MEMORANDUM TO Miss Pamela Green,
Rare Book Librarian,
FISHER LIBRARY.


The candidate has successfully completed the requirements for the degree.

R.B. Fisher,
Registrar

Ref. Miss Noble/JD/S
LITERATURE AND THE READING PUBLIC IN AUSTRALIA

1800 - 1850:

A Study of the Growth and Differentiation of a Colonial Literary Culture During the Earlier Nineteenth Century

ELIZABETH ANNE WEBBY

VOLUME I
OF FOUR VOLUMES

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sydney

August 1971
The British nation is characteristically designated "a reading People"; and wherever they spread themselves—however distant from their native land circumstances may carry them—their native attribute remains rather increased than diminished.

Introduction to the *Austral-Asiatic Review*, No. 1, February 1828.

I may perhaps be rewarded for my trouble with a smile of contempt, if I tell you that here, in Sydney, the capital of Botany Bay, there are many who have already enrolled their names among the fraternity of authors—that we have our historians, our poets, our novel-writers, our writers on theology, on law, and astronomy, our reviewers, our naturalists, our public lecturers; also, our museum, public libraries, colleges, schools, mechanics' school of arts, debating societies, commercial reading-rooms, several booksellers' shops, and last, though not least, our editors and daily newspapers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Most of the material for this thesis has come from a complete reading of newspapers, magazines and literary works published in Australia before 1850, supplemented by research into manuscript letters and diaries. Hence my chief debt is to the trustees and staff of the following institutions who so readily and ably assisted me in my work, either in person or through inter-library loan.

The Archives Department of New South Wales.
The Library of New South Wales.
Fisher Library, University of Sydney.
The National Library, Canberra.
The State Library of Tasmania.
The Archives Department of Tasmania.
The Allport Library, Hobart.
Archives Section, University of Tasmania Library.
La Trobe Library, Melbourne.
The Public Library of Victoria.
The Battye Library, Perth.
The University of Western Australia Library.
The State Library of South Australia.
The Public Library of South Africa.

Sir William Crowther of Hobart also very kindly allowed me to see his unique complete copy of the Hobart Town Magazine.
The difficulties of such a study would, of course, have been much greater without the invaluable guides of Sir John Ferguson's *Bibliography of Australia* and Morris Miller's *Australian Literature*, whilst considerable assistance has also been obtained from the volumes of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* published to date.

Early versions of Chapters I and II were published in *Southerly* in 1967 and 1969.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1866, G.B. Barton, then Reader in English Literature at Sydney University, produced his Literature in New South Wales. His introductory comments, in many respects, also outline the scope and aims of the present study:

... With us, literature requires to be considered in two aspects: first, as a native or indigenous product; and secondly, as a foreign or imported one. Too young to possess a "national literature" of our own, the consideration of foreign influence becomes an all-important one. With respect to the literary productions of the Colony, a detailed account of them will be found in subsequent pages. ... it was hoped that such a history would serve more than one useful purpose. It would enable the reader to form an exact idea of the progress, extent, and prospects of literary enterprise among us, more readily than could be done by means of any general statement; it would constitute a bibliographical account that might be practically useful, not only to those who are interested in our literature, but also to those who may hereafter be engaged in historical enquiries; it would serve to throw some light, from a new point of view, on our social history; and lastly, it would preserve the memory, and give some notion of the achievements, of men whose name could scarcely be expected to survive their generation. These were the expectations which induced the writer to enter upon such a task. The difficulties encountered in its performance were greater than would be easily believed, and must form the writer's excuse for whatever errors or omissions may be discovered. (pp.1-2)

In studying "the literary productions of the Colony" during the earlier nineteenth century, I have, like Barton, drawn most of my material from a detailed reading of all extant literary publications, including newspapers and magazines, of this period. As my emphasis, unlike his, falls on "literature and the reading public", however, I have been interested in the literature that was read as well as written in early Australia. Using evidence from auctioneers' advertisements and catalogues, booksellers' and library lists, supplemented by manuscript
letters and diaries and published reminiscences, I have attempted to show just what works were available in Australia from 1800 onwards and also, a rather more difficult task, what were the literary tastes of various classes of colonists. In so doing, I have inevitably been led into some discussion of the methods and growth of bookselling and booklending and the development of public libraries and literary institutions. Whilst both the broad scope of my topic and a concentration on imaginative literature have naturally resulted in a less than complete history of these subjects, I hope to have made some worthwhile contributions, especially in assembling material scattered through the columns of contemporary newspapers.

This inquiry into the literature that was being read in the colonies has made the consideration of "foreign influences" - mentioned by Barton in his introduction, but virtually ignored in the body of his work - bulk larger in my study than in his. The "reading public" in Australia in the early nineteenth century was nourished mainly by work published in England: in a colonist's library, the most often found authors were Scott, Goldsmith, Milton and Shakespeare; the books auctions featured all these, along with Byron and Burns, whilst the circulating libraries offered the latest productions of Dickens, Lever, Bulwer Lytton and Marryat. The extent of this "foreign influence" has not been measured before, but Appendix II indicates the vogue for various authors in terms of the number of times their works were advertised for sale. As will be seen,
Australian writers were decidedly in the minority, only a few copies of books by Charles Rowcroft or Alexander Harris being available in the eighteen-forties, in contrast to hundreds by Scott and Byron.

It will already be apparent that the aim of this investigation has not been to make a critical survey of early Australian writing; its affinities are rather with Richard Altick's *The English Common Reader. A Social History of the Mass Reading Public. 1600-1900* (1957), J.D. Hart's *The Popular Book: A History of America's Literary Taste* (1950) and H.S. Bennett's works on early English Books and Readers. My researches have not led to the discovery of hitherto unrecognised talents or to any major departures from the assessments of early Australian literature given by H.M. Green, G.A. Wilkes and others. Critical histories, even detailed ones like Green's, have, however, necessarily concentrated on the highlights of the period, generally restricting consideration to works published in volume form. But in early Australia, most original literature was printed in newspapers and magazines, and, while the quality of the work produced is fairly reflected in the separate publications, the full scope of the writers' interests is not. In particular, satirical and humorous verse, an important aspect of Australian poetry from the first "pipes" onwards, is not represented in any of the early collections of poetry, whilst the three works by Henry Savery, James Martin and Thomas McCombie give no adequate idea of the initial development of the Australian short story and
essay.

Although I have usually indicated my opinion of the authors and their works, with some emphasis on Charles Harpur, the only really significant figure of this period, my main interest has been in the typical literary concerns and styles of colonial writers. In poetry, the most popular literary form, for example, one sees the strong eighteenth-century echoes of the early verse being gradually replaced by influences from Romantic poets like Byron, Wordsworth and Shelley. Thematically, there is a growth in the number of poems on Australian topics, the greater political awareness of the eighteen-forties producing a significant increase in the proportion of local satires, the substitute for the modern newspaper's political cartoons. These qualities of early Australian verse are only fully revealed when one considers not just the few separate volumes published, but the hundreds of poems in newspapers and magazines. Accordingly, a full bibliography of the ephemeral poetry printed before 1850 has been included as an appendix, one which, echoing Barton, I hope may prove practically useful not only to those with literary interests but, for the poems' insights into contemporary attitudes to life in Australia, to historians as well. Although far fewer novels, short stories and plays were written, here, too, one sees the dominant English literary influences of the day being felt, sometimes rather belatedly, in Australia. As in England, drama was the least distinguished literary form in early Australia, local playwrights showing a similar inability to forget either the subjects or style
of the much-read Shakespeare. Besides attempting, along these lines, to give a detailed account of early Australian literature, I have tried to indicate the reactions of contemporary readers to local works, usually from newspaper and magazine reviews, and to examine opinions on colonial literature in general, both for their intrinsic interest and for their insights into prevailing literary tastes.

As one might have expected, Australian readers of this period seem to have shared the likes and dislikes of their British and American contemporaries, though much evidence has had to be drawn from the works for sale, on the assumption that these were also the ones read. There is, however, sufficient information to show that many colonists had considerable collections of often extremely high quality literature, whilst even the poorest seem to have enjoyed a good read, if only of The Newgate Calendar. By mid-century, every major settlement had some sort of public library, and nearly all important new and old literary works were available in Australia.

The literary culture of Australia during the earlier nineteenth century was still inevitably an isolated and provincial one. Nevertheless, it contained much more variety and activity than has previously been recognised. Whilst the majority of colonists may, as contemporaries so frequently complained, have served only Mammon, the Muses had their votaries too. As Barton foresaw, the names and achievements of such men and women have generally not survived their generation. Their literary tastes, projects and ideals have, however, been recreated as well as possible in the following pages.
CHAPTER I
BOOKS AND READERS: 1800 -1829

". . . a good library would be a treasure - and such an one as could not be purchased in this colony at any price . . ."¹

Although books were undoubtedly being read in Australia from 1788 onwards, there was little commercial attempt to supply works for either purchase or loan until the eighteen-twenties. Before then, colonists had generally either to remain content with whatever library they had brought out with them, perhaps augmented by occasional borrowings from friends, or to send direct to England for their reading matter. Given the expense of this and, indeed, the high cost of books themselves at the time, it is not surprising that all the evidence for the early years, and most for the 'twenties as well, reflects the literary tastes of the elite, educated and wealthy colonists - the government officials, military officers, clergy, professional men and merchants. Although a few convicts, such as Henry Savery in Tasmania, were well read and may have brought some books to Australia with them, one assumes that, on the whole, prisoners did little or no reading. Consequently, convict population figures have been left out of the tables given in Appendix I, relating growth in volumes of books advertised to growth in population. Naturally, one is also not surprised to find

¹Letter from George Allen to his brother Joseph, 15 February 1820. Original manuscript in the Mitchell Library.
that most of the books sold, borrowed and owned in this early period were by eighteenth-century authors, though by the 'twenties Scott and Byron had reached the popularity they were to retain throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. John Macarthur's favourite authors - Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Scott, Crabbe and Butler² - were also the favourites of most colonists of his class.

Most of the books in Australia, till the eighteen-twenties at least, had presumably come out from England along with their owners. This must certainly have been true of the earliest library recorded in any detail. On 23 September 1800, the Rev. Thomas Fyshe-Palmer, one of the Scottish Martyrs, made a list of the hundred or so volumes belonging to his friend, the surgeon-explorer, George Bass.³ Bass's library naturally reflected his personal and professional interests, including a large number of medical, scientific and travel books. Like most other private libraries of the period, it also contained dictionaries, magazines, works on law, history and theology, and by classical authors like Horace, Virgil and Homer. Its more modern literature was also extremely typical of the time - copies of Don Quixote, Gil Blas, Bacon's Essays, Dryden's Works and Gay's Poems - books which continued to be found

in the majority of colonial libraries even up till 1850. Since Fyshe-Palmer had attempted to give the London prices of Bass's books, John Earnshaw has suggested they may have been offered for sale in Sydney. Unfortunately, the then lack of any local advertising medium makes the substantiating of what may have been the first Australian book sale virtually impossible.

Those who had been unable to bring any books out with them, or whose literary tastes or practical needs could not be satisfied from the meagre stocks then available for purchase, had perforce to order them from London, through friends or booksellers. George Allen, who had arrived at Sydney in 1816, aged 15, and was training to be a solicitor, wrote to his brother Joseph on 15 February 1820:

... I shall close my letter by begging the favor of you to send me the law Books, a list of which you will find enclosed and marked No. 1 as they will be very useful and indeed essential to me in my profession. ... And if you are comfortably situated in life and can spare the money (not else) I should have no objection to you sending the Books a list of which I have enclosed and marked No. 2. If you can't spare the Money for all and can for some, do the best you can for me as this place is not like London for amusements, here we have neither society nor places of amusement, there is not [sic] library here to spend a few hours in; my only employment after the business of the day is to retire to my own room (for I am the only one of the family now left in Sydney) and read my books of which I am sorry to say I have but a slender stock. I am particularly fond of reading, to me it is the greatest of amusements and therefore a good Library would be a treasure - and such an one could not be purchased in this colony at any price ... 

Unfortunately, Allen did not copy the two lists he sent to his brother, so one has no record of his early literary
tastes. That he retained an interest in books is shown by his being a foundation member of the Australian Subscription Library in 1826, and a committee member from 1827 to 1829, and from 1845 to 1850.

As a slight variation on this method of obtaining books, some colonists had evidently preferred to leave their libraries in England, to be sent for when they were more settled in Australia. Thus, on 28 June 1827, Dr. John Gold, then living at Melville Island, wrote to his brother Clem:

I am glad my books are coming out, I suppose there will be some freight to pay which I must request you to see to, and I will repay you again. I expect this settlement will be given up before long, and if it is I shall most likely return to Head Quarters in Sydney. If you positively learn such will be the case, it would be prudent of you to retain the books in Sydney till I arrive; or if you should see it announced in the papers that I am to be removed elsewhere without returning to Sydney, you would do well to forward them to such place as soon after my arrival as possible. If you open the boxes in search of letters or papers be careful to repack the books so that they may arrive uninjured.\(^4\)

Although Gold did not mention any titles here, amongst his other papers is a long list of books left with his mother in Kent and a friend in London. His library was again very typical of the period, including many theological works, the usual histories and biographies, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, Blackstone's *Commentaries*, and, on the literary side, Shakespeare, Byron's *Works* and *Don Juan*, Pope's *Works*,

\(^4\)From the Gold Family Papers, in the Mitchell Library.
and his and Dryden's classical translations, Butler's Works, Johnson's Rambler, Sterne's Works, Burns' Poems, Elegant Extracts, and the forty-five-volume British Essayists. Given Gold's obvious concern for his books, one is pleased to learn some eventually reached him at Melville Island, though he did not long enjoy them. Also amongst his papers was an "Account of the Sale of John Gold's effects", dated 20 February 1828, listing the British Essayists as sold for six pounds, fifteen, and Shakespeare for fifteen shillings. Whoever bought them had got a bargain on the Essayists at least, since this had been published at nine pounds.

Although manuscript material is the most valuable, because most specific, source of evidence about early Australian literary culture, very few colonists, alas, bothered to mention books or reading in their letters and diaries. Consequently, most of this thesis is based on a detailed reading of early newspapers. With George Howe's establishment of the Sydney Gazette on 5 March 1803, information about books in Australia, though still sparse, becomes at least much more available than in the first fifteen years of settlement. On 17 July 1803, Simeon Lord, the wealthy emancipist and the first known person to auction books in the colony, advertised there for the return of his

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5See Amy Cruse, The Victorians and Their Books (1935), p.15, for a similar comment on English readers.
copy of Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron*. Originally published in 1777 as *The Champion of Virtue. A Gothic Story*, this novel evidently long remained popular, since several copies were offered for sale in the eighteen-twenties, and an occasional one even up to 1850. In the next issue of the *Gazette*, however, Howe was able to report: "The Old English Baron, advertised in our last, returned to his quarters on Monday; and we understand his presence was admitted as an apology for his absconding without leave of absence." For the next ten years, such requests for the return of borrowed books, for books wanted to purchase, are more often found in the *Gazette* than advertisements of works for sale, ampul demonstrating the current shortage of books in Sydney. On 21 August 1803, "C.D." hoped someone could supply him with a *Greek Lexicon* and an *Italian Dictionary*, whilst "A.B.", owner of the third and fourth volumes of the indispensable Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, "would willingly Purchase the First and Second, or Part with those he has to complete a Set." Later this year, on 20 November, John Harris, Esq. asked for the return of his volumes of *The Bee*, claimed to be the "only set in the Colony", and the first volume of his copy of Pope's *Homer*. "Some volumes of Pope's Works" and Smollett's *Adventures of an Atom*, were also amongst several missing books advertised for on 30 September and 7 October 1804, with this appeal to their borrowers' better nature:
As it is obvious to every intelligent mind that Sets of these valuable works are rendered incomplete by the detention of any of the volumes, and the Cause of Literature essentially hindered thereby, it is hoped that after this Public Requisition they will be forthcoming.

A similarly gentlemanly plea was made on 16 December 1804:

The Books herein undermentioned were at different times borrowed from the house of Mr. Andrew Thompson, at the Green Hills, Hawkesbury, but from forgetfulness have neglected to be returned, viz.

Two Volumes of the Spectator, Andrew Thompson written on the 15th page of each Volume.

Milton's Paradise Lost complete. Sterne's Works including his Sentimental Journey.

Three Volumes of the Works of Mr. Robert Burne [sic], the Scottish bard.

Thompson's [sic] Seasons.

Hervey's Meditations and other Works.

Two Volumes of the Newgate Kalendar.

It is earnestly requested, nor is it doubted, that any persons who upon looking over their books may find either of the above among their number will be kind enough to return the Interlopers to their Owner, at Hawkesbury, or cause them to be left at the house of Mr. Larra, at Parramatta, or Mr. Kearns at Sydney; as by their detention complete sets are destroyed and those valuable works rendered incomplete and consequently useless.

Later advertisers resorted to offering rewards for the return of their books, George Howe himself, advertising on 13 October 1805 for the first volume of his edition of Shakespeare, said that he would "pay any reasonable reward that may be required; as will also be the case to any person who will give information that may recover it, as this very valuable work is rendered incomplete." Although Simeon Lord's Old English Baron had so quickly returned home, other book owners do not seem to have been so lucky. On 31 July 1808, Isaac Nichols, another prominent emancipist, had
advertised for the first volume of his Newgate Calendar, "in good binding, gilt, and lettered; with a coat of arms on the inside of the cover, the motto, Domine dirige nos." By 28 April 1810, however, three volumes of this understandably popular work were missing, with Nichols threatening, "If not restored the person in whose possession either may be hereafter found will be prosecuted." Even less able to keep track of his books was W.H. Mansell, of O'Connell Street, who, on 5 and 12 January 1811, made one of the usual polite requests for the return of some volumes of the Sporting Magazine and certain travel books. Although he did not, like Nichols, threaten prosecution, Mansell's long list of lost books printed on 22 January 1814 was justifiably more curtly prefaced, especially as it now included eight volumes of both the Sporting Magazine and Mavor's Voyages and Travels, besides two of a "Collection of Farces", one of Hume and Smollett's History of England, and seven of the British Classics. A week later, the merchant, Robert Campbell, showed himself an avid novel reader by calling for the return of the first volumes of Jane Porter's long-popular The Scottish Chiefs (1810) and a Minerva Press thriller, Love, Mystery and Misery! A Novel (1810) by Anthony Holstein. Requests of this sort were less frequent
after 1814, though on 25 July 1818 George Howe printed "any Gentleman who obtained loan of a Translation of Don Quixote, in four Volumes, from the Gazette office, will be thanked to return them." Cervantes' novel was another to retain its popularity throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The first reference to books in a Tasmanian newspaper was also a plea for the return of a missing volume. In the fifth number of the Hobart Town Gazette, 6 July 1816, Mr. Walter Colquhoun advertised: "MISLAID. - One Volume of "HARRIS'S MINOR ENCYCLOPAEDIA". - Whoever may be pleased to return the same . . . will be rewarded."

That all these advertisers may have been taking a too naive view of book borrowing, is shown by two letters printed in the Sydney Gazette on 3 June and 8 July 1820. The first began

To the Printer of the Sydney Gazette

SIR,

Be good enough to insert the following Epistle, and charge the price to yours, etc. BEN KITE.

To my good Friend Peregrine Hawk I write at a distance upon an interesting occasion, which is no less, as I know him to be fond of books, than to put him into a way of setting up a cheap and expeditious library.

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6For other examples of advertisements for borrowed or stolen books, and books wanted to purchase, see the Sydney Gazette for 5 May, 9 September 1804; 10 March, 2 and 30 June, 14 July, 10 November 1805; 5 July, 30 August 1807; 1 January, 26 February, 12 November 1809; 22 December 1810; 22 June 1811; 13 January and 9 March 1816; 25 July 1818.
You are aware, Perry, that nothing in the world is more provoking than an empty bookcase, unless it be to have no bookcase at all. Only contemplate for a while the consequence we derive from half a dozen shelves of books, nicely bound, gilt and lettered, if they are to be had, staring a stranger in the face just as he enters. Sir, says we, these are the Poets. -Yes, Sir, they are very nicely bound. Are you an admirer of Pope, Sir? Why, yes, Sir, he's a very nice writer. Which of his pieces do you prefer, Sir? Why, Sir, none in particular they're all alike to me (discovering by his embarrassment that he knows as little or perhaps less of Pope than either you or I do). We take him down the whole range of poets, and so completely hamper him, that the poor devil would willingly undergo 50 strokes of the bastinadoe to get rid of our fretful importunities. We enjoy the embarrassment; he turns to the window, says it's a fine day; we press him to sit down; but no, he has pressing business elsewhere, and we are rid of him in a jiffy, which may at times be very desirable.

And so on with instructions to discuss Latin authors with those who know something about English ones and much other advice on the advantages of a little learning, concluding with to promise to "in my next furnish you with infallible instructions for equipping a library". These instructions on "How to form a library by borrowing from one's friends" included "it is better to borrow a whole author at once than a single volume if you intend to keep; as the latter way will prevent to the owner a deal of that mortification which it must excite to see a whole and possibly favourite author torn all to pieces by the Borrowing of one or two of his books."

Ben Kite's advice, however, does not seem to have led to a rash of "borrowing" in Sydney, for the only later advertisement for the return of books appeared in the Sydney
Gazette on 25 November 1824: "W.L. Edwardson presents respectful Compliments to the various Persons who have had the loan of his Books for one, two, and three years, and will feel extremely obliged by their return, if quite done with." Perhaps both the owners' concern and the borrowers' desire decreased with the increasing availability of books during the eighteen-twenties. In Tasmania, where the shortage continued longer, there were several such pleas in the Hobart Town Gazettes for 1820 and 1821, the most irate appearing on 8 December 1821: "'Ivanhoe', 'Florance Macarthy' and the 2d and 3d Volumes of 'The Hermit in London', had better be returned to the Owner, to prevent him having Recourse to Legal Proceedings for the recovery of the same." With the exception of the last, where the owner's anger was probably related to the recent publication of his lost works, all these advertisements testify to the predominance of eighteenth-century works on colonial bookshelves. This is also reflected in most of the literary works of the period, such as that of Ben Kite, with its eighteenth-century style and choice of nom-de-plume$, as well as in the auctioneers' and booksellers' advertisements and the circulating library catalogues. As in England, however, the most popular authors were Scott and Byron. Of the abundant evidence of Scott's popularity, which will be discussed in detail later, nothing

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7Lady Morgan's Florance Macarthy, A National Irish Tale (1819); Ivanhoe (1820); Felix McDonough's The Hermit in London; or, Sketches of English Manners (1821).
is more telling than the following, in the **Hobart Town Gazette** for 10 May 1823, "Lost, a few days ago, the Novel of 'Ivanhoe', in 3 vols. boards; also, in January last, a pocket Bible in 1 vol. bound in blue Morocco. - A Reward of 3 Dollars is hereby offered for Ivanhoe, and 2 Dollars for the Bible, upon delivering of the same to the Printer." On the 7th of the next month, the same paper printed "Byron's Work's. - Lost, supposed to be lent, the 2d volume of Lord Byron's Works, handsomely bound. - Whoever will bring it to the Gazette Office, will receive One Guinea Reward."

Given the high prices paid for books at the few auctions held before 1820, and the virtual impossibility of replacing missing volumes in the colony, the early advertisers' pleas, threats and promises are not surprising. Most of the books sold in this period belonged to gentlemen returning to England, who evidently thought it more profitable to leave their libraries behind them. In the first recorded Sydney book sale, 13 January 1805, Mr. Hartley, one of the members of the abandoned 1803 settlement at Port Phillip, offered before his departure a large family bible and several other books. On the same date, Simeon Lord advertised, for auction the following day, the estate of Mr. William Cox, who had the much less happy motive of trying to make good his misappropriation of army funds. A report in the next week's **Gazette** mentions two books amongst the goods sold. Whilst **Chambers' Cyclopaedia** went for six pounds, thirteen, as
compared with the eleven pounds publication price of the 1785 edition, Blackstone's Commentaries fetched two pounds, thirteen, the 1796 edition costing only one pound, twelve new. The late Mr. William Tough's copy of The Works of the British Poets, "13 vols. large octavo, elegantly bound, gilt, and lettered", was auctioned by Lord on 15 March 1805 for ten pounds, only a slight increase on the publication price of nine guineas, whilst on 9 April he sold a single volume of Paradise Lost belonging to Captain William Kent, leaving the colony, for eleven shillings. Unfortunately, the Gazette did not continue this very informative practice of giving prices of books sold at auctions, though the auctioneers themselves at least became a little more forthcoming in crying their wares. Thus, on 15 September 1805, one finds Lord advertising among the household goods of James Larra, another prominent emancipist, over sixteen volumes of books, including Shakespeare's and Sterne's Works. A much larger collection of books, perhaps the first speculative importation, was listed by the rival auctioneer Mr. Bevan on 17 November 1805. Amongst over a hundred volumes were such indispensables as the Encyclopaedia Britannica and Hume and

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8 See Robert Watt, Bibliotheca Britannica; or a General Index to British and Foreign Authors (1824), Vol. 1, pp.118v, 210f.

9 See A Modern Catalogue of Books . . . (1797), p.4.

10 Four editions are listed in ibid., p.19, priced at 2/6, 3/6, 12/- and £1/1/-.

A few volumes of books were also included in various auctions held in 1806 and 1807. On 18 May 1806, the *Gazette* reported:

The sale of a Gentleman's effects departing the Colony, yesterday se'nnight was very respectably attended . . . The library though small, was extremely handsome; and pregnant as the volumes were with taste and science, they could not possibly escape the notice of the judicious and polite, who by the liberality of their advances evinced their estimation of each succeeding Author.

Unfortunately, Mr. Bevan had not listed any of these popular authors in his 4 May announcement of the sale. Nor was he much more informative about the books in two auctions advertised on 17 August 1806, though one did star Hunter's *An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island* (1793), the first recorded Sydney sale of a piece of Australiana. 1806 also saw the first bookseller advertising in Sydney, if one may grace by that title John Connell, a general storekeeper who included a few school books and some unspecified novels on a list of his goods published on 28 September. By 9 August 1807, he was still advertising the school books but had apparently sold all his novels.

The largest pre-1820 book auction was advertised by
Mr. Bevan on 11 January 1807, for sale four days later.

A Capital and extensive Library, consisting of between 3 and 400 Vols. all elegantly bound; among which is included the Encyclopaedia Brittanica, a choice collection of historical, pastoral, and other Books on various Arts and Science, with the European Magazine from 1787 to 1805, and several of the best Authors on Husbandry, &c. &c.

Fortunately, the Gazette saw fit to report on this sale the following week:

... Great part of an extensive library, the property of a Gentleman leaving the Colony, was the first day disposed of the whole in elegant bindings. The volumes teemed with taste and Science; and could not therefore find a tardy sale. Among the Works were Hume's History of England with Smollett's Continuation, in 25 volumes small 8vo. which went at 5£ 10s.; 24 volumes of the European Magazine down to 1805 inclusive sold for 24£; and the Encyclopaedia Britannica, printed in Edinburgh, in 22 volumes, was knocked down at 4l£.

Again, these seem to have been slightly above the original publication prices, though it has not been possible to match the editions exactly with those given in bibliographies.

Later this year, on 26 July, Bevan advertised "a trunk of damaged books, the property of R. Townson, Esq. L.D.D. which will be sold for the benefit of the Underwriters."

Perhaps these were part of the collection of books and scientific instruments for the colony bought by this noted scientist with the hundred pounds given him by the British Government for that purpose. A fortnight afterwards, George Howe, who more often figured in his columns as a

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would-be purchaser of books, offered thirty copies of "The Late Negotiation with France"\(^{12}\) at six shilling each, more than double the publication price.

On 16 October 1808, Howe reverted to his more usual role, asking for copies of several books, amongst them Pope's *Works* and Young's *Night Thoughts*, both of which were, in fact, amongst forty-four volumes auctioned by Simeon Lord two months later, along with three-volume editions of Shakespeare and *The Spectator*. A week earlier, Lord had advertised a few books included in the effects of the late Captain David Dalrymple, none, however, of any literary interest. Books figured in five auctions during 1809, most of them again probably from private libraries. On 22 January, Lord offered "a large Collection of Books", whilst, on 26 February, Bevan had "a quantity of Books, Novels and Historical Books", seemingly the property of a gentleman leaving the colony; on 12 March, some novels and medical books; and on 14 May, "a few choice books, among which is a Complete Edition of Shakespeare, handsomely bound", belonging to Mr. William Blake. In addition, on 25 June 1809, Doctor O'Connor announced his intention of disposing of his medical and surgical books before departing

\(^{12}\) Presumably *Official Correspondence between Great Britain and France on the Subject of the Late Negotiations* (1803), though Howe noted the last letter was dated 30 September 1806.
for Europe. Another private sale of this sort was the source of the only books advertised for sale in 1810, a Mr. Stroud offering on 28 July "a well chosen small library", made up of Voltaire's Works, Plutarch's Lives, the Encyclopaedia Britannica and some of the usual works on agriculture, chemistry and natural history.

In 1811, Mr. Bevan listed some magazines for auction on 3 August, whilst, on the same date, Charles Tompson, father of the poet, included school books among the goods available at his Hunter Street store. He continued to be one of the few Sydney store-keepers advertising books, listing school books again, with Bibles and Prayer Books, on 7 November 1812. The concentration on utilitarian works must have been typical of storekeepers' stocks, though a later list, 27 June 1818, also contained Novels, Poems, and works on History, Geography, Navigation, Arts and Sciences, "with a number of first and other Books for the instruction of youth."

Obviously, Charles Tompson junior would have had a greater opportunity to read books than most other young colonials. Perhaps Tompson's 1818 importation had been in part determined by his experience of the difficulty of obtaining books in Sydney when, a few years earlier, his son had commenced his education at the Rev. Henry Fulton's school. In the Gazette for 1 July 1815, any person prepared to sell copies of a Latin
Dictionary, a Latin Testament, Caesar's Commentaries, Ovid and Virgil was asked to apply to Tompson at Hunter Street. Another storekeeper who sometimes sold books was Sarah Wills of 96 George Street, later the wife of George Howe. On 15 February 1812 she gave an unusually detailed advertisement to her literary wares, which included Sterne's Sentimental Journey, Pindar's Works, The Arabian Nights, The Old English Baron, The Muse's Bower in four volumes and some histories, natural histories, dictionaries and so on. More typically, school books were on lists of her goods printed in the Gazette on 15 April 1815 and 1 March 1817.

No book auctions appear to have been held between 1810 and 1813, and the only 1814 one, Mr. Jenkin's 12 February "large and valuable Collection of Books, consisting of History, Voyages, Travels, Law, Novels, Plays, &c. &c.", does not seem, even then, to have found a ready market, being readvertised twice more. Similarly, Mr. Bevan's auction of forty volumes of "just imported" books was readvertised twice after the initial 11 February 1815 announcement. He seems, however, to have had less trouble in disposing of "a quantity of law Books, with a great variety of others" belonging to Ellis Bent, on 30 October that year. Bent did not enjoy any of the proceeds of this sale, dying on 15 November 1815, though it was not until 19 December 1816 that Bevan advertised a further sale of his
effects, including books.

Two speculative importations of books were announced for private sale on 19 August and 23 September 1815. The first, opened at Mr. Marr's, was described as "consisting of the latest LONDON PUBLICATIONS which will be disposed of on reasonable terms. In the collection are some excellent Elementary Works for young persons." Fortunately, Messrs. Loane and Hall were more specific about their consignment of nearly one hundred and seventy volumes, over a hundred of them literary works. One finds such well-known collections as the British Essayists and Barbauld's Select Novelist, besides the works of Johnson and Milton, Ossian's Poems, Young's Night Thoughts, and the first appearance of books by Sir Walter Scott, easily the most frequently advertised author before 1850.\(^\text{13}\) This sale was very up-to-date, featuring Waverley (1814) as well as The Lady of the Lake (1810) and The Lay of the Last Minstrel (1805), works to remain standard components of colonial libraries throughout the earlier nineteenth century. As this was also true of other items in the consignment, like Hume and Smollett's History of England, Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations and Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, one imagines it would have found a ready sale.

Some of the same titles - The Wealth of Nations, The

\(^{13}\)See Appendix II.
History of England, Scott's Poems - figured in an auction advertised by Bevan on 11 January 1817. Also amongst the sixty-six volumes listed were other oft-found items like Shakespeare's Plays and the Encyclopaedia Britannica, along with more unusual ones such as Massinger's Plays (misspelt "Messenger's") and Webber's Popular Romances. The four other 1817 auctions to include books were advertised in the customary less detailed fashion. On 15 February, Simeon Lord offered "a Choice Collection of Books", and, on 17 May, "about a HUNDRED VOLUMES of BOOKS." A variety of spelling, arithmetic books and dictionaries were amongst "Articles on hand from late arrivals" to be auctioned at Windsor on 13 December by John Howe, whilst some equally unspecified volumes belonging to Alexander Riley, Esq., "who has embarked for England", were advertised by Bevan on 27 December. No books seem to have been auctioned in 1818, though on 29 August "a scarce and valuable collection of MEDICAL BOOKS . . . and a Collection of French and English Books, consisting of Histories, Travels and Voyages, etc." were announced for sale by private contract at 35 Cumberland Street. The books sold in three 1819 auctions were again advertised in little detail. On 16 January, Bevan listed eighteen volumes of works on medicine, farming and natural history, whilst Lord offered "Voyages, Novels, Plays" on 10 April and thirteen volumes,
including *Aesop's Fables*, on 5 June.

Although there were no full-time booksellers in Sydney till the eighteen-thirties, from 1821 on many books were included in the speculative investments imported in the hope of making a quick profit on the colonial market. In the early part of the period, at least, the importers were unsuccessful. If there was a shortage of books in Sydney, there also seems to have been a shortage of people with the inclination and the money to buy the large number which arrived in 1821. It is impossible to arrive at exact figures, for advertisers were again usually vague about numbers, but nearly five hundred titles were listed for sale in 1821, as against eight in 1820. With a free population in 1821 of just over seventeen and a half thousand, this amounted to one book for every thirty-five people in Sydney.

On 20 January 1821, the *Sydney Gazette* carried the following advertisement:

*Library. – To be Sold, on moderate Terms, the Whole of a choice Selection of New and other Publications, recently arrived on the Ship Skelton. Among the most interesting are the Edinburgh Review, the Edinburgh Annual Register, Brown on Rural Affairs, and various other Works, by the following much admired Authors, Mackenzie, Brown, Doddridge, Erskine, Ray, Baxter, Newton, Burn, Kincaid, Fuller, Cox, and others, comprising a complete Library of Moral, Sentimental, Literary, and Religious Works.*

A week later, the book-buying public was informed,
The Books which were advertised last Week, and which arrived on the Skelton, are on Sale at Mr. Robert Jenkins', George-street; among them are Sets of the Monthly Edinburgh Review for 1821, and a Variety of esteemed works, Religious, Moral, Geographical, and Historical, with some approved Novels and Poetry. - Ready Money.

But the ready money can not have been forthcoming for in the Sydney Gazette of 15 November 1822 there was a virtually identical list - "Burn" had been sold - although they were now "Cheap Books" instead of "a choice Selection":

On Sale, at Mr. James Elder's, George-street, Parramatta, the following Works, at reduced prices, to close Consignments: 40 sets of the Edinburgh Monthly Review; the Edinburgh Annual Register, 3 vols.; Scotch Repository Tracts; Brown, on Rural Affairs, 2 vols.; Kincaid's Geography; Fuller, on the Book of Genesis; Ray's Proverbs; Dodd's Comfort of the Afflicted; Paley's Theology; Erskine's Dissertations; Philemon on the Progress of Virtue, 2 vols.; Meikle's Select Remains; Irvine's Lives of the Poets; Brown's Collection of Religious Letters; Simpson's Visit to Flanders, or, Battle of Waterloo; Shepherd's Paris; M'Kenzie's Works . . .

Amongst the other publications advertised in the Sydney Gazette in 1821 were, on 14 April, "a small collection of valuable Books, consisting of history, biography, novels, a few of Sir Walter Scott's, moral and pathetic tales, the drama, etc." On 9 June, Mr. Thomas Harper offered, besides melon moulds, coffin furniture, white jean trowsers and waistcoats, Barbary comforts and other interesting goods, two hundred and nine books, seventy-nine of which were novels, poetry or plays. As these included several volumes of Scott and Byron, besides many possibly unapproved novels
such as Moreland's *Charms of Dandyism* (1819), *Curse of Ulrica* (1815), and *Actress of the Present Day* (1818), they may have had a better sale than the Skelton consignment. The only works by Coleridge and Jane Austen, *Sybilline Leaves* and *Northanger Abbey*, advertised in Australian newspapers during the 'twenties were also on Harper's list.

Only one large importation of books was made in 1822. Perhaps as a result of the earlier poor sales, this was given an extensive build-up in the *Sydney Gazette* for 15 November.

A catalogue is now printing of a choice, most valuable, and extensive Collection of the Works of the most popular and esteemed Authors in the various departments of Arts and Sciences; History, Biography, the Fine Arts, the Belles Lettres, Drama, Antiquities, Theology, Encyclopaedias, etc. etc. etc. These necessary and amusing embellishments to a Gentleman's library will be opened for inspection and sale, in a few days, at the Rooms of Macqueen, Atkinson and Pritchett, where the usual kind and prompt attention will be paid to those who may be longing to decorate their shelves, and enrich their minds, with so estimable an acquisition of literature as that which has now visited our shores. We are given to understand, as an inducement to purchase, that the prices will be reasonable.

But in spite of this, the *Gazette* was forced to report on 6 December: "The recent valuable and extensive importation of Books is still going off at Macqueen, Atkinson, and Pritchett's. The Importer intends shortly to re-ship the residue for India. Gentlemen had better not let works of value escape them." As none of the catalogues of this
collection have survived, it is impossible to say just what the "Gentlemen" of the colony were missing. They appear to have been content to do so, as this advertise-
ment appeared in the Gazette on 23 October 1823:

The Investment of Valuable Books, now open at Atkinson's Commission Rooms, will positively be re-
shipped at the Close of the present Month, unless sold. J. Atkinson therefore recommends an early inspection of them, as a considerable Reduction has been made in the Price.

Also in 1823, on 16 October, the Australian Stationery Warehouse advertised over one hundred and sixty books, mostly eighteenth-century, under the headings Divinity, History, Travels, Voyages and Poetry, many of which "still remained undisposed of" the following week.

From 1824 on, most of the book advertisements are for sales by auction, presumably a more satisfactory method, since there are few reports of books remaining unsold. A very large number of books was advertised in the mid 'twenties: over three thousand, six hundred in 1825 and over four thousand in 1826. An advertisement in the Sydney Gazette for 4 December 1824 has interest as the only one of this period to give bibliographic details. Many of the books are listed as "old", and were obviously intended to appeal to the collector. Amongst private sellers, the Australian Company advertised a hundred books in 1826, most of them by such popular authors as Byron, Scott, Shakespeare, Smollett, Sterne, Washington Irving, Burns,
Goldsmith, Johnson, Milton, Cowper, Moore and Thomson. In 1828 the Wesleyan Mission House had over three hundred publications for sale. The majority were, of course, of a devotional or theological character, although there were a few works by Shakespeare, Cowper, Goldsmith, Johnson and Pope, together with the inevitable Thomson's *Seasons*, Young's *Night Thoughts* and Blair's *The Grave* and other Poems.

A much more varied collection was described in "A Walk Through Sydney in 1828, Chapter I", printed in the *South-Asian Register* for December 1828. In his account of the Sydney market place, the narrator records:

On the outside of the gateway, amongst other small adventurers too needy to pay for a stand within the fence, we observe one of the trade, a vendor of literature. "What are these books about?" "Some very good books Sir; there's the history of Theodore Goodchild, and some beautiful tracts [sic] with cuts, and a volume of true prayer, and the trial of Jonathan Wild, Newgate Calendar, Ready Reckoner, and Hamilton Moore, a little soiled."

Obviously, these sorts of hawkers must have been selling books in Australia throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, but this is the only reference to them so far discovered. It is also extremely valuable for its rare indication of the types of books available to the poorer classes in this period, confirming one's expectations that

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religious works, tracts, and sensational crime stories would have formed the bulk of their libraries, if any. Even in the eighteen-forties, the Newgate Calendar was still the book most often mentioned as read by the working classes.

In the second half of the 'twenties, auctioneers were kept busy disposing of the libraries of several prominent Sydney persons who either died or left the colony. On 12 December 1825, the Sydney Gazette reported: "The books forming part of the library of Sir Thomas Brisbane, which were sold on Friday last, brought a very good price", but there is no record of what these books were. Similarly, no catalogues of Major Goulburn's library, "containing at least 1000 volumes", survive. This was sold in 1826, with the Gazette for 23 January enthusing "By such means as these literature becomes diffused throughout our infant empire; and, in the lapse of a few ages, we promise to become as wise (aye and as learned), as most nations." On 4 February, the same paper reported "Major Goulburn's Library fetched, in general, enormously high prices. Some of the choice works, however, we understand were brought in." Colonel Thornton's Library, sold a short time after, was thought by the Gazette for 18 February to have gone off "tolerably well". As one learns from a list in the Gazette on 8 February, it consisted of
one hundred and five works, about twenty of which were imaginative literature. Colonel Thornton's taste in poetry and prose was extremely typical of the period: Gil Blas, Don Quixote, The Spectator, Shakespeare, Pope, Glover, Ossian, Goldsmith, Cowper. He did, however, possess the only copy of the Works of Mr. Thomas Browne recorded in Australia during this period. The library of the late Mr. Shannon, advertised in the Gazette on 9 July 1827, was also rich in eighteenth-century literary works, containing Churchill, Dryden, Falconer, Gray and a number of periodicals such as The Tatler, The Rambler, and The Idler, besides the common Spectator, Pope, Thomson, Cowper, Burns, Goldsmith and Johnson.

In 1828 two important libraries were sold and catalogues of both survive in the Mitchell Library. Dr. Henry Grattan Douglas, a leading colonial personality who fell out with Governor Darling and returned to England at the end of 1827, had over three hundred books auctioned on 21 April 1828 and following days. The catalogue listed forty French Works, six Law Books, thirty Scientific Works, twenty Reviews, Pamphlets, etc., sixty Medical Works, twenty-three Works on Gardening, Agriculture, etc., eighteen Sacred Works, sixteen Voyages and Travels, five Historical Works and seventy-eight Miscellaneous Works. Douglas's literary tastes were also very typical of the period, for the latter
category included the collections British Poets, British Essayists, Flowers of Literature and Elegant Extracts, together with works by Cowper, Smollett, Fielding, Shakespeare, Scott, Crabbe, Washington Irving and Southey. He did, however, also possess two copies of Charles Tompson's Wild Notes from the Lyre of a Native Minstrel (Sydney, 1826). There were no newspaper comments on this sale but the owner of the catalogue noted in the margin that forty volumes of the Edinburgh Review were sold for 8/- a volume and thirty volumes of the Quarterly Review for 10/6 a volume.

John Oxley, whose books were sold on 27, 28 and 29 August 1828, had much broader literary interests. Of the three hundred and thirty-one lots listed in the catalogue of his library, almost two hundred were works of literature. Among the usual Scott, Byron, Shakespeare, eighteenth-century poets and novelists, were such colonial rarities as Swift's Letters and A Tale of a Tub, Bacon's Works, Ben Jonson's Works, Chaucer's Works, De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium Eater, Pepys' Memoirs, Roscoe's Italian Novelists, Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans, Walker's Italian Tragedy and Wordsworth's Poetical Works. No doubt Oxley bought some of these books to the colony with him; others were later ordered from England or purchased in Sydney. The Norton Smith and
Company Collection in the Mitchell Library, source of the only extant copy of Oxley's catalogue, also includes a statement of account with the Sydney firm of Berry and Wollstonecraft showing Oxley had spent £40. 19.9 on books and periodicals in November, 1821, and a further £ 7.13.0 in November and December 1822. He would also seem to be the "Gentleman" referred to in this advertisement in the Australian on 2 July 1828:

A VALUABLE LIST OF NEW PUBLICATIONS
A GENTLEMAN in Sydney has just received a trunk of BOOKS by the ship Bencoolen. They are the, very pick, the morceaux of the London shops, and many of them indeed were not generally published, when they were packed up for New South Wales. The proprietor, however, from a press of business, of one kind or other, is sorry to say he must forego the reading of them himself, at any rate for the present; but, as he is unwilling that the cream of them should be lost, under lock and key, he has no objection to dispose of part of them, at a small advance on the bookseller's bill, to pay the charges, and for which purpose he has sent the trunk to Mr. Bodenham's.

Then followed a list of fifty-nine works, most of which received such lengthy descriptions as

Matilda - a Tale of the Day - two vols. - fourteen shillings. The author of this very interesting and pathetic story is Lord Normanby, eldest son of the Earl of Mulgrave, and friend
and school-fellow of the present Duke of Devonshire. The events actually occurred in Italy. The Book is highly popular.

Besides a majority of such fashionable novels, there were Scott's *Tales of the Crusaders* (1825), Chateaubriand's *The Natchez* (1827), Fenimore Cooper's *The Prairie* (1827), Hazlitt's *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), Mrs. Radcliffe's *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826), Mary Shelley's *Last Man* (1826), Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* (1824) and a few medical and historical works. Most of these books - though not Scott or Cooper - reappeared in the catalogue of Oxley's library, thus indicating once again the Sydney reading public's unwillingness to buy books at set prices. The prices given in the advertisement were generally slightly higher than those quoted in the *Quarterly Review* for 1825: *Last Man* was £1.11.6 instead of £1.7.0.; *Matilda* fourteen instead of ten shillings; but some such as R.P. Ward's *Tremaine* remained the same. And if the account of Oxley's sale given in the *Australian* on 29 August 1828 may be believed, purchasers may have lost rather than gained by waiting for the auction: "The first day's sale of the late Mr. Oxley's library went off on Wednesday at high prices. The *Edinburgh Review* was knocked down at £23, and several standard works, in history and divinity, were in great demand. The Subscription Library were the principal purchasers". At over thirteen shillings a volume this was
certainly higher than the ten-and-six per volume paid for Dr. Douglass's *Edinburgh Reviews*, and a large advance on the new price of four shillings per number, two numbers to a volume. But in 1821 Oxley had paid a pound a volume for twelve volumes of the *Edinburgh Review* purchased from Berry and Wollstonecraft. The *Sydney Gazette* also commented on the high prices in its 29 August account of the sale.

The elegant library of the late respected Surveyor General has been "a-going" for the last two days, and is not yet quite "gone", though Mr. Bodenham has exerted his professional skill to knock the books down with that rapidity, looking to a good price, to which it is known he is so accustomed. We never saw books fetch so weighty a price before. It is thought that the residue of this library will come to the hammer in the course of to-day.

High prices were also obtained for the last library sold by auction in the eighteen-twenties, that of Solicitor General James Holland, which contained "500 volumes of rare and scarce books". The *Sydney Gazette* of 12 November 1829 commented on the sale,"... the law books generally meet extraordinary good prices. The 'extraordinary Laccon' published at 14s. fetched as high as a guinea and a half; Lord Byron's Works, 11 vols. £4.4.0." The following day, the *Australian* joined in with "Much of the furniture and several of the literary works, though of no extraordinary value, at the sale of the late Solicitor-General's effects on Monday and Tuesday, produced extraordinary high prices."

The Reverend William Horton, a Wesleyan missionary "preparing
to proceed to England", advertised his library in the
Gazette on 3 January 1829 at prices which could only be
called moderate: "Thompson's Seasons . . . 4/-, . . .
Young's Night Thoughts . . . 2/6 . . . Johnson's Rambler
. . . 3 vols. 7/6."

Even fewer books seem to have been available in
Tasmania during this period than in Sydney. Andrew Bent,
proprietor of the Hobart Town Gazette, one of many other
newspaper men to carry on the trend established by George
Howe, in also being occasional booksellers, was the first
recorded person to offer a work for sale in Hobart,
"WILLICH'S DOMESTIC ENCYCLOPAEDIA; or a Dictionary of Facts,
and useful Knowledge,' in four Volumes Octavo, with
numerous Copper Plates, and Wood Cuts." Although advertised
on 27 July 1816 as "THE MOST USEFUL BOOK EVER PRINTED", it
was still unsold five weeks later, when it was readvertised
"at the low price of £4 sterling". This was, however,
nearly double the price listed in the English Catalogue of
Books: 1801–1836 (1914, p.640). Evidently there was
little demand for books in Tasmania, and one imagines those
in two auctions held at the beginning of 1818 may have gone
very cheaply. On 31 January, Mr. Lewis advertised "a
collection of books" as among the effects of the late
Walter Lang, Esq., and, on 14 February "a great variety of
choice books". Perhaps some of the same volumes were amongst
the "quantity" listed by the storekeeper Mr. Jemott on 28 March 1818, along with much more saleable goods like rum, gin and brandy. The only other early mention of books in the Gazette occurred on 25 September 1819, when ninety-one volumes were included in the defendant's property to be auctioned in the cases Sir John Jamison v. Gordon, Esq., "unless the Executions in the above-named Causes are previously superseded."

During the eighteen-twenties, the Tasmanian bookselling scene was similar to the New South Wales one described above, although it lacked the stimulus provided by the large private library sales towards the end of the period. The Reverend John McGarvie, spending a few days there in May 1826, on his way to take up an appointment as a Presbyterian missionary in New South Wales, commented in his diary on the literary activities of Hobart Town:

Books hardly pay, however cheap they may be. A copy of the British Poets £100 vols. has been offered for 7 Pounds - being bound and found no purchasers. There is not a bookselling shop in the town. Bents Printing Office is 3 times larger than he requires and the Gazette Office is by much too large. The printing establishments are poor pitiful concerns.16

Staying at an inn in the interior, he noted further evidence of the colonists' lack of respect for books: "We slept soundly in a room open to every blast in which we found several fine prints - a fine copy of Burns' Poems, Cowper's

16 From the original manuscript in the Mitchell Library.
Poems, The Gamester etc. etc. etc.". The failure of early attempts to supply the colonists of Tasmania with reading matter seems to bear out McGarvie's strictures. Only a very few books were advertised for sale before 1822, when on 5 October, the Hobart Town Gazette printed:

The Reverend Missionaries Horton and Turner, persuaded that the Scarcity of Books in this Colony, and the difficulty of obtaining them from England, are generally regretted, beg leave thus publicly to state, that at the request of many respectable Persons, they will with pleasure procure as expeditiously as possible, Books and Literary Publications of any kind (those of a seditious or irreligious tendency excepted), adding to the English prices a per centage merely equivalent to the expense of their conveyance hither. They beg particularly to suggest, that through this channel heads of families may advantageously furnish themselves with good family Bibles, and other Works proper for a Domestic Library; and Schoolmasters with suitable Books of Instruction for their Pupils. Extensive Catalogues of the most approved Works in every Department of Literature, especially of such as are adapted to the capacities of Young Persons, will be submitted to the inspection of those who may require assistance in the selection of books. - Magazines, and other periodical publications, will be regularly supplied.

Presumably nothing further was done about this, for on 10 May of the following year Andrew Bent, founder of the Hobart Town Gazette in 1816, also offered to provide literary works.

A Correspondent remarks, that he has heard numerous respectable persons regret the want in this Colony of an individual who would make an arrangement with some person in England, to supply the inhabitants of the Island with the most useful periodical and modern publications from the Mother Country; which, it is said, might be done regularly by every English arrival for 25 per cent upon the English prime cost, covering freight, and every incidental charge to Van Diemen's Land. - Should this hint be improved, we shall feel pleasure in affording all the assistance in
our power, gratuitously, to forward so desirable an undertaking, which, if commenced, would doubtless meet with numerous Subscribers and Literary Commissions.

A few months later, on 23 August, Bent intimated that he had been "invited by two of the oldest established and most respectable Printers and Publishers (to whom he is personally acquainted) in London, to correspond with them for any Periodical Publications which may be required for Sale among the Colonists in this quarter of the World", publishing a list of the weekly, monthly and quarterly works he could supply. Again, there is no evidence for or against the success of this venture.

Nor is there any indication of the success of those storekeepers who advertised books in the Hobart Town Gazette during 1823 in disposing of their wares. As in Sydney, eighteenth-century works were the most prominent. Mr. Deane, who was later to open a circulating library, offered over one hundred and twenty books on 19 June 1823, including The Vicar of Wakefield, Roderick Random, Humphrey Clinker, Peregrine Pickle, Adventures of an Atom, Sorrows of Werter, Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, Goldsmith's Essays, Castle of Otranto, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, Sir Charles Grandison, Miss Edgeworth's Tales, Old English Baron, Young's Night Thoughts, Yorick and Eliza, Rousseau's Eloisa, and poetry by Burns, Landsdown, Tickle, Blakemore, Rowe, Fenton, Cunningham, Moore, Goldsmith, Savage, Otway,
Glover, Dryden, Butler, Walsh, Collins, Garth, Prior and so on. He was prepared to take wool, wheat and colonial currency as payment. On 7 May 1824, Mr. Thomas Atkinson offered to take sheep and cattle in exchange for his "part of a Library of Books, and eight years of the London Sunday Newspaper called the News." The colonists were also not deprived of sensation as this advertisement from the Gazette for 12 November 1824 shows:

Just arrived, and on Sale, at the Waterloo Stores, "The Memoirs of a Young Greek Lady", in French and English. This Work, though decidedly fit to be perused by the most chaste, exposes one of the most horrid cases of seduction since the times of Jane Shore; and has excited the greatest interest in England, France, Germany, and Prussia.

1825 was a bumper year for books in Tasmania, with over two thousand offered for sale to a free population of not much more than seven and a half thousand. This rapid increase in the number of books available largely resulted from the auctioning of several private libraries though, unlike the later Sydney sales, none of the owners were notable, or even named. On 15 April, J.T. Collicott advertised about 300 volumes belonging to a gentleman with a rather unusual reason for disposing of them: "As the Proprietor of the above valuable stock is going to reside on his farm, they will be sold without reserve". Perhaps Buck [Burke?] on the Sublime and The Beauties of St. Pierre may have seemed inappropriate to life in the bush but what,
one wonders, was the objection to Burns' Poems? The other two gentlemen selling off eight hundred and a thousand volumes respectively, had the more ordinary excuse of "leaving the Colony". The advertisement for the latter library, in the Hobart Town Gazette for 26 August 1825, ran

This Library, having been selected with great care, will be found well worth the Attention of Literary Persons of all Classes. - Among other Standard Works too numerous to mention are . . . the Monthly Magazine, 52 vols. complete from the commencement, one of the most entertaining Works in the English Language; . . . fine Editions of the Works of Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Pope, Shenstone, Byron, Scott, Campbell, Crabbe, Barry Cornwall, Molière, Rousseau, Madam de Staël, Burnett, Edgeworth, Lavoisier, Sir Humphrey Davy, Cavallo . . .

After 1825 the number of advertisements for books sharply declined. In 1826, the year of John Mcgarvie's visit, there was only one, in the Colonial Times on 11 August, and that was a repeat of one which had previously appeared in the same paper on 16 December 1825, including the hundred-volume British Poets referred to by Mcgarvie. The only book-suppliers in this lean period were Dr. James Ross, proprietor of the Hobart Town Courier, and Mr. Deane of the Circulating Library, who specialised in school and children's books. Ross stuck to the old faithfule Scott, Burns, Washington Irving, Milton, Young, Cowper, Thomson, Shakespeare, offering them at prices not much above those prevailing in London. On 8 December 1827, for example, he
advertised "A very handsome copy of Sir Walter Scott's Novels in 25 vols. fifty plates" for sixteen pounds, only a pound dearer than the price quoted in William Goodhugh's *The English Gentleman's Library Manual* (1827, p.151). Later in the same month Tasmanian readers could have purchased at the Courier Office "Milton's Poems, 2 vols. bound ...12.0... Young's Poems, 1 vol. unbound ... 6.0... Cowper's Poems, 2 vols. bound ... 10.0... Thomson's Seasons, 1 vol. unbound ... 5.0... Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, unbound ... 6.0... Wentworth's Australasia, 2 vols. last Edition ...12.0."

In 1828 about a hundred books were auctioned in Hobart by Mr. Lewis, amongst them Shakespeare's *Works*, Sir Walter Scott's *Works* in forty-two volumes, Johnson's *Works* in nine, Don Quixote in five, Byron's *Don Juan*, three volumes of Fielding's *Works*, The *Flowers of Literature* in four volumes and Lady Morgan's *Italy*. The book market apparently had improved in the two years since 1826, for the writer of an essay entitled "The Flood", printed in the *Courier* on 20 September, commented on this sale "It is out of the question to keep things dry in weather like this. You were lucky in disposing of your books so well on Saturday, Mr. Lewis." In the same paper, however, one finds this humorous description of the ignorance and desire to make a sale of a the local bookseller without much stock
to offer:

Have you Blackstone's Commentaries, said I yesterday to a certain dealer in books, who pretended to no small literary skill. I have not, answered he, but here is Caesar's, a book of much higher character. Smiling at this I inquired if he had a copy of Miss Edgeworth's Irish bulls? No, said he, but I have Clayter on Cows, which will suit you much better.

Of the one hundred and ninety books advertised in 1829, almost half appeared in the columns of the newly founded Launceston Advertiser, and a high proportion were literary works. This was partly the result of the failure of John Pascoe Fawkner, the proprietor and editor of the Launceston Advertiser, to establish a circulating library in Launceston. The first number of the Advertiser, for 9 February 1829, printed

Fawkner's Circulating Library

LIST of new Books at FAWKNER'S Circulating Library, Cameron street, Launceston, arrived per Lang.
Books teach us to "see ourselves as others see us."
Hume and Smollett's History of England
Miller's continuation of do.
Opie's Madeline [1822]
  Valentine's Eve [1816]
  New Tales [1818]
  Tales of the Heart [1820]
  New Simple Tales [1806]
  Illustrations of Lying [1824]
Montgomery's works [Poetical Works, 3 vols., 1820]
Mrs. Radcliffe's Udolpho [1794, 6th edition 1806]
  Romance of the Forest [1791, 7th ed., 1806]
  Sicilian [A Sicilian Romance, 1790, 5th ed., 1826]
Italian [1797, 1824]
  Castles of Athlin and Dunblayne [1789, 11th ed., 1811]
Lady Morgan's France [1819]
Italy [1821]
Gaston de Blondenville [Mrs. Radcliffe, 1826]
Hutchinson's Memoirs [of Charles II, 1806]
Modern Biography [1806-07]
Byland's Spain
Dance of Death [Douce, F., 1804]
Galt's Voyages [and Travels, 1809-11]
Peregrine Pickle
Canterbury Tales
Smollett's Works
French Serjeant
Story of a Life [Sherer, J.M., 1825]
Honor O' Hara [Porter, A.M., 1826]
Attic Fragments [1825]
Multum in Parvo [Fairburn, J., 1811]
The Provost and Annals of the Parish [Galt, J., 1821]
Blossoms of Anecdote [and Wit, 1823]
Smiles for all Seasons
Besides a great variety of Pamphlets.

But even this collection of popular authors of the past and present failed to attract custom and on 2 March Fawkner was forced to advertise the same books as "The following choice selection of handsomely bound Books for Sale, at the Cornwall Hotel. Any person who may be inclined to take the whole, may have them at a trifling per centage upon the cost price." Hume and Smollett's History, Miller's continuation, Story of a Life, and Smiles for all Seasons were omitted from the list, Lady Morgan's Salvator Rosa, Southey's English Poets, Galt's Ringan Gilhaize, John Hilary's The Parish Priest in Ireland, Goldsmith's Works, Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire added to it. The same advertisement reappeared on 1 June, with the addition of some twenty further titles, including Johnson's Lives of the Poets, Gil Blas, Tom Jones, Gulliver's Travels,
Goldsmith's Essays and The Citizen of the World. The other books available in Launceston in 1829 were listed in theAdvertiseron 31 August, for sale by auction on 8 September. Again there was a high proportion of literary works, with the old favourites—Shakespeare, Scott, Byron, Thomson, Crabbe, Sterne and Cowper—well to the fore. Among the more modern publications were Last of the Lairds (1826), Pierce Egan's best-selling Life in London (1821), Felix McDonough's The Hermit in London (1821), Horace Smith's The Tor Hill (1826), Maria Edgeworth's Harrington and Ormond (1817) and Barron Field's Geographical Memoirs of New South Wales (1825).

The decline in the number of books for sale in Tasmania after 1825 was, in part, compensated for by the establishment of the Wesleyan Library at Hobart in 1826. An abortive attempt had been made by Andrew Bent, who, as has been seen, was concerned about the shortage of reading matter in the colony, to commence a Public Library at the beginning of 1823, when the Hobart Town Gazette of 15 February inquired for

... a Person competent to conduct a Public Library and Reading Room, admitting Members and subscribers to a valuable Library, also the use of a Grand Piano Forte and an extensive selection of the first Authors of ancient and modern Music; for which it will be desirable that the Applicant has a taste and can play well, and if possessed of sufficient property to take a share in the concern, perhaps it might be most interesting and mutual to both
parties. To save trouble none need apply whose moral character and Education does not command the first recommendation of the place. — Letters addressed to A.B. at the Gazette Office, in the Name and Handwriting of the Applicant, will be immediately attended to.

Nothing more was heard of this venture — where was such a paragon to be found in Hobart Town? Only a week later, the Proprietor of the Tavistock Hotel begged

leave to inform the Gentlemen of the Colony, that he intends, on the 1st of March next, to open a Reading Room, which will be regularly supplied with most of the English and Scotch Newspapers, Magazines, and the most literary and interesting periodical Publications that are published in the Mother Country. — Gentlemen wishing to become Subscribers, are requested to intimate their intention, in order that their names may be entered in a Book, which will always be kept open for that purpose.

Once more, it is impossible to say whether this venture was a success or a failure.

The Wesleyan Library, if not an immediate success, certainly had more viability than any of its predecessors in Hobart or Sydney. The 1821 Sydney Philosophical Society, to be discussed later, may have deprived the Wesleyans of the honour of establishing the first library in Australia but they can be credited with the foundation of the first non-exclusive and enduring one. In Observations on the establishment of the Wesleyan Library, at Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land, printed by Bent in 1826, their reasons for commencing the Library are clearly set out: "But so remotely are we situated from the land of books, and so
few are possessed of competent libraries, that except within a confined circle, a taste for general reading cannot be gratified by the intelligent, nor cultivated by the young." (p.3) Later, the sources and nature of the works available are explained.

... One part of the books which now constitute the Library has been purchased; another part is comprised of those volumes which have been gratuitously presented by friends of the infant Institution; and a third part comprises certain books which have been sent from England from time to time, by the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, for the use of the mission at this place.

The present collection of books having been obtained under disadvantageous circumstances, cannot be expected to be of such a kind as some intelligent readers would wish; but it is hoped, it will soon be in the power of the Committee to augment the number of valuable standard works. It is also intended, by the first opportunity, to write to a friend in London for the purpose of obtaining a regular supply of periodicals. . . .

The Books comprising the Library are to be of general utility; but while on the one hand, History, Philosophy, and General Science are duly regarded; on the other, Publications that are either frivolous in their composition, or pernicious in their tendency, will be entirely excluded, and Books on Morality and Religion form the prominent feature of the Institution. (pp.6-8)

The Subscription was ten shillings annually in cash or books, with five pounds making one a life member. In addition, there was to be a number of books "on the plainest and most important subjects of doctrinal and practical Religion; which shall be furnished gratuitously to any who may be disposed to apply for them." (p.8) The "Catalogue of Books of which the Wesleyan Library is a present composed" lists seventy-eight works, with thirty-four
classed as "Theological", eleven as "Biographical", seventeen as "Historical" and sixteen as "Miscellaneous". Included with volumes of The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine and the Evangelical Magazine in the latter category were Cowper's Poems, No Fiction; a narrative founded on recent facts (1819), eight volumes of The Spectator and two of Dr. Johnson's Letters. On 10 October 1827, the Sydney Gazette reported, "The Wesleyan Library established about two years since in Hobart Town, by the Rev. Mr. Carvosso, we are happy to state, is in a flourishing condition, on account of its powerful patronage."

Those not content with the meagre supply of imaginative literature available at the Wesleyan Library were catered for after the establishment of Deane's Hobart-Town Circulating Library in the following year. The Hobart Town Courier for 15 December 1827 published a "list of Books to which additions are making daily belonging to the above Library which are let out on hire to the subscribers and others". On this were over one hundred and fifty works most of which, in the tradition of circulating libraries, were novels. For the more serious-minded there were "Boyle Danti[A]... Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson... Burke on the Sublime and the Beautiful, Butler's Hudibras..."

17 Presumably Henry Boyd's 1802 translation of the Divina Commedia.
Hawkin's Life of Dr. Johnson . . . Pliny's Letters . . . Rambler, Tatler, Thomson's Seasons . . . Young's Night Thoughts." Besides novels by Sterne, Smollett, Richardson and Fielding, Deane stocked many French and English novels of the eighteen-twenties such as G.S. Hume's Alice; or Infidelity (1822), R.M. Roche's Castle Chapel (1825), A. Lefanu's Don Juan de Las Sierras (1823), Mrs. Green's Who is the Bridegroom? (1822) and Gretna Green Marriages (1823), Sir. E. Brydges' Hall of Hellingsby (1821), F. Lathom's Live and Learn (1823), M. McDermot's Mystery Developed (1825), N. Stevens' Robber Chieftan (1824) and L.S. Stanhope's Seer of Tivotsdale (1827). On 8 August 1828, Deane, per media of the Hobart Town Courier, begged

. . . to inform the Subscribers to the above Library, and other friends, that he has just added to his original stock of BOOKS, Sir Walter Scott's celebrated Novels, and a variety of other interesting works, and takes this opportunity to return thanks for the support given to the above Establishment.

Terms of the Subscription:-
£2 2 0 per annum; One Guinea paid in advance.
0 15 0 Quarterly
0 7 0 Monthly
0 0 6 per Book.

One Week is allowed for the reading of a Book, and Country Subscribers are accommodated with two.

The library was apparently still prospering at the beginning of 1829, when the Tasmanian of 23 January printed another list of additions to it of the "latest admired and fashionable works" including fifteen supposedly "published in 1828", such as F. Lathom's John Bull, R.M. Roche's Contrast and
S. Davenport's Italian Vengeance and English Forbearance.

Competition of a more serious, because frivolous, nature than the Wesleyans could provide was, however, on the way. In 1828, James Ross made a further contribution to the literary life of Hobart by printing a Catalogue of the books belonging to the Hobart Town Book Society (corrected to Oct. 1828). Ross was also the librarian of this Society which, as page 12 of the Catalogue shows, gloried in an Executive composed of the Hobart Town elite of the day, most of whom can also be met with in Henry Savery's The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land:

Bedford, Rev. W. Montagu, Capt.
Bell, John Pedder, His Honor, C.J.
Dumaresq, Edward Ross, J. (Librarian)
Frankland, Geo., (Sec.) Secombe, William
Gunn, William Scott, Jas. (Auditor)
Hone, Joseph Sorell, Wm. (Treasurer)
Kemp, A.F. (Auditor) Stephen, Alfred
M'Arthur, Rev. A.

The books themselves had a much wider range. Unlike the Sydney Australian Subscription Library, to be discussed later, it held many popular novels of the period such as J. and A.M. Porters' Coming Out (1828), Lady C. Bury's Flirtation (1827), T.H. Lister's Herbert Lacy (1827), Lady Morgan's The O'Brien's and the O'Flaherty's (1827), Horace Smith's Rouben Abbey (1827), Disraeli's Vivian Grey (1826-27) and Fenimore Cooper's The Prairie and Red Rover (1827). As many of these titles are also to be found in
the catalogue of Oxley's library, it is quite possible they were purchased at the sale of his effects in August 1828. Another interesting feature of the Hobart Town Book Society Catalogue is the unusual absence of eighteenth-century works, perhaps because its well-to-do members already had their own copies of Cowper, Burns, Goldsmith, Fielding and so on. The histories, travel books, biographies and periodicals which made up the rest of the two hundred odd volumes listed were as modern as the novels, as were such literary works as Leigh Hunt's Byron (1828), Thomas Campbell's Theodoric (1824) and James Montgomery's The Pelican Island and other poems (1827) and The Omnipresence of Death, a Poem (1828). Among the large number of periodicals were copies to April 1828 of Ackerman's Repository, Blackwood's Magazine, two copies of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews, the Farmers' Magazine, Mechanics' Magazine, New Monthly Magazine, Sporting Magazine and the Westminster Review. On 15 November 1828, James Ross published in his Hobart Town Courier an "Additional List of works received" which included copies to July 1828 of the above periodicals besides issues of the weekly English newspapers John Bull, Atlas, Literary Gazette, The Warder, Sunday Times, The Observer, The Scotsman, Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and Dublin Weekly Register for May and June 1828. The Courier of 14 February 1829 advised
members of the Society that "The Reviews and Magazines to September last have arrived by the Fairfield: – Also the Chronicles of the Canongate, 2d. Series."

Dissatisfaction with the exclusive nature of the Hobart Town Book Society can be surmised from a report in The Tasmanian for 3 April 1829 of a recent meeting to found a "Book Society". Resolutions were made

. . . To limit the subscription to a moderate sum annually. To sell by auction among the Society annually, all the Books purchased in the preceding year, so as to increase the funds of the society, and to prevent the expense of forming a library. . . . To have neither Ballot nor Black ball for admission. . . . That every member should have the option of ordering books, equal in cost, to the amount of his subscription. . . .

At a further meeting it was decided, as The Tasmanian recorded on 24 April, "That the Society be open to all Housekeepers subject to a code of Regulations to be framed at a General Meeting of those disposed to join in its Establishment. . . . That the Annual Subscription be One guinea, with one guinea additional entrance." This move was applauded in the Australian on 28 April: "A Club, called a Book Club, is about to be established in Hobart Town, on a moderate and rational scale, the leading principles being to run into no unnecessary expense, and to EXCLUDE exclusion." But, in spite of this applause from the sister colony, neither the General Meeting nor the Society is heard of again. The original Book Society
continued to prosper, with the Courier for 5 September 1829 reporting

At the Annual General Meeting of the Hobart Town Book Society held on Saturday 29 August the affairs of the Society were found to be in a very flourishing state, several new members were enrolled. It was also proposed, we learn, to carry the original intention of the society into effect, of erecting a reading room, and to give it more the character of a really literary institution, by inviting the contributions of learned and scientific men, more especially in recording the researches into the natural productions of this island.

It was presumably to this proposal that The Tasmanian of 2 October referred: "We understand that Lieutenant Governor Arthur has been pleased to bestow a piece of land upon the book club, for the purpose of erecting a Library House, which will be erected by subscription, upon a very liberal plan."

At Launceston, John Pascoe Fawkner had attempted to found a library as early as 9 February 1825, when he announced, with some of the usual grandiloquence, in the Tasmanian and Port Dalrymple Advertiser

LAUNCESTON READING ROOMS.

AS learning expands the mind, produces discoveries which benefit mankind in general, softens the otherwise barbarous manners of men, and conciliates the affections, I beg leave to propose to the Inhabitants of the County of Cornwall the following Plan:— That a READING ROOM, on truly liberal principles, be established by Subscription; and that the Books be purchased by the same Means, either here, at Hobart Town, Sydney, or England. — But, in order that this Plan may ultimately succeed, it will be necessary
to divest ourselves of all narrow-minded prejudices, as I firmly hope that those who deplore the prejudices of others will shun their steps. The benefits to be derived from an establishment of this kind would be manifold. In the first place we should have the Gazettes, from England, up to the sailing of each vessel; together with the New Publications of all descriptions worth reading, without being obliged to wait for the extracts in the Hobart Town Gazette. Each Subscriber would have the benefit of reading the whole Collection (a great acquisition) and it would soon form a library, the boast of the County, and perhaps the envy of our more populous neighbouring towns. Let us set an example that will be glorious to us, at the same time that it is beneficial. In order to obviate one difficulty, I will provide a Room for the use of the Society for Twelve Months, free of expense, this Town being so barren of Public Amusements. - No establishment could be instituted that would tend more to polish the mind, to bind parties to each other by similarity of pursuits, promote disquisitions, and cause a general diffusion of real knowledge, besides placing us in a way of improving by the earliest News from our (Mother, or) Native Country. - The cost to each Subscriber would be, at most, not more than £5; and what is that, I ask, to any Inhabitant of Launceston, or its Environs? A mere trifle; a labouring man may earn it in a fortnight.

No man of real sense would object to concur with me in the general usefulness of this Proposal, and at such a small expense. Should any person wish to join in endeavouring to accomplish this Plan, I will submit a sketch of the Rules, but to be subject to the Members when assembled.

But either prejudices against emancipists were not so easily put down, or money so easily put up, as Fawkner had hoped, since his proposal seems to have come to nothing. Another attempt of this sort was made in 1826, the Colonial Times for 4 August recording,

At a meeting held in the School House, at Launceston, on Saturday the 22d of July, 1826, to consider of the means of establishing an Institution
for the Education of Youth, and the advancement of Science and Literature. The establishment of a valuable and extensive Library and Reading Room for Adults was proposed. This library also seems to have gone no further, so that, before and after the brief life of Fawkner's Circulating Library, the Launceston public had to rely on hotels for their reading matter. In the Launceston Advertiser for 27 July 1829, Fawkner announced "a selection of Periodicals, amongst which are Bell's Life in London, the Quarterly Journal, the Edinburgh Review, the Journal of Arts and Sciences, the New Monthly Magazine, La Belle Assemblee, and other amusing periodicals, always open to inspection" at his Cornwall Hotel. Later this year, on 14 December, the same paper, also owned by Fawkner, presented

A Report of A Meeting to found a Circulating Library by Subscription.
Subscribers to pay on the first day of January next, £3, and each succeeding 1st January £2.
The principal part of the funds to be laid out on works of standard value, which works are to form the nucleus of a permanent Library.
Any Subscribers to be allowed to name the book or books he wishes to have purchased; but if it does not meet the approbation of the Committee of management, he must agree to pay the full cost price after all the Subscribers have read it.
An alphabetical list to be made out, and each member to take one set of books to read, as his name stands upon this list - the first work to A, the second to B, and so on.

Thus, at the end of 1829, there were three libraries in Hobart of at least a year's duration - one missionary,
one circulating, and one subscription - and another attempt to commence a subscription one at Launceston. A similar situation prevailed in Sydney, though, despite that colony's earlier foundation, only one of the three Sydney libraries was more than a few months old. Various subscription and circulating libraries had been put forward in Sydney from 1808 onwards, none lasting more than a few years, most never going beyond the proposal stage. The earliest recorded, at least partly public, library, is Samuel Marsden's collection, about which much contention raged in 1814. Marsden had first conceived such a library about 1808 when, in "Proposals for Inst[it]uting a Lending Library for the General benefit of the Inhabitants of New South Wales", he argued the colonists' need for

... a Public Library to consist of books carefully selected and confined to particular subjects it is obvious from the nature of the Colony should be Divinity and Morals, History, Voyages and Travels, Agriculture in all its branches, Mineralogy and Practical Mechanics.  

Accordingly, of the two hundred and twenty-six volumes listed in his "1st Sydney Library. Catalogue of Books for the Lending Library of New South Wales", collected


through appeals in the *Evangelical Magazine* in 1809 and his own purchases, half were classed as "Divinity", with "Agriculture", twenty-seven volumes, and "History", eighteen, the other largest categories. Amongst its literary works, one finds only two volumes of the *Critical Review*, three of the *Tatler*, Bacon’s *Essays*, *Paradise Lost* and the second volume of Pope’s *Works*. Overall, it was very similar in content to the libraries set up by churches and religious bodies throughout the rest of the early nineteenth century. Unlike them, however, it was evidently not open to all, Marsden apparently choosing his borrowers as selectively as the later Australian Subscription Library. Consequently, complaints against Marsden’s library made in 1814 foreshadow some of those later levelled at the larger library. In the *Sydney Gazette* for 5 March, "A Free Settler" claimed that before leaving England he had been told,

... a good Library, consisting not only of a variety of useful School Books, but also of a large collection of Bibles, Prayer Books, Religious Tracts, Histories, Geographies, Travels, Voyages, Biographies, etc. etc. etc. had been established here for the use and benefit of the Public, and for the more easy instruction of the rising generation.

Naturally, this provoked a response, "Another Free Settler" asserting a week later,

... I also heard in England of the Collection of Books made by the Principal Chaplain of this Colony, for the benefit of the rising generation in New South Wales.
Soon after I arrived, I applied for books and have never been without two or three in the house. It has also come to my knowledge that the 73rd Regiment, and persons residing at Sydney, Parramatta, Baulkham Hills, Kissing Point, Hawkesbury, Bunbarry Curran, and George's River, have been supplied with books from the same library.

The first correspondent was not, however, to be put off so easily. In the next Gazette he ingeniously responded that Marsden's collection could not be the Public Library he had heard of, since Marsden had sold some of the books, had not advertised the library, nor held a public meeting to thank the donors, nor established the library in Sydney where it would be most readily accessible to all. Marsden now evidently felt the need to intervene in person, roundly proclaiming on 26 March,

... there is no Public Library in the settlement or ever has been, nor are there any Funds to support one. When last in England I collected from my Friends a few Books on Religion, and Agriculture, and other useful subjects to lend to Settlers, Soldiers, and Prisoners, at my discretion... 

Obviously, as Marsden seems to have borne a good deal of the expense of the library himself, he was within his rights in deciding who could borrow from it, and where it should be housed. The original proposals had, however, postulated a Public Library, and it was presumably on this understanding that the initial donations were made. But, as Marsden claimed when questioned on this matter by Commissioner Bigge in 1821, not enough money had been
raised to establish the library in Sydney. Accordingly, he had removed the books to Parramatta, and built a room there to house them, where "gentlemen and others" could read and borrow them.\(^{20}\)

As G. D. Richardson relates, others to plan Sydney libraries were Governor Macquarie in 1813, and the Methodists in 1816, whilst a Biblical Library, presumably short-lived, was established in 1821.\(^{21}\) One of its donors, Barron Field, was much more intimately associated with the Philosophical Society of Australasia, founded the same year by himself, James Bowman, H.G. Douglas, Frederick Goulburn, John Oxley, Edward Wollstonecraft and Captain Irvine. Amongst its regulations,\(^{22}\) one finds "Every Member shall furnish the Secretary with an alphabetical Catalogue of his library, to be digested into one Catalogue for the reference of all the members." (p.lxviii) On 18 July 1821, Major Goulburn’s offer of a room in the Colonial Secretary’s Office as the Society’s Museum and Library was gratefully accepted, and the resolution made "That each Member do pay into the Treasurer’s hands the sum of Five pounds, for the purpose

\(^{20}\) See Dawn Troy, _op.cit._


\(^{22}\) In the Minute Book, reproduced in the _Journal of the Royal Society of New South Wales_, 55 (1921), Appendix, lxvii-cii.
of forming a fund to defray the expenses of fitting up
a museum, purchasing a few Books of reference and other
incidental expenses." (p.lxxi) Field was given the job
of compiling the joint catalogue and on 24 July 1822
"laid before the Society a catalogue of the respective
Libraries of Mr. Berry, Mr. Douglas, Major Goulburn,
Mr. Hill, Captain Irvine, Mr. Oxley, Mr. Wollstonecroft
and himself"\(^{23}\) which was to "be deposited in the
Museum for reference". (p.ci) It is doubtful whether
much benefit was received from Field's labours as the
last entry in the Society's Minute Book occurred soon
afterwards, on 14 August 1822. Although begun with
the estimable aims of "collecting information with
respect to the natural state, capabilities, productions,
and resources of Australia and the adjacent regions,
and publishing from time to time, such information as
may be likely to benefit the world at large" (p.lxviii),
the Society never lived up to either these aims or its
rigid regulations. Its members were supposed to meet
weekly, with fines for non-attendance, "No excuse to be,
allowed but sickness, public business, or non-residence
in Sydney." (p.lxix) On 18 July 1821 Mr. Wollstonecraft's
excuse of dining at Government House was held to be
insufficient but very few members attended many meetings

\(^{23}\) Hill and Berry were elected to membership in July and
December 1821 respectively.
after the first months and the fines appear to have lapsed. Another rule more honoured in the breach was the important Number 1: "It shall be imperative upon each Member . . . to produce a monthly paper, upon some subject connected with the objects of the Society, under penalty of Ten Pounds". (p.lxviii) It was January 1822 before the "first peremptory paper" was called for, and by June of that year only Field, Berry and Rumber, another new member, had read papers. Accordingly, a resolution was passed

That the Society's Rule making it compulsory upon each member in his turn to write a monthly paper, be suspended for the next six months; and that it be left to the interest and zeal which (it is hoped) each Member has in the objects of the Society, to lay before them a paper at such time as he may think proper, without any penalty for default. (p.xcix)

An aside—notes, There is no record of the ultimate fate of the Museum objects and reference books, nor of Field's catalogue, though this can be partly reconstructed from the catalogues of Oxley's and Dr. Douglas's libraries, discussed earlier in this chapter.

More broadly-based, if also more frivolous in its aims, was the Sydney Reading Room, first mentioned in the Sydney Gazette on 26 August 1820, when Subscribers were informed "that the first Series of Newspapers and Pamphlets have arrived, and that the Reading Room is opened at Mr. Frank's, Hunter-street." Later in 1820, on 7 October,
Subscribers were told of the arrival of newspapers, magazines and reviews from December 1819 to April 1820 and "again requested to pay their Subscriptions into the Hands of Mr. Jenkins." Lasting longer than the Philosophical Society, the Sydney Reading Room was still in existence on 5 July 1822, when the following notice appeared in the Gazette:

SYDNEY READING ROOM

The Friends and Subscribers of this Institution are requested to meet at Mr. Hill's Tavern, on the Evening of Tuesday the 9th Instant, at Seven o'clock precisely, to hear the Report of the past Proceedings, and select proper Officers to supply the existing Vacancies occasioned by Death and Absence; as also, to pass the Accounts since the formation of the Institution, with the correspondents in England, who, though in Arrears, have sent out a Box of Periodicals and Papers by the last Arrival - "The Denmark Hill".

F.E. Forbes, Secretary.

A fortnight later, Thomas Rose, the Treasurer, informed Subscribers

... that Mr. Joseph Underwood has very handsomely offered the Use of a Room on his Premises, for their temporary Accommodation, which will be ready for their Reception on Monday next ... when the Papers, Periodical Publications, etc. recently received by the "Denmark Hill", will be open to their Perusal.

Although there is no further record of the Reading Room, there may have been some connection between it and the Reading Society first mentioned on 13 May 1824. Since the notice in the Gazette of this date stresses that the Society is a "Private Association", meeting at the
Judge Advocate's Office, it would, however, seem more likely to have been an extension of the exclusive Philosophical Society and a precursor of the almost as restrictive Australian Subscription Library. In any case, at the May meeting it must have been decided to disband the Society following Wylde's return to England, for on 17 June 1824 the Gazette printed

READING SOCIETY

The Books undermentioned, not being found amongst those returned after Circulation, and presumed therefore to have been borrowed afterwards for Perusal, are in such Case to be sent in without Delay, as not subject to Fines, to the Treasurer, William Wemyss, Esq. J.P., Deputy Commissary General.

List of Books missing

Cotter on the Criminal Code
Dixon's New South Wales
Grattan's Speeches
Burchell's Africa
Mitchell's Aristophanes
Blackwood, October to March
Constable's Magazine, ditto ditto
London ditto November to April
Pamphleteer, No. 37, 38 and 39
Grattan's Works
Farmer's Magazine, No. 85
Constable's Magazine, April to September
London ditto, May to October
Taxidermy
Edinburgh Review No. 70
Quarterly, Nos. 51, 52, 54, and 55.

On 1 July 1824, Mr. Lord was to sell by auction "At Mr. Judge Advocate Wylde's, Macquarie-place, This Day . . . The Kitchen and other Utensils, Law and other Books, with the Books also hitherto in Circulation through the Reading Society." Presumably the proceeds were divided among the
members.

The first attempt to found a commercial circulating library on the English model occurred in 1825, following a tempting advertisement in the Sydney Gazette on 7 April that year: "Mr. Paul. - Saturday, 8th April. An extensive collection of Novels, comprising near 1500 Volumes, presenting the desirable opportunity of laying the basis of a circulating library." There is no definite evidence that Robert Campbell purchased this collection, but it seems more than coincidence that a week later the Gazette printed

Novelty. - R. Campbell, 93, George-street, respectfully begs to intimate to his friends and the Public his Intention of Opening, for their Amusement, in the Course of a short Time, a

A Circulating Library,
Printed Catalogues of which, with the very moderate Terms, will be published in a few days.

In a lengthy article on this "Australian Circulating Library", in Howe's Weekly Commercial Express for 23 May 1825, the writer reviewed the previous failures in the field.

We have much pleasure in proclaiming the laudable efforts of Mr. Campbell, in singly attempting an undertaking, which has hitherto baffled the combined efforts of many respectable individuals. Our Reading Rooms have long since tumbled into forgetfulness, and can scarce be brought to one's remembrance, only when the subscribers recollect that such Institutions were promoted and subscribed to most liberally, but which (like the Sydney and Van Diemen's Land Packet Company) subsided as hastily as they were formed - all owing to the absence of a certain uniformity of sentiment that is required in our
community to benefit the public weal. In business we should like to observe men meet upon a par — in the private circle let them be as select as prudence may demand.

But Campbell's library also subsided rapidly, as did that commenced in 1826 by a Mr. Wood. The choicest attractions of Wood's stock were listed in the Sydney Gazette on 8 February 1826:

A Poem, by Lord Byron . . . Muezpae [sic]
A Poem, by Mr. Wentworth . . . Australian
A Poem, by Walter Scott . . . The Field of Waterloo
A Poem, by Walter Scott . . . Marmion, besides many other Works, by the same Author.
None of Walter Scott's lent, only to Subscribers.

Further evidence of the popularity of "the Great Unknown"!

On 29 March, Wood tried to tempt more subscribers with the offer of another very popular work, "Hume and Smollett's History of England, in 13 Volumes", but to no avail. By April 15, as a Gazette advertisement showed, he had fallen back on poultry-selling, and on 10 November was forced to advertise in the Monitor "On Sale, at the Circulating Library, No. 70, George Street, about 1,300 Volumes of the choicest Novels, Romances, History, etc. etc.etc. Also, several Volumes of Sir Walter Scott's Works."

In the mean time, another combination of "respectable individuals" had met and founded the Australian Subscription Library which, far from hastily subsiding, eventually grew into the present Library of New South Wales. Although
F.M. Bladen in his Public Library of New South Wales. Historical Notes (2nd. ed., 1911) claims "there is no reasonable doubt" that the cataloguing by Barron Field of the Philosophical Society's members' books was "the germ of the old Australian Subscription Library" (p.1), the only apparent evidence for this is that those members of the Society still in Sydney became Subscribers. Berry and Wollstonecraft were the Library's Treasurers till 1831, and Dr. Douglass was one of the ten gentlemen who initiated it at a meeting at the Sydney Hotel on 3 February 1826. The first general meeting was held on 16 March of that year, the decisions arrived at then being later printed by Robert Howe as Rules and Regulations for the Conduct of the Australian Subscription Library and Reading Rooms, which also included a list of members and office-bearers for 1826. While the annual subscription of two pounds was no dearer than Campbell's had been, members had also to find an entrance fee of five pounds, besides being elected by three-fourths of the members present at a membership balloting. Needless to say, most of the prominent members of Sydney society became subscribers. Among the seventy names listed in the Rules and Regulations were those of Mr. G. Blaxland, Dr. Bowman, Rev. W. Cowper, Mr. Robert Campbell sen., Col. Dumaresq, Lieut. De. La Condamine, Captain Piper, Captain Rossi,
Mr. Justice Stephen, Rev. Archdeacon Scott, and W.C. Wentworth. On 1 March 1826, the Sydney Gazette, whose editor Robert Howe was also a founding member, ran a lengthy article on the new institution. After commenting on colonial progress in politics, agriculture and commerce, the writer continued,

Literature seems to have been neglected in the midst of all that prosperity which has succeeded the united efforts of the industrious Colonists. Some attempts, it is true, were made in former years to enlighten, amuse and interest the Public, in the proper cultivation of useful knowledge; but, so singularly constituted was our society, that, no sooner were fair prospects entertained, than they were as quickly blighted, in endeavouring to accomplish an object so desirable. About four years ago, a Reading Society was formed - liberal subscriptions gladly entered into - an elegant room rented - a librarian at a salary of seventy pounds an annum, taken into pay - a library sent for to the Mother Country - when, lo! and behold all these mighty preparations, and ardent expectations, lived in conception, since it is a fact universally known, that the realization of a single project never occurred! This was only to be accounted for, in the absence of that spirit of unanimity which alone must be viewed as essential in furthering such important objects; for, in disorganized societies, people cannot be brought to coalesce, unless some powerful intervention arise to attract and cement individuals and parties, whose interests have invariably clashed. . . . Whether the foundation of the Institution which heads our present article, originated in political motives of a peculiar kind, or whether it is bottomed upon principles which characterize the noble soul, we are unacquainted - all that we have to do is to view the formation of this Society abstracted from every degree of prejudice and give it that desire of merit to which we think it lays claim. We will not say it is the best, but we insist that it is one of the best measures which has been resorted to in support of HIS EXCELLENCY's inaugural Proclamation, inasmuch as it tends to harmonize that Society, which has too long been agitated with a
multitude of distracting cares. . . . If ever there was a period more fortunate than another for the formation of an Institution, the present is decidedly propitious for the establishment of the Australian Subscription Library, and we augur it will meet with the most liberal support. . . .

As the period has arrived, when a thirst for knowledge seems to be daily gaining ground, we have no doubt that the Subscription Reading Library will be found to answer the most sanguine expectations, and ultimately to become an elegant and substantial appendage to the extending empire of Australia.

The history of the Subscription Library from this time onwards has been outlined by Bladen. Of the first order for books, sent to London on April 1826, he notes

The list of books ordered is still preserved amongst the Library archives, and is a very interesting document. The great quarterlies have precedence, followed by high-priced standard works on history, theology, biography, science, and travels. As if to grant concessions to the weaker vessels, Scott's novels were added, evidently as an afterthought.

The books, upon arrival, were deposited at the warehouse of one of the founders of the Institution, A.B. Spark, until a suitable house could be found. (pp.3-4)

The Sydney Gazette, perhaps concerned that in spite of its prophecies the Library would go the same way as its predecessors, noted the arrival of these volumes on 10 October 1827 with the comment "we should like to hear something more than we have of late" of "this patriotic Institution". But the Library continued and in 1829 Ralph Mansfield, who had assumed responsibility for Howe's paper and printing works after the latter's accidental drowning, issued the Catalogue, with Rules,
Regulations, and Bye-Laws, for the conduct of the
Australian Subscription Library, and Reading Room. 1828.
Again a list of members was printed, which shows that
eighteen had left (many, such as Oxley and Howe, had
died) and forty joined, an increase of about thirty
percent over the two years. Some recognition was now
made of the difficulties attendant on living away from
Sydney: members could keep duodecimo books for five
days; octavo for ten; quarto for fourteen and folio for
twenty-one, while "To Country Members, there shall be
allowed, in Addition to the above Time, two days, for
every distance of twenty Miles from Sydney". As a sign
of the increasing spread of settlement, however, another
new clause stated "That Books shall not be lent out of
the Library to Persons residing more than 50 Miles from
Sydney". An examination of the Catalogue bears out
Bladen's comment "At the outset the books were of a
very high educational order, what we would call to-day,
standard works for a Reference Library." (p.5) Of the
three hundred odd works listed, only about a sixth were
literature in the modern sense. Over half of these
were "Sir Walter Scott's Works" which, perhaps in compen-
sation for the Library's fictional deficiencies, were
listed twice, once under that heading and once in their
correct places in the alphabetical list of titles. The only other modern literary authors listed were Scott's son-in-law John Lockhart, Washington Irving and J.F. Cooper. Other literary works in the Library were Pepys's Memoirs, Milton's Prose Works, Percy Anecdotes in twenty volumes, Boswell's Life of Johnson, Florian's Works in twelve volumes, Evelyn's Silva, Alfieri's Tragedies, Byron's English Bards and Scotch Reviewers and the forty-five volume British Essayists. Among the periodicals were the Australian Quarterly Journal, the Asiatic Journal, the Edinburgh Review, the Eclectic Review, the Edinburgh Journal of Science, the London Magazine, the Oriental Herald, the Quarterly Review, the South-Asian Register and the Westminster Review.

Besides ordering works from the Colonial Agent in London, books were apparently obtained on the principle established by the Philosophical Society of loans from members' private collections. Bladen writes

One of the first steps taken by the Committee was to solicit loans of books from members, with which to make a start. About five hundred volumes were obtained in this way. Some of them were subsequently presented to the Institution, notably those of J.T. Campbell and Archdeacon Scott. (p.4)

On 26 May 1829, the Australian waxed incredulous over the report that Scott, who had succeeded the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Stewart, as Vice-Patron of the Subscrip-
tion Library, intended to donate his books.

We hear it rumoured, but scarce know how to credit so unexpected a sample of liberality, that the Venerable Archdeacon Scott has collated, or is about to make a present of the catalogue of Books, comprising his Library to one of the five Literary Societies of Sydney, the Australian Subscription Library, preparatory to his Venerability departing from amongst us, as a memento of his regard. If so, the Venerable Gentleman would certainly be acting rather unexpectedly and with more liberality than Mr. Justice Field, who before leaving dispersed his books about the Colony with bell and hammer to the merry chime of the "rino".

Scott's previous generosity had been reported in the same paper on 13 February 1829 in an account of the General Meeting of the Library held a few days earlier, headed "PROGRESS OF LITERATURE".

On Tuesday there was a meeting at the Society's Rooms in Pitt-street. It was meant to be a general meeting of Members, but the attendance was extremely thin, not above twelve or thirteen Members being present . . .

A letter was read from Mr. J.T. Campbell, Chairman of the Society, expressive of regret that indisposition hindered him from having the pleasure of attending the Meeting that day; and another from the Venerable Archdeacon Scott, conveying to the Society a very liberal and valuable donation, consisting of various choice and scarce works, and a sum of money, which the donor requested might be expended in the purchase for five years of the theological magazine published in England. . . .

Mr. Barnard, who in England goes by the name of the Colonial Agent, having had money transmitted him with the request that he would kindly devise and execute such measures as would always ensure to the library an accession of modern and valuable works, and the periodicals of the day, having written back a letter acknowledging the receipt of the money, but having given himself no further trouble in the business . . . it was resolved to the effect that he be deemed incompetent, and
that Mr. Donnison, of the firm of Donnison and Cobb, who had already displayed much zeal, and gratuitously too, in the cause of the Society, should be solicited to take these matters in hand. . . .

The library is now but in its germ. We hope to see it expanding fast, and in progress of time dispensing the benefits of liberal and extensive information.

"E parvis magna" some body or another says, to which we will offer the familiar aphorism "Rome was not built in a day".

The Alexandrian Library was not great at once. Why should we prognosticate less for Sydney - but allons, away with this prosing and floundering at the Antipodes.

As a Society having utility for its basis, and trusting that it will be conducted on principles liberal and patriotic, we wish the Society as our parting benison, unalloyed success and prosperity.

Other moves to increase the availability of reading material were afoot in 1826. The Gentlemen of Bathurst, who unfortunately resided more than fifty miles from Sydney, decided to start their own library. On 5 April 1826, the Sydney Gazette enthused under the heading "COLONIAL LITERATURE",

Our Readers will observe, with satisfaction, that the literary institutions of Australia are flourishing even beyond the Blue Mountains. We fondly cherish the hope that the day is not distant when Australia will rival the literary glories of the Mother Country. Such Institutions as the following bid fair to accelerate the attainment of so desirable an object, and thereby contribute, in the most effectual manner, to "ADVANCE AUSTRALIA."

Then followed an account of the founding of the Bathurst Literary Society "on Wednesday, February 1st, at a Meeting of the Gentlemen of Bathurst, Captain FENNEL, Commandant, in the Chair", thus predating the Australian Subscription Library by two days. At this meeting, it was
resolved:

... As the society of Bathurst is composed, in great part, of members of a respectable and well-educated class, who feel much the want of means for intellectual entertainment, so requisite for the cultivation and happiness of domestic hours, and for the preservation and improvement of polished life.

That a Society be formed, to be called "The Bathurst Literary Society", for the purpose of procuring a Library, and whatever else may, from time to time, appear to the Society, at the suggestion of any Member, necessary to the promotion of their object.

Its fees were similar to those of the Australian Subscription Library, though membership seems to have been even more exclusive since "two Black balls" were enough for a veto. The similar foundation dates suggest that the political motives seen by the Gazette as behind the Sydney Society may also have operated in Bathurst.

Certainly, many people were connected with the foundation of both, among them Archdeacon Scott, who was the Bathurst President, Alexander McLeay, the Vice-President, Colonel Dumaresq and Captain Piper. As with the Australian Subscription Library, members offered to lend their personal libraries as a foundation, the Rev. Mr. Keane also offering to give lectures in astronomy and natural philosophy. Nothing further is heard of this Society, so one presumes that, like the early Sydney ventures, it either had a brief but troubled existence or never went beyond the resolution stage.

Two other attempts were made to found libraries in
Sydney in the later part of this period, both more utilitarian in aim than the ones previously discussed. On 6 June 1828 the *Australian* noted "There is some talk among the profession, about the propriety of instituting in Sydney a Library by Subscription, which shall contain works on Law exclusively. The Judges have been pleased to volunteer a room for this purpose." Again, as there are no further references to this library in any of the Sydney newspapers, one presumes that it, too, perished at an early stage. The Useful Book Society, whose establishment was announced in the *Sydney Gazette* on 6 October 1829, also seem to have been short lived, despite its noble aims.

It will be gratifying to those who have brought with them from England a portion of the characteristic spirit of its inhabitants in the present age, the love of science, and zeal for its universal diffusion, to be informed of the actual formation and hitherto successful progress of a society for the dissemination of useful knowledge among all classes of society in this growing Colony. . . .

The object of the present Society is sufficiently apparent in its title. It is simply that of establishing a Library of Useful Knowledge, the contents of which shall be accessible to the whole community, without the distinction of rank or denomination, whether civil or religious. For imparting instruction merely spiritual, whether contained in the scriptures or in books founded on those sacred writings separate, societies already abound. For the higher branches of elegant literature, the Subscription Library is more than sufficient to meet the demands of upper classes. But for the middle and lower orders, for such as are either excluded from the associations of the more wealthy, or, being unable to avail themselves of their expensive institutions, have nevertheless a desire
for innocent recreation and intellectual improvement for all in fact, who from taste, necessity, or occupation, prefer that kind of knowledge which may be emphatically designated as "useful", some appropriate establishment to render that knowledge cheap, and access to its various fountains easy, is still a desideratum. . . .

With the view of compassing these objects, it is intended that the subscriptions shall be moderate, the Society unfettered with the appendages of more dignified associations, and every part of its proceedings conducted with an exclusive regard to simplicity and usefulness.

