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CANADIAN LITERATURE

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE MARITIMES

Articles

BY ALDEN NOWLAN, MALCOLM ROSS, ANDREW THOMPSON SEAMAN, DESMOND PACEY, FRANCES M. FRAZER, GEORGE L. PARKER, FRASER SUTHERLAND, MARILYN BAXTER, DONALD CAMERON, DOUG FETHERLING, THOMAS B. VINCENT, TOM MARSHALL, MARJORY WHITELAW

Interview

WITH HUGH MCLENNAN BY RONALD SUTHERLAND

Translations

OF ACADIAN POEMS BY FRED COGSWELL

Poems

BY ALDEN NOWLAN, PETER STEVENS, CHRISTOPHER LEVENSON

Reviews

BY GARY WERDEN, BARRY CAMERON

A QUARTERLY OF CRITICISM AND REVIEW

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BY GARY WERDEN (148), BARRY CAMERON (150)

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA MEDAL FOR POPULAR BIOGRAPHY 1975

This year has proved that biography is alive and well and living in Canada. The committee was nearly swamped by the number of books to be considered for the award, a clear indication that biography as literature and history is far from death's door. More important is the fact that the overall quality of the books submitted this year is very high indeed.

Other books quickly swam to the top for consideration. Peter Waite's *Macdonald* is an able account of the life and times of Sir John A. Lovatt Dickson's *Radclyffe Hall and The Well of Loneliness* is a sensitive story of a woman in a scornful, if not hateful, world and deserves recognition. Craig Brown's *Robert Laird Borden* is an exceptionally competent piece of work, holding great promise for the book to follow that will examine Borden's toughest years. Particularly engaging, entertaining and informative were the following books: Doris Shakleton's *Tommy Douglas*, Guy Richmond's *Prison Doctor*, Humphrey Carver's *Compassionate Landscape*, and *Rankin's Law* by Harry Rankin.

Joint winners this year are Margaret Prang's *M. W. Rowell* and George Woodcock's *Gabriel Dumont*. The Prang book is an excellent portrait of the man and his time; it is extremely well-written and is a balanced account. Woodcock's book is a very fine piece of work, written with grace and feeling and admirably coping with a shortfall of materials. Both books, in their own way, are gems which fully explore minor characters in Canadian history, one by way of academic thoroughness and the other by way of sensitive intuition. Both presses — University of Toronto Press and Hurtig Publishers — should be commended for publishing these books.

D.S.

editorial

MARITIME CADENCES

NEW BRUNSWICK, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island do not form a single society, except in the minds of outsiders. There is variety here, and personality, and idiosyncrasy. And when Alden Nowlan observes that it is only selective truth-telling that will produce such a generalization as "a Maritime school of writers", we are warned forthrightly not to make regional universalities out of superficial likenesses. Newfoundland, moreover, though mentioned in this survey of Maritime literature, appears only briefly. However linked their traditions may be, Maritime and Newfoundland societies differ from each other; their roots go off in different directions, and the Atlantic geography they have in common has not contrived to equate their cultural horizons.

"The Maritimes" has its image in the rest of Canada: dour, demanding, rural without being pastoral, industrious without being profitable, the exporter of brains and the importer of money, everyone's half-forgotten past and no-one's future. When Fraser Sutherland writes of a provincial patriarchal world, easily sentimentalized and easily transformed into grotesquerie, he treads a careful line between this cheerfully inaccurate image, communicated in part by expatriate Maritimers themselves, and a glimpse of a different society — Canaan rather than Cain's land, perhaps, but still dour — where "the religion of work, the cult of success, the fear of retribution" constitute a system of values that binds the native not unwillingly to his home. For Donald Cameron, the transplanted outsider, the task of trying to comprehend this tie, of discovering the mystery of the "Mysterious East", is one of "trying to deduce a system of values from the gridwork of assumptions" in which Maritimers tell, and for three hundred years have been telling, their myths, stories, and superstitions. The region is rich in folklore and the spoken word, as Helen Creighton's collections have admirably shown; the voices of Lawrence Doyle and Larry Gorman have helped to shape a popular literature there.

Even Thomas Chandler Haliburton's Sam Slick was conscious, in *Wise Saws*, that "if you read a book to a man, you set him to sleep . . . because . . . the language ain't common . . . [But] if you talk to him, he will sit up all night . . . because it's talk, the language of natur'." And Haliburton produced written talk. But to what end? Donald Cameron and Fraser Sutherland both speak of a "system of values" underlying the voices. Both are also conscious of the complexity of those values and of the problems that face the authors who engage themselves with them.

In Nova Scotia, Fraser Sutherland writes, Hugh MacLennan "would have been a Dalhousie professor. In Quebec he is a writer." This neat distinction not only points toward the sense of exile — whether from Scotland or New England, from a mythical Acadia or a time of moral order — which recurs so strongly as a Maritime motif; it also reiterates the cultural rivalries which have characterized Maritimes history. MacLennan himself, in conversation with Ronald Sutherland, disclaims the label "Maritimer", choosing "Nova Scotian" instead, only to fasten more closely upon Cape Breton Island with the laconic observation that Haligonians are a different people. Marjory Whitelaw's discussion of Thomas McCulloch further underlines the distinction between the Presbyterian Pictou Scots and Lord Dalhousie's Halifax Anglicans. And when Thomas Vincent examines the poetry of the two Massachusetts clerics, Henry Alline and Jacob Bailey, who emigrated to Nova Scotia after the American Revolution, he discovers more than just a contrast between two religious codes. For Bailey, Alline's pietistic, personal "New Light" movement represented an anarchic assault upon the authority of civilized institutions and universal (not to mention Tory) truths. What emerges from the contrast is a sense of the way in which loyalties divided: urban conservatism, whatever reforms it entertained, espoused the established order, whereas rural conservatism espoused an individual responsibility. The causes of minorities gave the rural writers the sensitivities of minorities; faithful to their own locale, they were just possibly politically more radical as well.

People's situations were not, however, as clearcut as this division implies. There is often a conflict between belief and social structure here, and the moral sensibilities that Andrew Thompson Seaman notes even in contemporary Maritime fiction are shaped in part by the reception that the society accords its artists. The Prince Edward Island that Lucy Maud Montgomery's Anne inhabits is scarcely the idyllic universe it has sometimes been made out to be; Frances Frazer points out that the Green Gables garden is constantly qualified by intrusive realities, and "Minegoo", the Micmac paradise, is a world of the past. Tom Marshall's discussion of Haliburton leads to his observation of "a pragmatic rather than reactionary conservatism, an ability to live with uncertainties and antagonistic philosophies, an awareness of shifting perspectives." Desmond Pacey, in one of his last essays, notes the ambiguities that attach themselves to the spiritual quests in the poetry

of Alfred Bailey. Fred Cogswell observes the shift that has taken place in Acadian poetry: simple faith in the Roman Catholic vision giving way to a more complex balance between personal and political aspirations. Malcolm Ross notes how, even among the Anglican Loyalists, the order of nature and the order of grace were separated. Finding a role was, for the artists facing such conditions, perhaps more of a challenge than finding a subject. It affected the literary forms they chose, the literary taste that would govern their language, the literary purpose which they framed. For literature was not divorced from society, and to be an artist was implicitly to have a social function.

The American satires of the Loyalist poets, and the journalistic sketches and essays which George Parker sees as more of a source of an indigenous tradition than either fiction or poetry, provide ready examples of certain responses to this situation. The contrast between Alline and Bailey provides another, and the work of Cape Breton's MacLennan and Minago's Milton Acorn amply demonstrates that the twentieth century has not put an end to literary social engagement. The engagement has not always proved artistic. Doug Fetherling shows how the younger Oliver Goldsmith's "The Rising Village", for all its historical pride of place, is hampered by its high style. George Parker points to Andrew Shiels' search for an appropriate poetic language. Frances Frazer notes the inconsistencies of the work of Basil King. Yet the literary endeavours of Maritime writers have had an effect beyond the Maritimes. They helped declare for Canada what every new society comes to recognize as the birthright it must learn to claim, the need — as Chinua Achebe writes of Nigeria — for its literature to "speak of a particular place, evolve out of the necessities of its history, past and current, and the aspirations and destinies of its people."

What helped Maritime writers shape their literary endeavours was the sense of community they enjoyed, a community to which Cameron, Cogswell, Pacey and Alfred Bailey have variously contributed; a community represented by the Howe-Haliburton relationship, by the journals, and by the taut connection between Halifax and Pictou; a community, as Malcolm Ross points out, like Roberts' and Carman's Fredericton, in which the interaction between Emerson's Massachusetts and Bishop Medley's Oxford allowed writers to discover the "congeniality" of the New Brunswick woods. The Church and the university both participated in the world of literature, and so, through the journals and the rhetoric of political commitment, did government. The institutions helped mould the independence of the place; through this came the independence of the people.

There may be no single Maritime school linking Goldsmith, Odell, Alline, Roberts, Carman, Acorn, and Nowlan, but crosscurrents there are in plenty. The influence of their communities on Canadian development, moreover, has far exceeded what their numbers might suggest. To study Maritime writing is not just to discover the myths and fears and philosophies and expectations of a parti-

cular locale, but also to find sources for much that modern Canadian literature celebrates and rejects. Listening closely to Maritime voices is like walking with ancestors; one hears so many echoes, so much of home.

W. H. NEW

THE BOIL

Alden Nowlan

Am I alone
I wonder
in finding pleasure
in this,
the thumb
and forefinger
rolling tight
a corner of
the handkerchief,
then
forcing the spear
of twisted cloth
under
the ripe core
of the boil
in my own flesh,
prying it
free,
burning
the wound clean
with alcohol —
now
at last
master
rather than
servant
of the pain.

SOMETHING TO WRITE ABOUT

Alden Nowlan

I WROTE MY FIRST POEM when I was eleven years old. I don't know why. Why is an apple? I could give you its first stanza, but I won't. I wrote detective stories. One of them was entitled *The Case of the Howling Dog* and when a little later Erle Stanley Gardner published a book of the same name, I felt cheated. I wrote romances about knighthood that developed over the next few years into erotic fantasies. But the poem came first. A ballad in doggerel rhyme. Any eleven-year-old could have written it if he had wanted to. Why did I want to? I suppose for the same reason that I wanted to draw, cut out and colour armies of paper soldiers, and for the same reason that I wanted to learn to play the mouth organ. It was something to do.

When he was drunk, my father sometimes recited "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" and "The Cremation of Sam McGee". I suspect my earliest verses were unconscious imitations of Robert W. Service. When I was thirteen or fourteen I read *The Pocketbook of Popular Verse*, discovering Edgar Allan Poe and delighting in things like "How We Brought the Good News From Ghent to Aix" and "Sheridan's Ride". We were poor, ignorant, isolated (but isolated from what?). Our house contained no plumbing except a makeshift kitchen sink that drained onto the ground outside, no electricity, no heat except from a couple of woodstoves, no telephone (I was nineteen years old before I used a telephone), and of course we possessed no refrigerator, no washing machine, no car. However, we did have a radio that worked so long as my father could afford batteries. I all but worshipped that radio.

I didn't *feel* particularly poor, ignorant and isolated until I was about fifteen and the outside world, that until then had seemed half-mythical, began to be wholly real to me. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps even the majority, of Canadians lived much as we did in those days. (I was born in the worst year of the Depression when my father worked in the woods for $30 a month.) It wasn't unusual for a working class boy to leave school, as I did, without finishing Grade V. The only extraordinary thing is that I became a writer.

Periodically, middle-class sociologists (and what other kind is there?) go down

into the lower class and come up with books that read like studies of the Papua-New Guinea highlanders. It would be fun to write about the curious habits of the bourgeoisie as observed by a spy from the lumpenproletariat. There's an old joke to the effect that God segregates the Baptists in Heaven because He can't bring Himself to dispel them of the illusion that they're the only people there. The middle classes suffer from much the same delusion. To take one example, they say there's been a Sexual Revolution when the middle classes start doing what the lower classes have been doing all along.

There was a time when I wanted to be a Prophet ("the words that the Lord God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob spake unto His servant, Alden"), and there was a time when I wanted to be a King or an Emperor, but there was never a time when I "wanted to be a writer." Subjectively, it was always something I was, rather than something I aspired to become. During my adolescence, I kept diaries, I wrote pompous letters to the editor, I wrote essays, short stories, novelettes, filled exercise books with verses. All of this no better and (aside from its pretentiousness) no different from what any other kid in the village could have done. I wrote in the way that other lonely and imaginative children invent imaginary playmates.

I wrote (as I read) in secret. My father would as soon have seen me wear lipstick. Books belong to The Big Man, he would have said if words had not come so painfully to him, and not to poor folk like us. It was not so much that he was humble as that he was pathetically proud of his capacity to endure. Aping The Big Man was absurd and could be dangerous. The sight of his son reading a book frightened him. So I hid from him, as I hid from the men (many of them actually were children, like me, between fourteen and eighteen) with whom I worked in the sawmills, the hayfields, the gravel pits and the pulpwoods.

Even today, if someone came into the room while I was working on a poem, I'd probably put my hand over the paper. As an adolescent, I was as secretive about writing as about masturbation, and I sometimes suspect that the two acts are still linked in my subconscious.

When I was sixteen I discovered the Regional Library in the nearest town, separated from our village by eighteen miles according to the geographers but at least a thousand miles away if distances were measured by their effects upon our lives. On Saturday nights, we kids paid fifty cents each to ride into town in a box on the back of a half-ton truck. I'd come home with a knapsack crammed with books: Whitman, Rupert Brooke, Jack London, H. G. Wells, Shaw, even Darwin and, God help us, Herbert Spencer. Often there would be as many as twenty of us packed into that box, swaying in the darkness as we rumbled and lurched along the dirt road, the girls on the boys' laps. The memory of those books, waiting to be read, pressing hard against my body, is as sensuous as the memory of a sleepy young girl's head against a young boy's shoulder, his lips in her hair.

The old *Family Herald* published a classified advertisement offering a sample
y of a short-lived publication called *The Canadian Writer and Editor*, from
ich I learned that there existed magazines that published poems. My first
eptance came when I was seventeen; when I read that letter, I almost fainted
literally, the darkness rose in clouds around my feet. In gratitude for that mo-
nt, I must mention the name of the magazine, *The Bridge*, and of its editor,
en Coffield, who published it on a mimeograph machine out of Eagle Creek,
egon. Its being printed on the other side of the continent in a village probably
larger than mine strikes me as being both appropriate and mysterious, as does
e fact that my second acceptance came, that same year, from a little magazine
blished in Lake Como, Florida.

Indirectly, I've been making a living from poetry since I was nineteen. If I
dn't been a poet I'd not have become a newspaper reporter, as I did in 1952.
y self-education was a product of my desire to write. For instance, I'd bought
second-hand typewriter through the mail and taught myself to type (without
er having seen anyone use a typewriter) because I'd read somewhere that editors
ould not even attempt to read longhand manuscripts.

In the early 1950's I was an American little magazine poet. There were prac-
ically no outlets for poetry in Canada. then. I came along too late for *Northern
Review* and *Contemporary Verse*. So I published all over the United States in
nagazines with names like *Curled Wire Chronicle.*

It was fun. Most of us have to write badly before we can write well. And very
often it's important that some of the bad work be published. Once someone else
has accepted it, the writer himself is freer to reject it. For a very young writer, the
publication of a poem or story may be of great importance simply because it
means that, emotionally, he's got rid of it. The size and quality of the magazine
are almost irrelevant.

TWO CRUCIAL EVENTS in my life as a writer took place in 1957. I went back to spend a month in my native village and I met Fred Cogswell.

Fred and I were living only seventy miles apart; I was working for a weekly newspaper in northwestern New Brunswick and he was teaching English and editing *The Fiddlehead* at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. But (and both of us have been telling the story with delight for eighteen years) we first became aware of one another's existence through the contributors' biographical notes in a little magazine, *Miscellaneous Man*, published in San Francisco.

Fred Cogswell was more than the first poet I'd ever met; he was the first person I'd ever met who read poetry. He gave me magazines, and books by people like Louis Dudek, Irving Layton and Raymond Souster, through whose work I found

my way to people ranging from Catullus to William Carlos Williams. He gave me postage stamps, sent me the names of new magazines; we drank beer together and, most importantly, he listened. My mental film clips of those early meetings show me getting drunker and drunker, talking more and more, while Fred sips from his glass, puffs on his pipe, and listens. I was twenty-four years old and, in one sense, I had never before had anyone to talk with.

During my month in Nova Scotia a surprising thing happened (surprising to me, then): for the first time I saw the people and landscape of my native place as entities separate from myself. Before that I'd written mostly what I've since come to call palpitating eternity poems, like most kid-writers attempting cosmic pole vaults when I was hardly capable of jumping a mud puddle. Now I looked around me and tried to write down what I sensed, intuited and thought about it. Aside from one or, perhaps, two even earlier verses, the best poems I wrote that fall are the oldest that I still take seriously. Fred published some of them in 1958 in a Fiddlehead Chapbook, *The Rose and the Puritan.*

So far I've talked mostly about myself. I suppose I'll be expected to say something about the Maritimes. People keep asking me, in effect, why did I choose to be born in the Maritimes and why am I a Canadian writer when I could as easily have chosen to be born, grow up and become a writer in England, the United States or even Hungary. Because I don't wish to appear stupid I keep trying to think of a plausible reply.

Because they must treat it as a Subject to be taught, critics and professors are more or less obliged to make believe that literature, like hockey, can be organized geographically (or otherwise) into leagues and teams. Perhaps there's no other practical way to teach it, especially to those students to whom the academic process is largely an exercise in unresisting boredom. It harms nobody to pretend that there is a Maritime school of writers and spares both teacher and student a good deal of possibly painful and probably wasteful effort. If I were a critic or a professor I more than likely would have devoted this article to an imaginary Maritime school, listing its outstanding practitioners and distinctive characteristics. It wouldn't be necessary for me to lie, merely to be highly selective in handling the truth. And I'd have had great fun doing it, since like most bookish people I enjoy such intellectual games — enjoy them so much, in fact, that if I'd gone on to acquire a Ph.D. instead of dropping out of elementary school I might have ended up as the most egregious pedant in Canada. (Sometimes I suspect that if Al Purdy, Milton Acorn, John Newlove and I had completed our schooling, as the saying goes, we might now all four be competing with the present holder of that title.)

There is no Maritime school, no Fredericton school and no Fiddlehead school, although it happens that more good poems are being written in Fredericton than anywhere else in Atlantic Canada, and that certain writers living in Fredericton

gather once a week in a funny little white doll's house called McCord Hall on the U.N.B. campus to read and discuss each other's latest work and that certain of those same writers, together with certain other writers, periodically assemble, often at my house, to sing, drink, shoot the bull and found organizations such as the International Flat Earth Society, the Stewart Monarchy in Canadian Exile and the Loggerhead Shrike Preservation Society. Myself, I spend so much time writing or thinking about writing that when I'm not writing or thinking about writing I want to talk about almost anything else. It seems to me sometimes that the writer compares with the critic the way the lover compares with the gynaecologist.

Possibly, we writers who happen to live in the Maritimes ought to manufacture a literary movement, complete with an enemies' list and a series of unreadable manifestos. I'm being reasonably serious when I say this. The TISH group, whose official pronouncements were, as one of its leaders cheerfully admitted to me, "mostly bullshit," succeeded in attracting attention to some important principles and some admirable poetry. I've no doubt that the work of Maritime writers would receive wider publicity and inspire greater respect if we organized a political-literary party. Since there actually are hardly two of us who work in the same way toward the same objectives, this would involve an enormous amount of flim-flam and gooblygook; but I'm confident we could carry it off, if only we could keep from laughing.

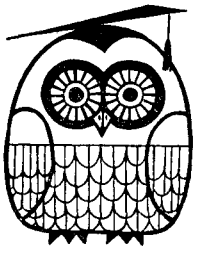
The best thing about living and writing in the Maritimes, as far as I'm concerned, is that there's no place on the continent where so broad a range of social and human relationships is so readily accessible. When I meet writers in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, writers I admire, I'm continually reminded of the narrowness of their experience. Most of them have lived all their lives in one subcaste of the bourgeoisie. The jobs they list on their dust jackets were in reality only roles that they played briefly during the summers on their way from high school through graduate school. They were students and now, for the most part, they are teachers and their friends are teachers who write or writers who teach. There are writers like that in the Maritimes, too (and writers unlike that outside the Maritimes), but it's more difficult to segregate one's self here because our provinces are so small that it requires considerable determination to maintain an impersonal relationship with anyone. I have friends who can't read or write, friends who can read and write in six languages, friends who are fishermen, farmers, bikers, waiters, professional soldiers, professional athletes, semi-professional thieves, cabinet ministers, priests, nurses, actors, painters, whores, musicians, friends who are doctors, lawyers and Indian chiefs, friends ranging in age from seven to eighty-seven. Living in the Maritimes, one not only meets and gets to know other people who live here; one meets and gets to know an astonishing percentage of the people who visit here. At 4 o'clock one morning I was walking

along King Street in Fredericton, pleasantly disoriented by Moosehead ale, and in the company of the Premier, the Mayor and Stompin' Tom Connors, whom moments before I had introduced to other remarkable friends of mine, known as Rat Bat Blue and The Bear. Except as a surrealistic fancy, I can't conceive of something similar happening on Yonge Street with Bill Davis and David Crombie as participants.

You don't have to tip a Fredericton cabbie, unless you feel like it, but if you're a Frederictonian you don't leave him out of the conversation while you're a passenger in his cab, any more than you'd leave him out of the conversation if you were a guest in his house. Not because we're inherently more sociable than Torontonians, but because he's not merely an automaton who controls the steering wheel, gas pedal and brake, but Bud, who likes Navy rum, or Terry, who's mad about the Black Hawks, or Dick, who raises dogs, or Jim, who just got out of the hospital, or shy, gentle Claude, who has the same first name as my father-in-law.

It's true that most of the fiction I've published to date has dealt with the lives of poor, rural people, but that's partly because my early life was spent among poor, rural people and I'm the kind of writer who has to let his experience ferment before he can bottle it in fiction, and partly because almost everyone else writes about the urban, middle classes. (I can't resist mentioning that three reviewers of my novel *Various Persons Named Kevin O'Brien* obviously hadn't read the book. I don't object to that, as I've done the same thing myself. But while one of the three was ecstatic, another was only so-so and the third was savage. I believe that a reviewer who writes his review without reading the book is morally bound to praise it.)

Being a Maritimer doesn't make it any more likely that you'll write well, but it sure as hell improves the chances of your having something to write about.



"A STRANGE AESTHETIC FERMENT"

Malcolm Ross

WHEN ONE LOOKS DOWN over Fredericton from the hills where Charles Roberts and Bliss Carman once took their long hikes with George Parkin, one still sees the spire of Bishop Medley's Cathedral rising above a city hidden in elms. Old Frederictonians, whether they be Anglican or Roman, Baptist or Marxist, think first of their Cathedral whenever they think of home.

George Goodridge Roberts, the father of Charles and Theodore (and Bliss Carman's uncle) was Canon of the Cathedral and Rector of the parish church of St. Anne's. George Parkin, headmaster of the Collegiate School in Fredericton, was an active Cathedral layman. Something should be said about the coincidence at just the right time of the Tractarian Bishop, his Gothic Cathedral, the great teacher whose classroom had no walls, "the new music, the new colours, the new raptures of Pre-Raphaelite poetry",[1] and the young and eager spirits ready to respond to the peculiar genius of this place and this time.

"The Fredericton of those days", Charles G. D. Roberts recalls, "was a good place for a poet to be." It was "stirring with a strange aesthetic ferment." Tiny as it was, with no more than six thousand inhabitants, Fredericton was nonetheless a capital city, a university city, a cathedral city:

> She had little of the commercial spirit, and I fear was hardly as democratic as is nowaday considered the proper thing to be. But she was not stagnant, and she was not smug. Instead of expecting all the people to be cut of one pattern, she seemed to prefer them to be just a little queer.... Conformity, that tyrant god of small town life, got scant tribute from her. There was much good reading done, up-to-date reading, and if people wrote verse, they had no need to be apologetic about it. To Fredericton it did not seem impossible that some of them might turn out to be *good* verses.

Good verses, Roberts avers, were indeed being written not only in "the big red rectory" on George Street, and in the Carman house, but also in a house not far from the Cathedral where "a slim, dark-eyed and black-browed youth by the name of Francis Sherman ... was dreaming with William Morris and Rossetti over old romances of Camelot and Lyonesse."

There is no easy explanation of this "strange aesthetic ferment" in the little city

of the Loyalists in the last quarter of the ninteenth century. Both A. G. Bailey[2] and the late Desmond Pacey[3] have drawn attention to the civilizing presence of the university. Bailey also points to "societal" influences, particularly the "lawless and speculative spirit of the lumber trade" which had made of Fredericton an island unto itself:

> The expansion of the trade brought hordes of poverty-stricken Irish to New Brunswick, decimated the forests and bled the province of its wealth, but provided a modicum of revenue for the support of the little body of civil servants, lawyers, judges, clergymen and professors who made up the governing class of the capital. Those Anglicans and Tories survived the loss of their political dominance because the establishment of responsible government was delayed in New Brunswick, and did not, in any case, mean a sharp break when it did come. . . . Moreover, it was a closely knit company of experts and adepts in administration, education, and religion, and the Province continued to depend upon it for some of these services long after confederation. To this circle of professional people the Carman and Roberts families belonged.[4]

Bailey argues convincingly that whereas in Nova Scotia "Howe and Haliburton had met a political challenge",[5] in New Brunswick "Carman and Roberts experienced a crisis of the spirit after the political battle was lost, and something of the world along with it." Howe and Haliburton had Man for their argument; Roberts and Carman, perforce, turned to the landscape.

I think this is so. Certainly "the little society of professional people" in Fredericton could not for ever nourish its brood of poets, and they were soon to be off to Toronto and Boston, New York and London, Cuba and Montreal, taking their landscape with them. However, the actual advent of the "creative moment" itself (and Bailey, of course, agrees) has its own inner urgency not to be understood solely in terms of the shape and stress of a society as such. Something happened that might not have happened. It happened in the context of a cultural phenomenon that could not have been predicted of a society of professional people already outliving their usefulness.

Roberts[6] attributes the advent of "the creative moment" to "the vitalizing influence of George R. Parkin, falling upon soil peculiarly fitted to receive it." Much has been made of Parkin's influence — and who can doubt it? But nothing has been made of Parkin's Anglicanism, his devotion to Bishop Medley, his friendship with Canon Roberts — a friendship which had much to do with those long hikes over the hills with Charles Roberts and Bliss Carman, and those rapt recitations of "The Blessed Damozel", a poem which Parkin "loved so passionately that Bliss sometimes suspected him of saying instead of his prayers."[7]

One wonders what would have happened in this "little society of professional people" if an evangelical had been sent as first Bishop of Fredericton, if there had been no Gothic Cathedral on the river, if between the teacher and his "favourite two" there had been no band of friendship in the faith?

What was the soil "peculiarly fitted" to receive Parkin's influence? In part, at least, it was New England soil. A. G. Bailey puts it thus:

> The poetry of Fredericton represented the flowering of a tradition that had been four generations in the making on the banks of the St. John; and behind that, across the divide of the Revolution, lay the colonial centuries.[8]

This is not to say that Roberts and the others were conscious of belonging to and fulfilling a native tradition in poetry. Bailey makes this clear:

> Charles G. D. Roberts, who perhaps more than any other fathered the national movement in Canadian poetry, considered that he was writing on a tablet that no one had written on before. He showed little awareness of the work of Sangster and Heavysege, nor that of Jonathan Odell, the Tory poet of the Revolution, who had been among the founders of his own city of Fredericton.[9]

Nevertheless, the influence on taste and manners of men like Odell — and other founding fathers like Ward Chipman and Edward Winslow — made Fredericton, from the start, heir to the culture of colonial America. The well-stocked private libraries, the university itself, the urbane and cultivated air of this remote frontier town, owed as much to the American tradition as it did to college professors from Oxford and transplanted British officials.

The place took something of its actual look from the older colonies. Just across the way from Medley's Gothic Cathedral stands Jonathan Odell's handsome colonial house. In the shadow of the Cathedral spire was the house where Benedict Arnold once lived. The mark of New England craftsmen was evident on houses throughout the city, on the white pine churches and farmhouses along the river, on the chairs and tables, dressers, and clocks and highboys of even the simplest Fredericton homes.

Roberts and Carman grew up in mind of their ancestor, the Reverend Daniel Bliss, pastor of Concord at the time of the Revolution. A. G. Bailey, in a tape recording of his literary reminicences prepared for the Harriet Irving Library of the University of New Brunswick, shows how vividly the New England memory lived on in Fredericton. He traces the ancestry of Carman and Roberts to one Peter Bulkeley, "The founder of Concord in the Massachusettes Bay Colony":

> It was Peter's granddaughter, Elizabeth Bulkley, who married Joseph Emerson, and two descendants, thus necessarily cousins, Hannah Emerson and the Rev. Daniel Emerson, became espoused in the year 1744. Both were ancestors of the Baileys of the University of New Brunswick and Hannah was a great aunt of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and sister-in-law of Phoebe Bliss, who was, in turn, sister of Daniel Bliss, forbearer of Bliss Carman and Charles G. D. Roberts. These families, Baileys and Bliss's, so early connected, were to meet again and mingle in ways that had, in the fulness of time, a significance for the development of a Fredericton literary tradition.[10]

In 1861, Loring Woart Bailey, the grandfather of A. G. Bailey, came from the

United States as Professor of Chemistry at the University of New Brunswick. "His friendship with the Carman and Roberts families in Fredericton brought together once again two families that had been connected away back in Revolutionary days in Concord."

Then, too, there was something "native to the blood" of these Loyalist New Englanders in the Maritime terrain itself. Roberts, writing of canoe trips with Carman, captures the feeling they both had of being three hundred years in the wilderness:

> I have never seen Carman so happy, so utterly at home, as in those wilderness expeditions. He was essentially native to the woods and the lovely inland waters. He paddled and handled his canoe like an Indian. He trod the forest trails like an Indian, noiseless, watchful, taciturn, moving with long, loose-kneed slouch, flat-footed, with toes almost turned in rather than out — an Indian's gait, not a white man's! That love of the sea that was later to show itself in so much of Carman's poetry was perhaps atavistic — an inheritance from some of our New England and approximately "Mayflower" ancestry.[11]

ONE NEED NOT SUBSCRIBE to notions of "atavism" to recognize a congeniality of place that wells out of time past but still present. The political break with the American past was only in part a cultural break. Even the Anglican parsons who fled to New Brunswick from the Revolution brought with them ways that smacked of American congregationalism. Until quite recently in New Brunswick the rector answered a "call", the Bishop appointing only after the congregation had chosen their "minister". And, in the main, Anglican churches were built in the style of the New England meeting-house. Bishop Medley, in horror at what he saw of New Brunswick church architecture, said to one of his laymen: "Mr. R.—, when you build a church, build a church but when you build a barn, build a barn!"[12] And Ketchum tells us that in the days before Medley

> the Church buildings and church services were alike of a dull and dreary sort. New churches were built but more after the plan of the meeting house. In the public services there were no responses — that all-important part of divine service fell to the lot of the clerk. The parish church of Fredericton — the pro-Cathedral — had its galleries and square pews. The altar stood in a narrow space between the reading desk and the pulpit. . . . church music was little understood or attended to.[18]

The Loyalists had brought with them their books and their crafts and a deep-down instinct for forest, river and sea. But they had also brought a Puritan distrust of the senses. For even among the Anglican Loyalists there was evident and active what A.S.P. Woodhouse once called the Puritan "principle of segregation"

which put apart, and far apart, the order of nature and the order of grace. The austerity of the sacred was to be preserved from any taint of the profane. Skills that went to the shaping of fan-windows and Chippendale chairs were not to be employed on altar-pieces and lecterns. To stain a window was perhaps to stain a soul.

This is not to say that learning was not valued, and for its own sake. (The college on the hill could not be hid.) There was pride, too, in the houses and public buildings of mid-century Fredericton. The red-coated garrison gave sparkle to the streets and the convivialities of Government House. There was a love of fine horses, and parades, there was canoeing or iceboating on the Saint John, the hunting party deep in the forest. But there was also the prim white church with square pews, galleries and blank windows — a place apart from the life of town and river.

In 1845, into this mixed society of Loyalist New Englanders, British bureaucrats and soldiers, lumber kings and small merchants came John Medley, first Bishop of Fredericton. It was the year of Newman's secession to Rome — not an auspicious moment to proclaim Tractarian doctrine and to build Gothic churches![14]

Medley, an Oxford man, was not only a friend of Pusey, and Keble. He was also an ecclesiologist, the author of an influential book *Elementary Remarks on Church Architecture* (1841). He was a musician, the composer of choral settings for the *Te Deum* and the *Benedictus* as well as a number of hymns. It was his great (if not his greatest) achievement to give to Fredericton, to the diocese and, in no small measure the whole ecclesiastical province of Canada, a sense of the kinship of beauty and holiness. His strenuous effort to reclaim for the sacred all of the outcast glory of the profane was begun in Fredericton almost a generation before the birth of Charles G. D. Roberts and Bliss Carman, who were to come of age in Medley's city, reared and taught by men who were Medley's friends, his allies, his disciples. The Bishop in what he built, in what he said, in what he did, altered a climate of the mind.

One need not here say much about the pastoral and doctrinal concerns of Bishop Medley. One must note, however, his Catholic insistence on the apostolic sanction for his high office, his Catholic sacramentalism, and his affirmation of the classical Anglican doctrine of the *via media*, an affirmation made persuasively enough to win him, in the end, the support of both High Churchmen and Evangelicals. Then, too, there was his solicitous care for the poor (he abolished pew-rents on arrival in Fredericton), and his astonishing travel by ship, canoe and horse to the farthest outposts of his diocese. No Yankee circuit rider rode farther than this intrepid Englishman who was to become the most ardent of New Brunswickers and, after 1867, without forsaking his Englishness, became a committed Canadian pleading for full self-government in the Canadian Church, while

advancing the spiritual claims of the universal Church beyond any possible reach of the secular arm.

With generous financial aid from England, the practical help of Frank Wills, a young English architect, and the advice and collaboration of William Butterfield, the noted English Gothicist, the Bishop, on arrival, began to build his Cathedral. The spire soon rose above the town, giving high point and focus to what had been a jumbled prospect of Georgian houses, British barracks and lumbermen's palaces. At the other end of town he built his Chapel of Ease — St. Anne's, consecrated in 1846, six years before the Cathedral. Also designed by Frank Wills, it is, says Phoebe Stanton, "the finest small North American parish church of its date in the English Gothic style."[15]

Even before the completion of his Cathedral, Medley was on the move about the diocese, exhorting his people to build churches, not barns. Soon new churches, of wood, but built under the guidance of the Gothic ecclesiologists, were consecrated at Newcastle, Burton and Maugerville. Later, the Bishop's son Edward, who had studied with Butterfield, designed several wooden Gothic churches, the most notable of which are at St. Stephen and Sussex.

In making possible through architecture a renewal of Catholic practice in Anglican worship, the Bishop had also effected a revolution in sensibility and taste. After the blank meeting house with the pulpit rising like a mountainous idol above the speck of a "communion table", St. Anne's, with its rood-screen, stained glass, and tiled reredos, and Christ Church Cathedral, cruciform, in dim religious light, pulsing with the music of the Bishop's own *Te Deum*, struck the mind and imagination of the Loyalist town like an apocalypse.

It is not surprising that the Bishop's sermon in stone and painted glass and lighted altar was not at first, and by everyone, happily heard. There were those among the meeting-house men of Fredericton who saw idolatry as well as extravagance in these "Romish" structures. The Bishop met the charge of extravagance by paying for St. Anne's out of his own pocket and by raising large sums in England for the construction of the Cathedral. Rebutting the charge of idolatry, in sermons, in addresses to lay audiences, in admonitions to his clergy, he argued with Ruskinian fervour and Tractarian point against that inherited Loyalist, Puritan bias which would allow splendid dwellings for governor, merchant and soldier, but which refused to the church all delight of eye and ear.

"Are they who despise the Church of God, and lay out all their substance in the decoration of their houses, of necessity the most holy?" He was fully conscious of that "principle of segregation" which had kept the order of grace wholly aloof from the order of nature: "... if there be no necessary connexion between external beauty and spiritual religion, is there any close connexion between spiritual and external deformity?"[16]

From this sermon, preached at the consecration of St. Anne's in 1847, to the

very end of his days (in 1892), it was among the Bishop's chief tasks to baptize beauty, to give beauty back to the Giver of it. In so doing he proclaimed not only the beauty and, for the Christian, the *congeniality* of the natural order. He was to affirm, as well, the integrity of the natural order and the full and proper dignity of the life of the senses.

The consecration sermon in itself was intended as a defense of beauty in worship. Alarmed at the puritanical bigotry of the evangelicals and the "high and dry" Churchmen alike, Medley was at great pains to protect the imagery of traditional Christian worship from the rigours of these latter-day iconoclasts. But he does not stop with a defense of beauty in worship. He calls upon his people to venerate and to enjoy as Christians the sensuous beauty of all creation:

> For let us consider to what did God vouchsafe us *form*, *colour*, number and harmony? ... why does the Book of God answer to the work of God, and dwell so often and so vividly on external nature? ... Did God make all these works for nought? Or are we intended to suppose them only for sensual enjoyment, that the animal man may be gratified, while the spiritual man is neglected?[17]

It follows that, in worship, "if the tongue praise him, why not the heart, the feet and the hands? What difference is there in principle between reading or singing the praises of God with the lips, and engraving those praises on wood, or stone, or glass?"[18]

The senses which respond to the beauty of creation are validly employed in praise of the Creator. But if art is indeed a suitable handmaiden of religion, it has its own province too. The lecture on "Good Taste," delivered in 1857 to a lay audience of churchmen in Saint John, is a nice distillation of Medley's thought on the secular implications of his aesthetic principles. Here, in little, a doctrine of beauty, art and nature which the Bishop propounded almost daily in private discourse as well as public, with consequences not only for the life and look of the church and the city, but also for that "strange aesthetic ferment" of which Roberts speaks.

FREDERICTON AS IT IS TODAY owes much to the man who had talked like this about city streets and houses:

> In laying out a town, it is common in North America to avoid the crooked lanes and devious ways of our ancestors, and to provide wide and spacious streets. So far so good, but it is not breadth or length only which gives a street a fine commanding appearance. The houses, if not of uniform height, should certainly not present an astonishing difference, one mansion towering to the skies, and the next a shanty of eight feet from the ground. The colouring and ornamentation of a house require great consideration. It is a safe as well as an ancient rule that nothing should form part of the decoration of a building, which is also not part of its

> construction. . . . Then as to colour. It is either as if men had no eyes, or lived in a colourless world. Their houses glare with white paint, and the same idea is repeated again and again, without variation, while there is not a hill, nor a lake, nor a flower which is not without its variety.[19]

Even now, the Cathedral with its varied and lovely architectural brood, defies the government "planner" who so often proposes, but still in vain, to erect around this priceless place his ugly monotones of steel and glass.

While I am not sure that the Bishop had read the Second Book of *Modern Painters* (although I suspect he had) he seems, like Ruskin, to discern in nature's teeming variety what Ruskin called "divine attributes", the mark of the Maker on things. The order of nature is given its own governance, its own integrity. It lives by laws unto itself, is lovable in itself and by itself, even as it gives witness to Other than itself.

Medley lifts the imagination to the restless, kaleidescopic configuration of clouds in language that suggests the art of Constable.

> What exquisite beauty lies in *water* and *light*, and in their mutual relation to each other. The clouds present an endless variety of form and colour, sometimes in streaks like the finest pencilling of the artist . . . sometimes like balls of snow or crystals, sometimes piled up like the everlasting hills, disclosing huge cavernous recesses, lighted up with a bronze colour, like the interior of a volcano, sometimes resembling cities whose top reached up to heaven, then melting into spacious plains, sometimes so transparent that we would seem to pierce them through with the hand, then gathering suddenly into a thick, fierce and angry mass, bursting into forked flames and threatening destruction.[20]

But in this "wide awe" of cloud and storm there is hidden wisdom to be pondered. For this infinitely unpredictable conduct of the natural order is still lawful conduct, and wonder at it is the beginning of human wisdom and the fountain-source of art. One must also observe that Medley takes no terror from those angry masses of clouds "bursting into forked flames and threatening destruction." There is in him, it must be insisted, "no terror of the soul at something these things manifest."[21] Quite the contrary. The Bishop "accepts the universe." He was, of course, not unaware of the "wrath of God". He never forgot that men were too often prone to bask under the sun of Satan. In his sermons he had much to say of original sin, of the Fall, and of the deep wound left by the Fall in the heart of things. But he had much more to say about the redemptive sacrifice of the Cross. It was Medley's Tractarian orthodoxy which protected him from all dark notions of the "total depravity" of the natural order and the natural man. Freed from fear by faith, he opened his church door and let beauty in — and nature.

Little wonder that there can be found in the Bishop's flock no trace of what Frye calls the "garrison mentality". Nor is there evident, in young churchmen like Roberts and Carman and the others who gathered at the parish Rectory on George Street, anything like the working of that old puritan "principle of segre-

gation" which had isolated the sacred from the profane. Through Medley's Gothic door there entered, as it had not entered the door of the old Loyalist meeting-house, all of the New Englander's active love of woods and sea and river.

The Rector of the parish, George Goodridge Roberts (a Bliss of Loyalist lineage on his mother's side), had come to Fredericton in 1874 to serve close to his Bishop. He was a man after Medley's own heart and had, before coming to Fredericton, rearranged his little church at Westcock in accordance with Medley's liturgical principles. In his new charge at St. Anne's he was equally faithful to Medley and had to contend manfully with nervous parishioners who saw in lighted candles on the altar the dire threat of "popery".

It was in Canon Roberts' rectory that Charles and Bliss Carman, the Stratons and, later, Francis Sherman, gathered after the canoe trip and after family prayers or evensong to read their verses to each other and to talk of Rossetti and Tennyson and Swinburne. Parkin was often among them, and Canon Roberts himself. The young poets were, in those days, active churchmen. Charles sang in his father's choir at St. Anne's. Carman served at Medley's cathedral altar and assisted Parkin in the Cathedral Sunday School. Francis Sherman was to become the fast friend of Tully Kingdon, the coadjutor Bishop and his next-door neighbour.

It might be said, then, that "the soil" which Roberts tells us was "peculiarly fitted" to receive "the vitalizing influence of Parkin", was New England soil which had been "Gothicized". It was from this soil that Parkin himself drew his own first strength. Born in Salisbury, New Brunswick, of Anglican parents, he received his early religious training from the Baptist Church because there was no Anglican Church within miles. According to his biographer, Sir John Willison,[22] Parkin, when he came to Fredericton, was soon drawn to the Cathedral, and "his family tradition, his instinctive love of seemliness and dignity in worship, and above all the character and influence of the Bishop brought him back to the Church of England." When he went to Oxford on leave from the Collegiate school, he bore from the Bishop "letters of introduction to several prominent men in the church". Parkin went to Oxford ready for Ruskin (whose first Slade Lecture he heard), ready for Pusey (whom he visited as well as heard), ready for Gothic England and for a past made present in the bright colours of Pre-Raphaelite poetry. It was as though he had come upon the very source of what he had already loved most. When he returned to his own country as a prophet he was a prophet honoured. For his country had been made ready for his prophecy.

