

"CRITICISM NUMBER"

"But the critic . . .
Still comes with his little envious span,
A hollow phrase and a measuring rod."

—Harindranath Chattopadaya.

FOREWORD

A REVIEWER has suggested, after perusing the first number of *Meanjin Papers*, that it might presage the beginning of a new literary movement in this State. That is kindly and encouraging comment, but such was not our intention when we commenced publication; indeed, under present-day socio-political conditions we could scarcely hope for such success to attend our venture. Our main object in presenting the *Papers* was to give expression to the best available literary work by Queensland writers—contemporary prose and poetry which cannot find publication elsewhere. (The fact that it is so may be a sad indictment of our national culture but it is nevertheless true. Reasons why this "culture decline" is so profound and widespread may form the subject of an essay in a later issue.) However, as a correspondent has rightly emphasised, one must publish to be known: hence the burden of these booklets. Whether we can continue publication is of course problematical; publishers of this sort of thing are now beset with ever-increasing difficulties, of which a shrinking public demand is not the least worrying. But we will persevere—for the first number met with an encouraging reception, and a deal of sincere interest has been aroused in other States as well as locally. And please note, all of you who remember the fate of so many "literary" ventures published in this country during past years, we have actually printed Number 2 of Volume 1, to the utter confoundment of the pessimists. Quite a memorable achievement!

In this issue Mr. Picot's essay strikes a distinctive critical note. The editor, in affording it hospitality, hopes that the accompanying poems by Joseph O'Dwyer, Paul Grano and Brian Vrepont will be discovered to provide interesting and challenging foils to the author's contentions. Admirers of that often interesting genre, the Bush Ballad (of the vigorous, the "virile", if that is inferred to mean the crudely so, indeed in expression most imperfectly so) may be disappointed in these pages; but we cannot feel that any mystification or annoyance they may experience as they turn them over will of necessity be shared by those who are genuinely alive to the present-day Australian and world tendencies in the field of letters.

—C.B.C.