Australian Literature

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H. M. Green

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Author's Note

To give an account of what is by far the greatest and most important part of Australian literature in a booklet of this size is difficult. The difficulty increases when the term 'literature' is interpreted, as it is here, widely enough to include all types of literary work that have contributed to the national culture; yet otherwise an incomplete impression would be conveyed. In the sections that deal with works of 'applied' literature, the subjective element that attaches to all criticism must be comparatively large, because such works have to be judged by several standards, and these sometimes conflict. Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to provide a true perspective, whatever differences of opinion there may be about detail and instance, and a running review in which the need of compression shall not squeeze out the interest and life. The author is indebted, sometimes heavily, to several friends who have been kind enough to help and advise in sections of the 'applied' literature in which they are experts and he is not. Nevertheless all opinions expressed here are ultimately his own, and for any mistakes of fact or idea he alone is responsible. For dates and other details he is often indebted to such works of reference as *Who's Who in Australia,* Serle's *Dictionary of Australian Biography,* and Morris Miller's *Australian Literature from its Beginnings to 1935* [another edition, revised and extended to 1950, published 1956, edited by Frederick T. Macartney].

It has seemed best to make all references in the text as general as possible, leaving specific references for the most part to the bibliography. Nevertheless the bibliography aims at simplicity rather than completeness. The reader is warned that both text and bibliography mention only works considered representative or otherwise important for the purposes of this review, and that many of them are out of print, though they should all be obtainable at the larger libraries.

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Introductory

Almost all that is distinctive and by far the most that really matters in Australian literature belong to the half-century that is now ending; broadly speaking, that is, for it was with the later nineties that the period actually began. Before that there had been a few forerunners, but they had been isolated, in a society in which a national literature would have been impossible because national characteristics, national unity, and a national consciousness had not yet been attained. But a foundation was now laid, and upon it arose a literature that from the beginning may fairly be called Australian. It is split horizontally by a line of demarcation between the products of peace and national development and of wars and fears of wars; and it is split perpendicularly by the difference between 'applied' literature, whose principal object is the conveying of facts and ideas, and 'pure' literature, whose object is largely aesthetic, and in which a much greater part is played by the personality of the writer. But many works lie across the boundaries of these literatures, and the divisions between them are not fundamental.

Various causes combined in a young and vigorous community to promote at the turn of the century a consciousness of democratic nationhood. This was the matrix, but the literature that came out of it was stimulated by the renascence, as distinguished from the decadence, of the English 'Nineties', and organized and guided by the Sydney *Bulletin*, on which J. F. Archibald and his sub-editors, and A. G. Stephens, editor of the *Bulletin's* 'Red Page', corresponded to some extent with Henley and his 'young men'. This literature was, as might have been expected in the circumstances, vital, individual, simple and sometimes rather crude, and its insistence upon nationality gave even some of its best work a rather provincial air. It was a remarkable product, nevertheless. In its short stories, especially Lawson's, and in its ballads, especially Paterson's, it may be said to have made a contribution to world literature. Curiously enough, however, it reached its highest point in the work of a novelist, 'Henry Handel Richardson', and a poet, Christopher Brennan, neither of whom had anything to do with the literary movement of the Australia of their day. Not long after

the ending of the first World War, with the gradual realization that it had not after all been the war to end all wars, and with the depression that soon followed, a change of attitude set in, which was accentuated by the arrival of the second World War and by growing fears of a third. In the literature that arose in these conditions, self-confidence was qualified by a realization that the world had become much more difficult and dangerous, and that Australia was an inescapable part of it. Leaders in all spheres began to look beyond their own shores, and to take into account new ideas, methods and fashions. What was written became much more sophisticated, concerned more with the revelation of character and personality by means of psychological analysis than with action for its own sake and the revelation of character through action. Writers became much better craftsmen, and in particular they learned much more of the art and craft of fiction. The defeatism of T. S. Eliot has found little kinship and few echoes in this country, but, broadly speaking, an unillusioned realism has taken the place of the romanticism of the earlier generations.

