

*KYK-OVER-AL*

**Volume 1**

**Issues 1-3**

**December 1945-December 1946**

*KYK-OVER-AL*, VOLUME 1, ISSUES 1-3  
December 1945-December 1946.

First published 1945-1946  
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Published by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports,  
Guyana at the Caribbean Press.

ISBN 978-1-907493-51-5



**THE GUYANA CLASSICS LIBRARY**

**Series Preface by the President of Guyana,  
H. E. Bharrat Jagdeo**

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## SERIES PREFACE

Modern Guyana came into being, in the Western imagination, through the travelogue of Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of Guiana* (1595). Raleigh was as beguiled by Guiana's landscape ("I never saw a more beautiful country...") as he was by the prospect of plunder ("every stone we stooped to take up promised either gold or silver by his complexion"). Raleigh's contemporaries, too, were doubly inspired, writing, as Thoreau says, of Guiana's "majestic forests", but also of its earth, "resplendent with gold." By the eighteenth century, when the trade in Africans was in full swing, writers cared less for Guiana's beauty than for its mineral wealth. Sugar was the poet's muse, hence the epic work by James Grainger *The Sugar Cane* (1764), a poem which deals with subjects such as how best to manure the sugar cane plant, the most effective diet for the African slaves, worming techniques, etc. As John Singleton confessed (in his *General Description of the West Indies*, 1776), there was no contradiction between the manufacture of odes and that of sugar: "...a fine exuberant plant, which clothes the fields with the richest verdure. There is, I believe, scarcely any cultivation which yields so lucrative a return per acre as under favourable circumstances, than that of the sugar cane. So bountiful a gift of Providence seems not only calculated to call forth the activity and enterprise of the agriculturalist and merchant, but to awaken also feelings of a higher and more refined enthusiasm." The refinement of art and that of sugar were one and the same process.

The nineteenth century saw the introduction of Indian indentureship, but as the sugar industry expanded, literary works contracted. Edward Jenkins' novel *Lutchmee and Dilloo* (1877) was the only substantial fiction on Guiana, and whilst it was broadly sympathetic to the plight of Indian labourers, it was certain of Britain's imperial destiny, and rights over mineral resources. It was not until the period leading up to

Guiana's Independence from Britain (1966) and the subsequent years, that our own writers of Amerindian, African, Asian and European ancestry (A. J. Seymour, Wilson Harris, Jan Carew, Edgar Mittelholzer, Martin Carter, Rajkumari Singh et al.) attempted to purify literature of its commercial taint, restoring to readers a vision of the complexity of the Guyanese character and the beauty of the Guyanese landscape.

The Guyana Classics Library will republish out-of-print poetry, novels and travelogues so as to remind us of our literary heritage, and it will also remind us of our reputation for scholarship in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology and politics, through the reprinting of seminal works in these subjects. The Series builds upon previous Guyanese endeavours, like the institution of CARIFESTA and the Guyana Prize. I am delighted that my government has originated the project and has pledged that every library in the land will be furnished with titles from the Series, so that all Guyanese can appreciate our monumental achievement in moving from Exploitation to Expression. If the Series becomes the foundation and inspiration for future literary and scholarly works, then my government will have moved towards fulfilling one of its primary tasks, which is the educational development of our people.

**President Bharrat Jagdeo**

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***KYK-OVER-AL***  
**Volume 1**  
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The Caribbean Press



## DEDICATION

This Volume is dedicated to the memory of A.J. Seymour, poet; editor; scholar and pioneer of Caribbean cultural production. He gave a lifetime of service to the literary arts of the region.





## INTRODUCTION

First published in Guyana in December 1945, *Kyk-Over-Al* was to become one of the most significant and long-running literary magazines in the Caribbean. Over the course of some 50 issues it has featured work by many of the leading writers from Guyana and the wider Caribbean, publishing the early poetry and fiction of such groundbreaking authors as Wilson Harris and Martin Carter, as well as important critical essays, histories, and reviews. Between 1945 and 1961, the journal was edited by the poet A. J. Seymour, a “committed literary figure and cultural architect” whose editorial notes and frequent essays for *Kyk-Over-Al* represent landmark contributions to the forging of a Guyanese literary culture.<sup>1</sup> Following Seymour’s departure from Guyana in 1962, the journal went into abeyance until a revival in 1984 under the editorship of Seymour and the poet and novelist Ian McDonald. With the death of Seymour in 1989, McDonald became sole editor. The magazine has continued to appear intermittently into the 2000s, with activist and writer Vanda Radzik joining McDonald on editorial duties.

*Kyk-Over-Al* was founded by the British Guiana Writers’ Association and the British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs, of which Seymour was Honorary Secretary. Costing a shilling and with a cover design by Cecil E. Barker, the first edition of the journal declared its intention to “...cultivate among British Guiana’s writers the art of setting out a point of view persuasively even when wholly uncompromising; always giving short shrift to the brow-beating and the intolerant; that it will assist our readers with the enquiring and challenging mind; and that, in pointing the way to a clear appreciation of British Guiana’s problems, it will contribute towards the efforts of all our people to achieve full responsibility in personal and community decisions.”<sup>2</sup> The name *Kyk-Over-Al* (“see over all”), taken from the ruined Dutch fort at the confluence of the Essequibo, Mazaruni, and Cuyuni rivers, was meant to signify the need “for quick and wide vigilance and the expression of an alert people.”<sup>3</sup> As Seymour

made clear in his editorial notes, the magazine was to be actively engaged in the project of building the Guyanese nation and of shaping a unique culture. *Kyk-Over-Al*, he wrote, will be “an instrument to help forge a Guianese people, to make them conscious of their intellectual and spiritual possibilities.”<sup>4</sup>

Seymour’s ambitions for the magazine chime with the upsurge in nationalist sentiment and the increasing agitation for political sovereignty that spread like wildfire across the Caribbean in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Against this backdrop, as Nelini Persram has observed, what “raged in the debates and expositions of *Kyk-Over-Al* assisted in the conscious articulation and awareness of an emerging Guyanese culture, something unprecedented in the country’s history. For Seymour the central interest was how, with the historical influence and domination of the language of English, the Guyanese could take the old colonial world and remake it into their own nation.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Seymour stressed the need for Guyanese, and Caribbean peoples more generally, to “make an act of possession somehow of our environment and the faster the better.”<sup>6</sup> Many of the stories and poems that appeared in the early issues of the magazine can be read as a direct response to Seymour’s enjoiner. The first issue, for instance, carries a fascinating piece of short fiction by Wilson Harris, ‘**Tomorrow**’, which provides an early glimpse of some of the themes (if not yet the unique prose style) that he would explore over the course his long career. Intriguingly, the story gestures to what would become a central concern in Harris’s work – the necessity of developing an original aesthetic appropriate to the remarkable landscapes of Guyana:

*“There was only one picture in the room. A picture of the Kaieteur Fall. When he saw me looking at it, the old man said –*

*‘I like that.’ He seemed to be seeking words to express his thoughts. ‘It has power. Beauty. Mystery. It is a symbol for this land. The symbol of power waiting to be harnessed. Of beauty that goes hand in hand with terror and majesty. Of the mystery that lies in men’s hearts, waiting to be explored, given form and direction and purpose.’”<sup>7</sup>*

In a later piece of short fiction, '**Fences Upon the Earth**' (published in issue four of *Kyk-Over-Al*), Harris can be seen still struggling to find a form of narrative expression adequate to the environmental experience of Guyana. At the end of the story, the narrator declares: "*Yes. I know what you will say. The words I have used are inadequate. Forgive me. I know it was inevitable that it should be so. The whole thing had been secret and wordless.*"<sup>8</sup> As Reinhard Sander has observed, this "'secret and wordless' thing is an encounter with the Amerindian presence in the Guyanese interior, an encounter that provides some insight into the profound and disturbing impression that the Guyanese landscape and its ancestral inhabitants were to leave on the mind of the future novelist."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the description of this encounter seems to move us a step closer to a prose more familiarly 'Harrisian' in style and tone:

*"For the first time that I could remember I looked upon a human being standing upon the earth, not falsely, by force or subterfuge, or bravado, or by any sort of empty pretension, but very simply, as though to own the earth were to carry the most natural and easeful burden in the world . . . His limbs were powerful. They had the perfection of the young trees that stand rooted in the forests, breathing forth an ageless symmetry in their being".<sup>10</sup>*

That Harris, one of the Caribbean's most acclaimed and original authors, should first publish in *Kyk-Over-Al* is testament to the journal's significance. There is a real frisson to be had in browsing through the yellowing pages of early issues and seeing formative works by poets and novelists who would go on to play a defining role in the development of Caribbean letters. Fifteen years after '**Tomorrow**', for example, Harris would publish his first novel, *Palace of the Peacock* (1960), a visionary re-telling of the quest for El Dorado that sought not only to reanimate eclipsed historical perspectives, but also to imaginatively redeem a past that had never existed. In this novel, as he would do in the twenty-two that followed (the last being *The Ghost of Memory* in 2006, over 60 years since his first appearance in *Kyk-Over-Al*), Harris sifts through the ruins of history, searching for signs of its Utopian negation in the form of the unborn potential of cross-cultural

community. Harris's longstanding emphasis on the redemptive force of cross-cultural community can be seen in embryo in a number of the poems he published in *Kyk-Over-Al*. Many of these were later included in his collection *Eternity to Season* (1954), which seeks to weave together Homeric myth with the landscapes of Guyana and the lives of its people in a manner that foreshadows Derek Walcott's epic reworking of Greek legend in a Caribbean context in *Omeros* (1990).

Alongside Harris, Martin Carter was another consistent contributor to *Kyk-Over-Al*. Indeed, his first published piece of work – a 'fragment' from '**An Ode to Midnight**' – appeared in issue six of the journal. This poem, with its "*deliberate archaism*" which "*does little to distinguish it from the many pastiches in Kyk-Over-Al that cast back to classical and romantic structures of poetic expression*", represents, as Gemma Robinson puts it, something of a "*deceptive entrance*" by Carter into Guyanese literature.<sup>11</sup> It would not be long, however, before Carter's more familiar poetic voice – passionate, committed, protesting the squalor of colonialism in a language of lyrical beauty – would resound in the pages of the periodical. Here he is in '**Death of a Slave**', for example, excoriating the brutality of plantation labour in stanzas at once both savagely forthright and dense with the gravity of history:

"cane field is green dark green  
green with life of its own  
heart of slave is red deep red  
red with life of its own.

day passes like long whip  
over the back of slave  
day is burning whip  
biting the neck of slave".<sup>12</sup>

It is worth comparing this poem as it appeared in *Kyk-Over-Al* in 1952 with the version published two years later as part of the collection *Poems of Resistance from British Guiana*. In the latter, the same stanzas are rendered as follows:

“The cane field is green dark green  
green with a life of its own  
The heart of a slave is red deep red  
red with a life of its own.

Day passes like a long whip  
over the back of a slave  
Day is a burning whip  
Biting the neck of a slave”.<sup>13</sup>

The addition of a series of definite and indefinite articles (“The cane field”, “a slave”) to the 1954 version subtly alters the rhythm of the poem: the *Kyk-Over-Al* piece has a punchy ferocity, a clipped cadence that is softened in the later rendering. While the tone and metre of the latter is perhaps more successful at engaging the reader in the subject of the poem (Carter’s aim in his lyrics, observes Robinson, was always to “pursue the goal of collective feeling” and to challenge his readers to join him in making sense of the world<sup>14</sup>), there is something about the brute simplicity of the earlier construction – especially its undifferentiated evocation of the slave as simply “slave” (“neck of slave” / “back of slave”) – that speaks to the terrifying, dehumanizing violence of slavery.

Comparisons such as this highlight how immensely interesting are the contributions to *Kyk-Over-Al* for those looking to track not only the contours of Guyanese literary history, but also the fascinating genealogies of individual poems and prose pieces. The republication of the journal in the *Guyana Classics* series will make easier the task of throwing light on the literary development of Guyana’s most significant authors. In addition to Harris and Carter, *Kyk-Over-Al* included work by a range of other significant writers in the early stages of their careers. Edgar Mittelholzer, for instance, contributed a number of intriguing poems to the journal (see issues three and nineteen). The “first of his generation to emigrate to the UK to make a serious career of writing novels”, Mittelholzer was a pioneer, penning such important works as *Corentyne Thunder* (1941), *Shadows Move Among Them* (1951),

and the *Kaywana* trilogy of historical novels (1952-58), which cover over 300 years of Guyanese history.<sup>15</sup> The work of Jan Carew, whose novels *The Wild Coast* (1958) and *Black Midas* (1958) are compelling re-workings of the *Bildungsroman* in a Guyanese context, also features in the journal, as does that of Roy Heath, who contributed some rare early poetry to issues seventeen (1953) and nineteen (1954), some twenty years before his first novel, *A Man Come Home* (1974), was published.

Of equal interest when reading through early issues of *Kyk-Over-Al* is the vast array of literary pieces by contributors whose career did not subsequently flourish, or whose work has never received the same kind of attention as that of writers like Harris or Mittelholzer. The journal enables us to reconstruct an often overlooked portion of the literary field in which those more celebrated authors were working. The dynamics of literary consecration and canonization tend to produce relatively attenuated literary histories, marginalizing certain writers and obscuring the diverse range of work with which more well-known texts may well have been in dialogue; *Kyk-Over-Al* allows us to recover some of that rich tradition and to develop a more fine-grained understanding of the evolution of Guyanese literature.

This is especially so since in addition to fostering new literary talents, *Kyk-Over-Al* sought to preserve and bring to attention the work of earlier Guyanese writers, thereby not only “moulding a Guianese consciousness”, but also “recording its tradition”, as Seymour put it.<sup>16</sup> In illustration of Seymour’s point, the second issue selected the poet Walter MacArthur Lawrence (1896-1942) for “honour and commemoration”, republishing a selection of stanzas from his poem ‘**Ode to Kaieteur**’ and featuring a number of essays on his work.<sup>17</sup> This issue of the journal was notable, too, for what, as Petamber Persaud has observed, may be “the first recorded call for a local literary prize”, with James W. Smith, the Honorary Secretary of the British Guiana Writers’ Association, arguing for the establishment of a literary award in the form of the Leo Medal for poetry, The Webber Medal for fiction and The Clementi Medal for non-fiction and drama.<sup>18</sup>

In preserving the Guyanese literary heritage while also supporting and even launching the careers of some of Guyana's most well-known and critically lauded writers, *Kyk-Over-Al* not only helped to shape the contours of Guyanese literary culture, but also contributed more generally to the 'boom' in Caribbean writing in the 1950s. Indeed, the journal was one of a number of literary magazines that flourished across the region in the middle decades of the twentieth century. These included such periodicals as *The Beacon* in Trinidad (first published in 1931), *Tropiques* in Martinique (1941), *Bim* in Barbados (1942), *Focus* in Jamaica (1943), *Origenes* in Cuba (1944), *Asomante* in Puerto Rico (1945), and *Caribbean Quarterly*, which was launched by the University of the West Indies' Department of Extra Mural Studies in 1949. Alongside such outlets as the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* radio programme (which ran from 1943 to 1958 and featured readings of work by writers such as George Lamming, Una Marson, V. S. Naipaul, and Sam Selvon), these magazines provided a new forum for the circulation and discussion of Caribbean literature, encouraging into print a whole host of emerging literary talents.

In comparison with many of these other journals, *Kyk-Over-Al* was, as Laurence Breiner has observed, "*remarkable for the high quality of its poetry from the very beginning.*"<sup>19</sup> This was down in large part to the frequent contributions made by Harris, Carter, and Seymour himself (Harris contributed some 37 poems between 1945 and 1961, Carter some 24, and Seymour over 40). The journal also "*made pioneering efforts in literary criticism, and opened its pages to writers of the whole region, even publishing translations of works from the French Antilles.*"<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Breiner suggests that *Kyk-Over-Al*'s outlook was "*closely tied to the dream of the West Indian Federation.*"<sup>21</sup> In a similar vein, L. E. Braithwaite has argued that the magazine moved from a purely Guyanese to a West Indian position with the establishment of the University College of the West Indies in 1948.<sup>22</sup>

The pause in the journal's publication in 1961, occasioned by Seymour's departure from Guyana, occurred just as the country was entering into a period of intense ethno-political hostilities that rent the fabric of society. That *Kyk-Over-Al*

should fall silent at this time seems poignantly apt given its stated aim to help build the nation and its commitment to fostering a collective Guyanese consciousness. Against the backdrop of race riots that pitched communities against one another, the journal's *raison d'être* perhaps appeared hopelessly Utopian. And yet such Utopianism was, and remains, fundamental to thinking beyond the apparent impasses and entrenched divisions that mark the present; and to imagining the possibility of a radically different future. As Martin Carter put it in 'Looking at Your Hands', published in *Kyk-Over-Al* in 1952, "I do not sleep to dream, but dream to change the world".<sup>23</sup> The last word, however, should perhaps belong to Seymour, who expressed similar sentiments to Carter in a poem published in the third issue, and which in many ways encapsulates the ideals behind the founding of the journal:

"To-day they hope  
But to-morrow belongs to the people.  
To-morrow they will put power behind their brow  
And get the skill in their hands.

To-morrow  
They will make a hammer to smash the slums  
And build the schools.

Like a River, the people hold history in their hands  
And To-morrow belongs to them".<sup>24</sup>

**Michael Niblett**  
**University of Warwick**

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Nalini Persam, 'The Importance of Being Cultural: Nationalist Thought and Jagan's Colonial World', in *Small Axe*, 15 (March 2004): 86.

<sup>2</sup> H. R. Harewood, 'A Message', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.1 (1945): 26.

<sup>3</sup> A. J. Seymour, 'Editorial Notes', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.1 (1945): 7

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Persam, 'The Importance of Being Cultural', 86-87.

<sup>6</sup> A. J. Seymour, 'Editor's Note', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 2.7 (1948): 2.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson Harris, 'Tomorrow', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.1 (1945): 30.



- <sup>8</sup> Wilson Harris, 'Fences Upon the Earth', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.4 (1947): 21.
- <sup>9</sup> Reinhard W. Sander, 'The Quest for Form: Wilson Harris' Contributions to *Kyk-Over-Al*', in *World Literature Written in English*, 22.1 (1983): 20.
- <sup>10</sup> Harris, 'Fences Upon the Earth', 21.
- <sup>11</sup> Gemma Robinson, 'Introduction', in *University of Hunger: Collected Poems and Selected Prose*, by Martin Carter and ed. Gemma Robinson (Tarsset, Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2006), 17.
- <sup>12</sup> Martin Carter, 'Death of a Slave', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 4.14 (1952): 53.
- <sup>13</sup> Martin Carter, 'Death of a Slave', in *University of Hunger*, 88.
- <sup>14</sup> Robinson, 'Introduction', in *University of Hunger*, 31.
- <sup>15</sup> Michael Gilkes, 'Edgar Mittelholzer', in *West Indian Literature*, 2nd edition, ed. Bruce King (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1995), 127.
- <sup>16</sup> A. J. Seymour, 'Editorial Notes', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.2 (1946): 3-4.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Petamber Persaud, 'Preserving Our Literary Heritage: *Kyk-Over-Al*, Part 1 – 1945-1961', in *Guyana Chronicle* 30th July (2006). Web. 1 March. <http://www.landofsixpeoples.com/gytodaysixevenjs.htm>
- <sup>19</sup> Laurence A. Breiner, *An Introduction to West Indian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). 78.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> See A. J. Seymour, 'Kyk at 50', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 46/47 (1995): 19.
- <sup>23</sup> Martin Carter, 'Looking at Your Hands', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 4.14 (1952): 52.
- <sup>24</sup> A. J. Seymour, 'To-Morrow Belongs to the People', in *Kyk-Over-Al*, 1.3 (1946): 11.



# ISSUE 1



## EDITORIAL NOTES

ALREADY there is the tang of Christmas in the air, and from the Watch Tower we send happy Christmas greetings to every reader of *Kyk-Over-Al*. It is the first Nativity season we spend free from hostilities, though not from the shadow of them, and most people hope for a long era of peace to repair the ravages of war.

Intellectual life in Europe and elsewhere is coming out of its enforced hibernation. The winter solstice is past, and thought begins its inevitable swing-back to catch the sun. In the West Indies there are signs that social and economic conditions will slowly but surely improve, and the colonial peoples are being taken more into partnership in the government of their own countries.

Cultural life too, is quickening in many ways, but one needs a canalising of energies or, if you like, nuclei here and there that will give direction and permanence to the quickening activities. Surely the B.G. Union of Cultural Clubs is one of those rallying points, and so also is a periodical of the kind we hope this will be.

What are our aims? *Kyk-Over-Al* we hope will be an instrument to help forge a Guianese people, and to make them conscious of their intellectual and spiritual possibilities. There's so much we can do as a people if we can get together more, and with this magazine as an outlet, the united cultural organizations can certainly build, we believe, some achievement of common pride in the literary world, without detracting in the least from their group aims or autonomy.

Now, why change the name from *Greetings from Guiana* to *Kyk-Over-Al*? The answer can be, why not? Associations make a powerful cementing force, and although ruined, *Kyk-over-al* still stands to remind us of our Amerindian and Dutch heritage. If we are going to grow, and to grow as a people, we've got to have roots and *Kyk-over-al* is one of them. The old fort there is in ruins, but, as Harold Stannard says in his article, the creative spirit of man is indomitable, and cultures

burgeon again amid their own ruins. As a title for a periodical *Kyk-Over-Al* calls for quick and wide vigilance and the expression of an alert people. The cover design—we think it an attractive one—was kindly done for us by Cecil E. Barker.

A word, now, about the contributors. The most distinguished of course is Harold Stannard, who made such a profound impression on the people of British Guiana two years ago. We don't have to introduce Alan W. Steward or Oscar Wight or H. R. Harewood or N. E. Cameron. Every one knows these public men.

Readers of Guianese periodicals will also know already J. A. V. Bourne, Duncan Boyce, Vere T. Daly, Celeste Dolphin, Wilson Harris, Terence C. Holder, J. E. Humphrey and Jas. W. Smith. They are known to editors of longer standing than this one, and if we are not mistaken the other contributors also have appeared in print.

The issues of *Kyk-Over-Al* will depend largely upon public response. We may promise half yearly Publication, with the hope readers will ask that the periodical appear quarterly. But Rome was not built in a day and we would wish steady growth in quality and response.

—A. J. S.

## Fragment from NEBUCHADNEZZAR

(Daniel tells the King's vision)

by Stanley Hamilcar White

*"O king, thy dream and vision of the head,  
Upon thy bed are these."  
"As a comet wandering without its ether belt  
Into the skiey course burns with  
Flamboyant radiance, or as a star  
That streaks the heavens suddenly with trail  
Of steel-like light, so in thy dream  
An image of metallic majesty  
Thy night's repose illuminatingly disturbed.  
Its head, set royally, carved out of gold.  
Bright, unalloyed, shone with continuous  
Glittering that did eclipse the brittle brilliance  
Of silver breast and arms, and mellowed mild  
The brazen sheen of abdomen and thighs.  
And in thy dream this shimm'ring statue stood  
Upon two legs of iron forged with feet—a part  
Of iron and a part of basely potter's clay.  
Such did command of thee hypnotic stare,  
Until, as in a storm when thunders clap  
Between the whirls of winds, a meteor  
Ejected from an unseen part of heaven,  
Falls crashingly upon the summit of  
A mountain, powdering iced stones and snowy sod,  
Then those unchartered winds their dust disperse,  
A stone, unburied by hands this statue smote :  
Then were the iron, and the brass, the potter's clay.  
The silver and the gold, grounded to grainless dust.  
And whirled away within a rush of wind  
The stone expanding wide into a mountain huge  
That covered earth colossally."*

# MARIONNE

by J.A.V. Bourne

This beautiful name

Perfectly portrays the owner.

The lovely rhythm of the syllables

Flows with a poetic flavour and

Evokes visions of crinoline,

Lavender and Spanish laces;

One sees autumn woods in young moonlight;

And a young sylph-like maiden

Tall, slender and graceful,

Mingling with the myrtle...



# FEAR

by James W. Smith

I cannot say there's aught for me to fear:  
And yet at times I feel, I swear,  
Weird beings which have no real existence, take  
Their ghostly stand around me—rake  
Chills up and down my spine!

I cannot see  
Those devils standing close to me,  
But I can feel their presence: I can hear  
Their mocking laughter ever near—  
Nearer still and nearer, 'til I feel  
Their breath—each finger like an eel  
About my throat!

I struggle with the ghosts  
Of my imagination—hosts  
Of them! I feel the sweat break on my brow!  
I try to cry aloud: but how  
Inaudible that cry

I pant! I gasp!  
My beating heart within their grasp!  
And when I fear that I must surely die,  
That cold fear passes as I sigh!

# THE EARTH IS A WOMAN

by A.J. Seymour

The earth is a woman with patient hair  
And she watches a window pane  
Where a tower of cloud creeps slowly past  
And other clouds come again.

When night comes in, she counts the stars  
On the dark gown that woman wears.  
She sits with her quiet hands folded there  
And she watches the patient years.

# TELL ME TREES! WHAT ARE YOU WHISPERING?

by Wilson Harris

It is strange  
Standing here  
Beneath the whispering trees  
Far away from the haunts of men  
Tell me, trees!  
What are you whispering ?  
When I am dead  
I shall come and lie  
Beneath your fallen leaves...  
But tell me, trees!  
What are you whispering ?  
They shall bury me  
Beneath your fallen leaves.  
My robe shall be  
Green, fallen leaves.  
My love shall be  
Fresh, fallen leaves.  
My lips shall kiss  
Sweet, fallen leaves.  
I and the leaves shall lie together  
Never parting...  
I and the leaves shall always lie together.  
And know no parting.  
It is so strange  
Standing here  
Beneath the whispering trees !  
Tell me, trees!  
What are you whispering ?

## SUNDOWN

by H.L. Mitchell

The sun is sinking in the west,  
The golden sun now goes to rest,  
    The happy gladd'ning sun.  
For one more day, he made men gay,  
For one more day, he made men play,  
    But now his task is done.

He rose this morn majestic, strong,  
Birds welcomed him with joyous song,  
    But now he must depart.  
For one more day he gave men food,  
And time to practise earthly good,  
    To joy their human heart.

He gave the earth the glow of life,  
He bade men banish hatred, strife,  
    And once remember God.  
Gloom and depression fled away,  
To ne'er return another day,  
    But with dark Night to plod.

Old Age felt young and strong again,  
And then ambitious, thought of gain  
    And days spent long in youth.  
Youths strong achieved th' impossible,  
And said "There is nought terrible,  
    Unless we taste its ruth".

And now he's sinking in the west,  
For one day more this world he blest,  
    But now his work is done.  
He will return to-morrow day,  
He'll make men happy, bright and gay,  
    But now his course is run.

## EMERALD ISLE

by Frank E. Dalzell

An idle field of rice on coastal land,  
Caressed eternally by passing Trades,  
Green stretches neat embroidered by the hand  
On min'ral rich brown earth in mobile shades.  
A vast expanse of softly waving grain,  
Nurtured and ripened 'neath a Tropic sun,  
Invoking bursts of intermittent rain  
To flood its water bed for Ixion.  
A staple stretch of food that needs no distance  
To lend enchantment to its treasured view,  
Seen far or glimpsed like winged visitants,  
Remains enshrined deep the long years through.  
What more could make a poet's thoughts soar higher?  
What more could artist's brush or pen desire?

## ACHIEVEMENT'S WAY

by Terence C. Holder

The die is cast! Prized promise to be kept  
Oft does commit the promisor to fight  
'Gainst Nature's. Laws. Whilst his companions slept  
One man resists seductive Slumber's might.

Why cast the die ? Such queries which proceed  
From minds that suffer not sustaining sighs  
Of suffering souls, may sow the subtle seed  
That steals the brightness from Ambition's eyes.

A want is felt; a want so simply filled,  
But yet fulfilment ever seems afar  
From grabber's grasp: No primal action willed,  
The path to progress bears a baulking bar.

Decision comes : The binding word is giv'n  
That on such day, indeed in stated hour  
A product fair, through toil, sweat, tears e'en driv'n,  
Shall share the beauties of Achievement's bower.

The die is cast ! No substitute can now  
Supplant production of Achievement's crown—  
The finished form. The when, the where, the how  
Are but embroidery on the caster's gown.

A wise old friend of Guiana says the activities of the  
mind need dignified surroundings for their progress

## **AFTER THE FIRE**

by Harold Stannard

MY YEAR in the West Indies has given me a new pleasure in the changing English seasons by providing the contrast with tropical memories. One particular Saturday afternoon, when I got down to my Hampshire home after the week's work in London, Georgetown was very much in my mind. The news of the terrible fire had just come through and as I stood and looked at the bright crocuses in my garden—they had only been in bud the week before—my thoughts crossed the Atlantic and in my mind's eye I saw Georgetown, High Street and its central avenue planted with flamboyant trees. They too, I thought, would be coming into bloom but was there now a torn and blackened gap in the long line? Trees left bare of leaves by fire are not uncommon sights in bomb-scarred London, though it is wonderful with what vitality they shoot again.

Later, as I read, I could not but feel the contrast between my home with all my books still on their shelves and the ruin of central Georgetown—the Assembly Rooms, the Society's Library, the Museum that Mr. Peberdy had built up and made a true delight, the book shops in which I had browsed,—all gone. What a blow to the intellectual and artistic life of the community, just when its many streams were beginning to flow together and were gathering new strength from their union. And so it occurred to me that whatever it was that the Editor, writing before the disaster, had intended me to say, what I must say was that the creative spirit of man was indomitable, that cultures, like the blackened trees, were stimulated by catastrophe to burgeon again amid their own ruins. How many times in Europe's tormented history has scholarship been overwhelmed and has yet survived to inspire human genius to fresh achievement. The plight of Europe today is indeed grim, yet everywhere new life is stirring. Here in Britain higher education has been almost

abandoned these five years and more, yet there was passed last year an Education Act which at last truly opens the doors of knowledge to all our people. I believe that the very extent of its losses, and in particular the destruction of irreplaceable historical matter will stir Georgetown and especially the young people of Georgetown in their many societies, now happily in full contact with one another, to show that they can rise to a great opportunity and make its cultural life richer, more varied, and above all, more public than before.

A factor that should further their enterprise is that the spirit of the time is now opposed to the haphazard growth of cities. Planning is one of the keywords of the age and the object of town-planning is not merely to ensure orderly and dignified development but to reconcile conflicting claims to the use of the land. Is a particular area to be industrial or residential? Is a given site to accommodate a public building or a block of offices? Far be it from me to attempt to re-plan central Georgetown; I have neither the general competence nor the local knowledge for such a task. But I can see that the fire has left behind it one of those clashes of interests on which it is the business of town-planning to adjudicate. High Street is Georgetown's most distinguished thoroughfare, Water Street, the main avenue of its business life. Now that fire has devastated an area of considerable extent and central situation between the two streets, there is bound to be a rivalry between projects for its redevelopment. Civic pride will point to the series of important buildings on the unscathed side of High Street—the Public Library, the Cathedral, the Town Hall, the Law Courts, and will urge their title to be faced in future by their equals. Business will retort that the least Georgetown can do for the activities to which it owes its prosperity and indeed its life is to place its best sites at their disposal. I make no claim to arbitrate between these contentions; on the contrary my attitude is aggressively partisan. Commerce has had matters all its own way for the last century but the time is now past when the refinements of life are thankful to accept whatever odd corners are left to them.



One compromise, indeed, I would offer—the reservation of the best site in the destroyed area for the new Post Office. All the activities of a modern community meet in its post office which is the symbol not only of the interdependence of its citizens, but of their association with the outside world. The structure of so significant a building should be worthy of its functions and it struck me as odd that so dignified and self-conscious a city as Georgetown should have been content to house its post office in a discarded hotel. But, for the rest, I would suggest to the business world that the sites on the west side of Water Street are available for its purposes and that if their area is insufficient it might consider whether the remaining Water Street frontages have always been put to the most effective and economical use. As regards High Street, my vote is for public buildings all along the line, and I would regard the re-planning of the devastated section as the beginning of a process which would gradually convert High Street into a processional avenue for its whole length from the sea to Brickdam. The new public buildings with which I would like to see it lined and for which I hope a new and worthier Post Office would leave space are two :

First, a new museum. The burnt museum which owed so much to Mr. Peberdy's vision and enthusiasm, was the best institution of its kind in the British West Indies. It was popular in the best sense of the term and was affecting the outlook and interests of Georgetown's children. It should certainly be reconstituted, if possible, by the same able hand which created it. The new museum would surpass the old because the contents would be housed in a building designed for them and not simply adapted to them. Room should be found for the anthropological section at present displayed on the upper floor of the Public Library. The transfer would complete the purpose of the museum as a mirror of Guianese life and would give the Library room for expansion. The destruction of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society's books has emphasised the need of providing Georgetown with a small but choice reference library for the use of students and I should be inclined to include it in the museum block. I suggest this arrangement not only because it would foster a proper relation ship between text books

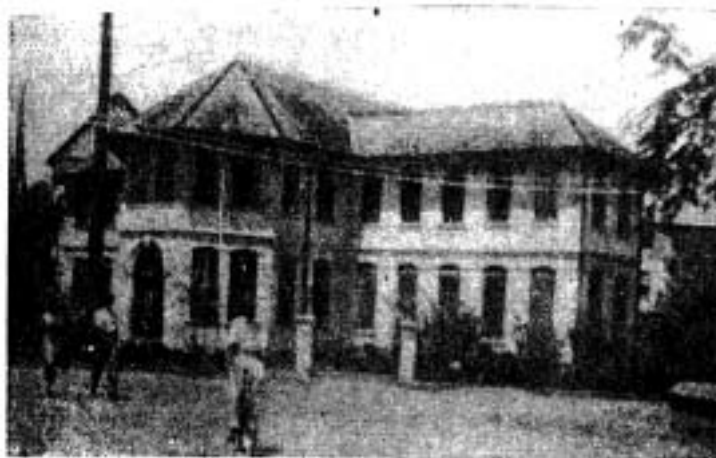
and exhibits but because I doubt whether a public library and a reference library can properly be housed under the same roof. A public library should be rather a noisy place with a stream of people flowing in and out, but students need quiet.

Secondly, the Assembly Rooms should be replaced by a building of rather more ambitious scope. It would, of course, contain a large hall suitable for both dramatic and musical performances with the necessary dressing rooms and rehearsal rooms, but it should also aim at providing a centre for all Georgetown's cultural activities. The need for such a centre was felt and expressed at the conference of the Union of Cultural Clubs last summer (1944) and I will not dwell upon it now. Except to say this, that it is wholly wrong to suppose that the activities of the mind are independent of their setting. They will of course, maintain themselves under any conditions but like all forms of life, they will flourish only in an appropriate environment. No one realised this more clearly than the ancient Athenians whose city owes part of its immortality to the fact that it sought to realise truth and beauty in externals as well as in men's thoughts. Our modern cities would be fairer and more genial places if the example which Athens set had been more generally followed. The time is now ripe to give the varied intellectual curiosities of Georgetown a common centre and rallying point, and I prophesy vigorous arguments about the form it should take. At the risk of adding to the confusion I suggest that there should be provision for a small hall accommodating not more than one hundred, appropriate to the more intimate cultural activities, such as chamber music, play readings, discussions, and the exhibition of paintings and carvings.

If what I have written needs any excuse—and I admit that the practical architects of reconstruction may consider it impertinent—let me plead that its argument comes fittingly from an Oxford man whose outlook on life has been broadened and humanized by the influence on his spirit of the ordered beauty amid which his mind was shaped.

**\*This article was originally intended for an issue of another magazine which didn't appear. We are grateful to Mr. Lloyd Searwar for transferring it to us.**

## The Georgetown Public Free Library



## The Philip Pilgrim Choral Union

On the 29th July, 1944, the last night of the presentation of **'The Legend of Kaieteur'** in the Assembly Rooms, a Choral Union was formed by Philip Pilgrim who used as his nucleus the 133 members of the choir that had just performed this work, many of them being representatives of not less than six different choirs. Miss Cicely Pilgrim and Mr. Steve da Cambra were appointed joint secretaries and Dr. John Heuvel consented to be the conductor.

The main object of this Union, as suggested by Mr. Pilgrim, was that picked voices from the local choirs should unite annually to perform choral works beyond the capacity of small individual groups. Philip Pilgrim emphasised the point that there was no intention of interfering with the individuality of those choirs forming the Union, and he stressed the fact that they would benefit rather by working together.

Owing to his unfortunate death a month later, this idea lay dormant until May of this year, when at a representative meeting of the original Union held on the 2nd day of that month it was decided that—

- (1) the Union should start to function;
- (2) it was appropriate that it should be named the Philip Pilgrim Choral Union, in order to perpetuate the memory of its founder;
- (3) the first production should be **'The Legend of Kaieteur'**;
- (4) there should be a Committee to sponsor the Union.

The following is a list of the names of the members of the Committee :—

The Revs. Norman Birnie, M.A., and W. Hawley Bryant; A. W. Steward, Esq., B.A., E. O. Pilgrim, Esq., B.Sc., A. J. Seymour, Esq., Steve da Cambra, Esq., Miss Cicely Pilgrim, and Miss Mildred Mansfield.

It is anticipated that rehearsals will begin early in the New Year.

Vere T. Daly uses the results of recent historical  
research to tell the story of Kykoveral  
**THE STORY OF KYKOVERAL**

by Vere T. Daly

KYKOVERAL today is our oldest historical relic, and it should be visited by all who have pride of country in their hearts. Its name was doubtless an inspiration, for it "Looked" or "Kyked-over-al" the waters of the Essequebo, Mazaruni and Cuyuni. Provided we have a sufficient leaven of humility in our hearts, we would do ourselves no harm to take as our watch-word "Kyk-over-al"!

It has now been established beyond reasonable doubt that Kykoveral was founded in 1616. The trustworthiness of Major John Scott, on whose authority this statement was first made, was once contemptuously denied; but Dr. George Edmunston, in a series of learned articles published in the English Historical Review, has shown, by comparison with Dutch and Spanish contemporary records, that Scott is entirely to be trusted.

By close examination and careful deduction Dr. Edmunston has reconstructed for us the story of the founding of Kykoveral.

Early in the seventeenth century there was at the Spanish settlement of San Thomé on the Orinoco a Dutchman by the name of Adrian Groenewegen. He was the Spanish factor at San Thomé, but when a change of policy had come about in the little settlement, Groenewegen quit the Spanish service and went back to his old masters in Holland.

He was at once engaged by Peter Courteen and Jan de Moor and put in charge of an expedition to Essequebo, where on his arrival with a mixed force of Englishmen and Zeelanders in two ships and a galiot, he built a fort and established a settlement on the island of Kykoveral at the water-meet of the Essequebo, Mazaruni, and Cuyuni rivers.

Until Dr. Edmunston took up the cudgel in defence of Scott (who was a notorious swindler in his private life) every bit of the above was discredited. But the acceptance of Scott's story has now shown how false are earlier accounts which tell of

the founding of Kykoveral between 1581 and 1598 and the finding of an old fort of alleged Portuguese construction.