THE SOIL HAD INDEED BEEN PREPARED. Here was "the fair beginning of a time". But the "strange aesthetic ferment" that began in Rectory

and Cathedral with Parkin's return from Oxford to this Gothicized colonial soil was to have unpredictable issue. Carman and Roberts soon went their own and very different ways. There are traces of Pre-Raphaelite colours and images in some of their earlier work but other influences were soon to gain ascendancy. Neither, of course, was to be a "Christian" poet. Carman's early "Easter Hymn" was never published and, by the time he wrote "Low Tide on the Grand Pré", he was closer to New England transcendentalism than to any force or fashion coming out of England. The mark of the Gothic and the Christian was to be stronger and more enduring on the work of the younger poets of the group, Francis Sherman and Theodore Goodridge Roberts.

The directions eventually taken in the poetry of Charles Roberts and Bliss Carman can be explained in part, at least, by the loss of that faith in which the ferment of the first creative moment had begun. The actual drift away from the faith — Parkin's faith, Medley's faith — is another story and not to be attempted here. Even in his college days Charles Roberts had admitted religious doubts and reservations to his father (who was disturbed but tolerant). Dorothy Roberts once told me that her uncle, for all his scepticism, had clung for years to a faint hope, at least, in "the permanence of human identity", and he seems always to have been nagged by "the religious question". In at least one remarkable poem, "When Mary the Mother Kissed the Child", he seems magically for a moment to be back at Christmas time in his father's choir at St. Anne's.

I remember having dinner with him once in Fredericton in the late Thirties. Rather mischievously, I asked him if he intended to go to the Cathedral in the morning — or perhaps to St. Anne's. "No", he said, "No, I'm afraid not." There was a twinkle in his eye and, I fancied, a rather wistful smile on his lips as he added, "Nowadays, I carry my church within me." I remembered that I had once seen him in the cathedral, not many years before, at the state funeral for Bliss Carman.

Theodore Goodridge Roberts, younger than Charles by almost eighteen years, was no church-goer either, but, much more than his brother or his cousin Carman, he retained a fascination for the chivalric Christian tradition, for Saint Joan and her "banner of snow",[23] and for the Love who tells the Young Knight[24]

> I am the spirit of Christ
> High and white as a star.
> I am the crown of Mary
> Outlasting the helmet and war.

It was not so much to the pageantry of Pre-Raphaelitism that Theodore Roberts was drawn. His daughter, Dorothy, has spoken to me of his veneration of the suffering Christ and of his symbolic use of the sacrificial Indian hero Gluskap as a kind of Christ-figure in some of the tales and poems.

Francis Sherman, eleven years younger than Charles Roberts, wrote poetry which is often thoroughly Pre-Raphaelite in style and specifically Christian in theme. The titles of not a few of the poems in his volume *Matins* are quite liturgical — "Nunc Dimitis", "Te Deum Laudamus". (He had first thought of calling his book *Lauds and Orisons* and then *The Book of the Little Hours.*[25]) His best work seeks to reveal a Christian dimension in the order of nature and in the love of man for woman.

Carman himself, after his Fredericton years, was to be close for awhile in Boston to Phillips Brooks, the eminent Rector of Trinity Church. Among his other Boston friends were Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Goodhue, the Gothic architects, and Louise Guiney, the devout Roman Catholic poet. But the drift which had begun in his college days with an enthusiasm for Emerson and Thoreau (and soon for Josiah Royce) carried him irreversibly towards transcendentalism in its late New England twilight, and very far from the Tractarian teaching of his boyhood. By 1903 he could write like this:

> Surely the soul of man is the only tabernacle of the veritable God. The sense of living humanity as to what is true, what is good, what is beautiful to see, is the only sanction for belief. You and I, standing outside the reach of an obsolete authority, believe and cherish the words of the Sermon on the Mount not because Christ uttered them but because we cannot help assenting to their lofty truth.[26]

The truths of Christianity, he goes on, need "only to be separated from superstition to appeal to us in all their charm and power." (Emerson might well have written this!).

But if Carman was to leave the church through Medley's open door and find his way back to New England (the New England not of his puritan ancestor, the Reverend Daniel Bliss, but of Ralph Waldo Emerson) he was never to become one of Frye's "garrison" men. If he was one day, as Frye puts it (unfairly, I think) to utter "prayers of a stentorian vagueness to some kind of scholar-gypsy God",[27] the prayers were not to be uttered "in stark terror". D. G. Jones is one of the few critics since the Thirties to be perceptive enough to recognize in Carman's poetry a loving acceptance and a celebration of the natural world:

> More than any other Canadian writer he has the kind of faith in the goodness or justice of life that is implied in Christ's parable of the lilies of the field which neither toil nor spire, and yet are clothed in a glory greater than Solomon's.... Throughout his career he was able to write poems in which we glimpse an authentic sense of the joy and poignancy of being alive — of what it means to love a woman or the world.[28]

If Mary Perry King was to replace Medley as Carman's mentor, and if Carman was to put aside Christian dogma in favour of a kind of transcendentalism, he was never to lose the slouching Indian gait, or the sense of kinship with all created things that Medley's door had opened to him. He had known early the awful

presence "swift and huge / of One who strode and looked not back." When his cousin, and close friend of Cathedral days, Andy Straton, died suddenly and young, Carman turned for solace, however, not to the hopes of Christianity but to Josiah Royce's *Religious Aspects of Philosophy.* In Royce's thoughts, as J. R. Sorfleet so aptly summarizes it, "evil is no more than a momentary dissonance in the organic unity of God's good act, and is soon resolved into God's goodness."[29] From Royce, from Mary Perry King and from George Santayana, Carman sought to build a system of ideas which could sustain and justify his faith, early and everlasting, in the holiness of beauty and the integrity of nature, a faith which he had first come to hold, with such different Christian sanction, in Medley's Cathedral city.

Fredericton, for awhile, had been "a good place for a poet to be", but not for ever a good place for a poet to stay. Charles Roberts soon found that not even Toronto could support a writer. Carman could not resist the New England of his forbears (after a few months in Boston, like many a Maritimer since, he could not imagine himself living anywhere else). Only Theodore Roberts returned later in life and after much wandering, to live in Fredericton and the Maritimes.

John Medley would have been grieved to know of the "unchurching" of his young churchmen. He would at least have been perplexed by Carman's curious New England heterodoxies. But in Theodore's Young Knight, and "The Maid", and in all that he had loved and known "on that far river" of the early years, in Charles' uncommon songs of the common day as well as in "Mary the Mother", in much of Sherman's *Matins* he might have recognized something of gifts which he had himself once given. With Carman's proclamation, early and late, of the holiness of beauty and the sense that his poetry imparts "of the joy and poignancy of being alive", the first Bishop of Fredericton would have had no quarrel. He would, one is sure, have been gratified rather than dismayed.

NOTES

[1] This quotation and the quoted passages which follow immediately are from "Bliss Carman". By Charles G. D. Roberts, *Dalhousie Review,* Vol. IX, March 1930. Pp. 409-417.

[2] "Sir Charles G. D. Roberts", in *Essays in Canadian Criticism.* Toronto, 1969. Pp. 180-187.

[3] "Creative Moments in the Culture of the Maritime Provinces", in *Culture and Nationality.* Toronto, 1972. Pp. 54-55.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[6] Roberts, p. 417.

[7] Roberts, p. 413.

[8] Bailey, p. 56.

[9] "Evidences of Culture Considered as Colonial", in *Culture and Nationality*, p. 184.

[10] This and the brief passage which follows quoted with permission of the author and the library from a manuscript revised from typescript "Literary Memories of Alfred Godsworthy Bailey: Part I, pp. 2-3, and p. 5.

[11] Roberts, p. 415.

[12] "John Medley". By W. O. Raymond, in *Leaders of the Canadian Church*. First series. Ed. W. B. Heeney. Toronto, 1918. p. 121.

[13] W. Q. Ketchum, *The Life and Work of the Most Reverend John Medley*. Saint John, 1893. Pp. 26 and 64. Still the only full account of Medley's career. A fine chapter on Medley is included in Christopher Headon's unpublished doctoral thesis *The Influence of the Oxford Movement Upon the Church of England in Eastern and Central Canada, 1840-1900*. (McGill University, 1974).

[14] The point was made by Eugene Fairweather in "A Tractarian Patriot: John Medley of Fredericton", *Canadian Journal of Theology*, Vol. VI (1960), No. 1, p. 17. This is the best approach to Medley in print.

[15] *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture*. Baltimore, 1968, p. 130. Professor Stanton devotes a full chapter to Christ Church Cathedral and St. Anne's and I am indebted to her for information about Medley's Gothic churches in wood. The most thorough architectural study of the Cathedral is to be found in Douglas Richardson's unpublished master's thesis *Christ Church Cathedral*, Fredericton, New Brunswick (Yale University, 1966).

[16] *The Staff of Beauty and the Staff of Bands*. Saint John, 1847. P. 14.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[19] *A Lecture ... Subject "Good Taste"*. Saint John, 1857. P. 21.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

[21] Northrop Frye, Conclusion to *The Literary History of Canada*. Toronto, 1965. P. 830.

[22] *Sir George Parkin*. London, 1929. Pp. 26-27.

[23] "The Maid", *The Leather Bottle*, Toronto, 1934. P. 71. Theodore Goodridge Roberts was lost for a while in the shadow of his brother's fame and in the reaction against the romantic tradition which began with "McGill Movement". He is a fine poet with his own very distinctive voice.

[24] "Love and the Young Knight", *The Leather Bottle*, p. 65.

[25] See *The Complete Poems of Francis Sherman*, ed. Lorne Pierce. Toronto, 1935. Information about Sherman's search for the title of his volume of poems was derived from his letters in the Hathaway Collection of the Harriet Irving Library, the University of New Brunswick.

[26] *The Friendship of Art*. Boston, 1903. P. 265.

[27] "Canada and its Poetry", *The Bush Garden*. Toronto, 1971. P. 134.

[28] *Butterfly on Rock*. Toronto, 1970. Pp. 95-96.

[29] "Transcendentalist, Mystic, Evolutionary Idealist: Bliss Carman, 1886-1894," *Colony and Confederation: Canadian Poets and Their Background*. Vancouver, 1974. P. 205. The most persuasive study we have yet had of Carman as a serious and consistent thinker. The discussion of "evolutionary idealism" and the comment on Santayana's influence I found particularly helpful.

FICTION IN ATLANTIC CANADA

Andrew Thompson Seaman

IN HIS INTRODUCTION to *The Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James analyses the problem of objective value in the subject of a novel. He describes how Turgenev helped him to see that it is valid to work from character, particularly as crystallized in some stray figure, into structure in the story, rather than from plot into character. He then perceives that if character, or human experience, is at the centre of the work, a very simple test of the worth of a subject emerges; "is it the result of some direct impression or perception of life?" And this leads to an assertion of "the perfect dependence of the 'moral' sense of a work of art on the amount of felt life concerned in producing it."

It is a phrase casually dropped — "felt life" — and yet a useful one, which helps to get at a quality in much of the fiction of Atlantic Canada which holds the secret of its value and importance. No group of authors in Canada has been more singly concerned with the sense of place and the value of heritage than our Maritime fiction writers, and those values can often be perceived through the intensified quality of "felt life" in their writings. This has been largely true of our best writers for the last two decades, from Charles Bruce's *The Channel Shore* of 1954, to David Richards' *The Coming of Winter* of 1974.

Ever since R. E. Watters announced in 1954 that Ernest Buckler's new novel, *The Mountain and the Valley*, was the most excellent first novel ever written in Canada,[1] the book has grown in reputation, until it is now thought of as a Maritime classic. However, Buckler's themes go far beyond merely regional concerns. David Canaan, whose life the novel traces from early boyhood, is an embryonic artist, a sensitive soul searching for a means of uncovering and expressing the meaningful patterns in life, and failing to find it in the essentially inarticulate society around him. David sees the farm folk of the Annapolis Valley with wonderful insight and compassion, never with contempt of any kind, and he finally grasps a vision of personal salvation, of what he might do with his life, ironically at

the point of death on the mountain top. " I know how it is with everything. I will put it down, and they will see that I know . . . It would make him the greatest writer in the whole world."

David had spoken, or thought, something very similar at an earlier stage, when he acted in a school play. It was the first of many traumatic experiences which gradually robbed him of the confidence to direct his own destiny as he grew older. At the climax of the play, in a moment of grand inspiration, David thinks "I will be the greatest actor in the whole world", and adds a touch of personal interpretation. He strides onto the stage and kisses the Princess, as he imagines it should be in real life. The result is instant disaster, and he stumbles from the stage and out into the snow, bitterly disillusioned and cursing the side of himself which has betrayed him into this acute embarrassment. One could conclude that he learns nothing in twenty years. As any rate, we have no reason to suppose that David could carry out the intention of his moment of vision on the mountain. It is Ernest Buckler who writes the novel. He knows "how it is with everything", and we see that he knows the people and the place. That is what makes the book regional, and moral in the Jamesian sense. If *The Mountain and the Valley* has a weakness, it lies in Buckler and not having trusted enough in this quality for the shape of his novel.

But before we examine the quality of felt life in *The Mountain and the Valley*, let us look at its rival where that quality is concerned, the lesser known novel by Charles Bruce, *The Channel Shore*. The structure of this novel is quite simple. We are taken through three significant periods in the history of a family, one after World War I, one in the thirties, and the third just after World War II. The plot is not really a plot at all, but a set of conditions which create human problems demanding resolutions. In the process of working out these resolutions, Bruce brings into realization the pattern of a culture.

Anse Gordon has left the Channel Shore, apparently for good not realizing that the lover he leaves behind is pregnant. Hazel is sent away to Toronto, the open shame to be avoided. Grant Marshall is in love with Anse's younger sister Anna, but Grant's uncle, and father by adoption, is a Protestant patriarch, while Anna's family is Catholic. Grant bows to James Marshall's will. A short time later, Anna is killed on a trip to Halifax, which she has undertaken in part as a gesture of independence from Grant. Haunted by a sense of guilt, and struck by the need to emancipate himself from his uncle's stern and prejudiced, though loving presence, Grant goes to live with the now-childless Gordons. Shortly thereafter, he comes to feel that it is right that he should rescue Hazel from her banishment and bring the Gordon's grandchild by Anse back to the Channel Shore, so he goes to Toronto, marries Hazel, and brings her back. The child is Alan. Hazel does not survive, but Grant keeps Alan. This is the post World War I phase. In the thirties we find Grant re-married to the school teacher, Renie, with a daughter

Margaret to go with his son, Alan. That Alan is not his blood son is a secret kept, out of respect for Grant, by those of the Shore who know the truth. Father and son are close. But Alan begins to catch hints, and finally learns the truth, realizing simultaneously that he cannot bring himself to shatter Grant's illusion, so carefully cultivated over the years. In the third section of the novel, Alan has just returned from five years in the war. Margaret is twenty. Both know that they are not blood relatives. Grant discovers, unknown to Alan, that Alan knows the truth, but in turn cannot bring himself to shatter openly the cultivated illusion. Anse, however, returns to the Shore, discovers he has a son, and subtly tries to lay claim to him. This results in a violent public confrontation which finally shatters all the illusions of a generation.

If anything in this bald description of the conditions that form the framework upon which *The Channel Shore* is woven appears improbable, all doubts are laid to rest by the main substance of the novel. Its value, its moral force, is entirely dependent upon the amount of felt life which goes into fleshing it out. One essential ingredient which defies second-hand exposition, is the constant presence throughout the novel of sun on skin, wind on face, sound of the channel muttering on gravel beaches, smells of the kitchens, all the minute paraphernalia of rural life which Bruce reproduces with unselfconscious skill. But the insight into character and human values deserves analysis.

After Alan's return from the war, the Shore seems a little dull by times, so one evening he and Margaret, with some friends, go down to Forester's Pond, a neighbouring community, to a dance. Margaret, without really meaning to, snubs a Pond boy. Bad language follows, and Alan's friend, Buff Katon, steps into Alan's moment of hesitation and starts a fight. This is no more incident for Alan. Grant had not approved of them going, because the Pond is known as a rough place. For all his independence, Grant is in thrall to uncle James' austere morality. Violence is unthinkable. People who fight are *Those* people, not his people. And Alan has absorbed Grant's notions of propriety. "This was the sort of thing the women of The Head (part of the Shore) had meant, years ago", reflects Alan, "when they said with loathing in their voices, 'a downshore dance'." Bill Graham, a visitor at the shore that summer, whose father had left a generation before, was among Alan's friends that evening. Bruce uses Bill as a foil throughout the novel. Grant goes to him later to get the story from an objective observer. Bill tells of Buff's defence of Margaret's honour. Grant's reply is: "I don't like that kind of thing. I don't like the Katons. They're violent people ... But you can't give orders! He thought: ... What good are orders when the qualities that make behaviour are born into you, brewed in the blood." Bill remarks that he doesn't see what else was to be done — sees it as "a kind of natural courtesy".

We realize that it is fortunate for Grant that it was not Alan who threw the punch. With his philosophy, Grant would have been torn by seeing it as evidence

of that other sonship — the blood of the reckless Anse Gordon. Grant is wrong here; he is suffering from one of the negative aspects of his particular, long, and upright heritage, symbolized in James Marshall. He is guilty of an inbred, totally unrealized sense of pious moral superiority. And this is very much tied up with the more central theme of the novel, his sense of parenthood. Grant goes through half a lifetime, fearful of Alan's discovery of something he already knows, almost wrecking both of their lives in the process, because his false sense of the importance of public appearances leads him away from the truth he knows deep in his heart. Only at the end of the novel, at the moment of public disclosure, does the look on Grant's face reveal his discovery of what old Richard MacKee thinks later on — that the thing between him and Alan was "a thing deeper and more telling than the accident of blood". Only then does he understand the force of Bill Graham's earlier assertion that you can't figure inheritance on a slide rule. Then the Channel Shore relaxes, finding for the first time in a generation no need to whisper, no need to guard against impropriety.

That is the secret of Bruce's insight: the ability to perceive the intricacy of the interweaving of impression, rumour, motive, regret, hope, misunderstanding, religion, loyalty, fear — over generations of time, which goes into making an individual what he is. He has the confidence to let that be his plot. For Bruce, that process is symbolized by the ever-present sound and movement of the eternal sea: by the constant influence of the channel on the channel shore.

This insight of Bruce's is valuable partly because, as Alan puts it in a moment of vision after he discovers the truth of his parenthood:

> The Channel Shore — it was not a little world, now, from which people went and to which they sometimes returned, but a living part of a larger world . . . He saw the Shore now not as the one place loved and friendly and known, but as his own particular part of something larger, embracing all, the bright and the ugly, the familiar and the strange.

It is valuable also because it is an eminently particular book, capturing in fine detail the essence of a disappearing way of life and system of values. For Grant, as well as for Alan, a major problem is to find a way of expanding and liberalizing that way of life, without losing the richness of that heritage — without leaving the Shore. They cannot live the austere and pious life of Uncle James: "Duty was another word for life to James, a straight road, uphill, between the fences of labour and religion. It worried him to find his eyes drawn by the grassy by-ways of affection." They are deeply moral people, but must find a way to accommodate the various and peculiar demands of love as well. What they find is that when the concept of duty is replaced by frankness, when the trusted guide is love, not propriety, many of the burdens of a lifetime melt away. Grant discovers that "in the face of his faith in Alan's stature as a man, he could find in nothing else, not even in fatherhood itself, a sense of urgency."

THE CHIEF POINT of contrast between Bruce and Buckler is that we find in Buckler no such sense of unity and salvation rooted in an on-going process of living. For Buckler, salvation is possible only through transcendence by imagination. That is Buckler's particular kind of insight, and it shapes every aspect of *The Mountain and the Valley* from David's mountain-top experience to the fine details of his literary technique. Where Bruce has the trick of telling philosophically what is in the mind of his character, Buckler has the poet's trick of transposing what is in the mind into figures of speech. One effect is the occasional achievement of an intensity of emotional experience which exceeds anything in Bruce. Another effect, not always desirable, is that whole sections of Buckler's prose become extended prose poems. This is perfectly appropriate in his pastoral idyl, *Oxbells and Fireflies*, but slows the pace of the already ruminative *The Mountain and the Valley* to a near standstill at times.

The Mountain and the Valley is full of passages which use a technique of moving back and forth from drama to poetry with great effect:

> Sometimes it would take no more than that: the sight of Joseph completely taken up in conversation with another man; forgetting that she was waiting or, remembering, making no account of it.
>
> She caught her breath and started back to the baskets. But it was faster than movement. Movement couldn't lose or shake the wind of exile. It sprang up from nowhere, and she was helpless, once she had felt it, not to feed it. It was like the blue dusk light of August exiling the mountains; or the cold horizon light of winter exiling the skeletons of the prayer-fingered apple trees; or the retreating October light draining the fields.

Buckler's study of reality is a study in patterns of isolation. Martha and Joseph, David's parents, have a fine relationship, but one which is plagued by moments of misunderstanding and intense separateness. Finally their relationship is severed permanently by Joseph's accidental death, not in the normal course of events, but under the peculiarly unfortunate conditions of one of their misunderstandings. The whole novel moves from warmth and unity, brought to a high point in the description of Christmas in Chapter VIII, to the loneliness and isolation of David's standing in the field while the train carries Toby away.

> But Toby didn't glance once, not once, toward the house or the field. The train went by.
>
> David stood rooted in the row. He leaned on the hack he'd brought with him to dig out the stubborn parsnips. He followed the train with his eyes. The train wound quickly through the cut. The grey cloud of its smoke thinned and settled over the trees. The clucking of its rails became a far-off clatter. And then the whistle of the train blew ever so distantly for the next station, and the whole train had disappeared from the day.
>
> A hollowness sucked suddenly against his breath. Toby's knife still lay there,

abandoned beside the carelessly topped turnips ... and Toby had gone away in the train. All the thinking came back in a rush.

But the panic wasn't only that the one friend he'd ever had had gone away. It was more than that. *It was always someone else* that things happened to, that was the panic of it....

This scene is a recurring pattern in Buckler. In "Another Man" from *Oxbells and Fireflies*, we find a direct parallel, though in this case the character is an older man who has lived alone for years. Syd Wright, about to attend the funeral of a neighbourhood kid, whose death was known to everyone else in the community before it was known to him, sees a cabbage which had been tossed aside on Halloween night, perhaps by Lennie himself. "It was the trifle that can suddenly daze a man with the news of his whole life.... I am never in on anything at the time. The afterwards is all I ever know."

There is something basic to Ernest Buckler here, something that necessitates his reliance on salvation through memory and imagination. Thus the quality of felt life in Buckler is essentially tragic, unlike that in Bruce, which is joyous, though there is a kind of high seriousness about both which renders them very similar. Bruce's *The Channel Shore* moves from the isolations caused by James' austerity and Anse's irresponsibility, to the order and optimism of Grant's and Alan's new pattern. In the end, Buckler's David must leave the Valley, climb the Mountain, and transcend the loneliness and pain of reality through imaginative vision and death. Alan will not leave the Channel Shore, but settles in to "begin the change in the pattern — in the memory and imagination and knowledge of the Shore.... A beginning, not an end." David must work his miracle through imaginative translation if at all, by giving "an absolving voice to all the hurts they gave themselves or to each other — hurts that were caused only by the misreading of what they couldn't express." Grant and Alan act out that absolution; Grant by bringing Hazel back from the exile of shame; Alan by learning the value of openness, even at the cost of violence, and living this by taking the name of his blood father and preparing to marry Grant's daughter before the startled, but relieved eyes of the Channel Shore.

These are our foremost writers of fiction; both are men with a vision which aspires to the highest purposes of literature. But literature has many purposes. Two other names spring immediately to mind when one thinks of Maritime fiction: Hugh MacLennan and Thomas Raddall. They are more prolific writers than Buckler and Bruce, perhaps because they are less artistic. That is not to say that they are less competent, but that their novels are of a different kind.

THOMAS RADDALL is thought of as an historical novelist primarily. *Hangman's Beach* provides a typical example. This is one of his more

recent books, first published in 1966, and reflects an impressive knowledge of nineteenth century Halifax and its role in the politics of the age. From the historical point of view, the central character in the novel is Peter MacNab, son of the original MacNab of MacNab's Island and a prominent Halifax merchant. Around this figure Raddall builds a picture of Halifax in the early eighteen-hundreds, and of a business intrigue involving him in the transfer of American goods to Britain during the American embargo. This is very interesting material, and as a character MacNab seems to have lots of potential. However, after eight chapters, a new section is begun, centring in a French officer, Cascamond, captured by the British and held at Halifax. Cascamond takes over the book, forcing MacNab into a supporting role, and the chief interest in the remaining three sections of the novel is provided by his dangerous affairs and miraculous escapes. The romantic plot built around him is capable of providing the framework for the historical content of the novel by itself. Cascamond is linked to MacNab by being paroled into his custody as French tutor for the MacNab boys. While living on MacNab's Island he falls in love with a niece of Peter's, Ellen Dewar. After many intrigues and mortal dangers, all turns out well through the intervention of MacNab, who throughout the novel is seen as a champion of justice and common sense in the face of the excesses of the British Admiralty. The two lovers are sent off to live in peace in Acadia, or "Arcadie, the land of simple plenty, of innocent pleasures, of peace without end", as Father Sigogne puts it. Perhaps we could say that Cascamond and Ellen, elemental man and woman, find their way to a garden of peace and love through the intervention of the Promethean MacNab against the Joves of the Admiralty, but that would be stretching a point. In fact, the romance which dominates two-thirds of the novel is largely for popular appeal, and remains crudely spliced into the more serious historical themes of the novel by circumstance alone. One is left with a sense of disappointment that more was not done with MacNab in answer to the promise of Part I. The romance detracts not only from the excitement which attaches to MacNab as a potential Canadian "man for all seasons", but also from the realism. It does not bear the imprint of "some direct impression or perception of life".

Raddall's most serious novel is *The Nymph and The Lamp* first published in 1950. This is set in the twentieth century and draws upon Raddall's personal experience as a wireless operator on Sable Island just after the First World War. Here the inevitable Raddall romance *is* the serious centre of the novel, and there is no division of purposes. Sable Island, or Marina as it is called in the novel, is more than just a setting; it imposes conditions of isolation upon the characters which make the normal directives of society irrelevant, and force them to rely upon their inner resources. This is a novel of self-discovery, urging that it is the responsibility of the individual to discover his own principle of integrity. And the basis of direct experience upon which Raddall builds much of the novel lends a

serious quality of felt life often lacking in his other works. Isabel learns to operate the equipment, for "something to do" during the long empty days, and is finally allowed by Matthew to sit a watch by herself.

> Stentor in the engine room awakened at her touch and snarled obediently. She smiled, and wondered why she had ever feared the thing ... The spark screamed through the station and over the dunes ... the dots crackling out like musketry, the dashes blaring, an immense, all-powerful sound. She exulted in it now. The sensation was marvelous.

Even this kind of experience is directly related to the central theme of the novel, for Isabel is also learning to seize control of her own destiny. When she returns to Carney, too, it is essential that she be a competent operator. The novel possesses a nice artistic unity, with no sense of a split between academic research and romantic tale-telling to reduce the artistic stature of the work.

Hugh MacLennan is a similar writer in some ways. Like Raddall, he writes an eminently readable book but when we look for more, difficulties arise. *Barometer Rising* is a specifically maritime novel, published in 1941. It is built around the Halifax explosion of 1917 — a subject with tremendous possibilities. But somehow the story goes astray amid confused purposes. One theme suggests that somehow, Canada came of age at that time, ceasing to be a colony, and rising from the ashes of Halifax, a new nation. This is neither convincing nor true, but of course MacLennan's conception of Canada has changed considerably since 1941. Nevertheless, there is too much architecture and not enough life here. The description of the explosion itself is entirely successful in a documentary way. But the most convincing theme seems to be associated with Dr. Murray, who rediscovers his purpose in life and regains his self-confidence in the midst of the chaotic aftermath of the explosion. Doctors seem to inspire Hugh MacLennan, no doubt because of his own father.

A doctor is at the centre of *Each Man's Son*, published just a year before *The Mountain and the Valley*. Daniel Ainsley is a general practitioner in a Cape Breton coal town. The central theme of this novel is summed up by an older medical friend of Ainsley's, Dougal MacKenzie:

> Dan you haven't forgotten a single word you've ever heard from the pulpit or from your own Presbyterian father. You may think you've rejected religion with your mind, but your personality has no more rejected it than dyed cloth rejects its original color.

Ainsley's life is torn by guilt, instilled by his Presbyterian past and focussed upon his wife, his work, and his purpose in life. He cannot enjoy a full and happy relationship with his wife because he cannot believe that he should take the time from his labours to do so, and because he feels guilty about an operation which he had to perform on her, rendering her sterile. He scourges his soul by translat-

ing Greek when he should be enjoying life. In an attempt to recover his lost immortality, he tries to take over the son of a local girl whose husband has been away for four years pursuing an unsuccessful career in the ring. Molly, the boy's mother, is thereby pushed into accepting the proposal of a shipwrecked French sailor that she and the boy, Alan, run off to France with him. Ainsley discovers the plan and realizes what he has done. He collapses under an awful sense of emptiness and futility, feeling that he has been cheated by the criminals who inflicted a false and cursed religion upon him, but feeling that he has nothing to put in its place.

> He felt as though his spirit had hurled itself against the window of his life and broken the glass. It had been caught in a prison and now it was free. But its freedom was the freedom of not caring, and the things it witnessed now were different from those it had seen before. Now his spirit flickered like a bat over a dark and sinister landscape as lifeless as the mountains of the moon.

And then Alan's father returns, suffering from brain damage. He discovers Molly and the Frenchman together, kills them both, and dies himself shortly thereafter. Alan is Ainsley's to bring up.

Obviously, the plot is resolved by some rather startling coincidences, but in dealing with Ainsley's latent guilt and his loathing of his Presbyterian heritage, MacLennan writes with energy and conviction. Ainsley's descent into the "bat-black night" of his personal hell is entirely convincing. But though a resolution is claimed for him — "He got to his feet and looked down at the brook. In that moment he made the discovery that he was ready to go on with life" — we are not led to understand why he is ready; and though a salvation is arranged for him in Archie's homicidal rampage, it is not found credible or satisfying. We know that Ainsley will leave Cape Breton, and go on to become a great surgeon elsewhere, perhaps finding in his new sense of family life and his new professional horizons a sufficient purpose for his life. The problem addressed here, in what MacLennan refers to specifically as the curse of the Calvinist faith, is an intensified version of one Charles Bruce grapples with in *The Channel Shore*, but MacLennan's characters leave it largely unresolved, and take the alternative of leaving Cape Breton in the hope of leaving the curse behind. We realize, in reading the rest of MacLennan's novels, that he also is one who left. Other problems of wartime and of Canadian politics occupy them — particularly the problem of Quebec and the federal system, featured in *Two Solitudes* and *Return of the Sphinx*. In fact, in the latter, Alan Ainsley turns up in federal politics and *his* son is involved with the separatists.

The religious problem in *Each Man's Son* brings MacLennan close to something at the heart of Maritime life, and apparently something close to his own experience of it. The novel scratches the surface, but hardly gets beyond polemic,

and MacLennan does not return to the theme, or to the Maritimes, in his later fiction.

Except for Raddall's more recent historical novels, these books are all from an earlier decade of Maritime literature. Another from that era deserves mention. Will R. Bird's *Here Stands Good Yorkshire*, which provides an insight into the lives of the Yorkshire immigrants to the upper Fundy in the 1770's, is highly valued among the descendants of those people, though as a novel, it is a bit thin in characterization, a fault common to Bird's historical novels. Though one of his best, it is no longer available in print, but a movement is afoot in Canada to republish such books, and may catch up with this one. The University of Toronto Press has recently published in paperback, with an introduction by Dr. Alan Bevan of Dalhousie University, C. P. Day's *Rockbound*, set on Ironbound Island and among the Tancooks. This particularly interesting little novel originally appeared in the twenties. It has a somewhat sentimental plot, but sketches vividly the way of life in the little Nova Scotia fishing empires of the last days of sail.

These writers speak largely of the Maritime past, but there is a group of younger writers speaking through fiction of Atlantic Canada today. Many write short stories. Kent Thompson of the University of New Brunswick has recently collected some of the best in an anthology for Macmillan of Canada, *Stories from Atlantic Canada.* Most of the women in Atlantic Literature are poets, but there are samples here of Elizabeth Brewster's ventures into prose, and of the work of Beth Harvor and Helen Porter. Alden Nowlan, Ray Smith, Harold Horwood, Gordon Pinsent, and David Richards have all published novels. Alden Nowlan is best known as a poet, short story writer, and journalist. His recent novel, *Various Persons Named Kevin O'Brien*, is not really a novel at all, any more than is Buckler's *Oxbells and Fireflies*. They are collections of short stories, tied loosely together by a thread of theme — in Buckler's, memories of Norstead (a fictionalized place where he grew up, "No More Place"); in Nowlan's memories stimulated by a trip back home. One gets a little tired of all this reminiscing, and hopes it is *not* a trend.

Ray Smith has been causing some confusion with his "compiled fiction", but there is something exciting in the idea — a way of getting at the complexity and infinite variety of life on the street. Gordon Pinsent, who turns a hand to many of the arts, has been entertaining Canadians and upsetting some with his acting and writing about Newfoundland characters. But Pinsent never intended to create stereotypes. The Rowdyman is a unique character, and if something of his zest, his language, his gift of the gab, his flights from giddiness to the depths of despair, is identifiably Newfoundland there is no shame in that.

Harold Horwood has met with some criticism at home too, but his fiction is not dishonest, any more than Farley Mowat's *A Whale For The Killing* is dishonest. *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* is a particularly good novel, though it may offend some readers. Perhaps the theme of emancipation from religious zealotry and pious ignorance is a little heavy-handed, but it is not unrealistic. Horwood draws a line down the centre of his fictional Newfoundland outport. On the side of the zealous fall the minister, Brother John, who believes the world is about to come to an end, his wife, Sister Leah, and various elders of the church and members of the community. On the side of the emancipated stand the Markadys and the Simms; Joshua Markady is a retired merchant and ship-owner who has made his fortune and seen the world: Peter Simms is a retired magistrate. "Mr. Simms and Mr. Markady were deeply entrenched institutions in Captain Bight, beyond the touch even of religious fanaticism, far too eminently respectable to be purged." Allied with them are Simms' son Christopher, who goes away to college and returns to teach school; Virginia Marks, daughter of the storekeeper and "not only an outstanding beauty but a woman who took no trouble to hide her brains"; Eli, a boy of the village who is really the central character of the novel, and Johnny, a much younger boy who is rescued from the Pious Ignorant by Chris, Virginia, and Eli.

During the novel, Eli becomes involved homosexually with Brother John, which finally brings about John's destruction after he has been temporarily successful in laying the same charge against Chris, and Chris and Eli both fall in love with Virginia, to Eli's ultimate heartbreak. The characterizations are skilfully drawn, with just the right touch of caricature in the more extreme types, and most important, all aspects of experience in this religion-torn, love-torn outport are treated with a genuine touch of felt life. Chris is thrown into direct confrontation with Brother John and triumphs, Eli and Johnny are rescued from psychological damage at the hands of the self-righteous, Virginia is led into fidelity and happiness — all through Christopher's absolute faith in the triumph of knowledge, common sense, and love, over ignorance and superstition. That theme, unalloyed, would run the risk of a new piety, but the conflict between Eli and Chris over Virginia saves the novel. Eli must learn to accept the sight of the woman he desires in the arms of the man he loves, and in doing so, achieves a worthwhile self-realization.

The theme of religious emancipation is similar to MacLennan's in *Each Man's Son*, but goes farther. Whereas the Presbyterian faithful are only distantly condemned in *Each Man's Son*, *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* examines even Brother John in depth and with considerable understanding. Horwood's personal philosophy allows him to place a fully emancipated figure at the opposite end of the spectrum, one for whom inherited guilt has no meaning. The result is a more relaxed, wide-ranging, and humorous view of the whole problem, allowing a

genuine resolution as opposed to the contrived one of MacLennan's conclusion.

Christopher Simms' character represents an ideal, a man liberated from the guilt and superstition of the past, not only intellectually, but in personality as well, and there are few enough such people in real life. Horwood is yet another Romantic, and we have yet to look at the chief exponents of a new and different sensibility, Alden Nowlan and David Richards. They focus with an unflinching gaze on the hard realities of another kind of life in rural Atlantic Canada. With a mixture of understanding and concern, but little hope, Nowlan sees the impoverished Maritimers, robbed of the ability to help themselves by despair. "They built that shack right in the middle of a bog hole. Could have built it anywhere. But they built it in a bog hole. What you gonna do with that kind of people?"[2] Little hope, unless there is hope in the very act of publicly facing the hardest realities. That heritage of values rooted in the land, baptised in the sea, which some of us have been drawing about us for warmth against the coming of winter, must be preserved, but it is not enough to ward off the evil drafts of unemployment, poverty, foreign ownership, ecological destruction, and quiet despair. Our literature must tell us the whole truth about the society around us. It is for this reason that David Richards' first novel, *The Coming of Winter*, published in 1974, is an important novel, perhaps the most important first novel published in Canada.

Richards treads carefully a path between traditional novel structures and the de-structured experiments of other contemporaries. He intentionally underscores no themes and comes to no general conclusions, in sharp contrast to Hugh MacLennan, but relies on the book to make its own statement. He draws for us a picture in which the quality of felt life is so intense that no "architecture" at all is required. It is a picture of several weeks in the life of Kevin Dulse, leading up to his marriage. Kevin does not live in the tradition of religious, educated, pioneer farmers of *The Channel Shore*. His folks are mill workers and poor farmers without much vision. When we first meet Kevin he is occupied in his favourite pastime, hunting with his .22 rifle. He loves the woods and being outdoors — it is his one escape from a dreary life — but he is inept, and before long he has shot a cow by mistake. It's a messy business, finishing it off with a .22, and he is in serious trouble. As the days go by, he moves from one minor disaster to another. His hands and feet are burned shovelling lime at the mill. A friend, Andy, gets drunk and kills himself in a car. He gets drunk, and smashes up his truck, which was his grandfather's '48 International. His fiancé discovers just before their marriage that he owes $300 for the cow. His father leaves it too late to buy a new suit for the wedding, but buys a bottle of champagne in a last-minute moment of inspiration. There are no champagne glasses in the house, however, and his wife won't serve it. Very dreary, the whole business, but one can't put the book aside because it is so real, so compassionate.

Kevin and his friend John are deeply disturbed by Andy's sudden death. He

has left behind a pregnant girl, Julie, whom he intended to marry. John is really in love with her, but he thinks he doesn't believe in love. Neither knows what to do. There is no possibility of John's taking the kind of action Grant Marshall did, because he hasn't the same sense of purpose — has no reason for any faith in the "rightness" of certain things. Kevin had gone up to see Julie:

> "Did Julie say much when you were there?"
> "Nothin' no — I can't talk to her. I want to but I can't so I didn't stay long up there. I'd just like to know what she's going to do."

They would all like to know what they are going to do.

> Work. The sound of the mill coming down across the water. It would wake him again. But yes, they couldn't remain here long — not long. A year or so.

And so, in November, he gets married. Everything is sliding inexorably downhill into winter. The relationship which leads to his marriage is based upon undefined needs and unrealized hopes. We see almost no evidence of love between the two — only habit and inevitability. Entirely absent from Kevin's mind is the kind of conscious choice of a way of life which we see in the young Alan of the Channel Shore. This is true, not because Kevin is dumb, but because he is numb — numbed by an environment which has none of the sense of destiny and heritage celebrated by Charles Bruce. The coming of winter is not merely symbolic of entering into a marriage without hope, without a shared sense of where one came from and where one is going; it is also symbolic of the descent of a way of life into the cultural void of endless shiftwork, bickering, drunkenness, inevitable accidents, and stunted sensibilities.

This is a world that very much concerns Alden Nowlan. His best short story, "The Glass Roses", sets up a contrast between a mind nurtured in a rich culture, and a mind about to be quenched by back-woods ignorance and prejudice. Nowlan describes a Ukrainian second world war refugee, come to New Brunswick to work in the pulp woods. He is teamed with a boy, the son of the foreman. The woodsmen think he is from Poland and call him a Polack. He is a man whose heart is constantly warmed by the memory of the culture he once beheld — cathedrals, castles, cavalrymen — and whose dreams are racked by the spectre of its destruction. The boy is enchanted by the tales he tells while they work, attracted by the stranger's open friendliness and warmth, yet confused because he knows that "men do not tell one another fairy tales about cathedrals." One of the "Polack's" stories is about a bunch of glass roses, exquisitely crafted, which stood on the windowsill at home and refracted the sun's rays. They had fallen and smashed when the first bombs fell, and this is the substance of one of his nightmares. "There is not much room in this world for glass roses", the Polack reflects. Certainly not here in the woods, where the men sit and play cards in silence when

it is too dark to slave. The foreman notices the arm around the shoulders, the cuff on the cheek, and is alarmed. "Them Wops and Bohunks and Polacks got a lot of funny ideas", he tells his son. "They ain't our kinda people . . . Just make that polack keep his hands off you."[3] The seeds of shame and suspicion are planted. Glass roses teeter precariously on the edge of destruction.

Perhaps we look too much to the past, or are like the psychiatrist of Anthony Brennan's new fantasy novel, *Carbon Copy*, insisting that the world around us is "peaceful, democratic, stable", that "there is no poverty and injustice", and being told by someone we consider to be mad that it is not so. But if our Maritime writers continue, as seems likely, to be regional in character, if their themes are contemporary, and if they are moral in Henry James' sense of the word, we will come to understand ourselves better.

NOTES

[1] R. E. Watters, "Three Canadian Novelists", as printed in G. M. Cook (ed.) *Critical Views on Canadian Writers: Ernest Buckler.* Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., p. 41.

[2] Alden Nowlan, "A Call in December." *Stories From Atlantic Canada*, p. 70.

[3] Alden Nowlan, "The Glass Roses." *Stories From Atlantic Canada*, p. 82.

HUGH MACLENNAN

Interviewed by
Ronald Sutherland

R.S. How long have you been here in Quebec, Hugh?
H.M. I came to Quebec the fall of 1935 to teach for Lower Canada College and live in at $25.00 a week. I came late in the term, because they simply had to get somebody else, I suppose. And I've been permanently based in Montreal ever since then.
R.S. Did you come directly from the Maritimes?
H.M. Directly from Halifax. I did not have a job. I got my Doctor's degree at Princeton during the depths of the depression, and it was difficult to get any kind of job at that time. I was in Roman History and a Rhodes Scholar. Terry McDermott, who ended up as Ambassador and Commissioner at various places, was the secretary of the committee that gave me a Rhodes' Scholarship, because I was defeated in Nova Scotia. But there was a special one loose at the time, and I was actually a Rhodes Scholar for Canada at large.
R.S. Where were you going to university? Dalhousie?
H.M. I went to Dalhousie. I did Honours Classics there.
R.S. When did you leave Dalhousie?
H.M. I graduated in 1928 and went to Oxford the next fall, then Princeton. I would sooner have gotten a job then, but there just weren't any jobs in 1932. Only about five per cent of Rhodes Scholars got any jobs at all.
R.S. Did you want to go back to the Maritimes, or did the economic conditions force you to leave?
H.M. I very much wanted to go back, but I couldn't get a job there, and that was the thing, I think, which was very damaging in the Maritimes then. Less so now. The casualties in the first world war had been abnormally heavy, and once the war was over there was a depression all over the Maritimes. They never had a 1920's boom down there. The old establishment didn't particularly encourage people who really weren't members of it to remain, but at any rate I couldn't get a job. Indeed, a post was vacant in my field at Dalhousie, and the chairman was a Yale man. A very small department, of course — they all were then. He simply told me that an Englishman was applying, and that was it, although he didn't like the English. The same thing happened with a vacancy in Saskatchewan. The

Chairman called me and said, "I am afraid you haven't got a chance because an Englishman is applying." The Englishman hadn't any higher qualifications than I had and was only coming here in order to get into the States, which was where he eventually went.