It is not intended that religious books should be excluded, nor even a proportion of such amusing and popular works as are calculated to afford recreation rather than instruction; a consistency with its professed design, however, will oblige the Society to devote the chief part of its funds to the purchase of elementary scientific works, of those treatises on practical subjects which are most likely to be of service to the farmer, the mechanic, and the tradesman in their respective daily occupations, and of the several cheap periodical publications, such as the Mechanics' Magazines, Farmer's Magazine, Cottage Monthly Visitor, etc. which are expressly intended for the instruction of the middle and lower orders.

The above passage is interesting for its assumption of clearly defined classes in contemporary Australian society, divided by wealth and, as a corollary, taste, as well as for its demonstration of utilitarianism at work in the colonies. In keeping with this spirit, the Regulations of the Society betray a strong paternalistic bent in the founders:

1. The Society to consist of all individuals contributing Ten Pounds at one payment; or Two Pounds at one payment, and One Pound per annum afterwards, in money or works approved by the Committee.
2. The Member to be entitled to a vote for every £1 subscribed annually up to £5.
3. Members having paid their Subscriptions, to be entitled to the use of the Books, and empowered to recommend others for the like privilege, at the rate of
2s. 6d. per quarter, or 1s. per Month, payable in advance.
The Members of the Committee were, with the exception of
a Mr. Sadlier and Mr. G.M.C. Bowen, the Secretary, also
members of the Australian Subscription Library –
Archdeacon Scott, Mr. McLeay, Rev. W. Cowper, Rev. R. Hill,
Mr. Lithgow, Mr. De La Condamine, Mr. Harrington, Mr.
Norton, and Mr. Deas Thomson, the Treasurer. Archdeacon
Scott, who was returning to England, was entrusted with
a sum of money collected from members to purchase "cheap
books as will best meet its objects" and also undertook
to "establish a connection with a bookshop in London,
and solicit assistance from those Societies whose plan
will admit of their extending it." As usual, books
donated by members were to form the foundation of the
library.

The Useful Book Society was not to commence lending
until after the receipt of the first shipment of works
from London. In the meantime, those who desired to read
but lacked the other essentials for membership of the
Australian Subscription Library, could obtain works from
William McGarvie’s Circulating Library if they could
spare "£2 per Annum; £1. 1s. per Half-year; 12s. per
Quarter; 5s. per Month; or 1s. 6d. per week." Subscribers
in the last two categories were also required to "Deposit
a Sum equal to the Value of any Book delivered, to be
returned at the Expiration of the specified Period". All
subscribers could borrow two volumes at a time and, if
exceptionally fast readers with nothing else to do,
could change them "once every Day". These Regulations
are to be found in *A Catalogue of Books in the Circulating
Library of William McGarvie, Australian Stationery
Warehouse, George-Street, Sydney*, printed by Ralph
Mansfield in 1829. William McGarvie, after following his
brother John to the colony, established his Stationery
Warehouse - where he also sold books, particularly school
texts - and his Library and was later to be one of the
founders of the *Sydney Herald*. On 18 July 1829 *The
Monitor* reported:

"We are happy to learn Mr. McGarvie has opened a
circulating library, and hope it will succeed. No library
however will prosper well, unless it commence as a
foundation-stock with Miss Edgeworth's, Sir W. Scott's,
Miss Moore's and all the best novels of the present time.
Mr. McGarvie can purchase the whole set of Scott's if he
has not all ready got them. We know of no books more
proper for the young ladies of New South Wales, than
Moore's, Scott's and Edgeworth's novels.

McGarvie agreed that novels should be his mainstay but was
rather more up to date in his choice, as an examination of
his catalogue shows. Of the one hundred and seventy works
listed, over one hundred and thirty were novels, most of
them written between 1815 and 1828. There were, of course,
several by Scott, and one, *The History of Leonora Meadowson*
(1806), by Maria Edgeworth, but poor Hannah More was
neglected for such more fashionable ladies as the Hon. Mrs. Grey with *Trials of a Life* (1828), Lady Caroline Lucy Scott with *Marriage in High Life* (1828), and Lady C. Bury with *Flirtation* (1827). Other popular novels on the list were J.F. Cooper's *The Prairie* (1827) and *Red Rover* (1827), E.G.L. Bulwer's *Disowned* (1828), Horace Smith's *Brambletye House* (1826), *The Tor Hill* (1826) and *Zillah, a tale of the Holy City* (1828), and R.M. Roche's *Castle Chapel, a Romantic Tale* (1825). Also on the shelves were such perennials as *Gil Blas*, *Don Quixote*, *Roderick Random*, Falconer's *Shipwreck* and Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. With a stock such as this, McGarvie's success is not surprising. The *Sydney Gazette* reported on 26 September 1829, "Mr. McGarvie's circulating library, we are glad to hear, continues to meet with liberal encouragement. The proprietor intends very shortly to add a considerable number of esteemed and popular works to his present catalogue." There was, however, trouble of another kind awaiting McGarvie, one presumably not encountered by any previous circulating library proprietor. On 9 October 1829, John McGarvie noted in his Memorandum Book, now in the Mitchell Library, the receipt of a letter from his brother:
The corporation are very desirous to crush his Library. They have a Book Society with 120 vols. which they wish him to manage but he must sacrifice his own. I think he should refuse it with a good grace in which case I fear they will set up an opposition retail Stationery Shop. Caution required and —.

Three days later he sent a letter to William enclosing one "to be written to the clerk of the Corporation regarding his library" which ran

Having taken into consideration your proposal with regard to the Library I beg to state that as there is no remuneration to be attached to the office and as I am not to order the Books, as I shall be answerable to replace the Books lost or injured I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of it. I am bound also to the Subscribers to Keep it up for one year otherwise I am liable to a prosecution. I beg also to state that no works of an irreligious, immoral or political character have been admitted into my Library. I was not aware that the creation of such an institution so much in the way of the business to which I had been trained at home could give any offence. Only works of approved merit and general information shall be admitted into it.

Presumably these arguments were accepted by the Corporation. At any rate, the library continued, and on 16 November 1829 John recorded that he had sent William some books from his own fairly extensive and well-organized collection, a manuscript catalogue of which survives in the Mitchell Library. The books were

1. Kaims Sketches, 4 vols. 8vo. [Glasgow, 1807, 10s.],
2. Dr. Franklin's memoirs. 2 vols. [Edinburgh, 1808, 2/6.],

24 Presumably the Church of England Church and School Corporation.
8. Lindsay's short method. 9. Lackington's Life. 10. Fenning on the Globes. 11. Whole Duty of Man etc.etc.etc. 25 Perhaps he thought these would help to give William's library more of the cast of "approved merit and general information" he had attributed to it in the letter to the clerk of the Corporation.

Besides combining to procure books and periodicals, the colonists of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land soon began founding societies for other purposes. Those with an intellectual or literary interest, however, do not appear to have achieved much lasting success until the end of the eighteen-twenties. In Sydney there seem to have been at least two literary and debating societies running in 1829. 26 The first mention of them occurs in the Sydney Gazette on 6 June that year, as a simple statement that the "Debating Society" meets on Wednesdays, at the Royal Hotel in George Street. Five days later the public was informed, by the same means, that the first debate would take place that evening. On 2 July, the Gazette made it known that there was another debating society in addition to the Royal Hotel one, which met at the residence of Messrs. Cook and Marshall in George Street.

25 Bibliographical information in square brackets taken from John McGarvie's ms. catalogue.

26 The quotation from the Australian of 26 May 1829 given on p.72 mentions five.
At a recent meeting of this society "a gentleman whose muse has for some time occupied a conspicuous rank in the annals of Australia" had recited a poem, to be discussed in the next chapter, on the future greatness of Australia. As no further attempt was made to distinguish between the two societies, it is impossible to say to which the Gazette was referring in this paragraph printed on 14 July:

Some Members of the Sydney Literary and Philosophical Society have expressed a little displeasure at our terming them a Debating Society. Now, though we do not discover much reason for such particularity, we admit the objects they aim at justify the appellations, Literary and Scientific discussions, Lectures, Experiments, and Recitations. They collected some funds last Meeting and manifested every appearance of advancement. Several questions have already been agitated, and argued with much deliberation.

although, from the grandiose title, the one meeting at Messrs. Cook and Marshall's seems more likely. Confusion is increased by information in the Gazette of 25 July that "a Debating Society meets at the house of Mr. Cape in King Street". Their next subject for discussion was to be "whether music or poetry has the greater influence on the passions". In the Gazette of 3 September and the Monitor of 5 September, the following notice appeared:

The Members of the Literary Society established in Sydney, anxious to facilitate the admission of respectable Individuals, have resolved:—

"That a letter addressed to the Society, intimating a wish to become a Member, will be read at the ensuing Meeting; and, after being proposed and seconded, such Applicant will be duly elected."
The amount of Subscription is fixed at £1 per Quarter in advance, and the Society meets once a fortnight on Monday evenings at seven o'clock.

As this was signed "W.T. Cape, Secretary", it presumably refers to the "Debating Society" mentioned on 25 July, apparently a quite distinct body from the two Societies referred to on 2 July. In the same 5 September issue the Monitor included among its "Domestic Intelligence" the news that, at the "Literary or Debating Society",

A question of much interest is to be discussed on Monday evening, "whether the conduct of Junius Brutus in executing his sons, is to be approved or condemned". We understand the Society is prosperous in all respects - we are surprised that the expenses of the Society should require so large an annual subscription as £4 stg. each member. Half the sum we should have thought abundant. But the subscriptions are all punctually paid, and therefore no reduction seems at present necessary.

Presumably the high subscriptions counteracted the liberal admission policy, by ensuring that only the upper, that is, wealthy, class applied to join the Society. Anyway, no criticisms were voiced in a letter to the Editor of the Sydney Gazette from a member of the "Literary and Debating Society", printed on 17 October 1829. He was at pains to point out the particular utility of such institutions in circumscribed colonial societies:

We want something to fill up the vacant hours which frequently hang heavy on our hands in this remote corner of the world, and surely the establishment of such Societies present many strong and powerful incitements for calling our faculties and energies into action.

Although the Society continued to prosper,
We find the difficulty of obtaining access here to works of use or reference to be very great indeed. In order to obviate this as far as our present means will allow, we have made arrangements for receiving a supply of the most approved periodical and other works, the necessary funds for which go forward by the next vessel for London; and when circumstances permit, the supply will be increased. It is also open for any of the members or their friends to present the Society with any work which they might think would promote its interests, to be returned to them should the Society discontinue its meetings, which is not anticipated.

The only other information on the Society's activities during this period comes from reports of the topics it debated. After a 2 November discussion, "Which have been the greater benefactors to mankind, misers or spend thriffs", "a large majority awarded the palm to the latter class of worthies", according to the Gazette of 5 November. The Australian for 12 December noted, "The subject to be discussed by the Debating Society, on their next meeting, is, which is (quere which has been) the noblest character, a Roman, Frenchman, or an Englishman?"

Although the Colonial Times for 4 August 1826 recorded "An Evening School or Mechanics' Institution for young men is about to be established in New South Wales. — A Mr. C. Cowper, is the Clerk of the Incorporation", to Bent's own town of Hobart belongs the honour of possessing the first Australian Mechanics' Institution, besides the first lasting Library. As there is no mention of the Sydney Institution in any other newspaper, it seems to have been
even more ephemeral than the other Institutions of Education and Enlightenment planned in the 'twenties. The founding and early struggles of the Hobart Town Mechanics's Institution are, however, very well documented in this and the subsequent period. On 13 May 1825, "A Young Admirer of Literature" had written to the Editor of the Hobart Town Gazette advocating a Public Library and Literary Society. This letter foreshadowed the exclusiveness later to plague the Mechanics' Institute, the first society of an intellectual nature to be founded in Hobart, as much as the Reading Rooms and Literary Societies of Sydney. The "Young Admirer" believed that, because of the peculiar nature of Tasmanian society, such a club would need to be very selective.

On 17 March 1827, The Tasmanian announced that a General Meeting of the members of the Mechanics' Institution would be held at the British Hotel three days later. A report of this meeting was published in the same paper on 22 March.

... Dr. James Ross was called to the chair, supported by W.H. Hamilton, Esq. J.P.; G.W. Gunning, Esq. J.P.; W. Gellibrand, Esq. J.P.; James Scott, Esq. J.P.; Edward Lord, Esq.; J.T. Gellibrand. Esq. and several other Gentlemen of respectability. The rules and regulations for the establishment of the Society were read and adopted. Above 50 individuals have become Members and there is every prospect of the Institution being considerably extended; and as the object of the Society is the diffusion of useful Knowledge and mechanical science, in its most
extended sense, we are confident it will have the support of all classes.

The donation of Books, for the immediate establishment of a Library, was urged upon the Gentlemen present, many of whom promised to contribute; and we trust every individual favorable to such a laudable establishment will contribute to it as far as possible.

A week later the editor apologised for omitting "to mention that Alfred Stephen, Esq. was at the Meeting" and "warmly espoused the measure, and promised to support it."

On 21 June, *The Tasmanian* carried a further report of "a numerous meeting of the Members of this Institution, held at the Court-house this Day". From this, one learns that the Patron of the Mechanics' Institution was "His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor", the President "His Honor the Chief Justice". Among the Vice Presidents and Trustees were numbered such pillars of Hobart Town Society as John Burnett, Esq. Colonial Secretary, James Scott Esq. J.P., Alfred Stephen Esq., Edward Dumaresq Esq., Joseph Hone Esq. J.P., A.W.H. Humphrey, Esq., and William Gellibrand, Esq. J.P. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that a correspondent calling himself "Numskull" should have written, in a letter in the *Colonial Times* on 20 July 1827,

I assure you, Mr. Editor, this is not an Institution of and for Mechanics - it is an Institution of and for Gentlemen; this is, Public Officers and rich men, merchants and others, exclusively, who have assumed to themselves all the power and control of the Institution, on the grounds that "the presence of superiors is the only thing to keep
the fellows (meaning the poor men) in subjection."

. . . I conceive it would have looked much more befitting
the character of Gentlemen, instead of figuring as
Vice-Presidents of a Mechanics' Institution, to have
appeared as Vice-Patrons, and let the Mechanics have the
power in their own hands; this would have created gratitude
and respect from the poor men, whereas their present
conduct has only occasioned a general jealousy and
disturbance throughout the Society.

On 26 July, "Opifex" replied in The Tasmanian, giving
some interesting details of the foundation of the Mechanics' Institution:

"Numskull" is true in saying, the Mechanics' Institu-
tion was established by mechanics, meaning, I suppose,
operative mechanics; but it was not by them alone it was
"brought to what it is". A meeting of operative mechanics
was formed some months before the present Institution was
thought of. The operatives found they could not get on by
themselves; and at the time they requested the assistance
and co-operation of the Public in general, the landlord
of the house did not thank them for their company, as he
could barely afford them a fire to sit by.

"Opifex" claimed the "Gentlemen" and the "Mechanics" had had a
dissention-free cooperation, tried to argue that the Colonial
Architect, Surveyor and so forth, were mechanics, and ended
with these comments on the present state of the Institution:

. . . the managing Directors are the Committee, of whom
one half at least, are operative mechanics - that the
operatives are punctual in their attendance, and still take
a most lively interest in its affairs - that the objects
for which the Institution was formed, are beginning to
develope themselves, the library of books being in circul-
atation, and lectures in the course of delivery - that a
subscription is open for erecting the necessary buildings,
and that the Lieutenant Governor has promised to aid by
giving materials and labour.

In the Hobart Town Courier for 1 December 1827, a more
detailed setting-out of the aims of the Mechanics' Institution, and the difficulties so far encountered in carrying them out, appeared over the name of J. Wood, Secretary.

The Institution is designed to promote useful and scientific knowledge; 1-by the voluntary association of mechanics and other, 2-by donations of money, books, specimens, implements, models and apparatus; 3-by a library of reference and circulation and a reading room; 4-by a museum of machines, models, minerals and other objects of natural history; 5-by lectures on natural and experimental philosophy, practical mechanics, chemistry, literature and the arts; 6-by elementary schools for teaching arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry, and their different applications, particularly to perspective, architecture, mensuration and navigation; and 7-an experimental workshop and laboratory.

The carrying of this plan into effect, notwithstanding the approbation and encouragement it has received from the public, has been retarded from various causes. One is the want of a suitable building, and although His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor has very handsomely promised an allotment of ground, and some assistance towards the erection, the committee has experienced great difficulty in obtaining a proper site for the building. The gentlemen who have been so good as to contribute lectures have also been hindered in their labours from the want of proper apparatus. These difficulties, however, are now in part surmounted, at least, so far as regards the elementary schools, the necessary apparatus to commence has been procured. A remittance of £25 has already been sent to England by the Cumberland, and a farther remittance of £50, half for apparatus and half for books, will be forwarded by the Persian.

Much of this was repeated in the Rules and orders of the Mechanics' Institution, Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land which James Ross, with his numerous interests and activities, somehow found time to print in 1828. In this volume, too, one finds the annual subscription given as one pound, probably within the reach of most interested
operative mechanics.

On 17 January 1829, Ross reported in his *Hobart Town Courier*, "The library of the Mechanics' Institution, we are happy to learn, has received a valuable addition to its volumes in several new and useful publications, by the ship Lady Rowena." This would seem to indicate the continued prosperity of the Institution, but only a few months later, on 8 May, *The Tasmanian* announced the dissolution of the Mechanics' Institution with the familiar "It is an unfortunate fact that from the peculiar composition of the materials of which many of the public associations hitherto attempted have been composed, that their existence was evidently impossible." The lapse was, however, only momentary in this case, for on 8 August the *Courier* recorded "On Tuesday evening there was a meeting of the Mechanics' Institution, when we learn, some regulations were made so as to render the excellent books in the library more generally available, and measures were adopted to renew the public lectures as well as the initiatory schools." *The Tasmanian*, six days later, rejoiced at the revival of this "lately dormant Society":

We are happy to perceive this, being of the opinion that all Public Societies upon Public principles, are calculated to effect Public good; and we understand that admission to the proceedings of this body, is no longer to be upon the exclusive system, but is to be open to the public. That is as it should be.
Two years earlier the same newspaper had published "Opifex's" defence of the "exclusive system", but Robert Lanthrop Murray was now editor in the place of George Terry Howe.

Two other societies were noticed as beginning operations in 1829. On 25 July, the Hobart Town Courier recorded the founding of a literary and debating society

... the members of which meet on a fixed day in each week, for the purpose of discussing questions of which previous notice has been given. We are informed that several speeches have been delivered, and no small share of research, good taste, and understanding have been evinced by the speakers. We consider the establishment of such an association a subject of congratulation to the colony, being the first of the kind accomplished by gentlemen, from whose youth so early an instance of well directed application could scarcely have been expected.

The young members of this society, who were possibly enrolled at James Thomson's Hobart Town Academy, also produced "The Academic Journal", as the Courier noted in the same issue, counselling,

The projectors of the present essay will no doubt succeed if they have but perseverance steadily to pursue their object. Every week will lead them a step higher up Parnassus, and at the end of a year they will look back with astonishment at the height they have attained. Minerva only wants to be courted to dispense her favours.

At the end of 1829, The Tasmanian of 11 December remarked briefly on "The Philosophical Society": "This Society which owes its origin to Dr. Henderson, a Gentleman recently arrived to settle here, is about to receive the very highest patronage."
Presumably Governor Arthur had bestowed his blessing, but even this does not seem to have helped the Society which, like most similar attempts during the next twenty years, has left little but its name behind it.
CHAPTER II

AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE: 1800 - 1829

Still, gracious pow'r, some kindling soul inspire,
To wake to life my country's unknown lyre,
That from creation's date has slumb'ring lain,
Or only breathed some savage uncouth strain;¹

Although comparatively little original literature was written in Australia during this early period of settlement, various ideas about Australian literature still current today were already established. For example, on 21 January 1828 a correspondent signing himself "Candid" complained to the editor of the Sydney newspaper the Monitor: "The South-Asian is really a good work; and people have only to get rid of the vulgar local prejudice that, because written at Botany Bay, it must by consequence be bad – they have only to get rid of this prejudice, to believe so." But while the short-lived magazines, such as the South-Asian Register, and the usually longer-lasting newspapers of the time may not have been much worse than most contemporary overseas publications, their interest today is mainly historical, as is that of the literature they contained.

A complaint often made by colonials about Australian publications was that they were insufficiently local and original in their contents. At a time when copyright was

¹From W.C. Wentworth's Australasia (1823).
completely disregarded, it is not surprising to find a large proportion of borrowed material, both news items and literature, in the early Australian newspapers and magazines. On 25 February 1829, soon after Robert Howe's death had left him sole editor of the Sydney Gazette, Ralph Mansfield wrote to his English agent, the Reverend Robert Bourne, with a list of requirements. The British publications to "be sent regularly" included the Atlas, the Observer, Bell's Weekly Messenger, Literary Gazette, Liverpool Courier, the Mirror, New Monthly Magazine, Blackwood's Magazine, Quarterly Review, the Pamphleteer, Nautical Almanack for 1830 and 1831 and Times Telescope for 1829 and 1830. Other works Mansfield thought essential were "A Printer's Grammar, the best published", "All Washington Irving's Works, Known as Geoffrey Crayon's", Therry's Life and Speeches of Canning, A Dictionary of English Quotations, Dibdin's Library Companion, A Complete System of Punctuation, A General Pronouncing Vocabulary of Proper Names, Specimens of Sermons and Sacred Poetry by John Johnston, and Sacred Specimens; Selected from the Early English Poets by the Rev. J. Mitford. Give or take

a few idiosyncrasies, such as Monitor editor E.S. Hall's fondness for William Cobbett and Mansfield's for sacred writings, this list is a fair indication of the sources of most of the English material published in Australian magazines and newspapers during the early nineteenth century. Whilst, on 20 November 1811, the editor of the Derwent Star and Van Diemen's Land Intelligencer regretted the need to take his material from overseas sources in this way,

The Editor is convinced that it is useless to endeavour to impress on the Minds of Subscribers to the late Derwent Star, what were the circumstances which induced the Discontinuance of that Paper, as there is not one amongst them who will not allow that the principal one was, a want of support from them to the Editor; for as it was Published not as in other cases from interested motives, but by one or more Gentlemen, for the amusement of their friends, they certainly might at least in a few instances, have been honor'd with a little original and interesting matter, instead of having been reduced to the absolute necessity of referring to stale English or India Papers, Magazines etc. The present Paper will be Published Monthly, until by the assistance of the Public the EDITOR is furnished with matter for more frequent Publication.

most others seem to have been content to fill up their columns with such "borrowings".

As might have been expected from their great popularity, Scott and Byron were the two English authors most frequently quoted and discussed. On 10 February 1827, the Monitor printed part of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. A Romaunt" with the comment "Perhaps to be continued". There was obviously
a demand for more, since on 12 June the poem was continued
with the note

Many of our readers, particularly those whose residence
up country prevents them having access to the work, have
expressed a wish that we should fill the space usually
devoted to Poetical Contributions, with a continuation of
this most admired production of the deceased Noble Author.
After Byron, the English poets most often reprinted in early
Australian publications were Thomas Moore and such
sentimental ladies as L.E.L. and Felicia Hemans. While
gossip about Scott frequently filled up odd corners, along
with English reviews of his latest productions, very little
of his actual work was taken over by Australian editors.
Lengthy serialisation of fiction did not get underway until
the eighteen-thirties, when the Dickens mania began, but
short stories and essays were reprinted in magazines and
occasionally in newspapers. In 1829, after Ralph Mansfield's
assumption of the editorship, the Sydney Gazette took on a
more literary tone, printing "From the Literary Souvenier
for 1829. Too Handsome for Any Thing. (By the Author of
Pelham [Bulwer Lytton] )" on 7 July, "Snow - Woman's Story.
By Miss Edgeworth" on 30 July and "The South Sea Chief. By
Miss Jane Porter" on 10 September. All three writers were,
of course, highly popular at this time. An earlier Gazette,
for 3 July 1823, had reprinted from the Literary Gazette
"Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life; a Selection from the
Papers of the late Arthur Austin'. The editor's comment "Aust in", otherwise on John Wilson's, highly sentimental work gives a good idea of the prevalent taste in fiction.

In our Supplement of to-day is presented a novel and exquisitely natural and pathetic production, to which the attention of the Reader is particularly called. The subject requires no commendation from our pen. It only needs a perusal to discover the beauties with which every line of the lovely narrative is pregnant.

The limited size of the early newspapers no doubt partly accounts for their tendency to publish more poetry than prose fiction, a tendency shown with local as well as overseas literature. Of course, poems were also then more respectable than novels, whilst the shorter forms of imaginative writing may have been more easily managed under colonial conditions. Whatever the reason, to study the literature written in Australia before 1850 is mainly to study poetry — although that is too grandiose a title for most of the jingles, impromptus and other "poetic effusions" offered to the public. From almost the first issues of the Sydney Gazette in 1803, George Howe was publishing original verse, and most later newspapers and magazines featured a "Poet's Corner", with the result that much more poetry achieved this sort of ephemeral publication than is the case nowadays. As most pieces, in keeping with the fashion of the time, appeared anonymously or under pseudonyms, it is now impossible to identify more than a few of the
authors. It has been suggested that George Howe was himself responsible for many of the poems printed in the Gazette under his editorship\(^3\), though the only ones attributable to him with any certainty are "All's Well That End's Well", 23 January 1813, reprinted under his name in Howe's Weekly Commercial Express on 25 July 1825, and "The Progress of Intemperance. A Tale" by "G.H.", 11 January 1817. Since there is nothing to show that the verses he published in 1803, all of the punning, humorous doggerel type which remained extremely popular, were not "extracted" from overseas sources, they have not been included in the "Bibliography of Original Poetry in Australian Newspapers and Magazines: 1803 - 1849" presented as Appendix IV. By 1804, however, Howe was certainly receiving local contributions. The first issue of Volume II of the Gazette, for 4 March 1804, contains a poem which, while in no way indicative in subject matter of a colonial origin, is at least signed "G.S." and so has been regarded as the earliest piece of published Australian literature. Entitled "The Vision of Melancholy. A Fragment" with, in parenthesis, "Apparently intended to awaken in the Mind a transient Sentiment of that Passion from whence it derives

its Title", it embodies many of the characteristics of early Australian poetry.

Bleak on the Tomb the midnight dew descends;
The Lamp of Night her silver reign suspends;
No stately Tower rises to the sight,
Nor Planet's lustre cheers the silent Night:
Then Fairies, sportive, on the distant mead,
In airy gestures o'er the fallows tread;
And pallid Shapes, emerging from their clay,
Commune with Mortals till they're chac'd away.

As this first stanza shows, its mentors were the late eighteenth-century poets: Thomson, Gray, Collins. It is written in fairly smooth-flowing couplets, has a conventionalised abstract poetic diction, generalised natural description, personification of such beings as "MELANCHOLY", "RESIGNATION" and "SORROW", and is on the second most popular theme of early local poetry. Love was naturally the most popular, followed by what one might call "death" poems, whether laments for actual persons or just for the general transience of life. Sometimes unintentional humour results when this melancholy-type poem is given a local colouring, with what today appears a comic blend of eighteenth-century decorum and savage subject, as far from reality as the stylisation of native scenes and peoples practised by the early artists. One prime example of this is again to be found in the 1804 Sydney Gazette: "The Native Mourner", 23 September, which opens
Ye’ve ebon Nymphs, ye warlike Youth
In pity list’ to my complaint;
If Constancy be thine, and Truth,
My Grief partake without Constraint:
For poor LAMHUIGA’S Sighs and Tears
In vain are spent upon the Shore:
Herself consign’d to Wants and Fears,
Since generous EBROE is no more!

Next in popularity were the intentionally humorous poems, often satirising - though that term is usually a little too strong for their merits - some aspect of the local scene. These are now generally the most appealing sort of early verse, though as poetry they are mostly just as unoriginal and banal as the other varieties. The type of humour involved in the earliest examples can be seen in another item from the 1804 Gazette, "Epitaph on a Monkey that usually occupied the summit of a high post in the yard of a Gentleman in Sydney", 29 July.

Beneath this pebbl’d spot, in death repos’d,
Lies the grim corse of one estrang’d to care;
Who chatt’ring oft’, no secret once disclos’d,
Who liv’d a Captive - yet disdain’d a tear.

A MIND possessing of peculiar mould,
Alike to him was flattery and scorn;
And tho’ unclad, protected from the cold,
For bounteous Nature’s robe had ne’er been shorn.

Devoid of talent, yet by Fate preferr’d,
He lived EXALTED, died without disgrace -
Uncensur’d too! - nor has Report been heard
T’announce the next Successor to his PLACE.

Should the gay Coxcomb hither chance to stray,
Let sympathy provoke one kindred shrug;
And let him chatter through the wiley way,
In doleful emphasis - Alas, poor PUG!
That the Gazette did not, however, print every poem sent to it, is evident from this rebuke George Howe delivered on 12 May 1804:

TO A CORRESPONDENT.

The song entitled "BANTI" is incomprehensible: the measure irregular, and for the most part UNLIMITED, but as Non descrip. it might be noticed, had it even brevity to recommend it. Should the POET again design favouring us with a STAVE, we trust he will avoid unnecessary circumlocution, that drags out a disinteresting subject to the rotundity of a HOOP.

Unfortunately, later editors rarely answered their correspondents at such amusing length, though a few gems may be found in early issues of the Monitor.

Of the fifty-three seemingly original poems printed in the Gazette before 1820, two of the best, showing an unusually successful marriage of poetic impulse and means, appeared on 26 May and 16 June 1805. Whoever the anonymous author of these early Australian pastorals was, he produced, some sixty years before Kendall, in "The Cottager",

When the Bell-bird to stillness gives sadness and awe, and, equally distant from Adam Lindsay Gordon, in "Colonial Hunt",

I point to the Game, and uplifting my hand,
Brisk Lurcher, obedient flies off to command: -
Perceiving her danger, Puss doubles her pace,
And well prim'd and loaded, I bring up the chace.

Exclaiming, transported the course to review,
"Hoick! hoick! my bold Lurcher! Well led Kangaroo!"

After the charm of these verses, the formality of Michael Massey Robinson's eighteen "Royal Birthday Odes" published
between 1810 and 1819 seems doubly stiff, whilst his three other pieces show just as little poetic talent. As an example of his style, and as the first of many early patriotic hymns to Australia, one may take the first and last stanzas of his "Song, To the Tune of Rule Britannia", 1 February 1817.

When first AUSTRALIA rose to fame,
   And Seamen brave explor'd her shore;
Neptune with joy, with joy beheld their aim,
   And thus expressed the wish he bore:
   Rise, Australia! with peace and plenty crown'd,
   Thy name shall one day be renown'd. . . .

While Europe's Pow'rs in conflict dire
Exhaust the Flower of the brave,
Here peace shall flourish, shall flourish - none conspire,

   With human blood they soil to lave.
   Rise, Australia! &c. &c. &c.

Apart from Howe and Robinson, the only other identifiable Gazette poet from these first twenty years is Laurence Halloran, to be discussed in more detail later, whose "To the 'Full Moon!'", 25 September 1819, was the last poem published there in this period. Amongst the other anonymous verses one finds, of course, further love and death poems, an occasional early "exile" poem like "Farewell Lines on Leaving England in 1816. (By a Gentleman)", 30 August 1817, and more of the humorous local squibs.⁴ Even though most of these can only by a considerable stretching of the term

be called "poetry", Howe apparently continued to receive others that were even worse, advising correspondents on 2 October 1808, "Five VERSES received on Thursday are inadmissible" and, a week later,

"The dog star rages; - nay, 'tis past a doubt, "Or Bedlam, or Parnassus is turn'd out"

In the course of the last week we have been favoured with THREE poetical productions; among which was an Epigram peculiarly recommended by its brevity: - For the moment it is unfortunately mislaid, or it otherwise would have appeared, as it contains a very salutary advice to Poets in general.

The Extempore Effusions of a Parent are not sufficiently correct for insertion; nor are they so constructed as to make that impression on the mind of the Reader, which doubtless was excited by the loss of an infant in the bosom of a fond parent. Its incoherencies may be very natural; but they are at the same time perfectly unpoetical and ungrammatical, as will appear from the following specimen, alluding to the mother of the departed infant.

"Oh! for her 'tis I'll live; and for her 'tis I'll die

"Nor ask for an hour to be given,

"When great God shall her call, my he then summon I,

"To meet our blest infant in heaven."

The beautiful verses upon Hope, if copied, should have been declared as such. This could not have detracted from the merit of the performance; but would have reflected credit to the taste and judgment of the correspondent for the excellence of his selection.

Some pieces may, of course, have been rejected on other than strictly poetic grounds. As John Byrnes noted, before 1824, when the Australian took over the "hitherto anonymous and dangerous job of undermining authority", anything of a really satirical nature had to be circulated as "pipes",

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apparently so called because they were rolled in the shape of a pipe and left where they could be found by their victims. The earliest dates from the time of Governor Hunter, whilst as late as 1818 William Bland was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for a book of pipes criticising Governor Macquarie found on the Parramatta Road. Byrnes suggests that these may actually have been written by William Charles Wentworth, later Bland's electoral running-mate. Certainly, pipes written by Wentworth in 1816 still survive in the Mitchell Library, one against Lieutenant-Governor Molle, quoted by Byrnes, being the best of those extant. It runs in part

Where'er the sickening Muse averts her face,  
Still Vice and Folly reign in ev'ry place,  
Their potent spells, and wide extended sway,  
All ranks alike, with willing hearts obey;  
Nor shall their pow'r her virtuous rage repress.  
But how attack this many-headed beast?  
Like City Alderman at Lord May'rs feast,  
Who, quite enrapt in gormandizing trance,  
The num'rous dishes eyes with rapid glance,  
Nor, as the sav'ry, smoaking food he views,  
Knows, all alike desiring, which to choose;  
Till some more tempting dainty than the rest  
Fixes his wav'ring, undetermined taste;  
So stands my Muse irresolute in Choice  
Amidst thy num'rous votaries; Oh Vice!

The other surviving pipes, including an earlier attack by Wentworth on James Macarthur, are much more poorly written and below the standard of the newspaper verse, all naturally showing an equally heavy eighteenth-century influence.
Presumably many more pipes were written than have survived, and this would be even truer of the less formal folk-songs and ballads composed by the convicts and others of the lower classes. Discussing bushranging during the eighteen-twenties, Peter Cunningham noted, "The vanity of being talked of, I verily believe, leads many foolish fellows to join in this kind of life, songs often being made about their exploits by their sympathising brethren". Whilst several folk-songs still popular today deal with the convict era, it is impossible to be certain when they were composed and how much revision they have undergone over the years. The nearest approach to a folk ballad printed in the *Sydney Gazette* before 1820 was "Murdoch Delaney's Description of the Races", 20 October 1810, which opened

Don't you know I from Hawkesbury came to behold
Your Races, that seem'd to delight young and old,
Where each rode a-foot, if not blest with a horse,
And canter'd away to the place called the Course.

Sing Ballynamony-ora, Ballynamony-ora,

Ballynamony-ora!

A tight little horse-race for me.

going on to describe the festivities, races, his lost bet and so on. In its adaptation of a popular tune and use of an Irish persona, this poem anticipates many of the later

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folk-songs and verses on local subjects printed in Australian newspapers.

About a hundred and eighty original poems appeared in the Sydney Gazette in the eighteen-twenties, a large number of these in 1829, when the Reverend Ralph Mansfield became sole editor after Robert Howe's accidental drowning on 29 January. Robert Howe, also a staunch Methodist, had taken over the editorship and proprietorship of the paper on his father's death in 1821, and in this period in consequence it developed a more strongly religious tone, reflected in many of the poems published. Of the three most popular types of poetry in early Australia, love and death poems tended to predominate in the Gazette in this decade, along with a fair number of nature poems, usually containing complimentary remarks on the Deity. Only about a third of the Gazette's poems bore any trace of their colonial origin, with most Australian references appearing, naturally enough, in the humorous, satirical variety. Many of these, such as "Bah's" "Impromptu. On Reading the Leading Articles of the last Three Monitors", 30 July 1827, "A Thorn's" "O Robin Howe, Thou Pink of Men", 15 March 1826, and "Anticipo's" "Hoax Heliconical, for the Next Anniversary Festival", 3 March 1825, concerned themselves with the bitter, continuous rivalry between Sydney newspaper editors particularly rife in this period. More
conventional songs in praise of the colony's Anniversary Day were published in the Gazette by two of the few identifiable writers of Australian poetry in the eighteen-twenties, Michael Massey Robinson and Charles Tompson. Most of the many love poems printed in the Gazette at this time could just as easily have been written in England. "Psyche's" "Recollections of Former Happiness", 16 October 1823, however, concluded

    And he would smile when I have said;  
    That he was mine alone;  
    And call me his Austral maid,  
    Young Guido of Verone!

while the anonymous "Australian Melodies. No. 1", 6 January 1827, was a love song to "a sweet maid of Australia". One poem showing more originality and technical competence than the majority of verses published may not in fact have been written in Australia. But it has been included in the Poetry Bibliography because of its Australian associations, and quoted here to show that not all poetry with convict overtones was melancholy. Its author seems to have been influenced less by the usual eighteenth-century conventions than by the gay, charming poetry of Herrick and his contemporaries.

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6 "Song for the Commemoration Dinner, January 26, 1820", 5 February 1820; and "A Song, Written for the XXVITH JANUARY Last . . .", 4 March 1824.
THE LOST HEART.
Lost - stolen - or strayed
With some pretty maid,
A heart which is not used to straying;
Deep, tender, true,
And faithful too;
Its love once captured ne'er decaying.

It last was seen
When Eveline
Tripped by with dangerous beauty beaming,
And much it sighed,
And fondly eyed
Her dazzling smiles like sunbeams gleaming.

'Tis thought it swallowed
Love's bait and followed,
For she so sweetly graceful looked,
The Prince of Evil, -
The very Devil,
With all his guile had then been hooked!.

If she trepanned it, -
The bright young bandit!
I hereby give her legal warning,
That sound and whole,
As when 'twas stole,
She must send it home by to-morrow morning.

And should it whine
(As I opine)
To leave a dwelling so enchanting, -
Her own must come
To bless the home
Now left so lonely, - pining, - panting!

Or in default,
I shall assault,
That best and dearest heart e'er courted,
And seize it, tho'
By doing so,
I needs must be for life transported!

A more conventional treatment of the convict system was "The Female Convict to her Infant", published anonymously in the Gazette on 5 February 1824. In this example of a
death poem, the unhappy woman who is to be executed on the morrow ponders in typical eighteenth-century fashion on the future fate of her baby. This was a very popular theme in Australian poetry of the eighteen-twenties and later, though usually the mothers were merely generally miserable, not in danger of impending extinction.

Although some of the love poetry and most of the death poetry has a pronounced melancholy strain, one is struck, when reading the verses published in early Australia, more by the optimistic tone of those dealing specifically with the new environment. There is very little of the gloomy, homesick "exile" poetry one might have expected to find in large numbers. Perhaps if more of the convicts themselves had had access to the columns of the Gazette and other papers the result might have been different - certainly the few popular ballads that perhaps survive from this period are much darker in tone than any of these more formal verses. Here, even when the authors are writing about convicts, the predominant idea is usually one of repentance in the good environment of this brave new world, to be followed by an eternity of bliss in the even braver one to come. This is the advice given the sorrowing convict by "I.R.M." in "Australasia", published in the Gazette on 29 July 1824, where Australia is seen as
the "Eden of the South", a country definitely not intended for slavery. So, too, "T.K.", obviously well-read in Shakespeare and the eighteenth-century poets, after describing the wrong-doer's dissipations, crimes and arrest in his "Australia; or, the Exile", in the same paper on 9 September 1826, continued

Sure, 'twas a kind arrest! the sternly spoken
Sentence, tho' 'twas banishment, 'was blessed.
The exile here, tho' banishment is pain,
Shall feel the blessing's influence benign
And salutary, healing every wound.
The Penitential tear, when shed in secret,
Unseen by every eye, save God's omniscient,
Which the recording angel registers
In heaven, shall find sweet reception there —
A savour smelling sweet as Arabia's
Mild perfumed gales, far more acceptable
Than would ten thousand penances and
Pilgrimages made to shrines of saints.
Affection, which till now lay slumbering
In his breast, awakened by absence,
Strongly draws him home, where thought conveys him,
Where late he left the partner of his sorrows,
And helpless babe, to bear the frowns of fate. —
Here, by adversity severely taught,
And rigid discipline, he studies virtue,
And if he lives, returns a character
Regenerated! to bless his children.
Here Industry and Labour smile content,
Since nature yields abundance rich to man,
Whose perseverance soon might change the scene
From natural uncultivatedrudeness,
To bloom a smiling paradise of sweets.
The stately oak, royal progenitor
Of princely forests, whose leafy foliage
Nodding in verdant pride to summer's zephyrs,
Like crested plumes on some mail'd warrior's helmet
By attitude, nobility, and strength,
Distinguished, from one poor acorn sprung!
The proudest empires once were infant states,
Acquiring glory by steps progressive.
Australia here, the nurse of science,
Her sons in arts polite improving fast;
Whose rising sun illumes her hemisphere,
With rays resplendent gloriously,
'Neath whose all invigorating influence,
Australia shall enjoy a long and happy day; -
She, in future times, shall boast of senators,
Wisdom, grandeur, pomp, and pageantry.
She, too, may know her Alfred and her Georges,
Whose deeds illustrious shall gild her name,
Whilst she shall proudly rise a nation
In dignity and state pre-eminently
Far above her peers — a potent rival
For a world in arms! and Commerce, busy
Speculative Commerce, shall introduce
Her beauteous offspring, smiling plenty,
The gift of heaven to this happy isle.

This hymning of Australia's great future was taken up
by several other writers in the eighteen-twenties. Under
his pen name "Lorenzo", Laurence Halloran in "To Miss *****
On Her Arrival in New South Wales", published in the
Gazette on 29 April 1824, predicted Australia would soon
rise from her present state of slavery to one of "Science,
Truth and Fame". The patriotically named "Australasiaticus",
in a rhymed criticism of the editor of the Australian
printed in the Gazette on 27 June 1829, concluded with the
idea, to become particularly common in the subsequent
period, that Australia would take over Britain's role when
the latter went the way of all empires. This idea had
perhaps first been suggested by William Charles Wentworth
in his 1823 poem Australiasia, evidently very popular with
contemporary colonists, since it was frequently reprinted
in local newspapers and magazines. Wentworth was also an
obvious influence on the anonymous author of "Lines Recited Before the Members of the Sydney Debating Society", which appeared in the Gazette on 2 July 1829.

From our dear home, where every social joy Was wont the evening circle to employ; Where, from the plastic fire of tempered mirth, Quick genuine wit was ushered into birth, And shot, like the galvanic spark along, Till all were roused by emulation strong, While Beauty, like a Franklin, in the soul Held all its lightnings in her soft controul; And with her silken thong, and key of steel, Drew from its clouds whate'er a soul could feel — Making their stormy contact to expire In lovely flashings of innoxious fire; Where the chaste Forum taught the youthful heart The first clear thoughts uncensured to impart, And schooled it on till the arena saw Its actors rise to give a senate law.

But, since the Fates decree that we must part From all that's dear to every Briton's heart, However great the pang, 'twere folly now To mourn the loss, and that rough soil replough Which would lie fallow. Let us rather turn Remote from thoughts like these, as from an urn In whose cold ashes the loved shades we trace Of many a much regretted form and face — To what strikes full upon us, for is not The vampire shade of scenes far best forgot? And what is that before us? Here we see A country wild as the unbridled sea. And such was man; but it were well to trace The moral day spring in this unblest place; Look back, ere fifty years this island lay Wild, rude, untilled, as at Creation's day. The solitary Indian on the shore Heard no sound stirring save the billows roar, And on their surface, in his bark canoe, That on the site of this young city grew, Fished round yon tower's crowned points, and saw arise Nought save a giant forest to the skies; Nor dreamed, perchance, that ere his sons would see A stone-built pile supplant his sheltering tree. Few years elapsed, when from our native land
A tribe debarked upon this virgin strand.
Grief in their words, dejection in their eyes,
Proclaimed this change no willing sacrifice.
Yet who were they? Shall I pursue the theme?
No! Rest in Lethe, — rest thou joyless dream;
And let us briefly onward: — Twenty years —
Lo, what a change on every side appears!
Fields cultured, fabrics rising, and around
An infant Sydney starting from the ground.
But still society in Gothic night,
Unpolished, and devoid of civil light.
Another twenty years — behold, my friends,
The moral landscape that around extends.
'Tis here — behold it gaze — what do you see?
A people shackled where they might be free;
Free from that vandal darkness which still reigns,
And the full soul in s'lient bondage chains;
Society is broken; or where two,
Or four, or six adhere together true,
How are their evenings entertained? The bowl
Steals on their senses — vitiates the soul —
Benumbs the feelings — stimulates too high —
Which downward sink again, and doubly die.
Here then, my friends, we meet to obviate
And check the growth of this immoral state;
Here will we pass the social evening hours
In weaving wreaths of literary flowers,
Or drawing hidden truth from out the well
Where sages say she holds her mystic cell;
And shall I breathe a hope? From hence may rise
Australia's fame and glory to the skies;
May she illumine this dark hemisphere,
And shed new lustre each succeeding year,
And with defiance on her brow unfurled,
Blaze the Britannia of the southern world.

These lines have been quoted in full more for their interesting references to the growth of a literary culture in Australia, than for any intrinsic merit. They are, however, superior to most contemporary pieces. While the versification and vocabulary — such as the use of "solitary Indian" for the aborigine — show the heavy influence of eighteenth-century poetic fashions found in the majority of early
Australian works, the poet does display more technical competence than is usual. The extended simile of Franklin's work on electricity, though somewhat clumsily handled, at least appears to be original and is in keeping with the emphasis on mental culture as a force in Australia's future greatness. This emphasis has been discussed at length by George Nadel in his valuable *Australia's Colonial Culture* (1957), where he demonstrates the stress thoughtful colonists gave to literary culture as a means of unifying the diverse elements of colonial society and improving it both morally and mentally. Although Nadel deals with the period from 1835 to 1860, it is obvious from the "Debating Society" poem alone, that the ideas he traces had their roots in the eighteen-twenties, if not earlier.

The desire for political rather than cultural improvements, however, led to the establishment of the *Australian*, the second newspaper to appear in Sydney. Founded by Wentworth and Robert Wardell on 14 October 1824, in an attempt to gain freer speech than was possible under the government sponsorship of the *Sydney Gazette*, the *Australian*’s advent resulted in a removal of press censorship and a marked increase in political comment not only in leaders and letters to the Editor but also in satirical articles, parodies and poems. In spite of its late start, the *Australian* was soon a
challenging competitor for the Gazette. Just a year after its first issue, a circulation of 652 copies a week was claimed on 13 October 1825, in response to a Gazette announcement three days earlier that it sold 576 copies on Mondays and 566 on Thursdays, compared with less than a hundred copies of "the very first number" in 1803. As the population of New South Wales was just over thirty-one thousand in 1825, and a little more than seven thousand, one hundred in 1803, there appears to have been a fairly rapid growth in the demand for reading matter. Even in 1819, as the Gazette of 25 December noted, it had less than three hundred subscribers from a population of over twenty-six thousand. The removal of newspaper censorship in 1824 probably had a lot to do with the increase in demand, since editors were now able to offer more meaty matter to their readers. By 1826, the Monitor had joined the publishing scene and on 6 October announced that it had 272 subscribers in Sydney alone, while the Gazette had 261 and the Australian a slight lead with 289. In 1828 when Wardell disposed of the copyright of the Australian to eight shareholders for £3,600, the South-Asian Register for December noted, in an article "A Walk Through Sydney in 1828", "This paper has sold 600 copies twice per week it is said", taking the high price given for the copyright as "proof that in New South Wales
there is a monied or reading public" (p.322). At this date, the two qualities were still, of necessity, highly correlated.

About one hundred original poems were printed in the Australian in the just over five years between its foundation and the end of the eighteen-twenties. Roughly a quarter of these had some Australian content, a slightly smaller proportion than the Sydney Gazette's verse. Possibly the editors of the Australian were more discriminating in filling their "Poet's Corner"; certainly they were more given to caustic comments on the poems submitted. On 20 January 1825, the "To Correspondents" section of the Australian informed a would-be poetess: "Ann may rest assured we have sufficient gallantry to oblige her, if by so doing we did not inevitably run the risk of offending our readers. Her rhymes are very fervid, but they are not poetry". The same could, however, have been said of most of the "effusions" published by the Australian and its contemporaries! On 10 February of the same year, Ann was rewarded for her persistency by publication of her verses "To J - ", although the editor thought it necessary to note in self-defense:

"Love seems to have mollified the obduracy of Ann's muse, for once. The 'strains' of this love-sick lady are so much improved, that we cannot refuse insertion to her chef d'oeuvre. She seems to be as far gone as her adored."
The last remark referred to her very popular absent lover theme.

Some years later, on 2 June 1829, the Australian laid down its poetical creed under the heading "Poesy Run Mad":

Several lyrical effusions embellish our table. None though, but what are of the mediocre cast. Some display so inferior a genius, and so utterly deficient are they in true taste and feeling, that we must deny them a nook in our Poet's corner: - others again flow on in that rich, luscious vein which prudent chaste Mamma's, would not be disposed to patronise in a Newspaper - a Journal devoted to the public good - to commerce, to politics, and to literature, to the solid and the useful as well as to the light and the airy effusions of facts and hearsay. We love a sprightly, natural, sparkling madrigal, with a smacking harmonious chime to it. Or the mellifluous chant of - a sonnet, tuned with the very key of love.

To any little chaste canticle having a pretension to mediocrity, much more any number of degrees beyond it, we feel a natural gratification in giving currency. But who would blame us for permitting so cold, so affected, such a drawling, stammering, stuttering effusion as the No. 1 subjoined, rather to "rot in cold obstruction" than to be giving [sic] to the world in arrant black and white. Let not the bard, however, be disheartened by a little honest remonstrance. Improvement often comes with practice, though we must acknowledge that should W.H. make love no better than he manufactures rhymes, we cannot express a great deal of wonder did the obduracy of his "Belle Amiable" remain unsoftened by all the poets' blandishments. But let our proscing poetical readers form their own conclusions from the following literal rescript of one of those rhyming pieces which it has been the pleasure of the composer to commit to our discretion.

Then followed "No. 1. Original Poetry. To Jane", some comments that No. 2 was rather better and the quotation of No. 2 which began "Dear Jane while the rosy spring . . .". Here, however, was probably the first Australian
literary hoax, since both poems had actually been taken from Charles Tompson's *Wild Notes from the Lyre of a Native Minstrel*, published three years earlier, with only the names of the ladies altered. This was pointed out in a letter entitled "Literary Larcency", printed in the *Australian* on 5 June, where "Solomon", most likely Tompson himself, waxed highly indignant at both the editor's strictures on the poems and "W.H.'s" attempt to gain glory from another's works. But "W.H.", whose pseudonym recalls the controversial dedication to Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, seems to have been motivated more by the spirit of practical joking - he even carefully copied Tompson's mottos "Spee Incerta futuri" and "Hopes and fears in equal balance laid" - than by a desire to steal Tompson's thunder. He certainly indicated that the work of this early colonial poet had not made a lasting impact.

Tompson himself published in the *Australian* two other poems later collected in *Wild Notes*, using the pseudonyms "Australasianus" and "Fidelle en Amour". Laurence Halloran also published here as well as in the *Gazette*, under his own name and probably also as "Bagatelle", "Jack Vainspun" and, no doubt, various other noms-de-plume that cannot now be identified. The most prominent of the *Australian*'s versifiers, "G.", contributed seven poems between February and September 1825. Four, entitled "Nugae Australes", 
described, in competent but uninspired verse, various Sydney scenes — Port Jackson, The Cemetery, Point de la Perouse and Belle Vue. Two other poems by "G." appeared in the *Australian* in December 1829, but they may not necessarily have been written by the same person. Another anonymous poet, "G.J.M.", probably G. James Macdonald, discussed in more detail in Chapter IV, was also fond of Latin titles, two "Horae Poeticae" being among four poems by him printed in July and August 1827. "J.M.", who published seven poems in the *Australian* in 1825 and one in 1828, could be the "J.R.M.", tentatively identified as the John Rush More, who called for subscribers [sic] to his "Original Pomes" in the third number of *The Australian Quarterly Journal of Theology, Literature and Science*, July 1828. Nine poems by "J.R.M." also appeared in the *Australian* between June 1825 and February 1826. They were on various subjects, including some of specifically Australian interest, such as "Emigration, or a Trip to the Antipodes". One other Australian poet worthy of note was another female bard, A. Stanhope Gore, who submitted two verses from "Hunter's Hill, North Shore" in August and December 1825. The Irish patriotism for which her father had been sent to Australia was reflected in one of these, entitled "Eathlina's Lament", representative of the Irish and Scottish lays which became more plentiful in
subsequent periods.

In keeping with its radical political aims, the **Australian** also published a large number of satirical attacks on Governor Darling and on other arch-conservatives such as Archdeacon Scott and the editors of the **Sydney Gazette**. Scott's departure from the colony was celebrated in the anonymous "Original Elegy: On a Deplorable, but Long Devoutly Desired Event", 23 October 1829, while Robert Howe was attacked in such verses as "Linkum Doddy's" "Greeting - To Our Well-Beloved Little Bobby", 16 December 1826. In 1829, the editors of both the **Australian** and the **Monitor** were imprisoned for publishing libels on Darling, an occurrence frequently deplored in verses by the **Australian's** "Thistle", possibly Laurence Halloran. The dangers and advantages of satire had earlier been humorously outlined in a "Prospectus of another Newspaper, to be called 'The Satirist'.", printed in the **Australian** on 8 December 1825.

As nations or smaller societies advance in civilization, the arts and sciences are more generally introduced amongst the inhabitants, and many of those things that would otherwise be useless or a nuisance, are, by the industry or attention of individuals, rendered of real advantage to every body. For instance, the offal of the slaughter-house, in a small village, is a public nuisance - in a large city it refines the most delicate sugar, and furnishes many articles of commerce; and the smoke itself of the furnace is converted into fuel, and assists in heating what may be called its own boiler, instead of being scattered into air, and blackening
and bespattering the clothes and faces of the citizens.

So we think that a certain species, or sort of newspapers (with durability on the part of the Editor) which have hitherto been considered a nuisance, may be converted into an engine of utility — at least it has every chance of being rendered a partial good, as far as feeding or furnishing a source of living for him, the printer, and for those employed under them, and for all their families. Time only can develope the many and the great other public advantages that will arise. At first, at least, it will amuse the public, and prevent their being misled, as all parties will be able to reply and to explain, without fear, and many who would otherwise have continued enemies, may become friends, and it will relieve other papers from the unpleasant task of filling their columns with what does not belong to them.

The plan proposed is this: — The editor engages to publish, besides the news of the day, &c. any thing forwarded to him, decently and correctly drawn up, not touching on politics or family affairs, for which he is to receive a percentage or premium, according to the pungency or acrimony of the production, so that like sending a ship to sea, the author or owner may be ensured against all damages.

Taking the maximum of damage at £500, the ensurance may be effected from half, to cent. per cent. on that sum, for which premium the editor engages not to divulge the name of the author, and to bear all pains and penalites.

As the editor purposes engaging the very best apartments in the gaol, and to have them ready at all times, it may be of further advantage to his supporters, as it is a well known fact, that many of our best books have been written in prisons, it is but reasonable to believe that his attention not being likely to be engaged by other pursuits, that it will concentrate, if not increase, his talent, and enable him, if the parties wish it, to turn their prosaic effusions into verse, so that they may have the option of attacking their enemies either in prose, theorick or doggerel rhyme.

The plain old name, "The Satirist", may be objected to, but we trust it will be fully understood and answer every purpose, and may be the more proper as no new invention is claimed, only a more advantageous arrange-ment of one of the oldest and most prevalent passions in human nature, which has hitherto been considered a weed, a nettle, and neglected or divided accordingly.

In a short time further arrangements will be made, of which due notice will be given to the public.
Nothing further is heard of this project, and it is
doubtful whether — in spite of its obvious appeal — the
Prospectus was intended seriously. Either way, it
throws interesting light on the love of scandal and
back-biting then so prevalent in colonial society.
Had The Satirist eventuated it would certainly have given
the writers of scurrilous "pipes" a wider audience for
their wares.

One newspaper which did come into existence in Sydney
in 1825 was Howe's Weekly Commercial Express, run by Robert
Howe in conjunction with his Gazette from 2 May. Although
popular, this enterprise involved too much work for Howe,
and after 26 September 1825 he dropped the Express in favour
of twice-weekly publication of the Gazette. In its short
life, the Express contained rather more material of
literary interest than its elder sister. On page 3 of
the first issue under the heading "Literary Notices",
readers were given "Specimens of a Patent Pocket Dictionary",
"Warrawatanne and Dingomatte, A Sentimental Tale" and a
review of "Australia; with other Poems. By Thomas K.
Hervey. Trinity College Cambridge", while page 4 contained
the additional pleasure of Sir Walter Scott on "The
Character of Lord Byron". The next week there was a review
of "The Count Arezzi; a Tragedy" and the week after,
"Dallas' Recollections of Lord Byron". In addition, the Express printed several poems by prominent Sydney authors such as Laurence Halloran and Charles Tompson. As proof of his father's prowess as poet as well as printer, Howe also offered on 25 July a love poem by George Howe entitled "All's Well, That Ends Well".

The next newspaper to appear in Sydney had a longer and considerably more chequered career than the Express, its editor being much more interested in politics than in literature. On 19 May 1826, the first Monitor was issued by Arthur Hill and Edward Smith Hall. Hill left the partnership the following year, but Hall continued as proprietor and editor until 1838. During this time he published little original poetry, in spite of the good intentions announced in his Prospectus: "Original poetry of taste and feeling, especially when it comes from the pen of a Lady, will command a place in Poet's Corner". This was taken up by "X.Y.Z." in "A Parody, for the Consideration of His Monitorial Eminence", printed in the Sydney Gazette on 24 June 1826.

Most pleasing warble thy sweet flowing notes,
Sweet simple Monitor, or Monitress;
O I could pause on Horace Flaccus long
If 'twere original, but 'tis not so.
From morn till night too, I could love the lay
Of any lady, black, or brown, or fair,
With the proviso that the lay be good;
But if it merely be a fungus of
A very melancholic kind of mind,
I really could not have the patience to
Allow my brain the botheration of
Any melancholy learned lady.
The most such do in poetry, in fact,
'S to squeeze a bunch of zephyrs in their verse,
A half-a-dozen sighs, and silken pinions,
Celestial harps, and seraphs half a score;
With choral songs, and anthems in abundance.
A mossy bank, and gurgling rill or brook,
A pair of decent harks! will bless the charm;
And if 'tis larded well, with Ahs! and Ohs!
His Monitorial Eminence I vow,
Will swear it breathes the soul of poetry,
Th' angelic verse of literary lady,
Though she should steal the matter from Count Fathom!!!

Although evidently inspired by "Original Poetry, by a Lady. To the AEolian Harp", printed in the Monitor on 16 June 1826, "X.Y.Z's" castigations were applicable to many of the verses published in colonial newspapers. However, only twenty-eight poems purporting to be original appeared in the Monitor before the end of 1829, about a third having some Australian content. These were mostly political squibs and satires such as "Nettle's" - obviously a blood-brother of the Australian's "Thistle" - "Interview a Week After the Fair", 1 August 1829, criticising the landowners and merchants who had organized a Loyal Address to Governor Darling. Satirical verses aside, Hall's tastes in poetry differed little from those of his fellow editors. He preferred the sentimental and the picturesque, love poems and death poems, like this one reprinted from the Sydney Gazette on 10 October 1829, with the comment "They are too
beautiful and too full of the best sentiment to be declined insertion by us; we hope the taste and virtue they inculcate may spread far and wide":

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE.
(Written by a Lady when very young, on an incident of early childhood)
My mother! ere my infant tongue could lisp
Thy name, I knew thy perfect semblance, drawn
By painter's art; I knew; and clapped my hands
For joy! — then wept; and nought would quiet me,
Because those beauteous lips would press no kiss;
Those loving arms refused to clasp the warm embrace;
That silver voice was mute, nor with sweet song
And lullaby would lull me soft to rest.
Poor hapless child! I little knew that grief
And bitter tears would follow riper years,
And I be left to mourn that mother's loss!
Though time has softened keener pangs, and dried
The tears of childhood, I shall ever think
On years long fled, with found [sic] regret, and keep
Thy memory fairly graven on my heart. E'en now
While gazing on the life-glowing canvass,
I feel the infant-longing still within me,
And vainly wish those eyes could look, those lips
Could breathe, the language of a mother's heart!
But the pure spirit rests in Heaven. May I,
Like thee, by Christian faith and well-spent life,
Receive a crown of righteousness, and join
Thy seraph voice in heavenly choir
To chant the praises of a Savior's love!

ELLEN AMERICUS.

Such emphasis on the moral value of a poem was common to all the Sydney newspaper editors, as will be seen in the later discussion of reviews of poetry.

By now, it will have become evident that most early Australian poetry was published anonymously. Among the more prolific of the poetic contributors to Sydney newspapers in the eighteen-twenties who can be identified are
Charles Tompson, Edward O'Shaughnessy, the Reverend Laurence Halloran and the Reverend John McGarvie. Since Mansfield, C.P.N. Wilton and John Dunmore Lang were also reverends as well as editors and poets, the influence of the clergy on early Australian literature is obvious, and was inevitable when they were among the few educated people attracted to the colony. Together with lawyers such as Barron Field, Wentworth and Wardell, medical men such as Thomas Parmeter and schoolteachers such as James Ross and H.N. Murray of Hobart, they were responsible for most of the literary life of this period. There must have been very few amongst the early settlers whose primary interest was literature, although someone was responsible for this humorous recital of woes which appeared in the Monitor on 16 June 1826.  

To the Editor of the MONITOR.

SIR,

I arrived free in the Colony, and am, saving your honour, an Author; one who has lived in the attic purity of the fourth floor. - No sutor - every man to his trade, as the painter said to the cobbler - so fall to business, I will contract with you, per folio, sheet, or line; - subject, any-thing; - terms, moderate. You bear, Sir, a very liberal character, now that is what I am partial to. Tragedy is my forte, but then, eheu! there is no play-house here, no company to patronise merit. What say you to Sermons? I will write plain country sermons at 5s. - orthodox, (Bishop of Lincoln) 10s. - Irving, 15s. - very deep Rembrandnt, full of tenebrious frenzy, 20s. - common homilies, with text and words, for half-an-hour, at 2s.6d. (if they are wanted). As for mild impassioned sermons,

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7 But see the claim by "X.Y.Z." in the poem quoted on p.122 that "Horace Flaccus" was unoriginal.
with a body of temperate reasoning, words apt, - grace, truth, and brevity, - such, are seldom called for, but can procure copies; price according to repetition. Accidents ludicrous and horrible, wild adventures, epigrams, and love tales, - keep a constant assortment. Dedications, apotheosisms, as per order; a list of adulatory words and phrases now used in several royal courts, 6d. per dozen; the same improved by recent importations from those accepted by the Czar of all the Russias, the sublime Sultan, and the great Emperor, 2s. 6d. - Mogul and Bourbon, only 9d; that latter, as adapted for Colonies, you will perhaps prefer; they are superior to any thing extant.

MANY a piece of mud has made his fortune by the last article, but, nous autres, (fortiter in re) - destiny is not to be repined at - sans souci is the motto - (mine, sans six sous,) a dinner to day, and coat out at elbows - we don't study appearances, - Fame is our portion - Kings and Authors wait a few years. You shall have common poetry, quite original, at 2d. a stanza - first rate, printed before, dearer - unprinted, not to be had. Very comical tales, with schmut and blue, fit for gay antiquity, gossips and coxcombs, at the lowest possible rate. The demand for these increasing, you have here an idea of the trade-prices, so hope you will honour me with your commands.

YOU will not object to an advance - will you? Leading Articles, which will beat hollow your extemporaneous contemporaries - prodigiously cheap. Sir! I feel the passion rising within me, ready to tear away; but - but - let time shape its course, and your service.

THE bearer, my 13th scion, can take charge of a few dollars, as you think fit. Homer was a ballad-singer! - My present abode on the Rocks, worth your while to see it, so picturesque and so forth.

Your humble Servant,

HORACE FLACCUS.

P.S. My eldest daughter is a promising Sappho! A proficient in lyrics, she is now scanning trochees, spondees and iambs. Her dress in consequence is at present quite negligée, but when a gentleman of honour and breeding appears, my domiciliary prerogative shall not lay dormant - I shall insist on more attention - a complete metamorphosis in short. However you shall have some sonnets.

It is tempting to equate: "Horace Flaccus" with Laurence Halloran, who also had a large family and a low income, which
he attempted to increase at various times by the publication of sermons and poems. Halloran, however, had not arrived in the colony free, and it was his eldest son, Henry, who was later to make a name for himself as a poet. Laurence Halloran's troubles had commenced with a libel suit at the Cape of Good Hope where he had been naval and military chaplain, and his inability to resist writing defamatory verse kept him poor for the rest of his life. On 7 April 1831, George Allen, a Sydney solicitor, wrote to the Methodist missionary the Reverend Horton,

Dr. Halloran died a few days previous to Mrs. Mansfield and was buried on the morning of her death. His decease was quite unexpected at the time. It is true he had been unwell some little time before but he was then getting better insomuch that only half an hour before he died he was engaged in writing a violent piece of poetry against the Governor. 8

Halloran arrived in Sydney in 1819, following a conviction for forgery. Before leaving England he had published seven volumes of poetry and two of sermons and at various times throughout his Australian career announced his intention to publish further volumes of both. In early Australia, however, it was the number of subscribers one could interest rather than the merit of one's work that determined whether or not it would ever appear, and Halloran always seems to have lacked friends. At least, no copies of

8 From George Allen's Letterbook, p. 139, in the Mitchell Library.
any of these works have survived. As a sample of one of Halloran's projects, the following advertisement appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* on 22 July 1824:

**PUBLICATION OF POEMS**

Doctor Halloran proposes to publish, by Subscription, a *Volume* of Original *Poems*, in boards, written chiefly in this Colony.

The Subscription will be Three Spanish Dollars, - one half to be paid into the Printer's hand, at the time of ordering the Work; the remainder on its delivery.

Doctor Halloran, disclaiming all idea of private advantage, or emolument from this Publication, proposes, that any Profits arising from the Sale of it, shall be appropriated, in equal Portions, to the Fund for completing the Roman Catholic Chapel; and the Fund for erecting a Scotch Presbyterian Church. . . .

Doctor Halloran has also in a state of forwardness for Publication in England (by Ackerman,) as a Sequel to his former practical work, entitled "Cap-abilities", or "South African Characteristics", a *Poem* (in two Cantos), entitled, "Phantasmagonia Australasiatica", or "Sketches at the Antipodes".

From forms, reflected by truth's magic glass,
I sketch the "living shadows, as they pass!"

At the end of 1826, owing to his liking for slander and litigation, Halloran lost his post as headmaster of the Sydney Free Public Grammar School, and on 2 March 1827, after a futile attempt to make money by publishing sermons, gave notice in the *Monitor* of his intention to commence a newspaper entitled *The Gleaner*. Recognising that "The Colonists of New South Wales may be said to be literally inundated with daily, triduan and weekly newspapers", he still hoped that "the Australian liberal and enlightened Community' should incline to encourage the Publication of the 'Gleaner', by even a circumscribed patronage, (to the
extent of two, or three hundred copies). This time the omens must have been favourable — he was, after all, anticipating a circulation less than half that of the other papers — for, as promised in the advertisement, the Gleaner was "commenced in the course of the ensuing month". As is implied by its title and motto

> From every flower, the sense whose fragrance greets As Bees, with grateful toil, extract the sweets, Thus Industry, with Truth, and Taste combined, Gleans a rich banquet for the enquiring mind.

the Gleaner, even more than the other early newspapers, obtained its material from overseas publications. Quite a large amount of poetry was printed, most of it written by Halloran himself at various stages of his career; some items had previously appeared in the Sydney Gazette. His brother, "L.B. Halloran, Esq., of the Royal Marines", was also represented by a poem entitled "Home" and several prose pieces published under the typically eighteenth-century heading "Rescued Fragments of Cabin Memorandums". As A.G. Austin writes in his article on Halloran in Volume I of the Australian Dictionary of Biography (1966), the learned doctor "was totally unfitted by experience or temperament" to run the Gleaner:

... Darling’s newspaper regulations of May 1827 and Halloran's ineptitude as a businessman ensured its failure; the last few issues consisted of little more than advertisements for their editor's business enterprises and reports of his libel suits, and on 29 September 1827 it ceased publication. (p.507)
Halloran's impracticality is well exemplified by his attempts to make money in a still largely convict colony by such cultural luxuries as collections of poetry and a newspaper that contained little news and many second-hand extracts. His only real hope lay in school-teaching, for which he was said to be very gifted, but after 1826 his inability to control his pen apparently led to his being unable to obtain pupils. One cannot help admiring his continued efforts to sell his poetry to people who were obviously not interested in buying it. On 21 May 1828 he advertised a "Collection of Original Poems" in the Sydney Gazette and on 24 September of the same year, in the Australian, "'The Progress of A Divine;' A Satirical Poem (with Notes) Being a Parody of Savage's Celebrated Satire; Under a Similar Title". As no copies of either volume appear to have survived, one presumes they were never printed. Nor are there any known copies of Halloran's "a 'Political Satire', in Imitation of Doctor Johnson's London, entitled 'The First Three Ages of Australia', 'The Golden', 'the Silver', and 'the Brazen'".

These unpublished poems, particularly the last, would seem from their titles to have been more interesting than those actually printed in various newspapers and magazines. Besides his many poems in the Gleaner, Halloran published
in the *Sydney Gazette*, the *Australian, Howe's Weekly Commercial Express* and the *South-Asian Register* under his own name and the nom-de-plume "Lorenzo". It is likely that he also published much of his satirical poetry under various other pen-names. Although no positive identification can be made, Halloran could well have been responsible for verses in the *Australian* by "Aristophanes", "Bagatelle", "Thistle" and "Jack Vainspun", among others. As a fair example of Halloran's poetic talent, one may take this translation of part of the first canto of the "Henriade of Voltaire" which appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* on 5 August 1824 under the signature "Lorenzo."

With teeming flocks Britannia's plains are crown'd;  
Her fields with corn - with ships her seas abound:  
Fear'd on the land, - while sovereigns on the seas  
Her proud fleets Neptune's ruling trident seize:  
To earth's remotest bounds, her sails unfurled,  
Command success and fortune through the world!  
London, uncivilized in former years,  
The Centre and the Nurse of Arts appears; -  
Emporium of the world, she shines from far,  
Cradle of heroes, and the school of war:  
While Westminster, within her walls contains  
The triple knot that Britain's power sustains;  
The knot, admired, which, of incongruous kinds,  
King, Lords, and Commons, in close union binds!  
These form th' invincible, the sacred band,  
Self-dangerous - dreadful to each neighbouring land!  
Thrice happy Isle! whose Sons, by equal laws,  
The sovereign power of filial reverence awes!  
Yet happier still, where public freedom reigns,  
Which, mild and just, a PATRIOT PRINCE maintains!

Two other poets - "Z." and "Musa Implumis" - also submitted translations, as requested by the *Gazette* on 22 July 1824
when the original poem had been printed. Of the three, Halloran's seems the best and shows the competent if dull handling of eighteenth-century forms demonstrated in all his poems. He never produced anything startlingly original or, indeed, unconventional but, on the other hand, never sunk to the abysmal language and metre of many newspaper versifiers.

Charles Tompson, although better known nowadays than Halloran because of his greater luck in obtaining subscribers for his *Wild Notes from the Lyre of a Native Minstrel*, printed by Robert Howe in 1826, was a much less prolific and accomplished poet. Most of the verses in *Wild Notes* had previously been published in the *Sydney Gazette*, *Howe's Weekly*, the *Australian* and the *Monitor* under the various noms-de-plume "Australasianus", "L.C.", "T.", "C.T." and "Fidelle en Amour". An exception was the long poem "Retrospect; or, A Review of My Scholastic Days" which opened the volume. In this, Tompson recalled his happy days at the Reverend Fulton's school in poetry laden with the worst eighteenth-century encumbrances, abounding in abstractions and classical allusions. Another poem, "Farewell. To the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Horton, of the Wesleyan Mission, on the Eve of their Departure from New South Wales to Van Diemen's Land, 1825", is as long-winded as its title
and so pathetic that it becomes unintentionally funny. So, too, does "Black Town", in which aborigines parade oddly by in decorous eighteenth-century trappings:

Ill-fated hamlet! from each tott'ring shed,  
Thy sable inmates, p'rhaps, for ever fled.  
(Poor, restless wand'rers of the woody plain!  
The skies their covert - nature their domain.)

A few of Tompson's shorter love poems, while still extremely unoriginal, have some of the grace and freedom of movement so lacking in the long set pieces where each couplet rhymes with a resounding bump. Tompson's attempt at blank verse in "The Storm; A Fragment" merely demonstrates his limited vocabulary, while his imitation of Cowper, "Zimeo", is written in a metre quite unsuited to its subject. But one should not be too harsh on the productions of a boy of seventeen. In the last two pieces in the collection, Tompson shows some skill in handling the song form. As the reviewer in the Sydney Gazette of 1 November 1826 was quick to point out, however, "Mr. Tompson's song of 'Mira, the flower of the vale', is nearly a transcript of Tannahill's 'Jessie, the flower o' Dumblane', with the difference that it neither possesses the simplicity nor pathos of the original." This review opens with a tribute to the favourite poets of that time, not calculated to encourage a young aspirer, though he is later assured of possible future development to equal someone like Pope.
Poetry, now-a-days, in order to be patiently read, would require to possess something of superior merit. Where people are accustomed to the sway of a Byron, a Scott, or a Moore, a common place votary of the muse has little or no chance of being attended to; but when a young man modestly offers the offspring of his muse to the world, he has something like a claim upon the public notice, and the more so when that production evidently bears the stamp of genius. What perhaps may seem to be somewhat singular is, that although the author of the present poems is a young man, we find in the whole of his writings a great chasteness of expression ... From the chaste style of the present writer, we expect that at an after period he will furnish us with something of the classical elegance of a Pope. We are always fond of seeing what is natural either in young or old, because nature is the language which constitutes real poesy. The only fault we have to find with Mr. Tompson, is, that he imitates too closely the style of others. In some places he even borrows their images, and embodies them in his own language. This is a fault we do not like, for it looks like poverty of conception, where we think no such defect exists.

The reviewer's praise of "Retrospect; or, A Review of My Scholastic Days" - "we think no one will rise from the perusal of the piece without respecting the ingenuous feelings of the writer" - shows the emphasis on "right sentiments" all pervasive in literary criticism at that time. At the conclusion of his remarks, the reviewer, again taking the opposite view to mine, states that Tompson will never be "a superior writer of songs" but looks forward to his success in a "heroic poem": "the piece in contemplation which will enable him to display his real abilities". With the usual colonial dislike of Barron Field, the reviewer pointedly refers to Tompson as "our first Australian bard" who "has gratified us much in one respect -
he has distained to imitate the Grub-street trash of the
author of the 'First Fruits'. One wonders just what Field
did in his few years in Sydney to make himself so often
a target for abuse, though his association with Leigh Hunt,
Lamb and others of the so-called "Cockney school" would
seem to have been enough for this ultra-conservative
reviewer. The reviewer's final comment, however, shows
him to have been in one respect, at least, ahead of his
time:

... we will merely suggest to Mr. Tompson the propriety
of letting his similes and metaphors be purely Australian.
He will soon find his account in doing so, as they will
infallibly possess all the freshness of originality. In
this respect he has a decided advantage over all the
European poets, because here nature has an entirely
different aspect. Let him select from the treasures by
which he is surrounded - let nature be his exclusive
study - and Australia will have it in her power to boast
of the productions of her bard.

As often when reading the newspapers of this time, one is
surprised by the early introduction of an idea that was
later to prove so important for Australian literature.

Far too frequently, however, the continuous rivalry
between colonial editors got in the way of unbiased
critical judgments. The fact that most early literary
works were printed at newspaper offices did not, of course,
help. Robert Howe published Tompson's poems and so the
Sydney Gazette was bound to give them a favourable review.
The other newspapers and magazines seem to have felt
themselves equally bound to find as many faults as possible.
On 24 November 1826, the editor of the Monitor noted, "We have been requested by a Correspondent to give place to the following critique on Wild Notes, from the Lyre of a Native Minstrel", promising to "give our own as soon as we can find leisure." "Correspondent" took a much more critical view of "Retrospect; or, A Review of My Scholastic Days" than had the Gazette reviewer: "The measure of this poem is harmonious, something in the style of Goldsmith, of whom this production, with one or more succeeding ones, very strikingly reminds us . . . it is . . . void of originality, either in design or expression." Mr. Tompson was further advised

. . . Miscellaneous productions afford but an uncertain criterion by which to try poetic merit. Such are not calculated to call forth the latent sparks of real genius. An historically descriptive poem, not in the beaten track of odes, or the worn-out numbers of an elegy - but warmed and enlivened by descriptions true to nature, and ornamented by metaphors and similes, easy and unrestrained; and avoiding those nicely measured rhymes which only jingle in the ear like pack-horse bells, would go farther to advance Mr. Tompson's fame than a closely printed quarto of birthday sonnets, although inscribed to Venus herself.

Tompson's poems were also given a poor reception in the first issue of the South-Asian Register in October 1827. The Sydney Gazette, challenged by the Monitor to justify its harsh remarks on the Register, lost no time in proving, in a review of 24 October 1827, that the Register's critic knew nothing of poetry or criticism.
After quoting sixteen lines from one of the poems, entitled "Retrospect", as a "favourable specimen of the whole", the opinion of the quotation, because it cannot be called a criticism, is contained in the three words "this is pretty", which anybody might have said without evincing any extraordinary degree of acumen. Fourteen lines more are immediately quoted, and in order to counterbalance the "this is pretty" with a spice of critical censure, the Reviewer says, "There are many instances in which the nominative is very dubious and the sense consequently obscure." Now in order to illustrate this other mere assertion without proof, eighteen lines are quoted from the "Pleasures of Memory", in which, as well as in the former quotation, the reader is left to form his own conjectures of truth or fallacy of what the pretended critic has asserted, without even the scanty assistance which an italic word might have afforded. The next sage observation which the critic makes, is the following: - "There are several Odes to Sylvia, who appears to be the duicincia of our author; and, looking at his amatory effusions, we must award them the praise of being poetical, on the authority of Touchstone" (which is no authority) "who says, the truest poetry is the most feigning; and lovers are given to poetry; and what they swear in poetry, may be said, as lovers they do feign." Now all this is mere trifling - a sheer display of ignorance - for poesy is the language of nature, which never feigns; and he who writes under feigned feelings can never be a poet . . .

Although this critic could have had more of a sense of humour, he does point up one of the major faults of Australian - and English - reviewing in the early nineteenth century, that of making a few, often a very few, general and meaningless remarks and then devoting the rest of one's space to quotation of "beauties".

Following the general pattern of attack and counter-attack then current, the Monitor was provoked to reply to the Gazette in the form of a letter to the editor from "Chathamville" printed on 29 October 1827. It has been
suggested that many of these letters were actually written by the editors themselves as a convenient means of airing their views while disclaiming responsibility for them, and such may well have been the case here. In this letter the *South-Asian Register* reviewer was defended and Tompson once more charged with unoriginality:

Had Dr. Oldfield in reviewing Tompson's poems cut where he could, mercy might have arraigned him as a severe critic; but he "felt for another's woes", and therefore spared the young man's Zephyrs and Bowers, Nymphs and Flowers, with all the other pretty little poetical etceteras which might well be termed "wild" and uncultivated; - jingling weeds that are excluded from the parterres of true poetry, and which only serve to mark the barrenness of the soil in which they flourish. I have read these "poems", and cannot call to mind a single idea which the boy of 12 years might not with the greatest facility have conceived. "Black Town" is quoted by the "South Asian" as the highest flight of the Poet's pegasus. And what have we here? A canting rhapsody of speculative patriotism and philanthropy; an idea or two, that have been ten thousand times metamorphosed, to preserve a show of originality, and presented to the public, and now again transposed and laid before us as the unsuggested thoughts of the writer. When Mr. Tompson ventured to publish his "poems", he listened with too attentive an ear to the flattery of his friends who praised the fluttering attempts (to use an Australian simile) of the yet callow emu, which alas! was NEVER created to fly. I am not singular in my opinion; the public voice goes with me, of which presumptive evidence may be seen on the shelves of the Australian Stationery Warehouse. The Public will no doubt acquit the editor of the Sydney Gazette of disinterestedness in becoming the panegyrist of Tompson's Poems, when they are informed, that he printed them, and that the payment of a pretty round sum for so doing, may be said to be contingent upon their sale.

As this shows, even in 1827 Sydney was not devoid of literary talent - consciously or not, the writer heeded the advice of the *Gazette* critic and made his remarks more telling by the
use of an Australian metaphor! He also gives one of the few pieces of definite evidence as to the popularity of early Australian poetry. It is easy to see why more publishers did not take a chance on a slim volume or two.

Unfortunately, nothing is known of the sale of John Dunmore Lang's *Aurora Australis*, or Specimens of Sacred Poetry, for the Colonists of Australia, published later in 1826 by George Eager. It was, however, greeted by a similar amount of newspaper criticism. Like most of Lang's numerous publications, the poems had been written at sea on one of his frequent voyages to and from England, as is made clear in the introductory "Advertisement" to the volume. Here one also finds stated Lang's opinion on the value of poetry, one apparently shared by most of his readers: "Poetry, however excellent, is valuable only as it is subservient to the cause of virtue and the progress of truth." Lang's verses deserve the title of "poetry" even less than Tompson's, so one's sympathies are strongly on the side of "Spectator" whose "Lines Written on Reading Those Luminous Poems Designated Aurora Australis" were printed in the *Australian* on 13 January 1827.

Go, little book! my mind is much imbued,  
To doom thee to eternal solitude;  
Or in the flood of Phlegethon's fierce flames;  
Or Lethe's rolling, dark, oblivious streams;  
With other reams of foolscap much befool'd,  
Lost to all light, the day they once have rul'd,  
Perversion strange! to dare assume the name
Of bright Aurora, in this land of fame;
Where dawn of talent spreads the eager wing,
To which aspiring minds with ardour cling.

A leaden iteration, in thee reigns,
Vapid, monotonous; no lucid strains
Shine in thy pages, break upon the heart,
Rich with the magic of the poet's heart, [art ?]
Which like the lava floods, should melting roll,
Burn as they dazzle, win upon the soul.

Go view those verses, mirrors through all time,
Where Greece appears immortally sublime,
Or Roman lyrics in Horation [sic] strain,
Or Dryden's strength, Pope's grace, or Byron's pain,

Song so enchanting that we doat upon
The sweetest thoughts, vain man's rack'd feelings own.
Can the soft eyes of beauty, in thy page,
Find aught that may her wild'ring love assuage?

Find pictur'd there the passion in her breast,
Long sought for solace, undissembled rest?
Or may the youth just reaching to the goal
Of manhood's hope, proud, emulous of soul,

Learn wisdom's course, the snares of men descry,
Whence he may nobly live, and freely die?
Thy nerveless lines are meant for matrons' ear,
Proud, mumbling, toothless, yet severe

On slightest slips, sprung from our mortal state,
Themselves exempt, self styled immaculate;

Loud in the censure, ready with the lie
The thought conceiv'd, resolved to certainty.

Methinks I view, a bevy of this sort,
Some six, or eight, around thee, book, resort,
When a grave she with sanctimonious [sic],
Cries, "Oh my soul! how very true my dear,
My feelings contrast with each godly line,
The hand that made them surely is divine."
Another speaks, with spectacles awry,
"True, sister, true, they almost make me cry,"
Another, sideling, "begs just then to say,
She had not read such poems many a day,
And thinks, and has no doubt, they will or would,
Be instrumental of much pious good."

Such, and none else, the crackling lips that praise,
The unmeaning nonsense, of thy devious lays.
Go, little book! with pages one third fill'd,
Emblem of vanity, of mind self will'd.

Go to repose within the darkest nook,
Take shame upon thee, that thou art a book.

For me, I take reproach that I have us'd
Time to scan o'er such pages, so abus'g;
And if, perchance, thy form again I see,
My loathing will declare thy apathy.
Here is a poem as strongly influenced by eighteenth-century style as Tompson's - though harking back to the early masters rather than the later Goldsmith, Thomson and Gray - but containing much more life and feeling. The amusing and telling description of the matrons' reactions is one of the best bits of verse written in Australia during the eighteen-twenties.

The editor of the *Australian* had been careful to dissociate himself from this possible "harsh treatment" of poems he "had not perused" personally. And on 24 January 1827 he published a counter to "Spectator's" arguments from "An Onlooker". This consisted mainly of a selection of "beauties", though the sound point was made that

... it was, perhaps, unfortunate for the Scotch Parson's muse, though it showed his desire to turn her to a good account, that he confined his attention to sacred and devotional subjects, for Dr. Johnson tells us somewhere that such subjects are not fit for poetry; and besides, they are of all subjects the least adapted to Colonial taste.

On 27 January 1827 the *Monitor* also published a criticism of *Aurora Australis* "from a Correspondent". His critical principles, stated at the outset, accorded quite closely with Lang's view of poetry.

The principles, the actuating motives, must in a rational mind, have a priority of claim, to correctness of metre; purity of language is indispensable, inasmuch as Poetry is a source of refinement; a reader of verse finds his ideas expand, and his language and manners intentionally receive a softness and polish...
In consequence, his strictures were not nearly so severe as "Spectator's"; Lang was taken to task only for the irregularity of his verse and for writing about trivial subjects unsuited to the dignity of sacred poetry.

Two other poetry reviews published in Sydney newspapers during the eighteen-twenties were of William Charles Wentworth's Australasia, issued in London in 1823, and of Barron Field's First Fruits of Australian Poetry, originally printed in Sydney in 1819 and reprinted in the London edition of his Geographical Memoirs of New South Wales in 1825. The first of these, in the Sydney Gazette for 1 April 1824, was chiefly concerned with proving "with due deference to the learned Aristarchus of King's College" why the 1823 Cambridge Chancellor's Medal should have been given to Wentworth instead of Praed. Accordingly, the reviewer writes

I admit that little can be said against the harmony of Mr. Praed's mild meek muse; but there is no fidelity of description, vigour of expression, or condensation of style; on the contrary, in Mr. Wentworth's Poem, we see and feel the glowing sentiment, and the generous mind, breathing patriotically in every line. He is the "youth whose birth the kindly Muse" presided over.

The rest of his letter is given over to examples of the beauties he finds in Wentworth's poems and the defects in Praed's. Although obviously influenced by that patriotic sentiment he lauds in Wentworth, the writer's comments would probably seem fair enough to most modern readers — certainly,
they are remarkably similar to those made in a recent comparison of the two poems in Brian Elliott's *The Landscape of Australian Poetry* (1967).

Many people, including Elliott, would not nowadays agree with the severe criticism contained in a "Review of Judge Field's Poetry" published in the *Sydney Gazette* on 25 November 1826. Completely missing the vigour and concreteness which make Field's "Botany Bay Flowers" one of the best early Australian poems, the reviewer carps at the rhyming of "grasshoppers" with "waggoners" and Field's use of similes. His utter lack of humour underlines the amusing gentlemanly playfulness which also distinguishes Field's work from the mass of dull, over-serious colonial verse.

This flower, all other flowers excelling, undergoes in the hands of Mr. Field, three of the most wonderful changes that were ever known in the annals of poetry. Ovid's are nothing to this. It is first to be his pet, that is his young sheep, then it becomes a parasol, and finally a silk neckerchief. The hocus-pocus of this extraordinary writer, whose pieces have received the approbation "of the first poets and critics of our times", astonished us more than any thing we ever met with.

What really riles the reviewer, however, is Field's description of himself as the first "Austral harmonist": "Viler and more revolting egotism could not have proceeded from the pen of man." To him, this title seems more properly to belong to Michael Massey Robinson "the poet-laureate under Macquarie's Administration, a gentleman who has really
produced a number of truly poetical pieces." Again, modern readers would probably disagree with this estimation of Robinson's rigidly eighteenth-century celebrations of King's and Queen's Birthdays.

A more interesting, if not better, poet than Robinson was Thomas Parmeter, about whom very little is known. On 1 September 1825, the *Sydney Gazette* printed the following advertisement.

Shortly will be published, price 12s. 6d.

**LETTERS TO MY UNCLE TOBY; OR, A History of New South Wales,** including "Poetic Trifles", by T. Parmeter, M.D. formerly Assistant Surgeon to the Hereford Regiment, and late of the Lunatic Asylum, Castle Hill, etc. etc.

"While FIELD was pert, shallow, flimsy, unfair, And I knew him once near Charter-house square; And still the same fool, his first was the last Fruits that gave the critics their poor repast, For another Bard did our feats explore, And sung his lyre upon our Southern shore, Some for dress, and some few for learning toast, Follow'd by their mother in a splendid train, They avoid what is wicked, proud, and vain. . . .

This was followed by a few more lines of equally disconnected verse and a list of subscribers which included "mr. Architect Greenaway", "mr. Halloran", "mr. Harper, Windsor" and "Wm. Redfern, Esq. late S.S. (paid)". To that date one hundred and fifty-three copies had been ordered and thirty-two paid for but the work never seems to have been published. However, a "T.P." did have two poems printed in the *Sydney Gazette* in July 1829. The second of these, which appeared on 21 July, was "The Drought! From the Australiad, A Poem".
By Science told — a burning dryness came
Throughout the land; grass and stalky maize
Universal felt the parch'd up, arid soil;
Then pin'd the quenchless kine, the rambling sheep,
And ev'ry lapping beast that roved the woods.
All were seen grazing o'er the winding creeks,
And mountain gulleys, and springs in vain.
In the hot, blazing air, now drooped the birds,
And there were seen the doleful dying quails,
And roselles golden, with glittering hue,
And wailing emu, and proud jetty swans,
And ev'ry domestic bird to house-wife dear,
And lastly man felt the wrath of Heaven
And pray'd — but not in vain.

Parmer may, therefore, also have been the author of
"The Australiad", whose "Canto Introductory" was published
anonymously in the Sydney Gazette on 14 October 1824.

Strongly influenced by Byron, "The Australiad" opens

    OH! for a Poem! ... subject ... length ... style ...
    measure ...

Something that's new and lively ... I'm ambitious,
And fear the public are somewhat capricious.
I thought I had collected quite a treasure
Of sterling novelties in my portfolio.
I reckon'd o'er my hoard with no small pleasure
From the Land's-end to Point D'Entrecasteaux;
Nor doubted I, for once, the certainty
To find a mart at Hobart Town, or Sydney.

II.

Vain hopes! I verily believe in my collection
I've not one article to suit their taste;
I would not judge, nor judged be, in haste;
And as to saying here is some defection
Of public judgment ... that would be unwise,
And speedily might lead to one's ejection;
Or, being simply charged with telling ... lies ...
No easy matter it might be forsooth
Of such averments to evince the truth.

III.

Albeit, I must write ... and since I find
No subjects of my own may suit the taste
Of the good public, a pity 'twere to waste
Their time, or mine; ... or to distract my mind
With vain researches. Far easier it will be
To ask the public if they'll be so kind
To read my strictures on the Colony,
Compris'd in a few cantos, good or bad,
Of a short poem; ... 'The Australiad'.

Unfortunately, none of this poem besides the two short extracts printed in the Gazette seems to have survived. Although clumsy and faltering badly in places, Parmeter's verses have more vivacity and originality than most early Australian pieces and one would like to know more about him and his "strictures on the Colony".

Rather more is known about another early poet, Edward O'Shaughnessy, who published twenty poems signed "E.0'S." in the Gazette between 1827 and 1829. Like Michael Massey Robinson, O'Shaughnessy was one of those who "left their country for their country's good", which may perhaps explain the predominant melancholy strain in his work. He is one of the few colonial poets who meet one's expectations of all-pervading gloom, though as John Byrnes says in his article on O'Shaughnessy in Volume II of the Australian Dictionary of Biography (1967, pp.304-5), this may have resulted more from the influence of Thomas Moore than from O'Shaughnessy's experiences in Australia. The only one of his poems to show much awareness of the Australian environment is "Lines, Written in View of the South Head Light-House", printed on 16 July 1827, and even here interest is not so much in the Light-House itself as in its symbolizing of Hope. In general, O'Shaughnessy's verses are slightly more
polished than those of most early writers, but have little else to recommend them. As he became editor of the Sydney Gazette in 1833, O'Shaughnessy's career will be discussed at greater length in a later chapter.

Another writer whose work has survived only in the pages of the Gazette and in a few manuscripts in the Mitchell Library is the Reverend John McGarvie, a Presbyterian clergyman who arrived in Sydney on 23 May 1826. From remarks in the diary he kept on the voyage out, it seems he would have preferred a literary to a religious life. Before leaving Scotland, he had prepared a work on the peerage which had been refused by Oliver and Boyd and by Constable. Blackwoods offered to halve costs and profits, a common practice in those days, but McGarvie was too poor to accept. Thus, as he wrote on page 5 of his diary,

My literary hopes and prospects being rudely annihilated by the stings of poverty on the one hand and the caution of mercenary booksellers on the other I became more resigned to my expatriation. I saw nothing for me in this country but the life which I hated above all others, a teacher or that life into which years of plodding industry hardly introduces one, a London writer. Examples of both were known to me and therefore I thank Heaven that I could so easily without compromise retire into an honourable exile . . .

After arriving in Sydney, McGarvie was apparently offered a position on the Australian, in which he published some

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9From the original in the Mitchell Library.
anonymous satirical comments on colonial society. Ten of his poems printed in the 1829 Sydney Gazettes, under the initials "M." and "C.D.", show him to have been a competent if not highly original versifier. In subject matter they reflect very well the tastes of his time - imitations of classical authors, sentimental love poems, a poem on the soldier's trials, humorous comment on Australian life. His "Cupid. A Bushranger", in imitation of the Third Ode of Anacreon, is an early and amusing attempt to adapt the classics to Australian surroundings. Another poem, "The Exile of Erin, on the Plains of Emu", based on, though superior to, Thomas Campbell's "The Exile of Erin", is interesting as one of the few extant examples of a literary "folk-ballad".

I.

O! Farewell, my country - my kindred - my lover;
Each morning and evening is sacred to you,
While I toil the long day, without shelter or cover,
And fell the tall gums, the black-butted and blue.
Full often I think of and talk of thee, Erin -
Thy earth-covered mountains are fresh in my view,
Thy glens, lakes, and rivers, Loch-Con and Kilkerran,
While chained to the soil on the Plains of Emu.

II.

The iron-bark, wattle, and gum trees extending
Their shades, under which rests the shy kangaroo,
May be felled by the bless'd who have hope o'er them bending,
To cheer their rude toil, tho' far exiled from you.
But, alas! without hope, peace, or honour to grace me,
Each feeling was crushed in the bud as it grew,
Whilst "never" is stamped on the chains that embrace me,
And endless my thrall on the plains of Emu.
III.
Hard, hard was my fate far from thee to be driven,
Unstained, unconvicted, as sure was my due;
I loved to dispense of the freedom of Heaven,
But force gained the day, and I suffer for you.
For this hand never broke what by promise was plighted,
Deep treason this tongue to my country ne'er knew,
No base-earned coin in my coffer e'er lighted,
Yet enchained I remain on the Plains of Emu.

IV.
Dear mother, thy love from my bosom shall never
Depart, but shall flourish untainted and true;
Nor grieve that the base in their malice should ever
Upbraid thee, and none to give malice her due.
Spare, spare her the tear, and no charge lay upon her,
And weep not, my Norah, her griefs to renew,
But cherish her age till night closes on her,
And think of the swain who still thinks but of you.

V.
But your names shall still live, tho' like writing in
water;
When confined to the notes of the tame cockatoo,
Each wattle scrub echo repeats to the other
Your names, and each breeze hears me sighing anew.
For dumb be my tongue, may my heart cease her motion,
If the Isle I forget where my first breath I drew!
Each affection is warmed with sincerest devotion,
For the tie is unbroken on the Plains of Emu.

Anambaba, May, 1829. M.

For a Scottish parson, McGarvie makes a good attempt at
this popular form, managing to capture the feeling of exile
and suffering in the first two stanzas before falling back
into conventional sentiments in the remainder of the poem.
The references to Australian trees and animals show the
keen observation of his new surroundings also reflected in
McGarvie's diary notes and published articles on zoological
and botanical subjects. Incidentally, this poem and
Parmeter's "The Drought!" are only two of many early newspaper poems refuting Judith Wright's contention in her "Australian Poetry to 1920" in The Literature of Australia (ed. Dutton, 1964) that "there is very little mention of trees, flowers, or birds by name or by recognisable description in Australian verse during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries." (p.57)

McGarvie also contributed a number of prose pieces to the Sydney Gazette, including a series of "Recent Biographies", mainly of eminent clergymen, under the initials "A.B.", and monthly "Agricultural Reports" on the state of the crops, the weather and so on, signed "Rus in Urbe". For the modern reader, however, the most intriguing are four "Rejected Addresses. To have been spoken at the opening of the Opera house, Sydney. August, 1829." published in the Gazette on 12 and 17 September and 1 and 24 October 1829. Although obviously suggested by Horace and James Smith's very popular Rejected Addresses or The New Theatrum Poetarum (1812), McGarvie did not attempt to copy the Smith brothers' parodies of literary figures such as Scott and Byron. His four speakers were the colonial types "Ben Block, An Australian Chip off the Old Block", "Donald Trot, a Scots Emigrant", "John Bull, Junior" and "Toby Tickler, a Lad of
Current Metal, Born in the Colony". The first and third of these were, in keeping with the editorial rivalry then so pervasive, caricatures of the editors of the Australian and the Monitor. Donald Trot's "Address", cleverly written in Scots dialect, advocates the use of the bagpipes in the Opera House orchestra, while that of Toby Tickler gives a clear indication of the early establishment of a recognisable Australian character. All except the "Address of John Bull, Junior" were accompanied by poems, usually not so well fitted to the characters as their speeches.

Apart from McGarvie's "Rejected Addresses", little original imaginative prose was published in the early Sydney newspapers. The first issue of the short-lived Howe's Weekly Commercial Express, for 2 May 1825, contained a mock-heroic parody of the sentimental love story entitled "Marrawatanne and Dingomatte. A Sentimental Tale", which began.

Marrawatanne was the most beautiful of all the Indian nymphs that grace the wilds of Australia. Her frog-fashioned figure, fiddlestick legs, and pumpkin paunch, gave a dignified grace to her waddling goose-like gait, while her bristly black hair, bushing out in greasy masses, stamped a commanding interest upon her other prominent attractions.

The author goes on in similar vein to describe the courtship of these, to him, extremely ignoble savages – Dingomatte unfortunately kills his lover with too hard an amorous stroke,
and dies soon after, not of grief, but of a surfeit of whale-meat. Two other mildly humorous essays published in the *Sydney Gazette* in 1829 by "Francis Fathom, Gent." were also mock-heroic in style. "The Mosquito!", 26 February, dealt with the abundant wiles of this annoying beast, while "The Isle of Dogs. A Comparative Essay", 11 August, discussed another New Holland torment, the large number of dogs that roamed unchecked through Sydney streets.