In 1621 the Dutch West India Company was formed. Its main aim being the capture of Brazil, which belonged to the Portuguese, its first notable act was to send an expedition of twenty-six ships to raid San Salvador. It is probable that official attention was not paid to Essequebo before 1623, when the Zeeland Chamber began to show special interest in the post. Jacob Canyn, a ship's captain, was the Company's first agent. He contracted to serve for three years, but in 1626 we find him asking to be released. It is to Jan Van der Goes must go the honour of being the leader of the first official occupation of Essequebo.

In 1895 the question as to the respective boundaries of the Republic of Venezuela and the Crown Colony of British Guiana caused a world-wide stir; but war between the United States of America (acting for and on behalf of the Republic of Venezuela) and Great Britain was averted when an arbitration treaty was signed between the British Ambassador and Senhor Andrade at Washington on February 2, 1897. Working on both sides were some of the ablest professors in the world, and one of the difficulties they had to face was to decide which of the two accounts of the founding of Kykoveral was to be accepted—Scott's, or that which could be gleaned from the minutes of the West India Company. In the American case, Scott's account was treated with contempt; and in the decision handed down by the tribunal which met in Paris, it is clear that Scott was discredited.

The apparently irreconcilable difficulty was this: If Groenewegen in 1616 had established a settlement, why was it necessary for the West India Company to establish another sometime between 1623 and 1626? What had happened to Groenewegen's settlement? Had it failed?

By close analysis of the documents which have come down to us Dr. Edmunston has shown that the official occupation of Kykoveral did not disturb the settlement under Groenewegen. Undoubtedly the old settlers must have viewed the new ones with suspicion, and *vice versa*; but on the whole the fortunes of the Company's trading post hardly affected the Courteen's colony.

How reasonable this conclusion is may easily be seen when one begins to read of attempts made by the West India Company to suppress the activities of a body of private traders. We find in 1634, for example, Abraham van Pere, and the Zeeland Chamber instructing their deputies, who were being sent to a meeting of the Nineteen, (The Executive of the Dutch West Indian Company), "*to request, and even insist, that no colonists or other persons shall be at liberty to navigate to the Wild Coast (Guiana) except this Chamber and Confrater van Pere alone*" ; and this request having failed we find the Zeeland Chamber the next year passing a resolution to the effect that "*the trade to the wild coast shall be done by the Company alone and by no private individuals.*"

In 1635 the Company's settlement was in such a bad way that the Zeeland Chamber's Committee of Commerce and Finance sat to decide whether or not it was profitable to keep it. At that time there were in the Company's employment not more than thirty men, whose main business was that of exchanging the articles of European make for anatto dye, which was then in great demand in Europe for use in the manufacture of cheese and other products.

Presumably, the report of the Chamber's Committee was favourable, for the official occupation of Essequibo continued. The discovery that sugarcane was growing in the Colony may have been responsible for this decision, for it is about this time (1637) that we find the first mention of sugar in the minutes of the Zeeland Chamber.

But if official Essequibo was in a precarious condition, the same cannot be said of the settlement under Groenewegen. In 1624 it was visited by one Jesse de Forest and in 1627 by Captain Plowell, the discoverer of Barbados. Plowell's visit was for the ostensible purpose of obtaining seeds and roots for planting in Barbados, but his real motive was to reinforce the colony. "*There I lefte eight men,*" he writes, "*and lefte a Cargezon of trade for that place.*"

In 1637, when the Zeeland Chamber had just decided not to abandon its post, Groenewegen was leading an expedition against San Thomé—a state of affairs which shows that the Courteen's settlement was in a stronger position than the Company's.

It is certain that the first fort built on Kykoveral by Groenewegen was not of stone, for in 1627, and again in 1631, van der Goes was promised a fort of brick. Failure to fulfil this and other promises caused van der Goes to return home with the whole lot of his colonists in 1632. He was, however, re-engaged, and by 1634 he was back at Kykoveral with two assistants. Significantly, in 1639, he was addressed for the first time as "Commandeur," and one may reasonably presume that this title was given him because of the fact that there were now soldiers under him. A further conclusion that can be drawn is that the promised fort had been completed, and that the soldiers were housed there. It was, as van Berkel described it thirty-one years later, "*of quadrangular shape, having below the magazine, and above three apartments in which soldiers are housed, a room for the Commandant and one for the Secretary, which at the same time serves to store the cargoes.*"

Meanwhile, the rivalry between the Company and the Courteens for the mastery of Kykoveral was gradually coming to an end. By 1645 the position was so much easier that Groenewegen was made Governor by the West India Company; nevertheless, in the same year, the Zeeland Chamber suggested to the Company, that in applying for a renewal of its charter it should stipulate that no private individuals be allowed to trade to Essequibo. This, however, was the last protest, for in 1650 Groenewegen was not only Governor, but was also Commandeur of the troops. The two colonies finally fused in 1664, for in that year Jan de Moor died and Groenewegen definitely became a Company's servant.

Groenewegen died at his post in 1664. He was, as Scott says, "*the first man that took a firm footing in Guiana by the good liking of the natives ...*" As an associate of Captain Plowell he was responsible for giving substantial assistance to Barbados. A story goes that when it became known in Essequibo that the Indians whom he had sent with Plowell to Barbados were enslaved, he was hard put to show that he was not party to such a diabolical scheme. He solved the situation by marrying an Indian woman by whom he had a son, Amos Groenewegen, who was later post-holder in Demerara (circa 1680-1700) .



The year after Groenewegen's death Kykoveral saw its first serious action. Commercial rivalry had brought the English and the Dutch into conflict, and in 1665 Major John Scott was sent by Lord Willoughby, then governor of Barbados, to raid Dutch settlements in Guiana. After devastating Pomeroon, Scott proceeded up the Essequibo and captured Kykoveral, leaving there twenty-eight men under Captain Keene before returning to Barbados to boast of his conquest.

Scott mentions in his report that he was able to secure for his troops 73,788 lbs. of sugar, and this throws some light on the activities of the settlement. That the Indian trade in anatto was still the chief occupation of the settlers there can be no doubt; but Prince Sugar was already threatening to usurp the throne of King Anatto.

The British occupation, however, was not destined to be long. The first difficulty of the troops was with the Indians, who refused to give them supplies; then the French, who were the allies of the Dutch, came and bombarded the fort; finally, a force under Bergenaar, the Commandeur of Berbice, travelling overland by a path that is probably now part of the Rupununi Cattle Trail, and down the Essequibo, reached Kykoveral and recaptured it. Meanwhile, the States of Zeeland, hearing of the fate of their beloved Essequibo, had sent Admiral Crynssen to the rescue. Crynssen arrived after Bergenaar had effected its recapture; but he took the colony over in the name of the States of Zeeland and instituted one Baerland, Commandeur.

The Peace of Breda, signed in 1667, brought hostilities to a close. Pomeroon was now completely deserted, but Kykoveral was recovering gradually from Scott's blow.

There was now some difficulty in finding an owner for the colony, but after long and tedious negotiations the Zeeland Chamber of the West India Company took it over once again. Hendrick Rol was made Commander; and though a third Anglo-Dutch War was fought in the meantime, Kykoveral was not molested.

But this was not to be for long. Louis XIV's ambitions soon precipitated Europe into more wars, and during the War of the Spanish Succession Kykoveral was attacked (1708). To the lasting shame of Commandeur van der Heyden Resen, it must

be written that instead of sallying forth to meet the enemy he ignominiously shut himself up with his troops in the Fort. Some resistance was given at Plantation Vryheid (Bartica) by the owner and his slaves; but after two had been killed and a few injured the defenders dispersed.

Captain Ferry, the leader of the French expedition, took his departure on the receipt of a ransom of 50,000 guilders, paid in slaves, meat, provisions, and pieces of eight. But Essequebo's cup of bitterness was not completely full. Two more French privateers sailed up the river the next year (1709) and completed the work of destruction. They plundered and burnt to their heart's content, took two hogshead of sugar that were being prepared for export, and left on their departure but two sugar-mills standing.

These two raids on Kykoveral soon woke up the planters to the alarming fact that the Fort could defend neither the colony nor the plantations. A fort, more strongly fortified, and more strategically placed, was needed, especially now that the fertile alluvial coastlands were attracting the planters lower and lower down the river. Flag Island (now Fort Island) was decided upon as the best site for the new fort, which was so advanced by 1739 that the seat of government was transferred there.

In 1744 Fort Zeelandia (as the new fort on Flag Island was called) was completed. Kykoveral thereafter was neglected, even though it was Gravesande's intention to have it reconditioned that very year. In 1748 it was proposed to raze it, and in 1750 it was reported abandoned. In 1755, however, it was again fortified, because of an expected Spanish invasion; but after the scare had passed it was allowed to fall into a state of dilapidation again.

Kykoveral today is our oldest historical relic, and it should be visited by all who have pride of country in their hearts. Its name was doubtless an inspiration, for it "Looked" or "Kyked-over-al" the waters of the Essequebo, Mazaruni and Cuyuni. Provided we have a sufficient leaven of humility in our hearts, we would do ourselves no harm to take as our watch-word — "Kyk-over-al"!

Guiana is an old Indian word, meaning  
“land of many waters.”

## **WATER MONEY**

by Duncan Boyce

SOMEWHERE on the East Coast of Demerara, there once lived a man who made his living by keeping cows and selling their milk. He sent the milk to Georgetown every morning by train. This meant that he had to wake around 4 o'clock, while it was yet dark, walk the long distance along the bank of the creek to get to the cows aback, milk them and fetch out the milk in time for the train.

He woke late one morning and as he hurried along it occurred to him that he would do the distance much quicker if he had a horse. Besides, it would be much easier to ride than to walk. But how was he to get a horse? The money he got by selling milk could not afford such a luxury. The idea having been born, however, it remained in his mind for quite a few days. He turned the matter over and over, looking at it from every side and the more he thought upon it the more attractive the horse became; especially as the rain season had just set in.

At last he hit upon a bright idea. The milk money could not buy a horse but how about putting some water in the milk? He could save this 'water money', as he called it, and buy the horse! Obeying the saying that "*Necessity knows no law*", he put this idea into practice forthwith.

In due course, and by faithfully keeping to his purpose, he saved enough money to buy the horse. But having got it, a new difficulty presented itself. The animal needed harness; a bit and bridle, saddle, stirrups, and so on. These would also have to be bought. As the 'milk money' couldn't afford it, 'water money' would have to be provided. He continued to put water into the milk until, at last, the harness was ready and the man enjoyed the reward of the diligent.

All during the dry season he rode to and fro at ease. He slept later and yet his milk was always on time. His bright idea pleased him a whole lot, so much so that he even began

to cast his mind around for something else that he might need. But at length, the rainy season set in again and the rain poured for days. The creek became swollen and the current raced out into the sea. The banks became very slippery.

As the milkman made his way aback through the rain one morning, his horse slipped on the bank and both the animal and the man rolled into the quickly running stream. Luckily for the man, as they fell, he managed to get his feet out of the stirrups, for had he remained on the horse he would surely have been drowned. But as matters stood, the water carried them separately and the man was able to catch hold of the low hanging branches of a tree. With his usual purposefulness he managed to regain the bank, barely escaping with his life, while the horse was swiftly borne by the current to a certain death by drowning.

While wringing the water from his clothing, some people who had witnessed the accident, came up and began to sympathise with him over the loss of his horse.

*"Ow Ramlall",* (for such was the man's name) moaned one of them, *"only 'bout two months back you buy duh horse"*. But Ramlall was untroubled in his greater knowledge of the history of the horse.

*"Nah worry",* he declared quietly. *"dah ah 'watah money', you nah see watah gone wid um?"*

# Exploration for Beginners *or* Travelling Without Tears

by Alan W. Steward

*Guianese should know their own country. The British Council Representative suggests a way to bring that about.*

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID and written in recent months — and, I suspect similar things have been said and written periodically in the past—about attracting tourists to British Guiana, but I must confess that the idea of Guiana as a Mecca for millionaires I find slightly revolting and the prospects of its realisation fortunately remote. For the true traveller, the wayfarer, Guiana has much to offer: scenery, and adventurous living that are unparalleled in the West Indies, and it is for such that we should make adequate provision. The wayfarer needs no luxury hotels: soda fountains and canned music he will go out of his way to avoid. All he asks is good food, clean shelter—and roads. We shall have enough to keep us busy for a long time providing these basic requirements without bothering our heads with trying to bamboozle the bored and supercilious pleasure-cruiser into regarding Guiana as another Miami.

Interested as I am, however, in attracting to this colony intelligent and adventurous travellers, I am even more concerned to persuade the intelligent but not very adventurous Georgetowner to explore his own country. On my return from each of my two or three visits to Bartica I have been surprised, and not a little embarrassed, at the expressions of awed admiration with which many solid citizens have regarded my hazardous trip to the back of beyond. In spite of my embarrassment it seemed a pity to reveal to my wondering friends that the journey, though delightful, peaceful and full of beauty, had afforded no adventures and involved no hazard to life and limb; that it was, in fact, safe to the point of being humdrum; and that, even though I was travelling from dawn to dusk for the whole of a summer's day, at the end of my pilgrimage I was, as the crow or aeroplane flies, only 47 miles from Georgetown. Though, I must admit, I felt a thousand miles away.

Before we can set about persuading the young men and women of Georgetown and New Amsterdam to spend their weekends and holidays exploring their homeland, it is obvious that we must make it physically possible for them to do so. The really tough traveller, the born vagabond, will not be deterred by any lack of facilities, but most of us like shelter and a clean bed at the day's end. We may not want, and probably cannot afford, the service of a hotel: all we ask at our shelter for the night are facilities for washing and cooking and a room where we may broaden our sympathies and experience in conversation with our fellow wayfarers. There are no such wayside inns in British Guiana.

There are plenty in England, and in peacetime they went far to meet the needs of those who motored and could pay. But there still remained uncatered for the large numbers of young men and women who walked or cycled, and who wanted a clean shake-down for the night at a cost of a shilling or two. Their needs began to be met in 1931 by the Youth Hostels Association of England and Wales, which in that year opened seventy-three hostels in old schools, disused mills, mountain huts, ancient manor houses and abandoned castles. By 1939 there were two hundred and ninety-seven hostels, comprising buildings of a most varied nature, some of them specially built for the purpose, and covering every part of England and Wales. It was now possible for cyclists or walkers to spend each night of their holidays in a different hostel and thus explore a wide stretch of country. And the movement grew apace. Even in wartime 1943 there were over a hundred thousand members of the Youth Hostels' Association, and half a million overnight visits were paid to the hostels.

Could we not form some such Association in British Guiana? Conditions of course are different: old farmhouses and abandoned castles are not plentiful in Demerara. In some ways the task would be more difficult than in England, in others, easier. We might make our first aim a chain of hostels along the coast, then one at Bartica, and so on. Progress would depend on the number and the quality of the members.

Quality is important. Such a movement as the Y.H.A. cannot succeed without a high standard of responsibility among its members. That standard could, I believe, be achieved. The

reward in the widening of horizons, in the joys of companionships and adventure, and in the quickening of imaginative sympathy, would be great. And some young men and women there would be who, through their experiences, would bring a heightened sensibility, a wider vision and a keener sense of responsibility to the service of Guiana. They would, in short, become better citizens, and in the process they would enjoy themselves mightily.

**Message by... N. E. Cameron, M.A.,**  
President of the British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs

IT IS with very great pleasure that we welcome the advent of *Kyk-Over-Al*, a magazine which is the result of the joint efforts of the B.G. Writers' Association and the D.F.P. Advertising Service.

A literary magazine of high standard should contribute a great deal towards fostering a Guianese spirit and showing the world the achievements, attainments and aspirations of British Guiana.

Numerous magazines have appeared in the past but most of them have been short-lived. It is easy to create a few issues but difficult to maintain continuous publication of a high standard. If our writers are prepared to work hard and produce work of great merit in large quantity, then with the co-operation of the public and especially with that of the cultural clubs, success should be assured.

May all work to help the founders of *Kyk-Over Al* realise their dream.

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At present, the British Guianese writer suffers from a multiplicity of handicaps which may be summarised as follows : —

The total absence of Publishing Houses. Restricted Printing facilities. The high cost of Printing. The absence of sound and constructive literary critics. A limited reading public.

There are five large printing houses in the city of Georgetown, and of these, three run daily newspapers. There are no publishers, and consequently, an author is called upon to pay out of his own pocket the publication cost of his work. This cost is usually very high, and even when advertising space is sold to assist in paying the cost of printing, the author who becomes his own publisher, invariably runs the risk of losing financially on the transaction. Some idea will be gained of the exorbitant charges of some of the Printing houses by



examining this extract from a quotation recently submitted to this Association for the printing of a 96 page magazine which will be sold at the price of 1/- per copy :

Cost of printing 1,000 copies...\$ 983.00

It will be appreciated that the high cost of printing is in itself a deterrent to the would-be author-publisher. When the author realises that he has to cater for a very small reading public within the colony and that any hope of a foreign market is negligible, the majority of his works remains unpublished.

—J. W. S.

## Message by...H. R. Harewood

President of the B.G. Writers' Association

FOR years writers have prayed and hoped for a periodical of high quality, published at least quarterly, reflecting features of Guianese life. The Writers' Association plans that *Kyk-Over-Al* (with the DFP's kindly and necessary services and the Union of Cultural Clubs' potential support) shall be the answer to that prayer.

It was partly because we were conscious of our distance from the highest standards that we Guianese decided to come together for self-improvement, but I am sure members and associates will meet the call for well-written and discriminating contributions.

We who seek proficiency in the art of writing can devote our efforts to few purposes better than a constant Watch Over All the Guiana scene. *Kyk-Over-Al* will have no particular ideologies or 'isms' to propound but present merely the independent points of view of individual writers—just persons thinking about things and seeking the word or phrase or design for a paragraph that would most happily and persuasively convey their thoughts to the reader.

But if the writer owes it to the reader to express his thoughts in an interesting manner, the reader also has his responsibilities. I am not now suggesting that there should be a Readers Association as a sort of complementary body, but I do most seriously want to add to this message a few remarks on the reader's duty.

In this country it is not true that one has only to write simply and entertainingly to be certain that readers will analyse what the writer has stated. As the editor of a newspaper whose circulation did not do so badly during my connection with it, I have often (what business heresy!) found myself wondering whether a million readers who skim were preferable to a thousand who scan. And, as the head of the Government's Bureau of Publicity and Information, I have been even more conscious how easy it is to read and how hard it is to read well.

It is upon critical reading that a democracy ultimately stands: for example, on the determination of its people to disentangle the significant from the trivial, to sift the reasonable from the illogical, to filter the plain statement of fact from the biased and opinionated adulteration.

I hope that if it does nothing else, *Kyk-Over-Al* will cultivate among British Guiana's writers the art of setting out a point of view persuasively even when wholly uncompromising; always giving short shrift to the brow-beating and the intolerant; that it will assist our readers to read with the enquiring and challenging mind; and that, in pointing the way to a clear appreciation of British Guiana's problems, it will contribute towards the efforts of all our people to achieve full responsibility in personal and community decisions.

Address delivered before the 1945 Convention  
of the B.G. Union of Cultural Clubs

**GUIANESE HISTORY**

by A. J. Seymour

MR. CHAIRMAN, ladies and gentlemen, the recorded history of British Guiana runs back, we are told, to the century that boasts the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, to the year 1581 when according to Schomburgh and Webber the earliest appreciable attempts at colonization were made by the Dutch. And there is another historian of Guiana, Dalton, who begins our history even further back. Dalton seems to shade his eyes with his hands and to gaze into the mists as great explorers do, and there he finds Christopher Columbus sighting the America coast in 1498.

But whatever date one may choose as the starting point for our recorded history, 1581 or 1498, to my mind, the story of Guiana begins much farther back than that. You may call me fanciful but the story should go back to the slow and vast trek of people out of Mongolia, coming across the arm of land that Asia stretches to America, over the Behring Strait and slowly and gradually pervading the American continents. It is a vast and slow trek which would provide an almost incredible epic of endurance. Authorities tell us that that would account for the Asiatic cast of countenance of our Amerindian people, the fierce Caribs who gave their name to this region and the Arawaks, a gentler race, the Patamona, the Warraus and Akowoios.

As I say, the story of Guiana begins with these people but it is a people who have no history, the sense that history is the record of struggle, and change, and increasing control over natural forces. The Amerindians have a body of oral folk lore, and their picture writing on rocks remains a source of wonder, but they never developed a civilisation, in this Guianian region. Yet I cannot help recording the sense of involuntary pride, that many of us felt when Mr. Peberdy published his discovery of a burial place of Akowoio warriors, near Imbaimadai, on the head waters of the

Mazaruni, of the Tramen Cliff with its paintings of black and red pigment, surviving storm and sun possibly from the 14th century. It gave many of us a sense of pride in ancestry.

However, a few bones in urns and marvellously persistent markings upon a towering cliff, do not in themselves add up to history, and it is only with the influx of peoples from the continent of Europe that the history of this region begins. The Dutch came originally to trade but decided to settle, and the tale of that Dutch colonisation is told for us in the books which are in this Union's library. There are found there, Netscher and Rodway and Clementi and Webber and de Weever. I put the careful Dutchman first, because I find his work the most solid and satisfying of the historians and de Weever is there for mention because of the fact that particularly his book is written to catch and hold the attention of children, and it is with the children that the promise of tradition always lies.

Now you mustn't think that I propose to take each book on Guianese history that can be found our collection, to take it, paraphrase its contents for you in 10-12 minutes. I don't propose to do so, so you need not be afraid of that.

But the books the Union's Library possesses on this subject prompt one to a few general observations which may be of interest.

The first group of remarks you may find rather negative. They come under the category of what Guianese history is not. But in a way they help to allow comparison with the chronicles of other lands. For instance, our country's history does not speak of change on the scale of violent events and vast areas. No civilisation has armed itself against the foe and fought on the beaches or on the hills. No Tamerlane has trodden with clanging steel over our territory. No empires have changed hands here and no rivers ran red with blood. The changes of flag that happened in British Guiana from time to time were effected merely by a show of armed force. Very few shots were fired in anger in organized warfare and a squadron of fighting vessels had but to appear suddenly on the bosom of the rivers for capitulation to be made, hands down. So, violent events in the sphere of human action have been noticeably absent; except for two serious slave insurrections in 1763 and 1823.

Then again Guianese history doesn't deal with degenerate times and the kind of immorality against which the great Roman historian Tacitus inveighed when he laid his indictment and charges at the door of Tiberius. And that's another point. Many of you will remember that the great histories of the world are stories of the decline of a civilisation—Thucydides gives the account of the suicide of Greek civilisation in his Peloponnesian War. Tacitus paints the drama of the corrupt age of the first Century A.D. and Gibbon, the third supreme historian, examines under a slow motion camera the cracking fabric of the Roman Empire. It would seem that the historical consciousness comes to magnificent flower when there's a sense of loss. Well we haven't had that in our history of Guiana—our history is but now on the build—and that leads us to a consideration of what Guianese history has been.

I want us to open our consideration in two ways—the first from the geographical point of view and the second from the political point of view and I believe both are important.

From the geographical point of view Guianese history is very largely the record of the effect of natural conditions on the life of a people. Now that's a commonplace remark I know but commonplace remarks are very often little parcels of truth tied up and passed from hand to hand at face value.

You will recall that the old Dutch trading ships sailed far up river. They did this partly to escape from the Spanish vessels patrolling the South American shores, partly to contact the shy reluctant Indians for purposes of trade and partly—this is psychological—because of the forbidding nature of our coast—desolate stretches of wild unbroken shore.

And so it happened that upriver the trading posts developed into nuclei for settlements where the sturdy Dutch farmers carried on their cultivations and tried to produce a little sugar. And Clementi records the decision to concentrate on sugar and tells us of the gradual migration down river to the more fertile coast, a decision which has affected for good or for bad, the history of this country. One part of that history is the account of persistent farmers fighting flood and drought on this coastal strip with its peculiar problems. Guiana is an

old Indian word meaning the land of waters and it is only now after patient study and with proposed aid from outside, that plans are afoot for these rivers of ours to be harnessed on the one hand to provide electricity, and on the other to provide agriculture with water in the dry seasons.

And so our problem of water on the land, too much or too little of it, is to a certain degree a historical consequence on a decision taken in the 1720s, and that has coloured our history in the past and will affect it still in years to come.

Of course that picture is too simple, I admit it. One must take into account the fortunes of sugar in a world market, the abolition of slavery early in the last century, the labour shortage on sugar estates, the attempt of administration after administration to bring to this country workers from other continents, and the slow assimilation, on the Guiana scene, of peoples with wholly dissimilar backgrounds of tradition and belief. That process of assimilation of peoples from Europe, Asia, and Africa which is also a part of our history is still in the making and it is the hope of this Union of Cultural Clubs that we may assist in the emergence of a proper Guianese tradition—proper, because entirely our own.

And this geographical factor through its economic implications reacts upon the assimilation of our peoples into one tradition and upon the political growth of the inhabitants of our country. And that too, compels us to pace behind our Sea Wall like caged animals, while a hinterland of promise lies waiting for development. For history has her laws, though, not as exact as those of mathematics, and they govern the interaction of forces, for hers are worked out in human lives and in human relations with the resources of a country.

But I shall stop there and turn to the other point of view I mentioned, the political one. It was yesterday that the Franchise was discussed by the Legislative Council and that act of deliberation represents the present political stature to which this country has advanced since its settlement. Sir Cecil Clementi has written a scholarly and fully documented book on the History of the Constitution in this country and I refer it to you for re-reading, but all I wish to say here is that the advance in democracy has been very real and that, more and more, people of every walk of life, even the humblest,

are being enabled to have an effective voice in the chamber where the country's laws are made.

But I find that I am running on and on and it is time for me to come to an end. But before I sit down, I want us all to remember that we are, in our times, making history, that we live in an age when the sum of our efforts as a community can win for us results which have been unparalleled in our past annals. History is the record of the impact of the will of an active people upon its circumstances, physical and material and mental. If we remember that daily, and realise that a newspaper is a page of history, and that as Schomburgh shows us, the chit chat of raconteurs may pass into a tradition after 100 years, then we will keep alive the high sense of dignity and purpose, and so affect profoundly and for good the course British Guiana will take in the years ahead.

Now I began this talk with the statement that although recorded history goes back to the Dutch, the Story of Guiana begins with the vast pervasion of this area and region by the Amerindians. And I want to end with the statement, that the dynamics of history are also to be found in a man or woman's burning passion and a man or woman's towering will. With trained and adequate leadership Guiana can yield the treasures of El Dorado of a kind, but paid in richer dividends, in the peaceful and happy lives of its citizens. History, in one of its deepest senses, is the record of a spiritual possession.



Perhaps the unfinished statue Wilson Harris  
tells us about is a symbol of Guiana —

## TOMORROW

by Wilson Harris

THE HEAVY, pouring rain chased me off the street, onto the pavement, against a dilapidated old building, that might have been a shop, a lawyer's office or a gambling saloon. I huddled against the closed door, but even here the rain, driving in gusts beneath the over-arching shed that jutted across the pavement, reached me with cold, bitter, naked insistence. It was late afternoon. In an hour or so it would be dark. I began to wonder whether it might not be better to take a drenching and get home, than stand here taking chill, with the lonely drab street before me, the hustling raindrops that flickered in upon me, every now and then, my only companions.

Suddenly I felt the door behind me moving. It had opened slightly. Looking back, I saw an eye appear at the crevice. A voice began speaking—*"Won't you come in? The rain is so heavy!"*

The door opened wider still. The eye grew to be a face, the face a form: the form of an old man standing in the doorway. He said, again—*"Come in. Come in. It's so cold out there! Come in."* I looked at the rain, the drenched street, the heavy skies. Then I looked at the old man, and I was held by a peculiar quality in the expression of his eyes: a sort of intensity, fire, a sort of hunger. These qualities contrasted strangely with a very old face, a face, lined, thin, fragile and kindly with that kindness and compassion the years sometimes bring to those who are deserving of their solace.

The old man said again—*"Come in. Come in,"*—urgently. This time I accepted his invitation at once. He led me along a passage to a room at the end of the passage. The room was brilliantly lit by a powerful electric bulb. It was an austere room. The walls were old and almost bare, scratched and broken in places. There was only one picture in the room. A picture of the Kaieteur Fall. When he saw me looking at it, the old man said—

*"I like that."* He seemed to be seeking words to express his thoughts. *"It has power. Beauty. Mystery. It is a symbol for this land. The symbol of power waiting to be harnessed. Of beauty that goes hand in hand with terror and majesty. Of the mystery that lies in men's hearts, waiting to be explored, given form and direction and purpose."* He made a wide gesture with his hand and was silent. But the look in his eye spoke volumes for what his thoughts were, and his feelings, and his hopes.

He pointed me to a chair. He himself took one, near a large table, scattered with numerous sheets of paper, covered with figures of all sorts, sketches, notes and calculations. For the first time I began wondering who was this old man. His features were dark, but unmistakably European, I thought. Living long in the Tropics, he had got bronzed by the continual exposure.

He was as bronzed as the statue standing in one corner of the room. From the moment I had entered I had been conscious of this silent, mysterious figure. It seemed to hold an immense secret locked too deep for words in its heart. Its long shadow falling upon the floor crossed the threshold of the room like a threat to all who came, a dark invitation, the proud gesture of a hand lifted with some obscure power to smite or to bless.

It was a figure cut out of stone. The form of a man. The whole body was relaxed, yet watchful. There was strength and beauty and sublimity in the limbs. The arms were lifted in prayer, in entreaty, in hope. Seeing such a form one would expect the face of an angel, a saint, a god. But the face, though it held a suggestion of beauty, of godliness, was baffling. It was the beginning of a face, with blind eyes, tormented, struggling to be born, struggling for vision. There was a promise in the face, but that was all. There was the promise of a noble head, but that promise had to develop from a sinister, unshapen mass. There were cruel lines about this head, too, and about this face, that were fighting to emerge, to become dominant and enduring features. I told myself—this face is a mask. Looking at the mask, I said, there is something behind the mask? What is it? It is something that is beautiful and grand and wonderful. But then again, with a queer shiver, I said, it might not be so grand, so beautiful, so wonderful.

Sitting in the chair, the old man had offered me. I stared at the statue and sought with all my imagination to probe into its mystery and its clouded beauty. The old man suddenly sprang up with impatience. *"You should pity me,"* he cried. *"I have been working on this thing for years, and can't finish it."* I started.

*"Can't finish it? But it's a masterpiece. It's wonderful."* He looked at me strangely. He said at last: *"You don't understand. The head. The face. I tell you it's incomplete!"*

*"Yes, the face is strange,"* I agreed, getting up, going closer to the statue.

*"Ah!"* The old man threw up his hands despairingly. *"But what am I to do? I can't finish it, I try. I make drawings. I go out. I examine people's faces. I have travelled all over the world. I dream, in the night of this face. For days I have gone without food thinking of this face. My sketches would fill volumes. But I don't know how to do it. I can't. I tell you I can't."* Tiny beads of perspiration bedewed his brow. *"I hoped that maybe one day a bar of light striking upon the head at some distinctive angle would be prophetic. The mask would fall away. The face would be born at last. Or else a thread of music. Sheer melody that might greet me one day at home or walking on the street, would be the voice of God, and I would understand at last. But there has been nothing. Nothing"*.

*"You are not the first stranger I have brought here. I am always welcoming strangers. But every time—nothing. Nothing."* He threw up his hands with a sort of hopelessness. *"I'm sorry;"* said with a gesture of sympathy. *"No,"* the old man cried, glancing at me with those keen, vivid eyes of his, *"it's not your fault, nor anybody's. It's my fault. It's I who am blind."*

*"Maybe my blood is too old. And this is the epitome of my achievement. Maybe I do not understand. Maybe the new people to be born are beyond my genius. I shall not be the one that understands. Maybe the new people to be born are beyond my genius. I shall not be the one that shall understand. But someone will come out of the byways of the world and he will understand this new people, because maybe he will be one of the new people. His will be a new story, the beginning of a new heritage, the end of today, the beginning of the dream that will help to shape tomorrow."*

He turned with me and we both stood looking at the beautiful figure of the statue, with its dim face, its obscure expression, its arms raised to the sky full of entreaty, prayer and a sublime hope.

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Suddenly there was a loud knocking at the door, and we both came out of our dream. The old man left the room and disappeared into the passage. I heard voices. Soon he was back with a companion: a woman looking rather wet and frightened, yet holding herself with boldness and a forced bravado. She looked at me sharply when she came in, then dismissed me with a sigh of relief, as much as to say, "*Oh! He's alright. He won't harm anyone.*"

The old man said — "*This is Mary. I've known her for years, since she was a kid. She looks after my meals and so on. I love her as if she were my daughter.*" He smiled in a sort of gentle, apologetic manner.

Mary was looking at us both rather keenly. Something of the frightened air that hung about her had gone, and suddenly I was struck by a strange, dark solemnity fixed upon her face. She began speaking in a very jerky manner, "*I feel better, now I've come here. It's so quiet, sort of.*" She lifted her head with a sort of defiance. She said :

*"I've got something terrible to tell you."* I noticed that her eyes were very sad and very beautiful. She said in a low whisper, like a sigh, "*The police are after me. I've done murder. I killed a man tonight.*" There was a sort of sob in her throat as she said this, and I, listening to her, felt suddenly that I did not know whether everything might not be a dream after all and I a dreamer, in a strange world. Outside the rain had stopped. The room was very silent. I waited for Mary, the statue, the strange old man to vanish, and I to find myself propped against my pillows, at home, in bed.

But the old man's voice brought me back to the reality of the moment. He was crying — "*What's all this, Mary? What have you been up to?*"

Mary did not answer. She had started moving about the room in a fit of restlessness. She came to a dead stop close by

the statue. She was staring at the uplifted arms. She cried, *"This is like me. I've always held out my arms reaching for something."* She continued in a quieter tone, *"But I've never discovered what that something meant, what it really was."* She stood very still with a sort of dreaming, terrible, confused look on her face. Her arms were still partly lifted, still tense, filled with quivering life, like a drowning man snatching at the beauty of the world. She lowered her arms and continued— *"I've always wanted lovely things. A home and lights and music, and a lot of things. When I met him I thought I had everything. He was the lights in my life. He was the music. He was everything. Then he started taunting me, and despising me, and going out and leaving me for days on end. I became lonely. There were no more lights, no more beauty."* She paused, shaken by a terrible ague. She looked at us with beseeching eyes. *"I should have left him maybe. But I was afraid. The world was so strange, and the people all acted like strangers. Once I tried to ask you to help me,"*—she looked at the old man— *"but words wouldn't come. Everything was so deep. Funnily, you who were my best friend, suddenly became the greatest stranger of all."* There was a puzzled look in her eyes. *"It's funny, isn't it? Why? Tell Me?"* But the old man only bowed his head and was silent.

She looked at him with remorseful eyes, and in his gesture beheld much of the frustration and bitterness in her life. She lifted her arms with a sort of desperation. Her body was poised, beautiful and tense, like some watcher looking out into a new country.

Her face was dark and confused like a lamp that is dim, burning low. She and the statue had the same lifted prayerful arms, the same obscure expression, the same dim potentiality for good or evil. She stood thus for a long time, then her arms fell to her side. She went on in a quiet, bitter voice.

*"Everything is so confused in this world, that when one reaches for the lights, one sometimes picks the shadows."* She paused for a full moment, then she went on very softly, *"Tonight, when I got home, I found him, packed, just about to leave. He was going away."* She paused again a very long time. She continued. *"I would never see him again. There would be no more warmth left in the world. I would be lonely. I would have no one to turn to. I said to him in a strangled voice—you can't go. But he laughed in my face"*

like a devil, and putting his hand on my shoulder pushed me away roughly. I was mad after this. A madness that must have been growing in me for years and years. There was a red darkness in my eyes. I rushed to my dressing table. He sensed what I was about, too late. He tried to reach me. His face was black and scared and terrible—a wild heart that knows it is going to die. I shot him without thinking. With his own revolver, the one I had stolen from him a few nights before.” She laughed in a terrible way, and I could see all her teeth, firm and strong and white. Her eyes flashed, full of dark fury. But gradually coming to herself, a look of lostness settled about her mouth like the tears that bring relief to all the terrible passion of this human heart of ours.

She was very quiet now. But I noticed a queer, listening look on her face, and she started at the slightest sound. We, too, were caught up in these moments of tense expectancy, as though we waited for the crack of doom.

“They’re coming”, she cried at last with a wild stare. “Don’t give me up!” She turned to the old man with a despairing cry. “Tell them I’m not here.” The old man patted her shoulder soothingly. “All right. All right. Everything will be all right.” There was a loud knock at the door. He left the room. We heard him saying, “She’s not here” and the gruff reply, “Very well sir, sorry to trouble you, goodnight!”

Then suddenly Mary seemed to undergo a swift change. She cried in a loud voice—, “Officer, Officer, I’m here.” There was a startled silence outside then quick commotion at the door. Voices were raised in argument. Mary kept insisting, “I’m here. I’m here.”

The clatter of big boots shook the house, and a police officer appeared, the old man behind him still protesting in a feeble voice. Mary went up to the old man, “It’s no use,” she said, “I’m going to give myself up.” She put her hands on his shoulders, and her raised arms and the statue’s raised arms were like the raised arms of brother and sister. She said to him, “You’ve been so kind to me. But I know you would prefer me to face what has happened. I’ve been running away from myself too long all these years. Sometimes it’s hard for people like me to know what are the things we really want in this world. Maybe everytime we run away from ourselves, we make it harder and harder to find out. Maybe if we go on running we’ll never find out. Maybe it’s

*time we start meeting ourselves, knowing ourselves. I believe that's what we're going to do from now on.*" Her arms on his shoulders we re poised with beauty and hope. For a swift moment her clouded, obscure expression had lifted, like a veil moved aside to reveal a flash of splendid beauty, a beacon light flashing out quickly across wastes of darkness. Then her face grew clouded again, bitter and obscure. Her arms fell to her side. She seemed to regret what she had done. In one instant she had been conscious of stature, of powerful hands to help her forward, a family of hearts to console her, but then quickly this was gone, like a dream. In its wake, she was aware of emptiness, of standing alone with darkness and loneliness pressing upon her, and fear growing within her. Who would hear or understand the dark meaning of her life? Couple the light and the shadow, the good and the bad into a true pattern? And what was that pattern? No one had ever told her. They would simply treat her like an outcast, a woman without a people, without a home, without a friend.

The policeman spoke at last, "*Come on, lady,*" he said, "*I'm sorry.*"

She looked at us with a terrible sort of appeal. She seemed to be trying to summon again that bright feeling of a moment ago, that moment of clarity, that moment of fulfilment when with a smile in her lips she had faced the future sure and unafraid. Her lips moved and her whole being was tense with feeling. The statue looking at her, with understanding in its obscure eyes, lifted its arms to the skies in prayer and entreaty and hope.

When I left the old man for home, the rain had long stopped. The air was clear and chill and sweet, and the polished stars glittering in the wide heavens promised good weather.

"*A bright tomorrow!*" I cried, wishing upon a falling star that fled swiftly across the dark heavens until it was lost in space, and I could follow it no more.