R.S. Do you still consider yourself a Maritimer?

H.M. I never did. I'm a Nova Scotian.

R.S. A Nova Scotian?

H.M. Anybody who says he comes from the Maritimes, ninety-nine times out of a hundred he is from New Brunswick. They never call themselves New Brunswickans. Perhaps they don't like the word. Otherwise, you are a Nova Scotian, or from the Island, or Newfoundlander, or from the Atlantic Provinces, in my case Cape Breton.

R.S. Do you think there is a particular mystique shared by people from Nova Scotia or any part of the Maritimes?

H.M. I do. I think it's because there is a sense of community. It's very beautiful country where people know each other. I'm not saying that in the old colonial days of Newfoundland the government was honest, because it wasn't, but I would say the governments in the Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, have been universally pretty honest for the reason that politicians know they couldn't get away with anything else. People know too much about each other down there. They are democratic countries. Montreal, the rest of Canada, Toronto — they aren't democratic, they're simply controlled by corporations.

R.S. Are the Maritimes still democratic?

H.M. They're democratic in the sense that they do manage a good many of their local affairs. For example, the developers began to do damage in Halifax, but they've been, to some extent, stopped. An attempt was made to develop Point Pleasant Park. They got nowhere. No, the people down there are much more straightforward and outspoken than they are here.

R.S. Can you see your upbringing in the Maritimes having an influence on your writing? You've not written a great deal about the Maritimes comparatively speaking.

H.M. I was influenced by Nova Scotia, and also by the kind of education I had. Years ago I came to the conclusion that urban-dwellers — people like Norman Mailer, Mordecai Richler or John Dos Passos, who grew up in cities — don't see details. But they have a wonderful sense of surge of movement. Now when Hemingway was growing up he spent a great deal of time in the country, and Hemingway will describe a situation or landscape by the minutest intuitive selection of detail, and he will use the *mot juste* again and again and again. That's why he is such a vivid kind of writer. City living is having its effect on me. My next book will be in a far more surging kind of prose than I have ever written before — there's a slight element of this in some of the writing in certain sections of *Rivers*

of Canada. The kind of writing or style that I used before is more reflective than what I feel now, living in Montreal.

R.S. Are you saying that the Maritimes have an essentially rural effect?

H.M. Don't forget the sea. Five thousand miles of coastline in Nova Scotia. When I was reading Homer as a kid, particularly *The Odyssey*, he was describing what I had all around me. Many of the poems in the Greek Anthology could have been written of Nova Scotia, and when I went to Greece the first time and again even more the second time, because the second time I was able to get out to sea a bit, it was very like the coast of Nova Scotia. If you stand out on Cape Sounian, remove the Temple of Neptune, and look inland, it's just like looking in beyond Peggy's Cove up St. Margaret's Bay. The ground cover is slightly different, but the same granite outcropping, the same formations. Now my neighbour, Tasso Sikiris, who is a Greek, went down with his wife to Nova Scotia last year, just about this time in September — they went around the Cabot Trail in Cape Breton, went through the valley and around the North Shore. Tasso called me up and said, "My God, you're absolutely right!" Once I saw a picture that my old friend, Ewing Irwin, had in his house here in North Hatley, and I said, "Ewing, that's somewhere up in Cape Breton isn't it?" "God, no," he replied, "That's Delphi."

R.S. So there's no accident about the affinity you've had with Greek legend?

H.M. No, not at all.

R.S. Do you think that growing up in Nova Scotia has influenced the themes of your books?

H.M. Actually, classical education, particularly Roman History, is the most perfect preparation for living today, especially the later Roman Empire in the period of disintegration. I wasn't studying that at Halifax, I was reading the elementary basic classics of the Golden Ages, but my research at Princeton involved that period. Boiled down in the long run, it was the decline and fall of the Roman Empire through the wrong end of the telescope. The Roman tax system was about the same as ours, and therefore doomed. The bureaucracy was doomed. We're going much faster than they were. We're much more efficient at ruining ourselves, but ultimately money, you see, became worthless. It took a long time, but once it passed a certain point — we're just on the verge of passing it now — it just went off to practically nothing — which meant agrarian feudalism. In our age it would mean, of course, some sort of urban feudalism, which would be far more explosive.

R.S. Far more explosive?

H.M. Oh, yes, it will probably destroy us.

R.S. Feudalism in what way?

H.M. Well, I mean, the working man today may be making a lot of money, but the government's taking half of it. There's no government, just bureaucracy. It doesn't seem to me to matter who's Prime Minister any more.

R.S. And this you regard as a new kind of feudalism? Man becomes a serf again?

H.M. He's becoming just that. He always tended to be. But a dictatorship of the Proletariat means a dictatorship of the leaders of the Proletariat. They drive around in Cadillacs and everything else, with hoods to keep the boys in order.
R.S. Of course, some of the labour leaders have a tendency to disappear these days, like James Hoffa.
H.M. That happens. It all reminds me of the Roman barrack room Emperors, the gangster Emperors. If you ever go to Florence, don't miss looking through the Portrait Gallery of the Roman Emperors. It tells you more than you get in books.
R.S. Let me ask you another question. You are considered one of the foremost interpreters of Quebec and the solitudes of Quebec. Do you think that your Maritime background has had some influence or has helped you to interpret Quebec?
H.M. I think so because I had absolutely no trouble at all, not even being able to speak French at the time and knowing very few French Canadians, interpreting how French Canadians felt. They regard everybody who is non-French as *Anglais*. But, of course, that's not so. The Scotch, as you know, had in many ways a worse history than the French Canadians ever had. The chiefs sold them and transported them some way or other with them as soldiers for the English and so forth. Leo Rowse, the great historian of All Souls, was a Cornishman. He read one of my essays in *Scotchman's Return* and said only a Celt could have written it. He was saying that a Celt has a dog-whistle sound that an Anglo-Saxon simply doesn't get and which an Anglo-Saxon finds very irritating. Of course, the Anglo-Saxons on the whole are much abler administrators and much more reliable people. At any rate, I knew what it was like to be in a minority, because the Celts were.
R.S. How were they in a minority in Cape Breton?
H.M. They were a minority in Nova Scotia, and while they were proud people and never felt a sense of inferiority, there was something underneath. The Annapolis Valley was pro-Loyalist Yankee. A lot of them came from Massachusetts. The Loyalists, of course, were not the way the Americans said — all coming from the upper classes. If you look at the shipping lists of boats that went into Saint John, you will find that every trade right down to tinkers, all classes of people were there. Some of them were upper class. For instance, the Bishop of New York, the Anglican Bishop became the Archbishop of Nova Scotia as a Loyalist. Many of them came from West Chester Country, some from Connecticut and some of them even came from North Carolina. As Loyalists they were more British than the King in some ways, as they tended to be in Ontario. But there was another thing about Nova Scotia in the 19th century. It was a tremendous sea power — the little town of Yarmouth with a population of about six thousand people built, sailed and manned one sixty-fourth of the entire shipping of the world from about 1850 to the end of the century. In sailing ships of wood, which they built themselves, Nova Scotian or Maritime ships — mostly Nova Scotian but there were some from New Brunswick — were about the fourth largest fleet

in the world. The British were first, I suppose the Americans might have been second, who was third I don't know, but they were fourth. Anyway, fourth or fifth. The Cunard Line was founded in Halifax and the White Star Line was founded in St. John. Those provinces in the 19th century were not provincial. Quebec and Ontario were much more provincial. A man who became the Admiral of the Fleet, Provost Wallace, was born and went to school in Halifax county.

R.S. You think then, that the fact that the people of Scottish descent were a minority in Nova Scotia has given you a lever to interpret Quebec?

H.M. I think it probably has, although I never thought of it at the time. Yes, I think it probably did, because I always felt in a minority. My family left Cape Breton when I was seven, coming to Halifax. I thought Haligonians were different people. I liked them very much. I loved Halifax, but people had names like Smith and Brown and Robinson and so forth. Halifax seemed to me a terribly exciting place. It still does.

R.S. Have you found any other sort of spiritual affinity with Quebec that helped you to develop your novels and your writing about Quebec?

H.M. Well, I think it's true that the Scotch and the French people have had an intuitive understanding of each other. God knows where the Highlanders would have been if their Chiefs hadn't made an alliance with France. I spent a winter in Grenoble about ten years ago. I remember I was very amused by this old retired French colonel who said to me, "*Monsieur, est-il possible de visiter l'Ecosse sans visiter l'Angleterre*?" I found out that he hated the English, but being *Ecossais* made a difference, being *Ecossais* and *un écrivain*. Everybody knows that the French seldom invite foreigners into their homes, but somehow or other people began inviting us out and we were in about fourteen different homes in Grenoble, which is very unusual.

R.S. Of course, in Quebec there are a lot of Scotch.

H.M. I'll bet that one third of them have Scottish blood. The Fraser Highlanders were disbanded here. If Rocket Richard doesn't have Highland blood in him, I'd be very surprised.

R.S. It would be interesting to find out. But when you came up to Montreal, did you like the place?

H.M. Immediately. I loved it. I don't like it now. It was the finest city in America seven years ago. Look at it now. It's a concrete jungle.

R.S. In your writing have you never had the desire to write more about the Maritimes? How do you pick your themes?

H.M. They pick me. The first book I wrote was unsuccessful. It was mixed up with Nova Scotia. I had some bootleggers in it, and it was set more or less in the States — people, the sea and so forth. The next one I tried to set in Europe with some Americans in it, but I wasn't close enough to it. Then *Barometer Rising*

occured to me. I have to write about what I absolutely know, and I had almost to make a map to write about Canada then. I had to because early perceptions are the things that count, and this all came about when my second novel had been reviewed by the twenty-first New York publisher, and the agent had simply put my name on it and sent it in. The review said, "We don't know who your writer is. He doesn't write like an American and he doesn't write like an Englishman. Who is he? There's something missing." So, I thought O.K., I can't get away from it. Then I thought of Aristotle's idea of recognitions — nobody could recognise within a social novel where the conflict would lie if they didn't know anything about the country. Even Canadians knew nothing about the country. So I made the city the hero of *Barometer Rising* and thought it might last for nine months, and I'm amazed that it's still published.

R.S. Have you consciously tried to map the country in that way?

H.M. It's hard to say that specifically. After *Barometer Rising* came out, an old friend of mine, an Englishman, was killed in an accident in the war. He had been in the publishing business, had been with Constable in New York, but he had lost his job in the depression as did everybody else. When he read *Barometer* he sent me a letter saying, "This is not Canadian literature, it's Nova Scotian." He asked me why I didn't consider setting a novel in Quebec. It's the centre of Canada, if anything is. Well, I'd already started it, because *Two Solitudes* came out of a dream in which I saw some tall blond man, a total stranger, and a short stocky dark man shouting at each other at the tops of their voices, both of them quite likeable people who just simply couldn't understand each other at all, and some boy said, "Don't you see they're both deaf." How the book was structured as it was, don't ask me. I have no idea how it formed itself. I felt the material was so rich I could have gone on forever.

R.S. Where did you get the material? How did you find out about the attitudes?

H.M. I got absorbed in them, and in Quebec. I should say this because it's very definitely true, and I want to acknowledge it though I didn't realize it at the time. I had a French-Canadian colleague who was a Protestant, Monsieur Peron, a man of enormous integrity and intelligence, a delightful personality and tough as all hell. The French-Canadian Protestants were sort of an underground in those days. He could call an election within a decimal point. He was very strong as a French Canadian. He disliked the Catholic Church intensely, blamed it for practically everything that was wrong here. When I finally finished *Two Solitudes*, I still had the job at Lower Canada. Mr. Peron was a very tough critic of things, and the highest praise that book ever got was when I gave him a copy on a Friday afternoon and he read it over the weekend. He came back and said there was nothing the matter with it.

R.S. Did you use him as a model for Tallard?

H.M. Absolutely. But unconsciously. Monsieur Peron was a very poor man. He

had two sons and a daughter. How in the name of God he educated the whole lot of them, I do not know. He never got more than $2,400 a year, and he had his own house, at least part of it, and he rented the other part of it. Both of his sons have succeeded tremendously. Fernand, the younger son, is now Professor of, I think Bio-Chemistry, down in M.I.T., and René, the elder, has been very successful in business.

R.S. You mentioned before that *Barometer Rising* was a Nova Scotian novel and not a Canadian novel. Is it possible for this contradiction to exist? Can you see any pan-Canadian attitudes or are the writers here strictly regional and must they be regional?

H.M. Well, I think that in so far as the novel has got to have a physical basis, all novels are regional in some way. *War and Peace* isn't, because it's the whole world. *Two Solitudes* isn't truly regional. *The Watch That Ends The Night* isn't regional. The reception *Barometer* got in Canada was so remarkable that it must have stirred up echoes from one end of the country to the other. I got letters from all over the place. It seemed to echo so many of our attitudes. It was a book with something of a contrived plot, though the plot turned out to be almost dead accurate as I found out later. But I didn't know that when I wrote it.

R.S. In what way?

H.M. Larry MacKenzie, who had been overseas with the 85th Nova Scotians, asked me if I got into any trouble about the book. I said no. A lot of people in Halifax said it was obscene and that sort of thing. Actually there was a case, and strangely enough I knew the people involved or at least some of them, of a man from an old Halifax family who had been with the 25th Regiment, which was decimated on, I think, the 19th of July, 1916, in the Somme battles. The colonel was a very ruthless man who was actually an Englishman, a ranker, who accused one of the soldiers of cowardice. The man might possibly have been shot, I don't know.

R.S. You didn't know this story before?

H.M. I didn't know it then, but how can I be sure? You get things through the pores.

R.S. Do you find then that it's quite possible to be completely regional and at the same time to embrace a kind of pan-Canadian attitude?

H.M. I think so. I have always seen Canada as a part of the history of the world and there has never been any universal literature that started on a local basis, except maybe the Greek, and even it probably didn't. But that was the original Western civilization. The Romans had to learn from Greek models, how to adapt them to Latin, and in the final Ode of the third book of Horace — I have built a monument more enduring than bronze and higher than the royal seat of the Pyramids and so on — he ends up by saying, I was the first man to tune the Roman lyre to Grecian measures. Take the Renaissance. It was first of all Italian.

Just think back to the time that Queen Elizabeth came to the throne. The only thing scholars could read really was Latin. Then Greek was coming in. They were learning some Greek, because Erasmus had come there to teach Greek. What was there of the European? Rabelais, Montaigne had just published around 1580. There was Chaucer and Malory and that was about it, before the great flowering came.

R.S. Are you saying there's no question of isolation of a culture?

H.M. Yes. It just means tuning the lyre to Grecian measures you may say, but I have no use for regionalism in itself although some of it can be charming. I always used to be irritated at being called a Canadian writer — I was a writer who was a Canadian.

R.S. Let me ask you another thing, what do you consider to be the major influence on your writing career?

H.M. This may sound stuffy, but in a practical way one sentence of Aristotle that the drama depends on the ability of an audience to recognize what the drama is about. I had to build a stage for the earlier books. Nearly all the academics at the time were criticizing me for doing this. Back in the 1950's, people who later became violent literary nationalists — who shall now be nameless — were bawling me out for not joining the English angry young men and so forth. I'd been to Cambridge for a year. That, and I suppose living in North Hatley, made an enormous difference to my understanding of how people live. I knew practically everybody in this village and I used to work in the garden with some French Canadians. I recall the lovely story of what would happen if the Germans won the war. My French-Canadian friend said that he would still be on one end of the saw, but the man on the other end would be an Englishman.

R.S. All of these influences together then have resulted in your writing the way you do?

H.M. I suppose so, but truly it's not profitable for a writer to analyse how he does things while he's still working, except in a technical way. The thing that must have had an enormous influence on how I looked at things was that I was something of an athlete when I was young, and I would sooner have been a Wimbledon champion than to be well known as a writer. When I was in my early twenties, I'd never thought of being a novelist; it just happened.

R.S. You say that when you wrote *Barometer Rising* you had to consciously set the stage for your writing. Has that stage now been set, do you think?

H.M. It's been set. By the time I finished *The Precipice* I decided that I didn't have to do that any more. With *Each Man's Son*, when I sent it to Boston, I just opened right up, didn't tell them anything about the situation. And I was told that I would have to write some kind of a preface, because nobody in America, not even in Boston, could believe in a kind of Calvinism as rigid as I had described. But I don't think such prefaces are necessary any longer.

R.S. Young writers today no longer have the same task. Good.
H.M. I think it might be relevant to say too that Gabrielle Roy had to do the same thing. Her book came out, *Bonheur d'occasion*, six weeks after *Two Solitudes* did. Neither of us knew of each other's existence. Roger Lemelin had to do it to some extent too. But Lemelin's work was of much more popular nature. *La Famille Plouffe* practically put the rural, small-town film business out of commission, because that long series of "La Famille Plouffe" not only trained a lot of French-Canadian actors and showed how to move people around the stage in television, but it brought up all manner of contemporary problems in French-Canadian life. Its influence was prodigious.
R.S. Do you often go back to The Maritimes?
H.M. I do like to get back to The Maritimes, to Nova Scotia, any part of it, but especially Cape Breton.

CARP

Peter Stevens

Flotilla of fat fish swims
with the hectic dash and swerve
of birds erratic sleekness
in the clear shallows. Sensing
canoe slant in heavy black
slide over the rocks they veer
sharply together then smooth
through the darkened stretch these thick
shadows in sunned water to keep
a meticulous distance
in their fleet from the canoe:

darts over the rocks under
the keel's black to swing across
and back they are keeping near
these carp together to weave
fishy awareness slippery
round the long fat underside
of the canoe.

Waves rolling
our shadow flowing over
rocks is a carp though swiftly
they streak towards other rocks.

A. G. BAILEY

Desmond Pacey

A. G. BAILEY'S poetry has been published in four volumes,[1] in many leading periodicals, and in most major anthologies of Canadian poetry since A. J. M. Smith's *Book of Canadian Poetry* (1943), yet his reputation is restricted to a relatively small group, the *cognoscenti*. Northrop Frye has declared him in the first rank of Canadian poets; A. J. M. Smith has put him in the forefront of the intellectual tradition in our poetry. But he has no large popular following, and a literary historian might easily omit his name. Yet Bailey's poetry is difficult and at first glance almost forbidding, yet it is among the most distinctive verse published in this country in the last forty years.

This is not the occasion for a detailed account of Dr. Bailey's life, but we notice the biographical influences that have had the most effect on his verse. The first such influence was his heredity, of which he is obviously proud and makes considerable use in his later verse. He came of a family with strong intellectual and literary leanings. His father's maternal grandfather was Marshall d'Avray, first principal of the Provincial Normal School in Fredericton and for many years Professor of Modern Languages in the University of New Brunswick. D'Avray was a man of broad culture; among his pupils in Fredericton were George R. Parkin and Canon George Roberts. His paternal grandfather was Loring Woart Bailey, for fifty years Professor of Natural Sciences at U.N.B. and a teacher of Bliss Carman and Charles G. D. Roberts. The Bailey family had connections with the New England family of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and numbered among its members poets and men of letters as well as scientists and divines. Bailey's father was a pupil of Bliss Carman at the Fredericton Collegiate School and of Professor W. F. Stockley[2] at U.N.B. and developed a love of literature and the arts that persisted throughout his life. Bailey says that he often heard his father quote *Marmion, The Lady of the Lake* and other poems by Walter Scott, as well as Byron, and contemporary Canadian poets like Carman and Theodore Goodridge Roberts.

The second major influence was that of the environment in which Bailey grew up. His boyhood and youth were divided between Fredericton and Quebec

City, to which he moved with his father and mother in 1913; he was then nine. The Fredericton of his early boyhood was a small university city which had maintained a continuous tradition of literary and intellectual activity since its foundation in the late eighteenth century by United Empire Loyalists. Its chief literary luminaries in Bailey's boyhood were Bliss Carman, the two Roberts brothers and Francis Sherman: none of them was still permanently resident in the city, but they all returned as visitors and their accomplishments were eagerly followed by the citizens of their native town. Still a small college, the University of New Brunswick had a succession of distinguished young scholars of literature, philosophy, and the natural sciences, and for its size, Fredericton provided a lively intellectual milieu; it also had a superbly beautiful setting and a graceful achitectural heritage which made it an ideal home for a potential poet.

In Quebec City, Bailey attended the private High School of Quebec, where F. R. Scott was his contemporary and there he came to love the poetry of Keats and Coleridge, Tennyson and Browning. His English teacher, the Oxford graduate Claude Thompson, strongly encouraged Bailey to develop his literary inclinations, and Bailey's first poems were published in the High School magazine, of which he became editor-in-chief in 1922-23. The first published poem was "Out of the Fog", a Coleridgean narrative of forty lines which begins:

> A great junk's stern post rose and fell
> On an oily eastern sea;
> The water dripped from off her sides,
> Her sails flapped noiselessly.

Bailey now describes "Out of the Fog" as a "juvenile amalgam of gleanings from 'The Ancient Mariner', a Kipling ballad, and memories of pirate stories in the *Boy's Own Annual, Chums* and *Chatter Box*."[3]

In September 1923 Bailey returned to Fredericton and entered the University as a freshman. At the same time, his first commercially published poem, "Mogodore", appeared in *The Canadian Magazine*: it was a product of his reading of a book on Morocco and filled with vivid images of the North African desert. Bailey soon became a frequent contributor to the student magazine, *The Brunswickan*, yet he found that the once proud literary tradition of the University had sunk to a low ebb. He was determined to revive the days of Carman, Roberts and Sherman, and dreamed of founding a literary magazine to be the instrument of revival. Already he had *The Fiddlehead* in mind as the probable name of such a magazine, but the scheme did not come to reality until twenty years later. The nearest approximation Bailey could achieve in undergraduate days was to establish a poetry department in *The Brunswickan*, in which his own poems and those of Dorothy Roberts, among others, appeared. In his fourth year, in 1927, Bailey published his first book, *Songs of the Saguenay*. He was still under the spell of

the British and Canadian Romantics: the poems are descriptive, atmospheric, melancholy in mood, conventional in prosody. Significantly, Bailey chose none of them for inclusion in his selected poems, *Thanks for a Drowned Island.*

After graduating from U.N.B. in 1927, Bailey became a graduate student in history at the University of Toronto. Little happened in his first two or three years there to change the romantic bent of his poetry. The new poets he read were late Romantics like Edna St. Vincent Millay, Marjorie Pickthall and Wilson Macdonald, and his literary acquaintances were mainly traditionalists — Charles G. D. Roberts, Constance Davies Woodrow, Nathaniel Benson, Virna Sheard and Lorne Pierce (the last of whom published Bailey's second little book of verse, *Tâo*, as a Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book in 1930). In these early Toronto years, his only link with something less traditional and romantic came through his membership in E. J. Pratt's graduate seminar in Modern Poetry.

THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE in Bailey's poetic outlook and practice occurred between 1930 and 1934 as a result of three major influences. The first was his experience as a reporter for the Toronto *Mail and Empire*: he witnessed poverty, violence, police brutality, drunkenness, and corruption, and came to recognize the world as no perfumed garden. The second was his membership in a literary club which included such lively, modern-minded figures as E. K. Brown, Dorothy Livesay, Stanley Ryerson, and Henry Noyes. The third climactic influence was his encounter, in 1931, with the poetry of T. S. Eliot. I quote Bailey's own description of the event, in his yet unpublished memoirs:

> One evening Roy Daniells called on me and my fiancée Jean Craig Hamilton at her place and said, "Listen to this!" He read "The Hollow Man", "Prufrock" and *The Waste Land.* I experienced the greatest excitement such as I had never experienced before and have never since experienced. All sorts of inchoate and previously ill-defined feelings and experiences suddenly came into focus. One felt transfigured, and one could only think that the old symbols and intonations and meanings had become completely dead, that a great spiritual void had been created by a sense of the bankruptcy of nineteenth century beliefs and standards, that the economic system under which we lived was in a state of distintegration, that the great urban wilderness of the modern world marked the sterility and death of our society. Eliot supplied the catharsis. He had pronounced the epitaph on the past. We felt that there was nothing more to be said, that nothing more truly meaningful could be said in prose or rhyme. We came to know all his work by heart, and soon we could think and speak and write only in terms of his images, cadences and meanings.

As a result of this encounter with Eliot's verse, Bailey began to write in a new way. Soon appeared in *The Canadian Forum* his modernist poems: "Best Seller,"

"Hochelaga", "From Day to Day", "Guide", "Seed", and "Rapprochment". Borrowing from Eliot colloquial diction and rhythms and the allusive and ironic method, Bailey gradually developed his own distinctive style by using Canadian idioms and alluding to his own spheres of knowledge and experience. With Robert Finch and Roy Daniells he established a small group that met weekly over lunch to read their poems and engage in mutual criticism and emulation. Shortly afterwards, he formed a friendship with Malcolm Ross, another student from U.N.B. who had come to Toronto for graduate work: Ross too was writing poems, although he was subsequently to establish his reputation as scholar, critic and editor of the New Canadian Library. Another friend of this period was Earle Birney, like Daniells a graduate of U.B.C., who had come to Toronto to do graduate work in English.

In 1934-5, Bailey and Birney were both in London as holders of Royal Society overseas fellowships. Birney was deeply engaged in Trotskyite politics and through him, Bailey came into contact with leftist groups, and confirmed a political outlook which he had begun to develop in Toronto. But he never became deeply immersed in politics and the most enduring influences of this period were intellectual ones. He was a student of the sociologist, Morris Ginsberg, by whom he was introduced to Arnold Toynbee. With Toynbee, the first volume of whose monumental *Study of History* has just been published, Bailey had long discussions on the philosophy of history. Looking forward to a career in the New Brunswick Provincial Museum in Saint John, Bailey also studied the Chinese and other collections in the Victoria and Albert and the British Museums. For his poetry the chief significance of this year was to augment his erudition. He is perhaps the most learned of Canadian poets, and in his poetry draws freely on his knowledge of history, sociology, anthropology, art, archaeology, and political science.

The only purely literary discovery that Bailey recalls from his London period was his reading, in a copy of *New Verse*, of a poem by Dylan Thomas. In the unpublished memoirs, he says of this experience:

> The poem was so unlike anything I had read before, that I undoubtedly recognized, as anyone would have recognized, that here was a new turning point in English literature, the first since Eliot. While it did not have the profound effect on me that Eliot's work had had, it stimulated me to write in a way that I had not done before. I did not imitate his style, but it touched a spring which led me ... to invent a new verse form in inchoate images, syncopated, galloping, and offbeat, as exemplified in my poems "The Winter Mill, and "The Feat Flame" which I wrote during that winter in London. On returning to Canada I found that none of my literary friends knew anything of Dylan Thomas, and as a matter of fact it was only after several years had gone by that I heard of him again, and by then he was famous everywhere.

Dylan Thomas did not become a major influence upon Bailey's own work, but a

diffused influence is sometimes apparent in the piled-up explosive rhythms and in the rapidly shifting, frequent and audacious metaphors.

The London year was followed by three years as an official of the Provincial Museum in Saint John, years so filled with onerous duties that Bailey's literary activities came to a virtual standstill. It was only after he became Professor of History at U.N.B. in Fredericton in 1938 that another influential experience occurred. Bailey revived his dream of establishing a literary magazine, and the first step was the founding of the Bliss Carman Society in 1940. This was a group of young persons, mainly students, who met once a week or so to read their poems and criticize each other's efforts. It was in this connection that I first knew Bailey, since soon after my arrival at the University in 1944 he invited me to join the group. Other early members of the group were Elizabeth Brewster, Fred Cogswell and Robert Gibbs. We launched *The Fiddlehead* in 1945; it is still alive and well thirty years later.

His association with *The Fiddlehead* had a strong influence on Bailey's own career as a poet: it stimulated him to write more and better work than he had previously accomplished, and many of his finest poems appeared in its pages. The late Forties and early Fifties was a period of intense productivity, culminating in the publication of *Border River* in 1952.

As the years passed, Bailey took on so many chores at the University that his poetic production slowed almost to a halt. Teaching a full load of courses in history, Bailey was Head of the Department of History, Dean of Arts, and Honorary Librarian, all at the same time. Later, shedding the other posts, he became Vice-President (Academic). It was only in his late Sixties, when he gave up administrative duties, that Bailey was able to resume systematically the writing of verse. At the age of seventy, he is still at work; and since he comes of a long-lived family he may continue for a good many years. It would certainly be premature to essay a definitive assessment of his verse, but in the pages that follow a preliminary appraisal is attempted.

To all intents and purposes, Bailey's poems worthy of appraisal are those found in *Border River* and *Thanks for a Drowned Island*. The poems contained in *Songs of the Saguenay* and *Tâo* are undergraduate verse typical of nature descriptions, especially descriptions of the sea, melancholy love songs, vague evocations of romantic scenes and exotic places. The chief influences at work are those of English Romantics and Victorians, particularly Keats, Coleridge and Tennyson, and of the Canadian poet Bliss Carman, whose effect can be seen in lines such as these:

There was a smile you gave me
That was native to the land
Of wide and tossing oceans
And of silver sifted sand. . . .

("Micheline on the Saguenay")

Tâo reprinted in unrevised form a number of poems from the previous volume, but in the new poems the chief fresh influence discernible is that of Swinburne:

Give me, Kathleen, one glance of langour and longing
That I may sleep at peace with the golden dawning.

("Fredericton Revisited in the Autumn")

In this second volume the only real hint of new directions is contained in the final poem, "Astromathematic", which has a kind of imagist sparseness and clarity:

Some god took compasses;
With centre moon, and radius infinite,
Described an arc of mist upon the sky.
Near by
Three points of light
Burned bright,
A triangle isosceles and tall.
They all
Patterned upon the night —
The moon, the mist, the stars —
Gold bars
And silver schemes of light.

Anyone who had failed to read Bailey's poems in periodicals of the Thirties and Forties and knew only his first two volumes, must have been flabbergasted by *Border River*. The vague melancholy and regular verse forms of the early books had been replaced by powerful emotions and a creative use of free verse. What a contrast there was between, say, "Micheline on the Saguenay" and this new poem of another river, "Miramichi Lightning":

The sachem voices cloven out of the hills
spat teeth in the sea like nails
before the spruce were combed to soughing peace.

They said a goliath alphabet at once
and stopped to listen to their drumming ears
repeat the chorus round a funeral mountain.

Hurdling a hump of whales they juddered east,
and there were horse-faced leaders whipped the breath
from bodies panting on the intervales.

The lights were planets going out for good
as the rancour of a cloud broke off and fell
into the back of town and foundered there.

The regular rocking-horse rhythms of the early verse have given way to irregular rhythms which match and augment the meaning, as in the third line of the first stanza where the idea of the temporary subsidence of the wind is enhanced by the extended length and retarded pace. Stock romantic epithets have gone, and either old words have been used in a new way or new words have been invented. "Voices" when "cloven out of the hills" become tongues and lips and can spit; wind passing over spruce trees combs them, so that they not merely sigh but sough, an unusual but precise word meaning to make a soft murmuring sound; to shout is not merely to speak loudly but rather to say "a goliath alphabet", so that one sees giant-sized letters being hurled into the air; voices "judder", a word which I assume Bailey to have invented to suggest both the forward thrust of jut and the lateral shaking suggested by the word shudder;[4] "rancour", an abstract noun, is transfigured into a concrete one, into something sulphurous and solid which can break off and fall, presumably by thinking of the similar word "rancid" with all its connotations of unpleasant taste, smell and texture, and of "anchor" with its connotations of solidity, weight and the sea ("foundered").

The creative technique of this poem is matched by its freshness and originality of content. Without thrusting it upon us, Bailey has obviously drawn upon his extensive knowledge of the Indians of the eastern sea-board so that his imagination is able to transmogrify a violent thunderstorm in some such town as Newcastle or Chatham, N.B., into an angry lament of Algonquin chiefs for the destruction of their culture. The force of their anger is conveyed to us not by abstract descriptions nor by vague laments but by the active verbs which serve as the straining sinews of the poem — verbs such as cloven, spat, combed, drumming, hurdling, juddered, whipped, panting, going out, broke off, fell and foundered.

"The Winter Mill" may be chosen as another example of the new freedom and originality of both style and content found in *Border River*. The opening lines will perhaps be sufficient to indicate the quality:

The winter mill will not return this
often
a granary for months of ill at
ease
Nor will the thaw engage to round and
soften
the burden of its coffin; from the
knee
to thigh and upwards cold as any fish
hook

will it look to sweep a mist from sunken
eyes,
nor gather to its heart its cherished
april.

That echoes of Bliss Carman still linger in Bailey's imagination is clear from the final phrase, but what a differance is here from the unassimilated Carmanesque influences of *Songs of the Saguenay*! Instead of the lingering, self-indulgent Carman rhythm, the lines have been deliberately decapitated and bent back upon themselves to suggest the destructive force which the poet sees in the natural world. The meaning is conveyed almost in a subliminal fashion: one grasps it without being quite aware of what and how. That one is being warned that the warm spring weather which has intervened to break the grip of winter cannot be expected to last or often to return is clear, but there is no firm progression of logic nor any easily discernible pattern of images The images in particular seem to follow one another arbitrarily, and it is almost impossible to see their connection. The image of the winter mill works in itself, suggesting by its imagined turning sails the cycle of the seasons, but one associates a windmill with water rather than with grain, so that when one comes to "this granary" one has to assume that the mill was not a windmill after all but rather a fanning mill, used in granaries in winter and therefore, on this second guess, acceptable as a "winter mill". Similar ambiguities surround the images of the corpse and coffin, the fish-hook and the sunken eyes: one is being tortured to follow the sudden twists and turns of the poet's imagination, but since the poem is about the agonies of living the very difficulties are a positive feature of the poem's success.

As this poem would suggest, the predominant mood of *Border River* is a sad one. The title poem alludes to the Saint Croix River, which flows along the border between New Brunswick and Maine. Bailey sees it as a symbol of man's failure to band together in brotherhood:

Yet if a cairn were put upon his bosom's sward
it could teach the mummers something for a day of international
mourning,
marking the count of time, to point a finger
at the sign-manual of the common dream,
lost by men whose counsels failed, who wrecked
the common structure of their Father's house.

The mourning for man's failure to realize his human potentialities, together with a wistful, almost forlorn quest for a tranquility glimpsed or dreamed of but apparently never to be re-found or found, is the dominant theme of the book.

To suggest this increasing but apparently never-ending quest for peace or vision, Bailey frequently uses the image of a sea voyage — see, for example, "The Unreturning", "Regression of the Pelasgians", "North West Passage" and "Thanks

for a Drowned Island". This in itself, of course, is not particularly original; what is striking is the detailed knowledge of seamanship and navigation which Bailey displays. His ships and voyages are not merely symbols: they are actual crafts and journeys, described in the technical vocabulary of the sailor's trade. This further illustrates the surprising reach of Bailey's erudition, and results from family tradition and personal experience. His family had extensive marine connections and Bailey says that he "more conscious of ships and the sea than anything else in my early life". As a youth he spent his summers at Tadoussac, on the Saguenay, which he describes as "a place of lightships, lighthouses, fog horns, shoals, wild tides and currents in which we rowed, sailed, swam . . . " All this background of knowledge and experience explains the easy authority of such lines as these, from the opening of "North West Passage":

> He clambered aboard the rocking boat while the waves
> like the bright fins of fabulous fish kept slapping
> the planks of the dock.
> The rich water rewarded him as he climbed in the sail,
> and away in the cloak of the gale he wrapped his thanks
> as trim as a clock
> geared, and unhampered as halyards, by the trim hand
> held and felt.

But if the voyages are, or are cleverly made to seem, actual journeys, they are also symbolic quests. So also are the journeys over mountains or through woods and wilderness which occur in such poems as "The Frank and Gentle Hand", "Shrouds and Away", "His Age was On" and "Megalopolis". What is being sought for, and what hope is there of its being found? At certain times it appears that what is being sought is human brotherhood and concord, and that there is indeed some hope, however remote, of achieving it. At other times the phraseology — for example, in "The Unreturning", "the lone hand / at the wheel / whose face is caught in a tanned and wrinkled dream" — suggests a Christian pilgrimage, a search for the divine, and here the hope, although not entirely absent, is very muted indeed and, as Northrop Frye has noted, it is certainly hope rather than faith.

One comes away from reading Bailey's poems, however, convinced that he is a deeply religious man, and not merely a humanist, though his religion is not orthodox nor institutional. Bailey confirms this in a personal note to me, in which he describes his early orthodoxy as a member of the Church of England but says that in later years "it was as though God became a beneficent force, a Platonic idea, real but almost impersonal and perhaps unreachable. I continued to feel religious and to have reverence, but I had no precise dogma any longer."

Serious poems of spiritual questing dominate *Border River*, but there are lighter

poems, chiefly satires, to act as leaven — poems such as "Rococo Game", "From Day to Day", "Best Seller", "Isobel" and "The Fruit of Now". It is a significant mark of Bailey's versatility that he can bring off playful poems as successfully as serious ones. These lines from "Isobel" will serve to illustrate this aspect of his talent:

> She grew more love than he could
> bear.
> She went to trim his morning
> heart.
> She quickened all his little
> leaves.
> His railings fell and left him
> bare.

THERE WAS a twenty-one year interval between the publication of *Border River* and *Thanks for a Drowned Island*, and the latest book reprints thirty poems from its predecessor and offers only forty-seven new poems. The new poems, however, were very much worth waiting for. Some of them are variants on Bailey's old major theme of quest, but others break new ground. There are several very moving poems which explore or re-create the history of his family — "Angel Gabriel", for example, and "A Chronicle of Other English" — and others in which Bailey goes back to memories of his own childhood.

"A Chronicle of Other English" commemorates some of Bailey's colonial ancestors, the Slaughters, and describes most powerfully the death of his grandfather in Fredericton in 1925. The bulk of the poem is almost too drily factual, packed with names and dates although rescued from tedium by striking images and turns of phrase, but it culminates in a magnificent line which by its very eloquence and power lifts the whole poem to a plane of universality:

> When times grow small may men take heart from these.

Perhaps the best of the poems which recollect Bailey's childhood is "Mr. McGinty's Claw", which manages to combine a sense of childish innocence with a sense of the macabre:

> Mr. McGinty's claw
> was the only one I ever saw.
> The hand on which it was affixed
> was holding an apple tart,
> I was holding a five-cent piece
> with which to buy a bun
> at the age of six

beneath the elms of Charlotte Street.
It was scary
to one so young.
But as no choice presented itself
I handed Mr. McGinty the money
and remember to this day
the point of his claw catching it up
and a bit of skin from the palm of my hand along with it.

This poem further illustrates Bailey's versatility, for it has few of his usual characteristics such as distorted or strained syntax and erudite allusions: it has an almost imagist directness, clarity, and simplicity, and achieves its effects by understatement and severe emotional restraint.

Another group of new poems are social, political or historical commentaries, such as "Canadian Flag Debate", "Here in the East", "Confederation Debate", "La Route Jackman", "The Shadow of Mr. McGee", and "Seventeen Seventy-six". Generally speaking, this group is less successful, for the complex allusiveness and metaphorical elaboration which Bailey employs in most of them seem alien to the genre. One of them, however, "Here in the East", is one of the best poems in the book. Simply and straightforwardly, by choosing and starkly presenting a series of images of the contemporary Maritime scene Bailey evokes a deeply tragic sense of the decay of a once-proud culture:

Here in the east the barns are empty of grass
and commerce has moved to the focal canals
and freight yards
of the smoking west.
From the muddy rims of the tidal estuaries
the wrecks of tugs stick out, a tourist's emblem,
graphs of decay and a kind of awakening.
Framed through the posts of a once-fenced field
our glaucous vision rests on rusted trash
thrown long ago.
The tons of timber buoyed on the bend of the teeming
river
are nothing now but a yellowed notation
in an archivist's scrapbook.
Last week a class of grade-eight pupils
were told by their teacher
of Champlain, La Tour, Chandler and Mitchell,
and the tribe of the Glasiers.
When they grow up they will forget all that and
go to live in Toronto.

Perhaps the most interesting new note sounded in the more recent poems is that of ironic acceptance of the poet's own limitations, found in at least two of the

finest poems in the book, "I Could Not Reach the Star" and "The Muskrat and the Whale". The final lines of the latter poem, with their air of ease and assurance combined with due modesty, may be quoted to illustrate Bailey's work in its most recent phase:

> Let whales wake and sleep in their
> own water,
> the muskrat in his.
> His bliss, like an emulsion, injects
> his veins and arteries, a whale's
> capillaries accommodate a liquor
> immense and sedate.
> Dignity and industry lend size to the muskrat.
> His size is his own, and mete.
> The whale may think his dignity is greater.
> The muskrat would be able, if the
> thought struck him,
> to prove his own title to this quality
> sooner or later.

In this poem the best of Bailey's qualities come together: colloquial ease of diction and rhythm, the functional use of line divisions, playfulness overlying a deep seriousness of purpose, empathy, and a kind of humane dignity and tolerance of outlook.

In the opening paragraph of this paper I suggested that Alfred G. Bailey's poetry is difficult, distinctive and distinguished. It is a difficult poetry not because Bailey seeks deliberately to obscure his meaning, but rather because he is trying to convey to us the products of a complex sensibility and of an erudite and sensitive mind. And he is trying to convey those things to us not in stereotyped phrases and rhythms, but in original and organic words, images, and music. His own mind hesitates, pounces, gallops off after a glimpsed target, leaps to its goal, or falls back to prepare a new start — and in his poetry he tries to re-create the actual sense of these movements of his mind. This necessarily poses problems for those with slower, more orthodox, or less erudite minds, but the effort to follow him is a rewarding one. Again, his poetry is distinctive because he has a uniquely rich mind which he freely opens up to us. The early poetry was not distinctive, because it made use of conventional material and displayed it in traditional forms. In his later poetry we witness an independent wrestle with language to make it communicate that which is peculiar and indeed unique to his sensibility. Finally, it is a distinguished poetry because that wrestle with language is ultimately successful, so that in his best poems we hear the assured accents of a man who is saying exactly what he wishes to say as only he can say it: "His size is his own, and mete."

NOTES

[1] *Songs of the Saguenay* (1927), *Tâo* (1930), *Border River* (1952), and *Thanks for a Drowned Island* (1973).

[2] A friend of the leader of the Irish literary Renaissance, Douglas Hyde (who replaced him for one year at U.N.B.)

[3] This, and most of the other quotations attributed to Dr. Bailey, are from a transcript of his tape recorded memoirs which he made available to me. In a few cases, so identified, the quotations come from notes written directly to me.

[4] Dr. Bailey modestly disclaims the invention of "judder". He believes that he encountered it in an early poem by W. H. Auden.