The essay was clearly the most popular literary prose form in early Australia and was adopted by the two Tasmanian prose writers of the eighteen-twenties, Henry Savery and James Ross. The satirical essays which make up Savery's *The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land* (1829), the only imaginative prose to appear in book form during this period, had originally been published in the *Colonial Times* throughout 1829. Like John McGarvie, Savery modelled his work on a popular English publication — in this case, Felix McDonough's *The Hermit in London; or, Sketches of English Manners* (1821). More relaxed and intimate in style were the essays published in the *Hobart Town Courier* during 1826 and 1829 under such titles as "The Sick Editor", "The Flood", "My Perigrinations" and "My Will". There seems little doubt that they were the work of the proprietor and editor of the *Courier*, Dr. James Ross, who made many contributions to the cultural life of Hobart. The *Courier* provides more
amusing reading than any other early Australian newspaper since Ross often indulged in small literary jokes such as the inclusion in a list of "NEW WORKS . . . shortly to issue from The Courier press, at Hobart-town", printed on 9 February 1828, of such titles as

3. The art of Sheep-stealing, shewing the great encouragement held out to the sheep stealer in this colony by many of the early settlers, who bought stock without being very particular as to their marks or brands, or the right which the seller had to dispose of them . . . with a concluding chapter showing the shortest road to the gallows.

4. The whole art of Drinking, with a supplement explanatory of the best means of exciting thirst and preparing the palate and gullet for the reception of raw and neat, and a short anathema on the patrons of mixed.

5. A critical examination into the principles of tip and tap, shewing at large, the peculiar properties, characteristics and etymology of each, with instructions to Sheriff's officers, constables and others, in what manner to apply the tap, so as best to extract the tip.

On 21 March 1829, the Courier published an "Advertisement, Extraordinary" strongly reminiscent of "Horace Flaccus's" earlier offer. This began

**Literary facilities**

The great success of Messrs. Humbug and company, at their very extensive establishments, Royal Exchange, Cornhill, Strand, Soho square and Duke street, London, Prince's street, Edinburgh, and Smoke alley, Dublin; and the high literary character lately claimed by certain inhabitants of Van Diemen's land, have induced the proprietors to open a branch concern in Hobart town and Launceston, under the immediate superintendence of their Mr. Henry Humbug, who has for some time been resident in that island.

The anticipated establishment of an elective house of assembly in Van Diemen's land, of trial by jury, the present existence of no less than six weekly journals, besides Reviews and Literary Almanacks, or Pocket annuals, and various other projected works and intellectual institutions must of necessity render the establishment of such a
concern, not only desirable, but an absolute desideratum in the colony.

Mr. Henry Humbug, junior, has therefore much pleasure in announcing to the literary world (that is the world of Van Diemen's land) that on Monday next he will open at his new and elegant store, lately built, the most extensive assortment ever offered to the public of wit and fancy of all kinds, speeches, sophisms, jests, theories, ideas and speculations, made up to order, pro or con, ministerial or antiministerial, and in any quantity.

The final sentence of this advertisement indicates that the staple subjects of Australian fiction had already been established: "Exploits against the natives, the apprehension of bushrangers, extraordinary narratives of all kinds in or out of the colony, got up in the best style, and on the shortest notice." Ross was, however, able to take a joke against himself, for on 25 April 1829 he published a poem, "from the pen of a young contributor", commencing

UPON HEARING OF THE DEATH OF THE EDITOR OF THE COURIER.
(Written after the manner of Swift, a Dialogue, between a friend of the deceased and a contemporary Editor.)

SCENE - THE LATE EDITOR'S STUDY.

FRIEND - So then the Doctor's gone at last!
I feared his wit had run too fast -
I've long since seen him break apace -
That death had stared him in the face!
Though I've no title to aspire
Or to his learning or his fire,
Although I never read a line
Of his, but what I wished 'twas mine,
Though he could in one couplet fix,
More wit than you or I, in six;
His genius, and his classic reading,
His mildness and his mark'd good breeding
Demand that I should try my pen,
To mourn him as the best of men.
EDITOR - But why so laud him my good Sir,
What did he ever do to stir
Your praise, and make you lay aside
The silence which has been your pride?
I'm sure his friends long time have seen,
He knew not what his punnings mean --
That he tells them stories, o'er and o'er,
They've heard a hundred times before; -
How could he fancy they would sit
To read his senseless idle wit?
Faith! had he made his prosings shorter,
T' had been better for him at each quarter . . .

Such light-hearted pieces are, however, rare among
the poetry published in Tasmanian newspapers before eighteen-
thirty. As has been noted, a surprising feature of the
Sydney poetry of this period is the paucity of melancholy
pieces dealing with the sad lot of the convicts or the
unhappiness of others far from home and friends. For
whatever reason, a much higher proportion of Tasmanian poetry
was of this "exile" variety. Perhaps the greater number of
convicts in the population had something to do with it -
perhaps it was just a product of the cooler, damper
climate! Although at various times during the eighteen-
twenties there were more newspapers published in Tasmania
than on the mainland, only about a quarter of the Australian
newspaper poetry of this period appeared in them. In contrast
to the Sydney papers, none of them were issued more than
once a week, and several published very little poetry. This
may indicate less interest in literature or higher critical
standards, but no doubt the smaller population was the major
reason. The proliferation of Tasmanian newspapers after 1825
resulted in part from Governor Arthur's take-over of Andrew Bent's *Hobart Town Gazette* in that year. Up till then, Bent had been government printer, but lost this position following attacks on Arthur in the *Gazette*. George Howe's son, George Terry Howe, who had established the *Tasmanian and Port Dalrymple Advertiser* at Launceston on 5 January 1825, was persuaded to remove to Hobart as the new government printer. From 25 June to 1 August 1825, Bent's paper and the government paper printed by Howe appeared under the same title, the *Hobart Town Gazette* and *Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, with identical volume and serial numbers. Then, after much protest at this piracy of his paper, Bent renamed his publication the *Colonial Times* and *Tasmanian Advertiser*. On 3 March 1827, Howe began publishing the *Tasmanian* following a disagreement with James Ross, who continued to edit and publish the *Gazette*, now entirely devoted to government notices. Ross's independent paper, the *Hobart Town Courier*, had its first issue on 20 October 1827.

Of the earlier Tasmanian papers, no local poems appeared in the 1810-11 *Derwent Star* and only three in the 1814 *Van Diemen's Land Gazette*.

By the end of 1829, fifty-four seemingly original poems had been printed in Bent's *Gazette*, established in 1816, and twenty-five in his *Times*, roughly a third of which
contained some reference to Australia. During this period, four original poems were published in the short-lived *Tasmanian and Port Dalrymple Advertiser*, seventeen in the *Tasmanian* and seven in the *Hobart Town Courier*, with about half of the two latter groups having some colonial content. Compared with the poems in contemporary Sydney papers, there were very few love poems and a much larger proportion of "Epitaphs", "Monodies" and equally melancholy "exile" poems. The two most prolific Tasmanian poets of this time, Evan Henry Thomas and Henry Nairne Murray, both commenced their Australian poetic careers with "exile" poems. On 26 October 1822, Thomas, later to become editor of the *Gazette*, published in it "The Emigrant's Lay", written on "The William Shand. Off Madeira", on the extremely common theme of the exile's determination never to forget his friends and loved ones at home. Some "Stanzas", printed in the same paper on 7 May 1824, also gave a melancholy account of the exile's homesickness for friends and country. Thomas's unhappiness, if more than a poetic attitude, may have in part resulted from the difficulties of finding a situation in Van Diemen's Land appropriate to the talents of a young B.A. His advertisements in the *Hobart Town Gazette* during 1822 and 1823 provide an amusing insight into the fortunes of a young educated man in early Australia. He first appears
in the Gazette on 22 September 1822 seeking "Twelve Young Gentlemen" for "A Truly select Academical Institution". These apparently were not to be found, for a few months later, on 19 October, he advertised that he had "obtained permission to act as Agent in the Lieutenant Governor's Court". By the end of the year, Thomas was attempting, like so many of his class, to publish a work on the colony. This advertisement appeared in the Gazette on 21 December 1822 and 4 January 1823:

A Popular and Statistic History of Van Diemen's Land is nearly completed, by Evan Henry Thomas, Esq., A.B. who invites the enlightened Public to favour him with any intelligence capable of advancing his production in utility. - The Author's design is to guide Emigrants from the delusive path of fancy, to the rational bourse of probability. - All Persons therefore who know the Colony being well capacitated to suggest much valuable Counsel for intended Settlers, Mr. Thomas cheerfully presumes no hint will be withholden that could enable them to avoid even one disappointment, or to secure the consummation of a single hope.

As usual, this project seems to have come to nothing, and by 17 May 1823 Thomas, having dropped the "A.B.", had taken over the presumably more profitable duties of proprietor of the "Albion Hotel, Tavern, and Coffee House". By 6 September of that year, he had substituted "Bread and Biscuit Baker" for "A.B.", in an amusing advertisement with more literary merit than many of his poems:

At a period when winds are so boisterous, breezes so fresh, and the popularity of puffs so general, the man who manufactures Pastry, at once elegant in form and luxurious
in flavour, has little occasion to praise his Puffs, in order to obtain the pudding he puffs for.

Evan Henry Thomas, Bread and Biscuit Baker

N.B. - Bull's eyes, barley sugar, lolly-pops, and kisses, with many other sweet meats, whole-sale or retail. Wanted, a good hand at crumpets.

In June 1824, however, Thomas returned to more literary pursuits when Bent appointed him editor of the *Hobart Town Gazette*. He had apparently also had some plans for setting up his own newspaper, if this report in the *Sydney Gazette* of 12 August 1824 may be believed:

We learn from E.H. Thomas, Esq. that he expects the speedy arrival at Hobart Town, on his account of two improved presses, and a large font of type, with paper, and all other materials necessary to produce a Journal (it is said) equal in magnitude to "The Times". This intelligence is truly cheering. It justifies a patriotic anticipation of colonial eminence in the scale of refinement; and reflects no ambiguous compliment on the general wish, which must, we should think, have induced the speculation.

As so often in the history of early Australian literature, the plaudits appear to have far out-stripped the performance, since nothing more is heard of this venture.

Thomas's editorship of the *Hobart Town Gazette* was notable for the paper's increasing criticism of Governor Arthur, and his editorial of 8 October 1824 led to Bent's prosecution for libel. Hence it is rather strange to learn that, presumably anticipating his replacement as editor by Robert Laðthrop Murray, Thomas had attempted in June 1825 to be given charge of the new government *Gazette* later set up by George Terry Howe. At least so the
Sydney Gazette reported on 9 June, following up on 18 August with the account of his replacement by Murray. There was no noticeable flowering of literature during Thomas's editorship, although he did his best to encourage writers and to set some critical standards, as shown by the "To Correspondents" section of the Hobart Town Gazette for 7 January 1825:

We have ordered a Letter Box, which will next week be attached to our door; and into which we hope the ingenious and contemplative will on every suitable occasion do us the honor of putting their always welcome correspondence.

The Gentleman who wrote the poetry that appeared in our last number, will perhaps oblige us with a second effusion. "Lines on a grave-stone" ought to be UNDER it.

Thomas's remarks on a poem "On Poverty" by E.W., in the Gazette of 29 April 1825, show that, like most contemporary critics, he valued sentiment more than technical excellence:

"The beautiful pathos of the above verses is our only excuse for inserting them, as they violate the laws of Poetry. A little care will however render the author a very interesting writer, from whom we shall again be happy to receive an enclosure." The standard of Thomas's own poetry may be gauged from these few lines from his early "The Emigrant's Lay":

O'er the azure waves of ocean,
Piloted by Hope we roam:
She imparts a bland emotion,
And pourtrays a southern home!

We have known the grief to sever,
Links that nature sanctifies!
But our hearts shall love them, ever,
'Till the pulse of Nature dies.
Thomas moved to Launceston in 1827, and it was presumably there he wrote his three-act play *The Bandit of the Rhine*, produced at Launceston on 14 October 1835. Unfortunately no copies have survived of this, the first play to be wholly written and published in Australia, so one is unable to say whether Thomas was a better playwright than poet.

The other most prolific poet of this period, H.N. Murray was, unlike Thomas, content to remain a schoolteacher. As he lacked Thomas's talent for self-advertisement, much less is known of his career. On 30 July 1824, he published the first of five of his poems to appear in the *Hobart Town Gazette* in the eighteen-twenties, "Valedictory Song, On leaving Scotland for Van Diemen's Land", a typical melancholy lament. Murray later switched his allegiance to the *Tasmanian*, publishing three poems there in 1828 under his initials "H.N.M.". He was probably also the author of five anonymous "Tasmanian Melodies", printed in the *Tasmanian* the same year, like Murray's work in having a strong Scottish flavour. The last two of these, "The Harp" and "Tasmanian Home", are notable for displaying that nationalism so often found in the Sydney poetry of this period, but otherwise virtually absent from contemporary Tasmanian poetry.  

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poet of "The Harp" takes a stand later adopted by Harpur and Kendall, seeing himself as the voice chosen to foretell the future greatness of his new land; while the sentiments of "Tasmanian Home", as the title implies, are in direct contrast to those more frequently expressed in the "exile" poems. The only other newspaper poem to show this optimistic attitude appeared, also anonymously, in the Hobart Town Courier for 22 December 1827, entitled "The Exile's Last Farewell". In this, the exile greets Tasmania as his "dear land of adoption" and makes many predictions of her future glory.

Two other early Tasmanian poems to deal in various ways with the colonial scene were "A Settler's" "Macquarie-Street", in the Tasmanian for 25 July 1828, an amusing account of the inhabitants and environment of this part of Hobart, and "The Native's Lament" by "* * *", printed in the Colonial Times on 5 May 1826. One of the best-written Tasmanian poems of the time, it is particularly interesting for its attempt to present the coming of white civilization through aboriginal eyes. To the noble savage of this poem, the white man's arrival spells the loss of his freedom, for which civilization seems very poor compensation. Civilization, as represented by the arrival of an organ for St. David's Church, was, however, praised in a light-hearted "Ode" by "V.V.", in the
Hobart Town Gazette for 13 May 1825:

Ave Tasmania! the long expected sail,
Favoured at length of some auspicious gale,
Arrives: - at length the Lady East appears,
And of her safety now are hushed all fears,
From Antipodean realms late news she brings
And full two hundred men sent here for sins:
Nor is this all, - but stop! the heav'nly nine
Must be invoked, before another line
Is penn'd. - Oh muses, heav'nly sacred throng!
To whom the powers of verse belong:
On thee I call to aid my feeble song -
On thee I call to lend thy pow'rful aid;
(Thanks to the muse, 'tis sooner done than said)
How in the ship, then sacred nine repeat
What merchandize, and stores, and salted meat,
What pickled pork, and tripe, and other things
She, in her spacious hold, together brings.
And now, O muse! once more I call on thee,
To say what else came in her o'er the sea:
What else! - ah now's the glorious theme!
The "Organ" has arrived, and's to be seen
In David's Church; - and there in awful state
It stands majestic, - this, the will of fate!
Inexorable fate has doomed it there to stand
The Organ metropit' of this land.
For ever and for ever! - ah, - but whence
Has come this mighty far-famed Organ hence.
From London it hath come, from Fitzroy-square,
And live (the names I do forget) the makers there.
No sooner was the bark in sight of shore,
Than mountains whistled* never known before -
Inspired by music, all Tasmania danced,
The women sung, - and all the horses pranced!
The billows heav'd (as usual) and the sun
Its usual course throughout the heavens ran.
Nature, it seemed, upon that awful day
Had clad herself in all her bright array.
The "Organ" came, packed up and stowed in hemp,
Immortal be the name of far fam'd Kemp! -
I've done. - The muse departs, - enough is said -
The Organ's up, and yes - the money's paid!!
* The tune is not precisely known.

Among the other humorous pieces were several satirising, as in Sydney, newspapers and their editors. On 21 September 1827, the Colonial Times printed "Quiz's" "Epitaph for a
Certain Editor", probably directed at George Terry Howe; earlier, on 2 March 1825, his *Tasmanian and Port Dalrymple Advertiser* had published a skit on Evan Henry Thomas, "A Character (Imitated from Pope)" by "R.L.M.", presumably Robert La Trobe Murray.

Before passing on to the Launceston poetry, two other poets who published in Hobart newspapers should be briefly mentioned. Mary Leman Grimstone, to be met later as author of the highly critical *Morning Herald* letter, was also, according to Morris Miller, responsible for three anonymous poems in the *Colonial Times* in 1826.¹¹ These, "Woman's Heart", 25 August, "On Visiting the Cemetery in Hobart Town", 15 September, and "The Broken Heart", 29 September, were all highly sentimental pieces, if a little more polished than many early Australian verses. The second, the only one of specifically Australian interest, contained a plea that in future the burial grounds be kept in the orderly fashion appropriate to a place, in the best eighteenth-century tradition, of meditation and speculation. Some of Mrs. Grimstone's later poems, originally published in English periodicals, were reprinted in Tasmanian magazines and newspapers in the eighteen-thirties.

As has been seen with Thomas's "The Emigrant's Lay", it was often the practice for those with literary interests to while away the long voyage from England by writing as well as reading. Such was the origin of an "Extract from a Poem, Written on Board the Berwick, during the Passage from England, by a Gentleman now settled in Van Diemen's Land", printed in the Hobart Town Gazette on 23 January 1824. Only one couplet is needed to indicate how derivative this was of eighteenth-century poetic traditions:

Now smiling fancy with her magic wand
Cheers the depress'd, and points to distant land,

On 2 April 1824, Bent announced "To the Public",

A Literary Gentleman, now settled in this Colony, having very kindly offered (at the suggestion of) the Printer of the Gazette, gratuitously, the Manuscript of a "Poem", containing upwards of 2000 lines, written by him on board the ship Berwick . . . If a sufficient number of Copies shall be subscribed for . . . the Work will be immediately put to press.

No copies of this poem survive, so one assumes that, as frequently happened, insufficient subscribers appeared. Presumably such was also the fate of the intriguing work advertised in the Tasmanian on 4 January 1828:

Shortly to be Published,
A Trip to the Lakes;
or,
The Desertion and Final Capture of An Innate of Castle Frog.
A Poem, by Don Juan.
Consisting of Fifty Pages of Quarto, and embellished with a Copper-plate Engraving.
After George Terry Howe discontinued his *Tasmanian and Port Dalrymple Advertiser* in 1825, Launceston was without a newspaper until 1829. Then, as so often in early Australia, a famine became a flood with two proprietors vying for patronage. As James Ross commented in his *Courier* on 17 January 1829,

We mentioned last week that a printing office, to be followed by a newspaper, was established at Launceston. We have this week to add that another is on the eve of starting, the materials for both offices having already proceeded to Port Dalrymple. We shall then have no less than 5 newspapers in Van Diemen's Land, a new country which we rejoice to see is so much under the influence of Minerva and the Muses. Let us hear no more of want of industry in this new colony, for no occupation on earth, take the whole circle of trades and professions round and round, is more laborious than that of a printing colonial editor.

More encomiums on the Tasmanian reading public and newspapers appeared in the *Courier* on 7 March 1829:

We have now no less than six journals in Van Diemen's Land, including the Government Gazette. We are proud, considering all things, to be able to bestow on them our humble meed of approbation. Compared with a few years ago they are far superior, both in typography and literary merits, to those of that period. Altogether the population of this island is perhaps one of the most literary in the British dominions.

Unfortunately, once again this praise proved premature, since one of the Launceston papers, Samuel Dowsett's *Cornwall Press and Commercial Advertiser*, ceased publication mid-way through 1829. Since this paper stated on 24 March 1829 that Evan Henry Thomas was no longer conducting it, he
must have had something to do with the foundation of the Cornwall Press. However, only two original poems were printed during its brief life, neither in any way remarkable. The same can be said about the poetry published in the second Launceston paper, the Launceston Advertiser, established by the more famous John Pascoe Fawkner on 9 February 1829.

Only one volume of poetry has survived from early Tasmania, The Van Diemen's Land Warriors; or the Heroes of Cornwall: a satire in three Cantos by Pindar Juvenal, printed by Andrew Bent in 1827. This mock-heroic account of an attempt by several cowardly townsfolk to capture the notorious bushrangers then roaming through Tasmania is dedicated "To my best and most sincere friend – myself", a fair specimen of the type of humour involved. Needless to say, in both sentiment and style it was heavily influenced by eighteenth-century writers. The suggestion that Evan Henry Thomas had some hand in its production would seem to have been prompted more by the lack of any other suitable candidate than by any definite evidence. An interpretation of this poem as a satire on the ineffectiveness of Arthur's attempts to control the bushrangers does, however, establish a link with Thomas's earlier criticisms of Arthur in the Hobart Town Gazette.  

12 See Morris Miller, op.cit., pp.88-92 for further discussion of this work.
As "Horace Flaccus" noted, in the early nineteenth century as today, drama was the least practised of the literary arts in Australia. The only published pieces to which this term could be even loosely applied are four dramatic fragments, all to some extent Shakespearian parodies. All have as subjects the continuous warfare between colonial editors, though, like *The Van Diemen's Land Warriors*, they could more properly be called burlesques than satires. As a typical example, one may take this extract from "The Monitor's Soliloquy", printed in the *Sydney Gazette* on 13 January 1829.

*Enter the EDITOR.*

_Edit.* To write, or not to write, that is the question; Whether 'tis better for my purse, to suffer The fines and censures of a Court of Justice, Or cease to flounder in a sea of libels, And, by my silence, end them. . . .

_Edit.* Get thee to a grog-shop; why wouldst thou be a seizer of Patriots? I am myself not very peccant; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better the Colony had not known me: I am very proud, malicious, jacobinical [sic]; with more black libels in my head, than I have quills to write them with, printers to give them shape, or folk to sell them to: - What would such fellows as I do scribbling in New South Wales? We are arrant deceivers all; believe none of us; - Go thy ways to a grog-shop: - Where's His Honor? . . .

Other works of this type were published in the *Australian* on 20 September 1826 and in the Tasmanian magazine the *Colonial Advocate* on 1 September 1828. The most elaborate, another jibe at *Monitor* editor E.S. Hall, appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* on 5 May 1829. This commenced
AUSTRALIAN DRAMA.

A New Gallimanfric Serio Comic Play, in 3 Acts,
ENTITLED
CRITICAL TOUCHES,
OR
HOW DOES MY PULSE BEAT;
By Obraim Von Brinen Augurius ACASTO, the Younger.

Poet, Politician, and Dramatist.

Scene, opens and discovers an Editor in his Office, leaning his head mournfully on his left arm, resting on his boudoir [sic], with pens, ink, and paper, and sundry Law and Miscellaneous Works. In his Library is seen the following choice and distinguished moral and political treasures. Cobbett's Code of Anarchy; Harriet Wilson's Memoirs; Paley's Moral Philosophy; Paine's Rights of Man; Common Sense, and Age of Reason; Young's Night Thoughts; Vaux's Thirty-two Years in Infamy; Plato on the Immortality of the Soul; Carlisle's Pure Sectarial Chimeras; Insolvent Act; the AEgis of Swindlers; Bankruptcy Laws; Religion but a Name; Joe Miller's Jests; Byron's Don Juan; Jonathan Wild; Phillipic Peace Reminiscences; the Newgate Calendar; Calumny an Antidote to Truth; Hoyle's Games; Licentiousness the Essence of Modern Liberty; Alladin [sic], or the Wonderful Lamp; Gall's Phrenology; Munro on Lunacy; &c. &c. &c.

A list well calculated to damn the radical Hall in the eyes of the conservative Gazette! Although this "library" is merely an invention, Hall, like the other Australian editors of the eighteen-twenties, had continually to resort to his real collection - which certainly included Cobbett - whilst awaiting the infrequent original contributions.

The only full-length Australian play of this period was David Burn's "The Bushrangers", never printed, but performed at the Caledonian Theatre, Edinburgh, on 8 and 10 September 1829. The manuscript surviving in the Mitchell Library seems to have undergone some revision during the eighteen-forties, largely to cut out satirical comments on
Governor Arthur. Perhaps Burn had hoped to have "The Bushrangers" published or performed, along with several other of his plays, at this time. Certainly, it has more interest and dramatic worth than most of his other pieces. As usual with Burn, the comic scenes involving a family of settlers — a "refined" young theatrical lady, her jovial stage-Irish cousin and her coarse-speaking mother — are the most effective. The opening scene of Brady and his men at Macquarie Harbour, however, has more life and reality than many later attempts at the bushranger theme, although the working out of the plot, with their escape, pursuit and death, is conventional enough.

Even more than the newspapers, the few short-lived magazines printed in Australia during the eighteen-twenties drew their material from overseas sources. The first Australian magazine, inevitably named the Australian Magazine, was established in May 1821 by the Methodist missionaries Ralph Mansfield, Benjamin Carvosso and Walter Lawry, with Mansfield as editor and Robert Howe as printer. Its full title was The Australian Magazine; or, Compendium of Religious, Literary, and Miscellaneous Intelligence, though the emphasis of its contents was to be more on the first and second than the third category. A good indication of its tone is the epigraph from Pope, "The Soul, Uneasy and Confin'd from Home,
Rests and Expatriates in a Life to Come", no doubt thought particularly appropriate to a convict colony. The magazine's aims were given a full statement in its Prospectus:

TO the important COLONY of NEW SOUTH WALES a regular Vehicle of Intelligence, as well religious as literary, has long been a Desideratum. As the Population continues to swell in magnitude and respectability, there is undoubtedly a progressive advancement in literary Taste and Genius. While within the narrow circumference of so young a colony, it cannot be reasonably supposed that local Occurrences should yield either an adequate gratification to the one, or exercise to the other; and the inconvenient remoteness of Great Britain, that Land of Letters and of Piety, renders it impracticable to a great majority of the Colonists to obtain thence a regular transmission of periodical Information.

To gather food for the enquirer after truth, to open a source of rational amusement to the curious, and to afford a scope for the efforts of genius, a Publication is required, which, as to the order of its appearance, should be issued at stated periods; and, as to its contents, should embody those topics of intelligence from the mother country that are of the first importance; defend those vital principles of Christianity which ignorance and prejudice would subvert; and invite the aid of those who wish by composition and discussion, to cultivate their mental powers. - Such, it is intended, shall be "THE AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE."

The Proprietors, while contemplating the Establishment of such a Work, found no process of reasoning required to determine the subjects which ought to assume the ascendancy in its contents. With that department of Politics, relating to public men and public measures, whether national or colonial, all interference will be uniformly declined. Science and Philosophy are neither sufficiently suitable nor important to claim their supreme attention, and are yet too considerable to be wholly overlooked - a department of their Miscellany will therefore be opened to philosophic Communications. But, of all other subjects, those have unquestionably a priority of importance, which may tend to enrich the mind with religious principle, and to adorn the life with religious character; and he who shall most zealously prosecute such a design, ought to be ranked among the first in the circles of philanthropy and patriotism. . . .

The Contents will be arranged under seven distinct Heads: -
I. BIOGRAPHY. - This department will present a summary view of Men, of whatever age, in whom wisdom may appear blended with piety, and whose example may be safely exhibited for imitation.
II. THEOLOGY unfolds an ample and inviting field. - In the
form of Sermons and Essays, the sublime Truths of the
Christian Religion, as well experimental as theoretical, will
be stated, illustrated, and defended.
III. PHILOSOPHY may properly follow, as Theology's Handmaid -
for, "All the Works of GOD praise Him." Such discoveries
or reflections, on the subject of natural philosophy, as may
elucidate the wisdom and grandeur of Creation, will under
this head be inserted.
IV. MISCELLANIES will embrace that variety of topics which
does not admit of distinct classification.
V. OBITUARY will consist of brief notices of the demise of
individuals in the Colony and its Dependencies; and, so far
as can be effected, of persons in other parts of the world,
who may have been distinguished for wisdom, benevolence, or
piety.
VI. RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE. - In this department, the
Anniversaries and Proceedings of Religious Institutions,
and as much Missionary Information as can be compressed
within our prescribed limits, will meet with particular
attention.
VII. POETRY, either original or selected, will adorn the
close of every number.

In a Preface attached to the first collected volume of
the magazine, the proprietors congratulated themselves on
having carried these aims through to fruition:

Our design from the first, has avowedly been, "to
disseminate useful Knowledge, religious principles, and
moral habits". And though some, we are aware, object to
our Magazine, that it wears too grave and religious an
aspect, candour must compel them to acknowledge, that we
have not swerved from the intentions we distinctly proposed.
Political discussion, and party spirit, and personal
allusion, we have scrupulously avoided. Literature and
science, while we have devoted to them a portion of
attention, have been kept subordinate and subservient to
our primary design. . . .

In fine, it has been uniformly our object to lead the
mind to serious reflection; to explain and enforce the pure
doctrines of the Gospel; to restrain vice and irreligion,
and to promote social virtue and vital piety. . . .

After going on in similar vein for a few more paragraphs,
the Preface ended with a pledge "to spare no exertions to
make its pages at once pleasing, intelligent, and instructive". Admire the aims for any magazine, but the emphasis on religion meant that the Australian Magazine did not contain much literature, in the modern sense of the term. The contents of the first issue give a fair picture of the whole. Besides lengthy articles on "Life of the Eminent Missionary Swartz", "The Truth, Importance and Design of Revelation", "Sixteenth Anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society" and similar topics, two-thirds of a column was devoted to "Literary Intelligence" on the rather unliterary topic "Public Men of 1820". Among the "Miscellanies" were short pieces "On Liberality of Sentiment" and " Allegory on Impudence and Modesty" though, again, one would hesitate to call these "literature". Even the "Select Poetry" by the celebrated English author Henry Kirke White shared the prevailing religious flavour, being on "The Star of Bethlehem". Some "Literary Intelligence" always appeared in later issues, but the works discussed were usually such gems as "Grammar of Arabic Language" and "Lectures on the temper and spirit of the Christian Religion". The second number, for June 1821, did, however, contain a review of Oxley's "Journals of Two Expeditions behind the Blue Mountains, etc.", taken from the English Monthly Magazine. No doubt the other reviews and, indeed, virtually all the Australian Magazine's articles, were also taken
from English publications. In Number 3, for July 1821, Mansfield printed a few lines by the ever-popular Byron, though, in keeping with the **Magazine's aims**, this extract from *Giaour* was entitled "Destructive Infatuation of Passion". The only original poem to appear in the **Australian Magazine** had, needless to say, a religious theme, "On Seeing the Bible Society's Map of the World". Printed in the issue for August 1821, it was signed "B.F." so had perhaps been written by Barron Field. If so, it was definitely not one of his happier efforts.

Under the heading "Emigration" in the September 1821 issue, Mansfield enlarged on the difficulties of producing an **Australian magazine** — particularly one so dependent on overseas material:

The disadvantages under which colonial periodicals have to struggle, are complicated. We are not only remote from the grand emporium of Literature, the British capital, but the intercourse with Europe has hitherto been subject to much precariousness and casualty. And it is to be feared, that until some permanent and well-organized literary establishment exists among us, our supplies of general intelligence must remain irregular. But, as the wealth and respectability of the colony are rapidly increasing, we trust the day is not distant, when the friends of Science will unite in some system for the facilitation of literary and general knowledge.

Unfortunately, as has been seen in the previous chapter, the establishment of libraries and learned institutions was further off than Mansfield hoped.

The number of the **Australian Magazine** issued in November
1821 was the most truly literary of all, containing not only a review of Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, information on the founding in London of a "Johnsonian Club", and poems by Byron, James Montgomery and others, but a short story "A Tale of Vavaoo". Like most of the magazine's contents, this story "Supposedly written by a Mr. Piers, surgeon of a ship that called at Vavaoo, one of the Friendly Islands", was probably not an original publication, though still the first piece of fiction printed in Australia. Dealing with cannibalism and other savage goings-on, it was obviously strongly based on fact, and does not read much differently from contemporary journals and explorer's accounts. The only other things of literary interest to appear in the *Australian Magazine* were some items on Byron and Southey, including a reprinted "Review of Lord Byron's Three New Tragedies" in the final extant issue, Number 14 for September 1822. Although the magazine was apparently doing well, its further publication was prohibited by the Wesleyan Committee in London as too expensive.

Between the final number of the *Australian Magazine* and the first issue of the *South-Asian Register* in October 1827, several abortive attempts were made to produce periodicals in Australia. On 17 July 1826, John McGarvie noted in his diary, "At Rev. Mr. Horton's, Wesleyan Min^t. Mr. Mansfield commenced a long oration on the utility of a
Mag. or Review, proposed to commence it and offered Editorship to Dr. Lang while in fact they could do nothing". Lang's volume of poetry, *Aurora Australis*, published in 1826, contained this "Notice":

The Public are hereby informed that the publication of "The Australian Magazine, or Quarterly Journal of Literature, Science, Philosophy, Agriculture, Morals, and Religion", of which it was proposed to publish the First Number on the first of January next, has hitherto been found impracticable from the want of Paper of the requisite size and quality. It is intended however to commence the undertaking very soon, on a smaller scale than was originally proposed, and with such paper as is at present to be had in the Colony, as the work may afterwards be enlarged when a supply of paper arrives.

The following are some of the Articles that will appear in the earlier Numbers; from which some idea may be formed of the general plan of the Work:—
1. A Series of Papers entitled, Sketches of Life and Manners in New South Wales.
4. Philological Essays on the Languages of the South Sea Islands and of the Aborigines of New South Wales, with notices of their respective manners, customs and mythology. . . .
12. Poetical recreations in *Ottawa Rima* comprising a voyage to New South Wales, Life at Sea, Rio Janeiro, Van Diemen's Land, New South Wales, with its men, manners, etc.

On 11 August 1826, the publication of this work was advertised in the *Monitor* under the title "The Australian Quarterly Magazine . . .", Robert Howe apparently having claimed the name "Australian Magazine" as his property, shortly to be used in a new venture. At about the same time, the *Colonial Times* of 4 August announced "Another new publication is about to make its appearance in Sydney, under the superintendence of the Rev. W. Walker, to be called the *Australian Journal*. 
It will be a quarterly work." Since McGarvie's diary entry points to united efforts by Presbyterians and Wesleyans to establish a magazine in 1826, this publication may be identical with Lang's *Australian Quarterly Magazine*.

Two years earlier, Robert Howe had planned to produce a new magazine in collaboration with Michael Massey Robinson, and printed in the *Sydney Gazette* on 4 November 1824,

> Prospectus of a Magazine, proposed to be published Quarterly at Sydney, under the title of "The Australian Mirror, or Quarterly Magazine", containing all the Subjects peculiar to Miscellanies of this Description. The Arts, Manufactures, Agriculture, and Commerce; British, Foreign and Domestic Intelligence, and such Selections from the London Newspapers and Publications as are generally interesting and amusing. The Work will also include the various Reviews of Works of popular Writers, and afford a comparative Survey of them generally, as to shew the Preference due to each individually.

The Price, to Subscribers, will be One Dollar; each Number to be paid for on Delivery.

The Performance of Works of this kind seldom answer the Professions with which they set out; but, according to the Merit of the first Number will depend the Advancement of this. Michael Robinson, Editor. Robert Howe, Printer.

**

A Book is open at the Gazette Office for the Insertion of Subscribers Names, and soon as 200 are ascertained the work will be put to Press.

Once again, insufficient subscribers seem to have been willing to put these professions to the test.

In the following year, the *Australian* of 27 October carried an advertisement for *The Australian Quarterly Magazine*, "Intended to be published in March the first, one thousand
eight hundred and twenty six . . . By T. Parmeter, M.D.
and a select number of literary gentlemen". Parmeter's
prospectus is worth quoting in full since it displays the
same extravagant language and faith in Australia's future
seen in his poetry.

Fungur vice cotis acutum,
Reddere qua ferrum valeat exsors ipsa secundi.
"I shall perform the office of a whet stone, which can
make other things sharp, though itself incapable of cutting."

Most appeals made to the public are of solemn complexion,
confounded of pledges right pompous and drafts on the bank of
wit and sense, that never fail to be dishonoured. Without
making such brilliant promise - the Editors in plain good
terms beg leave to assure the community at large that their
capital is but small, and they do not mean to venture beyond
it - their stock in hand comprising a few sober hints and
speculations on potatoes, bags of rice, cobs of corn, and
bandicoots. Don't be alarmed gentle Readers at this homely
way of including commerce, agriculture, botany, and natural
history.

The time will come, about the year of our Lord, 1919,
when your descendants will have their evening and morning
newspapers, and their monthly magazines in as multiplied a
form and fashion as the mother country. But hark good folks,
do not refuse to drink from earthenware - the vessel will
be clean, and your thirst for knowledge shall be quenched,
if not from the Piaerian stream from the waters of your
native mount tipped with a cerulean sky.

A good jockey looks forward - the rider that keeps
looking back will be distanced - we are therefore determined
to start fair, to keep the course clear, and win the race by
pocketing your dollars for the trouble, - pleasure we meant
to say, we shall take in amusing you all, with original
intelligence of your domestic concerns, your improvements in
agriculture, your commercial successes, your architectural
taste, and your rise and progress from an impervious wood
to an open cultivated soil.

It is delightful to contemplate the progress of
cultivation in this remote part of the world - to behold the
handy work of man - how the choicest gifts of Providence
have been discovered in this once trackless land! To see
the early march of a little band through barren woods and
lofty mountains, intersected by deep, broad and serpentine
rivers: to learn how rapidly the loftiest trees were felled, roads cut open, and every species of grain thrown into the ground, yielding abundant crops, and gratifying the first tillers of this Australian land with prospects of peaceful hours, again crowded with golden harvests.

Can any of us but with rapture view the wonderful change!

To behold in so short a space of time a little city, for in good truth many there are of less magnitude, in England covering that spot where nought but rocks and clustering trees of enormous height had before appeared - beautiful buildings, both public and private, here and there intermingled with the "neatly cultivated garden;" and the surrounding scenery, the busy hum of commerce, exhibited in every variety that can be serviceable to the wants of man! Callous indeed must be that breast that does not glow with ardor at the sight of such a metamorphosis and base indeed must be the soul that will not assist in the furtherance of an administration that has already teemed with so many benefits to the residents of this rapidly rising country. We have already entered the vestibule of civilization, let us not retreat, but advance, step by step, 'till we shall have arrived at the summit of man's utmost ambition, of virtue, genius, and power. By adopting a periodical inquiry; registering every remarkable occurrence connected with our political phenomenons and publishing every moral improvement we shall ultimately attain a respectable rank among the nations of the world.

This humble work will pourtray all that is interesting to the mother country, for it shall be our boast that we are a British Colony: we shall be like Carthage without its memorable decline, or more properly speaking, we shall possess the vigour of regenerated Rome.

Whoever lives to see this Colony reach her fiftieth year may say she bears a strong resemblance to her mother country.

"Son extreme ressemblence avec sa mere le lui fit reconnaître."

To our Australian fair we shall endeavour to make this work interesting: we shall not blush to delineate all their gentler passions - or the sigh,

"A gentle girl breathes, when she tries to hide
The love, her eyes betray to all the world beside,"

And when all the ephemeral vanities of this troubled life shall close, we hope then to seek that

"Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven" -
which nothing can equal, nothing can aggrandise.

The Author begs leave to inform the Public that he has appointed for his agent Mr. Forster, at James Norton's Esq. but should not the subscription amount to 200, he is requested to reserve and return the money to the several owners, and the author must succumb to public opinion. If the present attempt fails, the author does not despair that three or four years growth may induce him to make a second essay.

The subscription of £1 per annum to be given the agent in order to ensure the security of a prompt publication.

One feels sure that nothing in this magazine could have equalled its prospectus, but unfortunately it did not tempt the required two hundred subscribers.

An announcement of the foundation of Australia's second viable magazine, the South-Asian Register, appeared in the Monitor on 30 July 1827, under the heading "Introductory Address, (By the Proprietors)."

In presenting this Journal to the public, our principal aim is, to establish a permanent medium of Colonial information. The periodicals of the day, have their relative merits in the popular estimation, but nine-tenths of their columns are occupied with subjects of transient interest. . . . With only these frail and precarious tenures, men of learning or experience have had no inducement to write, no sufficient stimulus to prompt their labours - nothing in which they could place any deliberate evidence of what they have seen or known or felt; any record of their existence.

They, to whom this silent destitution, this confinement from the sociability of the mind, is the worst form of exile, are invited to witness our preparations for a more active scene; one in which, we trust, they may participate and thereby greatly enhance. . . .

An optimistic statement later in this Address, the Australian "reading population is small, though large in the aggregate", appeared borne out by sales of the first issue, 15 October 1827. On 1 November the Monitor stated "The South-Asian
Register prospers. Nearly the whole of the impression of the first number (Two Hundred) has been disposed of." In a review of this first number, the Sydney Gazette of 17 October praised its typography but criticised the editor, Dr. Oldfield. The next day, the Monitor came to Oldfield's defence with this letter:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MONITOR.

SIR,

I have made it a rule for a long time back, not to read books except I know the author, nor buy them till they have gone through the hands of Mr. Jeffery, or Philpot, or my old grandmother. Since I have been a Colonist, a Settler, and all that in this here place, I have read nothing but the papers. As soon as I saw a critique in the Gazette on a new Periodical Work, the South-Asian Register, praising it very much, I sent my servant to buy it. To tell you my opinion Mr. Editor, I like the Work very well as a commencement, and I intend to give it a few of my own loose papers as an encouragement - in fact I think it will become the receptacle of valuable and important knowledge as regards this Colony. All that I have to say, at present, is, that the price is too high, and there is too much English Literature, for I have no acquaintances up the country to send it to; but I want to send it home as a put-off against several little invoices which have come out, to let them see what is going forward here. As to what the Gazette says of its "creating a reading taste" and "advancing Australia", and being "a bold attempt to be hailed with pleasure", &c. such vituperations Mr. Editor are not to be heeded, for we may suspect the Gazette has a sixteenth share of it, but wishes to disown it for coming from the Press of Mr. Hill - let him (the Gazette) stick to making his wooden-headed remarks on politics - let him not dabble in literature or the works of learned men, if he is wise, but fire away his wooden bullets, taking care not to alarm women or children or casual passengers.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

X.Y.Z.

The Gazette's angry reaction to this tongue-in-cheek piece has already been discussed in reference to Charles Tompson's
Wild Notes from the Lyre of a Native Minstrel.

Besides the critique of Tompson's poems, which really deserved all the Gazette said of it, original material in the first number of the South-Asian consisted of an article on "Aboriginal Dialect" by L.E. Threlkeld, an historical account of "New Holland" and a review of Lang's Aurora Australis. The last is especially interesting for its early statement of a determination to criticise Australian literature objectively: "We are disposed to make much of our Colonial productions, and not be over fastidious when their number is so small: but we, notwithstanding, take it to be our province, to preserve a record of their merits and defects, for the guidance of public opinion" (p.34). Lang's characteristic metres were beautifully summed up in the sentence "Most of these poems were written, it appears, on ship board; we therefore do not wonder at their having a certain qualminess, every now and then, which is so commonly felt in the motion of a cross sea." (p.35). Oldfield was not so happy in his criticism of Tompson, in spite of the equally good intentions with which he began: "As this is a production of 'a Native Minstrel', we shall notice it at some length; not only to afford a just idea of its merits, but to trace, as we proceed, some dangers commonly found in this tempting path of literature." (p.8) The most interesting aspect of this review is Oldfield's
evaluation of English poets. After saying earlier that Thompson's imitation of Cowper "is more like Thompson [sic] or Wordsworth, or what any one with common imagination might have written," he concluded

In our own country, Shakespeare is the giant of his tribe; Milton, Cowper, and Byron are of the same race. The second class of modern times, comprehends Goldsmith, Pope, Rogers, Moore, Southey, Campbell, etc. The third class, Thompson [sic], Cowley, Crabbe, Wordsworth, Bloomfield, and a host of minor poets. (p.13)

Oldfield's conservative tastes were also reflected in the English literature selected for the first number of his magazine: several poems and ballads; the Edinburgh Review's notices of Moore's Life of Sheridan and Washington Irving's Tales of a Traveller; a piece on the Waverley Novels from the Greenock Advertiser; short prose extracts from the New Monthly Magazine; "The Burmese War" from the Quarterly Review and "The Wreath" from Bulwer's Autumn in Greece.

As can be seen, the first issue of the South-Asian Register contained a good amount of reading matter, all of a fairly popular kind, so its quick sale is not surprising. While the original contributions may appear meagre by present day standards, they were a vast improvement on the Australian Magazine's offerings, and the proportion of original to select items was one not often bettered in many subsequent productions.

Unfortunately, this standard was not maintained in the
remaining three numbers — there were, of course, no other Australian works available for review at the time. Number Two concluded the article on New Holland and also contained some observations on the Sydney theatre; Number Three had two poems by Laurence Halloran, besides "The Epicurean: A Tale" by Thomas Moore, "The Black Friar" by Byron and "La Belle Dame Sans Mercy" by "Caviare", otherwise Keats. The fourth and final issue included the historically interesting and competently written "Walk Through Sydney in 1828", which has already been mentioned, and the original poem "Blighted Hope" in XXIX Stanzas. On this, the Editor amusingly commented

    We give insertion to the following Stanzas, because the Author terms them original. The style is that of Childe Harold, and the whole substance may be characterised by a sentence of Shakspeare's (sic). "And then the lover Sighing like a furnace, with a woful ballad Made to his mistress' eye-brow --"

    They will, as the Author expresses it in a private note, "perchance excite very little commiseration in the mass of our readers"; but they ought to excite indulgence, and the Author will think, one day, that they have, in us.

    The South-Asian Register itself, excited varying degrees of indulgence in the Australian reading public. In the Hobart Town Courier of 10 November 1827, James Ross wrote "It consists of 100 neatly printed pages, and does credit both to the typography and literature of New South Wales. The first article is the best. It contains an interesting description of New Holland as far as our present
knowledge goes." After a few remarks on Tompson's poems - "His muse is by no means despicable, and when more cultivated, may produce something that his great descriptive namesake would not have distained to read, if he had not stooped to write it." - Ross concluded:

It is gratifying to see that a taste for letters is growing in these young colonies of reform, and outstripping even the increase in population. A reading, an intelligent public always constitutes a prosperous, a happy and well governed people, and if purchasers be found to keep the publication alive, it will be a convincing proof of our advancement. We do not approve of the title editor being added to the name of Oldfield. The editor ought to remain unknown behind the curtain, and though we by no means wish to discourage the gentleman, we trust his second number will be freer from blemishes than the first. He must avoid all affectation of fine language, and confine himself purely to legitimate English, so that our tongue may not degenerate as it has done in America. Such words for instance as novel and minor are better left alone, when we can say instead of them in plain English new and less.

A more favourable verdict on Oldfield's style was given in a comparison between the South-Asian and the new Australian Quarterly Review in a letter to the Editor of the Monitor, printed on 24 January 1828.

SIR,

BEING an attentive reader of your impartial Journal, I was induced, from perusing your strictures on the Australian Quarterly Review, and your encomium on the South-Asian Register, to borrow these two periodicals of a friend: the result was, that I returned the Quarterly, after a most tedious reading - but in place of the Register, transmitted 7s. 6d.

LANGUAGE, Mr. Editor, I have ever understood, as the means of reciprocally conveying our ideas; but in the Quarterly,  

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13 On 26 May 1828, the Sydney Gazette claimed that "Roger Oldfield" was a pseudonym.
this object seemed to have been entirely forgotten: I waded through an ocean of pure verbosity.

There is, however, a marked difference in the South-Asian. In this valuable little work, the editor seems so overflowing with ideas, as not to be able to find words sufficiently expressive of the same. This perhaps a fault; but it is on the right side: words, without meaning, are not so pleasant to the senses as the noise of crickets; sentiment - real sentiment - if expressed by a clown, is always delightful. Not that I would insinuate aught against Dr. Oldfield's terse style - my notion of that gentleman is, that his ideas are sometimes inexpressible. Lord Byron, in his Childe Harold, says, in painting an Alpine storm, that he shall die without ever being able to express his feelings: Such, I should think, is often the case with the Doctor.

O.P.Q.

The Monitor's impartiality towards the South-Asian is questioned by the number of mentions it was given, though these were not always laudatory. On 26 March 1828, the Monitor printed a critique by "Marcus":

The germ of Colonial Literature is but emerging as it were from the chrysalis which envelopes it, and its first respirations therefore be they ever so faint, was naturally regarded with a little solicitude by the lovers of literature. In the first number of the South-Asian, our expectations were not fulfilled.

The final issue of the magazine was, however, praised in a review in the Monitor for 2 March 1829.

The fourth number of this work came to our hand with satisfaction, because we consider Dr. Oldfield one of the best, if not the very best writer in New South Wales. He is certainly the best literary essayist. How he would shine as a political writer, we cannot tell, for politics, whether local or foreign he meddles not with; and in so saying, we think we offer no inconsiderable proof of the Doctor's talents, because what is Colonial literature without politics?

This decision not to meddle with politics may have been
one of the reasons for the short life of the South-Asian Register. No information is available about sales of the later issues, though the Monitor for 9 March 1829 did contain a list of thirty-five country subscribers to whom the fourth number of the magazine had been forwarded.

Oldfield's remarks in this final issue on the other two periodicals commenced in Sydney in 1828 leads one to assume that they and the South-Asian found a ready sale. Although this may have been in part purposeful flattery, intended to increase the South-Asian's circulation, his comparison of the English and Australian reading publics is still a provoking one:

Since the commencement of this Journal, two others have made their appearance in Sydney, published quarterly or so; the first, edited by the Rev. C.P.N. WILTON, and the second, by Mr. FULTON, an Australian. Of their merits or demerits, we have no desire to speak, especially as both publications are considered to be by now defunct. We feel pleased, however, by observing the indulgence which they, along with ourselves, have met from the public of this infant community. The people of New South Wales are not parsimonious; instead of turning a dollar round twice or thrice before they let it go, as an English shilling is often done, the eyes of fancy pondering the legend thereon— they give the Spanish monarch's image, his crown and herculean pillars, all without a second thought.

One does not know whether it was a decrease in the flow of dollars or material, or both, that led to the gap of eight months between the third and fourth numbers of the South-Asian Register and to its inability to reach Number Five. Similar shortages no doubt contributed to the
early deaths of Fulton's *The Blossom* and Wilton's *The Australian Quarterly Journal of Theology, Literature and Science*. The latter, which commenced publication on 1 January 1828, was, as its name implies, a fairly direct descendant of the *Australian Magazine*, and contained far less of real literary interest than the *South-Asian Register*. Besides editing this magazine, Wilton, a Church of England chaplain, also wrote many articles on scientific subjects for the Australian press and was responsible for the foundation of a Mechanics' Institute at Newcastle in 1835, thus providing another example of the role of clergymen in early Australian intellectual life. The first issues of his *Journal* were extensively reviewed in Australian papers. Continuing its advocacy of Oldfield, the *Monitor* of 14 January 1828 printed this letter from "A Constant Reader":

SIR,

I have looked over the new Australian Quarterly Journal just come out, and though it is perhaps not so good as might have been expected from its erudite Editor, it is pretty well. I would suggest however as an improvement in the next number, less diffusion of its common-place sentiments and the union of some masterly efforts to prevent, what I am fearful of, an insipid uniformity - at present, it is certainly too smooth - wordy, rather - and with a predisposition to effeminacy.

I find there are 600 words in one page of the *South Asian-Register*, and but 250 in this Australian Quarterly Journal; besides there is another questionable difference, *videlicet* in the one, an idea occupies a sentence or so; in the other it is wire-drawn over several pages - still I think it pretty well for a clergyman newly come from his book. The other Journals of Auster-trailing cognomine are we suppose, yet in embryo, or, abortions.
The *Journal* was also reviewed in the *Monitor's* leading article on 17 January 1828, which began

The duty of a Reviewer and of an Editor, are commonly held to be distinct. A newspaper is published for news, not literary criticism. But as the political speeches of public men are held to be lawful subjects of discussion by an Editor, so we conceive the political writings of public men are equally proper subjects for Newspaper comment. Hall's main criticisms were, however, directed at Wilton's ultra-right wing views on religion and politics, with no attempt at any real "literary criticism".

In his private journal on 8 September 1827, George Allen noted of a church attendance, "Mr. C.P.N. Wilton preached but his sermon was far from edifying and his delivery still farther from elegant." Wilton, however, evidently thought enough of this sermon, "The Beauty of Order in the Church of England", to devote thirteen pages of the first number of his *Journal* to it - or perhaps he was just short of material. Much of the contents of Number One were in similar vein: "On the Connection Between Religion and Science", "A Funeral Hymn (From the Christian Remembrancer for December, 1826) by Reginald Heber", and so on. As Wilton was a keen amateur scientist, he also included reviews of works by King and Threlkeld, a poem on geology entitled "The Mineralogist", remarks on "Australian Sperm Whale Fishery" and "Suggestions for the Establishment of An Australian Museum". Later issues of
the Journal also concentrated on theology and science, with literature, in the modern sense of the term, completely overlooked. Bearing in mind the nineteenth-century use of "literary", it would be hard to better this description of the Australian Quarterly Journal from the Tasmanian periodical Murray's Austral-Asiatic Review for August 1828:

This work, as may be expected from such an Editor, Rev. Charles Wilton (who was for seven years Curate to the Archdeacon of Wells, one of the most accomplished scholars in the English Church,) is of a staid, didactic, and principally, literary character. It is highly respectable, in every consideration.

As might have been equally expected from Wilton's strongly conservative views on religion and politics, his magazine was praised by the right-wing Sydney Gazette. A review of Number Four of the Australian Quarterly Journal printed in the Gazette on 14 November 1828, is chiefly interesting for its clear-sighted view of the prevailing cultural climate in New South Wales:

... The number to which our attention is at present called, completes the first volume of this extremely creditable and useful work, and which is certainly one of the best samples that we have yet seen of Australian literature; for though it is, as indeed it professes to be, of a light and unpretending character, it is superior of its kind, is evidently the work of a scholar and a gentleman, and altogether conducted with a refinement of taste that has not often pourtrayed itself in the labours of some who have been, as well as the Reverend Editor, candidates for literary fame. ...

It was once said by Dr. JOHNSON, that "no one but a blockhead ever wrote except for money", but the history of literature has fully demonstrated that the prospect of
pecuniary gain has not been, at all times, the greatest stimulus to literary exertion. The Editor of "The Australian Quarterly Journal," we are convinced, from what we know of the expense attending such a work as his, is not, at present, any thing like adequately compensated for his labour; but still we do hope that his exertions will yet be crowned with that success which they most unquestionably deserve. The age of literature and refinement will always come late in the annals of a nation; and there is nothing in the history of the formation or progress of this Colony to make it an exception to the general rule. The genius of the people is, at present, rather directed to what is useful and mechanical; indeed, in so early a stage of British settlement in this part of the world, and while there is still so much uncultivated land, we can hardly expect that any very great encouragement should be given to the cultivation of the mind; and though it may be difficult, perhaps to decide what political circumstances are most favourable to the development of the literary taste of a people, it is easy to see what state of things must necessarily be most adverse to it. In a newly peopled country as this is, the provision of the means of living, must for some time be the care of all. After these are secured, the pursuit of wealth, and the accumulation of property, will long continue to be the favourite subjects. Thus, in this Colony, agriculture, commerce, politics, concerns which come home to the business and bosoms of men - engross the attention of all, employing the best hands and the best heads; and it is the fulness of time alone which can bring into existence that distinct class of men, who form the literary reputation of a country. Under such discouraging circumstances, the writer who, like the editor of the work to which we are referring, devotes his attention and talents to the promotion of literature, is entitled to no trifling commendation, and we have little doubt that the labours of Mr. Wilton will yet meet with more substantial acknowledgment than that which consists of the mere voice of fame.

Unfortunately, even the "mere voice of fame" did not have any further opportunities to reward Wilton, since there were no further numbers of his Journal. A "List of Subscribers" appended to Number Four contains the names of eighty-five people who purchased ninety-seven copies -
only half the two hundred which seem to have been necessary for financial success. In spite of the Gazette's encomiums, Wilton's Journal was much narrower in appeal than the South-Asian Register, and the subscribers included only colonial dignitaries and Church of England supporters.

An obituary on both the South-Asian and the Quarterly Journal, printed in the Australian on 9 January 1829, points to another reason for their failure:

Mr. Wilton's Quarterly has merged into ... nothing; and the number which promises to be the forthcoming number of Dr. Oldfield's South Asian, promises to be ... its last. Theology enough is to be found in books without having recourse for it in magazines, and till the excellent moral and doctrinal treatises of a Blair, a Tillotson, an Atterbury, be better handled than they have been, any mawkish efforts to imitate or outstrip these pious and learned writers, must ever fail, amongst people of good sense and good taste, of obtaining the end desired.

But although the third periodical issued in this period avoided theology, it still only managed to survive for one number. It was advertised in the Monitor on March 1828:

The Blossom
A Quarterly Magazine,
By John Walker Fulton, an Australian, will be published on the 30th May proximo . . .

Price 6s. Sterling.

The first and succeeding Numbers will contain a Frontispiece. Ladies and Gentlemen desirous of favouring the Author with communications, are particularly requested to forward them to the Author's residence, No. 10, Macquarie-Street, Parramatta, on or before the 2nd April proximo.

However, it is likely that Fulton, like the other early editors, wrote most of the original contributions himself.
The son of Charles Tompson's beloved teacher, the Rev. Henry Fulton, this "Australian" was, according to the Austral-Asiatic of August 1828, only twenty at the time of founding The Blossom. In the Introduction to his magazine he reveals himself as an advocate of the view that literary enlightenment was to be the moral salvation of New South Wales.

... To advance the literature of a country should be the desire of every man claiming pretensions to the knowledge of human affairs, inasmuch as the moral state of society is concentrated in it its [sic] introduction and improvement. ... it is upon this broad basis we presume a claim on public regard, and not as the least of reasons, from the circumstance of our being a Native of that Country, whose literature we essay to encourage.

The Blossom's original offerings consisted of remarks on politics, society, commerce, justice, the drama, the turf and the press in New South Wales, an article, "The Aborigines of New Holland", and two extremely poor original poems. There were also some select poems and a few select and sentimental tales such as "The Dying Child (A Fragment)". Fulton probably devoted more space to Australian matters than any previous editor, but the general standard of his material was not as high as Oldfield's. He was interested more in applied than pure literature, as is evident from his intention to convert The Blossom to "a Weekly Miscellany", announced in the Monitor on 26 July 1828. However, no more issues of The
Blossom seem to have been published.

In Tasmania, only two periodicals appeared during this period, Bent's Colonial Advocate and Tasmanian Monthly Review and Murray's Austral-Asiatic Review, both in 1828. A prophetic note was sounded in the Monitor on 9 April 1828, in relation to the founding of the Colonial Advocate: "The people of these Colonies would have to exceed the Mother Country in literary taste and their means of indulging it, if besides their six Newspapers, they could also maintain the five Periodicals, with which they are awfully threatened." By the beginning of 1829, none of these five periodicals was in existence, though Murray's Review merged with the Tasmanian and survived as a weekly newspaper till the eighteen-forties. Robert Lanthrop Murray, who had previously edited Bent's Colonial Times, and been responsible for the letters from "A Colonist" which led to Governor Arthur's prosecution of Bent for libel in 1826, has been discussed in detail in Morris Miller's Pressmen and Governors. Some further interesting points on his character and his Review were made in this review of the first number, for February 1828, which appeared in the Monitor on 3 March 1828.

... We are sure Mr. Murray can write better than what this work seems to intimate; or he cannot write half so entertainingly as he can converse. The choice of his subjects, generally, is injudicious. A Van Diemen's Land
Magazine or Review should give information of Van Diemen's Land. The people of every colony like to read about themselves, better than of England or foreign countries. And the people of England, when they look into an Australian Magazine, would be disappointed to see it occupied almost entirely with matters which apply as well to Europe, as to the colony in which it is published. The article on "The Ministry" is composed with industry, but it is dull; the tale is heavily told. Under the head of Australian Extracts, and Tasmanian Extracts, the author ought to have supported his original matter respecting the colony, with good effect. Nothing can be more meagre however, and display worse taste, than the paltry subjects he has chosen to extract from our Sydney Press. We are certain the three Journals of the elder colony furnish subjects every week, more interesting both in matter and manner, than those selected by Mr. Murray. In short, the Editor of this Van Diemen's Land Review, must be an altered man. The school-fellow of Commissioner Bigge at Westminster, appears to us to have lost a good deal of his vivacity, his elegance, and his judgment. The two first we always considered him to be possessed of in considerable measure. The only article worth our notice, or that of our readers, is Mr. Murray's critique on the Sydney Journals. We here transcribe it for the edification of our readers. We had almost forgotten to state, that on politics Mr. Murray is tame. Perhaps necessarily so. We had expected otherwise.

To the modern Australian reader, however, there is some piquancy in the Introduction to the first number of the Review, part of which has been taken as the epigraph for this thesis:

The British nation is characteristically designated "a reading People"; and wherever they spread themselves - however distant from their native land circumstances may carry them - their native attribute remains rather increased than diminished. It is this feature in the British character which has raised it to the high rank it holds amongst the families of the world, superior in literary attainment, as our countrymen are acknowledged to be if taken as a whole, to any other nation of the earth.

The Austral-Asiatic Review really does not bear out this highly patriotic back-slapping, although, in later issues,
some presumably original articles on "Novel Writing" and Scott's Life of Napoleon showed Murray prepared to devote more space to literature proper than most of his contemporaries. The article headed "Novel Writing", in Number Two for April 1828, criticised the "fashionable novels" then in vogue, especially singling out one called The Guards for its "delightful scandal". In the same issue of the Review, a lengthy criticism of Scott's Napoleon, damned it as wholly unsuited to his talents and written solely for money. There were also some digs at "the Great Unknown" and the publicity Scott gained from the revelation of his identity just before his work on Napoleon was published. This seems to have been the only original criticism of Scott published in Australia during the eighteen-twenties, although other papers reprinted English critiques of The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte, in similar vein to Murray's.

The third number of the Review, for June 1828, contained the highly controversial "Letter from Van Diemen's Land" which had first appeared in the London Morning Herald, been reprinted in Bent's Colonial Advocate and copied from there by Murray, an indication of the great public feeling it aroused in Hobart in 1828. According to Morris Miller, it had been written by Mary Leman Grimstone; its sentiments were directly opposed to those of Murray's "Introduction":
... In the first place, you could hardly imagine that a country like England could produce such an illiterate cub as this Colony. Who would not have expected to find, by this time, a Library at least? They had one at South Carolina before it was established twelve months. Saturn is not more remote from the Sun, than Hobart Town from all Science and Literature. Variety is a word unknown in its vocabulary, and the light that surrounds you must all be from within. ...

There is no place of public meeting but the Church—not even a public walk. No books—no, not so much as a magazine, in which, if they were the lineal descendants of burgomasters, they may sometimes emerge from restraint, at least anonymously, so that any thing of a frank, open intercommunion of ideas is unknown; and the human mind here, like a soil that would refuse all vegetation for fear of growing poison, becomes a barren waste.

... Literature, an auxiliary everywhere, is here an essential; with that, and the idol my heart cherishes, I have a little Goshen of my own, to which I can always retire from the plagues of the world.

One is struck by some similarities between this and certain modern attacks on Australia's lack of culture, particularly in the simile of the "barren waste". Murray himself turned this simile to amusing account in his praise of Mrs. Grimstone's letter, introducing his extracts from it:

The London Journals have teemed with remarks upon a letter from Van Diemen's Land, which appeared lately in the Morning Herald. It has also elicited some ingenious articles in our own Journals. It is understood to be the production of a Lady residing here, of high estimation. It is certainly one of the most spirited compositions we remember to have met with, of female origin. In its style, it strongly resembles the celebrated Wortley Montague Letters, which were the admiration of the last century. But it has a peculiar buoyancy, a lightness, a somewhat which, while every reader must be pleased with, he is unable to describe. Above all, there appears occasionally a tone of expression, which shews the fair authoress to possess what, from the tendency of the atmosphere of Van Diemen's Land to the ossification of, is so seldom met with— a Heart!
The Austral-Asiatic Review was, of course, a magazine, but as it did not contain any imaginative literature, it was possibly not quite what Mrs. Grimstone was looking for. Nor, probably, was Bent's Colonial Advocate; as Bent himself said in his Introduction, it could not even properly be called a magazine, since it was in fact a newspaper in magazine dress. Governor Arthur refused to grant Bent a newspaper licence under the new Licencing Law which came into effect in Tasmania in 1827, and so from 12 October 1827 to 2 January 1829, when the new law was disallowed by the English Government, the Colonial Times printed nothing but advertisements. To fill in the gap, Bent published eight issues of the Colonial Advocate between March and October 1828. This was proclaimed as "Devoted to News, Politics, Agriculture and Commerce" and, as Bent said in the first issue,

... It is, in fact, a Journal, a public Record, a Register of passing events, a Review of Politics, and an epitome of useful and practical information. ... Humble and disqualified for the undertaking as we were, the political system of our adopted land, struggling and convulsed as it were, for the want of information, was a sight which we could not bear - our fellow Colonists complaining of the lack of intelligence was too much for our feelings - and our native youth, at least such of them as have no means of acquiring knowledge, deprived of their Public Instructors, caused every vein to swell, and with a bosom heaving with generous and honest English indignation at the idea of a reign of mental darkness and obscurity, we have now come forward to lift our pen, and do our best for the good of ALL - "for GOD, for Government, and for the People" - and to snatch Tasmania from impending ignorance.
. . . With regard to Literature, our columns are open for the essays of Correspondents of all kinds. In the "Colonial Advocate", the young may try their hand at authorship without the fear of being known, until they see the effect of their writings when in print; and we shall feel very proud in giving publicity to Tasmanian literary productions, whether in prose or verse, if our friends will do us the honour of transmitting them to us. We shall always devote a portion of our work to the Muscs, giving every month a quantity of Poetry, original and select.

Very few young Tasmanians took up this generous offer, since only five original poems and a snippety "dramatic fragment" were published during the Colonial Advocate's life. One of these original works, however, was a long poem called, in anticipation of a later Australian author, "The Wanderer". In Number 2 of the Advocate, for April 1828, this notice appeared:

To Correspondents.

Under the title of the Wanderer, we have received the manuscript of a very pretty little poetical sketch, replete with beauties of no ordinary description. The real author we are not acquainted with, but we know he is a resident in the Colony in a humble walk of life. His little piece possesses much originality of thought and expression; but in his descriptions, the writer seems to imitate the Poems of Sir Walter Scott. Upon the whole, the Wanderer is a fine piece, and must be the work of a man of strong poetical genius. Should these remarks meet the author's eye, we would recommend him to proceed in the course which the muses have evidently laid out for him, and we have no doubt, taking the Wanderer for a specimen, that he will be, when he comes to chasten some points of his language, a Poet far above mediocrity. His present piece is too long for our number of this month, but we will, if possible, give him a place in our next.

As promised, this poem "Supposed to be written by a Native of Van Diemen's Land", appeared in the May issue of the
Colonial Advocate. It is a long, conventional and
derivative piece, in which the wanderer loses his way
during a stroll on Mt. Wellington, falls asleep and dreams,
first horrifically of the arrival of a ship-load of convicts,
and then idyllically of scenes of pastoral peace and plenty.
He awakes to the strains of an "inspir'd musician" who
sings consolingly of the future freedom and greatness of
a Tasmania shielded by the "safe protecting wing" of
"Mother Briton". The most interesting, and best, part of
the poem is its opening, where the author struggles to
express his sense of his new surroundings in terms of
English poetic traditions:

Sweet nature smil'd on hill and lea,
Sweet sung the birds on bough and tree,
    And all was gay around;
Refreshing dews, and vernal showers,
With verdant green, and fragrant flowers,
    Had carpeted the ground:
From Wellington's high frowning brow,
    That nods defiance to the storm,
The sun had chased away the snow
That yearly shrouds its giant form.

A weary wanderer lost his way
Upon that mountain, bleak and grey;
Long, long he strove to find the plain,
But all his search, alas! was vain.
He found no path, excepting where
The Kangaroo runs to his lair;
He found no house, excepting caves
That hideous yawn'd, like open graves;
He shouted, and his loud halloo,
Was answered by the cockatoo,
That clap'd her snowy wings, and flew
Affrighted at the voice of man,
    The first that ever trod that ground,
Unless some fell, rude, robber gang
    That in the wild a shelter found.
Such was the wilderness to view,
But yet it had its beauties too;
The modest violet fair did blow,
    And sweetly bloom'd the red heath bell;
The daisy spread her breast of snow,
    And sweetly sang the gay rozell.
The sun's expiring beam did tinge
The mountain, with a purple fringe;
And those dark rocks, so wild and stern,
Were crested by a waving fern,
Save some rude crag, bleak, bare and high,
That towering seem'd tothreat the sky,
Where creature never found its way,
Save eagles, and fell birds of prey.

In such a place, secure from view,
A robber chief might lead his crew;
In such a place, might fairies dance,
Or revel by the moon's pale glance;
In such a place grey ghosts might meet,
    Glad in the mournful winding sheet;
In such a place, in days of yore,
When persecution stained with gore
The House of God, His priests might pay
    Their vows in sweet security;
In such a place, a wizard grey,
    Might peep into futurity.

"M.", whom Morris Miller has tentatively identified as H.N. Murray, thought so much of this poem that he wrote a lengthy review of it, printed in the Tasmanian on 27 June, 4 and 11 July 1828. He began

In a rising Colony like this, where there is, or ought to be, an ardour for the promotion of all kinds of private merit, every circumstance is interesting which tends to bring into notice an individual who adorns society by the brilliancy of his talents. I do not allude, on this occasion, to the more exalted and learned provinces of life, but descend, for the present, into the humbler domain, in the valley of pure nature, where, as a bard has well and truly remarked,

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
    And waste its beauties on the desert air." . . .
The Author indeed seems to excell in description, that
great test of a Poet's imagination, and which, in every
species of poetical composition, possesses a considerable
place: he has admirably suited the scenery to the subject
of the poem, and exhibited nature under such a form as
best corresponds with the sentiments he delivers: every
image and circumstance tends either to aggrandize or to
beautify, and places the objects in so strong a light
before the eye, that the impression is transmitted in its
full force to the imagination of the reader.

The following passages present a collection of strong
expressive images, not clothed in vague unmeaning language,
which would only enfeeble the impression designed to be
made, but all picturesque, and tending to place the
objects before our eyes in one strong point of view, with
all their distinguishing features distinctly; and every
thing that is new and peculiar in the scene is rendered
present to the mind in the glowing colours of reality . . .

After quoting the last three of the stanzas given above,
the reviewer continued

This is not merely the language of description, but
such circumstances are selected as may catch the fancy,
and the objects are particularized so as to convey to the
reader a lively conception of the scene. The single
object of -

"the Cockatoo,

That clapp'd her snowy wings, and flew

Affrighted at the voice of man,

The first that ever trod that ground,

is itself a very beautiful object in a landscape, and
characterises the whole scene.

In the second part of the review, praise was given to the
treatment of manners and characters, and the introduction
of a supernatural agency, since "The marvellous possesses
a great charm, particularly in poetry, and gratifies the
imagination." The author was, however, not allowed to
escape some criticism for his "blemishes":

... these, however, are chiefly of a verbal nature,
arising, perhaps, from the Author's not having had his
natural powers sufficiently cultivated, and from his not having studied poetry as an art, a circumstance partly owing, also, to his want of literature. He is the bard of Nature, and accordingly, writes with her pencil. He may exclaim, with Shakspeare, -

"Thou, Nature, art my Goddess, to thy law
My sevices are bound."

He seems to have written because he felt, and he consequently writes as he feels, with that true poet fire which warms the heart and steals the soul, but which has hurried him, in the ardour of his vivid imagination, into occasional inaccuracies. For example, he is perhaps rather careless in the choice of some of his epithets, and sometimes redundant; making use, in some instances, of expletive words, which, so far from heightening or adding a new idea to the description, render it faint and languid. The too frequent introduction of epithets, particularly such as are so trite as to have become insipid, instead of raising the signification of the words they qualify, only clog the style with enervating verbosity. Such phrases as - "verdant green", "bough and tree", "woe and sadness", "joy and gladness", being synonymous terms and mere tautology, are some of his most palpable blemishes in this particular. The expression - "in such a place", is repeated in the fourth Stanza no less than five times.

After defending the author from the charge of having copied Scott - "When different persons contemplate the same subject, it is almost impossible that a coincidence of thought and expression should not occur, without the smallest communication between the parties" - the reviewer concluded

Upon the whole, the author of the Wanderer seems to possess a feeling heart and warm imagination; and this poem has a valuable tendency, as in it he appears not only as a poet, but as a patriot and moralist. If these strictures shall be the means of introducing this poetical sketch to the notice of the public, and of drawing from his "destination obscure", a child of Nature, upon whom she has smiled in the desert, the aim of the writer will be sufficiently accomplished.
Making allowances for the natural desire to praise a patriotic fellow Tasmanian, this review was about the best piece of literary criticism to appear in Australia during the eighteen-twenties, with Murray, if he was the writer, showing a detailed knowledge of the requirements for a good poem. In its issue for August 1828, however, the Colonial Advocate commented justly "we cannot . . . place the poem on an equality with the poetry of a number of our English bards, which it would appear the reviewer in the Tasmanian seems anxious to do by the unmeasured praise he bestows on it." Discussing the authorship of "The Wanderer", Morris Miller finds it "hard to accept the presupposition that the composition was the work of a native of Van Diemen's Land" (p.236). The Colonial Advocate's emphasis on "real author", however, suggests that he merely adopted the persona of "a Native of Van Diemen's Land" for the purposes of his patriotic poem. Morris Miller throws up the names of Evan Henry Thomas and Mrs. Grimstone, but is unable to find any definite evidence to link them with the poem.

Although these two Tasmanian periodicals did not long survive, they apparently did not lack readers or appreciation, and this chapter will conclude with two letters sent to the Editor of the Tasmanian in 1828. In
the first of these, printed on 27 June on the same page
as the commencement of the review of "The Wanderer",
another sign of the stirrings of literature in Australia,
"A Colonist" wrote

I have observed with great satisfaction, that an
universal thirst for information prevails amongst all
classes, both in Hobart Town and the interior; the
Newspapers are hailed with real pleasure, and the
publication of the Review and Advocate are waited for
by many with anxiety.

Since I left Hobart Town, a Mechanics' Institution,
a Circulating Library, and several other institutions
equally beneficial to mankind, have been erected. The
star of literature has arisen on Van Diemen's Land, and
may its bright rays enlighten every hill and glen, and
every head and heart in Tasmania.

A month earlier, on 16 May, "Philanthropus" had given a
brief glimpse of part of the Australian reading public:

The Colonial Advocate is well calculated to enlighten
the minds of our native youths: I know a great many of
them who thirst after information, and who have little
or no means of gaining it, in a Colony like this, where
books are so hard to be found, save through the medium
of Periodical Publication.

I have known some of them drive their flock to the
hills, with Murray's Review, or Bent's Advocate in their
pocket. And the Public are so far from wondering that
they have "been so egregiously gulled", that Mr. Bent's
subscription list increases every day. I wish all our
Colonial Publications much success, they are all calculated
to make us wiser and better.
CHAPTER III

BOOKS, READERS AND SOCIETIES: 1830 - 1839

... the stagnant waters of ignorance, which formerly sent forth the pestilential vapours of crime and misery, have now given place to those fountains of knowledge, which issue their almost boundless streams to fertilize, enrich, and bless the world. ¹

The eighteen-thirties saw a marked increase in the number of books available in Australia for both purchase and borrowing. As a result of this, and a similar increase in advertising rates, colonists no longer used the columns of newspapers to solicit lost books as they had done so amusingly earlier in the century. The practice was continued occasionally by executors before the sale of a large private library, and by lending library proprietors, but on the whole one indication of the popularity of various works in early Australia is no longer available. As the number of references to books in private and published letters and reminiscences is still small, most evidence for the literary tastes of the pioneer settlers must once again be drawn from lists of books in newspaper advertisements, auction catalogues, reports of book sales, and records of the various early reading societies, Mechanics' and Literary Institutes. Again, one assumes that supply is an index of demand; that the works available in Australian libraries and bookshops were a fair reflection of the

¹"Literary Institutions", The Currency Lad, 27 October 1832.
literary tastes of the colonists. Since works were probably only sent to or ordered from the colonies at this period if they had proved popular in Britain, one naturally finds no marked divergences between the tastes of British and Australian readers.

In Australia as in Britain, the late eighteen-thirties saw the rise to fame of Charles Dickens, even though the time-lag in obtaining books meant that few copies of his works were advertised for sale in this decade. For the period as a whole, Scott was again the most frequently advised author, with one hundred and forty of his works listed by booksellers and auctioneers. Reversing the eighteen-twenties order, Byron comes next, with ninety-three works listed, closely followed by Shakespeare with eighty-seven. There is then quite a large gap to Johnson with fifty-five, Goldsmith with fifty-two, and Fenimore Cooper with forty-seven. After Milton with forty-one, there is little between Burns, Maria Edgeworth, Smollett, Fielding, Pope, Thomas Moore, Cowper, Thomson, Boswell, Bulwer Lytton and Butler, in that order. Thus, as in the 'twenties, eighteenth-century and earlier authors were the most often advertised, although Maria Edgeworth, Fenimore Cooper and Bulwer Lytton show marked increases in popularity, a sign of the growing importance of the novelist in this period.
A similar trend is seen in the English literature reprinted in Australian newspapers and magazines during the thirties. While Scott and Byron still made good copy — the Sydney Gazette of 11 January 1831 offered "Lord Byron (By Sir Walter Scott Himself)" — as the decade went on greater interest was shown in such modern novelists as Bulwer Lytton, Marryat and Dickens. On 7 February 1833, the editor of the Sydney Gazette prefaced an extract taken from "a London Journal",

We are sure our readers will peruse with pleasure the article in another column headed "Popular Writer." In this colony Mr. Bulwer is little known except as the advocate of the civil rights of the people; the literary reader, however, will be gratified in observing that, as a man of talent and genius, Mr. Bulwer is considered, by some, to suffer little by comparison even with Sir WALTER SCOTT.

A few months earlier, the Gazette for 11 August 1832 had reprinted the Literary Gazette's review of Lytton's Eugene Aram (1832); and on 21 May 1836, it extracted a notice of his Rienzi; the Last of the Tribunes (1835) from the London Atlas. Throughout the eighteen-thirties the Sydney Gazette also reprinted short-stories by other popular English novelists. John Galt's "The Fatal Whisper", from the Club Book, appeared on 19 January 1833, Henry Grattan's "The Mother's Revenge" on 25 November 1837, and Theodore Hook's "Russian Police, a true Tale of Love and Horror, and English Persons" on 25 and 27 December 1838, the two latter being
copied from the *New Monthly Magazine*. The titles of these stories are sufficiently indicative of the prevalent taste for sensational fiction. In 1837, the *Gazette* also published reviews of Mrs. Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), from the *Lady's Magazine*, and Marryat's *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836), from the *Atlas*, on 8 June and 7 March respectively. An extract from *Midshipman Easy* was given in the *Hobart TownCourier* on 21 April 1837, while the *Launceston Advertiser* for 3 March 1836 reprinted a passage from Marryatt's *Japhet, In Search of a Father* (1836), taken from the *Metropolitan Magazine*. The same paper had earlier serialised Samuel Warren's *Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician* (1832–38) between 11 July 1831 and 8 February 1832. A number of other papers reprinted Warren's extremely popular work later in the eighteen-thirties. Extracts appeared in the *Sydney Times* from 4 February to 8 April 1837, in the Tasmanian *Cornwall Chronicle* on 9 and 16 November 1839, and in the *Sydney Gazette* from 21 July to 4 August 1836 and again from 10 to 22 February 1838.

At the conclusion of the latter serialisation, the *Gazette* commenced reprinting the only work to exceed the *Diary of a Late Physician* in popularity during the eighteen-thirties - Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*. On 13 February 1838, the editor had stated "*The Pickwick Papers* - We have received
the first sixteen numbers of these humorous publications and intend copying them into consecutive numbers of this journal, commencing from Tuesday next". The copying did not actually start till 24 February, and continued with a few short breaks until 13 September 1838. Although no other paper attempted a complete serialisation, extracts from Pickwick appeared in the Monitor on 3 May 1837, the Australian on 3 and 13 October 1837, the Colonist on 3 February 1838, the South Australian Gazette on 30 June 1838, the Cornwall Chronicle on 2, 9, and 16 June 1837 and the Hobart Town Courier on 12 May 1837, 9 February, 10 and 24 August 1838. The Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review for 2 February 1838 made an appropriate comment on all this:

It has become fashionable with the newspaper press throughout the British Dominions, to extract from the Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club. We find not only the wit of that publication transferred to the columns of English, Scotch, and Irish papers, but to those also of India, the Cape, Sydney, and lastly of Van Diemen's Land. Fortunately, "Boz" has appeared in favourable time for us, for the Colony is dull, and every thing dull in it.

Most space was devoted to Dickens in the Sydney Commercial Journal and Advertiser. It published extracts from Sketches by Boz between 17 January and 14 March 1838, with a couple more on 14 and 18 July of the same year. Passages from Pickwick Papers also appeared on 10 February, 14 April and 25 July 1838. Later, the Commercial Journal
serialized Nicholas Nickleby, which ran throughout 1839, from 2 January to 25 December. Its popularity may be gauged from this apology for a break in publication, printed on 23 March 1839:

Nicholas Nickleby - We have to apologise to our numerous readers for the non-appearance of the above gentleman in our columns for the last few publications: but it gives us pleasure to state that now we shall go regularly on till the work is finished, and the young gentleman makes his exist.

The Commercial Journal was also the only Sydney paper to pay any attention to Oliver Twist in this period, with an extract "Oliver Twist and the Jew", printed on 16 February 1839.

In Hobart, the Colonial Times commenced its serialisation of Nicholas Nickleby on 18 September 1838:

We have been favoured with the first number of a new publication by Boz . . .
This we believe, is the only copy at present in the colony; and, it is our intention to insert suitable portions every week, until we have copied the whole. It is generally considered to be quite equal, if not superior, to the far-famed Pickwick Papers . . .

Perhaps it was sour grapes that made the Cornwall Chronicle for 1 June 1839 disagree: "From what we have seen of 'Nicholas Nickleby', we are inclined to pronounce it to be far inferior to the inimitable 'Pickwick Papers' . . ."

Another extract from Nickleby was given in the Hobart Town Advertiser for 5 April 1839, whilst earlier, on 1 January, the Colonial Times had again testified to Dickens' popularity:
"The following chapter from Mr. Dickens' **Oliver Twist**, which is published in Bentley's Miscellany, will be read with interest by those who are (as who is not?) admirers of this very able writer."

A few reviews, both original and extracted, of The Pickwick Papers also appeared. On 21 June 1838, the Launceston Advertiser reprinted the Quarterly Review's comments, while the True Colonist, Van Diemen's Land Despatch and Agricultural and Commercial Advertiser for 26 January 1838 had enthused

The twelfth number is the best we have yet read of these very amusing papers. It is chiefly occupied with a report of the trial, "Bardell vs. Pickwick", for breach of promise of marriage. The description of the proceedings is graphic in the most ludicrous degree. The laconic notes of Mr. Pickwick to Mrs. Bardell, which are produced on the trial, will be recognised as whimsical parodies of the Melbourne correspondence, which formed the theme of so much legal argufying in a recent trial.

In an essay on the advantages of reading, in the first number of his Sydney periodical the Literary News, 12 August 1837, William a Beckett anticipated later Dickens' critics by perceiving that though "Boz" was ideal for those times when a light work was required, yet "his humour is not without its moral".

The moral was, however, probably the last reason why Australian readers clamoured for copies of the Pickwick Papers. An advertisement in the Sydney Monitor for 27 April
1838 by the bookseller William Moffitt interestingly shows Dickens usurping pride of place from Scott.

The Pickwick Papers

The Undersigned has on board the Kinnear, a limited number of the above Publication now completed, with upwards of 50 Humorous Illustrations by Cruikshank, neatly bound, and will be landed in a few days.

Also

Scott's Novels, complete in 16 vols. . . .

As the great demand evidently could not be met by these limited importations from England, an enterprising Launceston publisher and book-seller, Samuel Dowling, produced an Australian edition. The Colonist for 28 July 1838 printed:

**Pickwick Papers** - We beg to direct the attention of lovers of **Pickwicks** to the advertisement which appears in our columns of today, announcing the sale of reprinted copies of these periodicals in this colony, at the shop of Mr. Tegg, Bookseller, George-street. Such has been the scarcity of these highly popular works, that in order to meet the insatiable demand for them in these colonies, that Mr. Dowling, of Launceston, has made arrangements for reprinting and publishing fresh copies.

Lovers of "Pickwicks" evidently also abounded in the infant settlements of Melbourne and Adelaide. The Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser for 6 May 1839 announced

We have received specimens of the Plates for the Pickwick Papers, and we can confidently invite all lovers of works of art, to call and inspect them; and we feel certain that those who do not already possess a copy, will instantly order one, before the few remaining copies are disposed of. The whole of this work - whether we regard the paper, the printing, or the plates, or taken altogether - are a credit to the Colony, and are every way equal, if not superior, to the home workmanship.
On 25 August 1838, Archibald Macdougall had advertised Dowling’s edition in his *Southern Australian*, succinctly commenting, "As regards the work, itself, nothing need be said, beyond the statement of the fact that the monthly circulation in Great Britain was THIRTY THOUSAND PARTS." Again, the justifiable assumption was that English best-sellers would be equally popular in Australia.

Like their English counterparts, Australians were inspired not only to copy but also to imitate "the inimitable" *Pickwick Papers*. On 24 October 1838, the *Colonist* reported James Tegg’s intention to publish "'The Australian Pickwick' - 'The Memoirs and Travels of Tobias Twickenham, Esq.'" in monthly parts: "The author ... has already appeared before the public, with acceptance as an interesting and promising writer." The first number of this work, now called "The Life and Adventures, and Public and Private Career, of TOBIAS TWICKENHAM, ESQ.", priced at one shilling, was advertised in the *Australian* on 1 November. A "Literary Notice" in the *Colonist* for 5 January 1839 - "Mr. Martin's Australian Pickwick is about to be resumed" - indicates that the author was James Martin, who had recently published his *Australian Sketch Book* (1838). Unfortunately, no copies of *Tobias Twickenham* appear to have survived, and nothing was said in the newspapers about the content of this work.
or its reception. Another Dickens imitator was, however, speedily silenced by the *Hobart Town Courier* for 10 August 1838: "'The Posthumous Papers of the Hobart-town Pickwick Club are not suited to our columns. We prefer, with the fat boy, to let them sleep in peace." A further sign of Dickens' popularity in Australia is the advertisement in the *Tasmanian Weekly Dispatch* for 22 November 1839 of "The Pickwick Tavern. J. Williams, Liverpool Street."

In contrast to the situation in the eighteen-twenties, more English fiction than poetry was reprinted in Australian magazines and newspapers during the 'thirties. As before, most of the "Select Poetry" consisted of religious and sentimental pieces, with Felicia Hemans and L.E.L. again well represented. The *Commercial Journal* for 14 September 1839 did, however, reprint Wordsworth's "The Longest Day"; only three copies of Wordsworth's works, and the same number of Coleridge's, were advertised in this decade. An even greater rarity, a "Sonnet" by Sir Philip Sidney, appeared in the *Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine* for October 1835.

Turning for a more detailed look at the works available in Sydney during the 'thirties, one finds nearly one thousand, nine hundred volumes advertised for sale in Sydney in 1830, of which over eleven hundred were from the
library of Robert Howe, to be discussed later. About seven hundred of these were works of imaginative literature, half of them coming from Howe's library. As in the eighteen-twenties, most books were sold by auction, with newspapers containing frequent reports of evening sales, no doubt one of the few diversions of colonial life at that time. On 9 February 1830, the Sydney Gazette commented that the thousand volumes

... put up to auction yesterday, at the Repository of Messrs. Douglass and Stubbs, realized very fair prices. Some of them, indeed, sold for considerably more than the original publishing rates: for instance, a copy of "Laacn"², published at 7 shillings, owing to the very great scarcity of the work, was knocked down at £2! A considerable number of volumes, consisting of rare and valuable works, are still on hand, and will be put up for sale on the evening of an early day. An evening sale of books will afford greater facilities for the attendance of bidders.

Mr. Douglass, one of the leading Sydney auctioneers of this period, had two further cases of books for sale on 5 March 1830. The literature was, as usual in the early 'thirties, all by standard authors: Tristram Shandy, Homer's Odyssey, Burns' Works in four volumes, Pope's translation of the Iliad, Butler's Hudibras, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, Shakespeare in ten volumes and The

²Presumably G.E. Lessing's Laocoon oder Uber die Grenzen der Malerei u Poesie (1766), though the earliest recorded English edition dates from 1836.
Rambler. On this sale, the Gazette of 6 March remarked, "The importation of books has increased very considerably of late; and the excellent prices which they in general bring, is a pleasing proof of the growing taste for literature in the colony." One trusts further proof was provided at an evening sale of books held a few days later, when works by Shakespeare, Swift, Goldsmith, Burns, Thomson and Scott were offered to the public. Certainly, by 15 May 1830, the Gazette was able to report.

Evening sales of books continue to be very well attended. Messrs. Douglass and Fellows have lately had some very crowded rooms... The prices at which the books sold indicate an increasing desire for the possession of works of literature.

Later, in the Gazette for 6 November 1830, Samuel Lyons, another prominent Sydney auctioneer, listed nearly four hundred volumes of books for sale. Such popular older works as Rasselas, Tristram Shandy, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Robinson Crusoe, The Arabian Nights, Thomson's Seasons and Cowper's Poems again predominated amongst the literature, set off by a couple of Scott's novels. So, too, a collection advertised by Douglass in the Gazette for 25 November contained Gray's Elegy, Johnson's Lives of the Poets, Milton's Poetical Works, Beauties of Shakespeare, Burns' Poems, Tom Jones and Waverley. A few days later, on 2 December, the Gazette noted, "The sale of books at
Douglass's last Saturday night was well attended, and several works of sterling merit and usefulness were disposed of at very low prices." Another comment on one of Douglass's book sales was made in the Monitor on 15 December 1830: "We perceive 200 volumes of choice books for sale at Mr. Douglas's [sic]. The Native youth should attend these sales; they may thus gradually collect a small frugal stock of useful works."

At the end of 1830, also, Mr. T. Brennand, possibly the first colonist to try to make a living entirely from bookselling, announced in the Monitor for 11 December, on sale at his shop in George Street, works by Washington Irving, Scott, Johnson, Boswell, Burns, Byron and Shakespeare besides "Eagan's Life in London, Carey's Life in Paris, with all the novels of the day, and a great variety of School-books". Like many later booksellers, however, Brennand had a brief career, the Sydney Gazette for 22 January 1831 reporting, "Mr. H. Douglass has received instructions from Mr. Brennand (who is returning to the Derwent) to dispose of the whole of his extensive and valuable Library of Books."

There were said to be "upwards of 1000 volumes." This same issue of the Gazette contained the comment "There seems to have been a very considerable importation of books into the colony lately; and it speaks much for the growing literary taste of the public that, in general, they fetch very
excellent prices."

Further auction sales of books were held throughout 1831 by Messrs. Douglass, Williamson, Bodenham, and Paul. The following advertisement, in the Sydney Herald for 30 May 1831, gives a fair idea of the works generally offered to the public.

EXTENSIVE SALE OF BOOKS,
on
Saturday Evening, June 11th,
at
No.60 George-street.

Mr. J. Williamson, begs to inform the Literary characters of Sydney, and the Public generally, that he has received instructions, to sell by Auction, a most extensive and valuable collection of Books, which consists of the most esteemed standard works in the English Language, by Gibbon, Prior, Crabbe, Todd, Lingard, Southey, Shakespeare, Scott, Smollett, Edgeworth, Fielding, Richardson, etc.

Evening sales of this sort continued to be popular, though in reporting "a sale of books and other articles at Bodenham's auction rooms on Saturday night", the Sydney Gazette of 16 August 1831 was not as enthusiastic about the literary tastes of the colonists as it had formerly been: "The sale was respectably attended, and the rhetoric of the auctioneer obtained very good prices for the books, considering the indifference that pervades our community for literature and science." Mr. Bodenham had "nearly 1500 volumes" for sale the following month, and the Gazette for 13 September noted, "The sale of Books by Mr. Bodenham,
on Saturday evening, was well attended, and the works put up, many of which were of sterling merit, fetched generally fine prices."

Most of the works auctioned in Sydney in 1832 were from private libraries. On 7 June, Mr Bodenham announced in the Sydney Herald that Whitsun Monday would see his continuation of the sale of the libraries of Mr. Keith and the late Mr. Charles Frazer, a former colonial botanist. No details were given of the contents of either library, though one imagines that Frazer's contained many scientific works. Another large private library sold by Mr. Bodenham later in 1832, that of the Reverend George Innes, Headmaster of the King's Schools, was also not listed in detail. The advertisement in the Sydney Herald of 15 November does, however, suggest a collection similar to those found in catalogues of clergymen's libraries in the 'forties: "some of the best Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Classical Books now extant; together with numerous Works upon Moral and Natural Philosophy." In the same advertisement Mr. Bodenham listed "The Library of a Gentleman now returning to Europe" which was equally typical of gentlemanly tastes at this period:

In this Collection will be found the undermentioned standard and scientific Works, namely, Bell's British Poets, in one hundred and nine volumes; Bell's British Theatre, 27 vols.; Walter Scott's Works, consisting of the Lady of the Lake, Lay of the Last Minstrel, Rokeby, Marmion, Harold Roderick and Lord of the Isles; Malone's Shakespeare, in
16 vols.; Byron's Works, in 7 vols. (a very elegant edition); Robertson's Works, in 11 vols.; Spectator, in 8 vols.; Dr. Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopaedia, in 8 vols.; Arabian Nights, elegantly bound, in 4 vols.; Smollett, Fielding, and Pindar's Works; Gibbon's Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire; Don Juan; Warner's History of Ireland; Burn's Justice; Plutarch's Lives, in 6 vols.; Tidd's Practice; Goguet's Laws; Don Quixote, by Westall, in 4 vols.; Cronstep's Mineralogy, in 2 vols.; Phillip's ditto; with numerous other Works, too numerous for the space of an advertisement.

Of the sale of Innes's library, the Sydney Gazette of 15 November 1832 reported, "The attendance was respectable and pretty numerous. The books sold fetched fair prices. The present is a good opportunity for gentlemen who are desirous of enriching their libraries with rare and choice classical works."

William McGarvie, whose Australian Stationery Warehouse and Circulating Library were mentioned in Chapter I, advertised books for sale in the Sydney Herald on 2 and 30 January 1832. In the first of these lists, besides the usual Don Juan, Vicar of Wakefield, Tom Jones, Smollett's Works, Thomson's Seasons, Butler's Hudibras, Young's Night Thoughts, Shakespeare and Scott, one finds Collins' Poems, Dryden's Fables, Bacon's Essays, even a copy of Clara Reeves' Old English Baron. The second was largely composed of similar popular standard works, including the Diamond British Poets, "The smallest edition ever printed, with portraits of Authors". A more informal type of bookselling
was noted in the Herald for 4 June 1832:
"A fellow with the lungs of a Stentor was singing forth in the market on Thursday, 'Here's your Paley's Theology two pence per lb.'"

Another early Sydney bookseller, William Moffitt, advertised "Upwards of 2,000 Volumes of Books, by Celebrated Authors" in the Sydney Gazette on 14 September 1833. Among these, which could be purchased at his London Stationery and General Book Warehouse, No.23, Pitt-Street, were Scott's Novels, Bulwer Lytton's Pelham (1828), Devereux (1829), Falkland (1827) and The Disowned (1828), and "Splendid Pocket Editions of Dove's English Classics" such as Don Juan, Gulliver's Travels, Sterne's Works, Cowper's Poems, Johnson's Lives of the Poets, Tom Jones, Humphrey Clinker and Peregrine Pickle.

The auctioneers continued to be busy in 1833 with sales of imported books and private libraries. On 27 April, Mr. Bodenham advertised in the Monitor one of the latter belonging to the late Mr. H. Weightman. Although the bulk of Mr. Weightman's library was made up of law books, it also contained such universally popular works as Paradise Lost, Thomson's Seasons, Don Juan, Guy Mannering and Rob Roy. One of the apparently few woman book-collectors also had her library sold this year, advertised by Samuel
Lyons in the **Herald** for 7 November as

Consisting of upwards of six hundred volumes, chiefly standard works, by the most esteemed ancient and modern authors, forming altogether a collection of English Literature rarely to be met with out of Europe, the property of a lady leaving the colony.

Some competition for the evening book auctions was, however, provided by the opening of Barnett Levey's theatre at the end of 1832. The **Herald** of 6 February 1833 advised readers: "In consequence of the alteration of the night of performance at the Theatre, the Book Sale by Mr. Prout will take place on Friday evening the 8th Instant, and will be resumed on Tuesday and Wednesday following."

A rare indication of the current prices for popular authors is given by this advertisement in the **Monitor** for 31 January 1834.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johnson's Works, 11 vols.</td>
<td>31.10s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacon's Works, 14 vols.</td>
<td>8l. 8s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgeworth's Tales and Novels, 16 vols.</td>
<td>4l.10s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare, 11 vols.</td>
<td>5l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto, 13 vols.</td>
<td>4l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boswell's Life of Johnson, 4 vols.</td>
<td>11.12s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto, ditto, another edition, 4 vols.</td>
<td>18s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto, ditto, 1 vol.</td>
<td>12s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott's Novels and Romances, 25 vols.</td>
<td>8l.15s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Aldine edition of the English</td>
<td>5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poets</td>
<td>per vol.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a check of the prices listed in the **English Catalogue of**
Books. 1801 - 1836 (1914) shows Beilby's claim to have been substantially correct, Sydney readers were really being offered some bargains this year. Three and a half thousand volumes were also advertised for sale by auction throughout 1834, but no details were given of the works available. A catalogue for a sale by Blackman on 30 June 1834 is, however, amongst the Rev. John Mcgarvie's papers in the Mitchell Library. Again, there are no surprises in its literature: works by Shakespeare, Cowper, Scott and Maria Edgeworth, the Spectator, Don Quixote and Falconer's Shipwreck.

In contrast, the 1835 book auctions are the most fully documented of this decade, owing to the survival of several complete catalogues in the Mitchell Library. Hence the figure of nearly fifteen and a half thousand volumes, about half of which were imaginative literature, for sale in 1835, is by far the most reliable for any year in the 'thirties. Since the free population of New South Wales was then a little over forty-four thousand, three hundred, there was approximately one volume available for every three persons. This year of extensive book-selling was ushered in by the sale of several private libraries, as announced in the Monitor on 4 April 1835:

Any person wishing to form a library, has opportunities at present that seldom occur in this Colony, as Mr. Blackman has upwards of one thousand volumes of classical and other works, in the English, French, Italian, Spanish, and German
languages, which formed the library of the late Rev. Mr. Pinkerton, for sale this evening; and Mr. Lyons has the libraries of the late Justice Stephen and Dr. Wardell, which consists of twelve hundred volumes of law and other books, to dispose of, on Thursday next and the two following days.

Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any record of the titles of works in the last two libraries, but a catalogue of Pinkerton's collection appeared in the Colonist on 26 March 1835. He had been English master at the Australian College and so amongst his books one finds such colonial rarities as Donne's Poems, Wordsworth's The Excursion, Coleridge's Sybilline Leaves, Spenser's The Faerie Queene, Sidney's Arcadia, Sheridan's The Rivals and Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World. Another library containing some uncommon English literature was that of Mr. J.P. Webber, sold by Blackman on 27 and 29 April 1835. Amongst over four hundred and sixty volumes of English works listed in the catalogue one finds, besides the usual Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Ossian, Byron, Thomson, Johnson, Pope, Moore, Crabbe, Cowley, Cowper and Scott, Farquhar's Dramatic Works, Wycherly's Dramatic Works, and another copy of Donne's Poems. Webber also owned more than one hundred and fifty volumes of Italian works. According to Blackman's advertisement in the Monitor for 25 April, many of these works had "been purchased in London, at the Sales of the late John Philip Kemble, Esq., and of the Poet Hayley." Such treasures
do not seem to have gone unappreciated, for on 29 April the same paper reported that the first evening's sale... attracted a numerous and respectable company. The books produced good prices, and the more valuable ones found purchasers on liberal terms. The general impression in the room was, that it was the most valuable and best selected library that has been offered for sale in the Colony.

The other catalogues in the Mitchell Library all relate to sales by Blackman, the chief book auctioneer of this period, in the second half of 1835. On 4, 5 and 8 June, he was to auction just over a thousand volumes, nearly all works of imaginative literature. Along with standards like The Rambler, Shakespeare, Byron's Works, The Waverley Novels and Burns' Poems, were many modern novels such as Cooper's The Pilot (1824) and Miss Porter's Roche Blanche, or the Hunters of the Pyrenees (1822). These popular "novels of the day" were also the mainstay of another list of fifty or so works to be sold by Blackman also on 8 June. The catalogue for a further sale of books and music by Blackman on 18 and 20 June lists just over seven hundred volumes, about two-thirds of them imaginative literature. Works by Johnson, Shakespeare, Pope, Dryden, Gray, Scott and Maria Edgeworth were again included, besides a copy of Pride and Prejudice and many by more popular novelists like Mrs. Ward and Miss Porter. A more unusual selection is found in the Catalogue of Twelve Cases of Books... Which
Will Be Sold At Auction By Mr. Blackman . . . On Monday, The 6th Day of July, 1835, At Eleven O'Clock Precisely.
The choice of a day rather than the usual evening auction may have resulted from the large number of school books for sale. As well, there were several copies of Pamela, Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress, Cecilia, Clarissa, Tom Jones and other works possibly supposed edifying to young readers. But was this also the reason for the inclusion of various early nineteenth-century murder mysteries - Murder of Mr. Weare, Cato-street Conspirators, Polstead Murder, London Burkers, Murder of Celia Holloway - besides the all-informative Newgate Calendar?

On 21 and 24 August 1835, Mr. Blackman reverted to an evening sale and more typical merchandise. Among the "Voyages, Travels, Novels, and Romances, Medical and Theological Works, of the latest and most approved editions" listed in the catalogue, were books by Boswell, Fielding, Smollett, Goldsmith, Scott, Young, Shakespeare and Southey. A separate section headed "New Novels" contained works by Bulwer Lytton, Ainsworth and many others. The final 1835 Blackman catalogue in the Mitchell Library relates to a sale on 5 and 6 October. Just over eight hundred volumes are listed, with more than half being works of imaginative literature. Foremost amongst these were one hundred and
sixty-four volumes of the Library of Romance (1833): the Banim's *Ghost Hunter*, Leitch Ritchie's *Schinderhannes*, the Robber of the Rhine, Waltham, John Galt's *The Stolen Child*, Mrs. O'Neil's *The Bondman*, Victor Hugo's *The Slave King*, James Baillie Fraser's *The Khan's Tale* and *Dark Lady of Doonar*. There were also numerous copies of the *Comic and Friendship's Offering* for various years, works by Goldsmith, Byron, and Milton, Pope's *Essay on Man*, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and one of the only two copies of Tennyson's *Poems* advertised for sale in Australia in the 'thirties. Although no other 1835 catalogues survive, Blackman evidently continued his regular auctions, the *Monitor* for 5 December 1835 noting,

There was a numerous attendance at Mr. Blackman's book sale on Thursday evening. It would appear that it is far more advantageous to sell this description of property at an evening sale than by daylight, in consequence of the greater competition which is ensured by the large number of persons who attend.

In 1835, competition was also the order of the day in other branches of the book-selling business. An article on "Colonial Literature" in the *Colonist* for 26 March 1835 stated that there were now five book shops in Sydney, run by Messrs. McGarvie, Moffitt, Evans, Tegg and Innes. The largest of these would appear to have been the concern of J. and S. Tegg, sons of the London bookseller and publisher Thomas Tegg. It was opened in January 1835, and the
Australian of 27 January remarked "The shop of Mr. Tegg, the bookseller, of George-street, promises to supply a desideratum which has always been wanting — namely, a collection of works of a superior order to those which are commonly found in a new Colony". The Alfred for 10 February was even more expansive:

We are gratified to hear that the collection of works brought out by the Messrs. Tegg, though various, is of a most useful character, chiefly, however, in rather advanced literature, for of school books they have remarkably few at present.

The Whittingham Cabinet Library and such modern publications, are to be had in single numbers or volumes, some of the most popular novels, — and other works of amusement and instruction most suitable for truth, such works, indeed, as cannot fail to extend the march of the intellect to the very confines of Australia.

Perhaps as a reward, an advertisement for Teggs' "Books at London Prices" appeared in the Alfred ten days later. Included in this were Scott's Waverley Novels, Thomas Moore's Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with Notices of his Life, Shakespeare's Poems and Plays, Scott's edition of Swift's Works, Byron's Works and Johnson's Works. Further advertisements by the Teggs were published in the Colonist on 7 and 21 May 1835. The first, "An Extensive Collection of Books to be Sold at London Prices" had amongst its three hundred odd volumes Pope's Essay on Man, Cowper's Poems, Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, Clara Reeve's Old English Baron, "Milton's Poetical Poems", and
Shakespeare's **Dramatic Works**. The second advertisement was a much shorter list of, presumably, those works which had not been sold. None of the books mentioned above reappear on it, and one is surprised to see amongst the theological and historical works a few modern novels, *String of Pearls* (1832) by G.P.R. James, *Women as they are, or the Manners of the Day* (1830) by Mrs. Gore, *Norman Abbey, a Tale of Sherwood Forest By a Lady* (1832), and W.J. Neale's *Cavendish, or the Patrician at Sea* (1831). Possibly this second advertisement repeated the books thought most likely to sell, rather than those remaining unsold.

Two of the Teggs' competitors, Mr. Evans and Mr. Innes, also had lists of their books published in Sydney newspapers during 1835. On 6 January Mr. Evans, *per media* the *Alfred*, respectfully informed the Public he had recently received a large collection of books which included works by Byron, Scott, Goldsmith, Bacon, Gray, Thomas Moore, Milton, Young, Miss Edgeworth, Cowper, Pope and Bulwer Lytton in addition to three volumes of poetry by the popular Mrs. Hemans and one by the then unknown, and misspelt, "Tennison". A further advertisement by Evans appeared in the *Commercial Journal and Advertiser* on 6 July 1835. Apart from Sir Walter Scott's *Poetical Works*, Valpy's *Shakespeare*, Miss
Edgeworth's *Works*, and "Cooper's Novels in single vols.", the books listed were nearly all the albums and annuals so dear to the Victorian heart and drawing-room. Later in 1835, on 24 September, the *Colonist* carried an advertisement for Mr. J. Innes. His collection was typical of the smaller bookseller in this and the next decade: a large number of school and children's books, a few recent novels and the standard authors Byron, Pope, Burns, Milton, Goldsmith, Gray, Bacon, Young, Smollett, Fielding and Shakespeare.

Books continued to be auctioned in Sydney throughout 1836, with Mr. Blackman offering two thousand volumes on 26 February; three thousand, including three hundred *Library of Romance* and Massinger's *Plays*, on 1, 2 and 3 of June; "The Most Extensive Theological library, Ever submitted to the Community of New South Wales, Being the Library of the Late Rev. Richard Hill" on 25 and 26 July; and a further two thousand volumes on 28 September. Other auctioneers were also joining the book trade. A. Polack advertised "A Quantity of Books", amongst them works by Chaucer and Spenser, in the *Commercial Journal and Advertiser* on 8 October 1836, whilst the *Monitor* for 19 December 1836

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3 See advertisements in the *Commercial Journal and Advertiser*, 22 February, 1 June, 20 July, 24 September 1836.
carried this notice:

**EXTENSIVE BOOK SALE. 4000 VOLUMES.**

Mr. Hebblewhite feels much pleasure in announcing that he is instructed to sell by auction, without any reserve, the Valuable Library of a Gentleman, consisting of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 20 vols. Select Poets of Great Britain, 18 vols. British Essayists, 40 vols. and a great variety of Standard Books, comprising the works of Milton, Shakespeare, Johnson, Goldsmith, Butler, Thomson, Rollin, Darwin, Hervey, Southey, Byron, Moore, Blair, Crabbe, etc.

The *Monitor* followed up this announcement of Hebblewhite's sale of a extremely typical gentleman's library with the comment on 21 December that the works sold the previous evening were said to have "realized good prices". Two days later the same paper noted "The books at Mr. Hebblewhite's sale fetched better prices than were anticipated, though probably not greater than the anticipations of the proprietor." Profits were presumably also coming the way of James Tegg - Samuel had returned to London and was later to open a shop at Hobart - who advertised his books in the *Colonist* on 19 May and October 1836. Again, these were mainly works by such popular authors as Miss Edgeworth, Cowper, Boswell, Johnson, Byron, Crabbe, and Scott.

Extensive lists of "New and Popular Works on Sale at Tegg's Repository" also appeared in the *Colonist* on 27 April and 15 June 1837. Besides standard works like those mentioned above and a variety of school books, Tegg's
advertisements contained a colonial rarity in Milton's Prose Works, and such popular novels as L.E.L.'s Francesca Carrara (1834), Cavaliers of Virginia; or, the Recluse of Jamestown, an Historical Romance (1836), Lady Morgan's The Princess; or the Béguine (1834), Mary Shelley's Lodore (1835), Lady Stephey's Heir Presumptive (1835) and Horace Smith's Reuben Abbey (1835). Historical and fashionable novels were also well represented in an auction by Issac Simmons and Co. advertised in the Colonist on 15 June. Among them were to be found Vivian Gray (1826) by Disraeli, Butt and Sherwood's Spanish Daughter (1824), Lady Charlotte Bury's Marriage in High Life (1828), The Conspiracy (1834), Scottish Legend (1832) and James Bayley Fraser's Highland Smugglers (1832), the last two showing the great influence of Scott on the popular novel. Mr. Simmons, a newcomer to book auctioning, had a fortnight earlier advised readers of the Colonist that on 6 June he would sell a variety of new books, including Boswell's Life of Johnson, the Rambler, Shakespeare in twelve volumes, Sir Walter Scott's Novels, and poems by Burns and Byron. In another sale, advertised in the same paper on 27 July 1837, Mr. Simmons offered a similar collection of standard authors, besides Southey's All for Love (1829), Hood's Whims and Oddities (1826), Mrs. Gore's Romances of Real
Life (1829), Body and Soul, by the Author of the Odd
Volume (1822), and five copies of History of William, an
Orphan.

The hardest working book auctioneer in 1837, however,
seems to have been Mr. Hebblewhite. On 6 April he was to
sell two thousand volumes, including works by Byron, Scott,
Moore, Swift and Cowper, with further "Extensive Sales"
advertised for 25 and 26 May and 3 and 4 August. 4 In the
former of these were works by Shakespeare, Byron, Burke
and Boswell, while Scott, Burns, Shakespeare, Young,
Milton, Chaucer, Johnson, Goldsmith and Blair figured in
the latter sale. Mr. Hebblewhite was also entrusted with
the sale on 12 and 13 December 1837 of "the carefully and
valuable selected Library of A. Cunningham, Esq. Colonial
Botanist, who is about to leave the Colony". Apart from
a slight bias towards his profession, Cunningham's library
was extremely typical of tastes in literature at this time,
as can be seen from the advertisement in the Commercial
Journal and Advertiser of 6 December:

... A valuable Collection of modern Botanical, Philosoph-
ical, and Literary Works, among which may be enumerated the
following:-
Sir Walter Scott's Works complete, new edition, eighty-
seven vols. with Engraving, Portraits etc. after designs
by Turner.
The Works of Lord Byron, new edition, with Life, by Moore,
with Plates.

4See the Colonist for 30 March, 18 and 25 May, 27 July,
3 August 1837.
Galt's Life of Byron.
Lives of British Painters, by A. Cunningham, with Portraits.
Sketches by Boz.
Lardner's Steam Engine.
Botanic Annual.
Ditto Magazines.
The Works of Lindley, Smith, Martin, Wood, Bakewell, Davy,
Ures, Nicholson, Loudon and Humboldt.
Lang's, Dawson's, and Breton's New South Wales and Australia.
With a great variety of Standard Works.

Since Cunningham had returned to Sydney to take up the post of Colonial Botanist in February 1837, he was probably one of the first people in the colony to possess a copy of Sketches by Boz and this appears to have been the first work by Dickens offered for sale in Australia. By 3 March 1838, however, the Commercial Journal was printing extracts from the Sketches, and on 28 April announced that "Mr. Moffitt, the bookseller, has just received from London twenty copies of the Pickwick Papers, handsomely bound, besides other standard works, well worthy the attention of gentlemen wishing select additions for their library." Later in 1838, on 1 October, the Monitor published a list of more extremely popular works on sale at Mr. Moffitt's:

Ditto Poetical Works, 12 vols.
Moore's Irish Melodies, a splendid edition, 1 vol.
Ditto Lalla Rook [sic]
Ditto Loves of the Angels
Rectory of Vale Head, 1 vol.
Campbell's pleasures of Hope, 1 vol.
Cowper's Poems, 3 vols.
Trollope's Manners of the Americans, 2 vols.
Mrs. Hemans' Records of Women
----- Forest Sanctuary
----- Songs of the Affections
----- Scenes and Hymns of Life
----- Tales and Historical Scenes
Hogg's Works, 4 vols.
Moore's Anacreon, 2 vols., English verse.

An even better idea of the books available to Sydney readers in 1838 can be gained from A Catalogue of the Most Extensive and Valuable Stock of Books Ever Imported into Australia, Now First Arranged and Completed for the Inspection of the Public, and On Sale by James Tegg, at his Repository, George Street. There are few surprises among the three thousand and ninety volumes listed, although the growing popularity of novels and of such travel books as Mrs. Trollope's Domestic Manners of the Americans is evident. The epithet "standard" is no longer only applied to works by Scott, Johnson and other eighteenth-century writers but also to novels by Fenimore Cooper, Horace Smith, William Godwin, Madame de Staël, G.P.R. James, Bulwer Lytton, Mary Shelley, Captain Marryat, Miss Porter, Thomas Love Peacock and Jane Austen. Austen, whose works rarely appear in colonial book lists before this date, has all her novels mentioned in Tegg's 1838 Catalogue. Besides the scope of his catalogue, an indication of Tegg's success as a bookseller was given in the Colonist's 29 September 1838 report that Mr. Tegg was opening a new Book Depository at Campbelltown to join ones already in operation at Maitland and Windsor.
A CATALOGUE

OF THE

MOST EXTENSIVE AND VALUABLE

STOCK OF BOOKS

EVER IMPORTED INTO AUSTRALIA,

NOW FIRST ARRANGED AND COMPLETED FOR THE INSPECTION OF THE PUBLIC,

AND ON SALE

BY JAMES TEGG,

AT HIS REPOSITORY, GEORGE STREET.

"Say what was man ere by the Press
Reduced,
What bound his glorious energies confined;
Did form the dull chaotic waste,
Court the fair forms of beauty and of
Of ye.
He! strong his anchor, and tho' pure his
Small was the sphere wherein those powers
Could move.
The meteor beam that science lent mankind,
Darting effulgence on the inquiring mind,
Consum'd—a weak and transient light,
A moment glared—they sank in endless
night.
Man knew no means to hold the sitting
Face
Of Art's own forms, that courted his em-
brace;
He only hope in Memory's taint'd power,
The total record—changing every hour.

"In early times our Press was yet un
Known,
The Artist carved his hieroglyphic stone;
The lasting pile ambition sought to rear;
The graviy his ardent thirst of prose;
While round his moulding arms
mock'd his care.
And should th' oblivious fate his toil
most share.
"Asked by thee—O Art sublime! our
race
Sperms the opposing bonds of time and
space;
With time's swift flight to hold an equal
course,
And taste the stream from reason's purest
source;
Vice, and her hydra sons, thy powers
Can bend,
And cast in virtues mock the plastic
mind."

PRINTED AT THE ATLAS OFFICE, BY JAMES TEGG & Co.
OPPOSITE THE BARRACK GATE, GEORGE STREET.

1. Title page, James Tegg's Catalogue of Books (1838).
Five Sydney auctioneers were kept busy selling at least seven thousand volumes of books in 1838. Mr. Blackman offered five hundred volumes on 20 March, six hundred on 3 April and another five hundred on 17 August, while Mr. Hebblewhite advertised in the Monitor for 28 September "An Invoice of BOOKS, comprising - 100 Zoological Society, 100 Maria Monk, 800 Primers, 50 Battle of Waterloo, and A great variety of Children's Books." According to the Monitor of 13 June, a T.W. Smart had two thousand volumes of books for sale on that and the following day. Two other newcomers to book-auctioning gave more detailed accounts of their wares. On 6 June, the Commercial Journal advertised a sale that day by Mr. Polack with "works from the most approved English, French and Italian Writers, namely - Scott, Byron, Moore, Fenelon, Voltaire, Bulwer, Marryat, Hook, Watts, Wesley and Mrs. Hemans." A notice of the continuation of this sale on 12 June, printed in the same paper three days later, mentioned "Shakspeare, Byron, Bulwer, Marryat, Edgeworth, Cooper, James, Milton, Johnson, Moore, Hogg, Neale, Norton, Butler, Lardner." In both, one finds the popular new novelists and poets now edging out the old standard authors. So, too, in another of Polack's advertisements, in the Commercial Journal for 27 June 1838, where the authors listed are Marryat, Banim, Byron, Cunningham, Burns, Lewis, Cooper, Pierce Egan, Hannah More, Galt, Gibbon,

5See the Commercial Journal and Advertiser for 14 and 31 March and 15 August 1838.
Milton, Shakespeare and Mitford.

Modern novelists predominated in the large number of book sales held by the notorious John Thomas Wilson in the latter months of 1838. The first mention of him as an auctioneer occurs in the *Monitor* for 14 September in an advertisement for a sale that evening of "about 100 sets of Modern Novels, and other Choice Works". Five days later, the *Commercial Journal* noted Mr. Wilson had "about 100 Vols. of Books" for sale that evening. This was presumably the sale reported in the same paper on 26 September: "To show the depraved taste of our Sydney readers, at a Book Sale last Wednesday evening, Paley's Evidences of Christianity sold for 3s.6d., while Major Mudie's obnoxious work on the Felony of this Country produced the sum of 10s.6d. !!!" A further advertisement in the *Monitor* for 24 September advised that on 28 September Mr. Wilson would sell "Upwards of 600 vols, - Bulwer, Marryat, Scott, Ainsworth, Neale, Maria Edgeworth, Miss Jane Porter, Cooper, Byron, Moore, James, the author of 'Darnley'." Another sale by Mr. Wilson on 26 October, advertised in the *Monitor* two days earlier, featured similar authors, though Fielding, Smollett, Thomson,

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6Wilson was apparently employed by A. Polack. See *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.II (1967) pp. 610-11 for further details of his career.
Bloomfield, Pope and Addison were also listed. And on 16 November, according to the Monitor of 12 November, Mr. Wilson was to sell works by Byron, Moore, Scott, Ainsworth, Milton, Miss Porter, Miss Edgeworth, James, Johnson and Cooper. 1838 also appears to be the first year in which a book auction was held at a New South Wales provincial centre, the Monitor for 7 September announcing that three days later Mr. S. Phillips would hold an evening sale of "500 Vols. of Books, by the most Esteemed Authors" at Parramatta.

Readers in other outlying districts were not neglected by the booksellers. The first issue of the Sydney Standard and Colonial Advocate, 7 January 1839, printed: "Mr. Charles Beck respectfully informs his Friends and the inhabitants of Campbell-town, that he has commenced business as a Bookseller and Stationer. His Stock will comprise the newest and best selections from Popular publications."

Two advertisements in Bent's News and New South Wales Advertiser for 20 and 27 April 1839, listing books "On Sale by Mr. TEGG, Sydney; Mr. LIPSCOMB, Maitland; Mr. BECK, Campbelltown", identify Beck's shop with Tegg's new Campbelltown Depository mentioned in the Colonist on 20 September 1838. At these three establishments it was possible to buy both standard works by such authors as Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon and Locke and the newest productions of Bulwer Lytton, Mrs. Shelley, G.P.R. James and
the Countess of Blessington. Mr. Tegg and his associates, however, generally seem to have been more conservative in their stock than the auctioneers.

Mr. Wilson's first evening sale for 1839, advertised in the *Commercial Journal* on 16 January, did, indeed, contain works by Byron, Moore, Locke, Newton, Paley and Milton, as well as novels by Ainsworth, Cooper, Fielding, Miss Porter, the Hon. Mrs. Norton, Marryat, Scott and James. But a later sale, announced at great length in the *Monitor* on 20 February 1839, was devoted almost entirely to novelists.

J.T. WILSON,
Announces to the Literati of New South Wales, that he will hold An Evening Sale, on Wednesday, the 27th Instant, At his Rooms, at half-past 7 o'clock precisely, of One of the most Splendid Collections of Books ever offered to the World. Amongst them are the works of -

Sir Walter Scott
Bulwer
Grattan
Miss Porter
Sophia Lee
Mrs. Holand
Miss Ownson
Dallas
Goodwin
Chamiens
Lady Morgan
Mrs. Inchbald
Byron
Ainsworth
Mrs. Roche
Galt
Cooper
Captain Marryat
Irving
Ainsby
Holston
Mrs. Opie
Mrs. Bray
Hon. Mrs. Norton
And many other distinguished Authors.

In soliciting public attention to the above valuable collection of Books, J.T.W. would assure the reading part of this intelligent community, that never has so great an acquisition arrived on these shores. The whole of the Books are elegantly bound, and were selected in England by a Gentleman of great reading notoriety, and have been brought here expressly for a private Library.

The popularity of evening book auctions is evinced by the decision of one auctioneer to hold them on a regular basis, as advertised in the Colonist on 30 March 1839:

CHOICE NEW BOOKS

Mr. Hart begs leave to inform the Reading Public of Australia, that he has made arrangements with two of the first Publishing Houses in London for the constant supply of a large assortment of the newest Standard Works, and which Mr. Hart is instructed to submit to Auction, and sell without the least reserve.

... Mr. Hart further adds that he will hold a sale of Books, by Auction, every alternate Wednesday.

A sample of Mr. Hart's stock, given in the same paper on 1 May, again shows the growing importance of the novelist:

BOOKS - NEW, CHOICE AND VALUABLE
Mr. Hart. May 3.
Includes The Whole of the Waverley Novels
Ditto Cooper's Works, including his last "Homeward Bound".
Ditto Sir E.L. Bulwer's, including also his last "Alice".
Banim's Works, Grattan's, etc. etc.

Novels were, however, in a minority in the list of some three hundred volumes to be sold by Mr. Blackman on 27 August 1839, printed in the Sydney Standard for 19 August. Besides the Waverley Novels, Samuel Warren's extremely

An examination of the Tasmanian book-selling scene during the eighteen-thirties reveals a similar pattern to that described for New South Wales, with a predominance of classics and serious works gradually giving way to a predominance of novels. One major point of difference between the two colonies was the tendency in Tasmania for newspaper editors to also function as booksellers. Although William McGarvie had a short association with the Sydney Herald, which he helped to found, none of the Sydney editors offered books for sale at their newspaper offices as their Tasmanian counterparts continuously did. As in the eighteen-twenties, the chief dispenser of literary culture in Hobart in this period seems to have been Dr. James Ross, editor of the Hobart Town Courier until 1836. On 23 January 1830, he advertised a set of Diamond Classics, "Just received per Chatham and to be sold at the Courier office, at the following low prices for cash". Anyone with one-and-six to spare
could have purchased "Goldsmith's traveller, deserted village and other poems, a biographical sketch of the author, head and vignette title, sewed" or "Gray's poems complete, life of the author, head and frontispiece, sewed" while works by Byron, Burns, Cowper, Dryden, Milton, Hannah More, Pope, Thomson, Young, Walpole, Swift, Johnson, Sterne and Goethe were available at slightly higher prices. A further advertisement, in the next issue of the *Courier*, offered more expensive editions of Gray, Burns and Johnson, together with works by such standard authors as Paley and Newton. Ross was not above selling novels, however, since a list of books printed in the *Courier* on 5 June 1830 included "Joseph Andrews, 2 vols. 8s.; Ambition, a novel, 3 vol. 10s. [Miss M.G. Lewis, 1825]; Albany, ditto, 3 vols. 10s. [1819] . . . The Son and Nephew, or more secrets than one, ditto, 3 vols. 9s. [Mrs. Ward, 1815]; Tears of Camphor, ditto, 3 vols. 9s. [Glypticus, H.F., *pseud.*, 1804]; Scenes in Ireland, ditto, 3 vols. 12s." Although the editor of the *Colonial Times* did not emulate Ross as a bookseller, he did, in the issue of 8 January 1830, offer "For Sale, at the Colonial Times Office, the first Edition of "The Spectator", in 8 Vols. demy octavo, printed in 1712, nearly one hundred and twenty years ago, in remarkably large type. - Price £4."
Books were also on sale at the office of the Launceston Advertiser. An advertisement on 25 October 1830 featured works by Lady Morgan and Mrs. Opie, and novels were again the mainstay of another list printed on 8 November. Among them were Sangrove Abbey, The Widow's Choice and Mrs. Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho and Gaston de Blondeville. However, no novels were to be found in the "excellent selection of Standard Works" Mr. J.C. Underwood was to auction at Hobart on 5 February 1830. The list, printed in the Hobart Town Courier on 3 February, included a fairly rare item in Spenser's Faerie Queene, besides works by Bacon, Goldsmith, Butler, Thomson and Pope.

In 1831, James Ross again had a set of the Diamond Classics for sale, as he advised readers on 12 February, while on 30 July he advertised several works illustrated by the highly popular George Cruikshank. Another offering books in 1831 was Mr. Brennand, who seemed to make a practice of selling-off his libraries, announcing in the Courier on 16 April,

Evening Sale of Books, Prints, etc.
T. Brennand
Respectfully informs his friends and the public, that in consequence of his intention of declining for the present the business of a Bookseller, he will offer for sale by public auction, the whole of his extensive and valuable collection of books, prints, etc. The sale to take place at his shop in Liverpool street, on Monday evening the 19th inst. at 8 o'clock precisely.
On 23 April, the *Courier* reported, "The evening sale of books by Mr. Brennand was well attended, and the books fetched very good prices." Mr. J.P. Deane, a prominent Hobart book-seller in the eighteen-twenties, continued in business in the 'thirties, as can be seen from his advertisement in the *Courier* on 21 May 1831. Apart from Lardner's *Encyclopaedia* and the seventeen-volume *Family Library*, all his books were the latest popular annuals, such as the *Friendship's Offering* and the *Literary Souvenir*. In the *Courier* for 11 June 1831, James Wood offered "upwards of Two Thousand Volumes of Books, consisting of Novels, Tales, Romances, Histories, Voyages, Travels, Religious and Juvenile Books, etc. etc. which will be sold considerably under the publishing price in London", while the same paper carried an advertisement on 5 November 1831 for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Their books were, of course, of a theological or devotional nature with the exception of a few copies of Bowdler's *Poems*, Gay's *Fables* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Works by Swift, but little else of interest, were to be sold by Mr. Richard White at two 1831 Launceston auctions.7

Very few books seem to have been for sale in Tasmania during 1832. The only auction, Mr. Stracey's of four hundred

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7See the *Launceston Advertiser*, 28 February 1831 and the *Independent*, 4 April 1831, for further details.
volumes, including a variety of magazines and reviews, Washington Irving's *New York* and the *Diamond Poets*, was advertised in the *Tasmanian* for 8 June. On 14 September, the same paper announced that Mrs. Deane had for sale another collection of the ever-popular annuals, besides "Jones's Select Modern Poets; Byron's Don Juan; Flowers of Anecdote and Wit; the Works of Robert Burns; Jones's Edition of the British Drama; complete Works of Johnson; Cruikshank's Doings in London. etc.". More books were available in 1833, with Cruikshank figuring again in an advertisement by James Ross, in his *Courier* on 7 June, for "Roscoe's beautiful edition of standard novels, comprising Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, etc. illustrated with designs by Cruikshank, 7s.6d. per volume." Since these works had originally been issued at five shillings a volume, Ross was making a considerable profit, also the case with "A New and elegant edition, being the first of the British Library, in 4 beautiful volumes, at the low price of 20s. cash, of Goldsmith's Miscellaneous Works, with illustrations", advertised on 25 October and published earlier in 1833 at the even lower price of twelve shillings. Some highly popular new novels, listed in the *Courier* on 27 September, were, however, remarkably cheap, since most had been published in 1830 or 1831 at the usual three-volume price of three guineas. They
may possibly have been French or American pirated editions.

JUST received and for sale at the Courier office, Collins street, at reduced prices, for cash, the following new and fashionable novels by the first writers of the age - viz. -


Theodore Hook's (author of sayings and doings &c, &c.) last very interesting new novel of Maxwell, 3 vols., cloth - 18s.

Mrs. Gore's the esteemed novelist's best work entitled Mothers and Daughters, a tale of the year 1830, 3 vols. cloth, 18s.

The popular novel of Norman Abbey, a tale of Sherwood Forest just published by Cochran, 3 vols., cloth - 18s.

Fraser's much admired work of the Persian Adventurer, being the sequel to Kozzilbach, 3 vols. cloth - 18s.

Miss Mitford's characteristic and entertaining Stories of American Life, by American writers, 3 vols., cloth - 18s.

The Cabal, a tale of William the fourth, 2 vols, cloth - 10s.6d.

The Staff officer, or the Soldier of Fortune, by Moore, a tale of real life, 3 vols, cloth - 18s.

D'Israeli's (author of Vivian Grey) most lively production The Young Duke, a moral tale, though gay, 3 vols. cloth - 18s.

Horace Smith's most popular novel Walter Colyton, a tale of 1688, new edition, 3 vols cloth - 18s.

Galt's national and characteristic novel of Lawrie Todd, or the settlers in the woods, second edition, 3 vols, cloth - 18s.

Grattan's very interesting historical tale of Jacqueline of Holland, 3 vols. cloth - 18s.

Mrs. Gore's first work Women as they are, or the manners of the day, second edition, 3 vols. cloth - 18s.

The Tuileries, a tale by the celebrated author of the Hungarian tales, 3 vols. cloth - 18s.

The very amusing work called Pundarang Hari, or memoirs of a Hindoo. 3 vols, cloth - 12s.

The American novelist Cooper's excellent tale of the Borderers, second edition, 3 vols. cloth - 18s.

A good many of these novels reappeared in a list of "BOOKS - On Sale at the Advertiser Office" printed by Henry Dowling in the Launceston Advertiser on 30 May 1833. In
addition, he offered copies of Shakespeare's *Dramatic Works*, Byron's *Don Juan*, Thomson's *Seasons*, Robinson Crusoe, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Amelia*, Joseph Andrews, *Tristram Shandy*, Roderick Random, Humphrey Clinker, and *The Castle of Otranto*. *The Staff Officer* (1831), *The Cabal* (1831), *Persian Adventurer* (1830), *Walter Colyton* (1830), and *Norman Abbey* (1832) were also among thirty-seven recent novels advertised on 21 October 1834 in the new *True Colonist* and *Van Diemen's Land Political Despatch and Agricultural and Commercial Advertiser* which evidently intended to rival the *Courier* in bookselling as well. These works and "a great variety" of others, including Shakespeare's *Plays* and Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, were to "be sold on the most reasonable terms for cash; and lent out by the week, month, or quarter, or by the volume."

James Ross also had a large number of novels for sale in 1834. On 7 February he again offered *Lawrie Todd* (1830), *Jacqueline of Holland* (1831), *The Borderers* (1829), *The Cabal*, *Persian Adventurer* and *Women as They Are* besides more serious works such as Mrs. Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* and Paley's *Natural Theology*. An advertisement in the *Courier* for 18 April 1834, headed "FOOD FOR THE MIND", included Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Mason's edition of Gray's *Works*, Captain Marryat's *Newton Forster* (1831),
W.J. Neale's *The Port Admiral, a tale of the war* (1833), *Mountalyth, a tale* (1823) by Jane Harvey and *The Library of Romance*. In the same issue of the *Courier*, Ross offered "TO THE INTELLECTUAL" a "collection of rare and valuable old and standard works, in various languages". Two of the works on this list were *L'Alcoran de Mahomet, translated d'Arabe en François, par le Sieur du Ryer, quarto, neat, Paris, 1647 - 12s." and "The Duke of Buckingham's standard treatise on the laws of poetry. London 1721 - 2s.6d."

These prices support Ross's claim that

It is impossible to furnish a gentleman's or a scholar's library with standard works abroad or at home, in London, Leipsic, or Hobart town, on Bookseller's shelf or stall, by Auctioneer's hammer or otherwise, in a more ready, elegant, or cheap rate than the above. But remember the prices annexed are for cash only.

Nothing quite as exotic appeared in Ross's final list for 1834, printed on 28 November, although there were several more French works, among them an eighteenth-century cookery book *La Cuisinière Bourgeoise*. Another fairly rare item was Henry Savery's *Quintus Servinton*, first published at Hobart in 1830. The other works for sale were novels like Disraeli's *Vivian Grey* (1826) and a few each of literary, theological, agricultural, historical and travel books.

Whether or not as a result of too much competition from the newspaper editors, James Wood decided to dispose of his stock of stationery and books at a sale advertised by the
auctioneers Collicott and Macmichael in the Courier on 11 April 1834. Among "About 1000 volumes of printed books in useful and ornamental literature" were Robinson Crusoe, Boswell's Life of Johnson, Maria Edgeworth's Castle Rackrent, the Spectator, Shakespeare's Dramatic Works and Byron's Don Juan. Works by Shakespeare and Byron were also on sale at Henry Dowling's New Stationery Warehouse at Launceston, according to the Launceston Advertiser of 18 December 1834.

In 1835, the True Colonist advertised "Mr. Bulwer's New Work. The Pilgrim of the Rhine" on 9 January, while Mr. Deane more conservatively offered a collection of British Classics in the Hobart Town Courier for 27 March. These included Humphrey Clinker, Roderick Random, Joseph Andrews, Old English Baron, Castle of Otranto, the Rambler and Ossian's Poems. On 7 August, Messrs. Macdougall and Stracey gave notice in the Courier that in four days time they would be auctioning "Three hundred volumes of books, consisting of novels, histories, magazines, and works upon almost every subject." The Launceston Advertiser for 30 July 1835 announced a book auction by G. Hamilton to be held that day, with works by

... Shakespeare, Lord Byron, Miss Landon, Burns, Moore, Goldsmith, Homer, Milton, Pope ... Shelly, Smollett, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Mrs. Hemans, Mrs. Opie, Thompson,
Washington Irving, and several others of the most popular and standard works of the present day, both in verse and prose.

.... The whole comprising 2 to 300 volumes, being the library of a gentleman departing from the colony.

With the exception of the mention of Shelley, this being the first Australian advertisement of his work, the unknown gentleman's tastes in imaginative literature were extremely representative of the times. One wonders if there were any takers for the Plays of Ford and Plays of Massinger advertised by Henry Dowling in the same paper on 3 December 1835, though no doubt he had little trouble in disposing of Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel and the Life and Works of Cowper.

Mr. J.A. Eddie, who was to auction four hundred volumes of books on 25 February 1836, as he announced in the Launceston Advertiser of the same date, probably also had ready bids for copies of Hudibras, the Tatler, Spectator, Guardian, Rambler, Adventurer, Connoisseur and "All the Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott". The new booksellers advertising in Hobart papers in 1836 also put their trust in the old faithfuls. Among the stock of a general store, Derwent House, listed in the Courier on 5 August 1836, were copies of Scott's Novels and Poems, Byron's Works, Edgeworth's Works and Valpy's Shakespeare. In the same issue of the Courier, J.W. Davis advised readers that at his Music, Stationery, Toy, and Fancy Warehouse they could purchase copies of Gay's Fables, Flowers of Anecdote, Cowper's Works
and Sir Walter Scott's *Works*. Samuel Tegg, who established his Hobart bookshop at the end of 1836, was equally conservative, advertising in *Bent's News and Tasmanian Three-penny Register* on 17 December, Byron's *Works*, Crabbe's *Works*, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, the *Family Library* in fifty-one volumes, Cooper's *Novels* and Shakespeare's *Plays*.

The arrival of another new shipment of popular standard works was announced by Tegg in the *Hobart Town Courier* for 10 February 1837. Again, one finds the usual old and new authors: Boswell, Burns, Crabbe, Goldsmith; Byron, Scott, Fenimore Cooper, Maria Edgeworth, Washington Irving, Thomas Moore: besides collections like *Roscoe's Novelists Library*, *Whittingham's Novelists' Library*, and "A Well Selected Lot of Novels at 4s. Per Vol.". On 17 June 1837, *Bent's News and Tasmanian* commented in an article "The Teggs of Cheapside",

The advantages of Mr. Tegg's Establishment in this Colony, have already been fully felt. He has been selling most books at London prices; in consequence of which, his Establishment has been most liberally patronised since its commencement. We understand that Mr. Tegg intends shortly to establish a most extensive Circulating Library in Hobart Town; which will comprise more than two thousand volumes of new and popular works.

The other Hobart booksellers responded to the challenge by also offering a variety of trusty favourites. Mr. Davis listed in the *Courier* on 19 May 1837 a large number of books by such authors as Sterne, Milton, Cowper, Burns, Goldsmith,
John Galt, Miss Edgeworth, Shakespeare, Smollett, Scott, and Montgomery. In Launceston, too, Henry Dowling had for sale such popular items as the Library of Romance, Miscellaneous Works of Cowper, sets of the Diamond Poets, Classic and British Essayists, and British Drama, and works by Byron, Johnson, and Shakespeare.  

1838 saw a slight increase in the number of novels available in Tasmania. On 6 July, Tegg advertised in the Tasmanian Marryat's Jacob Faithful (1834), Mr. Midshipman Easy, Peter Simple (1833), Pacha of Many Tales (1835) and Japhet, In Search of a Father (1835). Works by Pope, Scott and Byron were, however, to be auctioned at both Hobart and Launceston, as one learns from the Tasmanian for 28 September, and the Launceston Advertiser for 6 December 1838. Earlier, on 8 February, the latter paper had contained an advertisement for "About 200 Volumes of New Books, handsomely bound; most of them by celebrated authors, viz. - Sir Walter Scott, Anna Maria Porter, Louisa Stanhope, Galt, Grimstone, Atkinson, etc." to be auctioned by B. Francis on 10 February 1838. Henry Dowling's 1838 offerings, listed in the Advertiser on 29 March, were fairly standard: works by Cooper, Hannah More, Shakespeare, Pope, and Jones' Cabinet British Poets and Classics. But, as noted, he was also responsible for

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8 See the Launceston Advertiser, 18 May and 2 November 1837.
printing a Tasmanian edition of the Pickwick Papers which, the Tasmanian reported on 23 November 1838, was "finding a large circulation in the Colony".

Very few works were announced for sale in Tasmania during 1839; only thirty-seven in the Hobart papers and none in the Launceston. In the Tasmanian for 19 April, the "Hobart Town Book, Stationery and Seed Warehouse, Musical Repository, Circulating Library, etc. etc." advertised Peter Parley's Tales, Monk of Cimies, Wilson's Tales of the Borders (1835–36) and Warren's Diary of a Late Physician. These two latter extremely popular works were also offered by Samuel Tegg in the Hobart Town Advertiser on 7 June 1839, along with Sketches in London by Phiz (1838), Byron's Life, Cooper's Novels, Southey's Poetical Works and Mrs. Sherwood's Lady of the Manor (1823–29).

Naturally, even fewer works were available in the younger colonies of Victoria, South and Western Australia. The only book advertisement seen in a Melbourne paper of this decade, for copies of Dowling's edition of The Pickwick Papers, available at F. Pittman's store "at the Publishing price of one shilling per number", appeared in the new Port Phillip Gazette on 15 December 1838. As mentioned above, this work had been advertised a few months earlier by
Archibald Macdougall, who in 1838 also offered, in his *Southern Australian*, Johnson's *Dictionary* and a few other books on 23 June, and popular works by Shakespeare, Byron, Milton, Defoe, Washington Irving, Mrs. Trollope and J.J. Morier on 27 October. Another bookselling firm, A.H. Davis and Co., announced in the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* for 28 July 1838 that they had just received a supply of Charles Knight's cheap publications, including the works of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Of five book auctions held in Adelaide this year, all advertised in the *Gazette*, the three earliest, 20 January, 21 July and 1 September, went under the hammer of Robert Cock. The first consisted of about three hundred volumes of unspecified "Standard Works and School Books", whilst included in the "Effects of the Late Mr. Edwards" was some equally standard literature: *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Milton's, Goldsmith's and Kirke White's *Poems*. The third sale, however, contained two recent novels, Horatio Smith's *Reuben Apsley* (1827) and T.H. Lister's *Herbert Lacy* (1828). A much more unusual assortment was listed by J. Richardson on 6 October. Besides common titles like *The Arabian Nights*, *Paradise Regained*, Falconer's *Shipwreck*, Milton's *Poetical Works*, Johnson's *Works* and Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, one finds "Peter Pry's" *Marmion Travestied; a Tale of Modern
Times (1809), T.L. Peacock's Sir Proteus (1814), Pierce Egan's Life in London (1821), A Dictionary of Quotations from Shakespeare (1824) and Fenimore Cooper's Notions of the Americans (1828). Unfortunately, Richardson gave no details of the titles in another auction advertised on 3 November.

Most of the six book auctions listed in the Gazette, now called the South Australian Register, during 1839 were sales of private libraries. Richardson's advertisements on 2 and 9 March show the owner of these books, a gentleman leaving the colony, to have had extremely conventional literary tastes, with works by Homer, Bacon, Kirke White, Cowper, Smollett, Akenside, Cervantes, Defoe, Goldsmith and Scott. The other two similarly departing gentlemen seem to have had very little literature in their libraries, a 20 July announcement by Richardson mentioning only Schiller's Works along with a score of scientific and practical books; one by N. Bentham a week later citing mainly works on agriculture. A final advertisement by Richardson on 21 September did not list any of the works belonging to the late Mr. Murdock, though attributing to him a remarkably large collection of "1000 volumes of Books by the first authors". An apparent speculative importation of books had been described by Bentham on 1 June as "A LARGE lot of fashionable, and new BOOKS, consisting of works on divinity, chemistry, all the new novels, and books of general information." A week later,
Richardson offered another presumably speculative consignment of a thousand volumes. The literary authors listed were such favourites as Shakespeare, Cowper, Fielding, Smollett, Boswell, Goldsmith, Maria Edgeworth and Fenimore Cooper. Archibald Macdougall also advertised a few new books in his *Southern Australian*, though apart from Washington Irving's *Sketch Book* and Walton's *Complete Angler*, listed on 22 January, these were the school and religious works always emphasised by booksellers in new settlements.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that the colonists of South Australia were assured of a fair supply of reading matter almost from the start. Such was certainly not the case in the more poorly organized settlement of Western Australia. No regular bookseller was operating in Perth before 1850, and in the 'thirties the only opportunity to purchase books came at a rare auction sale. In consequence of the shortage, one finds, as in early Sydney and Hobart, advertisements for the return of borrowed books. On 3 February 1838, for example, W.K. Shenton intimated in the *Perth Gazette* that he would "feel obliged if the parties to whom he has lent the following Books, &c. will return them to Mr. Hillman, Perth." Perhaps because he was an

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9All subsequent details of Perth book advertisements are from this paper.
engineer, Shenton's eight lost volumes were mostly of a scientific and practical nature. Before this date, only a few book auctions had been held in Perth. On 1 August 1835, "a large quantity of Books" belonging to the defendant in three court cases was to be sold at the Sheriff's Office; on 6 August 1836, G. and L. Leake listed twenty-six volumes, including Don Juan and Hume and Smollett's History of England, and on 8 April 1837, Mr. C. Smith advertised "a few books" for auction. The only subsequent announcements were on 13 October 1838: L. and W. Samson's sale of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, The Repository of Arts and Sciences and "A variety of valuable Books on Architecture in Latin, French, Italian, and English"; and on 14 September 1839: the Western Australian Book Society's auction of its "old (1838) Books, under Rule, 11".

As this last advertisement shows, Perth readers were not entirely dependent on the few auction sales for their reading matter. The earliest book advertisement, 1 June 1833, related to an auction of "Part of the Books belonging to the Western Australian Institution". Since nothing further is heard of this body, the sale of its library may, however, have been its death-knell. On 25 July 1835, gentlemen interested in forming a "'Circulating Book Club' . . . for Perth and Fremantle, on the same general principles on which similar societies are established in England", were
asked to meet at the Gazette Office three days later.

The Western Australian Book Society may have been established at this meeting, though it was not until 11 August 1838 that another announcement relating to it appeared in the Gazette. As one sees from the auction of its works, this Society, which lasted into the 'forties, was founded on the popular English and Australian practice of a continuous turn-over of its library. A meeting of a more ambitious undertaking, the Literary Institution of Western Australia, was advertised on 11 May 1839. Despite its high patronage - "His Excellency the Governor will take the chair" - the Gazette's forebodings a week later seem to have been borne out, since there is no further information on this institution.

The meeting, it was reported, was

... well-attended, several resolutions were adopted in furtherance of the establishment of this praiseworthy undertaking. The purpose is good, but it is a question in our mind whether the funds likely to be subscribed will admit of the attainment of the objects contemplated. For instance, we notice that one of the first resolutions provides for the formation of a library of standard works. Now, we must confess it appears to us our community is too small to accomplish much towards forming a library, unless the pockets of the members should be unreasonably taxed. And its present utility may be questioned, as the circle to which this institution is confined is in the possession of many of the works which we presume would form the ground work of this library. There appears no necessity for carrying the plan forward on an extensive scale, which would infallibly bring the institution to a speedy close; but as a reading-room of general resort, we are satisfied the undertaking would receive greater support. This would better meet our present wants, and would be found more generally useful.
Given the more highly organized nature of South Australian settlement, one is not surprised to learn that a similarly ambitious institution, The South Australian Literary and Scientific Association, had been formed in 1834, before the colonists had even left England. In its Law, printed that year, one finds the usual broad aims—"The Objects of the Association are, the Cultivation and Diffusion of Useful Knowledge throughout the Colony."(p.5)—and the usual narrower principles. The annual subscription was as high as two guineas, while one black ball in ten could exclude a would-be member (pp.6,8). Although the Association then had only thirty-six annual and two life members, it had collected nearly three hundred volumes of books. All but one had been donated by members, especially by Robert Gouger, life member and one of the most prominent early settlers. Most of the works, as one might expect from the Association's aims, were non-literary, but Osmond Gilles, later the Colonial Treasurer, had given a ten-volume Shakespeare, Pope's Works in six volumes, Voltaire's in twenty and Esprit des Loix par Montesquieu in six. In addition, the collection included Contes Moraux par Marmontel, Cumberland's British Drama in fourteen volumes, and a few lighter modern works like Marryat's Peter Simple (1833), Hook's Sayings and Doings (1824-28), Grattan's Heiress of
Bruges (1830) and Thomas Moore's *The Loves of the Angels* (1822). But, as with other aspects of South Australian colonisation, where theories elaborately evolved in England were found to be less than perfect when put to the test, this Association apparently soon foundered. On 7 July 1838, the *Southern Australian* called for its reformation, drawing attention to the unused collection of books brought from England. A week later, Macdougall announced that the Provisional Committee of the Adelaide Mechanics' Institution would meet at the *Southern Australian* office on 16 July. By 8 December 1838, as the *South Australian Gazette* reported, the Mechanics' Institute had a library of three hundred volumes open for circulation. The similarity in the numbers of books suggests that the Institution may have taken over the Literary and Scientific Association's library, though, according to another report in the same paper on 18 July 1840, the two bodies did not join forces till 1839. This account of their first combined Annual General Meeting claimed that the library now amounted to just over four hundred volumes, and also stated that the Rev. T.Q. Stow had lectured on "The Pleasures of Literature" during 1839. A much less formal supplier of reading matter in early Adelaide was one J.W. Henry, who advertised his Coffee and Reading Rooms in the *South Australian Gazette* for 25 August 1838.
Another aiming to provide food for both the body and mind was John Pascoe Fawkner who, as at Launceston in the previous decade, ran a library in conjunction with his Melbourne hotel. In the first number of his handwritten *Melbourne Advertiser*, 1 January 1838, one finds

Fawkner's Hotel being in possession of a large and well selected library and Colonial and English Papers to the latest date offers at Once Mental as well as bodily refreshment unrivalled in this Quarter of the Globe.

Lodgers allowed the use of the Library Gratis.

There are 7 English and 5 Colonial Weekly Papers, 7 English Monthly mag^5^ and 3 British Quarterly Reviews.

This advertisement was repeated in the next week's paper, with the addition, "A very choice selection of Books including Novels, Poetry, History, Philosophy, Chemistry, etc. N.B. A late Encyclopedia." Fawkner's Hotel Library was again advertised in the first issue of his new *Port Phillip Patriot*, 6 February 1839. By 6 May, he was informing library subscribers of the receipt of "the following Annuals, for 1839, and our files of Weekly papers to the end of November. The Drawing-Room, Scrap-book, Keep-sake, Landscape, Picturesque, Forget-me-Not, and Friendship's Offering . . .". A further list of new additions published on 1 July 1839 also emphasised such highly illustrated drawing-room books as *Flowers of Loveliness, Children of the Nobility, British Landscape Scenery* and *Scotland and Scott*, but did include as well the Countess of Blessington's *Confessions of an Elderly Lady* (1838), the *Edinburgh Cabinet Library* in twenty-one volumes, and "Scott's Novels, the whole".
Another advertisement in this same issue indicated that Fawkner also "Bought, Sold, and exchanged" books. At the end of 1839, a Mechanics' Institution was established at Melbourne, the Port Phillip Gazette for 19 October printing,

At a Meeting of Master Builders, held at Melbourne this evening, it was unanimously resolved, -"That a Mechanics' Institution be formed in Melbourne, for the promotion of science in this rising Colony; particularly amongst the young, as well as the operative classes, and that a Public Meeting for the formation of such an Institution will be held in the new Scots School Room, on the first Tuesday evening in November, at seven o'clock, when all persons friendly to such an object are respectfully invited to attend. A. Sim. Chairman. October 4, 1839.

As in the other colonies, and in Britain, control of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution soon passed from the workers themselves to members of the gentry, such as the lawyer Redmond Barry, who played a leading part in its establishment.

The apparent decline in the number of books for sale in Tasmania at the end of the 'thirties may, as with a similar occurrence in the previous decade, perhaps have resulted from a further growth in the number and size of public and circulating libraries there. The three Hobart libraries of the 'twenties all continued into the first half of the 'thirties, at least.

James Ross's Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1830 listed as "Public Libraries"
Hobart town Book Society, 1826.
(Upwards of 1200 volumes, chiefly new works).

Bookseller, Mr. Sampson Lowe, Bond Street.
Wesleyan Library, 1825.
(Upwards of 800 volumes). (p.259)

Henry Melville's *Van Diemen's Land Almanack*, for the year of our Lord 1831 also includes "Hobart Town Circulating Library. Proprietor Mr. J.P. Deane. The Library consists of 2300 volumes." (p.226) Ross's *Almanack* for the same year gave a lengthy account of these three libraries:

The literary taste of the people also shews itself in a very respectable Book Society, consisting of 60 or 70 members. The annual subscription is two guineas, and the money is regularly forwarded to a bookseller in London who sends in return all the most approved and popular works of the day, reviews, magazines and newspapers. As a sort of appendage to it, there has recently been added a reading room on a small scale, held for the present in the large room above Mr. Deane's library and stationers' store in Elizabeth-street. It is however in contemplation among the public officers, merchants and other influential men in the town to institute a public reading room on a permanent and respectable footing, which may be a general rendezvous for gentlemen from the interior and strangers from abroad, when they visit town. A plan of this building for the purpose has already been made, and with the example of the excellent library at the Cape of Good Hope, of the chamber of commerce at Sydney, and other institutions of the kind, we think it is probable when we compile our little work for another year, that we shall have to commemorate its full establishment as an honour to the town.

Besides this, there is a very valuable little library of useful and instructive books, belonging to members of the Wesleyan persuasion, as also Mrs. Deane's circulating library; and though a great part of the latter consists of novels and other works of a light amusing description, yet in conjunction with the others, its establishment in Hobart-town has done very much good. A reading people can never be a very vicious people; for the very employing of the mind in the quiet rational exercise of perusing a book has, to say
the least, a negative good effect, in preventing a sacrifice of time or money in the pursuit of pleasures of a less innocent or more expensive kind. (pp. 99–100)

This is an interesting defence of novel-reading at a time when many people still regarded it as one of the less innocent pleasures. Unfortunately for Ross's argument, however, the Hobart Town Book Society was soon to suffer a series of upheavals that proved lovers of literature not always quiet and rational.

Before this, the Book Society had been praised, in an article in the Colonial Times of 11 June 1830 which also extolled the value of reading, as the model for all such colonial institutions.

Regarding as we do every thing that forwards the literature of the Colony, or the means of disseminating intelligence among its inhabitants, as an additional stepping-stone to its prosperity, and to its attaining a merited rank in the list of British Colonies, we hail with strong satisfaction the announcement made by the Hobart Town Book Society, in this and the other papers, of an intended enlargement of their plan, by establishing a Reading Room, which will be opened upon easy terms to many who have now little opportunity of becoming acquainted with the passing occurrences of the day.

The success that has attended this Society since its commencement, three or four years ago, and the total absence of all broils, dissensions, or party-feeling among its numerous members, should lead all other institutions to adopt as nearly as possible its fundamental principles, and its rules and regulations, for their guide or model. We have no doubt that much real good has been already produced by this Society, and that, as it advances, the benefit resulting from it will become extended. We are friendly to all Institutions of this nature - to all that have for their object useful purposes; for we look upon the human mind to be of so insatiable a nature, as to employment, that whatever tends to direct it to such pursuits as are known to be right, prevents it from

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10 See "The Decline in Standards", in George Nadel's Australia's Colonial Culture (1957), pp. 88–94.
resorting to those that are evil; that it resembles in a measure a child, who, if he be doing nothing else, will generally be in mischief. Upon this ground we would always lend our aid to the Mechanics' Institution, to Masonic Lodges, and, in a word, to all similar Societies, conceiving that the good they do is not merely confined to their avowed end or object, but extends further, by serving to give sound and wholesome food to the minds of those who belong to them, preventing their having time to think of evil; but unfortunately, it often happens, that the good thus capable of being produced, becomes warped and injured by the influence of the narrow-minded policy, or turbulent factious spirits, which have to do with the internal management of these Societies. We have two examples before us in this respect, one of which may serve for a copy, and the other for a warning to all future Institutions; for it cannot be questioned, that had the Van Diemen's Land Society been as free from blemish or objection as the Book Society, it would not have had to retrace its steps in the manner it has, but would have received the almost unanimous support and confidence of the whole Colony.

By 25 June 1831, however, it was evident that Ross's hopes of seeing a grand library arise were too sanguine, for the Book Society had been over-ambitious and run into debt and strife. Ross wrote in his Courier:

At a meeting on Monday last, of the Hobart town Book Society (one of the oldest and most useful of our colonial institutions) it was resolved to discontinue the lately established reading room and the further supply of newspapers altogether. A twelve-month's trial has now fully proved that, unless on a much more large and comprehensive plan, and at an expense perhaps beyond what the subscribers could at the present time well bear, such an institution will not succeed. The periodicals from abroad arrive at such long intervals, and in such accumulated numbers at once, that the interest they excite, and the desire to read them is over in a few days, and all the remainder of a month or two perhaps, until another ship arrives, the reading room is deserted. Added to this, the great majority of the members are so closely occupied with their commercial or official duties during the day, that it is seldom or never in their power to visit the reading room until late in the evening, when they would naturally be more inclined to peruse a page of a magazine or newspaper at their own domestic fireside. Notwithstanding this however we fondly
hope that the establishment of a useful standard library and
public room in Hobart town will not be abandoned. Such a
thing is as essential to the wants and character of Van Diemen's
land already becoming distinguished for its literature and
intelligence, as it is expected by all strangers and visitors
to our shores, a class of persons daily becoming more and more
numerous and respectable.

In an effort to restore the Society's financial position,
it was decided to sell off some of the older books. Mr.
Brennand announced in the Courier on 1 October 1831 that, at
a date to be decided, he would auction "A Collection of Modern
Works, belonging to the Hobart-town Book Society". Among nearly
four hundred volumes for sale were many novels and a smaller
number of histories, reminiscences, travel books and magazines;
indeed, virtually all the works listed in the 1829 Society
Catalogue. Exceptions were novels by Scott, Fenimore Cooper
and Susan Ferrier, presumably retained by the Society because
of their popularity. Some members, however, thought more works
should be kept back, and the Courier of 8 October 1831 reported
that a General Meeting of the Book Society would be held on
18 October "to take into consideration the expediency of
retaining a greater number of books than is at present contem-
plated". In the same issue of the Courier, Ross printed a
lengthy account of the Book Society's troubles. As this
contains some extremely interesting comments on the state of
Tasmanian society and the place in it literature should hold,
it will be given almost in its entirety.
We calculate as the United States men would say, that the final result of the late and present measures projected by the Hobart town Book Society... of a sale of the supernumerary books and other plans - will be to revert to the original state quo erant ante bellum...

It must be recollected that our little community, if our present population may be so called, though decidedly English in its character... is of a multifarious, or we may say party coloured or even discordant description. Two individuals shall meet together on the same subject or public occurrence and will view it in a totally opposite light. One man has been induced to emigrate from England for the sake of his health or to indulge a propensity for rural affairs, which a farmer's life in a new colony like this is likely to gratify. Him we should call the legitimate settler. Another undertakes the arduous voyage because he has a friend connected with the ministry, or of some influence with the home government, who will recommend him as a proper person to fill the first vacant situation in the local government after his arrival. While a third whom the recent calamities in England had overtaken, who had groaned under taxation and distress, and participated largely in the public burdens, had fled to this new country to escape the evils that overwhelmed him, and it may be the grinding persecutions of the persons in power with whom he had the misfortune to come into contact. From circumstances therefore all these three on their arrival must look upon life, manners and politics through different mediums and in conflicting lights. For this and similar reasons until these distinctions have settled down as it were much public spirit springing from unanimity of sentiment can scarcely be expected among us, and a happy thing it is for the peace and cordiality of our little society that the labour - the daily, ceaseless toll of a new country in which one and all of us unavoidably and instantly fall, if we attempt to raise a competence around us, engrosses our whole thoughts and actions, and throws in a measure our former troubles and painful recollections in the back ground.

It is evident, under these considerations, how beneficial a reading society - a circulating library must be to the colony. Independent of the innocent occupation, or rather recreation - of the knowledge that it insensibly and as it were by stealth conveys, it is calculated in a very high degree to knit the bonds of society amongst us, for, reading the same productions our minds are imbued with the same ideas, thoughts and facts, until a sort of similarity of judgment or thinking imperceptibly grows upon us, and the energies of the general mind being brought as it were into one focus -
the sources of our intellectual strength being conveyed into one common channel, the proper points of our colonial politics and welfare are viewed in a more correct and consistent light, and as it were chastened and purified, and public judgment acting with new and irresistible force, will carry all obstacles before it, and rear the community up to that importance and respectability of character as a colony of Britain, which its natural situation, its circumstances and resources entitle it to look forward to.

After disagreeing with claims that the spread of education had resulted in increased socialism among the lower classes, Ross defended another controversial topic, novel-reading:

We have heard it objected that the taste of the majority of the readers, and too large a proportion of the books are of a frivolous description. But to such an objection we attach no weight: many of the members take a work from the library in order to relieve an evening hour after the mind and its energies have been exhausted with the toil of a long day in some official, public or private arduous occupation! Study and the farther application of the mental power at such a time would be preposterous. Besides the force of genius that is now devoted to works of a lighter character, to novels and other lively pictures of English life, must render the perusal of such productions to an inhabitant of a remote, isolated corner of the world like Van Diemen's land, especially interesting and profitable, tending as it must do to keep alive in no small degree that amor patriae, that attachment of our mother country and that familiarity with the manners and relish for the habits of our countrymen which is at all times so desirable.

We regret that the experiment of establishing a public reading-room in Hobart-town has proved abortive. The lesson, however, on the score of economy which its failure conveys, will we trust not be without its effect. We have often urged the propriety of setting on foot a public subscription reading-room in Hobart-town, but it now evidently appears that such an establishment is beyond the means as well as the number of our as yet infant community. To carry it on as it would require to be, 150 or 200 members at an annual subscription of five guineas each would be as little as could be calculated on, besides perhaps something as donations towards a building fund. Whether if a prospectus were drawn up setting forth the advantages of such an institution, and a subscription list opened, a sufficient number of subscribers
would be found to come forward, is hard to say. The experiment however might be made without hazard.

Ross goes on to suggest that such a reading room could also be of use to other societies such as the Mechanics' Institute, with, as an additional inducement to subscribers, the rentals going towards a fund "for the relief of decayed members or the support of their destitute widows and children". He concludes by stating his reasons for opposing the proposed sale of the Society's books.

In the meantime, we see that the needless expenses into which our Book Society had thrown itself have set the members, like the King's ministers, (si parvis componere magna liceret) to adopt the strongest measures of retrenchment and economy, and like them to continue the simile, they seem to have gone beyond the bounds of prudence and propriety. For the projected measure of selling off the old stock of books, (like that of selling off the Crown Lands) has threatened the society with absolute annihilation, but which by the other more prudent measure of retrenchment since adopted in the mode of keeping and circulating the books, will we trust be now found wholly unnecessary and uncalled for. Better if possible as the books have once been obtained, to strive to continue them in possession, with the hope, however remote, of one day forming the nucleus of an institution and establishment of the kind above suggested.

The present character of the society is to acquire the latest and most celebrated publications of the day and to circulate them as speedily as possible among the members. And under this impression it appeared very reasonable no doubt to suppose as the society has now subsisted some years, that the earlier importations had sufficiently run the gauntlet of perusal, and might without prejudice be dispensed with. But this it turns out is not the case, for many of the more instructive and standard works are still unread by a majority of the members. Many points in the detail of the management, ought with some propriety, we think, to be suggested to the committee - as for instance an improved and more accelerated mode of sending out the different packages by every ship that leaves England, so as to preserve the interest of the periodical works, and keep the subscribers
informed of the more recent and passing events of the time. A sort of carte blanche should also be entrusted to the discretionary agent in London to fill up to a certain extent with such new works and productions of interest as from time to time appear on the literary and political horizon, and which could not possibly be anticipated and ordered by name by the committee on the spot.

Henry Melville was quick to pick up the hints of disaffection within the Book Society conveyed in Ross's article, writing in his *Colonial Times* on 19 October 1831,

If we rightly understand a lengthy article of the *Courier* which appeared in a late number, with respect to the Hobart Town Book Society, two things connected with that body appear to be disclosed. The one, that in its zeal for literature, the prudential maxim that would lead a man first to estimate his means, before he proceeds to purchase, has been disregarded, and consequently that the Society, like many of its haut-ton members, is a little out at the elbows; the second, that Mars - valiant Mars, has invaded the temple professedly set aside for the worship of a God of a very different nature.

After quoting with approval Ross's remark on the three classes of settlers, Melville, as the champion of the emancipists, went on to correct an obvious omission from Ross's list and to argue, with reason, that Ross's grand schemes for literary improvements would only succeed if all classes were allowed to participate in them.

There is a fourth, and neither an uninfluential nor an unconsiderable class amongst us, who have come here involuntarily, but who have eeked out for themselves, by industrious and honorable exertions, a claim, not only to entire oblivion of the past, but to an extension of the hand of fellowship for the present. So long however as the line of demarkation that is now drawn between these and the pure Merinos continues - so long as it shall be thought derogatory to the dignity of the latter to be members of the same society as the others, it is morally and absolutely impossible, that any public undertaking, whatever may be its character or
object, can have any other than an unfavorable result. If, therefore, either the Book Society or the Reading-room referred to by our Contemorary, be intended to thrive and flourish, they must be conducted upon a much more liberal footing, with regard to admission of members, than has hitherto been the case. The three classes comprised under the observations we have quoted from the Courier, must thoroughly amalgamate, altogether ceasing to bear in mind, any of the adventitious circumstances by which either of them may be distinguished. Nor must this be all. The door of admission must be closed to no one who has a good Colonial character to advance in support of his claim. We shall then hear no more of embarrassed finances, nor will it be necessary to nip the bud before it is half blown, by sales of the very books which are the chief attraction of the society.

Although no heed was paid to Melville's suggestions, the Book Society seems to have been able to continue without selling off its stock, since nothing further is heard of this measure. On 22 October 1831, the Courier announced that a meeting of the Society would be held at Ross's house on 1 November "for the admission of members, and for the purpose of considering the expediency of increasing the entrance money, and of altering the days of meeting." If, however, one may accept a somewhat scathing account of a recent meeting of the Book Society printed in the Colonist and Van Diemen's Land Commercial and Agricultural Advertiser on 19 October 1832, its troubles were far from over.

On Saturday last, an adjourned Meeting of this Society (rather a misnomer, by the bye, if the term is meant to imply sociality,) took place at the Court of Requests' Room, for what purpose our Reporter could not well understand - crimination and recrimination being the order of the day ;
... In the course of the literary discussions which took place, the worthy Chairman threatened more than once to vacate his seat, unless better order was preserved; and we are sorry to have to add, that a former meeting broke up with a general row amongst the Members, as appeared by the young Secretary's minutes received on this occasion. This is the march of intellect with a vengeance? When the storm had somewhat subsided, the only appropriate motion we heard of, was made by Mr. MEREDITH; viz that the present Society dissolve itself, with a view to the formation of a new one, based on sounder principles and with better digested rules; and we confess our regret, that it was not carried in the affirmative. We have heard that some trickery was played off on the occasion by the chief influentials, first pledging their support of the motion, and then breaking such pledge, and which has been accounted for by the professed secession from the Society, of the most determined opposer of the close borough system of conducting it. . . . . One reason assigned to us for opposing the dissolution of the present anomalous Society, and forming a new one, is, that the more recent Members fancy they have an advantage over the original Subscribers, on account of not having paid the same amount of subscriptions; but let them consider, that none of them have any actual property in the Library, they are forming, and after years and years of payment, whenever they leave the Colony, they can neither sell or transfer their shares; whereas, if founded upon the plan of English Subscription Libraries, there would be a constantly growing interest, and shares as there might become worth from £50 to £100 each, and upwards. This want of real property in the books may be one great reason why the subscribers at large seem so indifferent to the description they get out, or their due preservation afterwards. We cannot finish without complimenting Dr. Ross upon his zealous devotion to the well-being of the Society, such as it is, and regretting that he has not met a more suitable return. We hope he will publish the amusing and sarcastic speech he made at the Meeting, together with his ideas at large, in respect to dissolving the Old Society, and forming a new one, with shares transferable. Annual subscribers might still be admitted, without possessing any property in the books, unless upon after payment of proportionate back subscriptions.

Ross's devotion to the Society was presumably further shown in his decision not to print this "amusing and sarcastic speech", and the rest of the history of the Book Society
in the eighteen-thirties must be gleaned from occasional reports of meetings. On 7 March 1834, the Courier printed the request of various prominent members, including Ross, Alfred Stephen, John Montague, Judge Pedder and John Burnett, that a general meeting of the Society be held

... for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of calling upon every member to pay up his subscription and fines to this day, in order that it may be ascertained, under the provisions of the 26th rule of the laws and regulations of October, 1832, who are members of the society, that measures may thereupon be adopted either for breaking it up or of continuing it upon some plan more useful to the members than is at present the case.

The outcome of this resolution was discussed by Ross in the Courier for 18 April 1834.

We were happy to observe at the general meeting of the members of the Hobart-town Book Society, which took place on Wednesday that the general feeling was not only to continue the society as a literary institution, but prospectively to extend it towards the formation of a public library of standard works ancient and modern, and of books of reference. It is in truth rather a stigma on a colony like this, the inhabitants of which, most certainly have no small claim to the title of intellectual, that something of this kind has not long ago been brought to bear. But this apathy disease is conspicuous in this as in most other matters requiring a little public spirit and unanimity.

Evidence of the muddled state of the Society's affairs can be found in the announcement in the Courier on 2 May 1834 that Mr. Rolt had replaced Ross as librarian:

A complete catalogue of the books, the want of which furnished the ground work of all the groundless complaints against the late librarian (but which it was not his duty to compile) is about, we learn, immediately to be published. Some excellent works on men and manners, which had never been opened by any
of the members, have been discovered in the library.

But not until 1836 was the Hobart Town Book Society finally reconstituted as a public library. On 8 April, the Courier enthused "We are happy to see by the advertisement of the meeting of the Book Society to be held on Thursday next, that this remaining glimmer of literature is still alive amongst us, and gaining strength and members", and a week later reported,

At a numerous meeting of the Hobart Town Book Society held at the Library, Macquarie-street, this day, . . . it was resolved unanimously -

That the Hobart Town Book Society do henceforth take the name of the HOBART PUBLIC LIBRARY, and that any person residing in Hobart Town, or within five miles thereof, may (on the written proposition of two members of the committee) without ballot be entitled to its privileges, on paying the usual entrance fee and subscription in advance.

Commenting on this decision, the Courier of 6 May 1836 said

The eyes of both the public and the government have all along been directed to the proceedings of this Society, from which in justice to itself something distinctive in the cause of literature should long ago have emanated.

Such as it is, however, it has had one good effect, though of an unmeritorious kind, it has given rise to numerous reading associations throughout the interior. At Bothwell, Richmond, Campbell-town and Norfolk-Plains, incipient libraries already exist. But the great drawback to the ultimate success of all these is the expense of a room to contain the books, etc. Now, as it is the bounden duty of the government to promote a taste for reading and a supply of useful knowledge, we would suggest the propriety of going to the comparatively small expense of annexing an apartment to the public offices, vestries, or other public buildings at each station, for a public library.

After Ross's sale of the Courier in 1836, it ceased to devote so much space to the affairs of the Book Society and
little further information has been found on the progress of this newly established Public Library. The *Tasmanian* of 27 October 1837 did, however, report a proposal that a section of the Library should "be exclusively devoted to works on science, manufactures, and the arts - more especially to such of these, as are most desirable to see progressing amongst us." Most of the purchases of the Book Society, as Ross's defences of the practice and a few lists of recent arrivals of books indicate, had been popular works of fiction, poetry, history and travels. A typical list appeared in the *Courier* on 18 February 1832:

We have the pleasure to announce to the Members of the Hobart-town Book Society the arrival by the Science of a selection of the most valuable and popular productions of the day, viz: - Mitford's stories of American life [1830-31], At home and abroad [1831], The Incognito [T. de Truba, 1831], The Water Witch [J. F. Cooper, 1830], The Heiress of Bruges [T. C. Grattan, 1830], Moore's Byron, vol. 2; Destiny [Susan Ferrier, 1831], Southey's British Poets . . . Galt's Bogle Corbet [1831] . . . Social life [in England and France. 1789 - 1830, 1831], The young Duke [Disraeli, 1831], Burkhardt's Bedouins . . . Wedded Life [in the upper ranks, 1830], Southey's uneducated poets . . . The Siamese twins [a poem, E. L. B., 1831], Italian poets . . . Bowdler's Pen Tamar [or the History of an old maid, 1830], Rectory of Valehead [R. W. Evans, 1830], Hamilton's progress of society [1830], Persian Adventurer . . . Crotchet Castle [Peacock, 1831], The historical traveller [Mrs. Gore, 1831], Rodney's life [1830], Boswell's life of Dr. Johnson, by Croker [1831], Annals of the stage, Fletcher's Poland [1831], Philip Augustus [G. P. R. James, 1831], Pope's essay on man, Moore's life of Fitzgerald [1831], Scott's tales of a Grandfather [1830], and the continuation of Lardner's Cyclopaedia, Family classical library, Standard novels, Sunday library, and other periodicals.

Another announcement, in the *Courier* for 13 November 1835, included James's *The Gipsy* (1835), Wordsworth's *Yarrow*
Revisited (1835), Mrs. Norton's Wife and Woman's Reward (1835),
Washington Irving's Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey (1835),
Bulwer Lytton's Student (1835), Auldjo's Constantinople
(1835), Coleridge's Table Talk (1835), and Marryat's Pacha
of Many Tales (1835). Elliston's Hobart Town Almanack, and
(Ross's) Van Diemen's Land Annual, for 1837 claimed the Book
Society then had about two thousand volumes in its library.
(p.42)

After the failure of the Book Society's reading room,
Ross, in keeping with the views expressed in the article
previously quoted, attempted to found a separate institution
of this kind. The "Prospectus of a Reading, Literary and
News Room, about to be Opened in Hobart Town", printed in
his Courier on 19 October 1832, held out many inducements to
subscribers.

The situation which has been chosen for it is one of the
most convenient and central in the whole town, being at an
equal distance from both wharfs, almost contiguous to the
several public offices in Macquarie-street, and readily
accessible at a minute's walk from the principal merchant's
counting houses, stores and warehouses. The room which is
sufficiently capacious, will be neatly fitted up with every
requisite, such as globes, maps, writing materials, et
cetera. A cheerful fire will be kept up when the season or
any of the sudden changes in temperature to which we are
liable in this climate, may render that or any other means
of personal comfort desirable by the subscribers.

As no conditions of membership are laid down, it would seem
that the Reading Room was to be open to all who could afford
three guineas a year, or one guinea if they lived further
than five miles from Hobart. The tone of the advertisement suggests, however, that Ross anticipated his members would come mainly from the upper classes. A large selection of British newspapers and magazines, Tasmanian, Sydney, South African, Indian, Singapore and Chinese papers, were to be provided, as well as "some of the most popular novels, &c., a library of the most standard and classical works in English literature, Encyclopaedias, &c.". And, since the Hobart Town Mechanics' Institution was at this stage virtually non-existent, Ross also proposed to "commence . . . a regular series of evening lectures on scientific subjects, most suited to the character and probable wants of the youth of this colony."

In setting out the need for such instruction, he presented one of the first criticisms of the anti-intelectualism of Australian society:

While the progress of intelligence is marching with rapid strides in Europe and America, in these remote corners, to all useful and elevating purposes it may be said to be stationary. In those countries men of learning or genius, however humble in other respects are as much honoured and consulted, to say the least, as individuals of the largest property, which is still too apt to monopolise respect to the prejudice of what are really higher and nobler, though not perhaps as human nature is constituted more necessary endowments. . . . Our present excellent and liberal minded monarch alive to the true interests of mankind and awake to the finer feelings of the man, has been known to receive with the most cordial welcome and even to entertain at his table men who though otherwise destitute of worldly wealth had distinguished themselves by their attachment to learning and their fellow men in their generous and disinterested pursuit of useful knowledge. We will not say that there is not a disposition to act similarly in Hobart town, but we must in candour tell our townsfolk that the old mammon is
still too much an engrossing subject amongst us, and that the professor or rather the possessor of it is still as in the dark ages, too much an idol. Truth and sound reason should be our guide and not the type of custom which others may hold out for our servile imitation.

Despite these worthy sentiments, nothing more was heard of the Reading Room for over a year. Then, on 27 December 1833, the Courier advised subscribers to that Institution, "the arrangements will be finally completed by the first of January next". Although in the meantime the subscription had been reduced to two guineas annually for townspeople, the Reading Room does not seem to have prospered, since no further reports of it have come to light.

Having no James Ross to champion them, the affairs of the other libraries and book societies operating in Tasmania during the eighteen-thirties were more briefly chronicled. The Wesleyan Library continued, though apparently without much patronage for its more serious works, advertising in the Courier on 16 September 1836:

Wesleyan Library.

The Public will please take notice, the above Library is open to all persons on moderate terms; the Library, which contains nearly 1000 volumes, consists of works on Philosophy, History, Geography, Theology, Astronomy, etc. etc.

Terms - 10s. per annum, full members 20s. per annum.

Catalogues and particulars may be obtained on application to Rev. J. Orton, Mission House, or to J. Dunn Junr. Librarian, Commercial Bank.

Ross followed this up with some comments in the next week's Courier:
The little glimmerings that we yet have in our Book Society, our incipient Reading Rooms, at the Club and elsewhere, and though last not least, the Wesleyan Library, afford a gratifying indication of the general disposition of the people to literary improvement. In mentioning the Wesleyan Library, which is scarcely noticed equal to its merits, we take the opportunity to recommend it especially to public favour, as affording a selection of the best and most useful works, both for circulation and reference at present in the colony, attainable at a low rate. It is in all respects an institution, from the character of the books it comprises, highly deserving of general support.

The "Club" mentioned in the above passage would seem to have been the Union Club, described in Elliston's Hobart Town Almanack ... for 1837 as having been established in 1834, with membership limited to two hundred "respectable gentlemen" who had access to their own library. (p.42) In "A Few Words on the formation of a standard public library, and other literary and scientific institutions in the colony", published in the Courier on 21 November 1834, James Ross, midway through another variation on his common theme, wrote

The Union Club, lately formed has every prospect of a long and vigorous life, for its materials are joined together by the most effective of all cements of English society - good eating and drinking - and they are less liable to be shaken because the wavering topic of politics, and the undermining vice of gambling, are wholly banished from its circles. Comfort and social intercourse are the pith of its existence.

Ross's reference to "good eating and drinking" suggests that the Union Club may have been the subject of a facetious article, "The Philosophers", in the Tasmanian for 17 July 1835.
Van Diemen's Land may rejoice in the resurrection of the Hendersonian Philosophy. Once more its followers are assembled - having risen, Phoenix-like, from the ashes of that Society, which died with the departure of the proprietor of Huckamabad.

The following Minutes of the Proceedings at one of their Meetings, is of course their Secretary's production. It is published for the advantage of the Votaries of Science!

Seven members then speak in turn, revealing that their only hunger is for supper, which they speedily adjourn to take.

Presumably less exclusive, and more serious in aim, were the provincial book societies mentioned in another of Ross's articles. No further information has been found on the one at Campbell-town, but the Norfolk Plains Book Society, with "upwards of 400 Volumes", is listed among the Public Libraries in the 1830 Hobart Town Almanack (p.260). On 11 August 1834, the Launceston Advertiser printed a request by the Secretary of this Society for members to return their books without delay since "Another supply of books has been received, but nothing can be done to forward their circulation until the state of the Society's affairs is ascertained."

In addition, the Courier for 24 July 1835 announced a general meeting of another society, the New Norfolk Reading Association. Slightly earlier, on 3 April 1835, the same paper had reported the formation of book societies at both Richmond and Bothwell. The Colonial Times for 21 April announced that the Committee of the former Society were "prepared to receive offers from persons who may have works on General Knowledge for sale."
Judging by the frequency of newspaper mentions, the Bothwell Literary Society seems to have been the most successful of any of these institutions. On 16 September 1836, the Courier reported

On Tuesday the 6th September instant, the First Anniversary Meeting of the Literary Society, Bothwell, (the only existing Institution of this kind in the Island) took place. . . . This Society was instituted by a few individuals, lovers of science, who subscribed liberally for the purchase of works of philosophy and general literature - there is already attached to the Institution a very respectable library, both of circulation and reference, in which is to be found a variety of popular periodicals of the day, as well as several British newspapers and a considerable sum has recently been transmitted to London for the purchase of some of the most valuable modern publications - the members are also increasing.

Later, the same paper announced on 18 November,

Bothwell Literary Society - Remote from the distraction of party politics and strife, this little institution we are happy to say is flourishing - considerable additions have been made to the library, and amongst the presentations is a most liberal one, of above one hundred and fifty volumes of standard works, by Captain Wood, just landed from the Dunmore.

By the time of its second anniversary, as the Courier for 22 September 1837 noted, there were over three hundred and fifty volumes of books in the Bothwell Library and, by 8 November 1837, nearly five hundred volumes. The Courier of that date enthused over this demonstration "that to increase the taste for reading it is only necessary to keep up the requisite supply of new, and useful, and interesting publications." A few weeks later, on 22 November, it announced the formation of a similar society at Pontville. Amongst the resolutions of the Pontville Literary Society one finds:
2dly. That each subscriber name books for procurement to the extent of his subscription; such work or works having been in the Library one year, be at the annual general meeting sold by auction, and at his risk, put up at half price. These and other funds in the hands of the Committee be expended by them in the purchase of books, or otherwise, to the advantage of the Society.

9thly. That the amount of each gentleman's annual subscription be one pound, and the ladies' ten shillings.

This appears to have been the first such society to make provision for women members.

If, however, the British pattern was followed in this as in most other matters, women were probably the leading patrons of the various commercial circulating libraries established in Hobart during the eighteen-thirties. Deane's library presumably continued until 1835 when he got into business difficulties and was forced to sell all his property, though no further advertisements for it have been noticed. In 1835, too, the library run in conjunction with the True Colonist newspaper came to an end because, as reported on 1 May,

The Proprietor of this Library, finding that he is sustaining a loss by reason of the neglect of many of the Subscribers, who make it a practice to retain the Books in their possession for Months, has closed his Library. Subscribers who have books in their possession, are requested to return them without delay... Subscribers will take notice that their having retained books for months, and having lent them during that time to different individuals, will render them liable to be charged extra subscription.

Undeterred by these examples, Mr. Davis opened a Circulating Library in 1835 with, as he advertised in the Tasmanian of 13 November, an annual subscription of two guineas. On 6
January 1837, readers were advised in the **Courier**: Mr. Davis, at the suggestion of many gentlemen, whose time and occupation do not admit of their attending his Reading Room at the appointed hours, has made arrangements to send out the English, Scotch, and Irish newspapers by the night, to be returned by half past 9 in the morning. **TERMS** to be paid in advance — Two guineas per annum, 15s. per quarter, 7s. per week. Non-subscribers can be accommodated with any of the papers by leaving a deposit, and paying 3d. per paper.

This way of counteracting one of the drawbacks of a reading room earlier noted by James Ross, plus a concentration on the most popular novels and other new works, seem to have led Davis to succeed where many others had failed. In the **Courier** of 24 February 1835, Davis announced he had

... just received per **Derwent**, a large addition of the latest and most popular works, including those of **Bulwer, Cooper** and **Marryat**, etc. ... and assures the public that his library will be regularly supplied with all the new publications of the day.

On the same day, the **Tasmanian** commented on Davis’s library, "in addition to its being of a very extensive nature, it contains also the most recent publications of the most esteemed authors."

A Mrs. Turnley advertised in **Bent’s News and Tasmanian Three-penny Register** on 6 February 1836 that she would also be opening a Circulating Library on 25 February. Her terms were similar to Davis’s, though non-subscribers had to find a "deposit and 4d. per vol. old books; 6d. new; after 3 days 2d. per vol. per day." On 16 July 1836, the same paper announced that her library contained "nearly 1000 different
works. Town Subscribers are entitled to 3 vols., for 3 days; country to 6 vols. for 6 days. Books lost or damaged must be paid for." In spite of her extensive stock, Mrs. Turnley does not seem to have prospered since nothing further is heard of her library.

Stronger competition for Davis would seem to have been offered by Samuel Tegg's decision in 1838 to open a circulating library in conjunction with his book-selling business. The following advertisement appeared in the Tasmanian for 21 September 1838:

S.A. Tegg, Begs to inform his Friends and the Public generally, that, in consequence of the repeated applications for Books on loan, he has at length been induced to establish a Circulating Library, which he intends shortly to open with an extensive selection of Standard Works, comprising History, Voyages, Biography, and Popular Novels, under the title of the DERWENT CIRCULATING LIBRARY and hopes by strict attention, and a succession of New Works of Interest, to obtain a share of the public patronage in this branch of his Establishment.

On 7 June 1839, he announced in the Hobart Town Advertiser, "Upwards of 150 vols. of the best Works have been added to the . . . Library, which now contains a selection of Miscellaneous Literature, not to be met with in any other similar establishment in the colony."

One library which certainly could not have rivalled Tegg's was that of the Hobart Town Mechanics' Institution, of which a catalogue was published by J.C. Macdougall in 1839. Among just over one hundred and fifty works listed
were Cowper's *Miscellaneous Works*, *Feminiana*, or the Poets' *Beauties*, Madame de Genlis's *Theatre of Education*, Goldsmith's *Miscellaneous Works*, Robert Montgomery's *Messiah: a Poem* (1832), *Omnipresence of the Deity* (1828) and *Satan* (1829), Robinson *Crusoe* and Tonquet's *Voltaire*. Most of the books in the library had been donated: Dr. Bowring had presented a complete set of the *Westminster Review* and James Knox a copy of his *Poetic Trifles*, the first volume of lyric poetry published in Tasmania. The rules of the library were fairly strict, and it was only opened for two hours each Friday evening so, considering also its small collection of old works, it could have presented no real competition to the circulating libraries.

Although the first of its kind in Australia, the Hobart Town Mechanics' Institution was in difficulties almost from the moment of its foundation in 1827 and was not firmly established for another ten years. It was evidently still functioning in 1833, when the secretary, T.J. Lempriere, advised members in the *Courier* of 26 April that arrangements had been made to use Ross's new reading rooms "for the purpose of giving lectures, and for depositing the library and apparatus belonging to the institution." By 1837, however, judging by some comments in the *Courier* on 17 March, the Institution was completely defunct.

A mechanics' institution formerly existed in this town -
its library - its philosophical apparatus, its property of every description, are now unused and unclaimed. If we could believe that this had arisen from the absence of intellectual taste from the community, we would pronounce upon it shame and confusion. This is not the case, however; high literary attainment and ardent thirst for knowledge are widely spread in Van Diemen's Land; but they are isolated, and require concentration to prove highly beneficial.

Energy to revive and perseverance to support the Mechanics' Institution would effectively promote this end. We are assured, if the public generally will co-operate in this design, that the Institution will not be without the patronage and warmest support of those whose station and influence would be valuable to it. - We say this not on conjecture, but by authority.

The effects of this may be seen in an announcement in the same paper on 14 April 1837:

Tasmanian Literary and Scientific Institution

It is Proposed to Establish in Hobart Town an Institution under the Above name. Its objects will be to promote the Literary and Scientific Improvement, and the Moral welfare of Young Men. It is to be formed on the same principles as the Mechanic and Scientific Institutions in London, - it is to be open to all ranks and classes of the community. The objects for which it is intended, to be established, will be sought by the following means. - A Library of circulation and reference. A reading room to be open every evening from 6 to 10 o'clock in which the best English Magazines and other periodicals will be provided. Lectures to be delivered weekly in the winter months, on subjects of Literary Interest, of Science, Art, and Philosophy. The affairs of the Institution will be conducted by a Committee. . . . Subscription. £2 per annum, 1 guinea half yearly, 12s. quarterly.

The names of parties favourable to the Institution proposed, who will become members, are received at the Courier Office.

A week later, Frederick Maitland Innes, another prominent advocate of colonial enlightenment, advertised in the Courier a meeting of the Mechanics' Institution to be held on 25 April. It is difficult to know whether or not these two
bodies are to be equated, but it seems likely that the proposal to found a new Institution gave the necessary impetus for re-establishing the old one. Certainly, as always in early Australia, the way of educational and literary pioneers was not easy. On 2 June 1837, the *Courier* printed under the heading "Mechanics' Institution":

We are perfectly tired of speaking of this institution. The gentlemen who have taken upon themselves to revive it, are very tardy in in their operations. Time is being lost, in which great good might be done. When do they mean to call a meeting on the subject; or when are the promised lectures to be delivered? It is damming to every effort to accomplish good, the narrow competitions with which an individual is beset; nor would we complain, if others performed what jealousy prompted them to undertake.

By 1838, however, the Hobart Town Mechanics' Institution appears to have been firmly re-established. The *True Colonist* for 16 November 1838 reported

Mechanics' Institution.

Last Tuesday, Mr. Alfred Stephen, delivered an address to the members of this Institution on the close of the lectures for this season. Lady Franklin and several of the principal inhabitants were present, the room was altogether crowded to inconvenience. The learned gentleman commenced by, recapitulating the progress of the Institution during the last season. He stated that, the number of members on the books now amounted to 300. That of these, 90 had joined since the commencement of the Season. That a very valuable addition had been made to the library, by donations from several members. That, the lectures had been far more numerous and interesting, and much better attended than in any former season.

In his Lecture upon the Advantages of Science, Delivered at the Opening of the Season, of the Van Diemen's Land Mechanics' Institution, on Tuesday, June 4, 1839, the Reverend John Lillie, then the President, also rejoiced in the new-found vigour of
the Institution. His lecture, which the *Tasmanian* of 7 June 1839 reported "was very numerously attended", is a fluid, well-written account of the main arguments then advanced for the popularisation of scientific knowledge. Among the more literary of the other lectures given in 1839, listed in the 1839 Library Catalogue, were three on "Elocution, Language and the Belles Lettres" by Robert Lathrop Murray, one on "Readings from Shakespeare" by Adam Smith, and one on the "Art of Reading" by William Gore Elliston. The annual Reports of the Institution for 1838 and 1839 show that by the end of this period it had over three hundred and fifty members, more than half of whom had joined in the two years since its revival.

Although there was no Mechanics' Institution at Launceston during the eighteen-thirties, residents still had some access to books. On 27 June 1831, John Pascoe Fawkner printed in his *Launceston Advertiser* a "LIST of BOOKS" which, "together with Sir Walter Scott's Novels, and a large number of other Works, which would occupy too much of the space of this Paper", could be obtained at his Library. Amongst these were nearly one hundred and eighty "NOVELS AND ROMANCES", including both standard works such as *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pamela* and *Humphrey Clinker* and modern tales like Mrs. Gore's *Women as they are* and Mrs. Green's *Gretna Green Marriages* (1823).
More serious fare was offered under the headings "MISCELLANEOUS", "POETRY" and "CLASSICAL, &c." each of which included about thirty works. Shakespeare and most of the popular eighteenth-century poets were represented, with prose works by Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith and Swift figuring among the classics. Fawkner's library was still functioning in 1834, for on 6 February he advertised:

Fawkner's Circulating Library

J.F. takes an early opportunity to inform his friends and the public that, in addition to the large stock of novels formerly advertised, a choice selection of novels and standard works (ex VIBILIA) have been added to his library; among which are Hood's National Tales [1827], Leith Ritchie's Game of Life [1830], Incognita, Exclusives [1829], Woman's Love [Mrs. Grimstone, 1832], Annual Register, Knickerbocker's New York, Drawing-room Scrap Book, Hogarth's Works, National Gallery of Paintings, English newspapers to Sept. 14th, 1833, and a great variety of elegant and amusing works.

After Fawkner's departure for Victoria in 1835, the library was evidently taken over by James Hill, who, in the Launceston Advertiser for 12 November 1835, announced the recent arrival of "upwards of Five Hundred Volumes of Novels, Romances, Tales, etc.". The business then passed to Henry Dowling, now also the publisher of the Launceston Advertiser, which informed readers on 18 May 1837 that "The CATALOGUE of H. DOWLING'S Circulating Library" was available at his Stationery Warehouse. In the same paper on 12 July 1838, Dowling claimed that his Launceston Circulating library contained "upwards of 2000 volumes of works in general literature".
Various new libraries and literary societies were established in Sydney during the 'thirties, with the Sydney Literary Society apparently flourishing in the first year of the decade. On 14 January 1830, the Sydney Gazette reported the first "Anniversary dinner of this promising institution", mentioning toasts to "The liberty of the press", "Australia, the land of promise", "The republic of letters" and "The new London college" and commenting,

It is to be hoped that this first Anniversary Meeting will be followed by a corresponding good; and that those gentlemen who have held themselves aloof from the Society, with the idea it is one of the ephemerals of the day, will now enrol their names amongst its members.

The Sydney Debating Society does not pretend to any very great literary distinction; perhaps its only merit is in the opportunity it affords gentlemen (anxious for a few hours of rational conversation) meeting each other once a week, to exchange opinions and compare notes, and by these means tending to foster a literary taste among the future parents and guardians of Australia.

The foundation of a library, however, is already laid. Twenty pounds have been sent to England for the purchase of such works as cannot be procured in the Colony; and even with the present limited funds, double that sum will be sent yearly to the Society's Agent in England for the same praiseworthy purpose.

The Society is open to all parties. The only qualification for admission is respectability of character: it is therefore to be expected that in the course of the year they will add many to their number, and have an increase of funds, which will enable the Society to enlarge its library, and thus extend its usefulness and importance.

By 15 May 1830, as "A Member" observed in a letter to the Editor of the Sydney Gazette, the Society had thirty members
"of whom about a half attend with regularity". Shortly afterwards, on 9 October, the same paper noted that the first supply of British periodicals had been received for the Literary Society's Library.

But in spite of these apparent indications of success, and the many fervent wishes for its prosperity, the Sydney Literary Society does not seem to have survived to receive any more shipments of books. In 1832, the Currency Lad remarked on "Literary Institutions", "Several attempts have been made, from time to time, to excite a taste for literature and science in this Colony; but we regret to be obliged to acknowledge, that the spirit of enquiry, in this respect, is at a very low ebb amongst us." The writer went on, in rather grandiose prose, to urge the establishment of such cultural institutions:

Mankind begin to feel that they are born for some nobler purpose than mere animal existence, and that they are possessed of minds capable of expansion to an almost illimitable extent. The scenery of the moral and intellectual world is, in consequence, undergoing a mighty change. Fertility succeeds to barrenness; and the stagnant waters of ignorance, which formerly sent forth the pestilential vapours of crime and misery, have now given place to those fountains of knowledge, which issue their almost boundless to fertilize, enrich, and bless the world. If, therefore, knowledge be desirable, every endeavour to excite a thirst for its acquisition, by means of public lectures, and the establishment of literary societies, should meet with the ready aid and the fostering protection of a people who can duly appreciate the blessings of mental cultivation. To promote an object of such importance to the welfare of society in this Colony, it is desirable that individuals who are ardent in literary and scientific pursuits, should associate themselves together for the purpose of mutual
instruction; since it is by the collision of mind with mind — by the candid and unfettered change of opinion — by the excitement of laudable emulation — by bringing into focus the rays of scientific light which illuminate each separate mind — and by gathering into one general repository the collective produce of individual research — that improvements in the knowledge of philosophy and letters may be more permanently and more extensively secured.

For once, such urgings did not fall on deaf ears; on 16 March 1833, the same paper printed an advertisement for the first General Meeting of a proposed Mechanics' Institution:

A LARGE body of Mechanics and others residing in Sydney, being desirous to establish an Association to promote the diffusion of Scientific and Useful Knowledge extensively throughout all ranks of the community of New South Wales, and several Meetings having already been held, attended by upwards of sixty individuals friendly to such an object, a number of Resolutions have been prepared by them, after much consideration, with the view of their forming the basis of a SYDNEY MECHANICS' SCHOOL OF ARTS, in the progress of which provision should be made for enjoying the advantages connected with the use of a Library, the delivering of Lectures, and the establishment of classes for mutual instruction.

The founding and subsequent history of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts have been discussed by George Nadel in his Australia's Colonial Culture (1957). As with the revival of the Hobart Town Mechanics' Institution, the official support of the Governor provided the necessary focus for a growing demand for cultural improvements. By 6 March 1834, the Sydney Herald was able to report on the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts:
We are glad to perceive that the reading-room and library of this institution, are open to its members. . . . Since its establishment in March, 1833, up to 3d February last, nearly one hundred and fifty members had joined . . . Last month, fifteen new members were admitted, which is the best proof of its prosperity; and now, since the library is open, it is to be hoped that the attraction will be still greater. Upwards of five hundred volumes already adorn its shelves, consisting of works on science, history, and general literature, chiefly contributed by the liberal donations and loans of the members and friends.

Two years later, the Alfred of 10 February 1835 was urging further donations, and indicating the existence of fairly extensive private libraries in Sydney at this time:

. . . Such an Institution so essential to the benefit of every class of mechanics and enterprising youth, cannot indeed be too liberally supported. The mere formation of its library is an object worthy the co-operation of every philanthropic citizen for good books, whether on religion, morals, science, literature, manners, customs, or the arts, are not only innocent, but valuable recreations. A scheme was proposed to advance this branch of the Society, which, if carried into effect, will no doubt succeed in obtaining contributions from gentlemen who have scores of volumes in this busy Colony mere food for the worms. We trust the regard for literature which these persons have evinced as collectors, will lead them to aspire to the more honorable distinction of becoming patrons, and that they will remove from their dusty shelves works, of which they only peruse the titles impressed on the backs, and lay them open to the enquiring mechanic, who can find time to dive into their contents.

But, as the Monitor was pointing out at the same time, in Australia, as in Great Britain, "Mechanics' Institute" was something of a misnomer: "We understand that there are not more than a score of Members who fall under the denomination of Mechanics". 11 On 15 July 1835, this idea was

taken up again in the Monitor's comments on the opening of the 1835 Lecture Season:

The institution has not yet answered the expectations of the founders; but its utility, in another channel, has far exceeded our expectations; . . . Its present state is not an Institution so much for Mechanics; the latter will not attend; but rather an Institution for the instruction and recreation of young men, who prefer science, and the arts, and knowledge in general, to taverns and theatres, and cigar-smoking, and the billiard-room. In short, the Institution is an anti-Tom-and-Jerry Institution. Not that Mechanics also do not attend it; but their numbers are not so predominant as to make the Society de facto what it is in designation.