2

Ballad-verse and Poetry

The national characteristics that began to ripen just before the turn of the century were most marked in the ballad, and after that in the short story. The Australian ballad was a part of the modern revival of this form under the leadership of Kipling; but it derived more immediately from Gordon, and from that poor relation of the European folk-ballad, the Old Bush Song. At its most characteristic it is as fresh and individual as a sunlit stream into which gumleaves have fallen, and carries with it an atmosphere of careless freedom and dare-devilry that is even now regarded, consciously or subconsciously, as characteristically Australian. The best and most typical of the balladists is 'Banjo' Paterson, and after him Henry Lawson, with whose verses the stream flows sometimes through deep shade. Over the hot dry country with which the ballad oftenest deals, Paterson rode but Lawson plodded, humping his swag, and the melancholy side of his temperament found more and the humorous side less expression in his ballads than in his short stories. Allied to the balladists is C. J. Dennis, who based on the recently-discovered larrikin a senti-

mental and extremely amusing extravaganza that was enormously popular in its day. Behind the balladists, far less read and less obviously Australian, though still affected by the nationalistic movement, came the bulk of the poets, lyrical or lyrically descriptive; and away in the background, with a few exceptions scarcely read at all, were a number of more or less reflective poets, and in particular three intellectuals, with whom we shall deal later on. Among the most popular of the early lyrists were Victor Daley, who stands in Australia for the spirit of old-world romance; and Roderic Quinn, a 'nature poet' who possessed a certain intuitive quality that enabled him to pierce a little below the surface now and then. A few years later, though it was much longer before they became recognized, appeared the two finest pure lyrists that the country has produced. Shaw Neilson, though for the greater part of his life a bush labourer, contrived somehow to write the most delicate and ethereal of lyrics. Nature did not appeal to him, but he used it to convey glimpses of unattainable beauty, which he was always seeking. Men in general did not appeal to him either, but he wrote some warm and tender ballads, mostly about children, young lovers, and aged or unhappy people. The poetry of the second of these two, Hugh McCrae, is as different from Neilson's as a violoncello from a flute. The beauty that he worships is not supernal, but a glorification of earth and flesh. Neilson's versecraft is sufficient, even amazing in the circumstances, but McCrae is the most accomplished verbal artist of his generation; an artist in several senses, for his poetry proceeds with a rich and sensuous music through scenes and actions that are bright with colour and a succession of lovely images. His vigour and appetite for life are such that he is able to renew with fresh vitality conventional forms and types and institutions. Of the innumerable lyrically descriptive poets, there is room here to mention only J. Le Gay Brereton, a kindly and human nature-mystic, with a natural but extremely individual style. Among the lyrists of the second half of the century a woman, Judith Wright, is supreme. She is also, except for the much older Mary Gilmore, easily supreme among Australian women poets, and, along with the leading intellectuals, she represents in her different way the height of Australia's contribution to the poetry of today. Judith Wright is, in the main, a poet of love, but from a woman's point of view; from the point of view at any rate of simple, normal and adult woman, to whom the centre is not, as with almost all romantic and most other poets, the act of love, so much as what is to come of it: not the lover, but the child.

Everything she writes is charged with thought, yet she is essentially a lyrist, because life and thought sing through her veins in music. For 'Bullocky', 'The Company of Lovers', 'Woman to Man', and 'The Unborn', Australian comparisons are insufficient.

After Judith Wright comes a gap. Kenneth Mackenzie and T. Inglis Moore deal also in the main with love: the one sophisticated, sensuous, unimpassioned; the other fresher, comparatively simple beneath a façade of sophistication. And there is Ronald McCuaig, in one aspect a witty and whimsical virtuoso in the manner of some of the seventeenth-century love-lyrists; in another an ironic observer, a little in Eliot's manner, of the life of city clerks and typists. More noteworthy is Douglas Stewart, an example of the crossing of the literatures of Australia and New Zealand: his poems possess a gay, exuberant freshness, a humour that is dashed with irony, and a whimsical fancy that is often delightful though merely flippant sometimes. Peter Hopegood, who ranges in prose and verse over philology and comparative ethnology, is incidentally a maker of songs and ballads based on those of the folk, the best of which recreate in his own manner something of the magic, the haunting mystery, the cryptic wisdom with which his researches are often concerned. And Harold Stewart is perhaps the most talented and certainly the most painstaking and elaborate verbal artist among the Australian poets of today. The luminous atmosphere of his subtle and delicate poems has something about it of the feeling of Chinese painting upon silk.

Of the poetry that arose out of the first World War, that of Leon Gellert has not been equalled in this country. The second World War has not yielded its full poetic harvest yet, but one poem of Slessor's, based on a memory of El Alamein, compares with all but Gellert's very best.