A STRECTCHABLE WORLD

Alden Nowlan

Put your thoughts on the grocer's
scale, apply the tailor's tape
to your emotions, you
who depend on maps
to measure the distances
between people.

Sylvia's voice
so close to my ear
that no one else
in this room could hear it
— that was on the telephone
and I was drunk.

When I send her a letter
there are the spaces
that divide
my mind from my fingers,
my fingers from the page,
the page from what I wish it
to be, and that is only
the start —
it is a very long way
from here to Connecticut.

MODERN ACADIAN POETRY

Introduced and Translated
by Fred Cogswell

SCHOLARS INTERESTED in obtaining a detailed knowledge of modern Acadian literature may do so by reference to a remarkably limited number of sources.

The first serious representation and treatment of Acadian poetry in a Canadian magazine occurred in Volume II, number 5, of *liberté*, published in Montreal in the Fall of 1969. Poets represented in this issue are: Léonard Forest, Raymond LeBlanc, Roger Savoie, Marie-Josée Marcil, Herménégilde Chiasson, and Romeo Savoie. Other Acadian material included a French translation by Léonard Forest of extracts from Longfellow's *Evangéline* accompanied by an article entitled "Evangéline qui es-tu"; an extract from Placide Gaudet's "Le Grand Dérangement"; "Survol historique de l'Acadie" by Michel Roy; "La Récuperation d'un Passé Ambigu" by Camille Richard; "Notes sur l'Acadie" by Dorval Brunelle; "La Repression en Acadie" by Roger Savoie; "La Violence" by Monique Gauvin; "Interview avec Michel Blanchard" by Dorvel Brunelle; "L'Art en Acadie" by Pierre Villon; and "Journal de Bord" by Jean-Guy Pilon.

In January 1972, *La Revue de l'Université de Moncton* presented a 118-page anthology devoted to Acadian poetry. Not only did it present a large collection of verse in which almost every modern Acadian poet was represented, but it included two excellent articles on modern Acadian poetry, "Bilan des 20 Dernières Années" by Pierre Roy and Gérard LeBlanc, and "Sur le Production Poétique au Nouveau-Brunswick" by Alain Masson. Featured as well by extensive extracts from their work, interviews, articles and bibliography are two of the leading Acadian poets, Ronald Després and Raymond LeBlanc.

ellipse, No. 16, brought out in 1974, in Sherbrooke, Quebec, an issue devoted to Maritime poetry in both French and English. In it Acadian poetry is represented in translation. The poets selected are Raymond LeBlanc, Herménégilde Chiasson, André Arsenault, Ulysse Landry, Guy Arsenault, Léonard Forest, Calixte Duguay, and Guy Letendre. There is, moreover, an excellent article by Pierre-André Arcand, translated into English and entitled "Poets from the End of the Earth".

Also published in 1974 was *Ecrits du Canada Francais* No. 38, in which Pierre-André Arcand presented selections from the work of Raymond LeBlanc, Herménégilde Chiasson, Ulysse Landry, Guy Letendre, André Arsenault, Guy Arsenault, Calixte Duguay, Raynald Robichaud, Rino Morin, and Melvin Gallant.

Readers whose curiosity about Acadian poetry is whetted by a reading of these periodicals are referred to Les Editions d'Acadie, P.O. 2006, Moncton, which is issuing attractive, paperback volumes of the leading Acadian poets in series. The series to date comprises the following books: *Acadie Rock* (1973) by Guy Arsenault; *Mourir à Scoudouc* (1974) by Herménégilde Chiasson; *Paysages en Contrabande* (1974) by Ronald Després; *Saisons Antériéures* (1973) by Léonard Forest; and *Cri de Terre* (1974) by Raymond LeBlanc.

In order to give readers some idea of the nature and extent of the revolution that has occurred in Acadian poetry over the past two and a half decades, I have included in the representative anthology which accompanies this article two poems from a book, *Poémes de mon Pays*, privately printed in Moncton in 1949 by the Reverend Napoléon P. Landry. Father Landry's work is representative of the Acadian poetry which preceded it. Written in quatrains of alternately rhyming alexandrine and using language that is formal and stilted, this work illustrates the insidious partnership that can exist between a conventionally accepted art-form and a conventionally accepted idea of a society, both of which bear little or no relationship to the reality that they are supposed to represent.

It is well realized that words, particularly symbols, can on occasion be revolutionary. What is not so well recognized is that words, particularly symbols, can weigh like a dead weight upon creativity in any real sense. Symbols may crystallize out of the warm and volatile broth of experience, but by the time they have taken shape the broth has cooled considerably and the ferment has died down; in fact the very solidity of symbols makes them the ice that keeps future ferment to a minimum. So it was in Acadia. The remnant of a people, for the most part poor and engaged in primary industries, a Francophone enclave in an Anglophone world, eked out, through hard work and self-denial, an underprivileged temporal existence for approximately two centuries. In their symbolic and eternal vision of themselves, however, they were, reinforced by the sacraments of their Church, God's chosen people, expelled like the ancient Hebrews from the promised land, and on their return, compelled to live in the nooks and crannies that the Canaanites had not filled up in the interim. At the same time, in their religion, in their language, in their family solidarity, and in their primary pursuits, they enjoyed a moral superiority over the English, a superiority which, if they remained patient and obeyed their God, would be translated miraculously into a temporal Acadia that was, somehow or other, one with their spiritual vision. And their poets, like Father Landry and the Abbé F. M. Lanteigne, celebrated in their poems not the

matter of every day — there was really very little to celebrate there — but the eternal myths that were embodied in the words: Church, home, and language, and for that purpose, the alexandrines devised at the French court for myths as far from reality as their own were as good a form as any to use — particularly since their rhythms had both the formal stiffness and sonority that were associated with the religious service that stood at the core of their mythical structure.

This mythical structure collapsed after World War II, when for the first time in their history, the Acadians were presented with a genuine opportunity to develop in other directions than the symbolic. World War II had broken down considerably the relative isolation in which so many Acadians had lived and had led, particularly in Moncton, Fredericton, and St. John, to an increased urbanization of the Acadian population. These trends were enhanced by the expansion, then inaugurated and still continuing, of both the Provincial and Federal government services — an expansion in which all Francophones enjoyed a built-in advantage — and by the equality of opportunity programme introduced by the Louis B. Robichaud government, which by a reorganization of the tax structure and the administrative base of the school system, and by the establishment of the University of Moncton provided the Acadians with educational opportunities comparable to those which their English-speaking counterparts in the Maritime provinces had long enjoyed. As a result, large numbers of Acadians were not slow in exchanging the myths of their fathers for the very pragmatic advantages of living in the present and accepting the values of the present, whatever those values may be. Among these were the new poets.

It seems to me that the current crop of Acadian poets, Herménégilde Chiasson, Ronald Deprés, Léonard Forest, Raymond LeBlanc, and Guy Arsenault, represented here, have been able, in a way that few poets of any culture or generation have been able to do, to "put first things first, and second things second, and so on". What strikes one about their work, in both form, sensibility, and content, is the way in which it expresses primarily a personal reaction, and only secondarily, incidentally, or at a distance, a doctrinaire or dogmatic conviction. These poets have been incredibly lucky in their appearance in Acadia at this particular time. Emancipated at one and the same time from both the alexandrine and from the Acadian myth in which it had been enshrined, they can be their non-rhetorical and non-traditional selves in poetry to a degree and extent impossible to any other poets writing currently in Canada's cultural milieu.

There are signs, however, that they are not content with such freedom — which is a heavy responsibility for any one to bear — but are turning for direction in both an ideological and formal sense to their contemporaries in the province of Quebec. Here again they are fortunate. Had their renaissance coincided with the heyday of the existentialism of which Saint-Denys-Garneau and Anne Hébert were the chief representatives, it is doubtful whether they would have accom-

plished more than exchange one high-sounding vacuity for another. Fortunately, they discovered the new Quebec poetry under the aegis of Gaston Miron and his successors, a poetry often doctrinaire and rhetorical but committed to an essentially personal and honest response by the individual to the circumstances of his immediate surroundings. Since the struggle between the Francophones and the Anglophones in the Maritime provinces has been much less acute than it has been in Quebec, the mixture of personal experience and doctrinaire opinion which characterized poetry in French in Canada today is better balanced in the work of Acadian poets than it is in that of their Quebec contemporaries. I am reminded in this connection of a joint reading I once gave at Edmundston, New Brunswick, a few years back. On this occasion, I read translations from various Quebec poets while a member of the staff of the Collége de St. Louis read the originals. After the reading I was talking to an Acadian woman about the readings and she said: "When you read those poems, they sounded like Canadian poems, but when he read them they were *séparatiste* poems."

In the current Anglophile milieu of conflicting styles and poetic theories, where almost every review is a manifesto for one school of bardolatory against all others, I envy these Acadian poets, who are able still to speak for themselves in their own way and at the same time speak in tune to most of their peers without violating the reality of their time and their place. I hope they may continue to keep their separate voices and adjure the inevitable unifying myth-making tendency to which art is prone for yet a little while longer — at least long enough to lay a sufficiently complex literary groundwork to build on as to ensure that no myths as simplistic as those of "Evangeline" and "the Lord's chosen people" will ever arise again in Acadia to support the inherent laziness of the human spirit. Although they can normally bear to look at unshrouded reality about as long as the naked eye can bear to look at the sun, poets should be encouraged, as long as possible, to remain "eagles of the spirit".

W. P. Landry

THE VOICE OF THE ACADIAN SOIL

following the great expulsion

I saw, as in a mist, them leaving on that day,
All my proud peasants, the ones I loved so much;
Broken-hearted toward the shore they went away:
And in the sea the great sails swelled to the wind's touch.

The wind bore them off on a limitless sea
To the globe's four corners at the tempest's will . . .
And all alone in my mortal anxiety,
In my unending dream, I remained sad and still.

For one hundred and fifty years my nutritious land
Gave them without number great sheaves of wheat;
And all my billows brought them fish to hand
From silvery depths in beams of love and light.

I still can see them land upon my banks once more . . .
In previous times the sunshine made the young corn swell;
Their arms deprived the ocean of its very shore,
And everywhere their songs rang out a waking bell.

My fields from their labours bore their abundant best.
My valleys were filled with a low-pitched moaning.
And my orchards reblooming in a dancing mist
Embalmed with their odours the light airs of Spring.

I still remember hearing their laughter crack
That rang out so loud and mocking, yet so true!
Under their feet, they felt signs of an Empire's track
And a forest of their songs twittered in the blue.

In my ardent breast I felt life's vital sprout,
I felt the pain of labour in my splitting thighs.
And a mighty clamour that nothing could put out
Rose from Grand-Pré hills in evening's blazing skies.

In their cottages the hearth-logs flamed so high
Both day and night their doors stood wide open still;
So quick their table was to greet the passers-by
That good-luck was flowing like a noiseless rill.

How oft at night I have seen, by a flash of flame,
A group of children with gold ribbons in their hair
Singing before the altar hymns to the Virgin's name . . .
Like a stained-glass window I still can see them there.

I have seen my ripe ears at the Divine Sacrifice
Becoming the "Body of Christ" amid incense rife,
And the juice of my grape to my chalice-voice
Becoming, as God wills, "A draught of Life".

There flowed from out those souls an infinite love
At the breath of the Spirit which came down from the skies,
The goodness of the Most-High seared them from above,
And the truth of the saint shone out in their eyes.

And I still see once more, as I bend the bough,
To the holy place on a sabbath holy day
The gold monstrance passing in procession slow:
A whole people worship God the Lord in this way.

Then like a Shroud the Stillness came down over me . . .
The priest, alas! never returned to me to bless;
Full before the light I could no longer see,
And I saw myself dying in my own distress.

On my evening shores the sea no longer sang,
Alone, I died in my great sorrow and pain.
Was there ever so great a grief in course of time?
Death, with his black flag, covered my coffin again.

* * *

While seeing them leave, however, as you recall
In one last look the supreme comfort for my grief,
They spoke to me softly, "We shall be faithful".
Love is more powerful in his ways than death.

Already I foresee under a flaming sky
Their bands return from what lies beyond human days!
O miracle of heaven! Inconceivable joy!
Lord, may Your name be blessed forever and always.

Léonard Forest (1928-)

AND I DREAMED OF A GREAT BLACK SUN

III

the pope is dead
the king is dead
the school master has swallowed poison.
i have no more king
nor master
nor holy father to rule over me.
the queen is dead with her king
the pope is dead his dogma as well
and the little school mistress no longer
teaches anything but love.
i have no more law
nor fear nor restraint
i am punished no more,
i reign

IV

You know what they have done.
You know,
Pale, at the end of the garden, the bust of Homer.
They have killed Homer.

Do you remember at Chartres
the blue fire of stained-glass,
inviolate.
They have put Chartres out

Chartres,
Homer,
Phedre

Phedre, you recall, wept his dainty grief aloud
In evening discussions, and his historic plight
Stirred up the passions of that infatuated crowd
For his tearful mistress. Phedre is killed tonight.

They have killed Phedre

Ronald Després (1935-)

HYMN TO SPRING

After deliberating in long whiteness
The fields decided not to wait for Easter
In order to come alive

The whip of fever lashes the forces of life
The thickets hurry to burst their fallow
The streams, to sacrifice their sharks of ice
On the greedy altar of the sun.

That levelling dirtiness in the streets
Soils equally with muddy streams
A poodle's fastidious paws
And the already filthy slums!

I HAVE LOVED YOU

I have loved you
For your simple manner of nibbling small clouds
Of those small drops of sunshine at the nape of your neck,
Those ripples of sap, from you
Or from maples aflame

I have loved you
Because of my hut you bartered for a castle
And furnished with joy
Decorating our bare walls and marrow

I have loved you
As bones cling to flesh
As oceans to a seaman
And like the gentle sails of vanished ones,
Replete with the velvet of the waves.

I THOUGHT OF YOU ALL DAY

I thought of you all day

You were there, hiding behind every moment's dune
You were behind every door
And all doors stood wide open
To the theatre of the four winds

I saw your brow, your lips, your hair,
Adorning the face of every passer-by
That I noticed;
I saw your footsteps in every crowd
Your hands in every prayer
And your voice in the flow of words.

I cried out for you to give an answer, to smile at me
To tap me on the shoulder
But every time
You vanished from the reach of my voice
To be reborn elsewhere.

My day has taken root in you
Like a tree springing from nowhere
And see how its strange sap
Dulls the memory
That twilight brings to life in me.

SILENT SAP

I am going to show you
horrible sepulchres
in the crannies of your laugh

I am going to make you tread
on ferns of hate
in your heart's flower-bed

By the fingers of our childhood
I shall lead you to our middle ages
And to our patient sand-castles
that have no panic of dungeons and towers.

I shall lead you to a tree
which we shall clasp as high as hope
until our bony stems crack out their wedding song.

And we shall be as one
as long as this long hunt for sap shall last.

Raymond Leblanc (1945-)

WINTER

I knocked on your door with my hurt hand
Winter having come in the human dark

I knocked on your door with my two hands
One already frozen and red from the white crystal
On which the moon had lain down

I knocked on your door with the wind of my mouth
But the wind got caught on a cloud of ice

I knocked on your door with the beams of my eyes
But these were glued to the cold wood

I knocked on your door with the silence of my body
Straight as a tree
But the leaves at the end of the branches were slain

I knocked on your door and I understood too late
That there was no one at home

And the door nailed me to death with its frozen stillness

LAND-CRY

I live in a land-cry with roots of fire
Buried beneath the stones of loneliness

I have slowly plowed the dreadful kelp
In a bitter season of rain
As if to slake the thirst in a crab's heart

A phantom ship I have risen to the river's surface
Toward the fulness of human tides
And I have thrown the crowd to the promises of the future

Tomorrow
We shall live as secret planets
With slow anger and the upright wisdom of dreams

I live in a land-cry above hopes
Loosened on every lip
Already moored to the sunlight on glowing trawlers

And every word abolishes the hard lie
The shameful caverns of our silence

ACADIA

If it is hard for me to live in you with my shifting sky-line
People of my land unreal through lack of frontiers and futures
It is because I am too small to have you reborn in me
Faceless men breastless women
Tongueless children

If it is sad for me to reach out my two hands to you
To rejoin you to touch you wherever you may be
It is because you are too distant and scattered everywhere
People of my land who lack your true identities

If it is impossible for me at this time to dance with you
To the jigging rhythm of your folk-songs
People of my land do not be angry
I dream of your illusions and your stifling dreams

If it is agony for me to look you straight in the eye
While the dial of a misplaced sun divides the day
It is because Acadia cradles you in her memories
In her ghosts in her night an unreal symphony

People of my land
Without identity
And without life.

Herménégilde Chiasson (1946-)

Between the Season of Extravagant Love and the Season of Raspberries

You went away opening cracks in the April ice that melted so fast, without noticing the spring as it hastened to come that year with a moist March wind sticking the leaves to their trees.

And you went away so fast that a part of me was exiled with you; went away by roads among water puddles, mud-holes, gaping wounds in asphalt bleeding dirty water over our white clothes.

And I asked myself whether I would end by crossing the pale grass of burnt-over clearings and the fresh water of thaws in the voyage I took without a return ticket to go see a garden of untroubled flowers.

There were cabbages growing nearby, and they sent me a bunch of salad. Dusk fell and cars plunged into the darkness with all the racket of refugees gaining a frontier.

I closed the garden-door again. A bouquet of Everlastings had been put on the table. I reopened the door of the house and outside the raspberries had begun to get ripe.

ALL THE KINGS HORSES

All the king's horses are dead together, my love
All the king's horses are dead in the blue stream
But from the bottom of my stream, crushed beneath the horses bodies I got up and marched, carrying the harness of my dead horse.

All the king's horses are dead together my love in the big blue stream. But there was no longer a king to own the streams. Kings had forgotten that they were kings, they had forgotten that they were alone, and that without love they were going to die with their horses that had fallen asleep to wake again no more. That, I believe, was yesterday.

All the king's horses are dead and we are dead too.
We have slipped in the water on the cold soft hair of stretched and gutted black horses bleeding red in the blue of the stream.

Guy Arsenault (1954-)

TO CELEBRATE SEPTEMBER

A garden ripened
from a summer without spring
and without autumn

I see again and again
the fishermen return from the sea
I drink again and again
from their toil-wearied hands
of earth-solitude
I drink again and again
out of their faint
and faded eyes
of a peace reflected from the sea
I drink again and again their poetry

A summer ripened
from a garden without flowers
a summer ripened
from a garden without fruit

I have hurried
I display
my colour changes
I gather in my fruits
from my summer garden
I put a damper on time
I shorten my days
I have hurried

And the colour
and the freshness
and the frost
of September weather
give us a warning:
it's there in the air
it's there in the weather
it's there in the earth
it's there in the sea
Red!!
. . . the wild Summer
of an October revolution!

THE WHARF

wooden planks nailed
tarred
salted
worn by the age of the sea

sunshine
spangled rippling
crinkling
movement
of calm water in Buctouche bay

and the cold sea wind
got to him
and made him
feel deeply

the shadow on the ground
of a sea-gull in the sun
the cry of a poet sitting
on the planks of the harbour
in Buctouche bay

salt of soil
sea-wind
sea-gull sunlight
i embrace you

and the grass-blades
growing out of the tarred
planks of the wharf
let themselves be caressed
by the sea-breeze

and the blue sky has only
a few traces of clouds on the horizon

the sea is content with it
and shows it
and the poet
sitting on the tarred
planks of the wharf
embodies everything

ISLAND WRITERS

Frances M. Frazer

No one, to my knowledge, talks of the literature of Burnaby or the literature of Mississauga, and if population alone were considered, "the literature of Prince Edward Island" would be an equally improbable topic. But in the Island's case, history and geography also have a bearing. By Canadian standards P.E.I. has a lot of eventful history. And its natural isolation has given its people a strong feeling of communal identity and a desire, if not the means, for independence. When storms shut down air and ferry services, these late and reluctant converts to Confederation say, "The mainland is cut off again," with only half a smile.

History and geography have combined to encourage literary endeavours on the Island throughout the past one hundred and twenty-five years. Most of these endeavours probably deserved the obscurity they swiftly found everywhere except in fond family circles, but a few merited more attention than they have ever received from "the mainland". And in addition to giving pleasure in themselves, they might have modified and thus helped to reconcile the heterogeneous impressions made by P.E.I.'s strange trio of fictional successes — the three legendary Island figures known off as well as on their native soil — Bud the Spud, Glooscap the demi-god, and Anne of Green Gables. Viewed without a common backdrop, these three look as incongruous as shoes and ships and sealing-wax. But in fact each of them is a valid development of one of the three dominant strains co-existing in Island literature: rowdy parochialism, folklore, and romance.

Of the three, romance has fared best beyond P.E.I.'s shores simply because Lucy Maud Montgomery was and continues to be the most solidly-talented prolific writer the Island has produced. Her books are virtually synonymous with the province's literature to non-Islanders, and the impression she tends to leave, despite all the realistic qualifications a rereading of her books must reveal, is of a romantic garden province peopled chiefly by the conservative descendants of old-country clans, steeped in caste, class, and family traditions and proprieties. Stompin' Tom Connors of Skinner's Pond, with his rake-cum-rustic air and his raucous, rhythmic ballads, is an egregious figure against her gentle orchard and garden landscapes, though he is an authentic and popular son of the country-

music-loving Island, as was his predecessor, the composer folk-singer Larry Gorman. Nor does Avonlea seem a likely evolutionary development from Minegoo (the Island), the primeval paradise of Micmac folklore, the last and best creation of the Great Spirit and a favourite haunt of Glooscap even after its decline from Eden-like tranquillity. Historically, the Micmacs got their tales told first, of course, but they were little known to white men, except missionaries and anthropologists, until the Islander Cyrus MacMillan made them accessible in *Canadian Wonder Tales* (1918) and *Canadian Fairy Tales* (1922). By that time, the Prince Edward Island of Montgomery's first *Anne* books was firmly entrenched in the popular imagination.

This is not to say that any one of the three disparate legends seriously misrepresents P.E.I. The northeastern parts of North America, where Algonquin tribes like the Micmacs once roamed and struggled to survive, still include some rugged terrain — inhospitable woodlands and harsh, rocky shores where it is easy to picture forlorn Indians squatting around capricious fires and dreaming of a semi-divine chieftain who would do unequal battle for them with the invading ice giant, King Winter. On the wilder shores of Prince Edward Island and in its thornier thickets, it is more natural to imagine Glooscap's moccasin prints than the traces of Montgomery's dreamy super-civilized lovers out for an evening stroll. A country walker in the Island's November or April gales is more likely to envision the coldly mischievous Micmac Badger than pensive, beautiful Kilmeny of the Orchard as he fights a north wind over treacherous red mud. Jacques Cartier waxed poetic when he came upon the Island coast in July 1534: "Al the said land is lowe and plaine and the fairest that may possibly be seene, full of goodly medowes and trees" (Hakluyt's translation). But he did not linger, and the gifts he left for a shy Micmac he saw pelting away from the beach were perceptively practical — a woollen scarf and a knife.

For all their comparative sophistication, the Island's folk songs and country songs are perhaps closer to the Micmac tradition than they are to Montgomery's novel-chronicles, because they too reflect hard lives sustained by brute effort in a physically and morally demanding clime. Bud the Spud's "good red mud" can produce superior potatoes, but it takes its toll of potato-growers, as do the middlemen of "Upper Canada". Until very recently, the Island's population was preeminently a population of fishermen and farmers. Wresting a living from soil and sea was not conducive of delicate niceties, literary or otherwise. Before the advent of cars and TV, foot-stomping barn dances and marathon drinking sprees were the favoured relaxations from drudgery of hard-working men. They also liked pungent stories — "true" stories about their neighbours, other communities' celebrities, and the more colourful figures and episodes of the Island's past — and tales of sheer fantasy boldly asserted, about spectrally guarded pirate treasures and vengeful ghosts of the murdered. Many of these tales are extant in the battered

remnants of limited editions — editions of memoirs and reminiscences, collections of reprinted newspaper features, community histories of particular locales. A few are allusively treated in Milton Acorn's most recent book of verse, *The Island Means Minago: Poems from Prince Edward Island* (1975). And a large number are gaining new currency in Square Deal Publications paperbacks published by an indefatigable writer, publisher, and professor of political science, Reshard Gool, assisted by his artist wife, Hilda Woolnough. Square Deal books such as Christopher Gledhill's *Folk Songs of Prince Edward Island* (1973; revised edition 1975), Sterling Ramsay's *Folklore Prince Edward Island* (1973), and ex-Premier Walter Shaw's *Tell Me the Tales* (1975) are among the new repositories of Island history, folklore, and folk humour. None of the current crop is likely to make waves beyond the Northumberland Straits, but their popularity at home indicates that they make palpable hits on Island memories and sensibilities.

But Lucy Maud Montgomery's vision of the Island also has validity. The huge handsome old frame houses of Charlottetown, Summerside, Georgetown, and Montague are imposing memorials to the large middle-class families of the nineteenth century that she depicts so effectively in scenes of ritual clan gatherings. The wildfire rumours whose paths she traces through the gossip-filled air are still credible while P.E.I.'s population remains sufficiently small and stable for everyone to know, if not everyone else, at least everyone else's brother or aunt. Despite the recently fashionable complaints about anonymity in P.E.I.'s large new district schools, modern replacements of the old one-room schools that Montgomery's characters attended, there are still grounds for the saying that if you sneeze in Tignish someone in Souris will send you a handkerchief.

Moreover, Montgomery's novels are studded with vignettes and anecdotes from actual domestic histories of the Island. Though her publishing years began with this century, her typical ambience is the late nineteenth century, and many of the tales within her tales evoke earlier, more rigorous Island times. In *Emily of New Moon*, for instance, a novel that probably reflects more of young Lucy Maud than any of the *Anne* books, Emily is bequeathed with two of Montgomery's own ancestresses. The "Mary Murray" of the book is Montgomery's great-great-grandmother, Mrs. Hugh Montgomery. En route to Quebec with her husband in 1769, Mrs. Montgomery was acutely seasick and gratefully accepted the opportunity to visit dry land when the ship paused at P.E.I. for fresh water. According to the Montgomery family,

> ... when she felt that blessed dry land under her feet once more, she told her husband that she meant to stay there. Never again would she set foot in any vessel. Expostulation, entreaty, argument, all availed nothing. There the poor lady was

> resolved to stay, and there, perforce, her husband had to stay with her. So the Montgomerys came to Prince Edward Island.
>
> (L. M. Montgomery, *The Alpine Path*)

The only fictional embellishment upon this story in *Emily of New Moon* is the captive husband's wry revenge. When, after a long and useful life, his stubborn lady died, he had her tombstone inscribed "Here I Stay", thus innocently rousing neighbourhood doubts about his belief in the Resurrection or his wife's state of grace.

On her mother's side of the family, L. M. Montgomery had another strong-willed antecedent (also given to Emily), Eliza Townshend, who came to P.E.I. as a bride in 1775 to settle on land granted her husband's family by George III. Mrs. Townshend took one horrified look at colonial life on the Island and demanded to be taken home. Her demand was repeated for weeks before she conceded defeat and at last deigned to take off her hat.

While Eliza Townshend was pacing the floor of her despised new home with her bonnet on, the oldest piece of Island writing now extant was being composed. Benjamin Chappell, a close friend and disciple of John Wesley, emigrated to Prince Edward Island in 1774. Soon after his arrival he began to keep a diary which, though it has no literary pretensions, has proved very valuable as a reliable day-to-day account of pioneer life and a topical record of events during an exciting period of Island history. (A dramatized version written by Harry Baglole and Ron Irving for the Charlottetown Confederation Centre Theatre Company was produced successfully in Charlottetown and on a provincial tour in 1974, but has not yet been printed.)

When Chappell began to keep his journal, the population of the Island was almost entirely new, all but a handful of the original Acadian settlers having been deported by the British after the fall of Louisbourg in July 1758. In 1763 George III demonstrated his control over Ile St. Jean (thence the island of St. John until 1799, when its present name was assigned) by annexing it to Nova Scotia. Soon thereafter the Island was surveyed by Captain Samuel Holland and divided into sixty-seven townships of 20,000 acres each. In 1767 these townships or "lots" (a term still current on the Island) were distributed by lottery among the King and his approved petitioners for land grants. Grantees undertook to pay quitrents on their lots for the Island's administrative needs, to encourage the establishment of fisheries, and to settle their land within ten years with at least one European Protestant to every two hundred acres. These commitments were more honoured in the breach than in the observance. A few proprietors actively promoted Island settlement, but most were content to do nothing but collect trans-Atlantic rents. By May of 1774, there were still only 1,215 residents, according to Governor Walter Patterson's estimate. And this tiny population was soon to face a serious

menace from the south as the American Revolution gathered momentum. In the event, apart from occasional shore raids by privateers, the only serious incident occurred on November 17, 1775, when two American schooners, flouting General Washington's explicit orders not to molest Canadians uninvolved in the war, invaded Charlottetown Harbour. Led by the two captains, a landing party looted storehouses, offices, and private residences and carried off the Island's acting Governor and the Surveyor-General. In the chronicles of war it was a small episode, but it added real terror of foreign invasion to the Islanders' substantial concern about economics, concern augmented by the arrival of needy Loyalist fugitives from the American states.

All things considered, in the late eighteenth century the Island had too few people, and those people had too much on their hands, for artistic composition with any staying power to be likely. And in fact, except for newspaper ephemera (some thirty newspapers were published on the Island for varying periods between 1787 and 1867), there does not seem to have been much writing for publication until the mid-nineteenth century, when the major influxes of Loyalist and Old Country immigrants were settled and the population had stabilized.

THE FIRST ISLAND AUTHORS, most of them immigrants, whose works survive tended to be rather self-conscious about celebrating their indisputably beautiful but — certainly by European standards — raw new home. They were inclined to use its natural attractions chiefly as springboards for expressions of religious or philosophical truisms. The Reverend Louis C. Jenkins, for instance (like Mrs. Hugh Montgomery an inadvertent settler), describes the Indian summer scenes along "Fair Hillsborough's flood" — the Hillsborough is actually a modestly proportioned arm of the sea — to introduce the reflection —

> But ah! how fleeting is the scene I view,
> How like the sum of man's existence, too!
> Soon will the dark and rolling clouds arise,
> And howling storms obscure the sunny skies.
> The short-lived honours of these faded trees
> Must soon be scatter'd by the wintry breeze,
> The placid flood bv tempests wildly tost,
> Wail o'er its transient beauties marr'd and lost!
> 'Tis thus with Man, his glories pass away
> Like the short triumph of a summer's day;
> The autumn of his life, serene yet brief,
> Recals the image of the fading leaf,
> The wintry clouds involve him in the gloom
> That shrouds his entrance to the lonely tomb:—

Yet faith in Christ shall triumph o'er decay,
And radiant Hope point out a brighter day. . . .

("An Indian Summer's Day in Abegweet" — published 1878)

Elizabeth Newell Lockerby, a first-generation Islander, uses dramatic events from local history in a similar way. In "George and Amanda", a long narrative poem in her first published book, *The Wild Brier; or Lays of an Untaught Minstrel* (1866), she gives a powerful description of the "Yankee Gale" of October 3 and 4, 1851, an abrupt, catastrophic storm that struck the north shore of P.E.I. destroying more than seventy vessels of a New England fishing fleet and taking an estimated 150 lives. The poet's heart is obviously in her detailed, evocative description of the storm and the ghastly shoreline scenes it left, so that it comes as something of a shock when she trundles out her trite, pious conclusion:

But as the day advanced, the storm decreased,
The wind lulled down, the sea abated, for
Its awful work of retribution was
Completed; vengeance was appeased, and
Sabbath profanity fearfully
Chastised; for that proud fleet no Sabbath knew,
But, on the day of sacred rest, pursued
Their daily round of toil, and hasted to
Be rich: and thus temptation and a snare
Beset, and swift destruction smote them down.

Of the Island's universalizing nineteenth-century poets whose work is extant, John Hunter-Duvar was the most gifted. After an active public career in the army and as P.E.I.'s Dominion Inspector of Fisheries, he settled into comparative retirement at "Hernewood", his Mill River estate on the Island. An erudite, witty, elegantly whimsical writer, Hunter-Duvar long had the distinction of being one of the few Canadian writers frequently included in American school anthologies and about the only Prince Edward Island poet known to Canadian anthologists. Among his works are the novel *Meluoran* (1893); a collection of satirical essays, *Annals of the Court of Oberon* (1895); an historical drama in verse, *De Roberval* (1888); and a mock-epic fantasy, *The Emigration of the Fairies* (1888); about a supposed emigration of fairies from Britain to Epaygooyat (Prince Edward Island under its Indian name, which is usually spelled Abegweit). The fairies' voyage is an arduous one:

Not knowing contrary, they feared that ever
Their raft might wallow on the restless breast
Of cruel ocean, and that never, never
With life remaining could they be at rest
Despair came, as to tourists in the Channel,
Who call for death, and brandy and hot flannel.

But at last they sight land:

> A long low line of beach, with crest of trees,
> With openings of rich verdure, emerald hued,
> And as the string o' the tide and landward breeze
> Wafted them nearer in a thankful mood
> They blessed the land and beach of ruddy brown,
> And off the shore lay bobbing up and down.
> Now this fair land was EPAYGOOYAT called,
> An isle of golden grain and healthful clime,
> With vast fish-teeming waters, ocean-walled ,
> The smallest Province of the Martime.
> Up on the beach the Fairies' Raft was cast,
> And on Canadian land stuck hard and fast.

The fairies have reached Hernewood and an unselfconsciously Canadian poet-landlord who "charges them no rent".

Then there was the Reverend Maurice Swabey, a poet of smaller, less flexible talent than Hunter-Duvar, but one who could also proclaim the Island's attractions without apparent diffidence in such outpourings as "A Silver Thaw in Abegweet":

> . . . Look forth to-day! and in your ravish'd breast,
> Bee all her claims to loveliness confess'd!
> Look forth to-day! the "silver age", again,
> Hath surely dawned upon the haunts of men.
> Or, we have pass'd since evening's shadows fell
> To fabled isles where fairies only dwell!
>
> (*Voices from Abegweet, or The Home on the Wave*, 1878)

In the same period, Charles W. Hall, son of a Charlottetown-Boston trader, was writing lively, uninhibited prose and verse about dramatic episodes of Maritimes history. His works include *Legends of the Gulf* (1970), narrative poems illustrated by Robert Harris (an Island artist now best known for his painting "The Fathers of Confederation"); *Twice Taken: An Historical Romance of the Maritime Provinces* (1867), a story about the fortress of Louisbourg; and *Adrift in the Ice Fields* (1877), a fantasy about a group of people floating around P.E.I. on an iceberg.

But on the whole, the more serious Island poets of the time tended to be coy and shamefast about their small rustic island home — or to ignore it altogether. Among the successful ignorers was the Reverend Cornelius O'Brien, a native of New Glasgow, P.E.I., who became the fourth Roman Catholic Archbishop of Halifax. His *Aminta — A Modern Life Drama* (1890), a pathetic tale of "a soul / Proud, passionless, with self-control, / But cankered by Agnostic blight" expresses new-world conservative pieties in old-world settings. Except for the Holy City, Archbishop O'Brien has small use for Europe, birthplace of the scientific

spirit, where his wretched male protagonist Coroman searches for a creed. For example —

With Hegel, Fichte, and all that crew
    Next sought he truth that should be clear;
    But German lore, like German beer,
Is stomached only by the few;
    It bears the froth of pompous phrase,
    No ray of reason clews its ways,
To mind and sense a dreary view.

O'Brien's contemporary the Methodist Reverend Archibald Ross was similarly non-parochial in his poetry, though perhaps something of the Island's atmosphere crept into his celebrations of the virtues of fresh air in *Duty and Other Poems* (1901). Once, the Reverend Ross assures his slightly incredulous reader, a doctor declared him almost dead, whereupon he jumped from his bed and ran for miles in the cold night air, achieving a complete cure. Thereafter —

When chill or asthma came in sight,
And threatened to renew the fight,
Deep breathing in the cold, clear air
And vigorous travel soon would stare
Then out of countenance in a time
Far speedier than this sullen rhyme.

("Fifty-four")

Generally speaking, then, there was some reason for John Lepage, the nineteenth-century "Poet Laureate of P.E.I.", to complain that he found the instrument of Island poesy hanging dusty from disuse. And Lepage himself was most at ease in light-verse accounts of comic local episodes, though he also tried to do the Island serious poetic justice:

My native Isle! fit subject for the lays
Of sweeter minstrel, still the prompting power
Which led me simply to attempt thy praise
Shall sweetly prompt me to my latest hour;
For bound to thee by nature's tender ties,
To thee I feel my warmest wish must flow.
Thy verdant fields, thy placid summer skies,
Thy loaded autumns, and thy winter's snow —
All nearest to my thought, if reason reigns,
Must ever prompt the song, while love of song remains.

(*The Island Minstrel*, 1860)

Lucy Maud Montgomery also felt the "prompting power" and succumbed to it in the contents of *The Watchman and Other Poems* (1916), a volume that proves how right she was to specialize in prose.

Few of the early Island writers attempted substantial prose fiction. Apart from

Montgomery's, the only Island novel now easily accessible is Elizabeth Stuart MacLeod's loose collection of barely motivated melodramatic unlikelihoods misleadingly entitled *Donalda, a Scottish-Canadian Story* (1905). The heroine, pursuing her riches-to-rags-to-riches career in Scotland and, fleetingly, in Canada, barely pauses in Prince Edward Island to try simple bucolic pleasures before plunging into the more congenial delights of Ottawa's high life. Her happy ending is in Scotland. There she is last seen reading a letter from her mother, once a beautiful irresponsible adulteress, then the unrecognized nurse of her wounded son, and finally a penitent and saintly ministrant to ailing Micmacs. Since the entire production is almost completely arbitrary, there is a perverse consistency in the peroration to P.E.I. near its conclusion:

> ... from that speck upon the ocean, that smallest of all the provinces of Canada, some have gone forth to sacrifice young life in upholding the Empire's glory; while such as the sublime philosopher and soulful poet-archbishop O'Brien; the scholarly university president, Schurman; the gifted statesman, Sir L. H. Davies: the upright-minded ex-Governor Laird, and others, have made their mark, amid the world's ablest competitors, afar beyond the island of their birth.

L. M. MONTGOMERY has perhaps one rival for top honours as P.E.I.'s most successful writer of fiction in an expatriate novelist, the Reverend Basil King (it used to be said that the Island's principal exports were potatoes, professors, and politicians — to which list might be added preachers). A native of Charlottetown, King left the Maritimes in early manhood to become rector of Christ Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Except for a ten-year interlude in Europe, he spent the rest of his life in Massachusetts, and the numerous novels among his thirty-two books are Dreiser-like portrayals of American urban life in the early twentieth century. They include *Let Not Man Put Asunder* (1901), *The Inner Shrine* (1908), *The Side of the Angels* (1916), *The Lifted Veil* (1917), *The City of Comrades* (1919), *The Empty Sack* (1921), *The Dust Flower* (1922), *The Happy Isles* (1923), and *The High Forfeit* (1925).

Whether or not P.E.I. could legitimately claim him as an "Island author", or would want to, King was an interesting and not inconsiderable novelist. A strict yet subtle and compassionate moralist, he was both attracted and repelled by glamorous, sophisticated sinners of wealth sufficient to preclude economic excuses for their departures from grace. His typical hero is a kind but uncompromising Puritan, cast among socialites gone luxuriantly astray, and tempted to a point at which his moral victories over himself are hard-won and uncomplacent. But for all his three-dimensional credibility and his often strong, compelling plots, King's work has dated as pervasively as Gerald DuMaurier's and Warwick Deeping's, both of which it resembles — dated as Montgomery's less pretentious fiction has

not. Canadian or American, he is largely forgotten, though he enjoyed notable popularity in his day.

In the early twentieth century three multiply-talented Islanders, Robert Harris (born in Wales but an Islander from the age of seven), Sir Andrew MacPhail, and Edgar W. McInnis, made some noteworthy contributions to literature. The artist Harris wrote slight but engaging occasional verse which was collected and published by his family under the title *Verses by the Way* in 1920, the year after his death. His prose anecdote "A Surveying Experience in Prince Edward Island", relating an uncomfortable encounter with squatters armed to stop a landowner's survey, is a lively bit of storytelling as well as a vivid record of a typical nineteenth-century Island episode. ("A Surveying Experience", first told to members of the Montreal Pen and Pencil Club, is reprinted in Allan Graham's *Island Prose and Poetry: An Anthology* (1973) and in Moncrieff Williamson's *Robert Harris 1849-1919: An Unconventional Biography* (1970).) Sir Andrew MacPhail, O.B.E., physician, surgeon, and teacher as well as writer, received the 1930 Lorne Pierce medal for service to Canadian literature. His non-fiction works include *Essays in Puritanism* (1905), *Essays in Politics* (1909), *Essays in Fallacy* (1912), and *The Bible in Scotland* (1931). In 1916 he published *The Book of Sorrow*, a collection of his own hymns and poems on death, and in 1921 he completed an English translation of *Maria Chapdelaine*. But he is probably best known to readers for *The Master's Wife* (1939), a realistic portrayal of rural life in P.E.I. in the late nineteenth century, based on the experiences of his mother, Catherine Moore Smith MacPhail. Edgar McInnis, Rhodes Scholar, professor of history at the University of Toronto and later at York University (where he received a D.Lit. in 1972), began his writing career with two volumes of poetry, *Poems from the Front* (1918) and *The Road to Arras* (1920). Subsequently he was awarded two Governor General's Awards for academic non-fiction for his *The Unguarded Frontier* (1942) and *The War* (1940-46), a six-volume history of World War II.

Apart from L. M. Montgomery's continuing stream of fiction (the last of her books published in her lifetime appeared in 1939), little creative literature seems to have been written by Islanders from 1920 until very recent times. Cyrus MacMillan did his adaptations of Micmac tales at the beginning of the period. They have since been collected and reprinted in a handsome volume, *Glooskap's Country and Other Indian Tales* (1967) by Oxford University Press. Another expatriate Island ecclesiastic, the Roman Catholic Bishop Francis Clement Kelley, wrote some fourteen books of religious philosophy, autobiography, and fiction (for example the novel *Pack Rat: A Metaphoric Fantasy* (1942)), but like Basil King's, his fiction is set in his adopted homeland. His younger sister, Lucy Gertrude (Kelley) Clarkin, wrote conventional but lucid and touching verse, some of which is extant in her privately published *Way of Dreams* (1920) and in Reshard Gool's *Three Women Poets of P.E.I.* (1973).

What poetry there was tended toward sombreness and even gloom. McInnis wrote of war, MacPhail wrote of mortality, and Mrs. Clarkin was understandably preoccupied by the early deaths of three of her children. But P.E.I. also had its own Edgar Guest in the person of John Lamont-Campbell, the self-styled "John of the Lilacs", author of *Golden Moments Coined in the Mint of Time* (1947). A relentlessly rhythmic celebrant of such safe ideals as beauty, duty, home and country, and mother love, he does not provide much deliberate humour. His closest approach to the uncelestial is his prose dictum, "Very few, if any, will suffer from housemaid's knee through praying to the Almighty God." But he can be inadvertently funny:

> Crowned by that God above,
> With glory in her hair
> Genetic wonder of His choice —
> O woman! wondrous fair.