Although mechanics were never to predominate in the Institution, it grew steadily throughout the eighteen-thirties, with increases in membership and in the number of volumes in the library. By the end of 1836 there were over two hundred members, and nearly six hundred by the end of the period, paying twelve shillings for annual and five pounds for life membership.\(^\text{12}\) On 30 January 1836, the Monitor noted that the School of Arts library contained a thousand volumes, while the Sydney Gazette of 27 June 1837 recorded the addition of seven hundred volumes of "standard works of the latest edition; an equal number are also daily expected from England". Governor Bourke maintained his interest in the Institution, obtaining for it an annual grant of £200 from colonial funds and presenting one hundred and twenty

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\(^{12}\) Detailed statistics are given in Nadel, _op.cit._, Appendix B.
volumes of books to the library on his departure. No details are available of these, but a list of a hundred and fifty volumes donated by the solicitor W.H. Moore was printed in the Colonist on 15 August 1838. Although mainly history and philosophy, they included a copy of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy and Harrison's fourteen-volume British Poets. In general, judging by the Catalogue of the Library issued in 1837, members of the School of Arts had as much access to works of imaginative literature as to more serious volumes. Nearly half of the titles listed could be placed in the former category. Besides works by the major eighteenth-century writers, eighty-eight volumes by Scott and twenty-four by or about Byron, there were many modern novels by Bulwer Lytton, Marryat, Miss Porter, Horace Smith, Lady Morgan and others. The provision of literary works, particularly novels, in a library of this sort had evidently led to some criticism, since it was defended in the School of Arts Report for the Year 1836 (1837):

Some of these, at first thought, may not appear exactly suited for the Library of a School of Arts; but it ought to be remembered, that a taste for reading has to be formed before works of a more philosophical character will be relished or appreciated, and that if any book is likely to accomplish this more speedily than another, it is the works of Scott - containing, as they do, a vast fund of historical information, mixed up, in an agreeable shape, with the manners and customs of different periods. (p.12)

13 Sydney Gazette, 2 December 1837.
Whatever the means, a taste for reading certainly seems to have been established among the members by 1839, when the *Australian* of 7 February reported on the Annual General Meeting of the School of Arts, "it is gratifying to state that the business in the library has increased so rapidly that it has been found necessary to employ an assistant to the librarian, who could not perform the duties." Further evidence of this was contained in the *Seventh Annual Report of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts for the Year 1839* (1840):

The issues of books from the library are continually on the increase, and so great is the demand for additional works, that as soon as the funds will admit of any appropriation for that purpose, another remittance must be forwarded to England for the selection of later publications, equal in extent to that obtained through the house of Messrs. Walker and Co. in 1838. Some months since an order to the amount of £50, chiefly for works on mechanical subjects was sent home through Mr. Tegg, and the returns may shortly be expected. (p.10)

As well as having non-scientific works in its Library, the School of Arts included literary topics on its lecture programme, perhaps because there were insufficient volunteers to talk on scientific subjects. In 1837, William Cape, headmaster of the Sydney College, lectured on English Literature and, according to the *Herald* of 7 September, "was well received ... and ... displayed much originality." The *Sydney Times* for 2 September was, however, less pleased: . . . There was a respectable but less numerous attendance
than we could have desired. . . . he should give more ample quotations from superior authors - for instance we should have been delighted to listen to the entire of Thomson's celebrated Hymn on the Seasons, . . . with more copious illustrations from Shakespeare, Young, Milton, etc. as we hope to do next Friday, from Byron, Shelley, Beattie, Goldsmith, etc. etc.

Although, with the exception of including Shelley, Cape appears to have been remarkably conservative in his tastes, the School of Arts' Committee still felt obliged to justify this "deviation from the usual routine" of lectures in their Report for the Year 1837 (1838):

. . . A knowledge of science, however profound, if unembellished by those graces which literature supplies, is stripped of half its advantages: a relish for the beauties of which our historians and poets afford so inexhaustible a supply can hardly afford less enjoyment to the majority of persons, than that communicated by the perception of abstract truths affecting the material world. To point out those models among our national authors, upon which the popular taste ought to be formed; to infuse a general sentiment of esteem for those pure and classical monuments of English literature, upon which so much of English glory depends, is an object scarcely beyond the attainment of, and not incompatible with the general designs of this Institution.

With this precedent established, lectures on literary subjects were included in all subsequent seasons. Some of these, William à Beckett's 1838 series on "Poetry and the Poets of Great Britain", were sufficiently popular to be published, and will be discussed in the next chapter as examples of early colonial literary criticism. Also in 1838, as the Colonist reported on 25 August, the Mutual Instruction Class of the Mechanics' School of Arts had considered "Whether has
Tragedy or Comedy the more beneficial Influence on mankind", with Mr. Cape, Mr. à Beckett and Dr. Nicholson for Tragedy, Mr. Windeyer and Mr. David Taylor for Comedy. This emphasis on the moral effects of literature was a major feature of literary discussions in the earlier nineteenth century.

No details are available about the lectures given at the Newcastle Mechanics' Institute, founded by the Reverend C.P.N. Wilton in June 1835. In three months, however, according to the Monitor for 16 September 1835, it had gained fifty members and a library of two hundred volumes. Thereafter, progress of the Institute was somewhat slower. By 22 June 1837, as the Sydney Herald noted, it had seventy-seven members, while its library had been increased by a donation of one hundred and eight volumes of books by a Mrs. Radford and the receipt from England of a further hundred volumes "including the Waverley Novels and the Bridgewater Treatises". Another Mechanics' Institute was founded at Maitland in 1839, and the Colonist of 12 October, after reporting the Introductory Lecture, went on to say that the district could also boast two book societies, "one in West Maitland, the other in East Maitland, both of which under judicious management are likely to prove flourishing associations." Other provincial centres also set up book societies in the eighteen-thirties. The Australian of 1 August 1839 announced the formation of a Subscription Library
and Reading Room at Yass, while earlier, on 24 March 1837, the Monitor had noted approvingly, "The Bathurst gentlemen have established a 'Periodical Book Club' amongst themselves". Reading material had evidently been in short supply at Bathurst, since "M.W.H.'s" "A Rhyming Epistle from Bathurst", printed in the Sydney Gazette on 14 April 1832, commented amusingly

The weather's been horribly wet
All the week, and we're quite in the vapours;
Not a novel, not a book could we get,
But a few of the Sydney papers.

The Parramatta Book Society, an institution first proposed in the Currency Lad on 19 January 1833, was operating in some form before 13 October 1836, when the Colonist carried a request by the Honorary Secretary for members "to transmit their annual Subscriptions of £2. 2s. falling due July ult., to the Treasurer." Although the Monitor of 12 April 1837 contrasted "the broad and liberal principles" on which the Parramatta Library was run with the exclusiveness of the Australian Subscription Library, it would seem from a letter from "Parramatta Subscriber" in the Commercial Journal for 16 May 1838 that these principles had not been maintained:

There is a Reading Room now in Parramatta already, but it is of that exclusive nature that it effectually debars the entrance to its precincts, of any one less than gentlemen!! The terms of admission to this Institution renders it exclusive, (being £5 per annum) the very few and very select Persons comprising it, render it exclusive. The very secret manner in which it is conducted makes it exclusive, and above all, one of its members a very great man, (at least in his own estimation), but occupying a very small compass - in space and
denominations declared it was exclusive at the formation of the Institution, and said that the few respectable and highly gifted individuals to whose brilliant talents, this precious piece of consummate human wisdom would owe its origin, were determined that, nothing impure, should enter their hallowed sanctuary: - The Emporium of the wit, wisdom, and learning of the far famed town - Parramatta.

The exclusiveness of the Australian Subscription Library was also the subject of much honest, and usually better-written, indignation throughout the eighteen-thirties. On 19 January 1833, Horatio Wills, the young Australian editor of the Currency Lad, proposed the formation of a rival Public Library:

Every one who feels an interest in the cause of Literature must be aware of the importance of an institution of this nature to a young Colony. The idea first suggested itself to the writer by the extreme difficulty felt at present in obtaining standard works. He will not insult the good sense of the public by enumerating the many benefits such an establishment would confer. He wishes them, however, to bear in mind, that at the outset, if the Subscribers amount to 100 only, each individual member would have for One Pound the benefit of One hundred Pounds' worth of Books; and, therefore, such a proposal cannot fail of obtaining, at least, an attentive consideration. Of course, as it is made with a view of imparting knowledge, no system of exclusion of free persons will be acknowledged.

The disappointing reaction to this proposal was discussed in an indignant editorial in the next issue of the Currency Lad:

Our opinion of public spirit in this colony is daily becoming weaker, and we do solemnly declare that we do not believe there are above twenty influential individuals who care one curse for any thing but the filling of their own pockets - not a curse. They would let the colony and all it contains go to the devil for the sake of a competency. For the sake of grasping a trifle of our wealth they would give us the privilege of seizing the moon, like the unfortunate Billy O'Rourke, with greasy fingers. . . .
We may be told, there is one Public Library already. True. But will they admit the poor mechanics in that society? No. And, therefore, we call upon those young men in particular, who have the prospect of becoming fathers of families - we call upon them to establish an institution that will afford instruction and comfort to themselves now, and will teach their children to look down with contempt upon the miserly wretch, whose mind never expanded and whose purse never opened at the voice of philanthropy. Since the rich members of our state cannot afford to instruct the poor - let the latter do it themselves. For we beg to impress upon their minds, if they wish their children hereafter to move in society with respect, that nothing will conduce so much to this end as an education; and there is nothing more conducive to education than a cheap Public Library, founded upon sound principles.

Although Wills' plan was not realised, its objectives were taken up by the Mechanics' School of Arts, established soon after with Wills a member of the first Committee. Perhaps Wills was also partly responsible for the slight liberalisation of admission requirements for the Australian Subscription Library announced in the *Sydney Herald* on 4 February 1833. Members no longer had to pay an initial fee of five pounds but the high annual subscription of three pounds and the need to be "proposed by three members, and duly elected by ballot" were sufficient to keep the Library a province of the few.

Shortly before his departure from the colony in 1831, Governor Darling had given official support to the Library by means of land grants to aid its poor financial position and enable a building to be erected. In 1834, the Legislative Council passed the "Australian Library Act", regulating the
affairs of the Society and enabling it to buy and sell land. This Act was strongly attacked by E.S. Hall in his Monitor on 2 July 1834:

The Bill now before Council, to enable the individuals who in Darling's reign, clubbed together under the auspices of Archdeacon Scott, and other mushroom aristocrats, to buy, sell, and read books, appears to us a truly Colonial piece of Legislation in all its provisions save one. That one is, enabling the secretary to sue and be sued. This may be beneficial to the public.

To empower this book-club to buy and sell lands to be vested in the Trustees, is, we suppose, to enable it to retain the piece of land which Governor Darling (contrary to written instructions from the Secretary of State to give no more land, but to sell it,) gave the Club, in order to procure an address from the members, just previously to his departure, and when he was in the horrors, lest his creatures should desert him in his expiring moments. Thus this Club is now, for its obsequiousness to a tyrant, to obtain special privileges by law. But who are the law-makers on this occasion? the members of the Club themselves! Save the Governor, we understand, every one of the famous fifteen, are Club-men . . .

The Bill calls the Library a public Library. It is everything but a public Library. It is a close, party, political Library. For instance, the most respectable Colonists dare not offer to become members of it lest they should be black-balled.

Hall resumed the attack on 2 May 1835, when he also took up Wills' earlier cry for a true Public Library.

The people of New South Wales have no Public Library. A few government officers and residents of Sydney formed, what they pleased to designate "The Sydney Library", but its utility is narrow, and its principles are exclusive. This property is composed of a yearly subscription, (which is expended chiefly in novels and a few periodicals) and of an allotment of land, the parting gift of General Darling - a gift it may be remembered, which obtained from this coterie a most hyperbolical expression of admiration and gratitude, for the General's zeal in the promotion of literature and science.

The members of this Institution have managed to attach a number of subscribers of Three Guineas annually, who have no influence in its affairs, but merely the reading of the
books, though they contribute thus largely to its humble revenue. Why such subscribers do not themselves form a Library, and upon a more liberal principle, where their money would be no doubt more satisfactorily, and perhaps, more beneficially disbursed, is rather a matter of surprise to one informed of their position in the concern. . . .

The Public Library we urge upon the consideration of our Readers, must have at least five hundred subscribers; who will produce yearly £1000; which should be doubled by the Government from the immense revenue for religion and education. Men of wealth and taste, who desire to serve the Colony in a most substantial way, should contribute some of their mouldering volumes, or a few of their bank notes towards its extension. Purchases of books should be made at some of our sales, where standard works are at times sold for the price of mere paper; and a regular supply of periodicals, newspapers, and useful publications, should be arranged by means of an active and honest bookseller or agent.

To the absence of such an institution as a Public Library, are probably in some degree attributable the lethargic and unintellectual character of people in this Colony, as well as their absolute fatuity in matters of grand political concernment; matters which of course involve the interests of themselves and their children.

This proposal was supported by the more conservative Sydney Herald on 25 January 1836:

... The Australian Subscription Library is not a Public Library in the proper sense of the word; and although we admit the right of Members to manage their own concerns as they please, we are so little admirers of monopoly in literature, that we should rejoice to witness the establishment of a Public, or National Library, in Sydney.

Since nothing eventuated from these moves, Hall switched his attack once more, pointing out that a Society receiving public support should be open to the public. After praising the liberal Parramatta Library in the Monitor of 12 April 1837, he went on

... Radicals like ourselves cannot get admission into our
Sydney Library, though it is kept in a room belonging to the Government. All the Reformers are sure to be blackballed. Archdeacon Scott left it a legacy of money or books, on condition, that the Sydney Monitor newspaper should not be received into the room. . . . If the Club in question have a Public room without charge, let them throw open their Library to all willing to pay for the use of it. Why deny knowledge even to the vulgar? It is not a sociable Club; it is a reading Club.

Hall's proposals were supported in 1838 by the newly-arrived Governor Gipps. Bourke, never as sympathetic towards the Library as Darling, had arranged for the government to build a Public Library and Museum which could be used by the subscribers in lieu of the building allotment granted by Darling, and a sum of £4000 for this purpose was included in the 1838 Estimates. Gipps, however, wanted some assurance that the general public would have access to the books before he would allow the building to proceed. As the Commercial Journal reported on 10 November 1838,

The Australian Subscription Library, it is the wish of His Excellency should be thrown open to the public, as soon as it is removed to the intended new building. The admission will be through means of tickets, to be procured from a member of the committee, to be renewed every three months. This wish, however, of His Excellency, is to be subject to the consent of a general meeting of its subscribers. An extra librarian would have to be appointed.

The resolutions made at this general meeting were given in the Sydney Gazette on 12 January 1839.

With the view of rendering the Institution as beneficial as possible to the public, the proprietors have resolved, in consideration of the Government paying such extra salary as the librarian may be entitled to, that a room separate from
that occupied by the members shall be open to every respectable person who will obtain a ticket of admission gratuitously from any member of the Committee; and that access shall be allowed there to all their books, charts, and periodicals, none of which however can be taken away.

But Gipps was not satisfied with this form of apartheid, and the matter remained in stalemate at the end of 1839.

Meanwhile the number of volumes in the Library continued to grow. On 16 March 1830, the Sydney Gazette commented on the bequest of two hundred volumes to the Library by the public servant John Thomas Campbell: "the total number of books now in the library is truly respectable, and most of them works of established reputation." By 1836, there were two thousand, six hundred volumes in the Library, valued at £1040. A favourable account of them was given in the interesting, short-lived Literary News, A Review and Magazine of Fact and Fiction; The Arts, Sciences, and Belles Lettres, on 21 October 1837.

We were equally gratified and surprised on our first visit to the Public Library of Sydney, to find that its shelves were so numerously and judiciously filled. The assortment is one which reflects great credit on the selectors. In no department of literature is it deficient, and in many it is both sterling and abundantly supplied. Were it to receive no further accession, it would still remain a valuable intellectual storehouse - a repertory of entertainment and instruction, which few private libraries (certainly none in this country) can pretend to rival. Such an institution augurs well for Australia. The Press, one and all, ought to raise their voices in commendation and support of it. Our views, perhaps, are peculiar; but, in an infant community, we regard with more satisfaction the establishment of literary institutions than the erection of the most solemn or stately edifices.

14 F.M. Bladen, Public Library of New South Wales, Historical Notes (1911), p.15.
After arguing that debates and discussions should be held in conjunction with the Library since "by reading and meditating only, we may become experienced dreamers, but not very profound thinkers", the writer, presumably William à Beckett, concluded with a standard caution against over-indulgence in novel-reading:

... care should be taken, that, in an institution offering the means of knowledge as well as entertainment, the philosopher should not be sacrificed to the novelist - the real be not abandoned for the fictitious. There is already an ample assortment of literature in its various branches, to furnish abundant materials for readers of every description; but we suspect the novel department is in greatest request. We could point out books in the institution which would yield as much amusement, and at the same time open a store of valuable information respecting men and manners, of which our best romance writers give, after all, but a conventional picture. In a future number we shall probably allude, particularly to the contents of the Library...

Of especial interest amongst these allusions, made in the next week's issue, is the passage:

The Miscellaneous department contains some admirable selections; among others Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, a work which, if we may believe Lord Byron, will yield more quotable information than twenty other works. But the chief attraction - one which throws all others into the shade, are the Prose Works of Milton. It was not to be expected that a bigot and pedant like Johnson would see anything to admire in the magnificent ebullitions with which almost every page of these works teem; but more recent biographers have done them justice, and shown them to the world in their true light.

à Beckett's comments on the demand for novels point to the most noticable change in the contents of the Australian

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15 See Chapter IV for evidence of à Beckett's editorship of the Literary News.
Subscription Library between 1829 and 1834. The 1829 catalogue listed approximately three hundred titles, only about a sixth of which were pure literature, with Scott, J.G. Lockhart, Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving the only modern authors. In the Catalogue, with Rules, Regulations, and Bye Laws, for the conduct of the Australian Subscription Library, and Reading Rooms (1834), however, more than a third of the seven hundred odd titles are works of imaginative literature, over half of them novels. Thus, while E.S. Hall was exaggerating when he claimed in 1835 that the Library now bought only novels and periodicals, more than a quarter of the new purchases between 1829 and 1834 had been fiction. Among them were two additional titles by Scott, eight by Fenimore Cooper and one by Washington Irving. Other popular novelists now represented were Maria Edgeworth with seven titles, Bulwer Lytton with six, Horace Smith with four, Marryat with two and Mrs. Trollope, Mrs. Gore, the Countess of Blessington, Mary Shelley and Disraeli with one each. The Addenda to the catalogue listed several novels published in 1834: Gleig's Allan Breck; The Conspiracy. A Venetian Romance; The Hamiltons; or, the New AEra; Makanna; or, the Land of the Savage; Marryat's Peter Simple and Cooper's Water Witch; or, the Skimmer of the Seas were typical examples. By 1834, the surprising lack of standard literary works in the eighteen-twenties'
collection had also been amended. The collected works of Shakespeare, Johnson, Swift, Ben Jonson, Crabbe, Burns and Southey were now included in the catalogue, together with Moore's seventeen-volume *Life of Byron* and *The Anatomy of Melancholy* commended by a Beckett.

As the presence of works by Cooper and Irving in this library, and their frequent advertisement by booksellers and auctioneers, show, there was a considerable interest in American books in early Australia. Moreover, many colonists seem to have felt that much could be learnt from the American experience. On 28 October 1835, an unknown member drafted a letter, now in the Mitchell Library, proposing that the Australian Subscription Library purchase a collection of American works.

The presence of an unusual number of American Vessels having suggested the idea that by their means it may be comparatively easy to procure Publications upon the Agriculture, Inventions, and Institutions of the United States — which must always be valuable from the similarity of circumstances, in a New Country, and which possess a peculiar interest at the present moment, when Immigration is rapidly imparting to this Colony new features and the means of exciting energies yet undeveloped — it is recommenced to the Committee to devote the Sum of Fifty Pounds to the immediate purchase and importation of as many as practicable of the Books enumerated in the annexed List, and to procure information respecting the Titles and Prices of the remainder and the best means of obtaining them.

Most of the suggested books were, however, as one would gather from the above, on practical and legislative matters.

Some of them, at least, seem to have been purchased,
since various works on the American constitution, education and so forth are listed in the 1838 Catalogue of the Library. By now, the number of books in the Australian Subscription Library had almost doubled, with more than five hundred of over fourteen hundred titles listed in that year's catalogue being works of imaginative literature. The proportion of novels amongst these had now increased to more than two-thirds, indicating that nearly a third of the new books purchased between 1834 and 1838 had been fiction. As works were now listed by subject matter rather than alphabetically as before, some idea of the contents of the library in various fields can be gained from the number of titles in each: Agriculture and Horticulture - 30; Antiquities - 4; Chemistry - 12; Classics - 32; Commerce - 6; Dramatic Works - 9; Essays - 19; Geography - 7; History and Biography - 310; Jurisprudence - 31; Mathematics, Astronomy, etc. - 9; Medicine, Anatomy and Surgery - 5; Mechanical Arts - 11; Miscellaneous Works-173; Natural History - 43; Novels and Romances - 366; Philology - 11; Philosophy - 21; Poetry - 31; Political Economy - 15; Reviews, Magazines, and other Periodicals - 38; Sermons and Theological Works - 37; Voyages and Travels - 136. About seventy of the Miscellaneous Works were imaginative literature, including the first and second series of Sketches by Boz. The preponderance of novels, histories and travel books is very typical of the reading tastes of the time. Among the new novels found
in the 1838 catalogue were Mrs. Trollope's *The Abbess* (1833), Samuel Warren's *Diary of a Late Physician*, the Countess de Genlis's *The Duchess de la Valliere, and Madame de Maintenon* (1837), Bulwer Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii* (1835), Mary Shelley's *Lodore* and Mrs. Gore's *Mothers and Daughters* (1834). Mrs. Barbauld's fifty-volume *British Novelists* (1810) is also listed, along with works by Richardson, Fielding, Defoe, Goldsmith, Mrs. Inchbald, Smollett, Mrs. Radcliffe, Maria Edgeworth and others. At the end of the catalogue was a list of the fifty-three works donated by J.T. Campbell. His literary tastes seem to have been highly conventional, as shown by the inclusion of Burke's *On the Sublime and the Beautiful*, the *Quarterly Review*, Thomson's *Seasons*, Charlotte Smith's *Young Philosopher* and several works by Maria Edgeworth.

In April 1839, James Fairfax was appointed to the vacant Librarianship and was responsible for compiling *An Arranged Catalogue of the Books in the Australian Subscription Library And Reading Rooms, with the Rules, Regulations, and By-Laws; and a List of Members and Subscribers* (1839). For the first time full bibliographic details were given of author, date and place of publication and there was also some rearrangement of the subject grouping. Poetry and Drama were now placed together; among the twenty-nine new titles listed were Beaumont and Fletcher's *Works*, Shirley's *Dramatic Works* and
Poems, Ford's *Dramatic Works*, Moore's *Irish Melodies* and *Lalla Rookh*, Southey's *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*, The *Poetical Remains of the Late Mrs. Hemans*, L.E.L.'s *Poetical Works*, Walter Savage Landor's *Gebir*, Count Julian, and other Poems and six critical works by Hazlitt. Five hundred and six titles appear under the new heading "Works of Fiction", an increase of one hundred and forty on those in the "Novels and Romances" section of the 1838 catalogue, though some works, such as *Sketches by Boz*, formerly listed as "Miscellaneous", are included in this number. There were, however, nine additional novels by Marryat, five by Bulwer Lytton and William Godwin, three by Fenimore Cooper and Horace Smith, and two by Mary Shelley, Harrison Ainsworth, Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Trollope and Disraeli. Other new popular titles were the Hon. Mrs. Norton's *The Coquette; and other Tales and Sketches* (1835), Lady Charlotte Bury's *The Divorced* (1837), the Countess of Blessington's *The Friends* (1835) and L.E.L.'s *Francesca Carrara* (1834) and *Traits and Trials of Early Life* (1836). Dickens was now represented by *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Oliver Twist* and *Pickwick Papers* as well as *Sketches by Boz*, while Jane Austen made a first appearance with *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. Thomas Love Peacock's *Headlong Hall, Nightmare Abbey, Maid Marian, and Crotchet Castle* (1837) was also among the 1839 additions. Fairfax's work in compiling the 1839 catalogue certainly bears
out the comments on his appointment made by the Commercial Journal on 6 April 1839: "This gentleman was formerly the proprietor and printer of a respectable Journal in the Mother Country, and carried on the business of a bookseller and stationer; he is therefore well fitted for the situation." His talents were also evidently appreciated by the committee of the Australian Subscription Library who gave him a gratuity in November 1839 for his work on the catalogue and the promise of an increase in salary. Despite this, Fairfax remained librarian for only two years, resigning early in 1841 to become joint proprietor of the Sydney Herald.

One of the original founders of the Herald, William McGarvie, continued to provide an alternative to the Australian Subscription Library until 1835. On 29 November 1832, this advertisement appeared in the Herald:

CIRCULATING LIBRARY
OF NEAR THREE THOUSAND VOLS.

WILLIAM McGARVIE begs to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of Sydney, &c. that having returned from England with upwards of 1200 volumes, including a variety of the most popular and fashionable works, he has added them to his former library. The terms of which are as follows. - £2 per annum, £1. 1s. per half year; 12s. per quarter, or 5s. per month. All subscriptions must be paid in advance.

Catalogues will be ready in a few days.

An examination of McGarvie's forty-eight page 1833 Catalogue shows that most of his three thousand volumes were works of fiction. Of the nine hundred and twenty-one titles, as against

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16 A Century of Journalism (1931), p.58. Further details of Fairfax's career are also given here.
one hundred and seventy in his 1829 catalogue, over seven hundred and fifty were novels. A mere forty-three were poetry and drama, and one hundred and twenty-two non-fiction, mainly the popular histories and travel books, with a few colonial titles such as Barron Field's work on New South Wales and Wakefield's *Letter from Sydney*. The volumes of poetry added since 1829 were all old favourites: Young's *Night Thoughts*, *Paradise Lost*, Cowper's *Poems*, Goldsmith's *Essays and Poems*, Gay's *Fables*, *Don Juan*, Pope's translations of the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* and his *Letters to Several Eminent Persons*. Other new standard works were Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* and Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*. There were also ten additional novels by Scott and three by Fenimore Cooper, though two of his, *Red Rover* and *The Prairie*, were not relisted and had presumably been permanently borrowed by one of his admirers. For the first time Jane Austen was represented, with *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* and *Sense and Sensibility*. Among the more recent novels were Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826), the Banims' *The Boyne Water* (1826), and *Tales by the O'Hara Family* (1825-26), William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), and *St.Leon* (1799), Disraeli's *Vivian Grey* (1826) and Jane Porter's *Pastor's Fire Side* (1832), besides a great mass of sensational, sentimental and historical "most popular and fashionable works".
Some idea of their range and content may be gained from the following intriguing titles: W.C. Green's *Abbot of Montserrat; or, The Pool of Blood* (1826); A.A. Barber's *Country Belles; or Gossips Outwitted* (1824); R.M. Roche's *Discarded Son; or, Haunt of the Banditti* (1807); *Embarrassed Lovers* (1775); *Fair Methodist; or, Such Things Are; F. Latham's Fashionable Mysteries or, The Rival Dutchesses* (1828); *Hardenbrass and Haverel; or, the Secrets of the Castle* (1817); and Mrs. Meke's *Veiled Protectress; or, the Mysterious Mother* (1819). Needless to say, none of these appeared in the catalogues of the higher class Australian Subscription Library.

Possibly, too, more elevating works formed the stock of the circulating library commenced by Ralph Mansfield, between editorships, in 1832. On 12 November, he advertised in the *Sydney Herald*

> Knowledge for the Poor!
> At the
> Book and Stationery Depot
> Hart's Buildings, Pitt-Street,

> **A Select Library** of Serious Reading is opened expressly for the POOR. It contains nearly 200 Volumes, and the Terms of Subscription are fixed at the extraordinary low rate of **THREE PENCE per QUARTER**; which entitles the Subscriber to receive One volume every fortnight, either for his own use or the benefit of any person he may recommend. Subscribers of Six-pence a Quarter are entitled to Two Volumes every fortnight; and in the same proportion for larger Subscriptions.

Soon afterwards, in the *Herald* of 29 November 1839, Mansfield announced the formation of The Australian Reading Room with
"regular supplies of the most recent Newspapers, Magazines, Price-Currents, and other Periodical Publications, from London, Edinburgh, Dublin, South America, the Cape of Good Hope, the Isle of France, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, China, Ceylon, Singapore, and Van Diemen's Land, together with all the Newspapers, &c. published in Sydney." Obviously designed for a wealthier reading public than his Library, the Reading Room's yearly subscriptions were a guinea for Sydney residents, half a guinea for those in the country, and a guinea and a half for persons "wishing to introduce a friend occasionally".

In 1832, also, a Circulating Library was established by the Bookseller Mr. Evans. His stock, advertised in the Monitor on 29 September 1832, included "a variety of BOOKS in lives, memoirs, novels, romances, adventures, miscellanies, etc. which are lent to read by the volume." This Library was taken over in 1834 by Mr. Brennand, once more back from Tasmania, who, in the Monitor of 6 December, offered as inducements to new subscribers half-price subscriptions, fifteen hundred extra volumes and a reading room, with coffee served, open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. By 1835, as announced in the Colonist on 5 March, his Australian Modern Circulating Library contained "upwards of Six Thousand Volumes". A further advertisement in the Colonist on 10 September 1835 advised readers of additions to Brennand's Library "of the
most popular works of 1834 and 1835, amounting to upwards of 100 volumes." This advertisement also included a very interesting list of books missing from the library, one of the few pieces of definite evidence as to what books were being read, or at least borrowed, in Sydney in the eighteen-thirties. Almost all the works listed were novels, most of them titles which keep recurring in advertisements and catalogues throughout this period:

The Abbot of Montserrat; Amelia, by Fielding; Arabian Nights; Book of the Boudoir [Lady Morgan, 1829]; Bravo of Venice [M.G. Lewis, 1804]; Benson Paulet [sic., 1833]; Drake's Winter Nights [1820]; Duchess of Berri [Dermontcourt, 1833]; Essays and Tales [M. Engel, 1808]; Falkland, a Tale [Bulwer Lytton, 1827]; Fortunate Country Maid [Chevalier de Mouhy, 1740]; Frank Orby [1833]; Guards, 3rd vol. [1827]; Guy Mannering; Highways and Byways; History of Chili and Buenos Ayres; Harrington and Ormond; Isabella [1823]; Innkeeper's Album [W.F. Deacon, 1823]; Ireton; London Jester; Matilda [Marquis of Normandy, 1825]; Mothers and Daughters; My Landlady's Tales; Mysterious Gentleman [Farmer, J. Corry, 1808]; New Arabian Nights; One Night; Our Village [Miss Mitford, 1824]; Our Countries; Oxonians 3rd vol. [S. Beazley, 1830]; Palmer; Parlour Portfolio [1820]; Polish Bandit [F. Latham, 1824]; Stolen Child [J. Galt, 1833]; The Spy by Cooper - This work is handsomely bound in 2 vols., black; Third Series of Tales of my Landlord; Tales of Humour [Gallantry and Romance, 1824]; Children of the Abbey [R.M. Roche, 1811]; Doings in London [G. Smeeton, 1828]; Honor O'Hara [A.M. Porter, 1826]; Heiress [Ellen Pickering, 1833].

Undeterred by these losses, Mr. Brennand continued to supply the latest popular works to the citizens of Sydney. In the Monitor for 16 June 1837, he had

... the honour of informing his numerous Subscribers and the Public generally, that he has (at considerable expense) added to his Library, a Large Selection of the most popular works of the day; amongst which will be found nearly all the
Novels written by the most admired authors, viz. — Peter Simple; Jacob Faithful; Last Days of Pompeii; Legends of the Rhine; the Student; etc. etc. etc. The price of subscription being very moderate T.B. feels confident many Persons will avail themselves of them to have access to the most rational amusement the approaching long winter evenings can afford, namely a Public Library.

Brennand's encomiums were perhaps inspired by competition from the new circulating library established by the Sydney bookseller James Tegg at the end of 1836. Such a move had been anticipated by the Australian on 27 July 1835;

... if Mr. Tegg were to form a circulating library, or "Book Society", like those at home, where works of science and literary character formed the rule, and novels the exception, he would probably meet with success; and though he might not, like the "Australian Subscription Library", obtain a grant of land, for his speculation, he would probably succeed as well in his undertaking as if he was enabled to make use of those, or any other questionable means for its advancement.

On 16 December 1836, this paper was able to report the adoption of its suggestion.

Mr. Tegg proposes, we hear, to establish forthwith a circulating library to include not the common run of novels and romances only, but standard works of serious and elegant study, elaborated by the best of authors. Such a thing is wanting, and why should it not pay, and well too? At all events, we hope it may do both.

Further details of Tegg's undertaking had been given in the Sydney Gazette three days earlier:

Mr. Tegg has it in contemplation to establish an extensive circulating library. The number of volumes to commence with will be 6,000, and every new publication of merit will be added to the stock as soon as obtainable from the mother country. ... An undertaking of this kind cannot fail to prosper; it is a desideratum in the literary department of the colony, for literature, next to money, is the scarcest article in the community.
Two more attempts to increase the circulation of this scarce commodity in Sydney were made in 1839. The first, advertised in the *Colonist* on 4 May, relied on maligned fiction for its success: "Mrs. Solomon, Late of London, Acquaints the Inhabitants of Sydney, that she has Opened her *Circulating Library*, with a Choice Selection of Novels and Romances, at London Terms." In the *Monitor* for 23 September, William Jones offered a possibly more varied "extensive and recent importation of books of all kinds, essential for a circulating library, amongst which are the best and latest publications, which may now be obtained by subscribers and others". A certain Georgina Kinnear also apparently intended to establish a library at Port Macquarie since, in the *Australian* for 10 September 1839, she advertised: "Wanted, Three Thousand Volumes Second-hand BOOKS, to consist of Standard Works, and the works of recent popular authors, to fill up a *Circulating Library*.”

So far, this chapter has concentrated on the books available for purchase or loan in Australia during the 'thirties, without producing much evidence as to what works were actually purchased, borrowed, or read - such evidence being much harder to come by. A study of private colonial libraries brings one closer to this truth, though even here, as some references have indicated, the precious volumes may
have been mouldering unread in a corner. It is impossible to say how many of the works in the extensive library of Robert Howe were read by him, but an examination of the catalogue of his books to be auctioned on 5 August 1830 does at least reveal his tastes as a collector. On 3 July 1830, the *Sydney Gazette* had commented

... It is well known that Mr. Howe had accumulated, through a series of years, and at an immense expense, one of the largest and choicest libraries in the Colony, comprising some of the most scarce and valuable books in the various branches of literature; and certainly no collection of equal magnitude and importance, with the exception perhaps of Major Goulburn's, was ever offered for sale in this part of the world.

Nearly twelve thousand volumes were listed in the *Catalogue*, just over a quarter of them works of imaginative literature. In keeping with Howe's Methodistical leanings, there were many works on theology and only a handful of novels — among them a few by Scott, Miss Porter's *Fast of St. Magdalen* (1818) and Susan Ferrier's *Inheritance* (1824). The collection was, in other respects, very representative of the tastes of the period, with a good proportion of histories, biographies and classics and works by Goldsmith, Johnson, Swift, Gay, Boswell, Byron, Burke, and many other more minor eighteenth-century literary figures. As an example of the range of books in the library, one may take those listed under the letter "A":
Accountant's Guide, 1 vol. [J.H. Wicks, 1802]
Adam's Lectures, 1 vol.
Alison, on Taste, 2 vols. [1811]
Autumn near the Rhine, 1 vol. [1818]
Accomplished Tutor, 1 vol. [T. Hodson, 1802]
Artist's Assistant, 1 vol. [1803]
Addison's Works, 6 vols.
Aspasio Vindicated, 1 vol.
Anecdotes of Lord Chesterfield and Johnson, 1 vol.
of the French Revolution, 1 vol.
Atkinson, on Agriculture in New South Wales, 1 vol.[1826]
Adventures of a Guinea, 3 vols.
Archenholt's History of Pirates, 1 vol. [1807]
Atlas to Guthrie's Geographical Grammar, 1 vol.
Allein's Life, 1 vol. [1822]
Annals of Commerce by M'Pherson, 4 vols.
Anson's Voyages, 1 vol.
Annual Register (odd vols.) 6
Australian Magazine, 1 vol. [1821]
Æsopæ Vitæ, 1 vol.
Æsop's Fables, Greek and Latin, 1 vol.
Adam's Principles of Latin and English, 1 vol. [1806]
Armstrong, Collins, and Rochester, 1 vol.
Akenside's Poetical Works, 1 vol.

Although there were no newspaper reports of the sale of Howe's library, the original owner of the Catalogue now in the Mitchell Library did record a few of the prices raised. The Memoirs of Count Segur (3 vols., 1825-27) went for 17/-,
Moore's Life of Sheridan (2 vols., 1825) for 22/-, Mill's British India (6 vols., 1818) for 34/-, Scott's Life of Napoleon Bonaparte (9 vols., 1827) for £3/10/-, fifty-eight volumes of the Methodist Magazine for 2/3 a volume and ten volumes of Ballantyne's Novelist's Library (1821-24) for £6/10/-.
With the exception of the last, all were sold considerably below their publication prices. If Howe had still been alive, he would, no doubt, have regretted that
novels were valued so much higher than more serious works.

Howe's library would seem to have been typical, in range and emphasis if not in quantity, of those possessed by the colonial gentry, the educated government officials, clergymen, doctors and lawyers, and the wealthy merchants and squatters. In No. 5 of John Lhotsky's Illustrations of the Present State and Future Prospects of the Colony of New South Wales (1836), there is a reference to two large private libraries, owned by the Australian College and Alexander McLeay.

The Colony may consider itself fortunate in possessing at this early stage of its existence two libraries of such extent as the above, besides that of the Colonial Secretary's, Mr. McLeay. The latter most probably from its number and costly works, is unrivalled in any other colony. (p.63)

Books were also frequently imported from England by private individuals. For example, the Sydney General Trade List and Mercantile Advertiser for 29 April 1830 lists as having recently arrived from London in the Australia:

"1 box books - Lieut. Col/ Allan. 1 box apparel and books - J. Glennie. 1 box apparel and books - James Bowman. 1 case apparel and books - James Mackintosh. 1 case books and papers - William Mackintosh. 1 case books and publications - G. Bunn." The last named was the husband of Anna Maria Bunn, author of the first Sydney novel, The Guardian (1838). Other evidence of the extent of private colonial libraries comes from a short story, "The Ten Sovereigns. A Tale Founded
on Colonial Facts", published in the fourth number of Lhotsky's Illustrations . . . of New South Wales in 1835. Its hero plans to combine his own and his father-in-law's collections into a Public Library of a thousand volumes, to be available on Sundays after church hours. More humble was the library belonging to Sabina Meredith of Newtown, Tasmania. On 14 February 1833, shortly before her marriage, she asked her foster mother to send her

... my books consisting of Zeluco [Dr. John Moore, 1822] - The pleasures of Hope [Campbell, 1803] - Roderic the Last of the Goths [Southey, 1816] - The Pirate [Scott, 1821] - the Chronicles of the Canongate [Scott, 1827-28] - Tragedies, bound in a marble cover as large as the Pirate - the Odyssey - Miss Affable and Woodstock [Scott, 1826] - and if I have omitted any perhaps you will remember.17

This library would seem to have been as representative of the tastes of the majority of colonists at this period as Howe's was of those of the more wealthy and educated.

Conclusive evidence as to what was being read in Australia during the 'thirties would hopefully be found in the pages of private journals and diaries. But unfortunately, in the busy pioneering life of a new colony, few records of reading seem to have been kept. The long journey from the old world to the new did, however, make for leisurely reading and writing, and shipboard journals are often helpful guides to

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17 From a letter in the Meredith, Grant and Haddon Family Papers, Tasmanian State Archives, Hobart.
the literary tastes of future colonists. Magazines as well as private journals were usually written during the voyage, and on 13 March 1830 the *Sydney Gazette* published extracts from one produced on board the *Lady Blackwood*. Among these was an interesting indication that some ship's captains provided reading matter for travellers: "Captain Dibbs offers to the passengers the use of his library, comprehending a useful selection of works, 10s. being stipulated as a fair remuneration for their perusal. A hint worthy the consideration of other commanders." Such a library was evidently also available on the *North Briton*, in which a young Scot, David Melville, sailed to Australia in 1838, since he recorded in his diary on 23 November 1838 the

Strange fact that I should have found on board the *North Briton* what I have long sought for in vain through several libraries in Edinburgh, "The Adventures of a Younger Son". 18 I got it yesterday and absolutely hugged the volume I was so much pleased and I intend being economical of my treasure as good things of the kind are scarce here as well as elsewhere.

Melville's tastes were evidently more literary than most; at various other stages during the voyage he noted in his diary, now in the Mitchell Library, that he was reading not only Byron and Shelley. For example, on 27 September 1838, he wrote

I sat in the top today until my back was nearly scorched reading Schelley's [sic] Queen Mab to my no slight satisfaction. I do think it a great production in fact and notwithstanding his age the work of a mind more than mature.

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18 By E.J. Trelawney, (1830).
Other passengers do not seem to have been such persistent readers as Melville. On 27 August 1838, the day after sailing, he noted "There were many books produced on deck today but very little use made of them", though the sorrows of leaving home may have had something to do with this. However, in a diary kept by John Jones on a voyage from Plymouth to Sydney in the *Sesostris* between May and September 1839, there is only one mention of reading. On 25 June, he recorded "Have just concluded reading the first *Volume* of Moore's *Life of Sheridan."

A few other comments on books read can be found in diaries kept after arrival in the various colonies. Thomas Lempriere, while a government official at Port Arthur in 1834, wrote in his diary on 2 June, "Dr. Ross sent me some Books, amuzed with the life of Benevento Cellini." 19 Two diaries of women colonists, now in the Mitchell Library, also contain an odd reference to literature. Mary Phoebe Broughton, daughter of Bishop Broughton, noted on 23 February 1837, "I wrote to Mary Hely and she sent us the 'Black Dwarf' and 'Old Mortality'". More educational and uplifting, if less typical, were the works read by Mrs. William Mitchell, wife of the Chaplain at Swan River. On 21 January 1839, she "Began reading 'the Sea' by Robert Mudie",

19 From his Diary at Port Arthur, 1834–36, in the Mitchell Library.
while on 11 February she was "much pleased with reading the 'Listener' by Caroline Fry." Mrs. Mitchell's diary entry for 30 March 1840 gives what is perhaps the first record in Australia of that Victorian institution, communal reading: "Since last Friday we have of an evening read aloud. Miss Irwin has read to us the life of Emily Rowland - tonight one of Hannah Moore's [sic] Sacred Dramas (Moses and the Bulrushes)."

All these examples come, of course, from the gentry. A rare and valuable record of working class reading in this period is, however, found in Alexander Harris's Settlers and Convicts (1847). Like members of the gentry, Harris, or his persona "an Emigrant Mechanic", at least, apparently had "a few standard books to read on the voyage" to Australia in the 'twenties, but attributes his later "becoming passionately fond of books" (p.85) to chancing to buy an unclaimed auction lot:

... The great quantities of sales by auction, both of new and second-hand property, at this time in Sydney was to a new-comer not the least remarkable circumstance that presented itself. There had been one this day at the rooms of one of the principal auctioneers ... Some young gentleman had had a lot knocked down to him, but had failed to comply with some point or other of the terms of sale, nor could he be heard of at the address he gave. The lot therefore was returned. As R- and his acquaintance "yarned", I

20. The Sea (1835) was evidently natural history; The Listener (1830) a religious work.

took up one of the books to amuse myself. Its title was "A Chemical Catechism, by Parkes". Happening to open upon the experiments, my attention became engaged to such a degree that in the next five minutes a new world lay expanded before me. Of course I now know that the facts I met with in this volume were novel and wonderful to me only because I was ignorant. But at the time the curiosity and interest they awakened in me were such that I think I should have given 5l. for the book if I could not have secured it for less. However, I was much more fortunate than that. The auctioneer asked me the same for the whole lot as it had been knocked down for, but would not sell the single volume. The sum required was a few shillings short of 8l., and there were nearly a hundred volumes, large and small, old and new. Though it was my first deal in books it seemed clear to me that it was a very good one; and again, I felt sure I could always sell them again for the same money after reading them. I saw too that this was the very thing I had always wanted to make a bush life pleasant. I always liked my work so much that the day passed before I was aware; but the evenings, especially in winter, were the same dull thing over and over and over again, smoking, talking about good or bad trees, making and drinking tea we did not want, "chaffing", playing at cards for inches of tobacco; such were our recreations for hours in the long evenings, or on days when there was no work going on. I must own, however, that I felt a little intimidated at attempting this innovation on the manners of my class. I was quite sure I should get laughed at, and very likely get some not very soothing nickname for it. But the temptation was irresistible. (pp.90–91)

The collection thus acquired was typical of the books usually offered in auction sales and found in private libraries during this period:

... the book on Chemistry already named; Volney's Ruins of Empires; a number of the Oxford Encyclopaedia, containing "Astronomy"; Hume's Essays; several volumes of Byron's and Scott's works; Sibylline Leaves by Coleridge; a large volume of lectures on Metaphysics by Professor Browne of one of the Scotch universities; Euclid; a number of odd volumes of history by Robertson, Hume and Smollet, and others; and lastly, a quantity of little volumes with and without title-pages, among which were a Latin Grammar and a very incomplete Latin Dictionary with the mark of a red-hot poker nearly half through it. (pp.91–92)
Only one copy of *Sibylline Leaves* seems to have been advertised for auction in Sydney in the years Harris spent in Australia, from the library of the Rev. Pinkerton, although this did not contain some of the other works mentioned. Possibly the incident, like many others in *Settlers and Convicts*, did not occur exactly as described, or perhaps the auction in question was never advertised or not advertised in detail.

After purchasing the books, the narrator and his mate R-- go cedar cutting in the bush near R--'s home. His family's library, if one may call it such, seems to have been as scanty as most bush collections of the time: "part of a volume of Cook's Voyages, and an old Gentleman's Magazine, which had been in the family from time immemorial, and of which I believe every member of the family, and several of the neighbours, knew half the pages by heart." (p.95) In consequence, the auction purchase is particularly welcome to R--'s sister M--, whom the narrator is later to marry:

... The books, too, seemed to have done wonders for her; so I resolved, after we had been at home a few days, to go to Sydney and buy a good collection. My former purchase I had read till I knew them almost by heart. It never struck me, however, at this time that there was any one course in acquiring knowledge better than another, so that my selection could not be expected to be a very wise one. My notion was simply this: for myself, more books of history, sufficient to give me a clear and connected view of the progress of mankind from the earliest period; a treatise on the more advanced branches of algebra; a new *Euclid*, my first being
among the books lost in the flood at the brush; and Watt's Logic, of which a few leaves only had come into my possession among the fragments in the former lot: for M—, chiefly poetry; it seemed to me her favourite reading; and probably I was not much wrong in considering that the actualities of life are so forced on women in new countries, that they acquire inevitably from them their education in matters of common sense, and so may properly enough indulge in book studies of an almost exclusively imaginative cast. It turned out, however, that I became relieved from the responsibility of the selection. She got a friend to take charge of her mother for a day, and went to Sydney with me, and chose quite a different lot from what I should have chosen for her, and fewer by far. I bought just what I had laid down to myself that I would buy, and, additionally, about fifteen numbers of the Edinburgh Review. This latter part of my selection was from this time for some years forward my favourite reading; I find it to be the authority which directed more or less my views on most subjects. (pp.107-8)

Besides these insights into his own reading, seemingly of a much more serious cast than was usual with working men, Harris provides a few glimpses of other bushmen's interest in books. As with the more prolific evidence from the eighteen-forties, it appears that most were fond of reading, but had few works to indulge in. Harris mentions a stockman "smoking his pipe and reading some worn old fragment of a book, his whole library." (pp.170-1) Later, he says of the shepherds,

It has often struck me that there is no class to which the philanthropy of Britain could be so happily applied as to these isolated shepherds. A very large proportion of them can read, and where they can get books are very fond of reading; whilst the influence that reading exercises upon them is as beneficial as it is evident wherever the experiment is made. Some years after this period I supplied some stations in the way of loan with such books of my own as the men thought fit to come and fetch out a lot I had selected as fit for them and brought up the country. I did not lose a single volume; and the effect on the men's personal behavior was markedly beneficial. (pp.188-9)
In his autobiography, *Religio Christi*²², Harris also refers to the shortage of reading matter in the bush:

... at this time it was not once in twelve months or two years that I met with a book of any kind. A Sydney newspaper once, perhaps, in five or six months, was the full measure of my reading. The progress of American settlement in this respect is very different from that which was going on in Australia in my time. (p.194)

On this occasion, about 1835, he did, however, chance upon a copy of the *Quarterly Review* in a rum-seller's hut. From another part of the autobiography, it would appear that Harris had had a much earlier and more extensive acquaintance with literature than had the narrator of *Settlers and Convicts*.

My education, meantime, so far as education consists in the exercise and development of the strictly intellectual powers upon literary subjects, had been everything that it was possible to render it. I had access to two libraries of several thousand volumes each, and there was scarcely a volume with the substance of which I remained unacquainted. All the great books of Greece and Rome were there; all that is registered as classic since the departure of the dark ages and revival of letters in Europe. There were the pages of theology and of mathematics; of poetry and of criticism; of Christian and of heathen philosophies; of law and of all the branches of natural science; of history and of metaphysics - all profèssing their treasure to me from the first day on which I could read. And since the thought first occurred to me in after years, I have met with no greater enigma than that of how I contrived to read such immense quantities, and forget so little that I read. (p.53)

Such a large and varied collection of works would, of course, have been available to few Australians in the eighteen-thirties, and certainly not to members of the working class.

²²Originally serialised in the *Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia) during 1858; reprinted as *The Secrets of Alexander Harris* (1961). All references are to the later edition.
Town workers would, however, have had more opportunities of obtaining books than those in the bush. They could have purchased some of the cheap works then just beginning to appear, and patronized Mansfield's "Library for the Poor", the Mechanics' Institutes' libraries, the Hobart Wesleyan Library or the more expensive circulating libraries, but unfortunately no records of their reading seem to have survived. Perhaps a few were inspired by this praise of the delights of reading in an essay, "A Wet Day", printed in the Launceston **Cornwall Chronicle** on 15 September 1838.

To those, then, who find the tyrant - **ENNUUI, fasten upon them during these vacant hours, let me recommend an ineffable source of comfort to them - A LIBRARY. Let me impress upon your mind, gentle reader, some idea of the value of that everlasting mine - a GOOD Library, and the comparative ease with which it is obtained. Let me instill into your heart the beauties that inlay every crevice in the works of a good and great author, (for such should be the best known) for by nothing can your ideas of the good be more enlarged, and the richness of your understanding displayed, than by these borrowed treasures.

Truly, thou must not rate me on the score of being too poor to buy books. Go to Mr. Stracey's or Mr. Bell's Auction Mart, and thou will there obtain the " Beauties of William Shakespeare" for the moderate sum of eighteen pence; and in that there is a thought for every day - nay, every hour in the year. Thoughts that his successors, generation after generation have re-echoed, and vainly attempted original ones. Glance into William Shakespeare, and spring in all her charms, summer and autumn in all their loveliness, and winter in all his terrors come before us. The tender violet springs up from the kindred sod, the gay lark opens the day with her song at heaven's gate, and the bright dew glitters from every herb and every blade of grass. Music he describes sweet as itself. All the intrinsic beauties of the heavenly muse are assembled in his lays as "beauteous rubies and sparkling diamonds" in the bottom of a crystalline spring. The bird of night which he describes, sings not more amorously, nor touches the heart of the lorn-night-wanderer more softly.
than does the sweet melody of this immortal bard. Elves
sport in moonlit revelry. Love-tales are whispered - fairy
songs are his chief delight. To cite some beautiful passages
were too long a task; they are boundless as the azure sky
or the rolling ocean.

Without exertion from the people (who are the true
rulers) nothing can thrive. I am confident, with an enthu-
siastic spirit on THEIR part, for the Advancement of
Literature and the Fine Arts, Tasmania would gradually ascend
from the degradation in which she is at present plunged.
She is now like a lovely rose-tree, rent asunder by the
violent gust of Faction and party feeling; her bloom is
fading with an untimely frost, and her branches are torn
by the tempest of discord. Why is it thus? Was Vandemoria
formed but to propagate the convict's foul breath? or was
she meant to afford a peaceable abode for the industrious
emigrant - a place such as that where the Poet painted
Gertrude and her lover †? Surely yes! and the time may
YET come, when we may look up, smiling in sunshine, and our
little Isle may be proclaimed once more the Queen of the
South Seas. . . .
† See a beautiful Poem - "Gertrude of Wyoming," by T. Campbell.

No doubt these wishes were common to some settlers in
all the Australian colonies at this time. As Nadel has pointed
out in Australia's Colonial Culture, the desire to produce
harmony among the disparate elements of colonial society
through the development of a common literary culture was
shared by many in mid-nineteenth-century Australia. Book-
sales, societies and libraries could play important parts
in achieving this, but, ultimately, success or failure
depended on the exertions of the people.
CHAPTER IV

AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE: 1830 - 1839

Better be employed in writing bad poetry than squander time in idleness and vice.¹

Few differences exist between the literary scene in Australia in the eighteen-thirties and that of the previous decade. Several new newspapers were founded, the most prominent being the Sydney Herald, and once again some magazines had generally brief existences. Of these, the most interesting was the Hobart Town Magazine. Hobart, too, saw the publication of the first Australian novel, Henry Savery's Quintus Servinton (1830). In Sydney, James Martin produced his highly derivative collection of essays, The Australian Sketch Book (1838), and Anna Maria Bunn her novel, The Guardian (1838), while a few more volumes of mediocre poetry appeared. The bulk of Australian imaginative writing, however, continued to be made up of the numerous verses printed in newspapers and magazines, although most of the authors prominent in the eighteen-twenties ceased publication. Laurence Halloran died in 1831, but his son Henry proved an even more prolific thrower-off of verses. Charles Harpur, the best early Australian poet, also commenced publishing in this decade. While much of the newspaper and

¹Ralph Mansfield, "To Correspondents", Sydney Gazette, 28 September 1830.
magazine poetry was still closely modelled on eighteenth-century conventions, the influence of Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley becomes more apparent during the 'thirties.

I. Poetry

Since, with the exception of the Hobart Town Magazine, Australian magazines of the 'thirties lasted only a few months, most original verse was again printed in the newspapers. While the majority of poems were still on love, death or humorous themes, there was a greater variation in the proportions of each published in individual newspapers. In general, the poetry of this decade reveals an increasingly melancholy tone, with more writers bemoaning their unhappiness in exile or bereavement. In love poetry, too, mistresses tend to be denounced for their falseness rather than praised for their beauty. Two hundred and fifty original verses appeared in the Sydney Gazette during the 'thirties, with about a third of them making some reference to Australia. A third were on death and exile themes, a fifth on love, and another fifth humorous. More variation in subject matter existed than in the previous decade, with an increasing number of pieces of natural description, possibly a product of Romantic influences. There was a marked decline in the number of original poems published in the Gazette as the decade wore on; from a peak of sixty in 1832, numbers dropped
gradually to only two in 1839. Later editors were evidently not so kind as Ralph Mansfield, who resigned in June 1832. On 30 September 1830, he had printed

The Editor hopes his taste in poetry will not be measured by the original pieces he inserts, for to that taste he often does violence for the sake of encouraging every indication of a love of letters among his juvenile readers. Better be employed in writing bad poetry than squander time in idleness and vice.

The same decline is, however, noticable in the amount of original poetry printed by the Australian and the Sydney Herald and may in part be attributed to the number of new papers established in Sydney in the second half of the 'thirties. One of these in particular, the Sydney Times, published a great deal of verse, up to four original, if generally atrocious, items appearing in each issue. Authors tended not to confine their allegiance to any one paper: poems by Henry Halloran, for example, can be found in nearly every newspaper and magazine of the period. As before, much of the verse was anonymous but, besides Halloran, amongst the Gazette's poets were John McGarvie, Charles Tompson, Edward O'Shaughnessy, G. James Macdonald, M.A. Palmer and Charles McDonald.

Five poems by John McGarvie, as in 1829 signed "M., Anambaba", were published in the Gazette during 1830. Their titles are a fair reflection of the most common poetic themes of the time: "My youth - my age", on the problems of growing old; "My Last Dollar! -A Rhapsody", the humorous story of a dollar's wanderings; "Imitation of the 3d Ode, 1st Book of

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The identification is again based on manuscript and proof copies of the poems found among McGarvie's papers in the Mitchell Library.
Horace"; "The Home of My Heart" and "The Departure". Although competently written, these have no particular intrinsic or extrinsic interest. John's brother, William McGarvie, was one of the founders of the *Sydney Herald* in 1831, and, besides editorials and leading articles, John contributed three poems to the new paper in that year. Signed "M.M., Barambah", as before, they can be identified as McGarvie's from the original manuscripts in the Mitchell Library. Two, "Cupid on bread and water" and "The Four Wishes", were whimsical love poems; the third, "The Two Dogs. A Tale of the Times", a humorous comment on the new dog licensing laws. In 1832, McGarvie came to Sydney to take charge of a second Presbyterian congregation, and these new duties plus his work at the Australian College, founded by Lang in 1831, and his leader writing for the *Herald*, seem to have prevented him spending any more time on poetry.

Poems by two other authors prominent in the eighteen-twenties were also printed by the *Gazette* in the early 'thirties. "Australia. A Translation of the Latin 'Prize Poem' of S. Smith, a Student at the Hyde Abbey School, Winchester, published in the Sydney Gazette of December 17, 1829", 13 February 1830, was the only signed poem by Charles Tompson to appear in this period. More prolific was Edward O'Shaughnessy, who published one piece in 1830, four in 1831 and three in 1832. Like his earlier verses, these had a prevailing
melancholy tone, dealing with topics like the death of George IV, disappointment in love and the worthlessness of all human endeavour. Ralph Mansfield's encouragement of colonial poets, however, was not continued by O'Shaughnessy, who became editor of the Gazette in June 1833. Nor did any further poems appear under his signature in the Gazette, or in the Herald to which he transferred in 1835. But he did perhaps write "Sweet William's Farewell. An Affecting Ditty on a Fashionable Departure for Port Macquarie", published anonymously in the Herald on 17 September 1835, a satire on his former Gazette colleague, William Watt.

G. James Macdonald contributed five verses to the Gazette during 1831 and 1832. The first, "Lines, Written at 'Lake Farm', Port Macquarie. The Property of A.C. Innes, Esq.", printed on 11 January 1831 and reprinted in the first number of the New South Wales Magazine in 1833, described evening falling on the lake in terms derived from the English Romantics. In the "To Correspondents" column of the Gazette on 8 January, Mansfield had called these lines "exquisitely beautiful", continuing, "We earnestly hope the writer will cultivate the talent he possesses in so high a degree. For such pieces we shall ever be grateful." Macdonald's other Gazette poems, "Song of the Spirits of the Storm", and untitled verses on music, the loss of youth and an unhappy love affair, also show Romantic influences, though these had been less pronounced in
the four poems he published in the *Australian* in 1827. The latter paper printed only one piece by Macdonald in the 'thirties, on 15 August 1837. Entitled "Arnot Lyle's Song", it consisted of well-written verses supposedly sung by this Scottish bard.² Three of the four verses by Charles McDonald printed in the *Gazette* on 6 and 27 May 1837 also had "bardic" overtones: the love poems "Song - To Arabella for my Lute" and its "Answer", and "The Rescued Harp", on the overthrow of a tyrant. McDonald, who was blind and impecunious, tended to see himself as the poor, friendless minstrel so often depicted in the poetry of this period. His work will be discussed in more detail later, in relation to his publication, the *Sydney Coronal*.

The Celts' reputation as singers is certainly borne out by the names of four of these authors, if not usually by their work. A similar background was common to the most prolific poet of the decade, Henry Halloran, whose earliest published piece seems to have been "H****'s" love ditty "To Caroline", in the *Gazette* for 25 September 1830. Seventeen of his verses appeared in the *Gazette* during 1831, mostly on such melancholy topics as death, unhappy love and shipwreck. The last theme was, indeed, quite prominent in colonial poetry, presumably as a lasting result of the hazards of the long

²Macdonald's other verse and prose contributions to the *Colonist* and various magazines are dealt with later in this chapter.
voyage from England. In general, Halloran's early poems are poor and extremely derivative, much what one would expect from a youth of twenty who was never to soar very high. "The Dream", 13 April 1831, describing a midnight visit to the tomb of a lost love, is written in bad blank verse, replete with all the eighteenth-century melancholy trappings. Byron had an even more heavy and lasting influence on Halloran's work, as is readily apparent from "A Manfredian Soliloquy", 9 July 1831, where, in the midst of his black despair, the speaker asks for a quick death. Two of Halloran's 1831 Gazette poems also dealt with the sufferings of Greece, whilst his early adoption of the cloak of the melancholy bard can be seen in "The Poet", 19 September 1831, and "To the Author of the Beautiful Stanzas Addressed to H.H.", 28 January 1832. The latter was a reply to "Lines, Addressed to the Author of the Poem Published Under the Signature of H.H.", printed in the Gazette two days earlier, which predicted great fame for Halloran, in verse rather better than his own. Though most of its praise was unwarranted, Halloran did at least show application and versatility. Among his ten poems in the Gazette during 1832 were "Three Sonnets, On the Birth, Temptation, and Crucifixion of the Messiah", "Opinion", in which he waxed very severe at critics, young poets and plagiarists, "Anacreontic Verses" on the joys of wine and
women, and a "Fragment, entitled 'They Met', In Imitation of Keats". In view of the neglect of Keats' poetry in early Australia, the last poem and the editor's comments on it are particularly interesting: "This 'Fragment' by H.H. differs from his ordinary style, yet partakes largely of the poetical feeling which pervades his pieces generally. It cannot fail to be relished by the lovers of Keats." Any lover of Keats, however, would have little appetite for this extremely poor imitation.

Halloran's poetic talents are better displayed in his humorous verses on marriage. On 17 June 1833, the Sydney Herald printed "Yrneh Narollah's" "Offer of Marriage", and three replies to this appeared in the Gazette on 22, 27 and 29 June. The Mitchell Library copy of the Gazette has a manuscript identification of Halloran as author of the second of these, from "Sylvia Sentiment", while in the third, "To a Certain Vain Young Gentleman, In Answer to His Advertisement for a Wife, and in Allusion to a Dubious Letter from Miss Juliet", a girl "of the Red Rover" accuses him of writing the first reply. Perhaps he was responsible for all three! It also seems likely that Halloran wrote two humorous epistles from "Flirtessa Fortune, Dowager Hall", printed in the Gazette on 28 July and 18 August 1832. The first "Original Doggerel. In Imitation of Juvenal's 'Botany Bay Eclogues'", was a proposal of marriage to the editor of
the *Gazette*, the second a description of the various colonial suitors who clamoured for her hand. Further comments on colonial marital mores had been made in two "Botany Bay Eclogues", presumably not by Halloran, published by the *Gazette* on 14 and 17 July 1832. Parodies of Robert Southey's "Botany Bay Eclogues", they were much coarser than anything written by Halloran, and the nearest approach to the popular ballads of the time to receive newspaper publication. The first, "Australian Courtship. An excellent new song, as it ought to be sung in the Theatre Royal, Sydney, By Mr. B - t L - y, in the character of the TICKET-OF- LEAVE HOLDER", has, like most of the ballads, strong Irish characteristics:

The Currency Lads may fill their glasses,  
And drink to the health of the Currency Lasses;  
But the lass I adore, the lass for me,  
Is the lass in the Female Factory.

O! Molly's her name, and her name is Molly,  
Although she was tried by the name of Polly;  
She was tried and was cast for death at Newry,  
But the Judge was bribed and so were the Jury.

She got "death recorded" in Newry town,  
For stealing her mistress's watch and gown;  
Her little boy Paddy can tell you the tale,  
His father was turnkey of Newry jail.

The first time I saw the comely lass  
Was at Parramatta, going to mass;  
Says I, "I'll marry you now in an hour,"  
Says she, "Well, go and fetch Father Power."

But I got into trouble that very same night!  
Being drunk in the street I got into a fight,  
A constable seized me - I gave him a box -  
And was put in the watch-house and then in the stocks.
O! it's very unaisy as I may remember,
To sit in the stocks in the month of December;
With the north wind so hot, and the hot sun right over,
O! sure, and it's no place at all for a lover!

"It's worse than the tread-mill", says I, "Mr. Dunn,"
"To sit here all day in the hate of the sun!!"
"Either that or a dollar," says he, "for your folly," —
But if I had a dollar I'd drink it with Molly.

But now I am out again, early and late,
I sigh and I cry at the Factory gate,
"O! Mrs. R------, late Mrs. F------n,
O! won't you let Molly out very soon?"

"Is it Molly McGuigan?" says she to me,
"Is it not?" says I, for she know'd it was she.
"Is it her you mean that was put in the stocks
"For beating her mistress, Mrs. Cox?"

"O! yes and it is, madam, pray let me in,
"I have brought her a half-pint of Cooper's best gin,
"She likes it as well as she likes her own mother,
"O! now let me in, madam, I am her brother."

So the Currency Lads may fill their glasses,
And drink to the health of the Currency Lasses;
But the lass I adore, the lass for me,
Is a lass in the Female Factory.

The second poem, ironically entitled "The Happy Family",
tells of a settler who married a convict woman and, in
consequence, is frequently made a cuckold. It has not been
possible to identify the author, who used the pseudonym
"Juvenal."

Unknown, too, are the authors of four other attempts
to describe the colonial scene, printed in the Gazette
in the early 'thirties. A much more refined humorous poem
than the "Eclogues" appeared on 27 March 1830 with the note:
SIR,

The enclosed fragment was found on the Parramatta-road a short time back; should you insert it in your valuable Paper, it will at least convince the fair writers that their sorrows are well known.

Yours, etc.

INVENTIO.

THE PLEASURES OF SYDNEY

Ann

Dear Sydney, adieu!.
Our coach is in view,
We must to the bush once again.

Lucy

How dull we shall be,
When no longer we see,
Th' dear red-coats, altho' they're so vain.

Ann

Oh ---- street,
My visit so sweet,
To you I shall never forget.

Lucy

And then the Domain,
How shall we sustain,
Our sorrows at parting with it?

Ann

How thoughts o'er me hover!
Not e'en love could discover,
On this globe such a charming retreat.

Lucy

As all may procure,
If they will but endure
A walk to Macquarie's fair seat.

Ann

But think of the ride
On the fine South-head road,
In carriages of every degree.

Lucy

And if with your beau
We happened to go,
How delightful to gaze on the sea!
Ann
Yes, and think of days yore,
When we stood so forlore,
Looking over the side of our barque.

Lucy
How little we thought,
Fifty years could have wrought,
Such a place as that darling Hyde Park.

Ann
And then there's the band,
How delightful to stand
With your thoughts to dear England conveyed.

Lucy
By the melodious notes,
Which are poured from their throats;
But mind that you stand in the shade...

Ann
And likewise to call,
On the * * *
* * * * *

An even more interesting poem, "The Gin", by "Hugo", 16 July 1831, is a rare early appeal for justice for the aborigines. It largely consists of the thoughts of the Gin, waiting at Coogee for her husband's return from the temptations of "Sydney streets". The first five stanzas contain one of the most detailed and sensitive descriptions of Australian scenery to appear in any early poem, the picture of the gum tree in stanza two being particularly outstanding:

"Where spreads the sloping shaded turf
By Coodge's [sic] smooth and sandy bay,
And roars the ever ceaseless surf,
I've built my gunya for to-day."
"The gum-tree with its glitt'ring leaves
   Is sparkling in the sunny light,
And round my leafy home it weaves
   Its dancing shade with flow'rets bright.

"And beauteous things around are spread;
   The burwan, with its graceful bend
And cone of nuts, and o'er my head
   The flowering vines their fragrance lend.

"The grass-tree, too, is waving there,
   The fern-tree weeping o'er the stream,
The fan-palm, curious as rare,
   And warretaws with crimson beam.

"Around them all the glecina
   Its dainty tendrils careless winds,
Gemming their green with blossoms gay,
   One common flower each bush-shrub finds.

In the remainder of this fairly long poem, the gin bemoans her husband's long absence and the destruction of their former paradisal life by the coming of the white man. Despite certain solecisms, such as the description of the fan-palm as "curious as rare" and the later command to the whites, "Avaunt ye from our merry land!", the author displays a sympathetic understanding of the gin's feelings. He ends his poem with a plea to the colonists not to slight these people whose lands they have usurped.

"The Gin" is an example of a melancholy "death" poem; at the opposite pole is "Australian Melodies. No. 1", 6 August 1831, a love poem, though, because of its Australian references, not a particularly typical one. Here, "Yaralla" successfully manages to introduce colonial images into a traditional English form:
'Tis sweet to hear the bell bird's pipe,  
Like sheep-bells faintly tinkling —  
To see the cloud, o'er corn fields ripe,  
Its rain-drops gently sprinkling;  
And rainbow's arch, of varied hue,  
Extending o'er the tropic blue.

'Tis sweet to sit in shady bower,  
'Midst shrubs with heav'ns dew weeping —  
See Sol his rays, at evening hour,  
In misty splendour steeping;  
When but the lovely curlew's tale  
Disturbs the silence of the vale.

But sweeter far the native maid,  
Of youthful suitor dreaming —  
And sweeter far the auburn shade  
Whence her blue eyes are beaming;  
And sweet will be N-nd-or-e's bell  
When't doth the nuptial morning tell.

A much more unusual poem appeared anonymously on 26 April 1832 under the title "Australia. A Rhodomontade". Although dealing with the fairly common theme of the changes in Australia since settlement, its style is vastly different from the usual eighteenth-century platitudes and has a curiously modern air.

In days of yore  
Ere Tasman, Cook, and Banks  
Had played their pranks  
Upon this shore;  
How calm and desolate it must have been!

Nought to be seen  
Excepting now and then,  
An emu cock or hen,  
Or serpent green;  
Or, strange anomaly! the kangaroo!

Nought to be heard  
Save the dark native's cry,  
Or jarring minstrelsy,  
The voice of birds,  
That through the mighty forest rang!
But, hark! a troop of blacks!
There they go bang;
With waddle, womarang,
    My stars! what whacks
Are laid on head and shoulders!

My kingdom for a fight!
The gins scream out;
The chieftans lay about,
    To see this is a sight;
And then to hear their yabber, jabber!

Strange unintelligible lingo!
To make out a single word,
Would be very, very hard,
    It would, by Jingo!
For they talk faster than any Frenchman!

A change comes o'er my dream!
Men at work with axe and hammer!
Mallet, chisel, plough and rammer!
    In truth it would seem,
These new men are all natives of Great Britain!

Here let me sing thy praise,
Great mistress of the seas!
Compared with thee Chinese
    Are but as the sun's rays,
In very wet or cloudy weather!

Metamorphosed is the scene!
Land ploughed and houses built,
Field sown, and cattle kilt;
    No more silence here, I ween!
How very noisy are all civilized people!

Windmills spring up!
And, as you draw more near,
Huge stores and wharfs appear,
    While here lies a group
Of ships in "most admir'd disorder!"

There smoke the steamers!
There the small craft ply,
And there the tall ships lie,
    Phoebus! what dreamers!
To say Australia would not prosper!
Doubtless she will
At no very distant day,
Though when, we cannot say,
Exert her mighty skill
As mistress of the Southern Hemisphere!

Like the Sydney Gazette, the Australian ran throughout
the eighteen-thirties, publishing much the same amount of
original poetry, with almost the same proportions of love,
death and humorous verses. Again, about a third of these
contained some reference to Australia, although a greater
number of political satires appeared in the Australian,
especially before Governor Darling's recall to England in
1831. As with the Gazette, there were fewer original poems
published at the end of the period than at the beginning;
three in 1839 as against sixty-two in 1830. There was,
however, much more variation in the Australian's totals,
since forty-three poems were printed in 1835 and only
three in 1832. Besides the inevitable Henry Halloran,
Charles Harpur and Eliza Dunlop published several poems
in the Australian during this period. Eighteen verses by
Halloran appeared in the Australian between 1833 and 1836;
at the same time he was also contributing to the Sydney
Herald and the Sydney Times, although none of his poems
were published by the Gazette after 1833. Halloran's
Australian poetry mostly consisted of melancholy laments on
the loss of love and the general unpleasantness of life,
plus a couple of Latin translations and two of the addresses
to sleeping infants so popular in this period.

A melancholy tone also predominated in the fourteen poems by Charles Harpur which appeared in the *Australian* between 1833 and 1838. Harpur's earliest identifiable poems had been printed in the *Currency Lad* on 4 and 11 May 1833; when that paper closed soon after, he sent his verses to the *Australian* and later also published in the *Sydney Times* and the *Monitor*. Although Harpur had been born in Australia, his first poem in the *Australian* dealt with the common theme of shipwreck. "The Wreck", 20 December 1833, describes this disaster in fairly conventional terms, though with slightly more use of imagery and originality in metre than most poems on the theme. Most of Harpur's six poems in the 1835 *Australian* were also on standard topics: "Verses occasioned by the death of a child from the measles"; "The Hectic to Her Nurse"; "The Broken Heart's Carouse"; "Love's Memories" and "Memory's Genius", the latter on the joys of remembering a time when the world seemed full of hope. As can be seen, Harpur initially also adopted the melancholy stand taken by Henry Halloran; many of his early poems were on themes previously employed by Halloran, with whom, according to J. Normington-Rawling, he felt a continuous rivalry.³

Normington-Rawling also claims most of Harpur's early poems were based on personal experience. The extreme conventionality of his themes, when seen in the context of the other poetry of the time, would tend to deny this, although the last stanza of the poem on the dead child has an originality and power that perhaps came from real grief. Another Harpur poem, in the *Australian* of 9 June 1835, "To Imagination", does, however, have a more unusual and personal theme, and is the best of these early items. In it Harpur, once more taking a melancholy stance, describes the blessings of imagination in a world where "nothing real deserves the name of joy".

The remaining poems by Harpur published in the *Australian* during the eighteen-thirties were also nearly all on fairly common themes. Four of them were love poems, though of a happier tone than any he had written previously. "Delia", 24 January 1837, a very conventional sonnet, likened his beloved to the morning star, while "Woman", 17 February 1837, clumsily praised women as the fire and savour of life, and outlined all their effects on men. The last stanza of this poem is interesting for its reference to Shelley:

0 more than lovely woman! thou
To him art Life, and Light, and Fame!
'Twere death in aught he'd nobly do
To think no Fair approv'd the same;
He would not care to strike the lyre
With Shelly's [sic] rage, or Byron's fire,
Or deck him with Napoleon's wreath,
Unless the mead of praise sweet woman most should breathe.

Normington-Rawling notes the inconsistency between a MS. note by Harpur saying he had not read any Shelley before being presented with a set of his works by Henry Parkes in 1844, and the comment in his thanks for this gift that Shelley was "perhaps my greatest favourite". (pp.97-8)

While the reference in "Woman" does not necessarily prove that Harpur had read Shelley by 1837, it does indicate an early awareness of his work. Two further love poems were "Love's Even Song", 18 July 1837, and "To Mary", 1 June 1838. The former, a charming light piece, is the best of Harpur's early love poetry. A more melancholy tone is apparent in "Wisdom", 11 July 1837, where Harpur philosophizes on the worthlessness of life, and "The Lament of the Bard (Suggested By the Story of Chatterton)", 11 August 1837. Although Harpur may have felt a personal interest in this theme, it was also part of the common stock of colonial poetry. To come upon Harpur's "Milton" in the Australian of 30 December 1836 is, however, to be convinced of his standing as the best early Australian poet. The title alone is a shock, amongst the usual poor and conventional love and death pieces, and the stanzas that follow are not wholly unworthy of their great theme.

Nine poems by Charles Harpur's elder brother, Joseph Jehoshaphat, also appeared in the Australia in 1830 and 1831,
usually signed "J.J.H., Parramatta", sometimes "A Corn Stalk" with or without the initials. In no way equal to his brother's poetry, these were all highly conventional in style and mostly dealt with love. Three, however, praised Australian patriots: Macquarie, Wentworth and, in a typical ballad beginning "Ye sons of the Ring, come and listen awhile", the Australian boxer who had recently overcome his English opponent. In very different mood were the five poems by Eliza Hamilton Dunlop printed in the Australian in 1838 and 1839, under the general title "Songs of an Exile". Although only two dealt specifically with the exile's longing for home and family, the others were equally melancholy death poems. The most interesting of these is the fourth, "The Aboriginal Mother, (From Myall's Creek)", printed on 13 December 1838. Here, the mother mourns her husband's death in the Myall's Creek massacre in decorous eighteenth-century language even more incongruous than that found in "The Gin". Mrs. Dunlop, whose husband was protector of aborigines at Wollombi and Macdonald River from 1839 to 1847, did, however, have a sympathetic interest in aboriginal literature and translated some of their poetry into English. Examples of these are to be found in her manuscript volume of poetry, "The Vase", in the Mitchell Library. Another "Song of an Exile", in the Sydney Standard for 25 March 1839, dealt with the exile's continuing ties

3a See J. Normington-Rowling, op. cit., p. 16.
with his homeland. Mrs. Dunlop had been born in Ireland, as had the Harpurs' father — further evidence of the Celtic dominance of early Australian poetry.

Most of the original poems in the *Australian*, of course, appeared anonymously or under pseudonyms now virtually impossible to identify. A number of political and other satires by "Thistle" and "Hampden" printed in 1830 and 1831 were, however, possibly written by Laurence Halloran. Although the last poem by "Thistle" appeared on 1 April 1831, shortly after Halloran's death on 8 March, it may have been written before his death, or finished by his son Henry. As mentioned in Chapter II, George Allen recorded in his diary that, just before his final illness, Halloran had been busy "writing a violent piece of poetry against the Governor". This is certainly an apt description of the series of poems attacking Darling as the despot or tyrant of the "Isle of Goree", printed in the *Australian* between 31 December 1830 and 19 February 1831, under the signature "Hampden". The longest of these, "The Tyrant's Levee", satirising Darling and all his supporters, first appeared on 14, 28 January, 5, 12 February, and was reprinted "by the public desire" on 14 October 1831, just before Darling's departure from the colony. Poems by "Thistle" also attacked Darling and bureaucracy, with the final one, "Mend-i-cant Addressing. Scene — The 'Island of Goree'. Being a Parody
on the 'Beggar's Petition', as hawked about and chanted by two Justices", poking fun at attempts to get signatures for a loyal address to the departing Governor. As in the eighteen-twenties, several poems by "Thistle" also appeared in the Monitor in 1830 and 1831. The 1830 poems criticised a decision to shackle the press, the behavior of a military jury and "a Military Bear" who failed to stop a fight between two women. "An Impromtu, Suggested by Reading a Late Sublime Composition, Entitled a Good Hoax for the Whole Year", 29 January 1831, was, like two other poems in the Monitor at the same time, a parody of the Rev. C.P.N. Wilton's pro-Darling prize poem in the Australian Almanack for 1831.

Another prolific Australian poet was "Epsilon", twenty-three of whose verses were published between 1835 and 1838. While many of these were conventional, such as "The Swimmer's Song", 15 June 1835; "To ***", 9 February 1836; "The Star of Eve", 17 February 1836; "The Gondolier's Song", 7 June 1836; and "Home", 4 November 1836, some showed more willingness to experiment. "The Race of Life", 14 August 1831, was a well-handled allegory describing a sailing-race by Reason, Love and Pride on the River of Time, won by Reason who himself is then beaten by Death. The influence of more modern poetic trends is apparent in a number of pieces by "Epsilon" dealing with the supernatural. One of these, "The Midnight Watch", 5 October 1836, in which
a sailor tells of a bad deed revenged in mysterious fashion, suggests a knowledge of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. Others in similar vein were "The Ocean's Own", 16 February 1836, on a ghost fleet of ships from all past centuries, "The Ancient Tombs", 12 July 1836, a highly romantic description of spectres rising from their graves, and "Moonlight", 23 April 1837, in which supernatural beings sport in the moonlight on the sea. "Epsilon" also wrote three poems on Australian subjects. "The Genii's Council", 23 February 1836, where the Council appoints the son of the British genii guardian of Australia, ends with an idyllic description of Australia's beauties and future prosperity. "Address to North Head", 7 February 1837, contrasts the scene seen by the North Head before and after settlement, whilst "The Chase. A Sydney Hunt Carol", 29 July 1836, is one of a number of poems on the joys of hunting published in the eighteen-thirties.

Only thirty-three original poems appeared in the *Monitor* during this period. Most had some Australian content, the majority, in keeping with the radical nature of the paper, being political satires. There was, of course, a marked decline in the number of these after Darling's departure in 1831, since they had mostly been directed at him and his supporters. Besides "Thistle's" attack on Wilton's poem, "A Commentary, Written Currente Calamo, on the Rev. C.P.N. Wilton's Prize Poem, Published in the Australian Almanack For
the Current Year 1831" by "Vindex" had appeared on 8 January 1831. In this amusing satire, beginning "Hail Australasia! Britain's bulkiest daughter", "Vindex" claimed, justifiably, that Wilton's verses lacked both poetry and truth and had been given the prize on political grounds alone. Another poem on the same topic, "On Perusing the Ode for 1831 or the Good Joke for the whole of that year", was printed on 2 and 5 March 1831. Among other satirical pieces in the Monitor were "The Sydney Press. With sundry notes and comments by a new hand, and bona fide professor of doggerel" by "Philog of Cummeribus", 15 May 1833, and an amusing song on the Parramatta Female Factory published on 10 September 1834. This had the lengthy title, "New Song. To the air of 'Home, Sweet Home!' Said to have been sung by the fair frail ones who arrived by the Steamer from Sydney, at nine o'clock on the night of Tuesday, the 26th August, and who being in full spirit for a concert, chaunted it in a style superior to 'Cataline's' on their way from the wharf to the Female Factory - to the edification of the musical folks of Parramatta, who were then about hastening to bed", a very fair indication of the contents. Other poems on Australian topics dealt with kangaroo hunting, the discovery of a lonely grave in the bush, the acting of Mrs. Ward at the Theatre Royal and local doings in Bathurst.

The only two identifiable poets to publish in the Monitor during the eighteen-thirties were Charles Harpur and N.L. Kentish.
Three of Harpur's poems appeared in 1835: "The Minstrel's Last Lay", 23 May; "Melody. On the Harp of Australia", 19 September; and "Melody", 26 September. The first was a fairly conventional lament by the minstrel on the woes of his life, while the third contained praise of Australia, particularly its women. Most interesting is the second, where Harpur first presents himself as Australia's own native bard. He hopes that he may redeem the harp from "dark trackless forests", and though he had not "The wild strength of Burns, or of Byron the fire", leave one lasting song behind him. Extracts from Harpur's blank verse drama "The Tragedy of Donohue" were also printed in the Monitor in 1835, and will be discussed later in this chapter. More will also be said later on N.L. Kentish, the editor of the Sydney Times, whose "Imprisonment for Debt. An unpublished Poem. Canto VI" appeared in the Monitor on 20 April 1836, at a time when his own paper was not being published. A number of poems by Kentish, including more stanzas of the interminable "Imprisonment for Debt", were also printed in the Times.

The first new paper to appear in Sydney in the eighteen-thirties was the Sydney Herald, on 18 April 1831. Just over a hundred original poems had been published in it by the end of the decade, most of them, as with the Sydney Gazette, in the earlier years. In contrast to the newspaper poetry already discussed, about half of these were love poems, with
much smaller numbers of death and humorous poems. Less than a fifth made any reference to Australia. Henry Halloran was again the most prolific contributor, publishing twenty-seven verses between 1832 and 1834. Many were love poems, some influenced by the Romantics, especially Coleridge in "A Fragment", 18 February 1833, and Keats in "Three Original Sonnets. To - ", 9 January 1834. A large number of Halloran's Herald poems were in sonnet form, several on poetry again showing traces of the Romantic movement, particularly "To Poesy", 3 October 1833, and "Six Original Sonnets", 18 April 1833. The latter dealt with the difficulties of writing poetry and Halloran's wish to be in a less restrained society, such as Italy. Halloran also published "Lord Byron's First Love" on 23 July 1832 and Byronic references and influences are to be found in "Yrneh Narollah's" humorous "Offer of Marriage" printed on 17 June 1833. Besides the answers to this in the Sydney Gazette, a "Reply" by "Emiline" appeared in the Herald on 27 June 1833. Halloran may also have been responsible for this "Reply"; certainly the note "Gentlemen, Miss Desperate being engaged in preparations for her approaching Hymenials, has requested me to transmit to you her second Epistle. Your obedient servant, H.H." identifies him as the author of "Diana Desperate's" account of her past and present loves, published in the Herald on 6 August 1832. An earlier piece by this lady had appeared in the Gazette on 12 July 1832.
Entitled "Lamentation", it was, of course, on her lack of a husband. The alliterative comic name suggests that, in addition, Halloran wrote "Delia Delicate's" complaint about the rude behavior of "a subordinate Clerk in one of the Government Departments" who persisted in peeking under her bonnet, printed in the Herald on 6 September 1832. Several of Halloran's Latin translations also appeared in the Herald in these years.

Another prolific Herald poet was "Eta", who published thirteen poems there between 1832 and 1834. Both the dates and the contents of these verses suggest a possible identification of "Eta" as Halloran but, if so, his poetic output at this period was truly staggering, especially as both he and "Eta" were writing for other papers at the same time. Like Halloran's, the majority of "Eta's" verses dealt with various aspects of love, with some of both these and poems on other topics showing an acquaintance with Romantic poetry. "Ode. To the West Wind", 21 January 1833, had an epigraph from Shelley and was obviously influenced by him, while three extracts from "Recollections of Life", 21 February, 15 April and 2 May 1833, show a knowledge of Wordsworth. "Eta" published smaller numbers of poems in the Sydney Gazette, the Australian, the Sydney Times, and the New South Wales Magazine between 1832 and 1835, again mostly on love. With one exception, these coincided exactly with the publication
dates of Halloran's poems in the various papers.

As has been mentioned, very few of the Herald's poets made any reference to their Australian environment. A notable exception was "Rusticus" from Darlinghurst, whose charming piece containing the first poetic description of several Australian wild-flowers was printed on 19 November 1835.

Of all the flowers that sweetly blow,
You ask which is most dear to me.
I love them best which native grow,
And unassuming bloom like thee.

And first I love the Epacris meek,
Content it blooms 'neath rock or tree,
The applusive gaze it does not seek,
But has it modest worth like thee.

I love the sweet Boronia's bloom,
Which scorns adversity's decree,
While others choose a richer loam,
On humble fare it smiles like thee.

I love Mimosa's fragrant flower,
Also the Gum and Swamp Oak Tree,
They grace the Shepherd's rustic bower,
And breathes [sic] contentment round like thee.

I love all Woodbinds, for they wind
Themselves around a stronger tree,
Adorn the shelving trunk they bind,
And claim a kind support like thee.

I love the Giant Lilly's height,
Its form and emblem well agree,
Though simply clothed it glads my sight,
Though unobtrusive charms like thee.

I love Warrata's virgin face,
It smiles with health and cheerful glee,
The beauty of the Flora race;
'Tis my favourite - 'tis like thee.

To mention more, were waste of time;
In short, whate'er their form may be,
Whether their country or their clime,
I love them best when most like thee.
The next newspaper to appear in Sydney was Hill’s Life in New South Wales, intended to be mainly a sporting paper on the model of the popular Bell’s Life in London. Arthur Hill, its editor, printer and proprietor, stated in his Prospectus printed in the Sydney Herald on 7 May 1832:

"... 'Hill’s Life in New South Wales' therefore, will comprise chiefly matter of amusement, but at the same time, by stating results, and chronicling all events of public interest; it will form a brief abstract of Colonial History. Select and Original Poetry, particularly of a humorous kind, will occupy a just place in the columns of 'Hill’s Life in New South Wales'; but none but what evinces real talent will be admitted."

Its abstract was probably more brief than Hill intended, since the paper ran for only six months, from 6 July to 28 December 1832. During this time, only five original poems were deemed worthy of publication in Hill’s Life. These were all of a humorous nature, mostly on colonial subjects. Of particular interest is the anonymous "The Sprite of the Creek! An Australian Tale, founded on the Murder at Campbell Town, of a Sheriff’s Bailiff, named F*****", the earliest extant account of the "Fisher’s Ghost" legend. The first half of this poem was printed on 14 September 1832 and reprinted, "Agreeably to the suggestion of some of our friends", a week later with the concluding section. Although its interest is more historical than literary, "The Sprite of the Creek!" does have a certain crude melodramatic vigour as this description of the murder indicates:
... Night's murkiest month the pale moon o'erspread,
When Fredro, unconscious of harm,
Stept forth from his threshold - a blow on the head
His scull quickly severs - the victim falls dead
'Neath blood-thirty Wurlo's fierce arm!

From the red-reeking spot then the body he bore,
Unhallow'd and lone was the grave,
In the Greek's marshy bosom he cover'd it o'er
While clotted locks scattered and blotches of gore,
Some traces of violence gave.

The later reprinting of a revised version of this poem in
Bell's Life in Sydney on 27 June 1846 shows it to have
been the work of "Felix", a prolific writer of humorous
verse in the 'forties.

The other poems printed in Hill's Life were "Australia
Advance" by J.R., 24 August 1832, supposedly "written some
months back with an intention of its being sung at the
Anniversary Dinner of the 'Agricultural and Horticultural
Society of New South Wales"; "Protest Against Drunkenness",
7 September 1832; "Bardolf's" "Parody. Ye Swell Mob Men",
16 November 1832, a humorous tale of a pickpocket; and "A
New Ditty to An Old Tune" by "A Child of Song", 28 December
1832. The last, rollicking verses based on "an account of
the miraculous and fortunate escape of a distinguished public
officer, from the perils of an attempt made to cross the
RAZOR-BACK MOUNTAIN, with a light carriage and pair, a few
days past", ended
In journeys like these, where you meet Pyrenees,
If you your life not insure, Sir,
Pray take level ground, if you go five miles round,
And then you may travel secure, Sir.
Chorus — So, adieu! to the Razor-Back Mountain,
Till from its rough back springs a fountain!
Our Superintendent, had near made an end on't,
By crossing the Razor-Back Mountain.

This poem appeared in the last issue of Hill's Life, on the
same page as the editor's explanation for the change of
title to the Weekly Observer:

... In the course, however, of half a year's experience,
we have found, that the sporting part of our community do
not congregate sufficiently often in promoting sporting
games and pastimes, as to furnish intelligence for a Journal
which is published weekly. ... hence, while our Journal
has maintained the title of "Hill's Life", which, agreeably
to the title of "Bell's Life in London", impressed every
one who took up the journal with the idea, that one page of
it at least, would be occupied with races, theatres, balls,
boxing, wrestling, foot-races, single-stick, &c. &c., he
found that a couple, or at most three columns, were barely
occupied with all the sports and pastimes of the colony,
and that the other seventeen or eighteen columns were
occupied with English or colonial news, and with selections
from English periodicals; thereby giving the paper a
different character, to what the title had prepared them
to expect. ... .

Only one issue of the Weekly Observer was printed, on 4
January 1833.

An explanation of the demise of Hill's papers was given
in another new publication, The Currency Lad, on 12 January
1833.

A good joke! Mr. E.S. Hall declares, that in consequence
of the subscribers to Hill's Life, and the Weekly Observer,
being composed principally of ticket-of-leave-men, it was
thought prudent to drop both publications; but (0 tempora!
0 mores!) the old gentleman tells the subscribers to these
papers, that he will send to them his Saturday's number of the Monitor, and unless they refuse it he will consider them subscribers to that journal. Bravo! How easily the people are gullled! They can trust ticket-of-leave men with one paper when they could not with another! For our parts, we trouble not ourselves about ticket-of-leave men. We should be very happy to number the whole of them among our subscribers. We would run all risks of payment and we do not think we should lose much.

Such optimism and non-exclusiveness were in keeping with the principles of the Currency Lad, which had at its masthead an adaptation of the conclusion of Wentworth's Australasia:

See! Australasia floats, with flag unfurl'd,
A new Britannia in another world!
While ev'ry surge that doth her bosom lave,
Salutes her "Empress of the Southern wave!"

An interesting account of the Currency Lad's editor and aims appeared in the Tasmanian Colonist on 28 September 1832.

We have been favored by the Editor, with the first three numbers of the new Sydney Journal, called "The Currency Lad", produced, we understand, entirely by Native Australians. It is highly creditable to them in every way; and, being upon our plan, the 50 per cent reduction of the old prices, will no doubt soon be in considerable request. Mr. Horatio Wills . . . is the son of the late Mrs. George Howe, by a former husband, and having been brought up in the Sydney Gazette office by Mr. Howe, possesses many professional advantages. . . . The fixed principle upon which this new Journal starts, as avowed in the first number, is openly and avowedly to advocate the interests of the Native-born Australians - in Mr. Wills' words, "to preserve our countrymen as a distinct body of the Commonwealth." This is certainly a new view of a most important subject.

Unfortunately, the Currency Lad only ran from 25 August 1832 to 18 May 1833. A note, "To the Subscribers of the 'Currency Lad'", in the Monitor of 1 June 1833 claimed it had died not
from want of support, since five hundred and twenty-five copies had been printed, but because of interference by its printers, the proprietors of the *Sydney Gazette*. Wills evidently preferred to give up the *Currency Lad* rather than compromise his Australian independence. Thirteen original poems were published in the *Currency Lad*, about half of them having some reference to Australia. Included among these were patriotic poems befitting the paper's aims: "The Only Land for Me! From 'Mount Spoutem'..(By a Currency Lad)", 10 November, 1832; "Australia" by "Valentia", 2 February 1833; and "An Australian Song" by Charles Harpur, 4 May 1833.

Harpur had earlier been encouraged in the "To Correspondents" section of the *Currency Lad* on 16 March 1833:

We beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of C.C.H.'s contribution, and if his years are so few, and his education so limited, with culture and study, he will, at some future period, shine as a poet. His similes are not sufficiently varied, but that is owing, we fancy, to his scanty means of observation. Nothing, we assure our correspondent, gives us greater pleasure than to encourage our countrymen in the cultivation of their understanding. So soon as our room will admit of justice being done to him, his piece shall obtain insertion; for it is simple and shows intellect. The theme of verses 10 and 11 we recommend him to cultivate, and he will no doubt shortly become our national poet. We should be happy to behold an Australian Burns, and "our brother of tender years" may rest assured, that with a little exertion on his part, his countrymen will gladly render him every assistance. We should be happy to see C.C.H. if he can make it convenient, when he next visits Sydney.

Prophetic words, in part at least, although the assistance was not always so forthcoming as Wills had confidently predicted. One other poem by Harpur appeared in the second-
last issue of the **Currency Lad**, on 11 May 1833, "The Grave of Clements. An emigrant murdered on the road to Hunter's River, by the notorious Donahoe, and his gang".

Various attempts to found new papers were made in 1833, none of them apparently being successful. On 18 May 1833, the **Currency Lad** published this prospectus by Nathaniel Kentish:

Sunday Newspaper
and
Magazine,
including a
History of Australia and Poem.
"The Surveyor General".

The Editor, who, upwards of a year ago, had prepared for publication a History of this and the other Australian colonies, and who has subsequently written a Poem on Australia, with an abridged History, proposes to supply his Subscribers with both, in Numbers of Four Quarto Pages each, in alternate numbers of "The Surveyor General", in room of the Political or Religious portion of the Work, or of a portion of each, as may be most convenient according to the absence or abundance of English news, etc. etc. Thus his Subscribers will ultimately get his Poem and History, to complete a volume of itself (value about One Pound) without one farthing additional charge beyond the binding.

But even this generous offer seems to have failed to tempt subscribers, since no issues of the **Surveyor General** were ever printed. Another proposed new publication was the **Independent Press, and Australian People's Advocate**, advertised in the **Monitor** on 14 December 1833. An amusing parody of this and other similar proposals appeared shortly afterwards in the **Monitor** for 25 December:

In consequence of the corrupt state of the press in New South Wales, several new journals are spoken of as likely to come to birth with the New Year. Among others is "The
Emancipist"; "The Mechanic"; "The Benelong Morning Post", and "Bungaree's Magazine". The aborigines complain in bitter terms of the total neglect of their interests by the press. The two latter will be published in the abor-iginal language, and the subscription list is already pretty numerous. It is expected that much difficulty will be experienced in the distribution of the aboriginal journals, from the difficulty of finding the Estates of the subscribers. The prospectus, (written by Mr. Muninbulligo,) displays considerable talent.

Of course, none of these interesting journals ever appeared, but Nathaniel Kentish did manage to commence his Sydney Times on 15 August 1834. It initially ran until 28 March 1835, and was recommenced on 13 August 1836, Kentish apparently having tried unsuccessfully in the interim to establish a periodical called The Reform. The last issue of the Sydney Times was published on 26 March 1838. In its total running time of a little over two years, two hundred and thirty-five original poems appeared, nearly as many as in the Sydney Gazette during the whole of the eighteen-thirties, and more than in any other Australian newspaper of this period. Kentish proclaimed his wish to publish original poetry in the first number of his paper, in some verses beginning "Poetic Graces - Ye harmonious Nine", reprinted at the opening of the new series in 1836. Rarely an issue went by without one, and sometimes as many as four, original poems, although on 16 September and 9 December 1837 Kentish was forced to fill up his "Poet's Corner" with some "doggerel" of his own, complaining that he had received no other contributions. Less than a quarter
of the *Sydney Times* poems made any mention of Australia. Again, love was the most popular theme, with a slightly smaller number dealing with death, and much fewer with humorous topics. Kentish himself was one of the most prolific poets, particularly in 1834, when eleven of his verses appeared. Their quality is aptly summed up in a comment in Edward Kemp's *A Voice from Tasmania* (1846) on "Kentish gilding prose with senseless rhyme". Like his later publications in Tasmania and Victoria, most of Kentish's *Sydney Times* verses dealt with his own colonial trials. In 1833, Kentish and his wife had left Sydney for England, but the poor condition of their ship had forced them to disembark at Cloudy Bay, New Zealand, and many of Kentish's 1834 poems described his experiences there. Their matter and manner are well suggested by the title of this example published in the *Times* on 31 December 1834: "Lines written on the night of Christmas Day, 1833, on spending the night amongst Cannibals and Heathens, and still more barbarous Englishmen in Cloudy Bay, New Zealand, with an Anthem on the occasion". In 1835, Kentish also apparently published a poem on his New Zealand experiences entitled *An Essay on Christian Fortitude under Trials and Disappointments*, advertised in the *Sydney Times* on 14 March 1834, along with his *Lecture on the Present State of the Colony, especially in regard to Immigration, Transportation*
and Legislation, With a Preface, Explanatory of every

Circumstance relative to the Lawyers and Lawsuits, which
brought ruin upon the Author previously to his embarkation
for England in the leaky brig Sarah, (which after a passage
home of 200 days, reached and foundered off Plymouth, insured,
and no lives lost). Brevity was never his long suit. In
the Colonist for 5 November 1835, Kentish also called for
subscribers to his "Imprisonment for Debt. A Poem in Eight
Cantos". Among the six names listed as already received
were those of fellow poets Henry Halloran and William Woolls,
and colonial notables Sir John Jamison and Alexander McLeay.
Few others appear to have come forward, and this poem was
eventually published in the Sydney Times between 27 August
and 29 October 1836.