Curiously enough, in a literature that as a whole is not remarkable for intellectual content or background, most of the outstanding poets have been intellectuals. Of these the first to become prominent was Bernard O'Dowd. In his earlier work he was hamstrung by the conviction that poetry ought to be a mere handmaid to social teaching: his verses plodded slowly forward with metronomic beat, laden with a swag of science and sociology, through what would have been a dry waste but for the poet's impressive personality and fiery conviction, the occasional gleam of some gnomic epigram, and a few short poems that would seem to have been written almost in spite of himself. At last, however, in two long poems, O'Dowd's enthusiasm burned through his theories, leaving

him free for a glowing rhapsody about the bush, in which he saw reflected his country and its glorious future; and an even more glowing rhapsody addressed to the goddess of love and life. The first brought O'Dowd a wide circle of readers; the second, lacking local colour and patriotic appeal, has been unjustifiably neglected. Another of the intellectuals was William Baylebridge, whose considerable poetic talent was handicapped by artificialities and an inveterate propensity for borrowing both ideas and methods of expression, which he nevertheless contrived to make very largely his own. His highest achievements are a sequence of love-sonnets, whose style is markedly Elizabethan, but which contain passages of considerable beauty, and a set of metaphysical and moral poems on the origin and destiny of man. In each case Baylebridge rises at times above his limitations and becomes dignified, lofty and sonorous, the creator of an individual beauty. The third of the intellectuals, Christopher Brennan, is now beginning to be recognized as the first of Australian poets. A man of deeper thought and greater poetic power than either of the others, he lacks O'Dowd's fiery sociological and patriotic enthusiasm, and his poems are on the face of them a gloomy and self-centred monologue. But the protagonist in his best work is not the poet merely but everyman, and the overwhelming personality, the indomitable courage with which misfortune is confronted, and the rhythm and language that convey them are such that, especially in Brennan's longest and finest poem, 'The Wanderer', the reader, becoming identified for the time with a so much larger and deeper personality, is, in the Aristotelian manner, purged of his own misfortunes and his own mediocrity. Mary Gilmore shares some of the characteristics of the intellectuals and possesses also a marked lyrical gift. She combines warm humanity and a natural and un-selfconscious simplicity with a wisdom that finds expression here and there in utterances as gnomic as O'Dowd's, though of a quite different kind; some of her work is in the front rank of Australian poetry. Frank Wilmot and Frederick Macartney link not only the intellectuals and the lyrists, but also the poetry of the two halves of the century. Wilmot's disposition was based uneasily upon an impulse towards natural lyrism, which produced some beautiful poems of the bush, and a tormented vision of man's self-made unhappiness, which reached its climax in several terrible poems of war. But he had also a strong and critical sense of humour, and in later life he wrote a series of satires by which perhaps he is most likely to be remembered. Macartney is a lighter weight than Wilmot, but his

poetry is more modern in tone, and it has a wit and artistry and at its best a charm that Wilmot's does not possess.

Brennan, though his thought was often subtle and complicated, can scarcely be called a sophisticated poet; there is a comparatively youthful air about the enthusiasms of Wilmot and O'Dowd; and Baylebridge is almost naïve in his efforts to find fitting expression for ideas that he felt confident were profound. But the work of at least the leading Australian poets of today belongs obviously to a later, a more adult, a comparatively wordly-wise civilization. Yet it is only, setting aside a few minor poets, in Kenneth Slessor that the influence of the leader of the moderns in poetry has been marked, and Slessor has finally worked free into a style and attitude that are modern and at the same time strikingly individual. With him the comparative lack of illusion that distinguishes the Australian poets of today from their predecessors has become disillusion. But he differs from the Elioteans in the vital energy with which he gives vent to the bitterness of his conception of life. He reached his full powers in 'Five Bells', an elegy on a friend of his early youth who was drowned at sea: a savage outburst, directed against not merely the death of an old friend and his last agony, but death itself. Equally savage in his disillusion, but without any relationship to Eliot, is Alec Hope, who has not yet collected his poems in book-form. To Hope, man is a vulgar and absurd little exhibitionist, who seeks release from a trivial and monotonous world in radio burble and comic adventure strip. His main preoccupation is with sexual love, and he sees life from somewhat of a Swiftian point of view. In 'The Damnation of Byron', he marches forward with a slow and solemn dignity through a world of gloom and horror upon waves of rhythm that are filled with individuality and power.

