The dramatic success of the work as a whole is thereby weakened, but the keen characterization and the several scenes of flowing poetry give it importance and value in the corpus of Stewart's work and in Australian Drama generally.

The last play, "Shipwreck" (1947), though allegedly written "for the stage", shows the influence of the Radio technique so strongly that it is basically of that class. Here again, in recognition of the necessity for it in Radio Drama, characterization is intense and concentrated, depicting as
it does men gone wild. In the violence of the desires and actions described there is a strong reminding of Rubens, for Stewart paints his canvas wildly and voluptuously, with turgid consciousness of the power of the flesh. The pervading imagery in this play is not the sharp pain of fire but is a delicate playing with water and the sea—sand, fish, ships’ gulls. The dialogue is given individuality and character by the use of tautened verse which approaches in extreme the clipped succinctness of a Telegraph. Mylen’s speeches are noticeably crisp and clear and read like the tapping of a typewriter. Beyond the particular situation there is again implied the universal significance of the events and their outcome. This story of “what happens to people in nowhere” speaks for many men in many places:

“........ This sort of thing—
Killing, I mean: the lust for gold and women
Beyond all reason: and the knowledge of one’s deficiencies—
It also takes place in the world, on that other rock
On which we are all shipwrecked.”

The play is well knit as it moves from dramatic irony through scenes of colourful excitement and black passion to the light of the daybreak which is mentioned with such nice direction at several points in the action. Sympathies, however, are not handled with complete poise: indeed, they fluctuate uneasily towards the end. This latter Stewart has lost the precise fire of the earlier man, there is more cloud and mist here, but there is always incipient if not always completely fulfilled poetry.

Most recently Stewart has written for Radio a work which shows a withdrawal from direct dramatic form. It is a Ballad Sequence, again of epic tone, dealing with the Massacre of “Glencoe”. The sixteen Ballads which comprise it build as a drama and show the ever-present mobility of style and feeling which is one of Stewart’s best gifts. To the Ballad form also is grafted the strong characterization which is one of his strongest features, one which makes his writing so eminently suitable for Radio production for which plot without good characterization is useless because it leads only to confusion and blurred impression in the listener’s mind.

His steady and firm grasp of the medium has made Stewart’s writing superb in its Radio class and lack of any strong competition in the Theatre leaves it brightly amongst the best in this larger field also. His subject is Man, at his best and his worst, always studied with a poet’s vision and a dramatist’s sense of exciting situation. The fire of life in himself and his character is what inflames and energises all his work, that living fire which he has embodied with such leaping and surging power in the person and the symbol of his short story, “Portrait of a Girl with Red Hair”. In her is the epitome of his thought, the statement of the harshness and pain and the challenge and joy of living, which are the stuff of his dramas. Poet and man, he is, besides, a dramatic writer of high achievement and fertile promise.

NOTE.—One other play of Stewart’s, entitled “The War that Shook the Earth”, I have not heard broadcast, and have been unable to refer to in printed form.
They were harvesting in the big fields near the village when the stranger came. The middle of a hot and dusty day saw the inn filled with loud voices and laughter, and the warm smell of sweating humanity. He paused in the doorway, and those who saw him marvelled at his size, for he was taller by half a head than any man in the room, and his shoulders almost filled the doorway, blotting out the yellow sunlight which bathed the crooked street.

He moved slowly to the bar, and drank long and deeply of his ale. The innkeeper looked at him with interest, for there was about him something of one who had travelled to distant places, and seen strange things, and such men were a rarity in the village. He ordered another drink, and his voice was deep and quiet, like the eyes set wide apart in the tanned face. A man to reckon with, judged the innkeeper, who knew men. A man who was sure of himself, and who knew that most men were not.

The stranger turned to the old man beside him, “Who owns the big house on the hill?” he asked, idly, as a traveller would who sought to make conversation.

“That be Sir Thomas Dartram’s house,” replied the old one. “A very big place it is, owns all the land hereabouts, except for a couple o’ small farms.”

“Has he lived here—always?” The stranger’s voice was persuasive, as was the brimming pint he placed before the other.

“Deed he hasn’t. Only came about five year ago. They do say as he came from the north, and was a poor man once. But powerful rich he is now, a squire an’ all, and sitting on the bench here every month. I hear he’s very ill now, had a stroke or somethin’ like. Pretty serious, they say.”

“Well, I’m glad it ain’t me,” smiled the other, and the deep laughter rumbled in his chest. “Very glad it ain’t me.”

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“Well, I’m glad it ain’t me,” smiled the other, and the deep laughter rumbled in his chest. “Very glad it ain’t me.”

He spoke of other things for a while, and then sat silent by the wall, looking out the open doorway, up to the winding village street, towards the tall chimneys and proud gables of the big white house on the hill. Three miles he judged it to be, and at the thought he rose, picked up his pack from beside the door, and went outside, squinting in the sunlight.

Three miles it looked, but the way was full of bends and little hills and puzzling cross-roads. He had not gone half the distance when he sat by the wayside and studied the two roads in front of him. He could not see the house now, but he sensed it lay to his right. He rose again, and then stood still, watching the figure approaching.

It was a girl, and in her arms she carried a dog. He was a young dog, but big and rawboned, and his weight was heavy in her arms. She stopped as she came to him, and put the animal gently down. The dog
stood for a moment on three legs, then sat, one front paw held carefully off the ground.

She was a very pretty girl, he thought, and watched the sunlight in her hair. He felt a little sad as he looked at her, so young and fresh and lovely. "What's the matter with the dog?" he asked, and was surprised at the harshness of his voice.

"Just something in his paw. A thorn, I think." She looked at him, considering, her head on one side. "Have you anything I could use to get it out? A sharp knife, perhaps."

Without a word, he reached in his pocket, and handed her the knife. She opened it, and knelt by the dog. Fully five minutes of fruitless trial failed to dislodge anything, and the stranger went to her. He rolled the dog on his side, and placed a knee firmly on his ribs. He felt the roughness of its pads, and she marvelled at the gentleness of the great hands. Silently, she gave him the knife, and the sharp point of the long blade sank swiftly into the animal's paw. A deft twist, a yelp of surprise from the unwilling patient, and the piece of glass lay on the knife blade. He released the dog, but continued to kneel, in the dust by the road-side, as she did.

"Thank you," she said, and her voice was soft. "You are a stranger here, are you not?" He nodded, and she went on, "If there is anything you want, come to my father's farm, over there," she pointed. "I hope we can repay your kindness. There are many men—these days—who look for work." The statement was a query.

"No," he answered. "It's not work I want. But there is something I must do here, so I may be here for a while. I might see you again."

"Something you must do here, and it is not work. I know everyone here. Perhaps I can help you. What is it you seek?"

"Revenge." The answer came like a roll of thunder on a summer afternoon, setting a sudden coldness in the air. He cursed himself for his stupidity, in goggling at a pretty face instead of holding his tongue, and rose, dusting his knees.

She stood, and came closer to him, "That's a cruel word," she spoke low, almost in a whisper. "And you are a young man, and a kind one, as I know. Revenge is an empty thing. You should not have thoughts like that. Only thoughts of truth, and courage, and loyalty."

"And love," he said cruelly, and her face coloured.

"I'm not so young as you would think," he went on, more gently. "Nor so kind, or gentle. I'm hard, and can be cruel, and it is well that I realise it. Good-bye, and thanks for the offer."

She turned, and went slowly away, the dog limping beside her. He stood watching her, and an ache was in his throat, and his head was light with the scent of the clover and the warm, rich earth. That ache of regret was with him the rest of the way to his goal, though he cursed himself for a ninny and a weakling.
The great house loomed on the crest of the gentle slope, and he paused on the gravelled drive and looked about him. The lush green turf, the exuberant shrubbery, the boldly flaunting masses of flowers, all were still, as if numbed by the merciless power of a triumphant sun. He heard movement behind the western wing of the house, and went silently across the grass until he rounded the corner and saw her in the flower-bed.

She was small, he judged, and slender; and her dark hair fell to her shoulders in sleek, groomed waves. She was planting the little green slips that lay in a heap beside her, and he watched her fingers as she pushed them slowly, strongly into the damp earth, letting them stay there, covered, at rest, before the slow, reluctant withdrawal.

She glanced up at his greeting, and he saw her eyes were wide and dark, and somehow secretive under the long lashes. She forced her fingers into the soil again, and knelt looking at them. Then she spoke and her voice was low and almost breathless.

"Who are you?"
"The name, ma'am, is Blake, Jonathan Blake. An old friend of Sir Thomas."
"Indeed, Mr. Blake! I can't recall his speaking of you."
"It was a long time ago, ma'am. I take it you are Lady Bartram?"
"I am, Mr. Blake. I suppose you wonder to find me here, working in my garden like any servant, with my hands filthy."
"No. I was watching you. You do it because you like it."
"I do like it. I'm a great gardener, Mr. Blake. Don't you like to plant, to make things grow. I do. I love the earth. It's—it's..." She did not finish, but closed her hand on a clod of the warm, dark soil, and he saw her knuckles whiten under the pressure of her grip.

She stood now, and turned to face him. She was small, her head not reaching his shoulder. He towered over her and felt strangely awkward, like some uncouth hobbledy-hoy confronting a gracious lady. It was but for a moment, while her secret eyes swept slowly over his rough clothes, and came to rest on his face. The hidden laughter drained out of them.

"You are a sailor, Mr. Blake." It was more of a statement than a question.
"Among other things."
"What other things?"
"Why, I've been a farmer, a sailor, and—oh quite a few trades I've followed."
"How interesting. I can see you've led a very—interesting life. Do you wish to see my husband?"
"Yes."
"You know, perhaps, that he is extremely ill? Likely to die at any time." She showed no trace of emotion, her voice was flat and expressionless as if she were discussing the weather.
"I did hear that. Down at the village. I'm sorry."
“No you’re not. Please don’t lie to me. You’re not sorry, because you hate him. And I’m not sorry either. Why should we be sorry to see an old, worn-out, broken man go from this life. Better so, that his place may be taken by something strong, young, vigorous. Why do you want to see him?”

“I’ll tell him that, ma’am, if you don’t mind?”

Without a word, she walked towards the path that led to the side of the house. He stepped beside her, and he saw her looking up at him, slyly, sideways. To the west, a great bank of clouds boiled up towards the sky, and a far faint mutter of thunder came to them, borne by some chance stir in the otherwise still air.

“A storm is coming.” She spoke low, and looked up at him again. “I suppose you’re used to storms,” Mr. Blake. “Do you like them? The tearing wind, the rain that lashes and beats and whips across the earth and the sea. And afterwards the calm, the peace, the dampness.” There was something elemental in her voice, so that he did not answer but stopped and looked down at her. Again her eyes were secretive and the laughter played again, half hidden in the depths of them.