William Woolls also wrote two poems for the Sydney Times
under the initial "X" and, as usual, many verses by Halloran
appeared. Besides those signed "H.H.", Halloran seems to
have written a number of satirical pieces signed with a
pointing hand, repeatedly attacked, and identified as his,
in other verses in the Sydney Gazette. The longest of "the
Hand's" poems, "Sydney; or 'The Times'; a Satire", was
printed in the Sydney Times on 15 and 22 August 1834. It
appears to refer to a notorious contemporary seduction case,
later also the subject of a short story, "The Governess",
in Tegg's Monthly Magazine in 1836. Kentish's praise of this
satire on 15 August provides further evidence — if any besides the sheer number of Halloran's poems was needed — of the speed with which he churned out verse:

The friends of morality, in common with the lovers of literature, and all persons capable of appreciating the excellencies of composition, and the wit, the strength, and classic beauty of satire, will find a treat in our Poet's Corner. We are assured that our talented contributor, who has so obligingly anticipated our invocation to the Muses and Bards of Australia in this first number, adds the extraordinary merit of rapidity of composition, almost incredible, to qualities which our wits and our literati will estimate as they deserve — most highly; this Satire and "Moral Poem", containing nearly 300 lines, being the produce of but three or four evening's amusement, and written expressly for THE TIMES since its announcement on the 1st. inst.

To a poetical pamphleteer like Kentish, rapidity of composition may well have been meritorious, but it seems likely that Halloran would have been a better poet if he had written at a less incredible rate. In the mass of his work published during this decade, there is only an occasional good phrase or line amidst a lot of second-hand or poorly conceived rubbish. Halloran's humorous and satirical pieces have the most appeal, with more life and interest than his serious verses, which contain hardly any references to his physical surroundings. Among the latter in the Sydney Times, were several poems on love and others on such equally conventional, and conventionally treated, subjects as spring, fancy and "The Wanderer's Lament". One wonders just how Halloran was able to answer "Yes" to the
query in "On Being Asked By a Lady, If I Felt All That I Described", 7 November 1834, though the lady's doubts are quite understandable.

Charles Harpur's *Sydney Times* poems were also on fairly conventional topics: "The Banquet of Love", 16 September 1834; "The Minstrel", 21 March 1835; and "The Dream. A Love Song", 24 September, 1836. The third, a delicately written love poem, was by far the best. The only other major contributor to the *Times* not to use a pseudonym was P.H. Valentine, who published nine poems in 1836 and 1837. Most were on such melancholy subjects as "My Mother's Grave", "The Mourner", "The Lover's Last Letter" and "The Shipwreck". The only one to refer to Australia was "The Emigrant", 28 January 1837, a sad tale of a man who, marrying against his parents' wishes, was forced to emigrate to Australia, only to lose his bride on the voyage, and then live alone in the bush until his own death. Its first stanza gives a fair idea of the quality of Valentine's work:

They have buried him here, where the sunbeams shine bright,
And the bush-birds their wild notes are singing;
Above him the breeze of the evening plays light;
Around him sweet flowers are springing.

Valentine was also the author of four poems signed "Valentia" printed in the *Sydney Times* between 1834 and 1836, all on equally melancholy topics. A poem by "Valentia" appeared in
the *Australian* in 1835, and poems by "Valentia" and Valentine in the *Sydney Herald* in 1831 and 1836. "The Lover's Last Letter" was, in fact, printed almost simultaneously in the *Times* on 24 December 1836, signed P.H. Valentine, and the *Herald* on 26 December 1836, signed "Valentia". "Valentia" also contributed a poem, markedly different from any of these, to the *Commercial Journal and Advertiser* for 16 February 1839. Entitled "No. II. The Australian Sketch Book", it ridiculed James Martin's recently published work of this name, and asked why he had not published a second volume, as promised.

A melancholy tone, however, was once again to be found in the seven poems by "Sorencia" printed in the *Sydney Times* in 1834 and 1835, under such conventional titles as "The Lament", "The Minstrel", "The Maniac" and "The Warrior". Remarks on "Sorencia's" blindness identify him as Charles McDonald, who *will* be discussed later in this chapter. Other prolific *Sydney Times* poets were "Delta", "Ferdinand" and "Druiver". Most of their verses dealt with love, although "Ferdinand" also wrote a "Sonnet. To the Invisible Organist of St. Mary's Chapel", 28 January 1837, and "The Convict's Lament", 25 February 1837. "Druiver" had evidently previously lived in South Africa, since several of his sad ditties on a faithless woman had been written at
Cape Town. With the exception of another Cape Town poem, "Lines written on the Proclamation of the Law for the Abolition of Slavery in the British Colonies", 11 November 1837, his verses were heavily melancholic, like so much of the poetry of this period.

In keeping with the religious enthusiasm of its founder, John Dunmore Lang, many of the ninety-seven original poems published in the Colonist between 1835 and 1839 were moralistic as well as melancholy. Only one of them dealt with love, Henry Halloran's sad "My Early Love", printed on 27 March 1839, while just over a third were death poems. Lang evidently started the Colonist, A Weekly Journal of Politics, Commerce, Agriculture, Literature, Science and Religion, for the Colony of New South Wales, which ran from 1 January 1835 to 31 December 1840, mainly as a media for answering his many critics. Thus, although it was nominally edited by Henry Bull, most of its leading and other articles reflected Lang's controversial views on the issues of the time. Only one poem was actually signed by Lang, "Verses written within sight of the North-East Cape of New Zealand, on Board the Australia, August, 1830", 12 February 1835, dealing with the need to bring Christianity to the Maori. However, he was also obviously the author of "To a Cape-Pigeon, On board the Australian in the South Atlantic Ocean."
23rd Oct. 1830", "Psalm XIX" and "Psalm CXLVII", all published in January 1835. In addition, Lang may have written a number of 1835 satires on colonial topics dear to his heart, such as the evils of drink and Bourke's attempt to introduce the Irish system of education, as well as three attacks on the swindler John Thomas Wilson, printed in 1836. An extremely coarse criticism of Barron Field's poetry, "Botany Bay Flowers", 5 November 1835, may also have come from Lang's pen. They are not quite what one would expect from a cleric, but then Lang was no ordinary clergyman. About a quarter of the Colonist's original poetry contained some Australian references, found mostly in the humorous and satirical variety.

Twenty-nine poems by Henry Halloran appeared in the Colonist; he was, as usual, the most prolific contributor. Among these were several on his dead beloved, "Ione", who had herself published two poems, "The Tropic Calm" and "Come to the Lake of Swans", in the Colonist in 1835. In "On My First Poetical Aspirations", 21 May 1835, Halloran claimed he had first felt the urge to write poetry when he was sixteen. A competently-written allegory, "The Three Cups", 10 March 1838, describing a man tasting in turn the appropriately-fashioned cups of Love, Ambition and Wealth to find all ultimately disappointing, was no doubt admired by Lang for its advocation of Christian principles. These were
also to the fore in "The Butterfly, Worm, and Bee; or, Self-Love Reproved", 7 September 1837; "The Old Man's Contemplation", 16 November 1837; "Earthly and Heavenly Hopes", 23 November 1837; and "Universal Beauty", 12 December 1838. The last was given fulsome praise in the Colonist for 8 December 1838:

**Literature** - We have received, although too late for insertion in our present number, Mr. Halloran's beautiful poem - beautiful both in its philosophy and poetry, on "Universal Beauty", which we believe is to be included in that gentleman's projected volume. It is written in the difficult and involved "Terza Rima" of Dante - a measure that was entirely unknown to our language until introduced by Lord Byron in his "Prophecy of Dante"; and with singular success by Shelley in his "Triumph of Life", and in several minor pieces. Mr. Halloran's poem proves him to be in every way worthy of following in the train of those great Masters, for it abounds in beautiful and significant imagery - in sweet and subtle thoughts, and the rhythm is remarkably flowing and melodious. The diction too - a rare merit - is pure, unexaggerated and idiomatic. Mr. Halloran's volume will be printed as soon as a sufficient number of subscribers have been procured. . . . we trust therefore that the gentlemen of the Colony will prove their taste by encouraging the appearance of the only pure work of imaginative literature that the colony can boast of, and which is so likely to procure for its author a permanent reputation as the first true poet that Australia has produced.

The high position accorded Shelley, despite his immoral tendencies, is especially interesting as one of the first recognitions of his stature, and correct spellings of his name, to appear in Australia. As an example of one of Halloran's better poems, "Universal Beauty", although long, shall be given in full.
A SHADOW of the Eternal's glory, resting
Upon His works, and filling Earth, and Air,
With visible and articulate music, and investing

   All things which are, with love, and light, and prayer
How are those starry-bosom'd flowers array'd,
   In tints, which foil that artist's utmost care?

In the still hour of a dewy evening's shade,
   Within a dell, the burning presence clings
Around them for an instant, ne'er to fade, -

   And they are lovely, and the morning brings
The Sun to woo them with his joyous light,
   And bees, and birds, and other winged things,

Gaze on them and lovelier for the sight, -
   Receiving beauty from the Beautiful; -
And even men are filled with mute delight,

And from their hearts, a shadow cold and dull,
   The shadow of some haunting misery,
Falls, and they gaze, and drink their vision full;

And sweet and happy thoughts begin and fly
   Within their hearts, like birds in sunny bowers,
And they become as mild as infancy,

   And gaze with streaming eyes upon the flowers,
And dream their many-visioned dreams again,
   The dreams which filled their uncorrupted hours, -
Beauty annihilating shame and pain.

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Those burning orbs, the green and silver stars,
Float through an atmosphere of azure light,
Like sea-nymphs in their crystal ocean-cars; -

   How silently, in the deep noon of night
Their influence sinks into the Gazer's soul;
Filling dumb sorrow with a calm delight,

And moving even guilt with mute control; -
   So that the murderer in the thicket shade,
Gazing, as they in their mild radience roll,

   Throws to the earth his yet unreeking blade,
And seeks his home, and sheds repentant tears,
Or plies again the mallet, or the spade
Regenerate by Beauty; and for years
He feels a golden chain coil'd in his breast,
And finds the first links in those floating spheres.

Oh! thou poor child of hunger and unrest,
Dost thou not in thy midnight wanderings,
Though all degraded, outraged, and distress'd,

Find in those tranquil orbs, mild whisperings,
Of peace beyond the grave, where even thou,
Whom this wild world hath ranked with loathliest things,

Shalt stand with undefiled and radiant brow,
Pure as a Seraph in the Eternal's sight,
Beauty absorbing all that's hideous now,
In the calm depths of its unchanging light.

From the abyss by which I seem to stand,
I hear innumerous sounds which move my soul,
As the waves sway at will the golden sand, -

They pierce my brain and rob me of control, -
Visions drive fast before my swimming sight,
But still the eternal concords deeply roll;

And I shed tears and laugh with mad delight,
And my heart trembles with a frantic pleasure,
And then is overwhelm'd with starless night; -

For a sad tone, and deep, presents the treasure
My soul so long and fondly coveted,
In death's dark regions wandering, - but a measure

Of other tones surrounds that graceful head,
And all again is beauty and fond faith,
And I behold and tears of transport shed.

There is a sound which the toss'd soul allayeth,
(The infuriate king was by a sound o'ercome,)
Which bloodiest minds to holy deeds betrayeth;

Loosing the tongue of the obscure and dumb,
Leading them back to childhood, with a band
Of flowers, which from some dazzling regions come,

Soothing the wanderer on a distant strand,
Cheering the lonely and bereaved one,
With visions of a bright and happy land,
Beyond the portals of that glorious sun.
Although, as the Colonist claimed, this poem is smoothly-flowing and, presumably from Wordsworth's influence, free from the excesses of eighteenth-century poetic diction, it also displays the usual defects of Halloran's verse. His choice of language is repetitious and unoriginal - note the constant use of "delight", "light", "sight" and of such conventionalities as "mad delight" and "frantic pleasure" - and his imagery lacks detail and concreteness. About the only telling image in the piece is the description of the stars at the opening of the second section. While these faults were typical of the period in which he was writing, Halloran's failure to surmount them confines him, despite his enormous output, to the rank of a minor Australian poet.

G. James Macdonald, who published four poems in the Colonist in 1838, lacked Halloran's fertility and technical competence, but was at times capable of more originality. The titles of his Colonist verses also reveal his greater range of interests: "On a Movement of Beethoven's"; "Lines to the Steam-Boat", a protest against progress; "Political Charades" and "The Fate of Poets". Although on the common theme of bardic sorrows, the latter, printed on 14 November 1838, is interesting for its less common treatment of the Romantics, Shelley, Keats and Byron.
THE Poets have too oft an evil fate -
Those pale and wasted Forms pursued by Hate,
Whom Fame, the Mental Monarch, crowns, - when all too late.

Envy en-rings them with her ardent eyes,
Detraction dogs them with a life of lies,
Till Death descends, and takes them to their "native skies".

Alas! it is a melancholy doom
That those whose genius gilds this state of gloom,
Should garner Glory's guerdon, - only in the Tomb.

Yet are they Prophets of the Pure - the True, -
The Beautiful; - lone Pilgrims who pursue
The lofty paths that bring the Future to our view.

Idealists, whose pining fancies find
High nutriment in Stars, and Sea, and Wind; -
Earth-angels, Spirit-seers, and Martyrs of the Mind;

The Children of a cold, ungenial Clime,
Who eat their hearts, and perish ere their prime,
Scattering the seeds of Truth that spring not in their time.

The swan-like Shelley, beautiful but wild,
Soar'd like a spirit from its sphere exiled,
Above the race of Men by whom he was reviled; -

The Plato-Poet, whose rapt thoughts divine,
Glitter like Gems in an exhaustless Mine,
Upon the mystic page of his immortal line, -

Pass'd like a Planet from the ethereal Plain,
Amid the whirling Surf of the Italian Main,
Whose waves alone did mourn the greatness of their gain.

Endymion Keats - a frail and half-blown Flower -
Bent his wan Form before the hissing shower
Of Scorn, that swept him from the Earth - in evil hour.

And Byron, from his Pedestal of Pride
Fell Caesar -like - heart-stabb'd on every side
By Friends, and secret Foes, whose hate he did deride.

Their doom in life was a reproach and shame,
But their high meed shall be a deathless Name,
The Worship of the World - Eternity of Fame!
NOTE. - In speaking of Byron and Shelley in the annexed stanzas, I would wish it to be understood, that I allude to them as Poets only - and that I am not blind to the moral defects that blotted the character and conduct of the one, - or to the Pyrrhonism that unfortunately pervades the productions of the other. My estimate of Shelley's genius, will, I am aware, appear to many, overstrained and exaggerated - but if so, I can only say that I entirely coincide in opinion with the writer in The Edinburgh Review, who "Doubts whether any modern Poet has possessed in an equal degree the highest qualities of the great ancient masters. The words bard and inspiration, which seem so cold and affected when applied to other modern writers, have a perfect propriety when applied to him. He was not an author, but a bard. His poetry seems not to have been an art, but an inspiration. Had he lived to the full age of man, he might not improbably have given to the world some great work of the very highest rank in design and execution." - Vol. lxiv. p. 454.

Such praise of Shelley was indeed rare at the time and, despite the careful disapproval of Shelley's scepticism, many would probably have been horrified by his being termed an "earth-angel". Macdonald's verses are much more clumsy than Halloran's, but show that he could handle imagery in a way the latter could not. The descriptions of the three poets have originality and power, particularly "The swan-like Shelley, beautiful but wild". Little information exists on Macdonald, though in G.B. Barton's Poets and Prose Writers of New South Wales (1866) he was described as "formerly a commissioner of Crown Lands, a man of eccentric habits . . . a remarkable scholar and a musician of exquisite endowment". (p.208) In some reminiscences published in the Sydney Mail in 1908,
Edmund Morey, a stationholder in the Riverina during the eighteen-forties, remembered Macdonald as "a man of middle age, very short and somewhat deformed" but with "a most pleasing face and general manner". Morey often spent enjoyable hours in Macdonald's tent, "listening to his music at times, and then to readings from some of his small, but well selected, lot of books." 4 Obviously, Macdonald was an example of the colonist who retained his cultural interests even in the wilds of the bush.

One prominent contemporary poet whose verses did not appear in the Colonist was Charles Harpur. According to J. Normington-Rawling,

... he could not break into the columns of the Colonist, a paper whose high moral tone appealed to him. He was chagrined to see Henry Bull, its editor, reject a contribution with this note:

Chatterton's Lament is not suitable to The Colonist; we would recommend the author to forward it to the Sydney Times.

There was a sting also in another paragraph in which the editor stated that he was "literally over stocked" with verse, "the major part of which was of a most mediocre description". He would, he said, like to send it all to the Sydney Times, "where the smallest donations (in that line) are thankfully received and faithfully applied". (p.64)

Instead, the Colonist preferred to print banal, but highly

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moral, poems like "Erina's" "A Poetical Epistle, From a Lady to an early acquaintance, who had lost her esteem by the errors of his life and the abuse of his talents", 21 December 1839, where this black sheep was told to mend his ways and ask God for mercy.

The next newspaper to be published in Sydney, the Alfred, ran for only two months, from 6 January to 27 February 1835. It closed, according to a note in its final issue, "owing to difficulties attending the printing a newspaper at the office of another journal" - it had been printed at the Sydney Gazette Office. Only two original poems appeared in the Alfred, "The Exile", 24 February, and "Extract from an unpublished Drama. Guilt", 27 February. Both were by "J.A., Paterson's River", and both were extremely poor.

A happier fate awaited the Commercial Journal and Advertiser, established on 5 May 1835, and still running at the end of the decade. As its title implies, it was mainly an advertising medium, and no original poetry was published before 1838. Only nineteen poems appeared in that and the following year, most of them, in keeping with the Journal's love of Dickens, humorous or satirical. One of the most amusing was "Lays of the Police, No. 1" by "An Ex Henspector", printed on 13 April 1839, where a lazy Irishman sings of the joys of police life and his ever-
readiness to accept a bribe. All the poems in the Commercial Journal appeared anonymously or under now unidentifiable pseudonyms, with the exception of the previously mentioned equation of "Valentia" with P.H. Valentine. Three "Papers from my Portfolio" by "Whimsa", printed on 12, 19 and 26 December 1838, were examples of verses written to while away the long voyage from England.

Emigration to Australia continued to increase throughout the eighteen-thirties, and this growth in population is reflected in the foundation of two specialised newspapers in 1839, the Sydney Standard and Colonial Advocate and the Australasian Chronicle and New South Wales Advertiser, representing Anglican and Roman Catholic interests respectively. On the former, which ran from 7 January to 30 September 1839, the Sydney Gazette commented on 8 January:

... Of its contents it would scarcely be fair to offer an opinion so soon for the editor is evidently a new hand at his trade. He seems determined, however, to excite a sensation by striking out to the right and left. The editor is a Mr. Robertson, and has, we understand, but lately arrived in the Colony.

Ironically, later in 1839 George Robertson was to succeed George Cavenagh as editor of the Gazette. If Robertson's leading articles were sensational, the twenty original poems published in the Sydney Standard were anything but. Conventional, sentimental and, as one would expect, often on
religious themes, none of them contained any references to the Australian scene. The most prolific contributor was William Mort, whose seven verses dealt with such topics as "The Lost Brother", "To A Friend with a Bible", and "My Likes", while the only one of any note was Eliza Dunlop, whose "Songs of an Exile" have already been discussed.

What was probably the best Sydney Standard poem appeared anonymously in the first issue. Entitled "Similges", it was a quite clever dialogue between a man and a woman, in which she turned all his similes of the limits of woman's love into similes of its merits.

In 1839, Andrew Bent, ruined by libel suits, left Hobart for Sydney, where Bent's News and Tasmanian Three-penny Register was reestablished as Bent's News and New South Wales Advertiser on 13 April 1839. Despite, or possibly because of, his resolution "to confine it, in some degree, to its original object, as a recorder of passing events, and a faithful Register of occurrences of interest, divesting it in a great measure of its once almost exclusively political character", Bent seems to have had no better luck in Sydney. On 20 July 1839, he

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5Although, in An Appeal to the Sympathies and Benevolence of the Australasian Public, for the Relief of Mr. Andrew Bent... (1844), Bent claimed a circulation of one and a half thousand copies, second only to the Herald. (p.9)
announced that the paper had been sold and would in
future appear as the Australasian Chronicle and New South
Wales Advertiser. Only one original poem was printed in
Bent's News, in the last issue for 27 July. In this,
"The Judge's Lament", a judge bemoaned the difficulties of
a recent controversial court case, while a chorus of att-
ornies sang of its pleasures and rewards. Ten original
poems appeared in the Australasian Chronicle in the five
months after it commenced on 2 August 1839. Only one of
these had Australian connotations, "National Education"
by "Moore Junior", 18 October, which attacked the Anglican
Bishop Broughton for his opposition to the proposed Irish
system of education. The current vogue for novels had
earlier been criticised on 8 October in "C.S.R.'s" "The
Novel Reader", an ironic picture of a woman who neglects
everything but her reading. "Two Sonnets" published on
10 December reveal stronger Wordsworthian influence than
any other Australian poems of this period:

I.
Dismally moaned the blast, at close of night,
   Rains fell, and sullenly the torrent roared;
And, when the moon diffused a feeble light,
   Scarce was the harmony of things restored.
If, in such an hour, leaving a sheltered dwelling,
I clomb the haughty front of huge Helvellyn,
Nor thence beheld in truth what I so long
Had loved in the ideal light of song,
   And if unwelcome was the envious cloud
   Whose gloom obscured the scene's magnificence —
Yet, oh! how ample was the recompense,
When, 'mid the grandeur of that wavy shroud,
My spirit felt, that oftimes power revealed
Less overawes the sense than power concealed!

II.
Whate'er her mood, we have assurance strong
That Nature never wilfully deceives:
Whether in Ruin's lone domain she grieves,
Or laughs in concert with the jocund throng,—
Whether triumphantly she mounts her car
To mingle in the elemental war,
Or walks in sunshine thro' the vale of rest—
Still, in her gifts, she blesseth and is blest.

Slow, wending down that mist encircled hill,
'Twas mine from sweet experience to know
That, while the heart's affections nightly flow,
Storm cannot blight, nor outward langour chill,
Those shadowy loves that on the fancy rise
Calmly as moonbeams float in softest skies.

A.M.A.

Despite the obvious echoes, not only from the Romantics
but from the eighteenth-century nature poets, "A.M.A." does
display more true poetic feeling than many of his contem-
poraries.

Wordsworth's influence is also to be found in one of
September 1833. Although one of the few by Halloran to
deal with an Australian topic, there is little actual
description of Coogee in this poem, and none of the detail
found in "The Gin", quoted earlier. Still, it is possible
to agree with the Australian's comment of 6 September 1833,
"The stanzas by H. Halloran on 'Australian Scenery', although
written with a little inattention to harmony, contain some beautiful lines." Two other poems by Halloran appeared in the Magazine, "The Conflagration of the Hibernia" and "The Minstrel's Grave", in the issues for October and November 1833 respectively. The former, a long melodramatic descriptive piece, was given a detailed and interesting review in the Australian on 21 October 1833.

... The subject is perhaps the most difficult that the youthful poet could have selected. There is something so dreadeful in the catastrophe, that it is almost impossible for poetry to add aught to the feelings of horror which a bare relation of facts must excite. All the adventitious aid of rhyme and epithet are lost in comparison with the event itself. There is another disadvantage too in the subject, of even greater magnitude, - who can ever forget Lord Byron's description of a shipwreck? - it stands alone, the greatest effort of poetry, and is sufficient to deter all succeeding poets from attempting the same subject.

Accordingly we find that in the "Conflagration of the Hibernia" the Author has been unable to divert his memory from the wreck of Don Juan, from which many of the Stanzas are closely imitated. ... 

We have a far more serious charge against the present poem than its being a copy of Lord Byron's beauties, which would have been quite pardonable if it had not copied also his defects. Lord Byron sports with the feelings of his reader, by joining in one passage, ideas and language of the most exquisite beauty, with an abrupt remark or a ludicrous idea, which however they may pass with the noble poet, can never be tolerated in any other. Stanza 28 before quoted is an illustration of what we complain of. "'Twas evening - and the tropic sun descended Amidst the gorgeous vapours of the west;
I shall not paint his glow as I intended,
Because descriptions, e'en the very best,
Are poor attempts to image forth the splendid
Commingling of all hues; ... I therefore rest
Content with saying, that the tropic sun
Condescend his myriad brilliant beams in one."

The Apostrophe to woman in Stanza 20 is another example of our authors inability to avoid the defects of his original.
"Here, though my space forbids me, I will say
That I have found, in woman's gentle breast,
Such feelings as sublime the noblest clay;
And raise her far above the very best
Of those who style themselves, in life's poor play,
The "Lords of the Creation". - Though distrest,
How firm, how mild, how kind! - how free from all
Those paltry little passions which enthral!"

Although there is that about the history and character
of Lord Byron, which renders his occasional references to
self, the most interesting portions of his poems, yet it
cannot be denied that they are defects in mere composition,
and certainly never to be copied by any other votary of
the Muses, unless he would incur the risk of illustrating
the saying of Lord Orford, "There is but one step, from
the sublime to the ridiculous."

Now the only extraordinary incident in this lamentable
occurrence has been packed up into one solitary Stanza,
and that too as spiritless and unpoetical as any of the
whole of the poem. We allude to the cruel treatment of a
young woman and her infant daughter being forced out of
the boat back into the burning ship.
"It was a desperate moment - for "the boat!"
"The boat!" "the boat!" was shouted by each tongue;
The yawl was lowered, the pinnace was afloat,
The gig, descending to and fro, was swung;
But here with pain and horror I must note,
That from the gig an infant and its young
Mother were forced on deck to meet their fate:
This is a fact I blush but to relate."

Now this supernumerary but throws an air of ridicule
over the whole. Then does he mean he blushed but, as an
apology for not crying - or does he mean that his relation
was the consequence of his blush.

With respect to the metre chosen, there is again the
same imitation, and in the structure of the stanzas there
is a similar neglect of the strict rules of versification -
and an eking out of a line or rhyme by a short unmeaning
word or sentence - such as,
"The boats pushed off - I say"
"There were four sisters, as I have been told, "
"But, to die

"Is little when compared with such a scene
Of unimagined sufferings, I ween."

The I say, as I have been told, I ween, are blemishes
peculiar to Lord Byron, who seems to use such expletives,
not from poverty of language, but out of contempt for
criticism.

On the whole we think the "Hibernia", is very inferior
to many of the poems of Mr. Halloran, an inferiority which we attribute almost entirely to the difficulty he experienced in his subject, and from being unable to forget the description in Don Juan.

The Monitor, however, in its review of the October New South Wales Magazine on 9 October 1833, thought "The Poems of Mr. Halloran are too good to last out. We cannot expect genius to fructify monthly." Halloran did produce one more poem for the Magazine, which, in compensation for its earlier strictures, the Australian noticed most favourably on 8 November 1833.

The "Minstrel's Grave", by Mr. Halloran, is perhaps one of the most beautiful compositions he has sent to the world. Though short, it abounds with poetic imagery of the most rare and chaste description; and the lyrical flow of the versification, with the pathos and beauty which breathe through every line, renders it alike calculated to seize the feelings of the unlearned, as to awaken the admiration of the refined classic. In this piece, which seems as though it might be read again and again, and on every occasion appear more perfect we discover elegance of language, richness of imagination, and harmony of combination. Let us take a stanza or two by way of example: -

Some slender trees, embracing, wave
Their dewy branches o'er his grave,
And scatter all the balms they have
Above the hallowed ground.

The tuneful thrush, when all is still,
Brushes against some branch his bill,
And utters his melodious trill,
While echo whispers round.

And here, too, at departing day,
The sun-set throws its level ray;
Glowing, while all around is grey,
With warm and gentle beam.

And when the stars, like spirits' eyes,
Glance from the deep and azure skies,
How plaintively the night-breeze sighs
Along the glittering stream.
Certainly, it is harmonious enough, but one fails to see any rarity in the "poetic imagery" which, as usual in Halloran's poems, seems to abound in conventionalities.

Besides the three by Halloran, eleven other original poems appeared in Ralph Mansfield's *New South Wales Magazine* during its brief run from August 1833 to March 1834. About half made some mention of Australia, although only one was humorous, "Entering Port Jackson. From the Scrap-book of John Newcome, Esq.", in the December 1833 number; some fairly smooth comic rhymes at the expense of Sydney notables living on the foreshores of the harbour. "The Beauties of England. Written in the Bush of New South Wales" by "Aleph", in the issue for September 1833, was an example of a nostalgic "exile" poem, with the refrain "My heart is in England, - my heart is not here". At the opposite pole, "X.'s", or William Woolls', "Lines, Written on Bathurst Plains in the Month of July", in the November number, predicted a hopeful future for Australia, although written very much in the English pastoral tradition. The *Australian* of 8 November 1833 thought they would

... never immortalize their author. They certainly rhyme, but contain very little poetic beauty. The most conspicuous image in the piece, and no doubt a very beautiful one in the writer's opinion, is that of a Traveller's Hat being blown across the Plains!

Among several other poems of natural description was G.J. Macdonald's "The Evening Lake", reprinted from the *Sydney*
Gazette, in the first number of the Magazine. Macdonald was also the author of the only original poem printed in John Lhotsky's Illustrations of the Present State and Future Prospects of the Colony of New South Wales, four numbers of which appeared between 1835 and 1836. This poem, "The Voice of Liberty", in Number 3 for 1835, was one of several in the period predicting an eventual victory for truth over error and tyranny.

Seventeen original poems were published in Tegg's Monthly Magazine, which ran from March to July 1836. Over half were melancholy pieces on death and disappointment; there was no love or humorous poetry. "Lines, suggested by the sudden Death of the Rev. Richard Hill, on the Evening of the Birthday Ball" by "Vox", in the final number, were the only verses on an Australian topic. The Commercial Journal for 20 July 1836 thought these "written with force and effect". In general, however, the poems in Tegg's Magazine were a poor lot, with no contributions from any of the notable poets of the period.

James Tegg's second venture in magazine publishing, The Literary News; A Review, and Magazine of Fact and Fiction, the Arts, Sciences and Belles Lettres, appeared weekly from 12 August 1837 to 3 February 1838. During this time it printed thirty-six original poems. In contrast to the ones in Tegg's Magazine, nearly half of these were love poems, though again there was only a single Australian poem,
"Epsilon's" "Farewell, On the Departure of His Excellency Sir Richard Bourke", in the issue for 9 December 1837. Three other verses by "Epsilon" in the Literary News dealt with the death of William IV, the greatness of Britain and the lost joys of childhood. Henry Halloran published one poem, "Intellectual Beauty", on 18 November 1837, a philosophical account of the values of love and virtue. The Literary News also printed six poems by Charles Harpur under the pen-name "Stebii", probably used, according to J. Normington-Rawling, because of the Australian's opposition to the paper. (p.65) Harpur's themes were very typical of the period: three were on unhappy love, two on death and one, a sonnet, contained elaborate descriptions of dawn and sunset. The most prolific contributor to the Literary News, "B.A.W.", published ten verses on topics ranging from adaptations of the Psalms to "Stanzas Written in Dejection" and "A Hint to Coquettes". He was also the author of the only humorous piece in the Literary News, "Satisfaction. A Parody on 'My Heart and Lute'", 18 November 1837, ironic praise of duelling, still a popular colonial pastime. "B.A.W.'s" best poem, "Pompeii. Extract from a M.S. Poem called 'Recollections of Naples'", 21 October 1837, contained some quite effective descriptions of the destruction of Pompeii and its surviving ruins.

Two further cantos from "Recollections of Naples" appeared
in the ominously named *Australian Magazine* which, true to form, ran only from January to March 1838. Printed in the issues for January and February, these described the scenery of Naples and some of its historical characters in smooth but inconsequential verse, lacking the quality of the earlier extract. A "Song" by "B.A.W." on the "Gather ye rosebuds" theme also appeared in the February number. In keeping with the magazine's title, three poetical predictions of Australia's glorious future were published, "Star of Australia" by "Epsilon" and "Australia" in January, and, in the following month, Charles McDonald's "An Address, supposed to be Spoken by a young Australian on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Colonization of New South Wales". More typical of McDonald's muse was "Edgar Athling, or the Minstrel of the Lake", in the final number of the *Magazine*. This sad tale of the poor minstrel's death, forsaken by his beloved, was, appropriately, dedicated to L.E.L., whose spirit hovered over so much early Australian verse.

The *Australian Magazine* was the last attempt of this nature made in Sydney in the eighteen-thirties but, before passing on to the collected poetry, mention should be made of a few verses published in the *Australian Almanack*. The Rev. C.P.N. Wilton's "The Land of the South", accorded the prize offered by the *Almanack* for 1831, has already been noticed in discussing the satirical parodies of it in the
Monitor early in that year. It foretold, in laboured verse, the future greatness and glory of Australia as a land of agricultural wealth, education, freedom and virtue. Three similar predictions appeared in the next year's Almanack: "Australia. A Poem" by "W.F."; Henry Halloran's "The Southern Isle"; and the anonymous, and best, "Lines, Written in the Cove of Sydney", which celebrated the present beauty of the town in contrast to its past wildness. The 1833 Almanack contained a long poem by Halloran, "The Discovery of Eastern Australia", composed of incidents "taken from Cook's narrative of his discovery of the eastern coast of Australia". Although early in the piece Halloran hoped

But when my theme is virtue, truth my aim,
May my verse glow with bright Byronic flame —
in general, this poem reflects the more earth-bound eighteenth-century writers, with a few aboriginal incongruities, as in the following extracts:

At distance skims the Indian's light canoe —
Forth bounds, with stately head, the kangaroo;
The lofty emu seeks the grassy vale,
And from the brush upsprings the whirring quail;
On rapid wings the shrieking parrot flies;
And from the wave the dusky swans arise;
The curlew wheels, the rising mackaw screams,
The cooing pigeon seeks the cooling streams;
The flowers are brilliant, and the southern land
Shines free and mighty from its Makers hand! . . .
Now let me leave the weed encompass'd shore,
And o'er the forest's gums in silencepore,
Beneath its lofty trees reflecting stand,
And breathe the fragrance that pervades the land.
With eager search their beauties I pursue —
The meerah glitt'ring in the morning dew;
The waving gomeah's commanding height,
And leaves with melancholy grandeur bright;
The odorous gibber gul, whose breast of snow
Vies with the lily in its virgin woe;
Nor can I pass unheeding, or forget
To name, thy beauties, "fringed violet;"
The warrataw; the wattle's saffron bloom,
Its friendly shade, and exquisite perfume
Allure my footsteps, and delight my eye,
And, as they charm, demand a stranger's sigh...

Although Halloran's description is little more than a
catalogue of animals and plants, at times blurred by
convention as in "melancholy grandeur bright", he shows here
more true awareness of the colonial scene than in any other
of his early poems. His acknowledgement of Barron Field's
"fringed violet" is also interesting in view of the otherwise
universal condemnation of "Botany Bay Flowers" at this time.
The only other poem published in the Australian Almanack
is the eighteen-thirties appeared in 1835, "The Past Year"
by "J.", on the theme of mutability.

Halloran's "The Discovery of Eastern Australia" was to
have been included in a proposed collection of his works
advertised in the Sydney Gazette on 5 November 1832:

POEMS

The Author of several small Poems which have appeared
on various occasions in the Sydney Newspapers, under the
signature of H.H. has to announce his intention of
publishing (should he obtain a sufficient number of
Subscribers to comprehend the expenses of printing, etc.
say from 200 to 250) a Volume of Poems, comprizing
"Lorenzo, an Elegy", in imitation of the Adonais of Shelley,
the first Canto of "The Exile", "A Vision of the Mind",
"The Discovery of Eastern Australia", "Six Epistles from
the Pen of Diana Desperate", with many Odes, Stanzas, Songs,
and Sonnets, containing from 2 to 2000 lines. The price will
10s. per copy, in boards, payable on delivery. . . .

Despite the enthusiasm for this project in the *Gazette* of 25 September 1832,

> It is gratifying to learn that H.H. proposes to publish a volume of his own. Our community is by no means extensive enough for doing justice to his merits as an author. However, we trust that his encouragement shall be such as shall prevent him from regretting the proposal. Of this we think he may be re-assured, there will be but one opinion, entertained by all capable of passing right judgment, on his really superior talents as a poet.

Halloran seems to have been as little able as his father to attract paying subscribers. As some remarks from the *Colonist* of 8 December 1838, quoted earlier, show, he was once more trying to bring out a volume in that year.

Since Henry Halloran had a secure income as a clerk in the Public Service, he was never forced, like his father, to try to earn a living from his poetry. One eighteen-thirties Sydney poet, Charles McDonald, did make the attempt, with little apparent success, despite newspaper appeals even more heart-rending than Laurence Halloran’s.

On 24 September 1834, the *Colonist* printed

> TO THE PUBLIC:

> The Author of the Poetry in the late *Sydney Times*, under the signature of SORENCIA, who is labouring under the affliction of blindness, having in contemplation (as a means of obtaining a subsistence,) the publication of several Poems, humbly solicits the patronage of a Benevolent Public, to enable him to publish the same; and for greater convenience they will appear in Monthly numbers, containing sixteen pages, at One Shilling each.

> A Stanza from one of the Author’s Poems.

> I will not raise a mansion in the air,
Or aught invisible to mortal sight,
Nor downward sink to realms of dark despair,
Where pain draws vigour from eternal night;
But gather from the nations of the earth
A spot, where I may contemplate in peace —
Tell the adventures of a son of worth,
And how he fared on life's uncertain seas —
Tell how he braved the adverse storms of fate,
And spurned the follies practised by the great.

Subscribers' names will be received at the Office of the Colonist, and by the Author, who will take the liberty of waiting upon those benevolent ladies or gentlemen who may feel inclined to befriend him.

The Monitor of 7 October 1835 published a fairly lengthy article in support of McDonald's proposal, headed "Poems — By Sorencia, No. 1. (From a Correspondent)". Although purporting to be a review of the first issue of McDonald's The Sydney Coronal, a large part of it was devoted to praise of Henry Halloran and the patriotic assertion that Australia had already produced better poetry than America:

However inferior the Colony of New South Wales may be considered in National importance, or in her commercial or other relations, when placed in a balance with other countries, no one, perhaps, will contend that she has not reached, in intellectual culture, and particularly in one department of literature, a degree of advancement "far beyond her years". Let us look to America and see what she has exhibited in the full progress of all her liberal institutions, and under the unfettered independence of years, in the branch of literature upon which some remarks are now about to be offered. Bryant and Dana are the best poets, and the best and most complete of American compositions is, perhaps, the "Buccaneer" by the latter. Yet, in the whole of this poem, here is nothing which has not been equalled, if not excelled, by productions which have had their birth in this Colony. It would be easy to prove this, would the limits of such remarks as these permit it; but as they will not, the mere fact can only be allowed, and the proof left to a more extended review of colonial literature.

Look, then, to the compositions of Mr. Halloran — of one still young in years — short tho' those he has given to
the world may be, do they not show talents of the highest order - diversified, and beautiful, and chaste; - and do they not deserve a fairer and a more congenial element than that in which they have come forth? 'Tis true he has shown us no composition of any extent, and why has he not? Because he could not find, in an Australian public, subscribers sufficient to indemnify him in the expense of a volume of his writings, in which he promised to send to the world his more elaborate and lengthy compositions. He offered the labour of years - of hours - and sleepless nights - which others had passed in dissipation and luxury, for the benefit and entertainment of mankind, and for the mere expense of printing; but they were rejected! Can we expect a genius such as he has shown, to vegetate in a soil like this? Do we deserve to possess such a writer amongst us? - One who has exhibited a vigour of intellect and a facility of composition, that might place beside the best writers of any country? No! his talents should be exerted in other climes, where the fire of his genius would not be extinguished by the cold hand of neglect.

After this account of the problems of the writer in Australia - one is struck by how early the question of expatriation and the "barren soil" theme were raised - the author finally turns his attention to McDonald:

The Colony possesses other writers of merit, but none who can be placed on a comparison with Mr. Halloran; and "among these others of less note" stands SORENCIA, the author of a small publication of original, and many of them, very beautiful poems. It is proposed by the author, to publish them in numbers, of the pamphlet size, at one shilling each; and it is to be hoped that he will meet with that encouragement to which his talents and misfortunes entitle him. He tells us in his letter of dedication, that he is afflicted with the greatest of all human calamities - BLINDNESS, and only now at the age of twenty-four. The loss of sight to a poet must naturally be the greatest privation that he could sustain; because to him the whole external world is a mere blank, - he can have no intercourse with nature - upon her treasure there is a seal set which he can never unclose - the lake of his imagination can receive no reflection from her beauties - his imaginative powers may create, but they must find themselves exhausted by their own weakness and
incapacity; - yet we can trace in his descriptions a greater force and truth than could be expected of him, and in those parts where he gives way to reflection, there is displayed a great intellect and beauty. This might be expected; because the loss of one organ must naturally render those which retain their vigour, more acute and susceptible.

His writings are immured with a sadness and melancholy, which, knowing his affliction, render them more pleasing and grateful: for the heart will always lend its sympathy to misfortune, but particularly when appealed to under the guise of refinement.

While McDonald’s verses may be allowed to have refinement, and certainly are very melancholy, they are, as the stanza quoted earlier shows, full of clichés and lacking in any real originality. A more objective review of the first number of the Sydney Coronal appeared in the Sydney Herald on 12 October 1835, with a further reference to "barren soil":

It is but seldom we are called from our ordinary avocations to enter "the still cave of the witch Poesy" - for the visits of the Colonial Muse, like the visits of angels, are "few and far between" - and it is, therefore, with no ordinary pleasure that we consent, occasionally, to relegate politics and its asperities from a portion of our pages, to hold forth the hand of welcome to the literary aspirant, and to encourage him in scattering the seeds of poetry on the still sterile soil of our nascent literature, which we nevertheless trust, shall yet, one day, bring forth "good fruit" to be garnered by grateful men.

We have been led into these remarks by the publication of a small pamphlet, entitled "The Sydney Coronal", comprising a collection of Poems, of the class usually denominated "occasional"; which, without possessing any striking or peculiar properties of style or thought, have nevertheless the merit of unexaggerated imagery, and of a sweet and somewhat flowing versification. There is, moreover, a prevailing tone of plaintive sentiment and gentle personal repining running through them, that is touching, from the very knowledge that it springs from
suffering; and is not, as is too commonly the case, the
offspring of affectation, or of that factitious and
artificial melancholy engendered in the minds of the
superficial, under the false impression that the gloomy
and the lachrymose are essential and legitimate elements
of the poetic character.

Brave words, which unfortunately went unheeded by many of
those writing verses for colonial newspapers.

From some remarks by McDonald in the Colonist on 5
November 1835, it would seem that his first number had
been successful financially as well as critically:

THE SYDNEY CORONAL:
TO THE PUBLIC
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I return you my sincere and heartfelt thanks for the
very liberal share of patronage you have already honoured
me with, nothing but a continuance of your favours can
enable me to bring forth my little Periodical at the
times appointed; it is to the lovers of minstrelsy - the
promoters of knowledge - the liberal and the humane, - that
I make application. THE CORONAL has been reviewed in
most of the public Journals, and treated in no contemptible
manner. It will continue to make its appearance on or
about the first of every month, if a sufficient number of
subscribers can be had to remunerate me for my expenses.

Poetry is in all countries a bad commodity, or generally
thought so; but it is so especially in this thinly peopled
land. Slender as the population may be, there are I trust
and hope, a sufficient number to encourage and patronize
the humble efforts of an unfortunate son of song - one who
is shut out from the light of day - deprived of the blessings
of sight - and as the Bard who sang of our first parents
and their fall, pathetically says

For the Book of Knowledge fair, presented with a blank.

Only one number of McDonald's Coronal appears to have
survived, the third, for December 1835. It contains two
pieces, the lengthy "Ormand and the Mermaid, A Poem, In
Imitation of the Style of Lord Byron", and a much shorter
poem on the transience of beauty, "On Beauty". McDonald also wrote an interesting apology for daring to imitate the great Byron:

To the Reviewers.

... I have endeavoured, perhaps vainly endeavoured, to imitate in some measure, the style of Lord Byron. ... To excel in imitating the weakness and defects of such a man as BYRON would almost stamp greatness on the character of any writer of the present day.

It would be folly for any author to attempt imitating Byron in his beauties - the calm flow of sentiment, the lofty and almost supernatural ideas, the bursts of eloquence, flashes of wit, and sublime melancholy, so beautifully blended and interspersed throughout the whole of his writings, would baffle the attempts of the most dignified genius to imitate, since men possessing splendid talents, frequently stumble when they attempt to tread the paths of this great man - how much more certain is the fall of him whose contracted abilities and limited education barely places him above the common class of men. I must confess it wears the aspect of vanity and must receive the disapprobation of numbers to think a man who can have no intercourse with nature, and who never obtained a practical knowledge of men and manners, but has been shut up from his infancy in this vast and almost immeasurable southern wilderness, should even dare to make an attempt to imitate one, as Mr. North says, of England's mightiest dead.

In "Ormand and the Mermaid", the mermaid entices Ormand into the ocean with her magic mirror but repents on discovering he does not love her. Before returning him to the surface, she takes him on a tour of her domains, where he meets a Turk drowned while abducting a woman and a soldier who describes all his battles. There are ample opportunities for Byronic digressions, though, lacking the audacity of the original, none of them really comes off. In fact, as McDonald had anticipated, his poem is in
every way an extremely poor imitation of Byron. The reviewer of the fourth number of the *Coronal* in the *Monitor* on 30 January 1836 evidently had "Ormond and the Mermaid" in mind when he wrote "it contains several pieces, one or two of which possess a share of poetical merit; indeed, it is quite evident that if the author will keep to compositions of this sort, and not attempt any thing humourous [sic]; his little work will be more likely to succeed."

From these remarks, one assumes that the early success of the *Coronal* was not maintained, an assumption confirmed by some comments on McDonald in the *Colonist* for 11 April 1838: "the fate that awaits all literary productions in this colony, befell his Coronal, after it had lived six months, and occasioned him considerable labour without having produced one farthing emolument!" He was now in the Benevolent Asylum and wished to go to England where he hoped his sight might be restored and the publication of "several thousand lines of original poetry" gain him a small pension. Later in 1838, the *Colonist* for 10 November published an extremely melodramatic letter from McDonald bemoaning his misfortunes, with the postscript, "My last publication, containing a History of my Life with a Prose Essay, entitled the Fate of a Genius, with four Original Songs, may be had at Mr. Tegg's, Bookseller, George-street,
price 1s. 6d. " In the Colonist of 29 December 1838, McDonald again called for subscribers to "a series of short Poems, principally of that style denominated Lyric," to "appear in single sheets containing thirty-six pages, price 1s. 6d." There is no indication that these were ever published, or that McDonald managed to leave Australia.

Considering Halloran's and McDonald's difficulties in obtaining subscribers, one wonders how William Woolls was able to publish two volumes of poetry and one of essays and poems in Sydney during the eighteen-thirties. Woolls had arrived in Australia in 1831 at the age of seventeen; the following year he became an assistant master at the King's School and brought out The Voyage; A Moral Poem Written During, and Descriptive of, A Voyage from England to New South Wales. This consisted of five cantos of heavy eighteenth-century couplets. The "Argument" for Canto I, which had as epigraph Byron's "My native land — Good night", gives a fair idea of the matter and manner of The Voyage:

Departure from England — Scenes of childhood — Episode on Wealth — Madras, celebrated for beauty of scenery, salubrity of climate, and fineness of Wine — Islands in the Ocean of great assistance to Navigators — The Canary Isles famed as the Scene of Blake's Capture of the Spanish Galleons, also for the Golden Songsters of that name; their confinement compared with that of that African Slave; their civilized Captors reprobated — Cape de Verde Isles — Thunder Storms frequent — The Town of Praya as seen from a distance — British Tars and their Sailor King.
Woolls' second production, *Australia: A Moral and Descriptive Poem* (1833), is in similar vein, but has a little more extrinsic interest, particularly in the final Canto, whose "Argument" runs

The Colonial Poets, Wentworth, Tompson, Lang, and Halloran - the fate of Poets, their misfortunes and melancholy ends - the reward of merit - Columbus, Crichton - the Augustan age, the Court of Augustus - the Author's apology for digression - the United States of America, their greatness and liberality - an example for Australia!

Besides this further evidence of the current willingness to adopt America as a model for Australia, Woolls' poem gives one an insight into contemporary ranking of local poets. He manages to find something kind to say on all, granting Wentworth "no common talent", J.D. Lang "excellence of heart / So far superior to the Poet's art", and writing of Tompson

Now next a mirror, on Australia's shore,  
Unknown by pedantry or Classic lore,  
Nor deep nor studied, in our Tompson shown,  
With graceful numbers, which were all his own. (p.63)

Like most contemporaries, however, he reserved his highest praise for Henry Halloran, comparing him with Byron in

The plaintive Hall'ran, in the pleasing strain,  
Swells the smooth verse, and joins the tuneful train.  
"Satire's his weapon," yet in am'rous lays,  
Or in the moral song, he claims the praise.  
Alike the master of the grave or gay,  
Shade of the Poet of a former day!  
The curtain drops, for on Australia's coast,  
Few yet have sprung to grace the Poet's boast,  
No wonder why, when Learning strives unheard,  
And Merit pines obscure without reward -
When thirst for gold damps poetry and sense,  
And merchants only think of pounds and pence. (pp.63-4)

The final complaint about colonial preoccupation with money-making, to the neglect of literature and learning, is one heard increasingly frequently in this and the following decade. Like many others, too, Woolls saw the growth of a strong national literary culture as essential to Australia's future prosperity, writing in an "Introductory Essay" on the need for "societies for the diffusion of useful knowledge":

It is therefore, incumbent on every well-wisher to Australia to cherish every institution which may advance the rising Colony in useful acquirements; for from these spring all the blessings of social life - from these alone can peace and order expect a long continuance; they breathe a balm on society, and at their appearance in the world "order from disorder sprung." (p.xi)

Nevertheless, Woolls indicated in the "Preface" that, like most early works on Australia, his poem was "more immediately addressed" to an English rather than a local audience.

Certainly, the Currency Lad for 5 January 1833 thought Australia too highly priced for local readers: "The price is rather startling in these sober times - 5s. to subscribers, and 7s. 6d. to non-subscribers. We would recommend half-a-crown or eighteen-pence." Australia was also given a justifiably critical reception in the Monitor for 1 May 1833.
. . . We must, however, in candour say, we think "Australia" inferior to the "Voyage"; and we would advise the author, if he love composition, to turn his attention to prose. . . . The dedication of the author of "Australia", to Sir E. Parry, is beyond the bounds of independence and dignity, and too effeminate in style. In no one particular in the cantos do we perceive more than a very superficial view of the Colony and its multifarious adjuncts. The poetry appears to us mere jingling rhymes, such as a rhyme-making friend might sit down to amuse his correspondent with extemporaneously. The TONE of "Australia" is lofty—while the language and subject are quite common-place.

These strictures were, however, taken up in another review of Australia, in the first number of the New South Wales Magazine, August 1833. Its author, presumably the Magazine's editor Ralph Mansfield, began by offering the usual explanation for the lack of a sturdy literary culture in the colony.

. . . However true the charge may be (and it is advanced by many), of the little encouragement that is given to the intellectual efforts of literary men in New South Wales; we cannot but think that it is somewhat out of place and exaggerated. The fact is, that in all young countries, men's minds are too exclusively occupied in overcoming unlooked-for obstacles, and in forming the foundation of future personal comfort and competency, to take much interest in the quiet and peaceable pursuits of literature. . . . With whatever crudeness or defects Mr. Wools' [sic] poem may be charged, we cannot but think that it displays a very great portion of poetical spirit and promising talent (the author, we understand, is yet a minor); and certainly does not, in any point of view, either of conception or execution, merit the sweeping and ill-natured strictures and sardasms that were passed on it by one of the Sydney newspapers.

Mr. Wools evidently composes with much ease and fluency, and it is perhaps the possession of this faculty that produces an occasional poverty of poetical phraseology, and slovenliness of versification. His lines, to use Mr. Jeffrey's similitude, "do not glitter and vibrate like polished lances", but frequently fall tame and spiritless
on the ear; a defect however easily remedied by a little study of the diction of the master-minstrels of our own time, from whose elaborately polished pages the conventional places of imagery and expression have been long since exploded, and with whose works our author, we suspect, is less acquainted than with the older and more familiar classics. But Mr. Wools, if he wishes to succeed, must fall in with the spirit of the age, "and to beguile the time, look like the time."

Wools' third publication, *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (1838), shows him to have partly heeded the Monitor's advice to "turn his attention to prose". Twenty essays were included, half of them on moral topics such as "The Vanity of Intolerance", "Tranquility", "Hope", "Moderation", "Death" and so on, the remainder mainly on Australian subjects, amongst them "The Press", "Immigration to New South Wales", "Educational Errors in Australia", "The Beauties of Australia", "Sydney" and "The Establishment of the Colony". Unfortunately, Wools' prose displays little more art or originality than his verse, although the Australian essays do have some historical value, as comments on aspects of colonial society. Most of the eighteen poems in the *Miscellanies* had previously appeared in the *Sydney Gazette*, the *Sydney Times*, the *Colonist* and the *New South Wales Magazine* between 1832 and 1838, under the initials "X.", "S." or "W.". Despite Mansfield's warning, their style, as with Wools' longer poems, was nearer that of "the older and more familiar classics" than "the master-minstrels of our own time". Amongst them were
examples of all the popular themes of the period: "Wreck of the Edward Lombe"; "The Exile", on a convict's lonely death; "On the Death of an Infant"; "On the Birth of Emily"; "To -- ", a love poem; "Friendship"; "Spring"; "Youth"; "Ode to Memory"; "Evening"; "An Imitation", on mutability; "Bathurst Plains" with a prediction of Australia's future greatness; and "The Country", an idyllic account of pastoral life in Australia. In both his choice of subject-matter and the general mediocrity of his verse, Woolls is extremely typical of the mass of early Australian poets.

Woolls' Miscellanies received a few notices in the Australian press, ranging from the Monitor's brief acknowledgment on 8 August 1838 - "we have not had sufficient leisure to read them all thoroughly" - and the epithet "very deserving little volume" in the True Colonist, Van Diemen's Land Despatch and Agricultural and Commercial Advertiser for 12 October 1838, to a lengthy review in the Colonist of 11 August 1838. Since many poems and articles by Woolls had appeared in the Colonist, it was naturally predisposed to be sympathetic towards his volume. Nevertheless, the learned reviewer did not fail to indicate a few of Woolls' defects:

THIS little work, which we briefly noticed in a former number, is now before the public, and is gradually obtaining that degree of favour to which we consider it justly entitled. Possessing, as it does, a variety of pleasing and useful information, and combining in a small compass
many highly important truths, it is certainly well worthy of encouragement and support. The principles, generally speaking, which the author inculcates, are sound and judicious, although occasionally he seems to speak too favourably of antiquated notions, and, here and there, discovers an over-fondness for the land of his early days. These, however, are but minor failings, and, therefore, we hope that while the impartial critic will pardon the first, the second will not be too severely censured by the lovers of Australia. Every writer appears to display some distinguishing features in his compositions: a similarity of style and sentiment is manifest in all his productions. To this principle, we must attribute a certain degree of sameness in the author of the Miscellanies, for whether he is gravely discussing the importance of the Press, or whether he is tuning his lyre to sing of the beauties of Australia, he invariably reverts to the rural scenery of Great Britain. Certainly such a theme is calculated to awaken the most pleasing sensations in the mind, to resuscitate the dormant feelings of patriotism, and to lead us back again in imagination,

---------- To the schoolboy spot

We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.

It cannot be denied, however, that a variety of sentiment is one of the most pleasing features in composition, and that it at once enlivens, and renders interesting, the works of an author. As regards the style of Mr. Woolfs, it is chaste and classical, and claims the merit of originality. The prose, in some of the essays, is bold and dignified, and, if the poetry does not exhibit the brilliance of a BYRON or a CAMPBELL, it is remarkable for neatness and simplicity. Throughout the volume, the author displays the spirit of an original writer, and, disdaining to copy either the sentiments or expressions of another, he seems determined to think and speak for himself. This is commendable; for how soever a man may distinguish himself as an imitator, he must, nevertheless, be content to enrol his name amongst the servum pecus, whom the poet so justly condemns:

0 imitatores, servum pecus, ut mihi saepe
Bilem, saepe jocum, vestri movere tumultus.

After these revelations of a growing Australian nationalism, the review continues with another attack on the colonists' neglect of culture in the pursuit of wealth.

Laying aside, therefore, the trifling defects with which the Miscellanies may fairly be charged, we cannot
but look upon the work as alike creditable to the author and to the colony. Indeed, when we consider the usual employments of young men in New South Wales, and the sad want of taste which they manifest in literary and scientific pursuits, we should be wanting in justice to the author if we were not to congratulate him on the profitable manner in which he has spent his vacant hours. Too many, we are well aware, in this colony, surrender their whole time and attention to occupations of a mercenary character — they pay no regard to the engagements which should excite the energies of a moral and intellectual being — they bury themselves in sloth and indolence, intent only on gratifying their animal nature — and, strange to say, through the love of money, or the allurements of dissipation, they entirely overlook the grand end and object of their existence. Such a state of things is certainly deplorable, inasmuch as it shows the tendency which prevails to depreciate the efforts of the mind, and those employments which have for their object the amelioration and exaltation of mankind. To our author, therefore, some attention is due on account of his perseverance in the paths of literature, for, while others have consumed their evenings in scenes of riot and dissipation, it is manifest that he has spent his hours by the "midnight oil", and, with no common care and anxiety, turned over "the ponderous tomes" of the ancients.

A detailed discussion of the views put forward in three of Woolls' essays followed, the reviewer concluding with these remarks on some of the poems:

The few poetical pieces at the end of the little volume, which we now proceed to notice, form a pleasing appendage to the essays. We turn, therefore, with satisfaction from the "heights and depths" of astronomy and metaphysics to the lighter portion of the work, which we presume the author intended as a kind of literary dessert to his subscribers.

The lines on the Wreck of the Edward Lombe, suggested by the awful circumstances which attended the destruction of that ill-fated vessel, will be read with painful interest; and the succeeding piece, entitled The Exile, of which we quote the concluding stanza, cannot fail to engage the attention of the reader:
So wept the exile, bound in servile chains,
   Far from his home, and all that man holds dear.
No friendly smile to alleviate his pains,
   No friendly hand to wipe away a tear.
He pines in solitude: the desert plains
   Receive his bones: no hands officious rear.
The high-raised mound: unpitied and unknown
   He lies, without a grave or sculptured stone.

The piece on The Country, which, we presume, is intended
as an imitation of the well-known Ode of Horace, commencing
Beatus ille qui procul negotiis, is singularly happy. The
exalted characters, referred to in the following passage,
will readily be recognised:

   The drum and fife ne'er break his sleep,
Nor cannon roaring o'er the deep,
Nor does the Colonel's dreaded corps
With sticks and stones assail his door,
He cares not with the great to dine,
   And taste Sir ------'s sparkling wine;
Or on the weary Jury sit,
And shake his sides at ------'s wit.

In concluding our review of Mr. Woolls's production, we
cannot but express our opinion that it is very creditable
to him, and that it contains a great deal in small compass.
In a colony, therefore, like New South Wales, in which
mechanical labour is so much better remunerated than
intellectual exertion, we trust that he may not sustain
any pecuniary loss by his publication, but that a discerning
public will bestow upon his labours that consideration
to which we consider they are entitled. Such a line of
conduct will have a powerful tendency to awaken the
slumbering energies of aspirants after literary fame, and,
at the same time, demonstrate that the good people of
Australia are not wholly enveloped in the mists of avarice
and sensuality.

Whether or not the sales of Woolls' Miscellanies had
any influence, another "aspirant after literary fame" did
awaken in 1838. This was Beverley Sutor, son of a wealthy
squatter, George Sutor of Bathurst, whose Original Poetry
(Sydney; Printed and Published by James Tegg, George-Street,
For the Author, 1838), was probably the worst book of verse ever to appear in Australia, which is saying a great deal. It did, however, achieve a better sale - four thousand copies were printed and, according to the Commercial Journal of 23 May 1839, about a thousand sold, "a number which very few modern poets have sold of a first edition of a first attempt" - and more newspaper publicity than any other early Australian publication. On 1 November 1838, the Sydney Gazette commented under the heading "Beverley Suttor"

This gentleman is about to favor the world with several poetical essays - the first productions of his pen - at the moderate charge of five shillings for sixteen pages, including an excellent likeness of the author (!) drawn on zinc, by Mr. Barlow. We await, with much anxiety Mr. Suttor's pamphlet, as we intend to review it at some length. We may, however, now just as well annex one of the author's verses by way of giving Mr. Suttor's admirers some idea of what they are to expect from his pen. We have seldom met with four lines so much to our taste. The verse breathes a spirit of candour throughout, which we cannot sufficiently admire! The last three words are particularly beautiful. Mr. Suttor says -

Without money I can never do,
Can neither breakfast, dine, nor sup,
Yet give me fame and honor too,
And money enough to "keep it up".

The promised review, in the Gazette of 15 November 1838, was in a similar vein, with the ironic recommendation that Suttor should send his verses to the Quarterly Review. Irony was also the key-note of the remarks on Suttor's poems in the Commercial Journal for 8 December 1838:
Literature!

The unique volume, as we have before styled it, now before us, is, in our opinion, one of the finest productions in the shape of poetry, that has issued from the Press of this or any other country....

To show the beauties of the work to the public through a newspaper, would be impossible, for the whole of the poems are alike, chaste, original, and unique; we may, however, gratify ourselves and the public by selecting a few of those poetical buds for admiration, which our contemporaries have passed by unnoticed, so unused are they to behold flowers "so delicate and pretty", blooming in the wilds of Australia, and perfuming the prosy air....

To compare Mr. Suttor's poems with those of any other author extant would be preposterous:—his poems are without parallel for originality and perspicuity:—so simple are they, that a child would read them with delight....

A more blunt approach was taken in the same paper a week later by a correspondent signing himself "True Friend" who offered Suttor "A Word of Advice":

... if a school-boy ten years of age, in his metrical exercises had been guilty of one tithe of the absurdities contained in this rare specimen of adult perfection; he would have received as his desert a sound castigation at the hands of his justly incensed master.

He went on to criticise Suttor's vanity, self-conceit and folly, ending with the hope that he would recognise himself as the ass he was. Whether or not Suttor heeded the advice, this view of him was taken up, with some profit, by the Mr. Barlow who had produced his zinc portrait. The Sydney Gazette of 15 January 1839 reported with glee,

The prince of Australian poets has at last been immortalised by Mr. Barlow, of Bridge-street, in the window of whose shop may be seen a lithographic likeness of the face of our hero nicely fastened to the carcase of a Jackass which is covered with a Lion's hide. The drawing is called "A view near Beverley Park", and underneath are the impressive words legibly written— "The Ass That Thought
Himself a Lion*. The numerous and devout admirers of the author of the beautiful verses on "Colonel Wall" etc. say, that the publication of this caricature is a sheer piece of spite on the part of Mr. Barlow, who is envious of Mr. Suttor's first-rate abilities; however, be that as it may, Mr. Barlow is selling a great many of these drawings at sixpence each, and is likely to sell many more. Mr. Suttor is certainly obtaining a very fair and proper share of public notoriety now.

Further evidence of Suttor's notoriety had been earlier given in the *Gazette* on 13 December 1838:

Some would-be-witty dunce had the impudence to affix a placard, of which the following is a copy, to the door of the *Sydney Gazette* office on Tuesday night. It is apparently the object of the placardist to show off his wit at the expense of Mr. Beverley Suttor; but if so, we are at a loss to know why this Office should have been selected for the purpose, the more especially as the writer must have been aware from our published critique of the very high estimation in which we hold those

Orient pearls at random strung.
- Mr. Beverley Suttor's *Original Poems*. The placard is as follows:-

**IMPORTANT NEWS TO THE COLONISTS**

The poetical inhabitants of this Colony are informed that the much admired works of BOOBY BUTTER, ESQ., the unanimously allowed POET LAUREATE of the Southern Hemisphere are now ready for sale.

B.B. intending that ALL persons should be enabled to obtain a copy, has fixed them at the moderate price of a Crown, *pecuniary gain not being* his object.

N.B. - It is requested that no individual takes more than TEN copies for himself, as the author fears a scarcity, he only having had 100,000 copies printed.

VIVAT REGINA.

On the same page of the *Gazette*, under the heading "LITERATURE", one finds

We would seriously recommend Mr. Beverly [sic] Suttor to look to his laurels, lest they be wrenched from his brow almost before they have begun to sit easy. In our advertising columns of today our readers will find the maiden effusion of a nautical songster, which, although
but the first effort of a youthful Australian sea-poet, nevertheless, contains some touches of which even Mr. Beverly Suttor might be proud. In the equitable spirit which characterized the lays of Dryden when, in former days, he sang the mystical praises of St. Cecilia, in the lines -

"Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
-Or both divide the crown:-
He raised a mortal to the skies
- She drew an angel down;"

in the same spirit we would say, if Mr. Beverly Suttor is destined to become the Moore of Australia, our embryo poet may well be styled the Colonial Dibdin.

The poem referred to, evidently inserted at the author's expense, was an extremely bad love song by "An Australian". It and Suttor's verses were the subject of a letter in the Gazette for 22 December, by the Henry Halloran-sounding "Lydia Languish", "a lady aristocratically connected, and of an exceedingly sensitive and nervous temperament."

She complained about the affront to her taste - nurtured on Moore's "Paradise and the Peri" - of the poems by Suttor and "An Australian", and asked for a law against "original poetry".

Besides these, further ironical comments on Suttor's poems had appeared in the Australian on 16 October 1838, whilst other poets made him the butt of their wit. "Omega" in "Consolatory Epistle to Beverley Suttor, Esq. Occasioned by the perusal of some of his effusions when in the interior", in the Australian for 19 February 1839, ironically claimed he had outstripped all other Australian, English and Persian
poets, and similar praise was given in the anonymous
"Lines, Written On a Book of Poems by B. Suttor, Esq."

in the Sydney Gazette for 15 December 1838. On 21 November 1838, the Colonist had noted

POETRY - We have to acknowledge the receipt of a very gaudily bound volume, containing some dozen poems or thereby, written by Mr. Beverley Suttor ... The author informs us that it being desirable, in consequence of the number of subscribers being great, and the demand for copies being extensive, to complete the whole four thousand copies before publication, the work will not in consequence be ready for the public under three weeks; our review, therefore, will be in sufficient time for some time to come.

The review which appeared a week later was the most detailed and amusing of all the notices of this volume; it gives a description of Suttor's poems impossible to equal and so, though long, will be quoted in full.

MR. BEVERLEY SUTTOR'S ORIGINAL POEMS
(FROM A CORRESPONDENT)

Mr. Beverley Suttor, of Beverley Park, Bathurst, has lately published 4000 copies of a poetical pamphlet, of twenty-three pages, the copy before us printed on tinted, gilt-edged paper, bound in embossed pink silk, and adorned with a well executed zincographed portrait of the author, to which an autograph signature is attached, after the fashion of celebrated men. The volume is entitled, "Original Poems", and of a verity the poetry of this Bathurst Byron is without any exception the most original that we have met with for many years. The portrait it is true, looks more like the head of a bearded Brigand, than of a British Bard; but as Mr. Beverley is himself perfectly persuaded that it looks like an incarnation of the spirit poetry - it is not for humble critics like ourselves to question the correctness of a taste so pure as that of Mr. Beverley Suttor.

It is Victor Hugo we think, who says, that "supposing the entity of a poet to be represented by the number ten, it is certain that a chemist on analysing it, would find it
to be composed of one part interest, and nine parts vanity;" and if Beverley the Bard (who, we are informed, was himself once a knight of the pestle and mortar) were to analyse the properties of his own intellect, we have little doubt but that he would find the calculation of the great French poet pretty correct. Ill natured people, however, do say that the Lord of Beverley Park has no pretension to appropriate to himself that ill-used and little understood epithet - Poet; and that he has about the same idea of poetry that a cat has of conic sections. However, we regard these doubts as to whether our hero possesses a large development of the organ of ideality, as the mere sneers and sarcasms of the envious and unappreciating, as we shall presently prove.

Mr. Suttor's volume opens very appropriately with an impromptu on the Emptiness of Fame, in the course of which, he says

Honour's but a title,
As Falstaff says, "what's in a name,"
When a man's been killed in battle.

Title and battle are not very good rhymes it is true, but a great original like Mr. Beverley Suttor of course disdains to trammel his genius with such trifles as correct rhyme, and regular metre; and accordingly we frequently find specimens of every variety of measure and rhythm [sic] tagged together in the space of a single stanza, which to say the least, has a very novel and original effect.

After the Philippic on Fame, our Poet, who appears by the bye to be a perfect Improvisatore, in his way, perpetrateth another "impromptu upon his horse Black Prince, getting into a lady's garden, pulling up a rose bush, and destroying a barberry, written at the suggestion of a lady," and as the Black Prince behaves so ungallantly in my lady's garden, Beverley forthwith abuses and apostrophises the Prince in the following spirited strain:-

--- You Black Prince!
I'll send you elsewhere to graze,
If you don't behave a little better.

The next composition that claims our attention, was "written at the request of a lady, upon the author's taking up a bottle of eau de Cologne", and so ecstatic and inspired does our poet become, that he actually exclaims I wish I were in the bottle.

A wish which we cordially echo, and we only hope, that the first time our adventurous bard does ensconce himself in the slender neck of an eau de Cologne bottle, that the lady will forthwith safely cork him up, like another "bottle imp", till he smothers himself

Like maudlin Clarence in his malmsey butt.
After this spirited effusion, our hero waxeth holy
upon horseback, and composes a poem "upon a most beautiful
sermon preached at Bathurst", and we should imagine,
from a certain roughness and inequality in the rhymes and
metres and the want of sequence and coherency in the ideas
and imagery, that our friend the "Black Prince" must have
been rather unruly during the period he played the part
of "Pegasus", but be that as it may, his poet master,
instead of going directly to his pew, as all good
Christians generally do, on entering a church, evidently
so far forgot himself, as to walk into the belfry instead,
for he says

I went where hangs the bell,
from whence he afterwards informs us he
Quickly saw the preacher hie,
   To meet his people there;
To treat upon eternity,
   Of how, and who, and where.

and a very pretty treat it must have been, we should
imagine.

On escaping from the belfry, Mr. Beverley gets tragical
and sublime upon the subject of Love and Revenge, and then,
by way of contrast we suppose, he indites a Poetical Epistle
to his Ironmonger, from which we can afford room for the
first couplet only,

Sir,
The last time by you I got spooned,
I can tell you I was near been ruined.

And a very grammatical and poetical exordium it is, as our
readers will allow.

Passing over the "Farewell Address to Colonel Wall", we
arrive at the concluding Poem, entitled a Sonnet, and in
the composition of which Mr. Sutter seems to have put
forth the full powers of his intellect, and of his liberality
and loyalty as well. A sonnet, we always understood, should
consist of fourteen lines - and accordingly we find that
the crack hands, both ancient and modern - Petrarch, Milton,
Drummond of Hawthornden, and Wordsworth, generally confine
themselves within the prescribed limit; but our bold
Bathurst bardling disdains to be tied down to any conventional
rule, and in the prodigality of his poetic resources, he
therefore very liberally gives us about a double allowance
of lines, for his sonnet numbers twenty-six; it is true,
the lines are not quite so long as they should be, neither
is the measure at all legitimate, but then, quantity makes
up for quality, and the inspired loyalty of such a laureate
as Mr. Beverley Sutter, may well make up for every minor
defect; and as we do not wish to be accused of asserting what we cannot prove, we shall quote the last stanza of Mr. Beverley's sonnet, and allow our readers to judge for themselves:-

But one flower surpasses.
All we made mention;-
I dare say you'll guess which I mean;
'Tis the flower of all lasses,
The pink of carnation,
Our lovely, sweet, beautiful Queen!!!

We recollect that our loyal laureate concludes the Epistle to his Ironmonger with this line -
Some poetry hits - I hope this may,
And so we hope too; and if it does not, all that we can say is, that it is from no fault of ours; and we hereby authorize that promising corn stalk critic and ex-student, Mr. Martin, to enroll our hero in his next batch of pseudo-poets, and to appoint him forthwith Poet-Lgureate in ordinary at the Court of the Colonial Apollo!

Following this on the same page of the Colonist was a briefer article, also "From a Correspondent", on "Colonial Literature", dealing in part with the forthcoming publication of William à Beckett's lectures on English poetry and the preparation of a volume of poems by Henry Halloran. Its author thought "The colony has certainly every reason to be proud of such men as Mr. Halloran and Mr. a'Beckett, and the publication of their volumes will assuredly tend to relieve our nascent literature from the odium that has been cast upon it of late by such preposterous poetasters as Mr. Beverley Suttor."

A further whimsical piece on Suttor's verses appeared in the Colonist on 5 December 1838.

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HOMER AND BEVERLEY SUTOR.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE COLONIST.

No. 3, Maecenas Terrace, Sydney.

SIR, - On reading in your paper of last Wednesday, the notice of Mr. Beverley Sutor's poetry, I fell into an involuntary comparison of the Bard of Bathurst and Homer.

Homer was the father of Grecian song. Mr. Sutor is the first Australian poet. Homer was preceded, it is true, by a few insignificant names. Sutor was heralded by two or three pretenders whose names are nearly forgotten. Homer delivered his immortal epic in a fragmentary form. Sutor publishes a few stray verses, and then like the Sybil resigns them to the wind. Homer attracted multitudes to his recitations. Sutor the most popular man in this new world, commands thousands of rapt audiences. Who could have divined in listening to the blind Grecian, who sang of "the wrath of Peleus' son," that his apparently fugitive pieces put together would form one unbroken whole? and who, on looking at Sutor's first emanations, would predict that they would one day form a magnificent poem, having a beginning, a middle, and an end?

Greece was colonized from Egypt, Australia from Britain. The first emigrants to Greece were philosophers; Australia for the first fifty years of her national existence received, oftener than yearly, supplies of men who had been celebrated at home for abstraction.

Homer and Sutor are original. The first beheld and made his own the poetry of a virgin world. Sutor appeared when the fountain of all possible thought had been broken up by the adventurers of two thousand years. Hence Homer was original in thought and sentiment; Sutor in diction. Homer constrained the Greeks to wonder at the magic which gave life to gods and goddesses, and semi-deities: Sutor caused astonishment among the Australians on beholding words where they were never placed before. Homer awakens admiration: Sutor excites surprise. In Homer we are attracted by the majestic and beautiful: Sutor enchains our faculties with novelty. Homer's forte was synthesis: Sutor's analysis; hence, "how, when, where." In short, if Homer is celebrated as the first fabricator of heroic verse: Sutor will be equally notorious as the man who overturned the structure of the English language in Australia, if like other great innovators he is followed by imitators.

Genius is always dogged by detraction. Homer had his Zoilus: Sutor has been buffeted by critics. Of course, even his poems are not perfect. What then? Beverley Sutor will rise like Byron from the lash of English Bards
and Scotch Reviewers, and in the magnanimity of the moment resolve to publish again. If so, we say, let it be an Epic. Remember, America has produced the Columbiad: let us peruse the Australiad. If Joel Barlow, with his pitiful name, courted notoriety, what may we not expect from the syllable, Beverley Suttors? Listen to the liquids - an Epic by all means. Though we may be supposed by some to be too laudatory of the Bathurst bard, yet we promise, if possible, to write a review of his expected work, although we have no personal knowledge of the writer.

JAMES SHADOW.

Although the Monitor of 22 March 1839 reported, "Beverley Suttors, having failed as a poet, intends to go in for the acting profession", later in the year, on 11 September, it printed

Literary Notice - At the request of Mr. Beverley Suttors himself, we give insertion to the subjoined exquisite morceaux:-

Mr. Suttors intends publishing a second series of poems, of which the following is a specimen. Subscription lists have been commenced, and are now open at his publisher's. The following Impromptu was written by Beverly Suttors, on a gentleman observing, Suttors never could reach Lord Byron's flight of fancy. Suttors leaves it to the public taste to say of which they most approve:-

---------- Byron soared to the clouds, -
There the fancy brightening,
'Mid thunder, oh ye gods!
And then came down on lightening.

While Suttors went to heaven,
Courted the goddesses' sway,
Made choice of six or seven,
And came down most heavenly!

While no copy of this volume appears to have survived, it seems unlikely Suttors heeded "James Shadow's" pleas for an epic. The public had evidently had its fill of Suttors, since only two brief notices of his new verses were printed in Sydney newspapers. The Australian Chronicle of 1
October 1839 noted "We have received a collection of Poems by Mr. Beverly Suttor, which appear to us to have at least the rare and distinguished merit of perfect originality". Two days later, the Australian gave a much sever acknowledgement: "The publication is such infamous trash that we have neither time, space, nor inclination, to say another word on the matter." On the same date, a poem by "G.G.G.", "To Beverley Suttor", telling him not to write any more verses, appeared in the Sydney Gazette. It contained the lines

For him reserve Chatterton's fate,  
Poor Shelly's [sic] death, or Johnson's hate.

And on 16 October 1839, the Colonist printed

Lines  
Written on a New South Wales Bank Note, No. 59, 701.  
Let England boast of Power and Wealth,  
Poor Ireland of its Butter;  
Proud Scotland, too, its numerous clans,  
And New South Wales its Suttor.

Napoleon's birth is Corsica's pride,  
'Gainst Russian Nick the Poles do mutter,  
Wellington, too, all Europe know;  
But what are they compared to Suttor.

Tell England, Ireland, Scotland, France,  
Let the whole world well know it,  
At Bathurst does Bev. Suttor dwell,  
Australia's greatest poet.

Woolloomooloo, Sept. 29, 1839.

Thus, though Suttor's verses were "such infamous trash", they did have the effect hoped for in the Colonist's earlier review of Woolls' poems, of rousing the colonists from their "mists of avarice and sensuality" to the production
of several amusing and well-written pieces of poetry and criticism, giving a further insight into contemporary attitudes to literature.

As mentioned earlier, a distorted view of the variety and quantity of early Australian poetry has resulted from only a few authors having sufficient friends or money to publish their works in book form. Although a study of newspaper and magazine verses can largely correct this, there were, of course, other writers without access to even such an ephemeral form of publication. Chief amongst these were the convict poets, most of whose productions are now lost forever. Some verses by the so-called "Frank the Poet", otherwise F. Goddard or Francis MacNamara, do, however, survive in manuscript in the Mitchell Library. They include the now well-known, powerful and amusing ballad "A Convict's Tour to Hell", presumably a much truer account of convict attitudes than the pious ditties of repentance which occasionally appeared in local newspapers. Less striking, but also historically valuable, are some other pieces such as "A Petition from the Chain Gang at New Castle, to Capt. Furlong, the Superintendent, praying Him to Dismiss a Scourger named Duffy from the Cookhouse and appoint a Man in his room", supposedly "Composed and Written October the 23rd day Anno 1832", and "A Petition from the A.A. Co. Flocks at Peels' River in behalf of the Irish Bard". Like much of the
more formal verse written in early Australia, the popular ballads seem to have been mainly the work of Irishmen. Amongst them was one Francis McKearn whose "Lament" of his misfortunes and warning against scoundrelly betrayers, written in gaol whilst awaiting execution for robbery, has been preserved in John McGarvie's Memorandum Book, now also in the Mitchell Library. McGarvie noted that his copy had been "taken from the recitation of Mr. William Smith of the Hawkesbury who repeated the whole." In typical ballad form, McKearn's "Lament", though not a remarkable example of its kind, does indicate how widespread and popular this sort of composing must have been. Of course, members of the gentry often amused themselves by writing verse, with no thought of publication. Poems by James Macarthur survive among his papers in the Mitchell Library, whilst in Cattle Chosen (1931), E.O.G. Shann quotes several manuscript poems written during the 'thirties by John Bussell of Western Australia. (pp. 56, 150-51, 157)

The Colonist's previously mentioned article on "Colonial Literature" ended with a brief notice of the only book of verse to appear in Tasmania during the eighteen-thirties:

The sister colony of Van Diemen's Land has her literary aspirants also. We have looked over a volume of poems, dedicated to Sir John Franklin, by a Mr. Knox, of Hobart Town,

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which give evidence of a refined and cultivated intellect, and of true poetic feeling; and if Mr. Knox is yet a young man, we think his volume gives promise of better fruit to come — there is certainly not much originality of thought or diction in these productions, but they are fluent, harmonious, and correct, and some of the stanzas — the Magician's Legacy, for instance, — remind us, not unpleasantly, of the late Mrs. Hemans.

James Knox's *Poetic Trifles* (1838) was the first volume of lyrics published in Tasmania; in his Introduction Knox hoped others would try to better his example:

The suggestions of a few friends, whose criticism, influenced perhaps by their regard, has been very flatteringly expressed, have induced me to publish the following pages, not with a view to pecuniary advantage, nor because I myself possessed any very high opinion of their merits, but in the hope that this first publication of the kind in the Colony would awaken its slumbering poetical energies, and excite others to nobler and more successful attempts.

There are no indications of the success of Knox's volumes, but it seems unlikely to have brought him any "pecuniary advantage". In 1834, the Hobart *Town Courier* for 21 February had told the author of "the beautiful poem entitled 'Mercury's Coronal', written in commemoration of the services Mr. Robinson has done to humanity and the colony in removing the blacks to Flinders' Island": "With a little revision it would suit the public eye, but the little encouragement to such productions in this community, would render its publication a losing concern". No doubt the situation was much the same in 1838.

Many of the poems in *Poetic Trifles* had earlier appeared
in the Tasmanian Colonist in 1832 and the Hobart Town Monthly Magazine in 1833 and 1834, under the pseudonyms "Anglo-Tasmanian", "Anglo-Tasmanicus" and "*K*". Knox did, however, include other previously unpublished verses and omit some of the published ones. One of the latter, "The Jamaica Tale", in the Hobart Town Magazine for August 1833, was one of many local imitations of Byron, written in "the 'Don Juan' stanza", and justly criticised in the Tasmanian of 30 August 1833 as "a smart but somewhat conceited imitation of Byron's inimitable poem: it was a bold flight for an unknown bard to make, and we would say he has not reached his quarry." Knox's verses as a whole have been well described by Morris Miller:

... mainly simple lyrics on domestic themes after the "Keep'sake" fashion. He reflects on the years spent in northern climes, the cottage homes, and village greens, which come back to mind in contrast with the Tasmanian scene... The Tasmanian situation was exotic to Knox's mental outlook. His only piece with a Tasmanian title, "Impromptu to Mount Wellington", was written merely for the purpose of pointing a moral from the "snow that circles round thy haughty brow". Generally he saw the immediate landscape with eyes accustomed to English downs and meadows. His attitude was typical of emigrants who, steeped in provincial repose, sought compensation for the newness, incompleteness, and discomforts of their colonial environment, in the remembrance of sweets of childhood, ancient churchyards and countryside family gatherings. In reflection the commonplace of an English home afforded relief from the harshness of pioneering enterprise. An anonymous reviewer (A.A.R., April 6, 1838), in a lengthy disquisition on the office and work of the poet, summed up Knox's collection as a "choice of the Album sort", and advised him to improve the "intellectual part" of his
poetry. The *Colonial Times* (April 17, 1838) commented that the major portion of Knox's work was characterized by a "sweetness of versification and a prettiness of thought by no means discreditable", but added that it lacked "vigour and energy". As a production it did not portend a hopeful development for poetry in Tasmania.8

The *Hobart Town Magazine*, founded by Henry Melville in August 1833, was the longest-running and certainly the best Australian periodical of this decade. Its original poetry, however, although plentiful, was not particularly outstanding or interesting. Since almost half of the one hundred and nine original poems in the *Magazine* had been written by James Knox, the prevailing tone and themes can be easily estimated from what has been said of his work above. About a quarter of the poetry was on love, another quarter on death, and very few verses bore any relation to Australia. "J.N." did publish two melancholy "Convict Sketches" in February and June 1834, while two of the unsuccessful pieces for the 1834 *Van Diemen's Land Annual Prize* for poetry appeared in February and March 1834. These were "J.S.'s" "Lines to Tasmania", one of the few Tasmanian poems to take up the common Sydney theme of Australia's future greatness, and "Monitor's" disjointed "Lines", where Hobart was rather incongruously compared to Rome because of the number of its hills. The best poems on

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8*Pressmen and Governors* (1952), pp. 133-4. Further details of Knox's life and work may also be found in Miller.
colonial topics were written by "P." His "Tasmania, A Poem", in the number for February 1834, a long essay in eighteenth-century form, described the growth and prosperity of the colony, with some veiled criticisms of Governor Arthur. "P.'s" earlier piece, "Oh, Maid of the Tweed. An Emigrant's Song", in the December 1833 issue, was a charming Tasmanian version of "Come live with me and be my love", holding out such delights as

Our cottage shall stand by the evergreen wood,
Where the lory and turtle-dove rear their young brood
And the rosy-plumed paroquet waves his bright wings
On the bough where the opossum gambols and swings.

This presents a rare contrast to the nostalgic longings of James Knox and other "exile" poets.

One of the longest exile poems, predictably entitled "Home", was published in the seventh number of the Hobart Town Magazine, September 1833, under the initials "H.E.R.". According to Morris Miller, the author was Hannah Elsemere Richards, wife of Thomas Richards who was largely responsible for editing and writing the Magazine.\(^9\) Although Morris Miller calls "Home", "the best of the comparatively long poems in the Hobart Town Magazine", it is entirely conventional in form and sentiment, with little to distinguish it from the many other poems on the same theme. Mrs.

\(^9\) *Pressmen and Governors* (1952), pp. 103-4.
Richards also perhaps wrote several other poems printed in the Magazine under the initial "H.", generally sentimental and moralistic in tone, with such titles as "To a Child Embracing His Mother" and "Lines, On seeing a Contention between two Worms". A number of verses by Thomas Richards also seem to have appeared in the Hobart Town Magazine under various initials. Like his wife's, these were conventional pieces, mostly on death themes, with no references to the Australian environment. Among them were "T.'s" "Elegiac Stanzas", March 1833, and "R.'s" "Dream of a Wounded Soldier on the Field of Battle", October 1833; "Lines on the Death of Dr. Spurzheim", December 1833; and "To a Departed Child", August 1833. Richards' major contributions to the Hobart Town Magazine were a large number of prose essays, sketches and stories, to be discussed later in this chapter.

The second magazine to appear in Tasmania during the eighteen-thirties was the Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine, published by James Ross between September and December 1835. It printed only seven original poems, nearly all on religious themes and all of inferior quality. Indeed, with the exception of the Hobart Town Magazine, Tasmanian publications of this period printed a signific-

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10 Ibid., pp. 103, 260.
antly smaller amount of original poetry, even allowing for the differences in population, than their Sydney counterparts. Since the *Hobart Town Magazine* had no difficulty in finding poetical contributors, one assumes other editors either set particularly high standards, or thought newspapers should not print poetry. The latter was certainly true of the editor of the *Launceston Advertiser*, who told a correspondent on 24 November 1836, "The lines of J.B. have been received; and are only not inserted under an invariable rule with us to admit no poetry." At various times, however, both the *Colonial Times* and the *Tasmanian* commented on their lack of original poetry. On 12 October 1831, the *Times* printed: "To Correspondents. Next week we shall most probably insert the 'Poet's Grace', as we fancy all the poets in Van Diemen's Land have departed this life - on this side of the Island." Later, on 21 November 1834, the *Tasmanian* lamented that "The whole tribe of Colonial Poets have abandoned us. The 'Genus irritabile', full of resentment at our neglect of the innumerable favours they have bestowed upon us, have given us up in scorn at our want of taste."

As in Sydney, there was a decline in the number of original poems printed in Tasmanian newspapers as the decade wore on. The *Colonial Times*, the best example of this, published thirty-three original verses in 1830, eleven
in 1831, nine in 1832 and an average of less than two a year for the rest of the 'thirties. About half of the total fifty-nine were on Australian topics, mainly satires on local events and characters, nearly all the post-1831 pieces being of this type. Earlier, there was a high proportion of love poems, besides a number on death and exile themes. One of the latter, printed on 18 June 1830, was a "Canzonet", to the tune "Adieu, my native land, adieu", by H.N. Murray, whose work has already been discussed in Chapter II. Three other poems by Murray, under his initials or the pseudonym "Dominie Sampson", appeared in the Times during 1830. "Tasmanian Melody", 19 February, shows that, despite his nostalgia, Murray was able to see some beauty in the colonial scene,

beginning

'Neath a shady mimosa reclined,
Where carols the lively rozelle,
I call my sweet Jessie to mind,
For we plighted our vows in this dell.

Murray was possibly also the author of two gloomily romantic descriptions of Tasmanian scenery, "Stanzas, Written in a Tasmanian Glen" and "Stanzas, Written on a romantic lake in the mountains of Abyssinia, Van Diemen's Land", published in the Tasmanian Colonist on 15 February and 2 July 1833. He also contributed three verses to the True Colonist at the end of 1839, two of them on aspects of
Christmas and the third, "Lines on the Tasmanian Anniversary Regatta, 30th November, 1839", 29 November, patriotic praise of Tasmania, with the usual device of contrasting the scene before and after settlement. The other major Colonial Times author was Conrad Knowles, who published twelve poems there in 1830 and 1831. Mostly either sentimental love poems or melancholy ditties on absent friends, one, "On Seeing the following lines, by L.E.L. in a Magazine", 25 June 1830, clearly showed the main influences on Knowles' verse. He apparently also tried his hand at prose, since in the "To Correspondents" column of the Times for 27 August 1830 the editor commented, "'The Last Rose of Summer' is not exactly to my mind; we must say we admire Conrad's verses more than his prose."

Some time before the end of 1832 Knowles went to Sydney, where he became one of the leading actors and published his play Salathiel; or the Jewish Chieftan (1842).

A poem by Knowles, "To a Sister. Written at Sea", also appeared in the Tasmanian on 7 May 1830, one of only thirteen original verses in this paper during the eighteen-thirties. As with those in the Colonial Times, about half were local satires on such subjects as the expeditions against the aborigines and the need for trial by jury.

One of the most amusing, "A Swan River Eclogue" by "A Subscriber", 26 March 1830, gave this account of life in
the new settlement:

"Compare her face with some that I shall shew,
And I will make thee think thy Swan a Crow."

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SHAKESPEARE.

Though the classical bards, to cajole us,
Miraculous stories have told,
Of the glittering river Pactolus,
Whose margins were sanded with gold;
Of the Styx, whose ferruginous water,
Encrusting Achilles with steel,
Insured him for ever from slaughter,
Unless he were shot in the heel; -

Tho' Europe has many a river
To fame and to poetry known,
The Tagus, the Po, Guadalquiver,
The Tiber, the Rhine, and the Rhone;
Tho' Nile throughout Africa ranges,
From Nubia down to the coast,
Tho' the Hindoos are proud of the Ganges,
And Yankees their Potomac boast; -

They must all hide their heads, and knock under.
(Old Nilus already has gone,)
To this mystical, magical wonder,
The river that's christened the Swan!
Oh! this is the river of rivers,
For curing all ills of the Fates,
Spleen, bad reputations and livers,
Empty pockets, and emptier pates!

The Captain who found it was STERLING!
So no one should stare when he's told,
That its waves are for ever unfurling
Supplies of Pactolian gold.
I cannot suppose they deride us,
Or give us a shadow to clutch,
For all who have ears such a Midas,
May safely make sure of his touch!

That the country is Paradisaic,
To a certain extent I believe,
For the natives, both cleric and laic,
Are naked as Adam and Eve.
With spear, some facetious mad sinner,
Your short ribs may tickle and poke,
Dispatch you, and eat you for dinner -
But lord, 'twill be only in joke!
Of the swans, whence it took its cognomen,
The river may soon be bereft!
But none need repine at the omen,
For black-legs enough will be left.
Failing these, there are geese - not the Roman,
For they could their capital save;
With jail-birds acknowledged by no man,
And lame-ducks for each passing wave.

How pleasant for civilized creatures,
With a savage's life to be curst!
Not knowing whose morals or features,
The white brown or black man's are worst!
How cheering, instead of a cottage,
In a rain-dripping tent to reside;
To eat an opossum in potage,
Or feast on a kangaroo's hide!

How charming, with thousands of acres,
A failure and famine to dread;
To have plenty of butchers and bakers,
But wanting both cattle and bread!
How delightful to find your next neighbour,
A thief, or a clown, or a sot;
Like a negro to drudge and to labour,
And yet have a penniless lot!

To the new Eldorado then hasten
All ye who leave nothing behind,
And quickly, your fancies to chasten,
You'll learn you have nothing to find.
Would you picture Swan River before a
Full view to your eyes is unroll'd,
Imagine the box of Pandora,
Without any Hope in its hold!

Another interesting poem, "Stanzas, written on leaving England", was printed in the *Tasmanian* on 5 April 1839. In contrast to the many other verses of similar title, it was fairly cheerful in tone, with the anonymous author looking forward to such colonial delights as kangaroo hunting, rather than backward to the lost joys of home.

Even fewer original poems - ten - appeared in the
Hobart Town Courier during the eighteen-thirties. Over half of these were on Australian themes, though because of the more conservative nature of this paper, there were fewer local satires than usual. They ranged from the facetious "Death, the Only Remedy"; or, Lines upon Mrs. ----'s spilling a cup of tea over her silk dress, in Macquarie Street, on Saturday evening last", 21 May 1831, a parody of Goldsmith's "When lovely woman stoops to folly", to the melancholy "The Convict's Lament", 25 February 1832, a poor attempt to describe his repentance and hopes for forgiveness. Some conventional "Lines" on sentiment printed on 12 May 1837 under the signature "J - K -" were presumably written by James Knox. As has been mentioned, Knox was also the author of three of the eleven original poems published in the Colonist and Van Diemen's Land Commercial and Agricultural Advertiser, which ran from 6 July 1832 to 7 July 1834. The third of Knox's verses, "To the Boy Bard", 28 December 1832, was prefixed by these amusing comments on the dearth of Tasmanian poetry:

Sir, - You say you wish to invite the muses to this hemisphere. Recollect that the natives are extremely unpoetical in their appearance, and that the Colonists only think of money getting; so never have the idea of sending their cards to the Heliconian ladies. However one of your readers is a small rhymester, and will be much gratified by seeing the enclosed trifles in print, subscribing himself, Anglo Tasmanicus.

The Prospectus for the Colonist, printed in the Hobart Town
Courier on 6 July 1832, claimed that "Colonial subjects, and Colonial interests will reign paramount throughout", and about half its original poetry was on Australian topics. One of these, "Complaint in the Chest", 2 November 1832, on the recently discovered shortages in the Colonial Treasury, provides an example of a Tasmanian version of the Sydney "pipe", since the editor noted, "Copies of the following Jeu d'Esprit have been thrown over the gates of some respectable inhabitants. We picked it up in a public office. The owner may have the manuscript by applying at our office."

Local satires of this type were also published in the True Colonist and Van Diemen's Land Political Despatch and Agricultural and Commercial Advertiser, a successor to the Colonist established on 5 August 1834. As well, there were verses on kangaroo hunting, the opening of the Hobart Theatre, and the lines by H.N. Murray on the Anniversary Regatta mentioned earlier. The only one of the nine original poems in the True Colonist till the end of 1839 not on an Australian theme was "The Scottish Widow's Lament" by "Scotsman", 16 August 1839. Written in Scots dialect, evidently influenced by Burns, this simple and sincere poem was remarkably free from the sentimental moralising that usually marred the many colonial attempts at similar death themes.

Of the remaining four newspapers issued in Hobart during
the eighteen-thirties, the Tasmanian Weekly Despatch, founded on 4 October 1839, published no poetry, and only a few scattered verses appeared in the Morning Star and Commercial Advertiser, Bent's News and Tasmanian Three-penny Register and the Hobart Town Advertiser. Six original poems in the Morning Star, which ran from 28 November 1834 to 21 August 1835, included one, "Australia, Huzza!", 19 May 1835, on the beauties and future greatness of the country. Bent's News also did not survive the decade, being issued between 9 January and 28 December 1838. Many of its thirteen original verses were on Australian topics, six of them in 1838 dealing with Bent's current feud with Gilbert Robertson, editor of the True Colonist. More lasting humour can be found in "Lament of the Single Ladies of Van Diemen's Land", 25 June 1836, a charming little piece on their lack of dowries and consequent lack of husbands. In contrast, "M.'s" amusing "Original Song", in the Hobart Town Advertiser for 26 April 1839, dealt with the successful proposal of marriage to a dear lady of eighty. All but one of the eleven original poems in the Advertiser, founded on 5 April 1839, were by "M.", otherwise John Morgan, the editor. They were mostly conventional, sentimental love or death pieces, with no mention of the colony, although an "Original Patriotic Song", 5 April 1839, asked for God's blessings on Queen Victoria.
Of the three Launceston newspapers of this decade, the Launceston Advertiser published no poetry after 1831, apparently deciding that it should be devoted to more weighty matters. Up to that date, seventeen original pieces had appeared, none of any great merit or interest. In 1830, three nostalgic verses "By An Exile", "Lines Written on Leaving England", "Though all Others should Forget, Yet Will Not I Forget Thee!" and "Early Recollections", were printed over the initials "J. E." Another, and better, side of this author's work may be seen in two humorous 1830 poems, "An Advertisement for a Grocer's Shop Window" and "The Batchelor's [sic] Choice". The poems published in 1831 were all on commonplace topics such as "The Past", "Hope", "Thoughts on Woman" and "Forget Me Not".

On 23 March 1831, a new paper, the Independent, was established in Launceston by the Hobart editors R.L. Murray and Henry Melville. In the four years of its life it published thirty-five original poems, a higher proportion than most other Tasmanian newspapers of this period. Half of these were on Australian topics, several in 1834 dealing with the evils of tyranny and the lack of freedom in Tasmania. Some of the latter signed with a row of dots may have been by Evan Henry Thomas, since Morris Miller identifies the similarly-signed "Ode to Liberty", 12 October 1833, as
his. The ideas expressed were certainly in keeping with Thomas's earlier controversial criticisms of Governor Arthur. It is also likely that Thomas wrote "The Emigrant's Lay" by "***", 9 July 1831, celebrating a reunion with loved ones in Tasmania, as he returned from a visit to England in June 1831. He had published a more typically melancholy exile poem with the same title in the Hobart Town Gazette on 19 October 1822. In addition, Thomas was perhaps responsible for five poems by "T." printed in the Independent during 1832 and 1833. The final one, with the intriguing title "Literary Censorship Defended", 3 August 1833, was actually a warning to authors to heed their critics, as nobody's work was perfect. One of the most interesting of the Independent's poems, "The Two Sheep", by "A Subscriber", 20 October 1832, consisted of an amusing dialogue between "Coarse" and "Merino" on the prevailing class system, with the "Coarse" sheep forcefully pointing out how much the "Merino's" prosperity depended on him.