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I don't know what future awaits the national idea, and I certainly don't know in what form, if in any, nationalism as hitherto understood will express itself in plural—i.e., multi-racial societies. That is what you in B.G. are most concerned about and perhaps in 50 years' time you will begin to see how things are shaping. And that brings me to Napoleon and Hitler. The popular as opposed to the dynastic idea of a nation is the conception of a society forming itself by the will of the people in it—it emerged from English experience—and the French revolution and was spread over Europe by Napoleon. In the 19th century, thanks largely to what had happened in Germany and Italy, it was assumed that if a people willed to make itself a nation, *i.e.*, in political terms, to be free and independent, then its future was in its own hands. Nobody, except possibly Mr. deValera, believes that now. What Hitler has taught us is that any nation, however peaceful and harmless, can have its way of life overwhelmed by any other nation that happens to be more numerous, more industrialised and more ambitious. Thus Hitler has destroyed the fundamental convention of Victorian thought—the basis of English liberalism. That does not mean the refusal of self-government to weaker states. It does mean some permanent working confederation—something beyond nationality in fact. Perhaps the British Empire foreshadows the future.

—HAROLD STANNARD. (Extract from a letter)



A frank letter about the origin of a “sneer”.

**A LETTER TO JUNIUS**

by Celeste Dolphin

My dear Junius,

I liked that article you sent me. It was most interesting, but I couldn't help being worried over the phrase “imitation Englishmen” in relation to West Indians as a whole, but particularly to Guianese. I have been thinking it over and wondering whether or not I should agree with the writer that it's a sneer we have merited. (Perhaps if Napoleon had been fonder of this strip of Guiana, the taunt might have been “Imitation Frenchmen”. But that's a might have been of history).

Let us consider this dear land of the six peoples as Archbishop Parry called it. The Portuguese, Chinese and East Indians have their own language besides English. The Amerindians have theirs, too. I think as a child I used to hear the older people in the family say that when they brought the Africans to South America they took care that no two of one tribe worked or lived together. There was the fear of united revolt, so they were scattered all over the Colony. The only speech among them was the boss's language, English, so the sooner they learnt it the better. The older people soon forgot their own tongue—is that too pretentious? Perhaps I'd better say dialect there—the second generation was struggling to pick up here and there the meanings of the words the boss had let fall, and the third generation—it would be the young men, proud young bucks, they thought it smart to be able to say that they didn't know a word of Ibu or whatever the dialect was. So I don't think the African peoples had any choice but to be imitation English men, so far as speech is concerned, from the very start, but gradually I can see where the sneer came in.

I don't think I'll worry now about the habits of dress, customs, conventions and thoughts, take language alone.

I liked what the article said about speech being of paramount importance. It set me thinking. It occurred to me that most of us speak more or less in a rather careless

slip-shod way just because we aren't interested enough and don't care. Yesterday I went walking with two little children. They talked and talked, on and on, as they usually do. I just listened. And I thought that when children first begin to talk. generally they sound their a, e, i, o, and u's very clear and true. It is good to hear. Then a little later when they associate more with grownups it's not so good for their speech. They begin to listen to us. And when we haven't got on our "special voice", say when Mrs. Jones, from next door is paying a call, we forget the children are hearing all the time and their once pretty speech becomes a drawl. Then follows the period of correction, (you know the time when parents say "*we have to take the children's speech in hand*"). "*Don't say so and so, say so and so: don't say this, say that, you mustn't say that, you should say this.*" Before a class taking English they may be perfect models for an elocution test; but these same parents, it doesn't seem to strike them that their own careless speech, one to the other, is what the children pattern their talk upon. Children listen and imitate everything. Of course when they grow up and go to school it's a different matter, but even then a lot depends upon their parents, themselves, people at school, etc.

(This is just a letter so it doesn't have to be strictly logical, does it?) Another thing, this question of accent that the article dealt with. I don't know anything about the French accent as opposed to the German or Spanish, so let's confine ourselves to the accent in those places in the West Indies to which we do or may know a little. Now, it is said that people in the islands have a peculiar but fascinating sing-song accent. The Barbadian middle-class speaker gives you his intriguing "oi", the Trinidadian counterpart his "yes—oui," the Jamaican his "him goes ". (I understand these peculiarities of speech run clean through the middle-class coloured communities in those islands). In British Guiana we have no mannerisms of that kind in our middle-class speech. Rather it is a dull toneless speech grammatically correct that we utter: The Barbadian with his kind of jerky but emphatic undulating rhythm, he says: "*Good morning my lady*". Every ordinary Barbadian says "*Good Morning*" with the accent on the first syllable of the word. He might say "*Mornin'*." But always the accent is on the "*morn*". Now in B.G. a lot of us say "*This morning I went*

out." With the accent on the second syllable. That's B.G. We really have no accent in the first sing-song sense, but taking accent in the sense of those little marks over words in the dictionary that tell us where emphasis goes in a word, we make mistakes. I don't suppose you'll ever agree with all of this I'm saying. However, I'll go on. —

All we in B.G. can do is stress, accent or emphasize words according to the Dictionary, and we can either do it right or wrong, something not possible in the same way anywhere else in the West Indies because of the "Island accent". So it seems to me as we have no local accent, we can accent only in the sense of the English Dictionary marks; we must speak as imitation Englishmen.

But without troubling with accent, we do have in B.G. a few peculiarities of speech. I don't mean the country dialect, "*Ah we dees bin go go yanderside*", because there the English dialect equivalents: "*Way bee ohng gah and Way bee goon too*". I am talking about ordinary middle-class people speaking ordinary English. Here is what I mean. Sometimes we convert a "C" into "Ky", especially when "a" follows—we say 'Kyat' for 'Cat' or 'Kyar' for 'Car'. I know this is controversial but that's the way I see it.

It's terrible how I'm rambling on and on but now this is not off the point. At school there was a mistress I'll always remember. She was English, a Cockney, human, and the frankest person I ever knew, She was determined that the girls in her class would speak English well. She had a way of saying jokingly that most of us wouldn't need more French than perhaps the meaning of R.S.V.P. on invitation cards or more Latin than *aqua* in a Doctor's prescription. But she said that we are going to know only one language we should learn to speak it well.

She often spoke of the Law of Contrast and the Law of Balance, but as the 'Lawr' of Contrast and the 'Lawr' of Balance. We would sometimes smile and she would say angrily, "*I never said Lawr, I said Lawr*" and the R would creep in again. Another thing she would say was, "*Have any of you girls any idea's on the subject?*" And yet in words like car, far and war, she never pronounced the R. She said it was not a sign of culture to sound your R's but surely there was a mean

between her “fah” and our “farr”. There were quite a few schools of thought, she said, on the question of final rs.

Once she gave this joke about herself which is also a joke against us. In one of the songs she was teaching for a Camp Fire the words occur “*Old Macdonald had a farm...And on that farm he had some cows.*” A country girl would say cow. My teacher couldn’t say “Cow” to save her life so she taught the guides “Kah-ow” rather self-consciously. But to her embarrassment the next week the same girls had changed their pronunciation to hers. She felt at first they meant to burlesque her but quite seriously they thought that after all she was English and must be right. It must be “Kah-ows.” However, the joke is against us. I thought I’d let you know that.

In these days of a contemplated West Indian University and a Federated West Indies, etc., it seems important that we must realise just when we are speaking proper English and when we are speaking “imitation English” as in the case of “Kah-ow” (cow). When we ordinary people realise just where one stops and the other begins, we will have made a stride forward. We must educate ourselves to be able to be critical of what we receive from any source, English or otherwise. It is only then that we would remove completely the sting from the sneer “Imitation Englishmen” thrown more frequently at Guianese than at other West Indians.

So long until I write you again.

**Cd.**

## A WORKABLE DEMOCRACY

The essence of democracy is its deep respect for individuals—a respect that is extended impartially to every member of the state without regard for race, social position or wealth. It insists that the position of men in society must rest on a basis of essential equality. Any form of discrimination...such as governments sometimes indulge in...is considered a gross violation of the democratic spirit. Each person, from the humblest beggar up, is to be regarded as a worthy end in himself not as a means to other ends. To all is granted the right of self expression, but to none the privilege of exploiting or obstructing others from attaining their place in the sun.

Primitive social organization was wholly autocratic and hierarchical; but we say we are civilized, we say we have made rapid strides from the time our forefathers used flint and stone to obtain fire. But are we really? Basically we are not. Most emphatically we shall not until those in the lead pay all due respect to the subtle worth of personality. There is a crying need for this, as a pre-condition of self development for all.

My plea therefore is for a workable democracy. Not one that accents power, riches, class prejudices, racial and political ideologies, any systems of graft; not one that denies human equality and the intrinsic worth of individuals; but one that recognizes that we are all of common origin and destiny; that none of us in the sight of God is one jot or tittle better than the other; and that it behoves each and every one of us to work together as a team with our government as captain for the future welfare and happiness of all.

As the Chinese say, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Let us take that step today, now, towards a workable democracy.

—Frank E. Dalzell

# DRAMA IN BRITISH GUIANA

by N. E. Cameron

N. E. CAMERON HAS DONE CONSIDERABLE RESEARCH IN HISTORY, ANTHROPOLOGY, POETRY AND DRAMA.

AN observer who has done a fair amount of travelling in South America recently remarked at a meeting of one of our cultural clubs that he thought that the extent of dramatic activity was greater in this Colony than in any other which he had visited. It is quite true that locally there has been an outburst of such activity within recent times.

Let us take the year 1944 for instance: in January we had '**Princess Ju-Ju**' staged by the Bedford Boys and Girls' Club; in March '*Ecce Homo*', a religious play was staged at Buxton; in April '**Adoniya**' (Wife of Moses), written by the author of this article was staged at Queen's College, in May '**Savitri**' was presented by the B.G. Dramatic Society in the Assembly Rooms; in July '**Pageant of Church History**' was presented in St. George's School Hall; in August a sketch was presented on the occasion of the opening of the C.Y.O. and at the Annual Convention of the B.G. Union of Cultural Clubs two sketches were presented by the Georgetown Dramatic Club and the B.H.S. Old Girls' Guild; in October the Georgetown Dramatic Club presented Bernard Shaw's '**Androcles and the Lion**' in the Assembly Rooms and in November, Queen's College presented as its centenary play Shakespeare's '**Twelfth Night**', and in the same month Esme Cendrecourt presented her own play '**Unmasked**' in the Assembly Rooms, this being, I think, the last play to be staged in the Assembly Rooms before it was destroyed by the fire in February, 1945.

While there is undoubtedly a considerable amount of activity in this field locally, I personally am not in a position to say how this compares with similar efforts in the West Indies. I know, however, that Dramatics in the West Indies will be an interesting study for I have heard of playwrights in Jamaica and Trinidad and a writer of children's operettas in Surinam.

Anthony Froude in his *The English in the West Indies* published in 1887 remarked that on the occasion of a visit paid to Tobago by the Governor of that time, a party of villagers sprang a pleasant surprise on him when they presented before him the '**Merchant of Venice**'. That was nearly 60 years ago.

For a long time in this Colony there have been dramatic clubs and groups presenting plays. I came across, in the *Royal Gazette* of December 31, 1863, mention of "*an edifice containing all the appointments necessary to effective presentation of optical and dramatic entertainment.*" The writer of the article in question referred to the fact that the building no longer existed and that since then there had been no local theatre similarly equipped. I do not know whether the reference was to the Athenaeum which was founded in 1851 but the Athenaeum Club and the Philharmonic Society were among our famous cultural institutions of the past. Clubs there have been in galore, *e.g.*, the Georgetown Dramatic Club and the Demerara Dramatic Club. These two contemporary clubs presented plays on two or three occasions yearly and on some evenings they presented as many as three one-act plays. Other clubs were the Lyceum, the Three Arts, Jerusalem. At present the principal dramatic clubs are the B.G. Dramatic Society, which caters only for Indian members, the Georgetown Dramatic, open to all, while there are several clubs which include drama as a part of their cultural activity.

There is no doubt that drama has a special appeal for young people as one of the means of spending their leisure. Their opportunity for self expression, practice in elocution and gesture, an increased sense of dramatic appreciation together with the team spirit formed by constant association in rehearsals strike the youths as making play-acting well worth their while. It must be remarked, however, that no special courses in acting are given apart from hints picked up while at school or from reading articles in magazines or books bearing on drama. Here, of course, much more can be done and indeed much is expected to be done, especially along the lines of elocution.

Then again the drama provides opportunity for a very great variety of talent, for apart from the actors there are the

questions of scenery, costumes, make-up, music and dances, lighting effects, and the business end like advertising, etc. There are some notable scenists among us. Special mention may be made of Mr. R. G. Sharples, President of the Guianese Art Group, who painted an outdoor and indoor set for Queen's College and an outdoor set for the Ursuline Convent. Some of our make-up artists have succeeded in creating very good results and recently the lion in the Georgetown Dramatic Club's presentation '**Androcles and the Lion**' was declared by many to be a work of art.

### LOCAL DRAMATISTS:

I think the first person to write a play in British Guiana was the late Father C. W. Barraud, S.J., Principal of St. Stanislaus College. In 1872 he wrote '**St. Thomas of Canterbury**' and '**St. Elizabeth of Hungary**', both 5-act plays in the Shakespearean manner. These were, however, not published until 1892 and were reviewed locally in the following year. In 1893 a master of Queen's College, J. Veacock, Secretary and Stage Manager of the then Demerara Dramatic Club, presented '**Falstaff**' which was a collection, with modifications, of those scenes in Shakespeare's Henry IV, Parts I and II, in which the character Falstaff appeared. Then followed short sketches, usually humorous, dealing with various phases of local life. It is unfortunate that there appears to be no copy extant of '**Quid Rides**' (Why do you laugh?), a collection of about 10 sketches by Rev. P. Giddings, all the more as the sketches were supposed to characterise various foibles of the people, especially a tendency to use words of learned length and thundering sound.

About 1916, Sidney Martins, a Portuguese comedian published a collection of his witticisms and sketches. One of these '**Mrs. Farrington's Third Husband**' might well bear presentation especially if re-written to suit modern taste.

Since that time there have been several writers of comic sketches, the most brilliant being G. Ingham Goring, whose comic songs are still remembered by many. Three of his sketches are '**Perseus Drops a Brick**', a sketch based on the story of Andromeda in 5,000 words; '**Robin Hood and the King's Deer**,' and the '**Mortgage on the Old Guiana Home**.'



In May, 1931, came a revival of the full length play when there appeared the author's '**Balthazar**,' a play based on Anatole France's version of the story of the Three Wise Men. The late Walter Mac A. Lawrence reviewing this play in the *New Daily Chronicle* hailed it as the beginning of a new phase in local drama. Encouraged by this publication, Esme Cendrecourt, the most prolific of our playwrights, staged '**Romance of Kaïeteur**' in the Assembly Rooms in September, 1931. Miss Cendrecourt's succeeding plays were all propaganda plays, illustrating some phase of health work or social welfare work. In December, 1943, the author presented '**Adoniya**' at Queen's College for the first time,

The most recent to enter the field of Guianese dramatists is Mr. Basil Balgobin, who presented in May of this year '**Asra**,' a political play on India.

There is a growing demand for a new Guianese drama with full length plays written on a dignified plane dealing with various aspects of local life, and indeed voicing the sentiments and aspirations of the people. While this is very praiseworthy and indeed may be the next phase of our efforts at dramatic publications, it is rather curious that the advocates of this idea do not stress at the same time that all other forms of local art and literature, for example the short story, music, painting, poetry, should strive similarly to represent to the world the thoughts and aspirations of British Guiana. This is undoubtedly one of the highest aims of art and literature.

I mentioned previously that it was possible that in the very near future systematic courses of study might be given to our actors. Similarly, there should be courses of study in play writing for the would-be playwright. I notice that lessons on play writing and competitions for the best original plays are being given to the B.H.S. dramatic group and one can only hope that similar courses will be given in our dramatic clubs.

The work which has been done up to the present has been quite good on the whole in spite of the disadvantages due to lack of special training in acting and playwriting and to the limitations of small stages and halls of faulty acoustic properties. With the advent of British Council activity among us and with the promise of a new and modern theatre we may look forward to a considerable advance of local dramatic achievement.

# RACIAL OR HUMAN PROBLEMS?

by Oscar S. Wight

OSCAR WIGHT FACES ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS IN BRITISH GUIANA IN HIS FORTHRIGHT WAY.

I HAVE previously expressed the view that many of the problems with which we are faced in this country are categorised as racial when they are in reality just human, man to man problems.

The truth, as I see it, is that the aspect of race is generally used to serve an end which, at best, is sectional but mostly personal; and it is just as readily excluded from consideration if the same ends are as easily or as satisfactorily served.

It is significant that it is only when there is disagreement with what a man does, that his doing is attributed to a characteristic of his race. On the other hand, never is the good that a man does, ascribed to a racial virtue. Which, if viewed from the angle of the relationship between races, would mean that no race recognises any good other than its own. As this would make us all out to be far bigger fools than could possibly be the case, the evident conclusion is that the unseemly references made to race or colour are nothing more than loose talk and do not reflect reasoned thought or actual belief.

Personally, I have never been able to ascribe individual failing to a national trait, for I don't believe that anything in the nature of a failing can be compatible with a wholly national or even wholly racial character. All weaknesses are individual and the meaner traits and baser faults of man originating as they do in the cardinal vices are only the better controlled or disguised by virtue of remedial environment or higher education. They nevertheless exist in each and every one of us regardless of race, colour or creed. And it is these vices, not our virtues, that constantly have to be taken into account and present the greatest difficulty in the ordering of things for communal living.

Where most confusion of thought arises in erroneously attributing cause to racial differences is in thinking of things as having to be done to satisfy the demands of race when regardless of any such consideration they would still have to be done in exactly the same way to compensate for the differences in human outlook—an outlook which would not be so much at variance if to all men it were possible to give equal opportunity in all things.

In this light it is not too much to claim that the introduction of race as an influence in the conduct of life is often protective in spirit. That is to say it is compelled in rather the same way that differences in thought between capital and labour resulted in the creation of Trade Unionism.

I claim no particular merit for the comparison but I think it tends to show that our determination of the real difficulties which the problems of race present, are dependent on our assessing aright the extent to which economics, as indeed politics and religion as well, are causating influences.

And it is because I know that economics, politics and religion play no less important a part in making the question of race a problem, than they do in all other considerations in life, that I cannot bring myself to regard race as a distinctive difficulty. My view is that considerations of race when advanced for the promotion of particular interests are no less personal or sectional than when they are offered as reasons for individual aggrandisement.

The problem of race, as such, therefore is not so much one of racial characteristics as it is of undesirable personal peculiarities.

Book Review by The Editor  
***THE CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME***

by J. E. Clare McFarlane (*New Dawn Press, Jamaica — 6/6*)

In its literature, Jamaica is pre-eminent in the West Indies, and J. E. Clare McFarlane is outstanding among Jamaican poets. He has been producing verse of high quality for more than 20 years, and for almost the same length of time, he has been actively associated, as President or Secretary, with the fortunes of the Poetry League of Jamaica. One of the 15 essays and articles comprising the book *The Challenge of Our Time* is the Presidential address he delivered on September 19, 1923, at the Inaugural Meeting of the Empire Poetry League in Jamaica and since then, Mr. McFarlane has given many an inspiring and carefully prepared address before the League and the best of these are included in this volume.

For non-Jamaican readers, this volume is a first-class introduction to literary life and thought in Jamaica. The two addresses '**The Poetry of Jamaica**' open out new avenues. We know of Claude Mackay, perhaps, but how many of us had heard of Tom Redcam who seems to have made a very great contribution to poetry in Jamaica? In those addresses we gain some idea of the qualities that distinguish, in both senses, the work of Lena Kent, Constance Hollar, Arthur Nicholas, Albinia Hutton, and that most intellectual of women poets, Arabel Moulton-Barrett, who can write lines such as these :—

"How speeds the earth?  
Now Time, the Tyrant, strideth past;  
The stars are in his mighty hands,  
On lagging Day to cast."

Some of Mr. McFarlane's own poetry I have read, especially that commanding narrative poem, '**Daphne**', which is one of the finest long poems to come out of the West Indies. But in his prose Mr. McFarlane shows himself a vigorous champion of poetry and literature and a forthright thinker who has contemplated the Jamaican scene and meditated deeply on

the island's destiny. Some of the other titles of the essays and addresses are **'A Note on the New Constitution of Jamaica'**, —incidentally Mr. McFarlane is Deputy Colonial Treasurer of Jamaica—**'The challenge of our Time'**, **'The Freedom of the Individual'** (a Wilberforce Centenary address, delivered in 1933), **'Poetry and Religion'**, **'Form'**, **'On the Nature of Poetry'**, **'The Testament of Beauty'** and **'A Study in Pope's Homer'**.

Mr. McFarlane believes that the foundations of Jamaica and even West Indian literature have been well and truly laid. He says:

*"The great criterion of literary work is sincerity. If an artistic creation reflects without affectation the distinctive qualities which the individual gathers, from whatever sources, and builds into his personality, then it should be regarded with respect; and if the work be the expression of a great soul then it will be found to contain new and interesting combinations and patterns of thought and feeling, woven of the diverse material at his command, which will afford new interpretations of the cultures that meet in him. If ever Jamaica produces a great literature, there can be little doubt that its peculiar quality and distinctive value will be found in such new combinations and interpretations as those at which I have hinted."*

The importance of a wide reading of Mr. McFarlane's book cannot be too strongly stressed. The West Indies have contracted for development and economic reasons, and political organization stands perhaps just around the corner. Writers and thinkers in the region are increasingly aware of the need to know how their neighbours think and feel and literature is ever in the vanguard of the expression of a community life.

All libraries, private, school and public, should procure a copy of Mr. McFarlane's significant book which so well interprets, it may be said, Jamaica to the West Indies.

Notes on the British Guiana Writers' Association  
**Its Achievements and Objectives**

by The Hony. Secretary

By the time this article appears in print, the B.G. Writers' Association will be approaching the close of its first year of existence, and its members will be preparing for the General Elections. They will be approaching that time when they will weigh their officers' failures against their successes, and decide whether they have qualified for praise or criticism.

The Executive is fully conscious that during the year it has not been in as close contact with all the members as it might have been, but this was due to the fact that all our members are extremely busy individuals and consequently there is great difficulty in arriving at frequent General Meetings. Perhaps members will agree that as one of our primary objects is the building of a British Guianese Literature, the collection of material for publication by means of circular letter, as was done in compiling this magazine, will produce all the desired effects. The Executive has however kept all members fully informed of every decision and action taken.

It is regrettable that the Lecture Classes touching the various fields of writing proved a failure. This may have been due to the inconvenience of either the hour or the days set for these classes. The Executive will welcome suggestions from members as to some form of regular meetings at which an exchange of views may be obtained, and where discussions may result in the improvement of individual standards.

There is one achievement of which the Executive is justly proud, and indeed this feeling of exultation should be reflected by every member of the Association. I refer to the publication of this magazine—*Kyk-Over-Al*. This production under the most arduous conditions is clearly indicative of what may be expected when the cost of printing returns to its pre-war level, and it is hoped that in the very near future we shall see the fulfilment of another of the Association's aims—the publication of Standard Works.

During her visit to British Guiana, Miss Una Marson was given a memorandum from the Association, stressing the difficulties under which writers worked in this country.

Before closing, I should like to make an appeal to all the Colony's writers to join the ranks of the B.G. Writers' Association. In this way every decision made, every action taken, and every publication produced by the Association will be British Guianese to the backbone.

B.G. Union of Cultural Clubs  
**A NOTE ON THE UNION'S ACTIVITIES**

Founded in 1943 on Mr. Harold Stannard's suggestion, the B.G. Union of Cultural Clubs has now 30 member organizations in affiliation, and the following are its objects: —

- (a) to bring into active and friendly co-operation all the cultural organizations functioning in the Colony of British Guiana, by means of inter-club debates, competitions, discussions, games, the maintenance of a common library, etc.
- (b) to take joint action and make joint representations in all matters affecting culture in British Guiana.
- (c) to encourage and give practical effect to a spirit of self-reliance and self-help among the various members of the Union.
- (d) to take any other steps necessary and conducive to the proper functioning of the Union.

Union meetings are held monthly for syllabus items such as debates, addresses of various kinds, Brains Trust Evenings, and on one occasion there was a conversazione on various features of the Report of the 1944 Anglo-American Caribbean Conference. The Committee is also in correspondence with individuals in the West Indies who are also engaged on cultural work.

One of the Union's major efforts is the collection in its library of about 300 books, pamphlets and reports on British Guiana, a collection all the more valuable since the destruction of the books of the R.A. & C. Society.

In 1943 the Union forwarded to Sir Frank Stockdale a memorandum emphasizing the need for a cultural centre in Georgetown and requesting that such a centre be erected with Development and Welfare funds. This proposal was not considered favourably.



The Union has held two Conventions, 1944 and 1945, and on each occasion the programme included items from member organizations. In 1945, the Union presented an evening of dramatic entertainment in which four distinct dramatic clubs took part. This is the first time in Guianese history that a dramatic anthology was presented.

A Co-operative Insurance Scheme for members of the Union has been proposed by Mr. E. A. Q. Potter, member of the Committee of Management. A Union meeting was devoted to a presentation of the Scheme by Mr. Potter and individual clubs are at present considering the advantages and disadvantages of the proposals.

Various member organizations celebrated their anniversaries and arranged public functions. Among these may be mentioned the opening ceremony of the Catholic Youth Organization, the presentation of '**Macbeth**' by the Central High School Old Students' Association, and of '**Dear Brutus**' by the Arundel Young People's Fellowship, the Exhibitions of the B.G. Science Club, the Kitty Women's Institute, the B.G. Photographic Society, and the Guianese Art Group, and the Musical Evening of the Tagore Arts Society.

An outstanding feature of the Union's year is its collaboration with the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society and the British Council in two lecture courses in the appreciation of music and in the history of English literature.

New lecture courses are planned, to begin in January 1946, on local history, field botany, the recognition and identifying of minerals and on ten plays of Shakespeare.

Members of the clubs affiliated to the Union enjoy a preferential scale of fees for these lecture courses.

The Committee of Management has been preoccupied for the past four months with the planning of the Union's policy.

## ORGANIZATION AND ADDRESS

1. Arundel Young People's Fellowship  
- c/o Cyril Foster, Buxton.
2. Bishops' High School Old Girls Guild  
- c/o Miss M. Mansfield, Fitzpatrick Graham & Co.,  
High Street.
3. B.G. Dramatic Society  
- 273, Lamaha Street.
4. B.G. Photographic Society  
- c/o A.R. Yhap, c/o Bernard & Co., Camp and  
Robb Streets, Georgetown.
5. B.G. Science Club  
- c/o J.H. Bevis, Queen's College.
6. B.G. Writers' Association  
- c/o J.W. Smith, Parcel Post, G.P.O., Georgetown.
7. Catholic Youth Organization  
- Camp and Robb Streets, Georgetown.
8. Central High School Old Students' Association  
- c/o Miss B. Taylor, G.P.O., Georgetown.
9. Christ Church Young People's Movement  
- c/o Vicarage, Waterloo Street, Georgetown.
10. Circle of Sunshine Workers  
- 110 Regent Road, Bourda, Georgetown.
11. Club 25  
- 69, Brickdam, Georgetown.
12. Coffee House Club  
- c/o Miss E.R. Cox, c/o Lands and Mines Department,  
Georgetown.
13. Colonial Co-operative Society  
- c/o S.N. Collins, Hincks & Commerce Streets,  
Georgetown.
14. Comenius Youth Movement  
- c/o E. Van Gronigen, Public Hospital, Georgetown.
15. Dawson Music Lovers' Club  
- c/o D.C. Watson, Medical Department, Georgetown.
16. Diocesan Youth Movement  
- c/o Rev. C.A. Sayer, Vicarage, Kitty.
17. Excelsior Musical Club  
- c/o P. Koulen, 124 Fourth Street, Georgetown.

18. Georgetown Dramatic Club  
- c/o Miss M. Dey, c/o Commodity Control Office.
19. Guianese Academy Old Students' Association  
- c/o W.B. Telford, 115 Regent Street, Lacytown.
20. Guianese Art Group  
- c/o C.A. Gomes, B.P.I.
21. Harjon Literary and Social Club  
- c/o D.E. Croal, B.G. Lithographic Co., Ltd.
22. Kingston Wesley Guild  
- c/o Rev. L. Porter, High Street.
23. Kitty Women's Institute  
- c/o Miss V. Lowe, Education Department.
24. Mahaicony Discussion Circle  
- c/o J.H. Gopaul, Novar, East Coast, Demerara.
25. Maranatha Male Voice Choir  
- 9, Hadfield Street.
26. New Age Society  
- c/o Miss L. Dolphin, 6 Camp Street.
27. Tabernacle Youth Movement  
- c/o Miss D. Baird, Beterverwagting.
28. Tagore Arts Society  
- c/o S.N. Ghose, B.P.I.
29. Woodbine House Club  
- 294 Murray Street.
30. Young Men's Guild  
- 274 Forshaw Street.

# MIRACLES DO NOT HAPPEN!

by J. A. V. Bourne

## I

BETTY shook her husband.

*"Wake up, John, John, what's wrong! Fanning the air with your hands! Have you had a nightmare?"* she asked laughingly.

John sat up in the bed and rubbed his eyes while the phantasmagoria of his dream slowly dissolved. The memory of this dream, in which he saw himself flying like a bird, each time it came, was more and more delightful, but he never confided it to his wife.

*"I'll tell you about it later, Betty,"* he said, as he got out of bed and began to dress. A powerful obsession gripped him that morning. He wanted to fly as he did in his dreams, by the power of his will, but his logical mind knew that that was impossible.

When John Grace was a scholar at Queens he had liked to dabble in mathematics. Einstein was eagerly devoured. He read all his works and pondered long about his theories. The equations of space-time curvature did not worry him. He believed he understood them and he investigated thoroughly the laws of gravitation as expounded by Newton. Why did objects always fall to the earth?

He bought all the books he could obtain on the subject of miracles. Suppose he conceived an idea, put away all thoughts of doubt and fear and had the faith that can remove mountains. Would he not succeed in his purpose?

Despite his great love for mathematics, John was also a dreamer. He liked to imagine the impossible happening and his day-dreams influenced his sleeping visions where fantastic things occurred in a world without law and order.

John's wife was deeply religious and a staunch believer in the power of faith. One day a trivial incident left a strong impression on his mind.

He had lost his car keys. Without them he could not start the car and as he had no duplicate he was frantic. He searched his house without success. And then on the following day his

wife awoke him at 5 o'clock in the morning.

"John," she said, "Last night I prayed to St. Anthony, and I have just awakened from a wonderful dream. I saw your keys in the car."

"Impossible, Betty, I have searched the car three times."

"Look again, everywhere."

The keys were found wedged under the hand brake.

"Faith. John! Faith can perform miracles!"

John began to read his Bible. But he never told his wife of the obsession to fly that haunted his mind daily and nightly in his dreams.

Now in all human affairs there are *efforts* and there are *results*; and the strength of the effort is the measure of the result. All that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thoughts.

John Grace had decided in his mind that he would fly like a bird or die in the attempt. As a mathematician he knew that the law of gravitation was absolute but he felt there was something greater than a law which after all was only a conception in the mind of man and that something was *faith*.

The "*divinity that shapes our ends*" was in himself. His wishes and prayers could only be gratified if he had absolute faith in himself. His dream could only come true if he tried hard enough and with supreme faith. He believed his wife and his vision grew bright. As he went to bed one night, the words of some forgotten poet flashed across his mind.

"The human WILL, that force unseen,  
The offspring of a deathless soul,  
Can hew a way to any goal,  
Though walls of granite intervene."

## II

Next morning John rose from his bed with an indomitable purpose in his mind and quietly went downstairs to the drawing-room.

He stretched out his hands.

"*Kratos!*" he whispered softly, and immediately rose to the ceiling. He turned with ease and glided smoothly around the room.

His exhilaration was immense. He came down to the carpet rose again and flew in circles; then an open window beckoned him and he sailed out into the cool morning air. Hovering like a humming bird over the lawn for half a minute he then zoomed towards a tree, turned swiftly and glided upwards towards the roof of his house on which he alighted contentedly.

His purpose had been achieved and he sat there with a sense of exaltation. The golden vision of his youth was now a reality.

The cook saw him up there when she came in the gate some minutes later and told her mistress as soon as she had opened the back door. Betty rushed outside and shouted:

*"John, how did you get up there? Wait I'll fetch a ladder."*

John came down the ladder gingerly and never said a word about his wonderful experience. Betty was right. Faith was greater than Newton's law. He had discovered a master force. In his mind he now held the cord of a gigantic responsibility and he must be careful how he used it. He had conquered doubt and fear and thus conquered failure. He had realized the dream of his life.

Later on that day he would tell Betty all about it. John ate his breakfast and went to the College where he was a teacher.

That afternoon Betty wanted a breath of fresh air and John drove her in his car to Dixie. They went for a stroll and then sat on the wall enjoying the cool Atlantic breeze for it was a beautiful evening.

The cloud-flecked skies became a deeper blue as the sunset faded in the golden west.

*"John, look—a new moon—make a wish!"*

He whispered something into her ear. Conscious of his achievement, he was anxious to demonstrate his newly discovered power and he could withhold it no longer from her.

He spoke of his dreams and described his wonderful experience that morning, how he had flown over the lawn on to the roof of his house.

Betty was dumb-founded.

*"Don't attempt it again, John, you'll fall and die."*

*"But didn't you tell me that faith could accomplish anything and now you yourself are the doubter? Look."*

"John don't!"

He stood on the wall and stretched out his hands.

"Kratos!" he whispered and immediately rose like a bird, scaring gracefully into the blue air. Up and up he sailed until he was about a hundred feet above her, then he turned and zoomed slowly in a semi-circle, coming back to earth as smoothly as if he was riding a cycle!

He found his wife on the grass unconscious in a faint.

The unbelievable spectacle had been too much for her and she had collapsed from sheer fright. When Betty came to her senses the first question she asked was whether she had been hypnotised. Had she really seen her husband flying?

*"Of course I was flying Betty. I do not know how it happens. I just concentrate, have absolute faith in myself and up I go. It's amazing. Perhaps the power of mind can exceed even the laws of gravity."*

At dinner time that evening, there was a long discussion and Betty wanted John to promise he would never again use that strange power he had discovered. She thought it was dreadfully dangerous and believed he had ascended into the sky by the aid of 'spirits'. "One day," she said, "when they have got you up there they won't let you come down and I'll lose you."

John laughed heartily but became serious after a while. When he had been studying Einstein he had worked out a geometrical expression involving four dimensions but he could not fit that expression into the world of three dimensions he was living in. Did he enter the fourth dimension by means of faith and so was able to circumvent one of the fundamental laws of Nature?

He knew he was able to fly and enjoyed it immensely but he did not know how it happened. Maybe his wife was right. Maybe he was playing with dangerous forces as yet unknown to science. He loved her dearly. He would not tempt fate again.

### III

*"Most extraordinary!"* exclaimed the editor of the *Times* when Clark had finished speaking; *"but of course you know I couldn't publish it as a news item without making a personal investigation myself. Sounds like one of the prophet's 'phantasmagorias'—but*

*this time it isn't a celestial you saw in the sky but a real human being!"*

*"As clear as I see you before me, Sir, though it was some distance away. I was taking my usual stroll to Dixie and what I've told you I saw with my own eyes."*

*"This young man kissed the girl and then flew like a bird into the heavens, soared in a circle and then came slowly back to earth again!"*

*"So help me...!"*

*"And then what happened?"*

*"I saw the young lady fall down on the grass. When the chap came down he picked her up and revived her with kisses and then they quickly got into a car and drove off. I think the car number was 5544."*

*"Well it's too late tonight to do anything further. Tomorrow I'll investigate this, perhaps call on this remarkable gentleman when I find out who he is,"* said Marlow, the editor.

On the following day Jim Marlow rang the door bell of John Grace's house in Queenstown and was admitted by the servant. He was scrutinizing the unusual titles of books he saw in the bookcase when John came into the drawing room.

*"Good day, Mr. Marlow, I don't think we've met before."*

*"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Grace; I notice you're quite a mathematician."*

*"It's a hobby with me,"* John replied and added, *"won't you be seated."*

*"Thank you; I dropped in to get you to confirm a most unusual story of a man flying which I heard last night!"*

*"Good heavens!"* exclaimed John, staring at his visitor, and then he added.

*"Have a cigarette, I'd better tell you about my great adventure but you must promise not to publish it."*

Marlow laughed. *"We'll consider that,"* and lit his cigarette.

When John was nearly finished speaking his wife came into the room and was introduced.

*"I've made my husband promise not to fly again,"* she said.

*"It's the most fantastic thing I've ever heard of,"* said Marlow sceptically.

*"Faith!"* replied John seriously. *"You must have absolute faith, Marlow."*

And standing in the centre of the drawing room he raised



his hands and bent over whispering a strange word.

Slowly he rose to the ceiling and zooming gracefully around the room twice poised himself nicely over the carpet and then sat down on it!

The editor was completely flabbergasted. He tried to speak but couldn't utter a word. He stared at John in infinite perplexity.

"This is — this must be hypnotism," he ejaculated, after a long pause.

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Grace.

"It's unreasonable," began Marlow...

"My knowledge of mathematics has convinced me that there are forces in Nature as yet unknown to the scientific world," John interrupted.

Marlow reached out and put his cigarette end into a tray.

"As editor of the *Times*," he said, "I'll offer you, Mr. Grace the sum of Five Thousand dollars if you give one demonstration of your amazing power at the Town Hall tomorrow afternoon."

As John hesitated to answer his wife exclaimed.

"No! Mr. Marlow, John has promised not to fly again. I'm terribly afraid and do not wish to lose my husband."

Marlow picked up his hat and approached the door.

"Think it over, young man, five thousand is a tidy sum," and saying good-night he left the house, a very dazed man.

#### IV

Never before had such a crowd stormed the Town Hall and outside the police had been unable to cope with the people. Thousands filled the streets and motor traffic was almost at a standstill.

Long before the advertised hour, curious people had begun to gather around. Not one in a hundred believed the announcement they had read in the *Times* that day. The greatest hoax in history said a man in the street.

Foreseeing trouble Marlow had gone to Grace's house at midday and handed him a cheque for \$5,000.00 on condition he accompany him to Times House and wait there until the appointed time for the demonstration. John went.

He had not been very happy about the affair. He began to have doubts about his ability to fly. However he had that fat cheque in his pocket and hoped everything would go smoothly. He had insisted that the demonstration must be inside the concert room of the Town Hall.

The people in the hall were packed like sardines and the clamour was terrific. A loud speaker had been installed on the platform where many notable persons were waiting impatiently.

At last Marlow and Grace emerged from the wing and walked to the centre of the stage. There was a great clapping of hands.

Marlow spoke into the microphone and after a while the tumult died down.

*"Good afternoon, everybody. You've read today's Times. Well, we are here this afternoon to witness a feat of levitation unparalleled in the annals of mankind. As you know, the age of miracles has long passed but in the good old days many marvels have been recorded as actual experiences. Did not Saint Paul shake a viper off his hand and receive no hurt whatever?"*

*"In our modern life miracles do not happen and why?...because man has lost that absolute faith in himself that was so strong a thousand years ago. It is said the revelations of science have done much to destroy this belief in the power of faith."*

Marlow paused and there was a murmur of expectancy. He continued.