They entered the house and walked down a long passage. Away in the depths of the building, he heard the stir and chatter of servants, but they saw no one, as they came to the great hall. She took his pack, and placed it on a stand. The light came faintly here, through the tall windows, and the room was silent, and shadowed, and cold. They climbed the wide staircase and he could hear his own breathing, oddly loud in the quietness. She opened a door near the head of the stairs, and he entered behind her.

The sick man lay with his body raised high on pillows in the great bed, and the room was in shadows, so that his features were not easily seen. Only the eyes were at first apparent, blue and startling in the dead-white face.

“I’ve brought an old friend to see you, Tom. You remember Mr. Blake? I’ll tell the servants you are here, so that you won’t be apprehended as an intruder. If you want anything, ring.” She smiled at him, and left the room.

Blake turned, and looked again at the man in the bed. “It’s been a long time, Tom,” was all he said, and the blue eyes were hard now, hard and calculating and cold as polar ice. Neither spoke, the ticking of the clock on the mantel was the only sound.

He took a deep breath, and his voice was low and gentle when he spoke again. “Yes, a long time, Tom. Fourteen years it’s been. But you remember, Tom. I remember so well. I was only a kid, you know. Just eighteen. And to me, Tom, you were father and mother, counsellor and friend. You know, it was a great shock to find that you were selling out your friends. You remember, don’t you, Tom? You remember the strike and the starvation and the misery, and the silent women and wide-eyed, hungry kids? You remember, Tom, because you were the man
we all trusted and looked on as our leader, and we had faith in you. And you sold us out. How much did they pay you, Tom? I heard it was a thousand pounds. You could do a lot with a thousand pounds in those days. You must have done a lot with it, Tom, because now you’re rich, aren’t you, you damned, slimy, stinking rat?”

His voice was still conversational, but the palms of his hands were sweaty, and his great chest rose and fell swiftly as the turmoil mounted within him. He was silent awhile, and the white face in the bed did not move, or change expression.

“And me, Tom. They gave me ten years for breaking the skull of some sneaking, lousy pimp. I was lucky I didn’t swing, Tom. And you could’ve have saved me. You knew it was more an accident than anything else. I waited for you to help me, Tom. But all you did was stand outside when they led me away, and make a nice little speech about how sorry you were, and how you hoped I’d be back, and that you’d always been like a father to me, and you would always have a home for me. Well, here I am, Tom.” His voice rose until it was almost a shout, and he laughed, his head back, the big muscles in his neck working. “I’m here, Tom. Father. I’m home.” He laughed helplessly, hopelessly, his hands hanging limply, his body shaken with great gusts of laughter. He gasped suddenly, and was silent. After a while, he spoke again.

“Seven years I spent in the quarries, Tom. Then they let me out. Good behaviour. Do you know what seven years in there will do to a man? Do you know of the hate that festered in me, like a great cancer inside me, eating out all the joy and the hope and the love that all young men have? Do you know that I had to spend the next seven years in far places, Tom, far away from you or I’d have killed you like I’d kill a beetle? And for all those seven years, I couldn’t stay here, or there, because always the hate came welling up inside me, and hurt me, and hurt those I could have loved. So now I’ve come back. And where did it get you, all your sneaking betrayals, all your greed, all your selfishness? Let’s add it up. You’re rich, powerful, respected, feared. Not bad for a man who started off with nothing, Tom. But there’s another side. You’re old, and sick, and broken. You can’t move. You can hardly speak. You’ve a lovely home, and a faithless wife. You’ve plenty of money, but no friends. You have power, but you can’t exercise it. I’m young, and strong, Tom. I can do what I want, and call no man master. I can walk and drink and eat, and love. I’m lucky, aren’t I, Tom?”

He watched the other closely, cruelly. He stood beside the bed, and stretched, the great arms outflung, the chest straining the shirt that covered it. Every muscle of his huge body tense, he stood there and looked down at the other, and saw the terrible hate in the eyes, and the fear, and laughed to see it.

He dropped back into the chair at the bed-side, and went on quietly again.
“Do you believe you’ve a soul? I guess you do. You were always a good churchman, Tom. How do you think you’ll shape on the other side? I’ll bet it causes you some worry.” His voice was genial, almost caressing. The burning eyes of the man in the bed never left his face, and a faint whisper came from the tight-lipped mouth.

“What are you going to do?”

“Do, Tom?” He laughed again, softly, mirthlessly. “Well, I could kill you. You see these hands?” He held them out as he spoke, huge and rough, their knotted veins standing out on the backs. “They can crush a firm apple, Tom, like you’d crush a grape. They could hold a pillow over your face, and you’d die, and no one would know that you hadn’t slipped and smothered in your pillows. Then maybe I’d marry your wife, and spend your money. Or maybe I’ll just wait around until you die. It shouldn’t be long now. No, Tom. It’s a long time since I killed a man, and somehow now you don’t seem worth the effort.” He sounded surprised as she spoke, and indeed he was, surprising at the truth of what he had said.

The room was much darker now, and the rumbles of the approaching storm were louder and more frequent. A sudden crash of thunder sounded outside, and a shudder ran through the figure on the bed. The eyes dilated, the face flushed, the mouth opened, and a little trickle of saliva ran down on to the chin. Slowly, slowly, the head fell to the side, but the eyes were still wide, staring, still fixed on the man in the chair. And they made the face malevolent, cruel; a mask of hate, even when it was a mask of death.

Blake rose, and felt in vain for life in the still form. He stood, looking down at it for a long minute, then softly crossed the room and opened the door.

The woman came towards him as he closed it behind him. She wore a gown of green which rustled as she moved, and to the question in her eyes, he answered, “He’s sleeping.” He felt he must wash, for the dust of the day was caked on his face, and there was a feeling that he had touched an unclean thing. And there was a need for time, for thinking, because his vengeance, which he had thought sweet to taste, was as ashes in his mouth. His head felt oddly heavy, oppressed by the heat which lay like an unseen blanket over the earth, held by the thick black clouds above. He wanted coolness to ease this burning, so he asked for water. The woman showed him into an ornate room, full of silver fittings, mirrors and spotless enamel. She opened a closet and handed him a towel, dumbly, with a submissiveness like that of an Eastern slave-girl.

He filled the basin with cold water, and took off his shirt. The shadows deepened the hollows between the great muscles of his chest and shoulders. The uncertain light hid detail, making him like some massive bronze statue suddenly come to life. He splashed the water to his face, his temples, the back of his neck. It soothed and comforted him. Its cold freshness told him what he must do.
He reached for his shirt, and was surprised to see her in the doorway. The daylight had almost fled before the advancing clouds, and her white face and shoulders were in strange contrast to the darkness of her hair. She glided closer and he saw the white teeth between the parted lips, the rapid rise and fall of her breast, the light that was like a madness in her eyes.

Her hands reached out to him, but he pushed her roughly aside. He held her against the wall, and their eyes met for a long second. He felt the heaviness, the lethargy again, but he heard the gusts of wind which struck the house, and imagined the coolness of the storm around him. He released her so suddenly that she almost fell. He went rapidly down the great staircase. He saw no one as he lifted his pack and went to the front door, closing it swiftly behind him. He stood for a moment, his breathing deep and rapid, and the first big, slow raindrops announced the thunderstorm.

He was running when he left the gravelled drive and turned on to the road, and his brain was filled with phantoms. He felt exultation rise in him, and laughed at the lash of the wind on his face, and the roll of the thunder above. He ran, and the phantoms disappeared and reappeared in his mind, the grey one and the dark one and the vision of the girl with sunlight in her hair.

By the time he reached the place where the roads forked, the wind had dropped. The rain was coming down heavily, solidly, and his clothes clung to his skin. He was conscious of a happiness he had never known before, and he walked down the road like a man walking towards his future.

His heart rose within him as he came to the farm house the girl had indicated earlier in the day, and when she opened the door to him, he felt as if he had come home at last, as if his ship had come safe to its harbour.

“Did you do—what you had to do?” she asked him later.
He was silent a while, and his eyes wandered around the fire-lit room. There was gladness in his voice when he spoke again. “No,” he said. “No. I didn’t have to, after all.”

THE END.
Louis Aragon  Resistance Poet

BY C. ASPLAND.

Louis Aragon has been called the poet of the Resistance and the greatest poet of the war. At a time when no French book could pass—save technical publications—his poetry appeared in the clandestine publications of the famous reviews, “Fontaine,” “Les Editions de Minuit” and others, the only papers of any kind that helped to break the silence the occupying Germans had imposed on too-patriotic writers. Such poetry was “the most effective and subtle instrument of the recovery of French pride and French energy,” Professor Brogan wrote at the time.

Born in 1898 near Toulon, Louis Aragon began his varied literary career as a dadaist. Then he became a surrealist in 1924; but after a surrealist expedition to the Marquesas Islands he grew disgusted with the movement and in 1930 joined the communists, whose quieter literary ideas appealed to him. In Russia he met the authoress, Elsa Triolet, who later became his wife and inspired many of the war poems in “Le Creve-Coeur.”

“Le Creve-Coeur” (“Heart-Break”) came on the crest of the wave of poetry that Frenchmen wrote during the Occupation; and what T. S. Eliot said of contemporary English war poetry applies equally well to the French: that this “genre” lends more than any other to spontaneous effusion. Aragon’s poetry is spontaneous but it is not unpolished; he sang right from the heart, at first in hopeless despair. Though many of the poems were written at the front they could hardly have been written hastily. Aragon firmly believes that good poetry can be written only after a long apprenticeship and hard study. “The chief enemy of poetry is ignorance . . . there is knowledge in poetry,” he wrote in the “Chroniques du Bel Canto.” Aragon is an experimenter in verse technique and with “Le Creve-Coeur” began his use of ingenious rimes, a use he justifies in an essay, “La Rime in 1940,” and again in the “Chroniques.” He was a suspect in 1939 and 1940 liable to be arrested at any instant; and a man in such a position could not publish what he liked. So he used (though not solely) the technique of “rime enjambee,” the effect of which can be seen in this stanza from “Spring”:

“Mais nous sans yeux nous sans amour nous sans cerveau
Fantomes qui vivons separees di nous-memes
Vainement nous attendions le renouveau
Nous n’avons invente que d’anciens blasphemes.”

“But unseeing, loveless and without mind, phantoms living separated from ourselves, we vainly awaited the spring. We have invented nothing but old blasphemies.”