And for all his lyrical unction, Lamont-Campbell had a worldly streak that is evident in one of his "Gems of Thought": "There are many ways of acquiring wealth: the most beautiful is by turning an inkwell into a gold mine." He did not achieve the metamorphosis, but he did make his name in P.E.I. by the simple but arduous method of hawking his book at almost every Island door.

More recently, two centenaries — of the Confederation Convention in 1864 and P.E.I.'s entry into Confederation in 1873 — sparked a new explosion of Island writing. Histories of the Island appeared in rapid succession: Lorne C. Callbeck's *The Cradle of Confederation* (1964), J. Henri Blanchard's *The Acadians of Prince Edward Island* (1964), Francis W. P. Bolger's *Prince Edward Island and Confederation, 1863-1873* (1964) and his historical anthology *Canada's Smallest Province* (1973). (Dr. Bolger has also written a well-documented edition of L. M. Montgomery's girlhood letters, *The Years Before "Anne"* [1974], published by the P.E.I. Heritage Foundation.) Moncrieff Williamson's highly readable biography of Robert Harris (McClelland and Stewart, 1970) was a timely addition to this historical group.

Besides *Canada's Smallest Province*, the Prince Edward Island 1973 Centennial Committee has sponsored some publications of creative writing, including *Variations on a Gulf Breeze* (1973), a collection of contemporary P.E.I. verse and short prose pieces, and Allan Graham's *Island Prose and Poetry*, an anthology in which many of the writers mentioned here are represented, as well as a handful of Island writers in Gaelic and French who are not dealt with in this article.

In the meantime, the Island-born poet Milton Acorn has been winning national recognition with his gift for a telling phrase and his bent toward truculent political punditry. *I've Tasted My Blood* (1969), his sixth book, made him known across the country, and *The Island Means Minago* has now securely identified his Island roots.

And then there are the continuous activities of Square Deal Publications, already mentioned. Almost from his arrival on the Island in 1969, Reshard Gool has been encouraging, bullying, and cajoling books out of people for his imprint. Ironically, in view of the number of Islanders who have found their literary voices abroad, his best contemporary authors to date tend to be "from away", in the vernacular. He himself belongs to this group by virtue of a promising first novel, *The Price of Admission* (1973) and a collection of vivid, sensuous, emotional poems, *In Medusa's Eye* (1972). So does ex-Ontarian John Smith, whose poetry in *Winter in Paradise* (Square Deal, 1972) testifies to the high standard that talent honed during a hard self-imposed apprenticeship can achieve. And so does Tom Gallant, a native of New Brunswick, who touched down on the Island for a few years and there wrote a stark, strained but powerful drama, *Amadée Doucette & Son* (Square Deal, 1972).

To be fair, a few of Professor Gool's Islander protegés wield persuasive pens — for instance, such poets as Frank Ledwell and Jim Hornby. But a fair number appear to have rushed into print, given a kindly and optimistic publisher. Whether or not any of them will mature and blossom after such early hot-house forcing remains to be seen. For the moment, Lucy Maud Montgomery, veteran of rigorous self-training and a barrage of rejection slips, continues to dominate the field among Island authors past and present.

IN THE IDEAL WORLD

Christopher Levenson

of architects
we are surrounded by
corners and corridors, spaces
that 'lead the eye'
astray, where wood creates
'intimacy' and under ceilings
whose every stress is plotted
'students and faculty naturally converge'
on a human scale
or saunter, informal, scarved,
under the blueprint trees
at the edge of vistas that extend,
landscaped, into infinities
where we must learn to live
in all our humane chaos.

LITERARY JOURNALISM BEFORE CONFEDERATION

George L. Parker

> I once asked a Nova Scotian why his country was destitute of poets. "*Poets*!" he exclaimed, laughingly, "don't talk of them here, they are exotics that our country does not produce; the 'almighty dollar' is our 'immortal bard;' he is the Apollo of our mountains, lakes, and rivers, 'the wandering minstrel with the golden harp.' "
>
> Reported by Andrew Spedon in his
> *Rambles Among the Blue-Noses* (1863), p. 207.

THIS Bluenoser's ironic answer reveals the paradoxes that confront anyone who examines the Maritime literary milieu before Confederation. For instance, much literary publishing consisted of sermons on infant baptism, and political pamphlets on boundaries and federations, as well as some histories and textbooks. Were poetry, fiction, and *belles lettres* neglected, then? If we remember that literary landmarks such as Haliburton's *Clockmaker* (1836) first appeared in the newspapers, we shall discover that the periodicals are the proper starting point for discussing what is in fact an abundant quantity of imaginative writing. The story of the literary newspapers and magazines is now relatively unknown,[1] yet the genres, the preoccupations, and the cultural trends we find in them reflect a far more complex intellectual climate than we have hitherto acknowledged.

The first magazine in this country was *The Nova-Scotia Magazine and Comprehensive Review of Literature, Politics, and News* (July 1789 - March 1792), a monthly printed and published in Halifax by John Howe. It was edited first by the Rev. William Cochran, who left to become the first President of King's College, Windsor, and then by Howe himself. While it had a warm reception in its first year (267 subscribers, many of them Loyalist emigrants), the magazine was probably discontinued for lack of support. Apart from several essays, speeches, and a group of poems, its contents were composed of reprinted "selections".

Several attempts to begin magazines before the 1820's came to nothing. By that decade, however, some communities had been settled for over three generations, and there had been a brief, heady taste of prosperity during the Napoleonic Wars. Local schools and private subscription-libraries had sprung up, and the first Mechanics' Institute opened in Halifax in 1831. Two other factors explain the flow of magazines, literary and denominational, after 1826.

For one thing, a group of influential British magazines, among them *The Edinburgh Review* (1802), *The Quarterly Review* (1809), and *Blackwood's Magazine* (1817), had each helped alter literary and political journalism at home and in the colonies. These magazines were devoured in the Maritimes, and selections from them constantly appeared in colonial newspapers and magazines. Within the Maritimes, too, a new style of newspaper journalism had evolved under the guidance of Anthony Henry Holland. His reform *Acadian Recorder* (est. 1813) publicized political and social issues, and encouraged readers to discuss them in his columns. Between 1819 and 1823, for example, John Young ("Agricola"), Thomas McCulloch, and [Mr.] Irving set standards for Maritime prose rarely surpassed by subsequent journals.

The Acadian Magazine; or Literary Mirror (July 1826 - January 1828) was a monthly printed and published by J. S. Cunabell, Halifax's leading publisher until the 1850's. Among their intentions, the Proprietors (not identified) hoped to improve the Provincial image in British eyes by advancing "the literary standing of the Country".[2] At first, this magazine was successful in attracting original poetry and prose, and in his January 1827 "Address", the editor spoke of gains in subscriptions and contributions from all three provinces, and pointed out that this number contained no selections at all. Yet, by 20 September 1827, "Observator" in *The Acadian Recorder* criticized the magazine for its lack of local contributions. Some regular contributors were John Templedon, "Henry" [Clinch?] of King's College; the literary critics "Peter" and "Paul" and I[rvin]G of Truro; and a group of poets known only by their pen names, "Cecil", "Mandeville", and "E.O."

The unexplained demise of *The Acadian Magazine* coincided with the beginning of Joseph Howe's fourteen-year proprietorship of *The Novascotian*. It became the leading political and literary journal of the 1830's, a reflection of Howe's wide-ranging interests. Besides the selections, he printed book and theatre reviews, poetry, fiction, sketches, and essays. Another newspaper of distinctly literary bias was *The Colonial Bee* (1835), edited and published by the Pictou bookseller, James Dawson. The clergy, teachers, and students of McCulloch's Academy who contributed to *The Bee* displayed strong scientific and speculative interests. Dawson's son, the geologist and educator John William Dawson, received his early training in this milieu.

The Acadian Magazine's successor was *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* (June

1830 - January 1833), also printed and published by Cunabell. Its editor was John Sparrow Thompson (1795-1867), a literary jack-of-all-trades and father of a future Prime Minister.[3] The magazine's policy was to offer both selected and original articles, but Thompson (who became proprietor in October 1832) several times had to plead for both patronage and for regular correspondents. While there were fewer fictions and poetry than in *The Acadian Magazine*, there was — significantly — a broader range of essays. This shift may well reflect Thompson's own interests, for he enthusiastically printed the lectures on science and history given at the new Mechanics' Institute. Very little is known about Thompson's competitor, *The British North American Magazine, and Colonial Journal* (February 1831-?), published by Edmund Ward; it was discontinued by April 1831.

Unlike most contemporary Halifax newspapers, *The Pearl* (3 June 1837 - 15 August 1840) announced that it was "Devoted to Polite Literature, Science and Religion". On 28 June 1839, John Sparrow Thompson succeeded the Rev. Thomas Taylor as editor, and about the same time Howe purchased *The Pearl* from William Cunnabell "to help" Thompson.[4] Howe paid him a salary of £45 and hoped for a profit by 1843; however, Thompson reluctantly had to discontinue it after one year. An ambitious paper which carried on Thompson's policies from *The Halifax Monthly*, its many original contributions are evidence that Thompson could attract writers but couldn't make the paper pay. Joseph Kirk's *Nova Scotia New Monthly Magazine* (February - April 1842) published some interesting original pieces, but it quickly disappeared. Thus concludes the most active generation of pre-Confederation Nova-Scotian literary magazines.

In New Brunswick, similarly, there were many attempts in the 1820's and 1830's to produce literary magazines. Henry Chubb's *New Brunswick Courier* (est. 1811) and John Hooper's *British Colonist* (est. 1827) included literary items. The Rev. Alexander McLeod's *New Brunswick Religious and Literary Journal* (January 1829 - February 1830) was more religious than literary in its contributions. Of the first literary magazine, Patrick Bennett's *Saint John Monthly Magazine* (July-December 1836), only one number seems to have survived. Likewise, only a few numbers survive of H. B. Sancton's *New Brunswick Literary Journal* (January-December? 1840), modelled on *The Pearl*.

The Amaranth (January 1841 - December 1843), a Saint John monthly edited and published by Robert Shives, was New Brunswick's first literary magazine of both quality and duration. Born in Scotland, Shives (c.1815-1879) was apprenticed to Henry Chubb, and remained in the printing trade until 1866, when he was appointed Emigration Agent for New Brunswick.[5] Though not an author himself, he gathered around him a respectable group of Maritime writers. In May 1841 he commented that he had more than enough original articles; in April 1842 he boasted that his most popular writers were being reprinted in colonial and American papers. Shives' intention was to provide high-quality

articles in order to raise the cultural taste of the Province. Furthermore, he hoped *The Amaranth* would counteract the "levelling" and "anti-British" sentiments of American magazines now flooding the country. However, there were the usual problems: whereas 1841 and 1842 had a high ratio of original to selected articles, 1843 reversed the proportions, and *The Amaranth*, unlike its namesake, faded away. Shives attributed its failure to lack of patronage, but James Hogg later revealed that several promised articles were lost in the mails and Shives was forced to quit.[6] The chief contributors were Moses Perley, Douglas Huyghue, William R. M. Burtis, Mrs. F. Beaven, the poets John McPherson and James Redfern, and the lecturer George Blatch.

IN THE EARLY 1850's two Halifax women attempted to revive the literary magazine. Mary E. Herbert (1832-1872), herself a poet and fiction writer, edited *The Mayflower, or Ladies' Acadian Newspaper* (May 1851-February 1852), which was printed at The Athenaeum Office, the home of many temperance publications. A spirited and determined young woman, Mary Herbert probably wrote much of her magazine's original material. *The Mayflower* exhibited a new trend in its emphasis on women's interests such as the latest Paris and London fashions and domestic hints. Phyllis Blakely suggests that *The Mayflower* was discontinued for "lack of financial support and competition from other periodicals".[7] Interestingly enough, *The Literary Garland* had just gone under because of competition from *Harper's*.

Mary Jane Katzmann (1828-1890)[8] had already started her magazine, hoping it would compete with the American journals. *The Provincial: or Halifax Monthly Magazine* (January 1852-December 1853) was the last and best-edited literary magazine in Nova Scotia before Confederation. Its handsome typography and its lively literature and general articles are a reflection of Miss Katzmann's considerable editorial intelligence and the changed nature of Provincial interests since the 1830's. *The Provincial*'s contributors included Mary Herbert, Clotilda Jennings, Andrew Shiels, J. E. Hoskins, and the editor herself. Although she scolded Haliburton for not contributing, the magazine's problem was not writers, but a lack of subscribers. James Bowes, its publisher, paid contributors with a year's free subscription, but promised that when the subscription list reached 1,000, they would be paid cash. We are still speculating why Halifax, prosperous and otherwise cultured, had no literary magazines between 1853 and 1873. The intensive and exhausting political controversies of the day, as evidenced by the vindictiveness of the newspapers, may be part of the explanation.

After *The Amaranth* expired, a number of Saint John and Fredericton newspapers carried literary material. The most interesting of these is the *New Bruns-*

wick Reporter and Fredericton Advertiser (est. 1844), edited and published by James Hogg (1800-1866). He too was trained under Chubb, whose office issued Hogg's *Poems* (1825), the first such book written by a native New Brunswicker. He also made much of his connection with his cousin and namesake, the "Ettrick Shepherd". In its early years, the *Reporter* was almost entirely devoted to literature, and deserves further consideration in any survey of provincial literary life before Confederation.

The Guardian, A Monthly Magazine of Education and General Literature (January-September 1860) was edited by two young teachers, Edward Manning and Robert Aiken. While deliberately modelled on *The Amaranth*, *The Guardian* kept turning into an educational monthly, although it presented a wider spectrum of scientific and educational articles. It also succumbed for lack of subscriptions, and neither free postage nor the carrot-promise of increasing the pages from 24 to 36 when the subscription list reached 600 helped save *The Guardian*. Its chief contributors were William R. M. Burtis, R. Peniston Star, and Dr. Sinclair; many of the unsigned articles were by the editors themselves.

The first literary activity in Prince Edward Island began with the appearance of James Douglas Haszard's *Prince Edward Island Register* in 1823, when poems and sketches poured into the paper. Other newspapers, particularly *The Prince Edward Island Times* (est. 1837), and Edward Whalen's *Palladium* (est. 1843) and his *Examiner* (est. 1847), included original writings, news about literary societies and the Mechanics' Institute (1838), and carried serialized fiction and selections from foreign journals. The first literary weekly was the very successful *Ross's Weekly, A Literary Journal* (est. 1859), edited and published by John Ross, of whom we know little. Circulation rose from nearly 500 on 28 September 1859 to 1400 subscribers by 10 December 1860 — now "the largest paper on the Island". For two years, *Ross's Weekly* was almost exclusively devoted to cultural and scientific news, and attracted the essayists J. H. Fletcher and Harry Lee, and the poet John LePage. However, in the middle of 1861, Ross began to devote more space to political news, particularly the American Civil War; then in 1863 he reorganized the paper as the *Semi-Weekly Advertiser*, now "Devoted to Commercial and General News".

The only Island magazine until well after Confederation was the short-lived *Progress Magazine* (January-February 1867), edited by Thomas Kirwin from the office of his *Summerside Progress, and Prince County Register*, a pro-annexation newspaper. An Islander who spent much of his journalistic career in the United States, Kirwin (1829-1911) reprinted both British and American selections, one poem by Elizabeth Lockerby, and sketches of his own experiences in the Civil War.

The first national magazine of Confederation was *Stewart's Literary Quarterly Magazine* (April 1867-October 1872), edited by George Stewart, Jr. (1848-

1906). He later edited *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly* and *The Chronicle* (Quebec), and was a charter member of the Royal Society of Canada. About 1892 Stewart reminisced about his youthful undertaking, and praised his Saint John publisher, George James Chubb, for not taking any profit out of the venture from first to last. Stewart believed that

> the time had come for literary development in Canada, and especially in New Brunswick. Our best writers then, as now, were sending their work to the British and American magazines,* and I was convinced that the country could and would afford a decent support to a monthly or quarterly publication.[9]

His "Introductory" editorial was more explicit: the danger was the great quantity of "cheap Yankee literature", which on the one hand was often violently anti-British, and on the other lulled Canadians into a dependence on foreign matter with no development of their own talents.

Stewart attracted Maritime writers such as James Hannay, Moses Harvey, Allan Jack, John Bourinot, T. C. Garvie, and William Lyall. Moreover, taking advantage of the new patriotism itself and the temporary lack of magazines in the upper provinces, he got contributions from D'Arcy McGee (briefly), J. M. LeMoine, Daniel Clark, Charles Sangster, Alexander McLachlan, and Evan McColl.

ALMOST ALL THE JOURNALS carried "selections". *The Nova-Scotia Magazine* offered Collins' new "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands". *The Acadian Recorder* carried reviews of Byron's plays. *The Acadian Magazine* included poems by Moore and Southey. *The Novascotian* printed Shelley's "Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples" in 1828. A review of Tennyson's *Poems* in *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* quoted "Mariana". *The Pearl* reprinted William Ellery Channing, Daniel Webster, and Hawthorne. *The Novascotian* offered portions of Dickens' *American Notes. The Amaranth* carried Seba Smith and Harriet Beecher Stowe. *The Palladium* abridged *A Christmas Carol. The Mayflower* included a portion from *Confessions of an Opium Eater. Haszard's Gazette* serialized *Uncle Tom's Cabin, and Ross's Weekly, Ten Nights in a Bar-Room.*[10]

Since this practice was common in nineteenth-century journals, it cannot be explained merely as colonial inability to produce original material. Rather, these selections represent the educated Maritimer's awareness of the larger world, and if they are a curious blend of literary peaks and bogs, they are actually representative of international tastes. Significantly, too, literary magazines made room for religious, geological, and technological subjects.

* Among them: James De Mille, May Agnes Fleming, and Louisa Murray.

At the same time, Maritime contributors themselves discussed literary and philosophical currents. Thus *The Acadian Recorder*'s "Letters on the Living Poets" (1820-23), by Irving, provoked favourable and hostile comments about contemporary poetry. "Cecil" wrote of the erosion of freedom in "Greece" for *The Acadian Magazine*. *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* carried discussions of the principal plants of Nova Scotia and the building of the Shubenacadie Canal. From the 1830's onward there are dozens of temperance tales and poems. Douglas Huyghue's ("Eugene") "Essay on the Foresight of Nature, in Providing for the Reproduction of the Insect Tribes" (*The Amaranth*, April 1842) is a pre-Darwinian statement which combines scientific curiosity and religious idealism in its assumptions that all knowledge is a manifestation of the Creator's great universal pattern. *The Provincial* carried articles on Samuel Cunard and steam navigation, electric telegraphs, the role of women, international copyright (from the Maritime writer's viewpoint), and travel sketches of Europe. *The Progress* published sketches by Islanders about their American Civil War experiences. *Stewart's Quarterly*'s articles covered the North-West, geological discoveries in Newfoundland, American democracy, contemporary British poetry, and the cultural rift between literary humanism and modern science.

When we turn to imaginative writing, we find colonial authors adopting the genres and subjects of London and Edinburgh. Lyrics, ballads, sonnets, hymn forms, odes, and free translations from Greek and Latin predominate. Among the longer poetic forms, the narrative and the satire, complete with heroic couplets, survived into the 1840's. Reflective and topographical verses also retained their popularity, easily adaptable to the needs of nineteenth-century poetry. The poems show considerable awareness of British poetic traditions. from Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden, through Pope, Thomson, Gray, Goldsmith, Campbell, and Burns, down to Scott, Moore, Southey, and Byron.

The two major poems in *The Acadian Magazine* display the lingering eighteenth-century tradition. "The Accepted Sigh. A Tale" (January 1827) begins as a graveyard poem, develops into a consolation piece, and concludes with the assertion of God's redemptive grace over man's sinfulness. In itself, R—y's "Accepted Sigh" is in the Evangelical tradition of Maritime poetry. "Western Scenes" (February 1827), which the anonymous author claims was partly written before *The Rising Village* (1825) and Howe's "Melville Island" (1826) appeared, is a topographical poem set in the Annapolis Valley. Its patriotic and progressive sentiments reflect a secular strain in Maritime writing. Of Annapolis Royal the poet says:

> Who would not sigh at thy neglected state,
> (Destined by Nature for a better fate;)
> Without improvement lies thy fertile soil,
> In vain the marshes beg the farmer' toil.

The river source of boundless wealth would prove,
If aught from apathy thy swains could move.
If Labor's sons by fortune here should roam,
Soon would fair Commerce bless th' adopted home,
And thro' the land luxuriant harvests spread,
The gifts of plenty, where there lacks now bread.
So thought Agricola and would impart
To our rude hinds the nicer rules of art.
Divine the art! yet Industry we need,
If I my country's character can read;
For knowledge cannot the ungrateful serve,
And labour's arm must gen'rous feeling nerve.

By the 1850s, however, poems such as Clotilda Jennings' ("Maude") series "Wild Flowers of Nova Scotia", in *The Provincial*, show the mid-century romantic emphasis on the detailed and the unique in the commonplace:

Where graceful, leafy boughs crown ancient stems,
And cast their quivering shadows far below,
Making cool, lovely paths through the green world —
The wanderer finds thee, Lily; shelt'ring 'mid tall, grassy blades,
Thy pale, serene and fragrant beauty, or far away
In some secluded winding, where pearly violets
With deep, golden heart, (thick as the stars
In a clear, summer heaven) carpet sweet nooks of shade.
Thy tender stem, rears up its delicate bells,
Shielded by broad, green, glossy leaves, that seem to guard
Lovingly, a thing so odorous and pure.

(No. II, The Lily of the Valley, April 1852)

In the search for an appropriate language, Andrew Shiels ("Albyn") in his Preface to *The Witch of the Westcot* (1831) observed:

> instead of "mountains high" and "hills of green," the beautiful vale, breathing with imagery, including mouldering abbey, delapidated tower, ruin'd camps of Dane and Roman ... let the traveller to Nova Scotia ask what is the name of yonder dwelling? the answer is almost universally Mr. Such or such-a-ones' farm, and that contains all the variations of its History; or enquire the name of the dull half forgotten, or perhaps unknown stream, in any quarter of the Province, and ten to one but it is either Nine Mile or Salmon River.

In general, great chunks of pre-Confederation poetry are characterized by religious idealism and sentimentality, and many of its rhetorical stances irritate modern readers.

There are examples of almost every kind of contemporary fiction: the exotic-oriental tale, the gothic, the local-colour dialect (usually Irish), the silver-spoon high-society, the temperance tale, the historical romance, and the fictional sketch.

Few of the stories are in the realistic mode, although dialogue sometimes has a contemporary ring. There are very few book-length fictions.

While poetry — no matter how bad, it seems — was accepted as a legitimate literary pursuit, fiction writers had to overcome the suspicion that novels were a "sinful waste of time".[11] Thus, John Sparrow Thompson sets out the platonic-puritan-evangelical hostility towards fiction in his 1832 lecture on "History":

> The writers of the [romance and novel] endeavour to excite the fancy, by building interesting and picturesque combinations, of persons and action and scenery, on a very slender foundation of assumed facts. The Historian, on the contrary, has an immense mass of facts of real life under his pen, and he endeavours to record them in a most brief and lucid manner; having simple and severe Truth for his instructress, instead of enthusiastic and credulous Imagination. In studying the works of the first, amusement is the end sought; the facts are unimportant.[12]

Possibly such views help explain why McCulloch and Haliburton turned more readily to the sketch than to other fictional forms. Still, there were answers to Thompson's position. Mary Herbert defended fiction on both ethical and psychological grounds in *The Mayflower* (August 1851). In 1859 *Ross's Weekly* permitted two correspondents to answer the Charlottetown *Protestant*'s disapproval of the *Weekly*'s fiction. "Old Times" opined that "novel readers metamorphose themselves into sickly sentimentalists . . . while the real miseries of humanity, excite little or no attention." J. H. Fletcher agreed, but observed that Dickens, Bulwer Lytton, and Scott provided social experiences and a knowledge of character not found elsewhere in literature.[13]

Yet, three kinds of fiction — the emigrant tale, the historical romance, and the regional sketch — still deserve some attention, for they mirrored common psychic and social experiences. For example, Douglas Huyghue's ("Eugene") "Argimou. A Legend of the Micmac" (May-September 1842) was *The Amaranth*'s most ambitious contribution to Maritime historical romance. "Argimou" has many of the flaws of such popular fictions; it is "stereotyped in character, rhetorical in style, and melodramatic in plot",[14] but it is through these conventions that Huyghue reveals his intentions. Set between 1755 and 1761, the tale announces that the white man must bear the guilt for the debasement of the Indian, and it illustrates this thesis in the friendship between a good white man and a good Indian. Despite (or because of?) the Micmacs' Scottian language and the Victorian sentiments of the eighteenth-century English gentlefolk, "Argimou" stands as one of the earliest fictional attempts to mythologize the Maritime past and to invest its events with ethical meaning. In a climactic passage, the Englishman Edward recognizes that his quest for the captured Emily will only succeed after his initiation into the woodcraft of his Micmac friend Argimou:

> [Edward's] belief in the progressive improvement of the human race was shaken, as the lamentable truth forced itself upon his understanding, that mankind seemed

> to have journeyed further from the right, as they deviated from the plain habits and principles of the primitive ages.... Here in the rude forests he beheld plenty, cheerfulness, and frames untainted by the enervating maladies of the Old World. Here, among men unrestrained by penal codes, or chains, or strong dungeons, were to be found the most unflinching virtue; the elements of a beautiful philosophy....

In its time, "Argimou" was respected enough to be published as a book (Halifax: Courier, 1847), and re-serialized in *The Saint John Albion* (1859-60).

MARITIME WRITERS were at their liveliest, however, in non-fictional prose, especially the sketch and the essay, which are both flexible, personal forms. The sketch could be either fictional or autobiographical. The essay could be either formal (for science, speculation, or criticism) or informal — at which point it almost merges with the autobiographical sketch. These prose traditions descended from Addison and Steele, and many nineteenth-century textbooks kept these models before generations of children. In addition, the travel pieces of Cobbett and the essays of Lamb provided models for the proliferation of travel sketches and familiar essays — chatty, antiquarian, self-consciously literary — which appeared in the 1820's. But the more immediate influences on much British North American humour were the convivial and sometimes coarse *Blackwood's* sketches of Lockhart, Wilson ("Christopher North"), and James Hogg, known as "Noctes Ambrosianae" — Nights at Ambrose's Tavern.

McCulloch's Stepsure "Letters" (*The Acadian Recorder*, 1821-23) and Haliburton's "Recollections of Nova Scotia" [The Clockmaker] (*The Novascotian*, 1835) are the best known works in the humorous tradition. There is also "Samuel Slyboot's" analysis of fashionable Carlottetown at "A Tea Party" (*P.E.I. Register*, 23 August 1823). Among "The Club" Papers in *The Novascotian* is the famous punning sketch on the Assembly's proceedings (22 June 1831), possibly by Haliburton. No. IV of "The Recess" Papers in *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* sends up the interminable verses produced by the Halifax garrison (August 1831). Mary Jane Katzmann's "Editor" in *The Provincial* holds dialogues with "Snaffle" on the magazine's prospects. George Stewart considers the possibility of a special issue of *Stewart's Quarterly* to be composed of rejected pieces (April 1870). One of the more charming *personae* is Dr. Sinclair's "Recluse" in *The Guardian*; his ambiguous rejection of any political aspirations (March 1860, p. 60) is not merely Leacockian but implies much about contemporary New Brunswick politics.

Practically every editorial and speech by Howe has its literary virtues, and the recently published *Travel Sketches in Nova Scotia* (1973), reprinted from his "Western" and "Eastern Rambles" in *The Nova-Scotian* (1828-31) reveal a literary direction he unfortunately did not follow. A forgotten but imaginative

series is Moses Perley's five "Sporting Sketches of New Brunswick" in *The Amaranth* (1841). His vivid, first-hand, sympathetic accounts of hunting with the Indians emphasize that English sportsmen do not understand the pleasures of axe, paddle, and spear. Like Huyghue, Perley (with a more felicitous style) sees forest life as a humanizing and educative experience.

The many essays devoted to the problems of developing a native literature alternated, almost randomly, between optimism and despair. *The Acadian Magazine*'s "Preface" (July 1826) admitted the problem of subject matter: "A young country presents no field for the researches of the Antiquarian, it contains no vestiges of the glorious deeds of the days of Yore ..." (p. i). By May 1827, "Peter" and "Paul's" "Characteristics of Nova Scotia" pointed with pride to the numerous and respectable periodical publications, and to the evidence of intellectual development in the work of Grizelda Tonge, Goldsmith, and Howe. Yet, in his 7 August 1828 "Ramble", Howe tartly observed that *The Acadian Magazine*'s Editor

> asserted the depraved taste of this illiterate Province suffered [it] to perish; a charge which would have made greatly against our literary character, if it had not been proved that such a thing could not die that never had any life in it.[15]

The Halifax Monthly Magazine happily reviewed "Publications in Nova Scotia" (June-September 1832), yet saw fit to echo the plaintive cry in *The Gazette* (Montreal) of 26 June 1832, are we the only ones in the world not to make books? The continual editorial entreaties for articles also suggest that supplies could dry up without warning. By 23 January 1840, however, *The Nova Scotian*'s "Glance at the Past" could report favourably on the literary accomplishments of the colony, and *The Nova Scotia New Monthly Magazine* noted the developing sense of "locality" in writing. Paradoxically, 1842 is a year in which Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers had high hopes for literary flowerings. When *The Guardian* closed in 1860, Aiken and Manning no longer mentioned literary progress:

> Nor do we feel much abashed at failure in this case; having several examples before us of a similar result, under far more favorable auspices. The fact seems to be forced upon us, that the Provinces are not ripe for an indigenous literature.[16]

Both *The Provincial* and *Stewart's Quarterly* examined at length the native literary tradition and were equally confident about placing colonial writers in the international republic of letters. Thus *The Provincial* discusses Haliburton's virtues and flaws as respectfully as those of Dickens and Thackeray, and its five "Half Hours with Our Poets" selected Mrs. Cotnam, Grizelda Tonge, John McPherson, Sarah Herbert, Charles Desbrisay, Dr. Byles, and the Rev. Samuel Elder as the notable versifiers, none of whom have survived as well as have the prose writers — Haliburton, Howe, McCulloch, Dawson, even Perley. *Stewart's Quarterly* reviews, as with Mair's *Dreamland and Other Poems* (January 1869), empha-

sized the *national* literary climate. Stewart's "Canadian Literature" (January 1870) was a new approach, for "Canadian" no longer meant only Quebec and Ontario, and he had an impressive group of professional writers — poets, novelists, scientists, and historians, in two languages — who had international reputations. Furthermore, Stewart related the development of professional authorship to the native publishing industry, for both of which he expressed modest prospects — and which the depressions and other national setbacks of the 1870's and 1880's virtually destroyed.

Maritime literary magazines all set out to develop local writing, to avoid sectarian politics and religion, and some, to offset the reading of American trash. Most of the high hopes ended in financial shambles due to lack of contributors or subscriptions or both. They had life spans similar to other nineteenth-century literary magazines, *The Literary Garland* excepted. Yet long periods without magazines did not mean lack of literary activity, for the newspapers had literary corners until well into the twentieth century. As it turned out, the newspapers, rather than the magazines, were the springboards to fame.

From the 1820's on, colonial achievements and identity were the subject of many analyses, both adulatory and critical. This complex of dualities and sentiments was formed by the shared Loyalist and emigrant experiences, the sense of colonial unity among the three British peoples, and a growing love for the familiar trees, valleys, and coves. There was an (unfulfilled) urgent hope that industrial development and literary progress would go hand in hand. Measurement was made by reference to restless, dramatic society to the south and to the powerful Empire whose heart was just across the ocean. Such perspectives encouraged a double vision and ironic attitudes among the many writers who contributed to the nationalism which pervaded the Maritimes in the 1860's: a nationalism which, sadly, evolved into a complacent nostalgia in the next eight lean decades.

Editors and writers alike responded to an emulated British poetry and fiction, while after 1850 there was admiration for the best American writing. Maritime poetry, especially, retained many elements of eighteenth-century culture; we may attribute these in part to the American traditions of the educated Loyalists.

Thus, we can observe the demotion of the heroic couplet between 1820 and 1840 as new cadences slowly permeated poetic consciousness. There were other smooth transitions from the previous century: concepts of progress and scientific development, the humanistic emphasis on literary culture, the role of evangelical piety and sentimentalism in literature; all are apparent in nineteenth-century Maritime journalism. Finally, the best prose has vitality, uniqueness, and a sense of shape — qualities which are often missing from otherwise competent but derivative and technically-cautious fiction and poetry. And now we know why Spedon didn't find any poets in Nova Scotia: he couldn't see that the metaphoric prose of his Bluenoser held the answer.

NOTES

[1] The few articles on literary journalism are useful but often inaccurate: D. R. Jack, "Acadian Magazines," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 2nd Series, IX, Section 2 (1903), 173-203. D. R. Jack, "Early Journalism in New Brunswick," *Acadiensis*, VIII (October 1908), 250-265. David Arnason, "Canadian Literary Periodicals of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, II (Summer 1973), 125-128. My thanks to the Canada Council and the RMC Arts Research Fund for research grants, and thanks to the staffs of Douglas Library, Queen's; Saint John Regional Library; the New Brunswick Museum; Killam Library, Dalhousie; Public Archives of Nova Scotia; and Public Archives of Prince Edward Island.

[2] "Preface," *The Acadian Magazine*, I (July 1826), i.

[3] Joseph Chisholm, "John Sparrow Thompson," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, XXVI (1945), 1-31.

[4] Public Archives of Canada, *Joseph Howe Papers*, Vol. 33.

[5] "Death of Robert Shives," *The Daily Telegraph* (Saint John), 8 January 1879, p. 2.

[6] "To the Patrons of the Amaranth," *The Amaranth*, III December 1843), 393. [Editorial Note], *The New Brunswick Reporter*, 15 August 1845, p. 158.

[7] Phyllis Blakeley, "Mary Eliza Herbert," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, X 1871-1880), 348.

[8] I am indebted to Mrs. Lois Kernaghan, Research Assistant, PANS, for permitting me to examine her notes on Mary Jane Katzmann for a forthcoming *DCB* article.

[9] George Stewart, "The History of a Magazine," Typescript copy. New Brunswick Museum.

[10] As far as I know, the journals did not pay for reprinting the selections, but they were usually scrupulous about identifying sources; hence, there is copyright abuse here.

[11] "Editorial," *The Mayflower*, I (August 1851), p. 125.

[12] John Sparrow Thompson, "History," *The Halifax Monthly Magazine*, III (September 1832), p. 156.

[13] 'Old Times,' "Letter," *Ross's Weekly*, 10 August 1859; J. W. Fletcher, "Correspondence," *Ross's Weekly*, 24 August 1859, p. 2.

[14] Fred Cogswell, "Literary Activity in the Martime Provinces 1815-1880," *Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 110.

[15] Howe's comments on *The Acadian Magazine* were brought to my attention in Malcolm Parks's edition of Howe's *Travel Sketches of Nova Scotia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), pp. 64-65.

[16] "Close of the Volume," *The Guardian*, I (September 1860), p. 218.

HOME TRUTHS

Fraser Sutherland

Is one's birthplace Canaan, or the land that God gave Cain? Every writer born in the Maritimes must answer that question; how he answers it will determine whether he remains home to work, or goes away.

We have a variety of solutions. Poets like Charles Bruce and Kenneth Leslie spent most of their lives outside Nova Scotia and produced poetry that was a sort of superior nostalgia. One returns to their poems as one might to a place. Indeed, if there is one quality which unites Maritimes writers, at home or away, it is the ability to render the mood, the personality of a place. This evocation of place, especially when produced by a Scot, can easily become sentimental. (Scots' sentimentality is the worst in the world, an ugly, joyless, maudlin thing, almost obscene: whisky tears.) Bruce and Leslie are limited poets but it's to their credit that in this respect they did not succumb. A somewhat similar strategy has been adopted by the novelist Thomas Raddall, even if he did choose, unlike his contemporaries, to stay home. Raddall's nostalgia takes the form of an immersion in the distant past, from which he contrives his historical romances.

The best poet the Maritimes has produced, Alden Nowlan, has also chosen to remain there and so has Ernest Buckler, an excellent writer if a very unprolific one. The sense of place that informs the short stories and early poems of Nowlan as well as Buckler's lovely memoir *Ox Bells and Fireflies* (not to mention *The Mountain and the Valley*) is neither sentimental nor does it imply long excursions into a romantic past.

There are other strategies. Prince Edward Island's Milton Acorn has left the Maritimes to become "The Peoples' Poet".[1] Sadly there is a sag in performance between the charged lyricism of *I've Tasted My Blood* ("Charlottetown Harbour", "Rooming House") and the later *More Poems for People* — Acorn has settled for the rhetoric, as opposed to the poetry, of socialism, and in the process has relinquished some of his local strengths. A different route has been taken by Ray Smith, originally of Mabou, Cape Breton, but now of Montreal, who apparently couldn't care less about ideology, nor for that matter about the particularities of place. Despite the locally allusive titles of *Cape Breton is the Thought Control Centre of Canada* and *The Lord Nelson Tavern*, locales in Smith's stories are only departure points for his elegantly grotesque characters. Perhaps the middle ground is covered by another short story writer, Ray Fraser, who after living some years in Montreal is presently back home in New Brunswick. Fraser shares an interest in grotesques but roots them in a very specific setting.

There are other gifted Maritimes writers but these are the ones who come to mind as must, inevitably, Hugh MacLennan. MacLennan's Nova Scotian roots go deep, as he reminds us in his essays; he has set his novel *Each Man's Son* in Cape Breton, and *Barometer Rising* in Halifax, and has drawn on Maritimes experience for portions of *The Watch That Ends the Night* and *Two Solitudes*. Yet one does not think of him as a "regional" writer. After schooling at Oxford and Princeton, he came to feel that Canada

was *home*, and to be deeply involved in its divisions and destiny. Just as a reluctant Nova Scotia joined the national cause at Confederation, so a perhaps-reluctant MacLennan became a convinced federalist. In doing so he did not cut his Maritimes connections, but incorporated them into a larger whole: place became an agent in the construction of a political and historical unity that was also a novelistic one.

When Nova Scotia entered Confederation, it dedicated its best brains to Canadian commerce, religion and law. Having made *its* decision, that province has been impatient at Quebec discontent. An unsuccessful Nova Scotian was busy with his own sense of injustice; a successful one was inclined to say something like, "Look, Quebec, *we* do our bit for Canada. Why don't you stop grousing and get on with learning English and making money?" MacLennan cannot be accused of so crass an attitude, but to some extent a more liberal and sophisticated form of it colours his view of Quebec. One sometimes gets the impression, reading *Two Solitudes*, that he believes the Canadian wound would be healed if only our Athanase Tallard married our Kathleen Connors, and their son Paul protect, touch and greet Heather Methuen in a perfect commingling of English, Irish, Scotch and French. (This probably explains MacLennan's loyalty to the French-Scotch Pierre Elliot Trudeau which judging from his *Maclean's* articles, verges on the idolatrous: it is the clansman's fealty to his chieftain or, even more likely, an author's admiration for one of his own characters.) That matters are not as simple as this MacLennan himself demonstrates in his last novel, *Return of the Sphinx*. Landscape has always been the strongest character in a MacLennan novel — no disparagement intended — but in this book the land becomes the *only* abiding reality, literally above and beyond human / national feuds and reconciliations.

What interests me more, for present purposes, is the role that French Canada has played in the progress of MacLennan's novelistic vocation. Undoubtedly living in Montreal has been immensely valuable to him, not simply because the subject at hand suited his evolving style but because alienation, in the right amounts, is better for a writer than confraternity. He was in Quebec, but not of it, and I would hazard the idea that he would not be nearly so good a novelist, nor probably even a novelist at all, if he had lived in English Canada or, worse yet, in England or the United States. He might have become a lucid historian like Donald Creighton or A. R. M. Lower but the human tensions so evident in Quebec demanded artistic, not scholarly form. Animated by the dynamic present but detached enough that he could cope with it, he was able to encompass his ancestral and provincial pasts. He is inordinately proud that he is three-quarters Highlands Scots (since my own ancestry is entirely Highlands I regard MacLennan as something of a half-breed, but such are the ways of genetic vanity), and of his Nova Scotian heritage. Yet in Nova Scotia he would have been a Dalhousie professor. In Quebec he is a writer.

It is perhaps time to look at the culture that sent a young Dalhousie student named Hugh MacLennan off to Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship. A century before, colonial Nova Scotia was the centre of learned and artistic culture in British North America. In Thomas Chandler Haliburton it had a writer who was to be vital in the development of North American prose. If, as Hemingway said, all modern American literature begins with a book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*, so all the style of *Huckleberry Finn* is implied in a book by T. C. Haliburton called *The Clockmaker; or, The*

Sayings and Doings of Sam Slick of Slickville (1836). It is amazing in an age of specialists to look back on men like him or Dr. Thomas McCulloch (a Presbyterian da Vinci) of Pictou, who, if they did not quite accumulate and digest all knowledge, certainly made a sporting attempt to do so.

Whatever the economic benefits of Confederation to the three Maritimes colonies, generally judged to be few, it was a cultural disaster, only temporarily abated by the rise of poets — Bliss Carman, Charles G. D. Roberts — associated with the University of New Brunswick. Yet it was as if these men were only agents in the inexorable western swing of culture. The Maritimes would henceforth act only as a nursery for talent that was quick to catch a train for Boston or Ontario.

In speaking of culture, though, one must examine — to employ a phrase Robert Frost used in another connection — "the whole damn machinery," the bedrock/seedbed below universities and literary magazines and poetry readings. I think MacLennan would agree that a large part of the Maritimes cultural matrix is made up of rural Scots Presbyterianism.

Much nonsense has been written about the baleful effects of the Calvinistic creed. Our preachers are believed to be obsessed with Original Sin, and insatiable prophets of sulphurous damnation, warping everyone in their charge with the sour winds of an inflexible Puritanism and moulderous gloom. But the ministers I remember from boyhood were singularly gentle souls who scrupulously avoided hellfire in the pulpit. Our Sunday School Superintendant, known to inveigh against wickedness, was plainly a crank whom no one, least of all his pupils, took seriously. The best teacher of English I ever had, Viola Fraser, was a minister's wife. Then, too, for what is supposed to be a dour-faced, life-denying creed there is something wonderfully ambiguous about the first question-and-answer of the *Primary Catechism*:

> *Q*: What is the chief end of man?
> *A*: Man's chief end is to glorify God and *enjoy* Him forever.
> *(my emphasis)*

At other times I wonder whether the injunction doesn't suggest that we should emulate the practice of Tantric Yoga and conduct sex as a holy ritual!

When these reservations are made, however, it must be allowed that hardships faced by the early Presbyterian settlers profoundly affected them. The Enclosures had driven them off their holdings in Scotland, conveyed them in rotting tubs across the Atlantic, and set them down roughly in a country of only rudimentary promise. The iron-shod elements of the old faith were reinforced by physical obstacles — the Rock of Ages might be something you had to clear off your back field. Gradually a pattern of ethics, a system of values, emerge and these any Maritimer — be he Presbyterian, Baptist, Roman Catholic or Anglican — is bound to carry as psychic baggage wherever he goes.

