Foreword

The response to Australian New Writing has been exhilarating. From all over Australia, and New Zealand, letters came in, from battle fronts and war plants, universities and coal-mines—an astonishing amount of written and spoken comment, as critical as it was encouraging.

Indignation, praise, ridicule. Popular support has shown us how necessary we were to stimulate a more lively literar in literary affairs. It appears that what our readers demand is new writing that is really new—in the sense of having something vital to say about present-day ideas, trends and problems. They have shown themselves less concerned with niceties of style, highly-polished techniques than material that gets down to fundamentals. Fresh winds blow strongly; with the armed forces, which points to one of the most urgent of manuscript received is our justification.

We welcome a well-known writer in William Hatfield, whose theme, we believe, would not have been acceptable to any other Australian publication. This is consistent with our policy, which is to present the work of both established writers and those struggling for print, providing they have something worth saying.

Ken Levis, whose short story "The Artist's Touch" was one of the most popular contributions, is represented with the story that won last year's Henry Lawson prize at Sydney University. This is the second year in succession he has pulled off this prize. Most of the critics seemed to miss the point of his first story, drawing attention only to his descriptive ability. Its implications were definitely modern, revealing a new factor in Australian country life—the effects of large-scale capitalist industry, which drives the bush craftsmen down into the ranks of unskilled labor. From a literary point of view, "Inbred" is possibly a better title, something worth saying.

It was something of a shock to discover a poem of ours in Hansard. Replying to attacks on miners issuing from the comfortably-padded seats of the Opposition, Mr. Gowley declared, "We may not be so ready to condemn the coal-miners," he said. "Perhaps honorable members opposite have fallen back upon this book, it is still timely."

We were taken to task for appearing to have given editorial endorsement to Noel Hutton's article, "Art and the Working Class," which called forth, among much critical and hostile comment, a reply from John Rock, secretary of the Melbourne Contemporary Art Society (see page 48). This time we leave it to the readers to endorse the conflicting views of our three critical articles. Y. G. O'Connor's analysis of Sir Lindsay's "Addled Apron" may seem to be fingering a dead horse. It is unfortunate we were unable to publish it earlier, but as the artists' opponents of William Dobell, in the Archibald Prize controversy have fallen back upon this book, it is still timely.

Yet one or two hyper-sensitive critics want to turn us into a magazine for the "intelligentsia," publishing sophisicated and eccentric material for their amusement. We aim at a broader appeal, recalling Bernard O'Dowd's declaration back in 1929, "There is new writing that is really new—in the sense of having something vital to say about present-day ideas, trends and problems. They have shown themselves less concerned with niceties of style, highly-polished techniques than material that gets down to fundamentals. Fresh winds blow strongly; with the armed forces, which points to one of the most urgent of our three critical articles. Y. G. O'Connor's analysis of Sir Lindsay's "Addled Apron" may seem to be fingering a dead horse. It is unfortunate we were unable to publish it earlier, but as the artists' opponents of William Dobell, in the Archibald Prize controversy have fallen back upon this book, it is still timely.

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In these words of the great Frére Schwartzenberg, who was murdered last year in a Nazi concentration camp, for his "partisan" views:

"Art, in truth, is always involved in the battle of its age, even when it pretends to retire from the fight under the childish slogan of 'not for art's sake.' The very act of retiring from the battle, whether one realizes it or not, means that, like Pilate, one is washing one's hands of social injustice and tacitly consenting to the crushing of the oppressed."

We believe that the best tribute we can pay to the genius of Bolland, who long ago renounced his theory of remaining "above the battle," is to emulate his active opposition to the social cancer of Fascism.