You are forced on almost quickly to the end. Like many of his contemporaries Aragon did not punctuate his poetry in order to make the line appear as an element of one whole. The inevitable precipitation
of the voice that results when the rime “flows over” compensates for the absence of punctuation. Aragon used this technique to diffuse his ideas and not “poesie pure.”

His ideas result from the conditions of the times; for more than anything else his poetry is the poetry of circumstances. “There is no poetry . . . ,” he wrote, “which does not take from circumstances its force, its birth and its continuation.” He even goes so far as to say that poetry is no longer of value when the circumstances that aroused it are forgotten; but it is reborn when those circumstances repeat themselves. Too many people see the meaning in the literal sense of the words: this literal sense should be integrated with the time “the words were written in, with the environment of the poet, with the society he lived in.” It would be impossible to appreciate some of the poems in “Le Creve-Coeur” without doing this.

Aragon wrote the first six or seven poems of the book at Crouy-sur-Ourcq where he was mobilised in October, 1939. He reflected bitterly in “Twenty Years After” that he is back again fighting as he had been in the First World War; he is in a sort of stupour; and his companions are mere

“Spectres du plein midi revenants du plein jour.”

“Ghosts of the broad noon returned from the light of day.”

Among them are young men who were small children twenty years ago. Twenty years—he has known his wife in that time and now only his love for her remains. He anxiously awaits her letter at twilight, he writes in the second poem, but the post orderly has nothing for him. “Twenty Years After” is written in the usual French Alexandrine and in the four-line stanza Aragon so often uses. The second lyric is in short six-syllable lines that give a lively movement to a not unhappy love lyric. The Alexandrine suits the more serious thought. “The Time of Crossword Puzzles” will return, he says hopefully, perhaps not for him and Elsa; but after the storm has ceased it will return. Meanwhile he is bitter at his present position. Man and woman should never be separated and had he but known he would have cherished the days when they were together.

“Absence abominable absinthe de la guerre.”

“Absence wretched wormwood of war.”

In “Petite Suite sans Fil” Aragon introduces the radio to the sonnet. But the acquaintance is hardly likely to develop into a firm friendship even though the meeting is conducted with all the “appartenances of welcome.” The sonnet finds that radio has nothing to dedicate to silence but an endlessly repeated and insulting pot-pourri, some of the ingredients of which are Carter’s little pills. The second of these three poems is much more successful. In asking the wireless waves to sing to him of love he returns to his theme of love experienced by two people. In
modern poetry, he writes, the woman is no longer thought of without the man, nor the man without the woman; there is no longer the one-sided expression of love. This is what he calls “platonisme éternel.”

If Aragon has a deep love for Elsa Triolet his love for Paris is no less sincere. He does not directly express this love in “Le Creve-Cœur” but the descriptions of the Seine and the buildings on its banks in “The Waltz of the Twenty Years” and “Troy in France” unmistakably show his feeling for the city. He wrote “The Waltz of the Twenty Years” in Paris in January, 1940. It is difficult to follow the sequence of the thought (it often is difficult to follow Aragon’s train of thought) though the general idea is clear enough. Young men are being conscripted in the city who will have to sleep “under a cloak of rain and the shadow of battle,” children-soldiers sleeping without any beds but the trenches. These young fellows knowing nothing of life think it best to die young in a soldier’s glory. This is the theme of an earlier poem. The young men wish to die in honour, but the older men—“the sad school of life has marked these unhaloed saints as the wind with its sting.” Then he dreams on the banks of the Seine imagining “Troy in France.”

“Est-ce Troie ou Paris la Seine ou le Scamandre.”

“Is this Troy or Paris Scamander or the Seine” where he pours out his love of Elsa to beautiful Helen of Troy?

In April, 1940, Aragon moved up to the Belgian frontier during the alert caused by the change France made from a defensive to an offensive policy. Like the rest of the French people he began to lose all heart. Liberty was abandoning them. On the 10th May, after posting his “Interrupted poem” at one o’clock in the morning, he crossed the border, but he did not fight long. The armistice was signed on June 22nd and in the following month Aragon wrote “Lilacs and Roses,” the poignant cry of a Frenchman, of all Frenchmen, at the fall of “sweet’ France.

“All is silent now and shaded the foe repose. They told us here tonight that Paris has surrendered. I shall always remember the lilacs and the roses and I shall not forget two loves of ours forsaken.”

Aragon wrote besides his love lyrics and patriotic poems realistic descriptions of what went on around him during and after the battle. “Tapestry of Great Fear” is probably the best description. He wrote it in August when panic-stricken people were still fleeing they hardly knew where, carrying their children on their backs, the straw of the barns where they had slept still lodged in their hair. It is almost impossible to take any of the lines of this poem from their context where the scenes
are profusely crowded one after another in a completed whole, but the quiet couplet at the end contrasts sharply with what went before,

"La beaute des soirs tombe et son aile marie
A ce Breughel d'Enfer un Breughel de Velours."

"The beauty of evening falls and its wing combines and blends with a Hellish Breughel, a Breughel of Velours."

In "Richard II. Forty," the simplest and most perfect lyric in "Le Creve-Coeur," Aragon sings again in grief and despair. Song is the all of poetry to him, both the dignity and success of it and the communication. "You will see that I have had no other object than to bring all poetry back to song." He succeeds best when his language is plain and concise. What would it matter if they cut France to pieces after she has been abandoned? The colour has gone out of the sky and he may never see Paris again. Let the birds be silent and flee the forests now that the snarer is ruling.

"Fuyez les bois et les fontaines
Taisez-vous oiseaux querelleurs
Vos chants sont mis en quarantaine
C'est le regne de l'oiseleur
Je reste roi de mes douleurs."

His sorrow turns to hope in "Zone Libre," a poem Aragon wrote in September when French people began to organise the Resistance. His grievance has been heard and that terrible silence has been broken:

"Mon mal enfin s'est reconnu
Et son refrain comme un pied nu
Troubla l'eau verte du silence."

Louis Aragon has been called the greatest poet of the Second World War, but it is a precarious title to have gained. Few people remember the events he wrote about even now not ten years after they happened: when they forget them altogether much of his poetry will be forgotten too. It is read to-day and will be read so long as the world remains unsettled; but a time of peace will come when we shall have the leisure to work out cross-word puzzles and war poetry will not interest us. Then I think, despite all the poet said, we shall read only the "poesie pivie" embodied in his simple lyrics. "You will see that I have had no other object than to bring all poetry to song."
Efficiency
BY BETTY WILLIAMS

Roger Dacton was not an aggressive young man: he would not have been called a successful one. Indeed, rather was he shy. He liked people, both the concept and the individual. That is an unusual thing: for how often your verbose “humanitarian” has few friends, and how often, too, your cheery fellow with friends everywhere has a secret contempt for all humanity and love for himself only. He liked people to like him, and while they were doing this, so particular was he about this point, he would wonder why they did not, and try to please them more. He was inclined to dream—in day time as well as in night. When occasionally Roger Dacton went into “intellectual” company, he was inclined to sit silent, thinking, however, of points which would later penetrate the consciousness of the intelligentsia present.

This night Roger was reading. He was reading Shakespeare, as a matter of fact, and shocking though this fact may be to learned students of the bard, he had not, at the age of twenty-five, read all of Shakespeare. This was because he suffered from an affliction in his reading: he would read a play, like it, and read it again and again, at the cost of all the other plays. He was now reading “Hamlet” for the ninth time for, shocking though this, too, may be, his interest in this play had been vitally aroused by the film, and he longed to solve the riddle of it. In another half an hour he intended putting on his hat and coat again, to go out and meet his fiancee.

Someone knocked at his door. Roger swore to himself, but obediently answered the summons. Another young man stood without. He had a very bright, bold eye, and an excellent navy suit.

“Good evening,” he said. “I do not want to seem personal, but may I ask what you have just now been doing?”

“I’ve been reading.” Roger said, humbly.

“Reading!” The new young man looked disappointed. “Reading,” he repeated sadly. “And what have you been reading? A Digest, perhaps?”

“No,” Roger said. “Shakespeare.”

“Shakespeare!” The young man repeated the name several times, in a tone of the greatest astonishment, and as he did so walked into the flat and seated himself. “Shakespeare!” he cried then, and fixed his bright, bold eyes on Roger.

Roger was somewhat crestfallen, and stared at his visitor silently.

“I want to help you,” said the new young man, kindly. “May I ask what is your profession?”

“Teacher,” Roger stammered. “State school teacher . . . .”

“Ah,” said the young man. “And you are reading Shakespeare? Then I take it you have corrected the exercises and prepared the lessons for
to-morrow.' He glared at Roger, and added suspiciously, "Already, at four thirty?"

"No," Roger admitted. "No, I haven't. As a matter of fact, I don't often give homework. I hate to think of all those poor little nippers going home to . . . ."

"They must learn to control time," said the new young man, sharply. "And homework is admirable for that."

"Yes," Roger said, unhappily. "I suppose so." But he did not sound convinced.

The visitor was remorseless. "And what of your lessons for to-morrow? Are they prepared? Are they going to be prepared?"

"No," Roger admitted. "I don't seem to need that. I just have a fair idea of what I'm going to give them, and we talk about it. I like to encourage the kids to join in . . . ."

"Encourage the kids!" The young man veritably snorted now. "Experiments have proved that frequency is of greatest importance in learning. You may cover a subject once by your present method: with that subject properly prepared . . . ."

"That would take me hours," said Roger.

"Not when you have learnt our method of living," said the new young man, haughtily. "As I was saying: With that subject properly prepared, and presented ten times where it now is presented once, learning in your class would improve thirty per cent."

"But—learning to muster their own thoughts—it encourages the kids to think . . . ."

"Thought!" said the young man. "Thought is but material in the brain: knowledge which the mind retains."

Roger could not seem to answer that one.

"Our lives are too inefficient," said the young man. "We waste time. We repeat things needlessly. We do things the hard way, or the slow way. We dally. We procrastinate. We day-dream." He glared at Roger in a way that made it quite plain he used the plural only for tact.

Suddenly he changed his attack. He asked, almost kindly, "How long do you take to dress in the morning?"

"About—about thirty minutes, I suppose, shower and shave and all."

"Have you ever thought of revising your manner of dressing?" said the young man. "Discovering a more efficient way?"

Roger shook his head, sadly.

"Do you still fumble and fiddle with your tie as you did when you were fifteen?"

Roger nodded, mournfully.

"Have you ever considered the way you put on your shoes and socks?"

Roger shook his head, dumbly.