The Independent ceased publication on 31 January 1835, but its place was soon filled by the Cornwall Chronicle's commencement a fortnight later. Although William Goodwin, who had edited the Independent in 1834, took over the Chronicle at the end of 1835, its eleven original poems printed before the end of 1839 included few of the local

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11 Pressmen and Governors (1952), p.78.
sati res so prominent in the earlier paper. Exceptions were two on the new Insolvent Act, 16 and 23 September 1837. Apart from these, the Chronicle's poems had such conventional titles as "Insanity", "Burial at Sea", "Sunset" and "To Winter".

Two original poems also appeared in Henry Melville's Van Diemen's Land Almanack, one in 1832, the other in 1834. On 21 December 1831, the Colonial Times printed

Prize Poem. The Editor of the Van Diemen's Land Almanack, will present two handsomely bound copies of the forthcoming work for 1832, to the author of the best original poetical contribution, composed exclusively for its pages.

The verses must have some reference to the Colony, but the author may use his own choice and discretion as to the subject.

N.B. The verses must be addressed to the Editor, at the Times Office, on or before Monday next, the 28th December, otherwise they will be too late for publication.

In view of the brief time allowed, it is surprising that the Editor received the large number of contributions noted in the 1832 Almanack:

No less than seventeen aspirants for the reward offered for the Prize Poem, appeared in the field, but the number was soon reduced to four by the umpires.

Although the Prize has been awarded to M., it was so, simply on account of his Poem having some reference to the subject given. Aurora would undoubtedly have gained the day, had the same merit been confined to a subject of a local nature. J.P.'s verses were good, as also H.R.'s, but neither of the three rejected, had any reference either to the forthcoming year or the Colony, otherwise M. would not have been successful.

This suggests that many authors submitted previously composed works, hoping the conditions of entry would be overlooked. "M.'s", or John Morgan's "Reflections on the
New Year for 1832", a conventional, melancholy piece on mutability, actually made little mention of Tasmania. Its great future was, however, the theme of "Frances's" 1834 prize poem, "Van Diemen's Land", where it was praised, in verse much better than Morgan's, as a beautiful land of reformation. As has been mentioned, some of the unsuccessful 1834 poems were later, in compensation, printed by Melville in the Hobart Town Magazine.

Despite the pressures of a new settlement, the usual excuse for lack of literary culture, the pioneer colonists of Melbourne showed themselves, in proportion, more prolific poets than their Tasmanian brothers. The Port Phillip Gazette and Settlers' Journal, founded on 27 October 1838, printed twenty-eight original verses in 1839. Besides the usual love and death pieces, three patriotically hymned the history and future greatness of the infant colony. Two, "The Bay of Port Phillip" and "Melbourne", 5 and 26 January 1839, were by the aptly named "Coloniensis", otherwise "C.L.S." and "C.", identified in the Mitchell Library copy as "W.W.", which leaves one none the wiser. His other four poems were on more usual sentimental topics, also the mainstay of eight verses by "L.", on "To a Tear", "Youth and Pleasure", "A Mother to her Child", "To Sleep" and so on. The most amusing of the Gazette's poems was "H.K.'s" ballad on the woes of squatting beginning "If ever you were
at Yass you may have heard a song", 19 June 1839. Only
two original verses, one praising the Press, the other
God, appeared in John Pascoe Fawkner's *Port Phillip Patriot*
and *Melbourne Advertiser*, established on 6 February 1839.
None had been printed, or rather written, in Fawkner's
earlier *Melbourne Advertiser*, the first Victorian newspaper,
issued from 1 January to 7 May 1838.

Little verse also appeared in the newspapers established
in South and Western Australia during the 'thirties. Of the
Adelaide papers, the *Egoist*, May to June 1839, and the
*Adelaide Chronicle*, begun at the end of 1839, printed no
original poetry. Nor did the erratically issued *Port Lincoln
Herald*, commenced in April 1839. One quite clever anonymous
love poem, "A Challenge to Chess. To ---", was printed in
the *Adelaide Guardian* on 21 September 1839, early in its
two months' run. The *South Australian Gazette and Colonial
Register*, founded in England in 1836, initially deliberately
refused to publish original poetry, the editor telling a
correspondent on 6 July 1839,

The poetical effusion entitled "*The Bush in Australia*"\(^\text{12}\)
we have not had time to read. — We so abominate the "original
poetry" of newspapers that we make it a principle on no
consideration to print the rhymes with which we are occasionally
favored.

This principle was transgressed only once prior to 1840, on

\(^\text{12}\) Presumably by N.L. Kentish, whose diatribes against Adelaide
editors for refusing to publish his verse are discussed in
Chapter VII.
5 October 1839, for an amusing parody of Gray's *Elegy*
bemoaning Osmond Gilles' retirement as Colonial Treasurer,
"A Pathetic Lament Written in Gilles Arcade. By One of the
Gray School":

Though we have set our faces against what is called
newspaper poetry, and shall spurn the sickly sentimentalism
of the genus irritabile as decidedly as ever, we are pervious
to the good humour of the following *morceau* with which we have
just been favored.

In 1839, the *South Australian*, first issued on 2 June 1838,
printed four "South Australian Melodies" by "Timothy Short",
otherwise Nathaniel Hailes, who remained a prominent versifier
throughout the 'forties. Like his later works, all were
humorous local satires, two parodying popular poems by
Thomas Moore and Cowper.

Most early Western Australian verse, nearly all published
in the *Swan River Guardian*, was of a similar satirical or
local nature. No original poems appeared in the few
surviving issues of three short-lived Fremantle ventures,
the 1831 *Fremantle Observer*, the 1831 to 1833 *Western
Australian* and the 1833 *Inquisitor in Western Australia.*
The *Western Australian Chronicle* and *Perth Gazette* published
only "Australian Poetry. A Fragment", a death piece, on 9
April 1831, and its successor, the *Perth Gazette*, only five
original poems between 1833 and 1839. All were by unidentifiable authors, their sentiment and style typified by this
stanza from "Victoria's Tears" by "The Swan River Muse",

9 December 1837:

Hark - that unearthly sound - 'tis William's knell,  
Bursting from Ocean to proud Britain's shore,  
The Great Archangel toll'd the fatal bell,  
And Royal Naval William is no more!

The only one on a local topic, "On the Decease of a Late Newspaper" by "An Undertaker", 9 September 1837, was obviously directed at the rival **Swan River Guardian** which, however, did not finally cease till 22 February 1838. Between then and its commencement on 13 October 1836, ten original pieces had been printed, all but one 1837 love song being either local satires, some by the editor, William Nairne Clark, or patriotic hymns to Western Australia like "G.'s" "No More Let Us Roam. A Song of Western Australia", 13 October 1836. As a radical, working-class paper - on 5 January 1837, Clark claimed two hundred workers paid two-and-six a week to support the **Guardian** - it was naturally bitterly opposed by and to the more conservative **Gazette**. Consequently, one finds several rhyming attacks on the **Gazette**, such as "A New Song. The 'Oracle of the Humbugs'", 24 November 1836, or "A New Song" by "Unique", 23 November 1837, which opens

And have ye heard the news are true  
And have ye heard the bell,  
For it is said amongst the Crew -  
That some folk's are not well!  
The Humbugs tried to raise a sound,  
And put our Paper down,  
But they, and all their trash now find  
It's quite in vain to frown!  
For there's nae luck about the Swan,
There's nae luck ava!
True men have nothing else but bran
Till Humbug's gang awa!

In its adaptation of a popular song and doggerel style, this piece typifies the Swan River Guardian's verse, more noticeable for its relative quantity and concentration on local themes than for its quality.

II. Prose

Although the Western Australian for 12 November 1831 advertised

**IN THE PRESS**

And will be Published in December next,

Price 5s. in Boards.

Two years residence in NUBIBUS
WITH A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT
OF THE
Men, Manners, and Customs,
of that rising place (sic)
By the Author of Rambles, on the Pyranees, Sketches
in Sierra Leone, Poems and other works.

this, like so many other projected publications in early Australia, evidently failed to appear. No prose works with Western Australian, South Australian or Victorian imprints survive from the 'thirties. The ubiquitous "Timothy Short" did, however, send three chapters of "The Life and Adventures of Toby Trundle" to the South Australian in May and June 1839, though not managing to get further than his hero's schooling. Like his verse, Hailes' prose is mannered and ornamented, and never as funny as it is meant to be. Equally over-done prose may be found in a typically romantic tale,
"The Island of St. Iago", published in the Port Phillip Gazette on 8 and 11 May 1839.

Both Hobart and Sydney may boast a novel printed in the eighteen-thirties but Tasmania, as if to compensate for its deficiencies in poetry, produced more, and generally better, essays, sketches and stories. While this was largely the result of Thomas Richards' work for the Hobart Town Magazine, Tasmanian newspapers like the Colonial Times also printed their share of original prose. After taking over the Colonial Times from Andrew Bent, Henry Melville issued this statement of his aims on 5 March 1830:

With respect to our Publication, it is intended to be what our motto intimates, "a complete map of busy life", upon which all local and foreign occurrences of interest will be recorded. We purpose, also, giving to its pages a decidedly literary character, so as to render its perusal subservient to the recreation and amusement of the drawing-room and tea-table, whilst it is not the less desirable in its information and use to the man of business, the agriculturalist, or the politician.

Morris Miller has suggested that Henry Savery was associated with Melville in editing the Times between 1830 and 1832, so it is possible he was the author of some of the miscellaneous prose items printed in furtherance of these aims. Savery's volume of sketches, The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land, originally published in the Colonial Times at the end of the eighteen-twenties, was advertised in the Times on 8 January 1830.
In the Press, and will be shortly Published, 
The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land.

The whole of the popular Essays under the above Title, 
comprising No's 1 to 30 inclusive, and forming a neat Volume, 
price Twenty Shillings.

N.B. - A very few copies beyond those already subscribed 
for are open to the application of intended purchasers.

The popularity of Savery's work is also attested by two 
imitations entitled "Memoirs of the Hermit", printed in 
the Times on 8 and 29 January 1830. The author, "A Subscriber", 
claimed to be an old schoolfellow of the Hermit who had been 
bequeathed "his notes, being sketches of individual characters, 
profile views, miniature likenesses, and caricature cuts, with 
full liberty to treat his various reflections as my own 
discretion might direct". His two sketches are, however, 
merely factual accounts of meetings with some unidentified 
colonial personalities, lacking the enlivening touches of 
characterisation and natural description found in Savery's 
essays. The editor's discouraging comments on the second 
"Memoir": "Our Correspondent says that he had a bequest of 
SIMON STUKELEY'S notes, and we suppose we are bound to 
believe him. Our readers will however, we apprehend, arrive 
at the same opinion as ourselves, that they want a good 
deal of fashioning and framing": apparently prevented any 
 further attempts. Remarks by the editor on the first "Memoir" 
provide additional evidence of the Hermit's popularity: "We 
have received many other testimonies that cannot but be highly 
flattering to our late able Correspondent, and from which we
purpose from time to time to make selections." These, however, never seem to have been printed.

The other original prose pieces published in the Colonial Times in this period dealt in a humorous and ironic manner with various colonial topics. Two letters from "Sibsah to Vizem" followed Goldsmith's Citizen of the World in presenting European follies through the eyes of a visiting Oriental. Printed on 9 and 23 April 1830, they may well have been written by Henry Savery. Some idea of their style and tone can be gained from the opening of the second letter, dealing with the then common topic of the misfortunes of the Swan River settlement:

I remember well oft to have heard you say, that of all the nations under the sun, there is none to equal the English in either vanity or credulity. The first, as you observed, leads them to fancy themselves a superior race of beings, whilst the latter exposes them to be perpetually duped - thus shewing upon what slight grounds their claims to the former rests. But, dear Vizem, had you been, as I have, at their new and much vaunted settlement at Swan River, I know not how you would have vented your ridicule at the idle boasting of these proud Europeans upon their almost super-human sagacity.

A longer series of letters, twelve in all, this time supposedly written by one Sandie M'Gregor to his friend Donald in Scotland, appeared in the Colonial Times between 19 November 1830 and 22 February 1831. In introducing the first of these, the editor used the common device of pretending they had been found by the wayside.

The following is one of a series of letters that we accidentally picked up in Macquarie-street, on the outside of
the envelope containing them, was this direction: — To Messrs. Pimplikin and Co., Edinburgh, per Science. On opening the packet, we found it to contain the series in question, and likewise a private letter, directed to the above firm, evidently written for the purpose of instructing those gentlemen, as to the most advisable means of bringing them before the Public. Neither the packet nor the letter being sealed, we took the liberty of perusing the whole of them, and being ourselves pleased with the productions, we have ventured to publish them in our Journal, fully trusting the owner of the copy-right will not be displeased with the advantage we have taken of this mishap in losing them . . .

As to the nature of the letters, they are descriptive of the manners and general customs of the place — their style is easy and familiar — their delineations just — their discriminations nice — in a word, we have no doubt they will be much prized by our readers, and be considered as giving a true picture of this rising Colony.

Although lacking The Hermit's personalities, these letters, well described in the quotation, could quite easily have been written by Henry Savery. In the first, there is a general account of Sandie's activities since arriving in Van Diemen's Land.

. . . I have nearly made the tour of the Island on foot — I have explored in boats all the navigable rivers — I have ascended its highest mountains — fished in its largest and most secluded lakes — have been received with true hospitality by its settlers — sojourned at all its best inns — rode by the side of its landed proprietors, listening to impassioned descriptions of the valuable peculiarities attending certain spots, but always observing that, if I happened to notice anything in the soil or general character of the place, not particularly favourable, I was sure to receive for an answer, "Yes, Sir, but my boundary lines just avoid that", or else, "Ah! I took that strip of land in, to prevent being troubled by a bad neighbour, but I have a fine valley on the other side of the hill," or something of the sort. — I have been out hunting the kangaroo, and shooting the cockatoos with the sons, and have danced and played the agreeable with the daughters — talked upon theology, metaphysics, and the depravity of the times to the matrons, and been in fine, "all things to all men". What, therefore, have I not seen? I can scarcely answer the
question, but after telling you what the affirmatives upon these subjects are - you shall estimate the negatives for yourself. I had not been in the Colony a week, before I found out that there are three separate sets or classes here, and that oil and vinegar would scarcely better amalgamate, than would either two of them - there is the aristocracy, the respectable middle free population, and the Crown prisoners.

The next two letters are particularly interesting, since they give amusing accounts of the way in which this rigid class system handicapped the development of cultural life in early Tasmania. An attempt to hold a musical evening had been virtually ruined by the aristocratic ladies' refusal to sit "under the same roof with Mrs. Staytape the milliner, Mr. Ironsides, the hardwareman, and others of similar class>:</p>

"Well, but my dear," it is reported one of the husbands, a good well meaning Jerry, observed, "don't we sit with them at Church, and where can the difference be?" "I am surprised at your ignorance, Mr. Simpkins, we go to Church to let these people see our superiority in the cut and fashions of our new London importations, but that gratification would be denied us in a concert room, lit up with vile mutton lights, making one look horribly yellow, and not even setting off our dresses to common advantage."

Some of the husbands, however, are shown to equal disadvantage in the third letter, describing a philosophical society inspired by one who

... like Confucius of old, must needs signalize himself, by founding a sect of philosophers; and, considering of what materials a Van Diemen's Land population must necessarily be formed, it may be conceded, that the making choice of this spot for the scene of his labours, is an instance of his remarkable sound sense, and of his fitness for the task he had undertaken. His code of philosophy was to combine every thing - to dissect grasshoppers, and anatomize gnats -
to trace to the family history the vegetable kingdom - sift the pedigree of each with all their little peccadilloes - account for the peculiarities that mark each tribe, and bring to light the properties each contain, that may be valuable to man - to explore the mineral stores of the Colony, under the full persuasion that among them the long-sought philosopher's stone would be found - to form a depository for natural curiosities of every description - and, although it was not at the time promulgated as coming within the sphere of its operations, it soon became manifest that philosophy was only another reading of the word intolerance. Hence, its downfall has been even more rapid than its elevation.

The remaining letters are chiefly concerned with the settlers' life in the interior, giving historically valuable accounts of difficulties with assigned servants and the local constabulary, and sidelights on kangaroo hunting and the ways the fruits of the chase were cooked.

Two other satirical prose pieces appeared in the Colonial Times later in the eighteen-thirties. "Loo Choo Papers" by "J.J., Coal River", published on 17 December 1833, contained further comments on local affairs in the style of Goldsmith's Citizen of the World, whilst the anonymous "Coroner's Inquest!" of 30 June 1835 described the supposed dissection of James Ross, found to have been killed by the Colonial Times' criticisms of him. Ross himself was the author of "The Sprained Thumb (A Confidential Article)", printed in his Hobart Town Courier on 8 May 1835. In this genial and fairly well-written essay, he mused about times past and present and advanced the idea that Tasmania had now become an old and civilized country, sharing the problems of other old countries.
Thomas Richards replaced Ross as editor of the Courier in 1837, and four "Papers from the Portfolio of the late Arthur Norcliff, Esq." published between March and May of that year may have been written by him. These were "The Man of Letters", a short account of the literary life; "The Confessional", where a murderer gloats over his crime; "The Hermit", a romantic tale of his past life and loves; and, last and best, "The Auction", with a humorous account of the characters present. Some similarities in subjects and style exist between these and Richards' work for the Hobart Town Magazine, although the extreme conventionality of the "Papers" precludes a firm identification. Also in 1837, the True Colonist of 14 and 21 April and 12 May printed three chapters of "Asmodeus in Hobart Town", in which, in the much imitated Le Sage tradition, the writer is given bird's-eye views of various conversations between local notables.

A considerable amount of original prose also appeared in Launceston newspapers. On 28 February 1831, the Launceston Advertiser printed "The Scribbler. No. 1. On Fashion", with an accompanying letter from "The Scribbler, Norfolk Plains", saying in part

... I now beg to offer you a few brief essays after the style of the Spectator which I have written from time to time, for the express purpose of having them published. They have been composed for the use and benefit of the rising generation, and if you feel disposed to print them the papers of "the Scribbler", for so I have designated them, are much at your service. The manuscripts I now send
are all of rather a serious cast, but if you will give
me a corner now and then, I shall endeavour to diversify
the subjects, for being troubled with a cacoethes scribendi,
and for the most part having my time unemployed, I am always
scribbling.

In all, eighteen of these derivative essays, revealing a
particularly lasting eighteenth-century influence, were
published between February and June, with such titles as
"Ingratitude", "Misfortune" "Seduction", and, very grandly,
"Anti-Philo-Medico-Philosophico-Scribo-Musico-Multientho-
Meta-Physico-Theologosco-Moola-Negology". Some interesting
information on the reading of a certain class appeared in
the equally cautionary "The Puppy": "We generally find
that these persons are exceedingly talkative; and although
all their knowledge is confined to Walkinghame's arithmetic,
and FANNY HILL, HARRIETT WILSON and the SPEAKER they will
discourse you metaphysics by the yard . . .".

The only piece of local satire from Launceston "The
Chronicles of King Arthur", on Governor Arthur's adminis-
tration, was printed in the Cornwall Chronicle on 4 June
1836. In 1838, the same paper published two "Desultory
Essays" by perhaps the most literary of the early Tasmanian
writers, who signed himself "Sylvanus". Some of the first
essay, "A Wet Day", showing his appreciation of literature,
and Shakespeare in particular, has already been quoted at
the end of Chapter III. The second, entitled "Tasmanian
Scenery", gave a description, rare at this time, of various native plants, birds and animals. In style, however, it was as conventional as "Sylvanus's" literary tastes - his first essay began with a quotation from Thomson, while his second ended with one from Byron.

Tasmanian newspapers, of course, published many other prose articles on colonial matters, not discussed here because they did not pretend to be works of imaginative literature. A representative catalogue of the most common types of original contributions appeared in the Hobart Town Courier on 10 September 1831, in an amusing reply to

... numerous applications which we have lately received from various contributors, inquiring what remuneration we are disposed to make for certain articles and communications in prose and verse. We are indeed most willing to encourage literature to the utmost of our ability, but we assure our friends, that notwithstanding the great success of our journal, what we have said lately regarding the heavy expenses to which we are subjected is very true, and we really have it not in our power to reward merit as we would wish. The editor of the Scotsman (formerly Macculloch's paper) lately published a scale of rates at which he proposed to reward writers of genius who enriched his columns, which he does not in money but in goods - thus for a foot or half a column of blank verse, he gives a stone of raw sugar or a wedge of brown soap. We have in consequence adopted the hint, and in the absence of the circulating medium, now nearly vanished out of the colony, we propose to pay in future for articles of sterling merit at the following rates, by orders on our different advertising friends who deal in the several articles, viz.

For an interesting tour through some unknown part of the island - a pair of strong, sparrow billed travelling lace high-lows.

For an exploring voyage in a boat as far as Port Davey or half round the island - a pair of duck trowsers or a blue
jacket, (either one or the other but not both), if
overtaken in a squall, upset or nearly drowned - a
Scotch cap will be added.

For a skirmish with the blacks, if attended with
bloodshed on both sides or the capture of any number
above 20 - a Tower musket.

For a good and original paper on agriculture or
the management of sheep - a couple of breaking up
hoes or half a dozen pair of sheep shears.

For a love song or sonnet to a lady - 2 pennyworth
of lollipops.

For a satire on the requisitionists of the 23d May
last - nothing; for a good eulogy on them - a bottle of
Noyeau.

For a crim. con. or any other piece of genuine scandal
with guarantee against prosecution for libel - a one pound
bank note or a paper nautilus.

For a good attack upon the government or the legislat-
ive assembly - a copy of the government orders, proclam-
ations, acts of council, &c. complete.

For a defence of the government or the councils -
nothing.

For a tangible attack upon the Lumberyard - a log of
Sydney cedar, 12 feet long by 2 wide and 7 inches thick.

For a defence of the Engineer department - nothing.

For a philippic on the immigration committee -
inadmissible.

For the best and most feasible plan for increasing the
revenue without burdening the people - a superbly bound
copy of the Hobart town Almanack and a map of the island
with the latest improvements engraved at the Courier
office.

For a good plan for increasing the revenue and imposing
a tax on the people - a blister of Spanish flies.

For the best means of circulating the money in the
Colonial and Commissariat chests - a gold sovereign or
20 shillings in British silver.

All articles on quit-rents, surveying, road making,
law concerns, the dog and other acts of council, rum
drinking and usury - to be paid for according to weight
and measurement.

Other articles will be paid for in proportion, but
no praise of private individuals or attacks on public
bodies can be admitted without being paid for, at the
same rate per line as advertisements, and no payment is
made until the articles are published.

The greatest number of original prose pieces to appear
in an early Australian publication may be found in the *Hobart Town Magazine*. Most of these, as Morris Miller has indicated in his valuable and detailed chapter in *Pressmen and Governors*, were the work of Thomas Richards, who also seems to have been largely responsible for editing the magazine. Besides essays and articles on a wide variety of subjects, Richards produced several short stories and some longer serialised works, a few on Australian topics. Before leaving England, he had, according to Morris Miller, "contributed to the *Monthly Magazine* and other literary journals in London", and been acquainted with such well-known writers as William Hazlitt, Hartley Coleridge, Thomas Hood and John Banim. (pp.94-5)

His reasons for emigrating are unknown, but certainly, with this background and his evident wide reading and literary talents, he was able to make a valuable if erratic contribution to early Australian literature. As has been said, the poetry printed in the *Hobart Town Magazine*, although plentiful, was in other respects unremarkable, and it is largely thanks to Richards' prose that this periodical is superior to all others of the period. Unfortunately, like most colonial editors, Richards had increasingly to supply most of the material for his magazine, and this, plus the oft-mentioned pressures of
colonial life and of his medical work, did not allow him sufficient leisure to follow the "Advice to a Young Essayist", published in the first number of the Magazine and possibly written by him, to write so that one's work would last. As Morris Miller says,

The more important of Richards's short stories in print, except "Rob the Red-hand", suffer from incompleteness. . . . it seems not unlikely that, despite typographical and editorial difficulties, Richards himself was not the sort of writer to apply himself steadily to the developing of a plot as the story grew in range and complexity. Or, did he sidetrack his major literary bent to conform to the exigencies of periodical writing? Clearly he had an urge to write, but scattered his activities in a variety of ways, and so failed to pursue a literary objective, supreme in itself, to which other minor efforts should be but tributary. (pp. 115-6)

Some of the most interesting of Richards' contributions to the Hobart Town Magazine were in the form of genial, rambling essays on popular medical or scientific subjects, such as "The Philosophy of Apparitions", "Fatal Presentiments", "A Few Words on Bathing" and "Eating and Drinking". Like all his prose works, they were much better written than most contemporary pieces, and displayed his wide knowledge and appreciation of literature. This is also seen to advantage in an essay "On Criticism" in the fourth number of the Magazine where his discusses the common topic of the persecution of poets by reviewers, citing the fates of Cowper, Collins, Chatterton, Savage and Kirke White, and ending with a plea for all reviews to be signed. In two articles headed
"Notes of a Reader" in Numbers 9 and 11, Richards again displays his reading, with comments on Dryden, Fuller and Coleridge's *Friend*, and extracts from Jouhaud's *Paris dans le dix-neuvième Siècle*. Another of Richards' essays on the supernatural, "A Chapter on Ghosts", also in Number 9, mentions Coleridge, Johnson, Scott, Shelley, Mrs. Radcliffe, Monk Lewis, Maturin and the German Romances, Horace Walpole and Clara Reeve, in the course of an amusing account of his credulity with regard to apparitions. About the best of Richards' essays was "A Day's Fishing in the Plenty", printed in the first number of the *Magazine* under the signature "Piscator", and aptly termed "a delectable improvisation" by Morris Miller (p.107). Obviously inspired by Izaak Walton, who provides the epigraph, this elegantly written, if at times disjointed piece, engagingly reveals Richards' delight in fishing and his appreciation of the Australian countryside.

Richards seems to have been less at home in the more imaginative prose forms. As Morris Miller notes, several of his stories are really "descriptive sketches, modified by dialogue" (p.111). Even though these are still stylistically superior to most contemporary Australian productions, plot and characterization are usually in the conventional melodramatic or sentimental modes. Many of Richards' shorter tales were on colonial topics, the most effective being those
in which he recounted his experiences as surgeon on the
dfemale emigrant ship the *Princess Royal*. "The Mutiny;
An Event in the Life of a Settler", another of Richards'
works in the first issue of the *Hobart Town Magazine*, is
an exciting and well-told account of a crew rebelling
against a tyrannical captain, where the real *Princess Royal*
mutiny is brought to a more disastrous conclusion. Richards'
second piece on the *Princess Royal*, "The Voyage Out" in
Number 4, is in lighter vein, giving an amusing account
of the ship and its passengers, though again he finds space
to criticise the captain. Like many another colonial story-
teller, Richards seized on the bushranger as the one colour-
ful element in the new scene. Between his two shipboard
tales he printed "An Adventure with the Bushrangers" in the
third number, a straightforward account of a successfully
laid trap for some associates of the notorious Michael Howe.
He returned to this theme in Number 12 with "Peter Potter's
Robbery by Bushrangers", two humorous anecdotes of the
equally notable Matthew Brady. Three other short stories
with English settings are also attributed to Richards by
Morris Miller.\(^{13}\)

Evidently aware of the advantages to be gained by
serialisation, Richards was apparently responsible for most

\(^{13}\) *Pressmen and Governors* (1952), p.114.
of the longer tales printed in the **Hobart Town Magazine**. The first of these, "A Tale of Blood", with the appropriate epigraph "Out damn'd spot!", was commenced in Number 3, with the promise "To be concluded in our next". But Richards presumably felt this melodramatic tale of a luckless storekeeper's entanglement with a gang of Tasmanian ruffians deserved longer telling, since the episode in Number 4 was still inconclusive. Alternatively, he may have been unable to think of a suitable ending; after a month's gap another chapter appeared in the sixth number but the promised conclusion was never reached. Richards' inspiration seems to have dried up even more rapidly with the also unfinished "The Life and Adventures of Timothy Templeton", after only two episodes in the seventh and eighth issues of the **Magazine**. Largely autobiographical in nature, these give a lively and amusing account of his Welsh boyhood, his education at Christ's Hospital, and his apprenticeship to a medical practitioner, although the subtitle added to the second episode, "A Turnkey in His Majesty's Jail at Newgate", indicates that Richards had intended to develop Templeton's career along different lines to his own. Morris Miller suggests "Perhaps, as it was made known in Hobart Town that the tale was autobiographical, Richards discreetly ceased to pursue the course indicated in the title". (p.114)
In any case, the unfinished state of the first story and the later addition of the subtitle to the second, suggest that Richards began writing and publishing them with no very clear plans as to how they should proceed and end. His next two serialized works, however, "Rob the Red-Hand" and "The Confessions of Edward Williams", had obviously been better thought out and were brought to satisfactory conclusions. Both were melodramatic pieces set in parts of England with which Richards was familiar. Although filled with such typical properties as villainous smugglers, a jewel robbery, abduction of the heroine, a heavy father who disapproves of his son's love match and a happy ending, "Rob the Red-Hand", published in Numbers 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14, is, as Morris Miller says, "the most distinctive" of Richards' imaginative works. (p.112). This is largely the result of the character of Rob himself, Richards' medical knowledge and love of the uncanny combining to present a graphic portrait of an outcast deformed dwarf, bastard son of a local baronet, who has earned his nickname by accidentally killing his beloved. The hero of Richards' other five-part story, "The Confessions of Edward Williams", commenced in the twelfth number of the Hobart Town Magazine, was also a murderer, but in other respects a much less exotic and interesting character than Rob the Red-Hand. Again Richards employed conventional melodramatic elements
like the jealous, evil-doing rival, the faithful wife and the weak, gambling-loving husband in this tale of betrayal and revenge. In both stories effective use was made of the settings of the coast of Wales and the town of Shrewsbury respectively, locales well known to Richards.

Three other serials which remained unfinished because of the termination of the Magazine after Number 18, were presumably also written by Richards. The longest of these, "Lost and Found; or, the Bushranger's Confederate. (A Tale of the Colony)", begun in Number 14, was obviously intended to be a major work, since after five episodes there is no sign of any obvious climax. But no doubt Richards planned a happy ending for the poor overseer Edgar Walton and his employer's daughter, Isabel St. Clair. Just what is "lost and found" is unclear, though there is some hint of a mystery surrounding Edgar's station, since the Governor, whom Edgar rescues after a riding accident, feels he has known him before. The "bushranger's confederate" is obviously Martin, St. Clair's villainous assigned servant, who plots Edgar's downfall. Chapter IV contains the greatest amount of local colour, with much natural description of the bush and the introduction of "The Boomer", a supposedly insane hermit dressed in kangaroo skins, in reality a Scot whose wife and children have been murdered by aborigines. Possibly he was intended to play a similar
role in the story to that of the other wild outcast, Rob the Red-Hand. Although plot and characters, with the exception of "The Boomer" were obviously derived from Richards' usual English models, it is disappointing that this early attempt at Australian melodrama was never concluded.

One also regrets the incomplete state of "Lawrence Mertoun; or, A Summer in Wales" and "The Betrothed", commenced in Numbers 17 and 18 respectively, since in them Richards leaves the realm of high adventure for the domestic love story where he seems to feel more at home. "Lawrence Mertoun", in particular, begins promisingly with the introduction of the Crosbys, an ill-matched couple who quarrel over where to spend their holidays, and their daughters, the learned Catherine and the unsophisticated Ellen. It would seem likely to have developed into an amusing social tale, quite different from his other long works, though possibly with some resemblances to the two part "The Lad of Genius", in Numbers 12 and 14. This light, ironic tale describes the adventures of a country boy who, inspired by Thomson's *Seasons*, goes to London to write a great epic but eventually finds securer employment as a merchant. No doubt Richards' own experiences provided ample evidence of the poor material rewards for literature. Henry Melville later wrote of his *Magazine*: "It was a very
credible production, but it did not receive the anticipated support, and after wavering for eighteen months, the proprietor eventually abandoned the production."¹⁴ After this, Richards turned to straight journalism, editing and contributing to various Hobart newspapers in the eighteen-thirties and 'forties. Despite his superior stylistic talent and literary background, it is doubtful whether Richards possessed the inventive and constructive powers needed for a major prose work, even if he had had sufficient leisure to write it.

Most of the other prose pieces in the *Hobart Town Magazine* were the work of Henry Melville or James Knox. Melville, as Morris Miller has pointed out,¹⁵ was responsible for four short stories, besides three "Dialogues of the Dead", imitating Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*. In Numbers 2, 5 and 6, these were between "Napoleon and Frederick the Great", with quite an amusing account of their battles and other interests, "Lord Edward Fitzgerald and the Marquis of Londonderry", on the troubles of Ireland, and, most interestingly, "Voltaire and Shakespeare". In this, a snobbish Voltaire is taken to task by the humbler Shakespeare for criticisms of his plays, and also told what later critics have thought of his own work. Melville's short stories vary widely in theme and setting. "An Adventure on the Kilworth Mountain", in the third number, recounts a meeting with an

¹⁴ *The History of Van Diemen's Land, From the Year 1824 to 1835, inclusive, During the Administration of Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur, 1835* (ed. G. Mackaness, 1965), p. 146.
¹⁵ *Pressmen and Governors* (1952), pp.50-52.
Irish revolutionary amidst some effective description of the local countryside. The next issue of the Magazine contained Melville's Spanish tale, "The Castle of Jutella", a humorous account of a canny Scottish soldier's wooing of the widow of his grandee friend, with some gentle satire at the expense of the Scots. In Number 5, Melville travelled to Amsterdam for the slighter "Den Heer Veerhuis. A Deider Dutch Tale", given, however, fulsome praise in the Tasmanian of 26 July 1833: "it forcibly reminds us of some of the best articles we have seen in our leading periodicals at home". Melville's final story, "Francois Trouchet", in the seventh number, was a melancholy account, set in Marseilles, of the misunderstandings which led to a fatal duel.

James Knox published thirteen stories or sketches in the Hobart Town Magazine under his pseudonym "*K*" and was possibly also the author of some of the unsigned prose pieces. Several of these, such as "Maternal Love", Number 7, "Ellen Seymour", Number 9 and "George Fitzgibbon", Number 12, were, like most of his poetry, on such sentimental themes as lost loves and early deaths. The editor's comments on "Maternal Love" were not particularly encouraging:

We have given insertion to this little article with a view to encourage the author to nobler and higher flights. We are anxious to induce the youth of Tasmania to put forth their best energies in the cause of literature; and we hope our fastidious readers will not look with too keen an eye upon this humble, but praiseworthy effort for their amusement.
However, Knox kept writing and his later efforts, if not "nobler and higher", did show a willingness to deal with Australian topics. "Uncle Tom", in the twelfth number, was a slight sketch of a Hobart Town man who, in spite of his own generosity, believed all actions were motivated by selfishness. An even more pessimistic view of life is presented in "The Hated One", published in the following issue of the Magazine. The hero, a lonely soul who is slighted by everyone, goes through life and the world searching unsuccessfully for love - eventually he arrives in Tasmania, where his brief friendship with the aborigines is also lost with the coming of other settlers. Another story by Knox in the same number of the Magazine, "The Three Letters. An Incident from the Life of a Scoundrel", gave a supposedly true account of how a villainous Port Arthur convict was revenged on a merchant who had tried to have him convicted of forgery. In it, Knox for once advantageously put aside his sentimental garb. This was, however, resumed in his next work, in Number 14, "Amboo. A Legend of the Aborigines", presumably written in response to a request from the editor in the previous number: "Can any of our contributors favour us with tales connected with the Aborigines of the Colony?" Amboo's different race, however, does not save him from the usual fate of lovers in Knox's work, for he is accidentally killed when just
about to be united with his beloved. In his last story for the Hobart Town Magazine, "Charles Dillon", printed in the sixteenth number, Knox turned to one of the favourite themes of early Australia literature, the sufferings of a Tasmanian convict. Dillon loses his money in mining speculations, commits forgery and is sent to Van Diemen's Land, where he is framed by two other convicts and put in a chain gang. After the usual misadventures of escape, recapture and the lash, he gains his ticket-of-leave but never recovers from the shame and degradation of his punishment. In general, Knox's prose works are much less accomplished than those of Henry Melville and Thomas Richards.

Although these three writers between them contributed most of the Hobart Town Magazine's original prose, a few scattered pieces by other pseudonymous authors also appeared. In the first issue, "The Island of Death. A Fragment" by "C.G." told of storm, shipwreck and murder in a conventional but fairly graphic melodramatic way. The same author was possibly responsible for two "Recollections of Early Years", signed "C.", printed in Numbers 6 and 7. Both were cliché-laden, sentimental stories of forsaken love, although in an unexpected twist in the second of them, the rejected lover reappears as captain of a pirate ship and finally manages to carry off his beloved. Sentiment was
also to the fore in "My Last Pupil" by "S.", in the eighth number, a tale with a Scottish background, dealing with the death of this boy in a French prison. The two-part "Tale of Emouka" by the same author had earlier been published in Numbers 5 and 7. An unusual feature of this story was its New Zealand setting, with interesting descriptions of life among the Maori people and the early timber trade with Australia. The Hobart Town Magazine also published two brief moralistic essays, "On Tavern Buffoonery" by "Senex" in Number 1, and "On Gallantry and Duelling" by "Amicus" in Number 3. What seems to be H.N. Murray's only contribution to the Magazine, an essay on "The Moral Tendency of Theatrical Representations. By the Author of 'The Schoolmaster in Van Diemen's Land", appeared in the fourteenth number. In contrast to many contemporaries in both Tasmania and Sydney, he approved of the theatre, and thought it particularly valuable as an educational medium.

It is possible that Murray was also the author of two unsigned articles, "Education, Adapted to New Countries" and "Colonial Education", printed in Numbers 3 and 4. of the Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine. This second Tasmanian periodical, which ran from September to December 1835, carried the note "Under the Superintendence of a Committee of Gentlemen; Assisted by Contributors throughout the Colony", although it seems to have been edited as well
as published and printed by James Ross. In keeping with his efforts to encourage colonial literature through the Hobart Town Book Society and the Van Diemen's Land Mechanics' Institution, the "Introductory Address" of the Magazine enlarged on the advantages of Australian literary productions:

Our distinctive character is to be expressed by literature. Some persons not being able to recognise this distinction, may doubt of its existence. Some may pass over it; this is superficial observation. Some may wish to suppress it; this is pardonable, though injurious vanity. Some may misrepresent it; this is a malicious anti-social crime.

Later in the address, Ross countered arguments on the inappropriateness of poetry to the new convict colonies:

Why should we not have our poets? Are not the inspiring influences of nature scattered over the land? Do not men behold every day the awful and the magnificent? Why may not some of them break out into singing at the sight? Is there nothing in lofty summits and deep narrow glens, and silent limitless woods, and old undateable trees?

Despite these powerful arguments, no settlers seem to have been induced to burst into verse. As has been mentioned, little poetry appeared in the Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine, and it was all of a decidedly poor and unAustralian character. A high proportion of the prose articles did deal with such topics as "Source of the River Derwent", "The Settlement at Port Phillip", "The River Darling", "Austral-Asiatic Animals", "The Aborigines of New South Wales" and "The Australian Character". However, the few more imaginative pieces had no Australian references. "Sketches from Life", begun in Number 1 but never continued as promised, was set
in England and was anything but naturalistic, with grotesque, type characters and the usual overdone, cliché-ridden style: "the air was filled with the ceaseless hum of innumerable insects, rejoicing in their ephemeral existence." The final number of the Magazine contained two stories, the first part, virtually incomprehensible, of "My Uncle Benjamin", set in London, and the weighty "A Vision of the Dead", in which the narrator is tempted to commit suicide by the ghost of a departed friend. Of more literary interest was "The Editor's Album" in the second number, a discussion of love poetry, with extracts from Spenser, Byron, Scott, Prior, Shakespeare and others, presumably written by James Ross. According to Morris Miller, Thomas Richards contributed verse and prose to the Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine, but the only item certainly his is "The Philosophy of Dietetics", printed in Number 3.  

Besides these two notable magazines, Tasmania also has the distinction of being the birthplace of the first novel written in Australia, Henry Savery's Quintus Servinton; a Tale Founded Upon Incidents of Real Occurrence, printed at Hobart by Henry Melville in 1830-31. Like most of the convicts who wrote of their Australian experiences, Savery emphasised his moral purpose, then regarded as one of the

16 Pressmen and Governors (1952), pp. 41, 104.
chief literary virtues. In the Preface to Quintus Servinton he wrote

... strip him even of all other laurels, he defies the hand that may be lifted against the moral tendency of his tale; and he has not now to learn the great influence this ever has, in creating favor with the British Public. Had time and occasion served, perhaps he could have made the work more perfect in its form, its style and language; yet, the correctness of its details could not have been improved.

Defects in form, style and language certainly abound. Savery uses the common, clumsy device of a tale within a tale to introduce his story, with the narrator, supposedly rescued by Servinton and his wife after an accident, learning their history whilst recovering. Although largely autobiographical, Savery's novel is further distanced from his own experiences by being set in Botany Bay rather than Tasmania in its later stages, and by its happy ending, with the repentant convict, as usual, safely back in England. Unlike his earlier The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land, there is little natural description and, in general, Savery's efforts to justify his behaviour, and enforce his moral, result in a slow-moving and cliché-filled novel. As often with works of this period, each chapter is given an

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18 For further discussion of this, see Cecil Hadgraft's introduction to his edition of Quintus Servinton (Brisbane, 1962).
appropriate epigraph, showing Savery to have had the knowledge of English literature typical of educated men of his time. Besides a majority from Shakespeare, quotations were taken from Pope, Gay, Gray, Prior, Byron, Spenser and, more unusually, Beaumont and Fletcher.

The first mention of Quintus Servinton was given in the Colonial Times on 12 November 1830. Since the Times was now owned by Henry Melville, the notice was highly favourable:

Van Diemen's Land is likely, we find, shortly to appear upon the stage of England in a new character. We understand that a three-volume octavo work will issue from the press of this Colony about Christmas, in the shape of a tale founded upon incidents of real occurrence; and report speaks highly of the performance. It will indeed by something new for a colony like this to send books to England; but, considering the importance of literature, in improving both the character and manners of a country, we rejoice at the convincing proof that will thus be presented of what materials we are formed. Unless we are deceived, too, in the character of the work, it will much exalt us in the scale by which we are too often estimated in the Mother Country.

Further evidence that the novel was intended primarily for an English audience was given in the publication announcement in the Hobart Town Courier of 15 January 1831: "As this work is printed expressly for transmission to England, a very few copies only will be reserved for sale in this colony; early application will therefore be necessary." The reviewer of Quintus Servinton in the Launceston Advertiser for 4 April 1831 thought, probably justly, that it had been written solely to gain favour with the English governing
QUINTUS SERVINTON. - Thro' the kindness of one of our friends, we have been enabled to peruse, this new Colonial Novel . . . This work is in some measure interesting, it being the first of any size, which has emanated from the Colonial press; and had we not known that it contained merely the author's own history, we might have been tempted to pass it over without severe comment. We feel for SERVINTON. But where we see a man apparently attempting to impose upon the community at large, by a semblance of feeling which he cannot possess, when we see crimes speciously glossed over and made to appear only as the result of a prophecy - when we see that a belief in the vague and dark sayings of fortunetelling, gipseysitis strongly inculcated - when we see the most fulsome and mawkish egotism, pervades the work from beginning to end, we cannot refrain from condemning such writings. We can clearly see the object for which this work has been written, to wit, to ensure the author, the favor of the crown. This we would never wish to object against him, only that he makes a parade of his own conduct; and that he does not scruple to flatter all those who he thinks may be able to assist in bringing about such a favorable conjunction of circumstances as may prevail with the authorities to grant what he wants. This is very clearly evident from the commencement of the work, and is visible on every page. The style of this work is very flat, the plot uninteresting, and the narrative is in low language, the typography is moderately good, only that it abounds with "literal" errors, as the printers call them. The paper is very bad being of that fragile description which is imported from China; and which will soon tear out from the stitching. We propose to give an outline of the story at our earliest convenience, when we shall show by extracts that our opinion is not formed without good grounds. Much amusement is not however to be expected for the whole of the volumes are full of flattery and egotism. Nevertheless in justice to the heart of the author, we must add that there is a vein of instructive morality running through the work, and we are in charity induced to believe the faults lay more in the head, than the principal of the writer.

It is interesting to see even this censorious critic approving of Savery's moral lessons, despite his recognition of "crimes glossed over". In general, his comments are sound, though the remark on "low language" leaves one wondering just what
would have constituted "high".

Possibly the Launceston Advertiser reviewer would have preferred the purple passages which frequently grace the pages of the second novel written and published in Australia, The Guardian: a Tale. By An Australian, printed at Sydney by J. Spilsbury in 1838. After many years of mystery, this work has recently been attributed to Anna Maria Bunn, nee Murray, who had arrived in Sydney in 1827, at the age of nineteen.¹⁹ Her earlier years had been spent in Ireland, where much of The Guardian is set. Although none of the action of the novel takes place in Australia, there are several references to New South Wales, and more frequent discussions of it by the characters than one would have supposed normal in Britain at this time. Early in the book, Clara Dean, the heroine's best friend, receives a proposal of marriage from a gentleman intended to be the next Governor of New South Wales. There is some mention of Australian flora, "the warrataw, gigantic lily, native roses and fringed violets", but the Governor-designate indicates that he is not looking forward to his new post:

He said he became sick when he thought of going to a country, where society was divided into parties, dust blown as well as thrown in your eyes, children ran under your horses' feet, dogs lay about in the streets, ladies talked of wool, and

¹⁹Gwendoline Wilson, Murray of Yarralumla (1968), pp. 88-93. Further details of Mrs. Bunn's life may be found in this work.
dressed like antediluvians; and one beautiful spot of land is styled Pinchgut, and another Longbottom. (p.14)

In the interests of historical accuracy, he is saved from this fate by inheriting a legacy and dying soon after, whereupon, since the time is 1826, his place is taken by Major General Darling. These details are given in letters from Clara to her schoolfellow Jessie Errol, forming the opening, and some of the best, chapters of The Guardian. Clara, with whom Mrs. Bunn seems most to identify, poses as a cynical observer of the ways of the world, and her letters contain gay and humorous descriptions of the society in which she moves. Beneath it all, however, she is a true romantic, a devotee of Byron, and is finally happily united with her Venetian lover. A much darker fate awaits Jessie Errol, whose letter in reply is full of highly-coloured sentimental vapourings on her passion for her guardian, Sir Charles Vereker. Misled by Clara into believing he is about to marry another, she accepts the proposal of Frances Gambier. When the melodramatic plot of murder and adultery reveals that she is the illegitimate daughter of Gambier's father, Jessie, Frances and their young son all soon meet untimely deaths.

Although the underlying plot of the novel is melodramatic, reinforced by the epigraph
I can give thee but dark revealings
Of passionate hopes, and wasted feelings;
Of love that pass'd like the lava wave,
Of a broken heart, and an early grave.

in fact, a large part of it is in the form, more common
in the early nineteenth century, of a comedy of manners.
Besides Clara's initial letters, the middle section, between
Jessie's marriage and discovery of her past, is devoted to
the fashionable middle-class round of balls and other
social activities, though even here there is rather more
sensation than Jane Austen either used or needed. Since her
plot is basically a simple one, Mrs. Bunn evidently felt
the need to spin out the story, and give Jessie and Frances
time to produce the pathetic babe, by the introduction of
these scenes. It is here that most of the other references
to New South Wales occur. At a ball at the Deans, one of
the characters remarks, quite justly, on the colonists'
liking for the word "respectable":

"Sydney must be an extraordinary place, I read an
advertisement in one of the papers I received, stating
that a respectable servant was required in a respectable
family, residing in a respectable neighbourhood, a
respectable distance from the town of Parramatta . . ."
(p.217)

Later, there is an amusing, and possibly accurate, account
of English superiority towards and ignorance of all things
Australian. Isaac Samson, a grotesque would-be literary
lion, always writing great thoughts in his common-place book,
has announced his intention of going to the colonies:

"He purposes writing a novel when he goes to Australia. It seems quite correct that things should be done at the antipodes, the reverse of what is done in England, therefore a bad novel will be quite apropos to the colony."

"Nothing good could come from such a place," said Frederick Turk, smiling.

"Their wool is very fine," remarked Mr. Barnwell. "Have the natives wool?" cried Adamina.

"They live on it," said Frederick, still smiling. "How can they?" asked Adamina, "only think of eating wool!"

"They write on it too," continued Frederick, smiling. (p.224)

Perhaps Mrs. Bunn intended this as an apology in advance for the quality of her work! Earlier in the novel, further jokes about Botany Bay had been made by the conventionally quick-witted and pun-loving servants at Gambier's appropriately named home of "Evilo". (pp. 186-8) Barron Field's "Botany Bay Flower" even crops up again in a description of one of them: "Peter cast down a pair of eyes bright as the fringed violets of Australia" (p.142).

From these and other references to Australia, it is obvious that The Guardian, although set in Britain, bears many marks of its colonial origin. In general, despite its defects in construction and Jessie's tedious emotional outpourings, it has more life, interest and style than Savery's Quintus Servinton. Mrs. Bunn was obviously well-read in the popular literature of her time, from whence she derived not only her sensational plot, but the intervening scenes in servants' hall and middle-class society.
At various times in the novel, Jessie reads *Ivanhoe* and *Vivian Grey*, and there are several references to Byron, who also supplies some of the epigraphs for individual chapters. *Quintus Servinton*, as Savery's choice of epigraphs indicates, is in tone and style a product of the eighteenth century, while *The Guardian*, in contrast, derives from early nineteenth-century models. In token of this, it is dedicated to "Edward Lytton Bulwer". Unfortunately, there is no record of what he, or any other contemporary in England or Australia, thought of the novel. Since colonial works were usually extensively reviewed, it is strange that *The Guardian* was not mentioned in any Australian publication of the time; possibly the incest theme was considered just too shocking.

There was, on the other hand, quite a deal of comment on the other prose work published in Sydney in 1838, James Martin's *The Australian Sketch Book*. As is obvious from the title, its model was Washington Irving, whose influence is acknowledged in the "Introduction", where Martin also gives his age as eighteen. It is interesting to note the youth of the major Sydney writers of the eighteen-thirties: Henry Halloran, Charles Harpur, Charles McDonald and William Woolls all commenced publishing in their early twenties or late teens, and even Anna Maria
Bunn was only thirty when *The Guardian* was printed. Although Martin, who eventually became Chief Justice of New South Wales, later edited and contributed to newspapers and magazines, he did not publish any more literary works, apart from his imitation of the *Pickwick Papers*, which seems not to have survived. On the evidence of his early essays, this was no loss to Australian literature. Only a few of the fifteen sketches are on colonial topics: "Botany Bay", "Bondi Bay", "Christmas in Australia" and "The Pseudo-Poets": and, with the exception of the latter, add little to one's knowledge or appreciation of the contemporary Australian scene. Martin's lack of originality in subject-matter - other essays are entitled ""The Sublime in Nature", "A Visit to the Scenes of Youth", "The Colosseum at Rome", "A Church-Yard Reverie", "Sun-Rise", "Sun-Set" and so on - was the chief complaint of his reviewer in the *Sydney Gazette* of 29 September 1838:

**The Australian Sketch Book**

Of the work before us we have read only a few detached snatches and consequently are in no way in a position to give any definite opinion upon it as a whole. Judging from what we have read of it, however, we should feel disposed to form a very favourable estimate of the style - a very high one, indeed, taking into consideration the extreme youth of the writer. The great fault we have to find with this and similar productions, is, that great portions of the space are occupied with dissertations on subjects which have already occupied the attention of minds of a superior calibre to any we can expect to find in the Colonies, while the great mines of Colonial materials are in great measure left unexplored. Mr. Martin, in his preface,
speaks of laying a second volume before the public on the next Anniversary of the Colony, should his present venture meet with acceptation; if he thinks of putting his threat into execution it would be well for him to avail himself of this hint.

"The Pseudo-Poets", in which Apollo pronounces judgement on certain colonial authors, opens with praise of Martin's favourites, Gray, Goldsmith, Thomson, Milton and Shakespeare, and some valid remarks on early Australian poetry: "ridiculous and unmeaning trash"; "Literary fragments - sober tragedies - didactic poems - and fugitive pieces of every description"; "love is the principal - almost the only topic, on which their productions are composed" (pp.148-150). When dealing with individual poets, however, Martin's criticism, particularly with Charles Harpur, becomes unbearably superior and abusive, although he still occasionally makes some sound points. Charles Tompson's "native talent is but of an ordinary description" and he has not read widely enough, while Henry Hallowen has not selected his subjects wisely or "carefully revised and corrected" his verses. He is told to study more and "beware of vanity". Charles Harpur is also directed to "the illustrious sages of antiquity": "You may have innate genius, I dispute it not - you may have talent for poetic composition, but that talent, let me inform you, is useless without proper cultivation." (p.171) Martin's heavy emphasis on the need
to read before one writes, so obviously his own practice, was turned against him by the reviewer of *The Australian Sketch Book* in the *Australian* of 27 October 1838. After lengthy quotation and praise of the essay on "War" for its sound moral tone, this anonymous critic continued

In the "Sublime in Nature", the "Thunder Storm", and "Genius", "Sun-rise", and "Sun-set", the author shews no mean powers of description, but his reflections seem rather the result of reading than of thought. The "Pseudo-Poets", we like least of all; it is commendable neither on matter nor form. The position of literary censor is one which Mr. Martin's modesty should just now prevent him from assuming, even if his abilities qualified him for the task. There is, no doubt, much trash put forth, in this Colony, under the name of poetry. But it is not all trash — and we could wish Mr. Martin's acumen had led him rather to discover gold, than to expose the dross. "Your reading", says Mr. Martin to one of the luckless wights condemned by Apollo, "appears not to have been sufficiently extensive." Does Mr. Martin, then, imagine that extensive reading will make a poet? Did Burns get his poetry from books? From our author's admiration of Gray and Goldsmith, we infer both his reading and his taste, but we suspect that his judgment in these matters is yet far from being mature. We have spoken candidly on this subject, because Mr. Martin seems to treat with something like contempt, all whose productions do not bear internal evidence of the "reading" of their authors. His own writings are not chargeable with this fault — and, to deal plainly with him, we wish there had been some deficiency in this respect. He has ability enough to be original; and we would rather have his own thoughts properly matured, than the reflected ones of Paley or Washington Irving.

Martin's "Pseudo-Poets" strictures were also objected to in a review of his essays in the *Colonist* on 19 September 1838, though on rather different grounds:
... few possess the ingenium, the mens divinior, the oe magna sonaturum. But, nevertheless, why should not men of inferior abilities beguile a tedious evening in writing verse, and more especially a man (of whom, by-the-bye, we know nothing) who appears to be of the lower ranks of society? Surely he had better write verses, than dissipate his time and money in an ale-house? If, however, bad verses find their way into the "Poet's Corner", it is the Editor's fault, not that of the humble aspirant after fame.

According to his obituary notice in the Sydney Mail for 18 March 1893, the author of this review was William Woolls, an identification supported by the Latin tags and the recommendation to Martin "to direct his attention to celestial phenomena", the subject of one of Woolls' own essays, if he should again write on "The Sublime in Nature". The moralistic view of literature as an alternative to dissipation, though common in Australia at this time, would also have been in keeping with Woolls' pious outlook on life. In the opening paragraphs of his review, he gives a more elaborate expression to this idea, together with a more positive picture of the critic's role than that found in Martin's "Pseudo-Poets":

We hail, with peculiar satisfaction, a little work, which has recently issued from the press of Australia, By Mr. Martin, formerly a Student in the Sydney College. This production, emanating as it does from the pen of a native youth, and possessing considerable originality of style and sentiment, is well worthy of public notice. Little errors, both in judgment and expression, occur here and there in the work; but as the business of criticism, as Dryden somewhere remarks, "is not principally to find fault or rail maliciously at little lapses," we shall deal gently with them. Indeed, when we consider that the
book, now before us, is the composition of one whose "down is yet upon his cheek," and all whose opportunities of improvement or observation have been confined within the narrow limits of colonial society, we are quite disarmed of the fearful shafts of criticism. Our remarks, therefore, shall be dictated by every feeling of good nature, and, for once at least, the critic shall display "the milk of human kindness." Some parts of the book there are, which we shall presently point out, to which, from moral or political motives, we entertain considerable objections. These, however, we notice, not from any unfriendliness towards the author, but solely with a view to his own advancement in the literary world. In alluding, therefore, to certain principles, our only wish is to divert him from the shoals and quicksands on which others have suffered shipwreck, and, at the same time, to direct his abilities to the purest and best of channels. This, we conceive, is one of the most profitable employments of the candid and judicious critic, inasmuch as, by doing so, he prevents the dissemination of erroneous opinions, and leads the youthful author to the serene temples of truth.

Mr. Martin, as the title-page of his work informs us, received his education in this colony. Such a circumstance gives peculiar interest to his juvenile efforts, and throws no little lustre on our educational establishments; for while, on the one hand, it demonstrates that there are youths in New South Wales who do not undervalue scholastic instruction, it, on the other hand, plainly manifests to the world that the Vandals and Goths have not as yet usurped the preceptor's chair of Australia, but that natural force - the vim insitam, as Horace calls it - may receive nourishment in our halls of learning. Mr. Martin's example, too, affords a salutary lesson to many of our colonial striplings. Let them imitate him in his meritorious search after knowledge, and, instead of endeavouring to attain celebrity by their superior skill in horse-racing and boating, let them labour, with all their might to secure their moral and intellectual improvement. The mind, we say, the illumination of the mind, ought to be the grand object of all our endeavours. Physical display, or the attainment of wealth, is less than nothing when compared with this. It is this which elevates our conceptions beyond the things of time and sense - it is this, in a word, which strikes off the shackles of our animal nature; and confers upon us the sublimest pleasures. Emancipated from the thraldom of our passions, and guided into the paths of intellectual exertion, we can pursue our
peaceful course to the temple of truth, while, with a feeling of pity for the great mass of our fellow creatures, we can survey them everywhere to and fro on the waves of sensuality — finding no end "in wand'ring mazes lost,"

Errare, atque viam palantes quae re vere

Woolls thought "Botany Bay" and "Genius" "evidently our author's masterpieces", but, as he made clear, his judgments were on moral rather than literary grounds.

A more lively, amusing and disapproving criticism of James Martin's work appeared in the Commercial Journal on 26 January 1839, with the title "The Six Shilling Sketch Book. An Epistle to My Friend Tom".

I have sketched o'er this "Sketch Book", and por'd with delight

O'er the beautiful passages, others did write,
There are extracts from Washington Irving, a score;
From Buonaparte, Goldsmith, Pope, Milton, and Moore;
From Addison, Allison, Laurence, and Miott, —
D'Israeli, Campbell, Lord Brogham, and Scott;
From Robinson, Tompson [sic], a soldier, and Canning —
(I don't think he quoted our chairman, Young Manning);
And then with a green wreath the whole to environ,
One hundred and ninety odd lines from Lord Byron!!! ... His "War" is a series of extracts from others,
His "Genius", as dull as we think our Grandmothers;
His "Steam Boat's" discharged for an old sailor's story;
His "Sun Rise" is aught but a rise toward glory;
His "Kissing Point Farmer" soon sent me to sleep;
I stroll'd through his "Church Yard", but yet could not weep;

His "Botany" and "Bondy" is not "The Sublime";
And his "sun set" at "Christmas" in very good time.

This may have been the work of P.H. Valentine who, under his pen-name "Valentia", contributed another poem on Martin, "No. II. The Australian Sketch Book", to the same paper.
three weeks later. Again Martin's essays were ridiculed, and he was asked why he had not published a second volume of them in 1839 as promised. Almost twenty years afterwards, Charles Harpur, who had evidently not forgotten Martin's insulting criticism, included some lines on the Sketch Book in his unpublished satire "The Temple of Infamy", now in the Mitchell Library:

Just loosed from school, and learned enough to string Rote-beads from Horace, he dished up a thing Y-clept a Book by custom, as the one Wide term of dog takes in each bitch's son: As full of mortal words as he could spin it, But only sooterkins of thought were in it. 'Tis dead long since.

A fitting, if somewhat biased, epitaph!

Also "dead long since", and mostly of as little literary value as Martin's essays, are the number of original prose pieces published in Sydney newspapers and magazines during the eighteen-thirties. A few interesting items appeared in the Sydney Gazette in the first part of this period, while it was still being edited by Ralph Mansfield. On 3 and 5 August 1830, he printed "Rural Rocks and Romantic Roads. By the Pedestrian, Peter Perspective, Esq.", describing some journeys to outlying settlements, though without the spice of Savery's The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land. In 1832, another devotee of romance was told on 3 April,
We have to acknowledge the receipt of 'Amelia, or, the Cottage of St. Asaph: by a COMMONER'; being No. 1 of a series of Original Tales intended by the author, if approved, for publication in the Sydney Gazette. Owing to its length, we have not yet had an opportunity of giving it the careful reading necessary to enable us to judge whether the series, of which it is a sample, would be sufficiently interesting for our readers.

Evidently the verdict was unfavourable, since nothing further is heard of "Amelia" or her fellows. Later in 1832, however, the Gazette did publish five pieces entitled "Australia Advanced: or, Dialogues for the Year 2032. By Mephistophole the Younger", between 17 and 31 May. Most of the appeal of this early form of science fiction lies, of course, in seeing how accurate its predictions of the future were. The first dialogue opens with the arrival of a large steamship from England; with its four hundred horse-power engines it has made the trip in fifty days. One of its passengers tells his Australian friend the latest English news: a sixty-mile-per-hour locomotive has been developed; Shakespeare and Scott are still famous; England and China are at war; a suspension bridge has been constructed between Dover and Calais. In reply, his friend is able to point to two such bridges in Sydney. Although some of these prophecies are not too far out, at least in relation to 1971, "Mephistophole the Younger" had an exceedingly conservative vision of the advancement of Australia. By 2032, he saw all Australian trees replaced by English ones, their
greenness enjoyed by a population of only 350,000. He did, however, predict the disproportionate growth of Australian cities, since a quarter of these people were to be found in Sydney. Sydney could also boast of an abundance of newspapers, four dailies, three tri-weeklies and five weeklies, besides five two-monthly periodicals and, reflecting a more pious age, four religious magazines.

No doubt modern science fiction will appear just as short-sighted in a few more centuries.

On 10 July 1832, George Thomas Graham, the new editor of the *Gazette*, began a column headed "The Editor's Miscellany" and in the first, "The Editor's Own Corner", asked for more original contributions, outlining

... the great importance, - as a means of softening much, if not averting altogether, the miseries of disunion between this Colony and the Parent State, - of the early cultivation among the Colonists of a literary and scientific spirit. The pursuits of literature and science embrace the interests of the whole human family.

Unfortunately, he does not seem to have met with much response. One can hardly blame later editors of the *Sydney Gazette* for being more interested in news and advertisements than in the advancement of colonial culture.

The editor of the *Colonist* also tried largely unsuccess-fully to encourage colonial writers. After noting the foundation of the Newcastle Mechanics' Institute, he continued on 11 June 1835:
By the way, we have oftener than once hinted to our literary and scientific readers throughout the colony, that we should be most happy to throw open our columns for occasional contributions from their pens, on subjects interesting to literature and science, whether of a general bearing, or referring more particularly to their respective districts. We cannot complain, however, of a cacoethes scribendi in this department. Life in New South Wales, and especially in the bush, is somehow unfavourable to literary labour, and seems to render the exercise of the pen rather irksome. We have felt this occasionally ourselves . . .

The only original imaginative prose to appear in the Colonist's "Literature and Science" columns was "The Death of Yamma-Gil-Git. An Aboriginal Sketch by G. James Macdonald", 8 December 1838. Macdonald was a better poet than story-teller, which is not saying a great deal for his sketch, though he did at least attempt an Australian subject.

Another colonial poet who also tried his hand at prose, the pseudonymous "Druiver", stuck to the more usual sentimental tales with European settings. Two tales by him, "My Landlady's Narrative" and "The Enthusiast", were published in the Sydney Times on 30 December 1837 and 6 and 13 January 1838, both with epigraphs from Thomas Moore. The first story, in a form no doubt suggested by Scott's Tales of My Landlord, told once again of blighted love and early death, while the second was a more sophisticated account of a romantic Oxford man who believed life should imitate art and was always falling in love. Three original prose pieces also appeared in the short-lived Sydney Standard early in 1839.
"H." contributed two pathetic tales, "The Wrong Letter Box. An American Incident" and "Margaret Aubrey. A Sketch", 14 and 28 January respectively. A welcome contrast was provided by the anonymous "Letters of Introduction" of 18 February, an amusing essay on the disadvantages of this custom.

Much the same proportions of sentimental to humorous and English to Australian themes are found in Sydney magazine prose as in that published in the newspapers. The first Sydney periodical of the eighteen-thirties, Ralph Mansfield's *New South Wales Magazine*, printed little original imaginative prose. Number 1, for August 1833, included another of G. J. Macdonald's aboriginal tales, "Bremeba, the Kharadjie". Although rather more of an essay than a short story, it was quite well done and did not deserve its harsh criticism in the *Monitor* of 28 August 1833:

... "Bremeba the Kharadjie" is a tale of a sounding title — a title that would suit one of Colburn's three volumed Novels; yet the whole affair is this — that a black fellow killed a white fellow. It would require a brilliant mind indeed to make anything out of this simple fact. The aborigines of Australia are not the children of romance.

The second number of the *Magazine* contained the first episode of "The Pythoness: A Tale of the First Century. Composed For the New South Wales Magazine by Mythos", concluded in Number 7. Set in Corinth, it portrayed the conflict between Christians and worshippers of Apollo, with many elaborate, poly-syllabic
descriptions of pagan ceremonies and temples. These evidently led to some criticisms of the tale for, after explaining to the author that Chapter III had arrived too late for inclusion in Number 5, Mansfield continued.

We are surprised to learn that some few of our readers have so strangely misconstrued the spirit of the Tale, as to charge it with an infidel tendency! We do not thank them for the compliment to ourselves, whether it apply to the heart or the head. The author, "Mythos", is as sound a Christian as he is a scholar.

One hopes they were satisfied by the ending, where the Pythoness herself is converted to Christianity.

Among the New South Wales Magazine's shorter prose pieces, "Confessions of a Visionary", in Number 3, has a hero who wanders alone reading Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and dreams he is present at Death's judgment of men. This was supposed to be continued but, unregretably, never was. The same number included a learned essay in praise of fruit by "A.B.C.", possibly John McGarvie. "Duces Tecum" "Recollections of a Lawyer. No. 1. The Portrait", in the following number, was a fairly well-told English story on the acquiring of a legacy. The implied promise of further "Recollections" was, once more, unfulfilled. "Story of An Heiress", also set in England, belonged to the then popular "fashionable life" class. "The young and high-born Augusta Howard" inconveniently falls in love with a poor preacher, but her long-lost brother providentially returns
to claim the family fortune and enable them to marry. Two tales on European themes appeared in the final number of the Magazine, in March 1834. "The Yellow Domino" by "F!" was a short, amusing anecdote of the French Court, while the unsigned "Half an Hour Too Late. A True Story" dealt with the misadventures of two young revolutionaries at the time of the Napoleonic wars. None of the New South Wales Magazine's stories was in any way remarkable, and it is easy to see why Tasmanians confidently proclaimed the superiority of their Hobart Town Magazine.

Little more can be said for the stories published in Tegg's Monthly Magazine between March and July 1836. According to some annotations in the Mitchell Library copy, presumably made by the original owner William Palmer, several of these tales were by William Kerr, who later became notable as the editor of the Port Phillip Patriot. Kerr also worked as a journalist in Sydney before leaving for Melbourne, and his stories tend to be straight-forward, journalistic accounts rather than imaginative works of art. Thus, "Fisher's Ghost: A Legend of Campbelltown", in the first number, gives a well-written, factual account of the Fisher's Ghost affair, without any attempt to melodramatize the situation, as could easily have been done. In his serial, "The Governess", begun in the same number, Kerr wrote on
another notorious colonial event of a few years earlier, the seduction of an immigrant girl by a Sydney lawyer, and her eventual suicide. Again the story has little literary value, being full of clichés and the usual moralistic comments. These two stories were unfavourably noticed in the *Sydney Gazette* of 10 March 1836:

... The original matter (and in the first number we would have expected the editor to put forth his strength) is absolutely below mediocrity. The story of *Fisher's Ghost* has not even the recommendation of novelty, though the facts upon which it is founded are of the most extraordinary nature; and as for the tale of the *Governess*; however interesting and important the subject may be, the composition is such that in turning over the pages we felt as if swallowing a dose of literary ipecachuana [sic], administered from the "Minerva Press". ... the selected articles comprise by far the best part of the number.

As an interesting aside, the only short story in John Lhotsky's *Illustrations of the Present State and Future Prospects of New South Wales* (1835-1836), "The Ten Sovereigns. A Tale Founded on Colonial Facts", in Number 4, dealt in part with the same seduction theme as "The Governess". On 9 March 1836, the *Monitor* noted "Dr. Lhotsky - 'Australian Tracts, for the dissemination of moral, domestic, and patriotic feelings'. Dr. L. requests us to state that his tale was in type, in the office at which the *Governess* was printed, for a fortnight before the latter story appeared."
Three other stories by Kerr published in *Tegg's Monthly Magazine* were also on colonial themes. "The Slaughter House; or, Camden in the Olden Time", begun in Number 3 and concluded in the final issue, used the common device of a tale within a tale: an old shepherd relates the tragic history of a deserted house passed on the way to Camden. "Ellen Manners; or, Frank and His Friends. A Colonial Incident", also in Number 3, again deals with the attempted suicide of a girl who has been seduced and abandoned, this time by a member of the "Artillery Corps". Another distressed damsel is the heroine of "The Flower of Port Stephens; or, Traits of the Manners and Customs of the Aborigines", in the fourth number of the *Magazine*. Mary, a beautiful young aboriginal, is eventually murdered by her jealous lover. As before, there was some objection to an attempt to portray the aboriginal as a romantic figure. The *Sydney Herald* of 9 June 1836 thought that

"... one cannot help smiling at the designation of the "Flower of Port Stephens" applied to a native black girl! We think of the "Flower of Dumblaine", and then laugh at the association of ideas which is engendered by the mental portraits of "charming Jessie" and black Mary of Port Stephens!"

The other original stories in *Tegg's Monthly* were generally less sensational than Kerr's. "Constable O'Connor; or, 'Tis Twelve Years Ago: A Colonial Narrative Too True By One Half", attributed to John Dunmore Lang, was just as
long and prosy as its title. After spending a lot of time
describing the bush, the author passes on to O'Connor's
reminiscences of Macquarie's beneficent rule and his own
marriage to a convict and subsequent misfortunes. This
lame tale, full of too overt moralizing, was justly termed
"common-place and uninteresting, and poorly told" by the
Australian of 5 April 1836. "A Scene in the Wilds" by
"Timothy Tell-Tale", in Number 3, is most notable for its
curious application of Negro terminology to the aboriginals.
For example, a gin is called "Old Mammy" and the narrator
of the story referred to as "Massa". "R.'s" "A Chapter on
Bushranging", in the final number of the Magazine, was
written with the avowed intent of correcting English
misconceptions about bushrangers, and tells the story of
three convicts who tried to escape to Timor. The Commercial
Journal for 20 July 1836 claimed that it was "written
easily and naturally".

Two stories with Scottish settings were contributed by
"K.", some of whose poetry was also published in Tegg's
Monthly. "Stewarton of Kirkcolm; or, Jilting and Jealousy:
A Tale of Facts", in Number 3, was, as its title implies,
concerned with a jealous lover who shoots his sweetheart and
himself. Better written and more lively, the two-part
"Grace M'Cammon; A Romance of Real Life", begun in the
following number, was another love story with, for once, a happy ending. It is possible that William Kerr, himself a Scot, also wrote these two stories since, as with his Australian tales, the titles emphasise a factual basis. Other original prose pieces in Number 4 were the unfinished "The Traitor's Grave" and "The Suicide" by "L***n O'P*****m", a humorous account of unsuccessful attempts to kill himself. In similar vein, "The Premium. A Leaf stolen from an unpublished Comedy", in Number 5, dealt with a village butcher's attempt to apprentice his son to the local doctor. On it, the Commercial Journal of 20 July 1836 remarked, presumably sarcastically, "The Premium, we fear, has more merit than we can discern, and therefore we pass it over." The next day's Sydney Herald was also critical: "The 'Leaf from an unpublished Comedy' evinces little dramatic vein in the writer: we would recommend him to give the readers of our Colonial Magazine something more than a 'leaf' when his hand is next in."

Apparently undeterred by the failure of his Magazine, on 12 August 1837 James Tegg commenced the weekly Literary News; A Review and Magazine of Fact and Fiction; The Arts, Sciences and Belles Lettres, which ran for nearly seven months. Although its imprint states "Edited, printed and published by the Proprietor, James Tegg", the literary quality of the News's leading articles supports G.B. Barton's
claim in *Literature in New South Wales* (1866) that it was "under the management of Mr. A'Beckett, formerly Solicitor General of the Colony" (p.73). In addition, there are some similarities in style and ideas between these articles and William à Beckett's *Lectures on the Poets and Poetry of Great Britain* (1839). Besides the usual *Spectator*-type essays on "Independence", "Music", "Married Men", "Credulity", "Pride" and so on, many of the *Literary News's* leaders dealt with colonial topics like "Australia and Her Prospects", "The Sydney Library", "Colonial Society", "On a Neglect of the Fine Arts in New South Wales" and, on several occasions, "The Press". Some of the ones on specifically literary topics will be discussed later in the section on literary criticism. These articles, presumably all written by à Beckett, were characterised by a clarity of style and thought unusual in contemporary Australian writing. An essay, "The Utility of Riches", signed "A." and published on 9 December 1837, can also be attributed to à Beckett, since the passage "It is a fact of which we, in New South Wales, may in time have evidence, that the Aristocracy of Wealth eventually gives way to the Aristocracy of Talent", recalls a similar idea in his *Lectures*.

Unlike most other colonial periodicals of this period, the *Literary News* printed more original essays and articles
than short stories. One author who attempted both forms was "B.A.W.", also the contributor of several poems. His story "The Major. A Tale of the Sea-Side", 19 August 1837, gave an amusing account of a swindler named Majoribanks and the tricks he played at seaside resorts with loaded dice and so on. "Henrietta Winterton. A True Story", 7 October 1837, was a more conventional tale of a young girl who pines away after her father forbids her marriage. "B.A.W." was also responsible for essays on "Genius" and "Voyagers and Travellers", 16 and 23 September 1837. Another fairly prolific contributor to the Literary News was "H.S.", whose "The Power of Recollection", a short descriptive piece on his last visit to his native English village, appeared on 9 September 1837. The editor commented

'We have inserted the prose contribution of H.S., not so much for its intrinsic merit (in which we must confess we think it deficient), as for the purpose of giving encouragement to Colonial Authors; but admission of one must not be construed as a precedent for others. H.S. has ability, but he wants that finish and purpose which would warrant his productions being given to the public through the medium of the press.

"H.S.'s" work improved under this encouragement, however, for his "Confessions of a Young Bachelor", 11 November 1837, was an amusing and elegant essay on the advantages of remaining single. Other essays by him, "Self-Education" and "On Duelling", were published on 7 October and 23 December 1837. An essay on "Manners and Mannerisms" by "F."
also appeared on the latter date, while an earlier piece worthy of mention is "Spiritus Asper's " "Pining for Home", 2 December. It is difficult to tell whether the unsigned short stories were original or select but on the basis of a 6 January 1838 criticism of the editor of the Australian Magazine for trying to include too much original material in his magazine, one is inclined to think that such pieces as "A Venetian Story", "The Spanish Brigand" and "The Duel", all published on 30 September 1837, were unoriginal. One anonymous tale identified as original, however, was the mildly humorous "The Three Warnings", 23 September.

The Australian Magazine certainly did make a greater effort to print original material than any other Sydney periodical of the eighteen-thirties. Like its original verse, however, its prose was not of a high standard. The first issue, for January 1838, featured seven original stories and sketches, besides essays on "Botany Bay", "Freedom of the Press", "On Human Life" and "On Happiness", and other articles on colonial matters. Among the stories was one by "H.S.", who had earlier written for the Literary News. Entitled "A True Story", it told in stilted, conventional style of an army officer, sent to Kent to quell an uprising among the agricultural labourers, who falls in love with a local farmer's daughter. Soon after, he goes to New
South Wales, and the girl dies two years later, presumably of the usual broken heart. A certain "J.A.B." contributed two stories to the first number of the *Australian Magazine*, besides the essays on "Botany Bay" and "Freedom of the Press". "The Dibbses" dealt with the adventures of an impostor calling himself Lord Lascelles, in an amusing exposure of colonial snobbishness and pretensions. In contrast, "The White Boys" was an exciting tale set in Ireland during the 1798 troubles, both works proving "J.A.B." a better writer than most of his contemporaries. The use of these same initials in an advertisement for *The Australian Sketch Book* in the *Australian* of 29 June 1838 suggests "J.A.B." may have been James Martin.

Other stories in Number 1 were "The Drummer" by "An Australian", on a supposed haunting at the Nepean, and "J.E.'s" "Zelikia, the Georgian Slave. A True Story", very conventional in both theme and treatment. "Extracts from a Reporter's Notes (No. 1)" and "Metropolitan Ramblings (No. 1)" also copied popular English models. The former, though sub-titled "The Drunkard's Death Struggle", actually gave a poorly-expressed, moralistic account of the inquest on him. Death was again to the fore in "Metropolitan Ramblings", on the suicide of an unsuccessful London prostitute. Both were probably by the *Magazine's* editor, George Robert Nichols, who, according to an annotation in
the Mitchell Library copy, wrote two "Recollections of a Late Undertaker" published in the second and third numbers. Nichols evidently planned to continue his sketches in a "New Periodical, Dedicated to the Ladies of the Colony", advertised in the *Australian* on 29 June 1838:

IN THE PRESS, and shortly will be Published to be continued in Monthly Numbers, a second series of "Extracts from a Reporter's Note Book," by the Author of "The Inquest", "The Oratorio," &c., published in the *Australian Magazine* and *The Australian* newspaper, Price 1s. The Author of "Extracts from a Reporter's Note Book" has been requested to communicate to the Public a continuation of his "Valuable Notes."

As the Scraps were hastily penned, some from the oral communications of eye witnesses to the scenes, others from the Author's personal observation, he was for some time doubtful of the reception they were likely to meet, when the following debate on his productions, by a select Committee of

"THE BLUES",
determined him to launch his literary barque, imperfectly rigged as she is, and entrust her to the guardianship of

THE LADIES.

"Well! I must say that I do like the Oratorio a little—the fellow is passable—but the stories are much too short," observed a tall young Lady who sat at the lower end of a table which was graced by the presence of as fair and beautiful a jury as ever were congregated together on the trial of a poor author.

"I allow that they are too short," replied a fairy girl with a profusion of auburn ringlets flowing over her ivory neck, "but he may write them longer you know; he certainly has some talent, and we must not be too severe upon the poor creature at first—we ought rather to entice his imagination by our encouragement and commendation—he may improve."

"They say he is so modest," continued a sweet little brunette with sparkling black eyes and glossy hair; "how the poor fellow would blush if we brought him up to our bar."

"I wonder if he's tall?" said a diminutive but pretty featured lady, flirting her fan.

"Or short?" added a very lofty commanding beauty.

"Fair?" said the little olive.
"Or does he wear the tint of the eastern clime?" continued a wax work miniature of beauty's queen.

"Ladies," said the President, rapping her fan upon the table thrice, "Ye travel out of the record - the question for our determination is, shall we admit him to our boudoirs? Ye have read his stories (the shortest and the least interesting) - say, shall we stretch forth the token of encouragement, or seal his doom by our rejection of his book?"

"I would not like to kill him quite," said she of the auburn tresses; "Nor I;" "Nor me;" "Nor me," breathed a dozen silvery voices.

"Question" called the president - "the ayes show hands," and by one simultaneous impulse, the fairest, whitest, smallest, and most brilliantly jewelled hands, were raised in favor of the publication.

The verdict was communicated to the anxious Author, who forthwith transmitted "The Bereft" to the Printer.

The literary quality of this advertisement is a fair reflection of that of Nicholas' sketches, the rest of which, despite the ladies' blessing, never seem to have been published.

The second number of the Australian Magazine also contained further contributions by "H.S.": "A Short Sketch of the Origin and Progress of Poverty", part-mythological, part-Biblical and part-historical: and "J.A.B.", a description of a "Journey to Windsor". Despite its unusual title, "An Allegory. The Angel Bestowing a Garland of Roses on the Lovely Bride - July 1838" by Mrs. Mary Ann Henwright of Penrith, was a typically sentimental story of two lovers parted soon after marriage but later happily reunited. More original and better-written, "W. T----r's" "The Mock Election", set at Exeter, contained some good, straightforward
description and a little mild satire. "An Australian", also from Penrith, contributed another ghost story, "Mr. John Proctor and Jack Bowles's Ghost - As related By Mr. Edward Cashen, an Eye-Witness", while the final story in Number 2 was the first part of "Roger Townley", the history of a poor orphan boy who by a misadventure is mistaken for a criminal and taken to gaol. Roger's trial is dealt with in Number 3 and it seems quite likely he would have ended up in New South Wales if any further issues of the magazine had appeared.

Another tale in the final number of the *Australian Magazine*, "Tom Flatt, or Scenes in the Bush", did set out to deal with a young boy sent to Botany Bay, but ended rather abruptly after only three pages. A second "Extract from a Reporter's Notes", "A Death Bed Relation", also in Number 3, was a commonplace tale of the life of an unhappy seducer. In lighter vein, "A Tale of My Landlord" by Jim Crowquill, Esq., evidently another admirer of Scott, gave a humorous description of a landlord who gambled away all his money. "The Devil and The Man of Worth!! A Tale, Founded on Facts, by Miss Stenbow" was a further humorous piece, set at Penrith, with the devil presumably standing for a debt collector. A note proclaimed the story, in the roundabout way loved at this time, to have been "forwarded to Tommy Toast; by Miss
Stenbow, for the Australian Magazine". The Mitchell Library copy identifies "Tommy Toast" from Castlereagh as "Fulton", which could mean either the Rev. Henry Fulton of the Castlereagh Academy or his son, John Walker, editor of the one-issue 1828 periodical The Blossom. Since, in his magazine, John Walker Fulton had termed himself "An Australian", it is possible he was also the author of the two ghost stories under this pseudonym, sent from Castlereagh and Penrith. The remaining original story in Number 3 of the Australian Magazine, "The Rebel's Daughter" by "Iota", was a highly romantic tale of blighted love set in south-west Ireland. While theme and setting are reminiscent of The Guardian, one cannot positively identify "Iota" as Anna Maria Bunn, since many colonial authors wrote similar stories.

III. Drama

From the foregoing discussion it can be seen that, while poetry was still the most popular form of literary expression in the eighteen-thirties, a growing number of colonial authors were turning their attention to prose, helped by the increased demand for magazine material. Despite, however, the establishment of theatres at both Sydney and Hobart in this decade, there was no parallel development in drama. As in the eighteen-twenties, most of the few dramatic compositions published in the colonies were either
satirical dialogues or Shakespearian parodies, and sometimes both. On 25 August 1832, the **Currency Lad** printed "Gubernator; A New Play, to be acted once a-week, for six months, for the benefit of the Currency Lads". Dramatic in nothing but name, its characters were the Editor of the **Sydney Gazette**, a Professor from the Australian College, presumably Henry Carmichael, and "Cato Censor", author of many **Gazette** articles, who discussed the current newspaper controversy over the Latin term "gubernator". Its main interest lies in the revelation that many of the original critiques and poems, including "Botany Bay Eclogues", published in the **Gazette** at this time, were written by students at the Australian College. On 25 June, 2 and 9 July 1833, the **Colonial Times** printed three dramatic scenes ridiculing government officials, supposed to have been found by one Simon Queerfiddle in a parcel addressed to "Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co., London", a device used earlier in relation to "Letters on the Colony". The first dealt with a "Mr. Fait-rien", actually the surveyor George Frankland, and his neglect of his official duties, with a similar attack on "Mr. Morepork", Joseph Henry Moore, collector of internal revenue, in the second scene. After this, the author's invention seems to have flagged, since Scene 3 merely showed Moore's angry reactions on reading the previous satire. In 1836, the same paper published two Shakespearian parodies also satirising prominent Tasmanian
personalities. On 2 August, in an adaptation of the opening scene of Macbeth, Alfred Stephen was told he would become Puisne Judge and then Chief Justice, predictions which afterwards came true. Four weeks later, a parody of the more unusual Troilus and Cressida, III, iii, showed "Rub-a-dub", Robert Murray, asking Governor Arthur and others for a reward for his services to them. The most parodied piece of Shakespeare continued to be "To be or not to be", a typical example, "Wha' Lies There" by "X.X.X.", commencing "To drink, or not to drink", appearing in the Sydney Times for 23 September 1837. Several dramatic sketches in the Swan River News also satirised local affairs and personages. "A Sketch. Picked Up by Paul Pry", 8 December 1836, "Dramatic Sketch for 1838", 4 and 11 January 1838, and "The Two Editors", 18 and 25 January 1838, like most of this paper's poetry, all criticised government officials for their poor management of Western Australia, and the Perth Gazette for its "humbug" in support of them.

"Neville - the Plot and 4th Act of a Tragedy", in the Hobart Town Magazine for June 1833, had, like most of the serious drama of this and later periods, heavy Shakespereian echoes. The Tasmanian for 21 June inexplicably thought it exhibited "some very bold and nervous passages; it is very chastely written throughout, and would, we think in England,
well repay the author for its entire publication." Two of the three other attempts at longer dramatic compositions dealt with the evidently already fascinating bushrangers. The April 1834 number of the Hobart Town Magazine included Henry Melville's short melodrama "The Bushrangers, or Norwood Vale", apparently "hurriedly penned" in response to a request for "a theatrical piece, introducing a few Colonial characters". An apt description of this play, staged at Hobart in 1834 and Launceston in 1835, is given in Morris Miller's Pressmen and Governors (1952).

Melville divided his "Bushrangers" into three acts, with thirteen scenes, but in length it is scarcely more than a "one-act play"; in fact so brief and so disjointed are the scenes that the work may be regarded as merely a series of tableaux with running comments. The scenes are a settler's home and the surrounding bush. A party of bushrangers plot an attack upon the settler, who is saved by his daughter's lover and a native, the former, previously rejected by the settler, having arrived clandestinely. The time of the action occupies two evenings and the intervening day. (p.50)

Interestingly enough, a work with the same title had been mentioned in the "To Correspondents" section of the second number of the Magazine a year earlier: "'The Bush-rangers' lies on our table - the verse is not of the best order, but as it is a first attempt, and being anxious to encourage literature in all its branches, we shall probably offer in No. 3, a few extracts." Assuming this was a play, - no extracts were given - it may have been David Burn's "The Bushrangers", performed in Edinburgh in 1839, and discussed
in Chapter II.

At about the same time as Henry Melville was hurriedly penning his "Bushrangers", Charles Harpur must have been at work on his own play on this theme, given to E.S. Hall of the Monitor in May 1834. On 10 May, Harpur and his blank verse "Tragedy of Donohoe" were the subjects of an amusing leading article in the Monitor, headed "Australian Literature", which gives an unique picture of him at the start of his literary career.

A few days ago, a youth of an open and ingenuous countenance introduced himself to us, with something in his hand which looked like a small portfolio. He said, "he came to ask our advice." He described himself as a native of Windsor, that is to say (in the language of Major Goulburn), a Currency Lad, and said, he held in his hand a play of his own composing; and not a play only, but a tragedy; and not a tragedy only, but a tragedy composed in blank verse! We endeavoured to suppress our astonishment, but at his request, promised to read his production, and to give him our opinion on it; assuring him, however, that our opinion was of little worth, as we did not consider ourselves in the least qualified to judge of dramatic compositions, much less of a tragedy, written in blank verse.

Feeling quite confident that we should have to condemn the work, so far as our inferior judgment might guide us, we considered it only charitable to prepare the ingenuous and modest youth for the endurance of those pangs and throes, which a condemnation of his maiden production would, as of course, bring upon him; and accordingly we began in our tenderness, to inculcate the necessity for his preparing himself for disappointment, and to discourse to him with freezing kindness, on the policy of his bending in future his attention and talents (for talents we felt confident from his physiognomy he possessed) to something more substantial and profitable, than writing blank-verse tragedies; informing him for his comfort, that it had so happened he had, of all the paths to literary fame, chosen the most rugged, steep, and devious.
The ingenious youth bore our icy but parental counsel, with that modest but firm steadiness of feature, for which the young men of this extraordinary country are remarkable; so that we were vastly encouraged to pour in our cold water in still more copious drafts; but we at length finished our benumbing polar lecture, with a promise, that we would certainly read his play, and tell him candidly what we thought of it; and finally we invited him to call again in a few days.

On opening the portfolio, there stood revealed a good quire of foolscap, stitched together, the leaves of which were full of writing of a very neat description and plain, divided into acts and scenes with all the precision of a printed play-book, the titles and headings being transcribed in text and large italic hands, so as to make every part nearly as distinct, as if it had been in type. This displayed such great industry and precision, that we encouraged to look at the title. The word Donohoe struck a dam on our kindling expectations. "Donohoe? (we exclaimed internally) the low vulgar Donohoe? a man without heart, soul, or understanding, and above all, of doubtful courage? This must be altered. It must be Walmsley or Webber; these banditti were men of intellect and generosity; there was something about these men a little heroic; but as for the mean stupid animal Donohoe, the very name is enough to damn the piece.

Changing Donohoe for Walmsley, in our own mind, we sat down to peruse the first tragedy in blank verse composed on this side the equator, which we ever heard of. On going through the work, we felt very considerable interest in the tale, the scenes, and the characters generally. The judgment at which we arrived on a hasty perusal, was as follows: -

1. That the attempt at blank verse should be abandoned; because, if the style were not confined to measured lines, the sentences would admit, in their construction, of a great and ready improvement. The play abounds with sentences, which, but for their being divided into lines of equal measure, and thereby twisted and tortured, would be full of force, & many of them, we think, not deficient in pathos and beauty.
2. There appears some plagiarism in introducing the witches & ghosts, and a little, we suspect, of language and ideas, but the scenes are Australian, and the said witches and ghosts are made as much Australian, as by a wrench of the imagination and judgment, such exclusively Shakespearean creatures, can be made Australian.
3. The work will not pay for publishing; but we think it would pay both the Author, and Messrs. Levey and Simmonds for performing. It is superior to half the stuff that "His Majesty's servants of the Theatre Royal Sydney," have performed
there, and will continue to perform there.

4. For, when our Currency lads & lasses up the country, come to learn, through the newspapers, that a play, and a tragedy too, is to be performed by "His Majesty's servants", of which Walmsley and Webber (Donohoe may be chucked in as a make weight,) are the heroes, and of which Windsor and Richmond are the scenes, and our Colonial O'Bryans, and Rileys &c. &c. are the other characters, and (above all,) their own countryman, a Native too of their own dear Hawkesbury, the Author; and that by patronising this first humble attempt of youthful New South Wales genius, they may perhaps raise up and encourage a writer who may be stimulated to do or write, what may attract applause out of the Colony as well as in it; we think, that not only will the Currency lads and lasses flock down from the interior to Sydney by scores, but they will drag down their parents, and uncles and aunts, and godfathers and godmothers along with them, and make bumper houses for half-a-dozen market-eves respectively; to wit, Wednesday-evenings; out of the nett proceeds whereof, the youthful Author (of course), would take his share; and thus receive encouragement, of a kind somewhat more substantial then "the unbounded applause" which we hope will be going on inside "the Theatre Royal" while "His Majesty's servants" are cutting and stabbing and shooting each other, in true Donohoe style and to the hearts' content of the youthful Currency present to behold the astonishing and sublime spectacle.

We have written this unknown to the youthful Author. We propose, if it meet with his approbation, to give in a subsequent number, a sketch of the tale, and of the scenes, with specimens of the dialogue. In case we should be permitted to do this, we deprecate severe criticism on the part of our Contemporaries, and hope they will give our young Tragedian the encouragement which his inexperienced modesty, & unaided & unencouraged youth, so imperiously demand at their hands; and not at their hands only, but also at the hands of that public, before whose awful presence, this scion of the Hawkesbury is about to appear.

Despite Hall's engaging recommendation, Barnet Levey does not seem to have made any attempt to put on the play, possibly because of an earlier disagreement over Harpur's brief acting career.  

The promised "Extracts from the Tragedy of

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Donohoe (Written by an Australian)" finally appeared in the Monitor between 7 and 28 February 1835, Harpur presumably having made some of the suggested corrections in the meantime. Shakespearian echoes certainly abound in the scenes printed, with the characters continually talking in similes, and one of the Windsor constables, Bomebard, a poor imitation of Falstaff. In fact, the whole of Scene IV, "A Forest Near Richmond", is very reminiscent of parts of Henry IV. Other episodes show that Harpur, as one would expect, was equally well acquainted with Macbeth and Hamlet – Donohoe’s sweetheart, Mary, goes mad after the fashion of Ophelia towards the end of the play, while Donohoe himself is given some moments of Macbeth-like remorse. All in all, "The Tragedy of Donohoe" is very much what one would have expected from a young, inexperienced, Australian devotee of Shakespeare and, rather than pointing to its obvious limitations, one must, like E.S. Hall, express surprise that it was done at all. Harpur, seemingly missing the whimsical tone of Hall’s praise, persisted in over-valuing this juvenile piece, giving it pride of place, under the more usual title of "The Bushrangers", in his The Bushrangers, A Play in Five Acts, and Other Poems (1853).

The only other play written in Australia during the eighteen-thirties, Evan Henry Thomas's The Bandit of the
Rhine, also seems to have dealt with robbers, in a more romantic foreign setting. Its publication was announced in the *Cornwall Chronicle* of 3 October 1835, but though it was performed at Launceston on 14 October 1835 and at Hobart on 22 October 1836, no copies appear to have survived. The *Cornwall Chronicle* for 10 October 1835 called for subscribers to another play by Thomas, enticingly entitled "The Rose of the Wilderness, or Emily the Maniac: a Romantic Drama in Five Acts", which does not seem to have received the necessary support for publication. A similar fate must have befallen the earlier "Literary Amusements; Prosaic and Poetical, By Evan Henry Thomas, A.B. and N.P.", advertised in the *Colonial Times* on 28 January 1834. David Burn's *Wanted A Governess. A Petite Comedy in Two Acts*, which survives in manuscript in the Mitchell Library, was apparently written in 1836, during one of his periodic visits to England. A typical farce, involving much disguise and coincidence, it is stylistically poor, lacking any wit or convincing characterisation and, not surprisingly, never seems to have been performed.

IV. Criticism

Several examples of colonial literary criticism have already been quoted in relation to the works they reviewed, and more will be given in a following section on Australian
magazines of the eighteen-thirties. Besides these formal reviews, little critiques often appeared in newspapers' "To Correspondents" columns. Thus, in the Sydney Gazette for 3 April 1832, Ralph Mansfield told a would-be poet: "The 'Impromptu Lines on TIME' are, we fear, too rugged for our Poet's Corner. We will give them, however, at our leisure, a second perusal, and see whether we can smooth them down sufficiently." Where questions of morality arose, Mansfield was more uncompromising, on 7 June 1832 printing, "'A Midsummer Evening's Song', by 'GEORGE' is not objectionable on the score of its poetry; but its moral, — that 'the flask' is the best resource in trouble, and the richest source of human happiness, — may truly be designated 'a doctrine of devils'." A much more unusual event was for one paper to criticise the poetry published in another, as the Australian acknowledged in its remarks of 13 September 1836 on a Sydney Herald poem:

We do not often notice the Poet's Corner of any of our contemporaries — to that spot, sacred to the timid efforts of unfledged bardlings, is by common consent conceded immunity from criticism. But when the modest retirement of the back-page is despised, and the broad face of day courted in the publicity of the "inner form", we are justified in making upon the stranger the observations he seems to demand.

The Herald of yesterday contains some lines signed "G.", occupying the latter prominent situation; the writer is "A Constant Admirer" of the Journal which has given insertion to his Muse — which is of itself a pretty good proof of the correctness of his taste. The writer is describing the sadness of a parting hour, and most pathetically describes the Lady's natural grief at the loss
of — her complexion! —

She, too, was weeping; for she knew
Nor time, nor clime, could e'er restore
Her faded cheek its former hue

The inadequacy of the language! Who has not felt it!
The thought of her, cut off in youthful bloom,
Makes earth a hell, and life almost a curse,
And brings us pangs that can't be told in verse.

The remaining lines are equally good — superior to Byron, of which a resemblance is nevertheless attempted. The pathos of the whole was altogether too much for us — we shall therefore be excused for adding that we sincerely hope the concluding prayer of the writer may be granted —

"Oh! grant we ne'er may sing such strains again!!!"

The poem referred to was one of three by "G." on the death of a beloved woman published in the "inner forms" of the Sydney Herald early in September 1836. Although as banal as the quoted lines suggested, they were no worse than the majority of early Australian newspaper verses.

George Thomas Graham, who replaced Ralph Mansfield as editor of the Sydney Gazette from July 1832, substituted for the usual "Poet's Corner" the "Editor's Miscellany", where original poems were interspersed by comments from the Editor and one "Juvenal". The Currency Lad's satirical piece "Governator" suggests that this was instigated by Henry Carmichael of the Australian College. Possibly his influence also lay behind a series of critiques of English literature entitled "Notes of A Novice", by "Nemo", printed in the Gazette between 6 November 1832 and 16 March 1833. Besides Scott's "Lord of the Isles", "Lay of the Last Minstrel", 
"Lady of the Lake" and "Marmion", "Nemo" dealt with Falconer's *Shipwreck* and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, all highly popular at that time. Like many of his fellow critics in both England and Australia, "Nemo's" "criticism" consisted mainly of quoting his favourite passages. Number VI, on "Marmion", was reprinted in the *Gazette* on 10 March 1835 with the explanation "we can only account for our appearance after an absence of two years, by saying, that the M.S. of the above 'Notes' was stumbled upon, lately, while turning over some old papers." A similar series, "Notes of A Reader", was begun in the *Gazette* on 15 January 1833:

Under the above title we intend, occasionally, to furnish the readers of the *Sydney Gazette* with selections from the most popular works in the various departments of modern light literature which we now and then peruse as a relaxation from graver studies.

Among the extracts in the first, and only, selection was a much praised passage from Fanny Kemble's "A Dramatic Sketch". The *Australasian Chronicle* for 17 September 1839 also published "Extracts from the Common-place Book of 'AN AUSTRALIAN!'", with this note from the Editor: "We have received the following papers from a highly talented young gentleman, a native of the Colony. We willingly insert them, though we think his remarks not always sufficiently qualified."
The "young gentleman", signing himself "Athena", commenced with some rather self-congratulatory comments, showing the usual view of literature as a means of moral reform:

The publication of the following extracts, together with the remarks accompanying them, originates in a strong desire to improve the taste of the Australian youth, by rendering them easily conversant with some of the most splendid coruscations of genius which have adorned the literature of our parent country. That the object is praiseworthy all will admit, and novel as is the attempt, I trust that it will meet with success. If I but cause one person to turn occasionally from the grovelling paths of sensual gratification, to revel but for a moment in the luxuriance of intellect, I shall have obtained a reward. Continued contact with the brilliant sayings of the master spirits of mankind cannot but tend to soften the rougher particles of our nature, throw a shade over the fading joys of vulgar vice, and lead the mind by means the most exalting and ennobling to the peaceful paths of virtue. That my humble exertions should be instrumental in causing a marked change in the manners of my countrymen, I have not the vanity to expect, but the consciousness of having infused a taste for the gems of literature into the mind of a single individual before unacquainted with the beauties of genius, will amply reward the labours of ATHENA.