The third of today's intellectual poets, James McAuley, though younger than any of the others, is extremely mature; in his restraint, order, control, he may be regarded as a classic, one of the very few that Australia has produced. The outstanding characteristic of his poetry is a brooding and highly individual music, and its leading idea is that of rhythmic change through the ages, brought about by the creative imagination. But the most important of the intellectual poets of today is undoubtedly R. D. FitzGerald; except Brennan, he is indeed the most important poet that Australia has yet produced. His work blows like a fresh wind across this jaded and disillusioned world. Idealistic without sentimentality, he finds in man a heroic quality that it is nowadays the

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fashion—at least among the intellectuals—to ignore. Metaphysically, he surveys life as a unity, as the past continues through the present; or still looking backward, he sketches historical characters in an atmosphere of adventurous action that brightens all his work. Of the other intellectuals, Leonard Mann is a humanist and a reformer. His experience of war and depression has given a sombre colouring to his verses, but he retains a hope and an enthusiasm that are as indomitable as FitzGerald's. Rosemary Dobson, a poet of quiet humour and individual fantasy, seems to be emerging from an abstract into a more human world. William Hart-Smith, another example of the crossing of the literatures of Australia and New Zealand, in an imaginative and sometimes fascinating sequence of poems upon Christopher Columbus, reflects the impulse towards seaborne adventure that was begun in this country by Slessor and given fresh impetus and direction by FitzGerald. This impulse has been felt by Rosemary Dobson, by Douglas Stewart, and by several of the younger poets. Those who have felt it do not, however, form a school; indeed Australian writers, of prose or verse, do not tend to flock together. The only schools in Australian poetry, after the Balladists, have been the Jindyworobaks and the Angry Penguins. The first represents an extreme of Australianism. The Jindyworobaks contend that even poetic images should be purely Australian, and that Australian writers should draw upon the culture, art and song of the aborigines. The other school represents a translation into Australia of the New Apocalyptic movement in Britain; it was guilty of some absurdities, but its work was filled with a youthful and confident vigour.

Among the lesser-known poets of today, the most interesting are David Campbell, Francis Webb, and Brian Vrepont.

3

The Short Story

The short story developed along with the ballad. Its range has since widened and its methods have been modernized, but today's Australian short stories are in the mass inferior to their predecessors, and the best of Lawson's are still the best. Like the ballad, the short story of the beginning of the century was the creation of the *Bulletin*, which still has a good deal of power over it. The *Bulletin* preferred stories of a particular kind; for example, they had to be realistic, short, concise; but within the limits laid down

contributors were allowed free play, and the more pronounced talents developed along lines of their own. Lawson showed what could be done both within and to some extent without the *Bulletin's* limitations. His stories are far superior to his verses. They are written simply and easily, with much more art than appears on the surface, and with a sympathetic understanding of every type of simple character that came within his experience; no writer of Australian fiction has created so many realistic out-back types. The tone of his prose is far brighter than that of his verse; it is sometimes sad and sometimes tragic, but in a dry ironic humour that is usually but not invariably quiet, no Australian writer has surpassed Lawson. His stories have about them something of the easy humorous humanism of the camp-fire yarn, but it is translated into terms of art, and a few of the best of them deserve a place in any fairly large world-anthology. Henry Handel Richardson's short stories belong to this period, but they are outliers, connected only very slightly with their time and place. They represent a mere 'shaving from a great artist's workshop'. The only published collection consists, setting aside the titlepiece, which is a kind of postscript to *Richard Mahony,* of a series of sketches of girlhood, all of which are graceful and some lovely, and several stories set in Germany or Alsace, which have something of the tragic power of the two principal novels. Richardson has had no successors and no influence: Lawson has had both, but few of his immediate successors attempted, like him, direct transcripts from life, regarding it as a rule through humorous or tragic glasses. 'Steele Rudd' deals with the poorest and most primitive type of 'cocky' farmer and his family. A little of his early work is tragic, but it is the humorous side of this sort of life that is emphasized in the main. Steele Rudd's is a crude insensitive humour, based on action and incident, which tends to degenerate into broad farce; but at least his principal characters are within their limits lifelike, indeed memorable, and his sketches are individual, and firmly drawn and vigorous in the extreme. Barbara Baynton emphasized on the contrary the tragic aspect of outback life, dwelling upon the ugly and cruel and so isolating it from all alleviation as to produce an effect of nightmare. 'Price Warung' told of the horrors of the convict system, not romantically, as Clarke had done, but with a hard and gloomy realism, in a style that may be called journalistically documentary, though it is vivid and not without a touch of rather melodramatic imagination. The Pacific tales of Louis Becke, romantic in theme and setting, are