"Do you ever try to find a better, quicker way to your place of employment, or do you still spend hours hanging on tram straps, waiting for trans and buses?"
"'Tea revives,'" said the young man, scornfully. "Or so they say. Do you drink morning tea . . . ?"
Roger nodded.
"And afternoon tea . . . ?"
Roger nodded.
"And tea for supper, and in between times . . . ?"
Roger nodded.
"Do you know that there are tablets, that can be swallowed in one second, with revival effects five times as strong as the best tea—or coffee?"
Roger gulped, and shook his head miserably.
"Efficiency," said the young man, "directs you towards finding those things out."
Roger could not speak now; his defeat seemed certain.
The young man mustered his attacks. "You read Shakespeare," he said, accusingly. "What do you learn from Shakespeare? You can read his stories in brief if you need that for your profession. And you then have time to acquire more and more knowledge, on more and more subjects, from Digests and text-books. That is, if you do like to read," the young man added deprecatingly, "and I believe there are people who do."
"Do you spend three hours a day over meals?" the young man continued.
Roger nodded.
"Add up these times," the young man pleaded. "Think of the countless hours in your life, countless days, countless years those hours would add up to, that are spent in inefficiency."
Roger thought.
"We," said the young man, "can teach you efficiency in your life. Our terms are easy. One guinea down, lessons in your own time, and the other five guineas after a month. Easy and within reach of everyone, you will agree."
"We will dispel inefficiency and wasted time from your life."
Roger looked at him in awe and wonder.
"We can make for you," finished the young man triumphantly, "five extra hours a day." He was already drawing an enrolment form from his brief case.
"But what do you do with them?" Roger said, timidly.
The young man stared at him—uncomprehendingly, in amazement. "We save you five hours a day," he repeated blankly.
And much as Roger liked pleasing people, he did not spend his six guineas in that way, and half an hour later he and his fiancee were sitting in a coffee shop talking. They sat there for four hours in what any smart young man would have recognised as the greatest inefficiency, but which seemed to them just pleasant living.
The Kollywobble Men.
The Keeper
BY BERT CORNELIUS.

The cape was steep and rounded, hump-shaped, and linked to the mainland by a low tenuous neck which sloped upwards on the ocean side. Here the waves slavered in cream froth over the rocks, with a rumble and a sucking and a hiss. All night Barney heard them as he sat in the old house. And he heard, too, the walls creak as the wind passed by outside, and then the quick jarring chime of the clock in the next room. Sometimes he felt the backs of his hands prickle with fear, as though someone or something had crept into the house, and then he would force himself to pick up the lamp and walk into the other rooms. He did this three nights in succession, until his nerves gave out. Then he locked the doors leading into the rest of the house and sat in the kitchen, reading without concentration, pausing now and then to look at the doors and wonder...

When the department's launch was still a few miles off, Barney sent the flying fox singing down to the beach. Then he walked down the spiraling goat track to the boat shed and ran out the whaleboat on its cradle until it just nuzzled the water. He chocked the wheels of the cradle with coral next, brought the oars from the shed and sat for a few minutes on the sleepers of the tram line.

The launch, following the coastline and the channels, swung round into the bay on the landward side and puttered primly along beside the scrub-covered mainland. As soon as it drew level with the neck, Barney launched the whaleboat into the skittish cross-currents, and pulled hard for the anchoring place. Tide and wind were against him, and the whaleboat seemed to see-saw on stationary wave crests. He heard the jingle and scrape of the anchor chains while he was still twenty yards away.

"Can't you row that boat, Barney?" someone yelled.
He recognised the voice of Tommy, the aboriginal mechanic.
"Better than you bloody well can!" he called back.
Tommy chuckled, and swung the rope fenders over the side.
"Hope you got my new boss on board," remarked Barney when he had tied the boat to the rail of the launch.
"Threw him to the fishes," answered Tommy. "No, he's fixing his things up in the rear cabin ... got his wife with him, too."
"Married, eh? Good—we'll have a decent cook in the place for a change."

They made conversation for a bit, until "Cap'n" Jim Baxter thrust his head out of the above-decks cabin. He wore shorts and singlet, and the sun had made his skin brown and leathery.
"H'lo, Barney," he said. "Come and meet the new folk."
As they descended into the rear cabin its occupants moved to the foot of the steps to meet them.
"Mrs. Rainley, this is Barney McLennan," said Jim. "Mr. Rainley. . . ."
“Pleased to meet you,” said Barney warmly.

The new keeper shook his hand stiffly. “How do you do?” he asked.

His wife took her cue and shook hands also. Her grasp was limp and moist. She plucked her hand away swiftly, as though she were ashamed of what she had done, and blinked rapidly.

There was silence for a moment, and then Barney nervously cleared his throat. “Well, I suppose you’d like to get up to the house?”

“Presently,” answered the keeper. “I have some official papers I wish to check over first.”

“Right, then,” said Barney. “Maybe you’d like to come ashore this trip, Mrs. Rainley? That is, if you don’t mind perching among the luggage?”

“You can go ashore, Gwen.” The keeper’s tone suggested that Barney had not spoken.

“Could I take these little ports with me, Mr. McLennan?” she asked timidly.

“Certainly, Mrs. Rainley . . . we’ll put some of the heavier stuff in the boat first, and then put these on top so they won’t be crushed. All right?”

“Oh yes, of course,” she agreed.

Barney and Tommy lowered two of the lighter trunks into the whaleboat, and then the ports. After Mrs. Rainley had climbed in up forrard they took an oar each and pulled for the beach. The whaleboat rode low in the water, dipping its bow in the troughs and sending up spray with a loud slap whenever it broke with the rhythm of the waves.

“I’ll take you up to the house,” Barney offered when they had landed her, dry-footed, on the beach.

“Oh no . . .” she objected. “You mustn’t walk all the way up there just to show me the house.”

“No need to walk,” said Barney. “We can use the flying fox.”

Mrs. Rainley looked at the sideless framework hanging from the cable. “I’d rather not,” she said, in her earlier frightened manner. “No . . . I couldn’t ride on that thing.”

“Well, let’s walk up. Tommy can send the luggage up on the fox, and it’ll be waiting for us when we get there.”

“I’ll be able to find my way up there myself, thank you,” she said, hesitantly.

Barney grinned. “Right-oh. We’ll get some of your stuff off the launch. Oh . . . you won’t find the house locked . . . no burglars here, the goats are very honest.”

They pushed off again in the whaleboat, seeing her, as they rowed, set off up the track swinging one of the ports, and stumbling a bit on the loose stones. “Scared little woman, isn’t she?” Tommy observed. His brown eyes stared thoughtfully after her.

“Haven’t . . . taken too kindly . . . to her old man,” said Barney, wrenching at his oar. “Seems a bit standoffish.”
The Cap’n told them that Rainley was still mucking round with his official papers. “Think he was drawing up the Magna Charta,” he said. “You might as well take off another load of their stuff.”

Rainley and the Cap’n came off with the final load, while Tommy stayed on board to look after the launch. They piled all the luggage securely on the flying fox and watched it climb slowly to the top. Then, in single file, with the keeper in the middle, they ascended the goat track.

Mrs. Rainley came to the kitchen door as they approached. “I’ll have a cup of tea ready for you in a minute,” she said.

“Good heavens, Mrs. Rainley, there’s no need to bother about me,” protested Cap’n Jim.

She gave him a worried smile. “I thought that you might all need a cup of tea.”

“Not in a new house five minutes,” said Barney, “and she’s making tea for the visitor.”

After a quarter of an hour Jim said that he must be going, and took his leave of the Rainleys. Barney rowed him out to the launch and waited until Tommy had started the engine.

“Well, hope you like your fellow boarders,” shouted Jim through the noise and diesel fumes. “Rainley seems a bit of a snag, but his wife’s all right.”

“Listen,” said Barney, “I’m so darned glad to have someone to talk to that they could be Lord and Lady Frankenstein for all I care.”

“Okay!” Cap’n Jim laughed. “Six weeks time then,” he added, as the launch throttled up and moved away.

Barney walked slowly back to the house. The sun had just set, and the still, quiet cold of evening began to settle down on the cape like the bunches of homing gulls. Barney and the keeper climbed up to the light and lit the mantle. The lens was of German make, Barney said, taken from Fritzy during the first war. There was nothing to beat German lenses.

“The Germans are particularly good craftsmen. Lens grinding is something they excel at.” The keeper said this as though he had discovered the fact from long research. “You may have noticed how perfect the surface of the glass is.”

Barney felt slightly irritated. “Will we go down now?”

The keeper looked at his watch. “It’s time we went, I think.”

After tea they sat around the oil heater in the living room.

“Well, Mrs. Rainley, lighthouse life isn’t too bad is it?” asked Barney. She sat in the shadows beyond the yellow suffusion of the lamplight, her knitting needles clicking softly. “I don’t mind it,” she said.

“There are worse jobs,” said Barney, trying hard to add a little impetus to the conversation.

“I suppose so,” she said. “Yes, of course . . . there must be lots of worse jobs”
The keeper shut another magazine and added it to the pile on the floor beside his chair.

“That a ‘Wide World’ you’ve got there?” Barney enquired.

“Yes,” said the keeper.

“Mind if I have a look through it?”

The knitting needles suddenly stopped.

“Read it if you want to.” It sounded like a challenge rather than an invitation.

“Thanks.” Barney leant across, fumbling at the magazine a little until he picked it up. He leant back to rifflle through the pages, feeling uneasily that he had done something wrong.

Mrs. Rainley continued knitting. She hoped that Mr. McLennan wouldn’t offend her husband again to-night. He didn’t like other people touching his things. They broke them or spoiled them, he said.

It was warm and still in the living room, but outside the wind droned through the struts of the flagpole and the waves flung themselves on the rocks with a muffled and monotonous roar. The circle of flame in the heater rippled now and then, and sometimes a little spark rose uncertainly from the charred wick.

When the keeper spoke next Barney was absorbed in a jungle story. The drooping lids flicked back from the keeper’s eyes and he glanced at his audience before saying impressively, “Nearly all students at Howard University are negroes.”

Mrs. Rainley stopped counting stitches. “Well,” she commented, “that’s strange, isn’t it?”

The keeper glanced over at Barney. “Almost five thousand attend the classes,” he said, speaking a little louder, and enunciating carefully. “They study the liberal arts, medicine, engineering and law.”

Mrs. Rainley looked appealing towards Barney, wishing that she could attract his attention in some way. “Imagine that!” she said.

“Students participate in drama and debating activities . . . .” The keeper rose suddenly, picking up the magazines and one of the lamps. “Check the light at eleven o’clock and three,” he said in a thin, harsh voice, “I’m going to bed.” He turned out the heater and left the room.

Mrs. Rainley crept to the door. “I’m going, too,” she said tremulously. “Good night, Mr. McLennan.”