*"Now from the days of the Greek philosopher PLATO there has been an urge within the heart of man to rival the birds in their swift wheeling in the great dome of the sky."*

*"And in the Middle Ages, Leonardo da Vinci, a mathematician, made copious notes on the means by which men fly like birds. Early in this 20th Century the Wright Brothers were able to force into glorious reality what for thousands of years had been only an empty idea."*

*"We know the wonders of the aeroplane, the grandeur of swift air traffic which makes as nought the immensity of oceans. These things are known but it has been reserved for us in this inglorious outpost of Empire, this colony far removed from the centre of our present civilisation, for us first to see a human being fly by the power of his own WILL."*

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you this fine June afternoon John Grace, the first human being to fly."*

He held up his hand and a thrill swept over the great multitude.

John stepped forward hesitantly to the edge of the platform and held out his arms. That sea of faces in front of him made him scared and he began to tremble. He lost his nerve and forgot to say that magic word that would draw from the bosom of the ether that *energy* he needed...*"Faith!"* he muttered weakly, but nothing happened. He was rooted to the floor. Impotent!

The crowd hooted and jeered and soon there was pandemonium. The noise was terrific.

Hoax! Imposter! Fake!

Marlow's face was white with anxiety. His reputation would now be ruined. He felt disgusted and pinched himself hard. He had been fairly caught. People on the platform jostled him and he had an urgent desire to get away, himself.

John sat down on a chair and wiped his brow. Betty was right, he said to himself. He should never have attempted this show. He began to doubt whether he had ever flown except in his dreams.

And then he remembered that cheque in his pocket and a feeling of utter shame came over him. He should never have taken it from Marlow. Faith and filthy lucre cannot mix. No wonder he felt like a lump of lead. He took it his pocket and tore it into pieces.

Immediately afterwards an immense exhilaration filled his soul. Once again he was his true self. He felt clean and happy. A wonderful feeling of peace soothed his mind and absolute confidence returned. Those men down there—shouting? He would show them—fools and unbelievers—he would show them...

*"Know you not vain men that faith without works is dead?"*

He rose slowly to his feet and leaped into the air, soaring swiftly up to the rafters. Swinging gracefully in a circle he hovered in the air over the centre of the hall!

The frantic crowd, pushing towards the staircases, stopped dead and gazed speechless with eyes upturned and mouths open in utter bewilderment.

As John zoomed around the room they became madly frightened and surged downstairs and outside, screaming, where thousands began to scatter violently as if a devil was coming at them.

Zooming through an open window, John flew in beautiful circles around the tower of the historic building and then dived vertically towards High Street where the people ran helter-skelter in panic and complete disorder.

Rising again to a thousand feet, John hovered over the multitude for several minutes enjoying the spectacle of utter confusion he had caused, and then, he headed slowly for his home in Queenstown.

Betty was in the tower room of her house looking out of the window anxiously awaiting her husband's return. It was getting dark and she was wondering what had happened to him when a sudden thrill swept over her. A soft warm wind blew on her face with a crystal freshness and she felt queer. Her ears tingled and she heard a voice which seemed to come from a great distance speaking to her.

It was John's voice!

*"I'm lost, Betty! I can't reach you! I must be in the fourth dimension! It's like an enchanted place...everything floats like cobwebs...there's a blueish light, dazzling, and the silence is awful...I must find a way back...! Help me to find a way...!"*

Schools of British Guiana.—No. 1

**QUEEN'S COLLEGE**

by Jas. W. Smith

One hundred years old, Queen's College is now the premier boys' school in the Colony. The majority of British Guiana's Civil Servants, businessmen and eminent professional men resident in the Colony and elsewhere, owe their present positions in life to the sound ground-work which they received during their days at Queen's.

One of the few schools in the Colony with a tradition behind it, Queen's College today is more than merely a name, for with it are associated hard work, clean living and an unequalled sense of responsibility. This achievement is due mainly to the efforts of such former Headmasters as Pope, Potbury, Percival and Moulder. Here however, special praise must be accorded the present Principal Capt. H. Nobbs M.Sc. (Lond.), F.R.I.C., and his able Deputy Mr. E. O. Pilgrim B.Sc. (Lond). It would indeed be difficult to picture Queen's College without Mr. Pilgrim, and since his arrival in 1931, Capt. Nobbs has been unrelenting in his efforts to obtain better working facilities for the boys under his care and at the same time to give the youth of the Colony the highest possible standard of education available locally.

Formerly the London Matriculation was the highest standard of education a boy could receive at Queen's College. Today however, it is possible for a Queen's College student to reach the London Intermediate Degree standard, and to do pre-medical research. At the School Certificate examination of the University of London, the annual number of successful candidates has been practically stabilised to about eighty per cent, or more of the students presented. It is on the latter-mentioned examination that the British Guiana Scholarship is awarded, and during the last ten years, the " Blue Ribbon " of local Academic awards has been carried off by Queen's College boys on no less than seven occasions.

From the Preparatory Form which a boy may enter at the age of nine, to the Sixth Form where he may read for the Higher

School Certificate or the Guiana Scholarship, a student receives no less than eight years of thorough academic training coupled with the inculcation of a sense of responsibility which will fit him for practically any walk of life. As a result of the Hammond Report, Queen's College will shortly reserve 100 places for the annual training of boys later to be appointed teachers in the primary schools of the colony.

As regards academic training, Queen's College is an institution of which British Guiana may well be proud. But on the other hand, there is the crying need for space. Housed in the 150 year-old buildings of the old Orphanage, Queen's College barely accommodates 300 boys. Plans for the erection of a new building to accommodate at least 600 boys were drafted as early as 1935 but unavoidably shelved. The return of Peace however, should give to British Guiana a Queen's College worthy of its name and tradition, and we look forward to seeing in the near future, the erection of a building commensurate with the educational requirements of this magnificent province of ours, and from the classrooms of which will emerge Guianese to surpass the achievements of the past.

A Nigerian Vignette  
**GARUBA - A Strolling Player**

by J. E Humphrey

A noisy burst, the unintelligible words of a song, burst upon our ears as we stood on the platform of Jebba Station, the noise as it approached was changed into quick staccato barks of "Left" ... "Right" ... "Left" ... "Right" ... and Garuba, followed by a motley crowd hove into view. "What's this"?, we enquired as he came to a halt a few feet from us, and saluted with the precision of an officer on parade. "This be Garuba, Sah, he be fun man," came the attendant chorus—and thus at our behest Garuba started to show us his stock-in-trade.

Rapid life-like imitations of Europeans in the duties of their varied professions, was his forte, and his performances showed the quick, keen mind of the African for observing and remembering. There was the European engine driver climbing into the cabin of his engine,—looking for the 'right away'—and turning the levers to set the train in motion, ending with a shout at the fireman to—"Get a move on you...!" There was the European guard waving his flag and joining his train at the last moment. Then came the Sergeant-Major drilling a squad of Hausa soldiers, each operation being perfectly carried out as he barked himself the order...his 'Present Arms', would have given any squad he had graced full marks, and his voice would have been an asset to an Indian Colonel.

Other imitations followed but to us his '*piece de resistance*' was his imitation of an F.P. (Foreman Platelayer) laying new rails ...Surveying instruments were used, gradients were taken, rails around a curve were laid with the outer line elevated...flat on his stomach he sighted the levels...fluently he cursed his African foreman and his labourers, then at long last he departs on his trolley, opening a bottle of Lager with a sigh of well-deserved relief.

Then the curtain rang down with him as the over-worked, and over-abused African foreman—"You 'tupid people when you see white man mek all man work plenty!", "Musa", he shouts,

*"you cum hey mek you stan' watch-nice fo' me...when you see dem silly fella F.P. ah cum back mek you call me"*, and selecting a shaded spot; he worries no more.

His name is Garuba (and so is nearly every other Hausa), he is a native of Rigaachickun, his job that of a washerman, for he says, *"Dat is de mos' easy job I fit fine"*. He is open to accept any job easier than that.

*"What about a photograph?" "Ah photo no good, sah"... "but spouse you dash me,... p'raps..."* . A dash was forthcoming and here he is, his seriousness is part of his programme, he is the doleful comedian. The show was ended. *"Right, sah... Cheer O"*, says Garuba and he departs to the quick self commands of *"Left" ... "Right" ... "Left" ... "Right"* when nearly out of hearing he changed to his song again. *"Pretty slick 'un"*, we commented, and to his own people to whom he is hero, he is thought of in much the same terms... *"Dam raskle fella!"* they call Garuba.



# Library of The B.G. Union of Cultural Clubs

## SECTION ON GUIANESE HISTORY

- The Demerara Martyr* - Rev. Edwin A. Wallbridge (1848).
- The Missions to the Aboriginal Indians in the Diocese of Guiana*  
- Rev. Thomas Farrar (1880).
- Mission Work in the Forests of Guiana* - Rev. W.H. Brett (1881)
- Moravian Missions* - Augustus C. Thompson (1882)
- Annals of Guiana, Vol. 1* - James Rodway, F.L.S. & Thomas Watt (1888).
- History of the Colonies — Essequibo, Demerary, and Berbice*  
- P.M. Netscher (1888).
- A Contribution towards the History of Demerara — 1763 from the Correspondence of G. Clarke, Esq.*  
- Revised by James Rodway, F.L.S. (Reprinted from *Timehri*).
- The 'Schomburgks' in Guiana* - James Rodway, F.L.S. (1889).
- History of British Guiana, Vol. 3* - James Rodway, F.L.S. (1894).
- Westward Ho with Nelson in 1805* - N. Darnwell Davis (1896).
- The West Indies and the Spanish Main* - James Rodway, F.L.S. (1899).
- Our Colonial Currency, History of its Evolution* - J. Van Settima (1909).

- Notes on the History of St. Andrew's Kirk, Demerara*  
- J. Graham Cruickshank (1911).
- Guiana — British, Dutch & French* - James Rodway, F.L.S. (1912).
- The Evolution of the Negro, Vols. I & II* - N.E. Cameron, M.A.  
(1929 & 1934).
- Pages from the History of the Scottish Kirk* - J.G. Cruickshank  
(1930).
- Stages of Development of B.G.'s Womanhood* - Hildred Britton  
(1931).
- Centenary Handbook and History of British Guiana* - A.R.F. Webber  
(1931).
- Children's Story of Guiana* - Guy E.L. de Weever (1932).
- Story of the Heroes* - P.H. Daly (1940, 1941 & 1943).
- Portugal — Eight Centuries of History* - W.I. Gomes (1940).
- A Short History of S. Matthias, Cabacaburi, 1840-1940* (1940).
- Guiana Diocesan Magazine and Gazette, Centenary Number* (1942).
- Notes on the History of the Church* - Venn Thomas Farrar, B.D.  
(1892).
- Dutch Plantations on the Banks of the Berbice and Canje Rivers  
and the Village Evolved from the Plantation*  
- Rev. James Williams, F.R.Hist.S. (1940).
- History of Mission Chapel, New Amsterdam, Centenary Souvenir,  
1841-1941* - Rev. William Hollaway (1941).
- A Short History of the Wesleyan Church, Friendship, Jubilee 1855-  
1905* - D.V. Jacobs (1905).

# ISSUE 2



## EDITORIAL NOTES

SO FAR as can be, an editor has to present the philosophy of the issues of his magazine: he must show what they attempt to do and why. This mid-year issue of *Kyk-Over-Al* is the second sign-post, and whereas December emphasized history, the emphasis here is on poetry, always an important manifestation of cultural life in a country. There are at least two significant Guianese poets of the past—Leo and Lawrence—and we have selected for honour and commemoration in this issue the poet nearer to us in time—Walter MacArthur Lawrence.

Congratulations and encouragements on our December issue have come to us from many quarters, including Harold Stannard and Philip Sherlock, and friends in St. Lucia, Grenada and British Honduras. This issue is better, we think, because the note of introduction has gone, and the periodical is well away upon its work of moulding a Guianese consciousness and recording its tradition.

An important part of that tradition is attached to the Golden Jubilee of the Young Men's Guild celebrated in March, 1946. Wholly Guianese, for 50 years, this debating Society has been sharpening the logic and increasing the knowledge of young men. There are few men prominent today in British Guiana life who haven't been Guild men at some time or other. The work of the Guild is something to be proud of in Guiana.

The contributors again need no introduction. They must speak for themselves. More and more we've got to widen the net for young writers for consciousness to become articulate and speak for Guiana. That's the work of the Writers' Association and its organ, this periodical.

Readers will see from these pages the gathering importance of the Union of Cultural Clubs. Last year's report and the summary of the year's activities and plans, together speak of the Union's desire to stimulate and maintain intellectual progress in British Guiana. We're glad for assistance in this endeavour from the British Council and proud to record our

collaboration with the Council and the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society in lecture courses sponsored by a Combined Cultural Committee. Proud, because it is unity and co-operation in the intellectual sphere that must help Guiana, as in the social and the political ones.

Finally, we want these pages to reflect the ferment of cultural activity in the West Indies and its impact and influence on life in Guiana.

—A. J. S.

## RESUSCITATION

by LEO (Egbert Martin) (1862-1890)

The twilight shuddered into gloom,  
The trees stood trembling in the air;  
And flung their green, unbrageous arms  
Above their wildly floating hair.

While saddened misereres fell  
Like organ-peals in full excess.  
From breezes equal fall and swell,  
In agonies of bitterness.

The morning aged to older day,  
And burst in shreds of vivid light,  
Bestrewing on the lying way  
Its carnival of heat acid light.

The wind a wondrous "Gloria" rolled,  
Deep through the cloudy arch of space,  
Chord after chord, whose notes of gold  
Were smothered in the rhyme of grace.

## ODE TO KAIETEUR

by Walter MacA. Lawrence (1896-1942)

(Concluding Stanzas)

And falling in splendour sheer down from the height  
that should gladden the heart of an eagle to scan. —  
That lend to the towering forest beside thee  
the semblance of shrubs trimmed and tended by man, —  
That viewed from the brink where the vast amber volume  
that once was a stream cataracts into thee,  
Impart to the foothills surrounding the maelstrom  
beneath thee that rage as the troublous sea,  
The aspect of boulders that border a pool  
in the scheme of a rare ornamentalist's plan,  
Where, where is the man that before thee is thrilled not —  
that scorneth the impulse to humble the knee,  
With the sense of thy majesty resting upon him,  
and conscious of flouting some terrible ban?

Who, who can behold thee, O glorious Kaieteur,  
let down as it were from the fathomless blue,  
A shimmering veil on the face of the mountain  
obscuring its flaws from inquisitive view,  
Retouched with the soft, rosy glow of the morning  
and freaking the flow of desultory light,  
Or bathed in the brilliant translucence of noontide  
a mystical mirror resplendently bright.  
Or else in the warm, sanguine glory of sunset,  
a curtain of gold with the crimsoning hue  
Of the twilight upon it or drenched in the silvery  
flood of the moonlight subliming the night,  
And feel not the slumbering spirit awaking  
to joy in the infinite greatly anew?



# NAME POEM

by A.J. Seymour

Beauty about us in the breathe of names  
Known to us all, but murmured over softly  
Woven to breath of peace.

If but a wind blows, all their beauty wakes.

Kwebanna on the Waini — — Indian words  
And peace asleep within the syllables.

Cabacaburi and the Rupununi  
Reverence is guest in that soft hush of names.

For battle music and the roll of drums.  
The shock and break of bodies locked in combat  
The Tramen Cliff above Imbaimadai.

Guiana. Waini are cousin water words...

The Demerary, Desakepe and Courantyne  
Flow centuries before strange tongues bewitch  
Their beauty into common county names.

Through all the years before the Indians came  
Rocks at Tumatumari kept their grace,  
And Tukeit, Amatuk and Waratuk  
Trained ear and eye for thundering Kaieteur.

And there are mountain tops that take the sun  
Jostling shoulders with seaward-eyed Roraima ...

These Amerindian names hold ancient sway  
Beyond the European fingers reaching,  
Forever reaching in, but nearer coast  
Words born upon Dutch tongues live in our speech.

The sentinel that was Kykoveral  
Beterverwagting, Vlissengen and Stabroek  
And sonorous toll of bells in Vergenoegen.

For French remembrance, Le Ressouvenir,  
The silent and great tomb of an exile's anguish,  
Le Repentir – that city of the dead...

Simple the heritage of English names  
Hid in Adventure, Bee Hive, Cove and John,  
And Friendship, Better Hope, and Land of Canaan  
Garden of Eden and...so Paradise.

Out west are places blessed by Spanish tongues  
Santa Rosa, white chapel on a hill...

Beauty about us in the breathe of names.  
If but a wind blows, all their beauty wakes.

# SAVANNAH LANDS

by Wilson Harris

Lands open  
To sunshine and sky  
And to the endless winds  
Passing their eternal rounds.  
Lands that hold in their bosom  
Space like a benediction.  
Lands smoky with their dreams  
That drift across the world  
Like memories of ancient beauty dimly recalled.  
Lands full of the music of birds  
Crying softly a vague and formless meditation  
To the measureless skies: when the listening cattle  
Lift their quiet heads  
Dreaming their dream, so solitary and wise.

## LINES TO A SPINSTER

by Frank E. Dalzell

Think not you are unloved  
Because two eyes have never drawn you close;  
Because two lips have never soothingly  
Sung music sweet into your tender ear.  
Think not that Cupid's bow  
Has not been certain shot to stir some heart  
To ecstasy; to make the red life leap,  
And blaze the white of skin a fiery glow.  
Think not because no male  
Has held your sculptured form a while and thrilled  
You; caressed you, fondled, kissed you till the joy  
Of it persuaded you to sweet surrender  
You are unloved.  
This moment now some heart  
Is sending to the brain. Some nerve directs  
The wandering look to steadier gaze.  
Your vision is embraced, then clasped forever  
Think not you are unloved.

# LETTER TO MY UNBORN SON

by James W. Smith

My son—

But dare I call you son  
Since no one knows how soon you'll see  
The light of day? I cannot think  
Of you as some dim future hope:  
You are a part of me, e'en though  
The blood which is your very life  
Still flows within my veins. You are  
The star by which I steer my ship,  
My guide, my comforter, my friend!

Some day, my son, I'll gaze upon  
Your noble countenance. I'll see  
My flesh upon your bones: I'll feel  
My red blood pounding through your veins!  
And then we'll build the future, son:  
We'll tap the rainbow's gold, and ride  
Cold Luna's horses through the night.  
Together we will build the world  
A-new, and slay the vipers, lest  
They feed upon the hearts of men!  
And when my aged limbs no more  
Shall serve the soul which still fights on,  
You still will toil when I am gone —  
I shall be proud of you, My Son!

Fragment of Autobiography  
**THE MAKING OF A JOURNALIST**

by Harold Stannard

*"Poets are born, not made"*, says the proverb, and though the statement is too bald —for, in fact, no creative artist is unaffected by the circumstances of his time—it calls attention to the truth that genius will out, be its environment favourable or repressive.

Journalists are of earthier clay, unable by the very conditions of their calling to spin a web of words out of some inner intellectual secretion and wholly dependent on external events for the stimulus to write. Yet even the journalist as he pursues his pedestrian daily way, may not be altogether misled by vanity when he is occasionally moved to feel that a spark of the true creative fire smoulders in him and that his function is not entirely confined to the more or less lucid presentation of external facts, the more or less convincing interpretation of other people's ideas. In these rare but satisfying moments of exaltation which occur from time to time in spite of all that unsympathetic editors can and will do to discourage them, the journalist feels that he too is born and not made, that the apparently casual series of accidents that have made him what he is owe their significance to some deep inward urge which, like the poet's genius, will out. A bold claim this, to make for one who is often condemned as a mere rowdy shamelessly intruding upon privacy or impudently passing sweeping judgments on his betters: but the audacity which has led me to make it further impels me to seek to justify it by a fragment of autobiography.

My own journalistic career began when I was rising six. I had been sent to school and had learnt my letters—block capitals, still very imperfectly formed. No matter; I could write, and forthwith set myself to turn my newly acquired ability to account. I wrote letters addressed to the entire range of my acquaintance, and even beyond it; for I recollect asking my nurse for the names of her relations so that they too, might figure among my victims. There was a certain

uniformity about these letters. "*Dear So and So,*" they began, "*I hope you are quite well*" — and what beginning could be more satisfactory? There I was, launched upon the inexhaustible topic of health—my own, my correspondents', my family's, my correspondent's family's, our next door neighbour's, the dog's, the cat's, the canary's...here, indeed, was matter to take me well over into a second sheet. In fact I had begun to explore a topic which, along with food, sex, sport and crime, constitutes the staple of journalism.

But this great and helpful truth was not revealed to me at the time. On the contrary my Mother, after looking through the latest of my efforts, suddenly hurled at me the stunning question: Must you always begin with "*I hope you are quite well*?" If my temperament had allowed me to answer "Yes", I should no doubt have become a blameless civil servant and spent my working life in writing letters all beginning "*With reference to*". But something forbade me to take this easy way of escape. I realised not only that all letters need not begin in the same way but that there was just one perfect beginning for each individual letter. From that moment I started on the search, continued ever since, for the ideal opening phrase, and from that moment the journalist in me was born. If in the last forty years I have written on an average 300 articles a year, and if—my arithmetic is weak— — this assumption gives a total of 12,000 articles I must, I like to think, once or twice have achieved a good beginning. But how often, how despairingly often, have I had to fall back on the newspaper equivalents of "*I hope you are quite well*" — "*General satisfaction (or regret) will be felt at the news that...*", "*In conformity with (or violation of) the principles of British statesmanship*" or "*In conformity with (or contradiction of) public expectations,*" or— but why prolong the dismal catalogue? Enough that the pavement's of Fleet Street have been littered for years with my clichés.

Such, then, was the first or chrysalis stage in my making as a journalist. It remains for me to record the second stage in which the completed insect was hatched out. That befell some fifteen years later in my Oxford days. Among the famous undergraduate institutions of the University was the dramatic society — known from its initials as the Ouds — which is now, I believe, able to make its choice of plays at will but which in

my day had not emerged from the constrictions of Victorian discipline and was limited to Shakespeare and the ancient classics. The Ouds put on a play a year at the Oxford Theatre, and in the year of which I speak had staged a comedy of Aristophanes—'**The Clouds**'. This is the play in which Socrates is brought on to the stage and mercilessly guyed, and it may be imagined with what zest the dons, in their comments on the production in the London papers, let themselves go on such scholarly themes as the historic Socrates, the attitude of the public to new ideas or the modern significance of the Greek drama.

Reading some of these efforts, it occurred to me that, excellent though they were, they not dramatic criticism. The further thought followed that it would be rather fun to review '**The Clouds**' as a new play. To this end I hurriedly jotted down all the threadbare catch phrases of dramatic criticism that I could think of and with the list before me, produced a notice which succeeded in working them all in. Most of it has now gone from my memory, though I dare say that I have used a good many of its sentences since: but I remember that it ended with "*At the fall of the curtain there were loud calls for the author, who, however, not appear.*" — a form of words in pretty frequent currency at the time. Greatly daring, I sent my notice in to the *Westminster Gazette*, the leading evening paper of the day. It was edited by a most distinguished journalist, the late J. A. Spender, whose autobiography written in the evening of his days, illuminates the last great age of English liberalism. The time was to come when I was to know Spender moderately well. We were on different sides in politics and he paid me the compliment of regarding me as a minor thorn in his flesh. Coming across me after some ribald leader of mine had stung him, he would lift up his hands in mock horror and lament that through him I had been let loose in Fleet Street. Through him it was. The *Westminster* published my notice. Not only that, but it paid for it at the regular rate and sent me 30/-. It had taken about half an hour to write and had involved no real thought whatever. I had simply collected things that other people had written, rearranged them and been paid roughly a shilling a minute for doing it.



Who would not continue in so easy and profitable a course of literary cannibalism? This, I said to myself, is obviously the profession for me. And so it was, and so the journalist was made.

The Literary Tradition  
**GUIANESE POETRY**

by A. J. Seymour

BRITISH GUIANA is "*the dear land of the six peoples*" as Edward A. Parry said. But it is doubtful whether they live in the complete harmony that they may be able to achieve. The six peoples are Europeans, Africans, East Indians, Aboriginal Indians, Portuguese and Chinese (in this essay, the order is important only from the poetical point of view ) and there is as yet no one writer who has expressed the heart-deep longings and aspirations of all of the six. To illustrate what I mean, I will take the instance of another country, Russia. There one has a Union of 16 self-governing republics and several other states. There one has 150 languages and 175 different peoples. And yet they all acclaim Mayakovsky as the poet of Soviet Russia, some one who said what all longed to say.

Of course, history is different and there is the inspired utterance and the tremendous vitality of the Russian poet to be taken into account. But when one speaks of Guianese poetry, there is not that complete unity of thought, that community life which would qualify us for nationhood.

Poetry is another word to examine. Taking the country as a huge cauldron in which ingredients are being mixed to produce a savoury and distinctive dish, saying that Guianese culture is in the making, should one define poetry as metrical composition, as the art of expressing in melodious words the thoughts that are the creations of feeling and imagination? Should not the net be thrown wider to include other elements as well?

However, taking the words at their immediate face value, in what sense is there a Guianese poetry ?

One person may be inclined to say that Guianese poetry emerges when a man born and living in British Guiana is stimulated to capture in words his rarer moods, his more elevated thoughts and his more impassioned feelings. This, however, is a kind of verse that may have been written in Iceland or in Timbuktu, as well as in Guiana. Then there

will be another who will contend that Guianese poetry occurs only when a Guianese takes the themes that lie around him and reflects his country's sights and sounds in his poems. Both are possible views and there is another standpoint to help entangle debaters. Is it not Guianese poetry when one, who is not a Guianese, records his impressions of the country he inhabits at the time? For instance when Dr. Henry G. Dalton writes his long poem on the Essequibo and its tributaries, is he not writing Guianese poetry?

It is well to keep these three views in differing focus and to remember that there are other possibilities just around the corner, as it were.

First of all, the beginnings of Guianese poetry, where are they? Does one reach back to the days before emancipation and find anything? It doesn't seem so. Slavery looks like a dead wall with no eyes and certainly no mouth, but there should have been some outpouring of the oppressed spirit into song, some unburdening of the heart similar to the manner in which the Jews sang in captivity. The reading of history would tend to make us feel that there was something like that. Did none of the slaves think of singing the Lord's song in a strange land? Did no one hang up the harp and musical instruments upon our Saman trees? Of course I have suggested elsewhere that the Jews had already thrown around themselves a lofty wall of social and ethical consciousness, and before the Captivity they possessed a racial tradition expressed in magnificent poetry. The tradition of these slaves was mainly oral and in its infancy. However, even if there were songs by the rivers of Demerary, no one wrote them down, and they are like the songs the Sirens sang.

There are two historical factors which must have operated against their survival. The first is the fact that Mr. J. G. Cruickshank refers to in his book *Black Talk*. He tells us how the negro slave lost his language—how the slave ship captain found it a wise expedient to crowd together under hatches negroes of several tribes each with its own dialect. To have together several of the same tribe, speaking the same tongue was to ask for trouble. There was always the possibility of the slaves fomenting a plot and causing a minor insurrection. So the slaves were carefully assorted and the hubbub of tongues

resembled the noise at the Tower of Babel, but the ships came safely in. It was a magnificent application of the rule "*Divide and Conquer.*"

Mr. Cruickshank tells us how the slave-owner reversed the situation when the ship landed, and it was wise as an expedient to have several of the same tribe, talking his own dialect, to meet the sea-sick, home-sick, slave just brought over. Of course, it made him feel like Home to hear those darkies talking. However, after the slave trade ceased in 1807, there was not that continuous influx of new slaves into the colony to let each dialect keep like a well, pure and undefiled. The second generation after that lost some of the finer points of pronunciation and the third generation of young bucks prided themselves on being able to speak the master's wage.

The second factor is one recorded by Mr. Charles J. Latrobe, who reported in 1838 on education in British Guiana. In his report he remarks that the Dutch language prevailed at that time among the negroes on the plantations of Demerara and Berbice, and that children learning English at school often attained considerable fluency in pronouncing the English sounds without knowing the sense of what they uttered. When that conflict in his mind between the old Dutch and the new English is coupled with the loss of the negro's own language, it is easy to see why pre-Emancipation days yield little or nothing.

So, one should be able to say that before 1834, the only persons likely to write poetry in British Guiana would be the colonists from England; and they seemed to have fallen into two classes, clergymen and businessmen. Mr. N. E. Cameron appears to have made an extensive survey of this kind of material and he states in his anthology, *Guianese Poetry, 1831-1931*, that his earliest find is a book of poems by a Colonist with the name *Midnight Musings in Demerary* and published in 1832. He is as anonymous as the Unknown Soldier. All that is known about him narrows down to that bid for immortality contained in his sheaf of poems. He had a feeling for nature and wrote competent and elegant verse if one goes by the selection in the anthology.

Then some forty-one years afterwards Emancipation has come of age and there is Thomas Don. First it must be seen he

is religious, and secondly that he is a schoolmaster, brought up and trained by clergymen who gave by far the greatest impulse of that time to education. Mr. A. Thorne has commented on the significant relation between religion and the thriftlessness and inertia of the negro population since slavery was abolished but that conjunction of religion and the negro resulted in verse in the case of Thomas Don. (*Pious Effusions*, 1871). He is religious like his namesake, John Donne of two and a quarter centuries before, but this first perhaps of Guianese poets does not leap out of his time into immortality as that other did. It is fair verse, competent at times but it is the outpouring and search after compensation that carries one back in thought to the days before Emancipation. No one has yet led the negroes out of their former mentality as Moses transformed the Hebrew slaves.

And one must remember the times, 1850, 1860, 1870. The profits of the colony's producers had been cut by the Acts of Parliament that made them compete with slave-grown sugar in other parts of the world. Labour was not easily available in B.G. Immigration was not yet fully established as a means of supplying labour, employers were discontented. It was all the Guianese could do to keep body and soul together, and the level of education was coming up slowly, oh so slowly.

Then in 1883 there is Leo (Egbert Martin). It is now two generations after Emancipation and here one finds in a Guianese for the first time complete command over the technique of poetry and the consequent freedom of the imagination. There is a strong moral leaning in the whole of the sizeable body of his writings and these partake as they must, of the Victorian outlook. Someone has mentioned that Alfred Lord Tennyson thought highly of his work and that not so long ago in this colony, there was a copy of Leo's *Collected Works* autographed by the Poet Laureate. So here the poet has passed beyond the borders of his country and won Empire recognition. Another fine thing about Leo is that he uses his verse as a sword against superstition and cant and the abomination of slavery, and he writes perhaps the best type of didactic poetry in which his rhythm manipulation carries the reader along.

After this, there are a few trickles, and then the main comes flooding in. Walter MacA. Lawrence arrives and with him the crop of modern poets. Lawrence has a habitual power which it is doubtful whether Leo possessed, and he learnt to play all the instruments in the poet's orchestra. All forms poured from his pen—odes, sonnets, triolets, villanelles,—and he claimed Swinburne and Wordsworth as his masters. So one can always find in his verse the singing and the search after philosophical truth.

It would be interesting if one had the time to trace the effect of the rise of education in the colony upon the religious trend which gradually disappears from Guianese poetry—how as the one side of the scale is loaded, the other tilts up and gets lighter. The poetry becomes less and less moralizing as European technique becomes available and as there are cheaper books and more social and educational facilities. It is doubtful whether the moral tone will disappear entirely from our poetry because there seems to be a strong religious consciousness innate in the negro, and it will find expression.

So far the essay has dealt only or perhaps mainly with the poetical work produced by those of African descent. This is natural because none of the other five peoples in British Guiana has produced a comparable body of work, here in Guiana. European poets hardly or never come to these parts, and of the European who have lived here for years none has gone away from these shores and become a poet. The Chinese and the Portuguese have done excellently well in commerce, but in cultural pursuits of a creative kind, they have to date, done nothing outstanding. There remain therefore, the contributions, if any, to Guianese poetry to be made by East Indians and the Aboriginal Indians.

Early writers on the conditions of Aboriginal Indians in British Guiana include, in the list, the names of Rev. W. H. Brett, Everard im Thurn, and Walter Roth. There is a sizeable body of Indian legends and folklore which at least is stimulating to young poets. These legends and Arawak tales and Warau tales are so much raw material which the brooding intelligence may transmute into poetry: and when consideration has been made for difference in attitudes—the

fact for instance, that sophisticated eyes are looking on a tissue of primitive belief— when this consideration is borne in mind, it may still be claimed that this Aboriginal Indian background should form an important element in a genuinely Guianese poetry.

In 1934, C. E. J. Ramcharitar-Lalla edited an anthology of local Indian verse to which Rev. H. Hector Chick contributed a foreword. The small booklet of 45 pages contains 21 poems, mainly by Joseph Ruhoman and Ramcharitar-Lalla himself.

Rev. Chick, in his foreword, stated that he looked out for some marks of the distinctive metre of Indian poetry to show themselves in that anthology. There are, he claims, certain definitely Indian characteristics to be found in the poems—a longing to be caught up into the realms of everlasting peace, the passion to realize the Divine and a sensitivity to the delicate touches of beauty in common things.

In the synthesis of the six peoples of Guiana there is room for a much greater contribution to be made by the East Indians. This section of the population is too large and influential to be missed and there are welcome signs that steps towards this fusion will shortly be taken.

Guianese poetry is in its infancy. Some strong intelligence must take the diverse elements of culture and weave them together into unity. When that is fully done the country will have gone a long way toward nationhood. And perhaps not until then can Guianese poetry be really written.

In the meantime, Destiny is on the wing.

## THE UNION'S YEAR

Monday, May 27, at 8 p.m. in the Georgetown Public Free Library, the B.G. Union of Cultural Clubs discussed selected portions of the Report of the West Indian Conference held at St. Thomas, in February 1946.

This was the monthly meeting of the Union and members of the 30 affiliated clubs were asked to attend with their friends to discuss the Conference's recommendations on "Health Education", "Nutrition", and "Cultural Diversification" and after full discussion the leaders of each group reported its findings to the held meeting. Guest leaders were Dr. C. C. Nicholson, Miss Vesta Lowe and Mr. G. B. Kennard.

This discussion on the Conference is only one of the attractive syllabus items by the Union for 1946. Readers will remember the January public debate on West Indian Federation in the Y.M.C.A, in which John Carter led the proposition and the April public discussion on the relation between economic development and intellectual endeavour in a "backward country" like British Guiana.

On June 24, the Union held, also at the Georgetown Public Free Library a public discussion on one of the most important books published on the West Indies, *Capitalism and Slavery* by Dr. Eric Williams. Opening speakers were Messrs. A. P. Thorne, C. W. P. Roberts and A. J. Seymour and a full audience carried on a lively discussion until late in the evening.

The August Convention of the Union is already being planned. The Convention has been booked for August 29, 30 and 31, and invitations to attend as special delegates have been despatched to Mrs. Edna Manley, one of the significant artistic personalities in Jamaica, to Mr. H. Telemaque, President of the Trinidad and Tobago League of Literary and Cultural Clubs, Mr. Tom Phillips, Social Welfare Officer, Barbados, and representatives of the Ernheid organization in Paramaribo. Mrs. Manley is however, unable to come.



Plans for meetings after September have been tentatively framed and include the presentation by the Union of the feature '**The Seventeenth Century**', in which the musical, scientific, artistic, dramatic and literary clubs affiliated to the Union will be asked to present a composite picture of the life of the period.

Other activities of the Union include the Patrick Dargan Memorial Shield debating competition now concluded and a series of monthly 15-minute broadcasts over Station ZFY which began in June, and features various group activities such as art in British Guiana, music, drama, science, etc.

Personal Estimate of a Guianese Poet  
**WALTER MacARTHUR LAWRENCE**

**I**

by Norman E. Cameron

On first meeting the late Walter MacA. Lawrence one was confronted with a tall, broad-shouldered, fair-complexioned man having a strong face suggestive of a fighter. After a little acquaintance one recognised in him an ambitious poet but withal modest and retiring and willing to learn.

Among the strong points which I observed in him were the desire and the ability to describe what he saw, the ambition to tackle big themes, and a craving for originality of expression with a departure from the simple iambic.

His love for the Interior and his descriptions of its scenery are well illustrated in '**Sylvan Guiana**', '**Call of the Wild**', and '**Ode to Kaieteur**.' The Ode was published in booklet form and won him the congratulations of the then Governor, Sir Edward Brandis Denham. G.C.M.G. The concluding two stanzas of the Ode as well as the other two poems here mentioned were reprinted in a *Collection of Guianese Poetry* in 1931. I think that Dalton (Dr. Henry G.), who published his poems in London in 1858, and Lawrence may well be regarded as the "Poets of the Guiana Hinterland".

The three works referred to were massive like the man who created them. They are not his major works, however. On the 11th April, 1930, in the course of a lecture on '**Guianese Literature, Past, Present and Future**', I decried the paucity of the Colony's narrative poems. Lawrence took up the challenge and wrote '**Meromi**'—a tale of an Aboriginal Indian girl—which was published in serial form in *The Daily Chronicle*. The poem started well: but Lawrence saw the financial possibilities of a serial and protracted it unduly. However the poem was quite a success. Mr. A. A. Thorne, who was at that time unacquainted with Lawrence, was so impressed by '**Meromi**' that he gave the Governor a copy of the poem to read during his trip to the Kaieteur, and was of the opinion

that the poem should be particularly useful to tourists travelling inland.

In 1937 Lawrence published in book form *Meditation—Thoughts In The Silence*. In this work of seventy-eight stanzas of four verses each, Lawrence invited his readers to meditate on some of the basic things of life, such as the Creation, the progress of Civilization, the rise and fall of Empires, the salvation of man which will not come from mere knowledge but from a regeneration of the heart. The approach to these problems was quite orthodox, and Lawrence had no patience with the evolutionists. If the subject is well known and has been thoroughly threshed out, Lawrence was justified in asking his readers to revise or consolidate the grounds on which their attitude rests.

I once wrote of Lawrence: "...His sentences are sometimes very long and difficult to analyse, and he will do well to remember that a few good poets have been ignored by the public because of its inability to understand them...As a young poet he certainly has his faults, but he is modest, and this fact coupled with his poetic virtues, it will not surprise me if in time he should be deemed fit to wear Leo's mantle." Lawrence appeared to have been an admirer of Swinburne, and the massive form probably appealed to the solidity of the man. Fortunately for him modesty was one of his assets and he was always endeavouring to improve. Hence the remarks do not apply with equal force to his later works.

Lawrence did not confine his attention to the more lengthy form. Among his lyrics was '**Forward Guiana's Sons**' written in 1931 on the occasion of the Centenary of the Union of the three Counties into the Colony of British Guiana. Another written in a similar vein was set to music by Messrs. Percy F. Loncke, and R. C. G. Potter. His was a facile pen ever willing and able to write on many subjects including current topics.

I have referred to his modesty. This was exemplified in the readiness with which he accepted an invitation to be a foundation member of the B.G. Literary Society formed on the 29th August, 1930 as an association chiefly of local writers and would-be writers. He was a staunch supporter of the meetings and even attended regularly classes held on the

art of short-story writing. In the course of an address I referred to the unwillingness of people to discuss “method” frankly in their respective activity. Lawrence, in a comment recorded in the *Daily Chronicle* of the 31st August, 1930, advocated the communal study of method by members, as he thought that nothing but good could result from such frank discussions and interchange of ideas: as even with the same method different writers would naturally produce different results.