in tone and handling matter-of-fact. Becke was remarkably fertile in action and incident; he knew as well as anyone how to tell a story and could handle a tragic climax with considerable power; but his men and women are simple types that recur and recur, and they are sketched always from without.

Among the short stories of today the 'Australian' influence is still powerful, especially among those which appear in the *Bulletin,* but the power has ebbed a little; most writers of fiction turn naturally to the novel, and, if they use the other form, use it only as a side-line. Nevertheless, some of the most memorable of today's short stories are the work of established novelists and share the fundamental qualities of their novels. This is exemplified in the stories of Katharine Prichard, but there is little in them which can match the comparable parts of the best of her other work. They are set in the countryside, among types that are different from Lawson's; she shares his democratic sympathies but has little humour and prefers sharply-marked tragedy. Vance Palmer on the other hand is better in his short stories than in all but a very few of his novels; compression suits his talent, which is inclined to spend itself in analysis at the expense of action. Frank Davison is as good a craftsman as any and perhaps nearer to Lawson than most; his individuality is marked but his scope is not great. For the rest, Cecil Mann, leisurely allusive, quietly humorous, has a certain dreamlike quality and deals mostly with evocations from the past. 'Brian James' is in the line of succession from Steele Rudd as well as Lawson, but he is quieter than Rudd, less extravagant, and also less individual. Alan Marshall reaches a higher level now and then; he has something of a romantic touch: these two stick mainly to the countryside. Gavin Casey and Don Edwards deal in harder, drier styles with the town mainly, and mine or factory. As talented as any is Dal Stivens, but he tends to treat his men and women as though they were bodies on the dissecting table. The only writer of war stories who need be mentioned here is Harley Matthews, who has revealed to the life the average 'hard doer' in the ranks of the first A.I.F.

4

The Novel

The highest achievements of Australian literature are, as has been seen, by no means invariably the most 'Australian' in tone. This fact is less evident in prose than in poetry, as distinct from ballad-

verse, but even in prose there is the obvious example of Henry Handel Richardson. The novels of the early part of the half-century were, generally speaking, wordy, discursive, and lacking in structure, but these qualities are very far from being characteristic of her work. She left Australia as a girl of seventeen, but her first novel was conceived and partly written before she settled in England, and all the others except the last, which does not concern us, were based on Australian experience, supplemented in one case by visits to Australia and historical documents consulted here. Richardson was not interested in local colour as such, though she advised young Australians to write of their own country, but in creating characters who belong to the life of the world rather than of any particular part of it. *Maurice Guest* is a chapter of youthful passion and disillusion, recorded by a person of imaginative vision who is yet relentless in the pursuit of the exact truth. *The Getting of Wisdom* has been called the best of all contemporary school stories, and this is if anything an understatement, partly because here also, as indeed in all Richardson's work, nothing is allowed to divert the author from the truth as she sees it, or as her principal character sees it. But *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* represents the highest peak of Richardson's achievement, and of the achievement of the Australian novel. It is the tragedy of a conflict between the central character and his circumstances, or, in the last resort, himself; it is in the great tragic tradition, and upholds it. This is one of the world's great novels, and if one hesitates to call its author a great novelist, that is because of the comparatively small bulk of her work and its comparatively narrow range. Joseph Furphy belongs to Australia as Richardson belongs to the world; he is indeed, as he remarked of his masterpiece, 'offensively Australian'. But he is a man of one book; even apart from the fact that the subsidiary novels, or the gist of them, were part originally of the great mass from which *Such is Life* was quarried, they are comparatively insignificant. Furphy is far more representative than Richardson. Like Lawson, he reflects the Australianism of his day, but the emphasis is quite different; whereas with Lawson it is its mateship, with Furphy it is its assertion of rights. Furphy's work possesses an intellectual content and background that Lawson's lacks, and it flows with a stronger current of life. But it is narrow and parochial, as Lawson's is not; and though in his quite different way Furphy is for good and evil a stylist, he is diffuse and digressive and never such a master of style as Lawson