Barney mouthed his good-night silently, in a bewildered fashion, as he stared at the door closing behind her. He picked up his magazine and read a few sentences before putting it down again. The room felt colder, and he noticed that the heater was no longer burning.

When the sun wiped away the morning haze the cape swelled abruptly out of the sea, dun and solid. The house and meteorology hut clung to the hump-like self-effacing ticks, allowing the lighthouse to rear undisputed its chalk-white body and red cap.

Mrs. Rainley’s hoe bit sparks from the gravel of the garden bed. She was glad to work in the garden, although Barney had told her that it was
unnecessary; for gardening helped to turn her mind from herself. She
looked at the soiled white clam shells edging the path. Some of them con­
tained rain water, with the soggy forms of moths drifting on the surface.
She saw an ant clinging to a green leaf-raft and turned the leaf over,
watching until the ant emerged and climbed onto the veined back, carrying
a globe of water on its feelers. She turned the leaf over again. It seemed
amusing watching the ant struggle back each time, until it floated limply
among the moths. Then she felt sorry for the ant, and dropped it on a
warm stone, hoping that it would revive.

Further down the slope Barney whistled abstractedly as he read the
instruments in the small white box. The keeper was writing in the living
room, as he had been doing so much during the last three days. He must
have a great many official papers to deal with, Mrs. Rainley thought, in
obedience to the formula.

Barney shut the louvre door of the box and pencilled the readings in
his notebook.

He started towards the lighthouse and then turned and walked back
towards the house, scraping his boots carefully on the concrete step before
walking into the room where the keeper sat; and waiting for the keeper
to look up from his papers, because in three days he had learned to show
some outward deference.

Finally the keeper gave an impatient sigh and stopped writing. “What
do you want?”

“I was thinking,” said Barney, “that maybe we could get in some net
fishing to-day. What do you reckon?”

The keeper leant back in his chair and thought for a minute; lips
slightly parted, finger tips symmetrically together, one eyebrow raised.
“Perhaps,” he said. “It depends . . . I don’t know whether I have the time
for it. Perhaps.”

Barney looked down at him. “Rightoh . . .” he said automatically, but
his brain was thinking of other things, trying to analyse this queer bird.
“Well . . .” He let the word hang unsupported and moved towards the door.

“One minute,” said the keeper.

Barney moved back a step and folded his arms. “Yes?”

“Have you the instrument readings with you?”

“Mmm.” Barney pulled the notebook out of his hip pocket and turned
to the current date. “Here we are. . . .”

“Thank you. They will be radioed off later. In future I want you to
bring them to me no later than ten o’clock. You may collect the book
after.”

“Okay.” Barney was glad to leave the house. He strode off to the
light and soon was working with the cleaning rags.

After completing this job he went down to the boatshed and carried
the net onto the beach for inspection. Three or four large rents had to be
mended with twine, and he did this as he sat drowsily in the hot sand.
Looking across the bay to landward he could see the mangroves on the
opposite side; pick out their yellow greens clearly and see the ranks of
trees change colour as the land sloped back, until they melted into the
mist-blue fur of the coast ranges. The tide receded gradually and sun
and sand drank all moisture to the water line. When he had patched the
last tear he folded the net tidily on its stretcher and returned to the house.

Mrs. Rainley called to him as he washed his hands in one of the
laundry tubs. "I've kept your dinner hot, Mr. McLennan."

"Oh, I'm sorry," Barney said. "Look, I didn't know it was as late
as this. Has Mr. Rainley finished his yet?"

"Yes, my husband had his dinner twenty minutes ago. I'm afraid yours
may be a little spoilt." She spoke apologetically, as though prepared to
ward off an accusation that she had cooked the meal too early.

"Well, thanks, anyway," he said, to reassure her, as he pulled his chair
in to the table. Scraping up the last of the pudding, he suddenly asked,"Oh, by the way, did Mr. Rainley say anything about going fishing this
afternoon?"

"No," she answered, "he's taken his sketch book with him—he's gone
off somewhere around the rocks."

"Funny," said Barney. "I asked him this morning. You'd have thought
he would have told me then that he wanted to do some sketching. Maybe
he won't be gone long?"

"Oh, I think so," she said nervously. "Yes . . . the whole afternoon, I
think."

Barney walked to the top of the cape and looked across to the
rocks, that waded with smoothly rounded bodies into the water.
The sea was fairly slack at this time, although it still snapped and growled
at the foot of the cape. Sudden jets of water kicked up high and straight,
and with each gust of wind were swept above in clean-tasting salt spray.
Barney thought that he saw the keeper, almost out of his line of vision
under the angle of the drop. Let him stay there, he decided finally; don't
suppose he'd thank me if I did go and talk to him.

When the shadows slunk further up the cape and the air began to strike
cold, Barney went to the lighthouse. After opening the bronze door he
climbed to the first platform, pausing for a moment before clumping up the
second ladder. When the mantle was lit he descended again to the first
platform, where he could look through the open trapdoor above and watch
the light. It worked rhythmically and without fluster—without the osten-
tatious fuss of the keeper or the timid and erratic willingness of his wife.
It seemed to have a well integrated mechanical personality, as it swung
slowly one hundred and eighty degrees left, smooth and dependable:
quietly one hundred and eighty degrees right, steady and inexorable.

After a while Barney climbed down the ladder and checked the pres-
sure of the gas cylinders. Satisfied, he set out for tea at the house, but
when he approached the kitchen door he heard the raised voices of the
keeper and his wife, and drew back.
Mrs. Rainley had wondered how long it would be before her husband manufactured another violent scene. When Barney went to the light the keeper had come out of their room carrying the little blue clock from the dressing table.

"Have you been winding this?" he asked.
"What?" she said defensively.
"This clock . . . what do you think I mean?"
"I've never touched it."
"It was working perfectly well this morning," said the keeper deliberately, through pinched lips.
"Maybe if you shake it, it will go," she suggested.
"What do you think I've been doing?" he asked. "You know that mother had this clock five years," he added. "It never gave her any trouble, but of course she looked after things."
"Oh, of course she did," Mrs. Rainley muttered bitterly.
He swung round to face her, pupils dilated as he stooped and ground the tips of his nails into her shoulder. "What did you say?"
"Nothing," she said, her dry lips trembling.
"What-did-you-say?" he repeated, shaking her.
"I've told you. Nothing," she said. The side of her face quivered as she tried to return his glance.

"Ach, you dirty liar!" he said fiercely, pushing her away.
She struggled to keep from crying, to keep from admitting that he could hurt her. "You're the liar."
"Liar . . . you!" cried the keeper. "You come from a family of liars. You were bred in deceit and filth! You don't know what truth is . . . ." He was shaking with rage, almost screaming in a high strained voice.
"There's no need to shout so that Mr. McLennan will hear," she pleaded.

"You've joined forces with him now, haven't you?" the keeper demanded. "The voice of the serpent. . . ."
"Oh, don't be so ridiculous," she cried. "Don't be so stupid . . . so silly."
"Silly! Silly!" he mimicked savagely. "That's a good word to use when you want to sneak out of things. You've very fond of it, aren't you?"

Mrs. Rainley ran into the kitchen. She could hear the keeper still muttering to himself. Occasionally she caught words . . . deceit . . . trickery . . . but she tried not to hear them. She pretended not to hear Barney when he entered the kitchen and went to his room.

Tea that night was an unpleasant meal. Hate seemed to fill the room; crushing; stifling. Mrs. Rainley bent over her plate, white-faced and fearful. She made no sound, except for an incoherent exclamation when the fork slipped from her hand. Barney was on the keeper's right. Looking at this man at the head of the table Barney felt a fire of antagonism creep through his body. His stomach muscles tensed, and he breathed more heavily than usual.
After tea they sat conventionally in the living room, Barney with a crossword puzzle, the keeper enthroned smugly with his magazines. Mrs. Rainley sat in the shadows beyond the lamplight, as she always did, cowering into the depths of her chair, knitting. And presently the keeper, having picked up his magazines, took one of the lamps and left the room. Mrs. Rainley stayed there for a moment, rebelliously, but then gathered up her knitting and scuttled after him.

The people at the cape avoided one another after this, the two men speaking to each other only when their work compelled them to, and this was not often. The days dragged by wearily, each one bringing the same small monotonous jobs—shipping was morsed, and the goats were milked, and the weather reports were sent, and the light was attended to. Only at meal times were the three of them together. Then they sat at the table silently, although sometimes Barney attempted to make conversation with Mrs. Rainley. All the time the keeper watched them closely like a gaoler, his narrowed eyes glancing from one to the other and his mouth occasionally twisted in a sardonic smile. The keeper felt the resentment of them both—Barney’s plain, strong contempt for him, and the muddled and incomplete emotion of his wife, the confused birth of hate. A month went by, each of them afraid, for a different reason, to attempt to end the stupidity of this new isolation. They waited for the next visit of the supply launch.

One evening after dusk, when a pale large moon floated free of the horizon, Barney climbed the goat track from the beach. The cold air punched his lungs, and as he came to the lighthouse he smelt the faint drift of flower perfume from the garden. Then, even before he stepped over the door sill he heard the harsh, threatening voice of the keeper. He saw him take Mrs. Rainley’s fingers and twist them back until she gasped with pain.

The keeper heard Barney’s steps on the concrete, and turned round. His face was pale and the upper lip was drawn back from his clenched teeth. He stared at Barney.

“Just you cut that out!” Barney said in a tight, choked voice.

“Nobody wants you to interfere,” the keeper snarled: “You needn’t imagine you can manage my private affairs. You get out of here.” He stood stooped, almost crouching, with his head thrust forward and his arms hanging loosely.

Barney felt hot anger bore through him. “You dirty bugger,” he said, “do you think I’ll let you get away with this?” He struck the keeper hard on the mouth, gashing his lip, and the sight of the blood made him glad. Mrs. Rainley cried out and snatchet at his arm, but he pushed her away fiercely.

The two men clutched for each others throats as they fought, swaying to and fro, with the breath hissing through their teeth. Barney smashed his knuckles into the keeper’s face again. The keeper grunted with pain,
and twisting away, loosed his grip to gouge with his thumbs at Barney’s eyes. He thrust Barney back with a rush, jabbing with one hand, and swinging the other clubbed fist wildly at Barney’s temples. Barney, blinded, clutched at his face and stepped unsteadily sideways. His boot caught in the foot of the ladder and he fell awkwardly to the floor, his head striking the concrete with a thud. He twitched slightly once, and rolled onto his face, and a dark gush of blood came from his nostrils and mouth. Then he lay still.