In delineating this Scots-dominated character I cannot improve on MacLennan's essays or on J. K. Galbraith's charming memoir *The Scotch*, though the latter is of course set in a different locality. Both authors are right to stress the hospitable, humorous and fanciful elements in the Scotch character but there are, naturally, other aspects. A phrase that occurs in George Woodcock's study of MacLennan perhaps offers a valuable hint: "the diffused malevolence of the universe."[2] After a century of wrestling with intractable land and treacherous sea the Maritimer, especially if he is Scotch, not only doesn't expect anything good but is unhappy when it appears. This is not churlish ingratitude but only the expectation

that the good is the harbinger of the outrightly catastrophic. This sounds funny, but it does rather put a pall on one's life. The lull after ecstacy is not so much post-coitus *tristesse* as it is a grave watch, and no matter how hard you try, no matter how far you climb the success-ladder, you can never please your father. To put it coarsely, one's duty in life is to keep one's head down and one's ass close to the ground. The religion of work, the cult of success, the fear of retribution.

To understand this Maritimes mood one cannot do better than read those early clenched poems of Alden Nowlan's like "Summer" and "Warren Pryor" — the rage at having the feminine *Eros*, the dark fluid dream that feeds creation, pent up hopelessly in a society both patriarchal and philistine. Patriarchal (the many father-figures in MacLennan's novels!), because the manly virtues of the kind mentioned above are emphasized; common sense is the god. Philistine, because like provincial society everywhere, it prizes its own dormancy, both grumbles about and is complacent with its own poverty. For many years the spirit of the Maritimes was not to be found in its middle class, or the few intellectuals at the universities, but was centred in the rural poor, a culture of patched highways, reliable bootleggers, and bad dental care. It was migrant trips to Toronto's Cabbagetown or the tobacco fields of Tilsonburg or the nickel mines of Thompson, Man.; it was coming home for Christmas and getting boozed up — a world accurately described by Ray Fraser's stories in *The Black Horse Tavern* and elsewhere; it was the time when Nova Scotia led the country in the rates of alcoholism and illegitimate births. It was ignorance and fear.

The philistine above all fears to be mocked, and the artist is always the mockingbird. How can such a rare species as the artist survive in the Maritimes, save by becoming a hermit or, at the other extreme, pretending to be one of the boys in such traditional pursuits as collecting unemployment insurance and swilling Moosehead ale in the corner tavern?

Some of the homebound writers already mentioned are taking one or the other of these routes, but I cannot. Yet truly the question of going back for good has been settled by conditions outside the Maritimes. Any bucolic dreams I may have harboured about living there have been shattered by the fact that the whole world, and the Maritimes with it, is rapidly turning into a facsimile of Newark, New Jersey. I have a vision of the modern writer soon being driven by the force of technology, the loss of his own and exterior nature, into one of a billion illuminated cubes — a Hilton Hotel anywhere — and there trying frantically to write in honour of the past, since there is no engageable present and he falls back on racial and private memory for the seedbed of his work, knowing there can be no future except the Apocalypse and no past but that which lies buried beneath a Petrifond Foundation.

I would hope, in such a situation, to draw on a few good memories of my father though I know that he has never understood, nor can he ever understand, why or even how I am a writer.

My father with his team of horses, in his slow shambling was personifying what Hemingway called grace under pressure, sheer intelligent strength, a small man controlling two very large horses. Or, the victim of a practical joke, he pursues, pitchfork in hand, the impish youth from Pictou he'd hired to help with the haying. Or I see him in the corner chair, rumbling in the deepest of basses a hymn — "The Old Rugged Cross"? — this man who considered ministers some lower form of insect and devoutly avoided, except for the rare funeral, attending church. Or in that same chair, Sir Walter Raleigh

smouldering in his pipe, he stares out into the diffused malevolence of the night, the very picture of the Great Stone Face. Although he is very much alive I imagine him as somehow historical, embodying the verities of a rockbound province, the home truths.

But I know, or I think I know, that the home truths are only accessible to those with the power to understand them, and that the practice of art is not solely the attempt to make money or to create a masterpiece (will I ever?) but is for me a liberating way of life. In *The Mountain and the Valley* David Canaan walks up the mountain: "And some unquenchable leaven in the mind's thirst kept sending it back for the taste of complete realization it just missed."[3] I would not want to be David Canaan as moments later he lies on the ground, his thirst unquenched, snowflakes melting on his face, as only a partridge rises to make it over the mountain.

NOTES

[1] Milton Acorn, *More Poems for People*, (Toronto, 1972), jacket cover.

[2] George Woodcock, *Hugh MacLennan*, (Toronto, 1969), p. 7.

[3] Ernest Buckler, *The Mountain and the Valley*, (New York, 1952), p. 360.

WHOLLY DRUNK OR WHOLLY SOBER?

Marilyn Baxter

IN ALDEN NOWLAN'S early poetry (before 1969) the self is essentially a single, homogeneous entity. Although it is never "wholly removed from [its own] echo and reflection",[1] there is no hint of any actual dichotomy; and when the self inadvertently comes upon its own reflection in a pool, it does not think of that reflection as a separate being (as for instance Eve does in Jay Macpherson's "Eve in Reflection"), but is only concerned with avoiding any further encounters:

> Christ, but I wish
> I knew the direction
> a man had to take
> to keep from meeting
> himself.[2]

With the publication of *The Mysterious Naked Man* in 1969, however, it became obvious that Nowlan's apprehension of the self had undergone a number of changes. Although there is only one poem in the collection that explicitly mentions the "mysterious naked man", the title is appropriate because the whole volume can be seen as an exploration of the human soul stripped bare. And the human soul Nowlan is most interested in is, of course, his own. Intensely aware of "how mysterious it is / that I am looking out through the eyes / of a certain body and this body is alive / here and now",[3] the poet is also beginning to see that this mystery is heightened by the fact that the "I" or self is no longer single but multiple:

> You keep peeling off hollow dolls
> and finding another
> inside: I divide into men,
> fat and thin, half a dozen
> boys, children and babies
> of various sizes.
> I could have said it
> a year ago in a Russian boutique
> but it didn't happen
> until tonight.
>
> (*MNM*, 41)

Whenever "tonight" was, this is the first explicit mention of the multiple self that Nowlan makes;[4] an image which he explores at greater lengths in his next two volumes: *Between Tears and Laughter* (1971) and *I'm a Stranger Here Myself* (1974).

There are times when Nowlan's division of the self into two or more parts seems to be little more than a happy device that enables him to present two different voices within his own psyche. In "Argument",[5] for instance, the father in him argues, "I'll be as sentimental / as I want and if you don't like it / then to hell with you." To which the poet in him replies, "Not in my book you won't." The division of the self in this poem is essentially an artificial one, and the reader comes away not so much with the feeling that he has encountered two distinct personalities, but one personality with two voices; although one part of the self is in direct opposition to the other part, the dichotomy is not complete. In "The broadcaster's poem" (*SHM*, 78), however, it is: the one self apparently inhabiting an essentially different reality from the other one. Deciding that his failure as a broadcaster was due largely to the fact that he spent most of his time broadcasting from an empty room, Nowlan says that he was never able to convince himself that "there was somebody listening." The more time he spent at the microphone alone, the more an unpredictable, destructive part of his psyche seemed to assume control, and he was afraid that some night it

> might blurt out something
> about myself so terrible
> that even I had never until
> that moment suspected it.

The fear that torments him as a broadcaster reminds him of the fear he used to experience as a child when he was walking alone on "bridges and other / high places", the fear that a part of "me" would "sneak up behind / myself and push."

But the other self is not always as sinister as this poem suggests. In "The dream of the old man who became a boy yet remained himself,"[6] for instance, the man and the boy, believing themselves to be separate entities, plot to destroy each other. When the old man has a heart attack because he sees the boy doing things that he thinks are "unspeakably evil", the boy begins to think of himself as the victor, but then realizes that he is "shrinking smaller and smaller and smaller". Although the poet concludes, "I will be the first man in all of history /to leave two corpses behind him," the tone is one of mild surprise, not horror. At times the other self may assume the role of a fool. In "He finds himself alone in the house" (*BTL*, 19), a slightly mad, barbaric self gleefully takes advantage of the situation:

> When a slice of beef happens
> to fall to the floor
> I snatch it up and eat it,
> dust and all, my eyes rolling.
> I purr like a lion.
> Not because I'm drunk or drugged
> but because I'm happy and there's nobody
> else here, nobody not even myself to deny
> me
> the pleasure of going crazy.

The tone is more serious in "He addresses himself to one of the young men he once was" (*SHM*, 38) as the poet expresses a feeling of compassion for this earlier self. Even though he was "such / a clown" the poet is now eager to welcome him "home":

> You were a fool and I am
> too often tempted to
> play the comedian.
> I give you only
> a home for your ghost,
> and one
> fraternal voice
> joined in the general laughter.

Keenly aware of the fact that he is, in

some ways, a new person every day, the poet ponders the possible effects that the passage of time might have on his relationship with other people:

> Here I am promising to love you
> for ever
> when
> I was somebody else
> only yesterday
> and don't know who
> I'll be tomorrow.
>
> (*BTL*, 53)

Nor is time the only dimension that proves uncertain: space too, he finds, is equally unreliable. Addressing a loved one in "Walking toward the bus station" (*BTL*, 52) he says that although there are "witnesses / who would swear / they saw us now" saying goodbye to each other, in reality "we are each of use elsewhere / and alone," or perhaps "we" have "boarded a plane / together" and are now in "Spain". No one knows in what spatial or temporal reality the true self exists. The more he thinks about the fact that each of us "contains multitudes, / every one of whose / personalities is split" (*SHM*, 46), the more he realizes how difficult it is to be certain that you ever "know" another human being. In "Dear Leo" (*SHM*, 21) he confesses to his old friend,

> If I were honest
> I'd hesitate
> when asked if I know you,
> meaning do I know the one
> you usually let
> represent you in public,
>
> hesitate and grope
> through the past
>
> before answering.

But I do not wish to give the impression that Nowlan is describing a nightmare world in which new selves keep popping unexpectedly out of the woodwork. In most of the poems (including "Dear Leo") he is celebrating the multiplicity of selves that each of us contains because it is a part of that greater mystery — just being alive.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Nowlan's interest in the multiple self is his use of it as the controlling metaphor in "The encounter, the recognition" (*BTL*, 69):

> There's a path through the woods, or a
> corridor
> in an empty building. I enter it
> at both ends and walk slowly toward myself.
> I am wholly drunk.
> I am wholly sober.
> We meet midway
> and recognize one another.
> "Hello, Alden," I say.
>
> That's how my best poems are created.

The path and the corridor are passages through some kind of experience that the poet wishes to explore. Whether the experience occurs in the external world ("the woods") or in the internal world of his own psyche ("a corridor"), the poet begins by exploring it from both ends simultaneously. One self is "wholly drunk": relaxed, receptive, subjectively involved (as he says elsewhere, "drunkeness / is a kind / of dreaming"[7]); the other self is "wholly sober": alert, critical, objective. Meeting in the centre of the wood / building, the two selves recognize and greet one another. Although conversation is minimal ("Hello, Alden"), it would appear that each of the poet's selves learns something important from the other, something that contributes to the poet's total appreciation of the experience. Whatever the nature of the experience might be it is important that the "wholly drunk" self and the "wholly sober" self each have an opportunity to explore it independently, and even then the moment of their encounter will only prove fruitful if each recognizes (note title) the unique contribution that the other has to offer. There is no question of superiority — each self has its own

essential function without which the other self is diminished. It is tempting to try and measure the success of Nowlan's other poems on the basis of whether or not the "wholly drunk" self and the "wholly sober" self have each been given an equal voice, but such an analysis would be arbitrary and self-indulgent (one cannot forget Nowlan's indictment of the critic at Knox College who kept a "chamber mug beneath his bed / lest the floors of the long dark hallway chill his feet"[8]). But the terms "wholly drunk" and "wholly sober" do seem to suggest a new terminology that may be used to define certain aspects of the human condition that appear to haunt the poet's imagination and to be related to his interest in the divided self. Although Nowlan does not use these terms again, he does seem to feel that many experiences in life (not simply those that find their way into a poem) are more fully experienced when they are simultaneously apprehended by a self that is "wholly drunk" and a self that is "wholly sober". In "The beggars of Dublin" (*BTL*, 16), for instance, the "wholly drunk" self would "like to wonder / if this little lad blowing / a tin whistle could be Pan, testing me," but the "wholly sober" self condemns his "bleeding American / arrogance" and the pride he feels when he notices his shilling lying there among all the other pennies. His drunken self would like to feel sorry for the boy and also for the woman with the crying child who runs up to him after the first encounter, but the sober self knows that "she's the mother of the lad / with the whistle who is only a kind of signalman, / and of course she sticks pins in the baby". And yet he can not refrain from giving her "two shillings and six pence" and feeling "more of an ass than ever". While the poet's responses obviously cause him a certain amount of consternation, they are at least more fully human than the other alternatives: pure cynicism or pure naivety. When the poet encounters a wounded gull in "On the nature of human compassion" (*MNM*, 62), his "wholly drunk" self is again rather naively compassionate:

> Bird, I am sad for you.
> If I could make you trust me
> I'd take you in my hands,
> carry you back to the city
> and hire a veterinarian to heal you.

His "wholly sober" self, on the other hand, is unncessarily harsh:

> what you call your compassion the conceit
> that all living things are Alden Nowlan in
> disguise.

Only by keeping these two selves in some kind of balance or equilibrium will the poet be able to respond to the situation in a way that is fully human. In "Exile" (*BTL*, 67), the "wholly drunk" self is the "little child dreaming" and the "wholly sober" self is the God who finds himself in a world "other / than that / which he remembers / creating". Finding it difficult to keep the two selves in equilibrium, the persona concludes that his true self is the "little child / dreaming". It is always easier to deny the reality of one's objective, critical self (even when it has assumed God-like proportions) by confining it to a dream than to accept its existence and the concomitant fact that one has created, or is responsible for, the world in which one finds oneself.

But the self that is "wholly drunk" and the self that is "wholly sober" do not necessarily appear together in a poem: sometimes only one self is present and the reader is aware of the other self primarily because of its conspicuous absence. In "Marian at the pentecostal meeting" (*PJG*, 20), for instance, Nowlan describes a girl, "neither admired nor clever", who lives in a dream world of "cotton candy . . . faith / spun on a silver rod". The poet cannot condemn her but

only wishes that she may "ride / God's carousel forever". Perhaps he also wishes that Napoleon, "A tiger in the Dublin zoo" (*BTL*, 17), may be allowed to live in his fantasy world forever too. When he is "wholly drunk", Napoleon asserts that he "imposes his own order / on the space around him" and grandly declares, "I stop and turn where I choose". It is only his "wholly sober" self that reminds him that this "is three feet short / of the end of the cage". Nowlan's treatment of "Mister Name Witheld" in "After reading the correspondence in *Penthouse* magazine" (*SHM*, 69) is somewhat less sympathetic. Completely suppressing his sober self, Mr. N. W. divides his time between watching fantasy worlds on the television and creating them in the letters he writes to the magazine:

> It's time to sit down
> with pencil and paper
> to write about lapping
> anchovy butter from
> the navel of of [my] wife's
> nymphomaniac
> adolescent sister.

But although the "wholly drunk" self can be extremely dangerous, particularly when it is allowed to have full vein, Nowlan rarely castigates those who are under its influence.

His most serious attacks are reserved for those who willfully deny the visionary ("wholly drunk") part of themselves. To do this, he suggests in "The great rejection" (*BTL*, 56) is the first, perhaps "even the only / sin, and the guilt / therefrom / a kind of worship". In "The men in Antonio's barber shop" (*MNM*, 58) Nowlan defines a world in which all the members (with the exception of the poet) have denied the existence of the visionary self and live in a bleak, joyless world of mundane certainty:

> And their laughter is never accidental, or
> too loud.
> And each of them knows who would have
> won
> if Joe Louis in his prime had fought
> Cassius Clay in his;
> knows whether or not the World Series is
> fixed;
> knows which team in the National Hockey
> League
> will finish first, and if the same team will
> win the Stanley Cup.

The hecklers in "The bull moose" (*PJG*, 45), like the men in Antonio's barber shop, also live in a world devoid of vision and joy, and their idea of "fun" is rampant with cliché and self-aggrandizement.

> The oldest man in the parish remembered seeing a gelded moose yoked with an ox for plowing. The young men snickered and tried to pour beer down his throat, while their girl friends took their pictures.

At sunset when the bull moose finally gathers his strength "like a scaffolded king" and is shot by the wardens, all the young men assert their triumphant approval in the only way they know how — by leaning "on their automobile horns as he toppled".

In "Survival" the poet seems to be focusing on a situation that is almost archetypal: what happens when a man who is governed by his "wholly sober" self (Og) and his friend, who is governed by his "wholly drunk" self, encounter the same experience?

> The first man who ever stepped on a lion
> and survived
> was Og
> who afterwards attributed
> his good fortune to his poor eyesight,
> he having been unable
> to see anything but claws,
> teeth and a monstrous body
> while his companion
> stood transfixed by the indescribably
> beautiful
> visions that he saw with his third good eye.

While this is unquestionably one of Nowlan's finest poems, it is not immediately clear what the poet is saying about the visionary experience. Is he suggesting that

it is better *not* to have it and survive, as Og does, or to have the vision and cease to exist like his companion? Without explicitly taking sides, the poet's tone and diction seem to suggest that his sympathies (as we would expect) lie with Og's companion (who does, after all, see the vision with his third "good" eye) but surely a poet who has such an innate love of creaturely comforts, and is so quick to admit that it is "very good / to be alive" (*SHM*, 81) would not advocate a philosophy that had as its main tenet the idea that the body is easily expendable. Or is the poem simply an allegory on the human condition: the poet arguing that man only has two choices — either he has the vision and is destroyed by it or he does not have the vision and survives? Perhaps the full implications of the poem can only be understood by considering it in terms of the divided self. Like the self that is "wholly sober", Og is alert and practical, and when he suddenly comes upon the claws, teeth and monstrous body he comes to a conclusion that sends him smoking across the grasslands for home. He survives (hence the poem's title) but he *merely* survives. Og's companion, when confronted with the same claws, teeth and monstrous body comes to very different conclusions and sees only an "indescribably beautiful vision" that leaves him "transfixed" and subsequently, one assumes, dead. But "Survival" is not simply an allegorical exploration of two different approaches to life, each of which is potentially ruinous; rather it is an analysis of what happens to a man when he is dominated either by his "wholly drunk" self or his "wholly sober" self. Each man, as the poet says, contains multitudes: contains, among others, Og (a "wholly sober" self) and Og's companion (a "wholly drunk" self). In "Survival" these two selves are separated and housed in two distinct psyches, and the results are disastrous: Og's spiritual death is as tragic, if not more so, than his companion's physical death. But the two selves need not necessarily be divided in real life. And if they had been unified in one personality in this poem, there would have been no tragedy: part of the individual's psyche would see the lion as "indescribably beautiful" and the other part would see the impending danger and get the hell out of there. Whether this imaginary hero would subsequently go home and write a poem or return to his hut and sharpen his hunting knife does not really matter. What does matter is the poet's implicit suggestion, in this as well as in other poems, that man can never realize his full potential as a human being if he consciously or unconsciously denies any one of the multiplicity of selves that his psyche contains.

NOTES

[1] Nowlan, Alden, *Bread, Wine and Salt.*

[2] ———, *Playing the Jesus Game*, p. 36. Hereafter referred to simply as *PJG.*

[3] ———, *The Mysterious Naked Man*, p. 32. Hereafter referred to simply as *MNM.*

[4] Some suggestion of a divided or multiple self seems to be emerging in such poems as "Confession" (*PJG*, 86) and "Disguise" (*PJG*, 42), but the poet does not seem to think of his lascivious thoughts or his "third eye" as something truly "other" in these poems, but rather facets of a single personality which, for various reasons, he has to keep under control.

[5] Nowlan, Alden, *I'm a Stranger Here Myself*, p. 43. Hereafter referred to simply as *SHM.*

[6] ———, *Between Tears and Laughter*, p. 64. Hereafter referred to simply as *BTL.*

[7] *MNM*, 63.

[8] *PJG*, 79.

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THE MARITIME WRITER AND THE FOLKS DOWN HOME

Donald Cameron

HE WAS DRUNK, leaning up against an ornate doorpost in one of Fredericton's elegant old houses, his tie askew, a half-full glass in his hand.

"Shay," he muttered, "you know shomethin' I always wondered? How come all you guys come from away? How come none of yous is from N'Brunswick?"

"All you guys" were the people putting out the noisy leftwing monthly, *The Mysterious East* (1968-72) — and on the whole the man was right. The editors hailed from Vancouver, Toronto and Detroit; the layout was done by a refugee from Lethbridge and her husband, a native of Prince Albert; only the office manager was a native New Brunswicker.

"You guys come in," declared my inebriated friend, "an' fin' fault with everything. You don' like the gov'ment, you don' like the water authority, you don' like the roads, you don' like anything'. But what t'hell do you know? You don' *come* from here. You know? you don' *come* from here. Whyn't you go back where you come from?"

"I'll make you a deal," I said, "You get W. A. C. Bennett to go back where *he* comes from, which is Hampton, New Brunswick. *Then* I'll be interested in going back to B.C."

Harry Bruce calls it "birthplace bigotry", and any writer in the Maritimes with any commitment to truth *must* eventually face it. You don't come from here: you have no right to speak. Even being born in the Maritimes doesn't necessarily help. Alden Nowlan hails from Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley; should he criticize the genteel culture of Fredericton in which he is now a fixture, people will mutter that of course he doesn't quite belong, he's only shanty Irish from Windsor, blood will out, you know. Back in Nova Scotia, Alden is someone who left, and anything he writes is suspect: he no longer knows the situation at first hand. Birthplace bigotry is the native Maritimer's first, automatic response to criticism. It's the gut reaction of a slighted people who feel shut off from the more glittering rewards of Canadian citizenship. It's the tavern crouch of people who for generations have been put down for their accents, their values, their traditions.

The relationship between the Maritime writer and his culture seems to me remarkably complex, and its complexity has been intensified in recent years because the Maritimes have lately been attracting a whole new kind of immigrant: the talented, successful people who are traditionally drawn to the great capitals of learning and enterprise, but who nowadays seek in the Maritimes the personal and cultural values which they feel have been neglected elsewhere. The newcomers find a great deal which is admirable — and more than a trifle which is outrageous. Especially if he is a Canadian, the newcomer assumes his citizenship is not in question. But when he criticizes, he finds himself at odds with what must surely be the toughest, most deeply rooted regional culture in English Canada. Becoming a part of that culture is no simple matter.

Maritime culture, after all, has long forgotten the process of expansion which still dominates the mores of the West. British Columbia and Alberta are full of immigrants, from the Maritimes as well as from every other corner of the globe, and drawing the immigrant into the life of his new community is a well-developed art. For the Westerner, broadly speaking, change is likely to be progress, things are opening up, and the immigrant is welcome as part of that growth. For the Maritimer, change is likely to be loss, things are closing down, and the immigrant is rocking what is already a rather unsteady boat. Besides, the Maritimer has learned over the years that in the rest of Caanda his home is regarded as a kind of Wales or Appalachia: a land of closed coal mines and wasted forests, a stagnant and depressing society, a community of hillbillies who abuse the local blacks, a place where the spirit withers and the intellect flags, a place from which people escape. Indeed, the Maritimes used to boast that their main export was brains — and in fact the list of tycoons, statesmen, artists, and academics who graduated from Maritime society is a long one. Cyrus Eaton, Samuel Cunard, Bonar Law, Lord Beaverbrook, Izaak Walton Killam, Hugh MacLennan, N. A. M. MacKenzie, Nathan Cohen, W. A. C. Bennett, Allan Blakeney, D. O. Hebb, Louis B. Mayer, Walter Pidgeon and Donald Sutherland, Amor de Cosmos, Dalton Camp, Charles Bruce — if such people leave, the melancholy conclusion must be that those who remain are the inferiors, content to splash in the small pond east of Quebec.

Recently, however, things have changed. Jutting into the Atlantic with the only deepwater ports on the east coast of North America, the Maritimes are increasingly interesting to oil companies looking for supertanker terminals. Americans choking to death in the cities of New England and the megalopolis around New York have discovered that only a thousand miles north lies a lovely region of lakes and harbours where the people mostly speak English, act quaint, and don't shout Yankee Go Home. Newsprint and fish are still in demand, despite the serious problems of those industries. Even coal is staging a comeback. I am not denying the realities of poverty and regional disparity; I am simply saying that life goes on at a level today which is a very different matter from the absolute privation of thirty years ago.

And what yesterday appeared to be backwardness today looks remarkably like conservation. This is a region of small towns and villages; even Halifax, the premier city, is no more than a modest town by Ontario standards. All the same, it has the facilities of a much larger capital city: a well-heeled civil service, a large CBC operation, a symphony, a permanent theatre, four universities, a college of technology and another of art, bookstores and galleries, restaurants and nightclubs. It offers many of the rewards of a city without the cancerous sprawl which makes, say, Toronto such an offence to the eye and the spirit.

Halifax is typical of the region in its provision of a remarkably *human* environment, with all the irritations and delights that phrase implies. Maritime life is intimate and abrasive, comradely and gossipy. History and politics are worn close to the skin. Maritimers know one another very well, which is not to say that they invariably like one another very much.

It is possible, in short, to live an interesting and rewarding life in the Maritimes, and to do it without being trapped by the whole Rube Goldberg apparatus of modern life. One can still actually hope to *own* a home here, as opposed to renting one in perpetuity from the mortgage companies. It is possible to eat well, as rural Maritimers do, by planting a garden

and raising some animals, or by buying directly from the farmers and fishermen. The Saturday farmer's market in Fredericton seems to bring out virtually the entire faculty of the University of New Brunswick. A writer here can know a community's inner life in remarkable detail, and can understand concretely the lines of force through which history affects the present.

I speak, perhaps, with the romantic passion of the convert — but to me it really seems that the rest of Canada offers nothing quite comparable to the Maritimes. I have lived, for varying periods, in London and New York, in California and in France, and though I recognize their attractions, I cannot think any of them compares with D'Escousse, Nova Scotia, as a place to live and work, as a place to grow old and decline and die. It would not be so for everyone, but it is so for an increasing number of refugees from the absurdities of the modern city. To paraphrase Stephen Leacock's remark about my native Vancouver, if I had known what it was like, I wouldn't have waited till I was thirty to come; I would have been born here.

But I wasn't.

Neither was Harry Bruce, Kent Thompson, Reshard Gool, Robert Campbell, Russell Hunt, David Walker, Robert Cockburn, William Bauer, or Anthony Brennan. And their work represents a fair proportion of the writing coming out of the Maritimes at the moment.

Not only that, but Hugh MacLennan, Bernell Macdonald, Louis Cormier, Tom Gallant, Ray Smith and Elizabeth Brewster *aren't* living here. And they are all born Maritimers.

I don't want to construct any vast theories; the facts are too various and recalcitrant, and for virtually every notion I might propose there are numerous exceptions. Some of the explanations are perfectly obvious: for instance, all the newcomers I mentioned, aside from Harry Bruce and David Walker, have some connection with universities, specifically — Reshard Gool excepted — with the University of New Brunswick and its affiliates. Under the leadership of such men as Fred Cogswell and the late Desmond Pacey, UNB has always been remarkably hospitable both to imaginative writing and to Canadian literature, and the consequence is that Fredericton is positively infested with poets. Fredericton has a tradition of breeding poets as well as attracting them, and the lines of intellectual and even familial descent can be traced from, say, A. G. Bailey through Carman and Roberts to Jonathan Odell, the Loyalist eminence who was perhaps the leading Tory poet of the American Revolution, and beyond, to the Emersons of pre-Revolutionary New England. I remember once calculating that if you defined "nationally published poet" to mean any poet whose work had been published outside New Brunswick, then Fredericton had one nationally published poet per thousand of population. Even allowing for copious amounts of foul verse, that remains an astonishing statistic.

The whole matter is further complicated by the fact that while New Brunswick harbours poets, Nova Scotia is traditionally a province of journalists, satirists and novelists. From Howe, Haliburton and McCulloch through Will Bird and Hugh MacLennan to Ray Smith and Harry Bruce, Nova Scotia's writers are more like marginal men of affairs than men of letters. Even that generalization needs to be qualified, however, since it refers only to writing in English; in Gaelic, Nova Scotia has had its share of poets, and in New Brunswick the most visible of current Acadian works is *La Sagouin*, a monodrama which has had remarkable success throughout French Canada from Montreal to the villages of Cape Breton.

Nevertheless, I will venture a very ten-

tative observation. I suspect that literary people are attracted to the Maritimes because they sense the region's extraordinary literary resources, but that their association with universities largely prevents them from realizing those resources in their work. Native Maritimers have a vast advantage — but rarely have the comparative sense of culture, the shrewdness and breadth of judgment, to mine those resources without exposing themselves to a wider experience. They leave — and in the cities to the west they write about the east coast.

What I mean by resources is that vast, apparently endless supply of stories and myths, of superstitions and symbolism, which the east coast has developed over three hundred years of European settlement. A glance at Helen Creighton's work reveals its range and variety: a vital oral tradition which exhales the stuff of poetry and drama as naturally as the shoreline of Guysborough County produces fog. Down here, the news is still other people, and one's neighbours are perpetually cast as characters in the continuing play which is the life of the village. In fact the process almost becomes ruinous, at a certain point: once the casting directors in our minds have established that, say, René is a drunk, he finds it extremely difficult to convince anyone that he is ever sober, sensible or serious; such behaviour would be out of character. What's the news? Nothing to do with Henry Kissinger and Indira Gandhi; the news is that Pierre's pig went down the well, that Frank's wife ran off with that Newfoundlander who was staying with them, that Henry bought a new car. And *that*, rather than Kissinger and Gandhi, seems to me the stuff out of which literature can come.

Add to that the depth of history and legend: the understanding that Louisbourg has been foggy ever since it was captured by the English in 1758, while the villages of Main-au-Dieu and Gabarus, on either side, remained Catholic, French and fog-free. Listen to the plaintive melodies of a Cape Breton fiddler, melodies whose titles are in Gaelic and which came to Canada a century and a half ago when the fiddler's ancestors settled on the farm he still occupies. Look at the Music Room on the Bedford Highway outside Halifax, built for his French-Canadian mistress by Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria. Watch the fog roll in over Mader's Cove and wait to see whether you will glimpse the *Teazer*, the ghost ship of Mahone Bay.

Such things are dissolved in the blood of Maritimers, and lucky is the newcomer who develops an understanding of them. Indeed, one wonders if a newcomer can ever have the instinctive grasp of the Nova Scotia farm communities which informs the work of Ernest Buckler, or the command of the human bearings of history which underlies the novels of Thomas Raddall. Yet Buckler spent ten years in Toronto before returning to farm and write in Bridgetown, and Raddall lived his first ten years in England and put in his young manhood at sea. Hugh MacLennan's chilling account of the young Jerome Martell's midnight journey down the Miramichi, dodging his mother's murderer, is one of the most brilliant passages of Maritime literature, an occasion which enters into one's personal rather than one's literary memory — and yet by the time he described that experience from the viewpoint of a New Brunswick boy so isolated he had never seen a train, MacLennan himself was a Rhodes scholar long resident in Montreal.

I have heard analogous stories from the people who experienced their events, and just once, in a story called *Snapshot: The Third Drunk*, I think I did literary justice to such material. (The story was published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, ap-

propriately; Malcolm Ross declares that the common denominator of Maritime life has been the similar way all Maritimers bounce off Boston.) But that one story came from years of listening to the sorts of yarns Maritimers grow up with, listening to the phrasing and rhythm of the various Maritime accents—and there are dozens of accents—and trying to deduce a system of values from the gridwork of assumptions in which the stories were told. For me to hear and understand these stories was a matter of conscious choice and effort, and at the end I knew only a part of what any bright kid in a fishing village simply absorbs in the process of growing up. Never mind, for the moment, the sheer pleasure of hearing good stories, of learning from moment to moment the dramatic and homely details of lives very different from my own. The point is that to make myself capable of writing the story required something resembling a reconstruction of my personal history—and even then, I used a narrator in the story who was *not* a native of the village in which the story took place.

Such a reconstruction of personal history means, I think, almost becoming one with people whose roots reach deeply into their locale and its history, and that process is almost inaccessible to someone in the university. The automatic assumption of the working man is that the university person is his superior, has manners no working man can share, has a distaste for colloquial speech and rough humour, speaks in a way he cannot imitate. The professor may take a summer home in a village, but he remains a professor, and nobody in the village is likely to assume that his interests and preoccupations match their own. At the end of the summer the professor goes back to his lucrative chair in town, and the village goes back to doing without the light and cursing the bread, goes back to pestering the MLA to do something about the potholes and the snowploughs, goes back to the card games and bingoes in the parish hall. A receptive professor will absorb an amazing amount from his few balmy weeks, but he will not have the same understanding he would have if he actually had to cope with the year-round conditions his neighbours face.

The result is evident in the work. Take, for instance, the novels of Kent Thompson. Thompson is fortyish, a sophisticated and well-travelled man, despite his strenuous proclamations of his proletarian origins in the backwoods of the American Midwest. He is a graduate of the Iowa writing programme, and a Ph.D. from the University of Wales. He has been a professor at the University of New Brunswick since 1967, and is now a Canadian citizen and a New Brunswick patriot. He is a respected teacher of writing, and a good writer himself.

His difficulty, it seems to me, is that he moves in a rather uninformative round of activities, a problem he has resolved in ways I consider revealing. His first novel, *The Tenants were Corrie and Tennie*, (1973) is the story of an American schoolteacher, William Boyd, who falls in love with Fredericton while on a bus tour of the Maritimes. Boyd resigns by mail, buys a duplex, and retires, intending to live on the rent from the other side. A young American professor and his wife become his tenants, and Boyd gradually becomes obsessed with his desire for the professor's young wife, Corrie. Gradually he slips over the edge into madness, imagining that Corrie has left Tennie and the children for him.

The action takes place in Fredericton, and various aspects of the setting, the climate and so forth, are captured with admirable precision. Yet all the important characters are American; the New Brunswickers make only cameo appearances. The reader senses, I think, that Thomp-

son simply doesn't know the natives well enough to risk a novel about them. That is not to say the novel doesn't work; it does work but in a very particular way which has very little to do with the literary resources of New Brunswick.

With his second novel, *Across from the Floral Park* (1974), Thompson retreats even farther from the realities in which he lives. A wealthy man buys a city mansion across from the Floral Park, and finds two women apparently in permanent residence. One woman is old and decrepit but maintains a suite of rooms in one wing of the house; she has some legal claim on the house, which will not be fully his until her death. The other woman is young, beautiful and gracious, apparently of servant origins, and the hero marries her. They have a series of ventures and adventures together — she becomes a patron of the arts, he has a successful fling at politics, they have a child together — and then he comes home to find all the locks changed on the doors. He is expelled from his sumptuous Eden; as the novel ends he is telling the story from his hotel room.

I suggested to Thompson that *Floral Park* "read like a novel by someone who had been an invalid all his life and had watched the human comedy taking place on the other side of a pane of glass." Exactly, he replied, "that's what I intended. I wanted something timeless and placeless. Thus, a very philosophical novel."

In that respect, Thompson's novels greatly resemble those of Anthony Brennan, who teaches English a quarter of a mile away at St. Thomas University, UNB's Catholic affiliate. A Yorkshireman by origin, Brennan has travelled widely and studied at various universities in Canada and England; he once spent two years on a 75,000 mile trek from Alaska to Colombia to Newfoundland. He has been in Fredericton since 1971.

Like its predecessor, *The Carbon Copy* (1972), Brennan's second novel, *The Crazy House* (1975) owes something to Kafka and Sartre and the theatre of the absurd. The works become less novels than philosophical parables, excursions into the theory and practice of revolution, the problems of identity and the need for self-assertion. Both are set in imaginary countries, in times of great political turmoil; both invoke imagery of terror and flight, and both feature protagonists who become enmeshed in events largely against their wills and for reasons they do not fully understand. I found them both extremely interesting, extremely pertinent to Canadian politics, and quite unusual in the context of Canadian writing. Canada has remained largely untouched by the violence and confusion of modern politics, and in one sense Brennan's novels are like a message from that turbulent world.

Yet once again I am struck by the utter absence of the kind of experience which actually surrounds Brennan on all sides. Like Thompson, Brennan deals in generalities; like Thompson, he reflects not the context he inhabits, but a context his experience permits him to imagine. And though I do not want to ride a hobbyhorse about it, I suspect the reason is the oddly insulated world of the universities. Gossip and meetings, term papers and fluttery infidelities, parking privileges and pecking orders: universities really do not provide very rich material, and what there is has been picked over very thoroughly. What is a writer to do? The answer seems clear: drop realism altogether, and rely entirely on the resources of one's intelligence and imagination.

I am not, of course, suggesting that Brennan or Thompson *should* necessarily write about New Brunswick's inner life; I am simply pointing out that in fact they don't. Their novels describe a rootless,

mobile, violent and existential world, a world quite unlike the Maritimes. Realism, the dominant mode of Western fiction for three centuries, perhaps assumes a reasonably stable society, in which linkages such as family, politics, money and class have some meaning. Brennan and Thompson actually live in one of the few places where such a society persists, but their imaginations are not at home in that context, and despite their obvious talents the literary resources of New Brunswick go untapped.

The modern novel, as Defoe should remind us, was actually an outgrowth of journalism, and I suspect that even now fiction is most vital when it relies heavily on the values of journalism: on immediacy, concreteness, the shrewdly observed details of behaviour from which an astute reader may deduce the involutions of the spirit. Reality, I suggest, is richer, more surprising and more authoritative than anyone's imagination, and the novelist who does not ask observation to help him deprives himself of his greatest resource.

I argue my case from a special vantage point: I have been a professor, I am now a journalist, and writers are notorious for their insistence that the only reasonable course for a good writer is the course the particular writer has chosen for himself. But I call once again on Kent Thompson, reflecting on my route and his own:

> It's just a choice, I suppose, between doing articles as a job and marking first-year essays I don't think there's a great deal between them — do you? Except that, dammit, you get to *learn* something, and I hear, and read, the same damn thing over and over and over again. The curse of teaching is its goddamned repetition. The 18-year-old mind is always just that — and so, for that matter, is the 40-year-old academic mind. Nothing bloody well happens!

Be that as it may, Kent Thompson has published two novels, and I have not. If the professor is remote from the concrete concerns of ordinary people, the journalist is if anything too deeply enmeshed in them.

Consider, for instance, Harry Bruce, a native of Toronto who has lived since 1971 in Halifax. Harry is the son of Charles Bruce, the Nova Scotia-born poet and novelist, and like his father he is one of the finest journalists in the country. He is an accomplished prose stylist, an unusually knowledgeable observer, and his sense of the absurd is never asleep. The best of his articles and essays unquestionably rank as literature.

Yet Harry, too, is forty and essentially bookless. The curse of the freelance journalist's life is money: punching out articles for the national magazines, whisking off commentaries for CBC radio, hammering out a TV script here and a think-piece there, the journalist is perpetually tied to the events of the moment, perpetually haunted by the inexorable approach of the mortgage payment and the knowledge that if he dares to be ill this month, he will have trouble with that payment next month. A book-length project will consume not one month, but several, and how is the journalist to secure such a stretch of free time? And how, for that matter, is he to free himself from the habit of superficial brightness, from the easy and entertaining phrase which nevertheless glosses over the complexities of the situation before him? The journalist has always been a somewhat raffish and disreputable figure, and the rich variety of human life is easier for him to find than it is for the professor. But the long view of things, the practice of the art *as* an art, the fine indifference to the marketplace which the professor can take for granted — these are virtually unattainable luxuries for the drudges of Grub Street.

I am struck by the change in the literary marketplace since the young manhood of writers like Buckler, Raddall, Will Bird. In their day, the short story

was still a viable commercial form; Raddall could sit in Liverpool and write for *Blackwood's*, Buckler could farm in Bridgetown and write for *Esquire*, and each of them could utilize an established literary form. But today's market for imaginative literature as distinct from essays and reportage is sadly diminished. Aside from *Saturday Night*, *Chatelaine* and the CBC, Canada offers virtually no outlets for fiction except at purely nominal rates of pay. Fiction thus becomes a hobby for journalists as much as for professors — and journalists have less time to pursue any hobby.

The result is that the most successful Maritime fiction is often written in Montreal, where Hugh MacLennan soldiers on, where Ray Smith occasionally emits a polished and entertaining volume. And yet it sometimes seems that everyone down home is writing, too. A couple of years ago, I edited a literary supplement for the Halifax weekly *The Fourth Estate*. We advertised for contributions — and drew about 350 writers out of the woodwork, a surprisingly large number of whom were at least competent. The Nova Scotia Department of Recreation (which for reasons best known to the Liberals is the department responsible for culture) ran a writing contest last year and attracted over six hundred entrants. Prince Edward Island boasts Milton Acorn and a clutch of young hopefuls; in Saint John, Dan Ross has published literally hundreds of popular novels under half a dozen pseudonyms. After a stint writing fiction for Montreal's *Midnight*, Raymond Fraser is said to be back in Chatham, New Brunswick, and every season seems to introduce another new Maritime writer from a major Ontario publisher: David Richard Adams last year, Don Domanski this year with a book of poems provocatively entitled *The Cape Breton Book of the Dead*.

The writers I most admire are those who give voice to the fantasies and values, the fears and assumptions, of an entire society. The achievement of such writers as Ernest Buckler and Alden Nowlan is precisely that kind of articulation, and the excitement and despair of being a writer in the Maritimes arises from the knowledge that this part of Canada cries out for such articulation, the knowledge that the material with which life here routinely presents one implies a constant, strenuous test of one's talents and one's character.

In the end, the question is not where a writer comes from or how he develops the mixture of love and judgment which the Maritime community — and perhaps any community — demands. The question is whether he does develop it, and how he uses it to elucidate and evaluate the life around him. My drunken friend was fumbling for something real, for *The Mysterious East* was strident in judgment and reticent about love, and what he was really saying, I think now, was that judgment without love can hardly fail to be harsh and merciless. In the course of justice none of us should see salvation.

I don't accept his view: I think our judgments were based on love, on the perception that Maritime political and economic structures are unrepentantly brutal to people — and it is people, not structures, that deserve our love. The writer who could really capture the quality of Maritime people in all their raucousness, their pragmatism, their desperation, nobility, comedy and mystery, could give us works to compare with those of Chekhov and Faulkner. Perhaps the parallel is really with Ireland, that other small, poor, haunted and talkative country. A Yeats or a Joyce would rub his hands at the speech and sensibility of Lunenburg or the Miramichi; I think, somehow, they would throw up their hands at Pickering.

Sometimes, when I give myself over to dreaming, I think of John Millington Synge, capturing forever the melody and

anguish of the Aran Islands. I reflect that I too live on an island off an island. And I remember that Synge was not raised on the islands that called forth his greatness. The blend of what he brought and what he found gave the world *Riders to the Sea*, and that same sea washes at my doorstep.

THE CANADIAN GOLDSMITH

Doug Fetherling

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, the Canadian Oliver Goldsmith who wrote "The Rising Village" in emulation of his great-uncle's "The Deserted Village", occupies a place in Canadian writing unusual for being a compound of several small claims to fame. He was, as Lorne Pierce pointed out, "our first native-born, English-speaking poet". He was also the first Canadian poet to be published abroad (and the first to have his work panned overseas). Similarly, his brief *Autobiography* was one of the first literary memoirs by a Canadian. It can also be said without much exaggeration that Goldsmith was the father of a Maritimes poetic tradition, although this accomplishment, like the others, was rather involuntary and taken note of only in retrospect.