With the passing of Lawrence in 1942 this Colony lost one of its outstanding poets. It was said of Byron that when he forsook Poetry, Poetry forsook him. Lawrence was one of the very few Guianese writers of verse who persevered to the end.

Historic Estimate...

WALTER MacARTHUR LAWRENCE

II

by P. H. Daly

The literary aptitude of Walter MacArthur manifested itself early. As early as 1920 he contributed a poem to the *Daily Chronicle*, commemorating the arrival in this country of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (now Duke of Windsor). Between 1920 and 1942, Lawrence wrote with incomparable industry, judged by any standard. He produced a considerable amount of poetry that is voluptuous with a slumbrous, latinised, orchestral placency in which his great odes, '**Threnody**,' '**The Woodlands**,' '**The Stream**' and '**Kaïeteur**'—those exquisite documents of Guianese natural and intellectual life—are, every one of them, equally ornamented into a string of faceted diamonds.

As early as 1932, when he was employed at the *New Daily Chronicle* newspaper, Lawrence was acclaimed by the editor of a contemporary daily as the first poet in the land. That was the beginning of his purest period, when he wrote '**Dawn**' and '**Unreclaimed**' both of which are artistically conceived. '**Dawn**', which immortalises a Guianese morning, and '**Unreclaimed**', which is dreamily nostalgic, were published in the *Daily Chronicle Christmas Annual* in 1932; and early in 1933, H. R. Harewood, then Editor of the *Chronicle*, writing in his literary Sunday column "Random Remarks" under the penname of Dick Turpin, had this to say of Lawrence: "*Both of Lawrence's verses were very good indeed. His 'Dawn', which is one of the best hits ever produced by a local versifier, deserves reproduction... 'Unreclaimed' was longer and also of remarkable standard. Mr. Lawrence is far and away the best of our poets to-day*". Be it noted that this estimation of Lawrence's position in the country's poetry was made before the death of Wills the Suppressionist.

I call Lawrence the Leader of the Aesthetic Movement in Guianese poetry, because of the high regard he had for literary purity (and was he not the most intellectual and urbane poet of his generation?), because of his strenuous,

athletically supple verse which exercised a profound influence on the work of his contemporaries. After he had written 'Meromi', 'Unreclaimed', 'Dawn', and 'The Woodlands', every minor emasculator of poetry here, every diluted Homer, was plundering a style he was not equipped to handle.

Lawrence wrote for about twenty years, twenty years of unparalleled productivity (starting in 1920), and he wrote his name into educated acceptance as the Poet of Guiana. Not only did he initiate a movement; not only did he symbolise an important creative period in Guianese Letters, but he was the fulfilment of the prophecies of his period. Spiritually tempered to sustain his values against erosion from within and without, Lawrence retained a uniformity and stability which welded his composite into an integrating force in Guianese poetry. The signs and portents of a creative period should be integration, and Lawrence, was such an integrating force. He worked against the disintegrating forces symbolised, on the one hand, by the restrictions of revivalism and the sentimentality and complexes of that age; and, on the other hand, by the stubborn tradition of suppression. He had to work too—and he did work zestfully—against the petticoated puerilities and rhodomontade of the mad moderns, whose Muse is a minx and little better than a strumpet. He remains, then, historically the most considerable of Guianese poets and the most consummate of craftsmen.

His poetry carries evidence that there were always two forces contending in him for primacy—the imperialism of the artists and the proletarianism of the artisan. Within the compass of this study I cannot discuss to which of these forces went final victory. I reserve detailed discussion for a forthcoming volume. What can be said immediately, however, is that Lawrence was the most representative poet in Guiana; and even against the background of West Indian poetry, with Claude McKay for Himalayan, the Lawrencean peaks loom immense and challenging. This formidableness was natural in a poet whose spell is still so strong over us, whose Muse was so faithful, and whose gaze embraced the whole horizon of life.

I consider Lawrence to have been the first of the moderns

in Guiana, but his contact with the final, spiritual moments of Victorianism, and the influence of his great masters, Swinburne (that is Swinburne's desirably effective orchestration without Swinburne's irreligion), and Wordsworth, gave him solidity and uniformity. It is because of this Victorian permanency and decisiveness in him, his guiding and declassifying influence that Lawrence, in the judgement of unjaundiced critics, is considered to have contributed to the betterment, moral and intellectual of Guiana. This is the cardinal condition of greatness: that the impact of a poet's art should be directed, not towards the absurdities of the age, but towards the spiritual and moral elevation of society. After our Homer has succeeded in doing this, his place in Time, and in what is called Eternity, calls for no speculation. Lawrence has consolidated this first principle of survival by the spiritual fibre of his work, and by his consummate craftsmanship, his superb sense of word music, his mastery of — and his enslavement by — metre, and his rare flashes of illumination and inspiration. Like the imperishability of the spirit of which he often sang, we know that his work will resist the all-devouring maw of time.

Combined Cultural Activities Among...  
**British Council-Royal Agricultural and  
Commercial Society - Union of Cultural  
Clubs**

by Vincent Roth—Hony. Secretary. R.A. & C. Society

A prominent and pleasing feature of cultural development in British Guiana has been the recent combined activities of the British Council, the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society and the Union of Cultural Clubs, the last a young but powerful organization including some thirty different organizations whose main object is the dissemination and fostering of the various forms of culture in the Colony.

It being a fixed principle of the British Council, when working in British territory to operate only through the medium of an existing organization, it was but fitting that in this Colony the Council should choose as its working medium the oldest cultural society in British Guiana and the only Royal Society in the Caribbean area.

At a meeting of a special sub-committee of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society held on 17th January, 1945, it was decided that in so far as its cultural activities are concerned the Society should co-operate with the Union of Cultural Clubs and on this assumption Mr. A. W. Steward, the local representative of the British Council set out those activities which he felt might be sponsored by the Council through the Society. These included the regular publication of the Society's well-known magazine *Timehri*, public lectures on cultural subjects, study circles and classes in English literature, the formation of an amateur dramatic company, special study circles in music, an art gallery, classes and the formation of a purchasing fund for the acquisition of local works, popular science and a historical society.

Then came the great fire of 23rd February, 1945, and all cultural schemes were shelved temporarily to make room for matters of greater urgency. But by August the enthusiasm and energy of the British Council representative who by this time had become a Director of the Society, got things going again



and there was set up a Joint Committee of Cultural Activities composed of Mr. F. Ray H. Green ( Convener), Captain G. H. Smellie and the Hon. Vincent Roth—representing the Society—Mr. A. W. Steward — representing the Council — Mr. N. E. Cameron, Miss M. Mansfield and Mr. A. J. Seymour —representing the Union—with Miss N. Martins as Secretary.

This Joint Committee received an Annual subsidy of \$480 from the British Council and immediately set about organizing courses of public lectures.

These lectures were inaugurated on 4th October. 1945, when Dr. J. A. Heuvel, A.R.C.M., began a course of ten weekly lectures on **'The Understanding and Appreciation of Music'**. This course was so successful that, under the sponsorship of the British Council, Dr. Heuvel subsequently went to Jamaica to deliver the lectures in that Colony. On the 9th October the second course on English Literature was begun. This course was not given by a single lecturer but by the following ladies and gentlemen :—

A. W. Steward, B.A. — **'Chaucer and his Age'** and **'Dr. Johnson and his Friends'**.

Archdeacon R. M. Pattison-Muir, M.A. — **'Spencer the Elizabethan'**, and **'Tennyson the Victorian'**.

Mr. R. C. G. Potter, B.A. — **'Marlowe and the Mermaid Tavern'**.

Miss Marion Small, B.A. — **'Milton the Puritan'**.

Miss M. Peters, B.A. — **'Dryden and the Restoration'**.

Mr. A. J. Seymour — **'Pope the Augustan'** and **'T. S. Eliot the Modern'**.

Mrs. F. H. Allen, B.A. — **'Wordsworth and the Romantic Revival'**.

The second series of lectures began on 24th January, 1946, with a course of ten lectures on Guianese History by the Hon. Vincent Roth and a course on Field Botany by Mr. J. H. Bevis, B.Sc. Then followed **'Ten Plays of Shakespeare'** by the following :—

Mrs. F. H. Allen, B.A. — **'Richard II'**.

Rev. Robert Gray — **'Henry V'**, and **'Hamlet'**.

Mr. A. J. Seymour—'Antony and Cleopatra', and 'King Lear'.

Ven. Archdeacon R. M. Pattison-Muir, M.A.—'Twelfth Night', and 'The Tempest'.

Miss L. Dewar, B.A.—'Much Ado About Nothing'.

Major E. J. Haywood. B.A.—'Macbeth'.

Mr. R. C. G. Potter, B.A.—'Othello'.

All these courses were well attended and apparently greatly appreciated by the listeners.

A third series of lectures has been arranged to commence in September, 1946, when it is hoped that Dr. C. C. Nicholson will lecture on 'Child Psychology', and Mr. Bevis give a further course on Botany. Mr. S. Bracewell will later give a lecture course on Field Geology (possibly in December, 1946).

The Society in conjunction with the Governing Body of the British Guiana Museum, has brought into operation a scheme whereby each body will put up \$120 per annum for the purpose of purchasing local art work of merit and so forming the nucleus of a National Gallery. A small Committee under the chairmanship of His Honour Mr. Justice Luchoo has already made purchases for this purpose and the pictures will in the meantime be hung in the Public Free Library.

Beauty Waits in the...  
**CEMETARY AT CABACABURI**  
by Celeste Dolphin

Always I fight shy of cemeteries. I don't like them. Graves make me conscious of death, and the smell of Eau-de-Cologne, and white cloths around a jaw, and anguish and human misery. I have stood, but not without a feeling of revulsion, in the churchyard of St. James-the-Less, Kitty, considered a hallowed and beautiful place. I have gone, although a little reluctantly to St. Michael's Churchyard, Barbados; and although memory is sometimes liable to err, it seemed to me that every little leaf had been carefully tended to add just that effect to the general impressive design. But man-made. It was still a graveyard for me—with the shapes of death apparent everywhere, its monstrous marble cottages almost impatient to engulf you, living as you are.

But Cabacaburi—here is beauty in a cemetery. A place where the most irreligious finds a peace that is so tangible and even solid, that it hurts. It makes one acutely aware of being unworthy and the pettiness of daily living and the futility of things.

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At Cabacaburi any morning can be Sunday. The Pomeroun flows, sometimes dark green and sometimes black, and runs quietly past the little landing place. On either side of the river, trees tall and thick reach up to the sky. Sometimes when the tide is calm, the water is so clear that you can see the reflection of tree and blue sky in the mirror below, a jagged cross stitch pattern.

The landing, a few planks of wood on what look like stilts, is rather in disrepair, but tied there with bushrope are dozens of children's school canoes and dugouts. It is a picturesque scene, little brown bodies leaping like fish in and out of the water and the sun glistening on their wet skins.

Behind the landing, the giant Coomacka keeps watch over Cabacaburi. The huge Dutch iron chain around its roots still

supports the legendary chest of gold and diamonds in the river.

Rising in red earth terraces, the clearing, then the teacher's house, the college (a small troolie but with some books and papers) then the church and the vicarage (part wood, part troolie) then the white sand around the school and immediately behind, the Cabacaburi cemetery in the forest.

Wednesday or Sunday there is quiet, but with children's voices shouting, laughing.

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You enter. The path in the cemetery is covered with dry bamboo and cocoa leaves, leaves of green and gold, and dotted with yellow March plums that have fallen from the over-hanging trees. It is a narrow path, on either side of which are towering trees of bamboo, plum, cocoa, coffee, pear — a heterogeneous collection but bamboo everywhere, bamboo soaring slenderly above the other trees and curving over to intertwine hundreds of feet in the air, like a guard of honour of crossed swords. They are jealous of the sun, these bamboos, and from where you stand on the ground, looking up, there is the live roof of the leaves of the massive pear and the plum beneath the over-arching bamboo, and clouds move and change, all making a filigree upon blue sky.

Sometimes the wind blows and shifts the lower terraces of green leaves and you are allowed to see a wider stretch of blue sky, with the tall green glistening bamboos whipping magnificently across the blue. Then the terraces close again.

As you go further in, now and again it is dark. The trees are thick and they grow so close together that they shut out the sun, and then the wind will blow and the sudden sunlight dazzles you. When the rain falls this crowded shade makes an umbrella of the forest: but after the shower has passed and the sun is shining again, leaf after leaf pours its cupful of water down from the upper storeys and you quickly become aware that rain has fallen as the water trickles down your head and back.

Always you hear the birds but you don't often see them and when you look up hoping to see one, that may be the very time when a ripe plum will fall and thump you sharply on your back or neck.

On either hand as you go along the path bright leaves burst on your sight, red one side, green the other growing on the Dragon's Blood trees just above eye-level. The leaves are large and as long as a man's arm and so vivid in colouring against the background of bamboo stalks you might think them vulgar, if anything in nature can be vulgar.

As a basement to this canopy of green tones and blue sky, and in contrast with the blood of the dragon, there is the ankle deep carpet at your feet of dead leaves. Parts of this carpet are dark and others splashed with sunlight, and there are little clusters of flowers of blue and purple and pink here and there. A tuft of flowers will quiver as the black-eyed lizards slither through. There is no green like the emerald of these little lizards, and quite fearlessly they dart and play hide and seek, chameleon, around your feet.

Among the leaves, just above the ground, you come early upon little raised mounds, quiet mounds. Some have small wooden crosses and some have little green trees marking the spot, very few of the graves have headboards. You will be shown the grave of Cornelius, the first grave you meet in the cemetery. He was the first Arawak convert and since 1868, pilgrimages have been made to his grave. Here is no marble, no mocking tomb. Everything grows luxuriantly, unfettered, wild and free, without the aid of shears.

The peace of elegy is there, and this peace seeps within you as you walk along. In this peace, time passes easily, quickly but beautifully. You walk along the little tracks, you sit upon fallen tree trunks, but everywhere there is peace. And it is true of Cabacaburi, if of anywhere else, that trees where you sit shall crowd into a shade.

The graves are friendly here; they harbour no spirits that may do you harm, but here are people resting quietly, happy to be there. Ordinarily you wouldn't eat fruit in a burial ground, but if a plum should fall upon a mound, it would be natural for you to pick it up and eat it. And you are surprised and perhaps even a little ashamed to find yourself thinking that here is beauty in a graveyard, such beauty as only death brings.

You sit on a piece of fallen tree trunk, covered with moss, and you think and think.

Beneath your feet is the carpet of green and gold brown leaves that the wind has drifted down, damp and unbroken except where clusters of the blue and purple flowers, cousins to forget-me-nots push their way up just above the surface and bring an unpretentious beauty of their own. Then you look up and you see upon a gnarled old pear tree indistinct markings cut upon the bark. They mean absolutely nothing to you. You look again and your imagination broods, and in keeping with the folk tradition of Amerindian peoples, it could be a drawing, made upon the bark, of Christ upon the Cross.

Someone who knows will tell you that what you see there are, in picture fashion, the words—no, not the words, the sentiments of the beginning of the Lord's prayer. And being Arawak himself, he will pause a little before he tells you. And this is what he says:—

*"W'acinaci, aiomun kondi bui. Saren bu'iri ikitwan bia".*

You realise it is Arawak, the language that Schomburghk thought so melodious and sweet sounding that he compared it with the Italian. And you ask what it means. And he tells you. *"Our Father:...Which art in Heaven:... Hallowed be Thy name:"*

In the feeling of beauty that comes over you, the music of the soft Arawak language is interfused with the meaning of the Lord's prayer. And with the surroundings, themselves a haunt of peace...Hallowed be Thy Name.

No : Cabacaburi is not a cemetery as cemeteries go. Beauty waits here, beauty in the cemetery.

## OLD CLOTHES

Wine comes sweet with time, and a suit that has gone green with age has entered upon its second spring. It is now upon an era of love, not the particular and fastidious care that is bestowed on new clothes, but the hearty, hard-worn comradeship that has grown from long and close association. Old clothes are better than friends, if the Shakespearean line be true. A friend should only bear a friend's infirmities, but old clothes hide them from the view. They know the angular corners and they cover them with a familiar case.

In the very nature of clothes, they were intended merely for covering against sun and cold, and wind and rain. But someone included indecency in the class of natural elements, and clothes became covering against indecency and sun and cold, and wind and rain. All must have gone well for a few prehistoric centuries, and then women (God bless them every one) discovered the uses of clothes as armaments in the war of attraction against men. From that day comfort is a quality only found in old clothes.

When the great civilisations of the world become more enlightened, every book of statutes will forbid the giving away of old clothes as a sacrilege, and make such a malicious action a ground for divorce. It pierces one's heart to know that given away have been the clothes he has coaxed and shaped to his figure, the clothes that he has played the architect with and moulded to the temple of his body, the clothes that he has now learned to wear as an outer skin. Gone to beggars or worse as an undistinguished member of a heap of old garments at a jumble sale. For this last indignity means that old friends have been trafficked for money. At least, they should have been given to beggars out of charity, which is another name for love.

I could raise a separate lament for each tie gone, each tie that has known its knots (for it's a wise tie that knows its own knots), for beloved breeches out at knees and sweet coats out at elbows. The pity of it, the great pity of it.

I sometimes think of the looped and windowed raggedness of beggars and their houseless sides, and I feel then theirs must be very heaven. Consider my love for old clothes intensified, their wearing made compulsory, their oldness mellowed with dust and heat, joined to a mind that is philosophic, that cares naught for wind and rain and sun and cold—and indecency. Go to the beggars, ye well dressed, consider their garb and be wise.



For the Boy Every Day was...

**TUESDAY!**

by J. A. V. Bourne

*"Give us this day our daily bread..."*

Slowly the chanting murmur of the young voices died away. Morning prayers were over.

There was a pause and then the school bell rang pleasantly. It was breakfast time and the children began to make preparations for leaving.

The young boys lined up and marched out of the schoolroom: as usual John Bancroft was among the first three to leave.

Johnnie was not yet 5 years old but he considered himself quite a lad. He didn't sit on the floor and play with blocks like the other little boys. He had already been promoted to a desk and was learning about figures and time and days.

Last Tuesday his daddy had given him a new brown cork hat. That made him feel important, because only big box in the school wore these helmets. Why was his daddy always late in taking him home at breaktime? But never mind, he went along in a car while the other boys in his class were towed away on bicycles.

A horn sounded in the distance. He recognised the note and knew that his car would soon be at the school door. John picked up his bag and got ready.

The motor car slowed down and stopped at the convent gate. The boy ran out towards the car. The front door was opened and he stepped in and sat down beside his father.

*"John, haven't I told you not to bite your lip?"*

The boy relaxed his mouth and laughed. It was the same thing day after day. Biting his lip — a nervous habit. His father wondered, as he changed gears and proceeded along Church Street, if the boy would grow out of it. This was his second term at the kindergarten school, and the teacher had told him that John was very bright for his age. That wasn't news for him because he knew that his son had recited the whole alphabet from memory at the age of two.

Was he as clever when he was a child? He didn't know; he couldn't remember; but as he watched his son, he tried to imagine his own boyhood and live over again the early days of his life. He too must have behaved as his boy was behaving.

*"Joseph, look the Mosque!"* John broke into his thoughts.

He slowed down and glanced to the left. It was a fine sunny day and the three domes of the Building shone beautifully against the deep blue of the sky.

Why had he been called "Joseph"? He recollected his father remarking to mother...*"He will be good at figures"*. And he once read in a book that the name meant —He shall add! It was apt because he was very fond of mathematics. He should have named his son, Joseph. He too was always counting.

*"Johnnie, what did you learn at school today?"*

It was the same answer every day. Figures.

*"And daddy, I count to one hundred and I write on board and chalk."*

*"You write with chalk now?"*

*"Yes. I drew apples and a house and a car!"*

It looked as if the boy was unconsciously conditioning himself to the good things of life.

Now, in *his* school days there were no cars; what had fascinated him were books —books about travel and adventure. Reading them had stimulated his imagination and created an urge to see the world. And that was why he had left the comforts of his home when he was only 17 for a living in far countries. Would his son be as enterprising as he had been?

Sounding the horn he crossed New Garden Street slowly and turned into the gate of his house.

Thank heave, he owned his home and he would leave it in his will for John. He knew from experience a man's best friend was his property; and he must take out another Life Assurance policy for the benefit of his boy. He should have the means of going to College. He must earn his living respectably.

*"Johnnie, you're doing fine at school. I'm glad."*

*"Yes daddy...Oh! Joseph, let me hold the wheel."*

The car slowed down and stopped.

*"And Joseph, when I grow up I'll get a car more bigger than yours."*

*"You have ideas, boy; I hope you make a success of your life. Let's go upstairs for breakfast."*

He paused in the garden and picked a flower. *"What day is today, John?"*

*"Tuesday!"*

*"But why Tuesday, John, every time I ask you that question you say "Tuesday," why?"*

*"Because Mammy was in hospital and came out Tuesday."*

His first memory! The boy had never forgotten his first separation from his mother and the day she came home had been fixed in his mind. Tuesday! How was he to know the days, anyway! He couldn't read.

*"Well, John, today is Friday, And were having chicken for breakfast."*

*"Oh! chicken. And I'll get the tail!"*

*"Oh! No. That's for me, I'll give you a big fat wing!"*

He inserted the latch-key in the door and opened

*"You run along now and wash your hands before you come to table."*

Such a charming little fellow! Every day the same answers!

Figures...and a car *more* bigger and every day was Tuesday for him. Every day!

**END**

## A BRITISH GUIANA WRITERS' ASSOCIATION PRIZE FUND

One of the plans which the Executive has in mind and which every British Guianese would like to see wearing the cloak of reality at an early date, is the establishment of a Literary Prize Fund. Everyone, I am sure, will agree that the time is ripe when there should be annual awards of some kind — something like the Nobel Prize.

Here is a suggestion. There should be three annual literary awards; I would saw a gold medal and a certificate in each case:

I — Poetry — The Leo Medal.

II — Fiction — The Webber Medal.

III — Non-Fiction and Drama — The Clementi Medal (Perhaps?)

Perhaps local patrons of literature may be sufficiently interested and may desire to do something tangible for British Guianese literature.

In any case the idea is well worth serious thought. Think about it, will you?

**J.W.S.**

The Guianese Art Group's Secretary on...  
**PAINTING IN BRITISH GUIANA**

by D. L. Bourne

Painting in British Guiana no doubt might have had its horizons—horizons that were contemporaneous with those flowerings of the New World the Inca, Mayan or Aztec epochs of culture. This fact has only been barely indicated by the discovery of examples of Indian rock-painting near Imbaimadai. Future research might reveal more tangible evidence of the existence of a period of painting comparable to those that have been known to flourish in other parts of South and Central America. Up to the present time, not enough of this Indian art has been revealed to have had any recognizable influence upon painting in this colony. This has not been so in the case of Mexico and other parts of the Americas.

Then what about the colonists? Did the French bring us any of their Art? If they did they left us none, neither did the Dutch, who seemed only concerned with trading and building forts and dykes. To the British who ultimately controlled the colony a trace of influence can be credited. This however, is very slight since it has reached our present art in an indirect way—through the personalities of the artists themselves. The colonists who came to Guiana left her nothing that impressed or influenced her Art, unlike the flamboyant Spaniard who gave to Mexico and Cuba much of the baroque art of Velasquez and Murillo, and the boldness of Goya.

British Guianese painting has no heritage. This is unfortunate on one hand and on the other it serves a useful purpose. It gives the artists of British Guiana an opportunity to develop a style of their own and free themselves the Old World traditions. Today, for instance, in Jamaica, painting is experiencing the development of an independent style which already shows an appreciable difference in its treatment, colour and modelling that is distinguishing it from work of the Northern schools. This the Jamaicans are terming "Native Art".

The methods and the technique of painting which we will employ cannot be different from those used universally; but our country itself, its people, give us the opportunity of creating works that are unique compared with the rest of the world and even our Caribbean neighbours. We can have an Art of our own that reflects the amazing beauty and vastness of our country, the peculiar heliotrope shadows so characteristic of a Guiana afternoon as well as the varied traditions of its people.

In recent years an awakening of interest has been noticeable, both among artists and in the public. The number of pieces submitted as well as the standard of the work increases with every exhibition, and the public's admiration is even greater when the fact is considered that our artists are for the most part self-taught and have not had opportunities of deriving any of the benefits good books on Art and Museums and Galleries could give. Even the materials used are limited and usually not of the highest quality. Despite this a marked improvement is apparent.

These advances are mainly due to the activities of B.G. Arts and Crafts Society which was formed principally through the efforts of Mrs. Monty-White. This society was the first of its kind to bring together a strong and representative group of artists in the colony. The achievements of its founders and members will remain forever a corner-stone in the foundation of our art structure. From this parent organization grew the Guianese Art Group upon whose shoulders has fallen the task of carrying on and elaborating upon the excellent work that has been commenced. One of the recent achievements of this latter group was the holding, for the first time in British Guiana, of a West Indian Art Exhibition. Although the pieces exhibited were not fully representative of the colonies taking part, the Exhibition helped to convey an impression of the style, spirit, and general upsurge of Art in the Caribbean area. It is hoped that future exhibitions of this nature will embrace a greater number of colonies and examples of painting by their best artists.

The Guianese Art Group has among its members all of the pioneer British Guiana artists as well as the best of the crop of the younger ones. Together these artists are doing a valuable

job in stimulating art consciousness here in British Guiana. It is noticeable that artists have become more active and are working throughout the year. Until recently much work was not done except in preparation for Exhibitions which were held far too infrequently. It is also noticeable that more sales are effected at exhibitions than formerly, which is a sure sign of the public's growing appreciation.

Another factor that is greatly responsible for this stir is the assistance and encouragement that has been afforded artists by the British Council. Books and periodicals on Art are made available from the small but valuable collection in the British Council Library, and sound advice and encouragement is given by the Representative himself, Mr. Steward, to the artists with whom he comes into contact.

I feel sure that we are now witnessing the infancy of a great century of Art in this colony, and in future when this period is looked back upon, such artists as Burrowes, Sharples, Vanier, Phang and Moshett will be regarded as the pioneers. The names of Golde-White, Herbert Haines and more especially Mary Heron-Bruce will also be mentioned as having contributed tremendously, although they were not Guianese. The artists I have just mentioned have given us a promiscuous dawn; the brightness of the day depends upon the young artists like Gomes, Williams, Hinds, Bourne and those who will follow. From indications it seems that they will not disappoint.

I look upon the future with hope in our talent and the confidence that painting in British Guiana will attain a standard comparable with our mighty Kaieteur.

## FAREWELL TO ALAN W. STEWARD

Saturday evening, April 27, at the British Council Office, was the occasion of a farewell party held by the B.G. Writers' Association in honour of Mr. Alan W. Steward, British Council Representative in British Guiana. In reply to toasts Mr. Steward said that he would always remember the Association.

The proceedings were enlivened by music on gramophone records and the showing of films, '**Invitation to the Dance**' and the '**History of the English Language**', and the '**Life Story of an Onion**'.

Mr. Steward has always been a friend of the Association from the very beginning, and sorry as we are to lose him, he carries with him our best wishes for success in his new appointment. To him :

“ We touch our hearts as the Easterners do.  
May the Peace of Allah abide with you ! “

— J. W. S.

The Georgetown Free Library Discussion Circle holds fortnightly meetings in the Library on Fridays at 5.30 p.m.

The Circle began 3 or 4 years ago on an idea of the Librarian, Miss Ruby Franker and at the inaugural meeting presided over by Mr. B. R. Wood (then Conservator of Forests and member of the Library Committee) 50 persons attended. Within 3 or 4 months, the attendance had dropped to 12 to 15 regular members who maintain the Circle's activities.

Discussions are held on books in the Library, and subjects of topical, Guianese and West Indies interest. The May— July, 1946 syllabus include discussions on '**Housing in British Guiana**', '**Dr. Eric Williams' Capitalism and Slavery**', '**Some aspects of Fiction**', '**Black Metropolis**' (the Negro problem in USA), '**Slaying the Debt Dragon**' (discussion on Co-operatives) and '**Social Welfare**'.



Is it Possible to Have Virtue without Morals?  
**VIRTUE AND MORALS—(An Analysis)**

by Horace L. Mitchell

WHAT IS VIRTUE, or what essential qualities combine in its formation? It may be termed a peculiarly instinctive discrimination of right from wrong, or between their relative forces; a certain divine intuitive perception which reveals to the possessor the evils in a certain action or thought. It is the God in man. It must be remembered that man is part God and part earth. Since virtue represents that God in man, it is only logical and rational to conclude that in its godliness it will be opposed to evil and wrong-doing. It is unnecessary to say that a virtuous person will be rational in action, that is, will be capable of reasoning the “pros” and “cons” of a certain action before attempting it—the faculty of reason determines man’s position as the first of animals—as a result, every deed will be virtuous, for the source is virtuous, and no moral will be necessary for its maintenance. In his spontaneity of action. A virtuous man could never need morals. Virtue is inborn.

When a person has erred from the ways of virtue, morals may afterwards form a confident source of strength for the existence ahead. Morals are nought but a code of human ethics based on the good opinions of others of oneself, one’s earthly thoughts and aspirations. It may be asked, how then did the person err from the ways of virtue? I say through Innocence. It may be asked what is my conception of Innocence? I say Innocence is virtue in its irrational state, and consequently, not truly virtue itself. Innocence is gullible, virtue is not. Innocence admits of credulity not credibility. Innocence conquered by guile and florid flattery, —deceptive vices of evil—does not reason the “pros” and “cons” of a certain situation, but with a look of rueless resignation, dumb vacancy and drowsy indolence as if the details revealed were ever elusive and unrealy fascinating, surrenders in a half-hypnotized state of mortified intelligence to a supposedly superior mind. Virtue itself may be assaulted but never injured, surprised by an unjust force but never conquered. Innocence, the irrational state of virtue, is the one state conducive to the destroying force of virtue.

Some admit of men being born with virtue, but deny of their not needing morals for its proper maintenance. I am wholly in disagreement. Virtue consists in doing good for good alone, "*a habitual sense of right, and the habitual courage to act up to that right,*" and consequently, is independent of any other thought or motive for its preservation. Any act that pertains to self, social obligations and humanity in general in its good development is not virtuous but moral. Genuine goodness, the inspiring force of any virtuous act, is not then considered, but rather the consequence of the act in connection with one's earthly existence is thought of. Morals relate to a person's obligations to his fellow-men,—his parents, friends, the opposite sex—and a visible observance of the conventional rules of courtesy, demeanour and propriety, all a set of practical ideas, no doubt, evolved from the virtuous thoughts of man. In fact, an ardent endeavour by man to recollect his actions before flight from Eden. Virtue was first, that is admitted, morals came afterwards. Virtue must have existed some time before morals were developed. Why then, not admit of the possibility of virtue carrying on that existence without morals? It is possible. This virtuous existence without morals may not always be carried on in the world as we know it—a world of education as set by men; morals will be unconsciously absorbed, and as a result virtue's independence will be forever crushed. But left to 'vegetate' away from modern influences, in a life of splendid isolation from the obligations one owes to a social world; left only for its natural growth, free from obtrusive duties, all the faculties unimpaired by cramped inactivity and indolence, then brought to face evil without any moral basis, virtue will be undefeated. Once may ask, how could that be? I answer that they will both use the same means for attack and defence — Reason. I do not admit of brutal animalism and crude beastliness triumphing over virtue; that is the triumph of "motor" might over right or sublimated gentleness by sheer brute resistless force. But I admit of reason against reason; reason fortified by virtuous thoughts; then virtue cannot fail. It may be also said that virtue will be undefeated only by means of its isolation and not by dint of its divine goodness, and when subsequently exposed to the world will be

overcome through lack of morals. I contradict that. I say virtue, loyal to goodness alone, the innate sense of godliness, would do nothing wrong. The ability to reason right, as opposed to wrong, will always be the deterrent to wrongdoing. If, however, virtue should appear to err, that deceptive appearance was given by innocence, thus virtue is not really at fault.

In the world of today the elements of virtue and morals are strongly mixed and shamefully confused. This is, indeed, deplorable. It not only shows that the concept of virtue has been almost obliterated by the "modern" line of thought, but that man has lost his rational individuality, and consequently, the ability to perceive how he once had appeared and acted at the beginning of time when the prevailing passion of perverted mentality and evil had been unheard of, much less had been strong enough to have overcome the spirit of the pure.

Fire Purges...

**The Georgetown Fire and the Future of  
British Guiana**

by Eric Roberts

Many of these buildings that Georgetown lost in the fire of February 23, 1945 had been erected during the last century and represented the best in Victorian Architecture. The Victorian elements are by a wide margin, superior in beauty and design to our present structures. Gone are the days when the crystal rays of chandeliers flickered against the walls, and beamed forth smilingly upon dark and shining floors. Years have rolled since, the romantic art of carving which distinguished many of our buildings today, has become obsolete; and those buildings are cherished in appreciation of the epochs in which they were fashionable. But today, the advent of Science, every conceivable device being utilized, to help or destroy man, many items give rise to industrialization, to a degree beyond all expectations. At our disposal now are many gases and minerals, so dangerous that the slightest error may involve destruction to life and property. As a precautionary measure against another catastrophe of this nature, a new system of buildings would undoubtedly take the place of those now in ruins.

During the past 25 years, we have made quite a name for ourselves as a Country of Ambition. Commerce is the chief contributor to our appreciation. Many secondary business places have been opened and they have absorbed to our satisfaction a fair amount of unemployed. The participation of Government in the encouragement of local enterprises, has contributed and is contributing greatly to the success of our economic developments. Georgetown although it has suffered miserably from the neglect of capital speculation, is looked upon with pride in the truest sense as a Caribbean metropolis of no mean distinction. Coming at a time when our post-war plans were being effected, the Fire should be looked upon as something to be grateful for. By this statement I simply mean that had it occurred at the practical realization of our plans, it

would then be looked upon as a shattering blow: and would have cast a shadow of gloom over the entire Country. Therefore it would be well for us to look to the firms, and to the people that have suffered directly from the effects with patriarchal reverence for our future progress.

The Fire has taught us that there is a difference between the pioneering stage and the fully developed one. The pioneering stage of our commercial economy is passed and gone; and it is now the enhancement of the latter stage that must be treated as of primary importance. The appearance of this phenomenon has clearly indicated the birth of new structures in which fears that one little fire-outbreak would lead to something of a catastrophic nature would be forced to lie dormant within us.

Let us now consider the erection of fire-resisting buildings. To my mind the most suitable material for such purpose is concrete. Georgetown is the hub of this Country, and has to shoulder the responsibility for the safety of three and one half hundred thousand people. It is the life-line of our existence, and great energy and initiative *are* required in keeping it stimulated. In raising arguments for better constructed buildings in the place of those obliterated by fire; it would be unwise to overlook the condition of many that are left standing. These must be completely reconditioned, to conform with those that would be built out of the ruins. With the practical realization of such a plan, feelings of pride would eventually surge through us and we would look upon Water Street, much as the citizens of the USA look upon Wall Street. No doubt, many would regard this as wishful thinking, but judging from the remarkable strides that we have made commercially, in less than a decade, it would not be at all surprising in the next ten years, should we find it difficult to distinguish sites that we see now.

We must look upon this fire as the initial step in the evolution of communal progress. It has brought to the fore the ecstasy of Unity and Co-operation that was in the past only a verbal expression. The sincerity and earnestness which were demonstrated by the commercial community in rendering practical aid to those who were directly affected by the disaster, is a matter that could never be overestimated.

Another factor of equal importance is the recognition by the employers of the invaluable assistance by their employees. This clearly indicates what magnanimous benefits can accrue from the hand-in-hand policy of these two parties upon whose shoulders rests the destiny of our country. The gallant display by our commercial men in taking the drubbing on their feet, with a profound desire to establish themselves once again, is something that should stimulate every true Guianese soul. It is a noble exhibition on the part of men who are not easily discouraged by frustration, and with this in view, we can have no fear regarding the future of our country.

Let us now turn our thoughts to social objectives. In the destruction of the Museum we lost relics, over one hundred years old, ranging from animals of the wildest parts of our jungles to those which accompany us along the Coastlands: birds of every size and magnificence, of Solomon arrayed in all his glory. Nevertheless the loss of the Museum is not irreparable, for in its place could be erected two buildings, which would undoubtedly be more beneficial to the community and also command greater respect from the foreigner. These are a Zoo and an Art Gallery.

In discussing the former item, nothing for its enhancement proves in any way difficult. Our Botanical Gardens comprise over 180 acres, of which at least 4 acres could be made sufficiently useful for such a project. With an eye on Government's plan for Hinterland Development, we could rest assured that no chaos would present itself in the discovery of animals, reptiles, and birds suitable for a Zoo. To erect a Zoo, with all modern conveniences, to attract Capital, would need a tidy amount which we must not underestimate. But my contention is that given time, it would make back whatever has been spent on it. A reasonable fee within the majority's pockets, is sure to bring success, a success that will inevitably lead to more interested onlookers, more energy, and initiative in seeking for more exhibits, which may even result in widening the boundaries of our project in a short space of time. It is my opinion that public services of this type tend to distinguish this country as one that is not only an outpost of the British Empire, geographically, but flourishes under her banners in all the traditions and glory.

An Art Gallery is an essential long overdue. It is something more than a mere exhibition of various paintings and creations. It mirrors the character of a nation, community or individual. For instance, we distinguish a home by the pictures we see hanging in it. If these pictures are of characters, who have in some way or other accomplished a task by which the human race has nobly benefited: or of some beautiful part of the Earth's surface, we can infer that home is a living testimony of an orthodox life in which a thorough moral conception of elevated and intellectual examples can be acquired. With that fact in our minds, we now turn to the building of a new type of Guianese culture.

It would be well for us to embark upon the task of recreating from our History, characters and events that are seldom familiar to the tourist. By these, he would be forced to realize and even to respect the ideals of a thriving community, whose influence in world affairs in the near future may not be regarded as an overambitious project. Another is the fact, that he would get to understand much of our country, in a shorter period than he would by poring over the contents of a manual.

Let us erase from our memories, the temporary inconvenience that this disaster has placed upon many of our people, and look upon it as the beginning of a new Era. Many of the unworthy sights to which we were accustomed have been obliterated, and we must therefore hope that "*History will not repeat itself*" by allowing these grotesque scenes to dominate their former threshold.

We must get to the point: it has been openly admitted by many of England's statesmen that the indiscriminate bombing of London must be looked upon as "*a blessing in disguise*." The obliteration of the 'slum areas' will give rise to better buildings and a better layout of that City. Let us therefore look upon this devastation as a foundation stone for the future of this country.

As I saw on that February afternoon the thick dull smoke fleeing in front of a steady south-westerly breeze, I wondered what Fate had in store for us. Then sometime after as the Fire was subdued, I saw the moon appear over a cloudless sky, then a white smoke like phosphorous, formed a semi-circle

around the devastated area; and from within the rubble and debris a vivid illumination could be seen through the slowly rising smoke. The summits of the telegraph poles which the fire was stealthily eating away kindled into flames, and the satellites of the moon lent harmony to this majestic panorama. I looked upon them as a symbol of our future achievements.

By ridding ourselves of our fears for the future, and seeking in earnest that elusive quality of Co-operation, for the good of our country and ourselves, we should in every way be hastening our steps towards Self Government.