The keeper edged back, warily triumphant, waiting for him to move, but Barney was quite motionless. Mrs. Rainley felt weak and sick as she looked at him, and her voice was forced and jerky, as though she were breathless. “Oh, . . .” she said, “he’s dead! You’ve killed him. Mr. McLennan is dead!” She took a sobbing gulp of air and stood looking at him with wide horror-filled eyes, the palms of her hands pressed tightly against her breasts.

The keeper looked at her uncertainly. “Stop that noise,” he muttered. “He’ll recover in a minute—he just struck his head. He’s not dead. He’s all right.” But he trembled as he fumbled at Barney’s shirt and placed his hand on the chest. He bent on one knee for a minute, and then half rose. “No heart beat,” he said almost wonderingly, looking up at his wife. “No heart beat!” he repeated frantically. He raised the head and shoulders off the floor and shook the body as though it were a clock that had stopped and must be set going again.

He laid it down in a moment and leant against the ladder, automatically wiping the fingers of one hand clean on his trousers. He looked distractedly from the body to the pale tense face of his wife, and put his hand over his eyes. When he looked up again he saw her watching him. Abruptly she started to sob.

“What will you do?” she asked.

He looked at her and then at the body. “I can only radio off the facts,” he said presently. “I suppose this . . . the body . . . must remain exactly where it is.”

She nodded silently.

He stepped over the extended arms and walked irresolutely to the door. When he turned he saw the gaze of two pairs of eyes—the expressionless eyes of his wife, and the open, brilliant eyes of the dead man. He spoke quietly to break the fear which had touched his heart. “I’m going to radio this off,” he said as he went.

Mrs. Rainley stood huddled against the wall. Less than five minutes ago that man had been alive. She suddenly ran from the lighthouse through the darkness to the house.

She was shaking violently and had to lie down when she got there. At first she lay face down on the bed, sobbing and moaning hysterically, biting her hands until the fingers were covered with the deep bruise marks of the teeth. But after a while she felt tired and a good deal calmer, and
by the time the keeper entered the house she was sitting unobtrusively in a corner of the living room.

He told her the message he had sent, and the one he had received in reply, and then sat hunched in his chair, thinking of what to do, of what would happen to him. But his thoughts seemed to jumble and run into one another. Little fragments out of the past kept spinning through his mind; and froze and collapsed like the meaningless patterns of a kaleidoscope. There seemed to be an incessant, insistent whisper within his brain. It grew louder and louder, chanting his thoughts at him, although he fought to shut it out. He looked at his wife, sitting just beyond the glow of the lamp. Presently she took up her knitting. The needles clicked softly and the noise of the steel rasped on his raw nerves. God! she was so unconcerned!

"Gwen," he said. "Gwen, you'll be the witness to this business. You must impress on them that I was only defending myself against him."

Mrs. Rainley said nothing. She was thinking back over the years, and wondering why she had stayed with this man. If she could take the children away from the boarding school, she thought... if she could gain custody of them.

"Gwen," said the keeper again. "They must know that he attacked me first."

Mrs. Rainley smiled at her dreams. As she sat in the shadows the lamplight gilded her forehead and cheekbones, leaving the eyes in mysterious pools of darkness, and the mouth cut like that of a mask. She flicked the wool so that the ball unwound.

"Gwen," said the keeper, "did you hear what I said?"

She raised her head from the knitting. "Yes, I heard."

"You will tell them that when they come, won't you?"

She said nothing for a while, but the keeper thought she nodded. She sat there musing, listening to the waves smashing themselves on the rocks. Then she gathered up her knitting with one hand, and picking up the lamp with the other, she walked slowly over to his chair. She looked steadily down into his eyes and spoke quietly.

"Sorry to leave you in the dark... but don't forget, you've a job to do—at eleven o'clock and three—and there's plenty of light there."

As she walked, the lamp made her shadow dance like a black giant along the passage.

THE END.
He had told her many times not to touch the electric radiator when it was turned on, so he really felt justified when she at last was electrocuted. Now she was dead, and he was annoyed because so many people were rushing around, trying to offer condolence in their various pitiable, hypocritical styles. He looked at the white flowers sent by Mrs. Roberts. She was the most sensible of the lot, he reasoned. A small card, bearing the words, "Mrs. Roberts and family," attracted his attention. She was, he concluded, probably the best friend that Ethel ever had. Poor, silly, harmless Ethel.

He looked at the large amethyst-coloured floral wreath with its tremendous black satin sash. It reeked of the horrible opulence of death, but he didn't think of it in those terms. He felt it must have cost a fortune. An equally opulent card accompanied the wreath. It bore some kind of sentimental poem, and a great many flowery words beneath. From Sarah and Roger Day. He thought of Sarah and Roger. Bloated plutocrats the pair of them. Always flashing their money around where it was least necessary. They'd been like that with Ethel—they'd even bought her a vacuum cleaner last Christmas, and it had hurt his pride to think that they thought that he was too tight to buy her one. But Ethel had accepted it with humble gratitude. Poor, mercenary Ethel.

He looked at the flowers sent by Leone Barrett. Wildflowers. Leone didn't believe in conventions. She liked wildflowers for funerals and lilies.
for wild parties. Leone was always giving wild parties, and always inviting Ethel; never him. Anyway, they weren’t really wild. Just useless things where everyone came and read the latest poem that everyone else had written. He felt a kind of outraged dignity overcome him when Leone had said to Ethel, “I’d ask your husband along, too, dear, but I am sure he wouldn’t be interested.” Ethel was always writing funny little poems that she’d hoped to have printed some day. Poor, ambitious Ethel.

There was a large bunch of sweet peas and stocks, mingled with sickening pungency, “From the Kirkmans.” Mr. and Mrs. Kirkman were both terrific church workers. He wondered if they had ever thought of entering heaven without some kind of work in both hands. They’d even eventually got Ethel interested. Not that he was an atheist, but he felt some people went too far in their efforts to get to heaven. He wondered if Ethel were there herself now. The thought of her being there was just too funny for words. Ethel, wearing a resplendent white nightgown and twiddling on a harp, and being held up by clouds when she weighed almost eleven stone undressed. He realised that this was actually no time for laughter. Poor, faithful Ethel.

The roses were from the Gaylards. They were pink and variegated and inappropriate, he thought. The Gaylards were keen horticulturalists and were proud to display the fruits of their labours. They seemed to have cultivated this particular crop for the specific purpose of displaying them at someone’s funeral, he reflected. Their card was a mixture of pride in their floral tribute, and sorrow at the death of one of their greatest converts. Ethel had been growing roses lately. Vine roses over the gate, blood red Emperor roses outside the kitchen window, pink ones on leafy green bushes in the front garden, and little bushes of pink and red tea roses, that seemed an eternal source of supply for house decoration during the season. He thought of the satisfaction Ethel had got out of growing those blasted roses. It used to annoy him to hear her drooling over their beauty, when it would have become her more to leave the gardening to him. Poor, simple Ethel.

He glanced at his watch. The funeral would be over soon, and the puling masses would be on their way. He wished that they would hurry. He was a businessman, and life must go on just the same. He considered people strange creatures. They wept and fussed much about extraordinarily small things. Well—really, Ethel’s death wasn’t such a small thing, but to them it was, anyway. He glanced down at a bunch of violets that he hadn’t noticed before, and he turned the card over, slowly, uninterestedly. It bore no signature—just the words, “Ethel darling—all along I hoped that until the day you died, you would always receive my violets.” What nonsense. He was about to walk away, but the note puzzled him. Who on earth should write words like that to Ethel. Suddenly explanation and bewilderment at once filled his mind. Good gracious, he thought, with another glance at his watch. So that was why she’d been wearing violets so often lately. The deceiving little bitch!
Invocation to Love

How could I tell thee that I dared not keep
My pledge, but feared lest I should feel again
That fevered throbbing in my pulse and brain
Lulled now at last into a wakeful sleep;
Lest weeds of a tormented mind should leap
Into a monstrous growth fed by hot rain
Until my senses fainted with the pain,
And thou wouldst smile at last to see me weep.

Love! I would kiss the anger from thine eyes,
And still thy restless hands upon my breast;
My mind that I would master ever flies
Sorrowing to thy door; O give it rest!
Mantle thy wings about it where it cries,
And still the bitter longing of its quest.

—Marie Leaver.
Letter to Aunt Jemima . . .

LONDON—IN—JUNE.

Dear Aunt Jemima,—

Your remember my frantic epistle from Paris? Well, now that everything has “turned out nice again”, shall I go back to the beginning and tell you the whole story?

It was Saturday night, and we were on our way to a little theatre in Pigale, which presents gory melodrama with a sort of detailed perfection; that is to say, when necessary they will chop off the villain’s head and let it roll in the footlights, or gouge out one another’s eyes with knitting needles and throw them—the eyes—at the audience, while blood spurts all over the stage. Actually, as we say in Knightsbridge, it is very well done, and though not exactly a pantomime for children, worth seeing. I’ve just remembered the theatre did advertise its programme as “pantomime for children”—but, then of course, that means French children, doesn’t it?

As I said, it was Saturday night, and it was raining, and half Paris and I were sheltering under the awning of a newspaper stand near the bus-stop. Apparently my companion on the right was one of those black marketeers we read about, turned sour, now that the bottom has fallen out of the money-changing business. It seems he had a signet ring with a razor blade edge—and this he applied to the side of the handbag I had bought for cousin Myrtle in Port Said—to extract the bundle of travellers’ cheques—which might have bought you a Dior model, Aunt Jemima. It was very deftly done, and he stole away as silently as any Arab.

You’ve never been to Paris, have you, Aunt? The French have none of that stolid, uncomplaining virtue of the English. They have, therefore, invented a system for catching buses which turns what might have been a quiet, patient wait in a queue into a glorious game of chance. You walk up to a machine attached to the post marked, “Bus Stop”; you rattle a handle up and down until a ticket with a number on it falls out; you then join all the other people who have tickets with numbers, and you stand around, and kick stones with a nonchalant air until a bus arrives. The conductor, who appears to be attached to a spring somewhere inside suddenly pops out at the back of the bus. He calls out what could be an impassioned speech for liberty, fraternity and equality, but is actually a series of numbers.

You listen, tense and strained like something out of McDougall’s Theory of Instinct, translate and interpret the torrent in numbers; compare the numbers with those on the tickets, and if you have won a seat on the bus—take a flying leap at it before it plunges into the mad whirlpool of Parisian traffic.
So you see, in all this bustling I didn't notice my slit and empty purse until very much later. At the Bureau de Police everyone was most kind and attentive. They took volumes of particulars, recorded very carefully my name and those of everyone in the family for the last three generations, and then there was nothing more we could do about it. Hence my savage note to you about Paris. As it happens we managed to enjoy being penniless there—did our shopping at the Flea Market instead of the Rue de la Paix, and strolled irreverently up the Champs Elysees, eating some terrible pink stuff called "Papa's Beard," while elegant Parisiennes drifted past with parasols and poodles. We ignored the Casino de Paris and spent Sunday evening at a students' club in the Latin Quarter, a cramped little basement where I remembered to say, "Pardon, monsieur" every time I bumped anyone, and so passed in the crowd as French, a student, and just another Existentialist.