at his best. *Such is Life* remains however the most original and vigorous novel that has come out of this country. Two other novelists whose work, though published later, belongs to the same day, reflect, though in a manner that is quite different from Furphy's, the Australian countryside. Both are extremely feministic; the second is a woman and the first appears to be a woman, or women, though her identity remains concealed. The Australian novels of 'Brent of Bin Bin' constitute a rambling and discursive saga that opens with the taking-up of the first runs in south-eastern New South Wales and extends beyond the first World War. They are not a work of art but an unorganized extract from life, and the style in which they are written is sometimes clumsy and in its affected polysyllabics even excruciating; but the conversations at least are real and the men and women are typical and very much alive. Miles Franklin deals in a somewhat similar manner with the same types in the same settings, and it has been suggested that she had something to do with the writing of the Bin Bin books; but her work cannot compare with the best of these, except in the principal character of her principal novel, who is one of the most living and original in Australian fiction. Another woman writer is Mrs Aeneas Gunn, best known for a piece of autobiography treated in the manner of fiction, which gives a visitor's impression of station life and characters in part of the Northern Territory. They are sketched with realism, humour and a romantic sympathy that becomes at times very sentimental; but the book is so alive and interesting that it has deserved the wide reading that some of the others deserve and have not obtained. With Louis Stone we turn from the country to the city. *Jonah* is the classic of the larrikin, as the Bin Bin books are classics of station life. It consists of two quite different kinds of story welded together incongruously; but the larrikin part, and in particular Chook and his Pinkey, are delightfully though romantically real; and Mrs Yabsley, the enormous illiterate washerwoman who saw everything that happened in her neighbourhood and commented upon it with ironic wisdom, is almost beyond praise. Stone's only other novel shares the faults and some of the merits of *Jonah*. The novels of W. G. Hay are all historical, and almost entirely based, like Clarke's masterpiece, upon the cruelties and sufferings of 'The System'. But Hay deals with mental rather than physical sufferings, and his principal novel is a tragedy of nervous strain, written in a highly artificial and allusive style, full of mannerisms and reminiscent of Meredith, occasionally obscure but with considerable power.

In the novel of today the current of Australianism still runs strong, though more and more writers are being attracted to the comparatively cosmopolitan cities. Freud and Joyce and the neo-barbaric school in America have had comparatively little effect upon our leading writers, but they have felt the influence of the saga novel and the tendency to run to an immense length; this indeed had already shown itself in Furphy, Bin Bin and Franklin. It will be convenient to group roughly today's novelists according as they stand out by reason of their artistry or of their vitality and force. But these two groups naturally overlap, particularly in the work of the chief Australian novelist today, Katharine Prichard; she is on the whole surpassed only by Henry Handel Richardson, and, in another way and with qualifications that are not unimportant, by the author of *Such is Life*. She is deliberately 'Australian', but she is neither narrow nor provincial, and in her width of democratic sympathy she traces back to Lawson rather than Furphy. She is much more of an artist than Furphy, and understands how to construct a novel, but though vigorous enough, she has neither Furphy's humour nor his vital and compelling personality. Her *Working Bullocks,* a story of timbergetters in the Western Australian forests, is as near to the soil as *Such is Life;* and *Coonardoo* is another Australian classic: a story of the long hard struggle with heat and dust and loneliness on a far outback station, through which runs an idyll that ends in bitter tragedy. Kylie Tennant, almost a generation younger than Katharine Prichard, has much in common with her; but instead of being predominantly serious, she has an all-pervading sense of humour, and writes of the city as well as the countryside. She carries even farther her sympathy with the less fortunate, dealing typically not with the worker but with those who are out of work, on the bare fringes of society. Her novels are extremely vital, but neglectful of construction. To the same group, in its self-consciousness nearer to Furphy and to some early work by Miles Franklin, but without Furphy's aggressive Australianism or representative capacity, belongs the single novel of Eve Langley, a picaresque and self-centred, sometimes sentimental record of the experiences of two adventurous sisters on the Victorian countryside; it is rich in incident and character and abundant in life. Allied with the group in virtue of a vigour and an Australianism that are however quite different in quality and not traceable along any literary lines is the work of four other writers. Leonard Mann is the author of the best novel that has hitherto arisen out of either World War,

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