In that Fire a youthful life was made a martyr and it is therefore on the youths of this country that the solution of the problem rests—*“Whether he should feel justified by his death, or that his life was lost in vain.”*

Since the fire many discussions have taken place in which ideas vary one from another, regarding effects on the future of British Guiana. One fact however is certain, and that is, that by our initiative and energy in seeking progress, a Georgetown better than before will emerge from these ruins.



Written by a 70-year-old "Young Man", back to  
1891 go these...

## **CULTURAL MEMORIES**

by L. R. Chase

At the present time (March 1946) thirty clubs have sought membership with the British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs. Of this number eight are Church Organizations and twenty-two are independent of the Church.

Now fifty-five years ago a Cultural Union in British Guiana would have included in its membership nothing but Church organizations—the Churchmen's Union housed on the basement of St. Philip's Vicarage which then stood at the corner of Smyth and Hadfield Streets, and three Bands-of-Hope conducted by St. Andrew's Church, Trinity Church and Smith Memorial Church, respectively. These would have been the City's contribution. The rural districts had nothing or very little to add to this list.

The Churchmen's Union was of great use to the young men of the City, a few of whom passed their evenings in the Club room or profited by the debates, lectures, etc.. which regularly appeared on the syllabus.

To a limited extent the Bands-of-Hope catered to their members in literary matters, but their primary object was to win the country to teetotalism through the young. They deemed it better business to preach the gospel of abstinence to the young than to those who had already worshipped at the shrine of Bacchus.

Many of the young people joined the Bands-of-Hope because of their literary side. They would give up drinking when circumstances compelled them to do so. In that case the doctor or the employer would have to step in. That has always been the way with Drink.

But these early Cultural Institutions, good as they were, depended much on the whims of the Minister-in-charge, or on those of a Superintendent who got his authority from the Minister.

A couple of years later the Georgetown Dramatic Club and the Young Men's Institute could have claimed membership with our Cultural Union.

The two Dramatic Clubs did much towards developing what latent histrionic talent there was in the country. Each boasted a large membership. A small play for members and friends was a monthly feature of each club. A big play, like 'East Lynne' or 'The Lady of Lyons' was staged periodically.

'The Young Men's Institute' was the first real attempt to form a Literary Club independent of Church patronage or Church guidance. The leading spirits in this movement were C. B. Carto, Head Teacher of St. George's Church of England School; Charles Spooner, Chief Dispenser at the Public Hospital, Georgetown; E. N. McDavid, Chief Clerk to S. A. H. Culpeper; Thomas Williams, Master Carpenter, and T. N. Durant, Head Teacher of St. Saviour's Church of England School. Mr. Carto was the President and Mr. McDavid, the Honorary Secretary.

For a time the Institute occupied the flat over Kaufman's store in Camp Street, and then it changed its quarters to the Oddfellows' Lodge in Carmichael Street. The Institute "*carried on*" quite unobtrusively for some time. Then with a flourish of trumpets it held its inaugural meeting in the Town Hall, and from that moment it got into the decline, languished, and died.

Perhaps if a post mortem examination had been held the Coroner's verdict would have revealed the fact that the deceased had come to its death through indifference of the majority of its members to purely literary pursuits.

But the desire to carry on an independent literary club run by its members was not altogether dead. Every crisis produces its man; and the man of that hour was Frank Owen Franker, Cashier at Wieting & Richter. He, with his two brothers rallied again a few friends who had met week by week at his home for mutual improvement, previous to the founding of 'The Young Men's Institute'. Thus was founded 'The Young Men's Guild' in March, 1896.

In process of time increasing numbers required more spacious quarters, and it was Frank Franker who again rose to the occasion by providing better accommodation. And for fifty long years 'The Guild' has been functioning with no blast of trumpets but with a record which might well be the envy of more pretentious institutions. Of Frank Owen Franker it

may truly be said — “*He wrought his people lasting good.*”

And what has made ‘The Young Men’s Guild’ the success it has been? Perhaps if it were possible for me to give one word that could sum up the success of ‘Guild’ life that word would be THOROUGHNESS. No Slackness was tolerated in any member, be he President, Secretary, debater or essay-writer. I have seen the Honorary Secretary treated as though he was in receipt of a salary from ‘The Guild’ and a large one at that; and the President as though he was drawing \$10 per meeting night and yet failed to safeguard the interests of the shareholders. What an officer undertook to do had to be done thoroughly, for if the Opposition caught him napping the only person to pity him was his own faulty self. And all of this was carried on in a spirit that left not the slightest semblance of rancour behind it.

For the many years I had been an active member of ‘The Young Men’s Guild’ I invariably found myself in touch with a group of really fine young men. Some were good writers—good to the point of winning short-story prizes; some were fluent speakers; some were particularly good in after-dinner speeches; some recited faultlessly; some were keen debaters; some were wise; and a few were otherwise; but even these fitted in nicely to make up a literary mosaic of very pleasing pattern.

Some years after ‘The Guild’ had been in existence another group of young men started a similar club. They called themselves ‘The Young Guianese’ and their monthly magazine was similarly labelled.

In those days there was a fair number of these monthlies. ‘The Guild’ had its own—*The Young Man*—for which Editor E. N. McDavid was responsible. Each religious denomination had one, and the school teachers had their own. The Press was favoured with a copy of each of these publications every month for review. In reviewing a number of *The Young Guianese*, *The Argosy* said it was a readable publication unfortunately marred by “*a long and insipid poem.*” The name of the author was not affixed. In the next issue of the magazine its editor explained that that “*long and insipid poem*” was ‘**The Leechgatherer**’ written by Wordsworth. Oft times ordinary prosy mortals would say as much or worse of a poet,

but the name of the poet restrains criticism or veers it round to the other side. Of course, prudence counselled *The Argosy* to let the matter rest just there.

'The Young Guianese' — both man and magazine — did not function for long.

'The Young Men's Guild' has made "*footprints on the sands of time.*" It is doubtful, however, whether present day young men will follow on in the exact direction whither these footprints lead, for times change and customs change. We cannot ignore the fact that:

" The old order changeth yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways."

But in whatever direction 'The Young Men's Guild' may be guided, if the desire to do things thoroughly be the dominant note of both Executive and Opposition, then will the name of the 'Young Men's Guild' endure forever more.

The Schools of British Guiana—No. 2.

**ST. STANISLAUS COLLEGE**

by James W. Smith

It was in 1866 that the Catholic Grammar School for boys was started in Georgetown. The late Bishop Etheridge was headmaster, and the school at its inception comprised a mere handful of boys. Today, eighty years since that humble start was made, stands St. Stanislaus College—one of the educational landmarks of British Guiana.

St. Stanislaus is run by the Catholic Church in British Guiana, unaided by Government or any other agent. The school is run at a deficit which is met by the sponsoring of dances, fun fairs, and other forms of entertainment. Neither the presence of this annual deficit nor the possibility of its increase is in any way a damper on the progressive spirit of the school authorities. Proposals are already afoot for the extension of the school by the erection of an additional building. The proposed building which will be larger than the existing building, will accommodate about 400 boys, and when these proposals are realised St. Stanislaus will be one of the largest if not the largest school in British Guiana.

During the 20 year period 1880-1900, the school made the greatest strides forward in its history. The principal at that time was the Rev. Fr. Barraud, a brilliant literary man—a poet and a dramatist. He was mainly responsible for placing the school on its feet, and giving us today that Catholic centre of education and culture so well known to everyone in British Guiana.

Since Fr. Barraud's time St. Stanislaus has never looked back, and today under the capable leadership of the Rev. Fr. F. J. Smith, S.J., B.A., the school is one of the best educational centres in the colony. Of the candidates presented by St. Stanislaus College at the December 1945 Cambridge Junior and School Certificate Examinations, 85 per cent were successful. In addition the school possesses laboratory equipment adequate for the training of candidates up to the London University Higher School Certificate and Intermediate B.Sc. standards.

During the 10 year period 1931-1941, St. Stanislaus boys had the distinction of winning the British Guiana Scholarship on no less than four occasions. To Fr. Smith and his staff we say—Here's to the future; the destiny of a people lies in your hands!

Great things have small beginnings, and British Guianese can safely say that to schools like St. Stanislaus College we owe that progressive spirit which is one of the dominant characteristics of the young men of our time.

Literary Look-out over the Caribbean  
**FROM THE TOWER**

by The Editor

BRITISH GUIANA lies at the root of the curve of West Indian islands that runs from Florida down to the South American coast. It is a kind of anchor therefore, and from here in the Tower, it shouldn't be difficult to sweep the horizon with binoculars and see what emerges to catch the literary eye.

Regretfully, that excludes *Caribbean Post*, *West Indian Observer* and *Spotlight*, those Jamaican triumvirs. *Caribia*, the Guianese magazine, aims at serving the West Indies as a whole rather than a particular colony, and its present purpose is to provide an adequate anthology of West Indian literary and artistic endeavour. But Barbados has its *Bim* and its *Forum*. British Honduras has its *Outlook*; and though no copy seems yet available in British Guiana, Jamaica has had its *Focus* (1943). Grenada also has a magazine in preparation.

*Kyk-Over-Al* is a cousin magazine to these other little reviews, and all are devoted to an outlet for good work from young unknown writers and as a medium for experimental writing. All are out to produce the development of regional and area cultures and to build a public attitude where our local traditions are woven into the pattern of daily living. As A. L. Rowse said of Cornwall, "*we can do much to preserve our distinctive characteristics from being overwhelmed... and there is not so much beauty about us that we can afford to destroy it.*"

When neighbouring influences are strong—in the West Indies the separate English and American cultures are instances—they generally cause a culture to awake and express itself, and to answer the need for direction. More pithily, where there is no vision, the people perish. So the wise man chooses the best of what is offered by all and builds his own individuality. Nor must that be taken to mean that developing island individualities will delay West Indian federation. People must be aware of their differences before they unite. As Professor Whitehead would say, every occasion, whether a personality or a federation, has a past whose memories give it continuity and permanence and also

has a future which enables it to carve a world of actuality out of the realm of infinite possibilities. The little reviews we have in the West Indies are preserving our memories of the past for us and pointing into the future.

For instance, it stirs one in Guiana to learn that British Honduras, on September 10 every year, commemorates the Battle of St. George's Caye. At this battle in 1798 the men of the Bay of Honduras defeated a superior flotilla of Spaniards off or near Belize and ended a century and a half of struggle over the possession of Honduras. Every year, a special committee sponsors St. George's Caye Day Literary and Art Competitions.

This emerges from reading the *Outlook*, a quarterly magazine published by the St. John's Literary Society, Belize. Tradition roots there.

*Bim* is now in its fourth year of entertaining stories and verse, and its more serious work and *Forum* reaches back to December, 1931. It is good to hear the Editors of *Forum* say, "West Indian artists and writers have a peculiar contribution to make to the progress of their homeland, they have a distinctive point of view..." In the pages of *Forum*, Mr. H. A. Vaughan has been throwing valuable light upon the significance in Barbadian history of the eminent figure of Sir Conrad Reeves, and Dr. Eric Williams has been also eulogised in a recent issue.

All of which goes to show that the West Indies are awakening.

In recent years, books of poetry have been published in the West Indies that deserve more than an island audience. This is not a review page but this mention will serve.

There is in Trinidad, Neville Giuseppi's *The Light of Thought* (1943) poems with a strong philosophical and even a religious background. Frank A. Collymore (Barbados) has issued two books *Thirty Poems* (1944) and *Beneath the Casuarinas* (1945). Collymore writes in a personal manner and experiments with modern verse-forms, though not always successfully. His 'Prelude' is one among exquisitely lyrical poems. . . "The waiting arms, the understanding heart."

H. A. Vaughan (Barbados) has published *Sandy Lane and Other Poems* (1945), a collection that will delight any lover of poetry. Some very fine lyrics are there —



“ Turn sideways now and let them see  
What loveliness escapes the schools “ –

and a group of well-nigh perfect epigrams on distinguished Barbadians. Vaughan’s poetry has the hallmark of first-class quality upon it.

Archie Lindo (Jamaican) is perhaps better known as a dramatist and short story writer. His book of poems and short stories *My Heart was Singing* ( 1945) has much fine work in it. At the door of the book one happens upon this :

“ I saw a Lignum Vitae tree  
One evening in October  
And every branch upon the tree  
With violets covered over...”

But perhaps the most important book of poetry to come to British Guiana from the West Indian Islands is *First Poems* (1945) by George Campbell (Jamaica).

I doubt whether finer poetry has been written in the Caribbean ... “Daylight like a sacrament in my hands “...”A cloud that was the faintest breath within a time of gentian blue.”...

Or this first line of a poem written on Jamaica’s New Constitution, 1945.

“Now we’re tenants at will no longer,  
There’s more room.”

...or this:

“I dreamed  
Jesus kissed Lenin on the lips  
For the Russian Revolution “ ...

The binoculars catch sight of this new literary figure and one says “*The West Indies are coming of age. This is fine poetry.*”

## THE YOUNG MEN'S GUILD (1896 - 1946)

by David Ford

In a young country like British Guiana, it is no mean achievement for an organisation of any kind to reach its Fiftieth Anniversary. For a cultural organisation, as we call it nowadays, for a discussion club to celebrate its Golden Jubilee is to say the least most unusual. British Guiana should be proud of the Young Men's Guild.

Fifty years ago, on the 5th of March, 1896, to be precise, Frank Owen Franker, then quite a young man, invited eight of his friends to meet at his home to discuss local and other questions of the day. They met weekly, other friends joined them and soon was born the Young Men's Guild whose unbroken existence and activity since we here record. We are happy to be able to state that Mr. Franker continues to be associated with the Guild as its Patron.

Throughout its long life the Guild has served a useful and necessary purpose in the intellectual and cultural life of the community. It has, as every institution of its kind must, known its vicissitudes, but in spite of these, it has never ceased to meet, and to exert a sure, if quiet, influence for good on the minds of many of the thinking men of Guiana. It would be invidious to mention names here, suffice it to say that it is the rule rather than the exception, to find members of the Guild prominent in all fields of activity in the Colony.

The objects of the Guild have from the beginning been two-fold—intellectual and social. The achievement of these objects has been pursued through the debating of propositions, the reading and discussion of essays and papers and the delivery of addresses and lectures and their discussion. Musical evenings and play-readings have also been features of meetings. At one stage of its existence, the Guild maintained a Library and for some time published monthly *THE YOUNG MAN*, at first for circulation among members and later for sale to the public. Many encomiums were showered upon the now long defunct *YOUNG MAN* but it was not possible to maintain him. To those who love action above all, it may seem a futile thing to have spent fifty years, for the most part, in mere discussion.

And it may well be that the thinkers of this country have too often not been the doers. This, we are glad to say, appears to be a rapidly passing phase. When it is remembered that in a democratic community discussion is a necessary prelude to action, and that, although it cannot make the bad good, intelligent presentation may mean the difference between the adoption and the rejection of some desired project, the usefulness and the necessity of an organisation such as the Young Men's Guild is immediately realised. Herein lies the great need for the Guild in the future—to help provide a liberal intellectual foundation for coming citizens, some of whom may become the planners and leaders of this great country.

*The 50th Anniversary—March, 1946:*

The 50th Anniversary of the Guild was celebrated with a Reception held at the home of the President, Mr. E. A. Q. Potter and a dinner at the Hotel Tower.

At the Reception on Saturday the 2nd of March, the company included, as guests of the Guild, the British Council Representative in British Guiana, delegates from the member organisations of the British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs, the Young Men's Christian Association and kindred organisations, and friends of past and present members of the Guild. Presentations were made to the Founder, the President and Mrs. Potter and the Honorary Treasurer, Mr. H. G. Lord.

The Anniversary Dinner was held on Tuesday the 5th of March. The guests were Mr. A.W. Steward, British Council Representative, the Honourable T. Lee, Mr. A. Van Gronigen and Mr. B. Singh, representatives of the British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs, Mr. W.P. Smith, representative of the Young Men's Christian Association, Mrs. E.A.Q. Potter and Mrs. H.G. Lord. The Founder was present as well as many past and present members. After the loyal toast had been honoured, toasts were proposed to 'The Guild', 'The British Council' and 'The British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs'. Members of the Press attended both functions.

The Guild has also published a Fiftieth Anniversary Publication.

Literature has her Technologists, and:  
**Blessed be the Indexers...**

by H. R. Harewood

I spent Good Friday, the Saturday after, Easter Sunday, and Easter Monday indexing a book written by a colleague in the public service. I hope to be forgiven.

Bathsheba's beach, gloriously seductive, lay beneath my hotel window, and there was I, cooped up in my room chasing many words through many pages. In fairness to Bathsheba I should mention that I had a touch of malaria and so dared not join the bathers. But, still, I hope to be forgiven.

I learnt a lot from indexing this book. Not that it was the first book I had indexed. But the author of this particular book was a firm believer in Alternative Spellings of Names and from A to Z. I learnt that no matter how carefully you may think you have read proofs, the one final test where variants are concerned is to try compiling an index. I swore many a mighty oath that Easter; by Bathsheba I did. And as I say, I hope to be forgiven.

But it occurred to me that if I did not get down on paper some sort of simple guide to indexing I might be subjected to this tedious business again and again, for there will be many more books to be edited as time marches on. The object of this guide would be to get authors to do their own draft-indexing and so save me from ever again insulting Bathsheba or desecrating Easter. I cannot really hope to be forgiven again.

The author of a book should tackle the job of indexing by trying to enter the mind of the captious and impatient reader. He must imagine what headings a reader of this sort will look for and will expect to find very quickly.

Now let us see what materials the indexer needs. Firstly, several slips of paper cut to the same size — 4 ins. x 3 ins. would be large enough; secondly, 26 slips each 4 x 3 1/2 (i.e. a little broader); and thirdly a pencil, preferably HB grade. Cards would be better than paper, just as one of those new-fangled ball-bearing inkless pens would be better than a pencil. But I am deliberately selecting the simplest materials.

Do not, however, use pen and ink. You will find yourself having to blot an entry under A, then moving to the M group of slips, blotting again, and then back to B with more blotting. Use of pencil at this stage makes blotting paper unnecessary and saves a lot of time.

Next you read through manuscript, beginning from the beginning, and keeping in mind, while choosing your main subjects, the captious and impatient reader. You should have a supply of slips sufficient to enable you to use one slip for each main subject. Entries of sub headings would however go on the same slip.

As you read your manuscript and you come across headings and sub-headings the captious and impatient reader is likely to look for, you jot them down on slips of paper and place them under the appropriate letter of the alphabet.

Use as many cross-references as possible. To illustrate what "Cross references" means take this instance :

*Fools, suffering F. gladly, 9, 13, 20.*

*Bible, The Holy, allusions from, 9, 10, 13, 15, 20, 82.*  
"Ye suffer fools gladly..." 9, 13, 20.

*Martyrs, happy m.. 9, 13, 20.*

*Suffering, tolerance of fools a form of, 9, 13, 20,*

The next step is careful rearrangement according to alphabetical precedence. These long words mean that *Abuses* go before *Accommodation*, *Accommodation* before *Administration*, and *Administration* before *Allegations*.

After you have done all this there still remain to be inserted the pages to which the references correspond.

This the Editor (or the Foreman Printer, if you are not burdened with an Editor) will begin to do, as soon as he has all the page-proofs in his hand. If he is a wise Editor he too will read your book in the frame of mind of the captious impatient reader—that will not be too difficult, since so many editors are captious and impatient—and while paging the references, he will look for headings and cross-references the author may have missed.

A word about style. When you have chosen the style, stick to it. Do not put as one entry,—

*Fools*, suffering f. gladly, 9, 13, 20 and under another —  
*Fools—hell-fire* for accusers: 2, 31.

The first entry has commas and no period where the second has dash, colon, and period. It seems a small point, but it is the kind of thing that drives a respectable printer fairly frantic. Stick to one style throughout.

Indexing a book is not nearly as dull as it appears to be. It becomes as fascinating as a game of solitaire after a while. But you may rest assured that you will earn the gratitude of the reader, whether or not he is captious or impatient. You will at least spare him the annoyance he is sure to feel if he looks for an index and finds it not.

The two most readable histories of British Guiana, the one by Webber and the other by Clementi, are innocent of index and how many times haven't we fretted as we've chased an elusive date through their 900 odd pages? Whenever this has happened to me I have become more and more captious and impatient. No question of forgiveness here arises: one can't be too profane with a book that ought to be indexed and is not.

## The British Guiana Writers' Association

CONDENSED FROM THE 1945 REPORT.

On December 15, 1944, Mr. James W. Smith convened a meeting of writers at the Office of the Bureau of Publicity & Information, to discuss proposals for the formation of an Association of Writers. Present at that meeting were Messrs. A. W. Steward, British Council Representative, Vere T. Daly, W. I. Gomes, H. R. Harewood, J. E. Humphrey, T. C. Holder, A. N. Johnson, Pat. A. Lawrence, H. L. Mitchell. E. Roberts, L. A. Robinson, Lloyd Searwar, K. H. Cregan, A. J. Seymour, H. A. Stephens, L. P. Surrey, Walt S. Williams and S. H. White; Mrs. M. L. Isaacson and Miss Esme Cendrecourt.

After Mr. Smith had outlined his plans the meeting unanimously agreed to form the British Guiana Writers' Association with the following objects :

- (1) To foster and encourage British Guianese Literary Talent.
- (2) To make, by means of publications etc., a practical contribution to British Guianese Literature.
- (3) To protect the rights of British Guianese writers.

A Provisional Committee comprising Messrs. Harewood, Seymour and Humphrey and Miss Cendrecourt, with Mr. Smith as Secretary, was appointed to draft the Constitution of the Association, and at a meeting held on December 28, 1944, the Constitution was approved. For the year 1945, the following Office-bearers and Members of the Executive Committee were appointed:

<i>President</i> .....	Mr. H.R. HAREWOOD
<i>Hony. Secretary</i> .....	Mr. J.W. SMITH
<i>Hony. Asst. Secretary</i> .....	Mr. H.L. MITCHELL
<i>Hony. Treasurer</i> .....	Mr. J.E. HUMPHREY
<i>Members of the Executive</i> .....	Messrs. A.J. SEYMOUR
.....	and W.I. Gomes and
.....	Miss Esme CENDRECOURT.

Mr. A. J. Seymour was appointed the Association's Editor.

The Executive immediately set to work with a view to realising the Association's aims, and at a meeting held on Wednesday January 24, 1945, it was decided to inaugurate three-month series of fortnightly Lecture Classes covering the various fields of writing. The object of these Lecture Classes was to provide instruction for those members who were not fully conversant with a particular field of the craft, and at the same time enable those who were, to discuss its intricacies with their compeers. The subject chosen for the first series was '**The Short Story**', and the first talk was given by Mr. Vere T. Daly on Monday, April 9 at the Georgetown Public Free Library. This meeting was well attended, but on the occasion of the second Talk which was given by Mr. A. J. Seymour, the attendance was poor.

The third and fourth meetings at which Messrs. J. A. V. Bourne and H. V. Webber were scheduled to be the speakers, both proved abortive, and it was therefore decided to discontinue the series. It is regrettable that these Lecture Classes terminated in failure, since they provided an excellent opportunity for members getting together and exchanging views on a common subject. At the Executive Meeting of January 24, it was also decided to publish:

- (1) as from July 1945, a monthly Literary Paper to be called *The B.G. Writer*, and
- (2) as from December 1945, a Periodical Magazine to be called *Kyk-Over-Al*.

An estimate of \$15 a month for printing the monthly paper was received from the *Demerara Standard*, but before this could be considered our plans were disrupted as a result of the destruction caused by the Great Fire of February 23. Plans for a monthly publication had therefore to be shelved, and even the possibility of publishing the magazine then seemed remote.

The abandonment of plans for a publication of our own, rendered more acute the necessity of finding immediately a literary outlet for the members of the Association. On Monday July 9, a meeting was held at the Georgetown Public



Free Library. The Editors of the three daily newspapers were invited to attend this meeting and discuss with the members the possibility of publishing in the press works of British Guianese Writers in place of the Foreign Syndicated Features at present published therein. The members declared however, that from past experience they had lost faith in the local daily Press as a medium for literary material and decided that independent steps should be taken to find a regular outlet.

On July 17, 1945, the B.G. Writers' Association became affiliated to the B.G. Union of Cultural Clubs.

The month of July was for the Association, in all probability, the most important month of the year. It is true that the first half of the month saw the Executive's efforts to procure an immediate outlet for material dissolve in failure. During the second half of the month however, the Executive received two important offers—one from the D.F.P. Advertising Service, and the other from the Editors of *Caribia*. The latter offer was in the nature of an invitation to the Association to contribute literary matter to *Caribia* the new magazine which appeared this month, December, 1945. The D.F.P.'s offer was more practical, for it requested the Association to take over the D.F.P. Magazine *Greetings From Guiana*. The proposals which were contained in the Members' Circular Letter of August 4, were that the D.F.P. obtain advertisements to cover the cost of printing, the B.G. Writers' Association supply the subject matter, and the two organisations share equally in the profits. The response from members was heartening, and consequently the Editor received more material than he could possibly handle for the first issue. It was not until sometime during September that the Argosy Coy., through the kind co-operation of Mr. O. S. Wight, supplied us with a workable estimate for printing, and the magazine did not go to press until November.

*Kyk-Over-Al* is now a reality. The contributors may well be proud of having assisted in making the first venture of the Association a success.

In rejoicing over the appearance of the first issue of *Kyk-Over-Al* however, we should not lose sight of the fact that this is only the beginning, and that the standard and quality of the magazine must improve with every successive issue.

Let us therefore set our selves resolutely to the task of rising to greater heights in the future.

On the occasion of Miss Una Marson's visit to British Guiana during October, it was not possible for the members of the Association to meet her. Nevertheless the Executive availed itself of the opportunity of presenting Miss Marson with a Memorandum in which the reasons for the low percentage of literary publication were clearly indicated along with the aims and objects of the Association.

Before I close this Report, it is my duty to record the Association's thanks to those persons who so kindly placed at the disposal of the Executive, their premises for use as meeting places. The Publicity Officer for the use of the B.P.I. Office, Mr. J. E. Humphrey for the use of the D.F.P., and Miss Franker for the use of the Public Free Library.

Thus we come to the end of the account of the activities of the Association for the year 1945. This has been the first year of our existence, and we have achieved some measure of success. This success has been the direct result of hard work. As we look forward into the year which lies ahead, the Executive appeals to every member to make greater effort toward whole-hearted support. Co-operation has given us the success we have so far achieved: united effort will carry us still farther. Let us go forward together, and put our shoulders to the wheel.

**JAMES W. SMITH, Honorary Secretary**

**THIRD ANNUAL REPORT**  
OF THE  
**BRITISH GUIANA UNION OF CULTURAL**  
**CLUBS**  
1945-1946.

At the Annual General Meeting held at the Georgetown Public Free Library on February 19, 1945, the following were elected to the Committee of Management for the year ending February 28, 1946: -

<i>President:</i>	N.E. CAMERON, M.A. (Coffee House Club)
<i>Vice-Presidents:</i>	Mildred MANSFIELD (B.H.S. Old Girls' Guild) C.I. DRAYTON (New Age Society)
<i>Hon. Secretary:</i>	A.J. SEYMOUR of the B.P.I.
<i>Hon. Asst. Secretary:</i>	Esme CENDRECOURT (Coffee House Club)
<i>Hon. Treasurer:</i>	R.M. MORRIS (Club 25)
<i>Members of the Committee:</i>	J.H. BEVIS, B.Sc. (B.G. Science Club) E.A.Q. POTTER (Young Men's Guild) S.N. COLLINS (Coloured Co-operative Society)

In January, 1946, the Assistant Secretary, Miss Esme Cendrecourt resigned her post in order to proceed abroad on a scholarship training scheme under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. To fill the vacancy, Miss Beryl Taylor (Central High School Old Students' Association) was elected Assistant Secretary by the Committee.

The Committee continued the policy it had laid down in 1944 of co-opting representatives of member-organizations in its deliberations and during 1945 consulted on every important matter with these representatives. Once again the Committee

desires to acknowledge with thanks the ready and generous assistance these co-opted representatives have given in the management of Union activities.

## MEMBERSHIP

At the beginning of this Union year, there were 23 member-organizations affiliated to the Union. The close of the year finds 30 clubs in affiliation—the seven additions, being B.G. Photographic Society, the B.G. Writers' Association, the Circle of Sunshine Workers, the Dawson Music Lovers' Club, the Excelsior Musical Club, the Kitty Women's Institute and the Tagore Arts Society. The Committee has not succeeded in obtaining all the statistics it requires, and the Union records are not fully up to date. However, member-organizations have begun to forward to the Hon. Secretary of the Union courtesy copies of their annual reports and the statistical figures contained in them are being incorporated in the Union's records.

## UNION ACTIVITIES

During 1945, the Committee arranged a number of Union meetings in order to bring the various cultural clubs into active and friendly association. Briefly enumerated, they are as follows :—

On March 21, Mr. A. W. Steward, British Council Representative in British Guiana, entertained 3 representatives of each member club at his office, 5 Robb Street. This was to allow Sir Harry Luke, K.C.M.G., D. Litt., Chief Representative of the British Council in the West Indies, an opportunity to meet members of clubs in the Union.

On March 26, at Queen's College, members of the Union spent the evening listening to an electrical recording of the opera '**Madame Butterfly**'. Mr. J. H. Bevis, member of the Committee, made the necessary arrangements and conducted the proceedings.

On April 23, at the Georgetown Public Free Library, the Union discussed the results of the Literary Competition. Every interested organization was asked to submit a literary essay

of not more than 1,000 words, on the topic of the fire of February 23, and how best culturally to take advantage of it.

Four essays were received, from the Coffee House Club, the Georgetown Dramatic Club and from individual members of the Christ Church Diocesan Youth Movement and the B.H.S. Old Girls' Guild respectively. The standard of quality of the essays was high, and an active discussion followed the reading of the contributions.

On May 28, at the Georgetown Public Free Library. Mr. E. A. Q. Potter, member of the Committee, addressed representatives of the member clubs on a scheme of Co-operative Insurance that the Union might adopt with profit to its members. Mr. Potter's address advocated the Union's launching the scheme with a minimum of 150 members contributing 50 cents monthly for some form of sickness, unemployment or death benefits. Acting on the President's suggestion that member clubs should discuss this Co-operative Insurance Scheme, the Coffee House Club has submitted a memorandum on the subject, copies of which have been forwarded to other member clubs.

On June 25, the Union presented a 'Brains Trust Evening' at the Georgetown Public Free Library. The members of the Trust were Mr. E. A. Q. Potter, Chairman, Dr. G. Bevier, Chief Officer, Yellow Fever Service, Mr. F. Ogle, Asst. Director of Education, Mr. R. G. Sharples, President of the Guianese Art Group. Mr. Pelham Bayley, M.B.E.. Acting Social Welfare Officer, Dr. C. C. Nicholson, School Medical Officer, Miss J. C. Selman, Chief Municipal Health Visitor, and Miss M. E. Lee. B.A., Assistant Mistress, Bishops' High School.

Questions dealing with matters of principle in the fields of Art, Drama, Literature, Science and Social Welfare were submitted in writing by members of the Union and were opened at the meeting by the Chairman. They were then read aloud and discussed impromptu by members of the Trust.

On August 10 and August 11, the Union held its second Annual Convention at Queen's College and the Town Hall, Georgetown. A full account of this Second Convention is given later in the body of this report.

On September 27, the Committee held a Policy Planning meeting at the British Council's Office (through the courtesy

of Mr. Steward) to which two representatives of member clubs were invited to come and discuss the Union's future policy. The suggestions made fell under three heads—the usefulness of the Union to member clubs, the support clubs could give one another and the way clubs could help the Union.

It was then suggested that the Committee of Management pay special attention to statistics and records: that it act as an advisory body and as an organizing body which would advertise club activities, plan for the Annual Convention, maintain the Library and a Central Fund and arrange visits to clubs. After discussion at two Special General Meetings of the Union held at the Georgetown Public Free Library on October 26 and December 12, 1945, the other suggestions have been crystallised into the following Resolutions which were passed at the meeting of December 12.

#### **RESOLUTION 1:**

That each member organization of the Union inform the Committee of Management as soon as possible after such date has been decided on, of the date of any anniversary, concert, exhibition or other public function, for purposes of record and of information to interested clubs.

#### **RESOLUTION 2:**

That each member organization make every effort to support every other member organization at anniversaries, concerts, exhibitions and other public functions.

#### **RESOLUTION 3:**

That, when possible, each member organization allocate some part of its net proceeds from a public function for the purpose of establishing or augmenting a central Union Fund for carrying out the normal aims and objects of the Union.

#### RESOLUTION 4:

That this Union set itself the task of contributing a sum of not less than \$3,000 towards the erection or equipping of our Cultural Centre and that each member organization undertake to subscribe not less than \$100 towards this contribution.

#### RESOLUTION 5:

That this General Meeting of the Union records its appreciation of the programme for extending cultural activity, through lecture courses, initiated by the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society in conjunction with this Union and the British Council.

These Resolutions have been forwarded by the Committee to every member club for adoption or record, and in the case of Resolution 4 for careful consideration and for reply to the Secretary before March 31, 1946.

On Monday, January 28, 1946, at the Georgetown Y.M.C.A. hall, the Union held a Debate-discussion on '**West Indian Federation**'. The principal speakers were Mr. John Carter, B.A.. LLB., who presented the case for Federation, and the Hon. Secretary of the Union. Mr. A. J. Seymour, who undertook to present the case against Federation in the absence of an opposer. There was a very good attendance at this meeting and an excellent and lively discussion followed the presentation of the two points of view. During the evening's programme, the Maranatha Male Voice Choir contributed two groups of selections.

#### SECOND ANNUAL CONVENTION

In 1945, the Committee decided to spread the activities of the Annual Convention over 2 days, August 10 and August 11. The Convention was divided into three sessions, a dramatic evening at Queen's College on Friday, August 10 and on Saturday, August 11, two sessions at the Georgetown Town Hall; a library session in the afternoon and one in the evening devoted to music and British Council films.

Miss M. Mansfield, Vice-President of the Union, was Chairman at the Dramatic Session at 8.00 p.m. at Queen's College, and the following dramatic clubs took part: The Arundel Young People's Fellowship presented extracts from J. M. Barrie's '**Dear Brutus**', the B.H.S. Old Girls' Guild presented a sketch '**Daughter of Inventions**', the B.G. Dramatic Society presented the final act of Tagore's '**Malini**' and the Georgetown Dramatic Club presented '**To the Lovely Margaret**'.

Mr. Harry Kawall of the Tagore Arts Society contributed a dramatic monologue from '**Michael**' by Wordsworth, and there were two dances by members of the Woodbine House Club. There was no charge for admission and about 500 people attended.

The Committee is indeed proud of having arranged the first dramatic anthology ever presented in Guianese history by four distinct dramatic groups.

The Library session at 4 p.m. Saturday, August 11, in the Town Hall was presided over by Mr. A. W. Steward in the unavoidable absence of His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem.

Messages to the Convention from Sir Harry Luke and Mr. Harold Stannard were read by Miss M. Mansfield. Mr. N. E. Cameron, President, delivered a special address and Hon. Vincent Roth and Mr. A. J. Seymour also gave addresses on '**Guianese Travel and Natural History**' and '**Guianese History**', respectively.

Musical items were rendered by Mrs. Eleanor Kerry and Mr. Albert Rodrigues and the Chairman declared open the Union's Library at the close of the proceedings.

At 8 p.m. at the Musical Session also in the Town Hall, Mr. N. E. Cameron took the Chair and the programme was shared by the Maranatha Male Voice Choir, the Tagore Arts Society and the Excelsior Musical Club. After the chairman's remarks, three 16 mm. films were shown by courtesy of the British Council. These were *Architects of England*, *Invitation to the Dance* and *Lessons from the Air*.



## THE UNION'S LIBRARY

The 1944 Report made reference to the Union's Library project. The Committee is glad to be able to report that the Union's Library of 300 books and pamphlets was declared open at the Annual Convention and that the first borrowing of books was made on Thursday, November 22, at the British Council's Office. The Committee is grateful to the President for his personal preparation in typescript of the Library catalogue to Miss Irma Pilgrim of the New Age Society, who is in charge of a group of volunteer librarians and to Mr. Steward for the use of his office premises. Copies of the Union Library Rules have been forwarded to member clubs and the Committee hopes that in 1946 clubs will make greater use of the Union's library. It has been suggested that individual clubs devote an evening on their syllabus in the forthcoming year to **'The Books of British Guiana'** and detail 2 or 3 members to study a section of the Library and to present joint papers at club meetings. It is also suggested that clubs arrange lectures on these books by competent individuals belonging to the clubs in the Union or without the Union. In this way the Union can assist the growth of a strong Guianese tradition.

## UNION DEBATING COMPETITION

Through the work of a special sub-committee, the Committee of Management has arranged to be conducted a Union Debating Competition for a shield made of Womara wood to be known as the Patrick Dargan Memorial Shield. The Womara wood was presented by Mr. C. E. Barker, who also prepared a design and the shield was made by Mr. S. Fernandes.

Nine clubs have entered the Competition, entrance fee for which is \$1.00, and arrangements have been made for the competition to begin on Wednesday, February 20. Every club in teams of 3 will debate against every other competing club and the debates will take place every Wednesday fortnight with two judges superintending each debate on the points-award system. A noteworthy feature is that on a given night all the pairs of competing clubs will be debating at the same time on the same subject in Georgetown.

A list of judges and debating subjects has already been completed and the Committee believes that this competition should be of great benefit to the intellectual life of the community.

### ***KYK-OVER-AL***

It is with pleasure that the Committee records the first publication in December, 1945, of *Kyk-Over-Al*, a half-yearly magazine published by the B.G. Writers' Association, in conjunction with the Union and the D.F.P. Advertising Service. This magazine should provide an outlet for many excellent addresses delivered before member clubs of the Union and be a calendar of announcements of future club activities as well as a record of their achievements.

### **MISS UNA MARSON AND THE UNION**

During the one-week visit of Miss Una Marson to British Guiana, the Committee was able to arrange an "At Home" in her honour on October 24 at the Bishops' High School. Two representatives from each club were invited to attend, and the meeting took the form of group discussion with Miss Marson on the ways in which the BBC. West Indian transmissions might be made more attractive to Guianese listeners. Light refreshments were served and at the conclusion Miss Marson made a suitable reply to the good wishes extended to her.

### **CO-OPERATION WITH BRITISH COUNCIL AND THE R.A. & C. SOCIETY**

An outstanding feature of the Union's year was the co-operation achieved with the British Council and the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society.

On March 6, 1945, the Committee of Management met a sub-committee of the R.A. & C. Society and agreed on certain broad principles of collaboration for cultural activity in British Guiana. As a result a combined Cultural Committee

was formed comprising 3 Directors of the Society, the British Council Representative, and three members of the Union's Committee, the President, one of the Vice-Presidents (Miss Mansfield) , and the Secretary of the Union. This small Committee worked out details of a series of lecture courses to be run under the joint auspices of the Society, the Union and the British Council.