Back in London, I was condoning myself, and being condoned, and emitting hollow laughter at the Innocent on the B.B.C. home service who was singing "The Best Things in Life are Free," in the manner of one convinced—when an envelope containing my bundle of traveller's cheques arrived with the "Times", the "Daily Express" and the morning milk. It appears some shady character was apprehended because his signature at the top wasn't like my signature at the bottom. Rumour hath it, he was carried off muttering that only a freak spider with ten legs and a passion for surrealism could have a signature like mine—but, mark you, my total inability to make straight pot-hooks has been rewarded. I clasped the frail blue slips to my bosom, and to-night we celebrated their return.

We had an early dinner at a little Italian restaurant in Soho. The menu here advertised the first mixed grill I had heard of since we said good-bye to steaks, chops and all that last January. Emma, determined not to be taken for a gullible tourist, called over a mournful waiter to know if this might conceivably be horse. The waiter drew himself up to the height of George Washington's elder brother, about to say, "Madame, I cannot tell a lie—it is horse," stopped himself in time and contented himself with looking reproachfully at us. So we ordered the mixed grill, and of course it wasn't horse—it was whale. Whale steaks are quite common though I haven't yet discovered who sells them—the fishmonger or the butcher.

The variety of theatre is so confusing one tends to avoid "die Qual der Wahl" by spending the evenings quietly at home. Danny Kaye at the Palladium, or the Ballet de Paris; Vivien Leigh in "Antigone" or Sid Field and his rabbit playing "Harvey"; "Rigoletto" at Covent Garden, or "She Stoops to Conquer" at the tiny Arts theatre in Leicester Square. Dare I tell you we ignored them all? We walked past the flower girls selling violets in Piccadilly, the barrow man roasting chestnuts in Oxford St., and the little Cockney tearing up the evening paper to amuse the picture queue at Marble Arch. The band was playing in Hyde Park and the keepers
were kept busy laying out little green chairs and taking threepence from anyone who succumbed and sat on one.

A man was standing on a platform in a corner. Eyes closed, hands outstretched, he was offering paragraphs from T. S. Eliot, pages from Clive Bell and appropriate passages from Goethe, to listeners who remained very unimpressed.

Emaciated rather than just “thin and pale”; in a tattered coat with collar turned up and long black hair falling over the same—he was arguing for the superiority of a life of contemplation. He claimed the man of action is imperfect and inferior, occupied with a continual “doing” in an effort to complete himself. The snugly clad audience in muff, scarves and snow boots were not being convinced that the poor specimen in front of them was leading the fuller, richer life. Just then a ginger-haired monster with a placard about workers’ uniting came back to claim his soap box, and the aesthete was very hastily removed. He disappeared in the crowd and we walked on home.

We made cafe noir with the little filters from Paris, and listened and laughed at Swift’s “Polite Conversation” on the B.B.C. third programme, though Karl, the Swiss, learning English said, “I tink he is making us foolish.”

We talked about cannibals and kangaroos and what a strange, old land Australia is, until the fire went out. And now, it’s very cold and clear and quiet; the moon is right over London’s chimney tops; it’s very late, and this must be all for to-night. I shall write again next week, and so “Put out the light,” Aunt Jemima, “put out the light.”

—Maureen L.
In an overgrown, Disney jungle Donald Duck went to pick a yellow and black orchid. He ran his hand to the bottom of the stalk, only to find himself holding on to the non-business end of a tiger. Last year I did the same thing with an anthology of modern poetry. It was a true forest of the night and I seized upon the only bloom offering—"Sea Love". I soon found out that I had hold of a true poet, burning bright in that forest.

"Sea Love" was not an isolated success by its author, Charlotte Mew. I have read no more than a score of her lyrics, but in everything she permitted to be published the same intense quality of poetry is to be found.

She was born in 1869, the daughter of an architect who died while she was still an infant. Her life was a long struggle with poverty and adversity, and it was not until she was in her late fifties that she was granted a civil pension, and then only through the influence of Masefield, Thomas Hardy and Walter de la Mare. Her first poems belong to the nineteenth century, but she did not collect them into book form until 1917, when a small volume of seventeen poems appeared. In 1921 eleven more were added. These twenty-eight poems, together with the twenty published posthumously as "The Rambling Sailor" represent the entire poetical output she chose to be remembered by. I say "chose" deliberately, for it is known that Charlotte Mew was a severe critic of her own work, and her friends recall that many worthy poems were destroyed by her own hand. Others, too, were lost in her frequent house-moving around London.

Thomas Hardy, a figure to be reckoned with in English literature both as a novelist and as a poet, was the first to recognise her genuine poetic quality and stated that he considered her the finest poetess of her day. Indeed, much of her poetry has that lovely overtone and accent on the mortality of man and his institutions that we find so faultlessly expressed in Hardy's own lyric, "In Time of 'the Breaking of Nations'."

Charlotte Mew's poetry is very limited in theme. She sings of melancholy things—death, misunderstood love, unrequited love, love slain by mortality, and above all she sings of despair; but she is to be criticised for this limitation no more than A. E. Housman. She covers a wider range of topics than is to be found in "The Shropshire Lad", and expresses them with a greater command of metrical variety. Frank Swinnerton said that her first book contained "much that is of quite personal and unmistakeable beauty. It has, of course, some callow verses, but the effect as a whole is deeply moving. . . . Her language is admirable; its suppleness enchants the ear, but what gives the poems perfection is a sincerity which finds fit words because the impulse to write has been so intense."

It is difficult to write about lyric poetry, and Swinnerton, in stressing the intensity of her impulse is accrediting her work with what is one of the major values to be considered in any discussion of lyric poetry. Of a
lower order, and more within my power to discuss, is her metrical variety. Many of her short poems are songs, verse after verse following the rigid prescription of the first stanza. (Whether they will ever be set to music is another matter. The best lyric poetry since the Elizabethans is not easily yoked to draw the burden of the English song-writer. Witness the various unsuccessful attempts to “set” Shelley's “Love's Philosophy”. It requires a Schubert to perceive the poet's verbal melody and intensify it.) Despite the effective use of the short line in these songs, she is able to use an extremely long one without stumbling as Whitman sometimes does. Observe, for example, these lines from “I have been through the Gates”.

*His heart, to me, was a place of palaces and pinnacles and shining towers, I saw it then as we see things in dreams—I do not remember how long I slept;*

*I remember the trees, and the high, white walls, and how the sun was always on the towers; The walls are standing to-day, and the gates; I have been through the gates, I have crept Back, Back....*

Her use of a dialectal turn of phrase is very effective in restoring a human quality to situations apparently remote from every-day events. Read “The Farmer’s Bride”, pointless in broken quotation, to realise this skill. Because it is difficult of access, I am quoting the whole of “The Road to Kerity”. Notice once again the long line, but, above all, the atmospheric and emotional qualities of the poem. It could almost be a scene from Synge’s “The Well of the Saints”.

*Do you remember the two old people we passed on the road to Kerity, Resting their sack on the stones, by the drenched wayside, Looking at us with their lightless eyes through the driving rain, and then out again To the rocks, and the long white line of the tide: Frozen ghosts that were children once, husband and wife, father and mother, Looking at us with those frozen eyes; have you ever seen anything quite so chilled or so old? But we—with our arms about each other, We did not feel the cold!*

The melancholy note of so many of her poems is not one merely assumed for literary effect. She was devoted to her mother and her sister, Anne, and her mother's death was a blow from which she never recovered. In 1927, Anne died. In 1928, Charlotte Mew took her own life in a London nursing home. In her obituary notice in “The Times” it was stated: “Charlotte and Anne Mew had more than a little in them of what made another Charlotte and Anne and their sister Emily what they were. They were, indeed, like two Bronte sisters reincarnate.”

When you are reading “In the Fields”, “Exspecto Resurrectionem”, “Love, Love To-day”, notice how Death moved constantly across the window of her thoughts. She was like the child in Goethe’s “Erl King”.
GALMAHRA

We see only the misty cloud, the grey tree, but the clear vision of the child sees the symbol of death in all these objects. The final act of her life shows her as one going to meet her Erl King, unafraid. She seems to have known, more than most of us, the implications of Death. After all, he had been calling her soft names in many a mused rhyme for over twenty years before she decided to meet him face to face; and even then, not before she had implored God:

"Thou knowest how hard and bare
The pillow of that new-made narrow bed,
Then leave not there
So dear a head!"

WHERE TO FIND THE POEMS MENTIONED.

Sea-Love—"Bridges to the Present Day": Penguin.
In the Fields—"The Modern Poet": Ed. Gwendolen Murphy.
The Call—"The Modern Poet": Gwendolen Murphy.
The Road to Kerily—Anthol. of Modern Poetry: Robert Lynd.
Love, Love To-day—The Modern Muse.
I Have Been Through the Gates—The Modern Muse.
Extracts from a

New Guinea Diary

(Kept during war service in the Dutch N. Guinea Jungle.)

BY A. C. CRAIG.
Note: This particular period was so packed with incident, so crowded with interest that I find it extremely difficult to write a co-ordinated account. Some memories cut through hard and clear; others hazily, as if I lived through them in a state of slight delirium. Some of them I would rather not remember; and yet the lure is too great—I think once more of the jungle maze, a coconut grove and a night of violence—and the fingers of fear press again at my temples in recollection.

April 12th: The Pastor's boy, Jeremias, was now a staunch adherent; also an extremely useful one. He was the most intelligent lad of his race with whom I ever came in contact, and his accomplishments were as commendable as they were diverse. He was a hill boy from the unknown north country, and the jungle held no mysteries for him. He knew the use of every tree, the meaning of every sound and sign; had, too, that unerring instinct which told him just where he was at all times.

It was Jeremias, then, who was to be my bearer on this, my most memorable hunt.

We left the village in teeming rain about four in the afternoon, carrying light packs, a shot gun and my rifle, hurrying through the squelching mud and soaked kunai to reach our destination before dark. Rations were so very short in camp that the only food we could take was biscuits; there was an urgent need, therefore, for something solid for the menu.

