ately trying to launch his party on the path of a political comeback. But he did not know how to do it. He had no populist attributes, and thought that the working people would follow his star blindly. He could not effectively combat the absurd pro-communist allegations made against him because he so little understood the world of politics. In point of fact, I doubt if he ever bothered to define his attitude to Communism very seriously; in the world of his ideas, it would rank as but another system, and in that political game wherein he stumbled so often communists were only one of the many elements which at various times he sought to harness to his chariot. So far as his own credo was concerned, it was conventionally liberal; thus he could speak convincingly of the 1951 Referendum proposals as "utterly non-British and the very antithesis of the glorious traditions of our race."

Mr. Dalziel's book does not pretend to be either biography or political history. Consequently, it does not supply answers to some of the most intriguing questions in Evatt's career—for example, the factors which led him to make his abrupt and shattering break with the Industrial Groups in 1954.

But it does trace the highlights of Evatt's outstanding life as barrister, historian, judge, statesman, politician and defender of public liberties. More valuable still, it describes with admirable objectivity the virtues and weaknesses of this astonishingly erudite, wilful, impetuous Australian.

It is obvious that Dalziel himself is still not immune from the power of Evatt's personality, and attributes to him qualities which, in other contexts, he is conscientious enough to qualify or discount. Only those who did not know the man could be surprised at this. Evatt may not have been the most eloquent of advocates, but the force of his intellect and his overpowering self-confidence could easily oversway one's better judgment.

In some senses, Evatt was a political failure. But there is no question that, intellectually and morally, he stood head and shoulders above his arch-enemy, the Prime Minister of the day, not to speak of the puny figures at the moment of writing contesting the leadership of the Liberal Party. He deserves a definitive biography, but in the meantime he has been served well by his astute and humane secretary.

Rex Mortimer


Observations of Australia by travellers from overseas are frequently heard and read; less frequently heard or read are those comments made by Australians about other countries, especially on the earlier years of this century and the second half of last century. This anthology has brought together a number of such passages in which Australians have recorded their reflections and feelings on encounters abroad.

All the passages are selected from letters, memoirs, fiction or direct reports, written by well known literary figures. This could be regarded as a limitation but as Leonie Kramer points out in her Introduction to the book, the major works of these writers seem to declare them chiefly local or else narrowly nationalistic. However, one will be forced to reject this notion and see that not all Australians are uncritical and lack insight when they emerge from their southern isolation. For indeed, as the
passages move from the more historical ones, such as Henry Handel Richardson's *The White Cliffs of Dover* and Rolf Boldrewood's *England Home and Country*, in which the colonies are compared with the Old Country, to the more recent ones on the Vietnam War and the New York of this decade, the changing attitude of Australians to their own country and their deeper involvement and concern with the rest of the world is made obvious.

Unfortunately, this involvement has often been brought about by war. Thus, nearly half of the selection deals directly or indirectly with this subject. A. B. Paterson writes in the unfamiliar role of a war correspondent relating his encounters with men and situations in the Boer War. In *A Mexican Patriot*, Vance Palmer lucidly describes a skirmish between the Federal troops and the rebels. Then there are Hilda Freeman's intriguing memories of the joy with which the Germans greeted the possibility of war. Another view of German patriotic enthusiasm is given by A. H. Chisholm in his description of "The Fuehrer's meeting". Action in North Africa is presented through an extract from a book of Alan Moorhead. The beginnings of the Spanish Civil War are introduced by the personal experiences of Nettie Palmer who was informed by her milkman that "a military rebellion's broken out in Barcelona". Hal Porter perceptively examines Post-War Japan.

Other aspects of Australian experience abroad include A. G. Stephens' *Journey to Chicago* and Allan Ashbolt's *New York in The Sixties*, written a little over half a century later. Both dispel the myth of American greatness, a mere creation of the American genius. Despite some concessions, their conclusions are also very similar. "The dollar is almighty, and even the cent comes within an ace of omnipotence."

Mary Gilmore explains the ideals of the utopian communistic, Colonia Cosme, and gives an outline of her own life in that Paraguayan settlement. Sarah Bernhardt and Madame Marchesi are interviewed by Katharine Susannah Prichard in Paris. In two *Letters from London*, Henry Lawson gives advice to young writers and, with some feeling, describes the markets of Chapel Street. Other passages by Gilbert Murray, Christopher Brennan, Frederic Manning, Martin Boyd and Denis Warner are to be found.

Of course, in such a selection something is always omitted. But the diversity of the experiences which have been included and their manner of presentation are most adequate as a commentary on Australians abroad, and, undoubtedly, will arouse interest and provoke thought on the relationship of our country and the outside world.

**Janice Nash**

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**BRING LARKS AND HEROES**, by Thomas Keneally. Cassell, $3.75.

THE HIGH acclaim that this novel has received seems to me symptomatic of a general impulse to over-praise a work because it is written by an Australian. Excessive praise of a work that simply does not merit it, can be detrimental to an author as well as misleading to the reader. A case in point is that of Judith Wright, whose early work was received with an enthusiasm that was inspired not so much by her poetry as by the fact that she was both female and Australian. The virtue of being Australian cannot however continue to conceal the shakiness of much of her work, and such is the case, though to a lesser extent, with Keneally.