In the September—December quarter of 1945, two lecture courses were organized, in Musical Appreciation by Dr. J. A. Heuvel, and in English Literature by various lecturers. For January—April 1946, courses have been organized in '**Guianese History**' by Hon. Vincent Roth, '**Ten Plays of Shakespeare**' by various lecturers, and '**Field Botany**' by Mr. J. H. Bevis. Members of clubs affiliated to the Union enjoy with members of the Society a preferential scale of fees for these courses.

The Committee looks forward to a continuance and even extension of this collaboration with the Society and the British Council.

## WEST INDIAN FEDERATION OF CULTURAL SOCIETIES

The Secretary has replied to a letter which appeared in a West Indian newspaper, stating that the Trinidad and Tobago Union of Literary and Cultural Clubs desired to sponsor a Confederation of all similar organizations in the West Indies.

The Trinidad and Tobago Union has published a 5-point Declaration of Plan and Purpose: (1) the spread of literary and cultural standards; (2) the confederation of West Indian cultural organizations; (3) the encouragement of more cultural institutions; (4) the increase of thinking West Indians; and (5) moral and tangible response from West Indian peoples.

## MISCELLANEOUS

On the request of Sir Harry Luke, the Union has made contact with the Mahaica Hospital Dramatic Club and the Mahaica Hospital Guild to see in what ways the experience and

facilities of the Union may be best made available to those cultural clubs.

One of the Vice-Presidents represented the Union, on invitation, at a protest meeting of the Queen's College Old Boys' Association on June 22, 1945.

The Arundel Fellowship presented '**Dear Brutus**' at St. George's School Hall on November 23 under the auspices of the Union.

On request, the Union Committee has supplied all the information at its disposal to the B.G. Bibliography Committee, which is compiling a bibliography of books on British Guiana.

The Committee acknowledges with thanks the favourable mention of its activities made by the B.H.S. Old Girls' Guild in its 1945 report and by the B.G. Dramatic Society in the December 1945 *Dramag.*

### THANKS

The outgoing Committee desires to thank all those who have assisted the Union in its activities during 1945, especially the Publicity Officer, the British Council Representative, the Librarian of the Georgetown Public Free Library, the Principals, Queen's College and Bishops' High School, the Editors of the daily newspapers, the Board of Directors, Y.M.C.A., the Management of Station ZFY and Mr. C. E. Barker and Mr. S. Fernandes. The Publicity Officer has again allowed the Committee ready accommodation for its many meetings during the year under review. For this the Committee is very grateful.

# ISSUE 3





Photo by kind courtesy of Dr. G.M. KERRY





## EDITORIAL NOTES

*Kyk-Over-Al* is proud to have Philip Sherlock and Edgar Mittelholzer among its contributors in this issue. Those two names stand for eminent literary ability in the Caribbean and beyond it. We hope in every issue to continue this practice and to present a feature by some writer outside Guiana who has something significant to say to us.

.Not of course that Guianese contributors haven't in their own right something significant to tell. This issue carries a penetrating message from Critias, a young Guianese who has studied the best elements of contemporary literature and who is now attempting to apply what he finds to our literature-in-the-making. There is also a fable by Aesop and here again what is important is not so much what the writer says as what he's trying to say, and the vision of unity that he displays as being possible here. Between them, Critias and Aesop are saying the same thing in different art-forms.

The quality of verse in this issue is, we think, high. Dalzell's poem won the first prize in a literary competition sponsored by the British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs, Jas. W. Smith and Wilson Harris have some of their finest work included, and the extracts from Leo's work printed in the critical article on him — these all show that British Guiana's verse of yesterday and today is good and comparable.

The Writers' Association feels heartened by the words of commendation and even praise bestowed upon *Kyk-Over-Al* by some discriminating critics in England and by the growing appreciation of its quality in the West Indies. But we can't say it too often, that *Kyk-Over-Al* is primarily a Guiana product and counts among its highest aims the building and the helping to build of a Guiana consciousness.

— A. J. S.

## POEM

by Philip M. Sherlock

Clear as the clear sun's light  
So clear is the water's flight  
From the black rocks down  
To the waiting sand eager and brown,  
Near Gordon Town.  
And clear through the broad green leaves  
And the shining spears of the water reeds  
Through the tangled web of vine and root  
Of tangled roots black and wet  
With the shining water drops  
As swift in its crystal flight the river  
Leaves the rock for the sand and pebbles.

The rock and the light and the weaving stream,  
Fluid and fixed and fervent.

Trumpets blow and the dead arise  
Clanking bones and dead men's cries.  
Shiver the mountains huddled close  
Beneath their shivering coats of green  
Fluid now where once was rock  
Melting now where once was stable  
Liquid flows volcanic rock  
And the brazen sky is mad with sound  
And the sun and the moon and the stars appear  
And the blazing sky and the melting hills  
Uncover the roots of ebing that lay  
Buried beneath the crust of clay.  
Fire leaps headlong from the sky  
And the rock and the light and the weaving stream  
Join in the flaming dance that thrills  
Through the earth and the firmament  
For that which was fixed is fluid now  
And the shaken are the shrivelled skies  
Ablaze with a thousand lunatic eyes.

The black rocks twist and writhe and run  
Red with the blood red light of the sun  
The fire has claimed its ancient place  
The fire which slept within the rock  
The fire which slept within the earth  
The fire which slept within the trees  
The fire which slept within the clouds  
The fire which slept within the skies  
The fire that slept has come to birth  
And seals with flame the shaking earth

And leaps with quivering flanks of flame  
Through the woods and through the rocks  
And leaps from cloud to crested cloud  
And flames across the shrivelled sky.  
Fire that flamed where Eden stood  
A sword of flame.

Eden stands by Gordon Town  
Cool with the green of leaves and cool  
With gleaming water and dripping rock  
And cool with the tangled black of roots  
Where the river leaps from the tangled rocks to the sand and  
pebbles.

Green and black and flash of silver.

And around and beneath and about the place  
The flash of a flaming sword  
The fire holds still its ancient place.

## PORTRAIT OF MRS. DOLLY

by J.A.V. Bourne

When she spoke...

    It was in a high ethereal voice,  
Surcharged with mystery and  
    Weighted with superfine dignity,  
As if . . . eons of pure-bred generations  
    Stood behind her — making you feel  
That even to listen — merely to listen  
    Was privilege bestowed upon you.

And it was like watching a dream

    To see the elegant pomp of her walk.  
The whole world belonged to her!  
    Such majesty and yet such chastity  
Exuded from the pores of her dress  
    That it was as if she held in delicate balance  
A refined egg  
    Between her pure-bred fingers!

## FOR ME — THE BACK-YARD

by Edgar Mittelholzer

Play your Carnival, play your masque,  
Dance with your Country Club set,  
Hop, jump at your midnight fete;  
For these things I'll never ask —  
Take them all and leave for me  
The back-yard scene at dusk:  
The haze of blue wood-smoke,  
Morning mist amid mango leaves  
And the nancy-story fantasies  
That the cries of kiskadees  
From long, long ago evoke.

Keep your calypsos and your steel-bands!  
Wiggle your hips and waggle your hands!  
For me the good soft tingling dew  
And mottled shadows beneath a guava tree,  
The glimmer, the dim mysterious hue,  
Of coconut fronds — spider hands  
Immobile, immeshed in the filigree,  
The plaited pattern, of star-apple and plum,  
Breadfruit and mango — and the perpetual hum  
Of all the insects hidden in jumbie-lands:  
The magic a waning moon can weave; set free.

Let the saxophones quark and wail!  
And pianos thump a jiving jumbled tale!  
For me the ruby warmth in sunshine,  
The haphazard tracery of this wild vine,  
Coconuts a-sizzling,  
Water-vapour in the air,  
A red cock crowing, the clatter of a pail,  
The swift white drift  
Of clouds in the cool trade wind,  
A whiff of rice and salt-fish cooking  
And of earth, dank, dark and bare.

Keep your serge suit, collar and tie!  
Asparagus, lentils, your high-falutin' apple-pie!  
keep your respectability; I don't care!  
For me the sun, the dew, the leaves, the wind —  
And why should I even spurn  
These little ragged clumps of fern  
And the rickety latrine standing near  
The old grey-trunked tamarind!  
Assuredly for me — the naive back-yard  
Where *bajak* ants, without hypocrisy, troop by  
.And no gentlemen politely smile and lie.

# WORDS WRITTEN BEFORE SUNSET

by Wilson Harris

The Earth,  
glorious with the last colours of sunset.  
Quiet coconut palms faintly stirring  
moving with the slow and stately deliberation  
of unstudied beauty  
in last, melancholy greeting  
to the departing day.  
Man, too,  
Pausing awhile and dreaming  
in child-like wonder  
before this vast and colourful dissolution;  
thinking about the stars;  
standing upon the lip of darkness  
in grand and ageless contemplation;  
renewing a strange and nourishing compact  
with the womb of Night.

## TO A DEAD SILK-COTTON TREE

by James W. Smith

Your little tongues once whispered in the breeze  
And sang sweet music in the traveller's ear.  
Soft silken parachutes, like swarming bees  
Once bore your children from your arms. The air  
With gentle fingers planted armies to  
Your glory.

    Tell me, now that death has shorn  
Your tresses, kissed you 'til your giant limbs  
Stiffened into spectral resignation,  
What are your thoughts? Your strong brown roots still drink  
The waters of the Essequibo: still  
Erect you hold your proud and massive trunk.  
Death with his leprous touch, could not destroy  
Your noble form. But now your lips are sealed,  
No more. I hear the music of your voice...  
What are your thoughts, I ask, what are your thoughts?



# TOMORROW BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE

by A.J. Seymour

Ignorant,  
Illegitimate,  
Hungry sometimes,  
Living in tenement yards  
Dying in burial societies  
The people is a lumbering giant  
That holds history in his hand.

The efficient engineers dam the conservancies  
Design the canals and the sluices  
The chemists extract their sugar to the ton.

The millers service the padi into rice  
And the heavy lorries and unpunctual ships  
Bring ground provisions from the farms.

But always the people is a hero, a vast army  
Making the raw material for skill and machines to work upon.

They frequent the cinemas  
Throng the races and the dance halls  
Pocket small wages with a sweating brow  
And ragged clothes;  
But it is their ignorant, illegitimate hands  
That shape history.

They grow the cane and the rice and the ground provisions  
They dig the gold and the diamonds and the bauxite  
They cut the forests and build the bridges and the roads and  
the wall to keep out the sea.

History is theirs,  
Because history doesn't belong  
To the kings, and the governors and the legislature.  
History basically  
Is the work men do with their hands  
When they battle with the earth  
And grow food and dig materials  
For other people's profits and other people's skill.

And other people know it too.

The labour leaders and the politicians  
Shake fists to rouse the rabble  
But that giant, the people  
They say yes or no to the proposition ,  
Chinese running their groceries and their laundry places  
Portuguese controlling the dry goods and the pawnshops  
Indians saving every half of a shilling  
Cutting in canefields  
Breaking their backs to grow rice.

Africans tramping aback for the provisions,  
Running the falls "topside" for fabulous diamonds,  
Becoming the teachers, the policemen, and the Civil Servants

They are all heroes,  
They make history  
They are the power in the land.

And the women work patiently along with the men  
And look after the children, as best they can.

And the children grow  
Force their way out of the slums into the professions  
And stand up in the legislature.

Today they hope  
But tomorrow belongs to the people.  
Tomorrow they will  
Put power behind their brow  
And get skill in their hands.

Tomorrow  
They will make a hammer to smash the slums  
And build the schools.

Like a River, the people hold history in their hands  
And Tomorrow belongs to them.

## THE SEVENTH VEIL

by Walter C. Williams

I know I should not look upon your kind  
Nor feel the heat of love within my soul.  
Where once was ash you came, and though confined,  
Set flame again: but yet I am not whole,  
For music, though it charm my troubled breast  
And in your hands rest tender mystic touch.  
A woman's form you bear, and I would wrest  
Full price for that which I bore overmuch.

You challenge me to bare my heart, but then  
What would the Veil beneath which now we dwell  
Portray if lips of amorous men  
Could stir your soul to sate your passion well?  
Why move me — rip the past and claim that which  
Awoke in me and which I treasure too?  
Go, drink your fill. 'Tis aftermath of sin  
That I should suffer thus for wanting you,

## ATTUNEMENT OF THE SENSES

by Frank E. Dalzell

Who has an eye for Nature's beauteous forms  
And lends an ear to trap her melody,  
Will see the rose a sudden scarlet blush  
When shyly bursting forth in dewy morn;  
Observe the riotous splash of colour spilled  
Across the palest blue of Heaven's dome;  
Will hearken to the noise of kneeling grass  
Which furious, fitful winds keep trampling o'er;  
Will hear the symphony of weeping skies  
Euphoniously played on tresses green;  
Will smell the dampness of the rain-scoured earth  
And deep inhale the fragrance of its flowers;  
Will taste the freshness of the laughing brook  
And smack the lips in sheer delight of being;  
Will feel a oneness with Divinity,  
Dynamic; indivisible; serene;  
All these and more perceived and understood  
Is proof . . . clear proof . . . the senses are attuned.

— *Prize Poem* —

(B.G. Union of Cultural Clubs Literary Competitions, 1946.)

A Fable Around a Famous B.G. Wood...

**GREENHEART**

by AESOP

The story Matthews told Jim Pearce and his sister Edith began characteristically, at the end. It began with a scene on the balcony of the Guiana Public Buildings when a woman steps forward to receive the insignia of D.B.E. from the Governor.

The citation is *“for outstanding work in bringing together the six peoples of British Guiana”* and there behind her, towering, are her five sons. Each one of them was the leader of a racial group in the colony and among themselves they formed the members of a committee that had overcome all inter-racial feeling. They called it the Guiana Committee.

There was the tall stoop-shouldered Vincent. He took after his English father Fielding, the engineer who first married Ida Montague at 23 and died a year later from black water fever. Then there was Abel the boy born of the Dutch merchant who deserted her and got a divorce. Big strapping Henry was there too, son of the African insurance canvasser who was killed in the New Amsterdam motor smash.

As Matthews told the story, it seemed incredible that one woman could by accident have five sons from husbands of different races. But Matthews explained to Jim that the first three sons had been born without her realising the strangeness of the thing.

The first three had been husbands, the English engineer dead of black water fever, the Dutch merchant who divorced her, the African insurance canvasser killed by accident. She was only 30 then and it dawned upon her that she could bring up these sons of hers to be leaders in their racial groups and still be brotherly one to the other.

That transformed her from a drifting individual into a woman with a mission.

She married again. It wasn't difficult as she was 30—an attractive, tall, well-built woman, and something had integrated in her personality. Suddenly she had poise and quick-intelligence and she walked now like a panther.

She chose as her fourth husband a teacher with Amerindian blood in him. She loved him—as much as a woman with a mission can love a man and she cared for his creature comforts.

Fiercely she wanted a son with Amerindian blood in him. Two daughters came. Her children, they were, so she loved them both and was passionate with grief when one died; but the third child was a boy, a boy who to her surprise, had in him the beginnings of a poet. Strange moodiness, a quick memory for tones of voices and a gift for illuminating phrases. That the Amerindian characteristics were dominant in him came as no surprise to her; she had willed that that should happen through too many long hours of sleepless nights, bending her will to shape the destiny of an unborn son.

When Matthews told them that this fourth husband died also, Jim was not surprised. Unless a man's will is very strong, it cannot resist a purposeful woman's. Jim wouldn't believe that she killed him psychically but he weakened and died when the mission of this strange wife of his broke in upon his consciousness. The Amerindian strain in him carried an eastern fatalism and he grew to feel himself a pawn in a game beyond his ambit. So he succumbed to the Queen.

The fifth husband was an East Indian and she bore him sons. But Jim found he had already lost interest in Matthews' story. He could appreciate the fact that she never achieved her aim, never got six sons of different races. That would have been too perfect and making the inscrutable laws of fate bend to mathematical patterns.

She lived with her East Indian husband for twenty-two more years before she died, she who had followed funeral processions for four husbands. Jim thought of the wife of Bath and her "*husbands at church-door I have had five*" but this was a mission. This was different.

But he had lost interest, Jim found. When Matthews was telling Edith and himself of the rigorous education plan this woman had set for her sons and how relentlessly she kept them to it, how she punished them for deviation and kept them growing straight like greenheart trees, how she succeeded, the story of their varying political dominations of their racial groups, right up to the king's recognition of

her services—all this while Jim found his imagination straying back to the Amerindian poet this woman numbered among her sons.

Listening to him Jim Pearce wondered at this oddly sure young man of 27. Matthews had grown rather well, he thought.

This young man had been a pupil of his in trigonometry years ago. That evening he had dropped in to pay a courtesy call to his old tutor and his sister. Matthews had declared he wanted to write poetry.

He had brought a poem along, he said. So Jim Pearce had asked him to read it for them.

*"Well, you'll read it aloud, won't you? But wait a minute."*

He moved across to the radio and turned the knobs and by great luck he came upon exactly what he was looking for—Orchestral music to use as a background for what Matthews would read.

*"Go ahead now."*

Matthews knew what Jim Pearce meant and in his pleasant but rather monotonous voice, he began to read while the music in the background gave him the resonance he wanted.

"Orpheus drew his music from the trees  
Before they changed to instruments.

His art

Made the small fruit trees sing him ditties  
Trees like the towering greenheart played him drums.  
All the slim tree-nymphs slipped without the trunks  
As if in answer to the Orphic call  
Till a dark tree-god with great eyes of green  
Came clambering down the boughs.

There by the river

Stood the young Orpheus, watching water swirl  
And tumbling in a gurgling melody  
Around the stones, But the tall tree-god stopped  
That water music  
Tamed the wild anger in his great green eyes."

There was a little silence and then Edith turned and said to Jim.

*"I think that has something in it, Jim."*

Jim hesitated for a minute and carefully chose his words.



He wanted neither to patronise him nor speak harshly.

*"Matthews, it has the poet's sensitiveness and a sense of rhythm. It has imagery too. But you haven't quite seen it. Why Orpheus? Your Greek subject is mixed with the tropicalness of towering greenheart and there's a touch of the artificial in the word ditties."* Jim shrugged his shoulders, but he knew Matthews would pursue him.

*"But", he began "is it hopeless—"*

*"Of course, it isn't hopeless. But take greenheart as your theme, get your power on to our country Guiana."*

Matthews spoke eagerly. *"That's what I want to do; that's what I really want to write. This is just apprentice work."*

Jim smiled. *"What do you really want to write, Matthews?"* He didn't expect the flood of enthusiasm that poured out in reply.

*"I want to write about Guiana. Pin the soul of this country down upon paper, but in such way that what I write is a banner and a flame fanning out on the wind of time. I want to write an epic that will fuse us all together and give Guiana direction for the next century."*

Edith stopped knitting for a while as Matthews spoke and then went on threading the steel needles in and out. In and out.

*"That's a rather tall assignment, isn't it. Matthews."* Jim didn't like haywire schemes and this looked like one, though he didn't expect Matthews to have the kind of temperament that would have this Messianic streak.

*"Oh, I know that and that's why I've come to you, sir."*

Sensitive to the change in conversation atmosphere, Jim looked up at him and found he couldn't see him well in the dark. Edith noticed it and got up and switched on the light. The sudden light caught him rather wincing from it. He was flattering him, Jim knew, but there was something seemingly sincere about his words. Matthews really thought he could help, he decided, and so he leaned forward sympathetically, and yet he didn't want Matthews to think he had succumbed to flattery.

*"This isn't trigonometry, Matthews, and perhaps I can't help you. You want to write an epic of Guiana. Tell me the story you have in mind."*

Matthews sat there hunched in the big easy chair and he began to talk. He talked with an urgency that put compelling fingers on one's nerves and made one restless. This boy—he wasn't much more than that—was burning with a love for his country and as he talked, he had a habit of clenching and unclenching his fists as if he wanted to get to grips with something.

And this was the story he was telling them.

At last Matthews came to an end. The flood of talk ceased. It had been both narrative and running commentary with skilful thumbnail sketches of character and incident and at the end he slumped back into his chair, psychologically exhausted.

*"You're the first people I told this to",* he said.

To his surprise Jim found the hour-long summary had manipulated a number of infinitely subtle adjustments in his attitude towards Matthews and he could no longer, well *"patronise"* him—that was the word—as before. This young man had a vision of Guiana that he lacked and an intensity he would never match. He realised again to the full that strange self-appraisal that comes to a man when his juniors in years take their places at his shoulder and measure their strides to his.

*"It's a wonderful story",* Jim spoke slowly, *"and you are sufficiently craftsman to know that it could never go into verse. You have half a dozen novels there, Matthews."*

*"I know it has to be a saga in prose but do you think I can do it? I was thinking of it as a short story."*

*"No Matthews, that could never be a short story and then you have the stuff in you to write a panel of novels. But Matthews—"*

*"Yes sir!"*

*"Matthews, I'm interested in your Amerindian poet. Does he write any poetry?"*

*"He does. He is the most spiritual of the half-brothers. He goes and broods upon Kaieteur and upon the top of Roraima, he does medical missionary work among "his people" as he calls them. He translates the Gospel according to St. John for them to read in their tongues and he writes the epic in poetry that I want to write and cannot. He tells the story of Amalivaca as Homer would tell it broad and simple and deep about his rock-writing, his philosophy, his music,*

*his scientific work, on canoes and tides. And he recites this long poem of his to his people and they learn it by heart. The poem tells, too, how the Amerindians offended Makonaima and of the curse that fell upon this people that makes them impotent before foreign invaders."*

Jim was silent. Matthews had it all carefully planned.

*"It will take you eight years and it will nearly kill you but you'll write this saga, Matthews and good luck to you."*

\*\*\*

Jim Pearce had said eight years, but it took Matthews twelve and it killed him too.

Book after book, they came out every two years. The style was lofty and intense, the matter a cruel survey of contemporary life. It was not until the fourth book was out that critics in Europe began to acclaim the power of the work.

Approval went up, waveringly at first, like thin smoke and then in full flood. But fame and fortune came too late for Matthews.

The fearful strain of the intense writing of six novels, his poverty and his inherent ill health had sapped his powers; only his powerful will had kept the parts of his body together until the last line was written — then he collapsed.

The note of congratulation Jim wrote arrived before he died but he never was able to read it. He was already unconscious and two days later Guiana received back unto herself her greatest literary son.

Edith and Jim stood by and mourned. In his hand he had crumpled up a bit of paper Matthews had left with him years before.

*"Edith, we need drums here."*

*"Oh".* She hadn't remembered, Jim could see that.

*"No, I'm thinking Edith, of the only poem Matthews ever wrote so far as we know."*

*"Orpheus drew his music from the trees..."*

*Trees like the towering greenheart played him drums."*

*"You're right Jim. He did take greenheart as his theme — Guiana. He's done a great job for our country."*

Condensed from a B.P.I. Broadcast  
**THE CARNEGIE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
by Celeste Dolphin

Just imagine how wonderful that would be if you lived at Skeldon or Mahaicony and you could expect the Book Van, say every Tuesday, at your doorstep to bring you what you require and take back what you have completed. And then if you are a shoemaker or carpenter or just a student and you wanted a specialised book on any subject, you could give in your request when the Book Van called, and the Library Assistants would procure it and deliver it to you on their next visit. Think of the time and the trouble it would save you if you lived in the country. Of course my imagination leads me to think of the Georgetown Public Free Library running a twice-weekly plane service to the Rupununi and Mazaruni for the purpose of delivering books to the residents there.

I said to a friend of mine the other day: *"What do you know about the Georgetown Public Free Library?"* And her reply was: *"Nothing, except that children are always coming to me to sign forms when they want to become members of the Library"*. I said again: *"What else do you know?"* And she replied: *"Well, long ago you were not supposed to talk when you entered the library and you had to pay a cent for every day your book was overdue; I paid them quite a bit, there certainly was nothing free about the Library for me"*.

Perhaps it could do us no harm if we began at the beginning.

As the old name, the Carnegie Free Library suggests, it was Andrew Carnegie of Philadelphia, who in 1907 made a grant of £7,000 towards the building of the Library. And also at the same time the Government and the Town Council agreed that they would make between them an annual contribution towards the maintenance and upkeep of the Library. So now we can safely say right away that the Georgetown Public Free Library is a public service provided jointly by the Government and the Municipality.

The foundation stone was laid in 1908 and the borrowing of books began at the end of 1909 with 1,500 members and 5,700 books. It is of interest to mention here that it was Mr. Frank Pacy, Chief Librarian of the Westminster Public Libraries who selected and bought the first stock of books for this institution.

Between 1909 and 1943 there were 4,700 adults and 3,200 children using the library on the ticket system with a stock of 11,000 books. Later in 1940, the Open Access System was introduced by which borrowers were allowed to take the books down from the book shelves themselves. By this time the number of borrowers increased greatly and the circulation rose from 40,000 in 1939 to over 100,000 in 1943. Naturally the staff of the Library had to be increased.

Then the Colonial Development and Welfare and the British Council stepped in and granted money to open and stock a Children's Room. This was a great innovation and has proved of immense benefit to school children.

Also there is the Discussion Circle and there is the Workers' Study Circle. These are extra services and the Library provides a meeting place for these discussions. Then every now and then, the Library Committee arranges public lectures on various subjects by persons who are specialists in their field.

Short Story  
**DEATH IN THE NIGHT**

by J.A.V. Bourne

Mrs. Barry closed the windows of Roraima House.

Darkness had fallen over the village of Clonbrook. In the sky, black clouds dropped low and there was a distant roll of thunder.

The wind soughed and wailed through the coconut trees that surrounded the guest house as if a storm or a great tragedy was brewing. Mrs. Barry had been housekeeper for years. She retired to her room under the house and began to prepare for bed.

Suddenly the lamp went out. A puff of cold air passed by her and from the corner near the window a sound of someone rapping followed by a strange scratching noise came to her ears.

Astonished, she sat stiffly in her chair, listening.

*"Anyone there?"* she asked loudly, after a pause.

No one answered and after several minutes of utter stillness, she rose from her chair and relit the lamp. This was the third occasion she had been disturbed after dark and she was becoming scared.

*"Tomorrow,"* she told herself, *"I will report these mysterious happenings to the police."*

Tomorrow, she had been booked to receive a honeymoon couple and she did not wish to have them disturbed. But as she retired that night she felt an evil foreboding.

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*The Advocate's* special investigator had been granted two weeks' vacation which he intended spending with a friend at Clonbrook.

Jim Mark was always an early riser and by 7 o'clock was dressed and ready for his train journey.

Only yesterday, he soliloquised, staring at the dawn, he had reported a fashionable wedding at Georgetown. He

wondered why such a young and popular girl—she was much admired and sought after in her circle—should have accepted old Barberton. The chap was wealthy but eccentric. He had entertained his way into the elite of Georgetown society and now had ended by marrying the fairest debutante of the season.

His meditations were interrupted by a tap at the door, followed by the appearance of the housemaid.

*"The phone, Sir."*

*"Wonder what it can be?"* Mark muttered, as he ran down the stairs.

*"Hullo!"*

*"What! And Mrs. Barberton! Married only yesterday,"* he whistled.

*"Yes, I am catching the 8 o'clock train."*

Arrived at Clonbrook, Mark started off at once for the hotel. On his way, a man asked excitedly.

*"Heard the news, Sir?" "Strange doings at Roraima. House."*

*"What happened?"*

*"Murder!"* the man replied gravely.

In a few minutes, Mark reached the hotel and was lucky to meet his friend Inspector Read from Georgetown setting out for Roraima House with the police-surgeon and a constable.

*"Just got in by train on a holiday and I find myself in the midst of a tragedy,"* the reporter remarked, as he walked up to the men.

A minute later, the men reached the house and were met by a local constable who conducted them inside.

Roraima House stands by itself in gloomy grounds and faces the ocean. It is seldom tenanted except by people on a casual holiday and honeymoon couples. Mrs. Barry had been general caretaker for years.

The doctor and Reed went upstairs. The interior of the bedroom the men entered was light and spacious. The bed stood on the left-hand side from the entrance against the wall. The dead girl had been laid in the middle of it, covered with a sheet.

*"Wonder how she was killed,"* said the inspector.

He drew off the covering sheet as he spoke and dropped it on the floor. The body thus revealed was that of a young girl

fully attired. The right hand had been completely severed at the wrist and was missing! There was blood on the throat.

The doctor commenced his examination. He glanced at the inspector and nodded. The inspector left the room. Downstairs in the parlour he found the reporter conversing with the housekeeper Mrs. Barry.

*"Do you suspect anyone, Mrs. Barry?"* he questioned.

*"Well, Sir, the girl's husband can't be found anywhere. When couples come here to stay I usually take up an early cup of tea. This morning, to my great surprise, I found the bedroom door wide open. I called out, but there was no answer, and I peeped into the room. There was someone lying across the bed covered with blood. I ran out and fetched a policeman."*

*"Did you meet the couple when they arrived last night?"*

*"Yes, Sir".*

*"And, did you hear any noises during the night?"*

*"No. Sir. I sleep hard!"*

*"Was the lady wearing jewellery?"*

*"I believe she had a pair of gold bangles on her hand".*

*"Did you find the front door locked as usual this morning?"*

*"Yes, Sir, locked—and the kitchen door also."* Entering the room at this moment, the doctor beckoned to the inspector and said in low tones:

*"The girl's throat has been cut with some sharp instrument, probably a razor. There are no other signs of violence about the body. Rigor mortis is well established. She has been dead about eight hours."*

Mrs. Barry turned away. *"Do you wish me any longer?"*

*"No, not now,"* replied the inspector. *"You will attend the inquest, of course."*

During this conversation, a constable walked to the open window and looked out. Suddenly, he uttered an exclamation:

*"Someone escaped through this window."*

The others went over to the window. It was not more than five feet from the ground and looked out on the lawn.

*"There is blood here,"* said the constable, pointing to the stains on the edge of the sill.

*"Perhaps, he carried the girl's hand with him,"* Mark suggested.

*"Here's another clue"* said the inspector, pointing to a fragment of white material adhering to a nail at the side of the window.



*"Looks like a thread from a towel,"* he added, detaching the fragment which he and the doctor examined closely.

With eyes sharpened by his discovery, Reed made a careful examination of the parlour. Several spots of blood were observed, also a small piece of burnt-earth near the window. Outside, he noticed that the lawn grass terminated about four feet from the bottom of the window. Directly under it, he saw footmarks clearly defined on the soft earth and more spots of blood. But an investigation of the lawn and gardens failed to disclose any further clues.

*"We must have casts made of those footprints,"* said Reed.

*"The case seems clear enough to me,"* the reporter ventured an opinion. *"Barberton left the house by the window taking the dead hand of his bride wrapped in a towel. The act of a man inflamed with jealousy !"*

The inspector shook his head.

*"How do you account for the piece of earth found inside the parlour?"* he questioned doubtfully. *"Someone came in here."*

Next day, the inquest was opened at Clonbrook. Mark recognised several people in the courtroom. Ramolall, the dead girl's father and the police-surgeon were talking to Inspector Reed, and, amongst the general public he noticed Mrs. Barry.

The Coroner, in opening the proceedings, made some forcible remarks on their unusual horror. Here was a case in which a young bride had been done to death in a most senseless manner, and her husband had disappeared. Where was he? The village had been searched without trace of him. Why hadn't he come forward?

Ramolall was the first witness called. He formally identified the body of the deceased as that of his youngest daughter. Mrs. Barry testified that the couple had arrived at Roraima House about 10 o'clock on the Monday evening and had at once retired. She described the finding of the dead body next morning and remarked that Mr. Barberton was missing. Medical evidence was given and then after a brief summing up by the coroner, the jury of four held an equally brief consultation and then returned a verdict of "Murder" against some person unknown!

## II

On the night after the inquest. Mrs. Barry had gone to the front parlour to do some knitting before retiring to her room. She told herself as she thought over the events of the day that with the publicity, given to Roraima House by this crime she would now be having a busy time with inquisitive people.

While she thus ruminated, the lamp suddenly went out, a puff of cold air passed by her and again the weird raps came. Fearfully, she ran from the room and soon reached the street. She met James Mark and to him she breathlessly communicated her fears.

*"Something wrong at the house?"* Mark repeated, wonderingly. *"What do you mean?"*

*"I don't know, Sir,"* she breathed. *"I heard a rapping and then a voice whispering ; but there is no one in the house."*

*"Queer,"* said the reporter, puzzled. *"Let's go back and investigate."*

*"Do you think it's a bacchoo, Sir?"* she asked, as they walked along.

*"Nonsense! Probably a rat or something."*

A thin moon shone in the West and the night was unusually still. An uncanny atmosphere seemed to hang over the house and a dog howled eerily away in the distance.

It seemed to Mark that immediately he entered the room he felt himself opposed by a dreadful malign influence. In the gloomy silence, there came faint raps.

*"You hear it, Sir?"* the caretaker whispered.

They listened tensely. Once more there came queer sounds, this time apparently from somewhere near the ceiling.

*"Let's beat it,"* urged Mrs. Barry. *"The house is haunted, I tell you!"*

As the strange noises continued to come from the corner the frightened caretaker quickly retreated outside, but Mark remained, gazing spellbound into the darkness.

A strange odour was wafted towards him. And then he saw it...or imagined he saw it...there before him a phantom-like figure appeared. Moving fast and as silent as death the ethereal figure glided along towards the open window and outside, followed some distance away by the awed reporter,

Across the garden it went and at a spot outside the fence near some bushes it sank to the ground and then vanished.

Mark stood dazed. Recovering his wits, he placed a stone on the ground to identify the spot in the morning. He then rejoined the housekeeper on the road.

*"I am scared to stay here tonight,"* she told him.

*"Come with me to the hotel. Inspector Reed is there. Better tell him everything."*

The inspector was doubtful regarding the unearthly manifestations at Roraima House. The reporter was so insistent, however, that he decided to return with him to the house. The Inspector agreed that he seemed to feel himself opposed by some sinister force when he was in the bedroom, but apart from this inexplicable sensation no further phenomena were observed.

*"Perhaps, Barberton is in hiding not far from this house,"* remarked Mark, as they were walking along; *"...and there was present in that room an elemental, or 'thought-form' projected there by him!"*

*"What fantastic ideas you have, Mark! However, we've searched the village thoroughly,"* observed the inspector, drily.

Next morning, Mark pointed out the place beyond the fence where he had seen the apparition vanish. Although sceptical of any result, Inspector Reed ordered that the spot be dug up. The earth was soft as rain had fallen during the night.

*"There is something here,"* said the constable, after digging for some minutes in silence.

Next moment, the body of a well-dressed man lay exposed before the horrified onlookers!

*"Great Scott!"* cried Mark in amazement, *"It's Barberton!"*

The man's throat had been cut from ear to ear!

That day a squad of police from Georgetown began a man-hunt of the entire district.

### III

Night was falling.

An atmosphere of horror surrounded Roraima House and no one wanted to go near the place except Mark.

Mrs. Barry had left and was staying at the hotel. There she

met Mark who again questioned her about the mysterious sensations she had experienced at the guest house.

*"It don't make sense, who could have killed this happy couple?"* he asked.

*"Must be a devil in the village,"* and she added, *"it haunts the house at night."*

*"If you don't mind, I should like to sleep in that room tonight."*

*"You'll be taking a great risk, Sir. Better not."*

*"Don't worry. I'll keep an eye open."*

Later, Mark bid the housekeeper goodnight and with the key of the front door in his hand left for the house of evil. He saw no one about as he entered the door. At once he ascended the stairs and went into the chamber of death.

He noticed there was no bolt or key in the lock. He would have to take a risk. He closed the bedroom door and lay down on the bed fully dressed. Again he felt a peculiar sensation and tried to analyse it.

He must have dozed—he was not sure how long—when he found himself wide awake again. A sound had disturbed him and he was conscious that something was going to happen. And then, the stillness of the night was broken by an unmistakable creak on the stairs, followed by a strange muttering noise. Again the stairs creaked and he realised that someone was coming up.

Who was it, what was it, that was coming up the stairs, he thought apprehensively?

At last, the footsteps ceased outside the door. He could hear the thing, whatever it was, muttering and chuckling to itself, and he lay there, motionless, staring at the door...waiting!

After a moment or two, he heard the click of the latch and the door commenced to open. And then, quite suddenly there came a horrible cackle...awful!

The next instant, a ragged, hideous shape came into the room carrying something in its hands. It shuffled slowly past the bed and crouched down on the floor with its back to the reporter.

Muttering to itself, the THING deposited a bundle on the carpet. It was wrapped up in a small towel.

There the ghastly object remained for one or two minutes while Mark, not daring to move, watched it from the bed. He

tried to make out what the Thing was saying to itself, but the few words he caught were gibbering nonsense.

Another minute passed and then the strain became too great for him and he made a slight sound.

The monster swung round surprised and stared at him wildly in the semi-darkness.

Even as it took a step towards the bed, Mark sprang off and darted through the door, banging it behind him. Down the stairs he fled and out into the street, screaming loudly, while behind him rushed the infuriated monster, a razor gleaming in its shaggy hand.

In the darkness, Mark stumbled and fell prone. In a trice the monster was upon him. Without uttering a sound, he grabbed the unfortunate lad and swung the terrible blade...! Swish ! The razor came down!

There was a loud gurgling cry. Was that Mark's head rolling into the gutter? Was that weird noise the sound of blood gushing from his jugular vein?

Luckily, in a desperate effort, Mark had rolled sideways, and the monster, missing his throat by inches, had instead cut off his own finger!

Suddenly, two men sprang forward and hurled themselves on the crouching figure, Flashing a light, one struck it a fearful blow behind the head with a loaded stick and it dropped to the ground insensible.

*"By Jove, Sir!"* exclaimed one of the newcomers. *"You have had a very narrow escape."* *"What is it?"* the reported gasped.

*"He is a homicidal maniac. He escaped from the asylum. We tracked him to this neighbourhood, and were on the look-out for him. Fortunately, we heard your shouts and were near at hand!"*

*"Where the cunning brute has been hiding these few days is a mystery,"* the other interposed, grimly.

*"One moment!"* exclaimed Mark. *"He left a bundle upstairs in the bedroom."*

*"Let's go up and see it,"* said one.

In a few seconds, the men reached the room. Flashing his torchlight on the bundle, the warder stooped and opened it.

*"Good God! He killed them! The murderer!"*

There on the carpet lay the missing hand of the bride.

## IV

The unexpected elucidation of these tragic murders created a sensation in Georgetown. The Police made another searching investigation in the village and discovered that this lunatic had been in hiding there, having been secreted by his relatives.

At the enquiry, they admitted that the maniac had escaped from their house on two occasions, and added that sometimes he would go into a trance and when in this condition they had been unable to rouse him, He became utterly insensible to the world.

Later on, Mark and the Inspector were walking back to the Hotel.

*"Strange thing, that madman's trance!"*

"Yes," replied Reed. *"Puzzling. Do you believe lunatics possess mental powers unknown to science?"*

*"M ay be! Take those weird raps, that phantom I saw, and the other uncanny happenings in the house that so many people observed. Perhaps, they were caused by his astral spirit haunting the place in a state of uneasiness!"*

*"What fantastic ideas you have, Mark."*

The Literary Tradition:  
**THE POETRY OF EGBERT MARTIN (Leo)**  
by A.J. Seymour

It was only the other day that someone said, "*Leo, oh of course, Leo is the best poet British Guiana has ever produced*". Another echoed in reply "*Leo? Why, I've never heard of him, who was he?*"

Those two remarks are typical. One may attempt to divide the population into two classes, one ready to claim the highest honour for Leo's work and the other unable to say that the name means anything at all.