The rain was still splashing on the tiny stream when we arrived, and the jungle seemed devoid of life. Leaves drooped heavily under the weight of water and slippery bananas brushed against us as we passed. Fortunately, we had a large log in the shelter, into the end of which we built a fire. Night came even earlier than usual, black and gloomy, and I dried my soaking size 7's over the fire . . .

Round eight o'clock rain ceased, and the moon struggled to shine through the dense cloud. Jerry borrowed my knife and torch and entered the stream in front of the clearing. He shone the light against a fallen tree-trunk till the little fish were attracted by the glare. As they crossed the bright circle he stabbed swiftly and certainly, pinning them to the wood . . . In this way he caught eight in half an hour.

While he moved on to his next job—felling a little sago palm—I took his bow and hunted for lobsters by torch-light. I arrowed two little fellows before returning to the fire. There we cooked the fish and sago, washing them down with bitter tea . . .

Shortly afterwards I coated myself with mosquito repellant and went to sleep. Hunting at night in stormy weather held no attractions for me. Jeremias started to hunt around midnight; between that time and dawn I heard several shots at varying distance from the camp.
He returned at daylight with the news that he had shot at a young pig. I suggested collecting it, but he demurred, saying, “He’ll die alright; we’ll collect him on the way home.”

We set off now in the general direction of Kali Bian, passing out of my territory into country I had never seen before. As we went the well-defined trail gave way to the faintest of tracks; I lost all conception of direction, striving vainly to remember trees and turnings. Jeremias never wavered, walking with the speed of surety. We crossed several streamlets, passing through a big coconut grove, jumped another riverlet with steep banks, then entered dense bamboo. Here we had to bend double and crawl in places to negotiate the tunnels.

The bamboo gave way to rain forest—and what a forest! The sun shimmered through gaps high up in the branches, dead leaves crunched under our feet, and all nature burst into song. Then, a bare hundred yards ahead of us rose the most exciting clamour of bird voices I had ever heard. We eased our way gently from tree to tree.

It was an amazing sight. In one great tree I counted twenty-four full-grown male birds of paradise, spreading their golden plumes, dancing, screaming, fluttering and fighting along the straight, almost leafless boughs.

A harsh squawk made me lift my head: there was another bird in the tree straight above... I had the rifle trained on the shining, velvet green underneck when Jeremias touched my arm, and moved like a shadow to the base of the big tree; I sat motionless and held my breath. Suddenly I heard a sharp click—a misfire. Then another and still another: finally the blast... and still Jerry did not move. “Missed, you silly old black ——,” I thought.

The birds resumed their playing. Minutes passed... then a couple more clicks, then again the roar of the shot gun. This time I saw the fall of a bird and mentally withdrew my previous criticism. A moment later he approached, his face a mass of grins, bearing two gorgeous full-grown birds—he had dropped one with each shot.

We changed guns, as I hoped to find some pigeons on the way home, and set off back to the “operations” hut, through the bamboo, across the creeks into the thick jungle again. At one stage on the journey a cassowary strolled across the track, but was gone before we could load. Noon found us at the sleeping hut; we packed up, shouldered the guns and set off for Boepel.

After a mile or so we reached the scene of Jerry’s big shoot. A generous sprinkling of blood indicated that the animal could not have gone far, so we followed the crimson trail into the bush. A hundred yards in we found him—still warm, stretched out under a thorn thicket.

We cleaned him out on the spot—detestable job—cut a stout pole and lashed him to it. After twenty miles’ hard travel the addition of this junior heavyweight made the going tough... Two miles from home I subsided on a log—completely exhausted. When we had rested a while the
black boy turned on a display of stamina I have yet to see equalled. . . . He draped the pig round his squat shoulders like a fur coat and carried it the rest of the way himself. I staggered along under the burden of two packs, two guns and the birds. We arrived at Boepel covered in mud, blood and sweat, and carried the spoils across the river to the pastor's house. He hurried out when he saw us, and insisted on hearing all the gory details. Feeling very self-conscious under my grime I nonetheless managed to share his dinner before returning to the camp.

May 20th: It was mid-week at Boepel: all the teenagers were in school, and the monotony of the deserted camp was fraying the nerves of all concerned. With characteristic suddenness, I decided to "go bush" on stand down and went down to the village to collect my No. 1 boy Paolus. He was asleep when I found him—"sakit sama malaria" he insisted, but I finally persuaded him to meet me at dusk at the hunting hut.

After paddling my way across the river (now very low) I strolled comfortably over the five miles to the hut. By this time I knew every rise, every creek, every log along the way. I never felt lonely in that bit of jungle—in fact, I suppose I had a sort of affection for it. The way was filled with memories, and every point of recognition warmed my heart.

The clearing was very quiet when I arrived. The sky was overcast, the birds had stopped singing, and everything seemed to point to a storm at nightfall. I strapped on my cartridge belt, remembering with annoyance that I had given away my knife a few days before. It was an old standby, and I suddenly regretted parting with it.

I wandered up my old hunting trail, looking for signs. Here was the spot where I shot my first boreng koening, here, where Gerardoes and I sat down to wait for pig; and there, above me now, the withered remnants of my para para, high up in the dancing tree . . .

I turned back to the main trail and followed it to the next stream. There I stopped and hunted for lobsters in the clear, shadowed waters of the pool. None obliged me by appearing, so I retraced my steps to camp, shooting down some coconuts on the way.

It was dusk now and I built a fire into the end of a log. A little later I rigged my mosquito net, rolled a cigarette and waited for Paolus. It was lonely waiting, but the chattering stream and the jungle sounds kept me company till I heard the boy yodelling a welcome. Paolus, my soedarah yang baik, who would not see me in the jungle alone. We were both hungry, so gnawed away at the coconuts before retiring.

We awoke at dawn and set off immediately for the distant spot which Jeremias and I had visited previously. Paolus told me that of all the boys only Jeremias and he knew the trails in that part of the jungle. As we left the Kali Bian trail the boy started to lop off branches as we went along. Every few yards he placed a green branch in the middle of the trail, and at every fork repeated this procedure. About eight o'clock we
crawled through the bamboo tunnels into the rain forest where the dancing trees grew—only to find that the birds had dispersed and begun to feed.

Despite the fact that shots are rare under these conditions, I decided to wait an hour or so—it seemed pointless to have walked so far to no purpose. Paolus, who was complaining of headaches, asked permission to return to the hunting hut, to collect his bow and try for pig. Confident in my ability to follow the home trail I gave my consent and settled down to wait for shots.

No targets presented themselves, so after two hours I started back through the bamboo tunnels. I made quite good progress, reaching the coconut grove crossroads at noon. At this stage I, too, became dizzy, so hacked down a few large leaves, propped myself up against the base of a palm and passed out.

It was mid-afternoon when I woke. Still semi-conscious, I circled the grove to pick up the outward trail. I had five choices—two marked with twigs, both of which I tried. One led straight to the steep-banked stream (which I recognised) at a spot which I could not recollect. At this stage I fired three shots, reasoning that Paolus, five miles away, would hear them and work towards me. It later turned out that Paolus was at Boepel at this time, sleeping off an attack of malaria.

This, then, was trouble—and I knew it. I reasoned that only a villager would blaze such a trail, that I had definitely crossed such a creek and so, ergo, the trail must lead at least in the direction of Boepel. So, choosing the lesser of two evils, I followed the marked trail, thereby becoming hopelessly lost.

A storm was working up, and I was now really groggy. I decided that rather than complicate matters for a search party I would camp on the spot: I had just four rounds left.

For the first time in many hours I looked at my legs. It took me minutes to remove each leech, and every leech-hole bled. It was getting black now, and I could sense the storm working closer. After drinking from a tiny brook I picked a tree with raised roots, and set about building a shelter.

Using saplings nearby and fibre ropes from parasitic vines, I lashed a framework, then plaited in thousands of huge leaves. On the floor I used long, narrow billets covered with another dense layer of leaves, and had just completed this when the storm broke.

It is sufficient to say that it was a really mighty storm. Yet, despite the rain, the wind, the acute awareness of my precarious position, I felt neither worried nor afraid. I remember resigning myself to the fact that I stood a chance of being a permanent neighbour for the cassowaries if I had been roaming away from Boepel, but something seemed to tell me I was not far off-course. Secure and even warm in my primitive shelter I curled up among the leaves and slept.

Next morning I woke at daylight and heard, to my colossal joy—a shot. Mr. Lee-Enfield’s pride and joy has never sounded more beautiful.
Immediately I loaded my own vis a vis and fired a reply. A few minutes later another shot came, this time closer, which I also answered: inside half an hour Gerardoes and two other boys ran into my clearing.

The search party had a story of its own: the previous evening some of the chaps became anxious on my behalf, had made enquiries and found Paolus—still sick but very conscience-stricken—who volunteered to guide them to me. They set out at the height of the storm, and told of a nightmare trip through solid rain and thrashing jungle; of an encounter with a huge python which they killed; and of how Paolus, back-tracking me to the coconut grove was attacked by a taipan7 at the very spot I had left some hours before. The shot which I had heard was fired at some coconuts for food and was not a signal. Gerardoes had guessed the significance of the return shot and followed the others to my position.

For weeks afterwards “getting lost” stories were the vogue in Boepel. Everyone seemed to have had a relative or friend who had followed the wrong trail with or without fatal consequences. To this day, however, no one has been able to explain the significance of the broken twig trail that led to a dead end or the reason why the most faithful and best of black boys headed straight for home instead of to the hunting hut as arranged. I can only believe that he was as confident in my ability to back-track as
I was myself, and that in this way I became the victim of my own foolhardiness.

Because of his heroism in continuing with the search after the attack of the taipan, Paolus' name is recorded for posterity in the Daily Routine Orders of the unit, which will doubtless provide interesting reading for future generations of clerks at Air Force Headquarters.

2. This was the “tempat Hari”—Day time play tree of the yellow birds.
3. Literally “sick with malaria.”
4. Yellow bird.
5. Fern room for shooting.
6. Literally “good companion.”
7. Deadliest of New Guinea snakes (has dog teeth).

Brumbies

With surf-sweeping manes the Brumbies come down the duned tidal shore: Their blood is stung by salty sand and winds from a dormant land where geldings pick on gutted hills in dumb demand and kneel at sunset for war-painted braves that died: But here they fling their foaming crests in naked pride above rearing breakers, and shrill a challenging neigh to the moon of free horses riding in a stallion way of arched conquest: Nostrils hurl a smoky flare at the fisted wind that strikes a whistling mare. Brumbies: Brumbies: Streaming down the dunes and I the bright thickness of their veins, the tunes of crying wind in manes: I the chest, the haunch, the foreleg, lunge and plunge and laugh and launch.

—ELEANOR COOKE.