But if all these firsts were put aside, there would remain about Goldsmith's career one fact sufficient to immortalize him in the footnotes, if not actually in the anthologies he now occupies so curiously. This is the fact that he was our first, and one of our worst, great-bad poets, in the sense that William Arthur Deacon's four Jameses[1] are great-bad. He was the first to publish verse of such unabashed unsatisfactoriness as to make him stand out even among the poetasters, dabblers and crackpots who routinely inhabit the slums of verse. It is in this way that we should think of him and that he should appeal. It is also in this light that he has been insufficiently recognized, just as in the others he has been, if anything, overpraised. Poor Oliver Goldsmith (1795-1861) was not very important as a literary figure. He was and is important only as a curiosity of literature — in the pathologist's or carnival barker's use of the phrase rather than Disraeli's.

"The Rising Village" has several characteristics in common with other great-bad poems, just as Goldsmith's personality resembles those of other writers who followed in his eccentric footsteps. Generally speaking, the truly, monumental great-bad poems can be divided into two types. First there are the occasional poems, in which the poet acknowledges or celebrates with lopsided rhetoric, topics of excruciating insignificance. An example is James McIntyre's ode to the mammoth Ontario cheese, made famous by Deacon. The second type is the kind intended as an epic, in which the poet brings to bear what he believes are the big guns of High Style on a poem-idea completely unsuited to such treatment. "The Rising Village" falls within this classification. It is probably one of the finest examples.

Goldsmith's aim was to depict the tribulations of the early Nova Scotia Loyalists, a group from which he considered himself to have descended, even though his father was an Irishman directly employed by the Crown and not what is ordinarily thought of as a Loyalist. Still,

Goldsmith claimed sympathy with the Loyalists. He set about in his poem to describe their life in the wilds so different from the southern colonies they had left behind a generation earlier.

This was his intent. As to his motive, it seems that Goldsmith like most other first-generation Canadians was not so concerned with the family roots as perhaps his children would have been had he married. Nor does Goldsmith seem to have been concerned with the politics of the Loyalist era. Indeed he appears remarkably apolitical despite (or possibly because of) the fact that he was a civil servant for most of his days. It seems rather that he took to verse in order to show others the ties to his famous ancestor, in the shadow of whose renown the family lived.

Goldsmith was less interested in what the Loyalists did in Canada than in what they had been in the American colonies and, by extension, in the mother country. As Fred Cogswell noted astutely in the *Literary History of Canada*, Goldsmith "describes the pioneer homes of Nova Scotia as if they really were the neat English cottages which the author would have liked them to be." Goldsmith was a Tory by nature as well as by choice. He envied the prosperity and respect his people had known before the Revolution, which he might well have blamed for what he himself became: a minor Crown servant who kept hoping to be sent abroad but who most often was shuffled around the Maritimes. He was a man of no great ambition. Once "The Rising Village" was poorly received, he stopped writing verse, except for a few occasional poems. He was partly descended (and partly liked to believe that he was descended) from the Establishment, who lived among others of their kind. (The first wave of Nova Scotia Loyalists included 200 graduates of Harvard and an equal number from other colleges. These included four of the five judges of the Massachusetts superior court, including the chief justice.) His aim in life was to be comfortable and secure.

He was also a man proud of his education. This pride shows itself in his penchant for quotation. In his autobiography (which wasn't published until 1943) he is given to promiscuously extracting from the works of his relative, "The Traveler" in particular. But he was conversant with everything from the classics to James Fenimore Cooper, and one at least suspects that he was at ease with Scott's novels. The influence of the older writers over the newer is central to "The Rising Village". The poem is written in heroic couplets, one fancies, because, first, this was the form of "The Deserted Village" and, second, because (as Cogswell states) this form was "already out of date even in England" and thus pleasing to Goldsmith's sensibilities.

Such couplets, of course, reached their peak of usefulness as vehicles for the burnished wit of Pope. Goldsmith's success with them was commensurate with his own lack of wit and sophistication. He should have been better off with the freer forms used by, say, Thomson, whom he rivalled in emotional equipment. As it is, Goldsmith's poem resembles "The Seasons" only to the extent that it concludes with an embarrassing panegyric to Britannia, ending with the lines

> And bliss and peace encircle all thy shore
> Till empires rise and sink, on earth, no more

which, for the second (1834) edition, Goldsmith changed to:

> And bliss and peace encircle all thy shore
> Till sun, and moon, and stars shall be no more.

This change, which can be noted in Michael Gnarowski's excellent comparative text, published in 1968, points up the way in which Goldsmith revised the text to suit the climate of a later day. For instance, he struck from the second edition

the dedication to Dalhousie. Apparently it had been included originally in the hope of securing patronage. Once Dalhousie was dead, it bore no value or truth for the author.

The poem begins by describing the original Loyalists and their hardships and thanksgiving. There is a catalogue of the local professional class, such as the teacher and the physician. The growth of the community from settlement to village is indicated by "The wandering Pedlar . . . , / Established here, his settled home maintains, / And soon a merchant's higher title gains." There follows an inventory of the merchant's goods, which Cogswell cites as one of the lyrical high spots of the poem but which could also be looked upon as one of the more absurd passages.

> Around his store, on spacious shelves arrayed,
> Behold his great and various stock in trade.
> Here, nails and blankets, side by side, are seen,
> There, horses' collars, and a large tureen;
> Buttons and tumblers, fish-hooks, spoons and knives,
> Shawls for young damsels, flannel for old wives;
> Woolcards and stockings, hats for men and boys,
> Mill-saw and fenders, silks, and children's toys;
> All useful things, and joined with many more,
> Compose the well-assorted country store.

It is the rhythm of the two final lines, contrasted with the rest of this chamber of commerce puff, that makes one realize that no, this is no ordinary early poet, but a pretender of such sure hamfistedness as to stand apart on other than historical and literary grounds.

Following this section is the story of Flora, a local maiden left standing at the altar by her beau, Albert. This bit of soap opera was apparently meant to animate the local oral history that went before it. Coming as it does more than 300 lines into the poem, or a little more than halfway, it makes one think that at last the real point of the exercise has been arrived at. But it quickly passes into the penultimate section, which is an idyllic description of the countryside. Goldsmith's hymn to Mother England forms the conclusion. It is a poem remarkable not only for its incoherence of structure but for its club-footed metre and use of rhyme, at once both vapid and original. For example, Goldsmith describes thus a proxy who bears a note to Flora informing her of her betrothed's decision to break the engagement:

> But hark! a hurried step advances near,
> 'Tis Albert's breaks upon her listening ear;
> Albert's, ah, no! a ruder footstep, bore
> With eager haste, a letter to the door;
> Flora receives it, and could dare conceal
> Her rapture, as she kissed her lover's seal.
> Yet, anxious tears were gathered in her eye,
> As on the note it rested wistfully.

The last word — "wistfully" — for which there is little rhyme, rings on through a further 550 lines like the sound of a horseshoe coming to rest around an iron pole.

In comparison with other poets whom he resembles, Goldsmith comes off badly indeed, or well, depending upon how one chooses to see him. His autobiography reveals a man of some compassion, of a highly selective sort. He recalls that, as a boy apprenticed to a naval surgeon, he felt no emotion at seeing men having their limbs amputated. But he was reduced to tears by the sight of a flogging. Whatever the precise emotional state this implies, it is practically non-existent in his long poem, which seems predicated on no true feeling or attachment to its subject but rather on a desire to write a poem, period. Compared with his great-uncle whose form he copied (one could almost say parodied) he lacked a great deal in motivation and talent. Compared with lesser poets of his own time, he lacked simple powers of description, although he certainly strove to create the illusion of

such gifts. If he had been very much better at simple verse-craft, he would come closest to resembling a latter-day Pryor to the extent that he shared what Dr. Johnson described as Pryor's narrow "compass of comprehension or activity of fancy."

Yet bad as he was, Goldsmith was instrumental in the founding of a conservative tradition in Canada. The link between him and, for instance, Howe, is quite clear; and by risking a bit, one could even use him to point the way to Pratt. It was a tradition that wished itself epic but instead was merely historical. Cogswell, the best commentator on Goldsmith and his descendents, maintains that "The Rising Village" is at times worthwhile in the usual sense but that it suffers mainly from inconsistency. However, to lovers of great-bad verse, the poem's unevenness only contributes to the mediocrity, and thus to its claim of inspired status among the dreadful.

NOTE

[1] William Arthur Deacon, *The Four Jameses*. Ottawa: Graphic Publishers. 1927.

ALLINE AND BAILEY

Thomas B. Vincent

IN CURRENT ANTHOLOGIES surveying the development of Canadian literature, the two most commonly recognized poets from the 18th-century period of Maritime verse are Joseph Stansbury and Jonathan Odell. Ironically, only a single short lyric from the Stansbury canon is know to have been written in the Maritimes during Stansbury's rather brief stay in Nova Scotia; the rest of his work was produced in New York and Philadelphia. Similarly, the bulk of Odell's poetry was written and published in New York several years before his arrival in New Brunswick and is quite different in tone and spirit from the verses he wrote after settling in Fredericton. One might argue, of course, that the "loyal verses" of Stansbury and Odell essentially reflect the nature of 18th-century Maritime poetry in spite of having been written elsewhere. But surely it would be preferable to anchor our understanding of early Maritime verse first in the works of poets who were in more immediate contact during their most productive periods with the cultural milieu of the Maritimes. To this end, I wish to focus attention on the poetry of Henry Alline (1748-1784) and Jacob Bailey (1731-1808); to describe something of the literary achievements of these poets; and to indicate through their work something of the complexity and diversity of poetic activity in late 18th-century Maritime Canada.

Henry Alline was born in 1748 at Newport, Rhode Island, of an old Massachusetts family.[1] He started school in Newport, but his formal education ended early when his family moved to Nova Scotia in 1760 to settle at Falmouth at the head of the Annapolis Valley. They were part of the wave of New England settlers who came to Nova Scotia to take up the lands vacated by the expulsion of the Acadian French. Though portions of the land had been worked previously, life was extremely difficult for the new settlers. For some years, they were faced constantly with the problems of basic physical survival as they struggled to establish themselves on their farms. All

the amenities of a more settled society were lacking, including formal schooling and organized religious worship. It is remarkable, therefore, that Henry Alline should emerge from such an environment to establish a religious movement of major historical significance in the Maritimes,[2] and to write and publish two books of theology, three sermons, an autobiographical journal, and a book of 488 hymns. It is all the more remarkable when one realizes that all this was accomplished in a nine-year period between 1775 and Alline's death (at 36) in 1784.

The major turning point in Alline's life was his conversion to Christ in March of 1775. At this time he became intensely aware of the greatness of God's grace and of Christ's redeeming love, recognized the enormity of his own sinfulness, and saw the need to proclaim the gospel truth to all men. In effect, he was reborn and his life given new meaning, shape, and direction. In a few short years, his efforts to awaken those around him sparked a widespread religious revival in the Maritimes which at the time of his death was on the verge of spreading into the new United States.

Alline's religious beliefs provided the framework within which his poetic activities took place. As with his life, these beliefs gave both purpose and direction to his verse. But while his poetry was made to serve his religious views, it also embodies and displays the nature and depth of his Christian faith and commitment in the emotive terms in which he knew them. In poetry, he was able not only to describe the character and pattern of religious life, but also to communicate the emotional reality of religious experience by establishing a personal and intimate relationship between himself and the reader. Alline seems to have been acutely aware of this special communicative function which poetry could perform. Bits of poetry, usually his own, are sprinkled throughout his prose works. But nowhere is his awareness of the affectiveness of poetry more evident than in his book, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, published in Boston in 1786.[3] Alline prepared the book for publication during a lengthy illness in the spring and summer of 1783,[4] and it was mainly for the purpose of publishing it that he was travelling to Boston when he died in February 1784.

Hymns and Spiritual Songs is in five parts, more or less thematically arranged, incorporating 488 separate pieces and thereby making Alline one of the most prolific hymnists of his day. It had a practical purpose: it was intended as a hymnal for the use of his followers in Nova Scotia and designed to articulate in relatively simple verse the central aspects of Christian life and belief as Alline saw them. Viewed simply as a hymn book it tends to overwhelm the reader by the sheer number of its items, and to bore him by the apparently endless repetition of certain thematic motifs. But it is more than a hymnal. At the heart of the book lies Alline's own, intensely personal, religious experience, and when it is approached as an expression of that experience and understanding of the meaning and purpose of human life — at a time when he probably knew he was fatally ill — its utilitarian function begins to take second place to its poetry. In this context *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* emerges as Alline's vision of human reality, simplified and personalized so that ordinary men may relate to it fully and take it into their lives.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to analyse Alline's vision of reality in detail, but some of its more prominent features should be noted. First, as a deeply committed Christian, Alline places the person of Christ at the centre of reality and the desire for Christ at the centre of human experience:

O for the spirit of the Dove,
To bow this heart of mine!
Lord let my soul enjoy thy love,
And find a peace divine.

O for the meekness of the Lamb,
To walk with thee, my God!
Then should I feel thy lovely name,
And feed upon thy word.

Jesus, I long to love thee more,
And life divine pursue;
I love thy worship, name adore,
In songs forever new.

(Hymn II, lxxxviii)

What is interesting here is not that Alline should approach the question of reality in terms of the relationship between God and man, or even that he should give Christ such prominence in his view of things. Rather, it is the simple, direct, personal relationship between the speaker and Christ which characterizes his position and which at the same time controls the tone of the poetry. We find the same effect in one of Alline's Crucifixion poems:

As near to Calvary I pass
Methinks I see a bloody cross,
Where a poor victim hangs;
His flesh with ragged irons tore,
His limbs all dress'd with purple gore,
Gasping in dying pangs.

Surpriz'd the spectacle to see,
I ask'd who can this victim be,
In such exquisite pain?
Why thus consign'd to woes I cry'd?
"*Tis I*, the bleeding God reply'd,
"*To save a world from sin.*"

A God for rebel mortals dies!
How can it be, my soul replies!
What! Jesus die for me!
"*Yes, saith the suff'ring Son of God,*
"*I give my life, I spill my blood,*
"*For thee, pour soul, for thee.*"

Lord since thy life thou'st freely giv'n,
To bring my wretched soul to heav'n,
And bless me with thy love;
Then to thy feet, O God, I'll fall,
Give thee my life, my soul, my all,
To reign with thee above.

(Hymn V, lix, 1-4)

Concomitant with recognizing that the meaning and value of human life rest in the redeeming love of Christ is the realization of the profound sinfulness of man. The despondency resulting from this realization is also depicted in intensely personal terms:

Lord, what a wretched soul I am;
In midnight shades I dwell;
Laden with guilt, and born to die,
And rushing down to hell.

Hell yawns for my unhappy soul,
And threatens ev'ry breath;
While swift as fleeting moments roll,
I'm hurri'd down to death.

No hand but thine, O God of Love,
My wretched soul can save;
O come, dear Jesus, and remove
This load of guilt I have.

. . . . . .

Thy blood can wash my guilt away;
Thy love my heart can cheer:
O turn my midnight into day
And banish all my fear.

(Hymn I, ix, 1-3; 5)

Finally, in Alline's view, awareness of sin and of Christ's love, while it must inevitably lead to the birth of one's own faith, also creates a strong desire to see the gospel truth spread to all men:

Jesus thy gospel armour gird,
To spread abroad thy gracious fame,
Ride in the chariot of thy word,
And teach the dying world thy name.

(Hymn II, xxiv, 1)

Theologically, these basic religious views are quite typical of 18th-century evangelical Christianity. What makes Alline stand out, however, is his ability as a poet to communicate the special quality and character of his religious experience and to convince the reader of its verity. From this point of view, the most striking effect of Alline's religious poetry is the sense of immediacy and intimacy it brings to the relationship between Christ and man.

The poems not only assert but radiate an intense awareness of the benevolent presence of Christ in human reality. By creating in his verse this vivid sense of Christ's closeness and approachability, Alline is able to articulate a vision of reality in which mundane life is infused with the light and spirit of divine grace as the faith of the individual brings him into intimate contact with the love of Christ. In creating this effect, the spirit of Alline's hymns approaches that of Charles Wesley's hymns.[5] B. L. Manning, in comparing Wesley and Isaac Watts, points out that Wesley was concerned:

> ... with God and the soul of man: their manifold relations, their estrangement, their reconciliation, their union. Watts, too, concerns himself with this drama; but he gives it a cosmic background. Not less than Wesley, he finds the Cross at the centre of his thought: all things look forward or backward to the Incarnation and the Passion. But Watts sees the Cross, as Milton had seen it, planted on a globe hung in space, surrounded by the vast distances of the universe. ... There is a sense of the spaciousness of nature, of the vastness of time, of the dreadfulness of eternity, in Watts which is missing or less felt in Wesley.[6]

Much the same could be said of Alline's poetical perspective in *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. His is not a cosmic view. His poetry does not try to rationalize the relationship between God and man; it tries to realize it in terms of simple, human, emotional awareness.

Before leaving Alline, there is one other aspect of his poetry which should be noted. In addition to working in hymn forms, he wrote in heroic couplets and blank verse. For the most part, this type of verse is in the form of scraps scattered through his prose works and is thematically and tonally consistent with the poetry of the hymns. There are, however, several pieces of some length which reveal a rather dramatic element in Alline's poetic voice. One of these, an unpublished poem entitled "An Evening Walk among the Tombs,"[7] begins:

> Thick Cypress gloom, this Eve that Spreads her Veil
> O'er all the Slumbering world; but far more dark
> The gloom that Spreads this Solitary Vault
> Where Earth's rapacious jaws her Millions drink.
> O gloomy aspect of Eternal Night,
> As Sailors trembling o'er the Watery Grave
> When bellowing Thunders with the rattling hail
> Threaten immediate Exit unprepar'd:
> So stands my Soul to view the Gulf profound.
> My throbbing breast, my trembling knees, and all
> The Active powers of tho't start back
> Aghast: Is this dark Vault my gloomy home?
> Is this the End of all our Mortal race
> And Period to all Earth's Exaulted joys?
> Ah, no Escape from her rapacious jaws?

The theme, tone, and style appear to be heavily influenced by Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, but the theatrical character of the imagination here seems to come naturally to Alline. The same effect can be found in his prose when he is greatly "moved by the Spirit."

THE POETRY AND RELIGIOUS views of Jacob Bailey are radically different from those of Alline, yet both men were part of the same general social and cultural milieu. Bailey was born at Rowley, Massachusetts, in 1731. Unlike Alline, he completed a formal education, graduating from Harvard in 1755. For a short time he taught in schools, but in 1760 he entered Church of England orders and became a frontier missionary in the Kennebec area of Maine. During the American Rebellion, he became the object of anti-British sentiment in the Kennebec area, and he and his family were viciously persecuted until in 1779 they were allowed to emigrate to Nova Scotia. After a brief residence at Cornwallis (not far from Alline's home at Fal-

mouth), Bailey became the Church of England missionary at Annapolis Royal where he served until his death (at 77) in 1808.

Throughout his life, Bailey was an extremely prolific writer. He carried on an extensive correspondence, and wrote over 150 sermons, a number of moral and religious prose works, several historical pieces, and two lengthy descriptive geographies of Maine and Nova Scotia. In addition, among his papers[8] are found fragments of several plays, three incomplete epistolary novels, and an extraordinary amount of poetry. Yet little of Bailey's work was ever published; it circulated among his friends and acquaintances in manuscript form.

Bailey's early poetry consisted mainly of light love-lyrics; then, with the coming of the Rebellion, his subject matter became more serious. While still in Maine, he attacked the Rebellion, but only indirectly, through sentimental verses on the suffering and injustices perpetrated against innocents in time of civil strife. It was not until he reached Nova Scotia, following severe persecution from the Rebels in Maine, that he turned to satire as his principal poetic vehicle. In Hudibrastic verse, he found an energetic way of venting his resentment of the Rebels while at the same time satisfying his poetic inclinations. The result was some of the best satire written in North America in the late 18th century.

Bailey wrote a good number of short, anti-Rebel satires (under 300 lines each); a selection of their titles alone gives some idea of his political attitude: "The Factious Demagogue" (1779), "Character of a Trimmer" (1781), "Confin'd to these Malignant Times" (c. 1782), "Speech of an American Philosopher of Immortal Memory" (c. 1782), "Genius of Hudibrastic Verse" (1783). His main efforts, however, were concentrated on a long narrative-verse-satire entitled "America." The poem was begun in 1780 and patterned on Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*. To judge from Bailey's correspondence, he intended to write a satirical-historical explanation of the causes of the American Rebellion from a Loyalist point of view, including descriptions of leading personalities and events. Unfortunately, he never finished the poem, which nonetheless runs to over 4,100 lines in nine Books.

Although his poem is concerned with North America, Bailey begins in England with Hudibras, Butler's hero. He deliberately links his poem narratively and thematically with Butler's because he believed that the same nonconformist religious sentiments which Butler blamed for civil war in England were at work in the American Rebellion. Thus, Bailey's hero, Convert, is presented as the great-grandson of Hudibras and heir to a long tradition of religious enthusiasm and secret immorality. However, in Convert's generation, enthusiasm and non-conformity turn from religious matters to intellectual and political concerns. He becomes an atheist and free thinker, an enemy to authority in both Church and State, and dreams of attaining political power for himself. To further his efforts, he allies himself with one Doctor Faustus (Benjamin Franklin), and together they meet secretly in Boston with Tony Clincum (Samuel Adams?) and lawyer Bumbo (John Adams?) to plot rebellion. Among Bailey's descriptions of the plotters, his portrait of Bumbo is the most delightful and gives a good idea of the nature of his satire:

> No lawyer, vers'd in craft profound
> Could better puzzle and confound,
> Or blend together right and wrong
> By lasting clatter of his tongue,
> Or with a graver, brazen face
> Daub o'er a knavish dirty case
> Either with softness or with fury
> To bother both the judge and jury,
> So he could gild and beautify
> A lump of coarse deformity;

Make roughest pebble stones appear
As polish'd diamonds smooth and clear;
Nay, tis affirmed, that artful Tony
Could make a T— as sweet as honey;
Or cause a dung heap to excel
The pink or rose in fragrant smell.
But may it, sir, your worship please,
He did far greater things than these:
Made Boston people we are told
Believe his arse was made of gold,
And on the credit of his Bum
Borrow'd a most enormous sum,
And he employed this numerous score
To cozen and to cheat them more.

(Book VIII, 260-285)

Bailey never completed "America". Following the Peace of 1784 between Britain and the United States and the subsequent deportation of the Loyalists, the poem was no longer relevant, either politically and poetically. Bailey's interests, like those of his fellow Loyalists, became focused on establishing a new society in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. He therefore turned his attention to an issue of more immediate concern, one which he believed to be fundamental in shaping the post-Rebellion society of the Maritime Provinces.

The issue was the nature of religion and the role of the Church in society. The question was a particularly pertinent one for Bailey because, in the late 1780s and early 1790s, the influence and authority of the established Church of England in the Maritimes came under considerable pressure owing to the popularity of itinerant preachers. In Bailey's view, nonconformism led inevitably to anarchy and rebellion. Thus, the rising influence of such sects as Alline's "New Light" movement, the Methodists, and the Presbyterians was not only a threat to the authority of the established Church, but also a danger to political and social stability. With this in mind, Bailey began work about 1785 on his most ambitious poem, a satire entitled "The Adventures of Jack Ramble, the Methodist Preacher". The poem is incomplete but it runs to thirty-one Books (six are missing; others are fragmented). In all, probably more than 12,000 lines were written; over 9,200 of them survived!

While "The Adventures" ridicules and lampoons evangelical religious practices in a general way, its main attack is directed through a portrayal of the character of Jack Ramble, itinerant preacher. By nature Jack is undisciplined, immoral, viciously selfish, and hypocritical — traits nurtured and matured through his involvement with the American Rebellion. Following the Rebellion, Jack is at loose ends until a chance acquaintance (Parson Og) suggests that a man of his natural talents is ideally suited to the preaching trade. Jack himself is doubtful, but Og explains how simple it is:

"I have no learning, and beside
"The bible I have laid aside
"As wholly useless and unmeet,
"For I had other tunes to beat;
"A stranger to divine affairs,
"I seldom hear or say my prayers,
"Again I've run to great excess
"In many kinds of wickedness."
The reverend sire made this reply:
"Tis mine, your doubts to satisfy;
"Supply with daring impudence
"The want of learning and of sense;
"Assume a doleful hollow tone
"Between a counter and a groan;
"Then sink away to gentle sighing,
"To sadd'ning sobs and piteous crying;
"Now stretch your lungs with all your power
"And like a bull of Bashan roar,
"When he with fury paws the ground
"And shakes the nodding hills around.
"O Noise! What mortal can recite
"The wonders of thy sovereign might;
"Oft hast thou thunder'd in our ears
"And smote our souls with chilling fears;
"Subdu'd the sacred voice of reason
"And rais'd up men to blood and treason."

Jack's subsequent career as an itinerant preacher takes him to Nova Scotia. There his escapades reveal that his real interests are not religious; they involve exploiting female converts for the sake of sexual enjoyment or monetary gain, maliciously creating religious and emotional dissen-

sion within families and within the community at large, and deliberately undermining the beneficial influence of the established Church. Jack finds in nonconformism a perfect vehicle for his self-interest, malice and immorality, and thus (in Bailey's view) he becomes a living testament to the fundamental insidiousness of nonconformism.

While Bailey's political and religious views were not embraced by all Maritimers (nor in their extreme form, by many), they represent in their implications a body of assumptions about human reality which was recognized and seemed to be viable within the intellectual milieu of 18th-century Maritime Canada. This body of assumptions was derived from English Augustan Toryism; it posited a vision of human reality quite different from that reflected in Alline's verse. In place of Alline's pietistic approach to human life, Bailey's approach implicitly emphasized the ideal of civilized humanity. For Bailey, human reality was not so exclusively other-worldly; it involved the acceptance of natural reality and of man's responsibility to pattern his mortal life according to the divine, rational principles of order discernible in the natural universe. The controlling principle of hierarchical structure — a view inherited from the traditional humanistic vision of universal being. Thus, in society, Church, and State, individuals were related to one another in an hierarchical pattern of varying degrees of social, political, moral, and religious responsibilities. Authority was invested in those with the greatest degree of responsibility and was institutionalized in Church and State; it was the duty of those less responsible to respect and obey such authority. Disregard for authority meant disregard for the principle of order upon which it rested, and this in turn implied destruction of the social, political, moral, and religious coherence of human civilization. In short, it meant rebellion — the overthrow of Reason and the return of chaos into the world of man. It is this vision of a rational and orderly human civilization that informs and gives meaning to Bailey's vigorous attacks on American Rebels and dissenting preachers. In his view, both were part of a wave of irrationality sweeping North America and destroying all the elements of civilization that reasonable men sought to sustain and nurture.

In light of these views, it is not surprising that Bailey should find Alline's views and his mode of religion anathema. What bothered him most was that Alline's style of religion fostered an emotional or "enthusiastic" response to religious truths; it placed its trust in the least reliable element of human understanding, and depicted religious awareness as a relatively simple, emotional phenomenon. For Bailey, in the Church of England tradition, religion involved a rational response to the complex nature of divinity. His understanding of the relationship between God and man rested on the belief that man sought the grace of God by humbly exercising his reason to comprehend and appreciate the nature and purpose of Divine Will as revealed in scripture and the teachings of the Church. It was man's duty to submit to and obey the established dictates of religion and virtue. His obedience was a rational act based on recognition of the rectitude of moral and religious truths. Concomitant with this was the hope of salvation. But salvation was God's to grant or withhold; man's role was to obey and he did so because it was sensible and right. "Enthusiastic" religion, in Bailey's view, placed too much emphasis on the expectation of salvation, and ignored the necessity of obedience. As a result, emotion overrode reason, and zeal obscured the

importance of moral discipline and religious duty.

While Bailey's attitude to Alline's religious principles may be unfair, the difference between their concepts of religious response points toward a fundamental difference between the ways the two men approached the writing of poetry. For Alline, the purpose of his poetry (as part of his Christian mission) was "that the heart may be alarmed, and stirred up to action" so as to "engage that spirit or kingdom of God in the creature, until the kingdom is got full possession of the creature."[9] To this end, he uses affective language and imagery, and employs a very intimate poetic voice which seeks the confidence and sympathy of his reader. He never tries to rationalize his subject. Rather, he seeks an emotional comprehension from his reader, one in which the poet's personal experience as embodied in his poetry becomes the reader's experience, and thereby a shared experience. But at the same time, the perceptions with which he deals all relate to the universal truths of Christianity. They are special perceptions and intensely personal, but they are not exclusive. Alline simply uses poetry to bring religious insights within the range of the sentiments and affections of ordinary men.

Bailey, on the other hand, distrusts emotion as a primary vehicle of communication. While he intends to evoke indignation with his satire, he does so by implicitly appealing to his reader's good sense. To be indignant at the wrongs satirized, the reader must know what all reasonable men accept as being right. Bailey's poetry implies a body of recognized and accepted principles to which all sensible people consciously and publicly assent. In effect, his poetry is concerned with the objective reality of universal truths — social, political, moral, and religious — and with clarifying and confirming those truths by denigrating their antitheses.

This fundamental difference between Bailey's approach to poetry and that of Alline reveals an inherent dichotomy in aesthetic assumptions which was part of the general cultural context of the second half of the 18th century. Alline's verse, insofar as it personalizes human experience and is designed to elicit an emotional response, reflects the active presence and influence of Sentimental poetics. Bailey's verse, which presents us with the poetry of public purpose and statement, poetry designed to engage men's reason, clearly reflects the tenets of Neoclassical poetics. Thus, between them, Alline and Bailey appear to represent the two basic and most important modes of poetry to emerge in the evolution of 18th-century English verse.

However, although the models for their poetry and the influences on their aesthetic assumptions lay in British literature, Alline and Bailey were not part of the cultural milieu of England. In British culture, Neo-classicism and Sentimentalism had developed as mutually exclusive complexes of aesthetic thought; the rise of Sentimentalism had been inextricably linked to the decline of Neo-classicism. But this pattern of cultural development and poetic fashion had little bearing on the structure of the cultural complex which Alline and Bailey occupied, and in no way reflected their aesthetic and artistic needs. They were part of a cultural milieu marked not by uniformity but by diversity of assumptions, expectations, and attitudes. Thus, in spite of the profound difference between Alline's poetry and Bailey's, their verses co-existed and were equally viable within the poetic milieu of 18th-century Maritime Canada. Indeed, when their poetry is placed in its proper context alongside other poetry written in the Maritimes during this period,[10] their achievements may be seen

as part of a very broad spectrum of poetic stances, which characterized Maritime verse at least until the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Within this spectrum, the general influence of 18th-century English Neo-classicism and Sentimentalism formed a loose bi-polar relationship, allowing Maritime poets to explore a considerable variety of 18th-century verse forms. In addition, this co-existence of apparently opposing 18-century aesthetic assumptions not only permitted a wide range of poetic modes of expression, but also provided a unique opportunity for cross-fertilization between Sentimental and Neo-classical moods, tones, and views. In short, it allowed Maritime poets to adopt and adapt a variety of 18th-century forms so as to reflect fully the complexity of their perceptions and the diversity of their attitudes toward Maritime life.

Ultimately, it meant that Maritime poetry entered the 19th century on a very different footing than the poetry of Britain or the United States. Maritime poetry held more strongly to its 18th-century roots; whatever it absorbed from British Romanticism and American Transcendentalism was modified in the light of an established tradition of verse-writing suited to Maritime attitudes. It is in this context that the poetry of Thomas Cowdell, Oliver Goldsmith, James Hogg, Gertrude Tongue, Maria Morris, Joseph Howe, John McPherson, and the other Maritime poets of the early 19th century must be viewed. In this regard, the poetic achievements of Henry Alline and Jacob Bailey reflect more accurately the diversity and richness of 18th-century Maritime poetry than do the poems of Odell and Stansbury. At the very least, Bailey's verse demonstrates that Tory poetry was interested in more than partisan politics, and Alline's verse shows that the Tory view was not the only poetic stance in 18th-century Maritime Canada. Taken together, their poetry helps refute some of the over-simplified attitudes commonly taken toward early Canadian verse.

NOTES

[1] For more detailed bibliographical information, see Alline's autobiographical journal, *The Life and Journal of the Rev. Mr. Henry Alline* (Boston, 1806), and J. M. Bumstead's *Henry Alline* (Toronto, 1971).

[2] Two studies of Alline's "New Light" movement and its significance are M. W. Armstrong's *The Great Awakening in Nova Scotia* (Hartford, Conn., 1949), and G. Stewart and G. Rawlyk's *A People Highly Favoured of God* (Toronto, 1972).

[3] *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* went through four editions: Boston, 1786; Dover, N.H., 1795 and 1797; Storington-Port, Conn., 1802. For a brief discussion of these, see T. B. Vincent's "Some Bibliographical Notes on Henry Alline's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*," *Canadian Notes and Queries*, No. 12 (November 1973), 12-13.

[4] Probably some of the hymns had been written earlier, but the book as such was assembled and shaped at this time.

[5] I can find no evidence of direct influence from Wesley, but Alline undoubtedly knew Watt's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. His language and possibly his versification were influenced by Watts.

[6] B. L. Manning, *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts* (London, 1942), p. 83.

[7] Found in a manuscript copy of "The Life and Journal . . ." (p. 114) at Acadia University.

[8] At the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

[9] *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, p. i.

[10] During this period, local poetry was either published in newspapers or circulated in manuscript form. There were only a handful of separate imprints before 1815. As a result, early Maritime poetry is not readily accessible. Searching for and collecting this verse is the subject of the author's current research.

HALIBURTON'S CANADA

Tom Marshall

The explorers, those who walk
in a waste place
unceasingly.
These we celebrate.

The squire, a cultivated
Sancho Panza, itinerant in judgement.
Sam Slick, his alter ego
(we also are Americans)
pushing clocks on the timeless.[1]

THE FIRST VERY MEMORABLE character in Canadian literature is a stage-American, his creator an ardent Tory imperialist who went "home" to die in the British House of Commons. He wrote of the "white nigger" more than a hundred years before Norman Mailer and Pierre Vallières.

Thomas Chandler Haliburton was of both loyalist and pre-loyalist stock. He belonged from birth to the Family Compact, and he opposed the efforts of his friend Joseph Howe to obtain responsible government for Nova Scotia, but he had a sense of social justice as well. He was for the removal of the disabilities preventing Roman Catholics from holding office, for common school education at state expense, and against the cruelty of the farming out of paupers (whom Samuel Slick aptly termed "white niggers").

With Howe, he desired a railway from Halifax to Windsor as one means of stimulating industry among the Bluenoses. He was a local patriot as well as an imperialist, exhibiting the "dual allegiance" that, in one form or another, has characterized most Canadian writers. In 1829 he left the Legislative Assembly, and that same year published his *Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia.* Thereafter he became a judge of the colony's Supreme Court.[2]

The first Sam Slick sketch appeared in Howe's newspaper *The Novascotian* in 1835. Sam was designed to reach a larger audience than Haliburton's history had done. The purpose was propaganda:

> It occurred to me that it would be advisable to resort to a more popular style, and, under the garb of amusement, to call attention to our noble harbours, our great mineral wealth, our healthy climate, our abundant fisheries, and our natural resources and advantages, arising from our relative position to the St. Lawrence, the West Indies, and the United States, and resulting from the circumstances of this country being the nearest point of the American continent to Europe. I was also anxious to stimulate my countrymen to exertion, to direct their attention to the development of these resources, and to works of internal improvement, especially to that great work which I hope I shall live to see completed, the rail road from Halifax to Windsor, to awaken ambition and substitute it for that stimulus which is furnished in other but poorer countries than our own by necessity. For this purpose I called in the aid of the Clockmaker.[3]

Sam was intended to demonstrate both the undesirable and the desirable qualities of the Yankee in order to make the Nova Scotians rouse themselves from their lethargy for long enough to institute certain material reforms. The result is a series of sketches, each with moral appended, an approximation of picaresque. As in *Don Quixote*, and in *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* later on, a pair of contrasted heroes is presented for our inspection. Each embodies an aspect of his creator and makes an appeal to something in the intended audience.

The squire, tolerant, relaxed and rea-

sonable, is akin to Haliburton himself. He epitomizes British virtues. Sam Slick, as many have observed, is a type of the Yankee pedlar, braggart and con-man. Naïve and cunning at the same time, he has the exaggerated self-confidence and childlike chauvinism that the British attributed to the Americans:

> 'I allot you had ought to visit our great country, Squire,' said the Clockmaker, 'afore you quit for good and all. I calculate you don't understand us. The most splendid location atween the poles is the United States, and the first man alive is Gineral Jackson, the hero of the age, him that's skeered the British out of their seven senses. Then there's the great Daniel Webster; its generally allowed he's the greatest orator on the face of the airth, by a long chalk; and Mr. Van Buren, and Mr. Clay, and Amos Kindle, and Judge White, and a whole raft of statesmen, up to everything and all manner of politics; there ain't the beat of 'em to be found anywhere. If you was to hear 'em I consait you'd hear genuine pure English for once, anyhow; for it's generally allowed we speak English better than the British. They all know me to be an American citizen here, by my talk, for we speak it complete in New England.

Sam is as charming or as obnoxious as Muhammed Ali.

He has, as one would expect, a firm belief in manifest destiny:

> The Nova Scotians must recede before our free and enlightened citizens, like the Indians; our folks will buy them out, and they must give place to a more intelligent and ac-*tive* people. They must go to the lands of Labrador, or be located back of Canada; they can hold on there a few years, until the wave of civilization reaches them, and then they must move again as the savages do. It is decreed; I hear the bugle of destiny a-soundin' of their retreat, as plain as anything. Congress will give them a concession of land, if they petition, away to Alleghany's backside territory, and grant them relief for a few years; for we are out of debt, and don't know what to do with our surplus revenue.

Here is the American attitude to other cultures and peoples (and, by implication, to the natural environment) perceived and expressed as plainly as by any Canadian nationalist of the 1970's. And yet, paradoxically, Sam is assigned the task of telling the Nova Scotians what is wrong with them. His own deficiencies of moral and spiritual insight do not invalidate his criticisms.

Slick combines the dialect and characteristics of the New Englander with those of the western American folk-hero: the rustic superman; Davy Crockett; Daniel Boone. He is a Canadian parody of the American folk-hero, the teller of "tall-tales" about Paul Bunyan and others. As John Matthews has observed, the invention of Sam involves the harnessing of the Yankee love of the "smart" con-man to a moral purpose.[4]

If Sam is intended, as he is, to represent a social barbarism, then why is he made so attractive, so charming? How is it he can be so acute in his criticism of the Bluenoses? What is Haliburton's attitude to him?

The answer to such questions is known instinctively to sensitive Canadians, so much so that we do not normally bother to ask them. We live quite naturally with a kind of doublethink about America and Americans. It is a truism that we are appalled at many things American, and yet cannot help but admire American inventiveness and energy. Envy, admiration, amusement, disapproval, even horror — these are the mixed feelings aroused by the antics of our close kinsfolk to the south. To deny our cultural kinship with them, and our necessarily very ambivalent feelings about the United States, however, is to distort the essential (and continuing) task of defining our very real differences. It is hypocrisy not to admit that there is an "American" within us all.

The learned and respectable judge Haliburton was also a man of the new world. A questioner once received from him this reply: "I am Sam Slick, says I,

at least what is left of me."[5] He had roots in New England as well as old England. He is reported to have had a strong streak of coarseness in his nature, loving bawdy jokes and the company of "hostlers and fishermen rank with the obscenities of the stable and the dory."[6] He loved the taproom and excelled in the art of telling unprintable stories. He seems to have been (not altogether unlike Al Purdy) an interesting mixture of roistering good fellow, on the one hand, and scholar and gentleman on the other, i.e. the squire and pedlar combined. The two heroes reflect two aspects of his character, and *The Clockmaker* itself expresses the "Canadian tension" between the ways of old world and new.

Haliburton deplores American social disorder, and predicts the civil war. But he also supplies Sam with a speech attacking the conceit and condescension of the Englishman visiting North America: "He swells out as big as a balloon; his skin is ready to burst with wind — a regular walking bag of gas . . ." As for the Nova Scotians, they are described as "a cross of English and Yankee, and therefore first cousins to us both." Their country is "like this night; beautiful to look at, but silent as the grave—still as death, asleep, becalmed." The unrealized nature of the place and people (here confused, as if they had achieved a union) is seen in terms of "a long heavy swell, like the breathin' of the chist of some great monster asleep". The image of the sleeping giant, who embodies our sense of space, of which more later, was always appropriate. In their refusal to confront or engage this myserious space, the people condemn themselves to a species of paralysis that mirrors the land's apparent emptiness.

The Americans, of course, have con-

fronted the wilderness, but in a fashion so aggressive and destructive that we should be reluctant to emulate it. Slick is moved to observe that Nova Scotia is a happy backwater — in fact, "one of the happiest sections of all America"—but he feels that it could be one of the richest as well if the Bluenoses would abandon political agitation between reformers and Tories in order to concentrate on the development of natural resources. It would, I suppose, be smug of us (with our jaundiced hindsight) to ask whether Haliburton mightn't have been aware of the eventual problems and excesses of growth, of pushing clocks on the timeless. That is asking too much of a man of his time (unless he be Malthus). Sam's job was to teach the Bluenoses "the value of time." They were not supposed to acquire any of the less desirable American characteristics in the process.

Haliburton's politics are pragmatic. The reformers are characterized as misinformed and overcome with passion, and Haliburton's own Tories are not spared, since Sam warns them of "the prejudices of birth and education" and remarks shrewdly that "power has a natural tendency to corpulency".

In all of this one can see the ability to see two or more sides to every question, a pragmatic rather than a reactionary conservatism, an ability to live with uncertainties and antagonistic philosophies, an awareness of shifting perspectives. This is "Canadian". On the subject of systems of government Haliburton's mouthpiece Mr. Hopewell opines:

> 'When I look at the English House of Lords ... and see so much larning, piety, talent, honour, vartue, and refinement collected together, I ax myself this here question: Can a system which produces and sustains such a body of men as the world never saw before and never will see ag'in, be defective? Well, I answer myself, perhaps it is, for all human institutions are so, but I guess it's e'en about the best arter all. It wouldn't do here now, Sam, nor perhaps for a century to come; but it will come sooner or later with some variations. Now the Newtown pippin, when transplanted to England, don't produce such fruit as it does in Long Island, and English fruits don't preserve their flavour here neither; allowance must be made for difference of soil and climate ... So it is ... with constitutions; our'n will gradually approximate to their'n, and their'n to our'n. As they lose their strength of executive, they will varge to republicanism, and as we invigorate the form of government (as we must do, or go to the old boy), we shall tend towards a monarchy. If this comes on gradually, like the changes in the human body, by the slow approach of old age, so much the better; but I fear we shall have fevers and convulsion-fits, and colics, and an everlastin' gripin' of the intestines first; you and I won't live to see it, Sam, but our posteriors will, you may depend'.