To work this miraculous change, he selected the "Peroration of Brougham's Speech on Law", "one of the finest specimens of eloquence ever dropped from the lips of Henry Brougham", and a poem, "The Three Kings". Its mediocrity is well demonstrated in the opening verses:

From the isles of the East - from Arabia the blest,
From the star-loving land of Chaldee,
There came to his cradle in long flowing vest,
Of the Orient gentiles the wisest and best,
And crowns decked the brows of the three.

They brought odoriferous spices and myrrh,
The growth of their own sunny soil—
Though a smile from her infant, a blessing from her,
Was all that young mother and maid could confer,
To requite them for travel and toil.

"Athena", however, thought

... I have never yet met with a piece of poetry more
touchingly beautiful than these simple lines; easy and
unconstrained they flow, with a serenity which charms like
the silent grandeur of a moonlight scene. The ideas, which
are of the loftiest character, are expressed with a degree
of elegance and purity which may justly challenge a
comparison with the finest productions of poetic genius.

It is no wonder the Editor considered "his remarks not always
sufficiently qualified"!

Literary criticism of a much more valid and modern type,
though still heavily influenced by moral ideas, appeared in
the **Literary News** and was, as has been mentioned, probably
written by William à Beckett. A particularly interesting
article on "Novels and Novel Writers", the leader for 27 January
1838, gives valuable information on the popular novels of
the period. Like many others of his day, à Beckett still
viewed novel reading with some suspicion, though he did
not, like the evangelicals, forbid it altogether.

No age has been more fertile in novels and novel writers
than the present one, and as a natural consequence, much
that is bad, with much that is good, has been written and
read. It is a literary food for which we have but slight
relish ourselves, and thinking it among the most unlikely
kind of reading to benefit the mind, we have not much to
say in its favour to others. Still we are not so ascetic
as to wish it rejected altogether, nor so unlike the rest
of our fellow creatures as not to enjoy a novel right
heartily, when the mood is on us and the time is apt.
In admitting thus far, however, we mean to advance no argument in favour of novels generally - we only say, that there are periods in the state of the mind when to read a novel, good or indifferent, is an intellectual holiday, a distraction as the French would call it, which is truly delightful. Woman, for this reason dearly loves a novel, just as much as she hates an argument - all impulse and imagination herself, she flies to that which makes her a thousand times more so, till she half sighs to become the heroine she has been weeping over. What a wretch would she think you if you were to stop her in the midst of "Ivanhoe" or the "Scottish Chiefs", to bid her listen to a page of the Spectator or the Rambler!

After some remarks on the need for women to devote less time to novels and more to "the information of their minds", à Beckett goes on to discuss the main types of popular fiction,

... fashionable, religious, and sentimental. From the 1st class, with a few exceptions, (among which may be ranked Bulwer's Pelham) we turn with sheer disgust. To what purpose it concerns us to learn the vagaries of a coxcomb at colleges, or of a flirt at Almacks - of an intriguing wife or a jilting damsel - of a lounge in the park or a gosspip in the opera - merely because the thing is done in carriages, in opera boxes, and in drawing rooms - we confess we have yet to discover. Of all the most abominable forms of gilding over folly and vice, these are the most abominable. It is one comfort however, to think, that licentious and stupid as is the career of high life in many respects, it is not so stupid and licentious as it is made to appear in these repertories of effeminate balderdash and mawkish twaddle called fashionable novels. No author has written one who could write anything better. We have no novels of Johnson, Congreve, Pope, Addison, Defoe, Akenside, Cowper, or to come to more modern times, of Byron, Southey, Coleridge, Bentham, Brougham, or Mackintosh. It would be penalty enough to such men to read the rubbish - but for writing it we question whether they could.

Even allowing that à Beckett did not know of Moll Flanders, 
one wonders how he overlooked Robinson Crusoe, still
extremely popular at this period. Possibly, since it did not fall into any of his three categories, he classified it not as a novel but as a "tale of real life", a method of overcoming objections to fiction much in use, as has been seen, among colonial magazine writers.

Religious novels à Beckett thought

... not so abundant as the others, and having at least some professed object in view of a rational nature, are not open to the same objection. Of this genus the most popular is "Tremaine", but from what we recollect of the matter, the hero struck us more as a pious fop than a Christian gentleman. This work got a severe lancing in the Westminster Review, which somewhat lowered its reputation, but people thought it mighty fine to talk about a philosophical novel, and so Tremaine was read, praised, and talked of by people whose brains would have been hard put to it to understand a single sentence of Locke or Bacon. There is a novel, however, of the class of which we have been speaking, which, to those who really want to read a religious novel, we strongly recommend. It is rather out of date now, but like other good things out of date, will be found new to many who are fond of reading only for novelty's sake. "Dunallan" is its title; its chief object is to depict the character of a Christian in fashionable life, and in our opinion the picture is a much more perfect one than that arrant piece of pompous coxcombry and starched sanctimoniousness, - Sir Charles Grandison. Clarissa Harlowe was a better effort of Richardson's, and for propriety of moral, and justness of sentiment, may be called a religious novel. His much vaunted Pamela Mrs. Barbauld has shown to have obtained the approbation it never deserved. How indeed Richardson could so far forget what was due to the character he was pourtraying, as to make the virtuous Pamela accept as a husband the scoundrel who first strove hard to make her his mistress, we are at a loss to conjecture. We need hardly observe that no one now reads Richardson's novels; nor is it to be desired that they should. A delicate mind would only be shocked by their perusal, for though they contain much just sentiment, and inculcate the practice of virtue, their language is not such as in these days would be decent to speak, or fitting to hear.

Despite à Beckett's early Victorian prudery, works by
Richardson, and more especially by the even less decent Fielding and Smollett, were still extensively advertised in Australia in the eighteen-thirties, sometimes, in the way of all good classics, as children's books!

Although Beckett gave his third class as "sentimental", he actually next discussed historical novels,

... not of a character so objectionable as the other classes. We need hardly say, that Sir Walter Scott's take the lead in every respect. They have the evil however, of misleading on points of history, it being not always easy to distinguish between fiction and truth. Sir Walter has, in general, given a much more flattering portraiture of his kings, queens, &c. than history warrants, and as might have been expected from the bent of his mind, the bias in all his dramatis personae is in favour of the powerful and titled.

After giving some examples of these faults, he expressed his preference for The Heart of Midlothian "for the simple reason that it inculcates the highest moral". The article concludes with some amusing remarks on the lack of realism in most contemporary novels:

With respect to novel writing we purposed saying a few words. In fictitious narrative, though the circumstances be feigned, the characters and scenes should be natural. This is the reason why Mrs. Inchbald's "Simple Story" and her "Nature and Art", affect us so much. But in most novels every heroine is beautiful, every father cruel, and every circumstance romantic. Out of such materials, secret dungeons, moonlight meetings, tender partings, paternal maledictions, secret elopements, duels which never prove fatal to the lover, and all the other interesting machinery of a three volume novel are easily formed. If the scene is in high life, the heroine's carriage is always at her command - or she is at her harp or piano, or drawing book,
or at Almacks, or at the Opera. The gentleman too is always conveniently accommodated in this way; though poor as a rat, we generally find him, with sufficient funds to ride by his inamorata's abode, to follow her to the continent, and to keep his valet. We never hear of his walking — after a desponding interview with his mistress, we are never told that "he left her in a fit of abstraction, and forgetful of his umbrella got wet through in his way home, which brought on a cold and hoarseness, that prevented him from leaving his bed the next day." That would be far too common place — nothing short of "threw himself into his cab, gloomy and abstracted," would have followed a scene of this kind, and instead of the hoarseness and cold business, we should have been told that "such was his agitation on reaching home, that he was unable to reply coherently to his friend's (heroes always have a friend) enquiries, and it soon became manifest that his once noble mind (heroes always have noble minds) was gone.

The names of the gentlemen and the ladies that figure in novels are equally out of the common way. Charles Lovelace, Edward Winterton, Arthur Mortimer, Percy Belville, et id genus, are the usual cognomina of the heroes — of the heroines; Grace Nugent, Emily Dormer, Henrietta Charleville, Agatha Devere, may be taken as a fair specimen. One never hears of William Smith, Jacob Jones, Samuel Rogers; or among the ladies, of Jane Harris, Sarah Thompson, Briget Cox, or Ann Giles. And why not pray? people with such names are as susceptible of love. Certainly "my Cox", or "my Rogers" would not sound quite so pretty as "my Mortimer", "my Belville", &c. &c. but it would be just as much to the point. However, we should not object to names made for the occasion, if the bearers were made to act like natural beings.

On this topic we have done for the present, and meantime, wishing our readers joy of as many novels as they can find time to scan, hope they may derive all the pleasure, and none of the danger, of the amusement.

Although there is no conclusive evidence that William à Beckett wrote "Novels and Novel Writers", he certainly was the author of the first major piece of literary criticism published in Australia, Lectures on the Poets and Poetry of Great Britain, with an Introductory Lecture on Poetry in
General. Delivered at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts,
By W. a'Beckett, Esq. (1839). These lectures had been given
in 1838, and in their Annual Report for that year the School
of Arts' Committee pointed out the advantages of including
literary as well as scientific topics in their season:

... we believe that the acquisition of literary tastes
can hardly fail to create a right disposition to appreciate
the results of philosophic enquiry ... With some
acquaintance, although very partial, with the literature
of his country, an individual can scarcely fail to have
imbibed ideas and sentiments of a more worthy and ennobling
character, nor can any enjoyment be more intense than that
resulting from a gratified taste for the beauties of our
national poets and historians. The crowded auditories that
attended the lectures delivered on Poetry and the Drama
in this theatre, sufficiently attest the prevalence as
well as the truth of the opinion above maintained ... deeply imbued with the poetic temperament, Mr. a'Beckett
succeeded in infusing into his lectures a spirit and
character altogether congenial to the subject they were
intended to illustrate.

Reports in the contemporary press also show the popularity
of Beckett's lectures, presumably the reason why they
gained the rare distinction of print. The Sydney Gazette
of 26 June 1838 once again hoped for the awakening of
colonists to other than materialistic interests:

... The audience, which included several ladies, was
highly respectable, and so numerous as to completely fill
the room. We understand that the lecture was not only
instructive but highly amusing, and reflected the highest
credit upon its talented author, who was repeatedly
interrupted in the course of its delivery by the most
flattering applause. We have already had occasion to con-
gratulate our fellow colonists on the valuable addition
Mr. a'Beckett has proved himself to be to the Australian
Bar, and we do so again on the first occasion of his
appearing before us as a lecturer on literature, which
we trust may be the means of leading to a more refined
and intellectual feeling than has hitherto pervaded this trading and money-making community.

While, by modern standards, à Beckett's literary criticism is not particularly profound, it is easy to see why his lectures were so popular. They are often quite amusing, and much space is devoted to quotations and biographies and anecdotes of the poets mentioned, all of which would have successfully kept the interest of his audience. à Beckett's general remarks on poetry and his evaluations of individual authors are strongly influenced by the critical attitudes of his time, with the usual heavy emphasis on moral worth. After beginning with the comment, "I am aware that we are in a country where literary predilections meet with little encouragement—yet, small and tardy as that encouragement is, I trust that it will never extinguish, however it may check, a taste for intellectual pursuits", à Beckett proceeds to defend poetry against the charge that it has no relation to life: "It is not true that the poet paints a life which does not exist. He only extracts and concentrates, as it were, life's ethereal essence". He points to the Bible as an example of the high place of poetry, and gives a historical account of the origin of poetry as the first form of history, and its development through legends, hymns and romances, concluding "It is absurd, then, to
object to poetry that it gives a colouring to its themes which is not seen in real life – since but for that colouring, which it is the office of genius and taste to impart, it would not be poetry at all." Turning to deal with the attributes of good poetry, he gives first place to its moral value.

The delight, therefore, which the Bard should aim at producing, should be of a moral nature, and his subjects should be chosen in accordance with this end. Whilst affecting our sensibilities, and exciting our interests, he should be careful that he offers nothing repugnant to the dictates of the monitor within. Of this fault (to give it a light name), too many of those who have been famous for poetic genius have been guilty. Poets should "impart pleasure and instruction" through the use of moral judgment and taste, and also be mindful of the need for unity of tone: "how necessary it is to guard against any expression which may tend to excite a feeling of the ridiculous, in regard to subjects which are intended to inspire admiration and reverence." (p.15)

In contrast to the demand in "Novels and Novel Writers" for fictional realism, à Beckett thought

With poetical language it is equally necessary to combine poetical objects. For instance, we may place the despairing lover in a moonlit bark or a gliding gondola; but if we transfer him to a cab or a hackney coach the thing becomes absurd – the romance of the matter is at an end . . .

Much of poetic feeling depends on association of temperament; but we can all feel the magic of a lovely face – of flowers, trees and sunshine – of the hum of bees, the carol of a bird, the moss-covered ruin, the curling smoke of a forest-hidden cottage, a distant ship, the sound of evening chimes, the dashing cataract, the bubbling rill –
all these, he who has an eye and a heart, must feel to be poetical. (p.16).

Even more than the moral emphasis, this catalogue of the major ingredients of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century English poetry shows just how conventional a critic à Beckett was.

His later lectures trace the history of English poetry from Gower through to the Augustans, with typical evaluations of the major figures, and passing references to many minor poets. The *Canterbury Tales*' "Principal merit, now, probably, would be the correct picture which they convey of the manners and characters of the times", while John Lydgate "is now deservedly forgotten, being dull, prolix, and tedious" (pp.18-19) Surrey's poems, too, "are more readable than quotable, and probably would give little pleasure, except to professed students of our old literature." (p.21). On the other hand, Thomas Sackville's *The Mirrour for Magistrates* is said to contain "much beauty and grandeur, particularly a description of the passions which is scarcely inferior to Collins' *Ode* on the same subject." (p.22).

Spenser, "a name second only to those of Milton and Shakespeare", receives even higher praise:

Spenser's *Faire Queene* is a rich mine of poetical beauty, full of grace and tenderness, imaginative in the highest degree, and at the same time breathing the purest sentiment and the most refined thought. He has all the elegance and
seductiveness, without the meretriciousness of Moore -
the power and fancy, without the bitterness of Byron -
and the truth and philosophy, without the moroseness of Crabbe.
From its length and style, however, the Fairie Queene is
a poem (like Milton's Paradise Lost) more talked of than
read. It is one of those books which, being gilt edged and
prettily bound, does very well for a birth-day or Christmas
present; but it is the last book we should think of sending
for from a circulating library, or selecting from the
collection of a friend. Fill a bookcase with novels and
romances, and here and there a copy of Milton, Shakespeare,
and Spenser, or even Byron and Moore, we know what would be
the fate of the poets in such company - their repose would
not be very likely to be disturbed. This arises from bad
taste, habit, and indolence; to comprehend the productions
of a genius like that of Spenser, requires an exertion of
thought which we have not the industry to make, and a train
of ideas which we have not the disposition to indulge; our
brain is filled with the reminiscences of the novels which
we have been daily reading, till at length we have lost
both relish and capacity for any thing else. (p 26)

This criticism of the effects of too much novel-reading is
again reminiscent of "Novels and Novel Writers".

Of later writers, Donne is dismissed with the usual
"his poems are remarkable for obscurity, affectation, and
uncouthness of rhyme", while Shakespeare is said to have
"something Byronic in his style of expression, when he
comes to avow his own sentiments" on love. In his third
lecture, à Beckett feels himself inadequate to criticise
Paradise Lost, but recommends Milton's Comus as "a gem of
pure and radiant gold, which wants no labour to discover -
and it will reflect its light on all whose minds are not
blunted by worldliness or vice to the reception of moral
influences." Coming to the Augustans, à Beckett praises
their moral seriousness and criticises earlier works such
as Butler's *Hudibras*, still popular at this time, for the same coarseness condemned in Richardson in "Novels and Novel Writers":

From the time of Dryden, subjects began to be chosen more worthy of the muse than the levities of women, or the ferocities of men, and the language might be quoted at random, without fear of offending either decency or taste. So much cannot be said of other contemporary and preceding writers, and the consequence is, that many acknowledged productions of genius and wit have, comparatively speaking, become a sealed book to succeeding generations. *Hudibras*, for instance, though applicable in many parts of its satire to all times and all nations, is, with slight intermissions, so grossly coarse, as to be, even to masculine taste, exceedingly offensive. We shall be told that the faults of Butler were the faults of his age — the common excuse made for all popular authors who are liable to objections in the same respect. Now, this may account for the fault we are complaining of, but it is no exculpation of him by whom it is committed ... It is the distinction of a vigorous and original mind, to lead rather than follow the opinions of his age; and it should be the endeavour of a great one, without fear of being called revolutionary, to impress on society, the stamp of whatever is pure and lofty in himself, instead of suffering the pollution which he finds in the thoughts or habits of others, to mix with and contaminate his own.

This is a truth which will at once be admitted in morals, and it is equally applicable to literature, whether in poetry or prose. Addison, who wrote so well in both, and did so much towards the purification of the *Belles Lettres* in general, has sufficiently proved that poetry loses nothing of its strength and beauty by the choice of solemn subjects and decorous language. Pope, the model of eloquence, and whose numbers flow with the harmony of actual music, has devoted his lays to some of the gravest subjects that concern our interests, and in his *Essay on Man*, has shown us what enchanting features poetry may wear, in becoming the handmaid of philosophy. There can be no doubt, however, that whatever effect original genius may have on the age, the age has a greater effect on genius in general ... Viewing, then, our country in this way, we may congratulate ourselves on the social improvement which it has undergone within the last two centuries; for undoubtedly, during that time, English poetry has been gradually rising, both in its own character, and in public esteem. The seeds of this
reformation began to take root about the reign of Queen Anne, and the Georgian era which followed, opened the way to some of the brilliant coruscations of the muse, terminating with the effusions of Shelley, Byron, Scott, Moore, Crabb [sic], Wordsworth, and Coleridge, with whom a new school in poetry may have said to have been created. (pp. 46 - 47)

Although à Beckett thus interestingly recognised the emergence of the Romantics, he did not deal with them in the printed set of lectures. In the remainder of Lecture Three, he discussed some other eighteenth-century poets, such as Cowley, Prior and Swift - "Not exactly the model for a poet, though few even in that character, have exceeded him in correctness of diction, smoothness of numbers, and exactness of rhythm" (p.49) - concluding with a few comments on Australian poetry. Some verses in praise of Australia by William Foster were said to "have a strength and polish about them, which shows an aptitude for the poetic of no common order" (p.55), and mention was also made of Wentworth and Henry Halloran, the latter being, rather strangely, told that he did not write enough.

A review of à Beckett's Lectures, in some respects more eloquent and knowledgeable than its subject, appeared in the Colonist on 16 March 1839. The anonymous reviewer, obviously a man of wide reading and considerable literary ability, opened with an attack on the neglect and adverse criticism originally experienced by the Romantic poets.
The age of poetry, or rather of poets, is at an end, or nearly so, and an interregnum of criticism has commenced: the two arts, the Poetical and the Critical, have rarely if ever flourished simultaneously. During the last "high and palmy state" of poetry, when the great writers who shed such a glory-light upon the close of the eighteenth and the commencement of the nineteenth centuries, were at one and the same time stimulating and satiating the public appetite with works of the very highest and most varied order of poetic excellence — nothing could be more despicable, more unappreciating, more one-sided, and unartistic, that the current criticism of the periodical Press; for, while the most lavish and undiscriminating praise was bestowed on Byron, Scott, and Moore — the great merit and excellence of whose works were at all events visible on the surface, and therefore required no very "gifted eye" to discover — and while weekly, monthly, and quarterly, "intimations of immortality" were discovered and predicted in oracular articles, for the praise-worthy productions of such third and fourth-rate writers as Milman, Croly, and Montgomery, and a still lower grade of the now "illustrious obscure": — the calm but lofty intellect, pure feeling, and profound philosophy of Wordsworth — the soaring and expansive imagination of Shelley — the subtle and comprehensive, though sometimes quaint and cloudy, genius of Coleridge — and the tender, delicate, and redundant fancy of the "Boy-Bard", Keats — were "whistled down the wind", ridiculed, reviled, and scoffed at with the most sovereign contempt, and with the most blind, crass, and ignorant animosity. But, tempora mutantur — nearly all the true poets of our time have disappeared, like planets one after one, from the intellectual hemisphere, and none others have arisen to supply their place; while Criticism, on the contrary, has "cast off her old skin", and come forth anew, arrayed in the mantle of a more searching, comprehensive and AEsthetical philosophy.

After disagreeing with the opinion of à Beckett and others that poetry is now on the decline because of the growth of the Utilitarian spirit — he feels the public are just awaiting a new inspiration which, of course, was soon to come with Tennyson — the reviewer points out that the great age of Goethe, Schiller, Scott, Shelley and Coleridge, all
given lavish praise, has only just passed: "why should we so prematurely lament that the Spiritual is dead within us - that the forms of the Ideal flash no longer before us - that the fountains of Poetry are dried up - and that the Earthly, the Actual, and the Mechanical, done, have dominion over us?" Then follows one of the most savage pictures of colonial society to be given in this period; although the criticisms are common enough they are expressed in a particularly telling way:

In this country, and among this people indeed, all moral and intellectual life is, and ever hath been, torpid, pulseless, and all but defunct - low, grovelling, sensual, and eminently unspiritual. Our whole souls seem steeped in oil, or wrapped up in wool; we are almost entirely absorbed in calculating the increase of our kine, and the extent of our acres. We live in a pastoral country, and follow pastoral pursuits; yet have we not an atom, no, not a jot, of the pure, simple, antique pastoral spirit. Our community is composed of the most clashing, heterogeneous, and unamalgamating elements. Our habits are unsocial and utterly undomestic; and, moreover, quite uncongenial to the climate. Our Capital inherits all the evils and immorality of a large city in an old country, without any one corresponding or counterbalancing advantage. Our institutions are neither Aristocratic nor Democratic. Our self-made and mushroom aristocrats, are principally men who have waxed wealthy on wool, or grown fat on fisheries; whose modes of life are made up of second-hand imitations of imported manners and style - whose coats of arms have been "found" by Mr. Clint, and are to be seen any day and every day emblazoned on ill appointed equipages, driven by convict coachmen, dressed in dirty drab liveries faced with flaming yellow, and covered with crestless buttons; our Democrats, as a body, are without either energy, public spirit, or intelligence. Our literature consists of the most common-place disquisitions on colonial politics, and our journals are pungent only when seasoned with the pepper of fierce personality, and violent party invective, enriched with all the affluence of abusive epithet, and the beautiful flowers of Billingsgate rhetoric. Our religion consists in the correct and rigid observance
of all external forms and ceremonies, and of the covert practice of all sensual vices. Our highest conception of practical morality is to "meet our bills" at the Bank, and "keep up our credit". Our aspirations are of "the earth, earthy", our God is Mammon, and our worship, only "the dark idolatry of self".

This is certainly rather a dark-drawn picture of our social condition, and will be set down by some as a caricature, by others as an overcharged exaggeration. But is it so in reality? We, of course, think otherwise, and we speak from some observation and experience, and without being actuated by any self-known bias or prejudice. It may, then, be well asked by our readers, "Is this state of 'thought's stagnant chaos' to last forever? Are there no indications of the approach of a more advanced stage of refinement? No symptoms of a transition state yet discernible?" Yes; "the time is at hand — the spirit is gone forth"; the indications are already discernible, faint and imperfect though they be; that we recognize them in the publication of these Lectures of Mr. a'Beckett, in the Poetry of Mr. Halloran, in the projection that has been given to the musical taste of the public by Mr. Wallace and Mr. Dean, in the success that has attended the establishment of the Mechanics' School of Art, and in the increase of our printing and publishing establishments.

But we must defer what more we have to say on this and other synchronous subjects to some future occasion, and devote the remainder of the space allotted us, to the consideration of Mr. a'Beckett's able and eloquent Lectures, admitting, at the same time, that we have made his pamphlet little better than a peg to hang a dissertation on.

In the few remaining paragraphs, a Beckett is praised for his remarks on Milton, and criticised for being vague on Spenser, slighting to Hamlet and "overstrained and exaggerated" in his comments on William Foster. More conventional reviews, consisting mainly of quotations from a Beckett, appeared in the Hobart Town Courier for 2 August and the Sydney Standard for 25 March 1839. The latter critic also disagreed with a Beckett's praise of Foster: "His poem on Australia bears the learning of the scholar, although it
wants the genuine fire of poetry"; feeling that Henry Halloran "seems to possess the greater share of the spirit of inspiration." On 25 February 1839, the Monitor had briefly noted that the Lectures were "worth the attention of the public, particularly the fair sex".

Two more lectures on poetry were given by à Beckett during the 1839 season of the School of Arts. These were never printed, but several Sydney newspapers carried lengthy reports of them. The Australasian Chronicle for 3 September 1839 said of the first lecture:

. . . The Theatre of the School of Arts was crowded with ladies and gentlemen, and His Excellency the Governor and Lady Gipps, honoured the Lecture with their presence. . . . The works of the Poets under review, were those of Collins, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the two Bayley's were also brought forward, as examples of the mawkishness and silliness of the namby-pamby, nimini-pimini style of modern versification, which was illustrated by numerous ridiculous specimens from their respective muses; together with an original imitation, describing the palpitations and sorrows of a young lady from Wollongong, anticipating a visit from a young gentleman with whom she had danced on board the steamer during the passage down, which produced considerable laughter and applause, and gave rise to anxious expectation, as to why the lady and gentleman from Wollongong could be?

At the conclusion of the Lecture, Mr. a'Beckett announced his intention of giving one or two more, which would complete the series this session, and promised to commence a new series next session, when he would take occasion to treat of the works of Byron, Scott, Moore and others, concluding the whole with a review of Mr. Halloran's beautiful poems.

A day earlier, the Sydney Herald had printed a more detailed account of à Beckett's treatment of some of his poets.

Of Cowper, Mr. a'Beckett spoke very favourably, and quoted a variety of pleasing extracts in support of his commendation.
The poetry of Burns he also praised in very enthusiastic terms for its manly beauty. Of Wordsworth he spoke most contemptuously and turned his poem Peter Bell into ridicule, which we must confess it deserves, but a lecturer should act fairly, and surely there is some part of Wordsworth's writings that deserve praise!

The Herald of 11 September also disagreed with some of the criticisms of the Lake poets made in à Beckett's second lecture:

The theatre of the School of Arts was so crowded on Friday last, that by a late-comer, a seat could not be obtained. . . . He was very severe on Wordsworth and Coleridge; but it occurred to us that it was not difficult to be severe after Mr. a'Beckett's fashion. We will undertake to turn any isolated passage, from the works even of the greatest poets, into ridicule. Mr. a'Beckett dealt after this fashion with Coleridge; — especially in his quotations from "The Ancient Mariner"; the subject of which is, undoubtedly, puerile, but the poem itself abounds in passages of the highest order. . . . He appears to give preference to the "Lady of the Lake", "Marmion", and (least in his estimation) the "Lay of the Last Minstrel". . . . Of the "Lady of the Lake", public opinion is unanimous. Never were there a more popular poem. . . . Mr. a'Beckett bestowed great praise upon the "Lament of Tasso", the "Prisoner of Chillon", the "Hebrew Melodies": and he also quoted a splendid soliloquy from "Marino Faliero". Of "Childe Harold" he, of course, had little to say. That poem defies criticism — taken altogether it is, in itself, one of the greatest monuments of human genius that the world has ever exhibited. . . . Mr. a'Beckett closed a lecture of very great interest with a high eulogium upon the talent of Moore. . .

Disapproval of à Beckett's high ranking of Scott was given in the Australian's report on 10 September:

As a poet, we have never been accustomed to consider Scott as other than a man of second rate capacity; and although a few fair sentences may be selected from his works, upon the whole we consider him as completely thrown into the shade by all the higher poets of his age: Crabbe, Southey, Shelley, Moore, Campbell, Wordsworth, Rogers, and Byron (who is, in our opinion the greatest of all poets), are unquestionably his superiors.
Four days later, the *Australian* equally correctly pointed to the general unoriginality of à Beckett's literary views, writing of his remarks on Byron,

... if the same observations had not, during the last twenty years, been bandied about from critic to critic, until they have become by-words in the literary world, he would be entitled to some credit for the terseness and elegance of his remarks.

As the *Sydney Gazette* for 12 September printed the text of à Beckett's second lecture in full, one can see that he was, indeed, out of sympathy with Wordsworth and Coleridge. He claimed to be unable to fathom Coleridge's ideas in *The Ancient Mariner*, a poem to him full of absurdities, while of Wordsworth he said: "Simplicity is the chief characteristic of his style, and where it does not degenerate into puerility, no simplicity is more effective." Byron and Moore, though praised for their genius and music, respectively, were, in keeping with à Beckett's moralistic attitude to literature, criticised for their lack of morality and "uplifting spirit". The lecture concluded

There are still too many poets of the present era unnoticed, to bring, as I had hoped, this evening, the series to a close. It would be impossible at this hour to enter, except very imperfectly, upon the merits of such poets as Crabbe, Campbell, Rogers, Shelley, Keats, and one or two others that ought not to be passed over, including, as I before mentioned, Mr. Halloran.

On 26 September 1839, the *Gazette* published a letter from "A Voice from the Wilderness", the address, "near Goulburn", indicating that at least one settler was aware of something
else besides wool. He defended Coleridge against à Beckett's ridicule, and called Wordsworth "the father of the poetry of this age . . . Lord Byron could not have written 'Childe Harold' had not the 'Excursion' previously appeared." Like the Colonist's reviewer, he seems to have been free from the Byron idolatory so prevalent at the time and shows some originality of critical thought. à Beckett, on the other hand, was content to represent critical commonplaces, the main interest of his lectures lying in their concentration of conventional ideas on poets and poetry. If he was ahead of his time in anything, it was only in his dislike of literature that "brought a blush to the cheek of the young person".

V. Newspapers

The popularity of à Beckett's lectures, together with the increasing amount of original poetry and prose published in Australia during the eighteen-thirties, imply that the literary scene, although limited by the small population and demands of colonial life, was not quite as barren as was often painted. Australian newspapers, which, as has been seen, gave more encouragement to local literature than their modern counterparts, continued to increase in circulation throughout this period. Although the circulation figures, derived in all cases from the papers themselves, were probably not always free from bias, they do give a general
idea of this aspect of colonial reading habits. On 2 May 1831, after it had been established less than two months, the *Sydney Herald* claimed seven hundred and fifty subscribers, "the highest of any Sydney Journal". In that year the total free population was just under thirty thousand, and there were, of course, three other newspapers in circulation. The *Herald* seems to have retained its rapidly-gained lead throughout the eighteen-thirties, though in 1834 the *Sydney Times* did claim a subscription list of over one and a half thousand, the free population in that year being somewhat over forty thousand. These figures were given in the *Times* on 7 October 1834:

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Together they total just over three and a half thousand, or nearly one paper for every ten free persons in New South Wales. A week later, the *Times* gave this analysis of its circulation:

- In Sydney upwards of 983
- In the country (A very Small proportion, but rapidly increasing,) 388
- Hobart Town 80
- Launceston 20
- Swan River 20
- In England and the Colonies, to be filed upwards of 50
- Total 1541
Some check on these figures is provided by the Sydney Times Address Book for Subscribers, 1834, now in the Mitchell Library, which lists 384 country addresses, excluding 133 at Parramatta and on the Parramatta Road, 5 at Moreton Bay, 5 at Hobart and one at Inverary. On 8 April 1835, the Monitor noted that the Times had between one thousand three hundred and one thousand four hundred subscribers, and made thirty pounds a week profit.

The other main source of information on the circulation of Sydney newspapers during the eighteen-thirties is the Colonist, and unfortunately most of its figures only refer to country subscribers. On 10 December 1835, after it had been established for nearly a year, the Colonist claimed that it had printed 864 copies on 20 November, and had since added "13 respectable names to the list of Subscribers." In the same issue, under the heading "The Sydney Press", the Colonist announced

The following is a correct return of the number of Colonial Papers which have passed through the Post Office during the present week, from the various newspaper offices. The Colonist, this day . . . 374 " Herald, on Monday . . . 555 " Monitor, on Wednesday . . . 210 " Australian, on Tuesday . . . 164 " Gazette, on Tuesday . . . 123

Announcing an enlargement of the Monitor in an advertisement in the Colonist a week later, however, E.S. Hall claimed

The circulation of The Sydney Monitor among paying Subscribers, is next to The Sydney Herald. The account of
Newspapers published in THE COLONIST as passing through the Post Office, is no criterion of the circulation up the country of *The Sydney Monitor*, because, in order to promote their more early delivery, a great portion of them go by coach, and never pass through the Post Office.

Even allowing for certain inaccuracies in these figures, it would seem that, if the other papers followed the Sydney Times and the Colonist in having more than twice as many subscribers in Sydney as in the country, well over four thousand were circulated each week, still nearly one paper for every ten free persons in New South Wales. This proportion seems to have been maintained in 1836, when a similar list of "Periodicals passing through the General Post Office" was published in the Colonist on 15 September. The various newspapers were shown to be still in the same order of popularity, although the Colonist had had the greatest increase of country subscribers. By 14 April 1836, it claimed a circulation of just over a thousand copies, second only to the Herald. A similar number of subscribers was mentioned when the sale of the Colonist was advertised in the Herald on 1 August 1838. In comparison with the asking price of £3000, it was said that "the present estimated value of the Sydney Herald is £10,000, and a very inferior Journal in Van Diemen's Land, the Colonial Times, has recently been disposed of, with its Printing Establishment, for £3,500."

Earlier in 1838, *Bent's News and Tasmanian Three-penny Register* for 3 February reported
Mr. Henry Melville has disposed the whole of his splendid printing establishment, including the Colonial Times, the Tasmanian, and the Trumpeter. Mr. Maurice Smith is the purchaser, and the sum given is said to be £12,000. It is already offered for sale by Mr. Smith, upon such terms as will suit the convenience of a purchaser.

A similar figure of £12,000 was mentioned in the Tasmanian on 11 December 1836 as the price paid by Gore Elliston for James Ross's Hobart Town Courier. The apparent higher value of Tasmanian newspapers may possibly have been related to the greater demand for them in that colony, frequently the subject of some self-congratulation by their editors. In his Van Diemen's Land Anniversary and Hobart-Town Almanack for the Year 1831, James Ross wrote:

If in the field of religion where from the multitude of needs the labour must be proportionally great, there has yet been but little comparative success, it must still give pleasure to every friend of the colony to see the progress that her handmaid the press has already made, and nothing can indicate more strongly the improving character of the people than the great encouragement it has met with. In this respect these colonies are indeed triumphant, not even the overflowings of the great American press being able at all to compete with the extent of our literary taste. In Van Diemen's Land we have at this day no less than four printing establishments, namely three in Hobart-town, and one at Launceston, from each of which is produced a regular weekly periodical journal, neither of which in point of size would have disgraced a London newspaper office twenty years ago. (p.96)

On 31 May 1833, he reported in his Hobart Town Courier:

We observe by the returns that the total weekly circulation of newspapers to the interior of New South Wales amounted in January last to 1800, which we should conceive (at least taking the average of our own journals) was considerably below that of this colony, though our population be little more than half. The inference is of course that we
are a more reading and literary community then our northern neighbours.

Ross uses the plural "journals" since between 26 February and 2 July 1833 he issued the weekly Hobart Town Chronicle as well as the Courier. In the final number of the Chronicle he claimed its cessation was caused not by lack of "public favour and patronage, for they have been beyond our most sanguine hopes", but by insufficient "mechanical strength".

A more detailed comparison of the press in Tasmania and New South Wales was given in the Colonist and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser for 4 February 1834:

In Van Diemen's Land, there are six Newspapers, two Advertising Papers, and one Official Gazette; one Magazine, and two Pocket Almanacks; six Printing-Offices, employing eleven presses, amongst which are two Columbian and two Imperial Presses, the most improved inventions of the kind in England; also a Stanhope and another iron press. There are four Book-binding Establishments, two Stationer's shops, and two Circulating Libraries. These Newspapers, in so young a Colony as Van Diemen's Land, where ten years ago, there was only one little paper, thus present an extraordinary picture of the activity and wide dissemination of the Tasmanian Press. These papers, united, circulate no less than about 11,000 weekly . . .

In New South Wales, which possesses nearly double the population, there are only Four Newspapers, one Almanack, and one Magazine. The circulation of these papers are about 5,000 weekly . . .

As the free population of Van Diemen's Land in 1834 was just over twenty-two thousand, this represented one newspaper for every two free persons, compared with little more than one for every ten in New South Wales. Not much information is available as to the relative popularity of the Hobart papers, although on 7 January 1834, the Colonial
Times claimed that the circulation of the Tasmanian "far exceeds both the Courier and Colonist together".

VI. Magazines

The initial popularity of the Hobart Town Magazine, and its longer survival than any other Australian magazine of this period, also points to greater demand for colonial publications in Tasmania. An earlier attempt to found a Hobart periodical, reported in the Sydney Herald on 16 July 1832, does not, however, seem to have reached fruition. Entitled the "Literary Monthly Review", it was "to be embellished with engravings, and to be devoted to the literary, scientific, and agricultural interests of the Colony." The Hobart Town Magazine, subtitled "An Interesting Miscellany of Literature", concentrated more on imaginative literature, aiming to appeal not only to all classes in the colony, but also to their friends in England. These aims were set forth in the "Address" opening the first number for March 1833:

In presenting to the Public of this Colony a Miscellany, exclusively devoted to Literature and Science, the conductors are induced to offer a few remarks in explanation of their views and intentions. The novelty of their plan is, of itself, perhaps sufficient to attract attention in the first instance; but, erroneous indeed will be the opinion of their Readers, if they imagine that this alone will constitute their principal claim to public patronage. Their aim is much higher - their ambition much more lofty and meritorious, - they aspire to establish such a Miscellany, as shall not only prove highly acceptable to their fellow Colonists, but, at the same time, show their friends and well-wishers in
"Old England", that Tasmania is not devoid of individuals who have the means, as well as the desire, of cultivating Literature as well as Land, and of devoting their best and liveliest energies to its interests and advancement.

The want of such a work, as that which is now contemplated, has long been experienced in the Colony. The highly intelligent character of the general Settler, and his anxiety to find some means of relaxation and entertainment, beyond the mere gratification of his physical propensities, will induce him to hail the appearance of our Magazine with delight and satisfaction; and it shall be our own fault, if we do not strengthen and foster this gracious and salutary feeling, by our earnest endeavours to please, and, perchance, instruct him. But the general Settler is not the only inhabitant of this territory; neither is he the only individual, whose good opinion we desire, or whose obloction we shall study to promote. Our exertions will be directed towards all classes, from the very highest personage in the Colony to the lowliest - "who desireth instruction, and whose soul thirsteth after knowledge."

In the remainder of the "Address", it was hoped that the Magazine would also appeal to "those who, happily, enjoy offices of high trust and acceptable emolument", to "our fair and feminine readers" and to "the young of both sexes".

The favourable reviews which greeted the Hobart Town Magazine indicate that, at first at least, its editors' efforts were as much appreciated as they had desired. Henry Melville's own Tasmanian naturally praised his Magazine, saying on 8 March 1833 of Number One, "A taste for reading will go far towards civilization." A notice of Number Four

\[21\] On 26 September 1834, the Tasmanian called the Magazine "a necessary addition to the little library of every settler; and it is to the credit of the country that you can go into no house, be it ever so small, but there are to be found books, in many instances where it would be least expected, in no inconsiderable amount."
in the *Tasmanian* for 21 June 1833 was also generally favourable:

The present number contains several very good articles. . . . A paper *On Criticism*, is written in too formal and didactic a style to please us; it looks too like a school-boy's theme. The lines on my mother's eye, are very feelingly written, and do great credit both to the head and heart of the author. . . . There are some sharp but vigorous verses, entitled, "Adieu to Van Diemen's Land": we should like to meet with this writer very frequently in the Magazine. The *Voyage Out* is the only humorous paper in this number, and we cannot say it is the best in the world.

On 26 July 1833, reviewing the fifth number of the *Magazine*, the *Tasmanian* commended "Philosophy of Apparations", "Timothy Tims" and "Der Heer Vertius" and concluded that the colonists of New South Wales

. . . may make better butter and cheese, and salt more beef—but we will bet them one set of our *Magazine* to twenty sets of Dr. Lhotsky's embryo bantling—and the odds, every one must allow, are startling—that they shall not produce for the next dozen years, one *Magazine*, that shall approach within fifty degrees of the worst we have ever published. Will they accept our challenge?

Although several attempts at magazines were made in Sydney before 1845, the *Tasmanian* was never in any real danger of losing its bet. A reviewer in the *Tasmanian Colone* for 21 May 1833, however, thought that the *Magazine* was appealing too solely to its "fair and feminine readers":

The third number of the *Hobart Town Magazine*, which has just come out, is a "dear book" for the ladies, being with the exception of one or two very decently written serious articles, full of love, murder, and "the like of that". As the first essay to cultivate a taste for literary reading, we deem the *Hobart Town Magazine* entitled to every support,
but as a brother scribe, we would recommend the Editor of 
Maga, not to receive contributions from ladies and 
gentlemen "in love", if he can obtain others.

The Sydney press also gave a mixed reception to the new 
Magazine. On 2 May 1833, the Gazette briefly noted that it 
"has afforded, in the first number, such promise of future 
excellence as to make us earnestly hope that it will meet 
with the success it deserves." A longer and less favourable 
review appeared in the Currency Lad two days later:

On the first appearance of a publication of this description 
in a place whose population is so limited, it would be 
unkind to advance any thing that would have a tendency to 
cloud the anticipations of the writers whose pens are 
employed in a work intended no doubt for the diffusion of 
knowledge, and the substitution of a more correct taste 
than that by which colonial society is at present distinguished. 
We are afraid however (without the slightest intention of 
insinuating aught against the knowledge or diction displayed 
in this magazine) that society in either of the colonies is 
not sufficiently advanced to support a publication of this 
description. More especially do we credit the probability 
of this assumption, when we behold so many inducements held 
out by the newspaper scribblers of the day. Without a work 
pays, it must of necessity fall to the ground; and at a time 
when the local and foreign intelligence contained in our 
newspapers is so easily attainable, we see nothing in a 
magazine that can warrant it success. Our intellectual 
classes may indeed feel induced by the novelty of the thing 
to subscribe to a work of this nature, but we fear many 
years will elapse ere the bulk of society takes a sufficient 
interest in such an undertaking to afford it their support. 
In Great Britain even, the land of intellectual excellence, 
neither the Edinburgh or Blackwood's Magazine, we are informed, 
have more than 12,000 subscribers; and when we compare the 
vast population of the mother country with our own, there 
is nothing to afford any ground for hope. We must confess, 
however, that we see nothing in the Hobart Town Magazine that 
entitles it to any great consideration. With the exception of 
an article, headed "The Mutiny", there is nothing to claim 
particular attention. The writers of this work should employ
their pens in descriptions of the local scenery of the land, journeys, and monthly articles on the state of Europe... However, as we said before, we must not be too harsh on our Hobart Town friends at the commencement of their labours; and we may, in conclusion, do the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land the justice to affirm, that considering the limited society, they appear to have a taste for literature somewhat higher than the "people further North".

Perhaps the proprietors of the Magazine in question may not take it presumptuous on our part to advise the publication of advertisements, at a good price, similar to the plan adopted by the Magazines in Great Britain.

Despite Horatio Wills' obvious bias in favour of applied rather than pure literature, his arguments are sound enough, and point to the main reason for the rapid failure of most early Australian magazines, none of which adopted the practical suggestion to print advertisements.

In the light of Wills' gloomy predictions, the comparatively long life of the Hobart Town Magazine is even more remarkable, and seems to indicate that Tasmanian readers had a taste for other than the strictly factual articles advocated by Wills. As has been said, most of the success of the magazine can be attributed to Thomas Richards, though possibly James Knox's nostalgic verses were also popular at the time. Some idea of the type of contributions offered to the Magazine can be gained from the replies "To Correspondents" printed in each issue. The following appeared in the first number:

L's information relating to the "Whale Fishery", will be very acceptable; but we will not pledge ourselves to its
insertion, as a gentleman, whose practical knowledge of
the subject is very extensive, has promised to favor us with
a detailed account of it, as connected with this Colony.
We may here observe, that every subject of Colonial interest—
always excepting politics, will invariably receive our most
attentive consideration, and merit our warmest acknowledgments.
Eliza's "Lines to Horatio" are, we regret to say, too voluminous,
as well as otherwise unsuitable to our pages. We can readily
believe that they express the "agonized indignation and bitter
scorn of a woman's wounded and wrathful heart!" but, although
our gallantry vehemently inclines us, on all occasions, to
meet the wishes of the fair sex, still, in the present
instance, our Editorial duties compel us most reluctantly,
and with Roman sternness, to decline the pressing favors of
Eliza. May we venture to suggest to our unhappy correspondent,
the substitution of another word for the very odd one at
the end of the hundred and fifty-fourth line? Poor Eliza
will, we are sure, readily surmise our reason for the
alteration.

We cannot form a correct opinion of the communication forwarded
from Perth, till we see the remainder. We shall, in every
instance, decline the insertion of unfinished articles, no
matter how talented the commencement may be.

Dr. Richards has our best thanks for the offer of his "First
Impressions in Tasmania". We shall feel extremely obliged
to him for his contributions on this, or any other subject.

D.L.'s smart and severe description of "The South-sea Skipper",
is under consideration. It is full of truth, causticity, and
candour, and as it is directed to the exposure of the very
reprehensible foibles and absurdities of 'a class', we
shall most probably give it insertion. Could he favor us with
an interview any day after the 10th?

If P.P. will be so obliging as to send us any communication
that we can decrypt, we shall be most happy to attend to it.
That which he has now so obligingly forwarded, may be
extremely clever and interesting; but to us, it is veiled in
impenetrable mystery. We consider ourselves somewhat
accomplished in the art of unravelling hieroglyphical
manuscripts; and could read with tolerable facility and
very perfect accuracy, the extraordinary caligraphic scripts
of Francis Jeffrey, Lord Brogham, the late Dr. Farr, and
the late Mr. Gifford, whilome Editor of the 'Quarterly
Review': But this of P.P. positively and most perplexingly
puzzles us. . . .

Colonial Aphorisms are under consideration; and if we find that
acrid bitterness is not the prevailing ingredient, we
shall publish them, but we must beg the author to lie as
gentle as he can; the subject is certainly a good one.
Comments in later "To Correspondents" sections indicate that Tasmanian poets, at least, were busy writing for the Magazine. Thus, in Number Four for June 1833, the editor wrote

Communications crowd in upon us in such numbers, that we are compelled to defer the insertion of several very excellent papers. . . . We must beg of our numerous Correspondents to take pains in writing their contributions, as we mean to become very particular, in order to render the Magazine worthy of every patronage. . . . We have received nearly a cart load of Poetry - some good - some indifferent, and a great deal good for nothing. It shall all be exposed to the customary ordeal, and dealt with accordingly.

By the following month, the editor's patience with his numerous poetical contributors was wearing thin:

. . . We have received an immense quantity of - what, we suppose, we must call Poetry. We shall attend to it all, and insert that which is worthy of publication; as to the remainder, it must share the fate of "all the Capulets", and go to --, wherever our readers think proper.

As the novelty of the Hobart Town Magazine wore off, however, the number of contributors, and also the number of purchasers, seem to have rapidly decreased. In an effort to boost failing circulation, Melville and Richards revoked their earlier determination to avoid politics. On 12 August 1834, Melville's Colonial Times, in a notice of Number Seventeen of the Magazine, announced

. . . It has been suggested by some friends of the Editor, and firm supporters of this Work, that it would be much more valued in the interior, if it were to contain papers on political subjects. The very great circulation of the Magazine, and the fact, that a work of this description is a lasting record of the state of the Colony . . . must render the opinions it promulgates worthy of most attentive
consideration; and, therefore, . . . in future we shall so arrange that every number of the Work shall contain two or three political articles, suggested by the most popular topics of public consideration. . . .

The usual light reading for which this Work has been so celebrated, will continue as usual; but a more extensive portion will be spared to domestic intelligence, and Colonial information of every description.

In fact, from the beginning of Volume III in June 1834, Thomas Richards, who was by now virtually writing all the original material, had been contributing articles on such topics as "The New Jury Act" and "A Few Words on the Present State of Things". The eighteenth, and final, number for August 1833, the only one to appear after the change of policy was announced, contained two political articles attributed to Richards, "Free Representation By a Legislative Assembly" and "An Enquiry into the Causes of Misgovernment in the British Colonies", but was otherwise not noticeably more "colonial" than its predecessors. It is difficult to say whether the Hobart Town Magazine would have had greater or less success if it had adopted from the outset the more provincial, factual tone advocated by Wills. Certainly, most of Thomas Richards' best work, the literary essays and serials which still have some interest for a modern reader, were English rather than Australian in their inspiration and subjects.

No doubt inspired by the initial popularity of the Hobart Town Magazine, two other periodicals were proposed
in Hobart in 1833, although they never seem to have reached publication. On 7 May 1833, the Tasmanian Colonist printed


No. 1 will be Published on the 1st of June, and, among other interesting subjects, will contain a very talented, unpublished Poem, by an Under Graduate of Oxford.
N.B. Contributions, (which are earnestly solicited,) are requested to be addressed to "the Editor of the Tasmanian Chaplet", to the care of Mr. Bent, Elizabeth-Street.

Shortly afterwards, on 18 June, the "Prospectus of the Tasmanian Evangelical and Scientific Magazine, To be Conducted by a Gentleman, lately arrived from England, and formerly connected with the London Press" appeared in the same paper. Despite its title, this magazine was also to contain

. . . Original and select articles upon various branches of Literature . . . as well as a fair and candid review of the Tasmanian Press. Gems of prose and verse will also be supplied, so as to diffuse, in some humble degree, a taste for literary acquirements - a desideratum in all grades of society.

"For a reading people cannot be a vicious people".

In the following year an attempt was made to revive the Colonial Advocate, the Prospectus for which appeared in the Hobart Town Courier on 17 October. Its subtitle, "Political, Agricultural, Commercial and Literary Register of Van Diemen's Land", adequately conveys the range, and presumably also the order of importance, of its proposed interests. The literary
section was to "contain original articles, and extracts from the best works, as well in regard to the noble truths of Philosophy, as the Belles Lettres; and no pains will be spared to combine the useful with the entertaining."
However, this new series of the Colonial Advocate also seems never to have appeared.

James Ross had a little more success with his Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine, which ran for four numbers between September and December 1835. Said to be "Under the Superintendence of a Committee of Gentlemen; Assisted by Contributors throughout the Colony", it was ironically received by the Tasmanian on 4 September 1835: "It being reported to be the work 'exclusively' of the very highest of the 'Aristocracy', we shall treat it with appropriate respect". The following aims were set out in the first number:

The object of this Work is, to disseminate within the Colony, information generally acceptable or useful to the Community. It is devoted not only to the usual topics which a "Magazine" is understood to comprise, - including a Periodical Summary of Intelligence, Foreign and Domestic, - but also to the re-publication of articles which may have appeared elsewhere.

Devoted to such purpose, and excluding, as it does, every species of political or religious controversy, - this Magazine will, it is hoped, receive extensive support.

This emphasis on useful, rather than entertaining material, in keeping with James Ross's didactic character, distinguishes his periodical from the Hobart Town Magazine. Although a few original imaginative pieces appeared, they lacked the life
and creativity of those in the earlier magazine, and the poems were even worse than James Knox's. In extracts from the "Introductory Address" which have been quoted earlier, Ross expressed his desire to encourage Australian literature, especially poetry, but his colonial material, while perhaps proportionally more plentiful than the Hobart Town Magazine's, was confined to factual accounts of local animals, aborigines, geography and so on. "On the Usefulness of a Magazine. (From a Contributor in the Country)" by "A Settler", in the second number, again points to the Tasmanian settlers' interest in literature:

Our Libraries are, be assured, very - very small. Much that we once knew, many of us have forgotten; and what is old to you, may be heard by us for the first time. Literature is not, indeed, fled from our dwellings but its state amongst us is languid, torpid. It is a collection of dry bones. It is for you, to command them to live.

An interesting colonial tale appears to have been included in the first issue of an earlier Hobart periodical, the Wreath, of which, unfortunately, no copies seem to have survived. On 9 January 1835, the Hobart Town Courier noted

We have had the pleasure to receive the first number of a very neat and amusing two weekly production, printed at Mr. Olding's press, entitled The Wreath, a Journal of Literature, the Drama, etc. It consists of 16 pages octavo, closely printed, price 6d. The chief article in the present number is - "My Suit of Sheep-skin", being an account of a man that took a fancy to wear a dress of that description, in which he went to hunt kangaroos, and was overtaken in a shower. The work will doubtless improve in interest as it goes on, and we heartily wish it every success. It is better worth sixpence than many periodicals that are sold for twice the money.
Ross also mentioned the *Wreath* in his *Hobart Town Almanack* and *Van Diemen's Land Annual* for 1835, as "an amusing little periodical, likely to improve with our public encouragement." (p.55) According to the *Morning Star* for 13 January 1835, this encouragement was forthcoming:

The *Wreath* - We have much pleasure in saying that this little publication has met with the most unbounded support from the public, and is indeed, becoming quite a favorite. We feel confident that a work of this nature, will be appreciated by the lovers of Colonial literature, and wish the Proprietors every success in their undertaking.

Nevertheless, the *Wreath* must have been very short-lived. No further magazines were attempted in Tasmania till 1839, when the *True Colonist* for 25 January printed the "Prospectus of a Monthly Periodical, To Be Entitled, The Van Diemen's Land Farmer's Magazine and Austral-Asiatic Colonial Register". Like many other proposals, however, this seems to have been still-born.

None of the five Sydney magazines of the 'thirties was any match for the *Hobart Town Magazine*. In 1830, Laurence Halloran, as one of his various attempts to earn a living, had proposed "a Weekly Miscellany, from which all Political Discussion will be excluded, and which will embrace chiefly subjects, Moral, philosophical, and literary." His advertisement in the *Monitor* for 28 April 1830 went on to state that the work would have thirty-two pages and be priced at one-and-sixpence. No doubt had it reached publication, it
would soon have suffered the same fate as Halloran's earlier paper, *The Gleaner*. The first magazine to appear in New South Wales during the eighteen-thirties was Ralph Mansfield's *New South Wales Magazine*, which ran for eight numbers from August 1833 to March 1834. A gloomy anticipation of its failure had been made in the *Monitor* on 5 January 1833: "There is some talk of a monthly Religious magazine. A miscellaneous magazine will not answer in New South Wales for seven years to come, much less a religious one. He must be a novice who undertakes such work." But Mansfield seems to have learnt something from the failure of his earlier *Australian Magazine*, with its heavy emphasis on religion, since the *Prospectus* for his new undertaking appealed to patriotic rather than Christian sentiments:

In proceeding to submit the plan of the work, its conductors would observe, that as a Magazine of *general literature and science*, they conceive it would not succeed; since periodicals of that nature are procured from England at *much cheaper price*, and of a *far higher character*, than any that could be produced in the Colony. We therefore do not aspire to a competition so utterly hopeless. Our object is, to produce a MAGAZINE DECIDEDLY COLONIAL, an explorer of Colonial resources - a recorder of Colonial facts, - a nursery of Colonial genius, - an advocate of Colonial interests, - and a channel of discussion on all questions bearing upon the Colonial welfare. . . .

XI. COLONIAL LITERATURE - although in its earliest infancy, it will be our rule to notice every work from the Colonial press, and to cherish to the utmost of our power, every effort to advance the intellectual interests of the country.

XII. POETRY - to *this* department the most esteemed poets in the Colony have undertaken to contribute; and we shall study to enrich it by occasional selections from the best compositions of the Mother Country.
Even this, however, did not move the Monitor, which commented on 29 May 1833:

The Rev. R. Mansfield, in a notice to the Public, published in the Herald of Monday last, signifies his intention of speedily publishing a Magazine. - This, with Mr. Kentish's Periodical, and Dr. Lhotsky's Sunday newspaper, will make three additions to Australian Literature. (None of them will pay - ED.)

However, Kentish's periodical never seems to have been published, and a printed slip found with a copy of Mansfield's Prospectus among John McGarvie's papers in the Mitchell Library announces that Lhotsky's "Australian Minerva" is to be incorporated with the New South Wales Magazine, with Lhotsky as the editor of the "Department of Natural History". Along with the copy of his Prospectus, Mansfield sent McGarvie a letter dated 14 June 1833, asking him for contributions:

... although I am aware your time is much occupied with more important business, yet the recollection of the valuable contributions with which you used to favour me in another publication induces me to ask the kindness of an occasional article.

As the success of the work will be very much affected by the character of the first No. you would confer on me a great obligation could you enrich it with a paper from your able pen. 22

22 McGarvie Papers, Mitchell Library, A1613. Also in this collection is a manuscript prospectus in McGarvie's handwriting for the "Australian Monthly Magazine and Sidney [sic] Review", which was to make a strong feature of natural history. In an accompanying note, McGarvie wrote: "The foregoing was intended as the prospectus of a Quarterly publication to be entitled the Austral Asiatic Quarterly Review. It was proposed and to be edited by the Rev. Dr. Lang of Sydney - but it was never acted upon - nor was this Prospectus printed."
Although McGarvie was very probably the author of "A.B.C.'s" learned essay on "Fruit" in Number 3, he does not seem to have graced the first issue of the Magazine, as requested. Number One was as colonial in content as promised, but did not make the good impression Mansfield had hoped for. The Monitor of 28 August 1833 was quick to point out its faults:

..."THE EVENING LAKE" is a short Poem published three years ago in the GAZETTE. "A DAY WITH SIR WALTER SCOTT" is a paper copied from a defunct London magazine, and published eighteen months ago. ..."The Criticism on Australia" is a meagre review of a meagre Poem. ...
Mr. M. must really throw himself more on his own resources. He must give us good statistical articles; original papers of merit, both in prose and verse.

On 6 September 1833, the Tasmanian, although commencing with a lengthy dissertation on the value of literature, also found little to commend in the Magazine:

... literature, is of itself, a pastime, infinitely calculated to improve the morals, as well as to "soften the manners" of mankind; a literary community, can never be a vicious one, neither can a "reading public" become discontented, unless the poisonous food of political malignity, be presented to their minds; and even then, the really literary man - who delights in the quiet contemplation of sound knowledge, and who regards with horror and disgust, the abominations of political scurrility - even then, we say, such a man will reject the poisonous trash, and select such mental food only, as is pure and wholesome.

... there is but little variety in the work. The address ... is extremely dull and prosy, and the Poetry (there are only two pieces) very tame and spiritless.

To one used to the more abundant delights of the Hobart Town Magazine, the contents of the first number of its northern
rival must indeed have seemed poor stuff.

From the contents of the second number of the New South Wales Magazine, one would assume that Mansfield was hard pressed for material, since much space was devoted to Henry Carmichael's "Introductory Discourse, delivered at the Opening of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, April 23, 1833". Besides this, there were some articles on "Retribution of the Aborigines", "Proposed Improvements in Sydney", and "The Transportation System", a review of James Busby's works on wine, the usual "Historical Register" and "Natural History Department" and, on the creative side, two poems and the commencement of "Mythos's" peculiar serial, "The Pythoness: A Tale of the First Century". All were judiciously treated in a lengthy but lively review in the Australian on 6 September 1833.

The second number of the New South Wales Magazine . . . is on the whole an improvement upon the first, but justice requires us to say that there is still room for amendment. In the first place, we have to complain of indolence, or too much modesty on the part of its Editor, being unable to detect one article of his composition, excepting a very meagre review of some very meagre works of the New Zealand Consul.23 In the second place, besides the sin of omission, he has been guilty of the more decided offence of commission in admitting what we should christen fancy articles, such for instance as a "Tale of the First Century", which is sadly misplaced in a Magazine published in the ninth [sic]. Again, the long account of the Mechanics' School of Arts is very dull, but as a history may be hereafter interesting, -- not so the lecture, which is hardly of an

23 James Busby
order to render it worthy of publication. There also appears some sad stuff written in the bush, by a Poet, who says ten times in a Poem of some fifty lines "that his heart is in England, his heart is not here", a piece of information which induces a violent wish that his poetry and his heart had been in the same place. . . . The "Historical Register", at the conclusion of the volume, is judiciously curtailed . . .

The Natural History Department conducted by Dr. John Lhotsky, is doubtless very interesting, but is far too learned for us. There is something remarkable in this gentleman — some people walk out, and discover a flower, a pebble, a shell, or some such trifles, but Dr. L. is on the grand scale, he goes a walking and trips against a whale. — How differently too he regards the animal from other folks, he robs it of the ossa temporalia; John White would have taken the blubber. 24

The present number of the Magazine, however, contains some other articles which we can understand, and sympathise with, such as "Proposed improvements in Sydney". The stanzas by H. Halloran on "Australian Scenery", although written with a little inattention to harmony, contain some beautiful lines. Though last not least, there is an article on the Transportation system, in answer to O.P.Q., written with great ability, . . .

Before dismissing the Magazine No. 2 we must express regret, that a work of such a nature cannot be conducted without owing its chief, if not only interest, to its political productions. Is there not sufficient literary taste in this great Colony to support a literary Magazine? or must its Editor pander to party passions, or forego his list of Subscribers?

We would recommend Mr. Mansfield to copy from the English Periodicals, the Ladies Magazine for instance, which in its contents as well as attractive appearance is quite a model.

The history of the Hobart Town Magazine suggests, however, that some political material was needed to retain readers' interest since, as Mansfield pointed out in his Prospectus, those with purely literary tastes generally preferred the better and cheaper English magazines.

24 John White was a prominent Sydney oil merchant.
Throughout 1833, the *Australian* maintained its practice of giving lengthy and well-written reviews of the succeeding numbers of the *New South Wales Magazine*. Its remarks on Henry Halloran’s "Conflagration of the Hibernia", from Number Three, have already been quoted. The other contents of this number were dismissed summarily in the remainder of the review, printed on 21 October 1833:

The Pythoness. — Quite as inexplicable as Mr. Halloran in one of his notes declares woman to be.

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts. — Dull and unmeaning, and what is worse, not yet "concluded".

Confessions of a Visionary. — Visionary enough, God knows. To be continued too!

"Australian Sand" and "Sheep Washing" — Unobjectionable, but stale.

"Fruit". — Most terrible nonsense — quoting scraps of poetry and ending like a sermon, "Amen and Amen!"

A short Geological sketch by Mr. Wilton, containing the usual quantity of hard words and lack of useful information; curiously enough "Gammon Creek" was the principal seat of the Rev. Gentleman's researches.

In comparing the above with the Hobart Town Magazine for August, we were mortified at the contrast. In that work is a good selection of Articles upon different interesting subjects, for the most part sensible and well written. "Emigrant" and the "Stranger Guest" are, tho' not efforts of genius, still infinitely superior to any thing in our unhappy blunting.

The essay on "Fruit", presumably by John McGarvie, while not as free-flowing and amusing as some of Thomas Richards' attempts in the same vein, did not deserve quite such severe treatment. Mansfield himself evidently thought so, and his praise of the article was in its turn attacked by "A Correspondent", reviewing the fourth number of the *Magazine* in the *Australian* of 8 November 1833:
The Editor of the Magazine, in his Notice to Correspondents, takes occasion to compliment the writer of the article on "Fruit", and invites him to become a regular contributor. From his remarks, and the criticisms lately passed on it, I have been induced to refer to the preceding number, to read this paper with attention. It is certainly awful verbiage, and it is devoutly to be hoped, that the writer, whoever he may be, will give repose to his exquisite pen, even in defiance of this flattering invitation, and forbear manufacturing any more such essays of incomprehensible trash, until his readers have had time to digest the powerful dose with which he has already favoured them. From common charity to the Editors' judgment, one is compelled to conclude that it is some friend of his who has written this article, or it never could be believed that he would call it "an ingenious and well written paper."

"A Correspondent" also regretted Mansfield's emphasis on politics at the expense of literature:

The public mind is disappointed in the Magazine, from the simple reason, that it has failed to realize the entertainment which, it was expected, its pages would confer. - As yet, it has been principally a political organ, and the Notices to Correspondents exhibit a collection of papers similar in character to those contained in the present publication.

He found, however, "a few pieces into which the intellectual reader may enter with delight" - Henry Halloran's "The Minstrel's Grave", "Recollections of a Lawyer. No. 1. The Portrait", and an article on "Quantity and Accent of the Latin and Greek Languages", though the last two were not judged perfect.

The Australian's repeated censures of the New South Wales Magazine had evidently not gone unnoticed, for the review of Number Six on 17 January 1834 began:

We have been accused of harshness in our notices and criticisms upon the previous numbers, and divers and sundry
offended authors, who are proverbially the worst tempered of mankind, have from time to time hurled a weapon at our heads by way of revenge for our strictures, from which by the decrees of fate alone, we have hitherto escaped scathless.

Evidently trusting that fate's kindness would continue, the writer went on

The present number of the Magazine does not contain much to compensate for the inferiority of its predecessors. The poetical department is especially meagre, consisting only of some English extracts of no great merit, and one or two insipid original scraps. . . . Two chapters of the Pythoness occupy some eleven pages, and admitting, as some erudite critic once pointed out, the "gorgeousness of the language", we can only say, that, after reading them through, a labour which we fear few readers will have the patience to encounter, we were wholly unable to comprehend the design of the composition, or to trace any meaning at all in a great portion of the said language.

Mansfield himself was forced to admit in his Preface to Volume I of the Magazine, which concluded with Number Six, that

The plan originally laid down in the Prospectus has been very imperfectly accomplished - not from any unforeseen want of material, for they have proved even more copious than we had anticipated; not yet from want of diligence on our part, for the matter we collected and prepared would have sufficed for work of at least twice the dimensions of the one now before the reader. Why then has the Magazine not been swelled to a larger bulk, and enlivened with a greater variety?

It should be remembered, that this publication was undertaken as an experiment - and as an experiment from which many would have been deterred by the fate of previous trials. Several works of a similar character were started, at different times, some years ago; but it was found that the reading public was then too scanty to afford them adequate support, and, their proprietors having sustained no small pecuniary loss, they were soon discontinued. It was therefore necessary, in renewing the attempt, to proceed
cautiously — not merely for the sake of the Proprietor's own interests, but from the consideration, that another failure would be discreditable to the Colony, and retard, perhaps for many years, its advancement in periodical literature.

But despite, or perhaps even because of, Mansfield's caution, the Magazine soon went the way of all its short-lived predecessors, the two remaining numbers showing no marked difference in standard or content from the previous six. If the Australian's comments may be taken to represent the general feeling of the reading public, it would seem that only articles, stories and poems of a higher quality than those submitted for publication could have saved it. Unfortunately, Sydney at this period did not possess a Thomas Richards, and "Mythos" was a very poor substitute.

This further failure in the colonial magazine line did not, however, deter others from making new attempts. On 23 May 1835, the Monitor announced

The More Candle, The More Light. — A new Monthly Magazine is about to be started; and the first number will appear on the first of next month. It will be conducted by a gentleman already well known by his Liberal, or, we would rather say, Radical articles inserted occasionally in the Sydney periodicals.

The work referred to was presumably John Lhotsky's Illustrations of the Present State and Future Prospects of the Colony of New South Wales By an Impartial Observer, to which was annexed the New South Wales Literary, Political and
Commercial Advertiser. Four numbers appeared in 1835 and one in 1836, without any more specific dates. Its contents were mainly political and polemical, John Dunmore Lang being particularly singled out for attack. Only one original poem and one story, both discussed earlier in this chapter\(^{(11.391, 1492)}\), were printed.

In June 1835, the first and only number of the *Australian Settler's Guide, or Monthly Journal* appeared; it contained no material of literary interest. Later in the same year, the *Sydney Herald* of 12 November published the prospectus of another new venture:

*The Australian Magazine*

To Be Edited By
F. Stephen
- 1st January 1836.

. . . It is intended that this Works shall comprise the usual contents of an English Magazine, adapted to the taste of Colonial Readers. The Proprietors . . . will endeavour to make the *Australian Magazine* an amusing, as well as useful production; embracing all Subjects of Colonial interest, political, literary, and scientific. It will also contain a brief summary of the latest English news, and of such domestic occurrences as may appear worthy of being recorded in a work more durable than the columns of a Newspaper.

*The Colonist* for 3 December 1835, however, had no great hopes of its success.

. . . To speak plainly; we doubt much whether Mr. Francis Stephen possesses that vigour of mind, that versatility of talent, and that gracefulness of manner as a public journalist, that are requisite in the present age to keep a Monthly Magazine afoot for any length of time, either at home or abroad. For although we are not to expect a Campbell or an Ebony at the Antipodes, we must have something like a smack of their pens even here. Mr. Stephen undoubtedly
possesses what is commonly called cleverness; but talent is something of a higher order, and we suspect he has far too scanty a stock of it to warrant his commencing literary business in the wholesale or monthly line. The Australian Magazine (for the thing has been repeatedly attempted before) has made at least four literary bankrupts already. We should be sorry to see Mr. Francis Stephen Gazetted as the fifth. We would rather have him purchase a flock of sheep, and try his hand at wool-gathering.

Many colonists seem to have agreed with this estimate of Francis Stephen, at that time editor of the Australian. A fortnight later, the Colonist announced publication of the first number of the Australian Magazine would be delayed till February 1836, since it had not yet obtained sufficient subscribers. As it never seems to have appeared, one assumes that the required minimum number was not reached. Nor are there any surviving issues of the, presumably different, Australasian Magazine, advertised in the Commercial Journal on 14 January 1836, to "be published in January, By G.W. Evans":

It will be more especially devoted to Literature and Science, — will embrace the contents of the London Monthlies, — adding a summary of the Monthly Commerce of the Colony. This Work is undertaken without any prospect of gain, but simply from the wish to endeavour to add to the literary taste of the Colony.

The bookseller James Tegg, who published the first number of his Monthly Magazine in March 1836, no doubt hoped that it would advance his own interests as well as a taste for literature, though of course only the latter aim was expressed in the "Introductory Address":
The want of a Magazine, whose pages should be devoted to general literature, avoiding the stormy areas of politics and polemics, and combining amusement with instruction, has long been felt and acknowledged.

A work of this description seems at the present juncture particularly required. There is evidently a growing taste for reading in the minds of our colonial public; and to foster and supply that taste is the object at which we aim. (p.1)

Advertisements for this magazine in both the Commercial Journal and the Colonist for 18 February 1836 give an accurate description of its usual contents:

... its pages will be devoted to Miscellaneous Literature. A portion ... will consist of Original Articles, Poetical and Prose. Another portion will contain extracts from the best sources of Periodical Literature, and the remainder will be occupied by Reviews of New Books, Colonial and British, Literary Notices, the Drama, and other varieties.

Unlike earlier Sydney magazines, Tegg's Monthly thus excluded science as well as politics, emphasising entertainment rather than instruction. In most cases, its lighter tone was well received by the local press. The Sydney Gazette of 5 March 1835 enthused "Here is a bright little sunny compendium of light reading in poetry and prose, well arranged, and neatly printed, and all for the very parrinimitude of price above quoted, videlicet - one shilling." On the other hand, the Sydney Herald five days later thought "The original matter (and in the first number we would have expected the editor to put forth his strength) is absolutely below mediocrity. ... the selected articles comprise by far the best part of the number." Its further criticisms of William Kerr's
"Fisher's Ghost" and "The Governess" have been quoted earlier in this chapter. The Herald was, however, kinder to later issues of the Magazine, saying on 9 June 1836, "the fourth number . . . improves in interest. The original articles . . . are very fair and gratifying specimens of colonial literary talent in the 'magazine line'". And on 21 July, it noted that

Tegg's Magazine improves upon acquaintance. This month's number contains some very pleasing papers, both original and select, and is generally made up of those light and diversified subjects which ought properly to find their places in a "Magazine".

The Australian, in a reversal of its earlier criticisms of the New South Wales Magazine, complained on 4 March 1836 of the lack of political articles in Tegg's Monthly: "The managers seem resolved to exclude politics - they might as well exclude plain English; politics are the life and soul of periodicals, and for a work of this kind to be successful, they must be admitted - mark that, Mr. Tegg."

These comments were echoed by the Hobart Town Courier for 27 May 1836: "It is very neatly printed at the Colonist Office, and many of the articles possess considerable merit, but we fear it is not sufficiently spicy and political to suit the general palate of the day." The magazine's association with the Colonist - it also contained contributions from Dunmore Lang and William Kerr, a Colonist journalist - may possibly account for the Australian's hostility. On
6 May 1836, it wrote of Number Three: "we can say nothing in its praise. The tales are tame and without interest; and the verses but very indifferent. . . . Of the verses, 'Early Death' is the best; and that is all we can say for it." An announcement of the cessation of Tegg's Monthly in the Australian on 2 August 1836 was no kinder: "It has lived its little day, and is now dead and gone—leaving few to regret its untimely decease."

A further slight on Tegg's Magazine, and on Australian publications generally, appeared in the fifth and final number of John Lhotsky's

Illustrations of the Present State . . . of New South Wales.

(ADVERTISEMENT)

_________________________

PRIZE OF FIFTY POUNDS STERLING !!

_________________________

SYDNEY MILK AND WATER ASSOCIATION

A company of Gentlemen fond of pithy fun and frolic, have united themselves into a Society entitled as above, for the sake of awarding a QUARTERLY PRIZE to any of the Sydney Newspapers or Periodicals, which up to this time may have produced the greatest mass of nothingness and contemptible trash. - The Society held their first General Meeting on the 11th instant, when after the different papers had been again glanced over, the chairman put the following questions: -

"Gentlemen, which do you consider to be the meritorious publication; that during the last quarter has excelled in seven line leaders, much ado about nothing, and a quantity of unconnected and undigested extracts - the meritorious paper, I say, which has tamely and cunningly shrank from
every deep and conscientious discussion of colonial matters -
the incomparable paper finally, the reading of which will
send you first to sleep."

The contest, especially between some of the older
established papers and other periodicals, was warm, severe,
and protracted to such a late hour, that the meeting was
of necessity adjourned until the next evening.*

Gentlemen Editors are respectfully requested, to fill
henceforth their publications with the most stale and worn
out extracts from the home papers, tough tales, and such
like, to refuse peremptorily the insertion of any pithy,
businesslike, matter-of-fact correspondence, and they may
rest assured, that their high merits in benefitting the
colony, will be duly appreciated by the above MILK AND WATER
ASSOCIATION.

* Since writing the above, we are very happy in being
able to state, that at the adjourned meeting of yesterday,
the merits of MR. TEgg'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE seemed to the
association so paramount, that the prize for the last
quarter was awarded to it by acclamation, and there is
even some hope, that an especial letter of thanks will be
addressed to him - into the bargain.

This same number of Lhotsky's Illustrations contained as
its chief article a savage attack upon Dunmore Lang and
his "coarse and lewd" newspaper: "Another Dose for the
Reverend Dr. L-G, of Slanderous 'Colonist' Notoriety,
Applied By an Invalid Botany Bay Flagellator": which was
itself severely censured in the fourth number of Tegg's
Magazine. Earlier, Lhotsky's Jané and Mary, or The Ten
Sovereigns, "No. 1 of a series of Australian Tracts for
the Dissemination of Moral, Domestic and Patriotic Feelings",
had been critically reviewed in Number Two of the Magazine,
with comments on its poor morality.

In general, the review section of Tegg's Monthly Magazine
was undistinguished, containing, apart from the criticisms
of Lhotsky, notices of works, such as the latest English
Annuals, which Tegg himself had for sale. Its original poetry and prose, discussed earlier in this chapter, were also, with a few exceptions, unremarkable. Like the other magazine editors of this period, Tegg, or his anonymous conductor, found himself inundated with verse. The "Notes to Correspondents" in Number Two began "Short as is the space we have been in existence, our Editorial table already groans beneath a load of Original Poetry. We have not had time even to read one half the communications of this description which we have received." But in this case, quantity was certainly no guarantee of quality. None of the major Sydney poets, such as Henry Halloran and Charles Harpur, published in Tegg's Magazine.

Between the final number of Tegg's Monthly Magazine in July 1836 and the commencement of his new venture, the weekly Literary News, on 12 August 1837, a few issues of Nathaniel Kentish's The Reformer apparently appeared, though none are known to have survived. This was advertised in the Monitor of 4 June 1836: "Shortly Will Be Published, 'The Reformer', a Weekly Periodical for the People of the Australian Colonies; Published By a Society of Gentlemen . . . Price 3½d. per no." On 2 July 1836, the same paper announced that Dr. Lhotsky was to be the Reformer's editor. The only evidence of its fate, however, is contained in the Tasmanian Bent's News which on 3 September 1836 reported
that Kentish was about to republish his *Sydney Times*, "the *Reform* having after an existence of three or four weeks, closed." Much more successful was the *Australian Temperance Magazine*, the longest-lasting colonial periodical of the period, which ran from July 1837 to June 1840. A further indication of its popularity was given in the Monitor's notice of the first number of the Magazine on 5 July 1837: "There are 2,000 copies already subscribed for." Although the *Australian Temperance Magazine* did print a few original verses and short stories, they naturally were, like the rest of its contents, highly propagandic and of little literary interest.

On the other hand, the *Literary News, A Review and Magazine of Fact and Fiction; The Arts, Sciences, and Belles Lettres*, published weekly until 3 February 1838, had more literary merit than any other Sydney periodical of the eighteen-thirties. A comparison with the *Hobart Town Magazine* is more difficult, since the *Literary News* printed little original imaginative material, owing its chief value to the leading articles, presumably by William à Beckett, on a wide variety of moral, literary and colonial topics. Some of these have already been quoted in this and the previous chapter; they were generally serious in tone and, though somewhat ponderous, clearly written and well-
argued. In this extract from "Australia and Her Prospects", 7 October 1837, à Beckett again shows his moral attitude to literature, and his disapproval of excessive novel-reading, while expressing his views on the future literary development of Australia. After quoting some comments by Dr. Channing on the need to temper material prosperity with spiritual growth, he writes

These remarks are peculiarly applicable to a country like this, where the sole object, with most of us, in visiting or adopting it, is the accumulation of wealth. To ensure, then, our freedom from the dangers to which such views expose us, the spiritual must be called up in opposition to the sensual principle. The former should be assisted by the cultivation of all that relates to the intellect, not only in ourselves, but by encouraging and joining every institution which has for its object the improvement of the mind, whether relating to the arts, sciences, or belles lettres. But even the taste for these must be regulated by a principle independent of knowledge; or there is a danger of our exchanging but one kind of sensuality for another - a physical one for a mental one. We should benefit, for instance, but little, by confining our reading to those books which have taxed only the inventive faculties of their authors. The reflective powers, to be improved, ought to be solicited - they should be provoked to exercise, not lulled to slumber: the mind, wanting the circulation of thought, lies in as torpid and inane a state, as the body deprived of the circulation of its blood.

We consider, then, the diffusion and cultivation of literature to be one of the chief instruments of elevating and enlightening the minds of a people, and especially of a people formed under the peculiar circumstances of this colony. It is not to be expected that our press should suddenly, or even early, teem with many original compositions: a taste must be first established for the literary offspring of others, before genius can be aroused to the desire of creating for itself. Until this, however, takes place, no national literature can be properly said to exist, for it is the expression of a nation's mind that constitutes
literature, and this expression can only be adequately conveyed or estimated through the medium of the press. We have already said, in a previous number, that we do not consider the newspaper press as the organ of the public mind: it may convey the sentiments of a party on particular points; but it affords no specimen of that intellectual aggregate which may be said to constitute the true criterion of a country's literature. Of the importance of cultivating such a literature we feel more strongly convinced than any language of our own can express.

In both the Literary News and his lectures on poetry, à Beckett presumably felt he was helping to diffuse the knowledge and appreciation of literature he rightly saw as the foundation of genuinely creative work. The opening address, "To Our Readers", in the first number of the Literary News, had also emphasised the importance of reading, and reading not only for amusement. Although à Beckett hoped to acquaint readers with little known, excellent works, such as Milton's prose, he also praised "Boz", frequently extracted in the Literary News, as ideal light reading, "though his humour is not without its moral". Presumably aware of the usual influx of poetry which greeted new magazine editors, he sternly stated "We shall not deluge our pages with poetry, nor admit any verses which do not contain something more useful and interesting than the sickly sentimentalism of love-lorn striplings, or Byronic misanthropes". The Literary News had apparently not escaped the customary predictions of lack of success, for à Beckett went on to say,
In more than one quarter, we have heard the idea almost ridiculed, of infusing a taste among the Australian public, for literature and the arts, and in one publication, referring to our "Address" we are charged with promising "mighty things", as if the attempt to engage the interests of the colonists in something else besides pecuniary speculations and political squabbles, were really so Utopian an undertaking as to have emanated only from the brains of enthusiasts or egoists.

At first at least, the prophets of doom were proved wrong. On 26 August 1837, the Sydney Times reported of "Tegg's Literary News":

Our new and respectable contemporary, we are happy to hear, is rapidly increasing in public favour. As a miscellany alone it is certainly entitled to encouragement, as having a tendency to promote a fondness for reading and a taste for literature, in this Wool-growing, Rum-drinking, and Money-making, but certainly not remarkably Literary community. . . . Light Literature and Variety should be its motto; and so it happens to be.

"Public favour" evidently continued, for on 16 October 1837 the Sydney Herald wrote

THE "LITERARY NEWS" - We are glad to hear that Mr. Tegg's weekly miscellany is extensively supported. At present it professes to be little more than a compilation; but the selections from instructive and amusing works are judiciously made, and the weekly original article is evidently from the pen of a gentleman of education and taste. We wish the publication the success it deserves.

Exactly a month later, the Herald was able to "congratulate the proprietor of the Literary News on the increasing patronage which, we understand, it continues to receive. The fact speaks much for the improving taste of the Colonists who support a periodical that wants the zest of party politics to recommend it." From these remarks, one assumes that the Literary News was the most popular Sydney periodical
of the eighteen-thirties. à Beckett, however, thought its circulation could be larger, and devoted his leader of 4 November 1837 to defending and restating his editorial policies.

OUR PAPER

AT the close of our first quarter we take the opportunity of saying a few words on the prospects and progress of our new journal. We have, on the whole, every reason to be satisfied with the reception we have met with at the hands of the public. Still we must confess that the circulation of our paper is but yet comparatively limited; some are even in ignorance of its existence; others know it only by repute; while many who have become subscribers evidently mistake the purport and nature of the work. We have in more than one instance heard complaints of a dearth of original matter in the LITERARY NEWS; as if we had ever professed to fill our pages with the manuscripts of untried or unpublished authors. We confess ourselves unequal to the task; and the whole contributions we have received from other quarters, even if fit for publication, would hardly complete one of our numbers. A periodical of this description would not only, in this country, be morally impossible to produce, but the production itself, if it were feasible, could answer no end, save that of ministering to the vanity of the respective writers. For surely it will be at once conceded, that, whatever may be the merit of Australian authors, there are few, if any, whose effusions would be preferred by the general reader, even to the twice-told tales of a Scott, a Marryatt, or a Cooper, or to that monthly mass of new-born literature, in its variety of form and spirit, which is exported in such perfection, and arrives here none the older for its voyage, in the pages of the Reviews and Magazines. Supposing it be true, then, that our work professes to be nothing more than a compilation, is it not a compilation of infinitely more valuable matter that the most voluminous lucubrations of experimental or unknown authorship? What virtue is there in the word originality? Who would not rather hear one Pagarni than listen to the catgut-scraping of twenty original violinists? But after all, is our work not original? or does every reader of the LITERARY NEWS pretend to say that he has met with nothing in its pages which he had not previously perused? Do all the books to which we have access for selection lie
on their own tables? or if so, have they emptied their contents, or even taken the trouble to extract from them that which seemed most worthy of preservation? It is our business to do this; and although it is fairly open to any one to question the judgment exercised in the selection, it is absurd to make the mere fact of selection a ground of reproach to our work.

Having said thus much as to the deficiency of originality with which we are charged, it is but due to ourselves to assert and prove that our work is in many respects not only original, but contains a greater quantity of original matter than the majority of similar works in England. In the first place it must be borne in mind, that ours is, strictly speaking, neither a review nor a magazine; for, as before observed, the Colony is not equal to the wants of the latter, and produces no literature applicable to the purposes of the former. Occasionally, however, we combine the requisites of the two, giving not only several original articles, but also reviewing such works as come legitimately under our notice. These, however, are such rare instances, as scarcely to deserve mention, so that our work may be said, perhaps, to resemble Chambers' Edinburgh Journal more than any other periodical. But it has the advantage over that journal, of giving news, and contains much more original matter, that portion in Chambers' being confined to the Leader, whilst in the LITERARY NEWS there are few numbers which do not contain two and occasionally three, original articles. The selection too is a varied, and combines, as far as our space will allow, the different kinds of prose and verse from which we pledged ourselves to cull and extract. Let us refer to one or two of our previous numbers, and see whether our assertion is not borne out. What, for instance, are the contents of No. 3? There are ten articles in prose, of which the first is original, and the others combine a variety of information and amusement from some of the best Magazines and works of the day; there is also Original Poetry and Correspondence, together with some humorous verses, extracts with reference to the arts, a Miscellanea of two columns, Colonial Intelligence, and a summary of Parliamentary and English news, the gleanings of a quantity of newspapers up to the date mentioned. No. 5 contains notices of two of the most recent and interesting English works, with two original articles, a serious and comic tale, a chapter on Natural History, on Bathing, besides the usual complement of Poetry, Miscellanea, Colonial Intelligence, &c. &c. In other numbers there are several articles relative to the Aborigines of Australia; and in the Leaders to each, the attempt, humble though it may be, has been always
made to convey, in the guise of literary apparel, higher and more instructive lessons, than usually falls within the aim of periodical literature. We shall not be deterred from pursuing this aim, even at the risk of being called prosy, by those whose vitiated tastes dispose them to digest nothing which is offered to their minds in a more substantial shape than the contents (good as we admit them to be in their way) of the Comic Annual or the Pickwick Papers. But here, too, we must protest against a charge of dulness in our work; for we have drawn largely, though not solely, from Boz, and, in point of fact, the humorous articles in our numbers preponderate over the serious. We may have been somewhat fastidious in our judgment of the contributions with which we have been favoured; but we have at the same time been anxious to give admission to all communications which would, in any way, admit of insertion. As, however, what we may receive in this way will afford some specimen of colonial authorship, we have determined, for the future, on being less strict in our consideration of such articles; though we take this opportunity of informing our contributors, that poetry, unless of a very superior description, will always be less acceptable than prose.

In fact, in its first quarter the Literary News had printed, on the average, one original poem and almost one original prose contribution, excluding à Beckett's own leading articles, in every issue. These were sometimes included against à Beckett's own judgment, in an effort to encourage Australian literature. Thus, on 9 September 1837, he wrote of "H.S.'s" The Power of Recollection": "We have inserted the prose contribution of H.S., not so much for its intrinsic merit (in which we must confess we think it deficient), as for the purpose of giving encouragement to Colonial Authors; but our admission of one must not be construed as a precedent for others." A fortnight later, he printed an extremely poor love poem, "The Rapture" by "Omega", in response to the
author's protests against its earlier dismissal as "O meagre", commenting "We do not think there is any occasion to 'make strictures' upon the verses; we leave them to our readers, hoping that Omega will think his fame sufficiently vindicated by their publication." On 7 October 1837, an anonymous love poem, "Ta -", appeared with the editor's note: "We insert these verses, notwithstanding their faultiness, from a desire to encourage Colonial Literature; and we take this opportunity of assuring our Correspondents that we always feel greater pleasure in inserting, than in rejecting, their contributions." In the four months from 4 November 1837 to the last issue of the Literary News, à Beckett published a further twenty original poems and seventeen original prose contributions, again excluding his own leaders. Among the verses were several love poems by Charles Harpur under the pen-name "Stebii", showing that à Beckett evidently classed them as being "very superior". Overall, since it appeared weekly, the Literary News published more original material than any other Sydney periodical of the eighteen-thirties.

In the concluding paragraph of "Our Paper", à Beckett expressed his determination to steer clear of politics and his contempt for the faction fighting then so much a feature of the Sydney press.

With reference to the news department, we are free to confess that it forms but an inconsiderable feature in our paper; our chief aim being the diffusion of literary

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information, and of a taste for literary pursuits. We do not think the general reader would thank us for transferring to our pages the thrice-told tale of a trial or police report; for it is but ten to one he will have read the same in one or other of the weekly newspapers which precede the appearance of our own. It has been said, as well since as before the birth of our journal, that if we would hope for success, we must adopt the politics of one party or another, and, to meet the views of congenial readers, attack all opposed to us with the usual quantum of spleen, scurrility, and acerbity, that form the principal ingredients of newspaper political tirades. We can only say that if our success is to depend on such a degrading foundation, we must be content to fail. If the community of this metropolis be in want of other channels for the discussion of party squabbles, and the spread of personal and political animosities, it will in vain look for such an accession in the LITERARY NEWS. It certainly might be rendered more spicy by the introduction of sarcastic and insulting remarks on men and things; and if it is only to readers of a taste for such a style that we must appeal, we can easily understand why other papers should be preferred to our own. As it is, our journal is the only one of its kind in the Colony; and if the Press generally are too jealous or too unsympathetic to aid us, our claims on the public are all the greater for encouragement and support. . . . Generally speaking, we have not received at the hands of the Press that aid and encouragement which we had a right to expect. We are making a great effort in endeavouring to establish a work like the present in a place so peculiarly tenanted as Sydney; and we should admit that one of our objects is to turn the minds of our readers to a more healthy train of thought than is likely to be excited by the general run of newspaper effusions in this country.

The Literary News's cessation was, however, regretted by at least two of its contemporaries. On 6 February 1838, the Sydney Gazette wrote

. . . last Saturday morning the editor took his final leave of a very respectable list of subscribers. The taste for literature it is evident is not great in this Colony; still we did hope that a newspaper conducted on so reputable a basis as our contemporary, would serve in some measure to "win its way", and thus increase the desire of the Australian public for intellectual enjoyment. It is much to be regretted
that the Literary News has thus suddenly terminated its
career; the editor, to judge by his leading articles, is
evidently a man of talent and a gentlemanly writer; and
had he but persevered, we cannot but think that, despite
every obstacle, he must have eventually succeeded.

The next day, the Colonist followed suit with

_The Literary News_ - We regret to notice the termination of
this interesting and tasteful little periodical. We suspect
that its confinement to mere light literature, and its
exclusion of colonial politics or domestic intelligence
to any considerable extent, has been unfavourable to the
circulation of this excellent and tasteful little work. The
reason assigned for its discontinuance is the very
discouraging one, that it was not likely to pay.

In the face of this continual preference for local affairs
to "mere light literature", à Beckett evidently thought it
more worthwhile to devote his talents and his desire to
improve colonial taste to lecturing at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts.

At the beginning of 1838, another attempt to establish
a Sydney periodical had been made in the form of the
_Australian Magazine_. Its proprietors, like Ralph Mansfield
earlier, appealed to the patriotism of colonial readers,
rather than lecturing them, like à Beckett, on their want
of literary taste. Their "Dedication, To the Australian
Public" ran

_We are about to lay before you a work, differing materially,
both in form and matter, from any publication which has
hitherto been presented to you. Persons unacquainted with
your spirit have strenuously maintained that you were incap-
able of giving proper encouragement to an undertaking of
such magnitude and importance. Even some of the most
penetrating of your friends have declared that the publication
of an Australian Magazine would be both useless and unprofitable. But we, regardless of such baseless insinuations, have made the attempt, trusting to your intelligence to crown our labours with gratifying success. A firm—and we may add, a patriotic—zeal for your welfare has actuated us in comprising the following pages. Their purpose is to improve your understanding: if they convey but one ray of knowledge to your minds, we shall feel that we have obtained a reward. It is needless for us here to say more... before we dismiss it into your hands, we must mention a circumstance which will entitle it to a considerable portion of your indulgence, viz., that the most arduous part of it was written by the Sons of Australia.

Although the Australian Magazine did differ from the Literary News, not only in its tone but in its emphasis on colonial material, it was similar to the earlier New South Wales Magazine in these respects, though somewhat larger in size. An examination of its first number, for January 1838, shows that it attempted to appeal to all tastes. There were political articles on "Australia", predicting its great future and eventual self-government, "The Present Financial Situation of the Colony and Future Prospects" and "The Administration of Sir Richard Bourke". Other colonial matters were dealt with in an essay on "Freedom of the Press", a review of Maclehose's The Picture of Sydney, and Stranger's Guide in New South Wales (1837), "Agricultural Report for December", "Remarks on the Destructive Contagious Epidemic Catarrh which has been so prevalent Among the Sheep in Various Parts of the Colony During the last three Years", and "Memoranda for January,
1838”. For the lovers of "light literature", there were various original essays and stories, some with a colonial background: "Botany Bay", "The Dibbses" and "The Drummer": some set elsewhere: "A True Story", "Extracts from a Reporter's Notes", "Metropolitan Ramblings", "The White Boys" and "Zelikia, the Georgian Slave". Amongst the original poetry were patriotic pieces "Australia", "The Star of Australia" and "Lines Addressed to His Excellency Sir Richard Bourke", besides "Recollections of Naples" and "The Soldier's Toast". Moralists were regaled with essays "On Human Life" and "On Happiness" and scientists with a note on "Everlasting Fire in Persia" and "Mathematical Questions". In addition, there were selected articles on "Life of Andrew Jackson, Late President of the United States of America" and "General Bourke's Intended Journey Across the Andes from the 'Pacific' to the 'Atlantic' Side of South America" and some unoriginal verses, "The New Year". A similar proportion of political and general articles, original and selected stories and poetry, appeared in the following two numbers of the Magazine.

After listing the contents of Number One in his Literature in New South Wales (1866), G.B. Barton rightly comments "There is certainly more variety here than is generally found in magazines; and the articles, although short, are not wanting in merit. Considering the period in
which it made its appearance, it reflected credit on its conductors." (p.74) One contemporary opinion was, however, not so kind. In reviewing the second number of the magazine in the Colonist for 14 February 1836, "A Correspondent" claimed

There is not an interesting or cleverly-written tale or narrative in the whole mass, except such as are borrowed from English periodicals. Every one knows that it is upon the quality of its light reading, as much as anything else, that the popularity of a Magazine will depend; but more trashy stuff than some of the pieces that appear in this number, we have never read in any work pretending to the character of a literary periodical.

Despite its bold opening pronouncements, the Australian Magazine was the shortest-lived of the Sydney periodicals of this period. William à Beckett had obviously more correctly judged the tastes of the Australian reading public when he asserted that they would not support colonial works.

Although there was a marked increase in the amount of original literature produced in Australia during the eighteen-thirties, reflected in the length of this chapter, the only author whose reputation is still alive today is Charles Harpur. His most valuable poetry was written in later decades and, in view of the indifference and hostility to his earliest verse, it is remarkable that he was able to retain his belief in the value of poetry and in himself as a poet. Many less strong-minded authors were soon discouraged by their anti-intellectual and non-literary surroundings. The
following letter, printed in the Colonist on 8 June 1837, although written partly in jest, probably represented the feelings of many Australian writers at this time:

**LITERATURE AND SAUSAGES.**

**TO THE EDITOR OF THE COLONIST.**

SIR. - Nothing can be more discouraging to an author than to find his productions treated with indifference and contempt. Harsh criticism, unfavourable reviews, and the unkind opinions of the public, are not half so painful to his mind. Such notices - galling, indeed, as they may be - create a certain degree of satisfaction, because they evince that his labours are not wholly disregarded. He, therefore, under such circumstances, continues gradually to ascend the hill of fame, and to triumph over opposition. If, sometimes, he is doomed to experience the pains and aches of disappointed ambition, he still, however, plods on his way, big with the holy hope of nobler times to come.

Such reflections as these were naturally suggested to my mind by an event, which, I think, will prove a salutary lesson to some of our colonial literati, and will tend to show the vanity and vexation of authorship in New South Wales. Not long since, Sir, being actuated by those buoyant feelings which usually influence a young man on entering the literary world, I was induced to transmit, for your consideration, a communication on a matter of infinite importance to the community. You, Sir, with that kindness and condescension which distinguishes your character, were pleased to give my humble effort a prominent place in your valuable paper, and to express the gratification which you felt in doing so. Such a mark of approbation é emanating as it did from the leading paper in the colony - filled my bosom with the most pleasing anticipation of future eminence, and made me hope that, in years to come, I should attain a place in the annals of colonial literature. Inflated with these glorious hopes, already meditating another essay - such an one I considered as would raise me high in public estimation - I retired, with a friend or two, to indulge in the delicacies which ------'s shop affords, and to talk over my late success. What will you say, Sir, when I inform you that I - yes, with my own eyes - witnessed an act which was worthy of the dark ages? My splendid production - I shudder as I relate the sad profanation - was doomed by the barbarous confectioner to enclose a pound of sausages for one of his Gothic customers! And is it possible Sir, that such a merciless act of barbarity can be tolerated in the Nineteenth century? Shall all our
labours be expended in vain? Shall this be the reward of our anxious days and sleepless nights?

I need scarcely tell you, Sir, that the dreadful sight which I had witnessed produced a powerful effect upon me. The jelly fell from my hand, and the cake — in spite of its sweetness — followed in its course. I hastily parted from my friends and quitted the shop, silently resolving to waste my fragrance in the desert air, and never again to try the slippery paths of fame. "Henceforth", said I, "I will enjoy the peace and serenity which retirement brings; I will no longer consume the purple bloom of youth in the pursuits of science. I will cease to contemplate the wisdom of the ancients, and to injure my health over the midnight oil; fame, ambition, eminence! I hate ye".

And yet, Sir, as I became somewhat more collected, it occurred to me that many an author must have experienced a similar disappointment, and have been doomed to pass his days in painful seclusion, while his works, which perhaps ages yet unborn shall duly appreciate, have been dedicated to the service of the tallow-chandler. Heartrending as it was for me to perceive the horrid purpose to which my production was applied, yet, nevertheless, I am thankful. The circumstance has convinced me that those high-flown and splendid compositions, which occupy the attention and delight the imagination of the intellectual man, are by no means calculated for this colony. Such productions may secure a perusal in other countries, but, in New South Wales — where sensual gratifications are suffered to drown native energy of mind — they must be considered as pearls before swine. In such a state of things, Sir, I think that we had better vacate the Chair of Literature, and endeavour to suit the taste of the people by turning sausage vendors.

I am, Sir, yours,
A CORRESPONDENT.