And yet this shouldn't be so. In 1930, Clement A. Gomes did some research on Leo and commented on his work in a '**Survey of Guianese Literature**' he was releasing in the *New Daily Chronicle*. This article was reprinted in a foreign newspaper and as a result of enquiries based on the article, some bibliophile American paid \$75.00 for a copy of Leo's *Poetical Works*. In 1931, N. E. Cameron gave Leo pride of place with 23 selections in his *Anthology of Guianese Poetry*, covering the period 1831-1931.

Then in 1940, P. H. Daly tells an abbreviated version of the story of Leo and gives it a place amongst the stories of his ten heroes of British Guiana. And yet, despite these three published appreciations, there are many persons in British Guiana who have not heard of Leo, the first outstanding poet British Guiana has produced.

Who is Leo? When and in what circumstances did he live? What quality of poetry did he write? Is he Guianese in outlook? These are some of the questions to which the critic must give a specific answer if he is attempting to evaluate a man's poetry. He has to link the personal estimate of a poet on to the historical estimate of him and complete the portrait.

In assessing the personality of Leo, we have little more than the barest evidence to go on.

Leo's real name was Egbert Martin. He was a fair mulatto and was born in 1862 and his father Richard Martin, was a journeyman tailor of Georgetown. From early youth he was confined to an invalid's bed, as a result of illness.

However, when he was 19, the *Colonist* published a long poem of his and from 1880 with the appearance of the weekly newspaper, the *Argosy* of which James Thompson was editor, he was assured of steady employment. He became a regular contributor to both the *Argosy* and the *Echo*, a newspaper published in Plaisance. In 1883, with the help of James Thompson and George Anderson Forshaw, one of the outstanding men who have been Mayors of Georgetown, he published in England his *Poetical Works*, a volume of 224 pages—printed by W. H. & L. Collingridge, Aldergate St. E.C., London. In 1885 he published *Scriptology* a collection of 4 short stories and 1886 a slim 75-page booklet *Leo's Local Lyrics*, printed by G. Baldwin and Co., Georgetown, and dedicated to George Anderson Forshaw, Mayor of Georgetown. There is no:

“shilling life to give you all the facts  
How Father beat him, how he ran away  
What were the struggles of his youth, what acts  
Made him the greatest figure of his day.  
Of how he fought, fished, hunted, worked all night,  
Though giddy, climbed new mountains, named a sea.”

— nothing of the kind that Auden writes about in that sonnet of his I've just quoted.

Some one says he used to live in East Street, then a big canal or creek, with a rough footpath and James Thompson would come there and collect the material he had written. He is just far away from us in time for persons' memories to be blurred and for legends to begin to grow around his name.

In 1888 there is a blaze of Empire glory, Leo wins an Empire-wide competition sponsored by one of the leading London newspapers on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. To win this prize he wrote two additional verses to the '**National Anthem**'. These 2 stanzas have been reprinted more than once so I refrain from including them here. N. E. Cameron and P. H. Daly have both included them in their respective works.

For this effort Leo was awarded the first prize of £50. But he must have been known to literary circles in England before



1888 because it seems well attested by the local press that Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the Poet Laureate "*considered the volume of Leo's Poems worthy of an autograph acknowledgment*". Thus a writer in the *Guiana Herald*, some time before 1886, a writer incidentally who rates Leo as "*far and away the first West Indian Poet*". (I presume the writer means first in quality).

One of the functions of the critic may be the task of recreating the poet from his work, of overcoming the poverty of biographical data by a study of what the man thought and wrote about, and of causing a slowly shaping image of the man to emerge from the mass of his writings. This kind of study is a fascinating one. With a dramatic poet of high quality like Shakespeare it may lead to nothing, because the poet will become the character. But a lyric poet's works may yield results.

I seem to find two clues of this psychological nature which may lead us into the labyrinthine ways of Leo's well-stored mind. The first clue is the emotion that informs a poem '**Twilight Thoughts**' in the 1883 volume. Imagine the poet sitting in the twilight, thinking. Wonderful fancies come and go and it is clear that he loved to reserve this part of the day for meditation. He goes on thinking, — at a chance guess, he is looking out across the narrow footpath over the East Street canal; and watching the echo of the sunset die out in the eastern sky. He has a vision; he sees the ghost of the ages. He apostrophises it. But the phantom fades before it utters any prophetic word and Leo continued the soliloquy:—

"You fade into the ether  
I know not how it is  
The fancy comes, or whether  
The mind unconscious, sees  
A second life within us  
Ethereal and divine  
But such a double nature  
Seems ever to be mine,  
The life without — the harsher  
The life within — the best  
The life without — the turmoil  
The life within — the rest."

There is one feature which will strike the sensitive reader of this poem — where poetry overlaps the borders of autobiography, as it so often can in a man's work — the feature is that, despite the continuous preoccupation of his muse with the element of form, this 12-line stanza juts out in the elegant company of well-mannered sisters of eight lines. It seems that Leo's muse gloried in form. He loved to play through intricate poetical patterns in a well-nigh perfect manipulation of sense and sound. But in this poem he breaks away from his pattern and one cannot help believing that he attached some importance to the meaning of the extra four lines of that stanza we are considering and that perhaps they codified his own outlook, "*The life within — the best.*"

The second clue to the nature of this reserved man who loved to meditate when the sun had gone down the sky is in the dedication poem in the booklet *Local Lyrics*. There he says to Mayor Forshaw:

"The gift is like my favourite flower  
The jasmine, from a hidden spring."

The retiring nature of his favourite flower is so far from the nature of the pen name 'Leo' that the psychological student is tempted to say that the name 'Leo' symbolises the compensation of a jasmine-seeking disposition. However, these are two clues and they seem to delineate the character of a retiring, meditative man perhaps cut off from habitual commerce with men and not — shall we put it this way — not accustomed to jostle in the Market, buying provisions in order to cook his own meal. Of course, that does not mean he idled or that like the lilies of the field he toiled not neither did he spin. He worked for a living with his pen. It is only this consideration which at times allows the reader to overlook the standard of that section of the *Poetical Works* called '**Silver Chords or Heart Poems**', — only the knowledge that here Leo is perhaps giving the readers of the *Argosy* the series of moral platitudes they wanted, will enable the reader to pardon poems like this one beginning:

“We should be very careful  
Of every word we speak,”

or like ‘**Comfort**’:

“Though the heart is full of aching  
And all rest seems far away”

or like ‘**Give**’ and ‘**Smiles**’. Leo’s verse in poems such as these is barely distinguishable for quality from that of Ella Wheeler Wilcox and Robert Service. But a man when he is master of his craft can write in several styles with many hands and the critic would be extremely unwise if he condemns a poet on the low level of some of his work. What is worth remembering, in life is the poetry of it, as Hazlitt declares, these experiences where imagination has heightened our response to things outside of us—the fear, the hope, the love, the hatred. And in the work of a poet what is worth remembering is the series of passages which contain unity in that themselves and in which the imagination finds a vivid and speaking tongue for the rarer moods, the more elevated thoughts and the more impassioned feelings. So we can look at that section ‘**Silver Chords**’ and perhaps regret that he had to earn a living with his talent in this way or that he did not exercise a more stringent censorship or develop more of a self critical attitude.

However that comment on the ‘**Heart**’ poems is a digression and we were speaking about Leo’s retiring nature. The life within, the best. Here is a man who meditated at night and seemed cut off by his physical infirmity from the kind of social intercourse which naturally have assisted growth and development.

We don’t know what books Leo read. Anyone who has read his poems ‘**The Creek**’ and ‘**The Spirit Stone**’ (1886 Volume) and enjoyed them, must be tempted to believe that Leo had studied the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe. Leo expresses current creole superstitions with a power based on repetition that reminds the reader of the ability of Poe to devise situations of nightmare horror. And Leo had read his Tennyson. But he must have been thrown back largely upon his own thoughts for company.

I don't know to what extent he suffered from any sense of being deprived of advantages by reason of his race and colour, but the poem '**The Negro Village**' shows that he was much exercised on the subject on what persons of other races thought of the Negro and that he deplored their superstitions and attachment to Obeah. Such a sense of stigma coupled with physical infirmity and lack of regular converse with people of his own standard of culture—, these could easily influence Leo to look inward and write what he found in his own heart.

So he looked inward. In the *Poetical Works* of 1883 there are two sections, '**Silver Chords or Heart Poems**' and '**Celestial Echoes or Poems of the Soul**'. There are more than 100 pages of '**Silver Chords**' but the themes in these 84 poems are not progressive themes coming to an inevitable conclusion as the chords of a symphony progress to its inevitable end. Rather are the themes similar and the general quality of verse is low. If anywhere, it is here Leo could have exercised his critical faculty and pruned the collection. Of course, there are some fine poems included in the section. One is '**To a jasmine**'. There he corroborates our impression of his retiring nature by these pairs of lines:

"A Little Jasmine drooping low  
Like bride in virgin whiteness  
Why doth thy beauty shun the light  
And ope but to the gaze of night."

and finally:—

"My ideal ever be from now  
In heart to grow as pure as thou".

The following eight-line poem found also in this section is, I think, a very fine instance of what Leo could do.

"I plucked a rose with half closed leaves  
On which a sparkling dewdrop lay.  
The fragrance that it sweetly shed  
Perfumed the parched breast of day...  
The morrow came, the floral gem  
Was crushed and crumbling in the dust  
There lies, I thought, the birth of bloom  
And final end of earthly trust".

Turning at random, one comes to '**A Dark Day**'. I have selected these lines from the poem:

"Drift slowly, ye cold clouds  
Far, far away.  
Like great funeral shrouds  
Enfolding day.  
Hide, hide your heads, ye flowers  
Such cheerless gloom  
Should not pervade your bowers  
Quench your perfume.  
Cease, happy birds, your song.  
Hush your refrain  
Till morn's effusive throng  
Wake you again.  
Flood not this sullen hour  
With notes of praise.  
Keep your harmonic power  
For brighter days."

Those are fine lines, written by any man in any age. But it seems a little unnecessary to us for the poet to end his poem with these moral reflections.

"O fearful heart of mine  
This outward grief  
Must not around thee twine  
Tis passing—brief—  
Thy faith like Phoebus, must  
Burn, though obscured  
With calm, untiring trust  
In deed and word".

There is a drop here from poetry to ethics; to not so profound moral reflections. Of course, the critic has to remember that Leo lived in the Victorian days and that this estimate of his work, made 60 years later, is for our time. In another 60 years, another estimate may be needed. But the point to be made at present in this respect is that poetry is a way of saying something, not what is said.

To strengthen this remark, here is a short passage from '**Resuscitation**' – another of Leo's poems:

"The twilight shuddered into gloom  
The trees stood trembling in the air  
And flung their green umbrageous arms  
Above their wildly floating hair".

That is the incommunicable power of poetry, the power to throw, as Wordsworth says, over situations from common life, a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect. It seems the moral aspect must be vividly and remarkably expressed or the level of the poetry must fall.

However, there are further steps one can take along this road and Leo took them. From '**Heart Poems**' he passed to '**Poems of the Soul**' and it would seem that as the piety came in at the door, poetry went out of the window. The verse in these poems is competent with gems of expression embedded here and there. For instance, one comes across this stanza:

"God giveth to the sighing, pleasant waters  
That flow from springs serene  
Through vales of peace, through neighbourhoods of laughter  
Through fields and pastures green".

*"Neighbourhoods of laughter"!* and another instance;

"Hope deferred, thou'rt, cold to comfort  
Tears to shining eyes.  
Discord unto airs melodious".

there are gems like that, but on the whole the verse is merely competent.

It seems difficult to write good religious poetry. The writer has to be extremely intense, with the intensity of John Donne, or Henry Vaughan or Richard Crashaw before he can achieve really remarkable images and before the poetry of a passage can match the piety of it. Perhaps the nature of the subject puts one in a mood of reverence and adoration, and unconsciously the mind feels it should not play tricks, to relate the hitherto unrelated, to use metaphor. Perhaps the religious experience has no words to write itself and any comparison with things known seems desecration. Anyhow it has been difficult to get great and religious poetry.

Now normally, Leo is not passionate. I would think he wrote verse easily and the kind he writes is low temperature poetry. His is not the variety Emily Dickinson spoke about, the kind that knocks the top of one's head and his religious verse leaves us with a sense of respect for his reverence. But with some persons the respect may quite change and become disgust. That is what happened.

In his preface to the *Local Lyrics* (a preface which incidentally shows that Leo is an excellent prose writer) the author tells us that quite a few persons thought that the 1883 volume contained too much "goody-goodness." Further Leo says he was free to acknowledge that the opinions were not without foundation. But at the present moment I am interested in the sense of escape denoted by this emphasis on religion. One will remember that in America, the African slaves had found solace in their spirituals. Leo's verse seems symbolic of the coloured man's emphasis upon God rather than upon this world, symbolic as a means of escape from a world that had little or no economic security for him and his relations.

Both in the long poem '**Ruth**' and in the Poem '**The Magic View**' Leo makes the reader feel that he looks upon this world as a field of endurance where the spirit is chastened by woe and is being prepared for the after life. To use a line from one of his own poems "*the stifled dissonance of miseries*" is to make the resulting harmony greater and more beautiful. How much his own life may have been shaped in this mould of misery one can guess from the poem, '**On seeing the lame lead the blind**' where one becomes conscious of an unusual sympathy with the subject as a power deepening the scope of the verse.

However, so far as the public was concerned, it thought there was too much "goody-goodness." In the *Local Lyrics*, Leo turned to subjects around him and treated them with a "Broad catholicity of spirit." I think we Guianese have to thank that poet friend of Leo's who suggested to him that he should be as impartial of tints as a July sunset. We don't know his name but we thank him. But this 1886 volume shows greater maturity. For one thing, Leo is no longer quite as engrossed with form and ethics as in his previous work and he achieves a group of poems and songs which are of remarkably high quality.

Let us look at this second book closely, as a development of Leo's poetical power. In the long poem, the '**Negro Village**' he had already shown that he could deal sympathetically with the racial theme, although stanza 14 (omitted from the poem by N. E. Cameron in his *Collection of Guianese Poetry 1931*) seems to show he thought true some charges laid against the African, charges such as indolence and savagery. But his treatment of a local theme had been a religious and moral one. Now in the 1886 volume Leo weaves some of the Guianese superstitions of his day in to tropical studies. This is done especially in the '**Creek, the Spirit Stone and the Forest Walk**'. The poet has passed from the position of "*the life within—the best*" and is looking at people and things around him. The exercise on his meditations is now used to portray the simple credulity of some of the people of his time in the influence of spirits on their lives. It is successful. In the pages of the *Local Lyrics* he has caught for us, 60 years on, the feeling of people of his day on these matters.

Much has been written about Leo's long poem—'**Ruth**'—printed in the 1883 book. It has been called an epic. In a sense, it is a story of struggle and it ends in tragedy. Part III that tells of Ruth's death, ends on a magnificent note with a three-fold glorification of Mercy. The three concluding stanzas of this Part begin:



"Mercy saw the grief was cruel  
So it closed her feelings down  
Mercy saw the load was greater  
Than her feeble strength could bear  
Mercy saw her bosom needed  
A divine continual rest."

Much has been said about '**Ruth**' as Leo's supreme achievement but to my mind, it is the group of songs found in the *Local Lyrics* that constitutes his enduring contribution to Guianese poetry.

Take up the *Lyrics* at random and one finds (to quote from Leo's '**Image**') one of them:

"Exquisite tone in every part  
And beauty, beauty everywhere."

There is a limpidity and a fine restraint of expression that resembles much of the verse of Robert Eridges. Whether it is the '**Bride, the River, the Image, the Forest Walk**' ,

"The stars have spirits and the sky and breeze  
The water and the flowers and the trees  
And they come forth at night and wander near  
Wherever woods are thick or streams are clear."

or a '**A Shaded Spot**' or '**Serenity**':

"Low droop the trees where waters gleam  
Their mingled tresses viewing  
And twilight, like a lovely dream  
Speeds to her far pursuing."

The verse is cantabile. It is full and easy and singing. '**The Swallow**' is a rounded master-piece:

"Who would not follow thee, swallow, in flight  
On clean swift wings thro' the opal light

follow:

"Past the silent lake , thro' whose crystal breast  
Thy faint shadow flits like a spiritual guest."

In the section of the Lyrics entitled '**Songs and Ballads**' that easy singing quality found elsewhere in the book intensifies and purifies itself into really splendid lyrical flights.

"Splendour of morning, splendour of even, splendour of night.  
Splendour of sun and stars, and splendour of all things bright.  
Splendour in deepest deep and splendour in highest height  
These are the themes of Song."

In this excess of beautiful lines and beautiful moods, passing over '**Amor**', '**Regret**', '**Dost thou Remember**', '**The Hidden Joy**', '**A Dream of Angels**', '**Sing Bird**', (I hesitate here but pass on) I choose two poems, one a song and one a ballad, which I give in their entirety.

#### **'I CAN NO LONGER HIDE'**

I can no longer hide the truth  
How dear thou art to me  
For to my every thought there comes  
A gladness born of thee  
Ah, ne'er I knew until this hour  
How sweet, this life might prove  
If thou wouldst breathe the sigh that tells  
Not all in vain I love, my love  
Not all in vain I love.  
Thy shaded soulfulness of eyes,  
Thy brow as morning clear  
Thy simple grace— ah, search my heart  
And find them hidden there.  
No Hindoo guards his sacred charm  
With half such sleepless care,  
My soul's the casket— thou my gem  
Fast locked and treasured there, ah there,  
Fast locked and treasured there.

and now the ballad: —

**'MY DARLING'**

I saw my darling standing  
    Beneath the arbour where  
A flood of golden sunlight fell  
    And bathed her golden hair  
And I loved her more that moment  
    Because she was so fair.  
The purple grapes in clusters  
    Hung tempting from the vine  
Their hearts well-nigh to bursting  
    In rivalry of mine  
For the joy that burned within me  
    I could not well define.  
She knew my thoughts were of her  
    They lived upon my face  
And gladdened from my eyes that loved  
    To feed upon her grace,  
The gentle outlines of her form  
    Once and again to trace.  
But when she smiled upon me  
    With all a maiden's pride,  
And beckoned with her tiny hand  
    A welcome to her side  
My cup of gladness overflowed  
    And I was satisfied.

These songs, published by Leo in 1886 in the obscure city of Georgetown, may live beside those of Jonson and Herrick. It is hard to bestow greater praise on a man than to couple him with these great lyric writers.

And that is Leo, Egbert Martin, Guianese poet. He died at 28 and as with Keats, the sense of disease and infirmity seems to have been a ripening influence in his work, making him face conditions and facts with Time's chariot behind him and deserts of infinity before. Death and its nearness wipe away scales from our eyes and encourage us to see all things in the aspect of eternity. It is fruitless and in a way ungrateful to say

*"If Leo had lived?"* and so enter upon an interminable and profitless debate. Sufficient that he blazed a trail, lit a torch, opened a tradition and swung the gates wide for Guianese poetry.

What is that line from W. H. Auden *"Though giddy, climbed new mountains: named a sea,"* ...

Leo did that.

## MESSAGE TO THE WEST INDIES

by "CRITIAS"

The emergence of the critical spirit is a certain sign that a people are coming of age. West Indians are in a critical mood. They have begun to look about them, to assign a value to their institutions, their art and their religion... Moreover, they have begun to reevaluate the cultures of other peoples from the standpoint of their peculiarly West Indian experience. This search for new values has just begun and criticism should therefore still confine itself to a discernment of tendencies.

There are three main tendencies in the present West Indian way of life:

(1) The whole area is under economic stress and the widespread discontent provokes criticism of the existing order. Always the effect of poverty is pervasive. Hence there is a search for a better political and economic structure.

(2) The growth of local nationalisms masquerading under the banner of racial heritage has been fostered within recent times by dishonest leaders of the people.

(3) A religious strain colours the outlook of the people. This is as one would expect. The two dominant racial groups are Indians and Africans. Indians have been from earliest times a people "*intoxicated with God.*" Whenever the African sings he sings the song of the spirit — the spiritual. He brings to West Indian culture a wealth of feeling and seeming unrestraint of form. We must add to this the Catholic culture of the Latin peoples — the Portuguese and the Spanish. There is also the Chinese emphasis on civic virtues, the good life here and now.

These three tendencies touch at a point. Discontent drives men to search for supernatural values. Racial rivalry inspires a search for some form of plural society. Belief in God determines a man's attitude to other men. These three tendencies resolve themselves into what might be called the problem of man, the problem of human relationships.

## THE TENDENCIES OF WESTERN CIVILISATION

Two major wars have left the traditional values hopelessly discredited. The mastery of the external world has for four centuries engaged the attention of Western man. The emphasis has been on things not persons, on the material not the spiritual. Vast strides have been made in the accumulation of knowledge but this has not been accompanied by any comparable growth of moral feeling. The direct opposite has been the case. The moral life has shown a dangerous tendency towards anarchy. A tremendous depersonalising undertug is pulling the fabric of the civilisation to pieces.

It has become clear that civilisation must be built on a spiritual basis. The search for ideal values informs the work of T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden. The same reaction from materialism is responsible for the development of Platonism and the widespread influence of the works of Thomas Aquinas and Soren Kierkegaard. On the obverse side the tendency presents itself to E. M. Forster as the problem of human relationships. Attention is focused on man and the ideal values that define his attitude towards other men.

## MANN AND FREUD

Healthy people look out at the world. The sick look into themselves. What is true of the individual man is also true of civilisation. The introspective tendency of the age is apparent in the early novels of Thomas Mann and the first treatises of Sigmund Freud. Mann recreates the mind of the individual artist. Freud dissects the mind of the individual patient. One wrote *Death in Venice*, the other the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Later both turned their gaze from the depths to the distant horizons. They turned from the individual way of life to the culture. The elemental thread of human relationship is seen in the complex fabric of culture.

Mann devoted his mature years to the retelling of the story of Joseph and his brothers. It is more than a story. The mind which recreates ancient Egypt is one fashioned by contemporary influences, one drawing its inspiration from the urgent problems of our day. Egypt was undergoing a period of

spiritual formlessness analogous to our own. The Pharaoh Akhnaton had just carried out a religious revolution and moral codes had lost the binding power of the old faith. Joseph roams over the religions of the ancient world and he discovers “*the wholeness of the world and its abiding unity with which man is always and everywhere concerned.*”

Sigmund Freud had throughout his life a profound hatred for generalisations. His concern was with the particular mind. In the evening of his days, however, he applied his method of research to civilisation as a whole in *Civilisation and its Discontents* and to a particular culture in *Moses and Monotheism*. In this last book — *Moses*—he analyses the shaping influence of a religious ideal upon a people’s way of life. “*Admixture of blood made little difference since what kept them together was something ideal — the possession they had in common of certain intellectual and emotional values...*”

“*The wholeness of the world and its unity...*” This is the one hopeful theme in the sombre symphony of human history. The variations upon it are numberless:

There had been an astringent quality in Western Civilisation for a long time. One sensed it in the prose of the French critic Sainte-Beuve; the prose that missed the deepest accent, the sharpest sting of reality. The animal impulses of man’s nature were a bother and the problem best solved by ignoring them. This careful abstraction from life was the characteristic mental attitude of the nineteenth century.

A young Viennese physician had the courage to break the silence. An insurance clerk in Hamburg heard him and agreed. They both had a vision of a new humanity.

The instinctual drives, said Freud, cannot be ignored. They must be consciously entertained. This was the way towards rich and healthy lives. The other way leads to neurosis, broken lives.

Mann’s Joseph is the forerunner of the new humanity, the humanity which drawing its strength from the depths shall yet look up to the white light of the heavens.

Mann has drawn largely on the scientific knowledge of his time. It has become part of him. He uses its stones to build the vast scaffolding of his work. But the accent is on the imaginative recreation of life. The accent is on emotion. He

has gone a long way from that experiment in ideas that is the *Magic Mountain*.

In his later works Freud brought an unsuspected imaginative insight to bear upon his subjects. *“The man who has hitherto been a pitiless analyst now at length reveals himself as a great synthesist, the doctor and scientist shows himself what we have always felt him to be — an artist”*.

The development of these two masters points the way towards unity — the unity within man and the unity of a people. Common emotional values are not enough. Common intellectual values, are not enough. Once before, in Athens, a people had tried to live by reason alone. In the full flower of its greatness the Athenian culture withered and the people fled to the Eleusinian mysteries. Unreason and the abiding mystery of life asserted their own. Deep grow the roots of life and the flowers must never forget this.

The intellect will shape the stories. The emotion will be the cement binding them together. If truly the virtue of art lies not only in its timelessness but also in its endless anticipation of experience then here is a theme for West Indian artists.

These two prophets and thinkers have a message for a people in the making. We owe it to ourselves to hear them.



Join a Writer's Club...

## **PAINLESS PRACTICE FOR THE APPRENTICE**

by Bert Humphrey

A million words, two hundred rejection slips, four hours a day for a year: in such ways have I read in writers' magazines the apprentice writer should serve his apprenticeship.

A million words for the waste paper basket. Two hundred pieces of wallpaper. A year's work without a day's pay.

Something should be done.

Something can be done. Instead of writing just to be able to say you have written, or just because it has to be done, you can write your thousand words a day and be pretty sure they will be read.

How? Put them in a letter and mail them to a sympathetic soul...someone who is also writing his life away!

If you do not know many sympathetic souls to diversify your letters and receive a pleasing variety of replies, join a writer's club. The more letters you receive, the better you can learn how to write and how not to write in a manner which captures and holds the reader's interest. Remember that everything you read in print has been selected for you; in letters you are your own selector and the selecting will do your writing perceptions a world of good.

An enlargement and improvement of the writing-to-be-read-regardless movement is the circuit letter or round-robin, in one writing club the circuits are engineered from headquarters, but anyone having three correspondents can be his own circuiteer and include them all in one fell swoop by writing them a group letter, sending it to one of them with the instruction to send it to another and at the end of the trail it comes back to the starter; he removes the first letter, adds his second and so on endlessly and painlessly —if the letters are good copy.

Four members on a circuit are about right. There are enough points of view to keep things alive without taking too long to rotate and requiring too much postage. Four people can think

of just about ten times as many things to write about as two people can. Very intimate little circuits can be composed of three members, but one casualty kills the circuit without even a chance.

The clever member of the circuit is very likely to sharpen the pencils and the wits of the other members. The philosopher will make the others think about things and look them up in works of reference, thus learning about subjects that they have always wanted to know about, yet never took the time to study.

Local data may be obtained easily through contact with club members; data which would be inconvenient or costly to obtain in any other way. Collaborations often result much more successfully because of the far greater choice of collaborators. Every writer and his apprentice should belong to at least one good writers' club, just as he should take at least one good writers' magazine. It helps him to keep in the writing swing. You must have something to write about before that circuit calls again; or so that you can keep up with that bird on the other side of the circuit, who is trying to write around you.

So you write to have something to write about, and you write about it to get practice so you can write better, and you write —well, you want to write, don't you?

The Schools of British Guiana—No. 3  
**THE BISHOPS' HIGH SCHOOL**

by James W. Smith

THERE are only two state-owned secondary schools in British Guiana — one for boys and the other for girls. The boys' school is Queen's College: the Bishops' High School the girls'. The Bishops' High School became the property of Government .on January 1, 1943, when it was purchased from the Diocese of Guiana at a cost of \$17,436.

The school has had a colourful history. It was around the year 1870 that Mrs. Vyfhuis started a small girls' school in Smyth Street. That humble beginning, made over seventy years ago, marked the birth of what is today the premier girls' school in British Guiana. In the arduous task of maintaining the school (which changed its location at least thrice during the first thirty years of its existence) Mrs. Vyfhuis was, shortly after the beginning of the present century, assisted by the then Bishop of Guiana, the Rt. Rev. Edward Archibald Parry. In 1907 Bishop Parry purchased the building in Main Street which now houses the Transport & Harbours Department. To this new home he moved Mrs. Vyfhuis and her pupils, made himself financially responsible for the school and appointed Mrs. Vyfhuis as Headmistress.

In 1921, shortly before his retirement, the Bishop (who had by then become Archbishop of the West Indies) exchanged Woodside House (as the school building was called) for the old Queen's College Building in Carmichael Street. On the Archbishop's retirement in the same year, the school passed under the control of the Diocese of Guiana. A few years later the Diocese became the owners of the school by deed of gift of the Archbishop.

In 1922, on the retirement of Mrs. Vyfhuis as Headmistress, the school was re-named The Bishop's High School, and placed under the management of an Advisory Committee with Archbishop Parry's successor, Bishop Oswald Parry, as chairman. This change marked the beginning of the second distinct period in the school's history — a period which lasted

until December 31, 1942. During this period the school had three Headmistresses — Miss Emily Baskett, M.B.E., who succeeded Mrs. Vyfhuis in 1922; Miss Vera Wearn (later Mrs. R. Noel. Paton), appointed in 1933; and Mrs. A. M. Allen, the present Headmistress (then Miss Cookson) appointed in 1938. The school, by then a Government-aided school, was given an increase of the government grant, from \$1,500.00 to \$4,000.00 in 1939. Nor was Bishop Oswald Parry's interest in the school any less than his predecessor's. He personally made practically the entire financial contribution toward the building of the School Hall. Bishop Parry died suddenly in August 1936, and the Hall which now bears his name, was dedicated in the following month.

To Mrs. Allen has fallen the privilege of seeing the school launched on the third, and what may well prove to be the most important period of its history. On January 1, 1943, the Bishops' High School became a government institution, and plans were immediately made to replace the old building by a modern structure. The foundations of the new Bishops' High School building were laid early in 1943, and the first wing went into use in May 1946. The building was formally opened on July 5, 1946, by His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, the Hon. W. L. Heape, C.M.G., and the old building demolished in August 1946.

Today the new building (in which the Oswald Parry Hall has been incorporated) although not yet completed, is the finest school building in British Guiana: it is a structure of which every British Guianese may well be proud. It marks a forward step not merely in the history of the Bishops' High School, but in the educational history of British Guiana as a whole. When completed the new school building will have accommodation for 350 pupils — 120 more than the number now on Roll.

As an educational centre, the Bishops' High School is worthy of all the praise it has ever been given. Academic training is given up to the Higher School Certificate Standard of the University of London. In open competition girls of the Bishops' High School have won the British Guiana Scholarship on three occasions.

The Bishops' High School for girls has played a major part in the past history of the Colony: it will play an even greater part in the future. The British Guiana woman, like woman the world over, is fast coming into her own, and the women leaders of tomorrow are today receiving in the classrooms of the Bishops' High School, the training which will fit them for the tasks that lie ahead.

## PASSERS-BY

Passers-by; You and I,  
    Just a unit in the throng,  
Trying, as we pass along  
    To hold a star and make it fast;  
    As if the holding e'er could last:  
        Still we try; we passers-by:

Passers-by; Our heads held high—  
    Reaching up towards the sky,  
What of the broken hearts we know,  
    Too proud in grief, the world to show;  
We—of the passers-by:

Passers-by; Please God on high.  
    To give us strength to run our race  
Never to falter in the pace;  
    Mend broken hearts, and faiths gone bad,  
Help to the helpless: joy to the sad—  
    And nobly to—pass-by:

— J. E. H.

B.G. Writers' Association  
**Condensed Report for the Year 1946**

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association held at the Georgetown Public Free Library on Thursday, December 20, 1945, the following Office-bearers and Members of the Executive were elected for the year 1946:—

President: .....	Mr. H.R. HAREWOOD
Hony. Secretary: .....	Mr. James W. SMITH
Hony. Asst. Secretary: .....	Mr. H.L. MITCHELL
Hony. Treasurer: .....	Mrs. J.E. HUMPHREY
Members of the Executive: .....	Mrs. M.L. ISAACSON
.....	Mr. Eric ROBERTS
.....	Mr. A.J. SEYMOUR

**MEETINGS**

The new Executive set to work early in the year to formulate plans for bringing Members of the Association into closer contact with each other. As was disclosed in the Report for the year 1945, the fortnightly Lecture Classes started in April of that year proved a failure. It was therefore decided at a meeting of the Executive held on Thursday, January 31, 1946, that members should meet under less formal conditions. Consequently, as from Wednesday, February 17, meetings were held fortnightly, over a period of six months, after the manner of a Discussion Group. At these meetings of the Reading Circle, as the gatherings were called, members read their own works, which were then discussed and/or criticised by the other members present.

These meetings proved fairly popular, and the attendance (although it was not as good as it might have been) could not have been said to have been either disappointing or unsatisfactory. The average attendance for the entire series was about 50 per cent of the total membership.

Although these meetings were very interesting, the discussions stimulating and the criticisms constructive,

interest on the whole seemed to wane as the series drew to a close. The Executive inns not been able to determine the reason for this apparent waning of interest. It was felt that pressure of official duties may have prevented members from attending meetings on various occasions. The last of these meetings was held on Wednesday, July 31, and it is intended that they should be started again early in 1947.

### **B. G. UNION OF CULTURAL CLUBS – LITERARY COMPETITIONS**

The Association was in May requested by the B. G. Union of Cultural Clubs to draft the rules for the Union's Literary Competitions. On May 31, a sub-committee appointed for that purpose and comprising Miss Celeste Dolphin, Messrs. A.J. Seymour and James W. Smith, submitted to the Hony. Secretary of the Union a report on the proposed Conditions of Entry to the Competitions. The majority of these conditions were adopted by the Union. We record with pride that the prize in the Poetry Competition – the only award, was won by Mr. Frank E. Dalzel, a member of the B. G. Writers' Association.

### **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

During the year under review, the Association held three social gatherings, two at the offices of the British Council and the third at the office of the Bureau of Publicity and Information.

The first of these functions was held on Saturday evening April 27, when Mr. Alan W. Steward, until recently British Council Representative in British Guiana was guest of honour at a party held on the eve of his departure for Barbados as Representative of the British Council in the Windward and Leeward Islands.

At the second of these functions, held at the office of the Bureau of Publicity and Information, Mr. A. J. Seymour, Editor of *Kyk-Over-Al*, was presented with a pair of initialled gold links on the eve of his departure for the United Kingdom as a guest of the British Council.



On Tuesday, November 19, the Executive of the B.G. Writers' Association in conjunction with the D.F.P. Advertising Service was "At Home" to Miss Aimee Webster, Managing Editor of *Caribbean Post*, Jamaica, who was on a four day visit to the Colony.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

During the year two members of the Executive were granted leave, during their absence from the Colony. The President, Mr. H. R. Harewood spent a three-month vacation in Barbados as from February 20, and Mr. A. J. Seymour was away for about four months as from July 31. During Mr. Seymour's absence from the Colony, Miss Celeste Dolphin acted as a member of the Executive.

### KYK-OVER-AL

*Kyk-Over-Al* achieved its second publication with the release late in August of the June, 1946, issue. The unavoidable delay was due to the difficult conditions under which the printers—*The Argosy Co., Ltd.*, are still operating. The issue was a financial success and showed a fair margin of profit as did the December, 1945, issue.

It is with pride we record the fact that both in the West Indies and in England *Kyk-Over-Al* has been favourably received. In the April, 1946, issue of *Spotlight* a monthly Jamaican magazine, the December 1945 issue of *Kyk-Over-Al* was described as "*the most impressive Guianese Literary Product*" of the month.

Our reference to the reception of *Kyk-Over-Al* would be incomplete if we did not place on record the special mention made by *Spotlight* of Mr. Wilson Harris' poem '**Tell me Trees, What are you whispering**' which appeared in the December, 1945, issue of *Kyk-Over-Al*. *Spotlight* numbers Mr. Harris among the "*youngest West Indian Poets who are arriving at an excellence comparable with the best by young Poets in any part of the world today.*"

## THANKS

The Retiring Executive on behalf of the Association records its thanks to those who assisted us in various ways during the past year:

The British Council Representatives for the use of the British Council Rooms for our functions;

The Publicity Officer for the use of the B.P.I. Office;

Mr. J. E. Humphrey for the use of the D.F. P., and

Miss Franker, Miss MacArthur and the Committee of the Georgetown Public Free Library for the use of the Library for the holding of meetings;

Mr. Oscar Wight and the *Argosy* Co., for making the publication of *Kyk-Over-Al* possible despite the adverse conditions under which they are working.

To those kind friends and well-wishers, the Executive records its sincere gratitude.

Union of Cultural Clubs  
**THE THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION**

THE Third Annual Convention of the British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs ran on Thursday, August, 29. That part of the proceedings described on the Programme as the Public Meeting was held at the Town Hall at 8.30 p.m. under the Chairmanship of Mr. F. W. Holder. The Town Hall was about one-third filled. A cable was received from Mr. T. O. Phillips, the delegate expected from Barbados, stating that on account of transport difficulties he would not be able to attend. In the absence of Mr. Phillips who was to have given an address, the British Council Representative made a few remarks, among which was a statement that the Council's facilities would be available in the future only to members of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society and the Union.

In the course of his address, Captain G. H. Smellie, President of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society, announced that the Society had decided that the President of the Union should be *ex officio* one of its Directors.

The Social was held at Mrs. Potter's residence, 274 Forshaw Street, on Friday August 30. Representatives of about 15 clubs attended.

The Musical Evening was held on Friday, August 30, at the Town Hall at 8.30 p.m. under the Chairmanship of Miss Mansfield. The Town Hall was a little more than half filled.

The Business Session took place at the Broad Street Government School on Saturday, August 31 from 2 to 4 p.m. Nineteen persons including the Leaders attended. There was therefore one discussion group, but with the exception of subjects 2 and 3 on the programme all the subjects down for discussion were fully discussed.

The following decisions were reached :—

*1. The Economics of Culture*

- (i) That the Committee should take steps to have the Union included in the list of Charities which benefit

from the Demerara Turf Club's Sweepstakes.

- (ii) That the Union should solicit funds from Water Street Business Houses.
- (iii) That Annual Conferences with similar Organisations in the neighbouring colonies are most desirable and that the sum of \$600 should be raised for the working of the Union during next year if four Representatives were to be invited to the next Convention.
- (iv) That the fee for affiliation to the Union be increased to \$2 a year.

#### *4. Culture in relation to Social Welfare*

- (i) That the Honourable Mr. T. Lee should take up with Government the question as to the manner and method of after-care of boys who had left the Essequebo Boys' School, Onderneeming.
- (ii) That the Union take an interest in the Children's Dorcas Club and the Society for the Promotion of Refinement among school children and endeavour to assist these and other bodies which cater to the moral improvement of the pre-school child and the child of school age.

#### *5. The West Indian University*

- (i) That the Union should sponsor a full discussion on the West Indian University which Mr. Pilgrim should be asked to lead.
- (ii) That data on the West Indian University should be requested from the London University Guild of Graduates.

## 6. *The Union's Library*

- (i) That the R.A. & C.S. be asked to house the Union's collection of books in their reading rooms and to give Union Members and *bona fide* research workers access to them.
  
- (ii) That the Union's books should be available to all *bona fide* research workers introduced by a member of the Union Committee or the Committee of the R.A. & C.S.

The Convention was brought to a close with the Dramatic Evening which was held at Christ Church School Hall on Saturday, August 31, at 8.30 p.m. under the Chairmanship of the President.