Hopewell is an American clergyman, but surely he suggests here what Haliburton wants for Nova Scotia, i.e. a British system of government well adapted to North American conditions. This is the practical Canadian via media. Ironically, here is also an accurate prophecy of the American monarchical presidency.

Few (if any) of my observations here are very original, but my purpose is to suggest a situation and a pattern that persists in later Canadian writing. I am not aware that this pattern has ever been very fully examined as it emerges from the styles, textures and formal structures of our major works of literature. One finds in Haliburton's comedy a certain ambivalence; the things Canadian, American and British that he criticizes are inside him as well as outside him; one senses divided loyalties, ironic undertones. Similar but more complex and subtly developed ambivalences may be observed in the best humorous or satirical work of Leacock, Klein, Purdy, Mordecai Richler, Robertson Davies and Leonard Cohen.

Personally, I find *The Clockmaker* just a bit tedious as reading-matter, but it is the first notable attempt to articulate

Canada, and therefore a good place to begin.

NOTES

[1] Tom Marshall, "Macdonald Park", *The Silences of Fire* (Toronto, 1969).

[2] Greater detail about Haliburton's life and career up to his departure for England in 1856 may be found in Desmond Pacey's *Creative Writing in Canada* (Toronto, 1952) and Carl F. Klinck's *Literary History of Canada* (Toronto, 1965), which contains an excellent essay by Fred Cogswell.

[3] V. L. O. Chittick, *Thomas Chandler Haliburton ("Sam Slick"), A Study in Provincial Toryism* (New York, 1924), p. 179.

[4] John Matthews, *Tradition in Exile* (Toronto, 1962). For more about Sam and his place in an American tradition, see Chittick's "The Hybrid Comic" (*Canadian Literature* no. 14).

[5] Chittick, *Thomas Chandler Haliburton*, p. 342.

[6] Ray Palmer Baker, "Introduction to *The Clockmaker*" (New York, 1927). I am indebted to Mr. Baker for his expression of the idea that Sam and the Squire represent two aspects of Judge Haliburton.

THOMAS McCULLOCH

Marjorie Whitelaw

IN A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE appended to the New Canadian Library edition of *The Stepsure Letters* (the only item of Thomas McCulloch's writings easily available today and now generally held to be the first work of Canadian satirical humour), there is a comment by John A. Irving that McCulloch is one of the least known of the great nineteenth-century Canadians. This is still true, though since that 1960 issue of *Stepsure* there seems to have been a growing appreciation of McCulloch and his achievements and an apparent wish to have more understanding of the man behind the work.

A copy of the one portrait of McCulloch known to exist hangs in the old high school of Pictou, his former home. It shows a very Scottish face — large nose, long upper lip, straight determined mouth, steady eyes. In many a minister of the day such features would add up to an expression of stern spiritual purpose, but McCulloch's gaze is steadfast rather than stern. The expression is open, fully-developed, as indeed many Scots faces are, with nothing closed-in or parsimonious to its emotional range. The mouth quivers on the edge of laughter. Underneath the portrait is his name, and the words: "Child of Scottish Heart and Mind."

When I first looked at the face and read that brief and perhaps romantic phrase, I had a sudden impression of a powerfully attractive and interesting character. That early impression has not altered — in spite of the revelation of strong and not always sympathetic Presbyterian overtones to McCulloch's career — and for me he continues to project the essence of the true Scots intellectual, in whom the heart is partner to the mind.

McCulloch's writings, which were voluminous, grew almost entirely out of the circumstances of his life and his work. Except for *Stepsure*, the writings are almost unknown today, but the life and work are well known enough.

He arrived in Pictou from Scotland in 1803, en route for Prince Edward Island — a married man of twenty-seven with a wife and small family. He had been, as

the phrase then went, "missioned" to Prince Edward Island by the General Associate Synod in Glasgow, a Presbyterian group which had seceded from the main body of the Church of Scotland for what appear to have been radical political reasons. It was late in the year and travel across the Strait of Northumberland was dangerous; McCulloch was persuaded to remain in Pictou with his family for the winter, and in the event they stayed there for almost thirty-five years, until they moved in 1838 to Halifax where McCulloch became first principal of the newly-opened Dalhousie College.

When McCulloch arrived in Nova Scotia, there was one college only in the province: King's College at Windsor. The buildings were ramshackle, the teaching was uncertain, but this colonial institution was pure in heart. Modelling itself on Oxford and Cambridge, it accepted only those students who adhered to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England.

This single fact was responsible for the direction which McCulloch's life took in Nova Scotia. Fairly soon after his arrival he began to work for the establishment of a college in Pictou which would not only train Presbyterian ministers but also provide a liberal education for non-Anglicans desiring to enter the professions. Four-fifths of Nova Scotians were not Anglican; the fifth who were included, of course, the authorities and the official class in Halifax. McCulloch's long years of battling on behalf of the Academy caused Pictou to become known to this establishment group as a centre of radical anti-government opinion, and the Academy's right to exist became one of the most contentious and cantankerous political issues of the day.

The Governor, the Earl of Dalhousie, played a major role in the affair. He was a Scot and, though no admirer of McCulloch's brand of evangelical-radical Presbyterianism, he could see very clearly that the College at Windsor was incapable of meeting the colony's needs. A couple of years after his arrival in 1816, Dalhousie was proposing the establishment of a non-sectarian college, based on the principles of Edinburgh University, and in the end this is what happened in Pictou, with McCulloch becoming the first principal.

McCulloch's agitation was to have results far wider than the mere launching of a colonial college. The battle for the Academy was fought most frequently in the field of public finance. The elected House of Assembly would vote a grant; the appointed Legislative Council would veto it.

> McCulloch [says John A. Irving in the afterword of the New Canadian Library edition of *The Stepsure Letters*] was apparently among the first to realize that the will of the people meant nothing when it was in conflict with the views of the irresponsible Council. Once he was convinced that educational progress was impossible under that kind of government, he began to speak and write against the whole system ... Long before Joseph Howe began his work [for responsible government], McCulloch was teaching the people of Nova Scotia the new ideas which were ultimately to change their whole system of government.

Very few facts are known about McCulloch's early years in Scotland. He was born in a tiny hamlet in Renfrewshire, near to the growing industrial town of Paisley. His father was a master block printer in the textile trade. His eldest brother was in business in London and Lyons, the French textile centre. Another brother became a surgeon. Thomas attended Glasgow University, taking a medical course as well as subjects more closely related to life as a minister. After Glasgow, he went to Whitburn, the theological college of the Secession Church, and, on being licensed as a minister, was called to the little church at Stewarton,

near Glasgow, where he continued to study literature, Oriental languages and British constitutional law, all to the subsequent benefit of Nova Scotia. From Stewarton he went in 1803 to Pictou. In 1799 he had married Isabella Walker, daughter of another—and well-connected — Secessionist minister; it seems to have been a happy marriage with a loving family life. Some letters from Isabella to her grandchildren have survived; they show her to have been an affectionate and well-read grandmother, for she recommended books, discussed her husband's work in natural history and expressed an enlightened concern over the prejudice against the Micmac Indians that was developing in Pictou. One may assume that she was in full sympathy with her husband when he battled for the Academy.

The times through which McCulloch grew up were eventful: he was born in the year of the American Declaration of Independence, and the French Revolution had its influence on political opinion in Scotland during the years when he was at university. The works of Rousseau, Voltaire and other savants of the French Enlightenment were widely read by Scots, while Scottish universities were enjoying a prolonged period of intellectual enquiry and literary flowering.

All this influenced McCulloch's later work at the Pictou Academy, where he taught classes in Greek, Latin, Moral and Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and, I think, Hebrew. As a Glasgow graduate he was much interested in the developments of modern science, and in order to raise money for the Academy he would travel through the Maritimes giving public lectures on these wonders — the first of their kind to be heard in the region. In Pictou he also established the first scientific laboratory east of Montreal.

Many linear feet of McCulloch papers lie on the shelves of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia; his pen was prodigiously, tirelessly, incessantly busy. He wrote sermons, articles and editorials for newspapers; he produced an exhausting continuum of letters, memorials, petitions and pleas on behalf of the Academy. He wrote a treatise against Popery, another in favour of a liberal education. He published *The Stepsure Letters* serially in *The Acadian Recorder* during 1821 and 1822, and wrote a pair of cautionary tales of the moral and spiritual hazards of emigration to Nova Scotia, *William* and *Melville*. There is as well a much longer and unpublished work, "Auld Eppie's Tales", which seems to me both more revealing of McCulloch the man and more suggestive of genuine talent than most of the other work.

It is not in fact easy to get a clear picture of McCulloch the man in that mountain of manuscript. It is true that a very dull biography (*The Life of Thomas McCulloch, D.D.*, Truro, 1920) does exist, written by his son, the Reverend William McCulloch, who based it on his father's papers. But William's idea of the proper way for a clergyman son to write about a clergyman father merely cloaks McCulloch in respectful Victorian piety. Only in the excerpts from McCulloch's letters are there occasional tantalising flashes of a pawky wit and a vigorous mind. I like, for example, this little vignette of Nova Scotian high society as McCulloch saw it when he came to Halifax in 1830 to give his first series of scientific lectures. He seems to have gone from Pictou to Halifax by ship.

> It was not so bad as going to be hanged, but I found it by no means comfortable. I was going to the very focus of power, and enmity, and my unsubdued spirit felt that I was going because I could not stay at home. In Halifax there had never been any public exhibitions but of players and showmen and I really felt as if I belonged to the vagabond race. A bear and a few dancing dogs would have been suitable companions to the

> mood in which I entered into our gay and dissipated metropolis. To mend the matter, when my apparatus on two carriages was moving along the street, some wag gave notice to our Collector of Customs ... that a great cargo of smuggled tea had just come into town, and instantly I had a Custom-house officer at my heels ... At the solicitation of Councillors, the Admiral, Commissary-General, and other grandees who dine after six, I lectured three days a week at eight in the evening. In the compass of twenty-one lectures I managed to squeeze together a mass of the finest experiments in philosophy and left my audience as eager as at the commencement of the course.

William McCulloch prepared the biography in his later years and left it to his daughters to publish it after a suitable delay, when there would be no-one alive "whose feelings might be painfully excited" thereby. The Misses McCulloch accordingly had the book privately printed in 1920, some 77 years after its subject's death. But I have been told that before publication a worthy person at Pine Hill Theological College in Halifax went through the manuscript and blue-pencilled anything that might make McCulloch appear less than saintly. I can give one example of what may then have happened. William McCulloch quotes from the interesting account which the naturalist Audubon gives of his visit to Pictou in 1833, when he called on McCulloch. "Professor McCulloch," Audubon actually wrote in his journal, "received us very kindly, giving us a glass of wine." And, later, "I was handed three pinches of snuff by the Professor, who *loves* it." These damaging details of wine and snuff are omitted from the fragment of Audubon in the published *Life of Thomas McCulloch, D.D.*

McCulloch's own style when he wrote for publication often adds to our sense of having to search for the real person behind the minister. One wonders whether, consciously or unconsciously, he wrote what he thought might be expected of a Presbyterian minister. This is particularly true of the two moralistic tales, published in 1826 in Edinburgh under the title *Colonial Gleanings: William and Melville*, where a high religious note is struck on almost every page. For example, William, a young man whose Scottish parents are of modest means has determined to emigrate to Nova Scotia.

> To the parents of William, whose sole ambition was to exemplify that religious and peaceful life whose brighter prospects are beyond the grave ... his determination was a dreadful stroke ... With the fire and ambition of youth, he was about to launch into a world of snares, where the warning voice of religions might not be heard ... The grief of his parents, and the prospect of separation, had wounded him deeply; but the fairy dreams of ambition bewildered and perverted his mind. He felt firmly assured that he would never forget his parents nor their worthy example; abroad, he would retain his integrity; and when he returned to cheer their declining days, he would return both a wealthy and a religious man.

The same sort of note is often struck in *The Stepsure Letters*, for in creating his character, Mephibosheth Stepsure, to satirize the life of Pictou, McCulloch makes him the ideal settler: unfailingly thrifty, prudent, hard-working, moderate in his pleasures and strong in his piety. And, of course, he prospers accordingly. But his neighbours are frequently spendthrift, slovenly and in trouble with the sheriff. Stepsure is more than a bit of a prig, which McCulloch was not.

It is also possible that McCulloch wrote what he hoped would sell, for he was usually writing from an urgent need of cash, and at too much speed. Writing to his friend James Mitchell in Glasgow on the 24th June, 1828, he remarks:

> In the first place providence has placed me in circumstances in which I shall be forced almost alone to fight with the powers that be and if I cannot contrive something in the way of authorship to help me along in the mean time I must either starve or run off long before the battle is fought.

> Secondly Tom [his son] still has a wish to turn to trade and I have no way of assisting him but by my pen.

And later in the same year (29th December) he wrote also to James Mitchell referring presumably to his unpublished collection, "Auld Eppie's Tales."

> My story is not as well polished as I wish. The cause of this you can easily guess. Three volumes were written in a year in addition to my daily tasks. I have endeavoured to make them as amusing as the little time which I had for thinking would admit ... I mentioned to you formerly that one object which I had in view was to do a little to help my son Thomas into business. About that I am now more anxious than ever and must therefore earnestly entreat you to lose no time.

There is in fact no record that McCulloch was actually paid for the original newspaper publication of *The Stepsure Letters*. However, in 1822 he tried through the Mitchells in Glasgow to sell *Stepsure* to booksellers in Scotland, without being successful. It was only in 1862 that *The Stepsure Letters* were issued as a volume, and then in Halifax.

Of "Auld Eppie's Tales", of which he appears to have been speaking in his letter to James Mitchell, McCulloch had written earlier to Mitchell's father, the Rev. John Mitchell:

> I have begun with the days of popery and intend to carry on through three volumes without meddling with anything but popery and the progress of Lollardism in the west of Scotland, not forgetting a due quantity of witches, kelpies and other gods whom our fathers worshipped. I want Crawford's History of Renfrew most sadly. Indeed I cannot do without it. I have laid my scene ... where I was born and need to know every place and person. I expect also to have a great deal to do with the Abbey and Abbots of Paisley.

He followed this letter up by asking James Mitchell in the letter of the 24th June already quoted to observe discretion regarding his plans for the book.

> I have undertaken a business for which I have strong suspicion that Sir W. Scott going before me I am ill qualified and which were it not a sort of vindication of our ancestors and their support of civil and religious truth I would account not very clerical ... The present is the commencement of a series of stories which will extend to the revolution of 1788.

McCulloch first considered Blackwood in Edinburgh as a possible publisher for "Auld Eppie's Tales", saying that William Blackwood had been kind to him (Blackwood had sent a donation of books for the Academy), but some sort of difference must have developed between them, for early in 1828 McCulloch wrote crossly to Mitchell.

> About writing for his magazine I have only to say that I regard it as a very bad book and except in the expectation of helping to render its texture more moral I do not do it. I think I could give him for a few years a series of essays that would be generally read, but not being yet a hungry author ten guineas a sheet is no temptation.

So Blackwood does not appear to have been very interested in "Auld Eppie's Tales", but seems to have offered McCulloch other work in connection with *Blackwood's Magazine*, which he turned down. However, Blackwood evidently kept the manuscript of the tales, for in December 1833 McCulloch was still asking James Mitchell to retrieve it. At the same time he enclosed a story for submission to William Oliphant, who had published *William and Melville* in 1826. Oliphant seems to have paid thirty guineas for *William and Melville*, and McCulloch suggests that for the new work fifty guineas would be a proper price. He obviously hoped Oliphant would accept the manuscript, for once again he planned to give the money to his son for his business.

I mention these details of literary finances because they go some way towards demonstrating that Stepsure and McCulloch were in fact two very different per-

sons. Over and over again in his letters McCulloch states that he has chosen his path in life quite deliberately, that had he not stuck to his principles and to the Secession Church he could have been much more prosperous. He has done what he believes to be the Lord's will, he has worked very hard, and it has not brought him material success. If Stepsure is a perfect illustration of the Protestant ethic in successful practice, McCulloch represents something else entirely, and it is possible that in *The Stepsure Letters* he is not only satirizing the improvident and spendthrift, but also the unduly prudent and thrifty, those whom the Scots call the "unco' guid". Pictou had a good supply of these godly ones, and very irritating they may have been to a man with as deep a perception of life as McCulloch.

When *The Stepsure Letters* appeared in 1822, McCulloch wrote to Mitchell in Glasgow that "No writing in these provinces ever occasioned so much talk." Certainly many people in Pictou must have been angry when they perceived themselves, at least in part, in some of the caricatures. Even I, knowing only a little of the Pictou of those days, can speculate on possible likenesses. Saunders Scantocreech, the Scotsman who is always damping down the fun and confidently calling on the Lord to approve his actions, contains elements of the shrewd, grasping and pious James Dawson, father of Sir William, later principal of McGill. Then there is Mr. Solomon Gosling, whose father had left him very well-to-do, and whose daughters, having learnt to paint flowers and play the piano, left the housework to the black servant wench. When things went badly for Mr. Gosling (not content with farming he had tried his hand at trade) and he had to go to live with the sheriff (who ran the debtors' prison), he was wont to remark that the country did not deserve to be lived in; it was fit only for Indians and emigrants from Scotland. Could Mr. Gosling have been derived from some member of the Harris family, who kept a negro servant, who had come not from Scotland but from Pennsylvania, and who were among the founding families of Pictou?

To a modern reader, *The Stepsure Letters* decline in effectiveness as they proceed. In the earlier chapters, McCulloch had both fresh material for satire and a valid general situation to base it on. Take, for example, the character Jack Scorem, chasing after quick and illusory profits in the lumber trade. During the Napoleonic wars, Pictonians could hardly bother to look after their household animals, so eager were they to cut timber and (apparently) to drink up the profits, while their newly cleared land reverted to bush. But the lumber trade was subject to very erratic fluctuations, and McCulloch was not the only one to believe that the settlers would do far better in the long run to work towards establishing a productive agriculture. Pictou itself was a small and unimpressive place which lacked most amenities and McCulloch could see all too clearly the effect on the community of those citizens who were not content to put in the years of pioneer hard work and build up a strong basic economy, but who instead dreamed of getting rich quick, nor did he spare his derision of those among the newly prosperous who desired to be genteel as well and no longer to dirty their hands. In his strictures on negligent farmers, McCulloch was supporting the work of John Young, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Agricola" and who was anxious to promote in Nova Scotia the improvements in farm methods then being put into general use in Scotland.

One cannot question the effectiveness of *The Stepsure Letters* in their own day, especially since they originally appeared in weekly parts. Where the present-day reader finds them tedious is in their monotony of treatment. The same situations

are repeated over and over again. The unhappy weaklings end with deadening inevitability in the debtors' prison, and as Stepsure prospers, he becomes more irritatingly sure of his own virtue. Yet, if Stepsure's viewpoint is self-satisfied and hyper-critical, it is never sour, and on every page there are lively observed comments and observations often blossoming into good humour, earthy and devoid of primness. The letters contain an immense amount of information about how people lived in those interesting times and in terms of their period they are written in a style pared down almost to the skeletal.

McCulloch's standard plot turns up again in *William and Melville.* Both young men are immigrants to Nova Scotia, basing "their hope of happiness upon the acquisition of wealth in foreign lands", and both come to sticky ends through ignoring those principles of religious and moral behaviour which should protect a man from the dangers of strange lands. But there are interesting indications that in these stories McCulloch was trying out a larger idea, and moving into the areas of Scottish history which were of great importance to him.

Though the tales of William and Melville are separate, there had been early connections between the two families. Melville's great-grandfather possessed a large estate "at a time when Scotland groaned under Prelacy and arbitrary power." He was an easy-going gentleman, and indulgent landlord, who hoped for favours from the Duke of York if he aided the king. Which king? We are not told, but it may have been Charles II, whose brother was Duke of York, a Catholic and later, as James II, the last of the Stuart kings.

To prove his zeal for the government, Melville's great-grandfather takes William's great-grandfather captive and carries him to Edinburgh, where "for the testimony of Jesus" he is put to the torture "till the blood spouted from the legs of the prisoner and the marrow oozed from his bones" and is then consigned to the Grassmarket prison, where his horrified betrayer visits him and humbly begs his pardon.

Against this background of a cruel past, McCulloch follows the two young men to their various dooms. The paths they take are somewhat different. William's family inherit the civil and religious truths represented by the Presbyterian faith and the democratic principles it embodied and encouraged in government, and William sins in forgetting the religious and ethical principles his father has taught him.

When he reaches Halifax after leaving Scotland, William finds work easily, since he is a skilled tradesman. He earns far more than in Scotland, and, after being made foreman, he marries his master's daughter. He inherits the business, but finds it not so profitable as he had expected, since his master has neglected it. In his turn, becoming absorbed in public affairs, William also neglects the business, and his downward path begins at this point. He forgets to write to his parents; he conducts his business in taverns. He becomes slovenly in appearance and soon loses trade to competitors. Despair brings him low, and when a letter from his father arrives and it is being read to him, he cries out in mental agony and dies. But he dies repentent.

Melville is a little more political in tone. We are, for example, introduced to one Andrew Welwood, a weaver with "a rooted abhorence of the whole race of the Stuarts, as the enemies of the Church of God, and the authors of those innumerable evils under which Scotland had groaned"; among the evils is the martyrdom of William's great-grandfather, here fully described. After that occasion, Melville's great-grandfather takes to drink and we are not surprised to read that he dies from falling off his horse. His estate

is gradually impaired, and in the end there is nothing for Melville to inherit but the family name.

Melville has graduated from the university; he has a cultivated mind, prepossessing appearance, pleasing manners. He decides there is no way to retrieve his fortunes except by emigration. Arriving in Halifax, he soon finds employment and after various trials he is successful in business. But his life seems to lack direction and purpose. One day, wandering in the countryside, he comes on a rustic cottage inhabited by a father and daughter who have retired from the world to live the Christian life. Melville falls deeply in love with Elizabeth, the daughter, but though she reciprocates his feelings, she rejects him; there is no community of religious sentiment between them.

Melville goes to the West Indies on business, where he suffers not only from indulging in well-known West Indian dissipations but also from a tropical fever that affects his health and abilities, leading to business losses. He returns low in morale and health, to find Elizabeth dying of consumption; Melville also declines and dies, a repentent Christian.

It all now seems, I suppose, mawkish sentimentality, but in their time *William* and *Melville* were apparently regarded as expressions of religious truth and excellent illustrations of the perils awaiting young immigrants in the worldly ambiance of that notorious seaport, Halifax. At least, they are written in good, straightforward English, and they include some interesting comments on Nova Scotia as it appeared to the emigrant in the early nineteenth century.

> Though a passenger from Britain be aware that he will see a great deal of wood in Nova Scotia, the continuous succession of forest which almost everywhere exists, rarely fails to give his mind an unexpected shock. He had pictured to himself a diversity of lawn and grove which would cheer and delight: his eye meets tree towering above tree, till the horizon terminates, not the succession but the view ... From the immense solitudes of the forest, therefore, his mind shrinks within itself, and feels as if it stood alone in the midst of the earth. Nor is a nearer approach to the coast at all calculated to remove these saddening impressions. Rock appears piled upon rock; and where a tree is interspersed, it is the hemlock or spruce, upon which the occasional visitations of the spray have conferred the aspect of old age ...

It is interesting and curious that in *William and Melville* there is no mention of Catholicism, for McCulloch felt strongly about what he regarded as the fallacies of that religious attitude. It is true that his two works on Catholicism (*Popery Condemned by Scripture and the Fathers*, Edinburgh, 1808, and *Popery again Condemned by Scripture and the Fathers*, Edinburgh, 1810) seem oddities today. But one must remember that this was still the period of the long struggle for Catholic emancipation—a battle that seems almost forgotten now. In Scotland (and at least in theory in Nova Scotia), Catholics still lacked the right to conduct schools, to celebrate marriages or funerals in public (such a religious service had to be performed privately in the house.) A Catholic could be a barrister but not a judge of the High Court.

In England such laws were an expression of the national determination to give no opportunity to the Catholic Stuarts or their supporters to have another fling at seizing power. But in Scotland the Presbyterian feeling was older than the Reformation. When John Knox brought the Protestant Reformation to Scotland, he had a situation in serious need of reform; the mediaeval Scots Catholic church had fallen into a most ignoble state of corruption. To Presbyterians in Scotland in the early nineteenth century, Catholicism meant not only the temporal and alien power of the Catholic church, which they feared, but also a kind of irrational, illogi-

cal philosophic fallacy, indeed a heresy, adherence to which could be as damning to a man's soul as any other sin.

Catholic emancipation was a liberal cause, the retention of the penal laws a conservative one. *Blackwood's Magazine* in Edinburgh published article after article stating the case against emancipation, and these arguments revealed deep-burning fires of bigotry and prejudice. But in *Popery Condemned* and *Popery again Condemned*, McCulloch does not argue for retention; he restricts himself instead to a half-amused, any-fool-can-see-this discussion of various points of Catholic superstition and dogma; one can hear far greater and uglier prejudice expressed by Edinburgh street orators even today. He discussed such matters as the supremacy of the Apostle Peter, the temporal authority exercised by the Pope, papal infallibility, and so on. And it was this level of criticism of Catholicism that formed the basis of the major part of "Auld Eppie's Tales", which he wrote in the late 1820's, after a trip to Scotland.

There is a problem about this work. Dr. D. D. Harvey, former Provincial Archivist of Nova Scotia, has written that in "Auld Eppie's Tales" McCulloch "attempted . . . to counteract Scott's unsympathetic treatment of the Covenanters in *Old Mortality*." And there is in fact an unfinished manuscript by McCulloch which deals with the Covenanters. Over the years this manuscript has become somewhat disarranged, and when I searched through it I could find no evidence that the tale of the Covenanters had ever been completed. The one complete story in "Auld Eppie's Tales" — as long as a medium length novel, handwritten and fairly difficult to read — is in fact the work on the Abbots of Paisley to which McCulloch referred in his already quoted letter to the Rev. John Mitchell in January 1828.

It is a curious tale, and the opening structure is very awkward; the first narrator, returning to the district after many years, encounters an old friend who in turn narrates one of the tales Auld Eppie used to tell the children. Yet once McCulloch gets into the story itself, it contains some of his best writing.

Perhaps this is because, in "Auld Eppie", McCulloch is going home, home to the countryside he knew as a boy. This, however, does not prevent him from being realistic about what has happened to that countryside; he tells how the river has become industrialized, the water kelpies have gone from the stream, as has the grist mill, and a "huge unclassical cotton work monopolised its waters." But he retains his feel of the country, as when he writes of Jock Slater, one of the characters, that "no boy in the school knew so many birds' nests, or when paddling in the river could put his hand under a stone and pull out a trout with equal dexterity. At snaring a hare too he was a perfect adept."

The story deals with the Abbey, with the machinations of a rather wicked adherent of that establishment curiously known as Sir Hughie, with the imagined bewitchment of the Lady of the Manor, perhaps by her servant Mansie. In this story the gentry speak standard England, but the country folk speak Scots. A good example is the scene in which Killoch, a local farmer, warns Mansie against consorting with the Devil, of which she has been accused; Mansie suggests that he come with her to discuss it with the Devil, who resides — Killoch supposes — in a pocket of the river glen called the Spout.

> "Deil though he be," says Killoch, " 'I'll gie him ae mouthfu' that he'll no get ower. We'll tak the evangel wi' us, and lang afore we had read it through, if he be na' off to the Red Sea, as Sir Hughie says, he'll be off to a place that's ill to bide in. Nae deil e'er stood before Jesus Christ; and he'll be

a stout ane, that ventures to face his evangel."

Never was there day less in unison with deeds of darkness. The sun, diffusing his glories in a cloudless sky, looked down upon the Glen, which smiled in all the loveliness of nature. The hawthorn and birch perfumed the air with their fragrance; little birds carolled upon every spray, and the mellow notes of the blackbird and thrush, re-echoed through the Glen. Killoch, as he ascended after Mansie, felt the harmony of nature, but he was ill at ease within; he thought that, but for the devil and the church, the whole world would be a habitation of peace.

... Before him, Mansie moved onward without apparent reluctance, but this, so far from affording him relief, proved rather a matter of uneasiness. As an evidence of the obduracy and hardihood of witches under the power of the devil, it showed him that he was about to engage in a contest in which, judging by appearances, the probabilities of victory were on the side of the enemy. Had Mansie discovered symptoms of terror and contrition, he would have been much better satisfied ...

They approach the glen; Killoch's knees shake when he finds that it is pervaded by a strong and disagreeable smell of burning. Then he hears the sounds of sawing and hammering and, to his surprise, the Devil seems to be amusing himself with a song. He advances bravely, saying to Mansie:

"Stand back. Ye'll meet wi' nae skaith, if I can help it. It's no for the like of you, to daur the devil: but I hae a call to meet wi' him, and, wi' the help o' God's word, I'll let him ken that Jesus Christ cam to destroy the works o' the deil."

Killoch, therefore, with the scriptures in his hands, placed himself before Mansie; and, pushing aside the bushes, ventured into the Glen ... What he wanted in courage, he endeavoured to supply by haste. Saying to himself, it is God's work, he hurried onward; and, at last, found himself amidst a goodly company of gypsies, or tinklers, as they are commonly called; some employed in the manufacture of horsespoons, and others in the fabrication of brotches, crosses and several other trinkets.

"Gibbie Graham, Rabbie Marshall, and the hail o' you," said Killoch, "what brought you here? Dinna' ye ken, that for your ne'erdoweel gates [ways], the king long syne commandit you out o' the kintra?"

"We ken that weel," replied Gibbie, "but we hae nae other hame, and canna gang awa'. We like the Glen and a' that belang till't. Ye're a gude landlord, Killoch; ad we've no ill tenants: ye mauh say naething about us: we may do you a gude turn yet."

"Weel, weel," said Killoch. "I'm glad that Mansie has nae waur deils than you to deal wi'."

And McCulloch tackles the absurdities (as he sees them) of the Catholic position with the same blend of sardonic humour and deep seriousness, which it seems to me goes far beyond anything in *The Stepsure Letters*. Perhaps indeed an undiscovered treasure is there in "Auld Eppie's Tales".

books in review

POLITICAL ASYLUMS

ANTHONY BRENNAN, *The Crazy House*. McClelland & Stewart. $8.95.

RAYMOND FRASER, *The Struggle Outside*. McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd. $7.95.

BOTH *The Crazy House* by Anthony Brennan and *The Struggle Outside* by Raymond Fraser are satirical, oftentimes funny, non-"realistic" novels concerned with political extremes. The two books examine opposite ends of the political spectrum; *The Crazy House* attacks the repressiveness of established governments, while *The Struggle Outside* assails the follies of revolutionaries. And each book finds the political extreme examined untenable, absurd, and ultimately not so difficult to conquer.

The Struggle Outside by Raymond Fraser is a farce describing the antics of an inept group of revolutionaries, fighting a "war" in the unlikeliest of places, New Brunswick, and struggling against governmental oppression which is apparently felt only by them. The catalyst for the action is the escape from a mental institution (where, according to the escapee narrator, political prisoners are often confined) by the eventual members of the "Popular Liberation Army". The "Army" consists of several two-dimensional misfits, who voice no ideological basis for their actions, and each of whom envisions himself as leader or future leader of "the revolution". Moses is an army veteran, an uncouth brute, virtually an animal (even down to his thick black apelike body hair), whose only real interest is crime, and who bullies the others to such a degree that he is in effect the leader; Liz is a childish, bossy woman, neurotic about her body and her sexuality, and always trying to assert her imagined superiority; Cavanaugh is a pitifully near-sighted, almost blind, practically inept, archetypal weakling, who maintains delusions of a sexual relationship with Liz, and of himself as the philosophical leader of the revolution; LeBlanc is a French Canadian out to avenge the treatment of his people by the English, but who falls victim to it instead; the Chief is an Indian who is the supposed, but presumed captured, leader, but he betrays the group, thinking he is pitting two White political forces against each other, and thus aiding the cause of the Indians; and the narrator is a relatively rational, objective, and ordinary man in most matters, while retaining naive illusions of the value of the revolution and of his future leadership of it.

Their plan is to kidnap the Minister of Justice of New Brunswick, announce their revolutionary manifesto, and demand a million dollars ransom with which to finance the revolution. They begin well enough by stealing a car and abducting its driver, who turns out to be a well known Evangelical preacher. But they fall victim to their lack of organization and planning, and return to their "HQ" without the Justice Minister and pursued by an intensive police search. They finally attempt to ransom the Evangelist, Brother Bell, but in telephoning the ransom demand Moses omits all ideological discussion, gives away their location, and inadvertently though effectively seals their doom.

The subtitle describes the book as "a funny serious novel"; it is lively, frequently extremely funny, and always entertaining. Brother Bell, with his Biblical quotations and misquotations, and his varied attempts to persuade one member of the "army" after another to aid in an escape attempt, is a brilliant comic creation; the slapstick comedy between Moses, the bully, and Cavanaugh and Brother Bell, his victims, is quite effective; the combination of Moses' mental dullness with his bullying tactics produces a number of humorous situations; and Cavanaugh's self-delusions are simply hilarious. But as a "serious" novel it is not nearly so successful. Judging by his introductions of the characters in the first few pages, Fraser appears to begin with the simplistic premise that revolutionaries are demented, self-centred, and without political ideology or social concern. Unfortunately this idea is never really developed or expanded; the characters are merely caricatures and do not develop; the plot is a simple, almost mechanical, working out of the inevitabilities that result from the formation of "The Popular Liberation Army," and does not tell us much about revolutions, revolutionaries, or society; and the first person point of view's inherent possibilities for a psychological portrait of a deluded mind are only partially explored and exploited. Overall the book is an amusing piece of light entertainment, lacking the subtleties and intricacies of fine art, and giving little insight into the politics of revolution or the psychology of revolutionaries.

Anthony Brennan's *The Crazy House* grows out of the Kafkan and Orwellian tradition of political nightmare novels, but distinguishes itself in two important ways. By letting a pair of con-men survive and indeed, use for their own ends, the repressive political system, Brennan emphasizes the individual's psychological outlook in triumphing over or falling victim to repression, and makes repressive governments butts of satire and comedy rather than something to fear.

The novel opens with a short scene depicting the functioning of an office in which the file cards of political enemies are separated from those of the rest of the population; but behind the apparently care-free working atmosphere lie the pervasive fears of each of the clerks that some day his card will be selected. One of the cards selected is that of Ned Flask, a fear-dominated journalist. Two very clever attempts to entrap Ned are made, but his newspaper experience has made him aware of government methods, and he avoids capture. In the midst of these dangers Ned's uncle, Dan, an art thief by profession, elicits Ned's aid in authenticating, stealing, and transporting across the country a very conspicuous, famous sculpture. Ned is at first alarmed by his uncle's foolhardiness, but as they work together Ned begins to understand that Dan has discovered how to outwit government officials and avoid their harassment. Ned realizes that his problems have largely resulted from his timid, negative, victim mentality, and he gradually learns the skills of a con-man and thus insures his survival, success, and happiness in spite of his repressive environment.

Brennan very neatly contrasts Ned the victim with Ned the con-man in terms of being "dead" or "alive." In the beginning of the novel and in the flashbacks to episodes with his girlfriend, Carol, Ned prefers to withdraw from life, to be unobtrusive to the point of invisibility and

non-existence, to live in fear rather than confront his oppressors, and to be a victim of political absurdity rather than an exploiter of it. When he is reported "dead" in the newspaper (part of a government scheme to capture him by tricking him into coming to them to clarify the "error"), ironically, he is quite accurately described. It is his uncle, Dan, and later Ned himself, with their enjoyment of gourmet cuisine, or art, or theatre, their exploitation of the stupidity, fears, and private interests of government employees, and their conception of outrageous plans and succesful completions of them, who are really vital and "alive."

The novel is extremely well-crafted as Brennan neatly interweaves several minor themes with the story of Ned's change in attitude and triumph over his oppressors. From worried clerks in the first scene through police officials Murdoch and Zentner, Brennan skilfully portrays government officials who live in as much or more fear than do ordinary citizens. The scheme in which Ned is reported "dead" displays the insidious way in which communication media can be manipulated by the powerful. This nightmarish picture of oppression is taken farther as the government tries to destroy all works of art (hence, they want to find the sculpture Ned and Dan steal), attempting to crush the possibilities for sensitivity and beauty, and replace them with universal brutality and ugliness. But the various parts of the amusement park Crazy House in which Ned finally teases and ridicules his pursuer, Murdoch, provide the titles for the book's three sections, as Brennan creates an ironic metaphor for the frequently inept and inefficient political structure which is finally outwitted by Ned and Dan.

It is certainly possible to question or downright disbelieve Brennan's unique view that oppression is largely a result of the mental attitudes of the oppressed, but it is made quite convincing between the covers of Brennan's fine novel.

GARY WERDEN

ARTISTIC SCHIZOPHRENIA

TOM FORRESTALL and ALDEN NOWLAN, *Shaped by This Land.* University Press of New Brunswick, $27.50.

AS A BIBLIOPHILE, one who derives pleasure from books solely as beautifully made objects in the phenomenal world, I find *Shaped by This Land* an aesthetically pleasing artifact. I admire the general layout and design of the book — the printing and arrangement of Nowlan's fifty-four poems on the page (gathered mostly from his early books) and the seventy-six splendid reproductions of Forrestall's paintings and sketches nicely juxtaposed spatially with the poems throughout the book. As a habitual reader of poems and voyeur of paintings as structures of meaning, however, my reaction to the book is schizoid, critically somewhere between tears and laughter, for the aesthetic or emotional responses called for by Nowlan's poems are almost always in conflict with the responses demanded by Forrestall's paintings. As a result, the full artistic potentiality of both the poems and the paintings — at least in terms of affectivity — is severely diluted.

More often than not a coffee table volume with a prohibitive price, this sort

of book, which brings verbal and visual artifacts together, consistently disturbs me. I am all the more troubled by *Shaped by This Land* because Nowlan and Forrestall, each a brilliant artist in his own right, have not been fair to their own respective arts in having consciously created this condition of artistic schizophrenia. Each artist must have selected his work with some sort of eye towards a correspondence with the work of his fellow artist, but even if there were to be any sort of correspondence between a poem and a painting — of subject matter, theme, or technique — it could never be more than a tenuous analogical one. Detail in a painting, for example, its method of execution and its perceptual effects, is simply not the same as detail in a poem.

There is in *Shaped by This Land* an over-all analogical relationship between the accumulative effect of the poems and that of the paintings, and perhaps it is only this general correspondence that Nowlan and Forerstall had in mind. Taken together, all the poems and paintings exemplify the sullen anguish of a Maritime environment — moral, social, economic, and physical: "in my country even/ where the land was first/ broken two hundred/ years ago or more, the wilderness/ is waiting/ to reclaim everything if/ we turn our backs." And all the poems and paintings easily transcend region to become metaphors for the human condition in general, for both poet and painter know that the only effective road to the universal is the particular. But individual poems seldom, if ever, correspond in any way, let alone in terms of particularized subject matter and particularized theme, with their visual counterparts. The entire book demonstrates what I mean, but let me give a few examples. The portrait poem, "Carl", for instance, conflicts with Forrestall's corresponding portrait, "Wally". They are simply two quite different men. "Psalm" deals with several children dancing in the summer, whereas Forrestall's juxtaposed painting, "Upper Clements", is a winter scene with two isolated children, and the shift in mood is strikingly abrupt. "Dancer", a poem that works brilliantly both as precise, detailed description and as a metaphor for the human condition, contrasts violently with the subject matter, theme, and mood of Forrestall's "Day Off", which is, however, like all of Forrestall's paintings, a beautiful visual statement in itself.

There are, of course, very good reasons why Nowlan and Forrestall might have come up with the idea of this book, among them a shared aesthetic: both are "magic realists". Both poet and painter are concerned with rendering a precise, detailed depiction of the reality they perceive — "the things which are". Nowlan says that he "would be the greatest poet that the world has ever known/ if only I could make you see/ here on the page/ sunlight/ a sparrow/ three kernels of popcorn/ spilled on the snow," and Forrestall is a painter, according to Nowlan, who "makes/ a separate portrait of each blade of grass." For both poet and painter, there are "no ideas but in things", and both attempt to record and to preserve through the ordering processes of art — form — the life of the moment, arrested in time by the formal austerity of their craft. The moral and formal "acuity" of Nowlan's poems parallels the visual acuity of Forrestall's paintings, usually achieved by the use of an "egg-tempera" pigment and the "cross-hatching" strokes

of darker over lighter to shade and shape particular forms. Each blade of grass in a painting like "Above the Lake", for instance, is painted separately. In the resulting visual acuity, a simultaneous perception of details in both their distinctiveness and mass, lies the visual magic that corresponds to Nowlan's verbal magic. We see more details than we are customarily capable of perceiving in life; the ordinary and seemingly trivial are magnified, raised to the status of the "wonder-full". Finally, through their poems and paintings, Nowlan and Forrestall attempt to dignify the inhumanity of man's existence, to give it order and meaning, even though they know — and this makes their art fundamentally ironic — the enormous distance between life experienced and life depicted in art: "The worst art possesses/ a perfection beyond anything/ life has to offer, is so rational/ it becomes ridiculous." Although the work of Nowlan and Forrestall share these philosophical premises of art, their objectives are, in my opinion, better realized separately than in this gratuitous yoking together of their poems and paintings.

BARRY CAMERON

ON THE VERGE

**** EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG, *The Disposal of Liberty and Other Industrial Wastes.* Doubleday, $8.95. Edgar Friedenberg is that necessary thinker of our times, the pessimistic seer. His latest book is a salutary account of the way in which our false democracy has produced joylessness and rancour and has closed off rather than opening for humanity the vistas of experience. He issues a timely call to those who — fearing the label of *elitist* — have abandoned the defence of every kind of excellence in modern life, but he also realizes that it may well be too late for the call to be heard, that democracy in its populist form has destroyed rather than strengthening our liberties, and that we may have to seek what vestiges of freedom and culture we can find in the interstices of an immovable power structure, perhaps to be dominated by the multinational corporations rather than the nation-state. The flowers vanish from the earth; the time of the singing of birds is gone, and the voice of the raven is heard in our land. And ravens (pessimists) have more to say of value to our times than turtle doves (optimists). Only by starkly knowing the worst can we begin, with resolution but wasting no time on hope, to resume our human dignity and re-enter that austere world of true freedom from which the pursuit of affluence has enticed us.

*** DUDLEY WITNEY, *The Lighthouse*, with foreword by Thomas H. Raddall. McClelland & Stewart, $27.50. Dudley Witney has followed that splendid book, *The Barn*, which he prepared in collaboration with Eric Arthur, by a second nostalgic record in prose and photographs, entitled *The Lighthouse*. Like the barn, the lighthouse has been an image laden with poetic meaning for mankind ever since the day of the Pharos (where Mr. Witney makes his beginning), and so finely illustrated a book cannot fail to appeal. Yet there is not the same tautness between prose and photograph that existed in the former book, perhaps simply because Mr. Witney's photographs are more evocative than his prose. As in the earlier book, he ignores national boundaries, taking the North American continent from Newfoundland to Florida as his province and completely neglecting Pacific coasts and waters, which will disappoint his potential readers in British Columbia. On the whole, the historical background is well-researched, but there are weak points; for example, is not the tale — which Mr. Witney repeats — of the British chaining American patriots to drown in the tide on Execution Rocks an unproved piece of early atrocity propaganda? I have always suspected its authenticity. G.W.